

RELIGIOUS SOCIAL MOVEMENT AS AN AGENT OF CHANGE: A STUDY ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF DOMPET DHUAFA

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Abstract: This article delves into Dompot Dhuafa (DD) as a religious social movement stemming from organized collective behaviour responsive to specific stimuli, particularly addressing academic concerns regarding socio-economic disparities within communities. This movement is depicted through structural-functional theory, portraying it as an institution or organization within the religious social movement sphere, specifically engaged in philanthropy and its contributions to societal welfare and economic equity. In detail, employing this theory, the paper discusses the theological foundation igniting the spirit of the religious social movement, its contributions to the wider community, and religion as a cultural form encapsulating beliefs, values, norms, and ideas. The paper finds that the primary theological foundation driving DD's movement is compassion, thereby generating contributions to national and international communities by focusing on active participation and creating community welfare through its various programs. Consequently, rhetorically, religious teachings about compassion as the foundation of an organization's movement have proven to be the catalyst for a social movement while simultaneously becoming an agent of societal change.

Keywords: religious; social movement; change; Dompot Dhuafa

Abstrak: Artikel ini berbicara tentang Dompot Dhuafa (DD) sebagai gerakan sosial keagamaan dari hasil perilaku kolektif yang terorganisir dan responsif terhadap stimulus tertentu, terutama kegelisahan akademik atas ketimpangan sosial ekonomi masyarakat. Gerakan ini dipotret menurut teori struktural fungsional, yakni sebagai sebuah lembaga atau organisasi gerakan sosial keagamaan yang bergerak secara khusus di bidang filantropi dan kontribusinya bagi masyarakat dalam hal kesejahteraan dan pemerataan sosial ekonomi. Secara rinci, melalui teori ini, tulisan ini membahas landasan teologis yang memicu spirit gerakan sosial keagamaan, kontribusi kepada masyarakat luas, serta agama sebagai bentuk budaya yang berisi kepercayaan, nilai, norma dan gagasan. Tulisan ini menemukan bahwa landasan teologis utama sebagai spirit pergerakan DD adalah kepedulian, sehingga landasan kepedulian ini menghasilkan kontribusi terhadap masyarakat, baik nasional maupun internasional karena memang hadir dengan berkonsentrasi pada ranah turut serta menciptakan kesejahteraan masyarakat melalui berbagai programnya. Dengan begitu, secara retorik, dapat dinyatakan pengamalan ajaran agama tentang kepedulian sebagai dasar gerakan suatu organisasi telah terbukti menjadi pemantik semangat gerakan sosial sekaligus menjadi agen perubahan masyarakat.

Kata kunci: keagamaan; gerakan sosial; perubahan; Dompot Dhuafa

Introduction

Regardless of the historical background behind the formation of social movements, be they general or religious social movements, their essence revolves around a singular primary objective: to bring about changes, either in infrastructure or superstructure. Specifically within Indonesia, religious social movements (spiritual) have undeniably become integral to Muslim society's way of life (Padmo, 2007). One of the orientations within religious, social movements is the presence of organizations or institutions actively involved in and impacting both social and economic domains.

In general, religiously driven philanthropic activism impacting social and economic realms has continuously evolved in Indonesia, particularly during the reform era. This has garnered significant attention from researchers on religious issues, both domestically and internationally. For instance, Hilman Latief highlights Indonesia's intriguing experience regarding the progression of religious philanthropy movements. Over the past decade, numerous religious and philanthropic movements have emerged in Indonesia, stemming from social backgrounds or transnational connections (Latief 2013).

As an illustration, Latief mentions several institutions involved in the spheres of zakat (almsgiving), infaq (voluntary contributions), and sadaqah (charitable giving). These institutions include long-standing societal organizations like Muhammadiyah, NU (Nahdlatul Ulama), and autonomous bodies such as Dompot Dhuafa and various zakat institutions in Indonesia. This development holds positive significance as these organizations, to varying degrees, have contributed to poverty alleviation efforts. Consequently, this phenomenon has been accompanied by the discourse and humanitarian actions observed across various occasions (Latief, 2013b).

For example, religious organisations emerged following the earthquake and tsunami in Aceh, sending volunteers and gathering funds to aid the disaster victims. This development signifies a positive aspect, indicating that Islam transcends mere ritualistic boundaries and holds a role in social contribution and humanitarian endeavours. Moreover, since the 1990s, there has been an intriguing evolution in the intellectual discourse of Islam in Indonesia. Initially confined to fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) or religious

practices, it expanded into social and cultural domains. This transformative phenomenon paved the way for the emergence of philanthropic and humanitarian movements (Latief 2013a).

Given the emergence of various social movements, this paper will discuss Dompét Dhuafa (hereafter abbreviated as DD) as an institution or organisation within the religious social movement sphere. DD operates within Islamic philanthropy and examines its contributions to society. Through this discussion, it becomes evident that religion, serving as the foundation of DD's movement, has proven to be an impetus for social movement spirit while concurrently acting as an agent of societal change.

Method

This study employs a literature review approach, delving into scholarly works such as books, journal articles, and other relevant publications concerning Dompét Dhuafa. Additionally, the author leverages written or oral documentation, including excerpts from audio-visual recordings available on various YouTube channels addressing related themes and the official website of Dompét Dhuafa. Concerning the analytical framework, this research adopts a sociological approach, specifically drawing from two of its derivatives: structural functionalism theory and the theory of rational choice or action (Irawan, 2012). Specifically, utilising these two sociological approaches aims to reveal the social values embedded within the religious social movement of Dompét Dhuafa (DD).

Results and Discussion

Dompét Dhuafa: Profile, Programs, and Global Commitment

Dompét Dhuafa (DD) is a non-profit institution in Indonesia dedicated to uplifting the social dignity of the underprivileged through ZISWAF funds (Zakat, Infaq, Sadaqah, Waqf, as well as other lawful and legitimate funds from individuals, groups, companies, or institutions). The inception of DD stems from the collective concern of journalists from the daily newspaper *Harian Umum Republika*, namely Parni Hadi, Erie Sudewo, Haidar Bagir, and Sucipto, who extensively interacted with impoverished communities and frequently encountered the affluent. These four individuals

initiated the management of fostering solidarity among anyone concerned about the fate of the underprivileged (Nasrudin & Qusthoniah 2018).

Originating from internal fundraising efforts, daily newspaper "Republika" journalists encouraged the public to contribute a small portion of their income. On July 2, 1993, a column titled "Dompét Dhuafa" was introduced on the front page of Republika. This small column invited readers to participate in the caring movement initiated by Republika, marking this date as the founding day of Dompét Dhuafa Republika (Mulyawisdawati & Nugrahani 2019).

The "Dompét Dhuafa" column received an exceptional response, evidenced by the significant progress in collecting public funds. This progress led to the necessity of formalizing the activities managed by the Care Family in Republika. Consequently, on September 4, 1994, the Dompét Dhuafa (DD) Republika Foundation was established before a notary and announced in the Republic of Indonesia State Gazette No. 163/A.YAY.HKM/1996/PNJAKSEL (Abudalisa & Baidlowi 2021).

The professionalism of DD has been increasingly honed as their care programs expanded from initially being local to national and even international. Beyond merely providing cash assistance to the underprivileged, DD has diversified its programs to encompass broader initiatives such as economic aid, healthcare, education, and disaster relief. Consequently, on October 10, 2001, Dompét Dhuafa Republika was officially recognised for the first time as a National Zakat Institution (Lembaga Amil Zakat) by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs through Decree No. 439 of 2001 regarding the Confirmation of Dompét Dhuafa Republika as a national-level Zakat Institution (Septiara & Hutagalung 2023).

DD has a clear and distinctive vision, mission, and programs as an institution or organisation. The vision of DD is the realisation of a just and prosperous society. This vision is further elaborated in the following missions: (1) Optimising the utilisation of Zakat, Infaq, Sadaqah, and Waqf (ZISWAF) to empower the underprivileged to break free from the shackles of poverty; (2) Advocating and providing services to drive societal transformation based on justice; (3) Achieving high-quality, continuous service, advocacy, and empowerment that impact sustainable community

independence; and (4) Ensuring organisational sustainability through good governance principles following Good Corporate Governance, compliance with Sharia principles, and keeping up with advancements in information and communication technology (Admin, n.d.).

With such a vision and mission, it is unsurprising that since its establishment in 1993, DD, as a humanitarian institution, has endeavoured and solidified its efforts to contribute to Indonesia and embrace those in need worldwide. In an international context, for instance, DD first ventured into Hong Kong in 2004, aiming to address migrant worker issues through advocacy programs and providing startup capital to enable migrant workers to succeed abroad and achieve self-sufficiency upon returning to their homeland. As of today, DD has established 29 Strategic Partnerships in 22 countries, including the United States, Peru, Suriname, Bosnia, Kenya, Tanzania, Yemen, UAE, Uzbekistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, East Timor, the Philippines, South Korea, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand (Dompot Dhuafa, n.d.)

DD's programs and services consist of five pillars: health, education, economics, (social) development, advocacy, and culture. In the health sector, for example, DD has established and efficiently manages various healthcare facilities such as clinics, health posts, mobile clinics "Floating ambulances" (refer to mobile medical units or ambulances that operate in areas with water bodies such as rivers, lakes, or coastal regions where conventional ground ambulances might face difficulties reaching), optical centres, pharmacies, free healthcare services, and hospitals, all interconnected through a well-integrated and easily accessible system.

In education, DD fosters national intellect through programs like Smart Excellence Indonesia (Smart Ekselensia Indonesia), Independence Institute (Institut Kemandirian), and Indonesian Teacher School (Sekolah Guru Indonesia). Beyond these initiatives, DD engages numerous communities across regions with various empowerment programs to create entrepreneurs and generate new job opportunities. Programs such as the Healthy Farming Institution (LPS), Nusantara Livestock Village, civil society, Indonesian waqf savings, Madina Zone, Zakat Management Institute, and

DD's Waqf Assets consisting of hospitals, schools, guesthouses, and more exemplify this effort.

Moreover, the social sector serving as the foundation of DD's movement has witnessed significant growth with the emergence of several programs. For instance, the Community Service Institute (Lembaga Pelayanan Masyarakat/LPM) encompasses spiritual guidance for patients, mentoring for incarcerated students, diploma redemption, and empowerment of study groups, mosque renovations, psychiatric patient care, and more. Semesta Hijau serves as a poverty alleviation and empowerment strategy for the underprivileged, focusing on improving integrated and sustainable environmental management in Indonesia. It operates through concrete programs such as Tree Charity, Water for Life, Renewable Energy, and Waste Management. Cordofa, formed to foster a civilized global society through Islamic principles, engages in service, advocacy, and empowerment guided by Islamic principles through the role of Dai/Daiyah (Islamic preachers).

Religious Teachings as Catalysts for Religious Social Movements

Historically, Dompét Dhuafa as a philanthropic institution originated from the compassion-driven spirit of Republika journalists (Parni Hadi, Erie Sudewo, Haidar Bagir, Sucipto). These four individuals witnessed a group of preachers conducting religious outreach in a remote village in Yogyakarta, facing significant limitations, especially regarding financial resources. This experience sparked a sense of empathy, compelling them to set aside a portion of their earnings to assist these preachers.

Compassion is an integral part of the teachings of all religions, including Islam. For instance, a Hadith mentions that Allah will aid someone if they assist their brother. This teaching moved the four individuals to create a dedicated column in the Republika daily under the title "Dompét Dhuafa," leading to the establishment of Dompét Dhuafa in 1993, which continues to exist today.

This ethos of compassion propelled Dompét Dhuafa activists to continually evolve their thoughts and actions across broader sectors and diverse fields. Subsequently, DD sought to focus more on the development of Zakat, Infaq, Sadaqah, and Waqf (ZISWAF), recognizing these as having immense potential within the Muslim community that had yet to be

maximized. DD realized this potential and transformed it into a tangible movement that could be felt and benefited the wider society.

If it is assumed that Indonesia has a population of 250 million people, it is estimated that 83% are Muslim, approximately 207 million individuals. Assuming that those obligated to pay zakat are individuals with expenditures above Rp.200,000 per capita per month, which amounts to approximately 18.7%. Factoring in various criteria, the average wealth subject to zakat (*māl*) is estimated at 20 pure gold dinars (1 dinar = 4.25 grams), equivalent to 85 grams of gold. If the current price of gold is Rp.300.000 per gram, then the zakat that can be collected from this sector annually amounts to $2.5\% \times 85 \times 300.000 \times 38.000.000 = \text{Rp.}24.225.000.000.000$.

The Muslim community possesses significant financial potential when combined with zakat from trade, agriculture, livestock, and gold and silver zakat, along with voluntary charity, alms, expiation, endowments, and others. This potential can be optimally used to aid financially disadvantaged Muslims, ensuring their basic needs are adequately met and effectively reducing poverty levels. This forms the foundation for Dompét Dhuafa to extend its reach and enable its benefits to be felt by the Indonesian population, manifesting through the five pillars, as previously explained.

Contribution of Dompét Dhuafa as a Religious Social Movement Organization to Society

DD is a philanthropic institution with a legal framework, independent or separate from the government. It is self-reliant, does not distribute profits to its founders, and involves volunteer participation in several programs. DD's vision, mission, and programs align with the objectives of many philanthropic institutions in Indonesia, which aim to provide services and social assistance and empower various sectors, including economics, social welfare, education, healthcare, and disaster relief (Alawiyah 2015). The following explanation is a compilation from the 23rd Anniversary Profile of Dompét Dhuafa video in 2016.

If Dompét Dhuafa were likened to a heart, its body would be the archipelago of Indonesia, sustaining tens of millions of underprivileged individuals across the nation. This institution is dynamic, tirelessly working with immense hope to alleviate the rapidly growing number of

underprivileged individuals. For 23 years, DD has dutifully fulfilled its mission across the archipelago and beyond and now stands as one of Indonesia's community-owned non-profit institutions with a growing global presence. Presently, DD operates with 12 domestic branches, five overseas branches, and six domestic and international representatives. DD has flourished under five program pillars: education, economy, healthcare, social welfare, religious outreach and cultural programs.

In education, DD's programs have expanded significantly with clear licensing. They have established free educational support for the underprivileged, such as the Smart Excellence Indonesia School, Indonesian Teacher School, Ethos Scholarship, and Education Laboratories. Meanwhile, DD provides free healthcare services to serve the *mustahik* (needy) in the healthcare program. Through establishing the Integrated Health House Hospital, Free Health Service Clinics, Health Booths, and Health Posts, DD cater specifically to the underprivileged.

DD has devised programs encouraging entrepreneurship and self-reliance based on local potential to bolster the community's economy independently. These initiatives include Healthy Farming Indonesia, Zakat Management Institute, Independent Community Works, National Livestock Villages, Jampang Silat Villages, Social Trust Fund, Independence Institute, and Livestock Sacrifice Distribution. DD has developed programs related to environmental concerns, disasters, religion, and community services in the social domain. These encompass programs like Community Service Institutions, Green Universe, Disaster Management Center, and Migrant Institute.

A total of 13,115,981 individuals have benefited from DD's altruistic programs. DD's emissaries' dedication and hard work under its banner aim to fulfil the needs of the underprivileged and reach out more closely and effectively. The trust of donors and volunteers has ensured the continued operation of program sectors, resulting in mutually beneficial partnerships for stakeholders and shareholders. In addition to DD Philanthropy, DD Social Enterprise has seen rapid growth. DD Social Enterprise has diversified its business ventures, including DD Travel, DD Commerce, DD Public, DD Construction, DD Water, PT. Wasilah Nusantara, and CSR Focus. DD Social

Enterprise was established as an alternative fund to ZISWAF (Zakat, Infaq, Sadaqah, and Waqf) since ZISWAF funds are limited. At the same time, the number of underprivileged individuals requiring assistance is substantial.

The Structural Functionalism Theory Portrays Dompét Dhuafa as a Religious Social Movement

Throughout history, humans have lived in groups, forming communities within their social environments bounded by land, sea, and air, governed by laws and politics. History records significant moments where a social movement became the primary driving force behind social change. These movements produced groups capable of altering the infrastructural and superstructural order of national life within the concerned state.

The Industrial Revolution, American Revolution, French Revolution, Russian Revolution, Indonesian Independence Revolution, and coups in Thailand are etched in history as pivotal social movements. Since ancient times, societal social contracts have been bound by sacred religious oaths, indicating that any agreement formed among them is not merely a pact between them but involves the intervention of "deities," and society will feel the consequences of such agreements (Pals 2018).

Dompét Dhuafa is a non-profit organization that serves and uplifts underprivileged individuals' social dignity through ZISWAF funds. Its inception began with the collective empathy of a journalist community concerned about the fate of the underprivileged. They encouraged society to set aside a portion of their earnings, forming Dompét Dhuafa Republika. As outlined above, the vision, mission, and objectives of DD represent a functional approach that considers a society integrated based on the consensus of its members towards societal values, functioning as an integrated social system within a form of equilibrium. This line of thought is known as the integration, order, equilibrium, or structural-functional approaches. Influential thinkers inspiring this theory include classical philosophers like Socrates, Plato, Auguste Comte, Spencer, Emile Durkheim, Robert K. Merton, and Talcott Parsons.

The characteristics of the structural-functional perspective emphasize order and include key concepts such as function, dysfunction, latent function, manifest function, and equilibrium. Social movements like Dompét Dhuafa

have several components to operate within a society's legal boundaries and function legally or as underground groups. These components involve a collective nature and a shared purpose for societal changes.

Social movements encompass various types, including the Dompét Dhuafa social movement, categorized under reform and progressive movements. The reform movement aims to rectify societal flaws or aspects without entirely renewing them. Conversely, the progressive movement seeks to improve society by effecting positive changes within institutions and organizations.

Conclusion

A social movement is a collective effort to pursue a common interest or aim towards shared goals and aspirations through collective action outside established institutions. This theory is known as structural functionalism. According to this theory, social movements arise due to dysfunction, pathology, or social disorganization faced by society or as a mechanism to balance the system. Dompét Dhuafa is an example of such a religious social movement. Stemming from the principles and practice of Islam, particularly the concepts of zakat, infaq, sadaqah, and waqf, it aims to contribute to the welfare of society through various programs encompassing healthcare, education, economics, and social development.

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