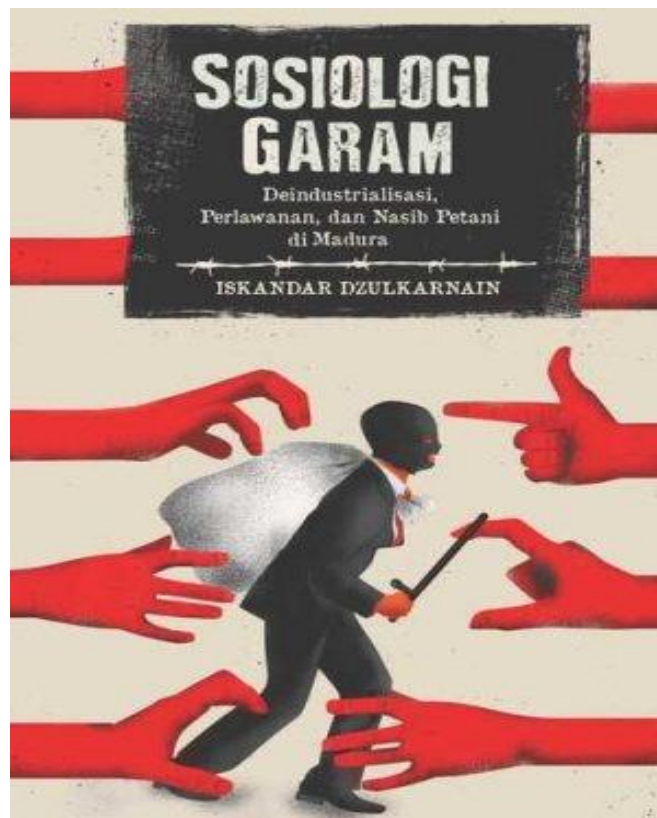


BOOK REVIEW:
IMPOVERISHMENT OF MADURESE SALT FARMERS

Title : Sosiologi Garam
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Hegemony is the right word to represent the first impression of seeing Iskandar Dzulkarnain's book, illustrated by the title and cover of the book which clearly summarizes the essence of the subject matter in the contents of the writing. A man wearing a complete tie with a suit and trousers in the style of an official/office

employee is depicted carrying a sack and a bat, remembering the hand symbols, familiar in the hegemony theme.

"Sosiologi Garam" generally describes salt farmers' conditions in Sumenep, Madura. This book explores the chronology of the history of salt farming in Madura up to colonialism, post-independence developments, and reality nowadays. The description of salt farmers with all the changes in formation and social structure is written in detail and neatly without leaving out other aspects such as culture, politics, economy, etc.

In the beginning, Iskandar Dzulkarnain wrote about the general description of the salt farming community in Madura, which is shackled by the capitalist system, research formulations, and the context of writing. Madura, known as Salt Island, which dominates national salt production, seems to be just a title that cannot boost the welfare of the Madurese people, especially salt farmers. The fact that Madura is the primary national salt producer compared to the welfare of salt farmers who are still mired in poverty raises significant questions. How can this condition occur and last until now? Coupled with the productivity figures of the salt farming community in Madura which are decreasing daily. Salt, the main commodity of Madura, is widely known in its history. How could deindustrialization occur? Madura salt farmers as the main actors supporting the national salt with all the downturns and limitations experience turmoil and even resistance to their rights. This is also the focus of questions for Iskandar Dzulkarnain in his writings discussed in the third part of "Sosiologi Garam". The context of Iskandar Dzulkarnain's discussion in his book focuses on the Gresik Putih and Pinggir Papas Village areas which are included in the Sumenep Regency area for various reasons, one of which is because of the different patterns of resistance, namely open-collective for Pinggir Papas Village and incidental-individual for Gresik Putih Village.

In the second part, Dzulkarnain writes a detailed portrait of salt farmers in Madura, traced from a historical perspective and its development to date. The history of salt in Madura, Sumenep in particular will never be far from the story of Raden Syekh Anggasuto, a figure who protected the soldiers of the Blambangan Kingdom when they lost a war with the Sumenep Kingdom in the 16th century. Apart from being a savior for the Blambangan soldiers, Sheikh Anggasuto as a charismatic figure in his legend is also considered a pioneering figure in the creation of salt farming in Pinggir Papas which brought it to prosperity and became the starting point for the birth of the *nyadar* tradition (a ritual of thanking God). It should be noted that the land of Madura, especially on the outskirts of the coast, is not very fertile for farming, so salt is an alternative container for people to make a living.

The era changed after the arrival of the Dutch, colonialism, and capitalism came with all the harmful effects on the Madurese salt community. Salt, which was also looked at by the Dutch (VOC) as a potential product, was then exploited in such a way as to implement policies that would harm salt farmers with their monopoly system. Not stopping at the VOC, the Chinese at that time also worked together to suck up the farmers by becoming patchers of the mode of production, namely fields *percaton* which were not allowed to be rented by foreigners. Dutch colonialism developed into colonization carried out by the state against salt farmers through PT Garam. Salt farmers are considered inferior people who must and should submit to PT Garam, so the exploitation that has been carried out can continue until now.

Madura salt became an important commodity that helped support finance from the Netherlands. Salt was not only circulated on the island of Java, but also on other islands, forcing the Dutch to open new fields to meet market demand. Simultaneously with the total salt reorganization program through the Madura Welfare Fund

(1937), the expansion of areas and the purchase of salt-making rights from the field owner were realized. Using the excuse of political evaluation and economic efficiency, the Dutch finally kicked out the Chinese from the salt trading circle and even castrated the owners of the fields by making them laborers for salt farmers. Acquisition and monopoly of salt land were carried out under the pretext of making the Dutch state company a classic story of the exploitation model of the natives. The culture of hegemony by ensnaring salt farmers seems to be a habit that they don't want to get rid of considering it is beneficial for the elitists, in suspending themselves in social order until now.

After independence, instead of getting a bright spot, the native owners of fields and farm workers still haven't got their freedom. The Dutch government's salt monopoly company was taken over by Indonesia only by changing its name to the State Salt and Soda Company (PGSN) which after that was split into the State Salt Company (PN Garam) and the State Soda Company (PS Soda), the operating system still inherits the legacy of the Netherlands with an orientation monopoly. Even though in 1957, the Orde Lama government issued Emergency Law No. 25 to abolish monopoly to strengthen salt productivity. This was followed up by efforts to open new fields, but intended for entrepreneurs or the private sector, not for workers or salt farmers.

The Orde Lama vanished leaving confusion over salt management during the Orde Baru era. The change in the leadership of PN Garam was apparently unable to solve all the welfare problems of Madura salt farmers and their own companies. As a result, in 1972, an institutional reshuffle and the transfer of the head office to Madura were carried out to return the glory of salt to the colonial era. However, during this government, monopoly was repeated again. PN Garam, a state-owned company, tried to force fields from the people to cause resistance, and the PKI jargon was

heard again to accuse people who refused to give up their fields. Not only monopoly and expropriation at that time the private sector was also partnered with by the government to take part in managing the salt circle. Ultimately, salt activity was dominated by the state and the private sector, leaving the owners of the people's fields and Madura salt farm workers as the parties who remained in the field with limited wages and facilities. Not satisfied with just monopoly, the government through Presidential Decree No. 69 of 1994 concerning salt iodization, opened the door for salt imports to begin. In addition to tackling goiter, iodization also increasingly dwarfs people's salt made traditionally.

The New Order's collapse and the Era of Reformasi's continuation created new optimism for the Madurese salt community. The Madurese salt farmers expect the democratic era as a gateway for the return of fields that have been stolen since the colonial era. Freedom of expression is a turning point for salt farmers to voice their aspirations after being quiet under the auspices of authoritarian leadership. The reforms predicted to bring the winds of change are similar to previous eras, the birth of new policies and programs such as PUGAR, Geo Membrane, etc., cannot wholly eradicate the poverty suffered by Madura salt farmers. Salt farmers, as a lower class group that is hegemony by PT Garam, want changes that can free them from the shackles of poverty

Post-reform social formations also contributed to perpetuating monopolies like in previous eras. The presence of *se andhik nama* or salt trading brokers is one of the obstacles to selling people's salt. *Se andhik nama* is the state's long arm in perpetuating hegemony over salt farmers. The quality and price determined unilaterally without socialization and assistance to improve the quality of people's salt are increasingly stifling the cultivators of salt fields. Competing with imported salt and iodization, which is increasingly widespread, causes farmers to be dazed in their daydreams, and

powerlessness in facing market demands causes resistance by farmers. Cultural capital that is in accordance with the desires of the capitalists becomes a habitus to perpetuate the power of hegemony over salt farmers.

Farmers carried out the resistance against the exploitation of PT Garam in various ways. Ranging from individual to communal resistance, from incidental to ongoing resistance carried out by the farmers. Such as by advocating through legal channels, open hearings, rallying for action, delaying salt harvest, taking PT Garam's old water, lowering the quality of salt, putting salt in excessive sacks, taking produce, and even up to communal resistance with NGOs and other social organizations. But it was unlucky that during the resistance experienced by the salt farmers, there were stowaways who tried to tap the movement for personal gain. The new moon for Madura salt farmers has not yet been seen. PT Garam considers fields and salt farmers as commodities. In more vulgar language, it can be said that fields and salt farmers are like dairy cows who are given makeshift food and shelter but are forced to produce nutritious milk every day. In Marx's language, capitalists are written as vampires who live by sucking the blood of the proletariat. Awareness to achieve the rights of salt farmers has basically begun to form. Still, with the social capital they currently have, it can only provide an impetus for resistance that has not been able to destroy the existing hegemony and exploitation. War position is the right plan to fight for the rights of salt farmers. Alliances between workers and the wider community, balanced with a holistic and solid awareness of their rights, should be raised by farmers so that they can cause fruitful resistance.

The depiction of the phenomenon of salt in Madura is drawn holistically through Dzulkarnain's pen. Salt farmers, as the leading actor who has been in hegemony for decades or even hundreds of years, are represented beautifully and with vivid nuances of conflict.

The summary of each vital concept represented by tables is beneficial in solidifying understanding of the outline of the problem. The appearance of the theory with the language is reasonably coherent without reducing or obscuring the substance of the book's discussion. However, in writing about actors or social structures in terms of salt, something seems missing, such as cooperatives and local unions are not very visible in the discussion. There are also little things that are annoying, such as writing inconsistent loan words or standards and pages that don't match the table of contents. However, these minor deficiencies do not cover the light of "Sosiologi Garam".

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