

## TOWARDS AN INTERRELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT: A Case Study of Paguyuban Eklasing Budi Murko (PEBM) in Kulon Progo, Yogyakarta

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**Abstract:** The feeling of being the majority often drives people to hegemony other minorities. The presence of religious minorities seems marginalized because they do not have much power to assert their existence. This study examines the dynamic relationship between *Paguyuban Eklasing Budi Murko* (PEBM) followers and the religious majority in the Salamrejo. Thus, this research uses two theories: the indigenous religion paradigm and the non-formal interfaith dialogue. The research data is collected from an in-depth interview, literature studies, and mainstream online data. The hegemony assumption reveals that the feeling of the majority continues dominating society. In contrast, the hypothesis is too general. The relationship of PEBM as the indigenous religion and world religions community, particularly Islam, does not reflect this hypothesis. The dynamic relationships between PEBM and the majority groups in the village of Salamrejo are engaging with one another, which is influenced by two factors: First, Mbah Mangun is the elder and the most respected person in PEBM. Second, by the teachings of PEBM per se, which is very fluid to all religions in the paradigm of inter-subjectivity and interreligious engagement as a new strategy for PEBM to encourage social acceptance.

**Keywords:** Majoritarianism; indigenous religion; interfaith dialogue; social acceptance; interreligious engagement.

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### Introduction

The relationship between majority and minority religion is not always under pessimistic relations. The general assumption creates that the feeling of being the majority often drives people to hegemony other groups who are the minorities. Concerning this discussion, Stoddart argues that people with more power tend to feel responsible for managing a group of people who do not have significant capabilities. The majority will formulate norms patented into social norms.<sup>1</sup> However, this assumption is too generalizing. For instance, it departs from how Islam as a majority religion negotiates with *Paguyuban Eklasing Budi Murko* (PEBM), the indigenous community in Salamrejo village, Kulon Progo. Thus, the relationship between majority and minority would be becoming a double sword, with either negative or positive effects.

In the Indonesian context, one of the issues of majority and minority religion relates to the world religion and the indigenous paradigm. As the majority religion in Indonesia, Islam has dominated many considerations and policy-making by the state. Consequently, Islam has sometimes intervened with the minority groups in Indonesia such as Ahmadiyyah, Shia, Baha'i, Christianity, and indigenous religions. As a vulnerable community, PEBM is expected to follow the social norms which could be biased in the interests of Islam. It is not surprising that the presence of minority religions seems marginalized because they do not have much power to assert their existence. Nevertheless, the relationship between PEBM and Islam in the Salamrejo village portrays the opposite.

Before the Indonesian reform, there were emotional problems in PEBM existence, in which one of them has been sourced since the emergence of Law No. 1/PNPS/1965. In administrative law, PEBM followers were personally "forced" to choose one of the official religions in Indonesia, including the compulsion to attend the religious education, carry out marriages with the "official religion"

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<sup>1</sup> Mark C. J. Stoddart, "Ideology, Hegemony, Discourse: A Critical Review of Theories of Knowledge and Power," *Social Thought and Research* 28 (2014): 191–225.

tradition, Etc. At the social level, PEBM followers are labelled as adherents of heretical teachings, not have religion, potentially accused as the *PKI* (Indonesian Communist Party). Thereupon, they do some manipulation related to their identity to avoid various problems.

The Kulon Progo Regional Government has provided an excellent opportunity to guarantee these rights with a population administration service circular. However, there are still not many PEBM followers who dare to take this opportunity. Various reasons were mentioned, ranging from avoiding resistance from the majority group to barriers to access to jobs, politics, and economics. However, the 2016 Constitutional Court decision has provided legal guarantees for *penghayat kepercayaan* (believers) to get good population administration services.<sup>2</sup> In this sense, the paradigmatic relationship between indigenous religions and world religions in organizational politics is considered complete.

Some scholars discuss the relationship between majority and minority, which this study categorizes into two classifications. First, the indigenous religions encounter the world religions. Treat (1996) reveals that several indigenous community groups in North America face several challenges: the effects of colonial disposition, competitive missionization, assimilative education, ghettoizing urbanization, and racist discrimination. The issues became the foundation to create an ecumenical conference as an informal dialogue among native leaders in the 1960s. Treat argues that the event becomes a space of religious diversity, as a revolution in interaction in native life, to conduct healing, revival, and solidarity.<sup>3</sup> Concerning this discussion, Samsul Maarif (2012) argues that the Ammatoans, adherents of the indigenous Religion in South Sulawesi, seem to be hegemonized by Islam as the official religion in Indonesia. This situation is inseparable from the modernization program of the New Order regime, which requires all citizens to adhere to their national identity, including embracing the state's official religion.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Samsul Maarif, *Pasang Surut Rekognisi Agama Leluhur Dalam Politik Agama Di Indonesia*, *Journal of Chemical Information and Modeling*, vol. 53 (Yogyakarta: CRCS (Center for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> James Treat, "Treat Native People and Interreligious Dialogue.Pdf," *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 6 (1996).

<sup>4</sup> Samsul Maarif, "The Encounter between Indigenous Religions , World Religions and Modernity," *Jicsa* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1–11.

Moreover, Alexandra Tomaselli and Alexandra Xanthaki (2021) reveal that the inability of world religion in embracing indigenous peoples in Ecuador and Bolivia is due to the reification of faith for the benefit of colonialism.<sup>5</sup> Second, the social inclusion approach is empowering. The way to prevent the social inclusion of PEBM is to provide role availability by promoting local wisdom values that exist in PEBM to the village of Salamrejo.<sup>6</sup> In contrast, Komalasari uses an economic empowerment approach when examining the social inclusion of PEBM in Salamrejo village. There is a Joint Business Group (KUBE) in Salamrejo village to accommodate women's businesses. The involvement of PEBM women with women from other religions through these economic business units opens up spaces for interaction to create an inclusive environment.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, this paper aims to examine the relationship dynamics between PEBM followers and the majority religion in the Salamrejo village. This study encounters generalization assumptions that the feeling of the majority continues dominating the society. The relationship of PEBM as the indigenous religion and world religions community, particularly Islam, does not reflect this hypothesis. The relationship building between the two communities is then analyzed through two theories: the indigenous religion paradigm and non-formal interfaith dialogue as a new strategy for PEBM to encourage social acceptance.

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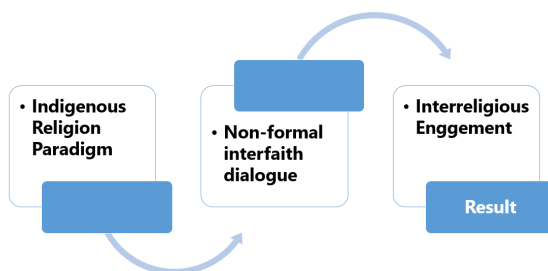
<sup>5</sup> Alexandra Tomaselli and Alexandra Xanthaki, "The Struggle of Indigenous Peoples to Maintain Their Spirituality in Latin America: Freedom of and from Religion(s), and Other Threats," *Religions* 12, no. 10 (2021): 869.

<sup>6</sup> hafizen, "Pendekatan Inklusi Sosial Dalam Pemberdayaan Paguyuban Eklasing Budi Murka Kulon Progo (Studi Implementasi Program Pnpm Peduli Yayasan Lembaga Kajian Islam Dan Sosial)" (Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2016); K. Dek Ali, Makrus, Hek, "Seeding Social Inclusion from Domestic Space, Agency and Women Empowerment: Case Study the Adherent of Indigenous Religion Majelis Eklasing Budi Murko (MEBM) in Salamrejo Village, Kulon Progo," in *THE 2nd USHULUDDIN & ISLAMIC THOUGHT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE (USICON)* (Yogyakarta, 2018), <http://conference.uin-suka.ac.id/index.php/USICON/article/view/393>; Rosemeini Heraningtyas, "Terbukanya Ruang Baru Bagi Agama Lokal: Studi Kasus Penerimaan Majelis Eklasing Budi Murko (MEBM) di Desa Salamrejo," *Jurnal PolGov* 2, no. 1 (2021): 43–81.

<sup>7</sup> Dewi Komalasari, "Women as Agent of Social Inclusion: Experience of the Women of a Local Belief Community in Salamrejo Village," *Jurnal Perempuan* 24, no. 4 (2019).

## Theory and Method

This study scrutinizes the dynamics of the indigenous and world religions paradigms. This issue is then analyzed through two theories: the indigenous religion paradigm and non-formal interfaith dialogue. In this sense, the indigenous religion paradigm is represented by *Paguyuban Eklasing Budi Murko*, while Islam represents the world religion paradigm as the majority religion in the village of Salamrejo. This paradigm interaction will be examined through the theory of the indigenous religion paradigm. This theory confirms a reciprocal relationship between humans and the universe. The consequence is that person (the dead and the living) and non-person (tangible and intangible) are two entities that share value and are related to one another.<sup>8</sup>



Maarif (2019) argues, “the religiosity means inter-subjective relationship. Being religious is being engaged in inter-subjective relations.” Thus, he concludes with three foundations in the indigenous religious paradigm: responsibility, ethics, and reciprocity.<sup>9</sup>

- 1) Responsibility requires that “what I do will affect me”. If commitment is not carried out properly, it will undoubtedly affect one’s well-being.
- 2) Ethics says that “what I do affects other people”. If a person does good things, others will receive good things too and vice versa.
- 3) Reciprocity contains the principle that “what I give is what I take, or what I take is what I give”. The self can only get something if someone gives something, and when someone gives something, something should receive something.

Morrison discusses this reciprocal relationship by looking at the native American phenomenon that lives with the concept of the

<sup>8</sup> Samsul Maarif, “Indigenous Religion Paradigm: Re-Interpreting Religious Practices of Indigenous People,” *Studies in Philosophy* 44, no. April (2019): 103–121, <http://doi.org/10.15068/00155157>.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

cosmic meaning.<sup>10</sup> The relationship between the universe and humans is manifested in the rituals of indigenous believers, which is an integral part of the way human spirituality views non-humans entities. Vicki Grieves discerns this perspective on Spirituality in the context of Aboriginal Spirituality. Grieves examines the spiritual motivations of adherents in building relationships with non-human entities of the cosmos.

Aboriginal Spirituality derives from a philosophy that establishes the wholistic notion of interconnectedness, of elements of earth and the universe. Animate and inanimate: people, plants and animals, landforms, and celestial bodies are interrelated. These relations and the knowledge of how they are interconnected are expressed. Keeping all things in healthy interdependence is encoded in sacred stories or myths.<sup>11</sup>

This paper also examines the dynamics of the relationship between the indigenous religion paradigm and the world religion paradigm in Salamrejo village with Diana Eck's non-formal interfaith dialogue theory. There are five components of non-formal dialogue that can be applied, such as "*dialogue of life, dialogue of learning, dialogue in the community, philosophical and theological dialogue, and dialogue within.*"<sup>12</sup> The principles of dialogue described by Eck are fluid and not rigid so that it is more effective in influencing the people involved in a pluralistic community.

According to Izak Y.M. Lattu, this dialogue is essential in an area where religious violence and conflict have damaged commitment to diversity between religions.<sup>13</sup> "Dialogue between religions has evolved from textual discussion to social action". This dialogue defines social interaction and daily communication between religions as a dialogue process.<sup>14</sup> When formal dialogue is difficult to

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<sup>10</sup> Kenneth Morrison, "The Cosmos as Intersubjective: Native American OtherThan-Human Persons," in *Indigenous Religion*, ed. Graham Harvey (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2000).

<sup>11</sup> Vicki Grieves, "Aboriginal Spirituality: Aboriginal Philosophy. The Basis of Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing," *Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health, Discussion Paper Series: No . 9* Discussion, no. No. 9 (2009): 78, [www.crcah.org.au](http://www.crcah.org.au).

<sup>12</sup> Diana Eck, "Interfaith Dialogue in the New Religious America," *Review & Expositor* 114, no. 1 (2017): 25–33.

<sup>13</sup> Izak Y M Lattu, "Interreligious Dialogue," *Volume 10: Interreligious Dialogue* (2019).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 71–72.

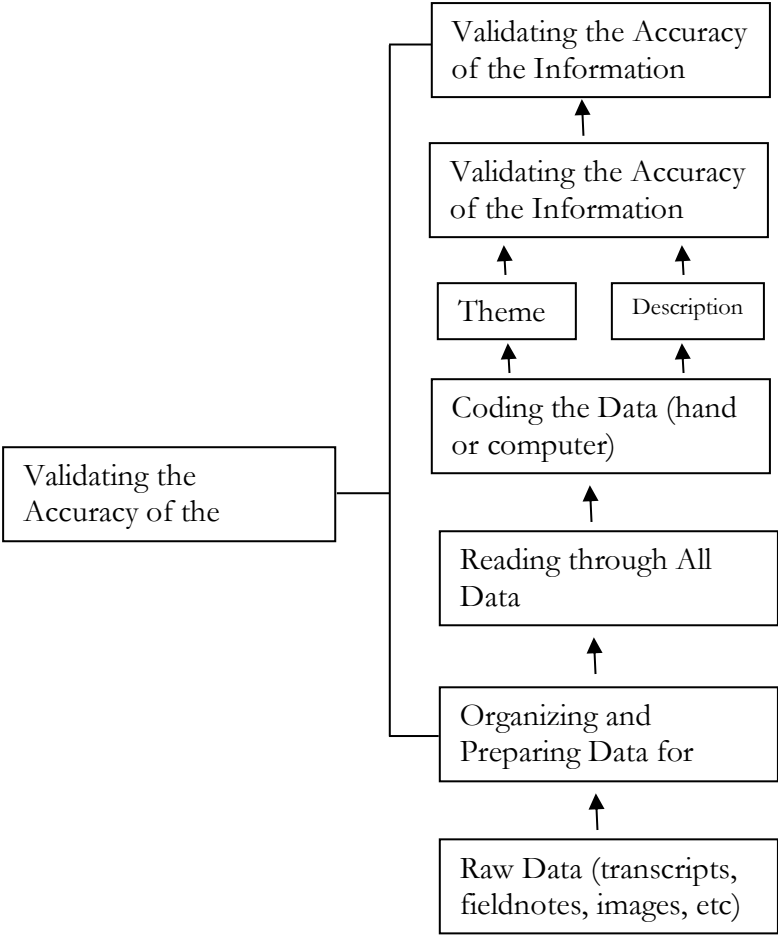
implement, dialogue of life can be an alternative to understanding the teachings and values of other faiths.

The data used in this research is from depth-interview with the leaders of Paguyuban Eklasing Budi Murko Mbah Mangun. The Researchers also interview the secretary in the sub-district government and two members of PEBM (wife and son). Furthermore, this study uses articles and books online, such as the Satu Nama website and the Pempov DIY website. In the interview, there is some way to extract the data. First, the interviewer conducts some meetings: 1) Pre-meeting, the interviewer explores the area of study and meets with the sub-district government to understand the relation between PEBM and society on March 03 2021. 2) Primer meeting, the interviewer meets with Mbah Mangun and his wife to answer research questions on March 05 2021. 3) Post-meeting, the interviewer validates the data and confirms some inquiries with Mbah Mangun, secretary in the sub-district government, and other members of PEBM, such as his son, on April 11 2021. According to Cresswell, the specific explanation implies that the writer articulates what they see. This detail is given inside the person, place, or event setting.<sup>15</sup> A more detailed explanation of Cresswell's data analysis techniques can be seen in the framework below.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Jhon W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, ed. Lauren Habib, Third Edit. (United State of America: Vicki Knight, 2013), 179.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 185.



Picture 1. Cresswell's Steps of Data Analysis

**PEBM: Manifesting Indigenous Religion Paradigm**

*Peguyuban Eklasing Budi Murko* (PEBM) is one of groups known as *Penghayat Kepercayaan Terhadap Tuhan Yang Maha Esa*/ Believer in the one and only God, located in Yogyakarta. PEBM was established in 1926 by Mbah Kaki Mangunwijoyo. Etymologically, *Eklasing Budi Murko* means using the heart to symbolize their community. A symbol of the soul '*Iklasno Budi Murkamu Agar Selaras*', which he gained from the meditation, suggests that “release the wrath of your heart to attain harmony”. The symbol indicates that the human heart



(mind) becomes the core of their teachings as something that needs to be maintained or managed.<sup>17</sup>

Like other *kepercayaan* (beliefs), PEBM teachings are practical through ritual and mystical with intangible things. The PEBM adherents believe in God but do not worship like the religious adherents. They argue that God's substance is in every living thing. For them, the entire universe is their scripture or holy book. The form of ritual performed by PEBM members is sitting cross-legged, hands crossed, focusing on the feeling of silence in welcoming God's guidance. There is a prayer/mantra that focuses on building and unifying elements between humans and God.

PEBM is an inclusive religious group, and it has good relations with people from majority religions in Indonesia. It is partly due to the flexibility of the teachings of PEBM, which allow its followers to independently choose whether they tend to embrace a recognized religion or follow PEBM teaching only, as well as a combination of both religion and local beliefs. These inclusive dimensions reveal what Maarif defines as an "inter-subjective relationship" in which there are no hierarchical relations, either with human beings or with God. However, this characteristic becomes a resource of religious values.<sup>18</sup> Thus there are three types of PEBM adherents:

*First, Penghayat Murni/* pure followers of *Eklasing Budi Murko*. They are people who convert from their previous religion to follow PEBM or people born in a PEBM family and chose to follow PEBM. People of this type also have legal ID Card citizenship as *Penghayat Kepercayaan*, and Kulon Progo Administrative Policy already recognizes them.

*Second, Penghayat Beragama*. They follow PEBM beliefs, but they tend to identify themselves as one of the recognized religions by the state in their ID card citizenship.

*Third, Agama berpenghayat*. They are followers of the official religion in the state, but they are also involved in PEBM rituals or ceremonies.

The most influential figure in PEBM currently is Mangunwiharjo (Mbah Mangun). Mbah Mangun, a *Kepalo Wargo* (head

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<sup>17</sup> SATUNAMA, "Menemukan Tuhan Dalam Kepribadian," *Yayasan Satunama Indonesia*, last modified 2016, accessed March 3, 2021, <http://satunama.org/2713/menemukan-tuhan-dalam-kepribadian/>.

<sup>18</sup> Maarif, "Indigenous Religion Paradigm: Re-Interpreting Religious Practices of Indigenous People," 19.

of local citizens) or charismatic leader of PEBM, is the primary source of the histories, teachings, and beliefs of PEBM. In the categorization of PEBM followers, Mbah Mangun is classified as *penghayat beragama*. It means Mbah Mangun has indeed dedicated his life to PEBM. However, he still has a basic knowledge of Islam and even practices Islamic law in only certain particular aspects. This context explains why Mbah Mangun always quotes Islamic postulates and verses while articulating the PEBM values. Mbah Mangun explains that when he had learned the PEBM, he became afraid of taking responsibility for Islamic religious teachings because Mbah Mangun felt that he did not study and understand them comprehensively.

He is an elder because he has been subserving at PEBM for a long time, so he is considered a master of knowledge. As a leader of PEBM, Mbah Mangun has a simple life philosophy, which is to form a family life that is safe, peaceful, and harmonious with neighbours. He believes that he will not hurt others, which also wants to reassure his environment. He does not want to have any conflict with other believers. A view of life can be used as a benchmark for everyone in carrying out their role, like anything, in social life.

Before embracing PEBM, Mbah Mangun joined ASK (*Allah Sesembahan kawula*) or God is our worship. In this sense, Mbah Mangun learned something that he also knew in PEBM but had different practices. He had been living, but he had no ideas about God yet. This spiritual journey got Mbah Mangun in a dilemmatic situation. Eventually, Mbah Mangun realized that the teachings of PEBM explained that there were divine attributes in him, so he learned it as a way to lead him to the meaning of life. Therefore, the teaching about helping others is a form of actual manifestation that there is a God within a person from the virtues he ever did. PEBM emphasizes meditation as an effort to interact with the God within in the hope of getting guidance or wisdom in life.

Mbah Mangun states that PEBM has a different understanding of *sharia* than Muslims understand. Most people understand that *sharia* is something that must be implemented by hoping that heaven will reward them for the worship they have lived. For Javanese people, *sharia* is a process of finding a way to get closer to the Creator. Accordingly, there is an obligation to find an identity for Javanese people where they do not focus on heaven or hell. Because when someone testifies to *lillāh Ta'ālā* (only for God the Most Gracious),

then we have to surrender to the will that God has given us. PEBM does not focus on heaven and hell but on returning to the Creator in a good way. The righteousness they understand so far is that they carry out the whole goodness and leave all prohibitions from God.

According to Mbah Mangun, the approach to God could be started from one's personality. We begin to read what is inside us and then move on to things we cannot touch but hear. We must be able to read whatever is there as a tool to find out the meaning of God. Javanese people usually do where God is one, but he is comprehensive. They perform personal meditation rituals to balance what is in use with the natural surroundings. Each member will feel the raw pulses at the peak whose vibrations are in the heart. During meditation, everyone will feel a particular dimension, such as the clock ticking sounds.

These PEBM teachings, referring to Maarif's definition of the indigenous religion paradigm, reflect the three commitments of *penghayat kepercayaan* in inter-subjective commitment, such as responsibility, ethics, and reciprocity. Mbah Mangun framed these three elements with the divinity framework for why PEBM needs to implement the obligations.

*First*, PEBM instructs everyone to respect each other and maintains integrity and harmony in the community. It reflects intersubjective relation on responsibilities which implies that "*what I do would affect me*". If the commitment is not appropriately carried out, it will influence the well-being of the self.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, PEBM members and the surrounding community can build togetherness in dealing with problems around their environment.

*Second*, Mbah Mangun said, "We should not be careless in building interactions with *natural surroundings*." In this context, PEBM articulates an inter-subjective relationship with ethics. It implies that "*what I do would affect others*". If a person does virtues, s/he will gain good things and *vice versa*.<sup>20</sup>

Mbah Mangun gave an instance when there was a drought in Salamrejo village. PEBM also meditated using the same prayers as when they had other problems. PEBM does not have standard or formal reading in their ritual. They ask for whatever they need. Mbah Mangun gave a description such as "*Oh God, I ask for this need, I hope for*

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

*your generosity, O Lord, please give us sufficiency.*” The language does not follow specific rules. In Islam, there is a habit of reading *al-Fatihah*, while in PEBM they read *pandom* (book guidelines) as the standard readings.

*Third*, one of the issues that are concerned by PEBM is deforestation. PEBM understands, absorbing from the Javanese philosophy, that when you cut trees, you have to plant another tree based on how many trees you have missed. Therefore, humans can maintain balance in their environment. Maarif argues that this action displays inter-subjective relations and provides a reciprocal relationship between humans and the universe, which implies “*what I give is what I take, or what I take is what I give*”. The self only receives something if s/he affords something, and when s/he affords something, s/he receives something in the form of good or bad.<sup>21</sup> Thus, humans and non-humans are two entities that share values and are related.

Mbah Mangun emphasized that the teachings of PEBM are focused on God. He explained that because of God, they respect the river. It also respects the ancestors who teach to preserve the culture and rituals around *the Sendang*.<sup>22</sup> In ancient times, *Sendang* was one of the basic needs of the surrounding community, so it was obligatory to respect *Sendang*. If a member of PEBM is obliged to worship God, he should respect the river by not peeing on it carelessly. Everyone should maintain cleanliness with respect. PEBM perceives everything as a person that deserves respect, which this inter-subjective paradigm is manifested in a spiritual awareness that emphasizes the supremacy of God over everything. This awareness is evoked by interchange. When the surrounding community gets prosperity from the ponds, the community needs to give reciprocity in respect and the obligation not to pollute the ponds.

PEBM has practically no difference from other *penghayat kepercayaan*. Mbah Mangun says that PEBM’s relation with God implies on each personality, respecting the natural surroundings, and building communication with fellow humans to maintain order and

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> *Sendang* is a pond in the mountains and so on whose water comes from a spring in it, usually used for bathing and washing, the water is clear because it flows continuously. Another meaning of spring is a source of water. Example: the village girls go to *sendang* every morning to get drinking water.

peace. Both are intended for all of God's creation between creatures and the universe to maintain harmony.

### **Building Dialogue with the Majority**

PEBM has existed long before the independence of Indonesia. PEBM even existed before the village of Salamrejo was born. PEBM was born in 1926, while Salamrejo appeared in 1933.<sup>23</sup> At that time, most people thought that religion and belief were personal affairs. The function of religion in the public sphere is not so prominent as what distinguishes it from the present era, where religion significantly controls public discourse, religion becomes more stringent in regulating the lives of its followers. Religion, in the past, was flexible. It was not exclusive as the case in some religious groups today.

This argument was conveyed by Mbah Mangun in the context of the emergence of many major religious groups today which accuse PEBM of a heretical sect and deviant' group. The exclusivity of religious groups today seemed to marginalize the PEBM followers. Responding to that, Mbah Mangun stated that what they understand and practice has in common with the world religion in fundamental theology and daily practice matters. "If you want to examine it more deeply, PEBM has no different from religion. Any religion can embrace PEBM."

This point becomes clear when Mbah Mangun stated that each generation in PEBM had a different religious affiliation; only the first generation had no relation with world religion. According to Lattu, dialogue of life can be an alternative to understanding the teachings and values of other faiths.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, the second generation has a religious affiliation with Buddhism. The elders of the second generation, led by H. Warsito, are a student and son-in-law of Mbah Kaki, who compiled the fundamental thing of PEBM Yogyakarta. The third generation has a religious affiliation with Christianity led by Ibu Endang Sujinoworo. The fourth-generation has a religious affiliation with Islam led by her younger brother of Ibu Endang. This

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<sup>23</sup> Super Administrator, "Organisasi Penghayat: Peguyuban Eklasing Budi Murko," *Dinas Perpustakaan Dan Arsip Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta*, last modified 2014, accessed March 3, 2021, <http://dpad.jogjaprovo.go.id/article/library/viewww/organisasi-penghayat-paguyuban-eklasing-budi-murko-pebm-590#:~:text=Paguyuban Eklasing Budi Murko atau,di Jalan Cokrodiningratan 113%2C Yogyakarta.>

<sup>24</sup> Lattu, "Interreligious Dialogue," 72.

research argues that the very fluid teaching of PEBM is the gate for the dialogue itself.

In the context of PEBM in Salamrejo village, dialogue is established through two variables. *First*, Mbah Mangun is a village elder and a PEBM respected person. As the most respected person, Mbah Mangun became the central intermediary for establishing a dialogue between PEBM, the minority, and Islam, the majority, in Salamrejo. *Second*, indigenous religion paradigm. Both variables are reflected in many events PEBM has involved.

The village government choices Mbah Mangun to become the most responsible figure in the field of rituals. One of the rituals is *Tirta Sapta Pratala* where Mbah Mangun takes medium water from the ponds (*sendang*). Because of the inter-subjective paradigm, Mbah Mangun is considered the most appropriate person to handle events involving nature and humans. Morrison argues that the relationship between the universe and humans is manifested in rituals.<sup>25</sup> Mbah Mangun stressed that water is a symbol of our life. The water comes from “*seven Sendang*” (seven pounds), seven springs in the village of Salamrejo. We respect the water in *Sendang* by keeping it clean and healthy, so the environment around the water is healthy and beautiful. That water ceremony is held not to cult the water but only to respect it as a primary resource of human life.

Mbah Mangun explained the process of taking water from the Medium. He started by asking permission from the caretaker of the Medium that we need *Sendang* water extract for the interests of Salamrejo village for agriculture, livestock, and the prosperity of Salamrejo residents. Then the water extract is put in the jar and then left in the area. The next day, he performs the ritual in an open field in the village of Salamrejo. This ritual is performed on the second Sunday of the week. Before the ceremony, on Friday nights, a recitation was held by inviting *Kyai* (Islamic religious figure), who understands the culture and character of the original Javanese. After that, there is a ritual tour; Javanese Islamic rituals are held at night. In the morning, they started with the *Kenduri* ritual. Grieves states that

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<sup>25</sup> Morrison, “The Cosmos as Intersubjective: Native American OtherThan-Human Persons.”

this ritual is from the spiritual motivations of believers in building relationships with non-human entities of the cosmos.<sup>26</sup>

The water from *Sendang* is proposed to get fertility from the plants that the people of Salamrejo village plant in their fields. Those water sources are from *Medari* Well, *Jlegong* Well, *Sendang Klampok* Well, *Alam* Well, *Sendang Wanatuk* Well, *Sendang Apit* Well, and *Wiyu* Well. It is regulated in the Salamrejo Village Regulation No. 7 of 2016 Chapter IV article 4 paragraph (1) and (3). This ritual is held at an event known as *Ruwat Bumi*, or village maintenance. This activity is a step to respect nature by cleaning it up. One example is that all gutters must be cleaned to avoid puddles in the village. This activity is a collaboration between PEBM and the resident that occurs in the community of Salamrejo village, which takes place in the month of *Suro* or, more precisely, every July 31. The Salamrejo village government coordinates this activity.

The indigenous religion paradigm internalized within PEBM also serves as a bridge for dialogue between PEBM and Salamrejo village. They respect God by respecting the creations that exist in the universe, such as; trees, water, animals, and others. They build relationships with others, such as respecting the river has something in common when respecting other God's creation. In social interaction, Mbah Mangun emphasizes that PEBM adherents should help people who suffer physically, mentally, or economically. Lattu argues that dialogue between religions has evolved from textual discussion to social action.<sup>27</sup>

Mbah Mangun exemplifies employing someone to clean our garden and give him a salary in economic issues. Interestingly, Mbah Mangun provides a value behind employment. Hence, it is not just helping out because he also has children and a wife at home; it also teaches us to continue working because it is a good activity rather than just being unemployed. According to Diana Eck, the dialogue is just the give-and-take relationship in the neighbourhood. This type of interaction is considered a dialogue of life.<sup>28</sup>

PEBM adherents have annually been invited to the Christmas celebration in December. *Vice versa*, when the PEBM held a *Satu Suro*

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<sup>26</sup> Grievies, "Aboriginal Spirituality: Aboriginal Philosophy. The Basis of Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing."

<sup>27</sup> Lattu, "Interreligious Dialogue," 70–73.

<sup>28</sup> Eck, "Interfaith Dialogue in the New Religious America," 33.

*event* (New Year's Eve for the Javanese community), members of other religious groups such as Islam and Christians were also invited. *Satu Suro event* is usually held in Mbah Mangun's yard. According to Izak Y.M. Lattu, the community's commitment to the diversity of religions is a core value in non-formal interfaith dialogue.<sup>29</sup> In the celebration of *Satu Suro*, all members of different religious groups can join with PEBM. In 2021, the Javanese community's New Year's celebration coincided with the *Hijri* New Year.

According to Diana Eck, this can be seen as *dialogue in a community*.<sup>30</sup> This interaction unfolds a space for more intense discussion in the context of *silaturrahmi* (making relation) to commemorate *Satu Suro* together. It is also portrayed in the schedule of *Tirta Sapta Pratala*. PEBM is also involved in the *Ruwat Bumi* event held by PEBM every July 31, together with the village government and the entire community. The idea is to keep the environment and nature well-maintained. This activity has been carried out annually along with the anniversary of the Salamrejo village celebration since 1933.

In this context, Diana Eck said:

"Dialogue in the community—in which people engage one another in a Habitat for Humanity project, a blood drive, or a city clean-up campaign. It is simply about cooperation across the dotted lines of difference. Most of what we have identified as the interfaith infrastructure focuses on the multitude of civic concerns that bring people together across lines of faith."<sup>31</sup>

PEBM has been indicated as an inclusive belief. In this sense, Mbah Mangun has a central role as a spiritual advisor and perpetrator of PEBM's tenets in the village of Salamrejo. As a native of Salamrejo village born and raised there, Mbah Mangun became an agent who bridged the majority of the Muslim villagers and PEBM as an indigenous religion. Mbah Mangun's understanding of Islam and Javanese philosophy made him very all-embracing to maintain the excellent kinship between PEBM and the Muslim majority. He accordingly had been appointed as the most responsible party for the village rituals by the village government. The PEBM's engagement with the village events and social relations is an accumulation of years of interaction representing non-formal interfaith dialogue.

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<sup>29</sup> Lattu, "Interreligious Dialogue," 79.

<sup>30</sup> Eck, "Interfaith Dialogue in the New Religious America," 33.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.



## Conclusion

Social relations between indigenous religions and world religions sometimes do not work well. The feeling of being majority continues to emerge in the middle of the dominating society. For example, Islam can control public discourse towards particular groups, including indigenous religions. Nevertheless, the hypothesis is too general. The relationship of *Paguyuban Eklasing Budi Murko* (PEBM) as the indigenous religion and world religions, particularly Islam, in the village of Salamrejo does not reflect this hypothesis.

Two factors heavily influence the dynamic relationship between PEBM in the village of Salamrejo. First, Mbah Mangun is the elder and the most respected person in PEBM. It is manifested in Mbah Mangun's position as the responsible person for village celebrations and rituals, such as the *Tirta Sapta Pratala* ritual in *Rumut Bumi*. The part of Mbah Mangun is an accumulation of interactions and relationships between PEBM and residents for years that are inclusive of producing an inclusive ecosystem.

Second, by the teachings of PEBM *per se*, which is very fluid to all religions with the paradigm of inter-subjectivity and interreligious engagement as a new role for PEBM to encourage social acceptance. This paradigm is reflected in the daily life of PEBM adherents. They perceive everything in the universe as a subject that needs respect. In a social context, PEBM and the majority religion invite each other to religious ceremonies. The flexibility of PEBM teachings creates a warm relationship with the majority religion in the village of Salamrejo.

The gap that has not been explored in this research is how indigenous and world religions representatives discuss each other in economic issues. It is interesting because there are economic activities in producing aloe vera initiated by PEBM. Specific studies on the role of economic relations in creating harmonious relations between local religions and the majority religion are considered essential to further research.

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