

Carok Tradition to Defend Self-Esteem from an Islamic Legal Perspective

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Abstract:

Abstract: In Madura, there is a tradition of carok as a defense of self-esteem, especially related to defending one's honor, self-esteem, or family. However, these actions resulted in injuries or deaths. This research aims to analyze the Carok tradition in Madura from the perspective of Islamic law. This research is qualitative and explores the carok phenomenon in Madura. The data came from the literature and previous research. The data is analyzed deductively. This study concludes that carok has strong roots in the cultural structure and social norms of Madurese society, and is often driven by feelings of shame due to insults to honor. However, from the perspective of Islamic law, carok is contrary to Islamic teachings because it does not follow legal procedures, endangers lives, and can trigger a continuous cycle of violence. Islam encourages conflict resolution through legal channels and mediation, not by violence. Recommendations include the need for a holistic approach involving the government, the community, and the clergy to address the problem of violence and criminality related to carok. Education and awareness of Islamic law also need to be improved to prevent harmful carok practices.

Keywords: Islamic law, carok, Madura, violence, honor.

Abstrak:

Di Madura terdapat tradisi carok sebagai pembelaan harga diri, khususnya yang berkaitan dengan membela kehormatan dan harga dirinya atau keluarganya. Namun, tindakan tersebut mengakibatkan korban mengalami luka atau kematian. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tradisi Carok di Madura berdasarkan perspektif Hukum Islam. Penelitian ini adalah kualitatif untuk mendalami fenomena carok di Madura. Data berasal dari literatur dan penelitian sebelumnya. Data tersebut dianalisis secara deduktif. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa carok memiliki akar kuat dalam struktur budaya dan norma sosial masyarakat Madura, serta sering kali didorong oleh perasaan malu akibat penghinaan terhadap kehormatan. Namun, dalam perspektif hukum Islam, carok bertentangan dengan ajaran Islam karena tidak mengikuti prosedur hukum yang sah, membahayakan nyawa, dan bisa memicu siklus kekerasan yang berkelanjutan. Islam mendorong penyelesaian konflik dengan jalur hukum dan melalui mediasi, bukan dengan kekerasan. Rekomendasi meliputi perlunya pendekatan holistik yang melibatkan pemerintah, masyarakat, dan ulama untuk mengatasi masalah kekerasan dan kriminalitas terkait carok. Pendidikan dan kesadaran hukum Islam juga perlu ditingkatkan untuk mencegah praktik carok yang merugikan.

Kata kunci: Hukum Islam, carok, Madura, kekerasan, kehormatan.

ملخص البحث:

في مادورا هناك تقليد لجاروك كدفاع عن احترام الذات ، خاصة فيما يتعلق بالدفاع عن شرفه أو أسرته. ومع ذلك ، أسفرت هذه الإجراءات عن إصابات أو وفيات. يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحليل تقليد جاروك في مادورا بناء على منظور الشريعة الإسلامية. هذا البحث نوعي لاستكشاف ظاهرة الجاروك في مادورا. جاءت البيانات من الأدبيات والأبحاث السابقة. يتم تحليل البيانات بشكل استنتاجي. تخلص هذه الدراسة إلى أن جاروك له جذور قوية في البنية الثقافية والأعراف الاجتماعية للمجتمع المادوري، وغالبا ما يكون مدفوعا بمشاعر الخجل بسبب إهانات الشرف. ومع ذلك، من منظور الشريعة الإسلامية، فإن الجاروك يتعارض مع التعاليم الإسلامية لأنه لا يتبع الإجراءات القانونية، ويعرض الأرواح للخطر، ويمكن أن يؤدي إلى دورة مستمرة من العنف. يشجع الإسلام على حل النزاعات من خلال القنوات القانونية والوساطة، وليس عن طريق العنف. وتشمل التوصيات الحاجة إلى نهج شامل يشمل الحكومة والمجتمع ورجال الدين لمعالجة مشكلة العنف والإجرام المرتبط بالجاروك. كما يجب تحسين التعليم والتوعية بالشريعة الإسلامية لمنع ممارسات الجاروك الضارة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الشريعة الإسلامية ، جاروك ، مادورا ، العنف ، الشرف.

INTRODUCTION

In Madura, there are two famous traditions, namely the cow race (*keraben sape*) and carok (Ma'arif, 2015). If cow race is synonymous with race and animal (cow) (Anggraini & Kuswanto, 2019), carok is related to sharp weapons and acts of violence, which can cause injury or death. A sharp weapon commonly used in carok is the celurit (Ratnasari et al., 2021). Celurit is a Madurese cultural artifact, a knife with curved blades and long heads used to cut grass and farm. It is also a cultural symbol that is more than just an agricultural tool. For the Madurese people, the celurit symbolizes a weapon to protect one's and one's family's pride from threats (Rizal, 2017).

For the Madurese people, bearing the burden of shame is something that must be eliminated. Carok acts are a form of action as an effort to defend and maintain self-esteem with physical violence (Dharmawan et al., 2017). In this context, the expression of the Madurese people, *ango'an potéya tolang etémbeng potéya mata* (better bone whites than eye whites). Connotatively, the expression means that it is better to die than to live to bear humiliation. The proverb is a reference to the deeds of carok. The carok case that occurred in Madura always stemmed from feelings of *malo* or humiliation in the perpetrator because

others harassed his pride (Rahmi, 2017). The perpetrator of the carok does not solely rely on physical strength, but he also has supernatural powers. A person who wants to do carok still needs *to be apagar* (fenced), which is interpreted as a fortress of immunity. In Madurese, the ritual is called *nylateng*, *nyepet*, and *mesem* (Sukimi, 2004).

The tradition of carok in Madura is synonymous with acts of violence that can result in injury or death for the victim (Daulay et al., 2022). In the context of Islamic law, acts of violence, whether in the form of persecution or murder, are strictly prohibited (Muhamad Ilham Syaputra & Ishaq, 2014). Persecuting or killing someone can lead to a qishash punishment for the perpetrator. This means, if someone takes the life of another, the retaliation is the loss of an equivalent life or paying the fine stipulated in Islamic law to the victim's family (Mubiin et al., 2024). Therefore, it is important to consider carok within the framework of Islamic criminal law.

Based on the above background, this study examines in depth about carok as a defense of women in the perspective of Islamic law. This research aims to answer the following problem formulation: How is the act of carok as a defense of self-esteem in Madura? And how is the analysis of Islamic criminal law on the carok tradition as a defense of self-esteem in Madura?

METHOD

This research is a normative research type that analyzes the carok tradition in Madura from the perspective of Islamic criminal law. The approach used in this study is a conceptual approach. Data collection comes from literary studies. The data comes from references in the form of journal articles, news and books. The collected data was analyzed descriptively, namely decrypting the carok tradition in Madura and then analyzed with Islamic criminal law theory.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Carok Tradition in Madura

Conflict is inevitable in relationships between human beings. To reduce conflicts in society, values, norms, and ethics are made (Malby, 2024). Culture continues to be developed from generation to generation through this shared morality (Ketprapakorn & Kantabutra, 2022). Culture is the work of the people in an area, such as the carok tradition

in Madura. Carok is synonymous with murder with a sharp weapon, usually a celurit, committed by a man against another man who is considered to have damaged his self-esteem (Jufri, 2019). It is generally related to infidelity, defamation, or acts of revenge for the death of a relative. For the people of Madura, these actions are seen as an insult to honor and self-esteem.

One of the main values in Madurese culture is to maintain self-esteem. Madurese people are very unwilling to accept that their pride is abused, as reflected in the saying "*lebbhi bagus pote tolang katenbang pote mata*" (it is better to die than to live in shame) (Rochmadi, 2021). To restore the tarnished self-esteem, one of the traditional ways is carok, which aims to avenge or remove insults by killing those who are considered to have defamed them (Jufri, 2019).

Violence in the carok incident is studied and inherited in Madura society, both directly and indirectly (Tsabit, 2008). Directly, people tend to justify and advocate carok in response when their self-esteem is hurt. Indirectly, carok becomes part of daily life through conversation, observation, and experience, thus influencing people's behavior patterns.

Carok is a dispute resolution effort chosen as a last resort after various mediation efforts, such as deliberation between families or direct negotiations with the opposing party, have not been successful in reaching an agreement. If all paths of peace are considered deadlocked, then carok will be used as a way to resolve conflicts (Hastijanti, 2005). If the dispute is finally resolved through a carok, several mandatory preparations must be met. Among them are: getting the blessing of the extended family, choosing a location that is quiet and far from the crowd, using the celurit as a weapon (other weapons such as crowbars or knives are prohibited), and ensuring the message that will be conveyed to the family if they lose the carok (Jufri, 2019).

Some Carok Cases

The case of carok in Bujur Tengah Village, Pamekasan, on July 12, 2007, was triggered by a dispute over inheritance and land, especially 5.8 hectares of tobacco land, which is considered crooked land and inheritance of the Majapahit Kingdom. This conflict involved two camps: Mur, the Head of the Central Circle Village, and Ba, the former Village Head. The dispute triggered a mass carok incident, which ended tragically with the deaths of eight residents, including Mur and his mother (Wiyata, 2016).

In addition, carok has occurred in Pandian Village, Sumenep, caused by problems involving women or wives. In this case, the wife of a man named Is is seduced by a man named Rap. As a result, Is and Rap fall in love with each other. Is felt very offended and did not accept this. This causes Is's grudge against Rap, and they get involved in a carok. In the carok, Is and Rap were both injured, but there were no casualties at that time. This case shows that problems involving women or wives can be a trigger for carok in Madura, although in this case no one dies (Wiyata, 2016).

In September 2008, there was a carok in Propo District, Pamekasan Madura. The car involved a resident with the initials D (22) and two of his colleagues, N (42 years old), and DM (25 years old). In the stirring, D died on the spot, while N and DM were injured. The motive of the carok was motivated by the Pilkades. In April 2017, three people were killed and two others were injured in a mass carjacking. The carok incident occurred in Naporah Hamlet, East Ketapang Village, Ketapang District, Sampang Regency. The chronology of the mass carok that killed three people began with allegations of witchcraft (Teguh Firmansyah, 2024).

In February 2021, there was a car accident at the Banangkah Village Hall, Burneh District, Bangkalan Regency, Madura, East Java. A fight broke out between supporters of the election. A resident was injured because he was hit by a sharp weapon that injured his back and arms. The incident occurred during the meeting of the formation of the Banangkah Village Head Election committee, which led to a dispute and a mass commotion using sharp weapons. In January 2024, there was a car crash that caused the deaths of four people. Carok occurred due to a fight using sharp weapons or carok in Banyu Anyar Village, Tanjung Bumi District, Bangkalan Regency, Madura, East Java (Teguh Firmansyah, 2024).

Factors Causing Carok

Various factors trigger Carok in Madura, but all of them are rooted in shame due to self-esteem issues. To restore this self-esteem, carok is carried out with social support. The perpetrator who managed to kill his opponent felt relieved, satisfied, and proud. However, carok is only used to resolve certain conflicts, not for all problems in Madurese society (Broto, 2011).

Carok can produce various consequences, such as one party dying or being seriously injured, and it can even happen that both parties experience similar things. Although carok is clearly an unjustified act because it deprives them of the right to life, this tradition still exists today, although it is not as common as it used to be. Carok has become an accepted and socially supported thing, and has even become part of the culture in Madura (Djarmiko, 2019).

The Madurese considered that there was no other way to quell the anger that had peaked than to kill the person who had brought down his dignity. This attitude can be seen from the expression "I got married by the headman, witnessed by the crowd, and by fulfilling religious regulations. So anyone who disturbs my wife is insulting my religion and trampling on my head at the same time." This means that the dignity and honor of the wife are the dignity and honor of the husband. Therefore, the wife is considered a *bantalla pate* (foundation of death), so disturbing the wife of another person is referred to as *agaja' nyaba*, which means risking or playing with life (Putri et al., 2021). Madurese people consider the function of the institution of marriage not only related to reproduction and socialization, but also functions as a manifestation of masculinity (Jufri, 2019).

The Madurese are known to be very fanatical towards the religion of Islam, as depicted in the expression "*abhental syahadat, asapo' iman, apajung Allah, asandhing Nabbi*" which means to be pillowed with the shahada, to be clothed in faith, to be under the umbrella of Allah, and to stand side by side with the Prophet Muhammad. This expression shows that Islam has become an integral part of the soul of the Madurese people. However, differences of opinion or khilafiyah in religion can trigger people's emotions and can lead to carok (Rokhyanto & Marxuki, 2015).

Carok can be concluded as an act of killing that involves five elements: (1) male perpetrators, (2) insults to honor, especially wives, (3) shame (*malo*), (4) social support, and (5) feelings of pride or satisfaction for the victor (Broto, 2011). The causes of carok are related to these factors. Other causes of carok are:

1. The arid nature and poverty have led to rampant carok violence in Madura (Broto, 2011). The institutionalization of carok violence is closely related to the mentality of ego (excessive worship of dignity) as an indirect result of ecological deterioration. The difficult social environment has conditioned Madurese men to feel that it is not enough just to take refuge in God. As a consequence, sharp weapons became an

attribute that Madurese men always carried, which was shown by habit "*nyekep*" (Storing sharp weapons) (Hotimah, 2020). Sharp weapons are considered to be *kancana sholawat* (companions of shalawat) for them.

2. Social approval through expressions. Madura expressions provide social approval and cultural justification for the carok tradition. These expressions include: *Mon tak' bangal acarok ja' ngako oreng Madureh* (If you don't dare to do carok, don't claim to be a Madurese); *oreng lake' mate acarok, oreng bine' mate arembi'* (Men die from carok, women die from childbirth); *ango'an poteya tolang etembang poteya mata* (It is better to be whitened (dead) than to be whitened (to bear shame))(Broto, 2011).
3. There is excessive protection of women in Madura, which is a reflection of the monopoly of male power. This is characterized by the pattern of village settlements, *meji* and *taneyan lanjang*, which provide extra protection for women. Internal solidarity between the residents of *Kampung Meji* is very strong, while solidarity in the wider social sphere tends to be low. Harassment of a member of the village community *meji* interpreted as degrading the dignity of all villagers(Broto, 2011).
4. The weak law enforcement in Madura has led to the habit of the winners of the carok to do "*nabang*" (obtain legal leniency through judicial engineering) by bribing police, judges, and prosecutors. This practice also played a role in institutionalizing carok violence in Madura. Carok has become a legal commodity for the judicial mafia to quote economic rents by trading in crime and violence. In this context, the police institution no longer plays the role of a protector of the community, but rather participates in or helps encourage the occurrence of carok. Therefore, efforts to eradicate carok become very difficult, like "upholding wet threads".(Broto, 2011)

Analysis of Islamic Criminal Law on Carok Acts in Madura

Based on the description above, it is very unfortunate if there is a carok incident among religious people like in Madura. In religious teachings, especially Islam, murder is a grave sin. However, it should be acknowledged that Islam does allow killing, but only under certain conditions and with very strict conditions. Islamic law provides a number of rules related to murder. In fact, these rules emphasize the prohibition against murder rather than allowing it. These prohibitions include: the prohibition of killing without a valid reason, the prohibition of killing non-Muslims who are not in hostility, and the prohibition of killing fellow Muslims (Syarof et al., 2020).

The prohibition of killing is explained in Surah Al-Isra' verse 33. In this verse, the mufassir explained that it is forbidden to kill human souls in general:

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ

“And do not kill a soul that Allah has forbidden (Killing him), except with a righteous (reason).” (QS. Al-Isra’ :33)

Islam is a religion that upholds life and peace. The act of taking a life is one of the great sins after the sin of shirk against Allah. The reason is that only God has the power to give life, so no one has the right to take away life except with His permission and within the limits set by Him. Every soul has honor and should not be disturbed, except for a just reason (Yenni, 2020).

Allah also forbids fighting the disbelievers as long as the disbelievers do not disturb them (disturbing the believers). In this case, it is affirmed in QS. Al-Baqarah verse 190:

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

“Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you and do not go beyond the limits. Indeed, Allah does not like those who go beyond the limits.” (*Surat Al-Baqarah Ayat 190*, n.d.)

This verse contains 2 (two) messages, namely:

1. Allah commanded Muslims to fight defensively against the polytheists, as a form of retribution for their actions against the believers (Cahyadi, 2019).
2. Defensive warfare is only allowed against those who are actively fighting the Muslims, so that Muslims should not attack those who are not involved in wars among themselves. Thus, the order to wage war for Muslims must be carried out in response to attacks carried out by polytheists (Cahyadi, 2019).

The prohibition of killing a believer is explained in Qs. An-Nisa verse 93:

وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاؤُهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَغَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعَنَهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا

“And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his reward will be hell. He remains in it. Allah was angry with him, cursed him, and prepared a great punishment for him.” (QS. An-Nisa :93)

In this verse, Allah gives five serious threats to those who deliberately kill a believer, namely: the torment of Hell, eternity or a long stay in it, the wrath of Allah, the curse of Allah (which means being kept away from His mercy), and a great punishment. These five threats show how severe the punishment is for the perpetrator, even though in fact, one threat is enough for a reasonable person to prevent an act of murder (Syarof et al., 2020).

Islam allows murder only under two conditions: in times of war and in law enforcement, with strict conditions. In war, murder is permissible if there is no other way to defend religion, state, or honor. However, war should be a last resort, and only combat troops should be killed, while children, women, and non-enemy troops are forbidden to be harmed (Ferdiansyah, 2016). In the context of law enforcement, the death penalty is allowed for perpetrators of serious crimes such as murder, rebellion, or threats to public order. This punishment can only be imposed by an authorized official with the approval of the judge. The punishment of qishash (revenge for life) can be canceled if the victim's family forgives the perpetrator (Saputra et al., 2024).

Carok is a violent practice that often occurs in Madura due to disputes over honor, property, or throne, with women's honor as the main trigger (Haris et al., 2024). Although carok is considered a way of maintaining self-esteem, it is contrary to the principles of Islamic law that prohibit violence and retaliation without due process. Islam recognizes the right to self-defense and honor, but with clear conditions. Self-defense is only allowed in situations of threat, and acts of violence should not be carried out indiscriminately, but in accordance with the provisions of the applicable law. In Islam, murder is permissible only in certain circumstances, such as Qishash (just retribution for murder), Hudud (punishment for serious offenses with clear evidence), and Rebellion that threatens public order (Ferdiansyah, 2016).

Murder without a valid reason and without going through the correct legal procedures, even to defend honor, is haram in Islam (Daniel Alfaruq, 2017). Allah says in Qur'an Al-Maidah: 32: "Whoever kills a human being, not because that person (kills) another person, or not because he causes harm on the earth, then it is as if he has killed all mankind". (QS. Al-Maidah :32)

Based on the above analysis, it can be concluded that carok is contrary to Islamic teachings because it does not follow legal procedures, endangers lives, and can trigger a continuous cycle of violence. Islam encourages conflict resolution through legal channels and through mediation, not by violence.

CONCLUSION

The people of Madura studied and taught the violence in the Carok incident directly or indirectly. The Carok tradition is considered the last way to solve problems quickly and

completely. Carok usually occurs in response to a disturbance of self-esteem, such as infidelity, defamation, or murder, which is considered an insult to honor and self-esteem. In Islamic law, carok is contrary to Islamic teachings because it does not follow legal procedures, endangers lives, and can trigger a continuous cycle of violence. Islam encourages conflict resolution through legal channels and through mediation, not by violence.

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