

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.11032510

# PHILOSOPHY OF PENCAK SILAT AND ITS FORMATION OF EXPECTATION TO RESTORE THE BARE LIFE

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Received: 28/05/2025

Accepted: 28/08/2025

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## ABSTRACT

*This study revisits the philosophy of pencak silat as a means of restoring dignity and agency for individuals experiencing "bare life" a concept from Agamben referring to lives reduced to mere biological existence, stripped of political and social value. By analyzing the logos of five pencak silat schools, the research explores how visual symbols convey ethical and spiritual meanings that offer hope and resilience. The study focuses on two main objectives: (1) to identify how symbolic codes in the logos reflect values linked to ethical and spiritual well-being, and (2) to assess pencak silat's potential as a cultural resource for restoring human dignity. The analysis combines semiotic interpretation with a hermeneutic comparison to the principles of Maqasid al-Shariah. Findings reveal that pencak silat is not merely physical (calisthenic) but deeply value-oriented. The logos affirms Islamic and Javanese philosophical roots as integral to the identity of the schools. This value system positions pencak silat as a meaningful force in fostering just and peaceful communities. The study recommends aligning pencak silat with SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), integrating its philosophy into national education, and extending this analysis to lesser-known schools to promote broader civic engagement.*

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**KEYWORDS:** Pencak Silat, Bare Life, Hermeneutics of Logo, Calisthenic, Non-calisthenic.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Pencak silat, a traditional martial art originating from the Malay Archipelago, particularly in Indonesia, is a deeply rooted cultural expression beyond mere physical competition. Unlike modern sporting disciplines, pencak silat operates within a holistic framework encompassing spiritual awareness, ethical values, cultural transmission, and self-defense. Although pencak silat is increasingly institutionalized as a competitive sport, its underlying philosophy resists such reductive categorization (UNESCO, 2019). This martial art embodies a tradition that emphasizes mindfulness, personal discipline, and moral values rooted in community life, extending beyond the conventional boundaries of sport (Rois *et al.*, 2024).

One of the core dimensions of pencak silat is the constant readiness to defend oneself against any threat. This continuous vigilance places pencak silat in a unique realm where self-defense is not limited to physical confrontation but extends to maintaining dignity and moral integrity in everyday life. In traditional Javanese and Minangkabau contexts, practitioners learn to respond with restraint, protecting themselves and others without initiating harmful actions (UNESCO, 2019). As Cahyani (2020) notes, pencak silat training integrates life skills such as empathy, responsibility, and resilience, preparing individuals to act ethically under pressure (Cahyani, 2020).

From a philosophical and socio-political standpoint, the relevance of pencak silat becomes clearer when examined through Giorgio Agamben's concept of bare life (Agamben & Sacer, 1998) a condition in which individuals are excluded from political and legal recognition, reduced to mere biological existence. In postcolonial societies such as Indonesia, remnants of colonial governance, authoritarian rule, and socio-economic inequality have created layers of exclusion, particularly affecting rural communities, ethnic minorities, and the urban poor. In these contexts, many individuals experience a form of bare life, rendered invisible by dominant power structures and lacking access to full citizenship. Within this landscape, pencak silat emerges as a cultural practice that reclaims space, voice, and agency for those at the margins.

As an embodied fighting art deeply rooted in communal ethics, pencak silat offers more than physical self-defense; it facilitates the recovery of dignity through ritualized movement, symbolic discipline, and solidarity-based training. Nugroho *et al.* (2024) argue that pencak silat creates spaces for identity and moral reconstruction. Its contribution to

health further reinforces its humanistic value: defined as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being (Conference, 2003), health is enhanced through methods such as game-based circuit training (Burhanuddin *et al.*, 2023). The holistic benefits include improved athletic ability, psychosocial adaptability, spiritual equilibrium, and ethical awareness.

The recognition of pencak silat by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (UNESCO, 2019) affirms its broader role in transmitting values of non-aggression, empathy, and intergenerational cultural wisdom. This study positions pencak silat not merely as a martial tradition or nationalist symbol but as a living philosophy of ethical self-defense, a response to bare life that is grounded in cultural resilience and spiritual dignity. Drawing from Agamben's theory and recent intertextual findings, pencak silat is explored here as a dynamic force in restoring the moral and political substance of life in contemporary Indonesia.

While pencak silat is often highlighted as a culturally embedded self-defense and holistic wellness practice, it is essential to acknowledge that some of its physical benefits, such as increased strength, flexibility, balance, and body coordination, can also be derived from other structured movement systems, most notably calisthenics. Defined as a form of exercise that consists of a variety of movements that do not rely on equipment but use body weight as resistance (Thomas *et al.*, 2017) Calisthenics has gained popularity for improving functional fitness and muscular endurance. This definition emphasizes that, on the one hand pencak silat is non-calisthenic (Alexander *et al.*, 1970), but when looking at the pencak silat moves that impress with fitness and graceful movement (Draeger, 2021) found it hard to deny.

Although calisthenics and pencak silat share similarities in physical outcomes, their cultural orientations, intentionality, and philosophical underpinnings differ. Unlike calisthenics, which are often practiced for aesthetic or health purposes in a secular context, pencak silat integrates spiritual readiness, moral instruction, and community values, making it more than just a physical training regime. Thus, this study distinguishes pencak silat not only through its physical expression but also by its embedded cultural logic and ethical goals.

As an Indonesian cultural heritage, Pencak Silat holds a complexity of meaning that is not only limited to the aspect of self-defense, but also includes the dimensions of aesthetics and physical fitness. In

practice, pencak silat can be read from two sides at once: on the one hand as a form of calisthenics that emphasizes the beauty of movement and physical fitness, and on the other hand as an expression of preparedness for attacks or physical threats. These two sides are not present separately but are united in the identity narrative formed by each school.

Interestingly, the calisthenic and non-calisthenic aspects can be traced even in the visual realm, especially in the symbolic representation of silat school logos. Five historical silat schools called Persaudaraan Setia Hati Terate (PSHT), Perisai Diri, Tapak Suci Putra Muhammadiyah, Perguruan Silat NU Pagarnusa, and Merpati Putih have visual characteristics that show how each school interprets the balance between physical discipline and mental alertness. As a visual medium dense with meaning, the logo plays a vital role in shaping and communicating these values to members and the public.

Based on this background, this study will analyze the logos of the five historical silat schools. These logos are positioned as cultural artifacts representing a synthesis between the calisthenic and noncalisthenic functions of pencak silat and a gateway to understanding the construction of visual identity in Indonesian silat. The problems highlighted through this study are: 1) through observation of the logos, what codes are the five historical silat schools trying to convey regarding the potential of pencak silat as a form of self-defense that goes beyond physical protection and contributes to ethical and spiritual well-being; 2) as a cultural practice, what is the contribution of pencak silat as a form of hope in restoring dignity and agency for individuals experiencing social uncertainty ("bare life"). The objectives of the study based on the two formulations of the problem are: 1) to obtain a description of the meaning of the five logos of historical silat schools to obtain an emic understanding of the values that are the ideology of their cultural practices; 2) to obtain an intertextual understanding of the potential of pencak silat as a solution to socio-cultural problems.

The circuits developed through research are as follows. Bare life in Giorgio Agamben's sense occurs when individuals or groups lose legal, political, and ethical protection, making them mere biological bodies exposed to symbolic or real violence (Agamben & Sacer, 1998). In the context of electoral democracy, this condition often arises after elections or presidential elections when society is divided by political polarization. Those who are ideologically not in line with the rulers or the majority usually

experience stigmatization, digital persecution, and even social exclusion (Nashrullah, 2023). This division causes some citizens to lose safe spaces for expression and equal rights to participate in national life.

The philosophy of pencak silat offers a path to recovery from this situation. As a cultural heritage that teaches harmony, pencak silat fosters mutual respect for differences. Values such as *tepo seliro* (temporary) and *looking without seeing* (flexible without losing principles) form the basis of the ethics of peace (Mayapada, 2025). In the hermitage, differences are not a reason for hostility, but rather a collective strength to reorganize social relations fractured due to political contestation. This approach supports the achievement of SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) by prioritizing culture-based reconciliation. Pencak silat plays a role as a social practice that restores community cohesion and restores human dignity in a democratic space (Carol Cameletti et al., 2016; UNESCO, 2019).

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with an intertextual interpretation framework, which examines the logos of three historical and two big martial arts schools in Indonesia - Persaudaraan Setia Hati Terate (PSHT), Sekolah Silat Nahdlatul Ulama Pagar Nusa, Tapak Suci Putra Muhammadiyah, Perisai Diri, and Merpati Putih. The material object of this study is the symbolic meaning contained in the logo, while the perspective developed includes the value system, spirituality, and social relations encoded into visual symbols. Because it aims to describe philosophical values intertextually, this study considers it essential to compare the values encoded through the symbols in the logos of the five martial arts schools with sharia books such as *Maqasid Al-Syariah*.

The focus of this research is: 1) to explore the philosophical values of the pencak silat school and find the values that are their beliefs; 2) to compare these values with the values of *Maqasid al-syariah*, as a system of ethics and spirituality in Islam. Both objectives must fulfill the research design with a non-normative, reflective, descriptive, and non-evaluative comparative analytical character. The first research focus requires a semiotic method (Peirce), while the second requires a reflexive hermeneutic method. Peirce's semiotics is used to bring out the intended semantic references (semantic contribution) based on original signs (Chandler, 2022). There are two semantic references, the intended meaning and the interpreted meaning (Leech, 1985). The meaning

included is the meaning of the symbols in the pencak silat logo as found on internet sites that list pencak silat schools. The interpreted meaning is the meaning of the symbols contained in the Dictionary of Symbols (Cirlot, 2020). Both meanings are used to understand - the opposite of norming emics each historical silat school's beliefs.

This research method uses reflexive hermeneutics, an approach to objects created by humans (the author's mind) (Gadamer & Linge, 1977). The interpretation of the pencak silat logos according to Gadamer's scheme aims to form a horizon of expectation as part of the horizon of meaning that is being formed, with awareness of the position, social background, and values it carries (Gadamer & Linge, 1977). In this study, reflexive hermeneutics is carried out in a comparative philosophical mode, comparing the findings of the philosophical values of the pencak silat logo with the values of religious ethics, especially Islam.

The logos of the pencak silat schools are analyzed as visual texts representing values such as preparedness, balance, and collective strength. On the other hand, the book *Maqasid al-Shariah* is read as a normative horizon of Islam that emphasizes the protection of the five basic principles of life: religion, soul, reason, lineage, and property (Auda, 2022). This hermeneutic process opens up space for the occurrence of the melting of horizons (Gadamer & Linge, 1977). Between the local horizon of meaning (logo silat) and the universal ethical horizon (maqasid), which produces a new understanding of the value of martial arts as an expression of social and spiritual responsibility.

Through this approach, researchers find equivalence of meaning and re-articulate the values of pencak silat as part of a new horizon of hope rooted in contemporary Islamic ethics. The reflective step is carried out through a spiral reading from the part (elements of logo) to the whole (ethos of silat), then compared thematically with the principles of maqasid. Thus, this approach finds intersections of meaning and opens up the possibility of transposing martial values into the framework of social responsibility and contemporary Islamic spirituality.

The complexity of this research report includes: 1) an intertextual interpretation approach based on the description of symbols in the logo of historical martial arts schools; 2) Peirce's Semiotic analysis: focusing on symbols to find codes; 3) religious reading using a comparative method, does not contain the intention of conducting an evaluation but rather to change potential into expectation. In line with the intertextual research pattern with

hermeneutic analysis, the final result resonated through this research: how to change potential into hope with the robust case of pencak silat restoring bare life.

The disclaimer of this research is that intertextual research does not place data triangulation as an urgency, so that empirical validation is ignored by not including aural data. This position is taken consciously to maintain consistency with the intertextual and semiotic approaches, which place the logo as an autonomous visual text and open to cross-discursive interpretation. Consequently, this study sets aside ontological validation of the symbol creator's intention or the personal meaning of the school members. Instead, the validity of the interpretation is placed on the accuracy of the theoretical framework, the consistency of reading between texts, and the richness of the library data.

First, the intertextual interpretation approach. Intertextual interpretation refers to the process of reading meaning by considering the relationship between texts (in this case: between logos, martial arts cultural discourse, and sharia doctrine). Intertextuality in this study covers two main domains: (1) the horizontal relationship between logos as a system of signs that developed in the Indonesian pencak silat tradition; and (2) the vertical relationship between visual signs in the logo and Islamic spiritual texts formulated in *Maqasid al-syariah* (Allen, 2021) explains that the intertextual approach emphasizes how one text never stands alone, but is constantly in dialogue with other discourses. Therefore, the meaning in the logo of a martial arts school is treated as a visual text that contains historical traces, ideological doctrines, and religious values that can be read across contexts.

Second, Peirce's semiotic analysis: focus on symbols. This study uses Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics to identify the visual meaning in the logo. Although Peirce's model is known for its triadic structure- icon, index, and symbol- this study only focuses on the category symbol. The methodological reason for this reduction is that the logo is a visual construction that is conventional, intentional, and abstract.

First, the icon as a sign that resembles a real physical object is not dominant in the structure of the logo studied. The logo does not explicitly attempt to create a realistic resemblance to a particular object. Second, the index as a sign with a causal relationship with its object is also not dominant. The symbols in the logo do not indicate a direct causal or existential relationship, but are conventional representations.

Thus, all visual elements such as stars, red color,

triangles, circles, lotus flowers, traditional weapons, are understood as symbols in Peirce's sense, a sign whose meaning is formed through social and historical conventions (Bellucci, 2020). The symbols in the logos of martial arts schools thus represent values such as courage, spirituality, unity, and peace. At this stage, the analytical steps carried out are: 1) inventory of visual elements in each logo; 2) interpretation of symbols based on the historical and ideological context of each school; 3) compilation of inferential meaning categories that emerge from the configuration of symbols.

Third, religious reading: Maqasid al-syariah as a value matrix. The second step of the analysis is to compare the symbolic findings with the principles of Maqasid al-Sharia. Maqasid al-shariah is a philosophical theory of Islamic law developed by Al-Ghazali and Al-Shatibi, which formulates five main goals of Islamic Sharia: (1) protection of religion (hifz al-din), (2) soul protection (hifz al-nafs), (3) intellectual protection (hifz al-'aql), (4) offspring protection (hifz al-nasl), and (5) property protection (hifz al-mal). The symbolic meanings that have been analyzed are then placed into this matrix to see to what extent the silat values reflected in the logo are in line with maslahah (public interest), supporting the Maqasid principle. For example, the star symbol in the Tapak Suci logo can be interpreted as a symbol of the value of monotheism, which is relevant to Hifz al-din (Misno, 2020; Tamer, 2024). The symbol of an open hand or a blooming flower can be associated with hifz al-nafs and hifz al-nasl. This reading method allows for a deeper understanding of how the visual heritage of silat functions as a value system that resonates with Islamic spiritual ethics. It also allows for value shift analysis if symbols that emphasize certain ideological aspects more than the Maqasid principle are found.

Fourth, methodological limitations: without empirical validation. This study did not use empirical data collection methods like interviews or observations. Thus, informants or practitioners did not validate symbolic meaning through aural confirmation or phenomenological experience.

Fifth, contribution and methodological excellence. With this approach, the research not only reveals the visual structure of the logo but also opens up the possibility of reading the spiritual values embedded in it. The intertextual approach provides flexibility in reading visual texts through various cultural, spiritual, and ideological discourse layers. Meanwhile, reducing semiotic categories into symbols strengthens the interpretive focus on culturally agreed meanings, not on the similarity or

causality of signs. Within the framework of Maqasid al-syariah, the logo of a silat school is not only an aesthetic object or group identity, but also a religious text that implicitly or explicitly speaks of the values of divinity, humanity, and ethics. This approach combines two rarely studied fields: Silat's visual aesthetics and Islamic law's philosophy.

This study has several limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, it is philosophical in nature, focusing on conceptual reasoning rather than empirical validation. Second, the data presented are primarily textual, drawing from theological sources, philosophical discourse, and symbolic interpretations of pencak silat logos. Third, the methodological perspective is deliberately framed around the formation of expectation as a way to address social dilemmas, which inherently involves a level of interpretive subjectivity when analyzing visual semiotics and symbolic meanings. Finally, the axiological orientation of this research views the formation of hope not merely as abstract thought but as a potential practical solution to the conditions of bare life described by Agamben, where human existence is stripped of political and social recognition. These limitations highlight the interpretive and normative character of the study, setting boundaries for its claims while opening pathways for future empirical research to complement this philosophical inquiry.

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

To obtain an overview of previous research on logo hermeneutics, a map was created using the VOSviewer application. A general filtering process was applied to select relevant literature. Journal exploration using the keywords "hermeneutics" AND "of" AND "logo" on June 13, 2025, through <https://www.scopus.com>. In the initial stage, 26 sources were found from Scopus, from 2020 to 2025. After selecting only English-language articles, 12 sources comprised five books and seven articles. The 12 sources were analyzed using VOSviewer to obtain cross-sectional keywords. The results of the VosViewer analysis are presented in Figure 1. Figure 1 shows that the topic of Hermeneutics (reflexive) for the pencak silat logo object is a research gap. Several findings, both books and journals, can be described as strengthening and marking the position of this research. Books Revelation and the Word of God-Volume 2 emphasizes that God's revelation is not merely a verbal or textual product but a relational encounter between God and humanity through the Logos, the living Word. In light of the hermeneutics of logos, understanding the Word cannot be

separated from symbols, forms, and emblems that embody divine meaning in various forms of verbal and visual representation. This perspective opens

space to interpret the logos of pencak silat as a medium for revealing noble values that originate from spiritual awareness and collective ethics.

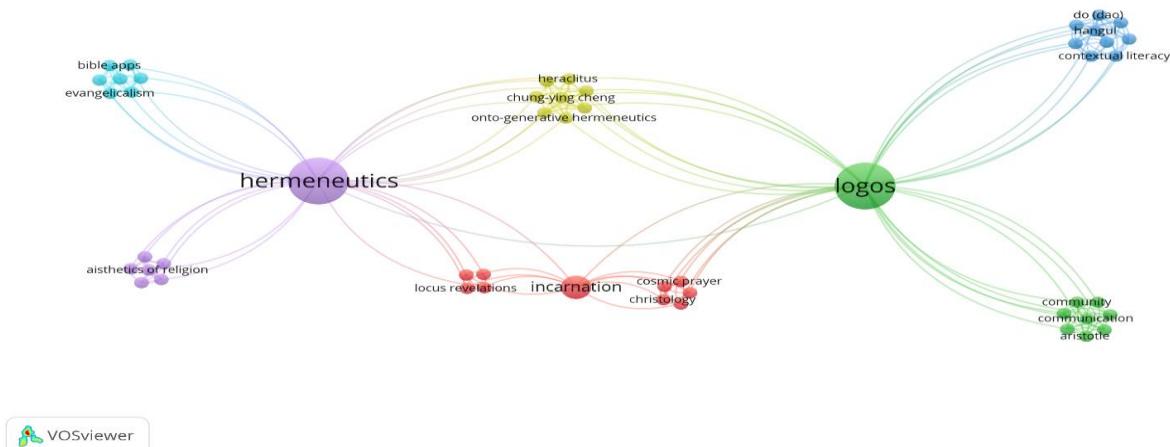


Figure 1. Research Topic Map with the Keyword Hermeneutics of Logo.

As the Word becomes the way, truth, and life (John 14:6), the pencak silat logo contains philosophical values such as balance (tawazun), collective strength (jama'ah), and self-preparedness (murāqabah), which in essence lead to human perfection. In this context, the hermeneutics of the logo is reading the visual form and interpreting the symbol as the embodiment of practical revelation: the truth that guides action. Thus, as the Bible is the Word that guides the people, the pencak silat logo also represents spiritual values in self-defense, forming the ethos of social piety.

In his article, Hung (2023) elaborates on the paradox in translating the concepts of "God" and "Logos" in the Chinese Bible through the lens of linguistic hospitality, Ricoeur's style (Hung, 2023). He shows that the translation of the Word (Logos) is not only a matter of linguistics, but also an openness to foreign meanings that have theological and cultural consequences. Hermeneutics of the logo. Here, it becomes important as an approach that reads symbols and words as a gateway to revealing meaning across cultures and beliefs.

In the context of the philosophical values of pencak silat, the concept Logos, which is translated as a spirit of hospitality, is also seen in the pencak silat logos that combine symbols of strength, balance, and spirituality. For example, the image of a spear, fire, or chakra is not just an ornament, but a symbolic form of the values of wisdom, self-control, and protection of life. If the Logos in Christian theology is

the incarnate Word, then in pencak silat, the Logos becomes the incarnation of noble values and the ethos of a knight. Thus, both in translating the Bible and creating the pencak silat logo, there is a process of hospitality towards meaning: receiving the divine in human form, and translating the invisible into a form that can be interpreted and experienced.

The article interprets the Logos Christology in the Gospel of John as a soteriological response to the cosmic prayer of the Ewe people of West Africa (Sakitey & van Eck, 2023). The Logos, as the eternal Word made flesh (John 1:14), is understood as cognitive revelation and as the embodiment of salvation in a world engulfed in darkness and chaos. Hermeneutics of the logo, in this case, underlines how the symbol and meaning of the Logos are translated across cultures as a light that overcomes cosmic chaos, both in the Gospel texts and in local religious practices.

In the context of the philosophical values of pencak silat, the symbols used in the logos of various schools often contain dualities such as light-dark, up-down, or motion-stillness, which ontologically reflect the human struggle to overcome inner and social "chaos". The logo is not only a symbol of visual identity but also a transcendent medium that brings hope, protection, and spiritual transformation. Just as the Logos in John is the light that gives life, the pencak silat logo is also a form of revelation of values such as courage, inner order, and social harmony. Thus, in the Christological Logos and the pencak silat

logos, we see a transcendent marker leading humans to spiritually and ethically practical salvation.

Wierciński (2023) in his article re-examines the relationship between thinking and believing, emphasizing that power and powerlessness are both present in a moment of openness to revelation. He shows that human thought reaches its limits when confronted with the transcendent, and this is where faith opens up a new path. Hermeneutics of logon, in this framework, it acts as an interpretive space where symbols, both words and images, become a field of dialogue between reason and faith, between representation and deeper reality.

In line with this, it is important to note that many spiritual traditions share a common ground of ethical and metaphysical truths. The Second Vatican Council's *Nostra Aetate* (1965) declares that "the Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions," acknowledging that different religious paths often reflect "a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men" (*Aetate*, 1965). This theological stance allows for a dialogical hermeneutic approach in which Christian symbols such as the Logos can find resonances with non-Christian spiritual symbols, including those embedded in the logos of pencak silat schools. These logos though culturally situated often manifest universal ideals: the pursuit of justice, balance, peace, and transcendence. They function not only as emblems of discipline but as cultural signifiers of an inner longing for harmony with the divine, a motif that Christianity, Islam, and other major religions deeply affirm. Therefore, the presence of shared symbolic structures across religious systems justifies a comparative hermeneutic reading, whereby pencak silat logos are interpreted not in opposition to, but in conversation with, the Christian concept of Logos as light and salvation.

In pencak silat, philosophical values such as humility (emut/recognizing), alertness (eling/awareness), and self-mastery are a form of Ohnmacht, which gave birth to Macht-a- a true power that does not rely on domination, but on inner harmony. The pencak silat logo, when read hermeneutically, is not just a visual identity, but an existential marker: how humans manage the boundaries between strength and vulnerability, between thinking and surrendering to the divine principle. Thus, as Wierciński says, a new beginning in thinking and believing is also reflected in the meaningful silence hinted at by the symbols in the silat world.

Previous studies have linked logos with Christian understanding, so Islamic affirmation in logo studies

will strengthen and complement the religious dimension of logo studies. At the end of this section, it is emphasized that the state of the arts of this study lies in the relationship between: 1) the horizon of hope in terms of the potential of pencak silat as a solution to re-glue social cohesion; 2) the pencak silat logo as the basis and goal of thoughts, attitudes, and actions towards orderliness; 3) in the UN scheme, pencak silat is not always positioned as a calisthenic sport but rather as an instrument for forming an atmosphere of Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (SDGS 16).

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Reasons for Choosing the Subject of *Silat School*

The Indonesian Pencak Silat Association (IPSI) was founded on May 18, 1948 in Surakarta in response to the urgent need to unite the various silat schools spread across the archipelago after independence. This initiative was born from the spirit of nationalism and the need to build a solid cultural identity within the framework of the new Indonesian state (Pratama & Trilaksana, 2018). Several influential silat schools supported the first congress that established IPSI, especially those from Java, such as Persaudaraan Setia Hati Terate (PSHT), Tapak Suci, and Perisai Diri.

In addition to being a forum for unity, IPSI is designed as a parent organization that sets technical standards, championship systems, and national pencak silat education systems. IPSI not only plays a domestic role, but also becomes a channel for cultural diplomacy through pencak silat as a martial art heritage of the nation (Suhardinata & Indrahti, 2021). Since the 1980s, IPSI has been active in fighting for the recognition of pencak silat at the international level through membership in PERSILAT and participation in the SEA Games, Asian Games, and efforts towards the Olympics (Deri, 2024). In this framework, no less important are the large silat schools that have an essential role in the further development of pencak silat, Pagarnusa, and Merpati Putih (PBIPSI, n.d.)

The role of silat schools in the early structure and development of IPSI cannot be separated from the social, ideological, and cultural networks they have. Some of them have been the main drivers since the beginning, while others fill strategic spaces in strengthening the dimensions of religion, spirituality, and cultural resilience within IPSI (Setiawan, 2023).

The selection of these five silat schools is based on their historical, institutional, and cultural roles in

shaping and maintaining the sustainability of silat as a national identity and a tool of cultural diplomacy. Each school not only has a technical influence in the world of pencak silat but also makes ideological, religious, and socio-political contributions to the structure of the Indonesian nation (Pratama & Trilaksana, 2018).

1. Persaudaraan Setia Hati Terate (PSHT), is one of the oldest and earliest organized schools that contributed directly to establishing IPSI. PSHT is known as a pioneer in the unification of streams and creating a national belt system (black belt). With strong roots in East Java and a significant diaspora, PSHT provided the initial structural foundation for IPSI (Suhardinata & Indrahi, 2021).
2. Perisai Diri, founded by RM Soebandiman Dirdjoatmodjo, was key in developing the IPSI engineering laboratory in the 1960s. He played a role in national engineering standardization and the recognition of pencak silat at the international level. The Perisai Diri philosophy, which is open to various schools, makes it a model for modern silat (Pratama & Trilaksana, 2018).
3. Tapak Suci Putera Muhammadiyah, integrates religious values and martial arts as an autonomous Muhammadiyah organization whose existence has been recognized since 1963. Tapak Suci introduced a modern education-based silat cadre approach. This school is also active in national and

international championships, becoming a representation of Indonesian silat in the global arena (Zakaria, 2025).

4. Pagar Nusa, part of Nahdlatul Ulama, was founded in 1986 in response to the need for cultural and spiritual strengthening in martial arts. Pagar Nusa's strength lies in its broad mass base, making it a medium for cultural preaching and a guardian of traditional values in silat. This school strengthens IPSI's relationship with the pesantren community (Setiawan, 2023).
5. Merpati Putih, the family martial arts school of the Yogyakarta Palace, represents the breathing and inner power style of pencak silat. It fills the gaps that competitive silat does not reach: the power of meditation, inner cultivation, and spiritual defense. Known to be active in TNI training and civil defense, Merpati Putih expands the scope of silat from mere sport to a part of national resilience (Farrer & Whalen-Bridge, 2011; Putih, 2021).

With their historical background, organizational contributions, and strong socio-political networks, these five schools are a representative foundation for understanding the development of Indonesian silat holistically as a cultural heritage, national identity, and soft power in international diplomacy. (Suhardinata & Indrahi, 2021). The logos and symbolic meanings of the five martial arts schools are presented in Table 1. Martial Arts Schools and Logo Elements.

*Table 1: Historical Silat Schools and Logo Elements.*

Logo	Symbol-symbol
<p>Persaudaraan Setia Hati Terate (PSHT)</p>  <p>(PSHT, 2011)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shield</li> <li>• Heart</li> <li>• Ray</li> <li>• Lotus flower</li> <li>• Belt</li> <li>• Weapon</li> <li>• The inscription "Persaudaraan"</li> <li>• The inscription "Setia Hati"</li> <li>• The inscription "TERATE"</li> <li>• Black color</li> <li>• White</li> <li>• Red</li> <li>• Yellow</li> <li>• Green</li> <li>• Symmetrical composition</li> </ul>
<p>Perisai Diri</p>  <p>(Diri, 2023)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shield</li> <li>• Martial worship attitude</li> <li>• 5-petal lotus flower <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pita</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The text "PERISAI DIRI"</li> <li>• Black color</li> <li>• White</li> <li>• Red</li> <li>• Yellow</li> </ul>

<p>Tapak Suci Putra Muhammadiyah</p>  <p>(Suci, 2018)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Symmetrical composition</li> <li>• A 12-sided shield forms a ray</li> <li>• Blue field with black border <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11 jasmine flowers</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Palms with fingers open upwards together, thumbs bent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Red Rose Crown</li> <li>• Green rose petals</li> <li>• White ribbon</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The inscription "TAPAK SUCI" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green</li> <li>• White</li> <li>• Red</li> <li>• Yellow</li> <li>• Black color</li> <li>• Blue</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Symmetrical composition</li> </ul>
<p>Merpati Putih</p>  <p>(Putih, 2021)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pentagon shield <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Palm</li> <li>• Merpati Putih</li> <li>• Red ribbon</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The inscription "Betako"</li> <li>• The inscription "Merpati Putih" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black color</li> <li>• White</li> <li>• Red</li> <li>• Yellow</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Symmetrical composition</li> </ul>
<p>Pagar Nusa</p>  <p>(Nusa, 2023)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pentagon shield <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 stars</li> <li>• Trident weapon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Globe</li> <li>• White ribbon</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• The inscription "PENCAK SILAT NAHDLATUL ULAMA" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The inscription "PAGARNUSA" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green</li> <li>• White</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Symmetrical composition</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

#### 4.2. Semiotic Meaning of the Logos of 5 Silat Schools

This analysis utilizes a modern visual semiotic approach, with the main framework from Charles Sanders Peirce, and pays attention to the distinction between intended meaning and interpreted meaning. This discussion is reflective and comparative, aiming to describe the visual elements and explore the ideological potential and universal symbolic meaning of the elements in the logo.

In the Peircean approach, each sign consists of a representamen (visual form), an object (what is referred to), and an interpretant (the meaning that emerges) (Thellefsen & Friedman, 2023). This structure allows us to understand the logo as a relational field between visual elements and the values they mediate. This approach focuses on symbols that are socio-cultural agreements. The

reading of these symbols utilizes a visual semantic approach that emphasizes the importance of historical and cultural context in forming logo meaning (Skaggs, 2019). Each logo is analyzed through two paths: first, institutional meaning based on the official narrative of the school to obtain a description of the intended meaning; second, symbolic meaning through reference to universal symbols, such as A Dictionary of Symbols by Cirlot (2020) to obtain a description of the interpreted meaning. The distinction between these meanings is not intended to test validity but to show the range of possible interpretations and semantic power the symbol possesses.

Categorically, there are similarities in several groups: 1) shields; 2) human body parts; 3) flowers; 4) weapons; 5) upper-lower nature; 6) colors; and 7) symmetrical-asymmetrical composition. The

similarities and symbols in the schools' logos are described in Table 2 categorization of Silat School

Symbols.

**Table 2: Categorization of Silat School Symbols.**

Category	College	Visualization
armor	PSHT	logo border
	Perisai Diri	logo border, Shield inscription
	Tapak Suci	logo border
	Pagar Nusa	logo border
parts of the body	PSHT	heart
	Perisai Diri	praying hands and upper body
	Tapak Suci	Palm
	Merpati Putih	Palm
flower	PSHT	lotus
	Perisai Diri	lotus
	Tapak Suci	jasmine
weapon	PSHT	short stick, silat belt, dagger, sword, karambit, and trident
	Pagar Nusa	trident
top-down nature	PSHT	bright light in darkness (top) and lotus (bottom)
	Perisai Diri	praying hands (top) bowed face (bottom)
	Tapak Suci	sunlight and fingers open upwards (upper realm), thumb bent downwards (below)
	Merpati Putih	dove (top) as a flying bird (bottom)
	Pagar Nusa	night star (top) and globe (bottom)
color	PSHT	black, white, red, yellow, green
	Perisai Diri	black, white, red, yellow
	Tapak Suci	black, white, red, yellow, blue, and green
	Merpati Putih	black, white, red, yellow
	Pagar Nusa	green and white
symmetrical-asymmetrical	PSHT	all areas are symmetrical except for the lotus bud and the words PERSAUDARAAN SETIA HATI TERATE (left to right and top to bottom)
	Perisai Diri	all areas are symmetrical except for the position of the palms (top-bottom) and the words PERISAI DIRI (left to right)
	Tapak Suci	all midwives are symmetrical except for the palms and the inscription TAPAK SUCI
	Merpati Putih	all symmetrical areas except the fingers (towards the top), the thumb (towards the bottom), the dove's head (towards the right), and the words MERPATI PUTIH
	Pagar Nusa	all symmetrical planes except globes and inscriptions

Table 2. categorizes visual symbols found in the logos of five Indonesian pencak silat schools: PSHT, Perisai Diri, Tapak Suci, Merpati Putih, and Pagar Nusa. It includes categories such as armor, body parts, flowers, weapons, top-down nature, color, and symmetry. These categories reflect the schools' values and philosophies. For instance, armor

represents protection, body parts symbolize spiritual and physical readiness, and flowers (like lotus or jasmine) represent purity and wisdom. Weapons reflect self-defense, while the top-down nature elements signify cosmic harmony, and symmetry embodies balance and justice.

Table 3: Semantic Meaning and Cultural Code of Symbols.

Category	Meaning		Cultural Code
	Intended	Interpreted	
armor	Protection against attacks is one of the pillars of Islam and one of the principles of Pancasila.	Attack shield (Cirlot, 2020:464)	general protection, the basis of Islamic doctrine, and the ideology of Pancasila
parts of the body	Depicts the spirit of struggle, the spirit of heroism, the spirit of development, and the spirit of cooperation	natural properties of living organs (Cirlot, 2020:307)	spiritual awareness and vertical and horizontal relations
flower	<i>PSHT</i> – lotus: purity and wisdom (PSHT, 2011) <i>Perisai Diri</i> – yellow lotus: attitude of loyalty (Diri, 2023) <i>Tapak Suci</i> – rose: fragrance, white jasmine: purity (Suci, 2018)	Rose, lotus flower, heart, point that radiates hidden sacred light; imagined to exist, but symbolizing a state achieved through the elimination of separation (Cirlot, 2020:266)	purity, wisdom, loyalty, fragrance (good image)
weapon	<i>PSHT</i> – Silat weapons are a silat practitioner's defense (PSHT, 2011) <i>National Fence</i> – The trident is the oldest weapon in the Indonesian archipelago and is very widely distributed (Nusa, 2023)	works of art and simplicity, giving pleasure to its owner (Cirlot, 2020:315); the separator of right and wrong (error and justice) (Cirlot, 2020:342)	responsibility for property and inheritance
top-down nature	<i>PSHT</i> – Stars are a symbol of hope and aspirations as well as high ideals (PSHT, 2011) <i>Pagar Nusa</i> – The globe is a symbol of the universe, the ribbon says ﴿victory belongs only to GOD﴾	the relationship between two worlds: heaven and earth (Cirlot, 2020:295)	cosmic harmony and direction of life
color	<i>PSHT</i> – green: fertility, serenity, and hope. White color: purity and purity. Yellow color: majesty and success (PSHT, 2011) <i>Tapak Suci</i> – blue: Majesty. black edge: the eternal and eternal nature of Allah SWT (Suci, 2018) <i>Perisai Diri</i> – the colors red and yellow have the meaning of origin and the intercession of father and mother, Red: Courage (Diri, 2023)	expressions of the various forms of the oneness of God	prosperous and noble life in the family
symmetrical-asymmetrical	No college has stated	Immanent justice, guilt as a ritual release of power that brings self-destruction and punishment (Cirlot, 2020:364)	moral structuring and spiritual direction of the movement of life

Table 3. presents the symbolic meanings and cultural codes of the visual elements in the logos. It distinguishes between the intended meaning (official interpretations by the schools) and the interpreted meaning (based on universal symbol interpretations). For example, armor represents protection in line with Islamic and Pancasila principles, while flowers like lotus and rose convey values such as purity, wisdom, and loyalty. Weapons emphasize responsibility in defense, and top down nature elements symbolize cosmic harmony. Color

meanings vary across the schools but generally reflect concepts of purity, courage, and prosperity. Symmetry in the logos is associated with moral structure and spiritual direction.

#### 4.3. Reflexive Meaning

The maqashid points can be juxtaposed with the codes discussed from the symbols in the pencak silat logo, which can be arranged in the matrix in Table 4. Reflection of Maqasid Based on Symbolic Codes.

**Table 4: Reflection Based on Cultural Code.**

No	Code Crystallization		Reflection of the Purpose
	7 Cultural Code	5 Codes	
1.	general protection, the basis of Islamic doctrine, and the ideology of Pancasila	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>protection</li> <li>Islamic doctrine</li> <li>Pancasila ideology</li> </ul>	care in general and care of religion and ideology (hifz ad-din)
2.	spiritual awareness and vertical and horizontal relations	real life doctrine of good relations between humans and humans and humans and God	care of life (hifz al-nafs)
3.	purity, wisdom, loyalty, fragrance (good image)	the glory of reason	care of reason (hifz al-aql)
4.	responsibility for property and inheritance	property and inheritance	custody of property (hifz al-maal)
5.	cosmic harmony and direction of life	real life doctrine	care of life (hifz al-nafs)
6.	prosperous and noble life in the family	family glory	progeny care (hifz al-nasl)
7.	moral structuring and spiritual direction of the movement of life	real life doctrine	care of life (hifz al-nafs)

Table 4 connects the symbolic codes from Table 3 to the core principles of Maqasid al-Shariah. It demonstrates how symbols like armor (protection) align with Hifz al-Din (protection of religion), body parts (spiritual and human relationships) reflect Hifz al-Nafs (protection of life), and flowers (purity and wisdom) correspond to Hifz al-Aql (protection of reason). Weapons symbolize Hifz al-Mal (protection of property), while elements of cosmic harmony and family prosperity reflect Hifz al-Nasl (protection of progeny). This framework highlights how the visual symbols in the logos resonate with Islamic ethical and spiritual values. From the five logos, various forms of relations between intended and interpreted meaning emerge: 1) confirmation: PSHT and Merpati Putih show the harmony between official messages and universal symbol interpretations; 2) expansion: Tapak Suci and Pagar Nusa gain additional symbolic depth by reading universal spiritual iconography; 3) concretization: Shield of Self shows how ideological concepts such as Pancasila gain profound visualization through semantic symbols. This shows that the symbols in the silat logo represent institutional identity and become a vehicle for articulating universal values such as justice, purity, protection, and peace.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

### 5.1. Conclusion

Through a close examination of the visual elements in the logos of five silat schools-three historical (Persaudaraan Setia Hati Terate, Perisai Diri, and Tapak Suci) and two prominent and influential (Merpati Putih and Pagar Nusa)-it can be seen that each contains symbols that not only

represent the organization's identity, but also include codes of ethical and spiritual values. These logos convey that pencak silat, although known as a physical martial art, also carries a transcendental spirit of protection. These codes go beyond the function of self-defense and touch on aspects of character building, moral strengthening, and achieving inner balance, making pencak silat a holistic and spiritually meaningful means of self-defense. As a cultural practice rooted in the community's lives, pencak silat holds potential and a horizon of hope in responding to various contemporary social challenges. Amid social uncertainty that marginalizes many individuals - those in a condition of "bare life" without social and symbolic protection - pencak silat offers a path to restoring dignity and strengthening agency. The values that live in silat schools, such as solidarity, discipline, and spirituality, place pencak silat not only as a cultural heritage, but also as a form of social intervention that is relevant and effective in restoring complete humanity.

### 5.2. Implications

Thus, there is great hope that silat schools will not only become centers of self-defense training but also play a role as strategic partners for the government and society in strengthening social cohesion and preserving the nation's noble values in line with Pancasila and religious teachings. Silat schools also have the opportunity to become models of cultural institutions that inspire the global community, presenting examples of how local practices can form peace, solidarity, and strong social institutions amidst the challenges of an ever-changing era.

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