



Remaining Memories: Semanggi and Wulayu as Cultural Memory around the Bengawan Solo River in the Colonial and Post-Independence Period

Latif Imam Prabowo¹

¹ Gadjah Mada University, Bulaksumur, Yogyakarta
latifimamprabowo@mail.ugm.ac.id

Abstract. Maritime activities around the Bengawan (large river) Solo are the cultural heritage of the people along the river. Memories that have been passed down from generation to generation represent “voices from below” as well as cultural memory products from the current generation. The research method used is the historical method and socio-cultural history approach with the conceptual framework of memory. This research aims to bring back the cultural memory of the past and the heritage of the community-social group. Cultural memory brings up ancient names around the Bengawan in the form of Wulayu-Wuluyu and Semanggi to see the common thread in finding traces of the cities, and trading activities of Bengawan Solo. The output of this paper is to bring back the name Wulayu-Semanggi as a product of the politics of forgetting or the existence of social memory that is lost from the community around the Bengawan.

Keywords: Bengawan Solo, Maritime, Cultural Memory

1 Introduction

Over the past two centuries, the great river (Bengawan) Solo has been captured in cultural memory through maritime activities as a traffic route, and a hub for Bengawan cities. Almost everyone knows and recognizes this longest river. But have you ever heard that there is also a large river Ci Wulayu or Semanggi which also turns out to be the same name as we know today, Bengawan Solo. The periodization of Bengawan Solo's maritime activities starts with D'Almeida's report on the exploration of Bengawan Solo in 1864 until the establishment of Semanggi Pier Park in 2022.

The loss of the name Semanggi-Wulayu is an example of a daily case of cultural memory of the community around the Bengawan Solo River. Reporting from Liputan6.com. The city of Solo once had a large port city area and was traversed by large ship transportation. [1, pp. p 1-2] This indicates that the Bengawan Solo was once the center of maritime activities and river transportation trade traffic.

This paper plans to use the main concept of Memory Making and its derivative concepts of the history of collective memory and Ross Poole's Claim of the Past, [1, pp. 149–166] Finley's Myth, Memory, and History, [2, p. 1] and Walsh's politics of forgetting and High Strategies of Memory: History, Social Memory, and the

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I. W. P. Utami and W. D. Sulisty (eds.), *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on History, Social Sciences, and Education (ICHSE 2024)*, Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research 875, https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-307-8_21

Community. [3, p. 1] The three concepts above become the basis of the conceptual framework in the case of the disappearance of the names Semanggi and Wulayu from the memory of the Bengawan Solo river community, especially Surakarta. This paper also takes some literature studies of related articles, which will aim to describe the daily case and the main concepts of History and Memory-making from the name Semanggi-Wulayu that have disappeared from people's lives.

Starting from the disappearance of the name Semanggi-Wulayu, research problems arose when visiting the grave of Ki Ageng Henis, Laweyan mosque, and Laweyan River. It turned out that there was a partial memory told by the Kasepuhan of Laweyan village that there used to be a memory of the Lawe river that led to a large dock, and the naming of the title *Raden Ngabehi Loring Pasar* to Sutawijaya (the first king of Mataram Islam) which indicated the existence of an auction market and transit city around Laweyan village now but he was not sure what large city was meant. Some of the research questions raised are: Is it true that the names Semanggi and Wulayu have disappeared from the memory of the Semanggi community? How is the process of the collective memory of the Semanggi community maintained to remember Wulayu-Semanggi? Why does the community's cultural memory of the names Semanggi and Wulayu remain?

2 Method

This research uses the historical research method. The references used are based on Kuntowijoyo [2, p. 90] and Louis Gottchalks [3, p. 92] to determine the stages of research and historical awareness. The selection of the research theme is related to socio-cultural history because Bengawan Sala is closely related to maritime cultural activities during the colonial period. Historical awareness also needs to be raised by maintaining the community's cultural memory of the large Semanggi pier and the name Wulayu (the ancient name of the Bengawan Sala river) that remains in the residents of Semanggi sub-district, Surakarta City.

The heuristic process is based on oral history sources in the form of interviews, primary sources in the form of writings from digital newspapers, and secondary sources containing information from inscriptions related to Wulayu. Informal interviews were conducted on Thursday, Saturday, March 1, 2018, during a visit to the grave of Ki Ageng Henis, Laweyan mosque, and a meeting with Laweyan village elders. Newspaper primary sources were obtained from Solopos newspaper, Sulindo which informed the missing Semanggi pier, and some information on the discovery of inscriptions from secondary sources of articles. Source critique began with determining the periodization of the research, the newspapers that contained the loss of the name Semanggi-Wulayu, and the search for correlations between cultural activities in the Sala River basin and the loss of the two ancient names.

Interpretation and historiography are carried out based on the concept of memory to explain the discussion of the research. First, it will start from the origin of the names Wulayu and Semanggi. The past and present of Semanggi-Wulayu, are the factors that determine the loss of memories and memories of the names Semanggi and Wulayu. Finally, there will be a common thread whether the disappearance of

Semanggi and Wulayu is the result of a mutual agreement between political forgetting or indeed the existence of Social Memory that is lost from part of the community.

3 Result and Discussion

This section explains several things related to maritime activities and the remaining memories of the ancient names Semanggi and Wulayu. The first point is the origin of the naming of Semanggi and Wulayu, the second is the activities and functions of the Wulayu River and the town of Semanggi as a means of shipping and trade transportation routes. Finally, the form of Historical Symbolism that is still maintained by the Semanggi community towards the names Wulayu and Semanggi.

3.1 Etymology of Wulayu and Semanggi

The origin of the words Semanggi and Wulayu refers to the research of J. Noorduyn with the title *Further Topographical Notes On The Ferry Charter Of 1358: With Appendices On Djipang And Bodjanegara*. In general, Noorduyn through his article explained that the Bengawan Solo River was mentioned in the journey of a Hindu-Sunda ascetic. [4, p. 1] It is identical that Sungai or in the Sundanese language means Ci “Wuluyu” which is correlated with Sungai Wulayu which was previously the ancient name of Bengawan Solo.

The existence of Bengawan Solo has also actually changed its name several times. Based on Noorduyn's explanation, it is not clear exactly when the name Wulayu changed to Bengawan Solo, but the villages related to maritime activities can be revealed by Deria Adi Wijaya. His article entitled *"The Maritime Age" on the Bengawan Solo River: The Phenomenon of River Shipping Transformation in Surakarta*. [5, p. 1] It is explained that there is a kind of enterprising spirit or the spirit of shipping activities is not only limited to the sea, but also to the inland rivers. Semanggi, on the other hand, is described as useful for trading and mining activities around the area now known as Pasar Kliwon and Laweyan.

The etymology of Semanggi and Wulayu River can be examined through several newspaper sources. Reported through the *Sulindo* newspaper entitled *Bengawan Solo, the Pulse of Old Javanese Transportation*, it was explained that the Bengawan Solo in Mataram had become the main source of transportation in Java. Unlike the information provided by Solopos.com, the name Wulayu is one of the docks at the end of Gresik or *Hujung Galuh* during the Majapahit period. [6, p. 2] Through this river flow, it is also explained that there were maritime activities in the form of trading rattan, onions, candles, coconut rice and other crops.

The study of Semanggi was also researched by Bambang Sumardjoko on the similarity of place (toponymy) that the name Semanggi is Wuluyu which he found in Noorduyn's article in the Bobodho area (near Semanggi-Desa Sala). [5, p. 140] Sumardjoko at least corroborates the identity of the collective memory of the name Semanggi from chronicle texts, such as the Kartasura chronicle. The story of *Bhujangga Manik* is referenced by Noorduyn to reveal the toponymy between Semanggi, *Wuluyu-Wulayu*. Some of the sources presented by Sumardjoko remind

one of Aristotle's statement that "Poetry is more philosophical and more weighty than history, for poetry speaks rather of the universal, history of the particular". [2, p. 3]

Semanggi and Wulayu are suitable to be analyzed with Tallentire's concept of Social Memory and Community. Semanggi and Wulayu are represented as Rethinking the Concept of Community or a product of the community politics of the Semanggi community. Indeed, Semanggi is still embedded in the memory of being one of the subordinate areas of Surakarta city (Semanggi village) while Wulayu has not been proven by Noorduyn. [4] An overview of the activity memory of the Wulayu-Semanggi area will be discussed in the second segment of maritime activities around the Bengawan.

3.2 Maritime Activity Arouns Bengawan

The Pasar Kliwon area can be a religious and culinary center with connections to Semanggi and Wulayu. This can be traced if you travel to Semanggi directly. There will be found the Semanggi city park which has a replica of a large ship even though it is now only limited to an ordinary village. The cultural memory embedded in the replica of the big ship is that the park was used as a recreational friend as well as a place for historical moments of the "lost big city" and there are also street names such as Gang Kyai Rajamala and Gang Waluyo. [6, p. 2] This is in line with Deria's statement that inland voyages were commonly carried out by Javanese people who would interact with the coastal areas along the Bengawan Solo. [5, p. 6] The two spatial aspects above are proof that Semanggi is a forgotten city area. This reason is supported by Bimo Hernowo who said that in the 18th century, around the city of Surakarta, there were indeed several tributaries such as the Pepe River, which became the lifeblood of Solo's trade at that time.[4, p. 4].

Hernowo's research focuses on the location of VOC forts around the banks of the Bengawan Solo river in the 17th century, for example the Vastenburg fort. Most think that the fort was built by land, but in reality it was not. Through Hernowo's project, obtained from the "*Geprojecteerd Benteng Van Soerakarta*" in 1756, there are indeed traces or locations of forts along the Semanggi river (Bengawan Solo). [5, p. 39] This is also confirmed by the report of D'Almeida who traveled in 1864. Noorduyn by ferry charter in 1358 used the names Semanggi and Wulayu respectively as means of water transportation and nautical activities.

The economic aspects and commodity products that are evidence of "forgotten" maritime activities are described in detail by Efendi and Septiana. Their article titled *The Role of Bengawan Solo in the Economy of Majapahit in the XIV-XVI Centuries* embodies several aspects of ancient maritime activities around Bengawan Solo.[4, p. 265] There are several archaeological sites related to former settlements along the Bengawan Solo (also called the Semanggi river) through the *Canggu* inscription of 1358 AD and the *Telang* inscription of 904 AD. Other findings include ancient boat finds around Padang village, Bojonegoro as well as pottery, jugs, nets around Ngawi.

The etymology of Semanggi and Wulayu can be traced through archaeological remains in East Java. Efendi and Septiana presented several reference sources from the Biluluk inscription related to rice fields, the Karang Bogem inscription of 1387 AD related to rice fields, owned by Patih Tambak and the Biluluk IV inscription which describes agricultural activities around Lamongan and Gresik.[4, p. 4]

Sumardjoko also added that in the colonial period, it was also used for activities to send weapons and diplomatic relations in the north coast of Java. All activities recorded in the previous inscriptions are in accordance with the concept of cultural memorization.

It seems that 'cultural memorization' according to Finley is a representation of the culture of the community in the past, meaning that cultural memory can also be a description of the activities of the surrounding community Bengawan Solo as a constructed memory of the past. The findings of inscriptions and other archaeological findings prove that the "claim of the past" in the form of collective identity, collective memory as well as past emotions can only be traced through inscriptions as Historical Symbolism.

3.3 Historical Symbolism Monument That Remain

Semanggi and Wulayu were once the names of a river and a pier along the Bengawan Solo riverbank. Solopos.com also corroborates that *Ci Wulayu* and Semanggi pier were gradually forgotten when Surakarta began to recognize the longest river as Bengawan Solo. This phenomenon or case is exactly Jun Jing's statement about the collective memory of a community as "The Temple of Memories".[3, p. 15] In detail, Tallentire explains that the study of a community's cultural memory is tantamount to exposing several layers of the community and refracting its geographical boundaries.

For Fentress and Wickham, memory corresponds to the interpretation of the community concerned and gives rise to "cultural rules of recognition and rememorization".[3, p. 14] This gives rise to historical symbolism in the form of the erection of monuments or the naming of places that evoke local legendary figures. One case that serves as a concrete example is Tubagus Mulyadi's article, titled *Bergada Rajamala Semanggi*. Rajamala is a puppet character who also became the name of the pride ship of Surakarta Sunanate in the era of PB IX. In addition to being a monumental work and the existence of a miniature of the ship in the local Surakarta museum, namely *Radya Pustaka*, there is a representation of Anderson's imagined political community in the form of the *Bergada Rajamala* tradition that continues to live in the Semanggi community.[6, p. 3].

Another concrete example can be traced through the maintenance of the *Radya Pustaka* Museum's asset, the *Canthik Kyai Rajamala*. Hernawati Suminarsih wrote that there is an effort to preserve the *Canthik Kyai Rajamala* asset as one of the mainstay tourist assets for the *Radya Pustaka* museum as well as the Surakarta community.[7, p. 97] *Taman Bandar Semanggi*, is also a product of Anderson's theory of community political imagination, as a reminder that the Semanggi area was once a large dock.

Finally, there is also the case given by Fajar Endang Hastuti about the ethnic Arab village in Pasar Kliwon which is used as a culinary tourism center and religious center.[8, p. 13] This phenomenon is called rememorization. The responsibility to continue to remember the past is the activity of remembering, including the politics of forgetting. In the end, the process of remembering and is the result of the construction

of collective identity, or the product of the imagination of a community concerned, especially the forgotten names of Semanggi and Wulayu.

4 Conclusion

The remaining evidence of the ancient name Semanggi-Wulayu River can be summarized in several points. *First*, the names Wulayu and Semanggi have not disappeared completely. The cultural memory of the great city of Semanggi is still very well preserved, whether from the presence of Bandar Semanggi Park in Pasar Kliwon, the tradition of Bergada Semanggi or Wulayu which is still embedded by Lamongan and Gresik residents. *Second*, there are several efforts made by Solo residents to maintain collective memory and can be referred to as political remembering. There are efforts to preserve the Bergada Rajamala dance tradition by residents of Semanggi Village, preservation of the Canthik Kyai Rajamala tourist asset by the Radya Pustaka Museum. These two things are concrete steps from the theory of rememorization, to maintain collective memory of the names Wulayu and Semanggi.

Finally, the name Wulayu-Semanggi remains alive and the politics of remembering its community commitment remains. The case of Semanggi seems to be luckier than the name Wulayu because there are several forms of preserving collective memory. there is Walsh and High's term Rethinking the Concept of Community which acts as an institution to preserve the collective memory of the Semanggi community in the form of cultural products in the form of Rajamala preservation activities, Bandar Semanggi park and the making of the Semanggi monument. Instead, the fate of the name Wulayu tends to the category of political forgetting even though there are remnants of memory to reject growing amnesia in the form of the discovery of archaeological evidence of inscriptions.

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