

ETHNIC RELATIONS IN THE CITY OF PONTIANAK A Study of Inter-ethnic Relations at *Gang Damai*, Kota Baru, Pontianak

Ibrahim MS

Pontianak State College of Islamic Studies

Abstract

Peace and harmony in life is one of the goals of the communities at Gang Damai in their social relations. This condition becomes very special when, in other places at the same time, conflicts and hostilities often occurred in the history of inter-ethnic relations in this region. This is the underlying reason of the naming of the place of this research i.e. "Gang Damai" (peaceful alley). This study found four key factors underlying the harmony and good relations between the ethnic groups; first, a positive outlook on the ethnic communities; second, distinctive efforts undertaken by the community members in order to continue to maintain good social relations, security, peace and harmony; third, awareness practiced by all communities in an effort to build and maintain social relations in the spirit of solidarity; fourth, different ethnic communities manage to minimize all forms of issues that could potentially become a trigger for conflicts by building intensive communication and social relations among themselves. In addition, unique social relation patterns built and inter-ethnic marriages have also become a model in building peaceful ethnic relations at Gang Damai until today.

Keywords: Peace, Harmony, Social Relations, Ethnicity

INTRODUCTION

The reality as we know it indicates that Indonesia is a plural nation comprising diverse ethnic, religious, tribal and cultural groups (Tomagola, 2006). Zulyani Hidayah in the *Encyclopedia of Ethnic Groups in Indonesia*, reported there are about 656 ethnic groups in the entire archipelago from Sabang to Merauke (see in Tomagola, 2007: 274).

The diversity of ethnic, cultural, religious and tribal groups in Indonesia can also be found in the communities of West Kalimantan. Nevertheless, research conducted to study social, ethnic, and religious groups in West Kalimantan is indeed not too satisfactory. As Collins (2001) argues that we have very little knowledge about the people, history, and culture on the island. Therefore, the writer believes it is important to continue to do research and investigations to identify and understand the ethnic community and culture in the area very well, especially in the context of social relations and human relations.

Studying West Kalimantan with all its complexities that characterize all aspects of life is a must. In terms of religion, for example, in West Kalimantan, there are communities that embrace Islam, Christianity (Catholics and Protestants), Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and even traditional beliefs. In terms of ethnicity, West Kalimantan has various ethnic groups such as Malay, Dayak, Madurese, Chinese, Javanese, Bugis, Minang, etc. (BPS, 2008).

Similarly this province also has complex and diverse social, economic, and cultural aspects. The complexity and diversity of this region cannot be separated from the history of its society, and even this factor has also influenced social relations until today. Therefore, a careful and thorough study should be carried out continuously in order to find an objective view and knowledge of West Kalimantan and the people.

As the provincial capital, Pontianak city is inhabited by people of various ethnic backgrounds, religions and cultures. The city has also become the melting pot of people, cultures and religions.

The diversity of social, ethnic, religious and cultural background of the communities particularly in the city of Pontianak is indeed inevitable (*conditio saina quo non*). Therefore, there is only one social attitude to adopt in the context, i.e. to accept the differences while continuing to build understanding and tolerance. With this attitude, there is no reason to make diversity a barrier in establishing social communication and humanity relations, let alone wipe out the difference "on behalf of the harmony of social relations".

As a place inhabited by various ethnic groups, it is interesting to see how ethnic relations are built there.

GANG DAMAI IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS STUDY

Gang Damai is part of the administrative subdivisions of the Kota Baru *Kelurahan* (Urban Village), Subdistrict of South Pontianak, Pontianak City. It is located Bina Jaya street, Kota Baru. To reach this place, one can enter through Gang Rukun on Perdamaian Street, District Kubu Raya, or through Harapan Jaya Street. It can also be reached through Kesehatan Street. Before *pemekaran* (creation of a new administrative region), the village which became part of Kota Baru *Kelurahan*, Bina Jaya Street was part of Kesehatan Street, as can be seen in the certificate of land ownership in the area.

Gang Damai is located approximately 250 meters Perdamaian Street, or 300 meters from Harapan Jaya Street, or 500 meters from Purnama Street 2. To be precise, this settlement is located between Perdamaian and Purnama Street 2. Referring to the city's development plan, *Gang Damai 2* will connect Kota

Baru and Purnama Street 2.

Gang Damai consists of 6 alleys namely, Damai 1, Damai 2, Damai 2a, Damai 3, Damai 3a dan Damai 4. These alleys are joint in one neighborhood association (RT), i.e. the RT 4 RW 12.

In General, the area was opened as a civilian settlement (village) approximately 10 years ago, precisely in 1999/2000s when it was inhabited by 2 – 3 households. In the aftermath of ethnic violence in Sambas in 1999, it started to be inhabited by ethnic Madurese who moved here from Sambas. It was a process in which more and more Madurese people came to live in the area until 2003. Later, following ethnic Madurese, other ethnic groups such as Javanese and Malay also came to settle down here.

In general, the majority of the ethnic groups living at *Gang Damai* are ethnic Madurese. This ethnic group stated to come to this area around 10 years ago. Generally the Madurese inhabitant here moved from Sambas when ethnic conflict occurred in 1999.

Of the total number of residents who live in *Gang Damai* (235 people or 57 households), approximately 75% of them are ethnic Madurese. The rest (25%) are ethnic Malay, Javanese, Bugis, Dayak and Chinese. However, in general residents in the alley mingle with the other ethnic groups. Except for the *Gang Damai* 1 and 3 where the majority of the inhabitants are Madurese. In other parts of *Gang Damai*, they simply blend in with each other.

In terms of the economy, it can be described that generally *Gang Damai* is inhabited by mostly middle class people. This is related to the economic resources of its inhabitants, i.e. ethnic Madurese. Most residents in this area work as farmers and laborers. Only some of them are working in private companies and Government agencies (civil servants).

SOCIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN ETHNIC GROUPS

To see how social relations between the ethnic groups at *Gang Damai* are built, four main aspects will be examined, i.e. the way each group views others, how they build communication in social relations, efforts made in maintaining relations between the ethnic groups, as well as the factors that affect the relations between the ethnic groups. The four aspects will be discussed in depth in the following review.

INTER-ETHNIC VIEW

The view between the ethnic groups in the social communication is called perception. Perception will essentially generate conception. If the perception and conception that are toward oneself, it is referred to by the term perception

and conception of the self. But if the perception and conception in question are toward others, then it is called perception and conception of others.

Perception and conception can be defined as behavior that cannot be separated in the social communication (Deddy Mulyana, 2001: 168). The correlation between the two patterns of communication behavior is equal to correlation between perception and conception toward oneself and the perception and conception toward others. As perception generate conception, and conception will ultimately form the communication behavior built into social relations (Ibrahim, 2005; 2009)

Thus it is clear that inter-ethnic perception (defined as views or judgment) has a major influence in building communication behavior that takes place in the social relations of ethnic groups at *Gang Damai*.

VIEW ON ONESELF AND ON ONE'S OWN ETHNIC GROUP

Based on the data obtained during the course of conducting research in the field, it can be concluded that people generally realize that they and their own ethnic group are basically equal to the general human disposition in which each has advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, people must live together to be able to complement each other. In order to co-exist, they make a variety of agreements in the form of social relations, be it complementary or open, primordial or constructional, as maintained by Rizka AR (2009) as follows:

“The intensity of the socio-economic interactions occurring between ethnic groups can turn one ethnic group that was primordial to become more constructional with awareness of the pluralism as well as the social and political state of the economy at the time. This inter-ethnic encounter will create complementary relationship between the two. The ability to meet the needs of other ethnic groups leads to the existence of relations between ethnic groups. This can be seen in urban communities who have removed the ethnic construction ideas that separate between “me” and “them”. Meanwhile, in traditional communities that still hold on to ethnic and cultural boundaries, when one ethnic group meet with the other and there is an economic activity between them, they will make up a rule considered common by both sides without leaving their respective ethnic characteristics behind. Whereas in an open society, they will abandon their respective ethnic characteristics and blend in a mutually agreed rules “.

A positive outlook on oneself and one's own ethnic group makes it possible to create good social and ethnic relations at *Gang Damai* as reported by many of the informants in the field.

VIEW ON OTHER PEOPLE AND OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS

Another aspect quite influential in shaping the behavior of social communications is the view on other people and other ethnic groups. How one views others and other ethnic groups will largely determine the patterns and forms of communication and social relations built between ethnic groups. In addition, ethnic conflict depends on the form of this view. To examine this, Rizka AR (2009) revealed that there are at least two approaches that can be used namely paradigm approach and structural approach.

The paradigm approach is adopted not only to change the view that a certain ethnic group should be ' powerful ' and other ethnic groups just become proletarians, but also to change the view that an ethnic group poses a threat to another ethnic group. Because of the socio-economic interaction, the ability of an ethnic group to complement the other ethnic group's needs is needed in order to create the harmony and continuity of social interaction that can build this nation. Whereas the structural approach holds that a rule issued by the Constitution can protect an ethnic group from other group's threats or from the threat of extinction of a certain ethnic group. State protection is needed to create social relations between ethnic harmony so as to support national development "(Rizka AR, 2009).

Thus any individual difference from any ethnic group can be seen as a reasonable social disposition, in which each has advantages and disadvantages. Therefore to know and understand each other must be done in building social relations.

Other positive view towards people of other ethnic groups at *Gang Damai* can be seen from a statement made by the neighborhood secretary who is a Malay. He said, "The residents here are very kind although most of them are Madurese. I have been living here for many years living, and they (Madurese) help a lot both with my personal matters as well as my position as the secretary of the neighborhood " (interview: Oct 14,2009)

This sort of view has proved that harmonization in social and ethnic relations at *Gang Damai* can be built by the community because there is a positive view toward other groups. This is because a good perception of will create a good conception to build the appropriate social communication behavior between ethnic groups.

Observations made by the researcher in the field show that a lot of people that come from different ethnic backgrounds also hold a positive view toward other ethnic groups, and it has become a milestone in building a harmonious social relations in the alley.

BUILDING COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

In certain regions, the views that holds that in ethnicity should be classified on the basis of shared customs is not suitable to be applied in a community with various backgrounds so that its homogeneity can be retained even though there are many different ways of life and social forms (Barth in Iqbal Jayadi, 2004 on how communication and social relations between ethnic groups are built).

The statement hinted that communication and social relations are determined by ethnic patterns and interlacing forms of communication that are built and created by each ethnic group in their social relations, both created in the group alone as well as together.

In the context of this study, the results of the study in the field indicates that there are several ways of building communication and social relations carried out by the community at *Gang Damai*, such as participating in neighborhood activities together, holding neighborhood meetings, involving in joint activities in the village, promoting togetherness in the village through *pengajian* (Qur'an lessons) for children, *yasinan* (recital of a chapter in the Qur'an), religious activities at the *Surau* (a smaller mosque), youths activities such as martial arts, *gotong royong* (joint work to clean up the drains, etc) on Sunday, as well as continuing to build togetherness in social communication. The description of each activity is as follows.

DOING MORE JOINT ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

One of the ways the people at *Gang Damai* build communication and social relations is to participate in more joint activities within the community. These activities allow for the involvement of many people in the community. Examples of the joint activities are holding *Yasin* recital every Friday evening, doing *gotong royong* every Sunday, celebrating the Islamic holy days, celebrating the national holidays such as independence day, getting together, Qur'an lessons for children, learning martial arts and so on.

HOLDING MORE NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS

As mentioned above that *Gang Damai* is a settlement within the area of RT 04 RW 12, Kota Baru urban village. With a good awareness to build social relations within ethnic relations, RT (neighborhood association) serves as an important forum for the residents of *Gang Damai*, particularly the its administrators.

According to Sdm (head of the *RT*), the people involved in administration of the *RT* are representatives of the existing ethnic groups. The purpose is to take care of the village as well as to build an atmosphere of friendliness and brotherhood. With these common goals, everyone can help each other and make use of all their potential to build the village. (interview, December 10, 2009).

Therefore, in his opinion, *RT* always holds a meeting even though the discussion is not serious and formal; with these meetings we can build better relations can resolve a lot of problems; and we will happy to welcome anyone who want to come here even they are not a member of the *RT* administrators (Dec 10, 2009).

PARTICIPATING IN YASIN RECITAL ACTIVITY

Joint activities at *Gang Damai* serve as one of the efforts made by the residents to establish sense of togetherness in social relations. These joint activities include *pengajian* and *Yasin* recital held each week. *Yasin* recital is held every Friday evening with each household taking turns as a host, or upon request, as the researcher saw for himself during participatory observations.

TOGETHERNESS AND AWARENESS IN BUILDING THE VILLAGE

Togetherness in building the village is the vision of Mr Sudi's leadership Head of the *RT* at *Gang Damai*. As the first head of *RT* since it was established over 5 years ago, his vision in building the village has won the support of the community. This is proved by the magnitude of the public confidence of the head of the *RT*. With that confidence, the community continues to prepare itself to support all policy issued by the *RT*. These conditions reminded the researcher of social relations theory expressed by Iones Rakhmat (2009), one of which is a Model of Charismatic Authority, where social relations can be well established because a leader someone who has charisma.

PENGAJIAN (QUR'AN READING LESSONS) FOR CHILDREN AND OTHER RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES AT THE SURAU

One of the activities that serves as a gathering event for residents of *Gang Damai* is *pengajian*. In this activity, children gather at the homes of Ustadz Mul and Mr Lili to learn to read the Qur'an together. These children come from various ethnic groups such as Madurese, Malay, Javanese and so on.

This *pengajian* activity has removed the boundaries of their ethnic identity in the interaction. Referring to the theory of communication, the activity

has become a place for 'us' not 'me' or 'you' (Ibrahim, 2010; & www.keluargabahagia.com).

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

In addition to religious activities, *pengajian* and so on, the researcher in the field also found that there are still other activities carried out by the residents, and it seems that those activities are also quite important as an effort to build communication in social relations of the community. One of the activities is martial arts (*pencak silat*) for teenagers.

GOTONG ROYONG

Gotong royong (cooperation among people to attain a shared goal) is indeed a local wisdom in building a sense of community, solidarity and care for one another. Local wisdom grows with the consciousness of others, to help each other and to work together. In the mapping of sociology, such activity is rare in the city, where an individualistic lifestyle is more emphasized. As a form of collectivism and social life, *gotong royong* is only possible in the village, the place where the social care is still important.

Gang Damai, which is only 5 km from the Mayor's Office, or 6 km from the Governor's Office, or just 3 km from the provincial Government Office complex, still has local wisdom of the village people, a tradition of community and social care emphasized through *gotong royong* regardless of whether the tradition is born purely within the soul of the ethnic groups, or there certain conditions that require them to practice such mutual aid, this has also formed social relations in the community.

The atmosphere of brotherhood and familiarity among themselves is also visible during a *gotong royong* activity. It was obvious when the researcher participated in the *gotong royong*.

BUILDING CLOSENESS IN SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

One of the characteristics of a good social relation is when there is closeness in communication. In the ethnic community at *Gang Damai*, closeness in social communication is visible from the habit of people to greet each other, both while in the homes of the residents, on the streets and in the form of visiting each other at home.

In the context of visiting each other's home at *Gang Damai*, this can clearly be seen in the afternoon to evening. Close communication in this form is usually

common among males. They usually get together to have a friendly chat on the terrace of the house belonging to head of the *RT*, or the other residents. This reminds the researcher of social relations culture of the Madurese which Ali Usman (2008) called *bala* and *taretan* or *kanca*. *Bala*, in addition to being defined as a friend, also means to have kinship (*taretan*). To have a *taretan*, one only needs to be a *kanca*, be it *kanca biasa* or *kanca rapet*.

The women are also commonly seen getting together. This kind of gathering involves residents of various ethnicities that live in the area. It is not uncommon to see them share many things such as food, vegetables, side dishes and so on.

EFFORTS IN MAINTAINING INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS

A good social relation between different ethnic groups is highly associated with social attitudes and communication indicated by the ethnic community. Social attitudes are related to several social aspects as quoted from www.keluargabahagia.com:

1. *Self-acceptance is important to build trust (being trusted or trusting others) in social relations.*
2. *We will feel comfortable socializing if we do not discriminate people based on social class.*
3. *Make social relations as a place to learn, not a place to compete negatively.*
4. *Do not push your own interests for the sake of the interests of the surroundings, but also do not ignore the interests of the surroundings just because you want to indulge your own interests.*
5. *Understand the importance of networking as well as making it an actualization of self development.*

In building good relations and harmony between different ethnic groups, there are at least two important categories have always been used by the ethnic community at *Gang Damai*, i.e. perceptual (perception of communication) and a practical (the behavior of social communication).

Perceptual efforts are conducted in the form of awareness of self and social group (internal) about human nature, togetherness and mutual respect over any differences. The history of the conflicts that have occurred in West Kalimantan indirectly involving the ethnic groups of the residents at *Gang Damai* has provided lessons to them regarding the necessity to understand any differences with sincerity, appreciation and mutual respect for each other, and in the end is manifested in togetherness creating a good social relations and harmonious.

It is this consciousness that the older Madurese generation exemplify for their descendants at *Gang Damai*. According to them, the efforts to maintain good and harmonious social relations must continue to be made intensifying joint activities among themselves such as *gotong royong*, *yasinan*, and so on.

The practical efforts are related to mending the structure of social communication in ethnic relations in their daily life; opening wider space for communication to resolve issues together, promoting mutual trust and respect for each other. In the communication theory, this structure is what Ibrahim (2010) called KITA (see also www.keluargabahagia.com).

In addition celebrating red letter days such as warning the independence day, celebrating Islamic holy days such as *sa'banan* (the month of *sa'ban*), *maulid* (Prophet's Muhammad's birthday) and so on, serves as forum of an important communication and interaction between people at *Gang Damai*. This is one of the practical efforts made to maintain the harmony of ethnic social relations there.

The chairman of the *RT* at the alley who is an ethnic Javanese has a charismatic leadership in building a good social relation. When referring to the theory of social relations, the pattern is closer to the model of the client patron relation model (Ioanes Rakhmat, 2009) even though in the case of *Gang Damai* it is not fully a patron (the ruler) and client (his servants) relation.

The pattern of "semi" patron-client (if it can be called so) that exists at *Gang Damai* is the utilization of a position of the head of the *RT* to build closeness and togetherness. This is in line with a statement made the head of the *RT* about the need to build a solid cooperation in the community to keep the order in the village. That is why he thinks a good policy is needed in the form of society potential empowerment (Nov 10, 2009)

In addition to his various efforts in building good social relations, mutual understanding between one ethnic group and another is a must, including equitable development based on social justice.

The efforts above indeed prove to have created a form of good, safe and harmonious at *Gang Damai* to this day. This, in researcher's opinion, is also supported by the attitude of residents who are always open in their communication. Such attitude is very relevant to the theory of building good communication as follows:

..To improve harmonious relationship in social relations, it requires the ability to build openness in communication, among others with the following attitudes: *first*, avoid assumption but look for clarity to discuss it; *second*, communicate openly based on the 'us' concept not 'me' or 'you'; *third*, learn

how to express something appropriately and positively; *fourth*, train yourself to be able to be a good listener; *fifth*, think ten times before passing on negative words “ (quoted from www.keluargabahagia.com).

A similar theory is proposed by Ibrahim, especially regarding the building of communication that should be realized together in the form of OUR forum not ‘my’ or ‘your’ forum (Ibrahim, 2010).

FACTORS AFFECTING INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS

Life is indeed a dynamic and ever-changing (Ibrahim, 2010), and so is the case with social relations in the society which are sometimes good and full of warmth, and sometimes full of conflict and tension. The dynamics of real life in such a case involve several other factors, both external and internal.

The external factors that can change the form and quality of social relations of different ethnic groups are political policies, economic interests, social influence of different culture from outside (culture shock/culture gap) and so on (Ibrahim, 2005). Meanwhile, the internal factors that can change the form and quality of social relations are ethnic identity and sense of self that tends to be ethnocentric (Ibrahim, 2009) i.e. an antipathetic attitude towards differences which is known in the local term as “*katak dalam tempurung*” (a frog under the coconut shell, meaning viewing other cultures according to preconceptions of one’s own culture). In addition, other internal factors that can threaten the form and quality of social relations are inter-ethnic stereotype and prejudice.

Regarding prejudice (even close to stereotype) against the ethnic Madurese, a respondent (chairman of the RT) reported that there was a concern when the Madurese people settled in this village.

“A lot of people out there think that living close to the Madurese is definitely unsafe and so on. But I feel quite the opposite. Here I feel safe and have a quiet life, far from the noise of city vehicles. Even after I hung out almost 10 years with the Madurese here, I never feel there is a problem “(Sdm, Nov 10, 2009).

Similar statement was also confirmed by several other respondents in the field like Mly (religious figure), Sdm (Chairman of the RT) and Pd (public figure) that said that there is no big social problem in this village, and hopefully people will continue to get along forever.

THE PATTERN OF SOCIAL RELATIONS

The pattern of social relations built by the ethnic community is an important factor in keeping and maintaining the relations of peace and harmony between

the ethnic groups at *Gang Damai*. From this concept of togetherness, the community members take part in developing the village together. The social relation such as this seems to be more complex and far-reaching than that offered in the contemporary approach. The contemporary approach divides social relations into three models: charismatic authority model, explorer leadership model and patron-client model (Ioanes Rakhmat, 2009).

In contrast, the pattern of social relations at *Gang Damai* is closer to the concept of brotherhood and kinship in the tradition of the Madurese society (Ali Usman, 2008).

In the Madurese society, brotherhood is not only synonymous with blood relations of kinship, but also with friendship. Brotherhood could turn to hostility because there is a problem that cannot be solved by a family. Such a relation collectively is commonly referred to as friend (*kanca*) and enemy (*moso*) (Ali Usman, 2008).

Therefore, the two forms of social relations are within a range of familiarity level, each basically is at its extremity. That is, a friend is a social relation with the highest level of familiarity, and vice versa, an enemy is a social relation with the lowest level of familiarity.

In the context of the ethnic community at *Gang Damai*, the first form serves as a social identity in building social relations, where a sense of brotherhood and togetherness is growing in society regardless of ethnic, cultural and religious differences.

Such condition is closely associated with the theory of communication and social relations found in the following site (www.keluargabahagia.com):

“.. the attitude of mutual acceptance would bring the impact of unifying, strengthening, and supporting the integrity and respective functions in social relations. When you decided to live together, without exception, you should be ready to mutually accept each other “

According to the theory, communication and social relations can be built in the following ways: *First*, positive thinking and being open to other people's opinion as it can help us to better identify ourselves; *Second*, realizing that nobody is perfect, so do not push yourself or someone else to be perfect; *Third*, assuring ourselves that it is never too late to learn to accept ourselves and others for what they are; *Fourth*, being aware that confusion is humane, so learning to forgive yourself and others is the attitude that should be adopted; *Fifth*, avoiding excessiveness toward weaknesses and strengths of your own and others (quoted from www.keluargabahagia.com).

MARRIAGE AS A FORM OF ETHNIC SOCIAL RELATIONS

Another factor that plays a role in realizing the harmony of ethnic relations at *Gang Damai* is inter-ethnic marriages. Marriage as one of the most sacred family bonds can only be realized if there is an attitude of mutual acceptance of the couple. This attitude becomes a starting point in building life together in matrimony as suggested in the happy family theory above.

Mixed marriages as a form of ethnic social relations at *Gang Damai* can be seen in the number of couples coming from different ethnicities. Marriage has become one of the options for the community there to establish better relations regardless of whether it is done to expand the family relationship and build a more harmonious social relation or simply a call of human nature, but in fact the social relations between different ethnic groups are harmonious to this day.

The following table shows couples who come from different ethnic backgrounds in the ethnic social relations at *Gang Damai*.

Tabel
Married Couple of Different Ethnicity

| No. | Name (Initial) | Husband's ethnicity | Wife's ethnicity |
|-----|----------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Ahm (PA) | Madurese | Sambas Malay |
| 2 | Ynt (PN) | Chinese | Javanese |
| 3 | Mly (Ust. M) | Madurese | Javanese |
| 4 | Frd | Syarif Malay | Dayak |
| 5 | Sry (PS) | Balinese | Madurese |
| 6 | Tgh (PT) | Javanese | Madurese |
| 7 | Alg (Abd) | Madurese | Sambas Malay |
| 8 | Tr | Malay | Banjar |

Source: *Observations and interviews, 2009.*

With the rise of inter-ethnic social relations in the form of bonds as a family through marriage, it would further strengthen the social relations within the community. In other words, social relations which are established safely, peacefully and harmoniously are not only bound by kinship, as in the Madurese tradition of friendship or *kanca* (Ali Usman, 2008), but also can take a form of inter-ethnic marriage relationship.

In addition to the mixed-ethnic marriages as evidence of the rise of the social relations at *Gang Damai*, many other things can also be made proof of the same thesis about social relations within the community. Among other things is the naming of the village (street name) which refers to a form of a peaceful

social relation. The name '*Gang Damai*' (meaning the Alley of Peace) can be understood as a prayer and hope from local society that their settlement will always be peaceful and safe, even though it is inhabited by diverse ethnic groups.

Each person can pray and make an effort, as shown by the people at *Gang Damai*. To support the efforts and prayers, we need an attitude in building better communication and social relations, i.e. by avoiding assumption and prioritizing discussion; being open to communication in a concept of 'us', not 'me' or 'you'; learning to express your opinions appropriately and positively; training yourself to be a good listener; and being careful before passing on negative words

CONCLUSION

This study has proved that the different ethnic communities at *Gang Damai*, Pontianak, is capable of creating social relations that are safe, peaceful and harmonious in the midst of issues of ethnic conflicts elsewhere in West Kalimantan. This is evidenced by the existence of a positive outlook among different ethnic groups in which they are capable of building communication and social relations through joint activities, efforts that continue to be made to maintain a good and harmonious social relation and several other factors that affect ethnic relations, one of which is in the form of inter-ethnic marriages.

Therefore, the well established social relations at *Gang Damai* should become a model for efforts to build communication and social relations between ethnic groups in other areas in the city of Pontianak.

Finally, the outcomes of this study are based on the data, information and knowledge obtained during the research process (*descriptive*). With this subjectivity, this study is certainly not the only answer to the question of the social relations of different ethnic groups in Pontianak City, because there are many other possible answers generated from other subjectivity as well.

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