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Integration and Conflict in Indonesia's Spice Islands

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Tucked away in a remote corner of eastern Indonesia, between the much larger islands of New Guinea and Sulawesi, lies Maluku, a small archipelago that over the last millennia has been disproportionately influential in world history. Largely unknown outside of Indonesia today, Maluku is the modern name for the Moluccas, the fabled Spice Islands that were the only place where nutmeg and cloves grew in the fifteenth century. Christopher Columbus had set out to find the Moluccas but mistakenly happened upon a hitherto unknown continent between Europe and Asia, and Moluccan spices later became the raison d'etre for the European presence in the Indonesian archipelago. The Dutch East India Company Company (VOC; *Verenigde Oost-indische Compagnie*) was established to control the lucrative spice trade, which was more valuable than gold, becoming both the world's first multi-national company and the globe's foremost trading and transport enterprise. So prized were the Moluccas that in 1667 the Dutch swapped their colony of Manhattan with the British for the latter's tiny island of Run in the Banda Islands, valued for its nutmeg. Subsequent Dutch conquests united the sprawling Indonesian archipelago for the first time and provided the precursor to the modern successor state of Indonesia.

Maluku thus occupies a special place among Indonesia's myriad islands, which make up the world's largest archipelagic state and the fourth most populous country in the world. Ironically, whilst its existence subsequently led to the creation of the modern Indonesian state, Maluku's integration into that state has long been contested and was afflicted by severe communal conflict in 1999-2002 from which it has yet to fully recover. In order to quell the violence, in 1999 Maluku was divided into two provinces – Maluku and North Maluku - but this paper refers to both provinces combined as 'Maluku' unless stated otherwise.

Given the scale of violence in Indonesia after Suharto's fall in May 1998, the country's continuing viability as a nation state was questioned. During this period, the spectre of Balkanization was raised regularly in both academic circles and mainstream media as the country struggled to cope with economic reverse, terrorism, separatist campaigns and communal conflict in the post-Suharto transition. With Yugoslavia's violent breakup fresh in memory, and not long after the demise of the Soviet Union, Indonesia was portrayed as the next patchwork state that would implode. In hindsight these fears were unrealized since only East Timor separated from Indonesia in 1999. The Indian Ocean tsunami helped trigger an end to secessionist hostilities in Aceh in 2005, and separatism in West Papua was driven underground after a period of unprecedented openness between 1999 and 2001.In addition to these so-called vertical conflicts in which local separatist forces resisted state control, Indonesia was also wracked by severe horizontal conflicts in which various ethnic groups fought communal battles against their neighbours. Eastern Indonesia was particularly hard hit since all six of the country's major communal conflicts of this period occurred in the provinces of West Kalimantan (twice), Central Kalimantan, Central Sulawesi, Maluku and North Maluku between 1996 and 2002.[1] This communal violence can be broadly categorised either as conflict between indigenous and migrant groups or between Christians and Muslims.

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The violence of 1996-2002 was at its most savage in Maluku and North Maluku. The violence in these two provinces alone accounted for between 5,000 and 10,000 deaths, and internally displaced between one third and one half of the Moluccan archipelago's total population.[2] By 2015 around 7,500 people remained displaced, some districts still segregated and many minority groups have never returned to their home communities. Whilst ethnic violence in both Kalimantan and Sulawesi has since faded, it has occasionally returned to haunt Maluku in the years since peace was re-established in 2002, most recently in March-May 2012 and July-August 2014.

Whilst East Timor, Aceh and West Papua undoubtedly represent the highest profile cases of separatist conflict in Indonesia's modern history, Maluku has also experienced a contested integration into the Unitary Republic. The roots of this stretch back to the colonial period when the status of Maluku and its people was much higher than it is elsewhere in contemporary Indonesia. Maluku is an exceptional case study of communal violence for, unlike the other episodes in eastern Indonesia, its horizontal conflict has also been imbued with undertones of separatist intent. This article aims to explain some of the difficulties behind Maluku's fraught integration into the modern Indonesian state.



Maluku and the Spice Trade

Maluku's two provinces together comprise over one thousand islands, only a few of which are larger than one thousand square kilometres. The area remains remote and difficult to access despite the huge advances in transportation since Indonesian independence in 1949. It is therefore ironic that the story of modern Indonesia forming as a successor state to the Dutch East Indies can be traced to the first European arrival in Maluku of 1512. During the Middle Ages, this was the only place in the world where nutmeg and cloves were found. The most valuable of these was the clove, which could command higher prices than gold. Maluku's spices were vital in preserving meat since large cattle herds could not be kept alive during the European winter, meaning that livestock had to be slaughtered before its onset.

Prior to the European arrival, the spice trade in the region was controlled by the rival Sultanates of Ternate (founded in 1257) and of Tidore (founded in 1109), both now situated in North Maluku province. Both sultanates sold their spices to Chinese, Malay, Arab and Javanese traders who transported it through Southeast Asia and the Persian Gulf on boats or by pack animals on the Silk Road. The spices eventually made their way to Damascus and Constantinople (modern day Istanbul) before finally arriving in Europe. Various European powers sought ways to break the Muslim traders' monopoly on these highly lucrative spice imports into Europe.

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive in the Moluccas with a 1512 expedition from their outpost of Malacca on the Malay Peninsula. Upon their arrival in Ambon, the Sultan of Ternate invited some members of the mission to his island, where the Portuguese were initially welcomed as traders.[3] Thereby encouraged, from 1513 the Portuguese began sending a trading fleet annually to the Moluccas and started construction of a fort in Ternate in 1522. However, Portuguese

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attempts to monopolise Ternate's spice trade, along with their interference in local politics and Christian proselytising, strained relations with the Muslim Sultan and eventually lead to their expulsion in 1575 after a five-year siege of their fort.[4] The Portuguese subsequently shifted their base of activities in Maluku further south to Ambon, where they had established a factory in 1521. Despite having constructed several forts across the Moluccas, the Portuguese never managed to wrest control of the region's spice trade.

Spanish merchants, who formed an alliance with the Sultan of Tidore 1603, subsequently followed the Portuguese. Even though Tidore was officially incorporated into the Spanish East Indies (*Indias Orientales Españolas*) the Sultan continued to rule the island. As with the Portuguese, the Spanish built forts and began trading from them. Seeking to consolidate their mercantile empire, Spanish forces invaded Ternate in 1606, prompting the Sultan of Ternate to appeal to the Dutch for assistance. The following year the Dutch seized the northern half of Ternate island but the Spanish retained both the southern half of Ternate and the whole of Tidore until 1663, when they retreated north to their colony of the Philippines.

The defeat of the Spanish Armada by the English in 1588 signalled a shift in European naval power northwards and the subsequent waning of Portuguese and Spanish influence in the Moluccas. The Dutch arrived in 1599 aiming to usurp their southern European rivals, and managed to evict the Portuguese in 1605 thanks to their superior technological and financial resources. The larger Dutch ships were able to navigate faster, more direct routes around Africa that were navigable all year round, whilst the Portuguese and Spanish persisted with slower, seasonal coastal trade routes that were delayed by the Indian Ocean monsoon.



The Bay of Ambon, Seventeenth Century

Having founded the VOC in 1602 to profit from the Moluccan spice trade, Ambon became the company's headquarters from 1610 to 1619 until the establishment of Batavia (present day Jakarta) further west. In order to secure a spice monopoly the Dutch dealt ruthlessly with local opposition in the Moluccas, especially in the Banda Islands where recalcitrant residents were killed and replaced by Dutch-owned slaves. By the mid-1660s, local opponents to Dutch rule across Maluku had been defeated and the remaining Spanish garrisons in Ternate and Tidore removed, leaving the British as their sole remaining opposition. The British were largely preoccupied with establishing a foothold in the Indian subcontinent but still periodically fought vicious battles with the Dutch for the right to maintain trading links in the Moluccas. The 1667 Treaty of Breda formalised the Dutch spice monopoly since it specified that the British would give up official control of the tiny island of Run, a source of nutmeg, in exchange for the island of Manhattan in the fledging colony that became the United States. The Dutch were now the dominant power in the region, with Ambon at the epicentre of world clove production. To protect their monopoly the Dutch banned the cultivation of cloves in all the other islands they controlled.

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1707 map of the Spice Islands. In the background of the map's cartouche a volcano erupts while men harvest spice. In its foreground, Dutch merchants presumably discuss trade with a spice island sultan. Source: Princeton University Library.



Fort Belgica in Banda Neira town today, built by the Dutch in 1611 to protect the nutmeg trade.

The spice monopoly contributed greatly to the fortunes of the Netherlands, a legacy of which can be seen in the glorious buildings of present day Amsterdam. However, the VOC collapsed into bankruptcy in 1798 and was nationalised. The following year the British occupied the Moluccas, taking advantage of Dutch weakness after the French Revolution. Even though the Dutch re-established control of Ambon in 1814 this interregnum spelt commercial disaster for the islands since the British had been able to smuggle out valuable nutmeg and clove seedlings which they used to cultivate plantations in their colonies in Malaysia, Sri Lanka and east Africa. These began to flourish by the early 1800s, thus forcing the price of the spices down, and within decades Maluku faded into obscurity as its spices could now be grown more cheaply overseas, nearer to the main consumer markets in Europe. Maluku's decline was compounded by the fact that Dutch energies were now focused on developing a plantation-based economy in the much larger and more populous islands of Java and Sumatra, which were also much closer to regional trading ports.

Integration and the Dutch Legacy

Islam arrived in North Maluku with Arab traders in the thirteenth century and established a foothold across much of the Indonesian archipelago, especially in coastal settlements. Christianity first arrived with the Portuguese in the sixteenth century, and the numbers of Christian missionaries increased as the Dutch consolidated their power in the Moluccas. Whilst Islam had made inroads in the northern part of Ambon Island, Christianity was consolidated in the southern part of the island where the capital is situated and from where the Dutch based their centre of operations. Even today, Christianity has a wider following in southern Maluku where the Dutch Protestant mission was more successful than in most of the Dutch East Indies.

European influence meant that 'by 1650, complex horizontal conflicts were already evident, dividing local populations along factional, commercial and religious lines'.[5] Christians received preferential treatment under the Dutch colonial administration, especially in the regional

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capital of Ambon city, and enjoyed much greater educational opportunities than non-Christians in the Moluccas. As a result, Malukan Christians disproportionately filled the ranks of the colonial bureaucracy and institutions, not just within the Moluccas itself but also further afield. For instance, in neighbouring Dutch New Guinea, Christian teachers, officials and professionals from the Moluccas and North Sulawesi were brought in by the Dutch administration to help run the territory prior to World War II.[6] Although the Dutch forced the departure of many of these functionaries after 1945 to prevent the spread of Indonesian nationalism, some 14,000 were still living in Dutch New Guinea in 1959, some 8,000 of whom were from Maluku.[7]

Seeking to preserve their status and fearing Muslim domination in a post-colonial successor state, Malukan volunteers, mostly from Ambon, formed the core of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army (KNIL; *Koninklijk Nederlands-indisch Leger*), established to suppress the Indonesian independence campaign (1945-49). Under the negotiated settlement that followed in December 1949, the Dutch transferred sovereignty to a federal republic, the United States of Indonesia. The Moluccas were part of the state of East Indonesia, along with all the islands east of Java. However, on 17 August 1950, the fifth anniversary of President Sukarno's proclamation of Indonesian independence, this federal system was replaced by the present Unitary Republic of Indonesia. The imminent disappearance of a federal Indonesia prompted Chris Soumokil, the East Indonesian Minister of Justice, to declare an independent Republic of South Maluku (RMS; *Republik Maluku Selatan*) in April 1950. Whilst this largely Christian rebellion quickly ended in failure, and Soumokil was executed in April 1966, the RMS remains a symbol of sectarian rivalry in Ambon and maintains a government in exile. Such divisions were compounded by the fact that more than 40,000 RMS combatants, supporters and their families were given sanctuary in the Netherlands in the aftermath of the rebellion's failure, from where they continue to agitate for an independent homeland.



RMS flags in the Netherlands, 2011, home to the South Moluccan government in exile

This colonial legacy ensured that Maluku's integration into the unitary Indonesian state would be contested from the beginning. That Maluku was still acting as an autonomous state was noted in a cabinet report of early 1957.[8] In March 1957 members of the military and civilian elite in East Indonesia began the Permesta rebellion (*Perjuangan Semesta* or Universal Struggle), which although based on the neighbouring island of Sulawesi also attracted much sympathy in Maluku. The American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) offered substantial material and financial support to the Permesta movement, including fifteen B-26 bomber aircraft and American pilots. Ambon was among several cities in eastern Indonesia bombed by these B-26s, in a rebellion that rumbled on until 1961. Malukan leaders also forged links with the Sumatra-based Revolutionary Government of the Indonesian Republic (PRRI; *Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia*), another rebel movement led by army officers which also

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emerged to challenge Sukarno's regime in 1958.[9]

In response to these various challenges to central government control in Maluku, Sukarno adopted policies to encourage deeper Malukan integration into the Indonesian state. These included several large government projects such as the Wayame shipyard and the Oceanography Research Institute on Ambon Island, and the large Makariki sugar mill on Seram Island.[10] However, central government policy towards Maluku changed during the Suharto era (1966-98) as its large government projects were either scaled down or moved to other provinces as Jakarta promoted a greater centralisation of political and economic power. For instance, the Wayame shipyard was relocated to Indonesia's second city of Surabaya in East Java province, whilst the Makariki sugar mill was moved to Jatiroto, also in East Java. Moreover, the status of the Oceanography Institute in Ambon was downgraded and construction of its main laboratory was cancelled.[11] Shipping routes began to bypass Maluku, and intra-island trade within the region declined. Furthermore, Suharto began awarding provincial governorships to non-Malukan military officials, and firms associated with the regime struck deals to exploit Maluku's natural resources. In northern Maluku, this centralisation of power in Jakarta also diminished the status of the sultanates in Ternate and Tidore.

Suharto's authoritarian regime also cracked down on civil society activists throughout Indonesia, and in Maluku such figures were branded RMS sympathisers. Despite Indonesia's democratic reforms since 1998, approximately 50 RMS supporters continue to serve long jail sentences for non-violent protest. The most notable of these political prisoners is primary school teacher Johan Teterissa who was sentenced to life imprisonment for leading a RMS flag-raising incident during a visit by Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to Ambon in June 2007. Another 22 RMS sympathisers, most of who were teachers and farmers who took part in the peaceful protest, received sentences of seven to 20 years. Whilst Teterissa's jail term was subsequently reduced on appeal to 15 years, in 2009 he and other Malukan activists were moved to prisons on Java over one thousand kilometres away, making family visits very difficult. Advocacy groups estimate there are around 170 political prisoners in Indonesia as whole, most of whom have been jailed for being involved in peaceful protests or displaying banned regional flags in Maluku and Papua. This is another irony of post-colonial Indonesia since these controversial 'rebellion' laws, which carry heavy sentences and are frequently used against non-violent protestors, date back to the Dutch East Indies but still remain on the books. The Dutch used similar exile tactics to those still applied to RMS members, most famously in the case of Sukarno, Indonesia's first president.

Communal Conflict

Indonesia's remarkably diverse ethnic mosaic has resulted in a melting pot of cultures across the archipelagic state. Horizontal conflict among Maluku's various ethnic and religious groups can be seen as both a legacy of its colonial history and an irony of its uneasy integration into the modern Indonesian unitary state. Sectarian conflict in Maluku first surfaced in the 1650s, as European influence began changing the ethnic and religious mix of the islands. Christian conversions in Maluku commenced after the Portuguese arrival and by the 1560s it was estimated there were some 10,000 Catholics in the area, largely on Ambon, which had grown to perhaps 50,000 to 60,000 by the 1590s. Much of the gains in the Catholic population is attributed to the work of Spanish missionary Saint Francis Xavier.[12] The number of Christians subsequently expanded under Dutch rule, bequeathing Maluku a delicate balance of Muslims and Christians. For

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instance, Indonesia's census of 2000 put the population of Maluku province at 1.15 million, almost evenly divided between Christians (50.2%) and Muslims (49.1%). Meanwhile, the new province of North Maluku was over 85% Muslim with a total population of around 670,000.

Although this religious balance was a direct consequence of European influence, the social and political changes of the Suharto era contributed significantly to the savage communal conflict that afflicted Maluku between 1999 and 2002. Perhaps the most profound of these changes was a large increase of internal migrants from other parts of Indonesia into Maluku, much of it officially encouraged by the government's transmigration programme. The Dutch first instituted this policy in the early nineteenth century to provide a plantation workforce on Sumatra. Although the scheme wound down in the twilight years of the colonial era it was revived by Sukarno, and then expanded by his successor Suharto. Then as now Indonesia has an unbalanced population with parts of the country subject to intense population pressure, with others covered by vast tracts of forest. The politically dominant island of Java houses some 58% of Indonesia's population within only 7% of its landmass, and its six provinces have the highest population densities in the country. By contrast, the other islands account for some 90% of the country's landmass but contain only around 42% of the population.

For Suharto's New Order regime, its revived transmigration programme had many facets. These included alleviating poverty in the core islands by distributing 'empty' land in the remoter regions; exploiting the various and abundant natural resources of these outer islands; inculcating a shared Indonesian identity by bringing together the different ethnic groups; and consolidating central control over distant peripheral regions such as Maluku. Formerly sponsored by the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, large-scale official migration programs came to a halt in August 2000 but informal or spontaneous migration still continues, particularly in eastern Indonesia. At its height between 1979 and 1984, some 535,000 families, or almost 2.5 million people, took advantage of the official transmigration program.

Official transmigrants who moved as part of the government scheme were often outnumbered by so-called spontaneous migrants who moved freely and without any government support. Both types of migration affected delicate ethnic and religious balances, especially in eastern Indonesia, since most transmigrants and a large number of spontaneous migrants were Javanese Muslims. Moreover, transmigration sites were frequently located on communal land that traditionally belonged to local communities and the associated infrastructure developments to support the transmigration settlements frequently uprooted local indigenous communities or damaged their environment.[13] Compounding matters, internal migrants have frequently been ignorant of indigenous customary law and traditions, thus creating further tensions. Christian communities in eastern Indonesia have felt particularly vulnerable since Muslims make up around 80% of Indonesia's total population, and are concentrated in the much more populous western half of the country. The fact that most official transmigrants have been Javanese Muslims, from the most densely populated region of the country, has fed the widespread perception among Christians that official transmigration is restricted to Muslims. However, in the case of Maluku province internal migrants constituted only 6.6% of the population in 2000 and were almost evenly split between Christians (52.1%) and Muslims (47.3%). By contrast, in North Maluku province, Muslim internal migrants were 9.1% of the total population and were 84.7% Muslim, as opposed to 15.1% Christian. In both provinces these migrants came mostly from

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Java and Sulawesi.[14]

In the months immediately before and after Suharto's resignation in May 1998, sectarian conflict spread throughout Indonesia, particularly across the more ethnically diverse eastern reaches of the archipelago that have been subject to significant internal migration. In Maluku's case, the mostly Christian-Muslim fighting began on January 19, 1999 in the largest city Ambon when a local public minivan driver quarreled with two male Muslim migrants from South Sulawesi province. According to court testimony, the two men attempted to extort money from the minivan driver with threats of violence. The angry driver responded by gathering several friends and going after the two migrants. In trying to escape one of the two Bugis men apparently shouted, "There is a Christian who wants to kill us". This led to a mass brawl since the argument had taken place in a predominantly Muslim district of Ambon. A Christian church was among the properties burnt down in the fighting, and members of Ambon's Christian community undertook reprisals on mosques in the area. The following morning, a false rumour circulated that the city's largest mosque had been set on fire, and the conflict escalated in a cycle of revenge attacks on public and private property by those from both the Muslim and Christian communities. The Ambon riots snowballed from a minor criminal dispute into a savage regional conflict replete with complex political and economic undertones.

Sectarian Conflict in Maluku

Whilst the sectarian conflict started in Ambon city, many localised conflicts broke out across the region and spread to the new province of North Maluku in August 1999. Whilst internal migration from elsewhere in Indonesia was undoubtedly a factor in the communal violence that erupted across both provinces, the movement of indigenous people within North Maluku province also played a role in the conflict. This was particularly the case for the 1975 resettlement of the largely Muslim population of Makian Island to the Christian majority Kao area of northern Halmahera, following an upsurge of volcanic unrest on Makian. Communal rivalry over traditional Kao land rights was already visible by the late 1970s, and the 1997 discovery of gold in the area exacerbated these tensions. The Kao generally viewed their new Makian neighbours as overly assertive since they frequently lobbied for their own administrative sub-district.[15] The proposed sub-district of Makian-Malifut would comprise Makian farmers' territory in addition to several Kao villages, and the gold mine would also fall inside the new unit of Makian-Malifut. The mine was due to commence operations in mid-1999, and although it was destined to be in operation for just four years, local residents envisaged significant financial return to its host sub-district in the form of employment opportunities, infrastructural developments and expanded tax revenues under Indonesia's new decentralisation laws. Indeed, there was speculation that Makian-Malifut might even become the new provincial capital of North Maluku.

The violence in North Maluku began in August 1999 with deadly skirmishes between the indigenous Kao and the migrant Makians and escalated over the following months as sectarian mob violence fanned out across North Maluku. Whilst this followed a precedent established in Maluku province, the violence in North Maluku was shorter than in Maluku but more intense than any of the horizontal conflicts across Indonesia during this period. Attacks by the Kao prompted all 17,000 Makian to flee across to southern Ternate and Tidore, where Muslims retaliated by attacking Ternate's Christians. This resulted in much of Ternate's Christian community escaping to Christian-majority areas, mostly in North Sulawesi province. Thus, North Maluku was ethnically cleansed of most Christians,

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following a pattern that began with the expulsion of Muslim Butonese migrants on Ambon. In Ternate, seat of the provincial capital, the Christian retreat left the island bereft of much its middle class since most Christians worked in the professions, education and business. It was speculated that these expulsions were linked to local electoral engineering, insofar as they would tip the balance in favour of certain candidates.[16]

The fighting became increasingly violent and complex in both provinces over the next two years as the armed Laskar Jihad militia arrived from Java to support the Muslim side, whilst some Christian combatants identified with the old RMS separatist movement. The central government imposed a civil emergency in the territory in June 2000 since the local security forces, divided along ethnic and religious lines, took sides in the conflict and proved unable to stop the fighting. The deployment of neutral security forces in both provinces changed the nature of the conflict from open rioting and mob violence to bombings and sniper attacks. Eventually, these troops from outside of Maluku were able to restore peace but the central government was criticised for not deploying them much sooner. Finally, in February 2002 the Malino II Peace Agreement was signed to end the conflict, although deadly Christian-Muslim riots have occasionally resurfaced subsequently. Fortunately, these incidents have not escalated as in 1999-2002.

Both structural and proximate causes have been cited as explanations for the communal conflict in Maluku and North Maluku provinces.[17] This theory posits that a weakening of traditional social structures was a major factor behind the escalation of violence across both provinces. This was because these structures had traditionally provided both a repertoire of conflict avoidance mechanisms through intra-community relations, and a shared sense of common identity that overrode ethnic and religious differences. Internal migration from elsewhere in Indonesia eroded these traditional structures to the point where they were unable to contain the outbreak of widespread communal violence. Across much of the region the result was a series of escalating revenge killings. This erosion was compounded by the inability of state institutions shaped under Suharto to mediate conflict in a non-violent fashion. Moreover, ethnic and religious partiality within the police and armed forces resulted in a loss of confidence in the security forces and local residents responded by establishing armed militias to protect themselves and their property. Moreover, there is a widely held belief that the military deliberately instigated some of the sectarian conflicts across Indonesia in 1999-2002 in order to stall attempts at military reform that would have blunted the power of the armed forces. Lastly, it is suggested that long-standing inequalities between Christians and Muslims also fed the violence, especially given the creeping Islamisation of Indonesia during the last decade of Suharto's rule.

Of the proximate causes, Indonesia's economic crisis, which started in late 1997, magnified pre-existing tensions by promoting greater economic rivalry between different ethnic and religious groups and between migrant and indigenous residents. At the same time, this competition was given greater impetus by the impending decentralisation and democratisation reforms that began after Suharto's resignation in May 1998. For instance, decentralisation promised local governments greater control over their own funding; thereby raising the financial value of capturing political office for corrupt local elites. Furthermore, democratisation ensured that generating popular support would now become more necessary to secure political office instead of simply cosying up members of the political elite in Jakarta. The result was a much greater political mobilisation along religious and ethnic lines than during the Suharto era. Indeed, all of the communal conflicts in eastern

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Indonesia during 1996-2002 were led by politically involved individuals from the lower middle class in provincial or district capitals, places that were reliant on state funding.[18] In anticipation of the decentralisation and democratisation reforms, and in the power vacuum that followed Suharto's departure, previous coalitions began to disintegrate into open competition and appeals made to ethnic and religious identities became a major currency of political campaigns.

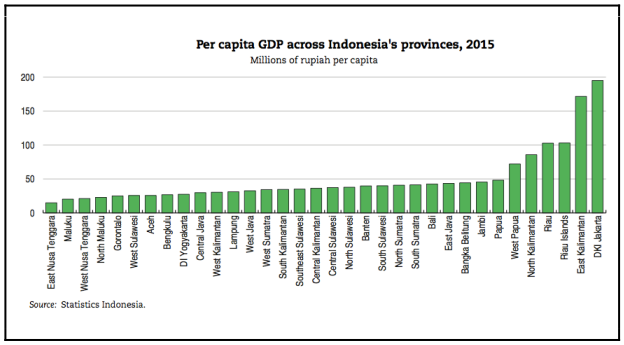
In the decade since the conflict ended, the results of communal reconciliation have been mixed. North Maluku province seems to have made relatively good progress, which may be largely due to the fact that most of its Christian population was expelled. In Maluku province, with its much more delicate religious plurality, tensions between Christians and Muslims have remained high, periodically surfacing into deadly violence. The first major post-conflict episode was in April 2004 when over 40 people died in Ambon city after riots broke out following the raising of the banned RMS flag. More recent riots and mob violence in the provincial capital occurred in September 2011, March 2012 and May 2012, and Maluku province has largely been segregated into Christian and Muslim areas. In 2012 it was found that over 3,000 families were still displaced from their homes as a result of the 1999-2002 violence, with all but 26 of those from Maluku province.[19]

The ethnic and religious makeup of Maluku has been altered by in-migration from elsewhere in Indonesia, and was the spark that lit the horizontal conflict. This is an irony of the region's integration into Indonesia, and once the violence began it was driven by local elite competition over access to state funding in a part of the country heavily reliant on it. Furthermore, the impending division of the large and unwieldy Maluku province, and the creation of many new districts and sub-districts provided greater incentive for local elites to mobilise support through appeals to ethnic and religious allegiances. Ironically, one aim of these new administrative divisions was to contain local intra-elite conflict by stimulating a greater transfer of central government resources to support the new province and its new districts. Indeed, greater decentralisation and the creation of new local government units in the outlying regions of Indonesia was seen as an antidote to Suharto's stifling centralisation policies, which many viewed as unsustainable after the longtime leader's fall. Instead, it inflamed communal violence in Maluku and other parts of Indonesia that had either been subject to internal migration or had a delicate ethnic and religious balance.

Relative Deprivation

A further irony for Maluku in its integration into Indonesia is that despite its former prominence and the fortunes that it made for local and foreign traders, it has been one of the country's poorest regions since independence in 1949. Data collected in 2002 revealed that the poverty rate in the eastern Nusa Tenggara & Maluku region was 26.1%, the second highest in Indonesia after West Papua and markedly above the national average of 16.7%.[20] During this period Maluku was in the midst of communal conflict that took a heavy toll on the local economy. However, in the decade since conflict ended Maluku has remained one of the country's worst off regions, as indicated in Indonesia's Regional Economic Governance Index, which surveyed 245 regencies and municipalities across 19 of Indonesia's 33 provinces in 2011. Districts and cities in Maluku and neighbouring West Papua comprised nine of the 10 lowest ranking units in the survey.[21] Most of the best performing districts were located in Java and Sumatra.

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Interestingly, government statistics from March 2012 indicate that North Maluku province was faring somewhat better than the rump Maluku province (see table below). For example, rural areas in Maluku province had almost twice the proportion of poverty stricken people compared with the national average, and the province's poverty severity index was also much worse than that of Indonesia as a whole.[22] Most people in both provinces still live a mixed subsistence lifestyle of fishing and farming. In 2005 less than five percent of the population of Maluku province were employed in the industrial sector.[23] As elsewhere in Indonesia, Sino-Indonesians dominate most of the larger businesses, whilst internal immigrants from the neighboring island of Sulawesi control most small-scale trading enterprises.

	Percentage of Poor People 2012			*Poverty Severity Index (%) 2012*		
	Urban	Rural	Urban+ Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban+ Rural
Maluku	9.78	28.88	21.78	0.42	1.91	1.36
North Maluku	2.55	10.69	8.47	0.09	0.46	0.36
Indonesia	8.78	15.12	11.96	0.36	0.59	0.47

Despite the region's relative economic deprivation, education enrolment and outcomes in Maluku have consistently been above the national average since the colonial period. Dutch policy in Maluku awarded greater educational opportunities to Christians and those who performed well were rewarded with secure employment in colonial public service. Thus greater importance was attached to education than elsewhere in Indonesia, and this legacy continues to the present day. The table below details enrolment at primary, middle and high school levels, in addition to those for higher education.

	School Participation 2003 (%)				*School Participation 2011 (%)*			
	6-12	13-15	16-18	19-24	6-12	13-15	16-18	19-24
Maluku	95.65	85.43	55.68	12.32	98.18	91.89	67.21	23.65
North Maluku	97.41	87.55	50.93	8.64	97.04	89.89	64.70	16.80
Indonesia	96.42	81.01	50.97	11.71	97.58	87.78	57.85	14.26

Literacy, a key indicator of educational outcomes, also sees Maluku place above the national average, as shown in the data below for illiteracy across different age groups. Indeed, only North Sulawesi province - another Christian-majority province that supplied many functionaries to the Dutch colonial regime - and the capital city of Jakarta - presently have lower illiteracy levels than Maluku province.

	Illiteracy (%) over 15			*Illiteracy (%) 15-44*			*Illiteracy (%) over 45*		
	2003	2007	2011	2003	2007	2011	2003	2007	2011
Maluku	2.96	3.15	3.37	1.38	1.92	1.93	6.66	6.19	6.93
North Maluku	4.46	5.35	3.99	0.95	2.33	1.87	15.57	14.63	10.31
Indonesia	10.21	8.13	7.19	3.88	2.96	2.30	25.43	18.94	17.89

In contrast to its education figures, health indicators in Maluku paint a less rosy picture as life expectancy has lagged behind the Indonesian national average. In 1996 the national average life span was 64.4 years, compared with 63.1 years in Maluku. By 2002, life expectancy was 65.5 years in new Maluku province and 63.0 years in North Maluku province, whilst for Indonesia as a whole it was 66.2.[24] Despite the national increase, Maluku

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and North Maluku were the only provinces in the country that saw an overall drop in life expectancy and a concurrent rise in infant mortality between 1999 and 2002, largely attributable to the communal conflict. In addition, those with access to health services in North Maluku fell from 66 to 58% of the population between 1999 and 2002, again largely as a result of the violence.[25] Whilst progress has been made in the decade since the conflict ended, both Maluku and North Maluku provinces were cited by Indonesia's Health Ministry as being among 10 provinces that in 2011 failed to provide adequate health care to their residents.[26] Maluku province was also cited by the Ministry as one of 20 provinces still suffering from a high rate of infant and maternal mortality as a result of poor access to health care facilities and shortages of skilled staff.[27] The highly dispersed nature of the Moluccan archipelago and its poor transportation links continue to blight health care delivery.

Using a combination of education, health and income data, Maluku's human development index (HDI) for 2015 was 67.05, placing it 24th among the country's 34 provinces, whilst North Maluku was 65.91, placing it 27th. The Indonesian national average HDI was 69.55, with most of the best performing provinces being located in Java and Sumatra. Eastern Indonesia as a whole lags significantly behind the western half of the country in human development, with Sumatra's Lampung province (ranked 25th) the only western province in the bottom 10. This is exacerbated by the fact that when large industrial projects are established in regions such as Maluku and Papua the workforce has often been imported from Java.[28] As a result, in recent years many ethnic Malukans have been making the reverse journey to Java in search of greater opportunities.

A 2011 survey of businesses by Regional Autonomy Watch (Komite Pemantauan Pelaksanaan Otonomi Daerah, KPPOD) looked at perceptions of the quality of local infrastructure across all provinces of Indonesia, focusing on water supply, electricity, roads, street lighting and telecommunications. The provinces of Maluku and North Maluku, along with Southeast Sulawesi, scored worst in all five types of infrastructure.[29]

Indeed, for both the resident and the visitor to Maluku the challenges of navigating the region are numerous. Online booking for transportation or accommodation is not an option, and even finding ferry schedules and timetables can be very difficult. Whilst several airlines do service the provincial capitals of Ambon (Maluku) and Ternate (North Maluku), travelling onwards to the other islands requires a great deal of time and patience. For instance, it is not uncommon to wait days for a boat to a neighbouring island, and there can even be up to two weeks between scheduled passenger ferries. Another alternative is to negotiate with the captain of a cargo or oil ship that has limited space to take some paying guests, although safety could be a concern when taking such an option. Such issues are compounded by the fact that Indonesia's domestic airline industry was hard hit by the Asian economic crisis of 1997-98 and many routes in eastern Indonesia were slashed. Despite a recent burgeoning of domestic low cost carriers, many of the less profitable routes in eastern Indonesia have not recovered. As a result, Maluku sees relatively few foreign visitors. This is ironic given that Maluku was the first region of Indonesia to have substantial contact with European visitors.

Conclusion

The genesis of the modern Indonesian state, the fourth most populous country in the world and the largest country in Southeast Asia, can originally be traced back to Maluku, a largely forgotten group of small islands in Indonesia's remote east. Yet Maluku itself has had a

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troubled and contested integration into that state. Both Maluku's centrality to Indonesia's formation and the roots of its fraught integration can be traced back to the Dutch colonial period (1602-1942) for Indonesia is the successor state to the Dutch East Indies whose existence stemmed from control of Maluku and the spice trade. Perhaps the beginning of the modern age and globalization can also be traced back to the spice trade, in which Maluku played a central role. These spices were the raison d'etre for the European arrival in the Indonesian archipelago, and were more valuable than gold at the height of the trade.

Maluku's integration into the successor state of Indonesia has been contested since even before independence was formally gained. Even though its economic importance declined precipitously after the Dutch moved their centre of operations to Jakarta and the British managed to cultivate Maluku's precious nutmeg and cloves in their own colonies, many ethnic Malukans continued to receive greater opportunities than other Indonesians under Dutch rule. Southern Maluku, in particular Ambon, was the first place in Indonesia where Christian missionaries made significant headway, and Ambonese Christians enjoyed privileged access to education and government positions during the colonial period. Anxious to preserve their status, many Christian Malukans fought in the Dutch colonial army trying to suppress the Indonesian nationalist struggle for independence (1945-49). Malukan leaders subsequently agreed to join the new independent Indonesian state under a federal system designed to give its member states considerable autonomy. However, just eight months into formal independence this federal arrangement ceased to exist and thus began a Malukan separatist campaign to resist integration into the Indonesian unitary state. Whilst this rebellion was quickly quashed, echoes of the separatist movement reappeared in the savage communal conflict of 1999-2002, the most violent of the various conflicts that afflicted Indonesia during that tumultuous period. In 2017 its legacy continues with some 50 political prisoners serving long jail terms for promoting independence for southern Maluku.

Communal violence has occasionally flared up since the Malino II Peace Agreement of February 2002 formally ended the fighting of 1999-2002. Like nearby Papua, the ethnic and religious makeup of Maluku has been altered by in-migration from elsewhere in Indonesia, facilitated by advances in modern transportation and encouraged by central government policy. This internal migration was the spark that lit Maluku's horizontal conflict, and was fanned by local elite competition over access to Indonesian state funding in an area of the country that has become heavily reliant on it. Ironically, Maluku continues to enjoy some of the best educational outcomes in the whole of Indonesia but its poverty and unemployment levels remain higher than the national average. As a result, it will likely remain heavily dependent on Indonesian central government funding for the foreseeable future.

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Notes

[1] As a geographic or political entity 'eastern Indonesia' remains somewhat vaguely defined but this paper follows the convention set by the Indonesian government and the World Bank which use the term to cover the provinces in Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Nusa Tenggara, Maluku, and Papua. By this definition the remaining islands of Sumatra, Java and Bali are classifed as 'western Indonesia'.
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[3] M.C. Ricklefs, 2001. *A History of Modern Indonesia Since c. 1200*, London: Palgrave, p.28
[4] Ricklefs, 2001, p.28
[5] Ricklefs, 2001, p.76
[6] C.L.M. Penders, 2002. *The West New Guinea Debacle: Dutch Decolonisation and Indonesia, 1945-1962*, Adelaide: Crawford House, p.89.
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[8] Graham Brown, Christopher Wilson, and Suprayoga Hadi, 2005. 'Overcoming Violent Conflict: Peace and Development Analysis in Maluku and North Maluku' in *Overcoming Violent Conflict: Volume 4*, Jakarta: United Nations Development Programme and Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia, p.11
[9] For more details see Kenneth Conboy and James Morrison, 1999. *Feet to the Fire CIA Covert Operations in Indonesia, 1957–1958*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press.
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[11] Aditjondro, 2000
[12] Ricklefs, 2001, pp.28-29
[13] Jennifer Leith, 1999. 'Resettlement and Restless Tree Spirits: Shifting Identities and Resource-based Livelihoods in North Halmahera' *Cakalele* vol.10 pp.62-76
[14] BPS data cited in Brown, Wilson and Hadi (2005), p. 9
[15] Gerry van Klinken, 2007. *Communal Violence and Democratization in Indonesia: Small Town Wars*, London: Routledge, pp.117-119
[16] Van Klinken, 2007, p.119
[17] Brown, Wilson and Hadi (2005), pp.20-31
[18] Van Klinken, 2007, p.109
[19] Musthofid, 'Refugees still waiting for resettlement', *The Jakarta Post*, 25 March 2012
[20] United Nations Development Program (UNDP), *Indonesia Human Development Report*

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2004, 2004

[21] This survey was based on nine indicators: regional infrastructure; business expansion programs; interactions access to land between the government and business; transaction fees; business licensing; security and business conflict resolution efforts; the capacity and integrity of the head of the region; and local regulations.

[22] Badan Statistik Indonesia (BPS)

[23] 2005 figures from BPS Provinsi Maluku, cited in Craig Thorburn, 2009. 'Maluku: The Long Road to Recovery' in Budy P. Resosudarmo, and Frank Jotzo (eds.) *Working with Nature against Poverty: Development, Resources and the Environment in Eastern Indonesia*, Singapore: ISEAS

[24] UNDP figures cited in Budy P. Resosudarmo, 2009. 'A Note on Socio-economic Development in Maluku' in Budy P. Resosudarmo and Frank Jotzo (eds.) *Working with Nature against Poverty: Development, Resources and the Environment in Eastern Indonesia*, Singapore: ISEAS

[25] Government of Indonesia and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Peace Through Development Programme for North Maluku, Maluku and Central Sulawesi*, January 2006

[26] Elly Burhaini Faizal, 'Inequality dogs RI's progress', *The Jakarta Post*, 5 January 2012

[27] Elly Burhaini Faizal, 'Maternal, infant deaths in 20 provinces remain high', *The Jakarta Post*, 11 May 2012

[28] Van Klinken, 2007, p.109

[29] KPPOD 2011. *Local Economic Governance, A Survey of Business Operators in 245 Districts/Municipalities in Indonesia*

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