

Religiosity of Indigenous Communities in Indonesia

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Abstract: This study is intended to reveal and examine the religiosity of indigenous community in Cireundeu village in Indonesia, which is expressed in the symbols of their daily lives. This research applied ethnographic method in a phenomenological perspective using a qualitative approach. The indigenous community of Cireundeu have tendency to make “religion” as “the ultimate concern”. They regard religion a fundamental philosophy in their lives where almost all their activities are based on religious values.

Keywords: Indigenous Peoples, Religiosity

I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesian people are believed to be a very plural society. The plurality of Indonesian society is seen in their diverse ethnic, interfaith and racial groups. Regarding the diversity of religions in Indonesia, there remained and developed some religions. In addition to the officially recognized religions by the Indonesian government such as Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, there are some other religious groups. The constitution in the Reform era stated that the people beyond the six religions are “the people of religion or belief that has not been recognized based on statutory provisions” In Indonesia’s religious studies, the religion beyond the six is called ‘local religion’, ‘native religion’, ‘tribal religion’, ‘mysticism’, ‘belief stream’ and ‘faith-bearing community’. Whereas the Western religious studies calls it indigenous religions, ethnic and religious origins (H. Byron Earhart, 1993, p. 264). The data of Tourism and Culture Department of West Java Province in 2012 revealed 27 traditional villages in West Java Province, one of which was the traditional village in Cireundeu Cimahi City (Tourism and Culture Office of West Java Province, n.d). Cireundeu traditional village is located in the valley of Kunci Mount, Cimenteng Mount and Gajahlangu Mount. According to the government administrative, it lies in Leuwigajah Village, South Cimahi District. Cireundeu village appears to be an ordinary village as the houses there have common shapes like other villages houses. However, due to the strict tradition practice of ancestors, this village has been formally established to be a traditional village in Cireundeu, Hamlet (RW)10 which is covering 5 Neighborhoods (RT) with 1,246 people population of 412 households. There are two group of people in Cireundeu village, people who embrace Islam and those who follow mysticism; they, however, live in mutual respect and tolerance. The latest data stated that the total population of Cireundeu village was approximately 1.246 people, and around 240 people of them followed Mysticism. Moreover, the latest online news and the interview with with the leader (Lulugu) the public relation Cireundeu village stated that the developer of residential has entered the traditional village of Cireundeu. After Gunung Gajah Langu’s conversion into a housing complex, the green open space (RTH) in Cireundeu traditional village RW 10, Leuwigajah village, South Cimahi Subdistrict, was increasingly eroded.

The hilly area which lies in front of the housing project is currently undergoing land maturation. The observation on Wednesday 10 April 2019 showed that the originally green area begun to disappear. When confirmed, Cimahi City Environment Agency stated that they had already known the construction of new roadways in Gunung Pasir Panji.

However, Cimahi City Government does not have full authority over the land because it is under the land authority of the

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West Java Provincial Government (Febriani, 2019). Regarding the construction project, Cireundeu indigenous people are worried about outside influences. In addition, they fear the loss of local customs and beliefs. Whatever happens, people in Cireundeu should respond the changes wisely and find solutions to maintain their local customs and beliefs. The issue regarding the identity recognition of the Sundanese *wiwitan* belief as religion that Cireundeu indigenous people strive is another problem they encounter coincided with the ongoing changes in Cireundeu indigenous people. In addition, the increased participation of Cireundeu indigenous people's children to go to school is another problem in maintaining their local wisdom. By the time the Sundanese *Wiwitan*'s children take part in learning other religious subjects, Cireundeu indigenous people are worried about their children's conversion to the other religions.

Achdiani (2012) revealed in his previous research that the inheritance of socialization and enculturation process of ancestral traditions has been instilled from children to adulthood, expecting that children can live at a wider or global era without leaving their identity (Achdiani, 2012). In addition, social media and technology greatly influence the system of teachings and customs of Cireundeu indigenous people. This is a reason behind the serious concern over the fading teachings of Sundanese *Wiwitan* beliefs and customs from their ancestors. There are several studies related to this article: (1) Transformation of Local Wisdom in Cireundeu traditional people by Puji Nurharyanto saying that Cireundeu indigenous people are open-minded to the changes of times. (2) Defense Strategy of Djawa Sunda Religion (ADS) Cigugur by Husnul Qosim reporting that ADS Community have succeeded to maintain their existence from majority group threats and challenges for three generations (Qodim, 2017). (3) Spirituality of Local Religion (the study of Madrais' Sundanese *Wiwitan* Teachings in Cigugur Kuningan West Java) showing that Madrais' teaching essentially taught the nature of human life and the awareness of the harmony as humans by relying on the teachings of native Sundanese proving that the ancestors were actually honorable human beings who already have a system of values and religious beliefs (Mutaqin, 2013). (4) Divinity in the Perspective of Sunda *Wiwitan* Belief showing that the importance of divinity for Sundanese *Wiwitan* people is not in the frequency of praying or worshiping God, but on maintaining humans' attitudes and actions who maintain a balanced relationship with fellow humans, natural environment and its contents, and God (Indrawardana, 2014).

The focus of this study is the same as some previous studies in terms of the religious aspect (diversity) of indigenous peoples and their way to preserve their local wisdom. Meanwhile, the novelty of this study that the researchers attempt to find out in dept is people's conservation, namely regarding the maintenance and protection of Sunda *Wiwitan* beliefs of Cireundeu indigenous community and their response regarding central and local government regulations on local Sunda *Wiwitan* religion adhered by Cireundeu indigenous people.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study applied a qualitative approach with ethnographic method in a phenomenological perspective. This study attempts to analyze and interpret the diversity and cultural systems of Cireundeu indigenous people. In more specific procedures, this study test and reveal people's behavior patterns, habits and their ways of life by involving quite long observation within in-depth interview (Spradley, 2007, p. 5). Through phenomenological analysis, researchers can reconstruct the religious diversity of Cireundeu indigenous people in their active participation in the subjects of this study. In accordance with the qualitative approach and descriptive-analytic method, the data collection techniques cover: (a) participant observation, (b) in-depth interview. (c) documentation. Furthermore, the data is analyzed in a descriptive way which modified with systematic case exploration based on the nature of existing data (domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, componential analysis, theme analysis).

Theoretical Framework Chart

“Religiosity of Indigenous Communities in Cireundeu, Cimahi, West Java” Using the five-dimensional theory of religiosity from C.Y. Glock and Stark (Gibbs & Crader, 1970; Stark & Glock, 1968):

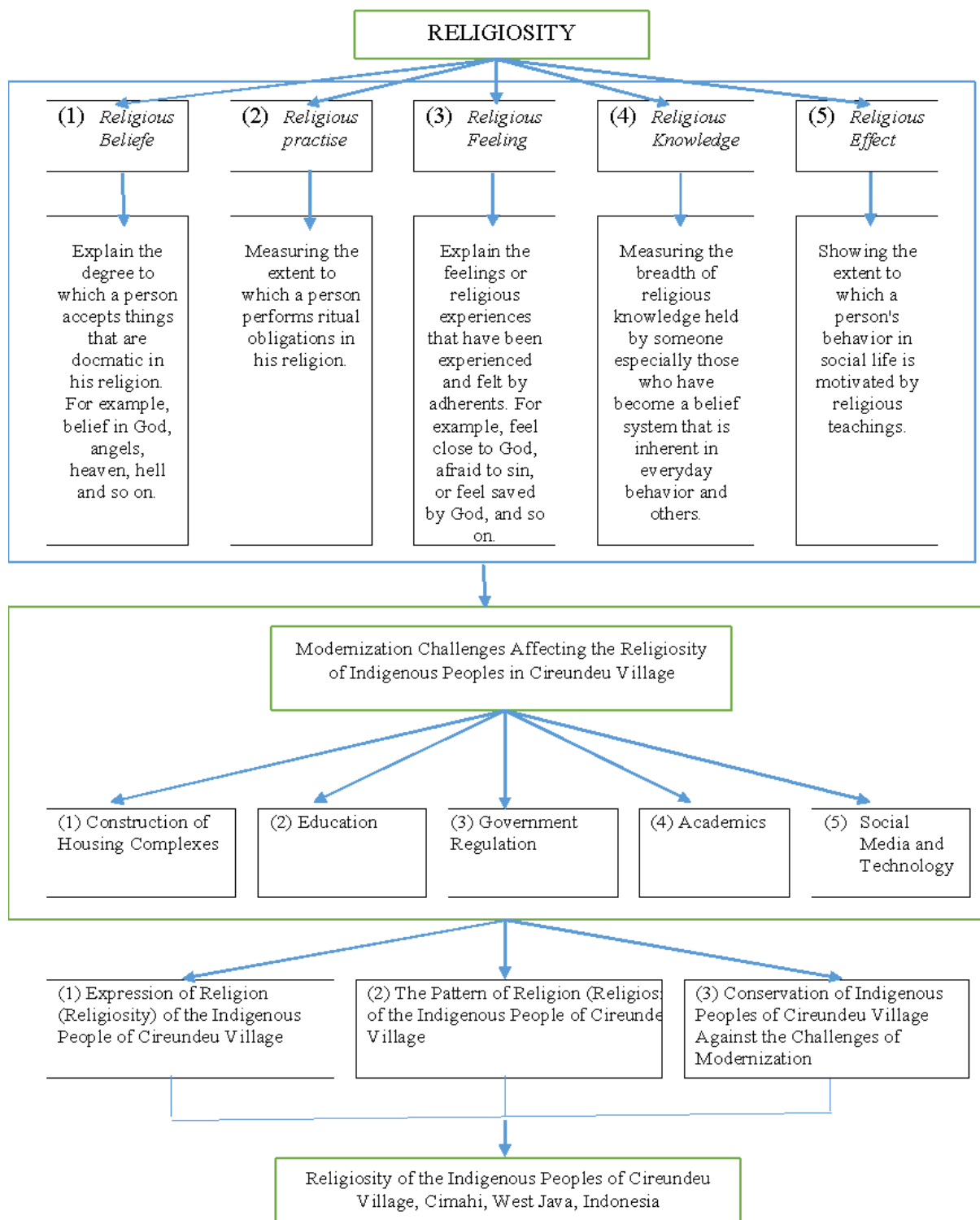


Figure 1 Religiosity framework

The framework of thinking reveals that understanding religiosity (diversity) of the indigenous community in Cireundeu village in this study is directed at the religious meaning and dimensions. Glock and Stark stated in Widiyanta that the five dimensions of religiosity are as follows:

- 1) Religious Belief (The Ideological Dimension)

This dimension is an important part of the religiosity of Cireundeu indigenous community. This dimension refers to the question “to what extent do they accept things that are dogmatic in their religion/belief?”. This means that the dimension is related to what is believed by the indigenous community of Cireundeu village.

2) Religious Practice (The Ritualistic Dimension)

The ritual dimension is a part of religiosity which is related to religious behavior or what is called religious ritual such as worship, obedience and other things that are done to show commitment to the religion/beliefs they profess.

3) Religious Feeling (The Experiential Dimension)

The experiential dimension is defined as a religious experience that is a feeling by a religious person, such as a sense of calm, peace, gratitude, obedience, fear, regret, repentance, and others.

4) Religious Knowledge (The Intellectual Dimension)

If the experiential dimension refers to the level of knowledge and understanding of a person towards the teachings of his religion, the intellectual dimension refers to the hope to have a minimum amount of religious knowledge that he professes.

5) Religious Effect (The consequential Dimension)

The consequential dimension is the culmination of other dimensions and is the actualization/ manifestation and doctrine of religion in the form of commendable behavior. (Widiyanta, 2002)

The subject of this study are Cireundeu traditional community who are the called indigenous people (Spradley, 2007). There are two objects of this study, namely: (1) social situation, whose goal is understanding social phenomena from the perspective of participants through the breakdown of situations and events that occur, and are related to feelings, beliefs, ideas, thoughts and activities of participants (Sukmadinata, 2005, p. 11); (2) religiosity, which is exploring the religious phenomena that arise when expressed by the indigenous community in various expressions (theological, ritual, and consensus) which include: customs, religious ceremonies, buildings, places of worship, stories/myths, beliefs and principles adhered to by the Indigenous community in Cireundeu.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The term religiosity which means obedience to religion is taken from the word religious (English); it also means religiousness inherent in a person (Rifaan, 2011). In popular scientific dictionary, religious is interpreted as obedience (Effendi et al., 2018). This word comes from the Latin word *religio*, English word religion, and the Latin verb *religare* or *religere* (Effendi et al., 2018; Mekarsari, 2020). This word is often interpreted as a religion in the Sanskrit language and *dien* in Arabic. According to Mangun Wijaya (1986) religiosity is an aspect that has been lived in one's heart, the vibration of a personal conscience and personal attitude. Meanwhile, Glock and Stark defined religiosity as a religious commitment related to religion or beliefs, and which can be seen through the activities or behavior of individuals related to their religion or belief (Effendi et al., 2018; Rahmania, n.d.).

The religious understanding of Cireundeu indigenous community is sees that religion is culture appreciation. This drives Cireundeu indigenous people have their own way of life (Perry, 1980, p. 90). Cireundeu community constitutes traditional group who call themselves indigenous people living on the basis of ancestors inheritance in a certain geographical area, who claim to have sovereignty over land and natural resources, distinctive social cultural values, and take care of their ongoing life with customary law and institution (Communication, 2012, p. 7).

In fact, the religious understanding of Cireundeu indigenous people lies at a metaphysical stage because they do not have any interest to talk about things beyond human reason that they have never directly experienced. In other words, their metaphysical understanding is based on logical thinking instead of presuppositions. This is resulted from their previous ancestors who obtained spiritual truth through spiritual truth wandering. Even though Sundanese wiwitan is not recognized as a formal religious in Indonesia, it is actually a native religion of the Indonesian people. Therefore, Sundanese wiwitan

belief is included in a local (tribal) religion (Mutaqin, 2013). The beliefs which are known as animism, dynamism, pantheism is regarded to be the first religions of the Indonesian people. Although classified into the initial religion in Indonesian, Cireundeu indigenous community believe that Sundanese wiwitan is a religion. However, Sundanese wiwitan belief does not fulfill the conditions of a religion because revealed religions require God, holy book and prophet. In addition, Sundanese wiwitan belief has not met the requirements to become non-revealed (natural) religion that requires the following conditions: believe, and convert. Assure means that ideology or belief guarantees salvation, believe means believing in a certain theology and convert means inviting unbeliever people to believe. The belief of Sundanese wiwitan does not guarantee salvation because they do not believe in the hereafter life, Sundanese wiwitan believes in the theology of their ancestors who gained enlightenment through spiritual experiences; however Sundanese wiwitan does not invite those who do not believe to believe. In consequence, although Sundanese wiwitan is grouped into the initial original religion in Indonesian, it does not fulfill the prerequisites to become a religion.

The research findings showed that all adherents of the Sundanese wiwitan belief are obliged to eat *rasi* (typical food) as their staple food, but in the present time this has changed as the informants who are the followers of Sundanese wiwitan belief do not require their children to eat *rasi* as their staple food. Another finding also reveals that not all members of the Cireundeu indigenous people eat *rasi* as their staple food and not all members of Cireundeu indigenous people adhere Sundanese wiwitan faith. This may happens due to the marriage between the adherents of Sundanese wiwitan faith with and the other religions adherents. In this regard, marriage requires mutual understanding and equality between couples. If marriage is based on differences, the couple possibly encounter differences. This customary change happened to one of the informants who adhered Sundanese wiwitan belief marrying the adherent of another religions. This interfaith marriage provided the free choice to their children to follow one of their parents' beliefs. For example, a child who has eaten *rasi* since childhood eats rice as his staple food after getting teenager. Whereas eating *rasi* for the followers of Sundanese wiwitan belief means fasting. The point is that parents do not force their children to eat *rasi* as their marriage is not based on coercion. In the sense, coercion means that they are not forced to marry people from the same beliefs and religions.

The change process of the local wisdom values in Cireundeu indigenous people is in line with the theory of action from Parson (Putri & Hasmira, 2020) that covers: (1) the action implies the existence of an actor, and the actors in this study are Cireundeu indigenous people. (2) For defining an action there must be a "goal", as a future condition that will be gained by the action, in this study the goal of Cireundeu indigenous people is the interpretation of Sundanese native religion namely Sunda wiwitan as cultural identity which is initiated by Kyai Haji Ali in his spiritual truth wandering. In addition to religious interpretations that serve as cultural meanings, the goal of Cireundeu indigenous people is opening themselves to marry people from other religions. (3) an action must begin in a "situation" whose developmental tendencies differ in one (or more) important aspects of the condition that will be pursued by the action goal. The situation in this study is that Cireundeu indigenous people are open to change but the change puts them in the situation that Sundanese wiwitan is not classified as a religion by the Government. Accordingly, when they are married in their tradition way, they will not get a marriage certificate because state administrative does not is not recognized customary marriage. (4) in turn, this condition can be divided into two elements: a situation which cannot be controlled by the indigenous people or in other words the action condition, which cannot be changed, or maintained so as not to change, in relation to these objectives, and the uncontrolled situation is "means". A condition that the indigenous people cannot control or maintain so that it does not change is that Cireundeu indigenous people make personal worship that is carried out jointly. In consequence, when Cireundeu indigenous people begin to marry people from other religions due to marriage certificates and birth certificates, they will get their future guaranteed in their effort to complete citizenship administration and obtain their public rights.

In addition, when the adherents of Sundanese Wiwitan belief marry people from other religions, the adherents can change their beliefs or no longer eat *rasi* as a staple food because the parents leave the responsibility of feeding and taking care as happened to the family of informants in this study. This shows that the tradition changes have taken place in a big

number as seen from the number of adherents who still hold their traditions. Cireundeu indigenous people try to take the control over the majority of Sundanese wiwitan believers who still eat *rasi* as their staple food. (5) The final concept always implies that there is a reference for the future, that is a reference to a condition that does not yet exist, and which will not exist if something is not done by the actor, something already exists and will not change. The process is called “realization” or “achievement”. The achievement referred to in this study is that although there are some Cireundeu indigenous people who marry their children to adherents of other religions, they still hold Sundanese wiwitan belief despite the possibility that their children will follow the beliefs of their husbands. To deal with the impact of Sundanese wiwitan children’s faith who attend formal school, they hold *surasa* gathering every Saturday at the tradition hall.

The findings indicate that the most populous community in Cireundeu village are Muslim. This highlights that the influence of Islam is inherent in Sundanese wiwitan belief. The burial ceremony of the followers of Sundanese wiwitan faith is almost the same as the Muslim’s burial procedure and the use of coffin follows Christianity tradition. Sundanese wiwitan beliefs states that the use of coffin after the corpse being bathed and fished is according to Sundanese wiwitan beliefs that humans are God’s most noble creations so that they must be treated nobly. Sundanese wiwitan believers in Cireundeu claim that the corpses are not clean before being bathed, fanned and buried. And the purpose of corpses baths is to make the corpses remain clean when returning to the Creator. Another reason behind the coffin usage is that corpses must be consumed by worms that live in the body because the body may be eaten by animals that live in the soil. They believe that human body can disappear and be decomposed without helping animals that live in the ground.

In terms of using coffin, Sundanese wiwitan belief adopted a new value and pattern that are internalized by Cireundeu indigenous people who believe in Sundanese wiwitan faith because the old funeral procedure was influenced by the funeral procedure in Islam. This form of internalization is cultural relativism. When there are some similarities with outside customs, the local customs may be influenced other cultures adopted and approved by other members of Cireundeu indigenous people who embrace Sundanese wiwitan beliefs.

IV. CONCLUSION

Religion which is subjective can be objectified in many expression. Cireundeu indigenous community have a strong religious tradition. Their religious expression has three forms. First is religious expression in the form of thoughts. Cireundeu indigenous people express their religiosity in thoughts through religious doctrines and customs from their ancestors. This kind of religious expressions is a vertical belief in the authority of God, by practicing Islamic Sharia as the basis for all activities in terms of respecting and believing in the ancestors’ tradition. Whereas the horizontal belief is realized in the principle of independence, life harmony with fellow humans and the natural environment, honest behavior, and anti-colonialism. This expression is based on the belief that if customary rules are held firmly, Cireundeu Village will remain sustainable, and if violated disaster will hit Cireundeu village. Second is religious expression in deeds. In terms of deeds, Cireundeu indigenous people express religiosity through ritual ceremonies, both religious rituals and customary rituals. Cireundeu Indigenous people adhere to Sunda Wiwitan belief. It is so-called Sunda wiwitan because of its original Sundanese as no religion has yet entered Sundanese. So, all brothers do not look at religion because religion is our own chosen identity. It does not matter people claim to have no religion, as long as they believe in the existence of God, because the important things in human’s life are determination, action and speech.

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