

Re-Claiming Lost Possessions:

*A Study of the Javanese Samin (Sedulur Sikep) Movement to
maintain their Peasant Identity and Access to Resources*

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Abstract

This study focuses on a Saminist (Sedulur Sikep) community in Java – Indonesia, particularly related to the contemporary anti-cement movement. With their Javanese puritanical traits and non-violent resistance, the Sedulur Sikep community managed to live their lives as a culturally separate community with distinct views on resource management, spirituality, and authority. Currently, this community's members are now standing at a crossroad in defending their capital resources and preserving their identities, culture, beliefs, livelihoods, and most importantly, future generations by protecting their land and water resources through anti-cement activism.

Research findings show that the strong idealism and spiritual behaviors of Sedulur Sikep play a crucial role in defining their activism within the anti-cement movement. This thesis studies the perspective and activism of Sedulur Sikep through their consciousness, both as a peasant and puritan Javanese community, toward the respective Kendeng Mountains. By perceiving the physical and non-physical elements of the mountains and its surroundings, Sedulur Sikep position themselves to challenge the powerful actors' interests in the cement agenda. On the other hand, Sedulur Sikep also manages to re-claim their identity as a passive and non-violent Javanese peasant movement, while they also adapt with the anti-cement movement's needs.

Therefore, the active role of Sedulur Sikep's identities and their passive and non-violent resistance traits are central within this study. This study then analyses Sedulur Sikep's movement strategies that have shifted into collective and openly declared forms of resistance, as ramification of power and interest relations among involved actors within the cement agenda.

Key words: Sedulur Sikep, peasant, Java, cement industry, anti-cement movement

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List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AMAN	<i>Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara</i> (The National Indigenous Peoples' Organization)
AMDAL	<i>Analisis Mengenai Dampak Lingkungan</i> (Environmental Impact Assessment)
ATOS	<i>Aliansi Tolak Semen</i> (Alliance of People Against Cement)
BUMN	<i>Badan Usaha Milik Negara</i> (State Owned Body/Company)
CPR	Common Property Regime
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessments
ENGOs/NGOs	Environmental/Non-Government Organisations
FMPL	<i>Forum Masyarakat Peduli Lingkungan</i> (Forum of People Who Care About the Environment)
FPIC	Free, Prior, Informed, and Consent
ILO	International Labor Organization
IP / IPs	Indigenous People / Indigenous Peoples
JMPPK	<i>Jaringan Masyarakat Peduli Pegunungan Kendeng</i> (Network of People Who Care for Kendeng Mountains)
JP2L	<i>Jaringan Perempuan Peduli Lingkungan</i> (Network of Women who Care about the Environment)
KLHS	<i>Kajian Lingkungan Hidup Strategis</i> (Strategic Environmental Assessment)
KOPLINK	<i>Komunitas Peduli Lingkungan</i> (Community Who Cares About the Environment)
KPA	<i>Komisi Penilai AMDAL</i> (EIA Assessment Commission)
KPPL 'Simbar Wareh'	<i>Kelompok Perempuan Peduli Lingkungan</i> (Group of Women who Care about Environment) 'Simbar Wareh'
KTP	<i>Kartu Tanda Penduduk</i> ((National) Citizen ID card)
NU	Nahdlatul Ulama
Perhutani	<i>Perusahaan Hutan Negara Indonesia</i> (National Forestry Company)
PKI	<i>Partai Komunis Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Communist Party)
PT. SI	<i>Perseroan Terbatas (Co. or Ltd)</i> Semen Indonesia
PT. SMS	<i>Perseroan Terbatas (Co. or Ltd)</i> Sahabat Mulia Sakti
RAPEL	<i>Rakyat Peduli Lingkungan</i> (People who Care about Environment)
SOC/E	State-Owned Company/Enterprise
SPP	<i>Serikat Petani Pati</i> (Farmers' Union of Pati)
TNCs	Transnational Companies
WALHI	<i>Wahana Lingkungan Hidup</i> (Indonesian Environmental Forum)

1 Introduction

“Suppose this island of Java is a human body, the head, where the brain is located, is the West Java (and Jakarta); the stomach, where is food processed and energy produced, is in Central Java; while the legs that move the body of the human is East Java. You can’t disrupt or hurt the stomach, otherwise the whole-body system won’t work as usual”

- Icuk Bamban; *Sedulur Sikep* elder in Sukolilo-Pati – Central Java

Indonesia is endowed with a huge amount of natural resources, which have been exploited for centuries. Since the Dutch colonialization, which was centralized in Java, Indonesia has suffered from massive cultivation, excavation, and cheap production to fulfill the demand for exports to the global North (Manhartsberger, 2013), and this long history of resource exploitation has always been matched with a resistance against it. However, during the Dutch colonialization period, grassroots resistance based on resource exploitation received minimal exposure in any written material on pre-independence Indonesian history – that is, until Samin Surosentiko started his movement in Northern Central Java back in the late nineteenth century.

Samin Surosentiko and his followers regarded themselves as the true upholders of Javanese peasant culture. They relied on farming activities as their only livelihood to maintain and support their lives, and clamped down on any form of cash system that involved profit-making. Their opposition to the Dutch Colonial’s administration was distinctly recognized as being passive and non-resistant, by rejecting the colonial system of taxes over resource ownership, as well as refusing to perform obligatory *corvées* applied to the native population of Java (Coolhaas 1960, Benda and Castles 1969).

In the years that followed, as Samin’s teachings spread and challenged the colonial bureaucracy in Java, colonial officers then labeled Samin and his followers as peasant-rural protesters, resulting in the imprisonment of Samin and his followers (Benda & Castles, 1969). To protect themselves, Samin’s remaining followers minimized their chances of being exposed and subsequently captured by colonial orders in two ways: They either lived remotely away from other common villagers by having settlements in teak forested areas, or they hid their Saminist identity by coexisting peacefully with other villagers. However, the latter group would still limit their participation in the other

Javanese communities to some extent in order to perpetuate the core teachings of Samin Surosentiko. Indeed, the group believed that their Javanese neighbors had betrayed the true Javanese values and norms, notably by accepting oppressive colonial policies (Peluso, 1992).

After Indonesia attained its independence in 1945, Samin Surosentiko's followers, who now prefer to be called *Sedulur Sikep*¹ or *wong sikep* meaning 'those who are alert' or 'those who embrace' (Widodo, 1997), survived the independence era and the subsequent oppressive regime of New Order (1966-1998). During the New Order regime, *Sedulur Sikep* were often socially excluded by both the Indonesian government and the surrounding common Javanese villagers. They were treated this way due to their rejection of institutionalized social order in the form of education, the marriage system, and particular religious beliefs that were enforced by the state. Consequently, this jeopardized the citizenship status of the *Sedulur Sikep*, since obtaining the Indonesian citizen ID card, *Kartu Tanda Penduduk* (KTP), was impossible because their spiritual belief in the 'Religion of Adam' (or 'Agama Adam', see Chapter 4 below) was not included within the KTP's system.

However, the geographically-dispersed settlement of *Sedulur Sikep* across several regencies – Pati, Kudus, Blora, and Bojonegoro – led to each community having a differing degree of integration with the Indonesian post-colonial state system, since each community has its own attitude toward government policies. Yet, above all, members of *Sedulur Sikep* agree to devote themselves to the ancestral values of 'Agama Adam', practice benevolence, give high respect to the environment, and use a distinct pattern of the (Javanese) language with their own community members as well as with outsiders.

1.1 Landscape of the Case

In 2005, PT Semen Gresik², the state-owned cement manufacturer, first released a plan to set one of its three new factories in Sukolilo - Pati, Central Java, and intended to mine

¹ Javanese term for: sibling or brother/sister-hood (*sedulur*) who has a settled way of thinking (*sikep*).

² In 2012 PT. Semen Gresik changed to PT Semen Indonesia Tbk (PT.SI), and become the largest cement producer of Indonesia. Semen Indonesia maintains a special status as a holding company for other state-

the karst Kendeng mountains for their main raw material. In the name of local economic growth and regional development (Manhartsberger, 2013), as well as to fulfill the national government's cement demand to supply infrastructure development in outer island.³ Both provincial and regional governments also approved the plan. The industrially-affected areas included where Samin's followers had settled their houses and farmlands. The incoming cement industry would inevitably bring environmental disruption, especially to land conditions and water springs found underneath Kendeng, pollution, and other long-term effects that would affect the local inhabitants. In an attempt to prevent all of those damages from occurring, the *Sedulur Sikep* and other farmers instigated a movement against the cement industry, which they later renamed *Jaringan Masyarakat Peduli Pegunungan Kendeng* (JMPPK), meaning Network of People Who Care for Kendeng Mountains. JMPPK's coordinator was Gunretno, a member of the *Sedulur Sikep* community. This anti-cement movement not only focused on the ecological issues created by the industry, but later also challenged the company's violation of several regulations on regional spatial planning. Another issue that the anti-cement group scrutinized was the granting of exploration permits by the provincial government that allegedly lacked consultation with the local people. Given its wide range of issues, the movement quickly grew larger among farmers living within the area affected by the industrial plan, not to mention the support it received from several NGO activists, religious figures, academia, and artists, which helped strengthen the narratives of anti-cement in popular media.

After long series of confrontations and a wide range of strategies, from protests to court trials, which challenged the permit to build cement factories issued by the Governor of Central Java, the Supreme Court in May 2009 ruled in favor of the people's lawsuit that annulled PT. Semen Gresik's license to build its industry in Sukolilo-Pati. Since that victory, the *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati have been praised and are now a symbol of the anti-cement movement, especially with their distinctly non-violent yet powerful movement against state-corporation collaboration in extractive industries. Keeping their promises

owned local cement companies, and was the first state-owned enterprise that went public on the Jakarta Stock Exchange and Surabaya Stock Exchange (both merged to become the Indonesia Stock Exchange in 2007).

³ Based on interview with PT. Semen Indonesia's corporate secretary, which on next chapters' data shows that Java in fact is the highest consumer for cement industries.

to protect the Kendeng mountains as one entity, the *Sedulur Sikep* with JMPPK are currently assisting two other areas close to their village that are also threatened by incoming cement industries. Through their anti-cement activism, the *Sedulur Sikep* have achieved their initial goal of rejecting the cement industry, thereby conserving their peasant identities that are bound to land and water availability.

At the same time, due to recent ongoing anti-cement cases located away from *Sedulur Sikep* land and properties, the continued activism of the *Sedulur Sikep* has created conflicting disagreement within the community, especially with regards to the practice of rightful behaviors as the followers of Samin Surosentiko. Nevertheless, *Sedulur Sikep* activism has also improved their previously negative perception by non-Sikep Javanese villagers, thanks to the new form of relationship- and network-building between the *Sedulur Sikep* and other entities involved in the anti-cement movement.

1.2 Central Research Question

Building on the history of and contemporary cases in the anti-cement movement, this study intends to explore *Sedulur Sikep* activism, particularly in mainstreaming their distinct views on environmental conservation and resource governance. Subjected to Sikep set of traditions (known as Samin's teachings), *Sedulur Sikep* are required to exercise some new strategies and adaptations in order to maintain strong rapport with other actors involved in the anti-cement movement. To some extent, this would mean that *Sedulur Sikep* must step out from their 'silence and isolation' philosophy (Widodo, 1997). However, according to some *Sedulur Sikep* views, such adaptations and new strategies contradict the principles of Sikep teachings.

Based on these circumstances, I therefore propose the following research question:

How has the anti-cement activism influenced the Sedulur Sikep's identity?

To answer the main research question above, the conducted research focused on the following objectives:

1. To describe the principal teachings of Samin Surosentiko.

2. To understand the importance of resource governance and environmental conservation for *Sedulur Sikep*'s identity.
3. To describe and analyze the importance of the Kendeng mountains, both for *Sedulur Sikep* as well as for the notion of development.
4. To analyze the *Sedulur Sikep*'s anti-cement activism and movement strategies in re-gaining and re-shaping *Sedulur Sikep* identity, as well as their interrelations with other actors.

1.3 Context on Research Location

This research was carried out in Sukolilo, a district located in Pati Regency, Central Java Province, in which a community who call themselves as *Sedulur Sikep* resides. I decided not to limit my area of research based on geographical or administrative boundaries, though most of the time I stayed in *Kecamatan*⁴ Sukolilo. This sub-chapter briefly describes context on Sukolilo and two neighboring districts, in response to PT. Semen Gresik's initial plan of establishing a cement industry by exploiting the Kendeng mountains.

*Kabupaten*⁵ Pati is one of thirty-seven regencies within the Central Java Provincial administration, located in the northern part of the Island of Java and directly facing the Java Sea. Pati covers a total area of 150,368 ha, consisting of 59,332 ha of farmland and 91,036 ha of non-farmland. Pati's significant agricultural land area has made it a prominent 'food shed' area, which is also reflected in its motto *Bumi Mina Tani* meaning 'the land of farms and fisheries'. Administratively, Sukolilo is one of several *Kecamatan* or districts located in the southernmost part of the regency. Bordering with Grobogan and Kudus Regency, southern part of Sukolilo covered with karst⁶ topography, so-called Kendeng Northern Karst Mountains or simply the Kendeng

⁴ In Indonesia, a district (Indonesian: *distrik*; used in Papua and West-Papua) or (Indonesian: **kecamatan**; used in the rest of Indonesia) is a subdivision of regency (*kabupaten*) and city (*kota*). A district is itself divided into administrative villages (*kelurahan* or *desa*).

⁵ A *kabupaten* is an administrative region in Indonesia one level below a province. It is headed by a *bupati* or regent who is popularly elected every five years.

⁶ According to Ford and Williams (2007), karst is a type of landscape characterized by caves and intensive systems of subterranean rivers, resulting from the development of solution processes on soluble rocks such as limestone, marble, and gypsum.

mountains. In term of coverage area, Sukolilo covered 15,873.9 ha, divided into 7,254 ha of agricultural lands and 8,619.9 ha of non-agricultural land.

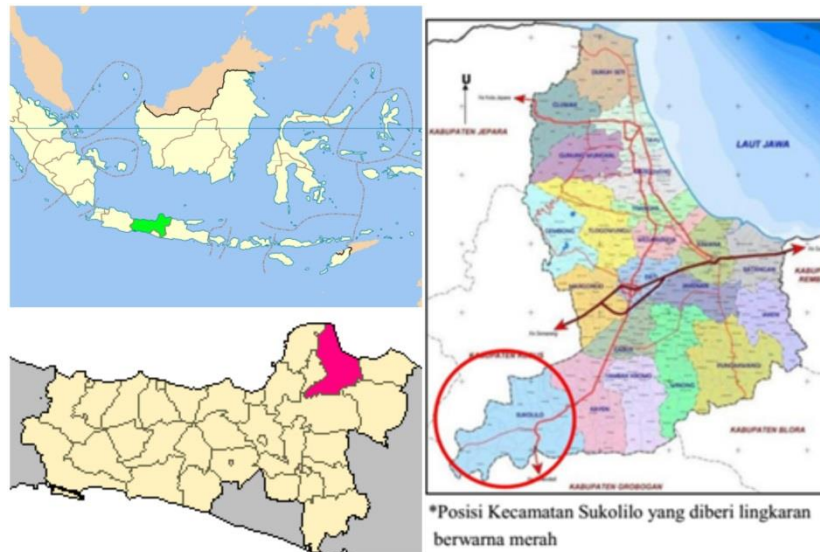


Figure 1 Maps of Research Location

The Regency of Pati's 2012 spatial planning report (Pati, 2012) states that Sukolilo, along with the districts of Kayen and Tambakromo,⁷ are areas where part of the Kendeng mountains lies. Furthermore, the report also notes these surrounding areas are imperatively entitled to maintain the sustainability of existing water springs, including preventing the area from any cultivation and exploitation activities that could potentially harm both the water springs and the surrounding environment. Technically, a spatial plan is made by a regency to specify the use, development, and management of a specific area within its administrative region based on material and non-material characteristics. The table below shows selected spatial plans (my own translation from a government document) for three districts in Pati where Kendeng mountains lies.

Table 1 (Selected) Spatial Plan for District Sukolilo, Kayen and Tambakromo

Zones	Spatial Pattern	Coverage area
Water catchment area	Functioned to absorb rain as main source of groundwater formation	Area with karst/limestone: Sukolilo, Kayen, and Tambakromo

⁷ Kayen and Tambakromo are two districts East of Sukolilo, where in 2012 - present, PT. SMS, a subsidiary of Heidelberg Cement set their plan for a cement industry, affecting people's land by exploiting limestone from Kendeng located particularly in Kayen and Tambakromo.

Water springs and their surrounding landscape	Hold function to sustaining the existing perennial springs. This area should be protected from any cultivation or exploitation that might harm the water's quality and surrounding physical condition.	District Sukolilo: Lawang springs; Sumur karanganyar springs; Baleadi springs; and Duwan springs
Karst/limestone region	Karst regions contain aquifers that provide large supplies of water. Drainage systems created by karst landscape uniquely dominated by ground subsidence, where most of the water on the surface enters the track of underground water through sinkholes or inlet. The rain falls on the karst region will directly absorbed and goes through to the subterranean rivers through sinkholes.	Karst region covered three districts in Pati; Sukolilo with 745 ha, Kayen with 324 ha, and Tambakromo with 234 ha.

1.4 Significance of the Research

This research is mainly focused on the *Sedulur Sikep* in the district of Pati and Kudus, who have been actively involved in anti-cement movement. This study hopes to scrutinize the consequences faced by *Sedulur Sikep* communities due to their anti-cement activism. Various actors involved in the anti-cement movement undeniably have different interests, which gradually nudge the *Sedulur Sikep* to comply and integrate their cultural and ecological beliefs with the broader strategies of the movement. The *Sedulur Sikep*'s decision to network with other villagers, activists, and NGOs within the anti-cement movement is one way to promote and integrate their environmental values into broader society. Doing so has increased the *Sedulur Sikep*'s interactions with outside communities after being 'alienated' for decades.

Previous research on *Sedulur Sikep* communities is quite diverse based on the location of the particular *Sedulur Sikep* community of study and whether the main focus of the research was on history, beliefs, customs, political or administrative pressure, physical matters, or the recent mainstream issue of the anti-cement movement. However, prior research on the anti-cement movement has been more focused on the JMPPK's activities and formal legal processes, as opposed to activists' use of the historical ideology of Samin Surosentiko in resisting all forms of capitalism. Thus, this present study aims to explore some elements that were overlooked in previous studies,

including the internal circumstances faced by *Sedulur Sikep* and the power relations between the different entities involved in the anti-cement movement.

Furthermore, this research will not only enrich the study of the *Sedulur Sikep* community regarding their shifting dialectic both with non-Sikep community members and within the wider Sikep community, but will also explore the network built with actors involved in the anti-cement movement. In a broader discussion, I hope this study will contribute to the understanding of the local community's notion of environmental sustainability based on resource exploitation that has been challenged by the state's image of capitalistic-driven development and growth.

1.5 Thesis Structure

This thesis will be presented in six chapters in the following order:

Chapter 1 Introduction

This chapter presents the background, research question, significance of the research, and thesis structure.

Chapter 2 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This chapter consists of a review of previous studies on the *Sedulur Sikep* movement in general, followed by different approaches of analyzing the *Sedulur Sikep* movement. This chapter then continues with the Indigeneity approach to frame the relationship between nature and culture, as well as how to perceive *Sedulur Sikep* on the basis of their indigeneity. Finally, this chapter explores the role, power, and interest possessed by main actors related to the anti-cement narratives, including the state, private business, ENGOs, and grassroots communities.

Chapter 3 Methodology

This chapter describes and explains the research method; first and secondary data collection, data analysis process, ethical issues, as well as limitations of the research.

Chapter 4 What is Saminism?

This chapter presents the main features of Saminism/Sikep teachings. These features of the movement are including its initial historical

contexts, as well as its contemporary development. This chapter also discusses the dispersed Samin communities and outlines their differences and similarities. The chapter ends with a definition of Saminism and its relation to the concept of indigeneity.

Chapter 5 Kendeng Mountains' Resource Potentials and Identity Narratives of Local Samin People

This chapter focuses on the Kendeng Mountains, both as resources potentials as well as defining elements for Sikep's identities. It begins with Kendeng's physical attributes that are significant for the surrounding environment and populating communities. The chapter proceeds with the significances of the Kendeng mountains for *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati.

Chapter 6 Resistance and Anti-cement: Sikep Identity at a Crossroad

This chapter analyses and discusses the resistance against the cement companies. It presents the intertwined interests of the *Sedulur Sikep* and other related actors. It describes the narratives of the proposed cement agenda in the Kendeng mountains in relation to the notion of development. It then continues with the rise in anti-cement resistance against the planned cement developments in the Kendeng mountains, which was initiated and instigated by a group of *Sedulur Sikep* in Sukolilo-Pati. The chapter ends with discussion of the conflict within the diverse Sikep communities in perceiving the anti-cement movement.

Chapter 7 Vernacularization of Common Resources and Contested Identity of Sikep: A Concluding Discussion

This final chapter is a concluding discussion on the main arguments and analyses presented in this thesis, culminating in the answer to the established research question.

2 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

‘Lemah pada duwe, banju pada duwe, kaju pada duwe’ (Land, water, and wood are the property of all)

- Samin’s philosophy on resource ownership and access

This chapter begins with a review of studies on the Samin movement in general, followed by scholars’ works in understanding the Samin movement both as a puritan Javanese movement and a peasant movement. Based on the distinct cultural behaviors that differentiate the followers of Samin Surosentiko from their Javanese neighbors, the chapter then introduces the concept of Indigeneity in order to understand how human-nature relationships shape the cultural traits of certain communities. Finally, the chapter outlines various actors’ approaches to resource management, especially their roles, power, and interests that will later provide a framework for understanding the contesting notion of the anti-cement movement that is scrutinized in this thesis.

2.1 The ‘Samin Movement’

According to Scott (1977), the Samin movement in Java in the early twentieth century was one of the many Southeast Asian examples of the defense of local subsistence rights, while Benda and Castles (1969) noted that this movement is one of the longest-living social phenomena in modern Javanese history. Both of these characterizations were based on scholarly investigations to understand the idea of the movement. In contrast, the local Javanese who live nearby and have direct experience in contacting Samin’s followers would define them as *‘wong samin’* (stubborn), *kafir*⁸ (backward), or simply *nyamin* (derived from ‘Samin’ as a form of addressing people who observe Samin’s teachings, with a rather negative connotation).

Samin Surosentiko, the founding father, and his followers were initially called Samin or *Wong Samin* – Samin People. Later, their resistance activities simply became known as the Samin movement. In general, the community actually prefers to be called *Sedulur*

⁸ Non-believer, usually used by Moslems to address those who are not practicing Islam or adhere Islam as their religion.

Sikep, derived from their notion of equality that everyone is *sedulur* (brother/sister) and the doctrine of Saminism called *sikep*. The core teachings of Samin were also transformed into a specific spiritual belief called ‘religion of Adam’ (not referring to the Adam of Abrahamic religions; see Chapter 4), which some Javanese villagers also call *Agama Samin* or ‘religion of Samin’. The religion of Adam points to the central importance of sex, interpersonal relations, high respect to women, and a range of puritanical traits (Benda & Castles, 1969). Based on ‘Dangir’s testimony’ (Shiraishi, 1990, p. 111), a number of names were given by the government to *wong sikep/Sedulur Sikep* or those who adhere to the ‘Religion of Adam’: Saminism, the religion of Samin (*Agama Samin*), the Samin movement and *orang Samin* (Saminist).

The movement was founded in Randublatung, Blora during late period of Dutch colonialization in 1890. Samin and his followers’ movement’s notion was closely related to resource access and ownership. Samin and his followers believed that they should not rent land from anybody. Samin Surosentiko – *Mbah Suro/Mbah Samin*, succesfully preached a peaceful way of resistance to Dutch colonialism through a distinct channel of action, most prominently by ignoring newly-imposed land ownership regulations, using convoluted language and misleading information to deceive Dutch administrators in relation to land and property surveys, speaking Javanese *ngoko*⁹ to everyone regardless of their social status, admitting no authority outside of their own system (such as religious beliefs, formalized schooling, and cash system), and abstaining from trade using money systems or activities that include profit-making (Benda & Castles, 1969; King, 1973; Korver, 1976; Scott, 1977; Shiraishi, 1990; Peluso, 1992; Widodo, 1997; Crosby, 2013).

Among scholars, there is no set agreement regarding the main cause of the emergence of Saminism. For instance, Benda and Castles (1969) highlight economic factors, namely the poverty of the Javanese lower-class peasants within the dry limestone areas around Blora, where the movement first started, as the origin of the movement. Likewise, Viktor King (1973; 1977) supports this notion of economic factors as the cause of Samin and his followers’ disobedience. However, King focuses on middle-class peasants, who were facing insecurities upon their dissolving role and position

⁹ Low level Javanese, usually spoken among same-age peers, or opponents that have lower status in terms of economy, social, and political conditions within Javanese society.

within the Javanese peasant socio-economic system, due to the application of new tax system by the colonial administration. Meanwhile, focusing on spiritual aspects, Korver (1976) regards this movement as millenarianism by looking at its idealism of a 'Golden Age' where everyone could find peace and happiness without intrusion from outside or foreign influences, in this case the Dutch colonial powers. Furthermore, Korver also argues that the millenarianism of the Samin movement can also be seen from the appointment of Samin Surosentiko as their messiah or Saviour with the title of *Ratu Adil*, or the 'Just Ruler'. More recently, turning again to economic factors, Nancy Peluso (1992) has stressed the limited access to the teak forest as the main cause, which was a common resource before the Dutch colonials applied the new forestry system.

Following independence, the administrative Government of Indonesia approached the Samin movement and its followers in several ways, depending on the regime in power at the time. For instance, the Old Order of Soekarno (1945-1965) saw Saminism in a positive light as symbol of nationalism and resistance to the colonials.¹⁰ However, Soekarno's administrators still considered them a backward community that needed to be educated. During this initial period of Indonesia as an independent state, the government had reimagined the idea of 'nationalism' from what was previously understood in opposition to colonialism, to a new form of 'enemy' to address any 'local expression' perceived as a hindrance to the otherwise unified nation-state of Indonesia (Sahal, 1994). Certainly, Saminism was included in that group of local expression. The rise of the authoritarian 'New Order' regime in 1965 worsened the *Sedulur Sikep*'s conditions, alongside that of other minorities groups in Indonesia, as the top-down authoritarian administration coercively eliminated and curbed any potential civil disobedience.

2.2 Saminism as a Puritan Javanese Movement

Samin and his followers started their movement in Java during the period of Dutch colonial occupation, in what was later called the Indonesian archipelago. In the

¹⁰ However, calling those who adhere to Samin's teachings as a nationalistic group was only based on information given by local authorities. Benda and Castle (1969) argued that there were probably some authors' tendencies to romanticize Saminism, and also as an attempt to minimize any friction between them and the authorities.

beginning, it remained a local rural movement and did not catch the attention of colonial administrators until it grew into a larger peasant movement that caused disruption to the Dutch bureaucratic system (Benda & Castles, 1969). Benda and Castles state that some Indonesian scholars confidently view Saminism as a manifestation of indigenous socialism, peasant virtues, and patriotic resistance to colonialism (1969, p. 209). Emphasizing ‘patriotic resistance to colonialism’, the post-colonial government further perceived the movement as a nationalist one in terms of its resistance to colonialism, claiming that the Samin community had successfully assimilated into newly-independent Indonesia (King, 1973, p. 460). However, the Samin movement did not cease when the colonial period ended, which puzzled both the administrators of the Indonesian Republic and their Dutch predecessors (Benda & Castles, 1969, p. 209). The Samin movement’s persistence was driven by their rejection of most colonial regulations, such as taxes and forest management, which were upheld by the post-colonial administration. Thus, Saminism cannot be categorized merely under the guise of nationalism.

The common Javanese villagers have divergent perceptions on Samin’s followers or *Sedulur Sikep*, in part due to Dutch administrators creating a disparaged image to limit the spread of Samin’s teachings and prompting the rest of villagers to shun the movement, and in part due to Samin’s followers own withdrawal from the common village system and its social life (Benda & Castles, 1969; Korver, 1976; King, 1973). The latter was triggered by the core of Samin’s teachings, ‘The religion of Adam’, which is considered a puritanical manner for both the Javanese and peasants. Korver (1976, p. 252), using a millenarian perspective, saw *Sedulur Sikep* detachment as part of the foundation of a perfect society exclusively for those adherent to the movement or faith. This then enforced their sectarian attitude, with a crucial dividing line between the millenarian leader’s followers (that is, Samin’s followers) and non-followers (Korver, 1976).

Another important aspect to be taken into account regarding Samin’s followers’ sectarian behavior is closely related to their view on being ‘pure’ Javanese by rejecting what King (1973, p. 460) called an ‘alien belief system’. Such a system would include being subject to the Dutch colonial system by paying taxes or accepting and following the enforced socio-political system, as well as any ‘imported’ religious beliefs.

Korver also highlighted the millenarian aspects of the Samin movement, such as its members' relationships with spirituality, Javanese puritanical virtues, and peasant tradition, which have triggered a resistance to authority and activism to claim resource rights. Korver writes:

“Core of Samin’s teachings was so-called ‘faith of Adam’, a form of natural religion of which veneration of the earth and a high estimation of the role of peasant society were important features. Further, Samin’s teachings are marked with distinct puritanical traits: Stealing, lying, and adultery were forbidden to Samin’s followers. Women, like the peasants, were also held in high respect. [...] Economically and politically the following goals were pursued by the Samin movement: Restoration of the freedom to access forests and other common lands (resources), and the abolition of taxes and statue labour [...] Generally speaking they recognized no authority and displayed a tendency to withdraw from village society.” (Korver, 1976, p. 250)

While Benda and Castle highlighted the relationship of ‘Faith / Religion of Adam’ with the existence of authorities as follows:

“The religion of Adam, that is to say, was not only a pre-Islamic but also – if only unconsciously – a pre-Hindu-Bhuddist ethic: It harked back to a ‘pure’ Java, unsullied by all foreign authority intrusions. Since the authorities confronting the Saminists were prijaji, with their Dutch bureaucrat masters and their Muslim bureaucrat subordinates, they could easily have come to see colonialism, Islam, and Hindu-derived prijaji values as part of a single, alien, and hierarchical establishment from which they sought to escape” (Benda & Castles, 1969, pp. 234-235)

Samin Surosentiko started his movement during the Dutch colonization period, such that the movement’s millenarism characteristic was derived from the concept of colonialism and its association with ‘modernization’. Inevitably, the ‘newly introduced’ modernization system introduced by the Dutch colonials was directed at the local traditional system through a wide range of reforms, including a new forest regulation, a new tax system, as well as the welfare measurements of ‘Dutch ethical policy’ (Benda & Castles, 1969, s. 220). In addition to state authorities, the *Sedulur Sikep* also perceived other forms of authority that needed to be banished, as they would interfere with any traditional way of living perceived by individuals, such as the ‘imported’ religious beliefs.

Accordingly, Kartodirdjo (1972) stressed the emergence of the millenarian movement as a resistance against colonial administrators in light of pre-existing traditions, by

stating that western domination through colonialism was perceived to undermine the existing traditional economic and political system. The existing traditional economic and political system here can be perceived as the local identity of peasants, which happened to fit with their religion or spirituality. Therefore, traditional religious leaders often have power over symbols of identity and hope. The role of these religious leaders is not only to (recruit and) maintain the loyalty of the followers, but also in a more anarchistic way to encourage followers in resisting against colonial domination. Hence, the existence of charismatic religious leaders has always been a potential threat to the dominant bureaucratic elites (Kartodirdjo, 1972, p. 75).

Looking at the late Samin Surosentiko and his followers' goals from the movement's early formation until its present status as a Javanese millenarian movement¹¹, Kartodirdjo argued that these goals represented the same classic response to threatened traditionalism resulting from exposure to a pre-colonial 'foreign system', such as the Islamic tradition brought by Arab (and later Indian) traders. Accordingly, within peasant communities undergoing de-traditionalization, the millenarian movement pursued the restoration of an indigenous traditional order and sought to reassert traditional identity (Kartodirdjo in Scott, 1977). For rural native peasants, this traditional identity was strongly based on a connection to the land and soil as a livelihood, including the tradition of producing their own food based on the principle of total self-sufficiency without foreign intervention. Scott (1977) concluded that this (puritan) peasant trait should be associated with the peasants' daily matters both within and between communities:

“Though by no means isolated from large society, local peasant communities stubbornly retained their own identity which was bound up with attachment to the soil and to age old village cults... moreover ... the central village values of cooperation and reciprocal help were prized because they allowed the village community to function as a more or less self-contained unit and were thus without outside referent” (Scott, 1977, p. 213)

¹¹ Perceiving the Sedulur Sikep movement as millenarism would, in this research, be best understood from the existence of 'Sikep ideology' preached by Samin Surosentiko, who was once regarded as 'The Savior' or in Javanese context as *Ratu Adil* – Just Ruler. Another millenarism movement that emerged around the same time as Saminism was 'Sarekat Islam', which was high in modernity, populated by scholars, and had significantly more advanced political action against the Dutch colonials at the local level (Korver, 1976, p. 264).

Accordingly, the importance of land/soil in defining identities and traditions has led to the Saminist movement and its activist actions having a stronger association to its land cultivation by peasants and its efforts to retain this identity. In addition, the way of living without outside influence also played a significant role in the movement's resistance, identity, and traditional struggles. Viewing Samin and his followers' activism as a peasant movement to conserve their tradition and especially to defend their economic right will be discussed in next section.

2.3 Saminism as a Peasant Movement

As previously mentioned, the Samin movement or *Wong Sikep* movement was triggered by new colonial regulations on land ownership and access to teak forest. The movement first emerged in areas with high densities of teak forest, reflecting how teak forests played a crucial economic role in the pre-colonial period when local peasants collected the dead fallen timber as part of their livelihoods (Benda & Castles, 1969, pp. 220-222). Moreover, Benda and Castles (1969, p. 223) point out the closure of forested land and the subsequent peoples' petitions to re-open this land, which the Forest Service ultimately refused. Consequently, stealing wood became an 'alternative' economic activity for the hard-pressed peasants.

A government investigation in 1917¹² found that the primary cause of the Saminist movement was the peasants' grievances in the face of new 'enforced' regulations. These included taxes, new land tax regulations, new enforced duties intended to benefit peasants (but not appreciated by them), such as tax-funded village banks, schools, night watchmen, bull studs, and irrigation regulation, as well as the surrender of land in the support of the village schoolteacher, and forestry regulations rendering the procurement of traditional wood more difficult (Kahin, 1955). The tendency for colonial regulations to incite a negative response from the would-be Saminist peasants also emerged in the broader context of the peasant movement across Indonesia. The government investigation found that access to resources and bundles of new regulations also

¹² The Dutch Colonial's Administration published a comprehensive official report: *verslag betreffende het onderzoek in zake de Saminbeweging ingesteld ingevolge het Gouvernements besluit van 1 Juni 1917*, No. 20 (Batavia, 1918). Authored by Asst. Resident J. E. Jasper, after he was assigned to investigate Samin's followers in Blora, therefore the report later known as 'Jasper Report'.

contributed to the attitudes of much of the Indonesian peasantry at the time, though in a less articulated and more passive way than among the Saminists.

The ‘passive resistance’ exercised by Samin and his followers was perceived differently by Kahin (1955, pp. 43-44). He highlighted that the movement developed ‘anarchistic’ tendencies in the way that members refused to pay taxes or perform corvees, or the multitude of new legally-required village services that members sought to avoid. However, this particular form of disobedience toward the colonial government – that is, avoiding open attacks or institutional confrontations, withdrawing from the village’s system, and focusing on self-help – showed to some degree that Samin Surosentiko was practicing what Scott would categorize as ‘everyday forms of resistance’. Scott (1985, p. 29) argues that everyday forms of peasant resistance are the prosaic but constant struggles between the peasantry and those who seek to extract labor, food, taxes, rents, and interest from them, which in this case can be a wide range of actors from formal state administrators and bureaucrats to informal property owners, money lenders, or local strongmen. Accordingly, farmers who acted based on everyday forms of resistance were consciously denying the claims made by one or more types of superordinate classes or other traditionally powerful actors (Scott, 1985, p. 33).

Even though Scott also argues that the movement was largely driven by lower classes struggling against superordinate classes, the *Sedulur Sikep* movement cannot merely be classified as everyday forms of peasant resistance. First of all, not all poor peasants submitted to Samin’s ideology that initiated the movement and was preached by middle-class peasants. Second, Samin and his followers had never been subject to any labor or wage systems, which were one of the most prominent causes of everyday forms of resistance. Yet, as Korver (1976, p. 264) argued, the peasants were unable to voice their grievances through concerted political organization in a more modern form of resistance, such that the movement moved closer to the categorization ‘lower class’ action, in the sense of lacking of access to political power in the face of their superordinate opponent, the state administrative authority.

Understanding the original movement by Samin and his followers, particularly in the context of *Sedulur Sikep*’s contemporary anti-cement movement, is not possible by only perceiving the members’ economic status as lower-class ‘poor’ peasants, nor their obvious actions of resistance alone. A prominent part of *Sedulur Sikep*’s actions of

resistance is conditioned by intentions, values, and purposefulness, which can be described as expression of their ‘consciousness’ (Scott, 1985; see next page). To understand their consciousness, I will derive Scott’s (1985, pp. 37-38) description on the pattern of ‘everyday resistance’ as a distinct behavior with far-reaching implications. Given the *Sedulur Sikep*’s consciousness of their puritan Javanese peasant culture and identities, values and norms should be taken account in scrutinizing their actions of resistance. The implied meaning they give to every act – the symbols, the norms, the ideological forms they create – constitutes an indispensable background to define their behaviors (Scott, 1985). The discussion therefore merits a reflection on the complicated relationship between the thoughts and actions of the *Sedulur Sikep*.

The points that need to be pinned down in order to understand the relationship between thoughts and actions become related if both elements are in constant communication. To explain the complicated relationship between the two, Scott (1985, p. 38) emphasizes their influence toward one another, in which acts born of intention influence consciousness, which then influences subsequent intentions and acts. Thus, acts of resistance and thoughts about (or the meaning of) resistance are in constant ‘dialogue’. Furthermore, Scott also points to another circumstance on the existence of consciousness to explain one’s intentions and actions:

“Intentions and consciousness are not tied in quite same way to the material world as behavior. It is possible and common for human actors to conceive of a line of actions that is, at the moment, either impractical or impossible. Thus, a person may dream of a revenge or a millennial kingdom of justice that may never occur. On the other hand, as circumstances change it may become possible to act on those dreams. Hence, the realm of consciousness give a privileged access to lines of action that may – just may – become plausible at some future date” (Scott, 1985, p. ibid)

The possibility of impractical or impossible action due to peasants’ imagination of a millennial kingdom – or the ‘golden age’ – which is centralized in millenarian movement, was transformed into consciousness of the peasants, especially those who were linked to the millenarism movement. Thus, I perceive *Sedulur Sikep*’s intentions, ideas, and languages of their resistance as part of their consciousness to achieve the so-called ‘golden age’.

The pursuit of the millennial kingdom – or the ‘golden age’ – by peasants, in this context, is essentially the *Wong Sikep* movement. That is, the desire to live without any superordinate actors, elites, or authorities who use their power to impose their own image of ‘the right’ social order, and the need to abolish such imposed power altogether. The Sikep consciousness of the elites promoting their own ideals justified not only the behavior but also the consciousness of the non-elites or the subordinate classes. This played a vital role in *Sedulur Sikep*’s action of withdrawing themselves from the Javanese village system that, based on what *Sedulur Sikep* believed was being exposed to foreign influence system and accepting it as their own (new) system, such as accepting the hegemonic religious or social ideology as a normal or even justifiable part of the social order (Scott, 1985, p. 39). Hence, the idealism of *Sedulur Sikep* living their lives without any interference from authority imposing a foreign system formed the backbone for the notion of establishing their own social order.

The peasantry culture of the *Sedulur Sikep*, especially in understanding the resistance movement, is largely derived from their experiences resisting the enforced non-native system or social order by elites or superordinate classes of authorities. Scott¹³ (1985, p. 41) vividly captured the process:

“By referring to the culture that peasants fashion from their experience – their ‘offstage’ comments and conversation, proverbs, folksongs, and history, legend, joke, language, ritual, and religion – it should be possible to determine to what degree, and in what ways, peasant actually accept the social order propagated by elites”

He further stressed that some elements of lower-class culture can be more relevant than others in explaining the subordinate lower-class phenomenon. The *Sedulur Sikep*’s experiences tolerated a very small degree of acceptance of the concerted social order, yet they aimed to conserve their tradition of resistance toward any authority’s interference. Lower-class [religious sect] culture explanation of this case is highly dependent on the high degree of consciousness behind every action of resistance toward the elites – be it the Dutch colonial state or the Indonesian post-colonial state – that

¹³ Scott’s research in this book focused on peasant in Sedaka, Malaysia. However, he also referred to the Saminist peasant movement by calling them a lower-class religious sect as one sample of peasant culture that abandoned the hierarchy of the nobility/elites.

enforced their vision of social order and sought to control the ideological sectors of a society.

Finally, completing the examination of lower classes or subordinate classes who, in this case, can be divided into two groups – that is, those who accept the social order propagated by elites and those who completely reject the elites and their hegemonic social order – shifts the discussion to the relationship between these two groups. For those who belong to the latter group and have their own ‘normal and justifiable social order’ shunned and ostracized by fellow members of their class, a lower-class subculture with sanctioning power proved to exist. The existence of such a subculture can define the frictions between the two groups, especially when the key values of peasantry culture within a certain social order either grow or harden. In the context of the contemporary *Sedulur Sikep* resistance, the emergence of a subculture will be relevant in explaining the frictions between the *Sedulur Sikep* and their fellow non-*Sikep* Javanese villagers, as well as within their own community, especially in the case of anti-cement movement where the notion of resistance and external authority are perceived differently by separate groups.

2.4 Addressing the Concept of Indigeneity

This section will discuss the term, concepts, and practice of the Indigeneity human-nature relationship, specifically in the context of the *Sedulur Sikep*. However, in this section, I will not focus on the debate on the Indigenous Peoples (IPs) status of *Sedulur Sikep*, partly because they are Javanese, and partly due to the fact that within the Indonesian context, IPs status is perceived from a rather different perspective (see Chapter 4). Therefore, the use of ‘Indigeneity’ in this section is based on the concept of the political ecology of Indigeneity, as presented by Yeh & Bryan (2015).

Indigeneity within political ecology understands the relationship between nature and culture in a way that the physical environment can shape cultural traits, and, on the other hand, cultural traits can be considered as a response to the physical qualities of environment (Yeh & Bryan, 2015, p. 532). In this context, Yeh and Bryan (2015) further argue that such adaptations have led to the production of culturally-distinct forms of knowledge and modifications of the physical environment, in which this

knowledge is later perceived as indigenous, and strongly related to particular environments and places. This understanding was later expanded as response to the influences of the modern system and society through colonialism and/or the emergence of the modern state, that threatened the existing native system of the people and the condition of the environment.

The presence of modern systems, however, has strengthened our understanding of Indigenous Peoples' ties to and use of land and common resources as a fundamental human right. The connection between land and human rights is further expressed in a way in which land is a matter of self-determination of people, which encompasses land rights, self governance, and cultural rights¹⁴.

Since the term 'Indigenous Peoples' first emerged, marginalized groups across the world have been using it to claim land and resources, as well as to self-determine. Moreover, it is simultaneously used as a means of articulating the historical- and geographical-related circumstances of dispossession and assimilation into modern society (Yeh & Bryan, 2015, p. 534). Without overlooking the purely racial identity factors, Yeh and Bryan further emphasize how the use of IPs later turned indigeneity into a political expression of identity that often mobilized marginalized groups to assert control over lands and resources they previously occupied collectively (2015, p. Ibid). Finally, this view conceptualizes that self-identification/determination is key, where its political perspective will draw on the relations among the indigenous with non-indigenous communities and the powerful actors, emphasizing geographic territory and historical context.

Within the Indonesian context, there are prolonged debates on the concept of Indigeneity and Indigenous Peoples (IPs). With a national population of over 250 million, the Indonesian government recognizes 1,128 ethnic-tribal groups (IWGIA). Indonesian government then identifies some of the indigenous communities as *komunitas adat*¹⁵ *terpencil* – (geographically-isolated customary communities), which

¹⁴ Stated in article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and ICESCR, and UN Human Rights Committee (CCPR) in its General Comment No.12

¹⁵ Adat can be roughly translated into tradition or way of living. Within the context of *Masyarakat adat*, *adat* can be perceived as 'the form of cultural ideas consisting of cultural values, norms, laws, and rules that are related to one another and formed into a system (KBBI)

later changed into *masyarakat adat* (customary community) or *masyarakat hukum adat* (customary law community)¹⁶ as the closest term used by government to refer to ethnic groups. The Government of Indonesia has hesitated in using the term ‘Indigenous’ within its nation-state context. As mentioned in the 2012 Universal Periodic Review at the Human Rights Council, the Indonesian government stated that:

“The Government of Indonesia supports the promotion and protection of indigenous people worldwide [...] Indonesia, however, does not recognize the application of the indigenous people concept [...] in the country”.

The Government of Indonesia argues that the concept of Indigenous People is not applicable within Indonesia, in that almost all Indonesians (with the exception of those of Chinese or Arab descent) are indigenous, and are therefore entitled to equal rights.

It is certainly true that the Indonesian archipelago is populated by many groups of minorities with culturally distinct ways of living. The National Indigenous Peoples’ Organization (*Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara - AMAN*)¹⁷ estimates that the number of indigenous people in Indonesia falls between 50 and 70 million (Perkasa & Evanty, 2014 and IWGIA, n.d.), and that these groups of people are often found to lack rights both as individuals as well as citizens¹⁸. Their lack of rights is usually related to their cultural distinctiveness, religious or spiritual beliefs, language, and other socio-political elements, all of which are regulated and homogenized by the state under the notion of ‘unity and harmonization’¹⁹.

¹⁶ These two terms have the same definition and are used officially in national law. Customary law community is mentioned and recognized in, among others, UUD 45 (the Indonesian Constitution), Act No. 39 of 1999, Act No. 5 of 1960, and Act No. 41 of 1999. The term customary community itself has been frequently used by NGOs since 1960 when the Agrarian law was discussed within the Parliament and with the Agrarian Minister, 12 September 1960. See Harsono (1999). In national law, this term is used in Act No. 25 of 2000 on Proenas.

¹⁷ AMAN works in local, national, and international level to represent and advocate the Indigenous Peoples issues. Consist of 2,304 indigenous communities across Indonesia, with totaling 17 million individual members. (AMAN)

¹⁸ AMAN defines *masyarakat adat*/Indigenous peoples as those who occupy certain customary territory throughout generations. Indigenous peoples are those who have sovereignty over land and natural resources, and socio-cultural life that are governed by customary laws, and customary institutions that maintain the continuity of their lives as indigenous communities (AMAN).

¹⁹ This notion promoted prominently by The New Order regime during 1965-1998. The New Order relied on heavily controlled construction of history in order to secured its legitimacy, and served an indispensable function in the protracted political ‘stability and order’ and impressive economic growth (Crosby, 2013). However, such notions still perpetuated socially by the people who are belong to the majority, such as by those who are subject to the majority Moslem traditions.

However, from the perspective of the *masyarakat adat* community, especially those who are marginalized, ENGOs such as AMAN challenge the state's claims and instead argue that people living in the country are indigenous in the formal sense of the term, especially regarding their rights to land, resources, and self-determination. Hence, the assumption is that Indigenous Peoples in Indonesia are the *adat* communities or *adat* law communities, under a definition adopted by AMAN as follows:

“Communities that live based on the ancestral origins continually throughout generations in a customary (adat) region, which have the authority towards lands and natural resources, socio-cultural environment which being governed by customary law and institutions that oversee the continuity of its people” (AMAN First Congress, 1999).

Based on the definition constructed by AMAN above, a report made by the Asian Development Bank (ADB, 2002) further adds this term to the definition of IPs, and is in agreement with some defining characteristics of indigenous peoples, namely: (i) they have been inhabiting a certain territory for generations; (ii) they maintain their culture, including aspects of language, belief, production patterns, law, and social institutions; (iii) they self-identify and are recognized by other groups or the state as community groups with their own characteristics; (iv) they are deprived of rights, marginalized, and discriminated against; and (v) other characteristics, including their relationship with the land upon which they live, not only in physical terms but also in terms of communal magic or religious beliefs.

2.5 Actors' Interests in Resource Management

This section will discuss the actors that are involved in resource management within a certain territory, including the state, business, grassroots groups, and ENGOs. Each actor's approach is based on their source of power and their own interests. Furthermore, the discussion will touch upon roles and interactions between actors, with a focus on the political side of environmental and resource management conflicts. To emphasize the political aspects, especially with regards to findings from the field, there are two things that need to be underlined:

“[...] (1) An appreciation that politics is about interaction of actors over environmental (or other) resources; (2) A recognition that even weak actors

possess some power to act in the pursuit of their interest.”
(Bryant & Sinead, 1997, p. 25)

Thus, this section shall frame the power relations and interests of the actors involved within the politicized environment of resource management, and their roles in environmental conservation or (more frequently) environmental degradation.

2.5.1 The State

In the context of post-colonial Indonesia, the state will be perceived as the only sovereign actor holding a monopoly over the allocation of resources within a given territory. The Indonesian Constitution states that the Indonesian State is the only authority that owns all land, water, and natural resources: “*The land, the waters and the natural resources within shall be under the Powers of the State and shall be used to the greatest benefit of the people.*”²⁰ However, this unlimited power of the Indonesian State over its natural resources was inherited from its predecessors, the Dutch colonial rulers. Colonial administrators exercised such power to monopolize control over valuable teak forests, in a policy that created a forest network in which peasants and villagers were either excluded, or granted limited access (Peluso, 1992). The resource management policies over the teak forests were then continued by the post-colonial Indonesian State, for example through the establishment of PERHUTANI, the National Forestry Company, that controls most of the forests in Java.

Looking back at Article 33 of the Indonesian Constitution quoted above, the power possessed by the state is accompanied by a responsibility to provide a benefit for its people. Accordingly, the state is not only entitled to (unlimited) power in owning and managing resources, but also actually exerts that power through institutions that Bryan and Sinead argue are the main providers of diverse public goods, ranging from security and a common currency to social and physical infrastructure (1997, p. 53). However, Bryan and Sinead (1997, p. Ibid) also argue that since the modern state is closely associated with a capitalist development agenda, the state indeed possesses its own distinct interest to accommodate such agenda: The political, economic, and strategic interests derived from its power.

²⁰ Indonesian Constitution, Article 33, Par. 3

In most cases in Indonesia, the state has collaborated with business, which has compromised its interests and led to the dilemma of the state to promote select environmental conservation initiatives related to resource management. The state's interests regarding resource use, which are often lacking concern for environmental conservation, are in contrast to how environmental conservation has captured the grassroots groups' attention. The state often uses the term 'development' to legitimize its resource extraction activities, which then become a kind of hegemonic agenda of social and economic order propagated by the government's elites – especially during the authoritarian Indonesian New Order regime.

This process then stimulates the political and economic marginalization of weaker grassroots groups, or the subordinate-class – a process which, in the Indonesian case, had already begun in the colonial period (Bryant & Sinead, 1997, p. 57). Eventually, the demand for a balance between economic development and environmental conservation was promoted by grassroots groups, farmers, indigenous people, and weak subordinate-class actors. Responding to such demands for conservation, then is perhaps a means for the state to *'assert their authority over peoples and environments, thereby strengthening the position of the state in relation to other actors'* (Bryant & Sinead, 1997, p. 65). This can be seen through the requirement to implement Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and/or 'Free prior and informed consent' (FPIC) mechanisms to ensure the conservation and sustainability of the environment within extractive industries based on the needs of the people.

However, without ignoring the technical capabilities performed by the state, there are other examples of the state's failure in making sure that the intended mechanisms run appropriately in attempting to fulfill both the state's interests and the grassroots actors' demands. There are two main factors contributing to the state's failure: (1) The presence of a rent-seeking regime that is in power, which in Indonesia has been worsened by the decentralization of power in mining industries management, thereby increasing the risk that policy-making process will be personalized by the elites' interests, and (2) the state-business relationship in which a profit-making interest is combined with the legal power owned by the state, and which will escalate the politicized nature of environmental and resource management (Bryant & Sinead, 1997, p. 62).

2.5.2 Business

The discussion in this section will focus on the partnership between the state and private business, where access to resources and labor are provided by the state. The discussion will not only focus on the capitalistic nature of business, but also on the social and ecological consequences of their ability to control the ‘means of production’ in pursuit of profit maximization. However, the classification of businesses into transnational companies (TNCs) and local- or state-owned companies (SOC) will not be emphasized here, as all business actors are assumed to pursue their interest in getting as much economic profit as possible at the lowest possible cost, regardless of ownership status. From their economic profit, businesses then accumulate capital as a source of power.

The emergence of business actors is crucial here due to the interconnected world brought about by the global capitalist system. The history of the capitalist system in Indonesia can be traced back to the colonial era, when the economies and societies of so-called Third World were conditioned as facilitators of production for the global market (Bryant & Sinead, 1997, p. 104). In relation to such ‘crucial’ roles, business was not only ‘required’ to fulfill its own economic profit interest, but also to fulfill the world’s demand, primarily dominated by the industrialized-First World states, under the umbrella of industrial capitalism. Bryant and Sinead (1997, pp. 105-107) argue that in accordance to this ‘accepted’ system of global capitalism by business, its implications for Third World countries have been enhanced by:

- The quest for cheap natural resources, where the plentiful supply provided by Third World countries leads to most of these states facing business-sponsored exploitation.
- The quest for cheap labor, which has been one factor in the growing shift of livelihoods as workers are increasingly pushed to work in resource-related jobs. Here, the temptation of getting paid by the employer is seen more favorably than obtaining a livelihood through, for example, own farming activities.
- The role of business within the global capitalist system is believed to be cooperative with regard to some actors but conflict-ridden with others. In many cases, businesses cooperate with other actors that have power to access or manage the resources needed, which is most-often the state. Through this

business-state cooperation, business benefits by having power in form of control and access to the intended resources.

With regards to the aforementioned circumstances of businesses' 'active involvement' in resource management in collaboration with a respective state, I highlight Bryant and Sinead's argument (below) on the exclusion of certain less-powerful grassroots actors, who are also likely to be the most impacted ones:

*“Business often has struck up **close relationship with both first and third world state in the pursuit of their accumulation strategies**. The role of the state as the provider of ‘public goods’ has been vital, as have its legal-coercive abilities vis-à-vis disaffected actors in society. As noted, **the state-business alliance has not been without its tension**, as these two actors have similar, but not identical, interests. **However, it seemingly in the nature of a capitalist business to require certain ‘goods’ that only the state can provide, which serves as a powerful force for mutual accommodation between these actors**. Conversely, the interest of business in obtaining environmental resources and labor as cheaply as possible tends to **embroil these actors in conflict with various grassroots actors** who, from the point of business, are often obstacles to the ‘free trade’ in resources and labour” (Bryant & Sinead, 1997, p. 107 – emphasis from the original)*

2.5.3 Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (ENGOS)

This section will discuss the emergence of the environmental-based non-governmental organizations (ENGOS) as a response to the environmental crisis, particularly in the Third World. ENGOS are sometimes perceived as complementary to the state for their role as the ‘guarantors’ of social and environmental well-being, as Bryant and Sinead note that the state has failed to fulfil its self-proclaimed role as both developer of and steward for the environment, while instead contributing to socio-economic and environmental degradation (1997, p. 131). In order to institutionalize such ENGOS’ roles, ENGOS are indeed in search of power that can secure their interests, especially due to the politicized nature of their interactions with more powerful actors’ counterparts: The state and business.

According to Bryant and Sinead (1997, Ibid) unlike the state, ENGOS do not possess control and dominance, nor a formalized monopoly and coercive power over a respective territory. Additionally, ENGOS have limited amounts of capital, if any. As a consequence, ENGOS need to ensure that the purposes and intentions of their

emergence will lead to some access to certain forms of power. Bryant and Sinead further argued that ENGOs often:

“Use their purpose to seek ways in which to solve environmental problems – provides them with a reserve ‘Public Goodwill’ that they are able to use politically. Hence, they exert political influence through an attempt to influence the environmental policies and practices of state, business and multilateral institutions”

Emphasizing their ‘public goodwill’ and turning them into a channel to exert political power, both toward the more powerful actors of state and business as well as to their grassroots counterparts, Bryant and Sinead (1997, pp. 132-133) further explain the way in which ENGOs commonly devote themselves to exerting their political influences in following ways:

- Influence the environmental policies and practices of states, business, and multilateral institutions. Using their ability to lobby, they push these powerful actors for major policy changes within their respective environmental issues.
- Support conservation and development projects proposed and operated by grassroots actors, peasants, indigenous peoples, villagers.
- Manage well-publicized campaigns (notably through the media) that are designed to raise public awareness, specifically on environmental issues. In this way, ENGOs might also influence powerful actors.
- Seek to exert political influence through activities at global environmental and development conferences, by joining important forums concerning inter-state conflict, negotiations, and agreements on environmental problems.

Within this research, the discussion on ENGOs will be centered on the actions of JMPPK (see next chapters) and other NGOs that work behind JMPPK to support their actions. Adapting the work of Clark (1991, pp. 40-41 in Bryant & Sinead, 1997, pp. 134-137) on the diversification of ENGOs, I will use two out of four of the ENGO’s categorizations: Grassroots Organizations (GOs) and Grassroots Support Organizations (GROs)/Service Organisations (SOs). The GOs are usually based within either urban or rural communities where the members are able to organize themselves into a movement for certain issues – usually issues that have a direct impact on the community. In the

Third World context, in particular JMPPK within the context of this research, GOs often emerge as response to threatened livelihoods, such as water availability and land sustainability upon which local incomes depend. In contrast, GROs/SOs' intend to either support existing community-based movements or initiate such projects themselves in prospected areas threatened by ecological destruction from local economic practices.

2.5.4 Grassroots

This section will discuss the role of grassroots actors, who are both perceived as relatively less powerful actors in contrast with the other actors involved in politicized environmental and resource management, as well as on the resistance initiated by the grassroots actors as a response to such unequal power in their struggle for livelihood.

Grassroots actors are perceived as those whose livelihoods depend on the physical environment that surrounds them. Therefore, their main interest is the continuity and availability of local environmental resources. However, as Redclift (1992, p. 36 in Bryant & Sinead, 1997, p. 160) notes, this interest will produce sustainable ways of resource management not because of 'respect' for the environment, but rather because it is part of grassroots actors' strategy to manage their livelihoods and secure their own existence in the long term. In this sense, grassroots actors often construct traditional knowledge upon their ecological processes derived from the socio-cultural context in which they live. This local/traditional knowledge later becomes a crucial power resource that grassroots actors use to challenge their state and business opponents. Despite the discussion of grassroots ways of managing common environmental resources with their distincted local knowledge, the state will still take over the so-called Common Property Regime (CPR) for large-scale commercial exploitation either by its own agencies or by their business counterparts benefitting from the legal political power of the state (Bryant & Sinead, 1997, p. 163).

Accordingly, Bryant and Sinead then argue that such take-overs by the state become the main argument for the enclosure of common resources, which contribute to the grassroots actors' marginalization via their limited or restricted access to the resources (1997, p. 163). This loss of control over and access to environmental resources that were necessary to their livelihoods will then typically lead to conflict over long-term

use of resources. Due to the strong dependence of the grassroots actors on the environment, a wide range of approaches are implemented by powerful state and non-state actors, followed by grassroots actors either opting to adapt to the given altered political and economic situation, or resisting in a covert manner to avoid the powerful actors' reprisal (Bryant & Sinead, 1997, p. 168)

This research focuses on the teachings of Samin Surosentiko with his *Sikep* ideology, which, to a certain degree, are largely derived from the narrative of human-nature relationship. The *Sikep* community is perceived not only as a grassroots organization that have applied their local knowledge in managing the common resources and their surrounding environment, but also as a group of people who lives under the moral authority of 'respecting' Mother Earth.

To summarize, the marginality of grassroots actors may be the result of their lack of access to and control over environmental and common resources caused by policies of commercial exploitation by the state and/or its business allies, or their resistance to integration into powerful actors' propagated social order. The latter scenario creates further conflicts within grassroots actors themselves as some of their members accept being integrated into the new social order propagated by the state and business by voluntarily changing their livelihoods, while others do not. Conversely, grassroots actors that maintain their dependence on the surrounding ecological system will defend it from any form of commercial or capitalistic exploitations, and will challenge their peers who oppose them. The Saminist *Sedulur Sikep* fall into the latter categorization, as they challenge their fellow neighbors who have accepted the hegemonic agenda of political and economic social order, as well as by challenging the traditionally powerful state and/or business actors who interfere with their traditional livelihoods as Javanese peasants.

3 Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodology of the research, including the nature of this research, a description of the research method, data collection techniques, the obtaining of access and consent, ethical considerations, limitations of the research, validity of the research, and a personal reflection from the field.

3.1 Research Methods

Meeting the stated research objectives required a combination of various key informants and data sources. I therefore opted for a combination of interviews with key informants, literature reviews, direct observations, and secondary data sources as my tools. This research used a qualitative approach, as the gathered data from the above-mentioned methods are in verbal form, derived from both spoken and written materials, alongside images from observation and secondary resources (Denscombe, 2007).

All of the data gathered during the research were closely examined using qualitative data analysis. According to Denscombe (2007, pp. 287-288), there are four guiding principles to analyzing qualitative data;

- First, the analysis of data and conclusions drawn from the research should be rooted in the data. The researcher must ensure that all analyses and conclusions must be derived from the evidence collected during the research process.
- Second, because raw data are interpreted by the researcher, the researcher's explanation of the data should emerge from a careful and meticulous analysis that looks closely at the empirical data collected.
- Third, the researcher should avoid personal prejudices or biases from previous research and theory in the related research area. Consequently, introducing unwarranted preconceptions must be avoided.
- Finally, the data analysis should involve an iterative process. Hypotheses, theories, concepts, and generalizations should be based on a continuous back-and-forth comparison between the data and the codes, categories, or other concepts being used.

Furthermore, Denscombe argues that this 'inductive logic' of qualitative data analysis is based on the logic of discovering things from data. These data then become the basis for

generating theory and the derived features from the data become the basis for drawing more generalized conclusions or theories.

As a researcher with a political science background, I found it very useful to use an interdisciplinary approach in conducting this research. The nature of the topic is very difficult to be framed within a single approach, due to the great variety of data that needed to be gathered. As I was interested in looking at the dynamics of the *Sedulur Sikep* within the issue of the anti-cement movement, this research has directed me to use anthropological perspectives in answering the given research question, where it tends to focus on Sikep's identity and its relations with other actors outside or within their own socio-cultural system. Having trained at SUM master's programme also had given me chance to learn other perspectives, especially in perceiving particular cases of environmental and development issues, which were helpful to examine the topic that I was interested in.

3.1.1 Literature Review

The usual start of doing research on certain topic is by exploring findings in previous studies through a literature review. It is very important to understand the existing framework and data in a way that allows the researcher to create questions and further concepts that will form the main topics and ideas of the present research. According to Denscombe (2007), the use of findings from previous research can be a platform for what is worth investigating and how it needs to be investigated. In addition, Strauss and Corbin (1990) argue building initial questions or observation topics is rooted in concepts derived from prior literature or experience. They then further state that literature reviews also provide a beginning focus, that is, a starting point for the researcher.

In order to understand *Sedulur Sikep* as both a Puritan Javanese movement and a peasant movement, existing literature is crucially important. Among the literature that has been reviewed are studies that explore the ideology of Samin Surosentiko during early stage of the movement, as well as Sikep's spiritual traits, identity, culture, and way of survival amidst scorn from fellow Javanese and government oppression. Literature on mining socio-environmental impact, peasants' movements, government regulations, research methodology, and other relevant topics were also reviewed.

3.1.2 Interviews

A big part of the data in this research was obtained through interviews. Since the research focused on people and the complex phenomenon of the *Sedulur Sikep* and the anti-cement movement, including interviews as part of the research methodology was a natural choice. Denscombe (2007, pp. 174-175) emphasized the need to gain insight into such things as people's opinions, feelings, emotions, and experiences. Throughout my field work period, I allocated most of the time toward interviewing key informants. These informants were selected based on two criteria: First, the purpose of the study, and second, their reliability and knowledge of my topic of interest.

Among the people that I interviewed were *Sedulur Sikep* elders in several hamlets around the districts of Pati and Kudus, prominent *Sedulur Sikep* figures who are actively involved in the anti-cement movement, anti-cement activists, both pro- and anti-cement villagers, and a representative from PT. Semen Indonesia. By interviewing the *Sedulur Sikep* elders, I obtained information regarding the principal norms in observing Samin's teachings and *Sedulur Sikep* ecological values, as well as *Sedulur Sikep* activism in the anti-cement movement. Talking to *Sedulur Sikep* members who are actively involved in the anti-cement movement provided me with insight into their views concerning the implementation of Samin's teachings in preserving the culture and environment by rejecting the cement industries. Meanwhile, interviewing the anti-cement activists gave me their insight on the anti-cement movement in general, the importance of the *Sedulur Sikep*'s involvement within the agenda, and tips on how to communicate with and approach *Sedulur Sikep* members.

By interviewing the villagers who were involved in the anti-cement movement, I managed to explore the story of their decision to join the movement, as well as their views on the *Sedulur Sikep* before and after the movement. During my field work in Pati, I also had the chance to talk with villagers who were reluctant to show their standing position regarding the issue. So rather than playing the role as interviewer or researcher, I was having regular conversations without any structured questions. In doing so, I managed to explore the villagers' relationship with the *Sedulur Sikep* and their ambiguous feelings toward the cement industry. Finally, interviews with PT. Semen Indonesia's corporate secretary gave me another viewpoint on the nature of the cement industry in Indonesia.

I conducted all of the interviews using different techniques, depending on who the interviewee was. I used structured interviews for the cement company, as they requested a list of questions beforehand, Denscombe (2007, p. 175), known as ‘a predetermined list of questions’ in a structured interview. Even though this type of interview offers limited option responses, I obtained some additional information beyond the direct responses to the pre-determined questions. The interviews with anti-cement activists, prominent *Sedulur Sikep* anti-cement activists, and the anti-cement villagers were conducted using semi-structured interviews. This type of interview was used due to its flexibility, allowing the interviewees to have more freedom to develop and elaborate their ideas and knowledge. Using a prepared interview guide, I also often responded to my interviewees’ points of interest to get a deeper response on certain issues raised during interview. Given the idea of a distinct style of communication practiced by Samin’s followers, I decided to use unstructured interviews in order to emphasize their thoughts. In an unstructured interview, Denscombe (2007, p. 176) mentions that the researcher must ‘roll the ball’ by introducing a theme or topic for the interviewee to subsequently develop further. Therefore, using the topic of the ‘importance of land and water for the *Sedulur Sikep* peasantry’, I allowed my *Sedulur Sikep* informants to speak their minds on the complex issues of ecological balances. These interviews also included the historical aspect of Samin movement from the *Sedulur Sikep*’s own perspective.

Most of the conducted interviews were recorded both electronically using a voice recorder and in written field notes. On some occasions, unplanned talks happened in circumstances that made it impossible for me to record voices or take notes at the moment of the interview, for example during a motorcycle trip with one of the interviewees. All of the interviews in Pati and Kudus were conducted at my key informants’ houses, in which they would offer me meals or heavy snacks in accordance with the Javanese farmers’ culture of welcoming guests. As a result, these interviews were run informally and in a much more relaxed setting while enjoying food together.

3.1.3 Observation

I had planned to make some observations while I was in Sukolilo, in particular to take a deeper look at the *sikep* agricultural system and compare it with the common Javanese

system. However, harvest time had passed, such that most *Sedulur Sikep* members were on their ‘break time’ and stayed at home during the day. I was a bit disappointed that I could not have an actual visualization on *Sedulur Sikep*’s agricultural activities. Yet, later on I had the chance to visit a particular area of *Sedulur Sikep*’s farmland and fishponds that used to be included in the cement factory’s plan due to its good quality of soil/clay. I also participated in several JMPPK activities, participated in the ‘people’s ceremony’ celebrating Indonesia’s independence, joined meetings, and helped prepare for the activities. These gave me a chance to understand how the movement was run and managed by JMPPK and the activists. I also had the chance to observe some *brokohan* (rituals) held by *Sedulur Sikeps* and villagers for the water springs’ sustainability, including visiting sacred sites, caves, and water springs, as well as accompanying one of my prominent *Sedulur Sikep* key informants to *srawung* (travel or visiting relatives). In addition to that, I also spent some of my time in a small food stall managed by JMPPK, located in a small teak-forested area, where most of JMPPK activities took place. This place had also become a new attraction for youths to hang out and spend their free time, as JMPPK had changed it into a green space with messages to protect the environment written on boards and hung in several places.

In order to get reliable observations, I was fully aware of the need to minimize the extent of my presence as a researcher, especially during activities held by JMPPK.

3.1.4 Secondary Data

This research also obtained data from secondary sources. These secondary sources were found in several forms of books, journals, articles, and social media, including Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube videos. Most of the NGOs’ activists use social media to spread articles and updates regarding the movement, one that I paid attention closely is Twitter and Facebook account named after the ‘Omah Kendeng’ (Omah Kendeng later will be discussed in chapter 6), these official accounts of the movement run collaboratively by JMPPK and the Desantara Foundation. Also, a documentary video made by a journalist in early 2015 about the *Sedulur Sikep* involvement in opposing cement companies next to their hometown caught my attention to get deeper and got me more interested into this issue, especially into Sikep’s activism and their roles within the anti-cement movement. Several videos made by the Desantara Foundation were also studied, as

Desantara is among the ENGO that focus on intercultural harmonization between Samin's followers as a minority group and the majority Muslim communities in Pati, Central Java.

Documents from PT. Semen Indonesia also became an important secondary resource for better understanding of the cement industries in Indonesia and Southeast Asia in general.

3.2 Gaining Access and Consent

As much as I had read about Samin communities in the past, I had never met or been in contact with one of their members. Fortunately, an old acquaintance is a native of Sukolilo-Pati, the exact area where I wanted to do my field research on *Sedulur Sikep*. I made an intensive contact six months prior to my research's schedule, which resulted in another contact with whom I could be put in touch to discuss my research. The first name I got was an activist who had stayed with a *Sedulur Sikep* family during the 2008-2009 anti-cement protest in Sukolilo. He gave many insights and advice on how to interact and communicate with *Sedulur Sikep*, who are known to have a distinct way of communicating compared to other Javanese people. From this key informant, I also got in touch with Gunretno and Gunarti, both of whom are prominent *Sedulur Sikep* activists in the current anti-cement movement. I was told that once I obtained 'permission' from either Gunarti or Gunretno, *Sedulur Sikep* communities in Pati and Kudus would be much more accessible; therefore, I focused on getting in touch with both of them. After Gunarti responded to me, I indicated my intention to her and made an appointment to see her and Gunretno in person to follow up our discussion about the research that I was about to do. I can relate the process of getting in touch with both prominent *Sedulur Sikep* activists to be my 'key people' with what Denscombe elaborates as follows:

"Identifying key people who can grant permission, and successfully negotiating with them for access to people, places and events, is often a prerequisite without which fieldwork cannot begin, in informal settings, such sponsors act as guarantors who vouch for the bona fide status researcher. They use their informal status and relationship status with subjects as a currency facilitating both contact and trust between researcher and subject of group (e.g Polsky, 1967; Whyte, [1943] 1981)."

I managed to have my initial visit to Sukolilo during the second week of August 2016 and intended to stay there for at least three days to get contextual understanding before my actual research in the field. When I stayed at a friend's house, I discovered that my friend's father was a vocal supporter for the cement industry in Sukolilo – something which I unfortunately was unaware of when I met with Gunarti and Gunretno at Gunretno's house. At that meeting, where I was accompanied by my friend's sister, the discussion with Gunarti went well, as we were engaged on a talk about some environmental changes around Sukolilo, yet Gunretno was not involved in the conversation at all. During the conversation, Gunarti suggested me to visit Omah Sonokeling, a small area owned by the state-owned forestry company that is lent to and managed by JMPPK, to talk to some JMPPK activists there. By the time I decided to go to that area, my friend's father insisted on coming with me and made me hesitate to not let him accompany me. This was the moment when I learned that he was a pro-cement supporter. He turned the informal and casual discussion I had into an agitated one, as he brought up the benefits if the Cement Company came to Sukolilo by emphasizing the economic and social development of the people of Sukolilo. He had made my informants uneasy and suspicious toward me as researcher, that my informants had thought that I sent to Sukolilo by the cement company, by calling me one of the '*wong semen*' – cement people.

I ended the interview that afternoon and left my two indignant interviewees. I decided to go back to Yogyakarta that afternoon and leave my friend's house in the evening to minimize any further consequences to my research by staying at a 'cement supporter'. I contacted one of the indignant interviewees by phone and explained the situation I was in during our earlier meeting. Fortunately, she understood and invited me to stay at her house next time I came to Sukolilo, an invitation which I immediately accepted. I also managed to keep in touch with Gunarti during my absence from Sukolilo, as she requested that I join the people's ceremony to celebrate the Independence Day and meet with most of the anti-cement parties. The day I joined the people's ceremony was the day that I started my short 'live-in' in Sukolilo. During my stay in Sukolilo, Gunarti agreed to be my gatekeeper to some of *Sedulur Sikep*'s elders and to those who had been active in the movement.

As much as I overcame the obstacles to gaining access to the *Sedulur Sikep* communities, anti-cement activists, and the locals, some of them were still distrustful of me. It was only near the end of my stay that I got the impression that they started to trust that I was just doing my research for my thesis.

In contrast, my first attempt to interview PT Semen Indonesia took place almost two months before they were willing to talk to me. I discovered that the corporate secretary and I went to the same school for our undergraduate degrees and I used this as an opportunity to get hold of him. I was able to talk to the corporate secretary without disclosing any activities I did in Sukolilo with the *Sedulur Sikep* communities and the anti-cement activists, and I did the same when I was in Sukolilo by not telling people that I was planning to talk to the cement company. In this way, I managed to keep my informants' trust toward me, allowing them to feel safe talking to me. I managed to get information and data I needed without my informants trying to influence my research. On top of that, I always obtained informed consent to my interviewees. If during an interview or observation, sensitive information happened to be disclosed, I made sure that it would not be problematic if I included it in my research by offering different options for documenting the information (e.g. recorded electronically or only on written note). This also applied to disclosing or not disclosing the identities of those involved.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

Prior to my stay in Sukolilo, I was in good contact with Gunarti. A *Sedulur Sikep* family who stayed at the same hamlet as hers knew ahead of time that I was coming and would be staying in Sukolilo. Introducing myself every time I met with new people was necessary, especially with the *Sedulur Sikep*. They have a different way in introducing each other than the common way in the broader Javanese community. In relation to the use of language, the *Sedulur Sikep* do not use term of *jeneng* (Javanese for name) to state their name, as this term means gender/sex for the *Sedulur Sikep*. Instead, they use '*pangaran/pengaran*' to state what other people would call them. Thus, I followed this way of introducing myself to every *Sedulur Sikep* member I met. Giving information about where I originally come from was also indispensable to let them know that I have a different dialect of Javanese. I did this to avoid any misunderstanding during conversations.

Before every interview, I assured my respondents that my intention was to research this issue, and that any information obtained would be solely used for academic purposes. Even though some of my key informants were slightly provoked knowing that I graduated from the same institution from which two academic staff members who were also consultants for the Cement Company's EIA reports were employed. Therefore, I always took my time to explain that my position as student of University of Oslo and independent researcher has no attachment with those academic staff members, and practiced no deception by treating my informants and information/data attained with respect.

During my stay in Sukolilo, I gained close relationship with my host and became a part of the family. I therefore felt obligated to do several chores, such as help her prepare food and take the children to and from school. Apart from domestic responsibilities at the house, I also helped in running a small snacks and drinks stall at Sonokeling managed by my host on a daily basis. Other than my host, my relationship with Gunarti's family, especially with her children also became closer. My attachment with my host and Gunarti created an opportunity to be involved in every activity that JMPPK and/or Gunarti had during my stay. In some activities, where JMPPK was the host, I would also help preparing some necessities, where my host and Gunarti were usually in charge. I did not take my close relationship with both for granted. For instance, I would always ask whether I could join unless it was Gunarti herself who invited me to join the activity. All interviews I had were managed upon agreement with the interviewee, where the time could match their activities, usually in the evening during their relaxing time. Meanwhile, interviewing *Sedulur Sikep* members was much more flexible during that period, as it was after the harvest season and most of them were just stay at home, relaxing, and waiting for the rainy season's arrival to start plowing and planting the rice seedlings.

In order to gain greater acceptance by the wider *Sedulur Sikep* community, and especially to create a more comfortable atmosphere during interviews, I needed to have a certain manner that would not insult the *tata cara* (etiquette) of the *Sedulur Sikep*. It is very common for a farmer in Javanese tradition to serve guests with crops' products (e.g. roots, fruits, beans, peanuts) from their own farmland as snacks. In a Saminist house, this tradition not only applies to snacks, but also meals. During my visit to

several *Sedulur Sikep* elders' houses, I was served with meals and heavy snacks, and expected to eat and enjoy the food. In this way, enjoying snack and meal together, my interviewees felt more comfortable and built a friendly demeanor over the course of the conversation. Also, I would always have my interviews in Javanese.

Although most of them know Indonesian, Javanese is preferred when having conversation with *Sedulur Sikep*. Fortunately, they understood and tolerated my Javanese dialect that is known to be relatively more direct and blunt compared to other dialects, including their own. Accordingly, I realized that several terms and words have different meanings and often led to misunderstanding. To tackle this issue, during interviews I would ask Gunarti, since she has a better understanding of the context and aims of my research. In addition, writing down, recording interviews, as well as hiring a transcriber to translate my interviews into Indonesian was helpful in order to process and analyze the information obtained during interviews.

In term of appearance, I oftenly found myself wearing black and/or dark color attire during my stay in Sukolilo, as it is my favorite shade of color. Fortunately, I appeared to be blended in with the rest of the *Sedulur Sikep*, as most of them tend to wear black or dark colored clothing on a daily basis.

3.4 Research Limitations

Prior to arriving at the field, my original plan was to observe and interview other Samin's followers in different areas, particularly those in Klopoduwur, Blora – Central Java. The reason I wanted to include *Sedulur Sikep* from Blora was due to the elders' arguments concerning the anti-cement movement in Pati. More specifically, the elders felt that the movement was unnecessary, as protesting in such a way did not reflect Samin's teachings. The contentious way in perceiving Samin's spirit and preserving the cultural beliefs concerning the real *Sedulur Sikep* had caused internal friction among Samin's followers themselves, as both Samin elders in Blora and a few of Sikep's elders in Pati opposed the involvement of the *Sedulur Sikep* in the anti-cement movement. My idea was to obtain information from both sides of the *Sedulur Sikep* to enrich the outcome of the study.

After discussing with my first informant, who was an activist, I discovered that the Samin community in Blora had appeared to be the ‘tamed’ one. Another activist that I met afterwards also mentioned the same idea about Sikep community in Klopoduwur, Blora. The reason the *Sedulur Sikep* in Blora are the tamed ones is due to their acculturation and acceptance of the government’s program. Due to the fact that *Sedulur Sikep*’s hamlet in Klopoduwur-Blora had been turned into a government-assisted hamlet²¹ getting research access to this hamlet required a permit from Provincial, Regencial, and Village authorities. Due to time constraints and the complicated and prolonged bureaucratic procedures, I did not manage to get the permit in time. Nevertheless, I found out that I could get some views of *Sedulur Sikep* in Klopoduwur-Blora toward the issue of anti-cement movement through videos on YouTube, news, article, and update on social media.

Knowing the limitations I had during my field research, I then decided to focus more on *Sedulur Sikep* activism within the anti-cement agenda, along with the changes and consequences faced by *Sedulur Sikep* in Sukolilo - Pati who believed that water and land are inseparable from human life both in the present and future generations.

With no attachment to any institution, I was only with myself and contacted prospective key informants using the ‘snow-ball’ method. I succeeded in overcoming several unfortunate moments that occurred in the beginning of the process, that it was lucky for me that Gunarti offered herself to be my gate-keeper. Although the guidance and help from Gunarti was most valuable, my close interaction with anti-cement activists in Sukolilo became a hindrance for me to secure contact with some of Sikep’s elders in Sukolilo, as they would perceive me as part of the anti-cement group.

3.5 Validity of the Research

The data were collected through a wide range of activities, such as interviewing relevant actors with different viewpoints, conducting literature reviews, analyzing secondary sources, and recording observations. The observations themselves were obtained by

²¹ Known as *Desa binaan* in Indonesian context. This type of assisted village is usually subject to one or several government projects corresponding to the village’s characteristics. This program intends to develop such characteristics with active involvement of the local villagers.

observing several activities, such as meetings by JMPPK, a counseling meeting by a legal aid organization, rituals by both villagers and the *Sedulur Sikep*, visits to water springs and sacred sites, and travels to farmland that used to be included in the cement company's areal plan. These different methods of gathering data are one of way to maintain validity of the research.

Data obtained from interviews, secondary resources, observations, as well as literature reviews can clarify and validate each other through triangulation. The triangulation method also helped view the *Sedulur Sikep*'s ideas on environmental sustainability from different perspectives. The same method also applies to actors' different perceptions on the cement industries' plans in Central Java. Thus, as mentioned by Denscombe (2007), the validity of findings can be checked through different sources of information, including data from different informants and different methods. Therefore, comparing data from different informants was essential.

I found that some of my field data was in line with what had been reported in previous research on Samin communities. The findings from my field data also corresponded to additional articles and secondary sources accessed post-field work. In most cases, the information complemented each other, especially when the informants were on the same page in perceiving the case of the study. Gathering information related to Samin's teachings, norms, beliefs, and customs also required more than one type of informant (*Sedulur Sikep*'s elders) due to a lack of written material that is used by Samin's followers as a divine manual. The fact that ideal teachings are taught by parents to their children required me to talk to several elders, parents, and children to get a more comprehensive picture of what being a Samin's follower entails.

As mentioned previously, Gunarti was my key informant as well as my gate-keeper to reach out to other *Sedulur Sikep* members, insofar as she always accompanied me to interviews with the *Sedulur Sikep*. Gunarti, with her capacity to communicate with non-Sikep members and people from outside Sukolilo made her easily understand my condition and purpose as researcher. Therefore, during the interviews she was also help me to interpret my question as well as what my interviewees said which often use convoluted Javanese *ngoko* that the meaning could not always be easily understood. The presence of Gunarti eased some of *Sedulur Sikep* members' hesitations concerning talking to a stranger and non-Sikep member like myself. I am grateful for having her as

my gate-keeper who is trusted among the *Sedulur Sikep* and by anti-cement group members.

However, I realized that the presence of Gunarti at every interview with *Sedulur Sikep* created some bias on the obtained data. Gunarti, and also Gunretno's, impact on my research also emerged through the choice of particular *Sedulur Sikep* and JMPPK individuals to interview. The bias here can be acknowledged from both due to Gunarti's company in almost all of my activities in Sukolilo, which made impossible for me to reach out other group of *Sedulur Sikep* who might have different views regarding anti-cement activism, and also because of her active role in interpreting the questions and answers, especially during interviews with *Sedulur Sikep*. Therefore, in order to keep their trust in me, my contact with village officials and PT. Semen Indonesia took place without Gunarti and Gunretno knowing it.

There had been previous incidents in which unidentified researchers or people tried to get involved or obtain data from the anti-cement movement, which JMPPK later realized was an attempt to 'steal' information and pass it off to opponents of the movement. In light of these incidents, the presence of stranger such as myself may have raised anti-cement members' suspicions or guard. Therefore, my attachment with Gunarti and my host was crucially important to reach out the JMPPK members in Sukolilo, Kayen, and Tambakromo. At this point, while some bias with Gunarti's presence was unavoidable, it would otherwise have been impossible to approach most JMPPK key members, given their high suspicion toward strangers who may potentially steal information.

3.6 Reflections from the Field

It was my first informant who happened to be an activist supporting and helped the Samin community in Pati to form an anti-cement movement, who told me that *Sedulur Sikep* is not a community that can easily be reached. What he meant was that the *Sedulur Sikep* need to trusts foreigner by verifying their intention in approaching them. Additionally, he also mentioned that I would need to be very patient during interviews with them, including when disentangling their convoluted language from the answers to my target questions. He suggested I may have a higher chance of having my questions

answered by what had already written on news or on previous research on Samin Movement (Sikep community). Based on my informant's advice, I initially had concerns about how far I could actually reach the *Sedulur Sikep*, and in particular secure their trust in order to conduct my research. Fortunately, my close relationship with Gunarti and a couple of anti-cement activists eased those fears, and made my research run smoothly despite some hurdles in the beginning of the process.

During and after the my research, from the information I obtained from the field, I questioned myself on this research: 'How thorough can my description of *Sedulur Sikep*'s culture and portrayal of the anti-cement movement from the point of view of those involved actually be, when I have my own way of seeing what's going on and my own interpretation to make sense what is happening in the field?'. However, I realized that doing research also needs to go beyond mere reflection. Indeed, it is undeniably true that the outcome of a social and qualitative research will depend on the researcher's ideology, interpretation, and personal beliefs relating to the topic.

I found it crucial to let my informants and everyone in the field get to know me by sharing my personal standpoint, thoughts, and experiences to let them know that I also was there to learn from them. In this way, I would lessen their feeling of being studied by my presence, or even during interviews that happened to be informal conversations in most instances. My background as a Javanese individual who studies abroad and still came back to the island to have my research, somewhat made them perceive my presence as a 'homecoming of a Javanese'. Several *Sedulur Sikep* elders even shared their perspective on how Java Island should be ideally managed and glorified, without me asking the question listed on my interview guide. As stated before, I tended to use unstructured interview with *Sedulur Sikep* elders, which enabled both my interviewee and I to have more freedom in exploring Samin's values and beliefs.

As the anti-cement movement also spread to different districts and sub-districts neighboring Sukolilo, I also travelled to these areas to to interview the villagers or participate in JMPPK activities. I also visited the *Sedulur Sikep* who live in different villages around Sukolilo, even to the neighboring Kudus District. Almost all of my travels during my stay in Sukolilo were made on motorbike rides, with Gunarti as a passenger on the back. During these motorbike rides, I had interesting conversations with Gunarti regarding many things, either related to my research or on daily life. I

could not take notes or even record these conversations; however, most of the time I would reflect on the given information to my research after the fact and ask follow-up questions to Gunarti or related actors regarding anything that was unclear when I was in a position to record or take notes on the conversations.

Interacting with a minority group, such as *Sedulur Sikep*, turned out to be more accepting and tolerable compared to common villagers in Sukolilo or in Indonesia in general, thus it became another interesting personal intercultural and interreligious experience for me. As a Moslem myself, I had deep conversations with Gunarti regarding religious practices in Indonesia. She would also remind me to pray and even asked why I do not wear a hijab like other common Moslem women, and I did not feel offended by her questions at all. I never had any worries about adapting to the village life, in part because the research location was in the presence of a common Javanese community largely similar to that in which I grew up in East Java. However, interacting with *Sedulur Sikep* communities required me to have certain communication skills. Though the language used is Javanese *ngoko*, their courteous and calm attitude somehow made me to feel discourteous, or showing discourtesy when around them.

I have read many articles and previous research on the Sikep community, both with regards to their cultural behaviors and beliefs and their connection to the anti-cement movement. I have learned and reflected a lot during my field research, especially on how *Sedulur Sikep* become very passionate in resisting cement companies in Central Java. Their courteous and graceful behaviors toward the environment and other people have attracted other villagers to support and join the movement. Despite my limited time in Sukolilo, Gunarti and my host's generous help have made my field research not only become important part of my research, but also to my personal self-learning.

4 What is Saminism?

Chapter 4 focuses on the history and main features of Saminism. The chapter begins by describing the birth of the movement during the colonial period and the subsequent changes brought by Samin Surosentiko's successors. The chapter then continues by describing the doctrines of Samin Surosentiko that later became the Sikep's teachings. Next, the chapter presents the Samin community's contemporary evolution, taking into account the dispersion of Samin communities and their survival up until the contemporary age of Indonesia. The chapter concludes with remarks on the definition of Saminism. As such, this chapter will answer the first and second objectives of this research in describing the principal teachings of Samin Surosentiko, and also to understand the importance of resources governance and environmental conservation for Sedulur Sikep's identity.

4.1 The History of the Samin Movement

Samin Surosentiko was born in 1859 under the name Raden Kohar in a village close to Randublatung in the southern part of Blora Regency. Samin Surosentiko was not an ordinary peasant, tracing back from his grandfather who was Raden Mas Adipati Brotodiningrat, a Regent in a quite large area called Sumoroto during the Dutch colonial period of 1802 to 1826. Samin Surosentiko's activism in the poor peasant standing up for their cause was inherited from his father, Raden Surowidjojo, who was disappointed by the people's poor condition and suffered under Dutch colonialism. In response to his disappointment, Raden Surowidjojo decided to be a 'Robin Hood' by robbing rich men who served as the Dutch's stooges. In doing so, he would share his gains with the poor while also funding his 'youth gang' called *Tiyang Sami Amin*²² (shortened to Samin) in 1840. Since then, Raden Surowidjojo and his gang, known as Samin, pillaged neighboring areas and recruited more people to join the 'gang'. When Raden Kohar (henceforth referred to as Samin Surosentiko) decided to continue his father's activism, he was no longer considered as a poor peasant with his three *bau* (about 5 acres) of rice fields (Benda & Castles, 1969).

²² *Tiyang Sami Amin*, shortened as SAMIN, means people who agree on same thing, that is, when a movement is supported by many people from a village.

In 1890, Samin Surosentiko started to recruit followers from his village and neighboring villages by preaching his view of resistance against Dutch colonialism, with particular emphasis on colonial regulations of taxation and control over resources. Samin's teachings were popular among poor peasants. As such, economic factors are important in analyzing the development of his movement (Benda and Castles 1969 and King 1973). The movement spread to the area between Central Java and East Java provincial borders, an area well known for its teak forest.



Figure 2 Picture of Samin Surosentiko
(Source: Researcher, taken from Gunretno's living room)

The fact that this movement first emerged in a teak forest played a crucial role in defining the movement's idealism, especially its view on common resource governance (as previously mentioned in Chapter 2). The movement began as an expression of the demand to the restoration of free access to teak forest in Blora and the surrounding region (Korver 1976). The closure of the teak forest was part of new colonial regulations, which stated that the Colonial Government 'owned all land that had no proof of legal ownership'. Thus, all [teak] forest became state property and a system of forestry police was established to enforce the rule. As a ramification of this regulation, poor local villagers were subject to different several levies in addition to their land and property taxes. This spurred a reaction from Samin and his followers by declaring that 'land, water, and wood are property of all' and insisted 'on what they took to be their

prescriptive rights' (Benda & Castles, 1969). The reaction was then followed by a one-sided confrontation between little tradition prerogative and colonial law, in which Samin's followers attempted in vain to defend their access to the forest (Scott, 1977).

By 1905, the movement had finally caught the attention of the Dutch colonials, as Samin and his followers had begun creating problems (Benda & Castles, 1969). According to Benda and Castle (1969), aggravations by this movement not only annoyed the Dutch colonials, but also the local villagers as Samin and his group neither complied with the villages' systems, contributed to the *lumbung desa* (rice banks), nor kept their livestock in the common herds. At this point, while some of Samin followers were still paying taxes as voluntary contributions, Samin himself stopped paying taxes altogether.

Samin Surosentiko was finally arrested in 1907 after allegedly propagating a rebellious movement and died in exile in West Sumatra in 1914 (Benda and Castles 1969; King 1973; Korver 1976; Shiraishi 1990). However, Samin Surosentiko's absence did not stop his teachings and ideology from spreading. His adherents and sons-in-law became his successors in keeping the movement alive as well as spreading it to other regencies around Blora. For example, his sons-in-law Surohidin and Karsijah (Pak Karsyah) spread Samin's teachings in part of Rembang Regency (Korver, 1976). In 1908, a man named Wongsoredjo got arrested and banished near Madiun Regency for spreading the teachings of Samin regarding not paying taxes and ignoring the responsibility of performing corvee. He also told followers that they would be immune from the Dutch's sabre (Benda & Castles, 1969). In 1911, Surohidin and another one of Samin's proponents, named Pak Engkrak (*Mbah Engkrek*), spread the teachings in Grobogan Regency. Meanwhile Karsijah (Pak Karsyah) started to call himself as *Pangeran* (Prince) whilst spreading the teachings in Pati Regency.

According to Benda and Castles (1969), it was in 1914 that the movement reached its peak, corresponding to when the Dutch decided to raise taxes. During the same year, Prodjudikromo in North Madiun told his followers that they should deceive the officers who survey the land. In response to the peak of Samin resistance, the villages in Central and East Java, in which most of Samin followers were concentrated, were raided and burned down by the colonials' orders. This 'cleaning' attempt later became known as *geger samin*. Although many of Samin's successors were seized during this *geger*

samin, in 1916 the Dutch administration found group of peasants observing Samin's teachings in South of Kudus Regency. Nevertheless, the total number of adherents to the movement began to decrease (Benda & Castles, 1969). Further evidence that Samin teachings could still be found in the area was the newly found form of Saminism in Pati, led by a peasant named Samat between 1914 and his death in 1920. However, scholars who studied Saminism later called this movement 'Samatism'. This Samatism movement was a type of communistic atheism based on reverence of soil and the cultivator, where they believe that the Dutch merely pawned the land and would eventually return it to the native Javanese people (Benda & Castles, 1969, p. 215). Later, in 1928, Dutch officials were accusing those involved in a resistance in Pati (including Dangir in Shiraishi 1990) as followers of Samat rather than Samin (Shiraishi, 1990).

The lack of written materials handed down by Samin Surosentiko himself has resulted in Saminism becoming a heterogenous movement. Consequently, various interpretations of his teachings exist – a condition that is further aggravated by the non-existence of main elders as Sikep's reference. Soon after Samin Surosentiko was arrested, exiled, and died, his many successors each seemed to have their own personal emphasis (Benda & Castles, 1969, p. 215). As mentioned by Benda and Castle (1969), villagers in Berukudon – Grobogan adopted Samin's teachings as early as 1904, yet they showed little opposition to authorities and still observed Islamic precepts, as Pak Engkrek failed to convert them into a passive resistance. Meanwhile, other followers in Wonokerto, Kalen – Blora recognized taxes and labor obligations. Another group of followers of Surohidin in Kemantren – Blora refused to pay any taxes or perform of the village's services, but behaved and spoke respectfully when dealing with authorities. In fact, the most provoking passive resistance came from the followers of Pak Engkrak (*Mbah Engkrek*), who rejected all forms of taxes and services for villagers.

4.2 Doctrines of Sikep (Samin's Teachings)

“We are the followers of Mbah Samin Surosentiko, who subject to his benevolence principles called ‘Sikep teachings’. Therefore, we perceive ourselves as Sedulur Sikep. Our life as farmer is rely on water resources provided by Kendeng Mountains”

- Gunarti, when she introduced herself in front of the audiences of movie screening ‘Samin vs. Semen’ in Berlin, May 3rd, 2017²³

By emphasizing peasant identity, Samin Surosentiko succeeded in both forming a movement that opposed Dutch domination through passive and non-violent resistance and creating a community that upheld the notions of individual equality, freedom from authority, and a way of life based on distinct puritanical and spiritual traits. To further understand the notions of Samin’s teachings, later known as Sikep teachings, based on gathered data, this study categorized four basic elements of Sikep teachings that shaped *Sedulur Sikep*’s traits, as discussed below;

4.2.1 Sikep Teachings on Spirituality and Divinity

The *Agama Adam*, or ‘Faith/Religion of Adam’, do not share the same concept of God (*Allah/Tuhan*) or other divinity adhered by most villagers. Hence, Samin’s followers were later perceived as atheists by their non-Sikep neighbors. In reality, *Sedulur Sikep* believes god created the universe and that god lies within the *Sedulur Sikep*. *Agama Adam* has no specific place to perform their prayer, or shrine, and do not require one. Given the absence of written materials to be used as ‘holy scripture’ on both the Samin’s ideology and the religion of Adam²⁴, *Sedulur Sikep* believes that such ‘holy texts’ exist within themselves and become part of their daily life. In accordance to the principles of Samin’s teachings, *Agama Adam* is preached and taught by parents or elders, passed from generation to generation. Sikep families emphasize personal interrelations within the nuclear family (Benda & Castles, 1969, p. 235).

Agama Adam cannot be understood by a single meaning of religion or faith. It has multiple interpretations. Samin Surosentiko’s own *Agama Adam* teachings were said as the ‘*Elmoe Nabi Adam*’ which literally translated as the ‘science of the Prophet Adam’.

²³ Gunarti went to Germany to fulfill an invitation from ENGO ‘Watch Indonesia’ to be the part of their ten cities roadshow across Germany for ‘Samin vs. Semen’ movie screening. Also, part of her visit’s main agenda was to talk to the management of HeidelberCement to review and cancel their plan to exploit Kendeng Mountains. Watch Indonesia managed to crowd-fund both Gunarti and the movie-maker trip to Germany and their three weeks stay in the country.

²⁴ Historian Suryanto Sastroatmodjo, in his book ‘*Masyarakat Samin: Siapakah Mereka?*’ believes that Samin Surosentiko actually left small number of written scriptures, yet most of *Sedulur Sikep*, particularly those in Pati and Kudus, believe that there are no written documents left by *Mbah Samin* at all.

However, *nabi*²⁵ here applied to ‘woman’ and *adam* to ‘man’. In my interviews, *Sedulur Sikep* elders confirmed that the women were called ‘adam nabi’ and men ‘adam wali’²⁶. This interpretation of *Agama Adam* emphasizes the importance of the relationship between woman and man, particularly concerning intercourse, with the main duty of man as ‘cultivator’ and that of woman as ‘bearer’ and (birth) ‘giver’.

Also, the term of ‘*Agama*’ used by *Sedulur Sikep* cannot literally be translated into the word of ‘religion’ as it usually is – rather, *agama* is perceived as ‘*ageman*’ as it means ‘garments/clothing’ for human beings. Therefore, *agama* for *Sedulur Sikep* functioned as dresses that define one’s attitude and behaviors. The term can also mean ‘image creator’ for everyone to be perceived by others.

To be clear, the term ‘Adam’ used by *Sedulur Sikep* has no connection with Adam the first human being as it was believed by the Abrahamic religions (i.e. Judaism, Christianity, Islam), instead the word of *Adam* is a term used by *Sedulur Sikep* to express ‘utterance’, ‘spoken word’, or ‘remark’ that a man (human being) must honor what he has said. Such a conceptualization of *Agama Adam* can be seen from the following Samin proverb:

” *Agama niku gaman, Adam pangucape, man gaman lanang. Adam, damelane rabi. Yen bengi tatanane wong, yen rino toto nggauto*”

There is no ideal or fixed translation for the proverb above, however its general idea is that *agama* is perceived as weapon, which needs language (*pangucape*) to be expressed, as is meant by the words *adam pangucape*. Weapon here can be interpreted as two elements: ‘political weapon’ to reject and avoid any outside intervention such as the colonials or the government’s interferences and ‘human weapon’ (the genital), as previously mentioned that *Agama Adam* emphasizing aspect of sexuality. This view of *Agama Adam* can be seen from the act of sexual intercourse as prerequisite of a marriage. It begins with a male *Sedulur Sikep* telling and express his intention to the female’s parents in a ceremonial way of proposing. After this phase, both parents will agree at whose house the couple will spend their nights together. This process can take some time, depending on when the couple is ready to have their ‘first time’. Once the

²⁵ Arabic’s (and adapted to Bahasa Indonesia) term for prophet

²⁶ Based on interview with several elders of *Sedulur Sikep* communities in Pati and Kudus, August 2016

couple have had their sexual intercourse for the first time, the couple should inform the parents, so they now can arrange the marriage. Thus, on this process of marriage, the significance relation between ‘agama’ as human’s weapon, and ‘adam’ as utterance is derived and being practiced during Sikep’s important stage of life, the marriage.

Therefore, religion or faith for *Sedulur Sikep* is also perceived as a weapon through language and words. Meanwhile, the phrase ‘*yen rino toto nggauto*’ can be interpreted as ‘man’s duty during the day is working by toiling the soil’ in order to embrace their humanism by seeking benefit from land’s products to feed the family. Accordingly, *agama* or faith of Adam can be understood implying that the main activity for *Sedulur Sikep* on this earth is ‘sexual activity’, both with their partner (through marriage) and through work as farmer toiling the land.

The importance of religious belief must be taken into account to scrutinize Sikep’s values of solidarity, especially in resisting the pressures of external authority. The absence of religious elements – shrines, holy scriptures, the concept of God – have defined *Sedulur Sikep*’s rejection of authority to some degree. These religious elements have the potential to limit or regulate certain ways of perceiving the divine, which the *Sedulur Sikep* believe lies within them. In relation to that, utterance/spoken words are also perceived to play important role in defining individuals’ behaviours and attitudes towards each other, not merely valued based on their adherence to certain rules and regulations set by religious authorities or other powerful actors.

To perceive other spiritual/religious beliefs, *Sedulur Sikep* sees all human activities as having good intentions, so that it can be considered as expression of praying to or worshipping a higher power. Therefore, *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati believes that all religions are the same, as all religions teach goodness and benevolence. Such beliefs also lead the *Sedulur Sikep* to see everyone else as their brother or sister equally, regardless of their religion or belief. By doing so, the *Sedulur Sikep* also see themselves as doing ‘social intercourse’, even though they are not perceived in the same way by the other non-*Sikep* villagers.

4.2.2 The Sikep’s Views on the Human-Nature Relationship

As was previously underlined by the concept of *Agama Adam*, another prominent Sikep teaching observed by *Sedulur Sikep* is based on the human (man) relationship with his partner (wife) through *sikep rabi* (sexual intercourse), with the land (earth) through intercourse or toiling the soil as a livelihood, and with other people through social intercourse. According to Shiraishi (1990), these intercourses are *sikep*'s notion of 'man who embraces his wife and land', which must be performed by the man. A *Sedulur Sikep* elder in Kudus said that once a person already has a partner (and possesses sexual intercourse), both parties then 'officially' become *Wong Sikep*²⁷, or become fully adult man (and woman) and understand the wisdom of being human and know how to 'function' the body and its obligations, by giving the vow:

"kulo wong, jeneng lanang, pengaran [...] Wit jeng Nabi kula lanang, damel kula rabi, tata-tata jeneng wadok pengaran [...]. Kukuh demen janji buk bikah empun kula lakoni."

["I am a man, of the male gender, named [the man's name], and since 'Prophet' Adam my job is indeed having sexual intercourse with a woman (female) named [the woman's name] and pledged allegiance and live together"]

Even if someone has not had sexual intercourse with their partner, they may still claim to be a Sikep based on their attitudes, behaviors, and spoken words, or if they were born, raised, and taught as *a Sikep* by a parent.

Based on the plots given by 'Dangir's Testimony' in combination with a report from Soeharnowo²⁸ mentioned by Takashi Shiraishi (1990, pp. 113-115), to account someone as a *Sedulur Sikep/wong sikep*, he (or she) must believe and adhere the following basic principles of *wong-sikep-isme*:

- *Urip* (life) is the central concept of the religion of Adam. This life can take many forms, but is divided into two: *wong* (man) and *sandang pangan* (food and clothing). *Wong* is the highest and mightiest who can produce *wong* and *sandang pangan*. There are two *jeneng* (type of sex) of *wong*; *laki-laki* (male) and *wedok* (female), and *wong* can have many *pengaran* (name). Yet

²⁷ Interview with Mbah Wagono, a *botoh* (elder/leader) of *Sedulur Sikep* community in Kaliyoso, Kudus Regency. 23 August 2016

²⁸ This report carried out in 1955 in collaboration of Faculty of Social and Political Science – Universitas Gadjah Mada and The Bureau from Social and Work Research (BPPS) on 'Masjarakat Samin'

what are most important above all personal traits is a person's *ucap* (spoken word or utterance).

- All human activities have two aims: First, *tatane wong* (the way of man) to produce *wong* by practicing *sikep rabi* (sexual intercourse), and second, *toto nggaoto* (the way of work) to produce *sandang pangan* by toiling the land. As previously mentioned in the proverb: “*jen bengi tatane wong, jen rino toto nggaoto*” [by night, the way of man, by day, the way of work].

Finally, the whole concept of *Sedulur Sikep* in perceiving the earth and ecological balances is closely related to how Saminism observes women within the Samin community. *Sedulur Sikep* is monogamous according to Sikep's principle that '*siji kanggo sak lawase*' – one (woman) forever, by which a man cannot divorce his wife regardless of the reason. Yet, this does not apply when death takes part, then the widow allowed to form another union. In addition to such full loyalty expected from their husband, the *Sikep* woman is highly respected by others, in addition to being respected under the spiritual belief of venerating the 'mother-earth'. A woman (mother) is a manifestation of earth, the giver, nurture, and life protector, therefore *Sedulur Sikep* believes that women are relatively more affected by any form of environmental degradation due to their direct contact with the earth, such as their domestic life matters related to water, food, household affairs, family nurturing, livestock, and agricultural activities (Susanto, 2016). Hence, the *Sedulur Sikep* movement is not a man activism; rather it is an equal movement where both man and woman take the responsibility in every attempt for their ecological balance and environmental justice.

4.2.3 The Sikep's Views on External Authority

To understand the underlying reasons behind Samin Surosentiko's resistance, it is necessary to reflect on the broader context of colonialization, in particular the closure of forest regions. Policy on the closure of common resources, such as teak forests, often contributed to peasant protests that ended in violent clashes with forestry officials and the police. Such confrontations led to movements that rejected the colonizers' restrictions and advocated for the founding of settlements in the frontier wilderness (Adas, 1981). This later contributed to the dispersed settlements area of Sikep communities, which some of them are found in in the middle of teak forest, partly due

to their concealment attempt, and also partly due to their desire to be free from outside interference.

New colonial policies, which were essentially a foreign system imposed on the villagers, had a profound impact on the traditional system of common resource management. The change of conditions did strike and jeopardize the villagers' poor condition, who used to gather forest products as their source of living. When Samin expressed his view that resource management should be based on values of equality and without outside intervention, his ideas were embraced by those who were negatively impacted by the colonial policies.

Meanwhile, the traditional local village economy in Southeast Asia was not only based on the cultivated lands, but also local subsistence resources (Scott, 1977). Michael Adas (1981) saw Samin's demand as communalistic social organization based on the economic equality of individuals and on the common possession of the land and its products.

The opponent during the colonial period was crystal clear, both from the perspective that the Dutch were not native Javanese, who were the only entity, entitled to rule and govern the island of Java, and that Dutch colonials enforced new taxes and regulations on resource management that contradicted the traditional communalistic system of governing. However, during the earliest period of independence, *Sedulur Sikep* communities were perceived differently by the new established Indonesian administration; on one hand as nationalistic group who opposed the Dutch colonialists, and on the other hand as a 'backward' community that need to be educated. *Sedulur Sikep* pledged to run their lives based on the teachings of *Mbah Samin Surosentiko*, particularly in observing *Agama Adam*, that served to promote solidarity and to enable them to withstand the pressure of external authority, which accordingly became the ramification of their resistance to Indonesian government authority (King, 1973, pp. 473-474).

During the era of independence and early years post-independence, narratives of Indonesian nationalism were dominating social, economic, and especially political aspects across the entire nation. In general, those who fought against the Dutch colonials were considered part of the nationalist movement; however, according to King

(1973), Samin Surosentiko and his followers never self-identified with the nationalist movement. Samin Surosentiko and his followers did not consider their movement and resistance to authority as a political movement, even though Sikep movement seen as political expression; it is only related to their concern with the relations of power and authority, which they wanted to rule out. Without a political manifesto, Samin and his followers did not wish to replace the existing power structures, including the colonial and post-colonial administrators. In fact, they showed very little interest in any political issues and wished only to be left with their own self-determination within their own value system (King, 1973). Therefore, even though they are very proud of their historical context as the opposition of Dutch colonials, they have never had recognized themselves as part of the (Indonesian) nationalist movement.

During the authoritarian New Order regime, the propagated social order embodied a combination of 'traditional' Javanese patrimonialism, deference and social stratification, extensive capitalistic acquisition and expansion, and a strong military approach (Thorburn, 2002). This regime had the objective of transforming Indonesia into a homogenous nation-state with a strong patriotic cultural identity. In reality, the regime became rather coercive, forcing a particular ideology that tended to assimilate traditionally distinct people to create a so-called national identity (Strachan, 2003). With much stronger coercion with the support from the military, the New Order also controlled the construction of the nation's history in order to served political 'stability and order' (Heryanto, 1999, p. 153). On the other hand, the New Order was also praised for its successful agenda of economic development, where economic growth was championed. As part of its agenda of economic development, the regime promoted the Green Revolution program. This program was intended to fulfill the nation's food demand by intensifying its agricultural activities. The Green Revolution aimed to increase crop production by promoting the use inorganic fertilizers and chemical pesticides. In response to this program, the *Sedulur Sikep*, who were primarily farmers directly affected by the policy change, resisted being integrated and maintained their organic farming methods²⁹.

²⁹ Gunretno claimed that due to their organic farming, the *Sedulur Sikep*'s crops became a favorite among wholesalers, consequently luring some *Sedulur Sikep* to sell their agricultural production at a

Moreover, the *Sedulur Sikep* faced other challenges during this period, both from government and their non-Sikep neighbors regarding their *tâtâ cârâ* – way of living, particularly concerning their spiritual beliefs and their refusal to send their children to school. The resistance of the *Sedulur Sikep* to both infringement on their spirituality and imposed children’s education led to a coercive response from authorities that eventually pushed Sikep’s parents to send their children to school and eliminated religious freedom by either forcing them to pick one of the state-approved religions so that they can obtain *Kartu Tanda Penduduk* (KTP) – National ID Card (further discussed in section 6.3) or sending in a religious preacher/teacher to convert *Sedulur Sikep* members into one of the state’s acknowledged religions.

Another ramification of resisting to the national religion and school system was that the *Sedulur Sikep* was subject to limits on their basic rights as citizens. Their discrediting of Islam (or any other state-recognized religion) led *Sedulur Sikep* to face exclusion in:

- Marriage, as their process of marriage counted as a ‘stray marriage’ (due to the possession of sexual intercourse before the wedding, that is not permitted under Islamic values), and performed outside of six acknowledged religions, the status of marriage could not be registered at any state-registry office.
- Funeral processes, where common graveyards were basically divided according to the dead’s religious view. This funeral process is linked to burial process fees administered by the local Mosque’s management. Consequently, the *Sedulur Sikep* does not use common graveyard, and instead buried their family and relatives in their own yards.
- Animal slaughtering, where other villagers were required to pay fees to the *modin*, the village’s administrative authority to slaughter livestock. This caused *Sedulur Sikep* had to slaughter their own livestock, which was a fortunate condition for them, but it made other villagers reluctant to eat the meat served by *Sikep* family during some events, as the animals were not slaughtered under Islamic way of slaughtering.

In addition, their resistance to sending their children to formal institutionalized schools caused their children to be scolded by neighbors as uneducated generations and

high rate. This, however, put certain Sikep traditional values at risk, such as the use of money and profit resulting from their trading activities.

subsequently shunned. However, *Sedulur Sikep* still defend their reasons for opposing state education, including:

- Claiming that civil servants (*prijaji* bureaucrats) who served the Indonesian Republic by opening new schools and charging school fees were essentially continuing the Dutch system even after the colonial rule ended (Benda & Castles, 1969 & Scott, 1977).
- Protecting their children from state indoctrination on any ideologies and religious beliefs besides Sikep teachings and *Agama Adam*.
- Arguing that children are their parents' responsibility, and thus it should be the parents who teach their children manners, benevolence, and life skills in their home environment.
- Arguing that children should spend more time with their parents at home and in the farm fields, in accordance with how a day as a *wong sikep* should be spent.
- Studying at school affects the children's ambitions and future goals, whereas all *Sedulur Sikep* children must become farmers and cultivated the land as their only livelihood. Therefore, the *Wong sikep*'s 'school' is the farmland or rice field, where they learn from and have direct experience with the earth.

To reflect Sikep's view on education, a Sikep from Kudus gave his opinion on how children of the *Sedulur Sikep* should receive their education:

“Therefore, the children of Sedulur Sikep are taught at home. People who go to school always wanting to reach their ambitions (i.e not become farmer). Our ancestors passed on the peasant tradition to us, and that I want to do the same for my generation, thus I teach my own children. Sedulur Sikep indeed take environmental matters seriously, as living things, humans need a ‘peaceful’ environment, which can be used sustainably. Until today, farmers have proven they can fulfill all human needs, indeed we need land to (keep) doing it. [...] School is a media for children to learn skills they needed when they grow up. As children of Sedulur Sikep, the only skills they need is how to be a farmer, therefore farm field is their school” – Priyadhi, A *Sedulur Sikep* from Kaliyoso – Kudus

4.2.4 Sikep Appearance and Attitude in Daily Life

Apart from the language they use in daily life; the Javanese *ngoko*, the *Sedulur Sikep* practice certain way of life as their commitment to the Ideology of Sikep as well as to the *Agama Adam*. This way of life covers almost every aspect of their social lives, such

as their physical appearance and the way they perceive social and economic issues. Their daily appearance as *Sedulur Sikep* is connected to their identity as peasants, especially for the male attire. Based on observations during the field research, there are several visual distinctions that one can directly identify with the *Sedulur Sikep* people or with adherents of Sikep teachings:

- Male *Sikep* do not wear long pants/trousers, instead they wear black knee-length pants (culottes). The knee-length pants are a symbol of their farming tradition, where they work in rice field with mud and water covering their feet.
- While, female *Sikep* often wear a piece of batik³⁰ as symbol of their identity as Javanese women. The way they wear it is a bit loose-tied and reaching just below the knee.
- Most (but not all) of their garments tend to be dark in color, and often black. The use of dark colors was said to symbolize *Sikep*'s honesty, resistance to fading, and modesty. Dark colors also relate to their avoidance of attention or spotlight by outsiders, authorities, and their non-saminist neighbors, which previously caused confrontation or frictions between them.
- Despite their resistance to modernization, especially in their agricultural system, *Sedulur Sikep* claimed that they are not opposed to the use of technology, especially technology that facilitates their daily work as farmers, such as tractors and motor vehicles. Over time, it has also become commonplace for the *Sedulur Sikep* to use other forms of technology to fulfill communication and information needs, such as TVs and mobile phones.
- Male *Sikep* do not wear any *peci* – a black or white cap that is usually associated with the Moslems' praying attire. Instead they wear *iket/udeng* as the male's headdress that is usually made from a piece of batik. Currently, male *Sikep* only wears the headdress whenever they travel outside their own community or household. As with other garments, the headdress symbolizes 'being the understood one' or holding onto the teachings of late Samin Surosentiko, and knowledge of what they are doing.

³⁰ A traditional textile originating from the island of Java. Batik is used in traditional clothing in a form of *kain panjang* or *sarong* in traditional dress



**Figure 3 Sedulur Sikep wearing their 'formal' Sikep costume, Family portrait of Sikep hamlet where Gunarti lives.
(Source: private collection of Gunarti)**

Other circumstances that contribute to *Sedulur Sikep*'s identities are their commitment to keep practicing the teachings of Samin Surosentiko, which framed their ethical, interactive, and characteristic principles. There are twenty Sikep rules that every *Sedulur Sikep* must observe – the so-called *angger-angger pratikel* (abstinence of behaviors). These specify that as Sikep they should not have: *drengki* (malice); *srei/kemiren* (jealousy); *panasten* (irritability or hatred of each other); *colong* (stealing); *pethil* (miserly); *jumput* (take (steal) a little; such as shoplifting); *nemu* (find and claim goods); *dagang* (trade); *kulak* (wholesale); *blantik* (broker); *mbakul* (sell); *nganakno duit* (moneylender); *mbujuk* (lie); *apus* (scheming); *akal* (being tricky); *krenah* (give bad advice); *ngampungni pernah* (not return favors); *dawen* (accuse without proof); *nyiyonyiyonyo marang sepodo* (disgrace others); and *bedog* (alleges). These teachings were passed down verbally through generations, including being transmitted to children through the *Sedulur Sikep* principle of personal interrelation through constant preoccupations by the nuclear family (Benda & Castles, 1969, p. 235). Under this philosophy, the role of parents is to conduct at-home primary education to educate their children to live as *wong sikep*.

4.3 The Contemporary Evolution of Samin Identity: Dispersed Communities

Having a unique way of perceiving their circumstances within the predominant Javanese community and system, the *Sedulur Sikep* are often shunned by their neighbors and marginalized by Indonesian authorities. These kinds of treatments are not something that can be simply explained by single cause – that is, their attitude toward authorities – but is also the consequence of several factors triggered by both internal Sikep idealism and external entities such as the state authority and non-Sikep villagers. Labels given by colonial administrators to Samin’s followers as ‘criminals/bandits’ had become very effective tools, both to stop the spread of the teachings and for Samin’s followers to be shunned by other villagers. At the same time, the followers of Samin also themselves tend to withdraw from the broader society.. They believe that their Javanese neighbors have been exposed and influenced by foreign systems that interfere with their way of living. Therefore, Samin’s teachings derived from idealistic notions of individual freedom and equality, as well as the striving to uphold Javanese puritanical traits, caused many economic, social, and political aspects of the non-sikep society to be deemed as ‘imported’ foreign notions.

Such rejections of external authority were later institutionalized by Sikep’s adherents by remaining critical towards the post-colonial Indonesian state administration. Their critical attitude to the Indonesian government can be seen from their basic notions on economic, social, and political levels by rejecting (1) the means of the economy, including activities that commoditized common resources, the use of money as means of exchange, trading that involved profit-making, and occupations other than farming as source of living; and (2) socio-political elements, such as the use of Bahasa Indonesia and the ornate differentiation of the Javanese language and social status as they are colonialism’s legacy (Gouda, 1995, p. 94), and any government’s program that intended to integrate Saminism/Sikep teachings as an ideologically and culturally distinct minority group into the common socio-political system.

Following their development, particularly during the current period of decentralized government, the *Sedulur Sikep* have been exposed to some adaptations and can no longer be characterised as a single community. Historically, Sikep’s dispersed settlement areas in Bojonegoro – East Java, Kudus, Pati, and Blora in Central Java, are the direct result of Samin Surosentiko’s successors who succeeded in spreading the words and teachings of Samin to different teak-forested regions. As previously

mentioned, Samin's successors each seemed to have different personal emphases on the teachings that they spread. Thus, the *Sedulur Sikep* who managed to survive and currently live in these various regions reflect the different teachings delivered by Samin's successors, and more importantly, are based on how the modern and decentralized local government perceives and treats them as communities with a distinct way of life. However, there are also basic similarities of Sikep's teachings across these groups, since these groups claimed themselves as the followers of Samin teachings that are subject to Sikep's idealism.

4.3.1 Similarities among Dispersed Sikep Communities

As a result of being a minority group in Indonesia, especially prior to the end of the New Order regime, *Sedulur Sikep* were often discriminated against. Under the current post-New Order regime, local governments have the sovereignty to rule and govern their respective regions in a decentralized system, and freedom of expression can be freely exercised. Prior to the current post-New Order, however, some Sikep communities sought to adapt and evolve in response to the discrimination they were subject to. Although some of these changes are now found in the differences between one Sikep community and the next, some similarities that characterize these communities as followers of Samin's teachings still remain.

Sedulur Sikep communities are mostly found in Kudus, Pati, Blora and Bojonegoro, where all equally withdraw themselves from and/or are shunned by the common Javanese society. Even though most of their housing is based on familial lines, they do not particularly live in an enclaved area. This way of forming of their settlement area can be perceived on the one hand as a withdrawal from non-sikep villagers in order to encourage their own families to stay in a Sikep environment, and on the other hand a desire to coexist with their neighbors by not making their houses into a gated settlement. Nevertheless, most of their Javanese neighbors are still very reluctant to visit and have interaction with *Sedulur Sikep* members.

The relationship among Javanese is often defined by a hint of either religious issues or socio-economic status, or a combination of both. Religious issues are implicit in the daily activities of Javanese people, which leads community members to then unconsciously perceive everyone based on their religious practices, or at least through

their religious view. Additionally, the traditional relationship between the ruler and the people during the pre-colonial Javanese Kingdom continues to affect how the Javanese people form relationships with one another, with hierarchical patron-client types of relationships penetrating the community (Anderson, 1990). Hence, the Sikep movement that has emerged and still exists today hardly finds an integrating space with its non-Sikep counterparts.

To distinguish themselves from other Javanese villagers, Saminists (that is, the followers of Samin Surosentiko and his Sikep teachings) call themselves *Sedulur Sikep* or *wong sikep* to posit everyone's status as the same and have equal position within society. Sikep-ism also rejects the colonials' attempt to re-feudalize the Javanese society, which was quite successful and remains in the Javanese system even today. These attempts were done by the veneration of *krama* (high polite Javanese) and *krama inggil* (very-high and polite Javanese) to accentuate the social distance between the Javanese aristocracy and commoners, the latter of whom tend to use robust and graphic *ngoko* – the low-level Javanese (Gouda, 1995). Therefore, those who define themselves *Sedulur Sikep* will only use Javanese *ngoko* with their interlocutors, regardless of their social, economic, and political status in the society.

Due to not being subject to any state-affirmed religious institutions, particularly Islam, *Sedulur Sikep* are perceived as *Kafir* for not sharing the same concept of God, thus they are among those who have no God and shall be shunned by society. In the broader socio-political system, the Religion of Adam has dissociated itself from Geertz's (1960) typology of the Javanese: Islamic *santri*³¹, the Hindu-influenced *Prijaji*³², and the Muslim *abangan*³³ peasantry. Accordingly, the *Sedulur Sikep*'s withdrawal from Javanese society is a consequence of such a societal system, in that the Sedular Sikep no longer seek to encounter or compensate for a possible sense of loss of status vis-à-vis the village administration and the supra-local (Korver (1976, p. 262).

³¹ Translated as 'Moslem scholars/students', based on Geertz, this group of *Santri* are those who stress Islamic aspects in daily life and broadly related to trading, more likely to be urban-dwellers. This culture grows around northern shore of Java where the Islam tradition came along with Moslem traders.

³² This group is more related to the bureaucrat-aristocrat elements, **Priyayi (Prijaji)** was the Dutch-era class of the nobles, as opposed to royal nobility or *bangsawan* (Indonesian) or *ningrat* (Javanese) that are by blood, **Priyayi** much influenced by the Hinduism culture, or given by the Dutch administration.

³³ Those who include in *Abangan* categorization tend to be from village peasant backgrounds and absorb both Hindu and Muslim elements, forming a culture of animist and folk traditions

Another narrative focuses on how it was not the *Sedulur Sikep* who withdrew themselves from society, but rather that it was their neighbors who triggered this action³⁴. With regards to the Sikep's children's non-attendance in formal schools, the children are prone to some discrimination including a higher risk for being scolded by their peers. As the level of literacy has dominantly been crucial in defining one's social status, the illiterate *Sedulur Sikep* are not anywhere near being accepted or integrated into the existing social system, at least from the view that education is necessary for finding a decent job, which is not farming.

Three out of the four aforementioned doctrines are still commonly practiced by *Sedulur Sikep* found in those regions. However, different degrees of observance are to be expected.

Those who claim to be followers of Sikep's teachings all agree to behave and appear as Samin's followers. Their Sikep appearance and attitude in daily life are similar, with the way of dressing and the twenty abstinences of behavior being observed by everyone in a relatively consistent way (as discussed in section 4.3.4). Meanwhile, the doctrines of perceiving the human-nature relationship and their views on spirituality/divinity are found to be observed in varying degrees. This variety of observance depends on each Sikep community in perceiving the external authority, as it was mentioned before that some of them are seeking a way to adapt and integrate to, in a limited way, propagated social order (see the next section on differences).

The concept of 'Agama Adam' is still observed by most of the elders in all regions of Sikep communities, though some of them chose to write Islam or Buddhism as their religion on their KTP. This was said to be to avoid any confrontation with authorities, especially during the New Order regime, where coercion was easily performed by the government. This coercion affected their systems of marriage and other issues related to religion. It also applied to school system, where some Sikep's parents were pushed to send their children to school. Some of them felt lucky when the New Order regime fell, and withdrew their children from school right away³⁵. Additionally, their way of

³⁴ Based on several interviews with Gunarti

³⁵ As what happened to Gunretno and Gunarti, they were sent to elementary school, as their father was following order from the government, but then sign them off from the school right after Soeharto

perceiving the human-nature relationship has also been affected by their views on religion and spirituality, through how nature is perceived by humans and how human should make use of their surrounding environment sustainably is still considered a basic teaching of Sikep. Their way is to take what is provided by earth based on their needs alone and have to always respect Mother Earth whenever taking something from Her.

Sikep communities are now living in a different era in which they can practice their cultural and spiritual traits based on Sikep's doctrines they believe. Therefore, through a combination of various teachings by Samin's successors, and the Sikep's virtue of individual freedom, and different approaches applied by local governments in perceiving Sikep communities, these dispersed Sikep communities now have different ways of practicing the Sikep teachings as well as various level of adherence to the Agama Adam.

4.3.2 Differences across Samin Communities

On the contemporary development of the *Sedulur Sikep*, each *Sedulur Sikep* who lives in a particular region is inevitably subject to the local administration's way of governing its people; both at the provincial and regency levels. The way in which local governments perceive Sikep communities within their respective regions has affected Sikep's views toward external authorities. Indeed, Indonesia is now governed by its own people, and *Sedulur Sikep* praised this fact, though to various extents.

Despite the complex principles applied by Samin's teachings, unlike other cultural norms, Sikep-ism is a loose set of doctrines and religious ethics emphasizing individual freedom, that a true Javanese shall not exert force on others nor should it be subject to the force of others. In relation to the contemporary development of Sikep's religious views, some *Sedulur Sikep* have been found observing Islam. Originally, this was said to be the result of some *Sedulur Sikep* who was previously forced to adhere to one of the state-acknowledged religions, but then decided to keep the new religious status and pass it on to the next generation. Here, Islam can be observed thoroughly by practicing its

resigned. Later, Gunarti used her knowledge she got from school to teach Sikep's children in Pati on basic knowledge on writing, reading, and counting, to minimize the scolds these children receive from their peers as they were called 'stupid' that they cannot read and write.

religious teachings in daily life or only used as a status on the KTP as did the *abangan* peasant.

Islam is observed mostly by *Sedulur Sikep* in areas where they comply with the government's approach to 'conserve' their tradition, especially areas where they are willing to be included in the government programs, such as those who live in Klopoduwur, Blora (DPPKKI Kab. Blora, 2015). According to Suripan Sadi Hutomo in '*Tradisi dan Blora*' (1996), Klopoduwur Blora was a prominent area to the birth and spread of Saminism. Historically, Samin Surosentiko started his movement in Klopoduwur - Blora, and spread it to several areas in northern-central Java where most of the teak forests are found. Later in the development, the remaining *Sedulur Sikep* community in Klopoduwur-Blora became the reference for most studies on Saminism, resulting in this community's narratives on Saminism dominating most of the research and knowledge on Saminism.

Prior to the flourishing case of the anti-cement movement that made a name for the *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati, it is not surprising that most well-known *Sedulur Sikep*'s narratives are found to be based on those in Klopoduwur-Blora. As previously mentioned, the historical background of the birth of the movement in Blora plays a significant role in centralizing the narratives of Sikep adherences. The local government of Blora also formally recognized that the *Sedulur Sikep* community in this particular area, as one of the *Adat* communities, therefore need to be culturally conserved. Moreover, the government also recognized Samin Surosentiko as national hero who fought the Dutch colonials (Pemkab. Blora), thus the Sikep community in Klopoduwur has become an 'icon' of the Blora regency. In relation to the 'originality' of the teaching, *Sedulur Sikep* in Blora, with its *botoh*, Mbah Lasiyo, who is the great-grandchild of Mbah Engkrek (discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.2), self pro-claimed their community as the true upholder of Sikep teachings.

The prominent narrative of the Sikep in Blora within the discussion of 'Samin movement' has made other regions with significant numbers of Samin's followers count as 'periphery area' of Sikep teachings. As a consequence, these so-called periphery areas have gained less exposure than those considered as 'pure', such as the Sikep

community in Randublatung-Blora³⁶. Even though both Randublatung and Klopoduwur Sikep communities live under the same administration of Blora regency, those in Klopoduwur were willing to put ‘Islam’ as their religion written on their KTP, while those in Randublatung have chosen the religion’s space to be left empty (Bahari, 2015).

Even though *Mbah* Lasiyo perceived their ‘adaptation’ to Islam teachings as a minor thing, Islam tradition can actually be seen in practice by the *Sedulur Sikep* in Klopoduwur. The former house of late Mbah Engkrek has been transformed into a *musholla*, a small mosque for Moslems to perform their religious activities. It was said that it was based on Mbah Engkrek’s request to not use his house except when the ‘Owner (of Life)’³⁷ needs it. Some of the younger generations of *Sedulur Sikep* in Klopoduwur also admit themselves as Moslem, yet still practice rituals based on Sikep teachings.

Emphasizing the local government’s acknowledgment of the Sikep community in Blora, it is perhaps not an exaggeration to say that the Sikep Blora has reached a *modus vivendi* with the authorities. Lasiyo argues, “It is our own brother now who is in power, so we should just follow it”. Their cooperation with the Blora regency government can also be seen from the appearance of a Javanese-style hall in the middle of their settlement area, built and funded by the government in 2009. This hall is used for welcoming guests, hosting meetings among Sikep members, as well as performing Sikep rituals or ceremonies. With such cooperation with the government, the Sikep village in Klopoduwur has also become one of Blora Regency’s so-called ‘assisted villages’, where the village functions as an educational-tourism destination in Blora³⁸ and often hosts the government’s cultural events. This assisted village shows and preserves local customs and traditions based on Saminism. Therefore, the *Sedulur Sikep* in this village are said to be the ‘tamed’ Samin’s followers by anti-cement activists, due

³⁶ Based on field findings, the Sikep community in Randublatung – Blora is known to have connections with those Sikep in Sukolilo-Pati. Some of the Sikep members also found to be actively involved in the anti-cement movement activities.

³⁷ Here it is perceived as God who is the owner of the universe. The statement retracted from a documentary video about the Sikep (Samin) community in Blora, where most of the information given by Mbah Lasiyo. Video can be found by accessing <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZfEY0hJirM&t=6s>

³⁸ Information also provided on the official website of regency of Blora at <http://blorakab.go.id/index.php/11-seni-dan-budaya/474-kampung-samin-klopoduwur-obyek-penyelenggaraan-jttm-di-blora>

to their good cooperation with the local government as well as several ‘adaptations’ to the propagated social order.

Besides the *Sedulur Sikep* in Klopoduwur-Blora, which at a certain point has decreased their level of adherence to the Sikep’s main teachings of Agama Adam, a Sikep community in Bojonegoro-East Java found that some of its members are subject to Islam teachings, went to school, and some of them even went into higher education at university, e.g the *botoh* of this Sikep community has a son who works as civil servant in local office. The *Sedulur Sikep* who live in this community are among the Samin’s followers that can access national ID because of their adherence to one of the state-recognized religions (most of them chose Islam or Buddhism). Hardjo Kardi said that he is focusing on searching for universal values, which are also taught by all religions in the world, such as helping other people without being asked, regardless of their social status and age.

Another Sikep community in Central Java is found in Kudus Regency. The *botoh* (elder) said that the *Sedulur Sikep* in Kudus are descendants *Sedulur Sikep* in Randublatung, Blora, in that their forefathers were originally Sikep from Randublatung who migrated to Kudus to flee from Dutch’s attempt to arrest them. With regards to their relationship with the local government, the *Sedulur Sikep* in Kudus is acknowledged and recognized by the local administration. The regent of Kudus maintains a good relationship with the *botoh* (elder) of the *Sedulur Sikep* in Kudus. This good relationship results in easier access for the *Sedulur Sikep* to obtain KTP and a Family Card by having special assistance on the application, such as allowing the religion’s column of the KTP to be left empty. As peasants, the *Sedulur Sikep* in Kudus are also recognized as one of the *Adat* communities that play a significant role in defining Kudus identity, as the regency generates its revenue predominately from agricultural activities, notably the production of tobacco and peanuts.

In comparison to the *Sedulur Sikep* communities in Blora, Kudus, and Bojonegoro, the Sikep community in Pati, most of whom are subject to Agama Adam, do not receive special ‘treatment’ from the government. One of the informants said that previously they were allowed to apply for KTP without specifying any religion, but now that it was impossible for them to obtain one. Such conditions then worsened with the activism by some of its members in rejecting the government plan of the cement industry as a way

of conserving their peasant identity by protecting the prospective mining area of Kendeng mountains (see Chapter 5 for the Kendeng mountains and Chapter 6 for the movement). But findings from the field show that such activism is not supported by all members of the *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati, and that those who oppose such activism are in a position of abstention. Evidently, the decision to abstain is signifying Sikep virtue to avoid interfering in other people's affairs, especially in light of activists that are involved in assisting (non-Sikep) villagers in different places in rejecting these industries. Therefore, relevant differences are found within the Sikep community in Pati, and despite their 'loud' voice in the anti-cement movement, the *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati are currently divided in their views on anti-cement activism. This conflict within the *Sedulur Sikep* will be further explained in Chapter 6.

4.4 *Sedulur Sikep*: A Puritan Javanese Peasantry or *Adat* Community?

4.4.1 What to Give, What to Get?

Based on the contemporary evolution of Sikep identities amidst their dispersed settlements, as Samin followers who adhere to Sikep teachings, the *Sedulur Sikep* across all regions reached an agreement that Sikep is a teaching of equality and freedom. These notions of equality and freedom are expressed in several doctrines based on the existence of outside circumstances: Nature, divinity, external authority, and day-to-day attitudes and appearances. However, due to to Samin's various successors who, to some degree, had their own interpretations of Samin's teachings, each *Sedulur Sikep* has claimed that their community is the true upholder of Sikep doctrines. The situation is further complicated given the vacuum of written materials to be used as sacred texts. At the same time, Sikep communities must reconcile this situation with the basic Sikep's principle of individual freedom, which includes refraining from judging other Sikep communities' behaviors.

During the contemporary development of *Sedulur Sikep*, given the change of authority that inevitably interfered with certain parts of their lifestyles, the *Sedulur Sikep* have been required to both adapt and confront. The choice between adaptation or confrontation is then decided by approaches exercised by different regimes, both at the

national level and, but more crucially, at the local level. As a consequence of the change of regime, the Sikep concept and observance to their divinity plays a crucial role in framing their response to powerful external authority. Accordingly, government approaches and responses given by Sikep communities have shaped Sikep identity within particular regions, further transforming the Sikep communities in heterogeneous ways.

The local governments see Sikep communities within their respective areas differently. For instance, based on the discussion above, the regency governments of Kudus, Blora, and Pati each treat Sikep communities differently. Blora, with cooperating approach in the form of involving the Sikep community in the government's tourism and cultural programs, has allowed the *Sedulur Sikep* in Blora to receive facilities not found in other Sikep communities. The fact that the Sikep in Klopoduwur-Blora responded to government initiatives with adaptability and a willingness to be integrated has allowed them to reach a consensus. The *Sedulur Sikep* in Klopoduwur also enjoy being the 'mascot' of Blora, since their narrative as the true Samin's followers is facilitated by the government. However, another Sikep community in Randublatung-Blora does not receive the same benefit as their counterparts in Klopoduwur, due to their resistance to being subjected to government programs and propagated social order, and therefore their narrative as Samin's followers is relegated to the periphery.

Meanwhile, the *Sedulur Sikep* in Kudus have more collaborative governments, and benefit from Kudus' identity as an agriculture-based region. As a result, their identity as a peasant community with distinct cultural traits is acknowledged and legitimized by the government. Though to a lesser degree compared to those in Klopoduwur-Blora, the *Sedulur Sikep* in Kudus receive specific treatment from their government to conserve their distinctness while still maintaining their rights as citizens. The title of *botoh* given to Wagono was not only based on appointment within Sikep community, but also formally legitimized by the Office of Culture and Tourism of Kudus Regency. With less interference to their way of living than the Sikep *adat* community, the Kudus regency government maintains its mutual relationship, as the *Sedulur Sikep* and the Kudus Regency government strengthen each other's identities.

As discussed before, the *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati used to have less contact with the regency government of Pati. Thus, the Sikep tradition in Pati can be perceived as one with

limited exposure to external authority in the form of an interfering government. However, even though this situation has allowed them to be left free to conserve and practice their Sikep lifestyle and beliefs, their rights as citizens are not taken into account by the administration. In addition to having a hard time obtaining the KTP, the cement industry, which is supposed to include the participation of the people, especially groups that have specific connections to the land, is neglecting the local Sikep community during the process. Additionally, the passive approach from the government and a strong resistance by the *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati has resulted in their status as an *adat* community to be discarded and their specific identity as peasant and land rights to be dismissed.

Therefore, in comparing the different approaches by local government – such as the recognition of one *Sedulur Sikep* community as *adat* community while others neglect the existence of *Sedulur Sikep* – the status of the *Sedulur Sikep* is perceived differently in different regions. As Javanese, yet practicing cultural and spiritual traits that are distinct from those of their Javanese neighbors, one might categorize the Sikep as an *adat* community, with or without recognition from the government. However, since the term of *masyarakat adat*, the closest term used in Indonesia to address indigenous people was introduced, and in context of the possibility of considering the *Sedulur Sikep* as such a group, this study rather emphasizes the aspects of their attachment to land, either as a mere means of economic production for peasants or as an element of ancestral territory included within the Sikep narratives. The following section will discuss the indigeneity of *Sedulur Sikep*: That is, the traits of Sikep-ism, particularly their attachment to land, that later become the main trigger for Sikep in Sukolilo-Pati to stand up and withstand the exploitative cement industry in the Kendeng mountains.

4.4.2 Indigeneity of *Sedulur Sikep*?

The *Sedulur Sikep*'s way of expressing their rights to the land and natural resources was built upon on their grievance for the loss of access to resources as well as limitations or regulations on their land possession, the value of the land and other resources pursued by the *Sedulur Sikep* is closely related to their peasantry virtues. As was mentioned earlier, as true followers of Samin Surosentiko and adherents of Sikep teachings, the only livelihoods allowed for Sikep members is farming. Sikep teachings rarely or never

specify compulsion on specific territorial or geographical location on their land to maintain the virtues as Javanese peasants. Moreover, due to the fact that Sikep communities are dispersed in several regions and that their new settlement area was chosen based on nothing related to their pre-existing cultural traits, apart from hiding away from Dutch and any interference from village's system, the availability of land became the only elements to observe and conserve their peasant Sikep traits.

Without downgrading the significances and meanings of the Kendeng mountains perceived by the local farmers, and prominently by the *Sedulur Sikep*, the respective Kendeng mountains' physical qualities are strongly related to their function as a water catchment area. Land and water availability is considered necessary to the *Sedulur Sikep* as upholders of Javanese peasant traditions, in particular due to their pivotal role in fulfilling economic needs.

Attachment to land has become the key feature of defining the Indigenous People's status and rights, as Yeh and Bryan (2015) referring to the International Labor Organization's (ILO) Convention 169 on the Rights of Indigenous and Tribal People, where indigeneity is defined as:

"In term of a 'territory' composed of 'the total environment' which the peoples concerned occupy or use. [...] further demonstrating the influence of cultural ecology's efforts to understand the relationship between indigenous peoples and their environment as systematic, their social expression constituting a 'territory'"
(ILO Convention 169, modified by Yeh & Bryan, 2015, p. 533)

The notion of territory found in the ILO convention with regards to indigenous people further distinguished peasants from indigenous and tribal populations, either as living outside of agrarian settings or practicing uniquely 'indigenous' forms of subsistence agriculture (Rodriguez-Pinero, 2005 in Yeh & Bryan, 2015). Concerning the resistance in defending the land as their respective right, the distinction between peasants and IPs then becomes clearer, where peasants fought for rights to land as means of production, while IPs struggled for territories. This differentiation further canvassed the political mobilization between the two types of resistance (Yeh & Bryan, 2015, p. 533).

Several elements that can define the *Sedulur Sikep*'s indigeneity are based on their pursuit of land as a means of production. At the same time, the *Sedulur Sikep*, who are actually Javanese, do exercise some culturally-distinct traits in response to their human-

nature relationships, and are thus perceived differently by the (external) state authority, such that they do indeed meet some characteristics of indigenous peoples (ADB, 2000 and Yeh & Bryan, 2015). However, they perceive land and resources as things that ought to be conserved sustainably for future generations, regardless of the location. In this context, this study perceives the *Sedulur Sikep* as a peasant movement that uniquely practices indigenous virtues derived from their attachment to land and its products of common as source of livelihoods. Furthermore, notwithstanding the strong influence of Sikep's narratives on the anti-cement movement, the *Sedulur Sikep* have turned their Sikep's interest in conserving their identity and traditions into political mobilization in their fight to protect the Kendeng mountains.

5 Kendeng Mountains' Resource Potentials and Identity Narratives of Local Samin People

Chapter 5 discusses contextual aspects of the Kendeng mountains, both physical and non-physical. Data on the resources contained in the Kendeng mountains are presented in this chapter to provide an understanding of how the mountains have become significant both nationally and locally. This chapter also pays particular attention to the significance of the Kendeng mountains for the local *Sedulur Sikep* in defining their cultural traits based on the narratives of the human-nature relationship. Therefore, this chapter will answer the third objective of this research, which is to describe and analyze the importance of the Kendeng mountains, both for the Sedulur Sikep and for the broader notion of development.

5.1 The Kendeng Mountains: An Introduction

The Kendeng mountains are located in the northern-central part of the Island of Java. A Dutch geologist, R.W. van Bemmelen, in *The Geology of Indonesia* (1949), mentioned that the mountains are part of the Rembang zone – a group of mountains formed by fold structures in the southwest and northwest axis directions. This karstic limestone formation extends throughout the regencies of Blora, Rembang, Grobogan, Pati and Kudus (Central Java) and ends in Tuban (East Java). The largest area of the mountains is located in Grobogan and Pati, with a total coverage of 11,802 ha. The Kendeng mountains are categorized as one of the karstic terrains on the Island of Java and part of the 154,000 km² of carbonate limestone rock in Indonesia.

At first glance, the Kendeng mountains area may be perceived as dry and unproductive land; however, the karstic landscape actually has important functions for the surrounding area. For instance, karstic regions absorb some 410 million tons of carbon dioxide annually from the atmosphere and discharge 300 million tons through the karsting process itself. The Acintyacunyata Speleological Club in Yogyakarta claims

that karstic regions store some 110 million tons of carbon dioxide annually, hence it plays a significant role in global carbon circulation (Keller & Klute, 2016).

As mentioned before, part of the Kendeng mountains is located in Pati, Blora and Grobogan, a section which would later be known as *Kawasan Kars Sukolilo* (Sukolilo Karst Region). This part of the Kendeng mountains stretches approximately 19,472 ha, of which Pati alone covers 11,802 ha and extends approximately 35 kilometers from District Pucangwangi to District Sukolilo. The Local Decree of Pati Regency No.5 in 2011, which concerns Regional Spatial Planning, specifies in Article 35, Paragraph 3b that there are three districts in Pati that possess karst:

- District Sukolilo with 1,682 ha coverage areas;
- District Kayen with 569,5 ha coverage areas; and
- District Tambakromo with 11,05 ha coverage areas.

With this much karstic material found in Pati, this area has the potential for certain extractive industries, especially the cement industry. Unlike other mineral-rich areas in Java, the karstic Kendeng mountains are still unexploited. Therefore, incoming cement manufacturers have been expected by some in this area, notably the local government who is eager to increase local revenues.

Using the ‘traditional view’ (see next section) perceived by most economists and policymakers, such mineral wealth should be profitably mined as part of a country’s (natural) capital. In order to make use of the mineral wealth represented by the Kendeng mountains, the Department of Energy, Resource, and Mineral under the Government of the Kendeng Muria Region has mapped out Kendeng as a prospected mining area in Central Java.



Figure 4 Mining concession area within Central Java Province. North Kendeng highlighted in red

Source: Department of Energy, Resource, and Mineral Kendeng Muria Region and Omahkendeng.org

Figure 4 shows the division of mining areas in Central Java. *Kawasan Pertambangan Kendeng Utara*, or the North Kendeng Mining Region (in red), is a karstic area that stretches to the border of East Java and is primarily covered in limestone. The figure also provides information on the various types of materials that could be exploited from the Kendeng mountains, including a potential limestone production of 9,994.5 million tons mainly from the part of the Kendeng mountains that lies in Pati, Grobogan, Rembang, and Blora. Several mining companies have planned to set their plant-site in these mountains: Semen Indonesia Rembang, Gunung Mas Mineral and Bosowa in Rembang; PT. SMS - Sahabat Mulya Sakti (a subsidiary of Indocement - HeidelbergCement) in Pati; Vanda Prima Listi and Thai-based PT Semen Merah Putih in Grobogan; and Marco Tambang Raya, Alam Blora Lestari, and Artha Parama Indonesia-Artha Graha Group in Blora (Jakarta Post, 2016).

In addition to their endowment in mining materials, the Kendeng mountains also possess non-material significance, which risks being disrupted and degraded should their material endowments be exploited. In order to balance the material and non-material properties of the Kendeng mountains, the Decree of the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources number 1456 K/20/MEM/2000 regarding the Guidance of Karst

Management in Indonesia explains the importance of the karstic Kendeng mountains and legally protects them. This decree should also be taken into consideration whenever the government creates new regulations, especially regarding mining and exploitation activities on the Kendeng mountains. In this decree, the Kendeng mountains are categorized as a ‘first class’ karstic area with the following characteristics (stated in article 12, paragraph 1):

- a. Function as perennial (permanent) underground water storage in a form of an aquifer, subterranean rivers, a stagnant pit, or underground lake such that their existence suffices as a general function of hydrology;
- b. The possession of caves and active subterranean rivers with both horizontal and vertical systems that sufficiently serve general function of hydrology and science.
- c. The caves possess active *speleothem*³⁹ and/or historical remains, so that they have the potential to be developed as a tourism and cultural place of interest.

In addition to the characteristics mentioned above, the classification of the Kendeng mountains as a ‘first class’ karstic area also means that they possess a specific biodiversity of plants and animals that provide social, economic, cultural, and scientific functions. Hence, to respect these significances, all forms of mining activities are, in principle, not permitted in this region (Kodim).

The Kendeng mountains also play a significant role in the local villagers’ daily lives, especially for those whose livelihoods depend on the physical quality of the mountains. In relation to that, JMPPK, an anti-cement group comprised of local villagers in Kendeng, has outlined three points of significance represented by the Kendeng mountains that would possibly make this karstic landscape even more valuable against any threat of exploitation from the mining industry. These three points of significance are detailed as follows:

Water Provider

³⁹ Known as a cave formation, is a secondary mineral deposit formed in a cave. Speleothems typically form in limestone or *dolostone solutional* caves [Wikipedia.org/wiki/speleothem]

In Pati, particularly Sukolilo, Kayen and Tambakromo, the caves and springs are evenly distributed across the hills and the lower plains. This shows that the North Kendeng limestone is a water storage area and serves as a water catchment as well as a recharging area, thus supplying water for the region around it. Hundreds of springs and tens of subterranean rivers are found underneath the Kendeng mountains. Based on the researcher's observations at JMPPK meetings and on interviews with JMPPK activists and villagers, there are reportedly 79 perennial springs and 24 caves in Sukolilo, as well as 125 springs in Kayen and Tambakromo, many of which also have subterranean river systems. With their approximately 1000-liters/second water flow, these springs have become crucial sources of potable water for household use as well as irrigation for thousands of hectares' worth of agricultural lands. In Sukolilo itself, there are 4,000 ha of rice fields depending on the Sumber Lawang spring alone, which is the largest spring in Sukolilo. In total, more than 25,000 ha of agricultural land and 165,000 people in Southern Pati rely on the springs underneath Kendeng. Recognizing the importance of sustaining these water springs, the Government of Pati on article 40 of Local Decree of Pati Regency Number 5 of 2011 regarding Spatial Planning, specified a number of springs found in three districts – Tambakromo, Kayen, and Sukolilo – that need to be protected. Some of these springs are illustrated on the map in Figure 5 below.

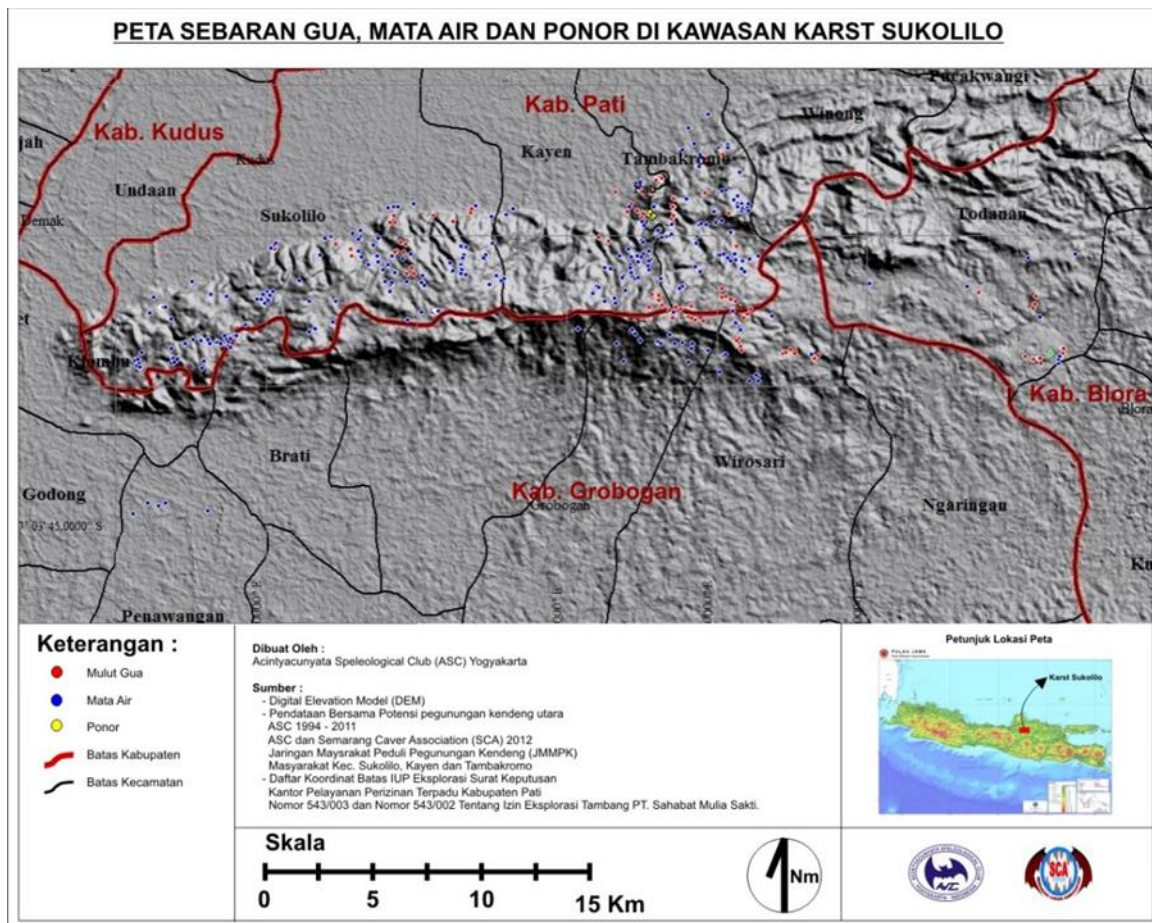


Figure 5 the distribution of caves, sinkholes, and natural springs found in Kendeng mountains (Sukolilo, Kayen, and Tambakromo)

Source: Acintyacunyata Speleological Club (ASC) Yogyakarta

Habitat for Animals and Vegetation

The karstic region with its unique features has made Kendeng home to many kinds of vegetation, such as mahogany, cashew, silk cotton, sugar palm, and teak.

Moreover, the vegetation diversity of the Kendeng mountains also makes them a perfect habitat for many animal species, especially birds. There are 45 bird species found around Sukolilo Karst Mountains, including the endemic Javanese sparrow (*padda oryzivora*). With many caves found within the mountains, they are also a sanctuary for bats, which produce phosphate fertilizer by defecating on cave floors, which becomes a source of food for other animals. Bats also help to control the pest population by consuming insects (Apriando, 2015). The existence of these animals plays an important role in keeping the ecological balance of the karst region, together with other species such as kingfishers, sparrows, spotted doves, and turtledoves that play a role in

spreading *ficus* seeds. Meanwhile, birds of prey have role in controlling rodents and insects (Wacana et.al, 2008 in Herwati, Rahardjo and Kristianto 2010).

Proof of Human History

The Kendeng Mountains have also been a haven throughout human history. Many caves around the Kendeng Mountains are sited as primitive caves and historical sites, especially those that are important to the *Sedulur Sikep* communities living in Sukolilo. Several researchers have concluded that the caves in Kendeng were shelter for primitive humans. Some recent discoveries include the Dampo Awang⁴⁰ heritage in Tambakromo, an ancient temple in Kayen, and *pewayangan*⁴¹ sites in Sukolilo. In addition, there are two other well-known ritual sites in Sukolilo: *Watu Payung* sites, meaning ‘umbrella (shaped) rocks’ and located in northern lower plain of the Kendeng mountains, which serves as a sacred place for both *Sedulur Sikep* and Muslims special rituals, and the Syeh Jangkung tombs at the border of Sukolilo and Kayen. Syeh Jangkung was believed to be one of the *Sunan*⁴² but was the unrecognized one; he was not member of the nine saints of Islam in Java. These sites demonstrate how the Kendeng mountains have played an important role in human history, in particular in connection to the cultural beliefs of those who lived there.

Almost all informants that were interviewed, and in particular those who joined the anti-cement movement, are aware of these various significances of the Kendeng mountains. This is not only because most of them are farmers who need the water to irrigate the rice fields, but also due to their belief that Kendeng possesses spiritual elements and has significance for the future generations. Some villagers built their awareness based on personal experiences seeing how industrial activities can ruin land, especially agricultural land, which eventually affect the people’s economic and social circumstances. Such experiences usually occur during the villagers’ youth as they frequently travel to another (usually bigger) town in search of better job opportunities as industrial workers. They admit that they do not want Sukolilo and the surrounding area

⁴⁰ A legend of Chinese trader who fought *Sunan Bonang*, one of saint of Islam in Java.

⁴¹ *Pewayangan* derived from the word of *wayang*, which is a Javanese term for shadow (puppet) which is popular as a media in delivering the Javanese epos based on the Hindu Ramayana epos.

⁴² *Sunan* is a title of member of The *Wali Sanga* (nine guardians). *Wali sanga* revered saints of Islam in, especially on the island of Java, because of their historic role in the spread of Islam in Indonesia.

to be turned into industrial area, where land and water scarcity become inevitable. Therefore, the villagers have responded to the incoming cement industry in a rather non-materialistic way that prioritizes environmental wellbeing and sustainability for future generations.

Nevertheless, from a different point of view, the abundance of materials in the Kendeng Mountains is perceived as national capital to support the agenda of national development, which also includes local economic development. This agenda is promoted by the traditional powerful actor of state and business, thus the section below presents how Kendeng Mountains become important within the development agenda, as well as how such agenda is perceived by locals.

5.2 Significance of Kendeng Mountains for Narratives of Development; Through Cement Industry

“Who does not need cement/concrete on these days? Cement is one of the most accurate indicators for economic [growth]”

– Agung Wiharto, PT. Semen Indonesia Corporate Secretary

Most economists and policy makers have presumed that mining creates wealth which in turn contributes to the economic development of the nation (Davis & Tilton , 2002). Cement, as the main component of concrete, is said to be an important component for development, especially for building infrastructure. In some parts of Indonesia, the incoming cement industry has made big promises to invest and generate profits for the local people. David and Tilton argue that such promises are often perceived from the ‘traditional view’ perspective, which rests on neo-classical economic theory stating that mineral deposits can be profitably mined as part of a country’s capital stock (2002, p. 5). In the context of this research, the cement industry is perceived as one way to convert a certain deposit of material resources, such as the limestone in the Kendeng Mountains, into a form of capital that contributes to the nation’s output and fuels its development agenda.

5.2.1 The Narratives of the Cement Industry

Cement production has secured a pivotal role in the nation's attempt to scale up its infrastructure facilities and boost economic development. PT. Semen Gresik, a state-owned cement company founded in 1957 by Indonesia's first president, Soekarno, had by 2003 transformed itself into a strategic holding group under its new name PT. Semen Indonesia. PT. Semen Indonesia said that it was requested by the president to be the company responsible for fulfilling the nation's cement demand in order to speed up the building of infrastructure facilities in support of the state's long-term planning objectives⁴³. Additionally, PT. Semen Indonesia is also responsible for countering foreign and/or private cement companies' expansion in Indonesia, while at the same time pursuing their goal of being among the world's top cement producers (Wiharto, 2016).

The cement sector in Indonesia is dominated by foreign private companies, which hold sixty-five percent of the total shares in capacity, while the remaining thirty-five percent is held by the state-owned company, PT. Semen Indonesia. Together, these two groups supply the domestic demand for cement in Indonesia. Based on data provided by PT. Semen Indonesia (2016), there are several key factors claimed to be the reason for the growing demand for and consumption of cement:

- Infrastructure development;
- The growth of the commercial and industrial sectors; and
- The growth of the housing sectors in response to population growth, rising income per capita rise, and mass urbanization.

Even though, in 2011, only 2.1 percent of the country's GDP was reserved for infrastructure, the government has listed infrastructure as a top priority in its agenda to accelerate economic growth. Another reason to boost cement usage through infrastructure development is to address the fact that despite Indonesia's vast area and large population, the country is still behind smaller neighboring countries such as Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand in its cement consumption (kg/capita). The national government has therefore been focusing its infrastructure development in several parts

⁴³ Taken from interview with Agung Wiharto, PT. Semen Indonesia corporate secretary

of Indonesia that were previously left out from prior infrastructure development agendas, especially those regions on the outermost and eastern parts of the nation.

Regarding funding for infrastructure projects, the government has set targets in both the National Medium-Term Development Plan 2010-2014 (RPJMN) and the Master plan for the Acceleration and Expansion of Indonesia's Economic Development Plan (MP3EI 2011-2025) which will be largely financed by the private sector (Indonesia Investment, 2016). Moreover, this infrastructure development is also said to be prominent within the nation's economic development agenda, which hoped to promote equality in terms of human and physical development across the nation. With the help of ambitious infrastructure projects, the current president, Joko Widodo, expects 7 percent growth to be reached largely by domestic consumption and investment. Inevitably, the terms "investment" and "economic growth" ultimately mean "cement". Insofar as annual cement consumption is an index for the country's construction activity, infrastructure developments are inconceivable without the cement industry (Keller & Klute, 2016).

By mid-2016, national cement sales were still dominated by demand in Java. Meanwhile, other islands of Indonesia, specifically those in the eastern part of the country where infrastructure development and wealth distribution are most needed, cement demand still falls behind Java's numbers. Based on data presented by PT. Semen Indonesia (2016), Java still dominates cement consumption. In the period from January to July 2016, Java consumed more than 54% of the nation's total cement production.

Based on these numbers, there are two different narratives regarding the cement industry that could be presented. On the one hand, perhaps, it is failings to perpetuate the noble idea of economic growth based on infrastructure development throughout in the whole of Indonesia; or on the other hand, the priority is to fulfill demand of cement consumption that is dominated by Java, as the centre of property and infrastructure development in Indonesia. The latter narrative favours the idea to build more cement industries in Java; this is more visible and profitable for the companies, as it is closer to their consumers, regardless of concerns over high population density and the major disruption to agricultural land use caused by the industry.

In addition to national demand for cement, cement manufacturers also use the narrative of global cement needs in order to legitimize increases to their production. Faced with mounting pressure throughout Southeast Asia to increase energy and material production, the cement industry has become a crucial element in fueling this agenda. Due to China's massive closure of hundreds of its cement plants (Bradsher, 2010), mainland and islands parts of Southeast Asia are becoming responsible for developing an inter-regional initial plan of "corridorization" that supplies concrete or cement (Sangkoyo, 2017). In Indonesia alone, based on data from various cement producers, the national cement producers' capacities is expected to double from 80 million tons in 2015 to around 150 million tons in 2017 (Panggabean, 2016). This planned increase in cement production is producers' way of anticipating the prospect of increased sales due to national government's infrastructure commitments and of fulfilling their obligation in the regional demand for cement across Southeast Asia.

In responding to the high demand for cement, Indonesia through its state-owned cement manufacturer has pledged to be a key player in both the national and global cement industries. Therefore, better quality and faster production of cement is necessary to meet this ambition. The unexploited Kendeng mountains, with their 'first class' karst materials, make them a prospective mining area for some cement companies. Accordingly, PT. Semen Indonesia, which had the initial plan in Pati (2005) and Rembang (2012-now), made a claim as to why they chose to exploit the Kendeng Mountains:

- **Location:** The Kendeng Mountains are located in the northern part of the island, close to the Northern Java Sea. Most big ports in Java are located on the northern shore, from which most goods are delivered and transported. In addition, there is easy road access to the port facilities in this area of the island. Hence, the location of the Kendeng Mountains would allow companies to reduce their transportation costs.
- **Limestone Quality:** The Kendeng Mountains have been said to be the only karstic mountains without any major exploitation, in spite of claims that the limestone there is of high quality. However, artisanal miners surrounding Kendeng are believed to have been selling their products to big companies such as PT. Semen Indonesia in

Tuban⁴⁴. To minimize negative impacts possessed by these artisanal minings, the local government has given access to big companies with more advanced facilities and technology.

Using the notion of economic development, PT. Semen Indonesia with its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs has promised to help one of the least wealthy regencies in Central Java: Rembang. Due to the fact that this area is located on dry, karstic, unproductive land, the incoming industry promised to make the land more productive, even during the post-mining stage through their reclamation and environmental management programs (PT. Semen Indonesia, 2014). In addition to the government's attempts to scale up the land's values, traditionally, the industry also promised to have a positive impact on the local people through the creation of job opportunities. The following section will further discuss the significance of the cement industry, particularly in the Kendeng mountains, in bringing economic development, both for government and the people.

5.2.2 Economic Development Led by the Cement Industry?

As previously mentioned, the endowment of materials in the Kendeng mountains has attracted a number of cement companies interested in setting up a plant and exploiting the Kendeng mountains. This section will further discuss the promised agenda proposed by the government and the cement companies to legitimize their plans of establishing a cement industry around the Kendeng Mountains.

The current expansion and development of cement industries are linked to the government's goal of economic development. The existence of cement companies is said to bring social and economic development, both to local government revenues and to the local communities through job opportunities (Tempo.co, 2016). As most people

⁴⁴ Based on interview with Gunarti and Gunretno, they claimed they also reached these artisanal miners and tried to persuade them to stop mining Kendeng. However, due to limited option for jobs, that they are not farmers who have land, Gunarti and Gunretno then instead looking after them, in a way that they both keep warning them on all the dangerous of their activities, especially the use of explosives. Additionally, JMPPK was also trying to educate them on the impacts caused by artisanal mining, such as floods or landslides that can put their lives and other villagers in danger. However, as Sikep, both Gunretno and Gunarti then let them to do as they wished, at their own risk, yet if they ever want to ask for help, JMPPK promised to help them as much as they can.

living in the area surrounding the Kendeng Mountains rely on agriculture activities for their livelihood, they are considered to be poor people due to not having a permanent monthly-based income. Thus, the proposed cement industries promise to increase the local people's living standards by opening more job opportunities. Accordingly, by increasing the living standard, it is assumed that consumption will rise, which will then create a circle of wealth distribution for everyone – that is, both those who directly benefit from the industry through employment and those who indirectly benefit through the informal economic sector that might arise around the industrial site⁴⁵.

However, turning to what the cement industry has to offer, bearing in mind that the education level of the local people is quite low, particularly in the rural regions surrounding the Kendeng Mountains, the job opportunities offered by the industry are limited. The jobs offered within the industry will be mainly for blue-collar workers during the construction of plant facilities. Based on an analysis by JMPPK (2015) on the incoming cement company in Kayen and Tambakromo-Pati by PT. SMS, more than 85% of the area to be used for cement plants will be villagers' rice fields. This means that farmers would lose their agricultural land and their livelihoods.

Therefore, the company's promise of job opportunities also to ease people's fear of 'unemployment' due to the land lost. Nevertheless, the jobs offered will be especially concentrated during the construction period, which based on data gathered by JMPPK from PT. SMS's plan, the details are as follows: 300 people for the construction of base camps and road access, 200 people for the construction of all facilities and infrastructure, 200 people for mining activities and treadmill execution, 300 people for tool installation, 400 people for production trials, and 800 people for operations. Based on the same report made by JMPPK (2015), the numbers of people needed to work in pre-construction and plant-site construction are relatively small compared to number of farmers who will lose their farmland. The proposed job opportunities provided by the cement companies are obviously not long-term jobs, and are low pay. When the construction phase is over, the workers would need to find another source of income

⁴⁵ Based on an interview with one of the heads of village in one of the villages affected by the cement industry. Though he admits that the industry will disrupt the condition of surrounding environment, which will affect the life of the farmers. He also further acknowledged the dilemma of being in his position, that on one side he must implement government's program at the village level, but on the other hand he also should listen to and accommodate the villagers' interests and needs.

besides farming, or, for those who still have a piece of land, the land condition might be degraded due to the disruption along construction process or industrial pollution.

To make matters worse, since companies will collaborate with village officials during the recruitment process, the existence of the cement industry will raise the sensitive issue of local governance in mineral-producing areas. Such a utilization of elite interests can be seen from what Thorp, et al. (2012) argue, that rules are designed to preserve the interests of elite leaders, such as clientelism, as well as rent-seeking. This condition forms the basis for the resource curse thesis within developing resource-rich regions, namely that an endowment of natural resources is unable to deliver sustained growth and alleviate poverty within the society. The resource curse thesis posits a generally negative relationship between a country's wealth in natural resources and that country's economic growth (Singh & Bourgouin, 2013).

The idea of development through compensation to communities surrounding exploitation sites should not be limited to land issues or to the agricultural income that they must give up. Extractive industries, such as the cement industry, should consider other negative impacts that need to be compensated, such as environmental damages or more complex social inequalities brought about by the structural shocks to the existing local economy (Thorp, Battistelli, Guichaoua, Orihuela, & Paredes, 2012). Therefore, rapid economic and social development, as promised, cannot be fully performed if the ecological systems and environment are damaged and defiled by the extraction activities.

5.3 The Significance of the Kendeng Mountains for Local Sikep Communities

This section discusses how the Kendeng Mountains are perceived as more than a physical landscape. The possession of material and non-material elements within the Kendeng Mountains has crucially shaped and defined the local communities' socio-economic traits, especially for *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati and Kudus. Their peasant tradition perceived the Kendeng Mountains beyond their physical water storage properties. As a natural phenomenon, Kendeng plays an important role in expressing Sikep teachings that are related to the human-nature relationship. Also, as common resources, the

Kendeng Mountains have shaped the narratives of Sikep teachings with regards to their resistance to the external authority. Accordingly, the traits of the *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati have become clearly canvassed, more particularly when the Kendeng Mountains became ‘threatened’ by the incoming cement industry.

5.3.1 Regarding the Sikep Notion of the Human-nature Relationship

There is a complex relationship between Sikep spirituality and other elements of their social and cultural system. These elements must be taken into account to analyze the causes of the Sikep opposition movement against the cement industry. King (1973) argued in his analysis of Sikep beliefs, or *Agama Adam*, that such beliefs may also promote solidarity and enable *Sedulur Sikep* to withstand the pressure of external authority. This research then uses the contemporary case of the capitalistic cement industry that is threatening the Kendeng Mountains’ spiritual resources to reflect on King’s argument.

With regards to *Agama Adam*’s way of praying and observing spirituality, the *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati and Kudus use all elements within Kendeng: Water, vegetation, animals, and non-material elements such as the symbolization of their life giver, Mother Earth. Some sacred sites, including the human-made Watu Payung used by the *Sedulur Sikep* to have meditation-like rituals or prayers to God for specific purposes, as well as the water springs and caves that irrigate Sikep houses and rice fields receive special blessings and offerings. This way of treating the elements of the Kendeng mountains, especially those that directly benefit the people, is hoped to help maintain and conserve their sustainability and express the people’s gratitude to Mother Earth. In addition, because these elements of the Kendeng Mountains are also important for non-Sikep villagers, *Sedulur Sikep* often manage a joint thanksgiving with the other villagers, usually held to express villagers’ gratitude, which is also in line with Islamic tradition.

The way of the *Sedulur Sikep* instigating other villagers to perform a thanksgiving session for some respective water springs also serves to popularize the value of the Kendeng Mountains through their water supply. Additionally, it also can be perceived as a way for the *Sedulur Sikep* to maintain, or to a certain degree re-integrate, their relationship with their non-Sikep neighbors. To strengthen their own Sikep identities

manifested through the Kendeng Mountains, *Sedulur Sikep* also re-create the mythological elements of the mountains. Even though they are built upon Sikep traits, these narratives about the Kendeng Mountains are also perceived by non-Sikep villagers, especially those who are involved in the anti-cement movement. They are as follows:

- The Kendeng significance as a water provider and indicator of [soil] fertility that are needed to conserve the Sikep's peasant tradition. For *Sedulur Sikep* protecting Kendeng is also their way to express their observance to *Agama Adam*, or what *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati and Kudus said as a way of keeping up what their ancestors have told them.
- *Sedulur Sikep* believes that the Kendeng mountains are the mythological place of origin of the Javanese people. Samin Surosentiko predicted would return to Java in the month of *Suro*⁴⁶, when many *Sedulur Sikep* would come from Blora and around the Kendeng mountains to Pati. *Mbah Suro* (Samín Surosentiko) was also known as *Pandito Gunung Kendeng* (The Seer of Mt. Kendeng)
- Some believe that Kendeng is the center for Javanese gods and goddess that are protecting the island of Java.
- Kendeng is also thought to be '*Nagaraja* - the sleeping (white) dragon' that protects the underground Great River that connects the north and south sea of Java. If the dragon is awakened, the island of Java will be cracked into two parts. The teak forests around the Kendeng Mountains are protected by '*Singa Barong* (lion-like creature)' or the king of forest, who would become furious if the ecological balance is disrupted.

However, these mythological narratives and creatures are now merely 'side stories' of the Kendeng mountains that add cultural its value for the local communities. In practice, the local people now consider the actual potential and significance of the Kendeng Mountains as the main reason for them to be preserved sustainably (Widi, 2013)

These non-material elements of Kendeng then enrich the perceived meaning of the mountains to go beyond a merely physical phenomenon of karst region and into an entity that consist of karst, springs, biodiversity, and socio-cultural elements that are inseparable from all the living things around it. One key informant further emphasizes

⁴⁶ Also transcribed as "Sura", is the first month of the Javanese calendar year, and corresponding with the Islamic month of Muharram

the significance of Kendeng, as a compound phenomenon that embodied strength and ‘good life’ for all living things populating the area. She argues that:

“[...] I want to include data regarding Kendeng (mountains), particularly data on historical sites, natural springs, and karst. I consider Kendeng (mountains) as a place to live, a source of strength, which will disappear once it’s exploited, especially the herbal plants (too). Our source of health (life) not only plants, but also small animals (microorganisms) that fertilize our soil. Therefore, if we (Sedulur Sikep) use pesticides, it will kill these microorganisms.” - Gunarti, quoted during a visit to Giyem, a female anti-cement activist and land defender in Tambakromo-Pati, 27 August 2016.

Hence, understanding the Kendeng Mountains through *Sedulur Sikep*’s view can be understood not only as a way of conserving their identity as Samin’s followers, but also as a mode of spiritual expression, especially to Mother Earth. With regards to their belief of *Agama Adam*, which emphasize the human-nature relationship, their belief inevitably transformed land into an element that is beyond a means of production, where land plays pivotal role within the cultural and spiritual aspects of *Sedulur Sikep*. The importance of spiritual beliefs in subjecting oneself as an adherent of Sikep teachings, the quality of the Kendeng mountains are important for the continuity of their tradition for the future generations of peasants. Thus, their anti-cement activism is further seen as a political consciousness that is connected to their spirituality upon the land where, according to Escobar (1995, p. 96):

“At the basis of the peasant model is the notion that the Earth ‘gives’ based on its ‘strength’ [...] There is a relation of give and take between humans and the earth, modeled in terms of reciprocity and ultimately validated by Providence (God) [...] Food crops draw their strength from the land; humans in turn, gain their energy and force from food crops and animal products, and this strength, when applied as work on the land, yields more force. Work, construed as concrete physical activity, is the final ‘using up’ of the land’s strength.”

The Sikep notion of management and access to common resources, such as the Kendeng Mountains, can be explained by tracing back to the early stages of the Samin movement. The demands of the movement, both then and now, are free access to and utilization of common resources. Thus, through their persistence in protecting the Kendeng Mountains, the Sikep community in Pati preserves their Sikep traits of equality and freedom to access the common resources, which these common resources

are now in position to be used exclusively and by the authority in power. Thus, their way of pursuing the Kendeng mountains at a whole new level by instigating their fellow non-Sikep neighbors has become a powerful way to gain more support for the anti-cement movement as an expression of their rejection of external authority, which through the cement industry will interfere and disrupt their very own Sikep's teachings, especially as farmer and adherents of *Agama Adam*.

Hence, with regards to the *Sedulur Sikep* anti-cement movement, their spirituality here plays a role in 'creating power' to assist their effort to build an oppositional movement (Pulido, 1998) against the external authority in the form of capitalistic resource exploitation by the state-business alliance. Once again, the *Sedulur Sikep* examine their ability to engage with each of their Sikep traits to be interconnected with their actions as Sikep, particularly the anti-cement activism that is said to conserve their identity.

5.3.2 Regarding External Authority

Due to their activism to protect the Kendeng Mountains, local *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati have regained their image as environmental defenders from their non-Sikep neighbors. Not only because of their professions as farmers who rely on the provided natural resources, Gunarti claimed that *Sedulur Sikep* 'bow down' only to Mother Earth, as She is the only provider for 'foods and clothing – *Sandang dan pangan*' as essential elements of strength for every individual in every home and nation.

Concerning the way that *Sedulur Sikep* build an attachment to their surrounding environment to preserve their identity, Irwin (1995, p. 42) argued that:

"Views of the environment are linked to specific cultural groups [...] environmental concern become a way of justifying existence and reinforcing group cohesion – the creation of external, environmental threats is a powerful means of maintaining group identity"

The contemporary post-colonial period has not changed *Sedulur Sikep* idealism, particularly those in Pati and Kudus. The *Sedulur Sikep* remain loyal to their cause of self-determination for their own communities and their spiritual connection to the land. Consequently, the *Sedulur Sikep* devote great attention to environmental conservation.

According to Benda and Castles (1969) and Scott (1977), by declaring that ‘land, water, and wood are property of all’ and insisting that what is taken from the earth is their prescriptive right, Sikep communities exhibit a type of Javanese socialism that defends local subsistence rights. This way of viewing *Sikep* communities indeed works contrary to both the colonial system and the post-colonial system’s natural resource management.

Conflict on natural resource management in the Kendeng Mountains first arose when PT. Semen Gresik decided to build their new factory in southern Pati. *Sedulur Sikep* as peasants who live in the area will inevitably be impacted by any new industrial activities. Realizing that the consequences are also long-term, they took this opportunity to demand resource management as part of their economic and cultural capital. Their concern over the exploitation of the Kendeng Mountains’ by the capitalistic cement industry became a turning point for them to start the anti-cement movement and collaborate with their fellow non-Sikep neighbors. Later, this movement became a space for the *Sedulur Sikep* to popularize their concepts of environmental protection and resource management, and to defend their freedom from external authority, in this case the government allied with business.

Although their initial rejection of the cement industry started in Sukolilo-Pati, the movement has spread out to other districts and regencies that are threatened by big cement companies. Thus, since the movement has grown and extended to other regions, the numbers of local non-Sikep farmers joining and dominating the movement has also grown. However, despite the varied backgrounds of people who have joined JMPPK, this anti-cement movement’s narrative is still perceived as the movement of the *Sedulur Sikep*. Sikep traits are strongly present within the movement, especially in continuing the ‘battle’ of late Samin Surosentiko to oppose any threat to their identity as Javanese peasants, who should be free from any external authority interference. That said, the two prominent figures of Sikep, Gunarti and Gunretno, have said that the movement is for everyone who cares about the Kendeng mountains.

Over the years, the victorious case of the *Sedulur Sikep* revoking PT. Semen Indonesia’s plans in Sukolilo – Pati in 2009 by challenging the company’s environmental permit and the EIA process through court trials has inspired people from neighboring areas to take the same action to challenge incoming cement companies. Non-*Sikep* villagers who

oppose the industry in District Kayen and Tambakromo, Pati and Tegaldowo in Rembang decided to ‘ask’ for *Sedulur Sikep*’s assistance in mobilizing to protect the Kendeng Mountains in their respective area. The anti-cement movement of JMPPK considers itself as a single entity. JMPPK has further pledged to reject any cement industries that intend to exploit the Kendeng Mountains, regardless of where it lies within the district’s or regency’s administrative borders.

The active involvement of *Sedulur Sikep* within the recent case of anti-cement movement has given them the opportunity to induct Samin beliefs regarding the Kendeng Mountains to everyone who have joined the movement. The most prominent element within the narratives of the Kendeng mountains that is closely related to *Sedulur Sikep*’s identity is the spread of its ideological roots of common resource governance that should be given to the people in all respects, without any interference from authority - as argued by Kahin (1955, pp. 43-44):

“[...] the desire of the peasant to be left free to lead their own lives unmolested by government interference and to return to a communalistic social organization based upon economic equality of individuals and upon possession of the land and its products of common (sic)”

Sedulur Sikep believed that common resources should be managed based on equality of every individual who benefits from its possession and products in common, therefore it should be freed from any capitalization that only gives exclusive access to a certain powerful actor, and leaves others out. At this point, through the Kendeng Mountains, the *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati inspected their traits of Sikep, which are prone to being exposed to adaptation and evolution. Nevertheless, what the *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati are trying to avoid are attempts at adaptation and evolution that could incorporate them into the authority-propagated socio-economic order, such as by being subjected to a notion of development driven by the exploitative cement industry and shifting their farmers’ lives into industrialization-based livelihoods.

6 Resistance and Anti-cement: Sikep Identity at a crossroads

*“Peasants are the earth’s protectors. We do everything to maintain this tradition.
When I pray, I speak to the earth – in it, all forces are joined.” - Gunarti*

Chapter 6 analyses and discusses the resistance in rejecting cement companies in the Kendeng Mountains. Building on previous chapters that discuss Sedulur Sikep communities in the Kendeng Mountains, this chapter will connect the interests of the Sikep with those of other actors, both in terms of assigning significance to the Kendeng mountains and defining the Sikep identity. The chapter begins with why the proposed cement agenda in the Kendeng mountains is being challenged by the local community. The chapter proceeds with a discussion on the anti-cement resistance in the Kendeng mountains that was initiated by a group of *Sedulur Sikep* in Sukolilo-Pati. The chapter then turns to the conflict within various Sikep communities in perceiving the anti-cement movement. Finally, the chapter discusses the fourth objective of this research by analyzing Sedulur Sikep’s anti-cement activism and movement strategies in re-gaining and re-shaping their identity, as well as their relationship with other Sikep communities and other related actors in negotiating their identity.

6.1 The Cement Industry in the Kendeng Mountains: An Opposed Agenda

6.1.1 The Beginning of the Cement Agenda in the Kendeng Mountains

As the foregoing chapters have described, the cement agenda in the Kendeng mountains first emerged when Indonesia’s biggest cement manufacturer and state-owned enterprise expanded its business to Sukolilo, Pati. The industry intended to exploit 1,432 ha, at the Kendeng mountains to extract limestone for cement production. With a capacity of 2.5 million tons of cement per year, the incoming cement industry seemed like a great opportunity for both government and corporate interests, especially through its contribution to the development agenda via its expected positive effects on the local economy from job creation and increased revenue (Crosby, 2013). However, nobody

had anticipated such a strong resistance from farmers, who later invited some environmentalists (e.g. ENGOs, artists, academics) to join their cause.

When the construction of the cement industry was first announced in 2005 and continued with an aggressive bid for land in 2006, the local authorities and the Semen representatives refused to disclose further information about the plan. Farmers from the affected areas were joined by a citizens' initiative under the name Network of People Who Care for Kendeng Mountain – JMPPK. Over the following two years, the campaign against the cement industry's plan was steadily developing. By March 2008, JMPPK through Desantara built their network headquarters at Kedumulyo – Sukolilo, which consisted of a large wooden house in traditional Javanese-style and would later be known as 'Omah Kendeng'.⁴⁷

Omah Kendeng further became an organizational base for JMPPK, as well as a dissemination point for exchanging information about the Kendeng mountains, public film screenings, discussions, and other activities related to the anti-cement movement. These activities were mostly sponsored or organized by community groups and organizations that support JMPPK and the broader anti-cement movement, such as ATOS (Alliance of People Against Cement), SPP (Union of Pati Farmers), FMPL (Forum of People Who Care About the Environment), JP2L (Network of Women Who Care about the Environment), KPPL Simbar Wareh, and KOPLINK (Community Who Cares About the Environment), the NGOs Desantara, WALHI (Indonesian Environment Forum), and then later Amnesty International, also became involved in the campaign.

In mid-2009, following a series of long and exhausting courts battles challenging the cement companies' environmental licenses and the EIA process, the constitutional court favored the people's request to annul the Semen Gresik plan in Sukolilo. JMPPK's

⁴⁷ *Omah Kendeng* which translates as House of Kendeng, is a Javanese type of house with a large hall as the main part of the building. This house was built by the Desantara Foundation during their intensive period working with Sedulur Sikep and the local community in Sukolilo, Pati. This house now became the center for Sedulur Sikep to have their activities, such as Monday School for Sedulur Sikep children to learn how to read, count, and write both in Indonesian script (Latin) and Javanese scripts (*Aksara Jawa* known as *Hanacaraka*), as well as learn to play Javanese music instruments (*gamelan*) and Javanese songs and poets (*nembang*). Since the case of anti-cement movement, meetings and most of activities related to the movements also centralized in this place. The building also functioned as hospitality house where guests and researchers received and welcomed in Omah Kendeng.

victory was the first in Indonesian history of social movements: The citizens prevailed over a large corporation that had full support of the government (Keller & Klute, 2016).

However, in 2010, in response to the defeat, the provincial government changed the status of the karstic Kendeng mountains region by allowing as much as 5,000 ha of its territory to be used for mining and industrial activities. An activist from Desantara argued that this move violated national laws that designate the karstic regions as protected geological zones. Accordingly, in 2012, PT. Semen Indonesia planned to build new cement factories in another regency east of Pati. During the same year, a private company called Indocement, through its subsidiary PT Sahabat Mulia Sakti – PT. SMS, also planned to build an industrial plant-site in the district of Kayen and Tambakromo, east of Sukolilo - Pati, and intended to exploit the other corner of the Kendeng mountain range.

Anti-cement conflict re-appeared and re-gained public attention in 2014, after a clash between villagers and the state apparatus in Rembang. This conflict continued with JMPPK setting up a protest camp in front of the entrance to the construction site of the PT. Semen Indonesia factory. Using the same strategy they used to defeat PT. Semen Gresik (PT. Semen Indonesia) in 2009, JMPPK criticized the company's environmental license and EIA reports. JMPPK argues that local population had not been sufficiently included in making the assessments, thus the company's reports contained incorrect information on the Kendeng mountains.

In addition to the legal process through court trials, this particular case against the cement industries was also brought up to national level by JMPPK through protests in front of presidential palace⁴⁸. This protest resulted in a presidential order to delay the construction of PT. Semen Indonesia in Rembang and required a Strategic Environmental Assessment (*Kajian Lingkungan Hidup Strategis* - KLHS) that included numerous departments as well as local communities. However the construction of the factory in Rembang continued without official approval, and in January 2017, the

⁴⁸ One of the most well-known protests was involving theatrical action by putting the feet of 9 women from surrounding villages in Kendeng in cements dough, as symbolization of their life as farmer is being shackled by cement industries. These women then labeled as 'Kartini of Kendeng', which the protest successfully catch both public and the president's attention. Thus the movement's narratives then become even stronger since that moment of acknowledgement by the president.

Governor of Central Java issued a new permit for PT. Semen Indonesia in Rembang by arguing that the company had provided new EIA reports which allowed them to continue their industrial activities, even though the KLHS ordered by the President continued to be in force until April 2017.

The arrival of the cement agenda in the Kendeng mountains cannot be discussed without including the anti-cement movement. The anti-cement movement was a reactive movement in the face of incoming cement companies in several regencies located around the Kendeng mountains. Even though most of the companies have not yet arrived at their target locations, JMPPK, to build their narratives on the cement agenda, started to build its own network of villagers, community groups, and other organizations to fight for the freedom of the Kendeng mountains from any exploitation by cement companies. However, because the key players with the most decision-making power over the cement industry are bodies of government – be it the local governments, provincial governments, or regencial administrations – a network of villagers from the affected areas have been said to not be strong enough to cancel the plans. Therefore, JMPPK's activities also rely on '*srawung*' (see section 6.2) to spread and reach out to surrounding villages and raise awareness about the negative impact of the cement industries. Notably, the *Sedulur Sikep* became actively and prominently involved in *srawung*, especially in highlighting the socio-cultural and educational importance of the Kendeng mountains.

6.1.2 Challenging the Environmental Permit Process

Indonesia has decentralized its mineral licensing process to sub-national governments, where the procedures should assess the potential environmental, social, and economic impact in a respective area, and are thus able to inform decisions that will bring greater protection to and greater benefit for the local population (Venugopal, 2014). As such, prior to granting permits and licenses to companies, communities should have the right to give or withhold consent, and these rights must be respected by companies and authorities alike. Venugopal (2014) also argues that this process should, in theory, increase the accountability of decision-makers toward citizens. In practice, however, the decentralized licensing system in the mining sector has induced subnational governments to go to extremes in exercising their 'given' power for managing mining

sectors (Global Investment Center, 2015, p. 120). Such power has led the decision-making process to often favor mere increases local revenues. In addition, the interests of the elites can hijack the decision-making process within the subnational government mining system. This fact illustrates how ‘value-chains’ in natural resource management actually ignore the interests and concerns of the impacted local communities by lessening their role during the decision-making process.

To examine the process of granting licenses to companies, there are economic, social, and ecological-environmental elements that need to be assessed. The assessment of these three classes of elements is crucial for the industry’s EIA reports, as these elements will raise concerns for the future of local community. The EIA process is necessary for companies to obtain an environmental permit from the government. Since their inception, the process of EIA requires people’s active participation. People’s active involvement is important to be taken into account, as the land and surrounding environment to be used for industrial sites are often found to play an important role in the local community. The land’s role usually goes beyond merely economic capital and extends to people’s socio-cultural traits. The current EIA process, however, which is regulated under Ministerial Environmental Regulation No. 8/2013 regarding environmental permits, is still neglecting local wisdom on natural resource governance, such as environmental conservation promoted by local people, such as *Sedulur Sikep* populating the Kendeng mountains.

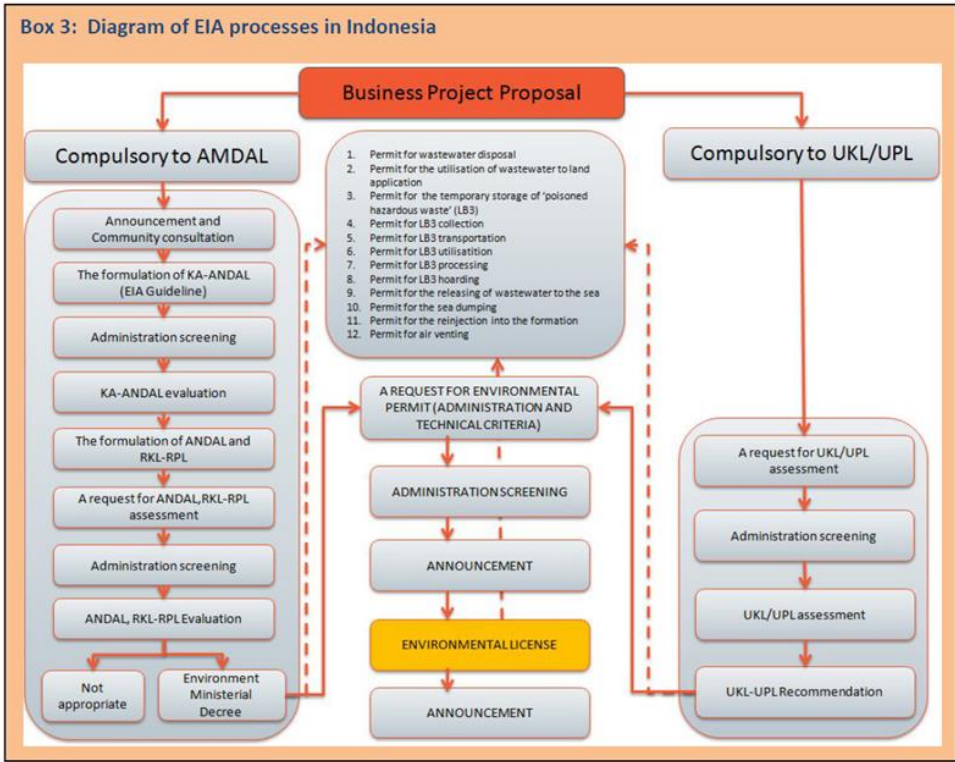


Figure 6 Diagram of EIA Processes in Indonesia (Source: Devi & Prayogo, 2013)

As shown in the diagram above, in the initial process of EIAs, a business project with significant impacts is obliged to conduct an EIA (AMDAL – *Analisis Mengenai Dampak Lingkungan*). The first step in the process is the announcement of the project and community consultations, both of which are mandatory in order for the project to continue the process until the issuance of an environmental permit. In addition to that, through the Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) mechanism, the authority is also presumed to deliver clear and transparent information regarding both positive and negative impacts of the exploitative cement industry. This mechanism then concludes the initial step of community consultation.

The prerequisite study EIA (AMDAL) is supposed to minimize consequences by the industry. Nevertheless, the EIA Assessment Commission (KPA – *Komisi Penilai AMDAL*) has often been found to be a highly politicized decision-making body, formed by authorities and comprising of carefully-selected representatives of governments, [academic] experts, NGOs, and other related stakeholders. The KPA, in many cases, only relates to scientific discourse while overlooking local wisdom and people’s expertise and knowledge. The result is an absence of the local community’s active involvement throughout the process. The complex nature of administrative activities

within Indonesian mining industries can sometimes worsen the situation by putting aside the important aspects of benefits, risks, and impacts on industrial activities that, again, should be scrutinized on EIA reports.

In relation to the lack of participation from local communities, the anti-cement group JMPPK managed to challenge PT. Semen Indonesia's exploration permit through a number of court trials that led them to win their case. One deciding factor in the court's judges decision to favor the anti-cement group's charges was the incompatibility of industrial site-plant with the regional spatial plan that had previously allocated the land for agriculture and tourism purposes. In this case, PT. Semen Indonesia's Corporate secretary claimed class action lawsuit received little contestation from PT. Semen Indonesia, who were no longer interested in the area and had found a better alternative location. In the following years, the victorious narratives of JMPPK against PT. Semen Gresik in Sukolilo-Pati became a milestone for this anti-cement group to assist villagers from two other areas in repelling the incoming cement companies that wanted to exploit other parts of Kendeng. In addition to the problematic issue of environmental conservation, JMPPK was also able to expose several legal frauds to prove the company's violations during process of being granted mining licenses by the sub-national government.

To respond to such loopholes, JMPPK and its networks further emphasized that the EIAs provided by companies are poorly carried out and may be largely useless due to:

- The absence of attributing economic values to environmental, economy, social, and cultural impacts arising from the presence of such industrial activities;
- The EIA reports being only a formality that every company should fulfill, without adequate law enforcement; and
- The frequent exclusion of all possible environmental impacts that may occur due to industrial activities.

Therefore, together with ENGOs and academia, JMPPK has been actively doing research on industrial impact, in particularly the negative consequences that are too-often neglected in EIA reports.

To illustrate, in Kayen and Tambakromo - Pati, PT. SMS (a subsidiary of Indocement - Heidelberg) sought to exploit as much as 2,025 ha of karst/limestone material and 663

ha of clay, of which most was to be exploited from people's agricultural lands and housing areas (JMPPK, 2015). The plan has not yet come to realization, as the company has not yet bought any land for this project. Building on this, JMPPK has created reports based on economic valuations for a number of obvious impacts that have been excluded in the EIA report provided by cement companies, and highlighted some issues as follows (my translation):

1. Impacts on the use of resources: Changes to the productivity of the means of production, both in the agricultural and fishing sectors.
2. Impacts on people's social and cultural elements: Resettlement and/or migration, loss of livelihood, and the spirit of togetherness within the community; and
3. Impacts on the surrounding environment and ecosystem: The disappearance of water springs, eroded karst – limestone, air pollution, water pollution, land pollution, and noise pollution.

These issues were either not stated or not emphasized in the EIA reports due to the fact that the EIA is treated as a mere administrative requirement for mining concessions and environment license. Thus, the possible negative impact on the environment, the economy, and the socio-cultural elements of the local communities are often overlooked, which leads to further conflicts between communities and authorities. This is often the result of biased environmental decision-making, where in many cases the actions of 'local elites or leaders' use the presence of big industries for their specific political agenda and have vested interests.

6.1.3 Multidimensional Impacts on the Development of the Industry

In addition to conflicts between the government-business alliance and the local communities, conflict within local communities also may occur. Such horizontal conflicts usually occur due to the segmentation of the local communities into those who are in favor and those who are against the cement agenda. Farmers or landowners who oppose the agenda are often forced to sell their land at a cheap rate under intimidation from village officials. This action by village officials upsets the anti-cement group, especially the *Sedulur Sikep* by virtue of their teachings of individual freedom and living without any form of coercion or violence. The anti-cement groups then respond to such intimidation by confronting the village officials, prompting the village officials

to become enraged and further intimidate anti-cement villagers. Due to their 'authoritative power', village officials often accuse the anti-cement group for causing conflict and violence, sometimes even leading to the imprisonment of some high-profile anti-cement villagers⁴⁹.

During a recent case in Tambakromo and Kayen, Pati, this process of intimidation has been said to worsen under the presence of some speculators who aggressively buy people's land located within the area of the future site-plan of the cement industry. These speculators use soft intimidation by mentioning the president's name and state's development program, in hopes of 'persuading' villagers to sell their land at medium-normal rates. Reflecting that similar conditions happened to PT. Semen Indonesia, the corporate secretary claimed that such action by speculators was beyond the companies' control, as speculators will re-sell the newly-purchased land to companies at a much higher rate, exceeding the company's budget for land purchase.

The prolonged conflict between villagers is further transformed into another level of oppositional movement. Division among villagers according to those pro and contra the cement industry becomes political action during elections for the heads of villages. Each group nominates its own champion to compete in election. Naturally, each candidate is someone who promotes their respective group's interests, either by supporting or rejecting industrial development of big cement companies. In Sukolilo and two other nearby villages, the election winners are those who get support from anti-cement groups and *Sedulur Sikep* communities. Therefore, recently, the relationship between village officials and the *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati has been improving, with the *Sedulur Sikep* often participating in village activities.

Emphasizing the *Sedulur Sikep*'s environmental idealism in the spirit of the anti-cement movement of JMPPK, environmental issues are given particular concern, even

⁴⁹ [Sukolilo anti-cement conflict] In January 22, 2009, there was a protest by villagers where six of PT. Semen Indonesia cars got blocked by protesters, and abduct company's officials riding the cars. Villagers from Sukolilo and Kayen then sought explanation from these company's officials and head villagers who were trying to rescue them, regarding acquisition of village's common land (*tanah bengkok*). However, police officers came and acted repressively and violently consequencing several villagers found injured, some houses were damaged, and 9 people got arrested on charges of provocation and aggravating. They are; [Sudarto, Kamsi, Sunarto, and Zainul] villagers from Kedumulyo, [Mualim and Sutikno] villagers from Sukolilo, [Wanto] Villager from Galiran, [Gunarto] a villager from Kaliyoso-Kudus, and a member of *Sedulur Sikep*, and [Sukarman] Villager from Jimbaran - Kayen.

underlying other potential consequences. Hence, with the additional knowledge acquired from their newly-established network of anti-cement ENGOs and academia, the *Sedulur Sikep* through JMPPK have successfully promoted these environmental concerns to their peers and raised awareness about exploitative industrial activities in the Kendeng mountains.

Land degradation has also received much attention from the *Sedulur Sikep* and other villagers who have refused to sell their land for industrial use. As their land is their source of livelihood and, importantly, a core part of the *Sedulur Sikep* identity, land degradation would automatically threaten their existing peasant tradition. Thus, the cement industry's activities and their chemical compound waste will degrade the soil quality, causing changes to crop productivity. Meanwhile, air pollution in form of dust, gas, smoke, and other chemical particles that are released into the atmosphere will disrupt human health, in addition to crops and animal productivities. Moreover, noise and sound pollution is rejected by most of villagers, based on one *Sedulur Sikep* elder in Sukolilo who argued that such noise and sound pollution from heavy industrial transportation is a sign of disrespect and a violation of people's freedom. He gave as an example the use of explosive materials causing both air pollution (from dust) and noise pollution. Further, he argued that experts who perform environmental studies for the company should look thoroughly by prolonging their stays at the villages, so that they can feel and experience all of the disruptions and pollutions caused by industrial activities as do the local villagers⁵⁰.

As was previously mentioned, the cement industry will affect four elements of environment –water, land, air, and sound/noise – based on data gathered on the field that shows that both *Sedulur Sikep* and non-Sikep villagers are aware of these impacts. The impacts of greatest concern to the villagers, most of whom are farmers, is the disruption to water springs that may eventually decrease the water quality. Water is regarded as a crucial element for human life, both for agricultural irrigation and for household needs. Obviously, water sourced from springs found underneath the Kendeng will be disrupted once the mountains are massively exploited, while liquid waste from the industrial activities running into the stream will worsen the water pollution.

⁵⁰ Based on interview with Icuk Bamban, an elderly figure of *Sedulur Sikep* in Sukolilo-Pati.

Polluted water will inevitably affect villagers' agricultural crops and soil fertility, as well as people's health condition through their own water consumption. Exploitative activities on the Kendeng mountains also expose the land to erosion, for example in the case of deforestation in the upland area, leaving villages in lower regions at greater risk of flooding during the rainy season. Sukolilo itself has already been hit by a massive flashflood in 2015 due to artisanal mining activities in several spots around Kendeng. Hence, the presence of big industrial activities will inevitably worsen the environmental condition of this area.

6.2 Sikep's Traits within the Anti-cement Agenda

In order to discuss JMPPK's anti-cement movement, it is necessary to first examine the Sikep perception toward the cement industry. From there, the strategies in JMPPK's movement can be more easily understood, insofar as the movement has, to a certain extent, been 'intercepted' by prominent Sikep figures. All of my informants said that *Sedulur Sikep* are not against the use of cement and concrete itself, as they also need it in their everyday lives, but rather, they are mainly against the exploitation of the Kendeng mountains. This is rooted in their idealism that Java, particularly Central Java, should be dominated by agricultural sectors, and that farmers are important to the island's development.

However, the differing concepts of welfare and development between the anti-cement farmers and the government-business alliance play a significant role in the ongoing conflict over resource management in the Kendeng mountains. While government and business push the idea that economic development can improve people's livelihoods, the *Sedulur Sikep* argue that their livelihoods from tilling the land are enough for them. They also argue that the government's standard for defining economic wellbeing is not applicable to them, since they have always earned sufficient income from their agricultural activities. The desire to base their lives on farming is strong among villagers who support and have joined JMPPK, and this desire is further enhanced by Sikep peasant traits.

The Sikep narratives that permeate within anti-cement groups are based on the belief that earth (and everything on it) was created by 'god' to fulfill human necessities. They

are taught to embrace the earth's resources and avoid taking them for granted, to only take and use based on current needs and without harming the surrounding environment nor interfering with the environments of others. However, the recent capitalization of common resources, which has either limited or outright closed access to the Kendeng mountains, has 'awakened' *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati to the realization that being only farmers is not enough to keep their land and surrounding environment safe. Therefore, environmental quality has become a critical issue for *Sedulur Sikep*, not only for the continuity of the Sikep peasant tradition, but also for everybody else whose life relies on land and water availability.

Built upon the subconscious *Sedulur Sikep* concept of 'Javanese peasant socialism', the anti-cement group has acknowledged that the Kendeng mountains should belong to everyone, and shall not be used for one's private benefit. Thus, it is also everyone's responsibility to keep it sustainable. A Sikep elder in Sukolilo stated that:

"From the first, the Kendeng mountains have always belonged to everyone. Not only belong to people in Pati, but also belong to people of Jakarta, all Javanese, and essentially had it belonged to everyone. Likewise, the earth and everything on it also belongs to us (Sedulur Sikep, Javanese, and everyone else.). Thus, it is our responsibility to keep it sustain"

- Icuk Bamban, an elderly figure of *Sedulur Sikep* in Bombong, Sukolilo-Pati

Therefore, as it is perceived by *Sedulur Sikep* that every part of the earth is connected without being limited by the administrative borders of villages, districts, or even regencies, JMPPK considers the Kendeng mountains which stretch across five regencies as one single entity. Thus, this anti-cement group then pledges to keep away any exploitation attempt to the Kendeng mountains, particularly from big capitalistic industries such as cement companies.

The anti-cement movement of JMPPK did indeed include prominent *Sedulur Sikep* figures, including Gunretno and Gunarti during its initial formation. Gunretno himself, with his activist background, has contributed his network of Farmers' Union of Pati (SPP) to strengthen the movement. Meanwhile Gunarti, with her strong spirituality toward Mother Earth, has attracted women to be more actively involved in the movement and stand up for their resources of life: Water and land. Thanks to the active involvement of others figures, both Sikep and non-Sikep alike, through Gunretno and Gunarti's influences, the anti-cement movement had valued and applied the notions of

Sikep within the movement's norms, idealism, and more importantly its strategies. Hence, to a certain extent, the movement is based largely on Javanese philosophy marked with Sikep features.

Further, with its 'Javanese-style' of movement, JMPPK became an inclusive space for anyone by accommodating other's values, especially the religious beliefs of its members. The movement has therefore spread throughout the region around Kendeng without difficulty. Based on conducted observations and interviews, this study scrutinizes the elements of JMPPK's movement to identify the movement's Javanese-Sikep traits. The elements listed below will provide insight on how the movement incorporates Sikep traits into the broader movement's agenda, especially those related to spirituality, perceiving external authority, consciousness of the rights to nature or common-resource management, and communities' 'social intercourse'. These elements are as follows:

Organizational pattern. The anti-cement movement has adapted the Sikep concept of a centered leader within a messianic movement. Similar to the case with Samin Surosentiko, both Gunretno and Gunarti were appointed as informal leaders in a unanimous decision by villagers in the anti-cement movement. Even though JMPPK is a form of people's network that has no hierarchical structure, both of these individuals have a 'special place' within the movement, particularly in increasing membership in the movement, as well as spreading the movement through the Javanese tradition of *srawung*, a type of informal chit-chat among Javanese villagers. The movement's pattern of organization is still strongly attached to the *Sedulur Sikep* way of organizing their own communities and movements. By having a centralized informal figure, Sikep communities manage to have a leader-like character who supposedly maintains the values, spirit, and fidelity of the followers. Much like Samin and his successors' millenarianistic role, Gunretno and Gunarti have become anti-cement idols who, to some degree, are responsible for maintaining the movement's values, idealism, and strategies, the latter of which are known for being passive and rather distinct. In order to keep themselves 'invisible', as part of Sikep principles, they choose some prominent non-Sikep villagers, members of JMPPK, to be the 'new idols' who are trained and promoted by the two Sikep figureheads to lead and deliver the movement's messages throughout JMPPK's activities. These non-Sikep figures appear in most mainstream

media, which also serves as proof that the anti-cement movement is actually a movement for anyone who wants to protect the Kendeng mountains, not just for *Sedulur Sikep* or farmers in Pati.

However, based on field findings, observations, and gathered media coverage, both Gunarti and Gunretno have significantly shaped the entire movement, as the ‘new idol’ is so closely attached to both of them that they would always wait for approval from either Gunretno or Gunarti before initiating or executing certain anti-cement activities.

One prominent female activist from Tambakromo-Pati claimed that:

”[...]At first I did not really know about Sikep people like Gunretno and Gunarti, but after a few meetings with them, I found out that Sikep people are indeed very sincere. Then I found myself interested in joining Gunretno and Gunarti, since I also want to protect my own land and the surrounding environment. But I was questioning myself whether I can follow their path in protecting the environment, finally, little by little I can understand (their movement’s values) then I just follow it. I also understood that despite having different religious backgrounds, both Sikep and non-Sikep people can work side by side [...]”

”[...] with regards to the action of cementing our feet (in front of presidential place), the idea came when I was in a car with Gunretno, he was asking me whether I was willing to do an action that is a bit extreme but effective, and I agreed right away [...]”

- Giyem, a female activist from Tambakromo-Pati, also known as one of the members of ‘Nine Kartini of Kendeng’

Method of Operations. As previously mentioned, the Sikep movement uses non-conventional methods to communicate its opposition to the cement industry.

Contemporary Sikep communities, especially those who are involved in anti-cement activities, are said to perpetuate the values of the colonial-era Samin movement. Thus, their ‘resistance identity’ for contemporary issues around land exploitation by capitalistic cement industries is also centered around non-violent tactics. Anti-cement groups’ operation methods start by recruiting people to join, or at least support, the movement through the Javanese *srawung*, often by traveling to other hamlets or villages. Initially, Gunretno, Gunarti, and a few other initiators of the anti-cement group travelled from one neighborhood to another to spread the message of environmental conservation, land and water degradation, and future sustainability. They managed to raise other villagers’ concerns regarding the negative impact that future generations will face. Through this way of approaching people, the movement has not only gained

followers and supporters, but also rendered the values of mainstreaming environmental protection.

One of the movement's initiators claimed that casual conversations with other farmers during their work in the rice-fields were more effective in gathering supporters. This is because partially due to farmers tending to have the same interests regarding the sustainability of land, water, and other elements of the environment, and partially due to the travel and talk (*srawung*) performed during their agricultural/farming activities, where farmers tend to build stronger connections with the land and Mother Earth. Door-to-door *srawung* by visiting neighbors' houses was also carried out, however, it was more effective when done as informal gatherings in the evenings, when most villagers have their free time. Attended by mostly male villagers, this way of gaining supporters and members for the anti-cement movement perpetuated the way Samin Surosentiko gathered his followers and did his preaching. In order to rapidly multiply the number of people joining the movement, JMPPK also utilized the 'snowball' method, where recruited villagers were responsible for re-delivering the movement's messages to their neighbors.

Target Movement, Both the colonial's Sikep movement and today's contemporary anti-cement movement, which may be considered an adaptation of Sikep teachings, correspondingly 'attack' symbols of power and authority. During the colonial era, the target was very clear: The taxes and forest regulations imposed by the Dutch government officials. Nowadays, *Sedulur Sikep* communities in Pati and Kudus, where the anti-cement group initiated, target all entities that intend to exploit and capitalize on the Kendeng mountains. However, in response to such a statement, the *Sedulur Sikep* who are involved in the anti-cement group JMPPK clarified that their target is not the development agenda or infrastructure-based development promoted by the president, but rather to maintain their prescriptive rights to the Kendeng mountains as a common resource where, as perpetuated by Sikep beliefs, everyone should have equal access to and benefit from its products. Accordingly, given the involvement of business allied with government in the cement agenda in the Kendeng mountains, *Sedulur Sikep* use the 'closure' of common resources by authorities to instigate an opposition movement.

Media of the Movement. Turning next to the types of media that both the colonial-era Sikep movement and the recent Sikep-inspired anti-cement movement use were

concerned with common resource governance based on the notion of human-earth relationship. Due to the highly political and complex issue of the cement industry, both Gunarti and Gunretno are lessening their focus on some of the principles of Sikep teachings. In this way, they can attract more people to support and join the movement regardless of their cultural, social, and spiritual beliefs. Therefore, this movement being rather inclusive, in a way that JMPPK do not specify who could join or support the movement, as long as the same values are shared among them.

In order to accommodate most of its members' values and beliefs, the movement has often held events and activities during a particular religious celebration, in which its members commonly celebrate or perform based on their cultural, social, and spiritual beliefs. Most of the members are subject to the Moslem tradition. Therefore, activities performed by JMPPK, especially those involving mass gatherings, are usually held as part of certain Islamic celebrations. Despite the pivotal role of the *Sedulur Sikep* within the movement, JMPPK manages to maintain its members' loyalty through its adaptation to Islamic traditions. Furthermore, the use of religious values in the movement's media also becomes an effective way to spread and popularize the notion of environmental sustainability in opposition to the cement industry. The fact that some well-known Islamic elders in the area have also become supporters of the movement, even if only spiritually, demonstrates that this anti-cement movement has scaled up its narratives in resisting the capitalistic cement industries into a movement about protecting what God has given to humans for today and for future generations.

6.3 Conflict within the Sikep Community regarding the Cement Agenda

In relation to the *Sedulur Sikep*'s response to the exploitation of Kendeng that has led to resource closure, Sikep activists have claimed that this issue is their chance to scrutinize *Sedulur Sikep*'s assertiveness in conserving their idealism as true Samin Surosentiko followers who observe Sikep teachings. As discussed in Chapter 4, Samin Surosentiko's successors, by their own personal preferences in interpreting Sikep teachings, had spread their own interpretations of the teachings and movement to different teak-forested areas. As a result, these Sikep communities practice their Sikep traits with varying levels of adherence. These differences in observing Sikep teachings are then

compounded by the various forms in which local governments interact with Sikep communities in their respective area and by the corresponding response by the affected Sikep communities.

These variations across *Sedulur Sikep* communities are linked to different perceptions of the anti-cement movement, especially with regards to the movement's traits in relation to Sikep teachings. The role of Sikep teachings in the anti-cement movement is perceived differently by different Sikep communities. The discussion below will examine the anti-cement activism perceived by each *Sedulur Sikep* community in relation to their self image as being the true followers of the original Samin Surosentiko.

6.3.1 Sikep activism in Sukolilo-Pati

As previously mentioned, the *Sedulur Sikep*'s settlement in Pati is concentrated in the Sukolilo district, with most members residing in two villages in particular: Sukolilo and Wotan. These two Sikep communities used to have one *botoh*, Mbah Tarno. During his life, he supported the rejection of the cement industry in Pati from 2005-2009. After Mbah Tarno passed away in 2009, right before the Supreme Court favored people's lawsuit over PT. Semen Indonesia, there was no agreement regarding who would replace Mbah Tarno as *botoh*. As a result, when I asked who the community's elder is, they would answer with: "*kabeh uwong iku yo wis tuo dewe-dewe*" (Everyone will be getting old by him/herself), which means that everyone is elderly for themselves.

There are elders in every *Sedulur Sikep* family, thus their roles are limited to family affairs. For issues that go beyond family matters, the elders gather in an egalitarian discussion. Regarding the anti-cement movement's activities, the Sikep communities in Pati are fractioned, having reached no consensus on a single voice for how Sikep communities should respond to the ongoing anti-cement activism.

For the *Sedulur Sikep* who are actively involved in the anti-cement movement, their activism is perceived as a 'wake-up call' for all peasant *Sedulur Sikep* to uphold and respect the environment. These *Sedulur Sikep* also claim to be continuing what Mbah Tarno had told them – that is, to protect the island of Java from industrial exploitation. On the other side, for other *Sedulur Sikep*, the notions of development and exploitation of the Kendeng mountains are perceived as issues that are neither advantageous nor

disadvantageous for the *Sedulur Sikep* themselves. Therefore, these group of *Sedulur Sikep* only want to keep the neutrality by opting neither pro or contra toward the cement industry, as long as the industry does not interfere in their lives.

Despite the anti-cement activism is being questioned by several elders who live in Sukolilo-Pati. Received support from the *Sikep botoh* in Kudus; Gunarti and Gunretno's father, they both have dedicated themselves to assist the anti-cement group in Kayen-Tambakromo, as well as those in the more distant Rembang Regency, by integrating them into JMPPK. Gunretno, who happened to be Mbah Tarno's son-in-law, has played a lead role in the anti-cement movement. Together with Gunarti, they have succeeded in propelling and uniting farmers, women, activists, youth, as well as attracting religious-based figures from surrounding areas to join and support the anti-cement movement.

Therefore, the discrepancy in the *Sedulur Sikep*'s opinions on the best way to conserve and perpetuate the 'real' *Sikep* teachings has become a crucial point in identifying and perceiving *Sedulur Sikep* who live in different areas. Furthermore, the difference in how *Sikep* teachings are perceived emphasizes two things: First, their views on resource governance, and second, their recognition of authority. However, without overlooking the element of adaptation to the current social and political order, the puritan Javanese peasantry that are bound to land sustainability and water availability must be underlined in order to understand how these *Sedulur Sikep* define their own identity.

6.3.2 *Sedulur Sikep* Kudus and Randublatung-Blora: Strengthening the Movement

Sedulur Sikep strongly suggests an endogamous marriage system in which they are only allowed to choose a partner within the *Sedulur Sikep* community, either with those who live in the same hamlet or from a different *Sikep* hamlet. Surely the relationship between *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati and Kudus is built upon the marriage relations of their members, where families from both places are related to each other. Additionally, due to the current anti-cement movement started by the Sukolilo case in 2005-2009, the relationship between the *Sedulur Sikep* communities in these two areas are getting stronger.

Since the first anti-cement movement in Sukolilo, many *Sedulur Sikep* in Kudus were found to be actively involved within the movement. That anti-cement movement was initiated and propagated by the children of the *Sedulur Sikep's botoh* in Kudus. There are several reasons⁵¹ why the *Sedulur Sikep* in Kudus believe it is important to support the anti-cement movement, namely:

- The need for a sustainable and peaceful environment to have descent livelihoods as human beings.
- The crucial role of farmers as food's growers to meet the needs of the people.
- The need for (sustainable) land for the future generations, just like how they inherited the land from their predecessors and it must be preserved sustainably.
- The fear of unpredicted risks and impacts caused by major exploitations from cement companies that can reach their living area in Kudus.
- The need to keep away all kinds of pollution to maintain good health so that their role as humans will remain in a good state

Similar to those in Pati, the *Sedulur Sikep* Kudus also claim to be upholding their peasant identity by keeping their livelihoods as farmers. Because some of their member's farmland is located in Sukolilo and Wotan – Pati, an area which could be affected by the cement industry, the *Sedulur Sikep* in Kudus are inevitably bound to the anti-cement movement due to their consciousness on land, resources, and the vital role of the environment in conserving their peasantry.

Their views on land availability, water availability, and resource access were found to be based on the same idealism as their *Sedulur Sikep* counterparts in Pati – specifically, that resources must be conserved sustainably to meet both today's needs and those of future generations. Therefore, the Sikep-inspired anti-cement movement's values are also supported by the *Sedulur Sikep* in Kudus, as mentioned before that they also actively involved during anti-cement movement in the Sukolilo case. One *Sedulur Sikep* member in Kudus said that they used *srawung* to gather support and spread the notion of conserving the Kendeng mountains, as well as to raise awareness of the long-term negative effects of the cement industry for the Kendeng mountains and the surrounding environment. Their *srawung* strategies also involve informal chats among neighbors at

⁵¹ Summarized from interviewing several *Sedulur Sikep* in Kudus: two elders, one *Botoh*, and one formerly active member of the anti-cement movement. All were held in the same day of 23 August 2016

one's house or during the days' working on the farm fields, and even during the Sukolilo anti-cement movement. These activities were facilitated by their own farmers' group called *Rakyat Peduli Lingkungan* (RAPEL - People Care about the Environment), whose members are mostly *Sedulur Sikep* in Kudus.

It was previously mentioned that Samin teachings promote individual freedom and an avoidance of interfering in others' affairs, in a sense that they respect everyone's individuality. However, when the *Sedulur Sikep* community in Kudus supported and joined the anti-cement movement in Sukolilo, it was perceived by some that they were taking the problem of another community as their own, while by others it was a compromise of one virtue of Sikep idealism (i.e. individual freedom) in order to defend another one: Land and resource sustainability. In the latter view, the Kendeng mountains are perceived as an entity attached to a single earth, so it is everyone's responsibility to conserve it sustainably. A prominent *Sedulur Sikep* activist from Kudus said that protecting the environment does not have to be measured by distance, but rather by how they feel toward the environment. Furthermore, some elders⁵² in Kudus also argued that land and the resources within it have the same function everywhere, and that is to bring wealth equally to all people. Thus, any action, especially by those the relatively powerful or superordinate actors of state and business that intend to use the land's benefit for their own interests while neglecting the needs of others, requires a response by the *Sedulur Sikep* as a grassroots community to act accordingly and to demand fairness.

The people populating Kendeng mountains are perceived by the *Sedulur Sikep* as those with rights to the land, regardless of whether they are subject to Sikep teachings or not. The Sikep teachings pledge to protect each other and help those in need, while still prioritizing their virtue of individual freedom by not forcing help upon those who do not want to be helped. In relation to this, what the *Sedulur Sikep* in Kudus actually meant was that different people perceived the Kendeng mountains and the surrounding environment in many different ways. When gathering support and power to protect the Kendeng mountains, they only will work with those who are willing to work together, while leaving out those who have different opinions and wishes. By doing so, they see

⁵² Based on interview with three Sikep elders in Kaliyoso – Kudus: Mbah Sutar, Mbah Tarsih, and Lek Pono

themselves as sincere, truthful, and grateful for whatever the result of their actions may be.

Even though, the current anti-cement movement focused on different districts and regencies, the *Sedulur Sikep* in Kudus, through their *botoh*, have claimed that they still support the movement, but in a ‘spiritual’ way. Their absence (at least in person) is said to be due to the growing intensity of the anti-cement activities. Many activities no longer coordinate with the farming season and require out-of-town travels while leaving their agricultural activities on rice-field behind. Yet, despite their lack of physical presence, the *Sedulur Sikep* community in Kudus would always receive updates on the ongoing anti-cement movement, particularly through the *srawung* traditions.

Thus, based on active involvement by the *Sedulur Sikep* in Kudus, using the same notion of environmental sustainability and their peasant traditions, these two *Sedulur Sikep* communities have reached a consensus on how to conserve their identity. By compromising a few aspects of the Sikep teachings, such as accommodating non-Sikep values in anti-cement activities, the *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati and Kudus have also ‘opened up’ to their non-Sikep villagers. Therefore, highlighting their peasant tradition, the anti-cement movement has become a space for the Sikep community in Pati and for non-Sikep villagers to build a common understanding of how the Kendeng mountains should be managed and preserved.

6.3.3 Other *Sedulur Sikep* Communities; Questioning the Movement

As discussed in Chapter 4, the Sikep communities in Pati and Blora have shown significant differences in perceiving external authority. These differences arise due to differing approaches applied by each regencial administration to reach out to Samin’s followers. In term of the anti-cement movement by the Sikep in Pati, the *botoh* and elders in Klopoduwur-Blora are questioning *Sedulur Sikep* anti-cement activism in Sukolilo altogether.

In addition to those in Klopoduwur-Blora and Bojonegoro, other groups of *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati have also had the same reaction towards *Sedulur Sikep* activism in the anti-

cement agenda. There are several reasons behind this contested view on anti-cement activism (KRJogja, 2016):

1. The way protests are performed by the anti-cement group does not reflect the teachings of Samin Surosentiko. Even though the protests are related to resistance, the way of resisting should be covert and passive.
2. Even in instances when the resistance is covert and passive, the activists find themselves facing the Indonesian government, which is supposed to govern the nation. Under the traditional Sikep teachings' values, only the native people have the right to rule and govern themselves. That for some, the Indonesian government and the state-owned PT. Semen Indonesia have a right to 'take care' of the land and its natural resources.

Additionally, as mentioned before that even some elders in Pati are not in the same position as those involved in the anti-cement movement, and are said to remain neutral. Essentially, they claimed to not want to be involved in any issues that are not related to the interests of Sikep teachings, including supporting or rejecting the cement factories. This argument was drawn from a statement given by a group of elders from Sukolilo-Pati, Blora, and Kudus who managed to meet the Governor of Central Java regarding their peers' activism. During the meeting, they stated that:

"We, Sedulur Sikep have commitment or principles from our forefathers in behaving our utterance and behaviors. We highly uphold honesty in our daily life. In addition, we also pledge to not hurt others or even be involved in a conflict, this would in relation to cement industry. We do not reject nor support the industry, as long as it has a benefit and good purpose for the people, so go ahead whether it (the cement industry) shall be established or not"

– Sutoyo, a Sikep elder from Pati on an invited meeting with the Governor of Central Java on seeking Sikep's stand point on cement agenda in the Kendeng mountains (Kompas.com, 2016)

Further, they also argue that the issue of the cement industry has actually never caught their attention, but has nevertheless become a channel for them to articulate their views, especially after the heated conflict in Rembang which was, at a certain point, associated with the image of *Sedulur Sikep*.

The statements made by these groups of Sikep elders from various areas in Central Java have been used by the provincial government, as well as by PT. Semen Indonesia, to delegitimize the opposition actions by Gunretno, Gunarti, and other members of

JMPPK, insofar as they demonstrate that the true *Sedulur Sikep* do not oppose the plans to develop a cement industry in the region. During an interview with the PT.SI corporate secretary, he mentioned that the real *Sedulur Sikep* who still uphold the true teachings of Samin Surosentiko are those who live in Klopoduwur-Blora.

With regards to the anti-cement group that has been protesting in several locations including the capital city of Jakarta, the *Sedulur Sikep* who oppose their community's involvement in the movement argue that, as farmers, its members should not travel so often and to such far distances. They believe that the *Sedulur Sikep* should observe their peasantry by taking care of their farmland wholeheartedly. Furthermore, they also accuse the *Sedulur Sikep* involved in the anti-cement movement of violating one of the basic principles of Sikep teachings of not interfering in other's issues, for instance when the *Sedulur Sikep* members in the JMPPK also advocate on behalf of villagers in another regency of Rembang to oppose the cement industry by PT. Semen Indonesia.

7 The Vernacularization of Common Resources and Contested Identity; A Concluding Discussion

"I have never claimed that the act of rejecting cement (industry) was the act of Sedulur Sikep, it is always on behalf of JMPPK, which elements are not only consist of Sedulur Sikep, but also other communities" - Gunretno

This final chapter is a concluding discussion on the main findings and arguments presented in this thesis. This study focuses on the notion of the *Sedulur Sikep* identity and its crucial role in the virtues of the anti-cement movement. Therefore, based on the findings, this chapter shall answer the thesis' central research question: *How has the anti-cement activism influenced the Sedulur Sikep's identity?*

To answer this question, this chapter will revisit the research objectives, which include discussions concerning the principle teachings of Samin Surosentiko, the importance of resource governance and environmental conservation for *Sedulur Sikep* identity, the importance of the Kendeng mountains for both the *Sedulur Sikep* and the notion of development, and how the *Sedulur Sikep*'s anti-cement activism and movement strategies re-shape their identity and their relationships with other actors

7.1 Identity and Change

Looking back at the historical roots of the movement, Samin Surosentiko emphasized resource access and management in starting the movement. Through his teachings, he and his followers perpetuated the claim that 'land, air, and water are communal properties which are the embodiment of the supreme Divine power'. Later on, with followers in growing numbers, Samin and his successors maintained their followers by forming a community that not only had a different perspective on the Dutch colonials and external authorities in general, but that also built its life upon the basic notion of the human-nature relationship through their spiritual virtue of *Agama Adam*.

This research has found that the main reason for the emergence of anti-cement movement is derived from *Sikep*'s traits above. Framed by their interest in conserving water and land as two important elements for their peasantry, the *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati

have found similarities between the current and late colonial's period 'threat': The closure of common resources by authorities. Under strong influence from Sikep figures that have become prominent actors within the movement, the anti-cement movement has come to be associated with the Sikep community in general. Scrutinizing it in reverse, their activism in the anti-cement movement is directly derived from their idealism regarding common resource management and environmental sustainability, both of which have played crucial role in re-defining their puritan Javanese peasant identity. Hence, even though the anti-cement group JMPPK is not a Sikep movement, it can be argued that this movement is certainly Sikep-inspired.

Furthermore, this research also points out another side of Sikep activism which concerns their own community and self-perceived identity. Stemming from the fact that the anti-cement movement consists of various villagers and communities of different regions and backgrounds, the JMPPK's strategies are undeniably following its member's traits. JMPPK, as an inclusive anti-cement movement, has been left with no other choice than to accommodate these different traits in order to maintain its members' loyalty. The two native Sikep figures; Gunretno and Gunarti, have played an important role in defining the movement's traits while at same time keeping its members loyal and willing to strive for their cause; freedom for the Kendeng mountains from any attempts at exploitation by powerful actors.

Meanwhile, other Sikep communities have started to criticize these Sikep figures who are involved in the anti-cement movement by accusing them of not being true Sikep adherents. Another space to re-claim alternative Sikep narratives thus emerges among Sikep communities who oppose anti-cement activism, that they will remain neutral. These groups of Sikep seek legitimacy and confirmation from other actors who are in opposition with the anti-cement groups, such as from the local authority with its allies of cement companies. Using their own knowledge in interpreting Sikep teachings, these groups of Sikep find their own ways to adapt, accommodate, and integrate into the broader social order. As shown by the Sikep community in Klopoduwur Blora by being integrated into the 'assisted village' program, this community is finding a way to reconcile by being fully subject to governmental program and the propagated social order, including religion and education. Meanwhile, the Sedulur Sikep in Kudus has found a 'middle-way' to balance having a good relationship with the government and

still upholding their own Sikep teachings. This approach makes it possible for Sikep communities to attain their rights as citizens, while keeping their Sikep traits in practice. This is shown by how the Sikep in Kudus receive government ‘special assistance’ for their KTP application, as well as government legitimization of their *botoh*’s status.

For those who are involved in the anti-cement movement, the movement represents an ‘open door’ for *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati to be integrated into larger society without being subject to any propagated social order by authority.

7.2 Resources Access and Resistance

Since its early formation, the movement was already centered on the aspect of resistance, as it began with Samin Surosentiko’s idealism, concerns, and values concerning how resources ought to be managed. Later, this view on resources shaped their views on external authority, especially those who have access and power to interfere others’ way of life by propagating a particular social order. The Kendeng mountains have inevitably played an important part within the narrative of the anti-cement movement. Just as the late Samin’s movement during the Dutch colonial era ‘used’ the closure of teak forests to instigate resistance, the contemporary anti-cement has also perpetuated the late Samin’s resistance principle by opposing the ‘closure’ of the Kendeng mountains by cement business who collaborated with the state.

Throughout the anti-cement movement, the narratives of ‘Samin movement’ have flared up in a way that re-claims its identity as a group that resists any form of oppression from authority. The *Sedulur Sikep* have successfully integrated their characteristic resistance into the mainstream movement’s narratives in Indonesia, while also allowing the anti-cement group JMPPK to receive support and attention from a variety of other actors, especially those who focus on environmental issues and human rights. Moreover, in a broader context of resistance, anti-cement movement has become a pivotal part of the narrative of grassroots movements versus capitalistic industries supported by the state in Indonesia.

It can be said that the *Sedulur Sikep* in Pati and Kudus first got involved in the anti-cement movement because of the industry’s direct negative impact on their communities. Their awareness and consciousness of these effects, alongside their strong

attachment with the Kendeng mountains as their ‘source of life’, allowed them to find a way to reject the exploitative cement industries. In contrast, the Sikep communities in Blora and Bojonegoro, who have no similar ties with the Kendeng mountains, are not in a position to support the anti-cement movement. In fact, some *Sedulur Sikep* members in Blora, Bojonegoro, and some from Pati perceive their peers’ activism as violations to Samin’s teachings, since the activities of movement are a rather ‘open resistance’ that is, based on these particular *Sedulur Sikep*, not suggested by Sikep teachings nor the Religion of Adam.

The location of the Kendeng mountains become an important reason for *Sedulur Sikep* who reject its exploitation. Protecting the mountains from exploitation becomes their way of expressing their Sikep virtues, that later turned into a resistance toward the cement industries. The vernacularization of the resources, that is the Kendeng mountains, has, to a significant degree, expressed the Sikep trait of resistance, in a such a way that communicates their interests to other related non-Sikep actors, ENGOs, as well as to the local government as the main authority over resource management and in propagating the social, economic, and political order

7.3 Concluding Remarks

The Dutch government argued that all taxes would be used to improve the people's welfare, yet Samin Surosentiko and his followers believed that forest privatization tormented the people and expelled them from their ancestral lands. The same argument has been used by government-supported cement companies in capitalizing the Kendeng mountains in the name of development and wealth distribution. But the cement industry’s plans have received strong resistance from the people will supposedly benefit from the agenda.

The differing views perceived by each *Sikep* community with regards to the anti-cement movement are perhaps not only a reflection of the variations in the teachings across groups, but also a reflection of strategic integration with the broader society. Their different views on the Kendeng Mountains show how much each Sikep community has been exposed to adaptation and evolution during their contemporary development. By looking back at the dispersed Sikep communities and their views on being the true

followers of Samin Surosentiko, it can be argued that today's Sikep communities are in search of a way to assimilate with the broader system –whether it is with the government, ENGOs, or the non-Sikep communities- that the Sedulur Sikep have been moving nowhere to strengthen their common and single identity as followers of Samin Surosentiko, who observe Sikep teachings, as they are becoming more heterogeneous by following their own particular vested interests.

Finally, the study of Sikep's resistance, both during its early phases and its contemporary development, not only contributes to further research on the 'Samin Movement' in scrutinizing different ways for Sikep communities to respond to external circumstances (e.g authority, common resource management, identity and integration into broader social order, and spiritual beliefs), but also scrutinizes how the notion of resource exploitation, capitalization, and privatization has become a tradition for authority to advertise their idea of development and welfare to the people. In fact, there has been little proof that such action actually gives the people what they have been promised; Welfare.

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Appendix I: List of Informants

No.	Informants	Status	Interview Date	Interview Location
1	Kindarto Dan Boti	Ex anti-cement activist	26 July 2016, and 10 August 2016	Yogyakarta
2	Jatra Palepati	Anti-cement activist / artist	11 August 2016	Pati
3	anonymous	Pro-cement villager	11 August 2016	Sukolilo, Pati
4	Gunarti	Sedulur Sikep member / anti-cement activist	12, 21 and 24 August 2016	Sukolilo, Pati
5	Gunretno	Sedulur Sikep member / anti-cement activist / founder of SPP and JMPPK	29 August 2016	Sukolilo Pati
6	Mbah Sriyono	Villager from Sukolilo, Pati / Omah Kendeng care-taker	20 August 2016	Sukolilo, Pati
7	Pak Sapari	Sedulur Sikep member / anti-cement activist / Founder of FMPL and JMPPK	21 August 2016	Sukolilo, Pati
8	Mbah Darto	Villager from Kayen, Pati / anti-cement activist	21 August 2016	Sukolilo, Pati
9	Mbah Wagono	Sedulur Sikep <i>botoh</i> in Kudus	23 August 2016	Kaliyoso, Kudus
10	Dhe Priyadhi	<i>Sedulur Sikep</i> member in Kudus / anti-cement supporter	23 August 2016	Kaliyoso, Kudus
11	Mbah Sutar; Mbah Tarsih; Lek Pono	Sedulur Sikep member in Kudus / anti-cement supporter	23 August 2016	Kaliyoso, Kudus
12	Dhe Icuk Bamban	Sedulur Sikep elder in Sukolilo	24 August 2016	Sukolilo, Pati
13	Heni and her in laws	Sedulur Sikep member in Galiran, Pati / anti-cement supporter	25 August 2016	Galiran, Pati
14	Mbah Gono and his family members	Sedulur Sikep member in Galiran, Pati / anti-cement supporter	25 August 2016	Galiran, Pati
15	Dhe Giyem	Villager from Tambakromo, Pati / anti-cement activist	27 August 2016	Tambakromo, Pati
16	Agung Wiharto	PT. Semen Indonesia Corporate Secretary	13 September 2016	PT. Semen Indonesia HQ,

				Jakarta
17	Sobirin	Director of Desantara Foundation	1 October 2016	Yogyakarta
18	Mohammad Jumaedi	The head-villagers of Sukolilo	4 October 2016	Sukolio, Pati
Also, not to forget other villagers who participated in some of JMMPK events; meetings, discussions, and 'thanksgiving' events which I also attended and gathered valuable informations.				

Appendix II: Interview Guides

1. To Sedulur Sikep elders (unstructured)

- a. What is ‘Sedulur Sikep’?
- b. What are the principles of Sikep teachings?
- c. What is the meaning of water and land for you as sedulur sikep?
- d. How do you perceive Kendeng Mountains?
- e. How do you see the anti-cement movement?

2. To Sedulur Sikep anti-cement activist (semi-structured)

- a. What is ‘Sedulur Sikep’?
- b. What are the principles of Sikep teachings?
- c. How do you perceive Kendeng Mountains
- d. How is the relationship between Sikep communities with the non-sikep communities?
- e. How do you perceive the government/authority?
- f. Why rejecting cement industry? How did it start?
- g. How anti-cement activism perceived by internal community of Sedulur Sikep
- h. As sedulur Sikep member, how to maintain the anti-cement movement (strategies and adaptation) to keep it in line with Sikep traits?
- i. How to treat those who support the cement companies?
- j. Why Sedulur Sikep decided to keep the activism and help those in Tambakromo-Kayen and Rembang to stop the incoming cement companies?

3. To Non-Sikep Villagers/member of JMPPK (semi-structured)

- a. Why rejecting cement industry?
- b. How did you decided to join the anti-cement movement?
- c. How do you perceive Sedulur Sikep and their traits?
- d. How (do you think) Sedulur Sikep perceive their non-sikep neighbors?
- e. How JMPPK’s strategies designed and matched with your interest?

4. To anti-cement activist (semi-structured)

- a. How did you engage with Sedulur Sikep, and further to anti-cement movement?
- b. How do you perceive Sedulur Sikep and their traits?
- c. How the image of Samin Surosentiko uses in the anti-cement movement?
- d. Why do you think Sedulur Sikep in Sukolilo decided to reject the cement industry?
- e. How do you see conflicts arise within Sedulur Sikep on one’s anti-cement activism?
- f. What are the roles plays by Sedulur Sikep (especially Gunretno and Gunarti) within the anti-cement movement’s agenda?

5. To cement company representative (Structured)

- a. What is the greatest reason for your company to build more cement industry in Java, more particularly in Kendeng Mountains
- b. How the cement industry supports the notion of developmentalism for Java, as PTSI is a State-owned company?
- c. To ensure the promise of wealth distribution, how PT SI designed the concept of 'trickle-down effect' apply both for the people and local government?
- d. Is there any programs proposed to local community and local government regarding environmental conservation and protection within industrial affected area?
- e. How those programs implemented, especially in accommodating the interests of company as well as local people?
- f. How's the EIA process, acknowledging the decree of Minister of Energy and Natural Resource No 0398 K/40/MEM/2005 that claimed Kendeng Mountains as protected karst region?
- g. In regards of recent case in Rembang, how is it different from previous PT. SI plant-site (in term of social conflict)
- h. Is there any attempt to re-do the EIA after the previous EIA was rejected by local people?
- i. Is the government (all regencial, provincial, and central government, as well as the ministry of Energy and Natural resource) offered any solution or assistance to solve the recent conflict between the company and local people?
- j. Apart from the EIA, what is actually the demand of local community to PT.SI?
- k. From the company's perspective, what is actually the main factor the triggered people's rejection to cement industry in Pati and Rembang?
- l. From the company's perspective, how far is *Sedulur Sikep* involvement on the anti-cement movement in Kendeng region?
- m. How effective is symbol of 'Samin' used in giving pressure and resistance to PT.SI?
- n. Is there any specific approach/communication that your company does to reach *Sedulur Sikep*?
- o. Regarding President's request to stop all industrial activities in Rembang until the process of Strategic Environmental Assessment (KLHS) is finished, what are the strategies of PT.SI in responding this order?

Appendix III: Additional Pictures



Figure 7 JMPPK protest in front of the presidential palace in Jakarta by putting their feet in cement dough for several days



Figure 8 left to right: Joko Prin (farmer from Rembang); Ghiyem (farmer from Tambaktomo-Pati) – both are the JMPPK’s ‘idols’; Gunretno and Gunarti during a meeting with Central Java Provincial government.