

Resilience of Local Religion Amid a Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract— This study provides factual conditions regarding the dimensions of religiosity of Local Religion, namely followers of the teachings of *Ki Ageng Suryomentaram* in responding to and dealing with the Covid-19 Pandemic. Using an analytical from Glock and Stark related to the dimension of religiosity well as descriptive analysis research methods. Forum Group Discussion as to the data collection tool, it was found that the dimension of religiosity of the *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa* provides peace and tranquility in the face of the Covid 19 Pandemic. From the results of the analysis, it was found that local religious resilience comes from beliefs and internalization of religious teachings. Research Contribution: This study presents a tangible form of local religious resilience. The religiosity dimension has been internalized from the teachings of *Ki Ageng Suryomentaram*, which is trusted can provide peace and tranquility during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords—*covid-19 pandemic; pelajar kawruh jiwa; Ki Agung Suryomentaram; religiosity*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the face of the world. Numerous countries have designed different policies and methods to decrease the rate of the outbreak Covid 19 [1]. Several Policies is designed to be able to defend against the virus, which not only impacts health but also impact the economy and society [2]. Economically, there has been a lot of reduction in the workforce due to restrictions on community

activities, which is leading to an increase in the unemployment rate [3]. The economic order has trembled, caused socio-religious life under pressure as well. Indonesia, which has a religious community, emphasizes the urgency of understanding the reality of situations and conditions from a theological point of view. Religious attitudes based on spiritual teachings are point up to address the realness of the Covid-19 pandemic [4].

The religious attitude that exists in society is the hallmark of spiritual civilization. Amid existing religious manners, the contestation of religious patrons is still dynamic in society. This contestation on the other side can be resulting in resilience, and the others can create uncertainty in society [5]. During an uncertain situation due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it is necessary to increase resilience in the community. One thing that needs to do in improving immunity and resilience in the community is to strengthen religiosity and local wisdom as social capital which is available in the community. Strengthen religiosity in society raises social awareness to overcome and overcome the impact of the global pandemic [6]. On the other hand, the social capital that exists in the community in the form of religiosity and local wisdom is one of the reinforcements for the community in dealing with the death of their family members caused by the Covid-19 virus. Religiosity and local prudence provide natural reinforcement in dealing with grief due to the abandonment of their loved ones [7].

The importance of strengthening religiosity in society places an enormous burden on religious leaders who can play a

role in dealing with the situation and conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic. Moral messages, doctrinal spiritual strengthening to strengthening religiosity are advanced in contemporary packages. In the uncertain dynamics, the policy of Restricting Community Activities and the prohibition of gathering in communal rituals becomes a challenge for religious leaders. From the Christian side, the conservative church has adapted into a virtual church [8]. Spirituality which was originally traditional, treated in communal rituals, was forced to transform into online customs and change its face into online spirituality [9]. There is a group of people who respond in their way in the transformation of religious rituals in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Indonesian local religious groups responded by continuing to perform rituals and using local wisdom with *titen* knowledge and *jamasan pusaka* as a step to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic [10]. The response of local religions is visible in their rituals is a form of religiosity of their adherents in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. How is the religiosity of Indonesia's local religions in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic? This paper will investigate further related to the religiosity of local religions in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. This article is a follow-up study on *Kawruh Jiwa*. If the previous research discussed the pattern of character education from *Kawruh Jiwa* about Christian Character Education [11], this paper will discuss the resilience of *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa* amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

II. METHOD

This article uses qualitative approach by using descriptive methods of analysis will be used in finding answers to existing research problems [12]. The method used as part of taking data approximately and close to the research object [13]. In collecting the data, Forum Group Discussion was conducted to explore and validate the data [14]. The data that has been collected is then analyzed descriptively [15] to be presented comprehensively

III. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Society and religion are two things that cannot be separated. In the eyes of Emile Durkheim, a sociologist of religion states that religion is a *sui generis*, that is, a reflection of society [16]. The *sui generis* nature of the religion makes the development of religion from one society to another not the same. The awareness of a person or group of people about the other entities forces outside of themselves brings the impetus to create different religious symbols and rituals. This projection of belief and divinity makes religion have figures, rules, and religious activities that differ from one community group to another.

The belief in the existence of this supernatural power then forms awareness of religion. The element of feeling is a combination of faith and consciousness that leads to a religious experience that turning out through spiritual action [17]. This spiritual act then becomes religiosity that comes from awareness of the religious beliefs that they hold. There are five

dimensions of religiosity [18] which is often a measure of the level of religiosity of a person or group of people.

Religious Practice is the degree to which a person only performs ritual obligations in his belief. Various ritual obligations are accomplished to express his respect and devotion to his faith. In this section, a person carries out his ritual practices as taught by his faith, without in-depth knowledge of the basis of his belief. In this dimension, a person behaves religiously-based only on his skin or religious packaging. From the outside, it will look as if the ritual is following what is believed, but forgets to capture the essence of religion itself. All religious ritual practices will be implemented correctly, without deepening the content and knowledge behind the ritual practices they undergo. Practical religious tendencies, a person will "blindly" carry out his ritual behavior, regardless of whether he is doing it right or wrong because religion at this level only displays the religious side of ritual behavior.

Religious Belief (the Ideological Dimension) contains expectations where religious people hold fast to particular theological views and acknowledge the truth of these doctrines. Each religion maintains a set of beliefs to which adherents are expected to adhere. However, the content and scope of these beliefs vary not only between beliefs but often also between traditions within the same religion. The extent to which people accept dogmatic things in their religious teachings. For example, the belief in the existence of God, Angels, books, Prophets and Apostles, the Day of Judgment, heaven, hell, and others are dogmatic. In this dimension, a person who behaves religiously begins to think about his dogmatic teachings, not only accepts applied ritual practices but has begun to believe in his teachings.

Religious Knowledge (the Intellectual Dimension) is a person begins to start his activities to find out more about the teachings of his beliefs. This activity is then interpreted as the science of religion/belief. The dimension refers to the expectation that the religious people are at least have a minimal amount of knowledge about the fundamentals of faiths, rites, scriptures, and traditions. The dimensions of knowledge and belief are mutually related because knowledge of belief is a condition for its acceptance. However, credence does not need to be followed by knowledge requirements, nor does all religious knowledge always rely on faith. For example, in Christianity, someone who comes to have religious knowledge will usually start by asking philosophical-theological questions about the basics of his religious beliefs. In this dimension, people are religious not by how to be religious, but by why they are devoted. In this section, a person tries to deepen the essence of his credence by questioning the basis of ritual, belief, and religion for himself and others.

Religious Feeling (the Experiential Dimension) consist of religious feelings and experiences that have been sensed and experienced. For example, someone feels close to God, someone feels afraid to sin, someone feels that his prayer has been answered by God, and so on. In this dimension, a person has experienced supernatural events in his natural realm. The

figure of God is believed to have manifested in his natural life. In this dimension, the primary belief in divinity could be strengthened by his experience with the supernatural. The tendency of religiosity in this dimension is that a person will be more mystical and will judge and start something, both about "god" and others in terms of feelings and experiences. Finally, having a tendency, his involvement is made as his standard of truth and justification.

Religious Effect (the Consequential Dimension) measures the extent to which a person's actions are motivated by religious teachings in his life to give an impact on others and the environment. In this section, a person's religiosity will begin to be felt by others, not only for his own sake. A person's religious behavior in this dimension begins to think about and has an impact on the common good. Some examples of figures in this dimension include Mother Theresa and Gus Dur. His religious attitude and behavior managed to impact others. Someone who is in this dimension has succeeded in reflecting his knowledge and experience of God in his religious rituals and into his daily life to impact the lives of others. As a result, his religiosity can reflect the "God" he believes in.

This conceptual framework of religiosity is the benchmark for mapping religiosity in society. In understanding local religion, especially *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa*, or adherents of the teachings of *Ki Ageng Suryamentaram*, hold that religiosity is realized in stages. Without an understanding of life and life, a person will fail in carrying out his religious life [19]. *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa* is the name of a community that follows the teachings of *Ki Ageng Suryomentaram* (KAS). This community is one of the many sects of *Kejawen* belief that developed in Java. KAS itself is a descendant of Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono VII and developed his teachings known as *Kawruh Jiwa*. His teachings are still developing in Gombang Hamlet, one of the hamlets in Semarang Regency which is also a historical place and is known as a stopover for KAS in getting enlightened life. This community is known as *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa*. Identity as a *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa* is still strong in the community.

Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa have a unique greeting, "*Salam Langgeng Bunggah Susah*". The greeting has the meaning that forever joy and sorrow will come and go. When happiness comes, don't get too caught up in the joyfulness, because when sorrow comes, the joy disappears. On the other hand, when sorrow comes, don't mourn it too deeply, because happiness will come in its place. Based on the narrative of the *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa* elder, the greeting reminded that humans have a *mongso* (time/season) of life that alternates. The *mongso* will come as a complement and make life more beautiful. Humans only need to be prepared when the *mongso* comes and goes in their lives.

Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic, *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa* have their views regarding their religious life. Based on the exposure and analysis of the Forum Group Discussion, with *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa*, found that religious rituals were not disturbed by the Covid-19 pandemic [20]. In the view of

Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa, the internalization of spiritual-religiosity is implemented in their religious rituals. In the dimension of religiosity, *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa* respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, namely:

Jagad Gedhe lan Jagad Cilik (Big and Small Universes) is a *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa* who adheres to Javanese religious cosmology in general. In Javanese cosmology, two worlds are believed to be the macrocosm and the microcosm. The macrocosm is the unseen or the invisible world, which is believed to have a significant role in the microcosm world, namely the real world inhabited and lived by humans [21]. For *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa*, the macrocosm is known as the big universe (*jagad gedhe*), while the little universe (*jagad cilik*) is the term for the microcosm. *Kasunyatan* realm (*Alam kasunyatan*) or *jagad cilik* is a reflection of what happened to the big universe (*jagad gedhe*) [20]. Therefore, a balance between what is happening in the big and small cosmos is needed.

The Covid-19 pandemic or in the *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa* paradigm known as *Pagebluk* is proof that the order of the great universe (*jagad gedhe*) is imbalanced with what is happening in the small universe (*jagad cilik*). The existence of such disproportion could be arbitration by holding a ritual to synchronize the two realms that are thundering. The rituals are held along with various offerings which are carried out personally in their respective residences, by the *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa*. This ritual can provide peace and tranquility within the individual. The inner calm in the face of the Pandemic gives you the supernatural strength to be able to live a better life [20]. In terms of religiosity, this section is a form of religiosity knowledge belongs to *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa*.

Sumeleh (surrender) is an understanding of cosmology possessed by *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa* makes their daily lives experience calm and tranquility. Rituals carried out to balance the macrocosm and microcosm give a feeling of *sumeleh* (surrender). For the *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa*, *Sumeleh's* feelings are the effect of accepting oneself and accepting what is in oneself [20]. Self-acceptance then makes the feeling of being able to appreciate and admit yourself as part of the scenario from the Creator. The feeling of *Sumeleh* is an attitude of surrendering to God, but still struggling to continue life for oneself and others.

The ability to surrender or *sumeleh* is the outcome of experience and understanding with his personal life with the Creator of Life. *Sumeleh* attitude means putting something down, letting go of attachment to something, and surrendering it to the Creator of life. This surrender means accepting all of His wills for oneself, circumstances, possessions, and what is unexpected to happen. The *sumeleh* condition proves a feeling of sincere acknowledgment of His greatness, His glory, and His majesty. In this feeling, there is a dimension of religiosity that believes in God's nature is manifested in his life.

Ngajeni lan Nepake (Respect and Enforce) In the words of the elders of the *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa*, the ethical concept that is often taught to all followers of the *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa* is

about *ngajeni* and *nepake* [20]. There is a teaching in this concept about being able to respect others and place oneself in existing social conditions and situations. This teaching is internalized and can be perceived in the daily attitude and speech of *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa*. The followers of *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa* will automatically turn on their social switches when dealing with different age levels. In student meetings of *Kawruh Jiwa* or commonly called *jogringan*, the youths will take over all the preparations and kneel when passing older people without being commanded.

The ethical conditions are usually done by *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa* are a practical manifestation of religiosity. In the view of the *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa*, without a proper understanding of the beliefs and beliefs they hold, they cannot use it in their life and social life. It is necessary to throw away ego, prestige, and turn off one's desires or in the language of *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa* known as *kramadangsa*, to be able to *ngajeni* and *nepake* [22], so that they can implement their teachings in their religious life. This practical religious attitude is what makes *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa* accept during the Covid-19 pandemic.

IV. CONCLUSION

Life and psychological burdens that exist in society need to be managed appropriately. The limitations and pressures of life, without good management, caused by the Covid-19 pandemic can make people not only encounter the challenges of physical ailment but also mental illness. Psychic strengthening requires the role of the religiosity dimension of society. Local religious groups, especially the *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa*, reinforced to face and respond to the Covid-19 pandemic by internalizing the teachings of *Ki Ageng Suryomentaram*. This internalization is a dimension of religiosity that lives by *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa*. A comprehension of the cosmology of the big and small universes (*jagad gedhe lan jagad cilik*) is an internalization of the religiosity of knowledge. The feeling of *sumeleh* represents the dimension of religiosity of a sense that is aware of the sovereign and powerful in God's nature in his life. The attitude of *ngajeni* and *nepake* is a form of practical religiosity, which provides rules for dealing with life. These three characteristics make *Pelajar Kawruh Jiwa* endure calm in responding to and dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic.

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