

THE INGENIOUS CITIZENSHIP OF THE PAGUYUBAN NGESTI TUNGGAL (PANGESTU) IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the practice of ingenious citizenship of an Indonesian spiritual group called Paguyuban Ngesti Tunggal (Pangestu), between their politics of religion (agama) and belief (kepercayaan). With the passing of the Constitutional Court Decision No. 97, 2017, the Indonesian government recognizes belief as another form of religious expression besides religion. Therefore, spiritual groups that are unable to be accommodated by religious or belief institutions have had difficulty accessing organizational rights, as they are considered 'abject' citizens. Even so, Pangestu has emerged as a spiritual group considered 'abject citizens' in the eyes of the state that has managed to survive. This paper will focus on two main questions: 1) How does the Indonesian government regulate citizens through the definition of religion and belief? 2) How does Pangestu respond to limited space for spiritual organizations between the recognition of religion and belief, by practicing ingenious citizenship? With these two formulations, this paper shows the relationship between the Indonesian government as an institution of control, and the spiritual organization of Pangestu as ingenious citizens. There will also be elaboration on strategies and unique tactics practiced by Pangestu to cope with the limited space given by the government.

Keywords: Paguyuban Ngesti Tunggal, politics of religion, governmentality, abject, ingenious citizenship

INTRODUCTION

Religion in Indonesia has been used as a tool of political control since the colonial period. It started with the agenda of colonization to divide the people of Indonesia through the dichotomy between religion (*agama*) and customs (*adat*) (Maarif, 2017). After independence, the word *adat* experienced a redefinition. *Adat* no longer was equal to religion, but became something that only represented local traditions, and had no religious elements at all. After narrowing down the definition of *adat*, the Indonesian government, which continued to control the politics of religion of the colonialists, placed the belief (*kepercayaan*) in its polarization with religion (*agama*) instead of

adat. This is evidenced by the use of the term *agama* and *kepercayaan* in the 1945 Constitution as separate categories. Furthermore, to reinforce this polarization, TAP MPR IV/1978 in the GBHN emphasized the recognition of only five religions (Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism) as officially recognized religions in Indonesia (Sihombing, et al., 2008: 32). With the issuance of the MPR TAP above, religious groups and beliefs outside of these five official religions experienced discrimination in the service of citizenship administrative rights, such as the management of KTP (Indonesian ID card) and family cards.

In the same year, the government of Indonesia transferred the management of *aliran kepercayaan* from the Ministry of Religion to the Ministry of Education and Culture by Presidential Decree 40/1978 (Picard and Madinier, 2011: 15-16). This decision indicated that *aliran kepercayaan* could not be part of *agama*, and the government did not give *penghayat kepercayaan* the same rights as those of an acknowledged religion. Previously in 1966, when there was a mass massacre of members and sympathizers of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), *aliran kepercayaan* also became victims because they were suspected of being affiliated with the PKI (Sihombing, et al., 2008: 30). As a result, massive numbers of *aliran kepercayaan* believers were forced to register themselves as adherents of one of the legal religions to save themselves.

In 2009, the central government which was initiated by the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Culture, and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism issued a Joint Decree (SKB) which recognizes and facilitates the fulfillment of the civil rights of *penghayat kepercayaan*, although they are still unable to formally state their beliefs on identity card (Maarif, 2017). Most recently, on November 7, 2017, the Constitutional Court issued a ruling supporting the fulfillment of the citizens' rights to *penghayat kepercayaan* and acknowledging the equality of *aliran kepercayaan* and *agama*. Since then, *penghayat kepercayaan* have been able to include their belief status in the religious column of their KTP, which simplifies their registration process for marriage, school, employment, insurance and other government processes.

But unfortunately, the Constitutional Court's decision also caused new problems. After the recognition of equality between *agama* and *aliran kepercayaan*, the government made specific requirements and definitions for the recognition process of *aliran kepercayaan*. The requirements being: forming an organization and registering it with the Ministry of Education and Culture, Directorate of Belief to the Supreme God, with identity as an assembly or organization of *kepercayaan*. Before forming an organization, the community also needs to fulfill the essential characteristics of *aliran*

kepercayaan set by the government. These characteristics include belief in one Almighty God, having prophetic or messianic concepts, scriptures, and more, which have been the typical characteristic of world religions. Such an adjustment process mentioned before is similar to what is described by Picard (1992), Asad (1993), Smith (1963), Geertz (1960) and Hefner (1993) that religion has pressed belief groups to conform to their identities.

Departing from the politics of religion and belief, this paper aims to state that the separation of *agama* (religion) and *kepercayaan* in Indonesia is a form of government control over citizens, which is then referred to as governmentality (Foucault, 2007). *Agama* and *kepercayaan* are considered as ideal scripts of religious expression of Indonesian citizens, which later on cause the exclusion of other expressions, including spirituality. Those groups of citizens with different forms of religiosity will have the lack of access to citizenship rights, become apolitical, and invisible, also called “abject” or “nonexistent citizens” (Lee, 2016).

Therefore, regarding the discussion of the abject and the ‘nonexistent citizen’ category, this paper focuses on a spiritual group called Paguyuban Ngestu Tunggal (Pangestu). Pangestu is a spiritual community born in 1949 that rejects the identity of belief (*kepercayaan*, *kebatinan*) and/or religion (*agama*). Its special identity then made Pangestu warrant a different legal status within the ministry. While other *aliran kepercayaan* organizations are generally recorded under the auspices of the Directorate of Belief in God Almighty and Tradition, Pangestu chose to exclude itself from the Directorate in 2008. As previously stated, the government of Indonesia has limited recognition only to *agama* and *kepercayaan*, along with the two institutions that sheltered them, the Ministry of Religion and the Ministry of Education and Culture. A spiritual organization such as Pangestu is not recorded in ‘the script,’ and does not have a particular institution to accommodate. But rather than trying to adjust to the government’s standards to become recognized citizens, Pangestu as an abject group chose not to negotiate with one of the identities. They instead sought unique ways to access their organizational rights.

THE PAGUYUBAN NGESTI TUNGGAL (PANGESTU)

Paguyuban Ngesti Tunggal (Pangestu) is one of the spiritual organizations established in Solo, Java 1949 based on the revelations received by Soenarto Mertowardojo. The experience underlying the establishment of Pangestu was Soenarto’s dissatisfaction with Islamic teachings, which he had embraced previously because Islam was taught in the Arabic language which he did not understand. Soenarto then began his spiritual journey, found his way to God,

and fortunately, on February 14, 1932, he received a “revelation” which later inspired him to create a new spiritual community. Before Pangestu was formed as an organization, its members often held meetings that they called “olah rasa” – the process of training emotions and spirituality through preaching and contemplation- under Soenarto’s leadership. The meeting was held as a medium “to exchange their thoughts and experiences about their spiritual life and also to worship or pray jointly. All of this was done with the aim of training ‘feeling’, making it nobler and more refined” (Indrakusuma, 1972: 32). From these small but frequent meetings, the idea to establish a formal organization emerged.

In terms of teachings, Pangestu tends to be similar to *kebatinan*, which emphasizes mental and soul education, because the soul is the source of all lust and sin. In general, the main points of the teaching of Sang Guru Sejati (the title of its founder, Soenarto) can be divided into three parts, namely: Hasta Sila (Obligation of Eight Cases), Jalan Rahayu (Panca Dharma Bakti) and Paliwara (Five Prohibitions). Hasta Sila first consists of consciousness, which means awareness of the existence of God Almighty and devotion toward Him. The second is the belief in God. The third is to obey all orders and stay away from prohibitions. The fourth is the willingness to surrender all property, rights, and works to God. The fifth is *narima* in the sense of having a peaceful soul by always being grateful for what is owned. The sixth is honesty and keeping promises; the seventh is patience, and the last is *budiluhur* or compassion with others. Furthermore, Paliwara consists of five prohibitions: 1) Do not worship to anyone/anything other than Allah, 2) Do not indulge in lust, 3) Do not eat/drink things which damages the body and spirit, 4) Do not violate state laws and regulations, 5) Do not fight. Those five basic teachings then became the primary source for each lecture held in *Olah Rasa* weekly.

Concerning membership, Pangestu can be identified as an inclusive organization. People can easily join as a member without gender, religion, or social status limitation. Pangestu is also a non-missionary-group, in the sense that it will only accept members who voluntarily have the will, and are old enough to be able to make the decision. To be formally accepted, people who want to join are expected to participate in the seven Enlightenment Lectures (*Ceramah Pepadangan*), according to the needs of each member. The lecture includes an introduction to Pangestu, basic teachings, the biography of Soenarto Sang Guru Sejati, and a brief explanation of the organizational system. Then, after completing the Enlightenment Lecture, members will be appointed to the Inauguration Ceremony of the New Members held by the local Pangestu Branch Management.

AGAMA AND KEPERCAYAAN AS THE ACT OF GOVERNMENTALITY

The word ‘government,’ which comes from ‘to govern’ according to Foucault, has several meanings. “To govern an individual or group means” to act on the possibilities of actions of other individuals, “a mode of action on the action of others” or “to structure the possible field of actions of others (Foucault, 2007). Foucault positions the word “to govern” itself as a transitive verb and places an object after it; an individual or a group means that the government itself needs an object to govern. The meaning of the word also means regulating, controlling, and positioning boundaries or specific spaces for individuals and groups to act. In practice, the government, aside from its function as a servant institution, also presents itself as an institution of community-control that seeks to limit space for movement, especially in matters of religious expression, specifically the topic of discussion in this paper.

Religion in Indonesia is defined, created, and regulated by the state. As has been written by some academics (Sudarto, 2017; Subagya R., 1981; Hefner, 1993; Picard and Madinier, 2011; Maarif, 2017), religion in Indonesia becomes the political product of power from the colonial era to the present. Religion is one of the government’s tools to regulate its citizens, like how the Indonesian government from the beginning made a minimum definition of religion, which originated from a combination of Christian understanding brought by colonizers and Islamic teachings of *ad-diin* (religion). Investigating the history of the state’s governmentality through the politics of religion, Samsul Maarif (2017) saw the inclusion of the word “agama” in the 1945 Constitution article 29 as the beginning of the infiltration of the politics of religion to the state. But if it refers to how the state and the government have a role to “regulate” citizens through various aspects - specifically religion - it can also be interpreted if the state is not only a tool for implementing the politics of religion, but the government itself is the subject of regulation.

For example, the government makes certain religions administratively recognized and has the right to get full right service and make the Ministry of Religion regulate the religious life of citizens. The Ministry of Religion (Departemen Agama) was established on January 3, 1946 to initially function to accommodate, divide the religious section, and control the political movements of religious organizations. But now, the Ministry of Religion also has become a symbolic forum for “legal” religions in Indonesia. The Ministry of Religion provided not only political support for the recognized religions but also financial support for religious activities, such as da’wah, worship facilities, and formal religious education (Bagir and Hefner, 2016: 201).

The presence of the Ministry of Religion also reinforces the polarization between *agama* and *kepercayaan*. Religious expressions that do not fit into the category of *agama* according to the Ministry of Religion fail to receive their recognition and are forced to merge into the category of *kepercayaan* under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Groups that reject fitting in with the standard will remain excluded. But even though *aliran kepercayaan* has received recognition, its status has not been considered equal to religion until the issuance of the Constitutional Court Decision No. 97/2016. The inequality makes it difficult for followers of *aliran kepercayaan* who are not affiliated with any religion to access the principle rights of citizenship such as education, health, employment, marriage, and even death burial. As is the controlling nature of the state, the Indonesian government makes 'religion' the basis for the legality of carrying out activities, such as the rules of marriage and burial.

In Law No. 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage Article 2 paragraph (1) for example, it is written that "marriage is legal if carried out according to the laws of each religion and its beliefs." Although the law refers to religion and belief in general, the law still refers to religion defined by the Ministry of Religion and does not provide space for the management of marriage for followers of the belief group (*penghayat kepercayaan*) in its implementation. The law was later strengthened by the issuance of the Circular Letter of the Minister of Home Affairs No. 477/74054 dated November 18, 1978 concerning instructions for filling in the "religion" column in the attachment to the Minister of Home Affairs Decree No: 221a / 1975 concerning Marriage and Divorce Records at the Civil Registry Office (Subagya, 1981: 276; Sudarto at.al, 2017: 38).

Besides marriage, death burial is also regulated according to religion. In 1978, the Minister of Religion issued a circular letter No. B.VI/11215/978 dated October 18, 1978, which was addressed to all governors in Indonesia declaring that "death burial is part of religious concern, so there is no known burial procedure according to beliefs (*aliran kepercayaan*), and even no known for the word "*aliran kepercayaan*" itself (Subagya, 1981: 276). Although the burial rules are only listed in the Circular Letter which can be changed at any time, the issuance of the CL further confirms that the government can use various legal tools to verify the limited definition of religion in Indonesia.

After the Constitutional Court Decision, when equality between religion and belief was recognized, the government has not necessarily stopped its tendency to continue to control. With a vast and varied *aliran kepercayaan* in Indonesia, the government tries to limit the recognition of the belief (*aliran kepercayaan*) by requiring the formation of organizations for the groups

that want to be accommodated. Through the presence of the Directorate of Belief to the Almighty God, the government requires several rules for *aliran kepercayaan* to register, such as including AD/ART which lists the history of *aliran kepercayaan* and the biography of elders and teachings. Furthermore, the Directorate will conduct further surveys of the teachings of the group. If there are several teachings, symbols, names, or other elements that are considered similar to the recognized religion, then the group is expected to adjust and change them according to existing rules.

The Constitutional Court's decision (2017) became a symbol of progress for the recognition of beliefs in Indonesia, though it confirmed the limited definition and categorization of beliefs, as well as the polarization between religion and belief. *Aliran kepercayaan* can be recognized through some requirements that must be fulfilled. Therefore, spiritual groups or other religious expressions not following religion or belief still do not get a place in recognition. Not only marginalized groups outside *aliran kepercayaan*, but also those different versions of *aliran kepercayaan* that do not desire to form an organization and do not want to be recognized also become abject and overlooked from the influence of the policy.

As a follow-up to the implementation of the Constitutional Court, the 2018 Circular Letter from the Ministry of Home Affairs concerning the separation of Family Cards for followers of religions and beliefs also caused new problems for citizens. The separation of the new Family Card format for *penghayat kepercayaan* is carried out because according to Article 28 E paragraph (1) and (2) of the 1945 Constitution, religion (*agama*) and belief (*kepercayaan*) are regulated as separate matters. Following these rules, the Ministry of Home Affairs also places *agama* and *kepercayaan* in separate but equal spaces in regulation and service. With this separation, *penghayat kepercayaan* who affiliate with a particular religion are forced to choose one of their religious identities, which were previously flexible.

In conclusion, I tried to re-examine various kinds of governing practices of the government through the politics of religion in Indonesia. The Indonesian government uses state institutions such as the Ministry of Religion, the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Attorney General's Office, and even non-formal institutions such as the MUI as tools to implement the rule of religion. Additionally, various kinds of laws were raised, and the government even used security institutions as a means of controlling the implementation of the rules and regulations. Such government efforts, in my opinion, are in line with what Foucault (2009: 108) defines as a governmentality, namely "an ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, and tactics that allow the use of

specific powers, has a population as a target, political economy as the primary form of knowledge, and security forces as important technical instruments. “

According to Foucault, the government has the power to regulate citizens, although citizens are not objects of government. The government can only regulate directly a country, and citizens are regulated indirectly because as the subject of life in an abstract country (Foucault, 2009: 123). In the case of the definition of religion in Indonesia, it can be understood if the government creates certain rules, definitions, and conditions related to diversity and belief for the sake of creating a sovereign state. But in practice, the government made the citizen as the object of governing, and not the state itself, because as previously written, the definition of religion created by the government has a significant influence on the life and principle rights of citizens related to social, economic and cultural aspects.

PERFORMING INGENIOUS CITIZENSHIP

In his book, Charles T. Lee (2016: 27) explains what is meant by “ingenious citizenship” as “an illustration of how ‘the abjects’ are excluded from the script and have a lack of status, strength, and resources to access juridical rights to that full and social recognition as normative citizens, emerged with original and creative ways to put themselves back into the script.” Lee also called it “nonexistent citizenship” - where the inclusion, belonging, equality and rights are not formally guaranteed or codified. Lee also uses the word “ingenious” to describe “an unexpected agency from an abject.”

According to Lee’s description, the ingenious citizenship practices tend to be carried out by abject groups whose existence in the political sphere is not recognized by the state. Associating with the practice of governmentality discussed before, the state has tried to regulate and control its citizens through rules, written laws, and implementing new policies. Those state rules and definitions became ‘the script’ which serves as a tool of state control. Because the script also functions as a basis of rules, it always has a limiting tendency. For example, in the politics of religious and belief recognition, government texts only recognize these two definitions, especially after the Constitutional Court Decision No. 97 when the beliefs (*aliran kepercayaan*) gain recognition of equality with religion. As a result, other groups outside of religion and beliefs were removed from recognition, while being neglected by administrative services in the government. One group that was eliminated from the script definition of religion and belief was the Pangestu group. As a spiritual organization, Pangestu is not recorded in government scripts, as they are neither *agama* nor *kepercayaan*. The incompatibility of Pangestu’s identity

with the government's script made Pangestu end up as "abject".

Judith Butler, an American philosopher and gender theorist, defines "abject" as a densely populated zone of social life that is "uninhabitable" by those who cannot enjoy the status of the subject (Butler, 1993: 3). In contrast to Lee, who defines the abject as an entity, Butler considers being abject a form of social life, in which those in it do not get complete social rights. Engin F. Isin and Kim Rygel (2007: 181-183) also appear with the theory of "abject space" to show groups that are not considered subjects or objects, and their existence is considered to be non-existent insofar as it cannot be heard or seen. Politically, abject groups tend to "suffer from a form of purity of citizenship that requires them to become silent victims, invisible and apolitical" (Nyers, 2003: 1073-1074). Although the abject can be seen as a condition or an individual, the whole explanation emphasizes it is untouchable, invisible, apolitical, and lacks the status of rights.

Citizens who become politically abject do not have legality and citizenship rights, and their existence is not recorded in the "script". Therefore, these groups are often called those with nonexistent citizenship. In the case of Pangestu, the form of spiritual organization was not recorded as an expression of religiosity recognized by the state, because the state only recognized the existence of *agama* and *kepercayaan*. As a regulating institution, the state presents two ministries as big houses and places of accommodation for *agama* and *kepercayaan*, namely the Ministry of Religion and the Ministry of Education and Culture. The presence of these two institutions indeed functions to facilitate the service, while also becoming a symbol of limitation. As a result, Pangestu, which cannot be institutionalized into the two ministries, became an "invisible" organization in the eyes of the government. Pangestu is thus abject because it is neither known by the Ministry of Religion nor the Ministry of Education and Culture.

For comparison, I will present several examples of citizen groups that became abject in the eyes of the government. Charles T. Lee (2016: 85-90) shows how immigrant housemaids from West India and the Philippines who work in Canada try to build a social life and a sense of belonging by renting apartments with other workers. As domestic immigrant workers, they are often excluded from other groups of workers who work in the public sphere, do not get guaranteed rights and protection from institutions that shelter, and cannot even socialize freely like other citizens. Even though they have not been able to access rights as other workers, they attempt to fulfill their social needs by gathering together on holidays, enjoying a dignified personal existence as individuals by cooking their food, and fulfilling their belonging desire to rent apartments.

Another example is how commercial sex workers (CSWs) have become the object of public abjectification. CSWs are seen as 'dirty' and amoral women who do not deserve to live in the community, so are largely excluded from social life. Not only is their existence abject, but the prostitution itself is also in abject zone, as the work is always seen as lower than other works. Prostitution is work which gives money, but not honors to the workers. Despite being abject, CSWs can produce enough or even much money to survive in a capitalist country. Through that money, they can buy and fight for a 'normal life' for their children and families (Lee, 2016: 107-108).

Not much different from the group of sex workers is the category of transgender people, has also regarded as an abnormal group whose existence is often ignored and exiled. In the standard of heteronormative citizenship, people are still recognized based on their gender identity in general, namely the binary: men and women. Some countries such as India and Australia have indeed acknowledged the existence of a third gender through the mandate of the Constitutional Court, but similar rulings have hardly been replicated in other countries. Donita Ganzon, a Filipino transgender person who lives in the United States, changed her sex from male to female to obtain a 'normal' life. Ganzon is indeed trapped in the binary categorization of men and women, and wanted a heterosexual life like other couples, building families and given birth to children. But by doing a sex change operation, Ganzon received the right to get legal marriage recognition in America, having a 'normal man' husband and enjoying the life she dreamed of. Conversely, if Ganzon naturally had an interest in men but did not carry out transsexual operations, she would live as a gay person who cannot claim marriage rites as she wishes (Lee, 2016: 150-152).

Refugee groups located in border areas, war zones, or refugee camps are also part of the abject communities where they are often considered invisible and do not even exist. According to Engin F. Isin and Kim Rygel (2007: 184), the absence of their existence is not due to their absence, but because they are living in the abject zones. Based on these examples, abjection can occur either purely towards the individual or because of the influence of the existing abject zone.

After reading those examples, I tried to highlight that both the abjection that occurs to individuals or those in the abject zone is caused by the existence of the script. In the context of prostitution and sex workers, for example, the 'neoliberal script' of the market and the world of entrepreneurship suggest that individual entrepreneurs should have the ability to fulfill personal needs and serve their ambitions (Lee, 2016: 128). On the contrary, prostitution is

often considered forced labor, where victims of poverty are ‘forced’ to become prostitutes or simply become money machines and objects from pimps. CSWs are considered to have no personal freedom, low-ranking, and be despicable workers who “sell” their bodies for money, do not have honor, and become a waste of society.

Although in many contexts the CSW group failed to put themselves into the ‘script’ of normal social life, they tried to minimize their abjection in other ways. Sex workers in San Francisco, for example, try to follow the logic of capitalist work by regulating “regular work schedules” like office workers. They try to not only minimize their abjection but creatively attempt to obscure the boundaries between abject and normal by using the advertising strategy of “being a girlfriend” for their sex clients. Doing this allows the sex worker to position herself not as a sex object that can be controlled by the client, but as an entrepreneurial subject who can control the types, terms, and standards of service offered (Lee, 2016: 129-130).

Furthermore, war and border areas are beyond the jurisdiction of the government. As a result, the government cannot guarantee rights to the people in the zone. A refugee camp is also a place where someone’s identity and subjectivity become blurred as most refugees are victims of war or riots who come from other countries to obtain a normal life in the destination country. Engin F. Isin and Kim Rygel (2007: 197) refer to these camps as places where subject rights are temporarily suspended, because the zone is a transition area between one subject to another. Individual refugees are initially subjecting, who can receive full recognition as citizens and rights in their homeland. But the rule that someone’s citizenship needs to be obtained through an official process puts refugees into the abject citizen group, even considered as nonexistent citizens.

THE INGENIOUS CITIZENSHIP OF PAGUYUBAN NGESTI TUNGGAL

As mentioned in the previous section, Pangestu is a spiritual organization that rejects the definition of religion and beliefs provided by the government. Pangestu’s organization was founded on May 20, 1949, in the city of Solo, Java. Initially, Pangestu was only an informal community as a place to gather Sonarto’s students who wanted to deepen spirituality and cultivate their souls and minds (*olah rasa dan jiwa*) to become a better person. As it is inclusive and universal, Pangestu openly accepts members from various religious groups and backgrounds, both Muslims and Christians became the majority during this time, as well as groups claiming to be *abangan* or other religious groups.

For instance, a 1972 report recorded in Dwija Wara magazine shows the list of Catholic members in each branch reached 600 people, although Pangestu was founded by a Muslim.¹ This data validates the claim that since the beginning, Pangestu has been an inclusive organization.

In May 1949, per the words of the Sang Guru Sejati, Pangestu decided to establish itself as a formal organization. Pangestu began to systematize the constitution and bylaws, the organization's vision and mission, and its management structure. Here is the following statement of Soenarto written in Sabda Khusus Peringatan No. 1 paragraph 16 which instructs the establishment of an organization that brings together all subjects: *"Gather all of my students to become familiar, gather the, as it is with the usual ordinances of the organization. As the chairman, decide it for yourself. And regarding your brother Soenarto, you can only consider him as a paranpara (advisor)."*

Apart from that statement, Pangestu needed to establish their organization to gather more diverse members, as their mission was to spread enlightenment (*pepadang*) helping humans better understand and appreciate their religious teachings. Compared to the non-structural community, formal organizations were more suitable for Pangestu to support their teachings. With the organizational system, Pangestu was also able to set up a supporting foundation called Andana Warih that helped Pangestu members collect funds and social support. Although Pangestu was established after Indonesian independence, the city of Solo, the birthplace of Pangestu, was still occupied by the Dutch who banned associations involving more than five people. But voluntarily, seven students of Pakde Narto: Soeratman, Goenawan, Prawirosoeparto, Soeharto, Soedjono, Ngalimi, and Soetardi offered themselves as the first members of the Pangestu community. Based on consideration of the word (*sabda*) and the need to organize, the seven students then formulated the first administrator of Pangestu. Those administrators were, Chief: Goenawan, Secretary: Soetardi, Finance: Soeratman, General Assistant: Soedjono, Soeharto, Ngalimin, and Prawirosoeparto. Soenarto, as the founder, received the position as advisor. The formation of the management structure later became the initial indicator of the establishment of the Pangestu organization.

According to this history, it is evident that Pangestu was born as an organization before the establishment of the BKKI (Indonesian Kebatinan Congress Council) which accommodates other belief and mysticism groups.² Pangestu formed

¹ Soenarto, Sang Guru Sejati and founder of Pangestu is a Muslim. However, due to the limitations of language to study Islam (as Islam is known to use a lot of Arabic), Soenarto tried to deepen spiritualism through other avenues, such as attending *kebatinan* associations, trying various kinds of ascetism, until finally gaining revelation to establish Pangestu.

² BKKI was built on August 21, 1955, precisely at the First Kebatinan Congress in

a formal organization years before BKKI. But after the establishment of the BKKI, Pangestu which emphasized its identity as a spiritual only organization (not belief or mysticism) refused to join BKKI because of several reasons. One of the reasons was because of the political status of the BKKI as part of the Joint Secretariat of GOLKAR (Golongan Karya, the ruling political party in the Indonesian New Order era). That political position was considered not strategic to support Pangestu's future, and being politically neutral is a good strategy to survive, is also identified as one of the ingenious ways practiced by Pangestu.

Not only utilizing neutral preferences in politics, but Pangestu's identity as a spiritual group also became its strategy. In 1966, many *aliran kepercayaan* groups were accused of their affiliation with PKI. Many of them were disbanded and even killed, but Pangestu remained safe, as Pangestu rejected the identity of *aliran kepercayaan* from the very beginning. Additionally, many Pangestu members were part of the TNI (Indonesian Army), POLRI (Indonesian police), and the Prosecutor's Office, such as Lieutenant General I Putu Soekreta Soeranta, Maj. Gen. (TNI) Hendarji Soepandji, younger brother of Hendarman Soepandji, the former General Attorney (9 May 2007-24 September 2010) and Chief of National Defence Agency. During the period 1959-1970, Prof. Dr. Soemantri Hardjoprakoso³ served as the leader of Pangestu. In 1966 when the existence of *aliran kepercayaan* group was threatened by the government, as aforementioned, Soemantri introduced Pangestu teachings to the representatives of Bakorpakem (The Monitor of Community Belief and Religion) of the High Prosecutor Office in Jakarta. By providing various explanations and lectures, Pangestu succeeded in maintaining existence through its clean image despite various threats toward the *kepercayaan/kebatinan* group.

Previously, on July 31, 1962, a delegation from the Ministry of Religion, Ghozali Sulamulhadi, conducted an interview with the Head of Pangestu for Solo Branch, Subroto, regarding the teachings of Pangestu. Before, Pangestu was initially suspected of being a new religious movement. After conducting several dialogues and explaining the basic principles of teaching in accordance with the words of Sang Guru Sejati, the Ministry of Religion decided that

Semarang.

³ Soemantri Hardjoprakoso has been the Chair of the Army Psychotechnical Institute (LPT) since June 15, 1950. He is also the initiator of the establishment of the Faculty of Psychology at Padjadjaran University and chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Establishment of the Faculty of Psychology, Padjadjaran University in August 1961. His name is now used as one of the building names in the Faculty of Psychology, UNPAD. UNPAD Psychology. <http://psikologi.unpad.ac.id/sejarah-psikologi-unpad/>, accessed on 06/16/2019, 10:35 p.m.

Pangestu was not a heretical group that threatened religious life. In response to the restlessness of the Ministry of Religion, the Head of Pangestu issued the Decree of Pangestu Central Executive Board No. Head/08/V/1978 confirming that Pangestu was not a new religion. The decree continues to be issued every year, and eventually became the subject of the Pangestu National Conference which is held every five years.

Besides the Ministry of Religion, Pakem, which is a *kepercayaan* monitoring agency, also continued to supervise Pangestu's activity, particularly in Jakarta, Bandung, and Semarang. However, after conducting several examinations of teachings and articles of association, Pakem stated that Pangestu was not an organization that threatened the integrity of the state nor had elements related to the blasphemy of religion. Pangestu notes that affirming its status to the government is very important, because one of its main teachings stated that Pangestu members must always be loyal to *Kalifatullah* (State Authorities and Laws). As a result, the Central Executive Decree was made as a testament to Pangestu's obedience to the state.

These ideological reasons have also become the consideration for Pangestu to not show direct resistance to the government despite experiencing limited access to rights and recognition. On the other hand, Pangestu tries to creatively utilize the empty spaces between policies that can be used to ensure its survival. Pangestu does not negotiate with the 'script' of *agama* and *kepercayaan* created by the state, but also does not reject it in a confrontational manner. As a solution, Pangestu continues to conduct dialogue and respond to the government without having to change their spiritual identity.

Regarding the status of the organization within the government, Pangestu has also shown a unique way to position the organization. While other groups of *aliran kepercayaan* register themselves in mass to the Directorate of Belief in God and Tradition, Pangestu expelled itself in 2008 after being registered once. Since then, Pangestu is no longer registered under any ministry. Especially for the DIY branch, a permit for organizational activities has been obtained from the Yogyakarta Police with the number No. Pol B/SKEP.13/018/IX/INTERPAM. Until now, this police license has been the only legal principle for the running of the organization's activities.

In addition, Pangestu always tries to build relationships with religious leaders to provide an understanding of the organization's vision and mission. Through this method, Pangestu can avoid the negative stigma as a cult or associations that blaspheme religion. Recently, I find the Pangestu's defense strategy unique because, according to the Law of Staatsblad No. 84 No. 1933, the government requires several rules for a non-legal association to be recognized, and one of

them is “obtaining specific recommendations from the Ministry of Religion (for religious associations) and the Ministry of Education and Culture (for non-religious associations), as well as registered documents by the Ministry of Home Affairs.” As Pangestu was not registered under any aforementioned ministry, Pangestu decided to use internal relations to the attorney, police and religious leaders of every region to access its organizational rights.

For the construction of the Dana Warih meeting building and fundraising as well as social support, Pangestu members collaborated to build the Andana Warih Foundation which was approved by the Ministry of Law and Human Rights in 2008 with the number AHU-3387.AH.01.02. The foundation then handled the building permit management process, as well as supporting the social activities held by Pangestu. Pangestu recognizes that the status of an organization unrecognized by any ministry will lead to limitations in accessing rights. So they tried to establish a legally licensed foundation to deal with the problem, without having to make Pangestu negotiate with one of the identities provided by the state.

CONCLUSION

The definition of religion and belief is a form of Indonesian governmentality to regulate the religious expression of its citizens. Power relations between the government and citizens are established through the formation of laws, limiting definitions and their implementation through policies, especially those related to religion and belief. These laws and policies can be seen from how the Indonesian government created the Ministry of Religion to accommodate *agama*, and the Ministry of Education and Culture as a house of *aliran kepercayaan*. In addition to utilizing state institutions, the government also controls religious expression by creating a minimum definition of religion by the Ministry of Religion, also an ideal characteristic for *aliran kepercayaan* to be legally recognized. As a result, the previously mentioned definition created ‘the script’ as an ideal description of a citizen, and ended up excluding another group of citizens with different religious expressions.

Ingenious citizenship is understood a condition where abject groups are excluded from the script and lack the status, power, and resources to access full juridical rights and social recognition as normative citizens, appearing in original and creative ways to get themselves back into the script. In the context of Indonesian governmentality which is shown through the definition of *agama* and *kepercayaan*, Pangestu is considered as an abject citizen as its spirituality is outside the state’s ideal script of *agama* and *kepercayaan*. Due to being an abject citizen group, Pangestu encountered many obstacles in

accessing several administrative rights, such as permission to construct a meeting hall and making organizational deeds. Additionally, Pangestu could not register itself at the Ministry of Religion and the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Responding to the situation, the Pangestu has made various initiative to restore its rights. In anticipation of public suspicion and rejection, Pangestu built relationships with religious and community leaders in each region, utilized internal connection with the police force to permit activities in exchange for an organizational deed, and actively held a dialogue with the Ministry of Religion to maintain a clean image in front of the government. Regarding civil action, Pangestu established the Andana Warih Foundation, which is officially registered at the Ministry of Law and Human Rights as an intermediary for carrying out social activities. By setting up a separate formal foundation, Pangestu does not have to sacrifice its spiritual identity or merge into a religious or belief group as some other spiritual organizations do, but can still fulfill its organizational rights and needs. In conclusion, it is important to emphasize that groups of abject citizens like Pangestu were present due to the limited government 'script' containing rules, regulations, and definitions that are used as a means of control. The abject also appears as a logical consequence of 'governmentality' where the government does not fully see the aspirations of the citizens.

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