

# The Functions of Social Capital and Local Wisdom in Handling Covid-19 Pandemic in West Kalimantan

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## Abstract

Covid-19 has caused anxiety in the world community. This impacts the multicultural community in West Kalimantan in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Some efforts are made with social capital and local wisdom in the form of the *Tolak Bala* ritual as prevention so that the pandemic does not have a broad impact. This study aims to reveal the function of community social capital towards the values of local wisdom in the form of traditional rituals practiced by multicultural communities in pleading to prevent the spread of Covid-19. The subjects in this study were traditional leaders and people from various ethnic groups in West Kalimantan. The results show that the function of social capital and local wisdom used with different rituals and traditional ceremonies is a form of self-defense to avoid Covid-19.

**Keywords:** *Tradition, Ritual, Local Wisdom.*



## A. INTRODUCTION

The spread of coronavirus that has occurred around the world harms human survival. The number of fatalities due to the coronavirus has increased, especially in West Kalimantan. The government is making efforts to handle the spread of the coronavirus so that the spread in West Kalimantan does not have a broad impact and there is no increase in patients affected by the coronavirus. The local community also makes efforts to prevent the spread of coronavirus using ancestral heritage, and the West Kalimantan provincial government responded positively, most importantly is they keep carrying out the provisions of the health protocol, considering that this activity involved various communities and leaders as an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Local wisdom was carried out (Arditama, 2020) *Jogo tonggo* as well (Rani & Safarinda, 2020). The policy of *jogo tonggo* (taking care of neighbors) (Shodiq, 2021) *Jogo tonggo* contains the value of *gotong royong* (teamwork) and religiosity (Fadhil & Lidiawati, 2021) in handling covid-19, the community also implements those values by establishing a task force and community empowerment, (Kurniawan, 2020) forming a working group for homemakers. The role of Village-Owned Enterprises is needed (Muhammad et al., 2021) to facilitate local wisdom (Ibrahim & Nugrahani, 2021) in farming traditions and forests as a place of protection. (Sempo, 2020) methods for handling pandemic outbreaks in Islamic tradition based on hadith and local wisdom of the Islamic community, as well as (Ibrahim & Nugrahani, 2021) religious ceremonies (Tawaf rituals around the village). The community's enthusiasm to participate in preserving culture minimizes the impact of local cultural shifts due to

globalization and the increasingly active role of local communities (Fitriasari et al., 2019). By maintaining local wisdom and sustainable actions to improve the quality of human resources (Fitriasari, 2021).

Malays, Dayaks, and Chinese, in preventing the spread of COVID-19, carried out a traditional ritual known as "*Tolak Bala*". The spread of the coronavirus is a severe concern. With an increase in the number of patients affected by COVID-19, the people of West Kalimantan carry out the ritual of "*Tolak Bala*". The traditional ritual of "*Tolak Bala*" is performed by ethnic Malays, Dayaks, and Chinese. Ethnic Dayaks, through the Dayak Customary Council (DAD) of West Kalimantan, issued an appeal to all DAD districts and cities of West Kalimantan Province through a letter from the West Kalimantan Province Board of Directors Number: 301/Int/DAD-KALBAR/III/2020, regarding prevention and increasing awareness of the spread of the Corona Virus (Covid-19) to hold a "*Tolak Bala*" ritual which is expected to break the chain of the spread of COVID-19. With the Dayak tradition as an effort to repel the covid-19. The name of the ritual is Ba'samsam, which aims to clean oneself, ask for safety and vigilance and maintain health.

Several districts carried out the Tolak Bala ritual ceremony in West Kalimantan: Sambas, Bengkayang, Hedgehog, Sanggau, Sekadau, Sintang, and Kapuas Hulu to ward off the spread of the Corona Virus -19, which is currently spreading around the world, including Indonesia. Likewise, the Chinese ethnic community, the Chinese in general, is influenced by their tradition, like Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, performing the "*Tolak Bala*" ritual to ward off the spread of COVID-19, known as the flower bath. The ritual implementation is carried out solemnly and carrying out the ritual procession, all residents follow the physical distance procedure and maintain their health to prevent the spread of the coronavirus -19. Husain (2020), *Sipa' sipakatau* (cultural values that aim to humanize each other respecting each other in any circumstances). Made et al., (2020) *menyama braya* (cultural values mean equality, brotherhood, and social recognition that we are brothers in joy and sorrow). Aswati et al. (2020) also carried out socialization and education for COVID-19 handlers, namely (Prasetio, 2021) ways to handle covid-19 with local wisdom such as using local plants (Rumilah et al., 2020) Jamu (herb derived from various herbal plants) and traditional values.

From this background, what is the function of social capital in the Tolak Bala ritual carried out in handling the Covid-19 pandemic? The objectives of this study are: to determine the role of social capital and the implementation of the Tolak Bala ritual in addressing the covid-19 pandemic in West Kalimantan. The form of local wisdom in the "*Tolak Bala*" ritual tradition in the Malay, Dayak, and Chinese ethnic communities is the community's effort to avoid the covid-19 pandemic, and there is a religious aspect that is asking for protection and a form of gratitude to God for the success of the "*Tolak Bala*" ritual. Hope that God grants this ritual and the community can live without the anxiety of Covid-19.

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. Public Policy**

The definition of public policy, according to experts, is very diverse. One of the definitions of public policy is given by Eyestone. He said that “broadly,” public policy can be defined as “the relationship of a unit of government with its environment”. According to Anderson, “policy is a direction of action that has a purpose set by an actor or several actors in overcoming a problem or a problem”. Gianttaya stated, “policy is a tactic and strategy directed to achieve a goal”. Therefore, a policy contains three elements, namely: (1) identification of the objectives to be achieved; (2) tactics or strategies of various steps to achieve the desired goal; and (3) providing various inputs to enable the actual implementation of public policy tactics or strategies (Ngabiyanto et al., 2019).

Policy studies result from contributions from four significant figures: Lasswell establishing a “think-tank” and approaching problems using a multidisciplinary approach through the stages in the public policy process. Simon, by emphasizing the decision-making process centered on rationality, Lindblom supports the approach of “incrementalism”, and Easton conceptualizes the relationship between inputs, policy making, policy outcomes, and the wider environment (Ockwell et al., 2019).

The development of the word “policy” is further a translation of the word “policy” in English, which means taking care of problems or public interests or government administration. Policies have a heavier emphasis on actions (products), namely policies that are determined subjectively. In its operative sense, the policy can be defined as:

- a. An outline of provisions;
- b. Which is as a guide, guide or guidance to reach an understanding of the intent, method, and or means;
- c. For every business and activity of an organized group of people;
- d. So that there is a dynamic movement of action that is integrated, in line, and in rhythm to achieve specific common goals (Elander et al., 2022).

The policy is also defined as matters concerning government policy or an instrument of government, not only in the sense of government which only concerns the state apparatus, but also governance that touches on the management of public resources. Policies are essentially decisions or choices of actions that directly regulate the management and distribution of natural, financial, and human resources for the public interest, namely the people, residents, communities, or citizens. The policy results from synergy, compromise, partnership, or even competition between various ideas, theories, ideologies, and interests representing a country’s political system (Capano et al., 2020).

Conceptually, there are various understandings given by experts about policy. But in general, “policy” can be said to be a formulation of government decisions that become guidelines for behavior to overcome problems or problems in which there are goals, plans, decisions, solutions, activities, and programs to be implemented.

According to Eulau and Prewitt, quoted by Jones, that policy is a permanent decision characterized by consistent and repeatable behavior from those who make and from those who obey the decision. Next, Jones analyzes the components of policy understanding which consist of:

- a. The goal, or desired goal;
- b. Plan or proposal, namely a specific understanding to achieve the goal;
- c. Programs namely authorized efforts to achieve goals;
- d. The decision are actions to determine goals, make plans, implement, and evaluate plans;
- e. The effect is the plan's consequences (intentional or not, primary or secondary, calculated beforehand or not, previously estimated or not) (Battaglio et al., 2019).

Solichin Abdul Wahab explained the various uses of policy terms, namely: (1) a brand for a specific field of activity; (2) a statement regarding the general purpose or certain desired conditions; (3) special proposals; (4) government decisions; (5) form of formal ratification; (6) programs; (7) output; (8) final result; (9) theory or model; and (10) process.

Thomas R. Dye defines government policy as "whatever governments choose to do or not to do". It is argued that if the government chooses to do something, there must be a purpose, and the policy must cover all government actions so it is not merely a statement of the government's or government's will.

Meanwhile, James E. Anderson argues that (1) government policies always have specific goals or are goal-oriented actions; (2) the policy contains actions or patterns of action of government officials; (3) the policy is what the government does, so it is not what the government has just intended or stated to do something; (4) the government policy is favorable in the sense that it is the government's decision to do something or not to do something; and (5) government policies in a positive sense are based or always based on laws and regulations and are coercive or authoritative (Hidayat et al., 2022).

The facts mentioned above have specific implications for the concept of state policy, including:

- a. State policies are actions that lead to goals rather than random or coincidental behavior or actions. State policy in the modern political system is generally not an act of chance but an action that is planned;
- b. Policies essentially consist of interrelated and patterned actions that lead to specific goals carried out by government officials and are not independent decisions;
- c. Policies are related to what the government does and particular fields, for example regulating the implementation of education, the economy, public housing, poverty alleviation, and so on;

State policy may be positive, but it may also be negative. In its positive form, state policy may include some form of government action intended to influence a particular issue. In the negative form, it may consist of government officials' decisions

not to act or not to take any action in matters where government intervention is urgently needed (Jackson et al., 2020).

### **C. METHOD**

This study aims to obtain information about the efforts of social capital function and local wisdom in handling the COVID-19 pandemic in Malay, Dayak, and Chinese ethnic ritual traditions in West Kalimantan. This research method is also known as ethnographic research. According to Sugiyono (2011), qualitative research methods are “based on the philosophy of post-positivism, used to examine the condition of natural objects”. The qualitative descriptive method, as stated by Nawawi (2012), “descriptive method can be interpreted as a problem-solving procedure that is investigated by describing the current state of the subject or object of research based on the facts that appear, or as they are. In this study, the researcher uses an ethnographic approach, although the meaning of culture is very broad, ethnographic studies usually focus on patterns of activity, language, beliefs, rituals, and ways of life. This research is classified as qualitative research, so the research subjects are the parties who are the research targets or sources that can provide the selected information.

This study used data sources, informants who include the governor of West Kalimantan Province, Malay, Dayak, and Chinese community leaders, actors of cultural traditions, and equipped with literature studies to complete the theory and discussion. (Guo et al., 2021) control of the 2019 (COVID-19) coronavirus disease outbreak from various alternatives (Umesh et al., 2022) consolidates the COVID-19 literature with immune, respiratory, and mental health systems to anticipate (Dlamini et al., 2020) undertake a spatial risk assessment of emerging pandemics under data scarcity.

### **D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

#### **1. Social Capital and Indigenous Wisdom of West Kalimantan in Facing the Pandemic**

A great nation is a nation with a strong character that comes from the values extracted from the culture of its people. Local wisdom is the formation of noble character, which gives a national culture root and builds national identity (Daniah, 2016). Local wisdom is a term that sticks to the surface by adopting the principles, advice, order, norms, and behavior of ancestors in the past which are still necessary to be applied in managing various emerging phenomena. Local wisdom is part of the cultural construction (Jhon Haba in Irwan Abdullah, 2008). (Liu et al., 2021) the effectiveness of environmental collaboration in pandemic control is predicted by ecological, social capital (community involvement and citizen participation) and hierarchical direction by the government through setting priority policies and providing support (Li et al., 2022), namely the public's attention to the covid-19 pandemic (Rabow et al., 2021) which has an impact on health workers because of the sudden and growing pandemic situation. Opdenakker & Van Damme (2021) post-



Covid-19 pandemic preparedness with preventive measures (Fan et al., 2021), the government's strategic actions in preventing or controlling emergencies, and people's safetyC

The local wisdom embedded by the people of West Kalimantan is an ancestral heritage passed down from generation to generation and used by the community as a means of interaction in daily life so that the harmony of life can be established between humans, nature, and God. Local wisdom in handling Covid-19 is an effort to fortify or protect oneself from exposure to Covid-19. Geographically, the Dayak people still hold the belief in certain places, particular objects such as stones, big trees, lakes, lubuk (deep river water), and others have rulers, which they call: Jubata, Petara, Ala Taala, Penompa, and others, for the title of the highest God, then they still have other rulers under the authority of their supreme God: for example, Puyang Gana (lord of the land), Raja Juata (ruler of water), Kama" Baba (ruler of land), Jobata, Apet Kuyangh, and others.

The results showed that the Malay community knows the "Tolak Bala" ritual of Sanggau Regency as the "*paradje ritual*". Performing a paradje followed by relatives and palace troops on foot while praying to God to protect the community from COVID-19. Prince Ratu Surya conveys this, Keraton Surya Negara Sanggau, who leads the traditional ritual of Paradje' Clean the country, saying, "The Paradje ritual is an effort conducted by the Surya Negara Palace to ward off or get rid of bad air or illness that comes. Hopefully, with this ritual that we are holding, all calamities and disease outbreaks, including COVID-19, don't reach our beloved Sanggau Regency".

The ritual is also carried out in Pontianak City by reading the Qur'an and doing dhikr in undergoing the "*Tolak Bala*" ritual, known by the Malay tribal community of Pontianak City. It was carried out during the covid-19 pandemic to free from covid-19. The existing virus immediately disappeared so that humans do not experience anxiety or fear, and the people of Pontianak City could do social activities, visit each other and carry out community activities. Tolak Bala rituals are also carried out in Sekadau Regency, known by the Sekadau Malay community as "*manik beladau*". Manik Baladu existed before Islam, and the ritual was intended to eliminate bad luck. The ritual process is carried out with various offerings, such as chicken, eggs, sticky rice, etc. Since Islam entered, the offering of Manik Beladau was replaced by using water with seven different colors of flowers and seven colors of thorns, then the water mixed with flowers and thorns was bathed for people who wanted to do Manik Beladau. The bathing process is carried out with an odd number of people, five or seven people. Dayak tribe, the results of the study showed that carrying out the "Tolak Bala" ritual, known as the "Ba'samsam traditional ritual is a ritual that is usually carried out to prevent diseases and pests of rice in farming, outbreaks of these diseases can attack crops, livestock, and also humans." The ritual is also used to prevent the spread of covid-19, during the ritual process it encourages the whole community to stop their daily routine and does not allow any activities outside the house for a predetermined time. Ba'samsam ritual aims to clean themselves and ask for safety carried out by the Dayaks in the District.

The traditional ritual of bapantang, or Balala', is the traditional procession of Tolak Bala, which was held as a series of activities before the mass abstinence procession, aka balala, was carried out by the Dayak who live in the Landak Regency. During the ritual, the community members are not allowed to carry out activities and do not leave the house. This ritual is carried out from generation to generation if an extraordinary event occurs in humankind, such as the emergence of a disease outbreak, namely the coronavirus -19, as a last resort for us Dayak Indigenous people, before doing the procession of Abstinence alias Balala. For the Dayak community, rites are expressions or expressions of "servant" attitudes toward the Transcendent and rituals showing the formalization of human behavior when dealing with objects. The chairman of the Dayak Customary Council (DAD) of Sekadau Regency said that: "This ritual of Tolak Bala is carried out as an effort to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, through this ritual, the people pray to God to prevent the spread of the coronavirus in Sekadau. The ritual of Tolak Bala itself is often carried out if there is a disease that spreads. The ritual of Tolak Bala, called the 'Adat Penyapat Virus Corona', is carried out with several traditional pieces of equipment, from clothes to food. This is done as a form of respect for the ancestors".

During the ritual process, all residents are not allowed to leave the house, cannot visit, and must abstain from what is prohibited based on custom. The traditional ritual activity is preceded by several traditional preparations in which the customs issued are one chicken, one crock of wine, three rancak, five eggs, seven ketupat, and seven leman, and each resident's house will be sprinkled with yellow rice and tengkarup (rice that has been stir-fried to form like popcorn). The Ketungau Dayak community carries out this ritual of Tolak Bala, and the local community believes this ritual can ward off the covid-19 virus. For the Dayak in Sanggau District, in this traditional ritual of Tolak Bala, the Kodant sub-tribe uses a chicken, and Jungor Tonyong'k uses four-legged creatures, namely pigs, palm wine, and blood. The traditional process of abstinence is held for three days, and you cannot leave the house, you are not allowed to cut living creatures, you are not allowed to take some types of vegetables such as bamboo shoots and ferns, and every two hours, at the third hour we hold a prayer reading ritual to spread the covid-19 virus.

The Dayak tribe, located in the Indonesia-Malaysia border area in Sajingan Besar District, Sambas Regency, held the Ba'samsam traditional ritual, which was attended by the Dayak Rara and Salako tribespeople. This is a Ba'samsam ritual to prevent the spread and transmission of Covid-19 in border areas. This is done by the Dayak Kanayatn community, who hold the Balalak Tamakng ritual, this is done according to an emergency and has been carried out for generations. Tolak Bala Bepenti' is a ritual by the Seberuang Dayak Indigenous Community, Sintang Regency. Penti' wood is tied using red and white cloth on the head and waist. Making wood is carried out the day before the traditional ceremony begins. The penti' wood that has been made should not be left alone; someone must be waiting for it. The next day the traditional ritual begins. Cultural development in border areas is marked by strengthening the community's identity and local wisdom, which is used to formulate

strategies to preserve and develop culture (Fitriasari, 2022). This ritual is called Besampi Sempata to Petara Puyang Gana, using a chicken as an intermediary for Besampi Sempata. All the penti' wood made represents each individual with this ritual to protect everyone so that the spirit (soul) becomes stronger, does not get sick easily, and is protected from the covid-19 virus pandemic sweeping the world. In addition to traditional herbal ingredients such as ginger drinks and spices, it becomes an alternative (Lee et al., 2021) that the supply of herbal medicines during the isolation period (Mathpati et al., 2022) is the concept of population independence in health.

Chinese Ethnic do a midday bathing ritual or Peh Cun. The tradition of bathing in the middle of the day is carried out by Chinese ethnic in Pontianak. This activity is centered on the banks of the Kapuas River and shows that in carrying out the "Reject Bala" ritual known by the Chinese tribal community as "Mandi Bunga". Bathing in the U Shi river is a Chinese tradition that is part of the Tuan U Ciek celebration. The people who bathe in U-Shi in the Kapuas River have been passed down from generation to generation by their ancestral heritage. By bathing, it is hoped that we can get rid of all the bad things to get safety, health, and cheap sustenance and prevent being exposed to the coronavirus. The water from the river after bathing is brought home and put in a bottle, and the Chinese community believes this to be efficacious in curing disease and getting rid of bad luck. Furthermore, residents water their bodies with flower water, and this ritual is believed to be able to bring blessings and ward off bad luck and dangerous things so that they get blessings.

## E. CONCLUSION

The legacy of local wisdom in the "Tolak Bala" tradition was carried out by the Malay, Dayak, and Chinese tribes to plead to avoid Covid-19, and this ritual has been carried out for generations and is maintained and passed down from one generation to the next. The ancestral heritage in the form of traditional rituals from the Malay, Dayak, and Chinese ethnic has local wisdom values as an element of the nation's spirit motto, Bhineka Tunggal Ika (Different but Still One), with various ethnic rituals in handling covid 19 as a manifestation of brotherhood sense and equality of fate to strengthen each other in facing COVID-19 pandemic.

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