Deconstructing Collective Identities and Violence: Analytical Perspectives from Indonesia

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Deconstructing Collective Identities and Violence:

Analytical Perspectives from Indonesia

A Thesis
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the Faculty of Arts and Humanities
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Master of Arts

by
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Abstract

The goal of this study is to establish a more applied, analytical approach to analyses of collective identity and violence while providing insights into the dynamics of the regions of Indonesia considered. By focusing on two regions of Indonesia - Aceh and Kalimantan - which are populated by distinct peoples and have experienced violence in contemporary times, this study contributes to the expanding literature on the social dynamics of identity and violence. To ensure a more practical approach within the study, concepts and frameworks which have contributed to discussions of the nature of identity and acts of violence are utilized. The work of Brubaker and Cooper (2000) provides a foundational understanding of identity which is complemented by Gurr and Bishop's (1976) study of diverse forms of physical and structural violence. Through a fusion of the authors' conceptualizations and terminology, a coherent understanding and approach to the case studies is developed for the evaluation of identities and violence in Aceh and the Western and Central provinces of Kalimantan. These case studies provide the opportunity to evaluate the influence which identity has had upon violence in two regions which have experienced eruptions of violence seemingly motivated by different values and aspirations.
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As a maritime point of connection between the Indian and the Pacific Oceans, the archipelago of Indonesia has long been a critical juncture of regional and extra regional commerce and exchange of social mores. The transfer of local and distant cultures and values coincides with the interaction of peoples and regional transfers of populations. Contact with various societies and cultures, as well as the isolation of some regions, has contributed to the diversity of the peoples which populate the nearly 6,000 inhabited islands of Indonesia. Today, Indonesia is populated by an array of communities which are diverse in ethnicity, ancestry, religion, and traditions. This has come about as a result of a regional history in which commercial, cultural, and colonial influences and exchanges have contributed to the evolution of the social features of archipelagic societies. The nature of Indonesia and the challenges it has faced in its contemporary existence are a result of social influences which have contributed to the formation of shared and individual identities which have impacted the dynamics of the archipelago. The violence and social movements which have spanned the history of Indonesia have been driven by a variety of factors and aspirations. Religion, ethnicity, ancestry, and other social features as well as movements to protect these and further regional autonomy have variously contributed to both regional cohesion and upheaval.

Individuals, nations, and states are all influenced and motivated by varying conceptions of self and others. The confrontation of divergent self-understandings within an individual creates an internal struggle to define oneself. In contrast, such clashes between individuals within communities may escalate from civil interaction into discord and violence. Similarly, intrastate or international confrontations often lead to violence
and destruction through the use of physical force against a community or government. This may be done in reaction to the threat which individual, group, or governmental actions or dispositions are seen to pose. Strife may also ensue in retaliation for past wrongs done or under a banner of tradition, cultural preservation, contestation of resources, or other aims which motivate and incite acts of violence. The aligning of customs, ethnicities, languages, religions and related social values with populations contribute to the solidarity of such social movements. Conflicts within Indonesia and around the world reflect the integral role which collective actions have consistently played in discord between peoples. By contributing to a proclivity towards cohesion and mobilization or discord and violence, expressed identities have advanced unification of groups towards a shared goal, be that peace or conflict.

It has been said that ethnonationalism corresponds to some enduring propensities of the human spirit that are heightened by the processes of modern state creation (Muller, 2008, p.35). Many values which are considered to contribute to identity - ancestry, ethnicity, religion, and nationalism - are also viewed as impacting both the solidarity and enmity which exist between peoples. Violence is considered by some to be founded upon the social categories listed above as well as other social cleavages. As identities are negotiated, the histories, traditions, and experiences of both stable and fractured communities, regions, and states contribute to understandings of these dynamics and the cohesion or violent action. The Indonesian provinces of Aceh and West and Central Kalimantan have experienced strife and social movements which have featured violence which has been carried out by collections of people with shared ethnicities, religions, and
ancestral ties. These instances of collective violence have often been ascribed to the existence of collective identities based upon these similarities. This study seeks to consider the role which identities have played in instances of violence in the regions of Aceh and West and Central Kalimantan, and to compare the two.

The Acehnese populations of northern Sumatra have sought autonomy and separation from colonial powers, interim rulers, and the independent Republic of Indonesia. Many communities in Aceh have viewed their traditions, religion, and culture as inherently incongruent with a unitary, secular Indonesia. Their quest for autonomy has been characterized by insurgency and violence as well as political engagement. Full autonomy has not yet been realized. However, groups such as the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) have won concessions and recently made progress in their goal for greater representation through participation in regional elections. Unlike the Acehnese population's confrontation with Indonesian authorities, Kalimantan has experienced conflict between different communities which have divergent traditions, religions, and ancestry. While contributed to by the transmigration policies of the Indonesian government, this confrontation of peoples has centered upon the Dayak and Madurese people of the Indonesian controlled portions of the island of Borneo. The differences in the nature of these populations and histories, or played out in these conflicts, reflect the complexity of social movements as well as the factors which impact the continuation and conclusion of violent conflicts. Through a case-based comparison, this study will elucidate similarities and differences between the conflicts which have arisen in Aceh and Kalimantan. The ability to analyze these regions depends heavily upon an understanding
of national and regional contexts, including the history of the archipelago and the
Indonesian state. Through these understandings, a richer representation of the conflicts
can be developed and the relationship between identity and violence can be depicted.

Identities have been considered broadly in many fields of study, from
anthropology through political science. As such, it is necessary to base a consideration of
identity and violence upon well developed terminology and operationalized
understandings. The following sections will provide historical insights and clarify
"identity" to set the stage for the cases to be considered within this study.
Archipelagic and Indonesian History

“There are over three hundred different ethnic groups in Indonesia, each with its own cultural identity, and more than two hundred and fifty distinct languages are spoken…nearly all of the important world religions are represented, in addition to a wide range of indigenous ones.” (Giannakos, 2002, p.191)

The Republic of Indonesia is a Southeast Asian state which has been formed through a convergence of diverse histories, cultures, and ultimately a violent struggle for independence. Having experienced colonialism, independence movements, and various challenges to national unity, Indonesia has emerged as a state seeking unification through Pancasila principles, yet remains fragmented by its diversity. The nationalism which arose in the years leading up to independence functioned as a unifying force for the dominant populations of the region. However, this cohesion subsequently fragmented into an array of social movements and conflicts, many of which have challenged the unity of the Indonesian state. Violence and resistance movements have erupted in regions throughout the archipelago, including Aceh, Kalimantan, Maluku, Papua, and Sulawesi.

These intrastate clashes have come as a result of conflict between peoples as well as between communities and the Indonesian state. There have been deep impacts upon regional institutions. Emergent identities and a nationalist rhetoric of independence have drawn heavily upon the ancient kingdoms and historical underpinnings of archipelagic Indonesia, as have contemporary social movements. Therefore, the histories of antecedent societies have been integral in the evolution of the Indonesian Republic as well as the identities and institutions which have formed throughout the archipelago.

As many authors have suggested, any attempt to synthesize the whole of Indonesian history is a boundless task and would likely overwhelm the topics at hand.
Taking such conclusions to heart, this survey of Indonesian history selectively discusses the character of ancient archipelagic kingdoms, the colonial era of the East Indies, as well as the emergence of the independent Republic of Indonesia. This will facilitate clear understandings of the early local, regional, and national features which have, in turn, given rise to contemporary identities and added to both cohesion and discord throughout the archipelago. Such identities have been formed through the melding of intra- and extra-regional cultures and traditions as well as the historical experiences of peoples. An early Indian presence, the ancient indigenous kingdoms of the archipelago, the presence of various religious belief systems, and contemporary experiences with colonialism and independence have all contributed to Indonesian archipelagic identities and social movements.

Indian commerce and culture entered the region with sailors and traders as early as the third century C.E. (Taylor, 2003, p.18). These travelers not only brought goods, but also transplanted traditions, customs, and religions which were previously unknown to the people of the archipelago. The limited ability of archipelagic peoples to afford rare and expensive goods traded by the Indian merchants, along with the development of merchant guilds in port cities, contributed to the dominance of port communities’ over inland societies and the transfer of an Indian styled class system throughout the region. A variant of the Hindu caste system created social categories based upon economic standing. Within this system, heads of ports and commercial centers adopted Indian titles such as raja or maharaja to reflect their status and authority within society (Taylor, 2003, p.20). Temples inspired by the religions of the Indian subcontinent were constructed in reverence to Buddhist and Hindu gods and beliefs. These structures featured Sanskrit
writing which was not an indigenous language of the archipelago. Indian influence continued to dominate the social conventions and organization of the early kingdoms. While today these aspects of Indonesian history are often labeled as products of Indian conquest and colonialism, the social influence of India and its contributions to the creation of coastal and agricultural settlements which would form the basis of the early kingdoms of the Indonesian archipelago cannot be overstated.

The ancient kingdoms of the archipelago and the cultural, religious and social structures they drew from Indian culture represent a pre-colonial influence which had strong implications for the future evolution of Indonesia and societies throughout the archipelago. The maritime Sumatran kingdom of Sri Vijaya and the succeeding Javanese empire of Majapahit are two such societies which would both have extensive interactions with the Indian subcontinent and would contribute to the basis of identities and national or regional movements (Tarling, 2001, p.16). Both have played an integral role in archipelagic history.

The kingdom of Sri Vijaya developed between the seventh and thirteenth centuries along the southeast coast of Sumatra. Tributaries, interconnected islands, and local waterways allowed the kingdom to develop tenuous connections to the inland communities of Sumatra. Its network of ports and commercial centers along sea lanes allowed the kingdom to exercise control over portions of the island of Sumatra, the Malaysian Peninsula, the island of Borneo, Sulawesi, and other coastal territories (Tarling, 2001, p.16). The kingdom consisted of urban centers and cities along trade routes throughout the central archipelago, yet lacked substantial inland territories, agricultural resources, and the population necessary to cultivate a land-based empire. As a
result, control of sea lanes throughout the region along with naval conquests and commercial networks were the way in which Sri Vijaya was maintained. The kingdom's commerce extended throughout Southeast Asia as well as (in attenuated form) to the Middle East and China, contributing to the transfer of people, cultures, and religions. Interaction with extra-regional societies also developed the foundation for continued exchanges by future kingdoms and states.

The geographically fragmented nature of the kingdom contributed to the development of a political structure which consisted of “a political center which exerted varying degrees of control over loose and amorphous geographical area...” (Brown, 2005a, p.3). Many of these connections were in the form of tributary or vassal relations between the politico-commercial center and the peripheral lands. Local leaders ruled these peripheral regions and were subordinate to the maharaja, who governed the Sri Vijayan capital on the island of Sumatra. Leaders of this period gained legitimacy by asserting ancestral connections to great empires within Southeast Asia and other regions connected through maritime networks. In spite of its commercial supremacy throughout the region, the thirteenth century saw Sri Vijaya diminish as commercial centers realized their autonomy from the capital of the kingdom (Tarling, 2001, p.18). The ability of vassals to operate independently along with the challenges posed to Sri Vijaya by newer adversarial states and kingdoms of the region increased the instability of the Sumatran's commercial network. Ultimately, due to the trans-regional dependence upon mercantilism, this series of events led to the disintegration of the kingdom in the thirteenth century. As the Sumatran kingdom of Sri Vijaya's dominance lessened, another equally impressive empire solidified its control upon the island of Java.
Increases in trade occurring throughout Southeast Asia had allowed for exchanges and confrontations between Sri Vijaya and other kingdoms of the region. The end of the sea-dependent kingdom of Sri Vijaya allowed for the expansion of territories centered in the eastern regions of Java. By the end of the thirteenth century, as Sri Vijaya was declining, the empire of Majapahit began to expand. Similar to previous kingdoms, Majapahit maintained regular interactions with states throughout the region and outside of Southeast Asia. As such, the temples, relics, traditions, and stories which have transmitted this civilization’s history reflect a strong Indian influence (Taylor, 2003, p.39). Tapping land-based resources such as the fertile soils and expanding populations as well as the ability to capitalize on the commercial network established in previous centuries, the kingdom developed resources not held by previous kingdoms.

The Majapahit kingdom would use these tools to consolidate east Java and to rule territories throughout the western and central archipelago. Similar to Sri Vijaya, the state was centered upon a capital city, also named Majapahit, which oversaw tributary cities and settlements. The empire’s vassal states spanned from the lands of Aceh and the Malaysian peninsula in the west to Ambon and less solidly to Irian Jaya (Papua) in the east. This translated into control of much of the Java Sea and the Straits of Malacca. However, west Java and the interior of the island of Borneo were not brought into the empire due to resistance from the populations of Java and the inability to access the interior regions of Borneo.

The vision of Majapahit rulers was the creation of an empire spanning the whole of the archipelago, referred to as "nusantara" (Tarling, 2001, p.16). Whether the kingdom fully realized its mission of a Javanese empire unifying the archipelago is disputed.
However, the empire did span much of what has come to be known as Indonesia through imperial and commercial networks which integrated large number of peoples and territories. The empire expanded its land and maritime holdings throughout its existence. Majapahit’s decline eventually came as a result of discontinuity in the succession of its rulers and not of a failure of its network or control over vassal regions. Towards the close of the fourteenth century the maharajas of Majapahit failed to maintain leadership which shook the foundations of the empire (Tarling, 2001, p.16-17). In spite of its previous strength, this lack of stability in the succession process along with the earlier introduction and continuing spread of Islam would challenge the kingdom and lead to its eventual collapse.

As Majapahit began to decline in the fourteenth century, Islam began to more rapidly expand throughout the archipelago. In fact, it was ultimately a Muslim state which would conquer the Majapahit Empire. During the decline of the Javanese empire, "trader-rulers" of many vassal states converted to Islam to improve their commercial prospects (Sar Desai, 2003, p.58). While Sri Vijaya and Majapahit were Indianized kingdoms, and therefore influenced heavily by Hinduism and Buddhism, the rise of Islam reflected a new influence in the region which led to the creation of sultanates and Islamic settlements throughout the western and central archipelago. Islam entered the consciousness of archipelagic peoples in the same manner in which Indian civilization had influenced previous societies, through maritime commerce and subsequent inland penetrations.

Acceptance of Islam in ports and communities in northern Sumatra, and the religion's subsequent expansion to Java and other islands, would lead to the conversion of
communities and eventually entire kingdoms throughout the region. Many traditional stories allow the kings of ancient cities the honor of becoming the first of Muslim converts in a region. The associated territories came to be known as sultanates. A ruler's conversion to Islam dictated that his people would become Muslim as well and would be governed according to the practices and teachings of Islam. By joining the pan-Islamic community, which included civilizations in Spanish, African, Turkish, Chinese, Persian, and Indian regions, rulers found themselves to be a part of a land-based yet seaborne civilization which provided greater commercial connections and strength in confronting the Hindu kingdoms and animist tribes of the archipelago. The resonance of Islam with the peoples of commercial centers was facilitated by the presence of missionaries, scholars, and artisans from the Muslim world. Cities on maritime trade routes, therefore, formed epicenters for the expansion of Islam throughout the archipelago (Brown, 2005a, p.4). Through commerce, there was a "...growing familiarity with Muslims over time, and access to knowledge of Islam as a religion and civilization..." in many port cities which contributed to the conversion of large numbers of archipelagic peoples (Taylor, 2003, p.75). The characteristics and events of the 14th through the 19th century C.E. have been passed on through stories, legends, and traditions related to the conversion of kings and the actions of Muslim holy men and local heroes who traveled throughout the archipelago or made hajj (pilgrimage) to the heart of Muslim civilization. Just as Islamic meta-legends and traditions have been passed from generation to generation, lesser known beliefs have also been passed through portions of the archipelago.

Discussions of the religious and cultural influences of India (Hinduism and Buddhism) and Muslim civilizations have often overshadowed the discussions of
indigenous traditions and belief systems of Indonesian societies. The local and regional
religions of the archipelago are often referred to collectively as animism. This grouping
is not an indication of the connection or uniformity of faiths and belief systems, but is
merely a categorization to facilitate a discussion of diverse local religions and traditions.
Animist beliefs were developed previous to and have continued to evolve alongside
extra-regional religions which were transferred through trade and cultural exchanges.
The beliefs of animists are tied to individual communities or subcultures. Unlike
religions with a more universal orientation which claim validity and relevance for all
people in all places, animistic beliefs are generally focused upon localized natural
phenomena (sacred trees, rocks, etc.) and spirits which are believed to be bound to
specific lands (Taylor, 2003, p.104). Universal religions provided seafaring and mobile
populations of early settlements and kingdoms with belief systems which were not
dependent upon maintaining geographic proximity to sacred phenomena. The practice of
universal religions has supplemented geographically dependent beliefs. Animist beliefs,
unlike universal monotheistic and polytheistic religions, were not bound to a specific
time of foreign entry into the archipelago, but instead evolved indigenously and continue
to be practiced, both exclusively and in syncretic combination with other religions,
throughout much of the Indonesian archipelago (Taylor, 2003, p.104). Christianity has
played a lesser role in the faith development of Indonesia. European traders and
colonizers have introduced Christian beliefs to the region since the 16th century C.E., but
have had much more substantial impacts upon the nature of Indonesian society and
institutions.
It has been said that the arrival of five small Dutch ships in the late sixteenth century launched 350 years of Dutch rule of the archipelago (Taylor, 2003, p.144). The Dutch arrived in Indonesia in 1595, nearly one hundred years after the arrival of the first Europeans to the Southeast Asian region. Existing commercial networks established by the Portuguese and Spanish which integrated port cities and regional trade centers were built upon by the Dutch East Indies Trading Company (VOC) and other mercantile organizations in the region. The VOC furthered its dominance in archipelagic trade through military and commercial alignment with Indonesian rulers, raiding of competitors, and the seizing of port cities from European and local competitors. Similar to previous centuries, as commerce was fostered throughout the region so was the transfer of populations, cultures, and traditions. Christianity, for example, was spread through Dutch and other European peoples (especially missionaries) who converted various populations. Through the development of an expanding colonial network of settlements and semi-autonomous regions, the Dutch furthered their authority over trade, commercial centers, and various localities throughout the East Indies. The dominance of the VOC would transition into the socio-political unification and central governance of the Dutch East Indies.

The Indonesian archipelago would continue to be dominated by the Dutch into the 1940s, until the Japanese captured and occupied these territories and other lands throughout Southeast Asia. In the midst of World War II, from 1942 to 1945, the Japanese took control of the Indonesian archipelago. This loosened the Dutch colonial hold on the region and, as a result, the Japanese in one sense had freed Indonesian populations from Dutch rule. The presence of the Japanese, however, quickly changed
perceptions of them from that of a liberating force into that of an occupying power (Taylor, 2003, p.321). Guerrilla violence and resistance movements erupted as the Japanese continued their presence into 1945. As the Japanese saw their impending defeat at the hands of Allied forces, the occupying authority developed the Investigating Committee for Preparatory Work for Indonesian Independence. The committee was comprised of prominent leaders of the contemporary political generation, including Sukarno and Hatta.

Sukarno's nationalist ideology of Pancasila, or "five pillars" was developed in parallel with the work of the committee to be a guiding philosophy for the eventual Indonesian state. Pancasila includes the values of nationalism, humanitarianism, democracy, social justice, and a belief in one God. The investigative committee created the foundations from which an independent Indonesian state would emerge. The values and solidarity created through the committee and the philosophy of Pancasila would remain integral in the evolving independence movement. The planning committee created by the Japanese had allowed the Indonesian leaders to develop the framework for an independence movement and on August 17, 1945, they declared Indonesia independence. The Dutch, however, would attempt to regain control over certain territories in the East Indies.

In 1945, the Dutch returned to the archipelago in a bid to resume their colonial authority. While some segments of the archipelago sought independence from these foreign colonizers, others fought for independence from the new Indonesian state. This led some peoples to align with the Dutch in support of a resumption of colonial governance in order to exclude themselves from the newly forming Indonesia. Indonesia
faced challenges from regions seeking to join a Dutch Federation of Indonesia as well as rebellions in regions not accepting the formation and character of the Republic of Indonesia (Brown, 2005a, p.15). The independence movement would simultaneously fight off Dutch imperial authority and attempt to ensure political and territorial cohesion throughout the archipelago. The battles of the independence movement would be fought in all regions of Indonesia through guerrilla warfare and emergent Indonesian military forces. After nearly five years of violence and struggle against the Dutch, the Indonesian Republic gained independence in 1949. An Indonesian state had been realized. Within the next year many of the smoldering rebellions and secessionist movements throughout the country would be suppressed and folded into the republic. This political consolidation of the archipelago, however, did not settle the underlying social issues to the conflicts. As a result, many of the sources of resistance and violence remained just below the surface of the "unified republic".

In their campaign against Indonesian independence, the Dutch appealed to cleavages among regional populations to differentiate and fracture regions in an attempt to regain control over them. This strategy included inflaming ethnic differences and encouraging sub-regional political and social autonomy in order to fragment the unity of territories held by the Indonesian state (Tarling, 2001, p.127). The continuance of rebellions and secessionist movements reflects an era of partial disintegration of the nationalism upon which the movement for independence was based. Populations in many regions did not rally to the cause of the Indonesian Republic, but instead violently resisted inclusion into the republic reflecting an aversion to rule by a Javanese-centric government and the Pancasila national philosophy. The violence and social movements
for autonomy and the resulting instability were driven by the diversity of regional, ethnic, and religious aims.

Conflicts based upon regionalism, differing religious beliefs, and socio-economic issues continue to persist throughout Indonesia. While over sixty years have passed and many political and social changes have occurred since Indonesia gained independence from the Dutch, it is likely that the same general social challenges which led to violence in the 1950s - conflicts of values and diverging aspirations - continue to exist. These factors have contributed to the diverse social and political environments, as well as the experiences and understandings of archipelagic peoples. Indonesia’s national governance structures have also been formed by these forces and continue to contend with the diversity of the peoples of the nation.
Disentangling Definitions of Identity and Violence

The social and political features of communities and nations are influenced by many forces. A variety of theories have been developed which provide conceptualizations of these influences as well as definitions of identity and associated violence. Many address the effects which identities have upon behavior, including violence. Brubaker and Cooper (2000) are two such authors who begin by presenting the conflicting definitions which exist for "identity". They also propose terminology which will move the study of identity, including its influence upon social and political action, towards greater analytical focus. The descriptions and analytical matrices of violence developed by Gurr and Bishop (1976) are applicable in defining the forms and patterns of individual and collective violence. These four authors provide the central foundation upon which the analysis of identities and violence in the regions of Aceh and Kalimantan will be built.

In their study titled "Beyond Identity," Brubaker and Cooper (2000) present several uses of "identity" which are shared across a variety disciplines including psychology, sociology, and international affairs. These fields have contributed to the study of individual and group character and to current conceptualizations of identity. The authors aim at bringing greater specificity and analytical utility to the term by deconstructing it and developing more functional terminology for social analysis. Rather than reifying identity as a general term of vague social and evaluative value they present several "clusters" of terms which are meant to facilitate clearer, more effective understandings. In doing so, Brubaker and Cooper seek to move "beyond identity" as a term of analysis.
The competing definitions of identity which are included in their study are shown to be inconstant and contradictory. Key uses of identity across various disciplines are:

- a driving force behind social or political action;
- a collective phenomenon of similarity among individuals;
- an essential and core aspect of individual and social existence;
- a process of interactive formation of self or group understanding;
- a product of multiple competing facets of self invoked in varying contexts.

In each of these definitions of identity both internal (e.g., self-understanding, self-interest) and external (e.g. categorical attributes, socio-economic status) features are suggested or implied to influence the actions, values, solidarity and enmity individuals and groups exhibit. However, each definition places value on a different aspect of the term "identity".

The first use of identity presented by the authors is as the grounds upon which social and political actions are founded. Actions are the physical representation of the values and self-understandings which are represented within identities. These drive action and are believed to be in competition with self-interest in determining both individual and collective action. However, certain of the values and understandings which contribute to identities are philosophically inconsistent. A dispute exists as to whether race, ethnicity, gender, and other categorical attributes or more structuralist categories based upon peoples' socio-economic positions are central contributors to action. In spite of its internal conflicts, this definition considers individual and collective identities to be strong motivations for social and political behaviors, including violence.

Identification of the sameness or solidarity of a group of people is another use of identity. This feature can be present in terms of an objective characteristic and as a subjective experiential or perceived identification. It can also be based upon both static
and shifting identifications. Social dynamics contribute to and reinforce the influence of identifications based upon internal or external forces. The collectivity, which is alluded to within this definition, assumes that individuals or groups who have aligning self-conceptions hold shared "dispositions and consciousness" (p.7). These shared qualities or understandings are expected to contribute to the unity of people and the cohesion of their actions. However, as a collective phenomenon, the inclusive solidarity and exclusivity of peoples is developed through aligning identities.

The third approach considers identity to be a "deep, basic, abiding, and foundational" sense of self (p.7). Identity is, therefore, comprised of stable and well-developed values and inclinations. As a self-understanding, identity can be an individual or collective condition of social existence. It is, however, an essential attribute of people which is cultivated over time. As the permanence and durability of this characterization of identity suggests, great value is placed upon the development, preservation, and recognition of identities by individuals and communities.

Additional uses of identity are somewhat intertwined as they reflect the formation of identity through processes and interaction as well as the fluidity and multiplicity of identities based upon context. The formation of individual and collective self-understandings is considered to be a product of social and political interactions. Identities are negotiated. These exchanges lead to the development of collective understanding and group cohesion. Influencing actors in these exchanges include governments, social structures, and other individuals or groups. These work as the basis for solidarity and action among individuals and groups. The environment and actions above reflect the diversity of influential factors in identity's transition to action.
Just as the process of cultivating identities is diverse, so are the identities which result. Individual and group identities are also "unstable, multiple, fluctuating, and fragmented" in the final definition presented (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000, p.8). The traits of individuals and groups are invoked and incited by external influences and interactions. Reflecting the view that identities do not exist independent of internal or external catalysts, the conceptions of self and active responses are dependent upon context and situation. In short, certain aspects of an individual's identity will rise to the surface when necessary or appropriate, but become increasingly dormant if the situation or context requires it and if pressures lessen.

The authors recognize that the term "identity" is made to "do a great deal of work" in discussions of motives for action, collective similarities, the permanence and subjectivity of self-understandings, processes of self-understanding, and, finally, in reflecting the inconsistent nature of the identities (p.8). These diverging and contradictory understandings of the term conflate practical and analytical uses of identity and cause it to become increasingly amorphous and indecipherable. These operationalizations, in and of themselves, fail to provide a clear analytical framework for the evaluation of the roles and influences of identity, let alone identity's role in violent action. Inconsistent and ambiguous understandings of identities and the processes which contribute to their formation diminish the value of identity studies. However, we can draw from the conceptualizations above several processes and aspects which contribute to their understanding. Brubaker and Cooper recognize this as a core conclusion of their study and develop three "clusters" in order to move beyond the simplistic term "identity" in analytical studies.
The unique approach developed by the authors deconstructs the interwoven and contradictory meanings of identity into strategic terminology which contributes to greater analytical focus in considering the aspects which contribute to behaviors. The removal of several assumptions and reifications clarifies and gives momentum to a more complete study of the social characteristics and features of individuals and groups. Several groupings of terms which can reflect the diverse features of identity have been developed to replace the overarching concept of identity. The three clusters proposed by the authors are:

- Identification and Categorization
- Self-understanding and Social Location
- Commonality, Connectedness, and Groupness

**Identification and Categorization**

It is through identification and categorization that individuals and groups develop internal and external understandings. These processes are common aspects of social life which provide meaning and understanding to individuals and groups. The internal self-identifications which individuals develop are often, but not always, influenced by external inputs and categorizations. An individual may also externally identify himself or be categorized by others. This is done through processes which are resultant from an individual's identification of himself to others or others' recognition of traits or characteristics and the subsequent categorization of that individual. These processes hold strong influence over self-understanding, actions, and affiliation with others. There is, however, an anomaly which exists within these processes which influences both identification and categorization.
“[F]ormalized, codified, objectified systems of categorizations developed by powerful, authoritative institutions” have no local equivalent in authority, resources, and pervasiveness (p.14). Modern states are said by Brubaker and Cooper (p.15) to be "one of the most important agents of identification and categorization" which hold the authority to define peoples and social structures. Access to the materials, symbolic authority, and modes of imposing such categorizations allow governments to construct the system in which individuals and groups exist. This, however, does not mean that the state can impose identities upon individuals or groups. The state does not hold a monopoly of influence. Other social formations, including families, schools, and community groups, also influence the way in which social life is conducted. The categorizations produced by states may be diffused easily, but they may also be contested by individuals or groups. This can lead to the development of alternative categories not envisioned by the state. Some of these become social movements, which are characteristic of the ways in which external classifications can influence self-identifications as well as the development of shared identifications to which people hold an emotional or cognitive attachment.

Individuals or collections of people identify themselves and others based upon relational or categorical features. Relational features suggest a social network or web in which the individual or group is bound to others through interactions or exchanges. These connections may include kinship, friendship, membership, or other forms of affiliation. In contrast, categorical features lead to the labeling or grouping of peoples based upon shared traits such as ethnicity, language, nationality, and citizenship which differentiate them from others. Both of these groupings are utilized when individuals
identify and categorize themselves and others. Of these two forms of labeling, several authors suggest that categorical identifications have become increasingly important in modern social environments.

This cluster represents the processual means through which identities are formed. By pulling these meanings out of ambiguity, two clear ways in which people provide themselves with meaning and localize others based upon the features (relational or categorical) are developed. Furthermore, the recognition of the actors who identify and categorize is something which the term "identity" fails to do. Also, these terms do not hold the assumption that shared traits or labels are inherently indicative of internal similarities, distinctiveness, or cohesion of individuals. Many previous understandings of identity have assumed this to be true.

**Self-understanding and Social Location**

Unlike the terminology used to reflect the active processes undertaken by specific agents - identification and categorization - this second cluster of terms considers features which are more affective and cognitive in nature. The aim of these terms is the "situated subjectivity" of individuals and groups. In short, focus is given to understanding where people position themselves or others socially rather than focusing on the processes of how they do so.

Self-understanding and social location represent an individual's sense of self, his position within society, and the way in which he is willing or able to act. A disposition towards certain actions is a reflection of these self-understandings and social locations. However, the "self" considered through these representations is not a "homogeneous, bounded, unitary entity" (p.17). Instead it exists in many forms and under the influences
of a variety of social processes. Self-understanding and social location are often specific to cultures, but may evolve over time and differ between people. They may, however, also become increasingly stable and ingrained over time. Similarity across peoples and times has often been inferred by the use of "identity", but self-understanding and social location do not carry this assumption as they are more dynamic terms which allow for diversity.

Such analyses of identity have encapsulated many concepts which are used to represent individual meaning or understanding as well as social and political action. Recognizing this, the authors suggest the use of self-understanding and social location as replacements for recognition of individuals' internal meanings and more structuralist representations of such understandings. This terminology provides meaning to relational and categorical features and provides a focus upon the meanings developed in relation to the "self" and "others". Self-understanding and social location contribute directly to individual and groups' social and political actions.

**Commonality, Connectedness, Groupness**

The final cluster which the authors propose in order to move beyond the limitations of the term identity is "commonality, connectedness, groupness" (p.19). Commonality is one aspect of connection which represents a categorical trait which is shared by people (e.g. ethnicity, language, nationality). The second term, connectedness, draws upon the relational bonds which exist and the way in which they link people (e.g., family, civic organization, political party). Groupness is the sense of "belonging to a distinctive, bounded, solidary group" (p.20). Categorical similarities are said to have the potential to lead to the cohesion of a group, but relational bonds are singled out as a
precursor for collective action. The combination of both commonality and connectedness can lead to a sense of belonging, but enduring group solidarity is also dependent upon shared narratives, experiences, and other aspects which consolidate group cohesion.

Through this terminology, the solidarity and exclusion which contribute to in-and out-group dynamics are represented. "Identity" has been used to reflect both an abiding oneness and less direct affiliations with others. The implications of using the term in such diverging ways have been the inability to fully appreciate the varying degrees of strength in these affiliations. Through these graded terms, a distinction is made among the connections between people. This makes evaluations of their relative significance and explanations for their existence more detailed. It also allows us to consider the "cultural idioms, public narratives, and prevailing discourses" upon which these bonds are developed while evaluating their "meaning and significance" (p.21).

Brubaker and Cooper close their work by evaluating their terminology against three case studies with foci upon African lineage trends, East European nationalism, and race issues in the United States. In doing so, the authors navigate the details of these cases considering the unique features of each and relating them to their terminology as well as other conceptualizations of identity. The authors conclude their studies by asserting that added conceptual clarity is a requirement for "social analysis and political understanding alike" (p.36). "Identity", as a term of analysis, is inconsistent, ambiguous, and continually indicates reification. The adjectives used to qualify the term - ethnic, religious, political, etc. - do little to improve its specificity. As such, their approach is a way in which greater clarity can be given to the terminology and analysis of identity.
Gurr and Bishop's (1976) "Violent Nations, and Others" provides conceptualizations and frameworks for evaluating and delineating among various forms of violence. The goal of the authors of this study is two-fold. First, the authors seek to make conceptions of violence more substantive and clear. Second, they seek to map global incidents of violence which occurred prior to the study's publication. While the mapping and statistical analysis of global violence conducted by Gurr and Bishop hold very little validity after over 30 years, the foundational understandings of violence still hold meaning and are useful in the analysis of violent action.

"'Violence,' in virtually all of its usages, is 'harmful action' but that base supports a great many different detailed definitions whose nuances seem to depend on whose ox is being gored." (Gurr and Bishop, 1976, p.80)

As the quote above suggests, violence is a form of action which, much like identity, encapsulates a variety of meanings. It can refer to individual or collective acts which are carried out by a variety of agents towards diverging ends. Definitions of violence often hold evaluatory, ideological, or empirical uses. The focus of the authors is the development of empirical understandings which do not lead to either excessively restrictive or broad understandings. Generalization is not the immediate goal. The authors present their findings through a 4x3 matrix which represents varying levels of analysis and forms of violence (Appendix: Figure 1). Two types of violence, physical and structural, are identified in this matrix. Physical acts of violence, similar to structural violence, are divided into two categories.

Physical violence is a category of actions which is characterized by bodily harm or the threat of such action which evokes fear. This form of violent action is divided into private and official acts, which are dissected further into different levels of analysis.
Private physical acts of violence are often restricted by governments and can be individual, collective, or transnational in nature. Private individual and collective violence are represented by acts of bodily harm against oneself or others.

Acts of individual violence include suicide, homicide, and assassination. In contrast, protest, rioting, rebellion, and coup are representative of collective acts of violence. Transnational violence is not addressed empirically by the authors, but is identified as acts of "transnational terrorism" (p.84). Gurr and Bishop present diverse actions which are indicative of violence, but their lists are not exhaustive.

In contrast to private acts, official acts are the use of violence, often asserting a level of legitimacy, in the service of the state or government. States utilize or threaten to use physical force against their own citizens and foreign actors in a variety of circumstances (p.88). These acts cannot easily be differentiated between their impacts upon individuals or collections of people. Therefore, different actions which are brought to bear against individuals or collections of people are represented, but are not separated between individual and collective levels of analysis. Governmental sanctions, arrests, executions, and deaths, and the intensity of domestic political conflict, are representative of violence against individuals and collectives by governments. It is difficult to clearly delineate between the individual and collective impacts of official acts of violence and structures of coercion. As these actions and tools of the state may affect both individuals and collectives simultaneously, the authors have fused these levels of analysis together to reflect the inability to differentiate between these individual and collective impacts. Other forms of government influence also exist outside of the application of physical means.
By developing a category for structural violence the authors allow for the distinction between physical violence and structure-driven socioeconomic and political victimization. "Structures of coercion" are the policies and institutions which governments utilize when engaging with citizens and other nations (p.89-90). Indicators of domestic structures of coercion include the size and resources of military and police establishments as they are applied to maintain internal stability and control. Transnational coercive influence is represented by military assistance, sanctions, and other positive or negative engagements. The differentiation between structures of coercion and patterns of denial recognizes the role of government engagement and social and international disparities.

Patterns of denial are the product of the social and environmental influences which develop and contribute to the continuance of differences in individual, collective, and transnational access to valued social or economic goods. These influences are the "farthest removed from what is conventionally called "violence" (p.91). They may or may not be caused by government policies, a shared ideology, or shortcomings of elites or institutions. Similar to the previous forms of violence, patterns of denial impact individuals, collections of people, and other nations differently. Lack of food, shelter, health services, education, and other social goods are recognized as individual deprivations. Collective deprivations are indicated by denial of group autonomy and systematic discrimination against "distinctive ethnic, regional, linguistic, religious, and other communal groups" (p.92). Transnational deprivation is indicated by economic dependence or exploitation of one nation by another, also referred to as economic imperialism.
Gurr and Bishop recognize two limitations in this matrix and the categorizations it represents. The first is identified above as the challenge of isolating individual and collective impacts from official acts of physical violence. The second limitation exists within the cell where the transnational level of analysis and structures of coercion meet. Information that could be used to populate this cell was not available to the authors at the time of publication. However, as the focus of the subsequent case studies on Aceh and Kalimantan are focusing upon intranational features, this will not limit the matrix's applicability.

Another limitation of the study is recognized in its conclusion. The authors, while valuing the conclusions they draw from their empirical study, state that the findings are "obviously time-bound" and that "today's political eden may be tomorrow's killing ground" (p.109). However, the multidimensional understandings of violence they provide have the capacity to contribute a guiding framework for an analysis of violence. Through the 4x3 matrix they develop it is possible to conceptualize a wide array of forms of violence.

The works of these authors provide us with foundational understandings of identity and violence which will contribute to effective analysis of the national and regional contexts of Indonesia. "Beyond Identity", by Brubaker and Cooper (2000), develops functional, cohesive terminology which facilitates an analytical approach to individual and collective "identities" and their processes, values, and connections. While their terminology provides greater analytical focus, the single term "identity" remains an important encapsulation of these processes, values, and connections, which the relational and categorical characteristics of people imbue. As such, the term will be utilized as a
synthesis of the overarching representation of the "identification and categorization", "self-understanding and social location", and "commonality, connectedness and groupness" of people (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000, p.14-21). Similarly, the understandings of violence and the matrix developed in "Violent Nations and Others" provide clear delineations between various forms of physical and structural violence. Gurr and Bishop's (1976) empirical analysis is out-of-date, but their approach is sound as it continues to provide guidance in the recognition of a diverse forms of violence.

These articles provide a strong foundation for the analyzing and developing clear understandings regarding the identities and violence of Aceh and Kalimantan. Comprehensive evaluations of the relationship between identities and instances of violence are complex and inherently challenging. However, it is through such comparative studies that understandings of identity and violence can be furthered. As such, the approach taken herein will utilize the frameworks developed by Brubaker and Cooper (2000) and Gurr and Bishop (1976) while adjusting as needed. The historical evolution of the Indonesian archipelago reflects an integrity yet diversity seen in the cultures, customs, and unique social features which exist today.

Yet, to describe Indonesia as diverse fails to convey the unusual complexities which exist throughout its islands. As the history of the region reflects, influences from all parts of the globe have driven social and cultural evolution and contributed to the formation of distinct populations. Maritime networks, expansive cultural exchanges, as well as geographic obstacles, have both facilitated and limited exposure to ideological transfers. In analyzing the identities and violence which have characterized Aceh and Kalimantan, an understanding of the historical contexts of the archipelago are crucial.
"...this whole culture in Indonesia is a culture of violence fighting between families, fighting between villages, fighting between tribes, fighting between ethnic groups, and finally fighting between religions" - Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Prabowo Subianto (Collins, 2002, p.1)

As this quote suggests, instances of violence throughout Indonesia have emerged along divisions created through social cleavages such as ancestry, ethnicity, and religion. The identities exhibited by the people of Aceh and Kalimantan have been contributed to and continually molded by historical and contemporary contexts which relate directly to regional cultural values and experiences. These, however, are not sufficient to determine the exact role of identity in the violence and conflicts which have erupted in contemporary times. In order to provide a holistic representation of the connections between identity and violence in Aceh and Kalimantan, the historical contexts of each region will be presented in combination with the formulations of identity and violence presented above.

Through foundational understandings of the history of Aceh and Kalimantan it is possible to develop a more thorough analysis of the impact shared identities have had upon collective action. The themes developed through the histories of the regions will allow us to apply the three sub-categories of identity developed by Brubaker and Cooper (2000). In this application of their concepts, the categorical and relational features of Aceh and Kalimantan will be considered in combination with identification and categorization processes, self-understandings and social location, and cognitive notions of collectivity and group cohesion. This will facilitate the clarification and deconstruction of group identities in the regions at hand. Building upon the terminology and conceptualizations of Brubaker and Cooper, the findings and matrices of Gurr and
Bishop (1976) will be utilized to consider contemporary connections between notions of identity and collective violence.

The aim of analyzing the conflicts of these regions is not to point to the cyclical nature of violence or to provide a rationale for future violent acts. Instead, focus will be given to understanding the nature of violence itself and establishing the rational and sources of collective violence actions. By first understanding the histories and identities of regional societies it will be possible to gain a full appreciation for the distinct contexts and experiences of these regions. This, in turn, contributes to the ability to effectively analyze the role of these qualities in collective movements associated with violence.

Aceh, Indonesia

The heartland of the Acehnese people is located at the northern most tip of the island of Sumatra. Aceh developed around the port city of Banda Aceh at a critical entry point into the Straits of Malacca which grew to be a commercial center for sea-lanes from the Malay Peninsula, India, and Arabia throughout the Southeast Asian archipelago. The region is also a gateway to Mecca for Muslim pilgrimages. Resilient Muslim sultanates have ruled Aceh and regions along the coasts of Sumatra. As a result, Aceh holds an important place in the history of Southeast Asia and the existence of Islamic culture throughout the Indonesian archipelago.

This history has also influenced the regional identities and collective actions of the people of Aceh. Throughout its existence, Aceh has held a unusual position between the Indian Ocean and the Indonesian archipelago. This geographic position has allowed diverse influences to contribute to regional histories and identities. These influences, in
combination with past and contemporary experiences, have provided the people of Aceh with discernable qualities. Through an exploration of Acehnese history and the distinct character and conflicts of the region a clearer understanding of the relationship between the Acehnese identities and instances of regionally focused collective violence is possible.

*Regional Historic Overview of Aceh*

The history of the region – conversion to Islam, the rise of a regional sultanate, colonial interventions, and contemporary experiences with the rise of an Indonesian state – reflects various experiences through which collective Acehnese identities have been molded. Each of these contexts conveys relational and categorical characteristics which also provide an opportunity for in depth analysis of the Acehnese people. This overview will provide essential contexts which are necessary to fully appreciate the experiences, grievances, and identities of regional populations.

Prior to the 13th century, independent settlements and communities existed along the coasts of Aceh. These settlements were heavily influenced by their geographic position along the maritime trade lines from the west into Southeast Asia. This provided the region with Indian and Arabian influences, many of which continued to exist following the formation of a regional Acehnese sultanate. Through its interactions with peoples from distant lands, the settlements throughout Aceh developed distinct and robust local identities (Reid, 2006, p.30). The Acehnese were some of the first people in the Southeast Asian archipelago to convert to Islam. The conversion of northern Sumatra, similar to other regions throughout the archipelago, occurred along central commercial posts and cities along important maritime trade routes. Adoption of Islam in Aceh led to
the rise of Muslim institutions and social values. The early conversion of people in Aceh and other northern regions of Sumatra has acted as a source of pride and shared ancestry.

By the 16th century, many of the independent settlements of the past had become Muslim communities or sultanates. The eventual dominance of one sultanate over others within Aceh led to the creation of a unitary Acehnese sultanate in 1530 (Reid, 2006, p.12). The strength of local social institutions and identities led to the existence of precarious geo-political connections between the Acehnese sultanate, which was centered in Banda Aceh, and its vassal states. While the sultanate was politically unstable, its reactive nature allowed it to act as a unifying force in the face of conflicts with foreign nations and external enemies (Reid, 2006, p.12). This fusion of the people of Aceh into a single, unified entity formed the foundation for contemporary claims for an Acehnese state and has provided one of several rationales for the region’s separateness from the Indonesian state. At the same time the newly secured sultanate was rising, the Portuguese had colonized Melaka and other territories of the Indonesian archipelago (Reid, 2006, p.39).

The sultanate of Aceh reached a golden age during the 17th century and Aceh consolidated both its military and economic dominance over the northern regions of Sumatra. By applying these strengths the sultanate sought territorial expansion along both sides of the Strait of Malacca. Expansion of the sultanate was challenged by the Portuguese as the European colonial power began to acquire territories throughout the archipelago, including Malacca along the eastern coast of the Strait of Malacca (Reid, 2006, p.39). Subsequent confrontations with the Portuguese and other regional competitors led Aceh to seek material support from Arabian nations. The sultanate of
Aceh continued to expand through territorial conquest. Sustained cultural interactions with regions to its west and the ongoing conflict with archipelagic and extra-regional peoples contributed to the further solidification of Muslim values, institutions, and distinct Acehnese identities. However, the geo-political stability and cohesion of the sultanate suffered due to continued “external military adventure” and the losses experienced as a result of this imperial expansionism (Reid, 2006, p.47).

In the centuries prior to increased colonial interest in Aceh, the region had moved from scattered and independent seaports into an Islamic sultanate of vassal states, exerting military and economic force throughout the areas surrounding the Strait of Malacca. These developments brought with them increasingly consistent features across the region including common social and political institutions and increasingly related notions of ancestry, religion, and ethnicity. As a region, Aceh emerged from the 17th century as a central port along important sea lanes and held a strong strategic attraction for European nations. The region had also come to view itself as “preeminent among Malays” and was positioned strongly in the Islamic world as the gateway to Mecca from Southeast Asia (Reid, 2006, p.49). European interest and intervention in Aceh would become increasingly apparent in the 18th century. However, it would not be until the 19th century that Aceh faced conflict with the expanding colonial ambitions of the Dutch.

Aceh, like much of Indonesia, confronted Dutch colonial subjugation. In 1873, the Dutch invaded Aceh with the aim of conquering the region and incorporating it into the Dutch colonial territories of the East Indies. Confrontation with the Dutch, differing from past instances of conflict with Southeast Asian and Portuguese rivals, heavily constricted the economic and cultural connections between Aceh and other regional
Muslim communities, many of which had already fallen to Dutch forces. As a result of its isolation, Aceh began to focus inward and develop institutions and organizations parallel but separate from those emerging in other regional Islamic communities (Aspinall, 2007, p.248).

Literature and narratives of the conflict such as the “epic of the holy war” (hikayat perang sabil) presented the resistance to colonial control as an Islamic “jihad” and a battle against foreign intervention (Aspinall, 2007, p.248). The Acehnese battled the Dutch directly at first, but following advances by Dutch forces they began to engage in guerilla warfare. After thirty years of continuous confrontation, both directly and through guerilla tactics, Aceh was conquered in 1903 (Reid, 2006, p101). Continued resistance to Dutch authority, primarily led by the ulama (religious leaders) of Aceh, continued following the conquest of the region. The ulama derided the uleebalangs (local chiefs) who cooperated with the Dutch. After retreating to their dayah (religious schools) following the conquest of Aceh, the ulama preached against the presence of colonial forces as well as association with foreign colonizers (Aspinall, 2007, p.248). They would come to form the Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh (All-Aceh Association of Ulama), also known as PUSA, in 1939.

PUSA, which gained thorough Acehnese support, was an expression of Aceh focused religious reform. Previous organizations from outside of the region which sought to modernize Islam in Aceh were met with strong resistance and, unlike the Acehnese ulama-led PUSA, were viewed as seeking influences for elite and foreign benefit (Aspinall, 2007, p.248). PUSA did not initially oppose the Dutch openly, but instead focused upon the values of Acehnese history, specifically those from the golden
age of the sultanate, to “…proclaim, uphold and defend the greatness of the holy Islamic religion, especially in the land of Aceh…” (Aspinall, 2007, p.249). PUSA and many Acehnese people came to embrace the concept of an Indonesia free of Dutch colonizers and supported it as it was an extension of Acehnese and Islamic interests.

The Japanese invasion of Aceh, following the German conquest of The Netherlands and its weakening colonial strength in Southeast Asia, ended the conflict with the Dutch as they were removed from power. Japanese troops limited the ulama and the uleebalangs’ political activities throughout their occupation (Reid, 2006, p.105). When Japanese defeat in WWII became increasingly apparent, the Japanese attempted to unify the clashing social and political views of the uleebalang and ulama in preparation for Japanese surrender and Indonesian independence. In spite of these efforts, the surrender of the Japanese left a power vacuum in Aceh’s political life.

Once Indonesian independence was declared in 1945, the Dutch returned to retake their colonial territories. The leadership of PUSA publicly stated that Aceh had been “left behind by its near neighbors” and distant Islamic nations (Aspinall, 2007, p.249). Instead of this separation leading to estrangement, the ulama drew upon the rising archipelagic-wide movement for independence from the Dutch as an alignment of Acehnese, Indonesian, and Islamic interests. Ulama publicly declared that the people of Aceh were “firmly united and obediently standing behind” Sukarno (Aspinall, 2007, p.249). The Indonesian cause for independence would become the cause of the Acehnese people and was increasingly framed by religious leaders as an extension of Aceh’s continuing struggle to overthrow Dutch colonialism. Months after the Indonesian declaration of independence was made, the ulama of Aceh stated the Dutch colonial authority would
seek to:

“…enslave the Indonesian people and make them their servants once more, and they will attempt to erase our holy Islamic religion and repress and obstruct the glory and prosperity of the Indonesian nation” (Aspinall, 2007, p.249).

Aceh was one of the few regions which fully resisted The Netherlands’ attempt to regain its colonies and acted as a bastion for the Indonesian Republic throughout the struggle. The initial and subsequent resistances of Dutch control produced national heroes from Aceh. The region and these symbols of the national independence movement and have acted as a source of regional pride.

The idea of a unified Indonesia remained a concept which encapsulated Aceh and other regions’ opposition to colonial dominance, and had become a point of shared fortune as the independence movement gained momentum. However, the autonomy of Aceh and the unification of interests would be temporary. As the Republic emerged successfully from conflict with the Dutch the government of Indonesia, based in Jakarta, began to consolidate power and impede upon the authority and religious autonomy of Aceh’s population. This culminated with Jakarta’s dissolution of Aceh’s “autonomous province” status and attempts at integrating the region into the new province of North Sumatra (Lloyd and Smith, 2001, p.152-153). Further enflaming relations with the region Jakarta denied Islam as the national philosophy, and adopted Sukarno’s Pancasila in its place.

The Darul Islam movement of the 1950s formed in West Java, but soon Aceh had joined the pursuit of an Islamic Indonesian state as a result of its grievances with the policies and political formation of the secular Indonesian state (Lloyd and Smith, 2001, p.151). The leader of Darul Islam stated, “Belief in One God is for us the very source of
social life, and every single one of its directives must apply here on Indonesian soil” (Aspinall, 2007, p.249). The aligning of this view with the regional aims of Aceh reflects the centrality of Islam in the region. Furthermore, the Republic of Indonesia’s encroachment into the region and the revoking of Aceh’s provincial status further contributed to Acehnese support for the Negara Islam Indonesia (Indonesia Islamic State). This movement did not seek an Islamic state separate from the newly independent Indonesian government, but instead aimed to “Islamise the state and uphold the dignity of Muslim people in Indonesia” (Aspinall, 2007, p.249).

The movement gained support from other aggrieved regions as regional autonomy was impeded and perception of Javanese dominance increased. It was publicly stated that the region participated in the movement as an act of “solidarity with our brothers in struggle in West Java, Sulawesi, Kalimantan, and elsewhere” based upon a sense of “Islamic brotherhood” (Aspinall, 2007, p.252). As the Acehnese revolt drew on and confronted military losses, the focus became increasingly regional. Acehnese autonomy became the goal rather than securing the importance of Islam throughout Indonesia. By 1962, the unitary Indonesian government conceded Special Territory status to Aceh, which provided the region with increased authority over laws, education, and religion (Bertrand, 2004, p.168). This allowed for the realization of an Islamic Aceh and the implementation of Islamic law throughout the territories and institutions of the semi-autonomous Acehnese regions. It further solidified notions of the distinctiveness of Acehnese identity by formally recognizing the special status of Aceh and institutionalizing this in regional social and political formations.
In the years following the peaceful settlement of the Darul Islam revolt authority began to be usurped by the Suharto regime, which negated the role of Sharia laws and the fusion of state and religious schools within Aceh. Coercive military actions and policies towards local political and cultural aspirations became increasingly prevalent. An Islam influenced Acehnese nationalism and separatism began to gain momentum in the 1970s. In 1976 the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) was established, but gained minimal support and experienced many setbacks before gaining widespread support in the 1990s (Aspinall and Berger, 2001, p.1017).

The coercive military crackdowns by the Indonesian military of the 1990s led to the deaths of thousands of Acehnese at the hands of the Indonesian government. Through these acts of violent repression and the grievances they nurtured, GAM gained increased popular support throughout Aceh (Aspinall and Berger, 2001, p.1017). The resignation of Suharto in 1998 created a social and political environment in which GAM could engage in greater political activity and also focus the Acehnese upon exposing the abuses which had occurred over the previous decades. A perception of exploitation grew out of the coercive governance, the central government’s collection of natural resource revenues, and a perception of “a policy of Javanisation” by the Indonesian state (Reid, 2006, p.326).

When new leadership had emerged in the central government a military presence was reestablished. Aims of uncovering human rights abuses were soon replaced by goals of statehood and independence. In this social and political climate, GAM gained administrative authority with the support of students, rural populations, and some members of the local ruling elites. Many of these local elites, however, continued to seek greater autonomy from the central government rather than full independent statehood.
GAM began to present a challenge to the central government and the Indonesian military. Throughout the 1990s and into the 21st century, violence continually erupted as protests, demonstrations, and riots took place throughout the region and were responded to with armed force.

The tsunami which hit Aceh in December 2004 devastated the region. As a result of the natural disaster, GAM and the Indonesian military reoriented their respective positions to address the humanitarian needs and destruction wreaked upon Aceh and its communities (Reid, 2006, p.310). This contributed to a stabilization of GAM–Jakarta relations, which contributed to ongoing peace initiatives and increased autonomy and political participation by Acehnese peoples.

This overview of Acehnese history, while limited in its specificity, provides a representation of many underlying historical and social features of the region. It is contextual in nature and contributes to the deconstruction of identities through more contemporary regional contexts and experiences.

*Deconstructing Acehnese Identity*

Two forms of social features – relational and categorical – exist in the identification and categorization, self-understanding and social location, and social connectedness and cohesion of the people of Aceh. These are qualities that hold influence over the formation of collective notions of identity and the cohesion of groups. Relational attributes reflect the associations developed and maintained by individuals and groups (i.e. ancestry, kinship, and membership). Categorical traits are those which act as social labels of people based upon observable features. These traits often overlay and interact with one another rather than existing separately. The concepts encapsulated
within these two groupings are apparent in the labels retained by peoples and those assigned to others. They are also observable through examinations of the understandings and solidarity of peoples who share relational and categorical features. The labels assigned and adopted by the Acehnese have made these relational and categorical traits more concrete in their self-conceptualizations. The character ascribed to others has similarly contributed to these understandings.

Identity is a term which binds cultural and religious mores passed from generation-to-generation and the historical experiences of Aceh’s population. Acehnese identities and the qualities which contribute to them are not static. Instead they have been reshaped and molded by the socio-political evolution of the region and the cognitive attributions of the Acehnese people. While there is likely to be diversity in the perception and valuing of cultural features and historical accounts, it is evident that Acehnese people maintain common self-identifications and -understandings through these features. The social character achieved through these shared notions of identity and their continuing negotiation has contributed to distinct Acehnese notions of identity which, while not necessarily shared by all Acehnese people, are socially pervasive.

Acehnese, as a label of ethnicity, is the result of collective internal identifications and external categorizations by others. In and of itself, this piece of Acehnese identity combines the experiences and the relational and categorical qualities of the people into a singular label. The territorial, religious, and lingual ties which have been shared among Acehnese peoples have, similarly, contributed to affinity among the Acehnese. Acehnese identities have also been contributed to by shared histories and common grievances which are related to the aforementioned social traits. Contemporary grievances have
heavily influenced identification and notions of identity held by many Acehnese. These
have, in turn, contributed to the nature of the solidarity and cohesion experienced in
Acehnese society. These grievances relate to the impeding of regional autonomy, the role
of Islam in society, exploitation of the region’s people and natural resources, and the
violence visited upon the Acehnese by the colonizing forces of European powers and the
Indonesian state. Ancestral territory has acted as a relational feature of Acehnese identity.

Historical and enduring connections to the ancestry and homelands of the
Acehnese people have acted as a source of regional pride and identity. While not
addressed by Brubaker and Cooper (2000) in their description of the two groupings of
social qualities, the territory of the Acehnese people has been an essential aspect of
historical narratives related to the rise of an Acehnese sultanate and a common reference
in Acehnese contemporary conflicts. Territorial integrity has acted as a source of
organization in defense of Aceh’s regional autonomy and the distinctiveness of the people
who populate these lands.

Connection to these territories has been developed over time through processes of
Acehnese identification with each other throughout these lands and categorization of
other peoples as outsiders and as foreigners. The social movements which have risen in
defense of these territories, including the Acehnese sultanate’s battle with the Dutch,
contemporary guerilla resistance, and the political organizations of PUSA and GAM,
have reflected collective self-understandings of the Acehnese people. Confrontations
with invaders have been undertaken to secure the social, political, and religious autonomy
of the region. These movements have been motivated by the self-understandings and
social location of Acehnese people. By ensuring Acehnese control of the region, peoples
who have engaged in these instances of resistance have sought to ensure regional culture and language, Islam, and the benefits of natural resources of the region were preserved for themselves and other Acehnese.

Furthermore, Acehnese history has centered within the region of Aceh and nowhere else in Indonesia is there a greater concentration of this ethnic group. Although the people of Aceh sought extra regional conquests in lands in close proximity to Acehnese ancestral lands, the northernmost point of the island of Sumatra is the epicenter of the peoples’ cultural, religious, lingual, and ancestral roots. Without these territories Acehnese social standing within the Indonesian state would also degrade, thus diminishing the ability of the Acehnese to ensure the preservation of their traditions, beliefs, and history. By maintaining autonomy and authority in the region, the Acehnese people have cultivated a sense of pride and status and grown a regionally distinctive society and essentially Acehnese social institutions.

Clashes with the Dutch and the Indonesian government have been driven by desires to maintain regional authority over the Acehnese homeland in combination with collective desires to remain autonomous and ensure a significant position of Islam within Acehnese, if not Indonesian, society. The Acehnese, through name, narratives, and contemporary experiences, hold a strong bond to ancestral lands which were part of the first Acehnese sultanate and have been held by the people throughout ongoing decades of strife and resistance to foreign colonialism and encroachment. In short, territory is heavily bound to the identification, cognitive affinities, and associations of the Acehnese people.
Islam is also “an important feature of Acehnese cultural and political life” and exists as both a relational and categorical trait of regional identities (Brown, 2005a, p.2). Islam has been fervently defended by the people of Aceh and has contributed to their identifications and subjective understandings. The longstanding historical and social pervasiveness of Islam, including its collective influence through institutions (i.e. social hierarchy, courts, religious organizations) and representatives (Ulama), have cemented the religion as a key aspect of Acehnese social life. Furthermore, past conflicts with archipelagic and colonial forces also contributed to the region’s religious affiliations and Islamic roots as the gateway to Mecca.

The regional importance and value of Islam have been cultivated since the religion’s introduction before the 13th century. Subsequent social developments and experiences such as regional sultanates, colonialism, and independence era politics created strong connections to the religion. Islam has been at the center of contests with the post-independence and contemporary Indonesian government into the 21st century. Religious leaders have been a rallying point for notions of Acehnese religious identity and nationalistic aims. This has further contributed to the linking of Islamic beliefs and values with regional conceptions of self and collective social movements.

One of the grievances held by the people of Aceh has been the spurning of Islam and adoption of the five pillars of Pancasila as the foundational principles of the Indonesian state. Challenges to regional religious autonomy have oriented much of the Acehnese against any form of external imposition upon Acehnese Islamic traditions and values. Through the conversion of the region to Islam and the social influences, conflicts, and grievances that followed, Islam has become a strong feature of Acehnese identity.
Language has similarly contributed to the identity of Acehnese peoples, as a categorical trait.

Acehnese language has played a role in the processes and labels related to identity. Throughout the many centuries which are discussed in the historical overview above, Acehnese remained the language of social life in much of the northern regions of Sumatra. The people of Aceh did not look to surrounding areas, such as Java, for symbols and cultural influence, but instead were directly affected by the influx of Arabic during the process of regional conversion to Islam. While Acehnese remained a predominant language of the region, Arabic script was adopted in written communication. Official documents, historical texts, and religious literature in Aceh were all written in Arabic (Taylor, 2003, p.212). Cultural interactions between Aceh and Java were minimal and Aceh’s languages and society, specifically its religion and history, drew instead from cultures outside of the archipelago, specifically Arabia and its religious scholars.

Acehnese language and writing have differentiated the Acehnese from other Indonesian and Southeast Asian communities. The region is home of Acehnese language which continues to utilize Arabic script in certain written communications. This differentiation in social communication reflects another aspect of Acehnese culture which creates clear identifications and categorizations to distinguish the Acehnese from others peoples in the region.

Foundations of Acehnese identity – ancestral lands, religion, and language – have also played a role in the social and political relationships which exist among Acehnese people. Regionally focused organizations and the associations of peoples with shared historical, cultural, and religious notions have been formed and championed regionally.
distinct values. Specifically, the commonalities and connectedness of these people have been reflected and impacted by the contributing features of identity addressed above. Through these qualities the people of Aceh share common attributes and can, therefore, be said to exhibit commonality and connectedness. These two features, however, only reflect that there is the likelihood and probability of belonging to a collective.

The final piece to this puzzle is the “groupness” of the Acehnese. Do people feel a cognitive sense of belonging to a unique and cohesive group? This feeling of attachment is a subjective, internal aspect of external associations which is developed and acted upon by individuals or groups. Just as an individual can be drawn to another person through shared values, so can individuals and groups of people unite under shared interests and aims. A glimpse into this sense of belonging can be seen through the participation of individuals in organizations, institutions, or activities which are undertaken based upon a set of principles or values.

Regional participation in social movements and groups such as PUSA, Darul Islam and GAM have allowed for the acting out of “Acehnese” perspectives as well as a reflection of their participants’ individual and collective identifications, self-understandings, and notions of group attachment. GAM and its contemporary resistance of the Indonesian state is an example of one such organization. Its values have focused upon Acehnese nationalism, regional autonomy, and the grievances held by Acehnese people. Each of these is an aspect which connects the people of Aceh, but may not necessary appeal to their acceptance or joining of the Free Aceh Movement. Therefore, it follows that those people who have joined the movement hold an attachment or interest to the values and aims of GAM. This investment may stem from varying sources such as
financial gain, expression of violence, and others, but it still remains that individuals have bound themselves to the collective movement and hold a sense of belonging to it.

The shared categorical and relational traits of those participating in GAM and other movements play an integral role in their ascription to the values and actions of collectives. Through these label and network driven similarities people are likened to one another which increases the potential for shared identifications, self-understandings, and association. The varied support for the social movements referred to above suggests the inconsistency of identification with others and the need for shared appreciation of experiences, narratives, and values in order for group cohesion in association and action to be achieved.

This section has provided insights into the relational and categorical traits which have formed the basis for Acehnese identity formation, conceptions of self, and relationships. It has also provided insights towards an understanding of the role of identity in instances of collective violence. The values of Acehnese identity presented above do not account for every instance of identity formation and self-understandings which occur in Acehnese society, but instead have focused upon the most prevalent categorical and relational features of Acehnese peoples. The following section will assess the connection which exists between these features, as well as the overarching concept of identity, and occurrences of collective violence in Aceh.

Regional Collective Violence

Gurr and Bishop’s matrix of “Comparative Indicators of Types of ‘Violence’” provides us with a lens through which we can appreciate not only the actions that are indicative of violence, but also recognition of the form of violence and the entity which
carried out these acts. Through their work it was made increasingly possible to understand the nature of violence. While this approach does not account for the contexts of history and underlying notions of identity or grievance, the previous sections addressing the history and identity of the Acehnese people has provided a presentation of these core understandings which will inform our recognition of the role of identity in violence.

Conflict and violence in Aceh have occurred in many forms. They have varied dependent upon the actor that has carried them out and the nature of these actions. By considering contemporary violence in Aceh and utilizing the work of these authors, this section will address the relationship between identity and collective violence.

To provide a scope which focuses on contemporary instances of collective violence, periods of conflict and instability between 1989 and 2004 will be considered. This timeframe will be broken into two sections. The first covers the social upheaval and violent acts which occurred between 1989 and the fall of Suharto in 1998. The second will continue where the previous timeframe left off and consider the “harmful actions” which occurred from 1999 to 2004 (Gurr and Bishop, 1976, p.80). As the comparative indicators developed by Gurr and Bishop present, there are a variety of forms, agencies, and actions which can be termed as “violence.” These various qualities will be considered in relation to the understandings of Acehnese history and identity developed in the sections above.

Beginning in the mid-1980s the Free Aceh Movement began to gain social and political significance. GAM has regarded itself and existed as a guerilla movement from its emergence in the mid-1970s. The expanding tacit and overt support experienced by
GAM in this period was obtained through references to the shared notions of identity and regional grievances (Thalang, 2009, p.332). While GAM eventually diverged from the values of the 1950’s Darul Islam movement, it was founded on a similar appeal to Islamic ideals and ethnonationalism which focused upon essentially Acehnese themes. Grievances related to regional commercial exploitation, continuing military occupation by Indonesia, as well as historical sources of frustration contributed to the movement’s appeal. Regional narratives of past conflicts were recited and applied to the contemporary conflict. In short, the movement drew upon the ancestral, religious, and ethnic aspects of Acehnese identity as well as local and regional grievances to gain material support and manpower.

Between 1989 and 1998, GAM engaged in violence, rebellion, and attempts to destabilize the New Order government’s authority in Aceh. During the mid-1980s small numbers of GAM forces received training in lands outside of the archipelago in preparation of a military confrontation with the central government, which led to the introduction of renewed governmental military interventions (Reid, 2006, p.139). The movement was armed and initiated a guerilla style insurgency against the Indonesian state. In this climate of violence, civilians including “civil servants, judges, members of the regional parliaments, and village heads were intimidated, kidnapped or shot” (Reid, 2006, p.230). The Acehnese people supported the movement silently by allowing GAM guerillas sanctuary in their homes and villages. The guerillas would attack from within communities and then disappear back into surrounding areas. While political outlets for GAM such as the United Nations and calls for referenda began to be explored during this era, insurgency and violence were the central tools utilized by GAM and its supporters.
In response to the increasing threat posed by GAM throughout Aceh beginning in the 1980s, Suharto’s New Order government established a permanent military presence in the region which responded fiercely to the GAM threat (Thalang, 2009, p.332). This was done to protect industrial and commercial infrastructures and the Indonesian governmental interests in Aceh. In the 1990s, thousands of additional troops were added by the New Order government to the existing thousands of security forces already stationed in Aceh. This was one piece of the Indonesian Republic’s Daerah Operasi Militer (Military Operations Region or DOM) period in Aceh, which would last from 1989 through 1998. Numerous abuses of the civilian populations occurred as a result of the government’s response to the covert and guerilla tactics of the organization which integrated GAM members into communities throughout Aceh.

It has been estimated that between mid-1989 and mid-1991 one to three thousand civilians were killed in Aceh by Indonesian military forces (Bertrand, 2004, p.172; Reid, 2006, p.163). The torture, killing, arrest, and execution of suspected Aceh supporters were carried out by military forces throughout the DOM era. By the mid-1990s much of GAM’s operations had been dismantled by the Indonesian military. However, the military continued its application of force and sought to weed out the remaining supporters of the GAM. Hundreds of people disappeared and more than 2,300 were tortured while a “climate of fear and intimidation” was stoked throughout Aceh by the Indonesian DOM (Bertrand, 2004, p.173).

The physical violence which was characteristic of military operations was accompanied by coercive methods. The bodies of GAM suspects killed by the military were positioned along roads to intimidate Acehnese communities to disassociate with
GAM and its supporters (Bertrand, 2004, p.172). The arrest, torture, and killing of Acehnese and other peoples were also carried out by Indonesian forces. The Acehnese and other communities in Aceh were forced to live under fear of death by the Indonesian military which abused, discriminated, and heavily limited their autonomy.

The fall of Suharto and the collapse of the security authority in Aceh in 1998, allowed GAM to revive its public presence and rhetoric. Similarly, a student-led movement for a self-determination and statehood referendum had gained momentum. It was expected by much of the Acehnese population that the new government, led by Habibie, would address and deliver justice for the abuses of the New Order Government’s DOM policies. The new government failed to sufficiently address the grievances of the Acehnese. However, the withdrawal of “non-organic” military troops had been declared.

Celebrations surrounding the removal of troops from Lhokseumawe, the second largest city in Aceh, turned into a riot in the city and surrounding communities (Bertrand, 2004, p.175). The government response to the riot was the movement of more troops to the region to secure commercial interests and stabilize the situation. However, this and similar incidents, combined with the apparent resurgence of GAM, caused the military to establish increased visibility throughout Aceh and maintain a continuing presence. An escalation in violence occurred between GAM and the Indonesian police and military beginning in 1999. This expanding conflict undermined the student-led referendum movement and resulted in the rise of identity and grievance based appeals to resist the Indonesian state.

The frequent killings, raids, and disappearances of Acehnese by Indonesian forces in districts throughout Aceh allowed GAM to increase its public presence and
emboldened its statements. Physical clashes between GAM and the local police and military units also became more widespread. In response, the security forces expanded their raids and sweeping operations in districts throughout Aceh. These operations included attacks on suspected GAM supporters and villages harboring GAM members. Between December 1999 and January 2000 it was estimated that at least 105 people died, while in 2000 alone approximately 960 people were killed in battles between GAM and police and military forces (Bertrand, 2004, p.179-180). The Indonesian government’s presence in Aceh was viewed as necessary to respond to GAM and Acehnese insurgency. Police and military raids continued to be a regular occurrence, as “they constituted normal police operations” and the military presence was asserted as the Indonesian government’s “sovereign right” (Bertrand, 2004, p.179). Although the DOM era was not reinstated, Indonesian military practices maintained a similar presence throughout Aceh which continued into the early 2000s.

“the troops always propagandize that they come to Aceh to protect the people, but the reality is that they kill the people…The GAM armed forces will continue to pursue these troops who harm and kill…” (Reid, 2006, p.168).

GAM and its supporters also engaged in violent acts in support of an ongoing insurgency. From the demonstrations and riots of 1998 and 1999 into more recent assassination attempts against political leaders, soldiers, and civilians GAM responded in kind to the police and military operations of Indonesia. The tactics of the movement and its supporters have been to attack Indonesian political structures, energy and commercial interests, and institutions and people that represented an Indonesian presence in Aceh. One such attack was carried out against an Exxon Mobil plant which suspended operations in March of 2001. The approach of the Acehnese and GAM did not change
much from its activities from 1989 to 1998, but instead this earlier period had worked as a proving ground for their tactics and their support networks. The grievances of the Suharto era were aggravated when the new government failed to address the ill-treatment and abuses of the past. Furthermore, public outpouring of support of a self-determination referendum had also incited increased support not only for the student led movement which deteriorated in 1999, but it left a space in which GAM was able to take up the cause of independence through violent means. The conflict between GAM and the Indonesian government has quieted, but the legacy of these acts of violence and the role identity and grievances have played in them remain under the surface of the relative calm experienced today.

The timeframes discussed above can be characterized by their acts of physical and structural violence, as developed by Gurr and Bishop (1976). GAM and its supports were primarily a source of physical violence. Homicide and assassination are two behaviors carried out by GAM and its supporters which are categorized as private, non-governmental acts of individual violence. These were acted out at an individual level by non-governmental actors within Aceh. Acehnese communities also engaged in collective acts of violence including demonstrations and riots. GAM and the Acehnese’ continuing insurgency also qualifies as a collective rebellion. It is apparent that violence played an important role in the dynamics of Aceh and its people during these eras.

Indonesian forces also engaged in similar forms of violence. The variance between these acts was that of the agency. The Indonesian police and military forces, in contrast, are an official agency of the government. Arrests, disappearances, and executions were carried out at both individual and collective levels by these official
entities. Furthermore, their actions could also be termed “deaths from internal conflict” which Gurr and Bishop categorize as an act of violence at a collective level of analysis. Their actions blur the lines between individual and collective levels of analysis as their violence was visited upon individuals as well as local communities and the entire population of Aceh. Beyond physical violence the Indonesian government also maintained structures which were violent in nature. The presence of police and military forces, specifically their size and resources, made them a structure of coercion against the people of Aceh and specifically the Acehnese people and GAM. Similarly, these institutions and other social and political structures put in place by Indonesia denied these people autonomy and discriminated against Acehnese culture and communities. These structures are a compounding factor which extended the prevalence of Indonesian violence beyond physical means into institutions which applied violence to regional populations.

Sub-Conclusion

In Aceh, the ancestry, territory, religion, and language of the Acehnese have contributed to the development of an exclusive ethnic category. Through these foundations of Acehnese identity both commonality and collectiveness have been advanced, embodied by GAM. Furthermore, the grievances developed throughout the region’s history have combined with these similarities to shape a sense of belonging and distinctiveness within the Acehnese community which is referred to by Gurr and Bishop as “groupness”. Regional conflicts have ranged from competition of archipelagic sultanates to the Indonesian state’s contemporary exercise of sovereign authority over the province of Aceh. In the recent instances of collective violence considered above, the
guerrilla resistance of GAM has been characteristic of private acts of physical violence at both individual and collective levels.

GAM and its supporters have confronted the perceived and real threats posed by the Indonesian Republic to Acehnese autonomy, culture, and socio-economic status. This conflict has been engaged in by GAM through guerrilla warfare and regional raids, attacks, and structural oppression by the Indonesian Government. GAM has utilized shared notions of Acehnese identity to appeal to a broad regional base of support. By appealing to the self-identifications and understandings of Acehnese people and kindling the categorizations and grievances tied to outsiders and the Indonesian state, GAM was able to establish increasing collective cohesion within local communities and made progress in gaining greater influence within and protection from Acehnese society. Such appeals also allowed GAM to draw support from the regional population for its insurgency and acts of violence in pursuit to distinct Acehnese values and aims. Acehnese peoples’ acts of collective violence in Aceh were supported by aspects of Acehnese identity and the grievances which had been cultivated throughout the region’s history.

West and Central Kalimantan, Indonesia

Borneo is an expansive island which is located in the midst of the Malaysian Peninsula, the archipelagos of Indonesia, and the Philippines. Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei share the lands of the mountain and rainforest covered island. The Indonesian region of the island, collectively called Kalimantan, is divided into four provinces: Kalimantan Barat (West), Kalimantan Timur (East), Kalimantan Selatan (South), and
Kalimantan Tengah (Central). They provinces combine to make up more than half of the landmass of the island of Borneo. Each of these provinces is home to peoples with diverse ethnic, ancestral, lingual, and religious histories. The provinces of West and Central Kalimantan are the focus of this case study as both regions have had contemporary experiences with collective violence. These conflicts have been predicated upon cleavages which are representative of the identities of distinctive peoples. The region has also been the setting of past attempts at the creation of a homeland for the indigenous populations of Kalimantan as well as transmigration policies which have introduced peoples from the far reaches of Indonesian territories.

All of the provinces of Kalimantan are home to distinctive indigenous communities and peoples from regions throughout the Indonesian archipelago. The character of local history and traditions has been formed through many experiences including commercial exchanges, colonialism, foreign occupation, and Indonesian independence. The detachment of some regions of Kalimantan from these regional dynamics has been due to the internal geography of the island. This has allowed for the secluded evolution of many indigenous cultures throughout much of the region’s history. In contrast, other regions, such as coastal settlements and areas rich in resources, have been increasingly incorporated into the experiences and trends of the archipelago and greater Southeast Asia. As provincial boundaries have been redrawn throughout the region’s past, the historic overview of Kalimantan will be concerned with all of the provinces of Indonesian controlled Borneo. This history will be followed by an examination of Dayak identities, which will be related to contemporary instances of violence in the Indonesian provinces West and Central Kalimantan.
Regional Historic Overview of Kalimantan

Many studies of Kalimantan’s local and regional histories have focused heavily upon the contemporary experiences of the region. As a result, an attempt at a complete historical overview of the region is likely to fall short of a full representation of the complexities and diversity which have existed and continue to persist in Borneo’s social and political formations. As many histories of this region are relatively limited, this section will focus upon the years prior to the fourteenth century. In spite of this limitation, this section seeks to develop a succinct yet substantial presentation of the history of Kalimantan.

Between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, as was true throughout the Malaysian peninsula and the Indonesian archipelago, the Majapahit Empire maintained vassal states on the Island of Borneo (Taylor, 2003, p.92). The proximity of these territories to the Java Sea provided the Javanese centered empire with tributary settlements spanning from the southern lands of Borneo as far north as the South China Sea. Majapahit provided the military and commercial support necessary for these ports to sustain themselves and to expand commercial exchanges within the region. As the Majapahit Empire had fallen into decline by the 16th century, coastal ports of Kalimantan had risen as Muslim sultanates and continued to play a central role in regional and extra regional trade (Taylor, 2003, p.75).

The Portuguese and Spanish established trading relations with these societies in the early part of the sixteenth century. This and previous eras of increasing commercial expansion and rising Islamic cultures along the coasts of Borneo encouraged Dayak migration further into the interior of the island. Over the course of several centuries, the
Dayak people would come to settle the central regions of Kalimantan and establish social and economic relationships with the other peoples along the fringes of these regions (Taylor, 2003, p.197). As a result, Dayak culture, customs, and animist religions would become intertwined with the lands of the interior of the island.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century the Portuguese and Spanish trade monopoly throughout much of the archipelago, including Borneo, was broken by the Dutch. The VOC succeeded in replacing Mataram influence with their own by intervening and participating in the affairs of Muslim kingdoms (Taylor, 2003, p.145-146) The northern coastal regions along the South China and Sulu seas were often raided by pirates emanating from Sulu and other surrounding islands. British interests, particularly in the north and west, diminished the presence of the Dutch in these regions and focused the VOC upon the lands which today are part of Kalimantan.

The indigenous peoples of Kalimantan existed outside of the administrative authority of the Dutch throughout much of the colonial era of Indonesia. The controls and boundaries established during the Dutch colonial era primarily existed along the coasts of the island, while tribal groups primarily inhabited the interior regions of Kalimantan (Bertrand, 2004, p.50). This territorial dichotomy ensured the preservation of indigenous people’s cultures, social traditions, and institutions. The coastal regions of Kalimantan were made up of Dutch administrative units which acted as commercial and maritime nodes for the VOC. This left much of the interior of the island unexplored by Europeans. The people who inhabited the coastal territories were labeled as “Malay” peoples and were primarily Muslim. Therefore, a majority of these commercial centers were sultanates which came to be indirectly ruled by the Dutch.
Beginning in 1848, Christian missionaries began to penetrate the central regions of Borneo. These were the first people to assign the term “Dayak” to the indigenous peoples of the “interior” of Borneo in order to differentiate them from the Malay Muslims who lived with the Dutch on the coasts (Bertrand, 2004, p.50). Elites of the indigenous groups would use this label to unify indigenous tribal peoples in response to the rising force of Islamic nationalism throughout Kalimantan. By 1919, Dayaks had formed associations and organized nominal support had been formed for the Sarekat Dayak which would later become Pakat Dayak (Bertrand, 2004, p.50). The similarities of indigenous cultures and traditions along with the desire to preserve Dayak lands were stressed by these groups.

During World War II the Japanese invasions of Borneo eliminated European colonial authority along the periphery of the island and limited the political expression of communities throughout the archipelago. The Japanese occupation of the island, similar to Dutch colonialism, was strongest along the coasts of Borneo. As the loss of the occupying forces became increasingly eminent, Indonesian nationalism was rising throughout the region. The threat posed to the Dayak peoples by intensifying Islamic nationalism created the foundation for indigenous Dayak peoples’ alignment with the Dutch in the Indonesian revolution. In the 1940s, when many regions of Indonesia were fighting for the creation of a new Republic the indigenous tribes of Kalimantan feared their inclusion into an Islamic Indonesian state.

However, in 1946 the Dutch attempted to capitalize on Dayak support and agreed to the creation of the Great Dayak (Dayak Besar) semi-autonomous region in Central Kalimantan (Bertrand, 2004, p.51). A Dayak council was formed from the Pakat Dayak
group and other Dayak leaders to take authority within the developing Dayak homeland. In West Kalimantan, similar developments had occurred. The West Kalimantan Council was established by The Netherlands to provide representation for various self-governing territories which were held by the Dutch. The region subsequently formed its own constitution and was provided with special status in 1947 (Bertrand, 2004, p.51). The people of the Great Dayak had gained representation in a modern governmental institution for the first time.

However, sovereignty over these and other territories was passed from the Dutch to the newly formed Indonesian state in 1949. In the next year a new constitution claimed Dutch Borneo as part of the Republic of Indonesia. This constitution and the new authority of the Indonesian Republic led to the dissolution of the Special Region of West Kalimantan and the Dayak Besar by the unitary Indonesian state. All of the Indonesian regions of Borneo were consolidated within the province of Kalimantan.

Past Dayak support for the Dutch colonial authority caused the indigenous peoples of Kalimantan to be labeled as traitors by the unitary Indonesian state and the term “Dayak” became synonymous with treachery to the Indonesian state (Bertrand, 2004, p.51). As a result the regional political institutions became dominated by Javanese, and Dayaks failed to gain reasonable representation in the political formations of the Indonesian republic. In response to this underrepresentation, the United Dayak Party (PPD) was formed in the 1950s along purely ethnic lines. This was denounced by the nationalist parties and was viewed as a return to times of Dutch instigation of divisiveness along ethnic lines. The results of future elections in Kalimantan left the PPD and the greater Dayak community without substantial gains in representation.
While the Darul Islam movement was gaining momentum in regions throughout Indonesia, the Pakat Dayak and PPD paralleled this movement with their own demands for the creation of a Dayak province. Facing the challenge of Islamic nationalism spanning from Aceh to the eastern islands of the archipelago, Sukarno conceded to Dayak requests and signed a decree creating the province of Central Kalimantan in 1957 selecting a Dayak as governor (Bertrand, 2004, p.53). Shortly thereafter, Sukarno’s Guided Democracy policies dissolved several Muslim political parties and eliminated elected councils which granted greater authority to governors, including the Dayak governor of Central Kalimantan. This ensured that Dayaks dominated the political institutions of the province and were given increased social and political control. In spite of Sukarno’s banning of political parties based upon ethnic lines in the 1960s, the thorough representation of Dayaks in Central Kalimantan would continue. However, in West Kalimantan, where the Dayak population was largest, PPD did not gain thorough support from the Dayak communities of West Kalimantan. There continued to be an underrepresentation of Dayaks in this province.

With the arrival of Suharto’s New Order government the Dayak peoples of Kalimantan lost political participation and were categorized by the government as backwards and primitive (Bertrand, 2004, p.54). The Republic’s focus upon development brought with it an influx of migrated peoples through the transmigration polices of the New Order. This movement of peoples from regions throughout the archipelago by the Indonesian government was done to develop the lands of Kalimantan and, as such, migrants were given authority to seize and exploit territory throughout Kalimantan. Compounding the impacts of these policies upon the indigenous tribal peoples of the
island were the resettlement programs which sought to move Dayaks from remote communities to villages which were considered to meet modern standards. The traditional norms of authority and social order in Dayak communities were discarded by these policies in place of “Indonesian” standards (Bertrand, 2004, p.54). Local government reforms were packaged in similar ways, replacing the customary laws, indigenous institutions, and agriculture and forest-based livelihoods with those imported from Jakarta. West and Central Kalimantan were overrun with loggers, plantations, and commercial resource companies as the Indonesian government engaged in transmigration policies and agreements for the extraction of Kalimantan’s natural resources. Increased displacement of the indigenous, traditionally forest dwelling tribes occurred while there was a continuing loss of social and political representation and relevance of the Dayak communities. The official transmigration policies of Indonesia combined with spontaneous population movements to increase the number of migrated peoples. This deepened the disaffection of Dayak peoples with the Indonesian government. These policies which introduced hundreds-of-thousands of extra-regional peoples began in the twentieth century by the Dutch and continued to the early twenty-first century through the development policies of the New Order government.

Beginning in the mid-1990s, intermittent eruptions of violence occurred in the West and Central provinces of Kalimantan. Much of this violence was in the form of altercations between the Dayak and Madurese populations of Kalimantan. These confrontations continued into the 2000s with intermittent acts of violence, ritualized warfare, and destruction of property. While minimal violence has been experienced in subsequent years, tensions between the Dayak and Madurese communities of Central and
West Kalimantan have persisted. Notions of Dayak identity and the grievances held by the indigenous peoples of Kalimantan are believed to form the foundation for these past instances of collective violence. Through a deconstruction of the traits which have contributed to the identity formations and internalizations of Dayak peoples it will be possible to further develop an understanding of identities’ role in collective violence.

Deconstructing Dayak Identity

Although the indigenous communities of the interior regions of Kalimantan have cultivated distinct social qualities and institutions throughout their long histories, collectively they are referred to as “Dayaks”. This label was inorganically developed and assigned to the indigenous, tribal population of the interior of Borneo which is made up of a “large number of tribal groups with different languages and customs” (Bertrand, 2004, p.48). In spite of this categorization and their inherent diversity, the internal identifications and self-understandings of the peoples labeled as “Dayak” became increasingly shared over time. By the close of the Dutch colonial era collective notions of Dayak identity had gained increasing acceptance in many tribal communities.

Through a study of the relational and categorical qualities which have contributed to the identifications, categorizations, self-understandings, and, ultimately, notions of Dayak solidarity, a clearer understanding of the ways in which the diverse tribal communities of Kalimantan have aligned will be developed. The relational and categorical traits which are a part of Dayak identity and have contributed to connections and commonality of Dayak communities are ancestral territories, political formations, and ethnonationalism. These notions of identity and solidarity have gained further...
traction within indigenous communities through the grievances and social and political disaffection the Dayak people have experienced in contemporary times.

As has been previously stated, the diversity of Dayak peoples has made their unification into a single ethnic group problematic. The tribes and villages categorized as such have their own social, religious, and political institutions and traditions. In spite of this diversity, the label has provided the indigenous peoples of Borneo with a notion of identity which has been increasingly internalized by people and exercised through social and political organizations. The early 1900s were the breeding ground for increased associations between Borneo’s indigenous peoples. Between 1919 and 1926, the Sarekat Dayak and Pakat Dayak were formed to cultivate and preserve the cultural commonalities of various Dayak tribal groups. However, it was not until the 1950s when indigenous elites sought to unite the people of the interior regions of Borneo against the threat posed by the Islamic nationalist movement Darul Islam (Bertrand, 2004, p.50). In subsequent years the connections were solidified through increasingly shared relational and categorical values. One such common trait is the value placed on the Dayaks’ ancestral territories.

Considering that the Dayaks have been forest-dwelling and agricultural peoples for centuries, it becomes apparent that the lands of their ancestry would be of great importance for the sustenance of their cultures and societies. These people cultivated the forest and lands with nominal interference from outsiders until the 19th century. They maintained nomadic agricultural practices which required the ability to abandon lands when they were no longer fruitful in order to seek more productive land. Swidden agriculture and the attachment of these peoples to the rainforest regions has been a part of
their heritage and is one shared ancestral trait. However, the shared identification and self-understandings developed through these interior rainforest-covered regions is not solely a result of historical and agricultural value of the lands.

The Dayak Besar, or Dayak homeland, is a concept which has held great sway over the identity formation and self-understandings of the indigenous peoples of Kalimantan. In the years before the Indonesian declaration of independence, the Dayak people sought control over territories to ensure the preservation of their cultures and social and political institutions. By supporting the Dutch in their bid for archipelagic control the Dayaks gained a homeland on the island of Borneo in the 1940s. However, this authority was dismantled by the Indonesian unitary state. The region was unified into a single province and these changes effectively dismantled the institutions and representation of Dayaks within the unitary state. As poor representation persisted Dayak calls for the creation of a Dayak province in Central Kalimantan rose and coincided with the Muslim rebellions led by Darul Islam throughout Indonesia. Sukarno placated the Dayak calls for lands by creating the province of Central Kalimantan in 1957 (Bertrand, 2004, p.53).

This province provided Dayaks with greater control and representation into the mid-1960s. However, three years after the Dayak political party PPD began to gain positions throughout the province, Sukarno banned political parties based upon ethnicities. This change effectively destroyed coherent political involvement by the Dayak population. In subsequent years the Dayak people would be increasingly displaced by migrated peoples, resource agreements, and development policies of the New Order government of Suharto. The New Order categorized Dayaks as “backwards”
and viewed them as a hurdle to modernity and development of the region (Bertrand, 2004, p.54). These categorizations and the policies which surrounded the Indonesian state’s approach to indigenous peoples further solidified the identifications and self-understandings of the Dayaks and would lead them into increasingly aligning notions of identity.

The historic cultivation of the interior regions of Kalimantan by Dayak peoples followed by the multiple formations and dissolutions of the Dayak Besar over these territories has caused many Dayaks to form shared identifications and self-understandings. The loss of Dayak autonomy and the resulting reduction of indigenous representation and participation in Indonesian institutions provided further sources of collective identity formation and grievances against the Indonesian state and other regional populations. Ancestral territories over which Dayak authority has been granted and reneged upon are a relational feature which has been shared among the indigenous tribal people of the provinces of Kalimantan. While they are related to the territories of the Dayak people, the migration of regional peoples and the cultivation of resources in Kalimantan have also contributed to Dayak collective notions of self.

The traits which are shared among the Dayak people are one source of identity, but so are the strong differences which have existed between indigenous peoples and the people who have migrated to Kalimantan. It is possible to understand more about the identity of the Dayaks by considering the people from whom they have consistently attempted to differentiate themselves. Through the movement of commerce and goods the coastal regions of Borneo have been home to many peoples. However, the Dutch colonial authority introduced policies which encouraged migration of peoples to the
resource rich and underdeveloped island of Borneo. This began in the 1930s and was continued by the Indonesian Republic into the 2000s. The transfer of Indonesians from densely populated areas to underdeveloped regions was utilized as a means of developing the peripheral islands of the Indonesian archipelago. Kalimantan’s low population density and plentiful natural resources led it to be considered, along with other archipelagic lands, an idyllic destination for transmigrated populations. Of the migrants of this era the Madurese were the most visible in their increased movement to the region (Bertrand, 2004, p.55).

Between 1986 to 2002 hundreds of thousands of people from diverse regions of Indonesia were introduced to Kalimantan (Achwan, et.al., 2005, p.11). Transmigration was paired with the resettlement of Dayak populations from remote regions into more modern villages throughout Kalimantan. “Primitive” populations were targeted to encourage lifestyles and cultural associations more in line with “Indonesian standards” (Bertrand, 2004, p.54). The combination of these policies challenged Dayak traditions and culture which led the Dayak to view some transmigrated peoples as enemies. Transmigration also contributed to the Indonesian state’s treading further into the ancestral lands of Kalimantan’s indigenous peoples. Development policies and a failure to recognize Dayak land rights further exacerbated the divisions between indigenous and migrant populations.

The influx of outsiders coincided with the regional extraction of resources to the benefit of the central government of Indonesia rather than local peoples, including the Dayaks. Transmigrated settlers were granted land, logging and resource rights while the Dayak populations’ rights were not recognized by Jakarta. Deforestation of traditionally
Dayak regions and the exclusivity of rights to the resources of Kalimantan led to the sense of displacement within the Dayak population, while economic inequalities were continuously intensified. The deepening divide between settlers and indigenous populations of Kalimantan was contributed to by development activities and the policies which supported them. As an agrarian society, the loss of access to various lands upset the agricultural patterns and livelihoods of the Dayaks. The indigenous population was slow to adjust to the changing conditions in Kalimantan and found themselves at an economic, political, and social disadvantage relative to the influx of governmentally condoned settlers.

Outside of these contemporary alignments of values related to identity, the Dayak people have historically been nomadic, tribal communities with minimal associations to one another and distinct cultural traits and social structures. The solidarity of Dayaks has been made possible more through the relational affiliations formed among indigenous peoples rather than the categorical similarities they share. Ancestral territories, their lack of kinship with and acceptance of transmigrated peoples, and the invasive development policies applied to Kalimantan by the Dutch and the Indonesian state have been the foundational sources of Dayak connectedness. Commonality, therefore, is primarily a result of the ethnic label of “Dayak”. This label has been adopted by large segments of the indigenous population of Kalimantan. Political elites and the institutions and movements which have championed this label have stressed the shared consciousness and cultural values of these people, thereby reinforcing the commonality which is present among indigenous, tribal communities.
The policies of colonial and Indonesian authorities have contributed to the
formation of the grievances held by Dayaks. Realization and dissolution of the Dayak
Besar is a central understanding within Dayak identities. This is viewed as the precursor
to decades of underrepresentation and marginalization which has played a substantial role
in the aligning of Dayak peoples. Throughout the closing years of Dutch colonialism and
into the 21st century, policies of transmigration have allowed, if not encouraged, the
movement of outside populations to Kalimantan and into Dayak lands. This policy has
undermined the traditions and practices of the nomadic, Dayak communities and has also
caused them to lose lands to foreign developers and commercial enterprises. The New
Order policies encouraging development and modernity in Kalimantan have diminished
the Dayaks’ social and economic status. In short, the policies related to the Dayak
homeland, transmigration, regional development and other issues have contributed to the
development of grievances and hardening of identities. Social and economic policies in
Kalimantan have led to the rise of protests against governmental development, social, and
environmental policies. However, the disparity of military power between the national
government and the Dayaks has led the indigenous populations to attack transmigrated
populations in lieu of the national government (Bertrand, 2004, p.55).

A shared sense of belonging cultivated by aspects of connectedness and
commonality has also been facilitated by social and political organizations, namely the
Pakat Dayak, Sarekat Dayak, and the PPD political party. These organizations rose as
ethnic platforms and with aims of organizing Dayak peoples under shared interests and
cultural values. Specifically, they worked to bring Dayaks together against the
defformation of indigenous cultures, the threat of regional Islamic nationalism, and
underrepresentation in Indonesian government institutions. While the term “Dayak” was
developed inorganically, the elite adoption and subsequent organization of diverse
communities under shared values and affiliations has solidified connectedness and
commonality into acceptance and internalization of this collective notion of identity.
Through these values and the affiliations there have been substantial increases in
collective identifications, self-understandings, and associations. The contemporary
conflicts between Dayaks and transmigrated peoples reflect the role of identity, supported
by shared grievances, as a collective basis for violent action.

By exploring the qualities which are shared among Dayaks, this discussion has
developed clear understandings of Dayak notions of identity. It has also related these
features to the cohesion of the indigenous peoples of Kalimantan in their internalizations,
self-understandings, and group solidarity as they are contributed to by relational and
categorical traits. This study’s focus upon collective identities has not required
specificity at the village and tribal level. Therefore, the contexts provided related to
Dayak identity should not be viewed as encapsulating the many diverse forms present
within this ethnic category. These collective notions of identity will be related to
contemporary instances of collective violence in the following section. This is necessary
in order to fully appreciate the potential relationships between identities and actions
undertaken by Dayaks and other regional communities in conflict.

*Regional Collective Violence*

West and Central Kalimantan have been the epicenters of social violence and
movements for autonomy within the population of the island which began in 1996 and
have continued into the 2000s. Confrontations between ethnic groups in these provinces
have occurred along social fissures related to group identities. The resulting violence within the island’s population has occurred among several groups with a variety of identity influences. However, the primary eruptions of violence have arisen between the indigenous Dayak and transmigrated Madurese communities of the island. The conflict experienced in West and Central Kalimantan coincide with the traditional lands of indigenous populations and Dayak ancestral lands which have been granted and subsequently denied autonomy in Indonesia’s past.

Central Kalimantan has, in its contemporary history, experienced high levels of violence stemming from the development, economic, and social policies of the government. Furthering this violence has been the segregation, stereotyping, and marginalization of Dayak peoples. The Indonesian government’s capacity to subdue the escalation of violence and tensions between 1996 and the early-2000s was extremely limited due to the sheer number of people who have engaged in aggression and the destruction and violence which characterized these clashes.

In order to provide a clear representation of the intermittent upsurges in violence, the violence will be broken into three periods. The confrontation which occurred from 1996 to 1997 was the outset of collective acts of violence and destruction between Dayak and Madurese peoples. Subsequently, the months prior to the fall of Suharto also saw a rise in conflict between these communities and in 2001 there was widespread rioting and continuing harmful acts carried out by both the Dayaks and Madurese of Kalimantan. This sectioned approach will be combined with the categories and indicators of Gurr and Bishop to understand the types, agencies, and acts of violence which have been present in West and Central Kalimantan. The understandings formed in the historical and identity
overviews above will be combined with this assessment to develop conclusions reflecting the relationship which exists between identity and violence in Kalimantan.

In the years leading up to the violence experienced from 1996 to 1997 there was a growing movement by the leadership of Dayak communities to seek redress for continuing grievances related to the economic and social marginalization of the Dayaks (Achwan, et.al., 2005, p.15). Public protests and demonstrations as well as the sabotaging of companies and government properties were common in the years leading up to the violence between Madurese and Dayaks. These demonstrations and the destruction of property were an exercise of Dayak demands for more just management of natural resources and the recognition of indigenous peoples’ rights. On December 29th of 1996 when a group of Madurese attacked two Dayaks near Singkawang, West Kalimantan tensions escalated into public violence between the two communities (Bertrand, 2004, p.56).

As word of the attack upon the two Dayaks spread throughout the Dayak population there began to be attacks upon Madurese people and homes throughout the area. These attacks were accompanied by calls for the removal of Madurese peoples from Dayak traditional lands. Hamlets primarily inhabited by Madurese were targeted and the homes, stores, and crops of these communities were burned by Dayak rioters. Confrontation between the two ethnic groups was limited as much of the Madurese population sought the protection of the Indonesian military at their stationary posts. Madurese peoples retaliated by burning Dayak homes and the offices of a Dayak NGO in Pontianak. In spite of this reprisal, by the beginning of mid-February, 1997 tensions had diminished and relative stability had returned.
However, later in that same month Dayaks had prepared for tribal warfare. The “red bowl” had been passed from village to village throughout Samba, which is a Dayak ritualized declaration of war, indicating the Dayaks’ intention to enter into open hostilities with the Madurese (Achwan, et.al., 2005, p.17). Other tribal customs including taking of potions, wearing of amulets, as well as ancient traditions of headhunting and cannibalism reemerged to encourage solidarity among the warriors and instill fear in the enemy. These traditions would also be practiced in future instances of war with the Madurese in Kalimantan. The attacks of the Dayak war in Samba were made against military installations in search of the Madurese being protected by the army as well as Madurese homes and mosques. These attacks and rumors of increasing Dayak violence led a group of Madurese to attack a Catholic boarding school. This continued the escalation of tensions in West Kalimantan and led to reciprocal violence between Dayak and Madurese populations in other districts including Pontianak and Sanggau. In certain regions the Indonesian military intervened to protect the Madurese populations, which further instilled distrust and further distanced the Dayaks from the Indonesian state. It has been estimated that approximately 500 people died in the violence and over 20,000 Madurese were displaced as a result of attacks and destruction in hamlets (Bertrand, 2004, p.48).

Following several years of decreased levels of violence, the fall of Suharto and his New Order government brought with it an era of liberalization and expression of regional demands throughout the archipelago. In 1999 and in this environment violence once again erupted in Samba, West Kalimantan. This conflict began as a confrontation between Malay and Madurese communities. The initiating incident was the beating of a Madurese thief by the members of a Malay community in Samba (Bertrand, 2004, p.56).
Malay witnesses to the beating led an attack on that Malay village with the assistance of hundreds of Madurese that had come to the area to take part in the attack on the community. There was an escalation in violence between Madurese and Malay peoples over the next month. Following the death of a Dayak during these hostile exchanges between Malays and Madurese, Dayak fighters joined the fringes of the conflict attacking the Madurese “in a devastating example of ethnic cleansing” (Achwan, et.al., 2005, p.17). The ethnic killings which occurred at this time were some of the most vicious attacks seen throughout the conflict between Dayak and Madurese populations. Official estimates suggest that 186 people were killed, there was massive destruction of property, and over 25,000 Madurese became internally displaced peoples or refugees (Bertrand, 2004, p.58).

The impetus for Dayak involvement was the death of a member of the Dayak community in the exchanges between Malays and Madurese. Also, this confrontation between Malays and Madurese was occurring in Samba, the same region as previous confrontations between Madurese and Dayaks. Previous instances of violence had already seated distrust between these communities. Furthering this disaffection, during the New Order era the seizing of land or “land grabbing” was not punishable and this had led to confrontations between the Madurese and Malays, Dayaks, and Chinese when land previously held by these groups was taken. The district of Samba was seemingly poised for a collective confrontation between the Madurese and the other local ethnic communities.

As tensions receded, relative stability took hold once again. However, in 2001 the Central Kalimantan would erupt in violence. This period of hostilities occurred as the
result of rioting which was initiated by a confrontation between Dayak and Madurese timber and construction workers (Achwan, et.al., 2005, p.21). As in previous escalations of violence, an attack upon an individual was followed by an escalation in collective violence which would leave local police and military unable to respond or mitigate the damages. Word of a fight between several Madurese and Dayaks in a Karaoke bar in Sampit spread through the Dayak population and tensions and bloodshed rose throughout several regions of Central Kalimantan. Following days of local attacks and retributions, the conflict escalated to include thousands of Dayaks who participated in acts of violence against Madurese. In the days and months to follow Dayaks flowed into the city and began to kill the Madurese population and burn Madurese homes. The Dayak attacks caused the majority of the Madurese population to flee for the jungle or to seek protection from the police and other government offices. After only a month of violent exchanges 486 people had been killed and by the next month over 100,000 Madurese had been evacuated to other parts of Indonesia (Achwan, et.al., 2005, p.23).

These periods of violence between the Dayaks, Malays, and Madurese communities of West and Central Kalimantan have consisted of various forms of violence which have been conceptualized within the work of Gurr and Bishop (1976) and some that have not. First, the contextual forms of violence, specifically structural patterns of denial, produced social, economic, and political environments which contributed to later acts of physical violence. Once acts of physical violence had been undertaken, they quickly escalated along cleavages which had been established through identity formation and the social structures which categorized the various communities of West and Central Kalimantan.
Prior to the violence of 1996 and persisting beyond 2001, the Indonesian government had established institutions and policies which developed fixed social locations throughout Kalimantan. The Dayak people of the region were systematically discriminated against in economic and social spheres, denied autonomous or semi-autonomous territories, and their customs and traditions were targeted by the Indonesians for modernization. All of these are indicative of patterns of denial which have been categorized as forms of structural violence by Gurr and Bishop. The subordination of indigenous peoples, negation of autonomy, and threats against their culture helped to form hostilities and grievances within Dayak communities.

The protests and demonstrations which preceded the violence of 1996 were an expression of these frustrations. These expressions of grievance and the destruction of private and public properties which accompanied them were acts of violence at a collective level. While all of these acts constitute violence, they were less destructive than the periods of violence which followed these outbursts of frustration.

In each of the periods discussed above there were many actors carrying out violence both in coordination with and independently of others. However, the inciting physical attacks and the subsequent violence of all of these episodes were engaged in by individuals and groups without support of the Indonesian government or other official authority, making them private acts of violence. There were both individual and collective harmful acts carried out against rival communities. The initial aggression in each of these periods was representative of individual instances of beatings, homicide, and assassination. It is apparent that these are physical acts of violence, while the burning of homes, stores, and other property reflects an escalation of violence to a
collective. This destruction of property and the potential human casualties suggest that these activities can be likened to the terms “riot”, “rebellion”, or “coup” as presented by Gurr and Bishop (1976, p.84). While the contexts of West and Central Kalimantan did not have direct impacts upon the stability or overthrow of the Indonesian government as these terms may suggest, they are responses to structural and physical forms of violence which Dayaks were resisting through hostilities.

People were also killed through ritualized warfare. This form of confrontation is essential in the consideration of the conflicts between Dayak and Madurese communities. These traditional means of Dayak warfare suggest a level of cohesion and solidarity among indigenous peoples. The communal nature of the rituals and actions surrounding this form of conflict are most similar to the notions of riot or rebellion indicated by Gurr and Bishop. These riots and the killings they included led to the death and displacement of many Madurese.

Sub-Conclusion

The Dayaks of West and Central Kalimantan hold distinct collective identifications and understandings which have formed the basis for group cohesion and supported collective violence. Through ancestral lands, social and political formations, and ethnic identifications, the diverse indigenous Dayak people have become increasingly allied. Shared contemporary frustrations, perceived abuses and exploitation, and historically developed disaffection for “foreigners” have furthered the widespread cohesion of Dayak peoples.

The focus of Dayak violence has been another regional community, the Madurese, in spite of the fact that it has been the regional migration and
development policies of the Indonesian government which have heavily impacted indigenous tribes. The relative disparity of force between the Dayaks and the Indonesian state has been presented as one reason for this. Other reasons have included the visibility of the Madurese in contemporary migrations and the exclusivity and reticence of the predominantly Islamic Madurese communities in Kalimantan. Irrespective of these rationales, it is clear that Dayak communities in both West and Central Kalimantan have acted in violent cooperation against the Madurese and Dayak communities have been connected through common aspects of identity.
Conclusion

By first exploring the historical foundations of the Indonesian archipelago a thorough context was created upon which the studies of Aceh and West and Central Kalimantan were developed. In combination with this regional overview, the deconstruction of the terminology surrounding identity and violence provided more thorough conceptualizations of the qualities which contribute to the character of societies and the forms of diverse expressions of violence. Applying the analytical perspectives of Brubaker and Cooper (2000) has moved beyond a one dimensional model of identity and delved into the diverging traits encapsulated within the term. The work of Gurr and Bishop (1976) has also contributed to this study by allowing for a complete appreciation of the various acts, forms, and agencies which are at work in violence. These approaches have been complimented by works from diverse disciplines including anthropology, history, psychology, sociology, and political science.

The relational and categorical traits of identity which have been discussed throughout the case studies have been viewed by some as causes of collective violence. While a causal relationship between identities and collective violence is not established through this study and the cases considered above, the significance of group cohesion is made remarkably apparent. The commonality, collectiveness, and “groupness” which are developed through shared relational and categorical traits are necessary precursors to the solidarity which is required for violence to be termed “collective”. So, while diverse identities do not cause violent acts in and of themselves, widespread acceptance of the underlying traits of identity does contribute to group cohesion. This, in turn, facilitates the capacity for violent actions to be carried out in a collective manner.
As the historical overviews of Aceh and Kalimantan have shown, identities are negotiated and cultivated through the experiences of regional peoples as well as the aligning identifications and self-understandings. In Aceh, GAM has led contemporary occurrences of collective violence against the Indonesian state and the peoples and institutions which have represented the presence of the Republic in Aceh. By appealing to grievances and aspects of identity related to Acehnese ancestry, territory, religion, and language the organization gained supporters and sustained a persistent guerilla resistance in pursuit of regional autonomy and independence. The relational and categorical qualities utilized by GAM have been shared among Acehnese people, which furthered the commonality and collectiveness of ethnic Acehnese. Through these shared notions, group solidarity and a proactive commitment to Acehnese values has been possible and has facilitated the collective nature of the violence engaged in by GAM and its supporters.

In the Dayak communities of West and Central Kalimantan the shared sources of frustration and identity brought diverse indigenous tribal communities together. The ethnic label of “Dayak” allowed for the formation of political and social organizations which linked tribal villages while the ancestral lands, ethnic identifications, and objections against migrated populations developed categorical and relational bonds. Unlike in Aceh, collective violence was targeted at the Madurese communities of Kalimantan in spite of the Indonesian government’s hand in the alienation and exploitation of Dayaks. In spite of this inconsistency, the communal nature of the hostilities in the provinces of West and Central Kalimantan were enabled through overlapping identifications and self-understandings, and the subsequent Dayak cohesion.
which was cultivated. These actions and the contributing pieces of identity presented above have been reactions to the influences and policies of the Indonesian government and peoples considered outsiders by indigenous peoples. Similarly, these are the institutions and peoples against whom grievances are held by many indigenous peoples.

As the proactive and reactive nature of regional collective notions of identity referenced above suggest, collective notions of self and many of the shared traits of Acehnese and Dayak peoples are fluid and have been continually negotiated. These regions, Aceh and Kalimantan, are reflective of the evolution of group identities as well as the prevalence of violence throughout Indonesia.

Structural violence, namely structures of coercion and patterns of denial, have been prevalent in the regions considered. The Indonesian government has maintained force structures and policies which have impacted both the Acehnese and Dayak identities and these nations’ participation in violent acts. These have contributed to the grievances of regional peoples and instances of violence between the Indonesian government and the Acehnese and regional populations in Kalimantan. These structures, therefore, have been paralleled by acts of physical violence at the collective level. Between 1996 and 2003, deaths and incidents of physical acts of collective violence escalated dramatically as is shown in Figure 2 (see Appendix). While not solely attributable to the regions of Aceh and Kalimantan, the instances of collective violence throughout Indonesia correspond with the intensification of such incidents and actions in these regions.

Further studies addressing the role of identity in collective violence are encouraged. By engaging in further evaluation of the terminology developed by
Brubaker and Cooper (2000), the study of identity in various contexts can be conducted without a reification of terminology. This study has sought an analytical approach to the term “identity”. By means of a thorough consideration of the qualities which contribute to this term, a more complete evaluation of the relational and categorical traits of Acehnese and Dayak peoples has been developed. This has contributed to clearer conclusions related to the role of identity in Acehnese and Dayak solidarity and the environment in which regional instances of collective violence have occurred.


Appendix

Figure 1: (Gurr and Bishop, 1976)

Comparative Indicators of Types of "Violence"

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- **Private acts (1)**: Suicide, Homicide, Assassination
- **Official acts (2)**: Political sanctions, arrests, and executions
- **Structures of coercion (5)**: Size, resources of military and police establishments
- **Patterns of denial (7)**: Lack of minimum levels of food, shelter, health services, educational opportunities
- **Deaths from internal conflict (2)**: Protest demonstrations, Riots, Rebellions, Coupes
- **War, Military intervention (4)**: Foreign economic exploitation and dependency
- **Transnational terrorism (3)**: (no comparative indicators)

Figure 2: (Source: Varshney, et. al., 2004)


- **Deaths**: 10, 25, 7, 25, 14, 23, 11, 1.059, 1.442, 3.546, 2.585, 1.615, 245, 111
- **Incidents**: 30, 46, 62, 60, 63, 79, 123, 244, 432, 523, 722, 523, 406, 295