

various ethnic groups with various kinship systems makes it necessary for her to also discuss the position of women in the Indonesian tradition. This distinguishes three different kinship systems: patrilineal, matrilineal, and bilineal. However, this seems to me to be the main weakness of this book. For example, her argument that a suggestion a woman makes in a family meeting in a patrilineal system is of no importance (p. 14). This statement indirectly indicates that in a patrilineal system a woman's position is not equal to that of a man; this is in opposition to the outcome of anthropological research, such as that of De Josselin de Jong whose socio-cultural evolutionary approach has influenced Cora Vreede-De Stuers.

Despite the limitations mentioned above, Ruth Indah Rahayu, a researcher at the Lingkar Tuter Perempuan, Indonesian Social History Institute who provided the introduction to the Indonesian edition, states that this book adds to our knowledge about the history of Indonesian women movement through an anthropological study. The content and study method of this book indicate that it is intended for readers who are interested in gender studies, especially in Indonesia.

-----

Gerry van Klinken, *Perang kota kecil: kekerasan komunal dan demokratisasi di Indonesia*. Translated by Bernard Hidayat. Jakarta: KITLV-Jakarta dan Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2007, xxii + 287 pp. [Originally published as *Communal violence and democratization in Indonesia: small town war*. London and New York: Routledge, 2007.] ISBN 978-979-461-652-9. Price: IDR 55,000 (soft cover).



**Retno Sukardan Mamoto**

Faculty of Humanities, University of Indonesia  
retnosmanoto@yahoo.com

In his Preface, Van Klinken states that many unexpected events occurred in Indonesia's social development in the post-New Order era after the downfall of the authoritarian Soeharto government on May 21, 1998. These events seemed to open up hope but were also evidence of the fragility of the Indonesian state. The author mentions that in the midst of growing space for democracy, for free press for the first time, and for general elections, there were violent conflicts that were, more or less, decisive in some remote places but which never attracted the attention of the general public. The author's personal interest in this problem became the red thread why the research was conducted. The international community knew

of the existence of various acts of violence in Indonesia but the particular types of violence Van Klinken describes in the book, were never heard of before. This violence occurred among local people, far removed from the political center, and dragged on for weeks and sometimes even years. The violence was moreover not instigated by human rights violence inflicted by the government, but emerged internally within society. Consequently, the book raises the key question as to what democracy for the Indonesians means.

Van Klinken's book proposes a thesis to answer the question above. However, rather than directly answering this important question, he starts by using a more modest approach, although his approach was not one merely "telling a story" or "presenting documentation". He talks of the anthropologists' tendency to write "a lot" and to produce fat books, but that these may not necessarily provide useful insights into the respective societies they write about. Van Klinken decided to concentrate on "certain patterns" and to observe "how these patterns start to develop". His is a heuristic approach that opens new perspectives leading to extensive research into social life in general, especially in the cities in the provinces outside the island of Java.

As a foreign researcher, Van Klinken uses the laudable practice of encouraging local researchers to be involved in the project. However, the main players were the local Indonesians and the research attempts to bring their unforgettable social experiences to the surface. Therefore, I applaud the author for his appreciation for all the people who were involved in the making of this book, either by providing information or by expressing their opinions. Earlier, Van Klinken had explained his ideas in two conferences that were held prior to the writing of this book. The first conference was "Sectarian violence in Eastern Indonesia: causes and consequences", held in the University of Hawaii on 16-18th of May, 2003, and the second, "Conflict in Asia Pacific; State of the field and the search for viable solutions", held by MOST-LIPI/UNESCO in Jakarta, 22-24th of October, 2003. He also participated in a one-day workshop in June 2005, during which he received valuable feedback from scholars such as Rosanne Rutten, Ratna Saptari, Henk Schulte Nordholt, John Sidel, and Oskar Verkaaik. The project was sponsored by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW). Marjan Groen of the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), provided the book with maps and graphics.

No less than 165 important Indonesians and foreign colleagues have contributed to the publication of the book. His network shows that Van Klinken has presented a fair perspective in his research by involving the opinions of many Indonesian scholars. The corpus of Van Klinken's research were the cases of violence in West and Central Kalimantan, Central Sulawesi, Maluku, North Maluku, and Ambon. His thesis is that the Indonesian military has not done enough to bring all these conflicts to a timely end. In the Sambas case, the Dayak people attacked people with other ethnic backgrounds. After two years, this West Kalimantan case was replicated in Ambon, where Muslims and Christians fought against each other, and later the violence spilled over

to Makassar (South Sulawesi). About the same time, that is at the end of 1998 and in early 1999, other occurrences of communal violence happened in the two other regions.

One was in Sambas, where the local Malay people drove the Madurese out of their territory by. Another was in Poso, Central Sulawesi, where the Muslims were fighting against Christians. This continued for a year. At end of 1999, in North Maluku, 400 km. from Ambon, two cases of violence occurred between Muslims and Christians, and between Muslims. After that, in February 2001, another case of violence erupted in Central Kalimantan, which was patterned like the one in West Kalimantan, where the local Dayaks attacked the Madurese who lived in Sampit, a coastal town. In general, the duration of these six incidents of violence turned from weeks into years. Between 1990-2003, they have caused hundreds to thousands of deaths, and tens even hundreds of thousands were displaced. First, the incidents took place at the district level, and later expanded to the provincial level. The violence was communal, and involved segments of society that brought in ethnicity and/or religion, and less explicitly class gaps into the conflicts, but they were not against the government.

The conception of the political consensus of the "Pancasila" ideology, has failed and Van Klinken points to the increase in the presence of the issue of disintegration in the public discourse. All of a sudden, the word "disintegration" appeared in the news in June 1998, only a few days after the May riots, which set in motion President Soeharto's downfall. Subsequently, there was a trend among the public against the idea of disintegration and chaos, and in favor of a substitute, even though it emerged locally, in the alternative idea of nationhood. The idea of "Putra Daerah" or "Local People" was elevated to express the identity of local ethnicities throughout the post-1998 period. Van Klinken has researched this local social construction in places where cases of violence took place. He especially paid attention to the relations between the local institutions, the roles of the local elites, political parties, churches, mosque organizations, non-governmental organizations, and pressure groups in the society that helped to mobilize the masses to go out to rally in the streets.

---

M.C. Ricklefs, *Polarising Javanese Society; Islamic and other visions (c. 1830-1930)*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2007, xviii + 297 pp. ISBN 978-90-6718-276-8. Price: EUR 22.50 (soft cover).

**Dick van der Meij**  
Center for the Study of Religion and Culture,  
UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta  
Dickvdm2005@yahoo.com