

## The ethnography of police: Communication barriers in Mesuji conflict, Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

This research examines the experiences of police working in conflict areas, how they adapt to situations that are prone to conflict, including their views on the conflicting parties, namely the community, companies and local governments as well as the communication barriers they experience with the new culture. This research focuses on the stories of the duties of Bintara, namely the police with the lowest rank in the police structure in conflict areas in Mesuji Regency, Lampung Province, Indonesia. The stories of Bintara who served in this conflict area are very interesting to study and analyze after conducting long research on their lives. This study uses an ethnography approach with qualitative methods, where in-depth interviews and observation are data collection techniques. The results of this study indicate that there is no non-commissioned officer who wants to be placed in a tense area because of the conflict, threats to life that always loom, skin diseases, no clean water source, poisoned food, and communication barriers with the community are one cause, namely stereotypes and prejudices against conflict area communities. The stories of the police on duty as a result of this research are full of tension and life threats are explored in ethnography.

## 1. Introduction

This study has never been accomplished before because previous studies have seen many strong criticisms from various parties on the duties of the police polisi (Ward et al., 2022; Zare et al., 2022; Urbanik, Maier, & Greene, 2022; Inzunza, 2022). However, this paper, on the other hand, examines at how the police perceive themselves and their world when working on their duties in conflict areas and what obstacles they encounter. In communicating with residents of conflict areas, it is certainly a noteworthy and

important issue to study in terms of social reality. This study is based on the stories of police officers who work in 'frightening and conflict-ridden areas, which of course are very dangerous for themselves. This area which is still rarely visited by persons and known for its drama of land grabbing and frequent killings, is a place of their duty that is considered not an option for police officers.

This study begins with the early stories of a person choosing to become a police officer, being placed in a conflict area and how they interpret their duties. To become a police officer, there are several choices of educational paths (Coleman & Cotton, 2014; Beletsky, Thomas, Shumskaya, Artamonova, & Smelyanskaya, 2013; Horswell, 1995) which will result in different classifications and stratifications. There are Private Military schools, Bintara (noncommissioned officer/NCO), Commissioned Officers, and Police Academy. The Private Military path is a cadet military school (Tantama), graduating from high school with Bhayangkara II (Barada), Bhayangkara I (Baratu), or Prada (Private) in Indonesian Army (TNI). Their education is taken for 6 months in Mobile Brigade Corps (Brimob) or Marine and Air Police (Polairud) Education Center, not in State Police Academy (SPN). To be promoted from Barada to Baratu, they need to spend 4 years. Yet, if they earn achievements, their promotion can be faster. To be endorsed as a non-commissioned officer, they must first go to higher education called a training school for Secaba or a group expert from Tantama to Bintara. They have to attend class regularly for 6 months and Class Experts for a month. For this school, the main requirement is rank.

The non-commissioned school is a pathway for all majors (except Culinary Art) in high school (SMA)/vocational high school (SMK)/other vocational graduates which is taken for 11 months with a 551 pattern. For instance, a cadet could spend 5 months of education at SPN Palembang, 5 months at SPN Lampung, and 1 month at SPN in other regions. Therefore, they need to move their school to another. After attending Bintara school, a cadet will be given the rank of Bripda (Second Brigadier). After getting the rank of Bripda, he can be promoted to be Briptu (First Brigadier), then Bripol (Police Brigadier), and lastly Bripka (Chief Police Brigadier). Later, he also can be Aipda (Adjunct Inspector II) and Aiptu (Adjunct Inspector I). Each promotion is taken for 4-5 years. Consequently, in order to get the rank of Bripka, he must devote for 16 years. In addition, character education is also instilled in every police member's learning (Resep, A, 2015).

For this Bintara graduates, they must pass the education level again if they want to become officers. There are several schools to become officers, namely PAG (Group Expert Education) based on the age factor, which is intended for those who are 46 years old. Besides PAG, there is SIP (Police Inspector School) for those who already have a bachelor's degree. Then, there is SPA (School of Officers) for the general route, namely for those who already have a bachelor's degree to become an officer, or also known as PK/career officer. There are also police school lines who directly become officers from graduating from high school/vocational school, this is known as AKPOL (Police Academy) or formerly known as AKABRI (Indonesian Armed Forces Academy). To enlist in AKPOL, it is usually acknowledged as 'difficult' as those who enlist this school are based on selections. Obviously, not only good physical and health requirements, but they also need to have high intelligence. AKPOL is a 'prestigious' school for the police,

because AKPOL's graduates immediately hold the rank of Officer, namely Police Inspector II (Ipda). In general, AKPOL graduates have a high chance of becoming high-ranking officers (PATI) with the rank of General, compared to Career Officers and Bintara who have very few opportunities. Recently, there are also opportunities for Career Officers to become Generals, although their chance is still not as considerable as AKPOL graduates. Usually, for these AKPOL graduates, especially if they have become officers, they will mobilize a lot, and do not stay in one place for longer time. For example, in Mesuji, they will only be placed as a Police Chief, who may only serve for a short time.

The police carry out their duties requiring communication with the wider community, but in reality they often encounter obstacles. Even as information technology develops, the Police must adapt to social media in communicating (Dekker, van den Brink, and Meijer 2020). A study on language barriers has been conducted (Herbst and Walker 2001) that language barriers are not a major factor in the delivery of police services as seen from delays, frustration, and conflicts in police-citizen interactions. The police certainly have strategies including increasing collaboration, awareness and training as part of the need to provide the best service (Saxton et al. 2020). The police face a wide variety of cases, so they will face obstacles in communicating. Language is part of communication, but communication is not fixated on the language used because communication is successful if the message is conveyed properly without any interruptions. Not many studies have reviewed police communication barriers.

The uniqueness of this research is the specific research object of the Non-Commissioned Police and the location on duty in conflict areas, where they deal with local communities and immigrant communities who have very different cultural characteristics. This study finds a novelty in the ethnography approach. Previous studies usually examine the ethnography of a society in general. Nonetheless, this study is from the perspective of the police about themselves and their world. Previous research examines at how the community sees the police, the community as an oppressed group and so on. While, in this study, how the police see themselves, what they mean by their duties, and how they see a community in conflict. The results of this study also support the symbolic interactionism theory of Blummer (1969).

Therefore, to understand the duties of the police in conflict areas, the most relevant groups are Bintara and Tantama given that they have served in one place for a long time. However, Tantama is not located in Mesuji because of their small members, so that Bintara group remains and deals directly with the community and the situation on the ground. The purpose of this study was to analyze the communication barriers to non-commissioned officers on duty in agrarian conflict areas in Mesuji District.

## **2. Method**

The stories of the Bintara who served in this conflict area were very noteworthy to study and analyze after conducting a long research on their lives. This study used an ethnography approach with qualitative methods, where in-depth interviews and observation were data collection techniques. The ethnographic approach is used because the researcher wants to understand the barriers to police communication in conflict areas

through parts of their life cycle, starting from collecting data on service history, main reasons for becoming a police officer, accepting assignments in conflict areas to carrying out their duties. In carrying out their duties the police communicate with local communities and immigrant communities who have different cultural characteristics. To complete field note data, researchers need to build a sense of and relationship with informants (Roeschley 2023) so that understanding them is very relevant using an ethnographic approach.

The informants were selected based on the length of experience the police had served in the conflict area of Mesuji Regency, Lampung Province. The selection of these informants was assisted by tracking work history using personnel data owned by the Mesuji District Police. The total number of informants was 15 people who worked at the Mesuji Police, and those who worked at the East Mesuji Police as an administrative area for agrarian conflicts register 45.

Data were collected by conducting FGDs involving 15 informants, then gradually performing in-depth interviews with each police officer. Next, they visited the informants' homes to observe the social environment, supported by the results of interviews with the informants' family members. Each informant was interviewed more than once, either face-to-face, using Zoom and by telephone. Data collection was accomplished from August 2021 to June 2022. Ethnographer Spradley (1980) in (Dirksen, Neumann, and Lotzmann 2022) said that ethnographic studies focus on describing broadly the types of settings, types of actors, and types of actions carried out in these study settings. Data analysis was carried out by coding themes, data reduction, and domain analysis, namely analysis derived from questions submitted to informants. In this case finding data which is the behavior (activities) carried out by informants at the research location (Spradley, 1980: 86) in (Dirksen et al. 2022).

### **3. Result and discussion**

#### **Mesuji, Police Officer, and Conflict Area**

In the post-independence era, the Mesuji relatives were included in the territory of North Lampung Regency until 1997. This area was also the target of the Pelita Period Transmigration Program (1966-1999), whose main goal at that time was to equalize the population by moving people from Java to the islands (Prihatin, 2013). Even though there had been social tension due to transmigration due to the increasing number of migrants and the urgency of space for indigenous peoples to move (Budianto, 2020). In Mesuji this program is seen as successful in contributing to nation-building from an agricultural aspect (Directorate General of Regional Preparation and Development of Transmigration Settlements, 2015).

Furthermore, administratively the Mesuji government is a sub-district which is part of the Tulang Bawang Regency. However, considering the width of the area, Tulang Bawang Regency finally divided its territory into three districts in 2008. Among them are Tulang Bawang Regency, Tulang Bawang Barat Regency, and Mesuji Regency. With Law No. 49 of 2008, Mesuji officially became Mesuji Regency, under Lampung Province (Renaldy, 2020).

The oldest is Wiralaga Village, which is currently divided into two villages, namely Wiralaga I Village and Wiralaga II Village. The old villages are located in several sub-districts, including:

1. Tanjung Raya District consists of two old villages, namely Kagungan Dalam and Seri Tanjung.
2. Mesuji District consists of four old villages, namely Kampung Nipah Kuning, Kampung Sungai Badak, Kampung Wiralaga I and Kampung Wiralaga II.
3. Way Serdang District only consists of one village, namely Kampung Labuhan Batin.
4. East Mesuji District consists of Talang Batu Village and Sungai Cambai Village.
5. North Rawajitu District only consists of one village, namely Sungai Session Village.

Culturally, the Mesuji area can be seen in the following map:

Figure 1. Cultural Area of Mesuji



Source: (Nurdin, Damayanti, Wiryawan, & Cahyadi, 2012)

If traced from the root of the problem, there are two points of land disputes that trigger conflict in Mesuji, and involve various ethnic groups in it. First, the land dispute between forest encroachers in the villages of Moro-Moro, Pelita Jaya, and Pekat Raya with PT Silva Inhutani. They fight over an area of 43,900 hectares in the Register 45 area. Second, there is a land dispute between residents in Kagungan Dalam Village, Nipah Kuning, Tanjung Raya in Tanjung Raya District, and PT Barat Selatan Makmur Investindo which fight over customary land. The resistance that has started since 1997 until now has become an open conflict so that it became a human rights problem that peaks in 2011 (Nurdin et al., 2012).

The conflict, which often ends in a massacre tragedy, reached its peak in 2011, when the conflict between residents was marked by the beheading of seven persons on PT SWA's land located in Sodong Village, Mesuji. To investigate the incident involving the Mesuji Police, the government formed a Joint Fact Finding Team (TGPF) consisting of elements from the Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs (Kemenpolhukam), Ministry of Law and Human Rights (Kemenkumham), Ministry of Forestry (Kemenhut), Police, National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM), Lampung and South Sumatra local government (Pemda), which was formed on



December 16, 2011 (Edwin Firdaus' article has been aired on Tribunnews.com entitled *TGPF: Insya Allah Temuan Kami Valid*, 2012). In the conflict that contained elements of human rights violations, it ended with the presentation of five suspects consisting of three civilians, and two people from the police (BeritaSatu, 2012).

According to the results of Sarnita's research (2014) on the conflict in Mesuji, the people who have revealed the tragedy of this massacre are victims of forest control which has been controlled by PT Silva Inhutani since 1996-2024. Previously, the 43,900 hectares land of Register 45 area was managed by PT Inhutani V until the mid-1990s. The company later merged with PT Silva, a subsidiary of the Sungai Budi Group, and changed its name to PT Silva Inhutani. Later, the combined company was purely managed by PT. Silva. In 1997, a number of residents began to inhabit the area planted with sengon and other industrial plants left by PT Inhutani V. They cut down the plants in the area until they were bare. In fact, it turned out that the people who came after 1999 were from various regions such as East Lampung, Tulangbawang, Metro and even from West Java, Bali and Makassar (Sarnita, I Made: 2014).

From the course of this conflict, it is explained that this conflict has become protracted, even turned into violence, on the other hand, new conflicts have emerged. In the results of the research (Sarnita, I Made: 2014).explains that the police in this case are seen by the community as a party who defends the interests of the company compared to nurturing and protecting the community itself. The police are an organization from the state, which performs functions based on a clear legal framework and has a clear code of ethics (Ibrahim, 2020) which is given the authority even to force it (Van Vollenhoven dalam Pelangi, 2017). But in reality police work is also under threat of crime (Pang & Pavlou, 2019).

The history of the police in Indonesia is full of dynamics, starting from the Dutch colonial era until now. Polri or National Police of the Republic of Indonesia is an Indonesian national police institution that is directly responsible to the President of the Republic of Indonesia. The motto of the Indonesian National Police is *Rastra Sewakottama*. In Sanskrit, *Rastra* means "nation" or "people" and *Sevakottama* means "best servant". This motto translates to "Polri as the main servant of the state and nation". The duties of the police throughout Indonesia are the responsibility of the National Police, namely to maintain security and order, enforce the law, protect, nurture, and serve the community (in [sejarahlengkap.com](http://sejarahlengkap.com)). In personal life, that the police is a life choice (Jasin, M. 2010).

Furthermore, there are elements of implementing the main tasks carried out by the Head of Bhayangkara Hospital, Head of the State Police School (SPN), Head of Finance, and Head of Medicine and Health (Dokkes) (Darmawan, 2016). For legal areas, the Lampung Police are in charge of one police station, and 10 police stations, namely Bandar Lampung Police, South Lampung Police, North Lampung Police, West Lampung Police, Metro Police, East Lampung Police, Central Lampung Police, Tulang Bawang Police, Tanggamus Police, Way Police. Right, and Mesuji Police. For the Mesuji area, which only developed in 2010, was previously still under the Tulang Bawang Police. After 2010, it became the Mesuji Police, with 3 police stations (Polsek). Meanwhile, the agrarian conflict area, namely East Mesuji, only had a sub-sector pol, not yet a polsek. For this

sub-sector, there are only 3 people guarding the office. In 2021, there will be the Mesuji Timur Police, with 19 personnel so far.

The first police station in Mesuji is in Simpang Pematang, known as Polsek Mesuji, which was established in 1989 because it is still part of North Lampung Regency. Then after the division occurred where several parts of North Lampung became Tulang Bawang Regency in 1997, it was changed to Simpang Pematang Police and Way Serdang and Tanjung Raya Police. Then after developing again into Mesuji Regency, in 2010, the Mesuji Police Station was established with the Simpang Pematang Police (former Mesuji Police in 1989), Way Serdang Police (2010), Tanjung Raya Police (2002), and East Mesuji Police (2021). Most of the registers are in the East Mesuji area, which at the time was the Tulang Bawang Police Station called the Sub-Sector Police, which consisted of 3 police officers. So far, the Mesuji Timur Police has 19 members. Mesuji Timur Police has only been definitive for two years, namely since 2021, and has its own budget since 2022.

A big problem for the POLRI institution itself is the lack of personnel stationed in areas such as Mesuji. Ideally, the existing Polsek in Mesuji should have 60-90 members. The number of police officers, but in reality, the number of members is only around 19. Even before that, the Mesuji Police with sub-sectors only amounted to 3 people. With the fact that the number of police officers is very small compared to the population, conflict-prone areas, and the difficulty of access to villages, this situation becomes one of the big problems in dealing with the conflict in Mesuji. Currently until 2022 the total number of police personnel in Mesuji is 345 people.

Bintara is a member of the National Police who holds the rank of Police Brigadier II (BRIPDA), Police Brigadier I (BRIPTU), Police Brigadier (BRIGPOL), Chief Police Brigadier (BRIPKA), Adjunct Inspector Police II (AIPDA), and Adjunct Inspector Police I (AIPTU). Bintara (Non-commissioned Officer) is a group of military and police ranks lower than Second Lieutenant/Second Police Inspector. The ranks in the police force starting from Bintara are as follows; Bhayangkara I, Bhayangkara II, Main Bhayangkara, Bripda equivalent to Group II A, Brigadier General, Brigadier Brigade, Bripka, Aipda equivalent to Group II D, Aiptu, Ipda equivalent to group IIIA, Iptu equivalent to Group III B, Captain or AKP equivalent to Group III C, Kompol equivalent Group IV A, AKBP is equivalent to Group IV B, and Kombes is equivalent to group IV C. While, for Generals, it is referred to as political rank.

### **Police Stories in Mesuji, Lampung**

The first start being assigned as a police officer in Mesuji, was not an option, no one wanted to be placed in that place, because they had heard of the situation in the area that was vulnerable. Yet, as a police officer you must be willing and ready to be placed anywhere, so that there is no reason to refuse. However, there are ways to do it so that it can then be transferred to another region. In March 2022, there were 7 people who moved from Mesuji, of the 7 people only one asked for a recommendation from the Mesuji Police, while the other 6 people came directly from the Regional Police because there was a relative there who took care of it or a colleague, so that the Polres had no power. Although there are those who enter, they are usually demotion or because of

punishment. It could be said that Mesuji place is regarded as a Demotion, or a place of exile. Even the police who were born in Mesuji does not want to work here.

If a police officer is promoted, a replacement must come in. However, if it is a member, it does not have to be. The number of personnel is 345 at the Mesuji Police, including all Sector Police, namely 4 Polsek and 1 Central Mesuji Post. There are 9 police officers in total. Of all the members, there is one person who is chronically ill, one person who guards the prison, one person who is in charged on rehabilitation for drugs on the lido, one person who is absence, one person who is outside the regent's security office, two people who are guarding the office, and one person who is guarding Regional Secretary. The number of police officers serving in Mesuji should be around 500, meaning that it is still not enough, only around 43% occupied. Mesuji Police, which was established in 2012, is expected to have only 20% of members, while 80% of all members want to move.

From the data obtained, in 2019, 29 people enlisted, but 40 people left. In 2020, 24 people left, and 20 people enlisted. In 2021, 26 people enlisted, and 23 people left. In 2022, 29 people enlisted (because there was a new Bintara placement who graduated from school), while 11 people left. In 2022, there are 8 people who have retired and died. There are not enough dormitories divided into 6 large dormitories and 3 floors of flats with a total of 48 rooms. The dormitory is inhabited by 3 head of division, head of ren, head of log, head of ops, and head of HR. The Mesuji Police Station is alleged to be one of the dumping grounds. If policemen make a certain fault, they are thrown to Mesuji. From 2019, there were 9 members who were dismissed to the Mesuji Police, with various faults such as getting drugs and not attending the service. There were 8 persons who are demoted, transferred, dropped their positions, and moved to Central Sulawesi, Papua, Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT), Papua, North Maluku because of drug cases and absence during the service. Of all those, there were only two who were facing the trials, and the remaining two people disappeared. There are also those who were sentenced to 6 years and then asked to move.

The stories of these police who face people who always carry badik, firearms, frequent riots, and the number of personnel is very inadequate to deal with the many conflicted communities and cases that occur. One policeman can handle 50 cases, various problems from different areas where the conditions are still far from electricity infrastructure facilities, transportation, cellphone signals, poor sanitation, or no clean water source. They always get itching when sleeping in the office because there is no proper dormitory or house. Companies and local governments also have a difficult time serving in conflict areas. Here are the negative stereotypes or prejudices of the police against the people in Mesuji, which are not necessarily true.

### **Police Stories in Mesuji, Lampung**

All police assigned to the Mesuji area consider that it is not an option to be placed in Mesuji. As a matter of fact, no one wants to be placed in a conflict area especially with development that is still very far from the facilities. However, National Police Officer has sworn, they must be willing to be placed anywhere in Indonesia. Considered as a remote area, it is not easy to adapt to new things, especially the conditions of conflict-prone areas. The sights of the policemen who had just been stationed in Mesuji are the



register forests with damaged, deserted roads, and also occasionally people passing by on foot or on chain motorcycles, and there must be a long machete on their waist. Moreover, some areas also cannot be passed by using ordinary roads, yet by crossing rivers. There are policemen who carry the bodies of conflict victims for hours through the river in their arms. According to their stereotypes, residents also have a grudge and easily take revenge on others. If he has a grudge, he will come back and stab the person, often resulting in death. Possibly from a different community perspective, this is about self-esteem and so on. Stories like this make the police feel 'fearful' and gripping. Even their lives could be threatened at any time. They illustrate that the price of a life is despicable. Moreover, at the beginning of the formation of the new district, there was no police station. There was a police chief in the main district, namely Tulang Bawang, only then in 2012, the Mesuji Police Station was formed. The number of personnel in the Mesuji Police Station is minimal, while there are only three Polsek namely Tanjung Raya, Simpang Pematang, and Polsek Way Serdang. While, in East Mesuji, it is still a sub-sector with three members. It was only later in 2020 that the Mesuji Police Sector was formed with 19 members. Electricity can be accessed in 2021, and until now clean water is still difficult to be found in East Mesuji.

What is more stressful for the police are the prejudices or stereotypes about poison. The stories about poison are frightening for them. Therefore, they do not want to eat and drink provided, or are very careful. The stories they heard by word of mouth that in this area are that a lot of poison spread can endanger lives at any time. Every dish the community provides, they hesitate to eat it. There was once a story that they had to eat a banquet, but then the community was reprimanded, "You are afraid of poison, aren't you?". The public also knows that the police are afraid of poison, so with bismillah they ended up eating it. So far, no police have died from poison in Mesuji. In addition to stereotypes about poison, the police also think about the low level of education and religious knowledge of the community. The police also think that this is also what causes the high crime rate in the area.

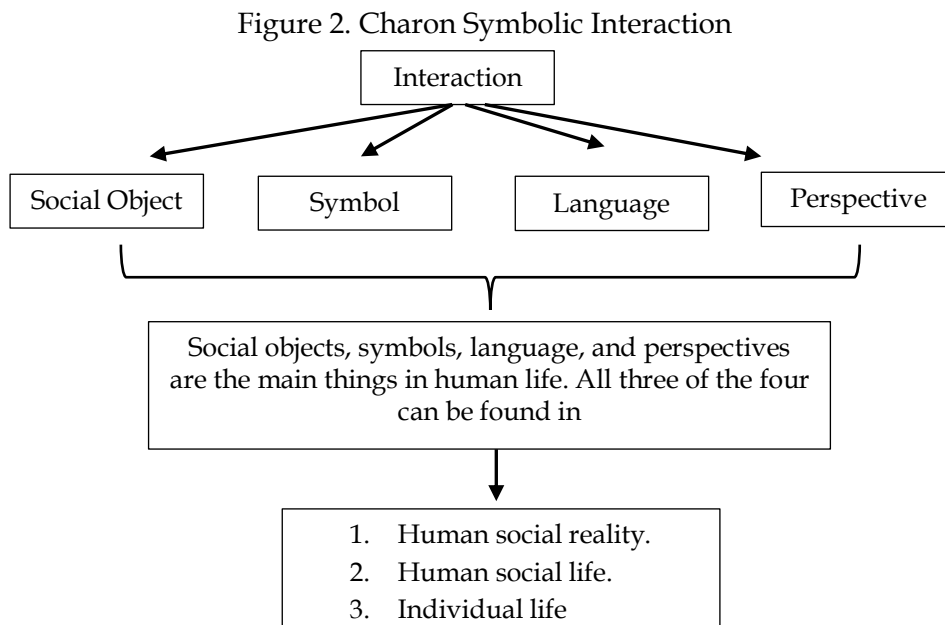
### **Police, Companies, and Government**

According to the police, the highest criminal cases in this area are agrarian conflicts, illegal firearms, robberies and other cases of violent theft. These illegal firearms are usually made and produced from the Ceper River area, namely South Sumatra, then sold to the Mesuji area. These weapons are often used when an agrarian conflict erupts between the community and the company that manages register 45. In Mesuji, there is a land for register 45 managed by PT Silva Inhutani and a state-owned plantation managed by PT BSMI. Both are often in conflict with local residents. In addition to taking land belonging to register 45 and the state and then living to build permanent and semi-permanent houses there, the theft of palm oil often triggers a lot of conflict in Mesuji. The company has also conducted a community development program known as binmas, which invites the community to become foster partners, so that they participate in managing palm oil with profit sharing. Some community groups have also followed the program for those who comply, nonetheless there are also community groups who are not willing to follow it. PT Silva Inhutani currently only manages about 60% of land belonging to register 45, whereas the rest is illegally controlled by the community.

PT. BSMI experienced a different case, namely the case of palm oil theft which occurs regularly. This theft occurs by stealing tons of palm oil every day. This theft is executed jointly and already has a network of thieves carrying large trucks and firearms. Subsequently, if security officers come, it will be very dangerous because the thieves have firearms. The company sees that many 'thugs' in this area already have a network in stealing palm oil belonging to the company. Although some have been arrested by the police, most of them are still scattered in this group of palm thieves. To deal with this group of thieves, the police had difficulties because of their large number, the firearms they used, and the non-existent deterrent effect after being punished. In the case of register conflicts, the police saw that there were also elements of the government who were less responsive in resolving conflict cases, especially the Ministry of Forestry. Until now, there is no proper formulation in resolving community occupation in register 45 area.

### Barriers to Communication: Analysis of Symbolic Interactionism

In symbolic interaction, questioning social objects in interactions that are used as representation and communication is determined by the people involved in it (Charon, 1979). It is further explained that the symbol referred to here is a social object in the interaction that is used as a representation and communication determined by the people who use it. In the interaction those involved will give meaning, create, and also change the objects in the interaction. Despite the fact, the social symbols that appear can be in the form of visible objects, words, or actions. In other words, it can be explained that in symbolic interactions, those involved in the interaction will interpret and define each other's actions both in interactions with other people and themselves. In more detail, Charon explains the process of this symbolic interaction in Figure 2:



Source: Charon, 1979

Figure 2 shows that the pattern of interaction is formed symbolically through social objects, symbols, language, and also the point of view (perspective). The theory was developed by Blumer which is rooted in the thought of Herbert Mead. In the view of Herbert Blumer in Veeger (1993), symbolic interaction involves several basic concepts, including (1) Self-concept: explaining that the police do not just move on the influence of stimuli from both inside and outside, but the police are organisms that have an awareness of themselves, so that they are able to see themselves as the object of their mind, including being able to interact with themselves; (2) The concept of action (deeds), considering that the police can be formed through interaction with themselves, then all actions taken are not controlled by the situation, but by themselves. From here then individual Police have the ability to design their actions which are not merely biological reactions, nevertheless as a result of its construction; and (3) Object concept: Seeing how the police live among objects, both physical and imaginary objects as well as abstract objects. The essence of these objects is not determined by their intrinsic characteristics, nonetheless by the interests of people and the meanings assigned to them. In this case, the police define their self-concept, on the one hand as a human being, working on state duties, and then performing actions between objects, namely the community, companies and local governments.

Police stereotypes or prejudices in interacting early with the community become a problem in communication. At the beginning of the assignment, there were indeed problems like this, in this case, called the adaptation process. Some of these adaptations work, and some do not. There are police who have succeeded in establishing good communication with the community, while others have not succeeded and have made it difficult for them to work in Mesuji. Some of the successful police officers have served for more than 10 years, usually police officers who get married in Mesuji, do business in Mesuji, and other activities. The police who then succeed or fail in establishing communication and interaction, both personal and interpersonal, are reciprocal, which is then called symbolic interaction.

In his writings, mind, self and society, Mead quoted by Turner (2008) explains the basic idea of symbolic interaction that comes from the mind, about self, and society (Mead: 1962). Furthermore, the explanations of the three concepts are as follows: (1) Police mind, interpreted as a process, not an object. An intrapersonal conversation (within the police itself) is not found within the individual, yet is a social phenomenon (Franks , 2007). Thoughts on the police present and develop in a social process, and also become part of the process itself. Here the mind represents the police's ability to use symbols that have the same social meaning. This symbol is then used by the police to develop their minds through interactions with other individuals, such as when interacting with the public, companies, and governments. Pragmatically, Mead also saw the mind as a process oriented towards problem solving. In the midst of the chaotic problems that exist in the world, it is the mind that allows individuals to find solutions and get out of these problems. From this, it can be analyzed that the police find a way to solve their problems about their stereotypes of conflicting communities, after hanging out for a long time and adapting to them; and (2) The self from several concepts conveyed by Mead narrows to the ability to make oneself an object; self is the ability to be both a subject and an object

(Schwalbe, 2005). Here the self is the ability of the individual Police to judge the opinions of others and reflect on themselves. That is, the self is part of the social process. Mead saw that the self is dialectically related to the mind, on the other hands, the body is not a self, and becomes a self only when the mind has developed.

Alternatively, the self, along with its reflexivity, is important for the development of the mind. This does not mean that body and mind can be separated, because the self is a mental process. On the contrary, although its existence is a mental process, the self is also a social process. There are several mechanisms that the self does to develop, one of which is reflexivity, or the ability to put oneself in the shoes of others and act as they act (Mead, 1959). There are two stages of self-development in Mead's view, namely the Play Stage and the Game Stage. The play stage is a phase where a person learns to take the attitude of certain people for himself (Vail, 2007). Meanwhile, the Game Stage is needed if a person wants to develop himself in the fullest sense (Vail, 2007). Mead's most famous concept in this stage is what he calls the generalized other, namely when other people are generalized as the attitude of the whole community. This is what happened with the communication between the Police and the Community. In Mesuji in the early days of duty, stereotypes that developed used as generalizations to assess the overall attitude of the people in Mesuji.

Society is used by Mead to describe a social process that is continuous, and precedes both the mind and the self. Its function is to form the mind and self. The concept of society also explains the social relationships built by each individual in society. How they are involved in the relationships they construct, and how they take on a role in society. More specifically, Mead also explains about social institutions, which is defined as a shared response in the community, or the habits of life in the community (Mead, 1962). Mead's thinking was then developed by one of his students, Herbert Blumer (1969) through seven assumptions rooted in the concept of mind, self and society. The assumptions are: (1) Humans act towards others based on the meanings that other people give them; (2) Meaning is created in interaction; (3) Interpretation of meaning involves a process of modification; (4) Interaction with other people is a means for individuals to develop their self-concept; (5) Behavior is a reflection of the motives of a person's self-concept; (6) Individuals and society are influenced by cultural and social processes; and (7) Social structure is generated through social interaction.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In fact, the results of this study explain (1) Non-commissioned officers are a group of police who directly interact with the community. They are the spearhead of the police on duty in the field. When conflicts and other criminal incidents occur, they are "fighters"; (2) Bintara police have their stories described ethnographically in conducting their duties in the conflict area in Mesuji in contrast to the police who served not in the conflict area or the higher-ranking police. The choice to serve in Mesuji is not an option because they are assigned by the state, they must be ready to be placed anywhere; (3) Bintara police were initially stationed in Mesuji with stereotypes towards the community, these were difficult times on duty in the field. Until later, there were police who managed to adapt and some did not. Some police have successfully adapted and at

the same time managed to build good communication with the community in conflict areas after they are able to 'understand' everything from the perspective of the community itself. For those who did not succeed, then many of them applied to move to other areas. (4) Polres Mesuji itself is often said to be a place of Demotion or a place of disposal for problematic police, this is also an unresolved problem; (5) The small number of police officers is not proportional to the number of crimes committed; and (6) The problem of agrarian conflicts that have never been resolved so far in Mesuji, and the police are between the community, the government and the company.

There is a dilemma in their duties. The police as a government organ deal with indigenous/local communities, and plantation companies that are granted legality by the government. The police are between indigenous/local communities, companies, and the government itself. A dilemma occurs between its function and the enforcement of human rights justice. As a person assigned to a conflict area for indigenous peoples such as Mesuji, the police themselves must understand the conflict systemically. Sometimes it is not possible to always use "state" law in solving these problems because many cases involve customary law. In almost all areas of conflict, problems with *ulayat* land in Indonesia are the result of state recognition of customary law on *ulayat* land which is still gray. So being a police officer, if they misunderstand the conflicts of customary rights, companies, and the government like in Mesuji, it will be difficult to fulfill their duties in the conflict area. For this reason, it is necessary to first comprehend the conflict in this region because it is related to the demands for a reformist police paradigm change by abandoning militaristic and violent methods. The ideal police around the world is a police who fits into society. With this principle, the community expects a police to fit into the community, which changes from an antagonistic police (a policeman who is not sensitive to these dynamics and runs a policing style that is contrary to the community) to a protagonist police (open to the changing dynamics of society and willing to accommodate it to the community) in their duties (Siregar, 2017; Rahadjo, 2002).

In conclusion, this ethnography study shows that the emic stories from the perspective of Bintara police are the stories of one human being who must obey one straight line of orders, and is always ready for the duties of the state. On the other hand, they are human being who has a dilemma in dealing with society like fear, anxiety, trepidation, and other feelings. They are people who must be able to adapt to all criminal events in society, subsequently Bintara is the real police.

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