Inequalities and Indirect Conflict Interventions: The Evidence on Perceptions of Difference, Social Cohesion, and Sub-national Variations in Violence in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia

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Abstract

This paper examines the empirical evidence on social cohesion and perceived horizontal inequalities in two neighbouring districts in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia. Despite having similar sized groups (religiously polarised, ethnically fragmented) and the opportunity to mobilise during the national political transition beginning in 1998, only one of the districts had serious violence. First, the evidence suggests that such violence was linked to perceived horizontal inequalities in terms of access to the state, particularly in terms of religious identity in the district affected by conflict. In the same district, there was also evidence of weaker social cohesion: there were more pervasive negative stereotypes of other groups along religious lines, and the least inter-religious mixing in terms of everyday interaction and friendships. These attitudes and less frequent mixing were more likely, too, among the group that was initially marginalised from the state when power-sharing arrangements broke down. Meanwhile, in the district with less violence, there was more frequent inter-religious group mixing overall but particularly on the part of the group that did not dominate the state. That is, frequent inter-religious group mixing and the absence of negative attitudes on the part of this group towards others may have signalled that it was not a viable group to be mobilised for political gain. Instead, in this more peaceful district, ethnic identity was the more salient form of political capital, but demographically the district is ethnically fragmented. Inter-ethnic rather than religious mixing was less frequent in this district, but it was worst among the dominant political group along religious and ethnic lines. Yet, the negative attitudes and stronger in-group (rather than out-group) bonds between members of the dominant political group did not translate into violent conflict because there were minimal challenges to their power during the transition. Finally, the evidence suggests that the associational membership of mixed

ethnic or religious organisations is less likely to explain violence prevention, given that membership of such organisations was greater in the conflict-affected district. The evidence overall suggests that demographic divides are not always an indicator of political divides and the propensity for conflict, but rather this is related to the politics of exclusion. Furthermore, it indicates that to some extent increased cross-group contact can act as an indirect conflict intervention mechanism.

Introduction

Indonesia, during the ten years of reform and the transition to democracy, has continued to face the enormous challenge of managing diversity within its borders. This diversity not only encompasses the great heterogeneity of communal identities formed around ethnicity, religion, locality, region, class and internal migrant status but also in terms of geography, the uneven provision of infrastructure and public services, access to natural resource revenues, and of course levels of education, income and health standards. Managing such diversity is a development challenge and has been at the forefront of the state-building initiatives since the dawn of Indonesian independence in 1945. It underpinned the debates on the appropriateness of Indonesia's unitary state structures *vis-à-vis* a federal system of governance at and during the years following Independence, and in part resulted in the implementation of decentralisation of most government powers to the district level beginning 2001 (laws 22 and 25 of 1999). In addition to the decentralisation laws, further legislative changes during the transition allowed greater space for the expression of diversity in civil and political life. These include, among others, outlawing legislative practices that repressed expressions of identity and discontent along *SARA* (Ethnic, Religion, Race, and Group) lines under the New Order (Sen and Hill, 2000), rolling back the role of the military in politics and, through the revisions to the decentralisation legislation (law 32 of 2004) that allowed for the direct elections of provincial governors, district heads and municipal mayors.

Given such diversity and the historical interventions of the state in expressing diversity in anything other than ceremonial terms, it is not surprising that the enormous structural, fiscal and political changes

occurring in the past decade have provided space for long-standing grievances to surface between groups and *vis-à-vis* the state. Tarrow (1998) and Bertrand (2004) both argue that at critical historical junctures, when disruptions in the political *status quo* signal the space to renegotiate power in relation to the state and other groups, it is likely that grievances relating to marginalisation and power sharing will surface, increasing the likelihood of conflict. The evidence on patterns of violence in Indonesia from the work of UNSFIR (Varshney, Panggabean and Tadjoeddin, 2004) gives credence to this argument. In the few years before the end of the New Order, reaching a peak between 1999 and 2002, a systematic study of provincial newspapers (excluding Aceh and Papua) found that there were increasing outbreaks of violence in different parts of the nation, but that there was large sub-national variation (*ibid.*). Preventing the escalation of disputes to violence, particularly in the initial years of the reform era, was no doubt hindered by the lack of dispute resolution institutions at the local level with the knowledge, resource capacity, willingness and trust of local peoples to resolve emerging crises following the rolling back of military intervention in civil society.[2] Before this, the armed forces (in particular, the army) had the monopoly in many areas on dispute resolution, often resorting to the use of force.

Yet, such violence did not occur in all parts of the country, in the same form, or with the same intensity. Although vigilantism took place throughout the country, it was particularly intense in southern Sumatra (Lampung Province) and throughout Java. Furthermore, clashes with state security forces took place predominantly in Aceh, Papua, then East

2   Through several legal and internal reforms, the role of the military in politics and civilian life has been diminished through structural and legislative change and to some extent by public scrutiny. Previously, particularly during Soeharto's reign, the dual function of the military as a defence force and as a participant in civilian politics and governance (*dwifungsi*) was legitimised by law 20 of 1982 on state defence regulations. Following the New Order regime, the role of the military in civilian life was rolled back. First, the roles of the military and the police were separated through MPR VI of 2000 and second, the function and tasks of these forces were separated through TAP MPR VII of 2000, which also limited the scope for the military in how and under what circumstances it could provide for security and defence. Third, military functions were also affected by the promulgation of law 3 of 2002 on state defence, which replaced law 20 of 1982.

Timor, and on a smaller scale in parts of Sumatra and other resource-rich regions. Large-scale communal violence took place in some districts in the Molluccas (North and Central), in Central Sulawesi, in West and Central Kalimantan, and on a much smaller scale in East and West Nusa Tenggara (for example on Lombok and Flores islands). Communal violence was even evident in some areas where separatist clashes with the state were taking place, such as in Wamena in Papua, where one form of conflict overlapped with another. Not all large clashes were confined to the post-New Order period, with tensions beginning to escalate in the early to mid-nineties; one instance being the ethno-communal clashes in West Kalimantan. However, inter-group grievances and those with the state culminated in peaks of violent clashes between 1999 and 2002 (Varshney, Panggabean and Tadjoeddin, 2004).

There is a variety of explanations for why and how such conflict has arisen in each case, and why and how there is an uneven pattern of violence across the nation. Two important sources of grievance, which have received less systematic attention, have been the role of group-based inequalities in driving mobilisation in such conflicts, and how these may have been mitigated by other forms of positive social relations and social cohesion as a form of indirect conflict intervention. This paper aims at examining these dynamics in two districts in Indonesia: Poso and the once neighbouring Donggala district.

Group-based inequalities are defined as horizontal inequalities (HIs). Horizontal inequalities are economic, social, political inequalities between culturally defined groups, and also include the dimension of unequal cultural status of different groups. The concept of horizontal inequality differs from the usual definition of inequality ('vertical inequality') in that the latter type lines up individuals or households vertically and measures inequality over a range of individuals rather than groups. HIs are multidimensional and encompass the group dimension of inequality. Findings from research in other parts of the world on horizontal inequalities has established that group inequalities not only have negative effects on the welfare of members of poorer groups, but can increase the likelihood of violent conflict (Stewart (ed.), 2008).

Indirect conflict interventions, this paper argues, are forms of positive inter-group relations that contribute to social cohesion and potentially prevent problems from escalating to violence. More specifically, it include those societal factors that may create positive social relations between groups and that in turn may mitigate efforts to mobilise around salient group identities in the presence of other conflict drivers, such as institutional change, inequalities, natural resource incentives, and discourses of marginalisation and domination. The indicators of these indirect interventions in the form of social cohesion used in this paper include inter-group interaction through everyday contact and friendships, and the existence of bridging institutions and organisations that incorporate cross-group interests.

Indirect conflict interventions differ from direct interventions. Direct interventions are defined as those efforts to halt inter-group violence as it increases or those that alleviate grievances through changes to policies and practices that can mitigate conflict drivers or facilitate de-escalation. Such interventions can change the incentives of elites and of group members to participate in violence. For example, military and police interventions reduce the need for self-protection and potentially increase the risk of prosecution or even death at the hands of security agencies. State policies of accommodation of different group interests may reduce inequalities or perceived inequalities as well as the accommodating the interests of elites in accessing the state. Forums and hearings through customary and legal institutions may channel demands for justice for transgressions against social norms or previous acts of violence. However, this paper is concerned with social cohesion. Direct interventions, such as macro institutional and policy changes, such as decentralisation in Donggala and Poso, are discussed elsewhere (see for example Brown and Diprose, 2009; Diprose, 2009). However, it is important to emphasise that other papers find that decentralisation and district-splitting helped to mitigate conflict pressures, especially in Poso, as did the direct election of district heads (*ibid.*). Furthermore, forthcoming work elucidates that informal leaders were a more popular and successful form of micro-level intervention in conflict in Donggala

compared with Poso, and that in Poso the state was more likely to be involved in dispute resolution but in the years following the transition from the New Order it had lost legitimacy and effectiveness in preventing violence (Diprose, 2010).

This paper therefore examines the evidence on perceived horizontal inequalities and indicators of social cohesion in Donggala and Poso districts, the only two districts in Central Sulawesi province that have existed since it was created in 1964. These are also two districts where there is a high concentration of different ethno-religious identity groups; however, Poso has had large-scale communal violence and Donggala has not. The discussion on Poso and Donggala explores potential similarities and differences between both places, particularly on indicators of social cohesion as well as a brief discussion of evidence on horizontal inequalities discussed elsewhere (see Diprose, 2008; 2009). The paper first explains why these districts have been compared and demonstrates that different levels of violence broke out in each place during the transition despite similar levels of ethnic and religious fragmentation and polarisation. Second, the discussion overviews some of the findings on horizontal inequalities in both districts and argues that perceived inequalities were most salient in terms of access to the state in both places, but in conflict affected Poso these coincided with demographic religious divides whereas in Donggala ethnicity, the more fragmented dimension of local demographics, was more salient.

Third, the paper examines some of the literature on indicators of social cohesion, such as the presence of negative stereotypes and interaction between groups and how these may improve social relations and potentially mitigate violence. It argues that in more peaceful Donggala, the dominant political groups, geographically and in terms of religion, were most likely to have negative views of others, but these did not coincide with discourses of marginalisation and domination during the transition. However, in Poso there was overlap between salient religious identity divides in terms of political access and the presence of more likely negative attitudes among the marginalised group. Fourth,

the paper examines the evidence from Poso and Donggala on social cohesion and attempts to understand how this may have in part acted as a form of indirect conflict intervention. It contends that membership of mixed organisations explains less the differences between the districts in terms of conflict intervention compared with more everyday forms of interaction and cross-group friendships.

The empirical evidence used in this paper draws on qualitative interviews and on a survey conducted in 2006 in both districts (n=300/district).[3] The within-district stratification (choice of smaller units) took into account the degree of ethnic or religious diversity by choosing diverse and more homogenous sub-districts within each district site. Three different areas (sub-strata) were selected in each district, each of which largely coincided with sub-district borders: one ethno-religiously diverse site in each district (containing two sub-districts in Poso and one sub-district in Donggala[4]), one mainly Christian site in each district (containing

3   The themes covered in the perceptions survey include basic demographic and socio-economic markers; self-identification by ethnicity and religion; perceptions of identity of self and other, importance attached to different aspects of identity, and how the importance of ethnicity and religion has changed over time; information on the nature of each site (which ethnic and religious groups are present and how large they are), organisational and group membership, the ethnic and religious identities that fall within these groups and organisations; interaction between groups; perceptions on access to the state and other services and sectors in society according to group identity, favouritism and discrimination by the state to groups; the nature of disputes and attitudes towards the use of violence and the use of collective action to achieve goals; as well as perceptions of mediators and trust in leaders. Parts of the survey were designed as a part of broader framework at the Centre for Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE) at the University of Oxford (the researcher participated in this process).

4   We were faced with the potential problem that the Donggala sample was significantly more rural than the Poso sample (73 per cent rural compared with 57 per cent for Poso). This was mainly because of the big discrepancy in the urban—rural split in the religiously diverse strata. The diverse stratum in Poso district is 67 per cent urban while the diverse stratum in Donggala is only 23 per cent urban. A preliminary analysis of the data revealed that urban—rural status significantly affected some of the key variables that the survey sought to investigate and in particular perceptions of own identity and attitudes toward violence. Thus, the results were re-weighted: the equivalent of 30 respondents from rural diverse strata in Donggala, where there was slight oversampling, were 'reallocated' to the homogenous stratum through reweighting. Moreover, because we oversampled in this sub-district, this adjustment will bring the sample size closer to what it would have been had we sampled with probability proportional to population size (PPS). Consequently, the undersampling in the other strata is rebalanced and more in line which its district population share. A similar process was used for the equivalent of 20 respondents in the diverse stratum in Poso, which

one sub-district in each district), and one mainly Muslim site in each district (containing one sub-district in Poso and two in Donggala). It was important use the heterogeneity—homogeneity stratification to ensure that perceptions captured in the survey represented a variety of sub-district contexts. The survey used random village, household and individual selection within these sub-districts. The numbers of men and women interviewed in each site were equal.[5] Sixty villages and urban neighbourhoods were randomly selected (30 in each district). Depending on population size, three hamlets were randomly selected in each village to implement the surveys, and 10 households in each village (where regions were more densely populated, 20 interviews were conducted).[6]

Demographics and Violence in Poso and Donggala

Poso had widespread communal violence beginning in December 1998 and officially ending in December 2001, although violence continued

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again was slightly over sampled.

5   After randomly selecting villages and hamlets, random walk methods were used to select households. The target interviewee in each alternate household was to be of a different gender, and as such, gender was assigned to the household before approaching the household. Individuals were then selected randomly from the people of only the gender assigned to the household. Living in the household was defined as eating regularly at the same table.

6   The survey in Poso district was repeated in 2009 (N=583) as a part of a related research project on the relationship between inequalities and development programmes. The bulk of the questions from the 2006 survey were repeated in one of the modules in the 2009 survey. The sample for the 2009 survey was divided into three types: randomly selected individuals from randomly selected households following the same sampling procedures outlined above, as well as two other targeted samples where respondents had knowledge of particular poverty alleviation development programmes. The latter sample represents the views of poorer, more disadvantaged citizens whom these programmes were aimed at. The 2009 survey was conducted in the same sub-districts as in 2006 but included two further sub-districts. Some of the results of the 2009 survey are discussed in this paper to examine if people's perceptions have changed over time in 2009. Where such analysis is undertaken of the 2009 results, only the responses of those randomly selected respondents from the same sub-districts as 2006 are included. The responses are weighted to reflect the same proportion of demographics as the 2006 sample (that is, a similar number of responses from each sub-district strata, and an equal number of responses from Muslims and Christians and men and women). On average, the number of responses for the questions from this sample is 120. In certain instances, these results are also compared with a random sample of one third of responses from the 2009 selected sample to see if such views vary among poorer groups and in effect increasing the sample size by a further 150.

until 2003 and was evident, albeit on a smaller scale, between 2004 and 2006.[7] In fact, a systematic review of three newspaper sources (one provincial, two district) conducted for this study found that between December 1998 and 2002, Poso district experienced a minimum of 363 conflict related deaths and 384 conflict related injuries (this includes conflicts involving individuals and groups). This is a minimum given that the present research used the most conservative numbers reported in newspapers when there were conflicting data.[8] By December 2003, this number had extended to at least 429 deaths and 504 injuries in Poso. Many of the deaths and injuries between 2002 and 2003 resulted from what was described in newspapers and local discourse as 'mysterious' shootings, bombs and hackings, which were attributed to the arrival of security forces and a change in the nature of open warfare.[9]

In one sub-district most proximate to the violence, Poso Pesisir, 6401 houses and public buildings were damaged (BPS Sulawesi Tengah, 2004). Between 1998 and 2002, the conflict resulted in 143,354 people being forced to relocate (IDP) to safer areas (Satkorlak Central Sulawesi, as clarified on 1 Dec 2002 and 17 Feb 2003 by OCHA). From a population of 275,974 in 2003 (BPS Poso, 2004), this is a significant

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7   See Brown and Diprose (2007; 2009) for an overview of the eight phases of the conflict.

8   Damanik (2003) lists Muslim and Christian sources on the total number of deaths between April 2000 and December 2001. Christian sources have counted 526, and Muslim sources have calculated roughly 1000. This indicates that newspaper sources are potentially still falling below actuals, given that these figures were both higher than those constructed through the database.

9   The above information is illuminating given that it relies on district and provincial sources of newspapers. Central Sulawesi was one of many provinces also reviewed in the UNSFIR study. Varshney et al. (2004) recorded only 669 deaths for an entire 12-year period ending in 2002 for all districts in the province. Furthermore, between December 1998 and December 2001, the UNSFIR study captured only 45 conflicts involving collective violence for the entire province (only six of which lasted longer than two days, seven lasted two days, and the remainder use a similar events coding system to this study). Nine of these conflicts took place in Donggala, and 20 in Poso. Two of the conflicts accounted for 465 and 116 deaths respectively, and both took place in Poso. However, these latter two figures were based also on cross-references with in-depth interviews and institutional reports rather than newspapers *per se*, raising some questions on the validity of the UNSFIR dataset. In the three-year period reviewed for the present research, using district sources and careful mappings, district figures for deaths are greater than the numbers from the UNSFIR study. A part of this can be attributed to the inclusion of conflict events that involved individuals, which were not included in the UNSFIR data.

number of displaced people. Once smaller incidents of violence escalated into widespread conflict, this mainly involved Gorantaloese, Bugis, and Javanese Muslims (many who had been in the region for decades) and indigenous Pamona Christians (and smaller numbers of other Christians), although the Napu (Perekehua) Christians of the Poso highlands did not mobilise and engage in the violence. Thus, although the conflict pitted Christians against Muslims, a variety of studies have demonstrated the dynamics of the tensions and patterns of violence are more complex, reflecting dynamic political agendas that were not exclusively defined by religious cleavages (Aragon, 2001; Brown and Diprose, 2007; Diprose, 2007; ICG, 2004; Cote, 2005; HRW, 2002; Varshney et al., 2004; Lasahido 2003). That is, people mobilised around religion, the largest demographic divide, but with a variety of different motivations.

During the same period (1998 to 2002), Donggala had only four conflict related deaths and 48 injuries according to the newspaper dataset.[10] Compared with Poso, of all conflict incidents reported in newspapers, 71 per cent of those in Poso related to inter-group clashes compared with only 55 per cent in Donggala (p<.05), indicating that in Donggala conflicts were less likely to take on an inter-group dimension. Donggala has had frequent disputes but, despite the presence of migration pressures, competition for resources and elite civil service positions, as well as large ethno-religious groups, none has triggered anything like the widespread violence in Poso.

Poso and Donggala are both ethnically mixed and both have large populations of Muslims and Christians spread across different ethnic groups. A number of cross-national and some sub-national comparisons indicate there is mixed evidence on how group size relates to the propensity for conflict (see Fearon and Laitin, 2003; Collier et al., 1999; Elbadawi and Sambanis, 2002; Reynal-Querol 2002; Posner 2004; and Goldstone et al., 2004). Posner (2004), in particular, argues that

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10 While there is obviously some predisposition for newspapers to report violence for its newsworthiness, one would expect that not only would this exist in both districts, but that using three sources of newspapers would have somewhat ameliorated any inter-district reporting bias.

group size matters most when it can be mobilised for political gain, that is, identities are salient politically. Therefore, before examining this premise, it is important to establish that Poso and Donggala can indeed be compared in terms of group size and later whether indicators of inequalities and social cohesion in each district can explain the differences in terms of violence in each district.

Many ethnic groups live in each district, and both have four or five larger and a number of smaller ethnic groups. In terms of religious polarisation and fragmentation, it is evident from the following table that religious fragmentation and polarisation was similar in both places at the onset of the national transition. Although the religious polarisation score in Poso (the number of Muslims and (mainly Protestant) Christians was almost equal at the onset of the transition in 1998 (BPS, 1999), it is still higher than in Donggala (which at the time was approximately one third Christian and two thirds Muslim). However, the score for Donggala is still relatively high (and is similar to those scores described as 'high', such as the polarisation score for the Sudan (in Collier and Sambanis (eds), 2005). Given some of the links, which authors, such as Reynal-Queral (2002) make between polarisation and civil war (and Donggala, like Poso, experienced the destabilising effects of the national transition) one would still expect more violent conflict in Donggala given this level of polarisation, however, the above evidences suggests this was not the case. Furthermore, after the conflict and several phases of district splitting through decentralisation, the level of polarisation in Poso was reduced to that indicated. However, the population share shifted in favour of Christians.

Table 1

Religious Polarisation and Fragmentation Indexes, Poso and Donggala, 1998 and 2005

	1998		2005	
	Fragmentation index of religious diversity at the district level (RLF)	Religious polarisation index at the district level (RRQ)	Fragmentation index of religious diversity at the district level (RLF)	Religious polarisation index at the district level (RRQ)
Poso	0.5	0.92	0.58	0.88
Donggala	0.42	0.72	0.39	0.74

Aside from similar ethnic fragmentation, and similar levels, more or less, of religious polarisation, the similarities between Poso and Donggala are many. The main sources of domestic income in Donggala, similar to Poso, are farming and employment in the forestry and plantation sector, fishing in the coastal regions of the district, and trade and cottage industries in the more populated urban areas (BPS Donggala, 2006; BPS Poso, 2006; BPS Jakarta, 2001 – 2000 Census). Both districts have natural resources ranging from forestry to mining but the natural resource base is not as extensive as in other areas of Indonesia, such as Papua and Aceh, which have both experienced separatist tensions. Furthermore, Poso and Donggala have both had the carving out of districts in recent years with decentralisation, and the effects of direct elections of local government heads. They both suffered from the same effects of the financial, monetary and fiscal crises in Indonesia at the end of the 1990s. Both are equally isolated and several hours flying time from Jakarta and national politics. Both, in the first elections held during the transition, voted in the incumbent Golkar (Functional Groups) party (2000 Census), which remained relatively popular in Eastern Indonesia, even though nationally, the PDI-P (Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle) was far more popular. Yet, only one area experienced wide-

spread violence in the initial years of the transition. The next sections explore some of the reasons for this in terms of horizontal inequalities, and in terms of social cohesion.

Perceived Inequalities between Groups

Stewart (ed., 2008) finds much empirical evidence that suggests the likelihood of conflict increases with inequalities, particularly the political exclusion of some groups, and that perceptions of inequalities are a motivating factor in mobilising for violence. The survey used for this study (as a part of the broader set of data associated with the Stewart (ed., 2008) asked people whether they thought their ethnic or religious identities affected their access to the state and private sector means of improving standards of living (these are discussed at length in Diprose, 2009). Ethnicity and religion were perceived to determine access to public and private wealth and social advancement in both districts. However, there was some variation, with significantly more people perceiving ethnicity affecting their chances of access to some sectors in Donggala, whereas religious difference was more pronounced as a driver of access to the state in Poso. The largest differences were found between Poso and Donggala on the dimension of religious identity and access to the state, especially in terms of access to public sector jobs (40 per cent in Poso and 28 per cent in Donggala, p<.01), contracts (25 per cent and 10 per cent respectively, p<.01) and private sector jobs (20 per cent and 8 per cent respectively, p<.01). Therefore, in terms of access to the state, religious identity was particularly salient in Poso.

To investigate the notion of differences in access to the state being linked to sensitive identities and potentially to conflict, the survey asked if particular groups were closer to (or favoured by) the government, and if particular groups were discriminated against by the government (discussed further in Diprose, 2009). It is here that the grievances around ethnic and religious differences were marked between the two districts. One third of respondents in Poso thought that particular groups were closer to the government compared with one quarter in Donggala (p<.01). However,

similar to the results above, ethnic differences were significantly more likely to be a perceived difference in Donggala (p<.05), whereas it was religious group differences that were cited in Poso (p<.05). Political and class cleavages featured in both regions with little significant difference, indicating that this is potentially a more pervasive problem across Indonesia, rather than something that explains how grievances emerge in some places and not in others and how sensitive identities are mobilised. Furthermore, approximately one quarter of respondents thought that some groups were discriminated against by government. Although there was no significant differences between districts in this view overall, there was a significant difference in that it was more likely to be linked to religious group identity in Poso (p<.05).

Other questions asked if particular groups dominated different sectors of social life in both districts. The extent of views was similar in both districts, but ethnic cleavages were most salient in Donggala and religious cleavages in Poso (see Diprose, 2009). The results indicate that although ethnicity and religion matter in Poso in terms of grievances about access to the state, with religious identity being more likely to be linked not only to favouritism but also to discrimination against particular groups. Discrimination becomes important here because it implies there is active marginalisation of groups on the part of agents of the state. Many qualitative respondents in Poso complained this was the case, however, there was a discourse of domination in Donggala mainly around ethnic identity but this was less one of active discrimination. Therefore, one can surmise that when political patronage enters the arena in terms of which groups can dominate parts of the administration and this results in perceived discrimination against particular groups and if this coincides with demographic divides, a more fiery mix of dangerous politics created, as has more been the case in Poso and less in Donggala. Given that particular groups are perceived to have dominated the state, its resources, and were implicated in corrupt practices before the onset of the violence, it is not surprising that conflict escalated in the district (see Diprose, 2010). Political affiliation and class differences seem to be present across the board as affecting access to public resources, and thus are unlikely to explain regional variation in the likelihood of

conflict arising from such grievances.

All of this suggests that how group size relates to the likelihood of violence is somewhat related to political opportunities and past experience of marginalisation and inequality, rather than to the existence of demographic ethnic and religious group divides *per se*. As yet however, a further dimension of identity saliency has not been considered, that is, how societal norms relating to the interaction between groups on an everyday level as well as through membership of organisations builds social cohesion in order to circumvent salient group divides from escalating into violent conflicts. If there is weak inter-group interaction in a society among groups of a particular identity, this leads one to question whether such interaction may signal where group divides exist and in turn, which identities are viable as a form of political capital for mobilisation and political gain at critical historical junctures. Hence, next the literature on how interaction between groups may affect identity saliency and social cohesion is examined.

Theories of Social Interaction and Cohesion

Theories of social cohesion have a long history in the social sciences. In his discussion of group accommodation in political systems, for example, Lijphart (1977:10–11) draws on the work of group theorists from the middle of the twentieth century (cf Bentley, 1955; Truman, 1951; and Lipset, 1960) argues that:

> When individuals belong to a number of different organised and unorganised groups with diverse interests and outlooks, their attitudes will tend to be moderate as a result of these psychological cross pressures. Moreover, leaders of organisations with heterogeneous memberships will be subject to the political cross pressures of this situation and assume moderate, middle of the road positions. Such moderation is essential to political stability. Conversely, when a society is riven with sharp cleavages and when memberships and loyalties do not overlap but are concentrated exclusively within each separate segment of society, the cross-pressures that are vital to political moderation and stability will be absent. As Truman states, if a

complex society manages to avoid 'revolution, degeneration, and decay [and] maintains stability…it may do so in large measure because of the fact of multiple memberships'.

From the perspective of group theorists, interaction through cross-organisational membership helps to moderate views towards 'others' and improve social relations. Blau (1977:2), in line with Lijphart, argues that identity saliency is linked to how people interact with others in their society. In quantifying groups, Blau (1977) argues that boundaries of groups can be assumed to be more salient when most of the interactions are with members of the same group. Blau (*ibid.*) defines such intra-group interactions as micro-sociological. He also argues that group boundaries can be considered more porous or less salient if most interactions are with members of other groups, which he defines as societal interaction. Blau argues that strong micro-sociological interactions contribute to group integration but not to societal integration. Similarly, Tilly (2005:6) sees interpersonal transactions as the basic components of social processes, which in turn compound into identities, create and transform social boundaries, and accumulate into durable social ties (or a lack thereof). He, too, examines cross-boundary and within boundary relations between collectivities, and argues that changes in one will affect all others.

More recent theories posited by Varshney (2002) follow a similar line of argument. He proposes that group membership of formal civic associational structures and, to a lesser extent, informal networks, help explain the likelihood of violence between ethnic groups. Where the membership of such organisations and networks are socially diverse, citizens have frequent, sustained and personal interactions with those who are demographically 'different' from themselves, thereby making it harder for opportunist elites to ignite or fan conflicts along communal lines. According to Varshney (2002), through their overlapping membership in social, political, and business associations, citizens find their interests and aspirations conjoined and are less likely to engage in violence. Interaction, he argues may be regular, formalised

and organised (formal associational interactions), although other forms are more ad hoc and spontaneous (informal social interactions) as people go about their everyday activities. However, it is important to emphasise that Brass (2003) argues that in India, where Brass and Varshney (2002) based their research, the main reason for the difference in the likelihood of violence in some of India's mixed cities was the role of elites in mobilising for violence, as opposed to the underlying civic structures. Bearing this finding in mind, it may not be inevitable that cross-institutional membership can explain an absence of violence. The findings on organisational membership are examined in the next section.

However, social psychologists contend that inter-group contact does matter for reducing the potentially dangerous negative stereotypes that may exist towards out-group members. However, they argue that it is the nature of contact between the members of groups that may change perceptions and potentially lead to a change in behaviour (for a theoretical overview see Tausch et al., 2005) rather than contact per se. Theorists of inter-group contact from social psychology examine the conditions under which contact between members of different groups changes cognition, attitudes, and ultimately behaviour of individuals, thereby improving social relations. This is in contrast to group theorists from political science and sociology who tend to examine these relations at the societal level.

Allport (1954), famous for his theories of social prejudice, which have influenced many more contemporary studies of inter-group interaction in social psychology, argues that the existence of negative stereotypes of groups can shape perceptions of others and own-group members and negatively affect interaction between groups. Moreover, Quattrone and Jones (1980) contend that when negative and socially unacceptable traits of other groups are ascribed to groups through stereotypes, this may lead to pre-emptive violent action. Allport (ibid.) argues that bringing together members of opposing groups has the potential to correct negative stereotypes and improve intergroup relations. Other

researchers find evidence that, in some instances, increased contact with individuals from other groups leads to greater variation in their perceptions of 'others', which in turn disconfirms the stereotypes applied to these groups and therefore improves social relations (Islam and Hewstone, 1993; Voci and Hewstone, 2003).

Allport (1954) contends that the kinds of conditions for best effects of interaction that will lead to cooperation rather than animosity include equal status between people involved in the interaction, cooperation towards a common goal, and institutional support for positive inter-group interactions. Other researchers investigating Allport's theories have found that these suppositions generally hold true (see Tausch et al., 2005, for an overview) however, there are some variations in the findings, particularly in situations of conflict. Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) for example, find that inter-group contact yields negative effects on attitudes in situations of high anxiety, threat, and if stereotypes are confirmed. This is relevant for this study in that such findings are likely to be pertinent to situations of high violence, where contact with other groups may be at the risk of personal safety. However, let us first examine in more detail work of social psychologists on Allport's theory and building social cohesion.

First, on working towards a common goal, according to Tausch et al (2005; cf Sherif 1966), in Sheriff's (1966) experiment, contact between groups that involved competition only increased conflict, but when they worked interdependently towards a common goal relations improved.[11] Second, social psychologists argue that these kinds of inter-group interactions should involve equal status between groups.[12] Tausch et al.

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11 This elucidates that when conflict interventions are introduced by the state or civil society organisations and groups, which create opportunities for interaction between groups, these should involve inter-group activities that focus on working together to achieve or contribute towards a common goal. This is opposed to simply creating situations where people from different groups meet without some overarching objective they are working towards.

12 All of the studies on equal status cited by Tausch et al. (*ibid*.) find varied effects of status. The results depended on whether people were of equal status coming into contact situations; and, that efforts to equalise status may threaten the distinctiveness of each groups' identities and exacerbate tensions. Therefore, in situations of unequal status, a careful balance between maintaining group distinctiveness but equalising status is important if interaction between these groups is to improve social relations.

(2005) stress the importance of perceptions, and that whether participants in interactions are members of high or low status groups must be taken into account for contact to reduce animosity. Tausch et al. (ibid.) also highlight that the demographics of the people in contact will intervene in the conditions for success of inter-group interaction outlined above. They argue that positive change in group member attitudes and behaviour is more likely to occur with interactions involving better educated, higher social class and higher status members of groups among others.[13] Finally, if people of different groups in contact are close enough to the centre of power, they will be able to influence political decision making and public opinion in conflict situations (Tausch et al., 2005 cf: Rouhana and Kelman, 1994).[14] The society in which people live, other researchers have found, can also affect the nature of contact. This includes historical relations between groups, current events, residential desegregation, as well as the role of institutional leadership, political discourse, and media framing (in Tausch et al., 2005).

Allport's theory supposes that friendships are the most likely form of inter-group contact that involve common goals and equal status contact over a variety of settings and thereby improve inter-group relations. Furthermore, Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) found that friendships were more a stronger predictor of reduced prejudice rather than inter-group contact per se. Supporting this finding and the theories of Allport (ibid.), Voci and Hewstone (2003) found that cross-group friendships were associated with improving attitudes towards others more generally. Williams and Jesse (2001) find that perceptions of ill intentions and distrust between groups render cooperation and conflict resolution between groups difficult, but as between group contact increases, especially with friends, there is greater trust between groups (Williams and Jesse, 2001). Therefore, it can be understood from the literature

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13 This emphasises the importance of either targeted interventions, which are to increase the interaction between elites, or including elites in broader efforts to increase contact between groups that include a more mixed membership.

14 This indicates the importance of conflict intervention efforts that endeavour to improve interaction between the opinion makers, leaders, and elites from different groups in order that they try to influence public opinion, mitigate the effects of stereotypes and thereby improve social relations between groups.

that inter-group friendships as a form of inter-group contact and interaction are important in improving inter-group relations. This is an interesting supposition, given that there are common stories of familial and friendship ties being insufficient to prevent violence in communal conflict situations. For instance, in Rwanda during the genocide in 1994, Mamdani (2001) details how group members were encouraged and sometimes forced by other group members to kill friends, neighbours, and even marital partners when they were of different Hutu or Tutsi identities. The evidence on interaction generally and in relation to cross-group friendships in Poso and Donggala is examined further in the next section.

This elucidates the importance of the third aspect of Allport's theory: institutional support for inter-group interaction and creating positive stereotypes of others. Although cross-group friendships may create equal status and a situation where people work towards a common goal, these friendships may lack institutional support for positive cross-group relations that Allport (1954) and the political scientists and sociologists mentioned above deem important for social cohesion. In some senses, the institutions of the state can be seen as a platform where equal status for groups and cross-group relations should be guaranteed, or at least find some support because the state is meant to be accessible to all citizens. If one group is perceived to dominate or to be marginalised from the state this may signal power imbalances between groups in the larger society and may stimulate negative perceptions towards others.

The qualitative evidence collected in this study and the work of other authors on the Poso conflict (cited above) found that in Poso there was overwhelming evidence of a breakdown in power-sharing between the representatives of Christian and Muslim communities in relation to the state at the onset of the conflict. The situation was characterised by a deeply divided political elite, civil service members competing for positions and access to the spoils of the state and diverting these to the interests of their own groups, as well as members of the civil service making negative statements in the press and being involved in the mobilisation of groups (Brown and Diprose, 2007; 2009; Diprose,

2010). This may, to some extent, have signalled to the broader society that the state as a platform for guaranteeing equal status for citizens was compromised, influencing attitudes to others for the worse. Further supporting this argument is the survey evidence, presented above, on perceived unequal access to the state that is based on religious and ethnic identity in conflict-affected Poso, which was less the case in more peaceful Donggala. The findings from previous sections therefore indicate that institutional support and equal status for groups in relation to the state may have been less prevalent in Poso compared with Donggala and undermined other forms of socially cohesive friendships and other organisational support for positive inter-group relations.

Given the findings from social psychology on contact outlined above in terms of the importance of the nature of interactions rather than the existence of interactions per se, and the arguments made that the institutions of the state did not signal support for positive cross group-relations in Poso, it is not clear then whether increased contact between groups fuels or prevents violence. As such, the relationship between civic ties and violent conflict suggests a more complicated story than the work of political scientists, such as Varshney (2002), imply when it comes to interaction through bridging organisations and institutions. Therefore, the next section will examine, first, the evidence on whether there are negative stereotypes in each district in ethnic and religious terms. Second, it will examine how these might be mitigated through non-state organisational and group membership that cut across religious and ethnic identities in line with the theories of political scientists on how this contributes to social cohesion and violence prevention.

Third, it will examine other forms of interaction, including the nature and frequency of interaction between groups, informally through 'accidental' interactions on the street or in the market and deliberately through visits to friends, to examine some of the aspects of Allport's theory and the aspects of identity saliency identified by Blau (1977) and Tilly (2001). It will also examine evidence on cross-group friendships, which social psychologists deem important for positive inter-group relations because they create a setting where there is equal status and co-operation in

terms of working towards a common goal. At the outset, it is important to note that interaction be not only based on people's attitudes towards other groups but also on the opportunities for interaction.

1.1 Indirect Interventions: Evidence of Negative Perceptions and Stereotypes

Stereotypes: Views of Other Groups in General

The evidence presented in the following section suggests that negative attitudes towards different groups exist in Poso and in Donggala, but in Poso these had in most cases a religious dimension and in Donggala ethnicity was more salient in line with the findings on perceived inequalities. The survey attempted to ask directly about the stereotypes given to groups in each region by asking people about their views of various groups in each region using four criteria: hardworking or lazy; peaceful or violent; honest or dishonest; and the extent to which they care about the region in which they live. Respondents were asked to use a scale from 1 to 7 to express their views of other groups, with a score of 1 one being most positive, 4 being neutral, and 7 being most negative. To some extent, the style of the questioning, which was to ask respondents directly about their own attitudes towards specified groups, resulted in people being unlikely to be forthcoming about their negative attitudes, particularly when it came to views of other religious groups.

One way to capture potentially negative views of other groups, which might not have been fully drawn out by the answering scale because of the direct nature of the questions, is to compare the score that each individual assigns to her own group with the score assigned to the other group. Table 1 below shows the score difference (by district and religion) between own group score and other group score on all questions used to capture attitudes. For example, 35 per cent of Poso Christians assign a higher score (for example, less peaceful attitudes) to Muslims than to member of their own group. Only 4 per cent of Poso Christians assign scores that indicate they see Christians as less peaceful than Muslims. The reverse is not true: according to the overwhelming majority (94

per cent) of Poso Muslims, Christians are no less peaceful or no more violent than Muslims are.

Table 1

Own Group－Other Group Score Differences, by Religion

	Hard work		Violence		Honesty		Care for region	
	Donggala	Poso	Donggala	Poso	Donggala	Poso	Donggala	Poso
Muslims								
S(M)<S(C)	14.4	13.5	17.3	4.4	11.8	6.4	21.2	2.6
S(M)=S(C)	80.5	83.3	81.5	93.7	84.2	92.7	77.0	96.0
S(M)>S(C)	5.0	3.2	1.1	1.8	3.9	0.8	1.8	1.4
Christians								
S(C)<S(M)	4.0	10.8	6.1	35.1	9.2	23.5	8.0	38.2
S(C)=S(M)	88.0	67.5	92.3	60.8	89.2	70.3	91.4	58.1
S(C)>S(M)	8.0	21.6	1.5	4.1	1.5	6.2	0.6	3.7

S(M) and S(C) refer to indigenous Muslims and indigenous Christians.

The table also shows that negative stereotypes refer almost exclusively to other religious groups (there is almost no one who has negative views about their own faith group). The results also highlight that the distinction between indigenous and non-indigenous religious groups has little effect on the views of respondents.[15] However, generally in Poso, more Christians reported negative views of Muslims than Muslims did of Christians, in terms of how violent a group is. That is not forgetting that the survey was at a time when violence was still evident in the region with much of it directed at Christians by unknown assailants,

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15 The only exception is the way Christians in Poso and Donggala see other Christians. Whereas in Donggala views of Christians in general are more positive or less negative than local Christians, in Poso we observe the opposite; local Christians considered more peaceful or less violent than Christians in general.

such as the market bomb in a Christian area in 2005 that resulted in 23 Christian deaths and some 100 injuries. Following the special police operations by the central government in January 2008 to oust Muslim hard-line groups, there were a number of arrests of Muslim hardliners responsible for some of the mysterious murders, shootings, and bombs (McCrae, 2008). On the other hand, Poso Muslims are more likely to have positive views of their own and other groups compared not only with Poso Christians' views but also to how Donggala Muslims view Donggala Christians. This is interesting, because, if the timing of the implementation of the survey during the initial period of reduction of the conflict matters in terms of shaping peoples views, one would expect there to be negative stereotypes for Muslims and for Christians, because both sides suffered significant casualties in the conflict. This may instead relate to broader and persistent negative views of particular groups over time.

In more peaceful Donggala, very few Christians, the smaller group in the region perceived a difference between themselves and Muslims across all the four dimensions used to measure stereotypes. However, when we compare this with the difference between the scores Muslims assigned to their own group compared with the score they gave Christians, differences emerge. Although most Donggala Muslims perceive little difference between their own group and Donggala Christians (around 80 per cent on each indicator), there are still significantly more Donggala Muslims who assign more positive scores to their own group compared with Christians when measured against the scores that Donggala Christians assign to themselves and others. For example, 17 per cent of Muslims in the Donggala sample were likely to assign higher (more negative) scores to Christians on the dimension of the group being violent when compared with how they scaled their own group. Yet, only 6 per cent of Christians assigned Muslims with higher scores than they assigned themselves. The pattern is similar on the dimensions of hard work (respectively, 14 per cent and 4 per cent, p<.05) and the extent to which a group cares for the region (respectively, 21 per cent and 8 per cent, p<.05); that is, more Donggala Muslims perceived Christians more negatively than Donggala Christians perceive Donggala Muslims.

This indicates that where there are negative attitudes towards groups in Donggala they are not evenly spread between Muslims and Christians. In contrast in Poso, on the dimensions of violence, honesty, and the extent to which a group cares for the region, Christians perceived Muslims more negatively compared with themselves.[16]

Stereotypes: Views towards Inter-ethnic Marriage

Although the direct questions on the application of stereotypes gives some indication of inter-group relations and attitudes, there are other questions in the survey that indirectly indicate the views that people have towards other groups. The survey endeavoured to ascertain the attitudes held towards other groups in terms of cross-group marriage and asked respondents whether they would object if their daughter or sister married someone from a different ethnic or religious background. It is important to keep in mind that the restrictive legal environment for inter-religious marriage in Indonesia might affect the extent of people's views, but less so on the differences between districts. The results on objections to interfaith marriage (not presented here) were in line with the broader findings and sub-district and group variations on stereotypes mentioned above in Donggala. However, in Poso significantly more Muslims disagreed with inter-faith marriages compared with Christians in Poso, indicating that on this dimension that more Muslims may have negative attitudes towards others.

There was little objection to one's daughter or sister marrying someone from a different ethnic group in both districts (only 6 per cent of the respondents in both districts objected to inter-ethnic marriages). The survey also asked respondents whether their spouse or husband is from the same ethnic or religious group. Despite the similar levels of ethnic-diversity at the village level, and the lack of objection to inter-ethnic

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16 The exception in 2006 was on the dimension of hard work where 22 per cent of Poso Christians assigned more negative scores to their own group than they did to Poso Muslims, compared with how Poso Muslims perceived Poso Christians, and compared with how Donggala Christians perceived Donggala Muslims. This is probably because that the migrant trader groups, often associated with economic progress and hard work, are mainly Muslim groups in Poso.

marriages in both places, inter-ethnic marriages were more frequent in Poso (35 per cent) compared with Donggala (26 per cent). This is somewhat related to the nature of the heterogeneity of the sub-districts in which people live in line with Tausch et al. (2005) who argue that the environment in which people live may relate to how interaction builds social cohesion. The most religiously homogeneous sub-district in the survey sample in Donggala, but one where there were similar levels of ethnic heterogeneity to other sub-districts, had the lowest number of ethnically-mixed couples (only 19 per cent in 2006) when compared with the other sub-districts in Donggala (where nearly one third of the people in both sets of sub-district strata were in cross-ethnic marriages in 2006). It is in this area that the most politically dominant ethnic groups, the Muslim Kaili and Muslim Bugis groups live, and this sub-district is also where all the district government offices are.

The highest percentage of inter-ethnic marriage was found in Poso, in the most urban sub-district (40 per cent) when compared with other rural sub-districts in Poso itself (28 per cent and 32 per cent). The results in each sub-district in Poso were still higher than similar sub-districts in Donggala. In both districts, inter-ethnic marriage was more likely to exist among the younger generation (18 to 30 years old), but again, rates were significantly higher in Poso (respectively, 41 per cent and 30 per cent, p<.05). A more interesting factor is that inter-ethnic marriage was more frequent in Poso among the oldest generation (27 per cent) compared with Donggala, indicating that inter-ethnic marriage was more common in Poso before the conflict and that inter-ethnic contact between groups through marriage has more likely been a long-standing social norm in Poso. Although it is difficult to tell if this also once crossed religious boundaries because there is no baseline data. In Poso too, the number of people with mixed ethnic parentage was higher compared with Donggala (respectively, 21 per cent and 13 per cent). People involved in mixed ethnic marriages in Poso were more likely to be educated and asset rich, but this finding was not true of Donggala. The empirical evidence overall indicates that it was in conflict-affected Poso, rather than Donggala, that inter-ethnic relations through marriage were perhaps more socially condoned and therefore more likely.

The results above on inter-group marriage indicate that although attitudes were similar in both districts, in reality it was in Poso that this translated into more inter-ethnic marriages, perhaps indicating that ethnicity had less saliency in terms of negative attitudes towards other groups compared with Donggala. When the same question was asked of a random sample of respondents in Poso in 2009 (N=116), 98 per cent of respondents said they would not object to inter-ethnic marriages indicating this view has not changed with time.

The discussion above indicates that there are differences between the districts in terms of the negative attitudes towards different religious and ethnic groups. These were most marked in terms of religion in Poso in terms of stereotypes and attitudes towards inter-faith marriage and, to a lesser extent, in terms of ethnicity, in Donggala, indicated by lower rates of inter-ethnic marriage. These attitudes may be an indicator of identity saliency in each place, especially if we consider the analysis presented on the importance of religion in Poso and ethnicity in Donggala in terms of access to the state. In general, the survey results on stereotypes suggest that negative attitudes existed among Christians towards Muslims in Poso and, in terms of inter-faith marriage, Muslims towards Christians in Poso. However, in Donggala, such negative views only persisted among Muslims of particular ethnicities towards Christians but not the reverse. In one place, the 'dominant' and the 'marginalised' group in terms of access to the state had the most negative views, but in the other, it was the group that dominated the state that had the most negative views.

If we consider these results on negative attitudes together with those on perceived inequalities in terms of Tarrow's 'opportunity structures' hypothesis, where during times of transition he supposes that marginalised groups my vie for greater power and dominant groups will act to protect their position, then these negative attitudes are quite telling. Although it is difficult to tell whether they drive perceptions of marginalisation from the state or are a reflection of these perceptions or are in fact indicative of broader existing perceptions. Poso Christians,

who were more likely to have negative attitudes to Muslims on the dimensions used to measure stereotypes than the reverse, also perceived that they were marginalised from the state (interviews, July–September 2006). In 1998, when the violence first broke out that led to the larger conflict, traditional power-sharing between religious groups in terms of rotating the highly coveted and highly symbolic position of District Head broke down, and for the third time the position went to a Muslim in 1999. Much of the public discourse on politics at the time was about who would get the top job.

In the in-depth interviews for this research, the leaders and elites, NGO (non-government organisation) staff in the region, and even some of the ex-combatants recognised the competition for access to the state, particularly on the part of elites, was a part of the conflict from the beginning. For example, one Muslim ex-combatant stated:

> Around 1998, it's true that the district head was clearly putting members of his broader family and connections into government positions. His wife, for example, is from Tojo Una-Una [then a neighbouring sub-district, now a neighbouring district]…and he put her into the personnel administration section, his brother was in a different department, and so on… in fact, during his reign, there was plenty of corruption, such as Farmer's Credit Union funds and others. There was so much corruption, but none of his family would take responsibility, instead they were deeply involved…so there were clear links to the conflict, as at the time in 1998 and 1999, when the district head said he would not try again for the position, all the elites were no longer talking about parties but instead they were saying 'Choose this person, he's a Muslim, don't choose him, he's a Christian'. Both religion and ethnicity were important, but most important was religion, as several ethnicities were allied under that…

> Muslim ex-combatant, 27 August 2006

The district head announced on 13 December 1998 that he would not seek a third term. In this sense a possibility presented itself that the nature of district politics would change. But at the same time, on Christmas Eve, just a few days before Muslims would celebrate Eid (on

27 December 1998), a Muslim youth was stabbed by a drunken Christian youth.[17] He called out for assistance using the mosque megaphone. This led concerned residents to seek out the perpetrator. When they could not find him, some of the houses where he lived (an area where many Christian political elites lived) were destroyed in retaliation the following afternoon (Mercusuar, 26 December 1998; FKAUB, 1999). This escalated into more violence over several days.

It can be argued that district politics cojoined with this trigger incident and was one of the drivers of conflict escalation. In line with the argument of Tarrow (1998) on opportunity structures, the group that hegemonic elites were attempting to marginalise from politics, the Christians engaged in the conflict, not only to protect their group but also to challenge the political *status quo*. Incensed by the razing of houses in neighbourhoods where Christian elites from the district government lived, as well anti-Christian graffiti posted around the town, and the political jostling taking place, some Christians mobilised in the violence. For example, a Christian civil servant brought truckloads of youths to the city and clashes ensued. It is noteworthy too, that one of the key Christian public officials with knowledge of corruption, was kidnapped by Muslim leaders and that the Christian frontrunner for the district head position was hunted at one point by a group of youths but managed to escape.

Moreover, it can be argued, using the theories of Tarrow (1998) that the politically dominant group occupying the top offices, the Muslims, acted to protect their position. Muslim leaders who had been implicated

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17 There are, of course several versions of this story. Basyar et al. (2004) highlights how different groups interpreted the initial clash. Muslims say a young man asleep in a mosque was attacked by some Christian youths. Meanwhile Christians say that the Christian youth got angry when he sought assistance from the Muslim youth to repair a broken bike. Ecip (2002) describes the event as three Christian youths carrying out an unprovoked attack on the Muslim youth while he was asleep in the mosque. Others recognised that the youth was drunk. (Interviews, 26 July 2006; Basyar et al., 2004). Note also that English sources (Aragon, 2001; and HRW, 2002) describe the Muslim youth as being from Kayamanya. Indonesian sources (Ecip and Waru, 2001; Basyar et al., 2003) describe the Muslim youth as being from Sayo village. The mosque itself was in Sayo, and it is probable that the youth who was stabbed was living in Sayo but came from Kayamanya. Both Kayamanya and Sayo villages are predominantly Muslim.

in large cases of corruption in 1998, including the brother of the district head, allegedly used their networks to organise youth groups to participate in the initial violence in 1998 (Interviews, 2006). Even in the first days of the conflict in 1998, qualitative interviews, newspapers, and other sources described truckloads of Muslims belonging to a large Sulawesi-based Muslim organisation, Al Khairat, and other Muslim groups, such as Majelis Zikir Nurul Khairaat, both of which had links to Muslim political leaders, coming from neighbouring sub-districts and from Palu, the provincial capital (Interviews, September 2006; Jawa Post, 29 December 1998; ICG, 2004; HRW, 2002; Mappangara (ed.), 2001).

In contrast, in Donggala, perceptions of unequal access to the state were more likely to be articulated in terms of ethnic rather than religious identities, despite the larger religious demographic divide. Traditionally too, the qualitative research found that conflicts in the region tend to play along ethnic rather than religious lines (Interviews, 2006). Furthermore, Donggala Muslims, who tend to dominate the state in the district and whose attitudes from the 2006 survey are most likely to be negative compared with other groups, were not challenged for power during the transition, where in 1999 a Muslim was again given the position of district head. However, rotations and informal power-sharing arrangements pertained to ethnicity rather than religion. During the New Order, the district head position was rotated, usually between the different Muslim groups, those being the Bugis Muslims and the coastal Kaili Muslims. These two groups also had the highest levels of objections to inter-faith marriages in the district compared with Christian ethnic groups. In 1999, following complaints from the mainly Christian Kaili Daa from the mountainous regions that their group had never held the top position it was given to a person of Daa ethnicity.[18] But in this instance he was a Muslim. In this sense, symbolically, Muslims were not alienated from

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18 It is important to note, too, that the qualitative research found that most of the tensions in the district were between Kaili Daa in the mountainous regions who are usually Christian, and coastal or lowland Kaili who are usually Muslim, and that traditionally, whenever ethnic warfare, albeit small scale, has broken out in Donggala it is usually between these two groups.

power, but the Daa, the group that had complained of marginalisation were accommodated. The Daa also have, in many but not all cases, traditional ties with other Christian groups from the mountainous areas, such as the Kulawi. This may explain, together with the findings on interaction below, why Donggala Christians, who were less likely to have negative attitudes towards others, did not perceive they were marginalised and did not vie for greater power over the state.

1.2 Social interaction between Groups: Organisational Membership Explaining the Likelihood of Violence?

Let us now examine the evidence on cross-group organisational membership, which political scientists, such as Varshney (2002), argue can act as a conflict prevention mechanism. Such organisations may provide an avenue of cross-group interaction that can mitigate the negative stereotypes outlined above and may further explain the differences between the districts. First, the survey results indicate that Poso has greater organisational and formal group membership compared with Donggala. Only 55 per cent of people in Donggala said they belonged to organisations or organised groups compared with 82 per cent in Poso (statistically significant at p<.001). This could indicate two things; that in Poso, higher levels of organisational and group membership meant that there were more avenues through which people could organise and be organised to engage in the conflict and this was less so in Donggala; or that the nature of the membership of these organisations is important (whether they cut across or reinforce salient identities).[19] If we find that higher organisational membership in Poso is confined to particular ethnic or religious groups compared with Donggala, then this would provide evidence supporting the theories of Varshney (2002) who argues that building civic ties through mixed-organisational membership puts pressure on leaders to have moderate,

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19 In 2009, 60 per cent of the random sample said that they belonged to organisations (n=118) in Poso, a level similar to that of Donggala three years prior. This may indicate that some of the organisational membership was in fact related to the conflict. There were 72 per cent of the random selection of respondents from the targeted sample representing poorer members of the community receiving development programmes.

more accommodating, policies towards other groups, thereby reducing the likelihood of violence.

However, when we further examine the evidence on group membership there are significant differences between both districts and it is in Poso that people are more likely to belong to non-religious organisations and those that cross-cut identities. The survey asked respondents the three most important organisations or organised groups (henceforth referred to as organisations) to which they belong. The results are presented in Figure 1 below and are based on the multiple responses by survey respondents. In both places, religious organisations were by far the most popular form of organisational membership but significantly more so in Donggala (respectively, 82 per cent and 67 per cent, p<.05).[20] This perhaps indicates that high religious organisational membership, even when people deem religion as salient when they think of themselves, in and of itself does not explain the likelihood of conflict, because the research found there was much less violence in Donggala despite the large demographic divide. Furthermore, as other analysts have argued, religious identity had little salience politically in Donggala and potentially such organisations have not been used as a means for mobilisation in the region.

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20 In 2009, although the number of people belonging to organisations overall has decreased somewhat compared with 2006, the nature of these organisations has changed little, where 82 per cent of people in the random sample in Poso (n=71) said that they belonged to religious organisations as did 75 per cent (n=114) of the random selection of the targeted sample of people receiving development programmes. Again, this was by far the most popular form of organisation, followed by ethnic organisations and gender-based groups. This indicates that the number of organisations involving religion has increased somewhat in recent years.

Figure 1

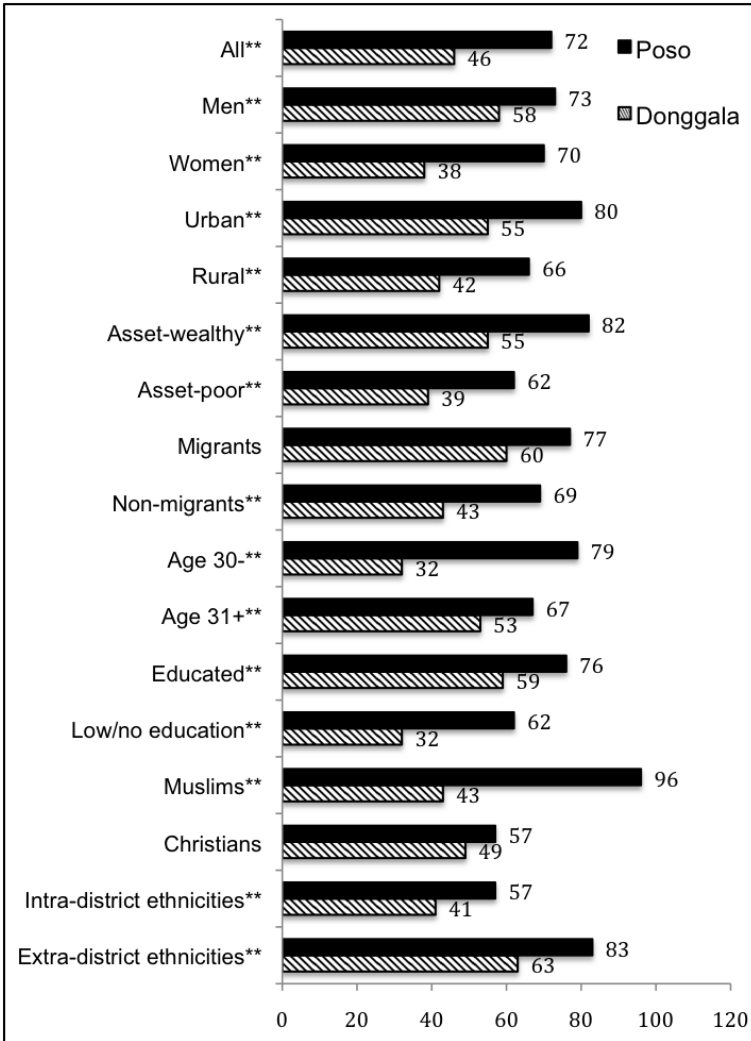**Three Most Important Organisations in Donggala (n=166, respondents) and Poso (n=247, respondents), 2006.**
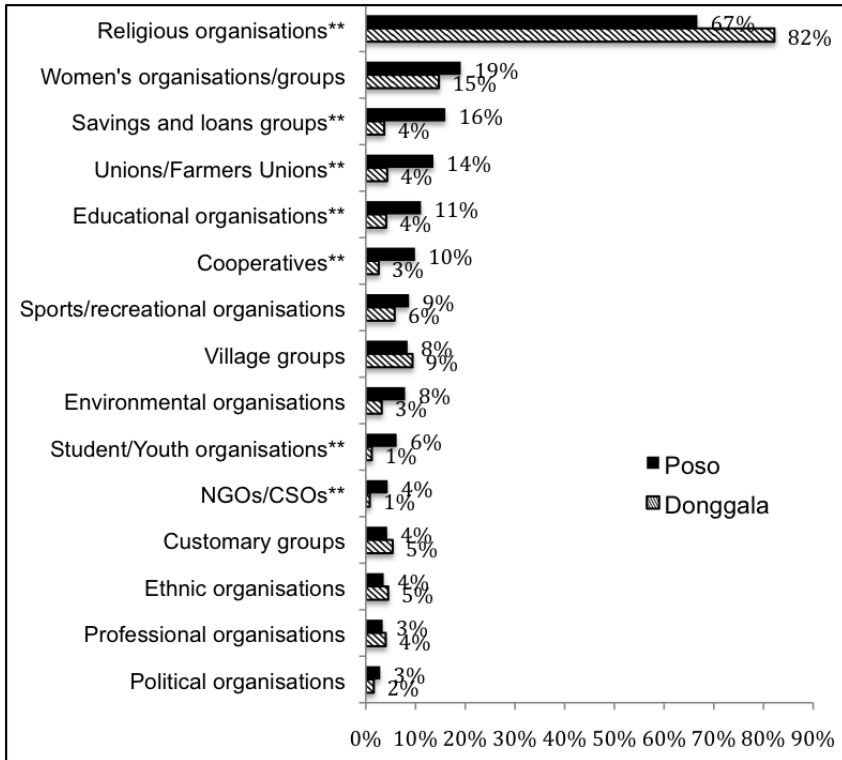
**Denotes significant differences, p<.05.

Given that we find stronger organisational membership in more varied organisations in Poso compared with Donggala, there are two conclusions that could be drawn. First, that group membership for in-group protection increased with the conflict, and therefore there were more structures through which mobilisation could take place in Poso. Or, that it is the nature of these organisations and their ethnic and religious make-up that is important. In order to examine these possibilities, it is important to examine the evidence on whether these organisations cross cut religious and ethnic identities in order to build social cohesion.

In the survey of perceptions, respondents were asked about the ethnic and religious makeup of the organisations to which they belong. Figure 2 presents the evidence from Poso and Donggala on the ethnic make-up of organisational and group membership. People in Poso were significantly more likely to belong to mixed ethnic organisations compared with Donggala (respectively, 72 per cent and 46 per cent p<.05).[21] Furthermore, across almost all measures of social stratification, such as age, gender, wealth etc., people in Poso in 2006 were significantly more likely to belong to mixed ethnic organisations compared with Donggala. The exception is those who have migrated to the district (the sample in Donggala was too small to test for significance) and those professing the Christian faith where in both places approximately half the respondents belonged to mixed ethnic organisations. However, what is most interesting is that the cross-ethnic group and organisational membership of Donggala Christians differed little compared with Donggala Muslims, but differed significantly to Poso Muslims. Nearly all Poso Muslims belonged to mixed-ethnic organisations or groups. Overall however, given the similar levels of ethnic fragmentation between the two districts, the almost uniformly higher membership of mixed ethnic organisations across a number of social stratifications in Poso may in part help explain why there are more positive attitudes towards other ethnic groups, as indicated by higher levels of inter-ethnic marriage compared with Donggala.

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21 In 2009, although the number of people belonging to organisations overall has decreased compared with 2009, the nature of the ethnic make-up of these organisations has changed little. Of the random sample of respondents in the same sub-districts, 81 per cent described the organisations to which they belong as being of mixed-ethnic makeup. A further 22 per cent of respondents said they belonged to organisations of purely one ethnic group. This differed little from the random selection of targeted respondents receiving development programmes (82 per cent in mixed-ethnic organisations, 12 per cent in ethnic organisations made up of purely one group).

Figure 2

Ethnic Make-Up of Organisational Membership (per cent of respondents)

	Poso	Donggala
All**	72	46
Men**	73	58
Women**	70	38
Urban**	80	55
Rural**	66	42
Asset-wealthy**	82	55
Asset-poor**	62	39
Migrants	77	60
Non-migrants**	69	43
Age 30-**	79	32
Age 31+**	67	53
Educated**	76	59
Low/no education**	62	32
Muslims**	96	43
Christians	57	49
Intra-district ethnicities**	57	41
Extra-district ethnicities**	83	63

**Denotes that the findings are significant to the 5 per cent level ($p<.05$) between districts

When we examine the differences within districts across a number of social dimensions the differences are more marked (the within-district significance tests are not presented in Figure 1 but percentage

proportions remain the same). In Donggala, men, people aged 31 and over, those with higher education (completed high school), and people whose ethnic heritage was from regions outside the district were more likely to belong to mixed ethnic groups and organisations compared with women, older men, those with lower education, and those with intra-district ethnic heritage (p<.05). A similar demographic difference existed within Poso along gender, educational, and ethnic lines (p<0.5). However, although it was older members of the community in Donggala who were likely to belong to such organisations, in Poso it was the reverse, those aged 30 and under being more likely to belong to these mixed organisations (p<.05). Furthermore, there were other differences in Poso, where people were more likely to belong to mixed ethnic-organisations if they were asset-wealthy, living in urban areas, and as stated previously professed the Muslim faith (p<.05). We can surmise therefore that although overall more people were likely to belong to mixed ethnic organisations in Poso compared with Donggala, in Poso this was more likely to be the case with younger, urban elites.

Similarly, people in Poso were also more likely to belong to organisations and groups of mixed religious membership compared with Donggala (respectively, 40 per cent and 21 per cent, p<.05) as is evident in Figure 3 below.[22] Overall, however, in both districts, compared with ethnically mixed organisations, the response rates on mixed religious organisational membership were much lower. Interestingly, the least differences between districts were found between older, poorer people of intra-district ethnic heritage, and those professing the Christian faith. This could in part be because of the nature of social relations and the societies in which these people lived traditionally, and historical intra-group norms for joining such organisations.

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22 Although organisational membership has decreased somewhat compared with 2009, the nature of these organisations has changed little in Poso, with 92 per cent belonging to organisations made up of purely one religious group and 25 per cent belonging to mixed religious organisations. This was somewhat different from the random sample of targeted respondents receiving development programmes, where only 83 per cent said they belonged to exclusive religious organisations, and 31 per cent of people belonged to mixed religious organisations.

Figure 3

**Religious Make-Up of Organisational Membership in Poso and Donggala
(per cent of respondents)**
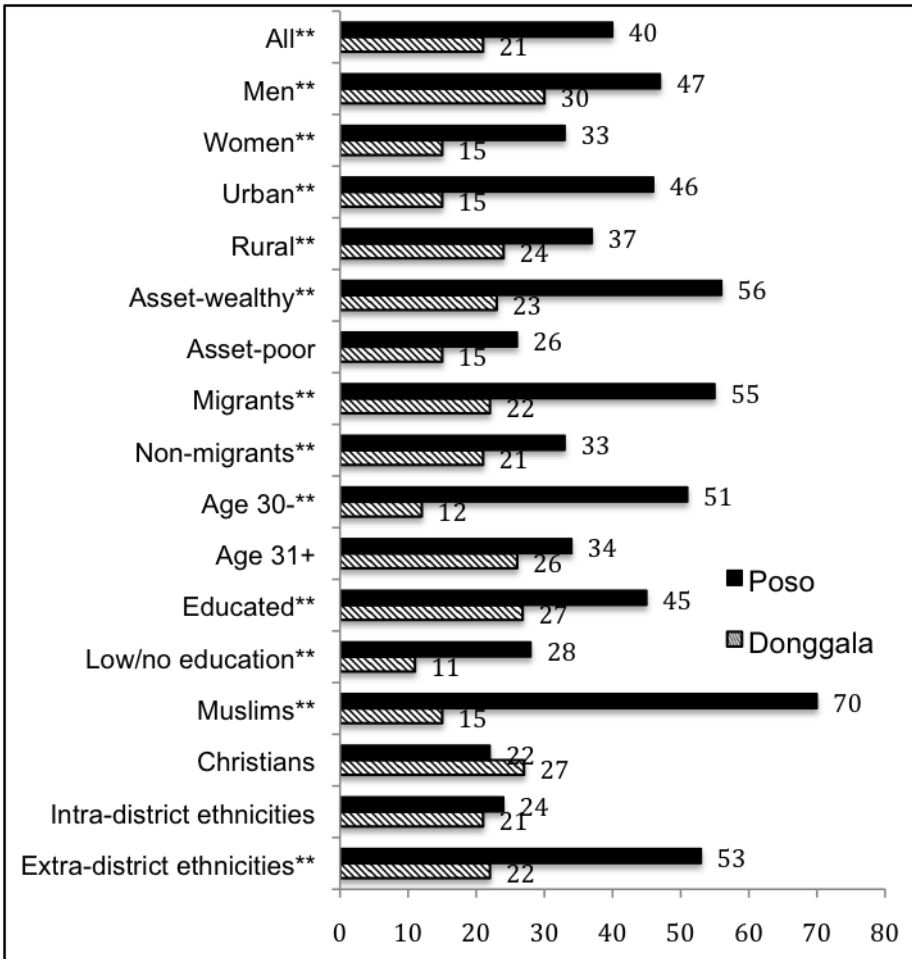
**Denotes the findings are significant to the 5 per cent level (p<.05) between districts.

Furthermore, when we look too at the intra-district demographics of those with membership of mixed-religious organisations (not presented as a comparative figure, but the proportions can also be seen in Figure 3), it is evident that in Donggala, there are fewer differences between the kinds of
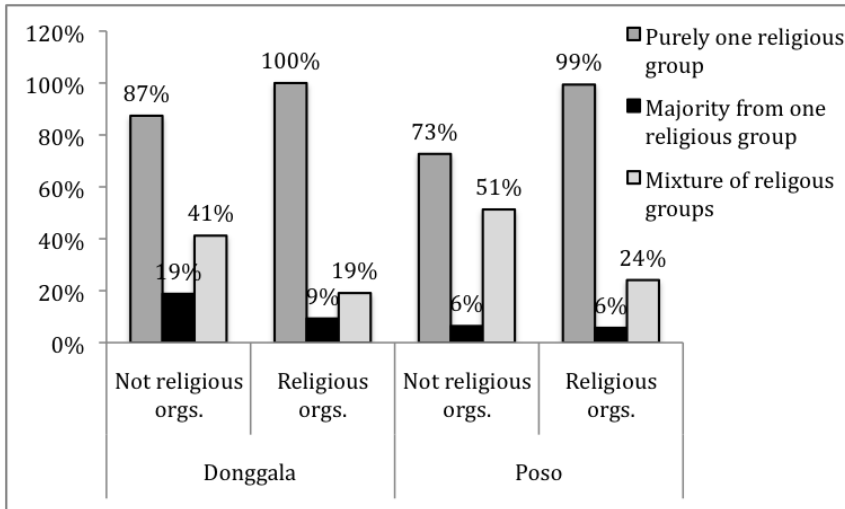
people that belong to mixed religious organisations compared with Poso. In Donggala, gender, education, age and religion matter in terms of the likelihood of people belonging to mixed religious organisations. There were significant differences between men and women (respectively, 30 per cent and 15 per cent, p<.05); those of higher and lower educational attainment (respectively, 27 per cent and 11 per cent, p<.05); those who were 31 or older compared with those aged under 30 (respectively, 26 per cent and 12 per cent, p<.05); and only marginally based on asset wealth. But again there were differences between Donggala Muslims and Christians; it was Donggala Christians who were more likely to belong to mixed religious organisations (respectively, 15 per cent and 27 per cent, p<.05). This may explain the differences between these religious groups in terms of attitudes to other groups described above, with Christians also having more positive attitudes towards others in Donggala.

Yet, we find in Poso, that gender, wealth, education, age, migration status, ethnic heritage and religion, are all related to the likelihood that people will belong to mixed religious organisations. The only social stratification where there was no difference was between rural and urban locations. For example, men are more likely than women to belong to mixed religious groups (respectively, 47 per cent and 33 per cent, p<.05), they are more likely to be asset wealthy (respectively, 56 per cent and 26 per cent, p<.05), they are more likely to be migrants (respectively, 55 per cent and 33 per cent, p<.05), and they are more likely to be educated (respectively, 45 per cent and 28 per cent, p<.05). However, in contrast to Donggala, but similar to the findings on the membership of mixed ethnic organisations, membership of mixed religious organisations was more likely to be the case among the younger members of the community up to the age of 30 and rather than those over 30 (respectively, 51 per cent and 34 per cent, p<.05). Similar too to the findings on inter-ethnic organisational membership, Muslims were more likely than Christians to belong to such organisations (respectively, 71 per cent and 22 per cent) as were those of extra-district ethnic heritage rather than those with intra-district heritage (respectively, 53 per cent and 24 per cent, p<.05).

This partly relates to the fact that more Muslims have extra-district ethnic heritage, are traders and belong to cooperative organisations, and they were more likely to be migrants and asset-wealthy. The within-district comparisons of social stratification suggest that in general in Poso, the likelihood of belonging to a mixed-religious organisation was higher than in Donggala, but this likelihood was confined to younger men, the asset-wealthy, those with higher education and ethnic heritage from outside the district.

Given that the most popular organisations in Poso were religious organisations, such as prayer groups, which often divided along gender lines, church and mosque organisations, which are likely to be intra-faith, then it is important that we also examine the results that distinguish between membership of those organisations associated with religion and the membership of other organisations unrelated to religion, to see whether the membership of other organisations could perhaps explain the differences between the districts.

Figure 4

Make-Up of Religious and Secular Organisations in Poso and Donggala (per cent of respondents)

The results presented in Figure 4 indicate that when it comes to religious organisations in Poso and Donggala, the vast majority of people in both districts who belong to religious organisations are likely to belong to those that comprise one religious group, or the majority come from one religious group, with no statistically significant differences between the two (the results in the figure show multiple membership of organisations, which is why overall percentages are greater than 100). This could give some credence to the argument that it was through such organisations that people mobilised for violence as the conflict escalated in Poso. However, one might expect greater mobilisation through religious organisations in Donggala, that is, if organisational membership of exclusive religious organisations alone were used as an indicator of where violence might break out in multi-religious communities. However, this was not the case. In Donggala, although religious identity was most important to respondents day by day, it has less perceived importance in terms of access to the state in Donggala compared with Poso, and in this sense may explain why such organisational membership is not related to the likelihood of conflict escalation in Donggala. But it could help explain how problems could escalate so quickly in Poso because there were strong networks and organisations available through which to disseminate information and mobilise.

Furthermore, when we examine the historical and qualitative evidence on religious organisation membership, it is evident that belonging to predominantly religious organisations was not something that just came about with the conflict in order to achieve in-group protection in Poso. Aragon (2000; 2001) points to the strong Christian religious organisations that existed in Poso before the conflict. The Dutch missionary programme led to the establishment of the GKST (the Central Sulawesi Christian Synod) in Poso by Albertus Kruyt, who converted many of the local animists to Protestant Christianity and eventually established schools, clinics and other facilities in the region (Aragon, 2001). According to Aragon (*ibid.*), the Western Highlands, including those in Donggala, was given priority for missionary activities by the Salvation Army (*Bala Keselamatan)*. Aragon (2001:51) argues that the Salvation Army

approach was more nationalised and conveyed a set of uniform doctrines and practices compared with Kruyt's focus on the Christianisation of local customs and practice (*adat*). Aragon (*ibid.*) also contends that this developed a religiously based 'regional nationalism' among Pamona Protestant highlanders, in particular, compared with the members of the Salvation Army churches in Donggala. This may explain in part why Poso Christians at present are less likely to belong to mixed ethnic and religious organisations compared with Donggala Christians. The more nationalistic approaches of the Salvation Army may also explain why Donggala Christians are less likely to have negative attitudes to others compared with Poso Christians.

Furthermore, qualitative evidence found that Muslim organisations in Poso were more prevalent and varied than in Donggala, particularly in areas where there were large numbers of migrants and traders of different ethnicities from other parts of the island and country. Islam first came to the region in the early 1800s, mainly through the ethnic Bugis trade routes from southern Sulawesi, as well as Arab traders (Aragon, 2001), and in some senses the different migrant groups tended to belong to different mosque networks either because of the different villages in which they lived, or because of their adherence to different ideological streams of Islam.

Compared with the Christian Protestant church with its strong and almost uniform reach in Poso (with the exception of a small population of Catholics), and the Salvation Army with its outreach in Donggala, there is a greater variety of Muslim organisations in both districts differentiated by their ideologies (such as those who support an Islamic state, those who support a more secular state among others) or geography and ethnicity. The largest organisation in both places is the regional Al Khairat network. Al Khairat has a strong presence on Sulawesi island and mainly in Central Sulawesi, but has little reach beyond the island and can be considered a regional Islamic organisation. The visits to the region in qualitative research as well as interviews found that Al Khairat tended to have a stronger presence in Poso compared with Donggala. It was also one of the first networks where people mobilised in the

early phases of the conflict under the banner of protecting the Muslim brotherhood. However, in recent years, Al Khairat has embraced a more moderate ideology in Poso, especially compared with some of the hard-line groups that entered the district during the conflict. Other Muslim organisations include all those that were established in the region with the conflict, such as Laskar Jihad and those under the banner of the Mujahhidin, such as KOMPAK, as well as national organisations, such as Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama, as well as a variety of *pesantren* networks etc. The evidence therefore suggests that Muslim and Christian organisations had a strong presence in the districts before the conflict in Poso, and the differences between districts can be explained less by the conflict and more by the existing organisation of social life in each district.

When we compare survey evidence from Poso and Donggala on the membership of organisations without a religious focus, it was found that, overall, these organisations were likely to have purely one religious group or the majority from one faith in its membership, but people in Poso were more likely to belong to organisations or groups with a mixed-religious membership compared with Donggala (p<.05). In contrast to the arguments put forth by Varshney (2002)—that cross-group membership of organisations explained the differences between peaceful and violent sites in India—the findings from Central Sulawesi indicate that the membership of mixed religious or ethnic organisations and groups can not alone explain why violence breaks out in some places and not others. In Poso, it seems that the membership of non-religious organisations with cross-religious membership was insufficiently strong enough to build social cohesion or prevent exclusively religious organisations from being mobilised for violence.

However, this finding on the difference between religious groups in terms of mixed religious organisation membership is also interesting when considered in light of the negative stereotypes and attitudes towards other groups on a group by group basis. There is a greater likelihood of inter-religious group mixing through organisations among Poso Muslims and these groups are the least likely to have negative attitudes towards

others compared with Poso Christians generally (although they object to 'group-merging' through religious intermarriage). The situation was the reverse in Donggala, where Donggala Christians were more likely to belong to mixed-religious organisations, and they had fewer negative attitudes to other groups compared with Donggala Muslims who were less likely to belong to mixed organisations. In Poso, these attitudes also reflected the power divides in the district, that being the marginalisation of Christians from the state and the domination of the state by Muslims, in Donggala, the situation was the reverse. In Donggala, the group with the most negative attitudes was not simultaneously marginalised from the state and power-sharing arrangements had not broken down at the critical moment of the transition from the New Order.

It can therefore be surmised that for interaction through cross-group organisational membership to mitigate negative views (as is argued by social psychologists) and explain sub-national variation (as is argued by political scientists, such as Varshney [2002]), then it must cross cut salient identities in terms of group access to the state, and incorporate all groups on either side of the most salient political divide. Higher levels of cross-group organisation membership were an insufficient indicator to show where one might find greater social cohesion and lower levels of violence, particularly given it was confined to elite members of society in both places and the religious group dominating the political sphere and not those who were marginalised in Poso. If we draw instead on the work of mobilisation theorists presented, such as Brass (2003), it was people from more elite backgrounds who were instrumental in organising for violence despite being the strata of society most likely to be members of cross-group organisations.

Social Interaction between Groups

Although there were negative perceptions of other groups along different dimensions in both districts, sometimes confined to particular groups, it is important to determine whether these may be mitigated by cross-group interaction other than organisational membership, particularly

friendships as posited by Allport (1954) and other social psychologists discussed above. The following table outlines a comparison of the survey findings on interaction between groups outside of formal organisations.

Table 2

Interaction between Ethnic and Religious Groups

		Ethnicity				Religion			
		Donggala		Poso		Donggala		Poso	
Frequency of contact (%)		Talk (%)	Visit (%)	Talk (%)	Visit (%)	Talk (%)	Visit (%)	Talk (%)	Visit (%)
	Every day	60.2	41.4	74.0	51.8	53.9	36.2	41.9	24.3
	Once a week	22.0	28.4	20.2	26.3	22.2	25.3	29.5	33.1
	Seldom or never	18.0	30.2	5.8	21.9	24.0	38.5	28.6	42.7

The survey asked respondents how frequently they talk to or visit people from different ethnic and religious groups. Visits to people of different groups indicate that the interaction is more purposeful and excludes chance contact, for example, when buying goods in a market. First, contact between different ethnic groups was significantly higher (p<.05) in Poso, compared with Donggala in terms of talking to different groups, and of more purposeful visits between different ethnic groups. This again indicates that the lack of inter-ethnic interaction is perhaps a stronger indicator of where group divides may lie in Donggala compared with Poso where contact between ethnic-groups is more likely.

Inter-ethnic interaction was also affected by the environment of the sub-district in which people lived. There are significant differences between sub-district strata in both districts according to the 2006 survey results (not shown in the table above) despite similar levels of ethnic heterogeneity at the village level. In more peaceful Donggala, but a place where ethnic politics predominates, it was in the ethnically mixed but

almost exclusively Muslim urban area (where the centre of government is located in Donggala) that had the lowest level of inter-ethnic mixing. The evidence showed that 27 per cent of respondents never or seldom talk to people from other ethnic groups compared with only 10 to 13 per cent in the other more rural sub-districts. This is interesting given that there are potentially more opportunities to interact in urban areas and there were no religious distinctions to be made. In fact, with both samples, rural respondents were found to visit people from a different ethnic back ground from their own more often than urban respondents do.

The reverse story presented itself in terms of interaction between different religious groups where a significantly lower proportion of respondents in Poso in 2006 purposely visited people of other faiths everyday compared with Donggala (respectively, 24 per cent and 54 per cent, p<.05). This indicates that either there was less interaction between different groups before the conflict, or that interaction broke down in Poso with the conflict. Even so, combined with other evidence, this is probably a further indicator of group divides and the saliency of religious identity in Poso. Furthermore, the differences were more pronounced between the different sub-districts in Poso (not shown above) in 2006, where in the majority Christian sub-district, only 4 per cent of people talked to other religious groups everyday and 69 per cent seldom or never talk to people of other faiths in 2006. As in the case of cross-ethnic interaction, it was in the majority Muslim and most ethnically mixed but rural area in Poso where many of the trading groups live that the most interaction took place, with 62 per cent having everyday interactions and only 11.5 per cent seldom or never having contact with other groups.

In Donggala, the patterns of religious interaction parallel ethnic interaction, where it was in the urban but majority Muslim areas that had the least interactions with other religious groups everyday (26 per cent having contacts every day and 42.4 per cent seldom or never interacting) compared with the majority Christian rural area where 77 per cent interact daily, compared with the most ethnically and religiously mixed

sub-district where significantly fewer people had daily interactions (62.6 per cent, p<.05). These results are in line with the religious composition of the sub-districts whereby more the religiously homogenous places are (and are expected to be) the least interactive.

Social Interaction through Friendships

Even more important are the findings on cross-group friendships that social psychologists deem to be the best indicator of equal status and working towards a common goal and where positive attitudes towards other groups will be produced and stimulate positive inter-group relations. The table below shows the findings on friendships across groups in both districts. Similar to the findings on everyday interaction between groups, inter-ethnic friendships are more common in Poso compared with Donggala (p<.05) and again are even less likely for Donggala men and those living in the urban, ethnically mixed but predominantly Muslim areas (p<.05). They are also less likely for members of the coastal Kaili ethnic group compared with all other ethnicities, and for the asset-poor as well as non-migrants. Cross-ethnic group friendships were more common in the urban ethnically mixed area in Poso, and among the educated members of society. However, there were few differences by other social stratification measures, such as gender, age, ethnic heritage, migration status and wealth; again reflecting the almost uniform levels of ethnic mixing in Poso where there were more positive attitudes towards other groups, and in spite of some of the differences by social stratification when it comes to formal organisational membership of mixed-ethnic differences.

Table 3

Cross-Group Friendships in Poso and Donggala (n=300/district)

		Ethnicity		Religion	
		Donggala	Poso	Donggala	Poso
Cross-group friendships (%)	All	69.0	83.1	57.6	47.7
	Christians			70.0	36.8
	Muslims			50.2	59.3
	Men	66.6	82.3	57.0	55.3
	Women	71.0	84.0	58.0	40.0

In line with the findings on everyday interaction between religious groups, inter-religious friendships are also more common in Donggala, with no difference between genders, compared with conflict-affected Poso (p<.05), where such interaction was even less likely among Poso women. Similarly too, in line with other findings, Donggala Christians were more likely to have cross-religious group friendships compared with Donggala Muslims (who also were more likely to have negative views of Donggala Christians than the reverse), where it was in the predominantly Muslim area that inter-religious friendship was at its lowest (all findings are significant to p<.05). Poso Muslims also had more cross-religious group friendships than Poso Christians (who also had more negative views of Poso Muslims than the reverse. In both districts, people with intra-district ethnic heritage were the least likely to have cross-religious friendships, suggesting that there is a relation between ethnic and religious identity when it comes to interaction (p<.05). In both districts however, cross-religious friendships were more likely among the asset-wealthy, and in Poso among those with higher education. Again, this suggests that in the event that there is inter-religious mixing in Poso it is confined to male elites rather than the broader society, and as such this may have been insufficient to mitigate negative views towards other groups more generally.

Conclusion

The above results indicate that to some extent increased cross-group contact can act as an indirect conflict intervention mechanism and help explain where problems of perceived inequalities are more or less likely to escalate into violence. The evidence suggests first, that there were differences between the districts in terms of perceived inequalities, mainly in terms of access to the state and in terms of which identities were the most salient indicators of access to the state, domination of the state, or marginalisation from the state. This was, however, only related to the largest demographic divide in the conflict-affected research area, supporting the argument of Posner (2004) that group size only matters in terms of the likelihood of violence when it has political saliency. In Donggala, perceived inequalities did exist, particularly in terms of access to the state, but they are more likely to be present along ethnic lines, which did not map on to larger demographic divides in the district. In Poso, there were more likely to be perceptions of inequalities, mainly in terms of access to the state, but these were more likely to be salient along religious lines, which did map on to the largest demographic divide. Therefore, religious identity had political saliency in Poso, mapping on to the largest demographic divides, and ethnic identity had political saliency in Donggala but this did not map on to the largest demographic divides and such views were less likely overall.

Second, whether this escalated into violence, the evidence suggests, is also related to whether negative attitudes towards other groups were more likely, which groups were likely to have such attitudes and how this relates to interaction between groups. In Donggala, ethnic identity was, similar to the findings on perceived inequalities, a more salient social divide given that there were less inter-ethnic marriages compared with Poso and less inter-ethnic mixing on an everyday level or through friendships compared with Poso. However, negative attitudes to others were more likely among the politically and numerically dominant religious groups, the Muslims, and two of the largest and politically and numerically dominant ethnic groups, the coastal Kaili and the Bugis, rather than among Christians and other ethnic groups. The latter were

more likely to interact with other ethnic and religious groups compared with the former three. At the time of the transition, traditional power-sharing arrangements accommodated ethnic group demands and did not challenge the power of the dominant religious group (also the group most likely to have negative attitudes to others). Furthermore, the Christians, the smaller religious group but potentially with the largest political base for new forms of political mobilisation, had less negative attitudes to other groups, were living in the areas that had the highest levels of inter-ethnic and inter-religious interaction and, in the qualitative interviews, these groups were less likely to perceive themselves as marginalised from the state compared with some of the Muslim ethnic groups vying for power over the Donggala government. Overall too, cross-religious group interaction was stronger in more peaceful Donggala compared with Poso, despite religion being the largest demographic divide. In this sense, there is a lack of continuity between demographic divides, poor interaction between groups, negative attitudes towards others, and perceptions of marginalisation from, or domination of, the state. It can be further argued that the stronger inter-religious interaction promoted social cohesion among religious groups, which acted as an indirect conflict prevention mechanism for the greatest demographic divide to be mobilised for political gain and potentially violence in the district. Ethnic divides did not escalate into violence as power-sharing mechanisms did not break down and poor interaction did not extend to all major groupings in the district.

In contrast in Poso, religious identity had the greatest political saliency as evidenced by the perceived inequalities along religious lines, which mapped on to the largest demographic divide in the district. Negative attitudes were most likely to be held about other religious groups in Poso compared with Donggala, and interaction between religious groups through everyday encounters and through friendships was weaker compared with Donggala. It was mainly the elites who did have greater inter-group interaction, and mainly the dominant political group, the Muslims. Given that positive inter-faith attitudes and interaction did not include all politically salient groups from different socio-economic strata, and did not encompass those who perceived themselves to be

marginalised from the state, then the evidence suggests there was a lack of social cohesion present in Poso that would mitigate political tensions from escalating into violence at a time when power-sharing arrangements broke down. At the same time, ethnic mixing through marriage, daily interactions, and friendships were more likely in Poso compared with Donggala and its salient ethnic political divides, indicating that such positive interaction in Poso may be related to why ethnicity is a less salient form of identity for political mobilisation. Furthermore, although the evidence suggests that cross-religious group friendships and interaction in Poso was weaker than in Donggala, in Poso there were higher levels of membership of mixed-religious organisations than Donggala, indicating that membership of mixed-organisations is less an indicator of where salient divides may lie in society and where violence may break out compared with other measures.

The findings presented in this paper tend to support theories of social psychologists on the importance of institutional support for inter-group interaction and inter-group contact through friendships as a means of promoting social cohesion and preventing conflict escalation. However, there is less evidence to support the theories about the importance of associational membership of mixed organisations as a violence prevention mechanism because these were more likely to be present in the conflict-affected research sites.

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