

INTERETHNIC RELATIONSHIP AND SOCIAL HARMONY: SOCIAL INTERACTION BETWEEN MADURESE AND OTHER ETHNICS IN SUMENEP REGENCY

Bambang Samsu Badriyanto¹

ABSTRACT

Indonesia is a multiethnic nation that has various physical characteristic and culture. Each ethnic has its own characteristic, the skin color, language, art, custom, social structure and culture. These variousity of human and culture is a form of human adaptation process into the different environment as the result of the wide archipelago area. In the process of a country development, since the independence era until today, it seems that one particular ethnic has a different development level to the other. In fact, today there is a high tendency of discrepancy among ethnics, whether it is the aspect of economy, social, technology, politic, or culture. This discrepancy has an implicatiion of horizontal conflict trigerred by the jelousy regarding the matter of economy, social, culture. The ethnic of madura is one of some ethnics in Indonesia with a high rate of migration. They live in several area of Indonesia, particularly Java, Sumatera, and Kalimantan. Due to the natural resources limitation in madura, about 70 % Madurese live and reside the Madura island (Djojomartono, 1985). They work in various sector, particularly the informal sectors, services, and fisherman. This article is based on research focused on interethnic relationship and social harmony: social interaction between Madurese and other ethnics in Sumenep regency.

Key Words: interethnic relationship, social harmony, Madurese, Sumenep

Introduction

In a collective life in several region, such as Sampit, Sambar, Ambon, or another Indonesia's big cities, they are often considered as the caused chaos. The interethnic conflict between the Madurese and the local residents is always associated to the "rebellion" nature of Madurese. This strong ethnic characteristic

¹ **Drs. Bambang Samsu Badriyanto, M.Si**, Lecturer at Departement of History, Jember University. This Article has been reviewed by Prof. Bambang Purwanto (Gadjah Mada University), Dr. Nana Supriatna, M.Ed (Indonesia University of Education, and Prof. Dadang Supardan, M.Pd (Indonesia University of Education). For academic interest, the author can be contacted at email: hole_melodic_kid@rocketmail.com

of Madurese has become the barrier when they have to adapt with the other society and culture, therefore everywhere they stay they would find difficulties to cooperate and other society saw them with a negative stereotype.

However, in this paper I would like to discuss how the Madurese and their characteristic interact with other ethnic group in their own cultural territory, in Madura. Of course the Madurese themselves have their own perception about their identity (image) which is absolutely different from the perspective of non Madurese. My discussion will include how the social connection occurs between the Madurese and other ethnic such as Javanese, Chinese, and Arabian.

Methodology

This paper is the result of empirical study about the life of Madurese society in Sumenep associated to their social relationship with other ethnic group domiciled in their own cultural territory. Essentially, this study is trying to describe the social phenomenon of Madurese life through their own perspective of their identity based on their view and attitude of life in socializing with other Madurese or other ethnic group. This interethnic relationship patterns describe a social reality forms that refers to the cultural value system applied in that society. This whole social reality will be simplified in description by the research process (Vredenburg, 1984: 34).

The qualitative approach is to understand the social structure and network of the Madurese, associated to several aspects of a mutual life with another ethnic group. Each person's attitude in the social life is basically a manifestation of the paradigm formed by his social structure.

The object of this study is the residents of Sumenep Region. In a collective life each ethnic group has their particular characteristic in accordance with their cultural background and the tradition covers it up. In social interaction, the culture clash may occur that in a certain category may result a conflict or otherwise, that may result a harmonious life.

Descriptive method is used in studying the Madurese culture, describing a systematic social phenomenon by processing the data and analyzing it to create new concepts. The data is collected by two methods, limited participant observation and interview (see: Meleong, 1990). The study result is a description of many factors and nature of the symptoms analyzed systematically, factually, and carefully.

Result and Discussion

1. The ethnical Characteristic of Madurese

Madura territory is very wide and contains of several islands. Meanwhile, the island of Madura itself is the biggest island which climate is hot, low rainfall rate

and most soil condition is not good for farming (arid and dry). In addition to the minimum of irrigation facility, the soil on that island is cakareous mixed with clay, similar to the chalk hills along the north coast of Java Island which geologically is in the same row5-6).

Madura culture area is the entire former Karesidenan Madura, including the "Tapal Kuda" region of East Java. Tapal Kuda is the north coast region of the east part of East Java, from the Regency of Pasuruan, Probolinggo, Situbondo, to Banyuwangi. Culturary the people of that region shows the "violence" culture character, such as high tendency to compete, easy to be offended, and temperamental. They also have similar cultural characteristic to the Madurese in Madura Island such as the custom, language, and Islamic art.

In fact, Madurese has various culture colors. There are two dominant work field thad affect the way of thingking and behaviour of Madurese, the fisher's culture and farmer's culture. Both workfield, fishing and farming, had influenced Madurese's character and cultural ethic which is very temperamental and like to compete. For example, as fisher, it is clear that the world they face is the wide ocean, therefore to conquer this wide ocean for fish the have to fight hard. As well as the farmers, to obtain the farming result they have to work really hard because most of the soil there is cakarous earth.

The Madurese life cannot be parted from cow, eventhough pasture is very rare in Madura. Cow is the symbol of social status and indicator for Madurese in their society. The relationship between human and cow is very close, therefore cow has an important function for the majority of the farmers' daily life. According to Glenn Smith (1989: 282) cow has another function than as a towing rover (*ananggala*), the cow's manure can also be used to fertilize the soil. This opinion is similar to De Jonge (1990: 425) who says that keeping a cow is useful for farmers. Cow helps farmers maintain their farms. In addition cow may also be used to pull cart (*jikar*), and also as investement that can be easily sold if they need money immediately. Furthermore, De jonge also said that for Madurese a male cow has the same value as a buffalo for Javanese, as the symbol of power and prosperity (De Jonge, 1992: 28). Such a great meaning of cow for Madurese, cow mostly identified the Madurese for their strict, easly to be offended, and biligerent (*carok*) attitude.

Madurese are very religiuos, they are strict moslems. Therefore, Islam is the Madurese's identity. The Islamic nature can be seen by how Madurese dress themselves. They (the male) always wear *songko* (Indonesian fez) and sarong, particularly when attending a ritual ceremony, friday pray, travelling, or accepting the unknown guest. The Islamic characteristic of Madura is also marked by many Islamic boarding school managed by *Kiai* (title or reference for a venerated scholar or teacher of Islam) who is also the role model for the Madurese life. However, Islam in Madura is not considered as the "pure" one, but the "local Islam" (Woodward, 1989), the Islam that mixed with the local tradition, such as Abangan or Agaman Adam in Java (Geertz, 1989).

Islam is one of the characteristic that define the Madurese, therefore a Madurese must be a moslem. There is a proverb describing that Madurese is

Islam in the heart: “*abantal syahadat, asapo iman, apayung Allah*”. The proverb means that if their life use *syahadat* (Islamic confession of faith) as the headware, covered with faith, and be under the protection of Allah, certainly sure they will be safe. Insulting the religion means insulting the self-esteem (*apote tolang*), the consequence is death.

For Madurese, one's status is judged by how they value Islam. The highest Islamic symbol they value is Kiai (Islamic scholar) and the people that had implemented haj at the lower. Kiai is the role model, every word and behaviour of kiai is followed by the society, and every word is considered as the advice. There is a Madurese's proverb saying that the most honoured people is: Ungkapan “*bupa, babu, guru, rato*” (father, mother, teacher, queen). According to that, Kiai (teacher) is the second highest person to be honoured after both parents that should be the most honoured person. *Kiai's* bless, besides the bless from father and mother, is powerful for every act taken. Kiai is always asked for advices prior to every act because it is considered to have a spiritual meaning.

Religion fused in every part of Madurese social life, religion support the sacred sanction in the life. Therefore, anyone insulting religion deserves to die because insulting the religion means insulting the social support sanction. This religious social sanction is the reason they called themselves “Islam spirit”, this sanction is one of the factors the maintenance of those values.

In addition to the religious values, the most important custom for Madurese is that they upheld politeness. Eventhough the outsiders considered them to be rude, but they themselves upholding politeness, respecting people in accordance to their social level. The respectiveness is express in their graded speech language (*ondho usuk*) in accordance with their social level, similar to the Javanese.

Politeness that is highly respected by the Madurese is the standard and custom of Madurese. The custom arranged the relationship among generation, rank, sex, both in society of piravetely. Anyone that act and say not in accordance with the custom will be consideret *ta'tao yudo Negara* (not respecting the Yuda Negara), Yuda Negara is the Adipati of Sumenep recognized as the custom enforcement patriot (Moelyono, dkk, 1984-1985: 43).

As explained above it can be concluded that the politeness applied in Madure is basically prioritizing respect and appreciation to others. This highly respected politeness values caused the social relationship among individual seems formal. Violation against the politeness values will concern with the matters of pride and dignity that will involved the family honor.

The respect and appreciation to the elder and any one with higher social level is the priority for Madurese. Madurese does not like to be underestimated but self-predomination will no be respected. If they face an arrogant person, they will be more arrogant. Otherwise, if the person they met shows respect toward them, they will respect that person more.

Pride or dignity is the basic value for Madurese. Therefore, pride must be defended. Pride shows a man capability to highly uphold and defense the family dignity. If a Madurese is underestimated his pride will be offended. The most offended matters will be anything associated to ego, women, and religion.

The basis of pride is shame (*todus*). Madurese said *tambana todus mate* (the healer of shame is death). This expression is similar to the concept of *siri* for the Bugis people of Makassar .

Based on what has been explained it is clear that Madurese ethnic can be categorized as the people with characteristic of hard, rude, like to fight, temperamental, a religion fanatic. This needs a further study. The negative characteristics emerge from Madurese are actually response of the offended of their pride.

The Madurese life is basically include all of their view and concept about the physical world, social environment, and supernatural world that all of them forms a complete order. The orientation of their social life is the harmonious life order, which is a safe, peaceful, and prosperous life. Human is the part of a wide life order, and in their relationship with their ethnical group they always try to be in harmony with this wide world in order to realize the harmonious life.

2. Interethnic Relationship

Interethnic relationship is usually associated to the social conflict. According to William Chang (2006), the ethnical and racial social conflict is not only destroying the nation integrity, but also destroying the nature of the nation's integrity. Ethnonationalism symptoms seems to prey the Indonesian integrity, that will cause fear, anxiety, and distrust amongst the citizen that will cause a not conducive national life.

Social conflict in a plural society is not an unusual matter. That is the logical consequences faced by Indonesia as the result of various differences, which include physics, customs, language, and culture. The main concern should be the conflict intensity because of its association with the safety and peaceful life as a nation.

Like fire in the husk, the social conflict happened all this time can only be suppressed on the surface, while the inside still on fire as the result of those differentiation. Particularly in the current era of reformation which is based on the regionalism spirit, which result to a more complex problem. While the government approachment tend to prioritize the security, that it is difficult to reach the problem's root.

In fact, a number of social conflict occur in several part of Indonesia is associated to the cultural problem. Different cultural background may result a diversity in various field, particularly the social and economy, that will trigger the horizontal conflict caused by jealousy.

Every culture which is the foundation of the human's way of thinking and behaviour contains universal values called the local wisdom (Sutarto, 2002: 23). In real life, the local wisdom can be realized in an orderly life in accordance with the norms and value's system as the human's behaviour guidance.

The Madurese life, even though they have a violence ethnical characteristic, infact they have a human value in their socialization with different ethnic. If

we respect them, they will respect us more. There is a proverb says that when a Madurese is respected, they are willing to give their heads. This phenomena can be seen when they live and socialize with another ethnic in their own cultural region.

The Relationship of Madurese and Javanese

As also occurs in another palce, the Javanese with their soft, flexible, and polite cultural characteristic may be more able to adapt with another cultural society where they live, including when they face with Madurese with their hard and temperamental characteristic.

In a certain part, the cultural characteristic of Madurese in Sumenep Region is not particularly different with the Javanese.

1. The social structure of Madurese is the same with the Javenese, stratified in vertical hierarchy. If Java have terms of *priyayi* (the haves) and *wong cilik* (the common people), Madura have *parjaji* and *kabula*. Essentially the social layers of both cultures are the same, because both have the same cultural development history, monarchy. *Keraton* (palace) as the culture center is the barometer of social changes.
2. The Madurese language is similar to the Javanese, its usage is stratified in accordance with the status. The Javanesse politeness is similar to the Madurese of Sumenep. The violation of the politeness principle for Madurese is associated to their pride and may have a fatal impact.
3. Madurese and Javanese are parternalistic. One differentiation is Javanese is oriented to the formal leader/government (queen), while the Madurese will obey the non formal leader/*kiai* (teacher).

Based on those cultural characteristic similarities both ethnical groups are easier to connect. The personal relationship between the Javanese and Madurese is tend to be careful, they protect each other from being offended. And if they are offended, *carok* has never happened. In accordance to various studies on Madurese, *carok* mostly occurs amongst Madurese themselves upon women problem.

The Relationship of Madurese and Chinese

The relationship between Madurese and Chinese has a long historical background. It can be seen in the Madurese traditional house. The architecture style and the roof ornament have the Chinese influence. According to the local chronicle source of Sumenep Region, the acculturation process of Sumenep Madurese and Chinese culture were intensive during the period of Penembahan Sumolo (1762). During that time there were six Chinese who stayed in Sumenep and married the Madurese girl of Sumenep. One of the Chinese is Laun Pia Ngo,

who is an architect. He was entrusted to plan and build the Palace of Sumenep (1764) and Masjid Agung Sumenep (Sumenep's Great Mosque) at 1781. Both buildings are still in the good condition with a Chinese architectural characteristic on their gate, wall, and ornament (Moedjijono, 1979: 32-33).

On the next governmental period the Chinese are needed and granted a position in the Sumenep kingdom government, particularly on trading, carpentry, and handicraft. The Chinese that was accepted by the kingdom affect the Madurese attitude as the society in general. They accepted the Chinese even though they were physically and culturally different to the Madurese. The differences were particularly from the religion, kinship system, language, and custom. As described by Leo Suryadinata (2002), the Chinese is very persistent and consistent in maintaining their custom, inherited from their ancestors. However, the Chinese in Sumenep seems different with the Chinese in other place. They were more adaptive with the Madurese culture characteristic.

The acculturation between the Chinese and Madurese culture seems peaceful. There has never been any conflict between both ethnic. The reason of harmonious relationship between the Chinese and Madurese in Sumenep are as follows:

1. The mixed married (assimilation) is common. No discrepancy on the both ethnic mixed married, both genders are equal.
2. In language, the Chinese in Sumenep use the Madurese language. Speaking in the same language will lead to a smoother social interaction process.
3. Many Chinese become Moslem, particularly in Dongkek District. The Chinese are majority in that District, compare to the other district in Sumenep Region. However, they are Moslems and speak Madurese daily.

These three aspects are the basis of the harmonious relationship among Chinese and Madurese

The Relationship of Madurese and Javanese

As an Islam fanatical community, Madurese view Arabic as the source of value orientation in viewing life. Arab is a holy place, the place full with blessing, a place granted with many advantages by God, including the people. Therefore, it is not surprising that Arabic descents are granted with a higher social level because they were considered as the direct descendant of Prophet Muhammad, and therefore deserve respect. This phenomenon is supported by a tomb of a scholar of Arab descent named Sayyid Yusuf in Talango, an island near Kalianget. The tomb is considered sacred (or *buju'* in local language) by the community because during his life his contribution was considerable in spreading Islam in Madura. Every Thursday night many people come for pilgrimage to his tomb, expecting blessing from him.

The social position of this Arabic descent ethnic has caused the Madurese to respect them more. They have become an exclusive community and rarely

socialize with another ethnic group, including the Madurese. However, that does not emerge conflict among them because they understand each other position.

Conclusion

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that basically the cultural adaptation is the key of social harmony. Disharmony of interethnic relationship that causes social conflict in various places is explainable by the cultural approachment. The utilization of cultural approachment in studying the relationship of Madurese with another ethnic group may be the model for studying another interethnic relationship in Indonesia.

REFERENCES

- Abdullah, H.B. (1985). *Manusia Bugis Makasar*. Jakarta: Inti Idayu Press.
- Chang, W. (2006). *Etnonasionalisme*. Jakarta: Kompas 3 Oktober 2006
- Djojmartono. (1985). "Adat-istiadat Sekitar Kelahiran pada Masyarakat Nelayan di Madura", dalam *Ritus Peralihan di Indonesia* (Koentjaraningrat). Jakarta: Balai Pustaka.
- Geertz, C. (1989). *Abangan, Santri, Priyayi dalam Masyarakat Jawa*. Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya.
- Jonge, de H. (1989). *Madura dalam Empat Zaman: Pedagang, Perkembangan Ekonomi, dan Islam*. Jakarta: P.T. Gramedia.
- _____. (1990). *Of Buuls and Men: The Madurese Aduan Sapi*. *Bijdragen tot de Taal, Land- en volkenkunde* 146 (4): 423-447.
- Mulyono, dkk. (1984-1985). *Mengenal Sekelumit Kebudayaan Orang Madura di Sumenep*. Yogyakarta: Balai Kajian Sejarah dan Nilai Tradisional.
- Moedjijono, Z. (1979). *Rumah Tinggal Tradisional di Kota Sumenep*. Seminar Penelitian Madura.
- Suryadinata, L. (2002). *Negara dan Etnis Tionghoa Kasus Indonesia*. Jakarta: LP3ES.
- Sutarto, A. (2002). *Menjinakkan Globalisasi*. Jember: Kompyawisda dan Universitas Jember.
- Vredembregt, J. (1984). *Metode dan Teknik Penelitian Masyarakat*. Jakarta: P.T. Gramedia.
- Woodward, M. R. (1989). *Islam in Java Normative Piety and Mysticism in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta*. Tucson: University of Arozona Press.

BAMBANG SAMSU BADRIYANTO
*Interethnic Relationship and Social Harmony:
Social Interaction Between Madurese and Other Ethnicities in Sumenep Regency*