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## Drama and Jokes Reminding Human Rights: Sekber' 65 Advocacy Human Rights Issues Through Ketoprak

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### Abstract

The resolution of gross human rights violations during the 1965 Tragedy in Indonesia still faces structural obstacles, particularly through legal mechanisms and state policies. In this situation, the victim community has developed alternative culture-based advocacy strategies. Previous research has indicated that artistic activities serve as an alternative means of advocating for human rights victims, healing trauma, and political struggle. This article analyzes Ketoprak *Srawung Bersama* (KSB), a performance art practice initiated by the victim community under the Joint SekBer'65 Surakarta, as a cultural strategy in human rights advocacy. Using an interpretive qualitative approach with an ethnographic approach, data was collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation studies. In this analysis, uses Henri Lefebvre's spatial production and Antonio Gramsci's hegemony, as well as Victor Turner's liminality. The results show that KSB functions as a space for the production of alternative narratives, a medium for the negotiation of collective memory, and an affect-based advocacy strategy that challenges the state's hegemonic narrative about the 1965 Tragedy. Performing arts in this context not only represent the experiences of victims but also become a social practice that expands the discourse on human rights in the public sphere, like agrarian issues, structural inequality, and exploitation. In the performance, the victims of '65 were involved in scriptwriting, acting, and directing. This was a novelty in previous research, which only addressed art as an alternative, but did not show how victims were involved in artistic productions that became a new space for victims of human rights violations.

#### KEYWORDS

counter narrative, cultural strategy, human rights advocacy, ketoprak, transitional justice.

### Introduction

The events of 1965-1966 are often considered one of the most inhumane events in the history of independent Indonesia. These events involved the mass murder of hundreds of thousands of people accused of being involved with or associated with the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). Estimates of the number of victims vary, but most sources cite figures between 500,000 and 1 million (Akmaliah, 2015; Cribb, 2001; Sumawiharja, 2024). Other sources, such as research conducted by Cribb & Coppel (2009), state that the number of victims may be higher if those who died from starvation, disease, and poor conditions in post-event detention camps are included. In addition to the loss of life, these events created prolonged collective trauma. The families of the victims, including their descendants, experienced stigmatization and discrimination for decades (Andries & Laksmono, 2022; Chandra, 2019; Wardaya et al., 2021). They were often labeled as "PKI people" and excluded from social, political, and economic life (Prahassacitta, 2024; Roosa, 2006). In the events of 1965-1966, the military was systematically involved in mass killings (Eickhoff et al., 2017; Leksana, 2021; Melvin, 2017, 2018; Robinson, 2017). Even, CIA involved in 1965/1966 Tragedy (Bevins, 2023; Holton, 2025). This data shows that the 1965 Tragedy was not just a local event, but a structured operation involving state forces nationwide.

The state's involvement during and after the 1965 Tragedy was also systemic. It took

the form not only of physical crimes and repressive actions but also cultural hegemony exercised by the New Order regime to justify the violence and reinforce anti-communist ideology (Citrawan & Putri, 2024; Dujisin, 2021; Miller, 2018). The military played an active role in inciting and carrying out violence, as well as creating massive anti-PKI propaganda to justify their actions. The state also established repressive institutions to monitor and crack down on "PKI elements," which prolonged the impact of repression for decades (Farchan, 2022). After 1965-1966, the state conducted a systematic campaign through political, social, and cultural channels, such as national ideology, museums, monuments, textbooks, films, and literary works, to stigmatize the victims and their families as "PKI traitors to the state" (Herlambang, 2021; Patra et al., 2022). This cultural hegemony created values that permeated social norms, prolonging collective trauma and reinforcing social stigma against victims. The historical narrative constructed by the New Order not only erased memories of the atrocities that occurred but also justified the violence as an effort to "save the state" from the threat of communism.

The tragedy of 1965-1966 caused long-term effects in the form of stigma and psychological impacts on the victims of '65 and their families. Victims experienced shame, fear, and isolation, which was passed down from parents to their children (Prastiono, 2025). This was exacerbated by the lack of recognition and reparation from the state, which kept victims and their families trapped in a cycle of unresolved trauma (Freiman, 2017). In fact, textbooks, especially between 1994 and 2013, still portray the PKI as the main villain, while the military is portrayed as heroes (Sariyatun et al., 2024). Thus, the cultural violence perpetrated by the New Order not only created historical wounds, but also influenced the social psychology of Indonesian society to this day, creating major challenges for efforts at reconciliation and restoration of victims' rights.

In an effort to address this social stigma, discussions and examinations of data and facts regarding the 1965 Tragedy have become increasingly intense among the public since the reform era, especially among academics. Academic publications and writings documenting the atrocities of the tragedy, such as Melvin's (2018) book *The Army and the Indonesian Genocide: Mechanics of Mass Murder*, have made an important contribution to strengthening the victims' narrative. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as KontraS also play a crucial role in providing legal assistance, documenting testimonies, and organizing public campaigns for recognition of the victims. Another significant effort was the lawsuit filed by victims, which in 2016 succeeded in obtaining recognition from the Jakarta Human Rights Court that the events of 1965-1966 constituted gross human rights violations (Amnesty International, 2016). Various efforts have been initiated to advocate for the rights of victims, including the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (KKR), which only lasted until its cancellation by the Constitutional Court in 2006 (Wahyudi, 2019), and the International People's Tribunal (IPT) 1965. However, these legal efforts are often hampered by structural and political obstacles that slow down the process of reconciliation and recovery. For example, although the IPT '65 in The Hague (2015) issued important recommendations, it did not have executive power. This shows a structural impasse, especially through state legal and policy mechanisms.

This deadlock through state legal and policy mechanisms has given rise to other alternatives in handling the victims of '65. The Joint Secretariat (SekBer) '65 in Surakarta has emerged as a significant initiative driven directly by the victims. SekBer '65, which is a forum for victims of the '65 tragedy to seek resolution for past gross human rights violations through reconciliation mechanisms, functions as a

coordination center for various advocacy and rehabilitation efforts for victims, as well as a forum for documenting testimonies, educating the public, and garnering support for justice and recognition for victims. SekBer '65 has been active since 2005 in collecting data, organizing public discussions, and collaborating with various parties, including academics, state institutions, and NGOs (*Non-Governmental Organizations*), to promote reconciliation and the enforcement of human rights (Asyifani & Suryadinata, 2021). SekBer '65 also uses a cultural approach. In the face of social stigma and marginalization, art and culture play an important role as a medium for expressing and documenting the experiences of victims of human rights violations (Fikri, 2025; Octarina et al., 2022). One concrete example is *Ketoprak Srawung Bersama* (KSB) in Surakarta, which has become a space for victims of the 1965 Tragedy to voice their narratives through performing arts since 2015, by advocating for victims, campaigning for human rights issues written by or narrated by victims of 1965, and creating a human rights art stage performed by victims. Through KSB, victims have gained a platform to tell their own stories amid the dominant narratives that have long suppressed and ignored them. The existence of KSB can be understood as a cultural strategy used by the victims in SekBer '65 to challenge the hegemonic narrative that exists in official history.

Previous studies have discussed the importance of art in advocating for human rights victims as a counter-discourse. The arts, particularly theater performances, have the capacity to increase public awareness of human rights issues by up to 35% and open up a space for empathy that cannot always be achieved by legal narratives or documents (Luckhurst & Morin, 2015). After the reform, there has been an increase in the use of cultural strategies for victim advocacy (Bielecki, 2018). In the performing arts, theater has become a means of processing trauma and forming political identities for communities of victims of political violence in Indonesia (Heryanto, 2015; McGregor, 2017). Performing arts can function as a form of memory work that allows survivors to rearticulate their traumatic experiences in the public sphere. However, previous studies have only discussed the role of art without showing how victims are involved in the process of producing art for counter-discourse.

This research stems from observations of *Ketoprak Srawung Bersama* (KSB) as a cultural practice born out of the initiative of victim organizations, rather than a strategy formally devised by institutions. Rather than being part of a procedural legal advocacy framework, KSB opens up a flexible space for expression—a place where personal narratives, traumatic memories, and artistic expression can meet and be collectively negotiated. By highlighting the creative process, patterns of participation, and social reach of this performance, this study aims to broaden understanding of how cultural strategies can play a role in shaping public discourse on human rights issues, particularly the 1965 gross human rights violations, while also advocating for the victims of the 1965 tragedy. Therefore, this study aims to answer how SekBer '65 articulates advocacy for victims of the 1965 Tragedy through cultural strategies and how *Ketoprak Srawung Bersama* function as a cultural strategy in advocating for the human rights of victims of the 1965 Tragedy.

## Methods

This research was conducted in Surakarta, specifically at the Joint Secretariat '65, Jebres, Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia. Observation and documentation for this research were conducted from September to December 2024. The researcher was actively involved in the entire creative process of KSB during the period of September–December 2024, from script writing, regular rehearsals, to the performances of

"*Ontran-ontran Gunung Kendeng*" and "*Ranggas*". This involvement allowed for a deep understanding of the behind-the-scenes dynamics: how historical trauma was processed into performance material, artistic negotiations between artists, and the emotional responses of the victims involved as sources of the story.

This research uses an interpretive qualitative approach with an ethnographic design. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to deeply understand the cultural practices of Ketoprak Srawung Bersama (KSB) from the perspective of the survivor community involved in it. Ethnography provides access to the symbolic dynamics, social interactions, and production of meaning that arise in the daily lives of the group, making it highly relevant for analyzing how cultural strategies were developed by victims of the 1965 Tragedy in response to symbolic repression and the stagnation of formal state advocacy.

As explained by Creswel (2018), the qualitative approach aims to reveal social reality from within by tracing the meanings constructed by actors in the context of their daily lives. In this case, KSB is not only understood as an art performance, but also as a social, political, and cultural space that is collectively produced. Through this method, researchers attempt to capture affective, performative, and symbolic dimensions that are not accessible by quantitative or positivistic approaches. The ethnographic design in this study is used to explore the internal dynamics of KSB as a cultural strategy (Moeran, 2021).

Data collection techniques included: (1) participant observation, in which the researcher was directly involved in the creative processes and social interactions of KSB; (2) in-depth interviews with two daily coordinators of SekBer '65, three coordinators who also served as KSB performers, two young volunteers, three survivors of the 1965 events, and two audience members; and (3) document analysis of nine KSB performance scripts, SekBer '65 archives, and other relevant visual documentation.

Data analysis was conducted thematically through systematic and iterative stages. First, the researcher engaged in data familiarization by repeatedly reading interview transcripts, field notes, and documents to gain a comprehensive understanding of the context. Second, open coding was performed by identifying units of meaning from the raw data and assigning initial inductive labels. At this stage, a number of preliminary codes were generated to capture salient issues within the data. Third, through axial coding, these initial codes were grouped into broader categories based on conceptual relationships and patterns across the dataset. In this study, these categories were further refined and organized into four main domains: (1) the trajectory of SekBer '65, (2) the practices of Ketoprak Srawung Bersama, (3) cultural strategies, and (4) performativity/performance. Fourth, selective coding was conducted to develop overarching themes that represent broader patterns of meaning and address the research questions. These themes were constructed using the constant comparative method across multiple data sources. Throughout this process, the researcher also maintained analytic memos to document reflections, emerging interpretations, and analytical decisions, thereby ensuring transparency.

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, several strategies were employed. First, triangulation was conducted at multiple levels: source triangulation (survivors, coordinators, volunteers, and audiences), method triangulation (interviews, observation, and documentation), and time triangulation (repeated observations over a four-month period). Data from different sources were systematically compared to identify both consistencies and divergences in perspectives. Second, member checking was

undertaken by returning interview summaries and preliminary interpretations to key informants, particularly SekBer '65 coordinators and KSB performers, to verify the accuracy and resonance of the researcher's representations. Third, a comprehensive audit trail was maintained, documenting all stages of the research process, including field notes, interview transcripts, coding procedures, and analytical decisions. This documentation enables external reviewers to trace the research process and enhances methodological transparency. In addition, informal peer debriefing was conducted with academic colleagues to assess interpretive consistency and minimize subjective bias.

The researcher's active involvement in KSB activities provided in-depth access to the field but also introduced the potential for over-rapport and interpretive bias. Accordingly, reflexivity was systematically integrated throughout the research process. First, the researcher maintained a reflexive journal documenting initial assumptions, shifts in perspective, emotional responses, and relational dynamics with participants, particularly when engaging with survivors of the 1965 trauma. Second, the researcher explicitly articulated their positionality, including social, academic, and ideological backgrounds that may influence data interpretation. The researcher acknowledged that involvement in cultural advocacy activities could foster an empathetic alignment with survivors' narratives, thus requiring deliberate efforts to maintain critical analytical distance. Third, to mitigate interpretive bias, the researcher consistently compared interpretations against raw data, employed verbatim quotations as empirical evidence, and discussed emerging findings with peers (peer review). Reflexivity was thus positioned not merely as an acknowledgment of subjectivity, but as a methodological strategy to enhance the integrity and transparency of the study.

This study adhered to strict ethical research principles, particularly given the sensitive and potentially traumatic experiences of participants. Interviews with survivors were conducted with permission from SekBer '65 coordinators and with careful consideration of participants' psychological readiness. Survivors' identities were anonymized to ensure their safety and privacy. All participants provided informed consent for audio recording and for their narratives to be included in the research.

The paper is organized into four main sections: (1) Surakarta as a socio-historical context marked by the legacy of the 1965 victims; (2) the formation and advocacy of SekBer '65; (3) the emergence and dynamics of Ketoprak Srawung Bersama; and (4) the role of KSB in human rights discourse as a counter-narrative to dominant state narratives. The analysis is supported by the theoretical frameworks of Lefebvre and Gramsci to examine the production of space and hegemony, as well as Turner's perspective to explain performativity as a cultural strategy.

## Result and Discussion

### Surakarta: A Place for the Victims of 1965

Surakarta became one of the largest bases of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). During the colonial era, the PKI's struggle grew significantly in Surakarta (Shiraishi, 2023). The PKI's base in Surakarta continued to expand until the Old Order, when Surakarta became known as a red base (Ferahman, 2010). During the transition from the Old Order to the New Order, the PKI became the main target for destruction. Surakarta was one of the transit and collection points for political prisoners from surrounding areas before they were transferred to large prison camps. The Diponegoro Military Police Headquarters (CPM) in Surakarta became one of the main locations where Teperca (Branch Investigation Team)

detained, interrogated, and decided the status of prisoners without formal judicial process (Putra et al., 2012). This was exacerbated by the many massacres on the Bengawan Solo River (Roosa, 2020). This situation shows that Solo was one of the sites of the 1965 tragedy and had many victims who became ex-tapool.

Repression against former political prisoners in Surakarta continued well beyond the period of physical violence in 1965–1966. Amnesty International and TAPOL (2003) noted that victims in Surakarta and surrounding areas still faced administrative barriers in the early 2000s, such as special markings in their identity documents ("ET"), restrictions on access to formal employment, and denial of certain public services (Amnesty International, 1994). Long-term impacts were also felt by the children of survivors, who experienced rejection when applying for jobs in government agencies or faced social discrimination due to their family's identity as "ex-political prisoners" (Surya, 2023). Several survivors in Surakarta reported monthly reporting obligations to the Koramil (military district command) until the late 1970s, as well as strict surveillance by the community due to frequent visits by officials to their homes—a mechanism of social control that continued into the following decade.

These findings are reinforced by field testimonies showing how administrative and social repression continued. One of the victims interviewed in this study, recounted:

*"My husband was picked up while we were working in the fields. We were just a family of farmers. My husband was taken to the Tasikmadu sugar factory for two weeks, and he came home with injuries to his face and many of his teeth missing. Not long after that, he was picked up again, and I didn't know his whereabouts for more than a decade. Some of our rice fields were also confiscated by the village authorities. Even today, my son took a police test; he passed several stages, but was then disqualified because our family is listed as 'ex-political prisoners'."*

(Interview, member of SekBer'65, Surakarta, 2024)

This testimony illustrates how repression not only targeted individuals accused of involvement in leftist organizations, but also their families through land confiscation, the disappearance of the head of the family, and intergenerational discrimination.

All of these findings show that Surakarta was not only the site of physical violence at the height of the 1965–1966 tragedy, but also the arena for ongoing administrative, social, and political repression. Surakarta's position as a transit point for prisoners, a center of military operations, and a space for the reproduction of stigma made this city an important context for understanding the dynamics of local history, as well as a relevant backdrop for the emergence of community-based advocacy initiatives for victims. Thus, after the reform, a victims' organization emerged, which then, through a long process, became SekBer'65.

#### The Emergence of SekBer '65 as a Victims' Organization

SekBer'65's main secretariat is located in Tegalrejo, Jebres, Surakarta. From this location, various administrative activities and organizational consolidation are carried out. From the outset, this organization has set its vision as an effort to "reveal the truth towards justice, achieve prosperity," and its main mission is to encourage state recognition of the gross human rights violations that occurred during the 1965 Tragedy. This community base is the main strength of SekBer'65—not its financial power or formal structure, but the solidarity and concern between generations of victims and sympathizers who participate in the assistance program.

With a collectively organized structure, SekBer'65 developed a horizontal consolidation approach. Regular meetings every 35 days and quarterly visits to various work areas became the main mechanisms for strengthening the

community network. Members consist of first, second, and third generation victims, as well as young supporters who are active in documentation, advocacy, and campaign activities initiated by SekBer'65. They explicitly refer to themselves as a community organization of victims fighting in the civil sphere. "SekBer'65 was originally named the Joint Secretariat of Victims '65, but later decided to change its name to SekBer'65 or Joint Secretariat '65. This name change was not only symbolic but also had a political aspect that greatly determined the identity of SekBer'65 to this day. The removal of the word 'victims' was a way to open the organization up so that it would not be limited to the victims of 1965-1966 who were already part of the victims' community."

(Interview with SekBer'65 Manager, Didik Dyah, 2024)

Historically, the establishment of SekBer'65 was triggered by the state's failure to respond to the demands for justice of the 1965 victims. Although the 1998 Reform brought a wind of openness, substantively, the state has not provided a systematic form of resolution (Sadzili et al., 2026). Data from Komnas HAM (2022) shows that there are no adequate policies to resolve the cases of gross human rights violations in 1965. Meanwhile, according to YPKP 65 (2020), out of approximately 200,000 victims throughout Indonesia, only 1,650 out of 3,000 applicants have successfully accessed LPSK services. This fact forms the basis for the analysis that the state continues to maintain the hegemonic legacy of the New Order, not only in political and legal structures but also in public narratives.

This situation can be interpreted as a form of hegemonic continuity in Gramscian terms, namely ideological domination that does not always involve physical violence, but rather the reproduction of meaning, stigma, and the silence of the state (Gramsci, 2013; Maesse & Nicoletta, 2021). Within this framework, SekBer'65 emerged as a response to hegemonic power. It provided a space for articulation for those who had previously been silenced or excluded from the national historical narrative. From the outset, SekBer'65 carried out activities such as documenting victims' testimonies, mapping territories, consolidating communities, and public education. However, these initial activities did not immediately yield significant structural results.

The Joint Secretariat '65 (SekBer'65) initially pursued a strategy focused on administrative work, public policy, and text-based campaigns. This strategy stemmed from the desire to gain recognition and restore the rights of victims of the 1965 Tragedy. However, over time, these initial strategies underwent developments based on structural obstacles, policy limitations, and socio-cultural resistance. The following section discusses these initial strategies, which include (a) multi-sector advocacy and assistance, (b) organizational strengthening, and (c) human rights campaigns.

#### Advocacy and Multisectoral Assistance

In its early years (2005–2015), the Joint Secretariat '65 (SekBer'65) pursued an advocacy strategy that focused on the administrative sphere and formal state policies. This strategy was built on the spirit of encouraging state recognition of the status of victims of gross human rights violations during the 1965 Tragedy through legal and institutional approaches. One of the main instruments in this strategy was assistance with the administrative process of obtaining a Certificate of Victim of Gross Human Rights Violations (SKKPHAM), which is an important requirement for victims to access services from the Witness and Victim Protection Agency (LPSK), such as medical services, psychosocial support, and educational scholarships for the children or grandchildren of victims.

However, administrative assistance has encountered obstacles experienced by SekBer '65. Based on LPSK data (2022), out of a total of 4,617 verified victims, only about 1,600 people had successfully obtained SKKPHAM by 2021.

Meanwhile, SekBer '65's internal data shows that out of approximately 3,000 applications submitted in 2017, less than half passed verification. This reflects a significant gap between formal recognition and the actual implementation of victim protection policies.

The LPSK policy in 2018 further restricted access, as the beneficiaries were limited to direct victims and children of victims. The implications of this policy are enormous, given that the third generation (grandchildren)—who in many cases are the main drivers of advocacy and documentation work—are no longer recognized as part of the circle of victims. In fact, this generation continues to experience various forms of structural discrimination that have been socially and politically passed down from previous generations.

Another form of symbolic recognition of victims by the state is the publication of the LPSK Green Book. This book serves as formal proof of victims' participation in the protection scheme, but in practice, this recognition is not always followed by substantial access to basic services. For example, access to health services is only available at Dr. Moewardi Surakarta Regional General Hospital, which is geographically difficult for victims from other areas such as Klaten, Karanganyar, or Sukoharjo. Transportation barriers, the physical condition of victims who are already very frail, and hospital administrative procedures that are not elderly-friendly make this assistance difficult to access.

In addition to structural factors, administrative barriers are exacerbated by psychosocial dimensions. Many victims are reluctant to speak up or find it difficult to recount their traumatic experiences. In an interview, Didik Dyah, Program Manager of SekBer'65, said:

*"In addition to barriers caused by policy products, other barriers also stem from the victims themselves, who are unable to recount their testimonies effectively, and some refuse to acknowledge their experiences as victims due to social pressure. Stigma remains strong in society, and this leads victims to choose silence."* (Interview with Didik Dyah, June 2025).

The silence of these victims is not merely a matter of individual fear, but can be read as a manifestation of the deep-rooted legacy of New Order political hegemony (De Porres, 2021). This situation illustrates the continuation of post-regime ideological domination, in which victims' narratives have no recognized space for articulation within the formal framework of the state. This position places victims in the subaltern category—a group that not only lacks political access but also has no legitimate medium of discourse to speak within the hegemonic social order.

Other efforts to encourage state recognition through public policy channels also face similar challenges. Such as SekBer'65's advocacy for the enactment of Surakarta Mayor Regulation No. 20 of 2018 on Social Welfare for the Elderly, which includes the recognition of elderly victims of human rights violations as a priority group for social services, resulting in an important symbolic document. SekBer'65 pushed for the victims of the 1965 Tragedy—who fall into the elderly category—to be included in this policy. They even held a focus group discussion and facilitated a memorandum of understanding through a green book for free medical and psychological services at Moewardi Hospital (February 2020). However, without budgetary support and clear policy implementation, this recognition has not had a direct impact on the welfare of the victims. Symbols without operational instruments only serve to widen the gap between promises and reality. This situation reflects the face of transitional justice in post-reform Indonesia, which appears progressive on the surface but stagnant in its implementation (Prasojo & Amalia, 2025). In many countries implementing transitional justice mechanisms symbolically without addressing the real needs of victims (David, 2017; de Waardt & Weber, 2019).

It can be said that the multisectoral advocacy and assistance strategy in the early decades of SekBer'65 opened up many new areas of struggle, but at the same time revealed the limitations of the administrative approach. In such conditions, there was a need to go beyond formal strategies and enter the realm of cultural articulation as a form of continuing the struggle.

#### Strengthening Organizations

Organizational strengthening was one of the main keys in SekBer'65's efforts to build collective resilience and expand the articulation of victims amid structural deadlock. Regular consolidations held every 35 days in Surakarta became a center of activity that combined organizational coordination with psychosocial recovery and narrative reconstruction. In this forum, victims from various regions such as Klaten, Karanganyar, and Sukoharjo came to share their testimonies, build networks, and reorganize their collective memories as part of an effort to construct a testimony-based historical narrative. This meeting also serves as a space where testimonies are not only heard but also collectively documented as an archive of resistance against the official state narrative. This was conveyed by one of the administrators of SekBer '65

*"Many victims have kept their trauma to themselves for decades out of fear or shame. When they finally meet other victims, they no longer feel alone. SekBer'65 also strives to provide training on how to tell their testimonies so that they do not stray into many things. Due to losing space for dozens or even tens of years, victims usually want to tell everything in a very long time. This is what usually becomes an obstacle in the internal verification process, the documentation of victims"* (Interview with Sekber' 65 administrator, Kastinah, 2025).

In response to the limitations of state services, SekBer'65 developed a community assistance scheme. They organized collective transportation, assisted with administrative processes, and even coordinated regular cash assistance for victims who had no regular income. SekBer'65 also initiated a community-based creative economy program. These activities were carried out in response to the economic conditions of the majority of victims who experienced systematic impoverishment after 1965, which continues to this day. In this program, victims were involved in handicraft production activities such as tissue holders, knitting, ashtrays from recycled materials, and plastic sandals. These activities are not merely economic endeavors, but also a collective space that enables intergenerational communication, psychosocial recovery, and a reinterpretation of historical experiences.

The involvement of the children and grandchildren of victims not only strengthens the sustainability of the



Figure 1. Regular Consolidation of SekBer'65 (Source: SekBer '65 documentation 2025)

movement, but also creates an educational space that dismantles the state's single narrative. Many of the victims' children hold grudges against their own parents because their stigmatized status has led to their marginalization in terms of political and civil rights (Wardaya et al., 2021). Many of the victims' children cannot become civil servants or hold positions in the civil service at state institutions because they are labeled as family members or descendants of the PKI. Therefore, the process in this independent economic program is intended to restore their relationships between the victims and the younger generation, their children or grandchildren.

Community strengthening through cross-regional consolidation and assistance has become a productive space that supports the sustainability of the movement. However, the heavy workload and lack of structural support make it difficult for this initiative to develop into a more systematic and long-term movement. Solidarity built from the bottom up does allow for the articulation of victims' narratives, but it remains limited by resource capacity and the scope of the movement's distribution.

#### Human Rights Campaign

In a post-reform landscape that clearly still leaves limited space for expression for victims of gross human rights violations, the Joint Secretariat '65 (SekBer'65) formulated a public campaign strategy that emphasizes a documentation-based approach and the dissemination of narratives. This campaign is not solely intended to arouse empathy, but to fill the void of representation that has been left by the state for decades. Relying on publications such as magazines, books, and brochures, SekBer'65 seeks to build a bridge between the experiences of victims and the awareness of the new generation, while preserving the collective memory that has been silenced.

One of the main forms of this strategy is the publication of Palawa Magazine, which from the outset was designed not merely as an internal organizational bulletin, but as a tool for documentation, education, and advocacy. This magazine has become an alternative space for victims to share their experiences, compile reflections, and record various activities of the victim community. In a situation where the state's formal narrative does not provide space for versions of history that arise from the voices of the victims themselves, Palawa serves as an important medium that provides space for storytelling, refuting stigma, and building hope.

Each edition of Palawa contains various types of writing, ranging from direct testimonies of victims, reviews of community activities, reflections on historical events, to readings on contemporary situations. The format and writing style are also made communicative so that they can be accessed by a wider audience, including university students, school students, and the general public. The target of regenerating awareness is a priority, and therefore the language and content approach is open and touches on the personal side of readers.

In addition to magazines, books are another strategic instrument developed by SekBer'65 to expand the scope of their campaign. One important publication is the book *Menembus Badai*, which documents the stories of victims of 1965 who experienced imprisonment, exile, and discrimination, but managed to survive and build meaningful lives. This book not only highlights the wounds and trauma, but also the vitality, strength of community, and perseverance in changing conditions.

The Palawa magazine and the book "Menembus Badai" are only accessible to a limited audience. This is due to funding constraints and audience segmentation, which have limited the reach of these publications. This text-based campaign strategy is not yet strong enough to break through the thick wall of hegemonic narratives that are deeply rooted

in educational spaces, the media, and collective consciousness.

#### The Birth of Ketoprak Srawung Bersama

The three forms of strategy in 2005–2015 show that the challenges faced by SekBer'65 were not merely a matter of technical effectiveness, but rather a reflection of the complexity of human rights advocacy in the context of post-authoritarianism. The formal and administrative strategies implemented in the early decade—including the management of the Human Rights SKKP, public policy advocacy such as Perwali, and the consolidation of victim documentation—were a rational initial response to a structural order that still inherited the exclusionary logic of the New Order. However, in the context of hegemonic work, these strategies directly confronted the dominant narrative of the state, which had been ideologically institutionalized in the public consciousness. This is where the ambivalent dynamics of civil space emerge. Although civil space is indeed open in the post-reform era, the articulation of victims remains limited by unequal representation mechanisms, in which administrative recognition does not necessarily guarantee full social recovery.

The period between 2005 and 2015 actually shows how SekBer'65 was building its base and negotiating new spaces for articulation, albeit still within formal boundaries. The limitations that emerged during this period were not merely the result of organizational failure, but rather a reflection of the power of hegemonic structures that worked through symbolic and administrative forms that appeared open, but still maintained the dominance of the old narrative. Efforts at recognition often stopped at the level of documents and procedures, without touching on the affective and cultural dimensions of the victims' own experiences. In Gramscian logic, this shows that post-authoritarian hegemony did not disappear, but rather transformed into something seemingly invisible.

The challenge for the victims of 1965 is to confront the state's narrative about 1965, which dominates the public sphere. The victims of 1965 and 1966 need to resist this domination, one way being through the arts. Using an anthropological and cultural approach, performances open up an intersubjective space where the collective experiences of victims can be processed and understood.

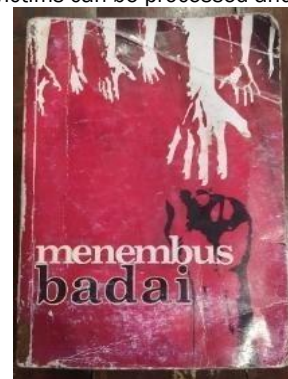


Figure 3. The book *Menembus Badai*

(Source: documentation, 2025)



Figure 2. Palawa Magazine Archive

(Source: documentation, 2025)

socially (McGregor, 2017). In Indonesia, after 2000, there was a significant increase in the use of cultural strategies by victim communities (Bielecki, 2018). This increase was due to limited access to formal state institutions—as a result of bureaucratic, political, and legal barriers—which encouraged victim communities to build alternative advocacy arenas through art, culture, and community. Thus, the artistic approach became an alternative in fighting for the victims of 1965.

Ketoprak, as a form of folk art, provides a symbolic and affective channel that transcends the procedural limitations of the state. The production of space through performance allows victims not only to narrate their trauma but also to position themselves as active historical subjects. In other words, ketoprak becomes an effort to reclaim the space that has been taken over by the state and to reproduce history from a liminal position—turning the threshold into an articulative foothold.

Thus, the initial strategy of SekBer'65 cannot be interpreted as stagnation, but rather as the initial phase of a long-term effort to adapt to the ever-changing configuration of power. It is precisely from the limitations of this formal strategy that the need to formulate a new, more flexible and participatory approach arises. This is because the values of New Order repression have changed in terms of the political landscape, but the position of victims is also not in a new space that fully accepts their existence. It can be said that victims are in a liminal space, so the need to create a new space is the only option.

This is what then underlies cultural initiatives such as Ketoprak Srawung Bersama—present not merely as an expression of art, but as a cultural strategy that enables the articulation of victims' narratives through affective, performative, and communicative mediums that differ from the logic of the state (Susanti, 2022). Therefore, the reading of the initial strategy must be placed in a dynamic framework, as a foundation that paves the way for the transformation of human rights advocacy strategies from merely legal-formal to cultural work based on experience and community relations, as well as opening up new opportunities in the context of advocacy. This is also believed by Winarso, the founder of KSB.

*"Ketoprak is familiar, down-to-earth, and can serve as a bridge," (Founder of KSB, Winarso, 2024)*

The cultural approach through Ketoprak Srawung Bersama is also supported by the history of Surakarta. Surakarta has long been known as one of the most influential centers of Javanese culture (Novianto et al., 2023). Since the colonial era, this city has been shaped not only as an administrative center but also as a complex cultural political arena. In his book *Merayakan Negara Mematrikan Tradisi (Celebrating the State, Embedding Tradition)*, Ramdhon (2016) shows how the colonial government, and later the post-independence state, used villages such as Baluwarti, Kauman, and Laweyan as a medium for symbolic production that represented cultural legitimacy. The urban space was arranged in such a way as to integrate power structures and cultural expression, so that the "cultural city" became a structural identity attached to Solo from the beginning.

This image was preserved even into the New Order era, when Surakarta played a central role in the national cultural preservation agenda. Various regular programs were held by the Cultural Office—such as gamelan performances, cultural carnivals, wayang orang performances at Sriwedari, and performing arts festivals (Dipoyono, 2018). However, behind the grandeur of these programs, the critical space in the performing arts became increasingly dull (Wiratno, 2022). Traditional arts such as ketoprak, although still performed regularly, have lost their original function as a medium for social expression and criticism by the people. Afifah (2014),

in her study of ketoprak in Balekambang, shows that the continuity of performances is supported more by grassroots communities than by the formal cultural system of the state.

This condition creates a gap between traditional art and changing social dynamics. Performing arts, which were once a medium for social communication and criticism, have become depoliticized. People watch performances purely for entertainment, not as a reflection of the realities they face. Ketoprak has become part of an institutionalized cultural ritual, no longer an open space that can be used to convey collective concerns.

It is in this context that Ketoprak Srawung Bersama (KSB) was born—as a response to the stagnation of the formal strategy of the Joint Secretariat '65 (SekBer'65) in promoting the issue of past gross human rights violations. The narrative of the victims of the 1965 Tragedy has not yet managed to penetrate the public consciousness ( ), especially among the younger generation who grew up under the hegemony of the state's version of history. In an interview conducted in 2024, Winarso—KSB coordinator and active member of SekBer'65—stated that

*"the victims' narrative is still difficult to reach the younger generation if it is only through text plates on campus or legal documents." (Winarso, 2024)*

This is where the importance of reading the birth of KSB through Lefebvre's perspective on the production of space comes in. Cultural space, such as the city of Surakarta and its ketoprak tradition, is never truly neutral; it is always a dialectical arena between representations of power and collective intentions. Ketoprak, as a traditional art form that has undergone institutionalization, provides a well-established symbolic and spatial infrastructure. However, this space remains open to reclamation by new socio-political intentions. In this case, SekBer'65 utilizes this deeply rooted art form to articulate an alternative narrative of the victims. Art can be used to transform the state's representational space into a *representational space* filled with memories, criticism, and collective experiences that were previously marginalized (George, 2024). Gigok, as an actor and director of KSB, also explains that ketoprak is used as a counter-narrative to the state's narrative:

*"Ketoprak does not belong to the palace, nor does it belong to the state. It belongs to the people. So we use it to talk about our historical wounds. To tell the story of what the people have experienced, in this case, those who have been marginalized and defeated by the state's single narrative. All victims of human rights violations, especially the victims of '65" (Gigok, 2024).*

In other words, the choice of ketoprak is not only cultural, but also strategic. It allows advocacy work to take place in a socially familiar medium, but with a transformed meaning. KSB then developed into a performing arts group that united advocacy interests with the concerns of artists over the declining interest of the younger generation in ketoprak. This group was not born as an institutional project, but from an organic process that brought together victims, the second generation, and local artists. The three main initiators—Winarso, Gigok Anurogo (actor and director), and S.T. Wiyono (scriptwriter)—became the creative foundation that pioneered KSB's early performances. Along with them, other members such as Bambang E.A.R.T, who continued to develop, also participated as actors and production supporters.

When compared to other forms of artistic expression also initiated by the community of victims of 65, such as the visual exhibition at Taman 65 (Komnas HAM, 2018), choir performances at the Festival of Remembrance in Jakarta (Koalisi Keadilan dan Pengungkapan Kebenaran, 2019), documentary screenings such as Pulau Buru Tanah Air Beta (Rahung Nasution, 2016), or musical works from solidarity musician groups, KSB has more interactive and dialogical

characteristics. For example, in some choir performances or film screenings, the audience often plays a passive role. Meanwhile, in KSB performances, direct interaction between performers and the audience takes the form of improvisation, humor, and even fluid debates in the middle of scenes. This strengthens KSB's capacity as a more inclusive and reflective space for contestation. Additionally, ketoprak as a performing art deeply rooted in Javanese society offers its own advantages in terms of local acceptance. It is not foreign, not elitist, and its meaning is easily absorbed. Thus, KSB not only represents the creativity of the victim community but also demonstrates the sophistication of a cultural strategy that is adaptive to the local social context while still delivering structural criticism in a subtle yet firm manner.

#### KSB as a Cultural Strategy

Ketoprak, as a form of traditional Javanese art, was chosen for a reason. It is easily accepted, dialogical in nature, and has subversive potential through satire and humor (Wijayanto et al., 2024). By combining traditional forms and contemporary content, KSB breaks down the boundaries between the profane and the sacred, between history and entertainment. The choice of ketoprak is also a form of strategic resistance. By choosing a format that is familiar to the community, victims are able to insert alternative narratives without being immediately suspected or rejected. This field research shows that KSB is more easily able to reach audiences across age groups and social classes, as well as directly touch the emotions of the audience through the physical experiences of the performers.

This concept can be linked to Turner (1969) thinking on liminality in two ways: first, liminal space is the position of victims who have not yet escaped the hegemony of the New Order narrative even though they are no longer in an extremely repressive socio-political context. However, they are also not yet in the new post-reform era that embraces democracy and the enforcement of human rights. Thus, the position of victims can be said to exist in an in-between space because they are not fully accepted in structural representations. Second, in-between spaces such as theater stages function as transformative zones—places where individuals and communities experience symbolic and social transitions. In KSB, performances become a kind of collective ritual that enables the transformation from the status of "the silenced" to "the speaking."

The state narrative that portrays victims as enemies of the state or people who deserve to be eliminated is countered through personal stories, testimonies, and critical fiction presented on stage. In many performances, the antagonist is no longer a specific party, but rather the bureaucratic system, discriminatory policies, or fictional characters that symbolize silencing power. Through this strategy, art functions not only as a means of expression, but also as a tool for advocacy and political education. KSB produces an alternative space that is simultaneously aesthetic, political, and therapeutic. This practice is also carried out in Latin America through the Pentaas Técnica mixta in Peru and the Memorial de Silêncios e Margaridas in Brazil (Telles & Ferreira Bossa, 2024). Art and memory enables resistance to the official history, in the vindication of the victim's rights, in the reconstruction of the social tissue or the battle for justice (Villa-Gómez & Avendaño-Ramírez, 2017). This space is formed not by state authorities, but by the victim community itself, and functions as a medium of social articulation where marginalized voices can gain public legitimacy. KSB also serves as a bridge for the younger generation, as described by one KSB audience member "This ketoprak makes me believe that there is a transfer of knowledge... that these symbols can be passed on to younger generations." (KSB audience member, 2024)

How KSB works can be seen in the form and content of

the script. In this case, the script also determines how the performance is constructed and which parts become the main focus as a message intended to spark discourse among the audience. Of the nine scripts that have been staged, there are three main parts, namely from remembering, opposing, to then changing into creating a fluid and broad space for discourse as a form of solidarity with other marginalized groups on contemporary human rights issues. Thus, KSB not only brings up human rights issues in the 1965 tragedy, but all human rights issues so that they are more widespread. Human rights issues discussed include land grabbing, health rights during the Covid-19 pandemic, and women's rights. The script entitled "Pagebluk" discusses the social conditions of communities struggling during the Covid-19 pandemic, such as scarcity of goods, fear of death, and lack of direction. The manuscript "Ontran - Ontran Gunung Kendeng" discusses agrarian issues, social inequality, and the exploitation of living space. The manuscript "Ranggas" discusses the experiences of female migrant workers living in a patriarchal culture. The manuscript shows that SekBer 65' and KSB expanded the discourse from the 1965 tragedy to current human rights issues.

#### Narrative Production and Process Collective as a Space for Discourse

Narrative production in Ketoprak Srawung Bersama (KSB) takes place collectively and participatively. The story structure is not arranged vertically by a single director, but through deliberative meetings involving the performers, production team, and several young supporters who are interested in seeing the creative process of KSB. In this process, the life experiences, traumas, and political ideas of each actor are processed into a story framework which is then enriched with improvisation, local symbols, and humor typical of folk performances. On the other hand, story material is also obtained from the routine consolidation of capacity building by the monthly SekBer'65 organization, which of course involves the victims.

Rehearsal sessions are an important part of this production process. Observation of the rehearsal process for "Ranggas", for example, shows that many narratives about the lives of migrant workers, lower-class women, and experiences of structural oppression emerge from the personal stories of the actors, which are then negotiated into the script. This shows that KSB is not only a space for representation, but also a space for the production of collective discourse. Lefebvre's concept of representational space is relevant in this context—space is not merely the backdrop for a performance, but a social field filled with meaning, emotion, and symbolic struggles.

During the rehearsal process, a kind of transformative space emerged where the actors not only rehearsed their roles, but also elaborated on their life experiences and connected them to the larger narrative of structural injustice. Thus, the story production process became a living space, where collective participation became part of the practice of knowledge production itself. In several other rehearsal sessions, the researcher noted moments when several female actors shared stories or views related to labor and women's issues, which then spontaneously became material for improvisation in the script. Something similar also happened in the development of the character Sri Ningsih in "Ontran-Ontran Gunung Kendeng", who was born out of discussions about women's struggles and who reversed her position to fight alongside the people. This was then developed into a speech scene at the end of the performance. This management shows the fluidity and importance of discourse in determining the KSB story, rather than the imagination of a single director.

The rehearsal process also becomes an arena for negotiating values and knowledge. Not all stories can be directly incorporated into the narrative structure, as their suitability must be considered in terms of dramatic form,

audience emotional response, and the symbolic meaning to be emphasized. This is where the process of collective editing takes place, which is not only technical but also epistemological. Who determines which stories are worthy of inclusion, how they are told, and in what form they are presented to the public? For example, in one rehearsal session, there was a debate about whether a scene of violence against women should be shown directly or transformed into song and choreography. The latter option was chosen because it was considered more ethical and allowed the audience to feel without having to witness the violence explicitly. This demonstrates ethical sensitivity as well as collective skill in framing experience as political and aesthetic discourse.

Rehearsals can be interpreted as embodied ethnography, where the actors' bodies become sites of memory and articulation of experience. In certain rehearsals, some performers appear to pause, overcome with emotion as they recite dialogue drawn from their personal experiences. This situation opens up a shared space for reflection, sometimes accompanied by open discussions about wounds and healing. In this context, rehearsals are not merely part of artistic production, but also part of a collective healing practice that unites the politics of memory and cultural work.

Thus, rehearsal sessions are not only a place to shape scenes, but also an important site in the formation of cultural narratives from below. This is where the creative process intersects directly with the political dynamics of knowledge: who can speak, what can be said, and how experiences are interpreted as something of value within the structure of the performance.

#### Expansion of Discursive Channels and Digital Adaptation

KSB not only works in physical spaces, but also uses digital spaces as a medium for expanding discourse. One important strategy is the use of YouTube channels as a space for distributing performances and discussions. During the Covid-19 pandemic, KSB performance that was also broadcast in digital space. The script "Pagebluk" attracted 3,200 viewers. Performances in digital spaces can be watched repeatedly, thus becoming a means of human rights education through the arts in the digital space. This channel not only reaches new audiences geographically, but also creates an interactive communication space that allows for the open exchange of narratives, testimonials, and criticism.

This digital channel strategy can be understood as a form of *tactical media*, namely the creative and political use of technology to disrupt the dominance of official discourse (Lisnawaati, 2024). The YouTube channel is a flexible tool that can reach a wide audience and provide an alternative space for narratives that have been marginalized. In this context, performing arts are no longer limited to conventional stages but move within a more fluid and inclusive digital network. Although in terms of aesthetics and sensation, performing arts are still more effective when viewed live, these efforts can be recorded and archived to be fully enjoyed with audio-visual dimensions.

Thus, the KSB digital channel also functions as a living archive that allows performances to remain accessible, rewatchable, and readable in an ever-changing context. This provides added value in the context of knowledge production—a performance does not end when the stage lights go out, but remains alive in the digital space and builds new resonance over time. Audiences are not merely consumers but also commentators, reinterpreters, and even dialogue partners in the open online discourse space. This can serve as a foundation for expanding the spectrum of audiences and alliances, while also positioning the digital space as a new social arena in the cultural struggle.

Therefore, KSB's digital strategy is not merely a technical

response to the times, but part of a larger cultural strategy to maintain narrative continuity, expand audiences, and strengthen the political position of subalterns in the public discourse space, which has been dominated by state power and the mainstream media industry. YouTube channels can also effectively open up opportunities for performances to be enjoyed by younger generations who are familiar with technology and the use of the internet.

#### The Dialectic of Power and Negotiation of Representation

KSB marks a new chapter in the relationship between grassroots cultural work and official power structures. State involvement in cultural work does not necessarily constitute full recognition, but also has the potential to become a means of symbolic co-optation, whereby narratives of resistance can be absorbed and silenced through mechanisms of official cultural legitimation. However, KSB is not in a passive position in the face of these dynamics. The loose structure of ketoprak performances, which are open to improvisation, provides space for KSB to play in the gray area between recognition and resistance. In several performances attended by officials or sponsored by state institutions, KSB performers inserted sharp social criticism through satirical songs, ironic gestures, or symbols that could only be understood by local audiences familiar with specific socio-political contexts. This strategy shows that KSB is able to transform the dominant space of representation into an arena of subtle subversion, where power is reflected, reversed, and even parodied in front of the very structures it targets.

This phenomenon shows that traditional performing arts have an adaptive power that allows resistance to take place from within, rather than always through direct confrontation. This approach shows a fluid, tactical form of resistance that slips between the cracks of official cultural language. In this logic, KSB's cultural work not only fights for alternative spaces, but also seizes and transforms hegemonic spaces through symbolic practices that are not always detected as overt opposition.

The presence of the state in KSB's performance space thus opens up two possibilities at once: as a reinforcement of the legitimacy of community art work, and as a potential for symbolic control over the narrative of resistance. Interestingly, in practice, KSB is able to maintain its narrative autonomy by utilizing formal moments as additional stages to voice critical cultural issues. This is a form of cultural *double play* that requires collective discernment and intelligence in reading situations and responding to them creatively.

In the performance of "Ranggaas," there is a moment when a government official gives a speech at the opening of the event. In the performance of "Ranggias," there is a dialogue that criticizes government projects such as free nutritious meals (MBG), which are still a subject of public discourse regarding their effectiveness and implementation. Some of the dialogues are as follows:

*"You talk about healthy eating and complete nutrition. But why is my plate full of air and promises?"*

*"It's free, you know. If you're not full, maybe your stomach is not nationalistic enough."*

*"The important thing is that you have eaten, and the government has provided it. Whether you are full or not is a matter for later."*

*(Dialogue, Ranggas Performance - Ketoprak Srawung Bersama)*

The dialogue is met with light laughter from the audience. Some people could be heard nudging each other, as if they understood the direction of the satire that was being built. Some people in the front rows looked towards the back seats, then returned their focus to the stage. The performance continued without explicitly mentioning the government program, but there were references to "free meals," "stomachs

lacking in nationalism,” and “the government has already provided food.”

Instead of being considered offensive to the event, the satire became a hot topic of conversation among the audience and expanded the discursive effect of the performance. Many audience members, including those from the government, laughed at the moment of criticism and humor combined. This means that KSB does not reject the presence of the state, but uses it as a mirror for the public to reassess power and its representation. KSB is able to redefine the boundaries between the ‘permitted’ stage and ‘disruptive’ voices, between the symbolic and the political, between entertainment and resistance. This is a form of representation negotiation that has become a distinctive strength of KSB's cultural strategy.

## Conclusion

KSB develops cultural practices that are alive and political, not merely aesthetic or ceremonial. The process of producing narratives in performance rehearsals is collective and participatory, turning the rehearsal space into an arena that facilitates the exchange of experiences, traumas, and political aspirations. Through improvisation, deliberation, and local symbols, KSB creates performances that are deeply rooted in the context of people's lives. This proves that traditional performing arts have the ability to become an effective *counter-discursive apparatus* in the context of human rights advocacy. KSB is able to shift the position of victims from objects of representation to active subjects of history. They are not only objects of their past experiences, but also producers of cultural knowledge that reshapes the understanding of human rights issues, especially regarding past gross human rights violations.

In this process, KSB also serves as a space for trauma healing for the victims. When their stories are brought to life in the performance, the victims witness their stories being presented in front of a public audience consisting mostly of the younger generation. These moments create a profound experience, where victims not only feel acknowledged, but also feel the presence of public support. The performance becomes a space for intergenerational encounter, where history that has been silenced can be heard again with empathy. In this event, the performance is not only a medium of education, but also a collective therapy that heals wounds and opens up a space for solidarity across age and social class. Thus, this thesis asserts that folk performing arts can be an effective and transformative cultural strategy in the struggle for reconciliation and human rights in Surakarta.

Therefore, this paper asserts that the position of the victims of '65 has not shifted from the repression of the New Order when viewed holistically due to the hegemony exercised during the New Order era. Political and power changes cannot be guaranteed. Decades of repression and cultural violence, one source of which was the anti-communist ideological campaign, are still deeply rooted in the cultural space. Thus, the position of the victims is caught between not being in their

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old position and not yet moving towards the new values promoted by the reform. In this case, cultural space becomes very vital, so that the decision to use KSB can be said to be a cultural strategy that becomes a process of cultural struggle without negating other efforts. Rather, reinforces the position SekBer'65 that struggles with the path of reconciliation and education for the younger generation about the history of the nation from the perspective of those who were silenced and became victims.

This article aims to explain how human rights victims play a role in advocating for themselves. Various articles explain that art has become a new alternative for human rights victims to tell their stories. This article explains that victims play an important role in the artistic production process to counter the state's singular narrative. This article has limitations in exploring the impact of ketoprak on government policy and stigma in society in depth. Therefore, this could be a topic for further research for researchers interested in the fields of art and social studies.

## Author contributions

Munanda Okki Saputro conceived and designed the research, conducted fieldwork, collected the data, performed the analysis, interpreted the research findings, and wrote the manuscript. Dr. Akhmad Ramdhon, S.Sos., M.A. contributed to the conceptual development of the research, provided academic supervision, and critically reviewed the manuscript. Dr. Ahmad Zuber, S.Sos., D.E.A. contributed to the interpretation of the research findings and provided critical feedback to improve the manuscript.

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## Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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