

THE INVISIBLE POWER OF LOCAL DEMOCRACY IN NEGLASARI

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ABSTRACT

Village democracy as local level democracy is different from supra village democracy. The difference is primarily on applied value or tradition basis. In empirical level, village democracy in Neglasari until present time applies two value basics, which are local and liberal values. Whereas it has been years that state, by its policies, try to introduce and enforce liberal democracy traditions in village area, both in decision making and village chief election particularly, as well as in governmental implementation generally. Local values based on Islamic teaching and Naga tradition that still exist and becoming the basic of democracy in Neglasari highly contribute in creating conditions above. In fact, local values have become a power that cannot be ignored by the governmental authorities of Neglasari in implementing democracy. It is an invisible thing that its existence can be felt especially in decision making and village chief election.

Keywords: *village democracy, democratic tradition, and local values*

INTRODUCTION

Neglasari Village was named Pasir Angin Village in the past time. It was established in 1911. The village was a merger of two kampung (hamlet), i.e. Pasir Angin and Sundewenang. These two kampung were the first residence of Naga people who lives outside the Kampung Naga, known as *sanaga*. Kampung Naga itself was a unity of customary law society that has been living in the present time Neglasari area since the 17th century, approximately since 1620s. In other words, Neglasari Village is the residence of the descendent of Kampung Naga .

Administratively, Neglasari Village is located under the jurisdiction of Salawu Ward, Tasikmalaya Regency, West Java. As any other villages, Neglasari is unity of law society protected by National Law. Recent law regulates villagel area is UU No. 6 Year 2014 on Village. According to this law, as well as two previous laws, i.e. UU No. 22 Year 1999 and UU No. 32 Year 2004, Neglasari, as well as other villages in Indonesia are having authorities to manage their

own household. In fact, however, in spite of any central regulation, since the beginning, villages have already own this authority. Since village is basically a self-governing community, in form of law society (*Kesatuan Masyarakat Hukum/KMH*), as well as customary law society (*Kesatuan Masyarakat Hukum Adat/KMHA*) with an ability to manage their society based on habits and customs such as Kampung Naga. Thus, authority constructed by state is not an award. Therefore state encloses a statement that the authority is based on local society customs and original rights.

In reality, many villages, as the unity of law society, do not put their custom and original rights as the basis to manage their society. Not because they do not want to. It is more because many villages' customs has lost or faded. There are two factors that caused the lost or fading of their customs, i.e. modernization and state policy.

Between both factors, state policy became the major influent for those villages. For it has the forcing power which is—like or

dislike—must be applied by villages in managing their household. Thus it can be immediately applied. Eventually their original habit as well as customs replaced by values considered better by the state to manage village. However, it is important to know that they are based on modern values.

We are able to find quite different phenomenon in Neglasari. Village conceptions constructed by state through its policies are actually applicable. On the other hand, local customs and original rights coexist in Neglasari. The presence of Kampung Naga as traditional village became the distinguishing factor of Neglasari amongst any other villages in Salawu, Tasikmalaya, or even West Java. The existing local customs that have become the life guidance for Kampung Naga villagers have also become the guidance for the majority of Neglasari residents. This is a fair condition, considering that the majority of Neglasari residents are the descendants of Kampung Naga.

This particular condition in Neglasari does not mean that they are free to apply their customs and original rights. State, by its authorities, persistently imposes its interest on villages. One example is in village chief election. All villages, including Neglasari, must choose their chief using liberal values (liberal democracy) that emphasize individual rights. Whereas according to their customs, many villages have their own way in choosing their chief. The villages' weak bargaining position gives them no other way but to accept and apply liberal democracy, including Neglasari. In this case, state does not commit to the formulated village construction. Eventually, authority based on customs and original rights in managing villages exists only in form of law statement, not in real application.

According to the law regulated by state, democracy in Neglasari refers to liberal democracy tradition, especially in village chief election. However, whereas how strong Naga custom in regulating the people of Neglasari, in its empirical level, Neglasari does not fully applies liberal democracy. The Naga customs that exist to the present time still becomes one of the bases in running village administration in Neglasari. In other words, there are two democratic traditions in Neglasari, i.e. liberal and local. The working of both traditions can be seen in village chief election particularly, and in village's decision making generally.

This is an attractive phenomenon for further studies. Whereas it is possible that the same phenomenon is taking place in any other

villages that are empirically still in form of law society, though it is not a traditional society, especially villages outside Java Island. Furthermore, we can also figure out the existence as well as how great is the effect of local customs and original rights on village democracy. Eventually we can also consider the urgency of liberal democracy implementation in villages, especially those which are still a unity of law society and customary law society.

METHODOLOGY

The research uses qualitative method. This method is chosen since the purposes of the research to describe and analyze further the existence of local Naga values, i.e. their customs, in local democracy of Neglasari Village, Salawu Ward, Tasikmalaya, West Java. The existence of Naga customs among modernization introduced by state through its policies has caused dualism in their democracy. However, the research focused on the existence of local values as an invisible power of democracy in Neglasari. Based on this purpose, according to Taylor & Bogdan (1984), Nasution (2003), Sugiono (2005), and Irawan (2007), it is appropriate to use qualitative method since the focus of the research is aimed to discover meaning behind visible facts.

Strategies used to accomplish the purpose of the research are case studies and historical strategies. Case studies strategy is chosen to go in-depth to research problems, in this case to deeper investigate the local values as an invisible power of democracy in Neglasari. Details in revealing specific cases can also be obtained using this strategy, especially concerning the causes of power owned by local values as well as its effect on democracy in Neglasari. Therefore the use of historical strategy become important as well, since it will deepen the comprehension in discovering the background of the condition takes place. By this strategy, we can also get clearer context in explaining every change ever taken place that eventually brings to the formation of local values as the invisible power of democracy in Neglasari.

With all those considerations, the relevant and appropriate data collection technique is unstructured interview and documentation. Interview becomes the main technique since secondary data obtained from various documents related to the research problems is hard to obtain. Interview especially carried out with Village Government, Villagers' Representative (BPD), *sesepuh* Neglasari (Neglasari elders), particularly for their knowledge on the history of democracy in Neglasari, as well as the Naga elders for

information on customs that become their life guidance.

STATE POLICY VS RURAL DEMOCRACY

State, according to Weber (in Greth and Mills, 1974) is an institute with a great power to regulate and force their will. In other words, Weber suggested that the state have an authority to execute any action to their citizens. While Marx (Ritzer, 2005) suggested the state as a party stands hand in hand with capitalists and against the civilian. In this case, Marx wanted to indicate that the state is always on the superior position, and people are inferior. Therefore, the state is an instrumental that has power to force people. Weber's description, as well as Marx's, shows that there is a relationship between the state and the people in term of authority. However, the relationship is generated in an unbalanced way.

State becomes the beneficial party by this authority. Meanwhile, people as the owner of sovereignty become their followers, walking on the direction of the state policies. The state policy to do or not to do particular action (Dye, 1978), must be followed by the people. By this kind of policy, the state is able to force any value they believed as the right one to the people. This is in line with the suggestion of Easton (1953) that policy is the authoritative allocation of values for whole society.

From the explanation above we can say that policy is a concrete form of the power owned by the state, i.e. authority. This state policy is formulated, implemented, and evaluated by the government. Therefore, policies made by the state are also commonly known as government or public policies. In more distinct form, the state policy can be seen in the form of law regulations, programs, and activities conducted by the government.

Government eventually becomes the more distinct manifest of the state. By this position, thus government is the responsible party in realizing the purposes of establishing a nation. In order to realize its responsibility, government is awarded by certain authorities to rule through its decisions and policies. Thus, by its authorities, government has the power to manage and administer its national household, including the life of local area people, which is, in this research, refers to the village.

Apart from different opinion amongst people on the presence of government, the need of its presence is a must. This is caused by the need of ruling party to minimize disorders amongst people. Even though at last it cannot be avoided, government can still seek for solution,

both directly, or by becoming a facilitator, depends to the government's choice. Another consideration is related to the implementation of the state policies. The presence of the government is needed to create effectiveness and efficiency of the state policies.

By its authorities, government is able to design the direction of political and governmental development it wishes through its policies. The government's perspective will give colors to its policies. In other words, those policies, as the concrete form of government authorities, will contain values of a perspective considered as better by government from other perspectives.

In the context of democracy, liberal tradition predominates in multiple countries, including Indonesia. This tradition has become government's main choice to be applied in various levels, from national to rural. Values of this liberal tradition have been excessively loaded in the content of policies formulated by the government. One of the policies formulated by the government concerns the ruling of village democracy. Whereas in fact, many Indonesian villages still applied their local traditions, whose characteristics, in academic rank, are identical with communitarian tradition.

Liberal tradition gives more emphasize to its admission on individual rights. This admission has constructed the procedure of decision making by voting mechanism. While the tradition of village democracy gives more emphasize to togetherness, so that the mechanism of decision making headed towards the consensus through parley (Kartohadikoesoemo, 1984; Hatta, 2009).

Wignjodipoero (1982) suggested in line with Kartohadikoesoemo and Hatta. According to him, in a village as the unity of law society, beside religious and communal, democracy is a traditional atmosphere living in the village. This atmosphere of democracy in the village is in line with the communal and cooperation that bring shared interest to advance over individual interest. This is because individual inside the unity of (customary) law society is bonded to the society and not free to commit every deed.

In the unity of customary law society (customary society), he suggested that democratic atmosphere is marked and spirited by the custom that possess universal values, i.e. common agreement as general authority basis, as well as parley and representative as the administration system. In carrying out the government, head of people (Village Chief) always hold a discussion with other governing colleagues. In many cases

the chief also hold with their people who have right to attend the discussion of certain cases.

Similar opinion suggested by Tjiptoherijanto and Priyono (1983). They suggested that the basic idea of "democracy" is the partaking of people in decision making through the process of discussion. Therefore, Moh. Hatta suggested that discussion become the symbol of traditional democracy in addition to communal cooperating culture implemented in village life (Tjiptoherijanto dan Priyono, 1983).

This really could take place since the basis of this phenomenon is the use of local values or customs. Hofstede, as quoted in Tjiptoherijanto and Priyono (1983) suggested that in Javanese tradition, customs rule rural society. One of cases is the election of Village Chief that is done by villagers themselves. Another case is the village conference that has the highest authority of decision making. In this conference, adult villagers have right to attend and share their opinions.

In rural community, maintaining social harmony and good relationship among other society members is as precious as wealth and communal resources. Based on this idea, in village democracy, avoiding conflict and stress is the best choice for it is able to maintain social system. Therefore, emphasizing consultation and process towards consensus is preferable in village democracy (Tjiptoherijanto and Priyono, 1983; Kartohadikoesoemo, 1984). In other words, collective consensus based on local values is the best choice in maintaining people harmony. In this case, according to Wigjodipoero (1982), the spirit to create harmony is related to the custom and good manners that encourage people to be patient on the proper and justice bases.

There are two factors, according to Soewarno (2000), that have to be considered when we discuss about rural democracy. Those are internal factors, i.e. *demos* (people) and *kratos* (institution). The *demos* of a village consist of people who dwell in a certain residential area because of cognation and/or have been settled in a same place. Therefore they get in touch one another by forming an association. While the developed *kratos* is a communal cooperation that according to Soewarno (2000) assumes in a form of *primus inter pares*. Under this condition people are participating in decision making. However, the final decision is still in the elders' hand considered as *primus*. The final decision bonds all people, and violation against it will be granted a social punishment. The external factors are upper government, social, economic, and cultural factors.

From the explanation above we can see that government policies related to the arrangement of village democracy based on liberal tradition as a matter of fact is not in line with rural life that have already owned their own tradition of democracy. On liberal tradition perspective, there are several things that do not seems like democratic, such as the right to be elected as a chief in a unity of limited customary law society. However, it is important to notice that the imposition of the state will to villages with their life full of various cultures, social structures, and economic systems, is also not a democratic manner. In other words, the mechanism of decision making through voting to get major votes in liberal tradition is not a better way compared to a conference to get a consensus in local tradition. Moreover if it is agreed that the most important thing in democracy is the participation of people, since in the local tradition, people participation has become the main thing. Togetherness is the pillar in maintaining village existence or the unity of law society.

LOCAL VALUES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON LOCAL DEMOCRACY IN NEGLASARI

It has been discussed earlier that Neglasari as a unity of law society formed as a merger of two kampung that are Pasir Angin dan Sundawenang¹. Both kampung are the first villages to be established by *urang* Naga (Naga people) after they leave Kampung Naga². They are later known as *sanaga*³ (*sanaga* people).

¹ According to Antlöv (2002) that quoted from de Klein (1939), it is known that there was a unity of people ruling their life themselves in Priangan, but not as large as other villages in Java. This unity was known as *Kampung* (Kampong). Whereas those kampongs inhabited by few people, thus for the sake of the Dutch political and commercial interest, kampongs in Priangan were merged and converted to villages such as Neglasari Village. It is uncertain when was the merger has taken place. However it was approximately after the year 1809 when the government of Netherland Indie issued an instruction to form villages in Priangan area (Now become a part of West Java Province).

² Kampung Naga is a residential area for a traditional society that in present time becomes a part of Neglasari Village. Administratively, Kampung Naga included in the area of RT 01 RW 01 *Kapunuhan* Naga (Naga Orchard). The people

When the *sanaga* opened a new land for their residence such as *Kampung* Pasir Angin and *Kampung* Sundawenang, they are automatically brought along Naga custom that has been their entire life guidance. This custom sourced from the teaching of their ancestor, combined with the teaching of Islam. The custom not only rules relationship between people and their ancestor, their surroundings, and other society members, but also rules the administering of a government, though the existing government is still in a simple form. However, the main thing in a government, which is the mechanism of decision making as well as the election of the leader have been arranged as well.

Naga custom contends that in every decision making, the consensus of the *sesepuh* and *pini sepuh*⁴ (the elders) becomes the main

of this kampong are the ancestor of Neglasari villagers, who are the people of two *sanaga* villages merged by the government of Netherland Indie. Kampung Naga is predicted to populate the present area since the early stage of 17th century. Wahyu Wibisana in his article published by *Pikiran Rakyat* in 1988 predicts they have been populated there since 1620s.

³*Sanaga* is a predicate refers to the *urang* Naga who live outside their host kampong. Generally they leave their kampong after they got married. In present time according to the administrators of Neglasari, 2/3 of their villagers are the descendant of *urang Naga* or *sanaga*. Even though they have not live in host kampong, *sanaga* still a part of Naga traditional society. Therefore, much of the existing customs that became the basis of their life order in Kampung Naga is still maintained by the people of *sanaga*.

⁴*Sesepuh* and *pini sepuh* are important parts of the whole people lives in Kampung Naga. They are a small group of people with the knowledge, skill, benevolence, and policy over most villagers. In living their life, they tend to give priority to the good of the kampong and all people. With all those superiority, they are obeyed by the people of the Naga Kampong and Neglasari Village. *Sesepuh* refers to those who sit in governmental structure in Kampung Naga, while *pini sepuh* refers to those with the same level of skills and knowledge as the *sesepuh*, but not in any position in governmental structure. In simple way, the *sesepuh* can be analogized as an elite

thing. This consensus is obtained through a forum called *babadamian*⁵. In *babadamian*, *sesepuh* and *pini sepuh* gathered to discuss things to do or not to do for the sake of the village and villagers.

This Naga custom based provision in fact still becomes the manual for the people of *sanaga* in living their life. Sometimes even the new comers will follow the rules of Naga customs in executing particular things, such as building a house or opening a business. The *sanaga* people who live in Neglasari are the majority. It is fair reasonable, since they are the one who open new villages in Neglasari for their residence. Up to present time, approximately 2/3 of Neglasari villagers are the people of *sanaga* and *urang* Naga.

In carrying out the village governance in Neglasari, almost all of the officers are the *sanaga*. Not only the Village Chief (known as *kuwu*), but also the staffs, Village House of Conference (*Badan Permusyawaratan Desa/BPD*), as well as several officers of Rural Community Empowerment Institute (*Lembaga Perberdayaan Masyarakat Desa/LPMD*), still have a relationship with Kampung Naga or *sanaga*. Meanwhile, *urang* Naga as the native villagers of Neglasari involved in the organization of illage administration by becoming *Punuh* (chief of orchard) in *Kapunuhan* Naga (Naga orchard).

With this kind of composition, it is fair that in government administration in Neglasari, the influence of Naga customs can be seen clearly. Moreover in every decision making through village conference (*musyawarah*), the presence of the *sesepuh* of Kampung Naga is

class with the soul of a statesman (*philospherelites*).

⁵*babadamian* can be translated as an activity to discuss certain thing to get a consensus. Referring to its mechanism, *babadamian* is likely to contain Islamic teaching, i.e. *musyawarah* (conference). Therefore, it can be said that *babadamian* is a mechanism of decision making carried out by *sesepuh* and *pini sepuh* sourced from the customs of ancestors and Islamic teachings. With this kind of construction of *babadamian*, we can also include *babadamian* in a concept of an institution as suggested by Hayami and Kikuchi (1987). As a mechanism, *babadamian* is an institution in form of bonding rules and a requirement for the people to obey it. Rules in *babadamian* are unwritten.

always expected. The village administrator considers the opinion of *sesepuh* as a reference to make decisions in implementation of development and government administration. By this condition, state regulations implemented through its policies do not hinder Naga custom to maintain its existence. Furthermore, along with Islamic teaching, Naga custom tends to be a power that invisible yet can be felt in governmental administration, particularly in the democracy of Neglasari by considering it as a reference in policies and decision making. The Naga customs then integrates with Islamic teaching and become the source of local value for the governmental administration in Neglasari Village, in form of *babadamian*.

The work of local value in democracy in Neglasari can be seen from its two main factors, i.e. the decision making and Village Chief (*kuwu*) election. To explain this phenomenon, we take a sample case such as a decision making process on renovating the *bale desa* (village hall) and the election of Village Chief take place in Neglasari.

Renovation of the *Balé Desa* of Neglasari

Balé⁶ desa is a meeting place for the villagers with the village administrator. This meeting is usually held when the administrator are willing to make a decision on development and governmental administration in Neglasari. Not all of the people attend this meeting. The attendants are people's representatives, such as *punuh*, Chairman of the Pillars of Citizens (RW), and Chairman of the Neighborhood (RT). Other attendants are social organizations representatives such as Institute of Rural Community Empowerment (LPMD), the Movement of Family Welfare (PKK), The Indonesian Ulama Council (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia /MUI*), and The Movement of Youth (*Karang Taruna*). As well as representatives of village government: Village Chief and staffs, as well as Villagers' House of Representatives (*Badan Permusyawaratan Desa /BPD*), and the people represented by the *sesepuh* and village personals.

In 2013, Neglasari Village received a grant from the West Java Province for the renovation of its *bale desa*. For this renovation, village administrator needs opinions from the

*sesepuh*⁷, especially from Kampung Naga. The opinion of the *sesepuh* is needed since there is quite a long history that lays between the building of *bale desa* and Kampung Naga. It is known that the *bale desa* and administrator office of Neglasari Village were built by *urang* Naga (the people of Naga). Moreover, the land where the building built was a donation (*wakaf*) from one of the *sesepuh* of Naga who was the first Village Chief of Neglasari, Mr. Arbasan.

When the time the *bale* was built, Naga custom as one of local value sources referred as consideration, such as to decide the building direction, dimension, as well as the best time to begin the building, etc. It means, when the *urang* Naga built the *bale desa*, they made calculations and considerations based on the custom they believed. Therefore, when the renovation is about to be carried out, the Village Chief holds a *babadamian* with the *sesepuh* of Naga and Neglasari. *Babadamian* is held by the Village Chief prior to the village conference held with the villagers.

It was previously known that there was a people's will to convert the *bale desa* to a multifunction hall. By this conversion, *bale desa* will has various functions, such as a sport lounge. This willing should be discussed with the *sesepuh* of Naga and Neglasari in a *babadamian*. It was decided that the *sesepuh* of Naga and Neglasari did not agree with the addition of *bale desa's* function. The underlying consideration was an apprehension that the *bale desa* will turn to a gambling venue, even in a small scale. In Islamic teaching, as well as in Naga custom, gambling is prohibited (*haram*).

The result of *babadamian* held by the Village Chief and the *sesepuh* regarded as a reference by the village administrator in later decision making process through village meeting. The village meeting took place in quite a fierce atmosphere since there were two conflicting parties. Both parties were BPD, who spoke in the name of the youth, wanted to convert the *bale desa* to a multifunction hall. With the spirit of

⁶The word '*balé*' itself may refer to a wall-less building. However, *bale desa* in Neglasari is a permanent building with the capacity of approximately 200 people.

⁷The concept of *sesepuh* in Neglasari is different from the one in Kampung Naga as described above. The difference is that the *sesepuh* in Neglasari do not need to hold a position in government structure. While in Kampung Naga, there are another conception that separates from *sesepuh*, i.e. the *pini sepuh*. The meaning of Makna *sesepuh* in the village includes both who hold a position in the structure and they who don't.

nowadays democratic “pattern”, if needed, BPD was ready to hold a voting in village conference. The other party was the *sesepuh* of Naga who still stand on their opinion that *bale desa* should only be functioned for positive activities according to Islamic teaching (*maslahat*) such as village meeting or conference, religious preach, PKK activities, etc., and prevent any opportunities of unbeneficial activities.

Nevertheless, it still goes in a warm atmosphere since the village administrator as the organizer, especially Village Chief, have already understood the pretensions of both parties. The village meeting eventually became the venue for opinion sharing of *sesepuh* Naga and the youth represented by BPD. Village administrator, by this meeting, played a role as a connecting bridge between both parties. *Babadamian* held by the Village Chief is the key of the efficiency of the meeting. Through *babadamian*, the Village Chief succeeded to unite the opinions of *sesepuh*, both from Neglasari and Kampung Naga.

Based on the considerations from the conference attendants, the administrator decided that the renovation of *bale desa* will not change its shape and function. Instead of voting, the decision was made through a consensus of village administrator, *sesepuh*, village personals, representatives of village institutions, and of course the BPD. Empirically, voting mechanism has never been done in Neglasari in every decision making process, except in the election of chief Village and *punuh* (chief of *kapunuhan*) since the state has regulate it. Before this regulation, the election of village chief in Neglasari was done through *babadamian* held by the village's *sesepuh*. As the follow-up of the decision, in 2 February 2014, the renovation of *bale desa* begun by collapsing the roof by the people.

Election of Village Chief and *Punuh* in Neglasari

The election of the Village Chief directly by the people in Priangan was introduced by the Dutch.⁸ It means that prior to the occupation of the Dutch, the election of village chief or head of kampong was not done directly by the people. If we pay attention to the mechanism of the leader election in Kampung Naga, this information is

⁸ According to Antlöv (2002) quoted from de Klein (1931), that in Priangan the election of village chief was not known until it was introduced by the Dutch in 1865. The model used by the Dutch follows the model used by Raffles in Java.

correct. The position of ritual leader of Kampung Naga, who is up to present time called *kuncen*, is a hereditary position. While other leader position such as *Lebe*, *Punuh Adat*, *Punuh Desa*, Chief of RW and RT elected through *babadamian* between *sesepuh* and *pini sepuh* in Kampung Naga. Kampung Naga is the pioneer village of Neglasari and have been inhabited the area since 1620s. It means, far before the Dutch colonization in Indonesia, Kampung Naga have already existed.

When the Dutch introduced the mechanism of village chief election, of course, the values they introduced were sourced from traditions of their country. It means that the tradition offered tends to be aimed to liberal democracy which emphasizes and glorify individual right. This tradition maintained by the Government of The Republic of Indonesia up to present time. To strengthen the implementation, the state regulates the mechanism of village chief election in state law, including the new law that is No. 6 Year 2014 on Village.⁹

From above explanation we can conclude that the introduction and implementation of liberal democracy tradition in Neglasari has taken place since the Dutch colonization era. Calculated since the establishment of Neglasari Village, that is, as known by local people, in 1911, until 2015, the implementation has been going for more than hundred years. However, in the empirical level, the tradition of liberal democracy is not completely implemented in the rural democracy of Neglasari, including in the election of village chief.¹⁰

In this hundred year period, Neglasari only have nine village chiefs. This amount also shows the number of village chief election taken place in Neglasari. Mr. Arbasan as the first village chief was elected not by the mechanism of direct voting, but by consensus obtained through *babadamian*. The consensus obtained from *sesepuh* and *pini sepuh* of Neglasari and Kampung Naga.

Mr. Arbasan leads Neglasari for more than twenty eight years between 1911—1939

⁹ Law No. 6 Year 2014 on Village in Section 34 verse 1 determines that Village Chief is directly elected by villagers.

¹⁰ In Neglasari, village chief was used to be called as *Lurah*. Therefore the people called *lurah* as *Juragan Lurah*. Now the predicate has changed to *Kuwu*, and the people called *kuwu* as Pak *Kuwu* (Mr. *Kuwu*).

when he passed away. In the tradition of liberal democracy, this long period of leadership would not be considered as democratic. However it is legal according to the tradition of democracy in Neglasari. In the habitual and customary provisions that underlie democratic life in Neglasari, a village chief is able to rule Neglasari as long as he has the *kawasa*¹¹. It means that the period of leadership in Neglasari does not base on the period of time such as five, six, or eight years for each period of leadership, but based on the presence or absence of *kawasa*. Determination of the presence or absence of *kawasa* is done by the chief himself since he is the only one who knows the condition of himself. Another limitation of the period is if the chief pass away.

Period limitation by the presence of *kawasa* is based on the quality that must be owned by a village chief. In the terms of *sesepuh* of Neglasari, a leader in Neglasari and Naga must have a good moral (*akhlak* in Islam teaching) and leadership¹². These requirements are considered as one unity. However, when it is need to advance one of them for a reason, the moral (*akhlak*) requirement will be the first choice. The main consideration is that moral will become the fortress or protector for the leader from any possibilities of committing bad deeds. Islamic teaching believed by the *sesepuh* highly contributes in determining this consideration.

Direct election of village chief by the people begins in 1939. However, the process did not completely implements the tradition of liberal democracy introduced by the Dutch. In its implementation, tradition or habit and custom that regarded as the life guidance in Neglasari still colors the election of village chief in present time. Decision on the village chief candidates is the authority of *sesepuh* and *pini sepuh*, both in Neglasari Village and in Kampung Naga, through *babadamian*. Thus it can be said that there are two traditions of democracy run in the election of chief village in Neglasari.

¹¹*Kawasa* in the tongue of neglasari *sesepuh* refers to the ability of a person, especially a leader measured from physical aspect related to physical, and psychological health related to spiritual health (moral/*akhlak* and mental), as well as the ability to lead the people (*leadership*).

¹²*Sesepuh* themselves call these requirements with simpler terms, i.e. *cageur* (healthy), *bageur* (good), *bener* (right), *pinter* (smart) *tur singer* (diligent and hard worker), as well as *ngomong* (able to speech, means the ability to influence people, or having the spirit of leadership).

In a glance, it seems that through the *babadamian*, not every people has right to be elected as the village chief. In fact it is not like that, since all people who meet the requirement of age will be "rated" by *sesepuh* and *pini sepuh* in the *babadamian*. If it appears that the result of the *babadamian* features only one person who meets the qualification of the *sesepuh*, then it will be decided officially as one candidate, and will not force to feature more than one candidate. The same thing will be applied if there are two or more qualified candidates, and then it will officially decide as it is, not forced to feature only one candidate.

From the investigation of village's history, it is known that there were three elections ever featured single candidate. Those were Mr. Saprudin (1968 election), Mr. Ada Kanda (1971 election) dan Mr. Endang Rusmana (1994 election). In each election, these candidates were against an empty *bumbung*¹³. Trial on the appropriateness of the decision of *sesepuh* and *pini sepuh* is done during the election between candidate and empty *bumbung*. In fact, these candidates resulted from *babadamian* obtained approval from all villagers.

Meanwhile, the result of *babadamian* that featured more than one candidate was the 1939 election between Mr. Abas dengan Mr. Oyo Kartawijaya; 1984 between Mr. Djaja Sutidja and Mr. Wiradinata; 1994 between Mr. Unus Suryadi and Mr. Mu'min. Entering reformation era in 2002, the candidates even increased to three, i.e Mr. Unus Suryadi, Mr. Mumu Mudin, and Mr. Anap Kurnia; 2008 featured Mr. Unus Suryadi, Mr. Adang Supriatna, and Mr. Sobirin. The phenomena of more than one candidate in village chief election including the 1939 election shows the objectivity of *sesepuh* through *babadamian* in determining candidates of village chief of Neglasari.

In the New Order era, in 1981 to be exact, by the Regulation of the Minister of Domestic Affair No. 2 Year 1981 on the Forming of Village Institute of Conference (*Lembaga Musyawarah Desa*), the *babadamian* is in fact had been authorized to the *Lembaga Musyawarah Desa* (LMD). This condition is maintained in the reformation era in 1999 by Law No. 22 Year 1999 on Regional Government, though the name was changed to Village House of Representatives (*Badan Perwakilan Desa*). The same thing

¹³ Vote box made of big bamboo pole to accommodate the vote of those who is not willing to vote for any candidates chosen by *sesepuh* and *pini sepuh* of Neglasari and Naga.

maintained in post-reformation era in 2004 by Law No. 32 Year 2004 on Regional Government, the name once again changed to Village House of Conference (*Badan Permusyawaratan Desa*).

Nevertheless, government policy (public policy) on the bureaucratization of *babadamaian* does not prevent the *sesepuh* to maintain and practice *babadamaian* in implementing democracy in Neglasari. The form and working pattern of *babadamaian* that based on the local tradition and sourced from Islamic teaching and Naga custom has been adjusted with the valid regulation. The *sesepuh* are no longer practicing *babadamaian* officially as it was practiced before the New Order. *Babadamaian* practiced by the *sesepuh* informally, and it can be held in mosque or the house of one of the village *sesepuh*.

Beside in the election of village chief, the Naga customs apparently becomes the main basis in the election of *Punuh*¹⁴, especially in *Kapunuhan* Naga. There are four *kapunuhan* in Neglasari: Naga, Sukaratu, Cikeusik and Tanjaknangsi. For the latter three, village administrator implements the tradition of liberal democracy in the election of *punuh* by the mechanism of *voting*. It means that the elected *punuh* is the one who gets major vote in the election. Meanwhile, for *Kapunuhan* Naga, the village administrator completely trusted the mechanism to the custom prevailed in Kampung Naga. The tradition that works in the election of *punuh* is the tradition of local democracy. According to the Naga custom, the election of *punuh* must be done through *babadamaian*. Therefore, *punuh* is elected by consensus based on the agreements of *sesepuh* and *pini sepuh* of Naga.

From above explanation, we can see that Naga custom still has a great influence to democracy in Neglasari. Even up to present time, those kinds of provisions are maintained to exist. This shows that Naga custom has strongly embedded in the people. Not only in common people, but also in all leaders and officers of village administrator. However, the process of decision making, village chief election, as well as decision that grants a freedom to Kampung Naga to chose its *punuh*, determined by the village *sesepuh*, both who are inside and outside the structure of village administrator. What is certain

is that the provision is strengthened by village regulation determined by village administrator and the BPD.

Conclusion

Democracy can be simply understood as a mechanism to make decision in the implementation of government generally—including when electing the leader—prerequisites people's participation. By this construction, thus, the value basis used during democracy may vary, likely when we discuss about rural democracy in Indonesia, especially in Neglasari Village.

Value basis of village democracy in Neglasari is its local values sourced from Islamic teaching and Naga custom. These local values are still active and becoming a moral demand for the people and leader of Neglasari in practicing democracy, even though the government (State) with its policies has introduced and implemented tradition of liberal democracy, especially in decision making and election of leader (Village Chief). This can be seen from its view that emphasizes individual rights in every policy, so that the decision making is headed towards voting. While in rural democracy, especially in Neglasari, the mechanism known for decision making is a consensus through discussions and conferences.

The powerlessness against the state power did not make the people and leaders of Neglasari to lose their local values. In the practice of democracy, local values remains and works in the middle of democratization stream carrying liberal values that continues to be sent by the state to villages. One of example is *babadamaian*, which is a local institution as the result of Islamic teaching and Naga custom. *Babadamaian* is used by the village *sesepuh* in implementing democracy, both during the process of decision making concerning the village development, as well as determining the candidates of village chief. Based on this condition, a special democratic atmosphere has been subconsciously developed, marked by the existence of two different tradition of democracy that take place. Instead of abolishing each other, both traditions work together to build democracy in Neglasari.

The presence and existence of Kampung Naga as a customary community in Neglasari up to present time has become one of determinants for the creation of democracy. This is since the Naga custom as one of local value sources for Neglasari remains exist. Naga customs as the moral guidance for the people of Kampung Naga has become a coherent part of life for the people and leaders of Neglasari Village.

¹⁴ The concept of *Punuh* is formally known as *Kepala Dusun* (Chief of Orchard/*Kadus*). *Kadus* rule in certain orchard area (*kedusunan*). In several areas in Priangan (West Java), orchard is also known as *kapunuhan*, led by a *Punuh*.

Acknowledgement and approval of the village administrator for the implementation of Naga custom in practicing democracy in the village become the standard.

The reality is easy to understand, since the majority of the people of Neglasari, including the *sesepuh* is the descendant of of Kampung Naga, called the *sanaga*. From these *sanagas*, the Naga custom that has already assimilated with Islamic teaching remains embedded strongly, maintained inside the soul of the people and leaders, and continuously implemented. It becomes an invisible power, yet the existence is still can be felt in the rural democracy of Neglasari. Similar phenomenon may occur in any other villages across Indonesia. Therefore, this reality shall be noticed by the policy maker of Indonesia in designing the future of village democracy, so that a righteous democracy can be established for all villagers.

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