

## CAH AMPERA: HYBRID IDENTITY OF KAMPUNG YOUTHS IN NEGOTIATING CITIZENSHIP

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### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mencoba menarasikan negosiasi pemuda terstigma dalam perjuangan citizenship mereka, baik secara sosial, kultural maupun politik. Penelitian ini mencoba menjelaskan fenomena tentang negosiasi kewargaan yang dikelola melalui posisi stigmatis mereka. Penelitian etnografi ini menemukan bahwa melalui identitas hibrid yang menjadi representasi cah Ampera, mereka berhasil mengelola sisi antagonisme sekaligus afiliasi. Kewargaan yang mereka kelola berhasil menunjukkan bahwa cah Ampera memiliki strategi di dalam mengelola posisi melalui symbolic capital dan aksi melalui mikro politik di kampung. Tiga posisi berhasil mereka kelola baik dalam rangka berelasi dengan adult, pengelolaan pekerjaan maupun young world mereka.

**Kata Kunci:** identitas hibrid, kewargaan dan representasi, negosiasi

### ABSTRACT

This article attempts to investigate the negotiating process for citizenship of a group of youths facing entrenched social, cultural, and political exclusion. It examines the phenomenon of citizenship negotiation based on stigmatized position of excluded youths. It was found that despite overwhelming odds, the youths use their hybrid identity, which is a manifestation of *cah Ampera* identity. They succeed in managing the antagonism and affiliation. The citizenship of *cah Ampera* is managed through symbolic capital and action in village micro politics. Success is reflected in their ability to manage their relations with adults, employment, and their young world.

**Keywords:** citizenship and representation, hibryd identity, negotiation

### BACKGROUND

Being a *kampung*<sup>1</sup> youth who often faces a stigma is no easy feat. However, Sangkrah *kampung* youths show strong resolution and determination not to accept such a condition as their predestined fate. In light of that the objective of this research is to delve into efforts of Sangkrah youths to negotiate citizenship with their proximate society. The issue of citizenship is interesting considering the reality that for them every day brings with it not only tension but also arouses their keenness to

know and understand why their condition remains in this reformation era which ironically is supposed to blossom with hope and democracy. Negotiation dynamics of the youth will be observed from the perspective of hybrid identity. Hybrid dynamics constitutes reality of an individual who is often proud to be a member of *cah Ampera*<sup>2</sup> identity even when the attribute of *ke'ampera'nan*<sup>3</sup> faces exclusion from mainstream society. Narration of the hybrid identity will be based on factor of sense of place.

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Sangkrah *kampung* youths live in a *kampung* or village that is located not far from Solo municipality government offices but live in object poverty and suffer from social stigmatization. The setting of the location aggravates the dilemmatic position of Sangkrah youths as the orientation of development follows the dictates of the market and *kampung* areas face alienation (Sudarmono, 1999). The changes that occurred during the new order regime, followed by equal changes during the reformation era accentuated such alienation<sup>4</sup> or 'the otherness' of the stigmatized youth.

This is an ethnographic research conducted in 2007-2008 in Sangkrah *kampung* that lies in the outskirts of Solo city. The decision to use participatory observation as a research technique was motivated by the need to observe the way Sangkrah youths managed citizenship negotiations based on their own perspectives. Unstructured interviews were conducted to several key persons, who included Sangkrah youths, NGOs, and regional government officials. In that backdrop, the question which guided the research was: 'Why does the *cah Ampera* identity constitute a representation of a strategy in negotiating citizenship in society?'

Based on the existing literature on youth studies, a number of studies are relevant. These include the one carried out by Robert M. Vanderbeck and Cheryl Morse Dunkley, which is entitled 'Young People's Narratives of Rural-Urban Difference' (Vanderbeck and Cheryl, 2003:242), which examines the construction of the differences between urban and rural youths. It investigates the construction of a person who is different as a form of otherness. Another research entitled 'Managing Meaning and Belonging: Young Women's Negotiation of Authenticity in Body Art' is carried out by Sarah C. E. Riley & Sharon Cahill (2005), on the issue of belonging among female youths. The research stresses the vital importance of body art in understanding the construction of belonging among young women in Glasgow, manifested through body piercing and use of tattoos.

In a research entitled 'On the edge: a tale of

*skaters and urban governance*', Elaine Stratford (2002) shows the placement of youth skaters as citizens through the contestation of socio-spatial and citizenship relations. Youth skaters succeed in extricating themselves from their estranged position by managing the contestation.

These studies are important sources of inspiration on how to explain the issue of exclusion. The issue is concerned with excluded or alienated youths in Sangkrah. Youth exclusion is explained not by using agency and pathology, but by using the middle ground technique-hybrid. The sense of place explains the strength of Sangkrah youths in negotiating their citizenship.

A hybrid identity is explained from the standpoint that when *cah Ampera* are excluded they use their stigmatized location as power to negotiate their civil, cultural, social and political rights (Meijer, 1998:235). The essence of the main concept of hybrid youths as espoused by post colonial theories is that "Hybridization is a process of cultural interactions between the local and the global, the hegemonic and the subaltern, the centre and the periphery" (Nilan and Feixa, 2006:2). Sense of place will be used to explain the hybrid identity when the youth undertake cultural creation between antagonism and affiliation. To that end, the pathology paradigm comes under criticism as poor youths as members of political society also have rights that should be respected and upheld (Ginwright, et al. 2005:6-7), and as cultural entities they respond by countering culture (Marchart, 2004:420). Paradoxically, when they are considered or regarded as agents, their agency is not linear. As hybrid youths, they use both sense of place and symbolic capital (Bourdieu in Jarvis, 2000) to negotiate their belonging.

Sense of place can be considered as tantamount to belonging. 'Yet belonging, with all its pragmatic connotations and potential for tying people to place and social relationships, also evokes emotions, sentiments of longing to be in a particular location, be it real or fictive' (Lovell, 1998:1; Indiyanto, 2012:3). The logic of sense of place refers to a matter of contestation, and power relation in

defining boundaries.

Through cultural creation that derives and draws from the identity of the location *cah Ampera* develop and generate the *reflexif habitus* attitude, which they use as means and medium to express the narration of their identity in the bargaining process between public and ontological narration (Somers:1994). *Reflexif habitus* is an attitude which explains the relation between 'conscious self and the unthought'. The conception of youth *reflexif habitus* is "Reflexivity--self conscious invention and reinvention in the shapping of youth identities..." (Nilan and Feixa, 2006:3). To that end, the concept of body and power self (Foucault and Grosz,1998) assumes great importance in explaining their hybrid identity.

The following discussion highlights the process of their self representation as hybrid youths through several themes that include *cah Ampera* identity construction, everyday activities and contestation of meaning of symbolic capital and micro politics.

## STIGMA

This section discusses how external society and local bureaucracy place the youth as a social problem due to their physical setting of the *kampung*.

Social economic development in Solo city on one hand and *kampung* alienation on the other (Sudarmono, 1999) have impacted on both Sangkrah population and the youth who are considered as a social problem. From the vantage point of location, the head of the *kampung* community empowerment institution bluntly describes the alienation that Sangkrah faces as follows: "Despite the fact that Sangkrah lies on the outskirts of the city, it does not only have a front or face, and residents are forced to take the long roundabout route prior to gaining entrance to it". The term 'does not have face or front' is indeed the dominant strategy used in negotiating with society for acceptance as citizens because of the strongly negative construction that mainstream society has come to associate them with.

The use of physical attributes such as the location of the *kampung* by external forces to justify the construction of the youth as outcasts or an estranged community arouses suspicion. An example to illustrate the point is the river embankment on Bengawan Solo. The construction<sup>5</sup> of the river embankment was not initially meant to serve as a demarcation point that creates exclusion of some section of the population. However, the people who live in urban areas tend to exclude them based on perspectives which are no longer limited to physical attributes but also social aspects as well. One resident who has been living in Sangkrah<sup>6</sup> for a long time gave the following comments: "just imagine there was no embankment, there is little doubt that the river flood would not rise beyond the knee level". In 2007 when floods inundated all houses, there was little that differentiated between those people who were safe and those who were not, as was the difference between the middle and periphery. Such a situation paved the way for the perception that there is need to create wedge between other members of community from the young, who were regarded as naughty because they live in a dangerous area, which was ironical since the youth<sup>7</sup> constituted the majority of *kampung* residents.

On my way to Sangkrah, a man, on hearing that I was heading to the *kampung* to obtain data on the area, responded with consternation and admonishment. This was evident in his brisk explanation as follows: "O Sangkrah is a place which is the destination of thieves for any thief that gains entrance to the *kampung* disappears without trace. The *kampung* is fraught with alleys for hiding, which complicates any efforts by law enforcement agents to trace whoever enters there". Pak Mahendra, who is the *kampung* head made the following statement to that effect: "Residents of that *kampung* are prone to drinking intoxicants, which energize them".

What seems to be uneventful day, all of a sudden takes course for the worse when all of a sudden young boys who were seriously absorbed in playing card games in Pak Parman's house met

face to face with policemen riding motorcycles along a narrow *kampung* road in the dark. On seeing the boys, the policemen stopped suddenly to take a closer look at what the boys were doing. At the time, a friend of Inug (17) was sitting near a collection of garbage as he used a lighted safety match stick to search for his mobile phone card that had got lost. "You are are looking for narcotics?" one of the policemen asked him. Indeed it turned out that the boy was searching for his mobile phone card which he eventually found in the midst of trash. However, thereabouts, many other boys were already intoxicated. "Hei, what are you doing there .....?". Another policemen interjected and said: "Just take them ... take them," while another one responded by saying: 'There is no problem..because they are inside a house'.

The day for the youth is often punctuated by a sudden change from a normal situation to an emergency, day and night time alike. Such situation has become normal to them although it makes them wonder why such treatment is meted out to them. What starts as an event for chilling out, suddenly turned into a very dangerous one when the police launch their raids into the *kampung*. The *thongkrongan* (leisure time in *kampung*) ritual which often involves music, does not only ensnare the youth into abnormality but is also a means they use to observe the reality about the construction of which they are an integral part.

The above narration shows that external society and local bureaucracy try to build stereotype and purification (physical cleansing) just based on physical factor of the *kampung*. This causes stigmatization of the youth as a social problem.

### **CAH AMPERA: RITUAL AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION**

This section attempts to show how the youth in their everyday life actually face and cope with their unattended position and always try to be autonomous.

Ignoring such a stigmatic issue, the youth show a good understanding of their individuality

and dynamics that affect their citizenship. This is the case because despite the stigma that confronts them, the youth are very independent and tenacious in facing all manners of risks they encounter. For instance, Sri (13), who is still very young, was forced to drop out of school and started working. 'My father got annoyed with me. This was simply because I requested for money to pay for school needs, but my father could have none of that'. Since that incident, Sri stopped being part of vivacious village children filling alleys as they headed to school. On the contrary, she headed in different direction toward the tailor where she embarked on a training exercise to become a tailor. It is thus pertinent to say that days of lively chattering and play were a thing of the past for her.

The youth often face the drastic change in the pattern of work they do as they strive to fend for themselves. It should also be noted that the youth are driven by their adherence to the principle of never wanting to be under anybody else's command. They opt for care free lifestyle, which is devoid of acting on commands of other individuals. This is clearly evident in Didik (22)'s words: 'Some people often come and ask me to go to work. However, prior to commencing work, I first of all look around to see whether the work involves being under a boss. If that is the case I just bolt out of there. Being a scavenger means leading the life of unfettered freedom'. They also espouse the principle of meeting ends meet, which is based on searching for old items which they sell to those who need them. Money obtained is used to buy basic necessities of life. Bobby (16) elucidated to the effect that his lifestyle is typical among his friends. Behind their efforts to sell discarded items lies the principle of adhering to their cherished principle of 'lolos butuh'<sup>8</sup>. "Yeah. we do that simply in line with our cherished principle of lolos butuh".

Meanwhile, for Ary (23), such enthusiasm is very palpable. Upon dropping out from high school, he commenced a new life by selling noodles using rickshaw, which did not take long before it collapsed. He also tried to become a regular worker along with Bobby and Budi. Unlike the other boys,

as an in-migrant from Cilacap region, who is forced to lead life that is punctuated by various hardships and extreme conditions, Ary shows high versatility in dealing with the hard life that has become an integral part of him. In dealing with economic dynamics that are characterized by collecting odd items that are sold for a living, he opted to raise the bar by becoming the head of a collection unit, or literary a businessmen specializing in old items. According to him, he opted to become head of a collection unit because being a regular employee was for him too hard. "What work were you doing at the time", I tried to ask him: "Cutting curtains in my Boss's place". To him such work was too difficult, because of the long distance he had to travel from where he lives and his place of work in Mojosoongo, which is about 8 km from the place he lives in. 'In fact I could only endure for just a week', he complained. His other attempt at employment was when he started a billiard business in the *kampung*, which registered some success. The billiard business was a meeting point between ritual dynamics, sports, and gambling games and was laden with *ciu* (a traditional alcoholic drink).

The ritual is managed in an independent manner, while at the same time independence serves as unity that represents them. One evening on yet another day, the infectious pang of *Ciu* pungent fumes spewed into the narrow decrepit alleys, as if directing the observer toward a certain river valley, which is the favorite hiding place for young boys as they clasp their *ketipung* (a traditional musical instrument), brandishing guitars, and snuffing cigarettes. Tension seems to fill the air, when Warno (20) who is a casual worker in the games factory where he earns Rp 640.000 a month alongside Guntur (22), direct questions to one another: 'Where are the other boys?', as if driven by the desire to provide confirmation to *kampung* residents, a question to which others responded with high sense of calm: "on the river valley, perhaps". It is an answer that appears to induce calm among other members of the community. The questions seems to take turns among *kampung* residents as if to seek reassurance from others about their state of

security and safety.

The only audible sound one could hear from a distance was the combination of music notes coming from a *ketipung* instrument as it was accompanied by the voice that seemed to highlight the indescribably high sense of innocence of the singer. The TV set perched in the *Brak/Lincak* (lean-to) along the road, which is often teaming with people seemed deserted. Old men trying to catch a nap were the only people in attendance to watch electronic cinema programs on television, all of which attested to an impending emergency.

*Cah Ampera* constitute an embodiment of *cah Ampera* identity, which is characterized by *ciu*, rituals and *lolos butuh*, independence in eking out a hard living in conditions of high uncertainty and tension. The enthusiasm to live despite apparent hardships that circumscribe them seems to be an apt reaction and criticism of the persistent manipulation that is always directed toward them.

## CONTESTATION TO BE MEMBERS OF SOCIETY

One important characteristic of *cah Ampera* is courage. This character keeps them socially and culturally in negotiation to be normal members of society. This section deals with criticism of the high sense of independence and courage as a form of social awareness sparking off or serving as a reaction to the contestation of meaning through symbolic capital manifested in the dropping out of education system and sidelined to criticize those who still have the opportunity to attend school as well as the bureaucracy.

One day, Tri (17) noted that a teacher in his school approached him, requesting him to commence schooling once again. In the meantime, another friend of him, Bayu (17), reacted vitriolically to the request in a blatant way by asking: "Is it possible for a hoodlum to attend school?". Such an exclamation is a characteristic response from *cah Ampera* youths in negotiating their status and position in their social environment.

Maman (17) also lodged another critical response when he reminisced about his fate as an

odd item collector and pedlar: "... will the condition remain like this for us?" Apparently, television news coverage of the national examination saga, which dominated the waves at the time, influenced the atmosphere. From the position of being sidelined from mainstream society because he dropped out, he tried to look around among his friends to identify who among his friends had the likelihood and possibility of attending school. His friend, Dede (18), failed to undergo the national examination. According to him, Dede's failure was attributable to the fact that he fell victim to manipulation perpetrated through the trading of examination questions, which turned out to be false. Inevitably, Dede failed the examinations. A befitting blatant comment was: 'That is the situation, the thinking is that money buys everything, which is why he could go to school despite his mediocre intelligence'<sup>9</sup>. Such form of awareness has become a characteristic feature of the way the voiceless try to negotiate citizenship.

At the dawn of Saturday night, the debate about their position takes center stage. Andy (22), who is a successful, wealthy young man, was able to graduate from the junior technical academy. He poked fun at Boby (16) who earns a living by collecting odd old items around the *kampung*. A number of times, he tries to be absorbed in the discussion that revolves around a young girl who is the idol of many fellow teenage boys in his school days. Later that night, after the discussion, as he sat on the river embankment, he extended an offer to Boby: "*Bob, do you want to engage in sexual intercourse with Tanti? She wants to be paid for the service. If you do, I'm ready to escort you to her place*", Andi articulated his offer. Boby responded: "*No, I don't, I don't like such things*". Andy's lifestyle and behavior, who happened to have undergone formal education, is to *cah Ampera* boys, very unfair. This is because from a social standpoint, while those with education are deemed acceptable to society, *cah Ampera* boys are denounced as naughty and vangabonds.

The jockeying for position and status between the two sides intensifies when Ervin, a second year

student in a junior technical school, became a target of jokes unleashed by other boys because he could not repair his motorcycle. This is because such a task was easy for the young boys despite the fact that they had never attended school. "*This is ironic. ... Students who are graduates of junior technical school find it difficult to repair their motor cycles ... school boys who do not know the technics of machinery*". Ervin was engulfed in shame and he tried to conceal the food behind his bicycle, when his parents approached and instructed him to go and buy vegetables. It is the kind of task which boys who have never gone to school would find distasteful.

Talks about school/education seem to emerge in their day to day conversation in the *kampung*. A friend of Didik, whose educational background was primary school, asked him to search for newspaper clippings on the national budget. Later that day in the evening after finishing his work, with no shirt on, Didik talked to his friend. He said: 'I was approached by a friend who is still studying in a junior technical school, to help him search for newspaper clippings on the national budget. I can not help but wonder why somebody has the guts to ask an illiterate boy to search for clippings on the national budget. This is stunning because the highest educational attainment of all boys who call this home is primary school. Hopefully, you can imagine such unfairness'. With keen interest to continue the conversation, I ingratiated him to talk more on the subject by asking : "*What is the national budget?*" His response was that : 'What I know is that the national budget has something to do with taxes, assistance and expenditure'. Based on what he said, the conclusion one could draw was that from his perspective, the national budget refers to government information that is published in newspapers.

The advanced knowledge and attitudes, which they showed, has perhaps been obtained from their interaction with some non-government organizations, which often provide assistance to the *kampung* community. Such NGO's include one that is involved in empowering working children,

*trafficking*, and the NGO consorsium. They often conduct communications with underprivileged people who are on the sidelines of society. Nonetheless, they rarely give advanced information and knowledge, since in most cases their role is to serve as mere participants.

Didik: My friend attends Muhammadiyah high school.

Margono: What year?

Didik: Second year. Learning environment in the school is deplorable. Students are often found napping during school hours. They are very naughty and stubborn.

Andi's story about the condition in the school provides an insight of the behaviour and treatment which school children perpetrate against their peers. Based on Andi's remarks, it appears that he sees himself as a courageous boy, perhaps in order to strengthen his status as a masculine boy among his peers: "*My friends used to carry condoms to school. Every Saturday, a friend of mine makes love in a hotel*". The quiet and chill of the night was drawn to a dramatic halt when in the middle of the night, members of the local Jihad militia<sup>10</sup> staged a coordinated raid on their *kampung*.

At the time, Asep and Bobby, who were about to leave the *kampung* to buy *ciu*, had to cancel their plan and returned to the *kampung* hurriedly yelling out : "*Jihad...Jihad!*". They were yelling : "*Sword...sword.....*". For Andi, it was not easy to understand and imagine that such chaotic situation, which was initiated and perpetrated by external forces, had become routine on every Saturday night. While other boys with the support of other *kampung* members were ready to counter Jihad forces using traditional weapons and beating drums signaling danger to other members of the community, Andi was so stunned and opted to flee for his life. The existence of the youth in the *kampung* constitutes an integral component of the risky nature of the negotiation process. In the *kampung* being young does not mean that one must always follow modern ways of doing things or lead modern lifestyle.

The involvement of NGO elites, who want to leverage their adult position to exploit the youth through projects they implement in the *kampung*, makes the process of negotiating status harder and more complex. The youth express disappointment as reflected in the negative response they articulated about the program that misrepresents the reality of street children which was featured in a film broadcast on an NGO community television. Meanwhile, the situation in the NGO premises could be described as subdued as Joko and some of his friends exhibit inexplicable silence as they assume seats outside the building. It is something that is easy to understand. On returning home, they could not help but show sadness. '*Making a film that does not represent the reality on the ground. How is it possible that life never registers any improvement for people who earn a living by singing songs for payment*', Didik ended his remark that reflected how disappointed he was about the injustice of it all. The way the youth are represented outside the *kampung* constitutes part of the tough and complex negotiations they have to manage in a way that suits their perspective and understanding.

A spontaneous expression seems to radiate from Asep's face as he returns home from work, which attested to his high sense of satisfaction as he slowly assumed a squatting position: "It is indeed very interesting to earn five thousand Rupiahs today". Such expression of satisfaction took on an even more stark contrast when his half clad body released lines of sweat that were trekking down the tattoo on his body. He extended his hand toward Wiwit as he requested for a cigarette: "*Please Wit, I have a craving for a cigarette but was not able to buy one because I don't have money*". Afterwards he unveiled old steel item, which was hidden behind an old and used plastic light, and applied fire to improve the quality of the outcome. When he suddenly screamed, another member of the *kampung* community responded : "*Indeed, that is how things should be. One should thank God for even the diminutive figure that one has, you should not behave the way big people do who gobble up hundreds of millions of Rupiahs alone*". Such an

expression seems to echo the palpable sense of refusal and rejection of the way the adult world positions them. Thus they often use the construction of *Cah Ampera* to manage all social limitation and obstacles they face both in their *kampung* and in other contexts, making it an integral component of their negotiations for citizenship in the community.

*Cah Ampera* make gives them the mettle to criticise their disadvantaged status and position in the community, which adults (community members, bureaucracy and NGO) will never understand. Their degree of social awareness evolves out of criticism and contestation of meaning on symbolic capital manifested in improvements and advancement in understanding their political rights, and epitomizes hybrid individuals, who are dimunitive but critical.

## MICRO POLITICS

Action is a special form of *Cah Ampera* hybrid identity in negotiating citizenship, at a time their social awareness is constrained by hardship despite the fact that reformation has ushered in openness for all citizens. The arena of negotiating action intensifies. The next section explores how they represent their action in micro politics to criticize macro politics in local setting.

The hiking of fuel prices, which the government implemented in 2008 along with another policy that aimed to mitigate the impact of the policy on the wellbeing of the poor, aroused the anger of the poor. The intention of the NGO participation in the meeting was to motivate the *kampung* inhabitants to take part in a demonstration against the hiking fuel price. Far in the distance outside the meeting, some *kampung* youths and members of the community were seated around an evening fire, discussing their preparations to participate in the demonstration. There is little doubt that members of the community were in a state of consternation and disappointment with the decision of the government to raise fuel prices, as well as the cash assistance program (*Bantuan Langsung Tunai*)<sup>11</sup>, the distribution of which was

plagued with controversy. Village men and women were evidently anxious to play their respective roles in the demonstrations. “*Tomorrow we will depart for the venue together using a vehicle*”, a fat woman, wearing a maternity dress, standing amidst seemingly relaxed rick shaw pushers, as a note of reminder to her friends about the event that was slated for the following morning.

In the morning of the following day, which was May 20, 2008, the country commemorated the National Reawakening Day (*Hari Kebangkitan Nasional*), demonstrations got off to a frenzied start in a procession of lines of people in groups that were based on those who took part, along Slamet Riyadi street, Solo city. During the demonstration, some youths sang a song called *Cucak Rowo* whose lyrics were slightly twisted and replaced by: “*Fuel prices up, SBY down....*” The same pattern seemed to characterize the song sang by fabricators of traditional kerosene stoves, who would face the brunt in the event the government went ahead with what demonstrations constituted a controversial policy of raising fuel prices. The song they sang with the same lyrics, but with a higher gusto and tempo. Amid long lines of demonstrators, one could see the head of the housing neighborhood Pak RT, very busy distributing beverages to demonstrators, a task he shared with the *kampung* youths who lent a hand to an NGO in giving out food to participants. There was little doubt that a festive atmosphere engulfed the area. The procession walked toward Slamet Riyadi statue which served as the venue where Solo city deputy mayor was scheduled to deliver a speech to highlight the importance of the occasion. Meanwhile, NGO activists were busy straightening lines of demonstrators as the procession proceeded. A pick up vehicle was used as a make-shift rostrum, outfitted with large speakers, instilled even more enthusiasm in songs that punctuated the procession as it moved toward the venue.

In the meantime, in an attempt to draw the attention of his friends to the direct cash program issue which at the time was still very fresh in people’s minds and discussions, Didik posed the



following question: “*What does this direct cash assistance –Bantuan Langsung Tunai—issue all about anyway?*”, to which Maman threw back an immediate, calculated but relaxed response: “*You say you are against any criticism of the program, yet you went all the way to become a participant in the demonstration that was organized to protest against the program*”. However, what Maman did was merely an attempt to lighten the moment by poking fun, only for Didik to take the statement seriously simply because in reality the program had made his life even harder. Didik had a child at the time, could not understand Maman logic, and went ahead to pose the following tough question: “*If fuel prices have been raised, where is the promised direct cash assistance?*”

There is no denying the fact that Ampera behavior and attitude evoke negative memory among the local population, mainly because of the intransigence that was a prominent feature of *cah Ampera* ways and methods. In an event which was organized in preparation for presidential elections in 2009, for instance, the attitude Didik and several of his friends portrayed by not refusing to lend a hand to the RT and the local general elections chapter to finalize preparations for such an important event, such as participating in giving out voters invitation cards, drew very strong negative public criticisms one of which was encapsulated in the comment made by one community member that was loaded with disappointment: “*To hell with Ampera devil ....!*”. Instead of helping the community in making preparations for the monumental occasion, the youth opted to travel to Tawangmangu tourist destination. One of them queried another this way ‘If such an event occurs, I just have to leave town. what benefit do I get in return for my participation?’ Such a question illustrates Didik’s way of asking and making reflection on the reality of the life he was leading at the time. He was well aware of such reality, which demoralized him the more and decided not to be part of it. On the contrary, unlike other young boys and children who were disinterested in such matter, they were very keen in assisting RT in making preparations by for instance

distributing locations maps and directions showing where voters could go to cast their votes on the day of the general elections.

Higher fuel prices induced spiraling inflation which was reflected in rising prices of commodities and services. Such a condition generated high uncertainty and hardship. However, after a long wait, the assistance which the government promised to mitigate the impact of higher fuel prices on the well-being of the poor, was disbursed. Even though the channeling process was not as smooth as expected, direct cash assistance reduced the impact of rising services for the poor. This was because, equipped with written proof that a parent was a beneficiary of the direct cash assistance, they could pawn it to providers of services in lieu of cash to pay for education and health bills. The charges below refer to the registration fees for entrance of students into higher education levels.

“*Many members of the community complained about their inability to pay for school fees of their children. In one instance, a parent was not able to register his children in school simply because he had not paid charges that were due. In other words, some children were forced to abscond from schooling as parents figured out how they could raise the funds to pay for their education*”, noted the neighborhood head (RT) 03.

As a way out, some parents pawned the direct cash assistance which the government promised to give them for the September-December 2008 period, (Rp. 400,000), at half the going price with their neighbors<sup>12</sup>. As a guarantee, the direct cash assistance coupons, which were promise notes to beneficiaries to receive RP. 400,000 for three months, were pawned for instant cash at the value. “*Each BLT coupon had a value of Rp 100,000,*” the head of housing RT 02/ RW VII Sangkrah, Sutrisno neighborhood explained. For every BLT coupon, which was pawned, was subjected to a charge of 10 percent interest per month. Potential recipients of BLT coupon were supposed to receive them in September or before the disbursement of the second batch. The condition above underscores the reality that direct cash transfers were not able to cover

the entire cost of services, which skyrocketed as a consequence of higher prices that ensued in the wake of fuel price hike policy. In other words, the cost of living for many people had become not only higher but unaffordable.

Youth resistance has reached such a level that leads one to draw the conclusion that: “*Today, Sangkrah is no longer strong supporter of the political party which uses the symbol of a bull (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan)*”<sup>13</sup>. And another member of the community shed more light on the point that: “*They are no longer in charge of managing relocation, but they expect their party to win the elections. It is better to support SBY’s party to win the election*”, so ended the critical comment but pregnant with a lot of rationality. “*The PDIP (Indonesian democratic party for struggle) indeed lost to other parties in Sangkrah Kampung, which is the first time which has happened*”. So went discussion that involved some youths, who spent their time along a decrepit alleyways which passed through the area where Hendra’s houses had been razed the ground in preparation for relocation and resettlement of the residents to another location, whilst listening to Hendra’s confusion as to whether he should use the relocation and resettlement compensation money to rebuild his house or pay for the treatment of his one year old child who was suffering from hernia. “*I don’t have any money left on me...which is why I’m in a state of confusion. I would like to take my child to the medical doctor for treatment but I fear rejection*”.

Ari (25), a young man who has always taken a risk, has a critical attitude, which distinguishes him from his peers. In the afternoon, the place, which is located near the cemetery and in close proximity of the Bengawan Solo river was rife with *kampung* youths. *Ciu*, cards, guitar and *ketipung* traditional music instrument have become common features of the youth *thongkrongan* event as it provided the rhythm that accompanied dangdut songs the youth sang. In their midst, Ari was seated with his legs crossed as he played card games. As often happens, playing the card of games under such a setting often invites the attention of security on their routine

security surveillance operations. Most youths are often dressed in pairs of jean shorts without shirts, a condition that exposed their heavily tattooed bodies clearly to passersby. Some youths donned fancy T-shirts, wore ear rings, their mops of hair colored, while their faces could not conceal frowns and fatigue, as their attention was absorbed by the card game play that was underway. The *lincak* (a traditional bamboo bench) was littered with cards and circulars published by Partai Demokrasi Kasih Bangsa (a national political party), which contained information aimed to convince members of the public to become supporters through a program that involved free lunch, doing barber work for free, music in Kedung Lumbu field, which was just a stone throw from *Kampung Sangkrah*, which the youth called home.

A collection of circulars distributed by the political party, which were still sealed, were clearly visible. Some circulars were mixed up with game cards, and placed under the knees of the boys who were seated with their legs crossed. Apparently, Ari’s attention riveted on one of the circulars. Ari tried to read about politics, which was at the time was the center of public discourse. At the time, political campaigns had gained steam, as on 9 April 2009, the election of candidates for the legislature got underway. ‘Mr, what does democracy mean, for me who is an underprivileged individual? Really! is participating in general elections important to me, a person who does not even have a job?’.

Ari tried to pose what in some way seemed to be a blatant question, about the importance and essence of democracy at a time when public expectations and reality, which Ari and his friends experienced did not in any way, produce any positive and concrete outcomes worth the word. It such reality, that indeed the coming to prominence of *Cah Ampera* expression and outlook toward life. They do not change and social stigma that mainstream society associates with them also remains intact. Democracy only goes as far as the instruments they use, but does not lead to change in their paradigm in observing youth dynamics. *Cah Ampera* way and lifestyle, is evidently prominent

hence assumes center stage in the way Ratna (19) behaves and participates in protests.

In one event which marked the national child's day, which was a collaboration effort among various NGOs, descended into chaos and pandemonium when Solo city mayor, Joko Widodo, in his speech highlighted achievements the city has made in the area of education for school age children in Solo city. Apparently, on hearing such remarks, Ratna could take it no more. In a loud, nonsense manner, she stood up in the middle of the field and began yelling out, which was an intent on drawing public attention to her intense displeasure and disappointment with what she had just heard "*.....not right! ....we are children but we can not go to school.....!*". Ratna protested as she pointed to the line of school age children standing behind her who were unable to attend school.

Such an unexpected interjection, coming from Ratna, caused mayhem in what hitherto seemed to members of government bureaucracy a well prepared and executed event. Yet Ratna is an epitome of facts and reality. The presence and existence of Ratna and her friends constituted testament of statistics on the number of school age children who could not afford it, hence the failure of the program. The instant emergence of Ratna upstaged the efforts of the which the bureaucracy to tell success stories about children education, hence throwing the harmony that such stories tried to create and disseminate to those attending the occasion. In light of such reality, perhaps, Solo city mayor, felt indignation and ashamed by the contrast between reality projected by bureaucracy and facts on the ground. Not long after that event, the mayor summoned all city government offices to register all school age children in the city, who could not afford schooling. Many children who were not attending school were requested to report to the city hall, but to this day, nothing of consequence came out of such efforts<sup>14</sup>. To this day, Ratna and friends continue to lead the tough life of fending for themselves as ever.

The youth resorted to resistance in the form

of purification to vent their anger at the hardship and social stigma that targeted them which is some way was regarded as the reason for their relocation/ resettlement plans. In reality, plans to relocate them attested to efforts of mainstream society to get rid of them by banishing them to some other location. However, the youth exploited such a misfortune by creating a new arena for developing a new hybrid identity which they used in negotiating citizenship with their members of mainstream society.

Hoisted above the embankment, was a banner which decried the performance of the regional government: "*What is the essence of an embankment, why did we deserve to be expelled and evicted from this place? We will live and die for the embankment!*".<sup>15</sup> Meanwhile, in a neighboring *kampung*, another banner could be seen conveying a similar message: "*Residents of the river Kelurahan Sewu river bank are opposed to relocation plans. We are determined to defend the land of our birth to death*". Another banner had the following message: "*We would rather suffer from water inundation than accept relocation and resettlement to another location!*".

The psychological situation of members of the community was evidently fragile and irascible hence very susceptible to mood swings when it became evident that socialization of the resettlement plan and collection of data was already underway. "*As I speak, the kampung head has begun the data collection process. Some residents have land certificates while others do not. The kampung head has already set the deadline for members of the river bank to submit the required information*". So noted Triyanto, the head of the regional government development planning agency (Solo Pos, 9 July 2008).

Problems which plagued the area designed for relation which among others, included the fact that the program was poorly planned and the ownership status of some of the land for relation was still shrouded in uncertainty and controversy.

Another problem which attracted a lot of public attention was the emergency assistance for victims of flooding, which did not reach the

intended beneficiaries in general and those who were seriously affected in particular. Cemeng (26) was critical of the practice of linking emergency assistance for flood victims to willingness of recipients to relocate and resettle<sup>16</sup>: ‘Why does the government do things this way, especially in implementing big programs such as relocation and resettlement? The issue of resettlement only assumed center stage yesterday evening, one wonders why such thinking was not done before. Now everything is in chaos’, he lamented. Meanwhile, Ponco, another resident, was even more blatant in his comment: “This is my guessestimate. The government will spend billions of Rupiah, 200 million will be spent on paying for those who have been living on government land hence do not have land certificates, the question is what about those who have land certificates?. Indeed, one does not blame them for thinking that someone is engaged in the practice of dividing and rule between the two groups.” Cemeng, instantly became irritated: ‘For Sewu *kampung*, all residents were given wooden pulp, cement...they must also have the right to receive the Rp. 8 million in assistance...if that is the case, I will go and hang Mr Pokja...’. The head of the housing neighborhood, Pak RT, seemed displeased with Cemeng’s idea: “*Please you should not reach such extremes... as such an action is in violation of the law*”. Not to be upstaged, Ponco reacted to Pak RT’s remark by siding with Cemeng: ‘What is clear, I have all readiness to be the executioner’. “*What if you are thrown into jail after perpetrating such a heinous act?*”, Mr. RT posed the question in askance: “*I have no problem with that, what is important I do not have any hesitation to do that*”, Cemeng responded, with an evidently irritated note.

There is little doubt that the attention of those in attention was absorbed by the issue, a fact that was attested by the fact that even as evening beckoned, they were still seated on their makeshift sits along the road shoulders as their discussion continued. Meanwhile another issue, that received a lot of public attention was uncertainty that often bedevils emergency assistance destined for

Sangkrah. The floods that struck on December 2009, was yet another chequered history of inundation for the *kampung*. Two years earlier, the *kampung* was inundated by floods as Gadjah Mungkur embankment caved in to the deluge of water. Victims received Rp 150, 000 in assistance, which was in the form of 2 pieces of wood and 2 bags of cement. However, the emergency assistance never reached the intended victims who were in dire need of it. Pak Parto, lashed out by saying: “*Just imagine, a house is damaged by floods and the only emergency assistance that the government could send to victims was two pieces of wood, while ironically those individuals who were not affected, received assistance*”.

Pak Parto was evidently more prognostic in his remarks. For him, all the uncertainty that surrounded emergency assistance was according to him, not surprising and predictable : ‘If those whose houses suffered slight damage faced such fate, just imagine what was in store for those whose houses experienced more severe damage?, a rhetorical question he answered himself by saying that, they could not receive and assistance!’, evidently displeased by answering the question which he himself had posed. Apparently, Cemeng evinced a more realistic attitude in facing the situation. For him, the attention was on his mother who was seriously ill. To that end, he tried to give him mother words of encouragement by saying: “Mother, you do not need to be disappointed with anybody in the event you are one of those who do not receive emergency assistance. What is important is that one of your siblings becomes a beneficiary ”, he consoled his bedridden mother and continued: “Do you know what, my mother is serious sick, what if she dies, it is me who will face the brunt”.

## CONCLUSION

The research findings show that to become a member of a society recognized as *cah Ampera* entails the need for repositioning in three boundaries. The first boundary is the negotiating

position with the adult. *Cah Ampera* survive from the reality that they are not part of social problems but always autonomous. They always stand alone and even criticize the pragmatic policy which exclude them from the *kampung*.

They represent themselves as members and become an integral part of the essence of negotiating meaning they strive for in their narrative about identity in contestation with symbolic capital. They manage the meaning of the reality of democracy, the resettlement and relocation policy, and resistance to public service provision program through rituals and yelling and shouting or ridiculing officials at the *kampung* administration offices. They manage the bargaining process amidst the reality of general indifference and also have sufficient understanding about news on underperformance of public services delivery.

Profession is the second area in repositioning citizenship. The third area relates to the *world of the youth itself*. The research findings contribute to findings on the concept of youth which emerges in the context of efforts to reform democratic public bureaucracy. The youth representing *cah Ampera* identity have the ability to serve as bridgeheads to pathology, and risk management (transition) and play roles in total unification of repositioning citizenship. The trajectory often positions the sequence of status from pathology to transition and eventually subject. The research findings show that the youth in Sangkrah constitute a holistic individual with the trilogy of perspectives right from the subculture of pathology, transition perspective from bravery to conduct risk management and agency in the process of their endeavors to manage their citizenship. The trajectory of the journey, which *cah Ampera* personality follows does not start from childhood to adulthood, rather achieving fully-fledged maturity in managing the dynamics of recurrent issues, right from purification, eviction, to managing the open 'container' and embankment to survival in the regime that observes individual political rights.

Notes:

- 1 *Kampung* is a hamlet in urban area.
- 2 *Cah Ampera* is an identity of a group of excluded youths who live in Kampung Sangkrah.
- 3 *Keamperanan* refers to representation of *cah Ampera* identity.
- 4 Yudi Latief gives an account of an Indonesian, who has experienced movement or shift since the onset of the reformation era. According to him, the boundaries of Indonesian nationalism has diminished (in Kompas, 2 December 2008) ironically at a time when freedom has taken center stage. The problem is reflected in the crystallization of contestation of identity which emanated from the euphoria that characterized the experimentation of reformation by the elites. 'Apparently, Reformation helped in strengthening another identity which is somewhat different, the identity of 'Others' versus 'Us'. The politicization of identity which is oriented toward control by the group relates to for example the marginalization of women and religious identity. The major implication of The others identity is the emergency of the false or fake (pseudo) identity, the false dichotomy between 'US' versus 'Them' and places the definition of others which essentially often tries to project different thinking of other groups (Hartiningsih and Pambudy, in Kompas, 8 May 2008, 'Pemberdayaan' Perempuan Di Tengah Politisasi Identitas').
- 5 The embankment was constructed in 1986, with the aim of providing security and certainty to members of the community from frequent flooding caused by Bengawan Solo River.
- 6 Sangkrah kampung was constructed during 1960-1970s among others through a number of people who were involved in *mboro*.
- 7 Based on the population composition, most people who fall within the 20-29 age group (USAID, 2010). As Sangkrah kampung suffers from high poverty incidence, 50 percent of the population who fall in the 7-18 age group can not attend school (11480 people), based on Kampung Monograph 2009). This means

- that many children and teenagers have never attended school.
- 8 *Lolos butuh* is self sufficient economic condition of the poor youth in Sangkrah.
  - 9 Students have the habit of riding their motorcycles in convoy after knowing that they have passed the national examinations. One of the interesting photos that was portrayed on the front page of *Jawa Pos* was a convoy of East Java students who rode in adjacent formation that involved many motorcycles that ended up obstructing traffic. Students wore school uniforms which had been colored with all manners of images using paint as they in standing positions on speeding motorcycles, some wore just under pants, exposing their brown painted torsos fully to the elements. The title read: 'The convoy of graduation, evidence of School repression' (17 June 2007). They felt they had succeeded in passing the national examination with an accumulative score of 4.5 which was raised to 5. Another news item depicted the same habit but in an area that is located outside Java. The theme of the convoy, sent another message with the title: 'Pass the examinations, sprayed with water and seduced' (Jawa Pos, 17 June 2007). 'members of the community also engage in the tradition of spraying water. Ironically, those who spray the students also engage in perpetrate lewd practices against female students involved in convoys'.
  - 10 Sweeping, which was carried out by groups of people who often do the same on Friday and Saturday nights used to be frequent during the early phases of the reformation era. Those involved are the Mujahiddin. Opposition to such practices often came from hoodlums who mujahidin consider are immoral. Violence reached the peak in 2008 and culminated in the death of a member of the community, Kipli, who was a hoodlum. (Okezone.com, 6 May 2012. 00:16 WIB, "Awal Konflik Preman Ormas di Solo terjadi sejak 2008").
  - 11 The Indonesian government planned budget for BLT reached Rp 14 trillion, which was to be disbursed to 19.1 million people. Every head of family, received Rp 100,000 a month in 2008. The same applied to the government budget earmarked for Rice for the poor which increased by Rp 4.3 trillion. Besides, the government allocated allowances to the national police and armed forces, and workers who earned lower than Rp 2 million. In addition, the government implemented three programs, which were expected to mitigate the impact of the increase of fuel prices on weak members of the population. First, social assistance and protection program which targeted 19.1million heads of households through the rice for the poor program, school assistance program, and community health insurance. Second, a revolving people empowerment program through national people empowerment program (PNPM) in 5,720 sub districts, which was in the form of direct cash assistance to the tune of Rp 3 billion per sub district per year. And third, the people's enterprises credit program (KUR) coupled with funding of programs channeled by every ministry and government agency that aimed to empower SMEs (Direktorat Jenderal Anggaran, 21 May, 2008).
  - 12 *Kartu BLT Mereka di Gadaikan*, Solopos, 26 Juli 2008.
  - 13 At the time, it happened that preparations for presidential elections were underway. Based on the outcomes of recapitulation of voter count by Solo city election board, Sby-Budiono garnered 47,96 % votes, compared with Megawati – Prabowo, who obtained 39,30% votes(Solo Pos, 16 July 2009).
  - 14 Actually, the implementation of free education program in Solo was belated, given the fact that plans were made long ago if information and announcements featured in news papers that covered the implementation of the school operational assistance program (BOS) by the government. In some regions, such as Sukoharjo district the program was implemented much earlier than in Surakarta (Subkhan, Kabar Indonesia, 24-Feb-2010, 20:02:17 WIB).
  - 15 Warga bantaran sungai ngotot tolak relokasi, Solo Pos, 7 September 2008.
  - 16 Solo city government received assistance from the Coordinating Ministry for social welfare(Menkokesra), which was tailored toward mitigating the impact of flooding. The assistance was expected to enable the regional government in relocating 1,571 citizens who were residents of River Bengawan Solo banks, from Semanggi, Sangkrah, Sewu and Pucangsawit. Once the program is realized, the

river bank, will assume its function of serving as water percolation point for river water. In an MoU on the mitigation of river flooding, Solo city administration received assistance to the tune of 31.9 billion for relocation and Rp 5.5 billion for strengthening and repairing infrastructure (Solo Pos (19/7/2011)).

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