



Universiteit  
Leiden  
The Netherlands

## **Embedded remembering : memory culture of the 1965 violence in rural East Java**

Leksana, G.T.

### **Citation**

Leksana, G. T. (2020, May 26). *Embedded remembering : memory culture of the 1965 violence in rural East Java*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/92258>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/92258>

**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/92258> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

**Author:** Leksana, G.T.

**Title:** Embedded remembering : memory culture of the 1965 violence in rural East Java

**Issue Date:** 2020-05-26

## CHAPTER 5

### MEMORY LANDSCAPES IN DONOMULYO: NEGOTIATING THE PAST AND THE PRESENT

Apprehending memory as a strategy to reconcile past and present enables us to understand that memories of violence actually never diminish even under the state's repressive acts. In these last two chapters, we will see the ways in which those memories have survived through changing political spheres and regimes, mainly through stories of places and family narratives. During my stay in Donomulyo, I realised that stories of 1965-68 violence are not only about people, but also about places. These places, which have different characteristics, will be discussed thoroughly in this chapter. Some of them were created by the state and thus, resemble much of the official narrative. Meanwhile, others have strong family stories attached to them and cannot be easily recognised publicly. While some of these sites are still maintained and used, others are practically abandoned. However, all of these places carry different meanings for the villagers that reflect how the past is represented today. The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the interaction between places, people, and their memory of violence.

I consider these places as sites of memory, or *lieux de mémoire*, a concept that Pierre Nora introduced as sites where memory is crystallised, and a residual sense of continuity with the past remains.<sup>346</sup> He also proposed two main characteristics of *lieux de mémoire* that differ them from other historical objects. First is the willingness or intent to remember, which reflects the interplay between memory and history. This implies that sites of memory are created, either authoritatively or collectively, and their meaning can be constructed. Second, Nora also stresses the fluidity of *lieux de mémoire*. They mix and combine many factors such as life and death, and most importantly, "they only exist because of their capacity for metamorphosis, and endless recycling of their meaning and an unpredictable proliferation of their ramifications".<sup>347</sup> I would like to take Nora's concept further, especially on his idea of intent in *lieux de mémoire*, because this is where the power of memory politics lies. Who has the intent to remember and what kind of past do they intend to remember, are the main questions.

In this chapter, I elaborate on Nora's concept to analyse the sites of memory in Donomulyo. The main feature of the 1965 case is its different layers of history that influence Indonesia's collective memory. Sites of memory, then, is a field of a contested yet intertwined past – representing the violence of national treason of the September 30<sup>th</sup> Movement, but also the gruesome mass violence against the communists in the regions. Yet, all these different sites of memory lie in the same space where communities continue their lives after the violence. They form memory landscapes,<sup>348</sup> where different sites (despite the various narratives that they convey) are connected and continuously (re)shape the memory of violence. Furthermore, as James Young argues, sites of memory should not only be examined in relation to their representation of the past, but also in relation to their role in

---

<sup>346</sup> Nora 1996, 1.

<sup>347</sup> Nora 1989, 19.

<sup>348</sup> Eickhoff, et al. uses the concept of memory landscapes to show connection between memory and its spatial dimension, including the crucial role of sites in evoking, shaping, communicating or controlling memories. Eickhoff, et al. 2017, 531. Echoing with Eickhoff, et al., in this study I use the term landscapes not only to refer to the various sites of memory, but also to the different layers of memory and its dialogical process with the surroundings.

the present.<sup>349</sup> A point that Ben Anderson also highlighted in his study of visuals and monuments in the New Order Indonesia is that monuments commemorate the past at the same time that they are intended for the future.<sup>350</sup> This means that Nora's point on the fluidity of *lieux*, should not only be examined on the representation of the sites itself, but also on their shifting interaction with the people in these landscapes of memory. This is what Bloembergen & Eickhoff called the agency of sites; how sites influence their surrounding individuals or parties in and beyond the national and international framework of heritage.<sup>351</sup> In the context of a society filled with complex patronage relationships, sites of memory do not only function as a remembrance of the past, but they have also developed into instruments for negotiating the present.

Therefore, this chapter is an exploration of the agency of memory landscapes of violence: what they represent in the past and how they shape the present. This chapter will ask questions such as: why are some sites abandoned, and others not? How are the sites and the surrounding people or parties connected? To what extent do they influence the villagers' current life and their perception of the past? More importantly, to what extent are the sites intermingled with the personal and the social, or the public and the private? The sites that I will discuss in this chapter were selected because they constantly appeared in my conversations with villagers specifically in Donomulyo (though there are more sites of violence in the area). Some of these sites can be easily recognised through, for example, the engraved names, dates, or events. While others are hidden, but constantly preserved by the villagers' memorialisation practices. The sites' diversity also shows that not all *lieux* are 'alive', in a sense that although they preserve history, they have become meaningless in the present.

The memory landscapes in the Banyujati area (the pseudonym for three villages covered in this research) convey different interpretations of the past – some resonate with the national narrative, while others do not. Therefore, I will start the chapter by describing the national commemoration project on 1965 through the creation of a museum and a monument. One of the important examples is the Crocodile Pit or Lubang Buaya memorial complex in Jakarta. The main feature of this memorial site is the glorification of the death of the seven military officers during the September 30<sup>th</sup> Movement, and the construction of the PKI as a threat to the nation. In the next part, I will explore the memory landscapes in Banyujati which consist of five sites: the Trisula community building, the Trisula monument, Bhayangkara or Ngerendeng monument, and two mass graves. For each site, I will start by describing their current condition, representation, and also their connection with the surrounding people. I will continue with analysing how the sites connect past and present, and how they have been reinterpreted by the surrounding people.

### Indonesia's National Site of Memory: Lubang Buaya

In 1973, the New Order government opened The *Pancasila Sakti* (Sacred Pancasila) Monument in Jakarta.<sup>352</sup> This public memorial complex consists of three main parts: a monument, a well called *Lubang Buaya* (Crocodile Pit) where the officers' bodies were found, and the diorama of torture of the Generals.<sup>353</sup> The monument depicts seven Generals who died in the September 30<sup>th</sup> Movement, standing in front of a large Garuda Pancasila, the national emblem that carries a shield containing

---

<sup>349</sup> Young 1993, 12-13.

<sup>350</sup> Anderson 1973, 61.

<sup>351</sup> Bloembergen & Eickhoff 2015, 36.

<sup>352</sup> Pancasila is Indonesia's national ideology which consists of five points. The first point is "Believe in God". The PKI, who were accused of being atheists, were also accused of hatred of the Pancasila especially because of that first point.

<sup>353</sup> In the September 30<sup>th</sup> Movement in 1965, six generals and one captain of the army were kidnapped and killed. Their bodies were thrown into this pit, which was later commemorated as the Crocodile Pit.

five symbols of the Pancasila (Picture 1).<sup>354</sup> They were regarded as national heroes; victims of national treason. The interesting part attached to the monument is the base relief below the statue of the Generals. Its relief shows a summary of Indonesia's official historiography from independence from Dutch colonialism, the September 30<sup>th</sup> Movement, and the establishment of the New Order. The portrayal of the September 30<sup>th</sup> Movement in the relief only describes scenes of torture and death of the army officers, including scenes when the bodies were thrown into the Pit. Visualizations of the torture in the diorama depicts members of the BTI (Indonesia Peasants Movement) and Gerwani (*Gerakan Wanita Indonesia*/ Indonesian Women's Movement) as the perpetrators of the violence (Picture 2).

Source: all pictures in this chapter are produced by the author



**PICTURE 7. THE SACRED PANCASILA MONUMENT/ MONUMEN PANCASILA SAKTI**



**PICTURE 6. THE TORTURE DIORAMA IN THE PANCASILA MONUMENT COMPLEX**

These visuals of the official narrative present a number of incorrect facts. The autopsy reports of the officers' bodies found no signs of torture, only gunshots as the main cause of death.<sup>355</sup> Another example of the fabrication of history in the monument is the relief of Gerwani women dancing the *Dance of The Fragrant Flowers*. The state accused this as being a lustful dance performed by Gerwani just before they tortured the generals. Apparently, such an event never happened. Based on a witness's account, the women who were present in Lubang Buaya were in fact 'scared and huddled in a corner'.<sup>356</sup> Stories about Gerwani's acts of torture were created through military pressure during the interrogation of women detainees after the September 30<sup>th</sup> Movement.<sup>357</sup>

<sup>354</sup> For further analysis of this memorialisation complex, see McGregor 2007, 68-95.

<sup>355</sup> Anderson 1987, 109-134.

<sup>356</sup> Some members of Leftist organisations such as Pemuda Rakyat (Youth Association), Gerwani and BTI were in Lubang Buaya prior to the September 30<sup>th</sup> Movement. They were following a training for the Free West Papua (*Pembebasan Irian Barat*) movement. When the movement erupted, these members were still in the area, but were definitely not part of the movement. Wieringa 2002, 295.

<sup>357</sup> John Hughes, a foreign reporter requested an interview with the accused Gerwani women prisoners. At the first meeting, the women did not say anything about the torture. However, in the second meeting, Hughes met with the same women together with the information officers who had extracted confessions from the young women. An officer from the division for psychological services was also present in the room. This situation resulted in a statement from one of the women, saying that the women had received razor blades along with orders to tear out the eyeballs of the generals, but that she was unaware of any sexual mutilation. See Lecrec 1997, 297-298. Sexual tortures were widely used against women in detention camps during the period of 1965-1970 to extract information that benefited the army. Pohlman 2017, 576.

Since its establishment, the Pancasila Sakti monument has been the centre for commemoration of the *Kesaktian Pancasila* Day on 1 October. The day functions as a reminder to Indonesians of the successful military actions in defending the nation's ideology. During that day, the president, his cabinet, and the families of the national heroes gather to attend the official state ceremony. The president customarily reads his official speech. He is then followed by the laying of a wreath beneath the statue of the 7 army officers. Up to today, Indonesians still celebrate *Kesaktian Pancasila* Day with a ceremony in schools and government offices. The monument complex is also a destination for historical tours and school excursions. Nevertheless, neither the monument nor the commemoration practices touch upon the death of half a million Indonesians who perished in the attempt to annihilate communism. The Lubang Buaya monument became a site that only commemorates 'the permissible aspects of the past' as Klaus Schreiner claims<sup>358</sup> - by only depicting the military as heroes, and communists as a constant threat to the nation.

Although erecting a monument is not the only means that the state uses to preserve anti-communist memory, it is a widely-adopted practice in other provinces and districts.<sup>359</sup> Through monuments, the official narrative is adopted in local governments. Another example of these regional monuments is the Trisula monument in Bakung subdistrict, Blitar, East Java. It was erected in 1972 and comprises five statues depicting three military figures and two peasants. All of them are standing together, symbolising unity against communism and a successful cooperation between the army and civilians during the Trisula operation in 1968.<sup>360</sup> This feature of cooperation is prominent in similar monuments in other districts, as we will see in the next section. To what extent does the narrative that they convey influence villagers in the surrounding area, is the question I will discuss further.

## Memory Landscapes in Donomulyo

### Trisula Public Meeting Hall

A site of memory can be a point of contestation, rather than a mere description of a particular historical event. Through a story of a certain site, we are confronted with the questions 'whose history do these sites serve?' and 'what narratives do they contain?' . In the context of the 1965 violence, no single answer can be offered. In this first site in the Banyujati area, we will see that numerous layers of different narratives are located within one site which reflects the entanglement of the official and unofficial narratives of violence.

---

<sup>358</sup> Schreiner 2005, 273.

<sup>359</sup> Besides the monument, the government also released the film *The Treachery of the 30 September Movement/ Indonesian Communist Party (Pengkhianatan Gerakan 30 September/ PKI)* in 1983, directed by Arifin C. Noor, along with Brigadier General Dwipayana and Nugroho Notosusanto, who both played a prominent role in constructing official narrative of 1965. McGregor 2007, 96-100.

<sup>360</sup> Hearman 2017, 521.





PICTURE 8. TRISULA PUBLIC MEETING HALL

The Trisula meeting hall (Picture 3) is easily recognised when we pass the main road, Jl. Raya Donomulyo. It is located in front of Donomulyo's district office, Koramil, and the Sector Police (Polsek), and next to one of the district's village offices. the Trisula building is the largest multi-functional hall amongst other buildings in the area and is managed by the district office. It is often closed, but on one rare occasion during our observation the doors were open for an event. Although I was not informed about the purpose of this event, it seemed to be a public seminar attended mostly by uniformed government officials. The initial purpose of the building was to provide a space for the village's public events. In the beginning, it was only intended for government events, but now the function has expanded, and Trisula hall can be rented out to laymen for non-government related events, such as weddings.

The construction started around the early 1970s, during the era of intense village infrastructure development in the Donomulyo district. Although the building is a reputation as a modern public facility, it also contains stories related to the 1965 violence. I learned about the construction process of the Trisula public meeting hall from Marwono, a BTI supporter in 1965 who was sent for *santiaji* during the New Order.<sup>361</sup> In the *santiaji* period, Marwono and other Leftists were instructed to bring bricks for the construction of the Trisula meeting hall.<sup>362</sup> Although this is not similar to forms of forced labour, it contains coercive acts by the authorities, where they mandated 'participation and contribution' from the villagers. Under the guise of valuing communal work (*kerja bakti*), authorities requested *santiaji* to bring bricks and assist the builders/constructors of the building. For Marwono and the others, their vulnerable position as *santiaji* was used by the authorities to extract materials for the development projects in the village. It was basically an order that if refused, could threaten their lives. Saying 'no' was impossible, because they might be sent to detention under the accusation

<sup>361</sup> A surveillance system under which every accused Leftist member should report regularly to the district military command. See Chapter 2.

<sup>362</sup> Interview with Marwono, Donomulyo, 16 September 2016 # 01.08.53-01.11.30.

of not supporting the new government. Out of fear of the official authorities, some members of the *santiaji* who did not have bricks or money to buy any decided to tear out bricks from grave tombs. In Marwono's words: "They were more scared of the military officers than the spirits of the dead". Marwono himself was fortunate because he had a supply of bricks at home, from which he brought deliveries to the construction site four times.

During the early years of the New Order, the meeting hall was also used as a venue for the seminars on Pancasila and P4 (*Pedoman Penghayatan Pengamalan Pancasila*/ Guidance on the Application of Pancasila), targeting especially the *santiaji*. In 1978, the People's Consultative Assembly released a decision to upgrade courses on Pancasila, which became well known as the P4. These became mandatory courses for all civil servants, students, and later were extended to diverse functional and political groups of society.<sup>363</sup> There has been a lot of criticism on this project, especially by pro-democratic national groups, arguing that it only provides ideological justification for the New Order's policies. P4 was later abolished in the *Reformasi* period in 1998.<sup>364</sup> Others perceived it as sheer indoctrination, which only stressed memorisation of the thirty-six formulaic precepts (*butir*) of the Pancasila.<sup>365</sup> This type of indoctrination also took place in Donomulyo, as experienced by Marwono and his fellow villagers.

The Trisula building contains no traces of the *santiaji* people who 'contributed' to its construction. Nowadays, it appears to be an ordinary function hall, serving anybody who has the need to organise large events. However, for villagers, especially those who were under constant surveillance by the military during the New Order, the place serves as a reminder of the past. It recalls the exploitation and repression of the *santiaji*, who were accused of being involved in the BTI or PKI. Giving the name Trisula to the hall connected the building with the military operation in 1968 that managed to 'secure' the village from the remaining communists. It is a symbol of security and development (two main features of the New Order – *keamanan dan pembangunan*), and at the same time, it is a symbol of violence and repression. While the first interpretation appears publicly through its name, the latter circulates in more discrete narratives. The Trisula meeting hall serves as a complex example of a *lieux de mémoire*. It contains layers of different intentions to immortalize the past while simultaneously diverges from the initial official narrative it was designed to represent.

### **The Trisula Monument (*Monumen Trisula*)**

The Trisula monument resembles the same event as the Trisula meeting hall. For official authorities, this anti-communist military operation in 1968 became more important in Donomulyo than the violence in 1965. As I discussed in Chapter 3, the Trisula operation became the military's show of force to state that a new regime had been firmly established. This message is conveyed in two sites in Donomulyo which use the name Trisula (the meeting hall and the monument). However, this message seems to have lost its influence in Donomulyo's society today as it is no longer a point of commemoration of the event. It could partly be because of *Reformasi* (a turn of Indonesia's democratic era in 1998), which provided more space for the narrative of violence to emerge on the surface, making propagandist monuments only symbols of manipulation of the New Order. On the other hand, it could also be because these official sites were initiated through a top-down approach and only imposed authorities' agenda. Therefore, they were not rooted in society and became futile as soon as the authoritarian state diminished.

---

<sup>363</sup> Morfit 1981, 838.

<sup>364</sup> Morfit 1981, 839.

<sup>365</sup> Saunders 1998, 63.



The Trisula monument is easily recognised in Donomulyo. It lies in the middle of a T-junction, which connects the district to three other adjacent districts. The year of its establishment is not very clear. Based on oral information, it was erected around 1968 or 1969. The monument depicts two statues raising their fists, a military officer and a local villager (Picture 4). Similar to the Trisula monument in Blitar, this monument attempts to depict the strong cooperation between the military and civilians during the 1968 Trisula operation. This message can also be seen in the base relief under the statue that depicts a civilian holding a sharp bamboo weapon and an army officer standing behind him (picture 5).

On the other side of the monument, the base relief describes villagers' activities in different themes such as religion, agriculture, and education (picture 6). The religious symbol is depicted by a relief of a mosque, and a woman with a headscarf, which represents the Islamic nuance in the monument. Meanwhile, the relief of cassava, a tree, and a woman cooking, represent daily activities in agricultural society. Cassava is a typical harvest for a dry-land soil and a common food in Donomulyo. Another relief, depicting a man reading a book, is also a symbol of education, or knowledge enhancement of a villager. An interesting aspect of this monument is the image of women in the relief. They are all depicted with certain common elements: wearing a head scarf, carrying a wallet, and cooking. All of these resemble an image of 'polite and decent' women, a New Order construction of apolitical and domesticised Indonesian women. Overall, the monument conveys a message of modernity, or to be precise, what a modern village should look like. The elements attached to modernity, such as the construction of women's role, education, religiosity, and improved farming, are key elements of the New Order. Similar representations can also be seen in the Pancasila Sakti Monument in Jakarta, where the New Order juxtaposed visual representations of their government with religion and morality, in contrast to the 'immoral' communists in the previous period.<sup>366</sup>

---

<sup>366</sup> McGregor 2007, 82-83.



**PICTURE 9. TRISULA MONUMENT IN DONOMULYO**



**PICTURE 10. BASE-RELIEF ON THE TRISULA MONUMENT**

The other side of the base relief contains a Javanese inscription: “*Angesthi Raras Trus Manunggal. Manunggaling ABRI lan Rakyat Minongko Ketahanan Nasional*” (Picture 7). This inscription is written in the high-level Javanese language known as *Krama*. It is the language of the *priyayi* (elites), derived from a Sanskritic sub-language, honorific in character, largely spoken higher up in the social hierarchy as its mastery requires a high degree of education.<sup>367</sup> The character of *Krama* is in contrast with *Ngoko*, the everyday Javanese language, which is more direct, spoken lower down the social hierarchy and among very close equals. However, the first sentence, *Angesthi Raras Trus Manunggal* refers to something else. This is a form of *Candrasengkala* or *Sengkala*, a year that is written in a sentence, instead of in numbers.<sup>368</sup> A good *Candrasengkala* is not only a combination of words, but an entire sentence that forms a profound meaning, conveying philosophical messages to its readers.<sup>369</sup> In the case of the Trisula Monument’s inscription, *Angésthī* is derived from the word *ésthī*, which means thought, willingness, and feeling (*pemikiran, kehendak, perasaan*). It also represents the number eight. The next word, *Raras*, refers to feeling (*rasa, perasaan*) and represents the number six. Meanwhile, *Trus* in *Candrasangkala* means fulfilled or continue (*terpenuhi, terus*) and is related to the number nine. The last word, *Manunggal*, originates from *Tunggal*, meaning to gather, to come together, to unite and be one (*berkumpul, satu*). *Candrasengkala* starts with the last unit in the year, and therefore, *Angésthī Raras Trus Manunggal* refers to the year 1968. It also conveys the message of ‘focusing on harmony to achieve unity’. The type of unity is explained in the second sentence in the inscription: *Manunggaling ABRI lan Rakyat Minongko Ketahanan Nasional* – the unity of ABRI with the people is a form of national defence.

<sup>367</sup> Anderson 1966, 96.

<sup>368</sup> Bratakesawa & Hadisoepapta 1980, 15.

<sup>369</sup> Bratakesawa & Hadisoepapta 1980, 16.



PICTURE 11. BASE RELIEF ON THE MONUMENT



PICTURE 12. INSCRIPTION ON THE MONUMENT

Although the use of *Candrasengkala* is not a common everyday practice, the use of Old Javanese words can frequently be found in many government terms, for example Pantja Tunggal, Bhayangkara and so on. By using this type of language, the government implies a certain prestige and majesty—a phenomenon that Benedict Anderson coined as the *kramanization* of public Indonesian. Official Indonesian has tended to become a language of political politeness; a mark of a high level of political sophistication and civilization – something that differentiates the *prijaji* with ordinary people.<sup>370</sup> The use of *Candrasengkala* and *Krama* in the Trisula monument symbolises this sense of sophistication. Through the monument, the idea of unity between the army and the people became grand and almost sacral.

So far, we have recognised the Trisula monument as a site that was meant to be sacral, a reminder of the successful cooperation between the army and civilians, and the hope that this relationship will continue in the future. It also functions to remind people of what the village should be: modern and sophisticated. However, when I discussed the monument with villagers in the Banyujati area, the monument is currently seen only as a landmark rather than as a site of commemoration. Located in the middle of the intersection of three main roads, the monument does not have its own ‘space’. This is different from the Trisula monument in Blitar, for example, where a space has been created around the monument and marked by a fence. The space surrounding Blitar’s Trisula monument also invites people to pay more attention to the monument and to read the inscription or the name of the army who fought during the Trisula operation. Similar to the Pancasila Sakti monument in Jakarta, the monument in Blitar has become an iconic tourist site. These things do not appear in the monument in Donomulyo. Since its establishment, no significant activities appeared on the monument. Local villagers realise that the monument resembles the Trisula operation in 1968 because of its name and the reliefs, but that is not the only representation of the monument. In a discussion with young generations of villagers, I asked them what the Trisula monument resembles and whether they heard stories related to it. Here is what they described:<sup>371</sup>

Villager 1: The monument at the intersection, that was about Blitar and PKI. It was ‘68. ... The southern part of Madiun became the hiding area of the remaining PKI. Without the help of the people, [the army] would not have found out their hiding place. The people informed the army, so it was the collaboration between the state apparatus and the people to eliminate PKI. In Modangan beach, there were many PKI hiding places. I heard the place is haunted. That [the collaboration] was a concrete expression of synergy between the army and the people.

<sup>370</sup> Anderson 1966, 110.

<sup>371</sup> Focus Group Discussion RT 15, Donomulyo, 15 Mei 2017 #29.04-31.27

Villager 2: I heard it from my parents-in-law (original residents of Donomulyo) [about 1968]. Everybody was shot. It was tense. Bodies were scattered on the road, every day. But we did not know who did it. Suddenly in the morning, they saw bodies, in the drain, and farm. Those who died were *considered* (emphasis from the villager) to be PKI. Although it had not yet been proven.

Therefore, although the Trisula monument aims to convey the official narrative, its present state resembles a completely different one. This case shows that although the monument was constructed by the state, the current meaning is not determined by the state. It resonates with existing studies by heritage scholars who criticise the frame of colonial determinism.<sup>372</sup> Colonial heritage that we see today is not necessarily defined by colonialism itself nor a representation of the colonial past, although it may have been established in colonial times. This implies that the influence of a power structure that created these heritages, or sites of memory, may not always remain the same. In the case of the Trisula monument, this site became less meaningful in commemorating its constructed history. This history and image of the New Order's modernity, development and security is far removed from what villagers remember, while the 1965-68 violence lingers more deeply in their memories.

### **The Ngerendeng/ Bhayangkara Monument**

As I mentioned earlier, the 'intent to remember' that characterises a site of memory can be analysed critically. In the case of the Ngerendeng monument in this section, we can see that the intent has been largely to create an anti-communist memory, if not a fabricated one. This reflects the power structure creating the *lieux de mémoire*. The monument itself is a simplification of a complex event that occurred in Madiun in 1948, making it a story of good versus evil-- story that results in the legitimization of the military operation to eliminate communism down to its roots in 1965-68. As we will see, the background of the monument's establishment may relate more to sustaining the New Order's coercive ideology of security and order rather than to commemorating the past itself (the Madiun event). Furthermore, in a society filled with complex patronage relationships, sites of memory also play a role in creating and transforming these relationships. Using the site, clients move closer to their patrons under the New Order agenda to construct an anti-communist memory. On the other hand, their relationship weakened after the *Reformasi*, in which the function of these official monuments also became meaningless.

Accompanied and introduced by Suparman (one of my key informants, a Catholic Youth activist in the 1960s), I came across a police monument, known as the Ngerendeng monument. The small complex was built to commemorate the death of four police officers during the 1948 Madiun affair (an armed struggle in pre-independent Indonesia). On our second visit to the monument, we managed to find Parjito, a local farmer and also the monument caretaker (*juru kunci*), who assisted the army in the anti-communist operation (see Chapter 4). According to Parjito, four police officers (Lilik Puguh, Jusuf, Musiatun and Pramu) died during the 1948 Madiun affair. They were first buried in the public cemetery in Ngerendeng (located behind the monument), but were later transferred to the heroes' cemetery in Turen in the Malang regency. A monument complex was later constructed, precisely in 1971, to commemorate these four heroes. The police brigadier at that time, Brigadier General Police Samsuri Mertodjoso formally inaugurate the monument precisely on 1 October 1971, during the commemoration of *Kesaktian Pancasila* Day. The complex consists of two stones; the first one contains the names and ranks of the four police officers as the victims of the PKI movement in 1948 (Picture 8). Meanwhile, the other monument depicts solely the symbol of Bhayangkara, the symbol of the Indonesian National police force (Picture 9). The construction and management of the

---

<sup>372</sup> Legêne, Purwanto & Schulte Nordholt 2015, 8.



complex occurred under the leadership of Bambang Kusdiyanto, the head of the police sector (Kapolsek) of Donomulyo at that time.



**PICTURE 13. THE BHAYANGKARA MEMORIAL COMPLEX IN NGERENDENG**

In order to find more information about the monument, we visited the police sector office in Donomulyo. The current head police officer, although unaware of the story behind the monument, was kind enough to share a document about it. It is a written guide, as Parjito already mentioned, developed by Drs. Moerdjiono, SH on 10 November 2010. Titled a “Short History of The Killings of Sector Police Officers in Donomulyo By the Indonesian Communist Party in 1948” (*Sejarah Singkat Pembunuhan Anggota Polri Kepolisian Sektor Donomulyo Oleh PKI Tahun 1948*), the document consists of only 8 pages. In the foreword page, the author states that the history of this monument is less known, and therefore, the document should fulfil the necessity. But in making such an attempt, he also mentions the limitation of time and reference, which makes the guide document not very comprehensive. The main chapters start with the background of the Madiun affair. According to Moerdjiono, a group of Indonesian leftists were unsatisfied with the Dutch-Indonesian ‘Renville’ agreement and established the People’s Democratic Front (*Front Demokrasi Rakyat/ FDR*) led by Amir Syarifuddin.<sup>373</sup> Moerdjiono also states that FDR programmes were constantly rejected by the government, which strengthened their opposition and led to collaboration with the PKI to build a communist-Russian state in Indonesia. “PKI and FDR strengthened themselves within an unstable state at that time, creating chaos to increase tension by using criminals to perform criminal acts especially in Madiun, Surakarta and Pati”, the guide document states. This led to the Madiun ‘revolt’ that involved kidnapping and killing of Indonesian police officers in Madiun, Magetan and other areas including Donomulyo. How and why the ‘revolt’ in Madiun is connected to Donomulyo is not explained in the document. The PKI in Donomulyo, led by Cokro Bagong, attacked the sector police office one night in 1948 (the date is not stated) and arrested four police officers.<sup>374</sup> Those officers

---

<sup>373</sup> Amir Sjarifoeddin was the Minister of Information during Sukarno’s cabinet. He resigned on 23 January 1948, after the signing of the Renville agreement. The next cabinet, vice-president Hatta’s Presidential cabinet, did not include any of the leftists’ representation, leaving them on the margins of the Republic power since Sjarifoeddin’s resignation. Poeze 2011, 10-11.

<sup>374</sup> An interview with a military veteran, Slamet Hardjo Utomo, also stated that the movement of the PKI troops in South Malang called Batallion Zein (or better known as the Red Battalion) led by Cokro Bagong. Slamet

were killed and their bodies were found in the cemetery of the Ngerendeng hamlet. Their bodies were transferred to the Heroes' cemetery in Turen, Malang regency. The Monument Bhayangkara, or the Ngerendeng monument complex, was erected at the site where the bodies were found. The monument was inaugurated on 1 October 1971.

The official narrative of the Madiun case, which is also referred to in the guide document of the Ngerendeng Monument, portrays the PKI as evil traitors of the nation. This narrative also frequently emphasizes the PKI's violence towards the Moslem residents in Madiun. However, the event is more complicated than merely a treacherous act by the PKI, as there other factors that contributed to the violence in Madiun still reimain. One of them is the conflict between the Siliwangi division and the Senopati division of the armed forces in Solo, Central Java, which resulted in acts of atrociocity at Madiun as the FDR's last resort. It culminated in a physical confrontation, where government officials, police officers, and Islamic leaders were slaughtered in Madiun. However, as Harry Poeze stated, a lot of FDR members were also executed after being caught in the battle against the soldiers of the Republic.<sup>375</sup> The movement ended because it was not supported by the people, and it became a difficult strategy to maintain while the party itself was still in the process of consolidation.<sup>376</sup> In short, by eliminating the complex background of the Madiun affair, official Indonesia historiography often focuses on the violence and treachery of the PKI during the event. It is frequently used as an



**PICTURE 14. FOUR OFFICERS WHO DIED IN 1948 MADIUN AFFAIR**

event to strengthen the portrayal of the PKI as violent and evil in G30S, and to legitimise the violent annihilation of the PKI in 1965-66.

This brings us back to the Ngerendeng monument in Donomulyo. Although it depicts the Madiun Affair in 1948, it still generates many questions. What is the connection between the monumentin

---

served as the platoon command that moved against the PKI troops in September 1948. He did not mention the attack on the police office in his interview. Utomo 1997.

<sup>375</sup> Poeze 2011, 382.

<sup>376</sup> Poeze 2011, 382.



Madiun and Donomulyo? Why did it take more than 20 years to build that monument? The objective of this site may not have a strong connection with the past, but more with the present. To further explore this point, we should look at the narratives that the monument conveys. First, there is the official scenario proposed by Drs. Moerdjiono in the guide document about the short history of the monument. A missing link in the document is the connection between the incidents in Donomulyo and the Madiun affair. Although oral sources mention the military's attack against the PKI in South Malang, this does not explain why an FDR movement in Madiun expanded to Malang.<sup>377</sup> It is highly possible that the sources that explain this Madiun-Malang connection are not available, or that there is actually no connection at all. The military operation in 1948 in Malang could be an insignificant chase to capture those who escaped from Madiun. If this is the case, then we are still left with the question what the monument actually represents. Furthermore, this official scenario could not explain the long interval between the event in 1948 and the monument construction in 1971.

The second scenario emerges against the background of the early independence situation. Since its declaration of independence in 1945, Indonesia has undergone a series of negotiations and war with the Dutch and additionally, attacks from different kinds of national groups who were not satisfied with the situation in the country. The situation at that time was filled with chaos and violence, involving confrontation between the republican army and militias or *lasykar*. On 20 March 1949, one of these militias killed three army officers and their men in Donomulyo after kidnapping them for several days.<sup>378</sup> There is a possibility that the death of the officers was caused by such militia violence, with no connection to Madiun. However, this event occurred in 1949, and not in 1948. A third possible scenario comes to the fore when looking back at the Brawijaya document about the Pancasila operation in Donomulyo (see chapter 3). According to the files, the operation also targeted a group of thieves (perhaps members of a larger network outside Malang) that had been operating for quite a while in Donomulyo, in addition to communists. It is also possible that Cokro Bagong and the incident at the police office was related to acts of thievery, rather than to the Madiun affair. This is, again, just a possibility. To examine this event any further is also beyond the scope of this research.

It is highly possible that the death of the four police officers in Donomulyo does not have a strong connection with the Madiun affair. But why did the police force provide such a huge effort to build a monument? To answer this question, we should go back to the other sites in Jakarta and Blitar that have the same heroic depiction of the military. The Pancasila Sakti monument was opened to the public in 1973, and the Trisula monument in Blitar was established in 1972. Meanwhile, the Ngerendeng monument, although it represents a different period and event, was built in 1971. These monument projects occurred relatively close to the first 1971 national election during the New Order. This election used the army's systematic structure, their domination in villages, and collaboration within local bureaucracies, resulting in the Golkar or Golongan Karya (Suharto's ruling party) as the winner.<sup>379</sup> In other words, the Ngerendeng monument may be part of a national project to convey dominant features of the New Order: security (*keamanan*) and development (*pembangunan*), which was basically a message to support anti-communism and economic enhancement of the New Order.<sup>380</sup> This explains the long time interval between the Madiun event and the establishment of the Ngerendeng monument, and also the determination of the authorities

<sup>377</sup> The source also confirms the official story of Cokro Bagong's attack on the police station. Utomo 1997.

<sup>378</sup> The officials were Major Banuredjo, Captain Rustamadji, Lieutenant Pamudji, Sergeant Saelan and their four men. Poeze 2014, 230-231.

<sup>379</sup> See Ward 1974.

<sup>380</sup> Ken ward 1974, 3.

to build the monument, even though the facts are highly questionable. Madiun became an event in the past that was needed to maintain the portrayal of the treacherous communists. The military's successful elimination of the movement became the New Order's symbol of security or *keamanan*. The Ngerendeng monument shows that instead of commemorating the past (Madiun 1948), the site of memory was created to fulfill the needs of the present (the New Order).

When I visited the monument complex, it was filled with wild grass and dried leaves. According to Parjito, the monument caretaker, the complex used to be a centre of commemoration during the National Heroes Day (*Hari Pahlawan*) on 10 November. On that day, sector police officers and school children visited the monument and paid their respects to the heroes. Parjito also mentioned that the school children sometimes cleaned the complex with their teachers. Even officers from Surabaya or other districts, sometimes even the Mobile Brigade (*Brigade Mobil/ Brimob*) also joined the ceremony. Family members of the deceased from Malang, Blitar and other places in East Java occasionally visited the monument to pay their respects. However, these practices ceased around 2010 (probably longer than that). Since then, nobody visits the monument or talks about its maintenance to Parjito. According to Parjito, this reflects the negligence of the head of police sector, because that person should be responsible for maintaining the monument and continuing the commemoration practices at the monument. To the same end, according to Parjito, the officer is also neglecting him as the caretaker of the monument. Parjito uses the analogy of a relationship between father and son. If a father takes care of his son, then the son will always be with him. "He should consider me as the guardian of the monument. And he should consider me as one of his subordinates. That way, I will always be close to him", Parjito explained. I asked him whether or not he asked the current head of the police sector about his status and he answered "No. Because he does not want to come down here". In this sense, Parjito thinks that the police officer is not only abandoning the monument, but also himself and his relation with the patron (police).

However, towards the end of June 2019, the sector police of Donomulyo cleaned the monument complex. This activity was part of Bhakti Religi, a series of actions in assisting with the maintenance of religious sites. During that time, they also cleaned the local church together with the locals. These actions were part of the preparations for the 73<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the police force (Bhayangkara) on 1 July 2019.<sup>381</sup> Although there is still an effort to maintain the monument, it implies a structurally top-down nature of the attempt.

The case of the Ngerendeng monument and its *juru kunci* highlights two important points about sites of memory in the context of patronage society. First, commemoration practices surrounding monuments are not spontaneous, but mobilised by the authorities and patrons, who are, in this case, the police officers or school teachers. This reflects the power structure in Nora's notion of intent in a *lieux de mémoire*. A *lieux de memoire* is not an empty void, it is always filled with tension of power. In some cases, as the Ngerendeng monument shows, a *lieux de mémoire* does not serve the function of commemorating the past, but a construction to support the established regime. Second, sites of memory play a role within the complex patronage relationships in a society. When the site was at its most important function, the patronage relationship between the authorities in power and the people who preserve the monument was also strong. This is the case reflected by Parjito and his relationship with the head of the police sector. However, when the function of the site as a propaganda tool begins to deteriorate, the patronage relationship also starts to erode. The function of a site of memory in this context goes beyond remembering the historical past, but becomes a device to negotiate the patron-client relationship in present society.

---

<sup>381</sup> Kiswara 2019.

### Kaliasri Public Cemetery

While the previous sites of memory are easy to recognise, the following ones are more hidden. They cannot be identified unless the locals choose to reveal them. Nevertheless, I still consider these places as sites of memory, as they still play an important role in society, or at least to the community of victims in Donomulyo. These sites reflect the entanglement of public and private narratives, resulting in places that do not proclaim themselves as sites of remembrance, but exist strongly among the public through narratives of past violence experienced by families of victims.

I had heard about the mass grave in the Kaliasri public cemetery several times in my conversations with the locals. I had not visited the cemetery until my encounter with one of the victim's family members, who turned out to be someone whom I had known for a while. Her name was Susi, and she works as a helper in my friend's house in Malang. Susi has been working for the family for more than twenty years. After I moved to Malang, I visited the family more often, and they were very helpful in assisting my navigation around the city. From my frequent encounters, I understand that Susi is originally from Donomulyo, though I have never really known her family background.



PICTURE 15. KALIASRI PUBLIC CEMETARY

When I started my field research in 2016, I paid a visit to her and my friend's family. During my light conversation with Susi, I started to mention a couple of people that I had become acquainted with in Donomulyo. She asked how I knew them, and I started to explain briefly about my research. At this point, she started sharing her stories. She started by saying that "People are wrong when they say that our village is a PKI village. There was no PKI there. My father was killed in 1965 by the army, but he was not a PKI. In fact, my hamlet became a widow's hamlet because all the men were taken away by the army" and she continued to share the story about her father. Since I met Susi in 2006, she has witnessed the work in human rights that I participate with our mutual connection (my friend, her employer). With this knowledge, she was comfortable in sharing information about PKI and her family.

A couple of days after that meeting with Susi, I received a phone call from my friend. She said, "I just heard about Susi's father. She said that her father was killed by the army. She never told us before. Since she started working here, she always said that her father *died because of the PKI*. After she found out what you are doing in Donomulyo, she started to tell a different story". I was really surprised, because I thought my friend's family already knew her background. On the contrary, Susi kept her story discreet, despite her knowledge of our position against the fabricated official history.

This drove us to visit Susi's family in Donomulyo. As soon as we arrived, we were introduced to her sister, Lina, and their mother. Her mother has a hearing problem, but apart from that, she is very healthy. We were also introduced to Susi's uncle, who shared a similar story about the death of Susi's father. On my second visit, I talked to several other people in the neighbourhood in order to understand what happened to her father. This is the chronology that I managed to reconstruct based on their stories:

One night in 1968, a group of villagers were guarding the neighbourhood at a security post (*gardu*). There were around 15 people in the group, including the village security or *jogoboyo* named Tokromo.<sup>382</sup> Suddenly, Tokromo was killed with a sharp weapon during his night watch. Although the details and exact reason for this act are still unclear, there was indication of a motive of robbery. After the incident, all of the villagers who guarded the *gardu* were taken to the Donomulyo district office. Only five of them returned. From the testimony of one of the survivors, the villagers were questioned about their party affiliation. Those who survived are the ones who claimed affiliation to PNI. While others who did not have any affiliation, or were indicated as BTI, were taken to the public cemetery and killed. Tokromo's murder seemed to be used as a reason to get rid of the remaining communists in the village. Most of the men were taken, but some of them returned. It is difficult to further investigate the incident of Tokromo. However, victims that disappeared from the Trisula operation and the Tokromo affair have infamously declared this particular hamlet as the hamlet of widows.<sup>383</sup>

Susi's father was one of those villagers who was accused of murdering Tokromo. He disappeared after he was taken to the district office for further investigation. A number of the 15 villagers who returned to the village told Susi's family that her father had been killed and buried in a mass grave in the public cemetery. Since then, her sister Lina and her mother usually visit the grave before the fasting month and on Eid Mubarak. The mass grave where Susi's father was buried is difficult to identify, because there are no specific markings (Picture 10). Despite its discreet location, the public cemetery is a reminder (not only to families of victims, but also to other villagers who know the story)<sup>384</sup> of the mass killings and violence in 1965, 1968, and the Tokromo incident. It does not resemble any notion of creating peace and order, as the military operation claimed it would. The cemetery illustrates that sites of memory are rarely one-directional –never containing a single narrative. A site often reflects multidirectional memory, as Michael Rothberg defined as “a series of interventions through which social actors bring multiple traumatic pasts into a heterogeneous and changing present”.<sup>385</sup> Memory, for Rothberg, is subjected to “ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not privative”. The Kaliasri public cemetery not only reflects the multi-directionality of national (the anti-communist operation) and a local event (the murder of Tokromo), but also the private (experience of Susi's family) and public narrative (shared recognition of the hamlet of widows).

### Mulyosari Mass Grave

Multidirectional memory that is attached to a site can also be seen in spiritual practices that are related to sites of violence. For example, a mass grave of 1965 victims in Semarang, Central Java,

---

<sup>382</sup> In Javanese villages, Javanese terms are used for the positions in the village apparatuses. For example, the village secretary is commonly known as *carik*; and the village security is known as *jogoboyo*. All of the apparatuses are responsible to their village head or *lurah*.

<sup>383</sup> Interview with Sukisman and Minto, 15 November 2016.

<sup>384</sup> Although the mass grave does not have any specific markings, the story of Susi's family is quite well known among villagers in her hamlet. The story circulates wider outside Susi's hamlet, I also encountered the same story from local villagers.

<sup>385</sup> Rothberg 2009, 3-4.

attracts people with different intentions: most commonly to win a lottery, to achieve economic success in their life, or to search for spiritual guidance (*petunjuk*) from the grave. A *sinden* (traditional Javanese singer), who was killed and buried there during the 1965 operation, is believed to be bulletproof. Her supernatural powers are believed to have the capacity to guide people in the present on a path to achieve their life goals.<sup>386</sup> The practices of worshipping spirits in the afterlife can be commonly found in Indonesian society, not only in relation to indigenous beliefs, but also as part of daily practices of modern Indonesian life. Sacred graves that lie all over Indonesia have become sites of worship and pilgrimage, carrying the *potent dead* – the power that the dead (ancestors, saints, national heroes) exert over the living in contemporary Indonesia.<sup>387</sup> However, particular mass graves that resulted from the 1965-68 violence generate the same treatment as the potent dead, yet the dead in this case were not saints or heroes. They were communists and outcasts but it was exactly the gruesome violence against them that produced stories of their supernatural powers. It was the violence that transformed these ordinary people into the potent dead.

My encounter with the site of the potent dead started with my acquaintance with Parminah. She was the only child of her mother and father, Purnomo Sukimin. When she was seven months old, her father moved away and she was brought up by her mother and grandmother. Later on, Purnomo Sukimin married Parminah's aunt who gave birth to Tarno, Parminah's half-brother. According to Parminah, Tarno was much closer to Sukimin because they all lived together until Sukimin disappeared and was killed during the 1968 Trisula operation. Although Parminah was not really proud of her father's complex relationship, she still cried the first time she shared the loss with us. In our second conversation, Parminah explained in more detail about the day when her father was executed:

I was around 14 or 15 years old. I heard that my father had been taken to the police station. After several months, my brother came. "*Mbak*, you have to see father at the [police] office. He's going to be sent away". My grandmother didn't give me permission. It turns out that the same night, father was really gone. He had been taken to a quiet place, which already had a hole. My father was put in there. He was not alone; there were five or six people. They were placed together. Those who had money to pay were set free, but there were also those who could not [pay]. ... My parents were poor, so they could not pay anything. But there was Pak Wisto, my father's friend who paid [for his freedom] and is still alive.<sup>388</sup>

I continue to ask Parminah about the source of this information. According to her, the news about her father's detention came from her brother who was informed by the police themselves. Meanwhile, the news about the killing came from the survivor, Pak Wisto, who told several people in the area. It is from these people that the family knows about the mass grave.

Parminah told us that her father was accused of being a PKI, but she does not know whether this is true or not. After they heard about his death, they could not search for his grave right away. "The situation was still critical. Nobody dared to search, everybody just stayed at home", according to Parminah. It was not until around 2004 that they found the location of his grave. This was the result of her brother's persistent efforts in searching for the grave. Parminah also told us about the inaccessible location, which became the reason for her less frequent visits to the site itself. In order to send her blessings to her father, she combinesthem with the *nyadran* (traditional religious practice to pay respect to the dead, especially to special events) at her mother's grave.

---

<sup>386</sup> Eickhoff, et al. 2017, 538.

<sup>387</sup> Chambert-Loir & Anthony Reid (eds) 2002, xvii.

<sup>388</sup> Interview with Parminah and Karsono, Donomulyo, 3 December 2016 #10.35-12.34.

Parminah connected us with her stepbrother, Tarno. He is a farmer who grew up in Donomulyo and later lived in Jakarta for several years. After his return, he dedicates most of his time to farming and taking care of his son while his wife works abroad as a migrant worker. After several visits, I asked about his father. It was in 1968 (Tarno was around seven years old) when his father was detained. When he visited the detention centre with his grandmother, he remembered that the place was very crowded. His father's cell was full of people, but they let him out to receive his family's visit. Tarno remembered being cuddled by his father, and after that, he never saw him again. After a few years, he was informed about the location of his father's grave by a person who lived near the market. Around 1974, before he moved to Jakarta, he tried to search for the location. It was almost Idul Fitri, the Islamic holy day, and it is common to do *nyadran* before this day. It became a motive and desire for Tarno to have a spiritual visual of his father. Therefore, he went in search for the place in the direction indicated by locals. When he succeeded, he was determined to sleep beside the grave in order to experience an encounter with his father's spirit. But what happened was really unexpected: he saw a large black creature without a face. It was horrifying, and according to Parminah (although Tarno did not mention this), Tarno fainted and was assisted by their uncle who had been waiting for him nearby. Tarno interpreted this single experience as a sign that he was not allowed to speak with his father's spirit.

The first time Tarno visited the grave, there was only a pole and several bricks. He does not know whether the killer or somebody else marked the grave. After spending a number of years working in Jakarta, he decided to return to Donomulyo, and he realised the grave had changed. It had become more solid, with a proper tomb. From the information that he gathered, this was done by someone who asked the grave for spiritual guidance in order to win a national lottery.<sup>389</sup> The person successfully won the lottery, and as an expression of gratitude, he restored the grave. This happened when Tarno was still in Jakarta. The present condition of the grave is well-maintained, with a grave stone without inscriptions (Picture 11). According to Tarno, although there is only one tomb, the bodies inside are possibly up to ten people. When I visited the grave with him, there were three other tombs beside his father's. Tarno does not have any information about the other graves.

---

<sup>389</sup> During the Suharto government, this lottery was famously known as SDSB (Sumbangan Dana Sosial Berhadiah or Awarded Social Donation Funds).





PICTURE 16. MULYOSARI MASS GRAVE

Tarno visits the grave with his family (even his grandchildren) quite often, especially during important events. For example, when his daughter was going to get married, he took his family and the family of his future son-in-law to the grave. For Tarno, paying his respects is important, “So they know our origins”, as he explains.<sup>390</sup> I asked whether there were questions or any resentment from the other family, but that was not the case. The only question came from his son, who asked what happened to their grandfather. Tarno explained that he did not know much because he was still very young at that time. His son continued to ask why his grandfather was buried in such a place. Tarno only replied, “It’s fine. Everywhere is just the same”.<sup>391</sup> From the time I spent with Tarno, I didn’t sense any anger about the violence that his father suffered, instead only a strong motivation to maintain the family connection.

The case of this particular mass grave illuminates the complexity of the memory of violence as it shows the layers of connection between different people with the grave. I encountered this impression during one of my conversations with Suparman, a former Catholic Youth activist in the 1960s, and a cultural- spiritual counsellor in the Banyujati area (see chapter 4). It is actually through him that I came into contact with Parminah, who visited Suparman for a ‘spiritual consultancy’. Parminah’s daughter was getting married, so they asked Suparman to choose a good day based on the Javanese calendar. Parminah also asked him to be the Master of Ceremony at her daughter’s wedding. However, this was not the only reason that brought Parminah to Suparman. As the wedding approached, Parminah was also thinking about her father’s grave. In Javanese, it is a traditional practice that the family visits and pays their respects to the grave of their deceased family members prior to important events. To do *nyadran* is difficult for Parminah, because her father’s grave lies somewhere in the woods and is difficult to access. Parminah consulted Suparman to determine whether or not it was necessary to pay her respects directly at the site of her father’s grave. Suparman then convinced Parminah that the most important aspect of the process is the prayer, which must not necessarily be given at the grave site, but can be sent from home or the church.

<sup>390</sup> “*Supaya tahu asalnya*”. Interview with Tarno, Donomulyo, 16 Mei 2017 #5.18

<sup>391</sup> “*Gak apa-apa. Dimana saja sama*”. Interview with Tarno, Donomulyo, 16 Mei 2017, #09.35.

For Tarno's family, the grave represents their connectivity with older generations. For Suparman, the grave has a different meaning. After spending several days with Parminah and Tarno, I shared some information with Suparman. When I told him that Parminah was not certain of her father's involvement in the Leftist organisation that allegedly manifested his death, Suparman directly stated that her father was in fact a member of the Pemuda Rakyat (the leftist youth organisation closely linked to the PKI). According to him, Purnomo Sukimin was not very compassionate toward other villagers, although he did not elaborate further on this particular comment. However, the most surprising thing for Suparman was how Parminah's family managed to find the location of their father's grave. Suparman himself had known about the grave from an army officer even before Parminah came to consult with him, but he remained silent about his knowledge of the grave. Revealing the grave seemed to have caused uneasiness for Suparman. It was intended to remain unmentioned, while the victim's identity as a Pemuda Rakyat lives on.

Mulyosari mass grave illustrates a complex way of remembering the mass killings in 1965-68. On the one hand, violence turned these ordinary villagers into the *potent dead*. They are sites of intense spiritual activity, such as the lottery winner and Tarno's experience with the black creature. The site not only carries the intimate narrative of a family's loss, but it is also transformed into a public domain, where others besides the family members invoke the spirituality of the site. The grave reflects the entanglement of private and public domain connected by the narrative of violence. There is a relationship of give and take between the site and its 'spiritual public'. Maintenance of the site not only becomes a private matter, but also a semi-public one. On the other hand, for those who have a strong connection with the site's patrons, the location of the mass grave should be kept hidden. When the site starts to be recognised in 'public', it generates discomfort for them.

## Conclusion

The landscape of memory in this chapter presents a complex representation of violence in contemporary society. There are some general conclusions that we can draw from the case of Donomulyo. First, sites of memory do not contain single narratives, but a complex entanglement of various dichotomies (public-private, past-present, or silence-shared knowledge). This is illustrated, for example, by the case of the Mulyosari mass grave, where the deceased are not only a reminder of the family's private origins and the 1965-68 violence that disrupted them, but also a spiritual site of an active, potent dead for a larger public. Second, despite the initial intention during the creation of these sites, their meaning could transform over time. This refers to Nora's point on the fluid meaning of the sites. Most of the official sites in Donomulyo were built not only to commemorate past events, but also to maintain anti-communist propaganda in the present and future, as shown in the case of the Ngerendeng and Trisula monuments. But even then, this function is in contestation with narratives of violence that are not concretised through these typical monuments. As the state who developed these monuments diminished, the intended commemorative functions of these monuments have become less important. This brings us to the third point, that the sites are always in a dialogical process with the people that surround them. The sites become devices of negotiation in present society, rather than symbols of remembrance of the past. For example, the case of Ngerendeng monument and its caretaker Parjito shows how the site is used for an employee/client to remain in proximity with his patrons. Therefore, sites of memory function to strengthen or even disconnect the patron-client relationship. For others, discovering hidden sites of memory, such as a mass grave, is an indication that past violence is starting to be recognised by a wider public, and is no longer a private matter of the victim's family.