

# Social Wisdom of Rural Semarang Under Capitalism

Cahyo Budi Utomo<sup>1</sup>, Ganda Febri Kurniawan<sup>2</sup>  
{cahyo.bu@mail.unnes.ac.id<sup>1</sup>, gandafk4@gmail.com<sup>2</sup>}

<sup>1,2</sup>Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

**Abstract.** Capitalism has become a big wave that changes the socio-cultural face of global and local communities. This article discusses the symptoms of capitalism and the conditions of social wisdom in the Semarang community. Important findings of this study are 1) people in rural Semarang still maintain social wisdom in an effort to care for cultural heritage. The surviving social wisdoms are mutual cooperation, deliberation, *nerimo ing pandhum* (accepting the gift), and *tepo seliro* (keeping other's feeling); and 2) capitalism has disrupted the agricultural economy in rural Semarang, the Semarang community has now changed its orientation in terms of work, initially the community worked as farmers and regenerated, but now that after many industries have been established, people are more interested in becoming factory workers. The implication of this research is that capitalism has a negative impact on rural agrarian societies. The influence of capital can change the orientation of society to be materialistic.

**Keywords:** Social Wisdom, Rural Semarang, Capitalism.

## 1. Introduction

The displacement of farmers' land is a process of "proletarianization" in village life, and the swelling of the peasant class who do not have arable land with all its impacts is not a new phenomenon in Indonesia [1][2]. Geertz through his research in Mojokuto shows that it has happened since the colonial period, precisely around the middle of the 19th century. The Mojokuto proletariat was largely formed not by the proletarianization of local farmers, but by migrating lower-class populations from other regions to areas that were adjacent to Mojokuto [3]. This condition is similar to the development of Semarang, which is shown by population growth and city activity which also demands greater land requirements [4][5]. The limited land area in Semarang causes the city to develop into suburban areas, such as Gunungpati Subdistrict. Those area is an area that is experiencing rapid dynamics and development (rapid growth area), so that this border area is quite difficult to distinguish from the downtown.

As a result, the life of this urban boundary area is affected by urban living arrangements and can be called rural-urban areas. This condition illustrates that the Semarang rural community is a mixed society between the village community and the urban community, the Semarang rural community which initially relied heavily on agricultural land has shifted to the industrial labor sector [6][7]. The negative effects of industrialization on human welfare include alienation, that is, feelings of alienation from oneself, family, and social groups that can cause apathy, anger, and anxiety [3][8]. This phenomenon is rife in rural Semarang lately. Cultural societies that care for adat systemically have experienced major changes in their social life. Semarang society has now forgotten its identity as the center of cultural

development, as explained by Berger that cities that have been infected with the globalization virus will experience an ethical shift in their lives [9].

This article describes the process of shifting ethics in the rural communities of Semarang which was originally a farming community and is now beginning to move towards industrial societies that live in the shadow of capitalism and encourage them to live in a modern way and leave the elements of traditionalism. It was this ethical shift that succeeded in changing the face of Semarang's rural communities to become more liberal and open.

## 2. Method

This research was conducted using qualitative methods with ethnographic design [10], [11]. The socio-cultural object in this study is the Semarang Rural community in the context of social life and the symptoms of attacking capitalism. The research data was obtained through participatory observation and interviews. This research involved 10 informants, the results of which have been transcribed into 5 coded data, namely Data Informant 1 (DI1), DI2, DI3, etc. Data analysis of this study used critical discourse analysis of the Fairclough paradigm [12].

## 3. Results

The results of this study have been mapped according to the focus of the study, those are the social wisdom of the Semarang community and the symptoms of capitalism in Rural Semarang. Both of those are quite closely related and in other ways influence each other in a negative context. More will be discussed in the presentation of the results as follows:

Life in the village which used to be defined as a harmonious place by the urban community, has now changed. In addition, in the past the villagers assisted in agriculture not because of wages but because the sense of solidarity between communities was very high, but for now everything has changed, in terms of helping each other now it is assessed using material, this case destructs the quality of mutual cooperation. Where if you want to be helped then have to pay, not because of a sense of solidarity between the community, neighbors, and family. In the case of agriculture too, that is the number of farmers, even though they do not have large tracts of land, do the land with a tractor that is rented from a particular company and rent in cash to threshing rice machines to process rice yields. Said explained that the structure of peasant life is now experiencing an expansion of capitalism, and that is not in accordance with the ethics of farmers who can survive in a crisis through the sharing of poverty. Farmers who according to Scott are very moral with their cultural life, often forget the foreign influences that make ethics in their communities slowly collapse.

The ability of Semarang's rural communities to deal with social change is one of which is determined by the social wisdom there. Village communities usually have insufficient resistance to the threat of change. The aspect of change referred to here is the transition from an agrarian society to an industrial society. Of course it has consequences, but researchers have identified several social wisdoms that characterize the people of Gunungpati, namely; Mutual cooperation, Deliberation, *tepo seliro* (keeping other's feeling), and *nerimo ing pandhum* (accepting the gift).

These five things are characteristic and most prominent when speaking in the context of rural Semarang. Social wisdom such as mutual cooperation, according to DI1; "Usually it is often used in conditions of reconciliation or doing construction". That is an aspect that can be easily found in rural communities of Semarang. Mutual cooperation, besides being a symbol of the social wisdom of Gunungpati community, is also a symbol of social wisdom of the Javanese community in general. There, mutual cooperation is still held by the farming community, but for industrial communities or those working in factories tend to leave the mutual cooperation attitude because they are imprisoned by working time in factories, which is certainly very unfortunate, because it means the community's concern for social wisdom is already starting to erode.

*Sambatan* is an attitude to help support one another's community members. This can easily be found in the rural communities of Semarang, especially in Jagalan, where the area is still inhabited by farmers, and settlements there are still quite dense, so that people can easily interact with each other, for example in a celebration, helping neighbors who experience distress, or build a house. *Sambatan* is more accurately called a voluntary attitude to help fellow citizens. According to DI4:

"*Sambatan* is a symbol of togetherness, if mutual cooperation is the spirit, then *sambatan* is the practice. So that, *sambatan* has important meaning for Javanese rural communities".

In semi-modern communities, it usually has a tendency to be prone to conflict or disputes because life is interpreted as competition. But in the context of rural of Semarang, the deliberation system still continues to this day. The system is usually used to solve problems, as stated by DI2 argues:

"in resolving social problems in Javanese people, we usually deliberate more often than through legal or police channels. Settlement through deliberation is usually easier and the results are better than through formal legal channels"

*Tepo seliro*, according to DI3: "attitude of tolerance and respect for differences". This attitude is normal for Javanese people, that the true attitude of tolerance in maintaining harmony has been cultivated long ago, in the historical context, indeed Central Javanese people rarely experience horizontal conflicts, but in some cases conflicts with different ethnicities, for example Chinese. A sense of tolerance for Javanese people is soul in social life. Javanese people expect a calm life rather than a life full of conflict.

The social wisdom that can be found in rural Semarang besides the above *is nerimo ing pandhum*, or accepting attitude towards the gift of God. This attitude belongs to the Javanese people who have been developed for centuries. Likewise in rural Semarang, simplicity and wisdom are the main characteristics of the farming communities there, although some people work as factory employees, but they still maintain the characteristics that are unique within them. The social wisdom of the community needs to be maintained, to maintain the cultural existence of the people there.

In Semarang village there are factories that accommodate a large number of workers from the farmers. The factories were urban industrialization, which resulted in changing the structure and world view of the community. Factories that are established in Rural Semarang include cigarette factories, soap factories, snack factories and beverage factories. This becomes common considering that it is a necessity for the city community. According to DI4:

“Since many factories stand in our environment, the situation of the community has changed, many of the children of peasants have turned professions to become factory workers because of income problems. Farmers rely on gardens that have a harvest period of up to 3 months, while in the factory every month the laborers earn income”.

More people are switching professions from fruit traders to factory workers for income reasons as well, even though it does not have a significant impact, but many things are taken into consideration in the process of change. The consequence of this industrialization is that many farmers have volunteered their land to be build for factories, bearing in mind that this is influenced by the selling price of land which is quite high and investors are willing to give more prices. This was stated by DI5:

“My plantation land covers an area of 2 hectares, and now it has become a bottled beverage factory, I am letting it go because my land is paid more, even though I did not mention the nominal, but I say it can double the price, in addition my children also come to work in the factory as a laborer, my four children work there, even my grandchildren who are still in grade 6 have no hope of being farmers but want to be laborers”.

Maybe the farmers who still survive in Rural Semarang are the last generation of farmers. This is seen from the above opinion and is reinforced by DI3:

“I myself want to be a factory worker, because seeing my friends who become factory workers seems fun. They get a monthly income and work indoors”.

This opinion shows how the changing of community social structures are influenced by capitalism entering through industry. This is unfortunate when capitalism has changed the orientation of society and their perspective on a job. In addition, capitalism has contaminated people's ideas about money. Javanese people who used to have *nerimo ing pandhum* attitudes, now turned into materialistic. Proven with the goal of being a laborer is to get regular income every month.

In the midst of the changes that happened, the rural communities of Semarang still uphold long-standing social wisdom in society and are passed down from generation to generation. Although some wisdom conditions began to weaken due to the influence of capitalism. For example *nerimo ing pandhum*. But some of the wisdom of its position strengthened, for example deliberation. This means that the strengthening or weakening of wisdom is influenced by external factors internalized into the human person.

#### **4. Discussion**

This research supports the opinion of Crouch, Fougères, Chen et al, Freyne et al [13]–[16] that capitalism destroys the culture and tradition that has long been developing in community. In this research, it can be seen that capitalism changes the orientation of the community which was originally agrarian to capitalist by dreaming of becoming a laborer. Materialistic reasons are used to create justifications that actually benefit investors, especially regarding labor needs. This also confirms that capitalism has a bad influence on traditional community [17], [18]. In addition this research reinforces Scott's argument, which explains

that farmers are principally citizens who have morals and ethics. This makes the farming community survive and live the traditions passed on to them [19], [20]. Even though it has been intervened by capitalism, the social life of people in Rural Semarang still maintains the existing of social wisdom. Although the situation is getting weaker. For them, social wisdom is an asset in dealing with the outside world and interact with people outside the group. This reflects the high morality of the social relationships envisioned by the farming community that began to move into the industrial community.

Capitalism has an impact in changing the idealism of farming communities in various countries [21][23]. The influence of capitalism is implanted through the most central areas, so that the expansion of that influence will be easier to do with the imagination of modernity [22], this is in accordance with the phenomenon that occurs in Rural Semarang, after the central region of the city is fully controlled by capital, so now capital influence shifted to suburban areas, creating new commodities [24]. The emergence of many industries in Rural Semarang has proven that the enthusiasm of work and materialism is a fundamental reason for someone to support capitalism, both as a financier and as a worker. This is not significant enough to change the fate of a society, but the element of capital in it, it makes people's imaginations about material becomes very strong. Monthly salary, overtime income, extra income, holiday allowances have become a shadow that makes capitalism increasingly attract the attention of people in Rural Semarang to become a laborer. It is a gap for the workers to be used as "a cash cow", because they are those who need work, not companies that need them. This research supports the opinion of Geertz, Castles, and Wite that change towards modern community will sacrifice a lot of cultures that have settled for a long time in society, people are preoccupied with work activities so that the process of inheriting values and wisdom is hampered [3][25][26]. On behalf of development, Rural Semarang has been transformed into a new industrial area that has consequences, changes in the basic structure of society and the erosion of social wisdom and values that have lasted long in society.

## 5. Conclusion

As a result of industrialization in Rural Semarang, now the character of the community has changed become liberal. One of them is supported by the influence of technology entering and developing rapidly throughout Indonesia. Capitalism became a major factor that led to the orientation of society be changed, it is paid by the loss of the spirit of farming communities that previously lived in the agrarian sector. One other impact of the symptoms of capitalism entering the Semarang Village is the weakening of social wisdom in the community, mutual cooperation, deliberation, *tepo seliro* (keeping other's feeling), and *nerimo ing pandhum* (accepting the gift) which are currently very rarely found in community behavior. Now society tends to be free and not bound by norms and values. So that the relationships that are built are not harmonious and everything is measured using the lens of materialism. This extends the black record of capitalism in Indonesia which does not have a positive impact. Throughout the history of the establishment of the Republic of Indonesia, the emergence of capitalism must be paid handsomely with the loss of traditions, character, and identity of rural communities that were originally highly moral and uphold social ethics.

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