

**POST-COLONIAL SAMIN IDENTITY;  
State, Religion and Tradition struggles in Pro-Con Construction of Cement Factory in  
Sukolilo Pati, Central Java.**

By : Abdulloh Hamid\*

**Preface**

Identity Politics in the present Samin community is affected by the legacy of its memory and spirit of the struggle against the Dutch colonialists. In the 20th century, exactly on February 4, 1907 Samin community led by Ki Surosentiko Samin movement refused to pay taxes, which is then followed by his followers. Payment of taxes by Samin community is not in accordance with conscience, Samin view "*lemah pada duwe, banyu pada duwe, kayu pada duwe*" (we have our own land, water, and soil) so there is no reason to pay taxes. Farmers living from working the rice fields and grazing cattle, so the obligation to pay taxes by the Dutch colonial government burden them much.

After Indonesia's independence, until the New Order era, Samin community in Hamlet Village Bombong Baturejo Sukolilo Pati district of Central Java province is considered as anti-development community, they do not want to accept help from the government, and cannot be touched by Islamization and evangelism. Samin community also rejected the religion and government in its border community. In the post-reform period, they also reject the construction of cement factory that they consider as a harmful thing for their natural ecosystems of Kendeng mountains (that lies from Pati to Blora). Moreover, they also think that this project will destroy their land and water resources because only farming which becomes the only mainstay of their livelihood, and will only benefit few people.

This research tries to explore identity politics Samin community, when dealing with government repression and his ocnum, company up to religious institutions. This study wanted to explore the phenomenon of Samin community by analyzing how to position Samin community in the context of the pros and cons of the construction of a cement factory in the mountains Kendeng in Sukolilo Pati, how the pattern of negotiations with the State Samin community is, religious institutions in the post-colonial and what visual expression / identity symbols as post-colonial communal Samin community are.

This study also sought space on studies and literature that discusses Samin movement and community life. Several previous studies on the Samin movement, such as the work of Harri J. Benda-Lance Castles in *The Samin Movement* describes the causes of the resistance movement led by Samin Surosentiko as resistance against Dutch colonial farmers, resistance is done by refusing to pay taxes. Resistance that began from the Blora on February 4, 1907 in a relatively short but has a lot of followers, among others: Apex, Tuban, Bojonegoro, Ngawi, Grobogan, Pati and Kudus (Harry J. Benda, 1969:207-216) .

In addition, Justus M. Van der Kroef in *The Messiah in Indonesia and Melanesia*, writes about Saminists resistance against Dutch colonial imagination Messiah or messianic figure

within Samin Surasentika. (der Kroef, Justus M. Van, 1952:161-162), Viktor T. King in the Same Observations on the Samin Movement of North-Central Java: Suggestions for The Theoretical Analysis of the Dynamics of Rural Unrest. In his study he discusses the Samin movement in the northern part of Central Java, to analyze the development of the movement with the economic foundations of the society and not the forest. (Victor T. King, 1973; 457-481). A. Pieter E. Korver in his book *The Samin Movement and Millenarism* reviewed, reviewing millenarisme Samin in motion, as the identity of the movement. (A. Pieter E. Korver, 1976; 249-266). Takashi Shiraishi also in *Dangir's Testimony: Saminism Reconsidered*, reviewed the reports of the colonial against the followers of Samin (Dangir) in Genengmulyo, Heilbron to read Saminisme influence in some areas on the north coast of Java. (Takashi Shiraishi, 1990; 95-120). Benedict Anderson (1996) and Saminis Millenarisme Movement, and Widodo (1997) in *Samin in the Order: The Politics of Encounter and Isolation*. more emphasis on the study of post-independence Saminists. And how traditional power struggle going on, as seen also in the study of minority rights that was done by Uzair Ahmad (2007) in *Political Representation and Discourse Multiculturalism in Practice Program Remote Indigenous Communities (KAT) Case Sedulur Sikep Bombong-bacem*.

Sadi Suripan Hutomo (1996) in *the tradition of Blora*, wrote about the traditions that exist in Blora, mostly talking about people's lives in Klopoduwur Samin, Blora. Suripan clearly described results of research and observations of the successor Samin Surasentika extant native village, in addition, Suripan also discussed sayings patterns, communication patterns and symbols of Saminists' symbol game and analysis of important texts that guide the wisdom of Samin residents.

In addition, Moh Rosyid (2008) in *Samin Kudus: Bersahaja di Tengah Asketisme Lokal*, doing research on the Samin in Undaan Kudus, Rosyid found, Samin community can get along with the friendly residents around the location where he lived, but he still hold his values these are the basic principles of the legacy of the ancestors, such as religion and patterns of communication with members of the group and outside of the group.

From some research on previous Samin, mostly in the domain of historiography, religious, cultural, political authorities up to the indigenous communities, this study attempted to fill the empty space of Samin study on using the framework of Postcolonial Perspective, to analyze current issues such as the case of the pros-cons cement plant in Sukolilo, which involves the contestation Samin community aspirations. By using Postcolonial Perspective it will find a common thread in the construction of political consciousness among the colonists of the present, which changed from a colonial interests of local political authorities and economic interests of the company. Leela Gandhi revealed that postcolonial help clear pattern of differences between native and invader, and to construct a political consciousness, uniting the revolutionary movement, and stand up against the new invaders (Gandhi, 1998:11).

## **Genealogy of Samin movement**

Samin movement was originally a movement against the colonial Dutch, after the Dutch left Indonesia, the movement continued and developed into a community of its own, which has distinct characteristics and attitudes from Java community at large. Samin name is taken from the name of its leader, namely Samin Surosentiko.

People of Samin's adherents use *bahasa jawa ngoko* For them to respect other people not from the language used, but the attitudes and actions that indicated they were often accompanied sanepo language (parable). To understand the language of the Samin, it is necessary caution to avoid misinterpretation.

At first the Dutch had not noticed this community, but over time the Dutch felt threatened. In 1905 followers of the Samin's values began to change their ways. They refused to pay taxes and refused to impound cattle in the barn along with other villagers, way of life so confusing village officials. (Deden Fathurrahman, 1996:16)

1907 is an important year in the course of formation of the cumin. This year his followers reached 5,000 people, and it makes the colonial government scared and shocked. On March 1, 1907, they were reported to when they gathered in the village of Tuban Blora Kedhung salvation event in one of the member of Samin followers. Those who came were arrested on charges of preparing for rebellion, and finally around the date of December 17, 1907, Samin Surontiko arrested by Prince Pranolo assistant district officer in Randublatung Blora then exiled to Digul Irian Jaya and eventually exiled to Sawahlunto and died in 1914. (RPA Soerjanto Sastroatmojo, 2000:16)

Thus Samin movement is a farmer resistance to colonial rule, using an anti-violence strategies. They turned the 'logic of language' as a means of avoiding repression, Samin community againsted the Dutch colonial with innocence and *ilmu bodon* which are still looking at the current generation descendants Samin. if during the Dutch colonial of Samin community gathered some farmers to fight invaders by refusing to pay taxes, then now Samin community against the government by rejecting the establishment of cement factory along the mountains Kendeng Sukolilo Pati.

### **From Samin towards Cement**

In the last seven years, Pati's residents of Central Java busy with plans cement plant construction project in Sukolilo. (Kompas, 25/2/2009 accessed 18 September 2012). Government of Central Java (Central Java Provincial Government) and the Local (Pati government), symbolically has an agreement with PT Semen Gresik (SG), to build a cement factory in the area of Sukolilo, because in Sukolilo exactly in the mountains Kendeng Sukolilo he has content karts, and other mineral materials which will be used as raw material for cement. Then the Central Java Provincial Government, Local Government and SG took Starch Universitas Diponegoro (Diponegoro University) Semarang, to conduct Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), after extensive analysis and mining exploration and feasibility cement plant Undip stated that the parties, in Sukolilo Worth Kendeng Mountains serve as mine site. (www.undip.ac.id / download / Chafid-EIA-SG.pdf accessed 18 September 2012). on the other hand results Undip opposed by many researchers from other universities such as ITB Bandung, UPN Yogya etc.

(<http://suaramerdeka.com/v1/index.php/read/cetak/2001/05/23/147313/Sosialisasi-Amdal-Pabrik-Semen-Diprotos>)

However, the desire of Central Java Provincial Government and Local Government to support PT Semen Gresik to explore Kendeng Mountains, it doesn't get the deal from some local people, especially people Sukolilo, Kayen and Tambakromo (Three districts closest to the mountains Kendeng). Some society groups, NGO's openly disagrees with the SG factory construction plan because it threatens the balance of natural ecosystems and the present environmental degradation. Although the government has said that the development of Pati's SG will be able to create new jobs for some residents in the mountains of Kendeng, so it cases the people around the mountains Kendeng into two groups, namely the group that supports the construction of a cement plant (Pro) and the groups who reject of sukolilo's residents (Contra).

Some residents Sukolilo, Kayen and Tambakromo reject cement plant, citing many disadvantages than the benefits, advantages cement plant will only be enjoyed by the political elite, and land broker. Many NGOs, such as the Community Care Network Kendeng Mountains (JMPPK), SHEEP Indonesian Starch Farmers Union (SPP), and Ssmin community rejected this Cement factory construction.

Pros and cons are not just a question of rejecting and accepting, but the problems go beyond religious and social relations. Parties rejecting the cement factory organized dozens of demonstrations to the regional government and the Provincial Government of Central Java Pati. Gunretno (a young leader of Samin) reveals that the Samin community is not opposed to development, but declined to environmental destruction, as happened in Tuban. Gunretno described:

*"aku lan sak konco rak wes dolan menyang Tuban, ndelok sedulur-sedulur kang manggon nang kono, ono pabrik semen, aku sak konco kroso trenyuh urip nang kono podo ngenes, ora podo karo janji-janji pabrik semen".*

"I and sedulur Sikep fellow - the term for followers Samin -'ve been to Tuban, see brothers who were there, near the cement plant site, my brother felt pity, pity about their lives that are miserable, so it's totally different from the promise of the cement factory".

Pros and cons of cement plants across the social space, economy, culture, and religion among the Sukolilo's citizens and Pati's residents generally. The high society of organizations tend to be much in the middle, such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and his independent institution. Muhammadiyah Regional Board support confirmed Pati cement plant. In-religious social structures, Islam is the largest religion: NU as the majority followed by Muhammadiyah, Rifa'iyah, there are also followers of Islam LDII kejawen. There was also the follower of Christian, Catholic, Buddhist and Hindu. As well as some of the Chinese living in this area, in the community Sukolilo Samin (Sedulur Sikep) Bombong

in Hamlet, Village Baturejo reach hundreds of families, the largest number of post-Samin Surosentiko Samin community who migrated from Klopoduwur Blora towards Bojonegoro, Tuban, Apex, Purwodadi, Sukolilo (Pati), until Unda'an (Kudus).

Besides the pros and cons of cement plant also affected Islamic studies and prayers, the sense of conflict-based on political economy shifted into widespread religious conflict in Sukolilo. The highlight of the pros and cons Cement conflict continues as Sukolilo Market will be built, the opposing parties of cement factory also reject the construction of this market, because according to them it will also be devastating to smaller communities because they have to buy a new stand that are expensive and not affordable by them. Meanwhile, those who support the construction of a cement plant (pro) also supports the construction of Sukolilo Market on the grounds that the market is more orderly and more unsightly arranged to attract buyers. Even when the new Sukolilo market will be built, many people who oppose it. It then, forces the government to mobilize a watercanon car to secure the opposing residents.

Finally, the small community and the residents who refused Sukolilo new markets establish a new traditional markets to the south of the new market which is only about 800 meters from the Old Market. Even the traditional market is now more crowded than the new market that was built by the Pati's Government.

### **Samin, Repression and Subalternity**

In this context, Samin community in Sukolilo is regarded as the one who opposed the development, not sane, not religious, to cause disbelief for local residents. Samin community are silenced and marginalized in mass communication maps, into the realm of "subaltern", borrowing the concept from Gayatri Spivak. Subaltern was born from political marginalization by the power transmitted by continuing the marginalization of culture, economy and religion. Subjects in the concept Subalternity, moving at the level of political elites to hijack power, and the marginal community is narrated in a historical and cultural stage across other dimensions. Spivak said: the subject implied by the next of insurgency can only serve as a counterpossibility for the narrative sanctions granted to the colonial subject in the dominant groups (1995 [2001] :27-28). He went on by the assumptions underlying the analysis of subaltern communities and mentoring movements that he brought to a small environment which then affect the political structure; in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and can not speak (1995 [2001]: 28). Post-colonial narration is dominated by the elite power and did not allow the marginal communities to express themselves.

Besides assuming Samin community as a subaltern community, it will be explored in depth the collective memory and its relation to power, as part of the reading of political determination in continuity distance of the labeled indigenous communities community. Spivak writes, that the Subaltern studies are in marginalized areas, where the history of the subaltern born of the power elite (Spivak, Gayatri, 1995 [2001]: 27).

While in the beginning of the 19th century to the 20th, Samin community dealt with the colonial power. In the 21st century, Samin community is marginalized by government

officials and corporate interests who want to exploit the nature. When dealing with the colonial, Samin community fight by refusing to pay taxes and forming other movements to help farmers free from the clutches of colonial. At the present time, they are dealing with the government and other corporate interests, Samin community fight to resist the exploitation of Kendeng mountains. Expression of rejection and Samin community identity can be seen from its movement patterns:

#### **a. The rejection of land exploitation**

Samín movement in rejecting the colonization of both political and economic interests of the ruling transactions corporation can be seen through its rejection in the planning of cement factory construction in Mount Kendeng. This construction is going to exploit Mount Kendeng natural resources, which has been a source of water and nature reserves in the region of Sukolilo.

Samín community assume that the Mount Kendeng is the center of Javanese ecosystem.

Mbah Tarno, an elder of Baturejo Sukolilo Samín said:

*"Jawa Tengah kuwi wetenge jawa, dadi ora keno diutak-atik, sebab iso dadikno rusak kabeh neng tanah jowo, yo ngono iki mau, dadi buyut mung tani buyute wong sak nuswantoro kabeh, sing kepingin ngelola piye, yen kepengen nandur, nandur dalane mangan nyandang. Ki cawisane anak putu buyut, canggah, wareng, udek-udek.*

*Ki sing diudek malah peraturane, ki bagiane anak putu, mboh ki mbah buyut biyen pesene ngono, yo tak kandakno opo anane, dene yo nandur monggo, nek ora yo sak kerso".*

(Central Java is Javanese stomach, so it should not be changed, because it will damage Java at all, yes it was the great-grandson of the previous farmer, who became his ancestors of the whole archipelago. Yang wants to manage the land, to plant, plant sources food, clothing. this part grandchildren and descendants tomorrow., but now it is played out of the rules. this is part of our children and grandchildren to distant descendants, this is a message from our ancestor. Whether they obey it or not is up to them . (Interviewed with Mbah Tarno, 5 April 2009)

Samín community rejection of the exploration plans of cement in the Mount Kendeng is one of its expressions to respect the balance of nature and ecosystems.

#### **b. Political memories of ancestors**

Samín communities, the resistance movement against the Dutch in the early 20th century inherited memory, ethos and identity. Samín Surosentiko is remembered as a good man model for his attitude and point of view. Most Samín houses have his photograp, including mbah Tarno's house, Mbah Tarno said:

*Lha yo, kuwi aran-aran tho. Samín kuwi pengaran wong. Kuwi gambare nek gedhek. Mbah Surosentiko, pengarane cilik kuwi Raden Kohar. Nek gedhe ditambahi wong tuwane Surosentiko, Samín jaman Belanda kuwi diatur malah emoh, Mulane koyo aku*

*barang kuwi, jaman kae yo ngono, mergo tanah iki yo tanah-tanahe dewe, londo ora nduwe neng kene, nyatane londo disingkap Jepang, bali ra nggowo ndah-ndeh...*

*Mengko wong jowo kuwi nggek-nggeke dewe..Manuke ko lambing. Manuk ki ono keneng ngak-nguk..mengko wong jowo iso dingkak-kuk londo jaman kono, lemah-lemaha dewe dadi, padahal sipatan sing jejek, mulane yo nyembah nyeleweng wae, mulane iku jowo podo jowo, karepe kuwi ngono, Jowo podo Jowo yo unen-unen bangun. (Wawancara dengan Mbah Tarno, 5 April 2009).*

(it would be the name. Samin's name, that's the picture of Mbah Surosentiko whose name is name Raden Kohar and was added Surasentiko by his parents, Ki Samin cannot be prsessed by the Dutch, that's why I like it too, because this is our land, the Dutch do not have right here, in fact, the Netherlands was destroyed by Japan, did not bring home anything.

So the Javanese were his own. The bird was so lambing. The bird can be formed-shapes, then get bullied Javanese Dutch era, this land belongs to itself, while the Javanese must have steadfast nature, so do not deviate (from the principle), and fellow man Jawasemestinya constructive / helpful).

Mbah Tarno's statement was considered to be the one that promoted the resistant movement against repressive government, from colonial times to independence, represented by the government and entrepreneurs. The use of the name of an ancestor Surosentiko Samin is a 'memory politics' to legitimize the resistance as well as offering business 'historical truth' rather than historical claims.

(Budiawan, [www.kompas.co.id/kompascetak/0603/12/buku/2501555.htm](http://www.kompas.co.id/kompascetak/0603/12/buku/2501555.htm))

Mbah Tarno as elders Samin Sukolilo, intends to inherit the spirit of the struggle to sedulur Sikep Surasentika Samin. That given the resistance movement against colonial ancestors in the early 20th century, is a denial of the legitimacy of the movement for the construction of a cement plant aims to maintain livelihoods and nature conservation.

Political memories of Samin community is not just a nostalgia, but the movement in the post-colonial period. On this Leela Gandhi, reveals that, remembering and forgetting is a strategy for the colonized, forget and erase memories of an attempt to start a new emancipatory movements in the post-colonial era.

*"Postcolonial amnesia is symptomatic of the urge for historical self-invention or the need to make a new start- ro erase painful memories of colonial subordination. As it happen histories, much as families, cannot be freely choosen by a simple act of will, and newly emergent postcolonial inheritance. The mere repression of colonial memories is never, in itself tantamount to a surpassing of or emancipation from the uncomfortable realities of the colonial encounter" (Gandhi, 1998:4).*

However, the Samin community remembers that 'forgetting' is a political process to pass on the spirit of struggle, as shown in the cement plant resistance movement in the Mount Kendeng Sukolilo. Language is an important part of the political strategy of communication and political memory of Samin community (Amrih Widodo, 2000:19)

## **Closing**

Samin community resistance in early 20th century and the 21st century shows a similar pattern. If at the time of its appearance, movement spearheaded by Samin Surosentiko and his followers to fight the Dutch by refusing to pay taxes and fight against colonial repression, at the present time they are against the 'occupation' in the form of exploitation of nature in the mountains Kendeng in Sukolilo Pati, bringing the consequences of discrimination and marginalization in politics and religion. Samin community is considered as dissidents who reject the development. Even it is considered infidels by a group of religious leaders. However, the principle of life that was inherited from ancestors resistance movement was named world view and identity of Samin community, they are not only reactive but also pro-active in giving a voice to the cultural expressions: (a) determination of exploitation refusal of nature, (b) resistance to the repression power by political memories to form communal unity. (c) building "Kendeng omah" (House without cement) as a symbol of resistance to the construction of cement plants in the mountains Kendeng Sukolilo. Samin community movement as a subaltern community in the post-colonial is not silent to the government repression, but it is speaking and even moving.

***\*Researcher, Graduate Students of  
Yogyakarta State University and  
Residents Sukolilo Pati.***



## Bibliography

- A.Korver. 1976. "The Samin Movement and Millenarism". *Bidjdragen tot de Taal, Land en Volkenkunde* 132. No:2/3, Leiden.
- Anderson, Benedict ROG. 1996. *Gerakan Millenarisme dan Saminis*. (Millenatialisism movement and Saminism) in Benedict Anderson (ed). *Agama dan Etos Sosial di Indonesia*. Bandung : Al ma'arif.
- Budiawan, Bung Karno sebagai (nara) Sumber Pelajaran Sejarah.(www.Kompas.co.id/kompas-cetak/0603/12/Buku/2501555.htm) diakses 18 September 2012.
- Bhaba, Homi K. *The Locational of Culture*. London : Routledge. 1994.
- Gandhi, Leela. *Postcolonial Theory; a Critical introduction*. Australia: Allen & Unwin. 1998.
- Benda, Harry J. dan Lance Castles. 1969. *The Samin Movement*. *Bidjdragen tot de Taal-land-en Volkenkunde*, ('sGravenhage-Martinius Nijhoff), jilid 125.
- Hutomo, Suripan Sadi. 1996. *Tradisi dari Blora*, Semarang: Penerbit Citra Almamater.
- . 1985. *Samin Surontika dan Ajaran-ajarannya*. Jakarta: Majalah Basis Januari.
- King, Victor T. 1973. *The Samin Movement of North-central Java*. *Bidjdragen Tot de taal; land-en Volkenkunde Deel 129*, 'S-Gravenhage- Maetinus Nijhoff,
- Koh Young Hun. 2011. *Pramoedya Menggugat: Melacak Jejak Indonesia*. Jakarta: Gramedia.
- Kroef, Justus M. Van der. 1952 *The Messiah in Indonesia and Melanesia*. *The Scientific Monthly*, September. Vol. 75. No.3.
- Rosyid, Moh. M.Pd. 2008. *Samin Kudus : Bersahaja di Tengah Asketisme Lokal* Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Shiraishi, Takashi. 1990. *Dangir's Testimony: Saminism Reconsidered*. Source : Indonesia, Vol 50. 25th Anniversary Edition.
- Spivak. Gayatri, *can the subaltern speak? In the bill aschroft (ed), The postcolonial Studies Reader*. London routledge. [1995], 2001)
- Uzair Ahmad. 2007. *Politik Representasi dan Wacana Multikulturalime dalam Praktik Program Komunitas Adat Terpencil (KAT) Kasung Komunitas Sedulur Sikep Bombong-Bacem*. In "Hak Minoritas Dilema Multikulturalisme di Indonesia" Jakarta :Yayasan Tifa.
- Widodo. Amrih. 1997. *Samin in The New Older : The Politics of Encounter and Isolation*. In Jim Schiller and Barbara Martin Schillers (eds). *Imaging Indonesia : Cultural Politics and Political Culture*. Ohio University Press.
- Website :**  
<http://www.undip.ac.id/download/chafid-amdal-SG.pdf> diakses 18 September 2012).  
diakses 18 September 2012

<http://suaramerdeka.com/v1/index.php/read/cetak/2001/05/23/147313/Sosialisasi-Amdal-Pabrik-Semen-Diprotos>] diakses 18 September 2012

<http://www.kompas.co.id/kompas-cetak/0603/12/Buku/2501555.htm>) diakses 18 September 2012

**Wawancara :**