

Power Hegemony in Pasarean Mount Kawi over Ngalab Berkah Myth

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ABSTRACT

Ngalab berkah is one of rites held by people on Mount Kawi (Mount Kawi). This rite can be done every day, but there are some days when many people visit the Mount, on *Jumat Legi* (eve) and in the month of *Sura*. This research was conducted to find out how the hegemony of the ruler in *Pasarean Mount Kawi* (Mount Kawi Cemetery) is over the people who do *Ngalab berkah*. *Ngalab berkah* rite in *Pasarean Mount Kawi* is intended to find blessing, security, tranquillity, and *penglarisan* (a supernatural science aiming to make the product sold out or successful business). This study was a qualitative research type. Data source of research included (1) informant, (2) event, and (3) document. Techniques of collecting data used were (1) in-depth interview, (2) participatory observation, and (3) document study. This research employed research instrument including (1) author, (2) interview guide, (3) field note, and (4) recorder. Technique of analyzing data used was interactive analysis model, encompassing (1) data collection, (2) data reduction, (3) data interpretation, and (4) conclusion drawing. The result of research shows the hegemonic power of the ruler in *Pasarean Mount Kawi* with *Ngalab berkah* myth using ritual symbols in *Ngalab berkah* rite. The success of ritual performers can be seen from the event (*hajatan*) held related to their success, business performance, tranquillity, and success in the event. Hegemony of Yayasan Ngesti Gondo affects the successful search for blessing.

Keywords: Hegemony, Power, Ngalab berkah, Mount Kawi.

1. INTRODUCTION

Belief in *selamatan Ngalab berkah* rite has been held by the people to look for fortune. Despite modern time with sophisticated technology, *Ngalab berkah* tradition remains to be existent and do by people. *Ngalab berkah* is defined as looking for fortune believed in to generate luck, for example, there is a *Ngalab berkah* tradition by means of grabbing food put on the *gunungan*, *Ngalab berkah sadranan* or *nyadran* on the ancestral grave in Yogyakarta in the month of *Sura*. Similarly, *Ngalab berkah* in *Pasarean Mount Kawi* is conducted by holding *selamatan* in hall agung *pasarean*. *Pasarean Mount Kawi* is the graves of Eyang Djoego and R.M. Iman Soedjono, the soldiers of Pangeran Diponegoro, his spiritual teacher, and a figure who cleared (*babad alas*) Wonosari, Mount Kawi.

Pasarean Mount Kawi has been known to the wide society as the place to seek for blessing or *Ngalab berkah*. *Ngalab berkah* rite in *Pasarean Mount Kawi* aims to look for blessing, security, tranquility, and *penglarisan*. *Selamatan Ngalab berkah* in *Pasarean Mount Kawi* is done every day, but there are some days when many people visit the Mount, on *Jumat Legi*

(Friday *Legi*) eve and in the month of *Sura*. Javanese people believe that *Jumat Legi* relates to the spirit occupying the grave. Sudarti [1] confirms that *Jumat Legi* symbolizes water and water is human's vital life need. *Jumat* (Friday) serves to support life; *legi* symbolizes East direction compared with new-born human. *Jumat Legi* can be defined as human's beginning time. It can be said that the new-born human is still pure and clean, so that the day is believed to be a good one to pray to God. On *Jumat Legi* eve, pilgrims or those looking for blessing on Mount Kawi will hold *tasyakuran* (expression of gratitude) by organizing wayang performance or *selamatan*. *Selamatan* is a hereditary ancestral tradition done by people. *Selamatan* is the manifestation of Hindu-Buddha cultural acculturation and when Islam came, it became a means of teaching religion to the people. *Selamatan* is an expression of gratitude for blessing and bliss given God. In addition, it also serves as the request for security and success to God. In *selamatan* some prayer is read and it is attended by some people, and meal or *sesaji* is served. During *selamatan Ngalab berkah* in *Pasarean Mount Kawi*, a variety of intermediaries is used as the form of the belief of the one holding the event. In the *selamatan*,

ayam ingkung (chicken meat), goat meat, and beef are used, and so are flower for *nyekar*—giving respect to the dead by coming to their grave and incense. The *selamatan* package can be ordered in the *selamatan* package counter managed by Ngesti Gondo Foundation.

Ngesti Gondo Foundation is the manager of *pasarean*, the members of which are Nitidirejo descendants. Nitidirejo is the descent R.M. Iman Soedjono. Ritual procession in *pasarean* is managed by Ngesti Gondo Foundation that prepares *ubarampe* or ritual equipment and wayang performance and the officers of *pasarean* complex organized by the foundation. The organization of *selamatan Ngalab berkah* rite can be coordinated by the performer or the one holding the event and the foundation. They order *selamatan* equipment or *sesaji* and *ubarampe*. Blessing seekers believe that *sesaji* should be present in the *Ngalab berkah* rite as the intercession of prayer. Ngesti Gondo Foundation helps prepare anything necessary to follow up this belief. In addition, the foundation also prepares prayer reader in *selamatan*. In this case, pilgrims and blessing seekers follow it consciously. Therefore, there is hegemony in *Ngalab berkah* rite in *pasarean* Mount Kawi. Grasmci in Barker [2] stated that hegemony is a situation in which a “historical block” of the ruling-class faction undertakes social authority and leadership over subordinate classes through a combination of power and approval. In this *selamatan Ngalab berkah* rite, the ruler looks for and maintains power. The power of *Ngalab berkah* rite in Mount Kawi is dominated by Ngesti Gondo Foundation as the *pasarean* manager. Therefore, an in-depth study is required on the cause of power hegemony occurring in *pasarean* Mount Kawi and the groups involved in the power hegemony. However, an investigation should be done first on the figure buried in the *pasarean* Mount Kawi leading to the emergence of *selamatan Ngalab berkah* rite there.

2. METHOD

This study was qualitative research. This research revealed the hegemony of power in *pasarean* Mount Kawi; therefore, hegemony theory was used. Social approach was used to reveal the hegemony of power in Mount Kawi using hegemonic theory. Data source of research consisted of (1) informant, (2) event, and (3) document. Informants of research were, among others, the chairperson of Ngesti Gondo foundation, *keymaster* (the custodian of graveyard), members of Ngesti Gondo association, performers of *Ngalab berkah*, master prayer (the one serving to raise prayer), head of village, and chief of tourist destination section of Tourism Office. The event occurring in *Ngalab berkah* rite is portrayed as data source, from buying *ubarampe selamatan*, *selamatan* package, to *selamatan* procession. Documents of *Ngalab berkah* procession photographs, *selamatan* equipment providers, hall to conduct

pasarean and books providing supporting information on Mount Kawi are the data source of research. Techniques of collecting data were (1) in-depth interview, to explore the data in more detail, interview was conducted with informants, (2) participatory observation, the author observed and participated directly in the *selamatan Ngalab berkah* rite, and (3) document study. This research used the following research instruments: (1) author, (2) interview guide, this guide serves as the hint to prepare question corresponding to the data needed, (3) field note is made to record the author's activity in collecting data, and (5) recorder is used to facilitate the collection and the classification of information resulting from interview.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Pasarean Mount Kawi has a distinctive appeal attraction to discuss because public has known it as a place to look for blessing and fortune. *Pasarean* Mount Kawi is the cemetery of Eyang Djoego and R.M. Iman Soedjono. Both figures were also known as a healer, a leader, and role model of society, as well as the faithful soldier of Pangeran Diponegoro during the war fighting against Dutch in 1825-1830 [3]. People with different ethnic and creed backgrounds come to the *pasarean* with varying purposes; some of them come to pray for Eyang Djoego and R.M. Iman Soedjono (two figures with supernatural power) buried there, some others do *Ngalab berkah* rite, and some others come to make a tour. In addition to *Ngalab berkah* rite with *selamatan*, some people also do so under Dewandaru tree. They wait for the tree's fruits or leaves falling down, because they believe that the one getting the fruit or the leaf will get fortune.

Many people still believe that visiting the cemetery of saints or those with supernatural power can be a means of asking for blessing, livelihood, fortune, supernatural power, and success. People still hold the belief until today. The habit then gradually becomes tradition, including tradition of going on a pilgrimage to the cemetery of saints or those with supernatural power. Koentjaraningrat [4] confirmed the perspective of people who go on pilgrimage to cemetery that the spirit of saint has a power to protect the nature. The spirit of dead saints will remain to have supernatural power or to be able to help the living ones, so that their living descendants will attempt to keep being connected to and adoring them. It indicates that the spirit of dead person can give help, so that many people do *Ngalab berkah* in the cemetery of saints. There are some cemeteries to which people come to do *Ngalab berkah*: the cemeteries of Syech Tubagus Zakaria in Tangerang, Kiai Damarjati in Salatiga, *para wali* (religious leaders), kings in Imogiri Yogyakarta, Pangeran Samodra in Mount Kemukus Sragen Central Java, Eyang Djoego and R.M. Iman Soedjono in Mount Kawi Malang. The people

come to those places with varying intentions and purposes. Koentjaraningrat (1994: 35) state that people going on a pilgrimage to the cemetery are generally connected to the sacred figure buried in the place. Javanese people call it *agami Jawa* (Javanese religion). The sacred ones include religious teachers, historical or semi-historical figures, heroic figures from mythological story known from wayang performance and the figures famous for a certain event. The figures buried in Mount Kawi belong to historical ones and the spiritual teacher of Pangeran Diponegoro.

3.1. Pasarean Mount Kawi

Pasarean Mount Kawi is located in Wonosari Village of Wonosari Sub-District of Malang Regency. *Pasarean* Mount Kawi is known as a sacred place to seek for blessing, fortune, and business success. Tranquil nuance, and incense and flower aromas feel strongly in the *pasarean* complex. Sulistyorini [5] said that the existence of *Pasarean* Mount Kawi as the ritual space has been well-known to the public since a long time ago. *Pasarean* Mount Kawi is famous for two reasons: Sudarti [1] the figures buried there are historical ones participating in Pangeran Diponegoro's war against Dutch, and Barker [2] the growth of people's trust in the cemetery of both figures as the intermediary of wish granting makes the name *Pasarean* Mount Kawi more famous. The people's trust in going on a pilgrimage and seeking for blessing to the cemetery of supernatural figures has been hereditary tradition.

The figures buried in Mount Kawi are Eyang Djoego and R.M. Iman Soedjono. Eyang Djoego died on *Minggu Legi malam Senin Pahing* (Sunday Legi or Monday Pahing eve), 1st date of *Selo* in 1879, and then his corpse was brought to Mount Kawi's slope to be buried on *Kamis Kliwon malam Jumat Legi* (Thursday Kliwon or Friday Legi eve). Meanwhile, R.M. Iman Soedjono died on *Rabu Kliwon* (Wednesday Kliwon) in 1876 *Masehi*) [6]. Both figures were buried adjacently. There are three gates to go into or to access *Pasarean* Mount Kawi. *Juru kunci* (the custodian of graveyard) said that the three gates have specific philosophy, reflecting that human beings will experience three life processes: being born, live, and die. The first gate is reminiscent of birth. The second reminds human beings to undertake their life in the world. The third is the death gate, symbolizing that human beings will go back to God the One and Only [5]. The three gates indicates life cycle from birth to death.

Grave as the place where human beings are buried after death is considered as pure or holy, so that people who will go to the place should be pure as well. Those who will go on a pilgrimage to the grave should be pure, woman who is having menstruation is prohibited from going there, footwear should be put off, and flower and incense should bring in. The purity is always

maintained, because prayer should be raised on clean and holy condition. Praying in *pasarean* Mount Kawi can be done corresponding to individuals' creed. Basically, they ask to God through the two figures buried in the graveyard as the ritual expression using flower and incense. They believe that the spirit of saints has supernatural power that can connect them to *Sang Hyang Widhi*. Going on a pilgrimage to *pasarean* Mount Kawi is the meeting point of various religions and creeds because the figures buried are Muslims, while the pilgrims hold varying religions and creeds. However, it can cultivate tolerance between religious communities and ethnics.

3.2. The Power of Ngesti Gondo Foundation in Pasarean Mount Kawi

Selamatan Ngalab berkah rite can be done every day in *pasarean* Mount Kawi. The *selamatan* in hall agung of *pasarean* can be done on 08.00-11.00 a.m.; 02.00-04.00 p.m., and 08.00-11.00 p.m. and it can be done for 24 hours on *Jumat legi* (Friday Legi). Those seeking for blessing in *pasarean* Mount Kawi have varying purposes: to seek for blessing, fortune, successful business, sold-out product, and tranquility. During seeking for blessing, *sesaji* should be brought and prayer should be read by *master prayer* on duty in *pasarean* hall. Prayer is intended to Eyang Djoego and R.M. Iman Soedjono and raised to *Sang Hayang Widhi* or God.

Master prayer, the officers in *pasarean* Mount Kawi complex, kitchen of *pasarean* to order *selamatan* equipments, and *nadzar tasyakuran nanggap wayang* (the rite to express gratitude to God through holding wayang performance) have been prepared by Ngesti Gondo Foundation. This foundation is led by Yana as the manager of *pasarean* Mount Kawi. There are two *keymasters* of *pasarean* Mount Kawi: Yana and Nanang. The activity in *pasarean* is organized and structured tidily by the Yayasan. It indicates the presence of Ngesti Gondo Foundation's power in the *pasarean*. They dominate the organization of *Ngalab berkah* and *nadzar* rite conducted by the ritual performers. The ritual performers dominated by the rulers of *pasarean* (Yayasan Ngesti Gondo) do not feel oppressed because they are aware that the rule in ritual procession prevails without compulsion. The hegemony occurs in *pasarean* Mount Kawi due to the presence of rulers who have power to dominate the community groups visiting the *pasarean*. Gramsci defines hegemony as the ways taken by the dominant group of society to maintain its domination over subordinate group culturally and ideologically [7]. In this case, subordinate groups agree and consciously follow the doctrine of the ruling group.

The performers of *Ngalab berkah* hold *selamatan* first before they go to *pasarean* hall, they buy flower

and incense, order *selamatan* or *nadzar* package, and then go to hall *pasarean* and reveal their wish of *selamatan* to *pengujub doa*. *Selamatan* package order, as ritual *sesaji* (offering), will be delivered by the officer from the kitchen to hall *pasarean*. Meanwhile, in the procession of *selamatan Ngalab berkah*, *sesaji* for *selamatans* ready, master prayer read the prayer corresponding to the ritual performers' intention or purpose, thereafter, *sesaji* is given to the ritual performers, ritual performers prayer before the graves of Eyang Djoego and R.M. Iman Soedjono while bringing flower and incense. Flower and incense are given to the officers sitting down before the grave and the *juru kunci* read prayer for it. *Keymaster* is sitting down beside the grave. After the performers pray before the grave, the officers give two small parcels containing flower and incense to be brought home. The ritual *selamatan* procession in *pasarean* Mount Kawi has been structured and the officers play their role corresponding to their respective duties. Culture in Gramsci's theory is put into common sense concept. Common sense is an individual's uncritical understanding that is often unaware of world [8]. It enables hegemony to run as something reasonable and acceptable to subordinate community. Through the mechanism, hegemony runs and common sense becomes a means of legitimizing the hegemony performed by dominant group over subordinate group.

Hegemony runs smoothly and is controlled well in *pasarean* Mount Kawi. The managers of *pasarean* help and cooperate with each other to make the ritual procession conducted by the performers of *Ngalab berkah* run smoothly. Through hegemony concept, Gramsci wants to reveal social controlling methods used by dominant group [9]. Gramsci theory suggests that subordinate groups accept value idea and leadership of dominant group due to a reason made by dominant group to secure the ideology inculcated, rather than based on either physical or mental invitation.

Dominant group in *pasarean* Mount Kawi is controlled by the Chairperson of Ngesti Gondo Foundation. The foundation is established in structured manner to undertake the task corresponding to its role and responsibility. They, of course, benefit materially from the ritual performers, particularly from *selamatan* package order and "sari (essence)" in *Ngalab berkah*. The power is controlled "softly" in *pasarean* Mount Kawi and subordinate group accept it consciously without compulsion. The performers of *Ngalab berkah* rite implement *selamatan* procession volitionally and based on their creed. Gramsci states that one group's or one class' supremacy is manifested into two ways: domination or coercion and intellectual and moral leadership [10]. It is supremacy of intellectual and moral leadership that creates hegemony. Through consensual control of intellectual and moral supremacy, dominant group assimilates its world view to the dominated

groups. The perspective of the foundation as *pasarean* manager comprehends hereditarily the ritual tradition in *pasarean* Mount Kawi understood by the performers of *Ngalab berkah* rite. They follow the pre-existing tradition because the managers of *pasarean* are more experienced with organizing the rite.

The *Ngalab berkah* ritual hegemony process occurs in multilayer manner in *pasarean* Mount Kawi. It means that there are some levels of dominant group controlling subordinate groups. Government is the first dominant group with the power of controlling other subordinate groups. The government intended in this case is Tourism Office of Malang Regency and Wonosari Village. Ngesti Gondo Foundation is the local dominant group becoming the power that can hegemonize the implementation of *Ngalab berkah* rite in *pasarean* Mount Kawi. Social control based on the agreement entered into by the pilgrims concerning the domination of ritual rule and mechanism specified indicates that hegemony process has occurred in the rituals held in *pasarean* Mount Kawi.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Ngalab berkah tradition has run for a long time in *pasarean* Mount Kawi and is still believed in by the people until today. The rituals in *pasarean* Mount Kawi are held by the performers of *Ngalab berkah* coming from various ethnic and creed backgrounds, but with the same purposes to seek for blessing, security, tranquillity, and business success. Some intermediaries, in the form of *selamatan* offering package prepared by NgestiGondo Foundation, are used in praying for expressing the purposes. Additionally, the officers helping the ritual procession are also designated by the foundation, from *pengujub doa*, manager of *selamatan* kitchen, and recipient of flower and incense brought by pilgrims. It indicates the existence of power in *pasarean* dominated by the Foundation. Hegemony is accepted by the performers of *Ngalab berkah* rite as the subordinates with their approval and consciousness without compulsion. Therefore, hegemony is not domination based on the power, but the approval relationship based on political and ideological leadership approach. The hegemony of *Ngalab berkah* rite in *pasarean* Mount Kawi contains some dominant group levels controlling subordinate groups. The first dominant layer is government, while the second layer is Ngesti Gondo Foundation as local dominant group. Hegemony results from a variety of institutional or group activities within capitalistic society.

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