

# Conflict Resolution in the Interactionism Symbolic Perspective

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## Abstract

This study describes conflict resolution using the theory of symbolic interactionism by Herbert Blumer and George Herbert Mead. The theory of symbolic interactionism contains three main substances, namely mind, self and society. The self-concept put forward has three criteris, namely emotions, attitudes, beliefs, and values. Self-concept is an attempt to understand and interpret the actions of others through symbols, so that an agreement or compromise occurs. Conflict resolution is an effort to understand and interpret actions based on the symbols of conflict actors, so that an agreement can be reached, thereby creating conflict resolution. The discussion of conflict resolution uses the theory of symbolic interactionism by Herbert Blumer and George Herbert Mead, that self and self-concept are conflict resolution construction models that prioritize discussion and negotiation.

**Keywords:** Conflict Resolution; Interactionism Symbolic; Self Concept

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## INTRODUCTION

Conflict is the output of social interaction process that is prevalent in people's lives. Conflict can occur between individuals and individuals, individuals and groups, or groups and groups. as Simmel, Weber stated that conflict in interaction is a social reality. Because in social reality there are forms of relationships, namely domination, subordination, competition, imitation, division of labor, group formation, religious unity, and unity of view (Wirawan, 2012) and also as Soekanto (2014) that apart from cooperation, competition, accommodation, another form of social interaction is conflict (opposition and conflict).

Indonesia as the largest pluralist country in the world, which has hundreds of tribes, cultures, customs and languages, dozens of races, ethnicities and hundreds of religious beliefs and beliefs has become a trigger for interaction conflicts. As is the view (Ashutosh Varshney, 2022) of every society that is ethnically diverse and allows the free expression of political demands, ethnic conflict is generally unavoidable. In fact, this conflict may be inherent in all pluralistic political systems, whether authoritarian or democratic. Ethnic conflict is a common feature of ethnically diverse democratic systems, because if there are different ethnic groups and there is freedom to organize, then conflicts regarding resources, identity, patronage and policies may occur. Conflicts often occur, inseparable from the condition of the Indonesian nation which has a multiethnic society (Ashutosh Varshney, 2022; M. Basir, 2011; Suratman, 2017).

Interaction conflicts in Indonesia are still a warm memory for us, such as inter-religious conflicts in Ambon, North Maluku (Duncan, 2009), Papuan race conflicts (Jaap Timmer, 2007), Poso Central Sulawesi (Aragon, 2001) based on religion, as well as in Sambas, West Kalimantan (Taufiq Tanasaldy, 2007), and Central Kalimantan (Braithwaite J, Valerie B, 2010; (Braithwaite et al., 2010; Susanto & Puryanto, 2022)) based on ethnicity, in the election of DKI Jakarta based on ethnicity and religion (Puryanto, 2022) And interaction conflicts can reappear at any time, if they are not balanced with the participation of individuals and the State in maintaining peace.

Humans as individuals need to use a good self-concept, so they don't get involved in things that still require in-depth explanation, let alone obsess, assume, and judge, without any effort to hear, acknowledge other self-truths. as student brawl conflicts choose other people's self-concepts, and recognize it as the truth, and get involved in student brawl conflicts. Emotions are transmitted by other friends, and ignite other participants, by using an approach meaning loyal friends, showing self-courage, pride and satisfaction, some even consider brawls as tradition and a battle for prestige, as well as self-esteem.

The habit of fighting is caused by the acceptance of symbols that are one-sided, captured by the mind, without boundaries and without being properly filtered. negative symbols, pervasive affect emotions, beliefs and attitudes and behavior, wrapped in a sense of loyalty to friends, family, self-esteem, pride, and satisfaction. The figure of a mind that loses control reduces the ratio of thinking about knowledge, values and morals. In other words, when the mind is dominant in humans, it will reduce values and norms, so the role of organizational institutions is needed as a break-down, changer, so that the process of self-actualization of self-concept can be channeled with procedures and good rhythm.

The environment has a role as a society that can shape students' self-concept to be good, with a binding mechanism. Rules that contain rewards and punishments are expected to shape the self-concept of students who obey the rules. The environment of an educational space should be able to create balance, between individuals in it. The factors of comfort, security, fairness and togetherness must be the main substance at the level of sustainability of an organization. Vice versa, that the self-concept played by individuals, namely mind and self, is more creative, innovative in order to be able to control the mechanisms of an organization, both in the form of criticism and suggestions, as well as recommendations.

As with corporate organizations, in which there is interaction between employees and employees, and employees and leaders, this can lead to conflict, such as the case of a strike by employees of a large company. The strike was carried out as an effort to form an individual self-concept, in order to give a warning to company leaders to choose a compromise or mutual

agreement, such as improving employee welfare, the value of friendship, and the value of cohesiveness. Vice versa, the symbolization shown by the company to employee organizations forces every employee to comply with the agreement, accompanied by sanctions and threats.

The organization is symbolized as a society, and in it contains the individual's self and mind. Organizations can shape the attitudes, behavior and values of their members, and have bound meanings. In order for an organization to run well, it takes the role of members. So thus the self-concept of each individual determines an organization can run well. Organizational conflicts are often encountered because individuals, as creative human beings, can develop self-concepts in accordance with attitudes, values and norms.

So it can be said that interactions between corporate education organizations can lead to conflicts both between leaders, leaders and employees and employees with employees. Individuals are interpreted as actors in a conflict, where that individual is an object, where the role of the object is much narrower than the role of the individual as a subject. Because in the role of the individual there is innovation, creation so that an actor has more meaning, a strong character, and an individual who is independent, but not overloaded, in other words independent who still has values, norms and understands the consequences of a collective agreement, as well as the concept of society, which has binding and coercive authority, but needs to consider justice rights, welfare, and employee needs, and this is dynamic.

Mind, self and society are like a circle which can describe reciprocal relationships, symbiotic mutualism, influencing each other, and being interrelated, and as a reflection of the process of life which is always rotating, and structurally, by using symbols. interactions that have meaning, both visible and invisible. Human interaction can shape feelings, emotions, beliefs, and can actualize oneself with ratios and thoughts based on values and norms.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Symbolic interaction theory**

The theory of symbolic interactionism is a theory that comes from the ideas of George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer who explain the use and creation of symbols in interactions (Soeprapto, 2002). West and Turner (2008) that in social interaction, individuals will shape and be shaped by society through interaction. In an interaction there are forms of social relations, according to Simmel, namely; domination, subordination, competition, imitation, division of labor, group formation, religious unity, family unity and viewpoint unity. Society is formed through the exchange of gestures and language (symbols) that represent mental processes. Symbols or signs given by humans in carrying out interactions have certain meanings, so that they can lead to communication. Pure communication only occurs when each party not only gives meaning to their own behavior, but also understands or tries to understand the meaning given by the other party. (Wirawan, 2012)

Blumer provides assumptions about symbolic interaction theory, (1) humans act towards something based on the meanings that that object has for them; (2) these meanings are the result of social interaction in human society; (3) meanings are modified and handled through an interpretive process that is used by each individual in his involvement with the signs he encounters.

There are three main ideas of symbolic interaction, namely: (1) that humans act (act) towards something (thing) on the basis of meaning (meaning); (2) meaning comes from one's social interactions with others; (3) meaning can be treated or changed through an interpretive process that is used by people in dealing with something they encounter. The point is that the meaning that arises from this interaction is not simply accepted by someone, unless the individual interprets it first (Wirawan, 2012).

Ritzer and Smart (2018) provide premises about symbolic interaction, namely; (1) people are unique creatures because of their ability to use symbols; (2) people become human in a special way through the interactions they have; (3) people are conscious and self-reflective beings who actively shape their own behavior; (4) people are purposive beings who act in and against



situations; (5) society consists of people involved in symbolic interactions; (6) to understand people's social actions, it is necessary to use methods that allow seeing the meaning associated with the person's actions.

Humans act based on the interests of the environment (society). Humans have a number of possible actions in their minds before starting the actual action. In symbolic interactions, humans are independent, unattached subjects, and have the power to interpret the meaning of their actions. There are many possibilities that can be taken from interests, it could be economic, socio-cultural, political, and could be other interests, which involve emotions, attitudes and behavior.

In conflict, individuals move on the basis of interests and meanings. Social conditions affect the mind, which can capture emotions, beliefs, attitudes and behavior spontaneously. The spontaneity shown in the conflict can be seen from the collective behavior that has arisen, such as brawls, demonstrations and conflicts involving ethnic, religious and racial groups. Meanings related to Religion and Race are great triggers for collective behavior.

The mind is the center for receiving stimuli, while the self is a form of response flow, namely attitudes and behavior based on value-based thinking and norms. Like water flowing from upstream to downstream, given. Conflict can occur when the domination of the mind is too strong, thus reducing the role of the self, which functions as a process tool, which can determine the level of maturity of an attitude. It can be said that self is a place of dialectical process. If the source of interaction is (-) then the possibility of output, there can be two possibilities of negative (-) and positive (+), depending on the dialectical process of self, where if the dominant mind, then the result is negative (-), whereas if the dialectical process is running according to values and norms, the result is positive (+).

The discussion of the flow of conflict resolution according to Herbert Blumer and George Mead, is described as follows.

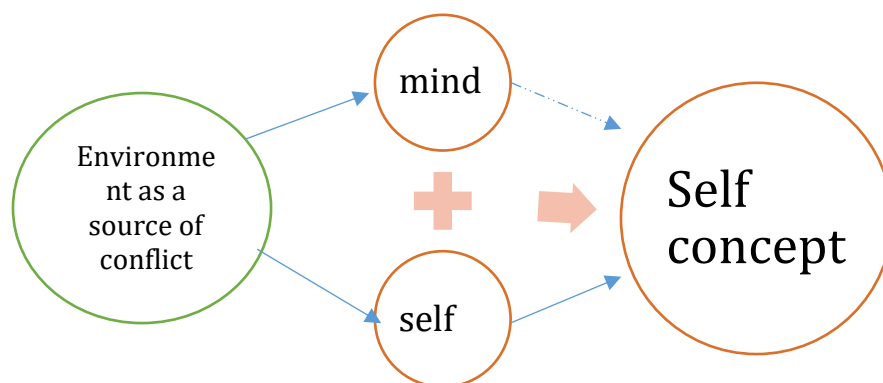


Figure 1. Flow of Conflict Resolution according to Herbert Blumer and George Mead

### Mind as a Sensitive Subject, Spontaneous and Uncontrollable

The human mind (mind) is the organ that first receives stimulation from interaction symbols, both those that have positive or negative meanings. The raw response made by the mind shows that at least the mind has a sensitive nature. The sensitive feelings shown by the mind can create emotion, sympathy and empathy. Like the feeling of love from someone that can cause affection, hate, jealousy, and even anger. Simmel described that individuals have a spirit in conflict, because within the individual has emotion, sympathy and empathy.

Feelings of spontaneity and loss of control (loss control) are determined from symbols of interaction related to sensitive feelings, for example because of family, boyfriend, ethnicity, race, religion, ethnicity and group organization. For example in the case of brawls between student gangs, motorcycle gangs, clashes between ethnicities, religions and races.

Mind synonymous with lust. Lust is a characteristic of social animals. The basis of lust shows that humans are conflicted creatures (*homo conflictus*), so what happens then is the ways used to

use animal characters. Such as the impact of conflicts that result in victims of property and human lives.

Mind in using a conflict resolution approach is more inclined to use coercion, due to the domination factor. Coercive force can be exercised by using power and authority, such as embargoes, and militarism. For example, in the case of the cement factory conflict in Rembang, it shows that the mind tends to be strong in one of the perceptions of community groups, both those who are pro and contra to the establishment of a cement factory. The mind of the pro group shows a tendency towards political economy interests, while the mind of the contra group tends to be strong in social, cultural and environmental interests.

### **Self as a Subject of Rational Thinking**

In contrast to the self which thinks rationally, based on the context of knowledge, values and norms. Self acts as a dialectical thought process, on symbols in interaction. Conflict for the self is change, which requires logical, systematic and procedural reasoning. Self is not affected by lust, sensitive feelings, uncontrolled emotions, because self has its own views based on moral-based intellectual arguments. It's not uncommon for us to see how someone is not affected when they see their friends fighting, fighting, because they think dialectically.

Self prefers to use a moral approach in every problem solving. Compromise and agreement are ways that are humane, rather than having to use his killing intent as a conflict resolution. And when its interests are fulfilled, self does not show greed and greed. In other words they stop after their interests can be fulfilled.

In a conflict, the role of self is very decisive in a dynamic, whether the conflict continues or there is a solution. If the self chooses to walk in a dialectical process, then it prefers constructive conflict, and vice versa if the self becomes subordinate to the mind, then it can be said that the self is also trapped and merged in a prolonged conflict. Thus, the role of the self as a conflict intelligent actor must be able to work optimally, so that the dominance of the mind can be reduced.

The steps for self in dealing with conflict are identical with the use of problem solving, as an effort to solve conflict problems. three concepts used in solving conflict problem solving, namely identification, diagnosis and treatment. Problem solving efforts as a form of dialectical process in seeking accurate and appropriate conflict resolution.

The self is called the antithesis of the mind, which uses a constructive approach. That conflict is dialectical, meaning it should not drag on. In the case of the cement factory conflict in Rembang, the resolution offered is that development must be based on the people (bottom up), democratic and egalitarian which prioritizes the interests of the people fairly (Soetomo, 2006).

### **The Self as a Conflict Resolution Agent**

The concept of self (self) as the view of symbolic interaction theory presents a dialectical process. To get a good interpretation (+), support is needed from the concept of positive thinking (+ mindset), where the use of values and norms becomes a reference. Mind premises that are still wild are collected, grouped, and filtered and can later be used as instruments of compromise or agreement towards dominant conflict resolution. In other words, the dialectical process carried out by the self originates from the premises of the mind, through reduction, clarification, and clustering until it becomes a final product, namely the result of a mature dialectic.

The self is the organ in which premises are ripened. To be a good organ, the self requires the distribution of knowledge, values and norms. Therefore the role of self as a conflict resolution agent, must have the carrying capacity of competencies, namely knowledge competence, attitude competence, social competence, moral competence, and spiritual competence, and must be able to position the agent as Puryanto et al. (2018) that agents Agents must be able to become safety valves who must have (1) special skills (2) stand in the neutral center, strive for both conflicting parties to reach common ground, synthesis agreements, (3 ) strive for both parties not to be demeaned and their dignity and self-esteem, (4) strive for both parties to feel benefited, both



benefit and nothing is lost, (5) strive for both parties to realize that life is dynamic, full of challenges and do not leave togetherness and harmony as a support for social life.

In addition, self-concept is capable of being a third party, capable of discussing, negotiating and having leadership in resolving every conflict (Puryanto, 2019).

## CONCLUSION

Self-concept is an attempt to understand and interpret the actions of others through symbols, so that an agreement or compromise occurs. At the mind level it contains various kinds of premises, while at the self level it is a place to process the maturity of the premises so that they become mature dialectic products. Meanwhile, self-concept shows a dialectical process between premises produced by the mind, which is then embodied by the self based on values and norms and knowledge, and the result is a compromise or agreement that can create a harmonious, peaceful and peaceful civilization.

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