

RESISTANCE OF MUSLIMS TOWARD THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON PROHIBITING CONGREGATIONAL WORSHIP DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

During the 2020-2021 period in Indonesia, the stricter enforcement of worship practices amid the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in opposition from various Muslim community. Prior research on this phenomenon has solely concentrated on binary notions of opposition, and as such, has not provided a comprehensive explanation of the resistance stance. The objective of this study is to elucidate the shape and manner of resistance from various Muslim groups towards the stricter enforcement of religious practices amid the Covid-19 outbreak. Qualitative methods were employed in this study, which involved collecting data through in-depth interviews and observations conducted at Mataram Mosque in Kota Gede, Yogyakarta. The findings show that resistance by some Muslim communities comes in three forms: passive, active, and reactive resistance. These three forms of opposition represent a manifestation of the citizens' ideological consciousness as they object to government policies that contradict the knowledge and collective experiences they have accumulated thus far.

Keywords: Resistance; Congregational worship; Covid-19

Abstrak

Pada rentang 2020-2021, kebijakan pengetatan pelaksanaan ibadah di masa Covid-19 di Indonesia telah menimbulkan sejumlah resistensi dari beberapa segmen masyarakat muslim. Studi terdahulu yang membahas fenomena ini hanya terfokus pada konsep resistensi yang dikotomis, sehingga belum menjelaskan sikap resistensi secara komprehensif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan bentuk dan pola resistensi beberapa segmen masyarakat Muslim terhadap kebijakan pengetatan kegiatan ibadah di masa pandemi Covid-19. Penelitian dilakukan melalui metode kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa wawancara mendalam dan observasi di Masjid Mataram Kota Gede, Yogyakarta. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa perlawanan yang dilakukan oleh sebagian masyarakat Muslim tersebut muncul dalam tiga bentuk, yaitu: perlawanan secara pasif, aktif, dan reaktif. Ketiga bentuk resistensi tersebut merupakan wujud kesadaran ideologis warga karena ketidaksetujuan terhadap kebijakan pemerintah yang berseberangan dengan pengetahuan dan pengalaman kolektif yang mereka miliki selama ini.

Kata Kunci: Resistensi; Ibadah berjamaah; Covid-19

A. INTRODUCTION

Resistance to Muslim worship during the Covid-19 pandemic is a significant form of resistance to reflect on as lessons learned after the Covid-19 pandemic. In line with that, Sun and Valenzuela (2021) further said that the resistance carried out by individuals or community groups indicates that the policies set by the authorities still do not accommodate the religious interests of Muslims during the Covid-19 pandemic. The resistance to worship during the Covid-19 pandemic also indicates that Muslims often perceive changes in worship patterns set by the authorities conservatively and contextually. So that the resistance carried out by Muslims during the Covid-19 pandemic appeared in forms and motivations that were so complex. Therefore, resistance to Muslim worship during the Covid-19 pandemic is a very important phenomenon to explain (Fernando et al. 2022), to gain a reflective understanding to provide comprehensive knowledge in mitigating social crises in the context of worship in the past which will come.

In general, not a few studies discuss religious resistance during the Covid-19 pandemic that focus on Muslim resistance to policies (Pabbajah et al. 2022; Fanselow 2021; Østebø et al. 2021). Other studies that discuss religious resistance during the Covid-19 pandemic also often explain Muslim resistance to restrictions on worship activities (Murphy 2021; Kostecki and Piwko 2021; Adelman et al. 2021). In line with that, few studies that discuss resistance to Muslim worship during the Covid-19 pandemic focus on analyzing Muslim disobedience in an ideological context (Das and Ahmed 2022; Chimuanya and Igwebuikwe 2021; Kumar and Kamble 2022). From the studies that have been carried out, the resistance to Muslim worship during the Covid-19 pandemic is a very complex phenomenon (Regmi et al. 2022). This complexity can

be seen through the attitudes and actions directed by Muslims during the Covid-19 pandemic in a more contextual direction.

Resistance to Muslim worship during the Covid-19 pandemic has been shown through actions that are so complex and contextual. However, studies that have discussed Muslim resistance during the Covid-19 pandemic have not been carried out comprehensively. Given the complex forms and motivations of Muslims in carrying out resistance during the Covid-19 pandemic, a study that addresses this context according to Fernando et al. (2022) is very important, in addition to gaining a reflective understanding as well as providing comprehensive knowledge in the process of Mitigating engagement activities in situations and conditions of social crisis. Therefore, this study, in addition to responding to the shortcomings of the studies that have been conducted regarding resistance to Muslim worship during the Covid-19 pandemic, also analyzes and reflects on the forms of resistance undertaken by Muslims in responding to social change contextually.

Resistance to Muslim worship during the Covid-19 pandemic is a resistance that is not least shown through complex and contextual actions. Therefore, to base the analysis, this study focuses on three questions: (1) How is the resistance to worship carried out passively by Muslims?; (2) How is the resistance to worship carried out by Muslims actively; (3) How is the resistance to worship carried out by Muslims reactively? In line with that, this study is also based on the argument that resistance by Muslims appears in three dominant categories, namely; passive resistance, active resistance, and reactive resistance. This context is not only an expressive form of resistance but also a form of evaluation of Muslims in responding to the doctrines, rules, and worship practices set by the authorities during the Covid-19 pandemic contextually.

Resistance is a concept used to describe individual or group resistance to domination both practically and ideologically. Factor, Kawachi, and Williams (2011) said that resistance is an expression that shows individual or group dissatisfaction with social, economic, and political domination. In line with that, Satriani, Juhaepa, dan Upe (2018) also said that resistance is dominantly influenced by three factors: changes in culture, the formation of new social structures, and threats.. Therefore, resistance is not only an action chosen by an individual or group to change a condition, but also has an orientation to maintain its conservative values (Brighenti 2011). In other words, the resistance carried out by individuals or groups will determine their social position, in maintaining or even rejecting the dominant ideology which is interpreted as common sense (Currás and Sastre 2020). As was done by Muslims in responding to and interpreting the doctrines, rules, and practices of worship during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Worship is a practice that can align Muslims with their God, both practically and ideologically. Apart from being oriented towards divine values, worship activities are also an expression of humanity, as is worship practiced by Muslims (Fakhrizal Idris Muhammad Yusram, and Azwar Iskandar 2021). In line with that, Husna dan Arif (2021) further said that Muslims also practice worship activities in manifesting their very concrete religious views. For Muslims, worship activities are also a commitment that refers to teaching conveyed by the Prophet Muhammad SWA (Nazish and Kalra 2018). Worship activities are not only very important, but the practice of worship is also one of the most essential obligations in the socio-religious life of Muslims. In other words, worship activities are also believed to maintain the spiritual and mental health of Muslims in times of crisis (Mahmood 2001).

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused religious, health, economic, and social crises in many countries because the

transmission of Covid-19 was faster than SARS in 2003 (Bhat 2020). The application of social distancing, wearing masks, testing, prohibiting mass gatherings, isolation, washing hands, spending less time outside the home, and collaboration between institutions are methods implemented by several countries to minimize the spread of the increasingly massive (Nanda et al. 2021; Hyder et al. 2021; Souliotis et al. 2021). Discussions about adopting a clean lifestyle, disinfectants, ventilation, religiosity, and health risks often appear more evaluative, specifically in worship activities (Hollins and Kiorpes 2020). Sheehan and Fox, (2020) in their view also said that the Covid-19 pandemic has provided valuable warnings and lessons for maintaining the spirituality and health of religious people because spiritual resilience is dominantly correlated with mental health in times of crisis.

B. METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted on the Muslims of the Great Mosque of Mataram Kotagede, Yogyakarta, Central Java, representing Muslims on Java island. The worship activities of the Kotagede Mataram Gede Mosque Muslims often refer to cultural experiences and knowledge. In other words, the principles, and attitudes of worship of the Muslims of the Great Mosque of Mataram Kotagede often take place statically, so in practicing their worship activities the Muslims of the Great Mosque of Mataram Kotagede during the Covid-19 pandemic have shown a lot of resistance. Therefore, the resistance to worship shown by the Muslims of the Gede Mataram Kotagede Mosque during the Covid-19 pandemic is the focus of this study to reflect the form and attitude of the resistance of the Muslims of the Gede Mataram Kotagede Mosque as a lesson.

This study is descriptive qualitative which refers to primary and secondary data. The primary data in this study were obtained

through a structured and unstructured interview process with the Muslims of the Gede Mataram Kotagede Mosque, who actively practiced the five daily prayers in the congregation at the mosque during the Covid-19 pandemic. The interview questions focused on three aspects, namely: (1) Aspects of congregational worship knowledge; (2) Aspects of congregational worship values and norms; (3) Aspects of the principles and attitudes of congregation worship. The interview process resulted in three classifications of dominant themes which are presented as important findings in this study. In line with that, this study also uses secondary data obtained through reading relevant books and journal articles.

The process of data analysis in this study was carried out through three stages, including: (1) Data reduction, which is a process carried out to organize data into a more systematic form; (2) Data display, which is a process carried out to describe research data in the form of tables containing excerpts from interview results; (3) Data verification, is the process of concluding data based on the classification of the data that has been obtained and collected. From these three stages, the data that has been obtained is analyzed inductively and then described as the basis for the interpretation of the data (Fernando et al. 2022). The stages of analysis and analysis techniques used made it possible to obtain a conclusion regarding the form and attitude of resistance of the Muslims of the Gede Mataram Kotagede Mosque during the Covid-19 pandemic.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings in this study apart from explaining how resistance to worship, also reflect the forms of resistance practiced by Muslims during the Covid-19 pandemic. This context can be seen through the three findings below:

1. Resistance of Worship with Passive Attitude Governmentality

Tabel 1.

Resistance of Worship With Passive Attitude

Resistance	Statement
Doctrine	During the Covid-19 pandemic, worship activities here followed the teachings and logic of the government and the palace. Because this mosque is supervised by the government and the palace because this mosque is mostly visited by people from outside, and like it or not we have to obey and follow these regulations. Even though this view is contrary to our conscience, and personally I do not agree, because worship activities can no longer be carried out as usual (Interview with informant 1, 2021)
Rules	The regulation of worship restrictions like this makes me think. We are more comfortable asking the Almighty in the mosque as usual. What's more, I, who am elderly, am also used to praying at the mosque, so it has been normal since our ancestors. But now, like it or not we have to follow, even though we don't agree (Interview with informant 2, 2021)
Practice	In the past, at the beginning of the pandemic, I was hesitant to worship at the mosque, because there were rules that prohibited people from praying at the mosque. But how else, for me worship is important even in an emergency and even though I have to follow the rules. Even though the government hasn't allowed congregational prayers, in reality, we are used to it, like it or not we have to accept the regulation, even though I reject this way of worship (Interview with informant 3, 2021)

The resistance to worship with a passive attitude by Muslims during the Covid-19 pandemic is often carried out in passive ways.

This context can be seen in the display of table 1, where Informants 1, 2, and 3 as a congregation passively reject the doctrines, rules, and worship practices set by the authorities during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, this rejection is not expressed in the form of action, it only appears in the form of cognitive discourse.

The resistance to worship with a passive attitude by Muslims during the Covid-19 pandemic was a form of rejection that was not expressed in the form of action. This resistance often ignores the feelings, thoughts, and beliefs believed by the congregation to avoid conflict. In line with that, the resistance to worship shown by Muslims is also a form of evaluation by the congregation in interpreting the doctrines, rules, and worship practices recommended by the authorities during the Covid-19 pandemic. Even though this context contradicts the collective knowledge and experience of the congregation, in the view of Hanafi et al (2022) religious people can compulsively perceive the doctrines, rules, and worship practices determined by the authorities as common sense. Therefore, the passive resistance carried out by Muslims is a rejection in the form of cognitive discourse.

In the context of the Kotagede Mataram Gede Mosque, resistance to worship that was carried out passively occurred due to an imbalance in power relations between the congregation and the authorities that legitimized worship activities during the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to the legitimacy of worship which is carried out hierarchically, the authority's intervention in the process of implementing policies is also carried out in a coercive manner. This context is dominantly a factor that encourages the emergence of resistance from the congregation passively. In line with that, Alpyspaeva and Abdykarimova (2022) also said that passive resistance carried out by society is not least caused by unequal relations, so those in control can only follow forced

doctrines, rules, and social practices. So it can be said that the passive resistance shown by the congregation of the Kotagede Gede Mataram Mosque occurred due to an imbalance in the relationship between the congregation and the authorities.

2. Resistance of Worship with Active Attitude

Tabel 2.

Resistance of Worship With Active Attitude

Resistance	Statement
Doctrine	During the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a prohibition against worshipping at the mosque, only at the beginning of the Friday pandemic here stopped, the five daily prayers were also abolished. But the door of the mosque is still open, only one door is opened south of the mosque. Usually, the congregation around here knows that the mosque is still open, and if you look from the outside, it doesn't look like there is a congregational prayer service, right? We're adjusting to the pandemic regulations anyway. Because prayer is obligatory, that's why we dare to pray but still prokes (Interview with informant 1, 2021)
Rules	Yesterday Friday was not allowed either by the government or from the palace by limiting the congregation quota, because there was also a ban on Friday prayers here, how come it was crowded during a pandemic. Now, to limit the number of worshipers, we only provide places of worship in mosques. However, if there are still many congregations and prayers outside the mosque it is no longer our responsibility, our responsibility is only for the congregation inside the mosque, and we will order them to return home. If he wants to pray, please (Interview with informant 4, 2021)
Practice	During a pandemic, every morning on Fridays, there are activities to pray together and lead cults, that's during a pandemic. There is also a study that provides enthusiasm that makes the congregation remain istikomah to continue to perform worship during a pandemic, moreover, it is added by holding back and forth prayers, to protect those who worship and pray for those who are sick, during a pandemic, worship during a pandemic is very important and should not be omitted altogether (Interview with informant 1, 2021)

The resistance to worship with active attitude by Muslims during the Covid-19 pandemic is also often carried out in active ways. This context can be seen through the display of table 2, where Informants 1 and 4 as a congregation actively reject the

doctrines, rules, and worship practices set by the authorities during the Covid-19 pandemic. This refusal was not least expressed in the form of more adaptive actions so these actions were interpreted more by the congregation as a form of adaptation rather than resistance.

In the context of the Muslims of the Kotagede Mataram Gede Mosque, resistance to worship is also actively expressed. Active resistance to worship is a form of rejection that is expressed in the form of adaptive actions. In line with that, Facal (2020) also said that active resistance is also not uncommon in efforts to adapt individuals or groups of people in positioning knowledge and its meaning contextually. As the response made by the Muslims of the Kotagede Mataram Gede Mosque during the Covid-19 pandemic, by emphasizing the knowledge and meaning they believe in. For the Muslims of the Kotagede Mataram Gede Mosque, the doctrines, rules, and worship practices that are legitimized by the authorities can be accepted as common sense, although in the process of adaptation, they are often shown through contradictory actions. Therefore, active resistance is often carried out by congregations in responding to social changes which are not least shown in a contradictory way.

The resistance to worship with an active attitude carried out by the Muslims of the Kotagede Mataram Gede Mosque during the Covid-19 pandemic was not infrequently caused by misperceptions that occurred between the congregation and the authorities. Druckman et al (2021) also said that misperceptions experienced by individuals or groups of people in interpreting certain doctrines, norms, or rules, dominantly often lead to an action that is considered to deviate from the general meaning. However, in the context of the Muslims of Masjid Gede, the resistance which was carried out actively was not only due to misperceptions but was also dominantly influenced by the implementation of one-way

policies. This context is not uncommon in the process of making and implementing doctrines, rules, and the legitimacy of worship practices during the Covid-19 pandemic, giving rise to a duality of meaning. In other words, misperceptions between Muslims and authorities in the process of interpreting worship activities during the Covid-19 pandemic, often lead to contradictory attitudes in interpreting the established rules.

3. Resistance of Worship with Reactive Attitude

Tabel 3.

Resistance of worship with reactive attitude

Resistance	Statement
Doctrine	If I interpret the restrictions on worship during this pandemic, they are there. For example, in my opinion, the worship of the Muslim community, especially the men's worship, must be in the congregational mosque, yes, prayer services must be very tight, so that there are no gaps to give room for the devil. The rules are what make our God follow the rules. Moreover, Allah is the one who has the virus, so draw closer to Allah, pray and worship as Allah has commanded, and be granted, God keeps us away from the virus. The prayer is the correct prayer following Allah's commands besides being careful too (Interview with informant 5, 2021).
Rules	Now the logic is like this, if indeed a pandemic spreads viciously, and quickly, the crazy people on the streets will surely die first. That's why, the pandemic is our thoughts, we are panicked by all kinds of news. And in the end, you panic anyway, so your organs become weak. That's why I reject any restrictions on worship, I just pray because if we pray and worship InshaAllah our immunity will be maintained. That's why praying is very important, especially in times of crisis like this, don't leave prayers, because there are no rules or orders to leave prayers under any circumstances, I just have to pray (Interview with informant 5, 2021)
Practice	We are whoever we receive our prayers, and we don't dare to forbid people to ask, who knows their prayers will be answered and the pandemic will disappear, after all, that's their right, so let's just accept it and understand it. So it is still accepted, the prayers are still together and not separated in this mosque. If you want to pray outside alone, please, if you want inside, please. Yes, at least wear a mask and prokes. Even those from outside the city pray a lot here

during the pandemic, only if people from far away want to enter the mosque do they have to wear a mask, if they don't bring masks the mosque provides them, but in essence, we don't dare to prohibit people's beliefs from praying during a pandemic (Interview with informant 5, 2021)

The resistance of worship with a reactive attitude shown by the Kotagede Mataram Gede Mosque during the Covid-19 pandemic was not infrequently carried out in reactive ways. This context can be seen through the display of table 3, where Informant 5 as a congregation reactively rejects the doctrines, rules, and worship practices set by the authorities during the Covid-19 pandemic. This refusal is often expressed in the form of frontal actions, so these actions are often expressed in the form of resistance from the congregation against the doctrines, rules, and worship practices determined by the authorities.

The resistance of worship with a reactive attitude carried out by the Muslims of the Gede Mataram Kotagede Mosque during the Covid-19 pandemic was a form of resistance that was carried out frontally. This resistance emerged in the form of protest and disapproval of the Muslims of the Gede Mataram Kotagede Mosque, towards the doctrines, rules, and worship practices that were legitimized by the authorities during the Covid-19 pandemic. Vinthagen and Johansson (2013) say that reactive resistance is also categorized as a form of resistance from individuals or groups of people for the sake of their ideology and identity openly. In other words, the resistance which was carried out reactively in the context of the Muslims of the Gede Mataram Kotagede Mosque was an open resistance to the congregation's disagreement with the doctrines, rules, and worship practices that were considered contrary to their knowledge and experience. Reactive resistance is an action taken by Muslims to fight against ideologies and rules that are considered contrary to their collective knowledge.

In the context of the Muslims of the Kotagede Mataram Gede Mosque, the resistance to worship with a reactive attitude is often influenced by the conservative views of the congregation. For the Muslims of the Kotagede Mataram Gede Mosque, the doctrines, rules, and worship practices recommended by the authorities are considered contrary to their collective knowledge and experience. This context is dominantly a factor influencing the emergence of reactive resistance in the Muslims of the Gede Mataram Kotagede Mosque during the Covid-19 pandemic. In line with that, the resistance shown by individuals or society in Weill (2020), is not least triggered by policies that make worship activities the object of the established rules. In addition to being influenced by conservative views, the reactive resistance carried out by the Muslims of the Gede Mataram Kotagede Mosque was also influenced by the objectification of worship activities during the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, reactive resistance is resistance to social praxis based on ideological awareness.

D. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The worship activities of the Kotagede Mataram Gede Mosque Muslims often refer to cultural experiences and knowledge. In line with this context, the important findings in this study also show that the resistance shown by Muslims is not only an expressive form of resistance but also a form of evaluation of the doctrines, rules, and worship practices set by the authorities in the past. the Covid-19 pandemic. In other words, the resistance carried out by Muslims during the Covid-19 pandemic was a contextual form of resistance.

The resistance to worship carried out by Muslims during the Covid-19 pandemic is an action that is so complex and contextual. However, the conception of resistance carried out by Muslims in previous studies was only shown through a dichotomous attitude

of rejection. Therefore, in addition to explaining how Muslims carried out resistance during the Covid-19 pandemic, this study also conceptualizes this resistance through three classifications, namely; passive, active, and reactive resistance. The conceptual contribution is expected to be able to become a reference for the development of socio-religious studies in times of social crisis.

This study also has limitations in the data collection process which only focuses on the scope of Muslims in the Kotagede Mataram Gede Mosque, so this study has not investigated this phenomenon in other Muslim socio-cultural contexts. However, the limitations of this study are expected to be able to contribute to further studies, especially those wishing to compare the phenomenon of Muslim resistance to other Muslim socio-cultural contexts.

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