

## Ethno-epistemology of the Jambi Malay Local Wisdom to the Covid-19 Pandemic

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### Abstract

*This research aims to elaborate on the importance of local wisdom for the Jambi Malay community in understanding and responding to the covid-19 pandemic. This research is a field research using qualitative methods where data has been collected through interviews, observation, documentation and FGD. The data that has been collected is sorted through data condensation, data presentation and drawing conclusions, and analyzed using epistemology and ethno-epistemology theories. Research has found that there is a fundamental difference between the epistemology of the government and the epistemology of the Jambi Malay community in the form of ethno-epistemology, an epistemology based on cultural diversity. This difference has led to differences in understanding and response by government and society. This finding has answered the research objective that local wisdom is important for the Jambi Malay community in understanding and responding to the covid-19 pandemic.*

**Keywords:** ethno-epistemology, local wisdom, Jambi Malay, covid-19 pandemic.

## Etno-epistemologi Kearifan Lokal Melayu Jambi sebagai Respons terhadap Pandemi Covid-19

### Abstrak

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengelaborasi pentingnya kearifan lokal bagi masyarakat Melayu Jambi, baik dalam memahami maupun merespons pandemi covid-19. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian lapangan yang menggunakan metode kualitatif di mana data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi, dokumentasi dan FGD. Data yang terkumpul dipilah melalui kondensasi data, penyajian data dan penarikan kesimpulan. Setelah itu, data dianalisis dengan teori epistemologi dan etno-epistemologi. Penelitian menemukan bahwa ada perbedaan yang mendasar antara epistemologi pemerintah dan epistemologi masyarakat Melayu Jambi yang berupa etno-epistemologi, satu bentuk epistemologi yang berdasar keragaman budaya. Perbedaan ini memunculkan perbedaan dalam pemahaman dan pemberian respons oleh pemerintah dan masyarakat. Temuan ini sekaligus menjawab tujuan penelitian bahwa kearifan lokal penting bagi masyarakat Melayu Jambi dalam memahami dan merespons pandemi covid-19.*

**Kata kunci:** etno-epistemologi, kearifan lokal, Melayu Jambi, pandemi covid-19.

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## A. Introduction

The covid-19 pandemic has given rise to various understandings and responses by the community based on their local wisdom. This understanding and response generally has a different form from the understanding and response by the government. In Jambi Province, Indonesia, the response by the government has been carried out in various forms, such as the formation and enforcement of travel or mobility regulations, distance restrictions, regulation of study hours and learning methods in educational institutions, regulation of opening and closing markets, and even providing regulations for the implementation of worship activities. Rules have also been made by the government in regulating public health, for example the use of masks, hand sanitizers, vaccination and isolation for suspects of covid-19. While the response by the community has usually been carried out in the form of an alternative response based on Jambi Malay local wisdom. Some have responded by increasing the body's immunity with natural ingredients. There are also those who have responded using traditional medicine for suspected covid-19, for example by consuming boiled water from *sungkai* leaves. These community responses, in the writer's opinion, were born based on the ethno-epistemology of the local wisdom of the Jambi Malay community which is different from the government's epistemology.

There are many studies that have discussed the problems of post-pandemic community life with various aspects. There are studies that have discussed post-pandemic issues from the aspect of economic resilience and the business world.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Alessandra Zanoletti, Antonella Cornelio, and Elza Bontempi, "A Post-Pandemic Sustainable Scenario: What Actions Can Be Pursued to Increase the Raw Materials Availability?," *Environmental Research* 202 (November 2021): 111681, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envres.2021.111681>; Carlos Mena, Antonios Karatzas, and Carsten Hansen, "International Trade Resilience and the Covid-19 Pandemic," *Journal of Business Research* 138 (January 2022): 77–91, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.08.064>; Álvaro Dias et al., "Post-Pandemic Recovery Strategies: Revitalizing Lifestyle Entrepreneurship," *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events* 14, no. 2 (May 4, 2022): 97–114, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19407963.2021.1892124>; Arthur Huang and Melissa Farboudi Jahromi, "Resilience Building in Service Firms during and Post COVID-19," *The Service Industries Journal* 41, no. 1–2 (January 25, 2021): 138–67, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02642069.2020.1862092>.

There are studies that have discussed aspects of post-pandemic health resilience.<sup>2</sup> There are studies that have discussed post-pandemic issues from the aspects of environmental resilience and urban planning.<sup>3</sup> There are studies that have discussed aspects of tourism resilience in post-pandemic issues.<sup>4</sup> There are studies that have discussed aspects of educational and behavioral resilience in post-pandemic issues.<sup>5</sup> There are studies that have discussed post-pandemic issues in

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<sup>2</sup> Ankur Jamwal and Vikas Phulia, "Multisectoral One Health Approach to Make Aquaculture and Fisheries Resilient to a Future Pandemic-like Situation," *Fish and Fisheries* 22, no. 2 (March 2021): 449–63, <https://doi.org/10.1111/faf.12531>; Leodoro J. Labrague, "Pandemic Fatigue and Clinical Nurses' Mental Health, Sleep Quality and Job Contentment during the Covid-19 Pandemic: The Mediating Role of Resilience," *Journal of Nursing Management* 29, no. 7 (October 2021): 1992–2001, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jonm.13383>; Jennifer Pink et al., "Psychological Distress and Resilience in First Responders and Health Care Workers during the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 94, no. 4 (December 2021): 789–807, <https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12364>; Livia Quintiliani et al., "Resilience and Psychological Impact on Italian University Students during COVID-19 Pandemic. Distance Learning and Health," *Psychology, Health & Medicine* 27, no. 1 (January 2, 2022): 69–80, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13548506.2021.1891266>.

<sup>3</sup> Luca Barbarossa, "The Post Pandemic City: Challenges and Opportunities for a Non-Motorized Urban Environment. An Overview of Italian Cases," *Sustainability* 12, no. 17 (September 2, 2020): 7172, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12177172>; Christina Kakderi, Eleni Oikonomaki, and Ilektra Papadaki, "Smart and Resilient Urban Futures for Sustainability in the Post COVID-19 Era: A Review of Policy Responses on Urban Mobility," 2021; Carlos Moreno et al., "Introducing the '15-Minute City': Sustainability, Resilience and Place Identity in Future Post-Pandemic Cities," *Smart Cities* 4, no. 1 (January 8, 2021): 93–111, <https://doi.org/10.3390/smartcities4010006>; Salma Antar A. AbouKorin, Haoying Han, and Mahran Gamal N. Mahran, "Role of Urban Planning Characteristics in Forming Pandemic Resilient Cities – Case Study of Covid-19 Impacts on European Cities within England, Germany and Italy," *Cities* 118 (November 2021): 103324, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2021.103324>; N. Valenzuela-Levi et al., "Housing and Accessibility after the COVID-19 Pandemic: Rebuilding for Resilience, Equity and Sustainable Mobility," *Transport Policy* 109 (August 2021): 48–60, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tranpol.2021.05.006>.

<sup>4</sup> Stefanie Benjamin, Alana Dillette, and Derek H. Alderman, "'We Can't Return to Normal': Committing to Tourism Equity in the Post-Pandemic Age," *Tourism Geographies* 22, no. 3 (May 26, 2020): 476–83, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2020.1759130>; Richard Butler, "Tourism – Resilient but Vulnerable as 'the Times They Are a Changing' in the 'New Normality,'" *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes* 12, no. 6 (December 7, 2020): 663–70, <https://doi.org/10.1108/WHATT-07-2020-0063>; Fei Hao, Qu Xiao, and Kaye Chon, "COVID-19 and China's Hotel Industry: Impacts, a Disaster Management Framework, and Post-Pandemic Agenda," *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 90 (September 2020): 102636, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102636>; Asif Hussain and Francesc Fusté-Forné, "Post-Pandemic Recovery: A Case of Domestic Tourism in Akaroa (South Island, New Zealand)," *World* 2, no. 1 (March 4, 2021): 127–38, <https://doi.org/10.3390/world2010009>; Wei Lee Chin and Siti Fatimahwati Pehin Dato Musa, "Agritourism Resilience against Covid-19: Impacts and Management Strategies," ed. Willem Coetzee, *Cogent Social Sciences* 7, no. 1 (January 1, 2021): 1950290, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2021.1950290>; Gagan Deep Sharma, Asha Thomas, and Justin Paul, "Reviving Tourism Industry Post-COVID-19: A Resilience-Based Framework," *Tourism Management Perspectives* 37 (January 2021): 100786, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2020.100786>; Danni Zheng, Qiuju Luo, and Brent W. Ritchie, "Afraid to Travel after COVID-19? Self-Protection, Coping and Resilience against Pandemic 'Travel Fear,'" *Tourism Management* 83 (April 2021): 104261, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2020.104261>.

<sup>5</sup> Anatoly Oleksiyenko et al., "Comparative and International Higher Education in a New Key? Thoughts on the Post-Pandemic Prospects of Scholarship," *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 51, no. 4 (May 19, 2021): 612–28, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2020.1838121>; Po-Chi

aspects of agricultural and food security.<sup>6</sup> Departing from the several studies referred to by the authors, the authors see a lack of studies on post-pandemic issues from cultural aspects, especially local wisdom. This aspect is important because it is in direct contact with the daily lives of people who are trying to respond and defend themselves from the effects of the covid-19 pandemic.

The purpose of this research is to fill the lack of studies on pandemic and post-pandemic covid-19 issues from the aspect of local wisdom. During the pandemic the research was aimed at studying the understanding and form of the Jambi Malay community's defense response, while during the post-pandemic period the research was aimed at examining the form of response to the revival of the Jambi Malay community. In addition, this research has also attempted to answer the main research question, namely why local wisdom is important as a backbone for the Jambi Malay community in understanding the covid-19 pandemic, defending themselves from the impact of the covid-19 pandemic, and recovering from the effects of the covid-19 pandemic.

The findings of this study have shown that local wisdom has an important influence on the Jambi Malay community, both in understanding the covid-19

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Tam, "Response to COVID-19 'Now I Send You the Rays of the Sun': A Drama Project to Rebuild Post-COVID-19 Resilience for Teachers and Children in Hong Kong," *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* 25, no. 4 (October 1, 2020): 631–37, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569783.2020.1816816>; Fabio Bento and Kalliu Carvalho Couto, "A Behavioral Perspective on Community Resilience during the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Case of Paraisópolis in São Paulo, Brazil," *Sustainability* 13, no. 3 (January 30, 2021): 1447, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13031447>.

<sup>6</sup> Ludivine Petetin, "The COVID-19 Crisis: An Opportunity to Integrate Food Democracy into Post-Pandemic Food Systems," *European Journal of Risk Regulation* 11, no. 2 (June 2020): 326–36, <https://doi.org/10.1017/err.2020.40>; Cennet Pelin Boyacı-Gündüz et al., "Transformation of the Food Sector: Security and Resilience during the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Foods* 10, no. 3 (February 25, 2021): 497, <https://doi.org/10.3390/foods10030497>; AG Adeeth Cariappa et al., "Impact of COVID-19 on the Indian Agricultural System: A 10-Point Strategy for Post-Pandemic Recovery," *Outlook on Agriculture* 50, no. 1 (March 2021): 26–33, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0030727021989060>; Pravin Kumar and Rajesh Kumar Singh, "Strategic Framework for Developing Resilience in Agri-Food Supply Chains during COVID 19 Pandemic," *International Journal of Logistics Research and Applications* 25, no. 11 (November 2, 2022): 1401–24, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13675567.2021.1908524>; Nikos Ntounis et al., "Tourism and Hospitality Industry Resilience during the Covid-19 Pandemic: Evidence from England," *Current Issues in Tourism* 25, no. 1 (January 2, 2022): 46–59, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2021.1883556>; Priya Priyadarshini and Purushothaman Chirakkuzhyil Abhilash, "Agri-Food Systems in India: Concerns and Policy Recommendations for Building Resilience in Post COVID-19 Pandemic Times," *Global Food Security* 29 (June 2021): 100537, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gfs.2021.100537>; Diana Burgos and Dmitry Ivanov, "Food Retail Supply Chain Resilience and the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Digital Twin-Based Impact Analysis and Improvement Directions," *Transportation Research Part E: Logistics and Transportation Review* 152 (August 2021): 102412, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tre.2021.102412>.

pandemic, making responses in self-defense, and making efforts to get back on their feet.

## **B. Research Methods**

This research has used qualitative research methods with a field research background conducted in two regencies and one city in Jambi Province, namely Bungo Regency, Tanjung Jabung Barat Regency and Sungai Penuh City. The selection of these three locations was based on considerations of the areas in Jambi Province, namely the East, Central and West regions, so that the three were considered to represent the eleven existing cities and regencies. This research has been carried out in 2022. Data has been generated through interviews, observation, archive collection, and focus group discussion (FGD). Interviews were conducted with informants consisting of traditional leaders, religious leaders and community leaders. Observations have been made to see the daily life of the Jambi Malay community. The archives that have been collected are archives related to Jambi Malay local wisdom. Meanwhile, FGD have been conducted with academics to criticize various issues during the covid-19 pandemic and post-covid-19 pandemic. The data that has been collected is then managed in three stages, namely data condensation, data presentation and drawing conclusions.<sup>7</sup> The data analysis that has been used in this research is theories about epistemology and ethno-epistemology.

## **C. Results and Discussion**

### **The Covid-19 Pandemic, Understanding and Response to It**

Covid-19 is the name of the disease caused by the corona virus. This disease first appeared in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China in December 2019, so it is also known as coronavirus disease 2019. This disease has escalated into a pandemic after spreading in almost all parts of the world. According to a report from the

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<sup>7</sup> Matthew B. Miles, A. M. Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, Third edition (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2014).

Worldometers website,<sup>8</sup> as of Friday 13 January 2023, the number of corona cases globally has reached 670,318,146 with 6,723,617 deaths. The number of recoveries worldwide has reached 641,428,691.

Society's understanding and response to the covid-19 pandemic has taken various forms. Slavoj Žižek<sup>9</sup> has explained the five stages and forms of people's understanding and response to the co-19 pandemic. First, people tend to reject the existence of a pandemic. For them, the pandemic is just paranoia. Second, people start to get angry. This anger is directed at those who are responsible for the emergence of a pandemic and those who are unable to manage a pandemic properly. Third, people bargain over the conditions that befall them. Fourth, people feel depressed when they are no longer able to do anything about the pandemic. Fifth, society can accept the pandemic. They are aware that the pandemic is real and they have to change their habits in order to live side by side with the pandemic.

In Indonesia, the understanding of and response to the covid-19 pandemic has also taken various forms, ranging from modern medical responses, traditional medicine, to religious approaches.

The government in general has taken modern medical methods by imposing distance restrictions, mobility restrictions, vaccinations and treatment in modern ways. Unlike the government, local wisdom in Indonesia has responded to the covid-19 pandemic in traditional ways. For example, indigenous peoples in the Banualemo area of South Sulawesi Province have made herbal disinfectants made from betel leaves and lime. This disinfectant has then been used as a raw material for fumigation to prevent and treat the covid-19 pandemic. Likewise, the Dayak Kaharingan indigenous people in Tumbang Malahoi Village, Rungan District, Gunung Mas Regency, Central Kalimantan Province have carried out the *manggatang sahur lewu* ritual, a ritual to ask for help and protection from *Patatu*, the ancestor of the village guard. These indigenous peoples have also carried out the *mamapas lewu* ritual, which is a ritual to clean up the village from disturbances

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<sup>8</sup> "COVID Live - Coronavirus Statistics - Worldometer," accessed January 13, 2023, <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>.

<sup>9</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *PANDEMIC! COVID-19 Shakes the World* (New York and London: OR Books, 2020), 51–52.

or various bad things that have happened. The practice of limiting social distance between residents has also been carried out by the Suku Anak Dalam indigenous people in Jambi Province. They call this restriction *besesandingon*, a tradition that is carried out to stop all forms of infectious diseases. In this case the sick person must have self-isolated for several days from his community. Furthermore, many residents of Solo City in Central Java Province have carried out the ritual of countering reinforcements to expel the corona virus outbreak that is currently sweeping the community. Some people have cooked *lodeh*, some others have put up hanging offerings made of reed leaves and opo-opo leaves or some have even shaved their hair bald.<sup>10</sup>

Recently, the covid-19 pandemic has begun to subside. As Žižek<sup>11</sup> explained in the fifth response stage that society has accepted the existence of a pandemic so they are trying to live normally side by side with it. The community is not only trying to survive in the face of a pandemic, but they have also made various efforts to be able to bounce back from the impact of the pandemic.

### **Ordinary Diseases, Results of Human Action, Calamity and Punishment from God**

The Jambi Malay community has understood the covid-19 pandemic with various understandings. Some people have seen the covid-19 pandemic as an ordinary disease that appears naturally like other diseases, some people have understood it as the result of human activities themselves, and some other people have understood it as a form of test or punishment from God.

Some Jambi Malay people have understood the covid-19 pandemic as an ordinary disease that appears naturally like other diseases. A community leader<sup>12</sup> in Bungo Regency has said that covid-19 is a common disease that affects humans. For him, covid-19 is the same as diseases that have existed before, such as sars and

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<sup>10</sup> “Virus Corona Dan Kearifan Lokal: Bilik Sterilisasi Dari Daun Sirih, Sayur Lodeh Untuk Tolak Bahaya Sampai Jaga Jarak Ke Hilir Sungai - BBC News Indonesia,” accessed January 13, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-52242436>.

<sup>11</sup> Žižek, *PANDEMIC! COVID-19 Shakes the World*.

<sup>12</sup> Sadan, August 19, 2022.

swine flu. A traditional leader<sup>13</sup> in Tanjung Jabung Barat Regency has added that initially covid-19 had caused an uproar in the world because many victims suddenly got sick and then died. This has created fear in the community, but over time, many people have considered covid-19 to be just the common cold. A traditional leader<sup>14</sup> in Sungai Penuh City has added that covid-19 is an infectious disease that is common in human life, moreover this virus continues to evolve. For him, covid-19 is an ordinary disease that is not malignant, so people don't need to be too afraid to face it.

Covid-19 can be compared to pandemics that have occurred in the Islamic world. At the time of the Prophet Muhammad and after there had been an outbreak of a disease called *tha'un*. Some scholars have defined *tha'un* as an pandemic. Outbreaks and pandemics are nothing new in the history of human civilization on this earth. Islamic history has acknowledged that there were at least five pandemics that were the biggest and claimed the most lives.<sup>15</sup>

Some Jambi Malay people have also understood the covid-19 pandemic as the result of human hands. For them, humans have been the main cause or actor for the emergence of environmental disharmony, which has led to the emergence and development of the covid-19 pandemic. A traditional leader of the Bungo Regency has said that the emergence of covid-19 was caused by human actions which were greedy and haphazard. They have consumed wild animals that are actually unfit for consumption, such as bats which have given rise to the disease covid-19.

In Islamic teachings, humans as the cause of disasters have been explained in several terms, such as because of human hands, because of their tyranny, because of their denial or their sins. Everything that has happened as a punishment for what they have done, either directly or indirectly. Various forms of destruction have been carried out by humans, both physical damage, for example damage to

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<sup>13</sup> Martunis, August 20, 2022.

<sup>14</sup> Buzarman, September 3, 2022.

<sup>15</sup> Dede Mardiana, "Rasulullah Saw. dan Pencegahan Wabah Covid-19: Studi Tematik Hadis-hadis Penyakit Menular," *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Ushuluddin* 1, no. 3 (September 6, 2021): 147–67, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpiu.12461>.



nature or the environment and psychological damage, for example the destruction of the morals and morals of humans themselves.<sup>16</sup>

Some Jambi Malay people have also understood the covid-19 pandemic as a form of test or punishment from God. For them, one's faith needs to be tested so that it can improve, while the perpetrators of immorality also need to be subject to punishment from God in order to stop their immoral acts. A traditional leader<sup>17</sup> in Bungo Regency has stated that covid-19 is a test from God to remind humans that they are only weak creatures. For him, covid-19 has also become a punishment for humans who often make mistakes and sins. This view was reinforced by a community leader<sup>18</sup> in Bungo Regency that disease or viruses are part of God's will for humans to do self-introspection in the actions and mistakes they have committed. A religious figure<sup>19</sup> from Tanjung Jabung Barat Regency has also stated that covid-19 can be interpreted as a disaster from God to humans, so that humans can return to their awareness that God is in control. For him, many humans have committed acts of denial and covid-19 as a form of warning for the sins they have committed. Another community leader<sup>20</sup> from Tanjung Jabung Barat Regency has also added that everything comes from God and with His permission, even though the biology of covid-19 was made by humans.

In general, calamity can be interpreted as something that befalls humans in various forms, both in the form of disasters and calamities of an unpleasant nature with the aim of being a test or punishment for humans. Actually, calamity can be either pain or pleasure. However, in general, people understand the meaning of calamity as a bad thing, even though something that is considered bad actually has good value because behind that badness there is a lesson or lesson to be learned.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Muhammad Randicha Hamandia, "Analisis Konseptual Mengenai Musibah dalam Pandangan Islam," *WARDAH: Jurnal Dakwah dan Kemasyarakatan* 23, no. 01 (n.d.): Juni 2022.

<sup>17</sup> Hasan, August 19, 2022.

<sup>18</sup> Sadan, interview.

<sup>19</sup> Arsyad, September 3, 2022.

<sup>20</sup> Razali, August 20, 2022.

<sup>21</sup> Muhammad Ikhsan and Azwar Iskandar, "Musibah dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an," *Studia Quranika* 6, no. 2 (January 28, 2022): 183, <https://doi.org/10.21111/studiquran.v6i2.5794>.

### **Government Programs and Traditional Ways**

The Jambi Malay community has made various efforts in responding to the pandemic, such as participating in government programs and practicing traditional medicine.

Some of the Jambi Malay community have carried out defense efforts by following government programs. A traditional leader<sup>22</sup> in Sungai Penuh City has explained that prevention of covid-19 is carried out on the instructions of a doctor or medical doctor by going to the hospital. They have followed the health protocols urged by the government. Those who are sick have been receiving active medical treatment, while those who are healthy have been carrying out normal activities with rice fields, gardening and trading. A traditional leader<sup>23</sup> in Tanjung Jabung Barat Regency has added that traditional leaders have also joined in appealing to the public to comply with the health protocol socialized by the government. Even though many people have neglected the protocol and many people think that covid is normal. A community leader<sup>24</sup> in Tanjung Jabung Barat Regency has also added that the community complies with health and medical protocols. They have implemented vaccines, have used masks and have kept their distance.

The Indonesian government has at least implemented various strategies to prevent the addition of new positive cases of covid-19. In the health sector, the strategies that have been implemented are divided into three, namely promotive, preventive and curative strategies. Meanwhile, in the economic field, the government has also implemented a social safety net to help residents get through the economic crisis. In addition to various policies such as staying at home, maintaining physical distance, using personal protective equipment, maintaining personal hygiene, working or studying from home, stopping all activities that gather large numbers of people, large-scale social restrictions, and implementing new normal policies.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Buzarman, interview.

<sup>23</sup> Martunis, interview.

<sup>24</sup> Razali, interview.

<sup>25</sup> Darmin Tuwu, "Kebijakan Pemerintah dalam Penanganan Pandemi Covid-19," *Journal Publicuho* 3, no. 2 (July 3, 2020): 267, <https://doi.org/10.35817/jpu.v3i2.12535>.

The Jambi Malay community has also carried out various defense efforts using traditional methods. A community leader<sup>26</sup> in Tanjung Jabung Barat Regency has explained that covid-19 is also treated based on their respective local beliefs, for example by drinking young coconut water. There are also those who believe that sunbathing alone is enough. A traditional leader<sup>27</sup> of Bungo Regency has added that the community uses traditional medicines such as ginger drink, honey lemongrass and *sungkai* leaves.

In various regions in Indonesia efforts have also been found to respond to covid-19, such as in Aceh as an area synonymous with Islamic law which has revived the *tulak bala* tradition, or Javanese people who have carried out the *mbeleh wedhus kendhit* tradition for the same purpose.<sup>28</sup>

### **Passive and Active Recovery**

The Jambi Malay community has taken various ways to recover after the pandemic. There have been efforts that are passive and active depending on the circumstances of the community and the conditions faced.

According to a traditional leader<sup>29</sup> of Tanjung Jabung Barat Regency, during the covid-19 pandemic, the community's economy has been disrupted, selling and purchasing power has decreased due to restrictions, expenses have continued so that business capital has run out. Not much has been done by the community to get up, everything has just flowed and has been waiting for government assistance. The community has tried to ask for help from all parties who can be asked for help.

Some Jambi Malays have made active efforts to recover. A traditional leader<sup>30</sup> of Sungai Penuh City has explained that during covid-19 there were restrictions, but they only applied to people outside Sungai Penuh City, while people inside the city were not affected. The farmers have continued gardening and paddy fields. A community leader<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Razali, interview.

<sup>27</sup> Hasan, interview.

<sup>28</sup> M. Yusuf and Abd. Basyid, "Tradisi 'Mbeleh Wedhus Kendhit' Sebagai Sarana Tolak Balak di Masa Pandemi Covid-19," *Sosial Budaya* 17, no. 2 (December 31, 2020): 149, <https://doi.org/10.24014/sb.v17i2.11272>.

<sup>29</sup> Martunis, interview.

<sup>30</sup> Buzarman, interview.

<sup>31</sup> Sadan, interview.

in Bungo Regency said that the economy was not affected because the majority were smallholders who were not economically affected. The health and social life of the residents has not changed much, indeed there have been those who died during covid-19 and were buried according to the covid-19 procedure, but these were residents who were old and had congenital diseases. Covid has only been felt when people are in crowded areas, markets and malls. He has also stated that the people understand each other if they are sick they should just stay at home, not interact with the community first, but there is no specific effort to return the situation because it will return to normal by itself.

The covid-19 pandemic has actually sent people into culture shock. This happens because people are used to maintaining and carrying out existing patterns of behavior and interaction processes. This is the challenge of the new normal era which will greatly affect social values in society.<sup>32</sup> On the one hand, the demand to restart various social and economic activities is getting stronger marked by the easing of social restrictions in various regions. On the other hand, the existing public health infrastructure is still inadequate. So that there is a high risk of returning to normal social and economic activities. With these limitations, the new normal is a must. The new normal is also an opportunity to strengthen the economy as long as it is accompanied by transparent priorities and proper policy coordination and synchronization.<sup>33</sup>

### **Ethno-epistemology of the Jambi Malay Community as An Alternative**

From the previous presentation, it can be seen that the Jambi Malay community has understood the covid-19 pandemic in various ways, namely as an ordinary disease, the result of human activity, calamity or punishment from God. Meanwhile, in an effort to defend against the covid-19 pandemic, the Jambi Malay community has participated in government programs, while also carrying out traditional methods passed down from their ancestors. After the covid-19

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<sup>32</sup> Andina Prasetya, Muhammad Fadhil Nurdin, and Wahyu Gunawan, "Perubahan Sosial Masyarakat dalam Perspektif Sosiologi Talcott Parsons di Era New Normal," no. 1 (2021).

<sup>33</sup> M Ikhsan Modjo, "Memetakan Jalan Penguatan Ekonomi Pasca Pandemi," *Jurnal Perencanaan Pembangunan: The Indonesian Journal of Development Planning* 4, no. 2 (June 8, 2020): 103–16, <https://doi.org/10.36574/jpp.v4i2.117>.

pandemic began to subside, the community has made passive and active recovery efforts.

The results of these findings have shown that the Jambi Malay community has a distinctive epistemological approach that is different from the general epistemological approach as adopted by the Indonesian government and most other countries. This difference has been born out of differences in the sources of knowledge and how it works. The government has only based on sensory experience and reason in the form of modern medicine, while the Jambi Malay community has also based it on intuition and revelation. The method of work that has been used is also different, the government has used a demonstrative way of working (*burhani*), while the Jambi Malay community has also used other ways of working namely *bayani* and *'irfani*. This is in line with the explanations of Masaharu Mizumoto, Jonardon Ginery and Cliff Goddard<sup>34</sup> about the existence of cross-cultural diversity for epistemology which is embodied in ethno-epistemology.

These results have also shown differences from previous studies, both studies that have discussed post-pandemic issues from the aspect of economic and business resilience, aspects of post-pandemic health resilience, aspects of environmental resilience and urban planning, aspects of tourism resilience in post-pandemic issues, aspects of resilience education and behavior in post-pandemic issues, aspects of agricultural and food security. In general, these studies have departed from general epistemology.

With these results it is hoped that there will be government policies that are also based on local wisdom, including Jambi Malay local wisdom. the government cannot exclude local wisdom from all the policies it makes because of the importance of the perspective of local wisdom as a partner for policies based on modern science.

Conceptually, these results will also assist the mainstreaming of ethno-epistemological discourse in particular and epistemology in general. Epistemology

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<sup>34</sup> Masaharu Mizumoto, Jonardon Ganery, and Cliff Goddard, *Ethno-Epistemology: New Directions for Global Epistemology* (New York: Routledge, 2020).

based on local wisdom can stand parallel to general epistemology originating from the West.

#### **D. Conclusion**

The results of the study have shown a very basic difference between the epistemology adopted by the government and the epistemology adopted by the Jambi Malay community. On the one hand, the government has adopted an epistemology originating from the West, while on the other hand the Jambi Malay community has adopted a distinctive ethno-epistemology in local wisdom. This difference has given birth to different understandings and responses to the covid-19 pandemic by the government and Jambi Malay community. The results of the research have simultaneously answered the main research question that local wisdom is important as a basis for the Jambi Malay community in understanding the pandemic, defending themselves from the effects of the pandemic, and recovering from the effects of the pandemic, as well as becoming an alternative epistemology.

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