

CHAPTER II

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF MADURESE CULTURE AND SOCIETY

II.1. Colonial Stereotypes About the Madurese*II.1.1. Stereotypes Toward the Madurese

In the colonial times, Europeans tended to compare the Madurese characterizations with neighboring ethnic groups, especially Javanese and Sundanese. They are described, in the physical characteristics as coarser, more angular, rougher, stouter or bolder and as having a stronger bodyly build.

Gennep (1921) and Veth (1907) depicted the Madurese facial features as a 'cruel trait'. It was said that their face are broader, bolder and often crude.

Van Gelder (1899) at first glance considered the 'less refined facial features' which spoke of boldness and coarsness, less than charming.

Si Lindoeng (1898) considered the Madurese both commoners and aristocrats, to be a less pleasing figure than the Javanese (in Jonge, 1991:4).

* This section is based on Jonge's paper of International Workshop on Indonesian Studies No.6 entitled "Madurese Culture and Society: Continuity and Change" - Stereotypes of The Madurese - Leiden, 7-11 October 1991.



About the Madurese woman, Van der Linden, a missionary, considered the beauty of the Madurese women far inferior to that of Central and West Javanese ones (Van der Linden in Jonge, 1991:5).

According to Si Lindoeng 'the fine, softly pale faces that make so many Javanese women so attractive only rarely occur among the Madurese (Si Lindoeng in Ibid.).

It is also said that the Madurese woman 'gets old soon and at relatively early age already has something masculine and wrinkled' (Surink, 1933 in Ibid.).

J.S. Brandts Buys, the composer and temporary Indies correspondent for the Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant wrote that :

Madurese women don't have much dignity and grace. Their bone structure is much too coarse for it (and) their facial expressions too dull. Little girls have much finer (features) but as they are growing up they coarsen enormously (Buys, 1923 in Ibid.).

The only positive thing of the Madurese woman's performance reported by Jonge is that she had well formed, jutting breasts.

During the colonial times, the Madurese clothing also called colonizer's attention. Mitis, 1903 (in Ibid:6) thought that among women as well as men the daily clothing looked dingy and dirty.

The men didn't care about clothes and the women dressed 'extraordinarily sloppily'. Both sexes had a preference for 'gaudy and loud colors' like bright red, yellow, green orange and bright blue (Hageman, 1958 in Jonge, 1991:6).

The stereotypes of Madurese behaviour and character as well as their appearance and clothing were depicted as crude, impolite, extrovert, outspoken, ill-mannered, unrefined-person, impudent and totally lacking in etiquette. Carmelite missionary even called them as 'oring pedis' (hot head) and preferred not to associate with them (see in Ibid:7). Other characteristics of the Madurese character that were emphasized ever more are touchiness, suspiciousness, hot temper, fierceness, vengefulness, combatitiveness and violence. They are probably derived from the situation of that time in which fights and murders called 'Carok' became their daily habits in solving the problems. It occurred when a Madurese was offended or his prestige underestimated.

As put by Wop, 1966 (in Ibid:8) even small insults were answered with a knife (or a sickle, a calog -- a sort of machete with a bent point, a wadong -- kind of calog or crowbar called 'penggali').

For the defense of honor everything was put at stake or, as a well-known Madurese proverb says: "(When the choice

is between) Death or dishonor, death is preferred" (Atmo-soedirdjo, 1952 in Jonge, 1991:8) or "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" (De Java Post, 1911 in Ibid:8).

From the well-known Madurese tradition at that time called 'Karapan Sapi' -- a bull race, the colonizers considered the Madurese as an 'incorrigible gambler' as it was put that :

How often has it not happened that, in order to be able to gamble, he frittered away his possessions, he pawned his fields with a richer countryman, Arab or Chinese.

When he has nothing more than an attractive daughter or wife, he pawns her or gives her to a richer man who valued her more (N. 1931 in Ibid:9).

The colonializer also considered that the Madurese had a 'low level civilization', since at a victory, people roar, scream and dance, but a loss they find hard to bear. When his animals have lost and 'scorn' and 'ridicule' are his part, the owner quickly reached for his knife (Ibid:9).

Beside the many negative qualities, the Madurese was also rated in few of positive ones, namely, of their personal courage, bravery, adventurousness, faithfulness, loyalty, diligence, thrift, cheerfulness, enthusiasm and humor. But Jonge said that such qualities only appeared and developed under certain circumstances such as peace, order, supervision and guidance. They were typified as 'fisherman shipper' who had more guts, more desire for

adventure and more open and robust passion (Van de Venter, 1904 in Jonge, 1991:10) -- a robust soldier, an honest coolie, a vigilant sailor and a good coastal pirates (Hageman, 1858 in Ibid).

Moreover, they were called 'men of honor' who hate squatting and prefer to be straightforward (Java Post, 1911 in Ibid).

II.1.2. Stereotypes Toward Madurese Language, Literature, and Arts

The stereotypes of the Madurese in the colonial time did not only embrace their character, behavior, and appearance but it also covered language, literature and art (Jonge, 1991:13).

Esser, 1894 (in Jonge, 1991:12) told a version, the old people saw how the Madurese had overslept when Allah passed out languages to the people of the earth. The result was that their language is a mixture of the neighboring ones like Malay, Kawi, Javanese, Sundanese and Balinese. Brandt Buys, 1926 (in Ibid) compared the Madurese language to the Sundanese and Javanese one by saying that Madurese sounds lack in the sweet, bright singing, the supple bowdness and are more jerky, rough, peasant like and it is a language for rough sailors. Si Lindoeng

stated that their language is used only in the strical productions of the lower kind (Lindoeng, 1898 in Jonge, 1991:13). It was also said that the language of the Madurese sounds hard and offensive (Van Gelder, 1899 in Ibid:7) and the tone of voice is bold and unconstrained, often bordering on impudence (Encyclopaedie Van Nederlandsch-Indie, 1918 in Ibid).

Concerning the literature, the plastic arts, music and dance, it was said that the Madurese just miss being depicted as barbarians, unfit for music and the visual arts for crafts (Gelder, 1899 in Ibid:13). The Madurese literature lacks quality and includes but few works of beauty (Si Lindoeng, 1898 in Ibid).

II.2. The Madurese in Surabaya Society and Attributed Stereotypes of Them

Compared to the surrounding islands of Java and Bali, the Madurese landscape is hare and arid. The soil is infertile, chalky and rocky. Exacerbated by the very scanty rainfall, there are practically no forests and rice farming is only possible along the few streams. The larger part of the population owns only dry fields called 'Tegal' planted with maize and cassava in the rainy season. The island is densely populated and the per capita land area,

which in 1976 was 0.178 ha of which 0.150 ha was 'Tegal' is insufficient to feed the population. As early as the beginning of the 19th century, food was imported (Hijst-kultuur, 1854 in Jonge, 1991:16). By seeing such conditions, obviously, so that the life on the island has always been hard.

The inhabitants of whom the largest part is partially or fully employed in agriculture, struggle daily in making a living. Especially in the 19th century, when population pressure increased yearly, the population lived in poverty. Some years they stayed alive by eating peels of pulses bark and corn leaves (Nota, 1904 in Ibid:16). All such sorts of insufficient conditions caused the migration of Madurese. They went to Java and other islands during the flowering of the plantations (1870-1930) either temporarily or permanently, in order to make a living. In 1930 more than a quarter million people in East Java were classified as Madurese immigrants.¹

The following table shows their place of origin and their most usual place of settlement :

1) Jonge mentioned that the sums of the Madurese immigrant is at least twice as many Madurese as on Madurese itself.

Table A. The Place of Origin and Settlement of The Madurese Immigrant in East Java

Origin	Settlement
Bangkalan	Surabaya, Malang, Kediri, Madiun, Bojonegoro
Sampang	Jember, Lumajang, Malang
Pamekasan	Jember, Banyuwangi, Lumajang, Panarukan
Sumenep	Jember, Banyuwangi, Bondowoso

The table above shows that since the independence the large cities such as Surabaya have become the main destination. The Madurese who settle in Surabaya, mostly are from Bangkalan. In this city, the Madurese especially people from west Madura work primarily in the informal sector, such as 'becak drivers', 'workers', and 'tiny peddlers'.

In the northern part of the city, their occupations are mostly as 'becak drivers' and 'tiny peddlers'. Along the river port such as 'Kalimas' area and trading port 'Tanjung Perak', the Madurese earn their living as 'porter', 'tukang tambal', and the 'pavement-peddlers'. Whereas, in areas named 'Sawah Pulo', 'Pegirian' and 'Sidotopo' they hold various informal job positions. In sawah Pulo and Pegirian, beside as 'becak drivers', the Madurese live as 'tailors of the confection', 'pedagang

burung' and 'pedagang besi tua'.

In Kelurahan Sidotopo, the youth mostly works as 'parker attendants' and 'bemo drivers'. The areas mentioned above, included 'Jatisrono' and 'Jatipurwo' (which belongs to Kelurahan Ujung) are well-known as 'Kampung Madura' in which we can still meet several practices of Madurese traditional culture, such as :

- Otok-otok, a sort of little party held to keep the friendship and brotherhood of Madurese ethnic group memberships in which they are also involved and belong to the members of saving club (in Java: Arisan).
- Sandur, a kind of Madurese traditional music accompanied by dancers that is similar to the Sundanese 'Jaipong' or Javanese 'Ronggeng' which is usually held on the wedding parties or circumcision, ceremonies.

It was stated in the previous chapter that the Madurese in Surabaya mostly work in the informal sector. This is caused by the distress which forced the Madurese turn out as competitors to the Javanese. Jonge pointed out that the new destination, the Madurese did not shy from the heavy work. The same is true of the Madurese in the cities. They are not afraid to dirty their hands and often do the so-called marginal jobs (Jonge, 1991:19). Such conditions have contributed to the stigmatization of the

Madurese that they are, most commonly rated as belonging to 'low social categories' especially in their job position.

'Carok' is still often met in Surabaya. It is not a surprising thing for people of Surabaya, since in their mind 'Carok' is identical with the Madurese. By observing such habits, obviously up to now the attribute of 'harshness', 'pugnacity' and 'avenger' are always attached to the Madurese.

II.3. Language, Ethnicity and Stereotypes

The relationship between language and social categories such as race, sex, age, social class, religion and ethnicity cannot be separated from each other.

The role of language often includes the identification or marking of the social categories, the maintenance and manipulation of individual social relationships and networks, and various means of affecting social control. The relationship is varying and constitutive in nature.

Social categories are primarily part of the social system, but also become embedded in the language system as it is used to mark them; the use and valuation of the linguistic markers in turn may affect the nature and persistence of the categories themselves (Troike, 1982:38).

As an example is ethnicity markers based on linguistic elements or features, i.e. accent, style, vocabulary, pitch, tone, voice quality, etc.

In multiethnic speech community, the fixed accent of someone is usually used to recognize ethnic identity or ethnic origin. As Giles puts it: in a multiethnic speech community, particularly in the condition of namely a minority group members that may be bilingual in their ethnic language(s) and the dominant language and those who may be monolingual in the dominant language, often speak a distinctive variety (accents) of the dominant language. These accents are usually interpreted simply as arising from the influence of the ethnic language(s), and features indeed may be attributed to substratum varieties or to the mother tongue, but they may be maintained and cultivated (consciously or unconsciously) as linguistic markers of ethnic identity (Giles, 1979 in Troike, 1982:85).

Since the linguistic markers mentioned above are closely related to the ethnic identity, it is no wonder that the use of an ethnically marked variety of language is often in an ethnic group membership - dealing with, as an example, the sense of regard to either their own culture or ancestral language. It is also not rare that outside of the ethnic group membership, the imitation of

such marked variety of a language is spoken by the imitator from other different ethnic group membership, but it is prone to be used in telling ethnic jokes to impart the stereotyped impressions as it is stated that:

Unlike using a foreign language, using an ethnically marked variety of a language generally requires being born into groupmembership, unless the intent is to ridicule or joke (which indeed is often the case). One of the best sources of data on which ethnic markers are stigmatized and stereotyped is the imitative language markers used in telling ethnic jokes (Troike, 1980:86).

That is why these three components -- language, ethnicity and stereotypes in the society are interrelated and their linkage seem unlikely to be separated from each other in the diverse or multiethnic speech community.