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Jean-Marc de Grave, J Lawrence Witzleben

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The Fighting Art of *Pencak Silat* and Its Music

From Southeast Asian Village to Global Movement

Edited by

Uwe U. Paetzold and Paul H. Mason



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The Standardisation of *Pencak Silat*: Javanisation, Nationalism, and Internationalisation

Jean-Marc de Grave

1 Introduction: Standardisation and Social Context

When talking of local Indonesian “martial arts,” based on their regional ritual conceptions and practices, a process of standardisation clearly emanates from the contemporary political domain, in its interaction with the Indonesian nation state.¹ In this political perspective, theoretically proposed as autonomous from religion, the ritual dimension of martial arts is secondary.

In the process of standardisation, techniques and transmission systems are formalised, notably through the use of written media. This chapter provides a reflection on the rationalising process in relation to traditional techniques of martial arts through the creation of formal federations. I will illustrate the broader background in which this process occurs and the groups and institutions specifically concerned. These descriptions will drive me to evaluate the impact of regional, national and international federations plus the embodied knowledge they put into practice at the larger scale of Indonesian principles of action and values.

In the analysis, I will partially disentangle the influence of martial arts from abroad and western bodily techniques, as well as local conceptions dealing with body practices. The role of the Taman Siswa educative movement networks during the nationalist period will also be mentioned. This information will help us to understand the context of the national and international *pencak silat* federations. These federations were created alongside the establishment of competitive disciplines. The diachronic perspective shows that the national sports politics has been tied to the prevalence of the Javanese in the Indonesian federation, which parallels the Javanese hegemony in Indonesian State affairs.

We shall see how the necessity of widening networks out of Java and how internationalisation of the *pencak silat* contributed just the same to revalue the role of different styles and their non-Javanese practitioners. This will give us an indication of how politicians tried to lean on traditional networks and

¹ In this chapter foreign words are given in *Bahasa Indonesia* (= BI) unless otherwise stated.

under which circumstances such networks could keep a relative autonomy facing the sports imposed on them. Finally, although this model did significantly spread in Indonesia, in light of the presented data I interpret its setting-up phase as a recoil of the Indonesians towards their sociocultural practices.

2.2.2 Formative Dimension and Normative Influence of Religions

There are very few statistics on the number of *pencak silat* practitioners in Indonesia. However, given the number of larger *pencak silat* schools, their members and an approximation of smaller groups, I estimate that Indonesia and Malaysia alone must have at least 70 to 80 million people practising or having practised local martial arts, of which the formative and educational dimension is particularly popular at a local level.

The value of this system of formation is that it induces an ethic and a social positioning, as well as the transmission of other much appreciated knowledge: anatomical conceptualisations, energy meridians, care by massage and action on the energy circuits, the care of fractures and cracks, herbal medicine, natural classifications (of the plant and animal worlds), cosmologies, classification of the human characters through myths and classical theatre, etc..

To understand the social weight of *pencak silat*, it is necessary to specify that it has played an important intermediary role between the more or less formalised imported religions and pre-existent ritual or religious conceptions. As quoted by Denys Lombard (1990 II: 115–119), the traditions of Hindu-Buddhist religious communities (*dharma*) is also currently found in the Qur'anic schools (*pesantren*), sharing the following characteristics: remoteness from the world, settlement land, a culture of free lands, royal tax exemption; a paternal link between the followers and the *kyai* chief; networks between linked communities by the old custom of the itinerant journey and the mystic quest which lead the students from one site to another to perfect their knowledge; the religious *kyai* leaders who return to the "former school" (*pesantren induk*) on certain occasions after having established a "sub-branch" (*cabang*). These traditions are very similar to those of the basic organisational systems of martial arts schools.

The relationship of *pencak silat* within Islam is not confined to *pesantren*. The national-wide *Tapak Suci* School was created within Muhammadiyah. This reformed Muslim and modernist social organisation was established by Kyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan in Yogyakarta in 1912. Although *Tapak Suci* is an integral part of Muhammadiyah, it is managed autonomously. As a result it allowed *pencak silat* to extend beyond the reaches of Islam to places such as the Toraja

Christian area in South Celebes (present when I was there in 1991) and in Germany where it is open to non Muslims.

If Islam maintained privileged links with *pencah silat*, other social groups have similarly integrated it into their activities. In this sense the Catholic networks of the archipelago allowed the organisation of *Pencak Silat Tunggal Hati Seminari* to reach a national scale (see de Grave 1996). This link with modern religions and the progressive religious trends was and still is current. Thus, expanding ideological practices linked to such religious universal values are very important in understanding the conceptualisations that facilitated sports integration and was said to be indifferent in its adaptation to any sociocultural context.

3 The Influence of Martial Arts from Abroad and Western Bodily Techniques

Alongside the role played by modern religious organisations and rational approaches, the recent penetration of foreign martial arts also seemed to have influenced training and organisational systems, as well as body conceptions. D. Lombard (1977:40) speaks of Chinese masters arriving at the very beginning of the 20th century in Indonesia: "...some of them sold remedies, the others demonstrated their conjuring abilities, but most escorted the convoys; after a first itinerant period, most of them settled down and opened their own school (*perguruan silat*)" (it is notably the case of Louw Djeng, born in 1854 in Fujian province, *ibidem*).

According to a Chinese master who taught at the Padjadjaran University of Bandung, Liem Yoe Kiong (1960), a new martial art philosophy developed in the 1920s where the obligation to maintain teaching secrets was no longer considered a necessity. Kiong also believed that Japanese territorial occupation was characterised by the fusion of the Sino-Indonesian techniques with Japanese *jū-jutsu* and sometimes boxing (although he did not specify where or how). With that being said, one clearly needs to put in perspective this testimony of a Sino-Indonesian speaking specifically about punctual influences of Chinese masters on local practices. The observations which Kiong made, of more and more opened systems, might have corresponded to a general process involving Chinese martial arts. There were apparently numerous inter-regional exchanges in the Malay world during the first half of the 20th century, but the secret seems all the same to stay valid during this period. The colonial authorities strongly limited the practice and perhaps even forbade it. Moreover, this

ban is quoted repetitively in an article by D. Lombard (1977) and by numerous informants I have met during my various fieldwork trips.

A type of martial art found in the Indo-Malayan archipelago where foreign influence dominates and does not wear the *pencak silat* label is *kuntao*. “A Chinese expression meaning ‘the way of the fist,’ *kuntao* is used in all Chinese combat systems practised in Indonesia and Malaysia. Traditionally kept secret, these systems were practised by Chinese communities scattered throughout Indonesia. Such systems include the Fukien boxing of the white heron, the *tai chi ch’uan*, the Lohan boxing and diverse practices originating from Shantung.” (Scott and Pappas 1985:52). The influence of Chinese martial arts on local techniques cannot be estimated. The Betawi *pencak silat*, practised by the inhabitants of Jakarta (Betawi people) ever since the colonial period, was locally said to have undergone Chinese martial arts influence. Besides, the *kelid* of the Cimande² *penca* – exercises consisting of colliding forearms with a partner to harden them while working reflexes and rhythm – are similar to exercises of Chinese origin. A comparative study of techniques could open potential areas of investigation as to possible Chinese influence.

Another more visible and recent influence on *pencak silat* is that of Japanese martial arts. A survey I led in 2003 in Yogyakarta within the Jiu Jitsu Indonesia Club revealed that *jū-jitsu* penetrated Indonesia from the 1930s onwards. During the 1950s a federation structure was developed in Jakarta known as the Jiu Jitsu dan Judo Association Djakarta (JAD). In December of the same year, Java and Sumatra’s big cities’ training groups formed a federation autonomous from that of the JAD: the Jiu Jitsu Club Indonesia (JCI), today affiliated with the World Jiu Jitsu Federation whose centre is in Liverpool, England. At the same time, an organisation of *jū-jitsu* developed under the authority of the Indonesian police, the Institut Jiu Jitsu Indonesia (IJJI).

As we can see, *jū-jitsu* also came into the archipelago before the period of independence, and was thus able to influence local practices either at an organisational level or on techniques. It is possible, for example, that grips and keys of *jū-jitsu* enriched *pencak silat* techniques. In any case exchanges took place. The club of *jū-jitsu* that I visited in Yogyakarta used some additional techniques of struck knocks borrowed from *pencak silat*. Nevertheless, *jū-jitsu* was introduced to Indonesia earlier than *karate* but *karate* garnered more popularity.

In previous work (2001a), I mentioned that the *pencak silat* school of *Merpati Putih* (Central Java) began to develop in the 1960s partly in reaction to the development of *karate* in Indonesia. According to the data which I collected

² Cimande is in the region of Bogor, close to Jakarta.

within the Indonesian Federation of Karate (the FORKI), the expansion of the martial art effectively took place during this period thanks to Indonesian students who stayed in Japan where they learned *karate*. The FORKI was created in March 1964 under the presidency of a lieutenant-colonel of the army who rather quickly gave up his function because he would have been compromised in what was then presented as the communist coup d'état of September 30th 1965.

According to the people in charge of FORKI Yogyakarta's section whom I spoke to during my time there, *karate* in Indonesia evolved following three main directions: schools and currents which remained attached to their former Japanese centre and preserved its original techniques; those who became partially independent and who developed additional local techniques; and those who broke all ties with Japan and evolved independently. Among the latter, Indonesian techniques of *tenaga dalam* (local breathing, meditative and concentration techniques) were frequently incorporated – as is the case for the popular school of *Kateda* (the name of which is an abbreviation of *karate-tenaga dalam*) – because the followers found that such techniques were lacking in *karate*.

So, the main contribution of *karate* came from the modern associative organisational system from the 1960s, allowing local forms to adapt and develop outside of their former regions. Among other contributions of *karate*, D. Scott and M. Pappas (*ibidem*) indicated the use of belt (*sabuk*) systems by certain schools of *pencak silat*. Preliminary stretching and warm-ups in the practice of the modern schools of *pencak silat* mark a secondary contribution, whereas other *pencak* or *silat* groups until today use their own traditional techniques to begin training.

Besides the *karate*, western gymnastics also represented an important contribution to the warming techniques. However, they penetrated into the archipelago before *karate*. In 1912, *karate* and western gymnastics were implemented into Dutch administered schools both for themselves and for Indonesian cadres serving the colonial government.

Gymnastic methods derived from Holland were alternately influenced by the German, Swedish, Danish and Austrian systems (see Ulmann 1997:277–308). During the Japanese occupation (1942–45) a Japanese method called *taiso*, influenced by the Swedish system, was practised in schools every morning. After the declaration of independence on 17 August 1945, and in bitter reminiscence of the Japanese, the Austrian system of the end of the Dutch period has been used again. In 1963, gymnastics officially entered the Sporting Schools of Higher Education (Sekolah Tinggi Olahraga or STO). From 1964, the Austrian method was adapted locally in the Bandung STO (West Java) and

gymnastics became a competitive discipline alongside other sports in national and international competitions (Swan-Po 1964:14–40). From fieldwork observations in *pencak silat* schools during the 1990s, the techniques of stretching and warm-ups established in the Indonesian higher education sporting schools were used. These techniques were adapted by local martial arts schools thanks to members who, having attended these schools, later taught sport in an academic or school context. With the incorporation of new conceptions of the body³ a new relationship to time and space arose locally. The techniques contribute – in parallel to the influence of foreign martial arts already evoked, as well as that of schooling and the use of the written medium – to the development of new processes of learning movement.

The technique, then highly developed, as it permitted the training of a more significant number of persons, is a sequence of movements reconstructed in a complete series.⁴ This kind of transmission initially facilitated the work of the student. However, according to what I observed and further discussed with Indonesian masters and instructors from the beginning of the 90s till recently, the faculties of sensory-motor empathy and reflexes function are reduced in the sense that through the new ways of teaching students cannot feel and seize complex sets of movements, and reproduce them. It would appear that in receiving a pre-assimilated product, a certain amount of psychomotor faculties remain dormant; for example your attention is much less sharpened. Consequently, the student learns to conceive the movement as a jerky succession and not as a linear succession. He perceives more a set of fragments than a totality, and thus he eventually reaches a certain totality through a difficult effort of reconstruction. I frequently observed, at the levels of athletes or very advanced practitioners, a sensation of incompleteness towards their training, despite having reached a state of expertise in the practice.

3 According to old informants I met in the 1990's like Pak Sukowinadi, the founder of *Perpi Harimurti*, or Ki Joyo, the founder of *Popsi Bayu Manunggal*, both of them deceased during the last decade, the start of any training traditionally consisted in simple movements involving the whole body. No part of the body was warmed up or stretched up separately from the others.

4 On various stages of this *modus operandi* development in gymnastics in Swiss, German, Swedish and French systems, cf. Ulmann *ibidem*: 259–320.

4 Nationalist Period and Creation of the *Ikatan Pencak Silat* Indonesia Organisation

First Steps and Javanisation of the Federation

In a very significant way, even before the transfer of sovereignty of the Dutch colonial government to the Republic of Indonesia in December 1949, the National Federation of *Pencak Silat* (*pentjak*, as we shall see, was the previous form for *pencak*) was founded in 1948, amidst the much-disrupted context of the fight for independence. Nevertheless, a first tentative step to unify different styles had already taken place during the Japanese occupation.

In 1943–44 representatives of all the provinces were gathered in Jakarta where they trained in a *pencak silat* consisting of twelve *jurus*,⁵ created by the *Renngo Tai*.⁶ But when they returned home and wanted to spread the practice of these twelve *pencak silat jurus*, they collided with the refusal of local schools.

According to the author of the abovementioned extract, T. Tamat (1986:17), on 18 May 1948, this event inspired Indonesians to create, rather quickly, a national organisation called the “Federation of *pentjak* for all Indonesia,” (*Ikatan Pentjak Seluruh Indonesia* or IPSI), managed by Wongsonegoro, the future Minister of Culture and Education (Maryono 1998:89).

The first years consisted mostly of conceptual and organisational activities. Agreement on the name of the martial art was the most urgent issue. The cadres of IPSI, many of them Javanese and Sundanese, thought that the local term *pencak* used in their respective regional languages was obvious. Besides, the works or books before 1950 used the *pencak* term and not *pencak silat*. In response to the protests of the representatives of Sumatra, the people in charge came to an agreement to combine the terms *pencak* and *silat*, as they are both terminological traditions most used in the archipelago. Thus, in 1949 IPSI (*Ikatan Pentjak Seluruh Indonesia*) became IPSSI (*Ikatan Pentjak Silat Seluruh Indonesia*). Besides, in the works and the newspapers of the beginning of the 1950s published in Java, if *pencak silat* was used, the term *pentjak* still dominated.

The first IPSSI congress took place on the 21st–23rd December 1950 in Yogyakarta. The name of the organisation was simplified to become IPSI (*Ikatan Pentjak Silat Indonesia*) (IPSI 1953:35). No longer was there any need to

5 A *jurus* is a series of movements specific to a given school or style.

6 An organisation of local troops trained to fight during the Japanese period

insist on unifying Indonesia, *seluruh* (from *Seluruh Indonesia*, “all Indonesia”) was dropped from the organisation’s name, testifying to the political stability at that time.

Among the 24 people present, 12 were from Central Java, four were from East Java, four were from West Java, one was from Sumatra and there were three whose origins were not specified (*ibidem*: 34). Yet, the domination of Central Java is understandable given that Yogyakarta is geographically situated at the heart of this region, that this city was the temporary capital of the republican government from 1945 until 1949 and that it represents the centre of the Javanese authority and hegemony in the archipelago.

Ten personalities were unable to attend, among whom president Sukarno, vice-president Hatta, Minister of Defence Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX of Yogyakarta and the Minister of Education and Culture, each sent a telegram of support to the members of IPSI Congress (*ibidem*: 58).

The statutes and the internal rules of the association were then established, it being desired to be a communication media between the various schools and aimed at creating a national form of *pencak silat*. It was decided, among other issues, to propose *pencak silat* as a compulsory subject in the primary and secondary schools and to ask the new government if the martial art be integrated into the cultural register or into the sport register. Rules for competition were displayed. Wongsonegoro, a strong Javanese personality, was re-elected as president (he had been *de facto* president since 1948) and Paku Alam VIII became vice-president (*ibidem*: 28–45).

Paku Alam VIII was the sovereign of the second royal palace of Yogyakarta, the Pakualaman. A member of his family, Ki Hadjar Dewantara, a progressive noble convinced nationalist, active in journalism and then in education, was at the origin of the Indonesian educational movement Taman Siswa. Ki Hadjar Dewantara had advocated, since the 1920s, an education adapted to Indonesians with mental subjects (such as languages, history, geography and mathematics), emotional subjects (such as dance and music) as well as physical subjects (including sport) which were all taught in a well-balanced way.

In the last category, the *pencak silat* occupied a central place. It became a compulsory subject for the boys in the schools of Taman Siswa (from 1934 onwards). The person in charge was Mohamed Djoemali, a technical person appointed by IPSI from its creation (*ibidem*: 18). Mohamed Djoemali has published several works on *pencak silat*, among which a method in three volumes (cf. Djoemali 1959/60/61) presents techniques marked by the Javanese *pencak* with high “legs postures” (*kuda-kuda*). From this first congress of 1950, *pencak silat* is considered as national sport (IPSI *ibidem*: 111–113).

In the same year, IPSI was connected to the sector of education of the Ministry of Education and Culture. However, in 1953, it shifted towards the culture sector, a move that seemed to reveal a sliding of educational conceptions at the state level. At the same time, demonstrations of *pencak silat* were organised during the “National Sports Week” (Pekan Olahraga Nasional or PON) in Medan.

The period that followed was marked by political troubles, amongst which were the regional armed movements demanding an Islamic State and the tensions provoked by the increasing power of the Indonesian communist party. During this period another federation has been established in August 1957 in Bandung, West Java, called the Indonesian Association of *Pencak Silat* (*Persatuan Pencak Silat Indonesia*) or PPSI. The birth of this federation was ostensibly connected with a dispute between the upholders of a traditionalist conception of the martial arts (globally the West Java masters), and the explicit and thus transformative conception of IPSI in terms of sport. Even if certain members of PPSI wanted to make a link with IPSI (cf. Darmana 1977:97), the PPSI always refused to collaborate with IPSI, which was dominated by the Javanese. This refusal would appear to echo the political, religious and even armed opposition existing between the Javanese and the Sundanese (opposition which recalls the Hindu-Buddhist period of Java).

In the 1960s, the PPSI spread very quickly: notably in West Java, but also in the Lampung area (Sumatra), in the eastern part of East Java where Sundanese styles were very well implanted (Maryono 2002) and also Bali (according to Pak Adil, chief manager of PPSI⁷).

To come back to the specific activities of the national federation, the third IPSI congress took place in 1959 in Jakarta.⁸ Increasingly influenced by western models of the body and conceptions regarding sport, in January 1961 IPSI shifted this time from culture to the physical education register. The 1962 (Southeast) Asian Games (SEA Games)⁹, which took place in Jakarta, started with a *pencak silat* demonstration. These two particular points marked a stage in the effort of formalisation of IPSI and were not without auguring the continuation of the political centralisation development of the Indonesian State.

7 Interview I held with him during a survey in 2003 in Bandung.

8 I have no information on the second IPSI congress held in Bandung in 1953.

9 According to IPSI (1989), the 1962 event in Jakarta were “Southeast Asian Games”. However, according to the website of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCASIA. 2015, Southeast Asian Games), or the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI. 2015, South East Asian Games), there were no “Southeast Asian Games” in Jakarta in 1962. Saleh (1991:30) names this event under “Asian Games”. The author assumes the above named event has to be labelled with “Asian Games” therefore.

In this first federative period, the progressive nationalists – including notably the nobility and the schooled elite of the colonial and nationalist periods – carried on a national project of modernisation in which *pencak silat* occupied a well asserted role. So, a first, initiatory step in the unification of the practice was taken. We will now see how large-scale sociopolitical disturbances – indirectly bound to the Cold war tensions – will significantly modify former orientations in the 1960s.

Militarisation, Centralism and Federative Formalisation

At the beginning of the 1960s Indonesia was marked by extreme confrontation occurring between the army and the communist party while at the same time the authority of President Sukarno weakened. It was in such a context that, in September 1965, the communists murdered some generals of the regular army. General Suharto then seized this opportunity to make an anti-communist purge on the national scope, allowing him to ensure his authority in a way that saw him in control for a period of thirty-three years.

This confrontation during the beginning of the 1960s, between the army and the communist party and the anti-communist purge post-September 1965 orchestrated by General Suharto (cf. Ricklefs 1988:274), provoked a forced stop of sociocultural and sport activities during the second half of the 1960s, and, in this particular case, IPSI's activities. Nevertheless, masters and advanced practitioners of martial arts were sought after on both sides, either by factions bound to the security of religious and communist groups or by the army.

Slowly at first, IPSI took back its activities headed by Bapak Tjokropranolo, who was military secretary of the president and former hero of the war of independence. In 1971, an extraordinary congress was organised in Jakarta (see Table 1.3). Yet, the congress was only followed by three regional centres: Jakarta, East Java and Yogyakarta (the three regions dominating IPSI since its beginning), "because of the transport malfunction which reigned at that time," according to an IPSI (1989) brochure. Competition rules were discussed and experimental projects in various regions were planned. The first referee training also took place in Jakarta the same year.

These decisions reflected the rising and considerable effort to impose a national model (with an international vocation) of sportive *pencak silat*. So, in the 1970s, with IPSI being the only official competition organiser, and given that it was compulsory for schools to participate in sporting events, a pressure – representing the principle of any sports federation – is maintained to ensure that various schools would continue to join.

The leaders of the suhartoist regime did not hesitate to impose a national model on the whole Indonesian territory, especially since the majority of the

servicemen – among them, Suharto¹⁰ – had practised *pencak silat* when they were young, and even continued to practise. Thus they understood very well the potential of the martial art. From their point of view the martial art had the potential for rebellion – not only in consideration of the martial techniques, but also the ethical or ideological dimension which it conveys – if used in the hands of factions opposed to the regime.

In 1973, *pencak silat* made its entrance among the official events of the eighth National Sports Week (PON) taking place in Jakarta (see Table 1.1); until then it was only present in exhibitions. In December of the same year the fifth IPSI congress takes place in Jakarta. Alongside Bapak Tjokropranolo's re-election as president, IPSI officially recognises ten "historic" schools that had helped the organisation and supported its development. IPSI also proposed to PPSI, the rival federation of West Java, to join as an historic organisation having strongly contributed to the development of the *pencak silat* in Indonesia. But conservative masters of PPSI declined the offer, PPSI preferring to organise their own activities in an autonomous way. As it did not receive subsidies from the central government, its development remains more limited than that of IPSI (Maryono 2002).

Looking closely at the origin of these ten schools or "historic" organisations (*Persaudaraan Setia Hati*, *Persaudaraan Setia Hati Teratai*, *Perpi Harimurti*, *Phasadja Mataram*, PPSI, *Perisai Diri*, *Tapak Suci*, *Perisai Putih*, KPS Nusantara, *Putra Betawi*), it appears clearly that all of them are Javanese with the exception of PPSI – mentioned all the same in the documentation of IPSI, although as a school and not as a federation – and *Putra Betawi*, which is Javanese.

According to the leading manager of PPSI, Pak Adil, whom I met in Bandung in 2003, IPSI developed in West Java from 1973 onwards, coinciding with the start of the period of Suharto's full yield coercive power. PPSI then concentrated its activities on the artistic *pencak silat* – *pencak silat seni*, practised with instrumental music accompaniment: percussions, gong and *terompet* as well as on the teaching of *pencak* in primary and secondary schools. According to Pak Adil, in 1994 Suharto forbade all federative associations of *pencak silat* other than IPSI. This verbal rule was of particular concern to PPSI, many of whose members were opponents of the regime. PPSI nevertheless pursued its activities and counted more than a hundred registered *pencak silat* schools in 2003.

10 Personal communication of Bapak Sukowinadi deceased (collected in 1999), founder of the school Perpi Harimurti and retired officer, who gave *pencak* courses to Suharto in Yogyakarta when he was young officer.

In 1974, again in West Java, the Persatuan Pendekar Persilatan Seni Budaya Banten Indonesia (PPPSBBI or “Indonesian *pendekar* association of the Banten *silat* culture”) was founded in Serang by Tubagus Chasan Sochib to promote the traditional schools of *pencak* originating from the region of Banten and according to the persons in charge of the organisation today, the PPPSBBBI recognise approximately 90 schools out of 500,000 members, whose networks extend to Bogor, east of Jakarta. Till his recent death, Tubagus Chasan Sochib was actually the chief of the *jewara* – local tough men practising *pencak* – and as such he was the main authority in the region of Banten, put in place by Suharto in the seventies, and telling local politicians what they should do. Tubagus Chasan Sochib also found a way to take advantage of the empty political space to increase his regional networks after the fall of Suharto and this was the way one of his daughters, Ratu Atut Chosiah, became governor of Banten in November 2006.

PPPSBBI association reflected the cultural and political sense of identity marked and claimed by Banten: it did not appear as a competitor of IPSI because its activities did not concern sporting events. Those activities focussed rather on urban and political security meetings.¹¹

Be that as it may, whether federations or rival associations, IPSI benefited from the political calm that the New Order of President Suharto established under forced military control, seizing the extremely centralized policy set up by the State chief to its advantage. It was in this context that the first national championship of *pencak silat* for adults, Kejuaraan Nasional Dewasa 1, took place in May 1975 in Semarang, Central Java (see Table 1.1).

Natasasmita Sukanda (1976:392, my translation) offers a detailed report of this event, in the following extract: “Altogether, Sundanese and Javanese techniques (East and Central including Yogyakarta), Sumatranese (Aceh, Batak, Minankabau and Riau), portrayed themselves as rather authentic (remark, however, that technically speaking a number of grips, knocks or other possibilities offered by *pencak silat* were not used, sometimes even forbidden for reasons which are completely unclear!), with a token of orthodoxy for Aceh; the results are the faithful reflection of it.”

This report was made by a Sundanese connoisseur. As such, it reflects opinions openly uttered by numerous representatives of the Sundanese and Sumatranese circles of *pencak* and *silat* since the beginning of the IPSI foundation. According to these opinions the formalisation, standardisation and

¹¹ To know who benefitted most from this protection and security, on the PPPSBBBI see G. Facal 2010b, and more especially 2012, where he presents a very detailed description of concerned networks and their orientation.

competition lauded by IPSI resulting in techniques that had nothing to do with their original forms and, consequently, eventually led to the disappearance of the latter.

In spite of these contests, IPSI pursued its purposes by centralising as much as possible its main activities in Jakarta. So, in 1976, the second national championship unfolded in Jakarta (see Table 1.1). In parallel, an IPSI delegation was sent to the Netherlands to lead a conference on *pencak silat* and to study the development of the martial art in this country where a very important Indonesian community lives.

In 1977, Bapak Tjokropranolo became governor of Jakarta and appointed Bapak Eddy Djajang Djayaatmadja to replace him as chair of IPSI. A short time later, Bapak Eddy Djajang Djayaatmadja was named governor of Central Celebes, leaving Bapak Eddie M. Nalapraya, former deputy governor of Jakarta, to replace him (see Table 1.2). His dedication to the development of the martial art at national and international levels was marked by his 26 years of service.

The same year, 20 regions participated in the National Sports Week (PON IX) *pencak silat* competition (Jakarta). In June 1978, the first junior national championship (Kejurnas Remaja I) also took place in Jakarta (see Table 1.1) and in September 1979 a *pencak silat* exhibition was made during the tenth Southeast Asian Games (Jakarta). The event was broadly mediatised and played a key role in the fast and continuous international development of the martial art (see below).

In 1981, the sixth IPSI congress was held in Jakarta where Eddie M. Nalapraya was re-elected president (see Table 1.2). In September, a meeting of referees and jury training was organised to prepare the PON X in Jakarta and in March 1984, the fourth national championship of *pencak silat* took place in Surabaya, East Java (see Table 1.1). At the same time IPSI's activities took advantage of police security and economic stability established by the political centralism in which it participated and upon which they set a partial model to spread almost everywhere throughout the archipelago. In this process, the structured big schools supplied a significant number of active members to the federation.

Paroxysm, Fall and Return of the Pro-Suharto

In 1986, Eddie M. Nalapraya was once more re-elected president during the seventh IPSI congress, and again at the eighth congress, which took place in February 1990 at Senayan, Jakarta (see Table 1.2). In that year a credit of 1,07 billion *rupiah* was granted to IPSI which notably began to publish the magazine *pencak silat*. An additional 7 billion *rupiah* credit is tuned to the organisation for the construction of the National Centre of *Pencak Silat*

TABLE 1.1 *Comprehensive list of IPSI and Persilat sports events*

Year	Event and place	Participation
1953	Exhibition at the "National Sports Week" (PON)	Nil
1962	Exhibition at the (Southeast) Asian Games, Jakarta	Nil
1973	Participation at the 8th National Sports Week, Jakarta	15 regions, 128 athletes (106 men, 22 women)
1975	1st national championship, Kejurmas Kejurmas, Semarang (Central Java)	18 regions, 141 athletes (106 men, 35 women)
1976	2nd national championship, Jakarta	22 regions, 203 athletes (140 men, 63 women)
1977	9th National Sports Week, Jakarta	20 regions represented
1978	1st junior national championship, Jakarta	13 regions represented
1979	Exhibition at the 10th SEA Games, Jakarta	Nil
1984	4th national championship, Surabaya	27 regions for 329 athletes
1987	Participation in the 14th SEA Games, Jakarta	Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei
1989	15th SEA Games, Kuala Lumpur	Nil

(Padepokan Nasional Pencak Silat Indonesia; see Figure 1.1). The six hectares of land located near the Taman Mini Indonesia Indah of Jakarta were offered by Suharto's wife, Siti Artinah Suharto, or commonly known as Ibu Tien. The person in charge of construction was Prabowo Subianto, the son-in-law of Suharto and upper officer of the elite commando squad Kopassus of the Land Forces (that he managed from 1995 until 1998). He was also protector of a *pencak silat* school.

The total cost of the Padepokan Pencak Silat Indonesia centre reached 31 billion *rupiah* (at that time, an American dollar was worth approximately 1150 *rupiah*). The remaining 24 billion were donated by business companies belonging to or allied with the Suharto family (IPSI 1997).

The Padepokan was inaugurated on the 20th April 1997. For the persons involved, the project may appear a sign of the peak of the New Order: high average economic growth rate; a very important influx of foreign capital investments; self-sufficiency regarding rice ... Yet, rather than being a peak, it turned out to more of a swansong in the fortunes of the suhartoist regime. In 1997 the Southeast Asia economic crisis began, striking Indonesia very sharply. And in May 1998 Suharto resigned. Suharto was forced to resign as a result of popular



FIGURE 1.1 *The National Centre of pencak silat (Padepokan Nasional Pencak Silat Indonesia) located near the Taman Mini Indonesia Indah in Jakarta. It was inaugurated on the 20th April 1997.*

dissatisfaction. He was questioned by some of his former allies and discredited by a media information policy and a financing of NGOs led by the United States of America, leaving B.J. Habibie, then vice-president, to succeed him as temporary president.

Over the years succeeding the fall of Suharto divergent and even contradictory trends have developed in Indonesia. These trends included the establishment of a democratic regime, regional demands for independence, the development of uncontrolled economic liberalism, an acceleration in the destruction of the ecosystem, and the development of radical Islam. It was within this very agitated sociopolitical background that, by a curious combination of circumstances, Prabowo Subianto became head of IPSI in 2003 (see Table 1.2). To better understand his entry, which amazed the world of Indonesian *pencak silat*, it is necessary to return to May 1998.

Following the confrontations, sometimes murderous, between the people/students of Jakarta and the army/pro-suhartoist agitators, Prabowo was judged at a court martial. Various media and personalities had previously questioned him for having tried to organise a coup d'état thanks to the chaotic situation reigning in the capital, and also to have organised a mass rape of Sino-Indonesian young girls by leaning on the *pencak silat* school of which he was the protector (cf. de Grave 2001a: 212–213). At the end of the military trial, he

TABLE 1.2 *Comprehensive list of IPSI presidents and congresses*

Years	President	Congress
1948–1971	Wongsonegoro	Nil
1950		1st congress in Yogyakarta (Organisation rules, Competition rules draft, Plan for development in school context)
1953		2nd congress in Bandung
1959		3rd congress in Jakarta
1971–1977	Tjokropranolo	Nil
1971		4th congress in Jakarta (Improvement of the competition rules, Referees' formative workshops)
1973		5th congress in Jakarta (Collaboration reinforcement with school members)
1977	Eddy D. Djayaatmadja	Nil
1977–2003	Eddie M. Nalapraya	Nil
1981		6th congress in Jakarta
1986		7th congress in Jakarta
1990		8th congress in Jakarta (Decision to build the National Centre of <i>Pencak Silat</i>)
2003–...	Prabowo Subianto	Nil

was accused of having exceeded orders by arresting and mistreating student activists opposing Suharto's regime and was dismissed from his post. Prabowo further exiled himself voluntarily for two years: in Jordan, Germany and Thailand. Upon his return, Prabowo had the unfortunate ambition to appear at the presidential elections. Taking advantage of a disagreement between senior officials of IPSI, he then succeeded in thwarting Eddie M. Nalapraya's projects of succession to be elected president of IPSI, although he was later re-elected in August 2007 (see Table 1.2). According to the people in charge of IPSI (with whom I spoke with during my time at Yogyakarta and Jakarta in 2005 and 2006), and also according to the people in charge of the French federation, this new president was apparently rather passive on a social and human relationship level. Nobody had ever seen him except during big meetings of formal character as well as in sports policy dynamics.

Be that as it may, the process of making *pencak silat* into a sport – what we might call the sportisation process – was launched well. Even if, since Prabowo's presidency, the Indonesian sports activity seemed less dynamic, development at the international level took on a more and more marked scale. This

development is, of course, the purpose of IPSI's persons in charge who see in *pencak silat*, an interesting Indonesian and Malay cultural world element to export abroad, contributing to cultural and sports tourism. The counterparty of its success is that it became increasingly harder to control the entirety of its development, passing in particular through the organisation of competition disciplines.

5 Internationalisation of *Pencak Silat*

Persekutuan Pencak Silat Antara Bangsa or The International Alliance of Pencak Silat

The influence of Eddie M. Nalapraya on the federative development of *pencak silat* was rapidly felt at the international level. It led in March 1980 to a meeting of the delegates of Singapore (see Table 1.2), Malaysia and Indonesia. The meeting was held in Jakarta, and saw the founding of the international federation of *pencak silat*: *Persekutuan pencak silat antara bangsa*, or Persilat. Eddie M. Nalapraya himself was elected as the president, testifying to the Indonesian influence; delegations counted moreover nine Indonesians for two Malaysians and two Singaporeans. To mark the pact which they had just sealed, the following month the three State federations organised numerous activities in Singapore in relation to *pencak silat*.¹²

In August 1982 Eddie M. Nalapraya's active policy led to the organisation of the first international championship of *pencak silat* (see Table 1.3). On this occasion the delegations of seven countries met in Jakarta: those of Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Netherlands, West Germany, the USA and Australia. The event was renewed in November 1984 in Jakarta (see Table 1.3) where ten countries were then represented: seven aforesaid less Australia, with the addition of Austria, France, Spain and Yugoslavia.

Persilat met in 1985 in Kuala Lumpur (see Table 1.3) and on this occasion, the rules of the international competition were improved and Indonesian proposals for the formalisation of technique were approved.

12 The case of the federations of Malaysia and Singapore appeared differently from that of IPSI. For example, Pesaka (*Persekutuan Silat Kebangsaan*) was established in 1983 in Malaysia by the four main schools of the country. It did not exist within State structure, as in Indonesia, leading directly to the sports development of the martial art. Concerning Singapore, it is mainly the Malayo-Indonesian community which manages the activities of *pencak silat* as well as the federation, the Persisi (*Persekutuan Silat Singapore*), established in 1976; the State grants subsidies only according to the results in international competitions.

The third international championship took place in August 1986 in Vienna, Austria (see Table 1.3). In addition to the previous participating countries new countries took part, these being Switzerland, United Kingdom, Suriname,¹³ and Turkey. Indonesia retained its championship of the world title.

In September 1987, for the first time, *pencak silat* became an official discipline of the South-East Asian Games (the fourteenth) with five countries participating: Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Brunei. Thailand and Brunei became members of Persilat.¹⁴

In 1988, the fourth international championship was organised in Singapore. At the same time, the second general meeting of Persilat was held (see Table 1.3). Eddie M. Nalapraya was re-elected president of the federation, a position which he occupied till 2010,¹⁵ shedding light, yet again, on the dominant and persistent influence of Indonesians within Persilat: they control the international authorities, promulgate rules and changes of rules, and impose their president.

In 1989, *pencak silat* appeared among the official disciplines of the fifteenth SEA Games in Kuala Lumpur. Since that time, world championships have taken place every two or three years in the following countries: 1990, The Hague, the Netherlands; 1992, Jakarta, Indonesia; 1994, Hat Yai, Thailand; 1997, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; 2000, Jakarta, Indonesia; 2002, Penang, Malaysia; 2004, Singapore; 2007, Pahang, Malaysia; 2010, Jakarta, Indonesia (see Table 1.3).

Besides the world championship and the South-East Asian Games, other international meetings of *pencak silat* have been the biennale sports week of the ASEAN students (Association of South-East Asian Nations), the annual Asia-Pacific championships, the annual European championships, as well as various European opens. With regard to Europe, the weight of its federation in Persilat is notably due to the fact that the international federation counts almost as many European countries as Asian countries today and more than Southeast Asia itself.¹⁶

13 In Suriname, former Dutch Guyana, a Javanese minority has been present since the colonial period.

14 An important Malay community lives in the South of Thailand. From here, the martial art subsequently spread over the country. On the *Silat* cultures of Southern Thailand see the chapter by Binson in the present book.

15 He was replaced by Prabowo Subianto for the mandatory period 2010–2014 (see the following link consulted on 30/9/12: <<http://www.scribd.com/doc/48892882/PERSILAT-Minutes-of-Founders-Meeting-January-21-2011>>).

16 The member countries of Persilat by continent include: 15 far eastern countries among which 11 are Southeast Asian ones (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor

TABLE 1.3 *Comprehensive list of world championship and Persilat congress*

Year	Championship	Winner	Congress
1980	Nil	Nil	Persilat founded in Jakarta
1982	Jakarta	Indonesia	Nil
1984	Jakarta	Indonesia	Nil
1985	Nil	Nil	Congress in Kuala Lumpur
1986	Vienna (Austria)	Indonesia	Nil
1987	Nil	Nil	Meeting (in Jakarta ?)
1988	Singapore	Indonesia	Congress in Singapore
1990	The Hague (Netherlands)	Indonesia	Nil
1992	Jakarta	Indonesia	Nil
1994	Hat Yai (Thailand)	Indonesia	Nil
1997	Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia)	Indonesia	Nil
2000	Jakarta	Indonesia	Nil
2002	Penang (Malaysia)	Vietnam	Nil
2004	Singapore	Vietnam	Nil
2007	Pahang (Malaysia)	Vietnam (?)	Nil
2010	Jakarta	?	Nil

The increasing place of the European federation within Persilat seemed to influence the policy of Persilat supporting the development of the martial art in Europe while, at the same time, establishing rules favouring the preservation of the martial art's Malay characteristics. The most pivotal development at the international sports level of *pencak silat* was an exhibition discipline at the Asiatic Games held in South Korea in 2002, and later on when it almost became an official discipline of these same games in 2006 in Qatar. This international recognition has been possible thanks to the establishment of competition rules.

Leste, Vietnam), the 14 countries included in the European Federation (Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy, Kazakhstan, Netherland, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, Uzbekistan), three countries of the Middle East (Iran, Palestine, Yemen), two African countries (Morocco, South Africa), one Oceanian country (Australia), one South American region (Surinam) and two North American countries (Canada, United States of America). Source: IPSI official website <<http://www.persilat.org/members.htm>>, consulted on the 28 November 2013.

Progressive Elaboration of the Competition

With regard to the sociocultural density of *pencak silat*, its religious and political dimensions, the sports register implied a strong transformation of the practices visible in the development of the disciplines and the regulations of competition. This development was not made without experimentations and questionings. At first, the dominating trend appears to be a stiff will to impose strict rules on fight competitions.

So, on the occasion of the 1971 congress, the main lines of the first draft of regulations were made as follows: the weight categories; determining the square area of the fighting space (8 metres by 8 metres); developing the counting of points (in decreasing order) i) in the hope of immobilising the opponent, ii) making him/her fall, iii) hurling him/her with a kick, iv) a punch, v) to make a block; the avoidance of striking the face and the neck; vi) agreeing on five three-minute rounds spaced out with a one minute break between them (Darmana 1977:103–106).

In the competition rules worked out at the fifth IPSI congress in 1973, the main changes were that it was completely forbidden to make a blow to the head. The rounds were reduced to two minutes in duration and the number of rounds reduced to three. The use of a plastron was made compulsory.¹⁷ The reason for these alterations is that although both the limitations of the knocks prohibited to the head and the use of the plastron played and continued to play an unfavourable role in the media development of the martial art, the opinion of Eddie M. Nalapraya was that although conscious of its consequences, he refused to endanger the health of the *pesilat*, simply to mediatise their sport.¹⁸

In 1976, an IPSI congress was specially organised to perfect the regulations of the competitions. Among other results, the fight area was made circular being seven metres in diameter (IPSI 1989).

Afterwards, additional developments were agreed in accordance with acquired experience, notably with the aim of trying to protect as much as possible the “proper” characteristics of *pencak silat*. For example, the aesthetic steps movement – which represent a central aspect of the martial art’s specificity – became compulsory. The 1985 rules established a rather exhaustive, albeit

17 O’ong Maryono (1998:138–139) declared that the obligation to use a plastron and a protection shell appears in the rules worked out by the fourth general assembly of IPSI, which would thus have fallen in 1971 (no source is quoted). But he also specified that the generalised application of this regulation took several years.

18 Interview I made with him in 1998 in Yogyakarta.

complicated, classification of the steps form (Persilat 1985: appendix 4). This problem was later restored with the constitution of the ten official footsteps.

Another issue that was difficult to regulate was the one of the fighters' verbal shouts during the fight confrontation. At first nothing had been planned on this subject. Then it seemed that certain participants shouted in a way that was similar to *karate* or *kung-fu*. Considering that *pencak silat* does not use shouts, regulations were put in place finally permitting only blowing through the mouth without the uttering of sounds.¹⁹ Today sport fight regulations have reached a rather stable form. This stability reflected on one hand the success of the Indonesian persons in charge in their efforts of standardisation; efforts which allow them to benefit from the international sports community and the approval of the foreign federations. On the other hand, and in a sometimes contradictory way, these efforts aimed at protecting as far as possible specific characteristics. Without such characteristics, the practice could not stand out as being attractive to amateurs. It would be difficult to establish more formal sports criteria of recognition with regard to martial arts such as *kung fu*, *karate* or *tae kwon do*. A state of balance seems to be reached through which one form of *pencak silat* martial art develops in a continuous way on an international level.

But it is necessary to note that this result, as with all activities that IPSI undertakes, strongly benefited from the support of schools, as well as from the Malayo-Indonesian regional styles, whose contribution was fundamental for the administrative structure – as IPSI members are basically members of local schools – and for technical research – as these members are elaborating techniques to be proposed as federative ones. So from the 1960s to the 1970s, certain groups played an important intermediary role between IPSI and recalcitrant masters. For example, the KPS Nusantara²⁰ group which knew how to diplomatically draw its inspiration from various regional styles working out a regulation of the sport and competitive *pencak silat* that inspired IPSI. In 1973 this resulted in *pencak silat's* entrance among the official disciplines of the National Sports Week (PON) and KPS Nusantara School among the ten "historical" organisations of *pencak silat* in Indonesia.²¹

19 Interview I made in 1999 in Yogyakarta with Mas Poerwono, senior official of the school *Merpati Putih* and person in charge at IPSI.

20 KPS is always written in this abbreviated form. It signifies "*Keluarga Pencak Silat*," *Nusantara* refers to "the Archipelago."

21 On KPS Nusantara, cf. Maryono: www.kpsnusantara.com/history/indonesia.htm (last consultation in October 2012).

Moreover, big schools, besides the fact that they develop in the form of associations, as mentioned above, have internal activities and functioning which, for the greater part, look like those of IPSI. Every big school organises, for example, an interregional internal competition by using regulations often just a little bit different from that of IPSI and additional sub-disciplines of competition.

Other state sports organisations also made their contribution to the process of formalisation. So, in 1992, an official section of *pencak silat* was established within the Sports Teachers' Training College of Yogyakarta (Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Olahraga Yogyakarta). This institution, in cooperation with IPSI, established formalised a series of stylistic movement (*jurus*) and finalised a national *pencak silat* trainer diploma. This diploma was accessible to the students who became physical education teachers with a *pencak silat* speciality, or to trainers of schools who pass via the IPSI network. It is necessary to have this qualification to become an IPSI or IKIP trainer, to teach in some school contexts, whether locally or abroad.²²

These steady efforts of formalisation for the sports were met with continuous criticisms on behalf of those who did not accept such a "denaturation of their art." Besides the process of standardisation and sportisation, it seemed that the competition fight resulted, rather quickly, in changes which were not specific to *pencak silat*. The very strong attention involved in marking points as the measure of success led to a technical simplification centred on this criterion. The indirect consequence that provoked a number of negative comments was that although if someone were a beginner in *pencak silat* but very advanced in another, similar competitive sport they could, at the end of a relatively brief training session, participate in and sometimes even come to receive medals.

Besides all the effort put in to enhance the specificity of *pencak silat*, it then appeared that the "aesthetic" (*seni*) aspect – in particular the aesthetic element in the steps of the competitor during contests – must also be incorporated into the competition. The request stemmed internally from the Malay world, in particular from the regions, where the martial art takes on an important ritual dimension (West Java, Sumatra, Malaysia), but is also brought from the outside. By way of explanation a significant number of western followers are above all interested in the aesthetic dimension of *pencak silat*, being one of the main presiding criteria in their preference for it over other martial arts.

The competition was initially centred on the execution of free movements; at a given time, one or some *pesilat* executed sequences of movements of their

22 Personal survey made with IKIP Yogyakarta in 1995.

choice. However, at the beginning of the 1990s, a process of standardisation was introduced.

A combination of linked movements, a *jurus*, supposed to contain characteristic elements of the main regional styles of the Malay world, was gradually worked out within IPSI, resulting in 1996 in a *jurus* with bare hands, called *wiraloka* (“the warrior of the world”) that must be executed in competition by three or five *pesilat*. Later *wiraloka* was required to be taught in all schools depending on Persilat. It was compulsory to learn *wiraloka* in the big Indonesian schools – as, too, in Japan – before it came to be practised in particular schools in Europe where, although its practise was not compulsory, it was largely adopted, especially by those wanting to practise the artistic *seni* competition.

This *jurus*, based on a sample of regional diversity, allowed Persilat to increase the centralisation of the practice. The Malay *jurus* was a response to a request for “authenticity” of the martial art from the outside. However, the Malay *jurus* was also a way of asserting Malay culture and presence (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei) in an activity that has become increasingly international.

Another *jurus* was one with bare hands and weapons called *wiragana* (“the huge warrior”). The *wiragana* is worked out and executed by one *pesilat*. A final *jurus*, a simulated fight freely choreography by two performers called the *jurus wirasanggha* (“the warrior of the community”) partially with bare hands and partially with weapons, was also established for the *seni* competition programme. These three *seni* sub-disciplines were adopted in international competition from 1996 onwards, with musical arrangement for *wiragana* and *wirasanggha* (IPSI 1996).

I was, however, able to observe the dissatisfaction of certain Malaysian partners when I conducted fieldwork in Malaysia during 2003. Given that Malaysians dominated the international scene for the free *seni* category, the use of imposed *jurus* initially appeared to them as a Javano-centred Indonesian policy meant to push aside its Malaysian competitors. Nevertheless, the Indonesians were convinced that international development had to pass this process of formalisation. These three sub-disciplines of the *seni* have consequently been preserved until today, although now there is no more musical arrangement.²³

On the other hand, Malaysians and Sumatranese lobbied at the beginning of 2000 to say that the Sanskrit terminology made reference to Java’s cultural contexts (Javanese, Sundanese and Madurese) and to Bali’s, and that this was

23 See the chapter by Paetzold in the present book on the development and finally the discontinuation of music practice within the *pencak silat seni* competitions.

to be replaced by a more Malay terminology. As a result, *wiragana* became *tunggal* (“one”), *wirasanggha* became *ganda* (“for two”) and *wiraloka* became *regu* (“in team”). The fight category called *wiralaga* in 1996 (“the warrior in the fight”) was renamed *tanding* (“balanced [fight]”) to distinguish it from the *seni*.²⁴

So, the imbalance of power that existed between Java and other regions of the Malay world would in the end be reduced, at least partially, thanks to the development of the *seni* competition. The elaboration of this competition resulted in a wider consensus conferring more strength and coherence to Indonesian presence within the international federation.

6 Observations: Javanisation and Impact of the Formalisation

Social Homogeneity of Pencak Silat and the Impact of the Nationalist Aims

Regarding martial arts, the Indonesian government could have potentially put forth different aspects of *pencak silat* other than sports – those of education, culture or religion, for instance. These remain nevertheless socially very present.

The relationship to education remains marked because of the sheer scale of the introduction of the martial art to schools and universities. Yet the framework of this new system implies a very normative adaptation of the martial arts, often similar to the sports version, in which the influence of federations is largely felt.

The link to culture also remains omnipresent, principally outside governmental networks, in local ritual and sociocultural activities, and through the cultural organisations of the regional forms of *pencak silat* such as those of West Java already mentioned in the text.²⁵ This link is also present in modern urban contexts where numerous institutions and companies appeal to masters or to *pencak silat* schools to give courses to their employees.

The link to religion also remains strong because it forms a privileged frame to the existence of martial arts; as we saw at the beginning of the article, the formal and universalistic character of certain religious currents influenced the standardising process of martial arts.

²⁴ The information dating from 1996 is from the booklet IPS1 (1996).

²⁵ On different regional studies of local martial arts, see this volume; also see Bastide (2010), de Grave (2010), Facal (2010b, 2012), Farrer (2009, 2010), Wilson (2010).

The desire for sports formalisation evolved with Indonesia becoming a nation state, passing through national unification and the recognition of its sovereignty by other nations. This process implied assimilating outside elements related to body techniques (warming, stretching, the sequenced set of movements) and adapting vernacular elements (cosmological, ritual and philosophical conceptions, transmission systems, body conceptions and techniques). Such a development did not happen without inferring a marked distance from traditional social links or even a strong will to break these links.

From the beginning of this process, the determination of the local elements raised a problem. On this subject, the formation of the Indonesian federation revealed a marked javanocentrism due to several convergent facts including the longstanding Javanese political hegemony in the archipelago and the demographic weight of the Javanese people. Dominating on the island of Java, the Javanese during the nationalist period (1910s - 1950s) benefited from the teachings they experienced in the Dutch schools (many of them being concentrated in Java) and the way that they were exposed to the values and conceptions spread in these schools, including those regarding sports – values that were often elitist and reserved for the natives who were working for the Dutch people. Another influence came from the sociocultural importance and the fame of Yogyakarta which, for various reasons, is the cultural and spiritual capital of the Javanese. In addition Yogyakarta is also the university capital of Indonesia where students come from all regions of the archipelago. The Javanese, particularly from Central Java, occupy many positions as superior and middle cadres in the capital city of Jakarta. Therefore, observations in Indonesia were about Javanese cultural, political and economic hegemony and can also be found at the level of *pencak silat* and its formalisation process.

Nevertheless, beyond the javanisation of *pencak silat*, it is important to mention the speed at which the first nationalists, who were not exclusively Javanese,²⁶ understood the regional martial arts of the archipelago. The group of Indonesian islands formed a homogeneous sociocultural background against which nationalists leaders could cultivate a rising national feeling. From this certainty came the idea to create a federation, more so than the will to impose a unified form of the martial art. Undeniably though, even if the will of standardisation increased during the suharthoist period (1965–1998), it concerned above all fight competitions, whereas the first national *jurus* being the *wiraloka jurus*, started to gain a certain consensual recognition from 1996

26 An example would be the case of the first vice-president, Mohammad Hatta, who was a native of the Minangkabau region, from where he brought the notion of democracy by deliberation and mutual consensus.

onwards, that is 52 years after the first aborted attempt of this kind under the Japanese occupation (on this point, see de Grave 2009), and 48 years after the creation of the national federation.

This length of time indeed indicated that if a certain pressure were exercised, more or less constantly according to the concerned period, a rough or definite imposition of immediate rules did not occur. The significant acceleration of *jurus* codification must be limited to the influence of foreign federations. As we saw in the text, the internal expansion of *jurus*, passed by the assertion of the Malay characteristics of the art, was reiterated in the development of various international *jurus*.

In every case, since the beginning of the federation, events have exceeded the simple initial projects of IPSI founders. Such a phenomenon extended to Indonesian society from at least the time of its independence. For example, Sukarno, the first president of Indonesia, dreamt about Indonesia being open to modernity but in a way in which mutual aid would remain, with a marked cultural, political and economical autonomy. These references and values had a tendency to decay in the course of the terms of various presidents. Another example was in the founders of the Indonesian education system (in a way that was similar to their politically non-aligned Indian neighbours in their own country). They dreamt about an educational system adapted to the Indonesians: one that was non-elitist, respecting the balance of the human faculties and the personality of each, and centred on the relational quality. Yet unexpected contingencies strongly later modified these perspectives at the national level (on this point, cf. de Grave 2001b, 2004, 2005).

Pencak silat did more than reflect the current situation of generalised trends in the Indonesian society; it preceded these and very often announced them. The following examples illustrate this point. First, the creation of the *pencak silat* federation announced the effective unification of the country and the international recognition of the Indonesian nation state. Secondly, the marked absenteeism and the lack of concentration of the students in the March-April 1998 training sessions announced the demonstrations that they were going to organise bringing down the Suharto regime the following May (cf. de Grave 2001a: 234). Thirdly, the increase of regional autonomy at the administrative level in Indonesia following the fall of Suharto had already been set up in certain large schools of *pencak silat* because the regional branches demanded a greater margin of operation (cf. de Grave *ibidem*: 302–303).

This particular point must be linked with the social anchoring of *pencak silat*. As evoked a little earlier, the first nationalists were certainly clearly conscious of the social strength represented by the masters of the martial arts schools (and also their students). Listened to and respected, they also knew

how to listen and to anticipate. This explains why politicians tried to lean on them and were careful not to hasten them too much. Thus, this traditional network maintained a notable autonomy and held consequent weight in large-scale social orientations.²⁷ Thanks to their teaching, for instance, on cosmologies, therapeutic knowledge and ethics, masters play an important social role in which sports has little significance, even absolutely none in certain cases. The process of sportisation implied a mitigation of this role: masters may become simple trainers, specialists of body motion and fight tactics, or consultants in endangered regional cultural body practice, yet it is impossible to reduce them to such roles in the current configuration.

Pencak Silat's Formalisation, Politics, Society, Education, Security, Health

To return to the initial projects of the *pencak silat's* federation, the paradox which is expressed from the beginning in Indonesia's internal debates, lies in the fact that developing the martial art consisted, on the one hand, to assert a sociocultural existence and to protect the national heritage, and on the other, to transform it through an adaptation to compulsory criteria imposed from the outside. As we saw, a large questioning was established, wherein Indonesians no longer recognised their own cultural referents in the elaborated new forms.

The efforts supplied in the competitive regulations constitution relay well this constant pull between submitting itself to a universalistic oriented system of values (in any event with international character) and the deep desire to safeguard the fundamental characteristics of the martial art. In fact, the sportisation of *pencak silat* represents a process parallel to other social processes, allowing certain groups (particularly certain Javanese and other nationalists educated in the Western way) and certain domains of social activity (political and sports) to stand out to the detriment of others (ritual and religious domains), but at the same time participates to a relative overall social cohesion.

This process is not without calling back, even if compared relatively, with what the Germano-Britanic sociologist Norbert Elias (1986) describes concerning sports development in England. It leans on the increase of a regulation where the development of rules had the same foundation as the 17th century parliamentary system. In both cases, it was a question for the various parties, in the view of Elias, of reaching a level of conventional agreement ensuring the non-recourse to physical violence. A question I wish to pose at this stage of the

27 For convincing evidence, see in particular the case of the *Pendekar Banten Association*, Facal (2010b).

analysis is precisely linked to such a process that pushes away physical violence outside of endogenous social relationships: in which way does it imply a withdrawal towards the social implication of the participants?

Indeed, among the numerous sidetracks which intervened in this process, it is advisable to note the central recoil of what we call “culture,” to indicate something that would be in large part outside social subjects. This recoil is actually what happened in the threat posed to regional variants of the martial art at the level of its relationship with local ceremonial activities and in specific local social relationships.²⁸ The threat was established concretely by the introduction of new systems of practice and transmission. Such an introduction destabilised the system in place more so than a direct ban on practices and values would do for not corresponding to the ambient ideology of a “developed nation” (*negara maju*).

So, if *pencak silat* evolved from dominating the sociocultural and religious regional senses of identity to become a full sport, can one speak of an active culture on this subject anymore in Indonesia?²⁹ Do processes of formalisation lead necessarily to the end of local cultures? How can we consider a local element extremely standardised as cultural, or what conception of the culture does it imply? What roles can the preservation of oral tradition activities play – such as that of martial arts – in this process? And ultimately, what type of social relationships organises the life of women and men in such a context?

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²⁸ The Minangkabau matriarchal society, whose system is more and more difficult to maintain, illustrates this essential aspect well.

²⁹ I understand “culture” as accessible to the majority and, especially, lived there, practised and perpetuated in an active and voluntary way by the members of the society.

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