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Over the course of 1999–2001, a pattern of inter-religious violence unfolded in the provinces of Central Sulawesi, Maluku, and Maluku Utara that caused hundreds, indeed thousands, of deaths, and created flows of internally displaced persons (IDPs) numbering well into the hundreds of thousands. As the author has argued elsewhere, these pogroms of 1999–2001 represented a decisive phase in the shifting pattern of religious violence observed in Indonesia, from religious riots in 1995–1997 to religious pogroms in 1998–2001, and what might be glossed as jihad from roughly 2000 to the present. Viewed from this comparative perspective, the inter-religious pogroms in Central Sulawesi, Maluku, and Maluku Utara must be explained in terms of the particular timing, location, perpetrators, targets, forms, and processes of mobilization associated with this phase of religious violence in Indonesia. Viewed through a zoom lens focused on the pogroms themselves, moreover, the very pattern of their unfolding—from initial outbreak, escalation, and spread in 1999 to gradual de-escalation by the end of 2001—also calls for close examination and explanation.

This essay will argue that the inter-religious pogroms of 1999–2001 in Central Sulawesi, Maluku, and Maluku Utara are best explained through a focus on displacement, in at least two different senses of the term. First and most obviously, these pogroms were “about” displacement in the sense that they concerned displaced people, as seen in the centrality of forced migration among the objectives and outcomes of the violence. As many observers have noted, the expulsion of thousands of residents from their homes, neighborhoods, and villages in Central Sulawesi, Maluku, and Maluku Utara constituted the primary means by which the violence spread and achieved its broadest consequences. Perhaps the clearest and most well-chronicled example of this process of violent displacement is Maluku

Utara, as discussed in this volume and elsewhere by Christopher Duncan, Nils Bubandt, and other scholars.

Second, and perhaps more subtly, these pogroms were “about” displacement in the sense of displacement as it was articulated by Sigmund Freud more than one hundred years ago and rendered commonplace in psychology and social theory: displaced anxieties, externalized and transferred or projected onto objects “centered elsewhere.” Most accounts of the inter-religious pogroms in Central Sulawesi, Maluku, and Maluku Utara stress the conditions—including migration—that heightened tensions between Christians and Muslims in these provinces in the late 1990s. But alongside these seemingly “external” sources of tension and fear were “internal” anxieties among Christians and Muslims, anxieties about the boundaries and hierarchies associated with religious identities in these parts of the Indonesian archipelago, identities haunted by what Arjun Appadurai has called the “anxiety of incompleteness.”

This essay is intended to reveal the connections between these two meanings of “displacement” and to show how the latter form of displacement enabled and impelled the former. To be sure, there are other meanings of displacement, most obviously if one considers the diverse phenomenological experiences of those involved in forced migration in and beyond Central Sulawesi, Maluku, and Maluku Utara from 1999 onwards. Such meanings remain largely unexamined in this essay, given the very real limitations of the author’s access to and understanding of such experiences. Instead, drawing on available ethnographic, investigative, and journalistic sources, the following analysis offers a more structuralist—some might say post-structuralist—account of the double imperatives of displacement in the inter-religious pogroms in Central Sulawesi, Maluku, and Maluku Utara in 1999 to 2001.

**BACKDROP: RELIGIOUS UNCERTAINTIES AND ANXIETIES**

The backdrop to the violence in Central Sulawesi, Maluku, and Maluku Utara was, of course, the ongoing transition from authoritarian rule to an open, competitive electoral system, and all the uncertainties and anxieties accompanying this transition. As could be expected, the effects of the first installation of a new president in three decades in Jakarta were soon to trickle down to the cities, towns, and villages of the archipelago in terms of access to state power and patronage. With the removal of the certainty and the centralization of state power that characterized the Suharto era, and their replacement by a transitional form of government moving towards competitive elections and the deconcentration and decentralization of state power, the fixity of the very hierarchy connecting locality to Center was undermined, as were the boundaries of the jurisdictions governed by those asserting authority within this hierarchy.

Under the New Order, the circuitries of power connecting villages to towns to provincial cities to Jakarta were centrally wired in the national capital and coursed through the military, the civil service, Golkar, various pseudo-parliamentary bodies, and schools and universities. Competition for power and patronage within the

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political class was thus confined and channeled—vertically, as it were—within the state’s coercive and ideological apparatuses, as rival networks defined by educational and religious affiliations and identities fought for coveted appointed positions (e.g., military commands, governorships, seats in various pseudo-parliamentary bodies) and associated perks (e.g., construction contracts and criminal franchises). Against this backdrop, the demise of the New Order and the promise of competitive elections on the horizon carried significant implications. Instead of individuated competition channeled vertically and confined laterally within the state, various streams or currents (aliran) within the political class now found themselves competing—collectively and horizontally, as it were—not (only) in and for the state, but (also) in and for society. Thus the boundaries of identities and interests in Indonesian society, long determined by a fixed, hierarchical source of recognition firmly anchored in the state and centered in Jakarta, were left in flux.

The implications of this loosening and shifting of boundaries were evident in a variety of violent new conflicts. In some cases, these were boundaries over property and territory, as seen in countless seizures of land and fights over control of mines, forests, and coastal shorelines. In numerous other cases, the boundaries concerned were those of local criminal rackets, with rival gangs in Jakarta and other cities initiating antar-kampung (inter-neighborhood) skirmishes to determine the extent of their claims over “turf” under conditions of indeterminate or fluctuating franchise. More broadly, with the deconcentration of power in Jakarta and the move towards decentralization in the provinces, the very boundaries of administrative units came into question, with local politicians vying for some control over the subdivision (pemekaran) of countless villages, regencies, and provinces in the months and years after Suharto’s fall from the presidency.

In many cases, contestation was framed in terms of the boundaries outlining collective identities—whether cast in terms of community, clan, ethnicity, or religious faith—whose fixity was no longer assured. Against this backdrop, it is hardly surprising that much of the “horizontal” violence that began to unfold in 1998–1999 assumed the form of specifically religious pogroms. As is well known, religious faith had long served in Indonesia as the primary marker of public identities insisted upon—and enforced by—the state, and as a key determinant of point of entry into the political class. Not only was the ascension to the presidency of B. J. Habibie, a politician closely identified with Islam, thus experienced beyond Jakarta in terms of religiously coded local repercussions for the distribution of state offices and patronage, but the turn towards open politics and competitive elections laid open the question of the very basis of claims to religious authority and state power. If under a centralized, closed, authoritarian regime claims of representation had been imposed and enforced from above, now under conditions of political openness and competition the hierarchies and boundaries of religious authority faced unprecedented uncertainties. As argued below, these uncertainties generated anxieties whose displacement impelled the inter-religious pogroms in parts of Central Sulawesi, Maluku, and Maluku Utara in 1999–2001.

While heightened uncertainties and anxieties about identities and hierarchies—both religious and otherwise—were common throughout Indonesia during this transitional period, their capacity to generate inter-religious pogroms in parts of Central Sulawesi, Maluku, and Maluku Utara was enhanced by at least three features of these settings. First of all, these pogroms occurred along the boundaries between the officially recognized faiths of Islam and Christianity, with Protestant churches
claiming sizeable congregations in these localities and constituting important alternative structures of authority and access to state power relative to those provided by their Islamic counterparts. Second, compared to the more economically “developed” and diversified setting of Java, with its clearer division between (predominantly Chinese) business and government, in the poorer and more peripheral regions of Central Sulawesi, Maluku, and Maluku Utara, access to the agencies of the Indonesian state was much more important for the accumulation of capital, status, and wealth, and local “business” and “politics” more fully overlapped. Third and finally, these local constellations of religious authority and political economy combined with unsettling events—the approaching elections of 1999, decentralization, and the redrawing of administrative boundaries (pemekaran)—to create tremendous uncertainty and anxiety along the local borders and within the local hierarchies of religious faith, not only among Islamic and Christian ecclesiastical establishments, but also among rival Muslim and Protestant networks of local politicians, businessmen, gangsters, civil servants, and (active and retired) military and police officers. These uncertainties and anxieties were not simply inter-religious in nature, but intra-religious as well. Indeed, as suggested in the analysis below, it was the displacement of anxieties essentially intrinsic and internal to religious identities and hierarchies onto ostensibly external enemies and aggressors that drove the pogroms in these localities.

CENTRAL SULAWESI

As a location for inter-religious violence in 1998–2001, the Central Sulawesi regency of Poso was notable for its role as a major “Outer Island” Protestant population center, and a hub for Protestant proselytization and political power, so that it acted as a center of Christian ecclesiastical activity and authority. The consolidation of Dutch control over this part of Central Sulawesi in the first two decades of the twentieth century had been accompanied, assisted, and in no small measure achieved by the activities of Protestant missionaries from the Dutch Reformed Church (and by other denominations such as the Salvation Army elsewhere in the province). While Islam was well established among the residents of the coastal areas of Central Sulawesi, it had largely failed to “climb” inland and upland, leaving the “animist” highlands of the province available for conversion to Christianity. Protestant missionary schools operating under the “Ethical Policy” of the colonial regime drew highlanders into their orbit with increasing success in the final decades of colonial rule, forging the crucial linkages between literacy, Protestant education, and entry into the state bureaucracy. These schools combined with the codification of customary law (adat) and the promotion of “indigenous” ethnic To Pamona identity to produce among highlanders very different kinds of supra-local connections and very different conceptions of collective identity from those emerging among the lowland, coastal Muslim population through pesantren networks, Sufi tarekat, the Hajj, and, increasingly, modern forms of Islamic education and association, most notably under the rubric of the Al-Khaira’at organization based in nearby Palu.4

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This pattern persisted and deepened with Indonesian independence, under the rubric of the Gereja Kristen Sulawesi Tengah (GKST, Protestant Church of Central Sulawesi), established in 1947 and headquartered in the town of Tentena in the southern highlands of Poso regency. Still funded by the Dutch Reformed Church and assisted by foreign missionaries, the GKST evolved over the first half-century of independence into a complex state-like organization boasting more than three hundred congregations and an array of schools, hospitals, clinics, development projects, and other organizations by the turn of the twenty-first century. As the anthropologist Lorraine Aragon has noted, the Suharto regime appreciated the assistance of Protestant churches like the GKST in “creating nuclear family households, defining individual economic responsibilities, increasing ties to the national and global economies, introducing biomedicine, and expanding school attendance,” and in promoting “the acceptance of national regulations, the use of money, government rhetoric concerning the benefits of progress, and regional record keeping.” Against this backdrop, the GKST continued to serve as a major channel for access to the state, through its network (jaringan) of school graduates entering the police, the military, the civil service, and Golkar. Indeed, as detailed by anthropologists who studied the church’s history, the GKST itself evolved into a somewhat state-like set of local authority structures. The GKST’s congregations were divided into evangelization groups composed of closely related families, which met weekly for ceremonial feasts and sermons by the church elders chosen by the governing body of the congregation. These church elders thus came to serve as lay preachers, authority figures within extended family circles, and as major local power brokers among a predominantly poor rural population, given their privileged access to the diverse resources, services, and networks of the GKST.

Against this backdrop, the holding of genuinely competitive elections, the process of devolution of fiscal and administrative powers to the regency (kabupaten) level, and the shift from central appointment of regents (bupati) to selection by local assemblies (DPRD, Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah) all combined to create considerable expectations and anxieties with regard to the structure of religious authority and power in Poso from 1998 to 2001. The final years of the Suharto era—and the brief Habibie interlude—had witnessed in Poso increasing success on the part of Muslim political-cum-business networks in the regency in extending their presence and influence into realms previously dominated by Protestants. This success in Poso reflected both the national conjuncture (with significant political implications) and the local culmination of several decades of increasing Muslim integration into the market (e.g., in copra-producing coastal areas), into state educational institutions, including new local universities, and into the ranks of the local bureaucracy. By the 1990s, this trend was apparent both within the local corridors of the state, as ICMI- (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia, Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals) and HMI-affiliated (HMI, Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam, Islamic Students’ Association) civil servants and politicians claimed positions and patronage powers once held by Protestants, and along the local circuitries of the

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market, as Muslim migrants (most notably Bugis from South Sulawesi) established new money-lending and marketing networks and bought up land in the hills of the regency in the midst of a world-wide cocoa boom. Researchers noted a pattern of land sales by families needing cash to fund their children’s university education and to pay the bribes needed to obtain positions in the local bureaucracy. Overall, these trends reproduced within the Muslim population of Poso similar patterns of exploitation and inequality, and parallel structures of power and authority, to those found among Christians in the regency. As for the impact of these trends on Protestant highlanders in Poso, Lorraine Aragon concluded:

Family-based farming of cash crops also generated new wealth, but again mostly for ambitious Muslim migrants and urban merchants, including Chinese ones. Although Pamona and other highland Protestants did grow some cash crops such as cloves, coffee, and cacao, highlanders remained primarily subsistence rice farmers. Few became involved in market activities beyond the sale of small crop surpluses in exchange for basic supplies or cash needs. While Muslim Bugis or Makasar migrants became middleman traders or worked for private businesses through their patron-client networks, Protestant highlanders traditionally had no capitalist business experience and much more localized exchange networks. Many ran up high-interest debts to immigrant salespeople, whose kiosks offered credit, and so found their next season’s produce already owed before harvest.

Highlanders traditionally left their ancestral villages only for higher education, church employment, or civil service jobs, if they could obtain them. As non-Pamona bought up or were allotted lands through transmigration programs, many Pamona youths found themselves landless as well as jobless by the end of the Suharto regime. Opportunities for social mobility depended upon personal connections to members of the regional bureaucracy. Indigenous groups’ access to positions remained available mainly to descendants of the precolonial nobility, and Protestants’ ties to recognized aristocracies were fewer than those of Muslims. Although a small percentage of Protestant Pamona leaders did increase their economic standing dramatically during the New Order, the mass of Pamona and other highland Protestant farmers did not.

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8 On the effects of the cocoa boom on Central Sulawesi, see Tania Murray Li, “Two Tales and Three Silences: Critical Reflections on Indonesian Violence,” paper presented at the conference on “Violence in Eastern Indonesia: Causes and Consequences,” University of Hawai’i and East-West Center, Honolulu, May 16–18, 2003. The author is grateful to Professor Li for sharing a draft of this paper.
Meanwhile, Protestant church leaders, politicians, businessmen, and gangsters in Poso in the 1990s had found an increasingly attractive alternative to Golkar in the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (PDI, or Indonesian Democratic Party). The PDI had deep roots in Poso, incorporating the Sukarno-era Protestant party Parkindo (which polled 26 percent and won second place in Poso in the 1955 elections) within its folds; the party held its annual national congress in the regency in 1997. Thus the processes of democratization and decentralization in Poso came with the opportunity—for some, the imperative—of mobilizing Protestant voters to halt—and reverse—the apparent “religious” trends of the preceding several years, if not through Golkar then via the PDI-P (Parti Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan, Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle), headed by the popular figure of Megawati Soekarnoputri. Likewise, for members of local Muslim political-cum-business networks in Poso, the possibility that the “Muslim vote” would be fragmented, divided between Golkar, PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, United Development Party), the new Islamic parties, and even PDI-P, threatened a loss of control over the local assembly (DPRD) and, with decentralization, over key local executive posts as well. Legislation creating a new regency of Morowali out of eastern Poso in September 1999 further narrowed the margin between the numbers of Christians and Muslims registered as residents—and as voters—thus heightening the uncertainty—and the urgency—of political mobilization along religious lines.

However, the opportunity or imperative of mobilizing voters in Poso along religious lines in 1998–2001 came at a time when the established structures of local religious authority and identity appeared to be in danger of losing their certainty, their coherence, their distinctiveness, and their power. By the 1990s, migration patterns had made the town of Poso increasingly diverse, in terms of ethnicity, language, and religion. As Lorraine Aragon noted:

Protestants besides Pamona included Minahasans, Balinese, and Chinese as well as Mori, Napu, and Bada’ people from within the regency. Muslims included Arabs, Javanese, Bugis, Makasar, Mandar, Buton, and Kaili people as well as Tojo, Togian (Togean), and Bungku people from the regency. The small Catholic

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13 Megawati’s PDIP was especially popular in Bali, Central Java, and among Javanese communities in the so-called “Outer Islands” as well, thus raising the specter of a strong showing for the party among Balinese transmigrants and in the sizeable pockets of—overwhelmingly Muslim—Javanese immigrants who had settled in Poso.
14 The creation of the Morowali regency appears to have reduced the Muslim percentage of the population of Poso regency from 63 percent in 1997 to 56 percent in 2000, with the Protestant percentage rising from 34 percent in 1997 to 40 percent in 2000. The remaining 3–4 percent of the population consisted of Catholics, whether of Chinese or Flores origin, and Hindu transmigrants from Bali. Compare: M. Hamdan Basyar, “Sketsa Kabupaten Poso,” in Konflik Poso: Pemetaan dan Pencarian Pola-Pola Alternatif Penyelesaiannya, ed. M. Hamdan Basyar (Jakarta: P2P-LIPI, 2003), pp. 18–19; and Leo Suryadinata, Evi Burvidya Arifin, and Aris Ananta, Indonesia’s Population: Ethnicity and Religion in a Changing Political Landscape (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003), pp. 172–75.
minority was comprised of Minahasans and Chinese, as well as migrants from former Portuguese colonies such as Flores. Balinese were the only Hindus.\(^{16}\)

Thus the GKST, while still dominant among the To Pamona people of the Poso highlands, could no longer claim to speak on behalf of all Christians in the regency. Likewise the established mosque and school network associated with the Al-Khaira’at organization, with its headquarters and university in nearby Palu, now competed with local branches of national organizations like Nahdatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and Persatuan Islam, Sufis \textit{tarekat} like the South Sulawesi-based Khalwatiyya,\(^{17}\) and other streams of Islamic devotion and affiliation for worshippers and pupils among Muslims of Javanese, Bugis, Makassarese, and other origins in Poso.\(^{18}\)

Alongside the diversifying and destabilizing effects of immigration on religious affiliations and authority structures in Poso came more subtle—and in some ways more “subversive”—homogenizing local trends accompanying capitalist development, the expansion of modern education and communications, and the imposition of national state religious policies. For much as the local cliques of Muslim businessmen, bureaucrats, politicians, and gangsters within and beyond Poso in the 1990s resembled those of their Protestant rivals, so too did the local marketing and money-lending networks of (Muslim) Bugis entrepreneurs begin to mirror those of their (Christian) Chinese counterparts and competitors.\(^{19}\) In the organization of religious life, moreover, further parallels emerged, as Christian and Muslim associations and schools alike worked to mediate between the needs of their respective “flocks” (\textit{jemaah}), on the one hand, and the opportunities and pressures of state and market on the other. Thus, for example, the Al-Khaira’at school system had “modernized” over the years, a process that culminated in the formally recognized Universitas AlKhairaat in Palu, which offered degrees in agriculture, aquaculture, and medicine alongside its selection of religious studies courses. More broadly, Lorraine Aragon observed a “process of supra-ethnic convergence of local Christianity and Islam” during the course of her fieldwork in Central Sulawesi (mostly in neighboring Palu) in the 1980s:

The longer I lived in Central Sulawesi, the more convinced I became that Christian and Muslim practices in Palu were conforming to each other. Christmas became, like the Muslim holiday in Lebaran, a weeklong visiting

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\(^{16}\) Aragon, “Communal Violence in Poso,” p. 57. The 2000 census indicated that some 20 percent of the Poso population was “Javanese,” with many found in rural concentrations of transmigrants outside the city.


\(^{18}\) On the diversity of religious practices and beliefs in South Sulawesi, for example, see Thomas Gibson, “Islam and the Spirit Cults in New Order Indonesia: Global Flows vs. Local Knowledge,” \textit{Indonesia} 69 (April 2000): 41–70.

\(^{19}\) On the two-term entrenchment of the \textit{bupati} of Poso in the 1990s, his ICMI affiliation and other Islamic associational links, his nepotistic personnel practices, and his patronage of local Muslim construction contractors and other businessmen, see Aditjondro, “Kerusuhan Poso dan Morowali,” pp. 23–26; for a description of the \textit{bupati}’s treatment of a prominent Muslim plantation owner and cattle baron in a rural area now part of Morowali regency, see pp. 32–33.
holiday where Christian and Muslim employees alike were invited to visit and eat at their superiors’ homes. Christians who were invited to their Muslim coworkers’ homes on Lebaran returned the invitations at Christmas, and vice versa. Common gifts such as jars of cookies, Western-style frosted layer cakes, or cases of imported soft drinks were exchanged both within and across religions at the major holidays.

As any visitor to Muslim regions of Indonesia knows, mosques of the past decades have used the miracle of electronic amplification to broadcast their five-times-daily calls to prayer throughout the surrounding community. In urban areas, these amplified chants in classical Arabic reverberate loudly in a manner that only the most hearing impaired could ignore. In the late 1980s, Christian churches similarly began to adopt the use of loudspeakers for their services. They then broadcast the ministers’ words not only to their in-church congregations, but, like the mosques, also beyond the church walls to all those thinking they might sleep through the words of God.

Muslim services in Palu also began to include sermons comparable in format and length to those given in the Christian churches. One Protestant missionary wife claimed that local Muslim leaders were imitating her husband’s sermon topics and delivery style. Even within Muslims’ and Christians’ minor discourses of rivalry, there was religious convergence. Christians disparaged goats as unclean Muslim animals, just as Muslims decried pigs as unclean Christian livestock.... Christian and Muslim institutions similarly contended to pull villagers away from their ancestral and family orientations towards compliance with a more remote state and God wielding more awesome powers. These common goals of modernization, at least in Central Sulawesi, made Christianity and Islam companions and peers as well as erstwhile adversaries.20

MALUKU AND MALUKU UTARA

As in Poso, the backdrop to inter-religious violence in Maluku and Maluku Utara in 1999–2001 was not only a long history of religious divisions, but also rising uncertainty, ambiguity, and anxiety with regard to religious boundaries and hierarchies. From the seventeenth century onwards, the Dutch East Indies Company (VOC, Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie) brought Protestant missionaries in its wake, first to the island of Ambon and the fort settlement of the same town, and later to other islands of the Moluccan archipelago. Dutch missionary schools provided not only religious instruction but also practical education to Protestants in the Moluccas for the purposes of preparing low-level civil servants for the colonial regime. As the Dutch colonial state extended its hold over the Netherlands East Indies in the late nineteenth century and in the “Forward Movement” of the early twentieth century, and as the colonial bureaucracy expanded its functions and personnel under the Ethical Policy declared in 1902, so did the numbers of Protestant civil servants, teachers, missionaires, and soldiers leaving the Moluccas for other islands of the archipelago correspondingly increase.21 Protestants from the island of Ambon were

20 Aragon, Fields of the Lord, pp. 315–16.
thus disproportionately well represented among the ranks of civil servants, professionals, and missionaries throughout the Dutch East Indies, and in particular in the Dutch colonial army, the KNIL (Koninklijk Nederlandsch-Indisch Leger, Royal Netherlands-Indies Army). The number of Ambonese Protestant recruits into the KNIL grew enormously in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, and the pattern of recruitment, organization, and quartering of soldiers “served to create a degree of competitiveness and a strong identification with the ethnic group and the status accorded to it by the authorities.”

By the 1930s, an estimated 16 percent of the Protestant population of Ambon was living outside the Moluccas, and as clerks, professionals, and soldiers under the Dutch they and their families enjoyed a higher level of material welfare and a closer degree of identification with the colonial regime than did the Muslim residents of the island. It was thus a group of Ambonese Protestants who had served in the KNIL who led successive local efforts to establish the Negara Indonesia Timur (State of East Indonesia), the Republik Indonesia Timur (Republic of East Indonesia), and, finally, the Republik Maluku Selatan (Republic of South Maluku) during the transition to Indonesian independence in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Yet despite their initial ambivalence about inclusion in the Republic of Indonesia, the “head start” enjoyed by such educated Ambonese Protestants was evident in their predominance locally (and, in relative terms, their prominence nationally) within the security forces, the civil service, the university belt, and the professional classes well into the Suharto era. This “head start” was, inter alia, a linguistic one. Since the early nineteenth century, a creolized Ambonese Malay had replaced local languages among the Protestant population in the South Moluccas, reinforced by “schools, sermons, [and] company directives,” thus facilitating the adoption of the Malay-based national language Bahasa Indonesia in the twentieth century.

Meanwhile, the termination of the Dutch clove monopoly, the collapse of the spice trade, and the relegation of the Moluccas to the status of an economic backwater combined to help establish a different, and more limited, pattern of extra-local linkages for Muslims in Maluku as early as the late nineteenth century. The phasing out of the clove monopoly in the 1860s and improved inter-island transportation in the late nineteenth century facilitated closer contact with Muslims elsewhere in the Netherlands East Indies, and small but growing numbers of Muslims began to leave the Moluccas as sailors, traders, and pilgrims. This pattern of slowly increasing circulation and interaction with Muslims from elsewhere in the archipelago began to draw the distinction between Muslim and Protestant elites in Maluku more sharply in the early twentieth century, as the former increasingly identified themselves in Islamic, and Indonesian, terms, while the latter tended to view their identities and interests as closely linked to the continuation of Dutch colonial rule. Yet the limits of such patterns of supralocal circulation and sense of connectedness among the Muslims of the Moluccas were evident in the persistence

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22 Ibid., p. 52.
23 Ibid., pp. 37–38.
of local dialects in Muslim villages, in sharp contrast with the rise of an Ambonese Malay lingua franca in Protestant areas of the islands.  

However, with independence and the defeat of the Ambonese Protestant-led Republik Maluku Selatan (RMS) in the early 1950s, and with the termination of Ambonese Protestants’ colonial-era advantages within the bureaucracy and the armed forces in particular, Muslims in Maluku began to experience gradual upward social mobility along the pathways paved by their Protestant counterparts, through increasing access to education and employment opportunities within the Indonesian state. The ascendancy of educated Muslims in Maluku into the political class accelerated in the Suharto era, with economic development, state expansion, and urbanization eroding the Protestants’ hegemonic position, most notably in the city of Ambon, the provincial capital. By the 1990s, Protestants in Ambon and elsewhere in Maluku faced rising competition from Muslims in schools and in the Armed Forces, the bureaucracy, Golkar and the DPRD, and in business (both legal and illegal). Suharto’s shift towards state promotion of Islamicization at the national level coincided with local demographic trends, as rising numbers of Butonese (and to a lesser extent, Bugis and Makassarese) immigrants from Sulawesi and high birth rates among local Muslims began to tip the population balance in favor of Muslims (59 percent province-wide in 1997), even in the capital Protestant stronghold of Ambon (42 percent citywide in 1997).

Thus, as in Poso, local political-cum-business networks in the Maluku of the late Suharto era were incorporated into the national political class through a pattern of linkages defined—and divided—by religion. Indeed, just as Maluku’s Protestant civil servants, Army officers, and members of Golkar engaged in intermarriage and nepotistic practices with their co-religionists in the universities, the professions, business, and the criminal underworld, so too did the province’s Muslim political networks operate as channels for patronage and protection linking Muslim towns and villages around the province, Ambon City, and Jakarta. As Jacques Bertrand, a political scientist who conducted extensive fieldwork in Ambon, noted:

The state sector became divided into sections controlled by each group. A particularly interesting example was the University of Pattimura (UNPATTI). The powerful Education Faculty (FKIP), one of the largest faculties in the university, was almost exclusively staffed with Christians well into the 1990s, while other departments included more Muslims. Within the regional and municipal bureaucracies, such tendencies were common. Christians resented the growing presence of Muslims in areas they previously controlled, while Muslims saw their advancement as a just redress since they had been previously marginalized in the region.

26 Collins, Ambonese Malay, p. 11.
Against this backdrop, the resignation of Suharto and inauguration of B. J. Habibie as president in May 1998 carried particular significance for Maluku. Habibie, after all, had served throughout the 1990s as the head of ICMI, the Association of Indonesian Islamic Intellectuals, and under this national umbrella, well-connected Muslims in Maluku could be expected to enjoy considerably enhanced local advantages in terms of appointments to civil service posts, Army commands, seats in various parliamentary bodies, and university lecturerships, as well as preferential treatment for various business and criminal ventures. Indeed, as in Poso, the last five years of the Suharto era had already witnessed marked trends along these lines, as a Muslim governor in Maluku began to fill the top positions in the local bureaucracy with fellow Muslim allies, cronies, and clients.

Yet beyond the immediate implications of Habibie’s rise to the presidency in mid-1998 for local Muslim and Protestant patronage networks, the approach of competitive elections in mid-1999 and the devolution of considerable powers to elected local assemblies legislated later that year represented a major challenge to existing religious identities, boundaries, and structures of authority in Ambon and elsewhere in Maluku. In obvious ways, local shifts in the distribution of state patronage and in the discretionary use of state regulatory power raised tensions along and across the borders between Muslims and Protestants, as did the impending shift to a system in which freely elected local officials would wield much more power over their constituencies. After all, the boundaries between Muslims and Protestants in Ambon and elsewhere in Maluku appeared to be sharply defined and securely fixed in spatial terms, in a pattern of segmentation into local units of official religious homogeneity. Religious boundaries thus tended to conform to village boundaries, and even in those rare localities where religious diversity was found, segregated settlement patterns divided not only Muslims and Christians, but even Protestants and Catholics. This pattern, observable in villages scattered throughout Maluku, as well as in urban neighborhoods (kampung) in the provincial capital of Ambon City, was reinforced by government policies prohibiting interfaith marriages, expanding religious instruction in schools, and promoting a pattern of recruitment into the bureaucracy through networks based on religious affiliation. In this context, competition for state offices, public works contracts, and legal and illegal business franchises was understood according to the zero-sum logic of a highly divided society. Given the considerable ambiguities about land titles and village boundaries in rural Maluku, gang “turf” in urban Ambon, and administrative units throughout the province, the uncertainties attending the regime change, the approaching elections, pemekaran (redistricting), and decentralization all made for

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30 S. Sinansari ecip, Menyulut Ambon—Kronologi Merambatnya Berbagai Kerusuhan Lintas Wilayah di Indonesia (Bandung: Mizan, November 1999), pp. 68–70.
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heightened tensions along religious lines in the months following the fall of Suharto. The impending division of the province into predominantly Muslim (85 percent) Maluku Utara, and a rump Maluku with virtual parity between Muslims and non-Muslims (49 percent/50 percent) in September 1999 only exacerbated the problem.

Yet in perhaps somewhat less obvious ways, the shift to an open, competitive, and decentralized system of organizing power in Indonesia was also accompanied by heightened uncertainty and anxiety as to religious identities and structures of authority within the Muslim and Christian “communities” in Ambon and elsewhere in Maluku. Anthropological writings on the villages of Ambon, after all, stressed the persistence well into the Suharto era of religious beliefs and practices that transcended the Muslim-Protestant divide, patterns of enduring alliance (pela) and mutual assistance among villages of different official faiths, and understandings of local property and authority relations based on supra-religious customary law (adat) and aristocratic lineage. Ethnographic work on other parts of Maluku likewise revealed a broad spectrum of diversity and change in the religious beliefs and practices of those registered as Muslims and Christians in the province, with “conversion” a recent and ongoing process for many official believers, even well into the 1990s. Patterns of migration to and within Maluku—especially by (Muslim) Butonese from Sulawesi—were also cited by observers in the same period as increasing the diversity of religious practices in Maluku and heightening, “ethnicizing” tensions between both Christian and Muslim “natives,” on the one hand, and immigrant “outsiders,” on the other, over economic resources, property relations, village elections, and other issues.

Against this backdrop, the dominant structures of power associated with Protestantism and Islam in Maluku were haunted by rising doubts and fears as to their authority, identity, and coherence, much like their counterparts in Poso. On the Protestant side, the Gereja Protestan Maluku (GPM, Maluku Protestant Church) greatly resembled the GKST in Central Sulawesi in terms of its internal authority structure and discipline, and its well-established links to state power. As one author noted, the GPM

... is by far the largest non-government organization in the province [of Maluku]. Its structure exactly parallels that of local government. Its youth wing, Angkatan Muda Gereja Protestan Maluku (AM-GPM), has thousands of affiliated branches.


All Protestant young people are socialized in the elements of an extremely formal religion through a constant round of activities that takes the dedicated believer away from home most nights of the week. Most prominent Protestant Ambonese are therefore also prominent church leaders.38

The establishment of the Gereja Protestan Maluku in 1935, the ensuing institutional detachment from the Dutch Reformed Church, and the end of Dutch rule in the 1940s had favored localizing trends and accommodation with non-Christian practices.39 Yet expanding access to modern education and contact with the outside world combined with other processes—the increasing encroachment of other Christian denominations and the promotion of Islamic reformism in Maluku—during subsequent decades to raise concerns about the everyday religious beliefs and practices of those claimed as belonging to the church. As one anthropologist noted:

After World War II some young Christian ministers were given the opportunity to study at prestigious theological schools in Europe and the United States. As these ministers gained leadership positions within the church, they were striving to achieve universally accepted standards of Protestantism and thus determined to “purify” Moluccan Christianity by ridding it of ancestor veneration and any customs contrary to Christian beliefs.40

Meanwhile, the Seventh Day Adventist Church had already established a small congregation in Ambon in the 1920s, and in the post-war, post-independence period, the GPM “saw a number of other Protestant denominations, mostly of evangelical and Pentecostal character, growing much faster. In psychological and institutional aspects the GPM was not yet fully on its way to abandoning the character of a dominant religion.”41 Over the years, the sizeable Catholic population in Southeastern Maluku had expanded, as had the numbers of Catholic migrants to Ambon City. Missionary activities in Maluku by Protestant churches from elsewhere in Indonesia and beyond likewise increasingly encroached on the GPM’s established “turf.”42

At the same time, the poverty and isolation of sparsely populated, archipelagic Maluku combined with the associational diversity and limited state institutionalization of Islam in the Netherlands Indies—and in early post-

38 Gerry van Klinken, “Small Town Wars: Post-Authoritarian Communal Violence in Indonesia” (unpublished manuscript), p. 46. Many thanks to the author for making this important forthcoming book available, and for granting permission for the citation of this passage.


42 For a map of the US-based evangelical New Tribes Mission stations in Maluku in the 1990s, for example, see Duncan, “Ethnic Identity, Christian Conversion, and Resettlement,” p. 106.
independence Indonesia more generally—to limit the possibilities for promoting universalistic understandings of the faith among the scattered and still mostly poorly schooled Muslims of the Moluccan Islands. As one observer claimed: “The degree of indigenization of Islam varied widely from village to village, but in one region it was carried so far that people ultimately came to believe that Islam was brought to the Moluccas by the Prophet himself. On the island of Haruku, the pilgrimage of Mecca came to be viewed as unnecessary, but was performed at a special sacred site in the mountains behind the villages.”

Over the three decades of the Suharto era, the expanding circuitries of the market, the state bureaucracy, and the school system began to propagate more modern understandings of Islam among Muslims in Maluku, as promoted by both the state’s official policies on religion (agama) and the diverse outreach (dakwah) activities of various Islamic associations like Muhammadiyah and Al Khaira’at. Thus, as one historian already noted in the early 1980s: “A situation has therefore developed, in which, within both religious communities there has been pressure for reform. Under attack have been those elements of common adat heritage which Christians and Moslems share…” These pressures, as the anthropologist Dieter Bartels further noted, went well beyond the strictly “religious” realm:

The people battling in the political arena are often identical or allied with religious purists and fanatics within the religious structures of Islam and Christianity. These people are outward directed. That is, they tie in with other organizations on the national level and beyond. They perceive Islam or Christianity as universal truths and thus as mutually incompatible. Extremists among them demand the “purification” of religion from beliefs which are not in line with pan-Islamic or pan-Protestant beliefs. Thus they have launched attacks on beliefs that God is one and the same for Christians and Moslems, and they have demanded the discontinuance of ancestor veneration and most of adat—all of which would lead to a further weakening of interfaith ties.

Against this shared backdrop of enduring concern about adat, the persistence of local aristocratic influence, and religious syncretism, and the rising ethnic diversification in Maluku, the hierarchies of Protestant and Muslim power in the province were notable for their increasing similarities, rather than differences. After all, in contrast with the final decades of Dutch rule in the archipelago, the half-century since Indonesian independence had witnessed the evolution of Muslim networks of power in Maluku strikingly similar to those established by their Protestant counterparts, through the modern school system, which led into the civil service and local legislative and executive offices, the police and military, the universities, the media, the professions, and the world of business and criminality. The same decades had likewise seen commensurate linguistic shifts in the direction of homogenization, with Ambonese Malay now serving—as it had for almost two centuries for Protestants—as a “lingua franca among Muslim speakers of different

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44 Chauvel, “Ambon’s Other Half,” p. 79.

Moluccan languages and dialects,” and Bahasa Indonesia increasingly used by Muslims and Protestants alike. By the late 1990s, direct personal memories of the violent events of the transition to independence, when the mostly Christian forces backing the Republik Maluku Selatan (RMS, Republic of the South Maluku) had fought bitterly against the mostly Muslim supporters of integration into Indonesia, were increasingly distant and dying away with the aging men and women who had participated in the events of that era. By the end of the twentieth century, moreover, more and more privileged Muslims in Maluku were attending the same state schools and universities, viewing the same television programs and movies, speaking the same lingua franca (or rather linguae francae), and jockeying for advantage within the same state and market circuitries as Protestants than ever before. By the mid-1990s, in the provincial capital city of Ambon, the newly built Ambon Plaza shopping complex combined Chinese, Bugis, and Butonese storefronts and drew Christian and Muslim consumers and flaneurs alike. Thus, as in Poso, the attractive powers of the national state and the global market threatened, if not to dissolve, then to diminish the differences among the most privileged local representatives of the two religious faiths.

POGROMS AND FORCED DISPLACEMENT, 1999–2001

In short, it was against the backdrop of increasing ambiguity, uncertainty, and anxiety with regard to the structures and boundaries of religious identity and authority in Central Sulawesi, Maluku, and Maluku Utara that inter-religious pogroms in various localities in these provinces unfolded in 1999–2001. The dominant structures of religious authority in these provinces faced unprecedented uncertainty as to their strength, their solidity, and their claims on the local population, in the face not only of unsettling sociological trends but also of sudden political change. Under the Suharto regime, Protestant and Muslim hierarchies of authority had been subordinated to, and partially submerged within, a highly centralized authoritarian state, beneath which they found shelter, stability, and patronage. With competitive elections now determining the composition of local assemblies, and thus the selection of new mayors (walikota), regents (bupati), and governors (gubernur), and thus the distribution of patronage and power in Central Sulawesi, Maluku, and Maluku Utara, the period 1998–2001 broadened the field, the forms, and the increased fruits of contestation between these hierarchies, underlining the imperative of voter mobilization for gaining access to state power on the one hand, and for making claims to religious constituencies on the other.

In this context, struggles over the uncertain boundaries of “turf” were transformed into broader inter-religious conflicts between Christians and Muslims in Poso, and parts of Maluku and Maluku Utara. Such “turf battles” began with contestation over gang control over bus terminals in Poso town and Ambon City, for example, or, as in Malifut, Maluku Utara, with a dispute over the creation of a new subdistrict. Against the backdrop of the uncertainties and anxieties about religious

46 Collins, Ambonese Malay, p. 13.
47 See, for example, the account of embittered old men in a Muslim coastal village on the island of Seram, in Juliet Patricia Lee, “Out of Order: The Politics of Modernity in Indonesia” (PhD dissertation, University of Virginia, 1999), pp. 83–118.
identities and hierarchies sketched above, these “turf battles” came to be interpreted in religiously coded terms and to entail violent mobilization along religious lines. As such they crystallized into inter-religious pogroms. The reclaiming and redefinition of territory along religious lines drove a process of forced dislocation or displacement of religious “Others.”

Indeed, displacement was intrinsic—and essential—to the pogroms in at least three ways. First and most obviously, the violence itself in large measure assumed the form of large-scale forced evictions of entire neighborhoods and villages through a combination of threats and intimidation, armed attacks, and arson. This pattern was apparent in the sustained inter-religious violence in Ambon City in January to March 1999, in the more episodic waves of violence in and around Poso in late 1998 and mid-2000, and in parts of Maluku Utara in the latter half of 2000. This pattern was also evident in the series of violent incidents perpetrated by armed Christian groups on Muslim villages in parts of Maluku and Maluku Utara in late 2000 and early 2001, and in the waves of attacks on isolated Protestant villages launched by Laskar Jihad and other armed Muslim groups in mid-to-late 2001 in Poso and earlier in parts of Maluku and Maluku Utara.
In urban centers like Ambon City, evictions of entire neighborhoods were preceded by harassment and intimidation, and brought to culmination through violent attacks. In human rights groups’ accounts of such “clearances” in Ambon City, for example, this process is said to have unfolded in many neighborhoods in the aftermath of the January 19, 1999, outbreak of inter-religious violence in the city, with homes stoned by gangs of youths night after night. So-called posko (command/communications posts) were established by Protestant and Muslim groups in neighborhoods across the city, with the avowed intention of “guarding each community against outside parties.” But the nighttime stonings continued, and the posko soon evolved into nodal points for the mobilization of Protestant and Muslim groups, armed with crude weapons and prepared for attack. By February, this process had escalated in some parts of the city into full-blown armed attacks on vulnerable Protestant and Muslim neighborhoods. Crudely armed gangs, sometimes backed up by larger crowds of local residents and supported by elements of local army and/or police units, stormed into such neighborhoods, shooting, throwing various kinds of explosive devices, burning and demolishing homes, and killing or driving out the inhabitants who remained. Between January and March 1999, dozens of neighborhoods experienced this process, with thousands of homes destroyed and thousands more residents brutalized and forced to seek refuge among their co-religionists in Ambon City or further afield.49

In vulnerable rural villages, forced displacement was also often effected with great speed and apparent efficiency. Perhaps most emblematic of this form of forced displacement was the series of forced evictions imposed on Muslim villages in parts of Poso regency during the peak weeks of violence in June through July 2000. As recorded by human rights investigators, three separate residents of different Muslim villages reported a similar process:

We were told to leave. The red [Christian] fighters came with lots of cars. I’m not sure if they had guns, but they had dum-dums, Ambon arrows, and bamboo spears ... First they burnt the houses near the road. We ran and hid and then they burnt the rest, but left the Christian houses. I don’t know who they were. I just know my house is gone ... 

We were forced out of our house and told to gather in front of the mosque. They told us we were going to the subdistrict military command. But when we got to the mosque they herded us towards the Tangkora elementary school. We left midday and it was ten at night when we got there ... They kept us there for two days and two nights. They had us walk towards Kasiguncu, guarding us all the way ... Then we spent two nights in Kasiguncu. They took us to the edge of the city and retreated ... 

We were told to gather at the village hall by about one hundred men with masks and cloths over their faces. A truck came, and they had a list. They took away eight people ... At 2:00 we were made to walk. We saw a truck with two

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49 For a very detailed—if not entirely unbiased—account of this process, see Laporan Hasil Investigasi Kasus Kerusuhan di Maluku (Ambon: Yayasan Sala Waku Maluku, 1999). This report focuses almost entirely on Muslim attacks on Protestant areas, without commensurate attention to Protestant attacks on Muslim areas.
people in the back: her brother [indicates young woman] and another relative. He said tell my wife not to cry, we’re just going to get some things in the next town. We never saw them again. We walked all the way to Mapane. We spent two nights there and then went by truck to Poso town ... 50

In short, whether urban or rural, forced displacement figured prominently in the pattern of inter-religious violence observed in areas of Central Sulawesi, Maluku, and Maluku Utara in 1999–2001. Indeed, the eviction of entire religious communities from neighborhoods and villages lay at the heart of the very purpose and process of the violence itself. Looking back at the sheer numbers of houses destroyed and residents displaced, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the violence served a means of effecting displacement, rather than displacement coming as a byproduct of the violence.

FORCED DISPLACEMENT AND THE SPREAD OF VIOLENCE

Second and somewhat less obviously, the forced displacement of hundreds, indeed thousands, of Muslims and Christians from their neighborhoods and villages played a crucial role in the spread of inter-religious violence from one locality to another in Poso, in Maluku, and in Maluku Utara. Such knock-on effects were arguably already evident in the outbreak of inter-religious violence in Ambon City in January 1999, just weeks after the arrival of Ambonese preman expelled from Jakarta after a major street fight in late November 1998. The fight, which occurred outside a gambling casino in the area of Ketapang in Central Jakarta, involved Christian and Muslim Ambonese gangs, local residents, and members of militant Islamic groups connected to the Habibie administration, and resulted in several deaths and the burning of seven churches.51 Rumors that the riot had been deliberately instigated as part of a larger conspiracy spread rapidly in Jakarta and in Ambon, especially after the violent attack on a Muslim neighborhood in Kupang, West Timor, a week later, during a march organized by a Christian youth congress to protest the church burnings.52

Against this backdrop, the fallout from events in Jakarta began to trickle down to Ambon City, a process allegedly accelerated by the expulsion of dozens of Ambonese preman to their home province in time for Christmas and Ramadan, and amidst rising anticipation of the recently announced—and rapidly approaching—June 1999 elections. Thus violent competition over the fluctuating boundaries of power shifted “downwards,” as it were, to local protection rackets in Ambon precisely as electoral mobilization was getting under way in a province where tight demographic margins between Muslims and Christians combined with the sociological and religious trends sketched above to produce considerable uncertainty and anxiety. As rival Christian and Muslim gangs in Jakarta and Ambon City had

long been part of competing networks of active and retired military officers, bureaucrats, businessmen, and politicians associated with Golkar, the possibility of a strong showing by the PDI-P in the upcoming elections foreshadowed not only mass defections by Christians (and potentially Muslims) but also a broadening of the arena and the weapons of contestation. It was in this context that a second street fight, this time in and around the bus terminal in Ambon City in January 1999, grew from gang conflict over “turf” into full-blown inter-religious warfare.

[The copyrighted photograph that appears in the published version of Conflict, Violence, and Displacement in Indonesia has been deleted here]

A ship in Ambon harbor overflowing with residents fleeing inter-religious violence in the city in March 1999. (AP Photo, by Charles Dharapak, with permission)

Large-scale displacement resulting from the violence in Ambon City created aftershocks elsewhere in Maluku. Large-scale attacks across the religious divide in Ambon City and its environs continued sporadically into February 1999, spreading to the nearby Central Maluku islands of Haruku, Seram, and Saparua, and leaving dozens killed, hundreds wounded, and thousands of homes, shops, churches, mosques, and other buildings burned or otherwise destroyed. By early March 1999, as this first phase of violence began to subside, more than one hundred casualties were reported, and as many as seventy thousand refugees were said to have fled Ambon. By the end of 2000, as many as 140,000 IDPs were estimated to be seeking refuge from the violence within the province of Maluku, with tens of additional thousands fleeing to safe havens elsewhere in Indonesia. This flow of IDPs from Ambon and other early sites of violence—a flood of people “carrying with them,” as an anthropologist working in the Banda Islands in 1999 noted, “stories, fears, and rumors”—facilitated the spread of inter-religious violence elsewhere in Maluku.

But it was in the newly created province of Maluku Utara where the role of forced displacement in the spread of the conflict was most fully revealed. In August 1999, fighting broke out in North Maluku, just a month before its official reconstitution as a new province and on the occasion of the formal inauguration of the new district (kecamatan) of Malifut in the regency of North Halmahera. This new district was to consist of some sixteen villages populated by transmigrants resettled from the nearby island of Makian in 1975, as well as eleven additional villages identified with the more established local Kao and Jailolo ethno-linguistic groups. For years, the transmigrants’ settlement and cultivation of land in the area had run up against the resentment and resistance of the “indigenous” Kao and Jailolo, whose representatives’ claims to customary (adat) land rights grew only more vociferous with the discovery of gold in Malifut by an Australian mining company in the 1990s.

This dispute acquired a strongly religious complexion, as the Makianese transmigrants were Muslim, while the Kao and Jailolo were predominantly Protestant. Malifut, moreover, had come to serve as a Muslim bottleneck choking off the southward spread of Christianity from predominantly Protestant North Halmahera, an expansion supported by the proselytizing efforts of the Evangelical

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Church of Halmahera (Gereja Masehi Injili Halmahera, GMIH) and the largely American-staffed New Tribes Mission based in the northeastern district of Tobelo.\textsuperscript{61} The Kao and Jailolo thus won backing for their claims from Protestant politicians and the Sultan of Ternate, who counted on Christian support for his ambitions to assume the governorship of the new province, while the Makianese enjoyed the support of Muslim politicians in Maluku and Jakarta.\textsuperscript{62}

Against this backdrop, a pattern of what Nils Bubandt calls “cascading” and escalating violence unfolded in North Maluku in the second half of 1999.\textsuperscript{63} First, the scheduled inauguration of the new district of Malifut in August 1999 was marked by the outbreak of fighting between crudely armed groups from Kao/Jailolo and Makianese villages. The fighting persisted for several days, leaving a handful of casualties—and dozens of homeless or otherwise displaced families—in its wake. Violence recurred and escalated in October 1999, with a wholesale Kao and Jailolo attack that razed all sixteen Makianese villages, left dozens of Makianese casualties, and forced some sixteen thousand Makianese residents to flee to Ternate and Tidore.

Then, the presence of these Makianese IDPs combined with the circulation of a forged letter from the head of the GPM in Ambon to the head of the GMIH in Tobelo, calling for the Christianization of North Maluku and the “cleansing” of Muslims from the province, to set the stage for attacks on Protestants in Tidore and then Ternate in November 1999.\textsuperscript{64} The violence in Tidore and Ternate, in turn, prompted mobilization by armed followers of the Sultan of Ternate and by forces loyal to his rivals for the governorship (including the Sultan of Tidore and a PPP politician who assumed the \textit{bupatiship} of Central Halmahera), as well as the flight of Protestants from the two towns to safe havens in North Halmahera and North Sulawesi.

In yet another twist, late December 1999 saw groups of armed men from among these IDPs from Ternate and Tidore, and from local Protestant villages, launch attacks on Muslim villages in the predominantly Protestant North Halmahera district of Tobelo, where the headquarters of the evangelical GMIH was located. The attacks, which began on the day after Christmas and lasted into the first week of the new year, left hundreds of Muslim villagers in Tobelo and neighboring Galela dead (including more than two hundred slaughtered in a local mosque) and forced the flight of thousands more survivors.\textsuperscript{65} By the end of January 2000, official sources estimated that more than 1,600 people had been killed in Maluku Utara since August 1999, and tens of thousands more had been displaced by the violence.\textsuperscript{66}

\textsuperscript{61} On the Gereja Masehi Injili Halmahera (GMIH) and the New Tribes Mission in Tobelo, see Duncan, “Ethnic Identity, Christian Conversion, and Resettlement.”


\textsuperscript{64} A copy of the forged letter has been reproduced in Henry H. Sitohang, Hidayaturohman, M. Dian Nafi’, Mohamad Ramdhani, and Sabar Subekti, \textit{Menuju Rekonsiliasi di Halmahera} (Jakarta: Pusat Pemberdayaan untuk Rekonsiliasi dan Perdamaian, 2003), pp. 175–78.


\textsuperscript{66} “Suara Kecewa dari Maluku,” \textit{Tempo}, Februari 6, 2000, p. 23.
Finally, the massacre in Tobelo combined with a wave of attacks by Protestants on Muslims in other parts of Maluku to spur new forms of violent mobilization in avowed defense of Islam elsewhere in Indonesia. Fighting in Ambon City had broken out on Christmas Day 1999 and led to the burning of one of the GPM’s most prominent churches in the capital by an armed Muslim crowd, followed by the burning of two mosques in the city by a similar Protestant mob later on the same day. Widely circulated media reports of this violence, which fell on a major Christian holiday and in the midst of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, had helped to precipitate the massacre in Tobelo, where tensions were reportedly already running high with the arrival of Protestant refugees from Ternate and Tidore the previous month. A similar dynamic was evident in the Central Maluku town of Masohi, where attacks by armed Protestant groups on Muslim villages in late December and early January left dozens of casualties and hundreds more homeless, violated, wounded, and otherwise traumatized by the violence. The alleged participation of Protestant police and military personnel (and the reported acquiescence of the Protestant bupati) in the violence in Masohi combined with the killings of twenty-seven Muslims in Ambon on Christmas Day, the massacre of hundreds of Muslim villagers in Tobelo, and the flight of tens of thousands of Muslim IDPs from Maluku and Maluku Utara to draw increasingly vociferous condemnations of Christian atrocities and expressions of concern for Muslim welfare in Maluku from Islamic organizations and political parties in Jakarta.

For example, Amien Rais, chairman of the People’s Consultative Assembly (MPR, Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat), leader of the National Mandate Party (PAN, Partai Amanat Nasional), and long-time head of the modernist Islamic association Muhammadiyah, joined other leading politicians in calling for jihad to save Muslims in Maluku and Maluku Utara at a rally in early January in Jakarta attended by an estimated 100,000 militants.

This wave of Protestant violence against Muslims in Maluku and Maluku Utara also spurred both old and new forms of religious violence elsewhere in Indonesia. On January 17, 2000, for example, prominent Islamic leaders, including a dean from the local university, the heads of local Islamic associations and schools, the leaders of a local Islamic militia, and the Jakarta-based Islamic labor leader and ICMI member Eggi Sudjana, held a tabligh akbar, or major public gathering, in a field in the city of Mataram, the largest urban center on the predominantly Muslim island of Lombok (“island of a thousand mosques”) and the capital of the province of West Nusa Tenggara. The tabligh akbar was announced as a venue for raising funds for Muslim victims of the violence in Maluku and for expressing solidarity and concern among the faithful. But the event was preceded by the dissemination of a letter by some of


69 Eggi Sudjana was a well-known Islamic activist since the 1980s, when he led a splinter group of the modernist Muslim university students’ association HMI, which refused to recognize Pancasila as its founding principles. See Achmad Fachruddin, Jihad Sang Demonstran: Pergulatan Politik dan Ideologi Eggi Sudjana dari era Soeharto hingga era Gus Dur (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2000).
the organizers demanding that Christians in Lombok come forward to issue public condemnations of the atrocities committed by Protestants in Maluku in the preceding weeks of late December 1999 and early January 2000, and threatening dire consequences in the event of continuing Christian silence on the issue. An estimated two thousand Islamic activists attended the tabligh akbar, many of them sporting white bandanas with the inscription Allahu Akbar (God is Great) written in Arabic on their foreheads. After the gathering, some of these activists began to attack various buildings identified as belonging to the small Christian minority in Mataram, burning Protestant and Catholic churches, schools, shops, and homes over the next two days and driving some three thousand Christians to seek refuge in local police and military installations or in non-Muslim sanctuaries beyond Lombok, like Bali, Manado, and Papua.  

Thus, the wave of violence in late December 1999 and early January 2000 gave rise to calls for jihad in Maluku and Maluku Utara that resonated among many Muslims elsewhere in Indonesia and spurred the mobilization and deployment of Laskar Jihad units to the Moluccan archipelago in the spring of 2000. Indeed, it was this wave of anti-Muslim violence in Maluku and Maluku Utara that occasioned the very creation of Laskar Jihad, a well-organized paramilitary group whose operations in Ambon, North Maluku, and elsewhere in the Moluccan islands preceded and foreshadowed their arrival and activities in Poso more than one year later. Thus already in late January 2000, in the aftermath of the huge rally in Jakarta, dozens of Muslim volunteers were arriving in Ambon and other parts of Maluku to provide medical, logistical, and paramilitary support to their beleaguered co-religionists.

Laskar Jihad had been formed on Java in April 2000, and by May of that year an estimated three thousand Laskar Jihad recruits—and hundreds of other similar Muslim paramilitary forces—had reportedly arrived in Maluku, bringing with them military training, heavy automatic weapons, and sophisticated forms of radio communications, as well as close links with elements in the Armed Forces. Thus June and July 2000 witnessed a fresh wave of aggressive paramilitary attacks on vulnerable Protestant areas, including an assault on a Protestant village in Galela district abutting the GMIH stronghold in Tobelo district, North Maluku, and the razing of Waai, a Christian village sandwiched between two Muslim villages on the east coast of Ambon island. These assaults caused dozens of Protestant casualties and proved highly effective in “cleansing” thousands more Protestant residents from these border zones. Even with the declaration of a civil emergency in Maluku by then president Abdurrahman Wahid in late June 2000, Laskar Jihad-led attacks on Protestant areas persisted, allegedly aided and abetted by elements of the Armed Forces. By early 2001, eight Protestant villages and towns in Ambon had been “cleansed” of Christians and occupied by Muslim forces. Hundreds, or perhaps even a few thousands, of Protestants living on small islands elsewhere in Central Maluku were reportedly forced to flee or to convert to Islam to insure their survival.

70 On these events, see Sihbudi and Nurhasim, Kerusuah Sosial di Indonesia, pp. 106–22; and “Ketika 'Iblis' Berkuasa,” Tempo, Januari 30, 2000, pp. 26–28.


While government forces launched a harsh crackdown on Laskar Jihad in Maluku in mid-2001, armed units associated with the group initiated a wave of attacks on Protestant villages in Poso in the latter half of the same year. The final few months of 2001 saw a wave of new armed attacks in Poso, now characterized by the use of automatic weapons and full-scale military operations across the religious divide. These attacks saw the mobilization of armed groups numbering in the hundreds and led to the razing of dozens of villages, which left scores of casualties and displaced hundreds, indeed, thousands, of residents. A human rights group based in Palu estimated that more than 140 people had been killed and nearly 2,500 homes destroyed by the end of 2001. 73

**FORCED DISPLACEMENT AND THE DECLINE OF LARGE-SCALE INTER-RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE**

Third and finally, displacement played a crucial role in the transformation, de-escalation, and effective termination of large-scale inter-religious violence. The displacement of thousands of families caused by the destruction and burning of homes, and the flight of thousands more in the face of continuing intimidation and fear of further attacks, forced tens, indeed hundreds, of thousands of IDPs to relocate among their co-religionists, and thus reinforced—and simplified—pre-existing spatial patterns of segregation along religious lines. 74

In many neighborhoods and villages in Poso, Ambon, and elsewhere in Maluku and Maluku Utara, Protestant and Muslim posko sprang up, as did elaborate local security arrangements for providing advanced warning of trouble, arming residents, and launching preemptive strikes against attacks by outsiders. Churches and mosques soon emerged as major nodes in these formations of violence, serving as important sites for paramilitary mobilization, planning, communication, coordination, and rearmament. This trend not only hardened the divisions between Christian and Muslim communities but further spurred the reconstitution of neighborhood and village gangs as crudely armed local militias, sporting variously red (Protestant) or white (Muslim) bandanas and other items of clothing to distinguish themselves as defenders of their respective religious communities and faiths. 75 In Ambon, for example, observers noted, “everyday social life is segregated: red market, white market, red and white speedboat quays, red and white pedicabs (becak), red and white minibuses, red and white banks, and so forth.” 76

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74 Aragon, “Communal Violence in Poso,” pp. 60–64.

75 For a detailed (if not disinterested) account of this process in one neighborhood in Ambon City, see Yayasan Sala Waku Maluku, Laporan Hasil Investigasi, pp. 41–42.

In addition, the paramilitary operations of Laskar Jihad in Poso in the latter half of 2001 and in Maluku and Maluku Utara from mid-2000 through mid-2001 heralded a pattern of effectively stalemated and subsiding inter-religious violence. By the end of 2001, the violence in these localities had effected a pattern of enduring religious segregation and simplification, with the Laskar Jihad-led assaults serving to eliminate some of the remaining anomalies of Protestant pockets inside—and impeding the connection of—Muslim zones. By 2001, moreover, Protestant and Muslim villages and towns throughout many of these localities had come to feature “red” and “white” armed groups ready for armed mobilization and plugged into their respective interlocking directorates of local politicians, bureaucrats, businessmen, criminal networks, and retired and active police and military personnel. Local election results in the gerrymandered new regencies of Poso, Morowali, and Tojo Una-Una, and in the newly divided provinces of Maluku and Maluku Utara, also worked to clarify the new distribution of civilian-controlled state patronage along religious lines. Overall, by 2001 inter-religious violence had peaked in Poso, Maluku, and Maluku Utara, and had begun to subside. In subsequent years, incidents of armed combat across the religious divide in these localities were very infrequent and limited in their scope. These localities were occasionally troubled by drive-by shootings and other assassinations, as well as bombings and the discovery of explosive materials clearly intended for imminent use. But overall, even with tens of thousands of IDPs still left homeless by the violence, and with the thorny questions of repatriation, compensation, and reconciliation left essentially unresolved, large-scale collective violence of a pogrom-like nature appears to have largely disappeared from Poso, Maluku, and Maluku Utara since the end of 2001.

In this way, the successful dislocation of thousands upon thousands of Muslims and Christians within and beyond Central Sulawesi, Maluku, and Maluku Utara in time helped to reduce the imperative of inter-religious violence and to restabilize competition and cooperation among the major hierarchies of religious authority in these localities. This reestablishment of equilibrium, of course, had been achieved at considerable cost and through the violent redrawing of religious boundaries and reconstitution of hierarchies of authority on both sides of the religious divide. Thousands are estimated to have been killed in Poso, Ambon, and various parts of Maluku and Maluku Utara during the peak years of violence in 1999–2001, with many more victimized by injuries and untold suffering, and with thousands upon thousands of homes and dozens of churches, mosques, and other buildings damaged or destroyed in the process. In addition, the violence forced several hundred thousand internally displaced persons to flee their homes, neighborhoods, and villages to seek refuge among their co-religionists elsewhere within Central Sulawesi, Maluku, Maluku Utara, and other provinces of the Indonesian archipelago.

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77 See, for example, the illuminating religiously coded maps appended to Yanuarti et al., Konflik di Maluku Tengah, pp. 151–53.


79 See, for example, the figures cited in Basyar and Mashad, “Pendahuluan,” pp. 1–14.
Thus the pogroms proved effective in sharpening—and simplifying—the boundaries of religious identity and authority. These new conditions have been reinforced by obstacles impeding the repatriation of IDPs in all these localities and various gerrymandering schemes, most notably the scheme engineered by the majority-Protestant rump Poso regency—with less than one half of its original population—which hived off the two new, mostly Muslim, regencies of Morowali and Tojo Una-Una. The pogroms also proved instrumental for the reconstitution of local religious authority structures. Local Protestant and Muslim networks of politicians, businessmen, civil servants, policemen, military officers, and gangsters came to enjoy greater coercive powers within their respective religious communities, thanks to the evolution of policing and surveillance structures and the elaboration of arms smuggling and other illegal activities, all ostensibly defensive in nature and responsive to self-evident threats from without. Thus the decline of large-scale inter-religious violence attested to the success of the pogroms in redrawing—and restabilizing—boundaries across the religious divide and reaffirming—and restrengthening—religious hierarchies and identities on each side.

CONCLUSION: DOUBLE DISPLACEMENT, 1999–2001

As argued in the pages above, the emergence, spread, transformation, and fading of religious pogroms in 1998 to 2001 owed much to displacement, in two senses of the word. First of all, the outbreak of violence owed much to the displacement of anxieties accompanying the major transition in Indonesian social and political life. This transition was one in which the forces associated with the promotion of “Islam” in Indonesian public life were first launched into the seats of state power in Jakarta, soon embattled from without and within, and eventually eclipsed and ousted from power. The effects of this precipitous “rise and fall of Islam” in 1998–2001 on the national political stage rapidly trickled down and came to affect the distribution of power and patronage in provinces, regencies, towns, and villages around the Indonesian archipelago. The local effects were especially destabilizing in localities where the national networks (jaringan) connecting local networks of politicians, civil servants, (retired and active) military and police officers, businessmen, and gangsters to Jakarta were defined and divided along religious lines, and where local boundaries of authority—and balances of power—were redrawn through pemekaran, the formation of new districts, regencies, and provinces (most obviously in Maluku Utara).

These palpable tremors of political realignments rippling across the archipelago were accompanied by deeper, perhaps somewhat less discernible, tectonic shifts in the very structures of religious identity, authority, and power in Indonesia. The loosening of the centralized authoritarian state’s surveillance and control during the political liberalization initiated by Habibie in the latter half of 1998 called into question not only the established hierarchies of power and patronage in Indonesia, but also the very source and structure of recognition and identity for Indonesians around the archipelago. This state of uncertainty was profoundly destabilizing for religious institutions—whether ICMI, Al-Khaira’at, Gereja Kristen Sulawesi Tengah, or Gereja Protestant Maluku—which in one way or another had secured niches

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beneath and within the New Order state and thus kept at bay persistent questions about the boundaries of their authority and identity. This state of uncertainty was also profoundly destabilizing for many ordinary people.

As Patricia Spyer has argued, these religious identities, boundaries, and hierarchies had long rested on the logic of seriality, on “numbers, statistics, and the range of enumerative practices with which they are associated.” In this context, the competitive elections and decentralization that were already looming on the horizon in mid-to-late 1998 and came to replace centralized authoritarian rule in mid–to-late 1999 heightened anxieties about the numbers of the faithful—numbers of converts, numbers of voters—who could be claimed for each “flock” (jemaah).

It is thus against the temporal backdrop of this distinctive national conjuncture of 1998–2001 that the geographical distribution—and spread—of the pogroms in specific locations around the Indonesian archipelago during this period must be situated. Indeed, following the logic of seriality stressed by Spyer, it is striking how all the major episodes of communal violence during this period unfolded in provinces where the statistical distribution of religious faith was least concentrated, all of which were found in the cluster of eight provinces with between 30 percent and 85 percent Muslim populations—and electorates. According to the 2000 census, Maluku was only 49 percent Muslim after the creation of Maluku Utara (85 percent Muslim); Poso was only 56 percent Muslim, in 78 percent Muslim Central Sulawesi. Thus the PDI had long-established roots in all of these localities, and the possibility of a destabilizing shift—of votes, DPR and DPRD seats, and eventually bupati and governorships—from Golkar to PDI-P loomed large on the horizon. All the sites of large-scale inter-religious violence in 1998–2001 were localities, in other words, in which high levels of electoral uncertainty prevailed.

In such settings, increasing apprehensions about the numerical—and electoral—strength of statistical religious “others” thus combined with abiding anxieties about the weakness and fragmentation internal to the religious “communities” themselves. The established positions of GKST and Al-Khaira’at in Poso were increasingly threatened over the years, not only by competition across the official religious divide but by rising ethnic, associational, and denominational diversity and fragmentation within their respective realms of pastoral care. Similarly, the ecclesiastical authority of their counterparts in Maluku ran up against the enduring influence of adat and aristocratic lineage, the proselytizing efforts of outside missionaries (evangelical Protestant, Catholic, and Muslim), and the destabilizing effects of immigration. Meanwhile, by the turn of the twenty-first century, the attractive powers of modern secular education, the national state, and the market had drawn increasing numbers of Christians and Muslims into their orbit, encouraging discernible trends towards cultural, linguistic, organizational, and social homogenization across the religious divide. These trends were perhaps most visible in everyday life in Maluku’s


82 Ananta, Arifin, and Suryadinata, Indonesian Electoral Behaviour, pp. 24, 53. Central Kalimantan and West Kalimantan, the sites of violent “ethnic cleansing” of immigrant Madurese communities in 1997, 1999, and 2001, were 74 percent and 58 percent Muslim, respectively. The other provinces within this band of provinces were Jakarta (DKI), East Kalimantan, and North Sumatra, all of which merit further treatment as cases where communal violence did not occur during this period.
provincial capital city of Ambon, where Protestant and Muslim neighborhoods and houses of worship were often found in close proximity (as reports of the violence of early 1999 make clear), and where more and more Ambonese and migrants of different faiths mingled in the streets, the schools, the shops, and the offices of government with every passing year. Meanwhile, if in the 1955 elections the vast majority of voters in Poso and Maluku had backed “sectarian” political parties that were clearly identified with one or another religious faith—Masjumi for Muslims, Parkindo for Protestants—by the time of the elections of 1999, the avowedly ecumenical orientation of the two most popular parties—PDI-P and Golkar—signaled the possibility of overriding, if not erasing, religious differences in the political realm.

In such settings, the local ecclesiastical establishments had come to assume quasi-statal and para-statal forms, with religious identities intimately bound up with associational, educational, economic, and political hierarchies. In peripheral, less developed, “Outer Island” localities like Poso and Maluku, this pattern was particularly pronounced, in part thanks to the relatively modernized, rationalized, and capitalized structures of local Protestant churches, and in part because of the importance of the offices and resources of the state. As the anthropologist P. M. Laksono noted with regard to the remote Southeast Maluku district island town of Tual:

Civil servants are the backbone of urban society. By the end of the 1980s nearly all the rupiah flowing into the district came from civil service salaries. Almost no rupiah came in outside the government budget. Agriculture is just subsistence. There is practically no export—just a little copra and marine products. The big fishing trawlers that frequent Tual harbor are Taiwanese and pay their money to Jakarta. The whole of society depends on the state—even if only as a labourer at a school building site.83

In such localities, moreover, religious institutions and identities had from their inception been “political” in the sense of close identification with religiously segmented networks connected to the state. As another anthropologist noted with regard to Protestant-Muslim conflict in Poso, “this fight is not about religious doctrines or practices, but about the political economy of being Protestant (or Catholic) and Muslim.”84 Likewise in Ambon and in other parts of Maluku, as the political scientist Gerry van Klinken concluded,

...joining the Protestant or the Muslim community means being part of a network that not only worships God in a certain way but does practical things for its members—provides access to friends in powerful places, for example, or protection when things get tough. These networks extend up the social ladder to influential circles in Jakarta. And they extend downward to street level, where

84 Aragon, “Communal Violence in Poso,” p. 47.
gangs of young men provide the protective muscle that an inefficient police force cannot provide.\footnote{Gerry van Klinken, “What Caused the Ambon Violence?,” \textit{Inside Indonesia} 60, October–December 1999.}

In this way, “turf wars” between urban youth gangs around bus terminals, competition among politicians over state offices, and the inauguration of a new district or province were religiously coded and interpreted in the light of the anxieties about religious boundaries, hierarchies, and identities described above. Neighborhood and village youth gangs—rather than students from religious schools—quickly emerged as the foot soldiers in the inter-religious policing and warfare. These gangs were defined and divided along religious lines and connected to the religiously segmented local networks of politicians, civil servants, retired and active military and police officers, and businessmen. In time, they were increasingly organized and equipped along paramilitary lines in the towns and villages of Poso, Maluku, and Maluku Utara.

If the displacement of anxieties about the “incompleteness” of religious identities, boundaries, and hierarchies prefigured the outbreak of violence, the forced displacement of neighborhoods and villages by armed groups across the religious divide promoted the spread, transformation, and, finally, deescalation of the violence. Indeed, as demonstrated most clearly in the events of 1999–2000 in Maluku Utara, the arrival of IDPs fleeing one site of violence often portended—if not precipitated—violence in would-be sites of refuge, creating a deadly contagion effect of a kind. Yet over time, in Poso, Ambon, and other parts of Maluku and Maluku Utara, the violent eviction of people from neighborhoods and villages also effected the spatial segregation and simplification of Christian-Muslim communities seen in other sites divided by inter-religious violence elsewhere around the world, producing an “interlocking binary spatial grid and inside/outside polarities,” with the “proliferation of interfaces, the barricading, and the influx of refugee populations” reorganizing towns and villages into a highly militarized and religiously coded topography.\footnote{Allen Feldman, \textit{Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland} (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 17–45, at p. 35.} In these settings, such processes were accompanied—and expedited—by the reconstitution of the two opposing religious communities into militarized hierarchies organized and equipped for interfaith warfare. In a pattern reminiscent of shifts observed in other sites of sectarian violence elsewhere in the world, the years 1999 to 2001 in Poso, Maluku, and Maluku Utara thus saw a shift from more spontaneous rampages by crudely armed crowds to more carefully coordinated large-scale attacks by heavily armed paramilitary groups, and then a reversion to sporadic bombings, drive-by shootings, and quick raids and arson attacks across the well-established and tightly guarded religious divide.

Thus by the end of 2001, the large-scale collective violence between Protestants and Muslims of the preceding few years had run its course and subsided into small-scale disturbances to the formal and informal settlements that had crystallized in these religiously divided localities. In large measure, the fading of pogroms followed from the internal transformation of the violence itself, with the “successes” of forced displacement serving to (re)establish religious boundaries and hierarchies, and thus greatly reducing the uncertainties and anxieties so evident in 1998–99. In short, in its
double sense, and in diverse ways, displacement was a driving force of the inter-
religious pogroms of 1999 to 2001 in Indonesia, prefiguring their inception, spread,
and disappearance.