



Research Article

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The Social Movement against the Human Right: The Case of Massacre over the Masters of Sibir in the Regency of Banyuwangi 1998

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Abstracts

Political transition from autocracy to democracy may produce paradoxes. Political succession in Indonesia may be the case in point. The anxiety over massive demonstration, riots and violence often over shadow political successions at the local, regional as well as national level support the above proposition. This article represents a research-based report on one of the most controversial collective violence relates to the monetary crisis 1997-1998 which brought the termination of autocratic era of Soeharto's regime in May 1998. Since February 1998, in the Regency of Banyuwangi broke out a spiral collective action among the people. Hundreds of local-religious teachers are reportedly to have been killed by an undercover actors called "ninja." All these phenomena have led to unanswered questions why the massacre against they the Master of Sibir is justified? What do they perceive of the violence? Who did it and how? Who, why and how they do it. As the violence continues almost throughout the year, the report is worth delivering. The aim of this article is to provide a research-based theoretical answers to the question of the nature of violence, the actors, the targets, and modus operandi of the violence. The research was conducted from 2002 to 2005 in the Regency of Banyuwangi and the surrounding areas. The method by which the research was exploratory in kind. Data was collected through snow balling technique while the perspective of the analysis is political sociology. The result shows hundreds of villagers have become victims of the violence most of whom, are village dwellers who are alleged the Master of Sibir. Most of the actors of the violence, if not all, are neighbours who share the believe that magic is benevolent while at the same time is malevolent. Accordingly, they perceive of those who were named the Master of Sibir paradoxically as foe and friend at the sane time. The violence vary degree starting from destruction of house or property, social isolation, expel from the village, and assassination. In conclusion, the chaotic political transition has given a room for the society to produce and reproduce violence. People may say that any violence is against human rights but, for this people, not to the Master of Sibir. For them, violation against the Master of Sibir is socially and politically justified, fair and acceptable.

Keywords: Social Movement, Human Right, Massacre, Sibir, Banyuwangi

1. Introduction

In Indonesia, almost all political succession from one regime to another is coloured by communal violence. The succession of President Soekarno to President Soeharto in 1965 was coloured by massacre over hundred thousands of members or just followers of the Indonesia Communist Party (PKI) by moslems. Likewise the termination of Soeharto as the President in 1998 was also coloured by demonstration, riots and violence in many where of the big cities in the country. The destruction of social orders and values by mass rallies, Chinese-owned mall burnings, systematic rape over girls and women of the shop keepers and other varieties of social unrests coloured some of the big

cities in Java. Jakarta burning as well as violence against Chinese ethnic origins seem not to be too surprising as similar affairs like riots in 1974 (Malapetaka Lima Belas Januari 1974/Malari, 1974) had occurred before. What is more surprising is that the collective violence also broke out between the villagers in the Regency of Banyuwangi and the surrounding areas which are about 1000 kilometers away from the central government in Jakarta. This article is a research-based report on the case.

Collective violence in this context can be defined as a series of actions against humanity committed by a community or group of people collectively intended just to hurt, to cause physical injury or even to kill some body or group of people who were accused to have practiced black magic against some body. The Regency of Banyuwangi is one regency locates in the east end of Java island. The Regency of Banyuwangi covers $\pm 5.782,50$ kilo meters square or approximately 12 % of the whole area of East Java. Besides, the regency has coastal line as long as 175,8 kilometers with 10 islands (from: http://www.syncOnConnect_time=1177956727). Geographic position of the Regency of Banyuwangi lays between the coordinates of $7^{\circ} 43' - 8^{\circ} 46'$ South Longitude (SL) and $113^{\circ} 53' - 114^{\circ} 38'$ East Latitude (EL). This regency is adjacent to some such neighbouring regencies as the regency of Situbondo in the North, Bali Strait in the East, Indian Ocean in the South and both the Regency of Jember and the Regency of Bondowoso in the West.

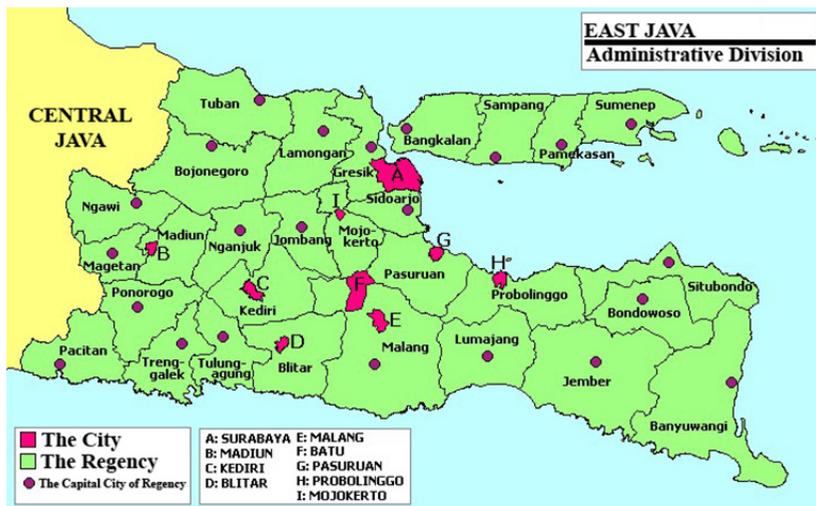


Figure 1: Map of East Java

Source: http://www.syncOnConnect_time=1177956727

Discourse of effectiveness of magic to meet human interest is widely shared by many, if not most, population. In such a way people believe that things, condition, event, good luck, bad luck and so on relate to the practice of magic purposefully conducted by someone. In the Regency of Banyuwangi a man who masters black magic is known as a shaman with a specific local term the Master of Sihir (Tukang Sihir) or Master of Santet (Tukang Santet) depends upon the kind of magic he or she manages. Social tension between people always reveals in the daily life resulted from the discourse. Under such a circumstance a specific tension exists between people because of the existence of *the Master of Sihir* and/or *the Master of Santet*.

When national politics was fraught with tensions due to the monetary crisis there broke out violence in Banyuwangi. While the violence escalates, the role of government declines. The government has been perceived of playing only a minor role in eradicating the violence. The violence lasts within months and wide spreads throughout the regency and the surrounding areas and confusion develops in such a way. Unfortunately, the social tension escalated together with growing number of spontaneous private teams of fact-finding (TFFs) which release data and interpretation of

the situation subjectively based for the sake of their own interest. In effect, together with publication of issues and rumors by the mass medias social tension in the area uncontrollably escalates.

Table 1: Report by Mass Medias on the Victims of the Violence in the Regency of Banyuwangi 1998

The Team of Fact Finding (TFF)	The Victims		
	NU	PPP	Others
Joint Team of NU ¹			163
Jawa Pos (JP) ²			108
NU - Banyuwangi ³			90
NU - Banyuwangi ⁴	96		52
NU - Banyuwangi ⁵	98		44
NU ⁶	83		65
TFF Independen ⁷			178
KOMPAS ⁸	96	5	
TFF NU ⁹			178
TFF of the PKS ¹⁰ (The Party of Justice)			114
Police ¹¹			85
Drs. Khoiril Anam, Head of DPD PKB, PW NU East Java ¹²	253 (70% NU)		

Source: Publication by various mass media, 1998.

Further, reportedly that the violence not only broke out in the Regency of Banyuwangi but also in other regencies in East Java.

Table 2: Fact Finding of TFF Independent

The Regency	The Victim		
	Wounded	Expelled/Flee Homes	Dead
Banyuwangi	8	6	114
Jember	18		4
Bondowoso			4
Situbondo			4
Lumajang			1
Probolinggo	2		3
Bangkalan			6
Sampang			12
Pamekasan	21		10
Sumenep			21
Total	49	6	175

Source: Jawa Pos, 26 October, 1998

¹ Jawa Pos, 'Korban ...' 8 October, 1998

² Jawa Pos, 'Ketika...' 8 October, 1998

³ Jawa Pos, 'Mengapa,' 15 October, 1998

⁴ Jawa Pos, 'Mengapa,' 15 October, 1998

⁵ D & R, No 11\XXX\31; Week II of October, 1998

⁶ D & R, No 11\XXX\31; Week II of October, 1998

⁷ Jawa Pos, 'Suka Duka ...' 26 October 1998

⁸ KOMPAS, Editorial, 23rd October, 1998

⁹ TEMPO, 27 Oct – 2nd November 1998

¹⁰ TEMPO, 27 Oct – 2nd November 1998

¹¹ TEMPO, 27 Oct – 2nd November 1998

¹² Jawa Pos, 'NU Siap Bawa...' 1 December 1998

Although no data of number of victims from the TFF can be relied on, it can be trusted that violence between village dwellers within this period of political transition also broke out also in the surrounding regencies. The questions to be answered by this research is why the massacre against the Master of Sihir is seemed to be justified? Who did it and how they did it? What do the people perceive of the violence? The purpose of this research is to describe the massacre against the Master of Sihir took place in the Regency of Banyuwangi starting from February to October 1998. The data is collected through snow balling technique within exploratory research.

2. Previous Study

The bombastic publication on the massacre in the Regency of Banyuwangi and around has provoked speculation among the people at various level. First, based on his research in the Regency of Banyuwangi, Douglas Kammen. On Group Discussion on "Violence and Mass Media" held by Lembaga Studi Perubahan Sosial (LSPS), Tuesday, 3rd July 1998 in di Surabaya Kammen came up with conclusion that the root of violence is economic factor, mainly, wide economic gap between the "have" and the "have nots" (Douglas Kammen, *KOMPAS*, Wednesday, 4 July 2001). The gap emanates from an event distribution of land. The monetary crisis becomes a triggering factor which directly hit the have nots of the peasant community of Banyuwangi and the surround. "The price of general commodities inclines while their purchase capability declines. *What we understand as effects of the monetary crisis in Banyuwangi the crisis was perceived of bad luck caused by the shaman.*" The monetary crisis worsened because it comes together with natural disaster of El Nino (drought) and La Nina (flood) which have caused failure to the harvest.

The second analysis comes from Sukidin. Briefly, based on his research he finds that the massacre against the Master of Sihir was caused by such social reasons as retaliation due a personal matter, accusation, jealousy, and so on. The assault may be taken spontaneously by organised brawls, or by hired man which in the context of Banyuwangi famously named as "ninja." Thus, the killing may start from both personal reason and/or bad social construct of the shaman as the common-enemy (Sukidin, 2007, Ph.D Dissertation). This research is in line with explanation relates to collective violence made by Hoffer who said that the collective violence is triggered by subjective relation, symbolic, imaginary and even magical.

Thirdly, analysis made by James Siegel. (James Siegel, 2006). In his first book, *Witch Hunts* (James Siegel, 2001) Siegel sees massacre against the witch or is due to the state failure to maintain both the state – society relations and internal relations between members of society. Under such a circumstance, the culture of fear which was maintained by Soeharto's regime against the revival of Indonesia's Communist Party (the PKI) was manipulated in such a way by the people to become anxiety over the witch or the Master of Sihir. Thus, the massacre against the Master of Sihir represents an anxiety by the society against a group of their own members.

In 2006, Siegel published his second book under title of *Naming the Witch*. Similar to what he wrote previously, in this book Siegel explores stories around violence against the Master of Sihir in the Regency of Banyuwangi and elsewhere in East Java during the time of transition of power from Soeharto. After some years of studying ethnography Siegel criticizes that so far anthropological explanation relates to magic to much depends on sociological explanation.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Result

Exploration of 70 victims sporadically throughout the Regency of Banyuwangi has confirmed that what violence in Banyuwangi 1998 was a collective violence village by dwellers against those who had been perceived as specific shaman before they were executed. Most, if not all the victims were labeled as black sorcerers which technically in the village local term is called the Master of Sihir. Effects of this violence varies in degree. Subsequently, the violence may result in destruction of properties including houses, flee homes, and killings. Based on the modus operandi of violence from Tom Douglas, the fact can be described as follows (Tom Douglas, 1986).

Tabel 3: Form of Violence

The Form of Violence	The Effect					
	Stigma	House/Property Destroyed	Swear	Physical Injury	Expelled/Flee Homes	Dead
Coordinated Destruction						
Organisational Outcomes						
Violent Ritual						
Dispersed Resistance						
Opportunism						
Brawls						
Individual Agression						

Note: Yellow for 1 victim; Green for 2 victims; Blue for 3 – 4 victims; Red for ≥ 5 victims;

Accordingly, the action is appropriately called violence because it fulfils three indicators namely behavior which is meant to hurt or kill people, a great deal of energy such as anger, or other forms of expression which are critical or destructive. These indicators are in line with definition of violence of Wessel & George Wimhofer which covers 'physical repression...with the burning and destruction of buildings, mass rape, and murder' (Ingrid Wessel & George Wimhofer, eds, Aber Verlag Markus Voss 8). Moreover, the actions also apply to collective violence or massacre according to Gurr's definition "All collective attacks within a political community against the political regime, its actors – including competing political groups as well as incumbent – or its policies. The concept represents a set of events, a common property of which is the actual or threatened use of violence....The concept subsumes revolution ...guerilla war, coups d' etat, and riots" (Ted R. Gurr, 2000).

3.1.1 Chronology

The collective violence against the Master of Sihir in the Regency of Banyuwangi occurred sporadically within 8 months, starting from February to October 1998. Chronologically, the violence can be described as shown in the table below.

Table 4: The Chronology of Violence

The Year 1998	The Number of Victims	The Tendency
February - June		5 victims, sporadic within the Regency of Banyuwangi
July - August		4 victims, sporadic & widespread outside Banyuwangi.
September		1 – 2 victims each day. Sporadic & widespread outside the Regency of Banyuwangi.
October		1 – 2 each day victims. sporadic & widespread outside the Regency of Banyuwangi.

3.1.2 Locus

The collective violence in 1998 broke out sporadical, but mostly within a community famously called the Using Ethnic group.



Figure 2: The Distribution of Settlement of Based on Ethnic Grouping

Based on the number of accident it is clear that most of the violence broke out within social community of Using-Ethnic group. The map of accident below may describe the location.



Figure 3: Locus of Violence in the Regency of Banyuwangi

3.2 Discussion

The discussion in this part focuses on socio-anthropological process and bases of collective violence against those who are socially constructed as the Master of Sihir and/or the Master of Santet by their community.

Violence represents conflict. What causes any single conflict may start from attitude (A), behaviour (B) which can be associated as doing black magic called sihir and/or santet, or contradiction (C) such as a belief in magic which provokes a dilemma of some body personality (Johan Galtung, 1996). Further, exploration of cases of violence in the Regency of Banyuwangi depicts the conflicts constitute a spiral violence. While one particular conflict has not been entirely resolved another conflict appears. By the time the conflict gets bigger in scale like a snowing ball rolling down from top of the hill.

Under such a circumstance, collective violence or massacre against the Masters of Sihir in 1998 in the Regency of Banyuwangi can be described as a conflict resulted from a dynamic power relations among elements of the society. In order to get description of socio-anthropology of the massacre, firstly, based on the locus where the accident occurred it can be assured that almost all cases occurred in the villages of Using ethnic group. Only 2 out of 70 cases found in the city. In general the condition of Using community can be described as poor people in term economy, education and politics who live in the mid of a very fertile agriculture plateau of mount Ijen. Only 2 out of 70 cases found in the city. Further exploration to every single case indicates that both the actors of killing and the targets of massacre are dwellers of the same village. They actors are not the outsiders, military, nor other group of people. They have different occupation such as peasant, motor bike taxi driver, and other form of self employed entrepreneur such as carpenter or small-scale businessman

Based on the concept of generative structuralism of Bourdieu, the massacre against those who have been socially alleged Master of Sihir can be seen as a praxis or result of a dynamic process of power struggle within a social arena called village daily life. Within the arena occurs struggle for power, bidding and/or maneuver of every single actor to win access to limited access or scarce resources. Here in this arena all elements of society put capitals of their own on the table for developing strategies. The ultimate purpose of this habitus is to win social distinction (Richard Harker, eds, 1990). Religious figure, teacher, village headman, security apparatus, land lord, shaman and others compete each other within a dynamic rivalries in order to win the better social position. The rivalry does not occur limitedly between different occupation such as between the peasant and the civil servant, but also between people of the same position. A farmer Vs farmer, a peasant Vs peasant, a religious teacher Vs religious teacher, and so on, so it also applies to individuals, families, and neighbours.

The success or failure in the struggle of scarce resource is very much dependent upon two factors that is the capital which he or she puts in the arena and habitus he or she develops. Principally, the capital can be separated into four categories that is economic capital such as money, social capital such as social relations, cultural capital such as science or knowledge, and symbolic capital such as social prestige. Possibly, some elements of society have all these four kind of capitals. However, a thorough observation of these social environment, especially around the places where the violence occurred shows that at the average people only have limited capitals. Instead of being wealthy, they live under poverty line within subsistent social environment where applies moral economy of the subsistence level of subsistent society. It is far from exaggeration to say that level of subsistence of Using community is more or less equivalent to the level of subsistence of peasant of Vietnam in Scott's report of his research (James C. Scott, 1977). In different report, Scott also concludes that it was subsistence condition which has led the peasant to rebellion (James C. Scott, 1987). In the case of Banyuwangi, however, the conflict is between the peasant against the Master of Sihir instead of the peasant against the farmer or the land owner.

For such a long time the village life has been very much influenced by macro political-economic policy. For the sake of political stability of the regime, there exists political-economic policy in the form of control of price of nine basic needs (Sembilan Bahan Pokok or Sembako) such as rice. The rice which represents main product of the farmer is just one among nine commodities

the price of which is under tight control of the government policy. Since the very beginning, the regime of New Order under President Soeharto has put the selling price of rice under control of political-economic policy of the New Order Regime. Instead of market mechanism the government imposes on market operation. For the sake of political stability the government keeps the rice price always under a set up the selling price. Under such a circumstance, the political-economic policy on the basic price constitutes a great wall which is almost impossible to break by the farmers. The farmer will never get higher price of their product even though the country is in the condition of under supply of the rice. Given the fact there exists justification to imposition of such a policy, effect of this policy on the village life is apparent. Hardly ever the farmers enjoy higher price in this kind of market-operation system. Sadly, the price of commodities other than rice is not controlled as the rice price. It is understandable if, under such circumstance, rivalry among members of the village to survive becomes tougher. In order to get social distinction, individuals must develop habitus to assure that the capitals which he or she puts on the table can successfully maintain their social distinction in the arena.

The habitus may vary. Most commonly, efficiency and productivity is conducted through putting more pressure in the weight and profit sharing. Like what had been reported by Kammen, profit sharing between the farmer and the peasant which in 1960s was 70:30, becomes 90:10. In 1990s there exists additional income the some of IDR 5000,- as the price for every presence in the working day. The peasant can not refuse such a thing due to their weaker bargaining position against the farmer or the land owner. Once the peasant rejects the job being offer, they may loose working opportunity because it may have been taken by some body else.

Both the farmer and the peasant are not the only elements of the village. There still exists other element in the Regency of Banyuwangi, called the Master of Magic. Due to quite number of this element, they represent a social element which can not be disobeyed (Inez Mahony, 2002). Most of them are self employed with different occupations such as motor bike taxi driver or running small scale business. However, their mastering of magic craft seems to be promising for income generating. By managing magic craft some one may offer service and eventually get payment in return. By managing skill of the magic craft, some one may also get social distinction among the society.

In the beginning of 1997 Indonesia was suffering from monetary crisis. The crisis was once and foremost indicated by a sharp decline in the exchange rate of Indonesia's currency. In fact, between 1989 to 1996 Indonesia's economy was fairly strong and impressive. The reserved device of the country in 1993 was around US \$ 21 billion. Annual economic growth during that time reached 7% and people enjoyed relatively high income per capita to the sum of US\$1000.00. In March 1993 the government launched IDR. 50.000 which was equivalent US \$ 25. But starting from early 1997 Indonesia together with such neighbouring countries as Malaysia, Thailand and South Korea were hit by a devastating monetary crisis. The crisis begun earlier in Europe, USA and Japan but the spiral effect of the crisis was world wide. In effect, in 22nd January 1998 the value of IDR. 50.000,- declined to only US\$ 2.94 although in June 1999 the value of money slightly increased to US\$ 7.46. Strives are made by the government to rescue the national economy from the monetary crisis. The crisis worsened, however, and developed into economic crisis and eventually resulted in the termination of President Soeharto from the office.

The monetary crisis 1997-1998 resulted in two effects, economy and politics. First, economy. The monetary crisis not only hit the urban people in the city, but also the village life and all over the country. Indeed, it is hard for those who believe in magic such as the peasant in the Regency of Banyuwangi to relate the crisis in the country to the international problems.

The Using group is one community among communities in the Regency of Banyuwangi who strongly believe in the existence of magic. Those who have been familiar with the daily life of the Using community, can easily find peculiar indicators relate to people believe in magic. These indicators can be found in many places of their properties like plantation, house, gate, room doors or in things stick up in their body such as belt, wallet even though some time unseen because planted in their specific organ of the body (Michael Hopes, 1997).

In their perception magic Based on the symbolization of the magic, it is not only divided dichotomically between the black and the white. Instead, it is like a continuous between black and

white end. Between the black and the white magic there exist another two kinds of magic. Closed to the black magic there exists the red magic while closed to the white magic there exists the yellow magic. Every single symbol denotes to a specific function and degree of positive and negative effectivity. The black magic is believed to be most malevolent while the white magic is most benevolent. The other two kinds of magic functions in accordance to its position to the black or to the white magic (Feelix Keesing, 1964). The easiest way for them to understand the crisis is by associating the bad luck and the good luck of life they were facing with magic exercise by those who master the magic craft. Here the social movement began by framing the Master of Sihir as a prima facie to the worsening deprivation (Dough McAdam, et al, 2004). Accordingly, the Master of Sihir must be blamed up and executed. For some people, associating the good luck or the bad luck with magic may be illogical, but not for the Using community. Most of 70 cases of violence against the Master of Sihir, if not all, is preceded by magic-related allegation. Violence against the Master of Sihir has, accordingly, been perceived of justified retaliation based on their believe in magic no matter of religious norms, social values, the law, nor universal human rights.

The second effect of the monetary crisis is politics. In fact, in the Regency of Banyuwangi people's anger towards the Master of Sihir has existed as long as their believe in magic. If they do not initiate violence against the Master of Sihir earlier, it is nothing but because political control imposed on by the regime of Soeharto which has successfully put pressure on conflict potentials between conflicting parties of the society. Nevertheless, the weakening control of the state resulted from the monetary crisis is inevitable. The monetary crisis is seen as a golden opportunity by the peasant to retaliate against the Master of Sihir. As they do not want to miss the opportunity, they organised clandestine groups consisting of the village dwellers as mobilising structure to execute.

4. Conclusion

The massacre of the Master of Sihir in the Regency of Banyuwangi 1998 was social movement perceived by those who were committed to retaliation as a justified. The cause of social movement deeply roots in two grounds, economic deprivation and the believe in magic. The execution of those who have been framed as Master of Sihir is justified due to prolong economic deprivation, and failures experienced by the people in their daily life. The potentials of movement eventually found their opportunity in the period of monetary crisis 1997 – 1998. The weak position of the state has allowed the society to launch retaliation or challenge against the symbolic power of the Master of Sihir. Here, clandestine groups constitute mobilizing structures from within the society for executing their interest. Eventually, collective violence occurred in a dynamic power relations between elements of the society. The ultimate goal of this collective action is retaking power from the hand of Master of Sihir. Under such a circumstance, violation against the Master of Sihir is socially justified no matter of against the human right principles. This is one of paradoxes resulted from the process of political change leading towards democracy.

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