THE SUNAN AMPEL REVIEW
OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

THE SARPASS

CHINA'S PEACEFUL DEVELOPMENT: A RESPONSIBLE GREAT POWER OR A GOOD NEIGHBOUR?

Eryan Ramadhani

Department of International Relations, Bina Nusantara University, Indonesia
eryan.tri@binus.ac.id

ABSTRACT

The rise of China has become a catchword to define China's current position in the international system. China's increasing power comes with responsibility. Continuing Hu Jintao's peaceful development, Xi Jinping is committed to realizing China's responsibility as a great power. Concurrently, Xi sets out neighbourhood diplomacy that underlines the importance of bringing development and prosperity to neighbouring states. This paper investigates how China realizes the twin goals of peaceful development. The South China Sea (SCS) disputes involving China and four neighbouring Southeast Asian states serve as a case study. It is found that China's assertiveness, manifested in continued escalations and dragged-on negotiations on the Code of Conduct (COC), does not bode well for China's peaceful development. In other words, China is hardly a responsible great power or a good neighbour in handling the SCS issue.
Keywords: China's assertiveness, peaceful development, responsible great power, neighbourhood diplomacy, the South China Sea disputes

INTRODUCTION

In January 2013, China's newly appointed President Xi Jinping addressed the domestic audience regarding his new administration's trajectory in the coming years. In his words:

> "We will continue to follow the path of peaceful development. However, we will never give up our legitimate rights and never sacrifice our core national interests. No foreign country should expect China to trade off with our core national interests, to swallow the bitter fruit as a result of our core national interests being undermined, which include sovereignty, security, or development interests. China is following the path of peaceful development, and other countries should also follow such a path. Only when all countries take the path of peaceful development can they develop together, and live in peace with one another" (quoted in Qin, 2014, p. 310).

This lengthy statement emphasized the continuity of foreign policy that conforms to the previous administration's approach under Hu Jintao. Developed by Zheng Bijian, Hu embraced the concept of peaceful rise and made it the official line of his administration's foreign policy goal to delineate the rise of China that would not threaten the current status quo and which other states should not be wary. It then was changed and replaced by terms with softer tones because of "the confusion caused by the word 'rise' among foreign audiences"—peaceful development (Chen, 2009, p. 16). The 2008 financial crisis and China's subsequent successful management of it boosted

China's confidence in furthering its peaceful foreign policy. As the old saying goes, with great capabilities comes great responsibilities; China has been expected to play a greater role in international affairs (Zoellick, 2005). Peaceful development serves as a means to achieve China's great power status. During his meeting with the United States (US) President George W. Bush Jr. in 2003, Zheng pointed out that uncertainty in Sino-US bilateral relations undermined China's future as a major power to be reckoned with (Glaser & Medeiros, 2007, p. 294). From this meeting, he formulated the 'development path of China's peaceful rise' concept that Hu's administration later adopted. It can be inferred that pursuing a great power status was intended to go hand in hand with realizing China's peaceful development. Since China values the unswerving economic development that has lifted millions out of poverty in the past decades, maintaining a conducive and peaceful environment is important (Xia, 2001). In other words, China's peaceful development cannot be uncoupled from the continuation of domestic economic development. And it starts with China's neighbourhood (Zhang, 2016).

Following the new administration's inauguration under Xi, Foreign Minister (FM) Wang Yi, in his attendance at the 2013 World Peace Forum, introduced China's new foreign policy agenda, which did not depart significantly from the existing principles, including Hus peaceful development. He, nonetheless, underscored, among others, two main features of China's foreign policy: to embrace a great power status by "becoming more proactive in international affairs" and to preserve "a stable and prosperous environment in its regional neighborhood" (Heberer, 2014, p. 120). In October 2013, the Peripheral Diplomacy Work Conference was held in Beijing. Chief to that event was the emphasis on the prominence of China's relations with neighbouring countries, although without abandoning the priority of enhancing its relations with the US. Drawing from the abovementioned explanations, China's foreign policy is designed to fulfil two intertwined goals of being a great power while at the same time being more attentive to neighbourhood diplomacy. Peaceful development is assumed to serve as the framework through which these two goals are simultaneously achieved. It is not an easy task to do for Chinese leaders. A great power status reflects the need to act responsibly on a global level. On the contrary, good neighbourhood diplomacy requires China to focus instead on an area of proximity. This contradiction, seemingly, appears to be a challenge to China's peaceful development. This paper aims to analyse how and under what condition China's foreign policy has been carried out in recent years in the light of two conflicting priorities: to be a great power with global reach or a good neighbour without (or with limited) global ambition.

Eryan Ramadhani

LITERATURE REVIEW

Great power responsibility is a concept coined and developed by scholars associated with the English School of International Relations (hereafter the English School). Hedley Bull is among the prominent scholars whose 'society of states' has become the central understanding of the English School in its view of the international system and order, and great powers play a major role in such a system. According to Bull (1997), there are three characteristics of great powers: (1) there are more than, or at least, two states with comparable (overall) capabilities, (2) they have strong military power, and (3) they are recognized by others or those with lesser power. Because not every state can manage the international order, this task or responsibility is therefore bestowed upon great powers. There is no consensus as to which states belong to this elite group. The noticeable one would be the five members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) or the so-called P5 consisting of the US, the United Kingdom (UK), France, Russia, and China. The importance of great powers does not only spring from their capabilities to create order but also to enforce it (Foot, 2001, p. 3). Even though great powers seem to hold sway in guaranteeing international order, they at the same time are constrained by legitimacy issues. Bull cautions that "Great powers can fulfil their managerial functions in global society only if these functions are accepted enough by a large enough proportion of the society of states to command legitimacy," (1977, p. 221). Furthermore, great powers' status, rights, and responsibilities are not determined objectively merely by looking at their material capabilities but intersubjectively by incorporating recognition of other states (Loke, 2015, p. 5). In Andrew Hurrels words, "great power status is a social category that depends on the recognition by smaller and weaker states willing to accept the legitimacy and authority of those at the top of the international hierarchy," (quoted in Zhang, 2011, p. 781). It can be summed up that great powers are those states with more material capabilities relative to others upon which the responsibility to manage and maintain international order is conferred. Accordingly, such status requires recognition by the rest of the states in the international system.

The conception of China as a great power could be traced back to the period before the Chinese Civil War. Under Chiang Kai Sek's Nationalist administration, China actively sought a place it deemed proper in the international system after the conclusion of World War II. Chiang declared that "The nation [China] is responsible for its interests and those of the world," (quoted in Loke, 2015, p. 13). Upon the creation of the UN, China toiled to have its say heard by emphasizing the significant role of China in ensuring the post-war order in Asia, especially in checking the possible Japanese remilitarization. China then was able to secure a seat in the UNSC and a legitimate great power status. Chen Zhimin argues that China's awareness of its great power responsibility emerged during the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997 (2009, p. 12). China's decision not to devalue the Renminbi helped avoid the region from plunging even deeper into crisis. Moreover, China exerted the responsibility of conforming to

international law as an excuse for its opposition to intervention in Yugoslavia in 1999 (Chan, 2013, p. 61). China's active role in the UN has also increased in the past two decades. Not only has China become more involved in peacekeeping operations, but it has also raised financial contributions to the institution. Unfortunately, in terms of leadership in both the UNSC and UN General Assembly (UNGA), China has yet made any significant progress as expected (Eastin, 2013). Interestingly, amid the debate over the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) in the UNGA in 2005, China endorsed such an idea, albeit with some reservations (Liu & Zhang, 2014).

Rosemary Foot (2001) contends that China incrementally embraces a great power status. Between the 1950s and 1960s, China was not intent on being a great power. Instead, China was at the peak of perceiving that "it had the responsibility to export revolution to the rest of the world," (Loke, 2011, p. 17). In the 1970s and 1980s, China started to turn the tide and changed its course from being "a system challenger" to "a system maintainer" (Foot, 2001, p. 8). Beginning in the late 1980s, China began to elevate its relations with other states, especially the neighbours and major powers. This step-by-step approach to great power is also illustrated by Xiang Gao's (2013) content and discourse analyses of China as a responsible power as appeared in an official magazine Beijing Review. She finds that such discourse has gradually been used after 1978 and that China's understanding of the term 'responsible power' has converged with Western conception, except on human rights and democracy issues. This finding is similar to Shogo Suzuki's study (2014). He maintains that China's status as a great power is closely linked to Western recognition of whether to acknowledge it as one. It implies China's attempts to meet Western expectations to be recognized as a great power. The result is that China is more likely to preserve the status quo and work with the existing great powers in their international order management. China's foreign policy, in and of itself, reflects the aspiration of the Chinese leaders to "cultivate positive recognition as a great power in international society," (Deng, 2008, p.17).

Despite the emphasis on China's gradual yearning for great power status, some scholars notice that China is still constrained by its limited power projection, let alone a grand strategy to pursue its great-power dream. China is preoccupied with its pursuit of national interests, and along the process, it might deviate from the responsible great power line (Bulkeley, 2009, p. 90). On the same page, Gerald Chan points out that China's sense of responsibility is toward its nation rather than the international society (2013, p. 62). Regarding the geographical area in which China is more likely to exercise leadership, it is the Asia-Pacific region instead of a global one, making it an incomplete great global power (Kim, 2004, p. 53).

Luke Eastin (2013) contends that China still lacks leadership at the UNSC and UNGA, rendering its legitimacy crippled to some extent. Xiang Gao (2013) reveals that China is still reluctant to discuss sensitive issues such as human rights and

democracy. Precisely these two areas are where China is hardly a part of the Western-dominated international society. According to Zhang Xiaoming, "China is still far from being accepted as a 'responsible' member of the international society [because] a rising China is not yet conforming to the 'new standard of civilization,' such as human rights and democracy," (2011, p. 241). The issues of human rights and democracy become an obstacle for China to present itself as a responsible great power, for its legitimacy is born upon fulfilling those norms. China, instead, is a "frustrated great power" (Suzuki, 2008).

The existing literature contradicts China's foreign policy in the 21st century. On the one hand, China is cognizant of its emerging status as a great power which entails specific responsibilities attached to that status. As then Chinese FM Yang Jiechi clearly articulated, "China is a responsible great power in the international society and would take more international responsibility as Chinese power increases," (quoted in Zhang, 2011, p. 244). On the other hand, China seems to be absorbed in its domestic and regional concerns.

RESEARCH QUESTION

When Hu's administration introduced the peaceful development concept as China's foreign policy core agenda, the key was to sustain national development so it could go in tandem with China's growing power. China's rise should not raise any eyebrow in fear of a suspected challenge to the status quo; that China could and would rise peacefully without shaking the existing international order. China aspires to be an active member of great powers. Xi's ascent to power does not extinguish such aspiration. He reiterates the continuation of the previous leadership's peaceful development. Additionally, his proposal of neighbourhood diplomacy is not aimed to put that aspiration in check. Peaceful development continues to shape China's foreign policy, as does the newly endorsed neighbourhood diplomacy. As aforementioned, there seems to be a contradiction within China's peaceful development agenda, whether China is ripe for a great power status or a good, non-threatening neighbour. The research question is: Is 'peaceful development' possible given the existing domestic and international challenges China faces in the 21st century?

This paper uses the South China Sea (SCS) disputes as a case study to help analyse China's peaceful development dilemma. With the growing apprehension regarding China's alleged assertiveness in coping with the disputes, China's adherence to peaceful development—and neighbourhood diplomacy—is questioned. Does China act in accordance with what great powers should do? Or does China abandon its neighbourhood diplomacy by taking assertive actions?

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

China's Claim over the SCS Disputes

China's claim is known as the nine-dash line, originating on the 1947 Nationalist government's map. After winning the civil war, the government adopted it under the Communist Party China (CPC) rule. In 1992 China enacted the Law on the Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone into which the claim over the islands and waters within the nine-dash line in the SCS falls: the Pratas Islands (Dongsha), the Paracel Islands (Xisha), Macclesfield Bank (Zhongsha), and the Spratly Islands (Nansha) (Dutton, 2011, p. 45). China's claim is primarily made on a historical basis. And this historic claim only came after the 1990s. The first mention of China's historic rights over the contested islands and waters in the SCS was in 1996. The use of historic claims is of importance for China to put itself in a favourable position vis-à-vis other claimant states, especially after China ratified the 1982 UN Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in 1996 (Li L., 2014, p. 151). Henceforth, the new historic claim has influenced China's position in the SCS disputes. However, these claims are ambiguous regarding "what constitutes 'historic rights' [and] what is included or claimed within those nine-dashes," (Ba, 2011, p. 271). In response to the Malaysia-Vietnam joint submission to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) in 2009 regarding their claims over the SCS, China, for the first time, including the 1947 map of the nine-dash line in its submission. China clarified its claims covering the islands and the adjacent waters in the SCS. This clarification remains problematic notwithstanding. China's historic rights, along with its 1998 Law on the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf, seem to collide with UNCLOS provisions about the delimitation of rights to only the waters, not the islands (deLisle, 2012, p. 616). These historic claims and obscure interpretations become the source of contention between China and other claimant states.

In spite of the overlapping claims, China has maintained good relations with the Southeast Asian claimant states. At the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) inauguration in 1994, China was invited, although it was anxious about the likelihood of internationalizing the SCS disputes. Following the Mischief Reef incident in 1995 between China and the Philippines, in which China built structures on that reef also claimed by the Philippines, China was confronted during the second ARF and agreed to talk about the disputes on multilateral fora—something that China had been firmly against. China further assured ASEAN members that the SCS disputes should be resolved according to UNCLOS (Li L., 2014, p. 165). In 2002 China and ASEAN signed a Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the SCS (the DOC). Although the DOC is a non-legally binding document, the agreement made by all interested parties was quite an achievement. The principles laid out in the DOC are in conformity with UNCLOS, meaning that all parties abide by their commitment to international law. To date, lacking a Code of Conduct (COC), DOC is the only document upon which China

and ASEAN have agreed to maintain regional peace and stability. On July 21, 2011, China and ASEAN signed and adopted the Guidelines for the Implementation of the DOC amidst heightened tensions. Negotiation on the COC once again was placed on the back burner. In 2013, to everyone's surprise, Beijing announced its readiness to negotiate the possible establishment of the COC. However, it did not touch on the more critical questions of when and under what condition such negotiation would likely undergo. Until then, there has been no significant development regarding COC negotiation.

China's Foreign Policy in the SCS

China's foreign policy toward the SCS disputes has been relatively constant. In the 1990s, China proposed a joint development with other Southeast Asian claimant states to explore and exploit the contested areas in the SCS. China signed such development with the Philippines and Vietnam, respectively. China has maintained a bilateral negotiation with each claimant state as the most appropriate way of resolving disputes. When the SCS dispute was brought before the second ARF in 1995, while taken by surprise, China conceded to ASEAN member states' demand to discuss the matter on the forum. It should be noted that China remains persistent in its preference for bilateral negotiation regarding sovereignty questions. Multilateral talk with ASEAN does not bother China as long as it does not impinge on such a delicate matter. In other words, China is not averse to multilateral negotiation—the signing of the DOC is a case in point.

Since the signing of the DOC, tensions have been fluctuating between claimant states. According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) data (n.d.), incidents involving claimant and non-claimant states have increased since 2010. Of 65 incidents between 2010 and 2020, only 8 cases did not involve China. The data further reveals that China and the Philippines have engaged in 21 incidents between 2010 and 2016, China and Vietnam in 30 incidents, and China and Malaysia in 1 incident (CSIS, n.d.). The incidents mostly take harassment by Chinese vessels, including the Chinese Coast Guard and maritime law enforcement agencies, toward fishers fishing in the contested areas in the SCS. These shreds of evidence coincide with the growing allegation of China being more assertive, which has alarmed the neighbouring states in Southeast Asia, not to mention the non-claimant states. China's assertiveness surely does not bode well for its peaceful development agenda.

China has been tiptoeing between assertiveness and cooperation in dealing with the SCS disputes. Starting in 2010, tensions have increased quite significantly. But China has not only resorted to tough approaches, such as more frequently deploying naval forces to the SCS and criticizing other claimant states. Concurrently it has strengthened its cooperation with Southeast Asian states. In 2013 Xi delivered a speech

before the members of the Indonesian parliament about his proposal to build the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road' that would connect China with Southeast Asian states and others beyond the region. This proposal receives overall positive responses. China also pioneers the establishment of two regional institutions supportive of the '21st Century Maritime Silk Road initiative, namely, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the New Silk Road Fund (NSRF). A question remains: if China has so far succeeded in deepening cooperation with its neighbours, why does it still cling to assertive actions that would only heighten tensions and neighbours' consternation?

According to Zhou Fangyin, China's alternate foreign policy from hawkish to dovish reflects an effort to transition from "keeping a low profile" to "striving for achievement" (2016, p. 873). To some extent, he adds that the maritime silk road has reigned China's proactive approach to the SCS disputes (2016, p. 876). This argument supports the view that being assertive is a deliberate strategy (Advincula, 2015; Chan & Li, 2015; Liao, 2016). Oriana Skyler Mastro (2015) argues that China's assertiveness manifests its long-term strategy to prevail over the contest of balance of resolve. This strategy is directed toward potential interference by third parties, particularly the US, which China believes would only confound the already complicated disputes with Southeast Asian claimant states. Hence, to prevent such a scenario from materializing, China needs to be assertive to show its resolve. Although intentionally carved, China is not interested in letting its assertiveness loose. China restrains its action in the SCS to "put pressure on other claimant states to more seriously consider various cooperative mechanisms, i.e., functional cooperation or 'joint development'," (Li M., 2010, p. 63).

Some scholars take the opposite side by arguing that China's assertiveness does not follow such a trajectory that the leaders carefully craft. Instead, China is being reactive toward external instances, that is, US policies deemed threatening (Feng & He, 2016; Scobell & Harold, 2013). China's reactive assertiveness is also rooted in the classic security dilemma, in which China is merely "responding to what it saw as an imbalance in the status quo [deriving from] other claimants [being] engaged in threatening activities," (Pham, 2011, pp. 157-158). That China is yet sure about what its rising power entails is another reason why it is being more assertive (Gill, 2013, p. 4). Driven by this uncertainty, China's assertiveness is a way to "renegotiate[s] its position with other states in the international system," (He & Feng, 2014, p. 183).

To sum up, China's foreign policy in the SCS disputes in recent years is associated with assertiveness. Two prevailing yet contradictory views explain that assertiveness is a deliberate strategy serving as a means to an end and primarily a reaction toward other claimant and non-claimant states' provocative actions. Be that as it may, sticking to the road of assertiveness does not seem relevant in light of China's peaceful development, let alone its neighbourhood diplomacy. How does

assertiveness feed into China's effort to present itself as a responsible great power or, to a lesser degree, a responsible neighbour?

China: A Responsible Great Power or A Good Neighbour?

China's growing power excites multifarious responses. The 'China threat theory' is one of them. This 'theory' means that China's rise would pose a danger to the existing international order, spanning from ideological to security threats (Broomfield, 2003). China is conscious of it. Therefore, Chinese leaders develop an idea to "project an image of a 'responsible great power' that is a force for global peace, stability, and growth," (Breslin, 2010, p. 53). The peaceful development is part of this image construction of China as a responsible great power (Breslin, 2009, p. 822). Regarding the SCS disputes, the ratification of UNCLOS in 1996 and subsequent iteration of adherence to international law in solving the disputes are evidence of China's attempt to demonstrate its responsibility to play by the rules. Moreover, China's continued support for negotiating the COC with ASEAN does not subside. Nor its engagement with the member states in various cooperation. China's assertiveness strikes a suspicion nonetheless: is China responsible enough to be a great power considering its actions in coping with the SCS disputes?

Another concern relates to China's neighbourhood diplomacy. Scholars argue that China places a strategic value on Southeast Asia for fear of potential containment by the US (Foot, 2005; Goh, 2007; Sun, 2009). The US rebalancing toward Asia has prompted China to re-evaluate its relations with neighbouring countries (Wu, 2016, p. 864). Xi's speech at the 4th Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in 2014 mentioned that "It is for the people of Asia to run the affairs of Asia, solve the problems of Asia and uphold the security of Asia," (quoted in Wu, 2016, p. 863). This statement is captivating for two reasons. First, China is serious about pouring its attention and resources to follow through with its neighbourhood diplomacy. Second, if taken at face value, at least for now, China's focus is Asia. As mentioned above, China has strived to assuage the uneasiness of its neighbours that results from its growing power. The SCS disputes, and China's assertiveness, accrue as a challenge. Regardless of China's many endeavours to disprove the 'China threat theory,' assertiveness is not likely to aid such an effort (Roy, 2016, p. 195).

Zhang Yunling maintains that China's rise to a great power status would ultimately bring about change and adjustment of regional order (2016, p. 843). China's peaceful development depicts well how China is keen to be a responsible great power. And it should begin in a region close to home. As eloquently stated by Sheng Ding, "To act as a 'responsible great power,' Beijing is also trying to bear greater responsibility for regional peace and development in East Asia," (2008, p. 204).

Therefore, China's commitment starts with maintaining regional peace and stability before moving to a global level. What kind of image has China painted of itself before regional audiences then?

The four Southeast Asian claimant states favour different approaches to the SCS. The Philippines under Benigno Aquino III's leadership perhaps was the only example of a balancing strategy against China's assertiveness. His successor, Rodrigo Duterte, swiftly overturned Aquino's China policy and chose appeasement instead. Interestingly, amidst continued escalations, Duterte later changed his policy to soft-balancing by fostering military cooperation with the US and Japan (De Castro, 2022). Vietnamese leaders resorted to, what Phuong Hoang calls, "a cooperation and struggle hedging strategy" (2019, p. 17). Besides modernizing its defence capability, Vietnam reaches out to outside partners, including the US. Malaysia has been a quieter claimant compared to the Philippines and Vietnam. Even when incidents occurred, like China's incursions into James Shoal in 2013 and harassment of two Malaysian supply vessels around natural gas drilling near Luconia Shoals in 2019, the government tended to deny it. This 'light-hedging' strategy rests on peaceful means of dispute settlement while maintaining defence partnerships with both China and the US (Lai & Kuik, 2021). Brunei is a case of 'foreign policy anomaly', for it has not taken any stance regarding China's assertiveness in the SCS (Putra, 2021).

All four countries have robust economic cooperation with China. At the same time, they are tied to defence cooperation with the US. Different strategies aside, they seem to agree not to put all their eggs in one basket—Aquino's Philippines was an exception. But this rowing-between-two-giants does not sit well with China which has remained suspicious about the US ulterior motives in the SCS. These governments must tread carefully so as not to upset China hardly indicates approval of China's great power responsibility. The heightened tensions in the SCS and dragged-on negotiations on the COC run contrary to the notion of a responsible great power and a good neighbour.

CONCLUSION

China, as of now, is hardly a responsible great power or a good neighbour. It does not necessarily mean that China will not be both in the future. Amitai Etzioni makes a good point that judging China as a responsible member of the international society should also consider three things, namely, high aspirational standards, contextual factors that mitigate China's conduct, and the fact that China is moving somewhat closer to living up to these standards, (2011, p. 550). Undeniably, China has done enough to prove itself as a rising great power not to be afraid of. Yet, in the neighbourhood, China faces the problem of being perceived as a regional bully for its assertiveness in the SCS disputes. These territorial disputes certainly mar China's

image in the region. Some scholars argue that China's assertiveness is a reaction to other claimants' actions. If that is the case, then asking whether China is a good neighbour should also add one supplementary question: does China live in a good neighbourhood that allows itself to be a good neighbour?

This paper starts with the question of whether peaceful development is possible in the 21st century—whether it is still relevant for China to hold onto this foreign policy agenda. By presenting the dichotomy rested in peaceful development between pursuing a great power status or being a good neighbour, it can be concluded that peaceful development is the most relevant strategy China has ever had (Buzan, 2014). Barry Buzan asserts that China's peaceful development is attainable but would not be smooth riding (2010, pp. 35-36). To be recognized as a great power, China has to fulfil some responsibilities, including one that it has pledged: to maintain regional peace and stability. History records that European great powers global domination commenced with their respective regions, and they had to fight against each other for decades in their backyard. It would be meaningless for China to be a great power without gaining respect from its neighbours. Thus, China should be focusing not only on making itself a responsible great power but also a responsible neighbour.

REFERENCES

Advincula Jr., J. V. (2015). China's leadership transitions and the future of US-China relations: Insights from the Spratly Islands case. Journal of Chinese Political Science, 20(1), 51-65.

Ba, A. D. (2011). Staking claims and making waves in the South China Sea: How troubled are the waters? Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs, 33(3), 269-291.

Breslin, S. (2009). Understanding China's regional rise: Interpretations, identities, and implication. International Affairs, 85(4), 817-835.

Breslin, S. (2010). Chinas emerging global role: Dissatisfied responsible great power. Politics, 30(S1), 52-62.

Broomfield, E. V. (2003). Perceptions of danger: The China threat theory. Journal of Contemporary China, 12(35), 265-284.

Bulkeley, J. C. (2009). Perspectives on power: Chinese strategies to measure and manage China's rise. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/304891214

Bull, H. (1977). The anarchical society: A study of order in world politics (3rd ed.). New York, N.Y.: Palgrave.

Buzan, B. (2010). China in international society: Is peaceful rise possible? The Chinese Journal of International Politics, 5, 5-36.

Buzan, B. (2014). The logic and contradictions of peaceful rise/development as China's grand strategy. The Chinese Journal of International Politics, 7(4), 381-420.

Center for Strategic and International Studies. (n.d.). Are maritime law enforcement forces destabilizing Asia? Retrieved from http://chinapower.csis.org/maritime-forces-destabilizing-asia/

Chan, G. (2009). Power and responsibility in China's international relations. In Y. Zhang & G. Austin (Eds.), Power and responsibility in Chinese foreign policy (pp. 48-68). Retrieved from http://press.anu.edu.au?p=266651

Chan, I. & Li, M. (2015). New Chinese leadership, new policy in the South China Sea dispute? Journal of Chinese Political Science, 20, 35-50.

Chen, Z. (2009). International responsibility and China's foreign policy. In M. Iida (Ed.), China's shift: Global strategy of the rising power (pp. 7-28). Retrieved from http://www.worldcat.org/title/chinas-shift-global-strategy-of-the-rising-power/oclc/367772491

De Castro, R. C. (2022). From appeasement to soft balancing: The Duterte administration shifting policy on the South China Sea imbroglio. Asian Affairs: An American Review, 49(1), 35-61.

deLisle, J. (2012). Troubled waters: China's claims and the South China Sea. Orbis, 56(4), 608-642.

Deng, Y. (2008). China's struggle for status: The realignment of international relations. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.

Ding, S. (2008). To build a harmonious world: China's soft power wielding in the global south. Journal of Chinese Political Science, 13(2), 193-213.

Dutton, P. (2011). Three disputes and three objectives: China and the South China Sea. Naval War College Review, 64(4), 42-67. Retrieved from http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA619254

Eastin, L. J. L. (2013). Legitimacy deficit: Chinese leadership at the United Nations. Journal of Chinese Political Science, 18, 389-402.

Etzioni, A. (2011). Is China a responsible stakeholder? International Affairs, 87(3), 539-553.

Feng, H. & He, K. (2016). How Chinese scholars think about Chinese foreign policy. Australian Journal of Political Science, 51(4), 694-710.

Foot, R. (2001). Chinese power and the idea of a responsible state. The China Journal, 45, 1-19.

Foot, R. (2005). China's regional activism: Leadership, leverage, and protection. Global Change, Peace & Security, 17(2), 141-153.

Gao, X. (2013). China as a responsible power: Altruistic, ambitious, or ambiguous? International Journal of China Studies, 4(3), 405-438.

Gill, B. (2013). From peaceful rise to assertiveness? Explaining changes in China's foreign and security policy under Hu Jintao. Paper presented at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Conference, 18-19 April 2013, Stockholm, Sweden. Retrieved from books.sipri.org/files/misc/SIPRI-Hu Gill.pdf

Glaser, B. S. & Medeiros, E. S. (2007). The changing ecology of foreign policy-making in China: The ascension and demise of the theory of peaceful rise. The China Quarterly, 190, 291-310.

Goh, E. (2007). Southeast Asian perspectives on the China challenge. The Journal of Strategic Studies, 30(4-5), 809-832.

He, K. & Feng, H. (2014). China's bargaining strategies for a peaceful rise: Successes and challenges. Asian Security, 10(2), 168-187.

Heberer, T. (2014). China in 2013: The Chinese dreams domestic and foreign policy shifts. Asian Survey, 54(1), 113-128.

Hoang, P. (2019). Domestic protests and foreign policy: An examination of anti-China protests in Vietnam and Vietnamese policy towards China regarding the South China Sea. Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs, 6(1), 1-29.

Kim, S. S. (2004). China in world politics. In B. Buzan & R. Foot (Eds.), Does China matter? A reassessment: Essays in Memory of Gerald Segal (pp. 37-53). London, U.K.: Routledge

Lai, Y. M. & Kuik, C. (2021). Structural sources of Malaysia's South China Sea policy: Power uncertainties and small-state hedging. Australian Journal of International Affairs, 75(2), 277-30

Li, L. (2014). China's policy towards the South China Sea — Geopolitics and the international maritime regime. Retrieved from http://udspace.udel.edu/handle/19716/13399

Li, M. (2010). Reconciling assertiveness and cooperation? China's changing approach to the South China Sea disputes. Security Challenges, 6(2), 49-68.

Liao, N. C. C. (2016). The sources of China's assertiveness: the system, domestic politics, or leadership preferences? International Affairs, 92(4), 817-833.

Liu, T. & Zhang, H. (2014). Debates in China about the responsibility to protect as a developing international norm: A general assessment. Conflict, Security & Development, 14(4), 403-427.

Loke, B. (2015). Unpacking the politics of great power responsibility: Nationalist and Maoist China in international order-building. European Journal of International Relations, 22(4), 847-871.

Mastro, O. S. (2015). Why Chinese assertiveness is here to stay. The Washington Quarterly, 37(4), 151-170.

Pham, D. (2011). Gone rogue?: China's assertiveness in the South China Sea. Journal of Politics & Society, 22(1), 139-164.

Putra, B. A. (2021). Comprehending Brunei Darussalam's vanishing claims in the South China Sea: China's exertion of economic power and the influence of elite perception. Cogent Social Sciences, 7(1), 1-12.

Qin, Y. (2014). Continuity through change: Background knowledge and China's international strategy. The Chinese Journal of International Politics, 7(3), 285-314.

Roy, D. (2016). Meeting the Chinese challenge to the regional order. Asian Politics & Policy, 8(1), 193-206.

Scobell, A. & Harold, S. W. (2013). An assertive China? Insights from interviews. Asian Security, 9(2), 111-131.

Sun, X. (2009). Why does China reassure South-East Asia? Pacific Focus, XXIV(3), 298-316.

Suzuki, S. (2008). Seeking legitimate great power status in post-Cold War international society: China's and Japan's participation in UNPKO. International Relations, 22(1), 45-63.

Suzuki, S. (2014). Journey to the West: China debates its great power identity. Millennium: Journal of International Studies, 42(3), 632-650.

Wu, X. (2016). Cooperation, competition, and shaping the outlook: The United States and China's neighbourhood diplomacy. International Affairs, 92(4), 849-867.

Xia, L. (2001). China: A responsible great power. Journal of Contemporary China, 10(26), 17-25.

Zhang, X. (2011). China in the conception of international society: The English Schools engagements with China. Review of International Studies, 37, 763-786.

Zhang, Y. (2016). China and its neighbourhood: Transformation, challenges, and grand strategy. International Affairs, 92(4), 835-848.

Zhou, F. (2016). Between assertiveness and self-restraint: Understanding Chinas South China Sea policy. International Affairs, 92(4), 869-890.

Zoellick, R. B. (2005). Whither China: From membership to responsibility? Retrieved from http://www.cfr.org/china/whither-china-membership-responsibility/p8916

DOES THE PANDEMIC DECLINE OR MAINTAIN DEMOCRACY? TWO SIDES EFFECTS OF PANDEMIC ON DEMOCRACY IN INDONESIA

Eko Bagus Sholihin[1], Raegen Harahap[2], and Yulion Zalpa[3]
[1]State Islamic University of Raden Fatah, Palembang, Indonesia
ekobagussholihin_uin@radenfatah.ac.id
[2]State Islamic University of Raden Fatah, Palembang, Indonesia
raegenharahap_uin@radenfatah.ac.id
[3]State Islamic University of Raden Fatah, Palembang, Indonesia
yulionzalpa_uin@radenfatah.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This paper investigates two sides' effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on democracy in Indonesia. Most articles on democracy and pandemics argue that the COVID-19 pandemic has declined democracy in many countries, including Indonesia. This article, on the one hand, agrees with the dominant argument but, on the other hand, argues that the COVID-19 pandemic also contributed to maintaining democracy. This paper bases democracy on Beetham's notion, which defined democracy as popular control over public affairs with the principles of equality and participation. To examine the relationship between democracy and pandemics, we use three issues as case studies: the Mineral and Coal Bill, the Omnibus Law, and data transparency issues. This paper uses qualitative methods and data from literature studies regarding civil society's participation and control in public affairs during the last year. Two main findings of this paper show that the pandemic has accelerated democratic decline in two directions: from above and below. The decline from above is due to restrictions on freedom of speech and civil participation in public affairs. At the same time, a decline from below occurred due to people's cleavage in public health issues. In addition, misinformation spread by buzzer redistributing by others has worsened this situation. Otherwise, the pandemic also maintained democracy by strengthening civil society's networks and participation, which was marked by supporting digital activism toward the country's policy and data transparency. It may be concluded that civil society plays a crucial role in maintaining global democracy, especially during the pandemic.
Keywords: pandemic, democracy, civil restriction, social movement networks, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

For eighteen months, countries around the globe have experienced uncertainty due to the global pandemic, including political and economic uncertainty. Uncertainty generates intense contestation about a crisis's meaning and how to resolve it (Abers et al., 2021). Various political scholars' questions related to pandemics' impact on the world life order. What will happen to global (Freedom

House, 2020), regional (Guasti, 2020), national (Abers et al., 2021; Avritzer, 2021), and local democracies? How does the pandemic affect the dynamics of class change (Lay, 2020; Gindin, 2020)? Is the global pandemic making the public support social democrats and welfare states, strengthening the legitimacy of government (Levine, 2020)? This article tried to discuss the effects of the global pandemic on the national democratization process in Indonesia by asking, "does the pandemic cause decline or maintain democracy in Indonesia"? We put forward the proposition that pandemic has caused the decline of democracy, but on the other hand, pandemic also contributed to maintaining democracy. We understand such an opinion is probably too soon to decide on long-term effects on democracy because this uncertainty is still ongoing (Barcena in Abers et al., 2021). However, at least we contribute to determining the dynamics of the pandemic's short-term effects while preparing for the possibility of more comprehensive research in the future.

In general, recent literature on the pandemic's effects on democracy argues that the pandemic has led to the decline of democracy globally. Freedom House, an organization that quantitatively monitored global democracy for decades, reports that the world has experienced a democratic decline over the past 15 years, and 2020 is the worst. In 2020, the decline occurred in 73 countries, and only 28 countries experienced improvement, so the gap reached -45 (the highest in the history of the freedom house). The 2020 V-Dem Institute report found that democracy has ceased to be the majority political regime in the world after dominating for the last two decades (Rapeli, 2020). Luhrmann and Linberg (2019) argue that we currently witness a "third wave of authoritarianism" globally. Then, if autocracy is getting stronger and democracy is regressing even in advanced democracies, how can the pandemic accelerate re-authoritarianism in many countries?

In Brazil, the pandemic has perpetuated the authoritarian efforts of populist conservative President Bolsonaro. Even though their health minister is a doctor and an expert in public health, Bolsonaro has openly spread disinformation and rejected social distancing and the use of masks on social media. Throughout 2020, capitalizing on the fear of crowds, Bolsonaro used military intervention to attack pro-democracy institutions in Brazil (Avritzer, 2020). Meanwhile, in Central European countries, Hungary and Poland, populist leaders took advantage of emergencies to strengthen executive power (Guasti, 2020).

While some literature above argues that the pandemic declined democracy, Mietzner (2020), Paredes et al. (2020), and D'cruz (2020) argues that what is happening is a pseudo-effect of a pandemic. It is not the pandemic that declined democracy, but the pandemic that proves the depravity of the democratic process. Mietzner (2020) mentions that the ineffectiveness, inconsistency, and poor coordination among Indonesian government institutions at the beginning of the pandemic were the effects of the democratic decline in the past few years, which were marked by: the rise of right-wing populism, conservative religious groups, political polarization, the emergence of anti-democratic actors, and fester corruption

behavior. Meanwhile, Paredes et al. (2020) argue that poor prison facilities and governance in the United States, characterized by excessive capacity, are proven by the high rates of infection cases and prisoner deaths in the early days of the pandemic. D'cruz et al. (2020) also argue that the pandemic has caused human rights crisis for vulnerable groups such as the elderly and children due to an imbalance between its impact on health risks and access to health facilities.

What happens if we reverse the logical relationship between pandemic and democracy? Several articles argue that autocratic regimes are more effective in dealing with pandemics because only autocrats can execute difficult choices to stem the virus spread, such as in China, Vietnam, and Malaysia (Mietzner, 2020; Vadlamanati et al., 2021). We realize that arguments deserve a lot of support because the powerful government will be able to pass response policies quickly and effectively (without complicated political pros and cons in parliament) to adapt to the uncertainty of virus containment methods. However, this argument is not entirely valid. Several democratic countries in the Asia Pacific, such as South Korea, Taiwan, and New Zealand, are also very effective in stemming the virus's spread (Mietzner, 2020). An egalitarian and inclusive democracy can create more comprehensive health, social and welfare services access than autocratic governments (Vadlamanati et al., 2021). Therefore, the effectiveness of overcoming the virus cannot be justified by moving away from democratic practices.

In the context of Indonesia, what happened to the pandemic and democracy? The literature on pandemics and democracy in Indonesia is dominated by 2020 regional elections issues (Habibi, 2020; Rosanti, 2020) which unfortunately is not our focus in this article. We only analyze the effects of substantive democracy, which relates to the space for public participation to control government policies and public affairs and uphold human rights (Pascarina et al., 2015). We found two articles analyzing pandemic effects on this substantive democratic backsliding. First, using indicators from the freedom house, Abhipraya et al. (2020) found three signs of democratic decline during the pandemic, namely Indonesian government's policies did not pay attention to the transparency of the state budget, increasing the threat to critics of the government policies, and the emergence of disinformation about the pandemic conspiracy caused community polarization (Abhipraya, 2020). At the same time, Primandani (2021) predicts that it will be challenging to maintain democracy in the long term due to the country's political environment moving away from democracy and the threat to the enforcement of human rights due to repressive ways in response to demands (Primandani, 2021).

After explaining such literature on the regressive effects of pandemics on democracy, we offered the question 'do all case studies only show that pandemics impact the democratic decline? or are pandemics proving and accelerating democratic decline?' We found a few articles that argued about how democracy was able to survive during the pandemic. Guasti (2020) found that democracy in the Czech Republic and Slovakia survived because of the vital contribution of non-

governmental actors in maintaining democracy. Executive leaders in these two countries - both led by populist leaders - are moving away from democracy by ignoring opposition and the public under "state emergency law." Fortunately, civil society, mass media, resistance, and the judiciary have collaborated to prevent repressive state actions against any violation of health regulations. In Brazil, when populist leaders threaten democracy, efforts to defend democracy are led by social movement networks (SMOs). These social movement networks (SMOs) are actively fighting disinformation spread by President Bolsonaro about the pandemic threat. Social movements are essential in pandemic politics because they protest and put forward ideas for overcoming the pandemic and building coalition networks among them (Abers et al., 2021).

Based on the literature review above, we conclude that all threats to democracy come from above (the government). Little evidence shows that democracy has been strengthened by actors outside the state, particularly civil society. Through this article, we examine what happened to democracy in Indonesia during the pandemic. We put forward the proposition by agreeing with the mainstream argument that democracy has suffered a more significant backsliding after the pandemic. However, suppose the entire article above argues that the decline of democracy comes from above. In that case, we offer a new argument by arguing that the decline of democracy also comes from below (civil society) due to the cleavage of society over public health issues and the increasing disinfodemic (disinformation about the pandemic). At the same time, we also argue that the pandemic has strengthened the network of civil society organizations that play an essential role in maintaining democracy amid the pandemic.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SUBSTANTIVE DEMOCRACY, DISINFORMATION, AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS NETWORKS

To analyze the effects of pandemics on democracy in Indonesia, we use the concept of democracy as the central concept and lay democracy on David Beetham's notion of "democracy as popular control over public affairs." Second, we are assisted by the concept of *disinfodemic* (disinformation about pandemics) to explain how the disinformation has created cleavage in society that has fatal consequences for democratic response to pandemics. Third, we use the concept of social movement networks to explain the critical contribution of social movement networks in Indonesia in dealing with the pandemic and maintaining democracy.

Definition of substantive democracy, according to David Beetham, is popular control over public issues based on participation and equal rights for all people (Beetham in Paskarina, 2015). Democracy means disclosure space for the public to influence and oversee the governance of public affairs, including the process and implementation of government policies. Therefore, spaces for aspirations must be standardized and heard in every policy formulation and implementation. In addition, democracy also means the equal treatment of the state towards the people fairly and

equally. Therefore, the right to control offered by Beetham guarantees that people are ensured to have: guaranteed civil rights, political freedoms, and democratic civil society (Madubun, 2015). So how does the pandemic threaten substantive democracy?

The pandemic is a challenge for democracy when "emergency policy" can be the government's justification for overriding public inputs in policy formulation and triggering abuse of power (Abhipraya et al., 2020). Speed and uncertainty are the main reasons for limiting public input. The quality of democracy during the pandemic is also threatened when the government uses "social restrictions" policies to restrict public participation. In fact, at the same time, the government passed several vital bills and regulations, such as Perppu No. 1 of 2020 concerning State Financial Policy and Financial System Stability, Law no. 3 of 2020 concerning Mineral and Coal, Law no. 6 of 2020 concerning the Election of Governors, Regents, and Mayors, and Law no. 11 of 2020 concerning Job Creation (Omnibus Law). Restrictions on participation become even more urgent when the public has to deal with buzzers who create biased information to justify their clients' data. This buzzer job can potentially make people lose their correct information orientation to the point of being disinfodemic and cause non-substantive polarization in society (Jungherr & Schroeder, 2021).

Disinformation departs from the excessive supply of news digital media era, which poses a threat of digital technology to democracy (Jungherr & Schroeder, 2021). Lewandowsky et al. (2013) define disinformation as a deliberate lie in the form of misleading statements disseminated to the public. Disinformation is widespread by leveraging digital technologies that enable the decentralized publication and distribution of information in the public arena. So that each individual can produce content without scrutiny or control as is done in mainstream media (Jungherr & Schroeder, 2021). In Indonesia, disinformation has become a medium for the threat of political polarization in the last few years due to high exposure to disinformation. According to the Mastel (Masyarakat Telekomunikasi), a non-profit organization in the telecommunications sector, 43 percent of Indonesians receive fake news every day (Andranto, 2020).

Since the beginning of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has created new fears about the spread of disinformation in digital media. The Ministry of Communication and Information of the Republic of Indonesia (Kominfo RI) recorded 2,632 fake news related to the COVID-19 pandemic from January 2020 to April 2021. Among them, 177 fake information about the COVID-19 vaccination (katadata.co.id, April 13, 2021). Social media Facebook accounted for 2,139 cases, Twitter 438 cases, YouTube 45 cases, and Instagram 20 cases. These findings only come from findings that the Kominfo RI has followed up. We suspect the actual data is much larger than the recorded one. The data above does not include fake news that spreads through messaging platforms such as WhatsApp and Telegram. Disinformation circulating

freely in the public arena seriously threatens the effectiveness of pandemic response in Indonesia.

The public arena has changed significantly since the advent of digital technology. Previously, the public arena was limited to stakeholders related to a particular issue. Recently, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, and Instagram have become inseparable parts of the public arena because they provide opportunities to distribute information freely and without control (Jungherr & Schroeder, 2021). Therefore, we want to analyze the consequences of democracy quality in Indonesia during the pandemic. In the discussion section, we will describe the forms of fake news related to the pandemic -and its minor issues- which have gone viral in the last eighteen months and their effects on community cleavage in Indonesia.

If we use the two concepts above to analyze the decline of democracy, then we use the concept of Social Movement Networks to analyze democracy resilience amid this pandemic. Social movements play an essential role in maintaining democracy by overseeing the government's work to overcome the pandemic and solve social problems with the government (Abers, 2021). Due to restrictions on street activities, social movements have transformed by focusing their activities on online formats (Habler, 2021). Social media sites are a practical medium to facilitate their activities in real-time with unlimited reach. The implication is that social media can empower civil society movements to mobilize protests, build networks, and articulate discourse based on relevant themes (Poell & van Dijk in Habler et al., 2021). Social media has two functions. First, a platform for direct interaction with their followers. Second, it provokes the attention of the mainstream media to be reported later (Habler et al., 2021). Thus, we will use mainstream media and social media as data sources.

This article defines a social movement as a network of actors engaging in collective action based on concerns and demands (Abers, 2021). Therefore, we call it a social movement network. The term social movement network in Indonesia is used to identify the convergence of issues in social movements in Indonesia in response to the pandemic. Since 2020, the anti-corruption movement, environment, gender justice, human rights, marginalized communities, students, and movements related to natural resources have moved to focus on the pandemic issue. In addition, temporary humanitarian actions have also emerged to respond to health, social and economic crises (kompas.id, July 2021). In identifying movement networks, we focus on two main issues: overseeing government policies and data transparency.

In this regard, we recognize the difficulty of identifying all the social movements that support democracy in Indonesia. Therefore, we limit it to specific activities. Hopefully, they are representative enough to illustrate the resilience of democracy. First, in overseeing state policies issue, we use three collective actions networks, namely the online people's assembly movement (Sidang Rakyat) initiated by academics and pro-democracy activists to protest the Minerba Law Bill in 2020, Indonesian People's Faction (Fraksi Rakyat Indonesia) led by an alliance of

environment, human rights, anti-corruption, and working-class movement to protest Omnibus Law Bill in 2020, and the movement initiated by the University Student Council (BEM) the University of Indonesia to criticize the President which BEM from other universities then followed. Second, on the issue of data transparency, we use the volunteer network kawalCOVID19.co.id and laporCOVID19.org as case studies.

RESEARCH METHODS

We use a qualitative-descriptive design with the concept of literature study research as a data collection method to explain the case "Does the Pandemic Declined or Maintained Democracy? Two Sides Effects of Pandemic on Democracy in Indonesia. The study of literature used in this study aimed to obtain various relevant sources and the process of collecting all data on the problems studied. This method is also used as a guide in getting a theoretical basis. In addition, the use of literature studies in this paper aims to facilitate us in the process of reading, analyzing, and minimizing the difficulty of finding research gaps with research has been carried out (Danial & Wasriah, 2009).

In the analysis process, we firstly construct theories relevant to democracy. Theoretical construction is carried out as a concept of thinking combined with the reality and existence of democracy amid a pandemic in Indonesia. Furthermore, the decline of democracy occurred due to disagreement between the central and regional governments in implementing the PSBB and PPKM policy. We also observe that pandemic has significantly strengthened the solidarity of social movement networks and organized community volunteers, which is evidence of maintaining democracy in Indonesia. Several phenomena were observed, such as the emergence of social movement networks in overseeing the government's performance, especially in updating and displaying data on the development of victims of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia and raising funds.

Furthermore, in data analysis, we qualitative approach analysis by recording phenomena, collecting data, selecting data, reducing data, and synthesizing with existing theoretical foundations. In this case, we carried out several stages, namely books, journals, and publications from mainstream media websites and social media. Furthermore, we selected data that is adjusted to the study. Finally, we conclude all data analysis combined with theories and phenomena of democracy in Indonesia as a step of verification and configuration of this research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Key Moments of Indonesian Democracy During the Pandemic

Since it emerged, many scholars have predicted that pandemics will significantly change all aspects of the world's people's lives, including democratic practices (Abhipraya, 2020). The pandemic is a challenge for democracy because it triggers the abuse of government authority through the policy of "emergency law." In the context of democracy in Indonesia, the freedom house records several key moments, whether democracy developed or declined during the pandemic, through indicators of political rights and civil liberties.

First, political rights. Electorally, Indonesia gained the maximum score after successfully organizing simultaneous regional elections amid a pandemic in 9 provinces, 224 regencies, and 37 cities. Although there were schedule changes to finalize preparations, the 2020 simultaneous regional elections were successful with a high participation rate, and no significant increase in fraud problems was found. This means that the pandemic does not significantly reduce the quality of elections in Indonesia. Nevertheless, elections in Indonesia are still accompanied by classic problems such as money politics and political dynasties (Freedom house, 2021).

Second, civil liberties. In this section, Indonesia gets many notes as in previous years. Indonesia's freedom index also dropped two points to 59/100, with the "partly free" status. Non-transparent pandemic data caused the record of deteriorating civil liberties in 2020, the arrest of 51 journalists critical of pandemic policies, digital attacks on critical media, restrictions on civilian participation in the formulation of two crucial bills, namely the Mineral and Coal Bill and the Omnibus Law, and the use of repressive means - arrests, tear gas and water cannons - in responding to demonstrations (Freedom house, 2021). Then, what is the relationship between the pandemic and democracy? Has the pandemic contributed to the accelerating democratic decline in Indonesia? Or, conversely, maintain democracy? The following two sections will review the relationship between democracy and pandemics.

PANDEMIC ACCELERATING DEMOCRATIC DECLINE

From Above: Top-down Government and Restriction of Participation

The impact of the exponential acceleration and negative celebrations of the COVID-19 pandemic raises various problems that have not been predicted so far. The COVID-19 pandemic has not only targeted immunity. Still, it has penetrated, destroying the human auto centrum from all aspects of human life regarding social, economic, and government systems. In the context of Indonesian democracy, the

acceleration and celebration of the COVID-19 pandemic raise questions as well as problems in the government sector, namely related to governance, especially regarding the relationship between the central government and regional governments in dealing with this situation. the spread of COVID-19 associated with the decentralization of health affairs.

Problems also arise when the implementation of the regional quarantine policy is carried out. The relationship between the center and the regions seems to have yet to find a clear point of direction in building slick cooperation and intense communication designs to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this issue is one of the unique dynamics in the context of Indonesian democracy. However, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia has exposed the vulnerability and fragility of how the decentralization design has been implemented so far (Ariyanto, 2020)—at the same time, burying hope in the substantive democracy in Indonesia, which has been aspired to so far (Chadijah, 2021).

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and its relation to democracy in Indonesia, the COVID-19 pandemic was tested directly on how to design a command between the center and the regions. The differences in attitudes shown by the center and the regions were seen; even before the local quarantine was established last March, they were not united. The command system in local government is out of sync with orders from the central government. As a result, the command system became volatile in several provincial governments. Several regions had undergone a lockdown before the central government, and even several regional heads did not comply with the rules.

The management relations between central and regions are becoming increasingly unclear, prompting several regions to take preventive actions. There are various forms of prevention. Some areas have taken a policy of closing access in and out of the city for four months, the inauguration of the area as an Extraordinary Event (Kejadian Luar Biasa -KLB), and closing flight routes and sea routes. However, this preventive action is not directly proportional to the central government's policy.

This form of attraction is seen when the local government first takes steps to anticipate and deal with a pandemic. For example, the local lockdown policy was taken by the Regent of Tegal on March 23, 2020, by closing city access with a movable concrete barrier (MBC). Papua Governor policy to close access ports, airports, land, and the National Border Post since March 26, 2020. Since March 27, 2020, the Bali Governor policy has emphasized that the public should not gather, work, study, and worship from home. Likewise, with several other regions, the Central Government has just issued Government Regulation Number 21 of 2020 concerning Large-Scale Social Restrictions in the Context of Accelerating the

Handling of COVID-19 on March 31, 2020. This raises the issue of how to regulate the authority of the central and regional governments in dealing with the pandemic.

Then, we analyze the democratic decline through the government's restriction of civil society participation in public affairs. At the beginning of the pandemic, some non-democratic countries such as Vietnam and Singapore - with centralized powers - seemed faster and more effective in tackling the pandemic. All countries do not yet have a role model; the governments are required to carry out a "trial and error" policy. This means that one policy can change in a short time. Therefore, "criticism" is seen as counter-productive and slows down their work. This is what supports why non-democratic countries seem effective in tackling the pandemic.

The Indonesian government also began to centralize pandemic policy. For example, the central government fully controls the PSBB policy, transparency of COVID-19 data, and information related to the pandemic. The impact of this pandemic data control is apparent when the government issued directives to the police to combat alleged pandemic disinformation -by reputable and critical media- and criticism of the president and government. Pandemic data becomes "state secret" data protected by law so that it is not leaked to the public. As a result, in June, the government arrested 51 people for criticism of the government and the media for releasing information different from that released by the government (Freedom House, 2021)

The Freedom House report also notes that the Indonesian government used pandemics to restrict critical journalists. Besides arresting 51 critics, several Indonesian media have also experienced digital attacks such as hacking, doxing, and distributed denial-of-service (DDOS) after publishing critical articles addressing government policies during the pandemic. The Alliance of Indonesian Independent Journalists (AJI) report noted that violence against journalists was the highest in 2020, with a total of 84 reports of violent incidents in the form of intimidation, physical violence, and detention of journalists covering mass demonstrations against the Omnibus Law Bill.

Restrictions also occur in the context of two bills formulation, namely the Mineral and Coal Bill and Omnibus Law Bill. Although spaces for participation are still available, the discussion of two critical laws in 2020 is carried out quietly and quickly without inviting relevant stakeholders. As a result, the two laws received a massive rejection from civil society after passing. Then, restrictions also occurred when the civil society movement held street demonstrations to reject the Omnibus Law in October 2020 by thousand people in 18 provinces in Indonesia. Inevitably, according to the direction of the central government, the police arrested hundreds of demonstrators and fired tear gas and water cannons that injured dozens of people (Freedom house, 2021).

From Below: Disinformation and Its Effects on Communities Cleavage

The COVID-19 pandemic, which continues to plague the entire world community, produces human life with uncertainty which at the same time creates fundamental problems for all aspects of human life, including the disinformation issue of a pandemic. Media news about the COVID-19 pandemic, which is increasingly massive, is often shrouded in misinformation or referred to as disinformation, which is currently one of the discourses in democracy.

Disinformation reduces public trust in government and scientists. According to a study report from the American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (10/8/2020), deaths from disinformation have spread throughout the world, even in the United States, which even killed 800 victims and 5000 were hospitalized. In addition, the impact of massive disinformation has circulated on various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and other websites.

The problem of disinformation also occurred in Indonesia. The impact of disinformation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic on various social media platforms was 2,000 sources divided into three categories: conspiracies, fraud, and health news regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Humpretch based on Research Pew (2020), disinformation from the conspiracy category reached 71% in the United States (BBC News Indonesia, 2021), while in Indonesia, from January 2020 to June 23, 2021, classifying as many as 1,885 hoaxes and disinformation regarding COVID-19 and vaccinations (Antara News, 20221). About democracy in Indonesia, the impact of disinformation causes a decline in democracy in the aspect of community collective awareness in handling pandemics.

Among disinformation narratives circulating pandemics and vaccination issues, they are: "pandemic is a conspiracy," "plandemics," "endorsed by COVID," and "pandemic is globalists' plans to control human population." It became worse when experts disseminated disinformation with broad influence, such as Mardigu (plandemic), dr. Lois (body-medicine interactions cause COVID patient deaths), Jerinx (endorsed by COVID), Ichsanudin Norsy (the guy behind why body temperature checks are transferred from forehead to palms). Meanwhile, globalists' plan to implant chips to monitor human behavior is disinformation about vaccination issues, such as vaccines containing magnets and metals, side effects that are harmful to the body, and vaccination. New York Times magazine report that one pioneer of the anti-vaccine movement is an osteopathic physician in Cape Coral, USA, Dr. Mercola. He used unscientific and unproven arguments to reject vaccination while offering his traditional treatment model. Since 2017, his profits from the disinformation business have been more than US$ 100 billion (New York Times, July 26, 2021).

The impact of disinformation caused communities to cleavage and threatened human rights to life. Helmi Hendra, a private worker in Java, shared the story lost his

father after being exposed to disinformation. After being positive for COVID, his father refused to be hospitalized because he believed he would be infected (di-COVID-kan). When his condition worsened, he finally accepted to be taken to the hospital. Unfortunately, he died due to late treatment. Here is Helmi's status on Twitter:

"Hoax played a big role in making dad lose the fight against COVID. My father died because he believed in the hoax news spread on social media. My father also did not want to be vaccinated because he believed in this hoax. Even when exposed, he does not want to take medicine because he believes in hoaxes that drug interactions can kill humans (liputan6.com, July 18, 2021).

Through the above analysis, it was believed that the disinformation has led to the decline of democracy by lowering public trust in government, threats to community unity, and threats to human rights.

Pandemic Maintaining Democracy: Important Role of Social Movements Networks

In line with the decline of democracy in Indonesia over the last few years, the network of civil society movements - the heart of democracy - has been actively consolidating and building solidarity, both institutionally and in terms of issues. During this pandemic, where street activity has been restricted, fears have arisen about the regress of civil movement. Fortunately, they adapted quickly by leveraging internet technology, mainly social media, and online meeting platforms. In this section, we analyze how pandemics helped to accelerate the adaptation of civil movements' struggles from offline to online without reducing the power of pressure. As we have said in the theoretical framework section, to examine how the pandemic maintains democracy, we use two crucial issues: controlling state policies and data transparency.

Controlling to Government Policy Issue: Cases of Mineral and Coal Bill, Omnibus Law Bill, and Criticism of BEM Universities Network in Indonesia

In this section, we used three social movement networks as case studies, namely: #BersihkanIndonesia, which led to the criticism of the Mineral and Coal Bill in 2020, and the Indonesian People's Faction (Fraksi Rakyat Indonesia), which led to the objection to Omnibus Law Bill in 2020, and the solidarity network of BEM Universities throughout Indonesia when criticizing the Government in June 2021.

Clean Indonesia, or #Bersihkanndonesia, is an alliance of 30 civil society organizations to campaign for Indonesia to move towards energy, economic and environmental policy changes. DPR RI has officially passed the Mineral and Coal Bill (RUU Minerba) into Law Number 3 of 2020 on May 12, 2020. The process

occurred quickly. Several chapters in the bill still reap rejection from many stakeholders. One of them is Chapter 160A which allows the mining company to extend KK and PKP2B without an auction (kompas.com, May 2020). Activists in many regions also highlighted the withdrawal of permits from the provinces to the central government. They suspected mining re-centralization would bring Indonesia back to the new order era (authoritarianism).

The Clean Indonesia Alliance led the protest of the Minerba Law and involved 30 networks of anti-corruption organizations, environmental human rights, animal protection, and others. This movement network also involves fishers, farmers, and communities around mining areas who are victims of mining practices. At that time, the form of an effective health protocol for warding off the pandemic was still trial and error, so street demonstrations were impossible. Therefore, this movement network chose virtual demonstrations through social media and online video conferencing. Soon, the hashtag #TolakUUMinerba spread on Twitter, then retweeted by hundreds of thousands of accounts.

At its peak, this alliance initiated a no-confidence motion against DPR RI, known as the "People's Session (Sidang Rakyat)." The People's Session involved a network of activists, mining victims from Aceh to Papua, and academics in law, political economy, and environment. It was conducted for three days (May 30 – June 1, 2020) virtually through the Zoom meeting platform and broadcast live via YouTube. The participants who attended the Zoom meeting were 50, while those who watched live on YouTube reached hundreds of people. Besides that, several activists also submitted a formal and material review to the Constitutional Court.

The second case study is the protest of the Omnibus Law Bill led by the Indonesian People's Faction (Fraksi Rakyat Indonesia). The Indonesian People's Fraction (FRI) is a network of civil society movements as a result of the consolidation of 40 NGOs representing issues of anti-corruption (ICW), the environment (WALHI and Greenpeace, Human Rights (YLBHI), trade unions (KASBI and KPBI) and student affairs (GMNI KPBI, and LMND) to demand the rejection to Omnibus Law Bill. Partial rejection began in early 2020 when DPR RI put the Omnibus Law Bill into Prolegnas 2020. Through FRI, released on March 31, 2020, the main reason for rejecting Omnibus Law Bill is that the formulation of the Omnibus Law Bill during the pandemic will prevent people and stakeholders from controlling the discussion. A few months later, ignoring people's aspirations, the Omnibus Law was passed quietly on October 5, 2020, without much debate in the Indonesian Parliament. Immediately, online rejections are voiced through social media platforms, movement organizations accounts, and individual accounts of academics, activists, public figures, and ordinary people who reject the Omnibus Law. In just two days, millions of people have tweeted with the hashtags

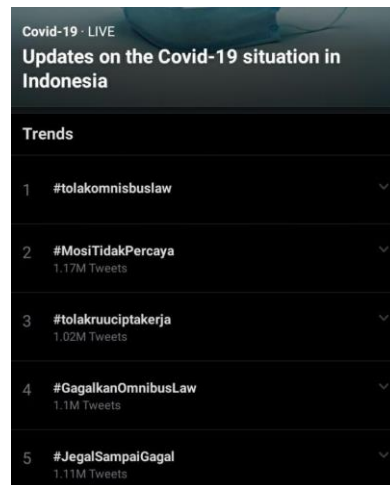#MosiTidakPercaya, and #GagalkanOmnibusLaw, which became trending on Twitter.

Figure 2: Twitter Trending Screenshot on October 5, 2020

Online demonstrations continue as the government does not respond clearly to their demands. On October 19, through its Twitter account, FRI voiced an online protest that read, "to prevent the danger of an oligarchic pandemic from spreading due to Job Creation Law, an Oligarchy State Code, it is hereby the Indonesian people need to enforce PSBB: Large-Scale Civil Resistance."

Figure 3: Online Guerrilla Rejection to Omnibus Law

They voiced their protest through social media using hashtags #CabutOmnibusLaw, #KitaBelumMenang, #StopBrutitasAparat, and an English

hashtag #WhatsHappeninginIndonesia. This massive online demonstration caused the rejection of Omnibus Law and gained attention from international media and the public.

The last case study is critics of BEM universities network throughout Indonesia to President Jokowi, Vice President Ma'ruf Amin, Chairman of the Indonesian Parliament Puan Maharani, and other public officials. This action began on June 26, 2021, when BEM UI criticized President Jokowi as the King of Lip Service due to many inconsistencies between the President's words and policies. In a short time, BEM UI action received a response from media and the public on social media, including reactions from politicians. One day later, UI Chancellor summoned President BEM to ask for information. The people considered this summons as a form of effort to silence student voices.

This triggered support and solidarity from BEM SI (All Indonesia) to form the Solidarity for Silencing Democratic Spaces on the UI Campus, which was signed by around 25 BEMs throughout Indonesia and civil organizations who also linked to the movement rejected the Mineral and Coal Bill and the Omnibus Law such as FRI, Clean Indonesia, YLBHI, AJI, Jatamnas, and Greenpeace Indonesia. This solidarity action was carried out by spreading the hashtags #KamiBersamaBemUI and #KrisisDemokrasiKampus on the Twitter platform.

Another kind of solidarity appeared when BEM KM UNNES Semarang criticized Vice President Ma'ruf Amin as King of Silent because he was always silent and did nothing as long as he was Vice President except as a religious legitimacy reinforcer of every government policy. BEM UNNES also criticized the Chairman of DPR RI, Puan Maharani, as the Queen of Ghosting because students thought that the DPR RI failed to represent the public interest, especially during the pandemic. Other BEMs throughout Indonesia also carried out this kind of solidarities and criticized the governors in their respective regions.

Figure 4: pamphlet BEM UI and BEM KM UNNES criticism of the Government

The three movements above can not be separated from one another because all coalition members are involved in the abovementioned movements. We argue that the COVID-19 pandemic has strengthened online media (social media and virtual meeting platforms) as a medium for social movements' struggle, which has been developing since the expansion of internet technology a few years ago.

In addition, the pandemic has also led to issues convergence of civil society movements. Movements that have their respective struggle areas to focus on overseeing public health issues and ensuring that people get their right to protection from the impact of the virus fairly. For example, they criticize the government after focusing on terms, not on substantive. They differ from PSBB, PPKM, Micro PPKM, Emergency PPKM, to PPKM Level 4. This movement alliance argued the reason behind government plays with terms is to avoid the consequences of the Health Quarantine Law in Article 8, which said that "during the regional quarantine, the basic living needs of people and food for livestock that are in the quarantine area are the responsibility of the central government." They also constantly criticize the portion of the pandemic response budget, which they consider to be not transparent and accountable, sluggish, and very inclined towards economic recovery rather than public health.

Data Transparency Issues: kawalCOVID19.id and laporCOVID19.org

Transparency data is one indicator of the government's performance in tackling pandemics. Although the government has emphasized openness to all data, some data problems have been found in the field. For example, the difference between central and local governments or the death data between the government and the Indonesian Doctors Association. Data accuracy is crucial to reducing the curve and becoming a basis for policy-making (Valerisha, 2020). Data issues brought

public skepticism about accurate pandemic data in Indonesia. In this section, we present the critical role of social movement networks in controlling pandemic data in Indonesia through two reputable data volunteer platforms, namely kawalCOVID19.id and laporCOVID.org.

KawalCOVID19.id and laporCOVID.org are two volunteer networks platform whose main job is to collect data related to pandemics using various sources, namely central government, provincial government, and community reports. Yusuf et al. (2021) refer to this volunteer as e-participation to tackle the pandemic. Regarding data transparency, the KawalCOVID19.id platform has three types of content: information, verification, and education. Information analyzes evidence-based information and facts (they avoid hypotheses, opinions, and assumptions). Verification works to clarify rumors and disinformation and explain them clearly. They work closely with the Indonesian Anti-Hoax Community. Lastly, they educate the public about what to do or avoid during the pandemic, including health information at schools, workplaces, and other public facilities.

Meanwhile, LaporCOVID-19 is a citizen reporting platform related to COVID-19 cases found by communities but out of the government's reach. In collecting and curating data, this platform uses a crowdsourcing approach by involving community participation to record COVID-19 numbers and report issues around COVID-19 around them (website laporCOVID19.org). In addition, this platform also provides a platform for reporting cases of social assistance distribution abuse. These two platforms are supported by social movement networks connected to movements we mentioned before, such as ICW, AJI, YLBHI, LOKATARU, and several platforms that focus on human rights and data transparency, such as hakasasi.id, Transparency International, and Jabar Digital Service.

An essential finding of this platform is the 19,000 death data gap between the government version and their findings based on reports in each province. On July 23, 2021, from May-July 2021 data, the number of positive COVID-19 deaths per province collected by the LaporCOVID19.id team reached 100,436, while the death data released by the central government showed only 80,598 people. From the perspective of human rights groups, 19,000 deaths cannot only be interpreted as statistics because there are stories and sorrows for every death.

Figure 5: data gap version between Ministry of Health and laporCOVID19.org

The COVID-19 report also focuses on the issue of distributing social assistance. This issue became a significant concern after Juliari Batu Bara, the Indonesian Minister of Social Affairs corruption case, was revealed. In addition, control of social assistance distribution becomes crucial as a guarantee of the public right to life during this mobility restricting policy. From March 2020 – February 2021, LaporCOVID19.org received 411 incoming reports and 327 verified reports related to the problem of social assistance distribution. The issues of social assistance include people who died but are still registered as beneficiaries; people who are recorded in the Social Welfare Integrated Data (DTKS) but do not receive assistance; residents who self-isolate but do not receive social assistance; as well as problems related to resident administration, especially for urban marginal groups such as homeless (Riana, 17th July 2021).

Based on the analysis above, we found that social movement networks have significantly contributed to maintaining democracy during this pandemic. Differently, the pandemic has contributed to maintaining democracy in Indonesia. This contribution was created in two ways: strengthening solidarity through the convergence of issues and strengthening internet technology as a medium for action.

First, strengthening solidity through the convergence of issues. #BersihkanIndonesia movement network, the Indonesian People's Faction (FRI), the BEM solidarity network, kawalCOVID19.co.id, and laporCOVID19.org were formed by movements with different focuses and issues. Although we see above that movements have begun to consolidate and support each other on every issue, the pandemic has strengthened its solidity through convergence pandemic mitigation. We have witnessed the pandemic crisis that has raised downstream problems such as corruption, human rights violations, freedom of expression, and participation restrictions. Therefore, the movement networks can help each other solve the partial problems of their respective movements by jointly overseeing the upstream issue, the

COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, it can be concluded that by building a solid network of movements in controlling pandemic policies, the network also controls policies on anti-corruption, human rights, environment, natural resource management, and freedom of participation.

Second, strengthening internet technology as a medium for action. Before the pandemic, we had witnessed the rise of online activism networks through social media and specialized platforms such as change.org (Kurniawan & Rye, 2013). However, collective action -to suppress state policies- is still dominated by collective actions on the ground. They accept that technology is beneficial for building networking, communicating, and mobilizing. However, technology is not strong enough to put pressure. Since the pandemic, when all face-to-face activities have turned virtual, online meeting platforms such as Zoom Meetings, Skype, and Google Meet, have become very helpful in conducting long and in-depth discussions without mobilizing people. In addition, video-sharing platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook Video significantly contribute to disseminating movement information. Finally, through the "hashtag" feature, the Twitter social media platform also greatly contributes to mobilizing support for specific issues with a much wider reach, up to the international level.

CONCLUSION

Through the analysis above, we tried to answer the question, "does the pandemic decline or maintain democracy in Indonesia? We realized that the current conclusions might not be strong enough to justify the long-term effects of pandemics on democracy. However, we seek to go into short-term literature debate while preparing for the possibility of more comprehensive research in the future.

We agree with the majority argument that the pandemic has accelerated democratic decline in many countries, mainly due to restrictions on participation and transparency of data and budgets (Avritzer, 2020; Rapeli, 2020; Abers, 2021). In the Indonesian case, we found that the pandemic has accelerated the decline of democracy in two ways, namely from above and below. First, from above, the government has restricted public participation in several important policies and laws making processes, such as the Mineral and Coal Bill and the Omnibus Law Bill. Public control over state policies is the key to democracy, according to Beetham (1993). The pandemic also confirmed the re-centralization of power between central and regional governments. The central government determines policies to overcome the pandemic, such as PSBB and PPKM, based on their indicators, even though the employed data as reference is problematic. This centralization led to minor resistance from local governments.

Eko Bagus Sholihin, Raegen Harahap, Yulion Zalpa

Second, from below, disinformation is the root cause of community polarization due to non-substantive debates, for example, pandemic conspiracies and hoaxes about vaccination issues. Social media has become a new public arena where all discourses are debated without limits. At the same time, social media has perpetuated the spread of disinformation due to the absence of 'fact check' or control features in mainstream media. One of the disinformation's fatal effects is when people die because of the virus. However, because he does not believe in viruses, a guy refused treatment in hospitals and refused to get vaccines after being exposed to severe hoaxes on social media. Disinformation that occurred during the pandemic not only caused communities cleavage but also threatened human rights (right to life), which human rights is a critical indicator of democracy, according to Beetham (1993).

Social media has a paradoxical characteristic to democracy, especially in pandemics. On the one hand, social media undermined democracy through the spread of disinformation. However, on the other hand, social media has also maintained democracy by reinforcing social movement networks' solidity and a medium for movement activities (Abers, 2021; Habler, 2021). This argument is our second finding in this article. We found that the pandemic also contributed to strengthening the solidarity of social movement networks. This strengthening of solidarity is due to two things: the convergence of issues and the strengthening of the internet as a medium for movement.

Regarding convergence of issues, movement networks represent various background issues, such as anti-corruption, natural resource sovereignty, environment, data transparency, and human rights. A chain of shared solidarity binds the whole movement through the pandemic issue, which is upstream of new crises in each of the problems they have struggled with. Next, the pandemic has also contributed to strengthening the internet as a medium of movement. We see that online-based social movements have indeed emerged in recent years (Kurniawan & Rye, 2013). When the pandemic limits street actions, thus, the movement network must adapt to the use of internet technology as an alternative medium. The advantage is that demonstration can be carried out without mobilization, allowing increased participation without reducing the substance of pressure. In closing, this article's overall analysis confirmed that civil society's role is crucial to maintaining democratic practices in Indonesia, especially during the pandemic.

REFERENCES

Abers, R, N., Rossi, F, M., Bulow M, V. (2021). State-Society Relations in Uncertain Times: Social Movement Strategies, Ideational Contestation and The Pandemic in Brazil and Argentina. *International Political Science Review, 42*(3), 333-349. org/10.1177/0192512121993713

Abhipraya, F, A., Pahlevi, M, E, T., & Amrurobbi, A, A. (2020). That Democratic Decline in Indonesia under COVID-19 Pandemic. *Jurnal Wacana Politik, 5*(2), 99-110.

Andrianto, A. (2020). *Problematika Komunikasi Pandemi COVID-19: Kepastian, Kebenaran, dan Harapan Informasi di Tengah Keberlimpahan Informasi COVID-19. Jakarta:* Pentas Grafika

antaranews.com, (2020, November 20). Disinformasi kacaukan upaya negara-negara untuk kendalikan COVID-19. antaranews.com. https://www.antaranews.com/berita/1851240/disinformasi-kacaukan-upaya-negara-negara-untuk-kendalikan-COVID-19

Avritzer, L., Renno, L. (2021). The Pandemic and The Crisis of Democracy in Brazil. *Journal of Politics in Latin America, 00*(0), 1-16. 10.1177/1866802X211022362

Baharamin, A. (2020, March 31). Rilis Fraksi Rakyat Indonesia: Desak DPR RI Hentikan Fungsi Legislasi, Fokus pada Fungsi Anggaran dan Pengawasan. aman.or.id. Retrieved from http://www.aman.or.id/2020/03/rilis-fraksi-rakyat-indonesia-desak-dpr-ri-hentikan-fungsi-legislasi-fokus-pada-fungsi-anggara-dan-pengawasan/

D'cruz, M., & Banerjee, D. (2020). An invisible human rights crisis': The marginalization of older adults during the COVID-19 pandemic – an advocacy review. *Psychiatry Research, 292*(-). 1-9. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2020.113369

Freedom House Report. (2021). Indonesia. Freedom in the World 2021 Country Report. freedomhouse.org. https://freedomhouse.org/country/indonesia/freedom-world/2021

Frenkel, S. (2021, July 26). The Most Influential Spreader of Coronavirus Misinformation Online. nytimes.com. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/24/technology/joseph-mercola-coronavirus-misinformation-online.html

Gindin, S. (2020). Political Openings: Class Struggle During and After the Pandemic. *New Solutions: A Journal of Environmental and Occupational Health Policy, 0*(0), 1-7. 10.1177/1048291120974422

Guasti, P. (2020). The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Central and Eastern Europe. *Democratic Theory, 7*(2), 47-60. 10.3167/dt.2020.070207

Habibi, M. (2021). Pandemic Democracy: Impact Regional Elections Held During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of Government and Political Issues, 1*(1), 15-25. 10.53341/jgpi.v1i1.1

Habler, J., Wurst, A, K., Jungblut, M., Schlosser, K. (2021). Influence of the Pandemic Lockdown on Fridays for Future's Hashtag Activism. *New Media & Society, 00*(0), 1-23. 10.1177/14614448211026575

Hamdi, I. (2020, October 20). Tolak Omnibus Law, Demonstrasi Mahasiswa dan Buruh Kepung Jakarta Hari Ini. metro.tempo.co. https://metro.tempo.co/read/1397610/tolak-omnibus-law-demonstrasi-mahasiswa-dan-buruh-kepung-jakarta-hari-ini

Humprecht, E., Esser, F., & Van Aelst, P. (2020). Resilience to online disinformation: A framework for cross-national comparative research. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, *25*(3), 493-516.

Jayani, D, H. (2021, 13 April). Konten Hoaks COVID-19 Terbanyak di Facebook. katadata.co.id. Retrieved from https://databoks.katadata.co.id/datapublish/2021/04/13/konten-hoaks-COVID-19-terbanyak-di-facebook#

Jungherr, A., Schroeder, R. (2021). Disinformation and the Structural transformations of the Public Arena: Addressing to Actual Challenges to Democracy. *Social Media and Society, 00*(0), 1-13.

Kurniawan, N, I., & Rye, S, A. (2014). Online environmental activism and internet use in the Indonesian environmental movement. *Information Development, 30*(3), 200-2012. 10.1177/0266666913485260

Lewandowsky, S., Stritzke, W. G. K., Freund, A. M., Oberauer, K., & Krueger, J. I. (2013). Misinformation, disinformation, and violent conflict: From Iraq and the "war on terror" to future threats to peace. *American Psychologist, 68*(7), 487–501. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0034515

Madubun, J., & Ufi, J, A. (2015). *Dinamika Peran Aktor dalam Isu Keamanan dan Implikasinya Terhadap Demokratisasi di Kota Ambon*. dalam Paskarina, C., Asiah, M., Madung, O, G (eds). *Berebut Kontrol Atas Kesejahteraan: Kasus-kasus Politisasi Demokrasi di Tingkal Lokal.* Yogyakarta: Polgov UGM Bekerja sama dengan PCD Press

Makdori, Y. (2021, July 18). Karena Hoaks COVID-19, Pria ini kehilahangan ayahnya. liputan6.com. https://m.liputan6.com/news/read/4609908/karena-hoaks-COVID-19-pria-ini-kehilangan-ayahnya

Pandu, P. (2021, July 27). Gerakan Kemanusiaan Modal Penting Membantu Tenaga Kesehatan. kompas.id. https://www.kompas.id/baca/kesehatan/2021/07/27/gerakan-kemanusiaan-modal-penting-membantu-tenaga-kesehatan

Patricia, S. (2021, July 1). Solidaritas Kemanusiaan Terus Bergulir. kompas.id. Retrieved from https://www.kompas.id/baca/bebas-akses/2020/07/01/solidaritas-kemanusiaan-terus-bergulir

Paredes, C, F., Jankousky, K., Schultz, J., Bernfeld, J., Cullen, K., Quan, N,G., Kon, S., Hotez, P., Martinez, A, F, H., & Krsak, M. (2020). COVID-19 in jail and prisons: A neglected infection in a marginalized population. *PLoS Neglected Tropical Diseases.* 1-4. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pntd.0008409

Primandari, F, F. (2021). Democracy and human rights during the COVID-19: The case of Indonesia. *Australian Journal of Human Rights, 26*(3), 529-539. 10.1080/1323238X.2020.1813366

Purbaya, G, F. (2020, October 5). Trending Tagar TolakOmnibusLaw di Twitter Tidak Pengaruhi RUU Ciptaker Disahkan. jakpusnews.com. Retrieved from https://jakpusnews.pikiran-rakyat.com/nasional/pr-44803252/trending-tagar-tolakomnibuslaw-di-twitter-tidak-pengaruhi-ruu-ciptaker-di-sahkan

Ramli, R, R. (2020, May 13). Revisi UU Minerba, Ini Beberapa Pasal yang Tuai Polemik. money.kompas.com. Retrieved from https://money.kompas.com/read/2020/05/13/085813226/revisi-uu-minerba-ini-beberapa-pasal-yang-tuai-polemik

Rapeli, L., Saikkonen, I. (2020). How Will the COVID-19 Pandemic Affect Democracy?. *Democratic Theory, 7*(2), 25-32. doi.org/10.1177/2056305121988928

Riana, F. (2021, July 17). Lapor COVID-19 Desak Pemerintah Perbaiki Data Penerima Bansos. nasional.tempo.co. Retrieved from https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1484365/lapor-COVID-19-desak-pemerintah-perbaiki-data-penerima-bansos

Rodriguez, U, M., Xu, J. (2020). Regulation of COVID-19 Fake News Infodemic in China and India. *Media International Australia, 177*(1), 125-131. 10.1177/1329878X20948202

Rosanti, R. (2020). Pandemic at the polls: How to prepare the elections post COVID-19 (towards Indonesia local elections in 2020). *Jurnal Academia Praja, 3*(2), 147-167.

Ross, A. S., & Rivers, D. J. (2018). Discursive deflection: Accusation of "fake news" and the spread of mis-and disinformation in the tweets of President Trump. *Social Media+Society,* 4(2). 2056305118776010.

Schuldt, L. (2021). Official Truths in a War on Fake News: Governmental Fact-Checking in Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs, 00*(0), 1-32. 10.1177/18681034211008908

Spring, M. (2020, May 31). COVID-19: Disinformasi dan teori konspirasi soal virus corona yang menelan korban jiwa. bbc.com. https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/majalah-52821352

Poell, T., & van Dijck, J. (2018). *Social media and new protest movements*. In: Burgess J, MarwickAE and Poell T (eds). *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media.* New York: SAGE, pp. 546–561.

Trein, P. (2020). The paradox of prevention: Authoritarian Past and Liberal Democracy in Times Crisis. *Working Paper.* https://ssrn.com/abstract=3625523 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3625523

Vadlamannati, K, C., Cooray, A., Soysa, I, D. (2021). Health-System Equity, Egalitarian Democracy, and COVID-19 Outcomes: An Empirical Analysis. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health, 49*(-), 104-113. 10.1177/1403494820982106

Valerisha, A., Putra, M, A. (2020). Pandemi Global COVID-19 dan Problematika Negara-Bangsa: Transparansi Data Sebagai Vaksin Sosio-Digital?. *Jurnal Online Universitas Katolik Parahyangan,* 131-137. https://doi.org/10.26593/jihi.v0i0.3871.131-137

Walby, S. (2021). The COVID Pandemic and Social Theory: Social Democracy and Public Health in the Crisis. *European Journal of Social Theory, 24*(1), 22-43. 10.1177/1368431020970127

Yusuf, A., Muntasa, A., Anamisa, D, R., Kustiyahningsih, Y., Wiyono, D, S. (2021). E-Participation against COVID-19: Case of KawalCOVID19.id. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series,* 1-6. 10.1088/1742-6596/1899/1/012080

KHABIB NURMAGOMEDOV: MANIFESTATION OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND ISLAMIC IDENTITY IN UFC

Moh. Daffa Izulhaq[1], Raditya Abdurrahman Nugraha[2], Julang Aryowiloto [3]
[1]UPN "Veteran" Jawa Timur, Surabaya, Indonesia
mdaffaizulhaq@gmail.com
[2]UPN "Veteran" Jawa Timur, Surabaya, Indonesia
radityaan50@gmail.com
[3]UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia
julang.aryowiloto@yandex.com

ABSTRACT

In contemporary times, public diplomacy is not necessarily facilitated by a state actor, and the diplomatic process could still be interrelated with many sectors, including religion and sports. The Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) is one kind of public diplomacy arena in this context. In the UFC, a game of identity is visible under certain conditions, for example, the one at the fighter Khabib Nurmagomedov, who is well known to have a strong Islamic identity. This paper will dig into the manifestation of Islamic identity and public diplomacy in the UFC by Khabib Nurmagomedov from the beginning of his career in 2012 until his retirement. This paper describes the UFC as a public diplomacy arena, including the values it brings. Then proceed with the background of Khabib Nurmagomedov as a UFC fighter with his unique identity. The authors will explain how the symbolism of Islamic identity emerged and played in the UFC, with Khabib Nurmagomedov as the primary focus. In the end, it can be concluded that Khabib Nurmagomedov has provided a unique position for Islamic identity in the UFC.
Keywords: Khabib Nurmagomedov, UFC, public diplomacy, Islamic identity

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary international relations have specific nuances which are pretty different from that before. Previously the various political role, such as diplomacy, was generally done by a framework of state's actions and relations. Nowadays, this role could be implemented almost fully by non-state actors, both as a direct actor who does the diplomacy or indirectly (Lee & Ayhan, 2015). For example, through "fora" in which diplomatic framework is being held. Non-state actors, for instance, multinational companies (MNC), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and particular individuals could do certain activities that even states are unable to do as good as them (Stephen & Zürn, 2014). For example, because of Taiwan's difficult position in formal international relations, it can use non-state actors to implement its

public diplomacy, such as the organization of Taiwanese indigenous people (Figueira, 2020).

In the sports industry, the public recognizes the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC). UFC refers to a US-based MNC which promotes mixed martial arts (MMA) and sporting events that the company holds (Telegraph Sport, 2017). This MNC has a special place in the MMA world and sports because UFC is considered the most successful MMA event holder globally, mainly because of the number of viewers and sponsorships globally (Way of Martial Arts, 2020). Similar to many internationally famous and heavily publicized sports events, athletes who play here often bring and show their backgrounds and identities, for example, those of religion, culture, nationality, and others (Telegraph Sport, 2017).

One of those athletes is Khabib Nurmagomedov. In his position as a UFC fighter, Khabib has a very interesting position and background from the diplomacy perspective. First, in terms of sports, he is the most extended holder of UFC Lightweight Champion in the history of UFC so far (from April 2018 until March 2021); some consider even him the greatest UFC lightweight champion of all time (Zulkofske, 2020). Secondly, in terms of his background, he is a Muslim from Dagestan (a region in Russian Federation). He also often shows his Islamic identity in various instances, whether directly related to UFC fights (e.g., press conferences and statements after winning the match) or not (e.g., social media activities).

Furthermore, this background seems very visible at the UFC 229 in October 2018, where Khabib fought Conor McGregor, a contender for the UFC Lightweight Champion title. Their fights (inside and outside of "the cage") are similar to Huntington's clash of civilizations because of their contrasting identity and background. Khabib represents Islamic or Eastern civilization, and Conor is the one from the West (Zulkofske, 2020).

Based on these postulates, uniqueness appears because of Khabib's clear actions of showing his Islamic identity, particularly during his "golden age" when he still fought to defend his title as UFC Lightweight Champion. Moreover, in the context of public diplomacy, given the position of UFC as a promoter of a famous international event and Khabib as a particular individual who was (and is still relatively) popular in the sports, UFC comes as a facilitator of public diplomacy and Khabib as an actor who did the diplomacy there and representative of a particular identity. These things are also added substantially by the fact that UFC is the most famous MMA promoter in the world, and Khabib had a significant social influence on the world as an athlete (Zulkofske, 2020). With these, we could formulate a research question for this paper as to how are the manifestations of public diplomacy and Islamic identity in UFC, with Khabib Nurmagomedov as a study case in the period October 2018 - March 2021.

This study uses a categorical method of literature review. This method categorizes various literature based on their linkage to the research question. Using this method, we have categorized the literature into two. First, the literature supports

the idea that sports could be used as an instrument of diplomacy. Second, it is the literature that affirms that there is a particular aspect of identity and value that could be played or represented in sports. In the first category, diplomacy often needs a medium to convey, for example, sports, as Deniz Demir Bolçay (2018) argued in *Sports as Public Diplomacy Element.* To him, the necessary application of soft power in international relations makes the government use sports or other important social events.

Zhang Qingmin (2013), in Sports Diplomacy: The Chinese Experience and Perspective, also added this idea of sports' function beyond just regular leisure and entertainment. He argues that although technically, sports diplomacy could be employed as a tool to heighten or improve relations between countries, according to the Chinese perspective, only the later usage can be considered sports diplomacy. Later on, John A. Johnson (2018) writes in T*aekwondo and Peace: How a Killing Art Became a Soft Diplomacy Vehicle for Peace*, sports that come from a specific culture could be used as a "vehicle for peace" between countries that also happen to have similarities about this particular culture and sports. In his example, historically speaking, Taekwondo, as a sport that emerged from Korean culture, has been used for a long time as a medium to improve relations between South and North Korea.

Both aspects of soft power and culture linked closely in diplomacy also manifest in how a government wants to improve its country's image and attractiveness internationally through sports. In *Muay Thai Diplomacy: Thailand's Soft Power Through Public Diplomacy* by William J. Jones and Pawinpon Theerawong (2021), they make an example of the Thai government's efforts to promote Muay Thai as an official Olympics sport through public and cultural diplomacy. The connection between sports and a country's culture is one of the main reasons why not all kinds of sports can be utilized to represent a specific country (Mor and Molle, 2021). Guy Mor and Anrea Molle (2021), in *Should The State of Israel Pursue Krav Maga As An Intangible Cultural Heritage of The Jewish People? History and Politics Say Yes,* suggests that Krav Maga embodies Israeli cultural ideas, national historical discourses, and biblical values. Therefore, this martial art could be employed as one of Israel's accepted cultural representation and diplomatic tools.

Even this appropriation of sports as political and diplomatic tools also appears in the domain of contested territories and sovereignty. As Ramesh Ganohariti and Ernst Dijxhoorn (2020) formulate in *Para- and Proto-Sports Diplomacy of Contested Territories: CONIFA as a Platform for Football Diplomacy,* CONIFA as an international sporting platform for contested territories, contributes to their nation branding.

In the second category, sports' ability to create an imagined community serves as a common expression of people that could break social barriers (Devan, 2012). Therefore, in sports, in one way or another, a particular aspect of identity

could be played or represented, including the unifying one. Pamela Devan (2012), in *Cricket and the global Indian identity*, explains how the game of cricket, even though its advent in India is influenced clearly by British colonialism, could become a symbol of Indian identity and community nationally in India and globally.

National identity symbolized in sports is not only just a link or reference to a kind of universally accepted idea or unifier but could, in some sense, reduce hate and improve pride in the identity. In Emilio Depetris-Chauvin and Ruben Durante's (2017) question in *One team, one nation: Football, ethnic identity, and conflict in Africa*, they found that even when there are historical and ethnic cleavages in a country, patriotic shock that comes from the national team winning a football match can reduce ethnic tension. In this case, identity is "played" positively from a conflict standpoint. Not just playing in a positive light, certain kinds of sports that have become widespread cultural phenomena could describe certain notions of a country.

Reagan Flaherty (2010) writes in *Considering Mixed Martial Arts as a Cultural Representation of American Empire* that due to the rapid growth of the UFC, MMA represents the American values of power, hegemony, identity, and capitalism. Also, these values and identities exist not just by themselves; some actors could also profit from them. Jennifer McLaren (2017) proposes in *"We Are All Fighters": The Transmedia Marketing of Difference in the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC)* how UFC increases its effort to market different fighters in terms of race, gender, sexuality, and nationality to make its event more publicized.

METHODS

This study is within the scope of explanatory-based qualitative research because it explains the cause-and-effect relationship between the existence of Khabib Nurmagomedov in the UFC realm with the manifestation of public diplomacy and Islamic identity. To gain an in-depth understanding of this, the collection of various information as data was carried out by utilizing a literature review on public diplomacy and specific identities in the realm of sports, credible media news texts related to Khabib Nurmagomedov's Islamic identity, which was shown as a UFC fighter, video interviews of Khabib Nurmagomedov with Vladimir Putin as Russian President, a series of Khabib Nurmagomedov press conferences at the UFC, as well as the official social media accounts of the UFC and Khabib Nurmagomedov. The analysis of these various data was based on content analysis which focused on translating and understanding the goals, messages, and effects of Khabib Nurmagomedov's activities as a UFC fighter with a dominant Islamic identity and gesture. Social identity theory and the concept of public diplomacy are used to analyze each factor of Khabib Nurmagomedov's Islamic identity and the effect of public diplomacy on Russia.

Social Identity Theory

Based on this theory, the dynamics between groups are strongly influenced by the social identity of individuals in the group. The identity discussed in this theory refers to the individual's social identity (Jasso, 2003). This arises from an individual's attempt to include himself in a group of individuals with similarities to himself (Stets & Burke, 2000). This social identity provides self-enhancement, contributes to self-conceptualization, and creates self-esteem and status for individuals (Jasso, 2003). When the activation of social identity or salience occurs, the influence of social group membership on individuals increases and impacts depersonalization or a phenomenon where the individual considers himself to be a cognitive representation of his group (Stets & Burke, 2000).

Moreover, Stets & Burke (2000) continue by stressing that this phenomenon causes individuals to do things that increase their in-group ratings relative to their out-groups and social identification. This causes in-group members to view their in-group more positively than their out-group group and conform to the same in-group norms and ideas. According to Hogg, Adelman, and Blagg (2010), this in-group feeling also exists in religious adherents. Religion provides identity in a social group and certainty in viewing the world's life for its adherents. This is quite reasonable because religion provides certain rituals, norms, and views of life, including in the metaphysical realm. Individuals who identify as followers of a particular religion are more conformist to the ideas that unite the in-group.

Public Diplomacy

Traditionally, public diplomacy refers to any diplomacy attempt by a state government to the public. But, with the development of international relations, especially with the increasing influences of non-state actors, there is an appearance of so-called new public diplomacy. This unique concept acknowledges the nuance of modern international relations so that public diplomacy is interpreted as:

> *an instrument used by states, associations of states, and some sub-state and non-state actors to understand cultures, attitudes, and behavior; to build and manage relationships; and to influence thoughts and mobilize actions to advance their interests and values* (Lee & Ayhan, 2015).

It also argues that non-state actors can be an actor in public diplomacy in their rights and represent the aggregate interest of society, even though non-state actors can also operate in the field of diplomacy as partners of state government with interests that follow the latter (Lee and Ayhan, 2015). According to Bolçay (2018), sports are cultural tools belonging to the government that exhibits their cultural practices. The instrumentalization of sports into an international political tool is

through public diplomacy. This method can bridge relations between societies and cultures so that actors can communicate better to convey their message.

Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC)

As an MNC, UFC has tried adjusting its operating model to suit its target audience better, namely the international community, which is quite diverse. One of these efforts is a marketing difference between the campaign and the slogan "We are All Fighters". Furthermore, this campaign is followed by presenting UFC fighters who are more diverse in gender, race, and nationality.

Each athlete is presented with individual differences with a slight lean back to more pronounced systemic differences (McLearen, 2017). Given the UFC's position as the most popular and significant MMA promoter globally (Way of Martial Arts, 2020; SportyTell Editors, 2021), it is natural for this MNC to appear more inclusive internationally. Moreover, MMA can be seen as one of the supporting foundations of white nationalism politics (Zidan, 2018). One of the preventive measures to overcome the existence of an MNC image is to maintain "political correctness" among UFC athletes, for example, by preventing athletes who are indicated to have unwanted ideologies from playing and prohibiting brands with extreme political affiliations from sponsoring UFC athletes (Zidan, 2018).

Thus, it can be seen that although it still has a profit motive in carrying out this "inclusive policy" (McLearen, 2017), the UFC tries to present itself as a forum for international sports and cultural events. This policy is undoubtedly conducive for the UFC in the midst of the view that the UFC is an essential microcosm in seeing the existence of the so-called American Empire because of the similarities between the two as entities characterized by power, domination, and capitalism (Flaherty, 2010).

Khabib Nurmagomedov

In such a UFC backdrop appears Khabib Nurmagomedov. His social identity (specifically culture and religion) became a considerable public interest when he became the UFC Lightweight Champion in April 2018 (Abdulrazaq, 2020). Attention to this aspect was heightened when it was decided that Khabib would fight Conor McGregor in October 2018 (Abdulrazaq, 2020). The rivalry between the two fighters developed long before the fight in October 2018 (Rondina, 2018). Khabib and Conor appear to be two contrasting individuals. Khabib is a Russian by nationality, not by ethnicity, devout Muslim, and individually more reserved. Meanwhile, Conor is Irish, liberal, and free-spirited (Baumgartner, 2018; Suchkov, 2019). Even in Russia, Khabib's home country, society is split in two. Conor's supporters represent the more liberal sections of society and the Russian narrative as part of western civilization. Meanwhile, Khabib's supporters represent a more conservative and pro-establishment segment of Russian society (Suchkov, 2019).

This contrast was exacerbated long before their primary battle, through verbal and physical conflicts shown behind the scenes, to the press conference at UFC 229. Conor's opinion of Khabib's manager, Ali Abdelaziz, showed the verbal conflict that he was a terrorist (Murphy, 2019). This is due to Ali Abdelaziz's controversial past. He was imprisoned for being a double agent with the FBI and an informant against the Muslim terrorist group of the Americans (MOA). Through it, Conor used the past of Khabib's manager as a weapon to create a contrast in the rivalry between the two fighters. Physical conflicts before the main event were also found when Conor threw a trolley at the bus carrying Khabib and several other athletes. This incident response to a series of consecutive events resulted from a verbal conflict between Khabib and Artem Lobov, who was Conor's teammate (Murphy, 2019).

This accumulation resulted in an extraordinary fight in October 2018. The fight became one of the most lucrative UFC fights in history, with 2.4 million pay-per-views globally and a total profit of over 17 million USD (Hill, 2018). In addition, Khabib also successfully defended his position as the Lightweight Champion from Conor. This caused the prestige of this Russian fighter to rise internationally. Not only having a "positive" outcome after the fight at home was over, but there was also a brawl between Khabib and Conor and their team. Khabib, who started the incident, reasoned that Conor and his team did trash talk, which was considered insulting to the country, parents, and religion (Hill, 2018).

Khabib's popularity from this accumulation of events has significant relevance to two parties, Muslims of the world and the Russian government. Since this victory, Khabib has been considered by some Muslims a hero (Zulkofske, 2020). Khabib occupies the world's second most popular Muslim athlete (the number one being Egyptian soccer player Mohammed Salah) (Pasha-Zaidi, 2021). Some have compared Khabib to the United States boxer Muhammad Ali (Abdulrazaq, 2020). Apart from his religious identification, this popularity is also greatly influenced by Khabib's behavior which explicitly displays his Islamic identity.

Explicitly, Khabib often shows his Islam through specific actions throughout his career at the UFC. When he was at a press conference, Khabib often said "Alhamdulillah" as a greeting when he wanted to start a conversation (Hussain, 2020). Not stopping at words, at the end of each match, Khabib also often shows himself prostrating in the octagon, which is a manifestation of gratitude and joy. In addition, there is phenomenal symbolism by Khabib, which is carried out from weighing sessions to face-offs at press conferences. His fingers are crossed in front of his chest, then pointing upwards; this symbolism means that Khabib believes that no power comes from oneself but the Creator who gives everything (Hussain, 2020).

Figure 1. Khabib bowing down after the match
(Source: www.mmasucka.com)

Not only related to actions, but Khabib also, on certain occasions, explicitly conveyed his social views. In 2018, Khabib had proposed closing a nightclub in Dagestan after the death of a National Guardsman while breaking up a fight at a nightclub in Dagestan (Ellingworth, 2018). In 2019, Khabib criticized a controversial play in Dagestan called Hunting for Men, which featured women in "inappropriate clothing." This led to the organizers apologizing to the Dagestan public (Zidan, 2020).

Figure 2. Khabib showing off Islamic symbol after weigh-in

(Source: www.sportingnews.com)

The Public Diplomacy

Meanwhile, for the Russian government, Khabib is a suitable medium for public diplomacy. After his victory against Conor, Russian President Vladimir Putin congratulated Khabib. He expressed the Russian government's support for sanctions imposed by the Nevada sports authorities regarding his post-fight brawl with Conor:

> "*...of course, if we are attacked from the outside, not only you, we could all jump in such a way, and there could be hell to pay*" (The Sun, 2018).

Not only in his match with Conor, but Putin also communicated both indirectly (e.g., Putin called Khabib after his victory over Conor (Owens, 2018)) and in direct meetings (e.g., Putin met Khabib and his father Abdulmanap Nurmagomedov (The Sun, 2018)). This relationship existed until Khabib declared his retirement in October 2020 (Russia Today, 2020). The relevance of "Khabib's use" as a political tool of the Russian government is not only because Khabib is a Russian athlete who has had tremendous success in the UFC but also his popularity among Muslims.

Unfortunately, the Caucasus region, where a substantial number of people are Muslims, also experiences relatively high rates of poverty and political instability. It increases the opportunities for Muslims to be exposed to radicalism and join terrorist organizations based on extreme interpretations of Islamic teachings (Suchkov, 2019). According to Suchkov (2019), Khabib as a person from the said region, specifically Dagestan, can be used as a public relations tool for the Russian government domestically to motivate Muslims there (especially young men, who are generally the main target of terrorist recruitment) to avoid from radicalism.

Not only domestically, but Khabib's popularity is also relevant at the international level. Russia is one of the big powers that have interests in the Middle East, one of these interests is maintaining Russia's allied countries (e.g., Syria) (Zidan, 2021). According to Suchkov (2019), Khabib's popularity as an excellent Muslim athlete and devout among Arab youth have also made him once again a tool of Russia as an image in convincing Arab communities that Russia also represents their values (i.e., values that tend to be conservative in general and Islamic in particular, in contrast to western values). This act of politicizing Khabib's popularity is not only carried out by the government of his country since Khabib's victory over Conor in October 2018, but various world leaders also invited the champion to their official events, some of which were the United Arab Emirates and Turkey (Zidan, 2018).

These countries have two things in common: both have a Muslim majority population and still have a poor record of human rights (Menezes, 2020). The United Arab Emirates is a vocal supporter of Saudi Arabia's military intervention in Yemen (an intervention that left thousands dead and millions at risk of starvation) and still mistreats migrant workers. Meanwhile, under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan,

Turkey experienced significant regression regarding press freedom (Menezes, 2020). According to Karim Zidan (2018), this effort can be categorized as sports washing, which means using sports by a political entity to divert the international public's attention from human rights violations in the said political entity.

Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC)

In the context of MNC, the primary motivation of these activities is profit, both in the short term (e.g., increasing the company's income and shareholder's stock value) and long term (e.g., keeping the company's brand and reputation, relations with consumers). In the case of UFC, the marketing strategy of UFC explains this motivation enough. This strategy tries to represent the diversity of the target audience in the athletes' characteristics and backgrounds (McLearen, 2017). Besides being an active public diplomacy actor, UFC's position as the most popular MMA promoter in the world can turn this company into a "forum and medium" for public diplomacy. Generally, sports bring people together across geographic, linguistic, ethnic, and religious boundaries (Bolçay, 2018). Because of this universality, we can consider sports an essential and effective asset for sending messages to foreign audiences (Garamvölgyi et al., 2020).

This capability appears because of the international popularity of UFC, which comes from its various sports events. The popularity of sports events can make political actors use these events for non-sports purposes. One kind of this usage is through a partnership between political actors and actors who hold the sports event, which does not always state actors or political actors themselves (Garamvölgyi et al., 2020). Practically, UFC cannot become an arena for public diplomacy on all occasions and possibilities. It is necessary to have another variable that can add this public diplomacy function to the sports event. An example of this variable is athlete's popularity (Garamvölgyi et al., 2020). Therefore, the idea that UFC can become an arena for public diplomacy presupposes the existence of this variable. Khabib is the variable. He is an entity that turns UFC into a medium for public diplomacy. In the end, UFC has two roles in public diplomacy. First is an active independent actor with its agenda. Second is a passive actor used by third parties as a medium to convey their messages.

Khabib Nurmagomedov

As the most critical factor in instrumentalizing UFC into a public diplomacy tool, Khabib has certain traits (e.g. popularity and image) that make sense as to why he plays a role in this instrumentalization. However, it does not mean that Khabib deliberately has this agenda. As previously explained, Khabib's public diplomacy tendency only significantly appears when he successfully defends his champion status against Conor McGregor. Before this match or Khabib's succession into UFC Lightweight Champion, the public diplomacy tendency of the Russian athlete barely existed.

Even in early Khabib's participation in UFC, he was just an athlete with a particular personality and background. So, with these in mind, it can be concluded that the public diplomacy role that lands on Khabib and is influenced by Khabib is an effect of his success in UFC, not his intention from the beginning. Therefore, we conclude that in this context, Khabib is an individual who occupies this position because of a particular set of opportunities and factors. Arguably, the most important factor which influenced Khabib's role as a catalyst of the instrumentalization of UFC into a public diplomacy tool is his' religious background.

Although sports of the world, including UFC itself, do not have a lack Muslim players, Khabib has significance in the international context of Muslim athletes. It is because of his explicit showing of religious practices; even his religious practices are seen as conservative. This contrasts with other athletes, notably in his rivalry with Conor McGregor.

Khabib himself is not the only Muslim fighter competing in the UFC. Muslim fighters include Kamaru Usman, Belal Muhammad, Khamzat Chimaev, and Islam Makhacev. However, Khabib has what other Muslim fighters do not have, namely the prestige that is conveyed through other fighters who are often the highlight of the media and his ability in the octagon, which is always considered to dominate to create a winning record without ever losing in his professional MMA career with a record of 29 wins and undefeated (Lee, 2018). For example, during his ceremonial weigh-in at UFC 229, Khabib said a phenomenal sentence that he would beat Conor in front of his fans who filled the building at that time:

> "...hey, first of all, I wanna say Alhamdulillah! God gave me everything. Alhamdulillah, I know you got this and don't like this! Alhamdulillah! Tomorrow night I'm gonna smash your boy guys"
> (Lee, 2018).

We can consider Khabib's position here as a celebrity diplomat. According to Young (2018), a celebrity diplomat is not a trained diplomat who represents the state in its entirety but a popular individual who concentrates on a particular issue and creates exploit in the issue through massive publication. As a celebrity diplomat, Khabib often utters iconic sentences that make him a Muslim figure and has a significant contribution to MMA sports. One sentence that will always be remembered is when Khabib said not to mock one's religion, country, and parents. This was addressed to the media due to the MMA community deploring the commotion created by Khabib after his fight against Conor. Khabib argues that no one has a problem with Conor's trash talk, but Khabib considers that it is not sportsmanship when it becomes personal. He argues that MMA departs from the attitude of respect for fellow fighters, and the trash talk spoken by Conor is considered excessive and too private by offending Khabib's religion, state, and parents (Beydoun, 2018). Thus, as a celebrity diplomat, Khabib, as a Muslim figure, significantly influences mutual respect for fellow fighters who compete in the UFC,

as he said after the press conference of UFC 229 about his actions that caused the riots:

> *"...I'm a human being, but I don't understand how people can talk about jumping on the cage when he talks about my religion, he talked about my country, he talks about my father, and he comes to Brooklyn, and he broke the bus and almost killed a couple of people. What about this?" (Beydoun, 2018).*

His strong pieces of advice of not insulting one's religion, country, and parents seemed positively received by the Muslim community he is part of. He is seen as humble, proud of his Muslim identity, and not afraid to stand up against "bullies". Especially given current international public discourse, it allows itself to be penetrated by many ideas and opinions that could be considered racist, Islamophobic, and other xenophobia (Hammond, 2018).

Moreover, his involvement in the UFC also influenced the change in public sentiment about Islamophobia. Conor McGregor's blatant discredit of Islamic values (for example, offering alcohol by force to Khabib) is a form of Islamophobia at UFC through a press conference at UFC 229. In this case, the presence of Khabib Nurmagomedov in the UFC affects sentiment as a result of Islamophobia is symbolically shown through public views, as well as his actions which are considered as the success of his religiosity towards Islamic values.

The Public Diplomacy

The use of sports events as a state's attempt to do public diplomacy is not a post-cold war phenomenon. One of the most important examples is the 1936 Summer Olympics in Germany. Nazi government at the time promoted white supremacy and prohibited the participation of Jewish athletes from all countries. In the end, this racist and anti-semitic policy was softened by allowing the involvement of a few Jewish athletes (Glosniak, 2017). But, a little different from using sports as a political tool in general, in this case, political actors are not only using sports events but also MNC (i.e., UFC) dan individual actors (i.e., Khabib) for their schedule. This action has particular theoretical implications for this instrumentalization. Firstly, the decrease of UFC's and Khabib's agency capacities and political wills, so these actors can easier be controlled by another political actor who is more powerful and experienced in fighting its agenda.

Secondly, we know that powers belong to UFC and Khabib. Powers manifest in their ability to spread their images through management and marketing skills for UFC or a unique individual persona for Khabib. Accumulating these two makes the instrumentalization of these two by political actors into public diplomacy more profitable, although not always in the literal monetary sense. As explained previously, Khabib is the most critical factor in this instrumentalization. The importance of Khabib causes the process of instrumentalization to be limited to political actors with particular interests in the athlete. Russian (the state and

government) and Muslim people are understandably two kinds of actors because of their background as entities from which Khabib comes. The instrumentalization also influences the position of the UFC as an MNC.

Vekasi (2017) considers these actions by MNCs are public diplomacy. According to her, the intensity of public diplomacy by MNC depends on the risk intensity which happens on the MNC; the scale of public diplomacy also has to be appropriate to the consequence of operation in a business environment that is not too friendly. One of the outputs of this public diplomacy, according to her, is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). This puts the economic actor as an active cross-border actor with a quasi-foreign policy (Vekasi, 2017). In addition, there are similarities in the image of the Russian government with Khabib in the international public, especially in countries with Muslim majority populations. Both are considered voices of conservative ideals such as respect for traditional values and obedience to authority (Zidan, 2020b). This equation is undoubtedly reinforced by the contrast between Khabib and the Russian government with their so-called biggest rivals, namely Conor McGregor and the United States, which are considered more representative of liberal values (Baumgartner, 2018).

For Muslim people, Khabib successfully represented the image of two communities or people. They are the image of Dagestani Muslims (and Russian Muslims in general) and Muslim fighters of UFC. He represented the idea that these two communities - united by their religious similarity - are as capable as any other people in the world of being hardworking and disciplined people who could achieve prestige and deserved respect. In particular, Dagestani Muslims (and Russian Muslims in general) represent those who feel they are left behind in their own country because they have different cultures and live historically, not politically stable places (Ellingworth, 2018). Khabib tells an image of Islam and Russia that was built through competition in the UFC peacefully. The competitive and sportive UFC evidence this matches through a journey that is considered quite brilliant. This Islamic aspect is also quite strong if we remember that Khabib is sometimes seen as a "representation" of Russian Muslims and as a Muslim of the world (Abdulrazaq, 2020). Thus, this proves the role of Khabib Nurmagomedov as a representative of those communities on the UFC stage with a good image.

In the end, Khabib's fight with McGregor shows that Islamic fighters can dominate a sport that has never been before. This dominance is the result of public diplomacy that also represents Russia as a country with athletes with abilities that effectively portray devout Muslims as committed, hardworking, and successful people. Thus, it improves the image of Islam and Russia for the better by increasing public sympathy for the Islamic identity of Khabib Nurmagomedov.

Then, as explained earlier, several countries other than Russia (both the state and people with particular religious affiliation) do sports washing through Khabib. Their sports washing action also relies on Khabib's image as a devout Muslim and a good athlete. But clearly, the scale of sports washing carried out by various state

actors is not as large as that done by the Russian government. In addition to playing a role in sports washing, the Russian government's use of Khabib, in general, is quite reasonable and exciting. Because this athlete inadvertently gave a political advantage to the Russian government and later had no plans made from the start regarding the former's political instrumentalization. Therefore, this usage of Khabib is not "very costly" for the Russian government.

At first, Khabib was "under the radar" of the Russian government. But as his popularity increases, the Russian government uses this athlete as part of the international projection of this country's image. In addition, despite or because of his level of popularity, Khabib has never occupied a fairly crucial position in the realm of public diplomacy in particular or diplomacy in general. This can be seen when compared to certain athletes whose relevance to Khabib has been compared. For example, the US government uses Muhammad Ali to persuade African countries to boycott the 1980 Moscow Olympics and Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to free American captives (Hauser, 2012). This may be explained because, despite being close with various influential politicians at the international and national levels (Suchkov, 2019) and having strong opinions about many things, as in the Charlie Hebdo case (Menezes, 2020) and views related to Women (Watson, 2018), Khabib in action is more apolitical. Despite having been offered various political positions in Russia (Zidan, 2020a; Zidan, 2021), he still has no interest in politics (RT Sport MMA, 2020)

After all, Khabib is not a traditional diplomat but an athlete who, coincidentally due to his popularity and religious background, becomes part of the international projection of ideas and people of the same culture and religion with him through public diplomacy.

CONCLUSION

It is essential to have a more diverse representation of international Islamic identity, especially representation through a more unifying and universal medium, such as sports. Although there is no lack of supply of talented Muslim athletes in the world's sports, this supply is often overrepresented in some sectors and underrepresented in others. In the UFC, Khabib Nurmagomedov, a Dagestani Russian whose religion is Islam, has provided a unique projection of his religion in cage fighting in particular and to the international public in general. Despite his extreme opinions about certain things and lack of action related to public diplomacy, he is still an athlete with much potential for public diplomacy. Unfortunately, his retirement from the UFC, for now, makes us less able to see the instrumentalization of his public diplomacy for the foreseeable future.

REFERENCES

Abdulrazaq, T. (2020, October 24). Khabib: An unabashedly Muslim champion in an Islamophobic world. Retrieved from TRTWorld: https://www.trtworld.com/opinion/khabib-an-unabashedly-muslim-champion-in-an-islamophobic-world-40866

Beydoun, K. A. (2018). Bigotry fueled the Conor McGregor-Khabib Nurmagomedov brawl after UFC 229. Retrieved from theundefeated.com: https://theundefeated.com/features/bigotry-fueled-the-conor-mcgregor-khabib-nurmagomedov-brawl-after-ufc-229/

Baumgartner, P. (2018, October 5). Sucker Punch? Many Russians Back Irish Fighter McGregor Over Daghestani Khabib In UFC 229. Retrieved from Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty: https://www.rferl.org/a/below-the-belt-many-russians-back-irish-fighter-over-local-daghestani-for-mma-championship/29523686.html

Bolçay, D. D. (2018). Sports as Public Diplomacy Element. European Journal of Physical Education and Sport Science, 4(1), 192-202.

Depetris-Chauvin, E., & Durante, R. (2017). One team, one nation: Football, ethnic identity, and conflict in Africa. Afrobarometer.

Devan, P. (2012). Cricket and the global Indian identity. Sport in Society, 15(10), 1413-1425.

Ellingworth, J. (2018, November 20). UFC champ Nurmagomedov a conservative voice in Russia. Retrieved from Associated Press: https://apnews.com/article/fa1a8334819345b1b76d7fb0d000008a

Flaherty, R. (2010). Considering Mixed Martial Arts as a Cultural Representation of American Empire. Athabasca: Athabasca University.

Figueira, C. (2020). Indigenous Peoples as Non-State Diplomatic Actors in the Public/Cultural Diplomacy of Taiwan: a Case Study of Dispossessions: Performative Encounter(s) of Taiwanese Indigenous Contemporary Art. International Journal of Taiwan Studies, 3, 62-92.

Ganohariti, R., & Dijxhoorn, E. (2020). Para- and Proto-Sports Diplomacy of Contested Territories: CONIFA as a Platform for Football Diplomacy. The Hague Journal of International Diplomacy, 15, 329-354.

Glosniak, Q. (2017). The 1936 Nazi Olympic Games; The First Truly Modern Olympiad. Claremont: Claremont McKenna College.

Hammond, A. (2018). Khabib 100 times bigger than Mo Salah after winning the Muslim world. Retrieved from https://gulfnews.com/sport/khabib-100-times-bigger-than-mo-salah-after-winning-the-muslim-world-1.2288059

Hauser, T. (2012). Muhammad Ali: His Life and Times. New York: Open Road Integrated Media.

Hill, A. (2018). UFC 229 far more than just the biggest fight in UFC history. Retrieved from .reviewjournal.com: https://www.reviewjournal.com/sports/mma-ufc/ufc-229-far-more-than-just-

the-biggest-fight-in-ufc-history/

Hogg, M. A., Adelman, J. R., & Blagg, R. D. (2010). Religion in the Face of Uncertainty: An Uncertainty-Identity Theory Account of Religiousness. Personality and Social Psychology Review, 14(1), 72–83.

Hussain, N. i. (2020). The Ingredients To Khabib Nurmagomedov's Success. Retrieved from https://www.islam21c.com/opinion/the-ingredients-to-khabib-nurmagomedovs-success/

Jasso, G. 2003. Identity, social identity, comparison, and status: Four theories with a common core. New York: New York University

Johnson, J. A. (2018). Taekwondo and Peace: How a Killing Art Became a Soft Diplomacy Vehicle for Peace. The International Journal of the History of Sport, 35(15-16), 1637-1662.

Jones, W. J., & Theerawong, P. (2021). Muay Thai Diplomacy: Thailand's Soft Power Through Public Diplomacy. Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences, 11(1), 99-124.

Lee, A. K. (2018). Khabib Nurmagomedov issues warning to Conor McGregor fans after tense UFC 229 weigh-ins: 'I'm going to smash your boy'. Retrieved from mmafighting.com:
https://www.mmafighting.com/2018/10/5/17944316/khabib-nurmagomedov-warning-conor-mcgregor-fans-tense-ufc-229-weigh-ins-im-going-to-smash-your-boy

Lee, G., & Ayhan, K. (2015). Why Do We Need Non-state Actors in Public Diplomacy?: Theoretical Discussion of Relational, Networked and Collaborative Public Diplomacy. Journal of International and Area Studies, 22(1), 57-77.

McLearen, J. (2017). "We Are All Fighters": The Transmedia Marketing of Difference in the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC). International Journal of Communication, 11, 3224-3241.

Menezes, J. d. (2020, October 30). Khabib attacks Macron over Islam comments: 'May the Almighty disfigure the face of this creature'. Retrieved from Independent: https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/general/mma/khabib-instagram-emmanuel-macron-islam-protests-latest-b1447229.html

Murphy, D. (2019). joe.co.uk. Retrieved from https://www.joe.co.uk/sport/conor-mcgregor-khabib-nurmagomedov-2-203497

Mor, G., & Molle, A. (2021). Should the State of Israel pursue Krav Maga as an intangible cultural heritage of the Jewish people? History and politics say yes. International Journal of Martial Arts, 7, 10-19.

Owens, J. (2018, October 17). Khabib Nurmagomedov says Vladimir Putin congratulated him after he beat Conor McGregor. Retrieved from Yahoo! Sports: https://sports.yahoo.com/khabib-says-vladamir-putin-congratulated-beating-conor-mcgregor-081940411.html

Pasha-Zaidi, N. (2021). In Toward a Positive Psychology of Islam and Muslims.

Springer.

Qingmin, Z. (2018). Sports Diplomacy: The Chinese Experience and Perspective. The Hague Journal of Diplomacy, 8, 211-233.

Rondina, S. (2018, September 25). The Complete Timeline of the Conor McGregor vs. Khabib Nurmagomedov Feud. Retrieved from Bleacher Report: https://bleacherreport.com/articles/2796869-the-complete-timeline-of-the-conor-mcgregor-vs-khabib-nurmagomedov-feud

RT Sport MMA. (2020, November 21). Khabib: 'We don't know how good Khabib could be as a politician.' Retrieved from Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OkJP3_t8IUg

Russia Today. (2020, October 27). 'They will definitely meet': Vladimir Putin will personally congratulate Khabib Nurmagomedov on his historic achievement.

SportyTell Editors. (2021, March 5). Top-15 Best MMA Promotions & Organizations. Retrieved from SportyTell: https://sportytell.com/mma/best-mma-promotions/

Stephen, M. D., & Zürn, M. (2014). Contested World Orders: Rising powers, non-state actors, and the politics of authority beyond the nation-state. Berlin: Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WZB).

Stets, J., & Burke, P. (2000). Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory. Social Psychology Quarterly, 63(3), 224-237. doi:10.2307/2695870

Suchkov, M. A. (2019, September 6). Is UFC champion Nurmagomedov 'new face' of Russian soft power in Mideast? Retrieved from Al-Monitor: https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2019/09/russia-khabib-nurmagomedov-ufc-abu-dhabi.html

Telegraph Sport. (2017, August 17). What is UFC, what is MMA and what are the rules? Retrieved from The Telegraph: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/mma/0/ufc-mma-fighting-rules/

The Sun. (2018, October 11). Khabib meets Putin after McGregor victory (ENGLISH SUBS). Retrieved from Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FcEq0TYG4So

Vekasi, K. (2017). Transforming Geopolitical Risk: Public Diplomacy of Multinational Firms for Foreign Audiences. The Chinese Journal of International Politics, 95–129.

Watson, J. (2018, December 6). Khabib Nurmagomedov's sexist response after being asked how women can get into UFC. Retrieved from Independent: https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/general/mma/khabib-nurmagomedov-sexist-ufc-next-fight-conor-mcgregor-a8670381.html

Way of Martial Arts. (2020, April 17). Ranking Top 10 Best MMA Organizations (Promotions). Retrieved from Way of Martial Arts: https://wayofmartialarts.com/ranking-top-10-best-mma-organizations-promotions/

Young, L. D. (2018). Celebrity Diplomacy. In G. Martel (Ed.), The Encyclopedia of

Diplomacy (pp. 1-7).

Zidan, K. (2020a, August 18). Khabib non-committal about political career following retirement. Retrieved from Bloody Elbow: https://www.bloodyelbow.com/2020/8/18/21373842/khabib-nurmagomedov-political-career-following-retirement-mma-news

Zidan, K. (2020b, October 27). Khabib Nurmagomedov's dominance was straightforward. His legacy is anything but. Retrieved from The Guardian: https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2020/oct/27/khabib-nurmagomedov-legacy-ufc-champion

Zidan, K. (2021, May 26). Politician supports call to make Khabib Minister of Culture in Dagestan to limit 'gayness' in Russia. Retrieved from Bloody Elbow: https://www.bloodyelbow.com/2021/5/26/22454786/politician-make-khabib-nurmagomedov-minister-of-culture-dagestan-limit-gayness-mma-news

Zulkofske, D. (2020). UFC 254: A timeline in the career of Khabib Nurmagomedov. Retrieved from fansided.com: https://fansided.com/2020/10/20/ufc-254-timeline-career-khabib-nurmagomedov/

EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH THE SHARIA SAVINGS AND LOAN PROGRAM IN SURVIVING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Eko Setiaji[1], Abdullah[2], Neneng Alghina Micha Grandisa[3]
[1]Desa Berdaya Foundation, Bandung, Indonesia
eko.setiaji@desaberdaya.org
[2]Desa Berdaya Foundation, Bandung, Indonesia
abdullah@desaberdaya.org
[3]Rumah Zakat Foundation, Bandung, Indonesia
neneng.alghina@rumahzakat.org

ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has pushed more women out of work during the pandemic. It adversely affects not only women's welfare but also economic progress and women's independence. The Sharia Savings and Loans Program from the Sharia Cooperatives, assisted by Rumah Zakat, is one of the efforts to provide capital to women who have micro-businesses to maintain their business activities during the Covid-19 pandemic. This study aims to determine the impact of empowering women by Rumah Zakat through the sharia savings and loan program during the Covid-19 pandemic. This research is descriptive and uses a qualitative approach. The data collection method used in-depth interviews with 12 members of MSMEs, Village Government, Relawan Inspirasi (RI), and the management of Mitra Insan Mandiri Cooperative in Gilingan Village and Berkah Bersama Cikeusik Cooperative in Pandeglang Regency. The study results show that women who are members of savings and loan groups can take advantage of interest-free financing to maintain their economic business and not go out of business during the Covid-19 pandemic. Savings and loan activities can also educate members to set aside income as member savings in cooperatives to become future savings. Through regular coaching for members, there is a change in the mindset of members to no longer access loans to moneylenders who pay high interest.
Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, women empowerment, sharia savings, loan cooperatives

INTRODUCTION

In early 2020, the world was shaken by a virus that first appeared in Wuhan in December 2019, eventually known as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV 2) and caused Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19). WHO finally declared Covid-19 to be a pandemic that occurred in almost all parts of the world. Indonesia announced its first positive case on March 2, 2020. Since then, various anticipatory steps have been taken to minimize the spread of Covid-19, including physical distancing, working from home, closing shopping centers and tourist attractions, and reducing worker density in the industrial sector. However, the

spread of Covid-19 is continuing. Few business actors have closed temporarily or permanently due to physical distancing policies that have affected the general economy. The continuous decline in the economy involves increasing the number of poverty in Indonesia.
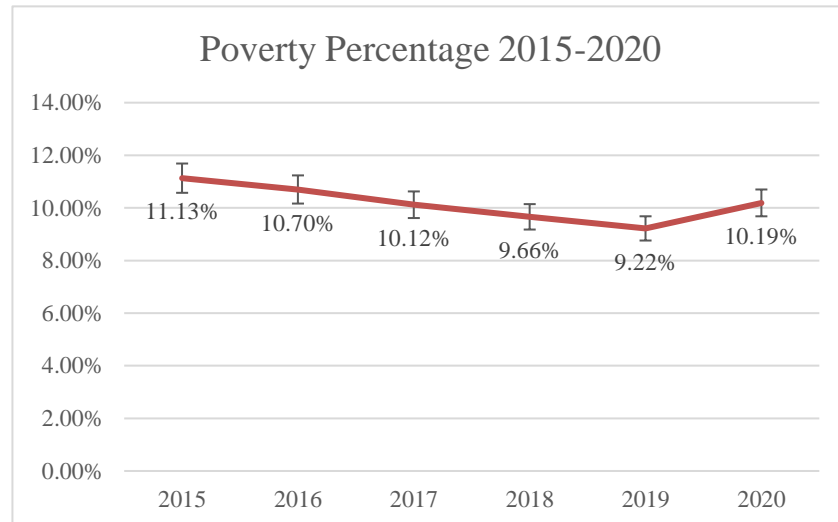
Graph 1. Indonesian Poverty Percentage Year 2015-2020
Source: BPS (2021)

The graph shows an increase in the poor population in 2020. The Indonesian government successfully reduced Indonesia's poverty to only single digits in 2018, but the percentage increased in 2020. The head of BPS, Suhariyanto, said that the PSBB policy caused an increase in poverty. To prevent the spread of Covid-19. PSBB has an impact on the economic downturn. It is supported by the results of the BPS demographic survey, which shows that 70% of low-income people experience a decrease in income (Fauzia, 2020).

A survey from the Economic Research Center of Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia (LIPI) in 2020 stated that the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the sustainability of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia. The economic crisis experienced by MSMEs has also become a substantial threat to the national economy, considering that MSMEs are the driving force of the domestic economy and the largest absorber of labor in recent decades. MSMEs, the pillars of national production, is facing shocks from the supply and demand sides; this can have implications for the decline in people's welfare.

Poverty is a phenomenon that is easily found in remote parts of Indonesia. Women are the most heavily involved in bearing the impact of poverty (Todaro, 2003). The study of the LIPI Population Research Center in 2020 explained that related to the effects of the pandemic on employment, people belonging to the young age (15-24 years) and female workers had the highest level of vulnerability to losing their jobs and being unemployed. On the other hand, young and female workers are the primary

targets for optimizing the achievement of the demographic bonus that Indonesia is currently facing.

The Global Gender Gap Index 2020 report from the World Economic Forum (WEF) is a report that discusses measuring the progress of relative gaps between women and men in the fields of health, education, economy, and politics. In this report, Indonesia is ranked 85th out of 153 countries with a score of 0.70. Unfortunately, this figure has not changed from 2018. The ranking is still far behind neighboring countries, such as the Philippines, Laos, Singapore, and Thailand.

In the past 12 years, Indonesia has narrowed the gender gap by approximately eight percent, especially in education and health. However, the gaps that are still large are in participation, economic opportunities, and political empowerment, which are also the main factors hindering Indonesia's progress in achieving gender equality. The indexes used to measure gender equality include the Human Development Index (HDI), the Gender Development Index (GDI), and the Gender Empowerment Index (GEI) (Kementerian PPPA, 2020).
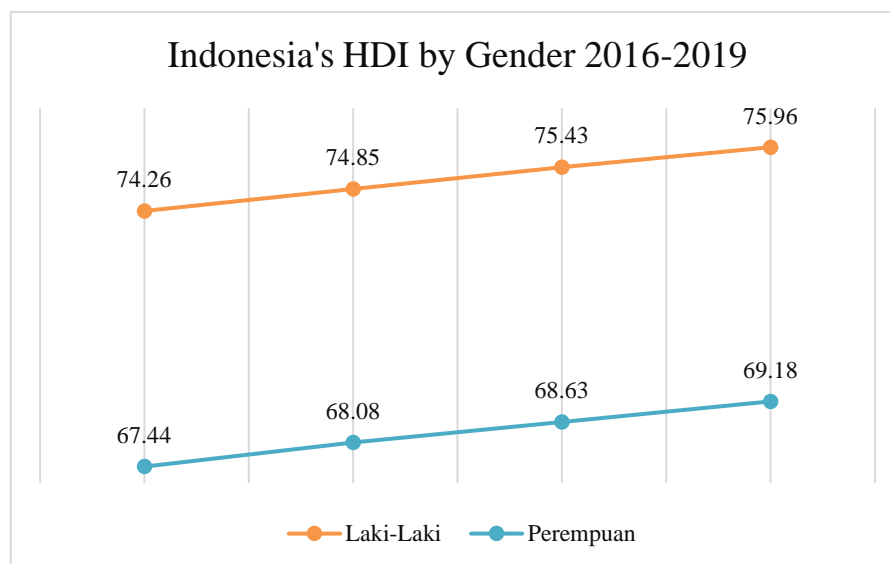
Graph 2. Indonesia's HDI by Gender 2016-2019
Source: BPS (2021)

The Human Development Index (HDI) above shows that women's HDI tends to increase yearly. However, the increase in HDI for women is still lower than for men. McKinsey and Company 2005 explained that if women and men had an equal role in the labor market, the Annual Global GDP in 2025 would increase by 26%, an increase of $28 trillion (Kementerian PPPA, 2020).

The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (PPPA), in a press release in October 2020, stated that women have the potential and play a huge role in national development, especially in the economic field. It can be achieved if this potential can be utilized to the fullest. It is reinforced by the government's

commitment to integrating efforts to strengthen women's potential into the RPJMN in 2020-2024, namely strengthening economic resilience for quality growth. It manifests the state's commitment to empowering and protecting women and children.

Statistically, women are still far behind in various fields of achievement compared to men. The involvement of women has a critical role, not only as beneficiaries but also as actors in nation-building. Women have resilience and fighting power for themselves and ensure the safety and well-being of those around them.

In all strata, it is indicated that the role and status of women in managing the household continuity are higher than that of men (heads of families). The dominance shows the high potential of women to control and direct their households, for the better or, the worse. It was identified that women have a dual role in the household. The dual role of women is implicated in: (1) the role of working as housewives (reflecting the feminine role), although it does not directly generate income, effectively works to support men (heads of household) to earn income (money); and (2) Acting as breadwinner (additional or main) (Elizabeth, 2007).

One of the challenges in empowering women is the limited access to finance and capital for women. The anti-poverty approach involving women in the development states that women are the poorest, including households headed by women. Therefore, some argue that microcredit is better for women (Ardiyati, 2018).

Women's potential to increase income must be encouraged by facilitating access to capital. Mayoux (2005) argues that the key to microcredit for women has an essential effect on empowering women. The indicators for the success of women's empowerment proposed by Sedarmayanti in Ardiyati (2018) are:

1. Increasing the ability of women to involve themselves in development programs as active participants (subjects) so that they are not just objects of development.

2. Increasing women to involve themselves in leadership to improve their bargaining position and involvement in every development program, both planning, implementing, as well as monitoring, and evaluating activities,

3. Improving the ability of women in managing household-scale businesses and small and large industries to support household needs, as well as to open up productive and independent work opportunities

4. Increase the role and function of women's organizations at the local level as a forum for empowering women to be actively involved in development programs in their area.

Basis Data Terpadu (BDT) shows that 40% of low-income people have limited or no access to all financial services (Saragih & Adi, 2020). Therefore, the government enforces an inclusive financial policy to make it easier to access financial services. Rumah Zakat is a World Digital Charity Organization that manages zakat, infaq, alms, and other social funds through community empowerment programs, presenting the Desa Berdaya as a process of empowering the target area based on mapping local

potential through community development in the fields of economy, education, health, and the environment.

Desa Berdaya of Rumah Zakat has various programs. One of its flagship programs is Microfinance Berdaya, intending to initiate the birth of a cooperative institution based on Islamic economic principles. Through this program, women micro-business actors assisted by Rumah Zakat are gathered in a cooperative forum. Aside from being a place for saving, they can also get credit for productive business financing, so that it is an alternative source of financing so that people don't lend to moneylenders with very high-interest rates.

In 2017, Rumah Zakat initiated the presence of fostered cooperatives in 2 Desa Berdaya, namely the Mitra Insan Mandiri Cooperative in Gilingan Village, Surakarta City, Central Java Province and the Berkah Bersama Cooperative in Cikeusik Village, Pandeglang Regency, Banten Province. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these two cooperatives were still able to survive amid economic uncertainty. These two cooperatives can still provide business financing facilities for members and can maintain liquidity in the absence of non-performing loans (NPLs). Through routine assistance by Rumah Zakat, members are encouraged to work together to help members whose household economies are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and members who borrow cooperative funds are assisted to remain responsible and trustworthy to repay loans until they are paid off even during a pandemic.

Based on the explanation above, the objectives of this research are: (1) Describe the implementation of the sharia savings and loan program implemented at Desa Berdaya Cikeusik, Pandeglang Regency, and Desa Berdaya Gilingan, Surakarta City; (2) Analyzing the impact of the implementation of the sharia savings and loan program on female beneficiaries at Desa Berdaya Cikeusik, Pandeglang Regency and Desa Berdaya Gilingan, Surakarta.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Koperasi is a business entity consisting of individuals or cooperative legal entities based on cooperative principles and a people's economic movement based on the principle of kinship as referred to in the laws and regulations on cooperatives that can carry out business activities based on sharia principles. According to Government Regulation (PP) Number 7 of 2021, sharia cooperatives are established, managed, and run business activities based on Sharia principles following sharia fatwas issued by the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI). Sharia cooperatives carry out sharia business activities based on business similarities, potential, and the needs of members and the community in industry, trade, services, and other business fields. Sharia cooperative business is carried out by borrowing, sharing, renting, buying and selling, and other forms following Sharia principles.

Koperasi is an association of people who have a common goal to work together to improve and increase their ability in the economic and economic fields. The essential elements of the sentence are the existence of people who gather in an association and have the same goal of working together in economic welfare. From the beginning, a cooperative, including a sharia cooperative, has run a business together, whereas the management and members consciously and are obliged to take advantage of the services or goods they produce as the primary way to raise capital.

Sharia cooperatives, in their operations, are slightly different from cooperatives in general; sharia cooperatives in savings and loan products (financing) use sharia principles. Sharia cooperatives have the following characteristics:

1. Recognizing members' ownership rights to business capital
2. Do not make transactions by setting interest (usury)
3. The functioning of the ziswaf institution
4. Recognizing existing market mechanisms
5. Recognizing profit motives
6. Recognizing the freedom of business
7. Recognizing the existence of joint rights

The difference between Sharia Cooperatives and Conventional Cooperatives can be seen in various aspects, including the following:

1. Financing

Conventional cooperatives pay interest to each customer as cooperative profits. Meanwhile, in sharia cooperatives, profit sharing is the method taken to serve its customers

2. Supervision Aspects

The aspect of supervision applied to conventional cooperatives is performance monitoring, which means that cooperatives are only supervised by the performance of the administrators in managing cooperatives. In contrast to sharia cooperatives, apart from being supervised on monitoring their performance, they are also supervised by sharia. Sharia principles are highly respected; therefore, the honesty of the internal cooperatives is essential in this supervision, not only in the management but also in the flow of funds and the distribution of profits.

3. Product distribution

Conventional cooperatives apply a credit system for goods or money in the distribution of their products, meaning that traditional cooperatives do not know whether the money (goods) used by customers to conduct business is experiencing a loss or not; customers must continue to return the money borrowed plus the interest that has been set on Rapat Anggota Tahunan (RAT). This activity is different in sharia cooperatives; they do not credit the goods but sell them in cash.

The sale and purchase transaction, or what is known as *murabahah*, occurs in sharia cooperatives. Money/goods lent to customers are not subject to interest, but profit-sharing, meaning if the customer suffers a loss, the Cooperative also gets a reduced refund, and vice versa. It is one of the profit-sharing applied to sharia cooperatives.

4. Function as a zakat institution

Conventional cooperatives do not make their business as recipients and distributors of zakat, while sharia cooperatives and zakat are recommended for their customers because they also function as Ziswaf institutions.

METHODOLOGY

This research is a descriptive study using qualitative methods. The research locations were in Desa Berdaya that assisted by Rumah Zakat, namely Koperasi Mitra Insan Mandiri Cooperative in Gilingan Village, Surakarta City, Central Java and the Berkah Bersama Cooperative in Cikeusik Village, Pandenglang Regency, Banten. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with several related parties and documentation studies.

The sample selection technique used purposive sampling, where the researcher chose several sources who were considered to understand women's empowerment through the sharia savings and loan program at the Mitra Insan Mandiri Cooperative and the Berkah Bersama Cooperative. The selected resource persons for the interview are:

1. Gilingan Cooperative : 1 Relawan Inspirasi (RI), 1 village head, 1 leader, 1 administrator, 3 members

2. Cikeusik Cooperative: 1 Relawan Inspirasi (RI), 1 village head, 1 leader, 1 administrator, 3 members

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As Mustahik's difficulty accessing business capital loans to banks and the spread of moneylenders in rural areas, Rumah Zakat initiated a savings and loan pre-cooperative group based on the *qardhul hasan* agreement Cikeusik Village, Pandeglang Regency, Banten Province, and Gilingan Village, Surakarta City, Central Java Province. The ease of becoming a member and interest-free loan facilities are the main reasons for joining the community in the group. Until now, the Mitra Insan Mandiri Cooperative group members located in Gilingan Village are 76 people, all of whom are women. Meanwhile, the Berkah Bersama Cooperative in Cikeusik Village consists of fifty-eight women and three men. The majority of members are housewives who have micro-businesses.

The conditions that must be met to access a loan are pretty straightforward, namely by first joining as a cooperative member, paying the principal and mandatory savings, and attaching a photocopy of the ID card of the prospective customer (beneficiary). Then members fill out a loan form and wait for approval from the management and supervisors. The loan amount given starts from IDR 500,000 to IDR 3,000,000. The loan repayment period is from 5 months to 10 months. Members voluntarily provide infaq, reused for group operations without being charged interest on the loan.

On average, beneficiaries borrow from cooperatives for business capital and daily needs, such as education and household needs. The six respondents we interviewed used loan funds from cooperatives as business capital. There was an increase in the respondent's income after receiving a business capital loan from the Cooperative. Mrs. Ratih, for example, is a 26-year-old housewife in Cikeusik Village. Her husband is only an honorary administrative employee at a school with a salary of Rp. 500,000. Ibu Ratih helps her family's economy by selling clothes with an average monthly income of IDR 1,000,000.

After receiving a business capital loan from the cooperative to increase her merchandise, Mrs. Ratih's income rose to an average of IDR 1,300,000-IDR 1,500,000 per month. The same thing was also stated by a respondent named Mak Een, a 50-year-old widow. After receiving a business capital loan from the Berkah Bersama Cooperative, his income from selling *nasi uduk* has increased to Rp300,000/month. However, something different happened to our respondents at the Mitra Insan Mandiri Cooperative. During the covid-19 pandemic, income tends to fluctuate, apart from declining economic activity, due to government restrictions on community activities.

Beneficiaries also revealed that lending to cooperatives fostered by Rumah Zakat is very helpful for beneficiaries because it implements a sharia cooperative system that makes it easier for beneficiaries to return their loan funds. Beneficiaries and members of cooperatives have also experienced problems when making payments, especially during this pandemic. However, this can be overcome by the leniency provided by the cooperative to members who borrow with a note that it does not exceed the maturity date.

Meanwhile, from the interviews with cooperative administrators, the outline of the two cooperative administrators is not much different in the pattern of strategies carried out by each cooperative, starting from the presence of a cooperative fostered by Rumah Zakat, namely Mitra Insan Mandiri Cooperative and Berkah Bersama Cooperative. According to the management, the presence of these two cooperatives has been going well for several years. It has helped mothers in the area continue developing their business with the help of business capital loans with sharia-compliant contracts without being burdensome. Then the ease of accessing loans, even the requirements needed, is not complicated and burdensome.

The requirements to apply for a loan in these two cooperatives are almost the same where the conditions that must be met are that the prospective customer or borrower is a member of the cooperative and has filled out the loan application form and collected other administrative files such as a photocopy of ID card. The management interviews the prospective borrower here is the beneficiary interview, which is generally carried out to explore the use of the borrowed funds after waiting for some time for the loan disbursement to be made. In addition to the borrowing process, which is relatively easy with a mutually agreed time tenor without burdening the borrower, the Cooperative also often asks for or gets input from members; of course, the input is welcomed by the management where the most frequently submitted input is to increase the loans that the borrower can access. However, the board responded by providing feedback if the loan had to follow the members' ability to pay and adjust to the Cooperative's financial condition.

In addition, the Cooperative received complaints from members, usually due to the one week of disbursement made by the Cooperative. It is also tried to overcome by asking the beneficiaries who will make the loan to speed up collecting the requirements. In addition to matters related to lending, the management also explained the pattern of financial management carried out in the two cooperatives, which turned out to have their respective strategies. The strategy implemented by the Mandiri Insan Mitra Cooperative is to create a budget ceiling for each cost component. Then the expenditure of cooperative funds is adjusted to the funds that go into the Cooperative so that it does not exceed the predetermined budget ceiling. As for the Berkah Bersama cooperative, the strategy is to adjust employee income. The employee salaries are adjusted to monthly income/turnover so as not to reduce costs. It was done because, so far, not all members have been shopping at the Cooperative.

In addition to the financial arrangements, the pattern of regulating cash and the amount of procurement of goods carried out by these two cooperatives also has their strategy or pattern. Mitra Insan Mandiri Cooperative procures goods weekly by looking at the goods' records. If the goods run out and a little stock is then procured, the profits are taken first to be stored as emergency funds. Meanwhile, Berkah Bersama Cooperative and its strategy are to adjust employee salaries and fill in empty stock of goods. Apart from the financial management strategy carried out, the presence of the Relawan Inspirasi Rumah Zakat and Volunteers in these two cooperatives also affects the cooperative management wherefrom the Relawan Inspirasi and Volunteers, the administrators often get input, enthusiasm, knowledge, and guidance for the benefit of the progress of the two cooperatives.

Another challenge this Cooperative face is several members who have problems returning loans, such as late payments. To overcome the situation, these two cooperatives have a strategy that can be similar or the same, namely by approaching constrained members, visiting residents, and discussing the causes of late payments,

which will later find the best solution together. According to the administrators, the presence of this Cooperative has made many women, especially housewives, open businesses with loan capital from the Cooperative, so it is hoped that this can be an opportunity to earn additional income to increase their economic standard.

In terms of Relawan Inspirasi, based on the results of interviews conducted with Relawan Inspirasi in Cikeusik village, said that although the distance between the village and banks is quite close, the community members have difficulty in accessing capital from banks. They commonly borrow from moneylenders with tremendous interest, around 40%. Likewise, in the milled village area, the community members are more accustomed to borrowing from moneylenders to make ends meet. Meanwhile, in terms of community characteristics, most community members, especially women, do not have savings. The features of community members in the Penggilingann Village are almost the same; they are more accustomed to borrowing from neighbors or relatives to cover the shortfall.

The initial approach taken by the two Relawan Inspirasi can be almost the same, namely by conducting socialization related to cooperatives to community members through the taklim assembly for mothers, even attracting public interest by giving door prizes in the form of groceries to the community. At the beginning of the pioneering, Relawan Inspirasi also experienced obstacles such as rejection from the community, members who could not pay off their installments, and the inhibition of cooperative group activities due to the emergence of the covid-19 pandemic. Relawan Inspirasi hopes that the cooperatives in these two empowered villages will continue to develop and have legality so that more community members, especially women, can create with the help of the Cooperative.

Apart from the Inspirational Volunteers and Administrators, positive and good comments came from village leaders and local village heads. Mr. Pendi from the Desa Berdaya Cikeusik said he was very aware of the cooperative Rumah Zakat fostered; this activity helped its citizens access business capital loans. He hopes that the members can continue to maintain the mandate given so that the Cooperative continues to grow. Mr. Nur, the village head of Cikeusik Village, said that with the Berkah Bersama Cooperative, the community's dependence on moneylenders disappeared by itself.

Meanwhile, the figures interviewed in the Gilingan village area were Mr. Surono as the head of RW 20 and Mr. Joko Kartono, the village head of Gilingan. According to Mr. Surono, the existence of the Cooperative, which Rumah Zakat fostered, is very beneficial. The ease of loan access shows it, so residents can easily borrow business capital without paying high interest. Mr. Joko Kartono, as the Village Head of Gilingan, knows the existence of a Cooperative in his area, which is fostered by Rumah Zakat, because Relawan Inspirasi always communicates with all activities related to cooperatives; it is an extraordinary approach. In addition, the benefits

provided by the presence of this Cooperative are felt by its citizens, and it is hoped that in the future, the cooperative will grow, and there will be other useful and positive innovations.

CONCLUSION

Sharia savings and loan activities allow women to access interest-free business capital loans. Women members of savings and loan groups can take advantage of financing to maintain their economic businesses, so they don't go out of business during the Covid-19 pandemic. Even for savings and loan members in rural areas, they can maintain their business and are also proven to increase their business profits. It makes women play a role in helping the family's economy.

Savings and loan activities can also educate members to set aside income as member savings in cooperatives to become future savings. Through regular member coaching, there is a change in the mindset of members to no longer access loans from moneylenders. The management of the sharia savings and loan group, which women fill, can provide more significant opportunities for women to be involved in activities in the community.

REFERENCES

Ardiyati. (2018). Analisis Pemberdayaan Perempuan Melalui Simpan Pinjam Kelompok. *Jurnal Ilmu Administrasi Publik*, 91-99.

Badan Pusat Statistik. (2020). *Hasil Survei Sosial Demografi Dampak Covid-19.* Jakarta: BPS RI.

Elizabeth, R. (2007). Pemberdayaan Wanita Mendukung Strategi Gender Mainstreaming Dalam Kebijakan Pembangunan Pertanian di Perdesaan. *Forum Penelitian Agro Ekonomi*, 126-135.

Fauzia, M. (2020). *KOMPAS.com.* Retrieved from https://money.kompas.com: https://money.kompas.com/read/2020/07/15/150436926/bps-dampak-covid-19-penduduk-miskin-naik-jadi-2642-juta-orang?page=all

Habibullah. (2019). Inklusi Keuangan dan Penurunan Kemiskinan: Studi Penyaluran Bantuan Sosial Non Tunai. *Sosio Informa*.

Humas LIPI. (2020, June 30). *Survei Kinerja UMKM di Masa Pandemi Covid-19.* Retrieved from http://lipi.go.id/: http://lipi.go.id/berita/survei-kinerja-umkm-di-masa-pandemi-covid19/22071

Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak & Badan Pusat Statistik. (2020). *Pembangunan Manusia Berbasis Gender 2019.* Jakarta: Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak.

Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak (Kemen PPPA). (2020). *Profil Perempuan Indonesia 2020.* Jakarta: Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak (Kemen PPPA).

Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak Republik Indonesia. (2020, Oktober 14). *Perempuan Berpotensi Besar Perkuat Roda Perekonomian di Tengah Pandemi Covid-19.* Retrieved from https://www.kemenpppa.go.id/: https://www.kemenpppa.go.id/index.php/page/read/29/2904/perempuan-berpotensi-besar-perkuat-roda-perekonomian-di-tengah-pandemi-covid-19

PERATURAN PEMERINTAH REPUBLIK INDONESIA . (2021). *PERATURAN PEMERINTAH REPUBLIK INDONESIA NOMOR 7 TAHUN 2021 TENTANG KEMUDAHAN, PERLINDUNGAN DAM PEMBERDAYAAN KOPERASI DAN USAHA MIKRO, KEVCIL DAN MENENGAH.*

Ronasifah, F., Ati, N. U., & Hayat. (2019). Peran Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat (LSM) Cakrawala Keadilan Dalam Pemberdayaan Lingkungan (Studi tentang Gerakan Peduli Sampah di Desa Paciran Kecamatan Paciran Kabupaten Lamongan). *Jurnal Respon Publik*, 53-61.

Rumah Zakat. (2021). *Tentang Kami.* Retrieved from https://www.rumahzakat.org/: https://www.rumahzakat.org/tentang-kami/

Saragih, J. F., & Adi, I. R. (2020). Pemberdayaan Perempuan Berpendapatan Rendah Melalui Strategi Keuangan Inklusif oleh Koperasi Mitra Dhuafa (KOMIDA) Cabang Cileungsi, Bogor, Jawa Barat. *Jurnal PKS*, 93-106.

The Indonesian Institute: Center For Public Policy Research. (2019). *Indonesia dalam gender Gap Index 2020.* Retrieved from https://www.theindonesianinstitute.com/indonesia-dalam-gender-gap-index-2020-report-beberapa-catatan/

Todaro, M. P. (2003). *Pembangunan Ekonomi di Dunia Ketiga .* Jakarta: Erlangga.

UNDANG-UNDANG REPUBLIK INDONESIA. (2020). *UNDANG-UNDANG REPUBLIK INDONESIA NOMOR 11 TAHUN 2020 TENTANG CIPTA KERJA.*

World Economic Forum. (2021). *Global Gender Gap Report 2020.* Switzerland: World Economic Forum.

Wulandari, D. (2020, Desember 16). *Indeks Kesetaraan Gender Indonesia Masih di Peringkat 85.* Retrieved from https://mix.co.id/marcomm/news-trend/: https://mix.co.id/marcomm/news-trend/indeks-kesetaraan-gender-indonesia-masih-di-peringkat-ke-85/

RELIGION, CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION, AND MODERNIZATION:
A Narrative on the Religious Paradigm Shift of the Community in Surakarta

Mibtadin[1], Lilam Kadarin Nuriyanto[2], Arnis Rachmadhani[3]
[1]Sebelas Maret University, Surakarta, Indonesia
mibtadianisahmad@staff.uns.ac.id
[2]National Research and Innovation Agency, Jakarta, Indonesia
lilam.ltbg@gmail.com
[3]National Research and Innovation Agency, Jakarta, Indonesia
arnisuksw@yahoo.co.id

ABSTRACT

Globalization is characterized by advances in science and technology that are inevitable to the community, including the people of Surakarta. People in Surakarta are in a dilemma between tradition and modernization. Education, transportation, and economic advancement have transformed the social, religious, and cultural aspects of the people in Surakarta over the last three decades. Thus, how is the narrative of the paradigm shift of religiosity of the Surakarta community amid modernization? This descriptive qualitative study collected data through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The analysis employed an interactive analysis model. The findings revealed that the paradigm shift of religiosity of the Surakarta community is directly proportional to the social, political, economic, and cultural changes. There is a shift in the religious perspective of the Surakarta community known as hijrah from the abangan Muslim community to Islamist activism or new *santri* with all the limitations of understanding and Islamic doctrine, which requires assistance in terms of Javanese Islamic culture and local beliefs to avoid uprooting them. As a result of hijrah and becoming Islamic activism, people left the Javanese culture, such as Kejawen and local beliefs. However, some of them have transformed the culture to fit the teachings of Islam. So far, those who hijrah to NU still adhere to religious traditions and even change Javanese culture to suit the times. Meanwhile, Islamic activism has left Javanese Islamic traditions and local beliefs. The shift in religious paradigm asserts two things. They are internal and external encouragement. First, internal factors are in the form of encouragement from within religious communities. Second, external factors are external stimuli that can encourage a shift in the Surakarta community's religious perspective.

Keywords: religion, religious culture, religious paradigm, modernization, Surakarta

INTRODUCTION

Following the fall of the New Order, Indonesia is like a house whose doors are wide open to all ideologies, even anti-mainstream religious movements that promote violence. Public space was formally controlled during the New Order to ease state control, but the reform era stretched to community organizations and practical politics. This ideology developed along with the rise of transnational Islamic movements such as Hizbut Tahrir, Ikhwanul Muslimin, Salafi, Shia, Wahhabi, and Tablighi Jamaat. The Islamist group with the motto 'Islam is the solution' seeks to place Islam in the state power as a system that regulates social, political, cultural, and economic aspects with the legitimization of religious language. Their liqo' movement is modified at the local level, usually through halaqoh activities in mosques, which develop new cultures.

One of their movements is in the form of the hijrah community targeting the millennial generation. Apart from religious movements, they have also established educational institutions, non-profit charities, and the media, all aimed at ideological interests.

The openness of the post-reform age has become a euphoria for transforming Islamic culture and identity, which has exploded in Surakarta. Religion becomes a vehicle to gain sympathy and empathy from the wider community, allowing it to control public space in Soloraya. So far, the public sphere has been a battleground between socio-religious components seeking to exert dominance over agendas, issues, interests, and ideologies. The epistemological paradigm shift from monotheism, fiqh, and Sufism to faith, hijrah, and jihad is currently taking place in modern society's variety as an urban society in the shape of popular Islam. This shift gave the hijrah community a new style of religious expression based on modernity's dynamics and a departure from previous religious traditions. The textual pattern of religious understanding narrows the theme of religion, such as jihad, to physical warfare. Meanwhile, hijrah is only understood as a change in attitude from being un-Islamic to being more Islamic, from traditional to modern. The term substantially has a broad meaning, yet the meanings are narrowed down because of the group's interests. As a result, there is a religious crisis, and Islamic teaching becomes shallow, rigid, and orthodoxy.

According to Amin Abdullah, the existing religious crisis is due to the Islamic studies focusing on one direction of normative theology while ignoring another approach, historical criticism (Abdullah, 2011). The normative theology puts forward ideological characteristics and is subjective (Barbour, 1980). These characteristics encourage the hijrah community in Surakarta to form theological enclaves with symbols of Islam, religious identity, and religion tends to be exclusive. These three essential characteristics encourage the hijrah community in Surakarta to prioritize truth claims rather than argumentative dialogue. With the truth claim, Islam loses its human touch because it displays a dogmatic side with a fundamental character (Smith, 1991).

The public perceives a movement in the variety of the Surakarta people, from opposing Islamic events to the emergence of a new religion, populist Islam, which was begun by millennials through hobby-based recitations. The growth of the hijrah community is interpreted as a search for a new Islamic identity, with a wide range of types, religious interests, and beliefs, resulting in a vibrant public space in Surakarta. There is a substantive hijrah pattern that puts forward Islamic values and morality. In addition, textual-symbolic hijrah patterns were found; for example, they only strengthened religious symbols and normative doctrines, such as upgrading from wearing a headscarf to wearing the burqa, among others. For men, the hijrah encouraged them to grow their beards and wore Arabic clothes such as Arab men's robes, trousers above the ankle, and Middle Eastern turbans. This indicates a transformation of religious culture in Surakarta society.

The growth of popular Islam in Surakarta emphasizes the necessity to find an original Islamic identity drawn from Arab culture that is believed to be Islamist. The desire for this identity quest motivates the hijrah community to form taklim gatherings, which are viewed as a strengthening expression of their faith. In addition, Arabic Pop has discoursed through the insertion of Arabic terms in daily conversations, such as

Ana, Antum, Abi, Umi, milad, ukhti, akhwat, akhi, ikhwan, syukran, hijrah, and jazakumullahu khoiron, have been entrenched among them. In addition, establishing the hijrah community in public space is associated with the growth of social media, which has become an essential means of presenting Islamic identity in Surakarta. This shifts the millennial generation's religious paradigm from offline reading to digital religion. This hijrah community mainly uses social media such as Facebook, Line, Skype, Messenger, and Instagram. Their role models are also "social media ulama" who use Instagram to invite 'amar ma'ruf nahi munkar' such as meet-up members, quotes, amaliyah, and agendas. The hijrah community agenda covers #MUSLIMFEST, #KOMUNITASHIJRAH, #HAPUSTATOGRATIS, #AYOHIJRAH, #YUKNGAJI.

Why is Surakarta becoming a breeding ground for popular Islam in the form of hijrah communities with various religious ideologies? What are their religious expressions? This hijrah community movement takes the form of fun, relaxing, hobby-based, and casual religious activities. For example, they held an event called "Solo Hijrah Day," which became a forum for those still confused about choosing which community they wanted to join in their hijrah. Most of them are hobby-based, such as touring and biking. This becomes the entry point for them to study religion or the Quran. In hijrah, they care about small things related to morality, such as dating, lifestyle, tattoos, and fashion. Unsurprisingly, they held free tattoo removal services, camping agendas, fashion fairs, book fairs, ayo ngopi (let's have coffee), bikers, and charity.

The success of the hijrah community in religious transformation can be seen in the development of its ideology in Surakarta. It shifts the religious paradigm of the community. Their strong base marks this through halaqoh, ngabuburit, talk shows, lifestyle, fashion, and other fun religious activities. They also carry an Islamic pop culture that shifts traditional Islamic traditions of NU, such as yassin, tahlil, manaqib, berjanjen, shalawat, and others. Their movement is primarily a religious model for millennials, with Islam depicted in a modern environment. There is a hijrah community named Yuk Ngaji Soloraya led by Taufan, 'Pemuda Hijrah Solo Fath'— which stands for the Komunitas Sahabat pioneered by Aziz Abu Faiz Mubarak, the Komunitas Sedekah Berkah led by Dinar, Fasthabiqul khairat initiated by Rayhan, Dakwah Islam Solo, Komunitas Hijrah Berjamaah, and Komunitas Sahabat Hijrah led by Yusuf. Their movement puts forward the tagline: "*Dari Jalanan, Hijrah Menuju Taat* (from the streets, move to obedience)" as a spirit to strengthen their community. This hijrah community in Surakarta forms an ideological knot. Taking a step from the preceding context, this article portrays the relationship between religion, cultural transition, and modernity because it shifts the religious paradigm of the Surakarta people as they enter urban society.

RESEARCH METHOD

This is descriptive qualitative research. It seeks to provide a comprehensive picture of the relationship between religion, cultural transformation, and modernity since they shift the religious paradigm of the Surakarta people who enter urban society. Qualitative nature is expected to help us understand the meaning of thoughts and actions of the object of research (Suprayogo, 2003). The approach used is the sociology of religion (Sodik, 2006). Religion is seen as an observable social fact

(Connoly, 2002). Religion becomes part of the real life of its adherents, ideas, activities, and works religious adherents (Kahmad, 2002). This approach studies the social aspects of religion (Suprayogo, 2003). Data were obtained through direct observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation (Sutopo, 1988) in the form of religious relations, cultural transformation, and modernity because. Data analysis employed an interactive model comprising data reduction, data submission, and conclusion drawing. The conclusions obtained were tested for truth and validity: data triangulation and informant review.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Religion, Public Space, and Modernity: Shaping Culture and Identity Politics

The 1998 reformation changed Surakarta's social, political, cultural, economic, and religious life. The public openness and democratization formed after the fall of the New Order opened up opportunities for religious groups to articulate their political and ideological aspirations aggressively, reactively, and demonstratively in the public sphere (Idharam, 2011). Their existence as an Islamic society indicates religious politics are inextricably linked to ideological and political agendas to capture space and control discourse. They seek to claim space in a changing political situation. Its existence, while posing a threat to democratization, also demonstrates the growth of democracy. Anti-mainstream religious movements threaten democracy since varied public discourses and actions not only contradict democratic values but also undermine the growing foundation of human rights (Hasan, 2011).

The availability of public space to religion is an important topic since it demonstrates three points. First, there are efforts to modernize and strengthen the democratic system as the most effective system in accommodating the plurality of society. Second, the movement of religious fundamentalism is getting stronger, as marked by the movement to reject the democratic system because it is considered unable to provide a better life for the community. Third, the impact of public openness is the spiritual awakening of urban communities (Jamil, 2007). The dynamics of democracy in Surakarta have made mass organizations with various ideological styles, both "right" carrying purification and moderation, develop rapidly. Islamism uses this openness to express political rights and establish institutions that breathe Islamic ideology (Ulum, 2002). This openness also significantly promotes Islam's presence in the public sphere (Gaffar, 1999). During the early reformation, dozens of parties, mass organizations, and social institutions with an Islamic spirit thrived with various ideologies. Some of them are religious movements with Islamist ideologies that have built a more purificative discourse to formalize Islamic law in Indonesia during the reformation.

In Surakarta, with its democracy, the ideology of Islamism thrives; they freely develop movements and networks through the media. Even though their numbers are small, their movements are huge because they are structured to preserve their presence. As a result, the growth of religious intolerance in Islamism has filled the public sphere, and its presence has given the public sphere and democracy a distinct tint (Fanani, 2002). Democracy and public openness allow the Islamism movement to express its political interests and religious ideology (Hardiman, 2009). The presence of Islamism

with various ideologies in Surakarta's public space aims to seize freedom, dominate the discourse, and enliven democracy; some enjoy the existing facilities. Its existence is a strategy to spread symbols, identities, and religious values in the broader community by utilizing the openness of the current socio-political structure. Islamist groups aim to communicate and negotiate their ideas, perspectives, culture, and religious values with the broader community, both in-person and online (Hardiman, 2009).

Surakarta is presently transitioning towards a sociological urban society due to modernization; the people's character still preserves tradition, but they are also in touch with modernity. Surakarta is also an important center for socio-religious studies in Indonesia, given this city's many growing religious organizations. Various religious organizations range from the radical right to the liberal left, and even beliefs and mysticism exist in Surakarta. This is what makes Surakarta a social laboratory due to the dynamics of its citizens and the struggle for discourse and public space among elements. So far, the address of Islamism seems to dominate religious discourse in this city. It is not surprising that Surakarta has a stereotype as the city of Islamism. Surakarta has become a contestation region for Islamism events that are networked both locally and worldwide through various religious activities as a result of the emergence of the phenomenon of Islamic activities such as halaqoh, recitation, and khutbah (Mibtadin, 2019).

The proliferation of this Islamic activism movement has made Surakarta synonymous with radical religious movements. This is further corroborated by many educational institutions, recitations, halaqoh, media, and various taklim majlis, which are the basis for their violent ideology. At this point, mass organizations, mosques, media, and educational institutions have a significant role in accelerating the spread of ideology among Islamic activists in Surakarta. The functions of mass organizations, mosques, educational institutions, and the media have shifted, das sollen pushing for social change for community empowerment based on the religious spirit has now become a seeding violent ideology, spreading hoaxes, and hate speech. This city has evolved into a new culture called "the spirit of Java."

It is not surprising that Surakarta has now signed a new Islamic revival movement. For instance, in various public spaces, several posters are seen inviting the general public to enforce Islamic law, the movement for the morning prayer in congregation, living hadith, and various other Islamic content. at this point, the mosque becomes the media and central agent that encourages the Islamism movement to reach a wider community. The mosque is being used for congregational prayers, Friday prayers, mass recitations, and even economic activities, as evidenced by actions dispersed across diverse congregational activities.

Mass organizations with various typologies and ideological styles, ranging from the radical right to the liberal left and even beliefs and mysticism, exist in Surakarta. This makes Surakarta a social laboratory because of the dynamics of its citizens and the struggle for discourse and public space among elements (Mibtadin, 2020). So far, the discourse of Islamism seems to dominate religious discourse in this city. Hence, it is not surprising that Surakarta has a stereotype as a "city of terrorism," although recently, it has been echoed as a "city of prayer." The rise of Islamic activism in Surakarta has caused the wider community to perceive the city as a battleground for

Islamist events that are networked both locally and internationally through religious activities such as halaqoh, recitation, and khutbah (Mibtadin, 2017). The fertile movement of Islamic activism makes Surakarta synonymous with the religious movement of Islamism.

Surakarta is currently experiencing a resurgence of Islamism, strengthened by using social media such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, and others. For instance, in various public spaces, several posters invite the public to enforce Islamic law, the congregational dawn movement, living hadith, and other Islamic content. Through social media, they are also actively encouraging the enforcement of Islamic law with its content. Mass organizations, educational institutions, and social media are central agents that promote the splendor of Islamism so that it can be felt by the whole community, as seen by the many activities that are spread in various activities of Muslims in Surakarta. They used the euphoria of reform to express their political rights and freedom to establish mass organizations that breathe Islamic ideology (Ulum, 2002). Because of the openness of the governmental structure, the presence of Islam in the public sphere has grown significantly (Gaffar, 1999). During the early reformation, dozens of Islamic parties were established, and Islamic organizations also thrived, with various ideological orientations. MMI, FKWJ, JI, FPI, FUI of West Java, and KPPSI Makassar are examples of organizations based on the ideology of Islamism during the reformation period, which until now, are active in developing purificative discourse with the orientation of formalizing Islamic law in Indonesia (Gaffar, 1999).

Surakarta has long been seen as a barometer of Indonesian politics, particularly religious movements, and the city is known for its "short axis." Surakarta has become an essential area for studying Islamism and has even become an interesting religious laboratory to follow its dynamics. The ideology of Islamism thrives; they freely develop their ideology and network with various media. Even though their numbers are small, their movements are huge because they are structured to preserve their presence. As a result, the religious intolerant Islamism filled the public sphere of Soloraya, such as FPIS, JAT, JAD, LUIS, JAS, DSKS, Laskar Hizbullah, Laskar Sunan Bonang, Laskar Jundullah, Laskar Zulfikar, Laskar Salamah, Laskar Teratai Emas, Laskar Honggo Darma, Laskar Hamas, Laskar Hawariyun, Laskar Barisan Bismillah, GPK, Brigade Hisbullah, Majelis Taklim Al-Islah. They were all present and added color to Surakarta's public environment (Fanani, 2017). Islamism can use an open public place to express its political interests and religious doctrine in an aggressive, reactive, and demonstrative manner (Idharam, 2011).

Islamism in Surakarta's public spaces aims to seize space, dominate the discourse, and transform religious culture. Islamism has simply used modern instruments such as electronic media to propagate religious symbols, identities, and ideals to a larger audience by leveraging the openness of open socio-political institutions, causing religious traditions to shift. Whether real or through virtual media, Islamism communicates and negotiates their religious ideas, views, and interests with the broader community (Hardiman, 2009). As a movement, Islamism places Islam as part of its political action, which relies on the paradigm that Islam is a perfect religion that has provided all the rules for the state and society. Islam is a solution for predominantly Muslim people because existing laws do not give a sense of justice (Effendi, 2010). There is a shift from traditional society to urban society and even

modern society. Surakarta is a house with wide-open doors into which any mass organizations, transnational Islamic ideology, and religious movements can enter, grow, and thrive. It is not surprising that Surakarta has become a public space for contesting Islamism events through various media. This discourse encouraged the proliferation of the Islamism movement, which led to religion-based violence and the marginalization of the local culture of Surakarta.

Tradition, Modernization and Urban Society: A Shifting Religious Paradigm

In Surakarta, the upheaval of fanaticism is felt for two reasons. First, the city of Surakarta has a stigma as a city that breeds terrorists. This can be traced to almost every terrorist issue; there are residents of Soloraya who are the suspects. Second, the city of Surakarta is also known to have a high level of socio-religious conflict that leads to relatively high violations of religious freedom. Urban Sufism has also spread to Surakarta. Surakarta has long been known as the center of Javanese culture, a plural city as well as a city that has spawned many radical Islamic activists. Various religious movements have long been born and developed in Surakarta, for instance, Serikat Islam (1905) and Sarekat Rakyat (1914) (Mulyadi, 1999). Currently, they are rapidly growing religious organizations such as Nahdhatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, Majelis Tafsir Al-Quran (MTA), Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI), Jamaah Anshar Tauhid (JAT), Jamaah Anshar Syariah (JAS), LDII, Jamaah Al-Islam Gumuk, Jamaah Al-Madinahon various fronts, the proliferation of different ideologically-patterned groups, and various taklim, majlis, halaqoh, recitations, and a large number of hijrah communities thrive in Surakarta (Aijuddin, 2008).

One of the phenomenal urban Sufism in Surakarta is the Jama'ah Muji Rasul Putri (Jamuri), which was founded in 1998, precisely after the reformation. Jamuri is an urban Sufism specializing in its congregation for women, intended to develop moderate religious spirituality and strengthen the nationality through recitation. Now, it is led by Nyai Hj. Shehach Wal'afiyah with a secretariat at Langgar Barokah Tegal Sari Laweyan, every event attended by approximately 500-1,000 worshipers spread from the Soloraya area. Its routine activities include general recitations, Maulid Al-Barzanji readings, tahlilan, and social services as a form of religious deradicalization and maintaining traditional Islamic traditions. Surakarta is a well-known city where numerous movements, sects, and Islamist groups have emerged, so it's worthwhile to investigate this movement in greater depth from a social psychology perspective, such as the Pesantren Al-Mukmin Ngruki, Jamaah Gumuk, Hidayatullah, MTA, Jihadi, Tahriri, Tarbawi, Salafi (Fanani, 2002).

In Surakarta, where there was a significant wave of Islamic radicalism, urban Sufism brought a new color to expressing spirituality based on local wisdom, challenging rhetoric and dogma, and indirectly promoting religious moderation. In addition, urban Sufism binds various groups with the same religious understanding of Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah an-Nahdliyah in Surakarta. Traditional community groups such as NU, abangan, habaib, Arab, Banjar, and Madurese merged into Jamuri (Mulyadi, 1999). From a social psychology perspective, urban Sufism in Surakarta goes hand in hand with other urban Sufism communities such as Jamuro led by Gus Abdul Karim, Tali Jiwa, Ahbabul Musthofa led by Habib Shaykh, Ar-Raudhah led by Habib Nouval Al-Idrus, Al- Hidayah led by Ustadz Soni, and Hubbun Nabi led by KH

Abdullah Faishol. This urban Sufism represents moderate Islam by prioritizing Islam and nationality in every recitation (Mibtadin, 2018). The existence of urban Sufism as a socio-religious movement seeks to transform Islamic culture in a new direction so that the wider community readily accepts it by still engaging tradition.

So far, popular Islam in the hijrah community has penetrated all levels of society in Surakarta, including the elderly, the millennial generation, and women. Even their existence is not limited to religious institutions. Doctrinally, popular Islam emerges in the public realm as a modernization strategy, forming identity and habitus. The presence of popular Islam was adopted and became a way of life for the hijrah community in terms of fashion, music, language style, and daily activities that reflect semi-Arabic-Islamic values. Its religious diversity carries popular Islam in prioritizing several central values. Local traditions were first influenced by Sufism teachings, resulting in local Islamic rituals. Second, popular Islam encompasses not only the modernization of Islam but also the flexible application of Islam in daily life while remaining within the confines of sharia. Third, popular Islam cannot be equated with populists or the majority. Fourth, popular Islam emphasizes the rise of Islam for community empowerment (Weintraub, 2011).

Identity politics emerged as a construction tied to communal symbols that bind together the Surakarta phenomena of popular Islam. The meaning of construction is 'the assimilation' of cultural symbols which then becomes a personal and collective identity. This hijrah group uses popular Islam as a worldview, with the sharia value serving as a guideline for values and customs. Therefore, popular Islam manifested in the hijrah community in Surakarta as 'habitus' is a form of behavior that later develops into a separate habit that distinguishes it from other communities. Surakarta is a crucial location for research on the phenomenon of religious movements and expressions among diverse religious groups in the famous Islamic world, whether Sufistic, abangan, traditional, modern, or radical. In comparison to other Indonesian regions, Surakarta has a sizeable Islamist movement. In Surakarta, the hijrah community thrives on developing its religious ideology, such as studies, lifestyle, and practical religion. Although the numbers are not significant quantitatively, the movement is quite massive and can be felt by the people of Surakarta and its surroundings. This is due to the success of the hijrah community in framing discourse, Islamic identity, and religious ideology.

The spread of the hijrah movement is a manner of the Surakarta community's religious views evolving towards a new Islamist. It is vulnerable to social friction and violence in the name of religion, which is targeted at four things: (1) religious movements that are considered heretical; (2) religious movements that are considered to be tainting religion; (3) groups of people who are considered liberal; and (4) community groups with different religions. As a result, tolerance is a valuable commodity in Indonesia (Misrawi, 2008), including in Surakarta. In the last two decades, Surakarta has seen a rise in religious-based violence. The patterns include threats, raids, clashes between religious communities, sweeping, intimidation, and coercion. Issues that often arise include matters of ideology, differences in beliefs, violence against cultural practices, morality, and discrimination in specific religious communities.

Mibtadin, et al.

The new Islamists in Surakarta's public space who call for purity are attempting to enforce Islamic law as a whole, support the execution of Islamic law, mobilize all Muslims to execute Islamic law, and oppose other ideologies that are not Islamic. Local cultural practices, religious traditions, and Kejawen Islam are considered contrary to Islam because it aims to unite the community in kaffah by returning to the Quran and hadith. With tauhid and Islam without local culture, the community is expected to practice religion correctly and avoid shirk and bid'ah. Every new Islamist movement highlights the examples from the Quran and hadith so that contemporary Islamists live good, correct, and appropriate Islamic teachings.

The emergence of religion-based violence in Surakarta stems from a weak historical awareness that has led to the disorientation of mass organizations with the reality in society. This can be seen from the themes promoted by the new Islamists in Surakarta regarding the caliphate, Christianity, Islamization, enforcement of sharia, and purification. This counterproductive gave rise to anxiety and fear, resulting in a conflict-prone situation. Surakarta has a high level of diversity where the power of civil society and mainstream mass organizations wants plurality and tolerance to be maintained. Conflict is a natural problem; what must be done is to manage conflict. According to Lederach, conflict must be addressed to increase justice (Lederach, 2003). Conflict is not only related to violence but also differences in perspective; in the social sphere, differences in religious views among mainstream, anti-mainstream, and purification at the level of thought are common. This can cause serious problems. The hijrah movement, which modern Islamists support by exhibiting purification, has posed no problems so far at the level of ideas. Still, when implemented in people's lives, it faces numerous challenges.

The new Islamists in Surakarta proposed numerous solutions to the conflict that arose in the name of purification of Islamic teachings. First, to begin with, Muslims have not understood and believed in the Quran as the primary source of Islamic teachings; instead, they prefer to follow rituals that directly oppose the primary sources of Islam. Second, in response to their disagreements, the immature community likes to force their will on others who disagree, do not have the same ideology, and are not considered adversaries who must be battled and overthrown. Third, this encourages new Islamists to further increase da'wah based on compassion, inviting Muslims to correctly place the Quran and hadith to achieve true happiness and create peace, mutual respect, and shared goals (Mibtadin, 2008).

The most significant possibility for social strife stemming from purifying the new Islamists in Surakarta is their attitude toward prevalent local traditions. According to the new Islamists, purely religious people are Muslim without mixing religion with traditions. According to the Quran and hadith, Islam must be understood as it is not added to a local culture considered the laisa minal Islam. Islam mixed with various local traditions or cultures can bring religion to its impurity. This is contrary to Islam which is expressly said to be a perfect religion, the most superior religion that nothing can match.

According to the new Islamists, Muslims must believe that all human life has been predestined by Allah in the Quran and exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad in everyday life. If Muslims want the salvation of the hereafter, they must hold fast to the Quran and hadith seriously without mixing them with other values. For new

Islamists in Surakarta, salvation can be obtained hereafter by following the Prophet Muhammad as al-uswah al- hasanah. On the other hand, if Muslims do not follow the Quran and hadith correctly, it can be disastrous (Mibtadin, 2008). The hijrah movement with the new Islamic purification concept offers salvation according to the teachings of the Quran and hadith that are complete, comprehensive, and carried out without being added to the local culture. New Islamists believe that adding local culture to religious traditions by some Muslims is a form of bid'ah.

Many Muslims in Surakarta practice worship that is not founded on the correct justifications according to the Quran and hadith; hence the new Islamists are a result of the hijrah movement. They worship because it feels natural, as it has been practiced and passed down by their forefathers while incorporating local culture. They don't realize that; therefore, they fall into worship without guidance because it isn't based on the Qur'an's and hadith's reasoning. The new Islamists encourage their citizens and the public to understand the teachings of Islam and worship properly, so they must recite the Quran. By reciting the Quran, Muslims can sort, choose, and know which teachings are pure from the Prophet Muhammad and which are those that have no basis in the Quran and hadith (Mibtadin, 2008). Other religious groups have labeled the new Islamist viewpoint hard, puritanical, and less tolerant of local wisdom as 'cultural radicalism.'

This new Islamist purifying view clashes with Surakarta society's religious practice, which still conforms to the Kejawen Islamic tradition in practice. The new Islamists reject all forms of worship mixed with local culture because it reduces purity and is considered the laisa minal Islam. For new Islamists, the true teachings of Islam are like those in the Quran and exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad through hadith; there is no need to add local culture that is not in line with Islam. Although the new Islamist purification movement does not directly interfere with the people who practice the worship, conflicts still occur because they separate cultures and religions. The new Islamist doctrine in Surakarta was put into practice by avoiding community traditions contradicting Quran and hadith. Regarding social, cultural, and religious traditions, the new Islamist movement tried to deconstruct local wisdom already established in the Surakarta community. Islamists want an Islamic culture to appear to take the place of a culture deemed incompatible with Islamic teachings. The shift in the religious paradigm as the impact of the hijrah movement has also brought about a cultural and traditional style that is trying to be imposed amid the dynamics and pluralism of the Surakarta society.

CONCLUSION

The shift in the religious paradigm of the Surakarta community is directly proportional to dynamic social, political, economic, and cultural transformations. The shift in the religious perspective of the Surakarta community is a hijrah even though it is strictly understood from the abangan Muslim community to the new Islamist with all the limitations of understanding and Islamic doctrine. Hence, assistance is required regarding Kejawen Islamic traditions, local beliefs, religious traditions, and other spiritual associations. Even though they have become new Islamists, some still adhere to the existing traditions of Kejawen and local beliefs. They believe local religious and cultural traditions must be transformed according to Islamic teachings. The difference

between traditional Muslims and new Islamists is in their attitude towards four things, namely nationality commitment, forms of tolerance, non-violent views, and accommodation to local culture. These four things become taboo for new Islamists because they contradict their religious beliefs. Meanwhile, for traditional Muslims, these four measures of religious moderation are being developed to create a balance of discourse. Internal and external factors drive the shift in the religious paradigm of the Surakarta community. First, internal factors include psychological encouragement from one another to improve one's self-esteem to become a better person. Second, external factors such as social media, hijrah communities, and other Islamist ideas, foster a shift and change in the Surakarta community's perspective.

REFERENCES

Abdullah, A. (2011). Studi Agama. Normativitas dan Historisitas. Yogyakarta: Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.

Aijuddin, A. (2008). Laporan Penelitian Transformasi Sosial Gerakan Keagamaan di Surakarta. Jakarta.

Barbour, I. G. (1980). "Paradigms in Science and Religion". In Garry Gutting, (ed.), Paradigms and Revolutions. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Connoly, P. (2002). Approaches to the Study of Religiondalam Aneka Pendekatan Studi Agama. Yogyakarta: LKiS.

Effendi, B. (2010). Islam dan Negara. Jakarta: Paramadina. Jakarta: Paramadina.

Fanani, Z. (2002). Radikalisme Keagamaan dan Perubahan Sosial. Surakarta: Muhammadiyah University Press dan Asia Foundation.

Fanani, A. (2017). Moderasi Pemikiran Fikih Hubungan Antarumat Beragama di Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid Muhammadiyah. SHAHIH : Journal of Islamicate Multidisciplinary, 2(1), 53. https://doi.org/10.22515/shahih.v2i1.705

Gaffar, A. (1999). Politik Indonesia: Transisi Menuju Demokrasi. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.

Hardiman, F. B. (2009). Demokrasi Deliberatif: Menimbang Negara Hukum dan Ruang Publik dalam teori Diskursus Habermas. Yogyakarta: Kanisius.

Hasan, N. (2011). Milisia Islami, Demokrasi, dan Hak Asasi Manusia. Jurnal Dignitas, Jurnal Hak Asasi Manusia, Volume VII.

Idharam, S. (2011). Mereka Memalsukan Kitab-kitab Karya Ulama Klasik: Episode Kebohongan Publik Sekte Salafi Wahhabi. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pesantren.

Jamil, M. (2007). Agama-agama Baru di Indonesia. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.

Kahmad, D. S. (2002). Sosiologi Agama. Bandung: Rosdakarya.

Lederach, P. (2003). Conflict Transformation. New York: Good Books, Skyhorse Publishing. Inc.

Mibtadin. (2008). Gerakan Keagamaan Kontemporer: Studi Potensi Konflik Atas Perkembangan Majelis Tafsir Alquran di Surakarta. Semarang.

Mibtadin. (2017). Gerakan Sosial Masyarakat Sipil. Studi Gerakan Sosial LKiS, Fahmina, dan The Wahid Institute. Yogyakarta: UIN Suka, Disertasi tidak diterbitkan.

Mibtadin. (2018). The Urban Sufism, Social Change, and The Smiling Islam: A Case Study Hubbun Nabi Kartasura Sukoharjo. Analisa Journal, Volume 3 N.

Mibtadin. (2019). Khutbah, Ujaran Kebencian, dan Keberagamaan Jamaah: Kajian Atas Materi Khutbah di Masjid-masjid di Kota Surakarta. Yogyakarta: Gerbang Media.

Mibtadin. (2020). Ormas, Keislaman, dan Keindonesiaan. Pandangan dan Prkatik Moderasi Beragama Ormas Islam di Surakarta: MTA, FPI, MMI, dan LUIS. Jakarta.

Misrawi, Z. (2008). Al-Qur'an Kitab Toleransi. Inklusivisme, Pluralisme, dan Multikulturalisme. Jakarta: Fitrah.

Mulyadi, H. & Soedarmono. (1999). Runtuhnya Kekuasaan Keraton Alit. Studi Mobilisasi Sosial Masyarakat Solo dan Kerusuhan Mei 1998 di Surakarta. Surakarta: LPTP.

Smith, W. C. (1991). The Meaning and End Religio, A New Approach to the Religious Tradition of Mankind. New York: Mentor Books. https://doi.org/10.2307/598421

Sodik, M. (2006). Pendekatan Sosologi In Dudung A. (ed.) Metodologi Penelitian Agama. Yogyakarta: Kurnia Kalam Semesta.

Suprayogo, I. & Tobroni. (2003). Metodologi Penelitian Sosial Agama. Bandung: Rosda karya.

Sutopo, H. (1988). Pengantar Penelitian Kualitatif: Dasar-dasar Teoretis dan Praktis. Surakarta: Pusat Penelitian UNS.

Ulum, B. (2002). Bodohnya NU Apa NU Dibodohi? Jejak Langkah NU Era Reformasi: Mengikuti Khittah, Meneropong Paradigma Politik. Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz.

Weintraub, A. N. (2011). Islam and Popular Culture in Indonesia and Malaysia. New York: Routledge.

PREMEDITATIO MALORUM AND DISSEMINATION OF HOPE IN POST-PANDEMIC RECOVERY

Anicleta Yuliastuti[1], Cahyaningsih Pujimahanani[2], and Rommel Utungga Pasopati[3]

[1] English Literature Program, Dr. Soetomo University Surabaya, Indonesia
anicleta.yuliastuti@unitomo.ac.id
[2] English Literature Program, Dr. Soetomo University Surabaya, Indonesia
cahyaningsih.pujimahanani@unitomo.ac.id
[3] English Literature Program, Dr. Soetomo University Surabaya, Indonesia
rommelpasopati@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Premeditatio malorum is a Stoic philosophical concept that speaks about the negative visualization of conditions that may come. By imagining, Stoic people could prepare anything for the most specific aspects that may be realized. Meanwhile, the post-pandemic condition is related to the recovery of everything. Since the COVID-19 outbreak changed our life, a new normal condition should be filled with preventive actions rather than preemptive ones. Alongside those, prolonging hope should always be kept flowing to walk with people in everyday life. The question is, how may *premeditatio malorum* contribute to the dissemination of hope in post-pandemic recovery today? Using the qualitative method, philosophical and cultural concepts explain correlations between *premeditatio malorum*, living hope, and post-pandemic recovery. The reality of hope does not stand alone but should be accompanied by anticipations of harmful impacts that may come. Preparing for inevitable setbacks could contribute more to optimism than pessimism or surrendering to current conditions. It is a matter of practice that will calm people and shape further hope to amend unavoidable impacts. In conclusion, this Stoic concept could overcome the negative impacts of future conditions by thinking negatively. Moreover, *premeditatio malorum* may provide a framework of thoughts to widen hope for the best and worst conditions that may happen afterward.

Keywords: COVID-19, hope*,* post-pandemic recovery, *premeditatio malorum*

INTRODUCTION

No one will disagree how the pandemic has worsened every aspect of life. This virus exists by spreading fear in everyone. The fear is of being medically infected and impacted socially and economically (Sonderegger, 2021; Lestari, 2021). When the Delta variant reached its peak, many people got infected then, hospitals were full of patients, and oxygen was rare everywhere (Kompas.com, 2022). Others must work from home while others lose their jobs since some productions and consumptions become limited. Alongside that despair, hope is still there. Some people try to maximize their time at home with their families. Some of them find opportunities by selling goods online. Some of them consume more vitamins and keep health protocols everywhere. People always carry hope with them and survive (Sonderegger, 2021; Lestari, 2021). One idea behind that survival is being preventive. This is in line with

the Stoic principle on premeditatio malorum. The advice keeps imagining the bad things to prepare for anything that may come. By thinking negatively, it is believed that positive impacts will come. Stoic people do not believe that the negative side will result in negative aspects either. They believe in balance; having negative minds could open possibilities to be optimistic positively.

Then, how may premeditatio malorum contribute to the dissemination of hope in post-pandemic recovery today? This writing underlines how the reality of hope does not stand alone but should be accompanied by anticipations of harmful impacts that may come. Preparing for inevitable setbacks could contribute more to optimism than pessimism or surrendering to current conditions. It is a matter of practice that will calm people and shape further hope to amend unavoidable impacts. This Stoic concept could overcome the negative impacts of future conditions by thinking negatively. Exactly, premeditatio malorum may provide such a framework of thoughts to widen hope to its best and worst conditions that may happen afterward.

METHOD

This research uses library research by searching books, journals, and other sources related to the subject matter discussed descriptively. Concept research or literature is carried out by conducting a careful study of the literature about the subject matter discussed. Using the qualitative method, philosophical and cultural concepts explain correlations between premeditatio malorum, living hope, and post-pandemic recovery. Online and offline scripts are derived from books and journals to understand shown matters. The data analysis includes attaining sources, reading sources carefully, comparing with other issues, quoting into paper, and writing down reference lists.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Condition of Despair and Hope in Pandemic Situation

The pandemic condition today indeed has made various impacts on everyday life. Most people got severely impacted by the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Its prolonged situation is also worsened by incoming mutations that have continued until now (Roziqin, Mas'udi, and Sihidi, 2021). Delta and now Omicron variants prove how a disease could affect individuals and societies to its fundamental foundations. In Indonesia, until March 2022, more than five million got infected, while more than a hundred fifty thousand people died because of the virus (CNNIndonesia.com, 2022). This situation has become more pandemic than an epidemic or an endemic disease. Around July 2021, when the Delta variant was spread, hospitals were full of patients, while many emergency hospitals were also built to contain more infected people (Kompas.com, 2022). Oxygen was getting so rare, and many people felt fear of being positively tested. Being positive will indeed hinder many things from work to family

life. Isolation must be done, and this action must be monitored continuously to prevent further complications (Lestari, 2021).

In everyday life, the concepts of time and place are also shifted. People who work in the office must work from home (Susanna, 2020; Lestari, 2021). Transportations and movements are limited since the virus is believed to spread if people get close together. Teachers and lecturers have to teach online from home, and this approach makes learners more challenging to understand further lessons. Many places that used to be the center of the crowd have no longer been used. Persons start wearing face masks that restrict their identities from being seen. Keeping distance becomes a staple of everyday meetings, so further contaminations can always be avoided (Susanna, 2020). Health protocols especially washing hands are massively introduced through various campaigns so that people can maintain their hygiene through their actions of awareness (Roziqin, Mas'udi, and Sihidi, 2021; Lestari, 2021).

In broader realities, no single aspect of life has not been affected by this pandemic situation. Changes must be done alongside various adaptations to new kinds of habitual deeds. The impacts could be divided into two main categories, from an individual and structural point of view. Individual issues relate to people's singular and subjective indications (Susanna, 2020; Lestari, 2021). This part is so particular that it correlates to how others implement individuals' behaviors. It also relates to own identities that are plural and lived continuously altogether from time to time.

For example, as a student, he or she is also a son or daughter and a friend of other children. A lesson learner must adapt to the online situation by studying harder to pay more attention to the screen rather than direct the lesson by teachers. They stay home longer than usual as a son and daughter, so helping parents should also be done. As friends, they could not play with others since keeping a distance is crucial today. This perspective is seen from an individual perspective that should maintain their existence by considering any danger that may come from the spread of the virus. Somehow, the situations are getting more complicated, and anyone may face despair corresponding to the current issue (Susanna, 2020). They may not be lazy, but more demands keep coming for them, and better performance must be shown. Their grades must still be good, while familial and social interactions should have been realized well.

From structural perspectives, these aspects are broader in coping with more matters beyond individuals'. Societal, governmental, and even national policies are included in those aspects. The mechanism is quite similar to the individuals since any policy taken must consider other identities that may get impacted (Susanna, 2020; Roziqin, Mas'udi, and Sihidi, 2021). For example, a policy limiting people's movements must be monitored gradually to control other aspects. The economy could collapse if limitations are strictly done, and more people could lose their jobs (Susilawati, Falefi, and Purwoko, 2020; Lestari, 2021). Any other policy outside health

matters should constantly be reconsidered so that it will not make such a lousy fuss among societies. People are already having pandemic fatigue in these two years, so further policies must help them to rebuild than burden them with various misconceptions (Yuliastuti and Pasopati, 2021).

Dealing with various difficulties today, people tend to face despair in their life. Despair is used to be explained as the accumulation of stress in life. The stress could not be omitted easily since there is no way out. The stress could be handled in other matters, but other problems still exist and shape another mindful solution (Susilawati, Falefi, and Purwoko, 2020). In short, despair is an inability to improve situations into better ones. In a pandemic situation, there are three main ideas resulting in despair in daily life. First, the stress comes from leaving habitual deeds that have been formerly done. It is the same with going out from old realities. Workers are used to doing things directly, but now it can be done unequivocally (Susilawati, Falefi, and Purwoko, 2020). Students used to play at school, but currently, it is closed. Mothers used to go to markets, but now distance should be maintained. Many religious events could not be realized in a worshipping place. People have to leave old habits since they could be no longer possible.

Second, people must make new adaptations rarely or never before (Lestari, 2021). Online conditions must be apprehended by everyone today since direct interaction is avoided. Demands for better technological gadgets and inventions are high due to the need for fast, accessible, reliable, and cheap online goods (Roziqin, Mas'udi, and Sihidi, 2021). The third one is the most sensible despair that exists today. That is the despair of being hopeless. It is such a result of any loss known to individuals. Some people lost their jobs because of pandemic conditions (Sparrow, Dartanto, and Hartwig, 2020). Jobless persons could not do anything because the companies were stopped. Some people must sell their belongings to buy everyday needs. Demand for various goods has declined, and the profits are gone, either (Susilawati, Falefi, and Purwoko, 2020; Sparrow, Dartanto, and Hartwig, 2020)). The ultimate loss is that families lose their parents, children, and relatives due to massive infectious viruses. They could not accompany them to hospitals, and the remains must be buried by medical assistances who wear hazmat suits. This despair is the saddest since families could not amend anything due to infectious remains (Widyataqwa and Rahmasari, 2021).

Besides despair, there is hope among people during the pandemic situation. This hope circles among individuals, societies, and bigger structures as well. The problem is indicated through its monistic nature and pluralistic values of hope in life (Milona in Heuvel, 2020). There are three points of how hope is shown today. First is the raising of altruism. In this case, altruism has ideas to share with others. More people start to realize that they are in the same boat as others (Jackson, 2019). People help each other in giving everyday needs to those who are isolated and the needing ones,

caring more for the poor, orphans, and elders, and also approaching health protocol campaigns in communities. This is done not only by individuals but also by institutions. They understand that their situation is difficult, but interestingly, it motivates them to help more. It is the opposite of the standard idea that everyone must solely take care of him or herself only if facing difficulties. The main idea is by sharing then; they can also thank God and others for every goodness in life that they had and will have (Jackson, 2019).

Second, many alternatives are found by people furthermore. In facing hopelessness, people try to find hope in other ways (Milona in Heuvel, 2020). Economical ways are done through social media, students discover more abundant solutions online, and even workers collect more happiness by staying home longer with families. Indeed, finding alternatives is never easy, but this pandemic condition has strengthened people's determinations (Susilawati, Falefi, and Purwoko, 2020). People realize that the despair will still be there, but the main concern is how to deal with that through an attitude of inventiveness (Jackson, 2019; Milona in Heuvel, 2020). If people face a dead end, they do not stay there but retreat and find another way. These are the ultimate characteristics of people during pandemic conditions today. This potential action must also be particularly emphasized in further post-pandemic recovery (Sparrow, Dartanto, and Hartwig, 2020).

Third, hope is reflected in how anticipation is done. This is a matter of prevention rather than preemptive action. COVID-19 as an infectious virus is still there, so a different approach must be made to contain its worse impacts. Health protocols also show hope to realize better surroundings from medical perspectives. Vaccinations are also how hope is recognized among the people to stop the worse implications of infections. Identifying everything that may come also shows an understanding that people face a lousy future (Jackson, 2019). This is also in line with any widened consciousness in realizing what own strengths and weaknesses are. Taking care of own self by promoting more healthy and medical consumption is also how hope is maintained today. In a defense mechanism, people do sublimation as they transform their hopelessness into hopeful actions in other ways (Yuliastuti and Pasopati, 2021).

Despair and hope walk together in pandemic conditions today. Of course, the situation is not similar for everyone, yet it is not 50:50 at all. Some people face more despair than hope, while others face in reverse (Roziqin, Mas'udi, and Sihidi, 2021). Both of them are so humane. There will be no getting without losing. The main idea is to keep hope as long as possible and realize it in every part of life. This is a matter of being positive in both beliefs and desires (Jackson, 2019; Milona in Heuvel, 2020). It is also used to cope with the despair that is so negative. However, humans could not think only positively without considering the negative. Even the first step of thinking is doubting or stating something as negative. Therefore, the logic of hope must be

formerly shaped through an understanding of despair. Realities of despair should not be avoided but understood. By doing that, hope could arise as people have succeeded in handling the despair of the past and be ready to disseminate hope in the future.

Premeditatio Malorum and Visualization of the Negative

Human beings would always like to be fortunate. Somehow, bad things are inevitable and could affect other central aspects of life. It is not that human likes to hinder pain, but this creature would like to enhance balance in their life (Hill and Nidumolu, 2020; Táíwò, 2020). Any stable condition is realized when everything works as it seems or in every certain way of happiness. This is not similar to hedonism which prioritizes the pursuit of sensual pleasure. Humans would always like to take control, especially by learning from the past to be realized in the present. However, control of the future could never be grasped. What people did in the past and do today indeed will affect the future, but other unnoticed aspects could make things go outside any predictable outcome.

Premeditatio malorum is one Stoic idea underlined by Marcus Aurelius (Irvine, 2009). This perspective is an art of controlling emotions that punctuates the imagination of any bad impact that may come in the future. Stoic understanding is usually shaped as a reaction to an event, especially how to be calm in facing that. Reaction or response is the main emphasis here since Stoic teachings would never like to intervene in any incoming future (Irvine, 2009; Hill and Nidumolu, 2020). It seems that human beings are positioned as a whole outside any event. The event then shows up and must be responded to by human beings. The responses will always be better if done in calmer conditions so humans can master their emotions.

Seen from an etymological understanding, premeditatio malorum is meant as a premeditation of evils. Premeditation is understood as a consideration, while evils are stated as negative impacts or results that may exist in the future (Irvine, 2009; Cordoneanu, 2019). Its main idea is to visualize the negative points so that any preparation for the worst can be done before it happens. On the one hand, this practice seems promising since it is always better to be safe than sorry. Identifying any negative or unwanted setbacks should be realized to ready self for any future condition (Irvine, 2009). On the other hand, it seems that the premeditation could understand all negative things that may come. However, since human beings are presupposed outside of the future realm, they can only predict what they have known before in their life (Kite, 2020; Ball, 2019). Knowing all negative things in a human's grasp and outside of it is almost impossible. Moreover, preparing for all negative impacts will make people so busy thinking about negative points, which could abandon other essential matters. Total preparations in all issues, such as emotions, goods, and even surroundings, are almost incapable of being known by human beings. Besides the advantages and disadvantages of premeditatio malorum, this practice is still beneficial since it

emphasizes how human beings should always consider different setbacks that could occur anytime as a reflection of the future (Irvine, 2009).

There are at least four well-known ideas of premeditatio malorum that best be realized in everyday life. These understandings are described, derived, and explored from a Stoic point of view and compared to the common sense of life. First, visualization of the negative could keep openness to various senses (Irvine, 2009). By being open, people could widen many perspectives, so understandings besides merely positive ideas may arise too. Different senses also could find ideas to further responses to life (Hill and Nidumolu, 2020; Ball, 2019). Being open allows people to welcome anything in their life, even if it is the worst one that may happen. This is crucial since welcoming reflects hospitability to embrace and then urge the situation to respond calmly. This is to prevent shaken mental that could always exist when facing bad news by living the now (Ball, 2019; Cordoneanu, 2019). Second, premediating evils also state distance of self from current matters. Here, consciousness is not something that is usually preserved unconsciously. In reverse, consciousness is understood as an awareness of other situations. By imagining negatively, people could step back and think about what they will do if facing such an event (Irvine, 2009). This idea then recreates the shadow of self-involved in the imagination of the negative aspect but not the real one. It also gives chances for people to stop a while, postpone all thoughts, then prepare for the worst outcome that may result.

Third, a distance of self then elucidates the matter of fearlessness in indicating bad things in life. People are taught to be always brave in facing anything. This is needed to firm and determine self out of doubt and uncertainty (Ball, 2019; Cordoneanu, 2019). The negative outcome will always be there and somehow is so inevitable. By being firm, human beings could mitigate what should be done afterward. Any threat that could increase pain could be handled well. Anxiety could be minimized either by not doing defense but by facing it bravely following own strength of mental health (Rahmawati and Purwanto, 2021; Cordoneanu, 2019). The emphasis of premeditatio malorum is to focus on stimuli of negative impacts that may come. As the trigger is known, further approaches could be realized by considering negative ones that have been thought of before. Fourth, visualizing the negative could also shape more rational understandings of such phenomena that may come. The understandings are matters of practice rather than definitions. It continues through meanings consumed and reproduced in everyday life (Cordoneanu, 2019). This is to make the internal self ready for any external force that is incoming. This is in line with the Stoic understanding that truth of any kind should always be accepted and comprehended by further actions. Truth should be thinkable with hope (Sonderegger, 2021). The universe is stated as reasonable physics; therefore, human beings should face it through reason. By being involved in reason, people could reach more virtues to realize better life (Kaukiainen and Kõlves, 2020; Kite, 2020). Visualizing the negative could also contribute more to ethics as the desire should be renounced alongside a clear sense of

judgment. This clearness is unified with self-consciousness, as previously stated in distanced thought before. Interestingly, through logic, premeditatio malorum practice does not evade any misperceptions (Kite, 2020). As common sense tells human beings that people should not worry about anything as it may result in misunderstanding, Stoics would like to approach it closely (Beckett, 2015; Kaukiainen and Kõlves, 2020). Worries together with anxiety are so humane and so valuable for shaping such preparedness for negative setbacks. By being worried, people are aware of anything, which could further enrich various understandings (Rahmawati and Purwanto, 2021; Kite, 2020).

Those four points above then assert the idea of hope from a Stoic perspective. Thinking negatively is not meant to make people sad but to bring more hope for the future (Irvine, 2009). The hope is being prepared for anything, even if it hurts. Developing awareness is also a matter of hope since people regard the present time and reflect on the past to enhance future situations (Beckett, 2015; Sonderegger, 2021). By being aware, people could identify more what kind of aspects could be controlled and not. Indeed, this is not a matter of effort to control anything as power. This is the idea of seeing diverse points of view, both conceptual and empirical values, that exist. Reducing the cloud of fear could also be seen as hope since predicting a different outcome is the practice of a better process in life (Beckett, 2015). Any misfortune should not be avoided but embraced, analyzed, and understood. This is due to the nature of human beings as part of a universe that contains both known and unpredictable sights (Irvine, 2009; Kaukiainen and Kõlves, 2020; Kite, 2020). The existence of misfortune is a way to keep the realm of contemplation in the process. Here, premeditatio malorum gives more meaning to future reflection or meditation in a Stoic term. Hope is also seen in previewing plans among contingencies. This is to lessen disasters that could be created in the future. More options and preparedness could be attained by having more projects, which are matters of hope (Irvine, 2009; Sonderegger, 2021).

Going Positively by Imagining the Negative in Post-Pandemic Recovery

The main ideas in post-pandemic recovery both in individual and social matters, are indications of hope. Hope indeed lives amid people, but the pandemic condition has abundantly changed its position (Buana, 2020; Riddell, 2021). It could incline and decline based on every self's understanding of their own experience. Alas, hope should be approached from three perspectives. First, hope should be made more to enhance its quantities and qualities. By building more hope, an individual could shape their reliance better and indirectly affect others (Beckett, 2015). Helping through material goods and supporting through immaterial advice could involve more wishes to be realized afterward. Second, the condition of hope should be preserved well every time and in every place. By keeping hope existing, people could face a brighter future.

People should know that each one is never alone but is supported by others (Riddell, 2021). Therefore, finding help is a critical matter of hope. More realization of service is in line with the preservation of great hope. Third, hope should always be spread to others. Here, the dissemination of hope finds its crucial meaning. To disseminate hope is to plant, grow, and cultivate it (Beckett, 2015). Individuals or even societies do not own any good or bad indication. Each side may contribute to it, including its fixations. So an aspect of disseminating hope, each party is responsible for spreading kindness to face fear as a direct reflection of hope (Riddell, 2021).

Dissemination of hope could be contributed through the action of *premeditatio malorum*. Thinking negatively is so necessary that it could result in the following positive impacts. Indeed, a matter of prevention is important here (Deng, 2019). Preparing for things that may happen could bring better hope. It is used so that any bad thing in the future should not change emotion to severe condition. Imagining the negative is like awakening any notification of things that may unpredictably appear to the surface. Better preparation is like having complete equipment to face any war that could happen at any time. *Premeditatio malorum* has many flaws; two of them are the inability to control unknown things and repeated deeds to think negatively will make life so stagnant or shadowed with fear (Beckett, 2015). Those two reasons are known and could be amended by a matter of explorations in life. Finding alternatives are characteristics of human beings in inventiveness that could erode fear of former flaws. For the latter flaw, people should differentiate between themselves in reality and as a representation that thinks negatively. Any negative condition must be considered, but it is not the actual condition (Beckett, 2015). Negative visualization should always be separated from real imagination. Even negative visualization is not the same as negative imagination. Negative visualization is an extra played by an excess of self, while negative imagination is how the true self imagines negative conditions. Besides, the purpose of thinking negatively in *premeditatio malorum* is not to hold a negative image as its result but to shape positive deeds afterward (Beckett, 2015; Manampiring, 2019).

The reality of hope does not stand alone but should be accompanied by anticipations of bad impacts that may come. Preparing for inevitable setbacks could contribute more to optimism than pessimism or surrendering to current conditions. In the meaning of ultimate loss, the bad impacts could not be avoidable since people face an unknown face of death (Widyataqwa and Rahmasari, 2021). Sadness is there, but people should still hang on hope as a commitment to continue a better life. It is a matter of practice that will calm people and shape further hope to amend unavoidable impacts. More exercise could widen knowledge and attain a calm response better to understand resilience (Widyataqwa and Rahmasari, 2021). The main target here is the situation of emotion that should be controlled so that it comes to solving the problems, not making them worse.

From the importance of *premeditatio malorum* above, hope could be cultivated further and disseminated afterward. Visualization of the negative could keep openness to various senses, including inner strength of confidence (Beckett, 2015; Wahyuna and Fitriana, 2020). At this point, hospitability could be attained to shape a calmer response. Sometimes reality is so bitter, but since human beings are part of reality, the creatures are gifted with the power to face it bravely (Táíwò, 2020; Wahyuna and Fitriana, 2020). People should not stop to find the best for their life. If they are stopped, they should retreat and find another way to move forward. No matter how difficult it is, any bitterness of life should not consume human beings wholly. People should strengthen their purposes by collecting more approaches as tools to face any bad thing that could come again anytime (Táíwò, 2020; Johncock, 2020; Manampiring, 2019).

It is not shameful if people stop and think about anything they have felt before and will feel in the future. This is also the practice of *premeditatio malorum.* Besides visualizing the negative instantly, taking more time to think could widen more thoughts and then accept negative setbacks. Stoic people taught people not to be shaken by anything incoming (Johncock, 2020). People should always control emotions, not in reverse. If facing loss, sadness is indeed its consequence. However, that is not affected all life, but only that matter, although it may impact whole life (Johncock, 2020; Wahyuna and Fitriana, 2020). It is better to learn from the loss rather than focus on it. Such loss is indeed consumed, but it should not be continuous. The production of meaning should follow any consumption. Therefore, it is always better to reproduce more understanding of any loss. Once understanding is indicated, the loss is involved as knowledge to find another great perspective to leave despair and widen hope (Widyataqwa and Rahmasari, 2021).

Fearlessness is also crucial as what *premeditatio malorum* could result in (Aitsi-Selmi, 2021; Bradley, 2017; Manampiring, 2019). Negative setbacks indeed will always be there and somehow so inevitable. By having a firm self, any psychological threat could be faced without solely suffering. In many dialogues, people consider the pandemic condition as a test. Despite the test being so tricky and could come to severe loss, it is a process for people to handle their anxieties (Rahmawati and Purwanto, 2021; Riddell, 2021). They could not deny what was going on since the reality was there. It is no longer merely negative visualization as the visual is already realized. While prevention should always be done, hope has to accompany the process. Finding the best for any problem is never easy. However, supporting the finding with abundant hope may give a better spirit to handle the fear of facing suffering (Buana, 2020; Akrim, Rudianto, and Adhani, 2021). Even suffering is not merely pain but such acceptance that should be filled with meanings. If the suffering is void but only filled with pain, human beings cannot learn from the negative impact. Pain is to be felt in the present, but the fearlessness of pain has to be collected as a shield from any negative thing that is incoming (Wahyuna and Fitriana, 2020; Aitsi-Selmi, 2021).

Rational understanding is also a direct reflection of *premeditatio malorum.* As a practical concept, anything from the external side must be interpreted rationally by internal deeds. As Stoic people said, anything is nothing but situated reasonably (Bradley, 2017; Johncock, 2020; Manampiring, 2019). So, the reason should best be indicated in rationality. Using the head to think is the ultimate solution for human beings. People should not think based on material and spiritual aspects solely. Intertwinement of both should be done alongside rational ideas (Adiyoso, 2021; Akrim, Rudianto, and Adhani, 2021). Somehow, the condition becomes a tri-lemma between being rational, material, and spiritual. People are pushed to balance the three altogether, which is impossible. Most people tend to support and be supported by an aspect bigger than others. However, even if another aspect is little, it should be focused on solving the negative impact that may come (Deng, 2019; Akrim, Rudianto, and Adhani, 2021). A combination of two aspects could also enrich the visualization of the negative. For example, contributing to religions by giving materials or rationalizing the loss through a spiritual perspective could contribute more to the existence of hope. This is also a matter of dissemination of hope, evaluating other elements to be supplemented by another aspect so that synthesis could be shaped to face further negative setbacks (Adiyoso, 2021; Akrim, Rudianto, and Adhani, 2021).

The analysis above is a reflection of going positively by imagining the negative. The pandemic situation is indeed so damaging. However, its recovery should be fulfilled with otherwise indications. Learning from any negative point that may come could amend the survival of human beings. The negative ones could not be stopped from their incomings, but the positive ideas shall prevent worse impacts in their realization (Buana, 2020; Bradley, 2017). The analogy is similar to how COVID-19 vaccines work. The vaccine is not such medication to make the body well from being sick. It is to prevent a worse condition that may come (Setiati and Azwar, 2020; Adiyoso, 2021; Manampiring, 2019). By being injected with that, people could build better immunity to ready the body if future infections invade again. The vaccine may not make people to be infected since any disease is always possible. It works to shorten the time of having a virus inside the body by strengthening the immune system (Setiati and Azwar, 2020; Adiyoso, 2021). The vaccine's mechanism is the same as *premeditatio malorum.* Any negative incomings still exist and cannot be stopped, but it is better to prevent them from worsening. Negative setbacks should be accepted as those are so humanely (Bradley, 2017; Johncock, 2020; Manampiring, 2019). Human beings must prepare themselves to have a better life. The situation is similar to the vaccine since its purpose is not to destroy the virus but to prevent any worse situation that may happen in the future (Setiati and Azwar, 2020; Adiyoso, 2021).

CONCLUSION

By thinking negatively, the Stoic concept of *premeditatio malorum* could overcome the negative impacts of future conditions. It could provide a framework of thoughts to widen hope for the best and worst conditions that may happen afterward. Openness to various senses, the status of a distance of self from current matters, elucidation of fearlessness in indicating bad things, and rational understandings of such phenomena that may come are advantages of the Stoic practice in life. It may still be difficult since loss could be so severe that it affects psychological balance, but the truth should be accepted first to shape the further response to such an event. By doing that, hope could be made, preserved, and disseminated again by own self-supported others. The work of *premeditatio malorum* is quite similar to the mechanism of the COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccine is not meant as a medication but to prevent further damage to the human body by strengthening the immune system. Visualization of the negative is in line with that indication. The purpose of the Stoic practice is not to destroy any negative incoming. It is to accept any pain and suffering caused by anxiety while being calm emotionally and ready to respond to further negative setbacks.

REFERENCES

Adiyoso, W. (2021). "Vaccine: New Hope, but It Is Not a Panacea of Pandemic". The Journal of Indonesia Sustainable Development Planning, 2 (1).

Aitsi-Selmi, A. (2021). *The Success Trap.* London: Kogan Page Limited.

Akrim, A., Rudianto, and Adhani, Abrar. (2021). "Interactive Effects of Stoicism and Religious

Coping on Psychological Distress, Fatigue and Intercultural Communication: Muslim Health Workers in Bali". *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, 8 (4).

Ball, J. (2019). *The Modern Marcus.* Haslemere: Considered Content Ltd.

Beckett, T. (2015). *Stoicism: Ultimate Handbook to Stoic Philosophy, Wisdom, and Way of Life.* California: Createspace Independent Publishing.

Bradley, G. J. (2017). *A Better Human: The Stoic Heart, Mind, and Soul.* New York: Bradley Pub.

Buana, D. R. (2020). "Analisis Perilaku Masyarakat Indonesia dalam Menghadapi Pandemi Virus Corona (Covid-19) dan Kiat Mejaga Kesejahteraan Jiwa". *Salam: Jurnal Sosial dan Budaya Syar'I,* 7 (3).

CNNIndonesia.com. (2022). *Positif COVID-19 Bertambah 4857 Pasien, Sembuh 14710 orang.* Retrieved March 26, 2022, from https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20220325152551-20-776175/positif-covid-19-bertambah-4857-pasien-sembuh-14710-orang.

Cordoneanu, I. (2019). "Marcus Aurelius: A Possible Paradigm from the Perspective of Philosophical Counselling". *MCDSARE: International Multidisciplinary*

Scientific Conference on the Dialogue between Sciences & Arts, Religion & Education.

Deng, N. (2019). "Religion for Naturalists and the Meaning of Belief". *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion,* 11 (3).

Heuvel, S. C. van den. (2020). *Historical and Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Hope.* Switzerland: Springer.

Hill, L., and Nidumolu, P. (2020). "The influence of classical Stoicism on John Locke's theory of Self-ownership". *History of the Human Sciences*, 34 (3).

Irvine, W. B. (2009). *A Guide to the Good Life.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jackson, S. P. (2019). "Hope and Necessity". *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion,* 11 (3).

Johncock, W. (2020). *Stoic Philosophy and Social Theory.* Switzerland: Palgrave McMillan.

Kaukiainen, A., & Kõlves, K. (2020). "Too tough to ask for help? Stoicism and attitudes to mental Health professionals in rural Australia". *Rural Remote Health,* 20(2).

Kite, A. (2020). *Being Stoic.* London: Independently Published.

Kompas.com. (2022). *Menkes: Pasien COVID-19 Varian Delta 4 Kali Lebih Beresiko Meninggal.* Retrieved March 26, 2022, from https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2022/03/14/18254051/menkes-pasien-covid-19-varian-delta-4-kali-lebih-berisiko-meninggal.

Lestari, S. D. A. (2021). "Pandemic of COVID-19 in Indonesia: Social Politics Perspective". *Journal of Development and Social Change,* 4 (1).

Manampiring, H. (2019). *Filosofi Teras: Filsafat Yunani-Romawi Kuno untuk Mental Tangguh Masa Kini.* Jakarta: Kompas.

Rahmawati, S. and Purwanto, E. (2021). "E-Counseling System Mental Health to Increase Self-Hope During the Covid-19 Pandemic". *Proceeding of International Conference of Health, Science, and Technology.*

Riddell, P. G. (2021). "Divine Testing and the Covid Pandemic". *Teosofia: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Mysticism*, 10 (2).

Roziqin, A., Mas'udi, S. Y. F., and Sihidi, I. T. (2021). "An Analysis of Indonesian Government Policies against COVID-19". *Public Administration and Policy: An Asia-Pacific Journal*, 24 (1).

Setiati, S. and Azwar, M. K. (2020). "COVID-19 and Indonesia". *Acta Medica Indonesiana,* 52 (1).

Sonderegger, R. (2021). "Truthful Hope". *Krisis*, 41 (2).

Sparrow, R., Dartanto, T., and Hartwig, R. (2020). "Indonesia under the New Normal: Challenges and the Way Ahead". *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, 56 (3).

Susanna, D. (2020). "When will the COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia End?". *Kesmas: Jurnal Kesehatan Masyarakat Nasional (National Public Health Journal)*, 15 (4).

Susilawati, Falefi, R. and Purwoko, A. (2020). "Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on the Economy of Indonesia". *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal (BIRCI-Journal)*, 3 (2).

Táíwò, O. m. O. (2020). "Stoicism (as emotional compression) is emotional labor". *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly,* 6(2).

Wahyuna, A. H. and Fitriana, S. (2020). "The Concept of Hope in the Western and Eastern Perspective". *International Journal of Islamic Educational Psychology*, 1 (1).

Widyataqwa, A. C. J. and Rahmasari, D. (2021). "Resiliensi Istri Selepas Kematian Suami Akibat COVID-19". *Character: Jurnal Penelitian Psikologi*, 8 (9).

Yuliastuti, A. and Pasopati, R. U. (2021). "Sublimation as Defense Mechanism in Pandemic Fatigue Today". *Prosiding Seminar Nasional FPPsi Universitas Negeri Malang.*

SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES' DIPLOMACY AMIDST COVID-19: ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES

Novian Uticha Sally
IAIN Kudus, Kudus, Indonesia
uticha@iainkudus.ac.id

ABSTRACT

The emergence of COVID-19 at the end of 2019 became the starting point for a new multidimensional threat to the world. This pandemic situation is an obstacle to relationship maintenance among nations which is generally carried out traditionally. Various innovations are needed because there is a rapidly-shifting paradigm in different life sectors. Some countries have made several adjustments related to their diplomacy with other countries to ensure the continuity of relations between countries and the welfare of their citizens in this pandemic era. In the Islamic world, controlling pandemics has been done before, so that it can be one of the solution options. This study begins by describing the changes in diplomacy carried out by Southeast Asian countries with Muslim majority populations during the pandemic. The next step was analyzing the changes in diplomacy that those countries with Islamic diplomacy have carried out. This study aims to determine the extent to which the diplomatic changes carried out by these countries are viewed from the Islamic perspective. The results obtained show that several diplomatic activities carried out by those Southeast Asian countries are in accordance with Islamic diplomacy. However, there are still some aspects of Islamic diplomacy that these countries can adapt to in the future.
Keywords: COVID-19, Islamic Diplomacy, Southeast Asia

INTRODUCTION

Since 2020, the world has struggled to fight one of the most pandemic diseases. Novel Corona Virus (COVID-19) has been in the limelight for some time now, with no evidence of its cure soon found. In late 2019, there was big news that shocked the world. The Chinese government announced the founding a new trait of the virus, named Novel Corona Virus. At first, some countries take this news lightly. The news of the COVID-19 outbreak was precedented by the Singapore flu virus. The success of the Singapore government in curbing the flu virus gave international countries confidence to face COVID-19. But apparently, the COVID-19 virus is more contagious, and the effect is more dangerous, some of which lead to mortality. Countries' efforts to curb the virus vary. Some countries took fast and measurable action to mitigate the spread of the virus. At the same time, some others are a bit late in realizing the pandemic's toll and made loose policies regarding the COVID-19 measurement. The policies affected how soon the country managed the spread of the disease. Nevertheless, at the end of time, the world has entered a new era that agrees to close the border of its countries and restricts the movement of its citizen.

The world has since entered a new age in which all activities are strictly limited. With this new situation comes a new challenge in country-to-country relations. Limited access to cooperation and the fearsome of spreading the pandemic are two of the main reasons that obstruct the relation among countries. Some countries have imposed travel restrictions and travel bubbles to protect its citizen from the danger of this pandemic. Governments face a dilemma in which it has to ensure their citizens are protected from this pandemic. Still, on the other hand, it needs to keep country-to-country relations going well despite the situation.

The use of traditional diplomacy is hard, if not impossible, given the current situation. In response to this problem, some countries have already made an advancement to seek cooperation with their allies using non-conventional ways. Many countries successfully reverse the tide, turning the challenges into opportunities. The pandemic has brought calamity to once peaceful countries. The effect of this pandemic is inevitable. The damage has already struck many vital aspects of a country, ranging from health, social, economic, and security.

To overcome the effect of this pandemic, countries must work together, helping to ease the crisis. There is a serious note on the diplomatic ways in the pandemic era. While human physical and close contact is restricted, communication and cooperation between countries are in high demand now more than ever. Changes that occur in the interaction process between countries during this pandemic are interesting to review to find the most effective and efficient way to deal with this situation.

This paper will observe the diplomacy in some Southeast Asian countries amidst the pandemic. The countries that will be monitored are Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei Darussalam. These countries are chosen as the object of observation because these countries' majority of citizens denomination in Islam. The Muslim population in Indonesia makes up 87,2% of its total population accounting for 227 million people. In Brunei Darussalam, Islam is the country's official religion, and 82,7% of its citizens are Muslim. In Malaysia, the percentage of Moslem in this country is 61,3%. These countries are chosen to become objects of research because the theory will observe the diplomacy used by these countries from the Islamic perspective. The total of Muslim citizens in those countries makes up more than half of the total population. Moreover, these countries are geographically located near each other, with shared values and cultures.

This research aims to find out governments' policies used by Southeast Asian countries amidst the pandemic from the Islamic perspective. The Islamic paradigm can give a new perspective to observing this issue. The other goal of this research is to seek the relation between the diplomacy used by these countries and the Islamic paradigm of diplomacy.

This research will benefit the countries observed to know the diplomacy used during the pandemic in the Islamic view. Other than that, the findings could give more

insight into the types of diplomacy different than what is conventionally used. This research will benefit future research in the Islamic diplomacy field.

The main questions are what measures these countries do to cope during the pandemic and whether the type of diplomacy is congruent with the ones used in the time of Khalifah. To answer these questions, this article will start by describing any collaborative relations made by these countries with other countries. The fields of collaboration are varied, ranging from economic, socio-cultural, educational, and tourism to the health department. Then, it will elaborate on the ideal type of diplomacy used from the Islamic perspective.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses the descriptive qualitative method. A qualitative approach is a social research approach that describes and interprets the meaning of any symptom in a social context. It is the root of many concepts, including interviews (group or one-on-one), participant observation (in person or online), and textual analysis (paper or electronic). Unlike the quantitative approach, the qualitative approach does not require long-term immersion in a culture or a holistic examination of all social practices. (TRACY, 2020)

There are three core concepts of the qualitative approach. The three concepts are self-reflexivity, context, and thickness description. Self-reflexivity means making interpretations of people's rations using their past experiences, points of view, and roles that impact their interactions. The context in the qualitative approach is engaging in a scene and trying to get a sense of it. The qualitative approach attempts to understand an issue by examining and taking notes of small cues to draw a bigger picture. In the thickness description, the qualitative approach uses clear diction to inform and interpret a situation to convey its meaning. In the qualitative approach, meaning cannot be separated from this thick contextual description. By using qualitative methods, researchers are expected to obtain comprehensive data about the situation studied; this qualitative method will be used to analyze the Islamic diplomacy of ASEAN countries in the COVID-19 pandemic.

The primary purposes of this article are to find out what kind of diplomacy these countries used during the pandemic and whether the type of diplomacy is congruent with the ones used in the time of Khalifah. To answer these questions, this article will start by describing any collaborative relations made by these countries with other countries. The fields of collaboration are varied, ranging from economic, socio-cultural, educational, and tourism to the health department. Then, it will elaborate on the ideal type of diplomacy used from the Islamic perspective.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Islamic Diplomacy

Diplomacy is the institutionalized communication among internationally recognized representatives of internationally recognized entities through which these representatives produce, manage and distribute public goods (Maiti & Bidinger, 1981). More simply, diplomacy is the art of establishing relations with other countries. In a literal sense, diplomacy comes from the words Diplo and ma, which can mean assignment documents for envoys of the king or government (Saptomo, n.d.). In international relations between nations, diplomacy becomes a negotiating tool for various nations to achieve the nation's goals.

The structure of the international world, which is full of hierarchies of power, makes relations between one country and another based on specific goals and objectives. For this reason, diplomacy, a means of interaction between countries, is often assumed with various negative labels (Rahman, 2000). Diplomacy is often misunderstood as a negative endeavor full of covert tactics to deceive other countries. The art of diplomacy is misperceived as the art of distorting facts and changing the ideas of others just to achieve the speaker's goals.

However, learning from the past, it will be seen that diplomacy is an attempt to establish relations with other countries with great goals and reciprocal attitudes. Therefore, there is what is called clean diplomacy and open diplomacy. The positive qualities of those diplomacies are also found in Islamic diplomacy.

Islamic diplomacy can generally be interpreted as cooperation between countries according to Islamic religious principles. Islam states that the prophet Muhammad is the best of people in behavior. Therefore, everything Prophet Muhammad SAW does, especially about nations' relations, can be a good reference.

In Islam, the practice of diplomacy has long been done. This can be proven by Surah An Naml 27: 23-44, which contains the cooperation between the Prophet Solomon and Queen Balqis. In addition, the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. also sent its ambassadors to the Arabs, Abyssinians, Persians, and Byzantium. This proves that diplomatic relations between nations have long been formed in the history of Islam.

According to Rahman, essential points in Islamic Diplomacy can support an excellent diplomatic process. These points include:

a. Public Opinion

Accountability to God does not merely free a leader from responsibility to human beings. The transcendental relation of a person with God is private for that person's goodness. In contrast, the relation between a person and the others, called hablum minannas, must hold its accountability to the other counterpart before their

God. "People will see your work and always criticize you," warned Caliph Ali Bin Abu Talib.

b. Justice

Islam always brings forward justice for all people. Do justice for the sake of Allah and do justice to human beings as you do to yourself and your relatives whom you love. For if you do not pass, it means you have oppressed others, and while someone oppresses God's creatures, God will be the enemy of the oppressor in place of the oppressed. And if Allah becomes the enemy of a person, then He will answer the supplications and prayers of the oppressed, He will punish the oppressors.

c. Selection of Advisors

The governors were commanded not to choose traitors and greedy people as advisers. "A minister (assistant) who is worst for you is someone who helps you commit despicable acts in front of your eyes," said the caliph's warning. The best people are those who speak openly and do not support oppressive actions (dhalim).

d. An Integral Society

The rulers were always ordered to have direct contact with the people. They are commanded not to engage in acts of nepotism and favoritism. And don't just express approval for those around him and get rid of those whose rights are being trampled on.

e. Fulfilling Promises

If a peace treaty has been agreed with the enemy, it should be executed as best as possible. Keeping promises is sacred work. The betrayal of the peace treaty will have dangerous consequences. (Rahman, 2000)

Pandemic Plague in Islamic History

There have been three major epidemics in the history of the world. The first was the Plague of Justinian (mid-sixth century), the second was the Plague of the Black Death (mid-fourteenth century), and the last was the Bombay Plague in the late nineteenth century (Society & Society, 1974). Historically, these epidemics have significantly impacted deaths in the Middle East. As an area that is the epicenter of Islam, various efforts have been made by Islamic leaders to stop the spread of the epidemic.

In addition to these three plagues, in Islamic history, there are two more plagues, namely the Shirawayh Plague and the Amwas Plague. The last epidemic mentioned will be widely discussed in this study because it is related to the efforts of Caliph Umar R.A. in handling it. Caliph Umar R.A. was one of the Khulafaur Rashidin's leaders after the Prophet Muhammad's death. The closeness of Caliph Umar

with the Prophet Muhammad SAW and his success in eradicating the Amwas Plague under his leadership can be a reference for handling pandemics in the current era.

Three aspects can be considered in handling epidemics according to Islamic history; these aspects are: (a) Plague is forgiveness from Allah; people who die due to plague are included as martyrdom; (b) A Muslim is not allowed to enter or leave an area affected by the plague; (c) All disease comes from Allah.

Moreover, some lessons can be learned from handling the Amwas outbreak by Caliph Umar R.A. The first Caliph, Umar R.A., ordered to destroy the residences of those who died of the plague. With the advancement of science now, it is only known that this is the right decision because the plague in ancient times was carried by rats hiding in houses. In addition, viruses present and attached to inanimate objects can still live on these objects and potentially infect the next host. Caliph Umar was also ordered to live in the mountains and keep the distance from one house to another. Maintaining this distance was one of the critical aspects of overcoming the Amwas Plague at that time.

PREVIOUS STUDY

Other previous studies have widely discussed the topic of diplomacy in the pandemic era. An example is a study by Albert Triwibowo entitled: Diplomacy and COVID-19: A Reflection. In this study, it is explained that the essence of diplomacy is communication. It is also hoped that diplomacy can provide a way out of the current pandemic. It was described in the study that the diplomacy carried out by countries had adapted to the existing conditions (Triwibowo & Sharp, 2020). This study also discusses the importance of regional cooperation in overcoming the pandemic crisis.

This research is necessary because it shows the diplomatic efforts taken by Indonesia to overcome the prevailing pandemic crisis. This study also describes the efforts of other regional and international groups to cooperate with various adaptations related to the limitations faced due to the pandemic. The research presentation was apparent and provided multiple inputs on the effectiveness of the diplomacy methods other countries had taken during the pandemic.

However, this research only offers perspective from one country, Indonesia. The research is also in the realm of general diplomacy. This is what distinguishes this research from the previous study. This research focuses more on Islamic diplomacy. Islamic paradigm in diplomacy may give a new perspective as an option to learn.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Indonesia

Indonesia, as a country with the most Muslim citizen in the world, faces a late yet destructive effect of the corona. The predicate as the most populous country in Southeast Asia comes with its challenge: public health control. When other countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, and Australia, the closest countries to Indonesia, admitted the spread of COVID-19 in their territories in January 2020, Indonesia just registered the first case on March 26, 2020 (Martha, 2020). President Joko Widodo carried out the news in a press conference aired by several national television channels. The first case happened due to close contact with a Japanese man, who was confirmed positive after he arrived in Malaysia. Since then, the cases of COVID-19 infection in Indonesia have been accumulating. At first, the curve of COVID-19 infected cases in Indonesia is sloping. But the peak of the case happened in January 2021. The case reached more than 14.000 cases, probably because of Delta variant infection.

The effect of COVID-19 in Indonesia was multi-dimensional. It affected the health sector, economy, tourism, education, and social activities. There was a slowdown in Indonesia's domestic economic growth year on year from 4.97 % to 2.97% (Iswardhana, 2021). Developing countries that have large populations and large territories face significant challenges because they have only limited financial capacity. Despite all the difficulties, Indonesia still managed to do its part as an international actor. Indonesia offered help to many countries which have been hit hard by COVID-19. In July, Indonesia provided USD 1 million to the Palestinian Authority and USD 500,000 to The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in the context of humanitarian assistance in Palestine during the Pandemic era. And then, in December, Indonesia assisted Fiji, Timor Leste, and Solomon Island in handling COVID-19. The international solidarity shown by Indonesia was proof of Indonesia's commitment to act as a part of a global society.

Some of the measurements that the government of Indonesia has put to curb the spread of COVID are:

1. Attempting to do contact tracing
2. Preparing some hospitals for COVID-19 cases treatment and isolation
3. Enforcing PPKM/PSBB (social movement restriction)
4. Creating a special task force to handle the spread of the virus (Gugus Tugas Percepatan Penanganan COVID-19)
5. Continuously broadcasting the data of COVID-19 through social media

Since it is impossible to do traditional meetings for diplomacy, digital diplomacy was used by the Indonesian government during the pandemic. Several international meetings were held to ensure that cooperation with other countries was

well maintained. Most meeting held by the Embassy and Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia in the United States, and so is United Nations Security Council meeting, are held online (Ilmu et al., 2020). During the challenging time, diplomacy should act as a set of practices rather than merely being a communication channel (Triwibowo & Sharp, 2020). The diplomacy runs by some countries focuses on strengthening bilateral relations instead of acting together as an international society. Regarding this issue, many countries make use of their resources to help other countries in need to develop better relationships. Indonesia has already received support from other countries, such as Singapore, China, and South Korea (Triwibowo & Sharp, 2020). The help offered by these countries, including when South Korea only provides coronavirus test kits to Indonesia and the United States. As a producer of chloroquine raw materials, India only provides its raw materials to Indonesia. Meanwhile, apart from assisting Iran and Italy, China offered assistance to Indonesia (Aos Yuli Firdaus, 2020). The practice of diplomacy done by Indonesia can be seen in its role in the UNGA to promote the first resolution about coronavirus entitled "Global Solidarity to Fight COVID-19". Another international cooperation was the G-20 Extraordinary Summit on March 26, 2020,2 Ministerial Meeting of the Alliance for Multilateralism (AoM) Group on April 16, 2020 (Martha, 2020).

Indonesia is currently the Chair of the Foreign Policy and Global Health Initiative. This forum discusses and initiates health issues and multilateral political policies, consisting of Brazil, Norway, France, Senegal, Thailand, and Indonesia. Also, Indonesia is currently a member of the WHO Executive Board. This WHO executive body discusses and decides on the direction of policies and the world health agency's work plan (Aos Yuli Firdaus, 2020). These opportunities open the doors for successful vaccine diplomacy and health support. Indonesian vaccine diplomacy is aimed mainly at opening market access, paving the way, and overcoming various obstacles through bilateral approaches involving all stakeholders (Wangke, 2021). Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi has visited many countries such as China, England, and Switzerland to ensure the availability of vaccines for the Indonesian people. Thanks to the bilateral approaches, Indonesia has successfully obtained vaccines for Sinovac (China), Pfizer (US), and AstraZeneca (UK). Indonesia's main bilateral vaccine diplomacy is to ensure the availability of the 20 percent quota of the population provided by WHO. According to the Indonesian COVID-19 national website (COVID-19.go.id), there has been 49,801,823 Indonesian have already received 1st dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. It makes up 18,35% of the total population, while the WHO recommendation is 20%.

There are some aspects of Islamic perspectives in government pandemic policies in Indonesia. The most apparent one is integral society. It was proven by some aid given by Indonesia to its surrounding. Indonesia realized that it is a part of a bigger society. The actors in this society are interconnected. In Islam, Moslems are told to help each other, as written in Surah Al Maidah verse 2, "…And cooperate in

righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression." This practice can lead to ideal Islamic diplomacy if it is well enforced.

Social distancing is another government policy in concordance with the Islamic paradigm. Indonesia has some movement restriction protocols to ensure social distancing. This practice was also done by Khalifah Umar Bin Khattab R.A. when he fought the Amwas pandemic. But since the virus can also be transferred through bad personal hygiene, social distancing should have been followed by strict health protocol.

Indonesia's pandemic management can evaluate some things from the Islamic paradigm. The first is public opinion in managing the pandemic and strengthening society's trust. The government may invite some prominent social figures to share their ideas regarding the situation. The ministry of health can carry out two-way communication live on national television to better understand the case to the society.

The selection of advisors also plays an essential role in improving conditions. Indonesia has many potential brilliant figures who can give some good advice to the government. Choosing a well-respected and educated figure will provide a good idea for pandemic management. Still, it will make people feel more confident, thus increasing people's trust in the government's ability to control the situation.

Malaysia

Geographically, Malaysia is located next to Indonesia. Both countries share national borders and have almost the same culture and language because they come from the same ancestor. Thus, it is no wonder that both countries share similar ways of combating the pandemic. Malaysia has a fewer population than Indonesia, but this country also faces some challenges in slowing the outbreak.

The first case of COVID-19 in Malaysia was an imported case from Wuhan, China, on January 25, 2020. There were only a few cases in Malaysia afterward. Malaysia even tabulated zero new cases until February 27, 2020. However, this date marked the beginning of the second wave that observed an exponential rise of daily positive cases (Ganasegeran et al., 2020). Malaysia has been through three major waves of COVID-19 outbreaks since the announcement of the pandemic in March 2020. The first wave spanned from 25 January to 16 February 2020; the second wave lasted from February 27 and June 30, 2020; and the third has been ongoing since 8 September 2020. This situation called for an effective solution by the Malaysian government.

To flatten the curve of infection, the Malaysian government has imposed some movement restrictions for its citizen. Since the virus might quickly transfer through airborne droplets and fomites, it is wise for the government to enforce movement restrictions for more than 32 million people in Malaysia. The first Movement Control Order (MCO) and its subsequent phases, the Conditional Movement Control Order

(CMCO) and Recovery Movement Control Order (RMCO), succeeded in lowering the curve of COVID-19 cases down to low-double or single-digit reports daily by June 2020 (Aw et al., 2021).

The Malaysian government also introduced some measures to contain the outbreak that was formulated based on three principal strategies: (1) slowing the introduction of global infections; (2) slowing infection of local outbreaks; and (3) executing community mitigation strategies. Under MCO, the following measures were implemented: (1) prohibition of mass movements, religious, sports, social and cultural activities; (2) closure of business premises except for daily necessities and needs services; (3) self-quarantine and health check measures for those who returned from abroad; (4) restrictions on tourists and visitors; (5) closure of schools, kindergartens and higher institutions of learning; and (6) closure of all government and private premises except for essential services like water, electricity, telecommunications. If one disobeys the MCO, that person will be fined or detained. Unfortunately, relying on rigorous social distancing methods, like MCO, will not be adequate in controlling the outbreak. Basic measures in infectious disease control must be strengthened as these measures play the most critical role in this epidemic (Altahir et al., 2020). The government tried to control and limit activities and mass assembly in religious, business, education, sports, cultural, and social activities except for supermarkets, public markets, grocery stores, and stores selling necessities. For community-based control measures, outdoor restriction measures were also enforced, whereby only one resident from a family was allowed to go out at one time and within 10 km of the residence. Moreover, the government also shared some advice on community mitigation measures, including (1) obeying the cancellation or postponements of ad hoc or planned events, sports, and religious activities; (2) high compliance with the practice of physical distancing measures and the usage of face mask; (3) reducing flight and public transportation services; (4) self-quarantine at home; (5) changes to vital essential services like funerals to minimize crowd size and exposure to body fluids; and (6) avoidance of misinformation. For the last measurement, the government has made some official websites to tackle hoaxes regarding the virus. Besides the website, the government has also made use of social media to share the news, including the Official Portal of the MoH, a particular Facebook user account called the Crisis Preparedness and Response Centre (CRPC), Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM), and CRPC KKM Telegram. To ensure mental health maintenance during the pandemic with some strict movement restriction rules, Malaysia has introduced psychological services by establishing care lines and virtual counseling sessions. The use of digitalization in improving the health care system in Malaysia was maximized as a solution to movement restriction. Malaysia has adopted the carefully crafted Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) based on the avoidance of 3Cs (Crowded places, Confined spaces, Close conversation) and the practice of 3Ws (Wash hands, Wear masks, Warn against risks, symptoms, prevention, and treatment) (Ganasegeran

et al., 2020).

Aside from controlling the movement of Malaysians, the government tried to reduce the effect of the pandemic from several aspects. An alliance involving 38 professional medical societies was established on March 1, 2020, to support the Ministry of Health (MoH) in healthcare. Another measure the MoH took to cushion the impact of COVID-19 was setting up a special fund known as the COVID- 19 Fund. In its effort to counter COVID-19 infection, the MoH also set up a provisional hospital in the Agro Exposition Park Serdang (MAEPS) in coordination with The National Disaster Management Agency (Shah et al., 2020).

In international relations, Malaysia works closely with China, South Korea, the United Arab Emirates, and its ASEAN neighbors to maintain the supply of essential goods and services (Umair et al., 2021). Other forms of cooperation with other countries can be found in bilateral or multilateral online meetings. Some help comes from international allies to ease the COVID-19 condition in Malaysia. Some of which were from China which sent 50.000 PPE and 500 ventilators, and the European Union's commitment to helping Malaysia during this difficult time.

From an Islamic perspective on diplomacy, Malaysia has done exactly like what has been thought by Amwas pandemic management in Islamic Era. The strict measures applied by the Malaysian government can reduce the outbreak. The government heard the public opinion through some state representatives. The justice part of Islamic diplomacy was given by some health funds provided by the Malaysian government to unfortunate citizens affected by the pandemic.

Brunei Darussalam

Despite being often called a tiny country, Brunei Darussalam has proved to be the most resilient country amidst COVID-19 compared to its neighboring countries. This success is earned by the synchronous effort of governments and its citizen. The first case in Brunei was derived from Malaysia's case. It was from the Tablighi Jamaat cluster. Of 81 people from Brunei Darussalam who attended the event in Malaysia, 19 of them were confirmed to contract the disease. It was not long before this super-spreader event became the first COVID-19 cluster in Brunei Darussalam.

The Brunei Darussalam government took fast and effective actions regarding the outbreak. The government uses many media to spread information effectively. The public communication done by the government was more transparent and responsive than usual (Wong et al., 2020). The government's efforts to do public diplomacy are arranging press conferences regarding the issues through national television and social media channels. Governments also invited newspaper reporters and some social media influencers to a closed press conference session. A practical contact tracing application, The BruHealth, also played a vital role in flattening the curve (Case, 2021). Moreover, the contract tracing teams are teaming with police officers to ensure

investigation safety. Brunei Darussalam also adopted a policy of RT-PCR testing in the absence of symptoms (Wong et al., 2020). This policy helps reduce the possibility of disease transmission in close contact with the infected people and the suspected cases.

While trying to minimize the spread of the virus, the government also ensured public diplomacy ran well by eliminating discrimination. Cases of discrimination have happened since the early spread of the disease. Since China was the first epicentrum of the pandemic, a glance of xenophobia happened in Brunei Darussalam. The following case occurred to the family whose member attended the tabligh in Malaysia. To address this problem, join cabinet ministers held a press conference.

In international relations, the Brunei Darussalam government donated COVID-19 test kits to the Malaysian and Philippines governments. At the same time, the Brunei Darussalam government also received medical equipment such as test kits, face masks, and hand sanitizers from China, Singapore, and Vietnam.

From the Islamic point of view, Brunei Darussalam scores high on some issues. The most impressive aspect is integral society, in this case, integrating Bruneian through the digitalization of health. The app launched by the government facilitated contact tracing, which was important to notify other citizens about nearby cases. Brunei Darussalam also made a great decision in selecting advisors. A good and reputable doctor was chosen to inform society about the updates on pandemics. This gives society a feeling of security and trust. Moreover, public opinion was also heard through live conferences by the special task force. This table shows the success of Brunei Darussalam in controlling the outbreaks.

COUNTRY	DATE	TOTAL CASE
Indonesia	22 March 2020	514
Malaysia		1.306
Brunei Darussalam		83
Indonesia	15 October 2020	349.160
Malaysia		18.128
Brunei Darussalam		147
Indonesia	2 August 2021	3,409,658
Malaysia		1,113,272
Brunei Darussalam		337

Table 1. Data of COVID-19 Cases in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei

CONCLUSION

From the data and discussion above, it can be concluded that Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei face the same threat in different manners. Among the three

countries, Indonesia is the one that makes the most international cooperation to fight the pandemic. Each of these countries has another underlying condition that needs a different approach to control the pandemic. Indonesia is an extensive and populous country, making citizen control harder. Under the Islamic diplomacy paradigm, Indonesia can choose a better representative figure to maximize public opinion. Indonesia and Malaysia can learn from Brunei to advance their health digital and choose a good and respected advisor to guide the public so that they will obey the government. Overall, these countries have done their best to follow the teaching of Khalifah Umar Bin Khattab regarding the pandemic. A social movement is restricted everywhere. This ensures infected people cannot escape from isolation and spread the virus.

REFERENCES

Altahir, A., Mathur, N., Thiruchelvam, L., Mustafa Abro, G., Radzi, S., Dass, S., Gill, B. S., Zulkifli, S., & Asirvadam, V. (2020). *Modeling the Impact of Lock-down on COVID-19 Spread in Malaysia*. *May*. https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.07.17.208371

Aos Yuli Firdaus. (2020). Multi-Tracing Diplomacy As Indonesia's Strategy In. *Journal of Social Political Sciences*, *1*(3), 168–177.

Aw, S. B., Teh, B. T., Ling, G. H. T., Leng, P. C., Chan, W. H., & Ahmad, M. H. (2021). The COVID-19 pandemic situation in Malaysia: Lessons learned from the perspective of population density. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *18*(12). https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18126566

Case, C.-T. (2021). *Leadership and Crisis Communication During. May*.

Ganasegeran, K., Hock Ch'ng, A. S., & Looi, I. (2020). COVID-19 In Malaysia: Crucial Measures in Critical Times. *Journal of Global Health*, *10*(2), 1–4. https://doi.org/10.7189/jogh.10.020333

Ilmu, J., Internasional, H., Indonesia, D., Perserikatan, D., Jepang, K. W., Kajian, S., & Indonesia, U. (2020). *MANDALA : Diplomasi Digital Sebagai Dampak Pandemi Global COVID-19 : Studi Kasus MANDALA :* 1–6.

Iswardhana, M. R. (2021). Indonesia's South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) as the Future of Diplomacy for World Solidarity to Overcome the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Global South Review*, *2*(1), 25. https://doi.org/10.22146/globalsouth.62532

Martha, J. (2020). Pemanfaatan Diplomasi Publik Oleh Indonesia Dalam Krisis COVID-19. *Jurnal Ilmiah Hubungan Internasional*, *0*(0), 121–130. https://doi.org/10.26593/jihi.v0i0.3859.121-130

Rahman, S. (2000). *Diplomasi ISLAM* (Issue 021).

Saptomo, B. (n.d.). *Penguatan diplomasi islam*. 15–20.

Shah, A. U. M., Safri, S. N. A., Thevadas, R., Noordin, N. K., Rahman, A. A., Sekawi, Z., Ideris, A., & Sultan, M. T. H. (2020). COVID-19 outbreak in Malaysia: Actions taken by the Malaysian government. *International Journal of Infectious Diseases*, *97*, 108–116. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijid.2020.05.093

Society, A. O., & Society, A. O. (1974). *Plague in Early Islamic History Author (s): Michael W . Dols Published by : American Oriental Society Stable URL : https://www.jstor.org/stable/600071 REFERENCES Linked references are available on JSTOR for this article : reference # references _ tab _. 94*(3), 371–383.

Triwibowo, A., & Sharp, P. (2020). Diplomacy and COVID-19: a Reflection. *Jurnal Ilmiah Hubungan Internasional*, *0*(0), 103–112. https://doi.org/10.26593/jihi.v0i0.3861.103-112

Umair, S., Waqas, U., & Faheem, M. (2021). COVID-19 pandemic: Stringent measures of Malaysia and implications for other countries. *Postgraduate Medical Journal*, *97*(1144), 130–132. https://doi.org/10.1136/postgradmedj-2020-138079

Wangke, H. (2021). Indonesia ' S Vaccine Diplomacy for the World Health. *International Relations Division: Info Singkat, A Brief Study of Actual and Strategic Issues*, *XIII*(1), 17–12. https://berkas.dpr.go.id/puslit/files/info_singkat/Info Singkat-XIII-1-I-P3DI-Januari-2021-170-EN.pdf

Wong, J., Koh, W. C., Alikhan, M. F., Abdul Aziz, A. B. Z., & Naing, L. (2020). Responding to COVID-19 in Brunei Darussalam: Lessons for small countries. *Journal of Global Health*, *10*(1), 1–4. https://doi.org/10.7189/JOGH.10.010363