

Running Header: Preserving Peace and Harmony

**PRESERVING PEACE AND HARMONY
WHEN YOUR NEIGHBOR IS FIGHTING:
THE VIEW FROM SOUTH KALIMANTAN**

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Abstract

In 2001, violence between Madurese and Dayaks living in Central Kalimantan gripped that region and began to affect neighboring provinces as refugees (especially Madurese) fled the province. In South Kalimantan, the Banjar-dominated government and security forces went on alert, commissioning peace banners while preparing for the onset of ethnic violence. The threat posed by the violence in Central Kalimantan was perceived as real. Somehow, though, the violence did not cross the border. How could a line as imaginary as a provincial border have held back the wave of violence that had spread throughout Central Kalimantan and ejected the entire Madurese community from its territory? What conditions, dynamics, relationships, actions, explanations, and interpretations made intergroup relations tolerable in one province and yet utterly impossible 30 kilometers away? Working from individual and focus group interviews with a diverse collection of residents, field observations, and document analysis, this research addresses these questions, but also illustrates ways in which South Kalimantan did not remain as uninvolved in its neighbor's conflict as some sources might wish to claim.

Key Words: Indonesia, peace, South Kalimantan, inter-cultural conflict, violence, community, communication

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In 2001, violence between Madurese and Dayaks living in Central Kalimantan gripped that region and began to affect neighboring provinces as refugees (especially Madurese) fled Central Kalimantan. South Kalimantan residents, provincial and local government institutions, and community organizations prepared themselves for the possibility that the conflict would spill over the border into their own communities. Madurese IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) crowded into Banjarmasin and found shelter in converted warehouses and other facilities that were hastily assembled as IDP camps. As the Madurese community in South Kalimantan swelled, the locals felt the pressure of their presence. Local government resources were directed toward feeding and sheltering the newly arrived Madurese, and the new arrivals competed with local residents in economic pursuits, engaging in petty trade as *satay* [grilled meat] hawkers and *becak* [pedicab] drivers.

The Dayak communities in South Kalimantan were called upon by their Central Kalimantan brethren to uphold region-wide Dayak solidarity, continue the fight, and eject the Madurese from the whole of Kalimantan. The Banjar-dominated government in South Kalimantan and security forces went on the alert, commissioning peace banners while preparing for the onset of ethnic violence. In South Kalimantan province, and in the capital of Banjarmasin, among government and community groups and in the neighborhoods, the threat posed by the violence in Central Kalimantan was perceived as real and palpable.

Somehow, though, the violence in Central Kalimantan did *not* cross the border. South Kalimantan remained a peaceful province, and in the end, the desperate messages of peace on the banners of Banjarmasin rang true. South Kalimantan's Dayaks publicly declared their refusal to join in the battle, and South Kalimantan's government emerged on the side of peace, even offering the province as a venue for negotiations to end the violence. Tensions between the Madurese IDPs and the Dayaks, Banjars and other groups in South Kalimantan never erupted in the violence seen in the neighboring Central Kalimantan province.

How could a line as imaginary as a provincial border have held back the wave of violence that had spread throughout Central Kalimantan and ejected the entire Madurese community from its territory? What conditions, dynamics, relationships, actions, explanations and interpretations made intergroup relations tolerable in one province, and yet utterly impossible 30 kilometers away? And what measures are being taken in the present to strengthen the bonds of community? These questions drive this research.

Literature Review and Background

South Kalimantan is treated in this research as not simply a geographic region but as a "community." The term "community," as it is used here, is not merely a designation for a group of people sharing some ascribed characteristic (place residence, ethnicity, religion); rather, the term is used to define a feeling of fellowship and togetherness, a sense of common purpose, and a sense of belonging. Rothenbuhler (1991) described the more abstract sense of community "as a place, or as a process, institution, interaction, feeling, cognition, structure" (p. 65). A community

in this sense is a group of individuals who come together to participate in civic life. As such, community is a form of action.

In its most ideal sense, community carries with it feelings of reciprocity and empathy, and a sense of caring and responsibility for maintaining and sustaining itself. The shared feelings and processes associated with the creation and growth of community are dependent upon communication. Communities also exist within and among other communities, and a person's membership, like other aspects of identity, can apply to more than one community.

The study of community includes the processes and properties that make and sustain it. These have been described by Dewey (1916, 1927, 1989), Mead (1934), and studies concerned with theories of social capital and the corresponding notion of civil society (Coleman, 1988; Portes, 1998, 2000; Putnam, 1995a, 1995b, 2000). Community has also been studied empirically in the plural community-under-stress context similar to the one being examined here (Brewer, Lockhart & Rogers, 1998; Ferre, 1987; Knox & Hughes, 1996; McEvoy, 2000), with regard to intergroup communication within organizations (Eastis, 1998; Stolle & Rochon, 1998), in the examination of diversity and relations between identity groups (Hagan, Merkens, & Boehnke, 1995), regarding communication in the face of a community emergency (Heath & Palanchar, 2000), in the context of social change, participation and volunteerism (Eckstein, 2001; Rothenbuhler, Mullen, DeLaurell, & Ryu, 1996), and in the study of tolerance and promotion of peace (Cigler & Joslyn, 2002; Persell, Green, & Gurevich, 2001). Also considered are critiques of the ways theories of community have been applied in some of these cases (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Claibourn & Martin, 2000; Edwards & Foley, 1998), how theories about community have

been applied to studies of social problems within communities (Brewer et al., 1998; Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995), and the applicability of theories of community and social capital in non-Western contexts (Gomez, 1999; Pye, 1999; Rigg, 1994; Widner & Mundt, 1998).

Both Mead (1934) and Dewey (1916) position communication as central to community. Dewey saw community as comprised of commonalities, inextricably interlinked with communication. Dewey observed that “society not only continues to exist *by* transmission, *by* communication, but it may fairly be said to exist *in* communication” (1916, p. 4). Commonalities, in the form of like “aims, beliefs and knowledge” (p. 4), are necessary to the formation of community, and are established through communication. In Dewey’s conception, communication and the means by which it is conducted are crucial for the making of community, and we might conclude also that the “quality” of communication is integral to the quality of a given community.

Dewey argued that there is no substitute for face-to-face interaction in the constitution of community, and he identified the local community as the most significant of all communities. Thus, the strength of community, at its most basic level, resides in interpersonal connections. As interpersonal connections (communication) between members weaken, the capacity of a community to sustain itself is compromised. When interpersonal ties decline, trust, reciprocity, and empathetic identification follow suit.

In the case of Indonesia, face-to-face communication tends to carry more communicative weight than mediated communication. It is through face-to-face communication that integrity is evaluated, trust is established, and social contracts are made and maintained. Daily face-to-face

interaction between community members is one way of reinforcing community and ensuring that community members are fully engaged with and remain attuned to their shared humanity.

Separation provides opportunity for the reinforcement of intolerance, the construction and crystallization of harmful stereotypes, and the dehumanization of the other.

These definitions of community also relate to the concept of social capital, or the “glue” that holds communities together, as defined by Coleman (1988) and found more recently in the work of Putnam (2000), and in the examination of social conflict by Varshney (2002).

Communities are composed of and held together by networks of people who are in communication and relationship with one another. The stronger, more varied, and more interwoven these ties, the more social capital a community possesses.

The present study examines the kinds of ties that different groups in South Kalimantan have internally among their members, and the kinds of ties that cut across groups and organizations, as these ties are also avenues of communication. Despite criticism that his work tends to glorify the benefits of social capital (see Portes, 1998, 2000), we refer most closely to Putnam for a description of the components of social capital.

Putnam (2000) distinguished between two general types of social capital: “bonding” social capital is one which functions inside a societal group to strengthen and define the group concept, while “bridging” social capital consists of networks that span across group boundaries, serving to strengthen intergroup relations and communication. Varshney (2002) asserted that the difference between bonding and bridging types of social capital in ethnic civic associations affects the likelihood of the occurrence of intergroup conflict. In his research on interethnic

conflict in India, Varshney (2001) further refined Putnam's definition from "civic networks" to "networks of engagement" across ethnic lines:

What matters for ethnic violence is not whether ethnic life or social capital exists but whether social and civic ties cut *across* ethnic groups. Stated differently, trust based on *interethnic*, not *intraethnic*, networks is critical. (p. 392, emphasis in original)

While Varshney refined Putnam's definition of social capital, his use of the concept tends to remain within Coleman's original view of it in the context of networks of social connections. In their critique of Putnam's use of the concept, Edwards and Foley (1998) found that expansions beyond Coleman's initial conceptualization of social capital by adding "social-psychological" value risks diluting the power of the original concept. Edwards and Foley advocated that social capital research should become less dependent on survey data (one of their critiques of Putnam) while focusing more on specific individuals and their participation in civic organizations. Portes (1998) also argued against the extension of the concept beyond Bourdieu and Coleman's original understandings of social capital.

Key to Putnam's notion of social capital is the idea of reciprocity, a notion connected with the idea of participation. The Indonesian concept of *gotong royong*, meaning "mutual assistance," is a form of reciprocity that has wide recognition in Indonesian society, and its relation to the Western notion of social capital is one of the issues explored here. The conception of community as a participatory exercise that both creates and is dependent upon the "glue" of social capital, as defined and refined by Coleman (1988), Putnam (2000), and Varshney (2001),

makes it apparent that social capital is at the level of community where individuals are mobilized to act and engage in social change.

Any study of the relationship between different ethnic groups that form a community should be informed by research on the concept of socially-formed identity and group identification. Tajfel (1978) defined social identity as “that *part* of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his [sic] knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (p.63, emphasis in original).

There has been considerable experimental research conducted using the assumptions of Tajfel’s theory, and in the past 25 years a number of refinements have been made to the theory. Among them, Turner’s self categorization theory provides a basis for explaining the phenomenon of depersonalization or dehumanization of those outside the ingroup (Horowitz & Rabbie, 1982; Stephan & Stephan, 1996; Tajfel, 1981), which is largely viewed as prerequisite to acts of discrimination and violence.

Among studies referencing social identity theory, Eriksen’s (1995) study in Mauritius finds that group identification shifts with context and circumstances, and suggests that identification employs two mechanisms: an ingroup identification based on group cohesion, and an identification based on contrasts with outgroups. Sidanius, Feshbach, and Levin (1997) examined the phenomenon of ingroup favoritism as it relates to ethnic vs. national affiliation. Figueiredo and Elkins (2003) distinguished between “nationalism” and “patriotism” in their studies of ingroup favoritism.

Identity in Indonesia is often determined on the basis of ethnic group (*suku*) and religious affiliation. There are some 300 ethnic groups in Indonesia, speaking as many languages and dialects. Prominent ethnic groups include the Javanese (*orang Jawa*),¹ the largest ethnic group comprising approximately 45% of the population; Sundanese (*orang Sunda*) (14%); Madurese (*orang Madura*) (7.5%), and coastal Malays (*orang Melayu, orang Banjar*) (7.5%).² Within these large groups are sub-groups based on district or sub-region, and there are different dialects within the major languages.

Six official religions are recognized by the state. These include the majority Islam (88% claim adherence), as well as Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and most recently Confucianism.³ Syncretistic forms of these religions exist alongside more orthodox ones, and particularly in the outer islands, there are many groups who follow spiritual traditions that do not fit into the classification of state-recognized religions. Prominent among these (whose traditional forms of religion are often lumped into a blanket “animist” designation) are the Torajan ancestor cults of Sulawesi, and the Kaharingan Dayak religious traditions of Kalimantan.

Among Indonesians, there are many stereotypes based on *suku* or regional affiliation. During the four years when I⁴ lived in Indonesia, I heard many explanations for individual behaviors attributed to ethnic identification: Bataks are loud, rude and direct, and they are erratic drivers; Javanese are deceitful, arrogant, and status conscious; Madurese are quick tempered and always carry weapons; Papuans and Dayaks are socially “backwards” and uncivilized. “Positive” stereotypes also abound: Chinese are miserly and clannish, but they are good at business; Manadonese are prone to drunkenness, but they play great music and are skilled dancers.

Knowledge of group stereotypes can guide decisions about whose services to contract. Banten traditional healers are not as religious as Javanese, but their black magic is stronger. I was once told (by a person from Central Java) that domestic helpers from East Java are more likely to steal than those from Central Java, and Madurese prostitutes are more skilled than other prostitutes.

Dangerous rumors spread easily and are believed by those who hear them, and negative group stereotypes all too often provide justification for intergroup violence. Yet given the problems that are inherent to a state that encompasses many nations, and where diverse groups compete for control over power and resources, many plural communities maintain healthy and tolerant relations among the ethnic and religious groups in their communities. South Kalimantan is an example of a province with a plural yet peaceful community.

Present day South Kalimantan is composed of the same major ethnic groups as those in Central Kalimantan, namely Dayak groups and members of other non-indigenous ethnic groups who migrated to Kalimantan for economic reasons, among them many Madurese. The Muslim Malay Banjar ethnic group dominates urban and coastal areas, and constitutes a majority in the province of South Kalimantan itself. Banjar culture dominates lowland areas, while Dayak groups live in relative isolation in the Meratus mountain range which runs along a north-south axis in the center of the province. Like the Madurese, Banjars are predominantly Muslim, while religious affiliation among Dayaks spans animist (Kaharingan), Christian (Protestant and Catholic), and Muslim faiths.

The Dayak-Madurese interethnic conflicts that erupted in West Kalimantan in 1997 and 1999 and Central Kalimantan in 2001 were reportedly triggered by Dayak reaction to Madurese

criminal acts and Madurese personal vendetta-related violence that offended indigenous cultural sensibilities. Madurese migrants make up a substantial minority in both provinces. In West Kalimantan, the Dayaks were joined by both Malays and Chinese against the Madurese. In Central Kalimantan, violence tended to take the form of organized Dayak attacks and raids on Madurese neighborhoods. The attacks against Madurese did not show signs of abating until nearly all of the Madurese had been killed or driven from the region. Many of the victims were hacked to death with machetes and their bodies were discovered decapitated. These reports accompanied rumors of cannibalism and a return to traditional headhunting practices among young Dayaks and of Dayak-directed magical forces, such as the *Panglima Burung* (an agent who has at his command a regiment of 80 “special forces” who are invulnerable to injury by bullet or blade).

Many Indonesians displaced by these and other conflicts have not yet returned to their homes, with many remaining in IDP camps. Disputes between provincial governments over responsibility for IDPs have at times resulted in less than optimal “repatriation” efforts.

One of the most interesting aspects of South Kalimantan’s response to the Central Kalimantan conflict came from South Kalimantan’s Meratus Dayak community. In 2001, South Kalimantan Dayak groups publicly resisted calls to stand in solidarity with the West and Central Kalimantan Dayaks by rising up against the Madurese. The *Banjarmasin Post* published several small reports of South Kalimantan Dayak groups making public statements concerning their intention to not become involved in the conflict with the Madurese. These groups took the risk of

rejecting an ethnic obligation to their Dayak brothers in favor of maintaining a provincial-level affinity with other South Kalimantan communities across ethnic lines.

While both scholars and the popular press have published analyses and reports concerning the conflicts between Dayaks and Madurese in West and Central Kalimantan,⁵ we were unable to find any study that has focused on the effect of the conflict in neighboring regions, or of measures taken by other regions to prevent conflict from spreading to their domains. This study, then, focuses on the province of South Kalimantan and seeks to address the following questions:

RQ1: How was South Kalimantan apparently able to preserve harmony and social trust when a neighboring community was embroiled in violent conflict?

RQ2: What communication channels are perceived as having been most effective in conveying messages promoting peace to and among residents of South Kalimantan?

RQ3: How do residents of South Kalimantan explain the violence in Central Kalimantan, and how do they explain the peace in their own province?

Method

The primary focus of this project is community response to the threat of conflict contagion and the safeguarding of community intergroup harmony. The primary data was collected during 2006-07, although occasional reference is made to observations from 2000-01 and to an earlier research project that focused on influential media in the province. The approach to data collection included a series of individual and group interviews and conversations among

residents and community leaders in South Kalimantan, with those interviews providing both individual and organization-level responses to the questions posed. While the precise interview questions asked varied depending on the participant(s) and the setting, most interviews included questions regarding trust in other groups, explanations concerning community peace and harmony, qualities sought in trusted community leadership, interpretations of identity, and the requirements for maintaining a peaceful community. In addition to interviews, attention was paid to evidence of community building, cooperation, and communication among diverse groups of residents. This included analysis of the public speeches of community, religious, and *adat* leaders and reports presented by influential media, including the *Banjarmasin Post*.

From personal experience working in Indonesia, and in South Kalimantan in particular, I⁶ know that face-to-face conversation is preferred to all other forms of communication. When one needs to communicate with someone, the surest means of doing so is by showing up at their office or home, even if unannounced. While working in Kalimantan in 2000-01, I was rarely able to obtain information via email, even though most scholars and many urban residents have access to this form of communication. Phone conversations were better, but could still be difficult, while face-to-face “showing up at the door” conversational encounters yielded much more information. Questions of meaning, the “whys” of intergroup relations and community in South Kalimantan, do not lend themselves well to closed survey methods, and it is just these meaning-related “why” questions that were being explored in this research.

As a researcher, I was returning to a site where I had worked before, and interviewed some of the people I had worked with previously in 2000 and 2001 when I was a program officer

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for regional autonomy and women's political participation with a US-based organization. At that time, I was in regular contact with members of the provincial legislature, local legislatures, and local executive branch members in government, as well as regional NGOs and academics. One of my former colleagues, Professor Setia Budhi, has since become the head of CERIC (the Center for Research on Intergroup Relations and Conflict Resolution) at the provincial university, Universitas Lambung Mangkurat. He provided me with a list of contacts and facilitated my introduction to these individuals. Setia Budhi is a public figure in the region and active as both an academic and the head of a prominent regional NGO working on development and social change issues. Other previous contacts included members of the provincial office of the Women's Political Caucus, a branch I helped to establish while working in the province in 2000 and 2001, and the leaders of ethnic organizations I met while conducting conflict resolution workshops in the province in December 2003.

During a previous visit to the province, I became acquainted with several former members of the Yogyakarta Mapala (Mahasiswa Pencinta Alam, or Student Nature-Lover's Organization) who are now working in NGOs and as civil servants in district government offices for environmental affairs. All of these individuals offered their assistance in making contacts in Meratus Dayak mountain regions as well as providing local contacts in the Banjarmasin and Banjarbaru areas.

I rented a house in Banjarbaru which afforded convenient access to the main highway and to the surrounding communities of Martapura, Banjarmasin, Barito Kuala, and Tanah Laut, as

well as being near Universitas Lambung Mangkurat. The Banjarbaru area was a good source for contact with community members from many of the major ethnic groups in the province.

Document analysis is useful in the interpretation of sources from the mass media and consideration of the exploitation of popular ethnic stereotypes in the production of “news” as a commercial product to be sold to the public. It is also useful in the examination of materials such as leaflets produced with partisan appeals and interpretations of events, and in other uses of persuasive rhetoric referring either to conflict or to inherently perspectival analyses of ethnic relations or Indonesian cultures and ethnic groups. For this part of the research, I drew on an earlier project involving an article survey from the Banjarmasin Post as I revisited my conclusions from this survey along with other forms of data collected when in the field.

Analysis of the interview data, observations, and documents collected as part of this project involved a lengthy process of reading and re-reading, listening and re-listening to each data source. Much of the data had to be translated into English. This was a process that involved the primary researcher as well as several research assistants, all of whom were fluent both in English and in the particular Indonesian dialect spoken by an interviewee or used within a written source. With selected items (especially recordings of focus group interviews), the primary researcher and a native-speaker of Indonesian (Adila Prasodjo) listened to the tapes multiple times, discussing not only what was said but the potential interpretations and meta-messages being conveyed. Ultimately, the data analysis process involved the identification of themes that spoke to the research questions that were posed and the identification of any evidence of conflicting or competing points of view concerning those themes.

Results

One of the broad themes that emerged upon examination of the primary data was that of the act of organizing, with an emphasis on organizations formed to either cement group ties (what Putnam would call “bonding” social capital) or to reach across the lines of specific identity group distinctions and promote interaction between social groupings (what Putnam would call “bridging” social capital). The data indicates a dialectical tension between these two types of organizing, with a relationship between the two being the need to both solidify and clarify group interests publicly and formally, and the corresponding need (arguably again in the interests of the group) to maintain trust and show respect for the rights and autonomy of other groups in the region. Both of these acts could be interpreted as serving group interests not only of the dominant Banjar group but of the minority groups within the province.

Banjars, on the whole, were described both by Banjars and members of other groups as religiously pious, not easily prone to engage in conflict, business-oriented, avoiding of trouble, and easy to “manage.” Another means of describing Banjar culture through stereotypes is through reference to the four “Ps” of Banjar culture:

1. *Pernah naik Hajj* (having undertaken the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca)
2. *Pandai mengaji* (adept at organized religious study or *pengajian*)
3. *Punya harta atau warisan* (having wealth or participating in savings clubs)
4. *Poligami* (practicing polygamy).

These four points emphasize Banjars’ sense of religious affiliation (Islam) as well as their concern with business and economic activities. Undertaking the Hajj pilgrimage, one of the five

pillars of Islam, is something every Muslim hopes to do at least once in his or her lifetime, and it is a journey that only those with considerable wealth can undertake (in part because it is thought to be inappropriate to borrow funds in order to make the pilgrimage). Wealthy Banjars are expected to perform the Hajj, gaining them the title of Haji or Hajah, with many Banjars having undertaken the pilgrimage more than once. The *pengajian* religious gatherings were a common sight in the neighborhoods when I was living in the province, and a frequent means to organize community gatherings from the purpose of religious study. *Warison*, or women's savings clubs, were also said to have a religious component as the Qur'an was cited as a frequent topic for discussion at these gatherings.

The fourth "P" was the topic of lively discussion for the entire course of my time in the province in 2006 and early 2007. Polygamy became a topic of national debate, particularly following a proposed governmental directive to restrict civil servants from practicing polygamy.⁷ Polygamous civil servants were said to be demanding additional living and food allowances to support their families. The government position stated efforts to cut public costs, but some Islamic groups interpreted these actions as an attempt to restrict the rights of Muslims. The result was a fiery public debate pitting seculars and liberal voices against right-leaning conservatives and more hard-line Muslims in a general debate about the topic.

Banjars were also said, by focus group participants, to feel a sense of connection to one another, like a "family" (*kekeluargaan*). There is a sense of clannishness when Banjars encounter one another outside the province. This sense of *kekeluargaan* was emphasized in the group's

behavior when Banjars moved into Central Kalimantan to fill the economic vacuum left by the Madurese who fled during the violence of 2001, and among the Banjar students in Jakarta.

With regard to conflict, Banjars were described (by focus group members) as being “unemotional” and not prone to fights or violence. This quality was ascribed to their belief in Islam. At the same time, they were described as being fond of showing off their wealth and distinctions were drawn between the upper river *pahuluan* Banjars and the lowland *kuala* Banjars. While I encountered several different “divisions” among the Banjar, the upper river/lowland distinction was the most common.

Participants in the focus groups frequently cited the fact that Islam teaches that Muslims are not supposed to kill fellow Muslims as a basic explanation for why South Kalimantan did not officially enter into the violence that gripped Central Kalimantan. (That reality, of course, does not explain the violence present within Central Kalimantan given that a majority of both ethnic groups—the Dayaks and the Madurese—are Muslim.) Also noted was that leaders exercise a great deal of power. If community members recognized as leaders do not give their authorization for conflict (violence), then conflict (violence) does not occur.

In the case of South Kalimantan, the foregoing contributed to a growing pride in the ability of the province to avoid violence. That is, no matter what a resident might have thought about the violence occurring in Central Kalimantan, the developing ethos in South Kalimantan was that of peace. If nothing else, peace was thought to be good for business. This ethos helped to bridge any gaps between different resident groups, allowing those groups to gather together in the name of Islam and in accommodation to the Banjar culture.

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Assimilation might be the key to a strictly hierarchically organized collectivistic society where respect for the dominant culture is key to relationships between/among groups. Minorities are free to practice their own religion and traditions; however, they are expected to respect dominant cultural practices. For example, in a social gathering that involves both Dayaks and Banjars, the Banjars will do the cooking and no alcohol will be present; however, following the event, the Dayaks will eat pork and drink beer in the “privacy” of their own community. As another example, Chinese shops that are located close to a mosque will close during prayers. In my conversations, participants acknowledged the existence of different groups within the province and asserted that this was not problematic (i.e., not a threat). Banjars “learn from the Madurese” when they (the Madurese) move to the region. There are, admittedly, differences, but family connections serve as a uniting force.

Outreach between groups promotes trust and the acknowledgement of plurality within the community. At the same time, the overriding expectation is that “guests” to the region will evince a visible respect for Banjar traditions and practices. The Banjar culture is predominant. As the dominant group, the Banjars who participated in this research typically spoke of a positive relationship with other groups in the region (South Kalimantan), but members of other groups acknowledged a need to bend their behaviors to those accepted by members of the dominant culture. Individual groups were acknowledged as members of the community and, thus, not a threat. That is, intergroup activities (tolak bala, interfaith dialogue) was not viewed as a threat to the dominant culture so was not dealt with in a heavy handed (i.e., violent) manner.

Intergroup ties in the form of outreach between groups promote trust and acknowledgement of plurality as a given aspect of the region. At the same time, Banjar culture dominates. Other groups are accepted—as long as they respect Banjar culture, respect Islam, speak Banjar, respect syariah, and respect haram/halal issues. In addition to those expectations, peace in the region is helped by a healthy (in comparison to Central Kalimantan) economy.

While all of the foregoing paints a picture of efforts to preserve peace in South Kalimantan, it must be noted that some of the residents of the South played roles in the conflict occurring in Central Kalimantan. Participants in the research, while typically claiming innocence on their own part, acknowledged that members of the region frequently crossed the border with the intent of participating in (i.e., contributing to) the violence affecting Central Kalimantan. Anger toward the Madurese was expressed, as was sympathy with the Central Kalimantan Dayaks. To the extent that sympathy was expressed with the Madurese, this sympathy was based on the notion of being fellow Muslims.

Discussion

Culturally and ethnically plural societies face the possibility of the escalation of intergroup tensions, intergroup miscommunication and misunderstanding, and the eruption of intergroup violence which results from and contributes to the erosion of trust between groups. While not all tensions result in violence, the erosion of intergroup goodwill and trust constitutes a slippery slope. Violent conflict between identity groups often seems to break out suddenly, and the damage caused not only directly in terms of human victims and property, but also indirectly in terms of a future of compromised intergroup trust and communication, does not repair itself

quickly or easily. The study of the steps communities take to successfully defuse intergroup tensions and maintain healthy intergroup relations without oppression of minority rights is important to the consideration of the prevention of violent conflict in the future and to avoiding the high costs such conflicts impose on the societies that experience them.

One of the broad themes that emerged upon the examination of primary data is that of the act of organizing, with an emphasis on organizations formed to either cement group ties (what Putnam would call “bonding” social capital) or to reach across the lines of specific identity group distinctions and promote interaction between social groupings (what Putnam would refer to as “bridging” social capital). The data collected as part of this research indicates a dialectical tension between these two types of organizing, with a relationship between the two being the need to both solidify and clarify group interests publicly and formally, and the corresponding need (arguably again in the interest of the group) to maintain trust and show respect for the rights and autonomy of other groups in the region. Both of these acts could be interpreted as serving group interests both for the dominant Banjar group and the minority groups within the province.

Within Banjar culture itself, which is the dominant ethnocultural force in South Kalimantan province, two types of organized social activities were often mentioned by the participants as they described the characteristics of Banjar culture: *pengajian* and *arisan*. *Pengajian* refers to the study of the Qur’an while *arisan* refers to regular social gatherings that include a lottery-style “savings” component. Neither is unique to South Kalimantan nor to the Banjar culture; however, during data collection, both were mentioned as specific characteristics of the Banjar culture. Both are forms of informal “grassroots” organizing activities, and they are

not organizations formed by state or local authorities. Instead, *pengajian* and *arisan* groups are formed by individuals, with friends and associates invited to participate. Both involve bridging and bonding elements. During data collection, only one participant expressed a negative perspective concerning *pengajian* activities, likening these activities to a form of religious “close-mindedness.”

While bridging capital can exist in the potential for interaction between majority Banjars and minority groups, *pengajian* and *arisan* gatherings seem to provide greater avenues for bonding social capital rather than bridging communication between ethnic or religious groups. Both are formed by and for groups who have prior face-to-face associations and who share like interests; as such, it would seem that, outside of providing a forum for discussion by influential group members, they would not likely serve a function beyond reinforcing the status-quo. With respect to the idea that South Kalimantan is a community that is proud of its reputation for peace, socializing at *pengajian* and *arisan* meetings might provide a forum for strengthening those values and assertions.

Research question one asked how South Kalimantan was apparently able to preserve harmony and social trust when a neighbor was involved in violent conflict. Our answer to that question rests in a complex of factors—but also points to the fact that the peace in South Kalimantan masks the South’s participation in the violence that occurred in Central Kalimantan. As for the factors that contributed to the peace, we have the dominance of the Banjar culture and expectations that others (“guests” in the province) would respect that culture.

Research question two asked about the communication channels that are perceived as being most helpful in preserving peace. As noted, a variety of group efforts exist, especially *pengajian* and *arisan*. Also present was the use of *lembaga swadaya masyanakat* (LSM) or non-governmental organizations as means for exerting pressure on political and economic entities, advocating for the disempowered, and providing public forums for discussion of issues of importance to a particular group. It is, perhaps, at the LSM level that the greatest potential exists for bridging social capital in the province although, as agents outside the state structure, their power is limited by their ability to form influential connections with people or institutions holding political or economic power. The pursuit of funding tends to be a common concern of LSMs, and well-connected LSMs with access to regular funding receive more attention and are potentially more influential.

Finally, research question three asked how residents of South Kalimantan explain the violence of others and the peace of their own region. A variety of potential explanations emerged. One of those explanations referenced the relative economic health of the region. This economic health enables a more positive relationship between different ethnic groups (particularly the Dayaks and the Madurese) as they do not perceive themselves as being in competition with each other for scarce resources. The leaders of the region also perceive the preservation of peace as part of their responsibility and work toward that end by trying to be alert to developing problems, intervening at as early a stage as possible. In fact, participants in this research frequently explained that a local conflict could be initiated *only if* area leaders granted permission. Rather than granting permission, in the face of the violence affecting Central

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Kalimantan and the calls (from Central Kalimantan agents) for South Kalimantan to follow suit in ousting Madurese from the province, the leaders of South Kalimantan publically declared that they would not get involved—that South Kalimantan would remain peaceful.

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Endnotes

¹ The Javanese consider their ethnic home to comprise the regions of Central and East Java. West Java is home to the Sundanese.

² These figures are found in several sources, see, for example, <http://www.depag.go.id/index.php?a=artikel&id2=pendudukagama> urban/rural, eth/relig maj/min/mixed, also kabupatens

³ The New Order recognized five religious traditions. Soeharto-era suppression of traditional Chinese cultural expression was lifted during the administration of President Abdurachman Wahid, and Confucianism was added to the list of officially recognized religions.

⁴References to “I” in this manuscript refer to the first author who was responsible for data collection and was the leading force behind this research.

⁵ See Alqadrie (2002), Davidson (2003) and (2004), Human Rights Watch Asia (1997), Heidhues (2001), International Crisis Group (2001), Irewati et al. (2001), Marzali (2001) and (2002), for examples of scholarly analyses. For examples of reports in the popular press, see *The Jakarta Post* (“Anti-Madurese Sentiment Remains High in C. Kalimantan”, and “A Glimpse of the Madurese and Dayaks in Kalimantan”), *BBC News* (“Indonesia Press Anger over Borneo”, and “Indonesian Witnesses Recall Borneo Horror”), *The Economist* (“Descent into Darkest Borneo”, and “Wahid Wanders While Borneo Burns”), Djalal (2001), Galpin (2001), Head (2001), Prusher (2001), Sims (2001), and van Klinken (2001). .

⁶References to “I”, “my”, “me”, etc. refer to the first author who played the primary role in data collection and analysis. We have chosen this approach, believing that this makes for a more readable document and also best reflects the two authors contributions to this work.

⁷ In Islam, a man is allowed up to four wives, provided he can provide for them and treat them fairly.