Revealing Symbolic Interactionism Of Organized Crime Organizations' Members In Bali

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ABSTRACT

Several community organizations in Bali were declared as organized crime organizations and recommended to be dissolved by Bali Police Chief. The label of a dangerous organization was given by Bali Police and several media, both domestic and foreign media. On the other hand, a survey of Balinese people's perceptions of the existence of these organizations stated that more than 50% of them are not disturbed by their existence. In fact, every activity carried out by this community organization is still enthusiastically followed by thousands of people. The purpose of this research was to reveal the process of symbolic interaction between members of the organizations with other members and also between members of the organizations and Balinese society in general, so that they can be accepted by Balinese people. This study was conducted in Bali region by involving eight sources, consisting of three organizational leaders and five organizational administrators. Observations were also conducted to obtain more detailed data. This research used a case study approach, where data was collected by observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. The results of this study revealed that the existence of symbolic interactions utilizes Balinese cultural values to maintain member trust in the organization. The process of symbolic interaction between members of the organization or between members of the organization and society occurs through symbols where the essence of thought is constructed from the experience of internalized meaning cues from the externalization process as a result of interaction between members of the organization and also between members of the organization and the general public.

Keywords: Symbolic interaction, Community organizations, Organized Crime, Bali, Communications Studies

INTRODUCTION

The presence of Community Organizations in Bali has become a phenomenon there, in which three Community Organizations in Bali with tens of thousands of Balinese youth as their members are designated as organized crimes by Bali Police Chief (State, 2019). They are called as the three most dangerous gangs in Asia by foreign media in their coverage (Chavez, 2015), namely Laskar Bali, Baladika and Pemuda Bali Bersatu. Local media also reports them be involved in criminal acts. According to the fact analysis and juridical analysis of Bali Police, they have violated Law Number 16 of 2017 concerning Mass Organization, and even

committed criminal acts as stipulated in the Criminal Code.

On the other hand, even though they are designated as organized crimes, their members do not leave the organization. In fact, their number of members continued to grow to twenty thousand people per year 2020. Based on a survey of Balinese perceptions of mass organizations, more than 50% of Balinese people feel undisturbed by their existence (Apriani, 2021). Thousands of people participate in every activity carried out by these organizations. The community is always enthusiastic about participating in the activities of mass organizations with a warm welcome to its leaders.

Meanwhile, a study on organized crimes in Indonesia conducted by Harkrisnowo & Harkristuti (2014) stated that the large amount of information about organized crimes in the world raised anxiety about the spread of organized crimes in Indonesia. This was further triggered by the discovery of a number of drug traffickers from various countries operating in Indonesia. Campbell (2017) stated that there are many threats in which the public either does not believe or is not aware of that they are connected with organized crimes. Even though this unconsciousness becomes important to take steps to protect themselves from organized crimes, it was further stated that organized crimes are a concept that has drawn widespread criticism, and most people stated that they would report it if they saw it.

Based on this background, the interaction of community organizations with Balinese people is interesting to study, especially how the members of organizations do communication so that they are still accepted by Balinese people. This is in contrast to

several studies on Community Organizations in Indonesia, where panelists from Gandasari (2015) and Lutfie (2017) showed that there are organizations that have difficulty in interacting or communicating with the community due to differences in members' characteristics. Hubies and Ginting (2017) stated that in some cases, mass organizations did not receive support from the community due to differences in vision and mission or beliefs. This reality is not experienced by mass organizations in Bali though they have been labeled as Organized Crime Organizations.

The process of communication or the exchange of meaningful symbols essentially lies in understanding the meaning given to the actions of others through the use of symbols and interpretations. In the end, each individual will try to understand the intentions and actions of each other to reach a mutual agreement. This activity becomes the main focus of symbolic interaction theory inspired by the works of John Dewey, Charles Horton Cooley, George Herbert Mead, and Herbert Blumer (Triplett, 2018). The peculiarity of symbolic interaction refers to human interaction in which human interprets and defines each other's actions, not only reactions to other people's actions, but also the given "meaning" to the others' actions. The essence of symbolic interaction is an activity as the characteristic of humans, namely communication and the exchange of meaningful symbols (Mulyana, 2008: 68).

In developing the theory of Symbolic Interaction, Mead takes three critical concepts that are needed and influence each other, namely Mind, Self, and Society. These three concepts and the relationship between them are explained in the book entitled Mind, Self, and Society which is the core of Mead's

thinking and the keywords in the theory. Symbolic interactionism specifically describes language, social interaction, and reflectivity. In summary, Symbolic Interaction Theory is based on the following premises. (1) Individuals respond to a symbolic situation, and then to the environment including media-based physical objects (objects) and social objects (human behavior) contained in these environmental components. (2) Meaning is a product of social interaction, therefore meaning does not look at objects, but it is negotiated through the use of language, in which negotiation is possible to happen because humans are able to interpret everything not only physical objects, actions or events (even without the presence of physical objects, actions or events), but also abstract ideas. (3) The meaning interpreted by individuals may change from time to time, in line with changes in situations found in social interactions. Changes in interpretation are possible to happen because individuals can carry out mental processes, namely communicating with themselves.

Several previous studies of symbolic interactionism in organizations have shown that the same meaning in symbolic interactions is needed to achieve harmonization and common understanding. Schnackenberg et al (2019) reviewed the symbolic management process framework to describe the relationship between organizational approaches to managing symbols and forms of organizational values that seek to create and capture meaning and reveal the results of symbol management. Kusumastuti (2006) viewed the process of symbolic interaction between players and spectators and the symbols used to form symbolic interactions between them. Meanwhile, Anugrahani (2014) explored the

meaning of actualizing ancestral values in the Chinese ethnic environment in trade communication networks. Eisenring (2018) used the theory of symbolic interactionism to study the architectural phenomenon of the public spaces of cities in Indonesia to understand people's perceptions of architectural symbols related to their behavior in social interactions.

In contrast to previous studies, this study aimed at revealing the symbolic interactions in community organizations identified as organized crimes, but their presence is still accepted by the public. The results would answer the following research questions, namely (1) How is the communication that occurs in the interaction between members of the organization and the interaction between members of the organizations and the Balinese people? and (2) What is the meaning of the they are still accepted by the Balinese people?

METHOD

This study used a qualitative research method with an interpretive paradigm meaning that viewing the reality as the result of mental construction that cannot be perceived through the senses, and as the result of individual interpretation in seeing the world. Therefore, in this study, the researcher became a research instrument with a unit of analysis of communication acts of members of community organizations in interacting with the community. To answer those research questions, a case study method was used in which the researchers were enabled to maintain a holistic character and meaning in real life events. K.Yin (1993) stated that observational studies on planning, organizational, social and political research were not enough just to be researched using survey and experimental approaches. By

using case studies, "analysis" (interpretation) becomes the blade in observing the phenomena that occur. In addition, case studies were also able to answer the context of the relationship of an event through an analytical approach (multi-case phenomena).

Case studies require data, documents, interviews and in-depth observations to obtain the desired objectivity. In this study, primary data was collected from January to August 2021 through in-depth observations and interviews with three organizational leaders (General Chair, Daily Chair, and Board of Trustees) and five Organizational Executives, while secondary data was obtained from documentation and records owned by the Organization.

To check the validity of the data, time triangulation, data collection techniques and sources were used. Triangulation of time was conducted by testing the results of interviews and observations at different times. Triangulation of data collection techniques was conducted by testing data on the same source with different techniques. Then, triangulation of sources was conducted by testing data on several sources. Data analysis techniques were carried out by categorizing data based on emerging patterns, interpreting meaning, and justifying findings with applicable concepts and then presenting important things to be concluded.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In February 2020, 313 Community Organizations officially were registered at Denpasar City Kesbangpolinmas (Putera, 2020). The existence of mass organizations in Bali has become a concern since billboards were installed by exposing their identities starting from 2015 (Pascarani, 2021). Even though if mass organizations are traced its

history, they have appeared in Bali and in Indonesia in general during the New Order government. Even today, mass organizations inherited from the New Order still exist, but their existence does not attract much attention because they are still affiliated with certain political parties.

In addition to mass organizations affiliated with political parties, the mass organizations that appear in Bali are the same mass organizations as thuggery, in which Bali Police stated that these mass organizations triggered an increase in criminal actions and caused unrest in the community so that the Bali Police Chief recommended that the three major mass organizations in Bali are dissolved (State, 2019). Even though they were recommended to be disbanded, these mass organizations still received community support, as seen from the activities carried out which were always greeted with community enthusiasm.

Communication events between fellow members of the organization and between members of the organization and the Balinese community were observed through activities organized by Community Organizations in the period from January to September 2020. These activities were divided into two categories, namely the category of routine activities and incidental activities. The former consists of activities and internal meetings held every month and the celebration of the organization's birthday held annually. The types of activities held to celebrate the organization's anniversary vary each year, but usually the peak of the birthday celebration is usually held at one of the big temples in Bali. Meanwhile, the latter is usually carried out in accordance with the happening events in Bali such as cleaning and repairing temples damaged by disasters,

providing assistance to disaster victims, and also holding chicken grafting, as a series of traditional village ceremonies.

The essence of the acts of communication carried out by members of community organizations can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Communication Acts of Community Organizations in Bali in Symbolic Interactions

No	Context	Types of Communication's Act	Purpose of Communication
1	Organizational internal activities attended by organizational leaders and branch managers such as regular meetings, celebration of the organization's anniversary, etc.	interpersonal communication; before the meeting begins, a light discussion regarding news or events that happened to members of the organization and extraordinary events that occurred in the Bali area occurs group communication; communication is dialogical, in a formal atmosphere, using a subtle local language and Indonesian language	holding coordinate organizational activities; maintaining friendship or relationships among fellow members of the organization; internalizing organizational values to all members of the organization
2	Social activities involving local communities, such as temple repairs, blood donations, provision of basic necessities, etc.	interpersonal communication; greet community members, ask their condition, and discuss community conditions using Balinese language, provide solutions to problems raised by the community.	maintaining good relations with the community, building a positive image of the organization, socializing the organization's values to the community

From Table 1, it can be seen that in these activities, there were symbolic interactions carried out by Pemuda Bali Bersatu Organization, including using the symbol of the Gods weapon as the organization's logo. Pemuda Bali Bersatu Organization uses "Moksala" as the organization's logo. Moksala is the weapon of Dewa Iswara, one of the Gods trusted by Balinese Hindus who is in charge of guarding the southeast direction. The Balinese Hindu community has a belief that the nine cardinal directions are guarded by the Gods known as Dewata Nawa Sanga. By using the symbol of a weapon from one of the guardian deities of the winds, this organization wants to convey a message to the public that they are the guardians of Bali. With the power of huge members, they are ready to protect Bali from all threats that come from outside Bali.

The logo of the organization is a symbol of their membership identity, which is applied to all organizational attributes such as uniforms, flags, stickers affixed to members' personal belongings such as helmets and vehicles. Additionally, most members have

tattoos as the representation of the organization. Based on the results of interviews with the Daily Chair of UN mass organizations, they have no rules nor obligations to apply tattoo. Those who apply tattoo in their body is because they are proud of being a member of that organization..

In addition to using the symbol of Dewa Iswara's weapon as the organization's logo, Pemuda Bali Bersatu Organization also applies the color symbols of "Tri Murti", the three main Gods in Hinduism. The red color symbolizes Lord Brahma, the white symbolizes Lord Vishnu or Iswara, and the black symbolizes Lord Shiva. The combination of these colors is commonly referred to as tridatu whose colors are usually used as a bracelet by the Balinese Hindu community. They believe that the bracelet can protect them from dangers both sekala and niskala. These colors are also applied for the uniforms. The white uniform is worn by the central management, while the black one is worn by regional organization administrators. Meanwhile, a combination of these three color is worn by the members besides the previous two kinds of members. All uniforms have the organization's logo and are worn in every activity held by the organization.

Their activities reflect the principle of Tri Hita Karana which means three relationships that lead to happiness. Based on the concept of Balinese Hindu community, Tri Hita Karana is a guide in maintaining a balance of life. As the name implies, Tri Hita Karana consists of three types of relationships, namely the relationship with God called "parahyangan", the relationship with humans called "pawongan", and the relationship with the environment, called "palemahan". The application of this concept can be seen from

the joint prayer activities which are usually held every celebration of organization's anniversary, as a form of parahyangan concept. Pawongan concept is reflected in social service activities which are often carried out to help victims of natural disasters. The last, palemahan concept is reflected in environmental cleaning activities around the temple or beach area.

Balinese people have very strong culture and traditions, which are still carried out from generation to generation until now. One of them is traditional ceremonies that have a great number in Bali. Those traditional ceremonies must be performed by Balinese people and held en masse, involving the local community of origin, called the "banjar" (customary community in a certain area). The applied tradition is that if community members who traditional ceremonies, the relatives are obliged to come to help organize the ceremony. Without being asked, the community will frequently help the ceremony, known as "meyama-braya" which means brotherhood. The leaders of this mass organizations often attend traditional ceremonies held by their members, and even attend traditional ceremonies for non-members and help donate, considering that the costs of these traditional ceremonies are not cheap. This adds to the respect for organizational leaders who are considered light-hearted to help the community.

In addition, this organization also often organizes tabuh rah (cockfighting) in a series of Balinese traditional ceremonies organized by Balinese indigenous people. This cockfighting is a complement to traditional ceremonies, namely drops of blood from fighting chickens as a symbol or condition to purify mankind from greed or greed for materialistic or worldly values

(Adityawiratmaja, 2018). This cockfighting becomes an entertainment for indigenous peoples. Mass organizations usually become event promoters by ensuring the safety and running of the cockfighting event smoothly. Balinese people usually continue the cockfighting, which is held in a series of traditional ceremonies by gambling by bringing their own pet rooster. This event is actually illegal considering this activity uses money bets.

A number of communication actions have been taken by the organization's members in these activities. According to the Daily Chairperson of Pemuda Bali Bersatu Organization, interacting with the community requires caution considering that the image of the formed Organization is already negative. Therefore, the leadership of this organization firmly instructs its members to be careful in interacting with the community, especially when using their attributes. He also said that every member of the Organization is obliged to sanctify the logo of the Organization, as something that can maintain the behavior of its members. To be able to convince the public that they are not a dangerous organization as they are imaged, the behavior of members must be maintained. Organizational values must be applied in a disciplined manner to fight negative news that damages the image of the organization. In order to improve the image of the organization, the communication process is carried out through interpersonal communication, dialogue, and group communication.

In addition, an approach to the community was also carried out by utilizing regional key opinion leaders to build a positive image of the organization. The narrations used in interacting with the community are delivered with a cultural approach to the local community using the refined Balinese language, in which language is usually used in communicating with higher castes. In Bali, the caste system is still in effect with the division of four castes. By using subtle Balinese language, showing respect for the communicant because it equates the communicant with people with a higher caste than the communicator.

Lionberger and Gwin (1982) stated that the effectiveness of organizational communication in symbolic interaction can be measured from the existence of certain impacts or effects on communication, namely cognitive, affective, and behavioral. Related to the cognitive effects, through symbolic interaction events, Balinese people know the vision and mission of the organization as well as the aims and objectives of the existence of Pemuda Bali Bersatu Organization in the midst of the community by witnessing firsthand the positive activities carried out by these organizations. Besides that, in the affective effects, symbolic events that occur in the interaction of Pemuda Bali Bersatu Organization and the community, the Balinese people can feel the existence of the mass organizations as the guardian of Balinese culture and the protector of the Balinese people. The last is behavioral effects, in which people's behavior who accept the existence of this mass organization is the behavioral effect of symbolic interaction events. The highest level of effect is behavioral effects, namely the impact on communication in the form of behavior, actions, or activities such as providing support or participation in activities organized by Pemuda Bali Bersatu Organization.

The reality that is awakened from the events of symbolic interaction shows the trust and

support of the community for members of this Organization in the midst of the negative coverage of this Organization. According to Blumer in Griffin (2000), symbolic interaction has three principles, namely those related to meaning, language and thought. Human actions towards other people or objects depend on the meaning given to the people or objects. In the context of the symbolic interaction of Community Organizations with Balinese people, the meaning of the existence of these organizations cannot stand alone, but as the result of social interactions where values and beliefs are exchanged. Meaning is not inherent in the object, but it is negotiated through the use of the languages used by the leaders and members of the Organization in their interactions with the community. In the end, the interpretation of the symbols carried out by Balinese people towards the community organizations was modified by the people's thinking process itself, according to Mead, called the inner dialogue minding process.

In these symbolic interaction events, this organization was able to gain public sympathy and break the negative image framing formed by the statement of the Bali Police Chief and local mass media coverage. The attitude of the leaders and members of the organization does not produce repressive actions, but chooses to develop communication actions that support and help local communities through interpersonal communication, dialogical communication, and expanded with appropriate communication networks. The success of the symbolic interaction of members of mass organizations can be seen from the fact that this communication act is able to reverse the framing of the news that these mass organizations are organized crime

organizations disturbing the public. On the other hand, the conducted symbolic interactions actually make the community feel that this mass organization has helped them a lot both in traditional and economical activities.

In symbolic interactionism, a person provides information resulting from the meaning of the symbol from his perspective to others, and the recipient of the information will give the meaning of the information conveyed. It can be said that actors will be involved in the process of influencing each other in a social action. To see the existence of social interaction, people can see individuals communicating with their communities, and then they will issue new languages, habits or symbols that are the object of research.

Mind, self, and society is George Harbert Mead's most famous work, where these three concepts underlie the theory of symbolic interactionism. Mind is the ability to use symbols that have the same social meaning, where each individual must develop their thoughts through interactions with other individuals' thougts arise and develop in social processes and are an integral part of social processes. These processes precede thought, so they are not a product of thought, which is defined functionally rather than substantively. A special characteristic of mind is the ability of individual to elicit within himself not only a single response, but also the response of the community as a whole. In this study, the symbolic interaction of symbols and conducted communication actions stimulated members of the Balinese organization and society to create the same meaning.

Mead also sees the mind pragmatically, meaning that the mind involves thinking

processes leading to problem solving. Thinking, according to Mead, is a process in which individuals interact with themselves by using meaningful symbols. Through the process of interaction with himself, the individual chooses which of the stimuli directed at him will be responded to.

Besides mind, symbols are also used in subjective thinking (processes), especially language symbols. The symbols are not used for real, namely through internal conversations. The process of internalizing the logo of the organization as a symbol of God to members of the organization is a process of thinking and interpreting the logo so that it becomes a guide for members in behaving and interacting with the community. As a result, a good attitude will be reflected, in accordance with the culture of Balinese people.

Likewise, the individual indirectly refers to himself or the identity contained in the reactions of others to his behavior. Therefore, the resulting condition is a self-concept that includes self-awareness centered on the self as its object. Additionally, signs as significant symbols appear in individuals who make meaningful responses. Signs in this form lead to an action and response understood by the existing community. Through these symbols, thought will be appeared. The essence of thought is constructed from the experience of internalized meaning cues from the externalization process as a result of interaction with other people. Since the sign of conversations carried out by the leader to members of the organization and vice versa have meaning, the stimulus and its response are the same for all participants so that the self-concept of the members of organization

becomes equal in accordance with the values held by the organization.

Moreover, self is the ability to reflect on each individual's self from the assessment of others' point of view or opinion, and the theory of symbolic interactionism suggests about oneself (the self) and the outside world. This phase focuses on the importance of self-concept and emphasizes on developing self-concept through the individual actively, based on social interactions with other people. Mass organizations leadership instructions to its members internalize organizational symbols to form a good self-concept and be accepted by the community. According to Mead, imagining oneself appearing in the absence of social experience is impossible. As such, it contradicts the solitary self-concept of the Cartesian Picture.

Self also allows people to take part in conversations with others because of the sharing of symbols. It means that an individual can communicate, then realize what was said, and then determine and anticipate what will be said next. Mead also stated that the self is related to the process of self-reflection, which is generally known as self-control or self-monitoring. Through this self-reflection, individuals are able to adapt to the circumstances in which they are in, as well as adjust to the meaning and effect of the actions they take. In other words, people indirectly place themselves from other people's point of view. From this point of view, people see themselves as special individuals or social groups as a unit.

Through interactions with fellow members, the members of this organization share the meaning of symbols and reflect on them, which Mead calls significant gestures and significant communications. Mead

distinguishes between "I" and "Me". I is an active part of "the self " which is able to carry out behavior. "Me" is a self-concept about others, who must follow the rules of the game, which are allowed or not. "I" have the capacity to behave, which is, to some extent, difficult to predict, difficult to observe, and unorganized to contain behavioral choices for a person. Meanwhile, "me" gives direction to "I" which functions to control "I", so that the result is that human behavior is more predictable, or at least less chaotic. Therefore, within the framework of understanding the self, the essence of social interaction is contained. The interaction between "I" and "me" (I) is the individual inherently reflects the social process.

Understanding the meaning of self-concept has two sides, namely the personal (self) and the social side (person). Self-character is socially influenced by "theory" (rules, values and norms) of the local culture a person is in and is learned through interactions with people in that culture. Self-concept consists of dimensions that show the extent to which the element of self comes from oneself or the social environment and the extent to which oneself can play an active role. From this perspective, it seems that the self-concept cannot be understood from the self. Thus, meaning is formed in the process of interaction between people and self-objects, while at the same time influencing social action. When a person responds to what is happening in his environment, at that time he is using something called attitude.

Furthermore, Mead explained that society is a network of social relationships that are created, built and constructed by each individual in society. Each of these individuals is involved in the behavior they choose actively and voluntarily which

ultimately leads humans to the process of taking roles in their society. According to him, society reflects an organized set of responses that individuals take over in the form of an "I" (me) so that society influences them, giving them the ability through self-criticism to control themselves. In maintaining relations with the Balinese people, Pemuda Bali Bersatu Organization uses a number of symbols and values adopted by the Balinese people so as to facilitate the process of symbolic interaction that aims to counter negative news reported by the local mass media. Finally, the values and symbols attached to the communication actions of members of the organization are more trusted by Balinese people than the negative image framed by the news in the mass media.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that in establishing good relations with Balinese people, these organizations with the label organized crime organizations carry out a number of communication actions, which are classified into acts of internal and external communication of the organization. The former, such as regular organizational management meetings, organizational anniversary celebrations are carried out through interpersonal, dialogical, and group communication to convey open principles and direct communication actors to reach a common consensus that has supported the organization's success in realizing positive symbolic interactions. Meanwhile, the latter are carried out in a number of activities involving local communities such as social services for temple repairs, blood donation, menyama braya, involvement of organizational members in village traditional ceremonies aiming at establishing good relations with the community, building a

positive image of the organization, and socializing values organization to society.

In the acts of communication, a symbolic interaction uses symbols related to Balinese culture such as the logo of the organization and the implementation of activities also applied by the Balinese people. These symbols and actions are significant symbols that appear in individuals who make meaningful responses. Signs in this form lead to an action and response that is understood by the existing community. Through these symbols, thoughts will occur where the essence of thought is constructed from the experience of internalized meaning cues from the externalization process as a result of interaction with other people. Since the signs' conversations carried out by leaders to members of the organization and vice versa, and from members of the organization to the community have meaning, so that the stimulus and response have the same for all participants. Furthermore, on the instructions of mass organizations' leadership, members of the organization internalize the symbols of the organization to form a good self-concept and be accepted by the community. This internalization process simultaneously forms a self-concept on both sides, namely the personal (self) and the social side (person). Self-character is socially influenced by local cultural rules, values and norms learned through interaction with Balinese people. Self-concept consists of dimensions that show the extent to which the element of self comes from oneself or the social environment and the extent to which oneself can play an active role. Through interactions with fellow members, the members of this organization share the meaning of symbols and reflect on them, which Mead calls significant gestures and significant communications.

LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

This study has limitations in the locus of study where this study is limited to members of organizations designated as organized crime organizations in Bali. The results of this research on the process of symbolic interaction cannot be generalized, so that the study on symbolic interactions in similar organizations in different areas is needed to conduct as a comparison.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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