

Social Harmony in the Attempt of Preventing and Controlling Covid-19 as the Representation of Pluralism Moderation in Surakarta Indonesia

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Abstract. Chinese and Javanese ethnic communities living together harmoniously are a multiculturalism reality in Sudiroprajan Surakarta Indonesia. Covid-19 pandemic coming from China results in a distinctive sensitivity to Sudiroprajan community. This research studies the social practice of Sudiroprajan community in preventing and handling Covid-19 pandemic. Observation and in-depth interviews with Urban Village Head, Chinese and Javanese ethnic leaders, *Jogo Tonggo* Task Force, the Logistic Command Post provider, and some Sudiroprajan people were conducted in this phenomenological study. Data source triangulation was used to validate data, and interactive data analysis to analyze data. The result shows pluralism constructed as a social reality and collective meaning in Sudiroprajan community. Pluralism is symbolized in such cultural acculturation products as *Grebeg Sudiro*. Concord and diversity acceptance strengthen the community to resolve some conflicts and problems including Covid-19 pandemic. Inter-ethnic communities collaborate to prevent and handle Covid-19 pandemic through such programs as *Jogo Tonggo*, and providing logistics for healthcare services.

Keywords: Pluralism, Social Harmony, Covid-19 Prevention and Control

1. Introduction

Multiculturalism results in a social dynamic in community life in dealing with various problems and conflicts. As a sensitive issue, multiculturalism vulnerably affects the community negatively. However, through an appropriate strategy, multiculturalism can be a strength for the communities to overlap with each other and thereby can be a resolution to social problems. Sudiroprajan usually called *Pecinan* village has been the symbol of diversity in Surakarta Indonesia since hundreds of years ago. It is because the village consists of Chinese and Javanese ethnic communities living adjacently [1].

Sudiroprajan is one of urban villages (*kelurahan*) in Jebres Sub District Surakarta City, consisting of 4 kampungs: Balong, Pasar Gede, Samaan and Sudiroprajan. It is in this region that the biggest traditional market in Surakarta is located, *Pasar Gede Hardjonagoro* (Hardjonagoro Big Market) where the tradition symbolizing the acculturation of Chinese and

Javanese cultures was born, *Grebeg Sudiro*. Social harmony is reflected in the social life of Sudiroprajan community, one of which is the celebration of Chinese New Year (Imlek). People hold a kind of cavalcade carrying *gunungan* around Sudiroprajan region. The cavalcade involves Chinese and Javanese companies wearing such cultural costumes as Barongsai, Reog, and other traditional costumes. The celebration of *Grebeg Sudiro* ended with turning on lampoons in front of Tien Kok Sie Temple in Pasar Gede. This cultural activity becomes an icon of Sudiroprajan community's pluralism-based social harmony [2].

Living socially in a multicultural society condition with diverse cultures, customs, ethnicities, languages, and habits generates challenges. A multicultural society is faced with challenges to the ability to live adjacently to achieve concord and unity. Social conflict and problems are the consequence of weak social harmony in a multicultural society. The social problems likely to occur are, among others, social discrimination, social disintegration, stereotype, ethnocentrism, primordialism, and social gap and conflict. Social discrimination results from the imbalanced power arising from the assumption of some groups consider that they are better than others within society. Social discrimination can include the attitude of treating differently or alienating certain races, classes, religions, sex, ethnic, gender, social class, and physical condition. Social disintegration or disorganization is the condition in which the unity of the community is broken due to conflict and contradiction. Those in conflict do not want integration because no consensus is achieved and social norms weaken in the society [3,4].

The next problem challenging the multicultural society is a stereotype. A stereotype is an impression or a suspicious feeling over the culture and habit of a group in a community based on uncertainly true subjectivity. For example, an assumption is that Chinese ethnicities tend to be stingy and deceitful in terms of financial management. Then, ethnocentrism is a thought inherent to an individual or group considering that they are better than others and thereby inhibits assimilation, acculturation, intergroup relation, and social integration process within society. Primordialism is an attitude of holding tightly to anything inherent to an individual or a congenital group. Primordialism is a form of loyalty to the self-group. Furthermore, social conflict is a social process when an individual or a group of individuals attempts to achieve its objective by means of resisting the opponent sometimes followed by threat or violence. One of the factors causing social conflict is the difference of interest between individuals and groups, whether economic, political, social, or cultural interest. The next challenge is the social gap resulting from the policy-making prioritizing economic growth over the main objective of development and therefore some aspects are ignored, for example, the social attitude and behavior of an individual, traditional economic patterns, and ethnicity uniqueness [5].

Those problems become an inevitable challenge to the multicultural society in Sudiroprajan. Various behaviors should be developed in living socially within a multicultural society, one of which is to grow sympathy. This attitude is reflected in an individual's feeling of being interested which leads to the establishment of cross-culture, -ethnic, religious, or -generation interaction. In addition, empathy should also be grown in living socially through an ability to feel other individuals or groups' leading an individual or a group is encouraged to help others. Society should appreciate different sex, race, ethnic, culture, thinking, and opinion existing. Appreciating differences means considering that nothing is bad and should be eliminated; thus a consciousness grows that this condition is reasonable. The attitude of appreciating differences can give a lesson and develop tolerance between individuals or groups. A multicultural society should maintain tolerance as an attitude of appreciating different opinions, perspectives, beliefs, habits, cultures, behaviors, or cultural practices in contradiction with their stance. The attitude of tolerance focuses on the form of different social

actions or cultural practices in each social group. The spirit of nationalism in the Indonesians has become the foundation for the people to unite in diversity including on a regional scale. This spirit is an appropriate strategy to deal with conflict in a multicultural society because nationalism overrides differences for the sake of collective integrity [6].

Multicultural education should be implemented to create equality of degree among various groups of society. Multicultural education is delivered in the form of socialization by many parties such as family, school, society, government, and mass media. The people's consciousness of multiculturalism generates inclusiveness, the acceptance or recognition of other individuals or groups with different social-cultural backgrounds. The implementation of inclusiveness in developing tolerance, democracy, and anti-discrimination is the manifestation of individual and group human rights that can prevent a conflict from occurring due to the difference of primordial background. Meanwhile, this condition cannot be achieved before discrimination disappears. People should develop accommodative attempts focusing on avoiding some parties feeling underestimated or defeated. The accommodative attempt to maintain social harmony in multicultural society can be taken through upholding the Declaration of Human Rights and developing cultural insight. These attempts can be represented in the attempt that has been taken by Sudiropujan community by holding multicultural performances and building a forum for intergroup communication integration. These varying attitudes and attempts are oriented toward creating social harmony in Sudiropujan community [7].

The pluralism-based social dynamic in Surodiprajan community is represented in various attempts of dealing with social problems and conflicts. This region with diverse communities vulnerable to conflict can change the challenge into a resolution to deal with various social, economic, health, and other problems. Covid-19 pandemic as a health problem affecting various classes of communities, of course, becomes a challenge to Sudiropujan community. Moreover, Covid-19 virus coming from China likely generates a distinctive sentiment among Chinese ethnics living there. This research aims to study the social practice of pluralism construction as a social reality in the attempt of preventing and handling Covid-19 pandemic in Sudiropujan Surakarta Indonesia using social reality construction theory analysis [8].

2. Methods

This research used a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach to study multicultural community culture in Sudiropujan in facing Covid-19 pandemic. The informants of the research were Urban Village Head, Chinese and Javanese ethnic leaders in Sudiropujan, the Guard Your Neighbors (*Jogo Tonggo*) task force, citizens providing Logistic Command Posts, and some Sudiropujan people. Data collection was conducted through observation and in-depth interviews. Data validation was conducted using data source triangulation, and data analysis was conducted interactively encompassing data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification [9].

3. Results and Discussion

Sudiropujan village is a symbol of multiculturalism in Surakarta Indonesia. A community environment with different ethnicities, tribes, religions, and cultures interacting

with each other will create a variety of cultural acculturation phenomena. The dimension affecting this cultural acculturation is the pluralism-based social-cultural values of the Chinese ethnic community. Historically, Chinese people coming to the Sudiroprajan area then created families along with Javanese ones generating *totok* and *peranakan* concepts. *Totok* refers to Chinese native people who migrated to Indonesia, while *peranakan* refers to Chinese people who have lived for a long time in Indonesia. Socialization in the family also plays a part in creating cultural assimilation and acculturation [10]. Children are accustomed to difference and diversity through social interaction established between actors with different social and cultural values. It is this factor that creates social harmony in the Sudiroprajan community environment. Openness to diversity indicated in the concepts of *totok* and *peranakan* symbolizes Chinese ethnic's acceptance of ethnic and cultural diversities [11].

Pluralism as a social reality is constructed through objectification externalization and internalization [8]. Chinese and Javanese ethnic communities have a distinctive construction in viewing their interethnic communities. Diversity becomes a construction of reality produced by each ethnic group. Through the process of internalizing respective ethnics' social and cultural values based on the acceptance of diversity, the objectification of pluralism construction will be created as a social reality. Furthermore, diversity as an individual meaning changes into pluralism as a collective meaning. This manifestation of pluralism is indicated by concord behavior in living within the community in Sudiroprajan.

The symbol of pluralism in Sudiroprajan communities is, among others, the organization of traditional events like *the Imlek* celebration called *Grebeg Sudiro*. This event symbolizes the assimilation of interethnic cultures resulting in traditional richness. This tradition is held in every Imlek celebration by presenting various celebration models like establishing a grandiose stage, holding a carnival, presenting *barongsai* with Javanese gamelan accompaniment, and distributing *kue keranjang* (yearly cake or seasonal cake) in the area around *Klenteng* and *Pasar Gedhe Harjonagara* (Harjonagara Big Market). The continuity of *the Grebeg Sudiro* organization makes the Chinese New Year celebration the tourism icon in Surakarta. Many people waiting for this event come and celebrate it annually. It becomes the construction of social reality in the pluralism-based Surakarta community [12]. Pluralism, as symbolized by *Grebeg Sudiro*, represents social harmony in a diverse community environment composed of Javanese and Chinese ethnicities. Even the concept of *kampung Pecinan* appears to be a new identity for this village (*kampung*) in Surakarta City. The philosophical meaning of *Grebeg Sudiro* becomes a plurality symbol of different cultures, races, tribes, ethnicities, religions, etc in Sudiroprajan. Plurality is also represented by this event managing process conducted by such Sudiroprajan organizations as Tourism-conscious groups (*Pokdarwis*), Youth Organizations (*Karang Taruna*), Catholic Youths (*Orang Muda Katolik*), Christian Youths (*Orang Muda Kristen*), Islam Spirituality (*Rohani Islam*), and *Barongsai* group from Surakarta Community Unity (*Persatuan Masyarakat Surakarta* or PMS). Even in its implementation, 90 percent of *barongsai* players are members of the Javanese ethnic community [13].

The pluralism-based social reality construction of the Sudiroprajan community is reflected in its people's harmonious living behavior. During the Imlek celebration, the Chinese ethnics will provide food with the Javanese ethnic people's help. Similarly, during the Eid al-Fitr celebration, Chinese ethnic people will help Muslims. In Sudiroprajan Javanese and Chinese interethnic marriage generates a concept of *ampyang*, a traditional food symbolizing social life harmony between Chinese ethnic symbolized by peanuts, and Javanese ethnic symbolized by palm sugar [14].

Social harmony established through a pluralism-based social reality construction of the Sudiroprajan community highly affects the attempt of preventing and handling the Covid-19 pandemic [15,16] Covid-19 pandemic induced by Coronavirus Disease found firstly in Wuhan China is at risk of generating sensitivity in the form of discrimination against Chinese race in multicultural areas, including Sudiroprajan. It becomes a challenge and vulnerability for multicultural communities in resolving problems and conflicts to maintain social harmony. The pluralism-social reality construction in the social environment of the Sudiroprajan community can resolve this vulnerability and become an appropriate attempt and strategy to prevent and handle the Covid-19 pandemic [17].

During the Covid-19 pandemic, members of the Sudiroprajan community were collaborating in an attempt of preventing and handling the disease. It can be seen from such attempts taken as activating Guard Your Neighbors program and establishing a logistic command post. Surrounding neighbors were helping each other to help supply the food needed for those conducting self-quarantine. Even *the Grebeg Sudiro* celebration which has been the icon of Surakarta was not held during the Covid-19 pandemic as a response to the Government's regulation to cancel any cultural activities potentially resulting in the crowd. The sudiroprajan community responded well to this policy by obeying and implementing the rule. It proves that the pluralism of the Sudiroprajan community has been a social reality and affects social practice in the form of collaboration in preventing and handling the Covid-19 pandemic as a collective problem.

4 Conclusion

Pluralism has been a collective meaning and created a social reality construction of the Sudiroprajan community. These pluralism actualizations and moderation are manifested in the forms of collaboration, concord, and mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) implemented by the members of the community in facing dynamic social problems. The covid-19 pandemic as a global problem is a sensitive problem as well to the social harmony of the Sudiroprajan community. However, this challenge can be utilized well by the community with a collaborative strategy of preventing and handling Covid-19 through such attempts as holding the Guard Your Neighbors (*Jogo Tonggo*) program at the kelurahan level, providing logistic command post, and helping neighbors in Sudiroprajan community environment. Those attempts become social practices of pluralism construction as the social reality of the Sudiroprajan community.

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