Conflict and Peace Studies in Post-Suharto Indonesia

Douglas Kammen

Expectations that the end of Suharto's thirty-two years of authoritarian rule in Indonesia in 1998 would usher in an era of political reform, including the end to separatist rebellions, human rights abuses, and military impunity, were dashed by the intensification of old conflicts and outbreak of new forms of violence. Despite initial optimism, efforts to address human rights violations during the New Order stalled. This article surveys the various forms of conflict in Indonesia over the past twenty years and the major trends in scholarship, together with the smaller body of literature framed specifically in terms of peacebuilding. It concludes that much of the literature on peacebuilding has been driven by institutional interests and the incentives created by the funding of these institutions.

Keywords   Indonesia, armed insurgency, communal conflict, terrorism, transitional justice, peacebuilding

Introduction

The outpouring of pro-democracy sentiment that emerged in Indonesia in February 1998 and culminated three months later in Suharto's resignation has been apotheosized under the banner of the *reformasi* movement, and the era it ushered in as the age of reformasi. But this designation was neither certain at the time nor is it an entirely accurate characterization today. Between March and April 1998, pro-democracy figures, grassroots activists and even some sympathetic figures within the regime wrestled with the formulation of their demands and the overall framing of the movement. The most popular slogan, printed on headbands and banners was not the general notion of reformasi but the more specific, and limited, *reformasi damai*—meaning peaceful reform (van Dijk 2001, 198). This was not just a declaration that the movement would be non-violent and an aspiration that it would lead to a more peaceful Indonesia; it was an explicit rejection of an alternative with wider reaching aims and implications—*revolusi*.

When President Suharto resigned in May 1998, many Indonesians hoped that their country would be reborn. The end of authoritarian rule, it was assumed, would usher in a new era of democracy, respect for human rights, and even efforts to address past abuses of power. But simplistic assumptions about the dawning of a new era characterized by peace were quickly thrown into doubt by the intensification of violence and conflict across Indonesia. The political transition in Jakarta opened new political space for the long-standing armed insurgencies in Aceh, East Timor, and Papua, to which the Indonesian military and regimist local politicians responded with increased troop deployments, new operations, and heightened repression. The political transition in Jakarta also led to clashes between the security forces (including newly formed paramilitary organizations such as Pam Swakarsa) and pro-democracy activists in Jakarta (Pandjaitan and Tanuredjo 1998). Perhaps most notably, new forms of violence emerged in Indonesia, particularly in the Outer Islands: serious communal violence—variously framed in terms of religious and ethnic differences—erupted in West Kalimantan (first, predating Suharto's resignation, in 1997, then in 1999 and 2001), in the Moluccan Islands (from 1999 until 2003), in Central Sulawesi (from 2000 until 2003), and in Central Kalimantan (in 2002). The post-Suharto era also saw the rise of terrorist bombings which, with the September 11 attacks in the United States (US) and President Bush's declaration of a global war on terror, were interpreted by many observers in terms of assumed global networks of jihad. In short, during the immediate post-Suharto years Indonesia was anything but peaceful.

Not surprisingly, scholarship on post-1998 Indonesia quickly bifurcated along two distinct tracks: the first of these, often celebratory in nature, focused on the successes of democratization; the other, often apocalyptic, emphasized Indonesia's descent into barbarity, and even the possibility of national disintegration. A third view, promoted by select Indonesian thinkers but virtually absent in foreign scholarship, was that the reformasi movement of 1998 and Suharto's resignation did not in fact represent a break from the authoritarian past but rather a hurried and messy reorganization of power on the part of a long-standing economic elite, often termed the Indonesian oligarchy (Robison and Hadiz 2004). The great author Pramoedya Ananta Toer called this the "New New Order" (*Orbaba*, a portmanteau created from *Orde Baru Baru*). The leftist painter Djokopekik depicted it in a series of paintings titled *Berburu Celeng* (Hunting the Boar), in which the mythical were-pig (Suharto) has been slain but the country lies devastated and Indonesians have all become pigs in Suharto's image (Florida 2008).

Twenty years later, there is now a vast body of literature on conflict and political violence in post-Suharto Indonesia. This scholarship can usefully be divided into a number of distinct categories: (1) studies of localized riots primarily directed against property;[1] (2) studies of long-standing armed insurgencies in

East Timor, Aceh, and Papua; (3) studies of communal violence in the Outer Islands; and (4) studies of terrorist bombings and networks (Davidson 2009, 330-31; see also Colombijn and Lindblad [2002] for an exploration of the historical origins of political/social violence, and Anderson [2000] for state violence during Suharto's New Order). In contrast to the voluminous literature on the production of violence, there is remarkably little scholarship on post-1998 Indonesia that is framed explicitly in terms of peacebuilding. There are two reasons for this lacuna. Domestically, with the exception of the Center for Security and Peace Studies at Gadjah Mada University,[2] the relative absence of academic units devoted to the study of peace and peacebuilding, along with associated journals, means that few Indonesians have academic training in the field or reason to pitch their work explicitly in terms of peace studies. Internationally, the study of violence in post-1998 Indonesia has been dominated by scholars in the fields of political science, security studies, and terrorism studies, for which the major research questions have focused on the production of violence rather than the means by which violence and conflict might be brought to an end. The first three sections of this article assess the scholarship on the three most important forms of political violence in post-Suharto Indonesia—armed insurgencies, communal violence, and terrorism—highlighting the research questions and institutional forces that have shaped scholarly output and its relationship to peace studies. The fourth section examines the demand for and state efforts to address the violent past, most commonly framed in terms of transitional justice.

Although less noted in the scholarly literature, the onset of democratization was also occasion for Indonesians who were ensconced in the higher echelons of the state to rethink what peace should mean and how it would be legitimated—or, in short, to rethink how to promote a lasting peace. Regional autonomy, introduced in 1999, was intended to roll back the centralization of state power, but carried within it an entirely unstated consequence: the rejection on the part of Parliament of legislative responsibility for what went on in the regions. Ultimate responsibility, therefore, was redirected back to the presidency. Freed from engaging with the troublesome variety of specific causes and dynamics in Aceh, West Kalimantan, Ambon, and Papua, attention was now focused on the overarching laws governing emergency situations and the deployment of the security forces. The fifth and final section of this article will address the search for an architecture on which a lasting peace could be established.

Long-Standing Armed Insurgencies

The cases of armed separatism in Aceh, East Timor,[3] and Papua are distinct phenomena so should be treated independent of other new forms of conflict that emerged after Suharto's resignation in May 1998. In all three of these provinces,

violence—on the part of both armed insurgents and the Indonesian state—had raged for years. In Irian Jaya (present-day Papua and West Papua), the earliest flashes of armed resistance to the New Order appeared in 1965, but it was not until the fraudulent UN-sanctioned Act of Free Choice in 1969 and full international recognition of the integration of the territory into Indonesia that the Free Papua Movement (*Organisasi Papua Merdeka*) took shape. Indonesia invaded Portuguese Timor in late 1975, and illegally annexed it the following year. Frontal warfare, led by the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (*Frente Revolucionária di Timor-Leste Independente*), and its armed force (*Forças Armadas da Libertação de Timor-Leste* [Falintil]), lasted through the late 1970s, after which there was a strategic shift to lower-intensity guerrilla tactics along with a corresponding rise in civilian organizing and protest. In Aceh, support for and opposition to the central government has waxed and waned over time. Despite strong support for the new republic during the revolution (1945-1949), the Darul Islam rebellion took root in the 1950s and was only extinguished in 1961. Four years later, Aceh was the earliest site of mass killings of communists, and hence support for the military takeover. But a decade later, the province saw the emergence of a newly declared Free Aceh Movement (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* [GAM]). In all three cases, the long night of Suharto's New Order regime was experienced as a period of severe repression and extensive human rights violations.

Suharto's resignation presented the long-standing resistance movements in each of these provinces with an unprecedented political opening. The combination of democratic euphoria in Jakarta and lack of clear instructions for the security forces was met with open civilian protest. In East Timor, students held free speech fora in support of independence. In Aceh, young urban Acehnese who had little previous connection to the Free Aceh Movement took to the streets. And in Papua, civilians in major cities and towns raised the independence movement's Morning Star Flag. In all three provinces, peaceful demonstrations were intended not only to rally local support for independence but also to garner international media coverage and, by extension, the attention of foreign governments concerned about human rights. In all three provinces, however, initial restraint on the part of the military was soon broken. In early July 1998, military troops opened fire on a peaceful flag-raising ceremony on Biak Island, killing an estimated two hundred people. In East Timor, despite claims about the withdrawal of troops in August 1998, army troops massacred civilians in Allas in November (though pro-independence reporting may have downplayed the fact that a Falintil attack had precipitated the event). And in Aceh, during a search for illegal weapons Indonesian troops massacred a religious teacher, Beuteung Bantaqiah, and fifty-six of his students in July 1999.

While the outpouring of civil disobedience and continued state repression made these cases appear similar, there were critical differences. The first of these was the nature of the resistance movements themselves. As a result of the early

influence of the revolutionary movements in Portugal's African colonies and the devastating experience of frontal warfare between 1975 and 1978, the resistance in East Timor during the 1980s developed a sophisticated structure in which civilian participation—including clandestine cells and student protest both in Dili and Jakarta—were accorded equal weight to guerrilla warfare. In Aceh, from 1989 until 1996, GAM had been an overwhelming military organization, with little real effort to develop civilian networks of support or activism. By 1996, Indonesian counter-insurgency operations had gained the upper hand, driving many of the remaining fighters to flee to Malaysia and elsewhere. While the withdrawal of troops in 1998 created new space for the revival of the armed insurgency, GAM military commanders never developed a balanced conception of civil-military relations that allowed for integrated civilian support. So, too, in Papua, where for decades a deep gulf divided the very small (and often fractious) guerrilla bands operating in the inaccessible central mountains and the majority of the indigenous population living in coastal cities such as Jayapura, Manokwari, Sorong, and Merauke. Scholarship on each of these insurgencies can usefully be divided into works that, adopting a perspective from below, emphasize local identities, grievances, and mobilizational strategies of insurgents and the population at large, and those that, adopting a perspective from above, emphasize either state violence or, more specifically, human rights violations.[4]

Different histories and resistance structures produced markedly divergent outcomes in the three provinces. In January 1998 President B.J. Habibie made a surprise announcement that he was willing to hold a referendum on the future of East Timor. In May 1999, despite intense opposition from the Indonesian military, Indonesia, Portugal (as the colonial power of record), and the United Nations reached an agreement to hold a referendum on the territory's future. The military's campaign of intimidation and terror failed to dissuade East Timorese, who in late August voted overwhelmingly to reject Indonesia's offer of "broad autonomy," meaning they had voted for independence. In Aceh and Papua, by contrast, no such offer of a referendum was forthcoming, and in both cases military operations intensified. The conflict in Aceh was brought to an end by a completely exogenous factor: the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, which was so devastating that it drove GAM to the negotiating table, and in 2005 a peace agreement was reached that granted Aceh special status under which local political parties were allowed. In Papua, low-level armed insurgency continues to this day, along with a rising tide of civilian protest and increasingly draconian state repression (Kuddus 2019). There is extensive literature on the political negotiations that led to the 1999 referendum in East Timor and the 2005 peace agreement in Aceh, as well as the longer-term efforts to maintain peace. This includes scholarship by individuals who were personally involved in the negotiations (for East Timor, see Martin 2001; Hasegawa 2006; for Aceh, see Kingsbury 2006) as well as a vast number of works on East Timor framed in

terms of transitional justice by scholars interested in drawing comparative lessons (for example, Suhrke 2001).

Communal Violence

Suharto's resignation prompted an outpouring of grievances over center-periphery relations, particularly on the part of peoples and provinces in the so-called Outer Islands vis-à-vis Jakarta and perceived Java-centrism. These grievances were by no means new. In 1949, during the negotiations that led to Indonesia's independence, the Netherlands had insisted on a federal arrangement that would protect minority groups in the Outer Islands, many of which had sided with the Netherlands during the revolution (1945-1949). One year later, however, President Sukarno abrogated the agreement establishing the Republic of the United States of Indonesia, creating a unitary state (the Republic of Indonesia), and amalgamating smaller provinces into single, island-wide provinces in Kalimantan and Sulawesi. When the first national elections were held in 1955, regional sentiments resurfaced and two years later led to the outbreak of rebellion by the self-proclaimed Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia (PRRI) in Sumatra and the Permesta movement in Sulawesi. Regional elites in many parts of the Outer Islands initially supported the anti-communist pogroms and military takeover in 1965-1966, and they eagerly joined the new ruling party (Golkar). However, provincial elites soon realized that the New Order regime took far more from the regions than it gave. The result was simmering frustration over Javanese political control (including the appointment of provincial governors), the large numbers of Javanese transmigration sent to the Outer Islands, and especially the unequitable distribution of wealth from natural resources such as oil and gas, timber, and minerals.

It was against this backdrop that communal violence erupted in a number of regions at the time of Indonesia's transition to democracy in the late 1990s. In West Kalimantan, the first wave of violence involving ethnic (Christian) Dayak attacks against (Muslim) Madurese migrants erupted in 1997, with repeat episodes in 1999 and 2001 in which Dayaks and Malays formed an alliance. Violence in Ambon, the capital of the Moluccan Islands, erupted in early 1999, pitting Christians (who had long dominated the provincial government and civil service) against Muslims (both those from Maluku and the increasing number of migrants from Sulawesi), and soon spread to the newly created province of North Maluku. In Poso, Central Sulawesi, violence broke out between Christians and Muslims in 2000, with repeated flare ups. And in Central Kalimantan, violence erupted between Dayaks and Madurese in 2001. In each case, relatively minor incidents—traffic accidents, perceived insults, and rumors—provided the initial trigger for violence. But deeper fault lines were at work. The most notable feature

Table 1. Statistics on Communal Violence

Location	Destruction		
	Deaths	Injuries	of dwellings
West Kalimantan	929	10,730	1,159
Maluku	529	4,305	2,300
North Maluku	139	1,356	827
Poso, Central Sulawesi	718	3,666	1,529
Sampit, Central Kalimantan	547	2,833	166

Source: Barron (2019, 57).

of this mass violence was, in fact, not the total number of deaths and casualties (see Table 1), but rather the "nativist" sentiments—at times based on ethnicity, other times framed in terms of religious identity—that motivated the violence.

The analytical focus of scholarship on these episodes of communal violence has varied considerably. In several of these cases the earliest—and often best—analysis was the work of anthropologists with long-standing expertise (for Poso, see Aragon 2001), with a focus on the historical construction of religious communities. By contrast, political scientists focused overwhelmingly on the production of violence, emphasizing the role of leaders, repertoires of mobilization, and the framing of issues. Two comparative studies of communal violence in post-Suharto Indonesia are notable for their divergent approaches. In a study that includes the anti-Chinese violence in Jakarta in May 1998, the three cases of separatist movements, and Maluku, West Kalimantan and Central Kalimantan, Jacques Bertrand (2004) argues that Indonesia's democratization was a critical juncture during which the national model of political inclusion/exclusion was renegotiated. Bertrand argues that it was those who were most threatened by political change (entrenched elites) and those demanding new forms of inclusion who were most likely to produce violence. He argues that "the causes of ethnic violence can be traced to the institutional context that defines and shapes ethnic identities, the official recognition of groups, their representation in state institutions, and their access to resources. Ethnic identities became politicized and the potential for mobilization is heighted when groups feel threatened by the principles embedded in political institutions" (ibid., 4). This is, in short, an argument that regime change created heightened anxieties. Although the theoretical ambitions are greater, the lines of analysis bear some similarity to the early warnings that only the military had kept Indonesia together (Kingsbury and Aveling 2002), and the work of the anthropologist James Siegel (2005) on the killing of alleged sorcerers in Banyuwangi, East Java, in late 1998. Tempting as these analyses may appear, they fail to explain why some regions were wracked by violence while others were not.

A second approach to communal violence in post-Suharto Indonesia high-lights struggles for local political control in the context of the adoption of new laws on regional autonomy that granted the districts significant political and fiscal authority. In a study restricted to the five provinces where major episodes of communal violence occurred, van Klinken (2007) draws on the social movements literature to highlight the horizontal nature of violence between citizens (rather than that committed by the central state), often mobilized by political "entre-preneurs" intent on capturing local state power. Of particular importance in this analysis is the degree to which the state—as employer of civil servants and grantor of contracts—dominates local economies. The greater the prominence of the state and the weaker the private sector, together with higher rates of urbanization, the greater the likelihood of communal violence. Thus, van Klinken finds violence was more likely in West and Central Kalimantan than in East Kalimantan, and was more likely in Central Sulawesi than either North or South Sulawesi.

In a more recent book, which considers the major cases of communal violence as well as the armed insurgency in Aceh, Patrick Barron (2019) constructs a model that bridges the focus on national politics epitomized by Bertrand and the focus on local social and economic factors found in van Klinken. Barron argues that extended episodes of violence are most likely when three conditions apply: the presence of "violence specialists" (such as paramilitaries, groups engaged in jihad, etc.), engagement by local elites, and the involvement of the central state (and especially the army). Without engagement by local elites, violence is likely to be restricted to brief episodes; without the involvement of the military, it may be larger in scale but still episodic, rather than extended. Conversely, when violence specialists are neutralists and local elites either tire of conflict or adapt to democratic competition, communal violence is likely to wane.

In contrast to studies of the production of communal violence, in which political scientists have driven research agendas, scholarship framed explicitly in terms of peacebuilding can be traced to two distinct sources. The first of these is a small but growing body of literature by anthropologists on the potential role that customary law (*adat*) can play in resolving communal conflict in Indonesia (Bräuchler 2009). Such scholarship is typically focused on the lowest administrative units—villages and former micro-kingdoms—though can be scaled upward as well. Yet, as scholars with a longer historical perspective remind us, customary law is just as likely to be a source of conflict as it is a remedy (Bourchier 2007). The second source of scholarship about peacebuilding in response to communal violence is essentially institutional: a range of national and international organizations commissioned studies about the origins of communal violence and possible ways to prevent it (of which interfaith dialogue received a great deal of foreign funding). Among the most prominent examples of this institutionally driven literature is the four-volume series titled *Overcoming Violent Conflict* funded by the United Nations Development Programme, the Indonesian

Institute of Sciences (LIPI), and the National Planning Board (Bappenas) (2005), and *Conflict Management in Indonesia*, produced by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (2011). In contrast to the literature on regional insurgencies, Indonesian scholars are particularly well-represented in commissioned studies of peacebuilding, reflecting a combination of institutional networks linking government/state agencies to universities, a demand for policy-relevant scholarship, and, above all else, financial incentives.

(Islamic) Terrorism

Alongside the study of separatist insurgencies and communal violence, a third stream of scholarship since 1998 has focused on the rise of Islamic terrorism. Concern about violence committed in the name of Islam was first prompted by the mobilization and training of militant Muslims in West Java to go to Ambon to fight on the side of fellow Muslims in early 1999. Militant Islamic publications such as the magazine *Sabili* portrayed the communal violence in Ambon (and, in short order, the Moluccan islands as a whole) in terms of jihad.[5] One of the finest early studies of mobilization in the name of jihad is the work of Indonesian scholar Noorhaidi Hasan (2002) who traces the career of Ja'far Umar Thalib, an Arab Indonesian from his Islamic education in Java, studies abroad in Pakistan, a visit to Afghanistan in the 1980s, and finally his rise as leader of the paramilitary organization Laskar Jihad (Warriors of Jihad) in 2000. In contrast to studies of communal violence in which the focus has been the production of violence, Hasan's work combines Islamic intellectual history with biography. It provides essential background, but stops short of examining the reasons for or dynamics of communal conflict in Ambon, let alone explanations for why conflict subsided and how peace was promoted.

In addition to the outbreak of serious sectarian violence, two additional factors contributed to the rapid rise of terrorist acts in post-Suharto Indonesia. First, despite expectations among many Muslim leaders that democratization would open the way for Islam to become a dominant force in Indonesian politics, the explicitly Islamic parties (including some with Islamist agendas) fared poorly in the June 1999 elections. Second, the 1999 referendum on the future of East Timor, and the fact that it resulted in Indonesia relinquishing its claim on the territory, led to the belief in many quarters in Indonesia, and especially among Islamists, that the West was out to break up Indonesia. Together, these factors helped to fuel the rise of groups—often small cells, but at times public and with card-carrying members—willing to resort to the use of violence. In September 2000, there was a car bombing at the Jakarta Stock Exchange, and on Christmas Eve of that year, bombs set off in eleven churches in Jakarta, Sukabumi, Bandung, Pekanbaru, Medan, Batam, Mojokerto, and Mataram killed nineteen people.

Troubling as these acts appeared at the time, they were in fact just a prelude to the real turning point: the al-Qaeda attacks in the US on September 11, 2001.

US President Bush's declaration of a global war on terror had an immediate and dramatic impact in Indonesia. Terrorist bombings rocked Bali in October 2002 killing 202 people, followed by further bombings at the Marriot Hotel in Jakarta in 2003, in front of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta in 2003, and, for a second time, Bali in 2005. Early police investigations traced a number of these actions to Abu Bakar Baasyir, an Islamic teacher in the city of Solo, who was alleged to head an organization called Jema'ah Islamiyah with links to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda. Acts of Islamic terrorism in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand and the US response (which included sending troops to Mindanao and renewing military cooperation with Indonesia) prompted a wave of what Italians call *dietrologia* (the study of what *really* lies behind an event), or what the English-speaking world knows more mundanely as conspiracy theories. The search for a mastermind quickly led a number of policymakers and academics to claim that Southeast Asia had become the "second front" in the war on terror (Chalk 2001; Gershman 2002; and a host of books soon to follow). Other scholars—including many with far deeper area expertise—pushed back, questioning the evidence for direct links between Islamic groups in Southeast Asia and al-Qaeda and highlighting the legitimate, and often long-standing, grievances that many Islamic groups in the region had (Hamilton-Hart 2005).

Far and away the most intellectually creative and historically grounded work on political violence in post-Suharto Indonesia is John Sidel's (2006) *Riots, Pogroms, Jihad: Religious Violence in Indonesia*. Combining class analysis with Clifford Geertz's famous concept of *aliran* (which refers to all-encompassing socio-political "streams"), Sidel seeks to integrate the localized riots that rocked cities in Java between 1994 and 1998, the post-1998 outbreak of communal violence, and the rise of Islamic terrorism within a single framework. Despite their apparent diversity, he argues that these were all fundamentally *religious* in character. He diverges from the scholarship on communal violence (with its focus on the production of violence) and that on Islamic terrorism (with its focus on global masterminds). Instead, Sidel argues that the "class matrix" that emerged in late-colonial Indonesia, in which foreign rulers and a comprador ethnic Chinese capitalist class created lasting anxieties among the indigenous (*pribumi*) population about the position of Islam.

Scholars working within the peace studies tradition have not engaged directly with the rise of Islamic terrorism in Indonesia. Instead, this task has fallen to scholars and practitioners in two niche areas. The first of these is terrorism studies. While the primary focus of this field has been devoted to tracking connections between individuals, organizations, and terrorist bombings, the field also spawned a mini-industry in the study of deradicalization, which was of direct interest to state officials. The second niche area that emerged in response to the

rise of Islamic terrorism in Indonesia was the promotion of interfaith dialogue. In both cases, funding from major international institutions and government ministries played a significant role.

Addressing the Violent Past

In contrast to the first three categories of scholarship on post-Suharto Indonesia that focus on types of violent conflict—whether old (long-standing insurgencies) or entirely new (communal violence and terrorism)—a fourth category of scholarship relevant to peace studies concerns efforts to acknowledge and rectify violence committed by Suharto's New Order. Suharto's resignation ushered in an atmosphere of political openness and newfound press freedom that allowed open discussion of human rights abuses. The end of Suharto's New Order also opened the door for scholars—both domestic and international—to research topics that had long been taboo, of which the mass violence against the Indonesian Communist Party in 1965-68 was the most sensitive. Much of the new focus and scholarship on Indonesia's violent past drew inspiration from the burgeoning field of transitional justice and its toolkit of truth-seeking, reconciliation, and calls for restitution. As Mary Zurbuchen (2002, 581) noted in an early and influential article, "It is tempting to hope that through systematic examination of the '1965 incident' and its aftermath, Indonesia could engender a process of reconciliation and conflict resolution that would mitigate the continued violence and new communalism being witnessed at present. In reality, however, a formal process of truth-seeking may not lead to social healing." In fact, a formal, state-led process for "1965" or any other gross violation of human rights was never a likely outcome.

In many respects, the early indications were quite promising. In 1998, the Habibie government approved the creation of a joint fact-finding team to investigate allegations of mass rapes committed against ethnic Chinese women in Jakarta and other cities in May of that year. In 1999, in response to calls from civil society, the government also established the Commission for the Investigation of Violence in Aceh. Meanwhile, there was also progress on the legal front. In September 1999, Parliament passed a new law on human rights (Undang-undang 39/1999), and a year later a second law established an ad hoc human rights court (Undang-undang 26/2000). The election—by Parliament, not popular vote—of Abdurrahman Wahid to the presidency in October 1999 provided further signs that the individuals at the highest echelons of the post-authoritarian state were willing to address the country's violent past. President Abdulrahman Wahid issued a public apology for the role Nahdlatul Ulama, the Islamic organization that his grandfather had founded in 1926 and that Abdurrahman Wahid had led since 1984, had played in the mass violence against the Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia* [PKI]) in 1965-1966, and followed this with a

call to revoke the 1966 ban on Marxism-Leninism. Opposition to Wahid's efforts to promote reconciliation and rehabilitate former communists was immediate, involving demonstrations by Muslim student organizations, the mobilization of vigilante groups, and threats against non-governmental organizations working on behalf of victims. The mass violence on which the New Order had been founded in 1965-1966 had rapidly become a new frontline in the struggle between progressive and reactionary forces in Indonesia.

For activists, the ultimate aim was the establishment of a truth and reconciliation commission with a mandate to investigate the violence against the political Left in the 1960s, the treatment of long-term prisoners, and discrimination against former members of the PKI throughout the New Order (and beyond). The origins of this can be traced to a proposal by the National Human Rights Commission in 1998 to establish a panel to investigate human rights abuses. Two years later, the People's Consultative Assembly (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat* [MPR]) issued a decree on national unity that included a call for the establishment of a truth and reconciliation commission. Lobbying by human rights organizations eventually bore fruit in 2004 when Indonesia's parliament based a bill, signed into law by President Megawati Sukarnoputri (Undang-undang 26/2004), creating a national Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Unfortunately, Megawati's successor, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, refused to appoint commissioners, a necessary step for the TRC to come to life. Two years later the Constitutional Court, ruling on a challenge brought before it, ruled that the legislation establishing the TRC was flawed, resulting in its repeal. This was an enormous setback, but it was by no means the end of the issue. Activists and non-governmental organizations have continued to lobby for the state to address past human rights violations, leading to a "Year of Truth" initiative in 2013 (Pohlman 2016) and the establishment of an "International People's Tribunal for 1965," which convened in the Netherlands in 2015 (Wieringa, Melvin, and Pohlman 2019). The issue was revived in 2022 by President Widodo's call to "settle" once and for all past human rights violations (*Jakarta Post* 2022), though this elicited protests from both those on the right who oppose the rehabilitation of leftists and progressives who object to the non-judicial process proposed by the president. What is notable about these efforts within Indonesia is that the greatest progress has often been made by presidents who had lost bids for reelection or were no longer eligible for reelection (Habibie in 1999; Megawati in 2004; Joko Widodo in 2022) and hence had nothing to lose by supporting a cause that would otherwise have been politically anathema if reelection had been a consideration.

The various actors who supported these efforts believed that addressing past abuses of human rights was a critical component of peacebuilding in post-authoritarian Indonesia. However, scholarship on these efforts to address Indonesia's violent past have generally been framed in terms of human rights and the intellectually fashionable rubric of transitional justice. As such, the

scholarship has appeared in either area studies journals (Wahyuningroem 2013; Kimura 2015) or journals devoted to human rights/genocide (Pohlman 2016), but it is generally absent from peace studies journals. For example, while there is a large literature on transitional justice in Indonesia, *The Journal of Peace Studies* has not published a single article to date on the topic.

Building Peace as Delimiting Coercion

If the broad outlines of conflict and violence that accompanied Indonesia's transition after 1998 from authoritarian rule to democracy are now clear, a fundamental question regarding the relationship between conflict and peacebuilding looms ominously in the offstage shadows: what efforts were made to establish a new and lasting *regime of peace* in democratizing Indonesia, and what vision, if any, informed these efforts? To answer this question we must turn away from the literature on specific types of violence and conflict and look beyond the literature on transitional justice, and instead draw on scholarship about the security sector and legal reform in post-Suharto Indonesia.

Following Suharto's resignation in May 1998, the reformasi movement lost its singular focus on democratic reform, and, with this, demands quickly proliferated. The most immediate of these demands were for fresh national elections, for Suharto to be held accountable for the fortune he and his family had amassed, and for an official investigation into the May riots in Jakarta. But there were also more structural concerns. Primary among these was the demand that the military "return to the barracks," a catch-all slogan that included abolition of the military's self-proclaimed "dual function" (*dwifungsi*), and specifically an end to the military's guaranteed allotment of twenty percent of all seats in the national, provincial, and local legislatures, the secondment of active duty military officers to government positions, and an end to military involvement in business (see also Honna, 2003 and Mietzner, 2008 about military politics during Indonesia's transition to democracy). These were the demands of student demonstrators during the special session of the MPR in November 1998 when security forces opened fire on a mass demonstration at the Semanggi interchange in central Jakarta, killing seventeen people and injuring hundreds more.

Beyond the question of the army's dual function lay a deeper challenge: redefining the legal basis and application of emergency powers. In 1950, a year after Indonesia achieved independence, Sukarno had thrown out the federal constitution of 1949 and replaced it with a new provisional constitution of 1950 that made Indonesia a unitary state and granted the president far greater powers. This move was accompanied by efforts to distance Indonesia from the Dutch legal legacy, including passage of new emergency laws (Government Regulation 7/1950 and Emergency Law 8/1950) that superseded the 1939 laws of the Netherlands

East Indies on the States of War and Siege (*Regeling op de Staat van Oorlog en van Beleg*). Further military powers were added under the 1954 Government Regulation 55. In the wake of the 1957 regional rebellions in Sumatra and Sulawesi, President Sukarno declared the introduction of Guided Democracy (*Demokrasi Terpimpin*), thereby marking the death of parliamentary democracy. Alongside this, Parliament passed Law 23 of 1959 on states of emergency that allowed for special military powers in order to respond to civil emergencies (*darurat sipil*), military emergencies (*darurat militer*), and the state of war (*darurat perang*) (Kammen and Widjajanto 2000). For all its repression, Suharto's New Order regime did remarkably little to alter the legal basis for military deployment set out in Law 23/1959 (notably, the most important legal innovations of the emerging New Order were the 1966 ban on the PKI and Marxism [TAP MPRS 25/1966] and a 1975 law [Law 3/1975] banning political parties from operating below the level of the district seat, ostensibly to ensure that the rural population—conceived as a "floating mass"—would not be distracted from the primary task of economic development).[6] It was against this legal backdrop that post-1998 debates raged over the role of the military and the authority to deploy the military.

While the reformasi movement demanded an end to the military's dual function and the establishment of full and proper civilian supremacy over the military, high-ranking military officers were busy waging a counter-offensive. In July, 1998, the military pressured President Habibie to declare martial law in Aceh and Irian Jaya (subsequently renamed Papua, then divided into Papua and West Papua, and as of 2022 into three more new provinces) so that it would have full legal cover for its counter-insurgency operations. Going one step further, in early September—just two days after the announcement of the results of the UN-sponsored referendum in East Timor, when violence raged—General Wiranto proposed a draft law on State Peace and Security (*Undang-undang Tentang Keselamatan dan Keamanan Negara*) that would have replaced Law 23/1959 and allowed the military, rather than the president, to determine the terms of "when and how a state of emergency was declared" (Crouch 2017, 463; Hosen 2010). Ignoring strong opposition from civil society, and perhaps as a knee-jerk rejection to international condemnation over the military's scorched earth policy in East Timor, Parliament passed Wiranto's proposed law under the modified name "A Law Concerning Emergency Situations" (*Undang-unang tentang Keadaan Bahaya*). However, President Habibie, recognizing that the June legislative election had not provided him the necessary support to be elected president in the upcoming parliamentary session, and perhaps with an eye on his legacy, refused to promulgate the bill into law.

The issue of emergency powers resurfaced under Habibie's successor, President Abdurrahman Wahid. As president, Wahid made a number of bold declarations in the name of peace and tolerance (including the controversial apology in the name of Nadhlatul Ulama for the violence against the PKI in 1965-

1966), but accomplished little in the way of actual peacebuilding. The reason for this was that Wahid found himself hamstrung by the political comprises that had led to his selection as president in the first place. In a last-ditch attempt to free himself from a cabinet that had little loyalty to him, Wahid threatened to declare a state of emergency (based on Law 23/1959) and carry out a self-coup against his own government (Slater 2005). But the military refused to back his move and the Supreme Court ruled that his maneuvers, including a presidential decree, were illegal. Wahid's erratic behavior had only served to further politicize debates over the legal basis of the role of the military, and his impeachment (which resulted in the elevation of Megawati Sukarnoputri to the presidency) was a victory for the military.

The question remained: what was to be the legal basis of the new, democratic peace in the time of reformasi? Given how politicized legal revision of military powers had become, it is no wonder that the solution was to scuttle the idea of formulating a comprehensive legal framework and instead to adopt a piecemeal approach, when and where there was political will, that gradually chipped away at Law 23/1959 on states of emergency. This approach began in response to the spree of terrorist attacks on churches in December 2000 and the newly declared US war on terror in September 2001. Parliamentary debate on a new Anti-terrorism draft law was followed by issuance of two presidential decrees and, ultimately, passage of two new anti-terrorism laws (Law 15/2003 and Law 16/2003) that both specified the powers of the president and military with regard to terrorist activity and created a new anti-terrorism task force. The second effort to chip away at Law 23/1959 came in 2007, in the aftermath of the devastating 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and a major 2006 earthquake in Yogyakarta, when Parliament passed a new law on natural disasters (Law 24/2007). Remarkably, given the very serious communal violence of 1998-2003 in parts of Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and the Moluccan Islands, it was not until 2012 that Parliament passed a new law, now superseding elements of the 1959 law, on social conflict (Undang-undang 7 2012).[7] In each case, the legality of military deployment and the scope of its competencies were defined with far greater precision, and has paralleled the end of Indonesia's violent political transition.

As this brief summary demonstrates, from the very first years of Indonesia's political transition the conflicting interests of reformers and the military ruled out any possibility of comprehensive legal reform that would provide the basis for a new and lasting peace. Instead, the vision for a lasting peace was founded on the principle of subtraction: whittling away at the emergency powers available to civilian authorities and the military elite. This was, in the language of peace studies, fundamentally a vision of a "negative peace," meaning the absence of (violent) conflict. Two decades later, there is an improved policy framework for addressing terrorism, communal conflict, natural disasters, and cyber-security, but this has been achieved while leaving Law 23/1959 in place rather than

replacing it with new legislation on the conditions under which the military may be deployed to address internal affairs. The result is a paradoxical situation in which large-scale violent conflicts that haunted Indonesia's democratic transition have (with the exception of the insurgency in Papua) been overcome, but in which there has been a simultaneous increase in the use of other forms of repression—particularly the law—to intimidate political opponents and grassroots movements (Hamid and Gammon 2017; Fealy 2020). In short, establishing and maintaining peace in Indonesia has been inseparable from ramping up the repressive capacity of the state.

Conclusion

Despite the high hopes encapsulated in the slogan "reformasi," Indonesia's transition from authoritarian rule to democracy was plagued by the escalation of old conflicts and the appearance of various new forms of mass violence. These conflicts were most intense and mostly widely spread during the six-year period—1998 to 2004—that corresponds to Indonesia's transition to a consolidated democracy (defined in terms of two peaceful, democratic transfers of governance). Two decades and many tragedies later, with the exception of the provinces in Papua and the ongoing threat of terrorist acts, mass political violence in Indonesia has been tamed. That success is largely a function of both local elites (who came to accept the legitimacy of competitive democratic elections and were incorporated into national networks of patronage) and the country's security apparatus (first and foremost the army, but also the other service branches and the police), both of which became more effective at responding to violent outbreaks, overcame the temptation (apparent in Ambon and elsewhere) to adopt partisan positions in communal violence, and developed far more effective surveillance, especially of terrorist cells.

The diminution of violent conflict in Indonesia was accompanied by both a host of peacebuilding activities (including the use of customary law and practices, interfaith dialogues, and educational programs intended to combat terrorist ideologies) and heightened respect for human rights. The generous funding made available by national and international agencies to support these efforts helped to fuel a variety of new research, though this has largely been driven by the terms of reference designated by funding agencies rather than creative ideas about the sources of conflict or sociologically-based reasons for why conflicts abated or how they may have been transformed.

In fact, what is perhaps most striking about the outpouring of scholarship on conflict and peace in Indonesia over the past two decades is the degree to which it remains compartmentalized into a series of sub-specializations that address disparate, rather than common, questions. Today, after Timor-Leste's

independence and the 2005 peace agreement in Aceh, the ongoing conflict between supporters of Papuan independence and the Indonesian state is generally understudied both because of the risks that serious, on-the-ground research would involve and because it is not considered to be directly comparable to armed insurgencies elsewhere in the region that are framed in terms of religious (usually Muslim) identity. Similarly, the end of serious communal violence in the Moluccan Islands, Central Sulawesi, and Kalimantan has meant that scholarship has shifted away from the in-depth study of the dynamics of mobilization, leadership, mass displacement, and the involvement of the security forces, and increasingly become the preserve of quantitative political scientists interested in questions of democratization (or its failures). The subfield that has demonstrated the strongest continuity over time is terrorism studies, though even here there has been a shift away from a focus on the "event"—bombings and the particular networks or organizations behind those events—to the problem of intelligence, policing, and deradicalization. In short, we are left with the paradoxical situation in which a country that once appeared to be fertile ground for peace studies is now home to a range of specialty fields, but with peace studies itself largely overlooked.

Notes

1.   Although not addressed in this article, this includes sprees of lynchings of individuals accused of practicing black magic that occurred in Banyuwangi, East Java, in late 1998 (Siegel 2005; Herriman 2016) and over the next few years in locations along the south coast of Java.

2.   Even at the Gadjah Mada Center for Security and Peace Studies, the leading professors do not list "peace studies" among their areas of expertise: Professor Mohtar Mas'oed's field is international relations; Professor Yahya A. Muhaimin's fields are military politics, comparative politics, and Indonesian foreign policy; and Professor Ichlasul Amal's fields are political parties, elections, and human security.

3.   Although, separatism is technically a misnomer since Portuguese Timor remained a non-decolonized territory within international law and at the UN.

4.   For Aceh, representative works from "below" include Schulze (2004), Kingsbury (2007), and Aspinall (2009), while state-centric perspectives include Robinson (2001) and Miller (2008). For East Timor, major works from below are Jolliffe (1978) and Niner (2000), while those from "above" include Kammen (2001) and Robinson (2009). For Papua from below see King (2004), and for state economic and security policy see Elmslie (2002).

5.   It is also important to note that, at the exact same time, claims circulated among Christians in the Moluccan Islands, East Timor, and elsewhere that the outbreak of violent conflict was part of a global continuation of the medieval crusades in Europe. Both the Islamic appeal to jihad and the Christian discourse of "the crusades" should be understood as local expressions of Huntington's (1996) "clash of civilizations" thesis.

6.   The most important legal innovations of the emerging New Order were the 1966

ban on the PKI and Marxism (TAP MPRS 25/1966) and a 1975 law (Law 3/1975) banning political parties from operating below the level of the district seat, ostensibly to ensure that the rural population, conceived as a "floating mass," would not be distracted from the primary task of economic development.

7.   In 2018, a new law on disease was passed, further eroding the emergency powers specified under civil emergencies (*darurat sipil*) in Law 23/1959. Despite this, the COVID-19 crisis provided new justification for military involvement in the health field (Honna 2022).

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Douglas Kammen is an associate professor in the Department of Southeast Asian Studies at the National University of Singapore. He is the co-author of *A Tour of Duty: Changing Patterns of Military Politics in Indonesia in the 1990s* (Equinox Publishing, 1999), author of *Three Centuries of Conflict in East Timor* (Rutgers University Press, 2015) and *Independent Timor-Leste: Between Coercion and Consent* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), co-editor of *The Contours of Mass Violence in Indonesia* (University of Hawaii Press, 2012), and has written numerous articles and book chapters. Email: seadak@nus.edu.sg