# Local People's Political Thought Against Changes in Elite Political Decrees of the Ruler

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#### **Abstract**

Local people in the North Semarang area continue to aggregate and articulate critical political thoughts, pressing political thinking, and having a strong influence on the ruling elite's political decisions in the city of Semarang. This has been done by local people starting in 2004 until now—for example, Kanjengan Mall in the Johar market area, which investors from PT contracted. Pagar Gunung Kencana, in 2004 has expired. However, Jamaah Peduli Dugder in the North Semarang who always monitor the area say, there is still a development of the Johar market area, the Kauman area, and Malay villages that are not right and lack the attention of local elites and slow development. This research problem formulation is how does the community build the strength of its political thinking? The purpose of this study is to analyze the results of local people's political thinking on changes in elite political decisions and to analyze them with the approach of the power of civil society. This research's methodology was qualitative methodology, which was supplemented by descriptive analysis, including conducting in-depth interviews. In addition to primary data collection, secondary data collection from relevant documents was then analyzed. The conclusion of the political thinking of the local community on the Dugderan tradition is very strong. This resulted in a change in the political decisions of the elite who were then pro-local people.

#### Keywords

Critical Political Thinking; Elite; Civil Society; Changes in Political Decisions

### **INTRODUCTION**

Every country, every society, and every age always give birth to new challenges and thoughts that require a political actor's presence. Those who are

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This paper was presented in the International Symposium on Indonesian Politics 2019, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia. The authors are grateful to all participants for their valuable comments on the early draft of this paper.

visionary, anticipatory, responsive and able to make measurable political decisions are the desired ruling elites. On the contrary, the people do not want dominant and unresponsive ruling elites. The elites should no longer be concerned with maintaining the power (status quo) because it is a conservative political thought. The elites should be aware of the magnitude of the people's power (Schumpeter, 2003).

Local political actors (JPG, PPJP, Kauman Mosque Association) in the North Semarang area keep aggregating and articulating their critical political thoughts, pressing political thinking, and turning out to have a strong influence on the political decisions of the ruling elites (Sukawi Sutarip) Mayor of Semarang era 2000-2010.

This was done by local political actors in the Kauman area of North Semarang District, starting in 2004 to the present time, 2019. In 1976, an investor, PT. Pagar Gunung Kencana, rented the Kanjengan Mall in the Johar market area for 30 years. In 2004 his contract expired (Djawahir, 2016). The local political actors, who always monitor the area, said that the development of the Johan market area, the Kauman area, and the old square's removal in front of the Kauman mosque did not fit the goal. The people demand that the development of Johar's market area and the Kauman area provide benefits and that the old square's function be returned. But the ruling elites seem to ignore this demand. In the context of this research, the ruling elites as rationally limited policymakers make decision-making selection that is only effective from the authority side but less effective from the people's side (Hadiati, 2018). The Kanjengan area is an area adjacent to the Kauman village, with its tradition (Kurniati, 2013; Mawahib, 2015; Suprapti et al., 2010; Azizah, 2015). According to Somin (2016), with his decision-making theory with limited rationality, any political decision should satisfy various parties besides the authorities and inventors, namely the people affected by the political decisions.

In this study, it turns out that the alternative choice, moving the tradition of Dugderan to the City Hall, causes the political actors of the Kauman community to begin having difficulties carrying out the Dugderan tradition. As a result, there has always been a demand to return the Dugderan to the Kauman mosque, said Djawahir, a Semarang City cultural observer (Interview with Djawahir on July 27, 2016).

This choice of an alternative political decision should be satisfactory, but in fact it is not (Davidson, Henley & Moniaga, 2010). The old square area of the City of Semarang was then "lost". The Kauman mosque area became narrow and squeezed by an increasingly crowded environment, such as the Johar Market, Kaumanshoping area, and the Pemuda street's shopping area, the Metro Hotel area (Kistanto, 2006). These areas were increasingly filled with traders moving from the Yaik market. This took place from 1975 to 2004. For almost 30 years, the people have been concerned about the elites' decisions at that time (Kasturi, 2010).

In this research, the problem formulation is how the strength of local community political thinking? The purpose of this study is to analyze the results of local people's political thinking on changes in elite political decisions and to analyze them with Edward's theory about the power of civil society.

# **RESEARCH METHOD**

The researcher chose the type of qualitative approach to examine all the problems because the method can help the author in knowing the unique phenomenon is related to people's bargaining power and lobbying of political thought with the government implementation elites, about the tradition of the Dugderan and the return of the functions of the old square of the City of Semarang (alon-alon). Through this method, the writer can also see to what extent to find a phenomenon of political thought, aspiration and argument of the people who have unique and profound characteristics (Creswell, 2015).

This study's main instrument is the researchers themselves as stated by Miles and Huberman (2014). In addition to supporting qualitative data obtained informants from the (primary informants, secondary informants and supporting informants), researchers also conducted a forum group discussion on December 8, 2016 at the DIS Campus of UNDIP Semarang. The researchers also invited keynote speakers from various circles, namely religious figures such as Ahmad Wahid and Muhaimin (from the Mosque of Kauman), cultural figures such Muhammad Djawahir, as academics such as Prof. Nurdin H. Kistanto and Prof. Djuliati Suroso of Diponegoro University Semarang.

# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK Edwards's Political Thought

Edwards (2004) in his book "Civil Society" said that civil society as an influencer policy could correct mistakes in decision making made by the state as the policymaker. In addition, civil society can also correct market errors. They call civil society a missing link in the success of democracy.

Edwards explained that civil society as associational life means that these

refer to all associations and networks of cooperation whose members and activities are voluntary. Civil society as a non-government organization consists of various associations such as worker units, political parties, religious groups, professionals and independent business associations and media (Edwards, 2004: 27).

Furthermore, Edwards explained that civil society as a good society means the people who form the goals and means to achieve that goal. Civil society compromises different interests to have the best view in contemporary politics and collective action. Civil society, therefore, is a type of society where people want to live as a good society (Edwards, 2004: 46).

The third is the existence of civil society as the public sphere. According to Edwards, this is the arena where community groups play an important role in social change. Civil society describes all people who care about the common good. Civil society can discuss society's things and problems democratically within the framework of carrying out the supervision of people's thoughts (Edwards, 2004: 55).

# **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

First, political decision-making can change because of political thoughts and objective and critical arguments from local people, even though conflicts and disputes have occurred. In the process that follows, when local people's pressure intensifies (Bertrand, 2004), then the ruling elites finally make a deal (Bishin, Barr & Lebo, 2006; Gill, 2018). As with the history of Semarang, which

occurred in 1975, the ruling elites in Semarang agreed to move the Semarang Regency pavilion (Cahyono, 2006).

In 1975 Hadijanto (Mayor of Semarang from 1973-1980) moved the pavilion from the Kanjengan area to City Hall, arguing that a more extensive and modern shopping center would be built. In 1976, an investor, PT. Pagar Gunung Kencana proposed to build a shopping center called Kanjengan and widen the Johar market which was later named Ya'ik market (Djawahir, 2016).

In the context of this study, policymakers rationally select effective decision-makings (only from authority side), but they are effective from the people's side. Local people's political thought is ignored. According to Yusuf (2000), local political the Kanjengan area is an economic and cultural center, which is adjacent to the traditional village called Kauman village, with the Dugderan tradition. The best and right alternative choice turns out to be the goal of the ruling elite (state) and investors (market), not that of the local people.

Such political decisions were carried out since Hadijanto (1973-1980), Imam Soeparto (1980-1990), and Soetrisno (1990-2000).Soeharto The political decision was terminated in the era of Mayor Sukawi Sutarip, in 2004, when people demanded that Dugderan government the return tradition center to its original area in the Kauman mosque (Hadiati, Kistanto & Bahrudin, 2017).

In the process of deliberation of the elite-mass (Hadiati, 2018), all communities are all educated, both

formally and informally. The information obtained by the people is very adequate and they are fully rational and highly motivated. But still, the problem of individual political ignorance and the ignorance of the political community continues in the Kanjengan area (Djawahir, 2016).

Secondly, people never accept political decisions that are not in line with their political thought (Syam & Basalim, 2007) or not in line with their cultural traditions and the surrounding religious situation. Indeed, the people chose to be "silent" for 30 years. According to Djawahir, this is the ignorance of the people. As with Arrow's impossibility theorem (Caporaso & Levine, 1992), the theorem of impossibility for democracy exists. The New Order came to power until it fell on May 31, 1998, when the reform era began to affect the present. At that time, all the leader's supporters wanted a victory for the leader, without seeing that other potential leaders also had the same opportunity to win an election. If the candidate from the political party they support loses, the supporting community will never accept the defeat (Katz, 2001). At this point, ignorance occurs, and they are still ignorant until they can accept and acknowledge that the legitimated winner (Heith, 2017) is not the candidate of their choice. According to Arrow, then they become smart when they know better and can accept the facts.

The strategy to improve political knowledge, i.e., making the community smart and having access to information, is not easy. Strength needs to be made to

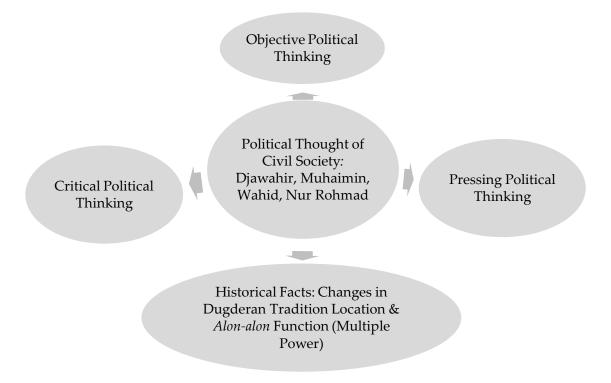


Figure 1. Strength of Political Thought of Civil Society

**Sources**: The processed data.

thought improve political by educational technology and pedagogy 2015). Therefore, political (Grande, knowledge is not just an individual cognitive achievement but also the knowledge intelligence of and a community group or collective/assembly policy, as Hampton (1999) defined. The assembly must hold political deliberations with critical and objective political thoughts (Durnova, Fischer & Zittoun, 2016; Hadiati, 2018).

In the Suharto regime era, it was said that there was an irony of democracy (Schumpeter, 2003). The government elites appoint a small group of people who can form assemblies as in Hampton's political thought. On the contrary, the masses are the people who actually do not have power, who make

collective agreements called social contracts (Hampton, 1999).

The political situation of the Semarang City government in the era of Mayor Hadijanto was about the same. During the Hadijanto era, there was subtle political violence, including making political decisions to move the center of tradition to the City Hall. The celebration of the Dugderan tradition was then taken over and controlled by the ruling elite since 1975 for security reasons and avoiding politics of divide (divide et impera), which damaged the City of Semarang's integrity at that time.

Third, people can influence the ruling elites. Sukawi Sutarip (2000-2010), after serving as the mayor of Semarang City for four years, began to review the political decision to celebrate

**Table 1**. Differences between the Elite and the People about the Celebration of Dugderan Tradition

Political thought	The Elite*	The People*
Location of Procession	In 1975: The procession of Dugderan was moved to the City Hall from the Kauman mosque.  In 2004: Procession of Dugderan as moved back from the City Hall to the Kauman mosque.	The moving in 1975 made the Kauman community very disappointed "silent" for 30 years.  The move back in 2004 was welcomed with joy and made the Kauman community get new "energy" to restore the old spirit of the Dugderan tradition.
Organizer of Procession	The government as the subject and the people as the object who must follow the government rules only.	The Kauman community is the owner of the Dugderan tradition. The main actor was originally the people of the village of Kauman. But it was taken over by the Government.
Tradition Events	The Dugderan tradition has the meaning of uniting the pluralistic people of Semarang	Dugderan tradition has the meaning of uniting the spirit of culture and religion of the Kauman Moslem community.
Purpose of the Event	The festival is held for tourism, economic and socio-cultural, political purposes	The festival is held for religious purposes ahead of Ramadhan, including its cultural and business aspects.
Dugderan Market	The impromptu market for seasonal traders.	They are accommodating traders selling children's toys such as <i>Warak Ngendhog,</i> traditional food, prayer equipment and date ( <i>kurma</i> ).
Symbol of Procession	Carnival/procession of national culture	Procession of Warak Ngendhog

**Sources**: The processed data.

**Annotation**: \* The Elites (executive power, legislative power). \*\* The People (cultural power and religious power, NGO power, academic power, business power, people power).

the Dugderan tradition at the City Hall. In 1998, people's democracy began to find its shape (Figure 1). The people understood the essence and substance of democracy as a government-controlled

by people's political thoughts and actions (objective political thinking).

Explanations by political actors such as Wahid, Muhaimin and Djawahir are important considerations. They said that in 30 years (1975-2004) the people were

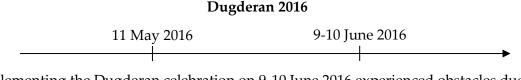
**Figure 2.** Agreement between the Elites and the People during 2014-2017 in the Process of the Celebration of Dugderan Tradition Discourse



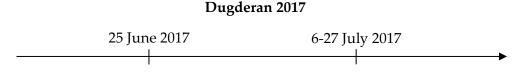
The previous implementation of Dugderan (Cahyono, 2006), from 1975-2004 for almost 30 years, was centered at the City Hall (Kasturi, 2010).



The government moved the Dugderan Procession (Triyanto, Rokhmat & Mujiyono, 2013) from the Kauman mosque to MAJT by removing the Dugderan Market and the people's stage because Johar Market was burnt down on May 28-29, 2015.



Implementing the Dugderan celebration on 9-10 June 2016 experienced obstacles due to the Johar Market was burnt down on 28-29 May 2015. The Dugderan Market location was moved to the MAJT area, including the Dugderan Procession from the Kauman mosque to MAJT.

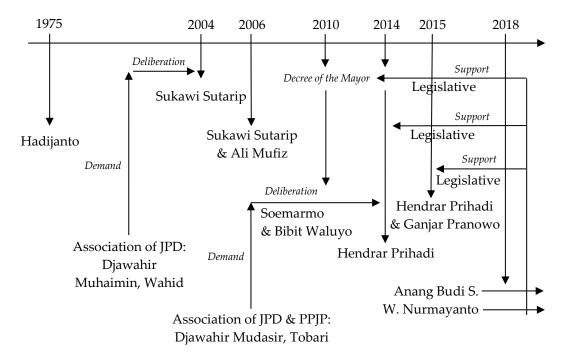


The Dugderan celebration on June 25, 2017, experienced significant changes. The festival of Dugderan was more contemporary, no longer retained the traditional nuances of the Islamic religious tradition.

**Source**: The processed data.

harmed because the implementation of Dugderan was no longer by its original tradition. They continued to carry out critical political thinking and press political thinking and apparently strongly influenced the elite's political decisions (during the Sukawi Sutarip era).

Dahl (2008) mentioned the multiple power, and this has been happening since the era of Mayor Sukawi Sutarib to the present era. Except for the ruling elite (who had the power), along with Hendar Prihadi who held the executive power and the legislators who held the legislative power, many forces characterized the political system and



**Figure 3**. The Politics of the Elite vs. the People in the Changes of the Implementation of the Dugderan Festival

**Source**: The processed data.

governance of Semarang city, including in policymaking. They included NGO power from the Kauman community, namely JPD, people power, people who were the advocates of the Dugderan tradition, economic power, Johar and cultural PPJP, namely the Kauman Mosque Management, **MAJT** and Baiturrohman Grand Mosque and religious power, the scholars in those three mosques, including academic power, namely lecturers of culture from Diponegoro University and customary law lecturers from the University of 17 Agustus 1945 Semarang (Hadiati, 2018).

These multiple powers (Figure 1) represent different interests and political thoughts to manage the Kauman area, the Johar area, and the Kanjengan area to be better and more

beneficial to all interested parties. Therefore, the Kauman community hoped that from 2003-2004 they would no longer suffer continued losses and wanted to benefit from the expiration of PT. Pagar Gunung Kencana long-term The Kauman community contract. finally succeeded in influencing the political decision of Mayor Sukawi Sutarip to move the center of the celebration of the Dugderan tradition to the Kauman Mosque in Semarang and open the old square area.

The concept of the Kauman people's political thinking about the celebration of the Dugderan tradition is still being fought to be accepted by the ruling elite. This happens because of the differences between the elite and the people, such as in the table 1.

Bargaining power (contacting and lobbying) means strength or bargaining power possessed by a person/a group of people and the community to contact and lobby with those who have the authority to make decisions (Hadiati, 2018; Parsons, 2011). The Kauman community as a civil society with the power of thought of political actors (Edwards, 2004), successfully lobbied decide the authorities to the resettlement of the center of the celebration of the Dugderan tradition and the re-functioning of the old square. The explanation can be shown in figure 2.

The dynamics and power of civil society political thought are marked by the seriousness of the Kauman political actors. In addition, the changing of political decisions of Dugderan celebration by the will of the elite but not according to the will of the people (Siavelis, 2009; Nicholson, encourages the differences between the elite and the people political deliberation that never stops (Figure 3).

The elite versus the people's political deliberation involves various groups and culminates in celebrating the Dugderan tradition back to the Kauman mosque. Important political deliberation has reached its peak since 1975 (Colonel Hadijanto era), 2004 (Sukawi Sutarip era), 2010 (Soemarmo era) until the Mayor's Decree was issued in 2010, as shown in figure 3.

The existence of discourse and public space (Habermas, 2012) which began to be built by the people in 2004, has been a neutral factor in the celebration of Dugderan in the City of

Semarang since 1975. The elites started to appreciate the people's voice after the reform era in 1998, which is crucial. However, it was the people who had the power (Edwards, 2004) as civil society and can no longer be ignored.

A strong, detailed and in-depth argument (Bernhagen & Schmitt, 2014; Cramer & Toff, 2017) is very important for returning the celebration of the Dugderan tradition and the old square, as seen in the FGD (Figure 1) on December 8, 2016. The facts show a discourse of ethics from the FGD above because in this ethics, the authority is not in the representatives of the bureaucrats and council members only. It is in the structure of one's political thinking and argument and it is objective with reality and not in conflict with the norms of society and the state.

In this regard, the ideas and thoughts that are objective, critical, communicative, aspirational argumentative from the discussion participants, from which the researchers obtain in the public space of the FGD, radicalization of democratic procedures (Habermas, 2012). In deliberative democracy during the FGD, direct democracy. radicalization of this procedure contains elements of the power of the social (Hardiman, system 2020; Curato, Hammond & Min, 2019) as an effort to direct discourse in the FGD in the formulation of local political decisions of celebrating the Dugderan tradition and of returning the functions of the old square.

#### CONCLUSION

First, local people's political thinking can change the elite's political decisions with ethical, critical and objective content. Therefore, all political actors' thoughts imply that they are random thoughts or thoughts that only for defending groups, organizations or parties. On the contrary, objective and critical political thoughts are needed to suppress the ruling elites' goodwill and good minds to change their political decisions.

Secondly, the political thoughts of society contain elements civil of radicalization of the procedure democracy to unite the social system in a community. Even though they contain multipower elements, different political thoughts do not mean that they are dispersed, differentiated and can later turn into a flexible power structure. The community's combined aspirations and arguments of political thought are derived from legislative power, cultural executive power, power, non-governmental academic power, organization/NGO power, economic power and people power.

We come to the essence of this study, i.e., that the Dugderan tradition's implementation so far might be called stagnant, especially before 2004. The Dugderan tradition's implementation even tends to lose its historical and cultural identity, especially as a traditional/original village. Still, civil society's political thought and the multiple powers have a strong influence on the ruling elite's political decisions.

Third, civil society's model is the local people in the Kauman area who

must take action and exercise radical political thought as a solution. One way is to re-objectify the political discourse in all deliberations related to implementation of Dugderan and the return of function of the old square. This means radicalizing all the conventional local procedures of deliberative democracy and getting out of the tendency to conventional deliberations and political thoughts, formalistic symbolic routines, and routines. Political decisions should not have a effect on detrimental anv including the civil society of the Kauman community who is already well informed in terms of data and facts about the functions and designation of the Kauman area and its surroundings.

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