

## DIGITAL CAPITAL AS INFORMAL SOCIAL PROTECTION IN THE PANDEMIC COVID-19'S ERA (CASE STUDY OF THE WAYANG KULIT ASSOCIATION IN YOGYAKARTA)

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**Abstract.** This article explains digital capital in the wayang kulit (Javanese traditional shadow puppet) association in Yogyakarta during the Covid-19 pandemic era and how its digital capital can protect and serve as informal social protection for the wayang kulit artists association in Yogyakarta in the difficult time. Following the case study method is to investigate WL (Ki SN) association, the group of wayang kulit GP (Ki CB) and SK (Ki GS). The three associations were chosen because they can survive in the middle of the pandemic by holding wayang kulit performances virtually using existing social capital and digital capital. Based on the research results show during the Covid-19 pandemic, digital capital is more effective in providing social protection for group or associations of wayang kulit in Yogyakarta than the traditional social capital scene. The higher the digital capital has seen from the virtual social network (subscriber and viewer or virtual audience), norms of reciprocity, and trust existing with external parties to increase the virtual shows, therefore it can meet the economic needs and welfare of every member in the group and association for facing the pandemic. This research offers a new alternative framework related to digital capital as a informal social protection form. Meanwhile, the practical result is as references for wayang kulit artists to survive in the uncertainty of pandemic and adapt to the challenges of technological digitalization. In addition, it can suggest for the government in formulating rules and an effective model of social protection policy for wayang kulit performances, shadow puppet artists, and in general other artist who rely on art performance as their livelihoods.

**Keywords:** digital capital; social capital; social policy; social protection; shadow puppet

### I. INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 pandemic has caused unexpected social changes due to the lockdown policy, which could slow down virus transmission by social distancing and limiting large-scale physical contact among people (who.int, 2020) [1]. In Indonesia, the term of lockdown was modified into *Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar* (PSBB). This PSBB policy is, of course, practical, especially for workers who spend their lives in the entertainment sector, which depends on direct responses/requests for celebrations or performances. Even art and performance contributed around 9.54 % to the national industry (edukasi.kompas.com, 2020) [2].

On the economic situation before the pandemic, several wayang kulit associations in Yogyakarta between February and June could perform at least six times a month, and from July until the end of the year is a busy time around 20 to 25 art performances. In Yogyakarta, many traditional and cultural rituals like *merti desa*, wedding, circumcisions, and thanksgiving always invites wayang kulit performances to celebrate events. Meanwhile, during the Covid-19 pandemic it was possible to count associations that could survive by holding virtual performances. For puppeteers with substantial digital capital, virtual performances can be performed 10 to 28 times a month, while those with moderate digital capital can only hold virtual performances one to four times a month.

Amid this sudden social change, we are required to be adaptable with the life of digitalization, which prioritizes technology and various digital platforms, ultimately accelerates our lives into the era of technological transformation. However, the shadow puppet artist is considered a traditional art performance that is 'forced' to adapt using technology during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is hard to adapt, but they need to perform and earn money for their family. This article describes digital capital in the wayang kulit (Javanese traditional shadow puppet) association in Yogyakarta during the Covid-19 pandemic era and how its digital capital can protect and serve as informal social protection for the wayang kulit artists association in Yogyakarta during the Covid-19 Pandemic, when formal social protection from the government was ineffective in covering social issues in the wayang kulit community. Following the case study method is to investigate the WL (Ki SN) association, the group of wayang kulit GP (Ki CB) and SK (Ki GS). The three associations were chosen because they can survive in the middle of the pandemic by holding wayang kulit performances virtually using existing social capital, both traditional and digital capital.

### II. RESEARCH METHODS

Case study research is defined as a qualitative approach in which the researcher explores real-life,

contemporary (case) systems through detailed and in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audio visual material, and documents and reports) and case description report and case theme. The unit of analysis in a case study can be multiple cases (multisite study) or a single case (on-site study) (Creswell & Poth, 2018) [3]. This study describes social capital as a virtual social protection mechanism through a case study at the *wayang kulit* association in Yogyakarta. This article is based on an empirical study and uses qualitative methods with a case study approach.

The reasons why the three *wayang kulit* associations were chosen as case studies: (1) the *wayang kulit* associations can survive the Covid-19 pandemic by still holding virtual shadow puppet shows, (2) Ki SN, an artist who mastered the show the virtual world, and is called the king of the YouTube Channel live streaming for cultural arts performances, because the live streaming audience with two channels can reach more than 20,000 live virtual world viewers, and; (3) Ki CB and Ki GS, apart from being the puppeteers in their association, are also members of the *wayang* organizations, namely Pepadi and Sukro Kasih.

This article is based on field research from October 2020 to April 2021. Two data sources were collected, namely primary data sources and secondary data sources. Primary data sources were obtained through observation and in-depth interviews with eight primary informants involved in the study, the three shadow puppet associations, namely the WL Association (Ki SN), the GP association (Ki CB) and the SK association (Ki GS). To enrich this research, secondary data is obtained from literature reviews and research articles (journals, scientific papers), social media such as; YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and online news.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Digital capital As Informal Social Protection during Covid-19 Pandemic

Digital capital as informal social protection found in the *Wayang Kulit* Association in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic, is now experiencing technological shifting or virtuality. The puppeteers and the *wayang kulit* association are required to have technological equipment that supports live streaming to attract public interest, thereby expanding virtual social networks, namely subscribers and viewers, so that people will respond to the virtual puppet stage. It can be concluded that the more subscribers and virtual viewers, the more virtual responses, the stronger the social protection. It is because the accumulated Digital capital can become economic capital. Digital capital accumulated from subscribers and viewers will later become economic capital, either directly, through virtual responses, or indirectly in the form of video royalty from YouTube, which is calculated based on the number of viewers or video viewers virtually, and social media used as a promotion to raise the name or popularize certain puppeteers and puppet groups.

Informal social protection becomes essential during the Covid-19 pandemic. When formal social protection from the government was ineffective in covering social issues in the *wayang kulit* association, therefore digital capital as informal social protection that is adequate to cover association during pandemic from several perspectives such as social, economic, and cultural.

ILO explains that social protection is the newest term, where social protection includes all social security, which is widely used in "more developed" and "less developed" parts of the world (F. Lund et al., 2005) [4]. Social protection describes a range of all public and private initiatives, both formal and informal, that provide social assistance to extremely poor individuals and households (F. J. Lund & Srinivas, 2000) [5]. So, social protection is a form of social policy by public and private, both formal and informal, which describes a series of social services, and is manifested in the form of goods, money, or social insurance and social guidance. Meanwhile in Indonesia, the social protection program in Indonesia is designed to provide four main schemes: social assistance, social services, social insurance, and labor market policies (Suharto, 2015) [6]. Informal social protection is formed from protective relationships and natural relationships (Bilecen, 2013) [7]. If on the formal side, social protection refers to state-sponsored welfare schemes and social provisions, including services provided by civil society organizations (CSOs), then informal social protection is affected by social support. In addition, according to (Twigg, 2015) [8], where informal social protection refers to traditional coping strategies, social capital and community-based actions. These can be effective at the local level, and in many cases, they provide an important source of security, but their reach can be limited. Social capital is one of the informal social protection mechanisms that exist in society. Social capital refers to networks, norms, and trust, facilitating coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit (Putnam & Leonardi, 1993) [9]. Digital capital is also inseparable from social capital, namely the existence of networks, norms and trust, which ultimately affects the digital capital of the community itself to produce the economic capital. Digital capital is the ability of an individual, organization, or society to build social relationships and networks in cyberspace, generating social, economic, and cultural benefits facilitated by digital software or hardware such as cell phones and computers. Digital capital is also a form of informal social protection that is worthwhile for overcoming and reducing risks due to shocks, creating economic and social benefits and the welfare of the individual or the community.

In the information age, marked by reduced face-to-face contact, digital capital will play an increasingly prominent role. In the third and fourth waves, where information is the dominant thing, by human connection via the internet as expanding knowledge mediation, people must be related to each other, build a learning society, work together to share insights in terms of obtaining mutual benefits (Ancok, 2003) [10]. Whereas virtual nowadays has a strong meaning towards digital hardware and software.

Virtual is a space, place, relation, and value to look at the technological and economical changes. Virtual is not only about incomplete imitation towards the real, but it can be another manifestation of the real itself. High-speed computer networks via the Internet can enable seamless information exchange to create a suitable interactive environment for computer-mediated communication exchange (Shields, 2003) [11].

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the social networks in the wayang kulit association had before depended on a large organization that accommodated *wayang kulit* artist, such as Pepadi (Indonesian Pedalang Association) and Sukro Kasih, as well as networks with the community as performance responders (people who pay for the *wayang kulit* group in each performance). Now it is transformed into recent virtual social network manifested in subscriber (virtual customers) and viewers who rely more on social media than before. By using this virtual social network, they can perform virtually to attract virtual viewers in virtual stage. The reciprocity norms in social capital produce positive externalities between the *wayang kulit* association and the virtual responders and the virtual audience. Meanwhile, the established trust can be seen from the internal and external wayang kulit association. The three formers of Digital capital during the pandemic are described as follows:

### 1. Social Network

Network is one of the important elements in social capital. The existence of a social network allows for coordination and communication that can foster mutual trust among fellow association members, the various successes achieved through previous cooperation in this network will encourage the continuation of cooperation in the future (Putnam et al., 1993) [12]. Anderson in Lawang, R. M. (2005) [13] convey that one of the network functions is the information or access function that enables each stakeholder to find information about problems or opportunities or business activities. It can also be called a lubricant function or opportunity because opportunities can be obtained without spending too much in this network. Here the network function is interpreted as the wider the virtual social network, or the greater the total numbers of subscribers or followers and viewers, the more benefits will be obtained like increasing virtual puppet performances orders. Also, another reason *wayang kulit* is getting more famous and loved by public in real and virtual world. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a change towards virtual social networks. Although some groups still rely on traditional social networks, this cannot be separated from earning income from virtual stages. The social networks are divided into two, namely purely virtual and mixed social networks. Virtual social networks are where *wayang kulit* associations rely on social media as a medium to acquire and expand their social networks. It is obtained from virtual responses and YouTube subscribers, followers or followers on Instagram and Facebook, viewers or virtual viewers on YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook. In addition, the virtual social network is expanded with online responses and the

viral video and live streaming of the puppet show so that the more people watch, the more subscribers/followers will be and online responses will come. For example, during this pandemic, Ki SN's *Wayang Kulit* Association relied on a virtual social network, using its social media, which consisted of two YouTube channels, with 580,000 subscribers and the highest viewers reaching 512,000 viewers, and the other channel with 163,000 subscribers and 100,000 viewers, as well as his Instagram and Facebook. Ki SN association can perform virtual performances up to 28-29 times a month from this virtual social network. The virtual social network is from the *wayang* community's social media subscribers or followers in responding online. The online correspondence extends automatically to the government and the private sectors as part of new wayang kulit fans participating in this virtual performance.

On the other hand, mixed virtual social networks are wayang kulit associations that get social networks from virtual, by doing virtual performances and still rely on large organizations in Yogyakarta to support them. For example, using the DIY Privileges Fund, a fund originating from the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget allocated to fund special region. The DIY Privileges Fund is allocated under the mandate of Article 42 of Law Number 13 of 2012 concerning the Privileges of the Special Region of Yogyakarta (kemenkeu.go.id, 2020) [14]. Through this funding, wayang kulit artists receive virtual puppet shows around one or two times each year, broadcast and live streaming on the *tasteoffogja* youtube channel and private youtube channel.

### 2. The Norms of Reciprocity

The norms of reciprocity are where the individual provides services to others, but in the general expectation that this kindness will be returned at an unspecified time in the future if the need arises. In a community where reciprocity is strong, people care for each other's interests (Bullen et al., 2005) [15]. As for the norm of reciprocity, there are positive externalities between the *wayang kulit* association that performs online and online responders. It is because the wayang kulit association earns income to survive during the pandemic, contributes to or promotes the puppet association, and adds virtual social networks. In contrast, on the virtual respondent side, it can provide personal satisfaction and disseminate their ideas to the public, including; promotional media for private companies, socialization of government programs, to gain community support, socialize cultural preservation programs, to provide entertainment to the community, help their favorite puppeteers, or to virtual celebrations of school reunions

### 3. Trust

Trust is an expectation that appears in a community that regularly behaves honestly and cooperatively, based on shared norms (Francis Fukuyama, 1995) [16]. A group whose members show a sense of trust and trust in one another will achieve more than just a similar group that does not have faith. It also affects the norms of reciprocity and obligations that must be fulfilled (Coleman, 1990) [17].

In the wayang kulit association, internal belief is more of kinship than understanding their respective obligations. Besides that, if a member cannot attend or violates this belief, it can be replaced with another. However, the most important thing is maintaining the trust and fulfilling obligations with virtual responders/clients because, for wayang kulit performance artists who sell their creative services, the obligation to the client is the primary thing. The client also has the right to choose the wayang kulit association that he will respond to based on the trust between him and the wayang kulit association.

In addition, there is also trust between the association and external parties such as virtual responders because the respondent will see whether the desired thing can be achieved, for example, the promotion will be achieved, which can be measured from the number of viewers who watch the virtual show. Meanwhile, trust with the puppet lover community also needs to be maintained because they are helping to promote the virtual puppet show. For the virtual audience, it is also essential because they are watching the virtual puppet show. If it is not in accordance with the wishes, it will also destroy the trust between the wayang kulit association and the virtual responders.

#### The Benefits of Informal Social Protection: "Climen" as Coping Strategy

Wayang *Climen*, also known as the minimalist puppet, uses online media to broadcast live shows or live streaming. The duration of the *climen* show is more limited by reducing some parts of the big story. Usually, it reduces the number of wayang and gamelan instruments and some elements of the scene present in traditional wayang parades. Its wayang *climen* virtual show duration in Yogyakarta around only two to three hours, with performance payment from 30 to 40 million Rupiah (IDR) compared to traditional wayang following the overnight duration show with price from 50 to 80 million IDR depending on the type of event and the staging distance. At the Ki SN wayang kulit association, the *Climen* puppet show can be performed up to 28 to 29 times a month. Ki CB wayang kulit association also live streaming on their Youtube channel with virtual performance. In addition, this channel is filled with podcats and information about Jogja, Hip Hop wayang, And Republik Wayang. It is done to expand virtual social networks among the community, especially millennials, by increasing virtual subscribers and viewers responses.

Meanwhile, the Ki GS wayang kulit association, the youtube channel is used as a promotional media partner to expand social networks by increasing the number of virtual viewers and followers or fans, as well as a platform for virtual performances whose responses come from organizations or individuals who carry out community actions, for example raising funds and sponsorship. In addition, in virtual performances, there is a virtual saweran. When the virtual wayang kulit performance occurs, there is an official account number for open donation money or saweran for everyone who watches this show directly. They can transfer money to the account listed on the Youtube

screen. The accumulation of virtual saweran will later be collected and shared with all community members together with the monthly salary.

The social capital accumulated from subscribers and viewers will later become economic capital, either directly, through virtual responses, or indirectly in the form of video royalties calculated based on the number of viewers or video viewers virtually. It includes a social protection mechanism for crews in the wayang kulit association facing this pandemic, where they can still serve as cultural artists and still have the income to survive. Income in virtual puppet performances is obtained from:

- Online responders who spend budget or money around 30 million to 40 million in one Climen performance.
- Monetizing virtual viewers from watching shows that the Youtube channel owner will get royalties from AdSense or advertisements.
- Virtual saweran, which is obtained by transferring to the bank account of the association member during the climen performance. Usually, online saweran is collected and given to the paguyuban members' cash, which is used for the needs of community members, such as when a member is affected by a disaster, for sudden internal needs, for example, uniform, photocopy and so on for supporting hatchery. It is similar as the preventive function of social protection.

With direct and indirect income, the wayang kulit association can survive from this uncertainty of pandemic, both from direct income through virtual staging responses, royalties from YouTube, and virtual saweran to indirect benefits, namely the promotion of the association widely, so at the future, it will get virtual responses. In addition to virtual responses, fan community action that raises funds to respond virtually and sponsorship is a form of direct assistance to the wayang kulit association. In the puppet association, which does not have a large Digital capital, they take advantage of traditional social networks, namely the organization that houses the puppeteers, namely Pepadi and submits proposals for virtual fans who make donations to respond to their idol puppets. For example, the wayang kulit association Ki CB and Ki GS use the Jogja Government Pepadi Jogja network to get virtual puppet performances. However, the Ki GS association was also supported by a community action of fans to hold virtual puppets by donating funds. In addition, there is also sponsorship from individuals to help with the virtual performance..

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In the Covid-19 pandemic, formal social protection in the form of cash transfers cannot solve the problem due to the prolonged pandemic, and it is difficult to predict the completion time. As for traditional social capital, it is also insufficient to make wayang kulit communities survive in times of crisis like this. Breakthroughs and adaptations with technology or virtual strengthening of social capital are needed so that artists can survive this Covid-19 pandemic

and other times of crisis. With the existence of *climen* or virtual puppet performance responses, apart from being a medium for channeling artists' artistic and cultural souls, they get income from virtual responses, monetizing YouTube, virtual *saweran*, and promotional media to popularize the wayang kulit association. It also brings two-way advantages, not only for the wayang kulit association benefit but also for the virtual performance responders.

It can be concluded that the higher the Digital capital has seen from the virtual social network (subscriber and virtual viewer), norms of reciprocity, and the trust that exists with external parties, the more virtual staging responses will be. The benefits are sufficient for the economic needs and welfare of the association members during the Covid-19 pandemic so that the social protection within the association will be even stronger against changes and crises. It is because the accumulated Digital capital can become economic capital. The Digital capital accumulated from subscribers and viewers will later become economic capital both directly, namely through virtual staging responses, or indirectly in the form of video royalties from YouTube, which is calculated based on the number of viewers or video viewers virtually, and also benefits socially as a promotional medium to raise the name or popularize the puppeteer and the shadow puppet association.

This research prospect for studies in the future regarding Digital capital and virtual social protection will be increasingly needed. It considers the revolution of the technological world, and the world is moving toward sophisticated and modern technology and digitalization, where community interaction can be carried out through software such as gadgets and computers so that social capital is no longer only traditional in nature which must meet directly and take the form of a network between people and organizations directly, but also through the form of Digital capital. Therefore, the researcher offers a new frame of mind to follow the context of changing times to remain relevant to the existing situation in society.

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