

Urban Dealing with Pandemic: Comparative Responses on Spanish Flu and the Covid-19 Era in Indonesia

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Abstract

This article compares how the Indonesian, specifically the urban people respond to the pandemic during the history. In 1918, Indonesia, formerly known as the Dutch East Indies, witnessed a pandemic of the Spanish Flu that killed thousands of lives. A century later, Indonesia is once again experienced with the lethal Covid-19 pandemic. The emphasized responses are specific on countermeasures and vaccination programs during the Spanish Flu 1918 and Covid-19 pandemics. The primary source of this research is the archive of annual reports (Kolonial Verslag) Dutch East Indies government 1920 and a report from the Dutch East Indies Civil Health Service (*Burgerlijken Geneeskundigen Dienst*), as well as supported by newspapers such as: *Sin Po*, *Oetoesan Hindia*, *Pewarta Soerabaia*, *Tjhoen Tjhioe*, *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, and *Andalas*. This article also aims at understanding how the Indonesian people are handling pandemics, both the Spanish Flu and the Covid-19 pandemics. The action taken by the government in tackling the Spanish flu and Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia is to issue regulations to reduce activities in the public domain. This regulation has proven successful in reducing the spread of the Spanish flu pandemic in the past and Covid-19 in the present. This research found that Indonesian urban in the past and today have similar points of view, the irrational views and rational views, this is proofed from the emergence of unique, local-rational, and uncontrollable news and rumours because of the amplification of news about the outbreak. The difference is that in the past, religious responses were expressly confronted with the news but in the present, it is more moderate and open to cooperating with programs from the government. The spectrum from the news of the past outbreaks is not as large as that of the present. Mass media with information technology to social media are further expanding the spectrum from outbreak news to produce more powerful amplifications. It also affects the polarization of the masses that respond rationally and irrationally to the outbreak.

Keywords: Comparative Responses; Pandemic Mitigation; Spanish Flu; Covid-19.

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Introduction

Covid-19 pandemic is a major outbreak in the world. A century ago, when the Spanish Flu outbreak began to spread in the Dutch East Indies, the exact first response occurred. According to Ravando, the propagation of the Spanish Flu virus pandemic during the initial period (July to early September 1918) was pretty rapid. However, most infected individuals did not experience significant consequences and healed on their own within a few days. The majority of doctors in the Dutch East Indies believed that the early period of the outbreak was not very lethal in terms of mortality and morbidity rates (Ravando, 2020).

Sumatra was the epicenter of the Spanish Flu's spread, followed by Java and Borneo (Khodafi, Wildayati, and Septiyani, 2021). According to the records of the *Burgerlijken Geneeskundigen Dienst* (Dutch East Indies Civil Health Service), the first case of Spanish Flu in the Dutch East Indies occurred in June 1918 in the Pangkatan plantation area of North Sumatra. By a report by the Dutch East Indies Health Service, the virus was believed to have been spread by plantation coolies from Singapore or Penang (Ravando, 2020). Simultaneously, East Sumatra's plantations are in turmoil since the virus has caused many plantation coolies to get limp. Numerous newspapers claimed that the disease infiltrated Medan via Penang, considering the two regions' economic solid ties.

On July 17, 1918, the *Sin Po* newspaper in the Dutch East Indies became the first to publish news of the Spanish Flu. According to info gathered from *Sin Po* Medan contributors, alien infections like the common cold have spread throughout Medan. The virus is believed to have infiltrated Medan via Singapore. Interestingly, numerous people refer to the virus as *Russische Influenza* (Russian Flu), referring to the 1889–1900 influenza epidemic. Additionally, *Sin Po* reported that the Spanish Flu virus had infected 60 police officers and killed 100 Chinese coolies in Medan (“Penjakit Aneh,” 1918).

Meanwhile, the number of fatalities from the Spanish Flu increases daily in Medan. According to a report from the *Deli Maatschappij* hospital, approximately 50-60 people get killed each day, with over half suffering from the Spanish Flu (“Penjakit Ini Wektoe,” 1918). Meanwhile, this virus has spread rapidly in the plantation area surrounding Medan. However, only a few days later, the infection had spread throughout the port area. Due to the large number of persons infected with this virus, the situation in East Sumatra's plantations was rumored to be stressful (“Penjakit Rasia,” 1918).

The first wave of the Spanish Flu outbreak was strongly suspected to be carried out by traders and ship passengers from Penang and Singapore. The spread of this virus was so massive, directly proportional to the development of the transportation system that helps accelerate the process of transmission from one region to another (Wibowo et al., 2009). Surabaya has the highest spread rate. This is inextricably linked to Surabaya's strategic position as the meeting point for ships from both domestic and international waters (Setyowati and Yunita, 2018).

Then, in the second wave, which lasted from late November to December 1918, a massive attack happened. This outbreak lasted until January 1919 in some areas of Eastern Indonesia. Over this second wave, the Spanish Flu spread rapidly throughout Eastern Indonesia, including Sulawesi, Maluku, and the Sunda Kecil Islands. Due to the severity of the virus attack, the Dutch East Indies Health Service reported that nearly no place in the Dutch East Indies had been unharmed (Cipta, 2020).

Nobody in the Dutch East Indies expected that the second wave's attack would be more deadly. The problem is exacerbated further by residents' and doctors' inexperience with the Spanish Flu's complexities, giving the impression that they underestimated the outbreak (Baha'uddin, 2006). However, this perception quickly shifted when it was revealed that the Spanish Flu virus had claimed thousands of lives and disrupted social and economic activity in many regions in just a few weeks.

The *Tjhoen Tjhioe* newspaper reported that it was hazardous for people to be in the crowd for some time. No place is truly safe except the jungle (*Tjhoen Tjhioe*, 1918). Because of the deadly attack of the Spanish Flu in this second period, some newspapers pinned some bad nicknames on the virus. For example, the newspaper *Pewarta Soerabaia* repeatedly wrote the disease as "devil's influenza" and "bastard diseases" ("Setan Influenza," 1918).

Additionally, the Dutch East Indies government appeared unprepared for the Spanish Flu pandemic resurgence, especially this time it happened on a much larger scale. Every day there are various reports of coolies who died. This is inextricably linked to the poor health conditions prevalent in plantation and mining areas. Their immune systems are particularly vulnerable due to inadequate sanitary procedures and substandard. Additionally, they felt easy prey for the rampaging Spanish Flu.

In the past, as is repeated today, the Dutch East Indies government's lack of readiness caused them to underestimate the Spanish Flu outbreak. However, the Indonesian government is currently challenged with even more complex problems. There was only one route for this virus to enter the Dutch East Indies: the seaport. Additionally, population density, mobility, and information conduits were severely constrained. However, the situation is a little different at the time. The Indonesian government is responsible for overseeing ships arriving at the port and other modes of transportation. The level of population density and mobility is also a significant factor in why Indonesia continues to struggle with the Covid-19 virus (Mawardi, 2020).

In terms of pandemic mitigation, the current Indonesian government also inherited the error from the Dutch East Indies government. Poor coordination between the central and local governments caused many communities to try to overcome this pandemic in their way eventually. Starting from logical methods to carrying out various rituals that sound absurd (Ravando, 2020). Not only that, but the miscommunication also contributes to the spread of fake news (hoaxes) that are increasingly rampant. A few people also use the Spanish Flu pandemic and Covid-19 to reap the maximum profits during such a difficult situation.

Research on the Spanish flu pandemic in the Dutch East Indies has also been carried out by Gani A. Jaelani in his publication entitled "*Fighting Influenza: Spanish Flu*

Pandemic in Colonial Indonesia, 1918-1919." This paper focuses his research on how the Dutch East Indies government struggled in overcoming the Spanish flu pandemic that was raging in the Dutch East Indies. This research also looked at what are the preventions and actions taken by the Dutch East Indies government in overcoming theso-called pandemic (Jaelani, 2021).

Other publications from Jaelani are *"Islam dan Persoalan Higiene di Hindia Belanda."* This paper highlights how Islam as a religion that advocates for its adherents to live a clean life was used by the Dutch East Indies government in overcoming the spread of the Spanish flu pandemic. In a regulation issued by the Dutch East Indies government that encourages people to wash their hands and maintain personal hygiene so as not to be infected by the Spanish flu pandemic outbreak. This isinspired by the teachings of Islam which always advocates maintaining a clean lifestyle to its adherents in their daily lives (Jaelani, 2017).

Meanwhile, both vaccination programs were quite similar. The low level of vaccination, which does not cover all groups in society, is the primary reason for the program's several rejections (Ravando, 2020). Due to a lack of public awareness and extensive fake news about the vaccination program, the initiative struggled to meet its aim. Numerous religious leaders oppose the program as well, which is why the Indonesian government collaborates with religious organization to encourage the public to vaccinate (Karuru, 2021).

Errors in handling the pandemic and unclear regulations issued by the government in preventing the spread of the pandemic. Causing the community to then have the initiative to be able to handle this pandemic in their own way. Departing from this, this article wants to compare how urban communities in Indonesia have responded in the past and present in facing a pandemic. Differences in terms of population mobility and technological advances, are the main focus of the comparisons that the authors made in this study.

Method

In this study, the author used historical methods with a phenomenological approach. The historical method according to Gottschalk (1986) is the process of testing and critically analyzing records of the past. Imaginative reconstruction of the past based on data obtained by going through that process is called historiography (Gottschalk, 1986). This method is used to describe events or events in the past. According to Kuntowijoyo (1994), there are five stages in historical research, namely: topic selection, source collection, verification, interpretation, and historiography (Kuntowijoyo, 1994). The author's phenomenological approach is used in this study because it explains the nature of phenomena so that they are able to give an idea of something that is what it is and according to the actual situation. Phenomenology focuses on how people experience certain phenomena, meaning that people experience something not because of experience but because of phenomena that occurred in their lives (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015).

The data collection technique in this study was through a literature study with the stage of finding sources related to the response of the Indonesian people when there was an outbreak of the Spanish flu and Covid-19 pandemic. The author collects sources in the form of archives, newspapers, books, and other related articles that are relevant to the theme of the discussion. In this study, the authors focused on looking for data related to community responses in major cities in Indonesia, such as: Jakarta (Batavia), Surabaya, and Medan. These cities were chosen because they represent the representative response of the Indonesian people in general regarding the outbreak of the Spanish flu pandemic and covid-19. In this research, the author uses primary sources from *Kolonial Verslag* tahun 1920 and *Mededeelingen van den Burgelijken Geneeskundige Dienst in Nederlandsch Indie* juga tahun 1920. Sumber sekunder berasal dari surat kabar terbitan, *Sin Po*, *Oetoesan Hindia*, *Pewartas Soerabaia*, *Tjhoen Tjhioe*, *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, and *Andalas*, as well as several books and journals.

The sources that have been obtained then the author of the analysis using a phenomenological approach (Hasbiansyah, 2008). This approach essentially describes a phenomenon as it is without manipulating the data in it. Before analyzing with this approach, we must first set aside our understanding of religion, customs, and so on so that there is no bias (Campbell, 1994). In this study, data from *Kolonial Verslag*, reports from the Civil Health Service of the Dutch East Indies, and contemporaneous newspapers about the conditions, number of victims, and actions taken by the Dutch East Indies government, the author tried to compare with the situation that occurs today. This comparison then shows that there are similarities between the response of urban communities during the past Spanish flu pandemic and the Covid-19 pandemic in the present. The similarities can be seen in the actions taken by the government in preventing the spread of the pandemic, as well as the steps taken independently by the community through rituals, ceremonies, and other traditional methods.

Indonesian Countermeasuring of Pandemic: Rationality or Superstition?

When the Spanish Flu broke out in the Dutch East Indies in 1918, many locals performed various rituals to deal with the virus. For example, among the Chinese population, the *toapekong* parade has become the most frequently done thing since the emergence of the Spanish Flu pandemic. The parade is usually held several times and is believed to be able to reject diseases. This ritual is held by Chinese residents in various regions, such as Karawang, Medan, Surabaya, Cirebon, etc. In this ritual, they ask for heavy rain immediately. It is believed that heavy rains can wipe out the spread of the virus. But this ritual also received minor criticism, *Sin Po*, as modern newspapers that uphold rationality, criticized the ritual. *Sin Po* wrote an opinion entitled "*Pertoeloengan?*" (The Aid?) with a question mark at the end that implicitly indicates doubt by *Sin Po* to the ritual ("*Pertoeloengan*," 1918).

Most indigenous people also have similar views related to the Spanish Flu pandemic. They believe that an evil spirit or ghost causes this pandemic. The countermeasures they usually do is to focus on driving away from the evil spirit, not the disease. Among the ways that are often done is to go to sacred places while praying

for salvation. They also do fasting, perform certain rituals, and slaughter animals (Wibowo et al., 2009).

Locals in Medan have assembled at the Grand Mosque and the Old Mosque Gang Bengkok for several nights to perform rituals. They also gathered between Antara and Japaris street, then went around the village and did *shalawat* and asked God to relieve the diseases ("Tolak Bala," 1918). A week after the ritual, residents around the Kera River region also made a similar procession while spelling *shalawat* to repel the Spanish Flu pandemic. Not long ago, Medan was poured with very heavy rain. This led residents to believe that the heavy rain was the answer from God and a sign that the virus would soon disappear ("Habishlah Penjakit," 1918).

A similar situation also occurs in Solo. Increased cases of death caused by the Spanish Flu, making the Kasunanan Surakarta issue instructions to the residents and their *kawula* to perform rituals that are believed to be able to resist the diseases. Kraton Solo then decided to take out a spear named "*Kyai Slamet*." The heirloom is planned to be paraded along with other heirloom objects around Solo. The ritual is believed to be able to drive out the pandemic that has claimed so many victims in Solo (Supradewi, 2020).

Meanwhile in Yogyakarta, on December 5, 1918, the Kraton Yogyakarta decided to hold a large parade ritual that is believed to be able to fight the Spanish Flu pandemic. In the ritual, various heirloom objects owned by the Kraton Yogyakarta are paraded by a line of soldiers around the city. On the right side of the soldiers carried the Kiai Tunggal Walung banner, which was carried so luxuriously and gallantly. This banner is one of the most sacred heirlooms of the Kraton Yogyakarta and is believed to be powerful to ward off all diseases (Ravando, 2020).

Some irresponsible people used the moments of the Spanish Flu to spread hoaxes. For example, Di Semarang once circulated a mystical story that there was a rich man who died from the Spanish Flu. When the funeral was held, purportedly that his hand was detached and flew everywhere. The hand will not interfere if given some money. Therefore, many residents of Semarang carry some money wherever they go. There was also a growing belief among Javanese people to draw the walls of their homes with certain pictures. This method is also believed to reject disease (Wibowo et al., 2009).

Meanwhile, in Wonogiri circulated a news stating that catfish can be used as an antidote to the Spanish Flu. In a short time, local people flocked to buy catfish. This starts from the story of a resident who prayed by the river and dreamed of being visited by two young children who told him that the antidote to the disease was catfish (Dewi, 2013). According to *Sin Po*, the news is only the ingenuity of fishmongers seeking to profit from the outbreak. As a result, the price of catfish, which previously cost over 5 cents/head, then jumped to 30-40 cents/head ("Akalnja Toekang Ikan," 1918).

The Spanish Flu pandemic swept over the Dutch East Indies, and health workers who were still inexperienced with this uncommon disease could only offer quinine or aspirin as first aid. Even though these medications are ineffective in treating

the Spanish Flu, they can alleviate symptoms such as headaches and fever. Both types of drugs are suggested by the government of the Dutch East Indies as the primary treatment for the Spanish Flu (Baha'uddin, 2006).

In East Sumatra, *Departement van Binnenlandsh Bestuur* [Department of Internal Affairs] urges the Dutch East Indies Health Service to implement strict rules and provide recommendations to the population related to the Spanish Flu pandemic. The goal is clear: to reduce the number of victims that continues to grow every day because of their confusion and ignorance regarding how to deal with the Spanish Flu virus. But the Dutch East Indies Health Service stated that nothing could be done to fight the pandemic ("Penjakit Baroe Mengamoek," 1918).

It was never known exactly how many victims were caused by the Spanish Flu pandemic in the Dutch East Indies. This was due to poor coordination and government record-keeping at the time. The *Tjhoen Tjhioe* newspaper estimated that about 1.25 million people had died. Higher figures released by the *Neratja* newspaper estimated that about 2 million people died from the Spanish Flu in the Dutch East Indies (Ravando, 2020). But it is, the figure of 1.5 million is often the consensus and reference for research on the Spanish Flu in the Dutch East Indies (Brown, 1987). The article became one of the few references for research related to the Spanish Flu pandemic in the Dutch East Indies.

Another effort made by the Dutch East Indies Government is to produce tablet drugs as a measure of anticipation if many victims have been exposed to this virus with severe symptoms. The government prepared 972,300 tablet drugs to deal with the Spanish Flu that occurred. The drug will be distributed in two ways: door to door in people's homes or through government- and military hospitals. The existence of this drug is beneficial to treat and reduce the number of victims affected by the Spanish Flu (Setyowati & Yunita, 2018).

The Dutch East Indies government then formed a special team that handled the problem of the Spanish Flu pandemic, which was directly under the Dutch East Indies Health Service. The government authorizes the Dutch East Indies Health Service to fully control all policies issued (*Mededeelingen van Den Burgelijken Geneeskundige Dienst in Nederlandsch Indie*, 1920). After knowing that the spread of this virus can occur through the air, the government then took action to distribute masks to the public to avoid transmission. Treatment is immediately carried out by sending people's health cars to carry out lighting or propaganda on the problem.

But after the emergence of the second wave of the Spanish Flu virus, which proved to be much more deadly and dangerous. Health workers in the Dutch East Indies then recommended isolating sick people, banning gatherings and events that could potentially cause crowds, temporarily closing schools and other public places, reducing labor, prohibiting people from working during rains, increasing ventilation at home, gargling with alcohol, bathing, and washing hands regularly, and wearing masks (Ravando, 2020).

Even though various regulations have been made to prevent the spread of the Spanish Flu, which is increasingly massive, people still refuse to implement them. This

is suspected that residents are reluctant to take advantage of the help of medical personnel and free medicines from the government for fear that there will be reciprocity or veiled intent of the assistance. But when compared with today's rejection related to handling the Covid-19 pandemic, the denial in the past was not too great. There are several things behind the at least rejection, including 1) The educated society is only filled by those from Europe and local nobles who number only a small part of the total population; 2) High degree of illiteracy; 3) Limited information media so that people only get information from newspapers or radio.

This is inversely proportional to the Covid-19 pandemic that is currently sweeping Indonesia. The vaccination program scheduled to start in January 2021 by the Indonesian government continues to get a rejection by various parties (Idhom, 2021). Rejection occurs due to the confusion of information and the lack of massive government in socializing these activities. Rejection occurs because some people are afraid of side effects after vaccination (Ryan, 2021).

A century ago, the Dutch East Indies government issued a regulation to mitigate the Spanish Flu (*Kolonial Verslag 1919*, 1920). The regulation was established on October 20, 1920 and came into force throughout the Dutch East Indies region. The rules were then contained in the *Staatsblad van Nederlandsch Indie* (Wibowo et al., 2009). The regulation contained in *staatsblad* in 1920 number 723 article 2 states that the responsibility of the Dutch East Indies Health Service is greater than that of other agencies. In addition to the Dutch East Indies Health Service, the government ranks are encouraged to realize the regulations that have been set. If they violate these regulations, the consequences will be punished criminally following the violation (Khodafi et al., 2021).

Like repeating the same thing, currently, the Indonesian government, through Presidential Regulation No. 14 of 2021 concerning Amendments to Presidential Regulation No. 99 of 2020 concerning Vaccine Procurement and Vaccination Implementation in the Framework of Countering the Corona Virus Disease Pandemic 2019, imposes sanctions on Indonesians who refuse to be vaccinated. The government requires state civil servants (ASN), medical personnel, educators, and various other professions that are considered vulnerable to the spread of this virus (Shalihah, 2021). The advancement of technology and education of a society greatly influences their response to seeing vaccination. We can see how the public responded during the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918 and Covid-19.

Medicines, Traditional Herbs, and Religions as the Alternative Solutions

The uproar caused by the Spanish Flu pandemic in Dutch East Indies was directly proportional to the spread of various commercial drugs that were claimed to be able to treat the disease. Most of the disease's drugs result from a concoction from doctors in the Dutch East Indies or imported from other countries, such as Australia. It cannot be denied that the drug has become a very in-demand commodity during a pandemic that is so tense. This is seen in the proliferation of advertisements for these drugs in various newspapers every day (Ravando, 2020).

One of the newspapers that featured advertisements about the drugs was the *Sin Po*. The ad first appeared on October 28, 1918 and mentioned that the Spanish Flu virus swept the entire Dutch East Indies region, but it was no more dangerous than bubonic plague and cholera. The advertisement mentions that the symptoms of the disease usually begin with symptoms of headache and a body limp (“Obatnja Influenza Atawa Penyakit Baroe,” 1918).

A figure who contributed to the discovery of drugs in fighting the Spanish Flu pandemic was R. Mohammad Saleh, a famous doctor in Bandung. The drug is consumed by adults and children and is priced at f.2.50 beyond its postage. The drug is marketed in various drug stores around Bandung. This is likely the first anti-influenza drug widely marketed in the Dutch East Indies. Since it was first widely marketed, the drug was directly sold out.

The complexity of the problem makes residents who do not know what to do, choose to do alternative medicine, ranging from using traditional herbs to performing various religious rituals. In addition, residents still unfamiliar with Western medicine certainly view quarantine and isolation as something unusual. Moreover, most of them looked at the hospital as a haunted place and looked at the doctors with a cynical look. This is inseparable from the population's limited access to Western medicine because the majority do not have money for treatment in polyclinics or hospitals.

This rejection of Western medicine arises because of the assumption of ordinary people seeing that Dutch doctors often take advantage of sick people. The most common causes are that doctors refuse to treat patients who do not have money. As a result, there is a stereotype that these doctors only serve those who have money (Ravando, 2020). Therefore, those not from European circles, nobles, or rich people do not get proper treatment. As a result, many of the fatalities came from the underprivileged.

The Chinese people play a crucial role in producing traditional herbs. They sell Western medicines and herbal medicines that are concoctions from the recipe of their ancestors. When the Spanish Flu pandemic broke out in the Dutch East Indies, these drugs became an important alternative for the community. Especially when the rates of doctors and hospitals are not affordable for most people. So, the option was to use alternative medicines concoction *sinshe* or go to the shaman.

Various newspapers also switched to publishing traditional medicines that are believed to be able to treat the disease. As the country is beset by confusion over what to take to deal with the Spanish Flu pandemic, various circles are trying to find their medicines. On November 9, 1918, the newspaper *Tjhoen Tjhioe* published an article containing recipes and steps to treat the Spanish Flu (Kwan, 1918). The West Java *Sin Po* reported that many residents use water gourds as a medicine against the Spanish Flu (“Tida Laen Dari Influenza,” 1918). While newspapers *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* also published simple concoctions and drugs that are claimed to be able to prevent and treat the Spanish Flu. The herb is just a decoction of ginger and palm sugar (“Obat Boeat Influenza (Sakit Demam),” 1918).

Sinar Hindia also did not want to miss to report the viral traditional medicine

concoction. But as first aid, *Sinar Hindia* still recommends using aspirin first if a person suffers from a high fever. In the article, the editor of *Sinar Hindia* also gave several alternative medicines that later were also widely used by the community, including: (1) pumpkin grated water; (2) lime mixture; (3) and clove stew water. Meanwhile, cough medicine can use: (1) egg whites mixed with natural honey; (2) a mixture of soy sauce and lime; (3) *asem* leaves and sugar cubes stew water.

News about the use of traditional medicines as alternative medicines, in an instant, has spread throughout the Dutch East Indies. This is inseparable from the role of newspapers in informing these treatment methods, especially in the midst of public confusion regarding the drugs they should consume (Ravando, 2020).

The impact felt due to the outbreak of the Spanish Flu pandemic in 1918 occurred in the health and social aspects and affected other aspects such as education and religion. Education has been severely affected by this pandemic, so various activities from educational institutions in areas that have been infected with the Spanish Flu are prohibited from carrying out the teaching and learning process. This was the same today when the Covid-19 pandemic hit Indonesia.

Religion has had a strong influence on the social change of human history. Religion is considered a significant influence, so it is the leading cause of change in society. The Covid-19 pandemic that is currently sweeping Indonesia has caused people to limit all activities related to other humans. This is also felt by religious believers who can no longer perform religious rituals and other activities in a crowded manner. These restrictions lead to a more flexible religious pattern and prioritize common interests for public health (Kustana, Jamaludin, Zuldin, & Nuramin, 2020).

The response of Muslims in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic this time is very different from the occurrence of the Spanish Flu a century ago. After Indonesia's independence, Muslims became one of the great powers in the country. Muslims have also given birth to many great experts and scholars. In addition, Islamic organizations that are very much in Indonesia further affirm the aspirations of Muslims related to handling the Covid-19 pandemic and vaccinations campaigned by the Indonesian government. In addition, the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) has also issued several fatwas and new rules related to the implementation of worship during this emergency response period.

Regarding the issue of ritual, the impact of this pandemic was strongly felt by Indonesian Muslims when the Indonesian government issued rules for ritual activities in houses of worship. The government issued this rule after seeing the development of cases of the spread of Covid-19 and received views from several religious figures and Islamic organizations. As a result, the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a crisis of uniformity in Indonesia. This crisis means that the situation and conditions are less supportive of religious activities, thus having a bad influence on society, especially Muslims. As a result of the religious crisis, religious eradication must be carried out. As stated by Johan Effendi (2015), there needs to be an adjustment of the meaning of religion with the conditions of the times so that through efforts to redefine religion becomes re-fused in human life (Suherdiana, Ridwan, Fatoni, & Rojudin, 2020).

In Indonesia, the vaccination movement began in January 2021 faces challenges from various circles. The biggest challenge comes from religious people who continue to resist this movement. Responding to this, the Indonesian government then collaborated with Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, the Majelis Ulama Indonesia, and various other Islamic organizations that represent the views of the majority of Indonesian Muslims. This cooperation is intended so that the goals of the vaccination movement are achieved.

Chairman of Muhammadiyah Central Leadership, Prof. Haedar Nashir said that citizens should put their mental interests first to help the government overcome the Covid-19 pandemic this time. He also said people should avoid egoism and negative stigma about vaccinations. The same thing was also conveyed by the Chairman of PBNU, Prof. KH. Said Aqil Siraj. He invited all Indonesian people, especially Nahdliyin residents, to be willing to be vaccinated. Concern to participate in vaccination programs can maintain and save the nation from this very dangerous Covid-19 pandemic (Karuru, 2021).

To strengthen and give people confidence in this movement. The MUI, through the Fatwa Commission, issued a fatwa stating that the Sinovac vaccine and others that are planned to be circulated in Indonesia have fulfilled halal status (Nurul, 2021). With this status, most people are finally willing to be vaccinated. Evidently, until June 3, 2021, approximately 11,003,152 people have been vaccinated in the second stage. This is an extraordinary achievement, and we hope to be a good step so that the Covid-19 pandemic can end soon (Yahya, 2021). The last update from the vaksin.kemkes.go.id page shows very optimistic data. Of the 208,265,720 Indonesians as target recipients of the vaccine, as of March 2022 it has reached 196,850,337 first doses (94.52%); 159,950,991 second doses (76.80%); and 23,574,482 third doses (11.32%).

Conclusion

In looking at a pandemic that occurred, Indonesian urban in the past and today have similar points of view. The similarity is that society still puts forward irrational views rather than rational views, this is proofed from the emergence of unique, local-rational, and uncontrollable news and rumors because of the amplification of news about the outbreak. The plague is still being used by a handful of people to reap personal benefits. Meanwhile, in the vaccination program, the public response is still equally resistant. The study found that the biggest rejection occurred in urban areas where the community was more diverse and plural. The difference is that in the past, religious responses were expressly confronted with the news but in the present, it is more moderate and open to cooperating with programs from the government. In addition, the spectrum from the news of the past outbreaks is not as large as that of the present. Mass media with information technology to social media are further expanding the spectrum from outbreak news to produce more powerful amplifications. It also affects the polarization of the masses that respond rationally and irrationally to the outbreak. The author hopes that this research will have an impact on providing an overview of how the Indonesian people are responding to a pandemic.

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