

## THE SOCIAL VIOLENCE AND REGIME CHANGES IN INDONESIA

Nurus Shalihin<sup>1\*</sup>, Firdaus<sup>2</sup>, Muhammad Sholihin<sup>3</sup>, Andri Ashadi<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1\*,4</sup>Religious Studies Department, Faculty of Ushuluddin and Religious Studies, UIN Imam Bonjol, Padang, Indonesia;  
<sup>2</sup>Sociology Education Department, STKIP PGRI Sumatera Barat, Indonesia; <sup>3</sup>Department of Islamic Economics, Institut  
Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Curup, Rejang Lebong, Indonesia.

Email: <sup>1\*</sup>nurus\_shalihin@uinib.ac.id, <sup>2</sup>firdaus@stkip-pgri-sumbar.ac.id, <sup>3</sup>sholihin@iaincurup.ac.id,  
<sup>4</sup>andriashadi@uinib.ac.id

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### Abstract

**Purpose of the study:** This paper aims to explain social violence during the transition of three regimes in Indonesia, from the Old Order to the New Order and from the New Order to the Reformation. This paper also analyzes the motives behind the violence at each transition of the regimes.

**Methodology:** The research was conducted through a literature study by examining media documents, magazines, research reports, scientific articles, and books on various social violence practices in every three regimes in Indonesia.

**Main Findings:** The result of the study found that the social violence in Indonesia has occurred in various forms and motives. Five types of social violence have been identified, communal violence, separatist violence, state-community violence, industrial relations violence, and political violence. The social violence has used as a tool to silence the past and carry out political propaganda by elites and to gain the power by opposition. Thus, it argues that all social violence practices are constructed by various interests of the regimes and anti-regimes.

**Applications of this study:** This study provides a mapping of violence in every political and regime transition in Indonesia. Thus, this study can be applied for two important issues. First, this study can be used as reference in anticipating political violence in the national and regional election process in Indonesia in particular, and other countries in general. Second, for developing countries, this study can be used as reference in mapping and analyzing various social violence practices that accompany the transition process.

**Novelty/Originality of this study:** The recent studies of violence in Indonesia covered the issues of religious, ethnic, economic and political violence. There are limited studies violence and democracy transition in Indonesia and it's relation to political regimes. This article focuses on violence and its relationship with the political regimes and regime's changes in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** *Social Violence, Political Regimes, Power Transition, Indonesian Democracy.*

### INTRODUCTION

Regime change is a product of political consolidation and democracy (Stojanova, 2013), which at the domestic level is determined by an economic crisis with political violence and social conflict (Gasiorowski, 1995). In this case, the change of political regime is basically a consequence of the economic crisis as well as the political crisis. Several studies show that regime change tends to be rooted in political tension and democratic breakdown (O'Donnell, 1988). Furthermore, the transition of power has also emerged from elites. Political consolidation takes an important role. It determines the exchange of political systems. In this case, The Kingdom of Bhutan as the youngest democracy in the world has succeeded in holding multi-party elections and replacing monarchical powers (Sinpeng, 2007). The similar cases were occurred in several Middle Eastern countries such as Libya, Egypt, and Iraq. Arab's Spring through Western pressure on democratic life has pushed regime change as well as the political systems of these countries (Katiri et al., 2014).

In Indonesia, the process of political power transition after independence has never been apart from violence. The transfer of political power from the Old Order to the New Order was marked with the G30-S / PKI Tragedy (1965). The violent tragedy prior to the collapse of the Old Order political regime, and the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of members of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) (1966) broke out at the beginning of the construction of political power in the New Order (Herman, 2000; Hiariej, 2005; Kammen & Zakaria, 2012; Roosa, 2008; Toer, 2003). The shift of power of the New Order into the Reformation era began with the Mayor Trisakti Tragedy (1998) towards the collapse of the New Order political regime (Collins, 2002; Dijk & Dijk, 2001; Jusuf, 2008; Tadjoeddin, 2002). Finally, the reform era was set off with various separatist violence in Papua, East Timor, and Aceh, ethnic, religious, and racial communal violence in Poso Central Sulawesi (Christian-Muslim 1998-2001), in Ambon and South Maluku (Christian-Muslim 1999-2002), West Kalimantan (Malay-Madura ethnic 1999-2001), North Maluku (Christian-Muslim 1999-2001) (Al-Qurtuby, 2015; Barron, 2019; Klinken, 2007; Sidel, 2018; Tadie, 2009; Tadjoeddin, 2002).

Various acts of violence with a huge number of casualties have taken place long before Indonesia's independence. The Indonesian Revolution is a bloody revolution (Kahin, 1995). Such characteristics have become part of the long history of the Indonesian people (Colombijn & Lindblad, 2002). Many studies of social violence that come with changes in political regimes in Indonesia have been carried out by many researchers such as George Mc Turnan Kahin (1995), Henk Schulte Nordholt, (2002), Zulfan Tadjoeddin (2002), and Gerry Van Klinken (2007). However, the existing studies have

not comprehensively analyzed the social violence that accompanied the collapse of the Old Order political regime and the establishment of the New Order political regime, as well as the collapse of the New Order political regime and the establishment of the political regime of the Reformation.

This paper aims to elaborate the involvement of social violence in the transition of the Old Order political regime to the New Order, and the transition of the New Order into the Reformation era. This paper also analyzes the interests behind the social violence involved in each transition of the Old Order regime to the New Order, and the New Order to the Reformation Order. The writers argue that the social violence accompanying the transition of the political regime in Indonesia was not merely born without warning and free from conflict of interest. All social violence practices occurring in each regime transition are constructed according to various interests of both the regime and anti-regime. Therefore, the social violence practices during the transitions of the Indonesian political regime was deliberately formed and loaded with various interests.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Political violence is a complex violence because it is closely related to the power and political system. The meaning and intention of political violence is also very different from social conflicts that are not determined by power and politics (Valentino, 2014). Gabrielle Bardall et al. (2019) conceptualize political violence as an action with political intentionality that results in damage, death, and psychological harm. In concrete relationship with power and democracy, Atando D. Agbu et al. (2019) define political violence as organized or random actions aimed at influencing the electoral process through acts of harm, verbal intimidation, hate speech, disinformation, physical attacks, military force, blackmail, even destruction of property or death threats. Therefore, political violence will tend to involve ideological conflicts, and emerge in strong identity conflict conditions (Maynard, 2015).

Political violence occurs because of power, class, and economy (Østby, 2013) because it is basically the product of political scandals. Tim Sweijs et al. (2017) identify the political violence practices in several countries and categorize them into three forms as states based conflict, non-state conflict, and one-sided conflict. Based on his research, the most common factors on political violence are the intentionality of power and ideological domination, both originating from religion, political and economic ideology (Sweijs et al., 2017). Middle East political violence is one of the case studies that is dominated by militant groups fighting for political ideology through violence (Katiri et al., 2014). In Nigeria (Agbu et al., 2019) and Myanmar (Burke, 2016), electoral violence actually takes a part on political violence. The strategies and characters of political campaigns by political actors have made electoral conflicts and led to social and religious violence on a wide scale.

Political violence appears in various forms. This practice involves a variety of actions. Some political violence often involves the military, such as violence in Vietnam and the United States during the era of physical confrontation in 1968. The military force uses sexual abuse as a part and mechanism for political violence that contains psychological and physical intimidation (Wood, 2018). Likewise, in Venezuela, military action was chosen by the regime to reduce discontent and political segregation due to the decline in oil prices and the absence of elections (Briceño-León, 2006). On the other hand, the violence in Brazil is a democratic political product that shows the failure of existing socio-political institutions in creating a stable and accommodating political climate for social, economic, and political life (Hoelscher, 2017).

The close relationship between political violence and power is reflected on the incidents of political violence in Veracruz, Mexico (Guevara, 2018) and Bangladesh (Mollah & Jahan, 2018), where political violence has been used to defend the regime. Political violence is also used in taking power through general elections as happened in Rakhine State, Myanmar (Burke, 2016). It is also used in overthrowing the regime as happened in Argentina (Holmes, 2001). In Ukraine, although political violence does not led to regime change, the revolution is related to power. The elites are the key factor in the absence of regime change, they are very clientelism, secretive deals, and quota-based nominations for government positions (Matsiyevsky, 2018).

In Indonesia, political violence has involved a wider range of conflicts. Socio-economic and religious factors are determinant factors of conflict in this country. There are some causes of political violence in Indonesia such as economic crisis, corrupt political behavior, and the increase in identity politics (Barron et al., 2009). The violence in the 1990-2001 was categorized by Tadjoeiddin (2002) as communal violence, separatist violence, state-community violence and industrial relations violence. In addition, Gerry van Klinken (2007) also classified violence in Indonesia into separatist violence, communal violence, communal riots, social violence, and terrorist violence. Both Tadjoeidin and Klinken identified violence in Indonesia as involving the community and the state.

Political violence will take place in various forms. It is very influenced by the structure, political culture and elite formation in a country (Barron et al., 2009; Østby, 2013). Based on these literature reviews on political violence in some countries, the series of violence in Indonesia must also be identified in relation to the change of power. This work will be useful to studying the process of regime change in countries with less established democratic systems.

## METHOD

This article was written using data from literature studies ([Zed, 2014](#)), and the data collection process, which focuses on historical data, was carried out by reading and studying documents in the form of research reports, newspapers, magazines, journal articles, and books related to social violence in Indonesia. Hundreds of newspaper sources, research reports, scientific articles, and books discussing violence were collected and later sorted by categories of information content, time of events, and validity. The validity of the sources, especially those originating from newspaper news, is measured by comparing them with other news media and or research reports and scientific articles. It took a long time and high difficulty to obtain news sources and writings regarding to violence in a certain period, especially violence incidents during the New Order.

Once all data has been collected and considered sufficient, all events are sorted based on time of occurrence and the similarity of the motives of the events in order to make it easier to write a series of events and to interpret the data. The process of interpretation or analysis of data was carried out through three models, namely hermeneutics, sociological-historical and historiographic. The three hermeneutic elements (*intelligendi subtility*, *explicandi subtility* and *applicandi subtility*) ([Austgard, 2012](#); [Prasad, 2002](#)) are applied in interpreting data sourcing from both from newspapers, magazines, journal articles and books while the sociological-historical approach serves to capture the construction of space, time and context in writers or historians ([Bhambra, 2016](#)). On the other hand, the sociological-historical approach also functions to understand the political-economic constellation by historical actors. Through a sociological-historical approach, immaterial facts behind the violent events when the transition of power took place in Indonesia can be drawn. The final stage of data analysis is historiography ([McDonnell & Waldstreicher, 2017](#)). This stage is the final process, in which we undertake an effort to synchronize and narrate diachronically and chronologically historical data, especially related to the description of incidents of acts of violence surrounding the transition of the political regime in Indonesia.

## RESULTS

### Narration of Social Violence in Indonesia (1965-1998)

Narration of violence in the power transformation process from the Old Order to the New Order and the New Order to the Reformation Era is included into the narrative of violence in the period 1965-1998. The momentum of the transition occurred during that period. In narrating violence during this period, it is important to underline two things. Firstly, there are not all incidents of social violence during this period that can be narrated for two reasons. Due to the length of the period between 1965 and 1997, it is not possible to write it in this limited paper. Thus, this research only focuses on major and important events related to the research purpose. Furthermore, the writers dealt with data limitations of violence especially in the period 1967-1997. Second, the number of violent events in a particular year which is relatively much explained in this paper, does not show the increasing intensity of violence compared to other years because the violence is not the only measurement. Systematically, the periods of violence in this paper are divided into the periods 1965-1966, 1974-1976, 1981-1989 and 1990-1998.

#### 1. Period of 1965-1966

In the history of Indonesia as a nation, the series of social violence in 1965-1966 was a very tragic and most devastating event of violence. The incidents of the kidnapping and killing of seven Generals of the Bull Council by the Revolutionary Council are practices of political violence by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) for a revolution ([Chandra, 2017](#); [Kartodirdjo, 1977](#)). However, the revolution process ended before the target operation was accomplished as the scenario compiled by DN Aidit. General Soeharto, an actor who was not in the PKI revolution scheme, appeared to be the sole winner. Later, under Soeharto's direction and command, the RPKAD (Army Regiment) devised another scenario and set a new stage and seized power. On the bodies and blood streams of many victims, it is estimated that millions and more civilians consisting of PKI members and sympathizers became victims ([Herman, 2000](#)) for the establishment of the New Order power. More terrifyingly, this period of violence continues today against people who were considered as members, sympathizers, or progenies of PKI in that period.

#### 2. Period of 1974-1976

After replacing Sukarno as President, Soeharto adopted the *Trilogi Pembangunan* (trilogy of development) strategy consisting political, economic, and security stability to silence the people of Indonesia on the tragedy. Practically, in the period 1966-1973, there had been no social violence manifested and pervasive among the society. Violence in Indonesia began to surface in 1974. Earlier this year, violence arose in an event called Malari (*Malapetaka 15 Januari 1974*). It starts with student protests at the end of 1973 when violence broke out at the height of the protest against several government policies, especially on Japanese investment on January 15, 1974. The action claimed 11 lives, 100 injured, 1,000 destroyed, burned vehicles, 144 damaged and burned buildings, and 820 people arrested. During the period 1974-1975, military violence under Operation Command and Seroja in Timor-Timor (Now Timor Leste) occurred ([Djajadi, 1999](#)). The Violence was later followed by a separatist movement in Aceh. This movement was marked by the Declaration of Free Aceh by Hasan Tiro in 1976 ([Al-Qurtuby, 2015](#); [Haris, 1999](#)).

### 3. Period of 1981-1989

Although in the years after 1976, social violence practices were successfully suppressed by the New Order, they reemerged in the early 1980s. During 1981-1989, social violence practices were not only related to politics, but also extended to issues of ideology and ethnic sentiment. In 1981, ideological violence was carried out by the Imron group as the Islamic Revolutionary Council by hijacking the Garuda Woyla plane on March 28, 1981. This incident ended with the death of 5 hijackers in Don Muang field in Bangkok. Previously, on March 11, 1981, the Imron group also attacked the Cicendo Police Station in Bandung (Tempo, 1984). Hiariej (2005) noted that ethnic violence in the form of anti-Chinese social unrest occurred in Medan, Aceh, Ujung Pandang, and Semarang in the same year. Furthermore, political violence occurred in the following year in the form of an attack on the supporters of Golongan Karya Party in Banteng Square.

In this period, military violence reoccurred on September 12, 1984. The violence against Muslims in Tanjung Periuk, resulted in 60 deaths and 100 injuries (Hiariej, 2005). Following the incident, violence by the elite continued to accrue until 1983-1984. State violence took the most formal form through the *Penembak Misterius* (Mysterious Gunman) operation called Petrus. Petrus carried out killings of recidivists and tattooed thugs in almost the entire archipelago. In YLBHI's records, up to mid-1984, more than 5,000 people were killed by Petrus. After executed, the corpses of the victims were left scattered on the road, the riverbank, etc (Nordholt, 2002). Violence by the government continued into the following years. The cleaning up of PKI members had not ended. It was carried out again in 1966. In May 1985, 4 out of the 70 PKI members were executed. Afterward, executions were carried out again on 14 prisoners as communist. They had been imprisoned for 10 years in the midst of 1985-1986 (Hiariej, 2005).

### 4. Period 1990-1998

During the years 1990-1998, the intensity of violence continued to escalate in various forms and motives. It did not only occur vertically between states and people but also horizontally between people or among the societies nationwide. In 1993, there was violence known as the Nipah Tragedy in Sampang (Madura, East Java). The violence happened because the community protested against officials who were measuring land as an irrigation reservoir. This violent protest killed 5 farmers who were shot by soldiers with long-barreled weapons (Tadjoeddin, 2002). On May 8, 1993, Marsinah, a factory worker in East Java was found dead after being missing for 3 days. Marsinah was murdered by officers for leading a protest against the company. The murder was executed on the orders of the company. The essence of protest and resistance from Marsinah triggered massive labor protests on approximately 35,000 workers in Medan in 1994 (Komnas HAM, 2000). The demonstration led to acts of violence such as the destruction of houses, residents, shops, cars, and other property. Violence was also carried out by the security forces (police) in cleaning up the "Haor Koenig" faith group which was accused by the government of being a deviation. This incident claimed the lives of 4 people with 1 police officer and the rest were civilians (Tadjoeddin, 2002).

In 1995 violence also spread to the realm of ethnicity, religion, human rights, and the environment. Mass riots in Maumere and Larantuka of Nusa Tenggara Timur Province were triggered by mass dissatisfaction with prosecutors' demands for the perpetrator in the case of the Hostia Kudus defamation with two killed residents (Hasyim, 2015; Tadjoeddin, 2002). Religious unrest with Muslim targets occurred in Baucau, East Timor (January), Flores (April), East Flores (June), Dili, East Timor (September), and Atambua, West Timor (November) in 1995 (Collins, 2002). Moreover, Collins (2002) also noted the legal violence in Irian Jaya (now Papua) on March 7-10, 1995. Villagers armed with stones attacked Freeport Corporation in anger over their fellow villager run over by a Freeport employee with Dutch nationality. The resentment of the local population was also triggered by a human rights violation case which was being tried at the Jayapura Military Court. Other violence also followed on March 18, 1995, when the authorities or the government refused a request for permission to hold a memorial service for Thomas Wainggai in Jayapura.

Collins (2002) has described the violence practices of several incidents in various regions in 1995. In Jember, East Java, violence occurred from July 30 to August 2. Tobacco farmers protested over the decision to transfer ownership of two thousand hectares of State land which was then cultivated by farmers to be a state-owned plantation. This action resulted in the burning of warehouses, motorbikes, shops and houses. In Jambi, the community went out of control on October 13. The mass was triggered by resentment at waves of looting and lack of assistance to victims of natural disasters (earthquakes). As a result, two soldiers wearing civilian clothes were killed. While in Jambi violence happened in the security forces in Medan. Cavalry Battalion soldiers injured as 12 people, and damaged 20 houses and 23 cars on February 28, 1995. This violence was triggered by their resentment over the killing of a members of the local gang.

At the end of 1995, violence was more focused on the issue of environmental pollution. In November, several violence incidents occurred almost simultaneously. The Porsea people of North Sumatra burned 100 houses, a radio station and vehicles of Indorayon Utama paper mill on 3-4. This action occurred after the spread of rumors of toxic gas leakage. On November 15-20, Pasuruan farmers, East Java, protested for five days against a Korean company producing Monosodium Glutamate that was polluting their shrimp ponds. The car and house were burned down by the masses and caused an estimated loss of 3 million dollars. The following day, protesters destroyed the carbon plant because it polluted the environment in Tangerang, Jakarta (Collins, 2002).

In 1996, social violence revolved around religious, industrial, political, and migrant sentiment. Riots related to industrial problems occurred during the riot against the mining of PT. Monterado Mas Mining Sambas, West Kalimantan on March 29, 1996 (Tadjoeddin, 2002). Riots within Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (Indonesia Democratic Party - PDI) between the supporters of Soerjadi who were supported by the government and the supporters of Megawati Sukarno Putri occurred in the main office of PDI in Jakarta (Komnas HAM, 2000). The July 27, 1996 tragedy caused at least 5 deaths and 100 injured. Riots also occurred in Tasikmalaya, triggered by the police's harsh treatment towards a *santri* (a student of Islamic Boarding School). As a result, 4 people were killed and dozens of shops were burned by the mob (Gatra, 1997). In Sambas Kalimantan Barat, conflicts occur between ethnic Dayaks (native and Christian) and Madurese (immigrants and Muslims) (Klinken, 2007). In Situbondo, East Java, Muslim groups set fire to 25 churches, 5 Catholic schools, 1 Christian orphanage, and 1 courthouse. Five people died in the burning church (Collins, 2002). This case was triggered by the mass dissatisfaction with the prosecutor's claim against the defendant in the case of harassment by a Kyai (Islamic Clerics).

In 1997, violence due to religious, ethnic, and industrial relations sentiments continued. However, violence related to political differences is the most dominant. Riots broke out due to the demonstration of workers in Sumedang, West Java on January 31, 1997. Mass clashes resulted 4 deaths in Timika, accompanied by the Sahur Tragedy in Rengasdengklok and riots in Majalengka which were ethnically and religiously loaded (Tadjoeddin, 2002). The ensuing ethnic violence was directed at the Tionghoa-Indonesian ethnic group. Several cases occurred in Purwakarta, West Java (31 October-2 November 1997), Pekalongan, Central Java (24-26 November 1997), in Jakarta (24 December 1997) and Bandung, West Java (31 January 1997). In Bandung ethnic violence was intertwined with industrial violence, where riots were carried out by 10,000 textile factory workers. They stoned the company representatives because they did not pay holiday allowances. Violence due to religious sentiment occurred on December 31, 1997. Unknown persons distributed leaflets containing invitations to Muslims to attack Christian and Catholic targets. A similar incident also occurred in Tasikmalaya, West Java, on December 26, 1997. Muslim youths burned 13 churches and seven schools. They destroyed 12 police stations with three police stations burned down and 4 people died (Collins, 2002).

The dominant political violence could be seen in the riots of Pekalongan, Central Java on 24-26 March 1997. The Youth Organization of PPP party protested against a musical performance by Golongan Karya Party. It destroyed 60 buildings (mostly owned by Tionghoa-Indonesia) and a property of government bank. In Ujung Pandang, the PPP procession in South Sulawesi was attacked by Pemuda Pancasila on May 4, 1997. In East Jakarta and South Jakarta, three clashes between supporters of political parties and security forces occurred on May 20, 1997. This event was triggered by attack towards the Golongan Karya Party office by supporters of PPP party in Pekalongan, Central Java. In Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, a clash broke out between PPP supporters and Golongan Karya Party on May 23, 1997, ahead of the election. This clash resulted in 130 people killed in a shopping center (Tadjoeddin, 2002). PDI-P activist Megawati Soekarno Putri was attacked by supporters of Soerjadi (leader of the government-supported PDI) on April 28, 1997 in Surabaya. After the May 29 elections, PPP supporters burned an election ballot box in Madura. This action was carried out as a form of protest against election fraud (Collins, 2002).

There was the peak of violence in 1998 period and this was the year of tempest and riots. Violence has been mixed between various motives. However, the straight line is simple because all violence boils down to one point of political power. Violence began in Jakarta in 1998. A number of student activists, members of NGOs, mass organizations and parties were abducted between February and March 1998. The abduction was later discovered to have been carried out by the Mawar Team formed by Battalion 42 Commander, Group IV Kopassus, Bambang Kristiono on the orders of Prabowo Subianto. In May (May 4-8, 1998) riots erupted in Medan, North Sumatra, which was allegedly triggered by racial synthesis (Jusuf, 2008). Dozens of shops, offices and cars were destroyed and damaged. The shooting of four demonstrators on the campus of Trisakti University on May 13 was the climax of the violence as well as the beginning of the spread of violence to almost all corners of the country, such as Medan, Padang, Palembang, Solo and Yogyakarta. It was estimated that 1,188 died, 1,026 houses were burned, 4,676 buildings were burned (shops, offices, markets etc.) and 1,948 vehicles were burned (Tadjoeddin, 2002).

Violence and riots were uncontrollably broke out until 1999. Violence and riots occurred in many forms such as looting, arson, destruction, rape, murder and etc. They were triggered by various motives of politics, economy, religion, race, and ethnicity. Various acts of violence in 1999 occurred in Poso, Donggala (Central Sulawesi), Unjung Pandang, Luwu (South Sulawesi), Sambas, Ketapang (West Kalimantan), Sampit, Pangkalan Bun (Central Kalimantan), Bagan Siapi-Api (Riau), Kinali (West Sumatra), Jujuhan Batanghari (Jambi), Padang Sidempuan (North Sumatera), Pagaralam (South Sumatera), Kuningan, Cirebon, Pamanukan, Cikarang, Tegal, Pangalengan, Rembang (West Java), Brebes, Jepara (Central Java), Jember, Tuban, Pasuruan, Bojonegoro, Sampang, Jatiwangi, Banyuwangi (East Java), Denpasar (Bali) Mataram, Bima, Praya (NTB), Kupang and Ende (NTT) (Tadjoeddin, 2002) and others. Along with that, the intensity of violent outbreaks of separatist backgrounds has also increased sharply in Aceh, Papua and East-East.

## DISCUSSION

### 1. Typology of Indonesian Violence

The social violence during 1965 to 1999 shows two things. First, there are five violent orientations, communal violence, separatist violence, state-community violence, industrial relations violence, and political violence. Four types of violence is in line with four categories of violence that identified by [Tadjoeddin, \(2002\)](#), the last type is authors addition with accordance to research results. Second, there are seven categories, forms, and types of social violence such as rioting, looting, vandalism (arson, assault), murder, kidnapping, coup, and military action. Third, there are five motives for violence, namely the issue of SARA (ethnicity, religion, and race), ideology or politics, economy (lack of staples and struggle for incomes), the issue of sorcerer, and brawls between villages.

#### Communal Violence

Communal violence is social violence between two groups of communal or it can be in the form of one group being attacked by another group ([Tadjoeddin, 2002](#)). There are some incidents of social violence that are oriented towards communal violence. First, there were riots about racist such as the anti-Chinese social riots in Medan, Aceh, Ujung Pandang, Semarang on 1981, labor protests in Medan on 1994, Baucau, Timor-Timor, Flores, East Flores, Dili, Timor-Timor and Atambua, West Timor on 1995, Dayak-Madura Sambas West Kalimantan on 1996, Situbondo, East Java on 1996, Tasikmalaya on 1996, Sahur tragedy in Rengasengklok, Majalengka, and Bajarmasin on 1997. There were also riots in Pekalongan, Central Java on 1997. Chinese-Indonesian riots were in Purwakarta, West Java, Pekalongan, Central Java and Jakarta on 1997, and riots in Poso, Maluku, Luwu, Sambas, Sampit, Pangkalan Bun, Bagan Siapi-api, Kinali (West Sumatra), Jujuhan (Jambi), Mataram, Kupang, Ketapang, and riots in Medan on 1998.

Second, there were communal riots of a political interest, such as the attack on Golkar supporters in the Banteng field in 1982, the terror at BCA in Gadjah Mada Jakarta Street, the Sarinah Department Store and RRI in Jakarta, Borobudur, and the Solo Palace in Central Java on 1984-1985. There was Kedungombo peasants' resistance on 1989. PDI tragedy was on July 27, 1996 in Jakarta. There were riots between PDI-P activists and PDI supporters Soerjadi in Surabaya. In Ujung Pandang, there was PPP riot with Pemuda Pancasila on 1997. There was clash between PPP supporters and Golkar in Pekalongan, Central Java 1997. There were clashes between PPP and Golkar supporters in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan on 1997, and the kidnapping of students and activists from NGOs, mass organizations, and political parties on 1998.

Third, there are social violence with economic motives such as scarcity of basic commodities and struggle for resources. In this case, there are riots in NTT, Jepara Denpasar Bali, Padang Sidempuan, Pagaralam, Jatiwangi, Kuningan, Cirebon, Pamanukan, Cikarang, Tegal, Pangalengan, Rembang, Brebes, Jember, Batanghari Jambi, Tuban, Pasuruan, Bojonegoro, Bima, Praya, Ende, Sampang, Unjung Pandang, and Donggala 1998. Fourth, there is violence by differences in political views, the issue of sorcerer and brawls between villages such as happened in Manggarai, Berlan and Pal Meriam Matraman in Jakarta, Cirebon, Indramayu, Tasikmalaya, Banyumas, Buleleng Bali 1998, as well as the killings of sorcerer in Banyuwangi, East Java, Central Java, and West Java 1998-2000.

These descriptions show that communal violence was more in the form of riots and was dominated by ethnic, religious, racial, migrant motives, and differences in political attitudes and views.

#### Separatist Violence

Separatist violence is social violence between the state and society (local people) which is rooted in the problem of regional separatism ([Tadjoeddin, 2002](#)). This movement is motivated by the desire of some people in certain areas to separate from the Indonesian state. There are some categories of separatist violence. First, there was Aceh social conflict in 1998. Second, there was violence in the East-East in 1974, 1984, 1991, and 1999. Third, there was the conflict in Papua in 1998. The form of separatist violence in these three areas was military action, while the motive was violence from economic motives due to inequality. Separatist violence in Timor-Timor, Aceh, and Papua did not appear suddenly in 1998, but was a continuation of the previous year. In Timor-Timor, separatist violence did explode in 1998, however, in 1974-1975 there was actually military violence under Operation Komando and Seroja. In Aceh, in 1976, separatist violence had emerged which was marked by a Declaration of "Aceh Merdeka" (Free Aceh) by Hasan Tiro. Thus, the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) in 1998 was a continuation of the Free Aceh Declaration in 1976. Likewise, the Free Papua Operation (OPM) in 1998 actually started with a series of violent incidents in 1996 such as the riots in Abepura and the Loretz Expedition Team Liberation Operation who was held hostage by OPM.

#### State-Community Violence

State-community violence is violence between the state and community who express their protests and dissatisfaction with state institutions without separatist motives ([Tadjoeddin, 2002](#)). The state-society violence with political power were The Malari Incident in 1974, The Airplane Hijacking by Imron in 1981, The Tanjung Periuk Case in 1984, The Mysterious Shooter (Petrus) in 1983-1984, the execution of 4 former PKI members and 14 prisoners accused of being communist in 1985 and The Haur Koening Majalengka incident West Java in 1993. PPP youth protests against the security forces against the attack on the PPP office of Yogyakarta in 1997. The burning of election ballot boxes by PPP

was in Madura in Jember, East Java 1997. There were clashes between supporters of political parties and security forces in East Jakarta and South Jakarta in 1997, and the kidnapping of students and activists from NGOs, *Ormas* (mass organization), and Political Parties in 1998.

The violence on economic interest was the Kedungombo 1989 case, the 1993 Madura Nipah Sampang case, the 1995 looting of the community in Jambi, and the 1995 fire case by peasants in Jember, East Java. Meanwhile, the state-community violence on ethnic, religious, and race were riots in Maumere and Larantuka, East Nusatenggara 1995, mass violence in Situbondo 1996, mass rage in Bandung 1997, and the burning of a church in Tasikmalaya, West Java 1997.

If communal violence, issues of ethnicity, religion, race, and migrants are more dominant, then the state-community violence will actually be based on political issues, especially public dissatisfaction with the process of state administration as a source of violence. Although the violence originated from community protests, the state has committed the most violent acts. Both state and community violence are rooted in political problems. The difference lies in the respective reasons for using violence. For the community, violence is a manifestation of the dissatisfaction with state administration as unfair, discriminatory, authoritarian, etc. By the state, violence is used for reasons of political stability, economy, order, and law enforcement.

### **Industrial Relations Violence**

Industrial relations violence is social violence in industrial relations problems ([Tadjoeddin, 2002](#)). The category of industrial relations violence were the murder of Marsinah in East Java in 1993, the case of vandalism and arson by peasants in Pasuruan, East Java in 1995, the destruction of factories in Tangerang Jakarta in 1995, the Attack on PT. Freeport Corporation of Papua in 1995 and the rampage case of PT. Monterado Mas Mining Sambas West Kalimantan in 1996. Violence in industrial relations took the form of destruction with the motive of environmental pollution issues, except for the murder case of Marsinah with political motives.

This industrial relations violence took two forms. First, it was labor violence with the company. Second, the violence was between the community and the company. Based on both forms of violence in industrial relations, violence between the community and the company is more than the violence by workers against the company where they work ([Nugraha & Purwanto, 2020](#)). A study by [Tadjoeddin \(2002\)](#) estimates that from 1990-2001, 31 out of 38 incidents and 7 out of 8 deaths were violence between the community and the company, and the rest was between workers and companies. Although industrial relations violence does not show its significance, it does not mean it is not important. In this case, Indonesian workers prefer to strike as a manifestation of their conflict with the company. In this context, it reflects the significant intensity of social conflict between workers and companies.

### **Political Violence**

Political violence is social violence perpetrated by the state against society or society towards the state which is related to political power. This is an attempt to reinstate the political structure or overthrows the political power of a regime. Some events of political violence were the G30/S-PK or Gestapu in 1965, the Gestok Incident of 1965-1966, and the May Incident of 1998. At first glance, political violence is almost similar to state-community violence; both of events are related to political matters, but both differ in emphasis. In state-society violence, dissatisfaction on the process of state administration is the foundation for violent action. In other words, violence is only a manifestation and response of people's disappointment to the state. Violence are society instruments to encourage changes in the political structure or replace the political power of a ruling regime. Thus, the action of the Revolutionary Council in 1965 was an attempt to take over Soekarno's political power structure. Likewise the tragedy of May 98, community used violence for the purpose of overthrowing the political power of Suharto's New Order. If the state is actively uses violence in state-society violence, then the community is the subject of violence while the state is the object.

## **2. Relationship Between Power And Violence**

Violence in the course of Indonesian history as described above cannot be fully understood as a stand-alone phenomenon. Violence for the sake of greatness should be placed in the dimensions of space and time, where it takes place and in what context it applies as well as on what interests and who used it and how the actors operationalize it. Thus, violence that occurred in Indonesia cannot be seen as a destructive attitude of humans driven by the state of nature, or merely human instincts. Violence acts in Indonesia is more precisely seen as a social and cultural product that is deliberately created, constructed, and scenarios by social actors to achieve a goal, namely power politics.

If violence is placed in the logic of power and the state, violence actually has a strong relationship with political power. Because in power, there is not only a power relation with knowledge as Foucault's thesis ([1977](#)), but there is also a relationship with the force of violence as described by [Hannah Arendt \(1970\)](#), that violence as if the precondition of power and power is nothing but its front end. Understanding violence in the political context of power implies that violence has political content and interests. In the context of this study, there are three political interests of the violence carried out, firstly, the interests of maintaining and seizing power, secondly, silencing witnesses, and thirdly political propaganda.

### **The Desire to Have Power**

Based on five of violent orientations, the state is the most dominant in committing violence with all the motives behind it. Understanding violence in the context of power politics implies that violence has political content and interests. One of these powers is the interest in maintaining and seizing power. There is a very close relationship between violence and power (Piliang, 2005; Arendt, 1970). Violence is the most effective instrument in obtaining and perpetuating power. The combination and unification of violence and power in the process of power itself have placed violence as the most visible manifestation of power. Thus, violence is also the result of a political product of power for the sake of power itself.

There were brutal New Order's political regime of abolishing opponents to maintain power on the case of massacre of the Communist Party members (PKI) in 1965-1966, Lari Events 1974, East Timor violence from 1974 to 1975 and 1998, DOM (Military Operations area) in Aceh in 1976 and 1998, Pertus 1983 to 1984, Tanjung Priok 1984, Situbondo 1996, Manila 1997, OPM (Operation of Independence), 1996 and 1998 kidnapping and assassination of activists until the May 1998 Tragedy.

In Anderson's record as Triyono was crowned, since the formation of the New Order's political regime, Indonesia has been undergoing on brutalization process, a process in which everything contrary to the New Order's political regime is considered an enemy and has been abolished (Suryawan, 2010). In this case, the state during the New Order political regime had large and broad control over the sovereignty of the Indonesian nation with the support of capital, bureaucracy, administration, and the military. Then, the institutionalization of state violence in Indonesia has been massive systematically. In this context, if violence is placed in the logic of power and the state, then violence actually has a strong relationship with power politics. Thus, there is not only a relationship of power with knowledge (Foucault, 1977), but also a relationship with the power of violence (Arendt, 1970).

### **Silencing the Past**

The New Order political regime was not only used violence as a means to gain and maintain power, but it was also used to silence potential witnesses. This is clearly seen in the case of the killing of thugs, masters, and gangs by Petrus (Mysterious Gunman) during the years of 1983-1984. Petrus is a trick to silence witnesses in the Malari Incident in 1974 and incidents in Golongan Karya Party in Banteng Field in 1982, especially witnesses of the massacre of Muslims in Tanjung Priok in 1984. The same thing happened in the riots in Banjarmasin in 1997 where the state aimed at silencing and eradicating witnesses of the Situbondo cases in 1996 and Tasikmalaya in 1996. Some of the cases presented in the previous section show that violence is actually the result of the construction and engineering of political actors in building positive images in one group and negative images in other groups as well as being used to create psychological therapy or fear in society.

Using elements of violence as a strategy with various patterns shows the direction of imaging and psychological therapy in maintaining power. In this context, the use of violence in the history of the New Order political regime since 1969 was an attempt to "silence the past". This is shown by presenting historical evidence. In this case, there was the mysterious killings known as Petrus during the years 1983-1984. Although the murder of the perpetrators of the crime has disturbed the peace of society, but behind it tucked the political interests as the reasons for the shooting of recidivists, thugs, and perpetrators of crime for the interest of silencing of paramilitary, thugs and gangs used by the authorities to riot.

Extra-judicial killings through Petrus have an implied purpose as a strategy to build an image of the ruling authority, as well as being a psychological pressure on society. This was confirmed by Soeharto in his semi-autobiography (1989) that it was not General LB Moerdani's initiative to do Petrus, but Soeharto himself ordered Petrus campaign as a shock treatment. Soeharto as the President considered that it is necessary to fight the rapidly growing crime with shock-therapy. In the context of Petrus, Nordholt (2002) explains the fabric of the state with crime plays at least three things. First, the state is not able to oversee the increasing crime; therefore Petrus Operation was launched by order of the President which was used as shock therapy to regulate the thugs. Second, there were efforts to destroy the close relations between criminals and local officials, and neutralize government power. Third, it is the resolution of the problem between two ruling generals, who fought each other through a dirty war, namely General Ali Murtopo and General LB Moerdani.

### **Political Propaganda**

The violence of the New Order political regime as a strategy to maintain power and to silence political witnesses was also used as a political propaganda strategy. As a result of social product that is deliberately designed, whatever its name and form, the violence cannot be released with the designers of violence, whether individual, group, or state. In Indonesia, it is widely known that violence, especially state violence, always uses state apparatus such as the police, military, and Satpol PP or Municipal Police as executors in the field. Even the political elite and businessmen often resort to violence using the services of the police and military in securing their interests. Apart from using state elements, the designers of violence also used the services of the military; expert, thugs, gangs, and unemployed youth. They are scouted, organized, and paid to commit acts of violence. This paramilitary power is used by the state, political elites, military, and businessmen to trigger violence quell protests and discredit rivals.



The argument that violence is a political strategy and a propaganda tool for power holders (state, political elite, military, businessmen) to win the political battle of power can be traced from the cases of the Malari Events in 1974, the Banteng Field Riots in 1982, the Situbondo Riots in 1996, the Tasikmalaya riots in the Year 1996, Rengasdengklok riots in 1997, and Banjarmasin riots 1997 in 1997. If the Malari incident and the Lapangan Banteng were used as an issue to create riots, then riots in Situbondo, Tasikmalaya, Rengasdengklok, and Banjarmasin SARA issues were used as pellets.

Observing the patterns and ways of the masses conducting riots, as well as the patterns and ways of the state overcoming the Banjarmasin riots, it was found that the *Modus Operandi* was almost the same as the way to overcome the riots in Situbondo, Tasikmalaya, and Rengasdengklok. Thus, the motives of religious-ethnic conflict that were alleged to be the cause of the riots in Banjarmasin were refuted by the pattern and the way the state overcame them. The Banjarmasin riots were an elite-level political conflict in Jakarta because it was the final series and perfection of power struggle scenarios that had been constructed since Situbondo, Tasikmalaya, Rengasdengklok. Therefore, the four riots mentioned above which are suggested as religious-ethnic conflict, are very thick with political interests of struggle for power. [Henk Schulte Nordholt \(2002\)](#) explained that the riots were a series of elite scenarios in fighting for the position of vice president in preparation for Soeharto's transition to power.

The Situbondo and Tasikmalaya riots were intended to corner Abdurrahman Wahid, Chairperson of Nahdatul Ulama, a strong supporter of Megawati. The riots were created to build the image that Abdurrahman Wahid, NU and Muslims were intolerant of minority groups. There is a strong suspicion that riots committed by thugs/paramilitaries in these two regions are a scenario of ABRI-Green ([Nordholt, 2002](#)). In Rengasdengklok the riots organized by ABRI-Merah Putih to warn their political opponents - ABRI-Green - not to play with fire against the New Order political system based on Pancasila. Finally, the Banjarmasin riot was deliberately created to eliminate the witnesses.

Social violence in Situbondo, Tasikmalaya, and Rengasdengklok recalls the memory of Malari riots of 1974, and the incidents of Golongan Karya Party in the Banteng field 1982. The use of various elements of violence in the 70-80s era (Malari and Golongan Karya Party) and in the 90s (Situbondo, Tasikmalaya and Rengasdengklok) is a representation of the struggle for power by the elite. These two events show a similar pattern and method. The actors are using paramilitary forces (thugs, gangs, masters) to carry out acts of violence on the ground. The use of paramilitaries is not something new in Indonesia as it has even become a tradition in the life of the Indonesian people. Research of [Collins \(2002\)](#), [Nordholt \(2002\)](#), [Cribb \(1991\)](#), [Ongkhokham \(1975\)](#) show that the military transition in Indonesia has been going on since the pre-colonial, colonial, independence revolution until the New Order era. Thus, it was not surprising on various riots before the fall of Soeharto's power. The existence of paramilitaries still exists as instruments of violence by power holders. Even in the reformation period, the use of militia by the authority continued as in the case of the pro-independence mass massacre in East Timor by the pro-integration militia group by Eurico Guterres ([Parry, 2005](#)).

## CONCLUSION

The transition of power from the Old Order to the New Order, the New Order to the Reformation has engraved four phases of social violence in Indonesia. The first one is the killing of several *Banteng* Council Generals and the slaughter of PKI at the end of the Old Order regime in 1996-1995. This violence was politically motivated. The second one is the first social violence after the New Order political regime under Soeharto's leadership. The violence occurred between 1974 and 1976. It was marked by the Malari Incident, military violence under Operation Command and Seroja in the East Timor (now Timor Leste), and separatist violence of the Declaration of Aceh Merdeka (Free Aceh). The third one is the phase of expansion of violence from political motives to ideology, ethnic, industrial sentiment, and differences in political views. This violence occurred in the span of 1981-1989. And the fourth is violence with very complex motives and high intensity. This violence occurred in the years of 1990-1998. Violence at this time was not only vertical (state versus people) but also horizontal (people versus people).

The social violence that broke out during the process of changing or transitioning of the political regime from the Old Order to the New Order and from the New Order to the Reform Order can be understood in the context of politics as the struggle for power. Therefore, it can be concluded that violence in all its forms is a social product that is deliberately designed, disseminated, and used by the elit for certain purposes and interests. The violence that occurred during the New Order era was designed and intended as an instrument to maintain and perpetuate power, a tool to silence witnesses of violence, and strategies to carry out political propaganda. In the end, the practice of violence in Indonesia as shown by this study is very useful for developing countries in managing a democratic system, understanding the relation of violence to power, and how violence works and is used in the interests of political regimes and power.

## LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

This study is limited to mapping and discussing violence in every political regime and the transition of democracy before the reformation era in Indonesia. This paper does not discuss the political violence after the reformation. The next study is highly recommended to examine the violence related to the transition of democracy, especially in the electoral process after the reformation.

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## AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

Nurus Shalihin as the first author has compiles the background and state of the art studies to design research objectives, design methods, perform data collection and analysis and wrote the first draft of articles. Firdaus as the second author synthesizes a literature review, together with the first author designs research methods and analyzes data, analyzes, finalizing the first draft. Muhammad Sholihin as a third author help the second author to map and wrote a literature review. Andri Ashadi as the fourth author helps the second author in browsing and mapping literature and helps the first author in collecting data.

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