# AL-ALBAB

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# AL-ALBAB
Volume 10 Number 2 December 2021

# AL - ALBAB

## VOLUME 10 NUMBER 2 (DECEMBER 2021)

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# ETHNIC STEREOTYPING AND INTRA-RELIGIOUS CONFLICT: THE EXPERIENCE OF MUSLIMS IN SAMBAS OF THE INDONESIAN WEST BORNEO

**Syamsul Kurniawan**
*UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia*
Email: syamsulkurniawan001@gmail.com

**Sangkot Sirait**
*UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia*
Email: sangkot.sirait@uin-suka.ac.id

**Azis Muslim**
*UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia*
Email: muslimtenan@gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

*This paper aims to explore the impact of ethnic differences and ethnic stereotyping on the atmosphere of peace, written based on the conflict event between Muslims of different ethnicities (ethnic Malay of Sambas and ethnic Madurese) in Sambas in 1999. This paper, based on my research from 2018, is qualitative research with data obtained from observation, interviews, and documentation. Regarding the method, this research used a qualitative method that leads to a case study model as an investigative method. Meanwhile, for data analysis, the interactive data analysis method using the theory of self-categorization was employed. Based on the findings of the study, ethnic differences and stereotypes had a significant impact on the escalation of conflict between Muslims in Sambas in 1999. These ethnic differences and stereotypes essentially emerged as a consequence of the way a person or group of people of a particular ethnicity categorizes a person or group of people of another ethnicity.*

**Keywords:** Ethnic Stereotyping; Inter-ethnic Conflict; Atmosphere of Peace

## INTRODUCTION

The term conflict describes a situation in which two or more people feel incompatible or do not get along with each other (Mead, 1934). There are various types of conflict, one of which is differences between ethnic groups (Wolff, 2006), which may occur naturally as a result of different attitudes, beliefs, values, and/or needs in social life (Liliweri, 2009). Therefore, inter-ethnic conflict should be seen as something natural. So, the problem is not the

presence or absence of conflict, but how the conflict unfolds and and then how to handle it: does it lead to 'violence', or 'peace'? What happened in Sambas of the Indonesian, West Kalimantan in 1999 was a valuable inter-ethnic conflict learning experience for the people of West Kalimantan and still, after twenty years, the leftover tension has not disappeared. Although not as bad as twenty years ago, the consequences of conflict are still felt to this day.

Currently, the atmosphere of peace in Sambas has not yet reached positive peace (Galtung, 1969; 2010), because the Malays in Sambas still have a negative attitude towards the ethnic Madurese. This situation not only prevents the ethnic Madurese who have been expelled from Sambas for twenty years from settling back in the region, but it also creates fear around even visiting the graves of their relatives. In fact, during the last twenty years, various efforts have been made to reconcile these two ethnic groups (Fahham, 2010; Mochtar, 2007), however, it seems they have not succeeded in overcoming post-conflict realities and difficulties.

Although for a while, open conflict did not occur between the two ethnic groups, that does not mean that the relations between them have completely improved. At the minimum, there is an impression that until now, Sambas is an unsafe area for ethnic Madurese. In contrast to Singkawang, which was once part of the administrative area of Sambas Regency, now after being separated from Sambas, it has become a very tolerant city not only in terms of ethnicity, but also between religions (Muhtifah et al., 2021). Why is the impact of this inter-ethnic conflict in Sambas so lasting that it is still felt after twenty years? Undeniably, the inter-ethnic conflict in Sambas, according to Galtung, falls into the middle-level category (Galtung, 2004), a massive communal conflict. It is considered so because it involved not only the masses from the two ethnic groups, but also resulted in the loss of life and destruction of property from both sides, as well as severe damage to public facilities, etc. (Cahyono et al., 2008).

Even though both ethnic Malay and Madurese are Muslims, they murdered each other in the 1999 Sambas conflict, when there was no longer any mutual trust between them. This was exacerbated by the stereotype that the presence of the other group is an 'obstacle'. The point here is that differences and stereotypes in the inter-ethnic context can trigger conflict, even though both groups embrace the same religion. It makes the inter-ethnic conflict in Sambas much more complex than the one that occurred in Ambon, which Tomas Lindgren associates with intra-religious conflicts (Lindgren, 2018). This is what this work aims to describe.

Meanwhile, multiple works reveal how the inter-ethnic conflict in Sambas

emerged twenty years ago because of kinship issues, primordial grudges, and the emergence of intolerant attitudes, as well as other factors related to economic problems, social mobility, and politics (Alqadrie, 1999; 2015; Djuweng, 1997; Klinken, 2007; Patebang and Sutrisno, 2000; Saad, 2003; Schulze, 2017; Sudagung, 2001; Bahari, 2008). In this article, I do not deny these factors, but instead reinforce them while adding another factor that has been barely addressed in all previous works: stereotyping. This paper, written based on my research findings since 2018, is classified as qualitative research, with the data obtained from observation, interviews, and documentation. Regarding the method, this research used a qualitative method that leads to a case study model as an investigative method (Cresswell, 2009; Neuman, 2006).

For qualitative research models relevant to the topic and information about a particular case, this type of research uses a non-probability or non-random sample whose number is not specified before conducting the study (Neuman, 2006). As Cresswell points out, the idea behind qualitative research is the selection of participants (informants) or documents/visuals with a specific purpose that helps a researcher understand the research problem and question. Following the non-random sample model, the selection of informants in this study used a purposive type. The informants were determined based on abundant, in-depth information they have related to the problem of this study, and also as long as the informants meet the criteria (Cresswell, 2009). In this regard, most of the informants in this study were Sambas ethnic Malay in addition to several members of ethnic Madurese who were former Sambas refugees. To analyze the conflict between Muslims of different ethnicities in Sambas in 1999, this study uses the interactive data analysis method proposed by Miles and Huberman (Miles et al., 2014). While the theory used to analyze the data is self-categorization theory.

## CHRONOLOGY OF CONFLICTS BETWEEN MUSLIMS OF DIF-FERENT ETHNICITY IN SAMBAS

The conflict between Muslims of different ethnicities in Sambas in 1999 began with the news of the beating of an individual of ethnic Madurese suspected of being a thief in the house belonging to a Sambas Malay. The news of this beating developed into a beating of ethnic Madurese by the Sambas Malays. After that, rumors spread of attacks by a group of people from the ethnic Madurese as a form of revenge for the beating. Particularly as it occurred during the month of Ramadan.

In fact, the Village Head initiated a peaceful settlement of this issue, several times, with the hope that the dispute between residents could be resolved

adequately. However, this effort was unsuccessful, which resulted in an attack by a group of ethnic Madurese against the Sambas ethnic Malay in Parit Setia (19 January 1999), which then spread to other areas in Sambas and its surroundings, including Tebas (23 January 1999), Prapakan (17 March 1999). 1999), Sei Garam (7 April 1999), Singkawang Hospital (9 April 1999), Sei Ruk (15 April 1999), and Karimunting (18 April 1999) (Asmara, 2002; Al-Qadrie, 2003).

The attacks, which initially only resulted in the death of three people of Sambas ethnic Malays (Saad, 2003, pp. 90–94), later turned into a large-scale ethnic conflict. Reportedly, victims fell from both sides in large numbers, and houses and property were also burned down during the incident. To minimize more casualties, due to the rage among Sambas ethnic Malay being out of control at that time, most of the ethnic Madurese who previously lived in Sambas had to be evacuated.

Police reports noted that as of April 1999, 177 people died from both sides. In addition to the dead, 71 were seriously injured, 40 sustained minor injuries, 12,185 houses were burned, 315 were damaged, 45 were vehicles burned, and 21,626 residents were evacuated. In contrast, the report from the Governor of West Kalimantan in 1999 stated that the number of people evicted reached 33,634 (Kapolda Kalimantan Barat, 1999).

## ETHNIC DIFFERENCES TRIGGER THE CONFLICT

Based on estimates, Sambas and other areas in West Kalimantan, in general, are known to be prone to inter-ethnic conflict. (Al-Qadrie, 2016). The reason is that Sambas' population has a diverse ethinc composition. This is partly because the former kingdom of Sambas was of important value, not only because of its natural resources, but also its historic strategic location as an international trade route. The Sambas Kingdom was located between the junction of Sambas Kecil, Subah, and Teberau rivers (Rahman, 2001). In this way, its potential attracted people from various other regions to migrate to this area. Moreover, Sambas has been dubbed the "Veranda of Mecca '' and some call it the "Veranda of Egypt '' because of its scholars. So, in addition to the motive of earning a living, people also come to this area to study religion (Mahrus, 2009; Musa, 2003).

The migration of people from other areas to Sambas has made Sambas an area with a diverse ethnic composition. This situation, in turn, resembles a melting pot that Haitami Salim described as "a forum for fostering cultural diversity from various communities". These conditions gave rise to positives

and negatives. The positives, among others, are that society tends to be heterogeneous. Conversely, there are negative impacts such as the possibility of conflict (Salim, 2012).

The event of inter-ethnic conflict in Sambas, generally cannot be separated from the ethnic differences in the region, especially the conflict between locals and migrants. These differences are made by unfair and unbalanced socio-economic structures and competition (De Jonge and Nooteboom, 2006; Giring, 2004; Klinken, 2007; Marzali, 2003), which, if traced back, have occurred since the 1770s (Kristianus, 2017). Thus, the inter-ethnic conflict in Sambas that occurred in 1999, between the Sambas ethnic Malay is considered to represent a clash between the indigenous population and the migrant Madurese. Previously, ethnic Madurese had also been involved in several conflicts with ethnic Dayak, who like the Malay also regard themselves as locals in Sambas (Cahyono et al., 2008).

Judging by the relationship between religion and ethnic identity, it is difficult to accept the fact how there could be a conflict between Sambas ethnic Malay and the Madurese, who are both Muslim. Islam is synonymous with the Malay and the Madurese (Asmiati, 2017; Hermansyah, 2015; Yusriadi, 2017). Even though the conflict involved ethnic Malays (who are Muslims) assisted by the Dayak (who are Christians) against the Madurese (who are Muslim), it does not mean that the Sambas conflict had a religious motive (Salim, 2012). The reason the Dayaks helped the Malays in the inter-ethnic conflict in Sambas was mainly that the two were bound by an oath (Hermansyah, 2018). Meanwhile, Madura's ethnic ties are strong (Hefni, 2009).

Thus, the ethnic connection in Sambas is much stronger than the religious and has quite a strong ground. Indigenous ethnic groups (the Dayak and the Malay), as well as the migrant ethnic group (the Madurese) tend to hold strongly to their respective ethnic identities, and they display them openly. The Dayak, the Malay, and the Madurese ethnic groups consist of ethnic subgroups. For example, the ethnic Dayak sub-groups include Kenayatn, Kendayan, Bekatek, Menyuke, Kayan, Taman, Kenyah, Ot Danum, etc. The Malay ethnic group includes, for example, Pontianak Malay, Sambas Malay, Sintang Malay, Sanggau Malay, Kapuas Hulu Malay, and more. The Madura ethinc group includes Madura from Sampang, Bangkalan, Sumenep, etc. Outside of these sub-ethnic groups, they each identify themselves or are identified as one ethnic group, namely Dayak, Malay, and Madurese. In most cases, ethnic Dayak who have converted to Islam claim to be Malay. This is not the case with ethnic Madurese, who are Muslims. Even though the Madurese have long been married to the Malay, they remain strong with their Madurese

identity and are reluctant to be identified as Malay (Prasojo, 2011).

Consequently, referring to Syarif Ibrahim Al-Qadri, it is the emergence of ethnic solidarity, among the Dayak, Malay, and Madurese – where each group forms and strengthens a strong, unified ethnic consciousness (Al-Qadrie, 2015). Due to the strong and unified ethnic solidarity, each ethnic group considers ethnic groups outside theirs, as the other. This trend occurred in Sambas when the inter-ethnic conflict occurred in 1999. This tendency, according to Amartya Sen, contributes to an intolerant attitude of a person or group of people towards the "other" (Sen, 2007).

## NEGATIVE INTER-ETHNIC STEREOTYPES ESCALATE THE CONFLICT

Ethnic Malay are an ethnic group that is open and accepting of migrants. They also want to live in harmony and peace, including with ethnic Madurese (before the ethnic conflict occurred in Sambas in 1999). Until then, a culturally pervasive stereotype identified them as people who do not like to take risks, are considered shy, hide their feelings, and are cowardly. Before the inter-ethnic conflict in Sambas occurred, the term "kerupuk" (crispy chips) was used to refer to the Malay (with a scornful tone) among the Madurese, because of their cowardice and unwillingness to take risks.

While ethnic Madurese hold the principle of "lebih baik putih tulang daripada putih mata" (death is better than disgrace) (Wiyata, 2002), Sambas' ethnic group has a similar phrase: "lebih baik mati berkalang tanah, daripada hidup berputih mata" which means the same as the principle of the Madurese. So, no matter how well the Malay hide their anger, when it is too much and their honor is at stake, they can also be reckless. Many ethnic Malay from Sambas informants reported they could not bear the treatment from ethnic Madurese towards them, which in turn increased their anger at the migrant ethnic group. Munawar M. Saad noted some criminal events that occurred from the 1950s to 1999, which were perpetrated by ethnic Madurese against the Sambas ethnic Malay, such as extortion, robbery, persecution, and even murder (Saad, 2003).

These cases are among the things that formed the Sambas Malay's stereotype about the Madurese. The feeling of resentment of the Sambas Malays as an indigenous ethnic group continued to fester, worsened by the negative stereotypes about ethnic Madurese. This build up of animosity could exacerbate slight disagreement between them into a communal conflict, such as what happened in 1999. From the perspective of the Sambas Malay, ethnic Madurese are known to be selfish, threatening locals, carrying sharp weapons when traveling, defending the guilty, being vengeful, and in the name of "God's

land" they take other people's land, etc.

This stereotype held by the Sambas ethnic Malay about ethnic Madurese is not much different from that held by other ethnic groups, as stated by De Jonge cited by Edi Petebang and Eri Sutrisno, that the Madurese in the eyes of other ethnicities are disrespectful, angry, revengeful, often resort to fighting, and are familiar with violence. If the Madurese felt embarrassed, they immediately drew their sickles, ready to tear the victim to death. Pulling a knife is their way to defend their honor as Madurese (Patebang and Sutrisno, 2000). This reckless character of the Madurese, to some ethnic groups, is portrayed as a negative thing, like the Malays, who are usually passive and considerate.

The stereotype that developed with the negative image of each, was likely influenced by the fact that most of them had relatively low formal education at the time. Their education, like the generations of the 1980s and earlier, was mostly finished at the elementary and junior high school levels (with a few exceptions from college graduates). The low level of education may be the reason why this ethnic group tends to have a negative image of other ethnic groups outside of them. This stereotype contributed to the escalation of inter-ethnic conflict in Sambas in 1999.

Based on the theory of self-categorization, the process of forming a stereotype is determined by the presence of categorization in the individual, in which the categorization contains the concept of fit which is an important consideration for an individual in forming a stereotype. The concept of fit is considered as the core of the theory of self-categorization where in this theory it is revealed that individuals have several categorizations which then become prominent or are considered significant because of the crystallization of several prototypes caused by these categorizations fit with a social context (Littlejohn and Foss, 2009).

The concept of fit is classified into two categories: comparative fit and normative fit. Comparative fit concerns the issue of the comparative relationship between stimuli as the distributor of the meta-contrast principle, meaning that the categories formed must be in accordance with the differences in comparison between groups. Meanwhile, normative fit relates to a person's background knowledge and theory to be adapted to the existing data. So, the role of data is an important thing in the formation of content, where the content reflects the actual comparison and contextual aspects of the reality of stimuli. However, the role of the perceiver is also very significant, considering that the categorization and search for similarities and differences are determined by the person's needs, motives, and goals. When one compares differences between groups, it makes sense in terms of the relationship between knowledge and theory used

in stereotyping, so that comparative and normative fit runs in interactions to determine the content of the stereotype (McGarty et al., 2004).

In all interviews held with the informants from both Malay Sambas and Sambas Madurese refugees, there is a categorization process that involves comparative fit and normative fit. Therefore, there are themes and labels that fall into both categories. The themes and labels in the comparative fit category are needs that have different labels in them: goals that have the demeaning and joking labels, and motives that have the labels of use, honor, and benefit. As for normative fit, there are background themes that have personality labels: knowledge which has interaction labels, and social contexts which have educational social environment labels (McGarty et al., 2004).

When it comes to how ethnic stereotypes can be formed, there are at least three possibilities: 1. Stereotypes can be formed as a reflection of a person's direct observation of the behavior of a group 2. Stereotypes can be a reflection of one's expectations and the extent of one's insight about how a group behaves 3. The formation of stereotypes may also be a combination of one's observation and one's expectations and knowledge of a group (McGarty et al., 2004, p. 68).

These stereotypes are formed from observation, expectation, and knowledge about a group. Someone receives social information in the form of categories, where the category is obtained through an adjustment process (process fit) which includes comparative fit and normative fit. The content of the category is then described with a prototype. If the prototype defines itself (for example, an in-group prototype, and out-group prototype) then someone tends to internalize the prototype so that the prototype acts as the basis for self-perception, social judgment, attitudes, beliefs, and behavior (Littlejohn and Foss, 2009).

In the case of the conflict between Muslim ethnic groups in Sambas in 1999, the experience of interaction with ethnic Madurese was then generalized by the Sambas ethnic Malay as the basis for their self-perception, social assessment, attitude, belief, and behavior towards ethnic Madurese, and vice versa. However, in this context, they not only find group differences and stereotype content based on their own experiences, but also learn differences from outside themselves, and from various social sources. In the previous discussion, it has been described how there have been a number of criminal cases by ethnic Madurese against the Sambas Malay, such as theft, persecution, assault, and even murder as some of them have been reported by Munawar M. Saad. In addition, this stereotype becomes a kind of collective knowledge in several other ethnic groups who are non-Malay or non-Madurese (Patebang and Sutrisno, 2000, pp. 167–169).

In the formation of stereotypes, there are at least four theories that can be put forward: first is "bottom-up". This level is also called information-rich, which assumes that people produce stereotypes that are derived from information and facts about a group. The differences between groups are very clear because of the large amount of information available so that it becomes the basis for the formation of stereotypes, without making or using arbitrary assumptions about group differences. When these stereotypes afflict members of their group, self-enhancement occurs (where a person tends to prefer their social identity to be portrayed positively or negatively) and judgment emerges as a form of evaluation. This is in line with the principle of social identity in which when someone sees something that is the same or equal, the group will tend to see their own group positively in the arena of difference. On a bottom-up basis, information and data are obtained by someone through a process of learning or experiencing, where people are known by some information which, in creating such information, is used as the basis of the stereotypes, which of course are also based on group interests. This is in line with the principles of comparative-fit and meta-contrast which are then described in the self-categorization theory, that the better and clearer the group differences, the more they will be used as the basis for the formation of stereotypes.

The second theory is "a bit of bottom-up". Stereotypes formed through "a bit of bottom-up" do not require much information for a stereotype. Information that is little and not clear, can be the basis for the formation of stereotypes. It should be noted that in this context, the content of the stereotype tends to be informed by what a person knows, such as from his or her own group, and is likely to be evaluatively differentiated from attributes in other comparisons outside the group.

The third theory is "a bit of top-down". Where there is sufficient information to establish or suspect a person or group. That is, even if there is little information and knowledge, a person can generate stereotypes from these pieces of information to distinguish others (such as where he comes from or his family background).

The fourth theory is "neither up nor down". In this context, stereotypes are produced without clear and tangible data or information about what distinguishes a person or an ethnic group from the other (Spears, 2004).

The description based on the information obtained from the informants shows how the concept of fit is highly considered within them. This can be seen from the extent to which comparative fit is needed for ethnic groups as a differentiating measure. The Sambas Malay informants interviewed in this context felt different from someone who is of ethnic Madurese, in which

according to them their ethnic group is not as violent as the Madurese. They felt calm in their speech and were reluctant to fight. These differences encourage the presence of a kind of stereotype against ethnic Madurese, such as being violent, irritable, aggressive, and more. Meanwhile, ethnic Madurese perceive some Malays to be very timid and reluctant to take risks.

The Sambas Malay who feel different from the Madurese, apart from the reasons mentioned above, are also caused by a strong pressure to maintain their identity as indigenous people of Sambas. For them, migrant ethnic groups should not underestimate their position as the indigenous ethnic group in the region. In addition, negative experiences with ethnic Madurese also greatly influenced the formation of the Sambas ethnic Malay's stereotype about the Madurese. For example, several criminal cases committed by ethnic Madurese against Sambas ethnic Malay, such as attempted theft, persecution, assault, and even murder, as revealed by Munawar M. Saad, were very possible to contribute to the formation of this stereotype. Due to the experience of conflict between Muslims of different ethnicities in Sambas in 1999, this stereotype has further escalated the conflict.

## EDUCATION IN ADDRESSING INTER-ETHNIC STEREOTYPING

Being aware of the fact that inter-ethnic stereotyping may trigger conflict, and/ or re-occurrence of conflict, is important to address. In the current context of Sambas, little has changed from this stereotyping, both in terms of the Sambas Malay's stereotypes about ethnic Madurese, and/or vice versa, the Madurese about the Sambas Malays.

As described above, inter-ethnic stereotyping basically arises as a result of the way a person or group of people from a particular ethnicity categorizes a person or group of people from other ethnicities. Thus, stereotyping is very likely to arise from a person's experience due to their social environment, how they grow and develop among other cultures, experience inter-ethnic communication, and are educated (Samovar et al., 2010). This also means that when someone biologically looks similar to someone else, but they grow and develop with different socio-cultural situations and conditions, they will likely become different from each other, including in terms of stereotypes about a particular group. This is because the experience of a person and/or group of people is shaped by the social situations and conditions that surround them, which John Locke refers to as tabula rasa that the (human) mind is a "blank paper" without rules for processing data, and data are added, and the rules that process them are formed only by the experience of the senses (Locke, 2007). Education in one's social environment in this context is likely to

provide important experiences for a person and his character, including how he perceives others, has stereotypes, etc.

Should this be the case, then education is possible to shape or change mindsets. In the wake of the Sambas conflict, it is expected that the current stereotypes held by the Sambas Malay and the Madurese that tend to be negative about each other can be appropriately addressed. Several writers, such as Davies (2004), Bush and Saltarelli (2000), Hilker (2011), and Brown (2011), mentioned the reliable functional role of education for this, while at the same time, they also warned about the possibility of education becoming a conflict catalyst, which is very detrimental if it does serve its original purpose.

## CONCLUSION

Based on these research findings, ethnic differences and stereotypes had a significant impact on the escalation of conflict between ethnic Malay and ethnic Madurese in 1999. Theoretically, this ethnic differentiation and stereotyping essentially emerged as a consequence of the way a person or group of people of a particular ethnicity categorizes a person or group of people of another ethnicity. It can be argued that differentiation and stereotyping are formed based on observation, expectation, and knowledge about a group.

This is quite understandable because a person receives social information in the form of categories, where the categories are obtained through a fit process that includes comparative fit and normative fit. Where the content of the category is described by a prototype, and if the prototype defines self (for example, an in-group prototype, rather than an out-group prototype) then one is more likely to internalize that prototype so that the prototype acts as the basis for self-perception, social judgments, attitudes, beliefs, and behavior. There are at least four models of information processing that lead to a stereotype, namely with a lot of information (bottom-up), adequate information (a bit of bottom-up), little information (a bit of top-down), and poor information (neither up nor down). In addition, the emergence of ethnic stereotyping as a form of distinguishing a person or an ethnic group from the other can also be a consequence of inter-ethnic interaction and communication.

In the context of post-conflict Sambas, it is expected that the strongly held inter-ethnic stereotypes, which tend to be negative and have undermined the relations between the Sambas Malays and the Madurese, can be appropriately addressed. As discussed earlier in this work, we can rely on educational work to help reconstruct the stereotyping in a more appropriate direction.

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# *SELF-ISLAH,* GENDER RELATION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES ON TABLIGHI JAMAAT PROSELYTIZATION PRACTICE IN INDONESIA

**Saipul Hamdi**
*Universitas Mataram*
Email: shamdi@unram.ac.id

**Fadli Mulyadi**
*Universitas Brawijaya*
Email: fadli.mulyadi@ub.ac.id

**Fanny Henry Tondo**
*The National Research and Innovation Agency (PMB-BRIN)*
Email: fhtondo@gmail.com

**Ahmad Muzayyin**
*Institut Agama Islam Hamzanwadi NW Pancor*
Email: ayengmajidi3@gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

*This article explores one of the Tablighi Jamaat (TJ) teachings self-islah that develops in its dawah practices. Self-Islah emphasizes improving oneself through a proselytization program called khuruj from one community to another, from one mosque to another. The phenomenon of TJ dawah shows a different approach and pattern where da'i play dual roles not only as subject (preachers) but also as an object (listeners) during that khuruj program. Self-islah in this context includes strengthening faith, morals, and gender awareness. The gender aspect is strong external critics of TJ religious tradition where it does not involve women in their religious activities and even avoids interacting with them. Thus, TJ members must handle all the needs while staying in the mosque for religious camps, such as washing clothes, cooking, washing dishes, and serving guests from the local and international community. The article investigates changes in gender relations within the TJ family in the post-khuruj program. This article also focuses on the economic challenges Tablighi members face when they go out of preaching (khuruj), especially those from the lower-middle class. The research findings show that most TJ members achieved self-Islah and hugely impacted the evolution of spirituality after khuruj. They also acknowledged the transformation of gender relations in the family, but on another side, facing economic crises due to prioritizing dawah activity. I used an ethnographic approach and applied a qualitative method in collecting and analyzing data for two years (2017-2018) in three research locations, Lombok, Balikpapan, and Jakarta.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Tablighi Jamaat (TJ) is one of the most significant transnational *dawah* movements in the Islamic world's modern history (Drury, 2014; Gent, 2018; Pieri, 2015; Siddiqi, 2012).Tablighi's teachings have reached the global community, including secular countries whose minority Muslim populations include the United States, Britain, Spain, the Netherlands, Russia, Germany, and Australia through sustainable *dawah* traveling (Drury, 2014; Noor, 2012; Sikand, 1998). TJ missionaries had targeted Muslim migrants in Western countries through Pakistani and Indian links. Although Tablighi members are facing many challenges and obstacles when proselytizing in the field, especially in a country in which the Muslim community is a minority, however, their presence contributes a lot in strengthening Islamic values, enlivening mosques, activating dawah program, and building Islamic educational institution (Burki, 2013; Hamdi, 2015; Siddiqi, 2012). The consistencies in a purely religious activity that are not associated with a political agenda have been attracted local Muslim communities to be part of the Tablighi-dawah mission.

TJ in Indonesia has shown a progressive development since its presence in the 1960s (Noor, 2010). TJ members have consistently preached about the surrounding local and regional community and took over mosque's activity even though not all citizens accept their teaching idea. Statistically show that a total number of TJ members in Indonesia is estimated to be between 1-3 million people, and this number is still far below national Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama 140 million, Muhammadiyah 35 million, and Nahdlatul Wathan 5 million members (Hamdi, 2015; Sobary, 2010). Although as a minority group in Indonesia, the role of TJ cannot be underestimated. It has Markaz in each province in Indonesia, and these are actively leading the dawah program. This article generally examines the phenomena of the TJ movement in Indonesia related to its religious teachings and practices that have a positive contribution and a negative impact on another side. TJ figures successfully improve the members' spirituality, where they can correct or *islah* themselves after following *dawah* activities and guidance. However, the negative impact is also visible in dawah practices when the Tablighi doctrine emphasizes that all members sacrifice their time and wealth for *dawah*, which often becomes a significant issue at the family and community level.

Specifically, the article examines Tablighi's teaching about self-*islah* and co-

Islah in the process of dawah practices called *khuruj*, a holy trip for conducting a *dawah* to different Muslim communities. The most prominent purpose of TJ dawah is strengthening and reinstalling spiritual elements to proselytizers and the followers who are the object of its dawah. Self-islah is the self-effort to correct personal issues in faith and spirituality through cooperation among members in the camp to achieve the highest spiritual enlightenment path. *Self-islah* and *co-Islah* have a significant impact on spiritual transformation at the individual and social level. The educational practice of *self-islah and co-islah* can be found in *zikir, taklim*, *mushawarah, and bayan.* Tablighi members also take advantage of this dawah program to be more independent, such as washing clothes, cooking, cleaning mosques, and serving other members. Members of Tablighi acknowledge that this independent attitude is carried away when returning home, where they actively help the wife, including cooking, washing clothes, and other homework. This change in attitudes in the family relation led this article to examine gender relations at the family institution and gender education they gained during their preaching.

Tablighi's doctrine demands a high discipline, commitment, and sincerity to conduct religious dawah into the community (Chakrabarti, 2010; Drury, 2014; Rauf et al., 2019)we revisit Russell Belk, Guliz Ger and Soren Askegaard's study on consumer desire. We do so in an effort to further advance the extant understanding of desire in consumer research. Specifically, informed by Lacanian psychoanalytic thought and sharing much affinity with Foucault's central argument in The History of Sexuality, we consider how the institution of religion functions as a disciplining force by which to mediate the (potential. TJ members have to proselytize during three days, forty days, three months, and a year depend on the ability and seniority. However, to actualize this, it needs many transportation costs, food, and other necessities, mainly going abroad (Metcalf, 2002; Gugler, 2010; Siddiqi, 2018). In addition to that, they also must fulfill the needs of their family who stay at home. Without any sponsor for these programs, the economy becomes a crucial issue, particularly for low-middles class people. In many cases, TJ members have to sell their land and other assets to fund their dawah. This dynamic leads the article to elaborate on what strategy they use to overcome the economic challenges.

This article is based on two years of research (2017-2018) in three locations, including Lombok, Balikpapan, and Jakarta. I applied an ethnographic approach and qualitative method to collect and analyze data. I observed and participated in TJ religious and dawah activities, where I spent time with them in mosques. I also interview TJ religious figures, members, government, and other external communities to understand their responses toward TJ's

religious teachings.

## SELF-ISLAH AND CO-ISLAH IN TJ DAWAH

Islam encourages Muslims to do proselytization, which teaches about Islamic teaching to others, whether directed to Muslims or non-Muslims who do not know and understand Islam. The command to preach has been stated in the Qur'an and Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad to call on good deeds and prevent evil or bad deeds (Al-Quran, Imron 104). The word dawah means to call, or invitation is a general term that refers to the preaching of Islam. In Indonesian and Malay, languages also use *the dawah* term, which is taken from Arabic. Johan Meuleman (2011: 236)explains that dawah primarily refers to activities aiming to strengthen and deepen Muslims' faith and help them lead their daily lives in conformity with Islamic principles.

Dawah activities have continued after the Prophet's death and were carried out by his friends and religious figures *(ulama)* until this modern century. The teachings of Islam have spread to various countries with an estimated 2 billion adherents in the world through communal dawah that the establishment of educational institutions strengthens to build Islamic character. Dawah and Islamic education cannot be separated because it has the same function of developing and strengthening Islamic teachings. Transnational Islamic movements such as Tablighi Jamaat, Ahmadiyah, Muslim Brotherhood, Jam'iyyah al-Da'wahwa-al-Irshad, and Wahhabi have combined these two approaches of dawah and education for the expansion of their religious movements attracting the sympathy of the Muslim community to join. The rapid development of the dawah movement creates various methods and objectives that vary from organization to organization. Meuleman (2011: 237) states,

> *Since the birth of Islam, dawahhas been an important aspect of this religion and dawah activities have always been highly appreciated in Muslim societies. However, in the course of the twentieth century, dawahactivities and organizations have grown particularly strong all over the Muslim world and have adopted new forms and new aims. This phenomenon is related to two major developments which were partly contradictory: a renewed aspiration for international unity of all Muslims, on the one hand, and the formation of modern nation-states with their different religious traditions and – more importantly their conflicting political interests, on the other hand. Additional factors include the development of modern means of transport and communication as well as Christian missionary activities.*

The differences in the methods and objectives of dawah in the Islamic world, according to Meuleman (2011: 237), cannot be separated from various factors such as interpretation of scripture, emphasis on specific issues, economic growth, social and political change, and modernity. The dawah methods and objectives seem to follow the wishes of the audience, and also there is a political intervention by the government in the affairs of this dawah. Urban communities that middle-class groups dominate prefer a pattern of preaching that suits their needs. Meuleman (2011: 237)also gives attention to the rivalry between the Islamic organizations in dawah and the external religious motivation against the missionary movement of non-Muslim groups. In Indonesia, those organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, Al-Irsyad, Hidyatatullah, Wahhabi, and Salafi compete to gain authority and power in the public arena. He stated that political factors dominate dawah development in Indonesia, especially in the Suharto era.

Although Meuleman talked over the transnational Islamic movement such as TJ, Ahamdiyah, and Ikhawul Muslimin, he did not focus specifically on the discussion of paradigm in their *dawah,* so it is a noticeable gap and will be cover in this article. My focus here is on the TJ group related to its dawah methods and goals that are different from other transnational Islamic movements. One of TJ's dawah's purposes is *self-islah*, correcting ourselves and not entirely focusing on other people. Self-islah learning in TJ's dawah practice is part of its unique approach. Tablighi improves this approach after looking at the weakness of Islamic dawah, which only focuses on the object without involving the preacher as the subject. The preachers never thought about themselves, but more to others. They only teach the material of religious discourses without giving any attention to themselves.

Self-islah is one of the main goals in TJ's dawah practices. The concept of self Islah is an innovation from the Tablighi Jamaat, where this concept emerged from the TJ group environment to maximize results in dawah. To ensure the continuity of dawah, the TJ group prioritizes the *islah* of the preacher first. Khuruj has become a medium to do a self-islah and also to islah other members who have just joined TJ's khuruj activities. TJ members see *iman* as a mobile phone; when the battery is empty, it needs to be charging to get a new power. On the other hand, Iman needs *dawah* as a medium to recharge the power when humans lost their *iman*. TJ members who come out for dawah have two purposes, to reform themselves and others. Maulana Muhammad Yusuf (2012)quoted Maulana Ilyas's statement saying that the primary purpose of TJ dawah is teaching *umat* comprehensively what the Prophet Muhammad taught. According to him, the Prophet Muhammad made an effort to

change human worship and beliefs, obtain guidance, marriage, meetings, and transactions. To be able to achieve that, there are at least three types of efforts that must be carried out, namely *dawah* (invitation), *mashq* (practice), and *dua* (supplication).

Tablighi's dawah, which is communal, has an impact on self-islah and *co-islah* that is to improve each other among members. They went out preaching in groups of  five people from more than one mosque, and this group would join groups from other mosques and be dispersed in various mosques outside their village. The strength of communality and solidarity between members who come out preaching is what plays a vital role in self-islah.

TJ dawah that involved a group of people also influence other members to get islah which I called *co-islah*. The cooperation and togetherness among TJ members in dawah play an essential role in accelerating the piety character and communal *islah*. Self-islah and *co-islah* happen together naturally during its dawah practices *khuruj fi sabilillah*. They advise and remind each other to focus on self-changes through maintaining *shalat jamaah* (daily congregational prayers) and other beneficial religious activities.

All activities in TJ dawah become part of self-islah learning process. There is a *taklim, musyawarah, and bayan.* Taklim is an Arabic word that means learning, where they make a small group study Islam by reading the famous book written by Maulana Zakaria called Fadilatul Amal. One person read two or three pages of the book, and the other must listen. Usually, taklim runs in the morning time like 8.00 to 9.00 o'clock after breakfast time. They take rest after taklim until zuhur pray. They also conduct a *musyawarah*, a regular meeting to discuss the progress of their dawah program and evaluate the spiritual improvement that they have achieved. They also use this *musyawarah* moment to share their spiritual experience to motivate and strengthen each other. All members have the same position and equal right to express their opinion, although the final decision will be taken from the majority voices and now body allow requesting after the decision made. Usually, musyawarah is performed by sitting side-by-side in a circle from 5-12 people led by an amir, a temporary group leader in the Tablighi congregation.

*Bayan* is a program of religious talk that also becomes an effective medium to achieve *self-islah* and *co-islah* because the materials they deliver only about Allah, faith, and morality. The preachers do not speak non-religious material in the bayan program, including politics, economy, or family problems. TJ uses a different standard of selecting people who will give a bayan, not based on talk skill and mastering knowledge material rather social piety. They believe Allah guides them when delivering a *bayan* because they talk the truth of Allah. TJ

also build a new religious tradition in its dawah program, where all members have the same position and equality as proselytizers. Each member must play double roles as a teacher and as a student. The member possibly becomes a teacher one day when he gives *bayan* or taklim and becomes a student on another day listening to other members delivering a *bayan*.

## *KHIDMAT* AND GENDER RELATION

*Khidmat* comes from the Arabic word *khadama*, which means to serve or a service. *Khidmat* is one of the essential programs developed in TJ tradition to serve others voluntarily as part of social and religious obligation. Khidmat becomes an obligation for Tablighi members to eliminate the ego and soften the hard soul. Abu Hurairah, a TJ member from Lombok, said his ego decreased after following the regular khidmat during his *khuruj* program. Several activities that are part of khidmat are cooking, preparing meals for others, cleaning mosques, cleaning kitchens and dining rooms, and visiting sick people in a hospital near the Markaz. Food is an essential element in the TJ dawah ritual because they stay at the mosque for several days and even several months invite outsiders to join in and eat together. Therefore, they provide food to guests and TJ members for free. For instance, at an *ijtima* event, local members are assigned to cook and serve guests from foreign countries. Because of this cooking tradition, TJ members are well known as *stoves da'i* (da'i kompor) where they carry stoves for cooking when the preaching is running.

TJ members use khidmat as a medium of training patience and releasing the ego. Each member has the opportunity to perform *khidmat* solemnly without considering class and social status. Either the member is a medical doctor, lawyer, police, or religious figure treated equally regarding taking *khidmat* program. This section will elaborate on the role of *khidmat* in changing personal behavior, character, and gender perspective and relation in family. This *khidmat* will lead TJ members wiser, more careful, respect toward women, especially their wives. Most TJ followers in Indonesia are from a strongly patriarchal culture. Therefore, TJ members have to negotiate the nature and nurture patriarchal behavior when doing *khidmat* work such as cooking, providing food, and cleaning.

The argument was how *khidmat* **changes attitude and gender relations in the family. Abu Hurairah explains the significant transformation and changes in his behavior toward his wife. Usually, he acknowledges that he got an anger problem and very dependent on his wife. His wife must serve him everything, including making coffee in the morning and washing clothes. After** khidmat, it was opposite where he takes over her work the previously

the wife did. He said, automatically, he makes coffee on his own and washes his and her clothes. He also acknowledges that his love is stronger to his wife and more sincere to serve her like cook and wash her clothes. He tries to implement what he learned from dawah and maintain consistency following Muhammad's *sunnah*, particularly assisting the wife in domestic affairs.

Ahmad Ridho (50 years old), a member of TJ from East Lombok, also confesses that there is a significant change in his behavior and attitude after taking time for *khidmat*. He is no longer relying on his wife and instead always helps to complete her work. He was more active than before to do what can do without being ordered by his wife. I went to his house for an interview and met him alone at that time. His wife was, and her family was going out to a beach for vacation. He welcomes and offers me lunch from his cooking. He immediately cooks, cutting vegetables and frying fresh fish and chicken in the kitchen. Once cooked, he called the other Tablighi members to eat together in his house. Before lunch, we went to the mosque for zuhr pray, and after that, we got lunch. I took this moment to interview other members of TJ to complete my research data.

From data above show that *khidmat* has multiple effects, including changes in gender relations within the family. The exchange of social roles and gender segregation without religious awareness is difficult to happen in a Muslim community. Religious consciousness plays an essential role in raising new awareness beyond gender differences but more on humanity. Most TJ men willingly and sincerely play a social role usually performed by women or wives during the dawah program. Their dawah movement from one city to another had a significant impact on changes in gender relations in which women had to play a double role replacing the husband role. In Tablighi's belief, leaving their wives in performing the dawah program is part of woman empowerment, where women are more independent after living alone and taking care of children. They believe it was heresy and shirk when wives rely on their husbands, not on God. This dawah program gives them training space to be more independent and take over their husband's work.

## RELIGION AND POVERTY: SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES IN TJ DAWAH

Religion and poverty are among the discourses that scholars have widely researched and discussed, mainly how religion affects poverty. According to Jaco Beyers (2014), religion and poverty are two different things. Religion is concerned with non-material elements, namely spirituality, while poverty is closely related to a material element. The difference in this dimension (material

and non-material) shows that they do not have a direct relationship so that the study of religion and poverty is seen from the relationship between both. This external relationship can be seen in how religion and poverty influence each other. Discourses on poverty can be found in holy texts such as the Koran, the Bible, the Tripitaka, and others (Beyers, 2014; Kroessin, 2008).

Religion and poverty are social phenomena inherent in human life that are difficult to separate. These two social phenomena have different impacts on humans, where religion is assumed to be something positive and functions to help humans solve their problems (Beyers, 2014; Geremek, 1994). Meanwhile, poverty is considered to be something that harms the loss of human dignity. Religion itself sees poverty in various ways. Islam sees poverty as a social challenge that must be faced together by helping each other (Kroessin, 2008). Christians see poverty as a punishment for the sins that have been committed, while Buddhists see it as karma (Beyers, 2014: 3).

Religious texts, especially in the Quran, recommend a social action to fight against poverty by paying money and other material in *the zakat,* charity, and donation system. Geremek (1994:11) identifies capitalism as the origin of poverty. It is undoubtedly irresponsible to reduce the origin of poverty to one single aspect. Peculiarly enough, poverty, according to Geremek (1994:11), contributed to the development of capitalism, and simultaneously poverty resulted from capitalism. Along with capitalism came the processes of industrialization and commercialism, fuelling an unstoppable economic engine; for many centuries, some considered capitalism to be the solution to poverty (Geremek 1994:11). Currently, the introduction of technology is considered by some to be the solution to poverty. Technology can, for instance, lead to developing more advanced agricultural machinery alleviating poverty through better farming techniques.

In the TJ community context, the patterns of dawah and ritual practices have caused poverty in its members. Based on my findings, that TJ dawah program that spends a minimum of three days and a maximum of one year on going dawah is the primary source of the economic crisis in the TJ community. Every member must spend much material to finance this dawah cost, including transportation and meal. This pattern has raised a critical question about the strategy to overcome this financial issue. This section elaborates on the economic issue during the dawah program, mainly how TJ members manage and control their economy due to the high cost of traveling. This is the major challenge for the TJ family when the husband formally takes part in TJdawah activities in the socio-economic contexts. They focus on *dawah* rather than collecting material. Even in many cases, some TJ

members sell their assets and property to pay all dawah expenses.

My data shows how TJ members prioritized dawah and did not care about the economy. They live in simplicity with inadequate facilities and conditions. The Doctrine of Sufi asceticism *(zuhud)* strongly inspired TJ followers to live a simple life and significantly influenced a new religious lifestyle, in which they have no ambition to collect material and ignored social competition. TJ members believe material orientation is an obstacle to achieve the highest spiritual level of unification with God. However, I found another data that shows a different reality where few TJ members have an economic activity surrounding TJ Markaz. They sell religious accessories such as a robe, *tasbih (prayer beads), siwak (*traditional toothbrush from wood)*, perfume, turban,* religious cap*,* and *sarong (scabbard).* So, it depends on the intention of TJ members. Not all of them focus on dawah; rather also they have an economic vision and mission.

As a global missionary movement, TJ members come from various nationalities, ethnicities, traditions, languages, and professions. A similar condition also visible in the TJ community in Indonesia, where TJ members are plural in terms of ethnicities, traditions, social class, and profession. Some middle-class workers work as businessmen, lecturers, soldiers, politicians, bureaucratic officials in government institutions, school teachers, and some lower classes working as labor, farmers, and security. Therefore, the economic strength and capacity also vary to each member, which affects their ability to pay transportation cost in proselytization program. I will focus on TJ members in Indonesia, who have severe challenges and severe economic impact during proselytization.

In January 2017, I traveled to Selong city, East Lombok attending *iTJima,* an international meeting that involved all members from Asia at the Grand Mosque in Selong. I met my cousin in this Grand Mosque meeting, who is an activist of TJ. As a local member of TJ, he was assigned as a cookie for guests' meals during *iTJima.* After serving those guests, he asked me to accompany him to pick up Rahman (45 years), a Tablighi member who is not active anymore in TJ dawah. Rahman lives in Banjarsari village East Lombok only 7 kilometers from the location of *iTJima*. When we arrived at his house, the wife directly attacked us with anger and rude, saying, "do not bring your TJ friends here, I do not need them, I need money, our family needs money". When her husband left his works to conduct a dawah trip, she was traumatized, while no one could replace him as peasant labor. He got a peasant labor job, and it was a primary source of family income. She told us if her husband is responsible to the family and prevents us from taking him away to the dawah arena. She also

said that she had children, and no one cares about us when he was not here.

The real challenges were experienced by the Ahmad family (55 years old), who is suffered from dawah activity. He has to sell his cattle to buy a ticket for his dawah traveling all around Lombok and Java island. He believes that those cattle have the same value as Eid Al-Adha's animal as long as we intend to be sincere and complete submission to God. He never worried about the economic family. He spends much money on dawah, and he was ready to sell whatever he has as far for Allah. He declared, "God will replace with a greater number of what we sacrifice," as God promised in the Qur'an.

Another case from the Rahmawati family (38 years old) in Lombok. She cannot do anything when her husband, Miftahul Huda, is engaged to TJ dawah because she has to take care of three little children. She was disappointed in the husband when he left his job as a farmer. She cannot handle his job in the rice fields picking tobacco leaves and drying them. She complained to her father-in-law about her situation, and the father looks for him checking which mosque he stays. He found his son at the mosque participating in TJ dawah. He shouted to his son and challenged him to fight. He stated, "let face me, if you are gentlemen, why are you leaving your job and family at home." Huda responded and advised his father to be patient and remember God. He returned home and canceled his dawah program.

A similar case from Samarinda East Kalimantan that happened in Fatimah's family. She threatened to divorce the husband after joining a TJ dawah. He went out of town and left his. She cannot handle all the works and responsibilities at the family level, including taking the children to school and managing the family business of motorbike workshops. Her husband has a workshop place for motorbike services, which is the primary income resource of the family. Consequently, during the dawah activity, he must close the workshop. Fatimah gave him two options, whether divorce or continue as TJ followers. The husband is aware of this problem and decided to quit TJ dawah activities and rerun his business.

Bandi (43 years old), a young TJ member who was previously successful in his business affair, suddenly experienced severe economic problems after being a TJ follower. He started his career from the bottom, running his computer rental, radio station, and language course. His wife works as a civil servant in the Central Lombok government office. Bandi said the growth of his economy from his business company did not make him comfortable. There is something disturbing him in mind and soul until he saw a group of people praying in the mosque wearing white robes. They also visited people's homes and delivered a religious message. Although he was curious and did not know about this

group, he feels like *deja vu* with those people reminded him of the imagination of the Prophet Muhammad's life and his disciples in the Arab lands of the 7th century. This first meeting with this group impressed him, and he began to join and learn their dawah teachings. He finally leaves the family to conduct TJ dawah program without his wife's permission due to her objection. She did not permit him to do a dawah, although three days. After going out for three days, she starts to accept him, and again he went for ten days and three months to India. Because he was too active in TJ dawah activity, his business began to collapse. Before joining the TJ dawah movement, his company usually get a profit from IDR. 15-20 million per month, now decreasing to 2-5 million. His brother acknowledged that he could not even pay the business rent.

Those data show how TJ members struggle with their economic stability while participating in the TJ dawah program. In some cases above, dawah has a significant effect on the economy due to different focuses and orientations. The influence of TJ ideology "asceticism" is also the most significant challenge on TJ's new members, where they have new motivation and enter a new realm of nonmaterial.  Most TJ members I interviewed in Lombok, Jakarta, Samarinda were not interested in talking about business and economy; instead, they focus on spiritual development. They live a simple life and focus on improving themselves by surrendering to God in total. I do not deny that economic activities are surrounding TJ  headquarters such as in Temboro East Java, Jakarta, Lombok, and Samarinda they built stores for Muslim clothes, small restaurants, and small hotels.

## CONCLUSION

Self-islah is the primary goal of TJ dawah that all TJ members must achieve. When TJ members in a *dawah* camp program, they have to *islah* themselves than other people. Self-islah program makes TJ dawah different from other Islamic organizations, in which religious figures only focus on *islah* other people and forget their needs. So, TJ dawah changes approach and goal to be more effective and possibly involved both sides to achieve islah. All TJ dahwah programs are related to *self-islah* and *co-Islah*; it strengthens individuals and other members in a group for the dawah camp program in faith, *ibadah,* and morality. Self-islahcan be found in ritual and religious activities such as *taklim, zikir, bayan*, and *musyawarah.* Self-islah and co-islah are naturally working together in this pattern because every member gives support to each other.

*Khidmat* also another program that encourages transformation attitude more broadly for TJ members. All members of Tablighi acknowledged *khidmat* as a suitable training medium for them to be more sincere, gentlemen, and respectful

because through khidmat TJ member experience to serve others. *Khidmat* also raises gender awareness and changes the gender relationships in the family. Usually, before *khidmat,* TJ members have a solid patriarchal perspective due to the cultural construction of gender bias. They have to negotiate and harmonize the internal conflict within themselves. It also happens when they enter the new realm of dawah that leads them to release the ego and ambition to collect material in their life. The transition to be more spiritual close to Allah and minimize material influence and economic activity are not always easy because they still have another responsibility toward the family.

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# EXPRESSION OF LOVE FOR *AHL AL-BAYT* IN ACEHNESE SOCIETY

**Lukman Hakim**
*Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, Indonesia*
Email: lukmanhakim@ar-raniry.ac.id

**Syamsul Rijal**
*Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, Indonesia*
Email: literasi.syamsulrijal@ar-raniry.ac.id

## ABSTRACT

*Theologically, the Acehnese ordain themselves as loyal followers of Sunni Islam, but there are Shi'a elements in their culture. To date, there are some traditions of expressing love for the Ahl al-Bayt (Prophet Muhammad's family) which is one of the main characteristics of the Shi'a. This research is based on the hypothesis that several cultural practices in Aceh contain Shi'a elements. This study seeks to reveal the cultural practices of the Sunni followers in Aceh in expressing their love for the Ahl al-Bayt. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive analysis method from a combination of library and field data. This study found that, historically, the acculturation process of Shi'a culture into the Sunni followers in Aceh has coincided with the process of the arrival of Islam in the Indonesian Archipelago. This is possible given the position of Aceh in the history of Islamization in the Indonesian Archipelago. This acculturation has left traces of culture inspired by Shi'a such as the tradition of Ashura porridge, Boh Husayn cake. All these traditions have been preserved because these Shi'a values contain expressions of love for the Ahl al-Bayt who also have a place in the hearts of the Sunni adherents in Aceh.*

**Keywords:** Aceh; Sunni; Shi'a; Ahl al-Bayt

## INTRODUCTION

The people of Aceh identify themselves as Sunni followers, but in cultural practice remains still a form of typical Shi'a tradition which is meant to be an expression of love for the Ahl al-Bayt. Expressing love for the Ahl al-Bayt is a main characteristic of Shi'ism, because this school was founded based on fanaticism to Ali ibn Abi Talib who was a friend and son-in-law of the Prophet (Aslan, 2011; Hashem 2001). This is unique and interesting, considering that Shi'a and Sunni which have been understood as two theologically opposite schools of Islam, still influence each other in the socio-religious domain.

It seems unique and surprising because people who identify themselves as followers of Sunni have religious-cultural practices influenced by Shi'a culture. (Saby, 2013)

The historical journey of the relationship between the Indonesian Archipelago and Persia, which has existed for a long time, has also provided room for acculturation of theology between the Shi'a and the Sunni in the form of cultural contestation which later became Indonesia's fascinating treasure. The traces of the Shi'a can still be found in almost every region in Indonesia. This study specifically seeks to look at the various traditions practiced as an expression of love for the Ahl al-Bayt which is commonly observed in the Sunni Muslims in Aceh. In the context of Aceh, Shi'ism is thought to have developed for a long time since Islam was present in that region, along with the arrival of Islam itself.

Ali Hasjmy, an Acehnese culturalist and historian, suspects that Shi'ism has been present and developed in Aceh since the eleventh century AD in the Peureulak region (Perlak, East Aceh) brought by merchants from Persia. This condition lasted for a long time until the emergence of the Islamic kingdom of Pasee (Pasai, North Aceh) which followed the school of Ahl-al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah (Hasjmy, 1983). Given Aceh's position as a well-known trading port in the history of the Islamization of the Indonesian Archipelago, it is not surprising that it later paved the way for various schools of Islam in Indonesia. Through this trade route, it is possible to acculturate two theological schools; Shi'a and Sunni have long been part of the history of Islam in Aceh

This has left traces of religious cultural practices with Shi'a nuances in Aceh in the form of a culture of expression of love for the Ahl al-Bayt. This expression of love can be found, for example, in the naming of the month of Muharram as the month of "Asan-Usen" in Aceh. Both are still preserved as a reminder of the death of Husayn, the grandson of the Prophet of Allah in a historic war (Hoesin, 1970; Ismail, 2013). In addition, the traces of Shi'a also influence other cultural practices in Aceh, ranging from religious culture, literary arts, to culinary arts.

Studies related to the existence of Shi'ism in Indonesia can be found in some previous literature. Moh. Hasim has written about the history of the emergence and development of Shi'ism in Indonesia. The existence of Shi'ism has contributed to cultural diversity in Indonesia from the past until now (Hasim, 2018; Latief, 2008; Dewi, 2016 and Atjeh, 2017). The traces of Shi'ism in its history have existed since the beginning of contact with Persia along with the Islamization of the Indonesian Archipelago (Saby, 2013). Evidence of this connection to Persia can be found in various archaeological artifacts

in the form of tombstone inscriptions at the Samudera Pasai historical site (Muhammad, 2013).

In addition to the works on the history of Shi'ism or Persia in the Indonesian Archipelago, several previous studies also discussed acculturation, influence, and the Sunni-Shi'a conflict in Indonesia. Fakhriati mentioned the influence of Shi'ism on the lives of the Acehnese people, especially in Pidie District. This conclusion is based on a study of the Hasan Husen and Nur Muhammad stories (Fakhriati, 2011 and Wahyudi 2017). This Shi'a influence can be observed in the scientific tradition and the Islamic movement in Indonesia in general and in Aceh in particular (Apridar, 2015; Faiz, 2016). The acculturation and influence of Shi'a with other cultures in the Indonesian Archipelago do not always run peacefully but also create tension and conflict (Sulaiman, 2017; Sutriana and Mustahyun, 2017; Puteh, 2018; Jamal, 2011; Hamdi, 2012; Widyadara, 2015 and Shihab, 2017). Due to frequent conflicts, the Shi'a community started a movement to survive in the political and religious constellation in Indonesia (Abubakar, 2018).

As far as the literature review is concerned, in general, several works have been found based on library data and historical artifacts like books, story manuscripts, and archeological data on tombstones. In addition to using library data, this article uses field data through observations and interviews with 10 informants in each province from academics, historical and cultural observers. This article is built around the hypothesis that there is a Shi'a influence in the cultural and religious practices of the Muslim community in Aceh Province. Based on this hypothesis, this research was then developed into a literature review and field study, so that adequate data could be collected to answer the predetermined problems.

This article seeks to reveal the cultural expressions of the Sunni Muslims in Aceh and West Sumatra in expressing their love for the Ahl al-Bayt. For this reason, this study is built around several objectives, which include: 1) the historical genealogy of the emergence of Shi'a nuances among the Sunni communities in Aceh and West Sumatra; 2) How the tradition of expressing love for the Ahl al-Bayt is formed among Sunni Muslims in Aceh and West Sumatra, and 3) How this Shi'a-nuanced culture survives in a Sunni Muslim society.

## THE HISTORICAL GENEALOGY OF SUNNI AND SHI'A ACCULTURATION IN ACEH

One of the positive traits in society is integrating several elements of civilization

within its function (Ahmad, 2012). This trait can be found in the cultural structure that thrives in Muslim societies in Indonesia in general and Aceh in particular. This is because there are so many cultural elements that exist among Indonesian Muslims, which are "absorbed" from outside cultures, including cultures typical of Shi'ism. However, to reduce the community's resistance, sometimes these cultures are not called Shi'a but are simply referred to as of Persian origin. As previously explained, the spread of Shi'ism in Indonesia coincided with the process of Islamization in the Indonesian Archipelago. According to Tabataba'I, as quoted by Khairunnas Jamal, Shi'ism is a historical reality in Indonesia (Jamal, 2011), as is the case in Aceh, the connection with Shi'ism is a historical fact. It can be seen from cultural aspects that are still deeply embedded and ingrained in the society, which is predominantly Sunni. Here it is important to see how the contact and acculturation process of Shi'a culture in the Sunni community took place, although in this regard some views disagree with the fact that the traditions that exist in Aceh today are a form of contact between Shi'a culture and the Indonesian people.

Concerning whether there is a connection between Acehnese culture and Shi'ism, two different views are prevalent. First, the views that agree with the notion that there is a process of acculturation of Shi'a culture in the Sunni community in Aceh. Second, the views that disagree with the opinion that some traditions still exist in the community are a form of influence of Shi'a culture.

The first opinion is put forward by experts who say that the spread of Shi'a influence in Indonesia is an uncertain reality. At least there is historical and sociological evidence that there has been acculturation of Shi'a culture in Indonesia. Muhajir Al-Fairusi, an Acehnese anthropologist, stated that Aceh has experienced a long journey of Islamization since the 2nd century AD. The region was a port that was initially open to the process of Islamization of various schools, including the influence of Shi'a. The influence of Shi'a or Persians in Aceh cannot be ignored, because many elements in the structure of Acehnese society have been influenced by Persians (read: Shi'a) at the beginning of the development of Islamization. One of the terms used in the Kingdom of Aceh that received Persian influence is the title "Shah" which was then used by the elite of the Acehnese Kingdom (Muhajir Al-Fairusy Interview, September 13, 2020)

In addition, historical researchers, such as Taqiuddin Muhammad have written articles proving evidence and artifacts that show such contact. There is a sort of acknowledgment that the emergence of Persian Islam under the rule of the Safavid dynasty has become an influential force after the Arabs in

the Islamic world, which has colored various sides, both in terms of language, literature, philosophy, Sufism, etc. (Muhammad, 2013).

The arrival of Islam from various routes made it possible for Shi'a teachings to penetrate Aceh. As reported by a religious figure in Aceh, this may be closely related to the interaction of the Acehnese people with the outside world, especially the interaction of several world nations who had visited Aceh. Various nations of the world often visited the Pasai Kingdom (now Lhokseumawe), and they assimilated culture through trade. Thus, undoubtedly the community with the most dominant interaction will leave their culture with the indigenous people (Interview with Syukri, September 9, 2020). According to Khairil Miswar, this view has also been recorded in Ali Hasjmy's book about Sunni and Shi'a in Aceh which claims Shi'ism was once thriving in Peureulak (Interview with Khairil Miswar, 7 August 2020)

It was confirmed by Mr. Yusni Saby who said during the interview that "Islam arrived in Aceh through various agents; there were traders, Sufi experts, travelers, and even escapees from the Middle East. In the context of these escapees, many Ahl al-Bayt circles were expelled from their homeland due to political pressure and kinship to the Ahl al-Bayt. Many of these descendants of the prophet were expelled because of their status and political intrigues. The titles or names such as Habib, Sayid, indicate that they are the descendants of Ahl al-Bayt, the descendants of the Prophet, so they are highly respected. At the time, these traditions, which are now called Shi'a, were Ahl al-Bayt traditions; they were not Shi'a traditions, because the term "Shi'a" at that time had not existed; the term Shi'a only appeared later (Interview with Yusny Saby, March 17, 2020). From here, Shi'a teachings intersected with other schools of Islam in Aceh.

On the other hand, some groups disagree with the view that there is a contact or influence of Shi'a culture in Aceh. Hermansyah, an expert on Acehnese manuscripts, argued there is no strong evidence that the traditions in Aceh have been influenced by Shi'ism. According to him, the Shi'a tradition may exist in Aceh, but what needs to be considered is that the presence of Shi'ism in Aceh from the past until now has not been found, especially when referring to some axiological evidence, namely primary source evidence. For example, as revealed by Naquib al-Attas, in which he mentioned that Islam was brought from Arabia, namely Yemen. Regarding its influence, Islam in Aceh is strongly influenced by the thoughts of Imam Syafi'i and Ash'ari; in Yemen, it also influences Imam Shafi'i and Ash'ari. (Interview with Hermansyah, 19 March 2020)

Historically, Aceh has always been labeled as an area where the people follow

Ahlussunnah Waljamaah and the Shafi'i school of thought. However, it is also undeniable that the prevalent traditions are similar to the practice of Shi'a culture. In this regard, Arfiansyah, an Acehnese anthropologist, argued that knowledge and experience of Islam led to monotheism, so the Acehnese themselves in general do not have sufficient knowledge about the schools of aqidah in Islam, as well as other various schools of thought at that time. This has implications for the lack of knowledge and understanding among the Acehnese regarding the Shi'a elements in their culture. (Interview with Arfiansyah, September 8, 2020). Therefore, it's only natural that even though traditions typical of Shi'a culture take root in the Sunni community in Aceh, in general, people do not know anything about it.

Furthermore, according to Arfiansyah, the first Islamic preacher to reach Aceh via Perlak, was a Shi'a. Recently, it is strongly suspected that Islam first arrived in Aceh through Lamuri or Lamreh today. But it is not clear what sect of Islam was brought to Aceh through Lamuri. For more than 2 centuries, there has been no historical explanation of the schools of Aqidah that were adopted until the establishment of the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam. When Aceh was increasingly recognized as an important port, many scholars from the Middle East and other Muslim areas with Sunni aqidah and Shafi'i school of thought visited Aceh and later introduced these theological schools to the Sultanate. This explains why the aqidah Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah and the Shafi'i school indirectly become the identity of Aceh, apart from cultural practices typical of Shi'a culture.

In light of the above description, there are in fact differences in views among experts regarding the presence or absence of Shi'a influence on the socio-religious of the Acehnese people. This article is more inclined to the opinion that the cultural practices in Acehnese society in certain cases show an influence of Persian or Shi'a culture. Although this is sometimes not recognized by the predominantly Sunni Acehnese as they hold that such cultural practices do not derive from Persia or Shi'a but merely a form of love for the Ahl al-Bayt.

## CULTURAL PRACTICES OF EXPRESSION OF LOVE FOR AHL AL-BAYT

Regarding the hypothesis that in the cultural practice of the Sunni people in Aceh, there are still cultural entities inspired by Shi'a belief and culture. This influence can be seen in various cultural practices and is still preserved today. Here, it may be necessary to emphasize that this does not necessarily mean that theologically Shi'ism still survives and thrives in Aceh. This paper will

only explore the cultural side that develops in a society that is inspired by the values of Shi'a belief and culture (Saby, 2013 & Fakhriati, 2011). This influence includes several aspects of culture, such as language, poetry, cultural rituals, culinary, etc.

In Acehnese society, several cultural entities are observed which are believed to have a close relationship with Shi'a belief and culture. According to Khairizaman, if explored further, several artifacts and other historical objects, some of the movements in the saman dance have also allegedly originated from Shi'a culture. Many people mention that some Acehnese cultural practices, rites, and literature also originate from Shi'ism. The material culture includes texts as well as old rites that still survive today (Interview with Khairizzaman, 12 September 2020). Thus, cultural practices with Shi'a nuances exist in Acehnese society.

Aceh is known for its literary texts. Among them are the mystical poems of Hamzah Fanshuri originating from Shahr-i Naw, which in Khairizman's view, in Persian means 'New City'. Shahr-i Naw is believed to be Ayutthaya, the capital of Siam, the former Thai kingdom, where the Persian community at that time was very large and influential so that many strategic positions of the kingdom and regional leadership were controlled by the Shi'a.

Some stories are suspected to have a relationship with Shi'a ideology. One of them is the story of Hasan-Husayn, a manuscript written in the Acehnese language using the Jawi script. In a study by Fakhriati, it was stated that the story of Hasan-Husayn has traces of the ideology and practices of Shi'a teachings. In Fakhriarti's analysis, it is stated that in terms of the textual title of the story of Hasan-Husayn, it shows an inclination to the Shi'a concept. The story describes the triumphs, successes, and pains experienced by Hasan and Husayn (Fakhriati, 2011). Furthermore, Muhammad Hanafiah's role as Hasan and Husayn's brother in seeking revenge for the death of his brother is also highlighted.

In addition to the story of Hasan-Husayn, there is also Hikayat Atjeh: Struggle of Zainab al-Qubra which tells the story of Zainab, the daughter of Fatimah, the younger sister of the Caliph Hasan Saidina, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, and Si Bungong Lidah Ali Murthada, as stated in the Preamble of the Hikayat Atjeh by Mujar MS. The manuscript, which was written in 2006, tells the story of Zainab's struggle in Kuffah. The story also tells about the struggle of Imam Husayn and its relationship to the struggle of Zainab al-Qubra. Similar to the story of Hasan-Husayn, the Hikayat Atjeh Zainab al-Qubra also venerates the Ahl al-bayt. There are still several manuscripts in the form of stories that allegedly contain elements of Shi'ism in them, such as

the story of Imam Mahdi and the story of Muhammad Hanafiyah. Even the story of Muhammad Hanafiah is considered a story filled with Shi'a elements.

In addition to manuscripts, Shi'a elements can also be found in folklore, which is often conveyed in the oral tradition. There are several stories about the prominence of Ali and his sons, Hasan, Husayn, and Muhammad Hanafiyah, stories about Imam Mahdi that are also prevalent among the people. As reported by Hasbi Amiruddin in Aceh the story about Sayyidina Ali is one of the most popular in the community, especially among children. The oral tradition of the story about Sayyidina Ali describes Ali's traits, from his intelligence on the battlefield to the 99 sword scars he suffered, and how he survived and remained strong (Interview Hasbi Amiruddin, 17 March 2020). In various stories, Ali is shown as a noble, kind, humble person, in addition to being very strong.

In addition to texts and oral traditions, one of the trivial forms of habit in practice, which is allegedly derived from Shi'a culture is hand-kissing. According to Prof. Hasbi Amiruddin, kissing the hands of the teacher is derived from Shi'a. Similar to the habit of kissing on the cheek that many adults do when they meet, the actual culture of kissing on the cheek is Iranian culture. The difference is that our society only kisses the cheek twice, namely right and left, while Iranians kiss three times, namely right, left, and right. For Iranians, this kiss on the cheek is a sign of greeting when they meet (Interview with Hasbi Amiruddin, March 17, 2020).

Furthermore, there is also a belief among the people that the game of football is a form of humiliation to the family of the Prophet. Today, some Acehnese forbid playing football because they liken playing football to the incident of Husayn ibn Ali's head kick after being beheaded by Yazid bin Muawiyah's soldiers in Karbala. This belief then holds that football is a form of humiliation to the Prophet's family. This kind of belief is still prevalent among the Acehnese as quoted from Tgk. Hanafi Juned as follows: "In the past, we were forbidden to play football by our parents because football originated from the murder of Sayyidina Husayn ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib (Interview with Hanafi Juned, February 25, 2020).

There are other cultural practices among the Acehnese as a form of commemoration of the killing of Husayn ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib such as naming the month of Muharram as the month of Asan Husen because the Karbala tragedy occurred on 10 Muharram in the year 61 Hijri (Hoesin, 1970; Ismail, 2013). Regarding the designation of the month of Muharram as the month of Asan Husen, according to Tgk. Jazuli "is a form of profound appreciation of love for the Ahl al-Bayt shown by the people of Aceh, and I think this is

a traditional Acehnese cultural offering to remind us all about the story of Sayyidina Husayn's murder by Yazid ibn Muawiyah's soldiers" (Interview with Jazuli, 3 March 2020).

Still, in connection with 10 Muharram, it has become a culture among Acehnese Muslim women to cook Ashura porridge or Iebu Hasan Husen. Today the tradition of cooking Ashura porridge is also still preserved in Aceh. For Acehnese Muslim women, cooking Iebu Hasan Husen is not an observation of certain beliefs but merely as a form of preserving tradition from generation to generation to remember the murder of Husayn bin Ali in Karbala which became a milestone in Shi'a history.

Thus, the history of Shi'a has inspired the emergence of culinary culture in Aceh. In addition to the Ashura porridge, the Acehnese also have a type of cookie or snack called Boh Husen. This cookie is in the shape of a crescent moon. According to Dr. Safir Iskandar Wijaya the curved shape like a crescent moon was inspired by the shape of a typical Persian sword. While its shape is similar to a Persian sword, the cookie's name depicts one of the Shi'a figures, namely Husayn (Interview with T. Safir Iskandar Wijaya, January 20, 2020).

Several cultural practices traditionally preserved in Aceh to this day provide sufficient evidence of the existence of a Shi'a cultural identity in the Sunni community. This shows the moderate and open attitude of the Acehnese people. Moreover, they perceive such cultural practice as an expression of respect and love for the Prophet's family.

## SURVIVABILITY OF LOVE EXPRESSION FOR AHL AL-BAYT

One of the factors that make for the Persian cultural tradition which is influenced by Shi'a teachings acceptable in the Indonesian Archipelago is their alignment with the Ahl al-Bayt. Regarding this context, the fact that the Acehnese themselves love and venerate the Prophet and his family has paved the way for Persian/Iranian traditions and cultures to be easily accepted by the Acehnese and these traditions have been preserved for centuries. It seems that the influence of Iran was brought via the Persian Gulf to the Indian Ocean, while from Saudi Arabia, it was from the Red Sea, down to Yemen, then to the Indonesian Archipelago. So, there are three sources of influence: first, the Arabs; second, the Persians; and third, the Indians (Ghujarat). Sheikh Nuruddin ar-Raniry, a native Ghujarat who died in Ghujarat, India was in Aceh for 4-5 years). Hence, the legacy of the Ahl al-Bayt veneration in Aceh is regarded as being the Shi'a teachings (Interview with Yusny Saby, 17 March 2020).

In a similar vein, Khairil Miswar reported that when it comes to the survivability of Shi'a culture in Aceh, it is because the Acehnese themselves do not see this culture as a Shi'a tradition, but rather as an Ahl al-Bayt tradition. As is known, the Acehnese claim to love the Prophet dearly, so everything related to the Prophet, such as the killing of his grandson, Husain, or Hikayat Asan Usen, etc., are preserved as a form of their affection for the Prophet. In addition, the celebration of Maulid (the Prophet's birthday) in Aceh also tends to last quite long, up to three months, even though historically Maulid was first celebrated by the Shi'a in Egypt. Therefore, the preservation of this Shi'a tradition in Aceh is merely a medium to show their love for the Prophet and the Ahl al-bayt, not following Shi'a theologically, because as far as Shi'a fiqh model is concerned, it does not apply in Aceh. The preserved traditions have nothing to do with beliefs or worship models (Interview with Khairil Miswar, August 7, 2020).

It is for the love for the Ahl al-bayt that the Shi'a culture is adopted as part of the tradition among the Sunni. In the context of glorifying the Ahl al-bayt, according to Faisal M. Nur, "One thing that must be noted is that the expression of love for the Ahl al-bayt among the Sunni sometimes exceeds that of the Shi'a" (Interview with Faisal M. Nur, March 23, 2020) For the predominantly Sunni people of Aceh, all the Persian cultural practices they preserve are not meant to perpetuate Shi'a teachings, but simply as a display of love for the Messenger of Allah and his family.

Furthermore, according to Maizuddin, apart from seeing a culture that directly reflects respect for the Prophet and his descendants as the dominant factor that contributes to the survivability of Shi'a traditions in the Sunni community, the respect for the indatu (forebears) also strongly influences the Acehnese society. For certain circles, local wisdom is more important to maintain and observe than to show the identity of the culture (Interview with Maizuddin, August 8, 2020).

In line with the statement made by Arfiansyah, culture has lived for centuries and is practiced every year. There is a view held among the people that if they abandon the culture, there will be a disaster. Moreover, the Shi'a nuanced cultures are not seen by the Acehnese as Shi'a practices, but understood as part of Islamic teachings to love God, His Messenger, and his family. Arfiansyah believes that not many Acehnese, especially those in rural areas who preserve the culinary culture of Ashura cookie, understand the story of the murder of Hasan and Husayn, nor do they know who killed the Prophet's grandsons and on whose orders and for what purpose (Interview with Arfiansyah, 8 September 2020). In other words, they understand that the tradition is only a celebration that is not related to any other faith.

Culture is a set of traditions observed in the daily life of the Acehnese. Adat (custom) and culture are two terms that have close meanings, even customs are part of culture. Both custom and culture have become people's traditions passed down from generation to generation, and are difficult to change as they have become a habit (tabi`at/peukateun). The customs and culture that have been approved by the ulama are likely to last and be preserved by the community, and that is why Aceh's customs and culture are commonly respected and adored by the Acehnese since ancient times and used as the basis of life.

This acceptance of values with Shi'a nuances among the Acehnese is then maintained through cultural practices, then continues to be preserved because it is continuously taught orally. According to Badruzzaman, "In the past, in the villages of Aceh the recital of Hikayat Hasan-Husayn and Hikayat Ibn Hanafiah was very common. In this way, the preaching of Shi'a values became a collective understanding in Acehnese society (Interview with Badruzzaman Ismail, 29 March 2020). The story and poems that tell the history of Shi'a culture are still very much alive today, such as the popular song of Hasan ngon Husen by Rafli, an Acehnese singer and culturalist.

## CONCLUSION

Several studies have found that in a long historical process, there has been a contact of Shi'a Muslim culture with the teachings that had long existed in the Indonesian Archipelago. The contact between these two cultures then gave birth to a cultural formation whose genealogical roots have been influenced by Shi'a culture and practices. These cultural formations then develop and continue to be preserved by the Sunni community in Aceh, and are no longer seen as related to Shi'a rituals. They only see it as a profane culture, not sacred theological teaching. This culture is then practiced as an expression of love and respect for the Prophet and his family (Ahl al-Bayt).

In the context of Aceh, the practices of this tradition can be found in several forms still preserved today, such as Ashura porridge (Kanji Asan Usein), Boh Husayn cookie, the naming the month of Muharram as the month of Asan Usein, recital of stories about important Shi'a figures, such as Hikayat Hasan Husen, Hikayat Zainab Al-Kubra, Hikayat Iman Hanafiah. Based on the view that culture does not conflict with the Shari'a and is practiced as an expression of love for the Ahl al-Bayt, these cultural practices are not considered to be against the faith of the Acehnese Muslims who are predominantly Sunni. Interestingly, this expression of love for the Ahl al-Bayt by the followers of Sunni Islam has provided room for Shi'a culture to continue to exist and even

develop in a Sunni society. Moreover, the current Shi'a theological movement supporters in Indonesia do not call themselves Shi'a but instead operate under the name of the Indonesian Ahl-Bayt Jama'ah Association (IJABI). This is intended for minimizing resistance from the majority of Sunni Muslims in Indonesia.

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# RELIGION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL VALUES IN CULINARY TRADITION WITHIN LOCAL COMMUNITIES OF WEST KALIMANTAN

**Hariansyah**
*Program Studi Psikologi Islam FUAD IAIN Pontianak*
Email: shah4shah19@gmail.com

**Ana Rosilawati**
*Program Studi Pendidikan Agama Islam FTIK IAIN Pontianak*
Email: putricitrasmara@gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

*The article aims to explore culinary traditions that penetrate the public space, which does not give room for tolerance because it has to deal with the rules of Islamic law. Food is perceived as being in binary opposition: having an integration effect or being a social conflict resolution. Food is presented in the public space as a duplication of scriptural sources, a marker of tradition, an ecological balancing argument, and an indication of social shift. This paper confirms that dining traditions have an Islamic ideology. It is indicated by the ijab qabul phenomenon that accompanies the culinary tradition procession as an entity enriching the concept of fiqh among people living in coastal areas. In addition, eating and its traditions affect environmental conflict resolution in the coastal areas of West Kalimantan. The traditions of food, land, houses, gatherings, and reciting prayers for safety are all important ethnic characteristics in West Kalimantan. These five entities, which are perceived by the people of Kalimantan as provisions for life, have proven to be of no subjective values; they are reserved only for anyone with productive land. However, farm products in the form of food are also distributed to anyone in need. When someone has fulfilled the ber-saroʼan (the invitation to eat; berontang or saprahan) in a village, they are no longer treated as "strangers". This tradition is not only about eating, but also with the emergence of variants of Islamic fiqh in coastal areas, indicating psychological values.*

**Keywords:** Psychological Values; Culinary Traditions; Local Communities; West Kalimantan

## INTRODUCTION

The academic debate at the focus of this article stems from the research of

Varadaraja V. Raman (2014)[1] who provocatively stated that food is *sine qua non* for life on Earth. This issue triggers a discussion about the theme of food, leading to both religious and historical dimensions. Consuming food has proven to be highly motivated by minority religions (Mumuni at.al, 2018). This fact indicates the complexity of the food chain and ecological balance, which is one of the wonders of the culinary world that is related to esoteric values. In the context of the span of the history of human civilization, food has been found to have countless regional expressions and varieties. Food has been commonly used in festivities, but on the other hand, food shortages and poor distribution have also led to famine. It is reasonable to say that in addition to being a source of physical satisfaction, food also has an environmental impact.

Concerns about food have spread across cultures and civilizations. In the pre-modern era, ethical issues surrounding food focused on issues related to the way food is consumed, whereas modern food ethics focuses on food production. When referring to this idea, there are at least three main trends in food ethics. The first two trends are genealogical to pre-modern traditions, including the legalization of religion and concerns about food. The third trend is a modern trend that brings food closer to the social, economic, trade, and political frames.

Most pre-modern food ethics focuses on dietetics, namely managing life according to self-made rules. Dietetics currently relies on measuring body weight and levels of anxiety, problems labelling, and consumer awareness about food product ingredients. Another trend surrounding food production is related to the contamination of food with hazardous substances, and even considered *haram* (forbidden); rejected products are considered intrinsically bad. In addition, there are also new forms of contamination in the form of pesticides, preservatives, and genetically modified products. Therefore, dietetics refers to caution for health reasons over ethical reasons.

Regarding this issue of food, the Islamic world faces problems not only because of threats to health and the environment but also because food has been transformed into a tool used by transnational culinary superpowers and a source of food raw ingredients to monopolize the food industry. The culinary industry controls the largest share of the world's economy. The most serious issue is that until the end of the 20th century, there was no guarantee of

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[1] Varadaraja V. Raman. (2014). Food: Its Many Aspects in Science, Religion, and Culture with Pat Bennett, "Turning Stones into Bread: Developing Synergistic Science/Religion Approaches to the World Food Crisis"; Varadaraja V. Raman, "Food: Its Many Aspects in Science, Religion, and Culture"; A. Whitney Sanford, "Why We Need Religion to Solve the World Food Crisis"; and Steven M. Finn, "Valuing Our Food: Minimizing Waste and Optimizing Resources." *Journal of Religion and Sciences*. Volume 49, Issue 4. December. Pages 958-976.

"safe consumption" regarding food sources that were sold freely in the market. Contrary to this idea, the phenomenon of halāl food consumption in non-Muslim countries is a relatively new discussion, which is then known as the term 'modern *halāl*'. Modern *halāl* is a concept that refers to the complexity of the relationship between markets, industry, religious institutions, and international trade in determining the standardization of *halāl* foods. It seems that economic corporations were not only established for capital gains but also to control and even dictate food production on a global scale. At the same time, we may also suspect the emergence of a food regime that is produced locally but in more sustainable agricultural practices and with greater control over food sources in the public sector.

## UNSETTLED DEBATE ON DINING TRADITION

Gareth Reginald Terence White (et.al., 2018) argued that food production and distribution is a topic of interest. Meanwhile, Johan Fischer (2012) stated that the global market is currently developing the halal product industry rapidly within the framework of the global economic system with various interpretations: pros and cons. Fischer's statement triggers the hypothesis that *halāl* products have transformed into a new market segment, although it implies anxiety because they cannot avoid the potential to prioritize economic profit motives.

The same issue was also discussed in a study conducted by Jagadeesan Premanandh and Samara bin Salem (2017) which indicated that there had been improper business practices in product packaging. The operational complexity surrounding *halal* authentication poses serious challenges to the integrity of packaged products. At the very least, Shahriar Kabir (2015), Gabriel Said Reynolds (2000) and Mohamed Battour et.al (2011) attempted to remind people that Islamic law pays great attention to food. Discussing a similar theme, a study by Ali Motamedzadegan, Saeedeh Ebdali, Joe M. Regenstein, Muhammad Siddiq, and Mark A. Uebersax (ed., 2018) examined food from the perspective of food commercialization with various discourses. Similarly, Tullia Tedeschi et.al (2018) through their research predicted that in recent years, interest in the authenticity of food ingredients is increasing. Once again, this fact has further proven that the problem of food is not a simple issue. It is proven that the food issue determines the personal and environmental safety of mankind in the world.

The various statements above should make many people aware of the concerns about the commercialization of food that uses religious issues as the motive behind the business activity. The issue of food commercialization still seems

to be an interesting theme to be discussed. We suspect that this motive is what strengthens a group of people who are trying hard to build a business empire that promises "big profits" because there is also a large market share by utilizing religious issues as its legal support. Carolyn Rouse & Janet Hoskins (2004) reported that contemporary African-American sympathizers of Sunni Islam consciously articulate eating and food as "something" that liberates them from the legacy of slavery. and convey the idea of purification. This research is also related to the health of the body and the release of the negative mental effects of non-*halal* foods. This research provides a new perspective that eating is not merely to fulfil physical demands, but it also "liberates" and serves as an expression of psychological purification and an effective way of mental-spiritual health.

Through her research using a bioethical approach, Mariam al-Attar (2017) criticized several Islamic approaches to culinary ethics and the debate about genetically modified foods. Al-Attar's research has made many people aware of how important the authenticity of the food is because the current fact shows that there are so many improper practices in food processing and production. Moreover, a study by Richard Tapper and Nancy Tapper (1986) explained that food has become an important part of the tradition of the Islamic-Afghan society because it is connected with maintaining recognition of Islamic authority and camouflaging power relations. To them, the meaning of food has undergone a semantic change that leads to the ambiguity inherent in the values of "kindness" and "strength," symbolism of blood relations, and ritual sacrifices. This research opens a new debate space in which food can bridge social relations, although it is still on a symbolic level. However, what should be noted is when food turns out to be able to form a bond of brotherhood from several people who were previously not connected through kinship ties. Food is proven to be effective in forming kinship networks as a brotherhood is bound from breastfeeding relationships.

A different study conducted by Kecia Ali (2015) concluded that in the debate around religious thought, there are traditions that seek to link food with gender; food practices, and gender norms as communal identities and boundaries of social construction. This research argues that women's bodies and animal bodies serve as very strong markers of Muslim identity. This is because patriarchal thinking emphasizes male dominance and simultaneously allows humans to see animals as legitimate subjects of violence. According to Kecia Ali, the above statement implies that Muslims in industrialized Western countries must become vegetarians. On the other hand, for contemporary Muslims, meat is perceived as the identity of the superiority of "Islam". The

statement that Muslims in industrialized Western countries must become vegetarians is certainly full of controversy, and even tends to be illogical. Similar research was also conducted by Rose Wellman (2017) that reported that in Iran, food is perceived as having the value of piety, kinship, purity, and closeness to God. The case of Iran opens our awareness to consider the full spectrum of quality, such as the act of kinship, nation, blood, and its relationship with food that has divine values.

The research of Daniele Mathras at.al (2016) and Kishwar Khan and Sarwssat Aftab (2000) is an interesting example of how the environment can be created for the benefit of consumer protection based on Islamic teachings. The emphasis of this research is on consumer protection rights for all food products circulating in the market openly. From another point of view, using a gender perspective, Carla Jones (2010) concluded that the issues of consumer behavior are mostly faced by fashionable women in Indonesia. The problem is concerned with matters related to the material but superficial in religious appearance. Finally, from a very different perspective from several previous studies, Michel Desjardins' research (2004) presented a teaching strategy that involves using food media with games in the classroom to change moods and encourage students to skilfully relate food to religion. This research experimented with using food as one of the strategies that can be taken to support learning activities through psychological stimulation in students. This research again proved that food has a broad impact on the object of research in various aspects and themes that can be studied.

This article uses the method of literature review, indigenous psychology, psycho-anthropology, and narrative analysis, which was based on research conducted throughout 2020. This article describes various data in several areas in West Kalimantan including Sanggau Regency, Sekadau Regency; Nanga Taman-Sekadau Hulu Subdistrict, Mulia Hamlet of Sebubus Village in Paloh Subdistrict of Sambas Regency and Semakuan Hamlet of Semanga' Village in Sejangkung Subdistrict of Sambas Regency and Kubu Village of Kubu Raya Regency. To obtain accurate data, the following respondents were selected: village heads, hamlet heads, traditional leaders, and community elites as reliable sources. There are eleven reliable respondents with three additional respondents. To determine the respondents from the community, the snowball purposive sampling method was used. All respondents are natives in each research site who have a good understanding of the community and can provide accurate information related to the research theme. The data were collected using various techniques, such as in-depth interviews, psycho-anthropological observations supported by narrative analysis, and

documentation of facts found at the research site.

## FOOD AND THE MODERN HUMAN PSYCHOLOGICAL CHALLENGE

Food is an essential part of life. Food affects human psychology. Historically, food has often been a serious problem faced by society. Discourse in modern society indicates that there is anxiety about the food consumed. Food is no longer made using natural raw ingredients, not to mention the concern about contamination from harmful chemicals. Meanwhile, modern women who work outside the home often choose to serve processed and fast food because of the demands of the profession and at the same time find it difficult to allocate time to do domestic chores. In addition, many housewives help their husbands work hard to fulfil the needs of their families.

In a broader aspect, there are so many issues about food scarcity. Another worrying threat is panic buying for certain products for various reasons, especially during this current pandemic time. Many people and families have to struggle with this problem individually and communally. In contrast to the people in coastal areas, those living in the upstream stretch of the river and the interior of West Kalimantan have many local traditions that can overcome various food problems communally during food shortages. Working together to overcome food difficulties is known by the terms such as *berontang* in Melawi Regency, *arisan persatuan,* and *saprahan* in Sambas Regency, which are some interesting examples of food-related traditions. It is certain that almost all villages, from the coastal to the border to remote areas, have many traditions where food is the central point.

In a specific context, concerning the relationship between food and health, food poisoning has emerged as a health problem and the most frightening source of disease (Shariatifar at.al, 2016). Ensuring food hygiene is a crucial issue across the globe. The most widely used hazardous materials in product mixtures are *khinzir* derivatives. In this context, the term *khinzir* according to the pharmacist's perspective refers to "additives" in food, vitamins, and drugs (Amr, 2009). Food contamination has become a worrying new problem in recent years. Pollution and contamination can occur due to natural factors, work accidents, or other factors that are difficult to control such as during processing and production. This factor has the potential to reduce the quality of production.

Other concerns about food also involve the slaughtering process as an important part of the process of serving food ingredients, namely the management of handling animals before slaughter without hurting the animals through

restraining, stunning, and casting. Technological developments, especially the stunning method before slaughter, have been declared to fulfil the element of *ihsan* to animals, namely by eliminating pain during slaughter (Shukriya, 2019). Meanwhile, from the Sufistic perspective, food is not only related to the category of legality in religion but is also related to the routine of spiritual practice (Reynolds, 2000). At this point, eating ranges from the spectrum of piety to *halāl* tourism (Battour at.al, 2011). As an illustration, the *halal* industry in Thailand has become one of the largest exporters of *halal*-certified food and products in the Southeast Asian region despite Thailand being a non-Muslim majority country. Only 4.3 percent of Thailand's 69 million people are Muslim. This shows that Thailand's strong position in the global *halal* industry is due to the tourism industry, which helps to improve *halal* branding, uniformity of halal definitions and standards, as well as effective support for local Small and Medium Enterprises (Khan, 2019).

In another perspective, the discourse around food is connected with brand identification and decision-making to consume food products. This can be seen from the coherence between the fatwa and decision-making regarding the prohibited consumption of food of certain brands or product categories (Muhammad & Mizerski, 2013). This assumption is based on the increasing number of the Muslim population and the increasing purchasing power of Muslim communities in the Asia Pacific zone where the halal food market is emerging as a potential opportunity for meat producers. The strict requirements of *halāl* standards to potential markets are challenging globally (Kabir, 2015). This fact awakens many parties about the effect of religion on consumer behaviour. Religion as a multidimensional construct influences psychology through four dimensions – belief, rituals, values, and community. Furthermore, religious affiliation encourages different psychological mechanisms when faced with issues regarding consumptive behaviour (Mathras at.al, 2016).

Several themes related to food make it clear that human life is to a certain degree challenged by food. Food has expanded to unimaginable limits. There are so many new territories that were previously considered non-food domains. For example, the relationship between food and halal tourism, contamination of food production, the slaughter of animals, a mixture of processed food products, the formation of a lifestyle, etc. Keeping this in mind, at least the psychology of the public has been mapped out when facing the challenges of the modern era regarding the provision of food sources. Food seems to be in a position of the struggle between the supply of food sources amid a crisis of limited agricultural land, land conversion, climate change, flows of human

movement, the threat of chemical use, the continued escalation of food needs, which almost always fail to meet the food production targets. This situation is made worse by the scarcity of food sources. If this problem continues, then the end is predictable. Soon people in the world will plunge into anxiety about the food crisis.

Currently, in this open era, new problems arise in the form of the threat of invasion of "foreign" food from global food-producing regions [countries] to the target areas of the global food market. This challenge is certainly no simple matter. Presenting food in a competitive format in such a free market is certainly not a way out of the food crisis which most people in the world are still struggling with. At this point, it is hard to imagine that there is still a group of people who are trying to maintain traditional food during a global food rush that is completely indifferent to local "tastes". If this condition is left unchecked, it will immediately destroy the identity of local food. Even worse, it is very likely that there will be a reduction in tradition and culinary culture amid global food domination. *Saprahan, berontang, nyelamat*, and many more local food-related traditions are in danger of disappearing from the local community. It could be that, shortly, dishes such as *bubbor paddas,* typical cuisine of the Sambas Malay community, *sungkui* and *lemang* as icons of the Sanggau Malay community, *dodol*, and *gula durian*, *lamboi, umbut rotan*, and *tempoyak* typical dishes of Nanga Taman Village in Sekadau Hulu and countless other local foods of Borneo will soon be lost if not passed on to the next generation. This is a real threat. It is common when a struggle for dominance occurs. However, there is still a heritage of history that has proven to be able to survive to date. Bread, cheese, chocolate, tea, coffee are some interesting examples of "leftovers" from the struggle for dominance among humans. All these foods [and drinks] are silent witnesses to the dominance of civilization in the arena of human history.

## ISLAMIC ELEMENTS IN THE DINING TRADITION OF BORNEO PEOPLE

The essence of food does not merely serve to "fulfil" basic human needs. Discussions about food include the raw materials for making food: spices, cooking utensils, recipes, the ways food is cooked [boiled, fried, baked, stir-fried, roasted, etc], how food is served, important events that come with special foods, ornament and equipment in processing and serving food. Unquestionably, there are many more dimensions related to food. All of the above are so varied and have their characteristics in each society. All these variants grow along with the social response to how to treat food. All of them

are tinted by the human psychological atmosphere. The way of interpreting the relationship between human psychology, food, and its availability in nature gives rise to various forms of expressive representation of food.

Furthermore, in the context of sources of the fulfilment of food needs, food is closely related to natural wealth. In the context of this article, it covers coastal, inland, and border areas, namely Semakuan Hamlet of Sambas Regency which is on the side of the upper Sambas river, Nanga Taman Village in the upper Sekadau river, and Semanget-Entikong Village in Sanggau Regency which borders Malaysia. These places have since long ago been known to have so many food-related traditions. All of these cultures grow in open community relations. In the process, religion also played a role in confirming the form of this relationship.

In this regard, Zaenuddin Hudi Prasojo (2017) emphasized that the acculturation of local culture and Islam have occurred since the arrival of Islam into the interior of Kalimantan through the Kapuas River. This acculturation also encourages the birth of local religious institutions that function to ensure the survival of the community system among indigenous peoples who still embrace local religions but already have kinship networks, Islamic trade, da'wah, and local knowledge. Furthermore, Zaenuddin emphasized that there has been a relationship between local traditions and culture on the one hand and Islam on the other. This relationship can be seen from the prayer rituals in wedding traditions and religious ceremonies. It can also be seen from the food served at *walimahan* (wedding reception). In addition, there is also improvisation in terms of food that has been adapted to the local culture of the Sintang community with a very distinctive banquet.

In another article, Zaenuddin Hudi Prasojo et.al (2019) described that cultural issues and inter-ethnic relations are important for the people of West Kalimantan by including local potentials that develop in the interior areas after the collapse of several Islamic sultanates that succeeded in bringing Islam to this area. Some forms of local potentials that are compatible with Islam in the local community include the belief in culinary arts that strengthen brotherhood, cultural heritage traditions for friendship with nature as the key to success, offspring as a gift that should be treasured, welcoming guests as the key to happiness as well as hard work and good manners. That said, Zaenuddin gave a new perspective on food. First, food is a form of acculturation of local culture with Islam. There are so many local people's foods that are influenced by Islamic traditions. Second, the food of West Kalimantan's local people always comes with a purpose. Food is interpreted by local people in West Kalimantan as an effective way of strengthening brotherhood. In addition, food can have a

special meaning which is different from the stereotypical perception that has been circulating about food.

In his research on the wealth of food in the Muslim community of Borneo, Ibrahim (2018) described the *Pangil* tradition in the Malay-Muslims in Ulu Kapuas, West Kalimantan. This tradition shows that the balance of life is highly respected by the Malay-Muslim community in this region. This can be seen from the context of rituals that are filled with dining, reciting the Qur'an, and praying for their ancestors. Ibrahim concluded that the *Pangil* ceremony teaches four things; the value of gratitude to God (*nyelamat*), sharing joys and sorrows (*nyelamat* and *beruwah*), social equality (ceremonial meal procession); and togetherness and mutual assistance (holding traditional events).

Through this research, Ibrahim stressed the urgency of rituals to achieve life balance which is uniquely pursued through dining, reciting the Qur'an, and praying. Ibrahim's research has a similar theme to this article, supporting the argument that the tradition of dining and ceremonial meal procession [as an expression of social equality] is the fastest way to achieve balance in life. Once again, this proves that in food there are essential values that determine life and human values. Eating is no longer interpreted merely as a means "to sustain life" but to achieve balance in life.

Should this be the case, it is very unreasonable that food is perceived merely as a means to fulfil a need. In food, there is a divine value and a sense of purification. Food also indicates Islamic education on the procedures for "treating" food. Food has become a topic of conversation and even the most spectacular point of civilization in the history of humanity. Perhaps important issues that have become the central point of human civilization from prehistoric to post-modern era will [continue to] be filled with and dominated by stories about food. Such discourse on food can even beat other conversations even though the theme is still part of the discussion on the theme of humanity. In the future, food will probably dominate the trending topics of netizens throughout the world. These indications have emerged for a long time since humans realized that food not only concerns physical dimensions and the fulfilment of human needs but moreover it also has proven to be an important element of humanity and has even been filled with the meaning of devotion and servitude to God. In this context, fasting is the best example.

The discourse on food has long been discussed in every religion of the world. Historically, food is not just an issue of human life. Food has been able to penetrate the "divine zone", and therefore, it is very natural that it is often used as a medium for various rituals of worship. The practice of paying zakat and food alms in the form of typical staple foods of each region, providing food

for the poor and needy, etc., can be used as interesting examples to explain this phenomenon. Food seems to mediate human relationships with God. Meanwhile, religion has conversely become the instrument of determining whether certain foods can be consumed or vice versa, along with the types of criteria. The more diverse the religious followers, the greater the pattern and spectrum of food consumption. Even in some parts, the scriptures of these religions give more weight to food. Food that was originally from the "low world" is then given a "high" weight when it relates to the dimension of servitude to God. Even to "hold" oneself from consuming halal food at certain times is perceived as part of one's "test of faith" before God.

In a specific discussion about food, Islam introduces the concept of *halalan thayyiba* in setting standards for the quality of foods and drinks. This standard is not only for the sake of considering the ethical values and the sanctity of the two entities, but it is also closely related to the ethical values of divinity. Here, food has been transformed from being related to "the world and all the needs of humans" to being elevated to the "interpretation" in the divine sense. Food is no longer a profane dimension but has penetrated the world of divine immanence. In light of this perspective, it can be interpreted that food is not just a primary and basic human need which Maslow (1993) places as the lowest level of needs. It is proven that food is at the highest significance of human needs or at least higher than the hierarchy of needs as Maslow explains. The reason is simply that food is proven to be related to divine values. There is an argument that is being built by Allah the Almighty to teach humans how to consume foods and drinks. Education is in the form of building human awareness that food is not just to fulfil basic human needs but moreover it has a level of purity and a means to draw closer to Allah the Almighty.

Considering the awareness of the significance of food, there are so many traditions as a way of articulating this. In many cultures, it is known that various traditions include food in the context of one's approach to Allah. Certainly, almost all activities connected with Allah include food. Take, for example, the *saprahan* [*saroan*] event in the Sambas Malay community. Some of the food ingredients are made available through *arisan persatuan* (social gathering). This tradition is typical of the Sambas Malay custom. Such a social gathering is a very interesting part of a series of *saprahan* events. The *arisan* is held to ease and facilitate those who hold the *Saprahan*. This gathering takes place in turns. In addition to the host holding the event, others voluntarily "pay" for the social gathering with items such as cash, sugar, syrup, eggs, etc. Later when it is another person's turn to hold the event, the recipient of these items pays following what their invited neighbors brought to them or how

much the neighbors "paid" for in the previous event. If the payment is made in cash, the amount is by the "price" of the items paid by the neighbors before.

The *Saprahan* is always held in every series of traditions in the Sambas Malay community, such as house warming parties, marriages, social gatherings, thanksgiving, *aqikah, tahlilan* for the deceased, etc. During wedding receptions, housewarming parties, and an *aqiqah* ceremony, there are a series of events as follows: on the first day, the "*acara mumbu*" (preparing spices) is held where people grind peanut, *keminting,* and coconut as spices for cuisine. On the second day, the "*acara motong*" (cutting meat) is held where they cut chicken and fish. Also on this second day in the afternoon, the guests bring chicken and rice to the host, and some members of the social gathering bring food such as beef, coconut, rice, other staples (eggs, sugar, syrup). On the third day, "*acara makan-makan*" (a dining event) is held.

There is no requirement for everyone in the village to join the *arisan* (social gathering). Attendance is also optional. In the *arisan*, all planned events to be held in the village are recorded, such as *aqiqah,* housewarming party, wedding reception.[2] All events are scheduled. No events are left unrecorded. It aims to avoid scheduling conflicts of the event. This is also a sign that there is no overlapping time for the *Saprahan* event. Everything is carefully planned. In addition, the village community can also be prepared to bring complementary items that will be "paid" before the *Saprahan* event is held at a fixed schedule.

"*Arisan persatuan*" (social gathering) is not just an ordinary social gathering. This "*arisan*" – as the name implies – was formed to establish strong unity, friendship, and cooperation in a village. "*arisan persatuan*" has been confirmed to exist in all villages in Sambas Regency. However, there is no official data on the number of these social gatherings in Sambas Regency. This gathering is funded through voluntary donations from residents. The funding system is in the form of food items, such as staple foods (eggs, sugar, milk, cooking oil, rice, coconut, and beef). Especially for beef, the value is determined based on the price per kilogram depending on the financial conditions of the person in the *arisan* when planning to hold the *saprahan.*

Membership of "*arisan persatuan*" is based on the number of household heads in the village. Each head of the household counts as one member. However, there are also more memberships from one household depending on the

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[2] Within the Sambas Melay tradition, *saprahan* accompanying the *ngalek rumah* practice has the same level of public attention like the wedding party. In many cases the people may have the *ngalek rumah* for three days in a row. The *saprahan* and *ngalek rumah* carry not only party message but also beyond food such as kinship, togetherness and egality. The *arisan persatuan* is normally found with the participation of all village members and, in many cases, with people from the neighboring villages.

household's financial conditions. This is because in the "*arisan persatuan*" there is a tradition of reciprocal payments usually in the form of food items that a person receives from other villagers when holding a *saprahan*. But something is interesting about this reciprocal payment. When a member "pays" for this *arisan*, the host of the *saprahan* is allowed to negotiate the items brought to him by the villagers. Negotiation for the number of food items received is adjusted to the recipient's "ability to pay" because the amount of the items currently received by the host of the *Saprahan* will later be paid back to the villagers who brought the items to the host.

Beef, in particular, is treated quite differently, as its value is determined based on the total weight per kilogram at the time it is brought to the host. If it is paid in cash, it will be adjusted to the price of the meat at the time the *Saprahan* is held. For staple foods, it can be paid in cash equivalent to the price of the foods that were received or replaced with similar items.

Uniquely, all the items paid for in this "*arisan persatuan*" are well recorded. All circulations of goods, food items, and cash are accurately documented, although there is no requirement for everyone to "pay" for the *arisan* in each *saprahan*. Everything occurs voluntarily. Usually, those who are unable to make payment to the *arisan* are not required to do so during the *saprahan*. However, the person can pay for it in the next event. This condition is determined according to the ability to pay agreed upon by both parties.

In addition, what makes this "*arisan*" unique is that there is a philanthropic attitude and empathy. If the host wishes to serve beef cuisine by slaughtering a cow, then the people in the village will "bear" the cost together. The willingness to "bear" the cost aims to help the host with the *Saprahan* event, even though the host does not have sufficient funds. On the other hand, if a host slaughters a cow at their own expense, it will certainly help the members of the "*arisan*" who cannot afford such luxury.

To finance the "*arisan*" everything is divided equally. Slaughtering the cow, for instance, can be done at a particular member's own expense, but all members are still required to pay the price of the cow in cash by the selling price of beef at the time the *Saprahan* is held. The amount of cash is determined based on the price of per-kg of beef, which had previously been agreed upon by both parties. The price that must be paid later when it is another member's turn to hold the *Saprahan* is determined based on the amount of beef that each member brings to the host. If it is replaced with cash, the payment for the price of beef is determined based on the market price of beef at the time the *Saprahan* is held. The same is true for the payment of staples.

Even though the "*arisan persatuan*" is closely related to the principles of togetherness, cooperation, and tolerance among residents, it is still not allowed to burden both parties: the host holding the event and the people who donate. Everything happens on the principle of voluntary reciprocity. No one is deprived of their rights. Everything happens fairly but *arisan* members will understand if one of them has economic problems, especially in certain months when it involves quite a lot of people. At this point, it seems *Saprahan* is the turning point of the "*arisan*", continuing to hold it will result in the inability of people in the village to bear the cost.

To add to its unique aspects, the "*arisan persatuan*" assists not only members of the same cultural and religious backgrounds, but also those from different religious, cultural, and ethnic groups. In every *Saprahan*, cultural, ethnic, and even religious boundaries are almost non-existent. Everything is in a fluid psychological relationship. When villagers of different religions need cash or goods, the community members in the village voluntarily work together to help them even when they no longer live in the village because they have moved to another village (*ngalek rumah*).

During data collection on the research site, there was a non-Muslim family who had just arrived from Malaysia because they worked as migrant workers there. They were residents in the "S" village in Sambas Regency. Their family left the village and settled in Malaysia for a while. When they returned to the village, their neighbors brought them some cash. The money was the result of selling fruit and farm products belonging to the family who left the village and worked in Malaysia. Interestingly, the Sambas Malay villagers who live in the "S" village discovered the money they gave to the family returning from Malaysia was actually used for inviting the villagers for their homecoming traditional celebration.

Another surprising fact is that the *saprahan* tends to be inclusive and there are tight social clusters. Based on the data collected from the research site, the *saprahan* and its introductory activities have a very close relationship between Islam and the tradition of "*arisan persatuan*". The process begins with delivering the foodstuff to be served in the *saprahan*. It is usually brought by women from their respective homes to the host who holds the *saprahan*. At the same time, men bring cooking utensils and silverware for the *saprahan*. Some of them even make *tarup* and prepare fire stoves to cook dishes.

At the time of handing the food to the host, the women were seen shaking hands with the host [holder of the *saprahan* event] and saying: "*itok kamek sararah barras, palak, talluk to make food for tok sapprahan tok ii*". The sentence uttered in the Sambas Malay language is a statement of consent (*ijab qabul*)

between the two parties, the contributor and the receiver. This "*ijab qabul*" is certainly not an "ordinary" tradition. It is not found anywhere else. This tradition has also been confirmed to be found only in Muslim communities. It also confirms that communal dining tradition indicates strong Islamic values. In many places, giving items intended for improving relations is not accompanied by *ijab qabul*. Rice, in particular, is treated differently; the host has prepared a kind of basket or container that will be used for storing the rice brought by villagers. This "*ijab qabul*" is a sign of "paying off" what one has received in the previous *Saprahan* event. This phenomenon is an additional reference for enriching the discussion on *fiqh* among people in the coastal area. It is obvious that the *ijab qabul* is not only known in *fiqh al-tijarah*, but also in *fiqh* related to the dining tradition.

In the perspective of Islamic psychology, *ijab qabul* is a sign of the release of burden from the obligation to "pay" a certain amount of money or goods that are used as revolving payments whose value is equal to what has been received previously. The *ijab qabul* has become a symbol of mutual consent of the contribution that one gives to the host. This consent shows a deep willingness to give and receive gifts between each other, no matter the economic value. The *Ijab qabul* also indicates a willingness to share the burden. The villagers take turns uttering the *ijab qabul* as they take turns holding the *saprahan*. It's just a matter of time that makes the difference. Everyone in the village is bound in a cycle from one *ijab qabul* to another. The cycle of mutual assistance relieves the burden among people in the village, regardless of ethnicity, ethnic tradition, and religion. Every villager is equal. No one is special or has a higher position in social relations in the village. Young and old, rich and poor, men and women are all equal. They help each other to ensure things will go well for the host. All contribute according to their ability to fulfil their social obligations.

This phenomenon is very interesting to discuss. The *ijab qabul* during the handover of foodstuff before the *saprahan* is usually said with the host and the contributor both sitting on the floor with their legs crossed. The contributor holds the items with two hands and gives them to the host. The handover procession is carried out in a very friendly atmosphere filled with compliments and jokes that make everyone smile. It has a more psychological effect when the ones handing over the items are family members or relatives who come from a distant village or city. A lively reception is then held, and emotional expressions can be seen on their faces. Even though this procession is required as part of the *arisan*, the Islamic touch of the tradition of handing over food ingredients for the *saprahan* is visible. Everyone feels the desire to help each

other. It does not stop there. All the villagers who bring the food ingredients to the host also prepare a variety of spices and cooking ingredients to be mixed and processed into food. It has become a cycle that keeps repeating itself: getting together, working together, eating together, and concluding the activities with a prayer for the safety of the community in the village.

## BORNEO MUSLIMS INTERPRETING FOOD

If traced from the name of the tradition, something is interesting that may not have been widely exposed, that the communal dining tradition in the Sambas Malay community --better known as *saprahan*-- turns out to have another variant of the term, namely "*bersatu*" [unified]. The name is based on the purpose of the *saprahan* tradition which takes three days from the beginning to completion. All stages involve "all the villagers". This indicates that the culinary and dining tradition [*saprahan*] is capable of uniting people in a community. It is evident from the involvement of everyone in contributing to the success of an event being held by a villager. Furthermore, those involved in this culinary/ dining tradition (*saprahan*/*bersatu*) are also capable of overcoming religious barriers. Another interesting thing about this *bersatu* tradition is that not only are all the people in the village involved, as described above but they are also invited to the event and help ease the host's burden by helping to provide raw materials for food or spices. This kind of tradition implies mutual help because later it will be carried out in the exact same way when it is another villager's turn to hold the *Saprahan*. This *bersatu* tradition does not end here. It even continues until the *Saprahan* is completed. A villager whose economic conditions are categorized as being poor but is socially bound by tradition, can still hold the event as other villagers will always be prepared to help him.

It is presumed that the almost non-existence of social conflict is due to two factors, one being the bond of the *bersatu* tradition that has influenced the pattern of the people's lives in this area and the other being the communal land ownership. Even when a rice field or a fruit or vegetable farm, etc., is abandoned or neglected by the owner, its safety is guaranteed. Interestingly, there is a certain "part" of the harvest shared fairly among relatives or even neighbors despite having no kinship with the land owner. Since land produces commodities for food, its position is very decisive. The land is an asset that provides people with daily needs. It is an important asset that guarantees the welfare of all people in the village; not only for landowners or *tembawang* (communal land management) alone. For the people of "S" village, the land can be used by everyone to fulfill their daily needs. Everyone may take advantage of the harvest from the *tembawang* land with the permission of the

owner/heir. *Tembawang* has an important role in survival. *Tembawang* will be the last asset to be sold after no longer having other valuable assets in case an economic crisis occurs. "Land" and "houses" have important positions for the people of Sambas Regency. For them, land in addition to a place to grow crops is a property that determines their life. It is proved to be of no subjective value; Productive land can be used by anyone. However, the results of the land are also distributed to anyone who needs it, shared without a kinship barrier, strangers or locals, all done without expecting compensation in the future.

Regarding the widespread discussion about this local tradition, the focus of attention, for now, is how this local tradition can survive. There is a concern that the *saprahan* tradition will be abandoned along with the widespread of new patterns of behaviour in society. At least some conditions should be observed that could potentially erode the tradition. Currently, people have various professions which require a lot of time and attention so they have little to no time for communal life. Some people move somewhere to become migrant workers. The threat to the *saprahan* is real and someday perhaps this tradition will be abandoned. Meanwhile, from a different perspective, the food served at the *Saprahan,* as we observed, tends to be simple very familiar, and easy to find in the community. It can be defined as "village" food that is typical of village cuisine and is easy to process as well as popular in almost all walks of life. Most of the raw ingredients are taken from the farm or yards around the village. Part of it is purchased from the market in the city area or stalls around the village. This implies education about the simplicity of life and togetherness.

The *bersatu* tradition also indicates the preservation of the anti-conflict tradition. The unique fact is that when a 'foreigner' [migrant] or a non-native in the village is invited to the *saprahan*, it is a sign that he has been "included" into a village member and is no longer treated as an "alien". The person immediately blends in and is regarded as "part of the big family of the village". This further confirms that the *bersatu* tradition represented through the *saprahan* is not only responded to as a manifestation of the heritage of ancestral tradition but must further be seen as a social legacy filled with Islamic values. It can also be stated, *Saprahan* is not merely to get together to eat. The tradition is full of psychological significance and Islamic values. Since it is full of social values, this tradition has been passed down from generation to generation. This tradition seems to be an "escort" in the span of age and the journey of human life. There are many *saprahan* events carried out in this regard, such as the celebration of birth, hair-cutting ceremonies, marriage rituals, and even funerals.

In the context of its extended meaning, the *bersatu* tradition [*saprahan*] implies a sign that a social community is guaranteed the certainty of being able to get food regardless of their physical conditions and social status. It is proven that the traditions surrounding dining and food are not only related to *saprahan* but are also practiced in daily life. In the whole series of traditions surrounding dining and for the people in Sambas Regency, it is proven that it does not merely involve ceremonies which include gathering, working together to prepare a procession, it has also been transformed as a means of providing food assistance to anyone who deserves to be helped. Among the reasons is because they lack food due to physical and economic limitations, or even due to medical reasons.

This tradition has even overcome social boundaries. There is a kind of inclusive attitude and readiness to accept "foreigners". It seems that this symptom has become a communal characteristic for the people there. Moreover, it is located in a rural area far from the city center. The communal characteristics of this society are common elsewhere.

Another interesting piece of data regarding this tradition [*saprahan*] is the division of the *saprah* assembly. In the previous section, it was described that the *saprahan* is open to anyone, However, there is a separation between women's and men's assemblies. The reason for such separation is quite interesting. The argument is based on theological reasons intertwined with the gender argument.

Although there are assemblies in the *saprahan*, basically in the culinary tradition among the people in Sambas Regency, everyone is treated equally. This egalitarian attitude is reflected in four important elements: gathering, eating, reciting prayers, and asking for the blessing of safety. Various descriptions of food and the *saprahan* along with several things related to them, it is evident that the *saprahan* is not merely eating together, but moreover, it turns out that it serves as a medium to gather to strengthen the friendship between people in the village; no matter if they know each other or not or if they have kinship relations or not, all of them are connected in a bond of getting together [unified] to achieve a more exoteric goal: asking for blessings from Allah the Almighty.


## ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

As the culinary industry develops, spices are becoming increasingly strategic. It has occurred since the beginning of the arrival of the world community to the Indonesian Archipelago to obtain spices. Historically, spices proved to be

justification for the meeting between Europeans, Arabs, Chinese, people of the Indian subcontinent, and Asia. Suddenly, all the nations of the world were connected by the same interest: satisfying culinary desires. Imagine that food became the reason for people around the world to create the "spice trading network". Everyone sought to "dominate" the spices and trade routes. In the end, everyone knew that the end of the spice journey was the Indonesian Archipelago, which was "the world's spice center". Along with the "spice journeys", the spread of Islam also occurred during the trade.

Spices made a big change along the "spice routes". Islam then spread to almost all stretches of the territory that were used by the spice trade routes. Even at the same time, suddenly the people's lifestyle in the world also changed completely. Spicy foods became a trend. Spices were also used for the global food industry. It soon added to the chaos and bustle of the spice trade routes in almost all parts of the world, all connected with one destination: finding spices for food. There are so many spices used as the basic ingredients of food preparations. Discussions about food include the raw materials for making food: spices, cooking utensils, recipes, the ways food is cooked [boiled, fried, baked, stir-fried, roasted, etc], how food is served, important events that come with special foods, ornament and equipment in processing and serving food and many other dimensions related to food.

In short, spices are an important characteristic of a dish. Spices represent a particular ethnic/nation culinary civilization. Culinary spices can "teach" environmental awareness. This can be seen in the Muslim Dayak community on the Entikong border, West Kalimantan, where most of the food spices are taken from nature. Likewise, food ingredients such as vegetables and fruits are all taken from the forest. The principle of their life is that as long as they have salt, *micin* [flavouring], rice, and vegetables [although it has to be taken in the forest] they feel their life is safe. For them, this is enough to make them happy. Even if side dishes are not available, it's not a big problem. Being able to survive is necessary, even if they have to work hard along with all the risks.

Regarding food, for the Muslim Dayak community on the Entikong border, nature has provided 'all' the necessities for human life. For nature to be sustainable, tradition/customary law teaches to take natural products as little as possible. They should not overdo it. If they need more, they can take some the following day, and so on. Forest products should not be taken at will. Take what is needed from the forest as needed. This is how the Muslim Dayak community in the border area maintains forest conservation. Forests are treated with respect because it is the forest that has provided the sustenance of life. Forests are a source of dependence, especially for ethnic Dayaks in

the border regions. This basic value raises their awareness of maintaining the sustainability of the forest and the land on which they depend. Well-conserved forests provide important resources for human life, such as wood, rattan, and bark (*kapuak*) as raw materials for making houses and home furnishings, sources of food ingredients such as vegetables, fruit, fresh animal food sources, and medicines that are so vital to cure illness. In conditions that are far from the city centre, people at the border have no other choice but to depend [almost all] for their fate on nature, rivers, and forests. The sustainability of the forest along with all the potential in it is non-negotiable. The destruction of nature, rivers, and forests is also a sign of the destruction of their lives. On this basis, it is very understandable that forests, nature, rivers, and land are very important for the border communities (Hariansyah, 2019).

Finally, spices are not just flavor enhancers or serve to characterize culinary dishes. An important element to cooking dishes is to make them more delicious to eat. When spices are used in food, they can immediately inspire the birth and maintenance of countless culinary traditions. Many people depend their fate on spices. A lot of money is invested in the spice business. Millions of kilometers of distance have been traveled by seekers of spices to reach the table of a diner. Spices also paved the way for Islam to be introduced to the people of the Indonesian Archipelago. Spices seem to give Muslims a way to a better life: enjoying culinary delights as a blessing from Allah the Almighty while practicing Islam more broadly, not just observing Islamic teachings and provisions related to food.

About the theme and the site of research on which this article is based, there are interesting facts about food. At least there is a new dynamic of *fiqh* among the people in the coastal [as well as inland] areas that food is not merely a matter of eating and fulfilling the human needs. In food, there are also indications of social values and the most important thing is that it is also filled with Islamic values. Verbatim excerpts of the interview held during research at least show strong evidence of the earlier statement. "When the spices were handed over by guests to their host, they said the *Ijab Qabul*: *ini barras kami sejumput untuk bikin langgar kasai* (this is a little rice from us to make *langgar kasai* -rice that is soaked, then ground and added with turmeric).

## CONCLUSION

The genealogy of contemporary academic debates around food has proven to have religious, historical dimensions, as well as the most profound meaning of humanity. The relationship between food and Islamic tradition places the debate on the subject in the public sphere: *halal* and *haram*. The culinary

tradition in the community of Sambas Regency is proven to have an Islamic ideology. This conclusion was made based on the fact that the handover food ingredients are accompanied by a specific *ijab qabul*. This *ijab qabul* enriches the *fiqh* concept of food (and drinks) among people in the coastal area. The *Ijab Qabul* is related not only to the concept of *tijarah* but also to the concept of food and drink in a tradition. The *Ijab Kabul* is not always concerned with economic transactions, but also with culinary traditions which involve no payment for economic exchange between the parties in the transaction. This *ijab qabul* is a sign of "paying off" what one has received in the previous *Saprahan* event, who now takes their turn to hold the *Saprahan*. This type of *Ijab Kabul* is not an economic transaction that requires paying for the price, but it is based on the intrinsic value of the same goods. All of this is done based on *taʾawun* with the principle of not burdening the two parties in the transaction. Hence, the work strengthens the existence of religious and psychological values in the culinary tradition of the local communities in the region.

Food has been proven to be in a positive binary opposition: the effect of integration or resolution of environmental conflicts or vice versa in the coastal areas of West Kalimantan. This conclusion is reinforced by multiple pieces of evidence, namely: dining traditions, land, houses, gatherings, and reciting prayers for the safety of the village regardless of religious differences, social and ethnic backgrounds. Everything happens in a fluid, friendly, familial atmosphere and conflict-free environment. All of these are important characteristics of Borneo ethnic groups. These findings contribute to the discussion of religious aspects and psychological values within the culinary tradition with a specific emphasis on Eastern tradition in Borneo societies. This work is limited to the studies of local communities in coastal areas in West Borneo. More comprehensive studies must take place to further elaborate the culinary tradition with a specific focus on psychological value construction within the religious and cross-cultural based communities in West Borneo.

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# THE DAYAK SELAKO SHAMANS ORAL TRADITION: INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN PEOPLE, CULTURE AND RELIGION

**Kristianus**
*Sekolah Tinggi Agama Katolik Negeri Pontianak*
Email: kristianusatok@gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

*The Dayak Shamans of Western Kalimantan of Borneo mediate between people and the makhluk halus or invisible beings. The makhluk halus who have their well-defined roles live in the sky, earth, water, and other places, with similar needs as humans. Thus, the relations between humans and spirits in the context of traditional beliefs are inseparable. Interestingly, these beliefs are common to both Dayak Selako Shamanism and Kalimantan Islam. The Malay oral tradition has a major influence on the Dayak Selako culture in Western Kalimantan. Both ethnic groups had originated historically from the same roots, but later separated by Islam and Christianity. Thus, irrespective of their affiliations to the major religions of Christianity and Islam, the Dayak Selako Shamanism and the Islamic spiritual healing practiced in Western Kalimantan follow the same oral tradition when conducting spiritual communication and shamanic healing. For the Malays, communication with the spiritual world begins with the recital of the Islamic verses, forming an essential part of the Malay identity. Interestingly, the Dayak Selako Christians use the same verses. We argue that the Dayak Selako Shaman is not only an intermediary between the Dayaks and their spirits but also between the Dayak, Islam, and Christian religions. The mutual values of oral tradition in shamanism of the Dayak Selako and Malays have created a societal structure based on the natural cycle and life pattern.*

**Keywords:** Shamans Oral tradition; The Dayak Selako; Malay; Dayak Culture.

## INTRODUCTION

The impact of modernization, especially the presence of various television channels, has shrunk Dayak's oral tradition. The *pantun*, a Malay poetic form of poetry and story-telling culture, has dwindled. Twenty years ago pantun was the communication model when a Dayak man wanted to propose to a Dayak lady. The representatives of both men and women would exchange poems in delivering their intentions of the meeting. During that time, the whole wedding event was featured with strong oral tradition. Unfortunately,

we can't find such oral tradition in Dayak weddings today. The only oral tradition that is still maintained today is the Dayak shamanism and its ability to connect the Dayaks with the spiritual world (Effendi, 2009).

It is undeniable that shamans play an important role in society. A shaman's role is not exclusive, which means that people from any ethnicity and religion can access them for healing. Thus the shaman plays a major role in strengthening ethnic relations (Kristianus, 2017). Although modernization impedes the shaman practices, rural societies still believe that shamans possess the ability to heal diseases resulting from the spiritual world. The data shows that in rural areas you can find at least 4 shamans in every village. There were 14 shamans in Selakau (Kristianus, 2011). Their commended ability to treat fractured bones is acknowledged not only by society, but by doctors. Their other capabilities are related to the spiritual world.

Oral traditions practiced by the Dayak's shaman in their healing sessions as well as dealing with the spiritual world are greatly influenced by Malay culture (Hermansyah, 2014b). The word *bismillah* is usually the initial word expressed by the shaman during healing sessions. Meanwhile, for the spiritual and magical world, the Dayaks keep the manuscripts written in Arabic, in addition to memorizing Malay verses. These circumstances are unique given they are Christians. Conflict and ethnic unrest which frequently occurred in West Kalimantan consequently encouraged the Dayaks to relearn magical knowledge, thus enhancing the role of oral tradition itself. Besides the Protestant Christians, Catholics played an important role in oral tradition development. Notwithstanding being Christians which normally goes against the traditional belief, the Dayak continues with their practice of oral tradition. Thus, it is natural for Catholics to practice Christianity in correspondence to their Dayak culture. The process of acculturation happened whereby elements of local culture were incorporated into the Catholic mass (Kristianus, 2017).

Oral tradition in a form of story and non-story inherited from the ancestors of the Dayak for generations. These oral traditions are very important to the Dayak as it reflects the thoughts, attitudes, and behavior of the Dayak. In addition, oral traditions consist of philosophy, ethics, morals, aesthetics, history, custom set of rules, the religious teachings of native Dayak, science and intermediate technology, as well as the people's entertainment. For the Dayaks, oral tradition connects generations of the past, present, and future (Darmadi, 2018).

## ORAL TRADITION, CULTURE AND RELIGION

When we discuss oral tradition, the main discussion is the socio-cultural aspects of society. It encompasses the way of life and attitude of society towards education, economies, politics, art, and customs. A preserved culture is a cultural heritage that has been a soul in the society such as feasts, weddings, and other events which involve relatives and the practice of communal help. The Indonesian Dictionary defines sociocultural as a community relationship with culture (KBBI, 2016). This relationship consists of the way of life, customs and others. Idris et al., state that culture covers the way of life of a society, civilization, behavior, and their progression in thoughts (Idris et al., 2019). The way of life includes the ways of thinking, customs, traditions, art, and matters related to their life such as the political, economic, learning ways, and others. Culture is a value and way of life, a combination of two elements, mind (something pure and chaste), and power (capacity, capability, and physical and spiritual strength). The power of physical strength without spiritual strength cannot create a positive and developed nation. Culture is a sign that humans can think, have feelings, and express creatively through various means including oral traditions (Shils, 1971).

The functional theory is a frame of reference for empirical research, which looks at the community as a social institution in status quo, structure human activities based on the norms embraced together and considered valid and binding the role as well as the man himself. The complex nature of the social institution is a social system that is dependent on each section, to the extent changes in one section will influence other sections, which finally influenced the whole system (Zahorka, 2020). The "cultural value system is a set of abstract conceptions of life in the natural mind of a society, about what is considered valuable and important significance, but also about what is considered trivial and worthless in life" (Koentjaraningrat, 2010). In the life of society, this value system is closely related to attitude, both of which determine patterns of human behavior. Value systems are integral parts of moral ethics, which is outlined in its manifestation in social norms, legal systems, and customs of manners which serve as behavioral rules to govern the discipline of community life. Customs establish how societies act in an orderly manner.

Area cultural values are of course particularistic, which is generally accepted within the typical culture of a particular ethnic group. Since childhood, "individuals have been impregnated by the cultural values of its people so that conceptions have been deeply rooted in their minds and it is difficult to be replaced by the values of other cultures in a short time" (Marzali, 2014). Concerning this, in its manifestation, cultural values that reflect specific

stereotypes, such as Javanese people are identified as polite people, act slowly, low profile, soft-spoken, and so on. The specificity of the cultural values of the area and the practical behavior is of course relatively distinct. With the specificity of cultural values of other ethnic groups, it is thus reflected in the oral tradition of those who live in the community.

Oral tradition refers to all forms of heritage and traditions existing in a community group. The delivery of this oral tradition has shaped the oral intercession. It is one way the society conveys oral history, literature, legislation, and other knowledge across generations without a writing system. According to Msiska, oral tradition is one of the ways a person develops itself in the culture. He added that when the speech and discourse take place, this is where people are putting together knowledge and living up to the norms or values in the ethos or aesthetics. Tradition is a cultural space that is the conceived place to learn, behave, and interpret reality rather than inheritance received in the adage, couplets, proverbs, and the art of the teaching of the good life and happy living. Oral tradition is an oral expression and discourse room before being written in the tradition of writing (Msiska et al., 2018).

## THE ESSENTIALS OF THE DAYAKS ORAL TRADITION

For the Dayak Selako, day-to-day life is inseparable from their beliefs and practices, especially in areas that require interaction with nature, underlining the spiritual significance attached to nature (Iyon, 2018). The Dayak *religion* teaches that all events whether good or bad, are influenced by external forces. The term *religi* itself originates from the English word religion that has the Latin root word *religare* (bind together) without having the revelation and Kitab Suci understanding (K. Kristianus et al., 2018) because this religi is inherited by their deceased ancestors in the life of a non-literate society, referred to as Traditional Religi, in which the Dayak Selako called it custom. This can be observed in the oral tradition prayer in each ritual event of the *penyangohotn* (imam):

> *"Bukotnnyo unang i-mantabok i-marompokng adat aturan anyian, io inurunan ampet i ne' Unte' i kaimantotn, ne' ancino i Tanyukng Bungo, ne' Sarukng i sampuro, ne' Rapek i sampero', ne' Sai i sabako', ne' ramotn i saa'u, ne' ranyoh i gantekng siokng. Angkowolah angkenyo kami anak parucu'e make io dah tingor-kamaningor, dah pahiyak dah goehotn kami ihane."*

> (It is not merely *adat* (traditional law) and rules as the results of human construction only, but they have been inherited from the ancestor under the one so-called Nek Unte' who lives in *kaimantotn*, Nek Bancino (the

Chinese ancestor) who lives in Tanyukng Bungo, Nek Sarukng who live in Bukit Sampuro, Nek Rapek who lives in Sungai Sapero', Nek Sai who lives in Bukit Sabako', Nek Ramotn who lives in Bukit Saba'u, and Nek Ranyoh in Gantekng Siokng. Therefore, the people living after those leaders use what has been inherited throughout generations and take it as the way of life for them).

This Dayak custom consists of rules, norms, and ethics that govern the relationship between humans, nature, and supernature. The traditional *religi* thus forms the suprastructure from which the practices are adapted to suit the environment (Pratama & Nurcahyo, 2019). This adaptation is immediately visible in the forms of prayer or sacrificial offerings (*buis bantotn*), with great emphasis on minute details such as the position of the sacrificed chicken, types of ritual leaves, and sacred sites. True to its name, traditional *religi* or custom is *non proselytizing*, and it is of concern to the individual alone. The cosmos for the Dayak comprises both the mortal and immortal beings constantly interacting with each other. The Dayaks thus co-exist with their neighbors-the Jubato and Awo Pamo (ancestors) in *subayotn*; the harmonious and balanced relationship fostered by the strict adherence of the Dayaks to their *religi*. The *religi* can thus be viewed as a set of unwritten codes that governs the relationship between the mortals and the immortals.

In the Dayak cosmology, the spirits are known as delicate creatures inhabiting the sky, earth, water, and other places with well-defined roles. They live in a world that cannot be seen, yet share the same needs as humans. Thus their niches overlap often, a condition that could lead to conflict in the absence of magical knowledge. It is the magic that helps the Dyak communicate with the spirits and understand them. This is also aligned with Thomson (2000) saying that as repressive ideologies and political systems started to dissolve, many ethnic groups in Asia and elsewhere began to reflect on their distinctive cultural properties to reconnect themselves with their tradition and their cultural roots. This led to a new appreciation and revival of folklore in various fields such as oral traditions, music, and religion."

The Dayak Selako believe that compliance and faith in the spirits will bring blessings and rewards in various forms, while the wrath of spirits would only bequeath danger and misfortunes. Therefore, man should strive to communicate with spirits through magic. The Dayak Selako magic is acquired through various means such as meditating, dreams, *rajaki* (luck), *baguru* (learning) by oral tradition, and inherited during birth. This magical power can be divided into two: hot and cold. The former could be used to potentially harm other people. Poisons, *dawak, spells*, and ghosts are included in this group. Cold magic is used to pre-empt or recover from hot magic and its

influences. Talismans and counterspells are the most popular manifestations of cold magic. An informant narrated an incident about a villager who was a habitual thief. However, he once earned the wrath of a powerful person whose belongings he happened to steal. This resulted in the thief suffering from an enlarged stomach which was cured only after the individual sought forgiveness from all the individuals from whom he had thieved.

The Dayak community's understanding of humans as part of nature is based on the existence of a deep relationship between the two, the signs and omens. This relationship is understood as a form of communication that is described by the myths of oral tradition, which flourished in the lives of this society (Luardini, 2016). Nature communicates with human beings, among others, through signs and Omens. Communication with nature in turn is possible through praxis (real action and awareness), and religious practices. *Jubato* birds such as Tingkakok and Bungkikik have a profound influence on the fertility status of all beings in the cosmos, for these birds with their unique sound, ensure that all living beings flourish, breed, and continue their lineage. The cattle at home, animals in the river and forests, crops and fruit trees in the farm and forests- they all owe their productivity to the *Jubato* birds. Hence, rituals involving offerings of *Patek* are often organized to honor these birds. The prayer for these birds goes as follows:

> (the *Patek* is taken from glass and put in the hand and say the prayer:)

> "*Au' unang nyian patek tampi paribaso si ane' (sebut nama pemilik kurnan) mirikngi' kito'am badamo Tingkakok burukng Jawo, Bungkikik, burukng matan. Kito' an dingaso'an dingarap, ingampioh am batimang. Ame kito' batimang jawi', batimang jaji ka manosio, jaji ka piarootn,jaji padi ka umo ka tahutn, jaji ka banir buoh. Kurrra' patek tampi* (and the one doing the prayer move up the *patek* right on the top of the sacrifice).

> (this is an overring of *patek*, which comes first from A (please mention the name of the one doing sacrificing) as an *adat* who is sending you all namely Tingkakok the Javanese bird, Bungkikik the Matan bird. You all hope to support all living beings to grow well, have fruits, and have descendants. It should be successful. Please support the success, human beings have children, animals live well in the jungle and cattle grow well around human beings, *padi* and the trees have their great fruits. Thank you for being with this *patek tampi*).

## HINDU-BUDDHIST INFLUENCES

Dayak culture and oral tradition, in general, have been profoundly influenced by Hindu-Buddhist philosophies. The Selako Dayak people believe in the God Jubata, also referred to as Dervata (Baier, 2007). According to Baier, Dervata is the Land Dayak name of a God from the Sanskrit word dewata divinity, deity, gods. We may recall that Land Dayaks have a kind of Hindu Trimurti, viz- Tapa or Yang, the Preserver (Vishnu or Dewa-dewa of Hindus), Jirong-Brama, the creator (Brahma of the Hindus), Triyuh-Kamang, the destroyer (Shiva of the Hindus).

The following are the Dayak cultural practices with visible Hindu-Buddhist influences. *Lala'* is abstinence from actions normally considered as good including eating, doing, or saying something. The aim of Lala' is to ensure every member in the society is safe from danger, increase strength, or achieve wishes in work. *Lala'* could last for three, seven, 44, or for the rest of the days of one's life as dictated by the local tradition. *Nyangahatn* is an indigenous Dayak prayer that echoes in the form of *nyangahatn* which is a traditional ceremony widely practiced in customary events such as *liatn*, *lala'remah*, *gawe*, *sampore'*, and *'mato*. *Nyangahatn* is also performed while narrating the origin of creations. The aim is to offer thanks, guidance, and protection or notification to Jubata, Ne' Panampa, Ne' Daniang, related to work *Nyangahatn* is equipped with a *palantar* (offerings). *Liatn* is Dayak Selako traditional rituals of magical and sacred significance, marked by dance, rhythmic prose, and prayers. The goal of *liatn* is to heal, pay intentions, and others. *Liatn* led by a *liatn* shaman and assisted by a *panyampakng* and some *panyangahatn*.

There are different types of *liatn* such as *liatn daniang, liatnnyande, liatn bantal* and *liatn kendayan*, categorised on the basis of rhythms, purposes and the words used. Each *liatn* has its own distinct character. For instance, *liatan danian* with Ne Sinede ' and Ne ' Lampede characters. *Liatn* that are categorized on the basis of purposes are: *liatn batama bohol, liatn ngaladak buntikng, liatn badingin, and liatn ngangkat paridup* . *Liatn batama bohol* is a fertility ceremony to ensure child boon, *liatn ngangkat paridup* fixes a failed *patahunan (expand liatn ngaladak buntikng, liatn badingin too)*. Other *liatn* ceremony are *nyangahatn* at the domestic levels such as, *ngantar roba*, *ka' ayutn, baramauan ngamok jalu, ka' bawakng, bajampi, ka' Jubata masaka*, *nyangahatn ngago' sumangat, notor* (offerings for evil spirits), *ka' dango bonto*, *ngalainse, ngungke, ka' paramainan*, and *baripakng*. The duration of the ritual varies from one day one night, to three days three nights. The dance and songs featured in *liatn* are unique and often accompanied by musical instruments such as *agukng, dau,* and *tuma'* (*gendang*/local music item like a drum).

All those cultural aspects are essentially manifestations of the Dayak understanding of human-nature relationships, influenced by Hindu-Buddhist philosophies. *Nyangahatn* is a form of traditional oral communication with Gods and the world of the spirits, while *Baliatn* is how Dayak people communicate with their ancestral spirits. The Dayaks regard 'death' as a means to return to or unify the human body with the world (*talino*), and the *semangat* or *ayu* (life) with *Subayotn*. Whenever a human has to leave the world, nature communicates to humans through *Tirantokng,* a mythical creature of the jungle. The sound of *Tirantokn* is heard between 22.00-24.00 hours and resembles that of a large saw tearing through a wooden plinth. This sign is interpreted as the cutting of a human body by the ghost foretelling the imminent death of a Dayak in the village or nearby within the next three days.

Another ritual is called *Mura'atn.* It is ritual seeking protection from misfortunes. Omens play an important role in foretelling such misfortunes and Dayaks predict the nature and extent of danger by relating to the time and direction from where the respective bird/animal sound arises. Known by the Dayak term *palangkahan*, such omens help the Dayaks in choosing the accurate time (hour, day) in performing outdoor activities. This understanding is described in the case of *Kulikng Langit*, a character in the myth of humans getting *pelangkahan* from nek Baruang kulup. Another case as an example of a maniamas myth (who lives in oral tradition) that violates suara rasi dari *kijokng* (kijang) – sebuah rasi keras, rasi orang mati berdarah.

The Dayak Salako believe in the cyclicity of life, and death is a temporal point when a human who originated from nature, returns to and blends with nature. Thus, in the Dyak Selako religion, when a human is *momo* ' (dead) she/he has returned to the *binuo* (original place). Therefore, in line with the evolution of human life, humans gradually evolved from life forms that are lower (Iyon, 2018). Dayaks and Malays share many beliefs related to Hinduism, noting that Malays and Dayaks of Serawai in Melawi, offer offerings at ancient Hindu monuments to obtain high padi yields (Sutama et al., 2020).

## THE MALAY BASED ORAL TRADITION OF THE DAYAKS

In addition to being influenced by Hindu-Buddhist culture, Dayak religion is also influenced by their interactions with the Malay community. Among them is *Sampore*, a ritual performed to support individuals recovering from broken/sour relationships. *Sampore* is carried out in the event of *lenggang, liatn, dendo, bapipis, batampukng, tawar* and *babuis* (because *badi* or jukat). The form of the ceremony is not derived from the original Kanayatn. The ceremony was performed at the time of paying the intention. This activity is similar to liatn

but with the Malay variation (Prasojo, 2011).

For the Dayak Selako, an individual is a combination of the four elements: the body, the spirit (soul), feelings, and life. To enable a man to be alive and healthy, all four elements should work in harmony without disturbances. Human beings cannot escape from experiencing misfortune and illness. The Dayaks also believe that accidents, severe diseases, or misfortune are penalties for violation of custom, attacked by ghosts or spells. Illness arises when the individual's spirit is disturbed and if the disturbance is not stopped to let the spirit return to the state of serenity, it would leave the body in pursuit of the afterlife (Chua, 2011).

Spirits are categorized into three viz., water ghost, the ghost of the forest, and the ghosts that live in the air. There are both male and female spirits and they do not disturb people unless they are not well-fed, or are unable to live happily. When disturbed, or unhappy, the spirits could bring illnesses to humans. Besides, there are also supernatural creatures believed to inhabit specific habitats, usually referred to as "*penunggu*". Passing by such *penunggu* without seeking permission from the creatures, or disturbing them could cause illnesses (Chua, 2015).

In their relationship with the extraordinary power, the Dayaks try to be friendly while also trying to master the extraordinary power of magic. The purpose of mastering extraordinary power is for the interests of the community. They believe that the extraordinary power may bring illnesses and at the same time also help heal illnesses, depending on the intention of the beholder. The beholder hence should be adept in communicating with the spirits; the Dayak shamans follow the Malay tradition while communicating with the spirits. A Dayak shaman in Kampong Sasak healing his patient, greeted Nabi Khaidir when using water as his resource. This is understood from the chant below.

> *Assalamu'alaikum sahibul bahar sahibul basar*
> *Assalamu'alaikum nabi Hedir*
> *Aku mengambil air untuk tepung tawar*
> *Si* (mention the name of the patient)
> *Salam sejahtera atas pemilik laut dan pemilik darat*
> *Salam sejahtera atas Nabi Khaidir*
> *Aku mengambil air untuk tepung tawar*
> *Si* (mention the name of the patient)

One of the key characteristics of Islam practiced by the people of the Malay Archipelago is the staunch faith in The Prophet Khaidir. Lathifah states that The Prophet Khaidir was one of the main prophets among the coastal Malays.

Owing to his reputation as the "lord of the water", he is more popular among Malays inhabiting the coastal region. This belief is also observed in the coastal district of Kendawangan district of Kabupaten Ketapang, West Kalimantan. For the Malay fishermen, it is important to seek permission from Prophet Khaidir with the prayer *Bismillah Assalamu'alaikum nabi Hidir* (Lathifah, 2018). Any catch obtained from the sea without seeking permission of Prophet Khaidir is considered a stolen catch. For this purpose, yellow-stained rice, *pucuk daun Sabah* (*excocaeria cochinchinensis*) flour, whole plant of *Cordyline fruticosa*, rice water, broken rice, and scissors or kitchen knife are used as offerings.

In addition to Prophet Khaidir, the coastal Malay people also recognize other lords of the seas. These lords are the sources of both positive and negative powers, capable of bringing both fortunes as well as misfortune to the fishermen. One such lord is the (ghost of the sea) who has the vast power to either help or destroy the community. The ghost of the sea could help the fishermen identify spots where fish, shrimp, calamari, and other seafood are abundant. The ghost of the ocean may also help to escape from the threat of sea waves. However, the ghost of the sea who is sometimes also referred to as the caretaker of the sea could also send strong winds and waves which the fishermen are afraid of. At times, the caretakers also present themselves in the form of frightening voices. To tame this ghost, the best possible way is to befriend it. Thus, it is common to find fishermen who 'keep' the sea ghost in their custody. The custodianship begins with an agreement or a contract established with the caretaker, which is an offering made at specific times. Dayak Selakos of Sepuk Laut holds a ritual known as *kasi makan laut* aimed at placating the caretaker and obtaining an abundant yield from the sea. Failure to organize the rituals would result in loss of lives, frequent storms, and meager catches. Led by the shaman, this ritual is normally held every year around June, when the northern winds are strong. Avoiding misfortunes in the sea also requires the Dayak Selakos to adhere to a strict code of conduct. Petty actions such as whistling would bring forth strong winds, while usage of foul words would result in fishermen returning with empty hands from the sea.

The influence of Malay Islam on Dayaks also extends to the animal world. The crocodile is one such animal that enjoys a unique relationship with the Dayaks. Known as 'Orang air' meaning 'Man of water' or 'orang bawah' 'meaning man of the underneath', crocodiles are not just the most feared water animal, but also considered as the twin sibling of the human. It is the responsibility of the Dayaks to maintain a harmonious relationship with the crocodiles, to avoid misfortunes. This belief towards the lord of water, especially the crocodile can bring danger to humans. This is a belief common to the Malays of West

Kalimantan and the Malay archipelago (Noor, 2013). For the indigenous people of Borneo, it is taboo to refer to animals of the jungle by their names. Instead, they use a metaphor to refer to them, as seen in the case of *Orang Bawa*.

Taboos too have an important place in the Dayak belief system. There are temporal taboos, as well as species and habitat taboos that could be either regulatory or connected to access and withdrawal of resources. An expecting mother in her early pregnancy is forbidden to cross the sea, rivers, or streams to prevent miscarriage. The husband of the pregnant woman is also forbidden to cut the head of fresh *tilan* fish (fire eel: *Mastacembelus erythrotaenia*) to avoid the chances of the baby being born with cleft lips. It is also forbidden to boil the tilan fish to remove the slime, as it can cause the baby's skin to scald.

The belief in *badi* is common to all communities of the Malay archipelago although there are variations. Badi is the curse of killing an animal that is not usually hunted for food. The human thus earns the wrath of the spirit of the killed animal, or its offspring(Irawati, 2019). For example, a father-to-be is forbidden to cut short trees, and the violation will result in the newborn being born with short hands or legs just like the shortened trees. Even though they know the illnesses resulting from the taboo violation, or miscommunication with the spirits can be cured by modern medicine, the Dayak still believe that illnesses are caused by disturbances from the devil, genie, and other spirits. Therefore, during ill health, a Dayak selako would consult both a formally trained physician as well as his shaman. Thus for the Dayaks, diseases and disorders require a hybrid healing regime involving both 'modern medicine' as well as shamanic healing. However, some diseases could be cured exclusively by shamanic healing.

Chants recited by the Dayak shamans during shamanic healing indicate that there is a profound influence of the Malay Islamic tradition. For instance, '*beri makan kampung*' is an annual ritual organized every year after the harvest (Oct- Nov), to safeguard the entire village from mishaps and illnesses. During this ritual, the Shamans recite the Arabic prayer of *tolak bala* followed by the following chant:

> *Asslamu'alaikum datu' Abdul 'Ain*
> *Nang bekuase tujuh lapis langit tujuh lapis bumi*
> *Inilah siade pengasihan anak buah aku*
> *Aku minta' jagekan anak buah aku sekelian nang bahaye minta' tulung selisihkan*

(Assalamu'alaikum Datok Abdul "Ain
The one controlling seven layers of sky and seven layers of earth
Only this we may provide you
I ask you to protect me and all people from bad and dangers).

*Beri makan kampung* ritual is held at the edge of the village and involves prayer and food offerings to presiding supernatural creatures of the village. The ritual food prepared consists of four varieties of rice (white, black, red, and yellow), seven boiled eggs, three combs of *Berangan* bananas, betel nut, palm sugar, kemenyan, scented oil, and bertih (broken rice), served on a banana leaf laid on the earth. Besides, participants also bring other food such as ketupat and pat lau with dishes In return for the offerings, the supernatural creature would assure the safety of the villagers. After the *tolak bala* prayers are read, there is an elaborate community feast.

Yet another popular belief among Dayaks is the *Semangat*. A person whose soul has left him does not result in death, but only leads to sickness. Thus, the individual is rendered soulless which is tantamount to the state of 'living dead' or '*tidak berghairah*'. Such an individual would have lost all willpower and energy to live. According to Hermansyah, the soul is possessed by humans and enables humans to have the willpower to face the world (Hermansyah, 2014a). Baier states the soul is the 'spirit of life, vitality, soul'. It leaves the body in sleep, and when absent from the body may be seduced or captured by another person; magic is sometimes used to attract and so win a girl's *semangat* (soul) (Baier, 2007).

The *semangat* could be summoned, exorcized, or rejuvenated. A Dayak facing misfortune such as an unexpected illness due to the loss of soul would therefore approach his shaman to have his soul summoned. An informant narrated an incident where he was once overcome by extreme fear to the extent of being incapable of undertaking even the simplest task. He then approached a village shaman who held a ritual to summon his soul by bathing him while chanting the *teriak semangat* mantra: *Bismillahirrahmanirrahim, kerasnya batu kerasnya semangat si* (mention name)*, kerasnya besi kerasnya semangat si* (mention name)*, ku semangat (*12 times).

The concept of soul is quintessential to the communities of the Malay Archipelago. Conclude that the soul is the core view of the Malays, especially in magic, because the soul is only part of the human element that needs to be observed. For example, it states that *undoubtedly the most important single element in Malay magic, and the most difficult to define because there are so many different opinions as to what it is, is semangat, the vital cosmic force or*

*energy which animates all creation.*

## THE DAYAK SELAKO SHAMANS

The Dayak Selako shamans play the keystone religion in maintaining the aforementioned belief systems in the Dayak society. They acquire the capability of diagnosing and healing through learning and *wereh*. Learning is the process of acquiring knowledge from other 'experts' who possess healing capabilities. Thus, there are both senior as well as junior shamans that lead to a hierarchical order. Village midwives could also perform the roles of shamans, albeit in a junior capacity. However, midwives of the Dayak Selakho community have been able to secure a formal role in recent times by undertaking formal training in 'child card and delivery' from the hospital in Sambas. *Wereh* is to acquire healing power through the supernatural including dreams and visions. Knowledge acquired through *wereh* cannot be taught to others, lest it would be turned useless- this belief also opens up the window for individual shamans to carve their niche, by possessing unique healing powers.

The close relation between the oral tradition in supernatural healing with the local socio-cultural communities can be traced back to the times when the codified religions of Christianity and Islam began spreading in Southeast Asia. These new religions could not be developed unless they have the answer to illness. Southeast Asian communities believed that formidable spiritual powers influence health and disease. The King of Patani accepted Islam after being healed by a Pasai Syekh. Hermansyah reports the role of supernatural healings in the *Islamization* process of the interior regions of West Kalimantan. In the process, traditional beliefs on unseen illnesses are adapted to conform to the Islamic view on genies and devils. Various formulas in Arabic are combined with local formulas to fight and heal illnesses. This phenomenon is observed throughout the Malay archipelago both in Muslim as well as non-Muslim communities (Hermansyah, 2014a).

## CONCLUSION

The oral tradition that lives in the Dayak society has a close relation with culture and religions in the society. In the discussed oral tradition, we observed Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic influences. The Arabs with Islamic backgrounds and Europeans with Christianity changed the social institution in Kalimantan. Institutional change thus affects the oral tradition in society. The oral tradition of the Dayak Selako and Malays in Sambas, especially concerning the spiritual world and shaman healing contributed to strengthening both ethnic groups' relationship. The value of local oral tradition is very distinctive, as it has

characteristics that support its culture. The characteristics generally contained moral values and universal philosophies. For that reason, each individual is trying to sustain their oral traditions.

This research covers a limited number of ethnic groups within sub-Dayak and Malay in the region. And therefore, more coverage of the shamanism practices that exist in West Borneo societies is encouraged for further elaboration of the oral tradition, culture, and religion of the Dayak and Malay in the region. This work recommends that further research on the continuities of the tradition in the modern world is needed to better understand the important changing values and behavior of the shamanism, culture, and religion within Dayak and Malay in West Borneo societies.

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# THE PRACTICE OF TABUT IN BENGKULU: A SHARED TRADITION OF SUNNI AND SHIA

**Femalia Valentine**
*Institut Agama Islam Negeri Curup*
Email: femalia.valentine@gmail.com

**Idi Warsah**
*Institut Agama Islam Negeri Curup*
Email: idiwarsah@iaincurup.ac.id

**Ruly Morganna**
*Institut Agama Islam Negeri Curup*
Email: rulymorganna@gmail.com

**Mirzon Daheri**
*Institut Agama Islam Negeri Curup*
Email: mirzondaheri@iaincurup.ac.id

## ABSTRACT

*This study explains how the existence of Tabut is interpreted and how it has become a tradition in the Sunni community. It is important to understand how this ritual is maintained in the midst of the Sunni-Shia conflicts which continue to occur. The present study was qualitatively conducted using field research methods. The leaders of Keluarga Kerukunan Tabut (KKT) and those of Tabut Pembangunan were engaged as the participants of this study. The data collection techniques deployed interviews, observations, documentation, and literature reviews. The present study revealed that the existence of Tabut's tradition, which is claimed to be a tradition originated from Shia teachings, is able to maintain its presence in Bengkulu. This existence survives in the middle of Bengkulu's society that is predominantly Sunni. This tradition is capable of being a peaceful path between Sunni and Shia in Bengkulu because each succeeds in creating social interactions through the Tabut's tradition as human relations and the symbol they interpret. As an implication, this study highlights that religious and/or cultural activity can be mediums of social bondage in the midst of cultural diversity. This study is a reference for those with interests in anthropological, social, and religious fields.*

**Keywords:** The Practice of Tabut; A Shared Tradition; Sunni And Shia Conflict; Bengkulu

## INTRODUCTION

Islam is a universal religion crossing the dimensions of time and space in which it has also intermixed with diverse local traditions (Lubis, 2016). As a consequence, interactions between Islam and local tradition, in some ways, can prsent potential conflicts if such interactions are not interpreted wisely. When Islam mixes with local traditions, the resulting religious practice is different from one place to another. At first, Islam was born as a local product which was later generalized so that Islam became universal. Hence, the fact that Islam can cross the dimensions of time and space indicates that Islam is universal. Islam can also be a critique of local culture and Islam to some extent can also integrate into a local culture in which a local culture can be a form of wisdom of the Islamic adherents in understanding and performing Islam (Fitriyani, 2013).

In the concept of multiculturalism as delineated by Hoon (2017), different interpretations of Islam can be interpreted as the cause of diversity. A community's diverse conditions extend to plurality with respect to different religions, races, languages, and cultures (Hui, 2017; Rodríguez-izquierdo, 2018; Sarwari et al., 2017). Such differences can naturally trigger perspective conflicts. However, such conflicts can be avoided, as long as those of multicultural societies have a willingness to accept other different groups in a social system without disputing the differences among them  (Strekalova-hughes, 2017; Warsah, 2020; Williams, 2015; Zhang & Han, 2019).

More deeply, diversity also exists even within a religious group (Erdogan & Okumuslar, 2020). For instance there are two major schools in Christianity, Protestantism and Catholicism (Gilks, 2007). The schools are even split into many other submovements and substreams. In the same vein, there are several schools of thought in Islam. In the aspect of Fiqh (knowledge and literature concerning Islamic law (Hassan & Benaicha, 2021)), there are Shafi'i, Hambali, Hanafi, and Maliki (Tan, 2014). If traced back to the Islamic history since the death of the prophet Muhammad PBUH, Islam has been politically divided into Sunnism and Shia. Each also has small groups with diverse sects (Finnbogason et al., 2019). In some areas, such diversities often trigger conflicts. Although the conflicts *per se* do not stem from a single factor, the differences in schools and sects often lead to making the conflicts more complicated and difficult to resolve. That is what happens between Sunni and Shia (Kayane, 2020).

The footprint of Shia in Indonesia has been widespread through almost the entire country from Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Aceh, Maluku, and more (Al-Hadar, 2015). Shia has been part of the ongoing history of Muslims

in Indonesia. Throughout history, Shia conflicts appeared in different time dimensions with all kinds of diversities. Historians from both Sunni and Shia circles respectively argued in different ways in explaining the history of Shia development. Each of them claimed their opinion was the most authentic and rational (Hasim, 2012). According to Hasim's (2012) explanation, Shia development in Indonesia experienced four waves. During the first wave, Shia entered Indonesia since the initial introduction of Islam into Indonesia through the early Islamic propagators from the Persians who lived in Gujarat. The second Shia wave was after the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979. The third wave was driven by Habib (Arab descendants/ Prophets) or Shias people who had received education at Qum University, Iran. Because the understanding of Shia had entered the realm of fiqh, at this stage the conflicts began to grow openly. The fourth wave was driven during the period when Shia people began to form an association, known as the Association of Indonesian Ahlul Congregation (in Indonesian acronym known as IJABI), established on July 1st, 2000. Thus, the existence of Shia was openly recognized by some of the Indonesian people. Shia ideology also gave birth to the *Ashura*'s commemorative doctrine that was strongly fused in the traditions of the Indonesian archipelago so that it gave birth to the memorial (*takziyah*) traditions in the archipelago of Indonesia such as *Bubur Suro* in Java, *Tabut* in Bengkulu, and *Kasan-Kusen*'s Tradition in Aceh (Al-Hadar, 2015).

Interestingly, although the majority of Muslims in Indonesia are Sunni, there exists a unique fact that in some areas of Indonesia the societies have traditions associated with Shia legacy. It is even more interesting that the organizers of such traditions are those of the Sunni Islamic community. In fact, those traditions have continued from generation to generation for centuries. In the midst of the increasing number of movements against Islamic minority groups such as Shia and Ahmadiyyah in several regions in Indonesia, it did not dampen people's enthusiasm to carry out such traditions. Religious traditions and rituals in societies have been internalized in the entire history of human life. All religious traditions amid societies cannot actually be united under the same umbrella even though the assumption of their emergence could be recognized as derived from one divine value (Warsah, Cahyani, et al., 2019; Warsah & Imron, 2019). All traditions will move in line with the goals and missions of the religions' adherents. Each religion has the same right to live, and each has its own way of maintaining its traditions and identity (Baidhawy, 2007).

The context of *Tabut*'s tradition in Bengkulu seems like a tradition influenced by a Shia ritual. This case is aligned with the socio-historical conditions of

the Sumatran area which came in contact with outside traditions from India, Persia, and Europe (Sofjan, 2012). For a long time, *Tabut*'s tradition has been believed and carried out continuously as a ritual from generation to generation, especially by the descendants of *Tabut*'s doers who established *Keluarga Kerukunan Tabut* (KKT) (Dahri, 2009; Sapsuha, 2013). *Tabut*, the traditional religious ceremony, is a social institution that is needed by the community in an effort to fulfill the obligations towards the ancestral heritage. *Tabut*'s tradition is the most popular tradition among the people of Bengkulu City and is a characteristic of Bengkulu's society.

In its implementation, *Tabut*'s tradition is plural in nature and not singular as a common impression notices. The impression that the celebrations of *Tabut*'s tradition in Bengkulu are homogeneous has been formed in many people's perceptions. The plurality of *Tabut*'s celebrations is reflected in the existence of several groups in which some of whom have different views in terms of *Tabut*'s celebrations (Handayani, 2018).

The followers of *Tabut* strive to maintain the existence of the ritual's sacredness amid the provincial government's policies which regard *Tabut* only as a cultural commodity. This case can be seen from the condition that the performance of *Tabut Pembangunan* (a governmental program of *Tabut*) is regarded as discrimination by the followers of *Tabut*. The government seems to deny the existence of *Tabut*'s ritual because it is only made a mere exhibition of arts and culture (Andoni, 2010). The difference in meaning to *Tabut*'s ritual in Bengkulu is inseparable from the insistence of diverse views which have deep roots, but it cannot also be separated from political interests. The diverse views extend to cultural differences including religion and historical claims to the tradition. From these roots, each group has the legitimacy to claim they are not part of each other. This study explains how the existence of *Tabut* is interpreted so that it becomes a tradition in the Sunni community. It is important to understand how this ritual is maintained in the midst of the Sunni-Shia conflicts which continue to occur.

Previous studies on Sunni and Shia have been conducted and are more oriented towards analyses of detailed conflicts between Sunni and Shia (Abou-Zahab, 2017; Douai & Lauricella, 2014; Holtmann, 2014). However, limited prior studies were oriented towards addressing cultural traditions as the mediators to decrease the intensity of Sunni-Shia conflicts. The present study thus aims to explain how the existence of *Tabut* in Bengulu is interpreted so that it becomes a tradition in the Sunni community. It is important to understand how this ritual is maintained in the midst of the Sunni-Shia conflicts which continue to occur. An ethnomethodology technique has been utilized to interpret social

actions and interactions taking place in the study field (Garfinkel, 1967).

The members, including the leaders of *Keluarga Kerukunan Tabut* (KKT) and those of *Tabut Pembangunan* as the community handled by the government, were engaged as the participants of this study. The data collection techniques deployed interviews, observations, documentation, and literature reviews as suggested by Bachri (2010) to present ethnomethodological data and make critically related argumentations. The data garnered from the aforesaid techniques were presented concomitantly as they had been properly synthesized and analyzed.

The data analysis adopted an interactive model (Miles et al., 2014). This model was used due to its detailed processes of data mapping and organization. Drawing upon this model, this study took on four elements of analysis: data collection, data mapping, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. As previously explained, data were garnered by interviews, observations, documentation, and literature reviews for the sake of reaching rich data on the ongoing discourse. Concerning data mapping, the data were condensed and grouped according to the emerging themes. The foregoing was useful for making it easier to present the data systematically, resting upon the focused discourse in an organized way. Pertinent to data presentation, the data were displayed systematically based on the theme-based groups. The data were further displayed by providing effective explanations alongside presenting some selected transcripts and discussing the data by making use of theoretical argumentations and interpretations. Lastly, the data were concluded comprehensively and representatively by considering the consistent linearity between the raw data and the condensed and grouped data.

## SUNNI-SHIA CONFLICTS AS THE BACKGROUND OF TABUT-RELATED CONFLICTS

According to Mansoer (2016), conflicts occur due to four things. First, they are caused by differences in position and feelings of conflicting individuals. Second, due to differences in cultural backgrounds. Third, groups or individuals have different interests. Fourth, because of the rapid and sudden changes of values in the community.

Based on the explanation pertinent to conflicts above, it can be summarized that the issue which becomes the source of conflicts among the conflicting individuals or groups is due to different views and perceptions of matters. Such differences result in rifts among the group's relationships, changes in attitudes to individuals, and even the likelihood to conquer one of the parties involved in the conflicts (Mansoer, 2016; Schilling et al., 2018).

Conflicts between Shia and Sunni are the source of conflicts related to *Tabut* in Bengkulu. Actually, the conflicts between Shia and Sunni have occurred many times in Indonesia. An example of conflict between Shia and Sunni in Indonesia includes the conflict that occurred in Sampang, Madura. The conflict occurred or arose around 2006 and continued until 2012, culminating in the burning of the house of the local Shia leader (Ida & Dyson, 2015). The other example is the Shia-Sunni conflict that occurred in Bondowoso, caused by the IJABI resistance which was the culmination of community hatred towards Shia followers (Syaukani, 2009). Subsequently, in Yogyakarta (generally known to be very harmonious) in 2013, there was a clash between the Rausyan Fikr foundation that sheltered the Shia group with the community (Widyadara, 2015). This means that Sunni-Shia relations between the majority and minority in Indonesia occasionally experience friction and clashes. If we look globally, Sunni-Shia do have long roots of collision (Humaini, 2019), as the majority often puts pressure on the minority (Warsah et al., 2021).

In any particular civilization large traditions and small traditions exist (Warsah, Masduki, et al., 2019). This condition is often called the elite culture and popular culture. Large traditions refer to inheritance and collective knowledge that are universal, while small traditions represent the local traditions and indigenous knowledge (Hefni, 2013).

In the discourse of culture, there are commonly known three cultural materials: cultural manipulation, cultural behavior, and cultural artifacts. First, cultural manipulation is an effort of a person, a group, or a community in order to describe their attitudes, experiences, beliefs, and values with a planned and organized construction of the order (Idris, 2020). Second, cultural behavior is the behavior displayed by a group of communities. Cultural behavior is not identical to an individual's behavior, as it is behavior that can only be presented by certain groups in a particular community and society (Morganna et al., 2020). Third, cultural artifacts refer to man-made objects that provide information about the creation and use of culture. Artifacts can change from time to time in what they represent, how they emerge, and how and why they are used as cultural changes over time (Atha'na, 2010).

## THE ESSENCE OF TABUT IN BENGKULU

Pertaining to the context of *Tabut*'s tradition (Syiafril Sy, 2012) in Bengkulu, it is a tradition that is influenced by a Shia ritual (Daneshar, 2015). This is related to the socio-historical conditions of the Sumatran region that came in contact with outside traditions such as India, Persia, and Europe (Sofjan, 2012). This tradition has been believed since a long time ago, and has been passed down

continuously as a ritual carried out from generation to generation, especially by the descendants of the *Tabut*'s doers who established *Keluarga Kerukunan Tabut* (Dahri, 2009; Sapsuha, 2013). One of the members of *Keluarga Kerukunan Tabut* explained the following during the interview:

> *Tabut, the traditional religious ceremony, is a social institution that is needed by the community in an effort to fulfill the obligations towards the ancestral heritage. Tabut tradition is the most popular tradition among the people of Bengkulu City and is a characteristic of Bengkulu's society.*

As documented from an old manuscript saved by the members of Keluarga Kerukunan *Tabut*, the Sipai people who were regarded as *Tabut*'s followers were initially part of the Shia community in Bengkulu. The *Tabut*'s tradition was used as a momentum to remember Hussein's death in Padang Karbala (he was brutally killed by Yazid, a tyrannical ruler of the Umayyads). But today, the Sipai's descendants who carry out this ritual do not show the religious expression of Shia. Regardless of the debate concerning the origin of this ritual, Bengkulu's people generally accept this tradition properly (Handayani, 2018).

Besides *Tabut*, in several places of Indonesia, there are also similar traditions such as *Kasan Kusen* in Aceh, *Tabuik* in Pariaman (Mason, 2016), *Hari Arbain* in West Java Pagelang, and the *Suro*'s tradition in the Javanese community. However, unlike others, a leader of *Keluarga Kerukunan Tabut* explained the following during the interview:

> *Tabut in Bengkulu lasts longer with its authenticity, whereas in other places such similar traditions have commonly begun to be abandoned by the related community, except for the Suro's tradition which is still mostly practiced by Javanese people. However, the purpose of Suro's tradition has changed and not been identical to a tradition of mourning, but a tradition of welcoming the year of Hijri.*

Almost, the same tradition as *Tabut* in Bengkulu, Tabuik in Pariaman of West Sumatra experiences changes (Ekasari, 2012), and the traditions of Kasan Kusen in Aceh, Suro and Hari Arbain also look different (Utomo, 2010).

In reality, this tradition is very influential and cannot be separated in the life of the Sipai's community and the community of Bengkulu in general. Throughout history, *Tabut* has become an important part of the lives of Bengkulu's society, both the Sipai's community and that of Bengkulu in general. The celebration of the *Tabut* also has an impact on various aspects of people's lives, ranging

from social, economic, religious, to cultural aspects, and so on (Dahri, 2009).

As observed during the preparation of *Tabut*'s celebration, although the Sipai's community is a minority, they are still able to maintain the existence of the ritual. According to Lubis (2016), a minority group is a category of people with the recognition of race, religion, or ethnic traits that occupy positions with low respect and obtain unequal basic services. This is where multiculturalism shows accommodation, in which the majority gives room for the minority to express their beliefs and traditions (Warsah, Masduki, et al., 2019).

As documented during the study, *Tabut* is a religious tradition carried out every 1st to 10th Muharram. There are many things indicating its religious value. To name a few, those of *Keluarga Kerukunan Tabut* (KKT) interpret the *Tabut* tradition in an effort to commemorate and pray for all who were martyrs in Padang Karbala, especially Husein and ahlul bait. *Tabut* is the commemoration of Mourning the death of Husein bin Abu Talib who was killed by Yazid bin Muawiyah (Handayani, 2018). Besides commemorating the Islamic New Year, for generations, this tradition has been continuously carried out by the *Tabut*'s followers in Bengkulu. *Tabut* is undertaken through 13 ritual activities (Syiafril Sy, 2012), namely: prayer for the sake of Allah's salvation, *ambik tanah, duduk penja, malam menjara, meradai, arak penja, arak seroban, hari gam, Tabut naik pangkek, arak gendang, soja, Tabut tebuang,* and *mencuci penja*. All of them have sacred meanings, especially for the members of *Keluarga Kerukunan Tabut* who continue to maintain *Tabut*'s rituals from generation to generation (Anindita, 2013).

## THE INTERPRETATION OF TABUT

Different from the other group commonly known as the *Tabut* Cultural Harmony (in Indonesian acronym as Ketab) which only follows the rituals of *Tabut Besanding* and *Tabut Tebuang*, a member of *Tabut* Cultural Harmony defines *Tabut* as follows:

> As a culture that must be released from the beliefs indicated by the polytheists and affiliated with Shia. Getting support from the government, they are more focused on managing the Tabut Pembangunan as a cultural commodity as one of the tourism destinations.

The growing news of mass media about the chaos between *Keluarga Kerukunan Tabut* and the government occurred when the *Tabut*'s followers regarded *Tabut* as a sacred cultural insight, and it needed to be known by many people. It was because the activities of *Tabut*'s Bengkulu were categorized as one of the

world's cultures by the West Sumatra's Cultural Value Conservation Agency. *Tabut* must be intensively promoted even to the national level. In addition, *Keluarga Kerukunan Tabut* refused the funding of 200 million Rupiahs from Bengkulu's Provincial Government because they were disappointed that Bengkulu's Provincial Government seemed unconcerned about the efforts of *Keluarga Kerukunan Tabut* that tried to maintain the sacred value of *Tabut*'s rituals. This showed the government's neglect of the *Tabut*'s cultural development.

The problem concerning *Tabut*'s ritual was getting more serious when this ritual was claimed to be a legacy of Shia. As the majority of the Bengkulu's community was Sunni, these two religious groups always legitimized that their teachings and beliefs were the absolute truth. So, they closed themselves to different teachings despite being part of the same religion. When Islam came into contact with a particular culture, religious understanding and practices emerged could not be separated from that culture. Then, the understanding of these religious teachings formed various religious expressions such as the appearance of rites, institutions, religious modes, and certain religious organizations (which were very possible between one group and another having different social identities (Mustamir, 2015)).

The ideological truth in the majority group is sometimes forced through governmental instruments, potentially through legal products, policies, government, or social instruments. The dominance of interpretation of religious teachings by the majority religious group becomes the main means to form public discourse. Resting upon the mastery of the religious interpretation as well, truth is reproduced so that the country gives its legitimacy. As a result, the government often acts to represent the aspirations of the majority group. The government even shelters behind the slogan of neutrality when carrying out violent practices against the minority group (Wahyudi & Wahid, 2015).

As highlighted in the above view, this condition even occurred in the implementation of *Tabut*'s rituals in Bengkulu. In practice, the implementation of *Tabut*'s rituals was divided into two, the *Tabut*'s rituals and the *Tabut Pembangunan*. The government held *Tabut Pembangunan* in which there was a competition and the *Tabut*'s festival as the festival of arts and culture which only aimed at raising cultural commodities. This condition was set as if it was as desirable by all people.

If connected with Karl Marx's theory pertinent to the reality of life which is always related to the concept of capitalism (the new economic life system of profits and markets), Karl Marx uses the concept of ideology in explaining how capitalists defend and protect their economic interests in dealing with crisis

situations (Branston & Stafford, 2003). The concept of ideology plays a pivotal role in explaining the patterns of power used by the government in eliminating the sacred values of *Tabut*. This is also aligned with Gramsci's hegemony theory which positions the government as a complex practical activity and in line with the theory of power in the form of policies and legal products to emphasize the ideology of the dominant majority group (Wahyudi & Wahid, 2015). However, in the dominant ideologies such as Gramsci's concept, it does not predominantly affect the social structure because diversity is ultimately relative (Branston & Stafford, 2003).

Since the government of Bengkulu was involved in implementing *Tabut*'s tradition, it morphed into a cultural festival with all the existing tourist activities. Thus, the *Tabut*'s ceremony for the people of Bengkulu contains two objectives. First, to welcome the Islamic New Year. Second to commemorate the heroic story and the death of the Prophet Muhammad's grandson, Husen Bin Ali, who died in Padang Karbela, Iraq (Marhayati, 2016). This means that there is a compromise between different meanings.

## DEALING WITH TABUT-RELATED CONFLICTS

Initially, the change in *Tabut*'s tradition was not organized, and that it then became organized seemed to be an appropriate step in anticipating the influence of time's changes, whereas the management of *Tabut* was aimed to maintain its sacred ritual tradition. To be able to survive in the face of time's changes that occur, it was considered necessary to have an ability to develop the present conditions more dynamically than those of the previous era. Openness to all changes is needed in order to be able to adjust to developments. Actually, what is needed to survive in the face of changes is not just adjustment but rather the ability to anticipate changes that are expected to occur in the future (Marhayati, 2016).

According to Gumay, *Tabut*'s ceremony could actually cultivate an excessive individual culture which in principle does not conform to the philosophy of Pancasila. However, from the standpoint of regional culture and the culture of the Indonesian people generally, *Tabut*'s tradition can be used as one form of regional art that has its own potential in the agenda of Indonesia's cultural richness (Marhayati, 2016).

The meaning of *Tabut*'s ritual above is associated with pluralism as a theory that includes differences in ideas and identity, and also as stated by Gramsci, and is influenced by economic, political, military, and symbolic forces. Pluralism in the Gramscian context is a floating free of power, and it must

also be understood how these forces can construct differences in ideas and identities, especially in the culture of society (Branston & Stafford, 2003).

The interpretation of *Tabut* through the Gramcian pluralism approach can be understood by positioning the Bengkulu's government as the holder of political and economic power, which in turn gives rise to *Tabut Pembangunan* as a tourism commodity. As the foregoing, the aim is to improve the community's economy.

*Keluarga Kerukunan Tabut* as the sole authority of the *Tabut* ceremony's rituals must show professionalism in every *Tabut*'s organization. It is especially in terms of maintaining the sacredness of the ceremony that has been directed and at the same time trying to make this ceremony a spectacle awaited by the general public. This interpretation is important as a way to maintain *Tabut*'s tradition as locally indigenous in order that it is not isolated from the supporting community, as well as to be able to maintain its sacredness (Marhayati, 2016).

In interpreting the *Tabut*'s ritual carried out by the *Tabut*'s followers, if linked to the concept of Gramsci's pluralism theory, as part of the floating free of power such as the government, the *Tabut*'s followers also have the power to shape their ideas and identities In this case, that was demonstrated through symbolic power to maintain the sacredness of the rituals.

Pluralism has a couple of positive aspects. First, it promotes people to increase respect for certain ethnicities, races, religions, and other groups, and also encourages them to develop their own values and culture. No one has the right to obstruct this development as everyone is protected by law. Therefore, everyone is free and not bound by oppression or controlled by others with different cultural backgrounds. Everyone holds the right to live and develop their traditions and culture. Some social and cultural systems or institutions may coexist. Optimal relations between the members of different cultures are possible without obstacles from the hierarchy and bureaucracy (Bakti, 2013).

In the Gramscian perspective, pluralism means freedom in determining various kinds of discourse but remains within the scope of the influencing forces (political, economic, military, and symbolic forces). These forces are used by Gramsci as the understanding of how ideas and identities are able to provide freedom from one meaning over another (Branston & Stafford, 2003).

Besides offering the concept of ideology, Gramsci also offers alternative discourses and lived cultures. Discourse explains about how one value and identity work together, both with verbal and nonverbal media so as to shape reality. In the meantime, the concept of lived cultures emerged from the power

of the dominant assumptions in the form of material existence including cultural practices and rituals (Branston & Stafford, 2003).

In connection with *Tabut*, the sacred values therein in the form of symbols and prayer sequences succeeded in constructing cultural practices and rituals in the perception of *Tabut*'s followers. According to them, the ritual's sacredness must be maintained. So, such an effort formed their social identity. Finally, the distinction between the *Tabut*'s followers and the government is the diversity of ideologies and identities, which have ethnic and religious links in the context of discourse and lived cultures.

In a multicultural view, the continuous implementation of *Tabut* with all its sacredness gives a real depiction of accommodative principles. The majority in multicultural society provides accommodation for the minority to retain their traditional values. Besides, in the case of *Tabut*, there was a minority's effort to be open to making various adjustments to social conditions.

As observed during the study, even though there was a conflict in the interpretation of *Tabut*, the two groups did not establish a partition. Looking at the Sunni-Shia phenomenon in Bengkulu, it shows that social interactions are going well, and each of which has a strong value. This phenomenon aligns with what was stated by Herbert Blumer about social interactions which are interpreted as dynamic social relations. The intended social relationship is a relationship between one individual and another, between one group and the other group, and between groups and individuals. In such interactions, there is also a symbol, where the symbol is interpreted as something whose value or meaning is given to it by those who use it.

Such a process of social interactions according to Herbert Blumer is when humans act on something based on the meaning that something has for humans. Then, the meaning that something has comes from the interaction between a person and fellow people. Other meanings are the meanings that are not permanent but can be changed. Changes to meanings can occur through the process of interpretation by people when they encounter something. Social interaction can also occur if there is social contact and communication between two individuals or groups. Social contact is the first stage of social relations, and communication is the delivery of information and the provision of interpretations and reactions to the information conveyed.

**CONCLUSION**

Drawing upon a field research method to explain how the existence of *Tabut* in Bengulu is interpreted so that it becomes a tradition in the Sunni

community, the present study revealed that the existence of Tabut's tradition which is claimed to be a tradition originated from Shia teachings is able to maintain its presence in Bengkulu. This existence survives in the middle of Bengkulu's society that is predominantly Sunni. This tradition is capable of being a peaceful path between Sunni and Shia in Bengkulu because each of them succeeds in creating social interactions through the Tabut's tradition as human relations and the symbol they interpret. This study contributes to being a reference in literature, addressing the role of a religious and cultural tradition as a mediator to decrease the existing religious, cultural, and perspectives conflicts amidst societies.

However, this study is not free from limitations. The specific and regional context, Tabut in Bengkulu City, brought in this study is only an example of a cultural tradition which becomes the mediator to decrease Sunni-Shia conflicts. Thus, this study, with such qualitative nature, cannot be generalized across wider contexts. It is recommended that further studies be conducted by addressing several forms of cultural traditions to cope with Sunni-Shia conflicts. Such involvement of various cultural traditions can pave the way for the studies to scientifically confirm and make a generalization across contexts that not only *Tabut* but also other traditions can help decrease Sunni-Shia conflicts.

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# ISLAM, PAPUANNESS AND INDONESIANESS WITHIN PAPUAN MUSLIMS IN FAKFAK

**Saidin Ernas**
*IAIN Ambon*
Email: saidinernas@iainambon.ac.id

**Ismail, DP**
*IAIN Ambon*
Email: ismaildp@iainambon.ac.id

**Ismail Kilderak**
*Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Seram Timur*
Email: staisseramtimur@gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

*This study shows that the long historical process associated with Islam in West Papua has an impact on defining a unique identity, and significantly interrelating Islam, Papuanness, and Indonesianness. The data in this study were collected for three months in Fakfak of West Papua, through methods of observation, interview, and documentation. Some key informants were data sources consisting of religious leaders, community leaders, and government employees. Two important findings are found in this work. First, the presence of Islam in Papua has significantly contributed to the formation of the identity of the Fakfak community in Papua through an intense and strong acculturation process between Islam and local Papuan culture. This process has formed new inclusive and tolerant values that are reflected in the local wisdom of satu tungku tiga batu (one stove with three stones). Second, Islam and Papuanness in Fakfak appear to have certain implications on the formation of Indonesian (national) identity. Theoretically, this research shows that identity is not something fixed and natural, but a constantly changing process, concerning the socio-political dynamics that affect it. That is why Papuan Muslims strive to continue to define themselves amid the construction of Papuan identity which is often defined as Christian and Melanesian.*

**Keywords***;* Papuaness; Indonesianess; Acculturation; Papuan Muslim; Fakfak

## INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of the development of Islam in the coastal region of West Papua is comprised of three main areas: Raja Ampat, Kaimana, and Fakfak

have several characteristics distinct from other places in Papua. Since the fifteenth century, the Islamic preachers who set foot in this region have spread Islam to the southern part of Fakfak. They generally came to Papua on trade expeditions and then settled down and spread Islam (Putuhena, 2006). Only a small number of people were on board in expeditions to control the territory carried out regularly by the sultanate rulers in North Maluku; Ternate and Tidore. Interestingly, Islam in Fakfak and its surrounding areas do not necessarily diminish cultural practices but regulate and direct them to conform to Islamic values.

Even when other missionary religions, namely Christianity and Catholicism, arrived here, Muslims who were on the coast of West Papua were able to adapt and acculturate with the two major religions, especially in building a moderate and tolerant religious spirit. The interaction between the three Abrahamic religions then gave birth to a family's religious system, where one family divides its members to adhere to different religions (Onim, 2006). Such a process of religious accommodation, according to conventional Islamic views, is considered something that endangers the Islamic faith. However, sociologically, it shows the flexibility of Islam when faced with the reality of religious differences in society. This occurred evolutionarily during the arrival of Islam in Indonesia, which formed the custom and culture of the community interrelated with Islam (Mudjib, 2013; Tuhri, 2020).

Similarly, when the integration of Papua with Indonesia occurred, some kings and tribal chiefs in the Fakfak region and its surroundings took the initiative to assist in this political integration (Ernas, 2014). The Muslims in Fakfak saw the integration of Papua with Indonesia as the right choice, especially in a religious context. Today, Islam in the Fakfak region is the majority religion which contributes to the dynamics of local politics. The Muslims in Fakfak have become more open to immigrants, and there have hardly been any violent political conflicts. They, as described by Abel Suwae (2013) are struggling to affirm their identity as Muslims amidst the strengthening of their Christian Papuan identity (Habel, 2012).

Based on these evolutionary developments, the study will focus on two important things. First, how does the presence of Islam shape the identity of the Fakfak people as Muslims? Do Islamism and Papuanness in Fakfak have a certain impact on the formation of Indonesian identity? By dissecting these two things, this paper will offer three things. First, the face of Islam which is marked by the presence of Muslims who are the majority in Fakfak. According to the statistical data in the Fakfak area, Muslims are the majority in this region who make up 63.2% of the population. Second, the Papuan elements formed

from the influence of Islam and Papuan culture, create distinctive and unique models of tolerance and moderation across narrow religious views, as can be seen from the emergence of a "family religion" culture that allows one family to follow a different religion (Iribaram, 2011). This is an important indicator of the moderate religious model. Third, the Islamic traits on the West Coast of Papua foster an Indonesian spirit (nationalism) which is marked by the ideological political affiliation of the Muslim community in this region which consistently supports integration with Indonesia. The long socio-political and cultural relationship with Muslims is recognized as one of the indicators of the strengthening of their sense of attachment to Indonesia. Although this is seen as another marker of Papuan identity, which is often identified as Melanesian and Christian (Chauvel, 2005).

It is the shades of Papua's unique Islamic identity that will be raised as the main theme in this paper, mainly because of two considerations. First, Islam in Papua has presented a unique mosaic in Indonesia, related to how the formation of three important elements, namely Islam, Indonesianness, and Papuanness that shape the Islamic character in the region. Second, to date, there are not many researchers in Indonesia who make the process of encountering Islam, Indonesianness, and Papuanness a topic of research and academic discourse. So far, Papua has only been highlighted from the perspective of the conflicts that have constantly been taking place in several areas in Papua. There are not many researchers who see Islam in Papua as a cultural potential to build peace.

This study is part of research conducted in Fakfak West Papua in 2019. The data were collected for three months with the methods of observation, interviews, and literature study from September to November 2019. Some key informants were successfully interviewed, consisting of religious leaders, community leaders, and government employees. During data collection, we read significant literature; books, journals, and documents on Islam, ethnicity, culture, and political identity in Papua. This included the literature data that had been collected and then analyzed with an interactive analysis, as proposed by Irwan Abdullah (2007) to understand how the interaction between Islam and culture in Papua has a certain impact on the national identity of Indonesia in Papua.

## STUDIES ON ISLAM AND PAPUAN IDENTITY

Few studies on Islam in Papua have been produced, although in recent years there have been several researchers who conducted research related to Islam in Papua. Such studies attempted to construct the position of Papuan Muslims in the increasingly dynamic political contestation in Papua. Cahyo Pamungkas's

(2008) thesis on *Islamic Papua and Special Autonomy,* which described the efforts of minority Muslim Papuans to negotiate their religious identity amid the Christian Papuan community, showed that cultural identities, such as ethnicity and religion, do not only function as an objective marker but also a symbolic power. This identity is constructed, contested, and used as a political instrument. Cahyo's study is interesting, but he only examined the dynamics of contemporary contestation and did not discuss the historical experience and its influence on culture. Similar to Cahyo's study, Idrus Al-Hamid described how political Islam is getting stronger in Papua, which strengthens the role of Muslims, but also creates a cultural distance with the indigenous Papuans. Similar to Cahyo and Idrus, Musa Rumbaru in his study "Identity Construction of the Minority Papuan Muslim: A Study on the Papuan Muslim Council," also mentions the same thing.

While the study of J.F. Onim (2006) about the history of the encounter between Islam and Christianity in Papua, which took place in the Fakfak area, provided important information about how the two religions have interacted since the beginning of their arrival in Papua, giving Fakfak people experience to build social harmony. Meanwhile, the anthropological study conducted by Suparto Iribaram (2011), entitled *One Stove/Cauldron with Three Stones/Legs --Cooperation of Three Religions in Religious Life in Fakfak)*, has significant relevance to this research. Iribaram argued that one of the factors that support religious harmony in Fakfak is the acculturation of religion and culture, which gives birth to the philosophy of *One Stove/Cauldron with Three Stones/Legs*. Likewise, Pandie's study (2018) which describes the philosophy of local wisdom from *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* in Fakfak. Iribaram anda Pandie's research is an entry point to examine how Islam influences the character of local culture and to create various institutions and local wisdom that are institutionalized and play a role in strengthening the integration of Islam, Indonesianness, and Papuanness in Fakfak Regency, West Papua.

If we look at the various studies and research mentioned above, there are at least two things that have not received adequate attention. First, the study of Islam in Papua still places Islam as an outside force that tries to conquer Papua with all its influence in a contestatory and even destructive way. Islam is considered the outsiders' religion, while Christianity is local. Second, Islam in Papua is considered a disintegrative force that interferes with the development of Papuan nationalism, so Muslims should be suspected of being "less Papuan." The dynamics of the society in Papua are not singular. In some Islamic societies, Papuanness and Indonesianness are two identities that tend to be interrelated, as we can see in Fakfak of West Papua.

**FAKFAK AS AN ISLAMIC MAJORITY REGION IN WEST PAPUA**

Papua is a unique region, not only because of its location at the far eastern tip of Indonesia but also because of its exotic people. Alfreed Russel Wallace (as quoted by Materay, 2011), a traveler from England described Papuans as people of "dark skin, brownish or black. Sometimes it is close to, but never the same as the dark skin tone of the Negroid race. Very different in color, exceeding the skin tone of the Malay, sometimes dark and slightly brownish. Their hair is very coarse and dry," (Materay, 2011). As for Fakfak, it is an area located right on the neck of the "bird's head" of Papua Island which is currently part of West Papua Province. This district is located extending from West to East on the southern coast of Papua with the following territorial boundaries: to the east are the Regencies of Mimika and Paniai; to the west are the Seram Sea, Berau Bay and Sorong Regency, and Central Maluku Regency; in the northern part are Manokwari and Paniai Regencies, and to the south stretches the Arafuru Sea and Southeast Maluku Regency.

The indigenous people of Fakfak are native Papuans who come from two major tribes, namely the Baham and Onin. In addition, there are also small tribes such as the Ihandin who inhabit the Fatagar and Baruan areas, the Yarimo, the Sasim, the Sabakor, the Kembaran, the Tukua, and several other small tribes who live in the areas along the coast of Petuanan Arguni. Each tribe has a different language which is generally grouped into Baham and Iha languages. It is not known exactly when the indigenous people began to settle down in the Fakfak area, because there is no important historical or anthropological research on this matter. In addition to indigenous people, the Fakfak area is also inhabited by several immigrant ethnic groups. Generally, they come from Maluku, namely Seram and Kei which have geographical proximity to Fakfak. The people of Seram and Fakfak have had socio-cultural relations and economic contacts that have existed for a long time, many of their people have kinship relations due to inter-marriage (Widjoyo. 2009). Many Bugis and Makassar people from South Sulawesi also live in Fakfak, generally, they work as traders in local markets in Fakfak. Other ethnic groups from Sulawesi are Buton people from Southeast Sulawesi. Many of these people grow various kinds of crops that supply food, vegetables and some are fishermen. It is estimated that the Buton people from Southeast Sulawesi have settled in Fakfak since the Dutch colonial era. They came for economic, trade, and religious purposes. The central government's efforts to promote transmigration since 1990 have contributed to the presence of a significant number of Javanese in the Fakfak area. Generally, they live in Bomberay District which borders Kaimana Regency.

Other ethnic groups found in Fakfak are Arabs and Chinese who mostly live in the city of Fakfak. The arrival of the Arabs is estimated to coincide with the entry of Islam in Fakfak, which was around the 16th and 17th centuries. In addition to being religious leaders and Imams of the mosque, the Arabs also run grocery stores and trade various products along the main Fakfak streets. The Chinese also run a grocery store in the center of the city, selling various basic goods and acting as collectors of nutmeg seeds for sale to buyers from Makassar and Surabaya. The fact that there are many Arabs and Chinese who have lived and traded in Fakfak since hundreds of years ago, is a testament to the glory of Fakfak's commerce in the past.

In a book entitled *A Study on the History of the Arrival of Islam in Fakfak,* published by the Fakfak Regency Government in 1996, it is stated that Islam has been present in Papua around the end of the 16th century. Several other writers such as J.F. Onim (2006) stated that Islam was only present in Papua around the 17th century. This conclusion was drawn based on an analysis of the report of Miguel Roxo Debrito (1581-1582), who stated that during his visit to the Raja Ampat islands. King Waegeo who ruled the islands at the time had not embraced Islam. Thus the presence of Islam in Papua is estimated around the end of the 16th century or the beginning of the 17th century. The path of the spread of Islam in Papua follows the path of the archipelago which started from Aceh at the tip of the island of Sumatra, Java, and Maluku, then entered and developed in Papua. Later, experts agreed that the presence of Islam in Papua was the final chapter of the spread of Islam because after that the process of spreading Islam had been cut off and stopped altogether. The encounter of Islam with Catholicism and Christianity which came later to Fakfak has opened a new chapter on the interaction of the three Abrahamic religions which is generally peaceful.

The development of Islam in Fakfak is very amazing. Fakfak is the only region in Papua where the population (the majority) is Muslim. Overall, Islam is the religion that is embraced by 53.80% of the community. This number increased significantly after the integration of Papua with Indonesia, where many migrants came to Fakfak. Some were officially sponsored by the government through the national transmigration program. The followers of Islam are comprised of the original Fakfak people (natives) who generally inhabit the coastal area of Fakfak, they are comprised of the Onin, Iha, and Baham tribes. The second group is the Fakfak people of Seram, Gorom, Banda, Arab, Buton, Bugis, Makassar, Javanese, Madurese, etc. Fakfak has become one of the beacons of Islamic da'wah in Papua. Many people refer to Fakfak as Papua's "Veranda of Mecca". This fact is undeniable because of the 71,069 population

of Fakfak in 2017, the majority were Muslims (53.80%), and most of them are indigenous Muslims who are quite religious and some have even become popular Islamic figures in Papua.

## ISLAM, CUSTOM AND FAMILY TRADITIONS IN FAKFAK

The presence of Islam in Fakfak, in addition to being the majority religion adopted by the Fakfak community, also gives important values that contribute to the formation of Islamic identity in Fakfak. The Fakfak people believe that as Muslims in Papua they have basic characteristics, which when analyzed in depth have different constructions from Papuan identity in general.

The presence of Islam in Fakfak strengthens cultural norms that further strengthen the brotherhood. Although currently Fakfak people embrace different religions, live in different districts or lords, and even have different social statuses, they are still bound and connected in a unitary custom, be it the Baham Mata Customary Unity, or the Onin who have inhabited the Onim Peninsula (Fakfak) since long ago. The moral values derived from these local values then gave birth to several norms and customary laws for the Fakfak community.

Customary norms in Fakfak can be distinguished in several areas of life which regulate family life and the public (people). In family life, for example, norms related to marriage law, *tombormage*, or respect for parents. Acculturation between Islam and local culture in Fakfak has also made an important contribution to the high respect for mothers and women. In public life, there is also a tradition of *bakubantu* or *masohi*, namely the tradition of helping each other in the Fakfak community. *Bakubantu* is applied in group life as well as in broad social practice, such as helping to build houses, helping neighboring regions when building traditional houses, or organizing traditional rituals.

In the public context, the acculturation of Islam and local culture forms networks of brotherhood and social relations among citizens, not only among Fakfak Muslims but also between Muslims and Christians and Catholics. Customary responsibility gives rise to several local pearls of wisdom, such as the requirement to have dialog to solve problems through the *dudu tikar* tradition. The description of *dudu tikar* shows that it is a best practice in Fakfak customary law, which serves as a medium to ensure social relations are always in a harmonious state, as instilled through the philosophical values of *idu-idu, mani nina,* and *yoyo*. If there is a problem, dispute, or conflict between the people, the King, Tribal Chief, or Village Elder must "open the mat" to talk, have a dialog, and deliberate. In contrast to some tribes in Papua who make

war a way to resolve conflicts and disputes. The Fakfak community considers such actions as harming brotherhood and kinship relations.

The results of the acculturation of Islam and custom in Fakfak also provide an important construction for religious life, which is institutionalized in the local wisdom of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* (one stove with three stones). In simple terms, the philosophy of *one stove with three stones* is a reflection of the brotherhood of the Fakfak community despite different religions, ethnicities, languages, and socioeconomic conditions. In the traditional construction of the Fakfak community, *one stove with three stones* is a term that describes a balance, like a stove supported by three stones when cooking food by ancient people. Without three legs of stone, the stove would not be stable and would cause food to spill. These three stone legs are likened to the three major religions in Fakfak, namely Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism.

In the opinion of the indigenous people of Fakfak, if the three stone legs are stable then all problems can be handled properly so that the implementation of the philosophy of *one stove with three stones* spreads to the family life of the indigenous people in Fakfak. In that philosophy, some elements are agreed upon, namely as one family, one must remain in one heart even though they have different religions and beliefs. There is no definite record of when exactly the term of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* (one stove with three stones) was first used in the Fakfak community tradition. However, some researchers agreed that the term comes from the result of acculturation between religious values (Islam) and local culture that upholds the spirit of kinship (Onim, 2006). In the communal Melanesian tradition, family is considered as everything, they used to risk their lives through wars to protect the family's good name. The tribal war ritual that is still practiced by some tribes in Timika and Pegunungan Tengah is an example of the cultural response of the Papuan people when they feel that their family is under threat. War is waged as a request for responsibility to those who have killed or insulted the honor of the family of a tribe.

Likewise, with social practices in Fakfak, the family is the center of identity that must be maintained. So the differences in religion adhered to by family members are not in question because they prioritize family harmony. This is the basis of the formation of family religion in the tradition of the Fakfak community. The phenomenon of one family adhering to a different religion is a common thing for the people of Fakfak, as stated by Mr. Simon Hindom as follows:

"In my family, there are eight siblings, some are Christians, some are Muslims, and some are Catholics. My brother is a Hajj, my nephew is even a priest. In our tradition here, we are used to sharing religions, as long as they are

sincere and obedient. So, for example, because of marriage a woman has to convert to Islam. So, later one of her children is advised to follow Christianity or Catholicism. This is for the sake of togetherness," (interview with Simon Hindom, 2019)

This is what makes Fakfak unique compared to Indonesia's other regions. In this diversity, there are no conflicts of beliefs or disputes that lead to clashes between religious communities. The flexibility of Islam as the majority religion in Fakfak and its tolerance, allows the people of Fakfak to choose religion without coercion and respect each other's choice. The philosophy of *one stove with three stones* unites the religious plurality in Fakfak so that there are no dominations that cause jealousy and lead to division.

The arrival of Catholicism to Fakfak coastal areas where the majority of the population have embraced Islam is one of the important historical episodes that can describe the roots of tolerance in the culture of the Fakfak community. The arrival of Pastor Cornelis Le Coq from Spain in Sekru village in 1984 on a mission to spread Catholicism in Papua was warmly welcomed by the local community. They apologized to the pastor that they had embraced the religion (Islam), but they were willing to help the pastor to spread Catholicism to their brothers who inhabited the mountainous region of Torea. This friendly attitude surprised Pastor Le Coq, because, in other areas where people embrace Islam, the priest often received acts of intimidation and even expulsion (Onim, 2006).

According to Pastor Isak Bame (interview), the friendly actions of the Muslim community at Sekru illustrate the perspective of the Fakfak community towards inter-religious tolerance. They consider brotherhood to be much more important, and differences between religions do not necessarily separate the ties of brotherhood between them. In this case, religion is placed as a complement to brotherhood and kinship which has become a tradition in the communal society of Fakfak. Many families in Fakfak have family members of different religions; some are Muslims, Christians, or Catholics.

Another form of tolerance is participation in the construction of places of worship, both mosques, and churches. For the people of Fakfak, the house of worship is not only a place to worship but also a cultural symbol of the local community. If a Muslim helps build a church, then he is not helping Christianity but more than that he is helping his brother who happens to be a Christian, and vice versa for Muslims. Therefore, every construction of a mosque or church always involves the two communities. In some cases they are involved as committee members, helping with various building materials and fund-raising for the construction of houses of worship (interview with Simon Tengerere).

Recently, the reproduction identity of "Sat Tungku Tiga Batu" has also been used for law enforcement and politics in Fakfak. For example, the local government interprets "Satu Tungku Tiga Batu" as harmony between the government, society, and local leaders. Some people consider the government's efforts to adapt these traditions to politics it is a good thing, but it must be done carefully to create political hegemony that will close the critical attitude of society.

## FAKFAK MUSLIMS IN THE PAPUA-INDONESIA INTEGRATION PROCESS

The identification of Fakfak's Muslim identity amid the rivalry between Papuan and Indonesian identities is not easy to explain, especially amid claims of Papuan identity which tend to be constructed as Christian and Melanesian. This section seeks to explain the dynamics of the development of Islam, Papuanness, and Indonesianness that are interrelated with the Fakfak-Fakfak community during various political challenges in Papua. The transfer of sovereignty over the Dutch East Indies from the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Indonesia on 27 December 1949 raised the question of the political status of Papua which was still occupied by the Dutch. The Dutch made various political maneuvers to exploit the spirit of "Papuan nationalism" to form a Papuan State that was independent of Indonesia. Sukarno's government took tough political steps by declaring the People's Three Commands (Trikora): 1) Stop the formation of the Dutch puppet state of Papua, 2) Raise the Red and White Flag in West Papua, the homeland of Indonesia, 3) Prepare for general mobilization to defend the independence and the unity of the homeland and the nation (Cholil, 1979).

The Dutch-Indonesian conflict related to the Papua issue officially ended with the signing of the 1962 New York Agreement, in which the Dutch handed over Papua to the United Nations through a commission called UNTEA (United Nation Temporary Executive Authority) and then UNTEA handed over Papua to Indonesia. As part of the New York Agreement, Indonesia is required to carry out a referendum to determine whether the Papuan people are willing to integrate with Indonesia or establish their own state. In a historical referendum in 1969, 1024 Papuans from various groups officially chose to join Indonesia (Drooglever, 2020).

The Fakfak community has a long history regarding Indonesia's claims on Papua during the period of integration and taking over of West Papua. Fakfak's strategic position as the gateway to Papua served as the main posts for military operations and the entrance to Papua. During the period of the Trikora, the

mobilization of volunteers and the infiltration of Indonesian military troops were carried out through the areas of Fakfak, Kaimana, Raja Ampat, and Sorong. To avoid radar monitoring of the Dutch troops, infiltration into Fakfak was often carried out secretly using traditional local fishing boats. People in the East Seram region (where a monument of the seizure of West Papua was erected) have many stories about the heroic actions of fishermen in infiltrating Indonesian military soldiers into West Papua.

This process put very real pressure on the Netherlands on several fronts and in various international diplomatic forums which forced the Netherlands to recognize Indonesia's presence in Papua. Through UN resolution No. 2504 of 1969, the UN officially recognized the results of the Referendum (PEPERA) in 1968. During the referendum, the representatives of the Papuan people, totaling 1024 people, finally decided to join the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. The role of the Fakfak people in the process was very clear when the Fakfak Community Deliberations gave support to the choice of integration with Indonesia. Of the 75 participants in the Pepera deliberation from Fakfak in 1968, consisting of traditional leaders, religious leaders, youth leaders, and women's leaders, 74 participants gave their approval to integration with Indonesia. There was only one participant on behalf of Eduard Hegemur who refused to support Indonesia. The absolute support of the Fakfak community in the process of West Papua's return to Indonesia has made the Fakfak area often called the "Veranda of the Republic of Indonesia" in Papua. Several monuments built in Fakfak indicate these historical claims.

The people of Fakfak also continued to show solid support for the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia after the 1969 Referendum. They rejected various upheavals marked by political resistance and armed rebellion by the Free Papua Movement (OPM) movement. The Fakfak people helped consolidate nationalist forces under the leadership of charismatic figures such as King Mahamud Rumagesan (Sukanto, 2004). Rumagesan who is the King of Pikpik Wertuar also carried out propaganda to strengthen the integration decision. He was often involved by President Sukarno in the Indonesian government's diplomatic activities abroad. For his services, the government of West Papua is currently making efforts to make Mahmud Rumagesan a National Hero. Fakfak is one of the most important areas in West Papua which continues to be considered the most pro-Indonesia community in Papua. The very large Muslim population in this region is considered as one of the important variables explaining the high level of Indonesian nationalism in Fakfak. In recent years, these claims have been challenged by new pro-independence Papuan movements such as the West Papua National Committee in the Fakfak area.

## INDONESIAN NATIONALISM AND THE RESISTANCE TO SEPARATISM

As one of the regencies in West Papua Province, Fakfak cannot avoid various problems that occur in big cities such as Jayapura and Manokwari that affect many other areas in Papua. Sensitive political issues such as separatism and Papua's special autonomy have also divided the Fakfak people into conflicting interest groups. There are youth groups that are increasingly militant in fighting for Papuan political rights in Fakfak such as the West Papuan Youth National Committee (KNPPB). This group is part of the Papuan Presidium Council (PDP) network and its panels, as well as the West Papua National Authority (WPNA), the West Papua National Coalition for Liberation (WPNCL), the West Papua National Committee (KNPB). At the same time, opposing groups such as the Barisan Merah Putih and civilian militias sponsored by the local security forces emerged.

Separatism has become a dangerous political trap because, in addition to being a tool to silence political aspirations against the government, it also triggers mutual suspicion among civil society groups. For example in Fakfak, some groups use a separatist stigma; Pro-M, Anti-Indonesia, etc., to corner political opponents. It occurs in political moments such as local elections or the contestation of political power in the government and during the elections of governors, regents, members of the legislature, or promotion to positions in the local bureaucracy to the civil servant recruitment. This issue is often used as a black campaign among local politicians.

Inevitably, in the Fakfak area, some groups openly support the idea of an independent Papua. Moreover, the repressive security forces contributed to the growth of these groups in Fakfak, for example, the treatment experienced by many young activists under the West Papua National Committee for Youth (KNPPB) representing Fakfak led by Arnoldus Kocu. This group is a representative of the KNPPB based in Manokwari and Jayapura and often conducts demonstrations to voice the aspirations of Papuan independence. The main aspiration of this group is a referendum to determine the popular opinion, whether to join the Republic of Indonesia or to stand alone as an independent nation. KNPPB fights for its aspirations by peaceful means; demonstrations and mass mobilization at certain moments. However, their peaceful actions are often met with repressive measures by the security forces. For example, when two KNPPB activists, Paulus Horik and Klismon Woi, were mysteriously killed in November 2012 and KNPPB Fakfak accused the Indonesian security forces of being the perpetrators. Likewise, the arrest and torture of Arnold Kocu and eight KNPPB activists in August 2013 also

contributed to the popularity of this group as evidence of the existence of pro-M groups in the Fakfak area (Karoba News, 2013). Over time, several components of the Fakfak community have secretly begun to give sympathy and support to this youth group.

The presence of Islam as the majority religion which has formed religious and social identity in Fakfak also influences the way the Fakfak community responds to separatism in Fakfak. The long historical experience related to the acculturation of Islam and local culture in Fakfak has strengthened the people of Fakfak to choose peace as a way of life as conceptualized in the local motto of *one stove with three stones*. This can be seen from the way they view the presence of some people's organizations that support Papuan independence (Pro-M) and radical religious movements. Although it is acknowledged that the KNPB movements promoting the mission of separatism are quite worrying to the immigrant community, they are still allowed to carry out their activities. For the majority of the people of Fakfak, KNPB's actions do not have to be taken seriously as long as their activities do not disrupt peace in the community and they always use peaceful means, which is permissible in democracy. According to the Chairman of the Fakfak Customary Court, as long as KNPB's actions do not cause violence or incite hostility between groups in society, they should not be faced with violence by the state (Interview with Jubair Hubrow, 2019). The same opinion was expressed by the Head of the Fakfak Islamic High School who considered that the ideas of independence and the referendum voiced by youth groups coordinated by KNPB Fakfak were normal in a democratic country. It is precisely through the discourse of separatism that they try to build critical negotiations with the state regarding various state policies towards Papua (Interview with Wihel, 2019).

There are also community groups that do not agree with the presence of separatist groups in Fakfak, such as the Red and White group led by Haji Ismail Bauw. Except for the violent incident that occurred in 2000, this group's rejection of the issue of separatism is more often manifested by peaceful actions, statements of attitude, or social movements that attract public attention, such as the one-kilometer-long flag march, coinciding with the day of the integration of Papua with Indonesia, which was carried out on May 1, 2013. This action was carried out again in August 2019, when Papua and West Papua were hit by violent riots due to demonstrations against racial discrimination against Papuan students in Surabaya.

## SPECIAL AUTONOMY AND DILEMMA OF PAPUAN MUSLIM IDENTITY

Since the integration of Papua with Indonesia, the Papuan people have continued to feel that they live under pressure from the central government, which at that time used a security approach in maintaining Papuan integration. So when the reform gave freedom, the Papuan people demanded independence and self-determination. The government then built diplomacy by imposing a Special Autonomy in Papua. After going through serious studies and debates, the Government enacted Law No. 21 of 2001 concerning Special Autonomy for Papua. The implementation of Special Autonomy for Papua Province has more or less become a conciliation for the Papuan people. There is hope that there will be changes and improvements in the fate and condition of the Papuan people. Since then Papua has received a fairly large balancing fund and continued to increase every year. Simultaneously, the construction of infrastructure, roads, bridges, office buildings, and several other strategic projects began. Special Autonomy is also interpreted as encouraging the creation of new districts in all corners of Papua.

However, the implementation of Special Autonomy has brought many serious implications for socio-political developments in Papua, not only in big cities like Jayapura and Manokwari, but also in areas like Fakfak. The real impact is the prominence of the practice of identity politics which refers to the symptoms of ethnocentrism. According to Levaan (2012), Special Autonomy has been interpreted as the freedom to determine a region's own destiny based on ethnic sentiments. This has prompted all political elites in Papua to recently stipulate that the Governor and Deputy Governor, as well as the Regent and Deputy Regent in Papua, must come from Papuan natives. This stipulation creates problems for multi-ethnic areas such as Fakfak. Since two centuries ago, the people of Fakfak have been interracially married to those of various ethnic groups who came and settled in Fakfak. This has an impact on the construction of Fakfak's ethnic identity, most of whom have mixed identities. They have a distinctive identity that is different from that of most Melanesians in Papua, not only in terms of physical and biological forms but also in complex socio-cultural aspects. The identity of Fakfak is unique and different from the dominant Papuan identity construction.

However, as a result of the Special Autonomy provisions that favor the Melanesian race in Papua, the specific identity of Fakfak has also been challenged. Many Fakfak communities question their Papuan identity. They are not considered to be indigenous enough to identify themselves as Papuans because of several biological differences and cultural characteristics, including

religion and therefore their political rights as Papuans are nor accommodated. Papuan Muslims are often stigmatized with various narratives that place them as being less Papuan, siding with the Indonesian military, pro-Indonesia, etc. Therefore, many get attacked and denigrated.

Moreover, Special Autonomy is interpreted as a specific right for Papuans, so Papuan Muslims are not part of it. Other issues have begun to emerge in the context of local bureaucratic segregation in Fakfak lately, where identity as a Papuan becomes a political construction that divides Papuans into different social strata. The interpretation of *putera daerah* (local people) informally gave birth to the terms Papua B1, B2, B3, and B4. A term that distinguishes the "level" of Papuanness of the people in Fakfak based on lineage. Papua B1 are those born in Fakfak to a Papuan father and Papuan mother who are reflected by a certain family name. Papua B2 are those born in Fakfak to a Papuan father but whose mother is of immigrant ethnicity, Papua B3 are those born in Papua to a Papuan mother and an immigrant father. Whereas Papua B4 or the lowest level, are those born and raised in Papua for the last few years but whose father and mother are of immigrant ethnicity. Such segregation began to occur during the process of recruitment of civil servants and promotion of regional officials. Whereas previously politics of accommodation in Fakfak only prioritized the representation of religions in politics. This is a challenge that must be faced by the multicultural people in Fakfak that have been able to maintain the harmonization of their social and political life.

Meanwhile, the implementation of Special Autonomy was also followed by the expansion of new autonomous regions in Papua, which so far have reached 40 autonomous regions for the Provinces of Papua and West Papua. At the same time, the local people of Papua have emerged as leaders, from regents, House speakers, to heads of offices and departments. The process of vertical mobility of the new Papuan elites is not accompanied by political maturity in democracy. So in practice, mass mobilization carried out by local elites often occurs by exploiting ethnic and religious sentiments. This triggers tensions between tribes in Papua, as well as between Papuans and migrants.

The Fakfak community, which has a moderate political stand and harmonious social conditions, has also been dragged into the increasingly vicious dynamics of identity politics. There are political groupings based on ethnic, and religious identities. Even regional segregation appears; between people living in mountainous areas and those in coastal areas, or between mainland people and islanders. This ethnocentric phenomenon gained momentum when regional head elections were implemented from indirect to direct elections. With this change, the role of local elites has become more prominent and

their bargaining position in local politics has increased. However, at the same time, issues of communalism such as ethnic and religious sentiments are also getting stronger.

The Papuan ethnocentrism that has developed in Fakfak so far can still be brought under control with local norms which are the spirit of *one stove with three stones*. Although there is friction, it can be normalized by employing the local social system. As seen in the political contestation in the 2011 Fakfak Local Elections, where competing candidates often took advantage of religious and ethnic issues for their electoral incentives. This can be seen from the configuration of the supporters of the candidates which centered on two potential candidates, namely the Mohammad Uswanas/Donatus Nimbitkendik pair, who were supported by the natives of Fakfak Baham Mata and the majority are Christians and Catholics. Meanwhile, the Said Hindom/ Ali Baham Temongmere pair was mostly supported by the majority of Muslim immigrant groups.

Such a process also occurs in other places and is a common phenomenon in politics. However, in the Papuan political context, such euphoria can have far-reaching implications beyond the political process as the political contestation has triggered "anti-immigrant" sentiments and provoked widespread religious sentiment among the people of Fakfak. The local political dynamics not only strengthens the negative seeds of ethnocentrism but furthermore it also leads to a political model of representation, where local political elites only use cultural and religious symbols for their pragmatic interests. Furthermore, when they are elected or control certain political positions, the people are forgotten.

Papuan Muslims are sociologically represented by the Papuan Muslim Council (MRP). This organization, as reported by Cahyo Pamungkas (2008), is a continuation of the Papuan Muslim Solidarity (SMP) organization which was formed by 47 Muslim leaders in Papua from various ethnic groups in November 21, 1999. It seems that SMP was established as a response to the political dynamics in post-reform Papua that further strengthened the Christian Papuan identity. Muslims from various ethnic groups in Papua want to show their existence through SMP, although in its later development, two groups were formed within SMP, namely Pro-M and Pro-Indonesia Muslims.

On 10-13 April 10-13 2007, at the Papua Hajj Dormitory, the Papuan Muslim Solidarity (SMP) was founded and later changed to the Papuan Muslim Council (MMP). MMP management builds relations and consolidates major Islamic organizations in Papua such as Nahdhatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, the Jayapura branch Islamic Student Association (HMI), the Jayawidjaya Muslim

Community Forum (FKMJ) which is engaged in the development of Muslim human resources in Jaya Wijaya. At the same time, it also strengthens the position of indigenous Papuan Muslims who felt being marginalized during the political upheaval in post-reform Papua. MMP built communication and networks with the Papuan People's Assembly (MRP), which is pro-independence. The Muslim leader in the MRP was Thoha Al-Hamid who served as Secretary-General of the MRP, while the chairman of the MRP was Teys Aluwae who died in the upheaval in Papua.

The MMP is filled with Papuan Muslim leaders such as Arobi A. Aituarow who is also the chairman of the MMP. As a native Papuan Muslim, Arobi has become a cultural bridge with ethnic groups in Papua (Pamungkas, 2008). The MRP also builds a network with the church community in Papua and often voices human rights violations that indigenous Papuans often face. The MMP's criticisms of the government (especially the Indonesian Military and Police) are often seen as taking MMP's side to the Pro-M faction controlled by Toha Al-Hamid. However, this fact benefits and strengthens the position of MMP, as an organization that is recognized as representing the identity of Papuan Muslims amid the political turmoil between the Republic of Indonesia and the Independence Movement. MMP's efforts to fight for the identity of Papuan Muslims have been welcomed by media activists. An editor of the Papua Women's Voice Tabloid (TSPP) as quoted by Cahyo Pamungkas (2008) admitted that the establishment of MMP shows that construction and division not only favor Christians but also Muslims. MMP tries to construct that Islam and Papua are two unified sub-cultures.

The existence of MMP shows that there is a serious effort to gain a strong bargaining position, especially in defining Islam and Papuaness. However, the problem is that there is a real reduction in the context of Indonesianness. Several groups we met in Fakfak considered that the MMP has good strategies, but it provokes a new segmentation between the pro-Indonesia Papuan Islamic group and Papuan Islam whose position is not yet clear. Most Papuan Muslims, especially in the Fakfak area, are supporters of Indonesia. Fakfak Muslims feel the need to emphasize this, because Islam, Papuanness, and Indonesianness for Muslims in Fakfak are three sub-cultures which is attractive identity. For Fakfak Muslims, being a Fakfak Muslim is similar to being Indonesian, as shown in the experience of the political integration of Papua with Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that the Papuan identity which has so far been constructed as being Christian, black, and having curly hair is not always correct. This

study shows that the long historical process related to Islam that has been experienced by the Fakfak people in West Papua has an impact on defining a specific identity amid the ongoing identity contestation in Papua. This means that the interrelation between culture, religion, and nationalism has so far formed a specific identity and character in the context of Papuanness, Islam, and Indonesianness. Based on such a narrative, two things can be concluded in this study.

First, Islam has made an important contribution to the formation of Fakfak Muslim identity in Papua. The process of acculturating Islam with local Papuan culture in Fakfak has formed new values such as an open and inclusive culture. Fakfak Muslims easily interact with other religious and cultural groups. Tolerance and harmony become the main culture in Fakfak, which is found in the local wisdom of *one stove with three stones*. The Fakfak Muslims' efforts to display identity as Papuans are shown by exploring the history of the encounter with Islam and local customs and culture from time to time. Second, the Islam and Papuanness in Fakfak seem to have implications on the formation of Indonesian identity. The Muslims in Fakfak feel that they are the main part of the Indonesian people in Papua, so it is often heard that Fakfak is both the Veranda of Mecca and the Veranda of the Republic of Indonesia. This can be seen in the historical event of the integration of Papua with Indonesia where all Fakfak delegates involved in the Referendum (Perpera) opted for integration with Indonesia. Even in the political turmoil that is happening in Papua today, where there are often separatist movements that voice Papuan nationalism and independence, Fakfak Muslims still stand strong as Indonesians. Even after the enactment of Law No. 21 of 2001 concerning Special Autonomy for Papua which put Muslims in Papua in a difficult position, Muslims in Fakfak responded by helping to encourage the existence of the Papuan Muslim Council which plays a role in affirming their identity as Muslims as well as Papuans and Indonesians.

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# TENSION OF MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS IN INDONESIA: THE CASE OF CONVERSION AND CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS

**Zuly Qudir**
*Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia*
Email: zuliqodir@umy.ac.id

**Bilveer Singh**
*National University of Singapore, Singapore*
Email: polbilve@nus.edu.sg

## ABSTRACT

*There are in the tense of Christian-Muslim relations in Indonesia since the time of the New Order until today. The issues in Christian-Muslim relations include conversion of faith with marriage and celebrating Christmas. These two issues are constantly associated with religious politics in Indonesia. The issues have forced tensions to resurface, although according to Indonesian history, Christianity and Islam had jointly driven colonialists away and participated in founding the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. In addition to theological affairs, the two issues relating to the tension of Christian-Muslim relationships have also impacted political and economic affairs. This article provides a description of tension between Muslims and Christians in Indonesia in the case of conversion from Islam to Christianity through marriage and celebrating Christmas in Muslim communities. The work concludes that in order to reduce tension between Christians and Muslims, all efforts to conduct theologia religionum dialogue should be sought, and social harmony between Christians and Muslims should be created. All of this is none other than a model of religious practices that have surpassed symbols. This is called passing over religious practices with new religious experiences.*

**Keywords:** Muslim-Christian Relationship; Conversion of Faith; Celebrating Christmas

## INTRODUCTION

Christian-Muslim relations in Indonesia have always been a sensitive discourse. This is due to the theological, historical, and political factors in the backdrop (Sumartana, 2015). Several other sensitive issues relate to issues of Christianization and colonialism (Sumartana, 2015). Another problem

is related to freedom of religion, particularly of minority groups, which is constantly discussed in academia (Yewangoe, 2015). Minority groups are nearly in a constant pitfall of freedom due to suspicions of their activities (Yewangoe, 2015). The relationship between Islam and Christianity in Indonesia is full of religious-political tensions.

Aside from issues of theology and Christianization, the building of places of worship is another sensitive issue in Indonesian Christian-Muslim relations (Asfinawati, 2014). In terms of building places of worship, there are many cases where the building of places of worship was thwarted and prohibited from continuing (Ali-Fauzi et al., 2011). Places of worship belonging to a region's minority groups truly pose a grave challenge in Christian-Muslim relations in Indonesia today. Particularly post the 1998 political reform, numerous houses of worship have been damaged by followers of other religions (Muslims damaging Christians' and Christians damaging Muslims' places of worship) (Ali-Fauzi, Alam, dan Panggabean, 2009).

When we trace back historic tensions that ignited disputes between Christians and Muslims, we found they have occurred since the development of the theological perspective that there is no salvation outside the church (*extra eclexia nula salus*). Such belief is followed by Indonesian churches to this day, and it has impacted the prevalence of suspicions and assumptions that religions other than Christianity are fake (Sumartana, 2011). Meanwhile, there is the assumption among Muslims that there is no salvation outside of Islam (*inna dina indallahi Islam*). God does not acknowledge one's deeds and beliefs outside of Islam. Islam is the perfect religion while other religions are denied, which has been believed by the majority of Muslims until it becomes an absolute doctrine. Accordingly, an inclusive and dialogic perspective of theology needs to be developed to respect differing theological beliefs between Christianity and Islam (Sumartana, 2011).

One of the impacts of the tense Christian-Muslim relations is the advent of conflicts, such as those witnessed in Ambon, where Muslims and Christians alike were engaged in violent conflict (Subagya, 2015). In the case of the Poso conflict, it was due to suspicions and tension between Christians as the majority and Muslims as the minority (Qodir, 2018). The dominance of Christians in Poso had led to unequal social relations with the Muslim community. Meanwhile, the conflict in Papua was caused by a standstill in the dialouge between Christian and Muslim communities in terms of building places of worship and other religious rituals (Hamid dan Suryo, 2014; Hasse, 2016; Qodir, 2015a). Political and economic dominance also served as causal factors in the tensions between Christians and Muslims in Papua (Faisal,

2020).

Facts on the ground corroborate the ongoing tension and contestation between Muslims and Christians to this day, given the various incidents that have taken place. Such conditions have resulted in a harmonious Christian-Muslim relationship that is actually restricted within the confines of artificialities. A harmonious state might have been observed during the New Order, but after the fall of the regime, it has become a serious issue confronted by both Muslim and Christian communities. It is interesting to note that amidst the unfolding conflicts, seeds of peace were found at the local level as part of local community initiatives. For instance, in Ambon where violent conflicts occurred causing more than ten thousand fatalities, there was an initiative to develop peace by civilians of Christian and Muslim backgrounds (Antoni, 2014; Al Qurtuby, 2016). The Christian and Muslim communities in Ambon engaged in collaborative efforts within the framework of humanity to recover from the aftermath of the violent conflicts that ravaged both communities (Pariela, 2008). The Christian and Muslim communities jointly fostered peace, which was shattered by horizontal conflicts in Ambon (Pariela, 2007). Such is also the case in Pose, where peace initiatives were carried out by civil society organizations like Monsituwu Foundation (Prasetyo, 2019). In Papua, initiatives for peace were suggested by both Christian and Muslim groups so that the conflict of violence did not continue (Faisal, 2020; al Hamid, 2020; Hamid dan Suryo, 2014; Yamin, 2020).

The tension in the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Indonesia may be afforded to the contestation fought over public space between the two largest missionary religions in Indonesia (Adeney-Risakotta, 2015). The Christian-Muslim relationship, accordingly, requires social ethics in order to alleviate the ongoing tension based on religious, political, or economic perspectives (Qodir, 2015b). Interreligious social ethics between the two largest religions (Christianity and Islam) in Indonesia is of utmost importance so that issues of mistrust or suspicions may be reduced.

Such conditions above, ultimately, demand that the existing construction of religious relationships (between Christians and Muslims), which is full of tensions, transitions into a relationship of mutual understanding and respect. The majority group should not impose any restrictions upon minority groups. In Indonesia, freedom of religion is a fundamental right guaranteed by the Indonesian Constitution in Article 29 Verse 1 stating that every citizen is free to choose their religion and belief. As such, a strict regulation that does not violate the rights of citizens is required in the life of the state and society (Bagir et. al, 2019). The current article argues that the ongoing Christian-

Muslim tension in Indonesia today is a persisting problem that continues to be submerged and perpetuated, and accordingly requires a contemporary solution to untangle the conflict and pressure between the two groups. A wisdom approach by holding religious (Christian-Muslim) dialogues within the framework of *religionum theology* must be conducted intensively in order to mutually understand and respect differences that are evident in Christianity and Islam. There should be no more mutual suspicions among Christians and Muslims, and followers should not perpetuate proselytization methods calling upon religious conversion and blaming the religious views others adhere to. Passing over serves as one of the options in fostering better Christian-Muslim relations in Indonesia. Immersion into others' feelings and understanding differences are among some of the key steps.

## THE ISSUE OF CONVERSION WITH MARRIAGE

Muslim-Christian relations have often been hampered by issues relating to religious conversion, which for instance refers to a Muslim converting to Christianity ince the New Order until today. However, it is not an issue for Muslims when a Christian converts to Islam. They are considered by Muslims to have been given divine guidance and chosen the true path. However, it becomes a serious issue when one converts from Islam to Christianity. They will be considered apostates who have renounced the true faith and abandoned divine guidance. Religious conversion, from Islam to Christianity or vice versa, remains unacceptable as a part of "religious freedom". This is, associatively, due to the missionary concept of da'wah and proselytizing found in both religions (Mujiburrahman, 2006).

Religious conversion has even become a tough political issue. The problem of conversion, which has put a strain on Muslim-Christian relations since the New Order, is a suspicion that Muslims have against Christians (Steenbrink, 2005). Several educational institutions and non-government organizations have long been suspected to be agents of Christianizing (converting) Muslims. In terms of study centers, the suspicion falls upon the Centre for Strategy and International Studies (CSIS) led by Sofyan Wanandi and Daoed Joesoef. Sanata Dharma University (previously known as IKIP Sanata Dharma Yogyakarta), which is a higher education institution accused to be an agent of Christianization and *kaderisasi sebulan* (one-month caderization – *kasebul*) (Dhakidae, 2003). Two Protestant higher education institutions often considered agents of Christianization include Satya Wacana Christian University of Salatiga and Duta Wacana Christian University of Yogyakarta (Dhakidae, 2003). In the Christian circle, the Indonesian Bible Society

(Lembaga Al-Kitab Indonesia – LAI) that publishes the Bible in Jakarta is accused to be an agent that distributes Bibles to Muslim communities. Meanwhile, religious seminars held by the Council of Churches in Indonesia (which has changed to Communion of Churches in Indonesia/PGI) are deemed as forums to discuss issues of Christianization, despite the difficulty in proving such accusations (Sumartana, 2011).

A study by Robert W. Hefner, concerning religious conversion in the Hill of Tengger, states the problem unfolding among Muslims, Christians, and Hindus as a historical and anthropological issue (Hefner, 1993). Religious conversion is also a political-economic issue in Indonesia (Hefner, 1987). Hefner also places minority religions as being accused of being agents of religious conversion from Islam to Christianity (Hefner, 1990). Conversion has, subsequently, become a crucial issue ambushing higher education institutions as well as Indonesian political-economic life. The issue of religious conversion becomes even more serious when the individual is a Muslim woman converting to Christianity. The accusation that Christians deliberately have a Christianization agenda by marrying Muslim women with the purpose of spreading Christianity among Muslims, as is the case in Aceh, exists among the public (Ansor & Amri, 2020).

Upon closer observation, issues on the Christianization of Muslims pertain to individuals carrying out religious conversion, the presence of educational institutions, study centers, Bible publications, and members of the community with economic predicaments. When a Muslim converts to Christianity, Christians will be accused as undertaking efforts of Christianization. Yet, oppositely, when Christians convert to Islam, it is not considered as a deliberate effort of converting Christians. The Muslim community may even be proud these converts, particularly when they become a prominent Muslim figure.

The problem of religious conversion in Indonesia indirectly correlates with the country's population and its exceedingly varied religiosity and spirituality traditions. With a population of 265 million in 2010, Robert W Hefner stated: "With a population of 265 million people, Indonesia is the third most populous electoral democracy in the world. It is also one of the most ethnically diverse, with over four hundred ethnic groups living on 4000 islands stretching across some 3400 miles along the equator. Indonesia is also the world's most populous Muslim-majority country, with 87.2% of citizens officially professing Islam. The remaining population is divided among Protestants and Catholics (9.90%), Hindus (1.69%), Buddhists (0.72%), and Confucians (0.05%). Although the Indonesian state extends formal recognition to just these six religions, there are several hundred thousand Indonesians who adhere to one among dozens of "indigenous religions" (*agama leluhur*) or "spirituality traditions" (*aliran*

*kepercayaan*) in the country. As will be discussed below, in recent years the status of these long-unrecognized religious traditions has become the focus of public debate and judicial review" (Hefner, 2020).

Many studies state that religious conversion carried out in Indonesia is not problematic. However, the facts on the ground are contrary to these findings because religious conversions from Islam to Christianity are a very serious problem in the Muslim community. This is especially problematic and controversial if the conversion is carried out by those who become religious leaders or famous personalities who were formerly Muslims but are now Christians. These type of incidents in Islamic society, where a Muslim marries a Christian and changes their religions, they will be considered to have betrayed his religion, family and society. Therefore, the social punishment for a Muslim who marries a Christian is very severe, especially if one later changes religion.

Therefore, religious leaders, both Christian and Muslim, have suggested that marriages should be within one's religion. Clearly, these leaders do not recommend interfaith marriages. The social burden of interfaith marriage can last a very long time because it becomes a burden to those who have to live through such mixed-religious unions as well as the burden for their families. Abdul Muhaimin said, one of the caretakers of a boarding school in Kotagede, Yogyakarta, is quoted as saying: "Marriage between religions, Islam and Christianity, even if there are those who allow it. Actually, the social burden they bear is very heavy. There are those whose families are no longer willing to admit they are part of the family. Someone threw him out of his house. Others were insulted by the local community on the accusation that they only wanted to get property. In fact, there are those who punish them as infidels-apostates. Therefore, even if interfaith marriage is allowed, in my opinion, the burden will be lighter if marriage is within one's religion, Muslims with fellow Muslims and Christian with Christian. It does not have to be between religions".

This is problematic in particular if the interfaith marriage is carried out by a figure or popular person in the Muslim community. This person will become a topic of conversation because of the marriage that is carried out. For example, in the case of a marriage between a television actress, a singer, or a female cinema star who marries a Christian cinema actor, then the punishment for the artist may not be light. The artist can become an issue on social media and may even be expelled from his village for marrying a Christian. This is especially true as an actor who is Christian among Muslims is usually referred to as an infidel, a largely derogative and disapproving term. This concern is especially if an interfaith marriage is performed by an Islamic religious figure

with a Christian. For such cases, the social punishment against such persons can last a lifetime with the individual accused of "selling religion" at a cheap price.

Critics have also argued that interfaith marriages are about creating wealth and beautifying oneself, and where beauty becomes a goal of life even if it means challenging God. It is for this dual mission of wealth creation and beautification that some Muslims are seen to be willing to marry a Christian. In view of these debates and narratives, interfaith marriages in Islamic societies are not as easy as in the past due to the rise of theological debates even in the context of rising discussions of religious pluralism. The same debates and challenges also exist in the Christian community. There are rising debates and issues about a Christian marrying a Muslim with such individuals accused of leaving the "path of Christus". Such individuals are said to have lost the blessings of Jesus. Those who marry outside the Christian religion are said to have violated the sacred promise of being with the kingdom of God. Hence, even within the Christian community, it prefers a Christian to marry another Christian. Or, if a Christian marries a Muslim, the Christian should stay within Christianity and not convert to Islam. This is because by converting to a Muslim, a Christian is seen to be "violating the Way of Truth". Hence, for Christians, if there is an interfaith marriage it is said to have an impact on religious transformation and hence, remains a serious problem and is viewed from negative lenses.

> Bishop Gregorius Subanar said the following about the topic:
> As a pastor, I always suggest that if you are going to get married, it is better if you only have one religion. Because marriage between religions is a serious social risk. Especially if you change religions because of marriage. It is a very severe "social punishment" to his siblings and family. There are many cases of marriage between religions which then have an impact on the rift between families in society even though some are still in harmony. However, in society they actually 'criticize and punish' those who marry between religions and convert to other religions".

Bishop Subanar's statement seems no different from what Abdul Muhaimin has stated. That marriage between religions, which causes religious conversion, even if it is permissible, actually creates serious problems in Muslim and Christian societies. Both Muslim and Christian communities are still not completely accepting if they take the path of marriage between religions, let alone change religions. Marriage between religions and changing religions is indeed a person's right in choosing the path of life. However, the social

punishment that must be borne becomes a burden that often discourages people from doing so. In Christianity, there are also negative consequences if a religious figure converts to Islam. The punishment given is much more serious. The phrase "Selling God", "Denying the Grace of the Lord Jesus", and "Betrayal of the kingdom of God", "Preparing to receive sin from God" and "not getting the atonement" are common expressions in Christian society, particularly in Indonesian Charismatic Christian community.

It is true that there are many motives for people to convert or marry between religions, including the generosity of one's family and to receive "guidance" or God's guidance. However, such motives are often incomprehensible to the general public, regardless of whether one is a Muslim or Christian. In fact, among Muslims, if a Muslim converts to Christianity, then there is only a very negative expression: apostasy and being distant from the Guidance of God. It also connotes that one is following the lust of the devil and the worldly attractions and hence the willingness to leave the goodness of the hereafter. In short, inter-religious marriages that cause the transfer of religion will be a disaster in social life in Indonesia. This leads to the view that one's choice of inter-marriage and religious conversion would create conflicts in society, especially in Indonesia, including a rising trust deficit between Muslims and Christians.

## PRAYER EVENTS OF CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS

Eid al-Fitr and Christmas are two of the most popular holidays for Muslims and Christians. Wishing Christians "Merry Christmas" was, initially, not a serious issue before 1981. However, since 1981 Muslims saying Merry Christmas became a very sensitive matter. It is known that Christmas became a sensitive issue since the resignation of Buya Hamka as the General Chair of MUI (Indonesian Ulema Council) in 1981 due to a difference of opinion with the government relating to Christmas celebrations conducted by governmental institutions that held joint Christmas Ceremony in Indonesia. Buya Hamka was of the opinion that participating in the Christmas Ceremony is haram for Muslims. Meanwhile, the government expected Buya Hamka to revoke the fatwa. Yet, Buya Hamka chose not to revoke the fatwa and resigned from the position of MUI General Chair.

The content of the MUI fatwa issued in 1981 is as follows: (1) Christmas celebration in Indonesia, although their purpose is to celebrate and honor Prophet Isa (peace be upon him), Christmas is inseparable from matters of faith and worship; (2) It is haram for Muslims to participate in joint-Christmas ceremonies; (3) Muslims are advised not to participate in Christmas activities

so as not to be plunged into *shubhat* (doubt) and Allah's prohibition. Such a fatwa on Christmas was issued by MUI in 1981. It was signed on March 7th, 1981 by the chair of the Fatwa Commission at the time, KH M Syukri Ghozali, and the Secretary of the Fatwa Commission, Mas'udi. When the fatwa was issued, MUI was chaired by Prof. Dr. KH. Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, also known as Buya Hamka.

The current General Chair of MUI, Din Syamsuddin, said that when correlated with the present social religious conditions, the 1981 MUI fatwa needs to be revisited. Din Syamsuddin mentioned that due to the misunderstanding of Christmas among Muslims, joint Christmas events are haram to Muslims. Din Syamsuddin stated, "Some issues had come to the attention of ulemas before the fatwa was issued. For instance, joint Christmas celebrations were often misinterpreted by some Muslims. Christmas celebration was also frequently likened to celebrating Mawlid al-Nabi (the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him) because Christmas marks the birth of Prophet Isa (Jesus Christ) to Christians. Accordingly, the fatwa was issued with the consideration that Muslims needed clear guidance concerning joint Christmas celebration so as not to intermix their worship with acts of worship of other religions, without undermining efforts to maintain interreligious harmony throughout Indonesia" (Pratama, 2014).

Based on the exegeses of theologians and ulemas of fiqh (Islamic law), the MUI fatwa that has been applied since 1981 until today, has constantly become one of the sources of tension in the relationship between Muslims and Christians in Indonesia, when Muslims convey Christmas greetings or salutations. Accordingly, when Christians express Eid al-Fitr greetings or salutations, tension unfolds among Muslims in which some argue that Christians should not express Eid al-Fitr salutation to Muslims, as it will erode Muslim faith. As, generally, Muslims carry out Ramadan Fasting for a full month prior to celebrating Eid al-Fitr. Throughout the holy month of Ramadan, Muslims conduct various religious activities as additional rituals, such as reciting the Quran (*tadarus* al-quran), providing snacks or meals to break the fast (*ta'jil*), communal reading of the Quran before breaking the fast, after the night prayer (Isha) and *tarawih* prayer. Muslims undertake all of those activities for the purpose of becoming closer to and gaining more reward from God during the holy month of Ramadan. All are carried out so that at the end of Ramadan, Muslims who fast expect to acquire a venerable standing as a human being that only fears God (piety) because they have fasted and followed all of its ensuing rituals (Shihab, 2008).

There is intense discourse pertaining to such expression in the Muslim

community on account of some Muslims who consider that expressing Christmas greetings to Christians is an expression of national comradeship as fellow citizens. It will not erode a Muslim's faith whatsoever. Expressing Christmas greetings will not turn a Muslim into a Christian. In fact, saying Christmas salutations to Christians indicates Muslim's degree of faith in Allah for the existing diversity in Indonesia, and that, essentially, is an acknowledgment to *sunnatullah* (the immutable laws of Allah) (Maarif, 2015). A serious debate that generates tension is also related to the guarding of churches carried out by Muslims during Christmas celebrations. Some Muslims question why the Multipurpose Ansor Front (*Barisan Serbaguna Ansor* – Banser, a part of NU's youth wing) guards churches during Christmas, while it does not guard mosques or locations for prayers during Eid al-Fitr. What is Banser's intent in guarding churches during Christmas if not for the sake of momentary interest and to state that they are, seemingly, tolerant of others? Meanwhile, those who do not do such things are not tolerant. That is why, guarding mosques during Eid al-Fitr is, actually, considered mere Christian politics so that their faith is acknowledged by the Muslim community, despite it being in clear opposition to the Islamic belief (Nashrullah, 2019).

In terms of guarding churches, and expressing Christmas salutations, Muhammadiyah Central Board's Tarjih Council firmly states its opinion as stipulated in the book titled *Tanya Jawab Agama Jilid II, Tim Majlis Tarjih PP Muhammadiyah* [Q & A on Religion Volume II, Tarjih Council Team of Muhammadiyah Central Board], which was published by Suara Muhammadiyah (1991). It is explained that attending joint Christmas celebrations is haram in the perspective of Islamic law. Muhammadiyah, in this matter, upholds the word of Allah SWT in the Quran as follows: "They are those who do not bear false witness, and when they come across falsehood, they pass it by with dignity" (Al Azhar, 2012). The meaning of this verse is that they do not attend 'az-zur'. If they were to pass by it, they would do so immediately and would not want to be tarnished at all by 'az-zur (Katsir, 2018). Many Islamic legal rulings declare that it is haram to attend celebrations of non-Muslim holidays based on this verse. To support its view, Muhammadiyah Central Board's Tarjih Council also refers to Imam Malik who stated, "Muslims are forbidden from celebrating holidays of *mushrik* (polytheist) or *kafir* (infidel), giving something (presents), selling something to them, or ride vehicles they use to celebrate their holidays. Meanwhile, eating food that they offer us is *makruh* (disliked), be it delivered to us or them inviting us " (Tamiyyah, 1967). Saying 'Merry Christmas' is akin to glorifying it, which is not allowed (Al-Jauziyyah, 1956). Unlike Muhammadiyah's view, the Executive Council of the NU Sentral Board is of the opinion that there is nothing wrong with Muslims

wishing Christians 'Merry Christmas'. Let alone when it is expressed simply to respect and maintain comradeship as fellow citizens. The chair of NU Sentral Board's Executive council, Robikin Emhas, stated that some religious priests do indeed have differing perspectives concerning the legal ruling for Muslims to express 'Merry Christmas' to Christians (Santoso & Yasir, 2019).

Such conditions have an impact on creating tensions when Muslims celebrate Eid al-Fitr. The Eid al-Fitr celebration among Muslims is one of the rituals that have a very deep meaning to celebrate Muslims who carried out acts of worship throughout the month of Ramadan. Muslims who have completed their fast are expected to be reborn as a hallowed human being, back to their initial point of faith. Whereas Christians, through Christmas, are also reborn in holiness as their sins have been cleansed away by Jesus Christ through his sacrifice on the cross. The two different and meaningful traditions of Eid al-Fitr and Christmas are laden with theological meanings and tensions between Muslims and Christians throughout the political period from 1985 until today. Even since the 1998 political reform, Eid al-Fitr and Christmas have been witnessed as events with highly intense political tensions. In terms of the development of this issue among Indonesians, according to the 1981 MUI fatwa, expressing Christmas salutation is haram. However, MUI does not, actually, prohibit expressing Christmas salutation in the fatwa.

Considering the debate presented by Muhammadiyah and NU about the celebration and Christmas greetings of a Muslim to Christians, can be said to be a question that has been going on all this time. It is very sensitive for a Muslim to deliver a Christmas greeting to a Christian. There are very unpleasant accusations like Apostasy, selling religion, and not a strong faith. Such allegations are hardly heard in the literature we can read. However, we will get it while in the Muslim community. This is of course a problem in the relationship between religions (Islam-Christianity) in Indonesia because the celebration of Christmas and Eid al-Fitr will always happen every year. The sensitivity of Muslims towards Christians who wish them a happy Eid was considered a tactic so that one day Muslims owe a debt of gratitude to wish Christians a Merry Christmas. We will easily get *WhatsApp* posts, videos, and Facebook, just before Christmas arrives. At that time, Muslims were warned not to say Christmas, because it made Muslims be considered apostate or infidel, and changed religions. The social impact on Islam-Christian relations in Indonesia is truly dire. The tension during Christmas and Eid al-Fitr occurs because the congregation congratulates Eid or congratulations about Christmas on social media.

## CONCLUSION

The critical issue hampering Christian-Muslim relations is the matter of religious mission (da'wah) found in the two Abrahamic traditions. Both claim to be the bringer and spreader of religion to people of the world so they can be saved from their digression. This is the crux of the problem in Christian-Muslim relations that continues to develop to this day and resulting in other problems such as religious conversion building of houses of worship, Christmas-Eid al-Fitr celebrations, and the issue of Jesus-Muhammad. These issues develop due to theological perspectives within Christianity and Islam that have not been resolved to date. Without the willingness of Christians and Muslims to jointly engage in critical dialogues pertaining to Christian-Muslim relations, which have been full of tensions since the post-colonial period until today, suspicions to bring down one another, to disrespect the uniqueness, differences, and salvation found in both missionary religions will remain among Christians and Muslims alike. The two Abrahamic religious traditions continue to be at odds due to differences in theological matters, as well as political and economic issues in the country.

One of the means to stop or reduce the ongoing tensions between Christians and Muslims in Indonesia today and in the future contemporary era is by conducting equal, critical, and open dialogue. By implementing such means, both Christians and Muslims will be able to learn from one another, share experiences, and still steadfastly uphold the beliefs they follow. This is the tradition of passing over that can be developed among followers of Christianity and Islam in Indonesia. Passing over can, accordingly, be considered a new tradition in spreading the mission of the Abrahamic religious traditions within the present context. Passing over also functions as a religious design within a perspective that goes beyond religious symbolism. It refers to practicing religion in a diversity of symbols yet a unity of substantial meaning.

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