Counting Conflicts

Using Newspaper Reports to Understand Violence in Indonesia

Patrick Barron
Joanne Sharpe

CPR

Summary Findings

Responding to conflict, in Indonesia and elsewhere, requires an understanding of its distribution, forms, and impacts. Given that different types of conflicts may require different policy and programmatic approaches, an understanding of the type and nature of conflicts in different areas and how they are similar, and/or how they differ is vital.

Relatively little is known about the incidence and costs of conflict in Indonesia. 'Headline' conflicts such as those that have taken place in the Malukus, Central Sulawesi, Papua and Aceh have received significant attention. However, there is an increasing realization that conflict is not confined to these 'high conflict' provinces alone, but that it can be found across the country. In large part this is because of the methodological difficulties associated with mapping conflicts, including through household surveys, key informant interviews, and the use of police or other secondary data.

In this paper, the authors outline an attempt to use local newspaper monitoring to measure the levels and impacts of violent conflict from 2001-2003 in two Indonesian provinces (East Java and NTT), and to assess variation in incidence, impact, and form across and within areas.

There are a number of significant findings. First, the levels and impacts of conflict are far higher than previously expected, and even areas thought of as not being particularly prone to conflict report high conflict impacts. Comparing the authors' data with that of a previous attempt to use newspapers to map conflict (UNSFIR), they find six times as many deaths. Much of the difference is because the UNSFIR survey uses predominantly provincial sources; the authors use district level newspapers, which pick up far more fatalities than those more remote from the locations where conflict takes place.

Second, there is significant variation between districts not only in the impacts of conflict, but also in the forms conflict takes. This suggests that many of the causes of conflict are localized and shows the limitation of theories that focus only on national factors. Different types of conflict exist in different areas and result in different impacts. Integrating evidence from qualitative fieldwork in the same areas where the survey was conducted, we argue that local violence is a function of the interaction between local cultures and actors. Local cultural norms help to explain the particular forms that conflict takes in different areas. However, there is significant variation in levels of conflict within areas with similar cultural heritages, pointing to the important role of local leaders and institutions in shaping norms and managing conflicts. Given that the nature of conflict differs at the local level, policy responses must also be locally tailored.

Finally, the authors explore potential sources of bias in the data, through interviews with editors and journalists from the newspapers used in the study. The authors find that in general newspapers can be used to provide a reasonably accurate conflict map but that it is necessary to use sources below the provincial level. The creation of a national monitoring system utilizing local newspapers would provide important insights into the impacts, distribution and nature of violence in Indonesia.

The analysis in this paper shows that violent conflict is significant in areas of Indonesia not normally associated with having high levels of conflict. A vital component of a strategy to promote violence-free development must be to understand better the distribution, impacts and nature of violent conflict across Indonesia. While there has been an increasing realization that violent conflict is spread across the archipelago, little is known about its nature or impacts in many parts of the country.

Counting Conflicts

Using Newspaper Reports to Understand Violence in Indonesia

Patrick Barron
Joanne Sharpe

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

COUNTING CONFLICTS: USING NEWSPAPER REPORTS TO UNDERSTAND VIOLENCE IN INDONESIA

INTRODUCTION

Responding to conflict, in Indonesia and elsewhere, requires an understanding of its distribution, forms, and impacts. There is a need to know where the most serious conflicts (in terms of both frequency and impact) are concentrated. In developing countries attempting to manage complex and contested transitions in peaceful ways, and with finite levels of resources available, understanding which areas are relatively peaceful and which have experienced large-scale violence is necessary for targeting purposes. Given that different types of conflicts may require different policy and programmatic approaches, an understanding of the type and nature of conflicts in different areas and how they are similar, and/or how they differ, is vital. Comprehending how levels and forms of conflict or violence are changing in localities over time can aid the identification of future 'hot spots' where attention should be focused or, conversely, success stories from which lessons can be learnt. Developing an empirical 'conflict map' can allow for the systematic consideration of factors that correlate with different conflict outcomes.

Despite this, relatively little is known about the incidence and costs of conflict in Indonesia. 'Headline' conflicts, such as those that have taken place in the Malukus, Central Sulawesi, Papua and Aceh have received significant attention, both within and outside Indonesia. In addition, there has been an increasing realization that conflict is not confined to these 'high conflict' provinces alone, but that it can be found across the country (Usman 2001; Vel 2001; Welsh 2003; Barron, Kaiser, and Pradhan 2004; Barron and Madden 2004; Abidin forthcoming). However, to date there has been little comparative consideration of conflicts in different areas and there has yet to be a fully satisfactory mapping of conflicts across Indonesia that shows both the distribution of different conflict types and the distribution of their impacts.

In large part, this is because of the methodological difficulties associated with mapping conflicts. Survey instruments typically used to assess variations in other development indicators such as poverty and education levels are less successful at measuring conflict. Household surveys are probably not appropriate for wide-scale conflict mapping because conflict is not normally distributed, and hence small (affordable) samples are unlikely to pick up true conflict rates. Key informant surveys run the risk of significant under-reporting because of disincentives against highlighting what is usually seen as a negative phenomenon. The use of police or other secondary government data is also problematic, at least in Indonesia, because of vast under-reporting and lack of standard definitions across localities.

This paper outlines an attempt to use local newspaper monitoring to measure levels and impacts of conflicts and to assess variation (in incidence, impact, and form) across areas. Increasingly, newspaper-based approaches have been utilized in the Indonesian context for mapping conflict incidence and form.[1] The United Nations Support Facility for Indonesian Recovery (UNSFIR) has developed two large-scale conflict datasets using newspaper reports (see Tadjoeddin 2002; Varshney, Panggabean, and Tadjoeddin 2004). However, while the studies provide interesting data and useful methodological insights, and while the second dataset presently offers the most accurate empirical picture of conflict's impacts in Indonesia, their efficacy as a tool for mapping conflict incidence and impact is restricted by their use of national and provincial level newspapers that are several steps removed from the localities where conflicts have actually taken place, and their almost exclusive focus on larger-scale, group-based violence. As such,

---

[1] Internationally, newspapers have been used, most influentially, in the work of Ashutosh Varshney who created a large n dataset to measure trends in violent conflict in post-independence India (Varshney 2002a; Wilkinson 2004).

many of the 'local' conflicts that affect Indonesians on a day to day basis are not picked up.[2] Whether through the use of official national surveys or provincial newspapers, then, the picture of conflict in Indonesia is distorted.

This paper presents data from a new effort to use *local* newspapers to map conflict. As part of a larger World Bank study of local conflict in Indonesia, a newspaper methodology was developed and used to collect data on local conflicts in fourteen districts in two provinces: East Java and Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT). The broader study involved ethnographic fieldwork by a team of twelve trained researchers over six months, during which time they tracked conflicts in forty-one villages and collected approximately seventy conflict pathways case studies. This in-depth field material was used in the development of the initial typologies and the format we used for the newspaper conflict mapping exercise. It also allowed us to cross-check the findings from the newspaper datasets with evidence from the qualitative fieldwork, giving us a deeper understanding of the findings, particularly with regard to what causes the different forms of conflict to develop the way they do.[3]

East Java and NTT provinces were chosen for a number of reasons. First, while neither province has experienced unrest on the scale of Indonesia's highest conflict provinces—such as Maluku, Central Sulawesi and Aceh—both areas do have significant levels of frequently violent conflict. Examining conflict in areas where violence is of low intensity but nevertheless pervasive, may help us to understand better the links between the forms of conflict across Indonesia and those in the conflict 'hot spots'. Second, in order to assess the commonalities, or differences, of conflict forms and impacts, we chose the provinces to be as different as possible. They vary in terms of population size and density (high in East Java, low in NTT), ethnic homogeneity (homogenous in East Java, heterogeneous in NTT), dominant religious group (Muslim and Catholic, respectively), and provincial development (East Java is relatively rich, NTT extremely poor). For the qualitative fieldwork, research districts within the two provinces were selected based on variation in conflict management capacity.[4]

In East Java, newspaper data was collected on two 'clusters' of districts, each consisting of a number of districts neighboring the research districts; in NTT, data was collected on all five districts on the island of Flores.[5] Data was gathered by two teams of researchers for the years 2001-2003 using seven local newspaper sources. Guided by the frameworks and typologies developed iteratively from and for use in

---

[2] Local conflicts can be distinguished from larger conflicts by: (i) their impacts, with most incidents resulting in fewer casualties, and (ii) the level at which they are concentrated, with most incidents taking place at the intra- or inter-village, rather than district or provincial level. While the impacts of specific incidents tend to be relatively minimal and locally-concentrated, cumulatively these local conflicts constitute a barrier to development and human security and, in some cases, they provide the fuel for larger incidents of unrest.

[3] The Kecamatan Development Program (KDP) and Community Conflict Negotiation (KDP & CCN) study is an initiative of the Social Development Unit of the World Bank, Jakarta. The study uses a mixed methodology (ethnographic qualitative methods, a key informant survey, national survey data, and use of secondary data) to assess how local conflicts evolve (see Barron, Smith, and Woolcock 2004). It also aims to examine the effect of KDP, the Bank's primary community development program in Indonesia, on conflict and conflict management (the results will be presented in Barron, Diprose, Smith, and Woolcock forthcoming). The newspaper mapping tool was originally developed in order to quantify the incidence and impacts of conflict in the research areas, as well as to evaluate the representativeness of the qualitative case studies. See Barron, Diprose, Madden, Smith, and Woolcock (2004) for a detailed presentation of the study's methodology; see Guggenheim (forthcoming) for an outline of KDP.

[4] Working in both 'high' and 'low' capacity districts in each province allowed us to examine the district-level factors that may affect the trajectories local conflicts take.

[5] During the 2001-2003 research period, two of the districts in Flores split into two, with Manggarai Barat becoming administratively distinct from Manggarai, and Lembata separating from Flores Timur. To simplify analysis, we use the pre-split district boundaries. The cluster approach was used in order to ascertain how the four research districts compared with neighboring districts (see Annex 1).

the broader study, they coded the collected articles by conflict type, location, impacts, actors, and interveners, to form larger datasets recording all reported conflicts and their characteristics.[6] The result (the KDP & CCN dataset) is an overview of conflict in the research areas that supports and contributes to findings from other elements of the research.

The data shows significant impacts from conflict in two provinces not normally thought of as being particularly conflict-prone. While the results presented here cannot be said to be representative of areas beyond those in which the study was implemented, insights from the analysis help shed some light on issues relevant to both a broader understanding of violent conflict in Indonesia and how we might measure and track it. Comparative analysis of the data with that from other sources shows that previous assessments of conflict in Indonesia considerably under-report its presence and impacts. Cross-checking our data with the qualitative fieldwork, and interviews with newspaper editors and journalists (see Section 4), also indicate that in our research areas newspapers do not over-report local conflict.[7]

The data also demonstrates that there is considerable variance in terms of both forms of conflict and their impacts, not just at the provincial level, but also between districts. This suggests that many of the causes of conflict are localized and shows the limitation of theories of conflict that focus solely on national factors, processes, and actors. Given that the nature of conflict differs at the local level, and that the causes also appear to vary by location, policy responses must also be locally tailored. Put another way, policy and programmatic instruments that do not take account of the differences in conflict's form and incidence at the local level are likely to be overly blunt. As such, there is a need for local-level monitoring of conflict.

We argue that the systematic collection of local newspaper reports is a useful tool for tracking violent conflict and assessing its impacts. While there are weaknesses in the method—in particular, for looking at how conflict develops prior to its eruption into violence, as well as who intervenes in conflict—by and large the method does provide us with a reasonably accurate picture of conflict in the areas where we implemented it. Analysis of the data shows the human security impacts of 'everyday' conflicts, and also demonstrates the extent to which previous estimates of conflict in Indonesia under-report its impacts. The method picks up substantially more conflict-related deaths than the two preeminent previous attempts to measure conflict (impacts) in Indonesia: for the area it surveys, it records over two and a half times as many deaths as did the Government's PODES survey, and over six times as many deaths as the second more comprehensive UNSFIR newspaper dataset.[8] The paper seeks to use the experience of putting together and analyzing the dataset on conflict in East Java and NTT to present methodological and operational insights on how newspapers can be used as part of a broader, even national, system to monitor conflict in Indonesia.

Data was collected on all reported incidents of conflict in the research areas. We used Coser's (1956) classic definition of conflict as "a struggle over values and claims to secure status, power, and resources, a struggle in which the main aims of opponents are to neutralize, injure, or eliminate rivals." This includes incidents involving individuals, groups, and/or the state. It also includes both violent and non-violent conflict. However, while the data on non-violent incidents was broadly useful for looking at the sorts of issues causing debate in our research areas, and for collecting counterfactual data,[9] the absence of a

---

[6] Information on a range of other variables was also extracted from each article including duration, weapons used and prominent cleavages involved. See Annex 1 for a more complete outline of the newspaper methodology.

[7] It is unclear whether this is also true in higher conflict areas (see Section I.3).

[8] Explanation of these datasets, and comparative analysis of their results, is given below (Section I).

[9] In other elements of the study, we used comparative case analysis of violent and non-violent conflicts over similar issues to try to determine the factors that caused seemingly similar disputes to take different paths to either violent or non-violent outcomes. This necessitated collecting and cataloguing non-violent cases as well as violent ones.

defining threshold (in this case, the eruption of violence) at which point a dispute or a disagreement became a conflict makes it difficult to develop standard or acceptable definitions across research localities. This is particularly important for this kind of quantitative study, where proxies for conflict need to be clear in order to be meaningful. As a result, the bulk of the analysis in this paper concerns only violent conflict incidents, by which we mean conflicts resulting in death, injury, or property damage.[10] Only when we look at the role of intermediaries do we examine the non-violent conflicts in the dataset.[11]

Conflict incidents were assigned one of five main conflict types (Table 1).[12] These types were developed based on the fieldwork, and then refined iteratively as the newspaper data came in. Examining the different types of conflict that are present in each cluster helps explain the varying characteristics of violence in the different districts.

Table 1: Primary Violent Conflict Types

Physical Resource	Disputes over ownership, access and use of resources (natural or man-made; private, public or communal)
Administrative	Disputes over management/procedure/service provision from government or donor-funded programs and public or private enterprises
Political Position and Influence	Competition over political power in state/non-state, village/district level positions (usually relating to elections and political appointments)
Vigilantism and Retribution	'Mob justice' or lynchings; violence motivated by revenge
Other	Residual conflicts not described by other categories (primarily domestic violence and other intra-family disputes)

The paper proceeds in five sections. Section 1 gives a broad overview of the findings from East Java and NTT, compares our results with those generated using other methods and draws out some of the implications for our understanding of the level and impacts, the distribution and the nature of conflict in Indonesia. Sections 2 and 3 present the findings from the analysis of the data on conflict in East Java and NTT, focusing on variation between districts within the same province. In Section 4, we explore issues relating to newspapers' reporting of conflict, and raise questions pertaining to the validity of the data and the relative strengths and weaknesses of local newspapers as an instrument for mapping conflict. Section 5 concludes with a summary of lessons learned and gives recommendation on the use of newspaper reports for mapping violent conflict in Indonesia.

I. USING LOCAL NEWSPAPER REPORTS TO MAP VIOLENCE: COMPARISON WITH EXISTING DATA SOURCES

1. Conflict in East Java and NTT: the KDP & CCN Dataset

Across the 12 districts studied, we recorded 277 deaths in the 2001-2003 period: 160 in the districts in East Java; 117 in the districts in NTT (see Table 2). All districts reported conflict-related deaths, but

---

[10] Although data was collected on all kinds of property damage, including destruction of crops, of transportation and infrastructure, this was difficult to quantify in a uniform way. As a result, property here refers to residences, shops and public buildings. Damage to houses was the type of property damage most frequently recorded.

[11] We do this in order to try to understand the role of different intermediaries in dictating the different pathways conflicts take, to either violent or non-violent outcomes.

[12] See Annex B for a complete list of conflict types and sub-types. Full conflict typologies for East Java and NTT can be found in Diprose (2004) and Satu and Barron (forthcoming), respectively.

totals varied from 4 deaths (in Ponorogo) to 52 (in Manggarai).[13] The level of conflict fatalities fell over the three-year period; in both provinces, and most districts, the greatest number of deaths were recorded in 2001 and the least number in 2003.

Table 2: Conflict-related Deaths, 2001-2003: KDP & CCN Dataset

Districts	2001	2002	2003	Total
Madiun	6	3	3	12
Magetan	3	3	3	9
Ponorogo	0	4	0	4
Pamekasan	11	5	1	17
Sampang	14	16	9	39
Sumenep	17	12	5	34
Bangkalan	20	12	12	45
East Java	**71**	**56**	**33**	**160**
Ende	1	11	3	15
Flores Timur	2	15	5	22
Manggarai	41	2	9	52
Ngada	2	1	4	7
Sikka	3	7	11	21
NTT	**49**	**36**	**32**	**117**

Source: KDP & CCN dataset.

These figures are interesting in that they demonstrate impacts from violent conflict across a range of districts in two provinces that are not normally thought of as being particularly conflict-prone. Of more interest—both for evaluating the methodological utility of the instrument, and for understanding levels and patterns of conflict in Indonesia more generally—is how these figures compare to other estimates of conflict impacts. Comparative analysis of the reported levels with figures from other datasets points to the conclusion that violent conflict in Indonesia is both more serious (in its impacts) and prevalent than we previously thought.[14]

---

[13] Because of gaps in the data, the number of deaths in Madiun, Magetan, and Ponorogo districts (East Java) in 2001 are under-reported. The archives for eight months of one of the sub-provincial sources (*Radar Madiun*) are missing; further, *Ponorogo Pos* was not published in the year 2001. Given that for the years 2002 and 2003, *Jawa Pos* only picked up 4 out of 16 deaths in these areas, we can assume that the number of deaths in the Ponorogo cluster for 2001 is considerably under-reported. The availability of comprehensive archives is one of the factors limiting the use of this method to retroactively collect data on conflict in Indonesia. Presumably this problem is even worse in areas with higher levels of conflict.

[14] For this section, we use only comparisons of deaths across data sources. We do this, because as Varshney (2002b) has correctly noted, deaths are more comparable across cases and time than other indicators of conflict. This is particularly important when conducting comparative analysis of different data sources, which use different definitions of violent conflict. Whereas what constitutes a conflict, and or a conflict injury, may differ across datasets, a conflict-related death is the same everywhere, allowing for easy comparison. In Sections 2 and 3, where we consider variation *within* our dataset, we also conduct analysis of violent conflict incidence and the distribution of injuries and property destruction.

2. The Impacts of Conflict in Indonesia: Comparing Data Sources

Previous Attempts to Map Conflict in Indonesia

To date, there have been three major attempts to measure violence and its impacts in Indonesia.[15] In 2001, UNSFIR put together the first dataset tracking conflict and its impacts over time across Indonesia. Using two Jakarta news sources (*Kompas* and *Antara*), UNSFIR compiled a dataset that included every reported incident of collective violence between 1990 and 2001. A total of 4,662 deaths were reported in the 111-year period (Tadjoeddin 2002). However, it soon became clear there were a number of problems with the data. First, until 1998 Indonesia was under the authoritarian rule of Soeharto's New Order government. The vast human rights abuses of the period included severe limitations on press freedom. The SARA policy suppressed reporting on subjects that could "inflame tensions" between racial, religious or ethnic groups, with the result than associated tensions or violence were not reported.[16] Second, in a country as geographically large, and with a population as dispersed as Indonesia, it was unclear whether all news would flow to the center, particularly given incentives for non-reporting. As such, the data was problematic.[17]

In order to improve on the underreporting present in the earlier dataset, which relied solely on national-level data sources, a second UNSFIR dataset (UNSFIR-2) used provincial-level newspaper sources. According to Varshney, Panggabean, and Tadjoeddin (2004, pp. 10-11) there were three reasons why regional newspapers might generate more accurate estimates. First, New Order Indonesia was an authoritarian rather than totalitarian state; as a result, the government neither fully prioritized the control of, nor was able to control, information flows in the regions. The result was that sub-national news sources were far more likely to report contentious (and violent) incidents.[18] Second, from 1990-1994 there was a policy of increasing openness (*keterbukaan*) of the press, which applied *specifically* to sub-national media. In effect, this meant that regional papers did not have to get their material cleared by a government information officer before it was published, something not true for journalists in Jakarta. Third, provincial news reports could be checked with other local sources, allowing for a level accuracy not possible with newspapers from the centre.

---

[15] Government figures on the incidence of conflict are weak. As Varshney, Panggabean, and Tadjoeddin (2004, p. 10) note, the New Order did not publish any figures on the impacts (death, injuries, other destruction) of conflicts. At present, a number of different ministries and departments have launched programs that aim to assess the potential for conflict. *Kesbang* (within the Ministry of Home Affairs), and the Centre for Religious Harmony (within the Department of Religious Affairs) have started such programs, with the Coordinating Ministry of Politics and Security (*Menko Polkam*) coordinating the information. However, these programs are still at embryonic stages, and do not provide comparable information across different geographic areas (see UNDP 2004a, especially Technical Annex A on 'Knowledge Management for Conflict Risks, Impact and Needs Assessment'). Police data is also weak, and analysis is hampered by the lack of common definition and categories. *Bakornas* (the Government of Indonesia's National Coordination Board) has also compiled data on conflict impacts in Indonesia, estimating that there were approximately 6,000 conflict-related fatalities between 1998 and 2004. However, it is unclear where the data comes from, or that a standardized methodology has been used.

[16] SARA is an acronym for ethnic (*suku*), religious (*agama*), racial (*ras*), and inter-group or class (*antargolongan*) differences. See Schwartz (1999) and Friend (2003) for general histories.

[17] Varshney, Panggabean, and Tadjoeddin. (2004, p. 11) point out some key indicators that the data was perhaps not very accurate, the most obvious being that in 1990, 1991, 1992, and 1994, no group conflict was reported *anywhere* in Indonesia.

[18] At the same time, however, local level military, police and government powers still had discretionary power to 'suggest' editorial policy to newspapers and other local media, meaning that even where newspapers escaped attention from the central apparatus, they may well have been subject to tacit censorship and suppression by local elites. This is likely to have varied from region to region. See Section 4 for further discussion.

The UNSFIR-2 dataset used provincial newspaper sources, collecting data from 1990-2003 for the 14 provinces that accounted for 96.4% of all deaths in the UNSFIR-1 dataset.[19] The new dataset recorded over twice as many deaths as the first for the 1990-2001 period (10,402 compared with 4,662), and estimated 10,700 deaths throughout Indonesia for the full period of enquiry (1990-2003).[20] Importantly for our purposes here, the two UNSFIR datasets only recorded incidents of collective violence.

A third attempt to measure the presence and impacts of conflict was the Government of Indonesia's *Potensi Desa* (PODES) survey, which included a module on conflict for the first time in 2003. The survey mapped the presence of conflict across all of the 69,000 plus urban and rural villages in Indonesia, based primarily on the reports of local elected officials in each village. The study found that 7.2 percent of locations had experienced conflict in the past year (2002); impacts were 4,869 deaths, 9,832 injuries, and material damage of Rp771 billion (approximately $91.4 million), figures substantially higher than those recorded in either of the UNSFIR datasets (Barron, Kaiser, and Pradhan 2004).[21] Further, the data showed conflict spread across the archipelago, a very different finding to that of UNSFIR who argued that 16 districts, holding only 6.5% of Indonesia's population, accounted for 85.5% of conflict-related deaths (Varshney, Panggabean, and Tadjoeddin 2004, p. 9).[22]

Comparison of Data Sources

How does our data compare with the other data sources? If we disaggregate the UNSFIR-2 and PODES data, using only data from the 12 districts covered in our dataset, it is possible to compare reported levels of conflict-related deaths. As is clear from Table 3 and Figure 1, we pick up considerably higher levels of conflict-related deaths than either the UNSFIR-2 or PODES datasets. We record 7 times as many fatalities as does the UNSFIR dataset across the seven districts in East Java, and 5.3 times as many in the five districts in NTT. Across the two provinces combined, we pick up just over 6 times as many deaths as does UNSFIR. Unfortunately, PODES only collects data for one year (2002). However, we were able to generate estimates for the 2001-2003 period, allowing for comparison.[23] Compared with the PODES estimates, our data captured three times as many conflict-related deaths in the East Java districts, and 2.3 times as many in NTT. Across the two provinces, we picked up 2.6 times as many deaths as the PODES estimates.

---

[19] The 14 covered were Riau, Jakarta, Central Java, West Java, East Java, Banten, Central Kalimantan, West Kalimantan, South Sulawesi, Central Sulawesi, NTT, NTB, Maluku and North Maluku. Aceh and Papua were excluded for safety reasons. Nineteen newspapers were used, mainly at the provincial level.

[20] Estimates were generated by assuming the *share* of deaths in the provinces not covered in UNSFIR-2 would be the same as in UNSFIR-1 (3.6%). See Varshney, Panggabean, and Tadjoeddin (2004, p. 12).

[21] In contrast, the UNSFIR-2 dataset records only just over twice as many deaths (10,700) in a *thirteen* year time period, compared to the one year of PODES.

[22] As noted earlier, the UNSFIR-2 dataset also excludes areas with secessionist wars (e.g., Aceh and Papua) because of personal risks for the data collection team.

[23] In order to estimate levels of conflict over three years using just one year of data, we need to know trends in conflict-related deaths over time. As we noted earlier, levels of conflict were not constant across time, with the highest reported levels in 2001 and the lowest in 2003. However, if we look at the KDP & CCN data, we can see that almost exactly one-third of deaths over the three year period were recorded in 2002: 92 of 277 recorded deaths occurred in that year (or 33.2%). This proportion was fairly constant across the two provinces (35.0% in East Java; 30.8% in NTT). We thus used a multiplier of 3 to generate three-year estimates using the PODES data.

Table 3: Conflict-related Deaths by District, 2001-2003:
Comparison of UNSFIR-2, PODES, and KDP & CCN

	UNSFIR-2	PODES (est.)	KDP & CCN
Ponorogo	2	3	4
Madiun	3	3	12
Magetan	3	0	9
Sumenep	2	0	34
Bangkalan	3	15	45
Sampang	9	21	39
Pamekasan	1	12	17
EAST JAVA	**23**	**54**	**160**
Manggarai	16	30	52
Ngada	0	3	7
Ende	4	3	15
Sikka	0	9	21
Flores Timur	2	6	22
NTT	**22**	**51**	**117**

Sources: UNSFIR-2, PODES, KDP & CCN.

Figure 1: Conflict-related Deaths by Province, 2001-2003[24]
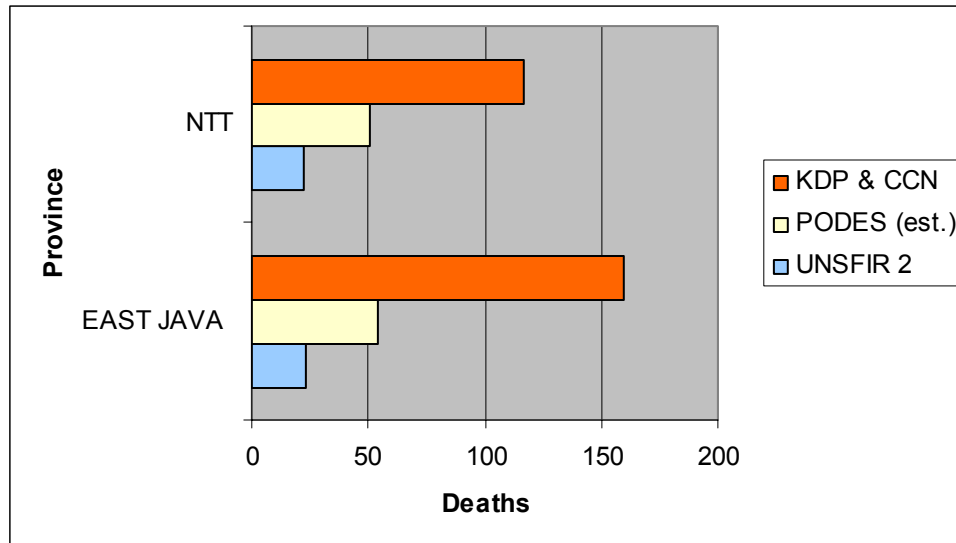
Sources: UNSFIR-2, PODES, KDP & CCN.

Indeed, further comparative analysis of the data reveals the extent to which the number of deaths reported in PODES and UNSFIR are significantly lower than those picked up using our method. Looking at the latter, we see that UNSFIR picked up 254 deaths in *all of East Java* over a 13 year period (1990-2003), considerably less than twice the number of deaths we recorded, despite the fact that the UNSFIR time period was over four times as long, and that we only covered seven out of 37 districts, accounting for

---

[24] Data for our 12 districts.

around 15% of the provincial population.[25] Even more startling, UNSFIR picked up only 89 deaths over the same period in *all of NTT*, significantly fewer than we found on Flores alone in just three years.[26]

The degree to which reported levels of deaths from conflict vary across data sources poses a number of questions. First, and most importantly, which data source most accurately reflects deaths from violent conflict? Second, what explains the difference in reported deaths, in particular between our dataset and the UNSFIR data, which also uses newspaper reports to generate estimates? And, third, what does our data tell us more broadly about (i) the incidence, impacts, and nature of violent conflict in Indonesia, and (ii) ways in which we might attempt to better measure these things?

3. Sources of Difference

Three hypotheses present themselves with regard to reasons for the difference in the level of reported deaths across the datasets.[27] First, our data could over-report conflict and its impacts. Second, differences in levels of deaths may be a function of how conflict is defined, and thus which incidents are recorded within the conflict dataset. In the UNSFIR dataset, for example, only violent conflicts involving groups are included; in our study, we also consider (and count) conflicts between individuals. Is the difference in numbers a symptom of comparing mangos with lychees? And, if so, is it better to use a wider or narrower definition? Third, the difference could be attributable to the geographic level of newspapers used. UNSFIR, as we noted earlier, created a second dataset using sub-national sources because Jakarta sources under-reported conflicts across the nation. By drilling even deeper, using *sub-*provincial and district sources, instead of just province-based ones, we can gain a more accurate picture of the distribution and impacts of violent conflict.

We argue that there is no evidence of our dataset over-reporting conflict; indeed, our figures, almost undoubtedly, still under-report the presence and effects of conflict. Our use of a wider definition of violent conflict does account for the inclusion of many extra incidents in our dataset. However, we argue that the use of a wider definition of violent conflict to include incidents between individuals is justified theoretically and useful practically. In the Indonesian context, while many violent incidents are between individuals, closer examination reveals that most of these 'individual conflicts' tend to have a group basis. In order to understand the nature and extent of violent conflict in Indonesia, it is also necessary to consider such incidents. The primary reason for the difference between datasets relates to the level of newspapers used. Given the widespread presence of violent local conflict in Indonesia that is not reported at the provincial-level, it is necessary to use truly local news sources to develop a reasonably accurate picture of conflict and its impacts.

Over-Reporting of Conflict Impacts?

Our numbers are high, and higher than we anticipated before we conducted the mapping exercise. As noted above, we picked up considerably more conflict-related deaths than previous estimates. Accordingly, it is important to consider the possibility that these source newspapers over-report violent conflict.

There are two potential reasons why newspapers may over-report conflict-related deaths. First, newspapers may over emphasize the impacts of conflict for ideological or political reasons. Brass (1997),

---

[25] 5.3 million out of a provincial population of 34.8 million (Badan Pusat Statistik 2002a).

[26] Flores is but one island in the province of NTT, and accounts for around 42% of the provincial population: 1.6 million people out of 3.8 million total (Badan Pusat Statistik 2002b).

[27] In this section we consider only reasons for why reported deaths in the two newspaper datasets differ. Analysis of why PODES may under-report conflicts, and more generally the weaknesses of primary survey instruments for mapping conflicts, is given in Barron, Kaiser, and Pradhan (2004).

drawing heavily on Foucault (1975), has discussed the extent to which conflicts are constructed, in that they are epistemologically contested. Elites manipulate narratives for their own purposes; one of the means by which they can feasibly do this is through newspapers. In particular, in class-based and secessionist conflicts, groups (and their leaders) may chose to emphasize the suppression which they have experienced. Deaths may be one measure of such suffering, and inflated newspaper accounts may be one process through which grievance myths are created and maintained. However, while such analyses are useful in highlighting the construction of 'objective' accounts and discourses, and the extent to which power relations both dictate and are shaped by this process, there is little evidence of such processes taking place in our research areas. Many of the conflicts we followed not only percolated to the local level but had, in large part, their genesis in issues at this level. Interviews with journalists and cross-verification of data did not bring to light any evidence of newspapers being manipulated by group leaders; rather, the dominant pressures bearing on editorial policy were market and audience-driven rather that ideological. Whether this holds for higher conflict areas—where group leaders articulate religious, ethnic and separatist narratives via local media, and local newspapers have notoriously been known to take sides and actively incite violence[28]—is less clear, but this does not affect the validity of the data presented here.

Second, newspapers may over-report conflict's impacts by reporting deaths as being conflict-related due to incomplete information. Journalists rely on reporting from local informants; if these informants either over-report the impacts of a conflict, or report deaths as being conflict-related when in fact there was another cause (e.g., accident), this would over-inflate the conflict numbers. Yet the scenarios where this might occur are few, and are much more likely to occur when conflicts are large in scale. Most of the fatal conflicts recorded in this study only resulted in small numbers of deaths, leaving little room for inflation of fatality figures.[29] Even if it is the case that some reports overestimate the number of deaths (because of incomplete information or political calculation), or wrongly attribute deaths to conflict (when in fact the deaths had another cause) these are likely to be outweighed by deaths from unreported conflicts.

Comparison with the data from the qualitative fieldwork demonstrated that our numbers still under-report the impacts of violent conflict.[30] Conversations with journalists and editors in the research areas backed this up. As we outline in detail in Section 4, there will almost inevitably be deaths resulting from conflicts that do not receive media coverage, either because news is not transferred to newspaper journalists/offices from rural areas, because newspapers do not want to further fuel existing tensions, or, with specific reference to the province-level sources, because very local conflicts are not interesting enough to warrant the allocation of column space or human resources. Thus we would posit that the estimates in this paper still under-represent the true impacts of conflict in our research areas.[31]

---

[28] See UNDP (2004b).

[29] Journalists from source newspapers were generally so close to the news story that reports of deaths were usually accompanied by the names and other biographical data of the victims.

[30] For example, the newspaper data recorded 17 deaths in Pamekasan district between 2001 and 2003. The field team, however, found that in one village in Pamekasan alone, nine people had died in 2001 alone due to conflict related to accusations of black magic. In one village in Manggarai district, a particularly brutal slaying of a *dukun santet* (witchdoctor) was not captured by our survey. This was an interesting case because the murder was committed by community consensus, an entire neighborhood signed a statement taking responsibility for the crime, and the incident was quickly hushed up.

[31] The assertion that newspapers will under-report conflict is backed up by research conducted recently in Iraq, which has sought to estimate the number of deaths since the American-led invasion in March 2003. Monitoring of press accounts yielded a figure of approximately 15,000 deaths. A study by a team from Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health, which surveyed households in randomly-selected clusters, estimated, with 90% certainty, that more than 40,000 Iraqis had died (The Economist, November 6, 2004).

Definitions of Conflict

A second explanation concerns the use of different definitions of conflict in the UNSFIR and KDP & CCN studies. As we noted earlier, UNSFIR only recorded incidents of collective violence, except in cases where individual violence triggered a larger group clash. UNSFIR's dataset included cases of "violence perpetrated by a group on another group (as in riots), by a group on an individual (as in lynchings), by an individual on a group (as in terrorist acts), by the state on a group, or by a group on organs or agencies of the state." As such, the "focus was on group violence, not on crime or violence per se" (Varshney, Panggabean and Tadjoeddin, 2004, p. 8). In contrast, we chose to use a wider definition that included a wider range of violent incidents, including violence between two individuals.[32] Data was collected on any incident where two or more parties (individuals or groups) entered into a dispute, widely defined. The subject of contestation could include the distribution of resources, values, or the access to power that allows influence over the two.[33] In order to investigate whether the difference in the numbers of reported deaths across the datasets is explained by the inclusion of incidences of violence between individuals, Table 4 shows the number of deaths in the KDP & CCN dataset disaggregated by the actors involved in the incident.[34] As shown in the table, the wider definition we use accounts for an extra 76 deaths in East Java (47.5% of all recorded deaths there) and 44 extra deaths in NTT (37.6%).

Table 4: Actor Combinations in Conflicts Resulting in Death, 2001-2003

	No. deaths	%
EAST JAVA		
Individual vs. individual	76	47.5
Individual vs. group	48	30.0
Group vs. group	20	12.5
Government vs. government	3	1.9
Individual vs. government	1	0.6
Group vs. government	1	0.6
Other	11	7.0
Total	*160*	*100*
NTT		
Individual vs. individual	44	37.6
Individual vs. group	15	12.8
Group vs. group	45	38.5
Government vs. government	1	0.9
Individual vs. government	2	1.7
Group vs. government	10	8.5
Other	0	0.0
Total	*117*	*100*

Source: KDP & CCN dataset.

---

[32] As noted earlier, we also collected non-violent disputes, but we do not use this data for most of the analysis.

[33] As noted earlier, we used Coser's (1956) classic definition of conflict. See Barron, Diprose, Madden, Smith, and Woolcock (2004) for the full set of definitions used in the study. Within this definition of conflict, we include any incidents where (i) there is animosity between parties, *and* (ii) where one party is trying to undermine the other. A concerted effort was made to distinguish between ordinary crime and conflict. This means incidences of ordinary theft and murder, for instance, are not counted. However, in some cases such actions were retaliatory responses to perceived crimes or social transgressions. Such cases fall within our definition.

[34] The categories were created for analysis purposes. Researchers coded the actors in more detail (see Annex 2). 'Other' actor combinations included a few cases where 'community institutions' such as schools, churches or mosques, or 'public or private enterprises' were listed as actors. See Annex 2 for the full list.

This is a significant share of the deaths. Nevertheless, even if these 'individual vs. individual conflicts' were excluded, we would still find 3.65 times as many conflict-related deaths in East Java and 3.31 times as many in NTT as did UNSFIR-2. Nevertheless, given the large proportion of deaths in our database resulting from clashes between individuals, it is worth asking if these incidents should be counted as conflicts, as opposed to violent crime. Which definition is more useful for those interested in the level and impacts of violent conflict in Indonesia?

The classic criminology literature, and much written in the conflict studies field, has sought to erect boundaries between the notion of crime and conflict. Crime is seen to be executed by individuals (sometimes organized), while conflicts are better defined in communal/group terms.[35] Yet in the Indonesian case this dichotomy breaks down. In many cases, incidents ostensibly between individuals do in fact have a group basis. Research in Lampung province, in southern Sumatra, provides evidence. In Lampung, there are high levels of violent crime with local Lampungese stealing from transmigrant Javanese. However, the motivating force behind these crimes seems to be as much one of redistribution between groups (from the wealthy Javanese to the poor locals) as one of personal self-interest. In such cases, the individuals are but agents of groups; their actions reflect dynamics of broader inter-group conflict. In other cases of conflict between individuals (e.g., in fights between young men over a woman at a party), group-based identities tend to determine who the conflicting parties are (Barron and Madden 2004). In some cases, these incidents escalated into open inter-communal clashes, including the burning of a village (Barron and Madden 2004; Tajima 2004). Qualitative fieldwork in East Java and NTT, undertaken as part of the World Bank study, found similar processes at work. As such, given the extent to which small incidents of violence tend to be linked to broader processes of contestation and, in some cases, larger and more deadly cases of inter-communal violence, it is necessary to track such cases and examine their impacts.

Second, conflict is cyclical. Often small disputes act as triggers for larger conflicts (Esman and Herring 2001). There is a real need to understand the processes at work in the retaliatory cycles which turn genuinely isolated, and relatively small-scale, incidents (such as a case of infidelity in Madura) into larger conflicts affecting entire villages and even subsequent generations. Mapping small disputes can help us understand why in some cases conflict escalates while in others it stagnates or gets solved (see Barron, Smith, and Woolcock 2004).[36] Recording basic information on such incidents provides us with a counterfactual—conflicts that did not escalate—missing from much conflict research.[37] Systematic analysis of such cases can help in the development of early warning systems that seek to predict when low level conflict is likely to escalate. We thus argue that the use of a wider definition has more utility, both for understanding conflict in Indonesia and for assessing its human security impacts.

Level of Newspaper Sources

A third explanation for the difference in the two datasets is the level of newspaper sources used. UNSFIR started work on a second dataset using provincial newspapers after realizing that, for a variety of reasons, national media sources significantly under-reported conflict. In turn, our dataset uses even more local sources, and this is likely to explain the higher level of conflict-related deaths in our dataset.

---

[35] Theoretically, conflicts can be between individuals (see Kriesberg 2003, p. 2) and indeed there is a vast literature on inter-personal conflicts (see for example, Burton 1987, Fisher and Ury 1981, Hill 1982). However, studies of *social* conflicts tend to focus on forms of group-based conflict such as ethnic and class conflict.

[36] Of course a quantitative dataset cannot alone do this. It can, however, provide a sampling frame for more in-depth comparative ethnographic process-tracing work to answer the 'how' and 'why' questions.

[37] A weakness of much conflict research has been its failure to examine cases "where the dog didn't bark", that is cases of (potential) conflict that did not take violent form (Ross 1999).

As Table 5 makes clear, the primary reason for the difference in the number of deaths picked up between the UNSFIR dataset and ours is the level of news source used. In NTT, the provincial source (*Pos Kupang*, also used in the UNSFIR dataset) captured 55 out of a total 117 deaths (47%). The other 53% of deaths were only picked up by the sub-provincial sources (*Flores Pos* and *Dian*), with the sub-provincial sources reporting 88% of all fatalities in total. More strikingly, the provincial East Java source (*Jawa Pos*, also used by UNSFIR) picked up only 22% of the deaths in the sample (35 deaths total). The other 125 deaths (78%) were only reported by sources from below the provincial level: *Ponorogo Pos*, *Radar Madiun*, and *Radar Madura*.[38]

Table 5: Proportion of Deaths by Newspaper Source, 2001-2003

	No.	%
EAST JAVA		
Captured only by sub-provincial source	125	78.0
Captured only by provincial source	16	10.1
Captured across sources	19	11.9
Total	*160*	*100*
NTT		
Captured only by sub-provincial source	62	53.0
Captured only by provincial source	14	12.0
Captured across sources	41	35.0
Total	*117*	*100*

Source: KDP & CCN dataset

The reasons for this disparity are outlined in more depth in Section 4. Discussions with journalists and editors confirmed that *Jawa Pos*, for example, actively excludes conflict stories from the regions. Given the size of Java, local conflict stories are rarely seen as newsworthy (i.e., of interest to the readership in the provincial capital, Surabaya). Again, for NTT sources, readers in the provincial capital (Kupang), may have little interest in reading about stories of village-level conflicts on a different island.[39]

The methodological implication is clear: the more local the news source used, the more accurate the picture of conflict given. The comparative analysis of the newspaper datasets shows that the use of provincial newspapers to map conflict results in significant under-reporting. If we are serious about creating an accurate empirical conflict map, useful for development planners and researchers alike, we must use news sources below the provincial level.

4. Implications for Our Understanding of Conflict in Indonesia

The comparison of data sources also has implications for how we understand conflict and its impacts in Indonesia. It suggests a wider distribution of violent conflict across Indonesia than previously thought, with conflict present in areas not normally thought of as being particularly conflict-prone. Rather than being concentrated in a limited number of districts, deadly conflict is present across the country. The obvious implication is that the costs of violent conflict in Indonesia are larger than we previously thought.

---

[38] It is likely that the proportion of deaths picked up solely by sub-provincial sources will be even higher, given that much of the data from these sources is missing for 2001.

[39] Kupang is on the island of West Timor, whereas our research locations were all on Flores island. Indeed, perceptions of the antipathy of the provincial NTT government to issues outside West Timor has helped fuel a movement calling for a separate Flores province (see International Crisis Group 2002).

The Distribution of Conflict Across Indonesia

The data backs up scattered evidence that significant levels of violent conflict are present across Indonesia. The vast majority of studies of conflict in Indonesia have focused solely on a limited range of areas deemed to be 'high conflict'. The UNSFIR data would appear to give an empirical basis to this: Varshney, Panggabean, and Tadjoeddin (2004) argue that 15 districts, holding only 6.5% of Indonesia's population, account for 85.5% of all violent conflict-related deaths. The natural extension of this argument is that the 'high conflict' provinces are the only ones in which Indonesians face serious security issues.[40]

Yet, the evidence from East Java and NTT shows surprisingly high levels of conflict in other areas. In Manggarai, we recorded 52 deaths in just three years, and three of our East Javanese districts experienced 34 deaths or more between 2001-2003. In contrast, in Kota Ternate, a known conflict hot spot in North Maluku, UNSFIR record 73 deaths over a period more than three times as long (1990-2003).[41] While it is also likely that the UNSFIR data underreports deaths in Kota Ternate, if 73 deaths over 13 years qualifies as high conflict, alarm bells should certainly be ringing for Manggarai.[42] The new data backs up the findings from the Government's PODES survey, which showed 7.1% of locations reporting largely violent conflict and with conflict spread across every province in Indonesia (Barron, Kaiser, and Pradhan 2004).[43]

Qualitative studies have also shown violent conflict in a range of locations. Using data obtained from health centers, the Lampung study estimated an annual death toll of "hundreds" in Lampung (Barron and Madden 2004). Studies by the International Crisis Group (ICG) have also highlighted the problem of conflict and its impacts in Flores, South Sulawesi, Bali and Lombok.[44] A survey of newspaper accounts of vigilante killings found 1,264 vigilante incidents involving over 2,000 victims in West Java alone between 1997 and mid-2002.[45] Ongoing work in Bengkulu, Bali and South Kalimantan suggests similarly high levels of vigilantism in these provinces.[46]

The Impacts of Conflict in Indonesia

As we noted above, we picked up more than six times as many deaths as did UNSFIR for our selected districts, and over two and a half times as many as did PODES. Given the extent of the difference, this raises questions as to the true aggregate impacts of conflict in Indonesia.

---

[40] In a Jakarta seminar where the results were first presented, Satish Mishra, the head of UNSFIR, pointed out the implicitly rosy picture that the data paints about conflict in Indonesia.

[41] According to the UNSFIR dataset, the district with the 15th highest level of conflict is Sanggau (in West Kalimantan) with 59 deaths over the 13 year period, only marginally more than was recorded in Manggarai in three years (2001-2003). However, it can be assumed that UNSFIR also under-reports death numbers in these areas.

[42] Especially given that 44 of the 52 deaths reported in Manggarai (85%) occurred in group/group, individual/group, group/state and individual/state configurations, thereby falling under the UNSFIR definition.

[43] While Aceh had the highest reported level (23.4%) and Maluku the second highest (15.7%) other provinces showed high levels of violent conflict. Nusa Tenggarah Barat (NTB), for example, came third with 13.8% of villages reporting conflict in the previous year. Jakarta was fourth (13.5%), and other areas not normally associated with violence also reported extremely significant levels: Bangka Belintung (12.3%), NTT (11.6%) and North Sulawesi (10.9%). The authors concluded, "the data confirms that conflict is not only prevalent in well-publicized 'conflict regions', but that it can be observed across the archipelago."

[44] See International Crisis Group (2002, 2003a, and 2003b).

[45] Welsh (2003).

[46] Correspondence with Bridget Welsh, October 2003.

It is possible to make some extremely tentative projections using our data. Our dataset only collects conflict data for twelve districts in two provinces. We do not know whether rates of under-reporting are similar in other provinces. Let us assume for a moment that they are. As shown in Table 3, levels of under-reporting are reasonably constant across the two provinces, and across the districts within them. If the rate of under-reporting was similar across all districts in Indonesia,[47] there may have been as many as 12,659 conflict-related deaths in 2002 alone and even more in 2001.[48] Further, if we use the same method to compare our data with the UNSFIR data, we can estimate there may have been as many as 65,800 deaths in the 1990-2003 period, a figure that still potentially under-reports true impacts.[49]

Of course, the rates of under-reporting are unlikely to be similar across all provinces and district in Indonesia. For example, we would posit that conflict-related deaths are less likely to go under-reported in districts such as Poso or Ambon where more attention is focused and groups actively monitor conflict levels. Conversely, less conflicts are likely to be picked up in remote areas than in the urbanized districts of areas such as East Java.

It is difficult to generate national estimates with such a small sample size. However, the evidence does point to a massive under-estimate of conflict impacts in Indonesia. It will be necessary to create larger datasets, including a wider range of provinces (some high conflict, others lower), to generate more accurate estimates of the human costs of conflict in Indonesia.

The Nature of Conflict in Indonesia

The newspaper data also contributes toward a series of debates about the nature of conflict in Indonesia. In particular, the data provides input into ongoing discussions among scholars, policy makers, and development and conflict management practitioners about the role of cultural factors in contributing to violence in Indonesia.

Two camps exist with regard to this question, each of which has a relatively coherent story about how and why conflict exists in the way it does in Indonesia today. The first we can dub the 'structuralists'. The structuralists' view has been the dominant one among policy makers and researchers examining conflict in post-1998 Indonesia. This school emphasizes the institutional basis of conflict in Indonesia, putting much of the blame at the door of the New Order regime, which was in power from 1966 until Soeharto's resignation in 1998. The New Order era provided development and security during most of its tenure but at the expense of the development of civil society institutions. At the same time, security sector institutions (the police and military), and formal government institutions (at the village, district, provincial and national levels) were eroded by corruption, distorting the way in which decisions were made, resources (both material and power) were allocated, and that over time undermined the basis of

---

[47] In fact, these calculations do not assume that levels of reporting are the same in very district. Rather, they are based on the assumption that *at an aggregate level*, the extent of under-reporting is similar to that which we found in NTT and East Java. For this to hold true, some areas may under-report conflict impacts less and others more. When added together, this averages out.

[48] Calculated using the multiplier (2.6) generated by comparing the KDP & CCN and PODES datasets. Both UNSFIR and KDP & CCN show declining trends in conflict-related deaths over time; we can thus assume higher impacts of conflict in 2001 than in 2002.

[49] Calculated using the multiplier (6.15) generated by comparing the KDP & CCN and UNSFIR datasets. UNSFIR based their estimates on their assumption that the vast majority of conflict was concentrated in 14 provinces. In the UNSFIR-1 dataset (which used national news sources) these 14 provinces accounted for 96.4% of deaths. In generating their estimations from the UNSFIR-2 dataset (using provincial sources) for conflict deaths *across Indonesia*, Varshney, Panggabean, and Tadjoeddin (2004, p. 12) assumed that these 14 provinces would still account for the same proportion of deaths. This, of course, assumes much lower levels of conflict in the other provinces. But as we have shown above, conflict may be more widely spread throughout Indonesia than previously thought. This may be another source of under-prediction, as is the fact that Aceh and Papua were excluded.

their legitimacy. As such, the collapse of the New Order left a conflict resolution vacuum with formal institutions not trusted or able to manage problems, and civil society institutions too weak to take up the slack.[50] These arguments have become common in analyses, particularly from policy makers and research institutions, of conflict in Indonesia post-1998.[51]

The second camp we can call the 'culturalists'.[52] These scholars point to historical continuities in the presence of violence in Indonesia, and ascribe a cultural basis to this phenomenon. Cribb (2005), for example, notes the presence of violence in the New Order era;[53] others point to the extent to which similar patterns of violence preceded the New Order state.[54] The obvious, although most often not explicitly stated, extension of this argument is that historical legacies have shaped norms in Indonesian society that legitimize the use of violence.[55] Many of the ethnographic studies of conflict in particular areas of Indonesia would seem to back up these points.[56]

The data from East Java and NTT contributes to such debates. It provides evidence that there is a cultural basis to violence in Indonesia. However, it is a mischaracterization to say that Indonesians, or particular ethnic groups within Indonesia (say, the Madurese), are inherently violent. Cultures exist at local levels, differ between locations, and each legitimize only certain forms of violence at particular times and in response to certain actions. Our data shows the extent to which conflict forms—e.g., what people are fighting over, how actors organize themselves, the types of impact, etc.—vary between districts.[57] Specific forms of conflict are present in different areas. Within each area, serious disputes tend to be over a given issue (e.g., land); there is also commonality within areas in how such conflicts are 'expressed' (e.g., the ways in which actors participate in conflictual action, the symbols and strategies they employ, and so on). In both East Java and Flores, the most violent forms of conflict are those described, and seemingly driven, by local cultural behaviors and norms. These include the history and development of rival *silat* (martial arts) groups in the Ponorogo research area; Madurese culture that condones and even insists on bloody retribution over matters of honor; the communal battles over traditional land ownership and use rights in parts of Flores, where actors split along lines of ethnicity and lineage (Muda and Satu 2001).

Hence particular norms relating to conflict, framed and sustained by local cultures and traditions, exist in different areas, legitimizing different forms of response to different issues. In some areas, violence may be a culturally learned (and legitimated) course of action. However, local cultures are likely to only

---

[50] A derivative of the institutional argument is that of Bertrand (2004) who examines the access that different identity groups had to the state in times of flux.

[51] See, for example, Malley (2001) and Tadjoeddin, Suharyo, and Mishra (2001).

[52] The discussion we briefly outline here echoes an earlier debate in the Indonesian literature. The "structuralists" who emphasized the role of material conditions in determining all other aspects of social life (Budiman 1989), critiqued the 'culturalist approach', "that makes culture an independent variable and non-cultural aspects as dependant variables" (Subianto 1989, p. 59). In large part because of weaknesses in the Indonesian social science tradition, the culturalists offered no effective retort and hence the debate went by the wayside (Heryanto 2005). This debate was not extended into the realm of social conflict analysis. Further, the debate differs today in that many advocates of a cultural approach have integrated aspects of micro-political economy into their frameworks.

[53] He cites Liddle (1985) in arguing that violence was one of the three pillars of the New Order state, the others being economic performance and ideological manipulation.

[54] See, in particular, Nordholt (2002). Indeed, the various chapters in the edited volume by Colombijn and Lindblad (2002), from which the piece is taken, provide a multi-faceted summary of the basic culturalist argument. Colombijn (2005) also expounds upon violence as "cultural practice".

[55] This is a different argument to one that argues that Indonesian culture is *inevitably* violent.

[56] See, for example, Barron and Madden (2004) who talk about both the "culture of vigilantism" and "culture of violence" in Lampung province. For good ethnographic accounts of conflict in Central Sulawesi, see Aragon (2001) and Acciaioli (2001).

[57] These points are discussed in much more depth in Sections II and III.

sanction violence in response to a limited set of problems, and both the occasions in which violence can legitimately be used, and the forms violence takes, vary between areas. As such, there exists a bounded, albeit dynamic, 'cultural realm' of action relating to conflict that varies from area to area.[58]

In part, this variation is a function of the development of different cultures, more broadly, over time. A plethora of different factors help to shape local cultures, including many of the factors the 'structuralists' draw attention to.[59] At the same time, there is significant variation *within* areas with similar cultural heritages. Our data suggests that local leaders play a large role in regulating conflictual action. Further, effective intervention by local leaders (formal and informal) and state institutions (e.g. the security sector) can prevent culturally-legitimized forms of violence from escalating.[60] Effective intermediaries play a vital role in preventing conflicts from escalating and turning violent. Where interventions are successful, small conflicts can be prevented from becoming big ones, and destructive conflict cycles can be broken. As such there is tremendous scope for positive actions by local leaders and governments to help reduce the presence and impacts of violent conflict. The next two sections examine more closely the evidence from East Java and NTT.

II. CONFLICT IN EAST JAVA: PAMEKASAN AND PONOROGO CLUSTERS

1. Conflict and its Impacts in East Java

Violent conflict is surprisingly common in our research districts in East Java. Over the three-year period, local newspapers reported 366 violent conflicts across the seven districts.   Together, these conflicts resulted in 160 deaths. Rates of violent conflict and, particularly, the impacts of such conflicts varied tremendously, both between clusters and between districts within each cluster.[61] Prevalent forms of impact (death, injury or property damage) vary considerably between different areas in East Java. This suggests that violent conflict manifests itself in different ways in different, even neighboring, districts.

Table 6 demonstrates the extent to which levels of violent conflict and its impacts are not necessarily correlated. Whereas Madiun has the highest number of violent conflicts of the seven East Javanese districts studied, and the highest number of violent incidents per capita, these conflicts resulted in fewer deaths than in any of the Madurese districts.[62]

---

[58] For an excellent collection of articles on the myriad ways in which culture frames and determines forms of public action, see Rao and Walton (2004).

[59] A vast body of literature has highlighted a range of different factors that help shape cultures that exist today. As Cole and Wolf (1974) have noted, in their investigation of the cultural identities of different communities in northern alpine Italy, "no single set of variables can account for the types of differences … in the microcosm [read, cultures] of the two communities."

[60] See Barron, Smith, and Woolcock (2004) for evidence from the broader study on the different qualities needed by interveners to successfully address conflicts and to prevent them from escalating.

[61] As noted earlier, we tracked conflict in two "clusters" of districts. The Pamekasan cluster (also referred to as the Madura cluster throughout this paper) is comprised of the four districts on the island of Madura, off the south coast of Java. The Ponorogo cluster is made up of Ponorogo and its two neighboring districts Madiun and Magetan, located at the far western end of East Java, bordering the province of Central Java. See Annex A for an explanation of the site choices.

[62] It is hard to know for certain whether Madiun has fewer fatalities than the Madurese districts because of missing data from 2001 (cf. footnote 13). Nevertheless, the data we have would suggest this to be the case. Certainly it would appear that there were fewer conflict fatalities in Madiun than in Bangkalan, Sampang or Sumenep districts.

Table 6: Violent Conflict Incidence per Capita by District, 2001-2003: East Java

District	No. violent conflicts	No. deaths	Total population	No. violent conflicts per capita (100,000)
Sumenep	53	34	640,855	8
Bangkalan	64	45	813,202	8
Pamekasan	33	17	698,932	5
Sampang	41	39	756,937	5
Pamekasan Cluster Total	**191**	**135**	**2,909,926**	**7**
Madiun	94	12	993,311	9
Ponorogo	56	4	842,211	7
Magetan	25	9	612,021	4
Ponorogo Cluster Total	**175**	**25**	**2,447,543**	**7**
TOTAL	*366*	*160*	*5,357,469*	*7*

Sources: KDP & CCN dataset (conflict data); Badan Pusat Statistik (2002a) (population data)

The variation in the levels of violent conflict recorded in each district and the impacts of these conflicts emerge with analysis of the *types of impact* observable in each district. As Table 7 shows, there are marked differences in the patterns of violence between the two clusters. Fatalities in East Java were recorded almost exclusively in Madura, while the bulk of property damage was recorded around, but not in, Ponorogo.

Table 7: Conflict Impacts by District: East Java, 2001-2003

District	No. deaths	No. injuries	No. properties damaged
Bangkalan	45	80	3
Pamekasan	17	18	3
Sampang	39	33	5
Sumenep	34	19	19
Pamekasan Cluster Total	**135**	**150**	**30**
Madiun	12	114	146
Magetan	9	21	89
Ponorogo	4	69	7
Ponorogo Cluster Total	**25**	**204**	**242**
TOTAL	*160*	*354*	*272*

Source: KDP & CCN dataset

Led by Bangkalan, all four Madurese districts recorded a higher number of fatalities than any of the three Ponorogo cluster districts. Together, 84.4% of all deaths recorded (135) occurred in Madura.[63] In contrast, almost 90% of property damage was recorded in the Ponorogo cluster with 242 properties damaged compared with 30 in Madura.[64] As such, the data points strongly to varying *impacts* of conflict between the two areas, with conflicts in the different clusters likely to end up with different violent outcomes – deaths in Madura, property damage in Ponorogo.

---

[63] The difference between conflict mortality rates in the two clusters is equally conclusive. In Madura, 71 deaths occurred for every 100 violent conflicts, while just 14 in 100 occurred in the Ponorogo cluster. Therefore, in rough terms, between 2001 and 2003, violent conflicts were five times more likely to be fatal in Madura than in and around Ponorogo.

[64] In the Ponorogo cluster, 138 buildings were damaged per 100 violent conflicts, compared to only 16 per 100 conflicts in Madura, an almost nine-fold difference.

There is also considerable variation in the forms of conflict impact between districts within each of the clusters. Most strikingly, an overwhelming proportion of recorded property damage—64.3% (146 buildings)—was recorded in Madiun and, to a lesser extent, in Magetan (21.8% or 89 buildings). Interestingly, Ponorogo did not share its neighboring districts' propensity toward property damage; only seven buildings were reported damaged, less than 3% of the East Java total. Similarly, in Madura Sumenep recorded the highest amount of property damage, 7.1% of the total (19 buildings), while property damage in Pamekesan, Sampang, and Bangkalan each accounted for less than 2% of damage recorded.

Thus, profiles of violence vary between districts. When violence does occur, it manifests itself in different ways (killings versus property damage) in different locations. Forms of violence, then, take on local characteristics, indicating that the types of conflict responsible for this violence are also likely to be locally distinct.

2. Forms of Violent Conflict in East Java

As we noted earlier, conflict incidents were assigned one of five main conflict types.[65] Conflicts related to disputes over physical or administrative resources, political positions or influence, and vigilantism. A number of conflicts occurred that did not fit into any of these categories; they were recorded in an "other" residual category. These types were developed based on the fieldwork, and then refined iteratively as the newspaper data came in. Examining the different forms of conflict that are present in each cluster helps explain the varying characteristics of violent conflict in the different districts.

Figure 2 shows the incidence of violent conflicts in the two clusters. Vigilantism/retribution conflicts are by far the most dominant form in both.

By definition, this category captures conflicts that are almost inevitably of a violent nature: the mass beating of a thief caught red-handed stealing a motorcycle; gang fighting; individuals taking revenge over matters of honor and pride; and so on. It is worth noting the low frequency of violent conflict in the remaining four categories as it illustrates that these types of conflict rarely turn violent in East Java.

---

[65] See Annex B for a complete list of conflict types and sub-types. Full conflict typologies for East Java and NTT can be found in Diprose (2004) and Satu and Barron (forthcoming), respectively.

Figure 2: Frequency of Violent Conflict Types by Cluster, 2001-2003: East Java
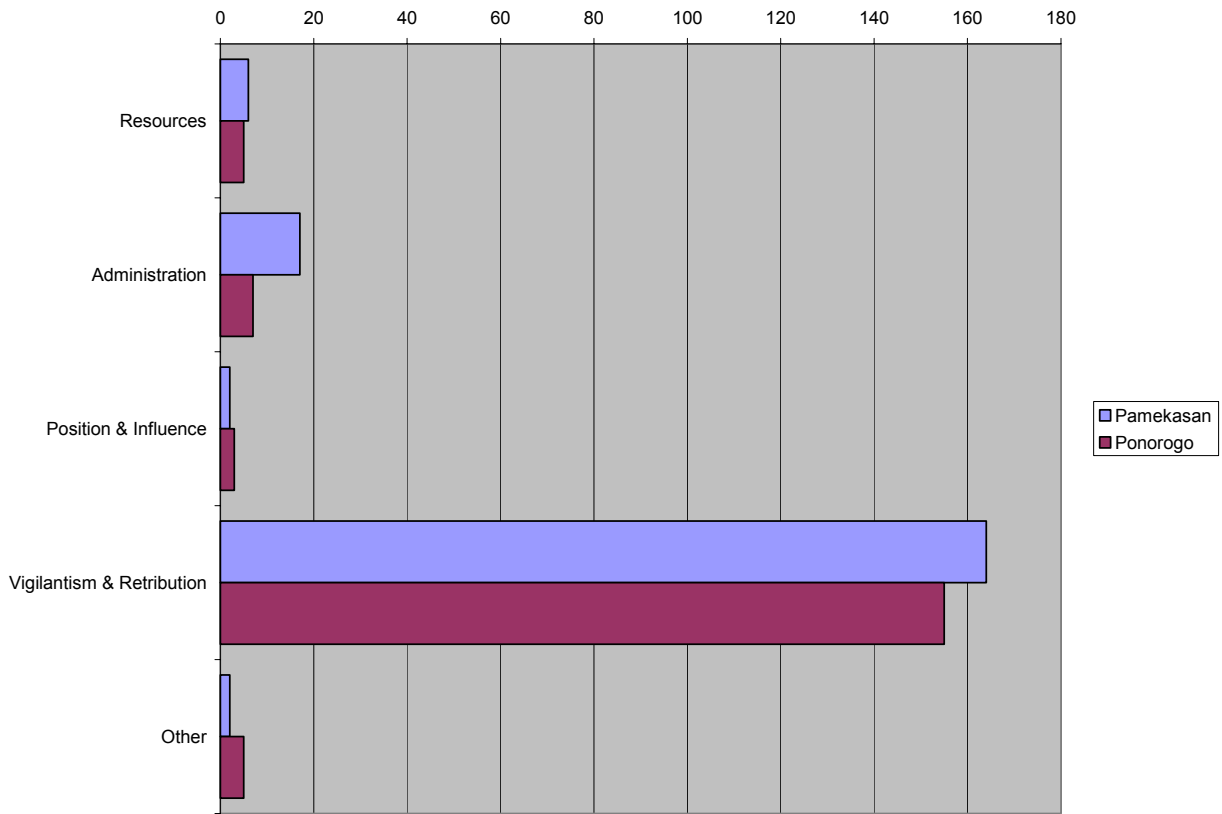
Source: KDP & CCN dataset

While the general patterns of violent conflict type and form are similar across the two clusters, considering the more specific sub-types of vigilantism brings out marked differences. This, in turn, helps to explain variations in the levels and forms of violence across the East Javanese districts. Figure 3 shows the different types of vigilantism/retribution recorded in East Java. Vigilantism ranges from the lynching of (alleged) thieves, murderers and "deviants", to the popular condemnation of witchdoctors, ninjas,[66] and revenge for acts of humiliation, in response to accidents or damage.

---

[66] Throughout 1998, a series of mysterious killings of 'black magicians' and 'ninjas took place in East Java (and particularly in Banyuwangi, Jember, Situbondo, Probolinggo, Bondowoso, and Pasuruan districts), with at least 170 killed over a nine-month period. There has since been extensive debate over the causes of this outburst. Douglas Kammen, a researcher from Cornell, has argued that there was an economic basis to the killings with most of the victims being landlords. Others, however, have critiqued Kammen's findings (see, for instance, TEMPO, January 14, 2002). Both the 'ninjas' of the Banyuwangi killings and the 'black magicians' described in cases collected from Java, Madura and Flores as part of this study exhibit similar magic powers and mystical traits, suggesting that the first phenomena may well be a sub-set of the second. Whereas the ninja killings peaked dramatically and subsided, witchdoctor murders would seem to have a longer history (see Colombijn 2002), and our data from East Java and Flores illustrates that this form of violence persists today.

Figure 3: Vigilante/Revenge Sub-types by Cluster (Violent Conflicts), 2001-2003: East Java
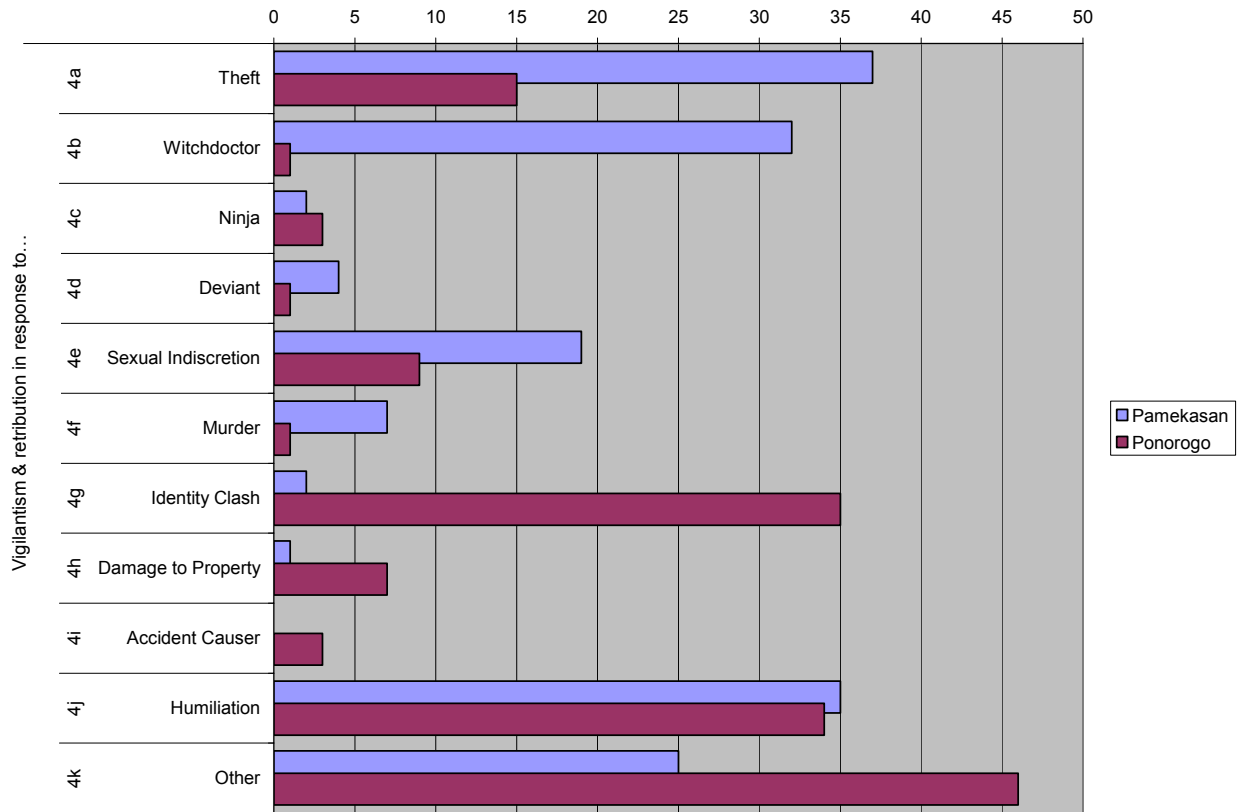
Source: KDP & CCN dataset

In Madura, violence most frequently occurred as a vigilante response to a theft, humiliation or loss of face, perceived witchcraft, sexual indiscretion, or for 'other' reasons. Of these, only vigilante action triggered by a perceived humiliation was also common in the Ponorogo cluster, where other forms of vigilante conflict prevailed: incidents of 'identity' clashes, and 'other' unclassified forms of vigilantism.[67] Theft and sexual indiscretion were also significant triggers for conflict in the Ponorogo area, although less so than in Madura.

Thus, while the basic types of violent conflict were similar across the different districts (i.e., vigilantism dominated), the *specific* prominent forms of violent vigilantism was different in the two areas situated at the opposite ends of East Java. The differences help to explain the variation in the degree and type of impacts across districts noted in the first section of this paper. As Table 8 shows, location-specific types are responsible for creating the distinct impact profiles in each place.[68]

---

[67] Conflicts in this 'other' category are closely associated with conflicts in the 'identity' class category (see Box 2 for an explanation).

[68] Table 8 disaggregates the impacts of each specific form of conflict in each district. To illustrate, the first box (top left) signifies that disputes over the management of privately-owned resources ('resource (natural, private)') and acts in retaliation to perceived humiliation ('vigilante (face loss)') in Bangkalan alone each account for more than 5% of *all deaths* recorded in the full East Java dataset. There are seven districts and 31 type/subtype codes used in the data (see Annex 2), so if impacts were distributed evenly by conflict type and location, each type/location combination would account for just 1/217 or 0.46% of each respective type of impact. As such, the table demonstrates the extent to which different forms of violent conflict, located in different districts, account for a considerable proportion of the impacts of conflict in the East Javanese districts.

Table 8: Conflict Types Associated with High Impacts by District: East Java, 2001-2003

District	Fatalities: % impact type across East Java (No. deaths)		Injuries: % impact type across East Java (No. injuries)			Property damage: % impact type across East Java (No. properties damaged)		
	>5%	3-5%	>10%	10-5%	3-5%	>10%	5-10%	3-5%
Bangkalan	Resource (natural, private) **11** Vigilante (face loss) **10**	Vigilante (other) **7** Vigilante (witchdoctor) **6** Vigilante (theft): **5**		Admin (govt.) **25**	Vigilante (theft) **15** Vigilante (face loss) **14**			
Pamekasan								
Sumenep	Vigilante (witchdoctor) **14** Vigilante (other) **9**							
Sampang	Vigilante (witchdoctor) **15** Vigilante (theft) **8**	Vigilante (face loss) **5**						
Madiun		Vigilante (face loss) **5**	Vigilante (face loss) **35**	Vigilante (identity clash) **33** Vigilante (other) **22**		Vigilante (other) **77**	Vigilante (identity clash) **26** Vigilante (ninja) **24**	
Magetan						Vigilante (identity clash) **36** Vigilante (murder) **29**		Vigilante (damage) **13** Vigilante (other) **11**
Ponorogo				Vigilante (face loss) **19**	Vigilante (identity clash) **16** Vigilante (other) **16**			

Source: KDP & CCN dataset

Thus, not only are certain types of conflict specific to certain locations, these same conflict types are responsible for the signature impact profiles of each cluster, and even district, that we saw in the earlier analysis. In Madura, vigilante responses targeting black magicians, thieves, and conflicts arising from a perceived humiliation or 'loss of face' are uniformly associated with high fatality and injury rates. At the same time, the identity, humiliation and other (unclassified) vigilante action in the Ponorogo cluster are clearly associated with property damage, especially in Madiun.[69]

---

[69] Three items stand out as anomalous from the Madura data. First, in Bangkalan more fatalities were associated with access to publicly-owned resources than any other category. This is due to a long running dispute between fisher-people of Kwanyar, Bangkalan, and Pasuruan on the East Java mainland over fishing territory. This conflict flared up twice in 2001, resulting in village sieges, hostage taking, deaths, injuries and damage to property, most notably fishing boats and nets (therefore uncounted in our data). Second, in Bangkalan 25 injuries resulted from government-related administrative conflicts, noteworthy given the lack of violence associated with this category in general. Twenty-three of these injuries (eighteen in one incident and five in a second, unrelated incident) occurred when police clashed with students demonstrating against government policy relating to aid for internally-displaced people (IDPs) from the conflict in Central Kalimantan (see Smith 2005). This would seem to indicate that the causes of violent conflict are more various in Bangkalan than in neighboring districts. Third, five deaths in Sumenep (five separate incidents involving one death each) were recorded under the 'other (residual)' sub-type. These newspaper reports actually describe mysterious murders, where motives for the slayings were unknown.

If a small number of specific forms of conflict in specific locations are responsible for a large proportion of the violence occurring in East Java, then effective interventions targeting particular forms of local conflict in different places would go a long way toward reducing the overall impacts of violent conflict. In Madiun, for instance, a successful intervention targeting vigilante conflict between clashing identity groups and the 'unclassified' vigilante violence could reduce property damage in Madiun by up to 70%.[70] Similarly, successfully curbing lynchings of alleged witchdoctors and thieves would have a significant impact on fatality rates in Madura. For example, witchdoctor killings account for 41% of all deaths in Sumenep, and 38% of deaths in Sampang.[71]

The forms and impacts of conflict vary considerably at a local level, with specific localized forms resulting in a large proportion of all conflict-related deaths, injuries, and property damage. This highlights the importance of tailoring policy responses to conflict to local conditions. The next section examines the actors involved in these violent conflicts, and the level at which they occur, in order to better understand where policy responses should be directed.

3. Sources of Violence: the Interplay between Local Cultures and Actors

Specific and different forms of violence exist in the two clusters. To a large extent, these formations are framed and informed by cultural factors and practices; local norms and values legitimize different kinds of violence, influence which kinds of issues will trigger violent conflict, and involve different configurations of actors. However, variation in levels of violence *within* each of the areas shows the extent to which local actors are important in shaping norms around violence, in managing conflicts, and thus in determining whether or not given forms of conflict become violent.

Levels and Actors

As we have seen above, vigilante action is targeted against different actors in the two areas. Violence in Madura is more likely to be directed at *individuals—*witchdoctors and thieves—while in the Ponorogo cluster, vigilante attacks against those with differing 'identities' are more common, suggesting *group* violence. These differences can be seen more clearly, and can be partially explained, if we consider the actors involved in vigilante/retribution conflicts across the two areas.

Figure 4 shows the actors involved in vigilante conflicts in the two clusters of East Javanese research districts. Based on readings of the newspaper articles, actors were coded on whether they were acting as individuals, as communal groups, whether they represented the state, etc.[72] Given that there are (at least) two parties to every conflict, we can examine different actor combinations. This gives us a better understanding of the dynamic of a given conflict.

However, common details of the incidents, most notably the use of the traditional Madurese weapon *clurit* (sickle) in each case, pointed to the presence of inter-personal conflict, most likely revenge. In Ponorogo, the somewhat anomalous data on ninja violence and retaliation in cases of murder are similarly explained by a small number of incidents recording a large number of impacts.

[70] Between them, these two sub-types account for 103 damaged buildings, of a total of 146 in Madiun, or 70.5% of all property damage in that district.

[71] Sumenep: 14 deaths out of 34 total; Sampang: 15 deaths out of 39 total.

[72] In fact, we coded the different types of actors in more detail (see Annex 2). We then aggregated these for the analysis presented here.

Figure 4: Impacts by Actor Combination for Violent Vigilante/Revenge Conflicts, 2001-2003: East Java
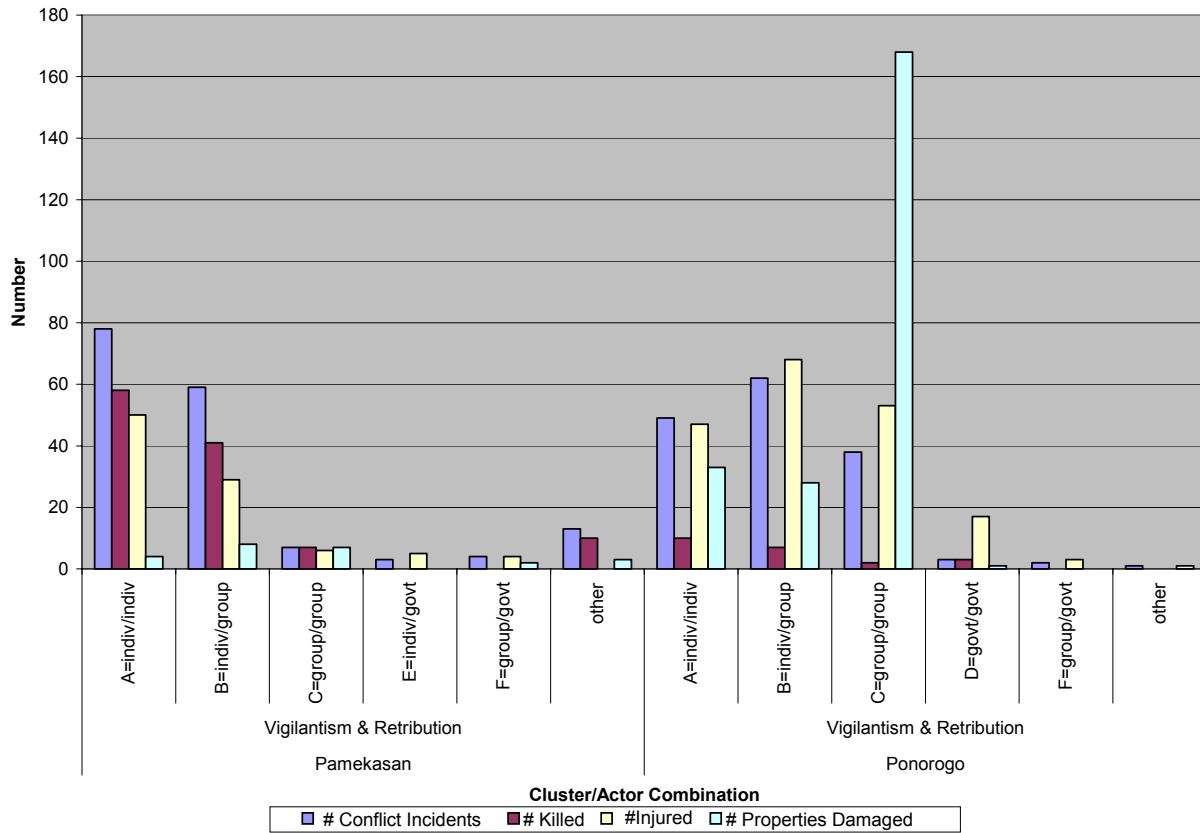
In this case, clues about conflict dynamics suggested by conflict types bear out, as violence in Madura is far more likely to be targeted against individuals, while group/group clashes are comparatively rare.[73] In contrast, conflict in the Ponorogo cluster was more likely to take group form, and these conflicts were particularly likely to result in property damage: on average more than four properties were damaged for every incident.

Violence against individuals—perpetrated by an individual or a group—also occurred more frequently overall in the Ponorogo cluster than group/group clashes. However, this is not the case for all districts within the Ponorogo cluster, as the dynamics of conflict actors vary significantly between Ponorogo, Madiun and Magetan districts (see Figure 5).

---

[73] Although they are particularly deadly when they do occur: 18 deaths from 8 incidents.

Figure 5: Impacts by Actor Combination for Violent Vigilante/Revenge Conflicts, 2001-2003: Ponorogo Cluster
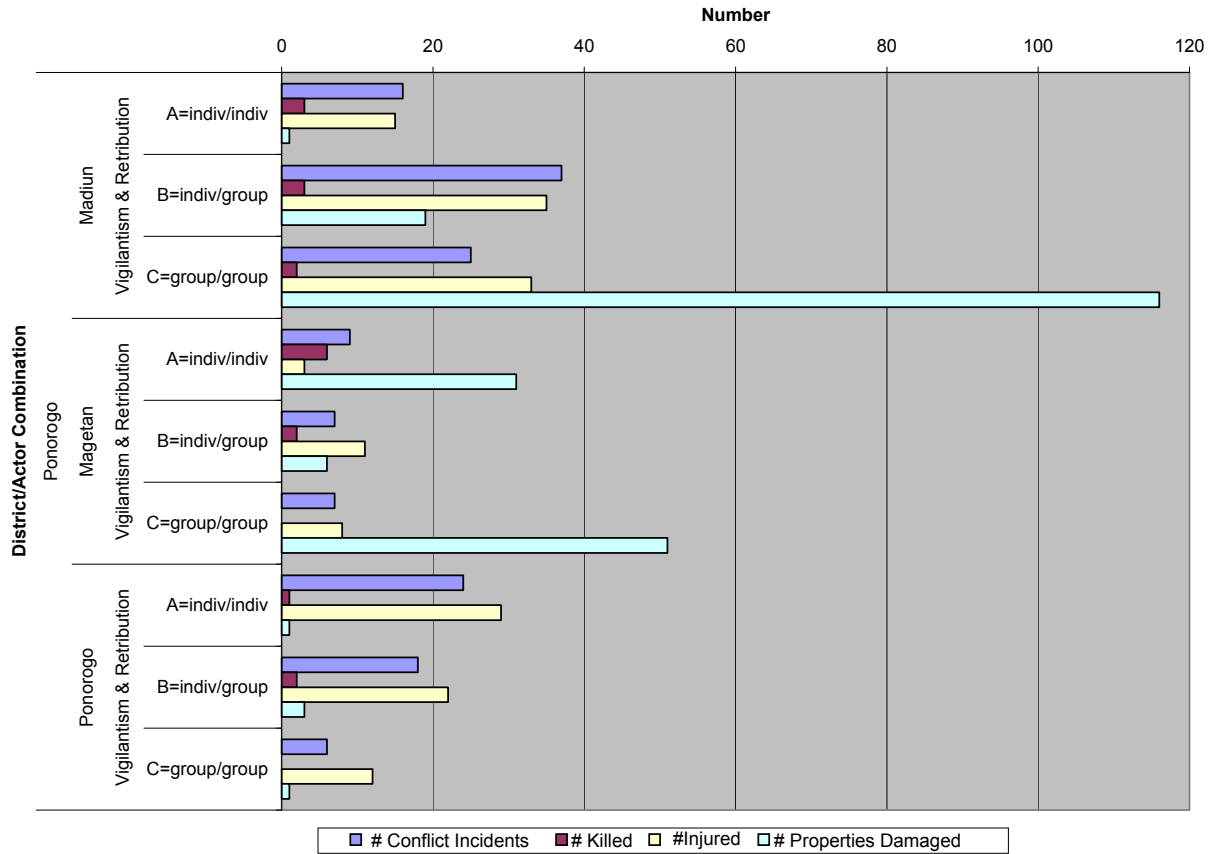
Source: KDP & CCN dataset

Inter-group vigilante violence in Magetan and Madiun districts results in damage to property, but in Ponorogo there are relatively few violent group/group conflicts (just seven, compared to 25 in Madiun) and virtually no property damage (just one property damaged, as opposed to 51 in Magetan and 116 in Madiun). In Madiun, the majority of violent conflicts of this kind have a group element, and conflicts between individuals are the least common; in Ponorogo, individual/individual clashes were the most common configuration (in Magetan, this kind of conflict occurs evenly across these three main actor combinations). Yet in terms of history, ethnicity and religion, these districts are close to identical. Clearly, there is another process at work here, dictating why one district can be prone to such large amounts of communal violence, while its neighbor escapes relatively unscathed.

That conflicts have a more personal, intimate element in Madura than in the Ponorogo cluster is also evidenced by the proximity of these actors to one another (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Impacts by Level for Violent Vigilante/Revenge Conflicts, 2001-2003: East Java
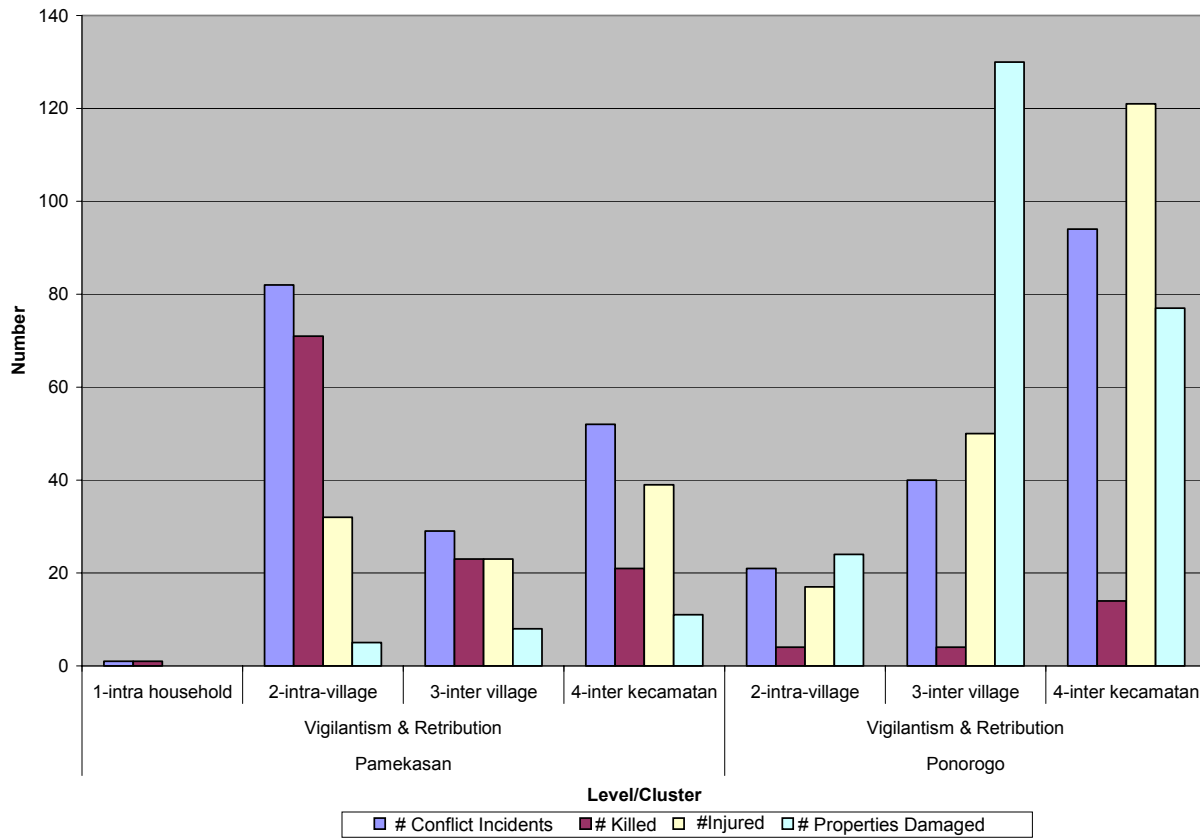
Source: KDP & CCN dataset

Fifty percent of all violent vigilante/revenge conflicts in the Madura cluster occurred 'intra-village'.[74] By contrast, conflicts in the Ponorogo cluster took place between parties more removed from one another; in all three districts, conflict was most likely to have occurred between people from different sub-districts (62.5% in Madiun, 58.0% in Magetan, and 60.4% in Ponorogo).[75]

Cultures of Violence: Explaining Differences in Forms of Conflict

Whereas conflict is common in both clusters, the different forms it takes (in terms of how actors organize themselves, where they live, who they target, and what the preferred modes of violence are) appears to differ radically across the two areas, and even between districts in one cluster. The newspaper dataset alone is limited in what it can tell us about the local nuances informing the way characteristic violence develops. However, the qualitative fieldwork conducted as part of the study provides interesting

---

[74] Within the cluster, conflict was most likely to occur at this level in Sampang, Sumenep and Bangkalan, with Pamekasan the one exception.

[75] The relatively large number of cases occurring at 'inter-*kecamatan'* (inter-sub-district) level in the Ponorogo cluster is in large part an artifact of the coding system. The 'inter-village' level for example is fairly unambiguous, generally referring to the fact that that actors originated from different villages. By contrast, the 'inter-*kecamatan'* level designation may indicate that actors originated from different sub-districts, but it was also used to describe conflicts that somehow 'reached' district level. To illustrate, if a conflict originating anywhere was brought before the District Parliament or courts, then it would be coded as occurring 'inter-*kecamatan'*. See the 'Coding Issues' section of Annex A.

insights.[76] As Boxes 1 and 2 outline, the dominant forms of violence in Madura and in the Ponorogo cluster can be explained in part by particular elements of local culture that legitimize the different forms of conflictual action in the two areas.

Box 1: Humiliation and Loss of Face: *Carok* Culture in Madura

When newspaper staff were asked why conflict in Madura was so much more frequently fatal than in the Ponorogo cluster, both Javanese and Madurese respondents replied that it came down to local character and culture. The Madurese are known across Indonesia, and particularly by their more 'refined' Javanese neighbors, for their *keras* (rough, hard) character, and for the high value they ascribe to matters of self worth and pride (*tengka*). In cases where a Madurese feels he has been insulted, particularly if he has been cuckolded or his wife 'interfered with', violent response is not only condoned but obligatory (Wiyata 2002). In traditional terms, this means that the offended party invites the offender to *carok,* or duel.[77]

Traditionally, *carok* described an organized duel, whereby two parties would meet at an arranged time and location and fight in an aboveboard manner to resolve a dispute. Today, however, *carok* is used more generally to describe any fight involving *clurit,* the traditional Madurese sickle-shaped weapon, including violent ambushes or chance encounters in public places. Said (2003) argues that Madurese understanding of *carok* has changed, and the term is used nowadays to disguise or justify essentially criminal behavior as acceptable cultural practice.

The newspaper survey data reflects this understanding of culture in Madura in a number of ways. The data recorded 35 incidents relating to vigilantism/revenge over issues of 'humiliation/face loss', and 19 incidents related to (alleged) 'sexual indiscretion', where women and/or infidelity was the cause of an argument. Violence and killing in Madura tends to be between proximate parties, and perpetrated by individuals or groups against individuals. This would seem to support the hypothesis that this violence is personal and targeted.

Boxes 1 and 2 help to explain the different forms that violent conflict takes in the two areas of East Java. In Madura, conflicts are more likely to be between individuals who live in close proximity to one another. In contrast, in the Ponorogo cluster, there is a group basis to violence, with many disputes taking place between rival martial arts groups, particularly in Madiun district, where the problem is most serious. It is clear that different cultural phenomena underlie the sorts of violence and conflict occurring in the two areas.

In Madura, historic notions of *carok* have legitimized forms of violence over face-loss, perceived sexual indiscretion. In recent times, *carok* norms have been extended to include vigilante action against thieves and other forms of mob justice. Such types of action are prevalent in Madura, because local norms create the space for (and in some cases prescribe) the use of violence in certain cases.

By contrast, in the Ponorogo cluster, young men have historically organized themselves (and, indeed, have been organized by local 'leaders' anxious to utilize them for political and economic purposes) in groups centered on different martial arts ideologies. Membership of these groups, often driven by political competition at a higher level, has become an important social marker in the area. Norms of inter-group rivalry have developed into gang mentalities. In Madiun district particularly, the vast majority of violent conflicts involve these groups in some shape or form.

---

[76] As noted earlier, 12 researchers (and their supervisors) spent over six months living in villages following cases of local conflict and assessing local conflict conditions.

[77] See also de Jonge (1998) and Diprose (2004). A case study collected during the fieldwork (Barnawi 2003, 'Rumours, Women and Carok'), provides an example of how *carok* often works. In the case, *carok* occurred following rumors that a man's neighbor had 'interfered' with his wife. In fact, the man had repeatedly stated that he did not believe the rumors of indiscretion between his wife and his neighbor. Instead, it was his family who forced him into action on the grounds that the entire family name had been sullied, not only by the alleged events, but also by the man's unwillingness to defend his honor. The man's family confronted the alleged offender and killed him, in a fight that resulted in two deaths and several serious injuries. In this case, *tengka* (pride, self worth) took precedence over the truth.

Box 2: Identity Clash and Vandalism: *Silat* Violence in the Ponorogo Cluster

> *"The South Madiun area has become like the Gaza Strip, never free from acts of violence."*
> Radar Madiun, February 18, 2003

One of the most frequent and violent forms of vigilantism in the Ponorogo cluster is the 'identity clash'. This category captures conflicts where two opposing identity groups fight based on perceived difference. It was largely designed to describe the clashes between youth from *silat* (martial arts) groups, particularly prevalent in this part of Java in 1999/2000. Further, the 'other (unclassified)' vigilante conflict type, which is responsible for even more violence in the Ponorogo cluster, often describes the same phenomenon. The distinction is an artifact of the way newspapers report conflict. If miscreants are caught and their group identity made known, their affiliation can be reported by the press and the incident coded in this study as an 'identity clash' conflict. However, without definite proof, newspapers are wary of naming groups for fear of reprisals and so may report on such incidents without speculating on who might have been responsible. These articles, where *silat* violence is indicated but not explicit, are coded as 'vigilante-other'. The editor from that publication states unequivocally that in most cases, conflicts coded as 'vigilante-other' in the Ponorogo cluster are *silat* related. Moreover, some of the violence in this region captured in the 'humiliation/face loss' category may also be related to *silat* fighting, as *silat* conflicts are notorious for being sparked by someone revving a motorcycle engine too loudly in the presence of a rival group, or someone being jostled too hard at a dance.[78]

The 'identity clash' and 'other', unclassified vigilante categories are closely allied to property damage and physical violence in the Ponorogo cluster and in Madiun particularly. The preferred mode of violence, as is abundantly evident from the newspaper data, is vandalism of property, whereby members of one *silat* group target the home or property of a member of another *silat* group, or the homes of neighbors and innocent citizens fall victim to a vandalism spree. This type of violence is so linked to the *silat* problem that as the *Radar Madiun* editor explains, "If a house is damaged, the police will just ask which *silat* group the sons of the house belong to. From that they can tell which rival *silat* group was responsible." Group brawling and bashings of individuals are also a feature of this kind of violence, again illustrated by survey data.

The *silat* groups in the Madiun/Ponorogo area have their genesis as organizations of resistance against the Dutch in the early 20th century. The two dominant groups (SH Terate and SH Winongo) stem from the same organization, Setia Hati which split in the late 1940s. The groups are driven by strong, quasi-mystical ideologies, packaged in a way that relates strongly to *kejawen* (syncretic Javanese Islam) spirituality, already familiar to East Javanese communities. Leaders justify the existence and actions of the groups in spiritual terms. The groups are particularly strong in marginalized villages, were locals have unfulfilled hopes and expectations; the martial arts groups, and the cultural ideologies they embody, provide a social outlet which can free them from the mundane routine of their everyday lives (Probo 2003).

Silat violence stretches the definition of violence in a number of ways. Many incidents here termed 'conflicts' could equally be described as acts of criminality, underpinned by generic social problems such as youth unemployment. One journalist expressed the opinion that these factors were more important, and that *silat* labels were used to justify a general propensity to violence, just as the term '*carok'* is used to legitimize violent behavior in Madura.[79] At the same time, vigilante violence is cyclical, so that in a sense, any incident of violence between, for instance, the SH Terate and SH Winongo *silat* schools is a flare up of an existing conflict rather than a conflict in itself.

As such, patterns of violence in the two clusters can be explained in part by different cultural phenomena. Different cultural realities exist in the two areas and these help to explain the things actors fight over, the ways in which they organize themselves, and the extent to which their actions are likely to be violent. This is neither to say that other factors are not important, or that such conflicts are inevitable. To do so, would both underplay the shaping role that socio-economic structures and power relations have on the development of local norms, and would assume an overly deterministic, static and bounded notion of culture.[80] In Madura, for example, factors such as low education levels and the weakness of law

---

[78] Managing Director, *Radar Madiun,* June 14, 2004.

[79] Ponorogo Correspondent, *Radar Madiun,* June 15, 2004.

[80] On the extent to which power relations drive the formation of (local and national) cultures, see Wolf (1999). In other work, he also criticizes the "romantic" notion of cultures as bounded and unchanging (Wolf 1964).

enforcement institutions are also relevant (Said 2003). In the Ponorogo cluster, it is clear that generic social problems such as youth unemployment help explain why young men often join *silat* groups.[81] Nevertheless, different forms of action have been culturally legitimized in the two areas, and these help explain patterns of local conflict.

The Role of Local Actors

While cultural phenomena help to explain the forms of violent conflict in the two areas, differences in the levels and impacts of such conflict can also be explained in part by the roles played by local actors and intermediaries.

As we have shown, there are some marked differences between the districts in the Ponorogo research cluster. The incidence of group/group conflicts in Ponorogo is low compared to Madiun city, particularly South Madiun, which has a serious and ongoing problem with *silat* violence. Yet *silat* culture appears to be equally strong in all three areas, which are culturally similar. Why so much violence in one place and so little in the next?

Again, the qualitative fieldwork helps to provide an explanation. *Silat* violence in Ponorogo, for example, has subsided in the last few years, apparently due largely to the efforts of the District Police Chief who in 2001 began holding regular meetings between *silat* group leaders, who agreed to hand troublemakers over to police for prosecution.[82] This approach was successful because *silat* groups are highly organized and hierarchical, and once senior *silat* group figures took ownership of the problem they were able to use their influence within the system. This example—and the newspaper data—shows that where local leaders and/or institutions start to play a positive role in dealing with conflict, conflicts can be successfully managed. In Madiun district, where group differences continue to spark conflict resulting in massive material damage, it is clear that the key to reducing levels of violence lies in halting cycles of violence between groups. The Ponorogo district example would be a good place to start.

In Madura, by contrast, conflict is more personal, and interventions must focus on strengthening inter-personal mediating parties, or perhaps strengthening law enforcement institutions to act more effectively as a deterrent. The next section analyzes newspaper reporting of mediating or intervening parties involved in conflict, in order to gain some clues as to how violent conflict can be better mediated or resolved.

4. Variations in Levels of Violence: The Role of Intermediaries

A number of interesting points emerge. First, in the vast majority of violent conflict and violent vigilante cases, the police are reported as being involved.[83] This is interesting, given that prior research has shown that in many cases of conflict (and especially of vigilante conflict) the police play a marginal and even tokenistic role.[84] During interviews with journalists from East Java, all stated that violence, and particularly fatalities, are certain to attract the attention of police. Nevertheless, this attention more often

---

[81] One journalist expressed the opinion that such factors were more important than any cultural basis, and that *silat* labels were used to justify a general propensity to violence.

[82] Another theory goes that the District Head, Markum Singodimedjo, himself an honorary member of the SH Terate *silat* group, deliberately stirred up *silat* violence in preparation for the 1999 District Head Election, in order for him to present himself as the strong man capable of handling the situation. According to this theory, *silat* conflict was 'allowed' to die down once he had been elected (Probo 2003).

[83] The high rate of intervention by district government in non-violent cases reflects the high proportion of non-violent disputes that were over administrative issues and, particularly, which related to government management, services and procedures.

[84] See, for example, Barron and Madden (2004) on Lampung.

than not comes *after* the conflict incident has taken place, sometimes long after; the qualitative fieldwork turned up several examples of police deliberately arriving late to the scene of an incident, allowing actors to disperse and avoid arrest.[85] Indeed, the police were only deemed to have been successful in resolving the problem in 20.7% of cases; for vigilante/revenge conflicts, this rate was even lower (19.0%).[86] While the police are usually present at some point in violent cases, their intervention is rarely substantive or decisive.

Table 9 summarizes the different actors who were involved as intermediaries. Here, we also look at the data on non-violent disputes, contrasting rates of intervention in all (violent and non-violent) conflict, violent conflict, and the violent vigilantism/retribution datasets. Comparing who intervened in both non-violent and violent conflicts gives us some idea of which interveners characteristically become involved in which types of conflict, and particularly the level of severity a conflict must reach before different intermediaries, like the police, intervene. The table gives the percentage of cases in which certain mediating parties became involved.[87]

Table 9: Intervening Parties in Conflicts: East Java, 2001-2003 (%)

	All conflict	Violent conflict	Violent vigilantism
Formal Security Apparatus			
Police	37.4	86.1	87.5
Courts	7.3	5.2	4.4
Military	0.4	0.5	0.3
Government			
Village (village head)	3.4	7.1	7.2
BPD (village council)	0.1	0.0	0.0
Sub-district	2.7	0.8	0.9
District	38.1	3.8	1.3
Province	0.8	0.0	0.0
National	0.3	0.0	0.0
Informal			
Family of Actor	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adat (traditional) leader	0.0	0.0	0.0
Group leader	2.6	0.8	0.6
Other community/ religious leader	1.4	1.9	1.6
Passerby/citizen	1.3	4.6	4.7
Other			
Informal Security Group	0.1	0.3	0.3
KDP Figure	0.1	0.0	0.0
NGO	0.3	0.0	0.0

Source: KDP & CCN dataset.

---

[85] See KDP & CCN case studies: Probo (2004) 'When Brothers are No Longer Friendly: A Fight Between the SH Terate and SH Winongo Martial Arts Schools in Dusun Sampung Kidul, Desa Sampung'; Rasyid (2004a) 'Mob Violence: A House is Vandalized During a Campursari performance to the West of Sampung Market'; Anggraini (2004) 'Night of Rhythm, Night of Destruction: Even the General Community is caught up in the current of the *Silat* Group Conflict'. These case studies will soon be available on-line at www.conflictanddevelopment.org

[86] Researchers attempted to code the success of the intervening actors for each reported incident. For all violent cases, the police were seen as being very successful in just 2.3% of cases, moderately successful in 18.4% of cases, not very successful in 67.4% of cases, and not at all successful in 5.9% of cases. For vigilante conflicts, these figures were: very successful (2.3%), moderately successful (16.7%), not very successful (68.8%), and unsuccessful (6.5%), with it being unclear in the remaining 5.7% of cases.

[87] Researchers recorded up to three intermediary parties for each conflict. The figures in Table 9 show the percentage of conflicts where the given intermediaries made an appearance. Thus the percentages are calculated out of a potential total of 300%. Because researchers did not always identify three mediators, the cumulative percentages are actually lower. Those cases where intermediaries were deemed to be not relevant or non-existent have been dropped from the table.

Second, very few of the cases appear to go to court. This is despite the fact that court cases are generally reported by local newspapers.[88] While the police were involved at some point in 86.1% of all violent conflicts, and 87.5% of vigilante conflicts, only 5.2% of violent conflicts went to court, with an even smaller proportion of vigilante cases doing so. There are a number of explanations for this low rate of involvement. First, local corruption means that cases are often not taken to the prosecutors. Second, the police and courts are extremely under-funded; the resources to pursue a case are often not there (Baare 2004; World Bank 2004). Finally, there is evidence from the qualitative fieldwork that police often see their role as extending to that of court and jury.

Third, the data appears to show that very few cases are addressed by non-state actors. Only 5.8% of all conflicts, 7.2% of violent conflicts, and 7.2% of violent vigilante conflicts were reported as involving intervention by such actors. This low rate seems strange, given that the village-level fieldwork showed the large role that informal community leaders play in dealing with local problems (Diprose 2004).[89] However, the same field data shows that local leaders and informal actors are more likely to play an intervening role in small, localized problems. These issues are less likely to be picked up by newspapers because in most cases they are likely to be less serious and do not result in significant impacts. Where cases are more serious, they are likely to be passed on to higher levels (state) actors who are deemed to have jurisdiction over these issues (Barron, Smith, and Woolcock 2004).[90] It is often only when problems reach this level that they are reported in newspapers.

We could speculate that the absence of reported involvement of informal actors in fact confirms their efficacy; emerging conflicts successfully resolved by local mediators are less likely to erupt into violence and hence attract newspaper attention. Yet, at the same time, the qualitative data points to the limited forms (and particularly scope) of conflict that local informal leaders can deal with. Assessing which interveners work best in which situation requires a deeper understanding of the nature of local conflict—and conflict mediation capacity—in different locations.

5. Summary

Where violence does occur in East Java, it is not uniform. Different forms of violence occur in different regions (and districts within regions), and each is associated with a particular form of conflict impact. Thus conflict-related fatalities were almost exclusively associated with the Madurese districts, while damage to property was rife in the Ponorogo cluster. Certain, specific types of conflict endemic in certain areas dictate these characteristic impact profiles. As such, successful interventions to prevent these specific types of conflict would reduce levels of violence significantly.

The forms of violent conflict in particular areas have a cultural basis. Local cultures exist legitimizing different responses to conflicts over different issues. However, variation in conflict levels suggests that local norms to conflict can be changed in positive directions, and that effective intervention/mediation can limit the extent to which conflicts become violent. In the Ponorogo cluster, and in Madiun district particularly, where violence often has a group basis, halting cycles of violence means targeting these groups. Effective action by local leaders can reduce violent significantly. In contrast, in Madura more attention needs to be focused on individuals, and in changing structural incentives to ensure individuals do not resort to violence. Everywhere, it is evident that potential mediating powers and institutions, such

---

[88] According to local journalists in both provinces, the courts are one key source of stories. Court cases were generally deemed to have high news value, and hence most court cases will be reported in local media. In addition, editors and journalists from all sources emphasized that they followed stories "to their conclusion".

[89] The research showed that villagers can identify the most appropriate person to deal with most types of problems, and that in many cases these are local-level (informal) actors.

[90] This is less the case in Flores, as we will see in the next section.

as the police, need to be strengthened and legitimized in order to successfully intervene to prevent violence.

III. CONFLICT IN NTT: FLORES

1. Conflict and its Impacts in Flores

There are fewer violent conflicts in Flores than in the East Javanese research districts. However, as the research districts in Flores are also far less populous than those in East Java, the per capita rate of violent conflict works out to be dramatically higher in Flores. As in East Java, particular forms of conflict in specific places are responsible for a large proportion of the impacts of violence in Flores.[91]

Table 10: Violent Conflict Incidence Per Capita by District: Flores, 2001-2003

District	No. violent conflicts	No. deaths	Total population	No. violent conflicts per capita (100,000)
Manggarai	56	52	631,211	9
Flores Timur	50	22	292,358	17
Ende	44	15	234,583	19
Sikka	45	21	265,962	17
Ngada	32	7	228,526	14
TOTAL	*227*	*117*	*1,652,640*	*14*

Sources: KDP & CCN dataset (conflict data); BPS (2002b) (population data)

The per capita rate of violent conflict is twice as high in Flores as in East Java: 14 violent conflicts per 100,000 people in Flores, compared with seven in East Java. The seven densely populated East Javanese districts have a combined population of 5.36 million, more than three times the population of the five districts on Flores. Compare, for example, Flores Timur (50 violent conflicts, population 292,000) with Sumenep (53 violent conflicts, population 641,000), or Ngada (32 violent conflicts, population 228,000) with Pamekasan (33 violent conflicts, population 699,000). Manggarai has a population roughly equal to Pamekasan, Sumenep and to Magetan, yet it out-scores all three East Java districts in terms of frequency of violent conflict. Flores Timur, with its relatively small population of just under 300,000, records more violent conflicts than Pamekasan, Sampang, Sumenep and Magetan, all twice the district's size.

As was the case in East Java, there are significant differences in patterns of conflict between the different districts. Manggarai, for example, has the highest number of violent conflicts (56). Relative to its population, however, Manggarai (with almost three times the population of any of the other districts on Flores) has a lower level of violent conflict. Ende was in fact the most prone to violent conflict (19 per 100,000), narrowly ahead of Flores Timur and Sikka (17).

Yet, while there is relatively more violent conflict in other districts in Flores, the impacts of the violence taking place in Manggarai are disproportionably great. As Table 11 shows, conflicts in Manggarai

---

[91]At the end of 2003 there were seven districts in Flores, namely (west to east): Manggarai Barat (West Manggarai), Manggarai, Ngada, Ende, Sikka, Flores Timur (East Flores) and Lembata. Manggarai Barat and Lembata are 'new' districts, created as the result of the re-drawing of administrative boundaries (*pemekaran*). In mid-2003, Manggarai was divided in two, becoming Manggarai Barat and Manggarai; Lembata split from Flores Timur in 2001. As the Manggarai Barat and Lembata districts did not exist for the earlier parts of the period over which data was collected, the following analysis will be disaggregated by the original five districts; i.e., Manggarai, Ngada, Ende, Sikka and Flores Timur.

account for the most deaths (52, 44.4% of all those in Flores) and the highest amount of damaged property (86 properties, 47.3%).

Table 11: Conflict Impacts by District: Flores, 2001-2003

District	No. deaths	No. injuries	No. properties damaged
Manggarai	52	78	86
Flores Timur	22	101	27
Ende	15	49	24
Sikka	21	40	24
Ngada	7	45	21
TOTAL	*117*	*313*	*182*

Source: KDP & CCN dataset.

Bearing in mind that Manggarai recorded the lowest rate of violent conflict per capita, it is clear that when conflict does occur in Manggarai it has very serious impacts. Indeed, for every 100 violent conflicts in Manggarai, 93 people are killed, more than twice the rate of any other district in Flores.[92] Even more strikingly, Manggarai averaged 154 damaged properties for every 100 violent conflicts, compared to 66 in Ngada, 55 in Ende, 54 in Flores Timur, and 53 in Sikka.

2. Forms of Violent Conflict in NTT

Analysis of the East Java data in the previous section demonstrated the marked differences in the characteristics of conflict between the two clusters around Ponorogo and Pamekasan districts. Adding this third cluster, Flores, a world away from East Java in terms of geography, culture, ethnicity and religion, further demonstrates the variance of violent conflict pattern by location.[93]

Superficially, there are a number of similarities between the three clusters in the dominant forms of violent conflict. Figure 7 shows the number of violent conflicts recorded in each of the five categories as a percentage of the whole in each cluster.

As in East Java, vigilantism/retribution conflict is of clear concern in Flores, responsible for the most incidents of violence. However, while East Javanese violence was almost exclusively a product of conflicts in this category, in Flores 26% of violent conflict stems from resource conflict. In addition, conflicts over administrative and 'other' issues account for a larger proportion of violence in Flores than in either the Ponorogo or Pamekasan clusters.

---

[92] The rates for the other districts are: Sikka (47 deaths for every 100 violent conflicts), Flores Timur (44 per 100 violent conflicts), Ende (34 per 100), and Ngada (22 per 100).

[93] As noted earlier, the two provinces surveyed were chosen to be as different from each other as possible in terms of dominant religion, ethnic diversity, provincial development and geographic location

Figure 7: Dominant Forms of Violent Conflict by Cluster: Flores, 2001-2003

Legend: Resources ☐ Administration ■ Position & Influence ☐ Vigilantism & Retribution ☐ Other ■
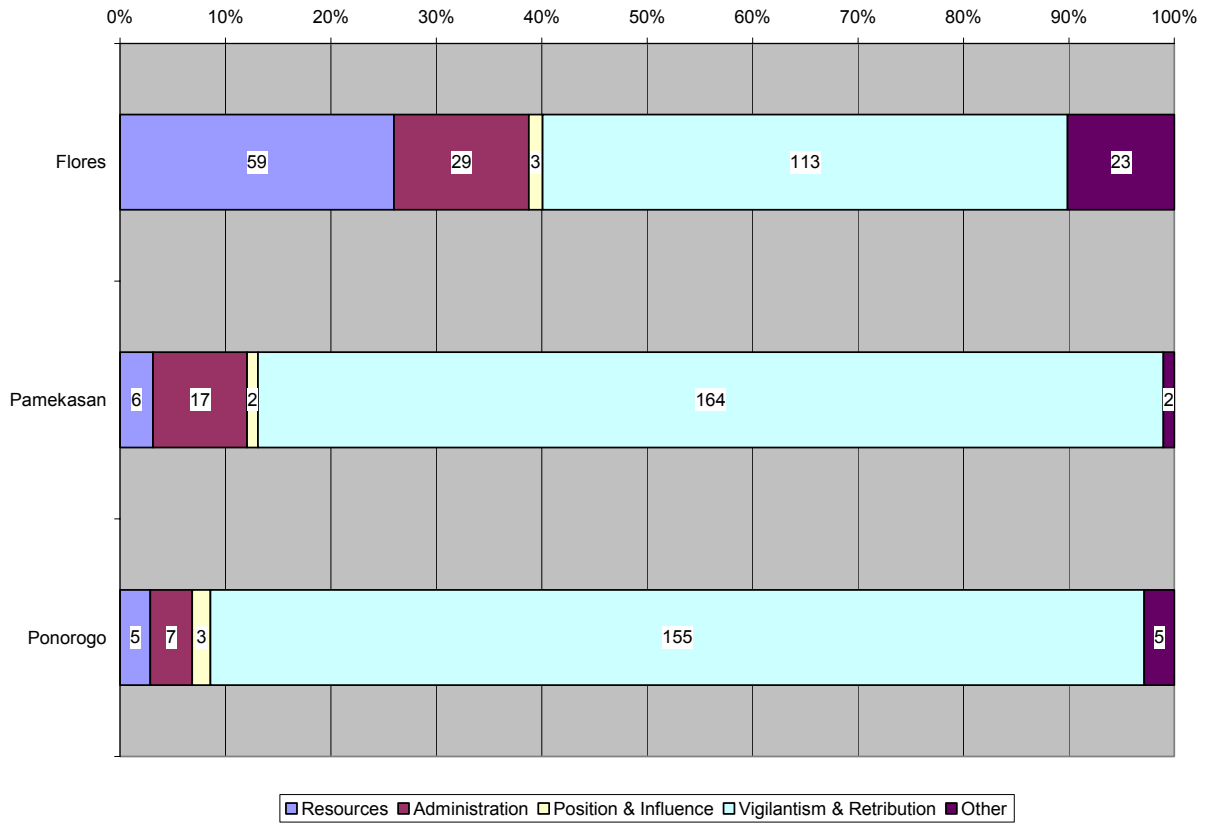
Source: KDP & CCN dataset

While the high number of vigilantism/revenge-related conflicts and their associated impacts is alarming in both Flores and East Java, the presence of so many different forms of violent conflict in Flores gives cause for greater concern than does the vigilantism-heavy picture of conflict in East Java. Vigilante/revenge conflicts are, almost by definition, violent, acted out as public lynchings, vandalism of property, and personal duels. That violence in the East Javanese districts is largely confined to this inherently violent conflict type is positive in the sense that it indicates other types of conflict are not erupting into violence. In Flores, a wider range of disputes are more likely to lead to violence, including issues relating to administration and procedure that almost never result in violence in East Java. Not only then does Flores experience more violence per capita than East Java, but the factors to be addressed are seemingly more diverse.

Variation between Districts in Flores

As in East Java, the forms of violent conflict also vary by district (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Violent Conflict Types by District: Flores, 2001-2003
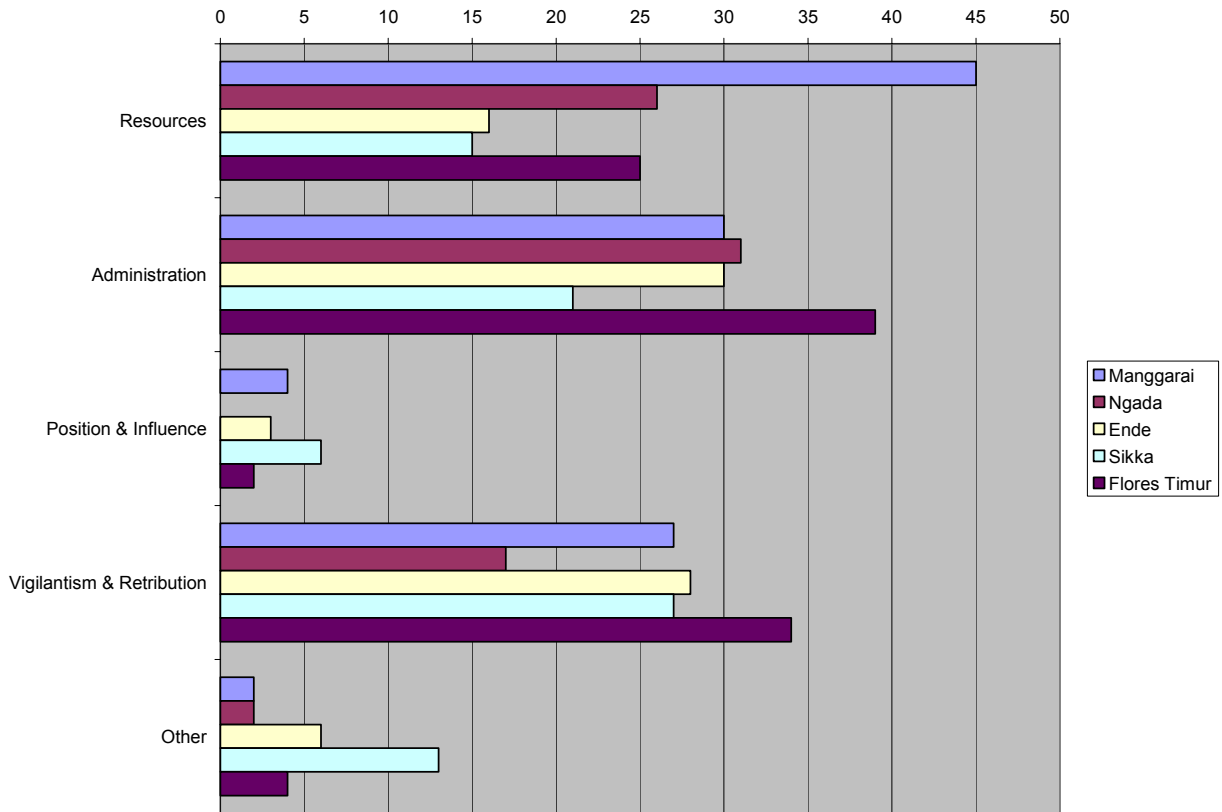
Source: KDP & CCN dataset

Vigilantism/retribution conflicts are the most common form of violent conflict in four of the districts: Flores Timur, Sikka, Ende and Ngada. The exception is Manggarai, where resource conflicts outnumber vigilante ones. While every Flores district recorded greater or equal numbers of violent resource conflicts than were reported in either East Java clusters (6 in total in Pamekasan, 4 in Ponorogo), it is Manggarai that dominates this category. A third interesting point is the high number of 'other' conflicts occurring in Sikka (12). These are made up of domestic violence conflicts (6), other intra-family conflicts (5), and one residual conflict not classifiable under other categories.[94]

As in East Java, a few forms of geographically-concentrated conflict are responsible for the bulk of different types of impacts in different districts (see Table 12). The impacts associated with these specific conflict types are often disproportionately high to the frequency of these incidents.

---

[94] Domestic violence conflicts, and those related to perceived sexual indiscretion, are explored in more depth in Satu and Barron (forthcoming). These appear to be heavily concentrated in Sikka compared to other Florenese districts. One survey conducted by a NGO in 2000-2001, found that nine out of ten women had been victims of domestic or other violence, 600 women out of 650 women covered in the survey (cited in Baare 2004).

Table 12: Conflict Types Associated with High Impacts by District: Flores, 2001-2003

District	Fatalities (% impact type across NTT) (# fatalities)			Injuries (% impact type across NTT) (# injuries)		Property damage (% impact type across NTT) (# properties damaged)		
	> 10%	5-10%	3-5%	>5%	3-5%	>10%	5-10%	3-5%
Manggarai	Resource (communal) **30**	Vigilante (witchdoctor) **7**	Resource (natural, public) **5** Resource (natural, private) **4**	Resource (communal) **24**	Vigilante (witchdoctor) **12**	Resource (communal) **74**		Vigilante (identity clash) **7**
Ngada					Vigilante (other) **13**	Resource (communal) **19**		
Ende			Resource (communal) **4**	-			Resource (communal) **15**	
Sikka		Other (domestic violence) **6**	Vigilante (sexual indiscretion) **4** Vigilante (face loss) **4**				Vigilante (other) **8** Other (unclassified) **7**	
Flores Timur		Resource (communal) **7**		Resource (communal): **19** Vigilante (theft) **17** Vigilante (identity clash) **17**	Vigilante (sexual indiscretion) **11**		Resource (communal): **10**	

Source: KDP & CCN dataset

The point most apparent from the table is that land conflict, and particularly communal land conflict, is the most pressing problem in Flores, most notably in Manggarai. Communal land conflicts in Manggarai alone account for a quarter of fatalities recorded across all of Flores (25.6% or 30 deaths), and much of the damage to property (40.7% or 74 buildings damaged). When communal land conflicts take place in Manggarai, they have phenomenally high impacts: every 10 violent conflicts result in 27 deaths, 21 injuries, and 67 damaged properties. Successful prevention or management of such conflicts in Manggarai would play a significant role in reducing the impacts of violent conflict in Flores. Manggarai was also the only district to record significant fatalities associated with other sub-types of resource conflict, namely over individual or state-owned natural resources. All in all, communal land conflict alone accounts for 35% of fatalities, 18% of injuries and 75% of damage to property across Flores. Sikka, where vigilante and domestic violence conflicts are both more common and have greater impact than land conflicts, is the exception.

As in East Java, vigilante and revenge conflicts are responsible for a great deal of violent conflict on Flores and the specific types vary somewhat from place to place. While deaths, injuries and property damage did occur as the result of revenge-motivated violence, they were distributed across a number of different forms of vigilantism. Attacks on witchdoctors (*dukun santet*) were a significant problem in Manggarai, while Sikka recorded significant levels of violence associated with vigilante responses to perceived sexual indiscretion and face loss. Interestingly, although this was the most frequently occurring conflict type overall, only Sikka and Ngada had high property damage and injury rates associated with 'other' unclassified vigilante action, while vigilante responses to theft accounted for a significant number

of injures in Flores Timur.[95]   While common institutional factors (e.g. weak rule of law) explain the presence of vigilantism across Flores, localized factors determine the particular form it takes in a given location.

3. Forms of Resource and Vigilante Conflict: Actors and Locations

Clearly, resource and vigilante/revenge disputes deserve further scrutiny as the most problematic forms of conflict in Flores. Closer examination of the specific characteristics of each goes some way towards identifying ways to limit violent conflicts of these types.

Forms of Resource Conflict in Flores

Most land and natural resource conflicts in Flores have a group rather than individual basis, which at least partially explains why they lead to so many deaths, injuries and fatalities. As Figure 9 shows, in every district but Sikka, the majority of resource conflicts occur between two groups. While most conflicts in East Java and NTT do not have an ethnic basis, 85% of communal land conflicts were between ethnic groups.[96]

Figure 9: Impacts by Actor Combinations for Violent Resource Conflicts: Flores, 2001-2003
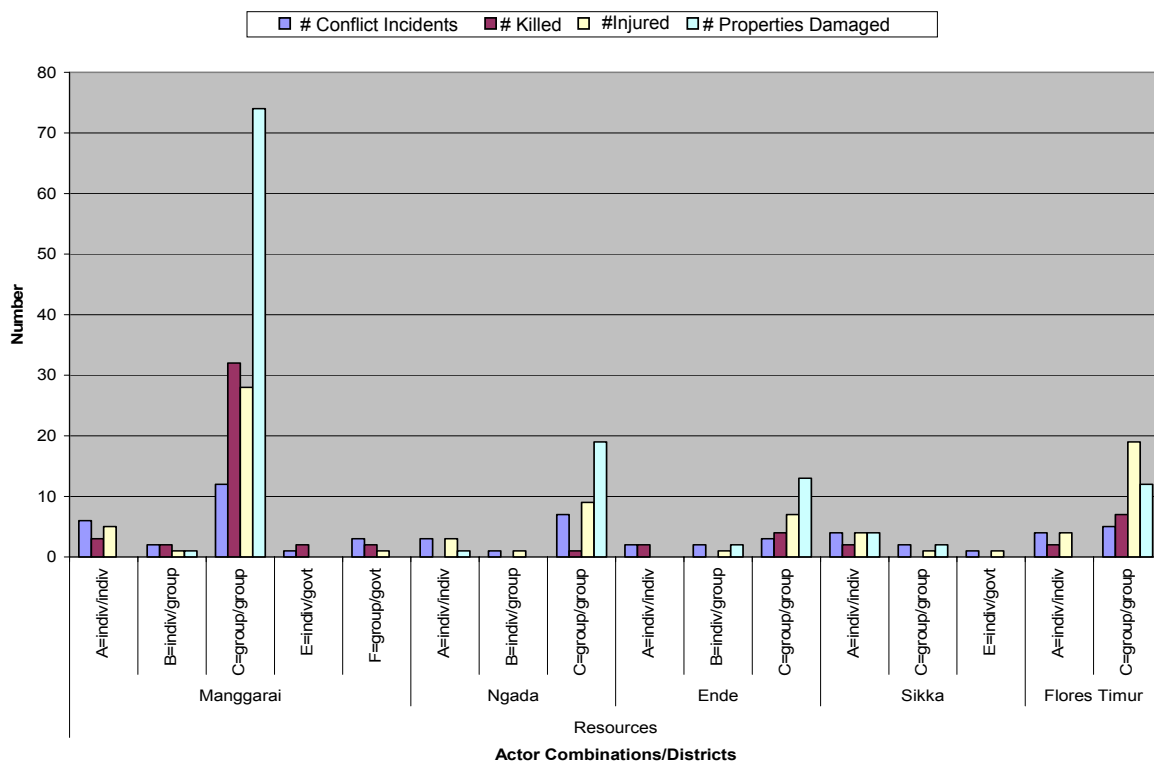
Source: KDP & CCN dataset

---

[95] The two anomalous conflict types recorded were domestic violence, which accounted for a high number of fatalities in Sikka, and disputes over village boundaries in Flores Timur.

[96] For each reported incident, the research team tried to establish whether a particular identity cleavage helped explain the conflict. Cleavages could be ethnic, religious, or secular (i.e. political). In East Java, cleavages were not seen as relevant in 98% of violent cases; in Flores, this was true for 79.9% of violent conflicts. However, ethnicity was a factor in 85.2% of communal land cases in Flores (compared with 14.0% of cases across the Flores sample).

Group conflicts are more likely to have larger impacts for a number of reasons. First, and most simply, they involve larger numbers of people. Second, there needs to be some basis for group mobilization. The qualitative fieldwork showed that, more often than not, a key mechanism by which groups were mobilized was the emphasis by local leaders of the difference between one group and another.[97] In turn, this emphasis on the essentiality of group difference can cause conflicts to endure and/or escalate (see Box 3).

Access to and control over communal land is a pressing issue in all districts in Flores, with the exception of Sikka, and conflict over resources most frequently takes communal, inter-group form in these four districts.

Box 3: Communal Land Conflict in Manggarai

A large proportion of land in Manggarai, and in many other parts of Flores, is held communally and governed by the traditional (*adat*) system. In such cases, land title, boundaries, and usage rights are not formally (state) mapped or codified. Instead, boundaries are usually defined by geographic features such as field boundaries, rivers, roads, avenues of trees and often changeable features. These boundaries can be altered over the years in response to changing needs and, to some extent, power balances. Sikka, where most land is privately held, is the exception in Flores.

Traditionally, *adat* elders were the repositories of knowledge for traditional land boundaries, and can arbitrate in disputes. In general, each *adat* authority knows where the borders lie. In Manggarai, where so much violent land conflict was recorded in this study, maps (*Kar*) showing borders, names and measurements of each piece of communal land were held by the local King of Tamur in the early twentieth century. However, during the *Bupati* (District Head) Gaspar Ehok's rule, this map was burnt, some allege in an act of arson. As such, no written record exists for much of the land in Manggarai.

In addition, *adat* systems, knowledge and authority has been under attack since the Dutch era (Mahur 2003), and several journalists interviewed as part of this research stated that the New Order further dismantled traditional *adat* structures. Traditional methods of intervention and conflict resolution have been undermined. As the state—and accompanying ideas of "modernity"—have penetrated to the level of the village, an ontological market place has developed were different groups make appeals based on different normative systems of justice (see Bowen 2003). This can result in competing claims for resources such as land, leading to conflict (Prior 2003; Clark 2005).

The *adat* (traditional) land system, where land belongs to the clan rather than the individual member of the clan, also has the result of elevating individual claims over land into group claims. This means that land conflict occurs more frequently, because a dispute over *any part of the land*, however marginal, is likely to result in conflict. It also means that when conflict does occur, it is likely to take a more escalated form in terms of the number of participants and hence the number of deaths/injuries. Further, by conflating identity with claims for resources, participants are less likely to see the outcome as negotiable. As a result, conflict between groups and/or with institutions over communal land is the most deadly and destructive form of violence in Flores (see Satu and Barron forthcoming). In Sikka, in contrast, where most land is individually held, resource conflicts tend to remain smaller and are less violent.

The level at which conflicts take place helps to explain their impacts. As Figure 10 shows, in Manggarai, resource conflicts occur most frequently within villages. However, higher rates of fatalities, injuries and property damage are associated with inter-village conflicts.[98]

---

[97] We explore the idea of the 'dynamics of difference' in greater depth in Barron, Smith, and Woolcock (2004, pp. 26-29). There is a vast literature on group mobilization. See McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001) for a good starting point.

[98] The tradition of *perang tanding* or all-out battle in Manggarai goes some way toward explaining this. In Manggarai, entire village populations sometimes wage war over land, with the result that large parts of villages are heavily vandalized or burned to the ground. These clashes are large-scale (group/group) and result in particularly

Figure 10: Impacts by Level for Violent Resource Conflicts: Flores, 2001-2003
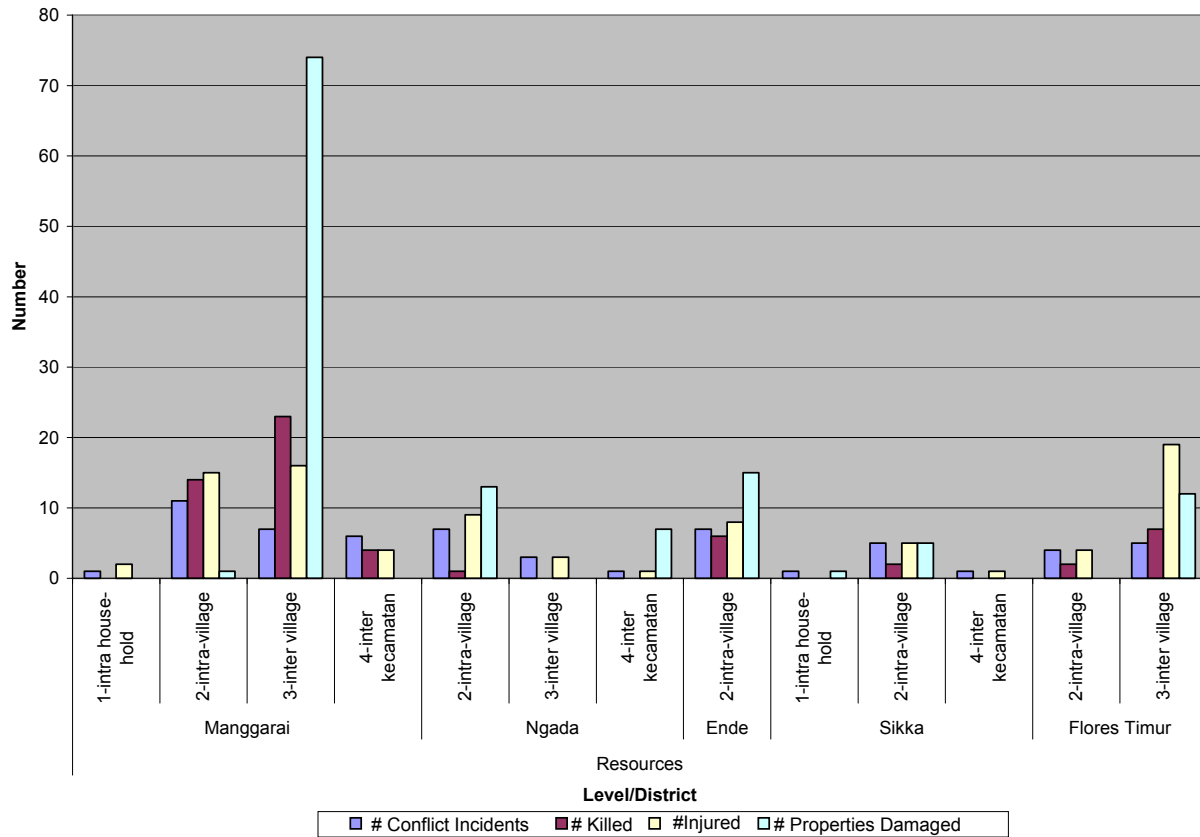
Source: KDP & CCN dataset

In both Manggarai and Flores Timur, greater impacts are reported from inter-village resource conflicts than from those within villages. In other districts in Flores, this does not hold true. In Ende, there were no reported cases of inter-village conflict over land and natural resources and in Sikka and Ngada intra-village resource conflicts resulted in both higher rates of violent conflict and higher impacts. Overall, though, it is clear that resource conflicts are much more serious at the inter-village level than they are intra-village (see Table 13).

Table 13: Impacts of Resource Conflicts by Level: Flores, 2001-2003

Level of resource conflict	No. deaths per 10 violent conflicts	No. injuries per 10 violent conflicts	No. properties damaged per 10 violent conflicts
Intra-village	7	12	10
Inter-village	20	25	57

Source: KDP & CCN dataset

Forms of Vigilantism in Flores

The vigilante violence profile in Flores perhaps most closely resembles the Ponorogo cluster, as the three most frequently occurring violent vigilante conflicts stemmed from 'other' unclassified acts, perceived

---

high impacts. Inter-village wars may be less common than intra-village clashes, but they tend to be much more dramatic where they do occur.

humiliation or face loss, and identity clashes.[99] However, in contrast to Ponorogo, in most parts of Flores the perpetrators and victims of vigilante action tend to be individuals. This was the case in Ende, Ngada, Sikka and Flores Timur. In general, these conflicts are personal in nature, between individuals or families. However, as Figure 11 shows, Manggarai is the exception, with most vigilante conflicts involving at least one group. This reflects the particularly high number of identity clash conflicts taking place in that district,[100] and is likely to be related to the broader phenomenon of resource conflict between groups with competing identities. It suggests that group action may be the way in which grievances are expressed and disputes settled across a range of different conflict types.

Figure 11: Impacts by Actor Combination for Violent Vigilante/Revenge Conflicts: Flores, 2001-2003
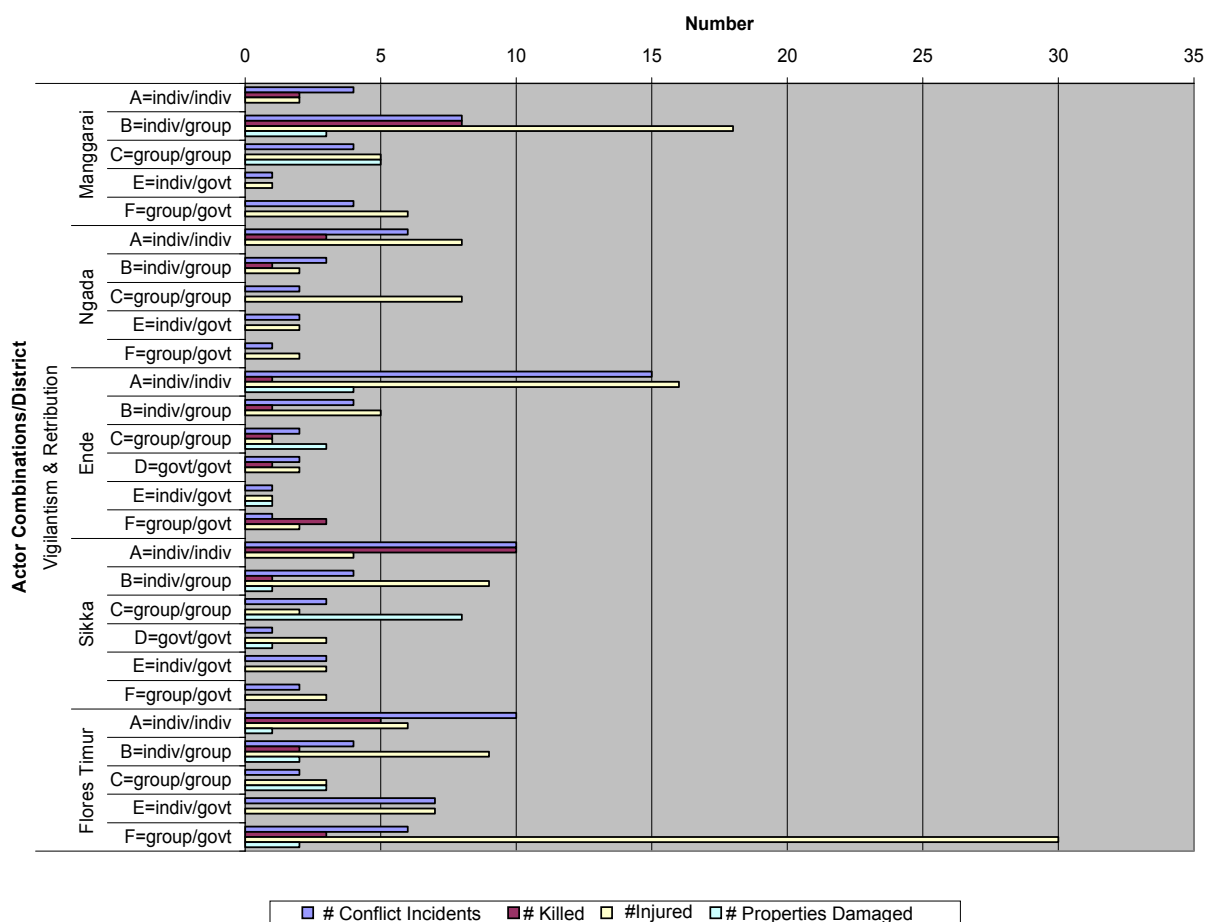
Source: KDP & CCN dataset

High numbers of violent conflict incidents correlate with high fatality figures. Conflicts between individuals account for the most deaths in Ende, Ngada, Flores Timur and Sikka, while inter-group vigilante conflicts are the most deadly in Manggarai. However, Flores Timur, Ngada and Sikka record higher numbers of injuries and properties damaged in association with other actor combinations. Most notably, in Flores Timur a particularly high number of injuries are associated with group versus government conflicts (see Box 4). In Ngada and Sikka the group/group combination is also prominent in

---

[99] However, the fourth most frequently occurring type of vigilante violence, response to sexual indiscretion, only featured prominently in the Pamekasan cluster.

[100] 9 of 25 identity clash conflicts in Flores occurred in Manggarai.

terms of violence: in Ngada, injuries associated with this combination are high; in Sikka, property damage is inordinately high.[101]

Box 4: Police as Violent Actors in Flores Timur and Flores at Large

The high levels of violence associated with conflict between a group and the government in Flores Timur is a function of the involvement of the police as a primary actor in many conflicts. Five of the six incidents of group/government conflict in Flores Timur were in fact group/police conflicts, where police either instigated the violence or were themselves attacked. Four of those cases involved the police shooting civilians, either because they were suspected of stealing or for reasons unknown. The remaining two involved full-scale clashes between police and civilian groups. It was these conflicts that caused the high numbers of injuries that make up the spike in Figure 11: eleven injuries in one case, 16 in the other. Aside from the level of distrust and enmity between communities and security forces that this would seem to indicate, these kinds of clashes are of particular concern due to their large violent impacts.

Group/police violence is not restricted to Flores Timur. There were two incidents in Manggarai, two in Ngada, and one each in Sikka and Ende. An even larger incident took place in March 2004 (outside the period of the survey). In this case, the police opened fire on protesting villagers in Ruteng, Manggarai. Six villagers were killed, and 70 injured, with three police officers also injured. The case is currently under investigation from *Komnas Ham* (the National Commission for Human Rights). Violent incidents between civilians and the military were also recorded: two in Manggarai, one in Sikka. Most of these conflicts were categorized as being revenge/vigilante conflicts, with case descriptions ranging from "Youth beaten by police for showing disrespect" and "Suspect accused of attacking police officer beaten in custody", to the more general "Police versus civilian clash".

Conflicts between police and individuals, which come under the 'individual/government' actor combination, were also alarmingly frequent, and again the problem was most serious in Flores Timur. In that district there were six recorded cases of police assaulting civilians for such offenses as refusing to give the police free beer and criticizing a police officer for not wearing a motorcycle helmet. Four similar incidents were reported in Sikka, one in Manggarai, and one in Ngada. Assaults on civilians by military personnel were also recorded in Manggarai and Ende.

In East Java, we suggested that police indirectly contributed to conflict through their inaction. In Flores, police have crossed the line from inactive observers to conflict participants, becoming involved in conflict as first and second party actors. At the same time, the next section explains that police in Flores seemed to resolve conflict more successfully and more frequently than their East Java counterparts. Further analysis of the role police play in conflict in Flores is necessary. Clearly, though, the few examples described in Box 4 above demonstrate that police and military personnel need to learn how to build better relationships with the communities they work in, particularly in areas like Flores where law enforcement officers are often posted from elsewhere. This could take the form of training in conflict management and community policing, with the aim of decreasing violent interventions as well as increasing public trust in these institutions.

---

[101] In fact, it is difficult to draw broad conclusions about the types and rates of violence associated with most actor combinations in each district because the numbers of conflicts in question are quite low, in most cases less than five over the three-year period. For example, the relatively large number of injuries associated with inter-group conflict in Ngada mentioned above comes from just two conflicts. It is thus difficult to conclude by extension that inter-group conflicts in that area are always violent. The small number of conflicts in combination with higher levels of violence recorded in this newspaper survey may reflect newspaper editorial policy rather than absolute figures; interviews with journalists and editors in Flores indicated that conflicts resulting in only a few minor injuries or properties damaged are unlikely to receive newspaper coverage, whereas non-fatal violence on a larger scale may. By this logic, there may well be many more group conflicts with smaller impacts that go unreported. See the discussion of newspaper editorial policy in the next section.

4. The Role of Intermediaries

Table 14 presents the different intermediaries involved in managing conflicts in Flores.[102]

Table 14: Intervening Parties in Conflicts: Flores, 2001-2003 (%)

	All conflict	Violent conflict	Violent resource conflict	Violent vigilante conflict
Formal Security Apparatus				
Police	50.1	74.9	83.1	73.5
Courts	18.1	18.5	11.9	18.6
Army	2.9	5.3	6.8	5.3
Government				
Village	7.5	8.3	8.5	6.2
BPD (village council)	0.9	0.4	0.0	0.9
Sub-district	12.6	10.6	16.9	8.8
District	41.7	29.0	50.8	15.0
Province	2.4	1.76	0.0	0.0
National	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.0
Informal				
Family of Actor	3.3	6.2	0.0	10.6
Adat (traditional) leader	1.8	3.1	3.4	3.5
Group leader	1.8	0.9	1.7	0.9
Other community/ religious leader	3.1	3.5	3.4	4.4
Passerby/citizen	1.3	2.6	5.1	2.7
Other				
Informal Security Group	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
KDP Figure	3.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
NGO	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Source: KDP & CCN dataset.

As in East Java, police were the most likely party to become involved in a violent conflict as mediator, recorded as present in 74.9% of violent conflicts, 73.5% of violent vigilante conflicts, and 83.1% of violent resource conflicts. Police intervention in conflicts was also deemed to have a higher rate of success in Flores compared to East Java. In Flores, police were 'moderately successful' in resolving 69.8% of violent conflicts.

The courts were significantly more likely to be involved than in East Java; they played a role in 18.6% of violent conflicts, compared with 5.2% of such cases in East Java. Where the courts were involved, the problem was completely resolved in a third (32.6%) of cases, and court intervention deemed 'moderately successful' in slightly more (41.3%).

One significant difference with East Java is the role that various levels of government play in conflict resolution. This reflects the more varied nature of violent conflict in Flores. While the vigilante/revenge conflicts that account for the majority of violent incidents in East Java are usually of a small scale and are criminal in nature, meaning that, theoretically at least, they can be left to the police to handle, resource conflicts, particularly those resulting in mass action, require higher level management and often political solutions. This is evident from the data: district-level government, which has been vested with significant powers and authority post-decentralization, was involved in 50.8% of violent resource conflicts compared to 15.0% of violent vigilante/revenge cases. Overall, 29.0% of violent conflicts were brought to the

---

[102] Again, because up to three interveners were coded for each incident, the figures are out of a potential 300%. See footnote 83.

district government for attention, a high figure when compared with East Java where no violent conflict cases were reported as being managed at this level. The sub-district and village level government reported similar rates of involvement in violent cases (10.6% and 8.3%, respectively), with higher rates of sub-district involvement in violent resource conflicts (16.9%) and lower rates for vigilante conflicts (8.8%). Again, these levels are significantly higher than in East Java.

Traditional *adat* institutions, which in the past played a role in mediating local conflicts, were weakened and divested of power under the New Order with their role taken on by formal state actors (various levels of government and the security apparatus). As a result, intervention by informal mediators, even in traditional disputes, was relatively uncommon.[103] Families of actors were involved in intervention in 6.2% of violent cases; traditional, group and other community group leaders were only involved in a very few cases. Similarly, vigilantism was rarely dealt with by the informal sector, although 10.6% of cases did involve members of actors' families. Interestingly, informal parties virtually never became mediators in resource conflicts, the highest level associated with ordinary citizens or passersby (5.1%).

5. Summary

In Flores, as in East Java, specific forms of conflict and violence are associated with disproportionate impacts in particular districts. As was the case in the Ponorogo and Pamekasan clusters, vigilante conflict was the most frequently occurring form of violence. However, in Flores the impacts of vigilantism are eclipsed by those that stem from natural resource conflicts, particularly conflicts over communal land. There is thus significant variation in the predominant forms of violence between Flores, Ponorogo, and Madura.

Violence also varies in form between districts in Flores. While having the lowest per capita rate of conflict and violent conflict in Flores, Manggarai district suffers disproportionate impacts from conflict with 44% of deaths in Flores and 47% of property damage recorded in the district. This appears to be because conflicts (and especially land conflicts) in Manggarai tend to have a group basis, and hence involve more people than conflicts in other areas of Flores. Examples from the qualitative fieldwork show the extent to which cultural symbols are utilized and help drive the mobilization of groups for violence in Manggarai. Here cultural norms interact with the presence of multiple, and incompatible, systems of legal reasoning and enforcement, meaning that both the scope of opportunities and the motivations for conflictual action are large.

The participation of the police and military actors in violence is also of concern. While the police and courts play a larger role in conflict mediation than in Flores, in many cases they are also primary actors in conflict. Effective interventions targeting group natural resource conflict and the role of the security sector would significantly reduce the impacts of violence.

IV. MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF CONFLICT: THE VALIDITY OF NEWSPAPERS AS A SURVEY TOOL

In the last two sections of this paper we used datasets drawn from newspaper reports to explain patterns of conflict in East Java and NTT. This section aims to put the conflicts recorded in the datasets back into their original contexts as news items, and in so doing to examine potential sources of bias in the way newspapers report conflict. As is the case with all genres of news story, incidences of conflict must fulfill basic criteria before they are deemed sufficiently newsworthy to have resources allocated, investigations conducted and column space devoted to them. Understanding the political economy of newspaper

---

[103] Although their involvement, as with all informal mediators, is undoubtedly higher than reported. See the analysis in the East Java section.

editorial policy is crucial to the understanding of how newspapers report conflicts, and in turn how we can use newspaper to map conflict incidence. This section is based primarily on evidence collected from 15 interviews with editors and journalists from all source newspapers, as well as through analysis of the data itself.

We test three main hypotheses. First, we posit that newspapers are more likely to report large-scale violent conflicts. This would mean that smaller incidents of conflict would be less likely to be recorded in the dataset, meaning that the full impacts of conflict are underreported in this study. Second, we hypothesize that urban incidents are more likely to be reported than rural ones. As such, newspapers may not be a good source for determining the distribution of conflict *within* provinces and districts (across urban and rural locations). Third, we would predict that newspapers would be subject to a number of subjectivity biases, stemming from publication-specific editorial policy and newspaper self-censorship that would affect how conflict is reported. Again, this may distort the picture of conflict that the newspaper data presents.

Using newspaper reports to understand conflict in Indonesia is a strategy not without its weakness, and these three hypotheses hold up to some extent. Nevertheless, close analysis indicates that these potential sources of bias are not as prominent as we originally suspected. We argue that the presence of these biases does not impact negatively on the *validity* of the data. Rather, investigation of the particular biases in the data can help us understand how to *interpret* the data, and how best to use the instrument.

1. Thresholds for Conflict: When Does Conflict Become News?

The newsworthiness imperative creates thresholds at which conflict becomes news; this helps to determine whether incidents get reported or not, and hence what is included in the dataset. First, and in the simplest possible terms, something has to "happen" before a conflict becomes newsworthy. Put another way, most kinds of conflict become news at the point of their eruption or escalation, characterized by violence, by a large numbers of actors being involved, or when local conflicts are brought to the attention of higher levels of government.[104] Escalating levels of violence and scale of conflict are the two factors most likely to ensure newspaper coverage across all categories of conflict.[105]

---

[104] The focus on the 'event' has a number of implications because it means that newspaper reports rarely forecast or foreshadow conflicts in any explicit way. Unless the conflict in question is a long running dispute punctuated by frequent incidents of violence, as in certain land conflicts in Flores, the 'eruption' is likely to be the first time a reader becomes aware of the conflict's existence. Journalists from all sources emphasized the fact that once a conflict had become news, the background, roots and triggers to the eruption would be investigated and reported, as these factors were an important part of what made the story 'interesting'. Once deemed newsworthy, follow-up articles reporting how the problem is being handled and further analysis of the problem from a variety of angles are the norm. This means that newspaper reports are a solid if broad source of information about the way conflicts develop—but only after the fact.

[105] The following discussion focuses on the violence, scale and level of an incident of conflict as indicators of its newsworthiness. There are, however, many other, less quantifiable qualities that determine whether or not a story is deemed to be "news". Items involving public figures, for example, including politicians and celebrities, are of great interest to readers. A story's proximity to its readership is also important; a rural audience will want to know about fluctuations in the price of rice for instance, while a provincial-level newspaper will tend to report only on items from the regions that are relevant in some way to the people in the capital. The term "human interest" was often used by journalists and editors to describe stories that had very few wider implications but were in some way funny, strange or "unique".

Violence

Newspapers are far more likely to report conflicts that are violent than those which are not. While different papers had different thresholds for how violent an incident had to be for it to be reported, as a rule the more violent an incident, the more 'interesting' it becomes and the more likely it is to receive media coverage. According to all sources, deaths have the highest 'sale value' and attract the greatest interest. The high sale value of fatal incidents ensures that they are captured consistently across regions and sources, and makes fatality numbers the most reliable proxy for violence. In the sub-provincial sources, one death under unusual circumstances (for instance, murder or as the result of some kind of attack) was often enough to warrant media coverage.[106] Respondents from both *Jawa Pos* and *Radar Madiun* stated that an incident resulting in three or more deaths would be likely to receive front page coverage or be "blown up", where an entire page is devoted to the item, ensuring in-depth coverage and follow-up.[107]

Thresholds for injury and property damage, by contrast, vary more across sources and are hence harder to use as a basis for geographic comparison. Incidents resulting solely in injuries, such as inter-group brawls, were less likely to go reported than fatal incidents. Journalists from *Radar Madiun* in particular, which covers an area where fist fights are common, stated that such a fight would have to be "very large scale"[108]—that is, upwards of around "75 people"—for the story to run in that publication.[109] Interestingly, *Radar Madiun* seemed more inclined to report on property damage than physical injury; damage to one property in an isolated incident might not warrant reporting,[110] but two or more homes damaged would probably become news.[111] Elsewhere, damage to property had to be on a significant scale to be considered newsworthy.

Magnitude: The Number of Actors Involved

Almost as crucial as the fatality rate in determining whether an incident would be reported is the number of people involved. Just as certain types of conflict were rarely reported unless they became violent, certain conflicts were unlikely to be reported unless they involved mass action. For example, conflicts over land are so rife in parts of Flores that they are often not seen as warranting attention unless mass villager groups lead full-scale attacks on one another *(perang tanding)*. Similarly, skirmishes between *silat* (martial arts) groups in Madiun are unlikely to be reported unless large numbers of people are involved. By the same token, poorly attended demonstrations do not qualify for newspaper coverage, whereas large ones do. Thus, the Managing Editor of *Radar Madiun* says of conflict, "If it isn't big, we won't cover it." Magnitude can also relate to a story's scope. Stories that "affect the fates of many people"[112]—e.g., regarding policy decisions and political power struggles, strike action, or accusations of corruption—are likely to receive coverage.

Level

Conflicts are also more likely to be reported if they occur at a higher level, e.g. in the district capital rather than a village. Although most of our analysis focuses on violent conflict, it is worth noting that the

---

[106] Bangkalan Correspondent, *Radar Madura*, June 13, 2004.
[107] 'Jawa Timur' page Editor, *Jawa Pos,* June 11, 2004.
[108] Ponorogo Correspondent, *Radar Madiun,* June 15, 2004.
[109] Certainly an exaggeration, but he makes the point. General Editor, *Radar Madiun*, June 14, 2004.
[110] *ibid*.
[111] Ponorogo Correspondent, *op. cit.*
[112] Journalist, *Radar Madiun,* June 14, 2004.

level at which a conflict occurs is particularly relevant to non-violent incidents. Many non-violent political disputes originate at the elite district political level, (inter-party disputes, criticism of the District Head or district legislature, etc.). However, these classifications also describe a range of other political protests and grievances originating at lower levels and then brought before the district government for intervention and resolution. The comparatively low numbers of conflicts reported at either the intra- or inter-village levels, particularly in East Java, do not mean that conflicts over administration and politics do not occur at lower levels. Rather, they do not become news until they escalate and demand attention at higher levels.

Crime and Politics: Forms of Conflict in Newspaper Context

The influence of the violence, magnitude and level thresholds largely explains why respondents across all sources described "crime and politics" as primary news staples. This has bearing on the forms of conflict most frequently picked up in this survey.

While we made a concerted effort to separate general crime from what we have termed 'vigilantism' or 'revenge-motivated' conflict, most such conflicts that we picked up appear as crime news. Thus conflicts of this type are well captured. In the newspaper data, variations of vigilantism/revenge violence stand out in both Flores and East Java. Crime is newsworthy for a number of reasons—readers may be titillated by the horror, drama and audacity of rape, murder and theft cases; residents like to be kept appraised of local crime levels; and so on—but the violence inherent in many crimes is certainly a key element of what keeps its news sale value high.

At the same time, political news receives extensive coverage, not because it is violent, but rather because it has broad appeal and in that sense is "massive" in scope. As outlined above, the level at which political conflict occurs is crucial to whether or not it will receive newspaper coverage.

The lesson to take from this is not that conflicts of a criminal or political nature have been over-reported. Rather, the sale value of news incorporating cases of high or increasing violence/magnitude/level makes the newspaper survey method particularly well attuned to these kinds of conflicts, whereas other types of conflict (when remaining small in scope) may not be reported to the same extent.

2. Urban/Rural Reporting Bias[113]

It seems logical to infer that the likelihood of a conflict being reported is related to its proximity to district capital cities where newspaper offices and correspondents are located. This raises the question of the extent to which the newspaper instrument underreports rural conflict.

At face value, interviewee testimony runs counter to the survey data on whether or not an urban bias exists. In interviews, respondents from all sources stated that the majority of news comes from the capital cities: the provincial capital in the case of the provincial-level sources (Kupang, Surabaya), and the district capitals in the case of the regional sources. The editor of *Radar Madiun*, for instance, estimated the ratio of urban (district capital) to rural (elsewhere) news in that publication was as high as 80-90% urban, 10-20% rural.[114]

---

[113] 'Urban' here essentially denotes district capitals, where newspaper correspondents are located, while 'rural' refers to everywhere else. The purpose of this discussion is to determine whether or not there is a correlation between reporting levels and proximity to newspaper sources, not whether conflict is more or less common in urban or rural areas *per se*.

[114] General Editor, *Radar Madiun, op.cit.*

Interviewees who argued that newspapers were city-centric explained this focus as being the result of two factors, namely the relative "sale value" of city and country news, combined with the relative ease or difficulty of access to the story.[115] The readership for regional newspapers lives primarily in the district capitals, where population numbers and levels of education are generally higher. Editors argue that local happenings in villages are rarely of interest to the wider readership; political intrigues and power struggles between the legislative and executive branches of the district government, for example, will therefore be covered in detail, while similar tensions at the village level are not worthy of column space. In addition, journalists, who are all based in district or provincial capitals, have a much better chance of keeping abreast of possible items of interest in their home bases. Perhaps most significantly, many parts of East Java and particularly Flores remain very remote and difficult to access, influencing the journalist's ability to report on stories arising in far-flung villages. As such, allocation of resources to rural reporting takes serious consideration.[116]

Despite this, while our results do show that a large proportion of conflicts counted occurred in district capital cities, they would also seem to demonstrate that a significant amount of conflict outside these big towns was also captured. In East Java, 72% of violent conflict cases were recorded as occurring outside of district capitals. In Flores, by contrast, 61% of violent conflict cases took place outside district capitals.[117]

While newspapers may not report non-violent conflict, and particularly the political types which feature prominently in the survey, evenly across rural and urban areas, they appear to capture rural violence effectively. This, too, is backed up by newspaper respondents. The Managing Editor of *Flores Pos* and *Dian* told us, "For a murder, a mass uprising, even if it's far away, we'll go [to the scene]." In principle, and across all sources, if an event is deemed newsworthy, then a correspondent will be dispatched to obtain the first-hand report.[118] In short, rural conflicts are more likely to receive coverage if they are violent or large in scale, meaning that the critical violence/magnitude/level are of even more relevance here, as news items must have particular 'interest' to justify the allocation of resources to covering incidents occurring in remote villages. Nevertheless, it is probably safe to assume that operational obstacles hampering rural reporting mean that levels of rural conflict and violence are even higher than those captured in this study.[119]

---

[115] In many ways, these phenomena also help explain variations in development outcomes (Harris and Todaro 1970; Todaro 1976). Key development decisions are made by politicians in capital cities. Their residency there makes them more susceptible to interest groups and lobbyists, who themselves tend to be urban. Higher wages, better infrastructure and services act as additional incentives for rural residents to migrate to cities, which can lead to a brain drain and continued rural underdevelopment. The political cognition and attention given to this may be minimal, given that policy makers will tend to be based in cities.

[116] The Ende correspondent for *Pos Kupang*, for instance, explained that she was required to seek special clearance from the head office in Kupang if she wanted to travel into the field for a story, on the grounds that the story had to be particularly interesting if it was to take her away from the city. Ende Correspondent, *Pos Kupang,* June 9, 2004.

[117] For some conflict incidents, there was not enough information about where the conflict took place to determine whether it was within, or outside of, a city. In East Java, 1% of violent incidents were not coded as being urban or rural. In Flores, 2.6% were uncoded.

[118] In Flores, the newspaper agents and sellers for both *Pos Kupang* and *Flores Pos*, who make frequent visits to villages in order to deliver the newspapers and collect subscription fees, report local gossip and tip-offs back to journalists. The Ende correspondent for *Pos Kupang* and the Bangkalan correspondent for *Radar Madura* both explained that they often spent their Saturdays actively touring villages, seeking news and following up on potential features.

[119] In addition, conflicts reported as occurring in cities may not have originated there. This section has already discussed the way conflicts originating at lower levels only attract media attention once they have risen in level. As such, some conflicts with rural roots may be recorded in the first instance at their point of escalation to the city. Indeed there is evidence from the qualitative research of villagers deliberately bringing village-level disputes to the district level to get attention. Also, rural populations migrating to cities may bring village problems into an urban

The data thus suggests that rather than violent conflict being a largely urban phenomenon, as Varshney (2002a) argues is the case in India, rural violence appears to be significant in Indonesia. The majority of this rural violence is picked up by local news sources.

Provincial/Sub-Provincial Reporting Bias

The high level of violent conflict recorded in rural areas in this survey is almost certainly due to the fact that sub-provincial as well as provincial level news sources were used in data collection.[120] Examination of *Jawa Pos* amply illustrates why a single, provincial level source, cannot be relied upon to give a clear picture of regional conflict. The Surabaya edition of *Jawa Pos* used to cover East Java in the UNSFIR-2 database is not intended by its own editors to evenly cover news in all districts. Instead, *Jawa Pos* in East Java is sold accompanied by local *Radar*, six to eight pages produced by a local office drawing on extensive local resources to focus on news in a specific area (*Radar Madiun* for Madiun, Ponorogo and Magetan; *Radar Madura* for the four Madurese districts). As such, reporting of local news in East Java is effectively delegated to sub-provincial *Radars. Jawa Pos'* coverage of regional news is largely limited to its 'Jawa Timur' (East Java) section, which makes up one to two pages of the entire publication, plus whatever regional news is important enough to appear on the front page. In determining which items from the 11 locally produced *Radars* in East Java will make an appearance on the 'Jawa Timur' page, the editor looks for "news that can cross over into different areas", that has wider spheres of relevance to the urban, largely Surabayan readership.[121] Thus, another threshold comes into play. While highly violent incidents are still newsworthy—the data indicates that *Jawa Pos* was slightly more likely to report on deaths than on violence as a whole—*Jawa Pos* is just as likely to pass over a violent incident in favor of a national dignitary's visit to a district capital, or an article comparing state-set exam results across districts. The provincial level source in this case actively excludes all but certain types of regional reports, with other news more than adequately covered by the sibling publication.

Although the provincial and regional sources in Flores operate in competition with one another, explaining the higher proportion of regional reporting from *Pos Kupang,* sub-provincial sources still capture significantly higher numbers of conflicts. In contrast to *Jawa Pos, Pos Kupang* has a correspondent in every district on the Flores mainland. However, like *Jawa Pos*, *Pos Kupang* focuses on reporting news from the provincial capital, and space for reports from the regions is limited to one or two pages. To illustrate, the Ende correspondent estimated that about 75% of the articles she wrote were ultimately published, and added that she would rarely contribute more than one or two articles daily due to the unlikelihood that more than one story from Ende would be included per edition.[122] Clearly, news items, particularly non-violent and/or small-scale conflicts, are omitted in these circumstances. This contrasts with *Flores Pos,* which would sometimes even run out of news, despite having at least two correspondents contributing from each district, causing editors to fill page space by inserting extra

---

setting. Reporters from *Radar Madura,* for instance, argued that traditional *carok* duels are rare in urban areas; thus if an incidence of *carok* does occur in a city, then the actors are most likely to be acting upon an old grudge originating in their native village.

[120] As noted in Section I, sub-provincial sources capture far higher numbers of conflict incidents. In Flores, the provincial source (*Pos Kupang*) reported 39% of the 225 violent conflicts, and 47% of the 117 deaths recorded in the database, while the sub-provincial sources, *Flores Pos* and *Dian*, captured 76% of violent conflicts and 88% of deaths. In East Java, the provincial source, *Jawa Pos,* captured even less violence: 14.5% of violent conflict incidents, and 22% of deaths. In contrast, *Radar Madiun* and *Radar Madura* between them captured 81% of the 366 violent incidents recorded, and 89% of 160 deaths. These differences are largely attributable to limitations of column space and human resources, as well as the different types of stories provincial and regional readerships demand.

[121] 'Jawa Timur' page Editor, *op.cit.*

[122] Ende Correspondent, *Pos Kupang,* June 9, 2004.

pictures or community service announcements.[123] The Ende correspondent was adamant that you could not gain a clear picture of conflict in her district from *Pos Kupang,* although she acknowledged that this may not be the case in every region.[124]

3. The Whole Truth and Nothing but the Truth? The Subjectivity of Newspaper Reporting

Beyond the market-driven sources outlined above, other forms of bias exist. Reporters, consciously or not, chose to report particular incidents, and not to report others, and also frame stories in particular ways with particular impacts in mind. Similarly, editorial policies, whether written-down or practiced, determine in large part the kinds of cases that are published, and the ways in which they are reported. Reporting biases can mean the exclusion of some types of conflict from newspapers, and, conversely, can blow-up other types that, according to the 'newsworthiness' criteria discussed previously, might otherwise go unreported.

There is a vast media analysis literature that highlights the ways in which newspapers wield considerable power as shapers of public opinion and subjective 'truth'. This is particularly true in the context of conflict reporting. Reporting on conflict may be biased towards certain interpretations based on larger political economic concerns (Herman and Chomsky 2002; Philo and Berry 2004).[125] In some cases, such concerns can lead to an over-inflation of the seriousness of conflict or, more commonly, of the potential for conflict. In the Indonesian context, for example, it is argued that biased or inflammatory journalism helped contribute to the escalation of violence in Ambon, Poso and North Maluku (UNDP 2004b). In Rwanda, news sources were used to spread rumors that helped lead to the genocide. Conversely, in other cases newspapers may deliberately try to play down conflict or tensions in order to help maintain peace.[126]

Limiting Conflict

While the stakes for newspapers are not so high in Flores and East Java, where violence and conflict is low to mid-level in nature, all sources noted the need to be mindful of the newspaper's role in defining news. Earlier in this section we noted the effect of bringing conflict to a higher level in signaling, and in

---

[123] General Editor *et al.*, *Flores Pos/Dian,* June 9, 2004.

[124] It is also worth noting a number of other economic factors that impact on reporting for both provincial and regional newspapers. *Pos Kupang* for instance assigns more resources to covering Sikka and Flores Timur because *Pos Kupang* is published in Flores in Maumere (in Sikka, near Flores Timur). By the time the paper reaches Manggarai, for instance, articles are already old news. *Flores Pos* admits that Ende receives better coverage than the other districts—two pages as opposed to one for the other districts—because it is where the paper is published and where its personnel are based. Similarly, the bulk of the readership of *Radar Madiun* lives in Madiun City, explaining why news coverage is so heavy there. Staffing levels also critically affect the way a district or region is covered. *Radar Madiun* for instance only employed a Magetan correspondent mid-way through last year, and the editor acknowledges that news from this district was neglected up until that point. This is interesting given that our data shows much less conflict occurring in Magetan than in other locations.

[125] Herman and Chomsky's (2002) classic and Indonesia-relevant example is the Western press' fairly extensive coverage of Cambodian massacres under Pol Pot in comparison with the lack of coverage of Indonesia's contemporary, bloody invasion of East Timor in the mid-1970s. They argue that this bias arose as the result of the media's reliance on good relations with ruling governments in order to ensure access to news items and a continued readership base, and the West's lucrative partnership with a repressive right-wing (and demonstrably anti-communist) government during a period of oil extraction.

[126] The 'peace journalism' movement argues that concerted efforts to report events in a way that is not only fair and balanced, but that also emphasizes points of similarity and solidarity, can contribute to conflict resolution (see Lynch and McGoldrick 2001; McGoldrick and Lynch 2005).

some cases translating into, an escalation of conflict. By the same token, if the media promotes a conflict to 'news' status, then it becomes an important conflict, regardless of its actual or initial size.

This is particularly relevant for counting 'local' conflicts. For example, interviewees explained that while private land disputes or conflicts over village head elections did occur more frequently than the data suggested, reporting on such minor, localized, and often private events could have a disproportionately negative impact on the conflict.[127] The very act of reporting on a private land or political dispute, for example, brings it into the wider public domain, constituting an escalation in itself and, in doing so, complicates dispute resolution. In short, the 'underreporting' of conflict at the local level is due not only to the limited relevance and interest to a wider audience of these conflicts, but also to a common conception that such conflicts are *"tidak usah dibesar-besarkan"* or "not worth making a fuss over."[128]

SARA and the New Order Legacy

A defining feature of journalism and indeed all elements of the media under the New Order was the understanding that a whole range of topics ought not to be made a "fuss" of. From newspapers to books to film, material "containing SARA elements", or having the potential to inflame tensions between *suku, agama, ras, antar-golongan* (ethnic, religious, race or class) groups was taboo. During the New Order period, suppression of this kind of material was enforced via a delicate method of quiet political and military pressure and media self-censorship.[129]

While contemporary media is, in comparison, more free and open than its New Order counterpart, the legacy of SARA and particularly the self-censorship instinct is evident in the editorial policies of newspapers today. SARA sensitivity may well be reflected in this survey's finding that ethnic, religious and secular cleavages are rarely relevant to conflict, as these are the kinds of details that newspapers deliberately avoid reporting. The deliberate exclusion of a conflict that the KDP & CCN study followed in detail, related in Box 5 below, gives insight into the ongoing impact of the SARA policy.

Newspaper Advocacy

In contrast, the Managing Director of *Flores Pos* and *Dian* highlighted the potentially pro-active role the media can play in conflict. The core mandate of these publications, he explained, was to draw attention to and combat "injustice". As such, the papers play an advocacy role. *Flores Pos* and its sibling publication *Dian* were unique amongst the newspaper sources used as part of this survey in that they are owned and managed by the Flores chapter of the *Societas Verbi Divini* (SVD), an international congress of Catholic ministries. The newspaper is a key part of promoting SVD's religious agendas, and as such was perhaps

---

[127] Journalist, *Radar Madiun,* June 14, 2004.

[128] Such considerations also affect *how* conflict is described. As discussed in Section III, for example, *Radar Madiun*'s reticence to name opposing *silat* groups lead to much of the violence and property damage associated with *silat* gangs being classified as 'vigilante-other' (see Annex 1).

[129] Sen and Hill (2000). Some have argued that the centralized nature of the New Order government's control over the media may have meant it would be easier for media in outlying areas (like Flores) to escape the attention of the central powers, thus affording them a relative degree of freedom. While remote newspapers may have been less at risk of being slapped with press bans, then, as now, local level political, police and military elites still had *de facto* autonomy to put pressure on news sources not to print information that might 'incite the masses', or that was in some way offensive to the ruling elite. To illustrate, the General Manager of *Flores Pos* and *Dian* also explained that he tried to be sensitive to SARA. In one incident recorded in this study, *Flores Pos* reported community anger when a non-Catholic (read Muslim) took holy communion. A group of stalls and restaurants in the port area (where Muslim communities are most likely to be found in Catholic Flores) were burned down in reprisal. However, the word 'Muslim' is never used explicitly to describe either the apostate nor the victims of the vandalism.

the only source where editorial policy was *visibly* influenced by concerns beyond the standard economic and market pressures.[130]

Box 5: SARA and Self-Censorship: The Expulsion of a PLAN Agent from Wates Village

In 2001, a Community Transformation Agent working for the international NGO Plan International was expelled from Wates village in Ponorogo district. This followed rumors that he, a Christian working in an almost entirely Muslim area, had tried to Christianize local children by teaching them to pray in the Christian manner. The issue was exacerbated at least in part by the machinations of a rival political village elite group seeking to exert its influence over village affairs.[131] The Agent's expulsion was dramatic. His belongings were forcibly removed from his lodgings and threats that his landlady's house would be burned down if he did not vacate the village within twelve hours were made. By the *Radar Madiun* Ponorogo correspondent's own admission, the incident fulfilled the newsworthiness criteria.

In an interview, the correspondent stated that he knew well of the incident, but explained that this was precisely the sort of story the newspaper was unwilling to touch due to the inter-religious (read SARA) element to the conflict. While the incident did not result in any actual damage to life or property, this conflict was nevertheless significant in that it resulted in the deepening of rifts between village elites and the disruption of Plan's activities in the village for several years. However, due to editorial policy prohibiting publication of this type of news, it was intentionally shielded from media coverage.[132]

Flores Pos' advocacy approach is the antithesis of the idea that small-scale, 'local' conflicts should not receive coverage for fear of making the problem worse. Rather, *Flores Pos* intentionally takes up issues that might otherwise go unnoticed, but that the editors—and the diocese—consider crucial from a human rights perspective. In doing so, conflict here is 'created' in the sense that an opposition is mounted; the power of the media is such that in drawing attention to cases, satisfactory resolution becomes more likely.

The two types of story likely to receive specific coverage are violence against women—particularly rape—and cases where the rights of "little people" are contravened, often involving government mismanagement and corruption. Father Agus Duka, Managing Director of *Flores Pos* and *Dian,* gave several recent examples of the publication's efforts to seek justice for victims in both categories. Agus argues, for example, that there is widespread institutional unwillingness in Flores to acknowledge rape as a crime, and as the result of a "conspiracy of silence" between police, doctors and the courts, rapists are

---

[130] *Flores Pos* and *Dian* are self-funded publications, meaning that market and economic pressures remain very relevant to them. However, they are fortunate in that they operate in a virtually competition-free market as the only local, Flores-specific publications, which would seem to give them some scope for setting their own 'newsworthiness' agenda.

[131] See KDP & CCN case study: Rasyid (2004b) 'The Eviction of Plan International from Desa Wates: Portrait of the Domination of the Old Leaders'.

[132] The rationale informing SARA regulations and newspapers' stated reluctance to report on these kinds of conflicts are two-fold: that reporting on these kinds of conflicts can only lead to escalation of conflict and the deepening of community cleavages and are therefore best avoided; by the same token, as long as these cleavages go unreported, their very existence can be denied. Indonesian journalist proponents of 'peace journalism', however, challenge this assumption. In Stanley (2001), a veteran Indonesian journalist analyzes newspaper coverage of conflict in Poso and argues that *Republika's* laudable effort to examine root causes of the problem and avoid analysis along religious lines, was nevertheless unconstructive. Stanley and others (Lynch and McGoldrick 2001) argue that journalists can report on conflict in a way that actively promotes peace, acknowledging SARA differences as part of fully understanding the issues in order to put conflicts to rest. As noted earlier, this research was not conducted in places with high levels of conflict, meaning that source newspapers may not have had many opportunities to display their aptitude for peace reporting; in any case, the survey was not designed to test for this effect. All the same, however, several journalists and editors interviewed made specific reference to the way they considered their reporting to actively promote peace. Generally, this meant making efforts to report on conflicts in a balanced and fair way— presenting both sides of the argument, preferably including commentary from an independent source. The Editor in Chief of *Jawa Pos* called this "creating a peace climate".

very rarely brought to justice. He cited a recent case of gang rape that the paper exposed, arguing that this exposure forced local police to investigate the crime. Another case recently blown up by his publication followed the compulsory acquisition of land adjacent to the airport landing strip in Ende, where local landowners had not been compensated. Following the newspaper's reports, the *Bupati* (District Head) personally visited the site to present locals with payment for the land.[133]

Flores Pos' focus on certain types of story highlights the problem of comparing data on different provinces drawn from different sources. In the Flores dataset, where the data is dominated by articles from *Flores Pos,* conflicts relating to gender, for instance domestic violence, are more prominent than they are in East Java.[134] In-depth qualitative research and anecdotal evidence from Florenese journalists highlight a real culture of violence against women in Flores, and particularly in Sikka, where higher levels of domestic violence were recorded; nevertheless, we cannot rule out the possibility that newspaper reporting on this subject is, in part, an artifact of *Flores Pos'* stated concern with this subject and we cannot assume that domestic violence is any less of a problem in parts of Java.

4. Summary

When we conducted interviews with journalists and editors as part of the research for this section, we presented them with early breakdowns of the newspaper data. Respondents all agreed that the data was generally representative of the key conflict issues on their beats. Nevertheless, using newspapers as an instrument to map conflict has both its strengths and weaknesses.

The newspaper survey method is particularly strong at capturing violent and/or large-scale conflict in a systematic way (across categories), as the 'sale value' of such news is high enough to ensure significant coverage of violent conflicts inside and outside of big cities alike. In particular, this study found that newspapers almost always report on fatalities arising out of conflict (even conflicts between individuals). Fatalities are thus the best proxy for violence. The corollary is that newspapers are not as consistent at reporting non-violent conflict; political conflicts, for example, may receive coverage at the district level, but are likely to escape notice at lower levels. Newspaper methodologies are thus less effective at capturing underlying social tensions and non-violent conflict. This was one of the primary reasons why we decided by and large to conduct our analysis with only the violent conflict data.

Newspapers face significant difficulties reporting outside of district capitals. Nevertheless, newspapers have a demonstrable level of penetration into the regions, and most cases of rural violent conflict (especially if there is a death involved) will be reported in East Java and NTT. News sources below the provincial level are considerably more effective at doing this than are papers based in provincial capitals.

Newspaper editors and journalists sometimes have agendas which dictate how they report on conflict. The legacy of the New Order still leads to self-censorship that affects the reporting of stories on clashes

---

[133] General Manager, *Flores Pos/Dian,* June 9, 2004. While in this paper we intentionally focus on the more easily quantifiable violent conflict, it is worth noting the large number of non-violent conflicts that were also collected as part of this survey, a great many of which concerned this kind of dispute over government services, management and procedures. This non-violent conflict captures exposure of corruption, the active participation of citizenry in the political process, and a critical media. As our survey only extends back to 2001, it is not possible to see whether this marks a change from the more restrictive New Order period. However, it could well be the case that the extent to which these types of conflict are taking place (and being reported) is a positive indication of democratic vitality in the research areas. Problematizing some issues—in our terms, creating conflict—is a necessary part of resolving injustice and community grievances. Insofar as these conflicts do not turn violent, they are no bad thing.

[134] As this survey did not gather data on the gender of victims and actors, it is not possible to determine how many conflicts involving violence against women were reported. This category was chosen for comparison across datasets because it best captures this kind of violence.

between ethnic, religious and class groups. However, this appears to affect more the ways in which stories are reported (e.g., the labels put on groups involved in the action) rather than whether or not the story is reported. In places, interest groups (often the newspaper themselves) may seek to use newspapers for advocacy purposes. This, we argue, may lead to a focus on particular forms of conflict (e.g., domestic violence in Flores) in some cases. However, we found no evidence of conflicts in our research areas being over-reported. Therefore, the advocacy role newspapers play affects our understanding of the relative presence of different types of conflict in and across areas, but not the actual prominence of violent impacts across different forms of conflict.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this paper, we have used evidence from a new dataset of local conflict to provide insights relating to the nature, impacts and distribution of conflict in East Java and NTT, and into how we can use local newspapers to measure and understand conflict. In this concluding section, we revisit some of the main findings, and draw out their implications, before providing recommendations on the creation of a national conflict monitoring system.

1. Understanding Conflict in Indonesia

The data shows that the levels and impacts of conflict in Indonesia are considerably greater than we previously thought. In our research areas, we picked up six times more conflict-related fatalities than did the UNSFIR newspaper survey, and two and a half times as many as PODES. These ratios are fairly constant across provinces and districts, suggesting that a similar multiplier may apply to conflicts in other areas of Indonesia, particularly those that have been seen as having lower levels of conflict. High levels of conflict were observed in areas not normally thought of as being particularly conflict-prone. There were 135 fatalities in the four districts of Madura between 2001 and 2003. More strikingly, we recorded 52 conflict-related deaths in Manggarai in Flores. These are higher than previous estimates of deaths in some high conflict districts, such as Kota Ternate in North Maluku, where UNSFIR recorded 73 deaths over a period three times as long as that of our study. Even though levels of violence conflict have dropped from a high in 2001, there is a vital need to pay attention to the social tensions and local conflicts that still exist across Indonesia.

The data shows that there is significant variation in the levels and impacts of violent conflict across districts. Local conflict is present everywhere, but there are particular hot spots. While our data would suggest that there are considerably more than the 15 "high conflict" districts that Varshney, Panggabean, and Tadjoeddin (2004) note, their general assertion of variance at the district level is correct. Given this, and the importance of the district as a level of administration post-decentralization, it would seem that interventions aimed at this level are at least as important as national responses to the problem.

Perhaps our key finding is that not only do the impacts of conflict vary locally, but so do the forms it takes. Particular types of conflict exist in different areas. In the Ponorogo cluster in East Java, for example, conflicts between martial arts (*silat*) groups dominate the picture. In Madura, in contrast, vigilantism against individuals is most prominent. In Flores, land conflict, and particularly conflict over communal land, accounts for the largest proportion of deaths and other conflict-related impacts. We argue that the forms conflict takes (what people fight over, how they organize themselves, the symbols they employ for mobilization) stem from local norms relating to conflict. These norms have a cultural basis; particular types of violent action are seen as legitimate in different areas. At the same time, the data shows considerable variation in the impacts of given conflict forms between districts with similar cultural heritages. For example, the effects of *silat* violence are far greater in Madiun than in its neighboring district, Ponorogo. Drawing on evidence from the qualitative fieldwork that accompanied

the newspaper survey, we argue that local actors and institutions are important, both in helping to shape local conflict-related norms, and in managing conflicts as they emerge. One way to break patterns of destructive conflict is to support local leaders, as well as security institutions, in managing conflict in non-violent ways. Given the extent to which forms of conflict are distinct at the local level, responses must also be tailored to local conditions.

2. Using Newspapers to Understand Conflict

Compared to previous attempts to measure conflict, the local newspaper monitoring methodology we employ proves to be very effective in capturing conflicts, with our method recording far higher numbers of conflict-related deaths than the other datasets. Even allowing for differences in the definition of conflicts employed in the two newspaper datasets (we include conflict between individuals, whereas UNSFIR, by and large, do not), we pick up over three times the number of conflict deaths. The primary reason for the difference in the number of deaths in the UNSFIR dataset and ours is the level of news source used. Using sub-provincial level sources is vital to obtaining the depth of newspaper coverage necessary to accurately gauge levels of conflict outside of the provincial capitals.

Examination of the data in combination with qualitative interviews with journalists and editors from source newspapers also supports the validity of the method and sheds light on where its particular strengths lie. When presented with breakdowns of the data, interviewees agreed that it accurately reflected the situation "on the ground". Using sub-provincial news sources, based in district capitals, meant that we captured a large amount of violent conflict in rural areas. A key aspect of understanding how best to interpret the data is to understand that a publication's search for news of high 'sale value' makes using newspapers a particularly strong method for capturing violent and/or large scale conflict in a systematic way across categories. Newspapers at local levels are highly likely to report on any conflict which results in a death, making fatality totals a useful proxy to compare violence between regions. At the same time, while injuries and property damage may be reported less uniformly across sources, counting them as part of this study has given us valuable insight into the forms that violence takes in different research areas.

The newspaper sources used for this study were generally found to be reliable, as they are largely free from bias that would significantly distort the dataset. This, however, may not always be the case, particularly in areas experiencing higher levels of conflict where the media can sometimes play an incendiary role. Editorial policy impacted, albeit in a small way, on how newspapers reported conflict. While we argue this did not extensively affect the validity of the data, it is important to understand the incentives of journalists and editors in reporting conflict in order to know best how to interpret the data. This underlines the importance of knowing the sources employed. Any further studies seeking to use newspapers to measure violent conflict should include a qualitative research component to understand better how sources report conflict.

3. Recommendations: Building a National Conflict Monitoring System

In conclusion, our study has resulted in interesting insights into the presence, impacts and nature of conflict in Indonesia, and the efficacy of using local newspapers to better understand it. However, some questions remain unanswered, in large part because of the limited geographic scope of our study. Is, for example, episodic violence in high conflict areas such as Maluku and Central Sulawesi underreported in previous estimates to the same extent as local conflict in East Java and NTT? What are the true impacts of conflict across Indonesia? In what ways are the forms of conflict in higher and lower conflict areas different, and in what ways are they similar? The creation of a national dataset that uses local newspapers, and that includes acts of inter-personal violence, would go someway towards allowing such questions to be answered.

Perhaps more importantly, such a dataset would also help those parties interested in promoting effective conflict management and peaceful development in Indonesia. Integrating the data into local government decision-making and planning processes—for example, into decisions on where police should station officers, or government decisions on areas where projects should be located—would go someway towards these ends. While conflicts cannot be predicted in the same way that other natural phenomenon can, such a dataset may also allow for the development of an early warning system, as factors correlated with conflict escalation become clear post-facto. For development donors, many of whom are now putting serious resources into funding conflict resolution and management programs, such a dataset would also help significantly in assessing the impacts (positive and/or negative) of such interventions. This, in turn, could lead to the design of better programs and policies.

Key Design Principles

If such a dataset is to be created, a number of key design principles must be kept in mind.

- First, newspaper sources below the provincial level must be used. As we have shown, using provincial level sources alone will mean that many incidences of violent conflict are not captured. Before a conflict mapping system is set up in a given area, it is necessary to survey the different sub-provincial news sources available.

- Second, conflicts between individuals should be included. These account for a considerable proportion of conflict-related deaths. Including such incidents also allows for consideration of patterns of escalation, e.g. where small inter-personal conflicts take group form.

- Third, the monitoring system should track only violent conflict incidents. Violent conflicts are more easily comparable across locations and news sources. Newspapers, as we have argued, are less effective at capturing non-violent incidents. Collecting articles on non-violent conflicts can be useful in understanding other social phenomena—for example, patterns of community protest against corruption. However, for conflict mapping purposes, only violent incidents should be included.

- Fourth, the creation of such a database must be accompanied by an ongoing program of qualitative research. Such research is necessary to ensure that typologies and coding systems reflect local realities. It can also allow for richer interpretation of the newspaper data. It is also necessary to understand better how newspapers report conflict in the areas where a monitoring system will operate. In particular in high conflict areas, reporting biases may exist. Before scaling-up the method, it will be necessary to run pilots in areas that have experienced high levels of violent conflict. This will involve interviewing reporters and editors in these areas, as well as cross-checking of data against other sources, in order to assess the efficacy of the tool in these areas.

- Fifth, attention also needs to be paid as to how the data from a monitoring system can feed into local policy-making processes, especially at the district level. This involves gaining a better understanding of how local governments, and security agencies, use information relating to conflict. Over time, technical assistance to such agencies could be provided to allow them to better use the conflict data that is being collected. Government agencies at the national level (such as the National Development Planning Board—BAPPENAS), should also play a role in designing the database, to ensure national needs for conflict data are taken into account.

The analysis in this paper has shown that violent conflict is significant in areas of Indonesia not normally associated with having high levels of conflict. A vital component of a strategy to promote violence-free development must be to understand better the distribution, impacts and nature of violent conflict across Indonesia. While there has been an increasing realization that violent conflict is spread across the

archipelago, little is known about its nature or impacts in many parts of the country. We have argued that local-level newspaper conflict monitoring provides a useful methodology for understanding conflict in Indonesia. As such, the development of a national monitoring system can aid in the development of responses that aim to both enhance human security and promote peaceful development in Indonesia.

References

Abidin, Zainal. Forthcoming. *Penghakiman Massa: Studi Psikologi Sosial Tentang Kekerasan Kolektif Terhadap Oran-Orang Yang Dispersepsi Sebagai Pelaku Kejahatan*. Jakarta: Gramedia.

Anggraini, Cici Novia. 2004. "Night of Rhythm, Night of Destruction: Even the General Community is caught up in the current of the Silat Group Conflict." World Bank Office Jakarta. Mimeo.

Acciaioli, Greg. 2001. "Ground of Conflict, Idioms of Harmony: Custom, Religion, and Nationalism in Violence Avoidance in Lindu Plain, Central Sulawesi." *Indonesia* 72: 81-114, October.

Aragon, Louise. 2001. "Communal Violence in Poso, Central Sulawesi: Where People Eat Fish and Fish Eat People." *Indonesia* 72: 45-74, October.

Baare, Anton. 2004. "Policing and Local Level Conflict Management in Resource Constrained Environments: Case Studies in Kabupaten Sikka (NTT) and Kabupaten Ponorogo (East Java), Indonesia." World Bank Office Jakarta/NCG. Mimeo. www.conflictanddevelopment.org

Barnawi, Saifullah. 2003. "Rumours, Women and Carok: A Case Study of Carok in the Rice Fields, Desa Campor, Kecamatan Proppo, Pamekasan." World Bank Office Jakarta. Mimeo.

Barron, Patrick, Rachael Diprose, David Madden, Claire Q. Smith, and Michael Woolcock. 2004. "Do Participatory Development Projects Help Villagers Manage Local Conflicts? A Mixed Methods Approach to Assessing the Kecamatan Development Project, Indonesia." *Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Working Paper* No. 9 (Revised Edition, March). Washington, D.C.: World Bank.

Barron, Patrick, Rachael Diprose, and Michael Woolcock. Forthcoming. "Conflict and Community Development in Indonesia: The Impact of the Kecamatan Development Program (KDP) on Local Conflict and Conflict Management Capacity." World Bank Office Jakarta. Mimeo.

Barron, Patrick, Kai Kaiser, and Menno Pradhan. 2004. "Local Conflict in Indonesia: Measuring Incidence and Identifying Patterns." *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper* No. 3384. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.

Barron, Patrick, and David Madden. 2004. "Violence and Conflict Resolution in 'Non-Conflict' Regions: The Case of Lampung, Indonesia." *Indonesian Social Development Paper* No. 2. Jakarta: World Bank.

Barron, Patrick, Claire Q. Smith, and Michael Woolcock. 2004. "Understanding Local Level Conflict in Developing Countries: Theory, Evidence and Implications from Indonesia." *Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Working Paper* No. 19. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.

Bertrand, Jacques. 2004. *Nationalism and Ethnic Violence in Indonesia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bowen, John R. 2003. *Islam, Law and Equality in Indonesia: An Anthropology of Public Reasoning*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Brass, Paul R. 1997. *Theft of an Idol: Text and Context in the Representation of Collective Violence*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Badan Pusat Statistik. 2002a. *Jawa Timur Dalam Anka*. Jawa Timur: BPS.

Badan Pusat Statistik. 2002b. *Nusa Tenggara Timur Dalam Anka*. Nusa Tenggara Timur: BPS.

Budiman, Arief. 1989. *Sistem Perekonomian Pancasila dan Ideologi Ilmu Sosial di Indonesia*. Jakarta: Gramedia.

Burton, John W. 1987. *Resolving Deep-Rooted Conflicts: A Handbook*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America.

Clark, Samuel (ed.) 2005. "More than Just Ownership: Ten Land and Natural Resource Conflict Case Studies from East Java and NTT." *Indonesian Social Development Paper* No. 4. Jakarta: World Bank.

Cole, John W., and Eric R. Wolf. 1974. *The Hidden Frontier: Ecology and Ethnicity in an Alpine Valley*. New York: Academic Press.

Colombijn, Freek. 2002. "Maling, maling! The lynching of petty criminals," in Freek Colombijn and J. Thomas Lindblad (eds.), *Roots of Violence in Indonesia: Contemporary Violence in Historical Perspective*. Leiden: KITLV Press.

Colombijn, Freek. 2005. "A cultural practice of violence in Indonesia: Lessons from history," in Dewi Fortuna Anwar, Helene Bouvier, Glenn Smith, and Roger Tol (eds.), *Violent Internal Conflicts in Asia Pacific: Histories, Political Economies and Policies*. Jakarta: KITLV/Buku Obor.

Colombijn, Freek, and J. Thomas Lindblad (eds.) 2002. *Roots of Violence in Indonesia: Contemporary Violence in Historical Perspective*. Leiden: KITLV Press.

Coser, Louis. 1956. *The Functions of Social Conflict*. New York: Free Press.

Cribb, Robert. 2005. "Legal pluralism, decentralization and the roots of violence in Indonesia" in Dewi Fortuna Anwar, Helene Bouvier, Glenn Smith, and Roger Tol Helene Bouvier, Glenn Smith, and Roger Tol (eds.), *Violent Internal Conflicts in Asia Pacific: Histories, Political Economies and Policies*. Jakarta: KITLV/Buku Obor.

De Jonge, Huub. 1998. *Madura dalam Empat Zaman: Pedagang, Perkembangan Ekonomi dan Islam*. Jakarta: Suatu Studi Antropologi Ekonomi, Gramedia.

Diprose, Rachael. 2004. "Conflict Pathways in Indonesia: Conflict, Violence and Development Programs in East Java." World Bank Office Jakarta. Mimeo.

The Economist. 2004. "The Iraqi War: Counting the Casualties." November 6, 2004.

Esman, Milton, and Ronald J. Herring (eds.) 2001. *Carrots, Sticks, and Ethnic Conflict: Rethinking Development Assistance*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Fisher, Roger, and William Ury. 1981. *Getting to Yes*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Foucault, Michel (ed.) 1975. *I, Pierre Riviere: having slaughtered my mother, my sister, and my brother ... A Case of Parricide in the 19th Century*, trans. Frank Jellinek. Lincoln: University of Nebraska.

Friend, Theodore. 2003. *Indonesian Destinies*. Cambridge, MA.: Belknap Press.

Guggenheim, Scott E. Forthcoming. "The *Kecamatan* Development Project, Indonesia", in Anthony Bebbington, Scott Guggenheim, Elizabeth Olson and Michael Woolcock (eds.) *The Search for Empowerment: Social Capital as Idea and Practice at the World Bank*. Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press.

Harris, John R., and Michael P. Todaro. 1970. "Migration, Unemployment, and Development: A Two-Sector Analysis." *American Economic Review* 60(1): 126-142.

Herman, Edward S., and Noam Chomsky. 2002. *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. Pantheon.

Heryanto, Ariel. 2005. "Ideological Baggage and Orientations of the Social Sciences in Indonesia," in Vedi R. Hadiz and Daniel Dhakidae, *Social Science and Power in Indonesia*. Jakarta/Singapore: Equinox/ISEAS.

Hill, B.J. 1982. "An Analysis of Conflict Resolution Techniques: From Problem-Solving Workshops to Theory." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 26(1): 109-138.

International Crisis Group. 2002. "Tensions on Flores: Local Symptoms of National Problems." Indonesia Briefing. Jakarta/Brussels. 10th October, 2002.

International Crisis Group. 2003a. "Indonesia: Managing Decentralisation and Conflict in South Sulawesi." Asia Report No. 60. Jakarta/Brussels. 18th July, 2003.

International Crisis Group. 2003b. "The Perils of Private Security in Indonesia: Guards and Militias on Bali and Lombok." Asia Report No. 67. Jakarta/Brussels. 7th November, 2003.

Kriesberg, Louis. 2003. *Constructive Conflicts: From Escalation to Resolution* (2nd edition). Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.

Liddle, R. William. 1985. "Soeharto's Indonesia: Personal rule and political institutions", *Pacific Affairs 58: 68-90.*

Lynch, Jake, and Annabel McGoldrick. 2001. "Peace Journalism in Poso." *Inside Indonesia* 66, April-June. www.insideindonesia.org

Mahur, Agus. 2003. "Land Conflicts and the Mechanisms Used to Resolve Them in Kabupaten Manggarai." World Bank Office Jakarta. Mimeo.

Malley, Michael. 2001. "Social Cohesion and Conflict Management in Indonesia," in Nat J. Colletta, Anita Kelles-Viitanen, and Teck Gee Lim (eds.), *Social Cohesion and Conflict Prevention in Asia: Managing Diversity through Development*. Washington, D.C. and Manila: World Bank.

McAdam, Doug, Sid Tarrow, and Charles Tilly. 2001. *Dynamics of Contention*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

McGoldrick, Annabel, and Jake Lynch. 2005. *Peace Journalism*. Hawthorn Press.

McGoldrick, Annabel, and Jake Lynch. 2001. "Peace Journalism in Poso," *Inside Indonesia* 66, April-June. www.insideindonesia.org

Muda, Hubert, and Adam Satu. 2001. "Interelasi antara Sistem Kekerabatan dan Masalah Kepemilikan Tanah di Manggarai." Lembaga Studi van Bekkum-Verheijen. Research Report for District Government of Manggarai. Mimeo.

Nordholt, H.S. 2002. "A Genealogy of Violence", in Freek Colombjin and J. Thomas Lindblad (eds.), *Roots Of Violence in Indonesia Contemporary Violence in Historical Perspective*. Leiden: KITLV Press.

Philo, Greg, and Mike Berry. 2004. *Bad News from Israel*. Pluto Press.

Prior, John Mansfield. 2003. "The Church and Land Disputes: Sobering Thoughts from Flores." Maumere: Chandratiya Research Center for the Study of Religion and Culture.

Probo, Endro. 2003. "The Phenomenon of the Martial Arts Schools in Kabupaten Ponorogo." World Bank Office Jakarta. Mimeo.

Probo, Endro. 2004 "When Brothers are No Longer Friendly: A Fight Between the SH Terate and SH Winongo Martial Arts Schools in Dusun Sampung Kidul, Desa Sampung." World Bank Office Jakarta. Mimeo.

Rao, Vijayendra, and Michael Walton (eds.) 2004. *Culture and Public Action*. Washington D.C.: Stanford Social Sciences.

Rasyid, Imron. 2003. "The Divisive Bridge." World Bank Office Jakarta. Mimeo.

Rasyid, Imron. 2004a. "Mob Violence: A House is Vandalized During a Campursari performance to the West of Sampung Market." World Bank Office Jakarta. Mimeo.

Rasyid, Imron. 2004b. "The Eviction of Plan International from Desa Wates: Portrait of the Domination of the Old Leaders." World Bank Office Jakarta. Mimeo.

Ross, Marc Howard. 1999. *The Management of Conflict: Interpretations and Interests in Comparative Perspective*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Said, Mohammed. 2003. "*Carok*: Contradiction between Culture and Social (Criminal) Pathology." World Bank Office Jakarta. Mimeo.

Satu, Adam, and Patrick Barron. Forthcoming. "Understanding Local Conflict Pathways in Flores." World Bank Office Jakarta. Mimeo.

Schwartz, Adam. 1999. *A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia's Search for Stability*. Westview Press.

Sen, Krishna and David T. Hill. 2000. *Media, Culture and Politics in Indonesia*. South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Stanley. 2001. *Urgensi Jurnalisme Damai*. http://dlibrary.tifafoundation.org

Subianto, Benny. 1989. "Ilmu-ilmu sosial Indonesia: Mencari pendekatan dari masa ke masa," *Prisma* 18(2): 59-76.

Tadjoeddin, Mohammad Zulfan. 2002. "Anatomy of Social Violence in the Context of Transition: The Case of Indonesia", *UNSFIR Working Paper* 02/01. Jakarta: UNSFIR.

Tadjoeddin, Mohammad Zulfan, Widjajanti I. Suharyo, and Satish Mishra. 2001. "Regional Disparity and Vertical Conflict in Indonesia." *Journal of the Asia Pacific Economy* 6(3): 283-304.

Tajima, Yuhki. 2004. "Mobilizing for Violence: the Escalation and Limitation of Identity Conflicts. The Case of Lampung, Indonesia." *Indonesian Social Development Paper* No. 3. Jakarta: World Bank.

Tempo. 2002. "Banyuwangi Black Magic Tradedy: Testing New Evidence." January 14, 2002.

Todaro, Michael P. 1976. *Internal Migration in Developing Countries*. Geneva: International Labor Office.

UNDP. 2004a. "Indonesia: Decentralized Conflict Sensitive Planning and Development: an Assessment and Project Formulation Report." Mimeo. Jakarta: UNDP.

UNDP. 2004b. "The Role of Media in Supporting Peace-Building and Reconciliation Efforts in Central Sulawesi, Maluku and North Maluku." Mimeo. Jakarta: UNDP/ISAI/IMS.

Usman, Mustofa. 2001. "Profil Konflik Tanah di Propinsi Lampung," at the Conference: Semiloka Masalah Pertanahan Dalam Rangka Otonomi Daerah Di Lampung, Joint Initiative between YIP-BK and PEG USAID.

Varshney, Ashutosh. 2002a. *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Varshney, Ashutosh. 2002b. "The Relevance of International Research on Ethnic Conflict for Indonesia: Some Reflections." *UNSFIR Discussion Paper*: 02/05. Jakarta: UNSFIR.

Varshney, Ashutosh, Rizal Panggabean, and Mohammad Zulfan Tadjoeddin. 2004. "Patterns of Collective Violence in Indonesia (1990-2003)." *UNSFIR Working Paper* 04/03. Jakarta: UNSFIR.

Vel, Jacqueline. 2001. "Tribal Battle in a Remote Island: How District Leaders in Sumba (Eastern Indonesia) Combat the Fading of Their Authority." *Indonesia* 72. October.

Welsh, Bridget. 2003. "Street Justice: Vigilantism in West Java." Paper prepared for the Workshop on Contentious Politics, Columbia University, New York.

Wilkinson, Steven. 2004. *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wiyata, A. Latief. 2002. *Carok: Konflik Kekerasan dan Harga Diri Orang Madura*. Yogyakarta: LKiS.

Wolf, Eric. 1964. *Anthropology*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Wolf, Eric. 1999. *Envisioning Power: Ideologies of Dominance and Crisis*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

World Bank. 2004. *Village Justice in Indonesia: Case Studies on Access to Justice, Village Democracy and Governance*. Jakarta: World Bank.

Annex 1: Methodology

1. Selections of Sites and Sources

Site Selection[135]

Three 'clusters' of districts were selected for the newspaper conflict mapping exercise, grouped around the four districts where the World Bank's KDP and Community Conflict Negotiation (KDP & CCN) study was conducted. The provinces of East Java and NTT were chosen for a number of reasons.

First, while neither province has experienced unrest to the extent of, say, Central Sulawesi or Maluku, both areas do have significant levels of (often violent) conflict. Conflicts over land and natural resources, development money, fights between gangs and martial arts groups, domestic violence, and battles over political authority are all common. Most academic and policy attention has been focused on areas of Indonesia that have experienced conflict 'big bangs'. Yet previous research shows the extent to which conflict is rife across Indonesia, and has posited that there are links between local conflict and larger outbreaks of violence. Examining conflict and conflict management in areas which have experienced low intensity (but still pervasive) conflict may help us to understand how and why conflict escalated as it did in higher conflict areas, as well as the links between the forms of conflict across Indonesia and those in the conflict 'hot spots'.

Second, they were picked to be as different as possible. They vary in terms of population size and density (high in East Java, low in NTT), ethnic homogeneity (homogenous in East Java, heterogeneous in NTT), dominant religious group (Muslim and Catholic, respectively), and provincial development (East Java is relatively rich, NTT extremely poor). The rationale for picking such diverse provinces was that if we find similar patterns in very diverse contexts, it is more likely that these findings will hold true across other locations.

Within each province, we chose two districts for the study, based on variations in 'capacity', defined as the ability of communities and/or the state to collectively solve or manage conflicts when they arise. In 'high capacity' areas, when there is a problem it is usually handled early and effectively (by formal actors, informal actors, or a combination of both) so that it does not escalate and/or become violent. In 'low capacity' areas, conflicts tend to emerge more easily and escalate and/or become violent. We chose high and low capacity districts in each province in order to create variation in areas within the sample. Our 'high capacity' districts were Ponorogo (East Java) and Sikka (NTT); our 'low capacity' districts were Pamekasan (East Java) and Manggarai (NTT). Districts were chosen based on interviews with a range of stakeholders at the national and provincial levels.

We used a cluster approach whereby we recorded incidents of conflict in our four main research districts, plus neighboring districts. The cluster approach was used for two reasons: first, to see how the research districts compared in terms of (violent) conflict with their immediate neighbors; and, second, to minimize the number of different sub-provincial sources that had to be used.

The 'Pamekasan Cluster' in East Java is comprised of the four districts on the island of Madura, off the east Javanese coast; the 'Ponorogo Cluster' is at the westernmost end of the province, bordering Central

---

[135] See Barron, Diprose, Madden, Smith, and Woolcock (2004) for a full study methodology, including the selection protocols for the broader study.

Java. As the two research provinces in NTT are both located on the island of Flores, the seven districts on Flores Island make up the 'Flores cluster'.[136]

Newspaper Selection
Data in each province was captured using provincial and local level newspapers, daily and weekly newspapers. We chose to use sub-provincial sources in addition to provincial ones because we suspected (as it turns out, correctly) that provincial sources would under-report conflict (see Section IV).

A number of local sources were selected to capture data on the district clusters. We chose sources based on interviews within each province. Specific criteria we used in selecting sources included: (i) the perceived reliability of the newspaper; (ii) the extent to which it would cover our areas; and (iii) availability of archives.

Table 1.1: Sources Used

Province	Districts covered in KDP & CCN	Districts covered in newspaper survey	Source
East Java	Pamekasan	**Pamekasan Cluster** Pamekasan Sampang Sumenep Bangkalan	*Jawa Pos* (Provincial) *Radar Madura* (Sub-provincial)
	Ponorogo	**Ponorogo Cluster** Ponorogo Madiun Magetan	*Jawa Pos* (Provincial) *Radar Madiun* (Sub-provincial) *Ponorogo Pos* (sub-provincial)
NTT	Sikka Manggarai	**Flores Cluster** Ende Flores Timur (East Flores) Lembata Manggarai Manggarai Barat (West Manggarai) Ngada Sikka	*Pos Kupang* (Provincial) *Flores Pos* (Sub-provincial) *Dian* (Sub-provincial)

Interviewee Sampling
In order to gain an understanding of the way newspaper sources select and record news and conflict, we interviewed editorial or management staff, journalists based at newspaper headquarters, as well as regional correspondents for each of the seven source newspapers. With the exception of *Pos Kupang,* this meant visiting newspaper head offices: in Ende, NTT and Surabaya, Pamekasan, Madiun and Ponorogo, East Java. A particular effort was made to interview correspondents working in districts covered by the KDP & CCN study, namely Sikka, Manggarai, Pamekasan and Ponorogo.

---

[136] Lembata and Manggarai Barat districts are new, having split from Flores Timur and Manggarai districts, respectively. As such, for analysis purposes, we coded each as being part of their former, parent district. See footnote 91.

Table 1.2: Interviewees

Source	Position
Pos Kupang	Maumere (Sikka) Correspondent
	Ende Correspondent
Flores Pos & Dian (same staff)	General Director
	Managing Editor
	Senior Journalist/Ende Correspondent
	Reporting Manager
	Maumere (Sikka) Correspondents (x2, originally from Manggarai)
Jawa Pos	Managing Editor
	'Jawa Timur' segment editor
Radar Madura	General Manager
	Managing Editor
	Pamekasan Correspondent
Radar Madiun	Managing Editor
	Madiun Correspondent
	Ponorogo Correspondent
Ponorogo Pos	Journalist and Founder

2. Data Collection and Management

Teams of three researchers collected data in each province. Each team was headed by a researcher who had been involved in the qualitative field research, who was assisted by two junior researchers. Provincial team leaders, in coordination with the newspaper survey coordinator in Jakarta, were responsible for ensuring coding consistency between members of their teams.

Researchers collected and coded every reported incident of conflict using a standardized set of codes (Annex 2) and template (Annex 3). They then entered the article into the Newspaper Article Database. Using a system of 'related article codes', they indicated where discrete conflicts were reported across several newspaper editions and/or sources. This raw data was then thoroughly reviewed, reworked and 'compressed' in Jakarta, combining all entries on each conflict to produce the final Conflict Database that was used for the analysis in this paper.

3. Incident Selection

Definitions of Conflict
We employed a broad definition of conflict for the study. Our definition was broad in two ways. First, we included conflict incidents that were between two individuals. We used a broad definition for a number of reasons. First, previous research, as well as the ongoing qualitative research, has shown that in many cases of conflict between individuals (e.g., a fight over a woman at a party), group-based identities have determined who the conflicting parties are. Often, individual conflicts are manifestations of a larger problem or tension. If we do not count individual vs. individual conflicts, we miss an important dimension of inter-group unrest. Second, conflicts are cyclical, and in many cases one-on-one battles can escalate into larger group-based conflicts. Tracking conflicts at their early stage can help provide more information on the genesis of the conflict.

In our full dataset we included violent conflict and non-violent disputes. However, for most of the analysis we used only the violent conflict incidents, as these are better comparable across sources and locations. Crime was not included, unless it was a response to a previous (real or perceived) conflictual

act, as in the case of vigilante lynchings, etc. We included non-violent incidents in order to provide a sampling frame for deeper investigations aimed at exploring why some, seemingly similar, conflicts escalate while others do not.[137]

Defining Discrete Conflict Incidents

Each entry in the dataset outlines a different conflict. Conflicts may be made up of a number of dispute incidents. By an incident, we mean that we can (or at least could if we had adequate information) distinguish the actors, the location, and the time it took place. A broader conflict may be made up of a number of disputes; a social tension may manifest itself in a number of disputes (Barron, Diprose, Madden, Smith, and Woolcock 2004).

Many of the conflicts that make up the database were reported across a number of articles, and, in some cases, over long periods of time. Where it was clear that subsequent reports and even subsequent events, such as the reemergence of violence after several months of relative peace, were in fact describing the same basic conflict, they were defined as one conflict. There is room on the coding sheet to show how conflicts develop. Thus if a conflict evolves in form or scale, this could be recorded.

This process was fairly straightforward. However, there are several points worth noting. First, where an issue such as tariff hikes or changes in public policy sparked protest in a number of different areas, these were counted as discrete incidents, as these incidents erupted spontaneously, without reference to actions in other areas. Second, incidents relating to *silat* (martial arts) and gang violence that were recorded in Madiun, Magetan and to a lesser extent, Ponorogo, were counted as isolated incidents, as actors and circumstances differed.

4. Coding Issues

'Level 4- Inter-sub district conflicts'

All conflict incidents were coded according to the 'level' at which they occurred, namely 'intra-household', 'intra-village', 'inter-village' or 'inter-sub district'. However, in practice, this fourth level was also used to describe any conflict that took place *at the district level.* The distinction is important; whereas it is clear that a conflict occurring 'inter-village' involves actors from two separate villages, a conflict at district level could involve people originating from different sub-districts, but it was also used to describe conflicts that somehow 'reached' the district level. As discussed elsewhere in this paper, it is precisely at the district level that many conflicts, particularly non-violent ones, come to newspaper attention, as communities protest before district government, or a case comes before a district court. Future efforts at data collection could attempt to distinguish where a conflict began (where actors originated) and where it ended up (where did conflict or violence actually erupt) in order to overcome this ambiguity.

Crime

Many of the conflicts recorded as part of this study also fall under the category of criminality. Violent conflict, resulting in death, injury or damage to property is, after all, unlawful. Equally, many types of criminal behavior stem from inter-personal and even inter-group conflict, so separating crime from conflict is often an artificial distinction.

However, this is not to say that all crimes are treated as conflicts in this study. A crime was deemed to be part of a conflict when it was committed as a vigilante or retaliatory response towards something, be it an insult, personal harm, or a transgression of social mores. Thus, the 'murder' vigilante type describes a

---

[137] This 'matched pair' strategy was employed in the two provincial reports that resulted from the study. See Diprose (2004) on East Java, and Satu and Barron (forthcoming) on NTT.

conflict that has arisen *after* and *as a result* of a murder, not the murder *per se*. A murder committed during the course of a robbery, for instance, where the crime was committed purely for personal gain and where there was no history of conflict between the murderer and the victim, was not counted as a conflict. Likewise, the 'sexual indiscretion' category might describe a retaliation following a rape, but an incidence of rape in itself was not deemed to be a conflict.

'Other'

The 'vigilante-other' classification denotes vigilante or revenge conflicts over issues and themes not described by the ten other given subtypes of vigilante/revenge violence. As noted above, conflicts stemming from acts of murder were counted as a distinct category, but retaliation for an incidence of beating or property damages was not, and these types of conflicts were recorded as 'vigilante-other'. In Flores, newspapers often reported cases of police brutality stemming from a variety of minor misdemeanors. As designated law enforcers, police and military violence is classified as retributive (even though their powers were clearly being abused) and such incidents were recorded in this category, too.

The 'vigilante-other' category was also used to denote incidents of conflict that *appeared* to be acts of vigilantism or revenge, but where the actual motive was not clear. As discussed at length in the main paper, incidents like this were particularly frequent in Madiun, East Java, where a group would go on a vandalism spree, but when the reason they targeted a particular area, or what precipitated the rampage, were not clear. Journalists from *Radar Madiun* explained that these types of incidents were part of the larger issue of rivalry and retaliation cycles between youth aligned in martial arts groups, but the identities of the groups in question were not always reported specifically, and so it was difficult for researchers to code them as 'identity clash' conflicts. Unexplained mass beatings and group clashes were often seen as being indicative of 'other' vigilante violence.

Less frequently, the 'vigilante-other' category also counted murder incidents where the motive was unclear, but where the *modus operandi* suggested that the killing was personally motivated—the ultimate expression of revenge. In particular in Madura, murders are often reported as acts of *carok*, or ritual revenge dueling, so these were counted in this category, even where the motive was not given.

Ultimately, the '4k: vigilante-other' category was used to capture most of the unclassified violence and conflict recorded in this data set. However, the '5c: Residual' category was also used to capture unique types of conflicts worth highlighting. Specifically in Flores, this category was used to describe two cases of the desecration of the Christian host, where non-Catholics entered a Church and took communion, to the subsequent anger of locals.

Annex 2: Codes

The following codes were used for each conflict incident.

Conflict Types

1. **Physical Resource Conflicts: Ownership, Access and Use**
   a) Natural Resources: Publicly-owned
   b) Natural Resources: Privately-owned
   c) Natural Resources: Privately-owned or used communal land
   d) Man-made resources: Publicly owned
   e) Man-made resources: Privately owned

2. **Administrative Disputes: Management and Procedures**
   a) Procedure/management of KDP (KDP corruption, dispute over KDP position)
   b) Procedure/management of other government development project AND government funds AND government services
   c) Procedure/management of non-government development/project/program/service
   d) Procedure/management of company (public or private)
   e) Dispute about administrative geographic condition
   f) Dispute about layer/level of government jurisdiction

3. **Political Position and Influence conflicts** *(competition over political power)*
   a) Village-level state position
   b) Village-level non-state position
   c) District-level state position
   d) District-level non-state position
   e) Other position _____ (write in)
   f) Political party influence dispute

4. **Vigilantism and Retribution**
   a) Theft
   b) Witchcraft
   c) Ninja
   d) Other deviant removal
   e) Sexual indiscretion
   f) Murder
   g) Identity clash
   h) Damage to Property
   i) Accident causer
   j) Humiliation/face loss
   k) Other _____ (write in)

5. **Other**
   a) Domestic Violence
   b) Other Intra-family arguments
   c) Residual

Levels

1. Intra-household (people living in same household)
2. Other intra-village (people living in same village but not same household)
3. Inter-village (people living in different villages)
4. Inter-sub-district (people living in different sub-districts)

Weapons

1. Knives
2. Machetes
3. Swords
4. Sticks
5. Stones
6. Guns
7. Petrol Bombs
8. Hands/fists (and other body parts)
9. Fire
10. Other _____ (write in)
11. None

Type of Actors

1. Individual (or household).
2. Community (non institution, include informal group)
   a) NGOs
   b) General community
   c) Student groups
   d) Worker groups/unions (including farmers groups)
   e) Ad hoc/single issue group (to be used rarely and only in specific cases)
   f) Other institutionalized groups
   g) Other _____ (write in)
3. Community Institutions (schools, *puskesmas*, church, mosque)
4. State
   a) Police (at all levels)
   b) Military (at all levels)
   c) Government institutions (at all levels)
   d) Other
5. Enterprises (private and public)
6. Other (write in)

Cleavage

1. Communal (ethnic)
2. Communal (religious)
3. Communal (secular)
4. Not relevant

Intervention (Who)

1. Village Government

2. BPD (village council)
3. KDP figure _____ (write in who)
4. *Camat* (sub-district head) and sub-district government
5. *Bupati* (district head) and district government
6. *Adat* (traditional) leader
7. Other community/religious leader
8. Group leader (of those involved in conflict – first and second party)
9. Police
10. Army
11. Family of Actor
12. Informal security group
13. Other _____ (write in who)
14. No-one

Success of Intervention

1. Very successful (conflict resolved)
2. Moderately successful (violence stopped, conflict being processed, looks likely to be resolved)
3. No more violence, but not resolved; could become violent again
4. Unsuccessful
5. Not sure/no information

Annex 3: Template

Source & Location				
Code		Province		
Source		Kabupaten		
Source Date		Kecamatan		
Related article codes		Desa		
Coding Issues		Dusun		
Impacts			# (amount)	cost
Killed		Houses damaged		
Injured		Shops damaged		
		Public Buildings		
Coding Issues		Other public goods		
		Other private goods		
Other noted impacts				
Description				
Type/Sub-type (I)		Type/Sub-type (II)		
Secondary type (I)		Secondary type (II)		
Level (I)		Level (II)		
Type of Actor (I - 1)		Type of Actor (II - 1)		
Type of Actor (I - 2)		Type of Actor (II - 2)		
Type of Actor (I - 3)		Type of Actor (II - 3)		
Duration (days)		Weapons type		
Cleavage (primary)				
Cleavage (secondary)		*Coding Issues*		
Intervervention				
Who (first)		Success (first)		
Who (second)		Success (second)		
Who (other)		Success (other)		
		Coding Issues		

CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RECONSTRUCTION UNIT—*WORKING PAPER SERIES*

No.	Title	Authors	Date
10	Landmine Clearance Projects: Task Manager's Guide	Jacques Buré Pierre Pont	November 2003
11	Timor-Leste: Independent Review of the Credit Component of the Community Empowerment Project	John D. Conroy	March 2004
12	Social Capital and Survival: Prospects for Community-Driven Development in Post-Conflict Sierra Leone	Paul Richards Khadija Bah James Vincent	April 2004
13	MIGA's Experience in Conflict-Affected Countries: The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina	John Bray	June 2004
14	The Devil in the Demographics: The Effect of Youth Bulges on Domestic Armed Conflict, 1950-2000	Henrik Urdal	July 2004
15	Practical Guide to Multilateral Needs Assessments in Post-Conflict Situations	Uwe Kievelitz Et al.	August 2004
16	The Private Sector's Role in the Provision of Infrastructure in Post-Conflict Countries: Patterns and Policy Options	Jordan Schwartz Shelly Hahn Ian Bannon	August 2004
17	Within and Beyond Borders: An Independent Review of Post-Conflict Fund Support to Refugees and the Internally Displaced	Swarna Rajagopalan	October 2004
18	Drugs and Development in Afghanistan	William Byrd Christopher Ward	December 2004
19	Understanding Local Level Conflict Pathways in Developing Countries: Theory, Evidence and Implications from Indonesia	Patrick Barron Claire Q. Smith Michael Woolcock	December 2004
20	Addressing Gender in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations in the Philippines	Sonia Margallo	January 2005
21	Community Cohesion in Liberia: A Post-War Rapid Social Assessment	Paul Richards, et al.	January 2005
22	International Companies and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Cross-Sectoral Comparisons	John Bray	February 2005
23	The Roots of Violence and Prospects for Reconciliation: A Case Study of Ethnic Conflict in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia	Claire Q. Smith	February 2005
24	The Mindanao Conflict in the Philippines: Roots, Costs, and Potential Peace Dividend	Salvatore Schiavo-Campo Mary Judd	February 2005
25	Counting Conflicts: Using Newspaper Reports to Understand Violence in Indonesia	Patrick Barron Joanne Sharpe	May 2005

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
ENVIRONMENTALLY AND SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
The World Bank
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20433 USA
Fax: 202-522-3247
E-mail: socialdev@worldbank.org
www.worldbank.org/conflict

Also published as Social Development Paper No. 83