



POLITICAL FIQH DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: Religiosity and Mosque Congregant Health in Jombang

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at investigating the view of mosque boards (*takmir*) in Jombang on the Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19) pandemic, the strategy of mosque boards in enlivening mosques and the attitude of the mosque's board towards the prohibition of worship in mosques during the pandemic of Covid-19. This paper presents the result of field research applying comparative approach. In analyzing data, it applies data reduction, data display, and verification. The result shows that the view of mosque boards on the Covid-19 pandemic is to be calm, not panic, and follow the government recommendations. The strategy of mosque boards in enlivening mosques during the Covid-19 pandemic encompasses socialization to congregations about Covid-19, spraying mosques with disinfectant liquid, implementing health protocols to prevent the spread of Covid-19, performing only five daily prayers and Friday prayers. Mosque boards choose to keep performing worship at mosques, but with very strict terms and conditions so that they can break the chain of the Covid-19 spread and perform prayers in congregation at the same time.

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini mendiskusikan pandangan takmir masjid di Kabupaten Jombang tentang *Corona Virus Disease 2019* (Covid-19), strategi takmir masjid memakmurkan masjid, dan sikap takmir masjid atas larangan ibadah di masjid pada masa Covid-19. Artikel ini merupakan hasil penelitian lapangan dengan pendekatan komparatif. Proses analisis data dilakukan dengan cara reduksi data, *display* data, dan penarikan kesimpulan atau verifikasi. Artikel ini menyimpulkan pandangan takmir masjid tentang Covid-19 adalah bersikap tenang, tidak panik, dan mengikuti anjuran pemerintah. Strategi takmir masjid dalam mencegah penyebaran Covid-19 adalah: sosialisasi seputar Covid-19, menyemprotkan cairan disinfektan di masjid, menerapkan protokol kesehatan terhadap pencegahan penyebaran Covid-19, hanya melaksanakan salat lima waktu dan salat Jumat, tetap mengadakan ibadah di masjid dengan syarat dan ketentuan yang ketat, sehingga bisa memutus mata rantai penyebaran Covid-19 sekaligus bisa beribadah bersama dengan sempurna.

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Introduction

Indonesia is a country with a majority Muslim population, so there are a large number of mosques. Lately, with religious spirit, it appears that mosque boards have begun to hold several planned activities, such as the movement of Dawn prayer in congregation, the *zikr* assembly movement, and the movement of Sunday morning islamic studies. These various activities are forms of mosque enlivening efforts.¹ However, since Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) hits the whole world, including Indonesia and especially Jombang Regency, East Java, it has become a dilemma to hold such activities.

There is no research found related to a policy of mosque boards in managing mosques during the Covid-19 pandemic, but there are some papers that explain the issue of worship during the pandemic, such as: first, *Hukum Salat Berjemaah di Masjid dengan Saf Terpisah karena Wabah Covid-19* by Eko Misbahuddin Hasibuan and Muhammad Yusram.² This paper explains the health protocols during the Covid-19 pandemic applied in congregational prayers, such as praying in separated rows and wearing masks. Second, *Model Pemberdayaan Jama'ah Masjid Menghadapi Dampak Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid 19)* by Asep Shodiqin, et. al.³ This paper describes the model for empowering the congregation of Al-Mu'minuun Mosque in dealing with the impact of Covid 19 which is adjusted to the stages of the research cycle. The empowerment programs are divided into three areas, namely, empowerment in health, economy, and religious sectors, so that the programs can help the congregation to feel comfort and secure in facing the impact of Covid 19. Third, *Optimalisasi Fungsi Masjid di Tengah Pandemic Covid 19: Telaah Syar'i, Regulasi dan Aplikasi* by Nanih Machendrawaty, et. al.⁴ The discussion of this paper is more on limiting group activities in mosques which lead to the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) fatwa Number 14 of 2020 regarding prayers in congregation during the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak. Thus, the difference between this paper and the previous ones lies in the object and the problem being studied; the object of this paper is the

¹ Moh. Makmun and Mahmud Huda, *Politikasi Masjid* (Yogyakarta: Bildung, 2019), p. 2.

² Eko Misbahuddin Hasibuan and Muhammad Yusram, "Hukum Salat Berjemaah di Masjid dengan Saf Terpisah karena Wabah Covid-19," *Bustanul Fuqaha: Jurnal Bidang Hukum Islam*, vol. 1, no. 2 (2020): 106-124, <https://doi.org/10.36701/bustanul.v1i2.139>.

³ Asep Shodiqin, et. al., "Model Pemberdayaan Jama'ah Masjid Menghadapi Dampak Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid 19)," *UIN Sunan Gunung Jati*, retrieved from: <http://digilib.uinsgd.ac.id/30656>.

⁴ Nanih Machendrawaty, et. al., "Optimalisasi Fungsi Masjid di Tengah Pandemic Covid 19 (Telaah Syar'i, Regulasi dan Aplikasi)," *UIN Sunan Gunung Jati*, retrieved from: <http://digilib.uinsgd.ac.id/30900>.



mosque boards in Jombang Regency and the problem is the policy of mosque boards in managing mosques during the Covid-19 outbreak.

This paper is the result of a field research, the primary data of which are collected through interviews with mosque boards in Jombang Regency. The chosen interviewees are determined based on regional typology from several sub-districts in Jombang Regency which represent urban and inland mosques. Jombang Regency is chosen because it is a “santri” (one with strict adherent of Islam) area in which communal religious attitude is strongly embedded in the society. This paper discusses the views of mosque boards in Jombang Regency regarding the Covid-19 outbreak, the strategy of the mosque boards in Jombang in attempt to enliven mosques during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the attitude of the mosque boards towards different views in relation to the prohibition of worship in mosques during the Covid-19 outbreak. This article might particularly beneficial for policy makers regarding worship held in mosques, and serves as a guideline for mosque boards in managing mosques during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Covid-19 in the View of Mosque Boards

Not all mosque boards in Jombang Regency are well informed about Covid-19; some know and understand about it, while others do not know Covid-19 at all. One of the mosque boards who does not clearly understand the nature of Covid-19 is Abd. Hakam, a member of Darussalam Mosque board, Gondekan, Jabon, Jombang. He said that he actually did not know about Covid-19 clearly, as he knew it only through social media. His attitude towards the virus is normal, not afraid, and still following the government recommendations and the Indonesian Ulama Council.⁵ The same thing was also expressed by Muntaha, a chairman of At-Taqwa Mosque board, Sawahan, Jombang District, that he did not know and did not understand about Covid-19, he only listened to and watched news about it. However, he added that it is necessary to stay normal and not to be panic.⁶

The mosque boards who claims to know about Covid-19 amongst others; Abu Zahlan Husain, a chairman of Jombang Permai mosque board, Kepanjen, Jombang District. He explained that Covid-19 is a virus that causes respiratory and lung problems. Covid-19 is a disease that cannot be seen in plain view. Therefore, it is necessary to learn from experts

⁵ Abd. Hakam, Darussalam Mosque board, *an interview*, June 28, 2020.

⁶ Muntaha, a chairperson of At-Taqwa Mosque board, *an interview*, June 26, 2020.



(health practitioners) and it is not suggested to simply use religious knowledge in dealing with the disease. In this context, it is wise to apply health protocols in worshipping God.⁷

Wahyuono, a chairperson of Nurul Iman Mosque board, Sambong Duran Village, Jombang District said that he knew a little about Covid-19. However, he advised that it is Allah who creates everything. Humans should do things as recommended by health experts and pray as recommended by islamic scholars.⁸ Muhtarom, one of the imams of Dr. H. Moeldoko Mosque, Kayen Village, Bandarkedungmulyo District, Jombang Regency, said that he knew about Covid-19. However, he advised not to be panic and suggested to follow the health protocol set by the government.⁹ Abdul Choliq, a chairperson of At-Taqwa Mosque board, Cangkringrandu Village, Perak Subdistrict also said that he knew about Covid-19. He and the mosque board members advised his congregation to be careful and to protect themselves and others so as not to get infected the Covid-19.¹⁰ Other mosque boards such as Nurul Huda Mosque board, Plosokendal, Plosogeneng District, An-Ni'mah Mosque board, Betek Barat, Mojoagung District, Nurul Hidayah Mosque board, Kedungmlati Village, Kesamben District, and Al-Ishlah Mosque board, Tapen, Kudu District also said that they knew about Covid-19, they made efforts to help the government to prevent transmission of the virus by making Standard Operational Procedures (SOP) for performing worship during the pandemic, and enforcing health protocols.

Pandemic and the Challenges of Communal Religiosity

Covid-19 has changed the habits of community activities, both religious and social activities. This is certainly a challenge for various communities, especially the congregation and mosque boards. The mosque boards are not only responsible for running worship activities in the mosque, but also required to keep the congregation from the transmission of Covid-19. Mosque congregants want to be able to do worship in congregation in the mosques, but they still have to pay attention to health issue at the same time. Because the spread of Covid-19 is very fast, so that effective strategies to break the chain of the virus spread are needed. Although

⁷ Abu Zahlan Husain, a chairman of Jombang Permai Mosque, *an interview*, June 28, 2020.

⁸ Wahyuono, a chairman of Nurul Iman Mosque, *an interview*, June 25, 2020.

⁹ Muhtarom, Imam of the five daily prayers of Dr. H. Moeldoko Mosque, *an interview*, June 25, 2020.

¹⁰ Abdul Choliq, a chairman of At-Taqwa Mosque, *an interview*, June 25, 2020.



there are various strategies applied by mosque boards in Jombang Regency, they all refers to the health protocol for preventing the transmission of Covid-19.

All mosque boards in Jombang Regency apply similar strategy in breaking the chain of the spread of Covid-19, as follows:

First, the boards explain about the dangers of Covid-19 to mosque congregations, how it spreads out, and how to avoid it so that they do not get infected. The issues have been socialized by Abu Zahlan Husain, a chairman of Jombang Permai Mosque board and his friends to all congregations, through oral or written language, either in social media or panels with pictures and writing containing the urgency to maintain personal, family, and other people health.¹¹ In addition, Samsudi, a treasurer of Nurul Huda Mosque board, Plosokendal, Plosogeneng, Jombang emphasized that the mosque board also tried to help the government by advising congregation to abide by health protocols.¹² The same thing has been done by Abdul Choliq, a chairman of At-Taqwa Mosque board, who has constantly reminded congregation to be careful and vigilant to protect themselves and others from Covid-19 outbreak.¹³ Zainul Muttaqin, a secretary of the Al-Ishlah Mosque board, has also tried to advise congregation not to be panic and to obey government regulations and to keep body immunity by exercising, thinking, and doing *zikr* (remembering Allah).¹⁴

Second, they clean and sterilize the mosques by spraying disinfectant liquid. It is done in several mosques in Jombang, one of which is Jombang Permai Mosque. According to Abu Zahlan Husain, a chairman of Jombang Permai Mosque board, the board often spray disinfectant liquid to the mosque and the surrounding environment.¹⁵ Accordingly, other mosques also do the same thing, such as Nurul Iman Mosque, Dr. H. Moeldoko Mosque in Kayen, Bandarkbuildingmulyo District, and At-Taqwa Mosque in Perak District. The movement of spraying mosques with disinfectant liquid was initiated by the Jombang Nahdlatul Ulama Mosque Board Institute (LTMNU). According to Moh. Makmun, a chairman of LTMNU Jombang, as many as 500 bottles of disinfectant liquid for spraying mosques in Jombang Regency have been distributed. This was an effort to keep the mosques

¹¹ Abu Zahlan Husain, a chairperson of Jombang Permai Mosque, *an interview*, June 28, 2020.

¹² Samsudi, a treasure of Nurul Huda Mosque, *an interview*, June 24, 2020.

¹³ Abdul Choliq, a chairperson of At-Taqwa Mosque, *an interview*, June 25, 2020.

¹⁴ Zainul Muttaqin, a secretary of Al-Ishlah Mosque, *an interview*, June 28, 2020.

¹⁵ Abu Zahlan Husain, a chairperson of Jombang Permai Mosque, *an interview*, June 28, 2020.



clean and health so that the congregation could avoid Covid-19 transmission, and in turn, they could do worship and perform Friday prayers peacefully.¹⁶

Third, they apply health protocols to prevent the spread of Covid-19, such as requiring congregants to wear masks, providing hand sanitizers, requiring washing hands with soap before entering the mosque, prohibiting shaking hands, asking congregants to bring their own prayer mats, measuring body temperature with a thermogun before entering the mosque, keeping distance between congregations, and prohibiting congregants who feel unwell or have a cough, flu, and fever to do worship in the mosques. Abu Zahlan Husain, a chairperson of Masjid Jombang Permai Mosque board, stated that the congregations were advised to frequently wash their hands with soap and hands sanitizer, always wear masks, keep their distance, check body temperature before entering the mosque, and that congregants who are unhealthy, were suggested to pray or worship at home.¹⁷ According to Samsudi, the mosque continues to carry out government instructions and endeavors to apply health protocols in the mosques, such as keeping the distance of the congregation, providing a place to wash hands, wearing masks, prohibiting handshakes, providing thermogun, and requiring congregants to go in and out of the mosque only through one door.¹⁸ The same thing was also done by other mosque boards, such as the board of At-Taqwa Mosque, Dr. H. Moeldoko Mosque, Nurul Iman Mosque, An-Ni'mah Mosque, Nurul Hidayah Mosque, Al-Ishlah Mosque, and Darussalam Mosque.

The application of the health protocol by the mosque boards is in accordance with the principles of fiqh “*daf' al-dharar aulâ min jalb al-naf'*” (preventing harm is more important than achieving benefits)¹⁹ other principles with similar meaning, such as “*daf' al-mafâsid muqaddam 'alâ jalb al-mashâlih*” (preventing damages should come before taking advantages)²⁰ and the principle of “*raf' al-mudhârr muqaddam 'alâ jalb al-manâfi*” (leaving out the harmful one should take place before bringing benefits).²¹ These principles are applied by the mosque board to

¹⁶ A. Syamsul Arifin, “LTMNU Jombang Bagikan 500 Botol Disinfektan untuk Takmir Masjid dan Mushala,” *NU Online*, retrieved in June 18, 2020 from <https://www.nu.or.id/post/read/118302/ltmnu-jombang-bagikan-500-botol-disinfektan-untuk-takmir-masjid-dan-mushala>.

¹⁷ Abu Zahlan Husain, a chairperson of Jombang Permai Mosque board, *an interview*, June 28, 2020.

¹⁸ Samsudi, a treasure of Nurul Huda Mosque, *an interview*, June 24, 2020.

¹⁹ Imam Musbikin, *Qawa'id al-Fiqhiyah* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2001), p. 31.

²⁰ *Ibid.* p. 29.

²¹ Abdul Wahab Khalaf, *Ilmu Ushulul Fiqh*, trans. Masdar Helmy (Bandung: Gema Risalah Press, 1997), p. 371.



congregation in the form of prohibition of performing prayers in the mosques for congregants who feel unwell or have a cough, flu, and fever. Moreover, those who live with internal medicine are also advised to keep praying at their house, because they are susceptible to contracting Covid-19. Thus, people who may come to the mosque are those who are healthy and are willing to implement health protocols.

Fourth, activities other than the obligatory five daily prayers and Friday prayers, such as routine recitation, *khatm al-Qur'ân*, social activities, and the Qur'an Education Center (TPQ) are temporarily closed until situation returns to normal. At the Nurul Huda Mosque, for example, the five daily congregational prayers, Friday prayers, Tarawih prayers, and Ied prayers are performed as they should, but the routine recitation, recitation before breaking the fast during Ramadan and the *khatm al-Qur'ân* around between mosques and *mushallâ* are temporarily stopped.²² The same thing is also expressed by Wahyuono, a chairperson of Nurul Iman Mosque board, he said that the five daily prayers and Friday prayers were still performed with strict health protocols, while recitation, *zikr* assemblies and reading salawat were temporarily closed as recommended by the government.²³ Abu Zahlan Husain, a chairperson of Jombang Permai Mosque board, said that Friday prayers in the mosque were closed once in the early days of the pandemic.²⁴

Fifth, the boards shorten some of the worships that can be shortened to avoid prolonged physical contact in the the mosques, such as *zikr* after prayers, Friday sermons, and Ied sermons. It is stated by Abd. Hakam, a member of Darussalam Mosque board, that he shortened the activities of *tahlilan*, *zikr* after prayers, Friday sermons, and the Ied sermons.²⁵ Similar policy is also enforced in several mosques in Jombang. The shortening of Ied sermon has also drawn attention of the Institute of the Nahdlatul Ulama Mosque Board (LTMNU) in Jombang Regency. Moh. Makmun, a chairman of Jombang LTMNU, requests that the sermon to be carried out briefly and it is suggested to choose short verses of the Qur'an in the Ied prayers.²⁶

²² Ibid.

²³ Wahyuono, a chairperson of Nurul Iman Mosque board, *an interview*, June 25, 2020.

²⁴ Abu Zahlan Husain, a chairperson of Jombang Permai Mosque board, *an interview*, June 28, 2020.

²⁵ Abd. Hakam, Darussalam Mosque board, *an interview*, June 18, 2020.

²⁶ Anggit Puji Widodo, "Idul Adha di Masa Pandemi, Ini Imbauan LTMNU Soal Pelaksanaan Salat Id," *Kabar Jombang*, retrieved August 2, 2020 from :<https://kabarjombang.com/idul-adha-di-masa-pandemi-ini-imbau-ltmnu-soal-pelaksanaan-salat-id/>.



The policy of the mosque boards in Jombang Regency which applies health protocols in order to continue performing the five daily prayers and Friday prayers, as well as temporarily stopping other activities is a justified policy based on the view of the political fiqh (*fiqh of al-siyāsah*), which is in accordance with several principles of the *fiqh of al-siyāsah*. One of the principles is “*tasharruf al-imām ‘alā al-ra‘īyah manūth bi al-mashlahah*” (a leader’s policy over his people should be for the benefit of all).²⁷

Based on the principle, the policy of mosque boards must be based on the benefit of the mosque and the benefit of the congregation. If a mosque board causes Covid-19 transmission, when managing a mosque, then the board could be considered violating this principle. Moreover, the mosque board must not violate Islamic law and may not bring damage or loss when managing mosques. All forms of harm for mosques and congregations must be minimized and avoided. Any policies of mosque boards that bring benefits to mosques and congregations must be planned, implemented, organized, and assessed or evaluated. Likewise, any policies of the board that bring damage and have a negative impact on mosques and congregations must be avoided.²⁸

The policy of the mosque boards in applying health protocols is in line with the fiqh principles “*al-muta‘addi afdhal min al-qāshir*” (an action that includes the interests of others is better than the one done to one’s own interests).²⁹ In this context, this principle means that the mosque boards must always think about the interests of the mosque congregation or the public interest when making policies.

The implementation of detailed and strict health protocols is an attempt by the mosque board to protect the congregation from contracting Covid-19 and to avoid the stigma that could be attached if the virus spreads through the mosque clusters. The strategy of preventing the spread of Covid-19 carried out by mosque boards in Jombang Regency can be considered

²⁷ A. Djazuli, *Kaidah-kaidah Fikih Islam: Kaidah-kaidah Hukum Islam dalam Menyelesaikan Masalah-masalah yang Praktis* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2014), p. 147; and Musbikin, *Qawa‘id al-Fiqhiyah*, p. 124.

²⁸ Moh. Makmun and Mahmud Huda, “Politisasi Masjid Perspektif Fiqh Siyasa: Studi terhadap Takmir Masjid di Kota Surabaya,” *Jurnal Politik Profetik*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2019): 109, <https://doi.org/10.24252/profetik.v7i1a5>.

²⁹ Musbikin, *Qawa‘id al-Fiqhiyah*, p. 151.



successful because there is no spread of Covid-19 through mosque clusters so far, but the spread of the virus occurs, among others, through market clusters.³⁰

Health Politics During the Covid-19 Pandemic

On March 16, 2020, Mundjidah Wahab, the Regent of Jombang, held a press conference with the media crew regarding the spread of Covid-19 at Jombang Regency Hall after a limited meeting with Jombang Forkopimda (regional leaders communication forum), which was attended by the Deputy Regent of Jombang, the Head of the Jombang Police, the Chairperson of the Jombang DPRD (Regional People's Representative Assembly), the representatives of Jombang Kodim (Military District Commander) 0814, Regional Secretary, Head of the Jombang District Education and Culture Office, Head of the Jombang Ministry of Religion, and Head of the Jombang Health Service.

The press conference is basically an appeal to all levels of society not to panic but to make every efforts to prevent the spread of Covid-19, namely by familiarizing themselves and their families to always practice Clean and Healthy Behavior (PHBS) wherever they are. The board mosques, *mushallâ* (prayer rooms), places of worship, Islamic boarding schools, educational institutions, factories and other public facilities are urged to improve healthy life by providing places for washing hands with soap, handsanitizer, or the like.³¹

To prevent and cope with Covid-19, the Regent of Jombang issues Regent Regulation Number 57 of 2020 concerning the Implementation of Discipline and Law Enforcement of Health Protocols as Efforts to Prevent and Control Corona Virus Disease 2019. This Regent Regulation (Perbup) is an amendment of the previous three Regulations which are also related to Covid-19, namely This Regent Regulation Number 34 of 2020, This Regent Regulation Number 39 of 2020 and This Regent Regulation Number 43 of 2020. This Regent Regulation Number 57 of 2020 Article 3 states that the subject of the regulations includes: first, individuals (should do four things; wearing masks, washing hands, keeping distance, and avoiding crowds). *Second*, entrepreneurs (preparing the four health facilities and infrastructure

³⁰ Arya Pandora, "Dua Pasar Ini Jadi Kluster Penyebaran Covid-19 Terbanyak di Jombang," *Sariagri*, retrieved August 8, 2020 from <https://news.sariagri.id/58322/dua-pasar-ini-jadi-kluster-penyebaran-covid-19-terbanyak-di-jombang>.

³¹ Justitia Pradita, "Atasi Penyebaran Virus Covid-19, Ini Instruksi Bupati Jombang," *Faktual News*, retrieved August 8, 2020 from <https://faktualnews.co/2020/03/17/atasi-penyebaran-virus-covid-19-ini-instruksi-bupati-jombang/200605/>.



for employees and visitors). *Third*, the manager, organizer, or person in charge of public places and facilities (preparing the four health facilities and infrastructure for employees and visitors).

The Regent Regulation deals with not only the technicalities for the prevention and handling of Covid-19, but also sanctions for offenders, which are contained in article 10. Individuals, business actors, managers, organizers or people in charge of places and public facilities who violate the regulation referred to in article 4 will be subject to the following sanctions: *first*, sanctions for individuals are in the form of a written warning for 2 (two) weeks after the regulation is enforced; *second*, social work and/or administrative fines of Rp. 100,000,- (one hundred thousand rupiah). Meanwhile, the sanctions for business owners, managers, organizers or persons in charge of places and public facilities are in the form of: *first*, a written warning; *second*, an administrative fine of Rp. 300,000,- (three hundred thousand rupiah); *third*, sanctions for street vendors/food stalls take the form of administrative sanctions of Rp. 100,000,- (one hundred thousand rupiah); *fourth*, temporary suspension of business operations; and *fifth*, business license revocation.

The health protocol of Covid-19 is also regulated by the Ministry of Health and the Task Force for the Acceleration of Handling Covid-19, which includes: *first*, keep your hands clean and hygiene using hand washing liquid or handsanitizer when the hands do not look dirty. However, if hands are dirty, clean them with soap and running water. *Second*, do not touch the face when the hands are not clean, avoid touching the face, as much as possible, especially the eyes, nose and mouth. *Third*, apply the ethics of coughing and sneezing because when you cough or sneeze, the body will take the virus out. *Fourth*, wear a mask. *Fifth*, keep a minimum distance of one meter to avoid spreading the virus from person to person. *Sixth*, do self-isolation for people who feel unwell, such as experiencing fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat, and asphyxia. They are suggested to consciously and voluntarily do independent isolation at home. *Seventh*, keep in good health while stay at home or go outside, ensure to keep in good physical health by basking in the sunshine in the morning for a few minutes, eating a balanced nutritious diet, and doing exercises. Taking enough rest is also needed in an effort to keep in good health during this pandemic.³²

³² Luthfia Ayu Azanella, "Simak, Panduan Protokol Kesehatan Pencegahan Covid-19 untuk Sambut New Normal," *Kompas*, retrieved August 9, 2020 from <https://www.kompas.com/tren/read/2020/05/18/103200465/simak-panduan-protokol-kesehatan-pencegahan-covid-19-untuk-sambut-new?page=all>.



With regards to the covid 19 pandemic, It is not only government agencies but also Jombang District Nahdlatul Ulama Branch Board makes policies related to the Covid-19 pandemic. The board issues Circular and Appeal Number: 1061/PC/AI/L-12/VI/2020. The circular includes: *first*, keep running the obligations of religious law with dispensation in some procedures and technical domains justified by sharia. *Second*, always coordinate with the Regional Task Force for Handling Covid 19, the Health Office, regional leaders communication forum, sub district leaders forum, village administration, and other local-related parties (Task Force for Covid 19) to get information about Covid-19 and the procedures to prevent its transmission during worship in congregation and other activities that involve many people since the month of Zulkaidah 1441 H. *Third*, always consult with ulama or kiai (islamic scholar) or Syuriah (the religious council) of Nahdlatul Ulama according to each levels to get religious or sharia guidance related to the facts of changing conditions. The changes of conditions (cases) can be coordinated and consulted through the WhatsApp Group (WAG) “Syur-Tanf NU Jombang”. *Fourth*, follow the health protocols in prevention and handling Covid-19 set by the government.³³

In the Appeal of the Jombang PCNU (branch office of Nahdlatul Ulama), the technical guidelines on performing worship in mosques, especially during the Ied, from the Jombang branch office of Nahdlatul Ulama is also attached. The contents of the circular include: *first*, to avoid crowded congregation in one mosque or *mushallâ*, it is necessary to perform the Eid al-Adha prayers in mosques or other prayer rooms by applying the Covid-19 Spread Prevention Protocol. *Second*, Eid al-Adha prayer is only for local Muslim congregations of the mosque or *mushallâ*, for those who come from other city are expected to be placed in a special prayer room or not to attend the Eid al-Adha prayer. *Third*, congregants who are sick and elderly are expected not to attend Eid al-Adha prayer at the mosque or *mushallâ*. *Fourth*, congregants who have a history of internal diseases such as diabetes, lung and heart disease are expected not to attend Eid al-Adha prayer in mosques or prayer rooms, because the immune systems of the elderly and people with a history of internal diseases are low. Thus, people who can perform Eid al-Adha prayer are those with good body immunity. *Fifth*, the congregation must wear a mask, bring their own prayer mat, wash their hands before entering a mosque or prayer room, and have their body temperature measured.

³³ Circular and appeal of the Branch Office of Nahdlatul Ulama in Jombang Number: 1061/PC/AI/L-12/VI/2020.



The Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) also issues a Fatwa of the Indonesian Ulama Council Number 14 of 2020 concerning the Conduct of Worship in a Situation of the Covid-19 Outbreak, in which there is a controversial article amongst the community. Amongst the contents of the fatwa include: *first*, in case of a person living in an area where the potential for transmission of the virus is high or very high based on the decision of the authorities, then he may leave the Friday prayer and replace it with Zuhr prayer in which he lives, and he may also leave the congregation of five daily prayers, Rawatib, Tarawih prayers, and Ied prayers in mosques or other public places. *Second*, in case of a person living in an area where the potential for transmission is low based on the decision of the authorities, then he is still obliged to carry out his obligations of worship as usual and must guard himself so as not to be exposed to the Corona virus, such as not making direct physical contact (shaking hands, hugging, and kissing hands), bringing their own prayer mats, and frequently washing their hands with soap. *Third*, in a condition where the spread of Covid-19 is uncontrolled in a life-threatening area, Muslims may not hold Friday prayers in the area until things return to normal and must replace the prayers with Zuhr prayers in their own places. It is prohibited to hold worship activities that involve large numbers of people when they are believed to be a medium for the spread of Covid-19, such as congregation of the five daily prayers, Rawatib, Tarawih prayers, and Eid prayers in mosques or other public places, as well as attending public lectures and *zikr* assembly.

It is clear that the prevention of Covid-19 is not only done by the government agencies, but also by non-governmental agencies. In this case, religious organizations also take part in managing their groups, so that all parties participate in preventing the spread of Covid-19 through places of worship.

Juridical Reasoning (Ijtihâd) of the Grassroots

The Fatwa of the Indonesian Ulama Council Number 14 of 2020 concerning worship in a Situation of the Covid-19 Outbreak has drawn controversy in the community, because it contains article number 6 which reads:

“In a condition where the spread of Covid-19 is uncontrolled in a life-threatening area, Muslims should not perform Friday prayers in that area until things return to normal but they are obliged to replace the prayers with Zuhr prayers in their own places. Accordingly, it is not allowed to manage worship activities that involve large numbers of people when they are believed to be a medium for the spread of Covid-19, such as the five daily prayers,



Rawatib, Tarawih, and Eid prayers in congregation in mosques or other public places, as well as attending public lectures and *zikr* assembly.”³⁴

However, the fatwa of MUI does not seem to have had much effects on mosque boards in Jombang Regency Jombang. The mosque boards seem to choose do *ijtihad* (juridical reasoning) on thier own based on the consideration of the reality and situation surround them. This can be seen through their views on the implementation of worship in mosques as follows.

Didik Rifauddin, a treasurer of At-Taqwa Mosque board, states that if it is possible, congregational prayers at the mosque will be held.³⁵ Meanwhile, Muhtarom, one of Imam at Dr. H. Moeldoko Mosque, views that the mosque board chooses to follow the opinion that allows conegnants to perform worship in mosques. However, they have to follow the health protocol and anticipate safety as well.³⁶ Wahyuono, a chairman of Nurul Iman Mosque board, states that no one can prohibit people from performing worship. There are very diverse opinions in the community but it is recommended to perform worship because the relationship with Allah through congregational prayers cannot be stopped. However, he hopes that there will be no social upheaval in the community regarding the public lecture activities. Worship activities must be done with strict health protocols to prevent the spread of Covid 19.³⁷ The same thing was done by Masrukhin, who followed the opinion of those who allow to perform worship but with strict health protocols.³⁸ Muntaha, a chairman of the At-Taqwa Mosque board, chooses the view of those who allow congregational prayers in mosques because mosques are places of worship that must always be enlivened.³⁹ Samsudi, one of the mosque boards, chooses the opinion of those who allow to perform worship in mosques, but there must be efforts to comply with health protocols. As long as there is no members of the community around the mosque that has been confirmed positive for the Covid-19, congregational prayers are still allowed.⁴⁰ Zainul Wakhid, a secretary of the An-Ni'mah Mosque board, is also in favor of those who think that performing congregational prayers should be allowed considering that worship in the mosque is only for the mosque congregants itself,

³⁴ The Fatwa Indonesian Ulama Council Number: 14/2020.

³⁵ Didik Rifauddin, a treasure of At-Taqwa Mosque board, *an interview*, June 23, 2020.

³⁶ Muhtarom, the Imam of the five daily prayers in Dr. H. Moeldoko Mosque, *an interview*, June 25, 2020.

³⁷ Wahyuono, a chairperson of Nurul Iman Mosque, *an interview*, June 25, 2020.

³⁸ Masrukhin, *an interview*, June 21, 2020.

³⁹ Muntaha, a chairperson of At-Taqwa mosque, *an interview*, June 26, 2020.

⁴⁰ Samsudi, *an interview*, June 24, 2020.



while those from other areas are not allowed to perform worship in that mosque. Any worship activities that bring in congregations from other areas are not supposed to be held until the conditions are completely normal.⁴¹ Abu Zahlan Husain, a chairman of the Jombang Permai Mosque board, is also in favor of those who think that performing congregational prayers should be allowed but with very strict health protocols. Worship is one of the ways to neutralize anxiety and fear. It can raise awareness that humans are weak creatures and so it does not need to be arrogant. Behind our weaknesses, there is a God who is the Most Strong, so that it is necessary to always take refuge and ask for the safety of ourselves, family, and society to Allah, May Allah protect us from the Covid 19 outbreak.⁴² Abd. Hakam, a member of Darussalam Mosque board, is of the view that mosque boards should follow the views of those who think that performing congregational prayers should be allowed, because it has been obliged for congregants entering the mosque to be clean and have ritual ablution.⁴³ Meanwhile, Zainul Muttaqin, a secretary of the Al-Ishlah Mosque board, said that the mosque had considered the situation in the area, that the mosque is in a green zone area, so that it is allowed to perform worship in the mosque, but it still applies health protocols for the safety of the congregation.⁴⁴

The aforementioned opinions of the mosque boards seem to be in line with that of KH Cholil Dahlan, a chairperson of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) of Jombang Regency. According to him, referring to the fatwa of MUI number 14 of 2020, the condition of Jombang has not been categorized as a Covid-19 emergency, so that Friday prayers at home are not yet right. Thus, Jombang residents must continue to perform Friday prayers in mosques in accordance with the standards of Islamic law of Muslims. However, if some Muslims are worried about this and cannot perform worship perfectly according to terms and essential principles as well as optional worship (but meritorious if performed), they can use an alternative method to follow the rule of emergency law for the benefit of each individual and can be replaced with Zuhr prayers at their residence.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Zainul Wakhid, a secretary of An-Ni'mah Mosque board, *an interview*, June 27, 2020.

⁴² Abu Zahlan Husain, a chairperson of Jombang Permai Mosque, *an interview*, June 28, 2020.

⁴³ Abd. Hakam, a member of Darussalam Mosque board, *an interview*, June 18, 2020.

⁴⁴ Zainul Muttaqin, a secretary of Al-Ishlah Mosque, *an interview*, June 28, 2020.

⁴⁵ Taufiqur Rachman, "Jombang Tak Terapkan Fatwa MUI Terkait Darurat Covid 19, Umat Muslim Tetap Salat Jumat di Masjid," *Koran Memo*, retrieved August 8, 2020 from <https://koranmemo.com/jombang-tak-terapkan-fatwa-mui-terkait-darurat-covid-19-umat-muslim-tetap-salat-jumat-di-masjid/>.



The same thing is also expressed by Moh. Makmun, a chairman of the Body of Mosque Board of Nahdlatul Ulama (LTMNU) of Jombang Regency. When Jombang Regency was officially declared Covid-19 red zone, he appealed to mosque boards to ensure that the mosque congregants are safe. All mosque boards are more alert and monitor their congregants. If there are congregants who frequently leave the city to the red zone one, for the time being they should be carefully told not to perform prayers in congregation in mosques and are expected to pray at home. The mosque boards must be proactive in finding out the status of the congregants. All of this is for the good and benefit of all. The congregational prayers and Friday prayers are performed as long as no one has contracted Covid-19 in the village or mosque, while in areas where there is a patient with PDP (Patients Under Supervision) or tested positive of Covid-19, it is allowed to replace Friday prayers with Duhr prayers.⁴⁶

The policy of mosque boards seems to refer to the *fiqh* (islamic law) principle of “*jalb al-mashâlih wa dar’ al-mafâsid*” (to gain benefits and leave harms), in the sense that mosque boards take benefits (*mashlahah*) by continuing to perform congregational prayers in the mosques, and leave harms by implementing mosque operating procedures and standards during the Covid-19 pandemic as well as the health protocols.

The Measurement of *mashlahah* (benefits) of an issue must be viewed from three conditions of *mashlahah*, namely: first, the benefits must be in accordance with *maqâshid al-syarî’ah* (the higher objectives and intents of Islamic law) the spirit of islamic teachings, both *wurûd* and *dalâlah* of *dalil kullî* (holistic evidence) and *dalil qath’î* (definitive evidence). *Second*, the benefits must be clear, accurate, and convincing. It means that the benefits come from research, so there is no doubt that it can bring benefits and prevent harms. *Third*, the benefits bring convenience and do not cause difficulties beyond the limit. *Fourth*, they benefit the majority of people, not only a small part of society.⁴⁷

Conclusion

Not all people or mosque boards in Jombang Regency know in detail and clearly about Covid-19. However, they agree to apply health protocols to prevent transmission of the virus. Covid-19 is a challenge for society in applying communal religiosity. Mosque boards continue

⁴⁶ A. Syamsul Arifin, “Jombang Masuk Zona Merah, Takmir Masjid Harus Pastikan Setiap Jama’ah Sehat,” *NU Online*, retrieved July 9, 2020 from: <https://www.nu.or.id/post/read/118520/jombang-masuk-zona-merah-takmir-masjid-harus-pastikan-setiap-jama'ah-sehat>.

⁴⁷ Musbikin, *Qawa'id al-Fiqhiyah*, p. 31.



to provide services for congregational worship with strict health protocols and so do the policy makers, both government and non-government agencies. They set regulations to prevent and cope with the spread of Covid-19. At the grassroots level, the mosque boards make a breakthrough by doing *ijtihad* (juridical reasoning) based on the reality of the situation around their areas.

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