

said to be distinctive of Aceh — rather it is a norm in many Muslim societies, including other ethnic communities in Indonesia. The author draws attention to ‘honour killings’ (p. 101). Do these occur elsewhere in Indonesia?

This is a space rather than a flaw in the way the book tells its story, a space that exists because engagement with a Muslim society is not reducible to Islam observed, but requires a full engagement with Islam as a religion. Even so, this is a wonderfully engaging and enlightening work, inspiring further exploration of the wonderful world of Aceh.

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*From rebellion to riots: Collective violence on Indonesian Borneo*

By JAMIE S. DAVIDSON

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The Indonesian province of West Kalimantan entered the international spotlight in 1996–97 and again in 1999 as a result of massive ethnic violence that involved Dayaks, Malays and Madurese. The graphic aspects of the violence, including decapitation and the eating of livers, gave both local and international media fodder for sensational reports, feeding the popular imagination with intuitive theories of primordialist violence. Jamie Davidson’s book looks at these episodes of collective violence in the midst of political change in Indonesia, debunking the myths and providing systematic analysis. At the same time, Davidson weaves a compelling historical narrative through the three major bouts of violence that shook West Kalimantan, doing an admirable job of making sense of the events that defined the province.

Of the three major spates of violence the book deals with, the first is most complicated because of the multiple perpetrators and victims involved. At the centre of this spate of violence is a counter-insurgency operation against communist guerrillas lodged deep in the Bornean jungles and mountains. With the end of the confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia in 1966, the Indonesian military began to take action against Sarawak communist forces taking refuge within the borders of West Kalimantan. At the same time, the military attempted to ferret out remnants of the Indonesian Communist Party that had taken up arms in the Bornean jungles. To deprive these communist guerrillas of support among Chinese communities in the interior of the province, the military instigated Dayaks to evict these Chinese communities, leading to the dislocation of around 60,000 Chinese in 1967–68. The departure of the Chinese left both property and economic opportunities to be contested, which led to Dayak–Madurese clashes in the areas vacated by the evictees. As Davidson puts it, the New Order’s counter-insurgency campaign ‘facilitated a hardening of ethnic

differentiation', making 'Chinese', 'Dayak', 'Malay' and 'Madurese' distinct ethnic categories where ethnic relations used to be more fluid (p. 77).

Following the first recorded Dayak–Madurese clash in December 1967, further clashes took place in the 1970s and 1980s. This 'routinization of violence', whereby '(v)iolence became the means through which people resolved disputes' (pp. 92–3), coupled with the politicisation of the Dayak community, set the stage for the immense bloodletting in 1996–97, which led to fatalities numbering as many as 1,700. Davidson suggests that the intensity of this bout of violence is the result of the political awakening of the Dayaks under the banner of an indigenous rights movement (p. 116).

In January 1999, a third spate of violence erupted, this time between the Madurese and Malays in Sambas district, which later involved the Dayaks as well. This resulted in at least 400 deaths and the displacement of an estimated 34,000 to 62,000 Madurese (p. 134). Two aspects of this spate of violence are novel. First is the participation of Malays, who were not embedded in a 'routine of violence' with the Madurese; and second, the full-scale expulsion of Madurese from Sambas district, and they were not allowed to return, unlike after previous clashes. Davidson attributes this development to two broader political currents: the rise (and therefore threat) of Dayaks as a political force, and the anticipation of regional autonomy in the post-Suharto era (p. 135). In consideration of these factors, Davidson's proposition is that 'through anti-Madurese violence, the Malay identity *proved* its indigeneity to be on par with the Dayak identity in this politicized field of ethnicity' (p. 138, emphasis as in original). In other words, through an excess of violence, displaced onto the Madurese, the Malays competed with the Dayaks for legitimate claims to the spoils of power in anticipation of the decentralisation of power.

This is a bold assertion that requires a deep reading of the Malay psyche, and Davidson is reasonably convincing by providing insights into local elite and street politics, as well as Malay cultural and political thinking. But while this may explain why the Malays would want to embark on an unprecedented clash with the Madurese, the puzzle remains as to why there was a full-scale expulsion of the Madurese (which Davidson notes was not an *a priori* objective of the violence, p. 140), and why the Madurese were not allowed to return after the clashes.

Nevertheless, by knitting together a rich tapestry of primary materials drawn from internal military documents, newspaper archives and field interviews, Davidson delves deep into the local conditions of violence. At the same time, this attention to the local as an empirical object makes Davidson's analysis sensitive to how nationwide developments, such as the anti-communist purges of the 1960s and the implementation of regional autonomy from the late 1990s onwards, translate into local contexts. Thus, while setting up a broad comparative perspective, which Davidson undertakes towards the end of the book, can yield profitable insights, I suspect that it is the intriguing chapters focused on the episodes of collective violence in West Kalimantan that will attract scholars and students of Indonesia to return to this book repeatedly.

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