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The Jeme Semende: From Pasemah To The Land Of Sang Bumi Ruwa Jurai (The Cultural Identity Study Of Semende Diaspora)

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A B S T R A C T

Ethnic diversity is one of the outstanding characteristics of Indonesian culture. Diversity creates potential challenges and opportunities in the multi-cultural ethnic relations, with positive and negative social capital forming among ethnic groups. The ethnic cultural claim is principally pronounced with the kinship ties that bind the family in the Semende people. They are depicted by the unique Tunggu Tubang family tie system, in which normally the eldest female sibling in a family becomes the main guardian of all family members when the parents have become less able to manage the family house, yard, family agricultural fields, gardens and foremost the caring of brothers and sisters if in need. This paper is based on the research in the geographical location of the Tanjung Raja district in North Lampung, where one of the sub-districts is inhabited by the Semende people. This study used an ethnographic approach with participatory observation techniques and in-depth interviews of key informants. This research explores the cultural identity of the Jeme Semende diaspora by reconnoitering the knowledge of the actors of what and how these cultural customs are understood and applied in daily life. The research conclusion indicates that the Jeme Semende's cultural identity is maintained despite being surrounded by other ethnic groups in Tanjung Raja. And how "Semendeness" is constructed and is linked with their identity and in turn is supported with their oral origin myth combined with the identity raised in the Semende's Kuntaw martial arts.

A. INTRODUCTION

The *Semende* people are sometimes noted as the *Semendo* people in various pieces of literature. This is reminded for readers who already know the group by the name of *Jeme Semende*. They are one of the Malay sub-ethnic groups that inhabit many areas along the eastern region of the Barisan mountain range, especially in the Muara Enim Regency, as their place of origin in Southern Sumatra. This group identify themselves as the *Jeme Semende*, or the *Semende* people who live in the areas of South Sumatra, Bengkulu and the Lampung Provinces. The Semende community in South Sumatra is centered in the Ogan Komering Ulu and Muara Enim districts. These two locations are also the

Semende's categorization for the two main Semende groups. Setiawan (2013) states that the group living in Muara Enim Regency is known as the Semende Darat and the group living in Ogan Komering Ulu Regency is known as the Semende Lembak. The people of the Semende Darat are considered as the original cultural conveyors of the Semende tradition. The Semende people in the Lembak area are considered migrants who established a continuation of the Semende culture in their place of migration. This differentiation is intended to distinguish between the Semende cultural groups that have settled in Muara Enim and the Semende diaspora who established significant aspects of the Semende culture in other locations.

In Bengkulu Province the Semende communities are concentrated in the southernmost part, namely Kaur District. In those provinces the Jeme Semende have formed their own group, which are relatively separate from other groups, such as the Pasemah group in South Sumatra and the Serawai and Kaur groups in southern Bengkulu. In contrast to Lampung Province, Jeme Semende is not segmented as sharply as in South Sumatra and the Bengkulu Provinces. The Jeme Semende in this province occupy the area of the North Lampung Regency and live side by side with other communities, such as Lampung, Javanese, Sundanese, Malay, Batak and the Minangkabau people. Lampung actually refers to a particular ethnic group found in the southernmost province of Sumatra Island. Lampung is a collective term referred to one of the original ethnic groups that occupy the majority of the population in Lampung Province. This group also inhabits a small number of areas in the southern part of South Sumatra, including in Martapura District, South Ogan Komering Ulu Regency, Kayu Agung District and the Ogan Komering Ilir Regency (Alihanafiah, 2008; Arifin, 2015, p. 6).

In the Lampung area there are many other migrant groups besides the Jeme Semende, such as Lampung, Javanese, Batak, Malay and the Minangkabau people, who mostly live in the sub-district centers. This condition makes relations between ethnic groups intertwined in an economic perspective, especially after the Indonesian colonial independence. Today the population of the Lampung Province has become multi-ethnic. Although in certain areas there are ethnic dominating groups from South Sumatra. Especially in North Lampung and the Way Kanan Regencies. Lampung has strong customary *adat* areas, including; the customary territory of Melinting Tiyuh Timur (located in East Lampung Regency), the customary territory of the Marga Liwa Way Handak people, located in the South Lampung Regency and Bandar Lampung City. The customary territory of the Bandar Lima Way Lima people (located in Pesawaran Regency), the customary territory of the Bandar Enom Semaka people (located in Tanggamus Regency), the Paksi Sekala Brak customary territory (located in West Lampung Regency), the Enom Belas Marga Krui customary territory (located in Pesisir Barat Regency), the Pitu Kepuhyangan Komering customary territory (located in South Sumatra Province), the Telu Marga Ranau customary territory (located in South Sumatra Province and the customary territory of Cikoneng Pak Pekon (located in Banten Province) (Arifin, 2015, pp. 6-7). The last three mentioned customary territories are outside the administrative area of Lampung Province.

In Lampung itself, the Lampung people are more often known as the Ulun Lampung people. They identify their own region and group as Sang Bumi Ruwa Jurai which means one area (Sang Bumi) with two *jurai* (the two groups of descendants with relatively different customary traditions or *Ruwa jurai*) (Arifin, 2015; Hadikusuma, 1989). These two distinct (*adat*) traditional groups consist of the Ulun Lampung Pepadun or the people of the mountains, and the Ulun Lampung Saibatin or Peminggir or coastal people. Such group division is still used to identify Lampung people. This differentiation appeared in the colonial time, which was considered to have discriminatory motives to divide people of the same

lineage (Rosmelina, 2008). But on the other hand, this can also be used to strengthen the "authenticity" of certain groups.

Both the Ulun Pepadun and the Ulun Pesisir groups are generally called the Lampung people. The Lampung people are given a negative stereotype of being "hard" because they have *pi'il (piil) pesenggiri* (Irianto & Margaretha, 2011; Rosmelina, 2008). This is related to a character construction as a type of people who do not want to back down from acts of violence, if they feel offended by their personal honor or name. This is also what causes Lampung people to be known as "violent people" by other groups. For the Ulun Lampung people it is a principle related to the establishment of their self-esteem. This indicates that sometimes people also assume the identity of other people or other groups based on stereotype deviation. Moreover, prejudice and stereotyping often go together. However, it is possible to have one without the other, where a person may be aware of stereotypes about a group but not support or act according to the labeling (Marx & Ko, 2019, p. 9). This is also in line with what Lin (2019, p. 9) noted, that treating different cultures and identities equally does not mean that people need to treat foreigners the same as they treat their family or ignore that people are not equal in many ways, such as qualities of mental and weakness.

As for the Semende, it is a collective with the peculiarities of matrilineal principles which legitimacy is contained in the expression: "Tunggu Tubang Anak Betine", even in this regional song it is still echoed. Ideally, the Tunggu Tubang position is held by the oldest (female) daughter who has inheritance rights in her offspring.

On the other hand, Lampung also has a peculiarity with its patrilineal principle which is also known for its "*punyimbang*", where the eldest son inherits his father's power and resources from generation to generation which in essence gives rise to leadership and authority in the family, relatives and society (Arifin, 2019; Arifin, 2020; Arifin et al., 2017; Irianto & Margaretha, 2011; Sari, 2005). Thus, the importance of male leadership and authority, we can observe this principle of *punyimbang* which is often coupled with *piilpesenggiri* as the customary law of Ulun Lampung.

These two collective groups live within a striking distinction in Tanjung Raja, North Lampung. What is interesting is how each of these groups reinforces their ethnic and cultural identity, especially the identity of the Jeme Semende who are a minority migratory group in the Sang Bumi Ruwa Jurainya Ulun region. Under what conditions and why it appears to be interesting to study in the frame of ethnic relations? What are the forms of resistance and cultural identity shown by Jeme Semende in Tanjung Raja District? Why did Jeme Semende raise resistance and cultural identity in their relations with others in the region? Then what effect does it have on inter-ethnic relations in the region?

Due to various limitations, this paper will not provide a comprehensive picture of the Jeme Semende's cultural identity in the Lampung area. The fundamental contribution of this paper is to open our perspectives in seeing the diversity that exists in this part of the country. The more we know about the diversity, the more we can appreciate the diversity itself. If it can be managed

properly, it will become an extended social capital. On the other hand, if diversity or differences is exaggerated too much, it can lead to excessive ethnocentricity and demeans those outside the inner group. This attitude can become a source of dysfunctionality, triggering potential conflicts.

B. METHODS

This article used the qualitative method with ethnographic data collection by observation combined with in-depth and holistic analysis. According to Atkinson and Hammersley (1994, p. 329) the basic principle of ethnography is characterized by diversity rather than context. The term ethnography refers to social research that emphasizes the nature of specific socio-cultural phenomena. This article used a holistic approach to understand cultural identity and its resistance to other people at other places in a comprehensive and systematic way. Through this approach it produces meanings whose sources are from the thoughts of the local community which are in accordance with the factual reality of the people who are used as the object of this research. According to Spreadley (2006) the holistic view is based on culture as a unitary system that is interrelated so that in-depth knowledge of a society is obtained including cultural, social, political, economic, environmental, legal institutional and stakeholder aspects.

The Jeme Semende group was chosen as the locus of research based on several aspects including: the first subject of Jeme Semende migration is a major topic that has not been considered in previous studies. The second problem of migration is related to the intersection between the Jeme Semende and the others in Tanah Ulun Lampung as their migration area. The third reason for the relationship between the people (certain ethnic groups) as a phenomenon of identity and ethnicity. It can provide a new perspective regarding identity construction in inter-ethnic relations which is analyzed comprehensively. Based on these reasons, the Jeme Semende group is interesting to be considered as a cause of research. The main focus of this article is to identify the forms of cultural identity expressions that emerged from the Jeme Semende in Tanah Ulun Lampung. As well as to describe their interconnection in the sequence of ideas on the construct of the Semende identity. The use of the ethnographic approach provides space to capture the views of the Semende people. As well as the uniqueness of their cultural identity as expressed in their daily practices. We note by observation, in-depth interviews, and by taking part in certain Semende activities.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Identity and Ethnic Relations

Attention to ethnic relations is important in a multi-ethnic country. Each ethnic group has its own characteristics which become their own identity. It should be underlined that ethnic identity is always in relation to others (outside ethnicity). Therefore, as recognition of ethnic identity is always associated with recognition of other ethnicities (Barth, 1969; Grayman-Simpson, 2017).

Ethnic identity goes hand in hand with the production of locality. This locality is then raised as something particularistic, thus statements are made that this is "typical for us" and is "typical for them". Such peculiarities are, for example, the Tunggu Tubang custom of the Jeme Semende, in which control and management of resources is given to the eldest daughter in each family (Arifin, 2019, 2020). This means that according to the Semende custom, the eldest daughter is given the power to inherit, manage, and utilize the family's assets in the form of dwellings and agricultural land holdings. Those females are known in the community as the Tunggu Tubang in the family.

She carries out the customary duties to guard, care for, manage and utilize resources which are part of the family heirlooms. They include; dwellings, rice fields, gardens and other property (Guspitawaty, 2002; Iskandar, 2003; Setiawan, 2013). It is customary duties that contribute to the Tunggu Tubang responsibilities.

As well as the statements about the uniqueness of the culture. They include the legitimized rules and values of their ancestors. It boils down to "claims" as suggested by Sökefeld (2001). Those claims by each group are always predicted as belonging to "us". Regardless whether the things claimed originally are perhaps the result of a mixtures of belonging of other groups, or are self-reinvented due to the influence of global technological developments. Because it is a claim, identity will also be related to recognition of external groups. Recognition that arises from claims about "we" is connected with ways of making groupings which in turn involve acts of exclusion and inclusion based on the concepts of equality and difference (Simatupang, 2006). This act of inclusion and exclusion is also influenced by certain situations that support it.

In general, each collective performs an equalization action of its own group, so that an inclusiveness is formed. As for the exit, each collective performs an act of differentiation which in turn forms exclusivity. In a multi-ethnic country, the continuity of these two acts continues. It's just that the act of inclusion can lead to an attitude of acceptance, but the act of exclusion creates an attitude that strengthens segmentation within groups in society. Excessive exclusivity can also lead to ethnocentric attitudes of glorifying one's own group. Therefore, even people who come from the same ethnic group can be separated because of differences created especially because of religion, as happened to the Karo Batak (Kipp, 1993) or the Dayak ethnicity (Maunati, 2004), or other groups. The distinctions built for "us" and "them" will always be present, even though identity is situational (Eriksen, 1993; Kaufert, 1977; Maunati, 2004; Nagata, 1974) as it continues in social relations. In social relations the process of identification runs not only in inter-ethnic relations, but also in relations within the same ethnicity so that it is always associated with interpretations of "the Others" (Delfi & Weintré, 2014). It is through the relationship with the others that our identity is built.

To negate identity in the ethnic relations of each group with its claims of revitalizing their cultural potentials and customary values, is exemplified by the Sasak people (Kumbara, 2008). Similarly in the case with the Ulun Lampung people (Irianto & Margaretha, 2011; Isnaeni & Hakiki, 2017; Nurdin, 2009) and the Mentawaians (Delfi, 2013; Delfi & Weintré, 2014), in

relation to the external groups. Negation both for the sake of legitimacy and as a form of their resistance to outside forces that will "defeat" or be considered to be able to eliminate their identity. The result is that the process of constructing such an identity building will never stop.

With regard to the cultural identity, we can also see its connections with resistance and power as explained by Castells (2000). He indicates that the social construction of identity always appears in a context marked by power relations. Related to this issue, Castells further proposes three forms of origin and identity building, namely: 1) Legitimizing identity introduced by the dominant institutions of society to expand and rationalize their domination, 2) Resistance identity, which is generated by actors who are in situations or conditions that are degraded or stigmatized by the logic of domination, 3) Project identity, namely when social actors on the basis of any material culture available to them to build a new identity that redefines them in society (Castells, 2000, pp. 7-8). It should be emphasized that most ethnic identities that are defined through various contrasts with other cultures (Eriksen, 1993). We can also relate those views to what is discussed about shared social identity by Livingstone et al. (2023). He states that in social psychological models of shared social identity is a critical foundation for resistance and collective action.

Regarding the case of Jeme Semende, the origins and building of identity marked by these power relations are not rigid, but very dynamic. As there are spaces that allow the Jeme Semende to define and redefine their identity in relation to the Ulun Lampung people, especially in the area of Tanah Sang Bumi. Ruwa Jurai is their primary migration area (*rantau*) in this case. As indicated by Atkinson and Hammersley (1994) by taking part in the world of the subject under study is an aspect of social reality where we cannot examine social reality without being part of the reality itself. From the data collected, we can reveal the meaning constructed by Jeme Semende regarding their cultural identity in relation to the groups outside.

2. Puyang Semende: Of Myth and the Legitimacy of Conquest

According to the Semende elders, the establishment of this group closely hinges on the migration flow of their *puyang* (ancestors) from the Pasemah (Basemah) Lahat Regency while searching for new agricultural areas. We can deduct from conversations with the elders that the Puyang Semende can be seen as the founding ancestors of the Semende culture. The Jeme Semende, who live in North Lampung, often refer to the Pasemah area as an area close to Palembang, Pagar Alam and Lahat. From a geographical perspective, the Pasemah region covers a large area, including the Tinggihari, Tanjung Sirih, Tebing Tinggi, Pulau Panggung, Air Puar and Tegus Wangi (Munandar, 2009). Especially for the Pulau Panggung area, it is the region that is the center of the Semende Darat people in Muara Enim.

Referring to the oral history of this "myth of origin", it is told that long before the formation of the Semende community, as it is today, they used to be part of the Basemah community that currently is administratively included in the Lahat Regency of South Sumatra Province. The Pasemah or Basemah community is known as the

societies that adhered to a strong patrilineal system. In it males hold an important and powerful position. The following are the most common stories regarding the origins of the Jeme Semende from Pasemah:

"One day, there was a fight between two siblings, one boy and one girl, regarding the workload each carried out. According to the sister the workload for her was too much compared to the workload of her brother. This made the sister decide to leave her hometown, and formed a community in the new area of Muara Enim which became known as the Semende people."

This myth is not only still believed in the area of their origin in Pasemah, but also continued to develop in the Rantau area, especially the Tanjung Raja area and in Muara Sahung. From this myth, it can be observed that a girl's desire to leave her hometown is due to her disapproval of the male domination system, which in the Pasemah society is called a *lurah*. The strength of male power can also be seen from the pattern of mastery over inheritance, giving preference to men, while women are more positioned as caretakers of the house and tools in fulfilling men's needs.

This pattern of inheritance later in their myth eventually gave birth to resistance among certain groups which then supported the "rebellion" carried out by their sister. This pattern of inheritance was then renewed in the new area of Muara Enim. It gave birth to the tradition of Tunggu Tubang. In the Pasemah community there is no specific term to refer to women in the extended family, especially regarding the management of this inheritance. As for the Semende people, this is more emphasized through the custom of "Tunggu Tubang for the female child". It is the uniqueness in the Semende culture. Or in other word, it can be said that Tunggu Tubang is identified as the cultural identity of the Semende People.

This myth is strongly believed by the Semende Muara Sahung people as the cause of the formation of the Semende community in Muara Enim in South Sumatra and the formation of the Tunggu Tubang custom. In other words, it was the descendants of these women who migrated to Muara Enim and later formed the Semende community. In Muara Enim a new cultural identity was formed, the Tunggu Tubang aspect The Semende people still believe in the importance of the females as inheritors of tangible resources like a plot of land or a house from their parents. It cannot be separated from efforts to minimize conflicts that might occur from time to time, as noted in the past. Therefore, the tradition of Tunggu Tubang is very important for them to continue to strengthen their community, especially in remote areas.

It is the existence of this Tunggu Tubang in the Semende community, which is often used as an argument that the Semende people are matrilineal adherents. On the other hand, this matrilineal identity is also often associated with Minangkabau matrilineally. By way of legitimizing the myth that one of their ancestors came from the Minangkabau *puyang awak* ancestry. The legitimacy of the matrilineal identity of the Semende people has even been legitimized by several previous Semende studies. Tunggu Tubang serves as legitimacy for the Semende community's matrilineal system, related to the strengthening of their customary patterns. The parental assets in the form of the tangibles like house and rice fields, are passed on to the eldest daughter. This Tunggu Tubang system continues to be maintained and

strengthened in the community, so that it becomes the principal identity marker that is often attached to the Semende community. The pattern of inheritance in the Tunggu Tubang custom which is handed over to the daughters, gives rise to the impression that the Semende people are finally seen as adherents of the matrilineal system. If matrilineal is seen more as a form of kinship inheritance, then inheritance of property, it is in principle only a form of inheritance from the kinship system itself. Therefore, the argument that Tunggu Tubang is proof that the Semende people are matrilineal adherents is, very weak and without strong data support.

It indicates that the *adat* of Tunggu Tubang does not mean that power is in the hands of women (matriarchal) nor does it serve as legitimacy that the Semende are adherents of female descent (matrilineal). The position of the males in the Tunggu Tubang tradition is still placed as a group leader. Even as a guardian of the continuity of the community and as the principal decision maker in every deliberation that is held. In other words, the protection of men for their group, especially for women as successors of offspring, is important, so that their group can survive, so as to create a symbiotic relationship between brothers and sisters. The importance of protection and social solidarity like this is what the Semende people believe in and which their ancestors tried to apply. When males are active in clearing land for their family life, the females will wait a bit longer for the house and prepare everything needed to built. For the Semende people in outer areas such as in Muara Sahung (Bengkulu) and Tanjung Raja (Lampung) area, this customary pattern of Tunggu Tubang is very important. When many Semende males go away to seek new spaces of life and settlement for their proposed family, a time of returning is envisaged. When males return to their hometowns there will always be a house to go to, and this can only be done when their sister is given the right to be a Tunggu Tubang.

3. *Tunggu Tubang Anak Betine*: Legitimation of their traditional (*adat*) identity

The phrase of *Tunggu Tubang Anak Betine* stated above indicates the Tunggu Tubang is a female. Tubang itself is literally a term for a piece of bamboo, usually two or three segments long. This tube is typically hung horizontally above the fireplace or cooking stove in the kitchen. The tube has the function of a storage place for spices, shrimp paste or dried fish. Its position, which is above the fireplace, is intended so that the spices stored are not easily damaged by moisture and protected from certain animals, like rats and cats. While *Tunggu Tubang* is defined as the place for spices and dried fish, it is also the name of the human highly regarded female position in the household and her designated activities. Due to the modesty of the Malay women that include the Semende women, they are good in caring for the family unit. The position of the Tunggu Tubang is primarily a sign of identifying being the head of the household and indicate the duties.

Furthermore, ideally the use of the word Tunggu Tubang is interpreted to refer to the eldest daughter in a family who is given the responsibility to look after and maintain the inheritance owned by her family. These assets include houses, fish ponds and existing agricultural land (rice fields or gardens). This is what causes the oldest

female who is given a social position according to custom to become a Tunggu Tubang. She will inherently has a role in controlling and utilizing the inherited assets of the family members and relatives.

Figure 1. An elderly Jeme Semende Tunggu Tubang on the porch of her traditional house on stilts



Source: Rian Alfianda, 2017

As an inheritance, the house, fish pond and agricultural land of rice fields and gardens cannot be sold, and will continue to be passed on to the next generation. The house as an inheritance from the parents is very visible when there are activities that require more energy and time and will involve almost all members of the family. This can be at times of funerals and marriages. For these matters, members of the "waiting" relatives gather at the house for the Tunggu Tubang and wait for her signal to commence with their doled-out duties. The harvests of agricultural land, especially the rice fields, are intended as food reserves for all members of the "waiting" relatives during the gathering. The fish pond in the house hold is an important source to meet the animal protein needs of the people and supplement the rice consumption. Usually, around the fish pond are various types of vegetables are grown, such as spinach, eggplant and cassava and spices like turmeric, ginger, cayenne pepper and Dutch eggplant. For the needs of these communal activities the Tubang gives the signal to go ahead, to manage the resources belonging to the extended family.

The granting of authority to the Tunggu Tubang to utilize and manage this inherited property leads to consequences for her carrying out the obligation to provide for the needs of relatives, while they are at the home for the Tunggu Tubang. She is also obliged to look after and care for the parents and unmarried siblings. In order to fulfill the needs of the "waiting" family members who live with her, she also needs to manage the cultivation of the agricultural land other than rice fields, such as the gardens.

According to the Jeme Semende custom, the position and social role that are so important that they are symbolized by cultural objects, such as the following; 1) The baskets or *runtung bengkup* (like containers that close each other). The Tunggu Tubang is able or be firm in keeping secrets, 2) The *niru* (as a means of winnowing rice, or separating rice from grain) which means that a Tunggu Tubang must have the ability to distinguish between what is good and what is bad, 3) The *tudung* (a tool for covering food on the table), where a "waiting" person is expected to be assisted and be protected by the

Tunggu Tubang, 4) The *kinjar* (a container that is carried when going to the fields/rice fields), which means that a Tunggu Tubang must be diligent and always ready when asked to go somewhere, 5) The *piting* (*tikar pandan* or large mat to sit on) which means that a Tunggu Tubang must be ready and welcoming in receiving guests regardless of their position, 6) The *tuku* (plow the fields) which means that a Tunggu Tubang must have a commendable attitude and personality and not harming anyone.

Ideally, a person who is given the position of the Tunggu Tubang by his relatives is the oldest married daughter in the family. As the eldest child, she is assumed to be more mature and expected to be able to protect all family members in the place of her parents. It's just that there is still an assumption that women are physically "weak" and "incapable" of looking for their own needs, so they are very dependent on their husbands. Therefore, the position of being a Tunggu Tubang is ultimately not only attached to women, but at the same time also attached to her husband. If the eldest daughter feels for any reason unable to bear the responsibility of being a Tunggu Tubang, the burden of Tunggu Tubang will eventually be shifted to her younger sister, perhaps even if she is the youngest female sibling.

Traditionally, the position of *Tunggu Tubang* is synonymous with female members in the family, emphasized in the phrase: *Tunggu Tubang* for female siblings and continues to be echoed through local songs till these days. Ideally there are daughters in the family who are willing to carry out their role as a *Tubang Tubang*. However, if in the end none of the women in the family are willing to hold the position, the *Tunggu Tubang* position will be handed over to a male member of the family. However, the position of "Tunggu Tubang" or female sibling means that the man must "include" his wife to be part of the family, which in Semende's terms is called *ngkit* (revival). Thus the "Tunggu Tubang" remains ideally attached to the *betine* (daughter). If no female or male Tunggu Tubang can be appointed, it means the inherited property will be sold.

The explanation above shows that the *adat* of *Tunggu Tubang* is not just a pattern of inheriting property and land passed on to the eldest daughter, but also has a meaning as a tool to legitimize the cohesion of their group in relation to "the Others", especially in the Ulun Lampung people. Meanwhile, being in your own ethnic group is useful for strengthening the social cohesion among the Jeme Semende, especially for those living in distant areas. This assertion of the *Tunggu Tubang* *adat* is based on the myth of the formation. According to the Semende people it all occurred historically as a result of the contestations between a male and a female sibling.

4. *Kuntaw*: Assertion of Power and Inclusion of "the Others"

Kuntaw is a type of martial arts. As mentioned on the *kuntawusa.com* website, *Kuntaw* is self-defense art form utilizing a combination of hand and foot techniques in firm and soft touching movements. No one is certain how *Kuntaw* developed and where it was first established, but it has proven to be an effective self-defense art form. However, in the *usadojo.com* website it is mentioned that *Kuntaw* is an ancient art of native Filipino hand and foot

fighting using both hard and soft techniques. It is one of the oldest self-defense arts devised by the royalty of the Filipino Muslim, prior to the Spanish colonial time. Long before the arrival of the Spaniards to the Philippines, a system of unarmed (*kuntawan*) and armed (*kali*) fighting were being taught. *Kuntaw* is a Filipinized term for these martial arts. In Tanjung Raja itself, none of *Kuntaw*'s players and teachers are aware that their martial arts came perhaps from Philippines.

Of the 19 villages in Tanjung Raja, the research concentrated on four villages, namely Tanjung Raja, Merambung, Tulung Balak and Ulak Ata. Of the four villages, Tanjung Raja Village is the center of Tanjung Raja District. One of the research locations is an area that is considered the oldest in Tanjung Raja because it was the first migration area, namely Merambung Village. Because of this, Merambung it is said to be the oldest village by the Semende people in Tanjung Raja. Or also known as the first area established by the Semende ancestors in the Tanjung Raja region, around 1895. As noted by Anidarmansyah, in his assessment in "the History of the Establishment of Tanjung Raja". This is the same as the Prapau settlement which is known as the oldest village in the Muara Enim area.

Figure 2. A Semende male in the Merambung village is drying coffee beans, the main agricultural product of the Semende people



Source: Rian Alfianda, 2017

Apart from *Tunggu Tubang* practise, the *Jeme Semende* also negates their identity through the practice of self-defense called *Kuntaw* or *kuntawo*. The *Jeme Semende* are also proud to tell outsiders that they have a specialty in martial arts. This sport is taught to young men and women in Tanjung Raja by a local person. According to him, the martial arts of *Kuntaw* is a distinctive feature of the *Semende* culture. It distinguishes their group from other ethnic groups in Tanjung Raja, even with the ethnic Lampung people. Although they have martial arts sport, known as the *pencak* martial arts. Not less interesting is the *Kuntaw* martial art which is said to have originated in the Minangkabau area. It is also connected with one of the Puyang Semende people named *Puyang Awak*. For most of the interviewees of the *Jeme Semende* people stated that there is a similarity in the name "*awak*" which is associated with the *Minangkabau* people. When they just meet, they often ask whether they are "outsiders" or fellow *Minangkabau* people as they also use the word "*urang awak*". It was mentioned that the coach who taught the

Kuntaw martial art to the Jeme Semende people was an ethnic Minangkabau, named Sutan Pamencak also known as Pamuncak.

The Kuntaw martial art was spread by the Semende people to the Tanah Lampung area when they migrated. One of the Semende people, Pak J, although not having a specific place to practice the Kuntaw martial arts, admitted that he teaches it, if someone is interested. Pak J from Ulu Danau in South Sumatra, explained the importance of Kuntaw as follows:

This type of Kuntaw martial art is needed for the Semende youths as a self-defense protection effort when migrating. This was not only effective in past times, but also in current times. In the past the use of martial arts was important to protect yourself from wild animals, as you had to go in the field that were far away and dangerous. Nowadays there are more dangerous situations that include attacks by humans. The Semende people often travel on their own to distant fields while crossing dark forests. Lurking dangers can come at any time without any prior signs.

Such conditions resulted in the martial arts being taught to the Semende people. Although the word origin of *Kuntaw* is unknown, it is claimed to belong to the *Jeme Semende* people. This assertion is overall claimed by the people living in Lampung. In contrast to the relationship with the *Minangkabau* people, the *Kuntaw* martial art is emphasized to have a strong relationship with the *Minangkabau* people and their ancestors. One of them is known as *Puyang Awak*. It indicates that when dealing with other ethnic groups, the *Jeme Semende* people acknowledge a sense of group inclusiveness outside their immediate ethnic group. He said that the *Kuntaw* self-defense technique would be a provision before desire to migrate. He taught this martial art also to his sons, even though he doesn't have a specific training ground like Pak Syahrin.

Figure 3. Two Semende youngsters in the Tanjung Raja village practicing *Kuntaw* martial arts



Source: Rian Alfianda, 2017

Figure 4. Students and their *Kuntaw* coach, Mr Syahrin, after their martial arts training



Source: Rian Alfianda, 2017

In practice, children are also taught about body anatomy, or knowledge about human bones. Even Pak Syahrin himself said that one must know how to reconnect bones before one can become a *Kuntaw* martial arts teacher. The *Kuntaw* martial arts abilities are not meant to be shown off to others. This also has similarities with the values in the "*silek*" tradition in *Minangkabau* culture which have the same main values instilled in those who study it, namely this martial art is not to find enemies by "showing off" skills or their dexterity. This martial art is learned to recognize yourself and at the same time practice patiently. And not to be emotional or easily provoked by anger, but to make more friends. Recognizing oneself and practicing patience are part of mysticism.

The *Kuntaw* martial art still survives today, especially in Tanjung Raja District in North Lampung. According to the Semende traditional leaders in North Lampung, there were two matters that influenced the desire of the Semende youths to practice *Kuntaw* self-defense. The first was the development of telecommunication media that is easily accessible to youth and spread the art of self-defense. Television has started frequently to play soap operas with martial arts themes. Many young people are fond of one of the Indonesian action actors, Iko Uwais, who is famous for his martial arts exercises. Secondly, what is not less important is within the Tanjung Raja community itself. The Semende people still carry out weddings by presenting a bridal procession which is always preceded by a *Kuntaw* martial arts group. The *Kuntaw* group's attractions are also what the general public most want to see in the bride's procession. This procession is followed by the *Zikir* group. It is still carried out at weddings for the Semende people and are never absent, even though other features might no longer be used.

Some of the Semende people, said that the hallmark of a Semende wedding ceremony is the "*Kuntaw*" martial arts group display. The feeling of pride with the "distinctiveness" of the *Kuntaw* martial arts procession was also captured when they said; "It is a sign that the Semende people party have established a *Kuntaw* group!" .

CONCLUSION

The shared identity of the Semende People is always contrasted in relation with "the Others". The reinforcements of their cultural identity are

built continuously in their practices of living in the group they selected. Thus, it sometimes establishes if other groups are included or being exclusive. The data and facts obtained indicate that the ethnographic writing steps are expected to produce a more comprehensive understanding of *Jeme Semende's* cultural identity in relation to other ethnic groups in *Tanah Sang Bumi Ruwa Jurai*, especially with Ulun Lampung, in Tanjung Raja, North Lampung. Each ethnic group with its cultural practices emphasizes their cultural ownership or distinctiveness. In certain situations the cultural practices that are claimed as their identity are contrasted with some things belonging to others outside their own group. Therefore, *Jeme Semende's* cultural identity is also situational.

Apart from that, they can also use their cultural identity to affirm and even legitimize their cultural ownership which is embodied in local cultural practices of the Semende, which may not be the same as their area of origin in Pasemah. On the other hand, they also use this cultural identity to reject another identity which might be dominant such as the Ulun Lampung people have. It needs to be underlined that identity is not rigid, but fluid and dynamic, adaptation will still occur in the process of defining and redefining the *Jeme Semende's* identity. At one point it will be used as a means of legitimacy as well as recognition. At other times it can be used as a tool opposing other identities which might impose certain rules on the uniqueness of *jeme Semende*.

Follow up research is required to investigate other aspects of Semende culture and the *Jeme Semende* relationship with Ulun Lampung in inter-ethnic marriages.

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