

## Research article

# Revitalizing the Importance of Community Leaders' Role in Preventing Conflicts During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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The world is currently experiencing a downturn due to the COVID-19 pandemic that has significantly triggered a variety of problems in our society today. These problems have the potential to create conflict and lead to conflicts of interest among people of different groups. Various vulnerabilities arise with issues of virus spread, information dissemination, and the sensitivity of people who are experiencing changes in the new life order in terms of lifestyle, communication, social interactions, civic commitment, and responsiveness to the environment. Changes in the value order of social humanists will shift to a more structural and individualist opposition. The situation is getting complicated and the problem of conflict is getting widespread, it must be suppressed so that it will subside. The participation of the entire community is important. One of its strengths is the presence of community leaders who contribute as motivators and problem solvers in society. This research uses a qualitative design that focuses on revitalizing the role of community leaders in preventing conflict. The results show that strengthening the role of community leaders is very urgent in preventing conflict during the COVID-19 pandemic through a social resilience approach, as a mediator of "Jogo Tonggo," as well as a facilitator in conflict resolution.

**Keywords:** community leaders, conflict, COVID-19 pandemic

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## 1. Introduction

The Indonesian nation as a nation has a complex plurality that forms community groups with diverse characteristics [1]. The complexity of this diversity makes a good contribution and has the potential to develop the nation, but it can create vulnerability to competition and even conflict in living together [2].

At this time the Indonesian nation is experiencing a COVID-19 pandemic situation, which has changed the condition of society in various ways. The Indonesian nation is struggling against the spread of COVID-19 [3]. The existence of a pandemic in Indonesia has a systematic and multidimensional impact on all aspects of life [4]. The pandemic has a complex impact such as poverty, declining health levels, increasing unemployment due to layoffs, and so on [5].

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Socially, the pandemic has caused turmoil in religious conflicts and confrontational conflicts due to public distrust of policies imposed by the government [6]. The government has tried to take steps to anticipate the threat of conflict that has sprung up in the community due to the pandemic [7].

One of them is through stimulus from the government, both fiscal and monetary as outlined in Perpu No. 1 of 2020 concerning State Financial Policy. Policies with refocusing programs and reallocation of government budgets to deal with the impacts caused by the pandemic conditions. Several regions in Indonesia, one of which was the City of Semarang, immediately responded to this matter quickly and responsively, by pouring out direct cash assistance funds. The existence of assistance for the pandemic economic community can directly ease the burden on the community [8]. On the other hand, the provision of assistance to the community is very likely to be a new conflict caused by the unequal distribution of aid. Policies and wisdom are needed in carrying out decisions that must be in favor of the community. Policies are expected to contribute to making good social changes in society.

One of the policies started from the implementation of the "Jogo Tonggo" movement [9]. As an alternative model to shape individual awareness to become a state community, obedience to the law and the prevailing social values of humanism. The implementation of the "Jogo Tonggo" model can give birth to social solidarity among the community, which is driven by community leaders as dynamic drivers in a positive direction in preventing conflicts in the community.

Anxiety and problems due to the covid situation make people very sensitive, because of different interests. Therefore, there needs to be a characterization of someone who is considered important in a community group. The characterization of a person as a community figure acts as a conditioner and peacemaker when a conflict occurs.

## 2. Research Method

This study uses a qualitative descriptive type. This study focuses on revitalizing the role of community leaders in preventing conflict during the pandemic in the city of Semarang. Indicator of the role of community leaders as motivators, conflict resolution, and communicators.

The data collection method uses in-depth interviews with informants to obtain primary data and observations and documentation. The data analysis uses an interactive model starting from data collection, reduction, presentation, interpretation, and verification.

### 3. Finding and Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the prevention of conflicts that arise in the city of Semarang due to the current pandemic is not only strengthened by the participation of community leaders, but also by the community. The condition of a society that has diversity, consisting of customs, social norms that provide different color patterns. Handling social conflicts can be done by implementing conflict resolution. Communities can play their role in conflict resolution.

Community roles include conflict prevention, conflict cessation, and post-conflict recovery. This role can be performed by religious leaders; traditional leaders; public figures; customary institutions; as well as social institutions. Groups of formal community leaders and informal community leaders whose existence cannot be ignored [10]. The role of community leaders As a determinant of direction; representatives and spokespersons; communicator; and as an integrator.

Seeing the real conditions in the people of Semarang City, the occurrence of conflicts at the level of power spaces. There are three known power spaces in the social system, namely the state power space, civil society or social collectivities, and the private sector [11]. Social conflict can occur between community leaders who have an advantage over most people and play an important role in decision-making. Community leaders are experienced in adapting to the surrounding community, competent, and maintaining existing norms.

Community leaders are experienced in adapting to the surrounding community, competent, and maintaining existing norms. Recognition of the existence of figures as people who are sensitive to various problems in the environment. It can also influence the attitudes and behavior of citizens who act in certain ways [12]. Human life will always be faced with various kinds of conflicts that occur with various phenomena of plurality or diversity, with this plurality often being a trigger for problems [13]. In social life that often occurs inequality can lead to conflict in society which can result in people not being able to carry out their activities.

If we look at the role of community leaders in the city of Semarang by carrying out the "Jogo Tonggo" implementation movement. The implementation of "Jogo Tonggo" applies the principle of togetherness, such as by connecting the relationship between the community and community leaders. Gathering in the city of Semarang is known as Srawung Culture, which is a bridge of harmony, strengthens brotherhood, maintains harmony, and can reduce conflicts between religious communities. The goal is to eliminate stigma and suspicion between religious adherents and reduce differences

so that they accept each other. Differences are not seen and used as a source of new conflicts and divisions, but as wealth and a driving force for harmony, peace, unity, and cooperation for the community.

The role of community leaders as direction-setters, when there are aspirations or responses regarding problems during the pandemic. Community leaders are expected to accept and observe, seek and provide solutions to the community, such as the implementation of "Jogo Tonggo", and communicate to the community so that the community can take care of themselves, and also the surrounding area, especially their neighbors. As spokespersons for community representatives, community leaders convey their aspirations which can be conveyed through deliberation forums related to conflicts that occurred during the pandemic. The role of community leaders as facilitators and mediators. Community leaders play a role in facilitating the community in anticipating and overcoming various problems related to conflict and hoax news that is widely circulated in the community. The role of community leaders is needed and becomes a mediator between the pros and cons of problems circulating in the community. Community leaders must provide an understanding to the community that the occurrence of these existing differences is a very natural thing in society. Community leaders must find out the truth of the information from the pros and cons. If without a mature strategy, it will make the problem bigger and hurt implementing the "Jogo Tonggo" program.

The role of community leaders as nonlinear integrators or reinforcements in creating an integration process to create a safe and peaceful atmosphere in society by carrying out good coordination, and increasing friendship between communities by approaching personally and community groups. One of the tasks that must be done is to provide an appeal by maintaining harmony, mutual respect, and not the free will of each individual or different group. Maintaining harmony between communities through social resilience approaches, welfare approaches, assimilative approaches, and power-sharing. Based on various approaches, which are more emphasized and implemented according to conditions in Semarang, the social security and welfare resilience and assimilation approaches are more appropriate with the "Jogo Tonggo" program.

Community leaders play a vital role and together with all elements of society to find solutions and wise conflict resolutions and emphasize the norms of local wisdom. Factors that cause conflicts that come from triggers, private factors or root causes, mobilizing and aggravating factors, will be anticipated and resolved if all parties take sides to solve it, which is hindered by community leaders. It becomes very urgent to

revitalize the role of figures in any situation, to maintain the dignity of the people's peace.

## 4. Conclusion

The problems faced by the community during a pandemic will have an impact on people's lives. One of the causes and influences different directions of community movement, so there needs to be informed and appropriate approach solutions in conflict resolution. "Jogo Tonggo" as a concept of disaster mitigation as a movement that originates from local wisdom, and opens up space for people's participation based on local customs, norms, values for example social gatherings. This concept is applied so that there is the power of educational information about the dangers of Covid-19 easily and quickly understood by the public and is intended so that every member of the community takes care of their neighbors and their environment. "Jogo Tonggo" has mobilized all elements of the people, strengthened the social, economic, security net which has an impact on the growth of awareness & obedience of each individual in society. The role of community leaders is needed to support and be a mediator in minimizing the problems that occur due to situations in society that have the potential to cause conflict.

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