The Role of Trucks and Roads in the Killings of 1965-66 in East Java

Estimates of one-time changes in population during the killings reveal systematic patterns of increases and decreases across the districts of East Java. The locations in which populations show large declines often coincide with locations through which major roads pass. Conversely, the locations in which populations show large one-time increases often coincide with locations through which no major roads pass. These findings are consistent with the repeated mention in the news media and subsequent memoirs of victims of the role of trucks in taking away groups of people for execution, torture or detention.

Accessibility Map

This map shows the degree to which districts in East Java were exposed to the main road network in the province. The measure used is the percentage of the area of a district within one kilometer of a main road, marked by thick black lines. To the extent that districts were exposed to the road network and that trucks played a role in depleting populations, the degree of exposure of a district to the road network should be associated with the degree to which it lost population during the violence of 1965-66.

Roads and Changes in Population

This plot shows the relationship between the degree to which districts were exposed to the network of main roads in East Java and changes in population in those districts. The downward sloping line captures the tendency across the districts for population change to decline (become more negative) as exposure to the road network increases.

Roads and Gains

This map shows the locations of districts with large gains in population in relation to the network of main roads. With a few exceptions, the districts with large gains tend to not be penetrated by main roads, which lie at a distance from them.

Roads and Losses

This map shows the locations of districts with large losses in population in relation to the network of main roads. With a few exceptions, the districts with large losses tend to be penetrated by or close to main roads.