

# **PRESERVATION OF CULTURE IN THE JAVANESE OF SURINAME**

**By: Tyler  
Bruner**

# SURINAME



# HISTORY/BACKGROUND

- Dutch presence dates back to 1602
- The English traded Suriname for New York around 1663
- Slaves worked on sugar plantations
- Caribbean ideologies
- Abolition in 1863
- This brought in a new working infrastructure.
- Hindustani, Javanese, Chinese, and others

# OUR TRIP

- Our journey lasted from June 27<sup>th</sup>-July 29<sup>th</sup> 2011
- Group consisted of 12 Cultural Anthropology students and 5 Theater students
- We stayed in the Capital Paramaribo mostly
- Ventured into the interior as well places like Jaw Jaw
- Worked with many cultural centers/educated children in two schools/raised educational supplies/
- Worked with HIV/AIDS organizations
- Learned traditional songs, dance, and dress
- Participated in many workshops ranging from theater to studio art construction.

# MY GOALS

- To understand how the Javanese have preserved culture
  - After globalization and diaspora
  - Through jeran kepang (an animal spirit trance dance)
  - And pencak silat (a Javanese mixed martial art combining mental/spiritual, sport, self-defense aspects)

# SURINAME AND ITS PEOPLE

- Hindustani make up 37% of the population
- Creole (mixed black and white) 31%
- **Javanese 15%**
- Maroons 10%
- Amerindian 2%
- Chinese 2%
- Other 2%
- White 1%











# THE JAVANESE DIASPORA



# THE JAVANESE IN SURINAME

- Third largest ethnicity
- Comprises 15% of the 485,000 people of Suriname.
- Well established throughout the community
  - Food
  - Dance
  - Performances (Pencak Silat/Jeran Kepang)
  - Music



# MY FIELD SITE



2009/05/11 22:55

# ETHICS

- All research was done after proper IRB class was taken on ethics and passed.
- Participants knew where and how the information would be used
- They knew they could stop at anytime before or even during an interview/recording
- They were told no full names would be disclosed



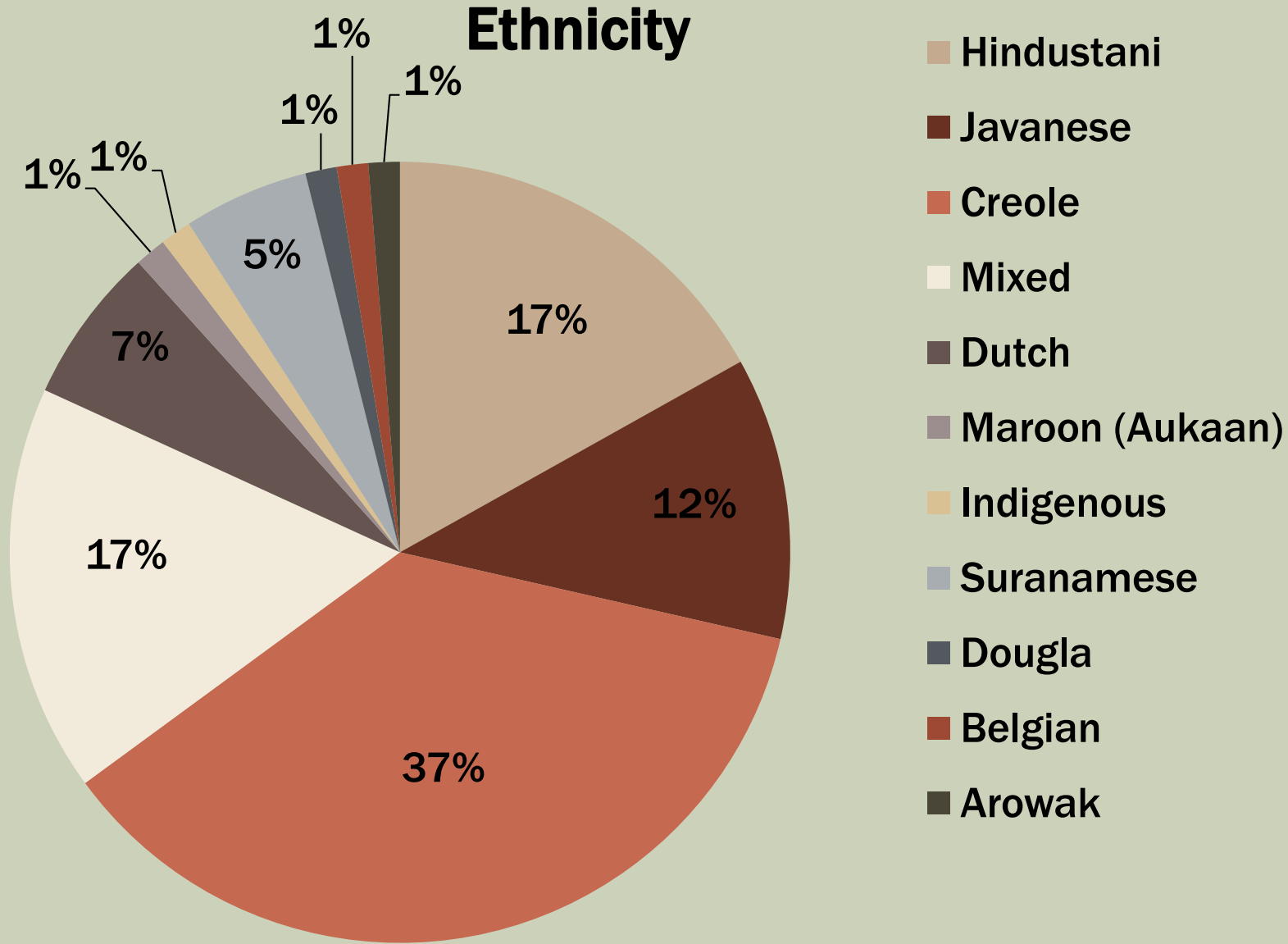
# METHODS

- 91 surveys distributed throughout Paramaribo
- 2 personal Interviews
- 1 group interview
- Participant observation
- Audio/video recordings
- Lead to filming of a documentary
- Helped with cultural setups for festivals

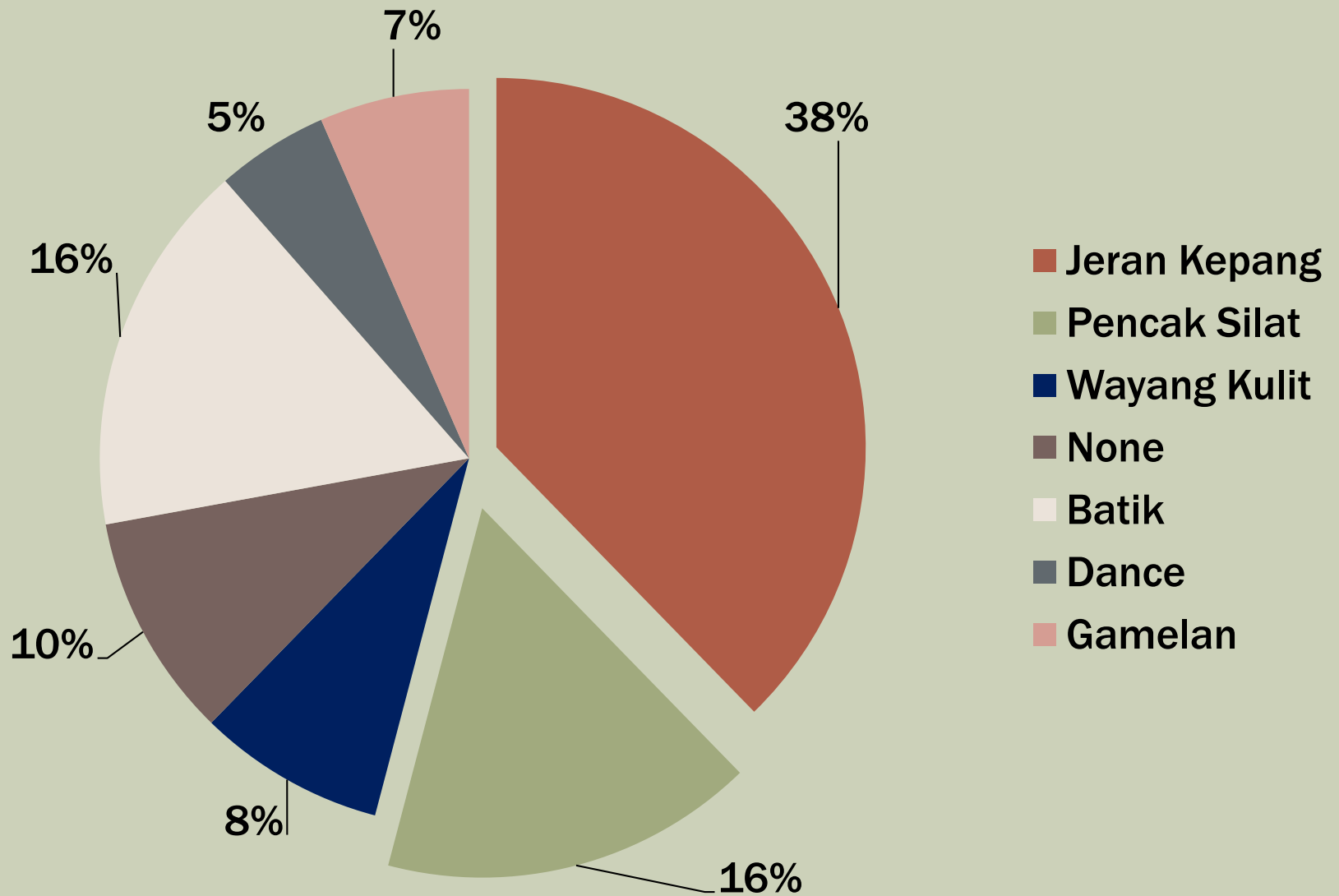
# FINDINGS

- Collected 91 surveys
- Surveyed a large age range spanning from 11-79
- 31 males (34.1%)
- 54 females (59.3%)
- 6 didn't state (6.6%)
- 10 different questions with one broken down into 11 listing recognizable arts.
- Included Sex, Age, Ethnicity, Religion, Languages Spoken, Recognized Art Forms, Favorite, 3 words to Describe Java Culture, Importance of Promotion of Java, and Unique Contributions

# Ethnicity



# Recognizable Arts



# SURVEY QUOTES

## Importance of promotion of Javanese culture?

- “It is very important for the youth.” (Hindustani)
- “It is of utmost importance, we as Javanese need to know where we come from, our identity.” (Javanese)
- “Very important integration for the community.” (Mixed)
- “It is very important because they can learn a lot about their culture that way.” (Surinamese)
- “Significant so that other groups can become familiar with our culture.” (Javanese)



# INTERVIEWS

**Why do you participate in pencak silat?**

- “...It makes me feel like we are the Javanese people who represent our culture to the community and the world.”  
(Marciano)

**How does your participation contribute to your sense of Javanese Identity in Suriname?**

- “Teach the new generations about our culture to keep the Javanese culture in Suriname alive.” (Jordan)

**What would you like us to share about your culture in the United States?**

- “...in Suriname the Javanese culture is not a hidden thing.. We try to share it with others...” (Dongelique)

# INTERVIEWS CONT.

**What 3 major contributions does Sana Budaya make to the larger Surinamese community?**

- “Teaching kids about the Javanese culture; teaching adults and outside of the Javanese community too.”



# CORRELATIONS/SIGNIFICANCE

- Throughout extensive information jeran kepang and pencak silat do preserve culture by

## Educating their youth

- This allows for traditions to stay alive even after globalization and diaspora.
- Creates a cycle for those generations to grow and teach.

## Community

- By embracing others they can share their culture
- Through this sharing, other ethnicities will
  - Understand
  - Respect Javanese culture
  - Be able to support it by participating in functions and events that keep culture preserved

# ■ Acknowledgements

- Aminata Cairo
- Kathryn Bently
- The entire Suriname group
- Members of the Javanese and other communities
- Anthropology department
- My parents for their support

# REFERENCES

- The World Fact Book,  
Geography and history of Suriname.  
<<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ns.html>>