ANTI-CHINESE VIOLENCE IN INDONESIA, 1996-1999

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Abstract

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Anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia reached a climax in Jakarta and elsewhere in May 1998 against a background of dramatic social and political change. This study presents close analysis of selected incidents that occurred mainly in Java in the years prior to this and in its aftermath. It tests explanations of anti-Chinese violence based on economic resentment, religious difference or state-sponsorship. By highlighting ethnicity as the single constant, as well as the importance of locating agency and responsibility, and the sources of representations of events of mass violence, the study challenges existing understandings of 'anti-Chinese' violence. The approach taken recognises that violence against ethnic Chinese Indonesians must be viewed within the context of Indonesian nationalism and alongside other violence in Indonesia. It cannot be separated from the national political, social and economic turmoil of that time. In addition, it emphasises the competing representations of 'Chineseness' and anti-Chinese violence for what they reveal about the motives behind certain explanations of violence and the events themselves. Of central significance is the way in which anti-Chinese violence is represented and perceived in Indonesian society as normal, natural and everyday. This study stresses the importance of listening to the voices of victims of violence and seeks to recognise the moral concerns related to scholarly and 'official' generalisations about violence and suffering in particular. Framed in this way this approach poses the fundamental question, 'Is there anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia?'

Declaration

This is to certify that

(i) the thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD except where indicated in the Preface

(ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,

(iii) the thesis is less than 110,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

Signed.....

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Preface

All translations from Indonesian to English are my own unless otherwise indicated. In some cases I have quoted from the English language version of an Indonesian newspaper on the internet, and in these cases the title is given in English in the citation. The same is true of the reports from TRuK and TGPF, which are available in both English and Indonesian versions. I have used modern Indonesian spelling for Indonesian words, names and place names included in the thesis, except in cases where individuals have retained the older style of spelling.

Certain sections of the thesis have been published in some form. These include: 'The "Other" May Riots' as 'The "Other" May Riots, Anti-Chinese Violence in Solo', in *Violent Conflicts in Indonesia: Analysis, Representation and Resolution*, edited by C.A. Coppel. London: Routledge Curzon, 2003, forthcoming; 'Representing and Remembering The Violence of May 1998' as 'Problematising the Place of Victims in Reformasi Indonesia: A Contested Truth about the May 1998 Violence', *Asian Survey*, July-August 2002. Part of 'The Aftermath of May 1998: The Forces of Change' has been published as 'Is There A Place For Ethnic Chinese Identity in Post-Suharto Indonesia? Nationalism And The 'Asimilasi Versus Integrasi' Debate Reopened', a special edition of *Asian Ethnicity*, 2002, forthcoming.

Sections of the thesis have been presented at conferences and seminars including: 'Is There A Place For Ethnic Chinese Identity in Post-Suharto Indonesia?: Nationalism And The 'Asimilasi Versus Integrasi' Debate Reopened' at the Asian Studies Association of Australia Biannual Conference held in Hobart, 1-3 July 2002; 'Common Suffering: A Tie That Binds' at the conference on 'Mediating Human Rights and Democracy: Indonesia, Australia and the Netherlands' at Curtin University of Technology, Perth, 4–6 February 2002; 'Emerging Identities: After the Rapes of Ethnic Chinese Women in Indonesia, May 1998' at the 10th Four Yearly conference of the International Society of Scholars on Chinese Overseas' at the Academia Sinica, Taipei, 28–29 April 2001; 'A Contested Truth About the May 1998 Violence: Problematising the Place of Victims in Reformasi Indonesia' at a conference on Violence in Southeast Asia hosted by the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 16–17 February 2001; and 'The Other May Riots: Solo, 1998' for a panel on Violence in Asia at the biannual ASAA Conference held at University of Melbourne, July 2000.

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I. INTRODUCTION

On 14 May 1998, in the north Jakarta suburb Tanjung Priok, the owners of a local basic goods store were disturbed by shouting and banging. The shop was located on a leafy residential street off a main road. It was owned by an ethnic Chinese family who had lived in the area for many years and whose children, including a daughter Lia in her twenties, had grown up playing in the street and attending school with their neighbours and regular customers. The family had been alarmed by the violence elsewhere in Tanjung Priok itself and in the greater Jakarta area over the past 24 hours and had closed their shop and locked the house, although they had not felt the need to flee. However on 14 May a crowd attacked their shop and the house behind it, and unable to break the windows and doors, they gained access through the roof. As the looters descended, the children and their grandmother sought refuge in the home of a pribumi (indigenous) neighbour whilst their parents tried to defend their home. As Lia struggled to help her elderly grandmother across the street to the safety of their neighbour's house, the old woman slipped and fell, injuring her hip. Among the looters were people known to the family, including the local meatball seller, who made off with a television set. Others stole the photocopier from the store and then later tried to sell it back to the family for a high price. A year after the attack the family were operating their store again, supplying basic goods to the neighbourhood. Lia, however, could not continue to live in the area, she was simply too afraid of confronting those who had terrorised her family.[1]

The recent history of the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia cannot be understood fully without attempting to understand the frequent incidents of violence such as that experienced by Lia and her family. Anti-Sinicism and anti-Chinese violence have been recurrent themes through Indonesia's colonial and post-colonial histories. This thesis is a study of recent anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia, including close analysis of incidents that took place particularly on Java between 1996 and 1999. It is an attempt to document these occurrences and to investigate the motivations, conceptualisations and ramifications of this violence, but it is also an investigation of the processes of truth-seeking and of writing about events of mass violence. A new approach to anti-Chinese violence is necessary in order to understand its frequency in Indonesia in the late New Order and early post-New Order period. The approach taken in this study recognises that violence against ethnic Chinese Indonesians must be viewed within the context of Indonesian nationalism and alongside other violence in Indonesia – it cannot be separated from the national political, social and economic turmoil of this period. In addition, there is emphasis on the competing representations of 'Chineseness' and anti-Chinese violence for what they reveal about the motives behind certain explanations of violence and the events themselves. Of central significance is the way in which anti-Chinese violence is represented and perceived in Indonesian society as normal, natural and everyday. This approach also seeks to recognise the moral concerns related to scholarly and 'official' generalisations about violence and suffering in particular. This study poses the fundamental question, 'Is there *anti-Chinese* violence in Indonesia?'

[1] Interviews, Tanjung Priok, 23 July 1999.

In general, conceptualisations of the causes of violence against ethnic Chinese Indonesians emphasise economic and class-related explanations on the basis of the role Chinese play in the economy as middlemen and as members of its wealthiest conglomerates. However, this alone cannot explain the frequency of violence against this minority during the period examined here. Broader questions about prejudice, the role of minority groups and the utility of violence in the modern nation-state must also be considered. These lines of investigation are not always easy to balance. It is often impossible to come to a definitive conclusion about these events so that judgment has to be suspended. However, this study will demonstrate that the story of Lia and her family in the Jakarta violence in May 1998 is typical of acts of violence against ethnic Chinese and illustrates certain key traits. That is, an attack against property, both residential and commercial, including small businesses owned by ethnic Chinese, is the most common form of this violence. The local character of the perpetrators and their relationships to their targets are complex, challenging perceptions of economic jealousies and also deep-seated animosities between the communities. Invariably they lived together in apparent harmony for some time. The audacity with which the perpetrators acted, in the incident recounted here, is also indicative of the perceived impunity for this violence. Furthermore, the response of ethnic Chinese targeted for attacks to return to their work, to re-commence their lives simply and without change is depicted in this case and elsewhere. Nonetheless, the events of May 1998 were also a turning point for many Chinese, especially for the young and for women, as the perceived limits to 'anti-Chinese violence' were altogether shattered.

Scholars of Indonesia's ethnic Chinese minority, an estimated two to three percent of the population,[2] have long recognised that the most essential observations about this group emerge at the point where they meet the indigenous population.[3] The fact that violence is the outcome of some, albeit only a very small fraction, of the meetings between this minority and the majority indigenous community, is the primary interest of this study. This introduction begins by focusing on the Indonesian state and the position ethnic Chinese occupy within it. The exclusion of ethnic Chinese from 'belonging' in Indonesian nationalism and in particular the policies and actions of the New Order government, created a pseudo-legitimate environment in which violence against this minority could take place. Theories related to 'othering' within the post-colonial nation-state and scapegoating provide some explanation for this hostility. Attention is then given to

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[2] Estimates of the number ethnic Chinese in Indonesia still rely on Skinner's 1963 estimate of 2 450 000 Chinese or 2.5 percent of the total population. (G.W. Skinner, 'The Chinese Minority' in Indonesia, ed. Ruth McVey (New Haven: 1963), 99–100). Subsequently, Mackie and Coppel (J.A.C. Mackie and Charles A. Coppel, 'A Preliminary Survey', *The Chinese in Indonesia*, ed. J.A.C. Mackie (Melbourne: Nelson in Association with the Australian Institute of International Affairs, 1976), 4.) estimated there were 3 million ethnic Chinese from a total population of about 120 million. Since the 1950s, there has been no significant migration of ethnic Chinese to Indonesia. Therefore, it can be said that the proportion of ethnic Chinese has remained approximately the same, or slightly lower. (See Robert Cribb, *Historical Atlas of Indonesia* (London: Curzon Press, 2000), 60–62.)

[3] See Furnivall and Coppel for divergent views regarding the outcomes of these meetings. J.S. Furnivall, *Netherlands India: A Study of Plural Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939) and J.S. Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948); C.A Coppel, 'Revisiting Furnivall's "Plural Society": Colonial Java as a Mestizo Society?', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 20,3 (July 1997), 562–579; Also Dédé Oetomo, 'The Ethnic Chinese in Indonesia', in *The Ethnic Chinese in The ASEAN States: Bibliographical Essays*, ed. Leo Suryadinata (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1989), 50–51.

representations of 'Chineseness', which are bound to certain ideas of class and of course, difference but which are constantly being reinforced and reconstructed. An overview of the representations of anti-Chinese violence in Indonesian history made by scholars in this field allows us to understand the variety of possible approaches to this subject, alongside a discussion of theories of ethnic violence. Finally, I will introduce this study's approach to incidents of anti-Chinese violence that took place in the late 1990s and their representations.

VIOLENCE IN THE INDONESIAN STATE AND THE ETHNIC CHINESE

> (I)nscribing the boundaries that make the installation of the nationalist imagery possible requires expulsion from the resultant 'domestic' space of all that comes to be regarded as alien, foreign and dangerous.
> (David Campbell)[4]

> (I)f the process by which either the content or boundary of an ethnic identity is constructed itself yields violence, then we would *surely* say that the social construction of ethnicity is relevant to the explanation.
> (Fearon and Laitin)[5]

Violence was increasingly prevalent in the late New Order and immediate post-New Order periods, including state-sponsored violence in Aceh, West Papua and East Timor used to suppress separatist movements; violence with communal overtones between Christians and Muslims in Maluku and Sulawesi; and violence between citizens in acts of revenge, frustration or political contest.[6] Violence against ethnic Chinese took place within these contexts and sometimes alongside them. Consequentially, most Indonesians were not strangers to images of brutality and indeed many had themselves, it is likely, experienced or been exposed to violence in some way.[7] As recent studies show, violence became increasingly recognised by those in positions of power, and also by the *rakyat*, the people, as an effective tool for expression and for the pursuit of certain goals. Through the discourse and deeds of the New Order acts of violence were presented as justifiable and normal in response to certain conditions. These included rebellion against the sovereignty of the Indonesian state through separatist struggles, and violence in response to perceived injustices carried out by an 'outsider' who was perceived to be greedy or to possess a missionary zeal. The distinctions made between ethnic Chinese and *pribumi* Indonesians and the impunity granted for acts of violence against this minority by the New Order government and its successors, fostered the divisions between these groups in a process of 'othering' not uncommon to the modern nation-state.

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[4] D. Campbell, *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 13.

[5] J.D. Fearon, and David D. Laitin, 'Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity', *International Organization*, v54 i4, (Autumn 2000), 850.

[6] B.R.O'G Anderson (ed.), *Violence and the State in Suharto's Indonesia* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 2001); I. Wessel and Georgia Wimhöfer (eds.), *Violence in Indonesia* (Hamburg: Abera, 2001); Freek Colombijn and J. Thomas Lindblad eds, *Roots of Violence in Indonesia* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2002).; C.A. Coppel (ed.), *Violent Conflicts in Indonesia: Analysis, Representation and Resolution*. London: Routledge Curzon, 2003, forthcoming.

[7] See J. T. Siegel, *A New Criminal Type in Jakarta: Counter-Revolution Today* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998); Anderson, *Violence and the State,* 9.

> Nation-ness, and hence the distinction between Indonesian and non-Indonesian, are only a step away from the ethnic dichotomy of pribumi and non-pribumi. Nothing illustrates this better than the New Order's grandiose national park, the Taman Mini Indonesian Indah, 'Beautiful Mini Indonesia Park'... we find nothing representing the lives of fellow nationals of Arab, Indian, Chinese or European ethnicity. (Ariel Heryanto)[8]

> For whatever understandable reasons, nowhere have more Overseas Chinese been killed or wounded, run away or been chased away, or been so insecure during the past twenty years than in Indonesia. (Wang Gungwu)[9]

> Is ethnic violence a result of processes of ethnic identity construction? (Fearon and Laitin)[10]

The notion of an 'imagined community'[11] conjures up images related to a peaceful, dream-like process which eventually leads to the sense of 'nation-ness' Heryanto speaks of. However, as Fearon and Laitin anticipate above, rather than a dreamy progression, it is a violent process, defined by both political and social forces. In the invention, imagining and development of the Indonesian nation-state, there was a need to define the limits about what and who could be constituted as 'national', as 'Indonesian', and therefore also who was different and 'other'. History shows us these boundaries are not fixed but highly changeable. As a nationalism project, which (as Partha Chatterjee argues), is defined by the hegemonic project of nationalist or Western modernity, Indonesian nationalism maintained the hierarchical structures installed by the coloniser, merely inverting them.[12] Lines are constantly re-drawn between political and ethnic nationalism and ethnic Chinese often find themselves in the space somewhere in between.

Ethnic Chinese who were born in the Netherlands Indies and whose parents were domiciled under the Dutch administration were legally regarded as citizens of Indonesia by 1949 (so long as they did not reject it).[13] These ethnic Chinese were distinct from the still considerable numbers in Indonesia who were Chinese nationals, that is were born in China and most probably arrived in the 1920s and 1930s.[14] However, they were still without the same claims of 'belonging' to Indonesian ethnic nationalism[15] because, as Dan Lev argues,

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[8] Ariel Heryanto, 'Ethnic Identities and Erasure: Chinese Indonesians in Public Culture', in *Southeast Asian Identities: Culture and the Politics of Representation in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand*, ed. Joel S. Kahn (New York: St. Martin's Press; Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1998), 100.

[9] Wang Gungwu, 'Are Indonesian Chinese Unique?: Some Observations' in *The Chinese in Indonesia: Five Essays*, ed. Mackie J.A.C. (Melbourne: Nelson in association with The Australian Institute of International Affairs, 1976), 204.

[10] Fearon and Laitin, 'Violence and the Social Construction', 857.

[11] B.R.O'G. Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983).

[12] Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 1–13. Ariel Heryanto put it, 'The New Order was largely a reincarnation of the Dutch colonial regime'. ('Rape, Race and Reporting', in *Reformasi: Crisis and Change in Indonesia*, eds Arief Budiman, Damien Kingsbury and Barbara Hatley (Clayton, Vic.: Monash Asia Institute, 1999), 326.)

[13] This was a provision of the Round Table Conference Agreement, 1949-1951. See C.A. Coppel, *Indonesian Chinese in Crisis* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1983), 26.

[14] Lance Castles, 'The Ethnic Profile of Djakarta', *Indonesia*, Vol. 3 (April 1967), 183.

[15] Legal distinctions remained: Article 6 of the 1945 Constitution states that 'the President shall be a native born Indonesian (*orang Indonesia asli)*'. Article 26, refers to citizenship rights stating, 'citizens shall be native Indonesians (*orang-orang bangsa Indonesia asli*) and those of other races (*orang-orang bangsa lain*)

rather than providing ethnic Chinese with security: 'Citizenship marked *peranakan*[16] vulnerability as nothing else could. It went to the heart of *peranakan* identity and security, preceding every other issue of significance to those who thought they belonged to Indonesia and nowhere else'.[17] In these early years of nationhood the *peranakan* Chinese no longer spoke a Chinese dialect but a local regional language and were culturally assimilated, yet they were treated as distinct from *'asli'* or indigenous Indonesians and their situation in Indonesian continued to be legally insecure.[18] For the nation-builders and for Indonesia's subsequent leaders the inconsistency of policy with regard to the citizenship and status of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia overshadowed valid questions regarding the possibility of a *suku Tionghoa,* or officially recognised ethnic grouping founded on this *peranakan* cultural community.[19]

Chatterjee and Anderson emphasise the limits upon the political imagination of the modern nation-state within a post-colonial international system.[20] As Anderson puts it, these limits sought to define one state from another, therefore rendering it difficult to include a minority whose ethnic origins lay with another significant nation-state: 'The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living beings, has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which other nations lie.'[21] In a comparison of the experience of ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia with that of Jews in Europe, Chirot agrees with this analysis: 'The notion that the Jews were ever a serious threat to the independence of any European state may seem laughable in comparison'.[22]

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who are confirmed as citizens by law'. (Coppel, *Indonesian Chinese in Crisis*, 3). In November 2001 the Parliament was considering amending the laws regarding citizenship [Law No. 62/1958] so that *jus soli* applies. That is, anyone born in Indonesia is automatically granted citizenship. (*Jakarta Post*, 14 November 2001.) However, this proposed amendment was still being 'drafted' in September 2002. ('Govt denies policies discriminating Chinese descents', *Jakarta Post*, 19 September 2002.)

[16] One definition of *peranakan* is given by Ien Ang; 'The term *peranakan*, meaning "children of the country" is generally used by people of Chinese descent born and bred in South-east Asia.' (Ien Ang, 'On Not Speaking Chinese: Postmodern Ethnicity And The Political Diaspora', *New Formations* 24 (Winter 1994), 1–18.) However, another more appropriate definition relates to this group's adoption of a mestizo culture with some racial mixing. Mary Somers Heidhues states, 'The most important characteristic of Peranakans in this sense is their use of an Indonesian language in the family.' (Mary Somers Heidhues, 'Indonesia', *Encyclopaedia of the Overseas Chinese* ed. Lynn Pan (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1999), 153.) The term *totok*, is used to describe ethnic Chinese Indonesians who continue to speak Chinese or dialect and to identify strongly in a cultural sense with China. Some of these families have lived for a number of generations in Indonesia. (Ibid.)

[17] D. Lev, 'Becoming An *Orang Sejati*: The Political Journey of Yap Thiam Hien, in *Indonesia (The Role of the Indonesian Chinese in Shaping Modern Indonesian Life),* ed. Audrey Kahin (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1991), 101.

[18] See Leo Suryadinata, *Peranakan's Search For National Identity: Biographical Studies of Seven Indonesian Chinese* (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1993); Leo Suryadinata, *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Java, 1917–1942* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1981). See Mary Somers, *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Indonesia,* (Ph.D., Cornell University, 1965). In later works by this author her name appears as Mary Somers Heidhues.

[19] See Wang Gungwu, 'Are Indonesian Chinese Unique?'209–210; See C.A. Coppel, 'Chinese Indonesians in Crisis: 1960s and 1990s', in *Studying Ethnic Chinese in Indonesia.* (Singapore: Singapore Society of Asian Studies, 2002), 14–47.

[20] Chatterjee, 'Nation and its Fragments', 13.

[21] Anderson, *Imagined Communities,* 16.

[22] D. Chirot, 'Conflicting Identities and the Dangers of Communalism', in *Essential Outsiders*, eds D. Chirot and A. Reid, (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1997), 11.

Somers's study of relations between *peranakan* Chinese and *asli* Indonesians in the revolution sheds light on the crucial role of anti-Chinese violence and sentiments among the people or masses (*massa*) in this formative period. It also provides an additional explanation for the distinctions between these groups then and today. Somers writes, 'Violence in the Indonesian revolution caused alienation of *Peranakans* and *Asli* Indonesians, despite the attempts of *Asli* Indonesian leaders to encourage *Peranakan* support.'[23] Despite what she terms the 'sympathetic attitude' of these leaders, continuing violence against Chinese then indicated a depth of community resentment and hostility, which even these leaders were unable to control.[24] This assessment portrays the social imperatives to exclude ethnic Chinese or *peranakans* from the national imagination at the time of its formation.

The Role of Ethnic Prejudice in the Modern Nation State

Although direct comparison between Jewish and Chinese minorities is problematic,[25] Paul Brass argues convincingly that 'the state everywhere in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has created that new category of persons known as minorities. Every state in today's world has its counterpart to the "Jewish Question"...'[26] The horrors of Hitler's Germany prompted vigorous interest in the notion of ethnic prejudice as a field of study,[27] though as accepted behaviour within societies it is also highly relevant to the colonial and also the post-colonial experience. The ideology of nationalism is exclusionary: it sets limits as to what or who is constituted as belonging to the 'nation'. In the process an 'outgroup' of citizens who reside within the nation state, though they fail to 'belong' to it, is also established.[28] They are, most likely, a minority group that is easily identified due to visible, cultural or religious differences, and their 'othering' serves a functional purpose in the state.[29] Triandafyllidou describes it thus, 'one nation or ethnic group becomes a salient

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[23] Somers, *Peranakan Chinese Politics* (1965), 120.
[24] Ibid., 120–125. Violence in Tangerang, May–June 1946 was the most serious, but violence took place across Java, including Bandung and Jakarta at this time. Somers called it a 'scorched earth policy'.
[25] See Daniel Chirot and Anthony Reid (eds), *Essential Outsiders* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997).
[26] Paul R. Brass (ed.), *Riots and Pogroms* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 40.
[27] T.W. Adorno, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Norton, 1969), first published 1950; G. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Cambridge Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1954), xv; Eliot Aronson, *The Social Animal* (New York: W.H. Freemont Co., 1984), 244–258.
[28] Anderson opposes those who argue that nationalism has 'its roots in fear and hatred of the Other, and its affinities with racism' (Ibid., 141.) As Hobsbawm theorised, there is a need to 'reinforce distinctions' within the nation state, including inserting horizontal dividers (ethnicity, race, religion). He acknowledges the 'proverbial role of racial stereotypes' within and without the nation state institution. (E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 15.) By constructing an 'in-group' (recognising that the community is indeed limited and sovereign) an 'other' remains against which the nation is measured. I agree with Anderson when he rejects the argument that racism and anti-Semitism derive from nationalism, (*Imagined Communities*, 148) but would counter this to argue that nationalism encourages the perpetuation of a racist sentiment as communities seek to define their 'imagined community' as separate, limited and sovereign.
[29] A. Triandafyllidou, 'National Identity and the "other"', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 21, Number 4, July 1998, 593-612.

outgroup, namely a significant other, against which the nation seeks to assert itself and which in turn influences its identity.'[30] In relation to Indonesian nationalism under the New Order, Heryanto comments:

> (T)he extent to which the New Order Self is premised on the active and conscious othering of the Chinese indicates how indispensable this ethnic Other is for the reproduction of the Native Self. If the Chinese were simply unwanted, this minority could have been marginalised, destroyed or simply ignored.[31]

Just as Somers' study of anti-Chinese violence in the late colonial period impels us to acknowledge the role played not only by the state but also 'the people' in this creation of difference and hierarchy in the nation-state, Eric Hobsbawm similarly emphasises:

> While governments are plainly engaged in conscious and deliberate ideological engineering, it would be a mistake to see these exercises as pure manipulation from above. They were, indeed, most successful when they could build on already present unofficial nationalist sentiments...To the extent that such sentiments were not created but only borrowed and fostered by governments, those who did so became a kind of sorcerer's apprentice.[32]

Likewise Fearon and Laitin argue that 'ordinary folks (not just elites) strategically construct ethnic boundaries.'[33] They reason that the outgroup performs a variety of functions in a modern nation-state and is particularly useful in a developing state, often coinciding with periods when the national identity is questioned.[34] During these periods this group can provide a common enemy, or a 'lever for the transition towards a new identity'.[35]

The exclusion of ethnic Chinese from full membership of the Indonesian nation was advanced by the New Order regime under its program of *pembauran* or assimilation, which rather than promoting 'sameness', highlighted difference between ethnic Chinese and *pribumi* Indonesians.[36] Discriminatory legislation against ethnic Chinese was introduced under Suharto's regime from 1966 until the 1980s. This included banning publication of Chinese script and the performance of traditional ceremonies in public, and the introduction of a special code on the identity cards of ethnic Chinese.[37] Meanwhile, the government engaged in lucrative and high profile business deals with Chinese conglomerates led by figures including Liem Soe Liong and Bob Hasan.

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[30] Ibid., 600.
[31] Heryanto, 'Ethnic Identities and Erasure', 101.
[32] Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism,* 92.
[33] Fearon and Laitin, 'Violence and the Social Construction', 847; 855–856.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Triandafyllidou, 'National Identity and the "other", 603.
[36] See Mély G. Tan, 'The Social and Cultural Dimensions of the Role of Ethnic Chinese in Indonesian Society', in *Indonesia (The Role of the Indonesian Chinese in Shaping Modern Indonesian Life),* ed. Audrey Kahin (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1991), 113-126.
[37] Presidential Instruction No. 14, 1967, About Chinese Religion, Beliefs and Traditional Customs; Decision of The Cabinet Presidium, No. 127, 1966, Regulation on Name Changing for Indonesian Citizens who use Chinese Names; Instruction of the Cabinet Presidium, No. 37, 1967, Concerning the Basic Policy for the Solution of the Chinese Problem. For analysis of discriminatory laws see C.A. Coppel, 'Chinese Indonesians in Crisis: 1960s and 1990s', 21–47.

> Under prevailing conditions the Chinese are still uncertain whether they will be made scapegoats if economic conditions or political dissension take a drastic turn for the worse. (Mary Somers Heidhues)[38]

Twenty-five years ago, in response to such policies and relationships between Chinese business and government, Wang Gungwu predicted that the failure of ethnic Chinese Indonesians to press their claims for their own *suku* or ethnic group, meant that they would fill a role in society which, 'is principally one of being an instrument of economic growth without either political ambition or social respectability, and will remain their role until they are totally assimilated and, therefore, no longer Chinese.'[39] Yet, contrary to this prediction and despite achieving high levels of assimilation, ethnic Chinese continue to occupy a special status in the economy, separate from the so-called middle class or any single class grouping in Indonesia and which is marked by their 'Chineseness'. Heryanto observes that this is due to a misinterpretation of New Order's aims for *pembauran*. Rather than seeking to erase Chineseness, it was intended as a constant source of negativity.[40] Moreover, because of the absence of a legal basis or even strong social contract by which they can lay claim to 'belonging' in Indonesia, ethnic Chinese necessarily make self-preservation a priority. Like Riggs' 'pariah entrepreneur',[41] many Chinese understand that the only way to take care of their interests and those of their families is through making money and making others rely upon them for making money. By seeking friends, or rather business partners, in positions of power, Chinese at all levels of society seek assurances for their safety. As we know, for some this arrangement has paid off extremely well.

The role of ethnic Chinese in business and economic development has been explored in great depth elsewhere: from their participation under Dutch colonial rule as 'middlemen' traders, through the revolution and particularly with regard to relations with Suharto's New Order.[42] It is well known that the success of Suharto's program of economic development in Indonesia during the late 1970s until the early 1990s greatly enabled the New Order government to hold power whilst pursuing its restrictive policies regarding political

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[38] M. F. Somers Heidhues, *Southeast Asia's Chinese Minorities* (Hawthorn, Vic.: Longman Australia, 1974), 112.

[39] Wang Gungwu, 'Are Indonesian Chinese unique?', 209. Compare this with comments made by Harry Tjhan at a symposium at Cornell University on July 13–15, 1990 and noted in Leonard Blussé, 'A Conference In Retrospect', in *Indonesia (The Role of the Indonesian Chinese in Shaping Modern Indonesian Life),* ed. Audrey Kahin (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1991), 7. Tjhan argued that attempts to preserve the ethnic Chinese population as a *suku* might endanger the process of nation building.

[40] Heryanto, 'Ethnic Identities and Erasure'.

[41] F.W. Riggs, *Administration in Developing Countries: The Theory of Prismatic Society.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1964.

[42] Adam Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia in the 1990s* (St. Leonards, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 1994); McVey, Ruth (ed.), *Southeast Asian Capitalists* (Ithaca N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992); J.A.C. Mackie, 'Changing Patterns of Big Business in Southeast Asia', in *Southeast Asian Capitalists*, ed. Ruth McVey, (Ithaca N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992), 161–190; R. Robison, *Indonesia: The Rise of Capital* (Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1986); Coppel, *Indonesian Chinese in Crisis*; K.D. Thomas, and J. Panglaykim, 'The Chinese in the South Sumatran Rubber Industry: A Case Study in Economic Nationalism', in *The Chinese in Indonesia*, ed. J.A.C. Mackie (Melbourne: Nelson in Association with the Australian Institute of International Affairs), 139–198.

and social freedoms, and in this Chinese business played a large part.[43] It was due to relationships such as those fostered between Suharto and the Chinese conglomerates and their conspicuous displays of immense wealth, that perceptions of the ethnic Chinese as a community as wealthy, were allowed to flourish. Consequentially, with the constant 'erasure' of Chineseness by the government, by the early 1990s discussion of the 'wealth gap' was distinctly racialised.

The Crucial Role of Difference: Placing The Blame

This position in the economy enabled the easy operation of patron-client partnerships, which were characterised by the term *cukong* in Indonesian language.[44] Exponents of this theory agree that the middleman has in common his essential 'foreignness' or 'alienness' within his host society.[45] The middleman 'acts as a buffer' between the elite and the public in commerce, but also to wider social hostility. He is a 'scapegoat' to be utilised by the elite in order to deflect aggression away from themselves and also by the masses, to vent their frustration and aggression without fear of retribution. An often-used term in political and social intercourse, 'scapegoating' was first used to describe a Hebrew ritual for cleansing the community of its sins through a process of transferring them to an animal or weak human being and then forcing them to 'escape into the wilderness' carrying the sins of the community on their back.[46] Gordon Allport described the process and its outcome, 'The people felt purged, and for the time being guiltless.'[47]

The transition from simply passing blame to acting out violence on this scapegoat or 'other' has been explained in social science and the study of human behaviour and has often been linked in some way to the theories of frustration-aggression and displaced aggression[48] because as Eliot Aronson commented, 'Frequently...the cause of a person's frustration is either too big or too vague for direct retaliation.'[49] As aggression increases they look to a convenient target, someone or some group less powerful (indeed preferably very weak) and vulnerable, and who does not have the ability to retaliate or seek revenge. It is in this choice of victim, of scapegoat, that existing prejudices play a key role. The selection of a target on who to place blame is never random. Aronson writes, 'frustration leads to a specific aggression – aggression

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[43] See Yoshihara Kunio, *The Rise of Ersatz Capitalism in Southeast Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). See also J.A.C. Mackie, 'Power and Property In Indonesia', in *The Politics of Middle Class Indonesia*, eds Richard Tanter and Ken Young, (Clayton, Vic.: Monash University CSEAS, 1990), 71–95.

[44] On *cukong* see Coppel, *Indonesian Chinese in Crisis*, 212 n17.

[45] W. Zenner (ed), *Minorities In the Middle: A Cross Cultural Analysis* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991); Edna Bonacich, ' A Theory of Middleman Minorities', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 38, No. 5 (October 1973), 584; Hubert M. Blalock, *Toward a Theory of Minority Group Relations* (New York: John Wiley, 1967), 79–84.

[46] T. Douglas, *Scapegoats* (London: Routledge, 1995), 7.

[47] Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, 244.

[48] On projection of prejudice and hostility see Sudhir Kakar, 'Some Unconscious Aspects of Ethnic Violence in India', in *Mirrors of Violence*, ed. Veena Das (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 135–145. In Indonesian *kambing hitam* or literally, black goat, is the term used. On frustration-aggression see John Dollard, *Frustration and Aggression* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., 1944); L. Berkowitz, *Roots of Aggression: A Re-examination of the Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis* (New York: Atherton Press, 1969).

[49] Aronson, *The Social Animal*, 249.

against an outgroup member.'[50] Scapegoat theorist, T. Douglas has expanded this thesis to argue that if this group are in some part responsible, or in some way represent a cause of this frustration, then the probability that they will be a target for aggression is much greater. 'A society finds that something is wrong...the search for someone or something to blame usually finds what it seeks in available people who may be already disliked but who are inevitably seen as different'.[51] Douglas compares the 'rational' orchestrated ritual of scapegoating presented in its very early depiction, with modern day interpretations of scapegoating as 'irrational' and spontaneous affairs, settling on the idea that both interpretations of scapegoating are valid.[52] Why is it, however, that often the victim is the same in both cases? Here again, analysis of the modern nation-state is integral.

The maintenance of an outgroup in the nation-state as a buffer between the masses and the elite can prove useful on many levels for both groups. Through government policy, behaviour and constructions of national identity that exclude the minority group, ideas or myths are fostered regarding the 'otherness' and 'alienness' of a particular group, and racism becomes institutionalised. As a consequence, it is feasible that in times of 'irrational' frustration, this group will be targeted again and again and in periods of 'rational' selection the choice made by the state or whomever, will be vindicated by the nation at large.[53] One writer, referring to the hostility of anti-Semitism, concluded that the scapegoating of a minority group 'offers a kind of political methadone' in times of trouble for the elite or the community as a whole.[54]

REPRESENTATIONS AND VIOLENCE AGAINST ETHNIC CHINESE

Representing Chinese Indonesians

The contradictions constantly facing ethnic Chinese Indonesians in their daily lives make studying or representing the position of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia problematic. On the one hand, displays of wealth by this group have seemingly provoked violence, and on the other hand they have been encouraged by successive governments in New Order and post-New Order Indonesia to assist in the development of the nation. Whilst many ethnic Chinese see the benefits of assimilation and indeed regard themselves as assimilated they also understand that they are treated differently under the law and ethnicity continues to be integral in configuring the 'nation'. Theirs is a difficult position to negotiate, between wanting to simply blend in with the majority,

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[50] Ibid, 251.

[51] Douglas, *Scapegoats*, 39.

[52] Douglas believes that the prime cause of irrational scapegoating is frustration. Choice of victim in such a case comes down to opportunity, availability and dislike. The more traditional and rational form of scapegoating has as its primary motivation self-preservation. 'Someone has to take the blame to allow the rest of us to continue our normal functions...free of guilt or responsibility for events past.' (Douglas, *Scapegoats*, 5.)

[53] In many ways the modern nation-state exists as what Hinshelwood termed a 'therapeutic community'. Hinshelwood used this term to describe a community that 'usually contains special individuals who act as a kind of sump into which negativity and bad feelings tend to drain, and who become prophets of doom.' (R.D. Hinshelwood and N. Manning (eds), *Therapeutic Communities* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), 218. Cited in Douglas, *Scapegoats*, 123).

[54] P.I. Rose, 'Blaming the Jews', *Society,* Sep–Oct 1994, vol.3, n.6, 36.

to be Indonesian, and the desire to fight for their rights as ethnic Chinese Indonesians in a multi-ethnic nation and to participate in its development.[55] For a researcher, this translates into a familiar problem: the tension between universalism and essentialism in representations of an ethnic minority.

Approaches to the study of this minority and violence against ethnic Chinese need to recognise these *lived* incongruities. To promote a thesis that ethnic Chinese are attacked solely because of their economic role, without considering their political and legal situation, would be wrong. So too would analysis which focused solely on the role of the state as an agent of this violence, viewing it simply as a part of a larger conspiracy theory. Ethnic Chinese Indonesians themselves are aware of all the intricacies or layers that come to bear in an event involving violence against them. When questioned they will explain that both the inaction of the security agents and the fact that the violence took place within the context of an elite power struggle played a role. At the same time they are by no means shocked that local residents were involved in an attack on their shop while that owned by a *pribumi* was passed over.

An example of the difficulties faced when approaching the study of this minority is highlighted in a recent piece written by Benedict Anderson. He writes about the declining sense of security as a consequence of increased violence and crime amongst Indonesians since the fall of Suharto. In the context of the debate between essentialising and universalising the experience of ethnic Chinese Indonesians, we are prompted to ponder the irony of his statement, 'These middle classes are quite aware of what has happened here and there to the Chinese, and how "structurally Chinese" they have themselves become.'[56]

Scholarly discussion and debate during the late 1980s and early 1990s about the rise of 'the middle classes' in Indonesia backed by concepts of democratisation and capitalism, was somewhat preoccupied with anticipating a flood of vocal, educated Indonesians who in time would do away with authoritarianism and install a liberal order.[57] Yet, Anderson argues, rather than the middle classes gaining power and confidence with a change in regime and transition to democracy in Indonesia in the late 1990s and early years of the 21st century, they were rendered less secure, less prosperous and therefore, more 'structurally Chinese'. Perhaps in a perverse twist of events, Heryanto's[58] prediction of a drift towards opening a space in Indonesian public 'culture' for Chineseness, is manifested here in the same insecurities and threats of violence ethnic Chinese have long experienced as part of their 'culture' of everyday life.

Anderson's statement is compelling as a description of the priority accorded by Chinese to security concerns, however, it also emphasises the difficulty of balancing the types of contradictions mentioned above. The claim that rising criminality and declining security is making members of the middle class who are non-Chinese 'structurally Chinese', erases the ethnic specificity of incidents of violence against Chinese, reducing it to a 'structural' or class phenomenon. I would argue, that no matter how 'structurally' Chinese the non-Chinese members of Indonesia's middle classes become, they will still be Javanese, Sundanese, Batak and Balinese, and will be treated accordingly under the laws of the state and within the collective imagination of

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[55] Wang Gungwu, 'Are Indonesian Chinese Unique?', 209, explains this paradox.
[56] Anderson, *Violence and the State,* 19.
[57] Richard Tanter and Ken Young eds, *The Politics of Middle Class Indonesia* (Clayton, Vic.: Monash University, CSEAS, 1990); Richard Robison and David S.G. Goodman eds, *The New Rich in Asia: Mobile Phones, McDonalds and Middle Class Revolution* (London: Routledge, 1996).
[58] Heryanto, 'Ethnic Identities and Erasure'.

the nation.[59] For researchers the problems can be simplified to questions of whether they study ethnic Chinese Indonesians according to class, thereby comparing them to the non-Chinese middle class and omitting mention of those Chinese who are not in the same economic realm; or according to ethnicity, with all the dangers this entails such as searching for commonalities which may not exist. The realities are, of course, much more subtle than that.

Constructed Identities: Chinese Indonesians, Class and Chineseness

> Culturally, the Chinese had a head start in the game of capitalism. (Adam Schwarz)[60]
>
> Chineseness is a homogenising label whose meanings are not fixed and pregiven, but constantly renegotiated and rearticulated, both inside and outside China. (Ien Ang)[61]

In studies undertaken of Indonesia's expanding middle-classes in the early 1990s, Lev foreshadowed that political consensus among them would be impossible.[62] For its ethnic Chinese members their set of priorities in terms of security and politics were altogether different again. The cohesion of the Chinese communities in Indonesia, formed in part as a result of their vulnerability, means they retain some sense of solidarity and 'middle group' status, however it cannot be said that they are homogeneous or indeed similarly motivated or capable in business and commerce.[63] Among them are extremely wealthy business people and members of conglomerates,[64] but they are far fewer than the small trader or shop-owner.[65] The basis of Somers Heidhues' rejection of a class-based view of ethnic Chinese under colonial rule similarly applies to a New Order and

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[59] Siegel argues that violence against ethnic Chinese is predicated on the 'insistence that they are not Indonesian' but at the same time 'always set against the possibility that they are members of the nation'. (J.T. Siegel, 'A New Criminal Type in Jakarta: A "Nationalisation" of Death', in *Figures of Criminality in Indonesia, the Philippines and Colonial Vietnam*, ed. Vicente L. Rafael (Ithaca: Cornell University Press: 1999), 211.)

[60] Schwarz, *Nation in* Waiting, 107.

[61] Ang, 'On Not Speaking Chinese', 5.

[62] D. Lev, 'Intermediate Classes and Change in Indonesia: Some Initial Reflections', in *The Politics of Middle Class Indonesia*, eds. Richard Tanter and Ken Young, (Clayton, Vic.: Monash University, CSEAS, 1990), 27.

[63] On the debate in the study of overseas Chinese around issues of 'Chinese capitalism' and tensions between their ethnic and national identities see, Sterling Seagrave, *Lords of the Rim: The Invisible Empire of the Overseas Chinese* (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1995); Mackie, 'Changing Patterns of Big Business'; Linda Y.C. Lim and L.A. Peter Gosling (eds), *The Chinese in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Maruzen Asia, 1983.); L. Kraar, 'The Overseas Chinese: Lessons From The World's Most Dynamic Capitalists', *Fortune,* (October 1994), 91–114; East Asia Analytical Unit, *Overseas Chinese Business Networks in Asia* (Canberra, DFAT, 1995); Arif Dirlik, 'Critical Reflections On "Chinese Capitalism" As A Paradigm', in *South China State, Culture and Social Change During The 20th Century*, eds L.M Douw and P. Post (Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1996), 3; Lynn Pan, *Sons of the Yellow Emperor: The Story of the Overseas Chinese* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1990); Wang Gungwu, 'Among Non-Chinese', *Daedalus*, 120, 2 (Spring 1991), 154; Wang Gungwu, 'The Study of Chinese Identities in Southeast Asia' in *Changing Identities of the Southeast Asian Chinese*, eds. Wang Gungwu and Jennifer Cushman (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1988), 1–22;

[64] Robison names these players 'the big bourgeoisie' or the 'new corporate capitalists'. R. Robison, 'The Middle Class and the Bourgeoisie in Indonesia', in *The New Rich in Asia: Mobile Phones, McDonalds and Middle Class Revolution*, eds Richard Robison and David S.G. Goodman (London: Routledge, 1996), 92.

[65] See Mackie, 'Power and Property in Indonesia', 75–95.

post-New Order Indonesia, 'Individual Chinese could be poorer than most natives and richer than most Europeans.'[66]

During more recent periods of Indonesia's history, this generalisation promoted stereotypes about *all* ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. As a result there were widely-accepted public assumptions and broad generalisations that *all* Chinese are wealthy and that *all* Chinese belong to the conglomerates, that *all* Chinese are corrupt. Over time these assumptions and in some cases myths, have become public 'fact'. The most prominent of these is the belief that 70 percent (or more) of Indonesia's wealth is controlled by the ethnic Chinese community, which comprises only two-three percent of the population. Given that these figures became popular during New Order rule, under which, as Mackie pointed out, Chinese could not own land and were excluded from many lucrative state sectors, they are highly disputable.[67] More accurate figures show, at least before May 1998, that ethnic Chinese business did indeed own a vast share – approximately 80 percent – of Indonesian corporate wealth.[68] Yet, as magazines like *Sinergi*[69] sought to demonstrate in the aftermath of May 1998, a view of all ethnic Chinese as wealthy excluded those who laboured in the *sawah* (rice fields) around Tangerang or sought a livelihood as small scale fishermen in Cemarajaya, West Java and the vast majority of ethnic Chinese who operated small businesses, such as *sembako* (basic goods) stores, across the country.[70] A view recognising the complexities of their position did not (arguably, could not) prevail in New Order Indonesia. Instead, as Adam Schwarz quoted an interviewee to comment in 1989: 'To most Indonesians, the word "Chinese" is synonymous with corruption.'[71]

At the other end of the spectrum from examples such as this relating to *erasure* of the 'ethnic' Chinese experience, is a discourse that *essentialises* it to the point where certain characteristics of 'Chineseness' are seen as 'natural', transmitted through biological lines. This includes studies by Kraar and Seagrave for example, which see overseas Chinese as 'the world's most dynamic capitalists'.[72] Recent literature in this field highlights the tensions between the national and the ethnic identities of overseas Chinese, and also how we as researchers play a part in constructing and reconstructing our 'subject'. In his critique of what he labelled this 'new discourse on "Chineseness"',[73] Dirlik is suspicious of attempts to label more global characteristics or behaviour as Chinese. He suggests that the study of overseas Chinese living in various countries across the globe is approached more effectively by considering them as minority groups or

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[66] Somers Heidhues, *Southeast Asia's Chinese Minorities*.
[67] Mackie, 'Power and Property in Indonesia', 75, 83.
[68] In 1998, ethnic Chinese Indonesians owned nine of the top ten business groups in Indonesia and controlled 80 percent of assets in the top 300 groups. Of the country's top 15 tax-payers, 13 are ethnic Chinese and the other two are Bambang and Tommy Suharto. (Statistics from *Pusat Data Indonesia* cited in 'Shattered Confidence', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 28 May 1998.) However, Somers Heidhues made the important observation that of these large business owners or conglomerates the majority are totoks. ('Indonesia', 159.) As totoks made up approximately 40 percent of ethnic Chinese in 1960, it can be said that the majority peranakan community have no such claims to extreme wealth. Rather, as Somers Heidhues claims, they are more likely to be employed in these businesses (Ibid., 167.)
[69] *Sinergi* is a bimonthly publication established in November 1998 by members of the ethnic Chinese community in Indonesia.
[70] 'Orang Tionghoa di Indonesia Tidak Semuanya Kaya', *Sinergi*, 8, 1999, 32–34; *Sinergi*, 9, 1999, 33.
[71] Schwarz, *Nation In Waiting*, 98.
[72] Kraar, 'The Overseas Chinese'; Seagrave, *Lords of the Rim*.
[73] Dirlik, 'Critical Reflections', 9.

individuals, rather than attempting to find generalised terms of reference for a large and complex group. As Wang Gungwu admitted: 'a new tradition has been invented now to explain Chinese behaviour that matches earlier essentialisations of Chinese culture...'[74] Like Dirlik, Hirschman recognises the need to find an approach to this study which lies somewhere between the extremes of essentialism and universalism, in which ethnic Chinese are simply treated as a 'minority who happen to be Chinese.'[75]

In a 'Class' Of Their Own

Adam Schwarz maintains Chinese Indonesians have a cultural aptitude for commerce, yet, he also observes, '(b)y no means has the Chinese need to "buy" protection disappeared'.[76] The New Order regime kept in place a mutually beneficial system for members of the elite and for many ethnic Chinese. At the same time, it sought to maintain the underlying vulnerability of ethnic Chinese and their dependence for protection upon the elite in military and government. Although, as many argue, this high level relationship is restricted to a minority of ethnic Chinese Indonesians, the same discourse and ideology underscoring these relationships defined relations between small shopkeepers and local military officials, for example. At all levels of society their ethnicity meant that ethnic Chinese require security and need to have the means to purchase it. Unlike Anderson's (it is assumed) previously secure non-Chinese middle classes,[77] many Chinese, although certainly shocked when violence hit in May 1998, were perhaps less than surprised when it came amidst economic decline and a rise in the popularity of *reformasi* (the reform movement). As Lim and Gosling observed, Chinese knew their security always came at a price, 'As political liberalisation and pressures for greater democracy increase in Southeast Asia, the willingness of Chinese businesses to ally with and support corrupt authoritarian regimes becomes both better known and less tolerable to the general population.'[78]

Scholarly Approaches to Anti-Chinese Violence in Indonesia

As stated early in the introduction, this study is concerned with understanding not only the act of ethnic violence, but also the process of its representation. Previous studies of violence against ethnic Chinese provide a guide for how to approach this study but also form a set of representations of these events, with a certain way of viewing it. The range of approaches presented by scholars writing from the early 1960s until the present day about anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia, is indicative of not only the variety of conditions for ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, but also of the trends within this scholarship over time.

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[74] See Wang Gungwu, 'Among Non Chinese', 136.
[75] C. Hirschman, 'Chinese Identities in Southeast Asia: Alternative Perspectives', in *Changing Identities of Southeast Asian Chinese Since World War II,* ed. J.W Cushman and Wang Gungwu (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1988), 30.
[76] Schwarz, *Nation In Waiting*, 108.
[77] Anderson, *Violence and the State*, 19.
[78] Linda Y.C. Lim and L.A. Peter Gosling 'Strengths and Weaknesses of Minority Status for Southeast Asian Chinese at a Time of Economic Growth and Liberalization' in *Essential Outsiders,* eds D. Chirot and A. Reid (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 292.

These approaches include arguing the centrality of economic competition, racialised state violence, elite political manipulation, tribalism or religious and cultural difference. As a consequence, the studies vary greatly in the extent to which they raise questions related to agency and responsibility for acts of violence. The scholars also tended to fall into two categories in arguing for one or some of these causal factors. At one end there were those who embrace a 'master narrative' to interpret the violence and at the other, those who advocate a case specific analysis allowing for various factors of influence. Underlying most these approaches, however, is an explanation of the violence against ethnic Chinese as isolated phenomena, set apart from other forms of violence in Indonesia[79] with a central concern being a preoccupation with the 'what happened?' and 'why?' The analysis by the scholars presented below includes incidents of anti-Chinese violence that occurred in Indonesia from the colonial period until the present.

Master Narrative

W.F. Wertheim[80] and The Siauw Giap[81] approach the study of anti-Chinese violence by arguing the salience of economic competition and particularly the middleman role of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia as the single causal factor of anti-Chinese violence. Wertheim argues that economic factors dominated relations between ethnic Chinese and the majority population, and therefore anti-Chinese violence occurs predominantly during periods of economic transition. As a consequence of their role as traders and middlemen in society, created to serve the interests of the elite, ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia attracted hostility and violence. Like many others,[82] Wertheim seeks to compare ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia with the Jews of Europe, drawing parallels between these two as trading classes and as persecuted minorities. He argues tensions emanated from a desire by the majority to exclude the middleman from a position of influence, 'their basic aim is to oust them in order to supplant them in their position of economic power', and dismisses the issue of ethnicity as being central to this conflict, 'it becomes clear that it is not cultural divergence which is at the root of the tensions.'[83] He states: 'it is economic competition, institutionalised in line with the traditional patterns of group definition, which is at the root of our problem.'[84] Wertheim's commitment to his 'master narrative' of economic competition as the cause of anti-Chinese sentiment and violence is steadfast. As a result, he presents a solution to it based solely upon rapid development of the economy in order to create economic opportunities for all Indonesians.

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[79] Exceptions to this include, Robert Cribb (ed.), *The Indonesian Killings of 1965–1966: Studies from Java and Bali* (Clayton, Vic.: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1990); Robert Cribb, 'Genocide in Indonesia, 1965–1966', in *Journal of Genocidal Research* (2001), 3(2), 219–239; and Ariel Heryanto, 'Rape, Race'.

[80] Wertheim, W., *East-West Parallels*. Van Hoeve: The Hague, 1964.

[81] The Siauw Giap, 'Group Conflict In A Plural Society, Anti-Chinese Riots in Indonesia: The Sukabumi (1963) ad Kudus (1918) incidents', *Revue du Sudest Asiatique*, Vol. 2, 1966, 1–31.

[82] Chirot and Reid, *Essential* Outsiders; Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Southeast Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965); Maurice Freedman, *The Study of Chinese Society: Essays Selected and Introduced by G. William Skinner* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1979); Seagrave, *Lords of the Rim.*

[83] Wertheim, *East-West,* 79.

[84] Ibid, 81. Wertheim does concede that ethnicity and prejudice play a role in that they form these 'traditional patterns of group definition'.

In her 1964 monograph, Mary Somers depicts anti-Chinese violence in Tangerang in 1946 and (in what became the first in a series of incidents of anti-Chinese violence) in Cirebon in 1963.[85] Similar to Wertheim, Somers approaches the study of these incidents and anti-Sinicism in 1940s-1960s by arguing the centrality of economic exploitation or jealousy and economic competition as a popular explanation of the violence. However, crucially, she argues it is not the sole determinant: 'we would be wrong to assign it alone the responsibility for anti-Sinicism.'[86] Somers observes that the methods employed within Indonesian society to stir up anti-Chinese sentiment were more varied and included religion, tribalism and nationalism. In her case studies she extends her analysis of the role of economic competition to indicate the ways in which religion and politics also played an integral part in these cases. Elsewhere, Somers describes the violence against ethnic Chinese in Tangerang in May 1946 as having 'the characteristics of a Holy War against the infidel', as many victims were circumcised by followers of a radical Islamic group that was previously involved in a local revolt to drive out elite civil servants.[87] Similarly in the case of Cirebon in 1963, Somers argues that a statement made by a local military commander 'casting blame on Chinese for their ostentatious way of life during a time of economic troubles'[88] demonstrated a level of political manipulation, or at least complicity, in these events. Somers concludes, nevertheless, that converting anti-Chinese sentiment into violent attacks on Chinese-owned property, 'to them the symbol of Chinese economic power', demonstrated the dominance of economic factors.[89] Economic indicators acted as a gauge for Indonesian views of the Chinese, and riotous events inevitably occurred at times of economic stress even when other sources of provocation were absent.

Writing about anti-Chinese violence during the period of Dutch rule in the 1910s, Takashi Shiraishi[90] presents an alternative explanation, which also has a resonance for more contemporary examples. The violence featured in Shiraishi's study took place at the time the Netherlands Indies government abandoned its policy of segregation in favour of supporting and promoting a self-sustaining structure of racial antagonism. Shiraishi argues that the Netherlands Indies government used elite control and political manipulation of social sentiment to promote anti-Sinicism and thereby to incite racial antagonism within the Indonesian nationalist movement. The government recognised the usefulness of a vulnerable and unpopular 'pariah' group that could be easily targeted for political gains. Shiraishi points to the ways the Dutch manipulated the rise in solidarity among Chinese Indonesians following the Chinese Revolution in 1911, and employed its new policy to drive a wedge into previously harmonious communities based around ethnically mixed *kongsi*.[91] He argues that anti-Sinicism formed the basis for this policy but was not, however, the primary cause of the anti-Chinese

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[85] M.F. Somers, *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University, Modern Indonesia Project, 1964), 54.
[86] Somers Heidhues, *Southeast Asia's Chinese Minorities*, 105.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid., 45.
[89] Somers, *Peranakan Chinese Politics* (1964), 46.
[90] Takashi Shiraishi, 'Anti-Sinicism in Java's New Order' in *Essential Outsiders*, eds Daniel Chirot and Anthony Reid (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 187–207.
[91] In modern usage this term refers to a public company; in Southeast Asia it refers to a cooperative business venture. (See Somers Heidhues, *Southeast Asia's Chinese Minorities*, 29 ref.1.)

violence that emerged around this time.[92] Rather the violence occurred as a result of elite manipulation of existing hostility towards this minority group.

Case Studies and Causal Explanations

Like Somers, other prominent historians researched and interpreted anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia which took place around the period from 1956-1966 – one of the most hazardous periods for ethnic Chinese in Indonesia's history so far.[93] Coppel, Mackie and Willmott similarly argue that anti-Chinese violence cannot be explained by one master narrative, but that within each case various 'themes' particular to place and time, must be considered. As a consequence the approaches adopted by these scholars rely much more on analysis of the 'causal factors' of a violent event in order to reveal explanations for why it occurred.

In his investigation of the anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia in 1965–1967, Charles Coppel employs a broad approach to theories of anti-Chinese sentiment and violence and identifies the range of different explanations applicable to the violence during this period. He argues that although the violence was very much related to the struggle for power among elites as part of the anti-communist drive, this simply formed an umbrella covering a range of interpretations by which the study of anti-Chinese violence could be approached. The violence could be interpreted as associated with demonstrations against China; a by-product of efforts to enforce anti-Chinese regulations; or that it arose spontaneously or as part of a 'wave' of such violence.

Similarly, Jamie Mackie's approach to the study of anti-Chinese violence in 1956-1968 recognises the inability of monolithic narratives to present complete accounts of these events. He challenges the 'exclusivist' position taken by Wertheim regarding the importance of economic competition as an exegesis.[94] Mackie argues that this narrative dismisses the cultural and political issues, which form a critical background to why violence occurs. Instead, in what is perhaps the most comprehensive analytical model for anti-Chinese violence, Mackie's approach isolates different aspects of the violence according to time and place. These include the general causes of racial antagonism or 'predisposing' factors, the causes of the violence (or 'precipitating' factors) and the 'restraining' factors (as they are present or absent) thereby effectively breaking down the concept of 'causal factors' into time sensitive parts. Both Coppel and Mackie argue that a number of causal factors are at play in any case of violence against ethnic Chinese Indonesians and that a more complex reading of these histories, which are receptive to place and time, is required.

Studies of anti-Chinese violence by James T. Siegel, firstly of the violence in Solo in November 1980 and later about the violence in Jakarta in May 1998, similarly focus on the local aspects of these

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[92] Shiraishi claims that the Kudus Massacre, 1918 was carried out in order to reinforce these racialised structures. ('Anti-Sinicism in Java', 205.)

[93] Coppel estimates that the number of Chinese killed during the communist purges in 1965–66 could not have exceeded 2,000. (Coppel, *Indonesian Chinese in Crisis*, 58–61.) This is from an estimated total number of deaths of up to 500,000. (Cribb, *The Indonesian Killings*, 7–14.)

[94] J.A.C. Mackie, 'Anti-Chinese outbreaks in Indonesia, 1959–68', in *The Chinese in Indonesia: Five essays*, ed. J.A.C. Mackie, (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson (Australia) in association with the Australian Institute of International Affairs, 1976), 77–138.

events.[95] Siegel's analysis of the violence in Solo in 1980 includes assembling a narrative in order to expose the protagonists, motives and structures that enabled violence to occur. This investigation revealed to him that there was – as Shiraishi concluded in relation to anti-Chinese violence under the Dutch – elite political manipulation of the violence in Solo. Yet this was only a partial conclusion. Siegel also attempts to understand the agency of the students and other individuals involved in carrying out the violence. He looks to the situation in Solo after the violence to assist in this search, and is intrigued by the rapid return to 'normalcy' in relations between ethnic Chinese and non-Chinese residents. His investigation reveals that local prejudices towards Chinese, who were widely perceived as opportunistic and exclusive, were tied to concepts of hierarchy in the nation as a whole. Through focusing on the aftermath of this violence, Siegel attempts to reveal something about its causes and about how the individual is accountable and also affected by it.

Work by Ariel Heryanto in this field over the past decade in journalistic and scholarly forms is receptive to the possibility of multiple influences in any single case of violence, without shying away from more classificatory analysis of these incidents. Following from Coppel, Mackie and Siegel, Heryanto demonstrates the necessity of an approach to violence, which places it within the context of time and place and avoids trying to view it as part of the vast 'sweep' of history. Like Siegel to some extent, Heryanto directly poses questions about individual agency as well as more structural explanations. Notably, he also attempts to understand situations when anti-Chinese violence *does not* occur.[96] What is most appealing about Heryanto's approach to the study of anti-Chinese violence is the way he moves from one 'set' or frame of analysis to another in keeping with the particularities of the time and place. He does not attempt to shape his analysis according to a pattern or series but places the violence within its wider political and cultural context.[97]

John Sidel also dismisses essentialist categorisations of anti-Chinese violence, which are prominent in the aftermath of mass violence in Indonesia.[98] Sidel rejects the idea that a single, or master, narrative or explanation for violence against ethnic Chinese is possible. He recognises that anti-Chinese violence can be variously understood as a form of social protest, economic jealousy, a manifestation of the popularisation of *aliran* (or 'patronage') politics or as a product of a conspiracy theory launched by, or against, the state.[99] Like Heryanto, Sidel highlights how the discursive nature of 'anti-Chinese violence' under the New Order created a context for further violence. Most importantly, Sidel's approach rests on the belief that 'riots' should also

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[95] J.T. Siegel, *Solo in the New Order: Language and Hierarchy In An Indonesian City*, Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1986, 232–254; J.T. Siegel, 'Thoughts on the Violence of May 13 and 14, 1998, in Jakarta', in *Violence and the State in Suharto's Indonesia*, ed. B.O'G Anderson (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 2001), 90–125.

[96] Heryanto, 'Ethnic Identities and Erasure'.

[97] Ariel Heryanto, 'A Class Act', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 16 June 1994, 30. Compare this analysis with D.K. Emmerson, 'Orders of Meaning: Understanding Political Change in A Fishing Community', in *Interpreting Indonesian politics: Thirteen Contributions to the Debate*, eds Benedict Anderson and Audrey Kahin (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1982), 149–164, regarding attacks on Chinese property, especially fishing nets, in Muncar, East Java in September 1974. See also Ariel Heryanto, 'Flaws in riot media coverage', *Jakarta Post*, July 15 1998, 4.

[98] Sidel, 'Riots, Church Burnings, Conspiracies: The Moral Economy of the Indonesian Crowd In the Late Twentieth Century', in *Violence in Indonesia*, ed. I. Wessel and Georgia Wimhöfer (Hamburg: Abera, 2001), 47-63.

[99] Ibid., 55.

be seen as a consequence of the 'mobilisation of the people to gain a certain kind of recognition beyond what is accorded them through the channels of state power.'[100] In line with Siegel he urges us to explore the agency of the 'local' and the 'crowd' as well as uncovering more structural explanations for anti-Chinese violence.

Theorising Violence: Agency and Responsibility

(H)ow do we get different narratives about particular riots at different times and in different places.
(Paul Brass)[101]

Theories of mass violence that focus on frustration leading to aggression and a linear progression from prejudice to precipitating incident, demand a level of 'inevitability' in their analysis. In anti-Chinese violence scholarship Wertheim's theory of conflict based on economic competition possesses this level of inevitability – implying that it is a 'natural' event like a chemical experiment which, when the correct blend of ingredients are added, produces an often explosive reaction. Work by Michel Wieviorka,[102] Donald Horowitz and Paul Brass[103] is instructive when viewed alongside these scholarly representations. They take issue with the theory that accumulated tensions are 'ignited by a spark' and flare into violence. Brass maintains that arguments that accuse exploitation and economic competition of causing racist hostility and violence act to justify it and in effect fail to cast any blame. This in turn makes public violence a kind of understandable response to certain conditions. Instead, he supports a theory of ethnic violence with a focus on identification of agency and responsibility. He seeks to recognise 'intentionality' in order to understand the 'endemic' nature of ethnic violence in certain places and also to acknowledge who controls representations of the violence. Localised hostilities cannot transform into greater violent activity, such as large ethnic riots, without some organisational structure. Together with Wieviorka[104], Brass advocates examination of the role of the state and other organisations including militant groups, religious groups, politicians, businessmen and academics in cases of ethnic violence. He labels these 'institutionalised riot systems', in which actors – 'riot specialists', 'riot engineers' and 'fire tenders' – exist for the sole purpose of inciting or preventing violence.[105]

Brass challenges traditional sequences for violence like that developed by Allport,[106] which represent a continuum of social antagonism, to precipitating incident, to racist violence. Rather, his sequence has four parts including creation of prejudices, politicisation of those differences, development of sites where it is politically advantageous to allow the proliferation of 'riot specialists' and the transformation of the environment in which these events are taking place into a social problem.[107] Ethnic violence is the result of concentrated efforts on the part of the state and certain in-groups to create a hostile environment for minority

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[100] Ibid., 59.
[101] Brass, *Riots and Pogroms*, 1.
[102] M. Wieviorka, *The Arena of Racism* (Paris: Sage Publications, 1995), 67.
[103] D.L. Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Brass, *Riots and Pogroms*.
[104] Wieviorka, *The Arena of Racism*, 67–68.
[105] Brass, *Riots and Pogroms*, 12–16.
[106] Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, 57–63. The conditions that Allport lists begin with long held prejudice, the formation of organisational structures based on that prejudice, combined with declining social and economic conditions and finally triggered by an incident as simple as verbal attack.

groups, so that ethnic antagonism can flourish. He argues that it then falls to the 'specialists' to wait for the time when conditions for a full-scale attack are right. Critically then, the extent to which racist violence evolves and the number of victims it claims depends largely on the activity or inactivity of the police and security agents. In cases of ethnic violence, the range of action taken by state security agents runs from deliberate instigation (provoking, supplying rioters), to deliberate inaction (standing by while rioters loot and burn), to using overwhelming force to bring the violence to an end. Above all, Brass aims to bring an understanding of the critical importance of agency and responsibility in causing and maintaining the conditions for peace and for violence, both on the part of the state and society to the study of ethnic violence:

> (T)he modern nation state, whose everyday operations – of self definition, of preserving its order and maintaining or enlarging its territory, of defining and creating its order and authority – generate violent conflicts. But the state does not operate independently of its citizens and subjects, who are themselves implicated in these conflict-generating processes through their upbringing, education, socialisation, reading of newspapers, submissions to media representations and misrepresentations of reality...[108]

Whilst Allport theorises that the presence of a crowd of people on a beach on a hot, lazy Sunday afternoon is enough to trigger violence (given other predisposing conditions are in place),[109] Brass views as crucial the presence of a third party who acts as fire tender or fire dowser in such a situation.[110] Just as the selection of a victim is never random, the choice of time and place is arguably well-planned as well.

Seeking An Explanation: Assessing The Limits

> (I)f violence and hardened ethnic boundaries serve elite but not popular interests, then what explains popular ethnic antipathies. (Fearon and Laitin)[111]

Wieviorka and Brass embrace a utilitarian view of violence by similarly arguing that 'racist violence is seen as a means to a certain ends'.[112] Wieviorka recognises that violence may emerge as a result of displaced and direct frustration and as a consequence of a social or political crisis, particularly when a society enters a period of transition. Like the studies by Mackie, Coppel and others, he supports an approach to the study of ethnic violence that is multi-faceted on the basis that each case is unique and therefore requires unique explanation. Nevertheless, Wieviorka argues for one constant in approaches to cases of ethnic violence, insisting that no matter how minor and fragmented its form, the violence is 'never totally independent of the political context in which it arises.'[113] He theorises that this relationship with the political context exists on three levels. The first, and most distantly related to the state, is where violence is conditioned and informed by the political system, but is basically a localised event. At the second level, the violence itself becomes political, as it is taken over by organised forces that place it at the centre of their activities, which are directly

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[107] Brass, *Riots and Pogroms*, 15.
[108] Ibid., 42.
[109] Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, 58.
[110] Brass, *Riots and Pogroms*, 13.
[111] Fearon and Laitin, 'Violence and the Social Construction', 853.
[112] Wieviorka, *The Arena of Racism*, 69.
[113] Ibid., 70.

political. The third level is most closely related to the state; racist violence becomes institutionalised in the state and constitutes a central principle of its functioning.

Wieviorka presents us with a scale of racist violence by which to measure events ranging from 'quasi-isolated violence' to state-controlled racist violence. In concluding that all racist violence is to some degree political and 'racist violence never arises in a social vacuum,'[114] he makes a salient observation regarding the intentions for these acts. Unlike Horowitz's somewhat theoretically constrictive 'deadly ethnic riot',[115] Wieviorka makes a distinction between violence based on discrimination and that based on exclusion, labelling the former 'limited' and the latter 'unlimited' racist violence. Similar to Heryanto's argument that Chineseness is not intended to be wiped out, but is rather constantly 'under erasure' in Indonesia,[116] Wieviorka claims that, by its nature discrimination aims to render one group inferior. In such a case the violence cannot aim to destroy this group altogether, as it would also destroy the foundations of the state's domination. It is limited.

The theories presented by Brass and Wieviorka of utilitarian approaches to mass violence, which is to some extent limited and politically and organisationally driven, also sit well alongside Pierre Bourdieu's theory of 'habitus' as a means for describing how and why societies behave the way they do.[117] Brass' fire-tenders and riot engineers rely on a crowd who possess a repertoire of actions which they might easily, (indeed as Bourdieu would argue, unconsciously), engage at certain times against certain targets. As Horowitz describes, the people are often acting in a manner that is imitative of previous violence, fuelled by rumour and imbued with a sense of impunity.[118] For this reason, in researching incidents of mass violence it is imperative to ask, as Fearon and Laitin, Siegel[119] and Sidel[120] have, 'why do publics follow?' Then to push this inquiry further: 'Are the 'followers' really *following* after all?'[121]

Struggles Over Symbolic And Temporal Space

> The control of sacred spaces and their protection continues to be an important symbol around which communal conflicts tend to be organised. However it is not only sacred space but also ordinary space which has important symbolic elements. (Veena Das)[122]

> Take the notion of tradition: it is intended to give a special temporal status to a group of phenomena that are both successful and identical (or at least similar);...tradition enables us to isolate the new against a background of permanence... (Michel Foucault)[123]

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[114] Ibid., 74.
[115] Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 1.
[116] Heryanto, 'Ethnic Identities and Erasure', 104.
[117] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1990.
[118] Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot,* 5.
[119] Siegel, *Solo in the New Order*, 232–254.
[120] Sidel, 'Riots, Church Burnings', 47–63.
[121] Fearon and Laitin, 'Violence and the Social Construction', 846.
[122] Veena Das (ed.), *Mirrors of Violence: Communities, Riots and Survivors in South Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 11.
[123] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1972), 21.

Veena Das advises scholars of mass ethnic violence to pay attention to the role of repetition, location and the time of the incident of mass violence; to identify the signature left by each event. Such an investigation may reveal a pattern of sorts.[124] This method of investigation provides a means by which to understand why violence occurs at particular times and places. The representation of certain times of the year, such as religious holidays, or anniversaries of previous incidents of violence as 'high risk' dates, and the naming of certain places (sacred or not) which are 'marked' by violence, is particularly relevant to this study. The notion of a struggle over symbolic and temporal space relates also to the idea that the memory of violence itself perpetuates violence. The 'memories' provide the context, a set of behavioural patterns or habitus, necessary to perform such an act. Further, as Sidel argues, violence against property and goods is also an avenue by which new claims on the urban landscape and sacrifices can be made.[125]

Das observes that the way in which state law and order agencies 'mark' or represent a particular time or place as 'dangerous' or 'prone' to violence – as with the period when Chinese New Year and Lebaran (end of fasting month)[126] coincide – means that these discourses are often self-fulfilling. Subsequent ill-performed efforts by the state agencies to protect members of particular groups from violence may also be interpreted as a demonstration of solidarity with the group against whom they were asked to use force. Brass similarly advises us to examine the representation of violence itself to reveal the politics behind these actions and ask: Why do we get different narratives about particular events at different times and in different places?[127] He highlights the necessity of asking 'What does it mean?' in addition to 'What happened?'

The use of certain discourses by the state in relation to incidents of anti-Chinese and other forms of violence in Indonesia similarly succeed in 'marking out' areas within public life where violence is legitimated, or at the very least, support is demonstrated for it through inaction. Terminology like *preman* (thug), *pihak tertentu* (third party) and *provokator* (provocateur) erases these events from public memory by presenting always elusive and faceless perpetrators, whilst also feeding off memories of fear. Led by the state, this discourse constitutes a part of what many scholars explain as the rhetoric of institutionalised state violence in Indonesia.[128]

New Trends: Truth-Seeking and The Victim

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[124] See also Peter van der Veer, 'Riots and Rituals: The Construction of Violence and Public Space in Hindu Nationalism', in *Riots and Pogroms*, ed. Paul Brass (London: Macmillan, 1996), 154–176. He argues that riots and rituals are linked in the construction of communal identities in public space. See also Jayati Chaturvedi and Guaneshwar Chaturvedi, '*Dharma Yudh*: Communal Violence, Riots and Public Space in Ayodhya and Agra City, 1990 and 1992', in *Riots and Pogroms*, ed. Paul Brass, (London: Macmillan, 1996), 177–200.

[125] J.T. Sidel, 'Riots, Church Burnings', 61.

[126] Also known as Idul Fitri.

[127] Brass, *Riots and Pogroms*, 1.

[128] Ibid.; See T. Lindsey, 'From Soepomo to Prabowo: Law, Violence and Corruption in the Preman State', in *Violent Conflicts in Indonesia: Analysis, Representation, Resolution*, ed. C.A. Coppel (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), forthcoming; Elizabeth Drexler, 'Engineering Violence and Authenticating Separatism: Separating the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI) from the Free Aceh Movement (GAM)' in *Violent Conflicts in Indonesia: Analysis, Representation and Resolution* ed. C.A. Coppel (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), forthcoming.

the truth can never be full enough. (Martha Minow)[129]

A new wave of academic interest has emerged in the study, not only of anti-Chinese violence, but also of violence in Indonesia more generally in recent years, particularly since the end of the New Order. As the more recent works discussed here by Heryanto, Sidel and Siegel show, this not only indicates a rise in the frequency of violence in Indonesia, but also a new way of looking at it.[130] Recent scholarship about ethnic violence has asked quite different questions from studies in the past.[131]

Instead of asking simply 'What happened?' and 'Why?', researchers of ethnic violence are indeed asking as Brass advocates, 'Who is writing this history?', 'What does it tell us about this society?' also 'How do we deal with the suffering?' and even 'Can we ever find the truth about an event of mass violence?' These questions and others like them, form a highly challenging investigation that goes to the heart of some fundamental issues in history writing, truth telling and fact-finding. Recent work on ethnic violence also investigates ideas of social order and hierarchies, 'regimes of truth' and features the role of the nation-state, the individual and the place of the victims with respect to the violence.

It is no coincidence that scholarship such as this has emerged at the same time that new sources of 'truth' have had the ability to come forth because of the fall of an authoritarian regime. They challenge the state's monopoly of 'truth' about events including violence, some of which was perpetrated by the state itself. This multiplication of voices, perspectives or 'regimes of truth' which are often in conflict, has forced researchers to think more deeply about the motives, the impetus behind such representations.[132] This increase in the study of 'alternative histories' about incidents including mass violence is reflected across the world

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[129] Martha Minow, 'The Hope for Healing: What Can Truth Commissions Do?', in *Truth v Justice: The Morality of Truth Commissions*, eds R.I., Rotberg and D. Thompson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 241.

[130] Since the late 1990s, incidents of violence that can be classified variously as separatist (Aceh, East Timor, West Papua), communal (Maluku, Poso [Sulawesi]), criminal and ethnic (West and Central Kalimantan, anti-Chinese), have increased in frequency. See C.A. Coppel (ed.), *Violent Conflicts in Indonesia: Analysis, Representation and Resolution* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), forthcoming; Anderson, *Violence and the State*; I. Wessel, and Georgia Wimhöfer (eds.), *Violence in Indonesia* (Hamburg: Abera, 2001); Freek Colombijn, and J. Thomas Lindblad eds, *Roots of Violence in Indonesia* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2002). On Poso see, David Rohde, 'Indonesia Unravelling?', *Foreign Affairs*, (July-August 2001), 110-124.

[131] Paul R. Brass, *Theft of An Idol: Text and Context in the Representation of Collective Violence* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997); Martha Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998); Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, et al. (eds.), *Remaking a World: Violence, Social Suffering and Recovery* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Veena Das et al (eds.), *Violence and Subjectivity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Fridman, Lea Wernick, *Words and Witness: Narrative and Aesthetic Strategies in the Representation of the Holocaust* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000); Schulte Nordholt, Henk, 'A Genealogy of Violence', in *Roots of Violence in Indonesia*, eds Freek Colombijn and J. Thomas Lindblad (Singapore: ISEAS, 2002); Peter van der Veer, 'The Victim's Tale: Memory and Forgetting in the Story of Violence', in *Violence, Identity and Self-Determination*, eds Sam Weber and Hent de Vries (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997), 186-200.

[132] Regarding responses to anti-Chinese violence in May 1998 see: Siegel, 'Thoughts on the Violence of May 13 and 14, 1998'; Heryanto, 'Rape, Race'; Sidel, 'Riots, Church Burnings'; Sai Siew Min, 'Eventing the May 1998 Tragedy: Problematic Representations of Violence in Contemporary Indonesia', in *Violent Conflicts in Indonesia*, ed. C.A. Coppel (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), forthcoming; Karlina Leksono Supelli, 'The May 1998 Tragedy', in *Perspectives on the Chinese Indonesians*, eds Michael R. Godley and Grayson J. Lloyd (Adelaide: Crawford House Publishing, 2001), 55–60.

(within societies at large as well as amongst academic scholarship) as new areas of critical study and reflection on the history of violent events have opened up.[133] Recent official and unofficial processes of 'truth-seeking' and, in some cases, 'justice seeking' about mass atrocities have taken place in many countries. Official attempts at 'transitional justice', that is, some form of justice for nations emerging from a period of instability, have included, most prominently, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, and similar processes in Chile, Rwanda, and many other countries.[134]

In addition, the unofficial histories of violent events, including those presented in reports assembled by civil society organisations (CSOs) and independent domestic and international media reports provide the researcher with accessible and varied representations. Internet technology means that individuals have the power to be heard across the globe, uncensored and instantly. This real-time availability of material has both positive and negative consequences for a researcher (and the victims), as Lochore, Ang and Tay[135] discuss with respect to the case of violence against ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. Positively, persecuted groups and individuals can speak to the world without censorship; negatively, their suffering can be exploited and misappropriated by others. This raises questions about authenticity of the voice or images presented on the web, and challenges the researcher to be more rigorous with respect to these sources. At the same time it is pertinent to examine the way these representations can produce powerful effects and beliefs in those who read or view them. Gaping holes still remain in the set of voices being heard about violence in Indonesia, but, since the late 1990s, the variety of 'truths' has been greatly widened and so too critiques of these new voices.

The presence of large Western CSOs and funding agencies in Indonesia with an interest in the promotion of democracy and democratic values including human rights has also meant that there is a ready supply of funds to support groups within the country who work with victims of violence and for human rights more broadly.[136] In some cases, this has enabled these groups to send their message out to an international constituency. This means that unlike the incidents studied by Wertheim, Mackie, Shiraishi and the others, the cases of anti-Chinese violence under investigation here involve the voices of at least some of those most severely touched by the violence, the victims. It is less easy, therefore, for this researcher at any rate, to attempt simply a causal explanation, or master narrative, of these events without concern for the emotion that

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[133] Das and Kleinman, *Remaking a World;* A. Barahona de Brito, et al. (eds.), *The Politics of Memory: Transnational Justice in Democratising Societies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Brass, *Theft of An Idol*; Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness*; Dominick La Capra, *History and Memory After Auschwitz* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

[134] See R.I. Rotberg and D. Thompson (eds), *Truth v Justice: The Morality of Truth Commissions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

[135] Laura Lochore, 'Virtual Rape: Vivian's Story', *Intersections,* Issue 3, available from http://wwwsshe.murdoch.edu.au/intersections/issue3/laura3.html, accessed on 4 April 2002; Ien Ang, 'Indonesia on my Mind: Diaspora, Internet and the Struggle for Hybridity', in *On Not Speaking Chinese: Living Between Asia and the West*, (London: Routledge, 2002), 52-74; Ien Ang, 'Trapped in Ambivalence: Chinese Indonesians, Victimhood and the Debris of History', in *'Race' Panic and the Memory of Migration,* eds Meaghan Morris and Brett de Bary, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, it is the 2nd volume in a series called Traces: A Multilingual Journal of Cultural Theory and Translation, 2001), 21–48; Elaine Tay, 'Global Chinese Fraternity and the Indonesian Riots of May 1998: The Online Gathering of Dispersed Chinese', *Intersections*, available from http://wwwsshe.murdoch.edu.au/intersections/issue4/tay.html , accessed on 4 April 2002.

[136] See Das and Kleinman, *Remaking A World*, 25–26, about the 'compulsions of politics and commerce' that inform reports produced by media and human rights organisations alike.

surely colours it, and without also questioning the motive behind the various representations. Moreover, more recent analysts of violence against ethnic Chinese Indonesians approach their subjects from a more 'global' perspective of violence against minority groups and ethnic violence within an authoritarian state context.[137] These approaches attempt to draw out more 'universal' understandings as to why people resort to violence against a particular group, or why violence is represented in a certain way, rather than restricting the analysis to the specific – Indonesian – context. Gender has also been presented as an essential basis for analysis of anti-Chinese violence, which had been previously unexplored.

In the post-Suharto era, although the authoritarian regime and its leader are gone and the structures that maintained his power are weakened, the violence remains. Indeed, violent conflict in Indonesia has become more frequent and more varied. It is no longer sufficient to explain it in terms of state terrorism orchestrated by 'third party agents' alone. There is increasing recognition of the plurality of truths about violent conflict. State truths, 'media reality' and the 'factual' and 'moral' truths told by human rights organisations are all in tension. The challenge for researchers is to navigate around the various representations of violence to understand exactly what happened. During the New Order, explanations could be located within the authoritarian system that sponsored violence as a problem-solving method. Today the links between the actors involved in the conflicts in Ambon, West Kalimantan and even Aceh with the state elite in Jakarta, cannot be made so easily. Suraiya Kamaruzzaman from Flower Aceh expressed the complexity of unravelling the 'truth' about violent conflict in a moving account presented to an audience in Melbourne in July 2000.[138] She spoke of the terror gripping the people of Aceh every day as they struggle to make sense of a conflict in which they have become pawns. The truth about the violence, she told the audience, has been monopolised by both the Indonesian military (TNI) and the armed Free Aceh Movement (GAM), leaving no space for the victims to tell their story. In the same forum, Hilmar Farid of the Volunteer Team for Humanity (TRuK) demanded that the victims be given a central place in the search for understanding and resolving violence, because he emphasised the 'events of violence are not just in particular points of time, they have a great influence on the social structure of the community.'[139]

The study of anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia has produced great insight from those who constructed 'master narratives' or theories such as economic competition or political manipulation, to explain this violence. The strength to be discovered in these scholarly works is in the comprehensive way in which a particular theory of the causes of anti-Chinese violence has been investigated. For those choosing to embrace a more multi-faceted or 'time and place' sensitive analysis of the causes of anti-Chinese violence, such theorising is integral to interrogation of those narratives. Studies which base anti-Chinese violence on theories of economic competition or political manipulation reiterate what appears to be an under-represented

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[137] Heryanto, 'Rape, Race'; Leksono Supelli, 'The May 1998 Tragedy'.

[138] Flower Aceh is a women's organization based in Aceh. Suraiya Kamaruzzaman, 'Problems of people who have been displaced by violence', paper given at a Workshop, *Violent Conflict in Indonesia: Analysis, Representation, Resolution*, held at The University of Melbourne, 6–7 July 2000. See articles by Kumarruzaman and others from this workshop in Coppel, *Violent Conflicts In Indonesia.*

and under-recognised factor of importance in these studies, namely the role of prejudice and ethnicity in causing anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia. As Somers Heidhues herself has admitted:

> (t)he answer to anti-Sinicism is, however, not so simple as the adjustment of the sum of the political, economic and cultural antecedents as outlined above. All prejudice, including anti-Sinicism, contains a substantial measure of the irrational. In the end, nothing which the ethnic Chinese themselves do can fully account for the feeling against them; nothing they can do can fully counteract that sentiment.[140]

It is therefore intriguing that the story of anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia has not yet been written with ethnicity as its master narrative.[141] Explanations of this violence by these scholars seem to skirt around ethnicity as a 'causal factor' in its own right. Whilst master narratives of economic competition and state terrorism recognise the salience of ethnicity and prejudice as a factor, they do not position it as central to this violence, but rather as a basic sentiment or tool to be manipulated. This appears to be a considerable oversight given that any explanation obviously begins with an appraisal of the fact that the victims of the violence are ethnically different from the majority population, before then acknowledging the decidedly complex range of other factors involved. As Heidhues implied, it is fundamental to any complete understanding of this subject.

APPROACHING THE STUDY OF ANTI-CHINESE VIOLENCE, 1996-1999

How Do You Write About Violence?

> The historian may decipher those emotions on the texts, monuments, artefacts and ruins he finds. But the modern historian writes dispassionately...And he thinks that if emotions focus the mind, they also limit it. There is an opacity to emotions; they cloud the mind such that it does not see things in their whole context. (Alphonso Lingis)[142]

> "doing justice" and "doing history" are related activities. A historian endeavours to "do justice" in several senses, first of all in the simplistic sense of giving his protagonists their due; that is, by voicing their aspirations and exploring their choices. This act of giving voice to sometimes otherwise silent or silenced actors is, of course, a minimum – the least historians can or must do. Nevertheless, doing justice and doing history are akin by virtue to their aspiration to a narrative that is, on the one hand, synthetic, and, on the other, open to conflicting testimony. (Charles Maier)[143]

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[139] Hilmar Farid, 'From Recovery to Struggle: Voices of the victims in the wave of violence', at a Workshop, *Violent Conflict in Indonesia: Analysis, Representation, Resolution*, held at The University of Melbourne, 6–7 July 2000.

[140] Somers Heidhues, *Southeast Asia's Chinese Minorities*, 111.

[141] Although Somers Heidhues pointed to the use of religion as a 'screen' of sorts, for more politico-economic motives for violence against ethnic Chinese – most whom are Christian, Buddhist with others practising Confucianism – this has also not been a favoured approach in this field (Ibid.). Many of the cases involving violence against ethnic Chinese are indeed within the context of attacks on their places of worship – churches and temples – and in some cases begin as an immediate consequence of a dispute which is religiously based. Yet, as I will argue and others have also, to describe these as religious or communal conflicts without consideration of their ethnicity also produces a distorted view of inter-religious relations in Indonesia.

[142] Alphonso Lingis, *Dangerous Emotions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 14–15.

[143] Maier, 'Doing History', 271.

In writing the stories of violent events, the tension between writing a 'scientific history' and what Das reminds us are 'alternative interpretations' has always been present. From the outset, as Brass, Das and many others argue, we must come to terms with the fact that the representations and interpretations of violent events comprise a highly contested discursive space.[144] Brass stresses the salience of the 'struggle to control the meaning of violence'[145] scholars, journalists and politicians engage in, as a serious political act. The danger lies in being too prescriptive, of setting precedents as to how events should be categorised in the future and therefore what solutions should be sought. It is for this reason that he advises; 'Above all, we should resist absolutely any single causal explanation or consensus on the causes and courses of riotous and other violent events.'[146] However, as Das adds, this task is an extremely difficult one because, 'As stories are layered upon other stories, the categories of history and myth collapse into each other...narrations not only representing violence but also producing it.'[147] Like Lea Fridman, some scholars observe that extreme violence is almost unrepresentable.[148]

In addition to an understanding of this responsibility to wade through the mythologised histories and wrest aside multiple versions of these violent events, this study attempts to provide a 'history' that is receptive to the emotion of the period, and of the victims in particular. As Clifford Geertz argues, social science does not simply exist in order to 'discover the hidden wires with which to manipulate cardboard persons.'[149] Through this text it is hoped that something of the humanity of this story emerges from the analysis. As Lingis wrote, 'Emotions colour the line drawings with which cognition represents reality.'[150]

Further, in this representation of anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia I have made the decision to avoid labelling these incidents of violence as 'riots'. Despite the assertion made by Horowitz that 'ethnic riot' is synonymous with 'ethnic violence' or with 'racial', or 'tribal disturbances',[151] to label these acts of violence as 'riots' is too prescriptive of the agency of those involved.[152] Regardless of what may be an academic awareness of its subtleties, in more general usage the term 'riot' assumes that these are incidents of crowd or 'mob' violence in which the participants are similarly motivated. It is an almost emotive term that, in many

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[144] Das, *Mirrors of Violence*. Also see the debate regarding the historiography of the Holocaust in Saul Friedlander (ed.), *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the 'Final Solution'* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992).

[145] Brass, *Riots and Pogroms*, 1.

[146] Ibid., 46.

[147] Das and Kleinman, *Remaking a World*, 7.

[148] Fridman, *Words and Witness*; See C.S. Maier, 'Doing History, Doing Justice: The Narrative of the Historian and the Truth Commission', in *Truth v Justice: The Morality of Truth Commissions*, eds. R.I. Rotberg and D. Thompson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 274; 'the temptation for the post-modern historian is to say the task is impossible.'

[149] C. Geertz, *Available Light: Anthropological Reflections On Philosophical Topics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 37.

[150] Lingis, *Dangerous Emotions*, 15.

[151] Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 1.

[152] Further, Horowitz himself doubted that recent anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia could be properly described as an 'ethnic riot', choosing instead to put these incidents in categories termed 'non-riots', 'mild riots' and 'near-riots'. His notion of 'hybrid forms' of violence and 'inhibited violence' are also noted in this context. Horowitz's analysis is towards defining these events as ethnic *riots*. Together with my reasons for avoiding use of the term 'riot', my concern is whether this is *ethnic* or 'anti-Chinese' violence at all.

ways, is dismissive of the actuality of these violent acts.[153] The term *'rusuh'* (riot) in Indonesian has the same effect as *'amok'* (amuk), as a term of reference presented in an almost automatic manner, to describe these acts. To use *kekerasan* (violence) instead of *kerusuhan* (riot) necessarily leads to deeper investigation of the sources of agency and responsibility in an event such as this. With respect to violence against ethnic Chinese in particular, avoidance of this term makes it possible to position these alongside other types of violence in Indonesia, without discrimination, and also in keeping with Steedly's argument for *localizing* violence, rather than *culturalizing* it.[154]

Studying Anti-Chinese Violence, 1996-1999[155]

The approach taken in this study of anti-Chinese violence[156] therefore attempts to achieve a balance between the various methodologies examined here, which are used to study ethnic and mass violence. I am aware of the dangers of attempting a single explanation of the violence, but conscious too of the academic drift to providing critiques of histories of the violence, rather than 'writing' them. Therefore, the search for the 'story' of what happened in these cases is a major part of this study. Further, although this study is the investigation of anti-Chinese violence – its motivations, conceptualisations and ramifications – it is also an investigation of the processes of truth-seeking and writing about these events of violence.

Where possible, my approach has been to attempt a narrative of a selection of events of violence against ethnic Chinese.[157] In these cases effort has been made to locate a causal origin for the violence and to provide a narrative of how it unfolded as recounted and reported by newsagencies, community groups, religious organisations, witnesses, victims and the state. From these different information streams and in accordance with Brass's advice: 'We might listen to all the interpretations of violence, especially those on site, who have seen it, participated in it, or somehow been close to it,'[158] I have moulded what I perceive resembles 'what happened' in each case. In itself this process required making judgements, as all researchers must, about different representations of these events, to produce my own authored and dominant narrative, with all the shortcomings of this form.[159] As Campbell so effectively put it, however, rather than being what White labels a historical discourse which narrates (that is, 'openly adopts a perspective that looks out on the

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[153] See Pandey, 'In Defense of the Fragment', 1; 'The violence itself is taken as known.'
[154] Mary Margaret Steedly, 'The State of Culture Theory in the Anthropology of Southeast Asia', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 28, (1999), 431–454.
[155] For a list of incidents during this period see appendix A.
[156] The subject of this study is *large-scale* anti-Chinese violence. That is, incidents involving attacks on more than one target, often in more than one place. Therefore this does not include incidents involving single attacks on churches, shops or houses owned by ethnic Chinese.
[157] I have been selective in the incidents of violence against ethnic Chinese included in this study. This is due to a variety of factors including the significance of these events in terms of the level of destruction caused, the public and political response to these cases, in some cases the continuities between cases, or in others, the discontinuties. In addition, practicalities influenced the choice of cases including basic access to material in relation to the event (documents, witnesses, reports). It was also my objective to present a representative 'range' of incidents of violence against ethnic Chinese – which had different motives, were isolated, were connected to other cases – thereby influencing the selection of cases finally assembled.
[158] Brass, *Riots and Pogroms*, 46.
[159] See Fridman, *Words and Witness.*

world and reports it'), it is hoped that this is one which *narrativizes*. That is, 'feigns to make the world speak itself and speak itself as a story.'[160] The outcome is therefore a 'provisional truth' of these violent events, which seeks to add to the range of potential realities. Moreover, to quote Campbell the existence of more than one truth enables 'not only a narrative rendering of reality but also the very grounds for questioning that particular narrative as only one among other possibilities;' so that 'Contained within the conditions of possibility for historical narratives, therefore, is the logic by which their authenticity can be interrogated.'[161] To this end, it was also my intention to expose the operations, interests and politics behind these interpretations by way of interrogating the authenticity of the narratives presented in this study.

The narrative of each incident is placed within the context of analysis of the organisational forms and structures of the violence; the systems and networks that allow it to occur; including the state, the 'institutional riot systems' of *preman* and criminals and the 'repertoire' of the crowds. The way in which the government and wider national discourse impacted on these is borne out by presenting analysis of events within the political economy of Indonesia alongside analysis of the violence. There are, however, some 'stories' of anti-Chinese violence that because of their scale, political and social significance, crowd the researcher with myriad contested versions and thereby resist 'narrativizing'.[162] Although masses of documentation exist about these incidents and countless representations of them may circulate, the 'versions' themselves invariably become the subject. For the period with which this study is dealing, the violence in May 1998 presents the greatest challenge for someone endeavouring to write a narrative of these events.

The 'May Riots', as they quickly became known, included incidents in Medan, Jakarta, Solo, Surabaya and Lampung, but are most commonly identified by the events in Jakarta. This study approaches the violence in May 1998 by presenting analysis of the cases in Medan and Solo, instead of focusing, as public discourse and official representations of the violence have, on the Jakarta incidents. There is a significant mass of documentation and analysis of this violence already in existence including reports assembled by the TGPF and by CSOs. These include interviews with victims and those who participated in the violence, or were suspected of doing so.[163] Again, Brass observes: 'We can learn much even with our imperfect knowledge of events from the very representations of them and the contexts in which they are placed. For every contextualisation and representation of an event or set of events serves the interests of some individuals, groups and forces in society.'[164] Rather than attempting to create a 'new' narrative, I offer a critique of the 'official' version of the violence as presented in the Joint Fact-Finding Team (*Tim Gabungan*

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[160] H. White, *The Content of the Form*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1987, 2. Cited in Campbell, *National Deconstruction*, 35.
[161] Campbell, *National Deconstruction*, 37.
[162] Gyanendra Pandey, 'In Defense of the Fragment: Writing About Hindu-Muslim Riots in India Today', in *A Subaltern Studies Reader 1986–1995*, ed. Ranajit Guha, (Minneapolis,:University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 18-19.
[163] For a Western woman researching violence against ethnic Chinese, which included two visits to Indonesia for fieldwork for a combined length of five months, accessing perpetrators and victims of the violence was not possible. For a discussion on the place of the author in 'writing' violence see Krishna Sen, 'The Human Rights of Gendered Citizens: Notes From Indonesia' in *Human Rights and Gender Politics: Asia Pacific Perspectives*, eds. Anne-Marie Hilsdon, Martha Macintyre, Vera Mackie and Maila Stivens (London: Routledge, 2000), 107–123.
[164] Brass, *Theft of an Idol*, 297.

Pencari Fakta, TGPF) report commissioned by Habibie's government in July 1998. This close study reveals the processes that are involved in 'truth-seeking' or fact-finding – the subjectivity of truth – and respond to the question, 'What does it mean?' Significantly, it demonstrates the way in which the representation of violence as anti-Chinese acts to normalise the violence, to make it everyday, rather than extraordinary, and thereby fails to compel the government and wider society to deal with anti-Chinese prejudice and institutionalised discrimination. The study of the Solo violence in May 1998 (in particular, representations of that violence produced by its residents and others afterwards) demonstrates the power of alternative interpretations as Das wrote, 'to constitute the meaning of the violence for people in different social positions.'[165] Similarly, the Medan case provides a highly localised context for analysing the May violence, yet at the same time reveals its national reach.

This study has attempted to examine its subject, anti-Chinese violence, in a way that is multi-layered. In some cases attempts are made to try to construct narratives of these events but at the same time to give full recognition to the importance of 'alternative sources' and versions of events.[166] In addition, the emotion and suffering of these experiences should not be overlooked. As Pandey explains:

> (o)ne advantage, or if you prefer, consequence, of narrativizing is that we are able to escape the problem of representing pain. This is a sanitised history with which we are relatively comfortable. In it, violence, suffering, and many of the scars left by their history are suppressed.[167]

As much as I have referred to anti-theoretical approaches or rejection of a single explanation about this violence, of course it is obvious that the one sociological construct it is impossible to ignore, as a major determinant of this study is race or ethnicity, specifically Chinese ethnicity. The central theme of this study – the anti-Chinese or racialised form of these cases of violence – pervades all these understandings, discourses and analytical methodologies. It is *the* constant feature across the range of events examined here, each with its own unique historical context, causal structure and so on. At the same time, the study resists deploying an 'ethnically structured way of seeing' which forecloses alternatives.[168] Indeed, again, the crucial question to be addressed by this study will be 'Is there *anti-Chinese* violence per se in Indonesia?'

Simultaneously, an objective of this study is to demonstrate the *difference* between individual incidents of violence against Chinese, to argue that 'anti-Chinese violence' is not a monolithic and crystallised phenomenon. It asserts that there is no single form or 'type' of violence, which can be labelled 'anti-Chinese violence' in Indonesia. Each case examined here reveals a different set of environmental factors, levels of organisation and state-led involvement.[169] Therefore, the forms of anti-Chinese violence depicted range from spontaneous incidents based on frustration and a form of scapegoating, to racialised state terrorism. The

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[165] Das, *Mirrors of Violence*, 15.
[166] See Henk Schulte Nordholt, 'A Genealogy of Violence', in *Roots of Violence in Indonesia*, eds Freek Colombijn and J. Thomas Lindblad (Singapore: ISEAS, 2002), 33–62. See also B.R.O'G. Anderson, 'Indonesian Nationalism Today and in the Future', *Indonesia*, 67 (April 1999), 1–11.
[167] Pandey, 'In Defense of the Fragment', 18–19.
[168] Campbell, *National Deconstruction*, 15.
[169] See G. Robinson, 'The Post-Coup Massacre in Bali', in *Making Indonesia*, eds Daniel S. Lev and Ruth McVey, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1996), 123–124.

incidents that fall somewhere in between are the most common. That is, localised violence initiated or sustained by local 'riot systems' and the repertoire of the crowd, but which is inextricably linked to the national political context as a source of rhetoric, policies and support for violent resolution of conflicts. Often this violence is subsequently given new and 'political' meanings by various groups, including the state, for their own gain. For this reason that this study aims to consider first, 'What happened?' and secondly, 'What does it mean?' It is increasingly apparent that one cannot ask the first without then posing the second.

In his work on anti-Chinese violence, Sidel is critical of common approaches to violence against ethnic Chinese in Indonesia under the New Order.[170] Likewise, this study resists classifying anti-Chinese violence, though undeniable patterns resonate with reference to many of the incidents examined here. This approach is informed by Wieviorka's and Brass's theories related to ethnic violence,[171] which locate agency and responsibility at all levels. It is hoped that this study contributes to an understanding of the *limits* and *utility* of anti-Chinese sentiment and violence in Indonesia. As Fearon and Laitin[172] theorise more generally and Heryanto and others argue, 'anti-Chinese violence' exists on a discursive plane as well as in 'reality' in Indonesian society and politics. It was used as a tool for diverting blame from the state or other parties and for 'normalising' both community and state violence. Fearon and Laitin state:

> (v)iolence has the effect, intended by the elites, of constructing group identities in more antagonistic and rigid ways. These newly constructed (or reconstructed) ethnic identities serve to increase support for the elites who provoked the violence while favouring the continuation and escalation of violence.[173]

Any study of anti-Chinese violence must be placed within the context of other forms of violence in Indonesia, violence against ethnic Chinese rarely occurs in isolation, but is merely one defined form.[174] For this reason it is not incongruous that there are cases described here as 'anti-Chinese violence', which occurred within the context of wider violence against other groups, other targets, who were not ethnic Chinese. Similarly, a complex layering of sentiments motivates an act of violence against an ethnic Chinese Indonesian: jealousies, misdirected frustrations and racial prejudice. Prejudice is not enough on its own to bring about anti-Chinese violence. Neither is it the intention to argue that Indonesia has a culture of violence, of which anti-Chinese violence is one form. On the contrary, attempts are made to follow Steedly's advice:

> (t)he alternative to essentializing or to culturalizing violence is not to disregard it but rather to localize it. By this I mean exploring the full particularity of its multifarious occasions: how it is produced in certain circumstances; how it is deployed, represented, limited, imagined, ignored, or instigated; how it is identified, disciplined, interrogated, and, of course, punished.[175]

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[170] Sidel, 'Riots, Church Burnings'; J.T. Sidel, '*Macet Total*: Logics of Circulation and Accumulation in the Demise of Indonesia's New Order', *Indonesia*, 66, October 1998, 159–194.
[171] Wierviorka, *Arena of Racism*; Brass, *Riots and Pogroms; Theft of an Idol.*
[172] Fearon and Laitin, 'Violence and Social Construction'.
[173] Ibid., 846.
[174] In a seminar in Melbourne, 2001, Ben Kiernan labelled the killings of ethnic Chinese East Timorese by invading Indonesian forces in 1975, as genocide. However, he argued the deaths of indigenous East Timorese cannot be defined as genocide because of the political nature of these killings. Likewise, Kiernan maintained, the mass killings of ethnic Chinese in 1965–66 during the anti-communist purges in Indonesia cannot be defined as a genocide, again because politics not ethnicity was the motivating factor for the murders.
[175] Steedly, 'The State of Culture Theory', 445-446.

Reformasi, Revenge, Retribution and Justice-Seeking: Understanding the Historical Specificity of Anti-Chinese Violence, 1996-1999

> For a society, as for an individual, an inner catastrophe, especially when it occurs in the process of a serious attempt to change, can be both a subtly addictive and a profoundly rigidifying force. This is particularly so.... when the truth of what has happened is obscured by convenient stories, and passions are left to flourish in the dark. (Clifford Geertz)[176]

A study of violence against ethnic Chinese or any other group in Indonesia must be seen in the context of what was happening at the time it occurred. In searching for explanations of this violence in existing theories of ethnic and racialised violence, prejudice and minority groups, the role of memories of violence and the origin of the 'crowd'; the specificity of the period of this study must prevail. This study of violence against ethnic Chinese in Indonesia is exclusive to certain events that occurred between July 1996 and October 1999. The historico-political 'bookends' to this period are 27 July 1996 – which saw the storming of the PDI party headquarters in Jakarta by agents of the state thinly disguised as 'hooligans' and 'subversives' – and 10 October 1999, the date Indonesia's first President to be appointed by a democratically elected legislature, Abdurrahman Wahid, took office. These moments in Indonesia's recent history were chosen to define this period because they constitute salient events in Indonesia's political and social revolution, suffering and transition that continues until now.

In the late 1990s, Heryanto wondered why anti-Chinese violence did not accompany the 27 July 1996 violence and the reaction to the murder of Marsinah.[177] Perhaps, as he predicted, we were witnessing the beginning of a new type of violence in Indonesia, which has subsequently escalated, that is, state-led terrorism against not only a minority like the ethnic Chinese, but also so-called dissidents and urban poor. Added to this are acts of community-led violence based on revenge and justice seeking, frequently enacted under the banner of *reformasi*. An increase in the number of incidents and the severity of violence against ethnic Chinese Indonesians during this time occurred within the context of widespread escalation in violent conflict among civilians, between civilians and the state and extrajudicial violence or state-led terrorism in Indonesia.[178] Escalating conflicts of various types across Indonesia such as those in West Kalimantan, Aceh, Papua, East Timor, East Java and Maluku reveal that anti-Chinese violence was not taking place in a vacuum. The range of violent acts perpetrated by the state, including extrajudicial kidnappings, torture, and killings, shows also that the sources of violence are often to be found within the nation's elite. Less obvious or overt forms of violence, such as psychological violence or trauma, economic deprivation or poverty, displacement and domestic violence also mark this period of Indonesia's history as a time of tremendous suffering. Whilst

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[176] C. Geertz, 'The Politics of Meaning', in *Culture and Politics in Indonesia*, eds. Claire Holt et al, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), 333.

[177] Heryanto, 'Ethnic Identities and Erasure'. Marsinah, 25, was a trade unionist murdered by security agents in East Java in 1993.

[178] The large volume of publications and academic conferences on violence in Indonesia in recent years attests to this. See Anderson, *Violence and the State*; Wessel and Wimhöfer, *Violence in Indonesia*; Colombijn and Lindblad, *Roots of Violence in Indonesia*; Coppel, *Violent Conflicts in Indonesia.*

anti-Chinese violence needs to be viewed in this wider context, nonetheless it stands apart from these other cases mentioned, in that the limits to it are unlike those upon the violence elsewhere in Indonesia. With the exception of the rapes in May 1998, the violence against ethnic Chinese was largely limited to destruction of their property.

The period of the study is divided into three parts: July 1996-April 1998; May 1998; and June 1998-October 1999. Central to this structure are the events of May 1998. The level of intensity and brutality of these incidents, together with evidence of their systematic and simultaneous enactment, marks this period as a 'climax' in the chronology of the violence targeting ethnic Chinese from 1996-1999. Within each of these periods, particular incidents of violence against ethnic Chinese are examined, either separately or as 'grouped' events through the construction of a narrative and analysis of representations of the violence. The decision to place a study of anti-Chinese violence within a timeframe of social revolution and chaos in Indonesia is not simply a matter of convenience. Beginning in mid-1996, Indonesia underwent a slow but steady revolution. Its people were beginning to demand a greater role in the politics of the state. Everywhere in Indonesian society – in the media, politics, CSOs, professionals, student groups and labour groups – people acquired the courage to move against the demands of Suharto's government and were more outspoken. Indeed it was this increased confidence and self-assurance among Indonesians that eventually forced Suharto's resignation on 21 May 1998, and the promotion of a new era in Indonesian politics focused on reform.

A steady trend of anti-Chinese hostility and violence continued during this time and reached its peak in mid-May 1998. During the period July 1996 to May 1998, attacks on Christian churches and anti-Chinese violence and sentiment increased compared to the frequency of such incidents in the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s.[179] There are various possible explanations that will be explored in this study as to why this trend emerged at the same time as Indonesians began to express the desire for greater liberty and influence on the state and democracy. A popular explanation for the increase in anti-Chinese violence during the 1990s is related to the rise of Islam as a political force during this time. Suharto's overt shift toward a more Islamicist position in politics must be considered when analysing attacks on churches and other symbols of Christianity and the responses of these groups, which followed such violence. Another possible hypothesis is that just as Indonesians felt a greater confidence to speak against their government, to draw attention to the President and his family's nepotism and corruption, to flaunt the rules of this state – they were equally confident to express sentiment that is hostile to the 'stranger' in their midst, who is also believed to be corrupt and opportunistic. This explanation is related to the processes of reassessing identity, of defining what it meant to be Indonesian at this time. Within this atmosphere of transition and *reformasi* from mid-July 1996, people began to re-configure their identities, to question what they thought they knew about being Indonesian. In the middle of this – what Geertz would call 'a serious attempt to change' – there was a catastrophe. Indonesia's currency

[179]See Mackie 'Anti-Chinese outbreaks in Indonesia' for anti-Chinese violence in 1960s–1970s; Human Rights Watch 'World Report 1998: Indonesia and East Timor', available from http://www.hrw.org/worldreport/Asia-07.htm, accessed 4 April 2002. As an indication see T. Santoso and P. Tahalele (eds), *Beginikah Kemerdekaan Kita?* (Surabaya, Forum Komunikasi Kristiani Indonesia (FKKS), Surabaya, 1997). (The number of Churches recorded as closed, destroyed or burnt down in Indonesia for the period 1995–1997 was 89 or 44.5 per year. This is an increase from the period 1985–1994 which saw 132 cases at a rate of 13.2 per

collapsed, taking the economy with it and allowing 'passions to flourish in the dark'.[180] It is also possible that in the last years of the New Order, the 'anti-Chinese riot' formed a highly useful instrument for state fear-mongering as well as scapegoating in an effort to deflect blame away from the political-military elites at that time. The position of ethnic Chinese in middleman roles and as perceived adjutants of the New Order meant they were easily placed to become targets for frustration. As a consequence, violence against ethnic Chinese was easily facilitated by elite elements as 'racialised state terrorism' to fight their power struggles. Nevertheless, as much as we have strong evidence to indicate that much anti-Chinese violence is the work of state-sponsored activists, it must be recognised, as some have already cautioned, that 'the people' also sought to make their own claims. As Sidel argues, we should not imagine that the Indonesian people are not themselves capable of self-expression through violent action, but "'anti-Chinese riots" reflect a certain kind of geographical, even architectural struggle over public space, in which "things are put in their place" or new claims are made on the urban landscape'.[181] What becomes clear from a close study of these incidents of violence against ethnic Chinese is the plurality of their forms and motivations, but also the eerie and uncanny likeness and repetition of this violence as a form of social expression.

This thesis will establish the argument that the New Order institutionalised racism in Indonesia to the extent that it became normal and everyday, so that under certain conditions violence against ethnic Chinese occurred with impunity and justification. This process was so effective that despite the fall of the New Order this prejudice and violence continued. Many other explanations of anti-Chinese violence tend to under-value institutionalised racial prejudice as a causal factor. This study shows that this policy of racial prejudice is the main cause of anti-Chinese violence.

The persistence of anti-Chinese sentiment and acts of violence against this minority in Indonesia shows no signs of abating. Discriminatory legislation and stereotypes remain in place and violence continues to be a preferred problem-solving method in a nation-state lacking decisive or authoritative justice and law enforcement institutions. The future role of ethnic Chinese in the life of their nation is restricted by these limitations and by the prevalence of memories of the violence and persecution they have suffered.

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year. Overall the highest number of attacks on churches was in Java, 62% from 1945 until May 1997: Santoso and Tahalele, 39).

[180] Geertz, 'The Politics of Meaning', 333.

[181] Sidel, 'Riots, Church Burnings', 59.

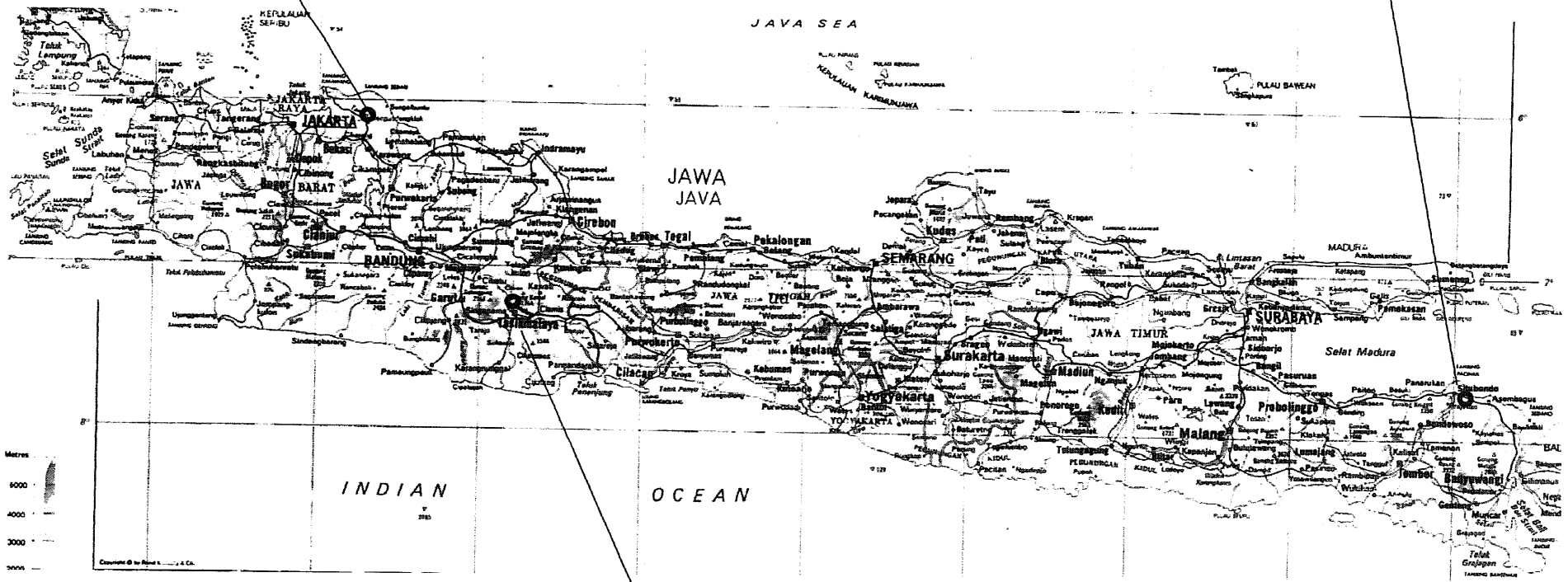
II. PRE-MAY 1998

(JULY 1996 – APRIL 1998)

Pre-May
1996 - 1997

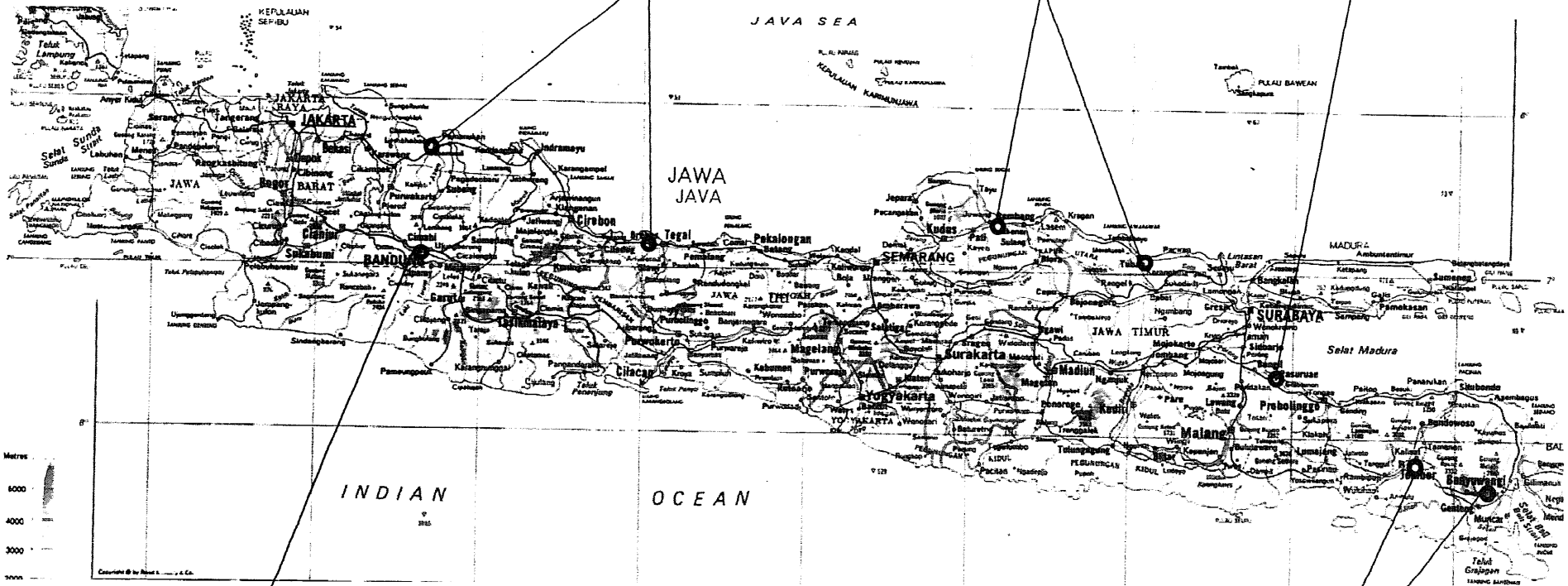
Rengasdengklok
30 January 1997

Situbondo
10 October 1996



Tasikmalaya
26 December 1996

Pre-May
January - February 1998



Anti-Chinese Violence: October 1996 – January 1997

Between July 1996 and the May 1997 elections, Indonesia's political and social landscape began to alter. This marked the beginning of the so-called *reformasi* era of Indonesian politics, as the Indonesian people became ever more willing to challenge the nationalism upon which the New Order had built its authoritarian rule. In the lead up to the parliamentary elections, incidents of violence involving the burning of government buildings, police stations, churches, and shops and offices owned by ethnic Chinese, became frequent. The violence could be interpreted as popular resistance, during a period of growing desire to participate in the political process, to be heard in the corridors of Merdeka Palace. At the same time, the violence also exposed a growing confidence to challenge the fundamentals of the nationalist doctrine of religious and racial harmony, which restricted the role of Islam in the state.

In mid-1996, the national economy continued to experience steady growth.[1] The New Order's development program, however, the cornerstone of its legitimacy, was beginning to be questioned.[2] The growing personal wealth of Suharto, his family and his business associates was being seen less as an admired indication of national well being and more as a symbol of the widening divide between rich and poor in Indonesia. This divide was also increasingly recognised along the lines of ethnic difference. Suharto had continued to bolster social perceptions of the ethnic Chinese as a group, as wealthy and corrupt.[3] Most Indonesians counted ethnic Chinese businessmen among Suharto's closest cronies, a perception that extended beyond the elite. Across the country, the success of ethnic Chinese business in leading the growth and development of local economies was similarly perceived to be, and in some cases was, due to their collusion with corrupt local authorities.

In these local contexts, ethnic Chinese developed new facilities such as shopping centres, leisure complexes and churches to cater to their needs and those of the expanding middle classes. To most Indonesians who remained poor and unable to climb into the 'new and expanding middle class', these developments drew envy and resentment. A growing number of Indonesians were struggling beneath the oppression of a widening social divide and tightening political straightjacket, and ethnic Chinese were recognised as agents of the system responsible for their suffering. For many of the *orang miskin* (poor people) in these Javanese towns, excluded from the national modernity program, a sense of empowerment and identity increasingly came from their religious commitment to Islam. Whilst this is not unique in Indonesian history, it is clear that the defence of Islam from interference and denigration, and demonstrations of the importance of Islam, became more exaggerated during this time. At the national level, friction between Islamic groups including ICMI (Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals), Muhammadiyah, and

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[1] Indonesia's economic growth for 1996 was 7.8%. 'Suharto promises openness', *Jakarta Post*, 2 January 1997.

[2] See Jacques Bertrand, '"Business as Usual" in Suharto's Indonesia', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 37 (May 1997), 441.

[3] Presidential Decision (Keppres) No.90, 1995 signed at the end of 1995 stipulated that companies (including foreign ones) must set aside 2% of net after tax profit over Rp100 million to help families dependent on welfare. 'YDSM Diaudit Akuntan Publik', *Kompas*, 1 February 1996.

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), was becoming more pronounced as they jockeyed for Suharto's favour and a *carte blanche* for their organisation's affairs in an election year.

The violence in the Javanese towns of Situbondo, Tasikmalaya and Rengasdengklok within the space of five months in late 1996 and early 1997 was linked by time, geography and similarity of targets; however there is no evidence that the violence was engineered or part of a 'wave of violence'. Each event had a unique story in time and place, but was also part of a wider sequence of violence, leading up to the May 1997 parliamentary elections, in localities across the nation, including Sanggau Ledo, Pekalongan, Pasuruan, Banjarmasin and Ujung Pandang.[4] While many of these cases were triggered by varying and sometimes random events, violence was directed at ethnic Chinese Indonesians and their property.

The incidents of violence in Situbondo, Rengasdengklok and, more briefly, Tasikmalaya, are examined here because of the extent to which they gripped the nation and its leaders and increased anxieties within the entire ethnic Chinese community. Further, these incidents challenged understandings in Indonesia of what constituted 'anti-Chinese violence', or, more particularly, the set of circumstances under which such violence was acceptable. These incidents are examples of what Wieviorka theorised as ethnic violence appropriated for political purposes. It is in the responses to and appropriation of these incidents that a great deal is revealed about the functionality or utility of anti-Chinese violence in the late New Order period. The elite national discourse about these incidents labelled them as part of a conspiracy to destabilise the nation while rejecting the suggestion that it was religious or ethnic conflict. Yet in each case, Christians and ethnic Chinese were among the main targets sought out for attack, although the actual 'trigger' for the violence had nothing – except in Rengasdengklok – to do with Christians or ethnic Chinese. Rather, a common factor was the perceived denigration or abuse of Islam. The violence in Rengasdengklok is particularly revealing due to evidence that this was, in some part, a 'copycat' incident. Previous incidents of violence against ethnic Chinese acted as precipitants to this one.[5] There is evidence that deep hostility existed toward ethnic Chinese due to jealousy because of their wealth or perceived wealth. In addition, people felt threatened by non-Muslim religious expansion, and held prejudices based on entrenched discriminative practices. An investigation of these three separate violent incidents must reflect the unique set of circumstances and events that contributed to them. As Siegel correctly points out, 'It would be precipitous...to see all anti-Chinese sentiment as having the same source'.[6] However, from a close analysis of the Situbondo and Rengasdengklok cases, it becomes clear that, despite having different local sources, public attitudes and perceptions about the targets of the violence were common.

Two days before Situbondo erupted into violence, President Suharto addressed a meeting of cabinet ministers, military elite and political faithful on threats to Indonesia's national unity. His focus was the potential of the growing social and economic disparity to create feelings of dissatisfaction. He said,

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[4] For a list of incidents see appendix A.
[5] Brass, *Riots and Pogroms*, 7–8.
[6] Siegel, *Solo in the New Order*, 238.

> The social and economic gap that exists in the community can be manipulated by those who want to destabilise the principles of nation and state and use the masses to achieve their goals. They will take advantage of unrest in workers groups, farmers and urban poor communities.[7]

Rather than using his speech to call for calm and acting to limit the potential for violence, the President referred to unnamed instigators. He set up decoys and constructed 'suspicious parties' motivated to destroy the nation-state, as though anticipating the trouble to come. The rhetoric presented by Suharto in this address just days before the Situbondo violence was maintained through the disturbances of the next five months and beyond. Many Indonesians were no longer prepared to accept the New Order's masking of certain realities, which did nothing to resolve hardships. The violence in Situbondo, Tasikmalaya and Rengasdengklok revealed that the New Order's control of its tools of institutionalised and politicised violence was slipping. The resentment and hostility felt by many non-Chinese towards ethnic Chinese had been one such 'tool' readily mobilised by the New Order in the past. At the same time, a careful balance had been maintained between hostility and violence due to the understanding that the Chinese were only useful as long as they were in Indonesia. Driving them out would not only hurt the national development program but also leave the regime without its convenient 'other'.[8] The violence demonstrated that this 'balance' was no longer under the New Order's control.

SITUBONDO, 10 OCTOBER 1996: RELIGION, RACE OR POLITICAL POWER STRUGGLE?

> (T)housands of young people moved very fast...asking others to join them in their rampage...Then there were some people who shouted that Saleh, who had insulted the Kiai and Islam, was being taken to safety by church workers in a near by church. I could not believe it then. How could Saleh be taken to a church. Saleh was a Muslim who had gone astray. What had he got to do with the church?[9] (Marzuki, Situbondo shopkeeper)

> The people had no faith in the court, the symbol of the state, and when the rumour hit, it was easy to trigger violence from a crowd like this. [10] (Hotman Siahaan)

On 10 October 1996, mass violence broke out in and around the town of Situbondo, East Java, after Saleh, a young Muslim man, was found guilty of blasphemy. The majority of those involved in the violence were Muslim and members of the NU, the largest Islamic organisation in Indonesia, with a particularly strong presence through the Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in East Java. Primary targets for the violence included the courthouse, churches and Christian schools. At first glance this appeared to be violence based on religious antipathies, even though the triggering event – the trial and sentencing of a Muslim – had no relation to Christians or inter-faith issues. As will be made clear in the re-telling of that day's events, the people who assembled in large numbers at Saleh's trial, some of whom later committed acts of violence, were responding to the perceived injustice not only in Saleh's sentence but also in the wider society. Selecting churches,

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[7] 'Pengerahan massa bisa memancing pengolakan', *Jawa Pos*, 9 October 1996.
[8] See Wieviorka, *Arena of Racism*, 71.
[9] Ainur R. Sophiaan, 'Situbondo slowly returning to normal', *Jakarta Post*, 21 Oct 1996.
[10] Hotman Siahaan quoted *in* Maria Ressa, 'Indonesian rioting further fractures diverse society', *CNN.com*, 29 October 1996, available from http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9610/29/indo.church/index.html accessed on 17 April 2002.

Christian schools, ethnic Chinese-owned businesses, and government buildings for violence meant targeting symbols of what were perceived to be agents of inequality, disparity and injustice in the local community.

Following 10 October, religious, political and military groups vehemently denied that this was anti-Christian violence. Rather than searching for its 'real reasons', they resorted to the New Order discursive practice of naming an unknown 'third party' as responsible. By so fervently ruling out religious conflict in Situbondo – which the burning of churches must indicate at some level – the community failed to confront and remedy anti-Christian and anti-Chinese sentiments. Efforts by the few who attempted to locate the source of public antipathy by asking questions about the social gap, and about corruption in local government and military, were hastily suffocated. Instead the Situbondo incident became highly politicised, most particularly among Islamic organisations and military elements. Conspiracy theories thrived in place of efforts to understand and reconcile. The violence in Situbondo was one in a series of violent uprisings across Indonesia, mainly on Java, after the storming of PDI-P headquarters on 27 July. Its impact on the national consciousness at the time was vitally important. This event set alarm bells ringing again about the fragility of New Order nationalism and revealed the inadequacies of this system to resolve the fundamental injustices that lay behind it.

Saleh's Trial

His friends and family described Saleh, 28, as quiet, shy and a devout Muslim, who earned Rp22,000 a month as an attendant at a local mosque.[11] It came as a considerable shock therefore, when in April 1996 Saleh was reported to the Kapongan branch of NU representatives (MWC NU) on charges of blasphemy, by a local *kiai* or Islamic teacher, Zaini.[12] The *kiai* charged that, at study sessions at his home, Saleh had repeatedly insulted a deceased local religious leader, Kiai As'ad Syamsul Arifin, by claiming he was a mystic or Sufi and that he had died whilst performing special mystical rituals.[13] Other charges of blasphemy were also made. It was alleged that on one of the occasions at his home, Kiai Zaini asked Saleh to write down what he had said and sign it. Armed with this evidence, Zaini approached the local NU branch with his charges against Saleh. After preliminary investigations, the Board of the NU Situbondo branch (PCNU) decided not to pursue the matter further.[14] They cited troubling flaws in the alleged confession signed by Saleh. President of PCNU Situbondo, Kiai Ahmad Sofyan, cautioned, 'A small problem does not need to be made into a large one.'[15] It

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[11] Masjid Nurul Islam, Gebang, Kapongan in 'Si Pendiam Bikin Perkara', *Gatra*, 19 October 1996.
[12] Head of pesantren, Nurul Hikam, Kesambi Rampak, Kapongan.

[13] Zaini accused Saleh of saying Kiai As'ad had died whilst performing *takacer* (tarekat; Sufism) and that he was an unbeliever. ('Kamis kelabu di Kota Santri', *Gatra*, 19 October 1996.) See also C. Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1976, 182–184.
[14] The Kapongan branch had passed the charges on to the Situbondo branch. (Gerakan Pemuda (GP) Ansor Jawa Timur, Pimpinan Wilayah Team Fact Finding Insiden Situbondo, 10 Oktober 1996, *Fakta dan Kesaksian Tragedi Situbondo, 10 Oktober 1996; Hasil Penelitian dan Analisis dari Tim Pencari Fakta GP Ansor Jatim*, available at http://www.fica.org/persecution/bp/home.htm, accessed 4 April 2002, Ch.2, 8.1)
[15] I. Hariyanto et al (ed.), *Melangkah dari Reruntuhan: Tragedi Situbondo* (Jakarta: Grasindo, 1998), 9. Similarly, other local Muslim leaders said that the issue should be dealt with as an 'internal' or 'family'

was not until Zaini, frustrated by this inaction, demanded an investigation that the case was taken up by police. By this time, he had already made numerous photocopies of 'Saleh's letter' and distributed them among the local community,[16] with the result that many people had become angered by its content. When the police arrested Saleh in May 1996 and charged him with inciting hatred and blasphemy, it was in fact as much for his own protection. Accounts of Saleh's character presented in reports following the events of 10 October 1996 depict a shy and socially removed young man,[17] whose own mother described as 'often doing strange and unnecessary things since he was small'.[18] The Institute for Inter-faith Dialogue in Indonesia (Interfidei) fact-finding team described Saleh as simple and poor and not smart enough or confident enough to say the things he was accused of. After interviewing him, they found no indication of the man Zaini depicted as being capable of debating complex problems of religious theology for hours and days at a time.[19]

Saleh's trial began on 12 September 1996 at the Situbondo courthouse. Large crowds of spectators attended each of the five sessions; each session was marred by violence. It was reported that people had come from across Java to attend the hearings.[20] At earlier sessions Saleh had been grabbed and beaten by the crowd, whilst the security forces offered him no protection. The prosecutor's office was also attacked and bottles thrown at the courthouse and at Saleh, but the security apparatus took no disciplinary action. The behaviour of the crowd outside the courthouse on 4 October at the fourth session of the trial was particularly violent. It was only due to the intervention of the late Kiai As'ad Syamsul Arifin's daughter Ning Nisa (whom it was alleged Saleh had defamed), that wide scale violence was prevented that day. She told the crowd that her family had no ill feeling towards Saleh and instructed them to go home.[21]

Sentencing Saleh: Violence in Situbondo

> I am surprised, Saleh is a person of Islam, but it was a church that was destroyed. What is the connection between Saleh and the church? Surely what should have been destroyed is not a church, but Saleh's house. (Pangdam (Regional Commander) Major General Imam Utomo)[22]

On 10 October, the fifth and final session of Saleh's trial, at which he was to be sentenced, it was estimated that between one thousand and four thousand people assembled outside the courthouse from early in the

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matter, in GP Ansor, *Fakta dan Kesaksian*, 8.2.; 'Saleh, si "penyebab" kerusuhan Situbondo di mata kakaknya', *Jawa Pos*, 18 October 1996.

[16] The letter was titled, 'Pelecehan Ulama dan Agama' and consisted of an alleged dialogue between Saleh and Zaini dated early May 1996. Another letter was also attached, written by Drs Moh. Asy'ari, which said that he heard Saleh proclaim that he himself was God and that he was a student of a local Sufi leader. (GP Ansor, *Fakta dan Kesaksian*, 2.8.2)

[17] Ibid.

[18] 'Si Pendiam, *Gatra*, 19 October 1996; 'Saleh, si "penyebab"', *Jawa Pos*, 18 October 1996.

[19] Interfidei, 'Laporan Survey Peristiwa Situbondo 10 Oktober 1996', (Yogyakarta, 1997) in Hariyanto, *Melangkah dari Reruntuhan*, 10–11.

[20] 'Government regrets violence in Situbondo', *Kompas*, 12 October 1996. People came from Bondowoso, Jember, Probolinggo, Banyuwangi. A PIKI investigation found that leaflets were circulated ahead of 10 October. ('Christian groups say no ulemas involved in the riots', *Jakarta Post*, 23 October 1996.)

[21] GP Ansor, *Fakta dan Kesaksian*, 2.8.3

[22] 'Wawasan kebangsaan perlu ditangkap', *Jawa Pos*, 31 October 1996.

morning.[23] They shouted slogans including, 'God is Great, kill Saleh, kill Saleh'.[24] The security forces present at the courthouse, between one and two hundred police and Kodam (Military Area Command) troops, were grossly outnumbered and unprepared. The inadequate level of security on the day was despite the fact that the local authorities, following the example of earlier hearings, had anticipated the scale of the crowd and their potential dissatisfaction with the sentence. Indeed, the court had approached the son of the late Kiai As'ad, himself a local *kiai*, Kholil As'ad,[25] to assist security to control the people at the courthouse, as his sister had done at the previous session. Kholil was committed to another engagement in Madura that day, and suggested that the court postpone the session until after his return. The court did not.[26]

At approximately 10am, the prosecution asked the court to give Saleh the maximum sentence according to the charge of five years' imprisonment, a term considered too short by the protesters. Anticipating trouble, security tried to move the crowds on. Some reports note that they acted harshly.[27] In the mid-morning heat, disappointed with the prosecution's claim for Saleh's punishment and reacting to the harsh action of the authorities, the crowd began to throw objects at the security forces, whom they outnumbered by more than ten to one. Meanwhile security had taken Saleh away undetected. The crowd set fire to the courthouse using petrol from a nearby service station, and attacked vehicles in the courthouse compound.[28] Witnesses testified that a call had sounded from the crowd that Saleh was hiding in the Mount Zion Bethel Church, which was situated almost immediately opposite the courthouse. By 11am, the church was in flames.[29] Christian groups reported that blasphemous graffiti, which they believed indicated NU members' involvement, were painted on nearby walls.[30]

After the first church was burned, people dispersed in an easterly direction, attacking nearby churches and Christian schools, a Buddhist temple, shops owned by ethnic Chinese, as well as government offices.[31] Five people died when they were trapped inside the Surabaya Pentecostal Church on Jalan Basuki Rachmat and in the house next door.[32] Those killed were the 70-year-old pastor, his wife, daughter and niece and housekeeper.[33]

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[23] Hariyanto, *Melangkah dari Reruntuhan*.
[24] 'Lima Tewas, Pemerintah Sesalkan Kerusuhan di Situbondo', *Media Indonesia*, 12 October 1996; 'Dosa Saleh dan kebrutalan ini', *Republika*, 12 October, 1996.
[25] Kholil was a popular local ulama.
[26] Hariyanto, *Melangkah dari Reruntuhan*, 12; 'Situbondo slowly returning to normal', *Jakarta Post*, 21 October 1996; 'Saya tak di tempat, saya tak bersalah', *Jawa Pos*, 16 October 1996.
[27] Witnesses testified that one officer hit a child who was watching, causing him to bleed. (Hariyanto, *Melangkah dari Reruntuhan*).
[28] FICA-Net, 'Chronology of Churches Destruction in Situbondo', *Incident 10 October 1996, Situbondo*, available at http://www.fica.org/persecution/10Oct96/chronology.html, accessed 4 April 2002.
[29] Komnas Ham investigators visited Situbondo in the weeks following, and concluded that one hour elapsed between the reading of Saleh's sentence and the crowd's rampage. This missing hour led many to argue that the violence was organised. (Ainur R. Sophiaan, 'Investigation into time gaps during the Situbondo riots', *Jakarta Post*, 25 October 1996.)
[30] GP Ansor, *Fakta dan Kesaksian*, 2.8.4.
[31] See list of damaged and burnt churches at FICA-Net, 'List of Casualties', *Incident 10 October 1996, Situbondo*, available at http://www.fica.org/persecution/10Oct96/casualties.html, accessed 4 April 2002.
[32] Neighbours say they were too afraid to leave the building because they were threatened by people carrying steel pipes, mallets, hoes and sickles. (FICA-Net, 'Chronology'.)
[33] Ibid.; 'Five killed in attacks on East Java churches: Government', *Jakarta Post*, 11 October 1996.

Early afternoon, the violence spread 30 kilometres to the east and west of Situbondo, to the towns of Asem Bagus, Besuki, Panarukan, Banyu Putih and Wonojo. In each village, churches were set alight.[34] The violence lasted for over five hours. Witnesses reported seeing men riding motorcycles between the various targets and giving orders to another group of men who had access to petrol and inflammatory material. According to a chronology of events complied by the FKKS, the masses were transported between locations outside Situbondo by trucks, motorcycles and pick-ups. Other investigations confirmed that some men carried ten litre cans filled with petrol for setting the buildings alight, and others shouted orders and distributed the petrol.[35] The security forces were ineffective. In its report, one Christian group claimed that the Pentecostal Church of West Indonesia on Jalan Sudirman, which was looted and damaged, was in fact next door to a police station.[36]

In the early evening the violence was brought under control by battalions from Bondowoso, Jember, Probolinggo and Malang, together with local military and police. The immense damage included destruction of the Situbondo courthouse, twenty-four churches, one Buddhist temple, six Christian and Catholic schools, an orphanage, numerous vehicles and shops. Five people were dead and many more wounded.[37]

Searching For The Culprits: Conspiracy Theories and Religion Ruled Out

> I know the characteristics of Muslims in the area (where the attack occurred). They love unity. They are good people. So, if they become violent it must be because they were provoked. (Army Chief of Staff, General R. Hartono)[38]

The response of political, military and religious leaders to the violence in Situbondo on 10 October was uniformly – or so it appeared on the surface – one of extreme shock. Christian and Muslim leaders alike spoke of the previously harmonious relations between their two religious communities in this town, which was famous for its *pesantren* and was regarded as being devout (*santri*).[39] The Bishop of Malang commented for example, 'There has never been a problem between religious communities. So we were all very surprised (*kaget*)...it is very strange'.[40]

At once, religious leaders, together with the political parties and the military, overwhelmingly opposed the claim that this violence was a religious conflict. In a demonstration of solidarity and commitment to religious harmony, leaders of Muslim, Catholic, Protestant and Hindu organisations issued a joint statement saying, 'We appeal to the government and the public for restraint (and)...we hope religious and community leaders will work hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder to foster peaceful co-existence between

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[34] 'Five killed', *Jakarta Post*.
[35] Hariyanto, *Melangkah dari Reruntuhan*, 22; Komnas HAM, *Situbondo Incident: 10 October 1996*, Jakarta, 15 November 1996.
[36] FICA-Net, 'Chronology'.
[37] 'Komnas HAM: Kasus Situbondo Murni Kriminal', *Media Indonesia*, 6 November 1996; Komnas, *Situbondo Incident*; FICA-Net, 'List of Casualties'.
[38] 'Attacks on churches instigated: Military', *Jakarta Post*, 19 October 1996.
[39] See Peter van der Veer , 'Riots and Rituals', 154–176.
[40] 'Dosa Saleh', *Republika*, 12 October 1996.

religious communities'.[41] They then rushed to present alternative explanations for the violence, including the accusation that a 'third party' or provocateurs were responsible. It was argued that they had manipulated the dissatisfaction and frustration of the people about Saleh's punishment, turning it towards latent anti-Christian and anti-Chinese sentiments. Head of the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), Hasan Basri, commented, 'I see this as a splinter movement'.[42] The same sentiment also came from Christian leaders, including Secretary General of the Union of Churches (PGI), JM Pattisana, who denied the violence was 'conflict between Muslims and Christians, but was an event that was exploited by certain sides.'[43] In its report on the violence, the National Commission for Human Rights (Komnas Ham) also supported the popular belief that a group of 'irresponsible persons' engineered the violence. Secretary of Komnas Ham, Baharuddin Lopa, added, 'There's a tendency of trying to divide and incite people in the community through deceitful issues. It's quite evident in the issues, which have been occurring lately. Apparently there are still people in this country who like spreading malicious rumours'.[44] Others were content to overlook the identity or motives of those behind the violence in favour of a result. Police Commander Soesilo Soedarman stated bluntly, 'There is no need to make connections with this or that. What's important is that there have already been arrests made, including Saleh'.[45]

The impact of these attacks on churches in Situbondo was felt at the highest levels of government and was deemed by many to pose a serious threat to national stability. Moerdiono, Minister for State Affairs, remarked, 'This incident could ruin the peaceful religious co-existence that we have been building...as taught by the state ideology, Pancasila.'[46] Amien Rais, head of the country's second largest Muslim organisation, Muhammadiyah, agreed that the violence may have been a part of a national program of destabilisation and warned, 'Don't be provoked by sides who do not like to see stability in our country'.[47] In the aftermath of 10 October, the general opinion expressed by leaders of various socio-political and religious organisations was that the people of Situbondo were indeed victims of a 'bigger scheme'.[48] Baramuli, a member of the team sent by Komnas Ham to investigate the violence in Situbondo, agreed that this local event had a more national context and was not a consequence of religious conflict: 'These things involve sinister persons (*oknum*)'.[49] However, his team failed to indicate who these *oknum* were.

Meanwhile, local groups were formulating theories around their own suspicions and numerous 'investigations'. The NU youth group, Gerakan Pemuda (GP) Ansor, produced a report or *'Buku Putih'* essentially to clear NU's name. It concluded that there was a *konspirasi lima kelompok* (KLK) or conspiracy

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[41] Ainur R. Sophiaan, 'Religious leaders pledge to work towards harmony', *Jakarta Post*, 26 October 1996.
[42] 'Ketua Umum MUI Menyesalkan Terjadinya Kerusuhan Situbondo', *Kompas*, 15 October 1996.
[43] 'President: Peristiwa Situbondo Merupaka Cobaan dan Ujian', *Suara Pembaruan*, 5 November 1996.
[44] 'Gus Dur begs forgiveness for raids on churches', *Jakarta Post*, 14 October 1996.
[45] 'Pelakunya Ditangkap, Gerejanya dibangun', *Jawa Pos*, available at http://www.fica.org/persecution/10Oct96/article/pelakunya.html accessed 4 April 2002.
[46] 'Five killed', *Jakarta Post*, 11 October 1996.
[47] 'Semua Pihak Harus Introspeksi', *Republika*, 12 October 1996.
[48] 'All faiths asked to help rebuild torched churches', *Jakarta Post*, 18 October 1996; Amir Santoso, 'Kerusuhan Situbondo', *Kompas*, 14 October 1996.
[49] 'Komnas HAM', *Media Indonesia*, 6 November 1996.

of five groups, including the military, Muhammadiyah, ICMI, Zaini, local *preman* and Golkar supporters.[50] Reports by Christian groups and by Interfidei did not cast blame in such clear terms, but supported the notion that provocation had occurred within an environment hostile to Christians and ethnic Chinese. The military also came under local suspicion, at least because they had failed to protect the community. The response by a coalition of Christian groups revealed the extent to which this was not a unique or altogether surprising incident, 'All this tragedy were (sic) made possible because the security officials did not handle the previous incidents properly.'[51] In response Commander Maj.Gen. Subagio Hadi Siswoyo simply insisted, 'This is a SARA (ethnic group, religion, race, inter-group relations) issue. If there are criminals like those who burnt shops and other things, it is only being exploited for other gains (*ditunggangi*).'[52]

NU In A Spin

> To God only do I ask forgiveness for those who did it without knowing the serious consequences for society, the people and the state. (Abdurrahman Wahid, Chairman of NU)[53]

Amid the national and local exchange of conspiracy theories and claims about the causes of the violence, tensions within the most dominant Islamic organisation in Situbondo, NU, and between NU and the government began to emerge, providing evidence that the violence was quickly becoming part of a larger political scenario. A few days after the violence, at a meeting in Ambon, the Minister for Religion, Tarmizi Taher, called for laws governing religious harmony and asked religious leaders to work harder to promote it. In what would have been seen by the predominantly NU *ulama* (Muslim religious teachers and leaders) in Situbondo as a direct criticism of their relationships with their followers, Taher said, 'To understand the aspirations of the people leaders must go down to the grass roots level more often and continue their struggle with the local government and armed forces'.[54] Perhaps not coincidentally, the next day NU's leader, Abdurrahman Wahid (just returned from an ecumenical meeting on world peace in Rome), issued a remarkable press statement.[55] In it he stated that considering that most of the rioters in Situbondo were NU members, the moral responsibility for the violence should fall on himself as NU chairman. He made this apology:

> The majority of residents in the area of the rioting are NU people. Because of that I appeal to all sides, particularly the NU leadership at all levels, to engage in introspection and prepare themselves for self criticism. In the name of NU I ask forgiveness from the people.[56]

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[50] GP Ansor, *Fakta dan Kesaksian*, Ch.3.2; 3.3.
[51] 'Statement of Concern of 3 Christian groups from the Province of East Java and the City of Surabaya', 11 October 1996, Surabaya, available from http://www.fica.org/persecution/10Oct96/article/concern1.html, accessed 4 April 2002.
[52] 'KSAD minta ulama turun ke bawah', *Jawa Pos*, 19 October 1996.
[53] 'Sudah saatnya Indonesia memiliki undang-undang kerukunan beragama', *Kompas*, 13 October 1996.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Wahid admitted that he had not yet received a detailed report about the violence or contacted people in East Java, but was waiting until things cooled down.
[56] 'Atas Nama NU, Gus Dur Minta Maaf', *Jawa Pos*, 14 October 1996; 'NU Chairman apologises for Situbondo riots', *Kompas*, 14 October 1996.

Wahid went on to say that he believed Muslim leaders continued to be suspicious towards other religions and wanted to be supreme, an attitude which led to conflict like that in Situbondo.[57]

In response to Wahid's apology, representatives from various Christian groups under the banner of 'Non Government Forum For the Situbondo Tragedy' immediately met with the NU central board to convey their gratitude for its chairman's statement.[58] However, they were not the only ones seeking an audience with the NU elite on this issue. Reportedly, crowds of NU members visited its headquarters seeking an explanation for Wahid's statement and reassurance that the NU did not believe the violence was a religious issue. This revealed existing concerns in the organization; as Hefner observed later, 'Situbondo, one might say, was where the tension between Wahid's enlightened leadership and the NU masses was dangerously apparent.'[59] An NU board member, Ahmad, responded to the concerns by stating that the violence was a criminal act, it was not fuelled by religious hatred and NU members were not involved.[60]

Quickly the focus of public and institutional interest in the Situbondo violence turned to tensions within the NU elite which had escalated beyond the 'apology controversy' in the weeks following the violence. Rumours began to circulate, originating from NU youth groups such as the Indonesian Movement of Islamic Students (*Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia*, PMII), that the Situbondo violence had been organised as part of a mass conspiracy to bring down Wahid. The Indonesian Association of Christian Intellectuals (PIKI) also concluded from their investigations that, 'There were efforts to slander the NU and Gus Dur'.[61] Initially Wahid rejected this speculation saying that the violence was the result of religious intolerance and a lack of understanding between residents, and he committed the NU to assisting in the rebuilding of damaged churches.[62]

In contrast to Wahid's reconciliatory approach, days later at a National Seminar on 'Religion as the Infrastructure for Development', the deputy of the NU Executive Board, KH MA Sahal Mahfudz gave what appeared to be another rebuttal of his leader's earlier apology, exposing again lingering tensions within the NU elite. 'To be frank, the Situbondo affair is more related to the character of the local citizens. If there is an opinion and evaluation that said incident is called a religious problem, then it has to be re-studied.'[63] Mahfudz also described the majority of Situbondo locals as 'temperamental Madurese residents'.[64]

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[57] 'Gus Dur begs forgiveness', *Jakarta Post*, 14 October 1996

[58] 'Proof of Religious Dehumanisation and Secularisation', *Kompas*, 16 October 1996; 'Komnas HAM minta restu Gus Dur', *Jawa Pos*, 16 October 1996.

[59] R.W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 190.

[60] 'NU denies attacks fuelled by religious hatred', *Jakarta Post*, 16 October 1996.

[61] 'Christian groups', *Jakarta Post*, 23 October 1996; 'Peristiwa ini luar biasa', *Gatra*, 19 October 1996.

[62] 'All faiths asked', *Jakarta Post*, 18 October 1996. Wahid spoke with many Christian groups in the weeks following the violence and continued to take moral responsibility for Situbondo. ('Batu Apinya Ya Saleh', *Jawa Pos*, 18 October 1996.

[63] 'Situbondo riots no religious problem', *Kompas*, 21 October 1996.

[64] Ibid. He was not alone in making such analysis of the nature of the locals. Another *kiai*, Ali Yafie, also argued that the *keras* (aggressive) nature of the Madurese can leads to problems. ('Peristiwa ini luar biasa', *Gatra*, 19 October 1996.)

Faced with a potential public relations nightmare caused by this open quarrel, Wahid re-entered the debate but succeeded only in complicating matters further.[65] He made an about-turn from his earlier dismissal of conspiracy theories, to fully acknowledging their intentions.[66] Startlingly, he claimed that the violence in Situbondo had been orchestrated, and named the brains behind it as 'our friends', 'AS' and 'AR'.[67] It was quickly deduced by all following this story that these were the initials of the leaders of ICMI, Adi Sasono and of Muhammadiyah, Amien Rais. Further, Wahid did not dismiss the possibility that the violence was connected with Army Chief of Staff General Hartono's push for the position of Vice President.[68]

Jockeying For Position In An Election Year

Wahid's public airing of conspiracy theories about the Situbondo violence reveals less about the causes of this violence than about political game-playing during an election year. In early November 1996, in the debate about what had caused the Situbondo violence and the role played by NU, Wahid issued a personal invitation to Suharto to open a NU conference in Probolinggo, East Java.[69] Aware of NU's difficult position at the time and therefore of their need to have supporters in high places, Wahid made a calculated political decision, taking advantage of Suharto's desire to be re-elected in March and, some believed, to move closer to Islam. In his opening address to the NU *ulama*, Suharto repeated nationalist doctrine and called for NU assistance, 'Given the diversity of our nation we have to strive to preserve unity and cohension'.[70] Afterwards Suharto met Wahid privately for the first time since the cleric had been re-elected as NU Chairman in December 1994. At that time, he had not been invited to the Presidential palace as was customary for new heads of religious organisations, and it was widely acknowledged that theirs was a difficult and unfriendly relationship.[71] Wahid's aides represented Suharto's attendance at the NU meeting as a sign that the relationship between the NU, its leader and the government was healthy. Indeed, a few days later, Wahid announced NU's implicit support for Suharto in his re-election in the 1998 ballot. While insisting he would take a neutral stance as leader of a non-political organisation, Wahid clearly intended to assure the government of NU's support:

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[65] 'Konspirasi Naga Hijau di Buku Putih', *Forum Keadilan*, 10 February 1997.
[66] GP Ansor, *Fakta dam Kesaksian*, 1.12.
[67] 'Konspirasi Naga', *Forum Keadilan*, 10 February 1997; 'Bola inisial dari Gus Dur', *Gatra*, 16 November 1996, 37.

68 There had been tensions between General Hartono and Wahid since the General directed a campaign against Wahid in 1994–96. (Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 195.)
[69] 'Gus Dur akan bertemu Presiden', *Jawa Pos*, 1 November 1996; 'Gus Dur', *Kompas*, 15 November 1996. There were indications that not all NU members supported the invitation to Suharto. 'Saya tak ada masalah dengan Habibie', *Jawa Pos*, 21 November 1996.
[70] 'Moslems told to preserve unity', *Jakarta Post*, 3 November 1996.
[71] See Andrée Feillard, 'Traditionalist Islam and the Army in Indonesia's New Order: The Awkward Relationship' in *Nahdlathul Ulama, Traditional Islam and Modernity in Indonesia,* eds Barton G. and Fealey G. (Monash Asia Institute, Clayton, 1996), 42–67.

> NU is not a social-political organisation with a representative in the MPR. So, NU is completely content to leave the problem of choosing the President to the Special Session of the MPR. And if Pak Harto is chosen again as President by the parliament, NU will support him.[72]

The importance of this meeting was recognised by political commentator Arbi Sanit[73] as signalling a trend towards closer relations between the government and Islam. It was also remarkable given that very recent reports by NU intelligence had advised that Wahid was about to become the target of another government attack.[74] The scandal involving the role of Muslims in the violence and Suharto's willingness to make peace with Wahid, hint at the increased level of concern among New Order elite about the potential for further disturbances. By giving its support to Suharto, NU undertook not to use its large membership against the government, and Wahid stood to benefit from this resumption of relations with the Presidential palace. At a time when NU's reputation was suffering due to both the violence in Situbondo and internal friction, Wahid's move to re-align NU with Suharto ensured NU much needed elite affirmation and political power vis-à-vis its rivals ICMI and the Indonesian Committee for World Islamic Solidarity (*Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam*, KISDI), which were close to the government.[75]

Local Antipathies Exposed Through The National Discourse

Leader of ICMI, Adi Sasono, denied firmly Wahid's alleged accusations of his and Amien Rais' involvement in the Situbondo violence. At the same time, as all around him rejected explanations for the violence based on religious and ethnic antipathies, Sasono alone differed. In an interview with the magazine *Forum Keadilan*, which was covering the scandal surrounding the NU and the Situbondo violence, Sasono said,

> The people are greatly concerned about the imbalance (*kepincangan*) and it is not being resolved. We must recognise their problem. For example, in Situbondo from 27 churches, 3 were built during the Dutch era, four have permits and the rest have no permits. It offends the peoples' good manners.[76]

He also warned, 'Don't blame the Muslims. This is also not healthy'.[77]

Adi Sasono was the first social or religious leader to speak of what Hariyanto terms the 'hidden conflict' in Situbondo over the number of churches built without permits in the town.[78] This was a cause of antagonism, as was the number of vehicles filling the area around a church every Sunday, or even around houses being used for Christian gatherings. The Mount Zion Pentecostal Church, the first to be attacked on 10 October had been at the centre of community friction. Not long before the violence, a petition was signed

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[72] 'NU Mendukung Keputusan MPR', *Jawa Pos*, 5 November 1996.
[73] Arbi Sanit, 'Nanti Giliran PBNU diterima', *Jawa Pos*, 5 November 1996.
[74] See Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 190.
[75] Ibid., 196. At the time, political commentators were calling for Wahid to meet with ICMI heads Habibie and Adi Sasono, as a good-will gesture to defuse speculation about conflict between the two groups. ('Gus Dur harus ketemu Habibie', *Jawa Pos*, 18 November 1997.) Days later Wahid responded by saying he had no problem with ICMI or Habibie. ('Saya tak ada masalah', *Jawa Pos*, 21 November 1996.)
[76] 'Adi Sasono', *Forum Keadilan*, 10 February 1997.
[77] Ibid.

by local residents to protest against the location of the church on the main street of Situbondo.[79] After the violence in October the issue of church building also attracted interest from the Minister for Religion, revealing the extent to which this was not only a local, but also a national tension and was recognised as a reason for conflict. He warned, 'Don't build a place of worship anywhere you feel like it, that can invite conflict'.[80]

In addition to disagreements over the building and location of churches, local tensions existed over land claims and industry development around Situbondo.[81] In most cases, these conflicts involved ethnic Chinese business people and local residents. Conflict over land claims at Banongan coincided with the Saleh trial and subsequent violence. This included attacks on the local plantation, the local police station, and the army post (*Komando Rayon Militer*, Koramil).[82]

In representations of the 10 October violence by authorities, including religious, military and political leaders, no mention was made of tensions between the ethnic Chinese business community, Christian churches, and local residents in Situbondo. Descriptions of the violence as religious conflict, and the prevalence of conspiracy theories, overwhelmed representations, leaving no space to touch on local ethnic or class based antipathies.

Local Relationships Of Power and Peace: Kiai and the Situbondo Violence

> I myself always visit KH Sofyan and KH Kholil to ask for spiritual assistance. (Franky Sastrowijoyo, ethnic Chinese businessman and resident of Situbondo.)[83]

Locally also, explanations why the public followed the so-called provocateurs were not sought. Instead, the issue that greatly occupied public debate was the role of *kiai* and the possibility that conflicts among them allowed the violence to occur. The story surrounding Saleh's trial and the involvement of several *kiai* remains to be fully told. The actions of Kiai Zaini, first coaxing Saleh, a simple-minded mosque attendant, to sign a statement of sophisticated religious argument and then distributing the letter among the local community may indicate a sinister objective.[84] That Zaini's local branch of NU representatives, and then the Situbondo branch, failed to support his claims hints that Zaini's relationship with this organisation was weak and that

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[78] Hariyanto, *Melangkah dari Reruntuhan*, 34.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Tarmizi Taher quoted in 'Menag: Pondok Pelopori kerukunan beragama', *Jawa Pos*, 13 November 1996. See A. Azyumardi, 'Islam and Christianity in Indonesia: The roots of conflict and hostility', in *Religion and Culture in Asia Pacific: Violence or Healing*, ed. Joseph A. Camilleri with the assistance of Larry Marshall (Melbourne: Vista Publications, 2001), 84–92.
[81] Hariyanto, *Melangkah dari Reruntuhan*, 36–37.
[82] 'Dukung Penahanan 5 Tokoh Banongan', *Jawa Pos*, 2 October 1996; 'Hasut warga bakar Polsek dan Koramil', *Jawa Pos*, 15 October 1996; Hariyanto, *Melangkah dari Reruntuhan*, 37; See 'Itu Fitnah, Kami Tak Memanen Jagung', *Jawa Pos*, 16 November 1996. Attacks on the plantation continued after 10 October. Authorities claimed that residents of surrounding villages took advantage of the fact that security forces were preoccupied with the Situbondo violence.
[83] GP Ansor, *Fakta dan Kesaksian*, Ch.2.6.
[84] Ibid., Ch.3.2.3. Some groups, including GP Ansor, believe Zaini was a member of the *kelompok lima kerusuhan* who engineered the violence.

they did not have sufficient trust in his word. As a consequence, questions about Zaini's motives in pursuing Saleh lingered.

A second 'mystery' relates to the lack of assistance given the police by *ulama* in controlling the crowds at the courthouse, particularly on 10 October. The local NU officials and *ulama* recognised the potential for violence that day. Speculation surrounds the reasons why Kiai Kholil, the son of As'ad, and other local *ulama* and *kiai,* who could have helped to calm the people, were sent to Madura for a religious meeting.[85] Kiai A. Wahid Zaini, head of the PBNU and High School for Ilmu Fiqh in nearby Asem Bagus, told *Republika* he was surprised that *kiai* were absent from Situbondo because, he argued, the locals 'are not afraid of the security apparatus, even when the tanks arrived. What they are afraid of, are teachers and leaders, that is the *ulama. Ulama* can ask them to cool down the atmosphere so that a riot will never occur.'[86] Later Kholil was accused by some Muslim groups of being the *dalang* or puppeteer behind the violence, despite his earlier calls for peace.[87] He rejected the accusations outright and argued that those responsible for the violence could be found hidden behind government and religious rhetoric: 'democratisation and honesty are nothing but a façade'.[88]

In their studies, Dhofier[89] and Mansurmoor[90] describe the position of the *kiai* in Javanese and Madurese society as central. They provide diverse services to their followers including education, business advice, medical treatment and spiritual guidance. They have considerable influence and power among the local community and most of their followers maintain their allegiance to them for life.[91] These studies also demonstrate that this relationship is not necessarily predicated on Islam.[92] Dhofier argues that the *kiai*'s appeal increasingly spans tradition and religion in a secular Indonesia: 'Amidst increasing material development, the *kiai* have been regarded as safeguards of the basic moral needs of the Indonesian community.'[93] By all accounts, a system of *cukong* relationships between ethnic Chinese and local authorities, including *kiai*, operates in Situbondo and across Java.[94] In practical terms, a significant portion of a kiai or *ulama*'s income comes from gifts and donations from wealthier followers, leading to inevitable tensions in maintaining his

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[85] 'Proof', *Kompas*, 16 October 1996.
[86] 'Semua Pihak', *Republika*, 12 October 1996. The *Republika* newspaper editorialised that Situbondo was experiencing a transition from traditionalism to modernism and the people were confused by it. ('Insiden Situbondo', *Republika*, 14 October 1996).
[87] GP Ansor, *Fakta dan Kesaksian*; 'KH. Wahid Zaini: Soal Kasus Situbondo dan Hubungan Ulama-Ulama', *Jawa Pos*, 16 October 1996.
[88] 'Attack on churches politically engineered', *Jakarta Post*, 25 November 1996; 'Saya Tak di Tempat, Saya Tak Bersalah', *Jawa Pos*, 16 October 1996.
[89] Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *The Pesantren Tradition: The Role of the Kyai in the Maintenance of Traditional Islam in Java* (Tempe, Arizona: Monograph Series Press, Program for Southeast Asian Studies, Arizona State University, 1999).
[90] Iik Arifin Mansurmoor, *Islam in an Indonesian world: Ulama of Madura* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1990).
[91] Ibid.; See Hotman M. Siahaan, 'Situbondo case reflects our violent culture', *Jakarta Post*, 18 October 1996.
[92] Mansurmoor (*Islam in an Indonesian world*, 259) writes that the Madurese *ulama* perform a role as agents of commerce and trade and details how they, like the ethnic Chinese, can be an entrepreneurial group, 'The *ulama* are quick to grasp new economic opportunities.'
[93] Dhofier, *The Pesantren Tradition*, 177.
[94] Vice head of SMA H. Fatchurrasyid. Hariyanto, *Melangkah dari Reruntuhan*, 33–34.

position as a traditional religious leader within a modernising Islam. Rumours about the role of certain kiai and *ulama* more generally in the October violence essentially stemmed from their failure to perform the role expected of them as a 'restraining' element.[95] Such relationships had restrained potential conflict in the past; therefore one of the questions which preoccupied many in Situbondo was why the *kiai* did not act to prevent conflict this time?

Many ethnic Chinese left Situbondo after the violence, some permanently but most temporarily, and for days afterwards many Christians and ethnic Chinese were still too afraid to open their shops. Three months later some Christians were still afraid to worship in the churches. Pastor Magdelena Manahutu explained, 'All the people feel the same like what I feel...scared and they're nervous and they worry'.[96] In spite of this fear, when the ethnic Chinese community came to acknowledge the causes and culprits of the violence and subsequent terror, they too denied racial or religious sentiment, and held strong to their relationships with local Islamic leaders. Cornelius Ronowidjojo from PIKI responded, 'All the ulemas that we contacted said they were astounded. They knew nothing of the riots beforehand. They also regretted and condemned the incident.'[97] Others again discounted suggestions of NU involvement: 'I do not believe that NU kiai were behind the 10 October riot, neither do I suspect the NU leadership'.[98] Nevertheless, those who remained in Situbondo and re-opened their stores were careful to take precautions, one being to simply display a picture of Kiai Kholil in their stores as a sign of solidarity with the cleric and his family.[99]

Trials and Justice? The Role of the Military

> The Muslims and Christians have lived in peace here for a long time. I believe the people are not guilty. They have only become victims. I think the military should answer who is behind this. (Khairul Amam, Muslim youth leader.)[100]

The role of the military and police, who failed to prevent or halt such destructive mass violence was never really questioned in the national discourse. Instead, along with religious and political leaders, the security forces pointed to planning an incitement by a 'third party'. They moved quickly, decisively, and also violently, to produce the alleged perpetrators.

In reports about the violence released by a local police team and the Regional Agency for the Coordination of Support for the Development of National Stability (Bakorstanasda), investigators concluded that the violence had been planned.[101] Armed Forces Commander Lt. Gen. Feisal Tanjung claimed that

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[95] See Mackie, 'Anti-Chinese outbreaks in Indonesia, 1959–68', 132.
[96] Ressa, 'Indonesian rioting'.
[97] 'Christian groups', *Jakarta Post*, 23 October 1996; 'Nun's testimony clears local Muslims, say youth groups', *Jakarta Post*, 2 November 1996.
[98] Samuel Lie, Head of Badan Musyawarah Antar Gereja (BAMAG), GP Ansor, *Fakta dan Kesaksian*, Ch.2.6.
[99] 'Christian groups', *Jakarta Post*, 23 October 1996.
[100] Ressa, 'Indonesian rioting'.
[101] 'ABRI: There was a meeting before the Situbondo riots erupted', *Kompas*, 17 October 1996; 'Kerusuhan Situbondo direncanakan', *Kompas*, 25 October 1996.

meetings had been held to organise the incident.[102] Although adamant about the planning, and despite making many arrests, the team of Bakorstanasda investigators were unable to locate the 'brains' or 'coordinator'.[103] Despite this, the apparatus of both military and police arrested over one hundred people and charged 54 within a month of the incident at Situbondo. Trials commenced by December. On 6 December, one of those charged and detained for participating in the violence, Ahmad Sidiq, died in hospital as a result of wounds he sustained in detention.[104] Police maintained that Sidiq was already injured at the time of his arrest, and the Regional Commander, Maj. Gen. Imam Utomo, claimed that Ahmad had simply become ill in custody.[105] However, following this death and prior to the first trial, Situbondo army chief, Lt. Col. Imam Prawoto, was replaced. Utomo admitted the dismissal was due to Prawoto's obsession with the violence: 'Over the past two months I saw him getting more and more stressed out. He could only think of the fifty four suspects and nothing else.'[106]

On 16 December 1996, just over two months after Situbondo, the first trial commenced. Four men and one woman, aged 21–34 years, were accused of involvement in the burning of the Santo Paulus Church in Panarukan and charged with criminal damage. Four hundred security personnel were situated around the court. Among the spectators were top military, police, MUI members and *kiai*. The Police Chief of East Java, Maj.Gen. Soemarsono, had earlier urged the people to stay away: 'We already appealed to the people that those who had no interest should not attend the trial. Let the farmer work in the rice field and the *santri* go recite the Koranic verses at the *pesantren*.'[107]

The Situbondo violence was triggered by a conflict between Muslims and by dissatisfaction with the legal process; yet, in addition to what can be seen as obvious targets, including the courthouse and government buildings, the ethnic Chinese and Christian communities were also singled out. This can be partially explained by the connection made by locals between injustice and disparity and ethnic Chinese and Christians. Many antagonisms existed over perceptions that unfair advantage was given to Christians and ethnic Chinese, as demonstrated in the building of churches, in land claims, in the flaunting of laws to which the majority must abide. Further, the 'restraints' normally in place to prevent hostility from transforming into violence – the Muslim clerics – were not present, whilst agents to facilitate it clearly were. There are indications that the

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[102] 'There was a meeting', *Kompas*, 17 October 1996.

[103] Lieutenant Colonel S. Subagyo. 'Otak Perusuh Situbondo belum tertangkap', *Kompas*, 19 October 1996. At one stage investigators were following a lead that planning had taken place in a number of houses in Jember, East Java. ('Kerusuhan Situbondo direncanakan', *Kompas*, 25 October 1996.)

[104] Ahmad Sidiq was an ascetic Muslim known for his long campaign against military-backed gambling in villages. (Gerry van Klinken, 'Tinderbox or Conspiracy?', *Inside Indonesia*, edition 50, 1997.)

[105] The accusations against the military and police regarding Sidiq's death originated from Wahid, who told the media. ('The Situbondo case: The controversy over a suspected casualty', *Kompas*, 10 December 1996.) The next day, members of the NU executive again acted to distance themselves from Wahid's remarks. (*Kompas*, 11 December 1996.) Sidiq's funeral was attended by religious leaders from across the region in a gesture of religious solidarity and commitment to harmony.

[106] 'Situbondo Army Chief Replaced', *Jakarta Post*, 14 December 1996.

[107] 'Situbondo Incident Goes On trial', *Kompas*, 17 December 1996; 'Situbondo incident court session', *Kompas*, 18 December 1996. The defence did not present witnesses. The five accused were found guilty and sentenced to five months prison. More than twenty more suspects were still to stand trial on similar charges. ('Jaksa Mengajukan 20 terdakwa lain', *Kompas*, 26 December 1996.)

violence was systematically carried out and possibly planned; but the involvement of large masses of people also indicates existing antipathies towards the targeted groups. National and local responses avoided such explanations, instead reciting mantra-like ideas of religious harmony and tolerance while directing responsibility not to the security forces and government but to 'formless masses' and individuals conveniently labelled *preman* and *oknum*. The struggle to represent the Situbondo violence was decisively controlled by discourses favourable to the New Order government and was appropriated by other groups for political advantage.

TASIKMALAYA, 26 DECEMBER 1996[108]

> There is no problem in being certain about the 'primary cause'. But it is easier to hope that riots with SARA sentiments like this, are not repeated in the future. (Bandung Diocese Investigation Team)[109]
>
> Violence by security apparatus begets violence. (Bambang Widjojanto, Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation, YLBHI)[110]

As the trials got underway of the first of those accused of participating in the violence in Situbondo, new trouble brewed on the other side of Java, in the town of Tasikmalaya, West Java.[111] Like Situbondo, the trigger of the violence was unrelated to ethnic Chinese or Christians, but involved a conflict between local Muslims and police. The violence resulted in an estimated Rp85 billion in damages.[112] This included the destruction of 13 churches,[113] one Confucian building and one Buddhist temple, 89 shops (particularly car showrooms and dealerships), 12 police stations, four factories, four schools, six banks, three hotels, over 100 vehicles. Four people died[114] and 15 injured.[115]

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[108] For a detailed description of this incident see appendix B.
[109] Tim Pencari Data Keuskupan Bandung, 'Tasik bergolak, Api berkobar', available at http://www.parokinet.org/bandung/tasik/bara.html , accessed 28 July 2000.
[110] 'Leaders condemn Tasikmalaya's wave of violence', *Jakarta Post*, 28 December 1996.
[111] Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia (YLBHI) *Press Release* No.73/SP/YLBHI/XII/1996 tentang 'Temuan Tim Pencari Fakta YLBHI: Kerusuhan di Tasikmalaya, 26 December 1996; Toriq Hadad (ed.), *Tasikmalaya: Konflik di basis Islam* (Jakarta: ISAI, 1998); Tim Pencari Data Keuskupan Bandung (TPKB), 'Kronologi Peristiwa Tasikmalaya, http://www.parokinet.org/bandung/tasik/kronologi.html, accessed 28 July 2000; Amnesty International News Release - ASA 21/81/98, 'Indonesia: Releases welcome but still more in jail', 18 August 1998; Amnesty International Report - ASA 21/84/98, 'Indonesian and East Timor: The prisoner releases so far', 26 August 1998.
[112] 'No rights violations found in riot', *Jakarta Post*, 30 December 1996; *Kompas*, 'Tasikmalaya riot', 28 December, 1996; 'Kota Tasik Kembali Normal', *Pikiran Rakyat*, 28 December 1996.
[113] Catholic Church, Jalan Sutisna Senjaya; Christian Church of Indonesia (GKI), Jln. Veteran; Indonesian Pentecostal Church, Jln. Penyertuan; Indonesian Bethel Church, Jln. Citepan were burnt down. Three more churches were badly damaged and five had some damages. (TPKB, 'Tasik Bergolak'.)
[114] The victims included an ethnic Chinese woman found in a gutted church. ('Life in troubled Tasikmalaya slowly returns to normal', *Jakarta Post*, 29 December 1996.) Another, a youth who fell from the back of a truck. (Tasikmalaya riot', *Jakarta Post*, 28 December 1996; YLBHI, 'Temuan Tim'.)
[115] Komnas HAM findings reported in 'Thousands of workers unemployed', *Jakarta Post*, 30 December 1996.

In the effort to interpret the violence, conclusions increasingly rested upon the social and economic divide, and blame was variously placed on provocateurs, an ignorant local community, and even the victims. The SARA-related issues that arose during this violence, however, revealed a divided community. As with the Situbondo case, Indonesians struggled to understand how a conflict between police and students of Islam led to the burning of Chinese shops. It was increasingly recognised that the Tasikmalaya and Situbondo cases could not be isolated from each other or from violence elsewhere in the country at the time. Baharuddin Lopa from Komnas HAM pointed to violence against ethnic minorities in Situbondo and Sanggau Ledo as evidence that the Tasikmalaya violence was not simply a local conflict, warning, 'The use of violence is regrettable, it is essential to continually develop mutual understanding among the ethnic groups'.[116] However, the government did not recognise the need to examine and address local antipathies and their national sources, including those that were ethnic or class based. Instead, it continued to ignore such explanations of the conflicts and maintained the rhetoric used also by military and religious groups, including imposing particular structures for resolving conflict.

In the wake of the second incident of violence in Java within a month, some political and social commentators turned their focus on the increased marginalisation felt by many in the face of the encroaching development process,[117] and decried the use of jargon such as 'third party' and 'communist threat' by the government and military elite.[118] Academics and commentators also opposed the initiative proposed by Komnas HAM leader Baharuddin Lopa to create a new forum to promote religious harmony. They argued that this was not conflict based on religious tension and charged that the government responded only to the 'symptoms' of social problems; it did not act to prevent them.[119] These same voices spoke out in opposition to a proposal by the government and military to establish 'alert command centres' in local and regional areas to monitor and prevent unrest. It was suspected that this plan sounded very much like the brief of the disbanded Operation Command for the Restoration of Security and Order (KOPKAMTIB), which was replaced by the National Stability Coordinating Body (BAKORSTANAS) in 1988.[120] Meanwhile, Suharto and Feisal Tanjung refused to acknowledge the limitations of the development and national security program they had designed for Indonesia. Suharto remained focused, 'Our development is based on stability. Without national stability there will be no development, without development there will be no growth. Without growth there will be no parity.'[121] In an explicit attempt to divert attention from the responsibility of his government or the military for failing to contain the violence in Tasikmalaya and elsewhere, President Suharto engaged a discourse integral to his rule. As Heryanto argues, 'Indonesia's New Order authoritarianism would not have existed nor survived without the magical power of the discursive phantom of the "Communist threat".'[122] In a statement about the violence in Tasikmalaya and elsewhere in the country, Suharto conjured up a group of 'formless

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[116] 'Third party masterminded riot, rights body says', *Jakarta Post*, 19 January 1997.
[117] 'Effective action needed to quell unrest: Nasution', *Jakarta Post*, 31 December 1996.
[118] 'Jargon creates much suspicion', *Jakarta Post*, 9 January 1997.
[119] 'Inter-faith forum "no solution for social unrest"', *Jakarta Post*, 11 January 1997.
[120] 'Scholars sceptical about Maoist theory', *Jakarta Post*, 21 January 1997; *Forum Keadilan*, 10 February 1997, 10.
[121] 'Maoist groups behind riots, says Soeharto', *Jakarta Post*, 18 January 1997.

masses' with misguided objectives, claiming, 'They are applying the Mao Zedong theory in which they seek to control the villages and then cities... These troublemakers mess the villages up first and then continue their disturbance into the city.'[123]

Only days after the incident, Tasikmalaya residents, many of whom lost their jobs in the violence, remained almost festive during their celebration of the New Year. This response raises some questions about participants in anti-Chinese violence. How do local participants fail to see the economic consequences of such violence for themselves? Why did the people burn contents of shops rather than taking them home? Why did they take delight in destroying the factory they worked in? The counter theoretical question here is to ask whether the violence was an instrumental action with a particular purpose, or merely a 'frenzy'? For Horowitz, the distinction between collective violence that can be described as economically motivated (with particular aims and demands for lower prices and so on), and collective violence motivated by ethnic antipathies, is the scale of destruction 'even of property that rioters might have chosen to steal instead'.[124]

As 1996 drew to a close, President Suharto reflected upon the previous twelve months, highlighting in particular the high rate of economic growth achieved; but without referring to specific events he lamented that 1996 had also been marked by social upheaval. Yet he failed to recognise the importance of this period of unrest for the future of his Presidency, simply restating an inflexible nationalist program: 'This is why we have to prevent these upheavals from recurring. We have to be able to place the interests of this nation above the interests of individuals and groups.'[125]

VIOLENCE IN RENGASDENGKLOK, 30 JANUARY 1997

> (I)n order to establish a government of the state of Indonesia which shall protect the entire Indonesian people and the whole land of Indonesia... the independence of the Indonesian people are embodied in a Constitution of the state of Indonesia. This Constitution shall establish a Republic of the state of Indonesia in which the people are sovereign and which is based upon: belief in the One Supreme God, a just and civilised humanitarianism, the unity of Indonesia, and a Democracy guided by wisdom arising from consultation and representation, and which shall ensure social justice for the whole Indonesian people.
> (Opening, 1945 Constitution.)

On 16 August 1945 Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta were brought to the home of an ethnic Chinese Rengasdengklok resident, Daniel Kristiadi or Djiauw Hoy Lin, by *pemuda* (youth) who were intent on 'compelling' the leaders to declare Indonesian independence.[126] Almost 32 years later, on 30 January 1997, the crowds spared Pak Kristiadi's *Rumah Sejarah* or historic house, whilst nearby homes owned by ethnic Chinese were attacked. It is perhaps ironic that, whilst carrying out violence that was itself motivated by

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[122] Ariel Heryanto, 'Where Communism Never Dies: Violence, Trauma and Narration in the Last Cold War Authoritarian State', *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol 2 (2), 1999; 157.
[123] 'Maoist groups', *Jakarta Post*, 18 January 1997. See 'Jenderal TNI R. Hartono: Kok Saya Dituduh Mendalangi', *Forum Keadilan*, 24 February 1997, 20. General Hartono agreed with Suharto's theory of a Maoist plot.
[124] Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 425.
[125] 'Suharto promises', *Jakarta Post*, 2 January 1997.
[126] 'Api yang mengancam', *Forum Keadilan*, 24 February 1997. On the 'Rengasdengklok Affair' see Saya S. Shiraishi, *Young Heroes* (Ithaca, NY.: Cornell SEAP Project, 1997).

dissatisfaction and frustration with the current state of the nation, the crowds on the streets of Rengasdengklok that day believed it important to preserve a symbol of the nation's birth.

Rengasdengklok's location, in the same province as Tasikmalaya, West Java, and only 75 kilometres from Jakarta, is a vital part of this story. Like Situbondo and Tasikmalaya, the violence was precipitated by an incident in which people perceived that Islam had been denigrated. This time, an ethnic Chinese resident was involved.

The 30 January fell during the fasting month of Ramadan. Cik Gue and her husband Kim Tjoan were awoken by drums and shouting from the mosque next to their house in Warudoyong kampung near the Rengasdengklok market. As usual during Ramadan, at this hour a group of youths from the mosque walked around the kampung banging a drum and calling Muslims to wake and eat before dawn. This ritual could not have been new to Cik Gue and her family who had lived in this kampung for many years. In later testimony, Cik Gue claimed that she had noticed that the loud speaker used to broadcast the call to prayer, which normally faced away from her house, had been moved so that it pointed directly towards it.[127] Unable to sleep due to the noise, Cik Gue and Kim Tjoan went outside the house and confronted the small group of youths. They demanded that the boys stop making noise and threatened to call the police. The youths attested that Kim and Cik Gue were abusive and angry. At this point Feri, Cik Gue's fifteen-year-old son, climbed onto the roof of the house and threw stones at the mosque, allegedly breaking a window.[128] The youths retaliated, throwing stones at the house and at Kim Tjoan. His daughter, Merih, recounts that her father was struck twice, causing him to fall to the ground. A policeman soon arrived and appeared to resolve the issue. However, the youths felt unfairly treated and did not believe that the family had accepted the blame for the disturbance as they should, viewing the policeman's rebuke as directed towards themselves.[129]

After taking their pre-dawn meal, angered even more after their reprimand, the youths returned to the house about 6am accompanied by a larger crowd. They again attacked the house with stones, this time forcing the family to flee. Merih told investigators that, as the crowds descended on the house, she heard people shouting 'Burn it, just like Tasikmalaya, Just like Tasik' and 'This is exactly like Tasik'.[130] The house was on a main thoroughfare through the kampung to the market nearby, so news of Kim Tjoan and Cik Gue's blasphemy soon spread throughout the area. A large crowd of passersby gathered and watched as the house was destroyed. By 8am the crowd was quiet and seemed satisfied; however again the peace was short lived. Someone from within the crowd began to urge people to attack Kim Tjoan's shop at Rengasdengklok market. By this time the number was estimated to have grown to three thousand, and, in response to cries to continue the violence, people fanned out around Jalan Raya.[131] The Surabaya Christian Communication Forum (FKKS)

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[127] Abshar-Abdalla, Ulil, et al, *Huru-Hara Rengasdengklok* (Jakarta: ISAI, 1997).

[128] Ibid., 6. Feri denied that he threw anything at the mosque.

[129] Ibid.

[130] Ibid., 34. In a round-up of participants, police arrested a man from Tasikmalaya.

[131] 'West Java town rocked by riot', *Jakarta Post*, 31 January 1997.

reported that a large number of participants in the violence came from outside the town and carried petrol and stones.[132]

Throughout the morning the crowds attacked and burned churches, Chinese-owned shops and homes, and a Buddhist temple.[133] At the Buddha Surya Adhi Guna temple, statues, books, carpets and other items were dragged outside and destroyed. In what has become an enduring image of this event, the head of a statue of Buddha was placed in a noose and hung from the gates of the burning temple. During the violence, army and police troops were present on the streets but witnesses attest that they did little to stop it.[134] The violence was mostly concentrated around Warungdong kampung near the commercial and shopping districts, but in the afternoon it spread to other areas where many ethnic Chinese lived. At 5pm the security authorities finally acted to bring the crowds under control, deploying a helicopter to disperse them.[135] By this time the damage to Rengasdengklok was immense. The city's buildings were covered in graffiti identifying the owners as Muslim or *pribumi*, and anti-Chinese slogans. The factories, shops and houses attacked were, with few exceptions, owned by ethnic Chinese residents, including properties owned by ethnic Chinese Muslims.[136]

Afterwards, local authorities insisted that Rengasdengklok residents were not involved in the organisation or incitement of people to violence; the Mayor, Mochtar defended, his constituents: 'I don't yet know where the masses came from. What is clear is that Rengasdengklok residents were not involved. Ojek drivers, becak drivers and others, none of them joined in.'[137] When Mochtar later met with a group of men aged 15–19 years who had been detained after the violence – whom he described as 'cheerful types' – he told them their acts were against Islam and had degraded the historic town.[138]

Local Tensions And Struggles of Symbolic Space: Cik Gue, Building Permits And the 'Tugu Kemenangan Cina'

> The non-Muslim family ought to understand that the noise of the drum is proper (*wajar*). Especially in the fasting month. (Lukman Harun, Muhammadiyah)[139]

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[132] Santoso and Tahlele, *Beginikah Kemerdekaan Kita?*, 163.

[133] Burnt: 42 shops; 76 houses; 12 cars; 1 factory; 1 school; 3 churches, 1 Buddhist temple. Damaged: 19 cars; 3 factories including a rice mill; 2 banks; 1 Confucian building. (List compiled by Komnas HAM, 'Rengasdengklok kembali normal', *Suara Pembaruan*, 31 January 1997.)

[134] Ric Curnow in, Abshar-Abdalla, *Huru-Hara*, 18.

[135] 'Rengasdengklok Tenang Kembali', *Kompas*, 31 January 1997.

[136] Abshar-Abdalla, *Huru-Hara*, 25; 'Rengasdengklok kembali normal', *Suara Pembaruan*, 31 January 1997.

[137] 'Rengasdengklok tenang', *Kompas*, 31 January 1997.

[138] 'Rengasdengklok kembali', *Suara Pembaruan*, 31 January 1997. HRW reported that charges were filed against 21 people, who were later sentenced to one to two month jail terms. By comparison, Kim Tjon, Cik Gue's husband, was charged with blasphemy and received the harsher penalty of three years six months in prison. HRW concluded, 'The relative harshness of his sentence, compared to those of the rioters, indeed the fact that Tjio Kim Tjon was arrested at all, appeared to be evidence of anti-Chinese discrimination.' (HRW, 'World Report 1998'.)

[139] *Forum Keadilan*, 24 February 1997, 14–15.

> Communal ideology may reflect hatred of other groups, but in Nandy's reckoning it may also be an expression of a group's attempt to create a legitimate space for itself in the public domain - especially in view of the homogenising pressures of the modern state. (Veena Das)[140]

After they had destroyed Cik Gue's house, as though their actions had not been clear enough, people scrawled graffiti on its walls. They wrote, 'Savage infidels, Satanic infidels, Villainous infidels, Chinese infidels'.[141] One of the youths involved in the initial quarrel with Kim Tjoan and Cik Gue later argued that the decision to attack their house had nothing to do with their ethnicity; rather it was because they were simply bad neighbours. 'The reason I don't like her is not because she is Chinese and also not because her religion is different to ours, but because her behaviour and attitude is strange. They are never neighbourly.'[142] Others from the kampung similarly reported that the family did not try to mix with their neighbours, yet were careful to point to other ethnic Chinese residents with whom they did get along. One neighbour further stressed that this was a personal, rather than an ethnic or racial problem, by stating, 'It's not just *pribumis*, other WNA (foreigners) also dislike her manner which is less than congenial'.[143] It is telling that, despite these assurances ethnic hostility was not the motivation for the violence that destroyed over 70 houses owned by ethnic Chinese, even Ceng Bouw, the ethnic Chinese Warudoyong resident whom many *pribumi* attested to 'getting along with' and even liking, was too afraid to leave his home.[144]

In 1996 the ethnic Chinese population of Rengasdengklok was estimated to be 3,725 out of 190,000 – less than 2 percent of the population.[145] Yet this small minority was again perceived by the majority to be generally wealthy and, through their partnerships with corrupt local officials, unfairly so. Indeed, many locals believed that ethnic Chinese liked to revel in the success they achieved at the expense of others. In 1992, two ethnic Chinese owned businesses erected a monument at a busy intersection in the commercial district in what they saw as a promotional exercise. However, some non-Chinese, including the head of the local MUI branch, H. Sobarna Noor, felt threatened by it.[146] The monument was widely labelled the 'Chinese Victory Monument', as it was seen by the non-Chinese community as a symbol of Chinese 'gloating'. Some even identified its construction with the promotion of a program of 'Christianisation' in Rengasdengklok, led by wealthy ethnic Chinese business people. They argued that the monument contained religious symbolism because its top was cone shaped, resembling the headwear of the Catholic Pope.[147] Recent renovation or extension of the Indonesian Christian Church (GKI) Rengasdengklok, originally built in the 1960s, added to anxiety among some members of the Muslim community about the threat of a Christian expansion. The need to increase the capacity of the church alarmed them, for they believed it indicated that the number of

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[140] Das, *Mirrors of Violence*, 7.
[141] Abshar-Abdalla, *Huru-Hara*, 10.
[142] Ibid., 29. Hendra Kurnia, resident of Warudoyong kampung and attendant at the Miftahul Jannah mosque.
[143] 'Kami nggak tahu, para pemuda itu datang dari mana', *Republika*, 31 January 1997.
[144] Abshar-Abdalla, *Huru-Hara*, 11.
[145] Manuel Kaisiepo, 'Fantasi revolusi dan Rengasdengklok', *Kompas*, 1 February 1997.
[146] Abshar-Abdalla, *Huru-Hara*, 52.
[147] Ibid., 93.

Christians in the town was increasing, which translated to conversions.[148] In response to these perceived 'threats' of Christianisation, a dispute initiated by Sobarna was ongoing over the conditions of a local government building-permit for the church.

An effort to understand and explain anti-Chinese graffiti and the destruction of religious sites during acts of violence calls for consideration once more of the intent of violence. Horowitz's explanation of the intent to degrade and humiliate the target group resonates.[149] Yet perhaps more incisive in this case is Das' call for analysis of the symbolic aspect of violence in terms of space and time as a means to providing insight into the higher levels of brutality against non-Muslim sites in Rengasdengklok and elsewhere. Das argues that spaces with symbolic elements for a community, and which are not restricted to 'sacred spaces' like churches and temples but include 'ordinary' or public space, are sites around which antipathies are exposed. Attacks on monuments or buildings overtly associated with the ethnic Chinese business community, and with perceptions of the expansion of Christianity in the town, demonstrate how the 'control of sacred space and their protection continues to be an important symbol' around which conflicts are organised.[150] To follow Das' argument further, not only is the struggle for symbolic space a valuable element to consider, but also its 'temporal space' or timing.

Why Violence Now?

> The division is everywhere, since before, since the Dutch era there was a division, why is this happening now? I think the reason lies beyond the social gap. (Rita Junita, ethnic Chinese businesswoman whose shopping centre, Shelby Plaza was destroyed.)[151]
>
> They (the economically disparaged) have been so deprived socially and economically they have become like a piece of dry wood, easily set alight. (Amien Rais)[152]

Rita Junita, a local ethnic Chinese businesswoman (who, it was noted, spoke perfect Sundanese) posed a salient question about why the violence occurred at this time and not at another.[153] The hostilities caused by the social gap and the role of the ethnic Chinese as middlemen had existed long before January 1997. What then caused that hostility to boil up into emotions strong enough to drive mass violence in Rengasdengklok? Can it be concluded, as Amien Rais did, that this was class-based violence, fuelled by frustrations born of racial prejudice and economic competition, 'exploding' in a tinderbox environment? The fact that, in this case, the precipitant can be linked directly to the target of the violence means that a cumulative aggression

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[148] As the Christian community explained and Abshar-Abdalla et al's research shows, these anxieties were unfounded as the increase in Christians in Rengasdengklok was in line with the number of children born into Christian families in recent years.
[149] Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot,* 430.
[150] Das, *Mirrors of Violence*, 11; See also M. Roberts, 'Noise as Cultural Struggle: Tom-Tom Beating, the British, and Communal Disturbances in Sri Lanka', in *Mirrors of Violence*, ed. Veena Das (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 240–287.
[151] In Abshar-Abdalla, *Huru-Hara,* 109.
[152] 'West Java town rocked', *Jakarta Post*, 31 January 1997.
[153] Abshar-Abdalla, *Huru-Hara*, 109.

theory such as those supported by Allport, Horowitz and others, can be used to explain this incident. However, the previous violence in Tasikmalaya and Situbondo had raised new questions about theories of cause and effect in relation to events involving anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia.

The incidents of mass violence in Situbondo and Tasikmalaya go some way to answering why violence took place in Rengasdengklok. The memory of the first two cases played a role in focusing crowd attention during the early stages of the violence in this, the third case in five months. Prior violence against ethnic Chinese in Situbondo and Tasikmalaya gave legitimacy to this type of violence as an expression of dissatisfaction carried out with near impunity.[154] The timing of the violence at Rengasdengklok during Ramadan is also significant. Clearly the quarrel that triggered it was related to the fasting month, which also explains why the violence was able to spread without police resistance. Police intervention in the initial dispute at Cik Gue's house failed to prevent further violence, as it might have done in other circumstances. West Java Chief of Police, Maj. Gen. Permana shed light on this when he suggested that the fact that it was Ramadan impacted on the ability of the security forces to control the violence: 'This is the fasting month. People need to go to mosques in the evening for *tadarusan* (reading and learning the Holy Koran). How can we stop them?'[155] Other restraints on participants in the violence also failed. Efforts by local authorities during the early part of the day to halt the violence and calm the people were ineffective. Moreover, when Mayor Dadang Mochtar asked local *ulama* to join in a dialogue calling for calm, it was apparent that cracks were beginning to appear in this normal framework for conflict resolution. The secretary of MUI Rengasdengklok (Sobarna) and the mayor disagreed on what had caused the violence. The mayor argued that certain parties had incited it, while Sobarna maintained that it was a spontaneous outburst in response to the abusive actions of Cik Gue and Kim Tjoan.[156]

An Act Of 'Normal' Anti-Chinese Violence

> We are not against other religions, but buildings that change their functions can become a time bomb. (Secretary of MUI Rengasdengklok, Sobarna)[157]

Responses to Rengasdengklok were significantly less vocal or prolific than to Situbondo and Tasikmalaya. In particular, the violence against non-Islamic places of worship and ethnic Chinese property was not received with the same degree of shock or condemnation from national and local leaders and the media. ABRI Commander Feisal Tanjung, Komnas HAM and other members of the national elite agreed with Mayor Mochtar that the violence occurred at that time because social tensions were manipulated by a third party.[158] Tanjung once again summoned a 'bogey-man' from the past in order to apportion blame: 'Those who did the burning are communists (PKI)', he said.[159]

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[154] See Horowitz on 'recurrent riots', *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 411–422.
[155] Ibid.
[156] 'Rengasdengklok kembali', *Suara Pembaruan*, 31 January 1997.
[157] 'Bupati Karawang: Ada yang membuat massa bergerak', *Republika*, 31 January 1997.
[158] Munawir Sadzali in 'Kota Rengasdengklok dibersihkan', *Merdeka*, 1 February 1997
[159] 'Panglima ABRI: Pelaku Kerusuhan Itu Anti-Pemerintah', *Kompas*, 1 February 1997.

The Rengasdengklok incident was treated differently in public discourse from the Tasikmalaya and Situbondo cases because the event that triggered it, a conflict between an ethnic Chinese couple and a group of Muslim youths, demonstrated an obvious link to the targets. Whilst the responses from the elite and from public discourse about the reasons 'behind the violence' were the same – economic frustration, anti-government forces – the level of acceptance was greater and quicker to take hold. There was not the same questioning at national level as after the Situbondo and Tasikmalaya incidents about why the violence happened and, in particular, why certain people and places were targeted. The explanation that an ethnic Chinese couple defaming Islam triggered the violence appeared to satisfactorily explain why homes and businesses owned by other ethnic Chinese and their places of worship were attacked too.

These differing responses indicate much about how 'anti-Chinese violence' had been represented and 'normalised' in Indonesian society up until this time. This interpretation of 'anti-Chinese violence' required a triggering event or precipitating incident involving a conflict between ethnic Chinese and non-Chinese resulting from an accident, argument or unfair business transaction.[160] According to such an interpretation, spontaneous violence against other ethnic Chinese properties or places of worship could be explained away as a manifestation of SARA conflict or, some argue, as ethno-class based conflict. This theory is contested, however, when the triggering event has no relationship to the targets of the subsequent violence, as happened in Situbondo and Tasikmalaya. These cases of violence against ethnic Chinese needed to be classified differently from a 'normal' interpretation of 'anti-Chinese violence'. How could it be anti-Chinese if the trigger did not involve ethnic Chinese? As a consequence of these different interpretations, the victims were also classified differently. A poignant illustration of the different response to the violence in Rengasdengklok was the complete absence of sympathy for Cik Gue and her family, whose house had been completely destroyed and who were forced to flee Rengasdengklok. When her husband was sent to gaol for inciting religious hatred, there was general commendation that justice had been done.[161] This is compared to the national mourning for the five victims in Situbondo, who were also ethnic Chinese. From these cases it would appear that at least some of the public response to violence targeting ethnic Chinese is regulated by the extent to which blame can apportion to ethnic Chinese themselves, or, more accurately perhaps, by how it is represented in official local and national discourses. For example, locally, the deaths of the pastor and his family inside a church might have evoked less sympathy in Situbondo if the building had been constructed without a permit. Indeed, Sobarna's comments at the opening of this section, with reference to the Rengasdengklok violence, indicate a note of justification of the actions of those who took part on precisely this basis.

Attempting To Tighten The Straps: National Reverberations

> If riots continue, the armed forces will take sterner action...because this country is based on the rule of law. (Commander of the Armed Forces, Feisal Tanjung)[162]

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[160] See Siegel, *Solo in the New Order* regarding accidents as 'triggers' of anti-Chinese violence, 232; On precipitants see Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 198.
[161] See HRW's condemnation of this sentence. (HRW, 'World Report 1998'.)
[162] 'Indonesian military chief warns against rioting', *Reuters*, 31 January 1997.

The military and political elite interpreted the Rengasdengklok incident as further indication that New Order control needed to be re-asserted throughout the country, particularly with an election approaching. Many in fact argued that this was the purpose of the violence, to justify further government and military oppression of the media and opposition groups and to warn of what may come.[163] However, the narratives of the incidents of violence as told here and elsewhere cannot expose government or military involvement in the violence at the level of instigation or provocation, although security forces were definitely partly responsible due to their failure to protect the victims and allowing the violence to continue. What is exposed are the local antipathies based on the social gap and racial and religious difference within Rengasdengklok, Situbondo and Tasikmalaya. Although such sentiments are by no means exclusive to these towns in Indonesia, the violence was essentially local. In Rengasdengklok it was conditioned and informed by the political discourse and practice in Indonesia and by previous incidents in Situbondo, and perhaps more so, nearby Tasikmalaya. Together, these three incidents of mass violence became part of a discourse taken up by various groups, including Islamic groups and especially the government, as part of wider political agendas. The Rengasdengklok violence was carried out in part, to render the ethnic Chinese it targeted as 'outsiders', to put them back in their place within the community or 'teach them a lesson', not to force them out completely.

The violence in Rengasdengklok and elsewhere proved useful for the New Order government's continued commitment to order and repression. Education Minister Harmoko told representatives of the Indonesian press to avoid journalism that incited hatred and violence, to keep to the facts. He reminded them, 'The spirit of the New Order is the spirit of development. The mass media has a clear commitment, that is to support development and stand for justice and truth.'[164] Harmoko's advice to the press was to find a balance: 'We can't make criticism go away, but it should be criticism that is correct and controlled and it must be positive'.[165] Around this time, Feisal Tanjung accused some of the press of allowing themselves to be influenced by unscrupulous parties who were 'twisting historical facts' about the events of 1965–1966 in order to destabilise the nation.[166] On 5 February, after prayers with his troops, the then head of the Army Strategic Reserve (Kostrad), Gen. Wiranto told his men that he believed recent violence was due to a lack of discipline and adherence to traditional or religious law, and he called on his troops to show the people what discipline was.[167] In February the armed forces also announced that they had taken steps towards establishing the 'Alert Command Posts' that had been drafted the previous month, amid considerable opposition.[168]

It could be argued, however, that this plan failed. Some commentators and representative groups began to turn the focus and responsibility for the recent violence back on to local and national authorities. The Union of Indonesian Catholic Students condemned the government's role in creating social frustration:

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[163] 'Scholars skeptical', 21 January 1997.
[164] 'Hindarkan pemuatan berita yang bersifat merusak', *Kompas*, 4 February 1997. See 'Hari Pers Nasional: Yang Menjadi Berwarna', *Gatra*, 22 February 1997.
[165] 'Hindarkan pemuatan berita yang bersifat merusak', *Kompas*, 4 February 1997.
[166] 'Military chief guarantees no fresh unrest', *Jakarta Post*, 22 February 1997.
[167] 'Panglima Kostrad: Berbagai kerusuhan muncul akibat tidak disiplin asas', *Kompas*, 7 February 1997; 'Presiden Soeharto: Pancasila Sering Diboncengi Tujuan Lain', *Kompas*, 1 February 1997.
[168] 'Pelaku kerusuhan itu anti-pemerintah', *Kompas*, 1 February 1997.

'The uneven distribution of state wealth has created economic disparity.'[169] NU argued that the legal and justice systems were perceived by the people as no longer serving their interests: 'People tend to take the law into their own hands in settling social problems because they consider themselves as the losers.'[170] The New Order's dismissal of conflicts in Situbondo, Tasikmalaya and Rengasdengklok and elsewhere as a dark conspiracy to destabilise the nation were beginning to ring hollow for many Indonesians. One political commentator stated in February 1997, 'The existence of a third party in every event of masses running amok can be recognised by simply paying close attention to declarations from the people and figures there, as quoted in the mass media'.[171] The ineptitude of the government in dealing with the increasingly frequent social disturbances and violence became more obvious with each incident.

CONCLUSION

> The numerous riots have only added to the nation's burden, worsened the nation's hardships, tarnished a certain religion and weakened unity. (Statement of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia.)[172]

Ethnic Chinese in the three towns became targets of undirected and unfocused violence on the basis of both their ethnicity and more localised antipathies related to economic jealousies and fear of Christianisation. It took place at a time of increasing frustration associated with the wealth gap and the 'mainstreaming' of fundamentalist Islam in Indonesia. Aronson wrote about ethnic violence: 'frustration leads to aggression...against an outgroup member'.[173] Hatred and prejudice against ethnic Chinese in these communities was attached to the role of the majority as traders and business people. In these roles, they had contributed to antagonisms with the majority non-Chinese community by building modern shopping centres in place of traditional markets, colluding with government authorities, investing in traditional *pribumi* industries, and less specifically, becoming visibly wealthy. Yet their economic position was not the only focus of tension. As well as shops and homes of ethnic Chinese, Christian churches and Buddhist and Confucian buildings, all with majority ethnic Chinese congregations, were attacked. In each case, particularly in Situbondo and Rengasdengklok, non-Christian residents had expressed concern about the spread of Christianity, which they believed was evident through the building of new places of worship.[174] The violence was also part of a struggle to reclaim 'symbolic space' within these towns and communities. Hostilities related to economic and religious marginalisation erupted into violence against a background of increased frustration with local and national political and social authoritarianism. Perceived as agents for that system, ethnic Chinese became 'rational scapegoats', a form of displacement where the connection between the source of the peoples' suffering and the target could, however tenuously, be made.

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[169] 'NU groups concerned over violence', *Jakarta Post*, 7 February 1997.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Agus Hermawan, 'Teka Teki dari Situbondo, Tasikmalaya dan Situbondo', *Kompas*, 3 February 1997.
[172] 'Transparent probe demanded', *Jakarta Post*, 12 February 1997.
[173] Aronson, *The Social Animal*, 251.

Nationally, the struggle between Islamic groups and the political elite formed a context within which expressions of Muslim identity and its defence were deemed more acceptable. The violence in Situbondo in particular was politicised by these groups. Suharto's willingness to accept Wahid's conciliatory gestures in November 1996 indicated that the New Order had recognised the potential for the NU's very large membership base to destabilise the nation, if uncontrolled. Locally, perceived abuse of the Islamic faith by an Indonesian court, police officers, and an old ethnic Chinese woman were significant enough to lead Muslims and others to violence. Clearly the message at both national and local level was that some Muslims were tired of what they saw as degradation of Islam and frustrated with having to give concessions to minority groups whilst accepting political neutrality.

The role of the security forces during these events is essential for understanding why the violence was permitted to spread and why it occurred on such a scale in these places and not in others. When confronted with mass violence in Situbondo, Tasikmalaya and Rengasdengklok, the security forces responded in a minimal way, allowing the crowds to run unrestricted until sated. Gen. Hartono admitted at the time that the military did not want to risk antagonising an already volatile situation by troops rushing in, guns blazing, despite the fact that many cases could be cited where they had done exactly that. The temporality of the Tasikmalaya and Rengasdengklok cases, the former at Christmas and the latter in Ramadan, provide further clues to why security forces were unwilling to intervene. Security agents admitted with respect to Rengasdengklok that people needed to be able to get to their prayers and that troops were not prepared to interrupt that ritual, even for the sake of peace. In Tasikmalaya the destruction of churches, which police and army failed to protect, had more profound impact because it coincided with Christmas.

These and other violent incidents across the archipelago at this time indicated that Indonesia had entered another period of political instability in its short history as a nation-state. Yet the response given by the New Order elite was unchanged and unwavering: adhere to the Pancasila and wait patiently for your own economic success. This standard rhetoric was no longer enough to satisfy the increasingly restless masses; the security forces and local elite also failed to provide assurances of security and justice. Violence targeting ethnic Chinese Indonesians and non-Islamic places of worship symbolised a frustration with the New Order nationalist doctrine and in particular its program of developmentalism and modernity, in which many were being left behind. By attacking symbols of their marginalisation, people marked out their claims to a share in development.

Representations of violent incidents consistently group them with other violence during this period. Many, including the government, attempted to explain them as comprising a 'trend' that was anti-government or caused by socio-economic frustration. Yet such interpretations failed to consider the reasons why opposition to the government or frustration with the economic gap consistently led to attacks on a particular ethnic minority – ethnic Chinese – apart from repeating common stereotypes. The closest public discourse and national leaders came to acknowledging the ethnicity of 'targets' as indicative of deeper social problems

[174] Data compiled by Santoso shows sharp escalation in attacks on churches in the period 1995–1997. (Thomas Santoso, 'Data Perusakan Gereja di Indonesia', in *Beginikah Kemerdekaan Kita?*, eds. T.

was in forums and meetings between various religious groups after the violence. The instruments for conflict resolution available under the New Order regime began and ended with inter-faith dialogue. Government responses to economic frustrations were 'to be patient'. Admitting that a problem existed would mean admitting the development program was failing and would, as Aguilar stated, demand a reconceptualisation of the place of ethnic Chinese in Indonesian nationalism more generally.[175]

Politicians, religious leaders and citizens had difficulty understanding the violence in Situbondo and Tasikmalaya, largely as it could not be easily classified and, in particular, because it did not fit into the 'normal' understandings of 'anti-Chinese violence'.[176] This understanding necessarily included a precipitant such as an argument or clash between an ethnic Chinese and *pribumi* Indonesian or rumours of such an incident occurring within pressured economic conditions. The ability to trace trigger to ethnic Chinese or their economic role meant that what followed could be regarded as an almost normal response to abusive behaviour, unfair business dealings or social jealousies. As Gyanendra Pandey wrote, 'The violence itself is taken as "known". Its contours and character are simply assumed: its forms need no investigation.'[177] The frequency of such conflicts leading to violence against ethnic Chinese in Indonesia added to the sense of acceptability or inevitability of these acts. Yet very few have attracted the nation's attention as did these cases.[178] They forced a re-thinking of the limitations and conceptualisations of violence against ethnic Chinese as a continuum. The precipitant could no longer explain the outcome of mass violence such as this,[179] revealing perhaps even more clearly the pervasive presence of irrational hostility and prejudice towards this ethnic minority. Violence against ethnic Chinese that was precipitated by events with no direct relation to either Christians, Chinese or their economic role indicated that antipathies toward Chinese could appear in isolation from their economic role or religion.

ANTI-CHINESE SENTIMENT AND VIOLENCE IN JAVA IN EARLY 1998

> Nowhere has the Asian economic crisis been felt with such devastating effect as in Indonesia. (Robison and Rosser)[180]

Santoso and P. Tahalele. Surabaya: Forum Komunikasi Kristiani Indonesia (FKKS), 1997), , 31-47.

[175] Filomeno V Aguilar Jr., 'Citizenship, Inheritance and the Indigenising of "Orang Chinese" in Indonesia', *positions*, volume 9, number 3 (Winter 2001), 503.

[176] See Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 268–325.

[177] Pandey, 'In Defense of the Fragment', 1.

[178] Santoso, 'Data Perusakan Gereja', 31–47. Attacks on churches were not new in Java. As recently as 9 June 1996, 10 churches had been attacked in Surabaya, East Java with out raising similar interest. (See FICA-Net, *Incident of 9 June 1996 (Surabaya)*, available from www.fica.org/persecution/9June96.html accessed on 14 April 2002; Tahlele and Santoso, *Beginikah*, 53.)

[179] Horowitz (*Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 197–199) argues that divergence is rare between the groups associated with precipitants and the identity of the targets, although he notes that displacement is one 'easily understood' explanation. Others include revenge, reprisal, spill-over of previous conflict and organisation, which can 'skew' targeting.

[180] R. Robison, and A. Rosser, 'Surviving the Meltdown: Liberal Reform and Political Oligarchy in Indonesia', in *Politics and Markets In the Wake of the Asian Crisis*, eds. Richard Robison et al. (London: Routledge, 2000), 171.

> We have always hedged our bets. Firstly, we have never believed that the government would protect us. Secondly, as Chinese we know we are going to be discriminated against.
> (Anonymous ethnic Chinese Indonesian)[181]

> It has been expected that riots would move from East Java, Central Java and finally West Java. (Maj. Gen. Djamani, West Java Military Chief)[182]

The parliamentary elections in mid-1997, the first following Megawati's ousting from the PDI, were accompanied by violence, mostly between rival political parties, but revealing a general atmosphere of dissatisfaction with the political process.[183] In some cases, property owned by, or associated with, ethnic Chinese was damaged. Within months of the elections that comfortably returned Golkar to power with a predictable 74 percent of the vote,[184] there were signs that Indonesia was facing a troubled time.[185]

Within six months, the economy was in crisis. The IMF had been called in by the government as early as 27 October 1997 to resurrect what it could in the wake of a massive devaluation of the Indonesian currency on world markets, as part of the region-wide monetary crisis. When it was allowed a closer look at the workings of the Indonesian economy, the IMF discovered what the currency markets had suspected. The economy was highly over valued, deeply in debt and riddled with corruption. Following the trend across the region, the IMF was called to intervene and implement strategies that could stop the rupiah and the entire economy from free-falling. In December 1997, Suharto signed an agreement with the IMF to repeal subsidies and implement reforms, specifically within the unregulated banking sector.[186] Yet on 6 January 1998, in a move MacIntyre described as 'the final straw',[187] Suharto released a budget that effectively ignored these demands. As a result, the economy began the free fall which the IMF had attempted to offset in December, the rupiah plummeting to Rp11,000 to the US dollar.[188] The IMF and the international community reacted quickly, as did an increasingly outspoken local political opposition.[189] By 12 January, the trade in rupiah quietened in response to positive statements by the IMF and governments such as Germany and Japan regarding Suharto's renewed commitment to reform.[190] On 15 January, as a result of this international and domestic pressure, Suharto signed a new agreement with the IMF outlining sweeping reforms. The signing of this second agreement made headlines across the world, with photographs showing Michel Camdessus, head of the IMF mission, watching over Suharto with his arms folded as the President signed. In an event marking

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[181] Patrick Walters, 'Indonesia's scapegoats', *The Australian*, 21 February 1998.
[182] 'Five die in fresh outbreaks of riots in several cities', *The Jakarta Post*, 15 February 1998.
[183] Incidents included a clash between Golkar and PPP supporters in Pekalongan on 30 March 1997. (AFP, 30 March 1997); and between supporters of these parties in Banjarmasin on 25 May 1997.
[184] PPP, 23 % and the weakened PDI, 3 %.
[185] For brief description of the period March–October 1997 see appendix C.
[186] For more economic data see appendix D.
[187] A. MacIntyre, 'Political Institutions and the Economic Crisis in Thailand and Indonesia', in *The Politics of the Asian Economic Crisis*, ed. T.J. Pempel (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 159.
[188] Markets drove the rupiah down to Rp11,000 to the US dollar from Rp2,700 in July 1997. Suharto's biggest obstacle to implementing the IMF reforms was said to be his own family and their economic power. ('And now the political fallout', *The Economist*, 17 January 1998.)
[189] On 10 January 1998, Megawati declared herself willing to accept a nomination for President. Other leaders also called for Suharto's resignation.

an extreme low point in his presidency, Suharto was humiliated in the eyes of the world, while his treasured economy crumbled around him.

Social conditions were beginning to become chaotic and unstable in Indonesia as people lost confidence that their government would be able to revive the economy and halt its dangerous slide. By mid-January, rumours about shop-owners hoarding food and imminent price rises began to cause panic. Shoppers rushed stores to stock up on any basic commodities they could buy for fear of national shortages. Java's agricultural and mostly rice-based economy meant that dramatically increased commodity prices made pressures there the most severe in the country. Even the government's own conservative estimates predicted that as a consequence of the economic crisis, unemployment would reach 13.5 million and underemployment 48.6 million in the coming year.[191] As Lebaran approached many predicted that conditions were destined to worsen.

ETHNIC CHINESE AND A 'CAMPAIGN' OF 'SCAPEGOATING', JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1998

> A society finds that something is wrong...the search for someone or something to blame usually finds what it seeks in available people who may be already disliked but who are inevitably seen as different. (Douglas)[192]

> The truisms that everything is related to everything else and that every incident is unique are just that: truisms. (Horowitz)[193]

In early January 1998, Suharto himself and his government were already heavily implicated in this crisis, and its causes, and by their lack of response to the monetary collapse. Suharto had been ridiculed by economists and political observers inside and outside Indonesia for his failure to react to the IMF's earlier demands, and causing the dire economic situation. Yet, during January and February 1998, outbreaks of social unrest focused mainly on small traders, particularly those of ethnic Chinese descent. Like those periods in Indonesian history described by Somers and others[194], this time of economic and political turmoil saw an escalation in violence against ethnic Chinese.

In the midst of the economic crisis and increasing social discontent, ethnic Chinese became the victims of largely spontaneous violence in which they were accused of hoarding, their shops were attacked, and they were forced to lower prices. In Java, during the first months of 1998, the violence was described by the mass media and commentators as 'irrational' and 'spontaneous' food riots: acts of displaced aggression in which the search for someone to blame most often led to those considered 'different'.[195] In line with

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[190] 'Political fallout', *The Economist*, 17 January 1998. The reforms included cutting subsidies and tariffs, eliminating monopolies, cancelling major projects.
[191] Ibid. At the end of February official estimates put the number of unemployed at 27.8 million, up from 13.1 million at the end of 1997. (*Jakarta Post*, 26 March 1998).
[192] Douglas, *Scapegoats*, 39.
[193] Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 69.
[194] Somers, *Peranakan Chinese Politics*; Mackie, Anti-Chinese outbreaks'; Coppel, *Indonesian Chinese in Crisis*; Shiraishi, 'Anti-Sinicism in Java's New Order'.
[195] See Aronson, *The Social Animal*; Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict,* Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985.

Blalock's argument, when this difference was coupled with the role played by many ethnic Chinese as local economic actors they became an obvious target. In many of the early cases of violence, the participants clearly intended to demand lower prices and force this point if necessary. Nonetheless, as time passed, violence against ethnic Chinese 'spread' across Java and was sustained for a long time. A general interpretation of this violence as 'food riots' is therefore inadequate to explain the persistence or why the target was broadened to include places other than food stores.[196] As will be described below, in most cases the attacks were carried out in some organised and systematic manner with deliberate choice of targets. Maj. Gen. Djamani's admission[197] that he was aware beforehand of the path the violence would take also indicates that the security forces knew about the level of organisation. Events happening nationally were shaping the political context and were explicitly anti-Chinese.

A series of national 'events' took place in January and February 1998, which taken together suggest a strong campaign to deflect blame from the government by implicating others in the economic decline – what can be called a process of 'rational' scapegoating.[198] During these difficult months and following Suharto's international humiliation by Camdessus, a steady flow of information and propaganda regarding the role of ethnic Chinese in endangering the Indonesian economy and engaging in a conspiracy against the state came from various members of the government, military and Islamic organizations, and was given considerable attention by the national media. At the same time, violence escalated in towns and cities across Indonesia, but particularly on Java, primarily targeting Chinese-owned businesses and property. Wieviorka wrote that violence is 'never totally independent of the political context in which it arises'.[199] The incidents of violence across Java during these months mostly fit Wieviorka's first model for ethnic violence: informed by the political system, but largely localised. However, as the weeks went on and the 'campaign' of deflecting blame from the centre continued, greater levels of organisation and institutionalisation of this violence became evident. The state created a political context in which violence, fuelled and facilitated by both individual agents and collectives, could easily occur.

This study seeks to present these violent events as part of an 'historical period' in which connections can be made between various incidents.[200] However it resists a representation of violence as a simple continuum of events, a response to 'mounting tensions', with prejudice or racism as a 'driving force'. Instead, as Wieviorka advised, through re-telling the stories of what happened in Javanese villages and towns and nationally during January and February 1998, a description of the violence emerges which demonstrates that antipathies, although essential to the outcome, do not on their own explain events. The examination of violent incidents in various locations during this period reveals both similarities and anomalies. Although in most cases there was a similarity of cause, target and motive, the level of participation in the violence varied, as did the level of individual agency and responsibility of the 'crowd', as it is clear that there were actors who were

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[196] Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 142.
[197] Ref. fn 182. 'Five die in fresh outbreaks of riots in several cities', *The Jakarta Post*, 15 February 1998.
[198] See Douglas, *Scapegoat*, 5; Sidel, '*Macet Total*', 180.
[199] Wieviorka, *The Arena of Racism*, 70.
[200] See Horowitz , *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 66–67.

present in these communities, or who came from outside and guided the violence. Local ethnic Chinese traders were in all cases deliberately targeted, either by the locals or so-called riot specialists.

Horowitz's theory of 'recurrent riots' is useful in explaining why this violence had the appearance of a contagion or wave and also why it became more organised and brutal as time went on.[201] Arguably, the incidents during these months had the same precipitants, that is, price rises and the broader economic crisis, exacerbated by government rhetoric and rumour. However, in explaining how the violence 'spread', the communication and transport networks across Java, and especially, the increased movement of large numbers of people along these routes during the Lebaran period, are critical. Imitation, rumour and impunity played a salient role in these events, which saw higher degrees of organisation, brutality and a wider selection of targets as time passed. Further, as we view the path of events nationally as well as locally during this time, this study shows that as the national political context became more and more hostile to ethnic Chinese, the violence against them was less displaced and more directed. Rather than ethnic Chinese simply being conveniently-placed scapegoats for mob frustration, they were increasingly held directly responsible for the crisis.

Economic Frustration Boils Up: Cicadas, Bandung, 5 January 1998

> I think the actions of the disciplinary troops (GDN) were less than appropriate. Now we are living under emergency conditions. Under these conditions the regional government must be more wise and pro-active in dealing with the public. (Prof. Kusnaka Adminiharja, Faculty of Sociology and Politics at the University of Padjadjaran, Bandung)[202]

By early January 1998, Indonesians were increasingly frustrated with the national political and economic situation and there was a tangible sense of impending crisis, but the government still had not appeared to act decisively towards improving it. Frustration in the face of economic stress and a seemingly uninterested government, coupled with the pressures of Ramadan and Lebaran, combined to cause violence in a district of Bandung on 5 January.

That morning the Mayor of Bandung, Wahyu Hamjaya, called the ABRI-controlled Team for National Discipline (Satgas GDN) to assemble before the town hall where he instructed them to restore order to Bandung and in particular, to remove *kaki lima* (street) traders from restricted areas of the city. Around mid-afternoon, police vehicles carrying dozens of Satgas GDN arrived in the district of Cicadas on Jalan Ahmad Yani. According to trading laws put in place in October 1997 by the city of Bandung, *kaki lima* traders were required to stay inside the market until 6pm.[203] However, the traders had recently been leaving the markets well before this in order to catch customers as rushed home to break their fast at nightfall. One trader explained to a journalist that by coming onto the street a little earlier than regulations allowed he was able to make Rp 20,000 a day, far above what he would make if he stayed inside the market and missed the

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[201] Ibid.
[202] 'Pedagang Kaki Lima: Meruntuhkan Wibawa', *Gatra*, 17 January 1998, 84–85.
[203] 'Bandung rusuh, warga dan PKL 'Ngamuk'', *Media Indonesia*, 6 January 1998.

afternoon trade.[204] Another added, 'Especially because it is Ramadhan, we need money to celebrate Lebaran.'[205] The decision taken by the *kaki lima* traders in Cicadas to flout city laws intended to keep Bandung 'clean, green and filled with flowers'[206] angered the authorities, Ramadan or not. According to Police Chief Erwin Mappaseng the problem was clear, 'There were *kaki lima* traders who wanted to take advantage of the fact that it is fasting month to seek some sort of permission to sell on Jalan Ahmad Yani'.[207]

When the Satgas GDN moved onto Ahmad Yani to remove the traders, eyewitnesses reported that they did so forcefully and aggressively using coarse language, overturning stalls and throwing produce.[208] The traders reacted by throwing things back at the troops. It was reported that, as news spread of the attempts to move the traders, crowds gathered to support them. Eventually outnumbered, the troops retreated as the traders and growing crowd turned the focus of their anger to shops along Ahmad Yani, including Matahari and Horison department stores among others. Pavements and flowerpots were smashed along the street and rubbish bins set alight. Hundreds of shop-windows were broken and tens of vehicles damaged. Although the police closed off the street it was not until at least one hour after the violence had begun that a full contingent of police and ABRI units arrived. About this time it began to rain and the call to prayer was sounded. It was largely this, rather than the arrival of troops, which caused the crowds to disperse.[209]

In Bandung and across Indonesia in early 1998, economic circumstances were dire. Prices for basic goods (*sembako*) began to increase exponentially as the rupiah rapidly depreciated.[210] For low income earners like the *kaki lima* traders, it was increasingly difficult to earn a living. The New Order policy of *kebersihan* or cleanliness had been introduced into Indonesia's cities and towns in the more prosperous mid-1990s. This included removing *warungs*, *kaki lima* traders and *becaks* from the street – all services used or operated by low income earners. Government predictions of increased unemployment levels had been realised by early January. In the construction sector in West Java alone, it was estimated that 75,000 workers had lost their jobs.[211] As a consequence, many Indonesians were forced to seek alternative, easily set-up employment and cheaper services such as those offered by the street traders. Meanwhile the New Order continued to resist the reality of the economic crisis. Suharto was in the process of drawing up a budget which ignored IMF demands. This denial of the economic crisis was reflected in the actions of the Mayor of Bandung when he ordered troops to restore order and cleanliness to the city. The anger of the *kaki lima* traders and the ordinary people who later joined them in the violence clearly articulated the increasing frustration of people in the face of the nation's economic problems, which Suharto himself was trying to ignore.[212]

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[204] 'Mengumbar kemarahan di Awal Tahun', *Forum Keadilan*, 26 January 1998, 26.
[205] 'Bandung Bondowoso Rusuh', *Xpos*, 10–16 January 1998.
[206] Commander of the Security Unit and Deputy Mayor of Bandung Endjang Soedarsono's describing the objectives of city government in 'Pedagang Kaki Lima', *Gatra*, 17 January 1998.
[207] Ibid.
[208] 'K-5 Bentrok dengan Petugas GDN, Bandung Rusuh', *Republika*, 6 January 1998; 'PKL dan petugas GDN bentrok di Bandung', *Bisnis Indonesia*, 6 January 1998
[209] 'Pedagang K-5 Cicadas Diizinkan Berdagang', *Kompas*, 7 January 1998. No human casualties but estimated damage worth billions of rupiah.
[210] See appendix D.
[211] Head of SPSI West Java, Husen Basarah in *Gatra*, 17 January 1998.
[212] On Suharto's economic policy see MacIntyre, 'Political Institutions', 143–162; Robison and Rosser, 'Surviving the Meltdown', 171–191.

> Actually, this incident can't be considered a riot like in Tasikmalaya or Rengasdengklok. No buildings were burned down. What happened here was only some damage to shop fronts caused by thrown stones. (Police Chief, Erwin Mappaseng)[213]

The violence in Bandung had little to do with direct hostility towards ethnic Chinese. Its occurrence during Ramadan explains why it took place, although not in the context of explaining the assault on ethnic Chinese-owned property. Rather, this was a spontaneous act of displaced aggression or scapegoating in its most irrational form. The *kaki lima* traders were angered by the troops sent to remove them from the street and frustrated with the government which gave the order. The shops owned by ethnic Chinese along Ahmad Yani received the brunt of that frustration, but *pribumi* businesses were also attacked. The reaction of some shop-owners in Bandung in scrawling *'pribumi'* or 'Muslim' on their doors said less about the types of targets sought by the protesters than about the expectations these residents had of what the unrest was about.[214] When a solution to the violence was sought, it was settled between the authorities and the *kaki lima* traders; ethnic Chinese shop-owners were not involved. The distinction made by the Police Chief at the time, that this was not like Tasikmalaya or Rengasdengklok, was valid. However, as the political context quickly turned against ethnic Chinese, it was an explanation that in the weeks to come could no longer be applied.

Act 1: Invoking Anti-Chinese Sentiment: The 'I Love the Rupiah' Campaign

Days after the violence in Bandung at the height of the stand-off between the IMF and Suharto, the first overt attempt to shift the responsibility for the crisis from Suharto and his government and onto external and extra-governmental forces was the *'Gerakan Cinta Rupiah'* or, 'I Love Rupiah Movement'. On 8 January 1998, the governor of the Bank of Indonesia, Soedradjad Djiwandono, and the bank's new directors met Suharto to discuss the currency crisis. Following the meeting, Djiwandono told reporters, 'We must convince the owners of foreign currency that they [are] not taking the wrong decision by converting their earnings into rupiahs'.[215] The following day a group led by Suharto's daughter, then chair of Golkar's central executive board, Ny Siti Hardiyanti Rukman (also known as 'Tutut'), launched the 'I Love Rupiah'campaign in an effort to encourage demonstrations of national solidarity through support for the currency. The message was that world currency markets and traders may not value the rupiah, but loyal Indonesians do. On that first day, Tutut exchanged US$50,000 for rupiah and urged other Indonesians to follow suit: 'We need everyone in society at large and in

[213] 'Tidak Benar Kader GDN Terlibat Kerusuhan di Bandung', *Kompas*, 7 January 1998.
[214] 'Bandung', *Xpos*, 10–16 January 1998.
[215] 'Governor of Bank Indonesia: Public's rush for dollars a momentary response', *Kompas*, 9 January 1998.

the government to love the rupiah.'[216] Elite business leaders and conglomerate owners such as Eka Tjipta, Liem Sioe Liong and Tommy Winata joined her.[217]

At carefully organised and well-publicised ceremonies at banks and moneychangers across Jakarta, business leaders, politicians and military officers handed over their US dollars in exchange for rupiah. The nightly TVRI news captured these transactions, which were presented to the public in such a way that they could easily be mistaken for charitable donations. Indeed, the quick response of these elite to the call of the 'I Love Rupiah' campaign was for the most part symbolic and token. In an editorial in *Suara Pembaruan* on 14 January 1998, the newspaper was critical that, although the movement had appeared to attract great support, in reality only USD650,000 had been exchanged.[218] In fact the actual sums of foreign currency exchanged for the national currency was never of primary concern. This campaign was only about nationalism and patriotism. The Governor of the Bank of Indonesia himself confirmed that this was not intended as a campaign with any real chance of making monetary impact:

> The general objective is a moral movement. From the aspect of restoration of the exchange rate it is not yet certain that it will have a direct impact. If the currency markets in London react or in New York, this is difficult for us to control.[219]

Moreover, Tutut expressed her hope that the 'I Love Rupiah Movement' would widen to become the 'I Love Indonesia Movement'.[220] At the same time, Golkar Chairman Harmoko was reported to comment, 'We must find the rat before he spoils the whole of our harvest'.[221] The search for culprits was focused not only on those outside Indonesia, but also upon those within whose loyalty was questionable. Not surprisingly some of the first and most 'generous' public figures to participate were ethnic Chinese Indonesian businessmen. Suharto called a meeting of conglomerate owners about this time, at which he discussed the issue of capital flight and national loyalty.[222] It is reasonable to speculate that support for the 'I Love Rupiah' campaign was also on the agenda.

Price Rises: The Government's Failure To Refute Speculation

> I would do anything to feed my wife and children...I would go to war, killing those people who have caused me trouble. (Lukiman, resident Central Java)[223]

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[216] Ibid.; 'Tanjuk Rencana: Mengefektifkan Gerakan Cinta Rupiah', *Suara Pembaruan,* 14 January 1998.
[217] Ibid.; 'Para konglomerat melepas dolar', *Suara Pembaruan*, 12 January 1998.
[218] 'Stiker Gerakan Cinta Rupiah', *Suara Pembaruan*, 14 January 1998. 'Tutut tukarkan Dollar AS', *Kompas*, 10 January 1998.
[219] 'Pengusaha Tunggu Langkah Riil Pemerintah', *Suara Pembaruan*, 14 January 1998.
[220] 'Pejabat dan Penguasha ramai-ramai tukar dolar', *Suara Pembaruan*, 13 January 1998.
[221] 'Governor of Bank Indonesia', *Kompas*, 9 January 1998.
[222] Louise Williams, 'Chinese becoming scapegoats', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 January 1998, 7.
[223] Sangwon Suh, 'Is The Time Bomb Ticking', *Asiaweek*, 6 February 1998, available at http://www.asiaweek.com/asiaweek/98/0206/cs4.html, accessed 4 August 2001.

Meanwhile, as those wealthy enough to own US dollars in the first place were starring before the cameras at 'I Love Rupiah' events, there was growing panic among the public about the potential for drastic price rises and for vital products to disappear from markets. Whilst official data shows that the price of rice increased by more than 11 percent in February, unofficial reports claimed this was in some places almost 100 percent.[224] In an effort to allay public fears, in mid-January Attorney General Singgih threatened that those found hoarding would be tried under the Anti-Subversion laws for jeopardising national security.[225] At the same time, the head of the National Distribution Agency (Bulog) insisted that there was no reason for price increases for basic commodities, and that the national stocks were sufficient to cover the market demands. He warned traders not to speculate with prices and asked the people not to panic.[226] The Bulog subsidiary Dulog (Logistic Depot) launched *operasi pasar*, a program of random visits by its officials to markets to check prices, and also *operasi intelijen*, to find the 'brains' behind the price hikes in an attempt to assure the people that prices were under some control.[227] With inflation at the highest levels in a decade, over 50 percent in February 1998, Bulog's insistence on holding official prices down while the prices of other farming commodities rose meant that farmers, particularly in Java, faced severe reductions in their real incomes.[228]

Within such a pressured environment, rather than calming the public, these statements simply encouraged people further to believe that the traders themselves – the shop-owners – were responsible for the price rises and the disappearance of products from markets. The authorities presented an impression of normality in the markets and failed to explain the reasons for the stresses in the economy, thereby rendering the public confused and increasingly frustrated.[229] The government untruthfully denied responsibility for price pressures and the demand for basic items. Anti-hoarding threats and *operasi pasar* were inadequate measures at a time of increasing panic and frequent violent attacks on suppliers. The explanations given to the public by the government for the monetary crisis (by way of easy nationalistic slogans in the 'I Love Rupiah' campaign) and now for the price rises deflected blame onto external and 'uncontrollable' factors in the international and local economies. It was no wonder, that the government failed to assure the public that a food shortage accompanied by massive price rises was not imminent. Protests erupting into violence continued across the country, particularly on Java, with a focus on ethnic Chinese owned businesses trading in basic products.

Riots in East Java, 12-16 January 1998: Motorcycle Convoys, Farmers And Price Rises

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[224] Ibid.
[225] 'Subversi Baru Ancaman', *Gatra*, 24 January 1998, 75. Hoarding could be considered an act of subversion under the laws No.11/PNPS/1963; No.5/PNPS/1959.
[226] 'Kami Tak Mennaikkan Harga', *Gatra*, 17 January 1998, 36. Bulog launched *'operasi pasar'*, a program involving randomly visiting markets to check prices.
[227] Ibid. At a market in Jakarta it was found that a litre of cooking oil was selling for Rp4000, compared to Bulog's price of Rp1800.
[228] Kevin Evans, 'Survey of Recent Developments', *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, Vol. 34 No. 3, (December 1998), 5–36.

It was in this climate of high anxiety both within Indonesia and overseas about the state of the national economy, that parts of East Java, including the city of Jember and its surrounds, were gripped by violence from 12–16 January 1998. Across Indonesia tensions grew as people struggled to comprehend why they were forced to pay prices for basic goods that were in some cases up to double those suggested by Bulog.[230] Consequently the threats made by Bulog and the Attorney General against traders found to be raising prices without permission and hoarding goods were taken up by the people, most of them farmers, in the Jember region. Armed with what they saw as an authorisation from these government agencies, people embarked on their own campaign, both organised and spontaneous, of enforcing these rulings in their local area. Hotman M. Siahaan described it: 'The masses forced traders to sell rice at a price that was in line with the prices set by Dulog (local Bulog branch) and not for their own self-interest. By using force to cause prices to be lowered the people acted in the style of Robinhood'.[231] A typical example of this took place on 12 January 1998, in the village of Lengkong in Mumbulsari district about 20 kilometres from Jember, where shop-owners had increased the prices for basic goods above the Bulog price.[232] Upon hearing this, crowds gathered at stores and attempted to force the traders to reconsider their decision.[233] When the shopkeepers refused, the crowds attacked the shops, looted produce and set stores alight.[234] In a few cases protesters were successful in forcing traders to sell their products at the *harga biasa* or 'normal price'[235] even though, as one trader told the media, 'If I buy and sell at these prices, I will die'.[236]

The initial action carried out in villages around the Jember district was mostly spontaneous. However, a shift soon occurred in the dynamic of the people's protest, which took on a much more organised form. On 13 January, a convoy of 1000 people on motorcycles and trucks called at villages around Banyuwangi, East Java, protesting against unfair prices. It was claimed that a television program screened a few days earlier about Bulog's commitment to maintaining prices triggered this reaction.[237] In towns visited by the convoy, protesters and large crowds of locals regularly outnumbered security forces and there were frequent incidents of violence against Chinese-owned stores and warehouses.[238] On 14 January, motorcyclists

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[229] During this period rice had to be imported due to a drought-induced shortfall in the last harvest. Bulog admitted it had imported 1.5 million tons of rice from around the region, on government credits. The rice was valued at between US$250,000–280,000. ('Kami Tak', *Gatra*, 17 January 1998, 36.)

[230] Bulog head, Beddu Amang, insisted there was no need to increase greatly the prices of goods such as rice and cooking oil, because national stocks were sufficient. He told traders not to speculate with prices and for consumers not to panic. (Ibid.)

[231] Hotman M. Siahaan, 'Perbanditan Sosial Ala Robinhood Akan Menjadi Mode', *Tempo*, 14 February 1998.

[232] Bulog maintained that rice should be sold at Rp1,000 per kg. ('Kami Tak', *Gatra*, 17 January 1998.) 'Kerusuhan di Jember', *Kompas*, 22 January 1998.

[233] In reality the decrease in stock available was due largely to people stocking up for to Lebaran. ('Di Jember, Minyak Rp1,400 per liter', *Jawa Pos*, 3 February 1998; 'Massa Ngamuk di Jember', *Bernas*, January 1998.)

[234] 'Subversi Baru Ancaman', 24 January 1998, 75.

[235] The price set by Bulog.

[236] 'Ruined Indonesians vent rage on Chinese minority', *The Guardian*, 28 January 1998; 'Dampak Krisis bagi Masyarakat Bawah', *Forum Keadilan*, 9 February 1998, 106–107.

[237] Human Rights Watch, 'Indonesia Alert: Economic Crisis Leads to Scapegoating of Ethnic Chinese', February 1998, available at www.hrw.org/press98/feb/chinese2.htm, accessed 4 April 2002.

[238] Ibid.

arrived in Jember, where they looted and destroyed at least 15 stores. A suspicious fire at a large supermarket in the city on the morning of 15 January, which left an estimated 700 people unemployed, was linked to the presence of a convoy of protesters in the city.[239] That day, approximately 100 motorcyclists continued to travel through villages in the area, closely watched by police. It was not until the convoy reached the town of Purwoharjo late in the day that security forces acted with force.[240]

Authorities responded to the situation with conspiracy theories. East Java Police Chief, Zarwan Djamaan, argued that 'intellectual leaders' were behind the violence with the aim of creating instability. He believed those forces had taken advantage of the rising discontent among farmers around Jember who viewed the price discrepancy (between what they received for their product and what the shop owner sold it for) as an injustice. Conversely, the Governor of East Java, Basofi Soedirman, attempted to calm the people and in part reverse the messages being issued from Jakarta. Basofi insisted that the few shop-owners who were storing basic goods were not intentionally hoarding; instead he commended them for acting responsibly by keeping some products aside so that a constant supply would be available.[241] He called on the people to consider the implications of their actions. But so as not to apportion too much responsibility to his constituents, he speculated, 'The manner of these figures, that is to mobilise the people in order to do problem actions, indicates PKI'.[242]

Media reports indicated that most people involved in the violence in Jember and its surrounds came from the 'interior'; they were farmers.[243] During this time of economic crisis, farmers continued to be paid small amounts for their produce (at the Bulog set price), while shop owners were selling at a far higher price. Armed with Bulog's assurances that there was no need to increase prices, the farmers protested against the perceived injustice by the shopkeepers. The farmers' plight became acute when the price of petrol, essential for their existence and work in the village, was increased. This, in addition to a severe drought, meant that the harvest would be delayed for months. Their frustration in the face of what they perceived to be and were repeatedly told were unlawful price increases and hoarding easily led to sometimes violent protests against the most obvious target, ethnic Chinese traders, where agency was implicit and undeniable. The origins of the motorcycle convoy are less clear. Authorities described them as 'youths', who, as the details of their journey indicate, were clearly working according to a plan. Whether their intention was a peaceful protest or not is difficult to tell; however violence occurred in each town they visited. This also makes it difficult to explain why security forces did not act to stop the convoy until the third day and why, when they eventually acted, it was with a level of aggression and violence completely out of proportion to the level of public violence that had occurred. In February, local police announced that they had made a series of arrests in relation to the violence in and around Jember. Most of those arrested were from the local area and were accused of being in

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[239] 'Isu Kerusuhan Masih Bertiup di Jember', *Kompas*, 17 January 1998.
[240] 'Banyuwangi Rusuh, Wartawan Jadi Korban' and 'Sumber Mas Pasaraya Terbakar Habis', *Jawa Pos*, 16 January 1998.
[241] 'Basofi: Kerusuhan Patut Diwaspadai: Lima Toko di Jember Dirusak Massa', *Kompas*, 15 January 1998.
[242] Ibid.; *Bernas*, January 1998.
[243] Siahaan, 'Perbanditan Sosial'.

the groups of motorcyclists who rode across the district. Jember Chief of Police, Lt. Col. Madjid Tawil, was confident that those arrested were key actors in the violence, explaining, 'Among the rioters certainly there are many *preman* and repeat offenders (*bromocorah*).'[244]

During this period, the farmers and other locals whose lives were in crisis had not yet associated the government's control of prices with their difficulties. Until now, they had responded well to the rhetoric from Jakarta regarding the price hikes and directed their protest to local traders. Such incidents fall within Horowitz's definition of food riots: 'generally motivated by hunger and indignation about price and supply the riots were not so much destructive as they were appropriative'.[245] The objective was to force prices down, and in most cases little more than looting resulted. As time passed and no resolution to the price increases was forthcoming from the government, stores closed in response to the threats. The people became more desperate. The government became more aware also, that it would not be long before a connection between was made itself and the economic crisis.

Act 2: Invoking Anti-Chinese Sentiment: Sofyan Wanandi And The Tanah Tinggi Bomb (Just What The Doctor Ordered)

On 18 January 1998, a homemade bomb exploded inside an apartment in Tanah Tinggi, Central Jakarta. The apartment was leased by two young men, both active members of the banned political party the People's Democratic Party (PRD), branded communist by the New Order government soon after it was formed in 1996.[246] When police investigated the scene, they discovered a laptop computer from which it is alleged they recovered emails and other documents.[247] The authorities claimed that one of these emails mentioned well-known ethnic Chinese Indonesian businessman, Sofyan Wanandi (Liem Bian Koen), head of the Gemala group of companies and once close confidant of the President.[248] The authorities claimed the email stated that Wanandi had been approached with a request to fund the party's activities. The Jakarta elite meanwhile were perplexed by claims that Wanandi, until recently very close to the New Order and a well known anti-communist, would have anything to do with the PRD.[249]

On 26 January,[250] Wanandi was called for questioning by the Chief of the Jakarta branch of Bakorstanasda, Maj. Gen. Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin, to answer the allegations, which he categorically denied.[251] Following this, Wanandi held a press conference at which he chose to speak in English as well as Indonesian,

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[244] 'Otak Kerusuhan Pasuruan Diciduk, BAP Kasus Jember Dilimpahkan', *Suara Pembaruan*, 13 February 1998.
[245] Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 425.
[246] 'Sofyan Wanandi: Jaringan di Balik Ledakan Bom', *Gatra*, 31 January 1998, 24–33.
[247] Ibid.
[248] Ibid. Wanandi was member of the Angkatan '66 which demonstrated against the PKI and supported the establishment of the New Order government. ('Isunya, Saya Sudah Ditangkap', *Gatra*, 31 January 1998, 31.)
[249] 'Kami tak ingin balas dendam', *Forum Keadilan*, 23 February 1998, 15; S. Schlachter, 'The Flames of Hatred', *Asian Business*, April 1998, 42–48.
[250] By this time the rupiah had slipped to as low as 17,000 to the dollar at one point. The currency had depreciated 86% since July 1997. (MacIntyre, 'Political Institutions', 160.)
[251] 'Sofyan Wanandi Summoned for Questioning by the Agency', *Kompas*, 27 January 1998.

strongly refuting the claims made against him and urging people to resist apportioning blame to any group. He stressed his commitment to helping the country overcome its economic problems and denied that his company was sending money offshore.[252] A few days after his meeting with Sjamsoeddin, Wanandi departed Indonesia for Australia. Rumours were once again rife and this time more fervent.[253] Suddenly Jakarta's elite and the public at large began to wonder if these claims might have some substance: had Wanandi fled Indonesia out of fear, and what did he have to hide?

Sofyan 'On the Run'

During the week Wanandi was out of the country, the Tanah Tinggi investigation continued and speculation flourished; not only about Wanandi's alleged involvement and that of his brother Jusuf, but also about ethnic Chinese Indonesians in general and their role in the economic collapse. Amongst other rumours circulating widely was the claim that, prior to the collapse of the rupiah, Chinese Indonesians had moved about USD$60 billion out of Indonesia, thereby precipitating the currency's collapse.[254] On 2 February, the Directorate General of Immigration announced that Wanandi had been asked to remain in Indonesia due to his connection to the Tanah Tinggi investigation, although they admitted a travel ban had not been issued.[255] On 4 February, at a prayer gathering at ABRI headquarters, Feisal Tanjung commented on Wanandi's absence and openly questioned his patriotism: 'Does he want to be called first so that he won't go. If he is a good citizen he must be in Indonesia'.[256] The issue received avid media attention. Stories speculating about where Wanandi had gone and when he would return featured daily.[257]

When he returned from Australia on 8 February, Wanandi was immediately called to the Jakarta Regional Police headquarters.[258] Police maintained that he was appearing only as a witness under a different investigation to that carried out by the Bakorstanasda on 26 January. Wanandi was again forced to defend his

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[252] Ibid.; 'Sofyan Wanandi diperiksa', *Suara Pembaruan*, 26 January 1998.
[253] He departed with his wife on 29 Janauary 1998. 'Memengnya Kenapa ke Australia', *Gatra*, 7 February 1998, 64–65.
[254] 'Chinese becoming scapegoats', *SMH*, 27 January 1998, 7; See interview with Adi Sasono, in 'Kami tak ingin', *Forum Keadilan*, 23 February 1998.
[255] A spokesman for the Directorate told *Antara* news agency that the request was issued on 29 January, however he made it clear that the order was not a travel ban, merely a 'proactive measure'. ('Immigration asks Sofyan to delay all overseas trips', *Jakarta Post*, 3 February 1998.)
[256] Feisal Tanjung from 'Konglomerat yang dianggap Jumawa', *Gatra*, 14 Februry 1998, 26. Meanwhile the State Minister of Environment Sarwono Kusumaatmadja defended Wanandi: 'Probably he is attending the Australian Open. He is such a fanatic. He is there for personal matters. I'm not convinced if he is involved in the PRD. Such a stingy person.' ('About Sofyan Wanandi's travel abroad', *Kompas*, 5 February 1998.)
[257] 'Hari Minggu Sofyan Wanandi kembali', *Kompas*, 6 February 1998. *Gatra* ran Wanandi's picture or name on its cover over four consecutive editions from 31 January until 21 February 1998.
[258] Wanandi was called to Police HQ again on 10 February to answer questions as a witness for the investigation in the bomb explosion in Tanah Tinggi. ('Sofyan Wanandi Penuhi Panggilan Polda', *Suara Pembaruan*, 10 February 1998.)

actions. He insisted the trip had been arranged well in advance and, as he had already answered all questions put to him and refuted claims of his involvement in the bombing, believed he was free to leave the country.[259]

Why Sofyan Wanandi?

> At face value, the accusation that Wanandi backed the PRD is absurd. The two are as politically incompatible as Bill Clinton and Saddam Hussein. (Heryanto)[260]

Though Wanandi had been a member of the 1966 movement which supported Suharto against the PKI, in more recent times his relationship with the New Order had been less close.[261] As a business leader, he had become vocal since the economic crisis began. Together with an increasing number of commentators and business people, he regularly engaged in public dialogue on economic issues and government policy. As early as October 1997, Wanandi and other business leaders called on the government to act to improve the economy. He urged them to loosen monetary policy and embrace the IMF's reforms: 'The IMF has some strong but effective medicine for our economic ills. We must give priority to the national interest and set aside our private ambitions for the moment'.[262] In the initial stages of the *krismon* at least, it seems that his opinions were well regarded by the government. He and other conglomerate owners were closely involved in the government's decision-making on economic policy. As late as 13 January, Wanandi, Sudono and Anthony Salim, Eka Tjipta and others met as representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Kadin) with the governor of the Bank of Indonesia and some cabinet members to work towards a solution.[263] During this meeting, Wanandi did not disguise the fact that his opinions on repairing the economy differed from those of the government, which was increasingly hostile to IMF reforms.[264] This was not the first time he had expressed an opposing view. Immediately after the Tanah Tinggi bombing and before he visited Australia, in an interview with *Gatra* magazine, Wanandi stated that he would not be exchanging his dollars for rupiah in the 'I Love Rupiah' campaign, viewing it as no real solution. 'If $1000 or $2000 is considered good for us, I will send it tomorrow. But it is my opinion that what can be done to improve the economy is to get much more dollar investment from overseas, not just $1000-$2000.'[265] Instead he believed that creating economic and political stability would be far more effective. Such opinions were strongly rejected by those close to Suharto. Again Feisal Tanjung was among them: 'Already 13 conglomerates have said they are prepared to help, except Sofyan who is not prepared to contribute to the government so that we may overcome the crisis'.[266]

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[259] 'Jakarta's security will call one more person', *Kompas*, 11 February 1998.
[260] Heryanto, 'Where Communism Never Dies', 150.
[261] See Hefner, *Civil Islam*.
[262] 'Normalize the national economy soon', *Kompas*, 14 October 1997.
[263] '650,000 Dollar AS Dirupiahkan', *Kompas*, 13 January 1998.
[264] MacIntyre, 'Political Institutions'. MacIntyre argues that politics determined how the Asian economic crisis played out for Indonesia. If not for Suharto's erratic and fundamentally flawed policy decisions in late 1997, early 1998 Indonesia could have softened the crash.
[265] 'Sofyan Wanandi Jaringan di Balik Ledakan Bom', *Gatra*, 31 January 1998, 33. Wanandi also said he needed US dollars to pay his creditors.
[266] 'Kontroversi Sofyan Setelah Ledakan', *Forum Keadilan*, 24 February 1998, 15.

Wanandi's outspokenness did not take place in a vacuum. Early 1998 saw increasing confidence among Indonesian democrats and intellectuals to present dissenting opinions about the way the nation was being governed. In addition to expressing his opinions on economic issues, in early January Wanandi hesitantly entered a political dialogue on the appointment of the Vice President. He argued that, due to the critical economic situation, an early announcement was important to avoid speculation and uncertainty that would further upset the economy.[267] In response to a journalist's question about the suitability of Try Sutrisno for another term, he responded, 'I consider Try Sutrisno as extremely ideal for the position of Vice President for the coming leadership term, because he can be accepted by all sides'.[268] This was widely understood to be a rejection of Suharto's preferred candidate, B.J. Habibie, who as Minister for Technology overspent on big projects and clearly did not have the confidence of world markets.[269] Proof of this followed his eventual appointment as Vice President in February 1998, when the world currency markets reacted by further devaluing the rupiah. In a subsequent interview Wanandi denied supporting one vice-presidential candidate over another.[270] Nevertheless, many believed his comments regarding the appointment were inseparable from his subsequent alleged implication in the Tanah Tinggi bomb incident, which occurred only days after.[271]

The question is why was Sofyan Wanandi, who was generally conservative and committed to the task of saving the national economy, singled out by the government and ABRI for condemnation, particularly at a time of wide dissenting opinion? As Heryanto's comparison of Wanandi's political position vis-à-vis the PRD makes clear, the allegations against him had no basis.[272] Wanandi himself concluded that it was an event designed to single out an ethnic Chinese for blame and for accusations of disloyalty to the nation during its time of crisis.[273] Heryanto explained further: 'Demonizing Wanandi exclusively on the basis of his Chinese ethnicity would not be adequately forceful in 1998, and thus an alleged association with the already prosecuted PRD was established.'[274] The scandal involving Wanandi, a high profile ethnic Chinese Indonesian who was also a conglomerate owner (and therefore the worst kind of Chinese in the eyes of many Indonesians), fulfilled the government's need for a decoy. A fitting analogy by one author about the usefulness of a minority as a scapegoat, which applies in this situation, is that it acts as 'a kind of political methadone' in times of trouble for the elite or the community as a whole.[275]

Riots in East and Central Java, 26 January - 3 February: Frustrated Fishermen and A Lean Lebaran

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[267] 'Segera Umumkan Nama Calon Wakil Presiden', *Suara Pembaruan*, 10 January 1998.
[268] Ibid.
[269] 'Indonesia: Suharto plays his joker?', *The Economist*, 24 January 1998. Mere rumours that Habibie would be Vice President drove the rupiah down to Rp17,000 on 22 January 1998.
[270] *Gatra*, 31 January 1998, 33.
[271] 'Api yang mengancam', *Forum Keadilan*, 24 February 1998.
[272] For further detail on the irony of this campaign against Wanandi see Coppel, 'Chinese Indonesians in Crisis', 20–21.
[273] See 'Chinese becoming', *SMH*, 27 January 1998.
[274] Heryanto, 'Where Communism Never Dies', 150.
[275] Rose paraphrasing Midge Decter, in 'Blaming the Jews', 36.

From 26–30 January 1998, violent incidents took place along the 100-kilometre stretch of the north Java coast from Rembang in to Tuban. Fishing is the primary industry for the towns and villages along this coast, which is a key road link between the ports of Semarang and Surabaya. These incidents occurred at the beginning of the holiday for Lebaran, which marks the end of fasting for Muslims. Traditionally, this is when Indonesians visit family and return to their hometowns and villages, and roads and transport systems across the country are at their busiest.[276] The violence began on the evening of 26 January in the town of Kragan, Rembang district, and continued in villages along this coast for two days. On the first day, a large crowd, mainly fishermen, came to Kragan from nearby villages to protest about a threefold rise in the price of kerosene. The protest became violent, and the crowds attacked shops, burnt produce in the streets and looted. Looting and burning the next day in Sarang, seven kilometres east of Kragan, was described as more brutal than the day before. Violence spreading east along the coast disrupted traffic on the busy Semarang–Surabaya road.[277] From 28–30 January there were violent incidents in various locations in Tuban district.[278] Police arrested 131 suspects and Rp139 million worth of damage was done to shops, stock and vehicles. Injuries were also recorded.

When the East Java Governor, Basofi Soedirman, was called to comment on the violence in his district for the second time in as many weeks, this time his response was more forceful. He agreed with police that the violence had been organised and again urged residents to resist provocation to join in: 'I appeal to rumour-mongers to stop their campaigns because what they have been doing has caused the nation a lot of pain. It's a big sin to agitate (people to riot).'[279] Generally however, responses by authorities during and after the unrest were far from strong enough to quell the now widespread belief that such violence could proceed with impunity.

Unlike the violence in mid-January around Jember, the incidents two weeks later in Rembang and Tuban districts were not simply small, isolated or spontaneous outbreaks or 'food riots' demanding price increases. Although consisting largely of disgruntled fishermen and other frustrated locals, the crowds of protesters were also organised to some extent. They involved large numbers, described as in the hundreds and even thousands; some had travelled from surrounding areas to a particular location. In most cases targets were not random; protesters moved directly to, for example, kerosene traders and fishing supplies stores. These incidents were more brutal than those around Jember. In addition to threatening shop-owners and breaking windows, there was large-scale burning and looting. Participants acted with increasing levels of confidence, safe in the knowledge that there would be no serious repercussions from the authorities. An attack on a

[276] 'Kerusuhan Nelayan bisa dikendalikan', *Bisnis Indonesia,* 28 January 1998.
[277] 'Shops attacked amid rumours of planned mass unrest', *South China Morning Post,* 2 February 1998; 'Gara-gara harga minyak (diisukan) naik', *Forum Keadilan,* 23 February 1998, 24–25; 'Pelaku kerusuhan di Rembang Masih dalam Pengusutan', *Media Indonesia,* 3 February 1998.
[278] '131 tersangka pelaku kasus Tuban', *Jawa Pos,* 3 February 1998. Stores were attacked in surrounding villages.
[279] 'East Java violence blamed on hoodlums', *Jakarta Post,* 4 February 1998.

Catholic church in Kragan similarly indicated that the targets were becoming more diverse.[280] Evidence was uncovered by police of mass meetings held to organise the protests,[281] and of key individuals, named as criminals, acting as coordinators. Amongst these was an ABRI intelligence officer suspected of coordinating the violence, thus giving weight to suspicions that the military and the government played a role in this violence, not only from afar but also at grass roots level.[282]

Further east and hundreds of kilometres from the districts of Rembang and Tuban, the town of Pasuruan became the scene of mass violence three days later, with the antagonising factor once again an increase in the price of kerosene. As in Jember nearly two weeks before, a convoy of motorcycles entered the town just prior to violence breaking out.[283] These acts of large-scale violence were no longer just a form of economic protest; they were more destructive and included new targets. In particular, the burning of goods that might otherwise have been looted demonstrated that the aims expressed in earlier protests could no longer be applied.[284]

Act 3: Invoking Anti-Chinese Sentiment: Islamic Groups Spread The Word

> The Muslim community also has to become aware, aware that power in this country cannot fall into the hands of Zionist agents or groups who have a phobia toward Islam. (*Conspiracy to Overthrow Soeharto.*)[285]
>
> There's no grip on the situation to prevent local conflict from becoming a national conflict.[286] (Marzuki Darusman)

As the crisis escalated through January, various Islamic groups were also sending clear signals about whom they considered the culprits in the economic collapse. During Ramadan, *ulama* in mosques around the country called on their audience to 'take back the wealth that was rightfully theirs'.[287] Some, particularly ethnic Chinese, who heard the sermons broadcast across their neighbourhoods took them to be accusatory statements against Chinese and calls to violence.[288] It is very likely that the source of much of this rhetoric was the government and its supporters.

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[280] Approximately 20 shops were damaged in Kragan and for the first time during this period a Catholic church was also attacked. ('Polisi Masih Memburu Penyulut Kerusuhan di Kragan, Rembang', *Suara Pembaruan*, 28 January 1998.) A statue of the Virgin Mary and pews were pulled into the street and set alight. ('Rembang Rusuh, Tuban pun Rusuh', *Xpos*, No.05/I, 31 January – 6 February 1998.)

[281] The regional police chief claimed that a mass meeting to organise the protest was held at the Tambakboyo shopping centre on 28 January. (HRW, 'Indonesia Alert'.)

[282] A grain of evidence of such a systematic plan emerged a week later when police rounded up a large group of suspects and identified one as an ABRI intelligence officer, known only as 'S'. ('21 Orang ditangkap kerusuhan di Rembang', *Republika*, 5 February 1998; 'Pangdam IV/Diponegoro: Oknum ABRI diduga terlibat kerusuhan di Rembang', *Suara Pembaruan*, 6 February 1998.)

[283] 'Di Pasuruan, 30 orang diamankan', *Jawa Pos*, 3 February 1998; 'Bermula dari bisik-bisik berbisa', *Gatra*, 14 February 1998; 'Gara-gara harga', *Forum Keadilan*, 24 February 1998.

[284] Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 425.

[285] Cited in Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 203, from *Konspirasi Megguling Soeharto*, 56.

[286] 'Ruined Indonesians', *The Guardian*, 28 January 1998.

[287] Interviews conducted in Jakarta, August 1999.

[288] See Sofyan Wanandi in 'Chinese becoming', *SMH*, 27 January 1998. 'There are a lot of speeches in the mosques saying that the Chinese are bringing the economy down. This is very dangerous; they are just trying to make us scapegoats.'

On 23 January 1998, Prabowo Subianto, then head of the Special Command Unit (Kopassus), hosted a *buka puasa,* or breaking of the fast, at its headquarters, to which he invited around 5,000 Muslim clerics and activists with links, among others, to ICMI and KISDI, including its notorious leader Ahmad Soemargono.[289] At the meeting Prabowo distributed a booklet titled 'Conspiracy to Overthrow Soeharto',[290] which argued, 'The reason President Soeharto had been targeted...was that he was a Muslim, and he and his family were becoming too powerful for the cabal of Jews, Jesuits, Chinese and CIA-Mossad agents who control international capitalism'.[291] Robert Hefner explains that the book 'painted a picture of a vile domestic and international conspiracy against Soeharto', and its authors were, he argues, to be found among those active in the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), previously known as the Centre for Policy and Development Studies (CPDS), both pro-Habibie think-tanks supported by the likes of Feisal Tanjung, Syarwan Hamid, Prabowo, Tutut and Bambang Suharto. Among the claims that Hefner describes as 'absurd', the book alleges that Ibu Tien (Suharto's late wife) had been murdered by a Chinese doctor as part of a conspiracy led by the aforementioned groups. This and similar claims led Hefner to judge that 'the booklet's anti-Chinese and anti-Christian rhetoric was the most hateful the Soeharto regime had ever used'.[292]

In late January and early February, soon after the Kopassus *buka puasa*, various Islamic groups became active in demonstrations against Sofyan Wanandi, which were also explicitly anti-Chinese. Demonstrations were held at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a leading Indonesian think-tank on economics and politics, headed by Sofyan's brother, Jusuf Wanandi.[293] Long regarded as an organisation of Catholic Chinese, the CSIS had close relations with the New Order government until Suharto's shift towards more Islamic policies in the early 1990s. The demonstrations were organised by a variety of Islamic youth groups, the most prominent being KISDI, which had close associations with ICMI and was widely seen as a radical group 'for hire', with links to intelligence networks and Kopassus through its then commander, Prabowo.[294] The protesters demanded that Wanandi answer the claims against him and made anti-Christian and anti-Chinese statements.[295] The demonstrations at CSIS continued for days, only ending after the leaders of the think-tank called their own friends in the military.[296] However, similar protests continued elsewhere. On 2 February, twenty-five demonstrators calling themselves the 'Extended Family of the Victims of the Tanjung Priok Incident', led by relatives of Amir Biki, a Muslim cleric killed during the 1984 Tanjung Priok incident, went to the national parliament to demand a decrease in the price of basic goods

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[289] Margot Cohen, ''Us' and 'them'', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 12 February 1998.
[290] Ibid. It was also claimed that copies of Seagrave's *Lords of the Rim* were distributed at this meeting.
[291] Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 202.
[292] Ibid., 203. Hefner also points out that the booklet was also put on the KISDI website at this time, therefore reaching a far wider audience.
[293] 'Unjuk Rasa Lagi di CSIS', *Kompas*, 28 Januari 1998.
[294] Cohen ('Us and Them') said it was rumoured that each protester was being paid Rp50,000 by Prabowo, although this was denied. Interview with Clara Juwono, Jakarta, 20 August 1999.
[295] Ahmad Soemargono said that CSIS had a very low opinion of Muslim clerics and attempted to influence government policy to reflect this. 'Konglomerat', *Gatra*, 14 February 1998; 'Mendemo CSIS, Mengiris Dendam Lama', *Forum Keadlian*, 23 Febrary 1998, 19. The demonstrators shouted slogans like, 'Close CSIS, Try Sofyan Wanandi'.
[296] Interview with Harry Tjhan, Jakarta, 25 August 1999.

and the prosecution of Sofyan Wanandi and the ethnic Chinese millionaire, Liem Sioe Liong.[297] Rusly Biki, leader of the group and son of the cleric, claimed there was a link between these issues: 'Both the House and security authorities should take measures against them. Indonesian people, mostly Muslims, are severely affected by the price hikes the businessmen have sparked'.[298]

In addition to these protest actions, demonstrators targeted anyone critical of their campaign against Wanandi.[299] On 6 February, the Islamic youth group 'Front of the Islamic Youth Action of Jabotabek', allegedly backed by Fadli Zon, held demonstrations outside the offices of the magazine *D&R Romantika* to protest against an article it had published entitled, 'The Sofyan Wanandi Case: Who Knows Where He Is?'[300] The group argued that the article defended Wanandi and CSIS and was insulting to Muslim youth.[301] In response *D&R* editors agreed to publish a counter-statement from the group in their next edition. Groups also demonstrated at the offices of the newspaper *Media Indonesia,* which had published an editorial suggesting that the allegations against Wanandi had been fabricated by the military. It was perhaps no coincidence that its editor had also been questioned by ABRI in relation to the Tanah Tinggi incident.[302]

On 8 February, these anti-Chinese statements and actions by Muslim groups reached a climax. A 'Great Meeting' was held in the Al-Azhar Mosque in Jakarta where *ulama* and leaders of Muslim organisations from across Java made speeches about the economic crisis, its causes and consequences and pointed fingers of blame. Speakers were united in calling for the people to rise and resist the 'new colonialists' and 'traitors' who, they argued, had plundered the wealth of the people.[303] In a speech titled 'Strategy of the Muslim Struggle in Facing Present Developments', KH Abdul Qadir Djaelani said, 'Let us close ranks of Islam and ABRI to face those who destroy the national economic system and create instability'.[304] Bambang Pribadi, head of the National Solidarity Front of Indonesian Muslims, added this statement about his followers' intentions: 'They join to face traitors of the nation like Sofyan Wanandi or

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[297] 'Unjuk Rasa Soal Sofyan Wanandi di DPR', *Kompas*, 3 February 1998.
In bombings following the Tanjung Priok demonstrations in September 1984, the first target was a branch of the Bank Central Asia, owned by Liem Sioe Liong described as the 'principal *cukong* in the New Order.' (M.C. Ricklefs, *History of Modern Indonesia Since C1300* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1993), 307.)

[298] 'Immigration asks Sofyan', *Jakarta Post*, 3 February 1998.

[299] Adi Sasono, ICMI Secretary General, told *Forum* that whilst he could not agree with the anti-CSIS demonstrations, he could understand why they were occurring. He said that CSIS represented the 'black history' of New Order politics and there was evidence that CSIS were behind incidents like the Malari Affair in 1974 and Tanjung Priok in 1984. ('Mendemo CSIS'; 'Kami Tak Ingin Balas Dendam', *Forum Keadilan*, 23 February 1998.)

[300] *D&R*, 7 February 1998.

[301] 'Kantor Majalah D&R Didemontrasi', *Suara Pembaruan*, 7 February 1998; 'Front of the Islamic Youth Action Protests 'D&R' Magazine', *Kompas*, 7 February 1998.

[302] Amnesty, 'Paying the Price'. Allegedly email between members of PRD was found that also mentioned the owner of *Media Indonesia*, Surya Paloh. Paloh was questioned by the Bakorstanasda on 27 January, but he denied knowing those people. ('Kontroversi Sofyan', *Forum Keadilan*, 23 February 1998.)

[303] 'Muslims called to face Traitors of the Nation', *Kompas*, 9 February 1998.

[304] *Kompas*, 9 February 1998. He also called for non-native conglomerates who had transferred up to USD80 billion overseas to have their wealth confiscated by the state.

whoever stands behind him'.[305] Representatives of the military were also present. Lt. Gen. Syarwan Hamid, used Harmoko's earlier catch-cry to 'eradicate rats' in the economy, reportedly saying, 'These rats took away the fruits of our national development and work for their own self interest...Don't think that the people do not know who these rats are. It's time to eliminate these rats'.[306]

'Holy War' Declared: A Common Agenda

Two days later, on 10 February, leaders of the MUI met with President Suharto during a break from their annual national meeting. Suharto urged the Muslim leaders to offset unrest in Indonesia by staying alert to events that might provoke the people. He told them, 'Keep on praying, use the mosques and smaller prayer houses, even for just a few minutes, to remind the people to stay alert. Stay alert, because there are (currently) so many efforts to instigate (unrest)'.[307] Maintaining the religious overtone, Suharto attacked 'certain' unnamed business people for bringing about the economic crisis through speculation: 'This is a game that would never receive the blessing of God'.[308] When the MUI leaders returned to their meeting, they affirmed their support for Suharto's re-election as President. On behalf of its members, MUI chairman Hasan Basri urged the government to take steps towards reducing the wealth gap by forming a people's economy and supporting *pribumi* business.[309] Furthermore, Basri embraced Suharto's call for vigilance against hoarders and speculators. In his speech he issued a call for *jihad nasional*, or a national holy war, against currency speculators and hoarders of basic commodities, and urged *ulama* to 'defend the nation from attack from within the nation and outside it',[310] again echoing government rhetoric.

Many other Islamic groups quickly acted to counter this discourse, warning that it was being used as a political tool with potentially dire consequences. Masdar F. Mas'udi, director of the Indonesian Society for Pesantren and Community Development, rejected Basri's assertions that the holy war could be carried out peacefully, arguing that use of the religious term *jihad* was employed precisely because it could easily incite Muslims.[311] A week later, at a Muhammadiyah meeting in Yogyakarta attended by 40,000 people, its leader Amien Rais also denounced the calls for holy war against hoarders and speculators, and declared that looting and burning were against Islamic teaching.[312] He explicitly condemned the attacks on ethnic Chinese: 'The Chinese are our brothers and they have become a part and parcel of this integrated nation'. He instructed them, '(The protesters) have to direct their anger and protests at the government as the government must be

[305] Ibid. This was despite the fact that by now Wanandi had answered all the police questions and had been cleared of involvement in either the Tanah Tinggi incident, or funding the PRD.
[306] *American Reporter*, February 1998.
[307] 'Ulemas urged to defuse unrest', *Jakarta Post*, 10 February 1998.
[308] Ibid.
[309] 'MUI Desak Pemerintah Berdayakan Ekonomi Rakyat', *Suara Pembaruan*, 11 February 1998.
[310] 'MUI Dukung Pak Harto'*Kompas*, 11 February 1998.
[311] 'Call for jihad 'may have caused riots'', *Jakarta Post*, 20 February 1998; 'NU says hoarding of goods against Islamic teaching', *Jakarta Post*, 23 February 1998.
[312] 'Moslems told to stay away from riots', *Jakarta Post*, 19 February 1998.

held responsible for this messy situation'.[313] Further, the head of the Indonesian Movement of Islamic Students (PMII), C. Umam Wiranu, expressed concern that demonstrations could easily be perceived as anti-Chinese because Sofyan Wanandi was a symbol of Chinese, Catholics and conglomerates, and he warned, 'Heaven forbid that because of lack of information, the Islamic community directly attacked the Chinese. This is what we are concerned about'.[314] As Hefner argues, the more outrageous the hardline Muslim position became, the stronger was the Muslim democrats' opposition to Suharto,[315] as they were in no doubt that elite political forces were at play.[316]

Up to this point, the government had said or done very little to discourage violence and ethnic tension. One gesture was made on 28 January, at the start of Lebaran, when Suharto met with Protestant Church leaders from the Indonesian Communion of Churches. He asked that all religious leaders call for calm during the crisis: 'Our nation may face a great difficulty and the nation's unity could be destroyed if it is neglected'.[317] Reports continued, however, from the scenes of violence across Java and on other islands, that military and police were standing by while property, mostly owned by ethnic Chinese, and churches were destroyed. Secretary General of ICMI, Adi Sasono, also made ambiguous statements about the violence. When journalists asked why non-indigenous Indonesians had been targeted, Sasono replied that they were being made scapegoats for popular anger towards the government and that most of them were poor people. He added, 'The rich ones are probably already in Singapore'.[318] In early February, Chairman of Komnas HAM, Marzuki Darusman, expressed the Commission's concern at the number of violent incidents with SARA 'tendencies', and promised an investigation. He called on the authorities to act strongly to halt the violence, saying that recent statements made by government and the military, in particular, could be interpreted as condoning it or at least indicating a willingness to look the other way.[319]

ABRI: 'Radical Groups' And A Change In Leadership

> That's untrue...We don't indulge in diversion acts.[320] (ABRI spokesman Brig. Gen. A. Wahab Mokodongan)

With neither words nor action from the President, military leaders and some members of government proved more forthcoming in their (almost uniform) responses. Comments stressed what they repeatedly referred to

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[313] 'Moslem leader decries attacks on Chinese property', *Jakarta Post*, 16 February 1998; 'Amien Rais: Menghadapi Krisis Harus Sabar, Jangan Merusak', *Suara Pembaruan*, 16 February 1998.
[314] 'Kami tak ingin', *Forum Keadilan*, 23 February 1998.
[315] Hefner, *Civil Islam,* 205.
[316] Masdar Mas'udi, in 'Call for jihad', *Jakarta Post*, 20 February 1998.
[317] Sularso Supater, chairman of the Indonesian Communion of Churches, quoted the President as saying this. Ian McKenzie, 'Indonesia's Suharto calls for calm in crisis', *Reuters* News Service, 29 January 1998.
[318] 'Adi Sasono: Mendesak, solidaritas Antarumat di Masa Krisis', *Suara Pembaruan,* 13 February 1998.
[319] 'National Human Rights Committee Concerned about Symptoms of SARA riots', *Kompas*, 12 February 1998; 'Munculnya Isu SARA Sangat Memprihatin', *Suara Pembaruan*, 14 February 1998.
[320] 'Military denies orchestrating unrest', *Jakarta Post,* 11 February 1998.

as 'radical' or 'suspicious' groups in society who threatened to destabilise the nation. They re-emphasised the commitment of the Armed Forces to protect the people during a time of uncertainty.

Interestingly, an almost lone voice for peace from within the New Order regime was that of Gen. Wiranto, then Army Chief of Staff.[321] At an awards ceremony in Bandung two days after the meeting in the Great Mosque, he advised people not to be incited by SARA issues. 'SARA sentiment is not allowed. Our nation is a large nation and can develop because of the rewards of uniting different ethnic groups, religions and races into one whole union. Do not ruin this for the sake of narrow self-interests.'[322] Wiranto also urged the people to remember the national creed, which embraced difference, and to ignore attempts to create social unrest: 'The situation now is not too troubled. However, there are certain sides that are trying to spread this issue to the people, in order to create divisions. So, consider these issues only as rubbish.'[323] Wiranto's words proved to be the exception, as the discourse of accusation and fearmongering became a convenient tool of the elite. Pangkoops Jaya (Commander of Greater Jakarta) Maj. Gen. Syafrie Sjamoeddin, used it to justify increasing security forces in the Jakarta area,[324] and the Minister for Home Affairs, Yogie S.M., helped to raise the level of social panic: 'They always try to spark social unrest to test the security authorities and law enforcement bodies. It may be a snowballing movement that can pose a threat to the general session of the People's Consultative Assembly.'[325] Outgoing Commander of the Armed Forces, Feisal Tanjung, also warned publicly on numerous occasions that political motives were behind the violence, aimed at undermining the government's credibility and forcing a leadership change. Despite ABRI's confidence that subversive groups existed, none, except for individuals involved in localised violence, were ever detained. It is perhaps no surprise to find that some of the elite were involved in the fabrication of rumour and speculation themselves. It was reported that Tanjung briefed local journalists and editors, advising them to write stories critical of the Chinese.[326] Also, since mid-January, he and other military leaders such as Syarwan Hamid, both with connections to KISDI and the like, had publicly accused ethnic Chinese of hoarding and moving their money offshore. Together, government institutions and sections of the Islamic community were, as Hefner saw it, laying the groundwork for 'a campaign of violence and intimidation.'[327]

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[321] ABRI were preparing for their annual leadership meeting in Jakarta starting 12 February. The main interest at the meeting was speculation about who would replace Feisal Tanjung who had passed retirement age, as Commander of the Armed Forces. The favourite was Wiranto. Furthermore, some speculate that Suharto himself did not completely trust the intentions of Prabowo, recently made commander of Kostrad, and sought to balance the power he had gathered around him. See Hefner, *Civil Islam.*

[322] 'Jangan Sebarkan Sentimen SARA', *Kompas,* 10 February 1998; 'Kasad: Kita harus melawan yang memunculkan sentimen SARA', *Suara Pembaruan*, 10 February 1998.

[323] *Suara Pembaruan*, 10 February 1998. At the same event in Bandung, Wiranto defended the role of the Movement for National Discipline (GDN) saying that, more than ever, discipline among the public was important and blaming unknown groups. (*AFP*, 10 February 1998.)

[324] 'Pangdam Jaya: Berbagai Kelompok Radikal Berada Dalam Satu Jaringan', *Suara Pembaruan*, 8 February 1998.

[325] 'Feisal warns groups exploiting economic crisis', *Jakarta Post*, 12 February 1998.

[326] 'Rioters killed in Indonesian Race-Hate Campaign', *SMH*, 16 February 1998.

[327] Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 206.

Religious Festivals Collide: Someone Has To Give

> (I)t is in the context of a living present that the future is constituted by an anticipation of the other events that are likely to follow. (Das)[328]

This groundwork was designed for impact at a time of severe economic and social suffering, and in a year when the most important seasons for both the Muslim and ethnic Chinese communities – Lebaran and Chinese New Year – coincided, as they occasionally do. As communal conflicts in South Asia demonstrate too well, conflicting temporalities in different religions can be seen to lead to conflict; equally, their sources often lie in elite discourse. In what Roberts[329] would see as an act by the state of 'marking' out this event as a potentially dangerous temporal space, the Indonesian government insisted that there was greater risk if Chinese New Year celebrations were allowed to occur in 1998. 'We are afraid that if there were celebrations they could spark jealousy in some people', explained a government official. 'The tougher action is needed because of what is happening nowadays. People could easily get angry over trivial things'.[330] Given, however, that New Year celebrations had been banned in Indonesia since 1967, and given also the current climate, it was extremely unlikely that these would take place in 1998. As one ethnic Chinese admitted, 'I really don't think too many of us were going to venture out over the period anyway. Some of us are looking at getting to Singapore for that time. By the sounds of it that would be best for everyone.'[331] The government's decision to re-state the ban on Chinese New Year in 1998 not only revealed the extent to which they acknowledged the high level of anti-Chinese sentiment and to which it could easily tip over into violence, but also demonstrated how the state utilised a 'fear of disruption' during this time as a 'weapon in the competition for symbolic space.'[332] There were few precedents of Chinese cultural and religious celebrations causing inter-religious or inter-ethnic conflict. Yet the language used by the New Order mythologised the potential for such festivals to induce conflict with non-Chinese and disrupt inter-ethnic and religious harmony.

At no point in early 1998 did the government condemn the anti-Chinese sentiment that prompted them to re-state the 1967 ban. Rather, the message being reinforced was that the rights of ethnic Chinese as a minority should always be subordinated to those of the majority, and that they should be the recipients of the government's 'tough action'. The response of the ethnic Chinese quoted above indicates the extent to which they had been conditioned to accept such remarks without challenge, to the point where this man at least was willing to concede it was the 'best for everyone'.

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[328] Das, *Mirrors of Violence*, 15.
[329] Roberts, 'Noise as Cultural'.
[330] Greg Torode, 'Indonesia Lunar New Year celebrations banned "as they could spark jealousy"', *South China Morning Post* Internet Edition, 21 January 1998.
[331] Ibid.
[332] Roberts, 'Noise as Cultural', 277.

Violence in Central and West Java, February 12-16, 1998: Holidays and Bus Strikes

> We have found (that) some people we arrested for allegedly inciting riots came from Jakarta. They arrived here along with the exodus of Idul Fitri revellers. (Governor Nuriana)[333]

Returning from celebrating Lebaran in the first week of February, many factory and construction workers found they were among the rising number of newly unemployed in Indonesia. This loss was even more acute because most had not received the traditional annual bonus given to workers at Lebaran.[334] In addition, in February alone, prices for basic goods rose a further 13 percent.[335] For many newly unemployed workers, the instructions they heard in sermons to 'take back what is rightfully yours' made a strong impact, particularly combined with constant warnings from the government and military of threats from 'mysterious sources'.

As many Indonesians prepared to return home from visiting family during Lebaran, for four days in mid-February 1998, a large part of west and central Java came to a standstill as a crippling strike by bus drivers closed down major routes north-south and east-west.[336] As elsewhere in Java, violence stemming from protests over increases in the prices of basic goods had become frequent since January; however, in mid-February, the protests took up a broader range of issues.

The violence spread along the transport networks by word of mouth as people moved about during this particularly busy time of year, and also by media.[337] Under these fluid conditions, the violence of 12–16 February was partly 'contagious' in nature,[338] as a policeman described at the time: 'They (the people) hear that a riot has occurred in city A and then there will be a riot in city B'.[339] Although the violence appeared to be more or less spontaneous, caused by frustration and spurred on by rumour and imitation, it became after a month of such protests more focused and organised. Comments in mid-February by the West Java Military Commander, admitting that mass violence was expected, revealed that it also had a method.[340] In this tense atmosphere, the presence of a few actors intent on antagonising and encouraging already frustrated people led easily to unstoppable violence.[341]

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[333] 'Kerusuhan didalangi kelompok antikemapanan', *Republika*, 16 February 1998; 'Fresh riots hit West Java sub-district', *Jakarta Post*, 4 February 1998. They also claimed that local hired thugs had definitely been involved. ('Kerusuahan di Jawa Barat bukan murni karena krisis moneter', *Suara Karya*, 20 February 1998.)

[334] 'Political fallout', *The Economist*, 17 January 1998.

[335] 'Indonesia: The doctors at the door', *The Economist*, 7 March 1998; 'Harga minyak goreng, susu, mie dan gula naik', *Suara Pembaruan*, 5 February 1998. The price of one litre of instant milk was up from Rp8,500 to Rp12,000 and full cream milk doubled in price.

[336] The north coast route east-west from Pamanukan-Tegal and routes between Brebes in the north and Cilacap in the south.

[337] Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot,* 398.

[338] 'Fresh riots hit west Java and S. Sumatra towns', *Jakarta Post*, 17 February 1998.

[339] 'Diredam, kerusuhan di Bobotsari, Pangelengan dan Pagaralam', *Kompas*, 17 February 1998.

[340] 'Five die', *Jakarta Post,* 15 February 1998.

[341] 'If there is a bit of organization, the chance for smooth spread to mainly contagious areas (or at least the main cities) is enhanced.' (Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 400)

The wave of violence began on 12 February in Jatiwangi, near Cirebon on the north coast, where becak drivers and labourers protested on the main transport artery, the Bandung–Cirebon road, over the increased prices of basic goods and spare parts.[342] Hundreds attacked vehicle showrooms and shops selling motor vehicle parts, looting and dragging stock outside, and burning it.[343] More than forty buildings and numerous vehicles were damaged. Reports mentioned the presence, once again, of a group of motorcyclists who entered the town and incited the crowd with anti-government slogans.[344] The Jatiwangi Military Resort Commander (Danrem) insisted the causes of the violence were not sinister but spontaneous.[345]

On the same day in Losari, on the north coast road between Cirebon and Brebes, people attacked shops and looted household items such as soap, oil and sugar, declaring, 'We are not stealing'.[346] 'We are angry because of the price increases; the Chinese own the shops and they are putting up the prices.'[347] The *Jakarta Post* reported that those involved in the violence paused for Friday prayers around midday, and returned later to continue their rampage in far greater numbers.[348] The violence continued for most of the day, unhindered by what appeared to be sympathetic security forces. Later, when these same forces used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse the crowds, two people were killed and many wounded.[349]

Some of the most violent incidents occurred on 13 February in the West Java city of Pamanukan, on the north coast not far from Jakarta.[350] Pamanukan was a prosperous city, indicated perhaps by the fact that it sustained no fewer than twenty gold jewellery stores, most owned by ethnic Chinese.[351] A crowd entered Jalan Kertadibrata on that morning for what witnesses testified began as a street protest in response to rumours that cooking oil was being sold for Rp4000 per litre in Bandung, compared to the local price of Rp6000 per litre.[352] Residents and shopowners in the town were evidently shocked by the outbreak of violence: 'This is the first time Pamanukan has been hit by a riot like that'.[353] Others simply expressed disbelief: 'I do not understand what the rioters want. The little people are indeed suffering but a riot will only increase their suffering'.[354] It also appears that there was warning of the potential for trouble, as most

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[342] 'Amuk makin mendekati Indonesia', *Xpos*, 14–20 February 1998.
[343] 'Gerakan menyapu penimbun', *Gatra*, 21 February 1998, 63–64.
[344] 'Kerusuhan di Majalengka berhasil diatasi', *Republika* , 13 February 1998.
[345] 'Kerusuhan di Majalengka: Gara-gara protes sembako dan onderdil', *Merdeka*, 13 February 1998.
[346] 'Situasi di Jalur Pantura Terkendali', *Kompas* , 14 February 1998.
[347] 'Rioters killed', *SMH*, 16 February 1998.
[348] M.M.I. Ahyani, 'More food protests grip West Java towns, military in control', *Jakarta Post*, 14 February 1998.
[349] 'Amuk makin', *Xpos* , 14–20 February 1998; 'Tim Komnas HAM meninjau korban kerusuhan di Brebes', *Kompas*, 25 February 1998. Komnas HAM sent teams to Losari and Brebes to investigate the deaths of Tarmin (22) from Mengger, Losari and Amron (24) from Prapaglar, Tanjung. ('Siliwangi Commander: Riots are in general under control', *Kompas*, 15 February 1998; 'Five die in fresh outbreaks of riots in several cities', *The Jakarta Post*, 15 February 1998.)
[350] The Pamanukan violence prompted police in West Java and elsewhere to issue 'shoot on the spot' warnings to rioters. Police declared this order was necessary to ensure their own protection and that of innocent members of the public. ('258 Tersangka Kerusuhan Pamanukan', *Kompas*, 20 February 1998.)
[351] 10% of local population ethnic Chinese. Walters, 'Indonesia's scapegoats'.
[352] Schlachter, 'Flames of Hatred'.
[353] 'Barang-barang itu dibakar di jalan', *Kompas*, 16 February 1998.
[354] Ibid.

shopkeepers closed their stores hours before the violence began and sought refuge at the local police station.[355] Those involved in the Pamanukan violence quickly focused their attention on businesses owned by ethnic Chinese, leaving those owned by indigenous Indonesians untouched. They shouted slogans including 'Kill the Chinese'.[356] Some graffiti were scrawled on boarded shop fronts: 'Chinese out', 'Stupid greedy Chinese' and, 'It (the crisis) is the Chinese shop-owners' fault'.[357] Outside a hotel the crowd demanded, 'This is not yours, it is ours'.[358] Chinese women reported that, as they fled their homes, their jewellery was ripped from their necks and wrists.[359] Significantly, four of the five churches in Pamanukan were destroyed. Residents later claimed that relations between Chinese, who constituted ten percent of the local population, and the rest of Pamanukan, had always been harmonious due to an effective program of assimilation and integration over generations.[360]

The general sentiment expressed by perpetrators and onlookers was that the violence and looting were justified as a consequence of economic suffering and frustration that had reached breaking point. Participants insisted that they were not stealing; they were simply taking what was rightly theirs as indigenous Indonesians and as Muslims. News of violence in one village quickly led to more elsewhere, as the people recognised they would, in all likelihood, not be stopped. Not surprisingly, given the signals coming from the centre and the encouragement of local agitators, people believed the political and religious elite had given them a mandate.

A strike by bus drivers in West and Central Java beginning on 15 February acted as a circuit breaker to the overtly racialised violence such as seen in Pamanukan. From this point, the nature, form and context of the violence shifted from the issues of price increases and economic frustration at the local and isolated level[361] to become violence born of frustration at the very effects of the protest but with less focused targets. Increasingly, violence broke out simply because large numbers of passengers were stranded by a bus strike which, ironically, was partially if not completely due to the drivers' fear of being attacked by rioters.[362] Many drivers claimed that they went on strike because they were too afraid to drive routes along which violence had erupted in recent days and where buses were sometimes the target.[363] Violence created further violence. The

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[355] 'Ketika hidup tak seperti biasanya', *Suara Pembaruan*, 14 February 1998.
[356] Schlachter, 'Flames of Hatred'.
[357] 'Rioters killed', *SMH*, 16 February 1998.
[358] Schlachter, 'Flames of Hatred'.
[359] Ibid.
[360] 'Ketika hidup tak seperti biasanya', *Suara Pembaruan,* 14 February 1998.
[361] 'Kapolda Jabar: Penembakan dalam kerusuhan di Cirebon sesuai prosedur', *Suara Pembaruan*, 15 February 1998.
[362] On 15 February on routes from Cirebon to Kadipaten and Kuningan, only four out of 100 buses were operating. Police negotiated with private bus company Dalmas to transport children to school in the area around Cirebon. (Ibid.)
[363] The price of sparkplugs rose from Rp2000–Rp7000. Tyres rose 100%. ('Ketika Onderdil Mencekik', *Gatra*, 28 February 1998, 44–45; 'Kerusuhan di Majalengka', *Merdeka*, 13 February 1998.) Many drivers believed that they would be attacked by people who did not believe they were taking part in the protest. (*Reuters*, 17 February 1998.) Police escorted buses through Tegal after two were burned. ('Five die', *Jakarta Post*, 15 February 1998.)

response of the security authorities was merely to warn people it was 'better not to be in crowded places'.[364] Such statements coupled with inaction to prevent it, suggested that security forces believed the violence was inevitable, unstoppable. This gave the crowds a sense of impunity for their actions, although they were quickly running out of energy.

The Crucial Role Of Bus Drivers: Riots Recede

At this time, roads between Brebes and Bandung and from the terminal town Purwokerto were at a virtual standstill. The role played by the bus drivers is crucial to understanding the nature of the violence in West and Central Java. Transport routes from Jakarta crisscross this small part of Java, straddling the border of these districts. Before the strike, as they travelled these routes, bus drivers spread news and rumours and delivered information to each other and to their passengers about the price of goods in one town compared to another. Through this network of communication, word that the price of spare parts had risen by 150 percent or that rice was half the price in another town travelled quickly, as did news of violence elsewhere. The strike, rather than serving as a channel for news such as this, created a new frustration. The dissatisfaction expanded to include not only disgruntled farmers, fishermen and becak drivers protesting over price rises of basic goods sold by small traders, but also would-be-passengers stranded at major terminal towns like Purwokerto, and people who were unable to travel to work, school, or shopping.

The Governors of West and Central Java, the police, and the State Operations Agency (BUMN) recognised that the dispute had the potential to severely disrupt transportation systems across the regions for some time, thereby creating further social unrest. The Governor of West Java, Nuriana, commented, 'Most riots are triggered by a lack of public transportation. With such a condition people tend to gather. And once this happens they can be easily driven to rioting'.[365] He called on drivers to end their strike and save stranded passengers.[366] The BUMN offered cheap loans to bus operators to cover their repayments and thus allow them to lower rental fees.[367] There was a violent protest by bus drivers on 16 February in Bandung over the price of spare parts and the lack of safety on the roads,[368] after which the unrest largely petered out in the border areas and Java as a whole.

It is clear that from mid-February people were tiring of the violence and the disruption it caused. It was in fact adding to their hardships. Mass violence had been a common feature in Java for four weeks, through Ramadan and Lebaran. The willingness to stop the violence following a resolution of some price and rent-related issues indicates that the actions of the people had limitations but also that the security apparatus finally made efforts to stop the violence.

CONCLUSION

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[364] Pangdam Siliwangi, Mayjen Djamari Chiniago, 'Siliwangi Commander', *Kompas*, 15 February 1998.
[365] 'Fresh riots hit West Java subdistrict', *Jakarta Post*, 14 February 1998.
[366] 'Ditutup tiga jam, Jalan Bandung-Cirebon', *Kompas*, 16 February 1998.

[367] 'Perusakan di Bandung, Majalengka dan Pagaralam', *Suara Pembaruan*, 17 February 1998.

There are several ways of explaining the violence in Java in January and February 1998. The transport networks can explain the spread of the violence across such a large part of the island. Evidence also indicates the presence of local 'hired thugs' who acted to instigate violence, actors within what Brass terms 'an institutionalised riot system'. They were needed to encourage people, no matter how high their level of frustration, to become violent and to target particular locations. The presence of those agents was particularly obvious when violence broke out around bus depots with stranded passengers. It was unlikely that passive and unrelated passengers waiting for buses in a strange town would become violent and know which stores to single out without provocation. The evidence also indicates that the authorities were aware that organised groups were operating and 'tending' the violence. They admitted to knowing in advance that such disruption was coming to West Java.

Nevertheless, the violence across Central and West Java was largely spontaneous, precipitated by price rises of basic goods and general frustration under increasingly pressured conditions. Rather than being purely reactionary, the people who participated were driven by a sense of righteousness and justice. They legitimised the acts of violence and theft by referring to their suffering and the 'otherness' of their victims, and also to Islamic teachings. As time went on their actions became more brutal and directed towards ethnic Chinese; they blamed them for their suffering; not the price increases. Whether or not they were selling agricultural produce or becak tyres at inflated prices and whether or not the people knew them personally was not relevant. Buoyed by comments by political figures, both military and Islamic, people equated Chineseness with wealth and with the economic crisis. As KISDI Chairman, Ahmad Sumargono put it, 'It is obvious that most ethnic Chinese often commit business manipulation and don't have any nationalist commitment.'[369]

Many commentators, from all sections of society, were quick to blame the violence on Islamic groups' calls for 'holy war' against hoarders and speculators, and on similar threats from the government. Masdar F. Mas'udi from the Indonesian Society for Pesantren and Community Development was direct: 'Rioters reportedly attacked local hoarders of staple commodities – an action called for by the MUI.'[370] Marzuki Darusman was also critical of the MUI's call and the violence that followed: 'Such a simplistic call could be very easily misunderstood. If there is a relationship, the council (MUI) should take moral responsibility.'[371] Nonetheless, in spite of strong condemnation, in the last weeks of February the same messages about hoarding and speculating continued to be issued by the government and Islamic groups. Ilyas Rukhiyat, chairman of the law-making body of the NU, issued a statement that hoarding was illegal according to Islamic law.[372] In addition, Agung Barman Zahir, spokesman for the Attorney General's office warned that

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[368] 'Onderdil', *Gatra*, 28 February 1998.
[369] Schlachter, 'Flames of Hatred'.
[370] 'Call for jihad', *Jakarta Post*, 20 February 1998.
[371] 'Public expressions restricted', *Jakarta Post*, 27 February 1998.
[372] 'NU says', *Jakarta Post*, 23 February 1998.

food hoarders could face the death penalty if found guilty of stockpiling essential goods.[373] This was even while Marzuki Darusman continued to warn about the potential for misinterpretation of these statements:

> The call has oversimplified the phenomenon because stockpiling of commodities could have resulted from poor sales at a time when buyers' purchasing power was declining or through their efforts to ensure that they had adequate supplies of goods to carry out trade.[374]

Komnas HAM continued to express concern about the violence and pledged to launch investigations, particularly in cases where deaths had occurred.[375] Meanwhile, following his earlier statements at a Muhammadiyah rally in Yogyakarta denouncing the MUI's calls for a holy war against hoarders and condemning attacks on ethnic Chinese, Amien Rais met with Catholic bishops to demonstrate the willingness of Christian and Muslim leaders to work together towards building a future based on openness and equality between religious groups.[376]

Social commentators called on the Suharto government to take responsibility for the economic and political crisis that had led to the recent violence.[377] Sociologist Loekman Soetrisno was among those pressing for an apology: 'Do not just blame entrepreneurs of Chinese descent because doing so will only worsen Indonesia's credibility in the international community. It is the government's mistakes and not those of Chinese descent.'[378] Perhaps understanding too well that Suharto would not heed this call, ethnic Chinese businessmen took matters into their own hands in the only way they knew how. They donated food packs and cash to poor families in Jakarta and other areas of Java. In Surabaya, a spokesman for Chinese businessmen explained, 'We live and make money in Indonesia and therefore there is no reason why we should refuse social activity like this.'[379] In Jakarta, as part of a program initiated by Tutut, free food worth Rp2.7 billion was handed over by mostly Chinese businessmen, including tycoon Sudono Salim.[380]

The newly appointed leader of Kostrad, Lt.Gen Prabowo Subianto, who had until now lurked in the shadows, entered the public dialogue. He expressed concern over the social unrest, acknowledging that the majority of victims were ethnic Chinese Indonesians. He attempted to reassure them and all Indonesians of ABRI's commitment to security: 'We will do our best to ensure the safety of all citizens regardless of their ethnic and religious backgrounds. I think the Armed Forces will not fail the people.'[381]

Earlier in February, the government demonstrated its power to control public demonstrations and unrest when it announced a 25-day nationwide ban on street protests until one week after the Presidential

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[373] 'General concerned over unrest', *Jakarta Post*, 21 February 1998. Meanwhile, lawyers were trying to understand how the anti-subversion laws could be applied to cases of hoarding, as the Attorney General had declared they could.
[374] 'Public expressions restricted', *Jakarta Post*, 27 February 1998.
[375] 'Rights Commission probes riots in West, Central Java', *Jakarta Post*, 23 February 1998.
[376] 'Uskup Agung: Amien Rais menjalin Kerja Sama Pemberdayaan Rakyat', *Suara Pembaruan*, 20 February 1998.
[377] 'Government "must apologise" to people for crisis', *Jakarta Post*, 23 February 1998.
[378] Ibid.
[379] 'Wealthy Chinese donate goods as fresh riot erupts', *Jakarta Post*, 19 February 1998. They donated noodles, sugar, rice, kerosene, gold and cash.
[380] 'Free food handed out to stave off rioting', *Jakarta Post*, 21 February 1998.
[381] 'General concerned', *Jakarta Post*, 21 February 1998.

THE UNIVERSITY OF

elections.[382] Law 5/PNPS/1969 allowed the authorities to imprison someone simply for taking part in political activities deemed unacceptable. Five activists from a peaceful demonstration in Jakarta on 11 February against unemployment, price rises and corruption were arrested under this law.[383] Yet, when confronted with demonstrations and food riots in the preceding six weeks, the government had failed to issue strict rulings such as this, and in most cases local authorities failed to implement a security program at all. The violence was allowed to continue, unhindered by instruction from Jakarta or from commanders in the field.

The government, ABRI and some Islamic groups combined their influence for the cause Van Dyke describes as 'the fostering of antipathy toward a minority community',[384] which goes some way to answering Laitin's call to explain the 'popular antipathies'[385] that prompted locals to violence. The violence against ethnic Chinese became less spontaneous, and higher levels of organisation and method were evident, as unrest shifted from protests over food prices to simple destruction; that is, 'violence which partakes of little else'.[386] The violence across Java in early 1998 involved, to an extent that cannot be truly known, figures from politics and the military. Comments and rumours put about by elite military figures, together with the absence of decisive security systems, justify this suspicion. Perhaps the most compelling evidence of the role of military and government in the violence was stated clearly by West Java Military Commander, Djamani, when he admitted that the riots in West and Central Java were anticipated; indeed, the pattern of the violence – in a westerly direction – was already known to ABRI. Given this admission, the lack of protection of ethnic Chinese and their property, or of efforts to prevent the violence further indicates a level of implicit support on the part of authorities.

Incidents of mass violence during the first months of 1998 were not restricted to Java. Violence targeting ethnic Chinese also occurred in Sulawesi, Sumatra and the islands of Eastern Indonesia. These cases, however, do not provide the same compelling evidence found in relation to Java. Evidence indicates that, in Java, in addition to being influenced by the political context in which it arises,[387] the violence was organised and institutionalised. Java's position at the geographic, demographic, and ethnic centre of political power meant that issues could be recognised faster and have more effective influence than in the outer islands. Social unrest in Java, at the epicentre of Indonesian nationhood, had implications for the whole of the country and particularly for the power struggle at the highest levels.

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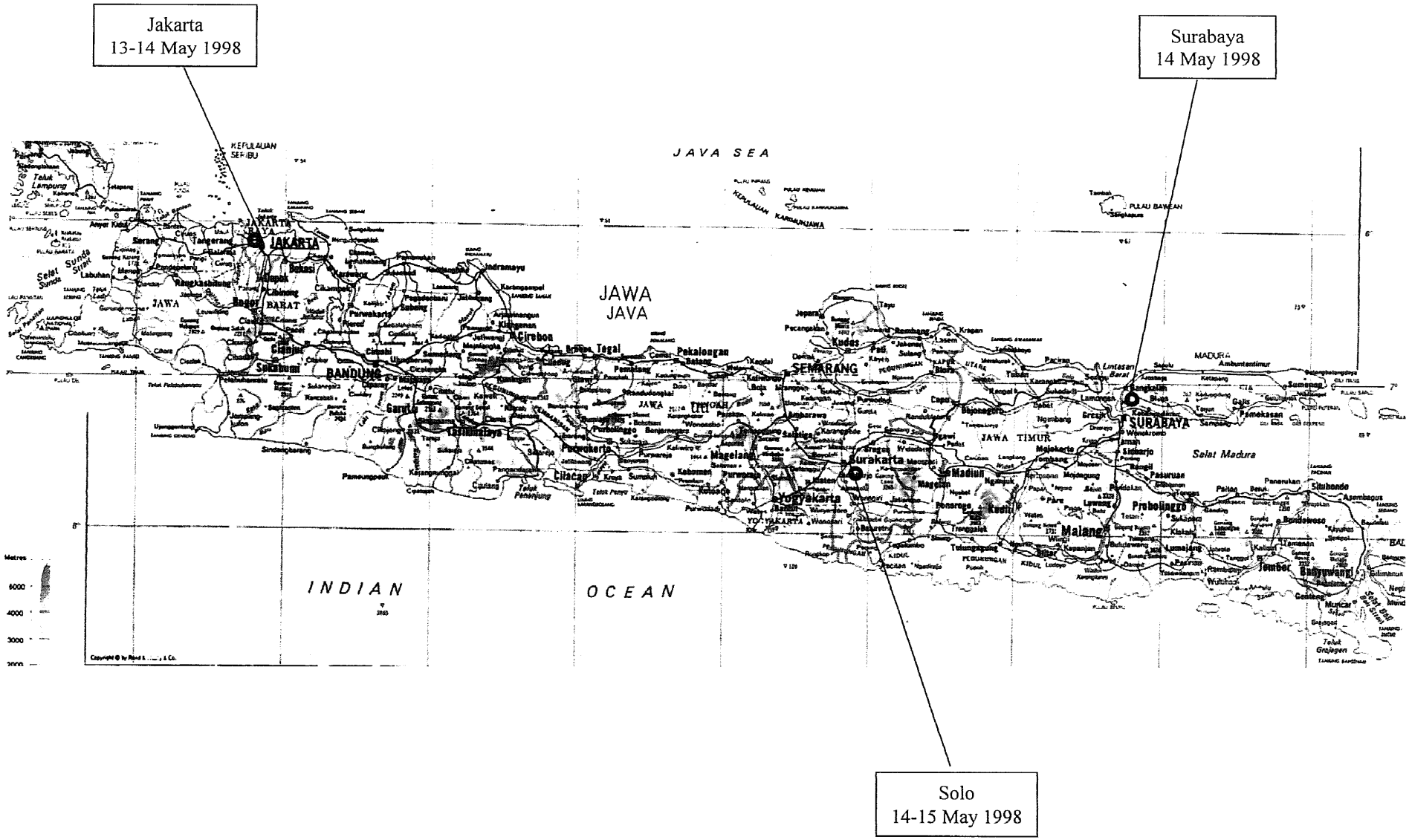
[382] Amnesty, 'Paying the Price'.
[383] The activists included Karlina Leksono Supelli and other members of Suara Ibu Peduli. 'Caught in the middle', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 9 April 1998, 14–15; 'Public expressions', *Jakarta Post*, 27 February 1998.
[384] See V. van Dyke, 'The Anti-Sikh Riots of 1984 in Delhi', in *Riots and Pogroms*, ed. Paul Brass (London: Macmillan, 1996), 205. Robison, 'Surviving the Meltdown' argues that the government used the violence to persuade the IMF to be more flexible in its conditions after it announced it was delaying the second USD3 billion tranche of its bailout package.
[385] Fearon and Laitin, 'Violence and the Social'.
[386] Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 425.
[387] Wieviorka, *Arena of Racism*, 74.

In March 1998, Suharto was elected unopposed for his seventh five-year term as President of Indonesia, appointing a highly controversial cabinet.[388] The murmurs of opposition heard in early January were silenced by the subsequent violence on the streets, and by intentionally engineered accusations and scandals. The silence would not, however, last long.

[388] See Coppel, 'Chinese Indonesians in Crisis', 19. On the composition of the cabinet. For analysis of Bob Hasan's appointment as Minister for Industry and Trade in this cabinet see C.M. Barr, 'Bob Hasan, The Rise of Capital, and the Shifting Dynamics of Control in Indonesia's Timber Sector', *Indonesia*, 65, (April 1998), 1–36. Barr believes this was a clear sign from Suharto that he was not prepared to make the changes demanded by the IMF. In his first press conference as Minister on 16 March 1998, Hasan was quoted as saying, 'Monopolies are okay. As long as the monopoly serves the interests of many people, it's okay'.

III. MAY 1998

May 1998


Jakarta
13-14 May 1998
Surabaya
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JAVA SEA
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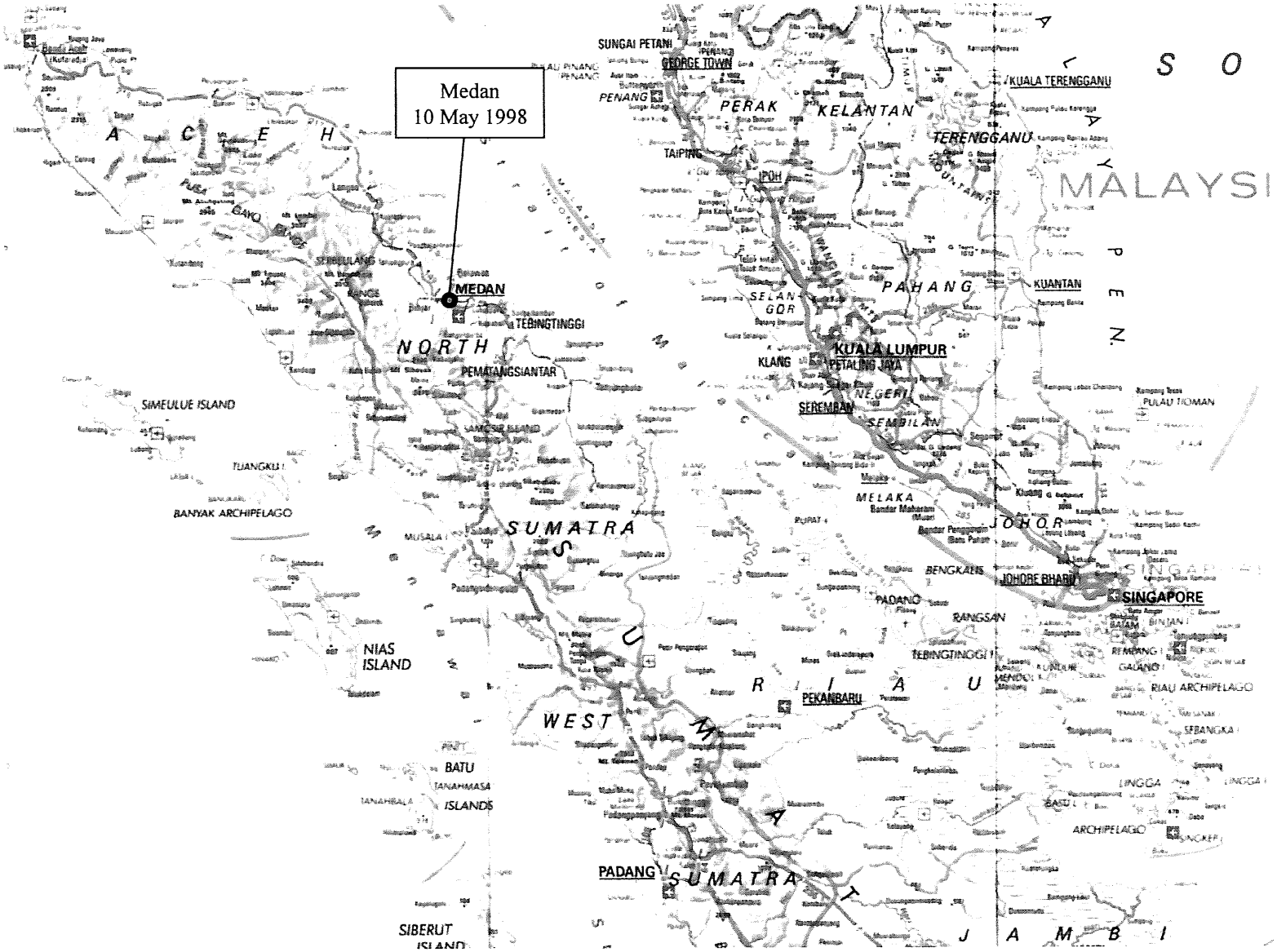
May 1998


Medan
10 May 1998
MEDAN
TEBINGTINGGI
PEMATANGSIANTAR
SIMEULUE ISLAND
BANYAK ARCHIPELAGO
NIAS ISLAND
BATU ISLANDS
SIBERUT ISLAND
PADANG
PEKANBARU
SUNGAI PETANI
GEORGE TOWN
PENANG
TAIPING
IPOH
KUALA TERENGGANU
TERENGGANU
KUANTAN
KUALA LUMPUR
PETALING JAYA
KLANG
SEREMBAN
MELAKA
JOHOR BHARU
SINGAPORE
BENGKALIS
RANGSAN
TEBINGTINGGI
RIAU ARCHIPELAGO
PULAU TIOMAN
ACEH
NORTH SUMATRA
WEST SUMATRA
RIAU
JAMBI
PERAK
KELANTAN
PAHANG
SELANGOR
NEGERI SEMBILAN
MALAYSIA

May 1998 marks a critical turning point in the history of Indonesia as. Barely two months into his seventh Presidential term Suharto finally stepped down on 21 May amid massive social upheaval, economic disaster and brutality. It was to the students who had begun their campaign for *reformasi* months before by protesting relentlessly on campuses across the country and finally at the parliament itself, that the victory of Suharto's resignation was accorded. However, it is perhaps in the events of the previous weeks that historians will uncover the real undoing of this once impregnable leader. Mass violence took place in the cities of Jakarta, Solo, Surabaya, Lampung and Palembang from the 13-15 May 1998, with widespread looting, burning, rapes and killings. This was after similar violence in Medan over one week earlier. Witnesses reported the use of systematic method in carrying out the violence – organised groups of men acting under orders. They also reported large groups of men, women and children of all ages taking unrestrained advantage of the situation to loot goods from stores and shopping malls, often in response to an invitation to do so. Security forces were either absent or inactive. The most devastating violence occurred in Jakarta and Solo, where over one thousand people perished inside shopping malls. In at least three cities, large numbers of mostly ethnic Chinese women, possibly well over one hundred, were sexually assaulted and raped in their homes, workplaces, on public transport and on the street. This violence, in the context of wider assaults against urban poor and women, exposed, more than any other incident in recent history, the vulnerability of Chinese as an ethnic minority with pariah status in Indonesian society. The violence in Jakarta, in particular, received unprecedented international media coverage by news agencies, including CNN and BBC, and also by the worldwide web. It was both spectacular and alarming.

The 'truth' about what happened in these cities on 12-15 May 1998, may never be fully known, and efforts to expose the meaning of the violence have been hampered. Further, the 'truths' that do exist are highly contested. There are aspects or 'basic facts' about the violence, however, which are undisputed – who was affected; when and where it occurred. In the struggle to understand it, the May violence was widely named 'anti-Chinese'; but common explanations were that it was state-sponsored or class-based, or an extension of political violence. Such explanations marginalised analysis of motives as being based on ethnic animosity and resentment.

This study seeks to reveal the 'anti-Chinese' nature of much of this violence, but at the same time to examine the way in which this 'basic fact' was represented and re-interpreted to produce different outcomes and perceptions. This is crucial to understanding the impact of representations of the violence as anti-Chinese in the New Order and immediate post-New Order period. As Heryanto[1] argues specifically regarding ethnic Chinese Indonesians and van der Veer[2] indicates more generally, certain representations serve to normalise this violence in Indonesia – to make it everyday, rather than extraordinary. Thus its power to provoke feelings of horror and shame among Indonesians is reduced, as is, ironically, the disruption in local communities where Chinese live.

[1] Heryanto, 'Race, Rape'.
[2] Peter van der Veer, 'The Victim's Tale', 186–200.

> While the traumatic combination of the extreme and the everyday blocks traditional claims to synthetic knowledge, attentiveness to its structure can also lead to new forms of knowledge beyond the realist and anti-realist positions and outside traditional disciplines. (Michael Rothberg)[3]

As stated in the introduction, the violence of May 1998 was the climax to anti-Chinese violence in recent Indonesian history and its study also forms the core of this thesis. The centrality of these incidents to this study is due not only to their increased scale and brutality, but also because they bring together the fundamental questions of this thesis, which include that asked by Gyanandera Pandey about the mass violence in Bhagalpur, India, in October 1989: 'How do we write the history of such an event?'[4] Also, how do we write about an event of mass violence in which there is a multitude of competing 'truths'? With what tools do we, as researchers, separate these 'histories'? How do we reveal the emotions of such suffering without over-sentimentalising and objectifying the victims? And, most importantly, is this anti-Chinese violence?

In asking 'Is the May violence anti-Chinese violence?' the theoretical investigation by both Allport and Wievorka on 'whether racism is the driving force for violence?' bears immense importance in this context.[5] The idea of the May violence as anti-Chinese violence has been problematised and debated in Indonesia and beyond. Brass, Wieviorka and Horowitz argue that the 'need' for racism to be defined as the driving force for violence (rather than hunger, frustration or political protest) is not a necessity in order for the violence resulting to be racialised, or in this case anti-Chinese, in its form. Ethnic violence may simply prove a means to an end, which is not necessarily related to its target. The importance of how ethnic violence is conceptualised, or what constitutes anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia, is strongly apparent with regard to the cases examined here, particularly Medan and Solo.

As theorists stress, apart from the 'basic facts' of who was attacked by whom, the classification of the violence, the contexts into which the events were subsequently placed, and the terminology used to describe them also reveal motives for violence. Whether or not the violence in May 1998 was perceived as anti-Chinese – if the motive for the violence was believed to be racial – profoundly influenced the recovery of the ethnic Chinese community. It also influenced how international diplomatic responses impacted on Indonesia's relations with China and Taiwan; and how post-Suharto Indonesia would go about re-configuring its nationalism. The reactions and responses to this violence are almost as important as the violence itself.

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[3] Michael Rothberg, *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 6–7.
[4] Pandey, 'In Defense of the Fragment', 10.
[5] Wieviorka, *The Arena of Racism*, 67; Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, 57–58.

Documenting the May Violence: Sources

> There are no tidy endings following mass atrocity. (Minow)[6]

On 23 July 1998 President Habibie and six of his ministers[7] appointed the Joint Fact Finding Team (TGPF) to investigate the May violence and to produce the 'official' set of 'facts', or version. The ministers and new President were largely responding to condemnation from some countries, particularly on behalf of local ethnic Chinese communities, as well as pressure from sectors of the Indonesian public, including human rights organisations and Komnas Ham.[8] The TGPF was a unique mix of members from the Armed Forces, Police and government, as well as civil society organisations.[9] Their report, produced months later, is recognised by many as a remarkable document for the content under investigation, its methodology and most particularly, its conclusions and recommendations. Yet it is also considered a failed attempt at 'truth seeking' due to its inability to deliver justice.

In Indonesia, during the later years of the New Order regime, fact-finding teams and reports had become standard for dealing with (or perhaps more accurately, dismissing) incidents involving human rights violations.[10] Komnas Ham, established in 1993, had had little (if any) impact on the status quo in New Order Indonesia, however.[11] This goes some way to explaining why the military and government ministers were so angered by the inclusion in the TGPF report of strongly worded 'recommendations' that they threw the entire report out. For the first time they were confronted with a fact-finding team that expected its recommendations to be addressed by both government and military. However, given the largely unchanged structures and the personalities in power, it is valid to ask why the TGPF members, the international community, and sections of the public were shocked by this response to the report. Did the team members ever think that they had a mandate from the government for honest 'truth seeking' and therefore to enforce justice?

The team was given three months to compile its report, a very short time considering the complexities they faced. Obstacles included the sheer scale of the events under investigation, the difficulty of locating witnesses willing to testify, the logistics of investigating multiple cities, the relative lack of experience in data collection, and conflicting methods employed by team members, who came from diverse

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[6] Goldstone, 'Foreword'., x.

[7] By a *Surat Keputusan Bersama* (SKB) [Letter of Joint Decision] between Minister of Defence and Security and Chief Commander of the Armed Forces; Minister of Justice; Minister of Internal Affairs; Minister of Foreign Affairs; Minister of Women's Affairs.

[8] Komnas Ham was among the first to call for an investigation into the May violence and for the government to apologise to the nation for failing to provide the people with protection. ('Pernyataan Komnas Ham', *Kompas*, 10 July 1998.)

[9] For list of members see appendix E.

[10] 'Masyarakat Dilecehkan', *Kompas*, 14 May 1999.

[11] Since the TGPF report was released in November 1998, the report by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women (Coomaraswamy, Radhika, 'Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Its Causes and Consequences', *Report on Mission to Indonesia and East Timor on the Issue of Violence against Women* [20 November–4 December 1998], Geneva, 21 January 1999) and the report by the Indonesian Commission of Inquiry into Human Rights Violations (KPP–HAM) in East Timor, (31

social sectors. Further difficulties arose as the team raced to collect data, analyse it in various sub-teams, and collaboratively write a Final Report for the Ministries concerned. In reality, the bulk of data analysed by the sub-teams came from police records and reports compiled by CSO, Volunteers for Humanity (TRuK) and the state-sponsored Communication Forum for National Unity (Bakom-PKB). Initially, the objectives and the level of independence granted the team were significant, particularly given its composition.[12] Evidence of this was the involvement in the TGPF of civil society organisations previously opposed to the New Order.[13] Various team members attested that the mandate they were initially given was far reaching and that the access they had to elite government and military figures demonstrated the sincerity of Habibie and his ministers about 'finding the facts'. Members of the team, including Saparinah Sadli (Komnas Ham) and Rosita Noer (Bakom PKB), believed they had been appointed to seek out the truth about the May 1998 violence, including drawing conclusions and making recommendations.[14] However, such understanding of the extent of the TGPF's role would later prove to be a critical point of conflict.

The TGPF consisted of three sub-teams: Victims, Verification and Testimony; each worked with a team of assistants.[15] Each sub-team was sent into the field to gather and verify data, and question those testifying. Given the limited time, only very brief training (if any) was provided for the members in how to conduct fact-finding and verification. Most members had to learn as they went and only a few had prior experience.[16] Consequently the methods employed in carrying out the research varied considerably.[17] Further, insufficient time to follow-up or verify information meant that much of the data was excluded from the final analysis. As a consequence, differences emerged within the TGPF over 'naming the victims': who qualified as a victim in general, what constituted 'rape' victims, and what evidence was required in order for victims to count?[18] When it was finally produced in October 1998, only the TGPF and relevant government ministers (and some researchers) received copies of the full report, which amounted to hundreds of pages of detailed information about the violence in numerous cities. A twenty-page Executive Summary was, however, widely distributed through the media and the internet in both Indonesian and English.

In addition to the TGPF report, which is studied in some depth here, a series of reports produced by the human rights organization TRuK very soon after the May violence is a vital source of data and evidence for this study. Led by the already high-profile Jesuit priest, Sandyawan Sumardi SJ, TRuK volunteers reacted very quickly to the violence. They went onto the streets in various parts of Jakarta and collected eye-witness reports and data, and also assisted victims. Volunteers recounted pulling bodies from burning shopping malls and following ambulances and emergency vehicles to hospitals in an effort to ascertain the number and

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January 2000) have been more or less rejected by subsequent governments, notwithstanding continued international pressures.

[12] TGPF, 'Executive Summary', Jakarta, 23 October 1998, pt.II. See also appendix E.

[13] TRuK, Kalyanamitra. It appears that the presence of one representative from a civil society organisation had encouraged others to join the team. The fact that Komnas HAM chairman, Marzuki Darusman, would lead the team also gave the investigation great credibility.

[14] Interview with Rosita Noer, Jakarta, 4 August 1999.

[15] For chairs of the sub-teams see appendix E

[16] Interview Rosita Noer, 1999.

[17] TGPF, 'Report of the Sub-team for Victim Facts', Appendix, *Final Report*, Jakarta, 23 October 1998.

identities of the dead. TRuK's offices in Jatinegara served as a clinic and refuge for victims and with other rights groups provided support and counselling. TRuK's reports in the immediate aftermath of the violence were instrumental in exposing not only its systematic nature, but also the inaction of the security forces and the high numbers of gang rapes and other sexual assaults.[19] Local and international media quickly picked up these assessments of the violence from the internet, in particular the analysis of the scale of the rapes. In the weeks following the violence, TRuK volunteers also visited other affected cities and liased with local groups to access victims and data. The analysis in these hastily assembled reports is unquestionably flawed, but it provides raw data, witness testimonies and chronologies, which are invaluable for understanding what took place.

The mass of documentation, testimonies and research compiled by TRuK and TGPF is extensive and detailed. Despite this, the 'facts' of what took place could yet take many decades to emerge if at all. Certain conclusions emerge from the data and its analysis, but also more questions. Clearly, the violence was widespread and unstoppable in numerous locations within cities and across the country as a whole, which inevitably leads to the conclusion that it was a part of the same organised system. The skill of those involved in the violence implied that those suspected of conducting the operation included members of the military; the absence of security forces to protect citizens led to suspicion that intelligence agencies and the government were involved. There was great speculation that this terror was wrought by agents of the state. But for what ends? Why would the state seek to create such chaos and cause suffering among its people? Immediate reports from the street also pointed to its racialised form. Shops and homes of ethnic Chinese were singled out and attacked, while some of the main areas targeted, such as Glodok and Pluit, housed large Chinese communities. Also, in communities where ethnic Chinese were highly assimilated – like Tanjung Priok, Jatinegara and Tangerang – their property was also attacked. Furthermore, as the lists of victims compiled by TRuK reveals, ethnic Chinese were not the only targets sought out by the perpetrators; the urban poor and non-Chinese women also suffered. What did this targeting of Chinese-owned property on the one hand, and killing of urban poor on the other, mean? The level of brutality was unlike that seen on previous occasions of anti-Chinese violence. Violence such as rape had been reserved for separatist movements in rebel provinces and for political dissidents. The questions provoke extreme responses. At one end there are conspiracy theories and, at the other, the academics' avoidance of answers altogether for fear of implication and error. As Pandey commented, a balance needs to be found between a sensationalised and an overly sanitised telling of the story.[20]

This study does not claim to uncover new evidence that may lead to revelations of who was responsible for the violence in mid-May 1998. Rather, instead of re-working the data and analysis presented

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[18] The disagreement was between those who only supported evidence that was legally admissible and those who supported a more social or moral assessment.

[19] TRuK, 'Di Balik Aksi Kerusuhan Dan Pembantaian Massa', Jakarta, 18 May 1998; 'Early Documentation n.1: The Riot Pattern in Jakarta and Surroundings', Jakarta, 22 May 1998; 'Early Documentation n.2: The Plunder Status of The Riot', Jakarta, 9 June 1998; 'Early Documentation n.3: The Rapes in the Series of Riots', Jakarta, 13 July 1998.

[20] Pandey, 'In Defense of the Fragment', 1–33.

by the TGPF and TRuK, what can be done is to refer to what they discovered, identify points of difference, and provide critiques of their representations. The masses of documentation, reports, photographs and personal testimonies produced about the violence in May, although allowing the researcher to compare and contrast in an effort to uncover 'facts', forces the questioning not only of which sources to embrace, but also of the origins of these truths. What can they, in themselves, reveal about the causes, reasons and meaning for this violence?

Further to these sources, the historiography already in existence about the Jakarta violence in particular provides additional compelling 'histories'. Many of these works, by Heryanto, Sidel, Siegel, Lochore, Ang and Tay are briefly discussed in the introduction. In addition, essays by Sai Siew Min, Karlina Leksono and more expansive analysis including that by Hawe Setiawan et al[21] provide a range of perspectives of this violence and attempts to understand the responses to it. Sai Siew-Min observes that the May violence quickly and unequivocally became an 'Event' in Indonesian history, even though that history is still under debate.[22] As an 'Event', the 'May Riots' are interpreted as being of one single form and scope. Heryanto decried the use of the term 'anti-Chinese riots' to describe the violence, on the basis that through such a racialised presentation, most people could 'detach themselves emotionally from the horror'.[23] He called for the violence to be recognised as 'racialised state-terrorism'[24] rather than racist, and later argued that 'ethnisation of the violence is emphasised out of proportion in the many analyses and media coverage.'[25] For its part TRuK named the violence 'crimes against humanity', presenting the varied social groups victims as example.[26] In its final report, the TGPF admitted that the suffering of ethnic Chinese was out of proportion to their representation in the wider community. At the same time it emphasised the inclusion of other groups as victims.[27]

This body of scholarship reveals the struggle over terminology in the months after May 1998, which recognised the power of the representations and interpretations of the violence by those involved. As Heryanto observes in regard to the rape of 'Chinese females',[28] this was the power to provoke horror and shame or to simply dismiss it as 'normal' anti-Chinese violence – to portray it as either extraordinary or everyday.[29] This debate asks whether we can write about mass violence such as this by giving it a uniform or single classification, as the terminology used to refer to May 1998, albeit contested, repeatedly does? It is well known that, in mass violence as in war, opportunities are taken to satisfy many and varied urges. As the field of genocidal studies makes clear, it is necessary to separate acts of violence from one another, even

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[21] Sai, 'Eventing the May 1998 Tragedy'; Lochore, 'Virtual Rape'; Hawe Setiawan and Hanif Suranto, Istianto, *Negeri Dalam Kobaran Api: Sebuah Dokumentasi Tentang Tragedi Mei 1998.* Jakarta: Lembaga Studi Pers dan Pembangunan, 1999.
[22] Sai, 'Eventing the May 1998', 34.
[23] Heryanto, 'Rape, Race', 317.
[24] Heryanto, 'Flaws of riot media coverage'.
[25] Heryanto, 'Rape, Race', 307.
[26] TRuK, 'Di Balik Aksi Kerusuhan', Jakarta, 18 May 1998.
[27] TGPF, *Final Report About The 13–15 May 1998 Riot*, Jakarta, 23 October 1998.
[28] Heryanto, 'Rape, Race', 317.
[29] Pandey, 'In Defense of the Fragment'.

though they may occur at a similar time and place, in order to understand them more clearly.[30] In May 1998, possible motives for the violence ranged from ethnic hatred and resentment, hunger and general lawlessness, to retribution and reprisal and the creation of chaos and subjugation by a powerful but flailing state. There were acts of anti-Chinese violence during the incidents of violence in Medan, Jakarta and Solo. Chinese property and persons (mostly women) were targeted by both agents of the state and locals – 'the crowds' – on the basis of ethnicity and the conflation of sentiments and perceptions that this contained about class, religion and corruption. At the same time, we can identify state-sponsored terrorism against urban poor, political violence against student dissidents, and gendered violence. Just as this 'Event' does not have a single truth, and cannot be generalised across localities and time, so too its forms, and therefore the labels to describe them, are various.

Challenging a Dominant Narrative of the 'May Riots'

Although some of the most remarkable instances of anti-Chinese violence took place in the Indonesian capital at this time, this section of the study will take an alternative approach from that of the first and third sections of the thesis. Rather than presenting a detailed narrative of the Jakarta violence, the focus here is on the incidents in Medan and Solo. This section will examine the idea that history should or could view the 'May Riots', which occurred in different times and places, as an 'Event', by localising the violent incidents in Medan and Solo, in order to see more clearly who did what to whom.[31] Although some detail of the Jakarta violence is presented, this earlier discussion attempted to explain that the multitude of possible 'truths' can themselves reveal a great deal. The close study of the compilation of the TGPF report presented here follows searches for the root causes of violence through its interpretations.[32] Whilst mindful that such investigation should not be done to the exclusion of the violent event itself.[33] This section attempts to fill out the truth about this period of Indonesia's history and to question the methods used by the state and people to interpret it, 'to think other histories' and challenge those which exist, particularly those constructed by the state.

Localising the Violence: Medan and Solo

> Failure to individuate riots adequately also de-emphasises agency, for the less sharply discriminated the event is, the less well it will be accounted for in terms of who did what to whom. (Donald Horowitz)[34]

In dominant narratives of the May violence, the events in Medan, 4–8 May, and Solo, 13–15 May, remain peripheral to the main 'Event' in Jakarta. Therefore, focusing on Medan and Solo is an attempt to peel back the generalisations, the broad 'facts', to account for these incidents as unique happenings, and to problematise representations that view them as a continuum. These cases are important because they challenge some

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[30] George J. Andreopoulos (ed.) *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994); Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness*; Michael S. Roth and Charles G. Salas (eds.) *Disturbing Remains* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2001).
[31] Sai, 'Eventing the May Tragedy'; Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic* Riot, 68.
[32] See Brass, *Theft of Idol.*
[33] Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 411.

accepted notions about what constitutes anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia, and provide insight into where theory and reality diverge. They underline the crucial influence of representations of mass violence in the long term, particularly for local communities. The study of these cases shows how a single set of 'basic facts' can lead to a range of interpretations and representations of a violent event.

This is not an attempt to dispute what can be widely regarded as the accepted 'basic facts' – that agents of the state (legitimate and illegitimate) were responsible for the violence. This has not been challenged, even though the identities of individuals and institutions definitely were. Of concern is that the accepted 'basic facts' regarding agency and responsibility deterred deeper investigation of 'the crowd' that followed and joined in the looting, burning and rape. As Brass explained, 'If the state is responsible for riots and pogroms then the people are relieved of responsibility...But the state does not operate independently of its citizens and subjects, who are themselves implicated in these conflict-generating processes...'.[35] The power of interpretation and representation to distort the contribution of certain groups to violence, or more generally its origins within a community, was highlighted by Robinson in his study of the massacres in Bali in 1965–1966. Robinson's critique of the historiography of this period in Bali's history led him to conclude:

> To the extent that it has been discussed at all by academics, the post-coup violence has generally been portrayed as a historical aberration, caused by the lamentable meddling of outsiders – communists, Sukarnoists, Javanese – thereby casting no doubt on prevailing views of a harmonious apolitical Bali.[36]

Brass (and Robinson to some extent) sought to uncover the 'uniqueness' of a violent event from the web of discursive linkages which bind it to other events (woven by the state, media and academics).[37] Conversely, the Solo case, as told here, demonstrates how local interpretations and representations of this violence 'de-linked' it from the national experience to which it was tied by time, geography and form. Whilst the academics sought to preserve their 'view' of Bali by way of an interpretation that agency and responsibility lay outside Balinese society, van der Veer made the poignant observation that such conclusions provide the very communities disrupted by violence with the means to return to their everyday lives.[38] The struggle of victims and local communities to get on with their lives in the aftermath of divisive and brutal violence is overlooked in the broad version of the 'May Riots'.

It is argued here that the marginality of these cases is in part because the 'facts' and their subsequent interpretations resisted easy classification or description by the media, local communities and fact-finding teams. Was it anti-Chinese violence, state terrorism, gangsterism? The 'localised' nature of the Medan violence, as a battle between local *preman* and Chinese business, clashes with the narrative of the 'May Riots' as an elite power struggle at the nation's centre which was fought at society's margins. Solo's violence, even though more damaging and devastating than that in Jakarta, had a lower profile due in part to its local representations, which downplayed its racialised nature. Both cases raise an issue of central importance in

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[34] Ibid., 68.
[35] Brass, *Riots and Pogroms*, 34; 42.
[36] Geoffrey Robinson, *The Dark Side of Paradise: Political Violence in Bali* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 2.
[37] Brass, *Theft of An Idol.*
[38] van der Veer, 'The Victim's Tale', 191.

terms of how anti-Chinese violence is conceptualised and represented in Indonesia. Why can it, as Heryanto argued, be used by the people to 'detach' themselves from the horror?[39] Arguments by Sidel[40] and others about the discursive power of 'anti-Chinese riots' as a tool of the New Order government become more authentic when seen in their local contexts. Further, Solo and Medan reveal the extent to which anti-Chinese sentiment, hostility and discrimination are normal characteristics of these Indonesian communities. Insecurity is part of everyday life for ethnic Chinese and buying protection is as customary as buying rice and water. Also, in the late 1990s, violence and crime were rapidly becoming 'legitimate' expressions of dissatisfaction and methods for extracting concessions.

Approaching the May violence through close studies of the incidents in Solo and Medan also bolsters the view that the violence across Indonesia was linked. There is no doubt that, leading up to this period, tension was caused by economic and political turmoil. Further, the methods used in violence, the targets, not to mention the timing, belied coincidence. Nevertheless, can this series of violent events be examined as a 'wave' of violence or even 'recurrent riots'?[41] The decision to include the Medan violence, which occurred a week before the 'main' violence in Jakarta and Solo, assumes a continuity that is independent of time and place. This linkage is supported by patterns of intimidation, threats, attacks on ethnic Chinese, and 'organised' assaults, which were first identifiable in Medan in early May and were seen to recur in Jakarta and Solo. In these cases there is evidence of links between actors in both places and between the absence of security forces stationed in these cities, in particular Kopassus, during the unrest.

Thinking Other Histories

In addition to studying the violence in Medan and Solo, a close reading of the 'fragment of history'[42] compiled by the TGPF is presented here as a means of challenging the dominant narrative about the 'May violence', especially that by the state. Through unpacking the processes involved in compiling this report, a great deal is exposed about what took place in Jakarta and other cities in mid-May. More than that, the TGPF report tells a story of the subjectivity of truth and of suffering in the modern nation-state, and uncovers the range of possibilities within the representation of a violent incident. Much is revealed by what the TGPF found such difficulty in telling, in particular the story of the rapes.

The story of the TGPF report represents the trends in Indonesian politics and society at the time it was written (second half of 1998). It reveals the level of the expectation by supporters of *reformasi* that democratic and human rights ideals would quickly impact on Indonesian politics. It also demonstrates the lingering influence of New Order politics through key players, especially the military. Ultimately, the TGPF story illustrates the critical importance of controlling representations of the May violence, in particular that in Jakarta. Because of the various expectations and motives of different groups in approaching the investigation, the path to the production of the final report was not smooth. There was opposition and conflict both within

[39] Heryanto, 'Rape, Race', 317.
[40] Sidel, 'Riots, Church Burnings'.
[41] Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 374–422.
[42] Pandey, 'In Defense of Fragment'.

and outside the TGPF. Furthermore, when – after an extended deadline and largely due to strong leadership – the team was able to reach a consensus on content and conclusions and the report was released, it was rejected by the military, and ignored by the government[43] and sections of the national media.

Compiled during a national transition from authoritarian politics to *reformasi* and potential democracy, the story produced by the TGPF was unlike any most Indonesians had read before and it reflected the tumultuous and expectant time in which it was written. Full of divisions and disputes about the scale of the destruction and the identities of perpetrators and victims, it had no tidy conclusion. Instead, it presented various narratives within the one story and admitted to its frustrations at being unable to end satisfactorily. The TGPF report exposed the weakness of its authors in the face of still dominant autocratic and repressive forces, and therefore opened itself to criticisms and rejection, particularly from those eager to see faster progress on *reformasi*. Yet the significance of this story, apart from revealing much about its storytellers (some of whom were at odds with each other), comes from looking at its processes and conflicts. Along these fault lines or lines of disagreement, the politics behind controlling the story of the 'May' violence appears. This story also asks questions about the expectations associated with 'truth' as a means to justice which, for a nation newly struggling to face its often violent history in order to move into a peaceful future, is a critical investigation.

This present study recognises the wider political and social conditions that contributed to bringing violence to these cities, which was focused, in most cases, on ethnic Chinese, but it does not take the view that anti-Chinese violence was simply a vehicle for state oppression and terrorism. Although most definitely facilitated by these, violence against ethnic Chinese by 'the crowd' reveals the degree of prejudice and antagonism within Indonesian society. As a whole, this study aims to emphasise the consistency of acts of violence against ethnic Chinese in Indonesia and, where they can be found, direct links between incidents. More significantly, it aims to demonstrate the frequency and normality of the violence. Violence against ethnic Chinese property can be recalled by many Indonesians with ease and, when required, put to use.

The Beginning of the End: Five Days of Violence in Medan

> (P)atterns of the violence in Medan and surrounds were it seems, used as a template for the pattern of violence in other places like Jakarta, Solo, Surabaya and Lampung. ('Medan Report', TGPF)[44]

The violence against ethnic Chinese in Medan, 4–8 May 1998, provides a different context for examining anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia, due to the status of ethnic Chinese in this multi-ethnic city. Ethnic

[43] 'Menhankam/Panglima TNI: Hasil TGPF tidak diremahkan', *Kompas*, 15 May 1999. Wiranto: 'Tidak ada sedikit pun dari pemerintah untuk meremahkan hasil TGPF.'
[44] TGPF, 'Anatomy of the Riot: Medan Report', *Final Report*, Jakarta, 23 October 1998, 6.

Chinese are the third largest ethnic group in Medan, constituting twelve percent of the population,[45] compared to proportions in Jakarta, ten percent[46] and Solo, four percent.[47] Regardless of the accuracy of these percentage figures, it is widely stated that the ethnic Chinese in Medan tend to be less assimilated than those in Java for example.[48] The search for motive and agency for anti-Chinese violence questions understandings of minority relations and the importance of perceptions of difference. Medan was the site of first violence of May 1998. The researcher is therefore enticed to seek patterns, links and consistencies between the Medan violence and subsequent incidents. Investigations conducted by the TGPF and the simple narrative of the violence provided below shows that links and consistencies with other cases are indeed present. A close study of the days in Medan also reveals the considerable difference in the situation of ethnic Chinese in this city, and their relations with the perpetrators of the violence. These differences, in fact, almost excluded the events from the 'national story' of the 'May Riots' as told by the TGPF. Analysis must start by problematising understandings of what constitutes ethnic violence: Was this anti-Chinese violence? and what causes anti-Chinese violence in Indonesian urban society?

The violence in Medan in May 1998 was not an uncommon event although its scale was unprecedented. Like other past incidents of violence against ethnic Chinese in Medan, it cannot be sufficiently explained in terms of ethnic hostility; its economic or class basis is impossible to ignore.[49] As Heryanto argued about earlier violence in Medan, class-based interpretations of the Chinese were inextricably linked to their ethnicity. However an argument based on economic motives for this violence fails to explain why other targets were selected. It cannot explain why in May 1998, in addition to ethnic Chinese, women, students, symbols of government and police were also attacked, but also why looters and provocateurs passed over shops identified as owned by non-Chinese Indonesians. Critical to an explanation of violence against ethnic Chinese in Medan is their large proportional representation there and their stronger sense of identity as an ethnic group compared to that of most Chinese in Java for example.[50]

For these reasons the Medan case gives us the opportunity to problematise explanations for violence that emphasise the vulnerability of a minority, but economically strong, group. It raises questions about the role of ethnic prejudice as a basis for wider community involvement in the violence. Further, it reveals the role in the violence of youth groups and *preman* and links they have to the state. Not unlike in other parts of Indonesia, ethnic Chinese in Medan are an integral part of a system of extortion and rents exchanged for security, however, the special importance of Medan for New Order youth groups like Pemuda Pancasila (PP) means that the national significance of this violence cannot be exaggerated.

4–8 MAY 1998

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[45] Statistics compiled by Prof Usman Pelly in 1980, quoted in Setiawan, *Negeri Dalam Kobaran Api*, 76. More recent figures quoted include 300,000 from total Medan population of two million, (around six percent), in Tesoro, 'Medan's Madness'.
[46] Castles, 'The Ethnic Profile of Djakarta', 185.
[47] 'Penjarahan Masih Berlangsung', *Kompas*, 18 June 1998.
[48] See footnote n73.
[49] See Heryanto, 'A Class Act'.

By the beginning of May 1998, anti-government demonstrations by students on campuses across the country had occurred for over a month. Following Suharto's uncontested nomination for re-election as President on 10 March 1998, Indonesian students launched the final chapter of the *reformasi* movement's struggle against the New Order regime. Despite the government's resistance and its refusal to allow the students off their campuses, the demonstrations continued, joined by university rectors and lecturers. By the end of April, students in Medan, Yogyakarta, Solo and elsewhere were clashing daily with security forces.

In Medan, demonstrations were held at many campuses across the city, in particular at HKBP Nommensen University (UHN), University of North Sumatra (USU), and IKIP Negeri Medan (Medan Teacher Training Institute). The atmosphere here and across the country was increasingly tense as the demonstrations continued and the security forces fought to maintain control. Not only were students becoming more determined in their efforts, but the wider public were increasingly showing support for the *reformasi* protests.[51] As the clashes increased, so too did the level of public empathy with the students. In Medan, the death of a student from USU on 27 April, albeit because of a vehicle accident, was blamed on the actions of security officials who fired teargas onto the campus.[52] The death of this student, Jon Tahi Hutabarat, combined with claims that security agents were planting molotov bombs on the campuses (which they later claimed the students used against them), ignited even greater anger among the students and wider population in Medan.

Student Demonstrations, Police Harassment and Rising Public Anger

The sequence of violent events in Medan and surrounds began on 2 May 1998, when student demonstrations were held at nine campuses in the city. At UHN campus on Jalan Perintis Kemerdekaan, a clash between students and security forces erupted when students attempted to break through the police cordon.[53] However, it was on 4 May, after the government announced that it would increase the price of gasoline by up to 70 percent and triple the cost of electricity,[54] that frustrations reached a critical level. At IKIP Negeri Medan, more than five hundred students assembled to demonstrate, and, as usual, the security authorities formed a barricade to prevent them from leaving. During the day, molotov bombs were allegedly thrown from inside the campus at the security cordon, and tyres were set alight on the street. By 5pm the situation had calmed

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[50] See Hugh and Ping-ching Mabbett, 'The Chinese Community in Indonesia', *The Chinese in Indonesia, The Philippines and Malaysia* (London: Minority Rights Group Report No.10, 1982), 9.
[51] Ed Aspinall, 'The Indonesian Student Uprising of 1998', in *Reformasi: Crisis and Change in Indonesia*, ed. Arief Budiman, Damien Kingsbury and Barbara Hatley. (Clayton, Vic.: Monash Asia Institute, 1999), 212-238.
[52] *Forum Keadilan*, 18 May 1998.
[53] Some students succeeded in leaving the campus and were joined by people who had been watching the clash. Together they moved to a Timor car showroom nearby. They also damaged a hotel and adjacent KFC restaurant. The crowd moved on to Jalan Sutomo where further damage was done to houses and offices. (TGPF, 'Medan Report', 6–7; 'Aksi Unjuk Rasa Mahasiswa Medan Ambil Korban Sebuah Mobil', *Analisa*, 3 May 1998, 1.)
[54] 'Harga BBM Naik 25–71% Listrik Naik Tiga Kali', *Analisa*, 5 May 1998; *New York Times*, 9 May 1998.

but security forces sent replacement troops to the campus with the intention of confining students all night, and it was not until 7pm that students were finally permitted to return home. As they left the campus, one group of students was stopped by police. It was reported that the police yelled obscenities at the female students in the group, one of them ripping the veil from the head of a girl. The TGPF report notes that 'A female student with the initials SN was also groped and her breasts were squeezed by the policeman.'[55] As a consequence of the assault the girl collapsed. Students who witnessed this were extremely angered, and a short time later a large crowd gathered at the nearby traffic police post on Jalan Pancing.[56] The police at the post were outnumbered and retreated as the building was attacked and its contents destroyed. The protesters then progressed to Buana Plaza shopping centre and another police post nearby, where they set alight police and military vehicles.[57] By this time, thousands of people were active in the Pancing area, damaging traffic lights, police posts, cars and shophouses, and burning tyres.[58] Police attempted to disperse the crowds by teargas and cutting the electricity to the area.[59]

The following morning, 5 May, news circulated that more than fifty people suspected of involvement in the previous night's violence had been detained. At approximately 10am, a crowd arrived at the relevant police post to demand the release of their family members and friends. When confronted by more police, the protesters grew angrier and attacked the building. Reportedly, anti-riot troops stationed at the nearby TVRI studios stood and watched as the crowd moved on the police.[60] Estimated at hundreds, the crowd moved towards Tembung Market, attacking shops, houses and cars. At the market, people looted shops owned by ethnic Chinese, and, it is said, largely passed over those indicating they were owned by *pribumi*.[61] Women, children and the elderly were among the looters. Around mid-afternoon, Mobile Brigade (Brimob) troops finally arrived and used teargas to disperse the people.[62]

The next day, almost every shop and bank in the city was closed and the streets were eerily quiet. Medan's local economy was at a standstill. Early morning, a large crowd assembled at the Medan Supermarket where they erected a barricade made from wood and tyres and set it alight. The supermarket was broken into and looted. The TGPF reported that ten men dressed in civilian clothing and on motorbikes arrived. These men fired on people with .38 revolvers and chased some of them down alleyways.[63] That day thousands of people attacked shops, burned cars and looted in and around Medan.[64] For example, in Lubuk

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[55] TGPF, 'Medan Report', 16.
[56] Ibid.; Setiawan, *Negeri Dalam Kobaran Api*..
[57] *Analisa*, 5 May 1998, photo and caption, 'Dibakar'.
[58] 'Harga BBM', *Suara Pembaruan*, 5 May 1998.
[59] TGPF, 'Medan Report', 9.
[60] Darwin Hwang (ptkka@indo.net.id), 'Kerusuhan Meluas di Medan', in apakabar@clark.net, 6 May 1998.
[61] 'Aksi Massa Semakin Brutal', *Analisa*, 6 May 1998. Many shops had *'milik pribumi'* written in graffiti on their doors and windows and hung prayer mats; TGPF, 'Medan Report', 10.
[62] *Kompas* reported that demonstrations against the increase in the price of kerosene were held in Medan and students performed a 'long march'. ('Mahasiswa protes naiknya BBM dan listik', *Kompas*, 6 May 1998).
[63] TGPF, 'Medan Report', 11.
[64] Other areas of violence around Medan included: Deli Serdang, Tebing Tinggi, Simalungun, Tanjung Balai, Tembung, Matunggang, Batangtulis, Hulubakang, Lubuk Pakam, Titipapan, Martubung, Mabar, Kota Bangun. (Ibid. ; 'Kerusuhan Landa di P. Siantar', *Analisa,* 8 May 1998.)

Pakam, Deli Serdang district, 1200 kiosks in Linpres Market were destroyed by fire.[65] Efforts by police, assisted by anti-riot troops, to disperse the looters by firing rubber bullets resulted in many injuries but failed to stop the violence. In Titipapan, at least seven people were injured by rubber bullets, which had been allegedly fired into the air.[66] Further violence broke out in many different locations on 7 May, and included attacks on shop-houses, factories and homes. At the end of these five days of violence in and around Medan, six people had died, including two who were shot,[67] 100 were injured (nine with gunshot wounds), over seven hundred buildings were damaged or destroyed, and the total estimated cost was hundreds of billions of rupiah.[68] Police announced that 51 people had been detained for questioning.[69] The TGPF investigation found that the ethnic Chinese suffered the majority of material losses.

ETHNIC CHINESE IN MEDAN AND *KRIMINALITAS*

> Here (North Sumatra and Riau) a much higher proportion of the Chinese were born in China; they are more 'Chinese' identify less with Indonesia, and by many accounts tend to be more aggressive and energetic than their fellows in Java. (Hugh and Ping-ching Mabbett)[70]
>
> Regulations are not tight. Things are very flexible. (Asamadinata, Medan resident and lawyer)[71]

According to a 1980 survey, ethnic groups and their proportions of the population in Medan included Javanese (30%), Toba Batak (14.11%), Chinese (12.84%), Mandailing/Sipirok, Angkola (11.9%) and Minangkabau (10.93%). Malays, Sundanese and others make up the rest.[72] Among this rich mix, ethnic Chinese, whose ancestors mostly came to Sumatra as coolies to work on its tobacco and rubber estates, are not a 'minority' ethnicity in the same sense as they are in Java.[73] Their proportional representation is significantly high relative to other groups. This in turn affects the level of cultural and linguistic assimilation of this community. The Medan case compels us to examine more closely the importance of perceptions of difference among and between ethnic groups in Indonesia. As a substantial minority in Medan and, as the Mabbetts claim, largely totok, ethnic Chinese set apart from indigenous Indonesians.[74]

The violence against ethnic Chinese in Medan provides evidence of its institutionalised condition within Indonesian society. The pervasive nature of New Order strategies of exclusion based on the Pancasila, SARA doctrine and other legislation, which treat ethnic Chinese as 'outsiders' or the outgroup in Indonesian nationalism, is all the clearer in this case. These are questions about levels of assimilation of this community

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[65] 'Kerusuhan sepakbola', *Suara Pembaruan*, 7 May 1998.
[66] 'Aksi Kerusuhan Bergeserke Pinggiran dan Luar Kota Medan', *Analisa*, 8 May 1998.
[67] *Suara Pembaruan*, 7 May 1998.
[68] The Police Chief of North Sumatra quoted 102 injured, 2 dead, 12 arrests. ('Arus Penumpang Warga Medan ke Luar Negeri Meningkat', Gatra, 16 May 1998.)
[69] 'Perusuh yang terbukti menjarah barang akan diajukan ke Pengadilan', *Analisa*, 9 May 1998.
[70] Mabbett and Mabbett, 'The Chinese Community', 9.
[71] Jose Manuel Tesoro, 'Medan's Madness', *Asiaweek*, 22 May 1998.
[72] Statistics compiled by Prof Usman Pelly in 1980, quoted in Setiawan, *Negeri Dalam Kobaran Api*, 76.
[73] Somers Heidhues, 'Indonesia', 153–154.
[74] Mabbett and Mabbett, 'The Chinese Community', 9. Mabbett and Mabbett make a strong distinction between ethnic Chinese in Medan and Java which they describe as the distinction between peranakan and totok; 'assimilation of the Javanese pattern has not occurred and the races have remained apart.'

into the wider society. The Mabbettss allude to this in their study of the Chinese in Medan, arguing that both their recent arrival and large proportionality allowed them a stronger confidence in their Chinese identity.[75] At the same time, it is problematic to link levels of assimilation within the community to acts of violence against this group. There are other compelling local institutional bases for the continued 'outsider' status of ethnic Chinese in Medan's wider society, which are both voluntary and involuntary.

Key to understanding the situation of ethnic Chinese in Medan is the system of institutionalised '*preman*ism' in that city, in which ethnic Chinese are the cash cows.[76] Perhaps the most crucial explanation for the violence against ethnic Chinese in May 1998 was that the structures within which the terrorisation and violence occurred, what Brass labels 'institutionalised riot systems',[77] were well established in Medan and were centred precisely on ethnic Chinese businesses. That ethnic Chinese in Medan and Indonesia generally were so accustomed to relying on extra-legal resources for their security and protection is integral to this structure. As a result of what Ang terms being trapped in their own 'historical debris',[78] fear and obsession with security dominated the lives of most ethnic Chinese Indonesians. Many, including the government, military, and 'goons' that were part of these extra-legal structures, knew that this fear was easily exploited with little cost to the greater national condition, at least until May 1998.

Kriminalitas as 'Normal'

> In the case of Indonesian criminals...the Indonesian state imitated the criminal, striving to become like him. (J.T.Siegel)[79]

Prior to the violence in Medan, a program of terrorising the ethnic Chinese community was carried out. The TGPF investigation discovered that in the days before the violence, ethnic Chinese had received threatening phone calls and visits from heavy handed *preman* warning them of mass violence.[80] It was reported that members of the youth groups PP and Ikatan Pemuda Karya (IPK) were also involved in demanding money from many Chinese in return for protection.[81] The groups of young men who visited the shop owners and delivered the threats were known to them as local gang members. This intimidation continued during the days of violence and commonly preceded an attack on a shop by a larger group. Shops were usually looted and goods piled in the street before being set alight. The TGPF concluded that local gangs took advantage of the instability in the city caused by the student demonstrations to terrorise the community.[82]

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[75] Ibid.
[76] On the history of Pemuda Pancasila in Medan and patterns of extortion of ethnic Chinese business in the city see Loren Ryter, 'A Tale of Two Cities', *Inside Indonesia*, n63 (July–September 2000) and 'Pemuda Pancasila: The Last Loyalist Free Men of Suharto's Order?', in *Violence and the State in Suharto's Indonesia*, ed. B.R.O'G. Anderson (Ithaca, NY.: Cornell University Press, 2001), 124–155.
[77] Brass, *Riots and Pogroms*.
[78] Ien Ang, 'Trapped in Ambivalence', 21.
[79] Siegel, 'A New Criminal Type in Jakarta', 217.
[80] TGPF, 'Medan Report', 19.
[81] TGPF, 'Verification: TGPF Research Team to Medan, 23–16 September 1998', *Final Report*, Jakarta, 23 October 1998, n5.12.
[82] Ibid.

Familiar with this initial pattern of threats, most ethnic Chinese in Medan were confident that nothing would come of them, provided they paid the gangs as usual. Therefore, when the violence hit, many Chinese experienced a mixture of tremendous fear and anger, as well as a strange sense of betrayal. Some fled to Malaysia and Singapore, whilst others sought safety (ironically) in Jakarta and elsewhere in Indonesia.[83] Some simply left their homes for indigenous-owned hotels in the city, such as the Hotel Lake Toba and Hotel Garuda, which were surrounded by tight security.[84] Others chose to band together in neighbourhood groups, or to defend their property alone, arming themselves with sabres, swords and battery acid and protecting their heads with helmets.[85]

The fact that local *preman*, gang members and heavies were responsible for creating the mood of terror and provoking the violence almost rendered Medan's story less noteworthy in the larger story of the 'May Riots'. As Ryter's work on PP in Medan shows, the types of actors involved in the violence in Medan could be described as being part of the 'normal' fabric of daily life in this city. It is significant to note that the PP, as a youth arm of the League of Supporters of Indonesian Independence (IPKI), had its origins in Medan in the late 1950s, and was heavily involved in the extortion rackets targeting ethnic Chinese business in particular.[86] The TGPF certainly regarded the Medan violence as more localised than Solo or Jakarta, due to the fact that a visible local network of actors was involved and an 'outside' involvement was absent.[87] Indeed, if the events of the following week had not taken place, this violence would never have been described as having 'national' dimensions. Acts of violence and terrorism involving business people, particularly ethnic Chinese, were not new to Medan.[88]

Contrary to these observations, however, the Medan violence – perhaps even more than the Jakarta and Solo violence – demonstrates the workings of the insidious national framework that Lindsey and others have referred to as *premanisme* or the *preman* state. Within this system a *preman* or thug and his gang form part of the illegitimate structures of the state but are connected to its legitimate structures by a network of rent collecting deals and other criminal activity with figures in the government, military and police.[89] As Lindsey explains, in this system '(e)xtortionists and thugs morph into paramilitaries and political associations'[90] and

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[83] Flights from Medan to these destinations were heavily occupied on these days. ('Arus Penumpang Warga', *Gatra*, 16 May 1998; 'Perusuh yang terbukti', *Analisa*, 9 May 1998.)

[84] *Gatra* reported in its 23 May edition that many ethnic Chinese were still too afraid to leave the hotels and return home.

[85] *New York Times*, 9 May 1998; Tesoro, 'Medan's Madness'.

[86] Ryter, 'Pemuda Pancasila', 134–135. Ryter argues that even into the 1960s and 1970s, PP in Medan remained larger and politically stronger than in Jakarta. PP Medan and Aceh were particularly active in the killings of suspected communists, including members of Baperki, in 1965–66.

[87] TGPF, 'Medan Report', 18.

[88] See Ryter, 'Pemuda Pancasila', 124–155; Heryanto, 'A Class Act'.

[89] Lindsey, 'From Soepomo to Prabowo'. 'The New Order was a stand over operation. The bargain it offered, like the classic manifesto gambit, was protection (against *gali* or commuists for example) or punishment in the form of brutality (as with Marsinah and Udin for example). In this sense, the state was an enterprise that operated on the same basis as criminals – *preman*...'

[90] Ibid.

vice-versa.[91] In his study of *premanisme politik*, Gunawan argues, as Ryter does, that the New Order regime explicitly used the PP and similar groups as organisations of terror and violence.[92] In their report on the Medan violence, TGPF investigators named members of PP and IPK as provocateurs and crowd 'movers'.[93]

Medan, May 1998: Blurred Distinctions Between Pemerintah and Preman

> It is clear that violence is (seen) as the method that is most appropriate to solve problems in society. (Munir, Head of the Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence [Kontras])[94]

Other examples uncovered by the TGPF investigators lent further credence to the argument that in this city, as elsewhere distinctions between *preman* and *pemerintah* (government) and youth groups like PP were blurred, and pointed to the 'morphing' described by Lindsey.[95] In a post-violence sweep, the police detained a suspect whom they then discovered was a member of Kopassus. Like the ten motorcyclists who were present at the raid on the Medan supermarket, he was dressed in civilian clothing and carrying a revolver. In another incident on 5 May outside Medan in the district of Deli Serdang, witnesses testified that members of PP were involved in the violence. A shop assistant named Sanchi, told the TGPF that his fruit stall was attacked by PP members and he himself was beaten.[96] The next day, a number of PP youths were apprehended by the security forces, but were merely addressed by the local military commander.[97] In Simalungun district on 6 May, after rumours circulated that looting would take place, the Regional Security Council (Muspida) instructed residents to form a neighbourhood security system to protect their homes. Through the night of the 6–7 May, residents patrolled the streets and there were no disturbances. Yet the next evening, when the chief of the local army post (Koramil) visited Simalungun, he was outraged that residents were patrolling the streets and ordered them to return home and gave control to forty members of a Brimob. At the same time as troops were moving people off the streets, a crowd led by local *preman* was growing at a major intersection in town. Witnesses told the TGPF investigators that when the Brimob troops arrived on the scene they gave permission to the *preman* to continue. As the *preman* led a crowd towards a shopping centre on Jalan SM Raja, they simply walked behind. When they reached the shopping centre, the *preman* pelted it with rocks, and some

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[91] Ryter describes how post-Suharto multiparty politics gave Pemuda Pancasila and other *preman* new opportunities. Many joined the security units (*satgas*) for various parties including Golkar and PDI Perjuangan. (Ryter, 'Pemuda Pancasila', 154–155.)

[92] Gunawan Rudy FX and Nezar Patria, *Premanisme Politik* (Jakarta: ISAI, 2000). Gunawan et al include extensive analysis of the formation of militia units in Indonesia by the TNI – in particular those active in East Timor in 1999.

[93] TGPF, 'Medan Report', 19.

[94] In Gunawan Rudy, *Premanisme Politik*, 12.

[95] Lindsey, 'From Soepomo to Prabowo'. The TGPF calls them '*pemuda preman*'. ('Medan Report', 18.)

[96] TGPF, 'Medan Report', 12. On 2 May, at the beginning of the week of violence in Medan, head of the local chapter of PP, Rahmat Shah, advised his members not to follow the student protest on to the streets, as the resulting violence and unrest would add to the suffering. He also called for restraint from reacting to provocation by groups intent on creating divisions amongst youth groups in the city. ('Presidium Rahmat Shah: Pemuda Pancasila agar Mampu Menahan Diri', *Analisa*, 4 May 1998.)

[97] At least one report claims, however, that PP were deployed to protect property at this time. See Tesoro, 'Medan's Madness'.

who were carrying iron bars broke into a store selling basic goods and encouraged people to loot its contents shouting 'attack, attack'. The security forces stood by and watched.[98]

Medan As a Test Case?

There are only a few examples of police and military action in Medan during what became days of unfettered violence; they are evidence of implicit, if not explicit cooperation between *preman*, provocateurs and security forces. The failure of the security forces to act on calls for a curfew or to step in to protect businesses and homes demonstrates some element of support for the violence. At the very least there was a complete lack of security co-ordination. When police finally moved to stop the violence and looting, rather than fire into the air, some fired rubber bullets into crowds that included women and children, killing at least two and injuring many, although District Police Chief (Kapolres) Dibyo Widodo denied issuing an order to shoot on the spot.[99]

Afterwards the police and military provided weak excuses for this lack of control and exchanged accusations with student groups. They apportioned blame to the students, who in turn insisted that 'ghost masses' had incited the violence,[100] led by a *'dalang'* whom they could not identify.[101] The Police Chief of North Sumatra, Sambas, told the media, 'Why (did) we try to prevent any student demonstrations (being) conducted outside the campus? Because if they take it to the street, look at what happens'.[102] The head of the military area command (Kodam) later told TGPF investigators that his men had been reluctant to intervene in the violence in a decisive way because they were concerned about accusations that security forces had earlier shot students.[103]

The Medan violence also attracted interest at the highest levels of national security. A visit by General Wiranto on 6 May, during which he toured some of the areas hit by violence to assess the security situation first hand, indicates that the Chief of the Armed Forces was watching events closely. He had earlier made comments about the national importance of the situation in Medan in terms of containing the student protests. He used the situation in Medan as an example to security agents across Indonesia of the military's direction on this issue, telling them, 'Like in Medan I gave orders to the Regional Commander (Panglima) and Regional Police Chief (Kapolda) to take harsh action against whoever is the mastermind behind the riots outside the campus...'[104] During his visit Wiranto ordered the security forces to act quickly and decisively to control the violence,[105] warning, 'ABRI will take strict measures for those performing this brutality and anarchy'.[106] Furthermore, Wiranto was not the only national military figure following events in Medan closely. On 8 May, Lt. Gen. Prabowo announced that an Army Strategic Reserve (Kostrad) unit had already

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[98] TGPF, 'Medan Report', 15–16.
[99] *Suara Pembaruan*, 10 May 1998.
[100] *Gatra*, 16 May 1998.
[101] 'Pangdam Ajak Masyarakat Tingkatan Siskamling', *Analisa*, 8 May 1998.
[102] *Gatra*, 16 May 1998.
[103] TGPF, 'Medan Report'.
[104] *Suara Pembaruan*, 4 May 1998.
[105] *Suara Pembaruan*, 7 May 1998.

been dispatched to Medan to support local troops and assured the public that others were ready to go into troubled areas should the need arise.[107] Notwithstanding this interest, few orders and very little decisive action seemed to filter down to the streets; it is telling that, in spite of Wiranto's own intervention, the violence continued for three days after his visit. The discourse started here by regional and national security leaders succeeded in spreading the military's message that it believed the student demonstrations threatened to bring wider violence and chaos, and it was prepared to repress unrest at any cost. The reality, however, was that the violence in Medan continued, and subsequently occurred in other cities without decisive attempts by the military to stop it.

Eventually, the inconsistent directives from the national security leaders led to Medan's security apparatus attempting its own solutions. In what seemed a last ditch measure, and perhaps an admission of the security apparatus' lack of control, regional commander Yuzaini called on community and religious leaders, youth organizations, and the people themselves to work with security forces to prevent violence, and to step-up *siskamling* (local security system) operations in their neighbourhoods in order to protect themselves.[108]

The Beginning Of A Trend? Sexual Violence in Medan

It was later revealed that, during the violence in Medan, the first incidents of sexual violence against women, including Chinese women, took place in what became systematic across various sites in May 1998. In addition to TGPF findings that 'SN' had been assaulted by a police officer on 4 May (discussed above), Mitra Perempuan claimed that twenty other IKIP students reported that police had sexually harassed them as they left their campus on 4 May. They claimed to have been forced to do improper things such as removing their clothes, running and doing push-ups.[109]

In the following chaotic days, other incidents occurred. In separate assaults on four girls, one of them only 15 years old, in Lubuk Pakam, the girls were threatened with knives. They described the men to the TGPF as having long hair, muscular bodies, covered faces and speaking with a Javanese accent. At least one of the girls was raped after being forced into thick jungle by the side of a road.[110] In separate investigations into sexual assault and rape in Medan during this period, TRuK found that three rapes had occurred, and the TGPF concluded that one case of rape[111], one of sexual assault and six incidents of sexual harassment could be verified. Stories of additional cases of sexual harassment and assault were recounted by victims but never reported, and could not be verified.[112] As with the case of 'SN' and the other female students at IKIP, perpetrators of the harassment and assault included security agents intended to humiliate the victims. This

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[106] *Gatra*, 16 May 1998.
[107] 'Letjen TNI Prabowo: Satuan Kostrad Sudah dikirim ke Medan', *Analisa*, 8 May 1998.
[108] 'Pangdam Ajak', *Analisa*, 8 May 1998, 1.
[109] 'Jangan Biarkan Pelecehan dan Perkosaan tak terselesaikan', *Kompas*, 6 June 1998.
[110] It is unclear if these incidents happened at the same time or were separate. (TGPF, 'Documentation: Report of the Sub-team for Victim Facts', Appendix, *Final Report*, Jakarta, 23 October 1998.)
[111] Results in Ibid. This victim reported her rape to the police.
[112] Ibid. This figure was revised from an earlier one of 101 victims of sexual harassment. The TGPF Sub-team for Victims facts found that over 100 cases of sexual harassment during the period 4–8 May were recorded in Medan. However only 5 claims were reported to police.

reveals a consistency with subsequent events in Jakarta and Solo, and also the involvement of security agents in these abuses.

Most of the actors in the Medan violence were classified by the TGPF, police, military and residents as 'locals', as criminals and thugs. This meant that it was more difficult to configure this as 'state sponsored' violence in the terms of reference most often used in regard to the 'May Riots'. Nevertheless, the fact that relatively few 'outsiders' were involved in the Medan violence compared to the incidents in Jakarta and Solo does not mean that these were less orchestrated and engineered by sectors of the 'legitimate' state structure in co-ordination with the local 'illegitimate' structures, nor that they had no national significance. On the contrary, in Medan we can recognise the system of *premanisme*. Further, it is difficult to distinguish *preman* from *pemerintah* as they 'morph' in and out of roles, so blurred are the lines. The activities of local *preman* and youth groups, including those with national reach like the PP, provide clues to explaining the systematic and national scale of the violence that followed only a week later. Arguably these elements were only waiting for an event such as the killings at Trisakti to start violence. The discourse stressed deliberately by security leaders in relation to these events also contributed to this condition. Large-scale mass violence was, in the end, inevitable. Moreover, as Munir stressed in his comment cited earlier, behaviour such as ethnic Chinese forming vigilante groups to protect themselves, police harassment of female students, and mob attacks on police posts reveals a society more familiar with violence and violent reprisals than with justice and security.

The extent to which the Medan violence was 'anti-Chinese' depends again on conceptualisations of what constituted this form of violence in Indonesia, or, more precisely, in Medan itself. The local community, including the security apparatus, distinguished the violence from past anti-Chinese violence on the basis that it was incited by either student demonstrations or 'ghost-like' masses intent on discrediting the *reformasi* student movement. The fact that extortion, threats and violence against Chinese business was normal in Medan, that it was a part of the socio-economic and political structure of the city, forces other explanations than ethnic antagonism. The existence of this structure based on prejudice and discrimination against Chinese because of their economic success and ethnicity was not examined.

Jakarta, 12-14 May 1998

> The TGPF believes that the 13-15 May 1998 incidents could not be parted from the social, political condition and dynamics of the Indonesian society during the period, as well as its succeeding impacts. Previous events and incidents such as the General Election 1997, the kidnapping of some non-government activists, economic crisis, the General Assembly of the People's Consultative Council of the Republic of Indonesia 1998, continual students demonstrations and the shootings of Trisakti students, all closely correspond to the 13-15 May incident. Those incidents were continuing incidents of violence which led to the outbreak of spreading riots on 13-15 May 1998. (TGPF Executive Summary)[113]

On 9 May, a day after the violence petered out in Medan, a civilian, Moses Gatotkaca, was killed in demonstrations in Yogyakarta. That day, President Suharto departed for Egypt to attend a round of meetings

with the Group of 15 countries. At the airport he told the press, 'I understand the suffering of the people, I know, I was once poor and I judge that if we keep going like this there will be no progress.'[114] Three days later, security forces killed four students from Trisakti University as they attempted to take their *reformasi* protest onto the streets of Jakarta. This event brought violence that had been plaguing many parts of Indonesia more and more frequently in recent times, right to the centre of the nation.

On the morning of 12 May, approximately 10,000 students assembled at Trisakti University campus for a long march to the parliament in Salemba. Police forbad the students to leave the campus and a long confrontantion ensued with students staging a sit-in outside the campus gates. Mid-afternoon, amid a flurry of activity from some students within the campus, including (it is alleged) stones being thrown at security forces, shots were fired. Four students were killed as they hurried inside the campus grounds.[115] It is widely accepted that the deaths of those student activists was a catalyst for the violence which began the next day.[116]

A study of the TGPF's interpretation of the May violence is presented in the latter part of this chapter; however, in brief, violent incidents took place simultaneously across the vast city. At least one thousand people perished in fires at shopping malls, in particular in Klender and Jatinegara in Jakarta's east. The violence hit large swathes of the city from the east to Glodok (Jakarta's Chinatown) in the north-west, where the main commercial area, including luxurious shopping malls, electrical markets and a traditional market, was decimated. From Tanjung Priok in the north and Tangerang in the west, to Kebayoran and beyond in the south, thousands of shops, shophouses, malls and car yards were destroyed. Most properties targeted for attack were ethnic Chinese-owned and almost no part of Jakarta escaped.[117]

The violence continued largely uninterrupted by police or other security forces. Eyewitnesses and victims recounted that they attempted to call for police assistance and were unsuccessful, or the police merely scattered looters who soon returned.[118] In Glodok's electrical market, owners of the few stores saved from the looters admitted to paying local *preman* to protect them, although this did not always prove a guarantee.[119] In Tanjung Priok, men on motorbikes led looters to selected locations, mostly ethnic Chinese-owned businesses, which were looted and burned whilst the Chinese took shelter in the homes of their *pribumi* neighbours. At Klender's Yogya Plaza and the Matahari department store in Jatinegara, eyewitnesses reported seeing people from nearby *kampungs* being encouraged by men to loot the shops.[120] Buildings were locked and set ablaze. Hundreds perished in these incidents. A similar fire in the Ramayana Shopping centre in Tanjung Priok claimed over forty victims, most of whom were urban poor from nearby slums. They included pregnant

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[113] TGPF, 'Executive Summary', I.2.
[114] *Suara Pembaruan*, 9 May 1998.
[115] The deceased students were Elang Mulya, Heri Hartanto, Hendriawan, Hafidin Royan. (Setiawan, *Negeri Dalam Kobaran Api*, 71.)
[116] See TGPF, 'Executive Summary', VI..2.
[117] For illustration see Setiawan, *Negeri Dalam Kobaran Api*, 31; Robert Cribb, *Historical Atlas of Indonesia* (London: Curzon Press, 2000), 188.
[118] Interviews with TRuK volunteers and victims in Jakarta, July–August 1999.
[119] Interviews with shop-owners in Glodok electrical market, 21 July 1999.
[120] Interview with Rinto, eyewitness and TRuK volunteer, 15 July 1999.

women and children.[121] The TGPF and TRuK reports conclude that the skills of many of the rioters pointed to military training, and that the simultaneity of the violence across the city indicated a level of organisation. The chain of responsibility for the violence, reports also found, ran to the highest levels of military and politics.[122] Incidents of sexual assault and rape came to light in the days and weeks after the violence. Women, mostly ethnic Chinese but also *pribumi* and foreign citizens, were attacked on the streets and in their homes, most often by gangs of men.[123] These assaults took place across the city, but in West and North Jakarta in particular, regions with a high concentration of ethnic Chinese residents.[124] Accounts collected from the rape victims by TRuK and women's groups such as Kalyanamitra detail brutal assaults often in front of other family members and including torture. Witnesses and victims reported that their attackers shouted anti-Chinese slogans and other abuse. The rapes continued after the violence had subsided, and victims and their families were warned against going to the police and threatened with further violence. In her report compiled after a visit to Indonesia in late 1998, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Radhika Coomaraswamy concluded 'the Chinese community appears to be terrorised by the events and victims are reluctant to come forward.' She added:

> Although the Special Rapporteur was repeatedly told that the Chinese were rich and wealthy, many of the victims she met who had been raped during the May riots, appeared to be from lower-middle-class backgrounds. Some were single women living alone, striving to make ends meet. It appeared that the victims were in fact poor...[125]

The 'Other' May Riots: Anti-Chinese Violence in Solo, May 1998

Despite being far more destructive in relative terms, the violence in Solo was largely overshadowed by events in Jakarta. This was in great part due to its representations at local level. Upon witnessing the attention that the Jakarta riots had generated and no doubt aware of the potential for Solo to also become headlines, locals recognised their power to control how the violence was reported and, thereby, avoid similar attention. In its immediate aftermath, the attention given by the international community and national media to the 'May riots' focused on their apparent 'anti-Chinese' or racialised element. Accordingly, when the residents of Solo represented their violence as anything but anti-Chinese violence, it remained largely unnoticed by outsiders. Despite the range of interest groups with varying political agendas in Solo, representation of what the May riot was *not* was uniform across all groups. Although actual representations of this violence varied among groups, the political objective of each was the same – to oppose any representation of racialised violence. By succeeding in this, the residents of Solo avoided the attention and condemnation that Jakarta attracted.

[121] Interviews with families of victims in Klender, 15 July 1999 and interviews with TRuK volunteers from the Tanjung Priok branch, 23 July 1999.
[122] TGPF, *Executive Summary*, VI.1; TRuK, 'Early Documentation' Series.
[123] See Leksono Supelli, 'The May 1998 Tragedy'.
[124] TRuK, 'Early Documentation n.3', Jakarta, 13 July 1998.
[125] Coomaraswamy, *Report on Mission to Indonesia and East Timor on the Issue of Violence against Women*, n.45 and n.62.

The Solo case allows us to examine how a single set of 'basic facts' can be transformed into multiple interpretations of a violent event. It will be argued here that in Solo certain key elements or 'basic facts', gathered from news reports and from official reports, have dominated interpretations of the violence. These include the pattern of the violence, identity of both targets and actors, and the role of security forces. In the hands of local groups, representations of the violence also uniformly sought to locate its source outside the local community itself.

PATTERN OF THE SOLO VIOLENCE: THE BASIC FACTS

Locals believed that conditions in Solo in mid-May 1998 were 'just right' for such violence.[126] Pro-*reformasi* student demonstrations began in early March 1998 at various universities, but particularly at UMS (Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta) and later at UNS (Universitas Negeri Sebelas Maret). The students were prevented from leaving their campuses and taking their protest onto the streets by security forces stationed outside the universities almost daily from March until mid-May. During these months, students and police clashed frequently. The security forces fired tear gas and rubber bullets at the students, wounding many. One such clash, on 8 May 1998, was named 'Bloody Friday' after hundreds of students were wounded, some by bullets, at UNS campus.[127] During those months large crowds gathered outside campuses to hear the protest speeches and to watch the clashes with police.

On 14 May, students gathered at UMS Pabelan campus to protest against the killings at Trisakti University in Jakarta.[128] The security forces were waiting. A clash erupted, triggered, reports claimed, by provocateurs throwing objects at the police from inside the campus.[129] Onlookers heard the screams of the students and moved closer to see and to assist the wounded. The crowd would not disperse when commanded by the security forces; instead they became angry and progressed east towards the city, damaging public facilities such as street signs, public telephones and pot plants before moving directly to their first target, a 'Timor' car showroom.[130] Already numbering 1,000, the crowd moved together to the city centre around Jalan Slamet Riyadi. Here they attacked banks and public buildings. When Kostrad troops prevented them from

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[126] At a soccer game at Stadium Sriwedari in Solo on May 6, violence erupted among spectators who threw objects at security. Thousands of people damaged the stadium and spilled onto Slamet Riyadi attacking public facilities shops and offices. 'Massa ngamuk Solo "Siaga I"', *Solo Pos*, 7 May 1998; ' 'Bal-balan' di Solo Rusuh', *Kompas* , 7 May 1998; 'Kerusuhan sepakbola', *Suara Pembaruan*, 7 May 1998.

[127] 'Ratusan demonstran tersungkur', *Solo Pos*, 9 May 1998.

[128] 'Solo Rusuh', *Solo Pos*, 15 May 1998. The students also protested about the death of Mozes Gatutkaca.

[129] TGPF, 'Anatomy of the Riot: Solo Report', Chapter 2, n.4, *Final Report*, Jakarta, 23 October 1998, 102–133.

[130] At this stage the crowd was not large, and as they passed by the military resort command, security forces had the opportunity to halt the violence before it spread. (TGPF, 'Solo Report'; M. Hari Mulyadi Soedarmono et al, *Runtuh Kekuasaan 'Kraton Alit': Studi Radikalisasi Sosial 'Wong Sala' dan Kerusuhan Mei 1998 di Surakarta*, Lembaga Pengembangan Teknologi Pedessan (LPTP), Surakarta, 1999, 496. This report was based on research conducted by staff from the Art Faculty at UNS in Solo about 'Radikalisasi Sosial Wong Sala', during four months from mid-September 1998–January 1999. It

getting close to the Town Hall they split up, breaking into shops and offices, looting and burning.[131] At strategic locations around the city, such as intersections or near shopping or business centres, tyres were set alight.[132] This had the effect of bringing people onto the streets and soon violence broke out around these locations.[133] By mid-afternoon, smoke from burning tyres, cars, motorcycles and buildings filled the sky above Solo.

Although scattered and involving thousands of people, the violence did not appear random or spontaneous to eyewitnesses, who reported seeing people on motorbikes and in minibuses transporting petrol, molotov bombs and iron bars. These men rode motorcycles that were in good condition and had no number plates. They screamed slogans, including 'support *reformasi*'.[134] Eyewitnesses said they identified certain people who were leading the violence and heard them say 'It is on the list',[135] when a certain building was located. Once located it was broken into with iron bars, and spectators were encouraged to enter and loot, after which the building was burned using prepared molotov bombs.[136]

The violence continued on into the night. Residents barricaded themselves into their kampungs, with men keeping guard. On the night of 13 May, rumours circulated that a Chinese-owned shoe store had been attacked in Singosaren. The rumours spread and stores were closed. Witnesses noticed that *pribumi*-owned hotels and hospital carparks were unusually full on that night, later realising these were the cars of ethnic Chinese who anticipated the trouble.[137] Others sought refuge with their *pribumi* neighbours. When the violence erupted around midday on 14 May, most Chinese-owned businesses were already closed and many had fled their homes to safety outside Solo or to hotels, hospitals and churches. That night, military resort commander (Danrem) Col. Sriyanto told citizens via local radio to stay inside their homes between 10pm and 6am. Yet with much of the city's electrical supply cut and shops selling batteries closed, most Solonese did not hear this announcement.[138] The violence continued unabated through the night and Solo burned. In the early hours of the morning, rioters began entering kampungs looking for homes and shops owned by ethnic Chinese.[139] Throughout 15 May looting and burning continued. At the end of the second day, troops descended on the city centre in tanks and quickly brought restored control. The damage bill was estimated at

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was funded by a private development agency (LPTP). As well as a chronology and analysis, the report contains analysis of inter-ethnic relations and socio-economic conditions in Solo.

[131] Violence spread to most districts around Solo city, like Nusukan, Gading, Tipes, Jebres and into surrounding towns like Sukoharjo, Karanganyar, Boyolali and Sragen. (Bambang Natur Rahadi et al., *Rekaman Lensa: Peristiwa Mei 1998 di Solo* (Solo: Aksara Solo Pos, July 1998).)

[132] TGPF, 'Solo Report', 124.

[133] Ibid.

[134] Soedarmono, *Runtuh Kekuasaan*, 508; TGPF, 'Solo Report'.

[135] TGPF, 'Solo Report', 123.

[136] Soedarmono, *Runtuh Kekuasaan.*

[137] For example Hotel Sahid Raya and Hotel Sahid Kusuma. H.M. Dian Nafi' (Nafi' is a Muslim cleric, head of a local NU pesantren and teacher) saw many more cars than usual parked outside hospitals on the night of the 13 and 14 May, indicating to him that ethnic Chinese were also hiding there. (Interview with Dian Nafi', Solo, 31 August 1999).

[138] Helen Pausacker kindly provided this information.

[139] Soedarmono, *Runtuh Kekuasaan*, 512.

Rp 600 billion (later revised to Rp 457 billion), 31 people died, and over 500 motorbikes, nearly 300 cars, hundreds of shops, banks and public buildings were destroyed.[140]

The population of ethnic Chinese in Solo at that time was around 24,000 or 4.4 percent of the total population, yet the ethnic Chinese head of Solo's chamber of commerce estimated that 80 percent of shop owners in Solo were ethnic Chinese. He believed this accounted for *pribumi* resentment and suspicion towards Chinese: 'It is difficult to avoid the impression that they (ethnic Chinese) "play games" when at certain times products suddenly disappear from the market or distribution is at a standstill'.[141]

Targets

To speak of targets in a violent event implies organisation and intention. In Solo this was definitely the case. The locations sought out included obvious commercial sites such as shops, factories and showrooms. Tokens of government were targeted, including public facilities such as street lights, public telephones and the home of Harmoko (Golkar Chairman), as well as symbols of wealth such as the Atrium 21 cinema complex, cars and motorcycles. The TGPF report and others[142] tell of the existence of an Operational Target List used by the riot coordinators who marked target sites with burning tyres. In late February 1998, a group of wealthy local ethnic Chinese businessmen met with some military leaders at the Diamond restaurant in Solo. The businessmen agreed to donate money which would, they were told, be used to distribute basic foodstuffs to those in need in Solo,[143] as was being done by ethnic Chinese in other cities in order to offset the threat of violence. In the weeks leading to 14 May 1998, the ethnic Chinese community in Solo became increasingly anxious as the economic crisis escalated and student demonstrations grew violent. Witnesses reported seeing people moving about the kampungs in the days before the violence asking if ethnic Chinese lived there and taking notes.[144]

In the aftermath of the violence, it is clear that whatever or whoever the intended 'targets', the victims of the violence spanned the socio-economic spectrum. Most of the dead were people on low incomes caught inside shops that were set alight. It is also estimated that 40,000 out of a total workforce of 298,000 lost their jobs as a direct result of the destruction of factories, shops, banks and offices.[145] Regardless of the level of planning and organisation of mass violence, as the crowds became larger and more diverse, their

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[140] *Solo Pos*, 16 May 1998; TGPF, 'Solo Report', 125–127.
[141] 'Penjarahan Masih Berlangsung', *Kompas*, 18 June 1998.
[142] TGPF, 'Solo Report', 123; Interview with Soedarmono, Solo, August 1999.
[143] Soedarmono, *Runtuh Kekuasaan*, 485. Soedarmono, co-author of a report on violence in Solo and lecturer in social science at UNS, said that there were rumours that the target list came from this list of donors. (Interview with Soedarmono, Solo, 1 September 1999)
[144] Soedarmono, *Runtuh Kekuasaan*, 487. In one case rioters attacked a house situated next to Sholat Magnih Church. When the owner came out of the Church to meet the rioters they were surprised to find it was not owned by an ethnic Chinese. A few of them apologised to the owner and left. In another case, a family's home was attacked because they would not answer questions about whether it was Chinese or Javanese owned. They quickly stopped attacking the house when somebody told them it was the home of a Javanese. (Ibid., 512.)
[145] TGPF, 'Solo Report', 127. Some groups believe that the deaths of looters were, like the burning of buildings in Solo, no accident.

goals inevitably became less fixed and their targets more random.[146] Nevertheless, a grasp of the damage to the Solo economy, and the overall hurt inflicted, could not have been absent from the organisers' calculations.

Actors

The violence in Solo occurred on such a scale that it could be said that a considerable percentage of the local population performed some role in it, if only as passive spectators. The TGPF classified the actors in the violence into three groups. The first were the 'passive masses', who were on the street only to watch. Clearly these people did not feel threatened by what was happening around them indeed they might have felt excited by it. The second group were the 'active masses', who came to see what was happening and joined in.[147] The third and most influential group were the 'provocateurs'. Numbering approximately 15 people, this group facilitated effective lines of communication via walkie-talkies, moved quickly about the city on motorcycles, while a van transported petrol, iron bars and alcohol to key locations. The provocateurs wore headbands and in some cases gloves and had distinctive physical characteristics and skills. They worked the crowd, exciting them by calling out provocative statements and giving directions. They used the iron bars to wrench open shop doors and smash windows, then invited onlookers to 'come in and take'. They then took molotov bombs from the van, filled them with petrol, lit them, and tossed them into buildings.[148] When the violence finally subsided, they had disappeared.

Security

Perhaps the most startling factor in relation to the violence and what shocked the locals most, was that it was able to continue for two days unhindered by security forces. The evidence indicates not merely ineptitude on the part of the security forces, but collusion with the rioters. An eyewitness reported that he saw police barricading themselves into their posts, rather than attempting to stop the rioters.[149] In other cases police and military stood by as the looting and burning went on around them. The TGPF was told that early on the first day of the violence, an army colonel issued a command which he claimed came from the command centre

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[146] See Brass, *Riots and Pogroms*, 21.

[147] In the field, the TGPF heard reports that prior to the riot beginning on 14 May, a group of people were organised as a 'support group' for provocateurs. A meeting for interested people was held on the 10 May at which they were instructed to 'invite' others to join a demonstration in the city. (TGPF, 'Solo Report', 122.) Heryanto referred to the importance of 'habit' as a necessary factor which enabled people to take on this role, 'there must be prior ideas, desires, memories, imaginations, histories and perhaps experiments and experiences of doing so.' (Heryanto, 'Rape, Race', 316).

[148] TGPF divided this group into three sub-groups: the coordinators – men on motorcycles who travelled around the city and used an 'operational target list' to select targets and mark them out (members of Pemuda Pancasila were identified among this group); the supply team – driving the van and dropping off the tyres that were then set alight; the provocateurs – whose job was to involve the crowd. The TGPF indicated that they strongly believed that these men were military trained, if not active members of the military. (TGPF, 'Solo Report' on 'modus operandi', 123–125; 127–128.)

[149] Interview with Bisyir, member of PWS, Solo, 31 August 1999.

(Komandan Korem) Surakarta, ordering that security personnel were not to fire warning shots into the air to disperse rioters. Most alarming was that the number of security personnel on the streets of Solo was extremely low on those two days. The TGPF discovered that eleven companies, consisting of Mobile Brigade, crowd control troops (Dalmas) and Kostrad troops, were situated at the UMS campus on 14 May, leaving the city of Solo itself largely unprotected.[150]

The TGPF later made several curious discoveries, including that Kopassus Group 2 troops were flown out of Solo on 14 May. The departure of four flights that afternoon coincided with the riot's gathering momentum. The destination for these troops remains unknown, as does the date of their return.[151] The TGPF also discovered that, although the Danrem had imposed a curfew for the evenings of 14–15 May, violence continued throughout curfew hours. Many security personnel later said that they were unaware of the curfew. In addition, it was concluded that most of the meagre security personnel available over those two days were concentrated in a few select places. These included the Sheraton Hotel owned by Tommy Suharto, the Ibu Tien Suharto monument, Suharto's house and the Town Hall. The TGPF described the security situation in Solo in damning tones: 'Efforts by the security forces to prevent the riot from emerging were not effective and virtually not carried out seriously'.[152] They concluded that responsibility for this violence must be placed on the armed forces, if only because they failed to act to prevent or stop the violence.[153]

REPRESENTATIONS OF THE VIOLENCE IN SOLO

How was the Violence Interpreted and Represented in Solo?

The residents of Solo and those who closely followed the Solo case would have had knowledge of these elements of the riot when they came to interpret it and represent it. Coverage of the violence in the local paper, *Solo Pos*,[154] was extensive, and news and rumour travelled quickly among the small population.[155] The extent of knowledge of the violence varied from individual to individual and was naturally based on personal experience, but the way in which people chose to understand these elements, and select a context and form, led to different representations.[156] The local groups most active in interpreting the violence were the students, the government and military, the local elite and the ethnic Chinese. Although they all struggled separately to control how it was represented, their objectives were very similar.

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[150] There are also reports that police grew anxious as the situation became heated. They feared that police hostels could become targets, as the previous evening threats had been made to that effect. In response police stepped up surveillance at hostels and made plans for the evacuation of their families. (Soedarmono, *Runtuh Kekuasaan,* 488.)

[151] TGPF, 'Solo Report', 131.

[152] Ibid., 130.

[153] TGPF also noted their suspicions that armed forces personnel were in fact 'involved' in the violence.

[154] I am indebted to Helen Pausacker who provided me with a vast number of clippings from *Solo Pos.*

[155] On the night of 14 May 1998 as noted, electricity was out across the city. Therefore television and radio coverage of events did not reach residents until the next afternoon. *Solo Pos* was the first source of news for most residents, who had been confined to their homes during 14 May. Some men who went out during this time brought back news.

[156] See Brass, *Riots and Pogroms*, 6.

Students, Government and Military and Local Elite

On 15 May, amidst the continuing violence, 10,000 student protesters and sympathisers finally made their 'long march' from UNS to the Town Hall in the centre of Solo. The crowd walked peacefully, singing fighting songs as they went. At the Town Hall, students asked for forgiveness for the violence of the previous day and thanked security personnel for allowing them to complete their peaceful protest.[157] Later, in a press release the students also angrily denied that the violence began as a result of protest action at UMS campus on 14 May, saying 'They (crowds outside the campus) continued to gather and to change direction going to the west and to the east, damaging and burning as they went.'[158] The students insisted that their two-month action on campuses across Solo, while frequently erupting into violence, had in no way acted as a prelude to the rioting on 14–15 May 1998. Instead, they explained it as mob violence with no connection with the *reformasi* struggle or their own protests. By marching peacefully to the Town Hall, the students aimed to set themselves apart from the rioters and from the violence that was occurring around them. Theirs was a pure and righteous not riotous cause.[159]

The reaction of national political leaders to Solo was largely overwhelmed by Suharto's resignation the next week. The most influential Solonese figure in elite politics to speak about the Solo violence was Amien Rais. At that time, Rais was riding the wave of student demonstrations to ultimate fame and power in Jakarta. He was the highly respected leader of the Muhammadiyah organisation, whose university, UMS, was the scene of the major clash between police and students on 14 May. At a rally in Solo in June 1998, he declared that all Indonesians should be ashamed of what happened in mid-May and told the crowd that the damage done to Solo was more serious than that done in Jakarta: 'I witnessed the riot in Jakarta which was terrifying. But in Solo it was truly more terrifying'.[160] However, his most influential statement that day was that a '*dalang*' or mastermind was behind the violence. As a powerful, elite voice for Solo in Jakarta, Rais' representation of the violence as orchestrated from 'outside', together with use of the term *dalang*[161], had impact. His statement made the headlines of the national daily, *Kompas* , as well as the local paper.

ABRI representative Colonel Sriyanto, also at the rally, continued the emphasis on 'responsibility' for the violence when he attempted to respond to increasing criticism of the role of the security forces. He asked forgiveness for the violence but continued to deny responsibility: 'We are sorry if the riot was not fully

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[157] 'SMPR 'long march' UNS-Balaikota', *Solo Pos*, 16 May 1998.
[158] *Solo Pos* reported that the violence originated with 'action of concern' at UMS campus. (*Solo Pos*, 14 May 1998) ('Tak benar, kerusuhan akibat aksi keprihatinan di UMS', *Solo Pos*, 16 May 1998.)
[159] The TGPF concluded that the long-running student demonstrations in Solo had 'paved the way for local provocateur(s) to create the riot.' (TGPF, 'Executive Summary', 12.)
[160] 'Amien Rais: Kerusuhan Jakarta dan Solo Ada Dalangnya', *Kompas* , 11 June 1998.
[161] Solo is the home of Javanese *wayang*. Locals would interpret it as a puppeteer controlling every action.

brought under control by ABRI, but we can't do everything.'[162] He defended the behaviour of security personnel by arguing that conditions on the ground were extremely difficult, and that it was difficult to take severe action against rioters because there were too many spectators in the way. The military represented the violence to the Solonese in terms of mobs gone mad, acting in an uncontrollable and spontaneous manner, outnumbering security forces, and guided by an unknown and intangible, yet convenient, 'third party'.

A few days after the violence, the Sultan Pakoe Boewono XII issued a statement that he deplored the violence and declaring that such behaviour was not in line with the cultural values held by *'wong Solo'* (Solonese).[163] On 19 May, the Sultan and other community leaders, including Mujiono from Surakarta Cultural Centre (*Taman Budaya Surakarta*, TBS) and Sardono a leading traditional dancer, visited an ethnic Chinese family whose home and shop had been burnt down, leaving them with only the clothes on their backs.[164] This visit, a rare public appearance by the aging Sultan, was covered in the local and national press and had the intention of demonstrating the city elite's solidarity with the victims, and more particularly with the traumatised ethnic Chinese community.[165]

Following the violence, community leaders, including artists, professionals, businessmen and academics, formed the Association of Solonese (*Paguyuban Wong Solo,* PWS) in order to assist victims to rebuild their lives and with the long term objective of encouraging unity, equality and tolerance in Solo among ethnicities, religions and classes.[166] In the wake of the riot the respected community leaders in PWS and TBS saw before them a treasured city and its people, facing not only a physical crisis but also an identity crisis.

The approach of the local elite nevertheless varied. Mujiono and others at TBS refused to excuse the behaviour of the rioters and discounted the claim it was provoked by outside forces. They maintained that the violence was spontaneous for the most part and that the emotions and frustration of the people were such that they were easily enticed, concluding that 'the ordinary people (*masyarakat*) were responsible for the violence'.[167] Others insisted that the provocateurs were to blame, that without these actors the local people could not have performed such acts.[168] Whatever their interpretation of the violence, the local elite agreed that ethnic Chinese were the main victims and targets. At the same time, they spoke of relations between

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[162] 'Amien Rais', *Kompas*, 11 June 1998. *Kompas* reported that Sriyanto claimed that ABRI personnel were limited at the time of the violence because members of Kopassus were at Kartasura, and one Kostrad and one Infantry Brigade were on their way to Jakarta. The small number left behind, he said, were busy assisting police to control student protesters at UMS.

[163] 'Masyarakat harus "eling lan waspada"', *Solo Pos,* 18 May 1998.

[164] 'PB XII, MNIX dan Waldjinah Berada di Belakang Mahasiswa', *Kompas*, 20 May 1998.

[165] Days later at a meeting held at the Kraton for 5000 students, the Sultan pledged Rp1,111,111 to the students' struggle for reform. (*Kompas,* 24 May 1998.)

[166] The most immediate work undertaken by this group was to help victims with funding and with the difficult process of making insurance claims. 17 insurance houses in Solo were rejecting all claims because they considered the violence a 'political riot', and not covered under their policies. ('Perjuangan klaim asuransi kerusuhan Solo', *Solo Pos,* 1 June 1998.)

[167] Interview with Mujiono, Sujani Sabdaleksono, St. Wiyono SkaR members of Taman Budaya Surakarta, Solo, 31 August 1999.

[168] Interviews with Bisyir; and Ardus, journalist in Solo for *Kompas*, Solo, 31 August 1999.

ethnic Chinese and *pribumi* in Solo as being 'just like elsewhere in Indonesia',[169] and refused to believe that racialised motives were behind the actions of the '*wong* Solo'. A great sense of shame was evident in the admission by the people at TBS, the protectors of Javanese high culture, about the level of local involvement, but at the same time they avoided confronting why the violence occurred and why the ethnic Chinese were its main targets. A founding member of PWS, Yayah Khisbayah, told of the need to teach the people of Solo about tolerance as a means to providing a lasting solution to violence and discrimination in Solo. She seemed to be a lone voice willing to speak openly of racial intolerance and discrimination as a *cause* of the violence and to represent the violence as at all ethnically motivated.[170]

Similarly, journalists and editorial staff on the local daily *Solo Pos* played an extremely important and public role in representing the violence. As the most respected local newspaper, *Solo Pos* was the primary source of information for Solonese.[171] In its early responses to events, *Solo Pos* was aware of its moral responsibility in reporting and editorialising and also sensitive to the social context. In an editorial on 18 May, titled 'The Time Has Come For Introspection', the editorial staff wrote of the psychological trauma of the people and condemned the behaviour of many locals. They were also understanding of the causes of antipathies: 'The feelings of the people are also not easy to discount when they have been forcefully evicted from their land by business people working in collusion with others to develop shopping centres and elite housing estates.'[172] In response to demands from its readership for even more information, in July *Solo Pos* published a book of photographs and essays about the unrest. In the introduction, its purpose was explained as hoping to serve 'not only as an album, a souvenir of these events, what is more important is that we can gain wisdom and learn from this event.'[173] The book was an attempt at a comprehensive documentation of the violence as well as a reflection and contemplation of its causes. In an essay in the book, M.T. Arifin wrote briefly about 'the fate of the Chinese residents'.[174] He made an attempt to understand and explain why ethnic Chinese were the main victims of the people's anger by repeating common stereotypes of Chinese as wealthy and exclusive. In addition, he touched on the local relations between the *pribumi* and ethnic Chinese, arguing that they were not harmonious and were affected not only by a wealth gap, but also a 'cultural gap', which had led to violence often in Solo's recent history. Arifin argued that sentiments such as these prompted people to attack ethnic Chinese businesses and homes when encouraged to do so by *preman*. Although he acknowledged and attempted to understand why ethnic Chinese were the main victims, Arifin and the *Solo*

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[169] In interviews I conducted in Solo in late August 1999, almost without exception people used this term. They explained it to mean that Chinese were restricted to the economic sector and were subject to other discriminatory laws and behaviours. The relations between ethnic Chinese and *pribumi* were affected by these issues; they lived and worked together, but other interaction was minimal.

[170] Interview with Yayah Khisbayah, Solo, 1 September 1999. Yayah had lived in Solo for about 2 years at the time of the violence. She is a lecturer in sociology and psychology at UMS and member of Muhammadiyah.

[171] It is important to note that *Solo Pos* was not yet available on the internet.

[172] 'Saatnya Introspeksi Diri', *Solo Pos,* 18 May 1998.

[173] Rahadi, *Rekaman Lensa*, 1.

[174] M.T. Arifin, 'Bara-Bara Reformasi: Solo dalam perubuhan dan aksi mass', in *Rekaman Lensa: Peristiwa Mei 1998 di Solo*, eds Bambang Natur Rahadi et al. (Solo: Aksara Solo Pos, July 1998), 1–8. Arifin describes the everyday relations between the Chinese and *pribumi* in Solo as far from

Pos editorial team, like other local elite, did not try to understand why the 'cultural gap' and social jealousies remained.

Ethnic Chinese

Ethnic Chinese suffered most of the material loss in the Solo violence.[175] Nevertheless, in its aftermath, the overwhelming response of the Chinese community was to reject claims that this had been violence focused on race, and to represent it in other ways. The reasons they gave for this were numerous. A leader in the textile industry and owner of PT Batik Keris, Handoko, was not alone when he argued that, because *pribumi*-owned shops were damaged along with those owned by ethnic Chinese, this could not be deemed anti-Chinese violence. He told a meeting of ethnic Chinese and community leaders in June 1998, 'If this riot was an anti-race movement, then it would not have been possible for me to travel about among the masses without anything happening to me'. He asked why, if the violence was based on anti-Chinese sentiment, did he have to stand down 11,000 *pribumi* workers as a consequence?[176]

Crucially, Chinese argued that evidence of the violence being engineered and provocateurs inciting people to participate demonstrated that those involved lacked personal motivation to harm the ethnic Chinese; they were merely following the provocateurs. Some ethnic Chinese, such as Budi Mulyono, head of Solo Community Union (*Persatuan Masyarakat Solo*, PMS) – a 60 year old community organisation consisting mostly of ethnic Chinese – saw the causes as multifaceted. Political and social problems compounded by the economic crisis and the wealth gap were all factors; he added, 'And my eyes are not closed to the fact that there are people who do not like the ethnic Chinese'.[177] However, Mulyono agreed that the perception of ethnic Chinese as wealthy and in control of the economy was understandable when Solo was viewed from street level and he was supported by others when, in effect, he excused the rioters' actions: 'Their homes (ethnic Chinese) open onto the edge of the street and by economic consideration usually their home is also their place of work. So it is understandable if they then become a target for masses running amok'.[178]

Why was the Violence Interpreted in This Way?

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harmonious. He writes the Chinese are too busy with their work to engage in ordinary social activities in the city and religious and cultural differences have created a *jarak kebudayaan* or cultural gap.

[175] The total damage bill was Rp 457 billion. ('Kerugian akibat kerusuhan Solo capai Rp 457 milyar', *Solo Pos*, 3 June 1998.)

[176] *Kompas*, 18 June 1998.

[177] Adi Sasono, then Minister for Cooperatives (and a senior ICMI figure), and other leaders attended a meeting in Solo in June to discuss the violence. At the meeting, attended by many who had suffered losses, Sasono and others advised ethnic Chinese to engage in some introspection in light of the violence. They agreed that 'care for society has more meaning than an exclusive attitude, demonstrated by building tall walls around your house.' ('Penjarahan Masih Berlangsung di Solo', *Kompas*, 18 June 1998.)

[178] Ibid.

> Sometimes...the collective accounts we heard partook of the character of pre-emptive narratives. They were constructed, more or less consciously, in order to falsify particular 'theories' or explanations of the course of events. (Gyanendra Pandey)[179]

The community in Solo, both *pribumi* and ethnic Chinese, overwhelmingly rejected the suggestion that this was a case of anti-Chinese violence. In order to understand why they came to a particular conclusion about how to represent the violence, it is necessary to examine their arguments and reasoning. Older ethnic Chinese and local elites in particular, framed their interpretations and representations within an historical context, which included prior incidents of anti-Chinese violence in the city.[180] Interpretations were also framed in the context of political objectives, rumours, statistics and, crucially, ethnicity. While most ethnic Chinese and *pribumi* dismissed claims that the Solo violence, like that in Jakarta, was anti-Chinese violence, the arguments used by them to support this position, were nevertheless highly racialised.

As the basis for one interpretation of the violence, locals sought to identify the composition of the victims. They pointed out that this was 'inclusive' of all ethnic groups, rather than restricted to ethnic Chinese. They argued on the basis of statistics of losses, including shops, houses and vehicles owned by *pribumi* and ethnic Chinese alike, and the unemployment largely suffered by *pribumi*. This information was widely available, as *Solo Pos* published details of losses relating to different industry sectors regularly during May and June.

Another tool used by Solonese was based on assessing the emotions or intentions of those involved in the violence. The aim was to determine if people were motivated by strong racialist emotions, if their intention was to harm ethnic Chinese. The assessment of many was that most of those involved were from the lower classes, and were uneducated,[181] together with hoodlums and common criminals (of which, according to reports, there was an abundance in Solo),[182] and 'outsiders'.[183] They targeted economic actors, symbols of wealth, and government and were motivated by frustration stemming from the economic crisis. With this conclusion, the Solonese were able to find comfort and reassurance that the violence was the work of marginal elements in society frustrated by the national economic crisis, not indicative of social fissures in Solo itself. The question often asked in Solo was, was there 'hatred' for the ethnic Chinese and a desire to 'eliminate' them? The answer is 'possibly', among some, but on the whole most of those involved probably did not feel strong or implicitly racist emotions. In Indonesia, however, the question of 'racist emotion' cannot be detached from feelings of economic frustration. Many of the people involved in the violence made an almost inseparable link between economic advantage and Chineseness. They were able easily, and probably unconsciously, to make a link between the causes of their frustration and the ethnic Chinese, who

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[179] Pandey, 'In Defense of the Fragment', 13. Regarding the fact-finding investigation into riots in Bhagalpur in October 1989, of which he was part.

[180] See Siegel, *Solo in the New Order*.

[181] However, this conclusion appears highly generalised and contrary to evidence. In a column in the *Solo Pos* titled, 'The looter who only wanted cigarettes' on 30 May 1998, the writer tells a story about an *'orang kaya baru'* or 'nouveau riche' person who looted cigarettes.
Soedarmono also testified that students and LSM members participated in the looting.

[182] Interview with Iswahyudya, member of Solo's ethnic Chinese community, Solo, 1 September 1999.

[183] This seems to be a generic term for anyone who lives outside Solo city, including the surrounding villages.

owned 80 percent of shops in the city.[184] This perception had become so much a part of the process of identification in Indonesia, that the actors in the violence and those struggling to interpret it did not readily identify this association.

Two further arguments used to reject the claim of anti-Chinese violence were based on the 'normal' relations between *pribumi* and Chinese afterwards and on the fact that provocateurs were involved. The kindliness of their neighbours the next day convinced ethnic Chinese in Solo that anti-Chinese sentiment was not present among the rioters the night before. Many ethnic Chinese old enough to remember the 1965–1966 or 1980 violence in Solo were adamant that nothing like the anti-Chinese sentiment experienced then was evident in 1998.[185] The degree of difference between the racist sentiment expressed in the earlier incidents and the May 1998 violence was so great that it appeared to them to be a difference in kind.

The presence and identity of provocateurs before and during the violence was vital to both ethnic Chinese and *pribumi* Solonese when rejecting the claim of anti-Chinese violence. Elite Solonese cultural and artistic leaders, including the Sultan of Surakarta, dismissed this behaviour as 'out of character' for Solonese and Amien Rais spoke of a *dalang*. Evidence that provocateurs played a part served to mitigate public responsibility and therefore any impression that Solonese were racist. For ethnic Chinese, the identity of the 'bona fide' actors in the violence was imperative. The ability to place responsibility on perpetrators who had come from 'outside' and were controlled by a 'third party' allowed Chinese to return to 'normality' in their day-to-day relations with *pribumis*.

Each of these arguments is set within a racialised context. But rather than highlighting the presence of race and ethnicity as ingredients in the violence, as happened in respect to the Jakarta violence, the Solonese sought to dismiss it, to deny that anti-Chinese sentiment existed in Solo during the violence, and particularly it seems, to deny that true '*wong* Solo' were capable of feeling it.

Returning to 'Normality'

> The discursive strategy of the victims is to externalise the state, and, in that way to exorcise violence. This externalisation can be interpreted as a sign that the victimised community wants to stay on in the neighbourhood and attempts to recreate the imaginary neighbourhood community by saying that an external force, the state, was the perpetrator of violence, not the neighbours. (Peter van der Veer)[186]

The consequences of two days of unimpeded mass violence left Solo broken. Its infrastructure was paralysed and great psychological damage had been done to a city that prided itself on its refined culture. Indeed many Solonese were ashamed and saddened by what had happened during those days and by the behaviour of many from among them. In the aftermath of the violence, cultural, artistic and business community leaders recognised the need to examine racial and inter-group relations, and Chinese and *pribumi* got together to work

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[184] Ang describes this social configuration: 'Indonesia is an intensely racialised social formation, in which the Chinese/*pribumi* distinction is generally read in terms of economic advantage/ disadvantage. In other words, "Chineseness" in contemporary Indonesia does not denote primarily cultural identities, but economic identities.' (Ang, 'Trapped in Ambivalence', 31.)

[185] Interview with members of MATAKIN (High Council of Indonesian Confucian Religion), Indarto, Haksu Tjhie Tjay Ing, Bs. Prasetyo Wahyudi, Solo, 2 September 1999.

[186] Peter van der Veer, 'The Victim's Tale', 191.

on rebuilding. As van der Veer observed, they felt united by the oppression, which they believed had come from 'outside', from a 'third force' in the form of provocateurs and *dalangs*. Aided by this belief, relations between *pribumi* and ethnic Chinese, I was constantly told by both groups, returned to 'normal' the following day. That is, they were 'no better and no worse'.[187] But what constituted normal relations between *pribumi* and ethnic Chinese in Solo prior to the May violence? Locals insisted that prejudice and discrimination experienced by ethnic Chinese in Solo was 'just the same as elsewhere in Indonesia'. That is, whatever the truth of the matter might be, ethnic Chinese were considered to be wealthier and to control the economy. Indeed, most ethnic Chinese in Solo remained caught in what Ien Ang labels their own trap of 'victimhood and the debris of history'.[188] They remained exclusive in their activities and lived in concentrated areas because they were frightened and also because government policies forced them to do so. However, the often repeated comment that 'discrimination and prejudice against ethnic Chinese in Solo is just like everywhere else' also indicated that these sentiments were tolerated and had been enculturated to the point where they were no longer remarkable or even noticeable to *pribumi* or ethnic Chinese alike. It was simply 'normal'.

At least one Chinese community leader believed that the explanation for the quick return to 'normality' in Solo was also related to the special relationship between ethnic Chinese and the government and military.[189] He argued that trauma experienced by the ethnic Chinese in Solo was largely due to the shock they felt when their guarantee of safety was not delivered, rather than the violence itself.[190] As in many towns and cities across Indonesia, the ethnic Chinese in Solo positioned themselves very close to members of the military and Golkar, and in doing so believed that their safety was guaranteed. Their situation had drastically altered, however, and their safety became once more an all-pervading concern. The ethnic Chinese in Solo became so consumed by feelings of betrayal and anger towards military and political leaders that they rejected suggestions that the *massa*, ordinary people, were at all to blame for the violence. Rather, they blamed the elite who failed to provide them with the protection they had paid for and as a consequence harboured no ill feelings towards the 'crowds'. This time the violence brought a greater fear for ethnic Chinese in Solo, due to the loss of their guarantee of security.

The Rape Factor

There are also indications that the Solonese, particularly ethnic Chinese residents, believed that open discussion or reporting of cases of sexual assault and rape during the violence would only serve to harm the community further. Whilst local community groups reported that 24 families had come to them with stories of a family member being sexually assaulted or raped during or after the violence,[191] the local police received only one official report. In response to the claims made by a 24-year-old ethnic Chinese woman, the local Police Chief told *Kompas*, 'The victim was only stripped and treated improperly.'[192] The victim later fled to

[187] Iswahyudya interview.
[188] Ang, 'Trapped in Ambivalence'.
[189] See Coppel on *cukong*, in *Indonesian Chinese in Crisis*, 212 n17.
[190] Iswahyudya interview.
[191] 'Perkosaan di Solo tak terungkap', *Kompas*, 22 July 1998.
[192] Ibid.

Malaysia before the TGPF could pursue its own investigation.[193] Despite the lack of evidence and their reluctance to report to the police, local representatives from CSOs and the Chinese community in Solo insisted that there were cases of sexual violence during and after the May violence.[194]

In its widely distributed Executive Summary, the TGPF report did not conclude that cases of sexual violence occurred in Solo during the May violence.[195] Yet, in the detailed report, investigators found that the issue of rapes in Solo in mid-May had emerged during their investigation. They reported that they were presented with conflicting reports from various sections of the community, but no solid evidence was uncovered. The investigators concluded that this was due to lack of time to investigate, as much as anything else: 'Therefore the team cannot yet be sure that rapes did or did not occur at the time of the riot. Verification is still needed in order to cross-check information circulating in the community'.[196] In addition, most of the victims were, as in Jakarta, also ethnic Chinese women.[197] This admission, together with no cases of sexual assault in Solo being noted in its final report, illustrates well the problems and conflicts within the TGPF over the rapes and their verification. As shall be investigated in the later in this chapter, the question of the rapes was perhaps the most controversial within Indonesian society, and for the TGPF the most problematic.

The fact that the TGPF was given conflicting reports, together with the virtual 'non-mention' of rape in local discussion or reporting of the violence, suggests that the rapes were considered a greater taboo in Solo than in Jakarta. In Jakarta, human rights activists were able to convince a small number of the victims to tell their stories. Apart from the one reported assault, no stories came out of the Solo experience. Even if it had been permitted to conduct further investigations, it is unclear that the TGPF would have uncovered similar cases. What is clear from their small attempt to investigate sexual violence is that they found it difficult to get past the first stage of identifying cases, because locals fed them contradictory stories during initial inquiries.[198] The importance of the response of national and international media, including the internet, to the rapes issue, cannot be overstated in relation to the profile subsequently given the 'May riots'.[199] That stories of sexual violence in Solo did not reach headlines and webpages across the world as they did in the case of the Jakarta violence goes some way to explaining why Solo's 'May riot' was able to remain largely a local issue.

In his study of the Bhagalpur riots and the 'fact-finding' process, Pandey made this observation about responses by residents to this incident:

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[193] TGPF, 'Solo Report', 133. See Heryanto, 'Rape, Race', 299–331; regarding the difficulty experienced by NGO activists, journalists, academic researchers, police and public attorneys, in investigating rapes.

[194] Iswahyudya testified that he knows of 1 or 2 cases of rape in Solo, which took place in the girls' homes. TRuK recorded one incident of rape in Solo on 14 May 1998. The victim was raped and penetrated by a foreign object (metal rods, broken bottle) and fled overseas after the attack. (TRuK, 'Korban Kekerasan Seksual Kerusuhan Mei 1998', Jakarta, 30 September 1998.)

[195] TGPF, 'Executive Summary', 'Sexual Violence', Jakarta, 23 October 1998, IV.4.

[196] TGPF, 'Solo Report', 133.

[197] See TRuK, 'Early Documentation n.3: The Rapes in the Series of Riots', Jakarta, 13 July 1998; Heryanto, 'Rape, Race', 317. Heryanto and TRuK argue that it is unlikely that the rapes were carried out by the masses, but that members of the military – under orders or not – were responsible.

[198] TGPF, 'Solo Report', 132–33.

> the defence of something larger and more tangible was sometimes at stake: the 'good name' of this city (or region), for example, or the very possibility of Hindus and Muslims living together in the future – as of course they must.[200]

When examining representations of the May violence made by residents of Solo, what becomes clear is that *pribumi* and ethnic Chinese were trying to protect their city from its past experiences of anti-Chinese violence, for which they continue to feel great shame. A local academic went so far as to claim, 'Solonese have anti-Chinese characteristics' (*'Wong Solo punya ciri-ciri konflik Cina.'*)[201] The residents of Solo understood the damage such violence does to a city, the deep wounds it creates that take so long to heal. The local elite recognised that the violence was symptomatic of a deeper crisis. The people were entering a fragile and definitive period as they faced an increasing crisis of identity as Javanese, as ethnic Chinese, and as modern Indonesians. Perhaps the conclusion was that Solo could not survive the division and shame that this kind of violence brought. By refusing to represent the violence as anti-Chinese in the same context as the Jakarta or 'May' violence, Solonese were attempting to hold their community together. Of course, the fact that they believed it necessary to do so reveals the deep social cleavages they were trying to conceal. Another indication of this determination to protect the fragile unity in Solo is that, like the Muslims and Hindus in Bhagalpur, no-one sought to cast blame upon anyone from within Solo; rather they avoided this by diverting the blame onto an unknown 'third party' and the state. Nor did they seek retribution from those deemed responsible.

The TGPF report on the Solo violence was read by only a handful of people in Indonesia and even fewer outside the archipelago. In its widely disseminated Executive Summary, virtually no reference was made to specific cases, apart from Jakarta. Yet in the detailed 31-page report on the Solo riot[202], the investigators spoke strongly of the importance of this case for providing clues to why the violence happened nationwide. They also concluded that, for Solo, the consequences of the violence were extremely serious:

> This riot has altered the image of the Solo community as polite to an image of them as wild destructive and uncivilised. This really represents an historical and socio-cultural tragedy for the people of Solo. More than this, this riot signals the re-emergence of a level of distrust and enmity between *pribumis* and citizens of ethnic Chinese descent. Social cleavages have become stronger and it will take a long time to repair them.[203]

However, as the national and local press did not have access to the reports these comments went unreported.

In the absence of an 'official' report or political interest, the role of local residents was crucial in representing the violence to the rest of Indonesia and the world. The powerful Chinese group PMS chose to play down any ethnic aspects of the violence, declaring instead that the causes were 'multifaceted' and saying they understood why people might attack Chinese-owned businesses because admittedly they appeared

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[199] For discussion of the international media's coverage of the rapes, see Lochore, 'Virtual Rape'; See Chapter IV, below.
[200] Pandey, 'In Defense of the Fragment', 14.
[201] Soedarmono interview.
[202] TGPF, 'Solo Report'.
[203] Ibid., 126.

affluent. Their response was key to how the ethnic Chinese community in Solo perceived the violence and how they responded, and it had positive results. Almost all ethnic Chinese who fled Solo during the violence returned soon after, which was essential for economic rehabilitation. In order to continue their 'normal' relations with *pribumi* and therefore their lives in Solo, a representation of this violence as something other than anti-Chinese was essential.

Representations of the Jakarta violence as anti-Chinese, particularly by the international media, sparked an outcry from ethnic Chinese communities and human rights groups around the world, which pressured governments to respond with threats to pull capital and impose sanctions.[204] For the small Solo community, a path that exposed divisions and ethnic animosities would be damaging. History had shown them the harm that could be done, and it was far too costly.

Following the violence, student groups made attempts to bring ethnic Chinese and *pribumi* businesses together, community groups instituted projects to rebuild the city, and open forums discussed how such violence could be avoided in future.[205] Throughout, the common objective was to put this violent event in the past and get on with life; there was no genuine attempt to talk about the causes of the violence aside from the involvement of third parties and government agents. Despite the increased interaction and discussion among community groups, most Solo residents including students, military and community leaders failed to admit to a connection between discrimination and racism and the fact that most targets of the violence were ethnic Chinese. As Brass wrote, 'The assumption behind such reasoning clearly is that people do not act solely on their mean prejudices, but in response to genuine and understandable grievances, the "real causes"'.[206] It is not clear if they deliberately overlooked its importance, or if they simply could not see that it was there – that it was indeed a 'real cause'.[207]

In May 1999, unlike in Jakarta where ceremonies were held by victims to remember this dark period, the people of Solo did not pause to reflect or to remember. Some burnt out buildings remained as reminders of the May violence, but there were remarkably few considering the extent of the damage. Solo moved quickly to rebuild its banks, shops and factories. The sad and telling fact is that, although they returned, ethnic Chinese moved just as quickly to rebuild fences surrounding their homes, perhaps even making them a little higher.

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[204] The governments included Taiwan, PRC, Hong Kong and USA. (See Chaper IV for further discussion of this response.)

[205] 'Hipmi siap jembatani pri dan nonpri', *Solo Pos,* 3 June 1998.

[206] Brass, *Riots and Pogroms*, 9.

[207] Meanwhile the ethnic Chinese community, particularly children, continued to suffer from trauma. A journalist told me that he went to an internet cafe frequented by many ethnic Chinese children and youths. He often saw them emailing friends outside Indonesia and talking in chat rooms about how much they wanted to leave Indonesia. (Interview with Blontank, Solo, 31 August 1999.) In addition, looting and terrorising ethnic Chinese continued in the months after the violence, but they were reluctant to report these events to the police, knowing nothing would be done to stop it. ('Warga Cina masih trauma', *Solo Pos,* 19 June 1998.) Church groups also expressed their concern that not enough was being done to help victims suffering from trauma. 'Ada kesan Solo kurang diperhatikan', *Solo Pos,* 3 June 1998.

> The bloody massacre in Bangladesh quickly covered over the memory of the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia, the assassination of Allende drowned out the groans of Bangladesh, the war in the Sinai Desert made people forget Allende, the Cambodian massacre made people forget Sinai, and so on and so forth until ultimately everyone lets everything be forgotten. (Milan Kundera)[208]

> Uncovering the truth is seen as an act of humiliation for Indonesia before the international community. (Karlina Leksono Supelli)[209]

The violence of May 1998 terrorised the entire nation. Its main victims were women, urban poor and ethnic Chinese[210], but the audacity and impunity with which its perpetrators acted shocked all of Indonesia and much of the international community. In the months following Suharto's resignation, Indonesia was a nation filled with great hopes for its newly claimed democratic future, but it was already visibly struggling to identify how it should best deal with the past. Notions of 'truth' and 'reconciliation' were only just beginning to enter the national discourse, and even then they were 'unknowns'. At the same time, dealing with the violence and understanding it was extremely difficult. It was understood that this series of massive events could not be explained away in the same manner as other incidents in New Order history. The May violence exceeded limits of what was perceived as justifiable or explainable, in particular with regard to understandings of anti-Chinese violence and state oppression. In response to this, in July 1998 Habibie chose the TGPF as the means to produce the 'truth' demanded about the 13–14 May violence and, in particular, to identify the perpetrators. 'Fact finding' was a familiar method of 'truth seeking' employed in Indonesia under the New Order. However 'finding justice' for victims was another story.

The attempt at fact finding about the violence in Jakarta and other cities demonstrates the power to be gained by having a monopoly not only on violence within a state, but also over 'representations' of that violence.[211] That from years later no one has been brought to trial or even charged reveals the extent to which the search ran contrary to the wishes of the government and military elite, even in post-Suharto Indonesia. The results were such that, even after the TGPF finally reached a consensus on its contents and conclusions, the report was rejected by the military, ignored by the government,[212] and contested by some sections of the national media.[213]

The search for the truth about the Jakarta violence can be described as a dual struggle to name both victims and perpetrators. At times, the two struggles could not be easily separated. The TGPF's failure to produce the perpetrators of this violence, together with the further harm that that failure meant to the victims,

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[208] Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1980), pt. 1.5.
[209] Leksono Supelli, 'The May 1998 Tragedy', 57.
[210] These groups are not mutually exclusive. However, I choose to treat them separately not only because non-Chinese women were also targeted for sexual violence, but also for the way the rapes of women was separated in public discourse and responses from the violence against Chinese property and the deaths of urban poor in the aftermath of the May 1998.
[211] Brass, *Theft of An Idol*, 3–31; Brass, *Riots and Pogroms*, 1–6, 45–46.
[212] 'Menhankam/Panglima TNI: Hasil TGPF Tidak Diremehkan', *Kompas*, 15 May 1999; 'Government Promulgates Latest Facts on Rape During Rioting', *Jakarta Post*, 22 December 1998.

reveals the need to find alternative ways of facing history in Indonesia. As an attempt at public 'truth seeking', the TGPF was perhaps the most ambitious in Indonesia to date. Furthermore, the scale of the task confronting its members was matched by expectations held by members of the team, the victims, the international community and the Indonesian public; expectations that the truth, once known, would lead to justice.

THE TGPF REPORT: FINDING THE 'FACTS' ABOUT THE MAY 1998 VIOLENCE

Naming the Victims: Stumbling over Numbers

> How do we get different narratives about particular riots at different times and in different places. (Paul Brass)[214]
>
> particularly with respect to extremely traumatic events, the transferential problem arises on the elementary discursive level of naming. (Dominick La Capra)[215]
>
> Any production of truth is reflective of an ongoing battle for power and temporary consensus. (Ariel Heryanto)[216]

The most controversial question within Indonesian society regarding the violence was the rapes. It was certainly the most problematic issue for the TGPF, as they grappled with determining the number of victims. The TGPF considered data from numerous outside groups as well as that collected by the members themselves. These reports varied widely in the definition of rape and the processes of verification, which made assessment complicated. Another problem was the composition of the team itself. The presence of members of the police and the miliary on the TGPF made most victims, particularly those who had suffered sexual assault, reluctant to testify, because they believed that certain of the security officials were complicit. Consequently, there was concern that the pursuit of hard evidence regarding the rapes could lead to prosecutions being carried out by possible perpetrators. The same concerns applied to certain prominent figures in politics and society who might also be involved in the prosecutions. In either case, victims saw giving testimony as having the potential to endanger their lives or cause further trauma.[217] Such reluctance made it clear to many TGPF members that the true number of rape or sexual violence victims would never be fully known. Finally, the team faced another problem in the form of statements from a number of politicians, social commentators, religious leaders, and military figures, who publicly challenged the veracity of the rape claims.[218] At the same time that TGPF members were setting about their task of finding and analysing data,

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[213] 'Fakta Lain Tentang Pencari Fakta', *Tempo*, 16 November 1998.
[214] Brass, *Riots and Pogroms*, 2.
[215] Dominick La Capra, *History and Memory After Auschwitz*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1998, 54.
[216] Heryanto, 'Rape, Race', 324.
[217] 'Jalan Panjang Tragedi Itu', *Tempo*, 12 October 1998. See also 'Ita Fatia Nadia, Tim Relawan: Ini Murni Dari Hati Nurani . . .', *D & R*, 4 July 1998, 50. For intimidation of victims and those who assisted them see also, 'Rintihan dalam Kebisuan: Derita Korban-Korban Pemerkosaan', *Matra*, July 1998.
[218] Sri Muryono, 'Did Mass Rapes Actually Happen?', *Republika*, 2 August 1998. See also Saparinah Sadli's response, 'Open Letter to the Minister for Defense and Security', 3 August 1998, Jakarta, available from <http://www.hrw.org/hrw/press98/sept/denial908.htm> (accessed 4 April 2002); 'News

comments made by religious leaders,[219] journalists and members of parliament[220] challenged this search and threatened to undermine the fact finding process. These public attacks were potentially so damaging that Saparinah Sadli, the leader of the team for Victims' Facts, who was responsible for the data on victims of sexual violence, was compelled to issue an 'Open Letter' to counter the negative voices increasingly asking, 'Did the rapes actually happen?', and demanding victims step forward to prove it. Having to confront such attitudes from the start demonstrated that an investigation such as the TGPF's could not take place in a vacuum.

Local human rights groups such as TRuK and their leaders became celebrities, and the debate over the veracity of the rape reports became a major story. There was strong media and public interest over a TRuK report issued in June stating that it had counted 168 victims of rape. In retrospect, Sandyawan concedes that the group was too hasty in making the figure public and somewhat naive in its expectations of the story's coverage.[221] Some elements reacted negatively to the work of these volunteers in assisting victims of the violence. Their reaction was revealed most shockingly on October 9 1998, when an 18-year old TRuK member named Marthadinata was murdered in her home. Although police insisted that the murder was a purely criminal case and promptly produced a suspect in the form of a male neighbour, TRuK leaders believed that her death, which came just a week before the release of the TGPF report, was linked to her work with victims.[222] Until the murder, TRuK members had been prepared to speak to the media on these issues; afterwards, they became guarded in their comments, opting instead for a quiet approach in assisting victims and their families.

The TGPF was already divided over methods of verification and collection of data about victims of sexual violence. Now, the dispute was compounded by the public and political debate. On one side were the police, military and supporters of the Jakarta Protocol (the name chosen by its implementers, the Indonesian Doctors' Association) verification process, in which a doctor's confirmation of assault was required; on the other were those who supported procedures accepting evidence from third parties such as eyewitnesses and members of the victims' family on behalf of the victim while protecting those parties' identities. The debate over these standards was clearly influenced by the wider public discourse about the rapes, and it forced the TGPF to delay the release of the Final report.

Report Says Official Denials of Indonesian Rapes Hinder Investigation', Human Rights Watch press release, 8 September 1998.

[219] Islamic groups like the Indonesian Preachers Coordinating Agency (Bakomubin) protested that the rape cases were being used to discredit Islam. Its leader Dra Toto Tasmara met with President Habibie in late July 1998 to oppose media reports (foreign) claiming that the rapists had made statements like 'You must be raped because you are Chinese and non-Muslim' and shouted 'Allah is Great' during attacks. Tasmara claimed that it was part of a political conspiracy to discredit Islam. ('Kasus Perkosaan dimanfaatkan untuk Sudutkan Islam', *Republika*, 22 July 1998.)

[220] It was reported that at a meeting to discuss the report on 24 September between some TGPF members and a parliamentary committee, there was great opposition to this particular point from members of a particular faction, including Ismawan and Dra. Haryati Ariyani. See Saparinah Sadli's response to the DPR committee (*Tempo*, 12 October 1998, 60.)

[221] Interview with Sandyawan Sumardi SJ, Jakarta, 15 July 1999.

[222] 'Rape Victim's Counsellor Killed', *Jakarta Post*, 10 October 1998. Sandyawan believes that Marthadinata was herself a victim of rape. She was murdered days before she was to leave for the US to testify about the rapes. Sandyawan interview, 1999.

At the last minute, the team reached a compromise: the Final report would state that two sets of figures on the number of victims of sexual violence existed. The first set were cases that had been verified under the Jakarta Protocol, totalling 15 rapes. In the second set were 37 rapes, as verified by data from victims' families, psychologists, religious clerics and eyewitnesses. In total, the TGPF found 52 rapes, 14 rapes with torture, 10 cases of sexual violence and torture, and 9 cases of sexual harassment. As a further concession to those who disagreed with the content of the Victims' Facts sub-team report, specifically the Assistance Team and TGPF members including Rosita Noer, Bambang Widjojanto, and numerous ABRI representatives on the team,[223] the Final Report included neither the sub-team's finding that the sexual violence was planned, nor the alternative explanation that the violence was just an 'excess of the riot'. Rather, the report stated that it simply could not be determined whether the rapes occurred spontaneously or were a part of engineered violence. The report did conclude, however, that the sexual violence was another facet of the riot activities, together with looting, burning, kidnapping, and torture.[224]

With respect to the total number of victims of all other violence, the TGPF reached a compromise much more easily than it had on the emotional issue of rape. In its assessment of the numbers in these categories, the team again articulated the extreme difficulty of finding consensus either on methods of verification or one set of accurate data on the numbers of victims. As a solution, the Final report also stated that multiple sets of figures existed. The numbers differed in the extreme. The TRuK data showed 1,109 had died in fires, 27 were shot dead, and 91 were wounded; the police reported 451 dead and no wounded; the district military command, 463 dead, 69 wounded; and the Jakarta regional government 288 dead and 101 wounded. While this compromise again allowed for the possibility that the true number of victims was greater than that recorded in the report,[225] the damage had been done. By transforming the battle to name the victims into a debate over numbers, any representation in the report of the victims as human beings and individuals was lost.

Naming the Perpetrators: State-Sponsored Violence

The disagreement over the numbers of victims and most especially the rape victims marred what were, by Indonesian standards, quite unprecedented conclusions regarding the involvement of the armed forces and political elite in the violence. In fact, the TGPF pulled few punches when it came to analysing the role of the security forces. Specifically, it found that ABRI had failed to anticipate the riot, that there was a lack of adequate communications between those in command and those on the ground, and that, as a consequence, the forces had responded tardily in most cases and sometimes not at all. Furthermore, in some instances, security officers had even 'permitted riots to occur'.[226] Responsibility for security in Jakarta at that time was in the

[223] 'Fakta Lain Tentang Pencari Fakta', *Tempo*, 16 November 1998; and 'Laporan TGPF: Bukan Hanya Soal 14 Mei', *D & R*, November 14, 1998.
[224] TGPF, *Final Report*; TGPF, 'Executive Summary'.
[225] TRuK, 'Di Balik Aksi Kerusuhan Dan Pembantaian Massa', Jakarta, 18 May 1998.
[226] TGPF, 'Executive Summary'.

hands of elite members of ABRI who, the report argued, had failed to provide sufficient and consistent instruction to officers on the ground. As a result, security officers on the street were confused as to the nature of the commands given them and at the same time overwhelmed by the size of the mobs they confronted. The TGPF, conceded that some security agents faced a 'psychological dilemma' when confronted with the need to take action against citizens. This, the report reasoned, was partially due to the fact that, according to ABRI doctrine, citizens are not enemies and therefore should not be shot at.[227] Furthermore, they advised ongoing investigation into suspicions that the violence had come about as a result of a challenge on Suharto's presidency from within the military.

Nonetheless, the evidence the TGPF collected led it to conclude that there was a 'security vacuum' in Jakarta during the days of the riots. The team called for further investigation, specifically into the role of Operations Commander for Greater Jakarta (Pangkoops Jaya) Major General TNI Syafrie Sjamsoeddin. They also sought investigation of Prabowo Subianto, then Lieutenant General and head of Kostrad, for his suspected role in the violence. Furthermore, the TGPF singled out key events about which it sought more information. For example, several ABRI officials and prominent figures, including Prabowo, met at the Kostrad Command Headquarters (Makostrad) on the evening of 14 May 1998; the TGPF suspected that some organization of the violence occurred or was discussed. Interest in such matters arose from the TGPF's conclusion that the violence was linked to people at the country's 'highest levels' of decision making, and that it was part of 'an effort to create a critical situation that required a form of extraconstitutional government to control the entire situation.'[228] Finally, despite access to elite figures and the participation of the police and the military, the TGPF – although tantalizingly close – was compelled to admit that a link between the highest levels of politics and military with the rioters on the street was still missing.

[227] Major General Prabowo Subianto interview, 7 September 1998, in TGPF, *Final Report*, Appendix, Jakarta, October 23, 1998, 220.
[228] TGPF, 'Executive Summary'.

> Difficulties existed in uncovering the logic and facts in order to find the way to evidence which was more specific. Apart from this, from a moral angle, it was certainly difficult to find answers as to why people would plan and organise a riot that would claim so many victims. (TGPF)[229]

The struggle to represent and tell the story of the May 1998 violence was driven by great expectations that the naming of the perpetrators lay on the path to justice and truth. Habibie established the fact-finding team explicitly with the task of revealing the identities of those responsible. From the outset, Habibie himself focused the investigation on this aim: 'I particularly ask the Armed Forces leadership to reveal the truth over the allegations that an organised group was seen inciting the people to burn and loot buildings in several areas where disturbances occurred.'[230] Many Indonesians, particularly the victims of the violence, concluded that the report did not achieve this goal. Despite its suspicions that such were to be found, the TGPF failed to produce unequivocal facts about the involvement of key figures; in its report, it presented not one overall truth regarding the identity and number of victims, but rather multiple and highly contested truths.

The TGPF's search for the missing link that would back its suspicions with facts was hindered by the conditions of the investigation, which was under the ultimate control of those in positions of political power. Therefore, the perpetrators were never properly named, although the reaction of senior members of the military and the government to the final report might suggest that the team was nearing the truth. Also, it is conceivable that it was never within the power of the TGPF, even without its political divisions, to achieve the result for which victims and their supporters hoped. Judge Richard J. Goldstone argued that, after mass violence, achieving justice is almost impossible: 'It should be recognized that in a perfect society victims are entitled to full justice, namely trial of the perpetrator and, if found guilty, adequate punishment. That ideal is not possible in the aftermath of massive violence. There are simply too many victims and too many perpetrators.'[231] The attempt to name the perpetrators of Indonesia's violence was a struggle against insurmountable odds, precisely because the trail of evidence pointed to the highest echelons of Indonesian politics and the military.

A closer examination of the TGPF's attempts to prove what its members suspected reinforces the above view. The TGPF's members had to cope with recalcitrant military and political figures who were well aware of the potential damage to their own careers that truth telling could have, with reluctant witnesses equally afraid of the consequences of telling the truth, and also hard-to-identify shadowy but ambitious third parties with political and military links. The negative after-effects of being unable to find the missing link or find an alternative path to some form of justice continue to be seen in Indonesian politics.

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[229] TGPF, *Final Report*, 164.
[230] 'ABRI must reveal truth behind the riots', *Jakarta Post*, 12 June 1998.
[231] Richard J. Goldstone, 'Foreword', in Martha Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History After Genocide and Mass Violence* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), xi.

> It is clear from the victims that they were incited by groups very well trained for looting...A testimony from one of the urban poor is that there was one particular trooper/soldier who carried a jerry can and disappeared from the scene in a vehicle that was clearly identified. (Sandyawan SJ)[232]
>
> Certainly there were agitators who 'played' however I cannot say if there is intelligence data to support this. (Governor of Jakarta, Sutiyoso) [233]
>
> To be frank, I am not your mastermind. (Prabowo Subianto)[234]

The TGPF had sufficient evidence to suspect the involvement of elite members of the military and the government in the violence. The evidence clearly pointed to the provocateurs and *preman* (thugs) as having military-type skills. Some of the provocateurs apprehended or questioned testified that they were trained and under Prabowo's command. Furthermore, the TGPF also had a clear picture of the perpetrators active on the streets from the countless stories told to the press, human rights groups, and government authorities by witnesses from across Jakarta, who described certain individuals consistently.[235] One person commonly described was involved in the violence as a provocateur or in a more active role. Witnesses described him as a fit, muscular man with cropped hair (although sometimes it was very long) and wearing army-style boots. He was variously dressed in civilian clothes, school or university shirts, or in a black uniform. They described him as skilled at throwing molotov bombs and stones with great accuracy, able to use an iron bar to wrench open shop doors with excellent precision and to light fires and jump off walls and roofs effortlessly.[236] He often rode a motorbike in a group of approximately ten others or arrived in a pick up truck or metro mini bus, and always appeared suddenly. He was not known locally but had a very good knowledge of the local area.[237]

Despite such evidence and the TGPF's suspicions about the role of some elite military officials in the violence, it was still insufficient to uncover the crucial *link*. The TGPF conducted interviews with military, intelligence, and local and national government elites during August–September 1998. Among those of particular interest were former head of Kostrad Prabowo Subianto; Operations Commander for Greater Jakarta (Pangkoops Jaya) Syafrie Sjamsoeddin; Zaki Anwar Makarim, commander of ABRI Intelligence Branch (BIA); and Sutiyoso, Governor of Jakarta.[238] During the interviews, these men and others were questioned about their movements during the unrest, the activities of troops under their command, and what they had understood to be taking place at the time. Yet, despite being elite members of the armed forces and

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[232] Question addressed to Governor DKI Jakarta, Sutiyoso. TGPF, Sutiyoso interview, 27 August 1998, Appendix, *Final Report*, 218.
[233] Ibid.
[234] TGPF, Prabowo interview, 225.
[235] Data collected by TRuK, including 'Di Balik Aksi Kerusuhan Dan Pembantaian Massa'; 'Early Documentation n. 1'; 'Early Documentation n. 2'; 'Early Documentation n. 3'; 'Korban Kekerasan Seksual Kerusuhan Mei 1998', Jakarta, 30 September 1998; and TGPF, *Final Report*. The TGPF final report included data from Bakom PKB, the police, the military. Other data was collected by the author during fieldwork, July–August 1999.
[236] TGPF, 'Photos and Progress Report', Appendix, Seri. 3, *Final Report*.
[237] TGPF, 'Testimony'; TRuK, Series of 'Early Documentation'; TGPF, *Final Report*.
[238] The text of these interviews is in the appendices to the TGPF's *Final Report*.

leaders of various units within that institution – that is to say, in positions of command – these men recalled surprisingly little of those days in May. Instead, they insisted on knowing almost nothing about security conditions in the nation's capital at the time in question. For example, Sutiyoso (a former Pangkoops Jaya) said that he followed the news of the violence on television and admitted to knowing less about the events than members of the TGPF.[239] Makarim testified that, following his agency's intelligence gathering, he had issued an 'early warning' to the authorities that a disturbance would take place in Jakarta sometime around 13–20 May 1998.[240] He explained that, when the students were shot at Trisakti University on 12 May, sparking the violence, the BIA were caught off guard. For his part, Prabowo testified that from 14–20 May, troops were brought into the city from other parts of Indonesia but how many and what their movements were he could not be sure: 'Quite a lot, but not all at once, they came and went, we searched around but just about all of Kostrad was already almost involved because some of them had to go to Malang.'[241] Further, Prabowo attributed all responsibility for command of security operations in the city to Syafrie as Pangkoops Jaya, claiming that he had no authority over the operation.[242] The vague testimony by the military and intelligence leaders proved to be too great an obstacle to the TGPF's investigations. These prominent figures were reluctant to answer questions and most surely held back the complete truth. As a result, the team was left with no firm evidence to verify its suspicions of elite involvement, but they were frustratingly close to naming the perpetrators.

Who's afraid of the missing link?

The testimony provided by the Army's chief of intelligence, Makarim, and his failure to assist the TGPF by providing intelligence about the violence was a key to why they were unable to find the 'missing link'. Firstly, there is no evidence that the intelligence agencies assisted the team by providing information they would undoubtedly have collected.[243] TGPF members who attended his interview said Makarim was reluctant to even provide them with information about the procedures of the agencies. In response to questions about BIA's knowledge of the violence, keeping in mind that the agency had issued an *early warning* that violence could occur, he testified that after 12 May, when 'war broke out' in Jakarta, the tasks of the intelligence agencies changed. He claimed that, as a consequence, they failed to collect intelligence during the violence itself: 'Our only remaining task was to assist the troops in the field...we did not have troops, that is what

[239] TGPF, Sutiyoso interview, 219.
[240] TGPF, Makarim interview, 230.
[241] TGPF, Prabowo interview, 224.
[242] Ibid., 223. Prabowo said he repeatedly questioned Syafrie about the absence of troops. In March 2001 when appearing before a special parliamentary committee on the Trisakti killings, Prabowo maintained a similar argument regarding the line of command. He claimed he could not explain precisely why Kostrad marksmen were on the streets near the university at the time of the killings, saying that this operation was under Syafrie's command. ('Prabowo di depan Pansus Trisakti', *Kompas*, 1 March 2001.)
[243] Except for information they may have passed on to the Police, TNI and government.

happened in the field, so after the war broke out, intelligence did what they could, but it was not maximal...'[244]

In his testimony, Syafrie presented what the TGPF judged a weak explanation of his activities and of those of his troops who were supposed to be protecting the city. Regarding the presence or 'absence' of security forces at locations where violence occurred, he testified that a contingency programme existed for the city during crises such as that in mid-May. This meant, he said, that the security forces were committed to protecting 'priority locations' first. According to Syafrie, these included the homes of foreign diplomats, embassies, campuses, the DPR/MPR complex, television stations, print media factories and electricity, fuel and water supplies. He then attempted to explain why most of the city was left unprotected:

> Because the strength of troops were not able to be moved to other places where incidents occurred, from time to time there were those who were directed to other places, but we did not have a certain mobility. Apart from that, during the events of 13-14 May there were still incidents in central and strategic locations also, like incidents at the DPR/MPR...[245]

Again the TGPF were unconvinced that the Operations Commander was being open and, in its Final report, recommended that Syafrie be made accountable for his activities.[246] The inability of the TGPF to detail troop movements and therefore its failure to adequately explain the security vacuum in Indonesia's capital resulted in an absence of 'facts' to either rule out the involvement of those agencies or to implicate them.

Membership of police and military in the TGPF made it most unlikely that some of the thugs and provocateurs who carried out the violence would reveal on record what they had stated off it. Off the record, some of these individuals acknowledged that they had been trained for the deeds they executed in May by elements of the military and that they were under the command of either Prabowo or Wiranto.[247] Yet this source of evidence was barely examined due to the reluctance of these people to testify. Furthermore, the police were unwilling to capture, charge, and question them,[248] as doing so could have exposed their commanders as the 'brains' behind the violence. Similarly, and perhaps even more frustratingly for some TGPF members, witness testimonies that the security forces took an active part in the violence and often directed it were largely disregarded by the verification team and failed to reach the Final report.[249] In a letter to *Asiaweek* in response to its article about Prabowo titled 'The Scapegoat?', Sandyawan recounted three testimonies made to his group describing the involvement of security agents in the Jakarta violence. In one account, a taxi driver testified that he had seen five military helicopters hovering over Ciledug shopping

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[244] TGPF, Makarim interview, 234.
[245] TGPF, Syafrie interview, 209. See also TGPF, Testimony: Major General (Police) Hamami Nata interview, Appendix, *Final Report*, Jakarta, 23 October 1998, 242–263. He stated that pressure on the police to guard 30 campuses across the city everyday for the past four months had left them fatigued.
[246] Prabowo testified that, when he was moving above the city in a helicopter with Syafrie on 14 May, he asked Syafrie, 'where are all the troops?' (TGPF, Prabowo interview, 223.)
[247] TRuK, 'Lokasi Dan Kronologi Kerusuhan Mei 1998', n.d., 1–3.
[248] In testimony before the TGPF, intelligence agent Aris Sampurno stated that Jakarta police had identified 36 rioters (among them the *dalang*) and arrested 16 suspects. See Major General (Police) Hamami Nata interview, in TGPF, *Final Report*, Appendix, Jakarta, October 23, 1998, 248.
[249] See TRuK, Series of 'Early Documentation'; and Sandyawan Sumardi, 'Letters: The Prabowo Question', *Asiaweek*, April 7, 2000.

centre in South Jakarta, and that shots were fired from the helicopter into the air and rioters commanded not to 'hesitate to loot'.[250]

'Sejumlah tokoh, beberapa jenderal dan 14 Mei' (Some elite, a few generals and 14 May)[251]

Other factors also contributed to the 'undoing' of some of the gains the TGPF believed it had made in linking key figures from the military, and elsewhere, to the violence.[252] In particular, statements to the press by high profile figures who attended the Makostrad meeting on 14 May were damaging. These included Rendra, Adnan Buyung Nasution and Bambang Widjojanto, a member of the TGPF, who, following the release of the final report told the media that they had witnessed nothing at the Makostrad meeting to confirm the TGPF's suspicions. Rendra commented that the TGPF was making a 'big deal' about the meeting: 'It seems that it has been dramatised',[253] and Bambang described the meeting as 'informal', adding, 'We asked Prabowo about the problem of the kidnapping and he swore that he was not involved.'[254] Bambang later admitted publicly that the conclusions of the TGPF about the Makostrad meeting were not unanimous.[255] These statements reported in the media, together with details of the final hours of bickering amongst members of the TGPF, contributed greatly at the time to discrediting the entire TGPF report in the minds of many Indonesians.[256] However, two years later, Bambang Widjojanto was perhaps less sure of his assessment of the events at the Makostrad that night, conceding 'I myself also questioned why so many people ran to Prabowo, not to the Pangdam. I also don't know if beforehand there was a similar meeting at Makostrad or not.'[257]

The testimony by Prabowo Subianto to the TGPF, it has since been revealed, was certainly not a complete account of his activities during the violence. Two years later, Prabowo recalled a great deal more in interviews with *Asiaweek* magazine, *Tempo* magazine,[258] and in statements directly or indirectly (via his father and brother) to the media.[259] In these more revealing accounts, Prabowo states, among other things, that when he called the Commander of the Armed Forces, Wiranto, no less that eight times before the scheduled

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[250] Ibid.
[251] 'Laporan TGP: Bukan Hanya Soal 14 Mei', *D&R*, 14 November 1998, 48.
[252] In an article 'Wiranto: Tidak Ada Niat Mengubur Temuan TGPF', *Suara Karya*, 15 May 1999; Wiranto is recorded as insisting that there was no plan to bury the TGPF findings and stating that in the near future the meeting at Kostrad headquarters on 14 May, would be 'clarified further'.
[253] *Tempo*, 16 November 1998.
[254] Ibid.
[255] *Tempo* reported that along with Rosita Noer and Abdul Hakim, Said Agiel Siradj, Bambang and ABRI members refused to sign the agreement until concessions were made.
[256] The discussions that the TGPF suspected had taken place that evening linking Prabowo and other actors to the violence most probably took place in a room separate from the main meeting or after it had commenced. (*D&R*, 14 November 1998.) Prabowo's known connections with Muslim fundamentalist groups including KISDI and the figure Fadli Zon, who had been involved in anti-Chinese agitation in January–February 1998, drew further suspicions of his involvement. However, they were ultimately unable to produce evidence to support these suspicions.
[257] Rendra was also no longer so sure. 'Saya tidak tahu lagi apakah di situ masih ada pertemuan-pertemuan lain.' ('Pertemuan 14 May di Markas Kostrad', 16 May 2000.)
[258] 'Prabowo Subianto: "It Hurts to Stand Down"', *Tempo*, 19 November 2000.
[259] See 'Prabowo Bikin Buku Soal Kerusuhan Mei', *Kompas*, 10 March 2000.

meeting in Malang on 14 May to persuade him to postpone the meeting, Wiranto replied, the 'show must go on'.[260] To *Asiaweek,* Prabowo gave a blow-by-blow account of his actions from the 12 May until Suharto's resignation on 21 May – sometimes even giving precise times. This is in contrast to the sometimes muddled account he presented to the TGPF.[261] Furthermore, in his interview with *Asiaweek*, Prabowo insisted that the Makostrad meeting had not been called by him, but by Buyung Nasution and other figures, during which he refuted their questioning of his possible involvement in the violence, the Trisakti shootings and the kidnappings.[262] In his interview with the TGPF, Prabowo made no mention of this when recounting his movements on the 13, 14 and 15 May. A question remains about Prabowo's innocence and the truth of his more recent accounts of events. However, his failure to provide detailed information to the TGPF during its investigation inevitably contributed to further suspicion of his role. It also prevented the TGPF investigation from closing in on the 'missing link' which, given Prabowo's recent testimonies (if they could be verified), might have turned their attention to other figures. At the same time it is undeniable that some members of the TGPF, like the public, had more or less tried Prabowo before the facts could be examined, although the head of the TGPF, Marzuki Darusman, did also urge caution, saying that Prabowo should not be the only suspect.[263]

Naming Prabowo: A Solution or a Diversionary Tactic?

> Yes, the aim of the riot is to bring down the regime. (Prabowo Subianto)[264]

Suspicion had fallen on Prabowo almost immediately due mainly to his known role in the kidnapping of political activists as leader of the Kopassus in early 1998.[265] Furthermore, the TGPF uncovered sufficient evidence to suspect that Prabowo had been involved in the violence in mid-May. They pointed to his role at the Makostrad meeting on 14 May,[266] which the TGPF believed was crucial to exposing the 'missing link' between the violence and political elite conflict. They suspected that, at this meeting, attended by key military figures as well as Islamic leaders including Fadli Zon, some 'organisation' or discussion of the

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[260] Tesoro, 'The Scapegoat'. In his TGPF testimony, Prabowo stated that he had asked Wiranto to postpone the meeting.
[261] Rosita Noer, who was one of those interviewing Prabowo, said that she did not believe much of what he said that day.
[262] Jose Manuel Tesoro, 'The Scapegoat', *Asiaweek,* Vol. 26, No.8, 3 March 2000.
[263] Darusman is quoted as saying, 'I personally am not convinced that all of this ends with Prabowo. The public are also not convinced. The court will clarify this.' (Setiawan, *Negeri Dalam Kobaran Api*, 137.)
[264] TGPF, Prabowo interview, 228.
[265] He transferred to Commander of Kostrad at the end of March 1998. ('Former VP attends Prabowo's transfer from Special Troops', *Kompas*, 30 March 1998.)
[266] Nasution maintains that Rendra called him to arrange to meet before heading to the meeting at Makostrad. They had been informed that Prabowo wanted to meet with them. ('Pertemuan 14 May', *Kompas*, 16 May 2000.). However, Prabowo's brother Hashim later claimed that the meeting had been initiated by Buyung Nasution. ('Bukan Hanya Soal 14 Mei', *D&R*, 14 November 1998.)

violence took place. In their Final report they called on the government to investigate further this meeting and Prabowo's role in it as a means to exposing the elite machinations behind the violence.[267]

On 22 May 1998, a day after Suharto resigned, Prabowo was transferred to a non-active position in the military as Head of the Armed Forces Staff Command School (Sesko Abri) in Bandung amid denials from Wiranto and Prabowo himself that the move was a disciplinary action.[268] However, just over a month later, Prabowo was named as a target of investigation by the Military Council of Honour regarding his role in the kidnappings mentioned above. During the investigation, Prabowo maintained that he had been directed to carry out the kidnappings by his then superiors Armed Forces Commander Lt. Gen. Feisal Tanjung and Army Chief of Staff Gen. Wiranto.[269] The Military Council dismissed his claims, insisting that Prabowo had 'analysed' incorrectly whatever order he was given and on 24 August 1998 he was discharged from military service.[270] By the time Prabowo met with TGPF members in early September to testify about the May violence, he was already the subject of intense public condemnation.[271] Soon after, he fled Indonesia, and his whereabouts were unknown until it was discovered in December 1998 that he had sought what he termed asylum in Jordan as a guest of the King. For many, Prabowo's fleeing rendered him instantly guilty of involvement in the May violence and of being the mastermind of a greater plan to destabilise the nation.[272]

From the outset, Prabowo insisted he was innocent, that he was not the *dalang* behind the violence but rather had been made a scapegoat.[273] Although the TGPF had singled out Prabowo and Syafrie for particular investigation, in Prabowo's case the media and public rumour had tried and convicted him in advance. This was an indication of how desperately the Indonesian public required a culprit for the violence. As a man of known brutality and ambition, Prabowo was a highly suitable candidate.[274] It is puzzling that Syafriw escaped the same level of public trial. Syafrie was, after all, in command of military operations in the Greater Jakarta area.[275] The role of the intelligence bodies was also not scrutinised by the Indonesian public or the TGPF. In interviews with the TGPF, various members of the intelligence agencies insisted that they could not reveal information about the processes of intelligence collection. Furthermore, despite their

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[267] TGPF, 'Conclusions and Recommendations', *Final Report*. 'The Makostrad meeting on 14 May 1998 was suspected as being able to reveal the role of these actors and the conflict pattern which led to the May 1998 riot.'

[268] 'Lt. Gen Prabowo replaced', *Kompas*, 23 May 1998; 'Prabowo: Don't believe gossip', *Kompas*, 29 May 1998; 'ABRI Leaks New Prabowo Relieved of Active Duty', *Straits Times*, 5 August 1998.

[269] 'Lt. Gen Prabowo analyses operational instructions', *Kompas*, 11 August 1998. At the time of Prabowo's testimony Tanjung was Coordinating Minister for Politics and Security and Wiranto had taken over as Commander of the Armed Forces.

[270] 'Johnny Lumintang Replaced Prabowo', *Kompas*, 23 September 1998.

[271] There was also speculation that he was behind the Trisakti shootings.

[272] See 'No need to worry that Prabowo will give military training in Jordan', *Kompas*, 23 December 1998.

[273] Tesoro, 'The Scapegoat'; *Tempo*, 19 November 2000; TGPF, 'Testimony'. His father, brother and friends also addressed the press on this, see 'Sumitro Sesalkan Prasangka atas Prabowo', *Kompas*, 27 November 1998; 'Pemecatan Prabowo Keliru dan tak Adil', *Kompas*, 8 October 1999; 'Bukan Hanya Soal 14 Mei', *D&R*, 14 November 1998.

[274] 'Prabowo denies blame in slayings that changed a nation', *AFR*, 26 June 1998. Prabowo visited the home of one of the students killed at Triskati, Hery Hartanto. Before Hartanto's parents; Prabowo held a copy of the Koran above his head and swore that he did not order the shootings. Hartanto's father was affected by the gesture saying that after the display he believed Prabowo was not involved.

impressive networks, they testified that they had no prior knowledge of the violence save for vague rumours that something would occur around the 20 May.[276]

Final Concessions

> Why would I want to sign something that I don't know? (Rosita Noer, Secretary of TGPF)[277]

The manoeuvring and conflict during the final days and hours before the report was released overshadowed the major achievements of the TGPF in uncovering the perpetrators and the role of the armed forces. Numerous members, including ABRI representatives, Bambang Widjojanto and Rosita Noer, refused to sign the document until concessions were made on disputed issues, particularly the numbers of rape victims and the Makostrad meeting on 14 May. In addition, before the final report could be released, a concession was made to some team members who required that 'Notes of Objection' be included at the end of the report before they signed it. Various team members from the police, Ministry for Internal Affairs, and Ministry for Foreign Affairs objected to specific wording or statements. In all, seven objections were made by four of the eighteen members.[278] Notably, other members of the team from the TNI and government chose not to make any objections. Given that the Final report was compiled with all members present, and that the report was written sentence by sentence, it is remarkable that so few objections were made.[279] For example, no objection was made to the overall conclusion that the violence occurred in an environment of elite political struggle, or to the assessments and recommendations relating to Syafrie and Prabowo. Also, military and police involvement, their lack of action to protect citizens, and the evidence presented that the violence resembled a military-style campaign were not contested.

Implications Of Failing To Find The 'Missing Link'

It cannot be overlooked that all parties within the TGPF agreed that there was some link between the elite and the violence on the street. That they were not able to make that link explicit had several implications. First, long after the original events and the release of the TGPF report, some of the suspected masterminds of the violence remained in positions of great power. Perhaps the greatest omission by both the TGPF and the public was not to question Wiranto. This, and the failure to investigate figures such as BIA chief Makarim, represents a grave missed opportunity. Numerous reports about the massacres around the time of the East Timor referendum, only 12 months after the May 1998 violence, observed that Wiranto bore at least partial

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[275] See 'Pemecatan Prabowo', *Kompas*, 8 October 1999.
[276] Two years later Buyung Nasution highlighted the gap in knowledge of the role of the intelligence agencies. ('Pertemuan 14 Mei', *Kompas*, 16 May 2000.)
[277] *Tempo*, 16 November 1998.
[278] TGPF, 'A Note of Objections', *Final Report*. Those who objected were: Marwan Paris (Major General Police, ABRI HQ), Dunidja D. (Ministry for Internal Affairs), Da'I Bachtiar (Major General Police, ABRI HQ), Abdul Gani (Ministry for Foreign Affairs).
[279] Interview with Prof. Saparinah Sadli, member of TGPF and Komnas Ham, 23 August 1999.

responsibility as commander of the armed forces.[280] It is worth bearing in mind that the reports also note the involvement of Makarim, Syafrie, and Feisal Tanjung in the killings in East Timor. If, as many suspected at the time, they had been found to have acted improperly in some way in the May violence, these men would not have occupied positions of power in relation to security in East Timor.[281]

The failure to clarify the connection of these elite figures with the violence – and perhaps even bring about their removal from office – left victims unable to trust figures of authority. Others, who had suffered at the hands of the state in previous years, but allowed themselves to feel hope with the TGPF, had their hopes dashed when the report was released. The fears instilled in them by their experiences were not alleviated; they largely ceased to hope that justice would be attained. For these people, the new era of supposed *reformasi* or transitional governance was already failing. Many ethnic Chinese Indonesians and female victims of sexual violence who may have otherwise been prepared to return to Indonesia chose not to, largely due to the disappointing outcome of the report and specifically to the sentiments within society exposed by the debate about the veracity of the rapes. In wider society and politics, the failure to prove the involvement of figures suspected of being so-called *dalang* and 'third parties' (or even 'PKI') meant the continued concealment of the perpetrators' identities.

Perhaps the most significant outcome of the failure to find the missing link and produce the perpetrators and organisers of the violence in Jakarta was the inability to locate responsibility for the terror that the violence instilled throughout the nation as a whole. Although naming Prabowo fulfilled some of this need, assigning responsibility for this social calamity to a single individual was not enough and he had left the country. Geared as the investigation was toward finding a culprit or someone to blame, the focus of attention shifted from the victimizers to the victims: the urban poor, women, and ethnic Chinese. Rather than offering these individuals assistance, compassion, and reconciliation, some in the media, the TGPF, the police, and the justice system chose instead to lay the blame for what had taken place on them or, most horrifyingly, deny their experience as authentic in the first place.

The Politics of Naming The Victims: Reflections on a Nation

> The victims were subjects who experienced destruction of property and wealth, death or loss of self-respect as a result of the events of the riot. The riot victims were generally characterised across ethnic and class lines. (TGPF Final Report)[282]

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[280] Hamish McDonald, et al., *Masters of Terror: Indonesia's Military and Violence in East Timor in 1999* (Canberra: Australian National University, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, 2002); Don Greenless and Robert Garran, 'Tarnished Brass behind Timor Violence', *Weekend Australian*, May 18–19, 2002. The KPP–HAM East Timor named Wiranto as involved and soon after he was forced to resign from his position as Minister for Defence in Abdurrahman Wahid's cabinet and take early retirement from the military. However, he was not charged by the ad hoc human rights court established to try violations in East Timor.

[281] KPP–HAM East Timor; McDonald, *Masters of Terror*; Geoffery Robinson, 'Patterns of Responsibility for Mass Violence in East Timor: An Assessment of the Evidence' (paper presented at 'Mass Political Violence in Twentieth Century Southeast Asia: Causes, Consequences, and Representations', the 18th Annual Conference of Southeast Asian Studies, Center for Southeast Asia Studies, University of California, Berkeley, February 2001); Greenless and Garran, 'Tarnished Brass'.

[282] TGPF, *Final Report*, 74

> The May riot gave birth to a new 'discursive practise', that is a certain kind of division between one social entity and another social entity: between 'indigenous' and 'non-indigenous', between 'muslim' and 'non-muslim'. This differentiation is making us as a nation decline, because is it not the case that attempts were made to eliminate such things long before the Proclamation of Independence in 1945 by the Fathers of the Nation? This problem is crucial. (TGPF, Recommendations)[283]

> The debate about whether or not there were rapes has destructive tendencies. There is very strong evidence to prove that other violence which was organised took place, like looting and burning houses and shops. (Sidney Jones, Human Rights Watch Asia)[284]

The acts of violence and terror experienced by ethnic Chinese, urban poor and women revealed what the TGPF described as 'a nation in decline' (*bangsa menjadi mundur*).[285] According to them, Indonesia had abandoned the tenets of its nationhood, as set down by the fathers of independence, of unity in diversity. Yet, despite the struggles of the investigators to understand how Indonesia had fallen into such social division, animosity and hatred, the victims' suffering continued and grew.

The response of the Indonesian public and government authorities to the victims of violence revealed lingering prejudices toward people of other social categories.[286] They were marginalised from the outset and their stories, which had the potential to reveal most humanly the consequences of violence, were drowned out in the debate over numbers and semantics. Giving full consideration as to who the victims were was critical, as their selection as targets and their treatment by society afterwards reveals much about the inadequacies of a future Indonesian nationalism emerging from the tumultuous, and celebratory, times that surrounded Suharto's downfall. For the victims of the May 1998 violence, especially those who were raped, post-Suharto Indonesia foundered in its efforts to deal with them. The social and political response was similarly inadequate for the other victim categories, that is, ethnic Chinese and urban poor. In all cases, the inadequacies were due in no small part to the fact that the struggle to understand the violence became enmired in the issue of naming perpetrators.

Writing about those who suffered from kidnap, torture, and rape in 1998, Ariel Heryanto argued eloquently that a gendered distinction was made between different 'victims' in Indonesian society, even in the midst of '*reformasi* fever'. Focusing on the kidnap victims, Heryanto wrote that 'the bodily wounds of these activists – all of them males – were publicly endowed with a degree of political heroism'.[287] In contrast, the female rape victims never received such public sympathy and praise. Rather, as Heryanto pointed out, they were stigmatized and marginalized, a response that grew out of social constructions of femininity and the values imposed on the female body, such as chastity and virginity. In my view, it could be said that they were virtually subjected to a 'second rape' by society at large. An article by Antara Newsagency reporter Sri Muryono titled 'Did Rapes Actually Happen?' published in the *Republika* newspaper on August 2, 1998, epitomized this response. Its author was sceptical about whether the rapes had occurred and called for the victims to come forward to 'prove' their claims. Saparinah Sadli, head of the TGPF Victims Sub-Team,

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[283] Ibid., 169.
[284] *Tempo*, 12 October 1998.
[285] TGPF, *Final Report*, 169.
[286] For a case study of the responses to claims of rapes in Surabaya see appendix F.
[287] Heryanto, 'Race, Rape', 302.

responded to the article with an open letter – and later reiterated her comments in public comments – stating that the opinions in the original piece were 'bound to have a negative social impact' and were 'dangerous, as they shy away from the horrifying reality'.[288]

The urban poor and ethnic Chinese victims were similarly denied the status of national heroes in the aftermath. Social constructions and prejudices played a role here, too, but rather than gender it was ethnicity and class that was the focus. These people were regarded as anomalies or imperfect ambassadors for Indonesia and Indonesian identity in the New Order regime's nationalist discourse: the Chinese because of their 'foreign' ethnicity and the urban poor because their poverty lingered in an Indonesia driven by developmentalism and modernity. Like those of the female victims, the images presented by each of these groups were anathema to the New Order. Yet, despite the fall of that regime, and after the May violence, these social constructions based on masculinity, the sanctity of the female body, and an Indonesian nationality continued to dominate understandings of both the victims and the perpetrators.

Conclusion: Anti-Chinese Violence After May?

> If those six students were heroes of reform, then my family is a victim of reform. (Pak Chairul, 44 year shopkeeper whose wife and two daughters burnt to death in their home during the violence in Jakarta in May 1998)[289]
>
> This is watershed period for the Indonesian Chinese. The riots, looting, burning and rapes on May 13-14 have left them bewildered, rudderless and desperate. (Jusuf Wanandi)[290]

The TGPF's report was a highly problematic representation of the predominantly Jakarta-based violence in May 1998. Yet, it must also be recognized as a definitive account of those events. In terms of Indonesian national history, the report was a unique document precisely because its account was flawed. These flaws were evident in the sense that the political fault lines within the team that created it – and those within society in general – were clear. This was unlike other national histories created under the New Order about which no debate could take place. Furthermore, the report's representation of a violent event introduced the Indonesian public to the notion of multiple truths. There are also concrete legacies. For the first time, an official account of violence in Indonesia suggested that members of the Indonesian government and military may have engineered and perpetrated it. The report acknowledged the state-sponsored terrorism that had caused such pain and suffering for all Indonesians, especially ethnic Chinese, women, and the urban poor. It also boldly issued recommendations to government and military about their conduct and how to deal with perpetrators and victims.

Nevertheless, a single truth dominated in Indonesian society. As Filomeno Aguilar and Heryanto recognised, this represented the violence as state orchestrated, and as 'racialised' rather than racist. This interpretation allowed Chinese communities in Solo and elsewhere to return to their lives. To quote Aguilar, 'Had there been no statist hands behind the rampage and the rapes, coming to terms with these ugly episodes

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[288] Saparinah Sadli, 'Open Letter'.
[289] William McGurn, 'Indonesia's Kristallnacht', *Wall Street Journal*, 10 July 1998.
[290] Jusuf Wanandi, *Business Week International*, 3 August 1998.

might have been more difficult.'[291] But it also enabled the Indonesian government to avoid crucial issues related to discrimination and anti-Chinese prejudice.

Undoubtedly the violence affected individual ethnic Chinese in different ways. There were those who were direct victims of the violence, as well as those who were not; those who fled Indonesia or to elsewhere in the country, and those who stayed. In the 'wash up' of this turbulent period, there were those who emerged with a sense of empowerment and a desire to express their ethnic identity and those who remained cautious, wary and traumatised. For Indonesia's future the outcome was crucial. Economists predicted that the return of ethnic Chinese business held the key to ending the economic crisis, which continued to devastate the country.[292]

Crucially, however, violence against ethnic Chinese did not disappear following the fall of the Suharto regime, but continued in patterns similar to the violence before May 1998. Economic hardship and social disenfranchisement formed the basis for post-May 1998 violence against ethnic Chinese in, among other places, Cilacap, Kebumen, Bagansiapi-api and Holis, Bandung, from August 1998 to early 1999.[293] Explaining this violence by tracing the chain of responsibility directly to the government or military, as was possible during the New Order and particularly in the May cases, no longer applies. Earlier, Heryanto argued, 'In the final analysis the violence serves the interests of the regime.'[294] Given that the New Order regime had been replaced, for what purpose or for whom was further violence being carried out? Perhaps more than at any other time in Indonesia's recent history, we must consider the motives and therefore the agency of local actors more closely; that is, 'the moral and ethical processes and judgements of those who participated'.[295] What is revealed by such analysis is the raw prejudices within local contexts, the powerful stereotyping of ethnic Chinese which has endured, even if Suharto did not, and the local 'riot systems' which have also remained. As Sidel indicates, the conspiracy theories of the Suharto period could no longer satisfactorily explain this violence.[296] It could no longer be described in terms of *'ada provokator'*[297] or *'pihak tertentu'*; instead the agency of the individual should be considered: 'But maybe deep inside us we are defending an unpleasant feeling towards this particular racial group'.[298] The questions requiring answers include: if this is not political violence or 'racialised state terrorism' any more, then what is it? And, if society now has new opportunities to express its frustration, why continue to choose the ethnic Chinese as targets?

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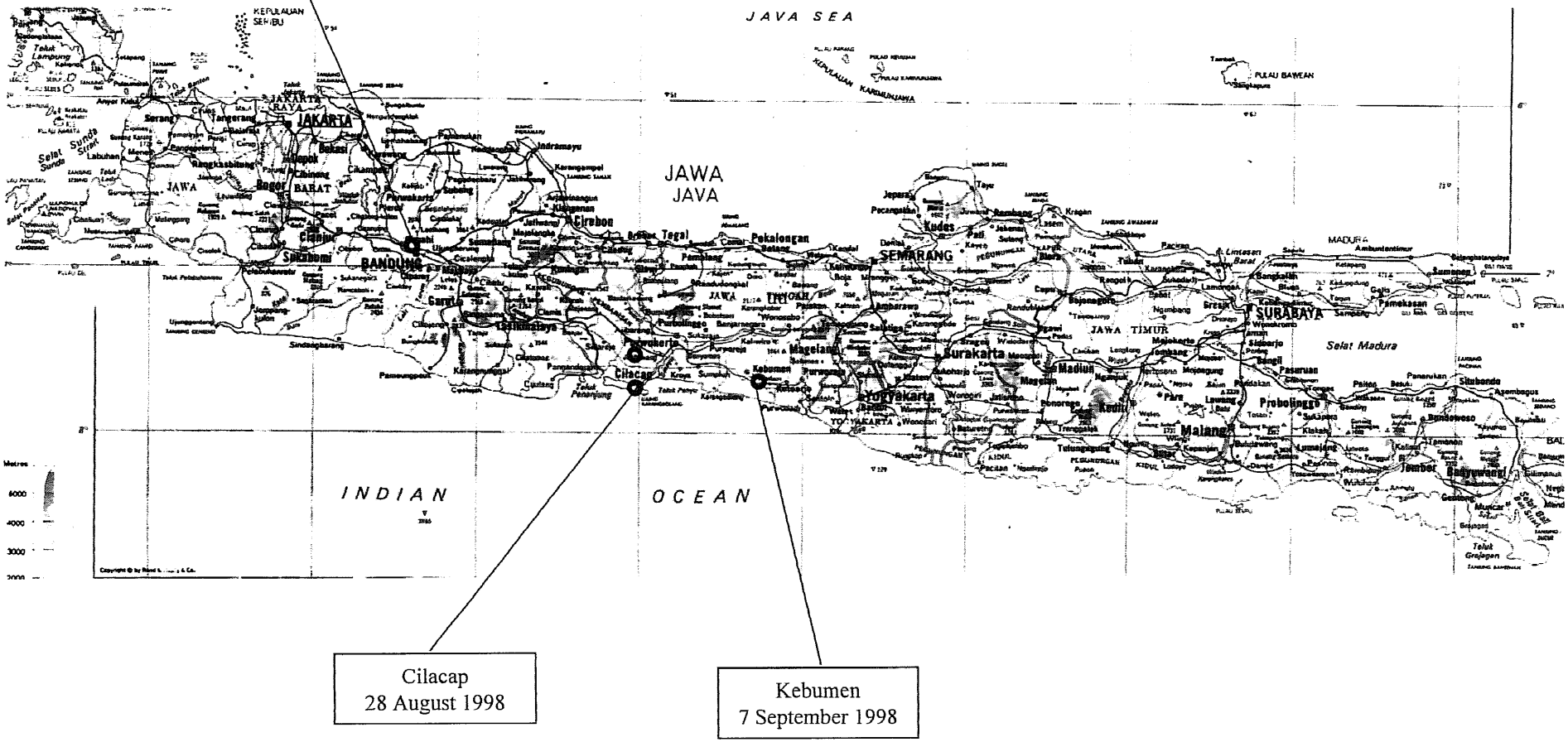
[291] Aguilar, 'Citizenship, Inheritance', 502.
[292] Tim Colebatch, 'Chinese Investors key to Indonesia's economic recovery', *The Age*, 13 March 1999.
[293] For incidents of violence in this period see appendix A.
[294] Heryanto, 'Ethnic Identity and Erasure', 102.
[295] Das, et al, *Violence and Subjectivity*, 16–17.
[296] On conspiracy theories and other theories see 'Editorial: Kerusuhan Sebagai Mainan', *Media Indonesia*, 9 January 1999.
[297] See Drexler, 'Engineering Violence'.
[298] H. Aendra, 'Medita SARA Itu Alat Pemukul Dari Rezim Soeharto', *D&R*, 4 January 1999.

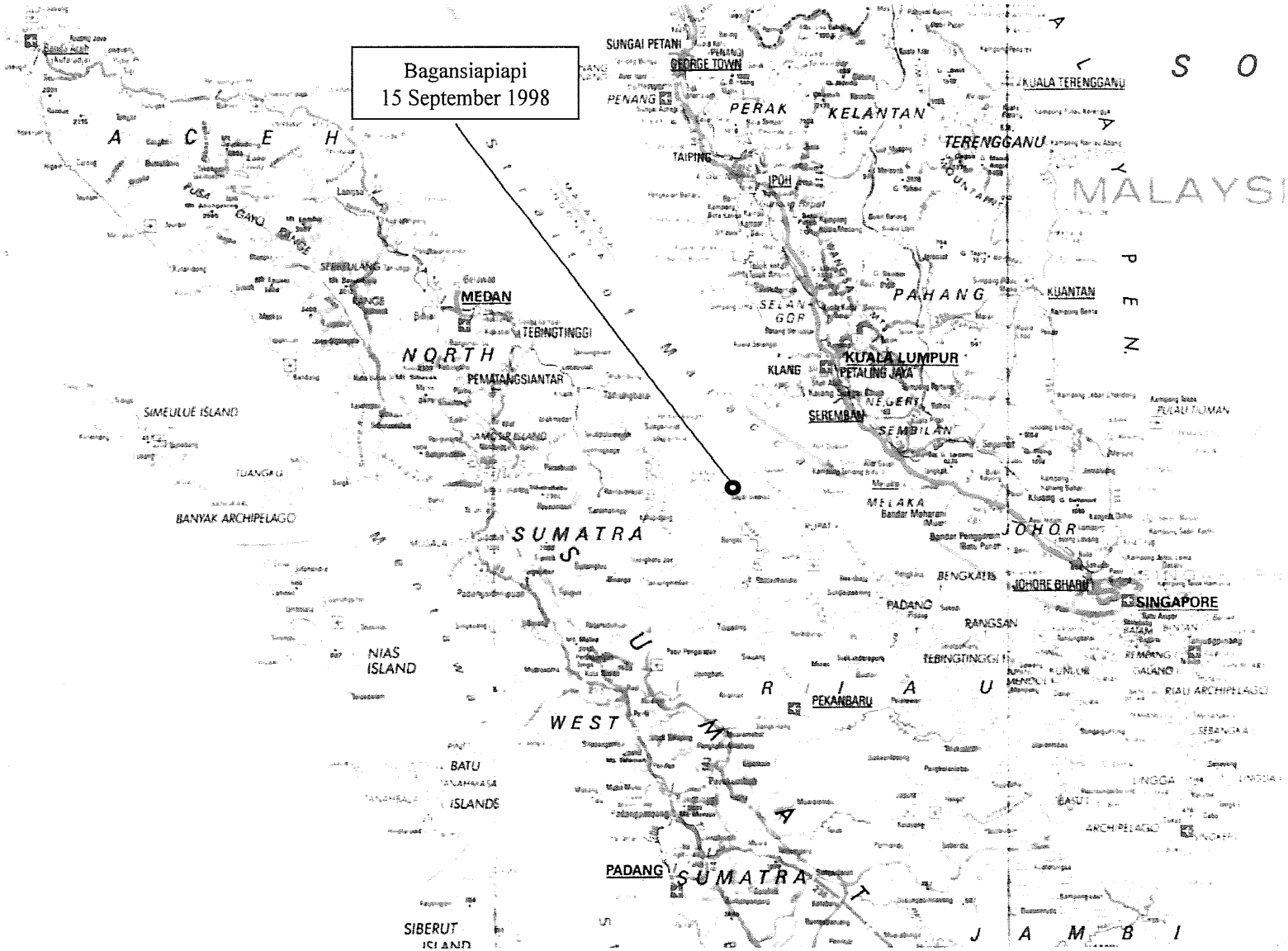
IV. POST-MAY 1998

(JUNE 1998 – MARCH 1999)

Post-May
June 1998 - March 1999



Post May 1998



> History is cyclical, but nobody seems to learn from it. (Onghokham)[1]

> History presumes that we must learn from the deeds, triumphs and defeats of the past. (Alphonso Lingis)[2]

The fall of Suharto on 21 May 1998 opened the way for democracy in Indonesia. Indonesians now questioned what nationalism meant to them and where to situate ethnicity within it. The taboos associated with SARA issues began to be challenged by open discussion and debate on religion and religious conflict, race and ethnicity. This process had particular implications for ethnic Chinese. Further, though many were able to 'reconstruct their everyday roles'[3] in some form during this transition period, most ethnic Chinese Indonesians remained fearful of the implications of 'flaunting' their 'Chineseness' in too prominent a way. Many continued to believe that assimilation would protect them[4] and were acutely aware of the potential for a backlash against their community following the violence in May, rather than an outpouring of national sympathy.

The boundaries around their nationality and ethnicity – 'Indonesianness' and 'Chineseness' – had become less clear because for so long one was sacrificed for the other. Whilst potentially more open to expressions of their ethnic identity, the way ahead was also more confusing as they struggled to reconcile these differences. Some of the influences on ethnic Chinese were explored in the previous chapters, in particular the response of the government, national media and some human rights groups. At the same time the actions of Chinese living in the diaspora and indigenous Indonesians sympathetic to ethnic Chinese presented further and contrasting responses and challenged them to navigate to consider their sense of identity and place in post-Suharto Indonesia.

The changing and uncertain environment in which ethnic Chnese now found themselves offered new challenges and opportunities, but the conditions in which violence against them could occur still remained.

THE FORCES OF CHANGE

Overseas Chinese Solidarity

> Everybody here agrees that it is extremely important to treat fairly all ethnic minorities who have been victims of violence during the riots. We also appreciate the sympathies that have been expressed. It is important, however, that we have a thorough understanding of the matter. Protests can backfire and cause more problems for ethnic Chinese who have been living in Indonesia for generations. (Mochtar Riady about protests by overseas Chinese about the rapes.)[5]

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[1] 'Roots of Anti-Chinese sentiment', *Jakarta Post*, 1 June 1998.
[2] Lingis, *Dangerous Emotions*, 4.
[3] Aguilar, 'Citizenship, Inheritance', 504.
[4] 'Partai Mana Janjimu', *Sinergi*, 6, 1999; 'Warga Keturunanan: Asimilasi Vs Integrasi', *Suara Pembaruan*, 4 July 1999; 'Warga Tionghoa Minta Perlindungan', *Kompas*, 20 July 1998; 'Landasan Pembauran Bukan Lantaran Takut', *Sinergi*, 1, 1998, 14.
[5] Mochtar Riady, *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 24 September 1998.

Reports that over one hundred, mostly ethnic Chinese, women were raped in May 1998 caused international protests particularly from ethnic Chinese communities across the region. The violence was labelled as 'anti-Chinese', and comparisons were drawn with Nazi persecutions of Jews in Europe and the anti-Communist purge in Indonesia in 1965-1966.[6] Protests were directed towards the Indonesian government and their own governments as well as on the internet[7] and through the market.[8] The rapes of Chinese women in Indonesia evoked an unprecedented response from the governments and citizens of China, Hong Kong and Taiwan (with Chinese-Americans[9]) who led the protest.[10] These reactions are momentous not only in the evolution of a transnational *'huaren'* or overseas Chinese fraternity, but also for international relations in the region, particularly on human rights policy.

The Chinese government's response to the rapes was surprising, not only for its tone, but for the public impetus behind it. At a regional and foreign policy level, China's protest to Indonesia on this issue constituted a shift from its position on other human rights related issues in this period. Commonly, China aligned with the Asean countries or distanced itself entirely.[11] China's initial response, which was cautious and careful to note that the victims were 'members of the Indonesian family',[12] was strongly criticised[13] by various groups in China, including a women's group who were among two hundred who demonstrated at the Indonesian Embassy on 17 August 1998.[14] Following this, in late August 1998, the Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan condemned the rapes and called on the Indonesian government to punish the perpetrators and take measures to protect ethnic Chinese.[15] At subsequent meetings between Chinese and Indonesian government representatives, the issue of protection of ethnic Chinese Indonesians was repeatedly raised.[16]

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[6]Martin Lee, leader of the Hong Kong Democratic Party allegedly wrote in a letter to President Habibie dated 23 July 1998, that 'The severity of these two days of mayhem evoked comparisons to the Nazi regime's attacks against Jews'. ('Reject racism urges Hong Kong politician', *Singapore Straits Times*, 26 July 1998.)

[7] http://www.huaren.org and http://www.geocities.com/indochaos
Messages on bulletin boards often called for ethnic Chinese to take revenge for the rapes. They were fertile ground for rumour about potential repeat incidents and for stories (unverified) about victims. See Lochore, 'Virtual Rape'.

[8] FEER and CNBC Asia survey showed that 75% of respondents said Asian countries should offer asylum to Indonesian Chinese and 70% said they would be less likely to invest in Indonesia because of the rape charges. (David Lamb, 'Terrorized Ethnic Chinese Still on Edge in Indonesia', *The Times*, 3 October 1998.

[9] Lee Siew Hua, 'Chinese Americans mount campaign', *Singapore Straits Times*, 6 August 1998.

[10] 'Reject racism', *Singapore Straits Times*, 26 July 1998; 'Chinese women unite against atrocities in Indonesia', *Asiaweek*, 3 August 1998.

[11] For more detail on China's foreign policy position see appendix G.

[12] 'Is Chinese blood thinner than water?', *The Economist*, 22 August 1998, 31

[13] Wang Ruoshui, 'China's Media also needs an Open Policy', *China Rights Forum*, Fall, 1998, http://www.hrichina.org/crf/english/98fall/e10.html>, accessed 12 January 2000.

[14] Ibid.

[15] 'Tang: China waiting for Indonesia's true action to protect ethnic Chinese', *Beijing Review*, 24 August 1998, 7; See Wang Ruoshi, 'China's Media'.

[16] 'Chinese Indonesians should be treated equally: Jiang', *Singapore Straits Times*, 18 November 1998; 'Jiang – Chinese Indonesians should enjoy equal treatment', *Xinhua*, 17 November 1998.

Meanwhile Taiwan was even more vocal and active on this issue, demanding that the Indonesian government investigate and try perpetrators and provide protection for victims. The Taiwan government threatened to withdraw its investments in Indonesia, which some estimates put at over USD13 billion in mid 1998.[17] It also threatened to block the entry of Indonesian workers into Taiwan,[18] stating that this threat of sanctions was 'based on the principles of protecting overseas Chinese and protecting human rights.'[19] Further, Taiwan pledged that its representative office in Indonesia would help to re-locate abused ethnic Chinese women and assist them in filing charges regarding crimes committed against them.[20] They also offered assistance to victims who wished to travel to Taiwan for medical treatment.[21]

The rapes galvanised ethnic Chinese across the region. In addition to protests to their own governments, they made great use of the internet to disseminate their protest. They evoked images of the Rape of Nanking,[22] eliciting a highly emotional response from many participating on the internet, or at public demonstrations. A Hong Kong political commentator remarked about the rapes: 'This is really hurtful to Chinese people all over the world. Violations such as these are akin to the rape of Nanking.'[23] Ethnic Chinese Indonesian victims of the violence were named as brothers and sisters and their suffering embraced. In articles by Elaine Tay[24] and Ien Ang[25], the use of internet technology for the purpose of creating a global fraternity of ethnic Chinese or '*huaren* solidarity' is explored in great depth.[26] As these writers observe, the response from overseas Chinese on the internet to the rapes issue was quite revolutionary in the way internet technology was engaged for this type of 'gathering' and activism, with positive and negative results. The impact of this protest in cyberspace, together with international media coverage and diplomatic pressure was felt keenly by the new Habibie administration in Jakarta. Amid these threats of withdrawal of capital and other sanctions against Indonesia, Habibie announced the establishment of the TGPF. At the same time, as Mochtar Riady's comments indicate, many Chinese Indonesians felt uneasy about this response and they were conscious of the potential for a backlash against a protest which itself often descended into racist slurs against Indonesians and Muslims. Moreover, in a telling omission, the suffering of indigenous Indonesians in the violence in May, including the deaths of over 1000 urban poor burned in shopping centres, was not a focus for

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[17] 'Taiwan condemns Indonesia for abuses against ethnic Chinese', *Dow Jones Newswires*, 27 July 1998.
[18] 'Taiwan may stop entry of Indonesian workers', *Singapore Straits Times*, 7 August 1998. There were over 15,000 Indonesian workers in Taiwan at this time.
[19] 'ROC condemns gang rapes of ethnic Chinese women in Indonesian riots', *Sinorama*, August 1998, <http://www.gio.gov.tw/info/sinorama/en/1998/199808/708075e1.html>, accessed 4 April 2002.
[20] Representatives from Taiwan NGOs visited Indonesia, 2–5 August 1998 and met with Indonesian government officials to talk about the rapes. (For more detail of Taiwan's response see appendix G.)
[21] During a visit to Surabaya by a delegation of Taiwanese this offer was extended and accepted by some rape victims from that city. (Interview with Bingky Irawan, head of Majelis Agama Konghucu Indonesia (MAKIN), Surabaya, 18 April 2001.)
[22] www.huaren.org has a link to the site <http://www.cnd.org/mirror/nanjing> about the Nanjing Massacre.
[23] Tan Ee Lyn, 'Hong Kong Chinese call on Jakarta to prevent violence', *Reuters*, 21 July 1998.
[24] Tay, 'Global Chinese Fraternity'.
[25] Ang, 'Indonesia on my Mind'.
[26] Tay investigates the way creators of these sites misappropriated images of victims of sexual violence to raise the level of emotion, disregarding issues of authenticity or more importantly, the impact of such public 'misuse' of these images on the victims themselves.

these international protests. Representations promoted by the overseas Chinese disapora contributed to what Arthur and Joan Kleinman argue is the 'globalisation of suffering' by way of an instantaneous media disseminating images simultaneously and yet selectively across the globe. As they put it, these experiences are 'being used as a commodity',[27] in this case to galvanise *huaren* solidarity.[28] Meanwhile, denials of the rapes by members of the Indonesian government, military and some religious groups consituted an attempt to erase this suffering all together. Not surprisingly ethnic Chinese Indonesians faced an identity dilemma following the violence.[29]

Reactions varied among ethnic Chinese Indonesians from different socio-economic backgrounds, levels of assimilation and age groups. [30] The position taken by one older ethnic Chinese man, when asked his opinion about the protests held across the region after the violence in May, revealed his wariness of being seen as too 'Chinese'. He replied that whilst it was appreciated, in reality this action did not assist their cause. Instead, he said he simply saw ethnic Chinese in the region as highlighting his ethnicity (his 'Chineseness' and 'otherness') precisely at a time when he needed to feel and to be recognised as *Indonesian*.[31] Many ethnic Chinese Indonesians responding to bulletins posted on webpages dedicated to their persecution similarly condemned and rejected the strong anti-Indonesian discourse to be found on such forums. They declared that they too were Indonesian and therefore calls to 'kill Indonesians' were directed towards them also.[32] However others, especially those who were born after 1965-1966, were excited about re-discovering their ethnicity after being forced by the government and their parents to deny it all their lives. Their response to the protests and support from ethnic Chinese in the region was one of excitement, primarily because they were relieved and felt empowered by the fact that their persecution was being exposed and condemned after such a long period of repression. At the same time there was a sense that it did not matter that it was ethnic

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[27] Arthur Kleinman and Joan Kleinman, 'The Appeal of Experience; The Dismay of Images: Cultural Appropriations of Suffering in Our Times' in *Social Suffering*, eds Arthur Kleinman, Veena Das, and Margaret Lock (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 2.

[28] See Ang, 'Indonesia on My Mind', 57.

[29] See Rizal Bachrun and Bobby Hartanto, 'Krisis identitas diri pada kelompok minoritas Cina', in I. Wibowo (ed.), *Harga Yang Harus Dibayar: Sketsa Pergulatan Etnis Cina di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama bekerja sama dengan Pusat Studi Cina, 2000), 35-59. Perhaps 'identity crisis' goes too far as a generalization but it did apply to individuals who experienced the trauma of violence.

[30] At a seminar in Jakarta, 25 July 1999, 'Partisipasi Sosial Politik Etnis Tionghoa dalam Pembangunan Indonesia Baru', Stanley Adi Prasetyo discussed how ethnic Chinese are ashamed of their ethnicity. See also, Thung Julan, 'Susahnya Jadi Orang Cina: 'Ke-cina-an sebagai konstruksi sosial', in *Harga Yang Harus Dibayar: Sketsa Pergulatan Etnis Cina di Indonesia*, ed. Wibowo I. (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama bekerja sama dengan Pusat Studi Cina, 2000), 169–190.

[31] Interview with a senior member of INTI, Gilbert Wiryadinata, Jakarta, 22 July 1999.

[32] Of course, it is also true that some ethnic Chinese Indonesians used the internet to spread news of the violence and to call for *huaren* and international support. For example, an ethnic Chinese Indonesian living in Medan wrote an email dated 11 May 1998, which made its way to the ISSCO mail list saying, 'Peter, do me a favor if you can, if you care for justice, spread the words around about our sufferings here, let the world know or at least your friends preferably Chinese ones and if you want to read more about the riot you can access http://www.huaren.org and my suggestion is DO recommend them to any of your friends who care about the injustices that had befallen us here'. (A dated report from Medan', 20 May 1998, email to isscocommunity@uclink2.berkeley.edu.) It should be noted that these sites rarely contained Indonesian language items. Clearly they were intended for an audience outside Indonesia.

Chinese protesting or someone else, the point was that someone had noticed.[33] For others, especially young children of *peranakan* Chinese families who had achieved very high levels of assimilation, the violence forced an (until then unknown) awareness of their 'Chineseness'. An ethnic Chinese woman recounted to a friend how her children were confused when she came to explain to them that they had to leave Jakarta for their safety in May 1998. She told them it was because they were Chinese – the children were shocked and asked their mother, 'Am I Chinese?'[34]

Human Rights and A New Sense of Nationalism

Meanwhile, Chinese Indonesians themselves found new solidarity with other victims of the Indonesian state, in some cases playing down the 'anti-Chinese' focus of the violence. Through victims groups and human rights groups, ethnic Chinese victims shared their experiences with indigenous Indonesians and their families who had lost loved ones, property and their livelihoods in the violence. Furthermore, the rapes had a profound impact on human rights discourse and awareness in Indonesia.[35] The national and international response to them was a catalyst for other victims groups to be recognised and for their experiences of horror to be heard. After the rapes of ethnic Chinese women were reported, similar abuses in Aceh, East Timor and West Papua, which had been exposed some time before, were suddenly publicly recognised. The formation in July 1998 of the National Commission on Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan) by President Habibie, as a direct consequence of the May violence, advanced national consciousness-raising at elite levels about violence against women. The visit by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Radhika Coomaraswamy at the end of 1998 to Timor, Aceh, Irian and Jakarta, revealed to the world the pattern of state-led violence against women there. She concluded that stories told to her by women from across Indonesia had similar characteristics and had been used by 'certain elements in the Indonesia army' in Aceh, Timor and Irian, as an 'instrument of torture and intimidation'.[36] Whilst she did not emphatically conclude that the rapes of ethnic Chinese women had been similarly carried out, she found that as a result of the rapes the 'Chinese community appears to be terrorised' and that security forces had stood by while the rapes took place. The violence against ethnic Chinese and particularly the rapes triggered not only an emphatic discourse about the rights of ethnic Chinese among some Chinese groups and as Aguilar calls them 'newly aware *pribumi*',[37] but also a wider dialogue about inter-ethnic relations as a whole in Indonesia.[38]

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[33] Interview with members of SIMPATIK, 3 August 1999.
[34] See Ien Ang, 'Can one say no to Chineseness?: Pushing the limits of the diasporic paradigm', *Boundary* 2, Binghampton, (Fall 1998), 223–224. '"Chineseness" here is the marker of that status, imparting an externally imposed identity given meaning, literally, by a practice of discrimination.'
[35] See Sandyawan Sumardi, 'Rape is Rape', *Inside Indonesia*, n.56, Oct–Dec 1998, 19.
[36] Coomaraswamy, *Report on Mission to Indonesia and East Timor*, pt.43.
[37] Aguilar, 'Citizenship, Inheritance', 503.
[38] The seminar held in Jakarta on 25 July 1999 was an example of how discussion about discrimination against ethnic Chinese quickly turns into a much wider conversation about issues like construction of identities (*suku bangsa*), about racism and prejudice generally in Indonesia and about state violence.

Drawing together different victims of state violence and human rights abuses was a process carried out most effectively at the grass roots level within human rights groups and womens' groups in Indonesia. Volunteers for Humanity (TRuK) was such a group that explicitly sought to unite victims regardless of ethnicity, class, religion or the type of suffering. It formed victims groups for those who had lost property or loved ones and were traumatised by the May violence.[39] Members of these groups included ethnic Chinese and relatives of indigenous Indonesians who had lost family in the fires at the shopping malls and families of students killed at Trisakti. Groups including TRuK, Kontras (Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence) and women's groups, Kalyanamitra and Mitra Perempuan became the locations for a unique experience of solidarity between ethnic Chinese and their fellow Indonesians. The point of contact was their common suffering and persecution.[40]

This sense of solidarity was also felt throughout the wider Chinese community as they saw indigenous Indonesians embrace the suffering of Chinese victims and offer them assistance. As a consequence, among these groups there was a new sense of fraternity with indigenous Indonesian human rights workers and others who expressed sympathy for their persecution and suffering.[41] Contributing to this were events after the violence involving death threats against human rights defenders, together with victims and witnesses of the violence.[42] This prolonged terrorism of both indigenous human rights workers and their families and ethnic Chinese victims created an even stronger bond between these groups and ironically restored much of their faith in Indonesian nationalism.[43]

In many ways the May violence also empowered the ethnic Chinese community, as a persecuted minority under the New Order, to follow the path of the *reformasi* movement towards greater equality in a new and democratic Indonesia. For some ethnic Chinese this meant taking a leap into the political arena after fearing it for many years. A few 'Chinese' political parties were among the dozens registered before the 1999 general election, following the revoking of New Order laws banning political parties other than those that were officially sanctioned.[44] For others, the path to greater equality and participation for ethnic Chinese was through promotion of anti-discrimination and tolerance.[45] This sense of empowerment led to great discussion

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[39] Other victims groups also exist, for example a group for victims and families of victims of the Semanggi Incident in November 1998 and for Tanjung Priok. At a more elite level, religious and social leaders met at the residence of Abdurrahman Wahid in mid–June 1998 to deliver a 'message of conscience'. They expressed their sympathy for the victims of the violence, especially ethnic Chinese and called on the government to act. ('Destroy network behind May unrest', *Kompas*, 18 June 1998; 'Religious leaders condemn riots', *Straits Times*, 19 June 1998.)

[40] See Karlina Leksono-Supelli, 'The Others', in *Kapok Jadi Nonpri: Warga Tionghoa Mencari Keadilan*, ed. Alfian Hamzah (Jakarta: Zaman Wacana Mulia, 1998), 6–13. (English used in title is the author's.)

[41] Some ethnic Chinese Indonesians also joined these CSOs as volunteers after the violence and others gave considerable donations.

[42] See Coomaraswamy, *Report on Mission to Indonesia and East Timor*, pt.46.

[43] The murder of a woman in Jakarta in October 1998, Martadinata, who was a volunteer with TRuK and a suspected victim of violence herself, was a critical moment. See TRuK, 'Tantangan Kerja Kemanusiaan'.

[44] See Leo Suryadinata, 'Chinese Politics in Post-Suharto's Indonesia', *Asian Survey*, (May–June 2001), 502-524.

[45] Including Solidaritas Nusa Bangsa (SNB); Gerakan Anti-Diskriminasi Indonesia (GANDI).

and reflection among ethnic Chinese about their place in Indonesia, including debate on questions of assimilation and integration, the relationship between ethnic Chinese business and ethnic Chinese identity and also at a discursive level, use of terms like *Cina* and *Tionghoa*, '*pri*' and '*non pri*'.[46]

The range of responses, writings and seminars on these issues which took place after May 1998 indicates the complexity of the question of identification for ethnic Chinese Indonesians.[47] Although the tension between their ethnicity and their nationalism has always been present, it increased after May 1998. During the New Order, their position of their ethnicity and citizenship was more or less clearly laid down in unchallengeable legislation and political and social practices. With the end of the New Order regime, and particularly given the extremity of the violence and rapes, there were great expectations that ethnic Chinese could gain equality under the law and some hoped they would be granted their place as a *suku bangsa* within the Indonesian nation. In this context it is telling that although a large number of ethnic Chinese Indonesians chose to flee Indonesia following the May 1998 violence and during the June 1999 elections, the vast majority chose to stay or returned soon after.[48] When asked why they did not leave (providing of course that they had the means), many ethnic Chinese would reply, 'Where would I go? This is my home'.[49] Uncertainty and doubt lingered, however.

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[46] Benny G. Setiono, 'Baperki: Stigma Etnis Tionghoa Indonesia', available at <<http:www.inti.or.id/ASPS/Indonesia>>, accesed on 4 April 2002; I. Wibowo, 'Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Indonesian Chinese After The Fall of Soeharto', *Sojourn*, Vol.16, No.1 (2001), 25–46; I. Wibowo (ed.), *Harga yang Harus Dibayar: Sketsa Pergulatan Etnis Cina di Indonesia* (Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama bekerja sama dengan Pusat Studi Cina Jakarta, 2000); J. Sahetapy, 'Asimilasi dan Integrasi' in *Sumbangsih Siauw Giok Tjhan & Baperki*, eds. Siauw Tiong Djin and Oey Hay Djoen (Jakarta: Hastra Mitra, 2000), 124.

[47] For more examples of discussion around these issues, see Abdul Baqir Zein, *Etnis Cina Dalam Potret Pembauran Indonesia* (Jakarta: Prestasi Insan Indonesia, 2000); I. Wibowo (ed.), *Retrospeksi dan Rekontekstualisasi: Masalah Cina* (Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama bekerja sama dengan Pusat Studi Cina, 1999); Moch Sa'dun M (ed.), *Pri Dan Nonpri: Mencari Format Baru Pembauran* (Jakarta: PT Pustaka CIDESINDO and Ford Foundation, 1999). See Ariel Heryanto, 'Kapok Jadi Nonpri', in *Kapok Jadi Nonpri: Warga Tionghoa Mencari Keadilan*, ed. Alfian Hamzah (Bandung: Zaman, 1998), 98–102.

[48] Estimates at the time predicted that 20,000–30,000 Chinese would leave (out of an total population of about 5 million). ('The May Riots', *Inside Indonesia*, Digest 63, 29 May 1998). Though no actual figures were compiled of ethnic Chinese departures, official statistics show that during the period 14–20 May 1998, a total of 70,837 Indonesians departed Indonesia with 27,616 then returning over 23–26 May. ('Over 150,000 flee abroad during riots: Ministry', *Jakarta Post*, 9 June 1998.) During May 1998 121,345 people arrived from Indonesia to Singapore, almost double the number of arrivals for April. (Leo Suryadinata, 'Ethnic Chinese Population Movement After the Fall of Soeharto (with Special reference to the neighbouring countries): Some Preliminary Remarks', at A Colloquium 'Chinese Emigrants and Refugees: Recent Population Movements in East and Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand', University of Melbourne, 1 June 2001.) Chinese communities in Jakarta and Solo report that most ethnic Chinese who fled during this period returned or settled elsewhere in Indonesia, but Hugo indicates the increase in Bali's population during the period 1990–2000 of 1.22% as perhaps representative of ethnic Chinese settlement from elsewhere in the archipelago. (2000 Indonesian Census figures, quoted by Graham Hugo at a Colloquium, 'Chinese Emigrants and Refugees: Recent Population Movements in East and Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand', University of Melbourne, 1 June 2001.) *Time* (31 May 1998) estimated that 250,000 ethnic Chinese settled in Bali after the May violence.

[49] This was a common response to such a line of questioning of ethnic Chinese in Jakarta and Solo, interviewed in July–August 1999.

LIVING IN INDONESIA: LINGERING FEARS FOR SECURITY

> Our blood will never mix with Chinese blood...Actually we hate the Chinese, but we couldn't do anything about them before, because they were protected by Suharto. But I don't think they will be protected anymore. (Sutanjo, a 38-year old resident of Gresik, East Java)[50]

> To restore belief to people whose homes were destroyed by fire, is not a simple case of replacing the damaged houses...These wounds cannot be treated even with a stream of funds gushing from the government, the reason being, as Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono has said, what has disappeared is a faith/ trust that has a value far more expensive, far greater than even trillions of rupiah. (Christianto Wibisono)[51]

> It is not only the country's "non-indigenous" people who aren't feeling safe, even "indigenous" people are feeling insecure nowadays. (Rosita Noer, Bakom PKB spokesperson)[52]

In the aftermath of May 1998, in addition to the *push* of their ethnic Chinese 'family' in the region and the *pull* of the growing solidarity they began to feel with many indigenous Indonesians, Chinese were also forced to confront the reality that the national political, social and economic situation remained largely unchanged. Despite reforms introduced by Habibie's government providing more personal and political freedoms, this process remained limited for ethnic Chinese. Although the *reformasi* spirit provided greater space to consider questions related to their identity, the situation was regarded by many ethnic Chinese as more uncertain and potentially threatening than before.[53] From elite millionaire businessmen to victims of the recent violence, Chinese knew from experience of the need to take a wary approach to political and social change in Indonesia. With the disposition for anti-Chinese violence still present in every community where Chinese lived and worked across Indonesia, their security remained of greatest and perhaps more immediate importance.

Across the country Indonesians generally, not only ethnic Chinese, were grappling with the consequences of the events of May 1998. Now the dictator and oppressor was gone, who and what would replace him? How would Indonesia shape its future? In this fragile and somewhat perilous state many varied groups emerged to fill the leadership void, some democratic and others based on criminality and retribution.[54] This was an increasingly confusing environment for ethnic Chinese conditioned to seeking protection from figures in the military and government and with a highly cautious attitude towards politics as a consequence of, as Heryanto put it, 'a general essentialising identification of this ethnicity with communism'.[55] Under Suharto theirs had been a position of persecution and exploitation, nevertheless certain behaviours and

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[50] Nicholas D. Kristof, 'In Indonesia, New Freedom Feeds Ethnic Friction', *The New York Times*, 25 May 1998.
[51] *Suara Pembaruan*, 1 June 1998. Christianto Wibisono left Indonesia with his family following the violence in Jakarta. His daughter's home, where she lived with her husband and two small children, was attacked and burned at that time.
[52] 'Habibie's comments under fire', *Jakarta Post*, 21 July 1998.
[53] 'Amankah Indonesia Menjelang Pemilu?', *Sinergi*, 5, 1999, 9.
[54] See Lindsey, 'Soepomo to Prabowo'.
[55] Ariel Heryanto, 'Ethnic Identities and Erasure', 98; See Sofyan Wanandi in Cindy Shiner, 'For Indonesia's ethnic Chinese, a new era revives old hatreds', *Washington Post*, 16 June 1998.

relationships were prescribed to ensure that they could continue to live and work in Indonesia. Now many were less sure of their place in Indonesian society.[56] What would become of the *cukong* relationships between the powerful conglomerates and the even more powerful figures in the military and government or arrangements between small shop-owners and local security officials under a new political leadership? Who would protect them now?[57]

The realisation that they had been let down in May 1998 by the arrangements put in place to ensure their security was more shocking for many ethnic Chinese than the actual material loss they suffered. Whilst some chose to persist with relations with the security forces and government,[58] others erected higher fences around the complexes and streets where they lived.[59] Many were no longer confident that assistance would be forthcoming from the authorities and increasingly took their safety into their own hands. Nurdin Purnomo, leader of the newly formed Partai Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, explained: 'Now we are told to fight for and protect ourselves. So, the fences rise. If something happens of which we are increasingly afraid, yes, the fences will get larger still.'[60] As a further precaution some Chinese sent their children to school outside Indonesia.[61]

The new government and the markets were quick to acknowledge that security was key to decisions Chinese Indonesians would make about their future in Indonesia or even in a particular locality.[62] Subsequent efforts to 'bring them home' highlighted this as a necessity, yet there was equally as much to indicate to ethnic Chinese that their situation in Indonesia was as perilous as ever.

Economic Stresses Continue

> These hungry and disappointed people could easily turn to looters. (Sumitro from the Department for Social and Political Affairs, Pontianak)[63]

> A great number of unemployed people, a worsening economic crisis, a euphoria over democracy, bureaucratic ills...combined with...a shortage in the food supply which will lead to starvation and physical diseases (have) added to the people's confusion and misery...It's almost natural for people under such pressures to become violent and impulsive. (Syafii Maarif, Chairman of Muhammadiyah)[64]

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[56] See Sofyan Wanandi, 'The Post-Soeharto Business Environment' in *Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Renewal or Chaos?*, ed. Geoffrey Forrester (Canberra and Bathurst: RSPAS, ANU & Crawford House Publishing, 1999), 128–134.
[57] 'Traders protest about security during riots', *Jakarta Post*, 29 May 1998.
[58] 'Warga Tionghoa', *Kompas*, 20 July 1998.
[59] So important to the ethnic Chinese was the *pagar* (fence) that *Sinergi* magazine, in its first edition in November 1998, featured articles on the use of the gate/fence in Indonesian history alongside responses to the May 1998 violence. Onghokham described the actions of many ethnic Chinese after the May violence to erect more and higher fences as *'masalah psikologis'* and Lies Sungkarisma stressed that a *'masalah rasa takut'* was not only being experienced by ethnic Chinese but by all Indonesians. ('Landasan Pembauran Bukan Lantaran Takut', *Sinergi*, 1, 1998, 14.)
[60] 'Benteng-benteng di sekitar rumah', *Sinergi*, 1, 1998, 7.
[61] *Kompas*, 20 July 1998.
[62] See Hugo, 'Chinese Emigrants'.
[63] *The Straits Times*, 10 September 1998.
[64] Syafri Maarif, quoted in 'Hardship driving people to violence', *Jakarta Post*, 11 January 1999.

Despite Suharto's resignation, the Indonesian economy continued to lag as the impact of IMF loan demands and the absence of ethnic Chinese business activity was being acutely felt.[65] At the beginning of June 1998 it was estimated that unemployment in Indonesia could reach 15.4 million people or 17.1 percent of the population and 96 million people would be living below the poverty line – almost half the population – by year's end.[66] The rupiah fell from Rp9,500 to the dollar when Habibie took office to Rp 13,000 in late July, before recovering to rates of Rp 7,000–8,000 in October.[67]

Of most immediate and acute concern, however, was the impact of the flailing economy particularly on Indonesians living in agriculture dependent regions like Java, and who were reliant on imported materials for manufacturing.[68] The purchasing power of a worker earning the minimum daily wage of Rp5,800 in April 1997 fell 35 percent from 5.7 kilograms of rice to 3.7 kilograms in April 1998.[69] The pressure on urban and rural poor who were wage dependent and small-scale agricultural producers did not ease and as a result frustration continued to build. Across the country, but particularly in Java, warehouses and distribution centres (many of them owned by ethnic Chinese) were looted and lands people claimed had been stolen from them during the New Order were re-occupied.[70] In September in Labuan, West Java the head of the local branch of the MUI explained that the people had simply reached a state of exasperation: 'Because they are annoyed...For a long time the residents have complained of many problems, but they have not been heeded'.[71]

A report on Indonesia's economic recovery released by a Singapore firm in June 1998, found that the economy was at a virtual standstill due primarily to the stagnation of distribution networks, largely made up of ethnic Chinese-owned business. It stated, 'The most significant damage from last month's riots is not the 217 million dollars worth of property damage, but the shattered confidence of the ethnic Indonesian Chinese who fled Jakarta with their capital.'[72] The authors of this report argued that although IMF loans were necessary for rebuilding the economy, ethnic Chinese capital was crucial to bringing it 'back on track'. In March 1999, this view was supported by the World Bank Vice President for Asia Pacific, Jean-Michael Severino who agreed, 'The Chinese are the issue in Indonesia...How they fix it (the Chinese problem) is up to the Indonesians, but the economic impact if they do not fix it will be huge.' He warned, 'If there is no

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[65] For more economic data see appendix D.
[66] Colin Johnson, 'Survey of Recent Developments', *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 2, August 1998, 3–60; Tim Healey and Jose Manuel Tesoro, 'Judging Habibie', *Asiaweek.com*, 4 September 1998, available from <http://www.asiaweek.com/asiaweek/98/0904/cs_1-1_habibie.html>; BPS figures state that in 1998, 24.2% were living below the poverty line and in 1999, 23%. (Hugo, 'Chinese Emigrants'.)
[67] 'Indonesia Sliding Towards Economic, Social Chaos', *The Washington Post*, 22 July 1998.
[68] Evans, 'Survey of Recent Developments', 31.
[69] Johnson, 'Survey of Recent Developments', 24–27.
[70] At the end of 1998, the National Police stated that crime had increased by 10% in Indonesia. ('Editorial: What Safety Net?', *Jakarta Post*, 2 January 1999).
[71] 'Labuan "Citta Perduto"', *Kompas*, 16 September 1998.
[72] 'Indonesian Chinese capital vital for restoration of Indonesia', *AFP*, 8 June 1998. During the first quarter of 1998, capital outflows from Indonesia accelerated, reaching an estimated Rp70 trillion. However, there is no way of assessing the 'ethnicity' of this capital. (Bank Indonesia,'Indonesian Financial Statistics' in Evans, 'Economic Update', 115.)

agreement between the two communities then probably the Chinese won't be part of the development process.'[73]

Government Efforts To Bring Ethnic Chinese Back 'Home'

> The priority now is to convince the ethnic Chinese that they are Indonesians and they should be coming back to doing their usual businesses. (Tanri Abeng, Minister for State Enterprises)[74]
>
> But justice must be seen to be done. I am sceptical about these statements (by Habibie, Giandjar Kartasasmita). Things are easily said. I have changed my Chinese name as encouraged by the government...I am alienated from the indigenous people in many ways. The number on my identity card is discriminately coded to tell government officials and policemen that I am not indigenous. This is reminiscent of Hitler's way of identifying the Jews. (Liem Sian Tie, 5th generation ethnic Chinese Indonesian, manager of a Glodok hotel which was destroyed in May 1998.)[75]
>
> If I am in the US, I just look for the Jewish restaurant and I can eat anything. (B.J.Habibie.)[76]

Given these assessments it was not surprising therefore that almost immediately after Habibie's government was formed, it embarked on a program designed to persuade ethnic Chinese who had fled Indonesia or who had ceased their economic activities to return home and re-open their businesses. Though no solid figures are known, it is estimated that around 20-30,000 ethnic Chinese left Indonesia in mid-May 1998, with many more seeking safety in areas like Bali.[77] Habibie set out with his assembled team of 'special envoys' on a confidence-building campaign across the region.[78] As James Riady – the special envoy to Australia and ethnic Chinese businessman himself – stated, their task was not an easy one, 'Many of them (ethnic Chinese) are frightened, threatened and their sense of confidence has been greatly affected'.[79] In interviews with newspapers from the United States to Singapore, Habibie urged ethnic Chinese to return and attempted to reassure them of their place in Indonesia. In Indonesia Habibie visited Glodok, Jakarta's Chinatown and posed for photographs with ethnic Chinese in front of their burnt out stores and hotels, 'I came to meet you and to express my sincere sympathy' he told them.[80] Other members of government also sought to reassure Chinese. Coordinating Minister for Economics, Finance and Industry, Ginandjar Kartasasmita vowed to protect them: 'what they need is assurance that they will be guaranteed safety, security and that they will be treated as Indonesians, and that, we can guarantee'.[81] The Coordinating Minister for People's Welfare, Haryono Suyono backed up this promise in late July when he also pledged that the military were committed

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[73] Colebatch, 'Chinese Investors key'.
[74] 'Indonesians: All to get equal rights', *Straits Times*, 25 June 1998.
[75] Sandyawan Sumardi, 'Letter to the Editor', *Asiaweek*, 19 June 1998.
[76] *Business Week*, 3 August 1998.
[77] See Hugo, 'Chinese Emigrants'.
[78] See 'Indonesia urges return of ethnic Chinese', *Reuters*, 11 August 1998.
[79] 'Envoy's job is to get vote of confidence', *Australian Financial Review*, 5 August 1998.
[80] 'Indonesia's Habibie running things differently', *CNN.com*, 26 May 1998.
[81] 'Indonesia vows to protect ethnic Chinese but no economic assistance', *Agence France Presse*, 30 May 1998.

to the safety of ethnic Chinese.[82] Similarly, Abdurrahman Wahid, Amien Rais and other political leaders expressed their support, with Wahid in particular, making numerous gestures. The leader of NU became a founding member of the organisation Anti-Discrimination Movement (*Gerakan Anti Diskriminasi*, GANDI) and he issued a joint statement with the founder of the Astra Group, William Soeryadjaya urging ethnic Chinese to return and assist with Indonesia's reconstruction.[83] Wahid also continued to publicly support the recognition of Confucianism as a religion in Indonesia.[84]

However this message, particularly from Habibie himself, was also inconsistent and for many unconvincing particularly given the President's previous support for an economic policy of affirmative action for indigenous business. Only months earlier, as Vice President, during a visit to Japan at the peak of anti-Chinese sentiment and violence across Java, he commented: 'It is absurd that the ethnic Chinese, who make up three percent of the population are controlling ninety percent of the economy. I would like to give opportunities to the *pribumi,* who make up the majority of the population, and build them up.'[85] Further, in an interview with the *Washington Post* published 19 July 1998, Habibie – now President – stated: 'If the Chinese community does not come back because they don't trust their own country and society, I cannot force, nobody can force them...But do they really think we will then die?... Their place will be taken by others.'[86] Wide condemnation of his remarks by prominent ethnic Chinese[87] and from foreign investors and currency markets,[88] quickly forced Habibie to back-pedal. Just days later he invited the leaders of ten of Indonesia's largest ethnic Chinese controlled business groups to the Bina Graha presidential office and assured them of their safety. The leader of the Ciputra Group reported that the President, 'also reassured us there will be no more differences between *pribumi* and non-*pribumi* and this will be entered into law', whilst the businessmen had conveyed 'the need for security to be guaranteed so that we can resume full operations and re-open job opportunities'.[89] Habibie went on to tell the *Asian Wall Street Journal* in early August that he was an ally of the ethnic Chinese, 'I have full sympathy for them...not only full sympathy, I'm on their side, proactive...They should trust me'.[90] Nevertheless, Habibie continued to stress that there was a limit to what he could do and say to coax ethnic Chinese back, 'I cannot go and take my airplane and beg them and kiss

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[82] *Straits Times*, 24 July 1998.
[83] Abdurrahman Wahid and Soeryadjaya, held a meeting and press conference on 22 June in Wahid's South Jakarta residence. ('Gus Dur-William Soeryadjaya: Reconstruct Indonesia's economy', *Kompas*, 23 June 1998.)
[84] 'If the government now refuses to recognise Confucianism, then the stance is antihistoric', *Jakarta Post*, 13 August 1998.
[85] Habibie's visit to Japan was in March 1998. (Leo Suryadinata, 'How will Habibie handle the ethnic Chinese issue?', *Straits Times*, 15 June 1998.)
[86] Keith B. Richburg, 'Habibie Pushes for Visit to US', *Washington Post*, 19 July 1998.
[87] This included Lieus Sungkharisma leader of the Chinese Indonesian Reform Party (PARTI), 'Habibie should have shown his deep concern over the exodus (of ethnic Chinese), over why it happened...His remarks are not compatible with the country's campaign to draw foreign investors.' (Ibid.)
[88] The rupiah was reported to fall 5–7% after the release of the article. ('Habibie assures Chinese tycoons', *Straits Times*, 23 July 1998.)
[89] Ibid.
[90] 'Habibie tells Chinese he's their 'ally', *Straits Times*, 5 August 1998.

them at the feet...'[91] Further in response to a question in an interview with *Business Week* asking if he could give assurance that riots would not happen again, he gave some indication of the limitations of his leadership (whether self prescribed or not), 'You know, I'm not God. I'm doing what's systematically within my capacity as President; making laws and taking a different approach. Give me time. Give the people time.'[92] His position was supported by the Minister for State Enterprises, Tanri Abeng who commented about the *Washington Post* interview: 'As a politician he had to make that statement. If the Chinese do not want to return, what else can we do but turn to existing resources. We cannot depend solely on any one group.'[93] At the same time the Minister also played down the claims of systematic rapes of ethnic Chinese women commenting, 'I would say the whole thing has been exaggerated. There may be a few cases but certainly not on a large scale'.[94]

Sofyan Wanandi described the Habibie government's attitude towards ethnic Chinese at this time as 'defensive' and far too slow and unconvincing in its efforts to heal the wounds in that community.[95] For many the ambivalence of Habibie's position on this issue reflected the insincerity of his message. It became apparent to some that rather than intending to make amends with ethnic Chinese as fellow Indonesians, these urgings were based on what another special envoy Imam Taufik described as 'badly needed' capital and economic activity: 'The key is to convince Chinese businessmen that law and order will come back. Political instability does not scare them. They know how to deal with it. They want safety.'[96] Taufik made it clear that it was businessmen above all, whom they were trying to coax back. Further, the government was emphatic about its inability to provide financial assistance to Chinese who had suffered losses, stating that ethnic Chinese would simply make do, as they always had. The Coordinating Minister for the Economy, Finance and Industry commented: 'Usually the ethnic Chinese can overcome their problems by themselves. They have their own network...we encourage them to reopen their business again. We are going to make it easy for them to renew the permit. And of course they can access the banking system.'[97] The call to 'repair the economy' was not exclusive to the government. Others also followed this line, 'So will you please return, because we need you to revive our economy', Wahid implored.[98]

The apparent sympathies of elite politicians and government officials for the ethnic Chinese victims of persecution seemed superficial when followed by a call to resume their business as usual, as though nothing had happened. Marzuki Darusman observed: 'But there's a mixed feeling, a mixed picture, where on the one side you have sympathy because of the raping, but this ambivalent view of the Chinese coming back and continuing again where they left off a few months ago'.[99] Moreover, some Chinese believed that their

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[91] Ibid.
[92] 'Habibie: You know, I'm not God', *Business Week,* 3 August 1998.
[93] 'Jakarta government is not against Chinese', *Straits Times*, 3 September 1998.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Wanandi, 'The Post-Soeharto Business Environment', 133.
[96] 'Indonesia in need of Chinese businessmen', *Straits Times*, 4 September 1998.
[97] *Washington Post*, 16 June 1998.
[98] Wahid quoted in 'Indonesia Plans Bill to Remove Racial Bias', *Reuters*, 24 June 1998.
[99] 'Habibie Pushes for Visit to US', *Washington Post*, 19 July 1998.

decision to stay away or to keep their business closed was similarly interpreted by non-Chinese as anti-nationalist:

> It is still fresh in their memory, after the May 98 tragedy ethnic Chinese shop owners chose to close their businesses for a period, rather than become another victim. But this sensible behaviour is often explained by figures in the government as being unloyal, unnationalist, these things are often used to incite hatred further towards the Chinese community as a whole.[100]

Others saw Habibie's, Wahid's and Amien Rais' calls for ethnic Chinese to return 'home' to help rebuild the national economy, not as an affirmation of the identity of ethnic Chinese as Indonesians but as an action which perpetuated the myth of ethnic Chinese economic domination.[101] Adhie M. Massardi wrote in *Kompas*: 'It is perceived that those who move outside the country really do control the life (economy) of the nation. In turn this attitude will give justification for social jealousy at first about money projected upward, as a result of the political engineering of the New Order.'[102] The call to return was focused on ethnic Chinese who had fled with their capital from Indonesia. These were mostly upper-middle to upper class ethnic Chinese who could afford such a journey and had enough capital to consider moving it off shore. What of the ethnic Chinese who remained behind in Indonesia? What message were they being sent at this time?

In early 1999 after ten months in office, Habibie was forced to admit that ethnic Chinese business remained critical to Indonesia's economic recovery, for only after the Chinese began to return would foreign investment have the confidence to follow.[103] Yet, the President was unable to give any guarantee to ethnic Chinese. 'But the Chinese are afraid that there is an Islamic wave which is going to hurt them. I wish we could change that like turning off a light. But it's not that easy. If you are religious you will never stress differences among people. The Chinese, I love them as I love others. I only hate criminals.'[104] For most Chinese this vow was some cold comfort. From its first weeks and months in office Habibie's government had pledged to reform discriminatory laws and to support equality for all Indonesians including ethnic Chinese. Indeed in his interview with *Business Week*, Habibie had spoken of taking 'different approaches' and 'changing laws' that would improve the conditions of Chinese in Indonesian society so long as they trusted him and gave him more time.[105] The reality was as Wanandi described it, that the Habibie government's attitude on these issues was 'defensive' and largely prohibitive to effecting any real

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[100] 'Mereka dihapus dari sejarah perjuangan dan lembaga tinggi politik Indonesia', *Sinergi*, 5, 1999, 9.
[101] Early on, at the beginning of July 1998, Kwik Kian Gie attempted to encourage the nation to think with a '*kepala dingin*' or cool head about news in the media about the collapse of distribution networks with the exodus of ethnic Chinese. He questioned how it was possible that the departure of an estimated 100,000 people, most of whom returned days later, could explain the great increase in prices for basic goods. He thought the decreased value of the rupiah was largely to blame. ('Kwik Kian Gie: Warga Keturunan Tionghoa dan Distribusi', *Kompas*, 7 July 1998.)
[102] *Kompas*, 22 September 1998.
[103] Derwin Pereira, 'Return of ethnic Chinese critical', *Straits Times*, 26 March 1999.
[104] 'Shoot the Criminals', *Newsweek*, 25 January 1999.
[105] *Business Week*, 3 August 1998.

improvement in conditions for ethnic Chinese.[106] In actuality, the variety of gestures and small legal amendments made during the Habibie government's term had very little effect.

Taking A 'Different Approach'?

> These statements about the repeal (of laws or regulations) or investigation of cases smelling of discrimination, in actual fact are only for political consumption, only to increase his (Habibie's) political credit points. (Hendardi, Director *Badan Pengurus Perhimpunan Bantuan Hukum dan Hak Asasi Manusia* Indonesia, (PBHI).)[107]

In the aftermath of May 1998 there was heavy rhetoric in Indonesian politics about abolishing inequalities and discriminatory measures against ethnic Chinese, yet the actual changes entered into law by the Habibie government were limited and without power. For example, in early June 1998, the Jakarta City administration pledged that 'in the future' it would end discriminatory practices in the processing of identity cards for ethnic Chinese Indonesians.[108] In fact Regional Rule (No.1) about Population Registration had abolished the use of these procedures two years earlier.[109] At around the same time, the Minister for State Owned Enterprise, Tanri Abeng, floated the idea of a Bill of Rights claiming that it had the support of the President and was in the process of being investigated by the Minister for Justice. He told delegates at a conference in Singapore that the proposed Bill was intended to 'eliminate the perceived and actual differences' between groups in Indonesia.[110] The most significant development was Habibie's decision in July 1998 to establish the TGPF to investigate the May violence.[111] Yet its significance, as discussed earlier, was rendered nugatory when his government effectively dismissed its findings. Indeed, in March 1999 Habibie pleaded ignorance about the May violence:

> I don't have a full picture of what happened. I am not sure we will have it before the election. What we have seen in May is not the face of Indonesia. We are still ascertaining what happened, who engineered it. We know it was engineered. That is all we know.[112]

From the beginning of his presidency Habibie made gestures to the Chinese community that were merely symbolic. Following the meeting with conglomerates in July, on 16 September 1998, Habibie issued a Presidential Instruction (Inpres No. 26 1998) that the terms '*pri*' and '*non pri*' should no longer be used in official government policy and business. The Inpres also stipulated that equal opportunity be granted to all Indonesians of whatever ethnic group, religion or race.[113] Much later, on 5 May 1999, Habibie issued a

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[106] Wanandi, 'The Post-Soeharto Business Environment'.
[107] *Sinergi*, 9, 1999, 7.
[108] 'City promises to end bias against Chinese-Indonesians', *Jakarta Post*, 12 June 1998.
[109] 'Eight Population Terms abolished: Valid for Chinese Indonesians Too', *Kompas*, 30 June 1998.
[110] *Reuters*, 24 June 1998.
[111] *Kompas*, 3 June 1998.
[112] 'Return of ethnic Chinese critical', *Straits Times*, 26 March 1999.
[113] Inpres No. 26, 1998, appendix H.

further instruction (Inpres No. 4 1999) restating Presidential Instruction No.56/1996[114] stipulating that the Indonesian Citizenship Certificate (SBKRI) would no longer be necessary and that the *Kartu Tanda Penduduk* (KTP) or identity card was sufficient proof of citizenship.[115] Almost hidden in the last clause of this Inpres was an instruction abolishing the ban on the study of Mandarin language. The ineffectuality of this decree was noted by *Sinergi* magazine some months later when they discovered that the SBKRI was still being demanded by authorities and ethnic Chinese were still being forced to pay extra for the processing of immigration documents, passports and so on.[116] They concluded that the changes in the law were not being communicated to the members of the bureaucracy who implement them. Director of PBHI, Hendardi, believed that the laws were introduced merely to score political points, though he believed Habibie had in fact failed in this, '(Habibie) believed that the way to handle discrimination problems is for example, by dealing with the May incident in a complete way. And this also was not demonstrated.'[117] As further indication of the lack of political will (or perhaps more precisely his limited powers), despite promises Habibie made as early as August-September 1998, the government did not ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination 1965, until 25 May 1999.[118] These empty legal gestures caused many ethnic Chinese to question Habibie's stated commitment to protecting them and their interests as Indonesians and to ask with good reason, 'Is such a Presidential promise adequate?'[119]

Adi Sasono: 'I am called the most dangerous man in Indonesia'[120]

> Expelling the Chinese might work, but I don't know...My neighbour is Chinese and she is very kind and gets along with us well. So I wouldn't want her sent away...Maybe we should just put restrictions on the Chinese so that they do not dominate the economy. (Ramsiana Kasuma, 20-year-old university student)[121]

> The government in the reformasi era, consistently, did not carry out policy which discriminated against Indonesian citizens. (Adi Sasono, Minister for Cooperatives)[122]

There were further inconsistencies in Habibie's 'bring them home' project, which maintained scepticism within the ethnic Chinese community. Most notable was the rise and rise of Adi Sasono as Minister for Cooperatives, dubbed in international media as 'Indonesia's most dangerous man',[123] due to the alarm within markets caused when in January 1999, Habibie's budget included USD2.67 billion to fund credit programs for

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[114] Issued 9 July 1996.
[115] Inpres No. 4 1999, appendix I.
[116] 'SBKRI Masih Jadi Sandungan', *Sinergi*, 9, 1999, 15–18.
[117] Ibid., 16–17.
[118] Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia, Number 29, 1999.
[119] Interview with Christianto Wibisono, 'Law needed to protect minority interests', *Jakarta Post*, 8 June 1998.
[120] 'Adi Sasono: Saya Tidak Anti-Konglomerat', *Kompas*, 11 December 1998.
[121] 'In Indonesia, New Freedom Feeds Ethnic Friction', *New York Times*, 25 May 1998.
[122] 'Keturunan Tionghoa Juga Punya Hak Mendirikan Koperasi', *Sinergi*, 3, 1999, 16
[123] 'Indonesia's "Most Dangerous Man"', *Washington Post*, 2 March 1999.

cooperatives.[124] Sasono's critics maintained that as a proponent of the '*ekonomi rakyat*' or people's economy, he wanted the government to transfer economic resources from mainly Chinese-owned companies to cooperatives owned by mainly *pribumi* businessmen.[125] Yet Sasono argued that his design for a people's economy with emphasis on cooperatives was inclusive; 'every Indonesian citizen has the same status before the law, and because of this ethnic Chinese Indonesian citizens also have the right to establish and manage a cooperative.' Nonetheless, hinting that he was still suspicious of Chinese business methods, 'I only warn that they should not become a cooperative that is exclusive and has members who are only ethnic Chinese. One of the principles of the cooperative is that membership is voluntary and the cooperative must be open in character...'[126] Sasono constantly denied that he was 'anti-Chinese', whilst also making comments like, 'One of the reasons for the May riot is the sharpening social gap between rich and poor. Those who are poor became angry and were easily incited and for a few moments burnt cars and shops.'[127] The sub-text was that those whose businesses were attacked were indeed 'rich'.

Scholar Muhammad Hikam told the *Straits Times* in November 1998 that Sasono's 'people's economy' project was yet another example of the mixed signals the government was sending to ethnic Chinese, 'Unfortunately in the government efforts to create a social safety net, somehow there is an attempt to also divide the process – meaning there is an idea to create new distribution channels which do not include these (sic) traditional and more experienced Chinese networks.'[128] Others went so far as to claim that Sasono's project was causing ethnic Chinese who had until then not taken their capital out of Indonesia, to begin to do so:

> In short, Adi Sasono was one of the main reasons for capital flight outside of the country by ethnic Chinese businessmen...Ironically after the capital flight because of fear of an increase in aggression towards ethnic Chinese business here, people like Adi Sasono took advantage of this phenomenon again by attacking them again with accusations that they were un-nationalist because they were responsible for capital flight.[129]

Sasono's crusade to redistribute wealth concentrated in the hands of a few to smaller companies or 'poorer' businesses, was described by his supporters in terms of a modern day 'Robin Hood'. Sasono himself explained it as anti-monopoly and anti-cronyism policy. However, in a society where wealth continued to be equated with ethnicity, and 'Chineseness' in particular, this policy was easily interpreted as anti-Chinese.[130]

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[124] L. Cameron, 'Survey of Recent Developments', *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1, (April 1999), 30.
[125] Shoeb Kagda, 'Sasono pushes for a people's economy', *Singapore Business Times*, 6 January 1999.
[126] 'Keturunan Tionghoa Juga Punya Hak', *Sinergi*, 3, 1999.
[127] 'Menkop tak anti-pengusahan nonpri', *Media Indonesia*, 28 July 1998.
[128] 'Ethnic Chinese Needed in Food Distribution', *Straits Times*, 4 November 1998.
[129] Lion, 'Rasialisme Adi Sasono (Bagian 3)', 3 March 1999, available from <http://members.tripod.com/Indo983/editorial/lion0399_03.html> accessed 10 March 1999.
[130] *Washington Post*, 2 March 1999.

Prevailing Prejudices

> I don't see that Habibie has done anything significant to indicate he's working towards racial healing...The feeling against the Chinese still runs deep. (Rika Agustina, 39-year-old ethnic Chinese, October 1998.)[131]

Developments in national politics during this transitional period illustrate the unchanged reality of the situation of ethnic Chinese. Despite the government's pretence (arguably to placate international protests), institutionalised discrimination, myths about the economic role of ethnic Chinese and doubts about their loyalty remained. Nationally there were clear indications that sentiments and prejudices about ethnic Chinese in Indonesia following the May violence had changed little. The debate that emerged after the news that women had been raped during the mid-May violence is the strongest evidence of this. Rather than providing a space for sympathy and solidarity with the victims of the violence and the ethnic Chinese community, the attention given by the media (and by extension the public) to the rapes and its preoccupation with 'proving' their validity, created a context for greater hostility towards these groups in wider society. This was exacerbated by comments made by the President and members of his cabinet. Although it was clearly in the interests of the nation for ethnic Chinese to regain confidence in its institutions, the government failed to deliver. Meanwhile the economy was continuing to slide and the frustrations of the people to grow.

The Violence Continues in *Reformasi* Indonesia

Still Scapegoats?

> what has followed the fall of Suharto is, for the most part, not 'Disorder' but Democracy, with 'anti-Chinese riots' now replaced by new forms of political conflict, participation and expression. (J.T. Sidel)[132]

As the Habibie government waxed and waned in its policies regarding ethnic Chinese – conscious of the economic imperative to bring them home, but aware too that they could not be seen to kowtow to Chinese demands – the Indonesian public was largely preoccupied with the rising prices for food and other basic needs. The insincerity of the government's expression of sympathy to ethnic Chinese was not only acknowledged by them, but also the wider population. The people did not see a President preaching peace, reconciliation and equality – things might have been different if they had.

Quite simply, the fact that the Suharto regime was no longer in power did not remove the widespread belief of many Indonesians that the Chinese were controlled the economy, local and national, and that they

[131] Lamb, 'Terrorised Ethnic Chinese'.
[132] Sidel, 'Riots, Church Burnings', 59.

were corrupt. Nor was this belief totally without foundation.[133] In towns and cities across Indonesia Chinese were key traders and businessmen. In many cases they used – or found it necessary to use – corrupt practices to further their success. The same pre-conditions that existed before Suharto's fall for anti-Chinese sentiment to become anti-Chinese violence were in place afterwards. Ethnic Chinese would learn that *reformasi* did not mean equal rights and a decline in their victimisation in Indonesia. Given it was the 'masses' who made the fall of Suharto possible – believing that they, the *wong cilik*, the little people were being neglected – it can also be argued that they never really sympathised with notions of democracy in any universal sense.[134] Hatreds associated with the ethnic Chinese as corrupt and opportunistic were not dispelled in the *reformasi* fervour.

The main issues pursued here are firstly, that the actions of politicians and other national leaders were imperative for restoring the faith of the ethnic Chinese community in Indonesia as a place where they had a future and that this in turn impacted on economic conditions all over Indonesia, down to the local market. Further, that general sentiment about Chinese expressed by the elite and in the media had an impact on sentiment on the street. Why was there no great 'sympathy' for ethnic Chinese post-May 1998? Why were efforts by some ethnic Chinese locally to promote harmony, to no avail? Secondly, it is essential to consider what *reformasi* meant to people across the archipelago – farmers, labourers, factory workers as well as professionals. Finally, what were the organisational structures and social conditions that allowed persistent hostilities towards ethnic Chinese to transform into violence?

Although anti-Chinese sentiments and prejudice remained after the fall of Suharto, changes did occur in the national condition, which altered how these hostilities would be transformed into violence. No longer under the grip of the New Order military regime, Indonesia began on a course to what some predict may prove to be its eventual fragmentation or implosion.[135] Large scale and brutal violence occurred in Aceh, Papua, East Timor, Ambon, Banyuwangi and Ketapang.[136] Some went so far as to claim there was a 'culture of violence' in Indonesia.[137] Within the *reformasi* context, which was synonymous with rebellion and revolution during

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[133] Douglas, *Scapegoats*.

[134] Wimar Witoelar, 'Long road ahead for Indonesian reform', *The Australian,* 25 July 2001. Witoelar commented that in Indonesia after the fall of Suharto, 'the fact that the media is totally free does not mean that it is espousing the values of democracy. It is just free. It is just like children out of school after a day with a tough teacher, and now school is over and some of them forget to go home; they are running around in the streets.'

[135] See Sylvia Tiwon, 'From East Timor to Aceh: The disintegration of Indonesia?', *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol. 32 (2000), No. 2, 97–104.

[136] See Anderson, *Violence and the State*; Colombijn, *Roots of Violence*; Coppel, *Violent Conflicts*; Wessel, *Violence in Indonesia*.
In January 1999, *Jakarta Post* conducted a poll with questions about how Indonesians perceived their levels of security. See appendix L.

[137] See comments made by Prabowo in April 2001, *Van Zorge Report*, Issue III (12), 26 June 2001. 'It is not really "politically correct" for me to say this, especially as an Indonesian speaking before so many foreigners but, like it or not, politically correct or not, the whole culture of Indonesia is a culture of violence between tribes and ethnic groups. Indonesians can very quickly turn to violence. The word amok comes from the lingua franca of this archipelago.'

this time, acts of retribution and revenge were carried out and inter-ethnic, inter-religious and local grievances exploded into violence. Graffiti scrawled on shop fronts and homes in towns and cities in Maluku, Java and Riau, which were sites of violence, declaring their inhabitants and owners to be 'muslim', '*pribumi*' and 'pro-*reformasi*', revealed some of the categories or labels under which it was perceived to be acceptable by locals for violence to be carried out. Herriman's study of the killings of practitioners of 'black magic' in Malang, East Java in 1999[138] reveals that these acts of 'community justice' were viewed by those who carried them out as part of their version of *reformasi*, or what someone called the 'false reform movement'.[139]

Munir, head of the Commission for Disappeared and Victims of Violence (Kontras), explained the increase in violent conflict following Suharto's resignation as the result of the shift from one political process, which had been in place for a long time, to something different but not yet certain:

> The culture of violence which is now occurring is a process where there is an open situation but the level of political awareness among the people is also weak, so people are easily incited and played off against each other – as a choice of political communication. Consequently conflicts become widespread.[140]

The scale of this violence overshadowed violence against ethnic Chinese Indonesians after May 1998, so much so that Sidel claims anti-Chinese riots were 'replaced by' these other forms of violence and political expression. In an atmosphere such as this how could ethnic Chinese escape violence? Rather, anti-Chinese violence continued alongside these other forms, simply overshadowed by these events and also by the scale of the May violence.

Kekerasan and Reformasi

> The majority of Javanese have been brainwashed by wayang stories where violence is a constant. (Pramoedya Ananta Toer)[141]

> Rumours, there are so many rumours...But when you're Chinese, you stay alert to rumours. At the first sign of trouble I close my shop and go home and lock the door. (Bun Kok, 48 year old Chinese medicine trader)[142]

In early August 1998 there were reports that in the lead up to 17 August, fears among the ethnic Chinese community were rising once again. Different reports estimated that up to 250,000 people had settled in Bali in the previous two months, which caused an increase in the price of land and property in the province.[143] The

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[138] Nicholas Herriman, 'Violence and Ideology in the Murder of Sorcerers in East Java's Malang Regency: The People, the State and the Press' in *Violent Conflicts in Indonesia: Representation, Analysis, Resolution*, ed. C.A. Coppel (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), forthcoming.
[139] The local military commander referring to conflict between two protest groups in Tegal in mid-June 1998. (*Suara Merdeka*, 16 June 1998); Jim Della-Giacoma, 'Indonesians soldiers fire in the air to quell protest', *Reuters*, 15 June 1998.
[140] 'Munir SH: Pemerintah yang sekarang masih gunakan kekerasan', *Buletin Jaring*, Edisi 10, December 1998.
[141] 'A Plea For Indonesia's Silent Millions', *Washington Post*, 7 June 1998.
[142] *The Times*, 3 October 1998.
[143] *Time*, 31 May 1999; 'Isu Kerusuhan Goncang Pecinan Semarang', 5 August 1998, stated 164,000 people.

reason for this alarm included continued economic tension and incidents such as the robbery of Chinese graves in Pekalongan in early August. Conflicts with no relation to the ethnic Chinese or with trading, such as in Karawang on 28 August,[144] again resulted in violence against ethnic Chinese. In Semarang, Chinese residents reported that strange graffiti had appeared on their homes and shops. The graffiti included a triangle, which it was later said, represented a command to loot, and elsewhere a circle appeared, allegedly denoting that women inside should be raped.[145] Some Semarang Chinese also received threatening telephone calls demanding up to Rp 1 million to protect their families. In response the local police and army initiated patrols in high risk areas, with the District Commander Maj.Gen. Tyasno Sudarto guaranteeing the protection of residents of Semarang and urging them to be more alert, 'If there is a plan for a riot, we must oppose it. Because we do not want a repeat of the Solo riot in Semarang'.[146] Chinese fled Surabaya also, many to Bali, after receiving threatening phone calls, attacks on warehouses and shops and other warnings.[147]

These small incidents – threats and cases of actual violence – of which there were many similar examples from this time and the absence of government guarantees to Chinese, explain the continued tension and level of anxiety within this community. The cases of violence against ethnic Chinese discussed below were those which caused the greatest damage and had the most influence on subsequent violence and anti-Chinese sentiment.[148]

CILACAP, 28 AUGUST 1998

On Friday 28 August 1998, a celebration was planned in Cilacap, a harbour town on the south coast of Central Java, to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Indonesian Fishers Association (HNSI).[149] As part of the program that morning the organisation's national chairman Tuk Setyohardi and other dignitaries were due to speak to HNSI members from across the district. However, shortly before 9am thousands of fishermen (reported numbers range up to 6,000 and even 10,000) gathered at the entrance to the Nusantara Fishery Harbour (PPNC). They then proceeded to set fire to ten fishing trawlers and to destroy a number of vehicles as well as the offices of the port authority. The trawlers were owned by *nelayan pendatang* or 'newcomers' who were ethnic Chinese originally from Bagansiapi-api in Riau, although most of them had lived and worked in Cilacap for over 20 years. The following day, homes and shops owned by ethnic Chinese in Cilacap, particularly those selling sembako and fishing supplies, were attacked and looted.[150] Although it was clear that fishermen were responsible for the violence at PPNC, the police insisted that those who carried out the subsequent violence in the town of Cilacap itself were 'infiltrators' who sought to take advantage of the

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[144] A dispute between traffic police and an ojek driver led to looting and attacks on shops and churches in that town. (*Tempo*, 1 September 1998.)
[145] *Media Indonesia*, 5 August 1998; *AP*, 5 August 1998.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Derwin Pereira, 'Mob violence in East Java 'instigated by radicals'', *Straits Times*, 22 July 1998.
[148] For complete list of incidents see appendix A.
[149] HNSI (*Himpunan Nelayan Se-Indonesia*) was a *golongan karya* (functional group).
[150] Approximately 27 buildings were targeted, particularly shops selling fishing equipment and basic goods. *Jakarta Post*, 31 August 1998.

earlier violence. Fishermen's groups refused to accept responsibility for looting the shops and called on police to deal firmly with the culprits.[151] Yet, it was reported that among those arrested by police were numerous fishermen as well as people from other areas of Central Java such as Cirebon and Brebes.[152]

Toke, Trawlers and Tradition

> Look at my home, my friends' houses, we have worked for 15 years and we can't even afford to buy a TV set...I had been planning to buy one in July, but I found out that the money I had been saving was not enough because the price had increased by two hundred percent. (Sarwono, Cilacap fisherman).[153]

The arrival of trawlers in Cilacap from Bagansiapi-api in the early 1970s impacted greatly on its local fishing industry. Until this time, Cilacap fishermen had maintained their 'traditional' or small-scale methods of fishing, which resulted in small but sufficient catches from a seemingly plentiful and unending supply of fish from the south Java sea.[154] However, these methods were quickly undermined by the trawler's capacity to bring in tonnes of fish daily. Furthermore, as the numbers of trawlers operating out of Cilacap increased so did the demand for manpower on board. Many 'traditional' fishermen abandoned their own boats and an increasingly unsure daily remuneration, to work on the trawlers for a steady wage and, if they were fortunate enough, a portion of the takings from the haul each day. It was these fishermen (*anak buah kapal*, ABK) and those still operating as 'traditional' fishermen, who stormed the PPNC on 28 August 1998. Their grievances were expressed at the time in terms of dissatisfaction with low wages, poor working conditions and provisions for compensation for death or injury whilst at sea, as well as frustration with the corrupt processes of both the port authority and their ethnic Chinese *toke* or bosses.

Prior to the violence on 28 August, crews members on board the trawlers operating out of Cilacap earned Rp2,000 per day and were promised two percent of the day's haul if it exceeded Rp1 million in total value. Cilacap's Police Commander later described these wages and conditions as the lowest in the country, 'Can it be imagined that they can pay people a wage of Rp2,000 a day without thinking of the consequences, when the fact is that there is nowhere in Indonesia that gives a wage of less that Rp3,000'.[155] In addition to the poor wages, corrupt port authorities in collusion with the *toke* often understated the size of the daily haul to avoid paying the fishermen their share. As the fishermen were prohibited to enter the weighing area, they were powerless to prove their suspicions. With prices for basic goods increasing, the ABK complained of being unable to feed their families or to send their children to school. One remarked, 'We can't even buy a kilogram of rice for two nights' work'.[156] Meanwhile, they observed their bosses pulling in tonnes of fish

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[151] *Republika*, 31 August 1998.
[152] *Kompas*, 1 September 1998.
[153] *Jakarta Post*, 9 September 1998.
[154] Prior to the mid–1960s small-scale fishermen alone operated in Indonesian waters, using mostly sail or paddle powered boats and simple fishing gear. (Connor Bailey, 'The Political Economy of Marine Fisheries Development in Indonesia', *Indonesia*, 46 (1988), 31.)
[155] *Kompas*, 30 August 1998.
[156] *Jakarta Post*, 9 September 1998.

daily and selling it to overseas buyers willing to pay higher and higher prices as the value of the rupiah continued to slide.[157] Siswadi, a member of one of the crews complained, 'The *toke* exploited us like we're slaves.'[158] On what was to have been a day of celebration of their profession and industry the ABK reacted against those they perceived to be the agents of their poverty, the *toke* and the port authority. Siswadi did not trace the chain of responsibility to whomever or whatever was responsible for the 200 percent rise in the price of basic goods. His reality was inextricably linked to the size of his daily wage.

After the attack the ABK claimed that their repeated protests to the port authority and to the *toke* about these conditions had been ignored[159] and comments made by *toke* also support these claims. One trawler-owner, Atay, insisted that they were unaware of any problems their crews were having in making ends meet, 'The Rp 2,000 wage is something that we agreed upon together. They continued to show up to work to go out to sea. Wasn't that proof that the wage was not a problem for them?'[160] This unresolved dispute between the *toke* and *anak buah kapal* had escalated in the months before the violence on 28 August. In addition to the rising prices of basic goods, two days before the violence rumours had circulated around the port that 50 new trawlers were on their way to Cilacap from Bagansiapi-api. The number of permits issued for trawlers to operate from the Cilacap port was cited as already approximately 300, but fishermen's groups believed the actual number in operation was around 500 boats. It was well known among ABK and 'traditional fishermen' that the *toke* bribed the authorities to allow them to operate without permits and as a result the number had steadily increased.[161]

Jumat Kliwon and Harbour Gateways

> Whever Friday (Jumat) coincides with the Javanese day, Kliwon, it is prohibited for Cilacap fishermen to fish, but for Bagan(siapi-api) fishermen, there was no such prohibition. So we were angry and eventually this incident occurred. (An anonymous Cilacap fisherman)[162]

The complaints voiced by the ABK and'traditional' fishermen did not end with accusations of corruption and unfair wages and conditions. Theirs was also a grievance articulated in cultural and religious terms, which further problematised their relations with their ethnic Chinese, and mostly Christian, bosses. It was therefore perhaps no coincidence that the violence in Cilacap erupted on a Friday. Local fishermen had long complained that the *toke* forced them to go to sea on *Jumat Kliwon*, a day of rest and prayer traditionally observed by local fishermen,[163] 'Cilacap fishermen still very much obey tradition. This was not respected by

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[157] *Kompas*, 31 August 1998. Buyers in Europe, Singapore, Taiwan, PRC and elsewhere were paying up to 300% more for fish and seafood. For example, lobster was up from Rp70,000 per kilogram to Rp300,000 per kilogram.
[158] *Jakarta Post*, 9 September 1998.
[159] *Kompas*, 9 September 1998.
[160] *Jakarta Post*, 9 September 1998.
[161] Ibid.
[162] An anonymous fishermen. *Media Indonesia*, 28 August 1998.
[163] *Jumat Kliwon*, or the day when *Kliwon*, the fifth day of the Javanese calender falls on a Friday (once every 35 days) in the Javanese calender month of *Sura* is regarded by the fishermen of Cilacap as a day for making

the owners of the Bagan(siapi-api) boats who still take their boats to sea on *Jumat Kliwon*.' As the Vice-Secretary General of HNSI, Djimanto explained it further, 'In Cilacap, there is a firm belief that every *Jumat Kliwon* fishermen are forbidden from going to sea. This promise is a type of custom which is also obeyed by fishermen and business people who are outsiders so that no misunderstanding occurs, which could cause hostility'.[164]

Furthermore, as they themselves put it, the plight of the practice of 'traditional' fishing in Cilacap had been dealt yet another blow with the construction of a new harbour there in 1996.[165] Local fishermen attest that at that time they alerted the PPNC to the fact that the gateway to the new port from the open sea would be too narrow for their boats to pass through easily.[166] Their concerns were not addressed and, as they warned would be the case, the traditional fishing boats were forced to scrape through the gateway, often becoming damaged in the process.[167] The fishermen of Cilacap felt like they were under siege.

The day following the violence the trawler crews refused to resume work until an agreement for better wages and conditions was reached, 'No boats have yet set sail for sea. We are still waiting for the fishery port's agreement with the *toke* whether to raise our salaries or not', explained one ABK.[168] Shortly thereafter the fishermen were successful in gaining an increase in wages from Rp2,000 to Rp5,000 per day and an increase in the compensation payment for death at sea from Rp750,000 to Rp1 million.[169] It was also reported that following a '*rapat koordinasi*' or meeting to discuss the various issues raised by the fishermen, the harbour gateway would be widened.[170]

Race, Class and Justice

> The problem is justice, the problem was that the aspirations of the little people were not heard for years. (Head of HNSI)[171]
>
> Look at those newcomers from Bagan, they work for only two days and they have gotten rich. They have big capital, they pay us only Rp2,000 per day, never gave us a raise for the past six years and make profits hundreds of times over. (Siswadi, 22 year old, ABK)[172]

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ritual offerings to Nyai Roro Kidul, who is according to myth, the Queen of the South Seas. The custom of not going to sea on this day dates back to the 19th century after a decision made at that time by the local nobility and leaders of the fishing community. ('Sedekah Laut, Tradisi Nelayan Cilacap', *Suara Pembaruan*, 7 May 2000.)

[164] 'HNSI Mendesak Pemerintah Batasi Operasi Pukat Harimau', *Suara Pembaruan*, 19 October 1998.

[165] President Suharto opened the port in 1996.

[166] These comments seem curious because the traditional fishing vessel is narrower than a trawler, including a 'baby trawler' possibly used here. Therefore such a narrow harbor gateway would also prevent trawlers from entering. A more conceivable complaint regarding the width of the entrance is that if it is particularly narrow, it makes it difficult to enter the harbor in adverse weather conditions or at night. (Bailey, email correspondance, 13 July 2001).

[167] *Suara Karya*, 29 August 1998; Sabam Siagian, 'Kenapa Para nelayan di Cilacap Mesti Rusuh?' *Suara Pembaruan*, 5 September 1998.

[168] Suwarno in *Jakarta Post*, 1 September 1998.

[169] *Kompas*, 1 September 1998.

[170] The widening of the gateway was to be carried out as part of a military operation, 'Masuk Desa Menunggal Nelayan': (Siagian, 'Kenapa para nelayan'.)

[171] *Kompas*, 31 August 1998.

The growing economic and social disparity between the *toke* and their workers and the traditional fishermen in Cilacap provided the immediate context for the violence on 28 August 1998, that is a vertical or class conflict between employers and employees. However, the perception of the *toke* not only as exploitative and corrupt employers, but also as outsiders – as Chinese from Bagansiapi-api – means that this violence cannot be classified simply in this way. Why were the *toke*, residents of Cilacap for more than 20 years and whose children had been born and raised in the town still referred to as *nelayan pendatang*? Furthermore, although this violence can also be easily explained in terms of tradition versus modernisation, we need to recognise the cultural and ethnic distinction being made about the conflict over *Jumat Kliwon*, which is specific to this area. The violence against ethnic Chinese-owned trawlers moored at PPNC reveals a complex series of tensions and grievances, which had been accumulated by local fishermen over many years. Although their protest was essentially an economic one it is clear that for the fishermen the ethnicity of the *toke* and their 'otherness' was an important aspect of these grievances, which contained local and national dimensions. Events a few weeks later in Bagansiapi-api, the Riau fishing town from which the Chinese *toke* originated, and discussed below, prohibit an assessment of this violence in simply economic terms and force us to confront its ethnic dimension.[173]

BAGANSIAPI-API, 15 SEPTEMBER 1998

> The people have no food. (*Waspada* journalist)[174]

In Bagansiapi-api on 13 September 1998, a fight broke out between two youths – Zulkifli bin Ibrahim, an indigenous Indonesian and Supardi, an ethnic Chinese – after they were involved in a motorcycle collision. Two days later rumours circulated that Zulkifli had died on the way to hospital in Pekanbaru as a result of injuries inflicted by the ethnic Chinese youth. That evening, 15 September, around 3000 people from various parts of Bagansiapi-api converged on Bagan Kota district, the economic centre of the city and home to an ethnic Chinese majority. The crowds set fire to houses and shops in the area destroying approximately 500 buildings – shops, houses, a clinic, a cinema and a billiard hall – most of them built from wood. Places of worship, including a temple, were also attacked.[175] The next day troops from TNI, Brimob and the regional police were deployed from Dumai and Pekanbaru and 31 suspects detained.[176] At the time of the violence

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[172] *Jakarta Post*, 9 September 1998.
[173] There is a record of a similar protest against the use of trawlers at Gabion in North Sumatra on 24 June 1998. (Siagian, 'Kenapa para nelayan'.)
[174] *Waspada*, 16 September 1998.
[175] *Suara Pembaruan*, 17 September 1998.
[176] Lieutenant Colonel Luther Harefa, the police chief of the Bengkalis district of Riau province, is reported to say that the fires burned through until the following morning because the town lacked firefighting equipment. ('Anti Chinese Riots in Sumatra', *The Tribune*, 17 September 1998,available from <http://www.tribuneindia.com/98sep17/world.htm#8>, accessed 13 August 2001.)

many ethnic Chinese fled Bagansiapi-api seeking refuge in nearby towns and larger cities.[177] Others were sheltered by their indigenous neighbours or sought sanctuary at police stations or the district offices.[178] Schools remained closed for three days and a 24-hour neighbourhood security system (*siskamling)* was maintained.

Days after the violence, groups representing local ethnic Chinese, Melayu, Javanese, Buginese and Batak communities met for an *upacara silaturahmi* (friendship ceremony) to demonstrate their commitment to harmony and the re-building of Bagansiapi-api. Despite the violence they insisted that relations between ethnic Chinese and the rest of the community were amiable, 'For a long time the ethnic Chinese and the community here have lived in harmony'.[179] Local authorities stressed that the proceedings of the meeting that day did not in any way constitute a 'peace agreement' for the simple reason that there was no war to begin with.

'Fishy' Relations

> Every sudden change in policies or regulations by any Government might indeed upset certain established systems or investment, but compared with the aim of reaching social peace and stability, by way of providing better protection to the poor traditional fishermen mass, the disadvantages become very minor. (Imam Sardjono, Director General of Fisheries, 1980)[180]

With a population of 50,000 people, Bagansiapi-api is one of Indonesia's major fishing ports and was once one of the largest in the world exporting dried fish, dried prawns and shrimp paste.[181] From the late nineteenth until the late twentieth century, the role of the ethnic Chinese in its fishing industry was a major part of this success.[182] In 1998 ethnic Chinese were said to make up at least a third of the local population and generally worked as businessmen or *toke,* although one news report was careful to note that they also occupied 'normal' jobs alongside non-Chinese such as policemen and teachers.[183] However, Bagansiapi-api's fishing industry, though still substantial at the end of the 1990s, was a mere shadow of its former self from colonial times, or even during the the late 1960s and 1970s when a techological revolution in fishing saw it play a key role in Indonesian fisheries.

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[177] *Suara Pembaruan* (17 September 1998) reported that hundreds of Bagansiapi-api residents fled.
[178] Ibid.
[179] *Suara Pembaruan*, 21 September 1998.
[180] I. Sardjono, 'Trawlers banned in Indonesia', *ICLARM Newsletter*, 1980, 3(4), 3. Referring to the 1980 ban on trawlers.
[181] See J.G. Butcher, 'The Salt Farm and the Fishing Industry of Bagansiapi-api', *Indonesia*, 62, (October 1996), 91–121; Siauw Giok Tjhan, *Lima Jaman: Perwujudan Integrasi Wajar* (Amsterdam, Jakarta: Yayasan Teratai, 1981.) Siauw wrote that prior to World War II and until a decline in the pepper trade in the 1950s, Bagansiapi-api was the second largest harbour in the world after Bergen in Norway.
[182] Butcher, 'The Salt Farm'.
[183] *Kompas*, 19 September 1998.

Conor Bailey describes 1966 as a 'watershed' year for Indonesia's fishing industry as a whole and for Bagansiapi-api in particular.[184] That year, through their connection with ethnic Chinese fishermen in Malaysia who worked with trawlers there, ethnic Chinese fishermen from Bagansiapi-api brought trawlers to Indonesia for the first time. During the 1970s trawling spread throughout Indonesia, particularly along the north Java coast and Malacca Straits, but also to Cilacap in south Central Java, the only area conducive to trawling along that coastline.[185] The trawler was so identified with the place where it was first used in Indonesia that it became known locally as 'Bagansiapi-api trawler'. Although ethnic Chinese were the initial and perhaps the principal investors in trawlers, by 1980 many non-Chinese also had an interest in the industry. By the early 1970s, 800 Indonesian trawlers were operating in the Malacca Straits alone and between 1975-1977 their total number increased by 70 percent. As a consequence of the rapid growth in the use of trawlers, by 1979 it was obvious that the Malacca Straits and north Java coast were being overfished and most ominously, that the trawlers were forcing the marginalisation of traditional or small-scale fishermen in these areas. In the last years of the 1970s, the HNSI lobbied the government against the trawlers and for the rights of small-scale fisherman. Bailey and others believe, however, that in fact 'it was the willingness of small-scale fishers to resort to violence that prompted decisive action on the part of the Indonesian government.'[186] No 'official' reports of this violence exist, but there were many accounts given of casualties and of damage to boats from this time.[187]

In October 1980 Suharto issued Presidential Decree No.39 imposing a ban on the use of trawlers in waters off Java and Sumatra.[188] This was followed by Presidential Instruction No.11 1981, which extended the ban nationwide. The ban was by most accounts effectively enforced, though it was possible to continue operating these boats by simply altering some of the gear, and therefore no longer being by strict definition, a trawler. The loss of the trawlers forced the local economy of Bagansiapi-api into a rapid decline as the earnings from exporting shrimp ceased. The void left by the trawlers led to an influx of new labour entering the industry, however these small-scale operations did not possess anywhere near the same capacity for export earnings. In 1992 the local government in Bagansiapi-api exerted added pressure on the remaining operators when it formed the Association of Fishermen for the purpose of collecting dues from local fish traders.[189] The association also enforced 'protective' measures to regulate the industry and sought rents from boat owners. As a consequence smuggling rackets emerged which took premium produce to markets overseas, thereby

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[184] Connor Bailey, 'Lessons from Indonesia's 1980 trawler ban', *Marine Policy*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (1997), 225–235; Bailey, 'The Political Economy of Marine Fisheries, 25–38.

[185] Bailey, 'Lessons from Indonesia's 1980 trawler ban', 226. Cilacap's shallow seas and sandy seabed made it suitable for trawling for prawns.

[186] Ibid., 229.

[187] See Ibid.; Sardjono, 'Trawlers banned in Indonesia'. Bailey believes that anti-trawler sentiment was still high after the ban. This is indicated by the threats given to a trawler operated by a government resource body to conduct resources surveys in the 1980s.

[188] During this same year President Suharto issued a variety of 'affirmative action' Presidential Decrees. This included Presidential Decision No.14a/1980, which stated that no less than 50% of capital should be owned by *pribumi*. (Siauw, *Lima Jaman*, 413.)

[189] Bailey, 'Lessons from Indonesia's 1980 trawler ban'.

making it more and more difficult to find a quality product to sell in the domestic market. Jobs were lost and the local economy suffered.

'Api dalam sekam' [190] *(Where there is smoke...)*

Despite the emphatic message promoted at the 'friendship ceremony' after 15 September 1998, relations between ethnic Chinese and non-Chinese in Bagansiapi-api had been slowly deteriorating for some time. The abandonment of sponsorship programs of local youth groups and community activities run by ethnic Chinese business groups – influential in maintaining harmony between local groups – in 1997-98 as a consequence of the economic downturn, signalled the tenuous state of relations. Added economic pressures in the period preceding the violence created a context in which anti-Chinese sentiment had the potential to escalate. Like the incident on 7 September in Kebumen, West Java,[191] the violence in Bagansiapi-api – after an altercation between a *pribumi* and an ethnic Chinese – was seen as inevitable. Indeed, some reports described ethnic Chinese in Bagansiapi-api as being prepared for 'something like this' to occur[192] and residents were not surprised when the violence broke out.[193] In some neighbourhoods where Chinese lived, residents had prepared to defend themselves with spears, knives, batons and dogs. The Police Chief described the atmosphere in Bagansiapi-api before the September violence as being on edge – like *'api dalam sekam'* the threat was certain, but it was not known where or when it would appear.[194]

There is evidence that the violence on the evening of 15 September was to some extent organised or coordinated. The leader of the local branch of Bakom PKB, Candra, an ethnic Chinese whose own home was destroyed, testified seeing people in the crowd throwing plastic bags filled with gasoline onto the roofs of houses and shops.[195] Police later arrested three men they suspected of being the 'brains' behind the operation, at least two of whom were members of the local youth group 'Bendahara',[196] although they were careful to insist that the involvement of these individuals did not implicate the organisation as a whole.[197]

Links To Cilacap?: 'Fish and Firebombs'[198] *Revisited*

One can only speculate as to how it was that eighteen years after the ban on trawlers was issued, these boats continued to operate in such numbers out of the Cilacap harbour. However as stated earlier, simple gear

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[190] Rob Goodfellow, *Api Dalam Sekam: The New Order and the Ideology of Anti-Communism*, (Clayton: CSEAS, Monash Asia Institute, 1995). Goodfellow uses the term to refer to the way in which the New Order interpreted the 'communist threat'. He defines *'api dalam sekam'* as an expression 'which refers to a fire deep within a rice chaff, although there is no smoke or flame it cannot be presumed that there is no heat.'
[191] Saharjo, *Rusuh di Kebumen.* For a detailed description of this incident see appendix J.
[192] *Republika*, 17 September 1998.
[193] Ediruslan, Baganiapi-api resident. *Kompas*, 19 September 1998.
[194] *Media Indonesia*, 19 September 1998
[195] *Jakarta Post*, 17 September 1998.
[196] *Suara Karya*, 17 September 1998.
[197] *Kompas*, 19 September 1998.

changes may have avoided this, as would 'cooperation' from officials, many of whom were 'scornful' of the trawler ban as they saw it as the most productive means available to the industry. Generally, Suharto's weakening power from the early 1990s may have allowed the enforcement of the ban to 'slip'.[199] The violence targeting ethnic Chinese in both Cilacap and Bagansiapi-api, occurring just two weeks apart, cannot be considered to be a coincidence. Although on different islands and facing different seas, the link between the fishing industries of Bagansiapi-api and Cilacap and past anti-trawler violence connect these incidents. The *toke* in Cilacap continued to be identified with Bagansiapi-api. Rumours of more trawlers arriving from Bagansiapi-api, perceived as a threat by the fishermen at Cilacap, indicate that communication between these two fishing towns was frequent, and that similarly relations between Chinese and non-Chinese were competitive and hostile.

Yet, the crowds in Bagansiapi-api in mid-September 1998 did not target trawlers or *toke* for violence, but property owned by ethnic Chinese. Further, this violence did not originate from a protest for higher wages, but followed a brawl between a Chinese and *pribumi*. The operation of illegal trawlers was not the only source of antagonism between Chinese and non-Chinese communities in Bagansiapi-api, nor demanding better working conditions the objective. The Riau Police Commander stopped short of stating that there was a link between those responsible for the violence elsewhere in Indonesia at that time with those in Bagansiapi-api, but instead pointed to the similar pattern of the violence in Bagansiapi-api with other places in which an issue involving a *pribumi* and a non-*pribumi* led to wider violence.[200] As he stated quite rightly, it cannot be said that the 'same' actors were involved in each of these incidents, however news of the Cilacap violence would have been heard by those in Bagansiapi-api, who were experiencing similar economic strains and held the same sorts of resentments towards the large ethnic Chinese community there.

HOLIS

A Prelude: Ketapang, Ambon and Christian Versus Muslim: A New Reason to Fear

> Potential social conflicts have long remained buried and unaddressed because of the decades-long security approach imposed by the state. (Rusdi Muchtar, LIPI)[201]
>
> (T)he religion which has been slandered is Christianity and the race which has been slandered is Chinese. Why is this so? Because they are the same: there are people in the government channelling money to the Christians. (Aendra H. Medita)[202]

On 22 November 1998 a fight broke out in Ketapang, Jakarta between the Ambonese guard of a gambling house and a rival group.[203] A rumour circulated that Christian Ambonese had torched a mosque. Locals

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[198] Part of title taken from Bailey, 'The Political Economy of Marine Fisheries'.
[199] Bailey, email correspondence, 13 July 2001.
[200] *Kompas*, 19 September 1998.
[201] 'Habibie condemns Kupang violence', *Jakarta Post*, 2 December 1998.
[202] 'SARA Itu Alat Pemukul dari Rezim Soeharto', *D&R*, 4 January 1999.

responded by attacking churches, Christian schools, houses, vehicles and other property in the area.[204] Fourteen people were killed, some of them after being lynched on the street by groups of men and their bodies mutilated. One week later in Kupang, West Timor, in an apparent act of retaliation for the Ketapang violence,[205] four mosques were burned, five others damaged and houses and shops also destroyed.[206] Less than two months later the first fighting broke out between Muslims and Christians in Ambon. More than fifty people were killed in what was the beginning of a conflict that has continued until the present day.[207] Across Indonesia at the end of 1998, the violence at Ketapang was quickly represented and interpreted not as a gangland war over control of inner-city territory, but rather as Muslim-Christian violence. Governors and military commanders warned of more to come. Though these cases involved non-Chinese ethnic groups, the new and ready presence of Muslim-Christian violence within the national discourse, meant that ethnic Chinese were aware that violence against Christian Chinese and others remained a possibility. The veracity of conspiracy theories such as that touted by Aendra H. Medita, cited at the beginning of this paragraph, was of little consequence to them.

7 March 1999

> The potential for a riot in West Java is sufficiently great. Don't wait until a riot like that in Ambon occurs in West Java. To ensure this, we have to be proactive. (Governor of West Java, Nuriana, 20 January 1999.)[208]

On the morning of Sunday 7 March 1999 dozens of people gathered at the entrance to the Taman Rahayu luxury housing estate in Holis situated on the southern outskirts of Bandung. They included people from a nearby kampung who had come to protest about the use of a shophouse (*ruko*) on the housing estate as a place of worship. How the crowd came to assemble at the entrance to the housing estate is told in a number of ways by locals, the police and the wider Bandung community. It is known for certain that the crowd, once inside the estate, moved directly to the shophouse used for prayer meetings and religious ceremonies by followers of the Christian group Ho Kim Tong and ransacked its contents. They then moved to Taman Holis, another housing estate only three kilometres away. Stones were thrown at buildings along Jalan Holis as the crowd passed by. At Taman Holis the group went directly to a three-storey building which housed a kindergarten

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[203] This was less than a week after sixteen people, including nine students, were killed at Semanggi as they protested at the Special Session of the MPR.
[204] 'Kerusuhan Ketapang', *Suara Pembaruan*, 23 November 1998.
[205] Benjamin Mangkoedilaga from Komnas Ham, investigated the Kupang violence in December 1998 and concluded that there was no indication of retaliation but that it was 'plotted so that it looked like an inter-religion conflict.' ('"Third Party" behind bloody riots', *Jakarta Post*, 21 December 1998.) However, he noted it was perception, which was most important, rather than the facts about responsibility for this violence.
[206] 17 people were injured at Kupang. Reportedly, people gathered in a peaceful demonstration of mourning for the Ketapang victims before the violence broke out. (*Jakarta Post*, 2 December 1998.)
[207] In February 2002 the International Crisis Group estimated that at least 5000 people (perhaps as many as 10,000) had been killed; 'Indonesia: The Search for Peace in Maluku, 8 February 2002, available from http://www.crisisweb.org/projects/showreport.cfm?reportid=544, accessed 10 October 2002.
[208] *Pikiran Rakyat*, 20 January 1999.

and primary school run by a Christian organisation. Windows and doors in the building were broken and the contents of some of the rooms including desks, chairs and computer equipment destroyed.[209] The crowd then progressed to a third housing estate, Taman Kopo Indah II, where they reportedly broke windows in ten *ruko* before being stopped by crowd control troops (Dalmas) mid-afternoon.

There are conflicting reports about the level of spontaneity of this protest. Some local residents report that just before the attack on the Ho Kim Tong building a becak driver was involved in a collision with a car driven by an ethnic Chinese.[210] When the car failed to stop after the accident, a group of becak drivers in the area moved to the Taman Rahayu estate, from where it was assumed the car had come. Existing grievances and complaints regarding the extra traffic caused by people coming and going to services at the Ho Kim Tong building in the estate – almost all of whom were ethnic Chinese – became the focus for their frustration following this incident. In this case the ensuing violence was described as 'spontaneous'. Others maintain that at least some of the participants in the violence arrived at the estate in trucks from outside the area and that those who carried out the violence were not locals, 'What I know is that the 'masses' mentioned were not residents from around the complex. I did not recognise their faces.'[211] It was only when extra people arrived at the gates to the estate, allegedly in trucks, and began to incite the people gathered to force their way onto the estate, that the crowd became violent.[212]

'Gereja Aneh', Permits and Urban Sprawl

The level of tension with regard to the Ho Kim Tong 'church' was well known in the area. This was not the first time the residents of the nearby kampung had protested about the noise levels generated by music and singing coming from the *ruko* and also about the increased traffic through the kampung on days when the congregation met, which was not restricted to Sundays. Previously they had made complaints to the estate manager as well as the church leaders themselves and had even approached leaders from other Christian churches to ask that they put their complaints to Ho Kim Tong. However the situation had never improved. Yet despite this dispute, locals reported that before the violence on 7 March there had not been any significant acrimony between the kampung residents and ethnic Chinese living in the luxury housing estates. They claim that everyday relations between these groups were harmonious, admitting though that tension and resentment lay just below the surface. The local police commander claimed it was only after the Ho Kim Tong began to use the *ruko* in Taman Rahayu as a *'tempat ibadah'* or place of worship that conflicts between these groups began to emerge.[213]

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[209] Only rooms used for religious services were attacked. (Interview with Martinus from Bandung-based CSO, Forum for Human Rights (FRONT), 10 April 2001.)
[210] Interview with Harry Dim, Holis, 11 April 2001.
[211] *Republika*, 8 March 1999. Members of local CSOs also believed this to be the case. Police arrested 'provocateurs', who included recidivist criminals.
[212] *Pikiran Rakyat*, 10 March 1999.
[213] *Suara Merdeka*, 8 March 1999.

Bandung residents variously describe the Ho Kim Tong Christian church as '*gereja aneh*' (strange church) and '*gereja karismatik*' (charismatic church). Established by ethnic Chinese Christians in Bandung, the church is evangelical, with services involving loud music and prayer.[214] For two years before the March 1999 attack the congregation had used the *ruko* at Taman Rahayu as a meeting place for prayer and ceremonies, yet failed to obtain a permit from the Department of Religion to establish a church.[215] Following the attack, representatives from the Department of Religion maintained that the congregation had been sent letters to remind them of their obligation to gain its permission before they could conduct religious services in the new premises. This permission was, one representative explained, dependent on the support of local residents, 'This is something we always emphasise in meetings with the board of the church'.[216] It appears that initially the locals, many of whom worked in houses on the estate and therefore in whose interest it was to avoid conflict, were tolerant of the presence of the church at Taman Rahayu. However, the unwillingness of church leaders to compromise on issues such as noise levels and traffic meant that this opportunity was missed. As a consequence locals started to view the presence of the 'church' in more general terms as a violation of laws regarding the establishment of churches – that is, a religious and legal issue – rather than as a dispute to be settled through local mediation. 'We have already protested because using it as a place of worship is not in keeping with the function of that building. What is more, most residents in this area are Muslim'.[217] Re-focusing this dispute from a neighbourhood squabble to a conflict over the legality of the 'church' was a crucial development. Controversy and disputation over the right to establish churches already constituted a nationwide discourse. Events at Situbondo, Tasikmalaya and Rengasdengklok previously examined are examples of the extension of this debate into violence.

Before the development of the three 'luxury' housing estates, the land on the outskirts of the city of Bandung was covered with rice fields and kampungs. During the early 1990s expansion of the city, developers bought up such land on the southern periphery, conveniently situated just off the toll road ringing the city. As a result, kampung dwellers, most of whom were very poor found themselves living alongside the rich and in many cases became reliant on them for work. The continuing economic pressures before and after Suharto's resignation created conditions described by one Holis resident as so tense they were almost at breaking point.[218]

Most homes and shophouses damaged during the violence on the three estates were owned or occupied by ethnic Chinese. This can be stated with confidence because most residents living in the 'luxury' estates were ethnic Chinese. The two buildings inside these estates targeted directly by the crowd – the shophouses at Blok A Taman Rahayu and the kindergarten and primary school at Taman Holis – were both associated with Christian groups, of which most followers in this area were also ethnic Chinese. The damage done to other houses and shophouses in and around the housing estates were less directed but, as explained

[214] Interview with Helen Lok, Bandung, 12 April 2001.
[215] *Pikiran Rakyat*, 9 March 1999
[216] Ibid.
[217] Ibid.
[218] Dim interview.

above, it is probable that mostly ethnic Chinese occupied them. Although it is difficult to say definitively who made up the 'crowd' involved in the violence that day or even why they chose that morning to escalate the level of their protest about the shophouse, it can be said that to an extent these targets were pre-determined and some of the actors skilled. This was not a spontaneous event but neither was it a planned action by outsiders as an attempt to destabilise the area. Local knowledge and previous grievances were the basis for this action, however the conditions or 'predisposition' dictating how the crowd were able to assemble, to turn to violence and why they were not stopped, were much wider than that.

Anti-Chinese Sentiment, Local Riot Systems and An Absence of Surprise

> Actually since three months ago we have already anticipated something like this. However because the situation is now different, for example there is the case of Ambon... The people's emotions can easily become difficult. (Governor of West Java, Nuriana)[219]

This admission by the Governor of West Java and general lack of surprise expressed in response to the violence at Holis goes to show both the level of tension and also the normalcy of violence in society at the time, particularly concerning issues involving religious and ethnic difference. It indicates also that whilst condemning it, political and military leaders still regarded violence as inevitable. In fact six weeks before the violence at Holis, the Governor had warned of the potential for violence, declaring, 'I can't see what direction it will come from. But we must prevent it. There has not yet been an occurrence, but we should not be deceived by the calm. So prepare the umbrella before the rain'.[220]

Whilst some local ethnic Chinese describe the conditions in Bandung at that time as being at breaking point, others qualify this by saying that the tension was no more and no less than had been 'normal' over the previous three years. Soeria, an ethnic Chinese businessman and artisan in Bandung, stressed that since the violence against ethnic Chinese and Christians in Tasikmalaya and Rengasdengklok (both in West Java province) in late 1996 and early 1997, Chinese in Bandung had been living in fear of an outbreak of widespread violence.[221] At that time he and some of his ethnic Chinese friends had been so alarmed that they had written to foreign embassies requesting protection. However, Soeria testifies, they had been too afraid to even sign these letters. The 'memory' of violent incidents against churches on the basis of disputes over their legality and applications for permits, is valuable for understanding how the violence at Holis came about. In the same way that Soeria draws on the memory of his fear during the attacks in Rengasdengklok and Tasikmalaya, examples of previous violence enabled locals at Holis and those who led them to perceive the legitimacy of their actions. Following the violence, a disturbing and potentially inflammatory debate emerged in the public sphere, providing further evidence that this incident – although local – was also part of a much larger, growing national trend. Islamic leaders from various local groups accused the police and the Department of Religion of discrimination against non-Christian groups because they had failed to prosecute

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[219] *Pikiran Rakyat*, 9 March 1999.
[220] *Pikiran Rakyat*, 20 January 1999
[221] Interview with Soeria Disastra, Bandung, 7 April 2001.

churches operating without the appropriate permit. One accused, 'When the police apparatus have a discriminatory attitude it is clearly destroying the police corps entirely...So we appeal that the police apparatus immediately act to arrest, investigate or detain those who have clearly violated the law.'[222] Furthermore, the mayor of Bandung admitted to sympathising with the frustration of the local people regarding the status of the church, commenting, 'a shophouse is only for living and trading in. Not for religious services'.[223]

CONCLUSIONS

Disturbing Trends

> How can we explain the alarming complicity of 'good people' to outbreaks of radical violence perpetrated by the state, police, military and ethnic groups? (Nancy Scheper-Hughes.)[224]

> As the explanation goes...they have already known for two years that they were violating the law, namely carrying out religious services in a shophouse. But why didn't the security apparatus take any action against them? Until now, worship at religious services by these two groups mentioned is done freely, there has been no investigation and no-one has been arrested. (Secretary General Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia Jabar, HM Daud Gunawan.)[225]

Precedents for the type of violence carried out in Holis, Bagansiapi-api and Cilacap can be identified in each case. Anti-trawler violence prior to 1980 (and very possibly thereafter) occurred at Cilacap and Bagansiapi-api.[226] In West Java the violence against churches in Rengasdengklok and Tasikmalaya in 1996-1997, and the recent violence in Ketapang and Ambon, contributed to a readily evoked 'memory of violence'. The image of 'anti-Chinese violence' was effectively manipulated by the New Order in order to maintain a fearful stability. After the New Order ended, these recollections of how to carry out violence, of how to conduct an 'anti-Chinese riot' remained and were engaged by locals for their own purposes, including the pursuit of private or community justice.

In January 1999, Alwi Shihab (then Dean of the Paramadinamulya University in Jakarta), highlighted the connection between a government that was failing the people and violence:

> What happens at the bottom levels (of society) usually reflects the situation at the top levels...If the people believe that the government has failed to find a solution to their problems, they will find their own way. This is very dangerous for our country in the future.[227]

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[222] The Coordinator of Tim Pembelaan Umat Islam Teraniaya, Abdul Choliq Wijaya. *Pikiran Rakyat*, 10 March 1999.
[223] *Pikiran Rakyat*, 9 March 1999.
[224] Quoted in Das and Kleinman, *Remaking a World*, 16.
[225] *Pikiran Rakyat*, 10 March 1999.
[226] After the 1980 ban, the Governor of West Java could not guarantee the safety of a trawler being used for research purposes off the south Java coast. (Bailey, email correspondance, 2001.)
[227] *Jakarta Post*, 11 January 1999.

In Cilacap and Holis, those involved in the violence revolted against fellow residents whom they believed were blatantly breaking laws. In Cilacap this was a law banning trawlers and in Holis it was over permits to establish a church. In both cases those 'breaking' the laws were ethnic Chinese who did so with the help of corrupt officials. Yet, it is too simple to say these movements are 'anti-law breaking'. Why choose these particular targets when corruption was rife throughout the bureaucracy, for example? These cases highlight another clue in the context of *reformasi* and uses of violence in this transitional period. Like the cases of community justice in East Java,[228] *reformasi* was interpreted by many Indonesians as a new freedom to resolve injustices, perceived or real, by means of mass mobilisation. Like the students at the Parliament in mid-May 1998, local groups recognised their power to oppose the source of their hardship and those 'breaking the law'. In Cilacap and Holis local residents involved in the attacks on ethnic Chinese property may also have made their attacks on these targets because they were not so close to the centre of power as to prove risky. Some of the ethnic Chinese targeted were law breakers, but at the same time the officials and bureaucrats who allowed the laws to be flouted were not attacked.

In Bagansiapi-api and Kebumen, the violence against ethnic Chinese property was not so much driven by a sense of injustice at infringement of particular laws, as by personal grievances and general frustration attached to prejudices against ethnic Chinese. Not unlike many incidents of anti-Chinese violence in the past, in each case the alleged beating of a *pribumi* by an ethnic Chinese precipitated the widespread violence.[229] Similarly, both communities appeared to have achieved high levels of assimilation or tolerance between Chinese and non-Chinese residents. Chinese businesses had actively encouraged this through sponsorship of community programs. The violence in each case exposed ethnic prejudices, or specifically, anti-Chinese sentiments, which many had believed were long buried.

The public sentiments that allowed the 'anti-Chinese riot' to gain the power it had under the New Order existed after Suharto resigned. Whilst, as Sidel claims[230], it may have lost its political power, local communities still deemed that there was something to be gained from anti-Chinese violence. Violence against ethnic Chinese in the late New Order period can be analysed in terms of it being a political tool of both the leaders and challengers of the autocratic regime. Yet such violence after the fall of Suharto was without these same vertical links, arguably it did not have the same purpose. Instead this violence needs to be examined in the broader social context of forces for retribution, and justice-seeking in Indonesia at this time. That is, in response to laws broken, unfair advantages and corruption. As the *reformasi* protest demanded, such violations were no longer to be tolerated. The drive for the incidents of violence in post-New Order Indonesia detailed here, originate from within their local systems, and from local memories of how to carry them out, not through channels of military or para-military command. This was also people power.

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[228] Herriman, 'Violence and Ideology in the Murder of Sorcerers'.
[229] See Mackie, 'Anti-Chinese Outbreaks', 100; 135–137.
[230] Sidel, 'Riots, Church Burnings', 59.

V. CONCLUSION

> It is normal for the people to see and experience violence and this means that they no longer consider violence to be wrong. The people even consider that violence is one of the ways to resolve a problem. (Solidaritas Nusa Bangsa)[1]

This study began by asking the question: Is there anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia? It found that anti-Chinese violence indeed occurred before and after the New Order. This violence took different forms and appeared in different contexts. Certain patterns, themes and agents kept reappearing, however. This study also accepted the challenge of Brass to identify whose interests are served by proclaiming that ethnic hostility is the predominant motive for the acts of the crowd involved in violence.[2] Similarly, it asked who benefits from a representation of the violence as being differently motivated?

This investigation found that, as a consequence of the New Order's policy of institutionalised racial prejudice, anti-Chinese violence was represented as normal and everyday in Indonesia when it involved a perceived injustice enacted by an ethnic Chinese or the minority as a whole. Moreover, despite the fall of the New Order, these acts continued to be engaged by the *massa* and the discourse surrounding them used by religious and political groups and for their own aims. Many representations of anti-Chinese violence erase racialised sentiments as explanations for the violence, while others essentialise such aspects. Each has the same outcome: neutralising the effects of the violence. This study argues for an approach to violence against ethnic Chinese which recognises its basis in Indonesia's discriminatory policies and trends toward violence as a solution. Anti-Chinese violence constitutes a part of what Robinson refers to as a 'culture of violence' in Indonesia's military, and also, I argue, in wider society.[3]

DISCOURSE AND THE NORMALITY OF VIOLENCE IN THE INDONESIAN STATE

A central theme throughout this study has been the way anti-Chinese violence as a discourse and an act is considered normal or everyday rather than extraordinary in Indonesian society. It has explored the complicity of the state in creating a context in which 'anti-Chinese violence' has benefits both for its institutions, and for the people who engage in violence. The New Order state utilised anti-Chinese hostility in society to deflect blame, to preserve a fear of violence, and to cultivate an 'outsider' against whom they could define the 'insider'. As a consequence, the *massa* and the specialists involved in carrying out these acts of violence were assured of impunity.

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[1] Solidaritas Nusa Bangsa, 'Kekerasan Terorganisir dan Konflik Sosial di Indonesia', *Seri Pendidikan Anti-Diskriminasi*, No.10, (October 2000), 37–38.
[2] Brass, *Theft of an Idol*, 267.
[3] Robinson defined it as 'a complex and ever-changing system of norms, discourse and behaviour, in which violence is a defining feature'. Geoffrey Robinson, 'The Fruitless Search for a Smoking Gun: Tracing the Origins of Violence in East Timor', in *Roots of Violence in Indonesia*, eds Freek Colombijn and J. Thomas Lindblad (Singapore: ISEAS, 2002), 234.

Previous research has documented the persistence of anti-Chinese violence through the history of the Indonesian state.[4] Scholars have recently begun to question the uses of a discourse of 'anti-Chinese' violence in the New Order which is heavily reliant upon this 'fact' of a historical legacy of anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia.[5] They have observed that acts of anti-Chinese violence were manipulated by the New Order government for its own benefit as they had been by the Dutch government. Now the discourse itself – interpretations of its historicity and continuity – was used to conjure up fears and to cover up motives for social unrest considered to be more damaging to the cohesion of the state.

The language of the New Order constantly questioned the position of ethnic Chinese in Indonesian society, creating a context within which not only the government but also the *massa*, could present discrimination, prejudice and acts of violence against this minority group as justifiable, normal and in some cases, legal. The New Order represented a certain set of identifying factors, patterns and themes of violence, as anti-Chinese violence. This discourse developed into a set of memories about these events and, critically, knowledge of the impunity granted its perpetrators.[6] The 'normality' of anti-Chinese violence in certain situations in both New Order and post-New Order Indonesia, almost erased from public and also scholarly consciousness an awareness of anti-Chinese antipathy as a motive for violence. The patterns and themes that defined anti-Chinese violence as 'normal' within this context included an identifiable root cause that could be directly related to ethnic Chinese. An argument between a Chinese employer and his employee, a fight between a Chinese and *pribumi*, a motor vehicle accident involving a Chinese, were incidents fitting this pattern. This set of defining characteristics not only allowed the state and the *massa* to escape repercussions for violent action, but it also enabled Chinese themselves to deny that violence against them is ethnically motivated. Whose interests are served by particular representations of ethnic violence in Indonesia?

The case of Solo in this study affirmed Pandey's observations after violence in communal India.[7] A representation of this violence as caused by something other than racialised sentiments, enables the victims to resume their lives alongside neighbours who days earlier may have ransacked their homes. Similarly, denying certain acts of violence are ethnically motivated but rather related to issues of economic resentment, criminal activity or religious conflict, enables the state to play certain cards when convenient and to ignore its own complicity in forging these prejudices. Ethnicity is erased in favour of explanations related to state violence, local crime and economic competition. Aguilar observed in relation to the May 1998 violence, 'the absence of state provocateurs might have meant a deep rupture on the conventional story of Chinese engagement in Indonesian society.'[8] On the other hand, essentialising the racialised nature of the violence allows the state to continue to engage in discrimination and prejudice against this minority, by (thinly)

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[4] Somers, *Peranakan Chinese Politics*, 1965; Mackie, 'Anti-Chinese outbreaks'; Coppel, *Indonesian Chinese in Crisis*; Shiraishi, 'Anti-Sinicism in Java's New Order'.
[5] Heryanto, 'Rape, Race'; Sidel, 'Riots, Church Burnings'; Aguilar, 'Citizenship, Inheritance'.
[6] Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 359–360.
[7] Pandey, 'In Defense of the Fragment'.
[8] Aguilar, 'Citizenship, Inheritance', 501–533.

disguising them as measures to limit divisions and conflicts. In Rengasdengklok for example, representations of the violence as 'anti-Chinese' essentialised ethnic hostilities to the point where problems caused by the ill-administration of government regulations concerning church building and the growing gap between rich and poor in a rapidly developing Indonesian society, were not considered relevant. The New Order discourse of anti-Chinese violence highlights 'Chineseness' as a root cause and promotes ideas of justification, inevitability and impunity, whilst the discourse used in Solo and by others erases the ethnic or anti-Chinese nature of the violence altogether.

Neither of these approaches results in analysis that can satisfactorily understand the agency of the *massa*, that is, why the public follows. The factors that compel members of the crowd to attack ethnic Chinese property in places as far apart as Rengasdengklok and Bagansiapi-api include frustration, poverty, sense of inequality and powerlessness but also ethnic prejudices.

Impunity and Representations of Anti-Chinese Violence

> Some riots are caused, some bring themselves into being. (Vikram Seth)[9]

Representations of violence against ethnic Chinese profoundly impact on the outcomes of prosecutions, rehabilitation and reconciliation among communities in Indonesia. In Solo residents and local leaders evoked memories of previous violence in that city in 1980 and 1965–66.[10] They even argued that there was an historical cycle of such violence. Simply, it was 'inevitable' and they were not responsible. Equally, the local Chinese used this same set of memories to argue that the 1998 violence was not anti-Chinese. Critically also, by representing the agents of the violence as provocateurs and its form as an orchestrated event, Solo's ethnic Chinese were able protect their place in that community and reconciliation between ethnic groups was not found necessary. In contrast, interpretations by the Indonesian public of the violence in Situbondo and Tasikmalaya created a context within which the violence in Rengasdengklok easily followed. Like in Solo, associations of impunity and inevitability opened the way for this incident. But contrary to this later case, this impunity hinged on interpretations of the violence as justifiable anti-Chinese violence. The violence in Rengasdengklok fitted the normal pattern for anti-Chinese violence. The fate of Cik Gue and her husband, both imprisoned on charges of blasphemy and inciting violence by defaming Islam, is in contrast to that of the people who burned her home and business and hundreds more owned by ethnic Chinese in that town in January 1997, who escaped punishment. The reason commonly accepted for anti-Chinese violence – that an ethnic Chinese had committed a crime, offended Islam, or cheated an employee – allowed this explanation to be set apart from the notion that racism or anti-Chinese sentiment played a part in it. As Aguilar proposed with regard to the May incidents, 'Had the violence erupted spontaneously out of pure racial hatred, the recent

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[9] Vikram Seth, *A Suitable Boy: A Novel*, New York, Harper Collins, 1993, 245.
[10] See Chapter III.

past would also demand a reconceptualisation.'[11] Whether acts of violence against ethnic Chinese in Indonesia during this period were described as 'anti-Chinese' violence, as state terrorism, premanism or by some other name – they had in common the assurance of impunity for the perpetrators. The responses to such violence by the state, the *massa* and ethnic Chinese were uniformly, 'The state did it', or 'They asked for it'. Furthermore, appreciation of the benefits of racialised violence did not disappear from society with the end of the New Order.

The Politics of Anti-Chinese Violence

Wieviorka's thesis that all ethnic violence is to some extent political is borne out in this study.[12] During the period examined, state institutions including the police, military, political and religious groups found the discourse of 'anti-Chinese' violence useful for shifting blame and were able to politicise it for their own gains. At a time of political transition in Indonesia, these acts of violence against ethnic Chinese were integral events in the battle between Islamic groups vying for political significance towards the end of Suharto's rule, as the debate after the violence at Situbondo, Tasikmalaya and Rengasdengklok demonstrated. In these cases violence against ethnic Chinese residents was essentially due to local prejudices and antagonisms such as competition and jealousies. The systems and agents that facilitated this mass violence, although not unique to each town, were local. It is clear that these incidents of violence were shaped by the state's discriminatory policies, its laws regarding permits to build churches and its support for corruption and *cukongism*. These cases all involved attacks on non-Muslim places of worship and were taken up by the government as a part of its wider political discourse about restrictions on freedoms of expression in relation to SARA issues and to push a policy of greater military control. Certain Islamic groups also appropriated the violence into their political agendas after they occurred.

Although primarily the result of spontaneous attempts by farmers and fishermen to reduce prices for basic goods, the violence in towns across Java in January and February 1998 provides more definite links to the national condition. Events at the national level are evidence that the 'local' violence cannot be isolated from 'macro' concerns including the economic crisis, IMF pressures to lift subsidies and the test of patriotism ('I Love Rupiah' campaign) launched by Suharto's daughter, Tutut. There is evidence of groups moving from place to place across Java inciting others to violence during this time indicating that in addition to local systems for violence, extra-local systems were also active. The violence in Java in early 1998, itself became political. As time progressed, the violence took on more organised forms as increasingly political and religious groups placed it at the centre of their activities. The anti-Chinese nature of this violence was used to take the heat off a government in major crisis.

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[11] Ibid., 503.
[12] Wieviorka, *The Arena of Racism*, 67–68.

The incidents of violence in Medan, Jakarta, Solo and other cities in May 1998 were undeniably national. Besides their spread and scale they were linked to national movements, both legitimate and semi-legitimate including Pemuda Pancasila, and sections of ABRI, particularly Kopassus and the intelligence agencies. Its racialised or ethnic form reflects the extent to which this type of violence, which was carried out in large part by agents of the state, was institutionalised by the New Order regime and constituted a central principle of its functioning. Anti-Chinese violence formed a part of the overall mass violence during this time, which also included violence against urban poor, violence against women and acts of violence motivated by economic frustration.

Sidel rightly observed that the 'anti-Chinese riot' largely disappeared from government and public rhetoric during the transitional period in spite of the abundance of 'military conspiracies and "communal" conflicts'.[13] However events of violence against ethnic Chinese did not cease. As this study shows, the element of anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia which is locally based should not be overlooked. Although grand conspiracy theories play an undeniable part, they cannot be the whole story. The cases in and after May 1998 show that anti-Chinese violence was a continued expression of the same local particularities – systems, motives and agents – that facilitated it before. The national rhetoric may have changed, but local realities had not.

Within a '(re)democratising' Indonesia, as Sidel calls it, the people were given the power, at last, to speak and act for themselves, with varied outcomes. Like the violence against ethnic Chinese at the end of 1996 and beginning of 1997, these events can be seen as an expression of 'people power', as a struggle for justice against corruption and for equality. Whilst these earlier 'protests' lacked political clout (other than that appropriated by the government and powerful organisations for their own benefits), post-May 1998 the violence against ethnic Chinese was a part of the national context of reform. Although, as Sidel observed, alternative discourses of violence may have replaced the 'anti-Chinese riot', clearly the ethnically motivated sentiments and understanding of the benefits of this form of violence were still in place in the immediate post-Suharto period.

THE PERSISTENCE AND CONSISTENCY OF ANTI-CHINESE VIOLENCE

A study of anti-Chinese violence in May 1998 and post-May 1998 allows a critical examination of theories which predominantly attribute this form of violence to the operations of an autocratic regime and locate its sources within these institutions. The post-May violence forces us, more than ever, to confront the idea of individual agency and local hostilities – fed by a 'history' of hostile rhetoric from the New Order regime – as sources of anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia. Further, our understandings of violence after May 1998 need to recognise the influence of the events in May and people's memories of them.

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[13] Sidel, 'Riots, Church Burnings', 59.

When the first and last incidents of violence against ethnic Chinese studied here (Situbondo in October 1996 and Holis in March 1999) are compared, they reveal similarities and continuities. Importantly, they also reveal the differences. These differences relate to the specifics associated with locality and time as well as the scale of the violence and the way in which the act of violence was represented and politicised.

The two and a half years separating these incidents were the most eventful and turbulent for thirty years in Indonesia. They were marked by a growing movement supporting reforms in Indonesian politics. Meanwhile, Suharto himself was increasingly identifying with Muslim groups in order to maintain his grip on power, as these groups became more prominent in political life.[14] Beginning in 1997, the Asian economic crisis was most severely felt in Indonesia when the rupiah was vastly devalued and the IMF stepped in with austerity measures. With this economic collapse came the end of Suharto's 32-year reign in 1998 amid both a student-led revolt on the streets of Jakarta, and what the TGPF, amongst others, speculated was a challenge from within the ranks of his own military. Widespread and brutal violence in Jakarta and elsewhere at this time shocked the nation and international community, in particular members of the overseas Chinese diaspora and nations including China, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Furthermore, as this study has shown, apart from the May 1998 violence there were many incidents of anti-Chinese violence during this short period. Separated by the immense changes in the political regime and the economic well-being of the nation, the incidents at Situbondo and Holis are however testament to the continuities of anti-Chinese sentiment and violence in Indonesia as a means for expression of dissatisfaction, claims for justice or as a perceived problem-solving method. The cases presented in this thesis which occurred after the end of the New Order indicate that anti-Chinese violence existed in much the same forms as it did during the New Order.

After May 1998 there was a heightened consciousness of the way in which anti-Chinese violence, as a discourse and as an instrument of state power had been institutionalised by the New Order government. As a consequence, some national leaders and members of Indonesian society made efforts to understand these acts of violence and some attempts were made to confront this as a problem. However, as the struggle encountered by the TGPF showed, there was considerable resistance to any attempt to delve deeply into the 'truth' of events of violence. In late 1998 and early 1999, powerful forces remained in place for whom this 'truth' would have been detrimental. It is due to this opposition to change in the power structures in Indonesia and deep-seated prejudices still held by the *massa*, that the incidents at Situbondo and Holis – more than two years apart – possess similarities in terms of the source of antagonisms and the agents responsible for the violence against ethnic Chinese.

However, the changes, as Sidel may have sought to emphasise, were in the level of politicisation of these incidents in the public domain and in the ways they were described. The violence at Situbondo resulted in national debate about SARA issues, squabbling between Muslim groups and meetings between these

[14] Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 200–203.

groups and the political and military elite. On the other hand, the incident at Holis, where a Chinese church was also destroyed, attracted almost no interest even within Bandung itself. In these cases, both agency and responsibility and the divisive issue that lay on the surface of tension within these communities – permits for churches – were similarly based.

'Moral Worlds', Agency and Intent

Achille Mbembe's description of the structures and institutions of authoritarian or colonial forces as institutions of violence which are then 'inscribed' upon their subjects, is extremely powerful in reference to understandings of violence in post-Suharto Indonesia. Mbembe advises us to recognise the prevalence of state or authoritarian violence, even after it is gone:

> The violence insinuates itself into the economy, domestic life, language and consciousness. It does more than penetrate every space: it pursues the colonized even in sleep and dream. It produces a culture; it is a cultural praxis.
>
> All this might be called the *spirit of violence*. This spirit makes the violence omnipresent...[15]

Sidel observed that the 'anti-Chinese riot' was a tag usefully attached to political or social disquiet or rebellion under the New Order and was often employed by the regime as a diversionary tactic.[16] Mbembe prompts us, however, to also recognise the various elements involved in mass violence, which are not directly political or elite driven, but that have their roots in the local and in human emotions. In this context Heryanto's observation about anti-Chinese violence is relevant: 'While state violence may be uniform in physical and material terms, it always implicates local elements, habitus and collective memories, making each case different in significance from others'.[17] The implication of the local and of collective memory about violence means it is impossible to draw a line of responsibility between the authoritarian rulers and their victims. The 'order of the world' produced under New Order rule in Indonesia included knowledge, norms and institutions related to violence.[18]

It is necessary to make a distinction between violence against ethnic Chinese and other increasingly brutal and deadly incidents in Indonesia at this time. Importantly, the violence experienced by Chinese as it had been during the New Order period (with the exception of the rapes in May 1998), was against their property and businesses only. Unlike the killings in Banyuwangi, the violence in Ketapang and then Ambon, ethnic Chinese were not killed or maimed by their attackers. This was never, it appears, the

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[15] Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2001, 175.
[16] Sidel, 'Riots, Chruch Burnings', 58-59.
[17] Ariel Heryanto, 'Where Communism Never Dies: Violence, Trauma and Narration in the Last Cold War Capitialist Authoritarian State', *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 2(2) 1999.

intention. This qualification leaves us, however, with a temptation to give greater weight to those acts of violence which are more brutal, more bloody and thus to down-grade these acts of violence against ethnic Chinese or to set them apart. This would be a dangerous path to embark upon, as it would set a precedent for a 'scale of gruesomeness' in discourses of violence in Indonesia and potentially elsewhere as well. This is not a reference to the huge numbers or particular motives for violence which amount to genocide. Genocide and mass killings are crimes against humanity, which stand apart in scale.[19] Rather it indicates the potential for a relativist discourse that creates a space in which some types of ethnic or communal violence are given more weight than others, and eventually a 'normalisation' of violence in Indonesia of the type that now prevails in South Asia with respect to communal violence. Moreover, some believe and it has been argued in this study, that to an extent this normalisation has already occurred in Indonesia[20] with respect to violence against ethnic Chinese. Lawyer and anti-discrimination activist, Esther Yusuf observed:

> There is a kind of fiction here that it is "valid" and "normal" when the ethnic Chinese are victimised...This is why most Indonesian ethnic Chinese until today choose silence even after all their possessions were robbed and burnt[21]

Whether or not Ben Anderson[22] is correct when he states that every 70 year old Indonesian today will have experienced or observed myriad forms of violence and those who are younger, at least some – what we know for sure is that they witnessed images and heard stories of violence during the New Order, most of which were highly subjective and politicised.[23] The continued use of violence against ethnic Chinese as either an expression of direct or indirect frustration, along with other forms of violence such as criminality, achieved a level of normality and acceptability during the New Order period previously legitimated by the killings in 1965–1966.[24] Violence against ethnic Chinese during the 'transition' period following the end of the New Order is evidence not only that the pre-conditions remained and that the habitus of violence or 'riot systems'[25] were still being employed to carry it out, but also that the wider public's attitudes to this type of violence remained ambivalent and, consciously or not, dismissive. As the publisher of a book about violence in Kebumen in September 1998 reminds us, to overlook the lesser incidents of violence has consequences for our general sensibility about all violence:

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[18] Mbembe, *On the Postcolony.*
[19] Neil J. Kressel, *Mass Hate: The Global Rise of Genocide and Terror* (New York: Plenum Press, 1996), 257. Kressel condemns 'moral relativists' who allow the Holocaust and other genocides to become 'meaningless metaphors' for all types of human suffering.
[20] Siegel, *A New Criminal Type in Jakarta.*
[21] 'Plan to set up Chinese political party', *Straits Times*, 6 June 1998.
[22] Anderson, *Violence and the State*, 9.
[23] See Siegel, 'A New Criminal Type in Jakarta'; Lindsey, 'From Soepomo to Prabowo'.
[24] See Robinson, 'The Dark Side of Paradise'; Schulte Nordholt, 'A Genealogy of Violence'; Heryanto, 'Rape, Race', 154.

> Perhaps Kebumen is categorised as a "small" event, but actually from small things we can be prepared or not prepared to face "big" events...one shop or hundreds of supermarkets, one life or hundreds of lives, they are all victims of the transition we are experiencing.[26]

Veena Das advises us to locate analysis of mass violence somewhere between an understanding of the individuals involved in this violence as simply running amok fuelled by ethnic and religious hatreds and controlled by puppeteers, and assigning blame to the individual to the extent that we lose sense of the 'powerful social constraints that organise collective experience'.[27] A study of violence that focuses on 'the moral and ethical processes and judgments of those who participated',[28] exposes the 'world views of participants and crowds'.[29] A statement made by Imam Riyanto, a resident of Gresik, East Java after the violence in May 1998, provides some clues to the 'moral world' of individuals in Indonesian society with respect to the ethnic Chinese:

> If the government does not solve the economic crisis, the next time the riots will be even worse...Even so, while people would take things and burn the shops, we wouldn't actually hurt the Chinese. [30]

Imam's comment reveals what he perceives as the 'limits' of anti-Chinese violence. It shows how normal and in a way, harmless, burning and looting shops was perceived to be. This behaviour against particular targets fell within the bounds of social acceptability. As Siegel observes, '"Chinese"... was a word that permitted massive theft.'[31] Imam also captures beautifully Wieviorka's hypothesis that racial violence falls into different levels with regard to intent. In the case of violence against ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, the intention was to render this group subordinate and inferior, but never to destroy it entirely. To do so would effectively destroy the foundations of the majority group's domination.[32]

The timing of these incidents is clearly linked to a breakdown in the guarantees for security and agreements ethnic Chinese had in place with local authorities, but also relates to Veena Das' point about the 'moral worlds' of those involved in these incidents, indicating a shift in what these Indonesians saw to be the limits of acceptable behaviour towards their fellows. In each of these cases, racialised violence is seen as means to an end. That end may only be alleviation of frustration in the short term, but in the longer term it has political and social implications which extend beyond Chinese and non-Chinese relations.

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[25] Brass, *Riots and Pogroms.*
[26] Arus Saharjo, et al, *Rusuh di Kebumen, 7 September 1998*, Jakarta, Institut Studi Arus Informasi (ISAI), 1999, x.
[27] Das, *Mirrors of Violence*, 28.
[28] Das and Kleinman, *Violence and Subjectivity*, 16–17.
[29] Das, *Mirrors of Violence*, 28.
[30] *The New York Times*, 25 May 1998.
[31] Siegel, 'Thoughts on the Violence, 121.
[32] Wieviorka, *The Arena of Racism*; Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1963).

Themes and Patterns for Anti-Chinese Violence

Though the meaning of mass violence may quickly change once it occurs, as Wieviorka and Brass argue[33], this violence is also utilitarian, that is, it is a means to an end. Putting aside the importance of representations of this violence afterwards, this study has also revealed patterns with regard to agency and responsibility for these acts. These incidents demonstrate that racism does not need to be the driving force behind the act of violence, but that incidents of ethnic or racial violence are not linear. This is far from the 'normal' or natural phenomena that New Order discourse and some theories of racial violence constitute them to be. This study also uncovers the varying depths of anti-Chinese sentiment that exist in communities in each case and the extent to which other prominent factors play a part. Through the detail of the events and their representations the complexities, undeniable patterns, continuities in attitudes and antipathies held by people across locations become apparent.

This study of a range of incidents enabled the identification of anti-Chinese violence within specific patterns or conditions for hostility and violence towards this minority group within this period in Indonesia's history, or as Horowitz would term them, 'occasions for violence'.[34] Indeed the 'normal' pattern of events considered 'anti-Chinese violence' defined earlier, fits only four of the incidents during this period; Rengasdengklok, Ujung Pandang, Kebumen and Bagansiapi-api. It is too simplistic to argue that violence against ethnic Chinese in Indonesia is singularly the responsibility of the state. It is also erroneous to state the case for an explanation of all anti-Chinese violence as being linked to economic or class resentments or competition. These are both influential factors in cases of violence against ethnic Chinese presented here, but not always central to why the violence takes place.

Violence against ethnic Chinese during the period 1996-1999 took place as part of disputes over sacred space (fears of Christianisation), scapegoating during times of economic hardship and political power-struggles, racialised state violence and justice-seeking. Within this variety of contexts, however, certain pre-conditions and organisational structures were evident in all cases. These included the presence of skilled agents, or as Brass called them, 'riot specialists' and 'fire tenders'[35], together with a crowd of locals that possessed a level of memory, knowledge or *habitus* of this kind of violence and were prepared to follow. The violence was intentional.

Scapegoating As a Consequence: Economic Stresses

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[33] Wieviorka, *Arena of Racism*; Brass, *Theft of an Idol.*
[34] Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 268.
[35] Brass, *Riots and Pogroms*, 12–16.

The incidents in Java in early 1998 and at Cilacap in late August that year demonstrate the validity of arguments that economic tension has the potential to create a context within which anti-Chinese violence may occur.[36] The national and local economic stresses at the time immediately preceding these events directly contributed to the outbreaks of violence. In Java in early 1998, there were spontaneous attacks by fishermen on shops selling fishing supplies. Likewise, in Cilacap economic hardship prompted fishermen there to launch a protest against their employers and the harbour authority, which resulted in destruction of property. As the study of these incidents showed, it was to a large extent conflict between consumer and middleman, worker and boss, which led to these incidents of violence against ethnic Chinese.

'Scapegoating' is a term most often used to describe blame being transferred to a third party, to absolve the sins of the whole. However, scapegoating is also likely to occur when some connection between the target and the source of the people's frustrations can be made.[37] A Javanese fisherman probably could not fathom the intricacies of his government's agreement with the IMF or pressures on the rupiah in international currency markets. On the other hand, the rising prices of oil, rice and the relative decline in their wages, was a connection they could make to local shop-owners and trawler operators. In Bagansiapi-api the same sorts of tensions between trawler-owners and local authorities, and a pressurised economic environment contributed to the violence in September 1998. In most cases examined here, however, the term scapegoating is more relative. The initial conflicts in Jember, Tuban and also Pamanukan in Java in early 1998 were based on grievances about increased prices of goods and transport to which ethnic Chinese could be implicated directly. However, this changed as the violence became more diffuse in its targets and objectives and more brutal.[38] Attacks on churches and non-commercial ethnic Chinese-owned property during these events, indicated that other frustrations existed in these communities.

Scapegoating As a Tool: Seeking Political Advantage, Premanism and State-Sponsorship

> A few of my friends and I had for some time already been concerned that something like this would happen. (Kwik Kian Gie)[39]

In addition to explaining the actions of the hungry and frustrated 'crowd', scapegoating can be used to describe the actions of the state and its institutions, both legitimate and illegitimate, at the peak of the economic and political crises in Indonesia in May 1998. The extent to which this sort of activity was a 'normal' operation of the state and its agents is clear in the case of violence in Medan. The division between what was the 'normal' behaviour by certain groups in Medan, in the form of extortion and rent-seeking by

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[36] Wertheim, *East-West Parallels;* The Siauw Giap, 'Group Conflict In A Plural Society'; Somers, *Peranakan Chinese Politics* (1964), 46.
[37] Douglas, *Scapegoating.*
[38] Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 425.
[39] Kwik Kian Gie, 'Masalah Pri dan Nonpri Dewasa Ini', in *Masalah Pri dan Nonpri Dewasa Ini*, Yayasan Dharma Wulan, Jakarta 1998, 16.

preman and what constituted state-sponsored violence was unclear until the violence spread to Jakarta and Solo. As Lindsey and Ryter demonstrated in their studies of *preman* and *premanisme*[40], the lines between what are legitimate and illegitimate security forces were extremely blurred in late New Order Indonesia, with one occasionally 'morphing' into the other. The narrative of the Medan violence and analysis of the TGPF report of this incident revealed the complexity involved in separating these forms of agency.

The violence in Jakarta and Solo showed the extent to which anti-Chinese violence became a form of state-sponsored violence – or as Heryanto termed it, 'racialised state terrorism'.[41] Numerous studies point to the usefulness to the New Order state of anti-Chinese hostility and violence as a tool for diverting blame from the government – as a form of scapegoating – and that other groups within the political and military elite may have also recognised the significance of this tool.[42] The involvement in violence, or at the very least, the inaction of sections of the military including Kopassus, the Jakarta regional military command and groups affiliated with the government like Pemuda Pancasila, is indicated in the TGPF report released in October 1998. Further investigation may reveal the true extent of this implication. Other reports, including that of the United Nations Special Rapporteur about violence against women in Indonesia, also support the view that this violence was carried out by skilled agents, who (it was suspected) included members of the armed forces. Crucially, the May 1998 violence is unique among the range of incidents included in this study from this period. It alone can be seen as an example of overt violence against ethnic Chinese carried out by agents of the state.[43] In each of the other cases investigated there is evidence of the failure to provide security to ethnic Chinese or to prevent the violence and acts of inciting violence through public statements and implication of ethnic Chinese. Support for certain groups hostile to ethnic Chinese can also be found, however proof of this same level of involvement in the action and agency of the violence is absent.

Fears of Christianisation and the Growing Wealth Divide

The threat or fear of Christianisation felt by many Muslims in Indonesia in the late 1990s underpinned anti-Chinese violence in Situbondo and Holis and is relevant in the Rengasdengklok case. Studies conducted by Christian group FKKS[44] show the steep increase in attacks on churches during the later part of Suharto's rule. In these cases, fears about the expansion of Christian churches and disputes regarding permits for building churches are common features. The large proportion of ethnic Chinese who are Christians – at least in Java – means that this violence often spilt over into latent anti-Chinese hostility and violence. The distinction it is possible to make between these incidents involving attacks on churches, from others in Indonesia, and Java more specifically, is that the violence is never confined to these buildings but include other symbols of

[40] Lindsey, 'From Soepomo to Prabowo'; Ryter, 'Pemuda Pancasila'.
[41] Heryanto, 'Flaws in riot media coverage'.
[42] Sidel, 'Riots, Church Burnings'; Heryanto, 'Rape, Race'; Siegel, *Solo in the New Order*.
[43] Aguilar called it, 'the familiar pattern' ('Citizenship, Inheritance', 503).

'Chineseness' in the town or city, such as temples, Chinese-owned homes, businesses and monuments. These were struggles for symbolic space as a way to make claims on the social landscape and also a means to communicate their identity.[45]

The violence in Situbondo and Rengasdengklok took place at the peak of this trend identified by FKKS and at the same time as increasing Islamicisation of Indonesian politics.[46] In the aftermath of these incidents, the government, military, NU and Muhammadiyah politicised the violence for their own advantages – to jockey for political power in an election year. The fears of Christianisation felt by Muslims across Indonesia, and particularly on Java, were due to a failure to administer regulations on church building and so on, but primarily were closely linked to fears of marginalisation within a rapidly developing economy in the mid-1990s. It was this swell of disgruntled voters which Islamic and government agents recognized was a crucial group to control. In more subtle ways, in early January 1998 at the height of the economic crisis, groups like KISDI, with the backing of Kopassus chief, Prabowo, and also outspoken and extremist elements of the MUI, created an atmosphere in which these fears were heightened. Sermons at mosques across the country and political demonstrations on the streets of Jakarta spoke about the validity of a religious war, a holy war, against traitors and infidels. The attack on the Ho Kim Tong 'church' at Holis in March 1999 – in the *reformasi* period – is another example of the fear of Christianisation converging with a fear of marginalisation to create anti-Chinese violence. The church became a symbol for the disempowerment of the people ahead of weak and corrupt state institutions and a growing wealth divide, all within an atmosphere in which demands for justice were increasingly being made.

Context: Seeking Justice and the Indonesian State in Transition

The three themes detailed above – scapegoating as a consequence of economic stresses, scapegoating as a tool, fear of Christianisation and marginalisation – can be applied to certain incidents in this study. Cutting across these, however, the claim for justice in some form was widespread. The wider political context – a period of transition and demands for reform in Indonesia – provides an important key to understanding why this is the case.

In Situbondo the crowd demanded justice for the alleged degradation of a popular Islamic leader but also for violations of laws regarding building permits for churches and also their marginalisation by big business in the local plantation industry. Similarly in Tasikmalaya the crowd wanted justice for police brutality and the abuse of a Muslim cleric and students. Underlying this incident and also in Rengasdengklok was a community protest at their marginalisation by encroaching development. Protests by farmers, fishermen and motorcyclists in convoys across Java in 1998 demanded fairer prices and quickly became acts

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[44] T. Santosoand P. Tahlele (eds), *Beginikah Kemerdekaan Kita?*
[45] Das, *Mirrors of Violence*; van der Veer, 'Riots and Rituals'.
[46] See Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 200.

of dealing out justice to suspected hoarders and opportunists. In Cilacap, workers believed that enacting their own form of justice – burning boats and other property owned by the *toke* and harbour authority – was necessary in the absence of any other alternative. The response to the violence in this struggling fishing community was registered in another. In Bagansiapi-api, the reaction to a fight between two locals, one an ethnic Chinese, the other *pribumi*, caused a group of youths to go on a rampage, burning Chinese homes and businesses. Antagonisms between the traditional fishermen in Bagansiapi-api and the trawler-owners had been constant, particularly following the introduction of government regulations designed to protect the fishermen. Trawlers continued to operate, as they did in Cilacap, undoubtedly with the assistance of corrupt local authorities, thereby heightening tensions. Likewise, at Holis, the lack of action by authorities on the basis of community protest and petitioning finally led to a violent attack on the focus of their grievance.

The absence of alternative methods for justice-seeking in Indonesia during the latter part of the New Order rule and also under a greatly weaker, post-New Order state, in conjunction with the impunity accorded to violence such as this, is the key to understanding the continuity and frequency of these acts. Furthermore, the *reformasi* tag enabled various groups to carry out acts of violence in its name. Herriman's study of killings in Malang[47] and Dédé Oetomo's attempt to understand an increase in homophobic violence in the *reformasi* period of supposed widening democratic space drew similar conclusions. Oetomo observes, 'The breakdown of law and order that accompanied the resignation of Suharto seems to give them an excuse to run on the rampage...'[48] Together with homophobic violence, violence that was retributive, criminal and motivated by ethnic or religious antipathies escalated across the country in Maluku, Poso, Kalimantan and so on.

The Absence of Violence

> Why are ethnic differences explosive in some cases and not in others? (Mackie)[49]

Whilst this study has been preoccupied with investigating situations where violence against ethnic Chinese occurs, it is imperative, although outside of the parameters of this thesis, to consider situations where violence *has not occurred* for further understanding of why it continues. If, as has been claimed here, 'riot systems' and memories of violence exist in the locations examined, can it not be similarly claimed that these exist in almost every community across Indonesia, subjected equally to the same autocratic rule? Why has violence, particularly against ethnic Chinese, not occurred more frequently and in even more places in Indonesia? The best explanations for the absence of violence in certain locations lie in what Mackie called the 'preventative' or prohibitive factors,[50] namely the role of the security forces and community groups in

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[47] Herriman, 'Violence and Ideology in the Murder of Sorcerers'.
[48] Dédé Oetomo, 'Gay men in the Reformasi Era', *Inside Indonesia*, April–June 2001, 11.
[49] Mackie, 'Anti-Chinese Outbreaks', 129.
[50] Ibid.

dealing with hostilities before they transform into violence. In addition, some activists working in the area of social harmonisation and conflict prevention point to the importance not only of a 'riot system' in each place but of the 'will' of the general population to become involved.[51]

It is precisely for this reason – because it has not been a site for major incidents of violence in recent times – that Bandung occupies an interesting place in a study of anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia. In particular, this city avoided being the site of widespread anti-Chinese violence during May 1998, even though the pre-conditions for this type of violence existed there. Historically Bandung, and West Java more generally, has been a site for violence against ethnic Chinese, including in Bandung on 10 May 1963, followed by the 'more destructive' violence in Sukabumi on 18-20 May 1963.[52] This highly volatile period was then followed by a decade in which there were 'no serious' anti Chinese outbreaks[53] until violence in Bandung on 5 August 1973, after a collision between a car driven by an ethnic Chinese and a horse and cart driven by a *pribumi*. More recently, as can be seen from studies presented in earlier chapters, incidents of mass violence against ethnic Chinese in West Java formed a steady pattern, particularly during the period from late 1996 until early 1998.

The existence of anti-Chinese and anti-Christian sentiment and memories of violence, which previous acts of violence in Bandung and West Java indicate are present, is not enough on its own to create violence. There is no genuine spontaneity about mass violence.[54] Further, in May 1998, it was crucial that the West Java Military Command and Provincial government cooperated with various groups to maintain the security of Bandung. Local community groups countered negative pro-violence propaganda distributed around the city, with their own campaign of anti-violence pamphlets and banners. These groups maintained an effective line of communication with 'goings-on' on the streets of Bandung through a network of taxi drivers.[55] For their part, ethnic Chinese business groups donated food parcels to the poorer sections of the city, which they distributed with the help of students, not through state agencies as was typical elsewhere in the country.[56] Together, these activities produced an effective 'anti-riot system' or put in place preventative measures to counter forces intent on violence.

When searching for material amongst Holocaust studies on the absence of violence in the midst of widespread animosity or hatred towards one group in society (who are elsewhere subjected to violence), I found myself returning to an earlier understanding. Anti-Chinese violence is a limited action, applied in

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[51] Interview with Martinus, Bandung 10 April 2001.
[52] Mackie, 'Anti-Chinese Outbreaks', 97–110.
[53] Ibid., 138.
[54] Brass, *Riots and Pogroms*, 12–16.
[55] I thank Susan Giblin for sharing this information with me.
[56] Interviews with Yanto, Herman and friends (Radio Chevy), Bandung, 8 April 2001. Charles Coppel also reports that he heard similar explanations from Chinese in Semarang during research there in July-August 2002.

certain situations with the right conditions, and never with the intention of eradicating this group of people.[57] Recalling this goes a long way to explaining why violence against ethnic Chinese is often absent. In this way, violence against ethnic Chinese does not have to occur in all places where they live in order to have the desired impact of terrorising this ethnic minority and serving the interests of the state and its agencies. The 'moral world' formed by many Indonesians under the New Order, recognised the functionality and limits of anti-Chinese violence, which in turn quickly transformed it into something normal. Although these limits had been exceeded in May 1998 and as a consequence many Indonesians were shocked, continued violence against ethnic Chinese after Suharto's resignation is evidence that this understanding of the basis for violence – or the 'spirit of violence' – remained within Indonesian society.

CHALLENGING NOTIONS OF NORMAL AND LIMITED VIOLENCE

Locating the Victim

> (F)or the historian, the imperative (is) of rendering as truthful an account as documents and testimonials will allow, *without giving in to the temptation of closure*. Closure in this case would represent an obvious avoidance of what remains indeterminate, elusive and opaque. (Saul Friedlander)[58]

> Victims are too frequently neglected. They are seldom if ever on the agenda of the politicians or the military. (Judge Robert J. Goldstone)[59]

The study of the processes, politics and outcomes of the TGPF report on the May 1998 violence demonstrated the subjectivity of truth about an event of mass violence, particularly one involving the state. It was also an attempt to follow Friedlander's advice to avoid 'closure' on the history of such events. One of the areas of 'truth' closed off after the TGPF report and in the wake of public responses to the violence was the testimonials and accounts of victims and their guardians. This was not a door through which I have been able to advance this study, though it has hopefully pulled it ajar for future scholarship to do so. Statistics, semantics, and political wrangling have dominated discourse of this tragedy to date. These factors subverted the identity of victims, particularly those who suffered sexual violence, turning them into faceless statistics, declaring their experiences unverifiable, and leaving them uncounted. In her study on the ways of resolving and remembering mass violence, Martha Minow highlights the potential that such horror might be perpetuated

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[57] The violence against ethnic Chinese and also their attempted expulsion from West Kalimantan in 1967 and Aceh in 1966–67 approached these outer limits of anti-Chinese violence. (See Coppel, *Indonesian Chinese in Crisis*, 145–149; Nancy Peluso, 'Territorializing Ethnicity Through Violence: The Case of West Kalimantan', in *Violent Conflicts in Indonesia: Representation, Analysis, Resolution*, ed. C.A. Coppel (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), forthcoming.)

[58] (Emphasis in the original.) Saul Friedlander, 'Trauma, Memory and Transference', in *Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of Memory*, ed. Geoffrey H. Hartman (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 261.

[59] Goldstone, 'Foreword', xi.

for its victims owing to 'the destruction of the remembrance of individuals.'[60] The powerlessness of these victims was heightened by the fact that they were already on the fringes of the Indonesian nationalist story and as such had little chance of influencing this representation.

The debate over who was 'verifiably' a victim also created discomfort and disillusionment with the truth-seeking process in Indonesian society. The TGPF did not hide the fact that there were multiple truths about the violence, particularly on the question of naming the victims. Indeed, it recognised that any attempt to force one interpretation or set of figures into the report would kill it altogether. Yet in the end, the document represented a failed attempt to face history as a result of the debate over numbers and the subsequent dismissal of the report by many. Initially envisaged by *reformasi* supporters and victims of the violence as a medium through which justice could be accomplished by exposing the truth, the TGPF report revealed the reality of Judge Goldstone's statement about the impossibility of finding 'tidy endings' after an event of mass violence.[61] In the aftermath of massive violence it is impossible to name the victims and perpetrators in a satisfactory way. On the other hand, elements in the government and military condemned the TGPF report for its attempts at raising consciousness and making recommendations. It became obvious that the team's 'truth seeking' did not go far enough for some and went too far for others. The TGPF report presented the Indonesian nation with the concepts of 'multiple truths' and 'non-closure' with respect to accounts of history – and tragedy. Scholars and observers still grapple with elusive and opaque understandings of what took place and who its perpetrators were.

Four years later, it is clear that Indonesia's elite no longer regard the May 1998 violence in Jakarta as a national story of great consequence, though it remains a blemish on the country's history and was politically significant at the time. The suffering the violence imposed on ethnic Chinese and the urban poor has not been recorded in the national consciousness. TGPF recommendations that laws discriminating against ethnic Chinese should be repealed have not been implemented, with the exception of President Wahid's repeal of the presidential instruction banning the public celebration of Chinese traditional and religious festivals.[62] The victims of violence and their families have received no support from the government. In addition, a draft law passed in the DPR in November 2000, establishing a Human Rights Court was made non-retroactive, thereby making prosecution of those responsible for the May 1998 violence almost impossible.[63] The efforts of TruK, to identify victims more explicitly than the law allowed and assist them in their recovery, were themselves met with threats and acts of violence. This is indicative of what was at stake for some and the sinister elements at play behind the battle for numbers. But how could these victims be considered a threat? Their narrative or memories were seen to pose a threat to the preferred representation of this violence demanded by those in positions of power.

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[60] Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness*, 1.
[61] Goldstone, 'Foreword', x.
[62] 'Indonesia's Chinese hold a cautious party', *The Guardian*, 5 February 2000.
[63] See "Will the DPR Dare to Challenge Impunity?" *Fakta HAM*, no. 22, November 2000.

> (T)o join the resistance to forgetting. (Minow)[64]

> (T)o remember, to convey the truth about painful events is an important prerequisite in order to heal individual victims, also in order to give restitution to the social order which was caused by these events to be in disarray. (Karlina Leksono-Supelli)[65]

> I am suggesting... that the conceptual structures of our disciplines – social science, jurisprudence, medicine – lead to a professional transformation of suffering which robs the victim of her voice and distances us from the immediacy of her experience...only the voice of the expert becomes embodied.[66]

Important efforts by women's groups and victims' groups and some scholars have been made to contribute the victim's narrative to the wider representation of May 1998. However, as a source of 'truth' they remain at the margins. Until now the Indonesian state, scene of many horrors including torture, mass rape, kidnappings, killings and destruction of property, has averted a remembrance of its crimes against humanity. It is widely agreed that this is an important part of Indonesia's program of rebuilding and reconciling with its past.[67] This process 'offers a means of making sense and interpreting the experience of marginalised peoples and forgotten histories.'[68] However, as E.L. Kornfield found with regard to the impact on victims of the Truth Commission in Chile in 1992, this re-telling is often fraught with risk. Kornfield's study revealed that it was not unusual for victims who testified to the Chilean Commission to later regret this and wish for a return to the 'silence'.[69] Furthermore, the subjectivity of these stories, which are coloured by trauma, ongoing fears, and the distance of time, causes doubt in the minds of many about their validity as 'truth'.[70] Yet, in spite of the potential risks to the victim and also the ethical dilemmas facing those who write the histories of violence, others argue that the alternative to not hearing the stories of suffering means limiting

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[64] Minow, *Between Vengeance*, 5.
[65] Karlina Leksono Supelli, 'Pembelaan Perempuan Korban Kekerasan Negara', paper presented on 24 July 1998 at conference in Jakarta held by Jaringan Mitra Perempuan; 'Riot victims find it hard to pick up the pieces', *Jakarta Post*, 12 June 1998.
[66] Veena Das, *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), 175.
[67] Mary S. Zurbuchen, 'History, Memory and the "1965 Incident" in Indonesia', *Asian Survey*, July-August 2002, 573–581.
[68] Selma Leydesdorff, et al, 'Introduction', in *Trauma and Life Stories: International Prespectives*, eds Kim Lacy Rogers, Selma Leydesdorff and Graham Dawson (London: Routledge, 1999), 13.
[69] Many survivors 'saw the truth as implying a continuation of pain (in) the lives of generations to follow.' (E.L. Kornfield, 'Treatment for Human Rights Victims in Chile', in *Beyond Trauma: Cultural and Societal Dynamics*, eds Rolf J. Kleber, Charles R. Figley, and Berthold P.R. Gersons (New York: Plenum Press, 1995), 129.)
[70] Leydesdorff, 'Introduction', 1.

our potential to understand.[71] For example, writing about the experiences of widows of the Guatemala civil war, Judith Zur highlights the dangers of failing to provide an explanation for this suffering for victims:

> Individuals unable to escape suffering are isolated within their own physical and emotional conditions, deprived of any vehicle through which their experience can be made meaningful and, therefore, sufferable. The grief experienced by people who cannot explain an ordeal is more intense than that of others who can explain and thus integrate their past.[72]

The debate within this area of study and practice is cognizant with these issues, including the risks associated with this process of truth-seeking and justice-seeking after mass violence. In Indonesia the aftermath of the violence in May 1998, including the rapes, demonstrated the complexity of this process.

The conceptual structures which supported the study of anti-Chinese violence have always attempted to explain it in political and economic terms. In doing so, they fail to locate the suffering of the victim within their explanation. As discussed throughout this study, the notion of anti-Chinese violence as limited is vital to its sustainability as an effective problem-solving method or tension diffusing exercise. It was a situation ethnic Chinese and non-Chinese alike could, it seemed, all live with. However, the rapes in May 1998 exceeded this notion of violence with limits. The stories heard through rumour, in women's magazines and on the internet about the violence these women had suffered, stressed its brutality. As Aguilar argues, exceeding the 'limits of the tolerable'[73] awoke in some Indonesians the realisation that Chinese were victims of discrimination. However, others, particularly some Islamic groups and elite, denied that the rapes occurred saying that it was too extreme, too horrible to be true. Instead, politicians, religious leaders, journalists, military and police called for victims to present themselves, to speak their stories publicly. The inability of any of the victims of rape to do this due to the still constant threats they faced, allowed such sentiment to remain even despite the eventual recognition of the rapes by the TGPF and Habibie himself. Further, as Tay and Lochore[74] show, the very act of re-telling the victim's story after the events of May 1998, especially a victim of sexual violence, raises ethical questions related to the representation of suffering and levels of truth.

At the same time, interpretations of these limits to anti-Chinese violence also meant that the losses experienced by thousands of ethnic Chinese families during May 1998 and in incidents before and after this time, were simply absorbed into the national consciousness without difficulty or it appears much discomfort. As opposed to the unlimited and unbelievable nature of the rapes (which allowed denial) this violence, provoked or not, was normal. Further, it was widely believed that ethnic Chinese would simply rebuild their shops and homes and start over, and, moreover, that they had the means to do that. Stories of poor Chinese

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[71] Das, *Critical Events,* 175.
[72] Judith N. Zur, *Violent Memories: Mayan War Widows in Guatemala* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1998), 248.
[73] Aguilar, 'Citizenship, Inheritance', 504.
[74] Tay, 'Global Chinese Fraternity'; Lochore, 'Virtual Rape'.

families who lost their small businesses in the May 1998 violence and with it everything they had ever worked for did not fit this popular perception.[75]

Although the nation may have failed to seek out or to listen to this kind of story, victims themselves find great solidarity in sharing their suffering. The common suffering experienced by ethnic Chinese victims with that of non-Chinese victims has created an important bond and together they have begun to reclaim their role in the Indonesian 'common project'[76]. Whilst some ethnic Chinese have been able to find a way for their suffering to be the means for forging bonds with *pribumi*, others are unable to compare their suffering to that of other Indonesians and it acts to set them further apart. This process also challenges the Chinese community to confront its own role in the continuing violence. The anger of shopkeepers in the Jatinegara district of Jakarta targeted in May 1998,[77] reveals the fears and hatreds which exist in some parts of this community.

This study does not claim to have made progress towards Veena Das' suggestion of allowing the victim's voice to bring us – professionals, scholars – any closer to the immediacy of the experience of victims of anti-Chinese violence.[78] In many ways and for many reasons this type of study at this time was impossible. Instead, it has sought to draw attention to this dimension of any study of violence and its representations and to make way for future work.

Racialised or anti-Chinese sentiment lies at the heart of anti-Chinese violence. These sentiments were institutionalised by the New Order's policies of racial prejudice. The incidents of violence against ethnic Chinese studied here reveal a range of patterns, themes and motives for attacks mostly on Chinese property. As Situbondo and Holis show, the consistency of these patterns and motives reveals the way anti-Chinese sentiment is bound up in a general sense of dissatisfaction, inequality, marginalisation and injustice in Indonesian society. Therefore, these cases also reveal that the causal origin for this violence lies with racialised prejudices. Continuing interpretations of this violence as a normal and valid response to these situations and emotions and in pursuit of certain outcomes after the New Order, means that anti-Chinese violence will remain a feature or even 'an essential ingredient of Indonesian national life'[79] in the foreseeable future.

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[75] I interviewed a family of five, a year after the violence who were living in a one room house in Tanjung Priok. They relied on the kindness of neighbours after their electrical goods store was looted and burned while uninsured (Interviews with victims in Tanjung Priok, 23 July 1999.)
[76] Anderson, 'Indonesian Nationalism Today'.
[77] Interviews in Jatinegara shopping district, 21 July 1999.
[78] Das, *Critical Events*, 175.
[79] Aguilar, 'Citizenship, Inheritance', 527.

VI. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A.

Cases of Violence Against Ethnic Chinese, 1996-1999

Date	*Location*
1996	
27 July	PDI headquarters, Jakarta
10 October	Situbondo (East Java)
26 December	Tasikmalaya (West Java)
1997	
January	Sanggau Ledo (West Kalimantan)
27 January	Tanahabang (Jabotabek)
30 January	Rengasdengklok (West Java)
18 February	Bandung (West Java)
27 March	Pekalongan (Central Java)
23 May	Banjarmasin (South Kalimantan)
9 September	Tangerang (Jabotabek)
15 September	Ujung Pandang (Sulawesi)
1998	
5 January	Bandung (West Java)
12-16 January	Jember and surrounds (East Java)
24 January	Probolinggo (East Java)
26 January – 3 February	Rembang, Kragan, Tuban (Central & East Java)
2 February	Pasuruan (East Java)
1-2 February	Donggala (Central Sulawesi)[1]
2 February	Ujung Pandang (Sulawesi)
4 February	Sukarme, Bandar Lampung (West Sumatra)
6 February	Bima (West Sumbawa)[2]
6 February	Brebes (Central Java)
8 February	Ende (Lombok)[3]
11 February	Palu (Central Sulawesi)
12-16 February	Purwokerto, Brebes (Central Java) & Bandung, Cirebon (West Java)
13 February	Pamanukan (West Java)
13 February	Padang Siampuan (North Sumatra)
14 February	Praya (Lombok)[4]

[1] Human Rights Watch, 'Indonesia Alert: Economic Crisis Leads to Scapegoating of Ethnic Chinese', February 1998, available from http://www.hrw.org/press98/feb/chinese2.htm, accessed 4 April 2002.
[2] 'Curfew Imposed in Ende, Nine persons arrested in Bima', *Kompas*, 9 February 1998.
[3] Ibid.; 'Satu ditahan, saksi dimintai keterangan', *Pos Kupang*, 13 February 1998.

14 February	Kendari (Sulawesi)[5]
14 February	Sentani (West Papua)
16 February	Pagaralam (South Sumatra)
10 May	Medan (North Sumatra)
13-14 May	Jakarta
14-15 May	Solo (Central Java)
15 June	Tegal (Central Java)
26 June	Purowejo (Central Java)
28 August	Cilacap (Central Java)
2 September	Medan (North Sumatra)
7-9 September	Kebumen (Central Java)
8-9 September	Pontianak (West Kalimantan)
15 September	Bagansiapi-api (Riau)
22 November	Ketapang (Jakarta)
4 December	Kare (South Sulawesi)
8 December	Luwu (South Sulawesi)
25 December	Poso (South Sulawesi)
1999	
9 January	Karawang (West Java)
8 March	Bandung (West Java)
28 July	Ambon (Maluku)

[4] 'Indonesia riots spread over weekend', *AP*, 15 February 1998.
[5] Jim Della-Giacoma, 'Restive Indonesian town quieter after warning shot', *Reuters*, 20 February 1998.

APPENDIX B.

TASIKMALAYA, 26 DECEMBER 1996

On 23 December 1996, two senior students Habib and Ichsan, from the Riyadul Ulum Wadda'wah pesantren in Condongan village were summoned to the police station in Tasikmalaya. Their teacher, Kiai Mahmud Farid, accompanied them. He was also the son of the head of the pesantren, Kiai Makmun. The three men were responding to a letter signed by the local head of police, Lt Col. Suherman, to discuss the punishment given to one of their non-residential students, 14-year old Rizal, son of a police officer, Corporal Nursyami.[6]

At the police station Habib, Ichsan and Farid were questioned about Rizal's punishment. During their interrogation eight police officers plus Colonel Nursyami were present. The three later recounted that during their detention they were beaten and forced to remove their clothes and perform various strenuous exercises for long periods.[7] Kiai Farid was particularly stressed by this treatment, 'I was interrogated first and I was already tired. It was difficult to answer the police because my throat was dry.'[8] A student who had accompanied the three to the police station passed news of the arrests to Kiai Makmun who contacted the Tasikmalaya Deputy Mayor Roesman. He gave the order to Lt. Col. Suherman to release the men.[9]

The news spread throughout Tasikmalaya and district of Farid's detention and also that he had been taken from the police station directly to the hospital. Reportedly, thousands of students and locals gathered there to hear about his condition. Acknowledging the agitated state of the crowd, Lt. Col. Suherman paid a visit to the Condong pesantren and met with its leaders, at which time he and Makmun signed a peace agreement.[10] Evidently news of this agreement did not reach the students and concerned locals instead they heard a rumour that Farid had died as a result of injuries he had sustained whilst in detention.[11]

The next day, 24 December, an estimated five hundred students from universities and pesantren across the district gathered at the Masjid Agung Tasikmalaya after evening prayers. It is not clear how or by whom the meeting was organised, but there are reports that anonymous phone calls were received at many pesantren, spreading the news that Farid had died and that a large demonstration would be held. At the mosque a further announcement was made over the loud speakers that a protest would be held at the Police headquarters and flyers were distributed and signed by a group named

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[6] Nursyami had earlier telephoned the school to protest, but KH Farid had refused to apologise saying that his son's punishment was in accordance with policies of the pesantren. Rizal was accused of stealing several small items such as pencils and books from his fellow students on numerous occasions. YLBHI report that his mother consented to the punishment he was given by the pesantren. (Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia (YLBHI) *Press Release* No.73/SP/YLBHI/XII/1996 tentang 'Temuan Tim Pencari Fakta YLBHI: Kerusuhan di Tasikmalaya, 26 December 1996.) It is reported that Rizal's punishment was to be submerged in a pond.

[7] 'KH Makmun: Perusuh tak berjiwa Muslim', *Republika*, 28 December 1996.

[8] Toriq Hadad (ed.), *Tasikmalaya: Konflik di basis Islam* (Jakarta: ISAI, 1998), 15.

[9] YLBHI, 'Temuan Tim'.

[10] Hadad, *Tasikmalaya*, 16.

[11] Tim Pencari Data Keuskupan Bandung (TPKB), 'Kronologi Peristiwa Tasikmalaya, http://www.parokinet.org/bandung/tasik/kronologi.html, accessed 28 July 2000.

Fokus Malam (Communication Forum for *Santri* (devout) and Islamic Youths). They demanded prosecution of the police involved and an apology to the pesantren, and also warned that if these demands were not met within seven days, possible undesirable events could take place.[12]

On the morning of the 26 December, a day after Christmas, the traffic into Tasikmalaya was unusually heavy, by 9.30am two thousand people had assembled at the Mesjid Agung and trucks carrying an estimated six thousand pesantren students were about to arrive. It was decided that five representatives from Fokus Malam would deliver a letter of concern on behalf of those present to Suherman. When the five met with Suherman, he indicated that he was prepared to talk and agreed to accompany them back to the mosque. However, it is reported that on the way there he suddenly changed his mind and returned to the police headquarters. When the Fokus Malam members returned to the mosque with this news, the large crowd now assembled grew agitated. PMII leader Mimih Haeruman took the microphone and spoke of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights declaring that if justice was not done in a week, 'we will react'.[13] As the crowd dispersed from the mosque many moved towards the police headquarters, situated only five hundred metres away. Witnesses told that they saw men with long hair among the crowd and heard them shout, 'Let's protest at police headquarters' and 'God is Great, Holy War.'[14] When the crowd, estimated to number in the thousands, reached the police headquarters Suherman attempted to placate them.[15] In response to his efforts they shouted back, 'Lies, lies' and threw stones at the building,[16] and demanded that the police officers responsible for mistreating Farid and the two senior students be handed over to them.[17]

The crowd then dispersed across the city. Investigations later found indications that there were people who gave commands to the violent crowd and directed truckloads of them around the city to various locations.[18] These reports also state that some of the rioters carried molotov bombs which they threw with skill and precision at their targets.[19] Two of the first buildings to be targeted by the masses were the Matahari and Yogya Department stores, followed by shops owned by ethnic Chinese along Jalan H. Zaenal Mustofa and the Salib Suai Catholic Church on Jalan Salakaso. People entered the Church and priests' residence and took statues out in to the yard and destroyed them, and then returned later with molotov cocktails and set it alight. Meanwhile residents from the surrounding neighbourhood prevented others from attacking the Yos

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[12] Hadad, *Tasikmalaya*, 19. Fokus Malam was made up of a small collection of pesantren students, university students and youth activists. After the initial gathering at the Mosque Agung, a group of approximately 150 people held a meeting at the offices of the Islamic Students Organisation (PMII) in Tasikmalaya. Mimih Hearuman, Secretary of the Garut branch of the PMII was one of the leaders of the group. He claims that at this meeting it was decided that the demonstration at the police headquarters should take place on 27 December, and that following this decision he spoke with the Kapolres, Panglima, Komnas HAM and politician Sri Bintang Pamungkas to inform them of these plans. (Interview with Mimih in Hadad, 19-20.) At the meeting it was also decided that representatives from each *pesantren* would meet the day before, 26 December, at the Mesjid Agung to talk and pray.

[13] Ibid., 21-22

[14] Ibid., 23.

[15] 'Kapolres Tasikmalaya, Kali ini Kami Jadi Sasaran Kemarahan, *Republika*, 30 December 1996.

[16] Hadad, *Tasikmalaya*, 23.

[17] It was reported that the protesters broke for midday prayers and then resumed their protest at the police headquarters afterwards. ('Riot breaks out over police beating', *Jakarta Post*, 27 December 1996.)

[18] Hadad, *Tasikmalaya,* 24. Others also arrived on motorbikes and in cars.

[19] YLBHI, 'Temuan Tim'. A woman charged with involvement in the violence, Ina Nurhasanah, testified in court on 13 October 1997 that she had been given a 'pill' by a stranger. After taking the pill she testified to feeling very pleasant and then proceeded to join the violence.

Sudarso school situated behind the church.[20] Even when people returned the next day and burned the sacristy, they were again prevented from attacking the school. Wide scale looting took place particularly around the commercial centre of town on Jalan Zaenal Mustofa. In a round up of looters by police, more than 160 people were detained of which a small number were schoolchildren. Major General Tayo Tarmidi described them as, 'residents tempted into looting. Some of the others were repeat offenders'.[21] The violence also spread to surrounding villages predominantly south of Tasikmalaya including Singapurna, Kawalu, Bantarkalong and Karangnunggal.[22]

The report complied by the Fact Finding Team from the office of the Bishop of Bandung, concluded that participants in the violence were 'very selective' when choosing their targets.[23] One witness, named Uron, attested to this selectivity. He told investigators how he had witnessed an attack on a shop owned by ethnic Chinese and recalled that before they attacked the shop they asked the owners what religion they were. He added, 'I heard people saying, "expel the Chinese...expel the Chinese". With those words my heart was moved to join the masses to hate the Chinese.'[24] Uron also observed that those doing the shouting appeared to be drunk. Witnesses report that there was not one police officer on the streets during the violence.[25]

At approximately 5pm on 26 December, troops from the regional command (Siliwangi) and Army Strategic Reserve (*Komando Cadangan Strategis Angkatan Darat*, Kostrad) closed off the major access roads in and out of the city. The electrical supply was cut along with telephone communication.[26] At 9pm Regional Commander Maj.Gen. Tayo Tarmidi and West Java Chief of Police Maj.Gen. Nana Permana visited the Pesantren Condong. An hour later Makmun made a radio announcement saying that his son, Farid had not died, as had been rumoured.[27] However, despite this announcement and threats made by Tarmidi of 'harsh action' if the violence did not stop, the next day burning and looting continued in the town and some outlying areas, and included the desolation of a church in Cipatujah, 79 kilometres south of Tasikmalaya.[28] The total damage from the violence included the destruction of 13 churches,[29] one Confucian building and one Buddhist temple, 89 shops (particularly car showrooms and dealerships), 12 police stations, four factories, four schools, six banks, three hotels, over 100 vehicles, four people died[30] and 15 were injured.[31] Komnas HAM estimated the financial cost at Rp 85 billion.[32]

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[20] TPKB, 'Kronologi'.
[21] Tasikmalaya riot claims three lives', *Jakarta Post,* 28 December, 1996.
[22] 'Kota Tasikmalaya kembali tenang', *Media Indonesia*, 28 December 1996.
[23] TPKB, 'Kronologi'.
[24] Hadad, *Tasikmalaya*, 24-25.
[25] TPKB, 'Kronologi'.
[26] Ibid.; 'Pangdam minta', *Pikiran Rakyat*, 26 December 1996. Komnas HAM were critical of security forces because of a two year time lag, although they said they understood the reasons for it. ('1000s of workers unemployed', *Kompas*, 30 December 1996.)
[27] Hadad, *Tasikmalaya*, 27; 'Kami Makmun dan Mahmud Farid', *Pikiran Rakyat*, 28 December 1996.
[28] 'Pangdam minta masyarakat Tasikmalaya tidak terhasut', *Pikiran Rakyat*, 26 December 1996.
[29] Burnt: Catholic Church, Jalan Sutisna Senjaya; Christian Church of Indonesia (GKI), Jln. Veteran; Indonesian Pentecostal Church, Jln. Penyertuan; Indonesian Bethel Church, Jln. Citepan. Three more churches were badly damaged and 5 had some damages. (TPKB, 'Tasik Bergolak'.)
[30] The victims included an ethnic Chinese woman, Giok Wie, who was found in a guttered church. She was found to have died from a heart attack. ('Life in troubled Tasikmalaya slowly returns to normal', *Jakarta Post*, 29 December 1996.) Another was a youth who had fallen from the back of a truck. (Tasikmalaya riot', *Jakarta Post*, 28 December 1996) and the other victims was an unidentified woman and a 34 year old woman. (YLBHI, 'Temuan Tim'.)

The initial response to the violence of many political and religious leaders, particularly local ones, was to reject the idea that students from the pesantren were involved.[33] Further they insisted that this was not spontaneous violence perpetrated by locals, the majority of whom were Muslim, but that it was planned and carried out by actors who had come from outside Tasikmalaya.[34] Although they refused to believe the violence had religious undertones, local leaders committed themselves to inter-faith dialogue and promotion of religious harmony in the local community as a solution. The Minister for Religion proposed a meeting of local Muslim and Christian leaders and again called for legislation on religious harmony[35] and the Christian community instructed its congregation to beware of religious hedonism if they wanted to avoid Java becoming the next Lebanon, Ireland or Yugoslavia.[36] After meeting with security forces, the Christian community also instructed its followers to avoid large and obvious gatherings.[37] They concluded that the victims must accept some of the blame. Meanwhile in contrast to local rhetoric, Suharto openly linked the violence to religious conflict, 'Religious communities need to exercise self restraint, by avoiding activities which may disturb people of other faiths...or hurt them.'[38] In the absence of alternative instruments of conflict resolution or for understanding community violence, a familiar structure for resolution was once again applied despite the fact that it was widely accepted that the explanation for this violence lay beyond religious conflict.

Similarly, elite members of the military and government sought to avoid the difficulties that could arise should they interpret this violence as something other than religious or instigated by a 'third party'. Acknowledging that social disparity and ethnic antagonisms played a part in the Tasikmalaya violence, would force the government to confront the possibility of the failure of its development programs and in particular, its SARA policy. Towards this goal Tarmidi simply urged, 'Let's forget all the wounds and make a fresh start.'[39] Evidently, in what they saw as a move in this direction, the security forces arrested four young Muslim men whom they suspected of organising the meeting at the Police headquarters on 26 December.[40] The men were generally considered by political commentators and human rights activists to be convenient scapegoats and were featured on Amnesty International's and Human Rights Watch Asia's list of

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[31] Komnas HAM findings reported in 'Thousands of workers unemployed', *Jakarta Post*, 30 December 1996.
[32] 'No rights violations found in riot', *Jakarta Post*, 30 December 1996; *Kompas*, 'Tasikmalaya riot', 28 December, 1996; 'Kota Tasik Kembali Normal', *Pikiran Rakyat*, 28 December 1996.
[33] West Java chief of Bakorstanasda in 'Tasikmalaya riot', *Jakarta Post*, 28 December 1996.
[34] 'Ini Bukan Spontanitas Massa', *Republika*, 27 December 1996; 'Tak ada santri yang terlibat kerusuhan Tasikmalaya', *Suara Pembaruan*, 30 December 1996. Various reports claim that the main actors were men with long hair and tattoos.
[35] 'Penyebabnya harus dipelajari secara lengkap', *Pikiran Rakyat*, 31 December 1996; 'Soal kehidupan antarumat beragama 'lampu kuning bagi Bangsa'', *Media Indonesia*, 7 January 1997.
[36] TPKB, 'Kronologi'.
[37] 'Tasikmalaya kurang bergairah', *Suara Karya*, 2 January 1997; 'Life in troubled Tasikmalaya', *Jakarta Post*, 29 December 1996.
[38] 'Tasikmalaya riot', *Jakarta Post*, 28 December 1996.
[39] Major General Tayo Tarmidi, 'Let's make a new start, military chief appeals', *Jakarta Post*, 31 December 1996.
[40] 'Kodam berhasil identifikasi bahan peledaknya', *Merdeka*, 2 January 1997; 'Kambing Hitam in absentia di Tasikmalaya', *Suara Independen*, edition 10 n.4, 1997; 'Konflik elite Islam di ekor Naga Hijau', *Forum Keadilan*, n.23, 24 February 1997.

political prisoners in 1997-1998.[41] The nine police officers were also charged and tried by a military court and later dismissed from the police force for their role in the assault of Kiai Farid and the senior students.[42] These arrests and trials were deemed sufficient by the authorities and no obvious effort was made to identify the *provocateurs* active during the violence who were generally labelled 'criminals' by police and the military. Feisal Tanjung depicted those involved in the violence as people simply lacking in patience and recommended that they wait their turn for the benefits of development to trickle down. He painted a picture of the crowds in Tasikmalaya as lacking in self-control, 'Some people become easily upset, violent, lose control and are easily provoked.'[43] Tanjung presented the violence as a further example of the indispensability of the military in its role as guardian of national stability saying, 'The incidents make us realise how vital it is to promote national resilience.'[44] Later, Wahid similarly depicted those involved in the riot as simple minded and ignorant, 'The riots were simply the result of a shallowing process, where people become ignorant of their own religion and therefore become easier to agitate.'[45] By placing the blame for the violence in Tasikmalaya with the 'impatient' and 'ignorant' residents and a group of tattooed and long-haired agitators or with the victims themselves, these leaders and others sidestepped questions about their own accountability and that of their institutions.

Social And Political Consequences: Development Falls Short

> 'This is very merry. The difference is that last year people walked up and down window-shopping. Tonight they're looking at debris.' (Haji Uu, 55 year old resident of Tasikmalaya on New Years Eve 1996.)[46]

On New Years Eve 1996, the residents of Tasikmalaya filled the streets. In a festive mood they paraded up and down visiting the sites of fire and destruction from a few days before. Many of them would have walked past burnout factories, shops and offices that had provided them with a source of income and essential consumer goods. As a consequence of the violence on 26 December in Tasikmalaya and surrounds, an estimated 12,700 people lost their jobs, most of them Muslim *pribumi* Indonesians, and many more were indirectly affected.[47] This immediate and drastic loss of employment for so many made the suffering of the

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[41] Human Rights Watch, 'World Report 1998'. The men were released in June 1998 as a part of Habibie's amnesty. (Amnesty International News Release - ASA 21/81/98, 'Indonesia: Releases welcome but still more in jail', 18 August 1998; Amnesty International Report - ASA 21/84/98, 'Indonesian and East Timor: The prisoner releases so far', 26 August 1998.

[42] 'Police trial opens for Tasikmalaya riot', *Jakarta Post*, 18 February 1997; 'Four cops fired over Tasikmalaya riots', *Jakarta Post*, 11 February 1997. Nursyami, Agus Yulianto, Redi Huerudin, Agus Martadinata were given a dishonorable discharge for violating officer discipline.

[43] 'Feisal says people need to develop pure patience', *Jakarta Post*, 30 January 1997.

[44] 'Mastermind behind riots almost caught, says G. Feisal', *Jakarta Post*, 8 January 1997.

[45] 'Gus Dur says Moslems getting shallower', *Jakarta Post*, 2 January 1997.

[46] 'Vatican calls in envoy to explain Tasikmalaya riot', *Jakarta Post*, 2 January 1997.

[47] 'Bakorstanasda Jabar bahas pasca-kerusuhan Tasikmalaya', *Republika*, 3 January 1997. Over 1000 workers were unemployed as a direct result of the violence. ('Situasi Tasikmalaya hampir pulih', *Kompas*, 2 January 1997.) Some were given offers to work in Batam. 'Pasca-perusuhan Tasikmalaya', *Merdeka*, 6 January 1997; 'Kota Tasik', *Pikiran Rakyat*, 28 December 1996. Bulog promised to monitor price rises of basic goods in the lead up to Idul Fitri. ('1000s of workers', *Kompas*, 30 December 1996.)

poorer groups in society more acute. Many believed this had the potential to lead to further trouble as Ramadhan and Idul Fitri approached.[48]

A Social Divide: Ethnicity and Class In Tasikmalaya

Despite the government's rejection of the idea that its economic development program was contributing to the difficult social conditions, at the local level in Tasikmalaya it is clear that the social divide played a prominent part in the violence on 26 December. Like Situbondo in East Java, Tasikmalaya is described as a *santri* city. The five largest pesantren in West Java are all in Tasikmalaya and at the time of the violence was home to an estimated 925 pesantren with enrolments of over 64,000 students under the tutelage of 1400 kiai. It is estimated that 99% of the local population are Muslim and of the 1percent who are non-Muslim, the majority are Christians,[49] many are also non-pribumi or ethnic Chinese. The Chinese Indonesian community in Tasikmalaya at this time numbered approximately 4,100 people, 0.23 percent of the total population.[50] Yet, despite their minority status at the time of the violence, the ethnic Chinese community in Tasikmalaya was considered to control the majority of commerce and industry in the town. In the early 1980s in accordance with the national development program, the Mayor of Tasikmalaya Adang Roosman, had encouraged outside investment of capital into the district. Large investment in transport and communications industries was soon followed by further and more diverse interest. Compared with the neighbouring districts of Garut and Ciamis, Tasikmalaya had developed at a great pace. The development was fuelled by capital from foreign investors and ethnic Chinese business with some of this investment moving into industries traditionally controlled by pribumi, including the production of batik.[51] A local leader, KH Dachlan Chudori went so far as to say, 'Strategic public infrastructure then changed over into the hands of newcomers with strong capital. Until now there are no strategic places in the city of Tasikmalaya that are controlled by non-pribumi.'[52]

As they settled and prospered in the district, ethnic Chinese built new facilities including churches, banks and shopping centres. Many locals considered these new additions to the city to be 'social status symbols' and associated them directly with the ethnic Chinese community.[53] Hasan Basri, head of the local branch of ICMI and national leader of the MUI, articulated the sorts of perceptions held by many locals of ethnic Chinese and in particular their relationship with corrupt local authorities, by presenting the scenario of a traffic accident involving a *pribumi* and an ethnic Chinese to ISAI (Institute for the Free Flow of Information) investigators. He told them, 'They (ethnic Chinese) just stand with their hands on their hips getting angry. They are brave because they have the backing *(dibekking)* of the security personnel.' He added that it was well known that if a dispute progressed to the police station, the ethnic Chinese would always win because they could give the larger bribe, 'Maybe because they are able to pay a high price.'[54]

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[48] 'Bakorstanasda', *Republika*, 3 January 1997.
[49] 'Dibalik kerusuhan Tasikmalaya', *Republika*, 7 January 1997.
[50] Hadad, *Tasikmalaya*, 133
[51] Ibid., 135.
[52] Ibid., 136.
[53] Ibid., 7.
[54] Ibid., 135.

Many were being left behind amid the surge of economic growth and development in Tasikmalaya and elsewhere in Indonesia in the 1980s and early 1990s. Many people also believed that the division between those who possessed this new wealth and those who did not was drawn along ethnic and religious lines.[55] One political commentator wrote at the time, 'In Indonesia those who are ready for competition happen to be ethnic Chinese, while the Indonesian majority are not. The Chinese are (then) deemed a Christian society. The fact that most churches also receive donations from abroad...makes it easier for Christian society to win the competition.'[56] Leader of NU, Wahid also agreed that the economic disparity between these two groups was based on religious and ethnic difference, 'We're not blaming the Chinese Indonesian traders for their economic supremacy. But the Moslem traders should be given the opportunity to do business,' he said.[57]

During the 1990s there had been various high profile conflicts within the community over the issue of advantage being given to non-*pribumi* business.[58] The suspicion of collusion between ethnic Chinese business and local government officials and judges had previously led to community protests.[59] After the violence in Tasikmalaya on 26 December, many locals agreed that the violence was motivated by similar feelings of social jealousy and marginalisation. The head of a local small business non-government organisation, Tatang Setiawan, described the actors in the violence as, 'those who feel oppressed by the power of the conglomerates.'[60] Albert Hasibuan from Komnas HAM also concluded that the disparity of wealth which had emerged in recent years was a principle cause of the current problems, 'Among other things, this riot occurred because of the social divide. The majority of people feel that there is a small section of the community with a better economic situation and who are less interactive among them.'[61] But what did this have to do with the protest by Muslim students at police headquarters? As Hasan Basri's story clearly shows, a connection between police corruption and brutality could easily be made with feelings of anger at the brutality of the police against an Islamic teacher, and subsequent attacks on Christian churches and ethnic Chinese businesses.[62]

Like in Situbondo, targets for violence in Tasikmalaya included police stations and other symbols of government and authority. The crowds who dispersed from their protest at police headquarters sought out these and also other symbols of oppression. They included the new churches built by Christian congregations largely made up of ethnic Chinese, as well as shopping malls, and supermarkets that had replaced traditional markets, and smaller ethnic Chinese owned shops. The violence was largely a rejection of a process of

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[55] 'Nations need new development paradigm', *Jakarta Post*, 28 December 1996.
[56] Loekman Soetrisno, quoted Ibid.
[57] Hotman Siahaan, 'Pluralism makes Indonesia prone to violence, *Jakarta* Post, 3 January 1997.
[58] Hadad, *Tasikmalaya*.
[59] After a fire destroyed the Tasikmalaya market in 1995 the authorities decided to re-build at a new location. Many traders believed they were being disadvantaged by the move and that non-*pribumis* were being given the best sites at the new market. It was suspected that the local authorities were colluding with non-*pribumi* business on this project. Traders held numerous protests. 'Dibalik', *Republika*, 7 January 1997.
[60] Hadad, *Tasikmalaya*, 184.
[61] 'Dibalik', *Republika*, 7 January 1997.
[62] 'Nation needs', *Jakarta Post*, 28 December 1997; TPKB, 'Kronologi'.
It appears that authorities' obligation to protect the ethnic Chinese community was maintained during the chaos and violence. On the 26 and 27 December, most of the four to five thousand ethnic Chinese residents of Tasikmalaya took shelter in government offices, in a military complex under the protection of security forces as well as at the homes of their pribumi neighbours.

modernity by people who had been left behind by it and the rejection of a corrupt system of local authority, which was also perceived to denigrate Islam. However, the antipathies which prompted people involved in the violence to shout angry slogans and derogatory slurs against ethnic Chinese like, 'Long live Muslims, Destroy the Chinese' and 'Expel the Chinese'[63] along with anti-police slogans, 'Police are Thieves too' demonstrate the extent to which these feelings of marginalisation were bound to ethnic prejudices. Further, as other slogans heard that day attest, including 'Don't think Islam is passive', 'Islam wants justice' and 'We are free from Chinese economic domination'[64] it could also be seen as an assertion of their power and identity as members of the Muslim community.

In the weeks following the violence ethnic Chinese businessmen were reluctant to open their shops and Christian prayer meetings were held at private homes so as not to attract attention.[65] So too, the local police force went underground. In fact police did not resume their normal duties until months later. In the period immediately following the violence, armed forces troops and youth groups patrolled the streets.[66] Later, an all female police corps was charged with protecting the residents of Tasikmalaya.[67] Students from the Condong pesantren helped soldiers and youth groups to clean up the city, including removing the graffiti from walls and doors of buildings.[68]

The 'history' of tensions between the Chinese and non-Chinese communities in Tasikmalaya, ostensibly because of social jealousies and corruption, meant that many non-Chinese residents could easily separate the burning of Christian churches on 26 December, from issues of religious conflict. Leader of the local branch of the NU, Kiai Dochlan Chudori, explained it clearly, 'The burning of the church does not indicate a lack of inter-religious tolerance. But the church is identified as a symbol of the economic gap.'[69] However, Pastor Hilman from the Kudus Yesus Catholic Church in Tasikmalaya, called for a more balanced assessment of the members of his congregation. He admitted that while 90 percent of his parishioners were ethnic Chinese but insisted that their success was due to hard work rather than monopolisation of the economy and he added, 'In my congregation there are also many who do not have abilities in commerce.'[70] Because their local and national leaders never attempted to address these (mis)perceptions about stereotypes of ethnic Chinese, in Tasikmalaya it had come to the point that all that was Christian or Chinese, was associated with economic and social inequality. When put in these terms, notions of tolerance and harmony could be easily overlooked.

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[63] Hadad, *Tasikmalaya*, 25. Students from the Condong Pesantren helped to clean the graffiti from buildings after the violence. *Media Indonesia* reported that stickers with the words 'Kami Muslim' printed on them were stuck on homes and cars around Tasikmalaya. In addition, slogans like, 'Don't burn this house because Muslims live behind it'. ('Kota Tasikmalaya kembali tenang 160 tersangka ditahan, tiga tewas', *Media Indonesia*, 28 December 1996.)

[64] TPKB, 'Kronologi'.

[65] Many ethnic Chinese shop owners received threatening phonecalls in the week after the violence telling them not to open their shop or they would be attacked. ('Aski Teror Kembali Melanda Tasikmalaya', *Media Indonesia*, 4 January 1997.)

[66] 'Life in troubled Tasikmalaya', *Jakarta Post*, 29 December 1996.

[67] A meeting between police and Ulama was organised by Regional Commander Tayo Tarmidi to repair relations. ('Menyusul Kerusuhan Tasikmalaya Pangdam Undang Ulama se-Jabar', *Republika*, 30 December 1996.)

[68] 'Life in troubled Tasikmalaya slowly returns to normal', *Jakarta Post*, 29 December 1996.

[69] Hadad, *Tasikmalaya*, 137.

[70] Ibid.

APPENDIX C.

MARCH-OCTOBER 1997: ELECTIONS, DECLINING SECURITY, A DISAPPEARING ECONOMY

Incidents involving violence against ethnic Chinese across Indonesia continued to be reported after the election. These included violence in Kadipaten, West Java on 2 June, after a rumour that a Chinese shop owner had strip-searched a *pribumi* female whom he accused of shoplifting. However, the largest incident of this kind during the post-election period was in Ujung Pandang beginning on 15 September and lasting several days.

On the evening of 15 September, Benny Karre, 23, an ethnic Chinese man who was a diagnosed paranoid schizophrenic, stabbed a nine-year-old girl, Anni, and her twenty-year-old companion, Norma. Anni and Norma encountered Benny as he was charging towards the store of a trader with whom he had an argument over a transaction. He was reportedly carrying a 40 centimetre long Toraja knife. When Benny arrived at the store the trader had fled, instead he found Anni and Norma who had stopped by on their way home from an evening religion class. He then allegedly stabbed Anni in the stomach and chased Norma, stabbing her too, in the head and hand. Both victims died from their injuries. Over the course of the next few hours news and rumours quickly spread about the attack. Benny was arrested by police and mobile brigade (Brimob) troops but then mysteriously managed to escape from the handcuffs they had put on him. When he was re-captured he had been beaten and later died in hospital from his injuries. Crowds gathered outside Anni's home, where her body had been returned before burial. As she had died late during the night, it was decided that she would be buried the next day, not immediately as was normal practice. At the time, authorities were concerned that this delay could cause the atmosphere to become heated and police increased security in the area. Authorities also stressed that Benny was mentally unstable and that this had been the reason for his attack on the women, not their religion. In the early hours of the morning of 16 September, however, groups, reported to have consisted of 'youths' and 'students' attacked shops and other property including banks and hotels, most of them Chinese owned. By the end of the next day the violence had more or less stopped, leaving over 1,400 buildings damaged or destroyed, six people dead and an estimated Rp17.5 billion in damage.[71] After the violence, Major General Agum Gumelar, who had directly intervened after the initial murders to lead the security effort in Ujung Pandang, told media that the perpetrators had been detained, and described them as *preman* or 'unemployed', and rejected the idea that students were involved. He concluded however that 'Clearly the riot yesterday is because of the group imbalance, that is between ethnic Chinese and *pribumi*. Sentiment between *pri* and *nonpri* of this sort, could no longer be controlled.'[72] Horowitz wrote about these events, 'a double murder by a Chinese produced an easily controlled attempt to lynch the culprit, but nothing more.'[73] The fact was however, that violent attacks on Chinese property continued for approximately 40 hours after Benny's

[71] Margot Cohen, 'Moving Targets', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 19 February 1998.
[72] Agum Gumelar in Hadad, *Tasikmalaya*, 26.
[73] Horowitz, *Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 489.

death, revealing, I would argue, a more than adequate precipitant for ethnic violence which was fuelled by a considerable intensity of anti-Chinese sentiment.[74]

Whilst the violence against ethnic Chinese property during the clashes between groups in the run up to the election can be described as by-products, the violence at Ujung Pandang and indeed in Kadipaten, occurred after the elections and within the more 'normal' parameters of 'anti-Chinese' violence in Indonesia. Does this mean however, that the election violence should be considered to be less 'racialised' than these incidents? As Wieviorka describes it, ethnic violence exists on various levels of intent and intensity and similarly it is argued here that anti-Chinese violence can occur within the context of other forms of violence. Simultaneous and yet distinct.

[74] Ibid., 486; 489. See Horowitz's argument that the violence in Sulawesi was lacking in intensity and was begun by a 'trivial precipitant'.

APPENDIX D.

ADDITIONAL ECONOMIC DATA

1997-1998

Price Table for Selected Commodities, December 1997 - February 1998.

(Rp/kg)

	Dec, 1997	Jan, 1998	Feb, 1998	% increase for period Jan-Feb
Rice	1,213	1,290	1,439	11.5
Palm Oil	3,050	3,580	3,580	0.0
Coffee	5,604	8,750	10,250	17.1
Wheat Flour	1,000	1,100	1,256	14.2
Condensed Milk	2,348	2,963	5,518	86.0
Cement	10,467	10,740	14,796	37.7
Writing Paper	10,395	10,395	22,050	112.1

From Colin Johnson, *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 2, August 1998, 26.
Source of data; BI website, http://www.bi.go.id

In October 1997, Indonesia signed an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in which the IMF agreed to provide a $US43billion assistance package in exchange for actions by the Indonesian Government to produce a budget with a surplus of 1 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) achieved through cutting government subsidies to petrol, kerosene and electricity, cutting large-scale infra-structure projects, liquidating unsound banks and dismantling some monopolies.[75] The notable exceptions were the national car project, IPTN's jet aircraft project and the clove monopoly.[76] Following Suharto's failure to implement the cost cutting measures stipulated in accordance with the October agreement, a revised agreement was signed by Indonesia with the IMF on 15 January 1998. In this agreement, the government provided more detail about the specific steps it would take, including to revise the national budget to take into account a more realistic conversion rate for the rupiah, to gradually cut the subsidies on fuel and electricity, to tighten supervision of banks, disestablish monopolies and to lift restrictions on foreign investment. In addition, the government agreed to end a range of concessions and subsidies to several projects linked to family members and allies of President Suharto. The government also agreed to write into the budget a projected 20 per cent rate of inflation, nil growth and to establish an Economic and Financial Resilience Council, an advisory body on the economy on which the IMF will sit.[77] The unemployment rate had jumped from 7.7% in 1996 to 10% in 1997, and in early 1998 it was expected to climb still higher. It was predicted that millions would

[75] Amnesty International, 'Indonesia and East Timor - Indonesia: Paying the Price for "Stability"', 25 February 1998.
[76] Robison and Rosser, 'Surviving the Meltdown'.
[77] Amnesty, 'Paying the Price'.

lose their jobs and inflation could reach 20%. Following the devaluation of the rupiah to 11,000 rupiah in early 1998, nearly all companies on the Jakarta stock exchange were listed as technically bankrupt.[78]

1998–1999

Despite Suharto's resignation on 21 May 1998, the Indonesian economy continued to lag as the impact of IMF loan demands and the absence of ethnic Chinese business activity was being acutely felt. At the beginning of June 1998 the Minister for Manpower Affairs, Fahmi Idris, estimated that unemployment in Indonesia could reach 15.4 million people or 17.1 percent of the population and others believed it would reach 20 million by the end of 1998.[79] Further it was estimated that approximately half of these new unemployed would be from the Greater Jakarta (Jabotabek) area.[80] In July the IMF deemed the USD43 billion loan package it had put together in November 1997 no longer sufficient.[81] The rupiah still appeared to be in free-fall, plummeting from Rp9,500 to the dollar when Habibie took office in late May to Rp 13,000 in late July before steadily recovering by October to rates of Rp 7,000–8,000.[82] In early September it was believed that nearly 80 million people out of a total population of 201.6 million, were living below the poverty line and it was estimated that by the end of the year this figure would be 96 million – almost half the population.[83]

As rice shortages began to take effect with the cessation in distribution channels and the worst rice harvest Java had seen for six years,[84] prices for basic goods increased throughout the months after Suharto's resignation. The increases in prices of basic goods mean that higher levels of inflation affect the very poor more than others. For the year to June 1998 Java and Madura had price increases averaging 102%, the rest of the country 71% and overall it was an 89% increase.[85] From January to September 1998 the BPS reported increases in the prices of basic foods by 117 percent, clothing by 104 percent and processed foods and cigarettes by 89 percent.[86] The purchasing power of a worker earning the minimum daily wage of Rp5,800 in April 1997 fell 35 percent from 5.7 kilograms of rice to 3.7

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[78] 'Indonesia: Debt Relief', *The Economist*, 31 January 1998.
[79] Colin Johnson, 'Survey of Recent Developments', *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 2, August 1998, 39; 'Komnas Ham:The May 13–14 Riots were Organised', 3 June 1998.
[80] Johnson, 'Survey of Recent Developments'.
[81] 'Indonesia's Business Suffers Amid Signs of Persecution', Wall Street Journal, 17 July 1998.
[82] 'Indonesia Sliding Towards Economic, Social Chaos', The Washington Post, 22 July 1998; Evans, 'Survey of Recent Developments'.
[83] Tim Healey and Jose Manuel Tesoro, 'Judging Habibie', Asiaweek.com, 4 September 1998, available from <http://www.asiaweek.com/asiaweek/98/0904/cs_1-1_habibie.html>; BPS figures state that in 1998, 24.2% were living below the poverty line and in 1999, 23%. (Hugo, 'Chinese Emigrants'.)
[84] The poor rice harvest was due to drought and the increased prices of fertilisers and pesticides. See L. Cameron, 'Survey of Recent Developments', *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1, (April 1999), 3-41.
[85] Evans, 'Survey of Recent Developments', 27. Some areas of the economy actually benefited from the crisis and depreciation of the rupiah. The increase in exports for electrical appliances (up 15%), garments (up 23%), handicrafts (up 85%) and palm oil (up 54%) brought good news for some. In the first 11 months of 1998 exports from Tanjung Priok had reached a 20 year high, with agricultural exports up 21%. (Cameron, 'Survey of Recent Developments', 11.) For example, Bali was not as hard hit as Java because they were able to offset losses on rice by fruit production. Similarly as the Yogyakarta economy is less dependent on rice production, they were not as severely affected. (Evans, 'Survey of Recent Developments', 27.)
[86] BPS, *Official News*, 5 October 1998 in Kevin Evans, 'Economic Update' in *Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Renewal or Chaos?*, ed. Geoff Forrester (Bathurst, N.S.W.: Crawford House Publishing, 1999),117.

kilograms in April 1998.[87] Meanwhile, the government continued to subsidise and also import rice from Thailand to make up for the shortfall caused by the poor harvest. For farmers this meant that although their own expenses for pesticides and fertilisers, oil and so on where increasing, their earnings were not. The pressure on urban and rural poor who were wage dependent and small-scale agricultural producers did not ease and as a result frustration continued to build. On top of this, the social safety net programs designed by Habibie's government to cushion the impact of the economic crisis for the poor, including Rp18 trillion (USD2.4 billion) in funds, were ill managed and by January 1999 only 30 percent had been allocated.

[87] Johnson, 'Survey of Recent Developments'.

APPENDIX E.

MEMBERS OF THE JOINT FACT-FINDING TEAM (TGPF) ABOUT THE 13-14 MAY 1998 RIOTS

Chairman: Marzuki Darusman SH (Komnas HAM);
Vice Chairman I: Mayjen Pol Drs Marwan Paris MBA (Mabes ABRI: Armed Forces Headquarters);
Vice Chairman II: K.H. Dr Said Aqiel Siradj (NU);
Secretary: Dr Rosita Sofyan Noer MA (Bakom-PKB);
Vice Secretary I: Zulkarnain Yunus SH (Depkeh: Department of Justice);
Vice Secretary II: Asmara Nababan SH (Komnas HAM);

Sri Hardjo SE (Kantor Menperta: Office of the Minister for the Role of Women); Drs Bambang W. Soeharto (Komnas HAM); Prof Dr Saparinah Sadli (Komnas HAM); Mayjen TNI Syamsu D Sh (Mabes ABRI); Mayjen Pol Drs Da'i Bachtiar (Mabes ABRI); Abdul Ghani SE (Deplu: Department of Foreign Affairs); I Made Gelgel SH (Kejakgung: Attorney General's Office); Dunidja D (Depdagri: Department of Internal Affairs); Romo I Sandyawan Sumardi SJ (Tim Relawan); Nursyahbani Katajsungkana SH (LBH-APIK: Legal Aid Institute Indonesian Womens Association for Justice); Abdul Hakim Garuda Nusantara SH, LLM (Elsam: The Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy); Bambang Widjojanto SH (YLBHI); Ita F. Nadya (Tim Relawan, resigned from the beginning).

Sub-teams and Chairs

Sub-team for Verification: Sri Hardjo SE (Chair);
Sub-team for Testimony: Dr Bambang W Soeharto (Chair);
Sub-team for Victims' Facts: Prof Dr Saparinah Sadli (Chair).

Source: Joint Fact Finding Team (TGPF), *Final Report About The 13-15 May 1998 Riot*, Jakarta, 23 October 1998.

APPENDIX F.

CASE STUDY: RESPONSES TO THE RAPES IN SURABAYA

> it is hoped that people do not make comments which are without evidence and facts. This can cause people to become restless. Let us work to creating an atmosphere of calm. (Chief of Police for East Java, Major General M. Dayat)[88]

> I am convinced that there is an aim to discredit certain members of society. If indeed this is the case, why not just report it to the authorities. This is the era of reform. (Mahmud, Surabaya resident)[89]

The response of the authorities, some of the media and some sections of the Indonesian public to the news of the rapes, can be seen most clearly in the case of Surabaya. There were both claims and denials about whether rapes were carried out during the violence in North Surabaya on the night of 14 May and early hours of 15 May. On that night, during four hours of violence, involving looting and burning of businesses and shophouses in the Semampir district in the north of the city, property mostly owned by ethnic Chinese was targeted. Some residents recalled how during this assault they were gripped by extreme fear, forced to abandon their homes, hide from the attackers and were themselves threatened with physical harm. In the following days, amongst a close circle of family and friends in the local ethnic Chinese community, it was also heard that women had been sexually assaulted and raped during the violence.

Those responsible for the attacks on property, looting and burning and threats against residents were described as being men aged between 18 and 35 years of age who moved in groups and were armed with sharp weapons – they were organised.[90] Importantly, witnesses claimed that they spoke Madurese, which fuelled rumours that they may have been members of the criminal gangs, comprised largely of ethnic Madurese, which dominated parts of Surabaya. The violence was however, contained to a relatively small section of the city and from its investigation the TGPF concluded that 'its scale is relatively small with victims and damage not so serious'. In addition the TGPF found that this violence, which they compared to that in Lampung at this time, was local, sporadic, limited and spontaneous.[91]

On 30 June, six weeks after the night of violence, Bingky Irawan, the head of Majelis Agama Konghucu Indonesia (MAKIN) 'Boen Bio' in Surabaya and close friend of Gus Dur, told the media that he was aware of cases of rapes of ethnic Chinese women which had taken place at the same time and in the same places as the attacks on shops and homes. He would not however expose exactly how many victims he knew of, except to say the number was around ten or so, nor would he name the victims or precisely where the crimes had been carried out. He explained, 'They are very shocked and afraid. So that, even when we wanted to get confirmation and a clearer picture, many did not want to

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[88] 'Bingky Akan Dipanggil Kapolda', *Surabaya Post*, 1 July 1998.
[89] 'Yang Ada Hanya Perusakan, Bingky Ditunggu Pasal Kebohon', *Suara Indonesia*, 2 July 1998.
[90] A report by the group Gema Sukma found that crowds began to assemble in north Surabaya from about 7pm on 14 May. At approximately 9pm six trucks filled with people arrived in the area with a few following on motorbikes. It claims that these people attacked, looted and burned businesses. ('Gema Sukma Temukan Korban Kerusuhan', *Surya*, 24 July 1998.)
[91] TGPF, 'Anatomy of the Riot: Surabaya Report', *Final Report*, Jakarta, 23 October 1998, 146-148.

continue.' [92] Bingky also added that the local ethnic Chinese community was concerned about a further outbreak of violence.[93] Immediately the local police expressed great surprise at this declaration and demanded that Bingky provide them with details of what he knew. Despite being summoned to, and attending police headquarters on at least three occasions, Bingky maintained what he termed a *'puasa bicara'* or 'speech fast'. He was supported in his decision to remain silent about the identities of the victims, as they had asked, by local non-government organisations including Gema Sukma and Pro-Democracy Women's Committee (*Komite Perempuan Pro-Demokrasi*, KPPD) which each conducted their own investigations, and found that rapes had occurred. In the following weeks, influential leader of Ansor East Java, Choirul Anam also supported the Confucian minister's position, claiming he had met with victims and witnesses.[94] Despite this wide support for Bingky and the truth about the rapes, the police and sections of the local media continued to condemn Bingky's position and that of other volunteers working to protect victims. Police threatened that Bingky could be charged with providing misleading information if he did not provide proof, and that he could be responsible for causing further social and ethnic fissures as a consequence of his actions. The Police Chief warned, 'if this is slander, he will be prosecuted.' [95] Furthermore, Bingky and other volunteers received threats and anonymous phone calls in the days following the news of the rapes thereby confirming the fears they had held about the safety of the victims themselves.[96] Bingky himself maintained a light and humorous manner whilst at the same time taking a deeply serious and ethical approach. On the occasion of one of Bingky's appearances at police headquarters, he wore what was described by the Jawa Pos as a *'kai pong'* or *'jang bao'* in Mandarin –a traditional Chinese costume often worn by characters in Chinese martial arts movies.[97] In statements he made to the press Bingky made other references to this popular film genre, ' Yes, maybe later, if I speak now I could send the world of *kang-ouw* (a term often used in martial arts films) into a tumult.'[98]. It was as though he was at once attempting to make a parody of his predicament whilst also drawing attention to the issue of his ethnicity and that of the victims of the violence.

Following the completion of more thorough investigations into the rapes, KPPD and Gema Sukma found 19 victims of rape and six victims of sexual assault. All incidents had take place in North Surabaya on the 14-15 May and mostly inside shop houses.[99] Earlier figures had shown 10 rapes victims, six of whom were ethnic Chinese women and four ethnic Arab women. Ansor East Java also confirmed that they knew of 'one or two' ethnic Arab victims. However, unlike the victims of rape in Jakarta and surrounds of whom about fifty percent could be accounted for later, only about twenty

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[92] 'Ketua Majelis Konghucu Ungkap Perkosaan Surabaya', *Jawa Pos*, 1 July 1998.
[93] 'Bingky dipanggil', *Surabaya Post*, 1 July 1998. Bingky said that these reports had come from the parents and friends of the victims. ('WNI Cina Diperkosa Dalam Kerusuhan Surabaya', *Surya*, 1 July 1998.)
[94] 'Ansor Benarkan Adanya Pemerkosaan', *Jawa Pos*, 14 July 1998.
[95] 'Jika Tak Benar, Bingky Bisa Dituntut', *Jawa Pos*, 2 July 1998.
[96] Hesti, a volunteer from Gema Sukma; 'I receieved a lot of threatening telephone calls, they started by asking me what my ethnicity was, then they threatened me if I continued my involvement in this problem.' ('Hesti: Tak Akan Terpejam', *Surya*, 14 Juli 1998.)
[97] Long pants gathered at the ankle and long shirt.
[98] 'Geger Dunia Kang Ouw', *Surabaya Post*, 11 July 1998.
[99] 'Gema Sukma', *Surya*, 24 July 1998

percent of the victims from Surabaya either remained in the city or Indonesia more generally, or let volunteers know of their whereabouts. Most simply disappeared. A few, it is known, took up an offer given by a delegation from Taiwan who visited Surabaya in the months after the rapes and met with Bingky. Their offer of assistance to these women and their families was in the form of medical support and refuge in Taiwan.[100]

The debate in Surabaya between the police, 'experts' writing for local newspapers (psychologists, criminologists, doctors and lawyers) and on the other side the volunteers, including Bingky, revolved more or less around two issues. These included the issue of presenting evidence to the police for their investigation and also the question of definition of rape.[101] For these 'experts' and the police, Section 285 of the Penal Code clearly defined rape as intercourse between a man and a woman who is not his wife, and which is forced. The definition, they variously accused, being employed by the NGOs was far broader than this. One 'expert' claimed that the NGOs went so far to include a situation whereby a woman's shirt was ripped from her, under their definition of rape.[102] In response, columnist Hotman M. Siahaan called for 'empathy for this tragedy, a compassion for the victims of these brutal acts ...'[103] From its subsequent investigation (albeit limited by the factors described elsewhere here) the TGPF sub-team for Victims Facts found that two rapes had occurred and four cases of sexual assault. TRuK found six rapes, three rapes with a foreign object and three cases of sexual assault.

[100] Interview with Bingky Irawan, Surabaya, 18 April 2001.
[101] 'Bingky Irawan Dimintai Keterangan di Polwiltabes', *Surabaya Post*, 9 July 1998.
[102] Pieter Hadjan, 'Perkosaan, Percobaan Perkosaan dan Perbuatan Cabul', *Surya*, 22 July 1998. Needs to include penetration with a foreign object for example. ('Trimoelja: Ungkapan Bingky Positif', *Surabaya Post*, 12 July 1998.
[103] Hotman M. Siahaan, 'Tragedi', *Surabaya Post*, 4 July 1998.

APPENDIX G.

CHINA AND TAIWAN RESPONSES TO THE MAY 1998 VIOLENCE

In recent decades China aligned itself with Asean on issues of foreign policy related to human rights, in particular in opposition to 'western' intervention on these issues.104 China protested to the Indonesian government after violence against Chinese traders in Medan in 1994, during which a Chinese man was killed. However, when this was met with rebukes from the Indonesian government to stay out of their domestic affairs, the Chinese government withdrew their statement.105 At a meeting with President Habibie in November 1998, just after the student protests erupted into clashes with security forces outside the Special Session of parliament China's Premier Jiang Zemin, again raised the issue of the problems of the Chinese Indonesians. He was reported as saying, 'We hold that the proper solution of the issue of the Chinese Indonesians will not only serve...the long term stability of Indonesia, but also...the smooth development of the relationship of friendly cooperation with neighbouring countries'.[106]

A Taiwan non-government delegation which visited Indonesia in early August 1998 met with the Commander of the Armed Forces, General Wiranto who was to report the details of their meeting directly to the cabinet and President. In addition, the Taiwan team met the Minister for the Status of Women, Tuty Alawiyah, Vice Head of the National Commission for Human Rights, Marzuki Darusman and head of NU, Abdurrahman Wahid. In response, on 9 August 1998, Minister for Investment, Hamzah Haz reportedly flew to Taiwan to ask forgiveness for the May violence. The Minister insisted that he also intended to promote Indonesia as an investment destination.[107]

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[104] See Chen Jie, 'Tactical Alliance: Southeast Asia and China's post-1989 human rights diplomacy', *China Rights Forum*, Fall 1998, available from <http://www.hrichina.org/crf/english/98fall/e4.html> accessed 12 January 2000.

[105] Ian J. Storey, 'Indonesia's China Policy in the New Order and Beyond: Problems and Prospects', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, v.22, i.7, fn.28, (April 2000) 29; Ann Kent, 'The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and China: Breaker or Shaper of Norms?', available from <http://www.hrichina.org/crf/english/98fall/e3.html> accessed 12 January 2000.

[106] Chinese Indonesians should be treated equally: Jiang', *Singapore Straits Times*, 18 November 1998; 'Jiang – Chinese Indonesians should enjoy equal treatment', *Xinhua*, 17 November 1998.

[107] 'Menteri Hamzah Haz akan ke Taiwan Minta Maaf', SIB, 3 August 1998.

APPENDIX H.

Presidential Instruction Republic of Indonesia
Number 26 1998

The President of the Republic of Indonesia,

Considering : that in order to raise the level of equality of status in the law and in government administration, to give equal rights in employment and lifestyle, rights and obligations of citizens and protection of human rights, and to strengthen the union and unity of the nation, it is seen as necessary to give directive for the means to carry this out;

Remembering : Article 4 subsection (1), Article 27, Article 28. Article 19, Article 30, Article 31 and Article 33 of the 1945 Constitution;

INSTRUCTS:

To :
1. Ministers;
2. Leaders of Non-Departmental Government Organisations;
3. Leaders of the Secretariats of the Highest/High National Organisations;
4. Governors Regional Heads Level I and Mayors Level II;

In order :

FIRST : To put an end to the use of the terms *pribumi* and non-*pribumi* in all formulations and in the implementation of policy, planning of programs, or in carrying out government activities.

SECOND: To give the same treatment and service to all Indonesian citizens in carrying out government services/duties, social and developmental, and to abolish differentiation/ discrimination of all forms including attitudes towards Indonesian citizens based on ethnicity, religion, race in carrying out the services mentioned.

THIRD: To consider going back and adjusting/ reconciling all regulations and laws, policy, programs and activities which until now have already been determined/ passed and implemented, including amongst others the service of the distribution of permits for enterprise, finance/ banking, residency (habitation), education, health, work opportunities and wage formulation/ determination of earnings and other workers rights in accordance with this Presidential Instruction.

FOURTH: Ministers, Leaders of Non-Departmental Government Organisations; Leaders of the Secretariats of the Highest/High National Organisations; Governors Regional Heads Level I and Mayors Level II should carry out the implementation of this Presidential Instruction in

each sector and district in support of universal ideals and of society that carries out activities on the basis of competence.

FIFTH: The Minister for the Coordination of Politics and Security shall coordinate the implementation of this instruction by Ministers and other figures mentioned in this Presidential Instruction.

This Presidential Instruction comes into effect immediately upon the date of its release.

Issued in Jakarta
On the 16 September 1998
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

Signed

Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie

Source: *Himpunan Peraturan Perungang-undangan RI tahun 1998*, Jakarta: Eko Jaya, 1998.

APPENDIX I.

Instruction of the President of the Republic of Indonesia
Number 4 1999

The President of the Republic of Indonesia

Considering : a: that in order to speed up the creation and strengthening of the union and unity of the nation as well as to increase the level of equality in the law and in government administration, equal rights for work/ employment and lifestyle, rights and obligations as citizens and protection of human rights, the Government has already issued policy through Presidential Decree No.56 1996 and Presidential Instruction No.26 1998;

(i) that in order to maintain continuity, and that the Government policy mentioned should be directly effective and its objectives formed immediately, it is seen as necessary to issue this Presidential Instruction for use in carrying this out;

Remembering : Article 4 subsection (1), Article 27, Article 28. Article 19, Article 30, Article 31 and Article 33 of the 1945 Constitution;

Instructs:

To :
1. Ministers;
2. Leaders of Non-departmental Government Organisations;
3. Leaders of the Secretariats of the Highest/High National Organisations;
4. Governors Regional Heads Level I and Mayors Level II;

In order :

FIRST : a. To implement with certainty Presidential Decree No 56 1996 about Evidence of Republic of Indonesia Citizenship and Presidential Instruction No. 26 1998 with full responsibility and in accordance with each duty and authority which amongst others determine that:

(i) The Presidential Decree about granting citizenship and its agenda stipulated that the act of taking an oath, was the basic necessity in order to complete the administrative requirements for residency.

4. The issuing of Kepres No.56 1996, dated 9 July 1996, declared that all regulations and laws which mentioned the condition of the Letter of Evidence of Republic of Indonesia Citizenship (SBKRI) would cease to apply;

b. Based on the Instruction of the President of the Republic of Indonesia No. 26 1998, laws which prohibit and limit the study of Chinese language were immediately revoked.

SECOND: The Minister for the Coordination of Politics and Security to coordinate the implementation of this instruction and report on its progress to the President.

This Presidential Instruction comes into effect immediately upon the date of its release.

Issued in Jakarta

On the 5 May 1999

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

Signed

Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie

Source: *Himpunan Peraturan Perungang-undangan hasil reformasi di bidang politik tahun 1999*, Jakarta: Media Karya Nusantara, 1999.

APPENDIX J.

KEBUMEN, 7 SEPTEMBER 1998

> actually it was really only a normal quarrel between an employee and his boss. However, as it passed from mouth or mouth, it developed into mistreatment and battering. (Kapolwil Deddy)[108]

Just over one week after the violence in Cilacap, an incident involving an ethnic Chinese employer and her employee led to violence in the nearby town of Kebumen. On 7 September 1998, Sukiman a 22 year old employee of Yohanes and Elizabeth, the owners of automobile spare parts shop 'Toko Rego Agung' on Jln. Pahlawan, was heard sobbing by some of his friends who worked at the nearby minibus terminal. Sukiman was well known to the men who worked on the minibuses that pulled in to the terminal on Jln. Pahlawan, as they often shopped for fuel and spare parts at Toko Rego Agung. That morning Sukiman was extremely distressed. When his friends asked him what was wrong he told them that he had been scolded severely and then beaten by his boss Elizabeth for spilling oil in the shop. The small group of minibus workers were familiar with the harsh way the owners of Toko Rego Agung treated their staff and were particularly aware of Elizabeth's fiery temper and erratic behaviour. Further, in recent times as customers of their shop, the minibus workers themselves had cause for grievances against Elizabeth and Yohanes. Increases in their prices had been unpredictable; 'The prices often fluctuated' noted one bus driver,[109] and requests for credits were always refused. The minibus workers felt for Sukiman whom they perceived, had tolerated and endured so much during seven years working for the couple. After hearing Sukiman's story they grew angry at his obvious distress and humiliation and a small group, together with *tukang becak* (becak drivers), *orang pasar* (market workers) and passersby, gathered in front of the shop situated only 50 metres from the terminal. A crowd of approximately 50 people assembled at the shop, some of them shouting abuse at Yohanes and Elizabeth, who quickly ran from their home as the crowd approached. At some point a few members of the minibus crews ran to a nearby warung for a can of oil which they then used to set fire to tyres in front of the shop. It was not long before the fire had spread to the shop and engulfed its contents, which ironically, included Sukiman's own car for which he had saved for many years and used to visit his mother in his village once a month.[110]

By mid-morning the minibus terminal at Jln Pahlawan had become busy with passengers arriving from nearby villages and school children coming out of school. Many of them joined the crowd that was now moving on from Toko Rego Agung to other shops close by, most of which sold spare parts, tyres and oil. Some witnesses report that they heard people shouting, 'Chinese are too much! Chinese Dogs! Burn! Burn, burn everything, what are you waiting for!' Witnesses claim the language and dialect used by those shouting these slogans was not local. One witness went so far to claim, 'The accent was like that of a Solonese. It definitely wasn't the Kebumen dialect.'[111] Over 80 shops, houses and factories in central Kebumen as well as dozens of vehicles and public facilities such

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[108] 'Amuk Massa Kebumen, 37 Toko Dibakar', *Jawa Pos*, 8 September 1998.
[109] Saharjo, *Rusuh di Kebumen,* 35.
[110] Ibid., 55.
[111] Agus Salim Chamidi quoted in Saharjo, *Rusuh di Kebumen,* 41.

as pot plants and street signs were looted, burned and destroyed at an estimated total cost of Rp5 billion.112

Conditions for Violence: Economic Stresses and Urban Poor

> There is a phenomena that things are easily ignited because the situation is very difficult.
> (Endro Suyitno, Head of DPRD, Jawa Tengah.) [113]

In Central Java in the months prior to the violence on 7 September, prices for *sembako* such as rice had increased from Rp800 to Rp2,500 per kilogram.[114] In addition to these pressures Kebumen's local economy had become increasingly strained since the beginning of the *krismon* period. During this time, workers retrenched from their jobs as maids and labourers in countries like Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore, which had also been hit by the crisis, were returning to Kebumen and surrounding villages. This was a double blow for not only were their foreign currency wages no longer coming in to buoy the local economy but they had become another burden, adding to the growing numbers of the town's unemployed.

At this time pro-reformasi supporters in Kebumen, including Chinese businessmen, members of local government, police and TNI formed an alliance called Social Welfare Forum (*Forum Kepedulian Sosial*, FKS) to campaign for decreases in the prices of *sembako* and distribute aid. Its main concern was the urban poor community, which was they believed, hardest hit by the price rises. Unlike the villagers who had some level of subsistence to cushion the impact of these increases they would devastate the urban poor. From July until September 1998 the FKS (of which Kebumen's mayor was a leader) operated a *pasar murah* or cheap market at which they sold subsidised *sembako* to urban poor. On 4 September, days before the violence, Bulog once again raised the price of rice by more than Rp1,000 per kilogram. Protests by the Bupati to the local Dulog centre asking that FKS be permitted to sell cheaper rice, were refused. Very soon rice and cooking oil began to disappear from markets and shopkeepers in Kebumen were quickly suspected of hoarding. In this tense atmosphere Sukiman's tears became a powerful symbol of the pain experienced by the urban poor – the *tukang becak*, *awak angkutan* and *orang pasar* – at this time. His suffering at the hands of an ethnic Chinese employer was easily perceived as mirroring theirs.

The youngest of three children, Sukiman had come to Kebumen from a nearby village to work for Yohanes and Elizabeth when he was 14 years old. He did chores about the house and shop every day of the week in exchange for board and a meagre and often variable wage of approximately Rp100,000 per month. Once a month he was permitted to return to his village to visit his mother and deliver some of his earnings. It was well known in the town that conditions for staff in the Yohanes-Elizabeth household were difficult. During the 7 years that Sukiman worked for the family other staff had come and gone with great frequency, unable to tolerate their employers' temper and strict discipline. Yet

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[112] Ibid. quoted from Polres Kebumen.
[113] Endro Suyitno, Ketua Komisi DPRD Jawa Tengah. *Suara Pembaruan*, 8 September 1998.
[114] Kedaulatan Rakyat, 23 August 1998.

Sukiman retained a sense of loyalty to the couple in spite of the way he and his fellow staff were treated. Even when police questioned him after the attack on Toko Rego Agung, Sukiman defended his employers and testified that he had not been hit that day but merely scolded. He later admitted this was a false statement explaining, 'It is true. That morning I was beaten. Moreover recently *nyonya* had become like a person stressed, she was always very angry for no reason. Maybe it was because of the *krismon, ya.* And I always become the target...'[115] Sukiman had been frightened by the way the crowd had massed at the shop and he felt partly responsible for the destruction that subsequently took place. Sukiman refused to testify against his employers or those responsible for the fire and expressed a desire to make peace with his former employers. For his part, afterwards Yohanes denied that his wife would ever hit Sukiman whom he called a member of their family.

Ethnic Chinese in Kebumen who worked closely with other local groups in an effort to promote social harmony in the town were ashamed and angered by Yohanes' and Elizabeth's actions. Many of them had in fact long been wary of the potential damage this couple could do to relations between ethnic Chinese and non-Chinese in Kebumen. A leader of FKS, Yunarto Arif claimed that he knew of the capacity these particular individuals had, despite their social and ideological distance from some parts of the Chinese community, to bring undone years of work to assimilate into the local community.[116] Yet Yohanes, Elizabeth and the rest of the local ethnic Chinese community were bound to each other by a social perception of their common ethnicity, no matter how different their politics, attitudes or behaviour.

The Ethnic Chinese In Kebumen: Against The Odds

> According to history racial riots have occurred in Kebumen four times. First in 1928, then in 1942, 1965 and finally in 1998. You can ask older people who had the opportunity to experience it. (Arif Yanarto)[117]

The buildings selected by the crowd — or as the evidence indicates, by certain 'leaders' — for vandalism and violence were mostly shops and homes owned by ethnic Chinese as well as some banks and public facilities. Words like 'pribumi', 'muslim' and 'pro-reformasi' were scrawled on the doors of many of those buildings passed over by the crowd. Kebumen is described as a *kota santri* with almost 99 percent of its inhabitants Muslim, 91 pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) and 4,500 mosques.[118] It was also the birthplace of several Islamic militia groups during the revolutionary period.[119]

In the 1990s Kebumen became the focus for new investment most of it by ethnic Chinese business in textiles, an industry traditionally dominated by indigenous Indonesians. During this period the first supermarkets opened in Kebumen, with ethnic Chinese business again playing a major role. In a pattern repeated across the nation, these investments led to the displacement of many small shops and traditional markets owned and operated by indigenous residents. There was a general belief that ethnic

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[115]Saharjo, *Rusuh di Kebumen*, 54-55.
[116] Ibid.
[117]Yanarto Arif, FKS, Ibid., 53.
[118]Department of Religion Kebumen District (Kebupaten), 1997.
[119] Including Angkatan Oemat Islam (AOI).

Chinese did better in business only because of their links to Golkar and KKN under the New Order. Cholidy Ibhar, head of the local branch of the Bakom PKB believed that the *santri* community in Kebumen considered ethnic Chinese to be 'infidels' and because of the difference in religion and culture, felt Chinese could never participate fully in the life of the community.[120]

At the same time many ethnic Chinese residents, well aware of the difficulties in relations between Chinese and non-Chinese in Kebumen, were working hard prior to the violence, to guarantee harmony in the city through groups like FKS. Many like Tun Han Jan (Handoko), the owner of a plastics factory, had donated hundreds of thousands (*ratusan ribu*) of rupiah to assist the poor in Kebumen and no doubt had spent much, much more over the years to pay for security. It was a strategy, which under the New Order regime had proved very successful. Since 1965 until this incident — as Arif recounted — no significant 'racial' violence had occurred in the town. However, after the violence in early September 1998, many ethnic Chinese in Kebumen, including Tun Han Jan, began to question their methods of security-seeking. 'Since I was small I have attended school, worked and lived with indigenous people. My concern about these problems is not any less. But still I become a target and victim every time there is a problem or crisis.'[121]

Spontan saja?

> I have been studying why it is that Kebumen, which for a long time was a peaceful and calm region, had this riot. Certainly there are factors and reasons which are internal and external...I see a red thread running between the riots in Bondowoso, Tasikmalaya, Pekalongan spreading to Cilacap and then Kebumen... (Kebumen Mayor, H. Amin Soedibyo)[122]

Immediately the police and local leaders refused to accept that the violence was a result of spontaneous actions by local residents reacting to the injustice done to Sukiman.[123] The Chief Commander of Diponegoro Division (Central Java) insisted that the violence had nothing to do with Sukiman but was orchestrated, 'In this case clearly there were those who heated up, agitated and orchestrated.'[124] Evidence was presented to demonstrate that the violence had been systematic and organised to the point that it had a 'commander' and there was a 'list' of targets. This level of planning was made clear when the owner of 'Sinar Baru' offered the leaders of the crowd Rp10 million to spare his shop but they refused it on the basis that the shop was 'on the list' and must be burned *(harus dibakar)*.[125] The existence of a list, or even the ready acceptance by the authorities that such a list may exist and that the violence against the ethnic Chinese was led or *'didalangi'* not only indicated that prevalence of such terms and analysis in the discourse of the authorities, but also the way in which this behaviour was part

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[120] Saharjo, *Rusuh di Kebumen*, 9.
[121] Ibid., 42.
[122] Ibid., 87.
[123] The absence of troops in Kebumen during the early stages of the protest and subsequent violence at Toko Rego Agung was claimed to be because the bulk of the town's security forces were concentrated at a college on the outskirts of the town where students were holding a demonstration demanding a decrease in fees. When they eventually appeared on the streets the crowds simply treated them with contempt and without fear continued to loot and burn (*Republika*, 9 September 1998).
[124] Ibid.
[125] Saharjo, *Rusuh di Kebumen*, 44.

of the 'accepted' array of activities in this community. Significantly, the presence of 'leaders' of the crowds and 'lists' demonstrates that a riot 'system' was at work and despite efforts at assimilation made by sections of the local ethnic Chinese community, their security could still not be guaranteed. However, evidence that this 'riot system' was the same, or linked to, the one responsible for the violence in the places mentioned by the Kebumen mayor is not apparent. It is more probable that a 'remembering' or 'mimicking' of those and other incidents of violence against ethnic Chinese in history, were in some way 'taken on' by those involved in this case as well as others.

The 'history' of racialised violence in Kebumen, beginning in the 1920s and including 1965 is typical of the 'remembering' possible in towns and villages across the country. In Kebumen the system worked just as effectively *pre* New Order as it did *post* New Order. Evidence that this system existed independently of agents from the New Order regime may, strangely, be found in the fact that in Kebumen it was effectively shut down during the years the regime was in power. Arrangements between wealthy ethnic Chinese businessmen in the town and *tokoh* in the government and military can explain this. In the absence of the New Order, guarantees of security given by the mayor and the local Chief of Police had little impact and no amount of good deeds within the community by ethnic Chinese groups could satisfy this renewed desire for justice among the people of Kebumen, nor suppress their recently acquired capacity to demand it.

Yunarto Arif believed that relations between Chinese and non-Chinese had been severely damaged by the violence in early September 1998. He claimed that the processes of assimilation and harmony between groups that had been present for so long were all but destroyed following the violence, as they became newly suspicious of each other. With another twenty ethnic Chinese business people he formed the Communication Forum for the Victims of the 7 September Kebumen Riot (*Forum Komunikasi Korban Kerusuhan Kebumen*, 7 September), because despite assurances from the Mayor and the Chief of Police that they would be protected, as he explained, the ethnic Chinese in Kebumen needed to work together for a solution, 'We established the forum in a spontaneous way because we feel we share the same destiny. We want to ask, can we still be given the opportunity to work here or not'.[126] In forming this new group to assist the victims of the violence, Arif and other Kebumen Chinese had greatly changed their outlook regarding their participation and future in Kebumen. They had shifted from a position of making pronounced efforts to 'assimilate' and to assist the indigenous urban poor, to questioning whether there was a place for them in that community after all. Essentially they began to demonstrate a sense of helplessness and a sense that no amount of effort or money could make pribumi perceive them as 'belonging'. It is possible that for these people and this community, this sense of helplessness and rejection was rightly stated. Conversely it is also possible that Arif and other ethnic Chinese in Kebumen had also misunderstood or misinterpreted what they believed to be harmonious and amiable relations with the pribumi during the previous 30 years. Perhaps they simply were naïve not to see that during the New Order years during which they played an important role in the government's development program, they had been shielded from what would otherwise have been real hostility. In the aftermath of the violence, some Chinese residents recognised they needed a new approach to relations with non-Chinese in Kebumen. They began to realise that

[126] *Suara Merdeka*, 20 September 1998.

they needed to participate in neighbourhood security operations and that they needed to contribute towards finding long-term solutions for social problems.

APPENDIX K.

Results of a poll conducted by the *Jakarta Post* in mid-February 1999, which surveyed 1,234 people in major cities.

Current standard of public security:

Bad	Very bad
49%	28%

Most serious threats to your life:

Riots with religious overtones	Widespread crime	Ethnic conflicts
61.4%	52.5%	49.6%

The prime cause of recent riots:

The high rate of unemployment and the economic crisis	The public losing trust in the law enforcement agencies
61.5%	32.7%

Source: 'Indonesia not safe: Poll respondents', *Jakarta Post*, 4 March 1999.

Glossary

abangan	Javanese Muslim who incorporates elements of mysticism and respect for local spirits in his/her religious belief.
ABK	Anak Buah Kapal: lit. children of the boat (fishermen working on boats for a salary)
ABRI	Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia: Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia
aliran	lit. stream or current.
amok	Amuk
Ansor	Nahdlatul Ulama youth organisation
antar-golongan	intergroup
asli	originally from, native of
awak angkutan	bus conductor, driver
BAIS	Badan Intelijen Strategis: Strategic Intelligence Agency
Bakom-PKB	Badan Komunikasi Penghayatan Kesatuan Bangsa: Communication Forum for National Unity
Bakomubin	Badan Koordinasi Mubaligh se-Indonesia
BAKORSTANAS(DA)	Badan Koordinasi Bantuan Pemantapan Stabilitas Nasional: (Regional) Agency for the Coordination of Support for the Development of National Stability
Banser NU	Barisan Ansor Serbaguna: Ansor multi-purpose branch. An arm of the youth organization of Nahdlatul Ulama
Becak	pedicab, tricycle
BIA	Badan Intelijen ABRI: ABRI Intelligence Branch
BPS	Biro Pusat Statistik: Central Bureau of Statistics
Brimob	Brigade Mobil: Mobile Brigade
bromocorah	repeat offenders
buka puasa	break the fast
bukti	Evidence
Bulog	National Distribution Agency
BUMN	Badan Usaha Milik Negara: State Operations Agency
bunuh	Kill
Bupati	district head, regent
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
cukong	a relationship between ethnic Chinese business and elite figures in military, politics
dalang	puppeteer, mastermind
Dalmas	Pengendalian Massa: Crowd Control troops
Danrem	Komandan Resort Militer: Military Resort Commander
Danrem	Military Resort (Provincial) Commander
darah	Blood
Depdagri	Departemen Dalam Negeri: Department of Internal Affairs
Depkeh	Departemen Kehakiman: Department of Justice
Deplu	Departemen Luar Negeri: Department of Foreign Affairs
desa	Village
DPR	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat: Legislative Assembly
DPRD	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah: Assembly at provincial, regional or municipal level

Dulog	Logistic Depot
dwi fungsi	dual function
ekonomi rakyat	peoples' economy
Elsam	Lembaga Studi dan Advokasi Masyarakat: The Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy
Fakta	Fact
fakta kebenaran	factual truth
FKKS	Forum Komunikasi Kristen Surabaya: Christian Communication Forum Surabaya
FKS	Forum Kepedulian Sosial: Social Welfare Forum
Fokus Malam	Communication Forum for Santri and Islamic Youths
Forum Komunikasi Korban Kerusuhan Kebumen, 7 September	Communication Forum for the Victims of the 7 September Kebumen Riot
Forum Komunikasi Untuk Reformasi	Communication Forum for Reform
FRONT	Forum for Human Rights
GANDI	Gerakan Anti Diskriminasi
Gerakan Cinta Rupiah	I Love Rupiah Movement
gereja	Church
GKI	Indonesian Christian Church
Golkar	Golongan Karya: Functional Groups
halal	permissible
harga biasa	normal price
HNSI	Himpunan Nelayan se-Indonesia: Indonesian Fishers Association
huaren	ethnic Chinese living outside China
ICMI	Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim se-Indonesia: Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals
Idul Fitri	celebrations marking the end of Ramadan, the fasting month in the Islamic calendar
IMF	International Monetary Fund
Interfidei	Institut Dialog Antar Iman di Indonesia: Institute for Inter-faith Dialogue in Indonesia
Inpres	Instruksi Presiden: Presidential Instruction
Intel	Intelligence agency
IPK	Ikatan Pemuda Karya: Youth group in Medan
IPKI	League of Supporters of Indonesian Independence
ISAI	Institut Studi Arus Informasi: Institute for the Free Flow of Information
kabupaten	district, regency
kafiran	Infidel
kaki lima	street trader
kambing hitam	Scapegoats
kampung, kampong	small village
Kapolda	Regional Police Chief
Kapolres	District Police Chief
kawasan	district, region
Kejakgung	Kejaksaan Agung: Attorney General's Office
kekerasan	violence
kerusuhan	riot
Kiai	Islamic teacher and community leader
KISDI	Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam: Indonesian Committee for World Islamic Solidarity
Kodam	Komando Daerah Militer: Military Area Command
Komandan Korem	Komando Resort Militer: Military Resort Commander

Komnas HAM	Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia: National Commission for Human Rights
Komnas Perempuan	Komisi Nasional Anti Kekerasan Perempuan: Indonesian Commission for Violence Against Women
Kontras	Komisi untuk Orang Hilang dan Korban Tindak Kekerasan: Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence
KOPASSUS	Komando Pasukan Khusus: Special Command Unit
KOPKAMTIB	Komando Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban: Operational Command for the Restoration of Security and Order
Koramil	Komando Rayon Militer: Military headquarters at local level
KOSTRAD	Komando Cadangan Strategis Angkatan Darat: Army Strategic Reserve
KPP HAM	Commission of Inquiry into Human Rights Violations
krismon (krisis moneter)	monetary crisis of 1997—8
KTP	Kartu Tanda Penduduk: identity card
Laskar Jihad	Holy War Forces
LBH	Lembaga Bantuan Hukum: Legal Aid Institute
LBH APIK	Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Asosiasi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Keadilan: Legal Aid Institute Indonesian Womens Association for Justice
Lebaran	day of celebration at end of fasting month
LSPP	Lembaga Studi Pers dan Pembangunan: Institute for the Study of the Press and Development
Mabes	Markas Besar: Headquarters
MAKIN	Majelis Agama Konghucu Indonesia
Makostrad	Markas Komando Kostrad: Headquarters of the Army's Strategic Reserves Command
Mapolsek	Markas Polisi Sektor: local police station
masjid, mesjid	mosque
massa	masses
MATAKIN	Majelis Tinggi Agama Khonghucu Indonesia: High Council of Indonesian Confucian Religion
Menperta	Menteri Negara Peranan Wanita: Minister for the Role of Women
MPR	Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat: People's Consultative Assembly
Muhammadiyah	modernist Muslim organisation
MUI	Majelis Ulama Indonesia
nelayan pendatang	newcomer fishermen
NGO	non-government organisation
NU	Nahdlatul Ulama: Revival of the Religious Scholars, a traditionalist Muslim organisation
ojek	motorcycle or bicycle used for public transport
oknum	shadowy figure responsible for instability
operasi pembersihan	clean up operation
orang kaya	rich person
orang miskin	poor person
PAN	Partai Amanat Nasional: National Mandate Party
Pancasila	Five basic principles of the Indonesian state (state philosophy)
Pangab	Panglima Angkatan Bersenjata: Commander of the Armed Forces

Pangdam	Regional Commander
Pangkoops Jaya	Commander of Greater Jakarta
Panglima	Commander
PBHI	Badan Pengurus Perhimpunan Bantuan Hukum dan Hak Asasi Manusia Indonesia
PDI-P	Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan: Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle
pedagang	self-employed traders
pembangunan	development
pembauran	assimilation
pemuda	youth
Pemuda Pancasila (PP)	New Order Youth group
Penangkapan Hasil Laut	Association of Fishermen
peranakan	person of ethnic Chinese descent who was born and bred in Southeast Asia.
perkosaan	rape
pesantren	Islamic boarding school
PGI	Persatuan Gereja Indonesia: Union of Churches
pihak tertentu	certain party, third party
PIKI	Indonesian Association of Christian Intellectuals
PKI	Partai Komunis Indonesia: Indonesian Communist Party
PMII	Pengerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia: Indonesian Movement of Islamic Students
PMS	Persatuan Masyarakat Solo: Solo Community Union
posko	coordinating, communication post
PPNC	Nusantara Fishery Harbour
PPP	Partai Persatuan Pembangunan: United Development Party
PR	Pemuda Rakyat: People's Youth, an affiliate of PKI
PRD	Partai Rakyat Demokrasi: People's Democratic Party
preman	thug, heavy
premanisme	gangsterism
pribumi	indigenous Indonesian
provokasi	provocation(s)
provokator	provocateur
PWS	Paguyuban Wong Solo: Association of Solonese
reformasi	reform movement
Romo	Javanese term of address for a Catholic priest
ruko	rumah, toko: shophouse
santri	devout Muslim, students of Islam
SARA	Suku, Agama, Ras, Antar Golongan: Ethnicity, Religion, Race, Intergroup relations
Satgas	Kesatuan Tugas: Security Unit
Satgas GDN	Gerakan Disiplin Nasions: Team for National Discipline
Satpam	Satuan Pengamanan: Security Unit
SBKRI	Indonesian Citizenship Certificate
sembako	basic goods, needs
siskamling	Sistem Keamanan Lingkungan: Local Security System
SKB	Surat Keputusan Bersama: Letter of Joint Decision
suku bangsa	ethnic group
tadarusan	reading and learning the Holy Koran

TBS	Taman Budaya Surakarta: Surakarta Cultural Centre
TGPF	Tim Gabungan Pencari Fakta: Joint Fact Finding Team
TNI	Tentara Nasional Indonesia: Indonesian National Army
toke	Chinese boss, or trawler owner
toko	shop
TRuK	Tim Relawan untuk Kemanusiaan: Volunteers Team for Humanity
tukang becak	becak driver
UHN	Universitas HKBP Nommensen: HKBP Nommensen University
ulama	Muslim religious teacher or leader
UMS	Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta: Surakarta Muhammadiyah University
UNS	Universitas Sebelas Maret: University of the 11 March
UPS	Universitas Panca Sakti: Panca Sakti University
USU	Universitas Sumatra Utara: University of North Sumarta
warung	small shop, stall
wayang	shadow play with leather puppets
WNA	Warga Negara Asing: Foreigner, alien citizen
WNI	Warga Negara Indonesia: Indonesian citizen
wong cilik	little person
YLBHI	Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia: Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation

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