

Covert Conflict among Fighters in Madiun According to the Perspective of Javanese Culture

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Prevalent fighting among schools (perguruan) led by Setia Hati Terate Brotherhood (PSHT) and Setia Hati Winongo (or Sedulur Tunggal Kecer (STK) in Madiun) has recently involved massive support, resulting in violence and casualties. The conflict arose from the differences in interpretation and claims of validity of SH ideology which has spread throughout Madiun. The root of the violence and inconvenience is inseparable from its historical background. The conflict among fighters from the two schools has spread to the grassroots and to date is causing hatred. Moreover, it has also been exacerbated by political interests and the struggle for an economic base. Both bases are different; SH Winongo is prevalent in towns, while SH Terate is prevalent in the countryside. In addition, there are differences in the development of ideology. SH Winongo is exclusive while SHT is open and is spreading throughout the community. With such a background there is an identity conflict in that both claim their own interpretation to be the truth. The claim of truth continues to occur so as to create discursive practices in which there is much blaming of each other. These claims are also supported by the agrarian culture of the local community and the ideology of pencak silat as a Javanese culture that is familiar in everyday life. The conflicts of fighters in Madiun are inseparable from the strong sense of brotherhood among fighters and pencak silat schools. The fighters define brotherhood as essential both in social life and in social interaction. A very strong sense of brotherhood eventually results in strong solidarity and an excessive struggle to maintain its symbols and this is the root of the conflict which is the focus of this paper.

Key words: *Fighters, brotherhood, violent conflict, and Kampong Pesilat Madiun.*

Introduction

Background of Problems

Pencaksilat schools have a culture of ancestral heritage in Indonesia and some of them are located in Madiun, i.e. *Setia Hati Terate* and *Setia Hati Tunas Muda Winongo*, *Kera Sakti*, *Rasa Tunggal*, *Panda Alas* and *Merpati Putih*. All Madiun residents have martial arts skills, especially young people. If they do not have them they are considered effeminate. One strong bond in *pencaksilat* is the brotherhood among fighters. If there is a fight among unrecognized fighters, a certain sign will be given which represents the school they belong to. If the sign given is the same, it means both fighters are from the same school and the fight does not proceed in accordance with an oath that has been taken; rather the fighters consider the encounter as if they have met with a sibling who has long been separated from them (Abdurahman: 1987, 5).

Conflict can be avoided if the clan upholds the principles of brotherhood in social interaction. Brotherhood in *Setia Hati* School aims to preserve the values of Javanese culture, create virtuous people and nurture an understanding of the difference between right and wrong. If someone has been recognized as a clan/fighter member then the sense of brotherhood will be more deeply embedded. The feeling of being in the same boat as fighters begins when practicing, conducting training materials in '*sambung*'. These things create an essential brotherhood among fighters (DinamikaKonflik, 1987) of the same school.

The significance of brotherhood in *Setia Hati* School is typical with Javanese culture as characterized by Javanese Islamic kingdoms and other major Indonesian kingdoms such as Majapahit and Singasari and seen in formal events such as in the celebration of a school's big days, on religious holiday, and in *Satu Suro*. The symbols and sense of brotherhood are shown in mass practice that is compliant with the directions of the leader trainers and this is the essential sense of the brotherhood demonstrated. Moreover, if there is a fighter/clan in difficult circumstances they get together to help and visit. If there is a fighter/clan member who dies and the blame is attributed to other parties (other *pencaksilat* schools), they will take revenge. This is the beginning of a conflict among fighters, in which their sense of brotherhood is tested by the disturbance caused by another school and in this context, vengeance is perceived as having been served in accordance with natural law or an eye for an eye (DinamikaKonflik: 2005, 7).

The conflict among fighters in defining brotherhood

Prevalent fighting among schools (*perguruan*) led by *Setia Hati Terate* Brotherhood (*PSHT*) and *Setia Hati Winongo* or *Sedulus Tunggal Kecer* (*STK*) in Madiun, recently has received massive supporter and resulted in violence and casualties. The conflict arose from differences in interpretation and claims of validity of *SH* ideology and has spread throughout Madiun. The

root of the violence and inconvenience is inseparable from its historical background. The conflict among fighters from the two schools has spread to the grassroots and, to date has caused hatred. Moreover, it has also been exacerbated by political interests and the struggle for an economic base. Both bases are different; *SH Winongo* is prevalent in town, while *SH Terate* is prevalent in the countryside. In addition, there are differences in the development of ideology. *SH Winongo* is exclusive while *SHT* is openly spreading *SH* in the community.

This is the background of identity conflict in which both schools claim their own perception of the truth which creates *discursive* practices where both sides blame each other. This claim is also supported by the agrarian culture of the local community and the ideology of *pencak silat* as a Javanese culture that is very much a part of everyday life. The presence of political interests in the *pencak silat* organization adds to the chain of conflict and makes the issues harder to resolve. The conflict among fighters from the two *pencak silat* schools results in their attempts to recruit as many members as possible to create an economic base. To overcome such conflict, the community is expected to actively support the police/army in upholding the law and acting against lawbreakers and not to support such parties.

Formulation of the Problems:

- (1) How is the brotherhood among fighters in *pencak silat* schools in Madiun formed?
- (2) How do the fighters define brotherhood in *pencak silat* schools in Madiun?

Research Objectives:

- (1) To determine the root of the conflict among fighters in *pencak silat* schools in Madiun;
- (2) To define brotherhood among clan and fighters of *pencak silat* schools in Madiun.

Research Significance:

In terms of its theoretical significance, this research is expected to generate new solutions related to the interaction and resolution of conflicts among fighters, especially in *pencak silat* brotherhoods in Madiun and establish an understanding of brotherhood among fellow fighters.

Significance for Government

The existence of a brotherhood between fighters/clan and the government will create solidarity and harmonization, preventing conflicts among fighters in Madiun. Therefore, Madiun could become an orderly, harmonious, safe, beautiful and clean region where citizens enjoy good fellowship. As social beings, upholding brotherhood can cause people to respect one other and is a mechanism to avoid differences in class and *pencak silat* schools and thus harmonious habitation as citizens.

Literature Review

The Concept of Pencak Silat

Pencak silat is one of the traditional martial arts that originates from Indonesian culture, especially Javanese culture and is widely known in Malaysia, Burma, the Southern Philippines and Southern Thailand as one that requires full of concentration. *Pencak silat* is a Javanese culture that has developed in society and as a sport, unified the nation, since each region has its own unique martial arts such as *SH*, *Merpati Putih*, *Pandan Alas*, *Cimande*, *Cikalong*, etc. (Sejarah IPSI, 2005). A *pencak silat* researcher, F. Draeger, argues that *pencak silat* can be evident from the artifacts and reliefs on the Prambanan and Borobudur temples and therefore *pencak silat* is of significant Indonesian ancestral heritage (Wikipedia, 2000). Sheik Samsudin (2001) argues that *pencak silat* in Indonesia was influenced by Chinese and Indian martial arts which was carried out by traders in the past. The definition of *pencak* is a game/skill where one defends oneself by parrying, avoiding and dodging (Hasan Alwi: 2008, 43). While *silat* is a sport/game that is based on dexterity, attack, and self-defense with or without weapons (Hasan Alwi: 2008, 306). Thus, *pencak silat* is the ability to fight and is a typical Indonesian martial art from requiring dexterity to defend and attack.

Abdus Syukur (in Sucipta 2001: 26-28) defines *pencak silat* as a movement with beautiful steps and dodging that can be seen as a comedy or form of entertainment. *Silat* is a martial art with elements of parrying, dodging and attacking which can be displayed in public. According to the Indonesian *Pencak Silat* Organization (*Ikatan Pencak Silat Indonesia, IPSI*), *pencak silat* is the product of Indonesian culture in self-defense, maintaining the existence of the nation, independence, and integrity/unity towards nature and surrounding environment to survive in order to maintain faith to the Almighty God. While according to Atok Iskandar, the objectives of *pencak silat* include self-defense, maintaining independence, and integrity/unity towards the environment, with the elements of self-defense, sport, and spirituality. *Pencak silat* is a sports that forms a whole person, to make them healthy, strong, skilled, agile, patient, calm, of 'knight' spirit and high self-confidence (Blog-pelajaransekolah blog sport.com 2013/05 pencak silat).

The Meaning of Brotherhood in Pencak Silat Schools

a. Brotherhood

Pencak silat does not only train gymnastics and moves, but more importantly, the use of those moves in a fight called '*sambung*'. The '*sambung*' often results in minor to severe injuries but the injuries lead to strengthened brotherhood. In a broad sense, brotherhood transcends ethnic, racial, customary, religious, social backgrounds and so on. Furthermore, brotherhood hierarchically means seeking mutual understanding and building a fellowship of optimal collaboration which essentially means fulfilling the duties of the caliphate.

With the concept of brotherhood, we expect an essential brotherhood and true equality that does not discriminate people by gender, origin, ethnicity, skin colour, historical background, social status, economic status, physical things and religion considering that we all are Ki Ngabehi Soerodiwirjo (*SH*) protégés. Our cultural and religious values teach courtesy, compassion and gentleness. These qualities should be followed by mankind and the noble character of the Prophet Muhammad is undoubtedly good both for friends and foes. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is an ideal figure who deserves to be following as does his brotherhood. With his gentleness, he was able to deliver an interesting sermon. History has proven the Prophet Muhammad always managed to overcome his interlocutors and that even they were interested in consciously converting to Islam (Haq, 2010: 231).

“Fostering relationship among fellow Muslims on the basis of a strong sense of solid brotherhood”.

This is evidence of a prioritization of shared interests, the experience of being in the same boat thus creating true brotherhood. Brotherhood can also be implemented in the form of social solidarity in life. According to Achmad Sidiq (General Committee of Nahdlatul Ulama, *PBNU*), there are 3 types of brotherhood: *ukhuwah Islamiyah*, *ukhuwah wathaniyah*, and *ukhuwah insyaniah* or *ukhuwah Basyariah* (Fadeli: 2012, 218).

A brief history of *SH*

In 1903, located in Tambak Gringsing village, Surabaya, Ki Ngabehi Soerodiwirjo formed a brotherhood whose members were called “*Sedulur Tunggal Ketjer*” while the play of *pencak silat* was called “*Djojo Gendilo*”. In 1912, Ki Ngabehi Soerodiwirjo stopped working. He was disappointed since his boss failed to keep promises and this unpleasant circumstance arose as the Dutch East Indies government began to suspect that he had thrown a Dutch East Indies sailor into the river and formed a *pencak silat* organization as a self-defense. Moreover, Ki Ngabehi Soerodiwirjo was a brave man and the Dutch East Indies government worried that Ki Ngabehi Soerodiwirjo would form a force against them. After leaving his job, he went to Tegal. In 1914, Ki Ngabehi returned to Surabaya and worked in Djawatan Kereta Api Kalimas, and in 1915, he went to a train station in Madiun. In Madiun, he revived the *Setia Hati* Brotherhood he had formed in Surabaya, “*Sedulur Tunggal Ketjer*”, but the play of *pencak silat* was then called “*Djojo Gendilo Tjipto Muljo*” and in 1917, the name was changed to “*Setia Hati* Brotherhood”.

One militant, tough protégé of Ki Ngabehi Soerodiwirjo, Ki Hadjar Hardjo Oetomo, argued the need for an organization to organize and discipline both members and subject matters of *Setia Hati*. For this purpose, he asked for the blessing of Ki Ngabehi Soerodiwirjo to perform the duties and obligations of a protégé, while the teacher’s duties were “to teach the knowledge



of *SH*” and advise him not to use the name of *SH* first. Ki Ngabehi Hardjo Oetomo developed *SH* under the name *Pencak Silat Club* (PSC). Since he was not sure about the name that did not represent *SH*, he met Ki Sura again and receiving permission to use the name *SH* to make a difference, so that the name *Pencak Silat Club* by Ki HadjarHardjoOetomo was changed to *Setia Hati Muda* (*SHM*).

Ki HardjoOetomo developed *SH* in several existing schools such as Budi Oetomo School and Taman Siswa School. In teaching *SH*, he mentioned a life principle: “We do not want to oppress others as we do not want to be oppressed by others”. At that time, the training was forbidden and as the Dutch patrolled, it was carried out clandestinely. Later, they became strong fighters who bravely opposed the Dutch invaders. Seeing the track record of Ki HardjoOetomo, the Dutch arrested him and some of his protégés and sent him to Digul twice. In addition, the Dutch politicized *SH Muda* with *SH Merah* of communism. Thus, the Dutch government cornered *SH* with communism in the hope that people would hate and fear *Setia Hati* (*SH*). Responding to the Dutch which politicized *SH Muda* with *SH Merah*, Ki HadjarHardjoOetomo declared a new name, “*Setia HatiTerate Brotherhood*” which, to date, remains.

Theoretical Review

The Symbolic Interactionism Theory

The symbolic interactionism theory emphasizes the understanding of meaning by means of empathy to an individual’s social activity as part of the activities that already exist in society. There are various meanings that can be elaborated from every interaction and as a result, the activity can give rise to various interpretations. Therefore, this theory prefers to understand real activities that individual behaviour is not a product of environmental pressure or stimulus coming from outside but rather, the result of how the individual interprets and manages various kinds of things in his/her behaviour.

The basic concept of the symbolic interaction theory is interaction or reciprocal relation; this interaction can occur if contact and communication are present. Blumer and Ritzer (1992: 76) state that:

“The elements contained in an interaction consist of event, statement, phenomenon, and process. Of which these four elements are inseparable to analyze behavior primarily concerning on meaning. Every behavior has its own meaning for a group of people and put as a pattern in responding to behavior by members of the group.”

Noeng Muhajir (1994) adds that in symbolic interaction, contact about self is an essential part. According to him, self is not considered to be present in individual as ego, needs, norms, motives and values. However, self is the definition that people create through interaction about



who he/she is. Shaping or defining one's self is conducted by interpreting gestures or actions by putting oneself in the role of others.

Arnold Rose concludes Symbolic Interaction as follows:

1. Humans live in an environment of symbols and respond to these symbols as humans respond to physical stimulus. However, the understanding of symbols is the learning result of living in a society.
2. Through symbols, humans are capable of stimulating or driving other people in ways that may be different from the stimulus that others receive.
3. Through communication from these symbols, a number of meanings can be learned which later can be used to interpret the ways people act.
4. The symbols of meaning and values associated with them are not only captured in separate parts but also in broad and complex groups. There are group units that have the same symbols which became group symbols.
5. Thinking is a symbolic process of finding possibilities and for learning future actions by providing alternatives, and choosing one to do.

Research Method

This research used qualitative method by collecting data through observation, interviews and documentation. While the data sources included fighters, trainers, academics and public figures. The Huberman and Miles' theory is used for data analysis. The following research stages were conducted: Data Collection, Data Reduction, Data Display and Conclusion/Verification. The data validity included member checking, data triangulation, transferability, dependency, confirmability, perseverance, extended observation and negative case analysis.

Discussion

By conducting in-depth interviews, the researcher obtained various data findings from all informants. In collecting data, the researcher was assisted by several informants included fighters, trainers, and public figures, from the beginning of the conflict to post-conflict. Further, the researcher also explored data about the significance of the brotherhood among fighters in finding solutions to the conflict. According to symbolic interactionism theory as a theory in the sociology paradigm of the definition of social, symbolic interaction theory sees an individual as a creative actor, who does not simply receive social facts and stimulus coming from outside themselves, but the further actions of an actor which contain subjective meaning as a result of the positive influence of certain situations.

In Herbert Blumer's opinion cited by George Ritzer (1992: 48), there are three basic principles developed by the theory of symbolic interaction in understanding social phenomena: *First*,

individual responds to something in his environment by its meaning for himself; *Second*, the meaning is given based on social interaction undertaken by other individuals; and *Third*, the meaning is understood and modified by individual in interpretive processes relating to the things he encounters. These three basic principles are framed by a basic assumption that every individual is able to see himself as he sees others; an individual is not passive, meaning that he has the ability to understand the situations in his life. This pattern of interaction is developed by individuals in their social activity, especially by how they interpret life situations. The interpretation of the subject of social environment results in defining himself which is further developed through social interaction with other subjects, so that creativity and innovation emerge to improve the pattern.

The symbolic interactionism theory emphasizes the understanding of meaning by means of empathy to an individual's social activity as part of the activities that already exist in society. There are various meanings that can be elaborated from every interaction and as a result, the activity can give rise to various interpretations. Therefore, this theory prefers to understand real activities that individual behaviour is not a product of environmental pressure or stimulus coming from outside but rather the result of how the individual interprets and manages various kinds of things in his/her behaviour. The basic concept of the symbolic interaction theory is interaction or reciprocal relation; this interaction can occur if contact and communication are present.

The data findings represented that there was a conflict among *pencaksilat* schools involving fighters of one brotherhood, namely Ki Ngabehi Soeradiwirjo, better known as *eyangSura*. The conflict of the two schools was manifested by the appearance of symbols that they were superior as a means of communication with the community by the true *eyangSura* protégés and shown in social behaviour. After conducting in-depth interviews, the researcher obtained various data findings from all informants. In collecting data, the researcher was assisted by several informants included fighters, trainers, and public figures, from the beginning of the conflict to post-conflict. Further, the researcher also explored data about the significance of the brotherhood among fighters in finding solutions to the conflict.

The events are displayed en masse, where symbols of organization, movement, flag and monument in the place considered their territory are the meanings of interaction between fighters and society and their competitors and emphasise that self is substantial, it exists and is the biggest and greatest influence. The expressions of fighters in every performance in the community through massive movement are the expressions of meaning that arise, coming from the deepest heart as the senses of brotherhood, attachment and belonging of the fighters. This mass mobilization is the way fighters communicate social culture with their competitors and wider community. Thus, they want to be recognized, respected and honoured as belonging to the *pencaksilat* schools that exist in Madiun. Such social communication as a means used to

show group existence to the public is still hugely prevalent, potent, and is a feature of claiming that the relevant school is the best, the greatest and the biggest in Madiun. This is in accordance with the symbolic interaction theory.

Findings

The data findings are that there was a conflict among *pencak silat* schools involving fighters of one brotherhood, namely Ki Ngabehi Soeradiwirjo, better known as *eyangSura*. The conflict of the two schools was manifested by the appearance of symbols as a means of communication with the community that they were superior as the true *eyangSura* protégés and are demonstrated in social behaviour. Symbols of territory are built in certain places, like a portal that symbolizes a specific school, where the location belongs to certain *pencaksilat* group. Generally, these symbols contain ideological and political meaning. Therefore, the symbol of a monument is the fighters' way of communication to others and the community that the area is their territory. The meaning of brotherhood is shown by fighters in social interaction at the convoys in Madiun. The convoy represents meaning that they interact socially with the community through the symbols of the organization and ego. Here is the self of the "clan". This is in line with Arnold Roose's opinion.

Conclusion

1. Humans live in an environment of symbols and respond to these symbols as physical stimulus. However, the understanding of symbols is subsequent to learning as a result of living in a society.
2. Through symbols, humans are capable of stimulating or driving other people in ways that may be different from the stimulus that others receive.
3. Through communication from these symbols, a number of meanings can be learned which later can be used to interpret the ways people act.
4. The symbols of meaning and values associated with them are not only captured in separate parts, but also in broad and complex groups. There are group units that have the same symbols which became group symbols.
5. Thinking is a symbolic process of finding possibilities and for learning future actions by providing alternatives and choosing one to action.

Suggestions

1. The data findings present that there was a conflict among *pencaksilat* schools involving fighters of one brotherhood, namely Ki NgabehiSoeradiwirjo, better known as *eyangSura*. The conflict of the two schools was manifested by the appearance of symbols as a means of



communication with the community that they were superior and the true *eyangSura* protégés as demonstrated in social behaviour.

2. Symbols of territory are built in certain places, like a portal that symbolizes a specific school, where the location belongs to certain *pencaksilat* group. Generally, these symbols contain ideological and political meaning. Therefore, the symbol of monument is the fighters' way of communication to others and the community that the area is their territory.

3. The meaning of brotherhood is shown by fighters in social interaction at the convoys in Madiun. The convoy represents meaning that they interact socially with the community through the symbols of the organization and ego and this is the self of the "clan".



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