CHAPTER 7

Experiences of Violence

The ethnic cleansing and mass killings of Madurese migrants in Sambas, West Kalimantan in 1999 and in Sampit, Central Kalimantan in 2001 shocked the world.1 All of a sudden, or so it seemed, the original Dayak population revolted against newcomers and reclaimed their ancestral lands. Especially the display of beheaded Madurese in Western media and the stories about the eating of organs such as hearts and livers of conquered enemies stunned the international community. How did the Madurese themselves experience this violence and how did it affect their perceptions of security and their livelihood strategies?

In the early days of the ‘Sambas Incident’, as it was initially called, journalists and observers sought quick explanations for this ‘excessive’ violence and turned to exotic and simplistic observations such as that the Dayak, ‘the once most feared tribe of head-hunters in South East Asia’, were returning to their old practices of headhunting and cannibalism.2 Scholars explained the violence by referring to the arrogant and aggressive ‘character’ of the Madurese, to the exploitation of Dayak land by foreign settlers, to the exploitation of natural resources by ‘transmigrants’3 or by religious contradictions (Schiller and Garang 2002:245).

2 See for instance: Linder 1999 or CNN 1999.
3 During Suharto’s New Order government, millions of poor farmers, mostly from Java and Bali, transmigrated to less populated islands such as Sulawesi, Sumatra and Kalimantan. Although these programmes have long been supported by the World Bank, in later years they have increasingly been criticised by scholars and developmental experts. The influx of migrants caused much frustration and resistance by the local populations of the so-called outer islands. During the New Order era (1965–1998), their protests were suppressed and not heard.

However, using the transmigration argument to explain the Dayak – Madurese violence is debatable. In fact, Madurese from the island of Madura have never been part of transmigration programmes, and Madurese-speaking people from the Eastern part of Java were only proportionally represented in the total number of transmigrants. Most Madurese in Kalimantan migrated independently and blaming transmigration programmes for the conflict is an oversimplification. The majority of transmigrants are Javanese and, if the conflict is to be explained as a resource conflict between transmigrants and the original population, then why the Javanese were not involved in the violence requires a convincing argument.
Soon, observers realized that the conflict was not that exotic and that it repeated the pattern of conflicts seen at other places in Indonesia such as in Central Sulawesi and the Moluccas (Schiller and Garang 2002). Expanding on the earlier analyses, they now explained the conflicts historically, referring to the errors of the past three decades: forced migration of hundreds of thousands people from densely populated islands such as Java, Bali and Madura to less populated islands without properly integrating the migrants with native groups in the settlement areas (Ave 2003, Dove 1997, HRW 1997, Peluso 2006, Peluso and Harwell 2001); the political heritage of suppression under Suharto’s New Order (Davidson and Kammen 2002); political instability after his fall (Davidson 2003, Putra 1999); a failing justice system and probable political manipulation by Indonesian authorities (HRW 1997, ICG 2001, Schiller and Garang 2002); and deep-rooted cultural and religious controversies (Coppel 2006, Schiller and Garang 2002). Van Klinken located his analysis in a context of decentralization and blamed local ethnic elites ‘who deflect democratization by stimulating ethnic conflict’ (Van Klinken 2003: 70). In retrospect, these studies taken together provide a pretty convincing explanation for the violence that took place in West and Central Kalimantan, at least from the Dayak point of view. The Madurese perspective has so far been poorly represented, and their perceptions and experiences have received less attention as few scholars have worked among them and many Madurese had already fled and were hard to trace.

A History of Violence

An historical approach is needed if one is to understand the background of ethnic conflicts. Since the late 1960s, and especially since 1997, in Sambas, West Kalimantan, over a dozen conflicts have occurred between the original Dayak population (and sometimes Malay) and Madurese settlers.4 So far, the conflicts

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It is remarkable how often transmigrants were mentioned in reports and the media as a source of the problem and a part of the conflict. If a summary of the studies on the Sambas and Sampit conflicts were to be constructed, a steady repetition of the ‘transmigration’-argument would be seen, with authors simply copying the transmigration argument. In the first months after the conflict, authors – desperately looking for an explanation – simply accepted the transmigration argument. These arguments lacked a sound basis since Madurese migrants had never been well studied and documented.

4 There are first, second and third generation Madurese in Kalimantan. In general, Madurese are Muslim, while most Dayak are Christian or adhere to animist religions.
of 1997 and 1999 in the Sambas region have been the most violent, leading to an estimated 500 fatalities and 25,000 evictions in 1997\textsuperscript{5} and many more in 1999. In 2001, a similar but even more violent conflict erupted in Sampit, Central Kalimantan, resulting in an estimated 3,000 Madurese deaths and over 125,000 evictions.\textsuperscript{6} All of these conflicts were triggered by relatively ‘minor’ incidents such as fights between youngsters at the market or a music festival, a killing, or by rumours of rape. As soon as news or rumours spread, the ‘insult’ was responded to by communal violence attacking members of the other ethnic group in search of ‘revenge’. In these conflicts, mobs and gangs of both Dayaks and Madurese burned houses, killed at random, destroyed crops and forced people from their homes. In 1997, 1999 and 2001, things spiralled out of control and killings and evictions became widespread.\textsuperscript{7} Since 2001, there are no remaining Madurese in the rural areas of Sambas and Sampit, and their houses and lands have been destroyed or taken over by Dayak and other ethnic groups.

In the early months following the start of the conflict in Sampit, fears arose that violence would spread across the whole of Kalimantan and to other parts of the Indonesian archipelago. This fear was understandable as the Sampit violence fuelled fresh conflicts in West Kalimantan, and Dayak from other parts of Kalimantan were reported as coming to the Western and Central provinces to fight against Madurese. Moreover, Khofifah, an Indonesian state politician, mentioned Samarinda (East Kalimantan), as the third ‘S’ (‘Sambas, Sampit, Samarinda...’) and a logical next step in the rioting.\textsuperscript{8} Many thought that an outbreak of violence in East Kalimantan was only a matter of time. This fear was not surprising given that all the necessary ingredients claimed for West and Central Kalimantan were present including problematic ethnic relationships with Madurese, resource competition, inequalities between ethnic groups, a long history of minor violent clashes

\textsuperscript{5} Human Rights Watch Report 9 (published December 1997). Although they offer this figure, the exact death toll is unknown.

\textsuperscript{6} Again, exact death tolls are not known. The ICG (2001) gives a total of 500, similar to official Indonesian Government figures, whereas local sources report numbers of over 3,000.

\textsuperscript{7} Some authors refer to the powerful ritual of ‘the passing of the red bowl’ among Dayak communities in the region as the start of the mass violence. The red bowl is filled with blood, feathers and other ritual items, then carried from one village to the next calling on all Dayaks to wage war against a common enemy. See: Peluso & Harwell 2001; Schiller & Garang 2002.

\textsuperscript{8} ‘State minister for Women Empowerment/Chairperson of the National Family Planning Board Khofifah Indar Parawansa warned Saturday of the possible spread of the ethnic conflicts in Sampit and Palangkaraya to Sambas in West Kalimantan and Samarinda, the capital of East Kalimantan. “I have informed the National Police Chief Gen. Bimantoro that there are indications the ethnic conflicts will center in those areas.”’ The Jakarta Post, March 4, 2001.
with Madurese, widespread negative stereotyping of Madurese, hatred, political instability and ethnic, religious and economic controversies. However, contrary to such expectations, mass violence did not break out in East Kalimantan. Why did the violence not spread to East Kalimantan? Before attempting to answer this question, the history and Madurese experience of violence will be discussed.

The West and Central Kalimantan Conflicts

Between 1996 and 2002, large-scale ethnic clashes took place in the province of West Kalimantan (Van Klinken 2002, 2006). In December 1996 and January 1997, it was the Dayak and Madurese in the district of Bengkayang who were fighting each other, resulting in between 500 and 1,200, mainly Madurese, deaths and the displacement of this immigrant group from this area (Bouvier et al. 2006, De Jonge and Nooteboom 2006). In the first months of 1999, violence erupted in the district of Sambas, this time between Malays and Madurese, although the Dayak quickly joined in on the side of the Malays. Again there were hundreds of casualties, and the Madurese felt compelled to flee. About half of the almost 70,000 displaced people from these two clashes who could not, or chose not, to leave West Kalimantan were placed in government refugee camps in Pontianak. The other half moved in with relatives or acquaintances in Madurese quarters in and around the city.

In 2001, after a series of smaller incidents, serious violence broke out between these displaced Madurese and members of other ethnic groups. In the same year, violence also erupted in Sampit in Central Kalimantan with fights between Madurese and Dayak resulting in at least 500 deaths and the evacuation of almost the entire Madurese population of Central Kalimantan, about 108,000 people in all, to Madura and Java (Sukma 2005:4). In total, over 130,000 Madurese left Kalimantan and lived as Internally Displaced People IDPs in mainland East Java and on Madura (Brusset et al. 2004:13). Especially those who still had relatives or land in mainland East Java or in Madura left Kalimantan – at least temporarily (Davidson and Kammen 2002, De Jonge and Nooteboom 2006, Schiller and Garang 2002).

The atrocities which accompanied the clashes, and the scale on which these took place, shocked the whole nation and exceeded those in other conflict areas in Indonesia. In many places in Kalimantan, mutilations, beheadings and ‘acts of cannibalism’ accompanied the riots. Although some of these were unsubstantiated reports, and facts were difficult to check, the symbolic power of these tales was massive (Peluso 2006, Schiller and Garang 2002).

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Dayak joined the fight against the despised migrants, and Madurese homes were set on fire, their cattle killed and other possessions destroyed. Those Madurese who did escape and hid in the forests were hunted for weeks afterwards. In rural central Kalimantan, all traces of their presence were wiped out. Also in Sambas, the Madurese were ethnically cleansed. In some places, only banana trees and disused mosques indicate where they once lived (De Jonge and Nooteboom 2006:457).

Ironically, as a result of the violence, the Madurese were in the spotlight for a short period of time as journalists, anthropologists and political scientists hurried to explain the violence. Most of the studies produced were, however, written from a Dayak perspective. The Madurese side was seldom heard, and studies among or from the perspective of the Madurese were rare (De Jonge and Nooteboom 2006:462).

According to many of the Dayak, Malay, Buginese and Banjarese informants cited in studies on Kalimantan, the migrant Madurese largely failed to adapt to their new social environment and looked down on others (Hendro 2001). Their behaviour is said to be arrogant, short-tempered, macho-like, rude, uncivilized, unfair, avaricious and revengeful: all widely-used characterizations and stereotypes that have been applied to the Madurese over long periods and which, in times of crisis, acquire additional significance (De Jonge 1995). Many of the Madurese born on Kalimantan blame this negative image on newcomers, who they claim do not know how to behave, and to preman (thugs) who are often members of criminal gangs involved in illegal logging, running brothels and gambling dens, and smuggling consumer goods from Sarawak into the country. According to them, these people cast a slur on the whole Madurese community. Dayak, Malays, Buginese and Banjarese tend to overlook the fact that such gangs also exist within their own groups. These various, ethnically-organized, gangs compete hard with each other, and do not eschew violence. Nevertheless, such stereotypes have without doubt contributed to a certain amount of suspicion and hatred towards the Madurese (Wilson 2011:251).

Little is known about the impact of ethnic violence in areas unaffected by the violence but with similar ethnic constellations. What does violence mean for members of a threatened ethnic group who are living elsewhere, and what did it mean to the Madurese migrants? How do they interpret and experience violence? What impact does distant violence have on the livelihood strategies of Madurese migrants? To answer these questions, I carried out research in East Kalimantan from mid-2003 until early 2004 with later, follow-up, visits. Below, I describe Madurese interpretations and experiences of violence as well as the role of the government in Samarinda, East Kalimantan. I do this by again focussing on two specific categories of Madurese migrants: brickmakers and...
stonecutters. These two categories of migrants are highly visible and therefore vulnerable to violence.

To achieve the aims of this chapter, I will first deal with the history of Madurese violence and the violence against Madurese in East Kalimantan, inter-ethnic relationships and, again, the existence and importance of widespread stereotyping. After this, I will deal with the experiences, perceptions and interpretations of violence by the Madurese and their changing strategies regarding settlement and accommodation. Finally, I endeavour to draw some conclusions on the mechanisms and processes underlying interpersonal and collective violence, the early warning signs in East Kalimantan and possible paths that could prevent or resolve future conflicts. As such, this chapter deals with violence and how it was experienced in a neighbouring province not swept by violence. This is relevant as understanding the roots of peace and violence is not only fascinating from an academic point of view, it is also valuable for development practitioners.

Violent Backgrounds

When it comes to violence, Madurese have an especially bad name (De Jonge 2004:5). Despite this, it is difficult to say if Madurese, and as we have seen there are Madurese with different backgrounds from different areas, are really any more violent than other ethnic groups. For example, certain elements of Bugis culture have been related to the many conflicts that Bugis migrants are involved in across the Indonesian archipelago (Acciaioli 1999:242). Crime figures, insofar as they are available, do not show any significant differences in criminality levels between Madurese and other ethnic groups. Nevertheless, there are certain forms of violence that are inherently part of Madurese culture (De Jonge 2002, 2004:8).

Under certain conditions, some forms of violence (for instance, carok, fighting and revenge) are culturally acceptable to Madurese people. However, this violence can only take place under certain clear conditions (such as injured honour or an assault), for certain purposes (to restore honour, to show courage) and by certain categories (such as married men or youngsters). These

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10 Information from a senior police officer who told me in 2005 that Madurese crime rates had been declining since the mid-1990s. They had been as high as Buginese crime rates, but, ‘nowadays, Banjarese migrants are causing most of the problems’.

11 For studies on ‘Madurese violence’ see: Latief Wiyata 2002 on carok; De Jonge 1995, 2002 and Smith 2006. In general, Madurese migrants have a very low educational level (half of all brickmakers cannot read or write), lack political participation and representation and, therefore, violence might serve as one of the only ways to express themselves.
forms of violence bear heroic connotations and play a role in constituting the male Madurese ethnic identity. Certain stereotypes, such as being strong, hard (keras) or rough (kasar), are negatively viewed by outsiders but are seen as contributing to a positive image among Madurese themselves. Showing courage and using force give status and play a role in constituting a form of leadership (based on status, fierceness, political power and the ability to control resources and distribute them, see: Nooteboom 2002; 2003). However, not everyone follows this path and other forms of leadership are also common: leadership based on religion and spiritual power (kiai), or on political and economic status. In everyday life, Madurese do not use violence any more than others. Nevertheless, they are more often associated with violence than any other ethnic group.

When I interviewed Madurese migrants in Krajan who had returned from Kalimantan, they proudly told me about how strong and forceful they had been, who they had cheated and how many fights they had won. An image of being courageous is important if one is to become a gang leader and gain admiration back in the village. Later, after the 1999 conflict in West Kalimantan, they told me they had also lived in constant fear and had been afraid of local populations such as Dayak and especially of their magic (ilmu hitam). Further, after 2001, many were hesitant to reveal their Madurese backgrounds.

**History of Violence in Samarinda**

In the dominant discourses on violence in Samarinda, both Madurese and Bugis are frequently mentioned in relation to brawls, killings and gang wars. This is partly due to the repetition of Madurese stereotypes, but also due to the large-scale fights between Madurese and Bugis during the late 1970s and the 1980s. In the 1980s, large feuds were witnessed between Bugis and Madurese in the major cities of East Kalimantan. These two immigrant groups were rivals for jobs and business opportunities in transport, construction and trade. At the harbour and market places of Samarinda, fights regularly occurred between bands of Madurese and Bugis. In early 1980, a Bugis gang leader (jago) was killed at the market after he had offended a Madurese. Seeking revenge, Bugis gang members sought out the Madurese man and tried to kill him. The perpetrator got help from friends, but was eventually killed after killing a few more Bugis. From that time on, fights between Madurese and Bugis occurred regularly, with dozens of casualties as a result. Madurese women and children were also

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12 These boasting Madurese were not representative of the majority of migrants, they were part of the minority of vagabonds and drifters (orang nakal) who had been virtually expelled from their own society.
harassed: ‘When we went to the market, we always brought knives. Our wives and children could not travel alone’. At some stages during the 1980s and early 1990s, fights between Madurese and Bugis occurred almost weekly in the market and at the harbour, with gangs competing fiercely over beneficial activities such as gambling and trade. Several Madurese boasted: ‘We were better at fighting and braver than the Bugis. For each Madurese who died, at least five Bugis have been killed’. Whether this was true or not, fighting contributed to the status and machismo of Madurese men and revenge was a natural thing throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. Violence in response to an assault was, and often still is, culturally accepted and even appreciated among Madurese. In fact, violence is considered a good thing. Madurese never turned their back and a regularly heard sentiment is that it is ‘Better to die with pride, than to run and be ashamed all your life. My wife and family members would disrespect me if I would have run away’.

This violence caused a climate of fear and insecurity. Innocent Bugis and Madurese were intimidated and sometimes beaten up or killed. Bugis also occasionally raped Madurese women or attacked houses or Madurese workplaces. In return, Madurese raided Bugis food stalls or houses, burned stocks and seized trucks. The local government was unable to stop this violence and the police appeared to tolerate such groups. Only if larger state or elite interests were endangered, such as in logging or mining, would they interfere. Moreover, some among the police and local elites maintained close ties with Madurese due to shared interests in ensuring trade monopolies and semi-illegal activities such as running gambling dens, brothels and illegal logging companies. Those who wished to fish in muddy waters undoubtedly benefited from a certain level of violence (Van Klinken 2002:103).

Until the mid-1990s, Madurese maintained these good connections with the police. There existed a form of mutual understanding built on patronage and shared interests. In return for a share of the profit, the police tolerated certain illegal activities and shielded perpetrators from punishment as long as they were more-or-less hidden and not causing too much trouble. The police regularly even recruited local Madurese strong men to suppress criminality or to control criminal activities (see Chapter 8).

After the mid-1990s, Madurese gang leaders lost most of their influential connections due to the transfer of some senior police officers and the waning of Suharto’s New Order regime. When the crisis came in 1997, followed by refor-masi, and with it several violent outbreaks against Madurese in West and Central Kalimantan (Peluso 2006), the Madurese found themselves isolated. A shift in local elites had taken place. When the old Suharto cronies disappeared, new, more regionally rooted, elites took their place. Suddenly ethnicity,
carefully suppressed during the New Order, became an issue. A catalyst for this process after the decentralization process started in East Kalimantan was ‘indigenous people’ (putra daerah) claiming the right to influential positions. Moreover, the regime no longer protected immigrants from Java and Madura, and Madurese found themselves in less favourable positions than local ethnic groups. They were even regarded as a threat to the security of East Kalimantan society and many feared they could trigger another Sampit or Sambas, endangering the flow of East Kalimantan’s extensive resources (Van Klinken 2002:92).

Since 2001, violent conflicts between Madurese and Bugis have ceased, and small-scale violence in Samarinda has diminished, although it remains part of everyday life. There are still fights after a traffic accident (where one party tries to get money from the other party, an activity which is often defined in ethnic terms) and fights among drunks, or between rival gangs. Thefts, burglaries and robberies occur daily, and rape and murder are also regularly reported. Although gang wars between ethnic groups have declined since 2001, tensions remain. Between September 2003 and February 2004, I counted eight fights between Madurese and Bugis in which four or five people were killed and several others severely wounded. Similar levels of violence were maintained in the years that followed. In newspapers, these events, if covered at all, were referred to as conflicts between criminals or as illegal activities by unidentified actors (oknum). Further, these two ethnic groups continued to compete in order to establish and maintain trade monopolies. In this competition, the use of force or intimidation was not exceptional.

The examples given above not only show that images of violent Madurese have deep historical and cultural roots, but also that violence during the New Order was not as suppressed as is often assumed, and that the government allowed it under certain circumstances (Hüsken and De Jonge 2002:2–3). To a large extent, Indonesian authorities were able to hide it from the larger national and international community. Colombijn (2002) and Van Klinken (2003) go further and even depict local and national elites as the major actors and factors in constituting violence and peace: ‘The leitmotiv in state violence has been the control of disorder that elites thought threatening to their position’ (Colombijn 2002:53), and Van Klinken (2002:70) blames the ‘parasitic elites who deflect democratization by stimulating ethnic conflict’. According to the latter, both in West and Central Kalimantan, as well as in East Kalimantan, these local elites played a crucial role. The difference with Suharto’s Indonesia was that, after 1997, the government-related elites (such as military forces) lost their monopoly on violence due to democratization and decentralization policies.

However, the forms of violence found in East Kalimantan cannot be understood solely from studying the movements and interests of elites. In the first place, violence occurs between people on the street. There, ethnic identity is constructed, maintained and negotiated. Violence is not legitimate against everybody, only against those considered outsiders or enemies. That is why ethnicity is so important in understanding violence. By calling people ‘Bugis’ or ‘Madurese’, with all the negative or even inhuman images attached to these labels, outsider categories are constantly constructed, reproduced and reinvented, thus forming a fertile basis for perpetual violence. The violence against, and the ethnic cleansing of, Madurese in West and Central Kalimantan produced very strong images and anti-Madurese sentiments in East Kalimantan. Even though, after a few days, broadcasts about the violence were banned, the damage was done. Images and stories of killed and beheaded Madurese circulated within the province, and Madurese would never feel completely safe in Kalimantan again.

Madurese Interpretations and Experiences of the Violence in West and Central Kalimantan

I cannot tell you...I simply do not know why it all happened. (A young women who fled with her baby from Central Kalimantan. She was forced to divorce her Dayak husband).

The mass violence in West and Central Kalimantan towards Madurese came as a total shock and traumatized the Madurese community in East Kalimantan. The Madurese, once bold, have been hurt in the core of their identity; some say they have lost their self-esteem:

We are now helpless, small people without direction and no longer proud (kami di bawah angin). We do not dare to defend ourselves. I give you one example: a few days ago, some of my workers sat outside a food stall nearby on the main road. From the back of the canteen, a motorbike came with a screaming girl on the back. The girl was being violently taken away it seemed. One of the Madurese chased the bike and tried to save the girl. A fight evolved and the Madurese was severely beaten up by other bystanders. I think they were Banjar and Bugis. My other workers didn’t do anything to help our fellow man. They did not know who was right and who was wrong, they said. In the past we would definitely have helped a fellow Madurese and beaten up all the others. Now they are
afraid and thought that the small conflict could spread and be disadvantageous for all Madurese. Madurese no longer have any self-esteem.

Pak Bakri, Samarinda, January 2004

The violence in West and Central Kalimantan swept away the things they were proud of: their colonizing success as settlers, their achievements in economic terms and their courage. The stories of the hundreds of thousands who returned to Madura, as poor as when they left, defeated by ‘gangs of headhunting natives’ made other migrants think. They had never considered that such a massive defeat, and such a huge loss of lives, property and prestige was possible. The trauma of Sambas and Sampit had an impact far beyond the Madurese in West and Central Kalimantan: it changed the minds and hearts of many other migrants.

A friend of mine who had ran from Sambas came to me and he cried in my house. I said: ‘Don’t cry, you are safe now.’ But he could not stop crying after all he had seen and all he had lost. He had owned a house, land and a lot of money. Now he had nothing. Just like another man here who also ran. He always starts crying if he talks about Sampit. It makes us afraid here.

Young labourer, Samarinda, 2003

In studying the experiences of this conflict, it is important to look at the interpretations and explanations of the people themselves, and how they deal with the trauma, as these will guide future actions. In the following, I describe four types of Madurese experiences and interpretations in order to evaluate the impact of the violence. These experiences and interpretations are reflected in specific narratives. These narratives are used among Madurese themselves to explain the violence, but they are also expressed to outsiders. Following this, some more distant implications of the violence are provided.

Four Narratives on the Interpretation of the Violence in Sambas and Sampit

In the first and most dominant narrative, the Madurese blame themselves and each other. According to this discourse, Madurese caused the turmoil. Pak Suleman, a foremen of one of the largest settlements of brickmakers expresses it as follows:

Madurese are notorious hotheads, arrogant and violent. Those Madurese there, they thought that they could do anything. They were dishonest and broke the rules. However, this turned against them. They have gone too
far in their arrogance and this provoked the Dayak. ‘We must do things differently here’.

pak SULEMAN, SAMARINDA, 2004

Although, in this narrative, the Madurese see themselves as part of the problem and even reproduce the negative stereotypes usually attributed by outsiders, many blame one subgroup of Madurese in particular: those originating from Sampang and Pamekasan. Madurese from Bangkalan, the area where most brickmakers come from, regarded themselves more refined and peaceful.

I do not know who were wrong in Sambas and Sampit. What I do know is that the Madurese there are very rough (kasar) and hotheaded (panas). We [Madurese from Bangkalan] are not like the Madurese from Sampang and Pamekasan. Those Madurese from the East are very emotional. They are always fighting and do not know how to deal with their emotions.

I do not know what went wrong. Madurese have been there for four or five generations. They mixed with the original populations and were doing well. I lived there for a couple of years in the early 1970s and the Dayak were always friendly and receiving. We got everything from them: vegetables, fish and meat.

Some of us speak of provocation, but I am not sure. How can a few people start something so big? There must have been something more, and Madurese must have been part of this.

pak HODI, SAMARINDA, 2004

In the second narrative, Madurese blame Malay and Dayak because they were jealous of Madurese success.

Madurese are hard workers and they have had more success than others; they had acquired hotels, large enterprises, transport companies and sawmills. They were simply doing too well and needed to be expelled. The Dayaks cannot work like we do but people always think that wealthy Madurese have been dishonest.

Eyewitness, QUARRYMAN

Indeed, some Madurese had become very rich and powerful, and this discourse suggests that they have been more successful and dominant than Madurese in any other area. It is not clear whether this image of success approaches reality or not. According to some authors, Madurese in West and Central Kalimantan were, on average, no richer than Dayak or Malay people (De Jonge and
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Nooetteboom 2006:461, Van Klinken 2002). In East Kalimantan, some very successful people can be found, but they are not very visible. The Madurese livelihoods I studied do not support this view at all. Among settlers, Madurese are rapid risers. They work hard and save a lot whenever conditions are sufficiently safe and stable. Their businesses tend to grow fast as we saw among Madurese vegetable producers in Lempake (Chapter 6).

In the third narrative, it is believed a larger conspiracy existed. In this vision, provocateurs ignited the conflict and were able to do so due to a failing state and a biased police. Typical statements are: ‘without provocation from the outside, it would not have happened’, ‘the governor and the police used foul play’, ‘they delivered us for a higher political goal’ and ‘the police helped the Dayaks’. Eyewitnesses give a more nuanced picture but also mention the role of outsiders who ‘poisoned’ local inter-ethnic relationships and stirred the ethnic soup. The story of mas Bumi and Tikno reflect this.

It all started with the killing of a Dayak gang leader (preman). I worked at a Malay sawmill where all the workers were Madurese. We gambled a lot. The bankers (bandar) were all Madurese and earned a lot of money from Malay and Dayak gamblers. The violence started after a Dayak preman lost once more. Repeatedly he had asked for money but, this time, he could not stand losing again and demanded more money. He got the money, but later that night, they [Madurese gamblers] killed him in the forest and disrespected his body. That man’s gang members (anak buah) got so angry that they stirred up the other Dayak and Malay against the Madurese.

At first the Madurese defended themselves, but then the police (aparat) came and took away the weapons of the Madurese and locked them in. Then, the Dayak came and could kill them easily. The aparat helped the Dayak. They pretended that they had fired on the Dayak, but the weapons only made noise and produced smoke: there were no bullets. When the army came from Jakarta, they did protect the Madurese. Unfortunately, those from my area were already dead. I was the only one who escaped.

mas Bumi, labourer from Bondowoso, East Java, who worked in Sambas.

Before it happened, there were no real tensions between Dayak and Madurese. In fact, the Dayak were very friendly. They told us: ‘If you are good to us, we will be better. If you are bad to us, we will be worse’. [...] There was no law there; only the right of the jungle. People were regularly killed. If there were problems with someone about money or women, he was killed some where in the forest. This often happened.

pak Tikno, refugee from Sambas working in the Batu Besaung stone quarry, 2008.
The problem was that if Madurese killed someone, they always fled to Madura and the others could not take revenge.

*Mas Bumi, 2005.*

Even when violence flared in other areas, it remained calm in our area. Dayak friends promised to protect us. Then the outsiders came. They stirred the local Dayak up and told them how bad Madurese were and what they had all done to Dayak people in other areas. Then the Dayak people around us became very angry and within a week everybody joined in.

*Mas Ahmad, eyewitness, now working in road construction, Samarinda, 2009.*

The final set of narratives are of a supernatural nature and offer explanations for the fact that ‘brave and violent’ Madurese could be defeated by Dayak bands of youngsters. ‘The magic (*ilmu*) of the Madurese was not sufficient’. Not only Madurese, but also Dayak and people from other ethnicities often mention this kind of explanation. Belief in magic is powerful and it plays an important role in explaining success or failure. The reason for defeat, in these explanations, was the superior magic of the Dayak. Madurese explained this by the fact that Madurese magic does not work so well in Kalimantan as it is too far from Madura. Explanations such as: ‘there are not enough religious leaders (*kiai*) in Kalimantan who can provide magical powers’ and ‘our magic does not work outside East Java’ were often used. Other important stories report that, due to magic, some Dayaks are able to ‘smell’ who is Madurese and who is not. Madurese are supposed to smell like cows. Interestingly, it was Madurese who told me these stories. In a sense, they internalized the dominant Dayak narratives in their own experiences.

During fieldwork in Krajan in 1997, 1998 and 1999, before the large conflicts occurred, returning migrants fearfully recalled Dayak being able to fly, to kill at a distance and to make people mad. Such stories were told and retold, and new migrants were warned not to steal from Dayak people or to touch their daughters. A powerful narrative involved stories about people who engaged in a love affair with a Dayak girl but then abandoned her. They were bewitched by the parents or by relatives of the girl and became mad (*gila*). If they returned to Madura or East Java then, somewhere in the middle of the crossing of the Java Sea, the spell was usually lifted and they were healthy again. There was no *kiai* who could heal them in Kalimantan. A couple of years later, when I started fieldwork in Kalimantan I heard the same story.

Much has already been written about the importance of magic elements in the violence in West and Central Kalimantan (Peluso and Harwell 2001, Schiller
and Garang 2002). A central element is the ancient war spirit that has been summoned and released by Dayak sorcerers (the most powerful sorcerers were said to come from East Kalimantan). Once released and possessed by people, this spirit fills the warrior with rage and makes him invincible. Moreover, Dayak people, and especially those from inland forested areas, were supposed to be able to make themselves disappear, to kill at a distance and to be resilient to bullets and knives. ‘The spirit was in a little bottle – they showed it to me – the oil in the bottle was beating like a living heart’ a Dayak from East Kalimantan told me. Also in East Kalimantan, the war against the Madurese was fought with supernatural armoury. Many Madurese have become afraid and believed that a war against the Dayak could never be won.
Effects of Distant Violence

Livelihood Implications of the Distant Violence

In essence, there have been three reactions among Madurese during and after the conflicts in Sambas and Sampit in 1999 and 2001. The first reaction has been one of disbelief. There had never been large-scale violence against Madurese in East Kalimantan before. A large element did not really believe the violence would, or could, ever spread to East Kalimantan. The second category was shocked that the violence had spread from Sambas to Sampit, and realized it could spread further to Samarinda, East Kalimantan, but trusted in their fierce reputation, their good relations with neighbours, police officers and local elites, and did not want to leave their property, business or occupation behind. The last category simply had great fear and tried to escape to Madura as soon as possible. In 2001, they flocked to the harbour, some with only their clothes, gold and some money. Eventually, according to estimates by local Madurese leaders, about 15% of the Madurese (mostly labourers, petty traders and craftsmen) returned to Madura and, for a couple of months, no new migrants dared come to Kalimantan.

These relatively poor Madurese, trying to leave for Madura, had urban occupations and worked as petty traders, porters or craftsmen. They had saved some money (many Madurese women have savings in the form of gold) and could relatively simply leave taking their jewellery and a few valuable belongings. For these people, transport by water was the only option. Richer people could fly, but most of the richer Madurese tried to hold on to their property as they had acquired houses, motorbikes, cars and/or land. About five per cent tried to sell cars and land to return to Madura or mainland East Java. Most of them kept their property and left only temporarily. They all returned within a year to Samarinda.

The majority of the poor labourers decided to stay and judge the signs of what was going on around them. Many Madurese simply did not have the money to leave for Madura, or were tied to employers by debts, labour contracts or patron-client relationships. In general, employers such as brick manufacturers and subcontractors were unwilling to let their workers leave as they needed the workers and wanted to protect their property. Foremen and ethnic leaders tried all means to prevent their people going back to Madura. Haji Rusti, one of the larger brick makers and an influential local leader (tokoh Madura) said: ‘If they would go, our foothold would be lost. A mass leaving of Madurese would have been a sign of weakness and a signal to take over our possessions’.

I am still not clear if the fear of a spread of ethnic violence to East Kalimantan was based on more than rumours. There are fewer Dayak in East Kalimantan than
in the rest of Kalimantan and, as Van Klinken (2002:102) points out, the interests of the elites differed. Some expected to gain from political turmoil, while others clearly preferred stability. Certainly, some Madurese informants mention an increase in fights, recall provocations and describe different forms of harassment. At the university campus, people threatened to burn Madurese food stalls down, elsewhere employers refused to employ Madurese and several brickmaking compounds were threatened with violence:

I sat here, in front of my house, when a car with three Dayak men came. One man I knew as a Dayak leader. I had seen him before in the paper. They used rough language and told me to leave with all my people to Madura within six days, otherwise they would burn down our compound. I stayed calm and told him we had never done something wrong. After six days we were prepared to fight, but nobody came.

Pak Suleman, Bayur, 2005.

From 2001 until early 2003, very few new migrants from Madura dared to go to East Kalimantan. Only experienced migrants and close relatives were willing to travel, and then only ‘after repeated phone calls and reassuring words’ of relatives in East Kalimantan. In particular, labourers from mainland East Java ceased to come. As a result of the lack of labourers, brick prices tripled in 2001 and 2002 to Rp 400–500 per brick. When, in early 2003, migrants started to come again, boosted by Sampit and Sambas refugees who were struggling in East Java, the number of migrants rose quickly and brick prices started to decline to Rp 250 as a result of over-production. In 2003, the number of Madurese in East Kalimantan continued to rise as a consequence of the lack of labour opportunities on Madura and the Malaysian ban on illegal labourers (many of whom were Madurese). By early 2004, large numbers of Madurese poured into East Kalimantan and brick prices fell to Rp 200, an absolute minimum and barely enough to cover costs of production. After this, prices recovered somewhat. Since then, East Kalimantan has been perceived as one of the few safe places left for Madurese in search for work and money.

Impact of the Distant Violence – Ten Years Later
Now, ten years later, we can draw up the balance. What have been the implications of the violence in West and Central Kalimantan on Madurese migrants in East Kalimantan? In the following, I will describe the most important impacts that I found in East Kalimantan.

The first and foremost consequence of the ethnic violence is a continuing sense of fear. Many of the Madurese migrants fear further hostilities against
them, although this fear is often hidden or tacit. This fear might be objectified, or less conscious and implicit. Some express the fear that, one day, other ethnic groups might fight against them and peaceful neighbours will betray and conspire to kick them out of the country. Others ‘just don’t feel comfortable in Kalimantan anymore’ and say that they are concerned ‘not to get rooted’. Feelings of general insecurity have become stronger and other ethnicities are no longer trusted. They are also no longer seen as a potential source of social security but rather the opposite, a source of insecurity. For most Madurese, ‘Kalimantan’ has acquired a new meaning. It used to be referred to as the land of unlimited opportunities, but now there is an implicit connotation with horror and hostility. The new perception is that a living in Kalimantan needs to be defended, secured and struggled for.

Secondly, the violence in West and Central Kalimantan has problematized ethnic relationships and also ‘everyday forms of violence’ such as fights, feuds and competition in East Kalimantan. Fights with other ethnic groups at the marketplace are now perceived as a threat to the peaceful way of life of thousands of other migrants trying to make a living. The majority of Madurese now reject these kinds of fights and interpret them as ‘ethnic’; as an expression of a long history of ethnic hatred. Further, not only the Madurese perceive these petty forms of violence as a threat, but also the government: ‘don’t emphasize the ethnicity, view these small conflicts as problems between individual people, not between groups’, is an often-heard warning from government representatives, police and ethnic leaders. The fact that these fights stand in a long tradition of fights with Bugis makes them more threatening.

Thirdly, the Madurese are once more regarded as ‘troublemakers’. ‘They should be tamed’, according to Dayak people and high ranking politicians and police officers. ‘Everywhere where there are Madurese, there is trouble’, a high ranking Bugis government official said, ‘we need to curtail them here’. As a result, during the period 2004–2009, Madurese in East Kalimantan needed to ask permission from the police if they wanted to organize large gatherings such as religious events, music concerts or weddings. With the Madurese, violence is perceived as a cultural problem, whereas, when other people are engaged in violent acts, they tend to be described as incidents. Bugis certainly have violent elements in their culture, but their involvement in fights is perceived differently (Acciaioli 1999).

Fourthly, the violence in West and Central Kalimantan, the belief of Madurese involvement, and the reactions of outsiders in Samarinda has brought a sense of modesty among the Madurese. There is a greater understanding that a more positive image is essential to make a successful living in
East Kalimantan. Religious and secular leaders urge their people to comply with the norms and rules set by religion, stress national values such as *Panca Sila* and show loyalty to the East Kalimantan government to try to improve the Madurese image and highlight those who make a decent living: ‘they must see we are peaceful people and useful workers’, ‘we should respect each other and live peacefully together’ and ‘everybody who does not comply with these norms will be sent home’. Pak Holik commented: ‘We do not want those troublemakers here’. For Madurese migrants, a strong rule of law and a strong nation state are beneficial, and many long for the Soeharto years.

A final important impact of the conflict is that ethnicity has become a political issue. Ethnicity is widely, and often implicitly, used to indicate differences between groups in society. Although formal references to ethnicity are not allowed in East Kalimantan, it continues to play an important role in political struggles over access to resources as part of the decentralization process. More importantly, however, it has acquired a meaning in categorizing people as belonging, or not, to Kalimantan. For example: ‘We don't want any more Madurese here. They are poor, unskilled and unrefined. We only need to grant admission to skilled labourers’. Examples of this changing sentiment are the sweepings of illegal migrants (*razia KTP*) in Balikpapan, in late 2003 and early 2004, in an attempt to send back all migrants without an East Kalimantan identity card. The *razia KTP* were presented by the regional government as an attempt to fight criminality, begging and immorality caused by the influx to East Kalimantan of large numbers of poor and unskilled migrants.14 There were many Madurese among those rounded up. In the perception of the government and of the leading elites in Samarinda, poor overseas migrants have become a threat to Kalimantan society, and Madurese are particularly blamed for not assimilating and mixing with ‘original’ populations.15 Categorizations such as insiders and outsiders, or established and newcomers (*pendatang*), have become important in discussions on the making of an East Kalimantan society. In this society, there is no space for poor immigrants and ‘troublemakers’. However, defining who the ‘troublemakers’ are is a matter for the regional elites and dominant ethnic groups.

14 Tribun, December 2003.
15 Personal communication. See also the comments of Dayak and Bugis representatives on the causes of violence in West Kalimantan and possible solutions in The Jakarta Post, a national newspaper: Madurese Refugees get Relief from wvi 1999 ‘It would be better if Madurese are not sent back and repatriated elsewhere’.
Impact on Social Relationships

Fear and the proliferation of ethnicity leads to a number of responses from among the Madurese. Many seasonal migrants first try to hide the fact that they are Madurese. They call themselves Javanese or as ‘coming from East Java’ and, if they speak Indonesian or Javanese well, they can go a long way without being identified. However, as soon as they are longer in Kalimantan, neighbours come to know that they are Madurese or from a Madurese-speaking area. On the boat from Surabaya to Kalimantan, I met dozens of Madurese who only after repeated probing and series of questions finally admitted that they were Madurese. They preferred to present themselves as coming from East
Java, being East Javanese, or from the neighbourhood of Surabaya. The secretary of the KKMM, the Madurese ethnic association in Samarinda, never revealed his Madurese background to his colleagues at Pemda (Regional Government Office).

According to Madurese and non-Madurese informants alike, Madurese ended their ‘arrogant’ attitude and style in business, trade and interethnic relationships in order to avoid conflict. ‘They are less arrogant towards other traders now’, a Bugis vegetable trader commented. Several Madurese leaders admitted: ‘Madurese have finally become quiet’; and Pak Hodi added: ‘We have become careful not to make any trouble. We are here to make money, if we only make enemies, we will lose out’.

Leaders and individual Madurese alike repeatedly stressed the importance of avoiding conflicts and trouble with other ethnicities. ‘If you have a problem, don’t make it an ethnic issue’, a religious leader told his followers. Haji Romli, a brickmakers’ foreman in Perjuangan commented: ‘If people make trouble here, I send them back to Madura. We do not want any troublemakers here’. It was not only the leaders who were trying to avoid trouble, Madurese porters at the market told me that they avoided fights and left ‘hotheads’ to solve their own problems:

Just before Idhul Fitri [2003], a Madurese brickmaker was selling ketupat (small cubes of woven palmleaves to steam rice) at the market. A Bugis motorcyclist hit his leg and a fight ensued. He called for help, but we did not help him. It was better he helped himself or ran away, we were too afraid to mix in and strain relationships. Every Madurese is now responsible for himself. If we unite and fight, others will unite and fight us with many more people.

As a response to the violence and their perceived negative image, many semi-permanent migrants and Madurese settlers who own land or houses have, notwithstanding their deeply rooted distrust, tried to engage in better social relationships with neighbours. This is comparable with what Susanto (2006:107) calls the ‘accommodation strategies’ of the Chinese during threats of violence in Central Java in 1998. Regularly, Madurese informants would explain to me the importance of living in peace with neighbours and told me about their activities to establish good relationships. Pak Gidun, a horticulturalist and informal leader of the Madurese vegetable and fruit nurseries outside Samarinda, organized, as head of the Madurese neighbourhood, several peace ceremonies with Dayak neighbours from nearby forests and their regional leaders. ‘We ate together, exchanged gifts, made music and agreed not to start
any hostilities. I even paid them money.’ They agreed to report all problems with one of their people directly to each other to be settled. Pak Hodi visited his Dayak neighbours to stress their good relationships, and Pak Bakri made sure he paid his land rent well before the due date. Remarkably, Bugis, with whom relationships in this area are tense due to fierce competition over land and the vegetable trade, were not invited to the peace ceremonies. Nevertheless, Pak Suleman, a foreman of a group of brickmakers, gave a donation of 15,000 bricks for the building of a mosque in a neighbouring Bugis/Banjar village.

Although the majority of the semi-permanent migrants and settlers adhere to these accommodation strategies, not all invest in friendly relationships. Especially among those brickmakers who live in relatively isolated communities, and among newcomers and poor labourers, many can be found who refrain from contact with other ethnic groups. They tend to avoid any interaction with outsiders and live and work in their own communities. Food and goods are supplied by the employer, and community leaders serve as brokers with the outside world. This process is enhanced by the fact that, since 2001, Madurese seldom obtain new permission from local landowners (especially from Banjar and Bugis) to use the soil on wasteland to make bricks. Instead, they are increasingly forced to lease or buy it. As a result, they search for cheap land outside the city (see Map 5). Madurese families often combine to buy or lease this land, and this leads to the establishment of mono-ethnic enclaves of Madurese brickmakers where seasonal workers just come to work and save something before going back to Madura. Among the stonecutters, who live further from town and far from other human settlements, this isolation tendency is even stronger.

Although investment in land and lease contracts has increased (especially after the end of 2002), there is a general tendency to refrain from investments in East Kalimantan in favour of investing and accumulating assets in Madura. Many settlers spoke of no longer investing in land and large houses, but preferring to accumulate on Madura, or invest in goods which could be sold easily (such as trucks, motor cycles or gold) in Kalimantan. Many also try, and even harder than before, to get a family member to Malaysia or Saudi Arabia. However, since early 2003, migration to Malaysia has become more difficult and in reality few men and women from mainland East Java make it to Saudi Arabia.

There is a small category of very rich Madurese who seem unconcerned about all the turmoil. A number of the Madurese business people engaged in road construction, recycling (iron, plastics and tyres) and coal mining retain their aggressive business style combined with an arrogant attitude. The infamous Haji Noa (a member of the powerful Haji Su family) for instance, who
made a fortune in road construction and – according to former business partners – operating gambling halls, treats neighbours and minor business partners with great arrogance. In a coffee shop near his large house, a Banjar driver spoke about an accident he once had: 'His car has hit my motorbike when he came out of his porch. I asked him for one million compensation for the damage. He told me to come to his house later that day. When I came, he said: “how do you want to have it? With a straight or a bent one?” [referring to the kind of stick to beat him]. When I went to the police they laughed, they are all friends of Haji Noa'.
The Role of the Government: Conflict Resolution in Samarinda

During the 2001 violence, the provincial government of East Kalimantan adopted a proactive strategy in an attempt to stop the violence before it could even start. The governor of East Kalimantan, in close cooperation with the police, brought many ethnic leaders together with some NGOs and university lecturers and forced the ethnic factions to make peace in public. The first meeting was held in the old stadium of Samarinda with hundreds of leaders present (tokoh tokoh masyarakat). Following this, monthly meetings were held in the prestigious Hotel Senyiur in Samarinda under the banner of Forum Kommunikasi Persaudaraan Masyarakat Kalimantan Timur (FKPMKT).16

In this forum, the most important ethnic groups were represented (Bugis, Banyar, Java, Kutai and Dayak) and all the expenses of the meeting were paid by the provincial government. In 2001, another forum was established: the Forum Komunikasi Antar-Etnik (Forkas). This forum included a Madurese religious leader (who unfortunately died soon after its start). The provincial government forced him to re-establish the Kerukan Keluarga Masyarakat Madura (KKMM), an ethnic association similar to the ethnic associations represented in the FKPMKT. After his death, a leadership crisis among the Madurese occurred, with Madurese community leaders from all over East Kalimantan quarrelling, and they failed to elect a new leader. There appeared to be no candidate sufficiently strong and respected to unite all Madurese.

Finally, Haji Su (a Madurese from Banyuwangi), pushed himself to the fore and proclaimed himself the representative and chair of the KKMM. The KKMM, however, was never successful due to diverging interests between the various ethnic sub-fractions, classes and business leaders. It ended up representing only the ‘urban Madurese’ such as porters, contractors and labourers in construction and road building. Brickmakers, stonecutters, farmers and small businessmen did not recognize Haji Su’s hegemony and refused to join. They saw the KKMM as an instrument for enhancing Haji Su’s personal power.

During FKPMKT and Forkas meetings in 2001, the government organized a number of indigenous reconciliation rituals that were supposed to be repeated at lower levels. Leaders exchanged presents and promised to settle individual conflicts between ethnic groups through communication and in harmony. The rituals however remained very artificial – especially for Madurese who are not used to this kind of ritual – and, except for Pak Gidun, this example has never been followed by any Madurese leader. Besides enforcing dialogue and reconciliation, the government banned the media reporting, and any other public

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16 See also Van Klinken, 2002:50.
references to, ethnic issues and instructed local leaders to perceive conflicts not as ethnic conflicts, but as individual disagreements between people. Their slogan: ‘Don’t play it as ethnicity, look at the individual’ became known and used by almost all Madurese. To subdue negative sentiments and rumours about injustice, the government promised to establish and safeguard a fair judicial system.

Although the symbolic power of these meetings has been significant and may have been crucial in curtailing ethnic policies by local leaders, for ordinary Madurese migrants the dialogue had little meaning as they did not feel at all represented. An important factor here was the lack of an organizational structure among the Madurese and their well-educated leaders. There has never been any form of formal Madurese organization in East Kalimantan, and the influence of the KKMM remained weak. Moreover, internal divisions and personal power policies weakened Haji Su’s bargaining position. Few inter-ethnic conflicts have ever been settled by the KKMM, and the strengthened governmental judicial policies turned out to be somewhat disadvantageous for Madurese. The government banned Madurese public meetings and established a zero-tolerance policy towards fights at hotspots such as markets, cock-fighting arenas and brothels. Security officials from the intelligence department of the police (Intel) infiltrated these places and stopped any fighting from spreading by simply firing in the air, capturing ringleaders or shooting some people in the legs.

Van Klinken (2002:70) explains the violence in West and Central Kalimantan in terms of the power politics of local elites and describes them as: ‘parasitic elites who [were willing to] deflect democratization by stimulating ethnic conflict’. According to him, in East Kalimantan, the role of local elites was positive and crucial in preventing the spread of mass violence because their economic interests were better served by peace. However, I doubt if studying the interests of the elites is sufficient. The East Kalimantan case shows that ethnic elites were only able to prevent conflict with the support of the government and police. All the necessary ingredients for a violent conflict were present: problematic ethnic relationships involving Madurese, a long history of violent minor clashes involving them, widespread negative Madurese stereotyping, hatred, political instability, resource competition, and ethnic, religious and economic controversies. This chapter shows that government policies did not lead to a decrease in local-level ethnic tensions, did not eliminate the roots of violence and failed to solve the problem of the politicization of ethnicity. As a result, the Madurese remain in the black books.

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17 ‘Jangan main sampai suku, lihat individu’.
By using reconciliation rituals, community meetings, censorship and repression, the violence seen elsewhere against Madurese did not spread to East Kalimantan. Although this provided some protection, many of the Madurese did not feel safe and remained cautious. In the concluding remarks below, the longer term impacts of the violence are summarized.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has analysed the impact of the Sambas and Sampit violence on Madurese in the neighbouring East Kalimantan province by studying Madurese experiences and interpretations of violence and the role of the provincial government. Madurese interpretations of violence in East Kalimantan are shaped within a context of frequent, small-scale, tensions with other ethnic groups such as Bugis, Banjar and Dayak. These tensions with other ethnic groups arise out of resource conflicts, negative stereotyping of Madurese, cultural differences and competing economic and political interests. The collective memory of the ethnic cleansing of Madurese in West and Central Kalimantan in 1999–2001 has added another dimension to ethnic relationships in East Kalimantan: ethnicity has become a political problem and Madurese are no longer welcome. In general, this leads to less access to resources and fewer opportunities for Madurese to make a living. In response, poor Madurese try to keep a low profile, avoid conflicts and try to earn a more positive image.

As a general conclusion, the chapter shows that the mass violence in West and Central Kalimantan has had a large and diverse impact on Madurese in East Kalimantan. The violence in West and Central Kalimantan was a major blow to Madurese pride and self-esteem in general and contributed to the daily hardship involved in making a living. For Madurese in East Kalimantan, the ethnic violence in neighbouring provinces has been a traumatic experience and fear has spread among them. Many feel they should operate with care and modesty so as not to provoke any negative reactions. This is not an easy task, and success is not guaranteed as negative images of the Madurese are deeply rooted, and few non-Madurese are willing to acknowledge that these images do not reflect reality. There is no evidence that Madurese migrants are more violent or criminal than, for instance, Bugis, Banjar and Butonese migrants. In reality, most Madurese migrants are poor and hardworking people who make a living in sectors unattractive to other people such as stone cutting, brick making, road construction, recycling and urban waste removal. Their importance for the local economy is seldom recognised. As a result, their livelihoods continue to be under threat.
The statement of Pak Bakri, earlier in the chapter, is indicative: ‘Madurese no longer have any self-esteem (harga diri).’ The story of Pak Bakri also illustrates that a distant conflict and a loss of pride and self-esteem have a strong impact on ethnic relationships and influence livelihood strategies. Madurese try to hide their ethnicity or tend to retreat into closed communities and the economic activities where they dominate. Although these accommodation strategies might curb conflict in the short term, in the long run, fear, distrust and frustration among Madurese could increase. This reaction does not facilitate dialogue and peaceful interaction with other ethnicities. If these local dimensions are neglected, no real reconciliation and integration can take place. It is especially here where the government could step in. Although they successfully prevented the 2001 conflict from spreading to East Kalimantan, and effectively suppressed violent outbursts of ethnic sentiments between 2001 and 2009, nothing is being done to start a real dialogue and develop sound ethnic policies oriented on intercommunity dialogue and cooperation.

It is important to not only note the far-reaching impacts of violence on individual members of an ethnic group, but also on regional ethnic relationships and policies. Madurese inhabitants perceived the violence as a collective trauma, a cultural loss of honour and a reason for increased resource competition, while others perceive them as a threat to safety and stability in the region. Although the regional government has tried to suppress ethnic sentiments and successfully prevented the spread of violence to East Kalimantan in 2001, the problems associated with the politicization of ethnicity remain unsolved. The unresolved tensions remain a potential source of future conflict. Not least because no real inter-ethnic dialogue takes place due to a lack of proper Madurese political representation. Without a change in national and regional policies that draw in the Madurese perspective, ethnic peace remains uncertain.

During the 2001 FKPMKT and Forkas (peace building) meetings in Samarinda (Van Klinken 2002), the government organized a number of indigenous reconciliation rituals which were supposed to be repeated at lower levels. Leaders exchanged presents and promised to settle individual conflicts between the various ethnic groups harmoniously through communication. However, the rituals remained very artificial – especially to the Madurese who are not used to this kind of ritual – and, except for Pak Gimun in Muang Dalam, this example has never been followed by any Madurese leader. Besides enforcing dialogue and reconciliation, the government banned public references to ethnic issues and instructed local leaders to perceive conflicts not as ethnic conflicts but as tensions between individuals. Their slogan, ‘don’t play it as ethnicity, look at the individual’, became widely known and adopted by almost all
Madurese. To subdue negative sentiments and rumours of injustice, the government promised to establish and safeguard a fair judicial system. In practice, however, negative sentiments against Madurese increased. Only the relatively prosperous and socially well-embedded vegetable farmers could maintain their good position due to their ownership and control of resources. In all other sectors, it became harder for Madurese to do business and expand their activities.

Although the investments by migrants in land and lease contracts in the brick sector increased (especially after the end of 2002), there has been a general tendency towards investment and accumulation in Madura. Many settlers spoke of no longer investing in land and large houses, but preferring to accumulate assets on Madura. If they do invest, it tends to be in goods which could be easily sold (such as trucks, motor cycles or gold) in an emergency. Many also strive, and even harder than before, to get a family member to Malaysia or Saudi Arabia. However, migration to Malaysia has become very difficult and many who have tried to migrate end up stuck in East Kalimantan and especially in the northern district of Nunukan. Overall, Madurese in Kalimantan remain ‘small and lowly’ (di bawah angin).