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## SINGKAWANG FROM COSER'S PERSPECTIVE

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**Abstract.** History records that Singkawang was an inseparable part of the conflict between ethnic groups in West Kalimantan. This article aims to examine three things, namely (1) the description of Coser's structuralist theory, (2) the strategic role of the city of Singkawang, and (3) the relevance of Singkawang City to Coser's theory. This research was studied with a qualitative descriptive. The research subject is the object of research is the city of Singkawang. Data collection techniques are carried out by literature study, interviews, and observations. The results showed that (1) the presence of conflict can play a role in restoring the social integration of members of society. Besides, the presence of conflict also plays a role in strengthening the social and emotional bonds of its followers. (2) Singkawang had a strategic role as a trading area and transit point for gold miners during the Sambas Sultanate. This condition lasted for a long time and made the people of Singkawang at that time learn to blend in with each other. In its development, the history of assimilation made the city of Singkawang finally used as one of the locations when there was an inter-ethnic conflict in West Kalimantan. (3) Coser's theory teaches that to avoid conflict there needs to be a safety value. In Singkawang City, safety value is carried out through natural assimilation through marriage, including culture. Apart from that, there is also artificial assimilation carried out by creating associations of both ethnicity and religion.

Keywords: Singkawang; Coser's Perspective

### I. INTRODUCTION

Very interesting to study conflict research from various scientific points of view. Social scientific clumps, both psychology, economics, sociology, anthropology, law, politics, history, including religion, can be used to study the reality of conflict in human social life. The study pattern of conflict cannot stand alone but also be supported by other social science disciplines. A conflict phenomenon does not only come from one aspect but other aspects also follow it. Such a mindset needs to be understood together when studying a case including the conflict in society.

Indonesian society has a long record when it comes to conflict. Since the kingdom era, colonial period,

independence era, post-independence, reformation period, and post-reform era, the track record of conflict has not disappeared. The conflict here can take the form of verbal, psychological, and even physical violence. The hope is that the conflict can be minimized, especially after Indonesia's independence. However, the reality of the conflict also continues to this day.

Talking about social conflicts, especially after independence, cannot be separated from the advice of the Indonesian proclaimer. President Soekarno once said that "my struggle was easier because it was against the invaders, but your struggle was harder because it was against the nation itself" (Nailufar, 2020). President Soekarno delivered this will during the Heroes' Day Commemoration Ceremony

on November 10, 1965. This will may sound strange in the past, but if you look at the present reality, it seems that President Soekarno's will is true. Conflicts between the nation's children are easy to find in today's social life.

Based on the results of historical studies, for example, it is known that in West Kalimantan there have been conflicts between ethnic groups. The conflict involved major ethnicities such as Chinese vs Dayak, Madurese vs Dayak, and Madurese vs Malay. This conflict occurred over a long period (1) Zasco (2011) mentions 11 times from 1962-1999. Petebang (2000) mentions 12 times since 1952-1999. As Kristianus (2011) mentioned 17 times since 1966-2008. The data of the three figures show that West Kalimantan has a fairly high conflict vulnerability.

In its development, the conflict in West Kalimantan cannot be separated from the participation of the City of Singkawang. Singkawang has a big role as a post-conflict refugee destination. Singkawang was chosen as a place of refuge because people have been able to live in peace and respect one another for a long time. This was also experienced by conflict-affected refugees who were gradually able to mingle with the surrounding community. The integration between ethnic groups is used as a *safety value* according to the thoughts of Coser.

This article aims to examine three main things, namely (1) the description of Coser's structuralist theory, (2) the strategic role of the city of Singkawang, and (3) the relevance of Singkawang City to Coser's theory. These three points are important to study to analyze the relationship between Coser's theory and factual conditions in Singkawang City.

## II. METHODOLOGY

Research on the City of Singkawang in terms of Lewis A Coser's conflict theory perspective is very interesting to study. This article was examined using a qualitative descriptive approach. The data from this study can be in the form of words, pictures, and even numbers (Danim, 2002). This research can also be used to describe or describe natural or engineering phenomena (Moleong, 2007). This research data is presented in descriptive form. The purpose of this description is to find out the relevance of Coser's theory with the conditions of Singkawang City. Data were collected using observation, interviews, and documentation as primary research data. Besides, secondary data obtained from journals, articles, the internet, and other relevant sources are also used.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Functionalist Coser Theory

Talking about conflict theory cannot be separated from several names such as George Simmel, Robert K Merton, Talcott Parsons, Ralf Dahrendorf, Max Weber, including Lewis A Coser. These figures are sociologists who specifically study and explore conflicts in social life. In this article, not all of the conflict figures' thoughts are taken to

analyze the phenomenon of conflict in society. This article only focuses on the thought of Lewis A Coser.

Coser is a sociologist who was born on November 27, 1913, in Berlin to Martin and Margarete Fehlow Coser. The Coser family belonged to the Jewish bourgeoisie. Teen Coser was heavily involved in the socialist movement. At school, he was not a diligent or extraordinary child. During his life, Coser had studied at the Sorbonne which focused on sociology studies, then continued his master's education at Columbia University, and his doctorate at the University of Chicago.

As a sociologist, Coser has succeeded in publishing some of his thoughts put into book form. Coser's works include *The American Communist Party: A Critical History* (1957), *Men of Ideas* (1965), *Continues in the Study of Social Conflict* (1967), *Master of Sociological Thought* (1971). Coser's work then became a reference for studying sociology from the contemporary context.

Coser's conflict theory emerged as a form of his concern over the dominance of the theory of Talcott Parsons and Robert K Merton. Coser has firmly rejected the views of some US sociologists who have prejudice on conflict and the function of social conflict. Coser has a belief that not all conflicts are oriented towards destructive, dysfunctional, and disintegrating connotations. The presence of conflict can unite conflicting groups (Rofiah, 2016: 477).

Coser's view that conflict has a positive side cannot be separated from George Simmel's thinking. A conflict is a form of social interaction that is quite basic. The conflict by Simmel then linked with the emergence of the concept of cooperation. However, Coser's focus was not on the interaction aspect but the principle of the conflict. Conflict is believed to have a positive impact on every conflicting group. The presence of conflict can function to restore social integration. Coser (1956) explained the conflict function, namely (1) conflict one group may serve to produce cohesion by leading to a series of alliances with other groups, (2) within society, conflict can bring some ordinarily isolated individuals into an active role, and (3) conflict also serve a communication function. Besides, conflict can also create a more stable, flexible, and more integrated social system (Kinloch, 2005: 225).

Increasing social integration between conflicting parties is the main focus of Coser's conflict theory. Rofiah (2016: 447) explains that indirectly the presence of conflict can increase a sense of internal solidarity. This solidarity occurs within the group's internal and external environment. Psychologically, the effect of increasing group solidarity can strengthen social and emotional ties between group members. In a more complex way, as quoted by Syawal (2016: 14), he explained his views on conflict as follows:

1. Conflict is a process that is instrumental in the formation, unification, and maintenance of social structures
2. Conflict can define and maintain boundaries between groups
3. Strengthening group identity

4. There is a *safety valve* to defend groups from social conflict.

There are several types of conflict in the community. Coser in Ritzer & Goodman (2004: 159) divides it into two, namely realistic conflict and non-realistic conflict. Realistic conflicts are concrete because the things that are being fought over are clear. The source of this conflict will easily occur if it is related to economic and regional sources. Meanwhile, non-realistic conflicts occur because of irrational and ideological motivations such as conflicts between religions, between ethnicities, and between other beliefs. This conflict can use any means including scapegoating certain individuals or groups.

In its development, Coser not only studied the phenomenon of conflict in society but also how to resolve the conflict. Conflicts that occur can be resolved through the concept of *safety value*. This concept is a way that can be done to prevent a community or group from all possible conflicts (Coser, 1956).

**B. The Strategic Role of Singkawang City**

Historically, Singkawang City has had close ties with the phenomenon of inter-ethnic conflict in West Kalimantan Province. The conflict involved ethnic Chinese vs Dayak, Madurese vs Dayak, and Madurese vs Malay. Uniquely, these three conflict events are always related to Singkawang City. When the conflict occurred, one of the places that were used as a refugee area was Singkawang.

*First, the* conflict between Dayak vs Chinese ethnic groups. The conflict between the two ethnicities was limited especially after Indonesia's independence. Tamagola (2007: 35-36) explains that in 1965 the North Kalimantan People's Party Movement (Paraku) and the Serawak People's Guerrilla Forces (PGRS) emerged in 1967 against the Chinese by Dayaks. The impact of this conflict caused ethnic Chinese who originally lived in the interior had to flee to the coastal areas of West Kalimantan. Pontianak and Singkawang were two destinations for Chinese ethnic refugees at that time.

*Second, the* conflict between Madurese vs Dayak ethnic groups. The conflict between the two ethnic groups can be said to be the longest conflict in West Kalimantan. Seeing records from Petebang (2005), Shaleh (2004; 2005), Tamagola et al (2007) at least twelve conflicts have occurred, namely in 1952 due to theft of *traps* or fishing gear, in Toho Kab. Pontianak in 1967, in Sungai Pinyuh Kab. Mempawah in 1968 and 1976, in Singkawang in 1977 and 1979, in Ambawang Bengkayang in 1983, in Pontianak City in 1993, in Pesaguan 1994, in Sanggau Ledo Bengkayang in 1996, in Siantan Pontianak, Kab. Pontianak, Sambas, and Sanggau in 1997, in Samalantan Bengkayang in 1999. After the conflict, many ethnic Madurese fled to Kubu Raya and Singkawang Districts. Marhaban area, Sedau Village, South Singkawang, for example, was the center for the Madurese ethnic refugees at that time.

*Third, the* conflict between ethnic Madurese vs Malay. Looking at the notes of Saad (2003), Shaleh (2004), and

Tamagola et al (2007), it is clear that conflict between two ethnicities has occurred sixteen times from 1950-1999. The conflict occurred in Sungai Dungun in 1955, Semparuk 1960, Parit Setia 1960s, Sentebang 1961, Sui Nyirih 1964, SB Nilam 1966, Jawai Sea and Matang tarap 1974, SB Kuala 1976, Lambau 1980s, Matang Terap 1985 and 1987, Semperiuk B 1996, Lambau Pelimpaan 1997, SB Usrat in 1998, and Parit Setia in 1999, all of which took place in District Sambas. The victims of the Sambas conflict fled to several areas including Singkawang, both in the Marhaban area of South Singkawang and the Roban Singkawang Tengah area.

Looking at the history of the conflict, the question arises, why is Singkawang City always the destination of refuge? History records that Singkawang has long been a trading center as well as a stopover for gold miners in the Monterado area. This condition lasted for a long time or since the arrival of ethnic Chinese to Monterado to become gold miners and continued during the Dutch colonialism era. It was this function as a stopover as well as a trade that made the Singkawang are the main center of interaction at that time. The old interaction has led to assimilation and even mixed marriages between various ethnicities so that the sense of tolerance of the citizens is high.

**C. The Relevance of Coser's Theory to Singkawang City Conditions**

The main teaching of Coser's theory is more focused on changing the paradigm of conflict. Conflicts that occur in society do not all lead to negative actions such as damaging, fighting, or even killing one another. Conflict can also be positive. The view of conflict such as that of Simmel was later expanded by Coser to become a reference. These two figures see the conflict from a positive perspective.

Conflict perceptions converge on two views, namely the old and the new. Robbins (1994) as cited by Urbaningrum (1998: 17) follows Table I.

TABLE I  
 CONFLICT VIEW

No	Views Old	Views New Views
1	Conflict is unavoidable	Conflict can be avoided
2	Conflict is caused by mismanagement in planning and organizational management or disruptors	Conflict arises because many reasons, differences in goals that cannot be avoided, differences in perceptions of personal values, and so on
3	Conflict disrupts the organization and hinders its optimal implementation	Conflict can help or hinder the implementation of organizational (community) activities to varying degrees
4	Duties of management (leadership)	

Source: Urbaningrum (1998)

Referring to the view of the conflict in table 1 above, it can be concluded that conflicts in society are relative. On the one hand, conflict can turn out to be a threat to various chaos in society. On the other hand, conflict can also be

used as a medium to strengthen integration between community groups. The thing that distinguishes the two lies in the motives including the output to be achieved from each conflict event, both in very large and small intensity.

Talking about the conflict in West Kalimantan cannot be separated from the strategic role of Singkawang City. Singkawang used to have a strategic function as a destination for refugees. After the 1967 conflict, many ethnic Chinese fled to coastal areas including Singkawang City (Superman, 2017). The same thing happened after the 1997 conflict in Sambas, where many Madurese ethnic took refuge in Singkawang (Habibie, 2004). Singkawang has always been known as a city that is quite friendly with diversity. In the era of the Sambas Sultanate, for example, the City of Singkawang has functioned as a transit point for traders and gold miners.

Singkawang has a magnet when it comes to conflict studies. For example, Coser's conflict theory can be a reference to see Singkawang from a conflict perspective. Singkawang is the epicenter of inter-ethnic peace in West Kalimantan. The results of a survey conducted by the Setara Institute in 2019 determined Singkawang to be the most tolerant city in Indonesia, as written by Melano (2018) in the *Tribun Pontianak* daily on December 7, 2018. This fact is proof that when diversity, especially ethnicity, is not the main problem in Singkawang.

Singkawang is a new area resulting from the expansion of the Sambas Regency. This is stated in Law No. 12 of 2001 regarding the formation of the City of Singkawang. Singkawang only took 20 years since the last time it occurred in 1999 between ethnic Madurese vs Malay. Geographically, Singkawang is directly adjacent to Sambas and Bengkayang districts. Previously, these three regions were incorporated into one district, namely Sambas. However, during the conflicts in Bengkayang and Sambas, the multiethnic community of Singkawang did not split up.

The communal conflicts that occurred in Bengkayang Regency and Sambas Regency became a valuable lesson for the ethnic groups living in Singkawang City. This city is left by various ethnic groups including Malays, Dayaks, and Madurese. However, when conflicts in other areas occurred, the ethnic groups in Singkawang were not provoked to take similar actions. This can not be separated from the tight guard by the authorities such as the army, police, and community organizations. Besides, the people also have a high sense of tolerance, love for peace, and a spirit of unity.

Seeing the social conditions in Singkawang at that time, it was seen that the people were able to internalize a new conflict paradigm. This paradigm by Robbins and Urbaningrum is characterized by the belief that conflict can be avoided. Coser (1956) states that every community group has *safety values* as an effort to avoid conflict. *Safety value* in the context of Indonesian society can be carried out through an assimilation process.

Integration is very important for multi-ethnic areas such as Singkawang City. The process of reform in society can be carried out in two ways, namely natural and artificial, as follows:

#### 1. Natural

Blending in society is commonly encountered in marriage. Marriage is an effective channel for carrying out the natural assimilation process in society. every member of society regardless of race, religion, and ethnicity can carry out the marriage process. Abadi (2007) sees marriage as one way that all ethnicities and races in Sumenep are united.

Integration can also be done through culture. The culture that exists in ethnicity can be used for the natural assimilation process in society. Viranida (2016) gave an example when the parade was held *Tatung* at the peak of the celebration *Cap Go Meh*. The *Tatung* use Dayak attributes when in action. Besides, it can be seen from the combination of ancient Chinese ethnic Taoist beliefs with local animism.

#### 2. Artificial Integration

The process of artificial integration is carried out by involving the participation of the government. Efforts to integrate into Singkawang were carried out by creating ethnic-based associations. In Singkawang, there are 17 ethnic groups under Forum Pembauran Kebangsaan (FPK) following the Regulation of the Minister of Home Affairs No. 34 of 2006. Uniquely, four ethnic groups have been involved in conflicts, such as Majelis Adat Budaya Tionghoa (MABT), Dewan Adat Dayak (DAD), Majelis Adat Budaya Melayu (MABM), and Ikatan Keluarga Besar Madura (Ikama).

Second, through religion-based associations. The association is called Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB) following the Regulation of the Minister of Religion Number 9 of 2006. FKUB members usually represent representatives of religious leaders in Singkawang City, whether they are Muslim, Buddhist, Christian, Protestant, Hindu, and Confucian. Besides, there is also Forum Komunikasi Pemuda Lintas Agama (FK Pela) whose members come from interfaith youth associations.

### IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the discussions that have been carried out, it can be concluded that the following three points:

1. Coser's conflict functional theory is an elaboration of Simmel's theory. Concert theory.
2. Singkawang is one of the destinations for refugees after the inter-ethnic conflict occurred. Singkawang was chosen because it is known as an area capable of embracing social diversity in society.
3. Coser's conflict theory has relevance to the City of Singkawang. Singkawang is a function of safety value because it can be a safe place for all ethnic groups. All individuals can live in harmony and side by side with each other.

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