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Religious Leaders and Social Transformation at Ogan Ilir Regency Indonesia

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Abstract.

Religion encompasses a process of inheriting values by its adherents from generation to generation through a learning process. The process of inheriting religious values was instilled by religious elites who not only transferred religious teachings but also transformed the nature and character of a society. One of the areas experiencing this phenomenon is Ogan Ilir Regency, South Sumatra, and its people, who are known to have tough characters and solve problems using physical violence even though the area has had traditional institutions since its ancient days, which although traditional in nature, have modern elements such as democratic traditions in politics. They also set the social order to avoid violent attitudes written in the code of laws in Simbur Cahaya. For this reason, we will discuss how the pattern of religious leaders transforms the characteristics of society, and how the model of social transformation occurs. This article describes and analyzes the above using a sociological and anthropological approach. Data collection was carried out through observation and involvement of the author in religious activities as well as in-depth interviews with ideational ethnographic methods. The data was analyzed using several relevant theories. The findings in this study are as follows: in general, when religion is seen as part of a culture, it will continue to develop and "change", bearing in mind that society itself continues to change dynamically. For this reason, strategies are needed so that religious values can be embedded properly and can change the character of society. One of these strategies is through the Cawisan tradition, which is a medium for non-formal education and a place for religious learning for the people of Ogan Ilir and is a public space as well as a mode of strength of the Civil Society – the agency of religious leaders in dealing with various social problems. Religious leaders instill a sense of *Besemon* (having a sense of shame) to take action against violations of religious teachings and rules.

Keywords: Religious Figures, Strategy, Transformation

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1. INTRODUCTION

This article is part of the author's dissertation entitled Religion and Social Transformation (Study of the Cawisan Tradition in Ogan Ilir Regency, South Sumatra). The discussion in this article departs from Amin Abdullah's view which illustrates that every religion has a historical-empirical experience, according to him religion has experienced a process of inheriting values by its adherents from generation to generation through a learning process. In the next stage, the process of inheriting religious values becomes a tradition and becomes a cultural feature that distinguishes one region from another. This inheritance process is played by Kyai, Ustadz or religious figures or known as religious elites.

They at the same time have creative power and are active in shaping the social character and religious patterns of their society. This historical reality is a criticism of the ideas of Clifford Geertz (1958: 228) who considers that the kyai only act as cultural brokers (Culture Brokers), and the influence of the Kyai lies only in carrying out the brokerage function and politically the Kyai do not have the experience and expertise to lead well modern society-nation relations.

Actually, Geertz's opinion above has been challenged and questioned by Indonesianist experts, such as Hirokoshi who stated that the kyai have played a role as decision-makers, mobilizing villagers to support community decisions. According to Horikoshi (1987: 242) quoted by Yusuf Wibisono, it is stated that leaders of religious institutions such as Kyai, have a creative role in social change, namely introducing outside elements and causing changes in their society. Therefore the dynamics of change played by religious leaders including religious institutions also become an inseparable part as agents of change.

The role of the above religious figures simultaneously builds its own charismatic in front of its congregation, discussion of the charismatic characteristics of religious figures can be seen from Max Weber's charismatic theory which sees a change due to social interaction in society due to external factors that encourage community action to make a change due to instructions from people who are trusted and respected so as to generate and give birth to innovative, dynamic or radical changes. Charisma in Greek means a gloriously inspired blessing (grace), while in Christianity it is called grace, for example, having miracles or being able to predict future events so as to give birth to a radical impulse. Weber classifies his charismatic concept into three types of leadership patterns, namely charismatic, traditional and legal-rational. traditional (established) and charismatic (charismatic).

This type of domination of authority is influenced by socio-political factors of one's strength and power, according to Weber that there is no stable power because people who believe in the power in obeying it have legal reasons for that power. Charismatic person has the ability to accommodate people because they are loved by the people. His presence is sorely missed by the people so he is able to lead these fanatical people in any direction desired by their leaders by continuing to improve themselves and also practising what their ancestors mentioned earlier with their Tri Dharma concept, namely: feeling of belonging (*rumongso melu handarbeni*), must feel partly responsible (*mandatory melu hangrukebi*) and be willing to always be introspective in acting for future improvements (*mulat sariro hangrosowani*) This charisma by Weber is said to be the fruit of dedication to someone's services that have been done to their community.

The charisma of religious leaders or what Dody S Truna termed the religious elite has an impact on the behavior of the religious elite, which according to him tends to try to affirm and maintain the status quo through religious statements. He sees it as a sociological fact, that religious elites are caused by opportunity, ability and position, have the opportunity to affirm the identity of Islam and its ummah and the structure within and it is inevitable that something like this will eventually form a structure in society that is based on religion and the members agree and obey it. Despite the efforts of the religious elite who tend to maintain the status quo and their position as elites, the religious elite have also provided benefits or at least provided solutions to practical problems faced by ordinary people and maintained the existence of Islam in society in their own way.

The authors use the concepts and theories above in studying and analyzing the social reality that happened to religious leaders in Ogan Ilir Regency, South Sumatra from the colonial era to the contemporary era with the media of preaching through the Cawisan tradition. For this reason, the writer will examine the role of religious leaders in transforming society.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2.1. Social Conditions and Traditions of Studying Religion in Ogan Ilir Regency

The name Ogan Ilir has been around since the 19th century, namely during the Dutch colonial era. In the *Regeering Almanac* published by the Dutch in 1870 it was stated that Ogan Komering Ilir and Belida were afdeeling economic zones which were directly

under the Palembang residency.¹ Ethnically, the population of Ogan Ilir district, South Sumatra, can be categorized as Ogan Ilir natives and migrants who were brought in from Java and Sunda through the transmigration program. The native tribes of the population of Ogan Ilir Regency consist of: the Ogan tribe, the Pegagan tribe, and the Penesak tribe. Data for followers of the Ogan Ilir religion in South Sumatra in 2016 shows that the Muslim community numbered: 453,849, Christians: 1,725, Catholics: 872, Buddhists: 440, Hindus: 0, Total number of religious people in Ogan Ilir: 456,886.²

In the official text of the Ogan Ilir district it is stated that Ogan Ilir Regency officially bears the title of SANTRI, there are two meanings of Santri, first, literally the daily activities of the Ogan Ilir people are always based on Islamic religious values. Safe, Comfortable, Orderly, Religious and Beautiful. The first understanding provides an overview of personality traits, while the second understanding displays concepts and frameworks that are more operational and systematic.³

Socio-political changes in an area including Ogan Ilir Regency with the steps of the local government to build road infrastructure that facilitates access in and out of one area to another so that they are able to increase interaction between residents and have a positive impact because they are gradually able to change the character and type of Ogan Ilir people from traditional societies become a transitional society, namely a society that is experiencing a process of orientation change, namely from traditional/rural to modern/urban.

In the past, according to Teacher Dani, perhaps because of the blood of the Ogan Ilir people, especially around the villages of Talang Aur and Muara Penimbung, Indralaya Sub-District, "Brangas/Bengis (Cruel) cannot be controlled so they "fight nian" and not just fight bae" (very good at it) and often many incidents killings, persecuting each other and now the decline in the social character of the community is already good, especially now that there are many madrasahs in every village that are interconnected. Therefore, according to Dani's teacher, he is very concerned about the issue of morals and knowledge in lectures at Cawisan or during charity events (at circumcision events, or weddings). According to him, morals must be studied. namely: the book of Taisirul Kholaq, the book of Adabus Syar'yah (Syariah Ethics), the book of Wasyhoyal Aba Lil Abna'(father's advice to children).⁴

2.2. A Brief History of the Cawisan Tradition

The word Cawisan comes from the spoken language used by the people of Ogan Ilir, origin of the word: Cawis plus the ending an. Cawis means serving or serving food.

When this term is addressed to a religious figure, it means that the kyai or cleric is presenting or serving and teaching religious knowledge to his students in the "garang" of his house. The place for Cawisan is carried out in the "garang"/terrace of the Kyai's house or residents' houses or under the residents' stilt houses and sometimes it is held in madrasah classes owned by Cawisan teachers.⁵ The Cawisan tradition can be referred to as a medium of religious education with a traditional education system that is carried out independently and with full awareness by the community to obtain religious knowledge from religious teachers or Kyai who are located in their village or other villages.⁶

The Cawisan tradition in the course of its history has faced many challenges, during the Dutch colonial era when people could not get proper education as was obtained by those who were close to the Dutch colonial rulers at that time, Cawisan became a solution for people to get education, especially religious education. This was supported by the return of young scholars from studying in Mecca and on the island of Java in 1900 with a spirit of renewal. During the Japanese colonial period, most of the people could not get an education because madrasas and schools were closed by the colonialists and turned into logistics warehouses that supported the movement of Japanese troops so that education was neglected, so cawisan was used as a place to study religious knowledge and coordinate people's forces in fighting Japanese army.⁷

During the Old Order, the Cawisan tradition was suspected of being a means of consolidating the power of Muslims to fight against the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), which at that time was being "friendly" with the government. In response to this, a cleric H.A.Rauf who is also the head of KUA Indralaya made a statement confirming the legality of the activity and the purpose of Cawisan which only discussed religious issues and was not involved in any political activity.

As for the New Order era, according to one of Ogan Ilir's elders, Mr. Muk'rom As'ad, the Cawisan tradition experienced a slow movement in line with the shift in the orientation of people's lives which was more inclined towards general education and formalized religious education in the form of madrasas and Islamic boarding schools to several villages in Ogan Ilir experienced a vacuum of Cawisan traditional activities and experienced a crisis of local ulema cadres.⁸

Entering the reformation era, the socio-religious life of the Ogan Ilir community has experienced a revival, this is marked by the revival of the Cawisan tradition as young clerics return to their areas of origin in several villages in Ogan Ilir Regency and the revival of the Cawisan tradition is also motivated by increased awareness among adults to study religion as a provision for them to live the life of the world in accordance with the

guidance of religious teachings after previously they did not receive religious education at the age of compulsory education or school age.⁹

2.3. Religious Leaders and Social Transformation

From field data regarding the existence and role of religious figures in making the Cawisan tradition a means of social transformation, the following facts were found;

1. Sociological facts in the field show that through the Cawisan tradition, religious leaders/religious elites have the opportunity and ability and position to assert Islamic identity and its ummah and the structures within which are based on religion. Religious leaders have provided benefits and solutions to practical problems faced by ordinary people, and maintained the existence of Islam in society in their own way and it was found that there were efforts from these figures to maintain the status quo and their position as elites in society, especially from religious groups and the Cawisan group whose teachings differ from the mainstream. This fact proves Johnstone's theory regarding the differences that occur between the religious elite and the clergy in the acceptance of new values. This is due to the different theological orientations and religious depths of the clerical elite or the clergy.

Rapid socio-political changes and technological advances have raised concerns about the occurrence of a Border Less society (lost roots) in society, especially in relation to the clerical authority. Informatics technology (Internet) has made it easier for the public to obtain information, especially information on religious issues, but the facts in the field show that information obtained from the internet media sometimes does not provide peace of mind for the community, especially Cawisan members, in carrying out and interpreting the religious teachings obtained. Delivering material or religious themes in a way that feels right has the potential to cause divisions among the ummah and make those who want to return to religion feel confused even though their goal is very simple, namely wanting to study religion.

The existence of religious leaders in the community has a central role and is a place for people to complain amid their confusion and panic in responding to the fast and varied information, especially issues of Islamic religious teachings through information technology such as the internet. In order to overcome the community's concerns about the above conditions, religious leaders also use Cawisan as a means of purification

against the massive influx of various religious teachings and beliefs that are accepted by the community.

1. Besemon Community Character Construction (having a sense of shame). The above is of course related to the dimension of religious consequences which refers to the consequences of religious teachings, practices, experiences and knowledge of a person from day to day so as to shape people's attitudes and morals and behavior in their lives. The religious behavior of Cawisan members, which according to Kyai Utsman is inversely proportional to the spirit of attending ta'lim and the awareness to carry out religious orders such as not fasting during the month of Ramadan or attending congregational prayers at the mosque, is of course a concern for Cawisan leaders. Therefore, gradually the religious leaders shape the morals of society slowly by arousing a sense of Semon (shame) in Cawisan members if they do not carry out the teachings or apply religious values that are taught and believed to be true by Cawisan members in the daily behavior of members Cawisan.¹⁰
2. There are several types of Kyai or ulama within the scope of the Ogan Ilir Regency area as grouped by Idrus Djunaidi: First, Leaders of Islamic Boarding Schools and Lecturers/Active Preachers and at the same time as mentors. The Kyai in this case is a figure who leads the pesantren and actively gives lectures in the area where the Kyai is domiciled or even outside his territory and the Kyai has more abilities, namely merukyah so that many congregations come to his Islamic boarding school for treatment using the rukyah method. Second, the Leader of the Pondok, the figure of the Kyai is more dominant in the pesantren environment and is very rarely invited by the surrounding community to give religious lectures/lectures or share their religious knowledge. Third, the preaching cleric/Active Preacher. This figure is often asked by the community to give lectures and religious teachings from the community even though this figure does not have a boarding school or he is only a teaching staff at a boarding school. Fourth, Kyai Cawisan (Kiai Kampung) This figure lives in the midst of the community and is active in giving religious teachings in the garage of his house or under his Panggun house which is transformed into a Cawisan place. Islamic boarding schools and devote their time to serve or leave their knowledge to the community with the motivation of the hereafter.¹¹

The various types above have an impact on the pattern of community respect for Kyai figures and their role in shaping community character. As explained earlier, the social facts that occur in the form of fast socio-political changes and technological advances

raise concerns about the occurrence of a Border Less society (lost roots) in society, especially related to the problem of respect for figures, especially local religious leaders who live in the community. Human actions are often believed to be unpredictable. Verstehen Weber method. be relevant to use to understand human action. According to him, anyone has the opportunity to compromise every structure in their own society. Everyone can provide change ideas based on their goals or desires. Following this paradigm, humans are seen as an interactionist symbol and as a unique person so that they have a dualistic character. Pressure from outside cannot form basic human attitudes, because there are factors that are more dominant in influencing human beings so that they cannot easily submit to pressure from outside.

1. The increasing level of people's welfare causes changes in their pattern and lifestyle, including in religious matters. Communities who have high financial capacity can bring in preachers or preachers from outside the region and even from the capital city to fill in as speakers at celebrations or pesedakan events held at their homes. The ability to bring in Da'i from the capital city who spent sizable funds from interviews with informants showed that their motivation was more dominant to show their social status in society.

The actions of people who have high economic capacity can become a great potential to support the spirit of Islamic da'wah for local Kyai or Kampung Kyai with their Cawisan tradition and prosper them. This of course can construct a philanthropic spirit in the midst of society according to the capacity and potential of each. Ulama with their religious scientific abilities and wealthy people with their financial ability collaborate in preaching Islamiyah in their respective hometowns.

2. Geographical location and technological advances make it easier for the public to obtain religious information, so it is not surprising that deradicalization was carried out by Cawisan figures with the local wisdom of the local community with lectures flavored with jokes by the Kyai when conveying his religious messages. The role of filtration and purification as well as deradicalization can be carried out by local leaders or clerics properly in line with the public's awareness to renew their beliefs which so far have been contaminated by acts that deviate from religious teachings. In the Cawisan tradition, the charisma of the kyai or ustadz is very important considering that they are a source of information and a source of confirmation so as to prevent potential conflicts in the community, especially related to issues of understanding religion due to differences in the various theological orientations of society. for example: as a transitional society, local cultures and mystical practices

are still commonly found in society, for this reason, in the Cawisan procession, teachings about purity of belief are always conveyed to the Kyai during Cawisan and when the Kyai has the ability to perform rukyah, then with the method rukyah indirectly the kyai or ustad has filtered and purified people's beliefs.

3. CONCLUSION

From the description and discussion of the role of religious leaders in transforming society in Ogan Ilir, South Sumatra, it can be concluded as follows:

1. In general, the theory that the author builds in this article is that when religion is seen as part of culture, it will continue to develop and "change", bearing in mind that society itself continues to change dynamically, for this reason strategies are needed so that religious values can be instilled well and can change the character of society. One of these strategies is through the Cawisan tradition, which is a medium for non-formal education and a place for religious learning for the people of Ogan Ilir and is a public space as well as being the strength of the Civil Society which is the agency of religious leaders in dealing with various social problems.
2. Religious leaders instill the character of *besemon* (having a sense of shame) to take actions that violate religious teachings and rules.

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