Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work, and that I have acknowledged all results and quotations from the published or unpublished work of other people.

Stella Aleida Hutagalung
Acknowledgments

A lot of people help me in many ways in my PhD journey and make this thesis possible. There are so many people to whom I owe a debt of gratitude. Let me start by thanking the people of Kupang, especially those who have patiently allowed me to observe their daily lives and made my days in Kupang challenging and enjoyable. I am immensely grateful to Ibu Endah, Kak Nur Wahid, Kak Rahmawati, Haji Komarudin, Rahma, Pak Munandjar Widyatmika and his wife Ibu Yuliati Aida, Haji Abdurachim Mustafa, Haji Badar Daeng Pawero, Haji Tahir Zen, Pak Hamzah Iyang, Haji Abdul Makarim, Haji Gudban, Pak Burhan Mustafa and all their families. I owe an enormous gratitude to *imam* of the mosques and members of Majelis Taklim in the villages that I studied. My thanks and gratitude is extended to Timoriyani Samauna and Rahmad Nasir who helped me as research assistants during my first months of fieldwork, Sugeng Prayudi and his wife Edenn Grace, Kak Lintje Pellu, Paulus Liu and his wife Selfi Nange, Nur Aini Talib and family, and Silvia and Victoria Fanggidae with whom I enjoyed a warm friendship.

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I have benefited from hospitality and friendships of numerous people during my stay in Canberra. Thank you Santi, Dewa Wisana, Daniel Suryadarma, Dimas Oky Nugroho, Saud Siringo-ringgo, Ardian Alhadath, Erick Hansnata, Luke Arnold and Leliana Setiono, Eka Mardiana and Doni, and (again) Andrey Damaledo and their families; friends at Canberunners who have introduced me to running, which becomes my favorite sport today; friends at PMKIC (Indonesian Christian Community in Canberra); Lin Zhao and her family; and all other friends that I cannot mentioned one by one.

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When I was in my first year of the PhD program, my father Mangasa Sotarduga Hutagalung passed away. His departure left a profound grief. It was during the fieldwork in Kupang that I fondly learnt how the Muslims remember and pray for the deceased in *tahlilan* (prayer ritual for the deceased). Every time I attended a *tahlilan*, I would take the opportunity to remember and pray for the beloved ones who have passed away: my father, my elder brother Gumilang Hutagalung and my baby Abbey.

I dedicated this thesis to my beloved family for their prayers and supports: Mama, Ibu, Bapak, Easter Hutagalung, Liston Simare-mare, Rusliana Sidabutar, Yosafat Hutagalung, Dwi Adhi Retiningtyas, Margaretha Hutabarat, Wahyu Wirasmoro, Indaru, Ririn, Prahesti (Teti), Wiwin, Dian, and all my nieces and nephews (Gita, Artia Daniel, Matthew, Odis, Arya, Azra, Aira and Acha). I owe much to Wahyu Handoyo, who is always happy to read the drafts of my thesis and to be the best critic of them all. I am very grateful for his endless support. Last but not least, I thank God for giving me an opportunity to undertake this research. It has been a long, winding yet beautiful PhD journey.
Abstract

This thesis argues that Islam practised in Kupang has a rich diversity based on historical influences that have shaped its traditions and expression. It examines the everyday Islamic practices of Aswaja Muslim communities in Kupang, with respect to the celebrations of Islamic festivals, lifecycles, and Qur’an learning. The study is based on fieldwork conducted in three Muslim enclaves consisting of four kampung: Kampung Solor, Kampung Airmata and Kampung Bonipoi, and Kampung Oesapa. It offers an ethnographic study of various practices of Islam in Kupang that examines the history of these enclaves, their mosques, and their leaders’ efforts to preserve the Aswaja Islamic traditions, how these enclaves deal with pressures for religious change, and their interaction with the Christian majority.

This study begins with Muslims’ perspectives on factors that enable their survival in a Christian town. The analysis focuses on the multifaceted nature of Muslim-Christian relationships in Kupang and the growing influence of wider Indonesian sectarian tensions on the city. But the shared history between Muslims and Christians, the community engagement in both religious and non-religious spheres, and intermarriage and friendly attitudes by both communities work to maintain generally peaceful relationships.

The emergence of modernist and transnational dakwah (proselytising) organisations adds to the diversity of Islam in Kupang, but at the same time also challenges the Islamic traditions practised by the Aswaja Muslim communities. Muslims in the three enclaves have adapted and adjusted to these changes in various ways. Kampung Solor adopted changes in certain rituals but maintained those considered to be at the heart of their Islamic traditions. On the other hand, Kampung Airmata and Kampung Bonipoi preserved the traditions, while Kampung Oesapa sustained the settler Bugis Islamic traditions. The existing relations between Muslims and Christians are challenged by the notion of a global Muslim community (ummah) advocated by the renewal dakwah.

The thesis shows that the challenge of being a Muslim in Kupang has two defining aspects. The first is its minority status in a Christian majority setting, and the suspicions and uncertainties that this entails. The second aspect is that being Muslim is by no means homogenous in cultural and religious orientation and so there are significant internal tensions, disagreements, and differences in the multiple ways that Islam is
understood and practised. This thesis argues that being Muslim in a Christian town has as much to do with engaging differences among the Islamic groups as it does in negotiating shared space with the Christians.
Table of Contents

Declaration ii
Acknowledgments iii
Abstract vii
Table of Contents ix
Notes on style xii
List of illustrations xiii
Abbreviations and Glossary xv
Chapter One
Introduction 1
Everyday Islamic Practices 3
Varieties of Islam in Kupang and their Histories 8
Aswaja and the Modernist Movement 17
Islamic Renewal Movements 20
Muslim-Christian Relations 21
Setting 24
Methodology 28
Outline of Thesis Chapters 37
Chapter Two
Living in a Christian Town: Muslims’ Perspectives 39
Introduction 39
Kupang as a City of Migrants 42
Christian Missionisation on Timor and in Kupang 46
Demographic and Social Indicators 48
Relations with Christians: The Muslims’ Perspectives 51
Legacy of the 1998 Violence 54
Dispute over the Batuplat Mosque 58
Celebration of Religious Festivals 60
Intermarriage and Familial Ties 63
Negotiation over Halal and Haram 65
Conclusion 66
Chapter Three
The First Muslim Enclave: Kampung Solor 69
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Muslim Community of Kampung Solor</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Fatah Mosque</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Imam and their Backgrounds</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhammadiyah Schools</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Majelis Taklim</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifecycle Rituals</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fourth Month of Pregnancy</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Akekah</em> and Circumcision</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praying for the Deceased (<em>Tahlilan</em>)</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Festivals</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communal Bath of Safar</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birthday of the Prophet</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fasting Month</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Feast of Sacrifice</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Four</strong></td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Second Muslim Enclave: Kampung Airmata, Kampung Bonipoi, and the Hadhrami</strong></td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction: The Second Muslim Enclave</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. The Muslim Community of Kampung Airmata</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Structure of Kampung Imam and Kampung Raja</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifecycle Rituals in Kampung Airmata</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Festivals in Kampung Airmata</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The Muslim Community of Kampung Bonipoi</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief History of the Kampung</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Ikhlas Mosque</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Festivals in Kampung Bonipoi</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death and Funeral Assistance</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qur’an Learning Centre</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambus Musical Group</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. The Hadhrami Community in Airmata and Bonipoi</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles of Hadhrami in Religious Instruction</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining Hadhrami identity</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes on style

I use single inverted commas (‘…’) when citing any written works and interviews. If quotation marks are needed inside a passage that is already enclosed in inverted commas, double inverted commas (“…”) is used instead of single ones. I use square brackets ([…]) when I add something to a quote. I spell out numbers under 10 (zero through nine) and for calendar years, dates, times, ages of people, monetary amounts, percentages and ratios, except for all numbers that begin a sentence. I use the numeric symbols for numbers 10 and over.

Indonesian words are spelled to the official convention of the Republic of Indonesia (Ejaan Yang Disempurnakan, abbreviated EYD or the Perfected Spelling System, 1972). Arabic words will be spelled as they are in Indonesian, for example Qur’an, syari’at and zikir, without diacritic symbols. For the plural forms of Indonesian words I do not add ‘s’ and such words as kampung and imam may be singular or plural. Bugis words will be cited as written in the referred sources without change. If the words are still in the original languages, I will use (A) for Arabic, (B) for Bugis language, and (D) for Dutch. For the Qur’anic verses, I use N.J. Dawood’s The Koran, 2006.
List of illustrations

Figure 1 Map of Kupang City .................................................................27
Figure 2. Population of Kupang based on religion (%) 2006-2013 (BPS various years) .................................................................50
Figure 3 The Number of Places of Worship in Kupang (BPS various years)..............51
Figure 4 The Number of Hajj Pilgrims from Kupang (BPS various years).............51
Figure 5 Map of Kampung Solor ................................................................72
Figure 6 Al Fatah Mosque .....................................................................74
Figure 7 The Fourth Month Pregnancy Ritual .............................................83
Figure 8 Islamic Festivals in Kampung Solor ..............................................89
Figure 9 Preparation for Bath of Safar ................................................................91
Figure 10 Annual Communal Bath of Safar ................................................91
Figure 11 Maulid Celebration at Al Fatah Mosque ...........................................93
Figure 12 Parcels of Fruits, Siripuang and Water ........................................94
Figure 13 Ibu Endah and her daughter visiting the grave .............................100
Figure 14 The Feast of Sacrifice ..................................................................101
Figure 15 Cutting and weighing the meat .....................................................102
Figure 16 Map of Kampung Airmata ..........................................................108
Figure 17 The Dyadic Structure of Kampung Imam and Kampung Raja ...........112
Figure 18 Names of Imam on the podium of Airmata Mosque .......................113
Figure 19 Airmata Mosque: the defender of Aswaja tradition ......................118
Figure 20 Islamic Festivals in Kampung Airmata .......................................119
Figure 21 The Dana-dana night ................................................................123
Figure 22 Maulid celebration in Kampung Airmata ......................................129
Figure 23 Visiting the grave on Idul Fitri ....................................................137
Figure 24 Map of Kampung Bonipoi ............................................................139
Figure 25 The tomb of Depati Amir Bahren at Batukadera Cemetery ..........140
Figure 26 Al Ikhlas Mosque .....................................................................143
Figure 27 Islamic Festivals in Kampung Bonipoi .........................................146
Figure 28 Prayer ritual after the Bath of Safar .............................................148
Figure 29 TPA Bonipoi .........................................................................151
Figure 30 Gambus musical group and Zapin dance .....................................153
Figure 31 Habib Usman Alkadri in front of Syarif Alkadri’s tomb ..............158
Figure 32 Genealogy Book (Buku Nasab) .......................................................... 161
Figure 33 Alhabsy's family gathering ................................................................. 164
Figure 34 Map of Kampung Oesapa ................................................................. 168
Figure 35 Al Fitrah Mosque ............................................................................. 170
Figure 36 Akekah ritual .................................................................................... 177
Figure 37 A boy and his father after circumcision ........................................... 178
Figure 38 Syahran and his great grandfather Haji Badar Daeng Pawero ........ 179
Figure 39 Bugis pre-wedding ceremonies ....................................................... 182
Figure 40 The newlywed after the Islamic marriage vows ............................... 183
Figure 41 Wedding party after the Islamic marriage vows ............................... 184
Figure 42 Maulid celebration at Kampung Oesapa ......................................... 186
Figure 43 Isra Mi'raj celebration at Al Fitrah Mosque .................................... 187
Figure 44 Women mualaf learning to read Qur'an .......................................... 193
### Abbreviations and Glossary

**Abbreviations:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GMIM</td>
<td>Gereja Masehi Injili Minahasa, Christian Evangelical Church in North Sulawesi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMIT</td>
<td>Gereja Masehi Injili Timor, Christian Evangelical Church in Timor</td>
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<tr>
<td>GPI</td>
<td>Gereja Protestan Indonesia, Indonesian Protestant Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPM</td>
<td>Gereja Protestan Maluku, Christian Evangelical Church in Maluku</td>
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<tr>
<td>HTI</td>
<td>Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, a revivalist organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>IAIN</td>
<td>Institut Agama Islam Negeri, State Institute for Islamic Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>IK</td>
<td>Indische Kerk, Protestant Church administered by the Dutch colonial administration, now GPI</td>
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<tr>
<td>JAM</td>
<td>Jajanan Air Mata, a culinary centre in Kampung Airmata during the fasting month</td>
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<tr>
<td>JT</td>
<td>Jamaah Tabligh, a revivalist organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KUA</td>
<td>Kantor Urusan Agama, the Office of Religious Affairs at sub-district level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUI</td>
<td>Majelis Ulama Indonesia, Indonesian Council of Ulama</td>
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<tr>
<td>NTT</td>
<td>Nusa Tenggara Timur, East Nusa Tenggara province</td>
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<tr>
<td>NU</td>
<td>Nahdlatul Ulama, a traditionalist Muslim organisation, founded in East Java in 1926</td>
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<tr>
<td>NZG</td>
<td>Netherlands Missionary Society (Dutch: Nederlandsch Zendelinggenootschap), led early Protestant mission on Timor</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAUD</td>
<td>Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, Early Aged Learning Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGA</td>
<td>Pendidikan Guru Agama, a vocational school to become a religious teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>PKK</td>
<td>Pendidikan Kesejahteraan Keluarga, a state-sponsored organisation for women focusing on family welfare programs</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (The Prosperous and Justice Party), a political party with Islamic inclination, founded in post-New Order Indonesia

Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (United Development Party), a political party with Islamic inclination

Rukun Tetangga, a neighbourhood unit comprising several households, see RW

Rukun Warga, a neighbourhood unit below village administrative government, comprising several RT

Suku, Agama, Ras dan Antar-Golongan, Ethnicity, Religion, Race and Inter-Class.

Sarekat Oesaha Solor (League of Solor Endeavour), a social organisation founded in Kupang in 1925, whose members were Muslims

Theological Seminary, established in three main centres of Protestant missions: Minahasa, Maluku, and Timor

Taman Kanak-Kanak, kindergarten

Taman Pendidikan Al Qur’an, Qur’anic Learning Centre (for children)

Timor Tengah Selatan, South Central Timor, a district in NTT province

University of Nusa Cendana

The Dutch East India Company (Dutch: Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie), a company that represented the Dutch Government in trade activities in the Indonesian archipelago, founded in 1612 and declared bankrupt in 1800. The role VOC was taken over by the Dutch colonial government

Glossary:

adat  Custom, tradition

adzan  The call for prayer from mosque

akekah  The ritual of hair shaving and name giving for newborn baby, marked by goat slaughtering
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>akhirat or kiamat</td>
<td>Judgment Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>akhlak</td>
<td>Morals, morality, ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>akidah</td>
<td>Articles of faith, religious belief, theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alam kubur</td>
<td>Realm of the grave, before the Judgement Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aswaja</td>
<td>Suni Islam, the followers of Syafii school of law (as opposed to Shi’i Islam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aurat</td>
<td>The term referring to parts of the body that must be covered in public as stipulated in Qur’an, which is subject to a number of interpretations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barzanji</td>
<td>The book containing story of the life of the Prophet, read publicly on important occasions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bismillah or basmallah</td>
<td>The Islamic opening salutation, literally means ‘In the name of Allah’</td>
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<td>bid’ah</td>
<td>Unwarranted religious innovation (claims made by modernists to certain religious practices among traditionalist Muslims)</td>
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<tr>
<td>dakwah</td>
<td>Proselytising activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>dukun khitan</td>
<td>A traditional circumcision expert</td>
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<tr>
<td>gambus</td>
<td>Gambus musical group is a small ensemble music featuring Arab-derived instruments, such as gambus lute</td>
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<tr>
<td>habib</td>
<td>Male sadah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadhrami</td>
<td>The people from Hadhramaut of Yemen, generally divided into sadah (who claim descent from the Prophet) and non-sadah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hadith</td>
<td>Recollection of the sayings and traditions of the Prophet, a source of Islamic law</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haji (male) or hajjah (female)</td>
<td>Hajj pilgrims</td>
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<tr>
<td>halal</td>
<td>Permissible in Islam (to eat or to do)</td>
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<tr>
<td>halaqah</td>
<td>Study circle, performed by HTI at campuses or at mosques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haram</td>
<td>Prohibited in Islam (to eat or to do)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ibadat or ibadah</td>
<td>Prayer in broad definition, including prescribed rituals and good deeds in daily routines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idul Fitri</td>
<td>Religious festival marking the end of the fasting month (Ramadan)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Idul Adha</td>
<td>The hajj festival or festival of sacrifice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ijab qabul</td>
<td>Marriage contract ceremony</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ijtihad</td>
<td>Independent judgement, based on recognised sources of Islam, on a legal or</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>theological question (in contrast to taqlid)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imam</td>
<td>Mosque leader or the leader of prayers in a mosque</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isra Mi’raj</td>
<td>Ascension and night journey of the Prophet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jahiliyya</td>
<td>‘Age of ignorance’, an Arabic term referring to the pre-Islamic period</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jilbab</td>
<td>Head covering, headscarf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kabupaten</td>
<td>District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kafa’ah</td>
<td>The marriage system of sadah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kampung</td>
<td>Village or kelurahan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kecamatan</td>
<td>Sub-district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khalifah</td>
<td>Caliphate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khatib</td>
<td>A person who delivers the sermon during Friday prayers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khuruj</td>
<td>(A) Dakwah tour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langgar or mushala</td>
<td>Small mosque, used for daily prayers, but not for weekly Friday prayers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madrasah</td>
<td>Islamic school that adopts a modern education system, as opposed to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>traditional pesantren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahzab or Mazhab</td>
<td>Islamic school of law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majelis Taklim</td>
<td>Religious educational gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandi Safar</td>
<td>Communal bathing ritual, performed in the month of Safar, to avoid disasters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and evils. Also known as ‘mandi tolak bala’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marhaban</td>
<td>Greetings for the Prophet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mualaf</td>
<td>A convert to Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maulid Nabi</td>
<td>The birthday of the Prophet Muhammad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mudin</td>
<td>A person/group of people responsible for washing a dead body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhammadiyah</td>
<td>A Java-based modernist Muslim organisation, founded in Yogyakarta in 1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mursyid</td>
<td>Spiritual mentor in the Sufi order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nasab</td>
<td>Lineage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orde Baru</td>
<td>The New Order regime under the President Suharto (1965-1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pahala</td>
<td>Amount of merit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paréwa’ adat</td>
<td>Instrument of the Bugis traditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paréwa’ sara’</td>
<td>Instrument of the Islamic law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pengajian</td>
<td>Qur’anic learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pesantren</td>
<td>Islamic boarding school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qunut</td>
<td>Special supplication in the second unit of dawn prayer, observed by traditionalist Muslims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramadan</td>
<td>The ninth month of the Islamic calendar during which fasting is required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raja</td>
<td>Ruler of a village or chiefdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rebana</td>
<td>Frame drums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sadah</td>
<td>Descendants of Prophet Muhammad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sakratul maut</td>
<td>A state of dying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shalat</td>
<td>The ritual prayers; obligatory prayers: subuh (the dawn prayer), zuhur (the early afternoon prayer), ashar (the late afternoon prayer), maghrib (the sunset prayer), and isya (the evening prayer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shalawat</td>
<td>Praise songs to the Prophet Muhammad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>siksa kubur</td>
<td>Suffering/torment of the grave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>siri</td>
<td>(B) The foremost guiding principle in the lives of the Bugis translated as honour or dignity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sirik or shirik</td>
<td>The polytheistic acts or worshipping another God than Allah, involving giving offerings in sacred places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siripuang</td>
<td>Decorated ornament to be carried in a carnival procession in the celebration of Maulid Nabi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slametan or kenduri</td>
<td>Communal meal to observe occasions of ritual importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sultan</td>
<td>Islamic term for king, leader of an Islamic state/kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sultanate</td>
<td>Islamic term for kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sunnah</td>
<td>Recommended, not obligatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>syahadat</td>
<td>Witness of faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>syarifah</td>
<td>Female sadah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tadarus</td>
<td>Recitation of the Qur’an in a group takes place after traweh prayers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tahlil, tahlilan</td>
<td>Prayers/ praying for the deceased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talqin</td>
<td>Addressed to the deceased to explain what will be going on and what the deceased should answer when the two angels come to examine him/ her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tarekat</td>
<td>Islamic mystical order or Sufi order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taqlid</td>
<td>Judgement based on tradition or convention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>traweh or tarawih</td>
<td>Ramadan ritual prayer (performed after isya prayer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ulama</td>
<td>Muslim scholars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ummah or umat or umma</td>
<td>The Muslim community or all Muslims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ustad (male), ustadzah (female)</td>
<td>Islamic teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>witir</td>
<td>Prayer to conclude traweh prayer during Ramadan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zakat</td>
<td>Alms/ charity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ziarah</td>
<td>Grave visitation especially to the tombs of holy people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zikir</td>
<td>Activities to chant confession of faith or of other Qur’anic formulae in remembrance of God</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter One

Introduction

This thesis is an ethnography of the diversity of Islam in Kupang, the bustling capital of the Indonesian province of East Nusa Tenggara (NTT or Nusa Tenggara Timur). It is also a study of a Muslim minority in a Christian majority environment nested within the world’s largest Muslim population country. In Kupang, Muslims are a minority (16.32 per cent) in a largely Christian environment. Respectively Protestants and Catholics represent 55.77 and 26.13 per cent of the 365,358 population (BPS 2011).

The study aims to show the diversity of Islamic practices, which have developed as a result of the different historical formations of Muslim villages, and the diversity of Muslim migrants from various places of origin. The four kampung that I am going to discuss in greater detail are those of Kampung Solor, Kampung Airmata, Kampung Bonipoi, and Kampung Oesapa. In this thesis I use the term kampung instead of village (kelurahan) as it is the term that the local people generally prefer to use. I have grouped these four kampung into three enclaves, based on the formative period when the kampung were established. Historically the development of Muslim communities in Kupang took place in three distinct stages (the 1700s, 1800s, and 1970s). Kampung Solor (the first enclave) and Kampung Airmata and Kampung Bonipoi (the second enclave) are chosen because they are the oldest Muslim communities in Kupang and form the majority Muslim population in those settlements. On the other hand, Kampung Oesapa (the third enclave) represents a Muslim community established during a later period, and constitutes a minority group in the settlement.

My research focuses on the history of the formation of each Muslim enclave, the histories of migrant groups that came and settled in the enclaves, the establishment of mosques, and how each Muslim community organised themselves around a principal mosque in the kampung, particularly with respect to the celebrations of Islamic festivals. ‘Enclave’ is defined as a portion of territory surrounded by a larger territory whose inhabitants are culturally or ethnically distinct (Oxford Dictionary). Based on this definition, I describe a ‘Muslim enclave’ as a distinct territory inhabited by Muslims in the Christian setting of Kupang. As a distinct entity, a Muslim enclave in Kupang seeks to organise themselves into a tangible community presence, either based on religion or ethnicity. The term ‘ethnically distinct’ in the context of Kupang refers to
the presence of the culture of the dominant ethnic group in the enclave and the extent to which the community is able to exercise internal (customary) law or regulation to members of the community. An enclave can consist of one or more *kampung*, or one or more communities.

The coming of migrants to the city, bringing with them a variety of Islamic traditions, shapes the diversity of Islamic practices in Kupang. Muslims in these three enclaves are the followers of Ahlussunnah wal Jama’ah (Aswaja) Islamic traditions and they are keen to preserve these traditions. ‘Aswaja’ literally means the followers of the Prophet’s tradition and the consensus of the *ulama* (Islamic scholars), but in Indonesia the term is commonly understood to refer to traditionalist Islam. In addition to their places of origin, Muslims affiliate with a number of Islamic organisations. Indonesia has two major Islamic organisations with nationwide reach. The first is Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), which represents traditionalist Muslims and is associated with traditionalist Muslims, and the second is Muhammadiyah which is associated with modernist Muslims. The traditionalist Islam follows a particular Islamic school of law (*mahzab*) and practices developed by *ulama* of past generations, in addition to the Qur’an and *hadith* (the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad).

In Indonesia traditionalist Islam has long been known for its Sufi tradition, *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) religious learning, acceptance and nurturing of local traditions, such as *ziarah* (grave visitation especially to the tombs of holy people), birthday of the Prophet, and prayers for the dead. The modernists, on the other hand, do not bind with certain *mahzab* and teachings of *ulama* of previous generations. Modernists approaches seek to purify Islamic teachings from perceived ‘un-Islamic’ practice of traditionalist or Aswaja Islam (Barton 1997). The traditional Muslim community of Kupang has been introduced to a number of religious reforms over the years, brought about by the presence of ‘modernist’ Islamic organisations in the 1970s and the Islamic renewal movement, such as Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) and Jamaah Tabligh (JT), in the early 2000s. In the thesis I examine how the Muslim community has adapted to influences from reform-oriented organisations with new agendas.

The Muslim communities in Kupang practice their religion in a majority Christian setting. Another focus of my research is to look at the ways Muslims as a minority group survive and indeed thrive in a Christian town. Despite their status as a minority group, I argue that Muslims of Kupang have freedom to celebrate Islamic festivals outside the mosque in public spaces, and these are usually very well attended by
representatives of local government—most of whom are Christians. Relations between Muslims and Christians in Kupang are complex and dynamic, involving negotiations and tensions over issues of immediate concern, such as *halal* (permissible) and *haram* (forbidden) practices and behaviours, as well as fundamental issues such as construction of places of worship and religious conversion.

This thesis examines a series of interrelated research questions: 1) What are the local narratives on the history of the establishment of Muslim enclaves in Kupang? 2) Who are the migrants who settled in these enclaves and what are their genealogies? 3) How do the different Islamic traditions of the main groups in each enclave influence the diversity of Islamic practice, especially with respect to the celebrations of Islamic festivals and lifecycles? 4) What is the role of the *imam* of the *kampung* mosques in preserving the Islamic traditions? 5) What are the religious changes and reforms faced by these enclaves, and how have Muslims in these enclaves adapted and adjusted to externally imposed changes? 6) What are the methods of religious learning utilised in these *kampung*, especially with regard to Qur’anic learning for children and women’s Majelis Taklim? 7) What are Muslims’ perspectives on factors that allow their survival in a Christian town? 8) How do Muslims view the new Islamic *dakwah* (proselytising) that has emerged in Kupang?

Muslim society in Kupang derives from different Islamic traditions but, despite the diversity of traditions, the different groups of Muslims maintain cordial relations while preserving and defending their distinct religious and cultural identities; that is, as Solor Islam, Bugis Islam, Hadhrami Islam, Java Islam, and Sumatra Islam. These groups of Muslims have been able to cooperate to preserve Islamic traditions while adapting to changes introduced by reformist groups. Their ability to adapt has also contributed to their survival as a minority, but one that is growing in confidence and numbers.

**Everyday Islamic Practices**

In terms of theoretical focus, I follow Geertz (1968) who maintains that different societies will transform Islam to fit their unique historical experiences. In his comparative study on two Muslim countries, Indonesia and Marroco, Geertz examines evolution of Islamic practices in these two countries by scrutinizing historical accounts to understand the changes in the practice of Islam. He views culture as an ‘inherited conception of life’ expressed in symbols. Each of the *kampung* in which I conducted my research has a different history dating back to the colonial period, with respect to the process of formation and the arrival of its migrant inhabitants, resulting in a series of
distinctive Muslim communities. Over the course of its history, the emergence of modernist Islam and new Islamic transnational *dakwah* organisations have added to this diversity.

Geertz (1973), using a semiotic approach to analyse culture, seeks to interpret culture as a text, rather than focusing on structural analysis of culture. Geertz employed the Weberian assertion of culture as one of 'the webs of significance' (1973: 5) in a society. This approach, known as interpretive or symbolic anthropology, aims at studying the way people interpret their surroundings in a particular cultural context. These surroundings include symbols, practices, myths, rituals, and human behaviours, all of which are treated as symbolic action that can reveal the understanding of culture.

Victor Turner (1967), another leading figure of symbolic anthropology, argues the way the symbols are used in rituals determine their meanings for particular members of the community. Turner asserts that symbols initiate social action, and their expression form a shared meaning that relates to both human emotions and social norms. In social interactions, these symbolic expressions allow the people to direct their behaviour in accordance to the norms and to resolve conflict.

Turner distinguishes two types of symbols: ‘dominant’ and ‘instrumental’ (1967:20). Dominant symbols refer to those signify central roles and posses constant meanings in rites, while instrumental symbols refer to those that support the efficacy of a rite. He suggests that an anthropologist focuses on the dominant symbols. The structure and properties of symbols, he further explains, can be understood using the following methods: “(1) external form and observable characteristics; (2) interpretation offered by specialists and by laymen; (3) significant context largely worked out by the anthropologist” (Turner 1967: 20). It is important for an ethnographer to discuss the interpretation of symbols with a broader range of informants, both specialist and laymen, to achieve a rich analysis.

Geertz defines culture as an 'intricate fabric of meaning' (1973: 145) that has a number of features. Firstly, as the accumulated body of symbolic forms and systems, culture is socially constructed and historically transmitted (1973: 89). Secondly, culture is public, not something that only occurs in the heads of humans (1973: 12). It is a product of social interactions and expressed by external symbols that members of a society use. Thirdly, culture is not a causal power that determines social events, behaviours, institutions and processes, but rather a context within which they can be analysed (1973: 14).
According to Geertz, symbols that a society uses are 'vehicles of culture' (1973: 91), hence social phenomena through which culture can be analysed. Since members of a society assign meanings to external symbols used in their surroundings, individual subjectivity is an important aspect in the reproduction and transmission of culture. Interpretation of symbols allows individuals to make sense of their experience, express emotions, develop knowledge, and direct their behavior on the basis of their interpretation. In other words, understanding of symbols will reveal the understanding of the worldview.

To understand Islam in Kupang, I also apply Bowen’s (2012) notion of the ‘new Anthropology of Islam’, which emphasises the importance of capturing individual efforts in understanding and transmitting religious texts in a certain social context. Therefore, the study of Islam should begin with examining efforts by Muslims to understand and give meaning to religious texts, and to transmit their understanding through religious practices. In other words, my research focuses on Muslims, not the religion per se. As Marranci (2008:15) puts it, ‘it is not Islam that shapes Muslims, but rather Muslims who through discourses, practices, beliefs and actions, make Islam.’ Therefore, hypothetically, at the local level of Kupang, there are multiple meanings and expressions of Islam, especially since almost all Muslims in Kupang are migrants from different places.

According to Bowen (2012), two strategies of analysis are considered important in pursuing an ethnography of Muslim practice/faith. The first is ‘focusing inward’, through which an ethnographer seeks to understand the intentions, understandings, and emotions of Muslim informants in relation to their religious practices and the history of their community. The second strategy he calls ‘opening outward’, where social meanings of religious practices and the environment that defines them influences and informs these practices. This approach argues that the ways that Muslims interpret and transmit religious texts and ideas should be understood by taking into account specific cultural contexts in certain localities and at different periods of time.

As a consequence, it is inevitable that particular Muslim communities will differ in their interpretation of religious practices, especially with respect to everyday practices. An anthropologist should be able to grasp these differences and the ensuing debates about that which is ‘proper’ Islam, and to show the Muslim community’s adaptation to the local environment. Even though adaptation is a response to a certain local context, including some constraints placed on the open expression of Islamic identities, the
influence on a Muslim community also comes from national and transnational movements and ideas.

Bowen (2005) has shown the importance of examining religious practices that include traditional topics such as rituals, healing, prayers, as well as contemporary issues such as migration, nationalism, and transnational religious movements. Bowen maintains that religious tradition comprises of three aspects—beliefs, practices, and social institutions. The study of religious practice, Bowen, argues, must consider the examination of religious doctrines, particularly how they doctrines are embodied in text and how the local people understand them. Secondly, interpretation of religious texts is strongly shaped by local factors—as Geertz (1968) has also shown in his comparative study on Morocco and Indonesia. Lastly, the study of religious practice must consider “the diversity of religious understanding and practices even in a small-scale society—between men and women, or adult and children, or across other social groupings—and the debate among people about how best to understand the norms and forms of religious culture” (2005: 9).

Everyday practice in religion is also discussed in Schielke and Debevec (2012). Drawn from a theory developed by De Certeau (1984), the study examines how individuals or groups try to understand the intricacy of religious beliefs and practices in everyday life, and their significance. While acknowledging the ambivalence and incongruous nature of the everyday practice of religion, the authors maintain that everyday practice serves as a starting point to look at “actual lived experiences and their existential significance for the people involved” (Schielke and Debevec 2012: 3). The study has shown that themes of everyday practice vary, ranging from divination, apparitions of saints, obligatory prayers, dance music in saints-day festival, and community relations between people of different religious backgrounds. Some of the practices, Schielke and Debevec consider, are “often highly personal practice, and sometimes secretive or socially marginal” (2012: 5).

Examination of everyday practice, do not put an emphasis on coherence, but focuses on how religion is interpreted as lived experience. As Geertz concludes, analysis of culture is an attempt to establish the interpretation of meanings, not to establish scientific laws (1973: 5). The task of ethnography is to produce a ‘thick description’ to empirically investigate cultural symbols, in order to grasp the roles they play in people's live (1973: 17).
Islamic expressions and meanings can be seen through rituals (*ibadat*), defined both narrowly and broadly. A narrow definition of rituals refers to the ‘five pillars’ including the witness of faith (*syahadat*), daily prayers (*shalat*), charity/alsms (*zakat*), fasting, and pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*). In its broader meaning *ibadat* covers all activities of life, including mualamat (relations with other human beings) such as in the conduct of trade and commerce, marriage and inheritance, etc. Muslims believe that the way a person lives his or her life is in itself *ibadat*, whereby all Muslims are supposed to do good deeds to gain *pahala* (amount of merit) (Bowen 1989, Muhaimin 2006, Möller 2005a).

In the context of traditionalist Muslim community of Cirebon, Muhaimin (2006) emphasises that *ibadat* in its narrow sense has two aspects: *fiqh* (derived from Islamic jurisprudence) and *tasawuf* or the esoteric dimension of *ibadat* that provides ways to improve the quality of the performance of rituals.

There are activities related to the five pillars and *ibadat* in a broader sense, which are constructed in specific ways according to local traditions. These include lifecycle rituals (birth, *akekah*, circumcision, death rites); sacrifice and fasting rituals; recitation of the Qur'an, commemoration of the birthday of the Prophet or important figures, and activities related to Sufi practice. In certain Muslim communities, the list includes visits to venerated tombs and performance of recommended prayers (Bowen 1989: 1, Denny 1985: 75, Rippin 1990).

The examination of such Islamic practices in everyday lives in the three Muslim enclaves comprises my primary research focus. Varisco (2005: 10) suggests that Islam should be studied as a religion that is united by practices and not just by shared beliefs. He mentions that of the five pillars in Islam, only *syahadat* represents an expression of belief, while other pillars are essentially practices. It is therefore the everyday Islamic practices, in this thesis covering all the practices that Muslims do, that carry meaning for them whether related to the five pillars, lifecycle rituals, Islamic festivals, or Qur’anic learning.

The role of the village mosque and its leadership (*imam* and his deputies) is crucial. The village mosque is the centre of religious life for Muslims in the three enclaves. The *imam* is a hereditary position in Airmata, while in Kampung Solor two who have taken this role are the descendants of Atulaga Nama (the Solorese warrior and the first *imam* in Kampung Solor). In Bonipoi, the *imam* has the authority to appoint members of *mudin* (a person or group of people responsible for washing a dead body and performing death ritual). Usually the *imam* is a lifetime assignment. Some *imam* that I
met were too old to fulfil their duties, but continued to retain their positions assisted by a number of deputies.

The women’s group Majelis Taklim,\(^1\) which can be found in each of the four kampung, also played an important role in the Muslim community of Kupang. The members meet on a regular basis in the mosque, at a classroom, or at the members’ houses to organise sermons on various topics on Islam; and also to perform tahlilan (praying for the deceased) and recite Surah Yasin from the Qur’an in their weekly meetings. Majelis Taklim plays a role as an instrument for the preservation of religious traditions, and also as a centre of religious learning for women and importantly in this setting for the new converts (muwaf). In Kupang, conversion to Islam is an ongoing process, especially through marriage. For example, marital conversion is common in Kampung Oesapa. Women’s Majelis Taklim in Kampung Oesapa has a unit to accommodate new converts. The Majelis Taklim becomes a centre of learning for them (Chapter Five).

**Varieties of Islam in Kupang and their Histories**

The eastern part of Indonesia was the last region to be Islamised in the archipelago. Before the 16\(^{th}\) century, Islam had not yet been adopted outside Java, Sumatra, Brunei, and the Malay peninsular. When these regions were Islamised, Timor remained non-Islamic, following varieties of ancestral sacrificial religions. Ricklefs (2008: 7) writes: ‘The rest of Kalimantan was non-Muslims, as were also the Islands of Madura, Bali, Lombok, Sumbawa, Flores, Solor, and Timor to the east of Java.’

Islam reached Timor from Ternate (Maluku) and Gowa kingdom (Sulawesi) (Ardhana 2005: 31). In the early 17th century, after being defeated by the Dutch, the Makassarese from Gowa kingdom fled and spread Islam to Sumbawa (Ricklefs 2008: 27). In Sumbawa, Islam was adopted by the king of Bima, and then spread to the coastal areas under its sphere of influence, reaching as far as Ende, Putta, Reo, Barie and Nagaramo, Solor, Lomblen, Pantar, and Alor (Ardhana 2005: 74-75).

Solor Island, north of Timor, was particularly important because it was a hub of the sandalwood trade, to which Muslim traders came from various places in the archipelago. From Solor, the Solorese migrants who had allied themselves with the Dutch brought Islam to Kupang in Timor. The Solorese community in Kupang are originally migrants from a number of villages on the island of Solor. Important villages

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\(^1\) Majelis Taklim is a council of learning, religious educational gathering.
of origin include Lamakera and Menanga, whose populations respectively formed Kampung Solor and Kampung Airmata in Kupang during the Dutch colonial period.

On Solor, Lamakera people were formed part of the Lamaholot-speaking people in the region. Lamaholot language is the indigenous language in East Flores, Adonara, Solor, and central and western Lembata. Lamaholot-speaking people were traditionally grouped into Paji and Demon. Paji comprises communities residing in coastal areas, while Demon are those of mountain people.2 Demon and Paji differ in their beliefs concerning the origin of their ancestors. The coastal communities of Paji see themselves as the descendants of people of foreign origin. Quoting Heijmering (1780), Barnes (1995) writes that according to local traditions, the ancestors of the people on Solor came from Ternate and brought Islam with them. I found that my informants in Kampung Solor shared a similar view, that their ancestors came from Ternate.

Lamakera people, who belonged to Paji group, were Islamised in the 16th century. Citing an observation made by Kate in 1891, Barnes (1996) writes that despite the acceptance of Islam, villagers of Lamakera maintained sacred stones and offering places, on which they placed rice, goat meat, and local wine (arak). Led by a chief (called sengaji or raja), the village was part of a federation of five Muslim states called Solor Watan Lema (five shores of Solor), comprising Lohayong, Lamakera, Lamahala, Terong, and Adonara. This federation formed an alliance with the Dutch, which began when the Dutch came in 1613 and continued after they left Solor for Kupang in 1653.3

The First Muslim Enclave

Atulaga Nama is an important figure of the early Solorese settlers. Barnes (1995), quoting Leyn (1981), writes that Atulaga Nama from Lamakera was an influential figure in the resistance against the Portuguese. He lived in the 17th century, was not a local Ternate Sengaji (king), but led a number of attacks on the Portuguese. His name

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2 These two groupings were different in their culture, religion, and political affiliation, and were in the past engaged in warfare and conflict. Paji were generally either Muslims or pagans, while Demon people were Catholics. The villagers of Paji states supported themselves through inter-island trade and fishing, and exerted a degree of superiority over the people of Demon who relied mostly on agriculture and local trade. Barnes (1996) argues that this division has become blurred in the 20th century because the majority of Demon and Paji population on Solor have professed Catholicism which became the overarching identity.

3 In 1556, to protect local converts from Muslim sea-raiders, the Dominicans erected a fortress in Solor. The Dutch appeared in this area in 1613, and after a three-month siege, managed to capture the fortress of Solor, but not before 1,000 of its inhabitants had transferred themselves to Larantuka on the northeastern corner of the nearby island of Flores. In 1653 the Dutch transferred their garrison to Kupang on Timor (Fox 1977: 63).
was also mentioned in my interviews with informants from Kampung Solor. According to them, Atulaga Nama was originally from Ternate, and migrated to Solor before settling permanently in Kupang.

Atulaga Nama and the Lamakera people occupied the land to the east of Fort Concordia granted by the Dutch, who considered the Solorese to be their most reliable ally. The Lamakera people helped the Dutch transport provisions for refugees from mountain Timorese rulers, Sonbai and Amabi, who took shelter in Kupang to avoid intimidation from the Topasses (Black Portuguese, a mixed group of mestizo Portuguese and locals considered to be elite soldiers) and its local supporters in 1658 (Hägerdal 2012). Local historians maintain that Atulaga Nama was not only a warrior, but the first imam who led a congregation of approximately 300 Muslims (Goro 1977: 78, Widiyatmika 2004: 48). This community established the first Muslim enclave in around 1700. Until now Kampung Solor has been the doorway for new Muslim migrants. Today other inhabitants include migrants from Java, Sumatra, and Sulawesi. In 2010 there were 2,150 Muslims in Kampung Solor (77 per cent of the total inhabitants). The kampung has a village mosque, called the Al-Fatah Mosque, which was built in 1911. Hamzah Iyang and Haji Idrus Lamaya of Kampung Solor, who retained the position of imam of the village mosque, explained that they are descended from Atulaga Nama.

On Solor, the relationships between the Dutch and Lamakera chiefdom deteriorated. In 1884, the Sengaji of Lamakera was toppled and sent into exile in the eastern Javanese town of Kediri. The reason for deposing the sengaji was because he took part in an attack on Boleng village on Adonara. In 1931, the Dutch abolished the independent status of Lamakera chiefdom and placed it under the control of the Raja of Larantuka on Flores. Barnes (1995) refers to the people of Menanga also participating in the 1884 attack. However, no further information is provided.

The Second Muslim Enclave

Menanga village on Solor, whose population were Muslim, was not part of the Paji confederation of local states. The Muslim leader of Menanga is locally believed to have originally come from Palembang in Sumatra. People of Menanga migrated to Kupang later (in 1780) than those of Lamakera. In Kupang, they occupied a separate territory

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4 The reliability, owing to their sailing skills and loyalty, has granted its leader Sengaji Dasi of Lamakera a number of privileges. Sengaji Dasi, leader of Watan Lima association from 1655 to 1701, was granted a trading permit that allowed his ships to sail and trade as far as Rote, Savu, Bima, and Wetar. His men were trusted to patrol the Solor waters to put a check on the Makassarese. Sengaji Dasi is reported to have visited Kupang a number of times (Hägerdal 2012).
called Kampung Airmata and built their own mosque (see Chapter Four). According to local narratives, Sya’ban bin Sanga led the first generation of Muslims in Kampung Airmata. Sanga became the first *imam* in Kampung Airmata when a mosque was built in 1806. Muhammad Badaruddin, a proselytiser from Palembang (Sumatra), helped him in Islamic propagation.

Solor was traditionally organised into a system that distributed power into the hands of certain clans. Generally, the system comprises different spheres of responsibilities: customary law, executive sphere, religious sphere, all of which are under the coordination of the highest leader. Application of this system varies, but the principle of division of power is retained (Barnes 1996: 84). In Lamakera village on Solor, the ultimate head is called *koten* (lord of the land). Under *koten*, there are two offices: the office of raja who is responsible for customary laws, and the office of spiritual/religious leader. These offices are supported by those responsible for matters related to defence (warrior), and spokesman. These roles are distributed to certain clans in the village.

The social structure of the Solorese migrants in Kupang resembles that on Solor Island, but has been adapted to the new environment. In Kampung Airmata, the founders Sya’ban bin Sanga and Muhammad Badaruddin formed joint leadership of the community. The legacy of these two leaders was the formation of a diarchic structure: Kampung Imam (the religious leadership) and Kampung Raja (the custom office). Each *kampung* is governed according to distinct principles in terms of membership, leadership, and responsibilities concerning prayers, lifecycle rituals, and Islamic festivals. Leadership in Kampung Imam and Kampung Raja is arranged on the basis of heredity principles (*keturunan*) and located in certain clans. Only the descendants of the Sanga clan for example, are eligible to become *imam*, and the position of raja is a privilege of Badaruddin’s descendants. In Kampung Solor, the division is not strictly applied. However, the descendants of Atulaga Nama retain their position as mosque leaders.

Kampung Airmata and Kampung Bonipoi were also home for anti-Dutch exiles from outside Kupang. The anti-Dutch stance by the people of Menanga was frequently mentioned in my interviews with informants from Kampung Airmata. Some mentioned to me that the early inhabitants of Kampung Airmata and Bonipoi were Solorese who had not allied themselves with the Dutch. During the Dutch colonial period many rebels from Java and Sumatra were exiled to these settlements. The exiles included Prince Ali Basyah Mahmud Gondokusumo and Raden Sutomo, who fought under Prince
Diponegoro in the Java War (1825-1830); and Dipati Amir Bahren and Hamzah Bahren. Dipati Amir Bahren was the leader of Mountain Miras rebellion against the Dutch on Bangka Island (Sumatra). In 1850, he was arrested and sent into exile one year later to Kupang. Local narratives recount that Depati Amir Bahren was the Muslim figure who spread religion to Kampung Bonipoi and founded the village mosque. There were different views among my informants concerning when Al Ikhlas Mosque of Kampung Bonipoi was established. Some informants mentioned 1851, while others stated 1860, or even 1885 as the year of its establishment. The descendants of Bahren currently live in Bonipoi and in the other nearby kampung. The mosque leadership was not retained by the heirs of Bahren, but the Muslims here actively maintain relationships with the descendants of Bahren in Bangka Island (Sumatra).

Hadhrami, people originally from the Hadramaut in Yemen and their descendants in diaspora communities, are also concentrated in this second Muslim enclave (Kampung Airmata and Kampung Bonipoi). Hadhrami migration to Indonesia occurred mainly in the 19th century. Despite their small numbers, the Hadhrami are influential in religious and political spheres. Many of them have secured respectable positions in the community. Historically, one notable figure was Syarif Abdulrachman bin Abubakar Al gadrie, who is considered an important figure behind the spread of Islam in Airmata. Al gadrie was the descendant of the Sultan of Pontianak who migrated and married the daughter of a noble at Ende on the island of Flores. In 1839, Al gadrie was appointed by the Kupang Resident, Gronovius, as his personal representative in the campaign to abolish slavery (Fox 1977). In 1841, he settled at Waingapu on Sumba and engaged in the horse trade. He was later implicated in continuing the slave trade from Waingapu to Ende and exiled to Airmata village (Fox 1977). Habib Usman Al gadri, his descendant, currently lives in Kampung Airmata.

The Hadhrami diaspora, referring to the dispersal of Hadhrami people from their original homeland in South Yemen, is generally divided into three types: trade diaspora, religious diaspora, and labour diaspora. For all three types, adaptability is the main characteristic of the Hadhrami (Manger 2014: 1). The Hadhrami migration was part of a

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5 Goro (1970: 65) argues that Arab traders from Java became involved in trade in Timor from 1812 and commonly resided in Airmata and Bonipoi. According to van der Berg (2010), there were no records of Hadhrami migration to Kupang until 1859. In Kupang by 1885 the number of Hadhrami had risen to 93, consisting of 58 people in Sumba, 30 people in Kupang, and 5 people in Rote (van der Berg 1989). Overall in the archipelago, Hadhrami migration increased significantly in the second half of the 19th century. The opening of Suez Canal in 1869, the invention of steam shipping, and the Dutch policy of integrating the archipelago into the global market in 1870 were the main drivers (van der Kroef 1953, van der Berg 2010: 99, Jonge 1997: 95).
larger scale migration, triggered by global economic and political forces. The first
generations of migrants were male Hadhrami, who married local women and integrated
into the local community, creating a mixed generation called *muwallad* (Manger 2014).

The Hadhrami community is traditionally divided into status groups, *sadah*, *mashayikh*,
*qaba'il*, and *duafa* (Riddel 1997, Heiss and Slama 2010). *Sadah* (singular: *sayyid*; female *sadah* is called *syarifah*) enjoy the highest social status through their claim as
descendants of the Prophet. *Mashayikh* (singular: *shaykh*) belong to the second-highest
group comprising descendants of *ulama*. The third layer is *qaba'il* (singular: *qabili*)
who come from the warrior tribes, while the lowest is *da'if* (singular: *duafa*) comprising
the poor and the slaves (Heiss and Slama 2010: 38-41). In the diaspora, however, the
boundaries between the last three groups have become blurred, creating a narrower
classification of *sadah* and non-*sadah* (Heiss and Slama 2010).

New types of divisions, Jonge (2004) argues, have come to replace the traditional
differences over the course of time. The first division now is between the rich and the
poor Hadhrami. Hadhrami from the *da'if* stratum may become successful traders and
gain a respectable position in society.6 The second division is between the conservative
Hadhrami and those who are progressive/educated, which in the course of history has
created tensions.7 The last categorisation is between the pure Hadhrami and the Indo-
Hadhrami. The former consider Hadramaut as their homeland, while the latter consider
their new settlements as their homeland. However, ‘despite these changes, descent
remains important in the Hadhrami social interactions’ (Jonge 2004: 397).

With regard to Islamic propagation, members of the *sadah* group played an active role.
The Hadhrami migrants would usually engage in religious education, businesses, and
local politics. Hadhrami migration is characterised by gender dimensions. Typically,
men are actively engaged in the economic and social life, while women play a role in
the religious education of their family members or the children. In the diaspora, the
*sadah* group remains at the highest religious and social hierarchy (Manger 2014). There
are a number of typical ways to maintain the Hadhrami identity, such as kinship, *haul*
(commemorative rituals), and the marriage system of Kafa’ah, through which a
Hadhrami tends to marry within one's own stratification group. In the diaspora,

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6 A number of studies have documented that Hadhrami migrants have done well in economic, political,

7 One of the examples was the tension between the conservative Hadhrami of Alawi descents with the
non-Alawi in the beginning of the 20th century in Indonesia (Mobini-Kesheh 1999).
Hadhrami people sought to adapt to local social and political conditions, and to secure respectable positions in their new communities. Manger (2014:12) argues that the Hadhrami identity is developed and maintained primarily through an active engagement ‘in the discourses relating to the understanding of being Hadhrami’. Moreover, new technology, such as the Internet, printed books and compact discs, also allows the Hadhrami people to learn more about the hadhraminess and to maintain the Hadhrami identity.

My informants often made narrow distinctions between sadah and non-sadah. Men of sadah families could be easily recognised from their surnames and because the locals would refer to them as habib. In Kupang, sadah families include Algadri, Alhabsy, Alatas, Alhaddad, Gubdan, Assegaf, Alhinduan, Bafaqih, and Banahsan. Non-sadah families include Djawas, Alkatiri, Alahsan, Sagran, Atamimi, Makarim, Bafred, Bajeher, Ba’awat, Balajang, Bachsoan, and Bal’affif.

The Third Muslim Enclave

The third enclave is the Muslim community of Kampung Oesapa, which was established as recently as the late 1970s. While Kampung Solor, Airmata, and Bonipoi are located in close proximity, Kampung Oesapa is located some 10 kilometres east of the city centre along the coastal road that follows the foreshore of Kupang Bay. Muslims here are the minority group, representing 15 per cent (around 3,600 people) of the total population of 24,158 (BPS 2011). Haji Badar Daeng Pawero (born in 1925), a Bugis commoner from Bone district, pioneered the establishment of the Muslim community in Kampung Oesapa. Muslims in Oesapa are predominantly Bugis settlers from the Bone regency in South Sulawesi.

Bugis people are well-known as migrants. The establishment of Muslim Bugis communities in Timor and Kupang is not a new development. On Timor, the presence of the Buginese in Kupang can be traced back to the 17th century when the oldest Bugis settlement was established in 1830 in Kampung Namosain, Alak sub-district (Munandjar 2004). Since the 1950s, Bugis have also been settling in Kampung Camplong, Fetuleu sub-district, Kupang district. In addition, Bugis people live in other Muslim kampung such as Airmata and Bonipoi (Widyatmika 2004).

Historically, Bugis migration to the archipelago and parts of Southeast Asia began to expand after the fall of Makassar to the Dutch in 1669. Bugis, who were involved in rivalry with the Makasarese and then allied themselves with the Dutch, began to benefit
from this victory. One of the consequences was that the Makassarese kingdom was no longer in control of Timor and Bugis people began to trade and settle on the island (Widyatmika 2004). Other waves of Bugis migration included migration of traders from Wajo to Sumatra and Kalimantan in the 17th century, which was induced by prolonged conflicts among the nobles in Wajo; and migration of Bugis peasants to Sumatra in a later period (Lineton 1975). Another important development that induced migration was the Islamic rebellion of Kahar Muzakar in South Sulawesi from 1951 to 1965 where a large number of Bugis left their homeland in search of safer places (Lineton 1975, Juhannis 2006, Millar 1989).

Migration is a typical enterprise of Bugis men before and after marriage. If a married man is engaged in a seasonal or temporary migration, the wife will stay in the homeland and is responsible for keeping their wealth. A wife joins her husband if he is migrating permanently. Sometimes the family will stay at home for years before the husband is ready to permanently settle in the new place and bring his family. Migration is a way of pursuing personal achievement and achieving a more respectable ‘social location’. In the new settlements, a Bugis settler can become wealthy and obtain a higher social status through marriage (with a noble in the natal village) and religion (Millar 1989). Bugis migrants usually maintain contacts with their relatives in the natal village, who are asked to take care of their properties, and they often go back to marry. Searching for a better life is the primary motivation of the migration (Lineton 1975).

The process of Bugis migration to Kupang and then Kampung Oesapa fits with the general characteristics described above. The pioneer, Haji Badar Daeng Pawero, left his village in Bone district in early 1950 when Kahar Muzakkar and the Darul Islam rebellion struck the region. He left his wife in the early years in Kupang and asked her to join him after he settled in his successful business. Lineton (1975) also describes the typical pattern of migration of Bugis as chain migration, a process whereby first settlers in the new destination invite relatives or act as patron to summon his clients/ followers to join them. Haji Badar Daeng Pawero brought with him a number of relatives and followers to build a new settlement in Kampung Oesapa.

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8 Timor used to be controlled by Makassarese, and Bugis involvement in the area was restricted. But commercial activities of the Buginese resumed after Makassar kingdom was forced to leave the region after being defeated by the Dutch, to whom the Bugis allied themselves, and signed the Treaty of Bongaya in 1667 (Widyatmika 2004). According to Farram (2010: 41-42), ‘There is some evidence that Timor was visited by Makassarese—an allied groups of Bugis and Bajo Laut—travelling to north Australia in search for trepang, and that some of them were actually based on the island.’ Outside Kupang, pockets of Bugis settlements can be found in Sumbawa and Ende (Pelras 1996: 391).
Lineton observes that Bugis tend to settle in coastal areas, as they are accessible and fertile. Also, Bugis tend to occupy unpopulated areas and ‘thus quickly assumed the aspect of purely Bugis districts, in which many of the features of Bugis society in Sulawesi could be recreated’ (Lineton 1975: 196). As migrants, Bugis are known for their reputation and status in becoming economically successful in the new places. Their dominance in the economic and religious fields often allowed the Bugis migrants to act as ‘agents of assimilation’, where their domination and influence over the local people by way of economic and cultural practice are exercised (Ammarell 2002). Bugis society in the new settlement maintains the practice of Islam in their everyday life and customs (adat) in ceremonies related to lifecycle and Islamic festivals. They also maintain the system of rank and patronage. Being Muslim is an important identity for a Bugis, at home and as a settler. Successful Bugis Muslims consider undertaking the hajj pilgrimage a major goal symbolising their personal achievement and higher status. A Bugis who has made the hajj pilgrimage to Mecca enjoys a respected position in the community (Robinson 2002).

Bugis, in their home and in migration, have been known for their strict adherence to Islam. Bugis observe the Aswaja tradition in lifecycle and Islamic festivals. On these occasions, the main feature is the public reading from the book of Barzanji. Maulid texts or Barzanji are pious biographical literary works in Arabic on the life of the Prophet Muhammad that became the subject of widespread devotional texts for recitation (Kaptein 1993: 125-126). Maulid texts are used for the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, commemoration of the Prophet’s nocturnal journey, anniversary of a death, recitation at the ceremonial shaving of the first hair of a newborn baby, ceremonial gathering at a circumcision, and wedding ceremonies (Kaptein 1993: 126). On the 10th day of Muharram, there is a festival of Ashura day to commemorate the death of the Prophet's grandchildren, Hassan and Hussein, and the mission of Noah. On this occasion, they prepare ‘porridge of seven kinds’ and visit cemeteries (Pelras 1996).

In his study of Muslims in Kindang (South Sulawesi), Alimi states that ‘baca-baca’ refers to spells or recitation, and the most common source for recitation is Barzanji:

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9 Interestingly, pre-Islamic beliefs and practices, including the worship of regalia, and the active role of pagan priests, were also preserved. The religious orientation of Bugis Muslims were divided into two directions: orthodox Islam and syncretic forms (marked by mysticism and Sufi order), albeit not a clear-cut distinction. Orthodox Muslims were generally traders and seafarers, while the latter can be seen among the higher and lower levels of the nobility (Pelras 1996).

10 Maulid texts are readily available, commonly purchased, and translated into Indonesian and various regional Indonesian languages including Bugis (Kaptein 1993: 126-127).
‘Baca-baca is chanted in almost all rituals by Muslims in Kindang for lifecycle rituals, crises rituals and Islamic calendar rituals’ (Alimi 2009: 80). Another ritual that is important for Bugis people is the performance of the bath of Safar on the last Wednesday of the month of Safar for the purpose of purification and seeking protection in the year to come. This ritual is said to derive from Sufi practice and is observed mainly by members of the mystic order, students of religious teachers, and people who are sick. It involves praying or writing down the prayer in Arabic words on a piece of paper (Pelras 1996).

In Kampung Oesapa, the Bugis settlers managed to establish a village mosque, called Al Fitrah Mosque, in 1980. Since its establishment, Haji Badar Daeng Parewo, who did a hajj pilgrimage in 1965, has been the imam and retains the position to this day. In this Kampung, Haji Badar Daeng Pawero acts as paréwa’ sara’ (B. instrument of the Islamic law) and paréwa’ adat (B. instrument of the Bugis traditions) by preserving both Aswaja and Bugis Islam traditions. These include the reading of the Qur’an on important occasions, celebrating Islamic festivals, and reading the book of Barzanji. Al Fitrah Mosque has a Barzanji reading group comprising 10 men, who present on important religious occasions.

Aswaja and the Modernist Movement

The majority of the Indonesian Muslims are traditionalist Muslims, the followers of Sunni traditions and belong to Syafi’i school of law, also known as Aswaja. The term ‘Aswaja’ is applied to practices of Sunni Islam as opposed to the followers of Shi’a tradition. In the context of Islam on Java and Madura, however, Aswaja is understood as followers of these specific teachings: Shaf’ite mahzab in Islamic jurisprudence, the teachings of Imam Abu Hasan al-Ash’ari and Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi in Islamic theology, and the teachings of Imam Abu Qasim al-Junaid in Sufism (Dhofier 1980).

Traditionalist Islam has been a dominant feature of Indonesian Islam since the coming of Islam until the early 20th century, when forms of reformist, so-called modernist Islam arrived in the archipelago (Howell 2001).

11 The Syafi’i mahzab was developed by Muh Ibnu Idris al-Syafii (767-820). He was born in Iraq and was initially the follower of the Maliki mahzab. In his later years, when living in Cairo, he formulated his own legal opinions, which led to the establishment of his own mahzab. This mahzab is adopted widely in Egypt, Syria, Hijaz, South of Arabia, parts of the Persian Gulf, East Africa, the Malay Archipelago, and Central Asia (Dhofier 1980).

12 Mahzab is a religious and juridical doctrine (school) of the Muslim Sunni.

13 There are two views regarding the coming of Islam in Indonesia. The first argues that Islam came in the 7th century, while the other maintains that Islam came between the late 13th century and the early 16th
urban Muslims (Barton 1997). Muhammadiyah, a major modernist organisation, emerged in Yogyakarta in November 1912. The word ‘Muhammadiyah’ means pertaining or attributable to the Prophet Muhammad. It has the following objectives. The first is purification of Islam from non-Islamic practices such as *adat* (traditions) and *bid’ah* (innovations, false doctrines). Secondly, it aims to reform the education sector in order to promote Islamic awakening. The third objective is to reform Islamic doctrine according to modernist interpretation. Finally, Muhammadiyah aims at defending Islam against Western (Christian) influences (Abdul-Samad 1991).

In 1926, traditionalist Muslim scholars formed NU as a reaction to the establishment of Muhammadiyah, who advocated the abandonment of *mahzab*. NU represents the preservation of Aswaja.\(^{14}\) Aswaja asserts that in addition to Qur’an and *hadith*, Muslims should not neglect the body of accompanying interpretations developed by *ulama* of previous generations and their followers over the centuries, as secondary sources of religious teaching. They argue that only those who are knowledgeable can understand correctly the messages contained in the Qur’an and *hadith*. After the Prophet, those who are knowledgeable include the Prophet’s companions, the followers of the companions, and then the followers of these followers, as well as leading *ulama* of subsequent generations. Followers of Aswaja preserve the teachings and interpretations transmitted by this chain of sources to the present day. Various interpretations and the consensus developed by these *ulama* becomes an inseparable source of teaching. Modernists, however, do not accept the consensus of *ulama* of previous periods as a ‘root’ of the Islamic law. Modernists allow individual interpretation (*ijtihad*) and a return to the Qur’an and *hadith* as the basis for *ijtihad*.

Traditionalists maintain *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) as centres of learning, in which the role of *ulama*/*kyai* is crucial. On Java and Madura, *pesantren* have become the key channel in the preservation of Aswaja, mainly by teaching various aspects of Shafi’ite *mahzab* and Sufism. Modernists reject rituals that are not stated in the Qur’an

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\(^{14}\) In Kupang, the term ‘Aswaja’ is contested. The traditionalists claim that they represent Aswaja Islam. On the other hand, some advocates of Muhammadiyah consider themselves also as the follower of Aswaja, in the sense that they follow the Qur’an and *hadith*, even though they do not affiliate themselves with a certain *mahzab*. In this thesis, however, I refer to Aswaja as traditionalist Muslims (see further in Chapter Three).
or documented in the *hadith*. They also differ in the conduct of lifecycle celebrations and rituals, especially with regards to the performance of *talqin*,\(^{15}\) *tahlilan* (prayers for the deceased),\(^{16}\) and rituals around the holy month of Ramadan.

Unlike modernists who seek the purification of Islamic teachings from *bid’ah* (innovations), traditionalists accommodate local traditions. One example is the tradition of visiting tombs (*ziarah*). Tombs of saints or famous *ulama* became shrines for traditionalist Muslims for various purposes. Modernists, however, argue that visiting tombs is *bid’ah* because a Muslim should directly look for blessings from Allah without any intermediary.

In general, *ulama* of both sides always assert that there are no fundamental differences in theology between them. Both believe in monotheism, divine determinism, *akhirat* (the judgement day), and the same Rukun Islam (the Islamic pillars). The differences lie in *soal-soal furu* (the details of Islamic teachings). Aswaja accepts and sustains non-obligatory rituals as suggested by *ulama* of previous generations. On the other hand, the modernists regard religious rituals, which are not prescribed by the Qur’an and *hadith*, as *bid’ah* and thus are prohibited.

Muslims in the three enclaves are the followers of Aswaja Islamic traditions. They perform rituals on prescribed important dates such as *mandi tolak bala* (annual communal bath of Safar to avoid bad luck),\(^{17}\) celebrating Maulid (birthday of the Prophet), and conduct of *tahlilan* (prayers for the deceased). Usually *kemenyan* (incense) is burned on these occasions. Another characteristic of Aswaja Islam is that many Aswaja followers are also members of Sufi orders. For example, Haji Tahir Zen, the *imam* in Kampung Solor, is a practitioner of Qadariyah Wa Naqsabandiyah. He follows Abah Anom of Pesantren Suryalaya in Tasikmalaya (West Java) as his *mursyid* (highest spiritual mentor). Another practitioner of a Sufi order is Mochtar Gehak (born in 1952). He is an active member of Naqsabandiyah al Kholidyah, a *tarekat* established by the late Prof. Dr Haji Kadirun Yahya, also known as Sayyidi Syaikh (1917-2001).

The *imam* of Al Baitul Qadim (Airmata Mosque) told me that the mosque set as its mission the preservation of Aswaja teachings. It aims to sustain values and traditions

\(^{15}\) *Talqin* is an advice recited for the dead before burial as guidance for the dead in entering the afterlife.

\(^{16}\) Usually *tahlilan* is carried out at the 1\(^{st}\), 3\(^{rd}\), 7\(^{th}\), 100\(^{th}\), and 1,000\(^{th}\) days after a Muslim dies. It involves a gathering attended by relatives and neighbours of the deceased.

\(^{17}\) *Mandi tolak bala* is an annual communal bathing ritual by the beach of Kupang Bay in the month of Safar of the Islamic calendar. It is usually held on the last Wednesday of Safar. The intention is to avoid disasters and bad luck.
inherited from great Muslim scholars, as well as protecting the community from perceived negative influences of both radical and liberal Muslims.

**Islamic Renewal Movements**

Kupang like most parts of Indonesia has felt the impact of Islamic revivalist movements in the last few decades. Revivalism is a stricter form of modernism, generally distinguished as a cultural movement (institutions such as Hizbut Tahrir) or as a political movement (e.g. the Prosperous and Justice Party or PKS/ Partai Keadilan Sejahtera) (Hilmy 2007). One of the primary consequences of revivalism has been the growing number of the so-called conservative Muslims. These are modernist Muslims with a puritan orientation and working, both culturally and politically, to advocate the implementation of Shariah (Arifianto 2009).

The origin of revivalism can be traced to modernist movements in Egypt, Iran, and Pakistan. Other factors contributing to its development include the Iranian revolution, Palestinian issues, and radical Islamic movements in the Middle East. Domestically, it is a consequence of the emergence of an Islamic middle class in Indonesia following the success of the New Order’s economic development. Many scholars argue that revivalism is an effect of the changing attitude of the regime towards political Islam, particularly from the mid-1980s (Hefner 1993, Bertrand 2004, Nakamura 1999, Barton 1991, Himly 2007).

There are several key objectives advocated by the revivalist organisations. The first of these is the purification of Islamic teachings based on the Qur’an and hadith. Other practices and teachings, including those influenced by local traditions and so-called ‘innovations’ (*bid’ah*), are categorised as heretical and are thus rejected. Secondly, Islam is seen as more than a religion. It is an all-encompassing way of life that regulates moral and political aspects and should be implemented in a complete manner (*kaflah*). The movement therefore seeks to impose *syari’at*-based regulations at the national and local level. In order to achieve these objectives, Islamists pursue strategies such as the formation of *dakwah* institutions, campus-based Islamic study groups and movements, and a stronger connection with the global *ummah* (Muslim community) as reflected in their issues of concern (Hilmy 2007, Rosyad 1995, Hussin 1990).

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18 Since the 1980s some elements within the Indonesian Muslims have been undergoing revivalism (Hefner 1999, Vatikiotis 1993, Howell 2001). The development was also referred to as ‘revitalization’ (Hefner 1987: 550).
In Kupang, the early 2000s marked the arrival of a new Islamic *dakwah*. At a local university, Universitas Nusa Cendana (UNDANA), HTI formed study circles (*halaqah*), and in a number of mosques, especially at Nurussa’adah Great Mosque, JT followers gathered on a regular basis. My study will provide observations on these two *dakwah* groups in Kupang, to examine when and how these organisations entered Kupang, the methods and agenda of their *dakwah*, as well as receptions and reactions from the Muslim community. HTI gained followers mainly among the university students, who engaged actively in the discussion on the weaknesses of Western-style democracy and to maintain Islamic *akidah* in the relationships with Christians. Some notable effects that the JT movement is having on the traditionalist community concerns the introduction of the concept of piety, which emphasises the observance of rituals and *dakwah* activities perceived as of purer Islam; and a notion that religious teaching is not an exclusive domain of *imam* or learned *ulama* because a lay Muslim can perform *dakwah*.

**Muslim-Christian Relations**

Muslim-Christian relations in Indonesia have generally been peaceful but with occasional disruptions/prone to disruption, and marked with some episodes of tension and violent conflict. During the early years of the New Order regime (1965-1998), Suharto emphasised political stability in the interest of rapid economic growth. Viewing Islam as a threat to this objective, Islamic political power and aspirations to make Islam the state ideology were suppressed. Suharto adopted the policy of banning political speech that invoked topics referred to by the acronym SARA, which was part of the New Order approach of restricting political freedom by any means necessary. During this period, the Chinese (Christian) minority seemed to have complete control of the economy, while native Christians and nominal Muslims enjoyed much power in the political sphere. At this time, tensions arose over Christian missionary activities, especially with regard to the construction of churches and the role of missionary organisations running social and health services. During the latter period of the New Order and the subsequent period of Reform (1998), the position of Muslims strengthened, partly because they managed to better organise their political power, and partly because Suharto shifted his position towards Islam in the hope of gaining political support against the army during his final years in power. The result was a new

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19 SARA is an acronym from Suku, Agama, Ras, Antar-Golongan (Ethnicity, Religion, Race, and Inter-Class).

The country’s transition to democracy after the fall of Suharto (1998-1999) saw large-scale inter-religious conflicts erupt in Maluku, North Maluku, and Central Sulawesi. These conflicts, which lasted for months and even years, were massive in their geographical coverage, physical impact and destruction of property. Kupang also suffered from anti-Islam riots, albeit on a smaller scale. The incidents occurred in November 2008, resulting in a number of deaths, and the burning and destruction of a number of mosques, Muslim houses and shops, in various parts of Kupang (Sihbudi and Nursahim 2001).

After the violent conflicts ended, in a highly decentralised system, political Islam continued to thrive through the adoption of syari’at-inspired regulations in some predominantly Muslim districts. Dakwah (proselytising) and similar interest groups, including HTI and JT, flourished with far-reaching implications in politics, economics, and people’s lifestyles. At the same time, Christian religious missions became more vigorous. Typical areas of contestation include methods of religious proselytising, construction of places of worship, interfaith marriage, and celebration of religious festivals. These contestations have been manifested in public debates over the issuance of laws and regulations concerning these matters, restrictions to participate in religious festivals, and objections to the building of a church, as well as threats and assaults (Ropi 2000, Husein 2005, Mujiburrahman 2006, Arifianto 2009, Seo 2012).

Developments at the national level influenced inter-religious relations at the local level. Some tensions that occurred in Kupang, including the November 1998 incident, to a certain extent were a response to occurrences in the other parts of the country. Scholars argue that two factors impact the ability of the community to curb tensions. The first factor is the presence of adat (custom) mechanisms that bind the community (Bartel 1977, Fuad 1985, Tule 2004, Gomang 2006, Rodemeier 2010). Scholars argue that studies of communities in the eastern part of Indonesia have shown that adat (customary) social and political mechanisms play a crucial role in maintaining relationships. In some instances, adat mechanisms work more effectively in resolving tensions, without substantive interventions from the state apparatus. Such adat

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practices, it is argued, have usually been in place for a long period, dating back to pre-colonial times, and before the emergence of religious divisions in society.

Rodemeier (2010) in her study on Alor and Pantar Islands found that Muslim villages at the coast have *adat* (customary) relations with non-Muslim villages in the interior. The people of Pandai at the coast embraced Islam in the 16th century, after being introduced to the religion by Muslim preachers from Ternate. The people of Helongdai in the interior initially accepted Islam but only partially, and later converted to Protestantism. However, the *adat* relations between the two villages continued. Rodemeier argues that mixed communities on Alor and Pantar rely on local traditions to maintain peaceful relations, including preventing the escalation of tensions. In the past, land was a source of conflict, which was constructed as religiously motivated.

Fuad (1985) argues that Rambu Solok and Rambu Tukak are the local mechanisms that bind the Muslims, Christians, and Pre-Islamic people in Tana Toraja (South Sulawesi) to help each other during hardships, funeral ceremonies, birth and wedding celebrations, religious festivals, *kerja bakti* (social activities), *kerja sawah* (cultivation activities), and national events (such as national day). Gomang (2006), on the other hand, found that Belagar community in East Flores has a common tie (Belagar language: *ia mutu lol ‘tela wala*) based on geographical locations (coastal and hinterland) rather than common ancestors. The concept in Belagar language ‘*ia mutu lol ‘tela wala*’ literary means brotherhood between Christian inland villages and Muslim coastal villages. Initially, both communities were economically dependent on each other. Christian interior people engaged in agriculture, while Muslims in coastal areas were fishermen.

In Maluku, Muslims and Christians are bound by the institution of *pela gandong*, on the basis of common ancestry and long-established traditional alliances. The tradition of common possession of house of the ancestor (*baileu* in Ambon language) symbolises the continuation of an alliance. The two groups have to maintain the *baileu* to prevent calamities and to guard the souls of their ancestors (Bartel 1977). Tule’s thesis (2001) shows that indigenous Muslims of Keo (Central Flores) recognise the same origin and

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21 Partial adoption of Islam is reflected in the inability of people in the interior to perform daily prayers, despite their conversion, due to lack of clean water in their area. Their religious practices are referred to as ‘small Islam’ (Rodemeier 2010: 31).

22 *Pela gandong* is a concept of pact or alliance between two more villages in Maluku. *Pela* is a pact developed on the basis of brotherhood, while *gandong* is a pact on the basis of kinship (see Attamimy 2014, Hoedodo et al., 2013, Jacky Manuputty 2014)
belong to a particular ‘source house’ or ‘ancestral house’ as their non-Muslim relatives. Their notion of ‘house’ is vital to their local cultural identity and unites both indigenous Muslims and non-Muslims of Keo (Tule 2001:13). Most local Muslims, indigenous and migrants (e.g., those from Hadhramaut), are incorporated into local source houses and ritual houses which sees their participation with non-Muslims in rites associated with their clan land and ritual house. They participate in mortuary rites, wedding proposals and ceremonies, circumcision and *hajj* (Tule 2001:270).

The second factor that works to reduce inter-religious tensions is intermarriage. In communities where intermarriages are common, relations between families of different religious groups tend to be stronger. Babcock (1981 and 1989) considers intermarriage as a way to tighten the relationships between Muslims in Kampung Jawa Tondano with their Christian families in other parts of North Sulawesi. He shows that many of the first Javanese male Muslims who founded Kampung Jawa Tondano married local Minahasan women. The women converted to Islam. Most Minahasan men who settled in Kampung Jawa also married local women, and converted to Islam. In the 19th century, many Muslims from Cirebon, Banten, Padang, Kalimantan, Gorontalo, South Sulawesi, and Maluku migrated to Kampung Jawa. Islam became a basis of village identity. However, according to Babcock (1981), the Kampung Jawa people have maintained close relationships with their Christian families for several generations. Both sides visit each other for funerals, weddings, or religious ceremonies, such as Idul Fitri, Christmas, and other festivals.

These studies provide insights into the kinds of social and cultural dynamics that contribute to social harmony in communities characterised by religious variety. I was able to identify analogous practices and social dynamics in my study in Kupang NTT.

**Setting**

Kupang is located on the northern coast of the Indonesian part of Timor. It has been the capital of the NTT Province since the province was formed in 1958, and it is also the capital of Kupang Municipality and Kupang regency. The city is divided into two parts: Kupang Lama (the old part of the city) and Kupang Baru (an area which was developed later). The NTT Province is among the poorest in the country. In 2010, the poverty rate stood at 23.3 per cent, much higher than the national figure of 13.3 per cent. In 2010, the number of poor people in Kupang Municipality was 93,880 (33.64 per cent of the total population of 279,072). Calculated from the number of households, as many as 23,470 households (38.79 per cent of 60,506 households) were categorised as poor.
It was not very difficult to observe poverty in the city. One would see many school-aged children not attending school and working as drivers’ assistants in *bemo* (public transport/ shared taxis). The city also has a low rate of electrification. Most streets and public spaces are without electricity.

Nevertheless, Kupang is fast becoming a dynamic urban community and an influential government centre. Most of the government buildings are now built away from the coast. In 1978, the sub-district of the city of Kupang (Kecamatan Kota Kupang) received the status of Municipality Region Level II (Kotamadya Daerah Tingkat II, becoming Kupang Municipality), resulting in an increased recruitment of civil servants, including from outside the province (Tidey 2012). By 2011, Kota Kupang is home to a total of 355 government institutions that employ 6,959 civil servants (BPS 2012). One can easily observe numerous government buildings when driving around the city. At the centre of new Kupang, the office and residence of the Provincial Governor looks luxurious and stands out among other buildings. Civil servants in uniform are also easily noticeable, on the streets, government compounds, and also in other public spaces.

Kupang Lama—located on the seashore—is a bustling centre with business, trading, and service activities, while Kupang Baru further inland is the centre of government and international non-governmental organisation (NGO) activities. Trade and services seem to be expanding, while agriculture is no longer a major source of income. Since Kupang is the capital of three levels of government structure (province, municipality, and regency), it naturally plays a role as a centre of government, trade, and services. This development is accompanied by a shift in land use in Kupang and its surrounding areas, where agricultural land has now been converted for housing, offices, and trade centres.

The transition of Kupang from semi-urban into urban areas is marked by some typical characteristics. On the one hand, the agricultural economy still exists, especially in villages on the outskirts of the city, while trade and services are flourishing in urban areas. In this economic dualism, the structure of labour has changed accordingly. Many of the people of Kupang still rely on agriculture, while a growing number of the inhabitants now work in trade and services, especially in the government sector. It is also common that those who engage in dry-land agriculture are also making some income from small-scale trade, especially in the informal sector (Mawardi et al. 2011). Trade, restaurants, and the hotel sector are the largest contributors (28.9 per cent) of
regional income, followed by government and private services (26.98 per cent), and transportation and communication (14.4 per cent) (BPS 2012).

Tidey (2012) maintains that more migrants came to Kupang after Indonesia became independent because Kupang was fast developing into a centre of education and government. The State University of Nusa Cendana (Undana), Artha Wacana Christian University, and Widya Mandira Catholic University were established in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In a later period, Muhammadiyah University, University of PGRI (Teacher’s Union of the Republic of Indonesia) and dozens of academies and colleges of various fields were also established.

The network of transportation in Kupang is reliable, covering land, air, and sea transportation that provides inter-island services and between towns on the Island of Timor, as well as to the regions across the country. El Tari airport and Tenau seaport play an important role for the economy of Kupang, and the NTT Province altogether. In terms of land transportation, Kupang has five terminals (Oebobo, Kota Lama, Belo, Manulai II, Terminal Alak) that serve transportation in the city and also intercity to and from Kupang. During my fieldwork, for daily activities, I travelled either on bemo or ojek. All bemo are equipped with a huge sound system, and extremely loud music was always playing. It was like clubbing all day long, everywhere you go. I don’t know how they do it, but the locals seemed to relax inside the bemo. They could even talk on the phone or chat with fellow passengers.

With respect to the government administration, Kupang Municipality is divided into six kecamatan (sub-districts), namely Alak (comprises 12 kampung), Maulafa (9 kampung), Oebobo (7 kampung), Kota Raja (8 kampung), Kelapa Lima (5 kampung) and Kota Lama (10 kampung). All three enclaves of my study are relatively close to the seaside. Geographically, these kampung are settlements on the outskirts of a large city. Kampung Solor, Kampung Airmata, and Kampung Bonipoi are located in Kota Lama district, while Kampung Oesapa is in Kelapa Lima district.

23 Each district (kabupaten) and municipality (kota) in one province has equal status. Under the region and municipality are kecamatan (sub-districts), headed by a camat (sub-district chief). A sub-district usually consists of about 10 to 12 kampung (villages) or kelurahan, which are headed by a kades (kepala desa/ village chief) or lurah. Although a village is the lowest level of administration, it is not the smallest unit. A village is usually divided into a number of dusun (hamlet), led by a kadus (kepala dusun/ hamlet chief), who coordinates rukun tetangga (RT or neighbourhoods). An RT consists of a number of households; the maximum number is 70, headed by ketua RT (RT chief). An RT is the smallest unit within the village.
As the population grew, in the 1970s, the government began to build subsidised residential compounds in a national public housing program (Perumnas). Perumnas at Kampung Pasir Panjang (currently Kampung Nenofaek) was the first public housing project, as part of the strategy to accommodate the increased influx of civil servants.

24 ‘Perumnas is the abbreviation of the National Urban Development Corporation (Perusahaan Umum Nasional). This state-owned corporation was founded in 1974 as an initiative of the Body of National Housing Policy (Badan Kebijaksanaan Perumahan Nasional)’ (Tidey 2012:312).
Over time, the city developed towards the east and the south, where more public housing projects were located, either funded by the government budget or by private contractors. The residential areas built by private companies are located in the vicinity of the Mayor’s office and its surrounding areas, down to areas near the El Tari airport. The inhabitants of these private, new residential areas are in general economically better off (Tidey 2012).

In these new residential areas one can also find mosques, but these mosques are different in character than those in the three enclaves that I studied. Mosques and imam in the three enclaves retain a distinct Islamic tradition derived from the place of origin of the dominant ethnic groups. There were no dominant ethnic groups among Muslims in the new residential areas. The number of Muslims in predominantly Christian new residential areas is insignificant, unlike in Kampung Solor, Kampung Airmata, and Kampung Bonipoi.

Methodology

I chose to study Muslims in Kupang on the suggestion of my adviser, Professor James Fox. He made this suggestion based mainly on a consideration that the Muslim community of Kupang was still understudied. It would be interesting to look at how Muslims in this area, comprising migrants from various different places of origin, practice their religion. The diversity of Islam in Kupang, according to him, is another point of interest. The other reason was that Muslims form the minority group in a predominantly Christian town. Moreover, being a Christian myself, it would be challenging for me to study the dynamics between these religious groups. After reading the literature on the history of Kupang and learning that there was no single study on contemporary Muslims of Kupang, I decided to pursue the topic.

My research focuses on how Muslims practice their religion in a particular cultural context. It examine efforts by Muslims in Kupang to understand and give meaning to religious texts, and how they transmit their understanding through religious practices by taking into account specific cultural contexts in certain localities and at different periods of time. Following Bowen (2012), in understanding the interpretation and transmission of religious practice, it is crucial to consider cultural diversity as a context within which these processes take place. Muslim society in Kupang derives from different Islamic traditions; that are, Solor Islam, Bugis Islam, Hadhrami Islam, Java Islam, and Sumatra Islam and they try to preserve and defend their distinct religious and cultural identities.
The task of an ethnographic work on Islam is to unfold how religious beliefs and ideas are operationalized into practice, not to explain normative religious teachings (Varisco 2005). I will focus on the diversity of practices of rituals (ibadat) and activities related to the five pillars, which are constructed in specific ways according to local traditions. These practices include lifecycle rituals such as birth, akekah, circumcision, wedding, death rites; prayers, fasting rituals, recitation of the Qur'an, festivals (sacrifice and fasting rituals; commemoration of the birthday of the Prophet, communal bathing), Gambus musical performance, and activities related to Sufi practice.

Some of the practices are referred to as highly personal practice and sometimes private (Schiellke and Debevec 2012:13) such as intermarriage, conversion rituals and subsequent female circumcision, and activities related to Sufi practice, but most of them are in reasonably ‘observable manner’ (Varisco 2005:140) since they are performed in fixed areas (such as by the beach, in the mosques, etc). The importance of social context within which practice is sustained and transmitted is also elaborated in my observation on Muslims as the minority group in Kupang. There is a diversity of Muslims’ perceptions regarding their relations with Christians, and the dynamic interaction between Muslims and their Christian neighbours focusing mainly on their strategies in living in the Christian town. Seen from the perspective of Muslims, I will show the significant influence of Muslim-Christian relations on everyday Islamic practice. Following Bowen (2005), my observation on Islamic practice will also cover the emergence of the new dakwah—notably two transnational movements of HTI and JT; and Muslims’ strategies in maintaining the Aswaja traditions in light of these new movements.

My data was collected from December 2010 to February 2012. I arrived in Kupang on 6 December 2010 and stayed at my friend’s house in Kupang Baru area for the first few days. Almost every night for the whole month there were firecrackers, sometimes lasting until dawn or only stopping after 3am. This tradition made me realise that I was indeed in a Christian town, where the majority of the people were celebrating Christmas. This kind of festivity could hardly be experienced in other parts of the country where Islam is the religion of the majority. The day after arriving I started looking for permanent accommodation. After searching for a few days and considering
many aspects of the matter—location, safety, and facilities—I chose a room in a boarding house near Nostalgia Park\(^{25}\) as my accommodation.

Hanifah Dewi, a staff member at the Municipal Office of Religious Affairs, introduced me to her colleagues. I explained my research to them. In my conversation with Hanifah and her colleagues, Kampung Airmata was frequently mentioned. According to them, Kampung Airmata was known as Kampung Arab (Arab Quarter), and the people in this kampung, Arab and Solorese, were known for their efforts in maintaining traditions, especially with regard to Islamic festivals and lifecycles. I was also informed that on the following evening there would be a pre-wedding party called Dana-dana Night and was advised to come and observe the party. Hanifah also introduced me to a local historian named Munandjar Widiyatmika. He has written a number of books about Kupang and East Nusa Tenggara, including *Sejarah Islam di Nusa Tenggara Timur* (*The History of Islam in East Nusa Tenggara*, 2004) and *Menelusuri Jejak Islam di Bumi Cendana* (*Tracing Islam on the Sandalwood Island*, 2008). He also emphasised on the diversity of Islam in Kupang due to different origins of migrants who try to sustain their various Islamic traditions.

I took the opportunity to attend the Dana-dana Night and made myself known to the people in this neighbourhood, who were curious about my research, mainly about the motivation for and intention of the study (see further details about Dana-dana Night in Chapter 4). This Dana-dana Night was the first lifecycle event I observed. Many people were helpful in giving me information about upcoming lifecycle ceremonies. I received an invitation to attend a wedding ceremony of the son of an imam; the ritual performed during pregnancy; akekah (a ceremony for a newborn baby, at which the baby’s hair is shaved, see details in Chapter Three and Chapter Five); circumcision; and also death rituals (see more details on Chapters Three and Four). I took detailed notes of the rituals, recorded them on a camcorder or took pictures of them on a camera, and also recorded the sermons (if there were any) on a digital recorder. The families who hosted these ceremonies welcomed me.

I started to record interviews in the third month of my fieldwork. Initially, I made efforts to build rapport with some Muslim informants there, and also to get to know their families, and spent time with them on some of their daily routines. Emerson et al.

\(^{25}\) In the park there is a Peace Gong Monument (a duplicate of the World Peace Gong). Former president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono opened Nostalgia Park and put his signature on the gong during his visit to Kupang to attend the commemoration of National Press Day on 8 February 2011.
(1995) argue that ethnographic participation requires more than physical and social proximity to the daily rounds of people’s lives and activities. It requires the ethnographer to immerse themselves into the local matrix of meanings, participate in local system of organised activities, see from inside how people lead their lives, how they carry out day-to-day rounds of activities, and what they found meaningful.

After a few days in Kupang, I was introduced to the imam of Al Fatah village mosque at Kampung Solor. Haji Tahir Zen, the imam, talked a lot about the history of this kampung and the mosque. Understanding the history of Islam in Kupang as told by the local people is very interesting, because these oral traditions are rarely documented in the literature.26 I benefited from a number of people from the older generation in Kupang who helped me find out more about the history of the village, of the mosque, and of the mosque leaders.

The imam in the four kampung where I conducted my ethnographic work were generally elderly. These imam and also their families became my primary informants about relevant topics of my study. None of them raised any objections to my doing research in their kampung, or prohibited me from entering the mosques to observe religious activities. Because of their acceptance, I felt completely comfortable adjusting and settling in. In addition to the imam of the village mosques, I also conducted interviews with some imam who led the mosques outside these four kampung, including Nurusa’adah Great Mosque, Nurul Imam Mosque, Baiturrahman Mosque, BTN Mosque, and Kampung Meleset Mosque.

In addition to attending lifecycle rituals, getting to know the imam, and observing their activities, the other channel through which I was granted access to immerse myself in the lives of Muslims in Kupang was the women's Majelis Taklim. I had become close friends with some members of the Majelis Taklim on the completion of my fieldwork. Almost every village has a women's Majelis Taklim, even though not all of them were active. I conducted interviews with them and observed their activities, including their activities outside the Majelis. On several occasions, I visited mother and baby health centres, in which some members of Majelis were involved. In all four kampung I had host families who provided me with a place to rest and to have meals, or even a place to stay for short periods. For example, during the holy month of Ramadan in August 2011,

26 The history of Islam in Widyatmika (2004 and 2008) is focusing on Islam in the whole province of NTT, not on the history of each Muslim kampung in Kupang.
I stayed for two weeks with Kak Nur's family in Kampung Airmata, and spent the last two weeks of the fasting month in Ibu Endah's house in Kampung Solor.

Through the women’s Majelis Taklim I had the opportunity to meet new female converts (mualaf), who had converted to Islam upon marrying Muslim men. I was particularly interested in these mualaf, exploring their experiences in learning a new religion and becoming a Muslim. The decision to convert, even though it was a marital conversion, and to learn a new religion is not easy, and this view was confirmed by many of the converts, including Hajjah Nurhayati (whose husband Haji Makarim is Head of Council of Indonesian Ulama (MUI or Majelis Ulama Indonesia) of NTT). She told me that if a prospective convert asks her opinion about converting to Islam, she would emphatically suggest that the person think about it carefully. She maintained that conversion comes with a set of obligations instructed in Islam. It is not sufficient for a convert to merely change their religion on their Identity Card without fulfilling the responsibilities. Islam requires its followers to observe a number of obligations, which may be difficult for those who are not committed, such as daily prayers, to spend at least 2.5 per cent of their income on the poor, to fast during Ramadan, and so on. In Kupang several mosques initiated women’s Majelis Taklim dedicated to new converts, in Kampung Oesapa (see Chapter Five) and Kampung Namosain. The Majelis Taklim for these mualaf were attended by a religious councillor, assigned by the Municipal Office of Religious Affairs. Kak Nur (chair of women’s Majelis Taklim in Kampung Airmata) was also teaching the Qur'an to mualaf (see Chapter Four).

The most celebrated religious festival in Kupang is the birthday of the Prophet (Maulid Nabi or Maulid), which falls on the 12th day of the month of Rabiul Awal in the Islamic calendar. The first Maulid that I attended was in Kampung Airmata (see Chapter Four). I then attended Maulid held in other mosques, including by a number of Majelis Taklim. From mid-February until mid-March in 2011, there were many Maulid celebrations in various venues. For me, this was similar to the celebration of Christmas in Kupang, which runs from the beginning until the end of December. Ramadan or the fasting month was also an invigorating celebration. In order to share the experience, I also fasted throughout the holy month. The excitement of Ramadan did not only belong to Muslims, but to non-Muslims as well, because every afternoon before people break the fast, in Kampung Airmata and Kampung Solor, there were many food stalls selling a variety of meals and delicacies. Light meals were usually served for free at the mosque, for those who intended to attend a sermon after breaking the fast. In general, activities at
the mosque became livelier. During the holy month of Ramadan, I made observations of activities of Muslims at the mosques and had a chance to chat with many of them. My presence at Islamic festivals, as well as in lifecycle rituals, allowed me to get close to many Muslim families in Kupang.

In addition to the women’s Majelis Taklim, another type of activity found in almost every village is Qur’an learning (mengaji) for children. I chatted with a number of Qur’an teachers, and admired their dedication in teaching children. Many of them taught the holy book to children for free, or received only modest compensation. I regularly attended Qur’an classes, to observe how the children were learning to recite the Qur’an, especially in Kampung Airmata and Kampung Bonipoi (see Chapter Four). They would get excited every time I took a photo of them while they were studying. Students of Qur’anic classes were involved in and added to the exhilaration of the celebration of important festivals at mosques. Some of these children introduced me to their parents, who then became my informants.

The diversity that exists among Muslim communities of Kupang also relates to Islamic organisations. One of the well-known organisations in Kupang is the local branch of Muhammadiyah (see above). Muhammadiyah proponents were proud of the fact that Muhammadiyah in Kupang was the first Islamic organisation to open its schools to non-Muslims. In Muhammadiyah University, established in 1987, non-Muslim students made up 70 per cent of the total 4,000 or more students. I had a chance to interview a number of Muhammadiyah elementary school teachers and Muhammadiyah university lecturers, but was unable to make observations on the teaching and learning activities in these institutions, or to interview non-Muslim students there. The other limitation I had during the fieldwork was that I only interviewed one informant representing HTI and three informants representing JT, and did not have an opportunity to observe activities of these revivalist organisations. However, thanks to Al Islam Friday flyers which were widely disseminated in some mosques, I was able to undertake content analysis of HTI's agenda (see Chapter Six).

I spent most time in two kampung: Kampung Solor and Kampung Airmata, and less in Kampung Bonipoi and Kampung Oesapa. As a consequence, discussions on Kampung Solor (Chapter Three) and Kampung Airmata (Chapter Four) are more detailed than the other two kampung. The other factor that limited my observation was that some festivals or ceremonies were performed in the same time at different kampung.
Therefore, in each of the kampung, the discussion covers only some Islamic festivals and lifecycles.

I come from a social position of belonging to a minority (a Christian Indonesian), a woman, a Batak (an ethnic group which is almost synonymous with Christianity) and have an interfaith marriage with a Muslim husband. Generally I did not experience a language barrier with people in Kupang, as all of my informants spoke the Indonesian language, albeit in a local dialect. However, I am not trained in Arabic and relied on my specialist informants to explain any Arabic terms or expressions used in interviews. Throughout my fieldwork, my positionality (Madison 2005) created certain limitations and expectations. As Madison (2005:14) noted, awareness of a researcher on positionality is crucial and is an important part because it allows she/he to regularly re-examines the research plan, methods, and possible impacts on the community in question.

During my fieldwork, the imam and informants generally warmly welcomed me to all activities and I did not experience any restrictions to enter the mosque. However, I encountered a challenge when I paid a visit to a Maulid celebration held by one Majelis Taklim in a mosque. An ustad (Islamic teacher), from outside the community, who was delivering a sermon, forbade me from entering the mosque. On the other occasion, I could not observe HTI activities on a mosque because one of the HTI ustad forbade me from coming to the mosque.

Many informants paid attention to the fact that I am married to a Muslim husband and some were curious to know how interfaith marriage is possible. In Indonesia interfaith marriage is a sensitive issue, including in Kupang (see Chapter Two). In Kupang, if one wishes to marry someone of a different religion, typically, a wife would follow the religion of her husband. That was why some imam asked questions about my decision to retain my faith for, in their view, I should convert to Islam to follow my husband. A stricter imam went further, saying that according to Islamic law my marriage was illegitimate and that my husband and I are now practicing zinah (adultery). There were also imam who believed that marriage between Muslims and Christians is permissible in Islam, however. Interestingly, some female informants were emphatically and explicitly hopeful that by researching the Muslim community I would one day convert to Islam, because they were certain I had gained some knowledge of the religion, and also they were certain that my face shone brighter when attending Islamic ceremonies and rituals. My experiences in these matters led me to reflect (Clifford 1996) that there are different
views among Muslims on certain issues. Some Muslims in Kupang are more open-minded and relaxed, some are moderate in their views, and some are rather strict.

My research on Muslim people and my interfaith marriage also created curiosity among Christians. When I visited the mayoral office to obtain the research permit, a government official asked about my motives for doing the research. A few days later, I was invited to attend an interview regarding my permit. Interviewed by a panel of three officials (all Christian), again, questions about motivation seem incredibly important. In the interview, there was also a question about whether my husband and I are devoted Christian. They were stunned to learn that I am married to a Muslim husband. They wanted to know why neither of us had converted to the other’s religion. When I said my husband and I are committed to keep our own faiths, one of them quickly responded, ‘My goodness. Please keep your faith, Ibu (Mam).’ An official even suggested that I take my husband to a charismatic church so he can convert. ‘He will become a Christian after three visits’, she said.

In the course of my research, I also learned that being the majority and minority in Indonesia does have consequences. On Friday 18 February 2011, when I attended a Maulid ceremony in a mosque, I heard rumours saying that mosques would be burned during Friday prayers on the week after. I did not pay attention when the ojek taxi driver told me about the news, but then on Monday I began to feel anxious when a child told the ustad about the rumour. The boy said that he did not want to attend Friday prayer at the mosque because he heard that the mosque would be burned. Rumours of attacks on mosques spread quickly in Kupang. Members of Majelis Taklim kept telling to each other not to be afraid of the rumour, but to stay alert. Its leader stressed that Kupang people are not easily provoked and that people of different faiths have been living beside each other peacefully for centuries. Some informants mentioned that this event was a direct response to an anti-Christian attack that occurred in Temanggung town, Central Java, on 8 February 2011 (see further in Chapter Two).

Being in an interfaith marriage helped me to appreciate the complexity of interfaith relationships in Kupang. Upon learning controversy that occurred about the construction of a mosque in Batuplat village (see Chapter Two), it was not hard for me to become empathetic on the Muslim side. I was aware that in Indonesia minority groups often suffered from difficulties when obtaining permits to build places of worship. My observation on marital conversion in Oesapa village shows that this practice serves as a
form of civic engagement, which positively contributes to tolerance and religious harmony (Chapter Five).

With regard to religious affiliation, I found myself simultaneously being part of minority group (as a Christian in Indonesia) and a majority (as a Christian in Kupang). This position allowed me to enjoy certain privileges. I was able to build rapport with Christian informants and freely talk issues concerning Muslim-Christian relations in Kupang, including those of sensitive in nature. On the other hand, I felt that Muslim informants appreciated my experience of being a member of a minority group in Jakarta and would openly share their thoughts. On Christmas of 2011, there was a big banner on a public area wishing merry Christmas bearing the name of Chair of Provincial MUI on behalf of Muslims in NTT. For me, it was a surprising thing to watch. For Muslims in the city, these banners were a simple way to show respect to Christians.

Overall, undertaking fieldwork in Kupang was an exciting experience. People were very friendly and helpful. However, living in a city like Kupang is not easy and could be uncomfortable. Some neighbourhoods were too dark at night due to limited lighting in public areas. Some neighbourhoods were also prone to theft. I suffered from a burglary on 19 February 2011, a few days before my fieldwork was concluded. Thieves broke into my room and stole almost all my valuable goods (camcorder, camera, mobile phone, etc.). I reported the case to the police and was grateful that they successfully caught the thieves within one month and I could retrieve almost all of my stolen equipment. Unfortunately, even though my camera and camcorder were returned, memory cards from these devices had been thrown away. I lost all the videos I had recorded (Islamic festivals, wedding ceremonies, etc.) and photos that were taken a week before the incident. When I went to the police station to report the theft, it happened that a number of journalists were there. On the following day, my story and photo appeared in *Pos Kupang*. When I bade my informants and families farewell, many of them were already aware of the case and expressed their sympathy and support.

In the course of my fieldwork, I interviewed around 85 informants, from various backgrounds. The interviews were semi-structured with the purpose of collecting more information and to allow me to lead and direct follow-up questions. I observed numerous Islamic rituals, festivals, and sermons. Varisco (2005) distinguishes studying Muslims from studying Islam. Muslims can be observed through their activities, rituals, and practices. To him, observing a Muslim means observing ‘a Muslim in a specific time and place, to live like anyone else through the cycle from birth to death’ (Varisco
2005: 20). Islam as a religion in an abstract sense cannot be observed. It can only be ‘represented’. The critical stage of conducting fieldwork is not the observation, but the representation. Varisco (2005) makes a point when stating that it is only Muslims who can represent Islam. The challenge for an anthropologist is, therefore, to represent their representation; and this is what I aspire to achieve in this thesis.

**Outline of Thesis Chapters**

The study is organised into seven chapters. Following this Introduction (Chapter One), Chapter Two presents Muslims’ perspectives on how they as a minority live in a Christian town, and shows the multifaceted nature of Muslim-Christian relationships in Kupang. In contemporary Kupang, relations between Muslims and Christians are marked by a number of negotiations, ranging from daily issues such as halal (permissible) and haram (forbidden), to debates over the construction of places of worship, and inter-religious tensions that resulted from issues at the national level. I will discuss the sources of tensions and how the communities work to resolve them.

Chapter Three discusses the first Muslim enclave established in Kupang, which is Kampung Solor. I examine the formation of the kampung and the role of the Dutch in the process. This chapter also talks about the origin and development of Kampung Solor’s village mosque, and how the Muslim community of Kampung Solor engages in the preservation of Islamic traditions during times of change and external influences, especially with the arrival of the Muhammadiyah modernist organisation. Differing views among mosque leaderships (imam) reflect a process of negotiation between Aswaja and Muhammadiyah in the kampung, especially with regard to the celebration of Islamic festivals and conduct of rituals.

The second enclave, comprising Kampung Airmata, Kampung Bonipoi, and the Arabic-descent community, will be discussed in Chapter Four. Kampung Airmata and Kampung Bonipoi are grouped in the second enclave because they were established in the same period in the 1800s. Muslims in these two kampung pursue the preservation of Islamic traditions of their forefathers and also of the Aswaja traditions. In Kampung Airmata, this goal is achieved through the preservation of the division between Kampung Imam (village of the imam) and Kampung Raja (village of the adat or custom), each with its own sets of authorities and responsibilities. In Kampung Bonipoi, efforts to sustain Solorese Islamic tradition can be observed in the existence of the gambus musical group, while efforts to sustain Aswaja traditions are evident in their attention to death-related rituals through the establishment of Death and Funeral
Assistance. The Hadhrami group mostly resides in Kampung Airmata and Kampung Bonipoi. Through their role as Qur’anic teachers, both sadah-group (people who claim descent from the Prophet Muhammad) and non-sadah (non-descendant) groups played an important role in the Islamisation of Kupang.

Chapter Five focuses on Kampung Oesapa, a Bugis kampung, which represents the third and most recently developed enclave of Muslims in Kupang. It discusses preservation of Bugis Islam traditions through life-passage rituals and Islamic festivals. I will also examine relations between Muslims and their Christian neighbours, in light of anti-Islamic riots on 30 November 1998. I will also look at the role of women’s Majelis Taklim for new converts, in response to the increased number of female marital conversion to Islam in this kampung.

After the examination of the three enclaves of Muslims, mainly concerned with Muslim residential communities, in Chapter 6 I shift the focus to the ‘non-residential, dispersed communities’ by discussing new forms of dakwah that have emerged in Kupang through the establishment of JT in 2002 and HTI in 2008. Both JT and HTI share the goal of purification of Islamic beliefs among Muslims and implementation of Shariah, but have different strategies to achieve those goals. Muslims in Kupang have different attitudes toward JT and HTI, but both of them can operate freely in Kupang. The last chapter (Conclusion) draws my arguments together, concerning the lives of Muslims in a majority Christian setting.
Introduction

Every year during Ramadan the Governor of NTT Province, Frans Lebu Raya, invites Muslims to attend a breaking of the fast function at his residence. I attended such an event on 21 August 2011 at his official residence when members of the women of Majelis Taklim were in attendance. After the meals had been served, the Muslim guests performed an evening prayer in congregation. In his welcoming remarks, the Governor emphasised that being a Christian himself (he has a number of Muslim relatives in his paternal line), it is in his interest to maintain good relations with Muslims, in his position as Governor and also in his personal capacity.

On this occasion, the Governor had invited Haji Mokhsen Thalib, a respected ustad, to deliver a sermon. In his sermon Thalib talked at length about verse 13 of Surah Al Hujarat in the Qur’an, which says: ‘You people! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you might get to know one another.’\textsuperscript{27} He explained that God created mankind as his representative (khalifah) on earth, suggesting that human beings hold the central position in the order of creation and are given responsibility to look after the earth. He emphasised that the virtue of mankind can be observed in each individual’s interaction with others. He stated that:

\begin{quote}
God created every one of us as a unique individual, with respect to physical appearance and personality. These differences are proof of His might. Our interaction and relations with other individuals will make us ‘perfect’. It is our obligation as khalifah to maintain harmonious relationships with others in the daily life.
\end{quote}

Thalib then asked the audience to reflect on the habit of spending some time every day looking at the mirror. He said that despite scars and other imperfections, naturally everyone would love to see his or her own face because the face is ‘the image of God’. He warned the audiences to respect the physical body of a human being, because the body is also the image of God. He went further by saying that those who show disrespect for other human beings at the same time show disrespect to God. This

conception has a profound moral implication, that a Muslim must respect other human beings, regardless of their origin and religion.

In the last part of the sermon, Thalib discussed the concept of the judgment day (kiamat). Using the term kiamat and the Christian term Maranatha Day\textsuperscript{28} interchangeably, he said that on Maranatha Day, all human beings, Muslims and Christians alike, will be brought together to answer to Allah. The key point, according to him, was that human beings are accountable to Allah for their role as khalifah on earth. On the Maranatha Day, God will not separate Muslims and Christians, but the two people will be called together to answer to Him for their deeds. He concluded that the point of being a khalifah is to take care of the earth, which is the property of Allah, and to interact with other human beings in a noble way. It took me by surprise that Haji Mokhsen Thalib mentioned the term ‘the image of God’. I recalled that a similar term was also in the Bible. I was even more surprised when he called judgment day Maranatha Day, describing it as the day when all Muslims and Christians are to be brought to one place in the afterlife for judgment. His decision to use the term ‘Maranatha Day’, a Christian term, reflects his awareness of the need to find a common term that would be understood by both groups, as a way to create a sense of proximity.

In Kupang, I observed that sermons emphasising the need to respect other religions in order to maintain religious harmony are often heard. Similar messages are repeated during Friday prayers, and published in the weekly columns of local newspapers. This friendly attitude, I argue, is an important character of Muslims as a minority group in Kupang. Christians, especially the political leaders, share the same attitude. In addition to the annual breaking of the fast ceremony at the Governor’s official residence, it is common for the Mayor, head of subdistricts, and head of villages, who are themselves Christians, to attend and deliver speeches at the celebration of Islamic festivals such as the birthday of the Prophet (Maulid Nabi). Local Christian politicians’ and leaders’ support for the building of mosques was also common. As of 10 April 2011, Indonesian Minister of Religious Affairs visited Kupang to witness a ceremony in which Christian leaders, including the Governor and Mayor, announced donations to help with the construction of Kupang’s Grand Mosque (Masjid Raya), which had been halted due to

\textsuperscript{28} ‘Maranatha’ is a Christian term referring to the day when the Lord is coming (judgment day).
financial difficulties. The Minister praised the initiative as a testament to tolerance in the region.  

However, like elsewhere in Indonesia, relations between Muslims and Christians in Kupang are also marked by underlying tensions. In November 1998, a violent clash broke out in Kupang, killing at least three people and resulting in the destruction and the burning of Muslim houses and mosques. In 2011, for the first time, a group of Christians openly challenged the construction of a mosque in Kampung Batuplat (see the section in this chapter: Disputes over the Batuplat Mosque). This protest forced the Mayor of Kupang to halt the construction of the mosque in an attempt to reduce tensions. There was also recurrent debate about whether or not a Muslim is allowed to wish their neighbours and colleagues Merry Christmas every year. The relations, in short, are complex and dynamic.

This chapter aims to examine the multifaceted nature of Muslim-Christian relationships in Kupang. It presents mainly the Muslims’ perspectives, derived from interviews with Muslim informants and observation of Islamic religious events, in order to show how Muslims as a minority are able to survive in a Christian town. I argue that despite tensions, Muslim-Christian relations in Kupang have generally been peaceful. In addition to the shared history between Muslims and Christians, which dates back to the mid-1600s, Kupang has an effective elite network, which plays a crucial role in preventing tensions from escalating into violence. Various forms of community engagement in both religious and non-religious spheres enhance the effectiveness of this network.

This chapter is organised into four parts. The first part depicts the history of Kupang and its development from a ‘colonial town’ to a predominantly Christian town in post-colonial Indonesia. It also explains the processes in which many different ethnic groups gathered and established themselves in separate enclave settlements, and the process of the emergence of Muslim communities. The third section examines the complexity of

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30 As a multi-ethnic town, Kupang is not without identity-based conflict. For example, group brawls between youth of Sumba versus Alor repeatedly occurred. Over the last five years, there were at least five incidents involving these groups reported by the media. In a brawl on 15 November 2009 in Kampung Oesapa, a student from Alor was killed (Timor Express 15 November 2009, Pos Kupang 15 March 2014, Timor Express 18 September 2012). The handling of inter-religious tensions, however, received more attention from the local authority.
the relationships between Muslims and Christians in contemporary Kupang, followed by a discussion about various factors contributing to the peaceful religious relationships. The last section provides a conclusion.

**Kupang as a City of Migrants**

In 1653, the Dutch returned permanently to Kupang, marking the start of a long period of colonial rule by the VOC (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie/ Dutch East India Company) and then by the Dutch Government. The Dutch settled in the fortification abandoned by the Portuguese priests, and renamed it Fort Concordia. From 1653 to 1810, an *opperhoofd* (D. supreme headman) was appointed to govern the city, and from 1810 onward, a resident was stationed in Kupang. The Dutch implemented two policies that would define the main features of present-day Kupang. The first policy was to encourage migration of a number of ethnic groups—who signed a contract swearing their allegiance—for economic and security reasons. The second policy was to support the spread of Protestantism, especially in the later years of their colonial rule.

The policy of ethnic segregation under Dutch rule has contributed to the creation of Kupang as a multi-ethnic town. Historically, the Dutch played a crucial role in bringing the early settlers—those of Rotenese, Savunese, and Solorese—to Kupang and turning the town into a melting pot of migrants. During the time of the Dutch, the population of Kupang could be categorised into seven linguistic groups, all of whom maintained relations with the Dutch. The groups consisted of the Savunese, Ndaonese, Rotenese, Kupangese (or Helong), Timorese (Atoni), Alorese, and Solorese. These groups used the Malay language as a *lingua franca*. The main purpose of the Dutch-sponsored migration was for the Dutch to have local allies in their wars against the Portuguese, the mixed Portuguese, and anti-Dutch Timorese. These local allies, as well as Mardijkers and Papangers, came as soldiers. There were also the Rotenese who were sold in Kupang as slaves and became labourers in crop production, a small number of Chinese who engaged mainly in trade, as well as Sonbai people who migrated from the interior.

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31 Kupang Malay (Bahasa/Basa Kupang) is a language spoken by the people of Kupang. In the past, the people in Kupang used the language as a language of trade. This development was not unique to Kupang, because the Malay language was widely used in other parts of the archipelago as a *lingua franca* (Reid 1984 in Jacob and Grimes 2006).

32 ‘The Mardijkers were an Indonesian native free soldier. The Papangers were originally Philippine soldiers who had fought on behalf of the Spanish in the Moluccas and were eventually incorporated into the Dutch forces. They served in various regions of Indonesia, and a contingent of these soldiers was permanently settled on Timor. Both the Mardijkers and Papangers were mainly Moslems.’ (Fox 1977:139).
to escape attack by anti-Dutch forces. During this process of Dutch-sponsored migration, the native population of Helong people were displaced to Semau Island, in their effort to escape from recurrent attacks from anti-Dutch forces from the interior.\textsuperscript{33}

The Dutch granted land and organised the settlement of migrants in enclaves according to their ethnicity around Fort Concordia:\textsuperscript{34} by the beach to the west for the Rotenese, and to the East for the Solorese and Savunese. These settlements served as a buffer against attack from enemies. In addition, there were Chinese and Sonbai people who migrated from mountainous areas, both of whom were clustered in separate settlements (Fox 1977). Over time, these ethnic-based settlements became multi-ethnic and open for newcomers, for example from Bugis and other neighbouring islands of Timor, and Hadhrami people who came to trade and for religious missions. However, the dominant ethnic groups (Rotenese, Savunese, Solorese) remained as it was during the Dutch period. Of these early settlers, only the Solorese continued to profess Islam, while the other major ethnic groups were Christianised.

The Solorese were the first to ally themselves with the Dutch in the region, however. The alignment was established following Solorese confrontation with the Portuguese, the first Europeans who entered Timor waters. By 1556, when the Portuguese came to the island of Solor, north of Timor and east of Flores, in search of sandalwood (\textit{L. Santalum album}),\textsuperscript{35} Islam had been introduced to the locals through their interaction with traders from Java, Ternate, and Sulawesi, and Muslims preachers from Bengal (India). Some Solorese were also said to have familial ties with Javanese Muslims (Hägerdal 2012).

The conflict with the Portuguese was triggered by competition in the sandalwood trade and religious missions.\textsuperscript{36} A number of clashes between Muslim Solorese and the Portuguese occurred, but the latter were able to curb them. A series of events in 1598—including the policy to implement forced labour, the punishment of some converts who

\textsuperscript{33} By the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, the people of Helong, whose villages were unprotected, had to move from Kupang and settled in the Semau Island in the Bay of Kupang.

\textsuperscript{34} The Portuguese built Fort Concordia in 1647 and the Dutch took it over in 1653.

\textsuperscript{35} The Chinese traders had already mentioned the Timorese sandalwood trade in a record dating back to 1436, while the first European reference to Timorese sandalwood was written in 1518 (Fox 1977).

\textsuperscript{36} The first Catholic mission was established in 1562 by three Dominican priests sent from Malacca. An early Catholic mission on Solor converted 2,450 local families—around 12,250 people. To protect missionaries and the local converts against raids by the Muslims, the Portuguese built a fortification in 1566. The Portuguese were strengthening their base on Solor when in 1575 and the Prior in Malacca sent a captain to be stationed on Solor with around 20 soldiers. By this time, there were already some 2,000 Portuguese traders and their families living on Solor (Fox 1977, Fox 2000, Heuken 2008: 73-81).
relapsed to Islam and imprisonment of the Sengaji of Lamakera—prompted the Solerese to revolt against the Portuguese. On his release the Sengaji launched an attack in retaliation. His men besieged the fort for some time and killed the Portuguese captain. They fought for months and attracted followers from Timor and Flores, who attacked some churches and killed the friars. The unrest was finally curbed with help from Malacca. The Solorese, many of whom had previously converted to Catholic faith, relapsed to Islam (Heuken 2008: 73-98).

When the Dutch arrived in Solor in 1613, the Solorese quickly allied themselves with them. Muslim Solorese asked the Dutch to help them drive the Portuguese out. The Dutch were able to capture the Portuguese Fort, forcing the Portuguese soldiers, friars, traders and their families to flee to Larantuka on Flores (Fox 1981). The alliance between the Dutch and Muslim Solorese continued after the Dutch left for Kupang in December 1615. In the following years, the Dutch and Portuguese exchanged control of Solor fort a number of times (Fox 1981), but the Portuguese still used Larantuka as the centre of the Catholic mission and as a base for their military operations. Alliance between the Muslim Solorese and the Dutch continued until the Dutch made a decision to move its colonial base to Kupang in 1653.

The migration of the Rotenese was the first large-scale migration under Dutch rule. The Dutch considered Rote an important island, a source of food supplies, slaves, and also a potential place for retreat. Therefore, the Dutch insisted on keeping the Rotenese out of the sphere of influence of the Black Portuguese. From 1650 to 1680, the Dutch went on several military expeditions to strengthen ties with their allies and attacked their enemies, causing many local states to surrender. A Dutch official was stationed on Rote and disputes between local kingdoms were brought to the Council of Raja in

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37 On Solor, the only people who remained Christian were those from a village near the fort and a village on Adonara Island.

38 The Dutch arrived in Kupang Bay in the same year. The ruler of Helong, the native inhabitants of Kupang, invited them to build a base in Kupang but the invitation was rejected on the grounds that Kupang had limited economic potential. The Dutch had settled in Batavia in 1596 and then formed the VOC as a trading organisation in 1602.

39 The five villages are Lohayong, Lamakera, Lamahala—all formerly Catholic villages—and Trong and Serbiti.

40 When the Portuguese left Solor, the Catholic mission was in a poor state, primarily due to the lack of missionaries. The other reason for the stagnation was that the friars were also expected to manage non-religious affairs such as administration, dealing with local rulers, securing protection, and even handling military affairs. The situation was worsened by rivalry between Portuguese-born and Malacca-born friars (Heuken 2008: 73-98).

41 The most notable war against anti-Dutch states took place in 1681, when the Dutch defeated Thie, Dengka and Oenal and brought hundreds of prisoners and slaves with them to Kupang (Fox 1977).
Kupang. Timor became the major destination of the Rotenese migration. Typically, it took the form of migration of the whole household (Fox 1977). Due to the schooling system on Rote, Rotenese migrants, whose initial occupation was as palm (*lontar*) farmers and palm-tappers, slowly emerged to fill government clerical positions under the Dutch rule. By the 1950s, the Rotenese made up the largest group of employees in the government bureaucracy (Ormeling 1956: 223 in Van Klinken 2014: 86).

The migration of Savunese to Kupang took place later. The first contact between the Dutch and Savunese occurred in 1648, when Savu began to supply armed men to Kupang. In a contract in 1756 the Company recognised five states on Savu. These states were required to send armed men to help the Dutch in their wars against the Black Portuguese and its Timorese allies. Savunese soldiers were renowned for their fighting skills and bravery. The scale of Savunese migration to Kupang was smaller than to Sumba. The majority of these migrants were armed men and single males pursuing their fortunes.

The Dutch influence, however, did not extend beyond Kupang and its surrounding areas. Despite its strategic location and accessibility, Kupang was far from the source of sandalwood in the interior of Timor, which remained in the hands of the Black Portuguese and their Timorese allies. The sandalwood trade continued to benefit them, and also Chinese traders, until its decline in the 19th century. The Dutch made several attempts to attack the interior without success. The Black Portuguese, on the other hand, launched three failed attacks against the Dutch (1735, 1745 and 1749). At the battle of Penfui in 1749, the Dutch, supported by 130 Mardjikers, a large number of Timorese, 240 Savunese, 60 Solorese, and 30 Rotenese, defeated their rival. After this victory, ‘the balance of power in west Timor gradually shifted to the Dutch’ (Fox 1977: 64). The Dutch began to exert influence in the interior, dealing with local rulers using a

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42 By 1822, as many 300 Savunese soldiers were stationed near Kupang under Opperhoof Hazzart (Fox 1977).

43 The Black Portuguese turned out to be the strongest rival of the Dutch. They controlled a vast area in the eastern part of Timor and the sandalwood trade by building alliances with local rulers. On the other hand, the relations between the Black Portuguese and the European-born Portuguese were capricious. On many occasions, they cooperated together against the Dutch, but on other occasions they were in conflict against each other. The Portuguese friars, however, were free to spread Roman Catholicism on Timor. Slowly, the leader of the Black Portuguese became more powerful than the Portuguese Governor appointed by the Viceroy in Goa. Following a dispute, the Black Portuguese drove the Portuguese Governor to Dili in 1771 (Fox 1977).

44 One notable failed attack was in 1656 led by de Vlaming, well known for his role in the Dutch victory in Ambon a few years earlier. Following these defeats, an order from Batavia was received to leave Kupang and move to Rote, but this order was never executed (Hägerdal 2012).
combination of repression and cooperation. Some rulers were willing to sign contracts with the Dutch, while others resisted.

**Christian Missionisation on Timor and in Kupang**

From its stronghold in Larantuka on Flores Island, the Catholic mission reached the island of Timor in 1642 and was successful in converting the rulers of Sonbai and Wehale (Fox 1977: 63), followed by the conversion of rulers in Mena, Lifão and Kupang in later years (Heuken 2008). One factor behind this rapid conversion in these areas was the commonly practised mixed marriages between Portuguese and local women. At the turn of the 17th century, around 25,000 locals had converted to the Catholic religion, many of whom were Black Portuguese (Fox 1981). Catholic missionaries arrived in Kupang in 1647, when the Catholic friars were welcomed by the ruler of the Helong. The Dominicans then proceeded to build a fortification there, but their presence did not last long. The mission was unsuccessful, and they left the fortification due to internal conflict.

The Dutch initially adopted the separation of religion and government and did not encourage active Protestant missionaries. Among the first locals converting to the Protestant religion were the Rotenese. The ruler of Thei was the first convert (1729), followed by his son and his families. On request from the converted rulers, the Dutch then built schools and assigned teachers. The Christian schools were funded by the income from the sale of beeswax, a regular tribute from the Rotenese to the Company, while the teachers were paid by the Rotenese themselves from the mung bean trade. Christianity rapidly spread on Rote, but the Rotenese maintained some form of independence in learning about the religion. After accepting teachers from Ambon, the second generation of teachers were the Rotenese themselves (Fox 1977).

By the mid-1750s, the number of local people converting to Protestantism had risen to around 1,300 (Fox 1977, Steinbrick and Aritonang 2008). Conversion to Christianity offered a number of benefits. The converts enjoyed better legal status, were no longer

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45 The Black Portuguese were slowly growing into an important actor in the sandalwood trade. In order to secure their access to sandalwood, the Portuguese and Black Portuguese moved to Lifão, on the northwest coast of Timor. In August 1769, following an internal dispute, the Portuguese were forced to leave Lifão and established a new settlement in present-day Dili.

46 Larantuka slowly lost its significance after the Black Portuguese moved to Lifão in 1650. A limited number of Dominican missionaries remained an obstacle. By 1679 only 16 Dominicans worked to cover the whole NTT area. Some Franciscan friars appeared in the region between 1708 to 1722. The Jesuit and the Oratorian priors were also invited to send friars to Timor, but the invitation was rejected on the grounds that the Dominicans were not willing "to share 'their' territory" (Heuken 2008: 88).
subject to the customary (adat) law, and could not be condemned to slavery. Even though the mission was coordinated from Kupang, in accordance with the policy of Resident Hazaart, the early Christian missions paid special attention to the Rote. Some ministers were sent to reside on Rote, but their tenure did not last due to geographical difficulties. The Protestant mission in Kupang was closed when the VOC went bankrupt in 1795, and resumed in 1819, when Netherlands Missionary Society (NZG/ Nederlandsche Zendeling Genootschap) arrived. In 1819, NZG sent the first missionary, Dr. R. Le Bruijn to Kupang (Fox 1977, Aritonang and Steenbrick 2008).

The vacuum created by the collapse of the VOC had negative impacts on the Christian mission because church activities were no longer adequately funded. The NZG operated for around 20 years with modest results and had to close its mission in 1854. On the other hand, the growing influence of the Dutch affected the Catholic mission. During the second half of the 18th century, the missionary activities began to deteriorate due to lack of personnel. In 1834, the Dominicans left Timor areas completely. After another period without any missionary activities, in 1901, Protestant mission and schools were taken over by the Dutch Government through the state Protestant Church (Indische Kerk or IK). In the 20th century, the Dutch actively supported the mission by providing financial assistance to the missionary workers, churches and schools.

Throughout these years, until the Japanese occupation in 1942, Protestant missions were fruitful. Kupang continued to play a role as a centre of government and missionary activities (Aritonang and Steenbrick 2008). It was common for the main pastor to be assigned to Kupang, while assistant ministers were posted outside Kupang. Mission activity intensified in the early 1900s owing to technological advancements such as telegraph, land and sea transportation, archiving systems, and improved roads. In 1925,

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47 NZG was founded in the Netherlands in 1799. NZG activities were driven by the spirit of the reformist Pietism movement in Europe. Also, as an impact of the French Revolution, state government tended to become more liberal towards religion. All churches are treated equally and no privileges are given to particular churches. In 1815, the government decided that matters concerning church organisation should be given to Ministry of Colonial Affairs. This meant that the formal relationship between the state and Hervormd Church in the Netherlands ended (Van Den End and Aritonang 2008).

48 NZG was also closed in Rote in 1854 and Savu in 1901 (Prior et al. 2008).

49 The Catholic mission resumed after 1860 led by Dutch diocesan clergy and Jesuits, especially in the north and south of Timor (Prior et al. 2008).

50 Two years later IK emerged as an umbrella organisation for denominations such as Hervormde, Lutheran, Remonstran, and Menonit. Churches in Kupang, Rote, and Savu joined IK (Van Den End and Aritonang 2008).

51 In 1810, a Resident was appointed to govern Kupang. The Dutch rule was interrupted by a brief British occupation (1811-1816).
the mission was concentrated in seven regions in Timor and coordinated from Kupang.\(^{52}\) In 1926, the school for pastoral education was relocated from Rote to Kupang (Aritonang and Steenbrick 2008).\(^{53}\) One year after the country’s independence was declared in Jakarta (in 1945), the Dutch were still in control of Timor. In 1947, they helped establish the Synod of the Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor (GMIT).\(^{54}\) GMIT is now the largest denomination in Timor.

The Dutch policies concerning migration and Christian missions had two notable impacts. Firstly, Kupang developed into a multi-ethnic town. Throughout these years, Rotenese and Savunese remained the most dominant groups in the government and the bureaucracy. Secondly, almost all inhabitants from all ethnic groups have been Christianised, with the exception of the Solorese who remained Muslim since their arrival from Solor, and the Hadhrami who arrived in the mid-1800s. In modern day Kupang, the number of Muslims increased, primarily due to the waves of internal migration.

**Demographic and Social Indicators**

The population of Kupang grew slowly during the colonial years. In 1825, the population was recorded at 4,800 people, and by 1930 it had increased to 6,934 people (Depdiknas 1983/1984). Fox (1977) wrote that by 1825, Kupang was inhabited by a handful of Europeans and their families, approximately 200 Chinese, 800 Mardijkers and Papangers, as well as a total of 2,600 Rotenese, Savunese, and Solorese migrants. Rotenese formed the majority of migrants with around 2,000 people.\(^{55}\) The number of slaves amounted to 1,200, many of whom worked in wet rice agriculture, maize, and vegetable farming in the vicinity of Kupang.

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\(^{52}\) The regions included Kupang, Camplong, Kapan, Rote dan Savu, Alor, Wanreli, and Serwaru.

\(^{53}\) STOVIL (School tot Opleiding van Inlandse Leraren) was a school for pastoral education. It was closed in 1931 after many students were involved in the pro-independence movement (Van Den End and Weitjens 1993).

\(^{54}\) Previously IK facilitated formation of ethnic-based churches such as in Minahasa (GMIM or Gereja Masehi Injili Minahasa, Christian Evangelical Church in North Sulawesi) in 1934 and in Maluku (GPM or Gereja Protestant Maluku, Christian Evangelical Church in Maluku) in 1935. In 1947 GMIM, GPM, and GMIT (Gereja Masehi Injili Timor or Christian Evangelical Church in Timor) formed the Indonesian Protestant Church (GPI or Gereja Protestant Indonesia). GMIT had six branches (\textit{klasis}): Kupang, Camplong, SoE, Alor/Pantar, Rote, and Savu. In addition, there were three autonomous congregations in Kota Kupang, Ende, and Sumbawa. The first chair of GMIT was a Dutch pastor, Durkstra (1947-1950) (Prior et al. 2008).

\(^{55}\) By 1930, Savunese migration to Kupang exceeded that to Sumba. According to the 1930 census, there were around 1,700 Savunese migrants in Kupang, almost equal to the number of Rotenese migrants (Fox 1977).
It was not until 1915 that the Dutch were able to pacify the interior of Timor and exerted control outside Kupang. The period that followed saw improved security and an increase in population. Van Klinken (2014: 76) explains that the population growth in Kupang was primarily due to the end of warfare, slave trading, epidemics, and the elimination of travel restrictions. In 1949, when Dutch colonial rule was coming to an end, the population of Kupang had reached 10,830 and had increased significantly to nearly 15,000 by 1953.

After independence, Kupang saw a high rate of internal migration. In 1971, the population was 50,000 and it almost doubled (91,000) in the 1980s (Leirissa et.al 1983). This was partially caused by the expansion of its administration boundaries. The migration had resulted in the expansion of Kupang to the south beyond its colonial boundaries, especially in the early 1970s when the New Order regime began to implement its five-year development plans.

In present-day Kupang, Muslims form the vast majority in the first and second enclaves. In the third enclave, however, they remain a minority. In 2010, the population of Kampung Solor was 2,703, of which 2,150 were Muslims, followed by Protestants (533 people) and Catholics (97 people) (BPS 2011). Non-Muslim houses are spread across the village, creating highly mixed settlements in many neighbourhoods. Muslims in Kampung Airmata account for over 80 per cent of the 1,614 populations. Non-Muslim houses are situated only in one neighbourhood (Rukun Tetangga (RT)).

Although ethnic segmentation marked the early years of the establishment of Kupang, the town has been developing towards an increasingly mixed settlement, especially in New Kupang (Kupang Baru). In this area, social status, rather than ethnicity, determines social stratification (Tidey 2012). However, the clusters of ethnic settlements can still be observed in present-day Old Kupang (van Klinken 2014, Tidey 2012). Van Klinken explains that the city rapidly expanded towards the south and east, even though the basic structure remained as it had been during colonial times (2014: 86).

In 2012, the population of Kupang amounted to 365,358. In terms of ethnic composition, the statistics (BPS 2009) show Atonimeto—the native Timorese—to be the largest group (29.43 per cent). The second largest group is Rotenese (17.72 per

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56 The Dutch ended their rule on 27 December 1949 and the power was handed over to a Timorese council of rajas under Raja Koroh. Prior to the handover, local elections selected a Timorese Parliament in November 1949 (Farram 2012).

57 RT is a neighbourhood unit consisting of several households.
cent), followed by Flores (13.6 per cent), Javanese (5.87 per cent), and Bugis (1.97 per cent). The Hadhrami represents a tiny minority of only 0.21 per cent.

More than 55 per cent of the population is Protestant, while Catholics come second with over 26 per cent. Islam is professed by around 16 per cent, and the remaining population are Hindus and Buddhists. The figure below shows that the number of Muslims and Catholics has steadily increased over the years, while the number of Protestants has stagnated or even slightly declined. The number of Muslims increased significantly from 2009 to 2010 (an additional 6,806 were recorded) and from 2010 to 2012 (11,085). The population in Kupang according to religion from 2006 to 2013 is presented in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2. POPULATION OF KUPANG BASED ON RELIGION (%) 2006-2013 (BPS VARIOUS YEARS)

The number of places of worship in Kupang is presented in Figure 3. It can be seen that the highest increase in the number of mosques took place from 2007 to 2008, when 16 new mosques were built. In the years that followed, the number of mosques almost stagnated. Since 2011, the construction of mosques has become a source of tension after a group of Christians rejected the plan to construct a mosque in Kampung Batuplat, using the absence of community consent as an excuse. It is unclear why the number of Catholic churches decreased significantly from 49 (2009) to 26 (2010), while the number of Catholics in Kupang steadily increased. On the other hand, the number of Protestant churches continued to increase, despite the stagnation in their numbers. There
is a possibility that these new churches belong to new Protestant denominations that have emerged in Kupang outside GMIT over the last few years.

**Figure 3 The Number of Places of Worship in Kupang (BPS Various Years)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mosques</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic churches</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant churches</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temples</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4 shows the number of hajj pilgrims from Kupang between 2006 and 2011. It is apparent that more and more Muslims in Kupang can afford to undertake the pilgrimage to the Holy Land. This continuous growth indicates an increase in the quota for the NTT province, and improved welfare of Muslims.

**Figure 4 The Number of Hajj Pilgrims from Kupang (BPS Various Years)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Relations with Christians: The Muslims’ Perspectives**

As shown in the previous section, Muslims have been a minority group since the establishment of Kupang. However, it should be noted that Muslims have lived peacefully side by side with other migrants, under an effective administration, without any record of inter-ethnic tensions. There are at least two reasons for this. First, despite their support for the Christian missions and church in the later period of colonial rule, the Dutch did not introduce any restrictions on Islamic practice, nor did they intervene in religious propagation (*dakwah*) activities. Secondly, there were relatively few Muslims and they were not regarded as a threat to the majority.

Muslim-Christian relations in Kupang are complex, involving processes of negotiation and contestation of various issues, in which the role of both religious and ethnic
identities are intertwined. While in the past, ethnic groups under the Dutch administration shared the same history of opposing the Black Portuguese and its allies, post-colonial Kupang saw a number of changes. Firstly, there has been a demographic shift due to the waves of internal migration. The numbers of Muslims and Catholics have steadily increased. These newcomers are distinct ethnic groups. The Muslims are mostly Bugis and Javanese, while the Catholics are from Flores (BPS 2012). Secondly, Kupang saw the emergence of new religious movements, both Islamic and Christian, with far-reaching impacts. New Islamic dakwah organisations such as Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) and Jamaah Tabligh (JT) emerged in the early 2000. Christian evangelist movements also appeared in Kupang (post-Suharto, 1998) and challenged the domination of GMIT (Aritonang and Steenbrick, 2008). Thirdly, due to improved methods of communication and flow of information, inter-religious dynamics at the national level, or in other regions, has had a stronger influence on and received a quicker response from the religious communities in Kupang.

As I will show in the following sections, two important sources of religious tensions in present-day Kupang are the legacy of the November 1998 riot and dispute over construction of a mosque in Kampung Batuplat. Tensions around these two issues in Kupang must be understood in relation to similar developments concerning Muslim-Christian relations at the national level or in other predominantly Muslim areas. In Indonesia, over the course of its history, Muslim-Christian relations have generally been peaceful but fragile, marked with some episodes of tension and violence. Under Suharto’s New Order (1966-1998), there were tensions relating primarily to suspicion about missionary activities and competition over access to state power. The tension reached its peak during the country’s transition to democracy when small and large-scale inter-religious conflicts broke out in a number of cities, including Kupang.58

After the violent conflicts ended, in a highly decentralised system,59 political Islam continued to thrive through the adoption of syari’at (Islamic law) inspired regulations in

58 These conflicts occurred in Maluku, North Maluku, and Central Sulawesi. They lasted for months or even years and were massive in their geographical coverage and impacts. Conflicts in Ambon (January 1999–2004) killed around 5,000 people and displaced 570,000; around 4,000 were killed and 250,000 displaced in North Maluku (1999–2000); and around 700 people were killed and 70,000 displaced in Poso district of Central Sulawesi (1999–2000) (UNSFIR 2003, Van Klinken 2007, Wilson 2008).

59 Decentralisation began with the enactment of two laws in 1999, respectively Law No 22/1999 on local government and Law No 25/1999 on central and local finance balances. These laws granted more authority to the local governments, with the exception of authority in the following sectors: foreign politics, national defence and security, judicature, monetary and fiscal, and religion. However, enjoying more power and revenue, a number of district-level governments began to adopt Syari’at-inspired local regulations for various reasons, although religious affairs are legally the authority of the central
some predominantly Muslim districts (Ropi 2000, Mujiburahman 2007, Tanthowi 2008, Arifianto 2009, Seo 2012). *Dakwah* (proselytising) flourished with far-reaching implications in politics, economics, and people’s lifestyles. On the other hand, Christian religious missions were also conducted in a more vigorous way. Typical areas of contestation include methods of religious proselytism, interfaith marriage, construction of places of worship, and celebration of religious festivals. These contestations were manifested in public debates over the legal matters, mass protests, as well as restrictions, threats, and assaults (Ropi 2000, Mujiburrahman 2006, Arifianto 2009, Seo 2012).

Historically, the construction of places of worship has always been a source of dispute, especially in predominantly Muslim regions of Indonesia (Mujiburrahman 2006, Ali-Fauzi et al. 2014). This issue came to a head in Kupang in 2011 when, for the first time, a group of Christians openly rejected the construction of a mosque in Kampung Batuplat. The protesters employed arguments typically used in protest against the construction of a church (Yasmin Church) that had happened earlier on Java. The underlying cause for the dispute was the suspicion on both sides towards religious missions, respectively coined in popular term of Islamisation and Christianisation.

In addition to episodic tensions, I will also examine routine interactions between Muslims and Christians. In this sphere, my focus is to look at negotiation and contestation concerning celebration of religious events, interfaith marriage, and practices prohibited and permitted in Islam (*halal* and *haram*). The controversy of intermarriage revolves around the assumption on both sides that it can be used as a way of converting the spouses. On the celebration of important events, the negotiation relates to whether or not Muslims are allowed to wish Christians Merry Christmas and participate in Christmas celebrations, as well as the extent to which Muslims are able to celebrate their important days. I will examine the concepts of *halal* and *haram* from the perspective of Muslims to show their feelings towards Christians in the above-mentioned issues.

I will also look at the role of the local network of elites and daily interactions at the neighbourhood level in coping with inter-religious tensions. As Varshney (1997) argues, religious tensions exist in both peaceful and vulnerable places. However, places
that have local networks and robust day-to-day community engagement are more resilient to violent conflict. When tensions arise, or when rumours are spread in the community, the presence of local networks serves as the basis for containing tensions and providing clarification and assurance to the community members of both groups. The effectiveness of such networks is enhanced by way of everyday engagement; participation in important religious festivals; and day-to-day interactions and cooperation, which all promote religious harmony.

**Legacy of the 1998 Violence**

Around the collapse of the New Order in 1998, violent conflict broke out in Kupang, albeit on a smaller scale than in other conflict-stricken provinces. On 30 November 1998 some Christian student organisations staged a mourning parade to express concern over anti-Christian riots in the Ketapang area of Jakarta on 21 November 1998. The parade turned violent following the circulation of a rumour that Muslims were attacking Kupang Cathedral. A number of mosques, Islamic school buildings, houses, kiosks, and shops owned by Muslim people were attacked or burned down. The next day, a crowd marched to Oesapa village on the outskirts of the city, throwing stones and setting fire to a mosque and some houses. Two people were reported killed, and 15 mosques, a number of kiosks, and houses were damaged or partially burned down (Sihbudi and Nurhasim, 2001). Some informants, however, suspected that the number of casualties was actually higher. An anonymous informant believed that there were four deaths and dozens missing.

In Kupang, memory of the 1998 incident lives on, especially among Muslims. Thirteen years after the conflict, Muslims still refer to that particular event every time religious tensions occur in their neighbourhood. I met a bapak (older man) who still keeps the videotape he took of the 1998 riots showing attackers burning down mosques. The trauma also comes from the insult to their religion during the attack:

I was traumatised by that incident. I call it the November 1998 Movement. The masses brought with them Molotov cocktails, and sharp weapons such as lances

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60 The Ketapang riot was triggered by an assault on a Muslim teenager by an Ambonese Christian who worked as a security guard at a casino. The victim’s parents and their neighbours responded and then a brawl occurred between the local residents and the Ambonese in the area. It rapidly escalated into a Muslim-Christian riot which claimed dozens of lives and injured 81 people. As many as 16 churches, a mosque, several schools, government buildings, houses, and vehicles were burned down or otherwise damaged (Sihbudi and Nurhasim 2001).
and knives. Among the attackers were high school students and teenagers. They were about to set my house on fire, but some of them—who were my students—recognised my house so they backed off. (Interview Haji Mokhsen Thalib, imam of Kampung Oebobo’s mosque and a high school teacher, 21 November 2011).

In general, there are three Muslim perspectives concerning the riot. Firstly, the majority of Muslim informants perceived the incident as an act of revenge for the Ketapang incident in Jakarta. Some informants suggested that there was a design behind the riot, which had definite motives:

It is a revenge for the Ketapang riot. They broke into mosques and peed on the holy Qur’an. You know, the one who peed on the holy book is dead by now. The government calls for unity, but it was rather regrettable that the local military did not respond to our request for help. We, Muslims, were only told to be patient. (Interview with Haji Mardjoeki Kalake, 17 August 2011).

Secondly, Muslims tended to believe that the perpetrators and the masterminds of the riot were not local people. It is difficult to confirm because the identity of the perpetrators and motive for the violence remain unclear, since no investigation was conducted. An informant believes that:

The perpetrators were thugs from Dili. They came by trucks and appeared suddenly among the crowd. After the Ketapang mourning parade finished at 10am, these thugs joined the masses and shouted, ‘Burn the mosque, burn the mosque!’ They also threw stones at mosques and houses. (Interview with Aing, 17 June 2011).

Thirdly, Muslims felt that the 1998 incident was related to the dynamics at the national level, not only the Ketapang incident, but also inter-religious incidents in other places around that period. The perpetrators, as well as the people behind them, were said to carry out exactly what they had instigated in other conflict areas. ‘They were brought here to instigate a riot in Kupang,’ said the imam of Airmata Mosque (Interview, 10 March 2011).

The 1998 incident, however, did not escalate into large-scale violence. After the riot, the Governor and local political leaders visited the damaged mosque and publicly condemned the violence. They also promised to provide compensation for the damaged buildings and financial assistance for reconstruction. Local Christian leaders took the initiative to publicly apologise for the attack on the mosque and to organise community
donations to help with the reconstruction of the damaged mosques. In a symbolic gesture of reconciliation, the local government organised Muslim youths to guard churches and Christians to guard mosques to prevent further destruction of places of worship (Sihbudi and Nurhasim 2001: 45-54, Robinson 2002: 148, Pos Kupang and Kompas 1 December 1998).

Another important factor that prevented the escalation of violence in Kupang, according to a number of informants, is that the Muslims were not provoked and did not launch a counter-attack. Instead, they responded by building a blockade to stop rioters from entering their village. This explains why damaged properties were located along the main road, while mosques and other buildings inside the neighbourhoods were safe:

We did not launch a counter-attack on nearby churches, such as Advent church and the Cathedral. None of us were provoked. By 3pm in the afternoon, we managed to block the main access to Kampung Solor to prevent the masses from approaching Al Fatah Mosque (Interview with Aing, 17 June 2011).

Idrus Lamaya, a lecturer at the Muhammadiyah University and an imam of Al Fatah Mosque at Kampung Solor, told me that he was stunned to see an angry crowd throwing stones at his house and setting the Muhammadiyah Mosque on fire. He concluded that such a horrible incident had left a feeling of resentment among Muslims in Kupang.61

I witnessed another episode of tension triggered by provocative rumours on 18 February 2011. This event was also a direct response to an anti-Christian attack that occurred in Java. A few days earlier in a Central Javanese town, Temanggung, a group of Muslims had attacked three churches and a court building. The attack occurred after a court hearing where a Christian was found guilty of blasphemy against Islam through his writings, and was sentenced to five years in prison. Following the trial, a rumour of attacks on mosques spread quickly in Kupang. During a Maulid ceremony, some informants said they had heard a rumour that mosques in Kupang would be burned down during the coming Friday prayers.

Many Muslims panicked and fled to Makassar or Surabaya for safety.62 However, as far as I observed, the rumour on 18 February 2011 did not lead to violent clashes. When the

61 Haji Idrus Lamaya further explained that growing up in Kupang, he recalled his childhood when his family had good Christian relatives and neighbours. On Christmas day his parents took him to the house of Christian relatives, from his Rotenese grandmother. He emphasised that familial ties developed through intermarriage contributed to the good relations between religious groups.

62 Interview with Haji Abdul Fatah Ahmad (Head of MUI (Majelis Ulama Indonesia/ Indonesian Council of Ulama) Kota Kupang, 21 January 2012).
rumour about the burning of the mosque spread on 18 February, the network of elites, consisting of both government and religious leaders, played a crucial role in dispelling it. Protestant, Catholic, and Muslim leaders met with the authorities, including the Governor, police, and Mayor, to discuss measures to address the rumour. On the same day, a joint press conference was held with one key message: that the rumour was baseless and that people should not be provoked.

The message was passed on through a number of channels. For two consecutive weeks, the *Timor Express* daily newspaper published an article in their weekly column written by an *official* religious councillor, imploring readers to refrain from violence. The Friday sermons in several mosques during the month of February carried similar messages. Muslim leaders repeatedly delivered the same message:

> When a rumour spread about the burning of mosques, I sent text messages to all *khatib* (the sermon deliverer on Friday prayer) asking them to implore for tolerance and peace at Friday sermon. It is important to calm people down.
> (Interview with Hudayanur, an official religious councillor, 16 August 2011)

It was generally perceived that in times of tension local political leaders, especially the Governor, are able to come together to contain the tension and rumours through a number of mechanisms that are extended down to the neighbourhood level. Many informants praised this quick response and acknowledged the effectiveness of the Governor’s leadership.

The fact that Muslims trusted the Christian Governor, Piet Tallo, was one of the key factors in preventing religious violence at that time. Many informants shared their admiration for the Governor and were convinced that his leadership was crucial in times of crisis. The Governor was perceived as a good role model for the people of Kupang. He is related to a Muslim family because his daughter married a Muslim. His non-discriminatory measures provided assurance for the minority group. As a leader, he was close to his subjects and was able to deal effectively with religious leaders every time tensions occurred:

> The governor was an extraordinary person. Because of his kindness, Muslims could mistakenly think that he is a Muslim. When he served as Regent of TTS [Timur Tengah Selatan] district, he invited me to deliver a talk on Christmas celebrations at his residence. My talk was about the five teachings of the Prophet in religious tolerance. I interpreted the teachings of Muhammad as if it was
addressed to the whole of mankind, not only to Muslims. (Interview with Haji Abdul Fatah Ahmad, Head of MUI, Kupang, 21 January 2012)

Dispute over the Batuplat Mosque

The other source of tension concerns building places of worship. The protest against the Batuplat Mosque in 2011 was a response to the recurrence of attacks on the Yasmin Church in Bogor municipality in West Java. In the case of Batuplat Mosque, the protesters employed similar logic to that used in the banning of church buildings in predominantly Muslim parts of the country. Some Muslim informants were fully aware of this connection:

The Batuplat case is a local response to similar cases in Java. I have asked the umat [congregations] to understand that and remain calm. If people here objected to the construction of a mosque, on the grounds that their fellow religionists in Java suffered from the same treatment by Muslims, we have to accept that and not persistently demand the construction. (Interview with Haji Abdul Fatah Ahmad, 21 January 2012)

In Indonesia, permits to build places of worship are stipulated in a number of regulations, all requiring community approval. The first regulation was the 1969 joint ministerial decree, which in 1996 was renewed by a Joint Decree No 8/1996 of the Minister of Religious Affairs and Home Affairs. The decree stipulated that a permit requires a list of at least 90 members of the congregation and approval from at least 60 residents in the same village. In practice, however, these regulations have applied only for the building a church. In many regions, this regulation has restricted Christians wishing to build a church. Many of them were forced to use commercial buildings, meeting halls in shopping malls or hotels, or even houses owned by members of the congregation as a place for worship. Attacks or obstruction on the construction of houses or churches are frequent, ostensibly due to lack of community approval.

63 Since 2010, the congregation of the Yasmin Church has been unable to conduct services in their building after the city administration revoked the building permit it had issued when the church was built. The Bogor Mayor claimed that there were objections by nearby residents. The Church had taken the matter to the Supreme Court, which later issued a ruling in their favour, ordering the church be allowed to reopen. However, the local government ignored the court’s decision and proposed the relocation of the church. The congregation was forced to conduct services outside the church for more than two years. During services outside the church, the congregation members constantly faced harassment and even physical assault from groups of protesters.
The role of the local elite network in responding to rumours among members of both communities has been effective for two reasons. First, the political leadership have been able to act in a concerted way to engage the network of religious and community leaders. Second, this elite network is enhanced by existing networks at the community level, such as Majelis Taklim, Friday sermons, and local print media.

Despite open objection from a faction of the Christian community, there was support for the completion of the Batuplat Mosque from various groups. For example, in July 2013, a youth group comprising Muslim, Hindu, and Christian organisations conducted a number of symbolic activities to express solidarity, such as coming together to celebrate the breaking of the fast at the place where the mosque would be built, issuing a press release demanding that the government resolve the issue peacefully; as well as inviting people of all faiths to agree on a peaceful resolution. Political leadership, however, is only brought into play at times of tension. The more important factor contributing to inter-religious peace is the extension of various forms of community engagement down to the neighbourhood level. This type of engagement takes the form of participation in important religious festivals, lifecycle events, and everyday interaction and cooperation in non-religious fields.

The history of the construction of early important village mosques, and more recently the Grand Mosque of Kupang, involves narratives of cooperation between the two groups and support from the Christian side. The narrative of the establishment of Al Baitul Qadim Mosque in Kampung Airmata states that the land on which the mosque was founded in 1806 was granted from a Christian ruler called Raja Am Abi. Similarly, the story of Al Fitrah Mosque in Kampung Oesapa, built in 1980, demonstrates cooperation between Muslims and Christians. The received history says that the land the mosque was built on was purchased from a Christian, and a Christian villager became a committee member. My informants in Kampung Airmata and Kampung Oesapa often referred to this story during interviews. It has become an important factor in fostering good relations between Muslims and Christians in the villages. The local government is aware of the significance of this practice and so they try to sustain it. The Batuplat Mosque was built on land granted by the government, while Kupang Grand Mosque was built with financial assistance from the government and some Christian government officials.

The importance of religious harmony for the people of Kupang, according to Haji Abdul Fatah Ahmad the Head of MUI Kupang, can be best illustrated by a metaphor
frequently cited by religious leaders in Kupang—Muslim and Christian alike: ‘The community of Kupang is like a pair of shoes. If one shoe is missing, or cannot be used for some reason, then a person will not be able to walk properly.’ (Interview, 21 January 2012)

Although the tension concerning Batuplat Mosque has sparked debate whether intolerance was on the rise in Kupang, it has been contained in a peaceful manner. Political leadership is important, especially when tension occurs. Leaders facilitate concerted actions and work with religious leaders to clarify rumours, provide assurance, and prevent violence from escalating. Majelis Taklim, churches, and interfaith groups play equally important roles in passing similar messages of peace down to the neighbourhood level. Harmony between Muslims and Christians in Kupang stems from participation and cooperation in religious festivals and integrated lives. These engagements create trust, which in times of tension serve as a basis for promoting peace.

**Celebration of Religious Festivals**

In the four villages where my fieldwork was conducted, the community members cooperated in important life events and religious festivals. In Kampung Solor, on hearing the announcement of a death, relatives, mosque officials, and neighbours—Muslim and Christian alike—gather at the house of the deceased to offer their condolences. The women go to the kitchen to help prepare meals for the mourners. While prayers for the dead are performed at a mosque and attended only by Muslims, preparations for the burial involve the whole neighbourhood and all neighbours, regardless of their religion. Participation of the Christian neighbours extends to digging the grave for the burial. On Idul Adha (the Feast of Sacrifice), Muslims ritually slaughter animals and distribute the meat to eligible recipients: in Kampung Solor, Christian neighbours were among the eligible as recipients of the meat (see Chapter Three).

Another form of cooperation can be observed in the celebration of important religious festivals. As an informant said:

> Since I moved to Kupang in 2004, I have never felt awkward as a minority group. We enjoyed the freedom to celebrate important religious festivals, including large festivals such as Maulid [the birthday of the Prophet] We can do almost everything that we need as Muslim. It is really good. I have never encountered
problems [with the Christians]. (Interview with Ibu Siti Hamalna (an official religious councillor) 1 December 2011)

In Kampung Airmata, the celebration of Maulid, was attended by government representatives, many of whom are Christian (see Chapter Four). The Kupang Mayor, himself a Christian, delivered the opening remarks. Core Maulid rituals took place only at midnight, but prior to that there was a procession of believers carrying offerings in an open space from the house of the imam to the mosque. Christian youth from Kampung Airmata participated and helped the organising committee to direct cars and motorcycles to parking lots at the mosque compound and they acted as security for the event. When the fasting month of Ramadan was about to end, the Muslim community and Islamic groups organised a procession, where they paraded using cars and motorcycles across the city to welcome Idul Fitri, which fell on the next day. The governor was again in attendance. Here he delivered a speech congratulating the Muslims who have completed the fasting month.

Engagement involving women of different faiths is another important practice, especially through Majelis Taklim, which has flourished in Kupang since the 2000s. In Kampung Airmata for instance, Majelis Taklim organised a charitable fund-raising event in the holy month of Ramadan targeting both Muslim and non-Muslim children. Cooperation is also often extended in non-religious spheres. In Kampung Solor, women of different faiths are active in a state-sponsored organisation called PKK (Pendidikan Kesehteraan Keluarga or Family Welfare Program), which runs a wide range of programs for women such as training (sewing, cooking etc.) and assistance (a credit scheme). Their interaction on a daily basis contributes to the fostering of relationships, since Muslim and non-Muslim households in the same RT, regardless of their religion, are the participants and beneficiaries.

Sofi Lubis, a member of Women’s Majelis Taklim of Kampung Bonipoi and a migrant from West Sumatra, shared her perception that the attitude of Muslims, as a minority group and as migrants, is a key factor in maintaining harmonious relations in routine interactions:

My neighbours, Christian Savunese people, are kind. I often asked them to babysit my children while I was away for work. If Muslims want to live peacefully, they have to be polite and nice to their neighbours. As a migrant, I was lucky to be able to adapt relatively quickly with my new environment. (Interview, 18 February 2012)
Another type of cooperation comes about from the celebration of Christmas. In Indonesia, there can be tension around the issue of whether or not a Muslim is allowed to wish someone a Merry Christmas and attend Christmas celebrations. The question is primarily driven by suspicions of Christian proselytising. In 1981, MUI released a *fatwa* (ruling) stating that it is *haram*, or forbidden, for Muslims to participate in Christmas rituals. The *fatwa* was intended to prevent Muslim children studying in Christian schools from participating in Christmas rituals (Mujiburrahman 2006, Seo 2012). In those years, it was common for Christmas to be celebrated at the workplaces or schools. The national government, unhappy with the *fatwa*, asked MUI to revoke it on the grounds that it might disturb religious harmony. The *fatwa* was not revoked, but MUI stopped circulating it publicly (Mujiburrahman 2006, Seo 2012). Munjid (2013) notes that the *fatwa* has been manipulated by some radical elements of Muslims to convey a message that Muslims are not allowed to wish Merry Christmas and this manipulation has caused a heated controversy.

In Kupang, the opinion of Muslim leaders concerning the aforementioned matter is in line with MUI’s *fatwa*. When Christmas was approaching, the chairperson of the MUI Kupang, Haji Abdul Fatah, touched on this issue in a Friday sermon. Stressing the importance of balancing the act of tolerance and respect to *akidah* (religious principles), he concluded that Muslims were allowed to attend Christmas celebrations but should not participate in the ritual parts of Christmas such as the prayer mass and the lighting of Christmas candles.

What is interesting in Kupang is that the Provincial MUI Haji Abdul Makarim arranged placement of a big public banner, which read ‘Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all Christians in Kupang’ and bore his name ‘Haji Abdul Makarim, Chair of Provincial MUI on behalf of Muslims in NTT’. Makarim explained that wishing Merry Christmas is the simplest way to show respect to Christians. This view is widely shared by Muslims in the area, especially those who have Christian superiors, colleagues, friends, neighbours, or relatives.

MUI chair Haji Abdul Fatah Ahmad was one of the scholars who were frequently invited to attend Christmas celebrations held at the Governor’s residence. Usually, he would be asked to deliver a Christmas message (*pesan Natal*) containing peaceful

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64 Christian schools usually asked Muslims students enrolled there to participate in Christmas celebrations in many ways, including joining a choir or acting in a play about the story of Jesus (*Panji Masyarakat* magazine in Munjid 2013).
messages from Muslims in Kupang. He explained that he always chooses to talk about similarities, not differences, between the two religions. His moderate stance as a Muslim scholar has earned him a positive reputation among the locals. ‘It is not without reason that people here refer to me as the Gus Dur of Kupang,’ he explained.

**Intermarriage and Familial Ties**

In Kupang, marital conversion is accepted and is not uncommon. I conducted interviews with around 15 new converts from three villages: Kampung Airmata, Kampung Solor, and Kampung Oesapa. They are mainly Timorese, Rotenese, and Savunese women married to Muslim Bugis, Buton, and Hadhrami men. In Kampung Oesapa for example, it is common to see Christian women marrying Bugis Muslim men. These women follow their husbands’ faith.

I also found a Hadhrami woman who converted to Christianity due to marriage. She is a daughter of Hajah Setya Djawas, a very well-known Qur’anic teacher in Kupang. Hajah Setya Sjawas maintained a moderate attitude towards this sensitive issue. Despite acknowledging that being a Muslim is an important identity for Hadhrami, she did not break familial ties with her daughter who still frequently visited her. Her moderate attitude, she explained, was based on a view that religion and family were two different matters. Djawas, who has facilitated conversions of many Christians to Islam and taught these new converts on Islam, accepted her fate, saying that religious differences in her family were not supposed to harm familial relationships. In her words, ‘Religion is a matter of belief, but family relation is a matter of love.’

In the country, the issue of intermarriage is disputed even among Muslim scholars. Officially the Law of Marriage No. 1/1974 prohibits interfaith marriage (Ropi 2002). If a Muslim wishes to engage in interfaith marriage with a non-Muslim, he/she cannot conduct and register the marriage in the Office of Islamic Affairs (KUA or Kantor Urusan Agama) where Islamic marriages are usually solemnised, but rather in the Civilian Registration Office (Kantor Catatan Sipil), which is authorised to register

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65 The full name of Gus Dur is Abdurrahman Wahid (1940-2009). He led Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) from 1984 to 1999 and was elected the President of Indonesia from 1999 to 2001. Gus Dus was famous for his moderate and inclusive religious stance, and his tireless effort in advocating pluralism, multiculturalism, and human rights.

66 The establishment of Majelis Taklim for converts in 2010 at Al Fitrah Mosque (in Kampung Oesapa) shows that there has been a growing number of converts (mualaf). Around 20 women were registered as members of Majelis Taklim for converts.
marriages of non-Muslim Indonesians. To my knowledge, several Civilian Registration Offices in Jakarta are willing to register interfaith marriages.

The views of imam and Muslim scholars on interfaith marriage are mixed. Some imam and ustad I met in Kupang, even the moderate ones, argue that according to Islamic Law interfaith marriage is illegitimate and that being married to a non-believer means practising adultery (zinah). They defined legitimate marriage as marriage among Muslims. Non-Muslims, men and women alike, are required to convert before marrying a Muslim. There are several ulama, however, who argue that Muslim men are allowed to marry women of the books (ahli Kitab, meaning Christians and Jews) without them converting. However, throughout my fieldwork I never found any interfaith couples where the wife and husband kept their own faiths. If a person wishes to marry someone of a different religion, one partner must convert so that the couple professes the same religion. Typically, in Kupang I found that a wife would follow the religion of her husband. Usually, an imam facilitated conversion rituals for new converts prior to the wedding.

From the interviews, I found that the conversion is primarily marital conversion, not forced conversion imposed by others (spouse or his family or dakwah organisation). While initially conversion is a condition to satisfy the requirement of the Islamic marriage ceremony (akad nikah), subsequently these new converts become actively engaged in learning Islam and fulfilling their obligations as good Muslims. These converts have developed unique personal meanings of being a Muslim and many actively engage in religious learning and in teaching the newcomers through a Majelis Taklim dedicated to women converts. The learning activity is the most important step for these women to construct their new identities as Muslims and to express their religiosity in a predominantly Christian community.

A convert to Islam is called mualaf, no matter how long the person has been a convert. Nurhayati (born as Wihelimana in 1952) who has converted to Islam for more than 40 years is an example. She was married to Makarim, a Hadhrami, when she was 19. The other informant, Rahma (her Christian name was Regina Mesakh, born in 1984) was only 16 when she married her boyfriend Suaib, a Bugis Muslim (see Chapter Five).

Many Muslim families here are related to Christian families through marriage, including the Governor who, as I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, hosted a breaking of the fast ceremony every year. I observed that intermarriage has strengthened
familial ties between Muslims and Christians. It is very common that a Muslim has familial ties with Christians, either in Kupang or on their home island:

I have a brother-in-law who is a Protestant pastor. I also have a number of Catholic relatives on my father’s side in Flores. My mother is a mualaf. For me, it is important to defend akipah as a Muslim, but maintaining familial relations is also very important. I remember that during the 1965 anti-communist campaign, my father offered protection to Christian neighbours and relatives. The (1998) incident has forced us Muslims to stay alert. Luckily, intermarriage and close kinship ties do help in building unity. We became resilient to provocation. (Interview with Haji Mardjoeki Kalake, a local figure in Kampung Solor, 17 August 2011)

These families maintain a tradition of visiting and receiving each other at Christmas as well as Idul Fitri (the celebration of the end of the fasting month). The same practice is maintained by mualaf. One of my mualaf informants said that she and her family would visit her parents and members of their extended Christian family at Christmas. During Christmas celebrations there is a common practice of visiting Christian families and neighbours, which contributes to fostering inter-religious engagement on an everyday basis. According to Ibu Murtilah Hamid, a teacher at Aisyiyah kindergarten of Kampung Solor, ‘the third day of Idul Fitri is usually the time to receive visits from Christian families and relatives.’

Negotiation over Halal and Haram

In Islam, the term halal (permissible) and haram (forbidden) designates not only food, but also many other aspects of life. However, in this section I will discuss mainly negotiations over halal and haram food in relation to daily interactions between Muslims and Christians. According to some informants, the concept of halal food in Islam must satisfy three requirements; the source (type of meat), the cause of the animal’s death (how it was slaughtered), and how the food is prepared. The most common haram meat is pork. However, meat other than pork can be haram if it is not slaughtered by a halal butcher. I was told that there are only three halal butchers in Kupang. They are located at the Muhammadiyah compound, at Adila shop, and another shop at Kampung Solor. Muslims owned these butcher shops.

The most typical outlet for negotiating halal and haram is on visits during religious festivals and on wedding parties. When being visited by their mualaf daughters, the
Christian parents will demonstrate respect by not cooking pork, even though pork-based dishes are important meals for the Christmas celebration. At other occasions, when pork is cooked it is served on a separate table. Through this practice, community members express consensual respect for halal and haram (practices regulated as permitted/prohibited in Islam).

When a Christian family hosts a wedding party, it is common to arrange halal food for Muslim guests. To show respect to the Muslim guests and allow them to enjoy the food at the party, when the party is held in the house of the bride and not in a meeting hall, the Christian family will ask their Muslim relatives or neighbours to prepare the halal food. An obvious mark of tolerance is that the host family would separate halal food and food containing pork by serving them on separate tables.

Muslims informants mostly found that their Christian neighbours were only aware of the first criterion, while the other two criteria are not well understood. The problem occurs when Christians perceive Muslims who do not eat meat bought from any shop other than the halal butchers as ‘arrogant and intolerant’. From the Muslim’s perspective, halal and haram is crucially important. Muslims have to be sure where the meat comes from. Otherwise, they will be in doubt and in Islam they are told not to eat such meat whose origin is doubtful.

Generally, many Muslim informants felt that Christians do not understand that, in addition to standard requirements of halal, it is generally unacceptable for Muslims to serve halal and non-halal food on the same table. If a wedding party is organised in a Christian private house, a special arrangement is usually made. As one of my Muslim informants explained, his Christian neighbour entrusted his wife to slaughter and cook chicken and all the ingredients for the consumption by Muslims at the wedding party. This arrangement benefited both parties. The difficulty is that most wedding receptions are hosted in a restaurant or a meeting hall. At functions, it is difficult to know if the food is halal. Therefore, Muslim guests exercise caution. Some prefer not to eat, and only have bottled drinks.

**Conclusion**

From at least the 16th century, Kupang has been known as part of global trading networks. Sandalwood was exported from Kupang to China and Europe. For hundreds of years this trade was primarily controlled by the Black Portuguese and their Timor allies. One result of the international trade is the spread of Islam and Christianity, the
presence of various migrants including those from Java, West Sumatra, Sulawesi, and from neighbouring islands such as Alor, Rote, and Solor. There are also members of the Hadhrami, Malay, and Chinese diasporas.

The history of the spread of Catholicism and Islam was peaceful, with the exception of early Catholic missions, which encountered hostilities from the Solorese. Protestantism was introduced initially by private missions, which were later supported by the Dutch colonial government. The acceptance of Protestantism by Rotenese and Savunese allowed them to become dominant ethnic groups in the province’s history. Even though Kupang has become a Christian town, Muslims are able to practice their religion and interact peacefully with Christians.

In contemporary Kupang, relations between Muslims and Christians are marked by a number of tensions, especially after the fall of the New Order. However, as this chapter has shown, the inter-community networks at the elite and community levels, have contributed to the containment of friction. The network of religious leaders and organisations, facilitated by the local government, is able to act in concert in times of tension, to dispel rumours and provide assurance to both communities. At the community level, everyday engagement is practised in the form of mutual visits and cooperation in day-to-day activities, celebration of important religious festivals, and lifecycle rituals. In non-religious spheres, mutual cooperation is fostered by the community’s active involvement in the state-sponsored organisations providing development assistance for women.

There are mechanisms for negotiating problems, for example through intermarriage and conversion, expressing mutual respect for halal and haram foods, and cooperating in activities for common causes. Intermarriage is an important factor that fosters peaceful relationships. Intermarriage generally involves conversion to Islam and a convert maintains the tradition of visiting families during Christmas. Furthermore, Muslims and Christians share narratives concerning the founding of particular mosques which stress harmony and cooperation. The history of the mosques in Kampung Airmata and Kampung Oesapa shows such narratives of cooperation between Muslim migrants and local Christian leaders or villagers.

To conclude, the responsiveness of the elite and community engagement have contributed to the containment of tensions by negating rumours, and preventing provocation from the radical elements in the community or from outside. Such responsiveness has ‘inoculated’ Kupang against the inter-religious violence occurring
elsewhere in Indonesia. The presence of an elite network is enhanced by day-to-day community interactions in the form of inter-religious cooperation and participation in religious festivals, lifecycle rituals, as well as in non-religious spheres. The challenge, however, is to strengthen the relations in a rapidly changing context as the number of Muslims continues to increase in previously Christian-dominated neighbourhoods and to anticipate Muslim-Christian hostilities at the national level.
Chapter Three
The First Muslim Enclave: Kampung Solor

Introduction
Kampung Solor has been the doorway for new migrants, especially Muslim migrants. Historically the dominant group of the first generation of migrants came from Lamakera on Solor Island. The Lamakera people, who allied themselves with the Dutch, were allowed to settle in an area currently known as Kampung Solor (Hägerdal 2012: 237). Haji Tahir Zen, imam at the Al Fatah Mosque, confirmed that the village was previously called Kampung Lamakera, referring to the place of origin of its early inhabitants. As more Solorese from other regions on Solor Island, such as Lohayong, Terong, and Lamahala, arrived in later years, the name of the village was changed to Kampung Solor to reflect the diversity of origins of these newcomers. Presently Kampung Solor is a mixed settlement. The inhabitants include migrants from Java, Sumatra, and Sulawesi. There is also a substantial number of Chinese and people from the surrounding islands. Muslims in Kampung Solor represent 77 per cent of the total population (2,793 people).

Throughout history, Kampung Solor was known for its openness to a variety of religious and political ideas, especially during the 1920s when the new educated class of the Dutch Indies emerged. This period saw the emergence of nationalist, Islamic, Christian, as well as ethnic organisations, and many of these organisations were founded or gained members in Kampung Solor. The openness was also reflected by the fact that Muslims and Christians were often members of the same organisations. Organisations affiliated to communism also emerged. The most famous one was Sarekat Rakyat (People’s League), led by Christian Pandy. He led the first boycott of dozens of labourers in April 1925. The organisation died after the boycott failed. Sarekat Oesaha Solor (SOS, League of Solor Endeavour), which also emerged in 1925, became a replacement for Sarekat Rakyat under a different name. Boerang Bait, an imam of the Al Fatah Mosque, led SOS at that time. SOS was exclusively for Muslims and was monitored closely because Boerang Bait was suspected of being a communist, even though the main activities of SOS were Qur’an reading and studies. By 1926 SOS had ceased its activities due to the lack of followers (Farram 2010: 117-120).
The majority of Muslims in Kampung Solor belong to Aswaja Islam. They maintain certain traditions, such as the annual communal bath of Safar, rituals for the dead, and Maulid (the birthday of the Prophet). At the same time the community is open to new religious ideas, especially those brought by the Islamic modernist organisation Muhammadiyah. Muhammadiyah came into being in the kampung in 1924, albeit for a short period. The founder was a Timorese Verbond activist named Abdulrachman. Initially attracting around 70 members, Muhammadiyah disappeared from the scene one year later and was re-established in 1966 (Farram 2010: 122-123). Many of the Muhammadiyah’s supporters and sympathisers, including teachers and lecturers of Muhammadiyah University, came from different towns in Java (Achied 2011). Despite its small number of the followers, which according to Haji Tahir Zen (imam of Al Fatah Mosque) was less than 10 per cent of Muslims in the village, Muhammadiyah was able to build schools in Kampung Solor, and its figures were welcomed at the village mosque.

This chapter aims to show how Muslims in Kampung Solor view and practise Islam. It discusses the intersection and negotiation of the competing values and practices propagated by the Aswaja and Muhammadiyah in the village. The everyday Islamic practices that will be elaborated in this chapter are related to lifecycle rituals: the fourth month of pregnancy, akekah (the hair cutting and naming of a baby), circumcision for a baby girl, and death rituals; Islamic festivals—the annual communal bath of Safar, Ramadan (the fasting month), Maulid, and Idul Adha (the feast of sacrifice); and Islamic learning at Women’s Majelis Taklim (religious educational gathering).

The first section in this chapter examines the local narratives of the establishment of this first Muslim enclave; the history of Al Fatah Mosque and the backgrounds of the imam, and how the hereditary system in mosque leadership was abandoned. The next section discusses the presence of Muhammadiyah’s schools in Kampung Solor and the influences of Muhammadiyah’s dakwah on Muslims in the village. In the following section, religious learning and preservation of some Aswaja practices at Majelis Taklim are discussed. Elaboration on the celebration of lifecycle and Islamic festivals, and how these rituals are contested by Muhammadiyah, are presented in the following section.

As explained in Chapter One, the differences between Aswaja and Muhammadiyah lie in soal-soal furu (the details of Islamic teachings). I found that the differences between

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67 Timorese Verbond was the first organisation established in 1921 in Makassar, and then it spread to Kupang.
the teachings of Aswaja and Muhammadiyah in Kampung Solor did not incite conflict. Aswaja Muslims were willing to accommodate certain Muhammadiyah rituals, especially conducting the eight cycles of *traweh* prayer, the abandonment of the heredity principle in mosque leaderships, and conducting Idul Fitri and Idul Adha prayers in public spaces. However, they retain a set of rituals considered core to the identity as Aswaja Muslims, such as *tahlilan* (praying for the deceased) and Maulid. I argue that contestation concerning religious views and everyday Islamic practices in Kampung Solor has been peaceful primarily because the Muslims in this village were open to new ideas and were willing to engage in negotiation. On the other hand, the proponents of Muhammadiyah showed a degree of tolerance to Aswaja rituals. On the occasion of death, they did not participate in the utterance of *tahlil*, but stayed at the house of the deceased to offer consolation. Contestation between Aswaja and Muhammadiyah proponents took place in the form of negotiation and acceptance, not hostilities and conflict, because the two parties were represented in the Al Fatah Mosque’s leadership, the most-respected religious institution in the *kampung*. This attitude also reflects the need for the Muslim communities in Kampung Solor to strengthen bonds between themselves, considering their position as a minority group in the Christian environment of Kupang.

**The Muslim Community of Kampung Solor**

Kampung Solor is an urban settlement strategically located in the economic centre of Kupang municipality. It is one of the villages in Kota Lama Sub-district, bordered by Kupang Bay to the north, Kampung Merdeka to the south, Kampung Tode Kisar to the east, and Kampung Bonipoi and Kampung Lai-lai Besi Kopan to the west. It is an area of approximately 15.90 hectares in size, divided into five administrative units (Rukun Warga or RW). When the fieldwork was conducted, there were 2,150 Muslims. The second-largest group is Protestant (533 people), followed by 97 Catholics, 10 Hindus, and 3 Buddhists. The majority of the population (470) were engaged in small and medium trading activities, while 47 people owned business enterprises. As many as 101 people worked as professionals, such as state employees, members of the armed forces and police officers, and a substantial number (42) were fishermen (BPS 2011).
In the village there were plenty of food and grocery stalls. Along the busy Garuda Street, there were 14 shops selling a variety of goods such as school and sport equipment, tyres and car accessories, as well as beauty salons and workshops. Affordable accommodation was abundant for travellers, businessmen, and students. There were 25 houses that offered rooms for rent and two hostels (Hostel Flores and Hostel Rahmat). Walking down Sunan Gunung Jati Street, one finds Muhammadiyah elementary school, as well as an early aged learning centre (PAUD or Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini) and kindergarten (TK or Taman Kanak-kanak), both run by the Muhammadiyah women’s wing Aisyiyah. Al Fatah Mosque and an Advent Church are located close to these schools. The kampung also has a market, which runs during the day and is used as a culinary centre in the evening. These food stalls, famous for grilled fish and seafood among other things, were usually packed with visitors. There are also
navy and military police compounds and other commercial buildings such as a bank and a state-owned fiduciary credit office.

The Muslim community in Kampung Solor, formed in the mid-18th century, was the first Muslim community in Kupang, and on Timor in general. The early inhabitants, the Solorese, had a long history of alliance with the Dutch—since 1613 when the Dutch arrived on Solor, and continued when the Dutch moved their base to Kupang in 1653 (see Chapter Two). The Solorese accepted Islam when the Dutch came, and remained Muslims after migrating to Kupang. The community, however, showed their ability to adapt to the new environment in Kupang. During the Dutch colonial years, the Solorese were the only Muslim ally of the Dutch. They were able to maintain their identity as Muslim in a Christian environment.

As explained in Chapter One, local historians and my informants maintain that the early inhabitants of Kampung Solor were families and relatives of Atulaga Nama. His real name was Sultan Syarif Syahar and he was originally from Ternate Island. He settled in the Lamakera area on Solor Island and was a proselytising figure (Widyatmika 2004 and 2008). In 1749 Atulaga Nama was also a warrior. He and his men joined a band of troops led by the Lamakera King, Sengaji Dasi, to fight for the Dutch against the Portuguese and the Topasses in Kupang and the interior of Timor. Atulaga Nama and his men were granted a piece of land for their settlement, in what is now Kampung Solor. I was told that since his arrival, Atulaga Nama became actively involved in religious propagation. The year 1772 saw the arrival of Abdulrachman, another important proselytising figure from Bengal. These two figures played an important role in the establishment of a mosque at Kampung Batu Besi. Atulaga Nama then became the first imam for around 300 Muslims in the area (Goro 1977: 84-85; Widiyatmika 2004: 48).

**Al Fatah Mosque**

The local narratives say that the origin of Al Fatah Mosque in Kampung Solor was in Kampung Batu Besi (what is now Kampung Fatubesi), where Atulaga Nama was the imam. The mosque shifted its location several times for various reasons. Initially the mosque was moved from Batu Besi to Siliwangi Street. Due to the expansion of the city towards the south—for the construction of an ice factory, among other reasons—the

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68 In Solorese language ‘atu’ means garrison, ‘laga’ means to destroy, and ‘nama’ means battlefield. Atulaga Nama means a strong garrison/warrior that is able to defeat enemies at battlefield (Goro 1977: 83).
mosque was moved to Muhammad Nur Street (currently the location of a fiduciary office). Haji Tahir Zen told me that it was only in 1911 that Al Fatah Mosque settled in its current location at Sunan Gunung Jati Street.

Throughout its history the mosque leadership positions were occupied by the offspring of Atulaga Nama and Sengaji Dasi. There are no written records to support this story, but one of my informants Haji Marzuki Kalake, a highly respected elder, was able to recall the names of previous imam. According to Kalake, after the death of Atulaga Nama in 1802, Sengaji Susang became the next imam.\textsuperscript{69} Sengaji Susang was consecutively replaced by the following: Burhan bin Dasi, Abu Bakar, Saleh Iyang, Minggi Iyang (Saleh Iyang’s brother), Haji Kiang Lamaya, Ahmad Burhan, Haji Mahian Amaraja, Ahmad Ase, Haji Mahian Amaraja, Ahmad Sahariya, Burhan Iyang, and Haji Tahir Zen (the current imam).

Hamzah Iyang, one of the deputy imam, explained that the hereditary position of imam at Al Fatah Mosque was a tradition brought from Lamakera. The tradition was sustained until the 1980s when Burhan Iyang became the imam. Burhan Iyang introduced a radical change whereby imam was no longer a hereditary position. Any Muslim without a familial link to Atulaga Nama and Sengaji Dasi was allowed to become an imam, as long as the person had a good knowledge of Islam and was accepted by the congregation.

During his service, Burhan Iyang appointed Tahir Zen as another imam to lead the mosque with him. In 1991 they elected Haji Idrus Lamaya and Anwar Abas Samana as their deputies, considering that they were getting too old to fulfil their tasks as imam.

\textsuperscript{69} Atulaga Nama was buried near the Fort of Concordia. Currently, the tomb is located inside the Indonesian Navy compound.
Then, in 2008, an additional three deputies were appointed as part of the mosque leadership: Hamzah Iyang, Haji Muhammad Aying, and Muhammad Qistian Anwar. Burhan Iyang retained his position until his death in August 2011.

The Imam and their Backgrounds

After the passing of Burhan Iyang, the leadership of Al Fatah Mosque consisted of one imam and five deputies. Even though officially Tahir Zen still retained the imam position, he was becoming increasingly less active due to his old age. His deputies played a more active role on a daily basis. The key tasks of these leaders include officiating at daily and weekly prayers, leading lifecycle rituals and celebration of important days, and giving advice concerning religious and non-religious matters, including providing consolation in the time of death.

The presence of imam and the deputies from both Aswaja and modernist orientations is a unique characteristic of the mosque. During my fieldwork, the following four persons became my key informants: Haji Tahir Zen and Hamzah Muhammad Iyang represented the Aswaja, while Haji Idrus Lamaya and Muhammad Qistian Anwar represented leaders with Muhammadiyah background. This composition reflects the influence of both Aswaja and modernist orientations on Muslims in Kampung Solor. I will briefly present the profile of these leaders.

Haji Tahir Zen

Tahir Zen was born in Kampung Solor in 1933. In 1954 to 1947 he attended Al Irsyad elementary Islamic school (madrasah) at Waiwerang, East Flores. There he learned Arabic, Qur’an reading, Kitab Kuning (collection of books written by traditionalist great ulama), hadith, and general courses. He explained that it was a good school because it received support from an Islamic ruler in Adonara (East Flores). The Adonara ruler obliged Muslim families to send their children to this school. Tahir Zen then continued his education to Islamic junior and senior high schools respectively in Solor and Ende for a total of six years.

Tahir Zen joined the Qadariyah Sufi order (tarekat) in 1960 when he lived in Waiwerang. His father was also a proponent of Qadariyah. He explained that many Muslims had joined Qadariyah since the 1930s. Some of them had travelled to Flores as part of the initiation. Others had travelled to Tasikmalaya in West Java, or Bukit Tinggi in West Sumatra. He said tarekat was beneficial for him in enriching his spirituality. As a spiritual exercise, tarekat helped him in leading a good life, doing good deeds, and
controlling his emotions. Since the 1980s he had followed Abah Anom from Tasikmalaya as his spiritual teacher (*mursyid*).\(^70\)

In the past Tahir Zen made a living by selling resin and maize. He purchased them from South Central Timor and North Central Timor districts and traded them in markets across Kupang and West Sumba. He was married in 1972 to a Rotinese Muslim and has six children. His youngest son teaches Qur’an to children at Al Fatah Mosque. In the past Tahir Zen was actively involved in politics. He was one of the members of the founding committees when United Development Party (PPP or Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, one of the three political parties during the New Order that had an Islamic inclination) was established in Kupang in 1973. Tahir Zen was appointed *imam* at Al Fatah Mosque in 1980. He did the hajj pilgrimage together with his wife in November 2011.

**Haji Muhammad Idrus Lamaya**

Muhammad Idrus Lamaya was born in Kampung Solor in 1939 and is a descendant of Atulaga Nama. He was enrolled in a junior high school in Kupang for two years, when his parents asked him to move to Jember (East Java) to attend a school to become a religious teacher (PGA or Pendidikan Guru Agama) from 1954-1958. After completing PGA Muhammad Idrus Lamaya attended an Islamic junior high school in Malang (East Java). He began to work as a teacher in Ende (Flores) and Waiwerang (East Flores). In 1970 he continued his education in an Islamic college (IAIN or Institut Agama Islam Negeri) in Malang. Five years later, he began to teach in PGA Malang. He gained exposure to Muhammadiyah ideas during his years in Jember and Malang.

In 1983 Muhammad Idrus Lamaya moved to Kupang to teach at PGA Kupang. From 1990 to 1997 he was appointed Head of the Religious Education Unit at the Regional Office for Religious Affairs, and served as a member of the oversight committee before retiring in 1999. Since 1988 and during his service at the religious authority, he has been lecturing at Muhammadiyah University Kupang. He was active in Muhammadiyah

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\(^70\) He explained Qadiriyyah Wan Naqsyabandiyah has a huge following in some regions in Java, Banjar (Kalimantan), and Padang Pariaman (Sumatera). This Sufi order uses as their main reference a book called *Sairus Salikin* or *Sair al-Salikin* (*journey to tarekat*). The author is Syaikh ‘Abdusshomad al-Falimbani (Palembang, South Sumatra), who is, as Tahir Zen explained, the descendent of Sultan Badarudin of Palembang. Completed in 1788, the book comprises four volumes. The first volume talks about *ushuluddin* and matters related to bodily rituals, the second volume examines custome laws and etiquettes such as in eating and drinking, the third volume discusses matters on good deeds, and the last volume talks about guides to the spiritual journey. Tahir Zen showed me the four volumes, written in Arabic language using Malay script.
of NTT province and was elected chairperson for two consecutive terms from 1990 to 2000.

Muhammad Idrus Lamaya explained that, in 1990, some people had nominated him as the deputy *imam* at Al Fatah Mosque. Initially, he rejected the request on the grounds that officially he was not a resident of Kampung Solor. His house is located near the Muhammadiyah University compound at Ahmad Dahlan Street, approximately 5 kilometres away from the mosque. However, he eventually accepted the request on one condition, that due to geographical constraints, his role leading congregational prayers would be limited. During my fieldwork in 2011, due to his old age, he had become less active at Al Fatah Mosque. He often opted to attend the weekly Friday prayers at Muhammadiyah Mosque in the university compound.

**Hamzah Muhammad Iyang**

Hamzah Iyang is a descendant of Atulaga Nama. He was born in 1943 in Lamakera, Solor (East Flores) when his parents were in temporary exile following the Japanese invasion of Kupang. Together with many other people, his family, who had lived for generations in Kupang, fled to Solor which was unaffected by the war. His parents only returned to Kupang in 1950.

Hamzah Iyang became a deputy *imam* in 2008. He supported the decision made by the late Burhan Iyang to allow Muslims who are not related to Atulaga Nama and Sengaji Dasi to become *imam* or deputy *imam*. He said the decision was timely and well justified. Any Muslim who demonstrates good knowledge of Islam, is fluent in reading the Qur’an, has a reputation of good character and moral conduct, and has leadership skills should be eligible to become an *imam*. He considered morality as an important attribute of an *imam*. He argued that an *imam* should be able to lead himself (to become a good Muslim) before leading others.

**Muhammad Qistian Anwar**

Muhammad Qistian Anwar was born in 1950 in Tulung Agung district in East Java. His mother was raised in a traditional (Nahdlatul Ulama) family, while his father was from a family with Muhammadiyah tradition. When studying at a PGA in Malang he began to incline towards Muhammadiyah ideas. Later he studied Arabic at the Islamic College (IAIN) Tulung Agung for two years, but did not finish. However, Muhammad Qistian Anwar maintained his interest in *tafsir hadith* (interpretation of *hadith*) and had learned some of the key literatures on the subject. He began his teaching career at a private
Islamic junior high school Madrasah Mu’allimin Tulung Agung before moving to Kupang in 1974 to teach at the Muhammadiyah primary school in Kampung Solor. He has been the school’s principal from 1987. He had served as deputy imam at Al Fatah Mosque since 2008.

Muhammad Qistian Anwar explained that his inclination to Muhammadiyah teachings is mainly based on his objection to the Aswaja tendency to overemphasise taqlid, a method of interpretation of religious issues that relies on the teachings of a number of renowned ulama in the past. As a consequence, he believed that the Aswaja approach did not require individual learning, hence the lack of literature. His involvement in a Muhammadiyah community in Malang allowed him to extensively learn a wide range of literature, as a necessary precondition to exercise ijtihad (the method of individual interpretation preferred by the modernists).

**Muhammadiyah Schools**

Since its beginnings, education has become one of the main dakwah strategies of Muhammadiyah. The chair of Muhammadiyah in Kupang, Husein Kasim, made a request to the central committee in 1966 for teachers. Thanks to help from the Muhammadiyah representative in Surabaya, Mas'ad Saleh, in June 1967, the central committee agreed to send three teachers, all of whom were graduates from Madrasah Mualimat Muhammadiyah in Yogyakarta, to work in Kupang. The three teachers were Murtilah Hamid, Zunnah, and Adiyah Husen. They were assigned to teach at the new Muhammadiyah Kindergarten in Kampung Solor and to establish the Kupang chapter of Aisyiyah, the women's wing of Muhammadiyah, as well as Nasyiatul Aisyiyah, as a wing for girls. In an interview, Murtilah Hamid explained that given the strong support from Muslim women in Kampung Solor, and Kupang, the plan to form Aisyiayah of the Kupang chapter was realised on 17 July 1968. Since then, the management of Muhammadiyah Kindergarten was handed over to Aisyiyah. In 1970 the kindergarten was officially registered with the local authority. Later Aisyiyah was also responsible for running a PAUD.

In 1968, Haji Imran Usman, the Muhammadiyah chairman who was also a local resident, led an effort to create a primary school in Kampung Solor. The central committee of Muhammadiyah supported the effort by sending two teachers from Java, Suyono, and Kasirun. In 1974 one additional teacher was assigned to Kupang: Muhammad Qistian Anwar. In its early years, the school had to use storage rooms in a private building as its classrooms. The conditions improved by 1979 when the village
head, Mahyan Amaradha, decided that Muhammadiyah was allowed to rent a building formerly belonging to a school for religious teachers (PGA), which had ceased its operation. To date, the primary school is still renting the building.

Muhammad Qistian Anwar recalled that in the beginning, the school only had 18 students, but by 2011 there were 282 students enrolled. The school provides a six-year education, comprising two classes of first grade students and one class each of second up to sixth graders. One teacher is assigned to teach each grade on general subjects, while two teachers teach all graders religion and sport respectively. The students come from families of different social and economic backgrounds, therefore tuition fees vary between students, to give children from poorer families the opportunity to receive primary education.

One important mission of these schools is to propagate modernist ideas of Muhammadiyah. Subjects on Islam take up to 40 per cent of the total hours, while 60 per cent of the student's time is spent on general subjects. All teachers in these schools are affiliated to Muhammadiyah. The main message is to teach the students that Muslims should practice the religion by implementing religious teachings stipulated in the Qur’an and following examples set by the Prophet.

Muhammadiyah education facilities, comprising an early aged learning centre (PAUD), kindergarten (TK), and primary schools, located in an integrated compound at Gunung Mutis Street, have become an important landmark of Kampung Solor. The *dakwah* activities were not only targeting students of Muhammadiyah schools, but also their parents and villagers in general. When asked what kind of changes that Muhammadiyah has brought to the community, Murtilah Hamid referred to the use of the veil (*jilbab*) by Muslim women in the *kampung*. She recalled that in the past when she and her colleagues Zunnah and Adiyah Husen first arrived in Kupang, many villagers thought that they were hajj, a religious title for Muslims who have completed the pilgrimage to Mecca, simply because the three of them wore veils. Murtilah Hamid and her colleagues tirelessly appealed to the local Muslim women that the use of the veil is a religious obligation, as the Qur’an has instructed Muslim women to cover their body except for their face and palms. She shared her observation that compared to previous years, the use of the veil has been increasingly popular among women in Kupang.

**Women’s Majelis Taklim**

*Ya Nabi salam alayka ya Rasul salam alayka*

*Ya Habib salam alayka salawatullah alayka*
O Prophet, Peace be upon you. O Messenger, Peace be upon you. 
O Beloved, Peace be upon you. The Blessings of Allah be upon you. 
You are a sun, you are a full moon, and you are light upon light, 
You are the quintessence of existence; you are the lamp in every chest. 
The full moon has risen over us, eclipsing all other moons. 
Such as your beauty we have never seen. No, never, O face of delight! 
O My beloved, O Muhammad, O bridegroom of the East and the West, 
The one Allah vindicated and exalted, O Imam of the Two Directions! 

In one evening around 20 members of women’s Majelis Taklim gathered at Ibu Endah's 
house to practice playing rebana (frame drums) and singing shalawat (a praise song to 
the Prophet Muhammad). The rehearsal was part of the preparation of Maulid 
celebration, which was planned for the following day. In Kupang, Maulid was 
celebrated not only at the village mosque, but also at the Majelis Taklim congregation. 

Majelis Taklim Al Kautsar, the official name of the women’s Majelis Taklim of 
Kampung Solor, was founded in 2003. One of its routine activities is regular Friday 
meetings, which usually start at around 4pm (after the ashar or late afternoon prayer) 
and last until 5.30pm (before maghrib or the sunset prayer). My informant Ibu Endah, 
was an active participant. She was also actively involved in a city-level forum for 
women’s Majelis Taklim in Kupang. According to her, the idea to form the women’s 
Majelis Taklim in Kampung Solor originated from the late Burhan Iyang (imam of Al 
Fatah Mosque) who in 1990 proposed the idea to Ibu Martilah Hamid (by then a teacher 

71 Other formats of Majelis Taklim in Kupang that have existed since the 1980s are on the basis of family 
relations (for example Majelis Taklim of Hadhrami family, see Chapter Four), ethnic group, and the ones 
that are formed by an imam or a religious leader. For example, Umul Mu’minin Majelis Taklim was 
formed in 1985 by the imam of Kampung Airmata Mosque. The first Women’s Majelis Taklim in 
Kupang was formed in Kampung Kolhua in 1989.
at Muhammadiyah Kindergarten). Burhan Iyang saw the need for women in the
*kampung* to have a forum where they could learn more about Islam and to read the
Qur’an. However, due to the difficulty of getting sufficient active members, the idea
was then abandoned for a while, until eventually Al Kautsar was formed in 2003.

The current leadership of the Majelis Taklim comprises a chairperson, a deputy, a
treasurer, and a secretary, all serving for a short period between one up to two years’
term. In total it has around 60 registered members, aged between 25-65 years old.
However, I have observed that the number of active members participating in regular
meetings was around 20-30 women. Many of these active members were those who
were not engaged in formal employment. Those with formal jobs found it difficult to
participate in activities on regular days. Ibu Endah who runs a small shop at her house
found it relatively easy to find the time for Majelis Taklim. Activities of the Majelis
Taklim were temporarily halted during the holy month of Ramadan and the first two
weeks of Syawal (the month after Ramadan in the Islamic calendar). During these
weeks, the members were busy with the fasting month, Idul Fitri (festival of breaking
the fast), and the tradition of exchanging visits among neighbours and relatives.

On a Friday, the meeting was held at Muhammadiyah Primary School. Ibu Endah and
other members were using one of the classrooms. First on the agenda was recitation of
the Qur’an. Those who had mastered the reading would pick up certain Surah and then
in a group take turns in reciting it. On other occasions when a newcomer showed up, for
example a new convert or a beginner, experienced members would help her. The second
item on the agenda was a public lecture, delivered usually by Ustad Hudayanur or his
wife Ustadzah Jasmi. They were the regular resource persons for Al Kautsar Majelis
Taklim, who would come on a weekly basis to deliver a speech or lecture on a wide
range of issues. Ustad Hudayanur is an official religious councillor and among others is
responsible for developing schedules of *khatib* to give sermons at Friday prayers in all
43 mosques in Kupang. He is also a teacher at a *madrasah* school. He frequently writes
opinion articles for a weekly Friday column in the *Timor Express* daily newspaper (see
Chapter Two). His wife, Ustadzah Jasmi, is also a *madrasah* teacher.

Every Friday Ustad Hudayanur and Ustadzah Jasmi would take turns in giving lessons
for around one hour on topics that have been agreed upon in advance. The selection of
the topic usually took into account the coming important religious days. In the month of

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72 *Ustad* is title for male Islamic teacher, and *ustadzah* is for female Islamic teacher.
Ramadan a variety of topics concerning fasting were discussed, such as the religious basis for performing the fasting, people obliged and exempted from fasting, payment and calculation of alms, and so on. Approaching Maulid day, the topic on the life of Prophet Muhammad was delivered. Emphasis was given to the importance of Muslims following the example of the Prophet in their daily life.

Some members of the Majelis Taklim stated a variety of reasons when asked about their reasons for joining the Majelis Taklim. One member mentioned that she found that Majelis Taklim provided her with more space to actively and independently determine the kinds of activities that fitted her interests. She said that activities for Muslims could be generally divided into two domains: mosque and women’s Majelis Taklim. Al Fatah Mosque, she said, was a male-dominated sphere, where all activities were under close supervision from imam and other leaderships. On the other hand, Majelis Taklim provided a space for women to fulfil their needs in terms of religious learning. The other members talked about how the Qur’an learning session during weekly gathering had helped them in improving their Qur’an reading skills. Other members mentioned the opportunity to learn more about obligations as a Muslim. Finally, some of them maintained that their active involvement in the Majelis Taklim had allowed them to learn useful knowledge on managing organisations, coordinating members, and organising religious events. I observed that some members of the Majelis Taklim played a key role in helping the mosque leadership in the organization of important religious events, such as breaking the fast during Ramadan, Maulid celebration, Idul Adha, and others. This weekly program was not filled with the recitation of Surah Yasin and tahlilan, as was usually the case in women’s Majelis Taklim at Kampung Airmata (see Chapter Four). However in Kampung Solor, families observing the tahlilan ritual to commemorate death after one year or more would invite imam and members of Majelis Taklim. Some members of Majelis Taklim even extended these organisational skills to be actively engaged in non-religious organisations in the villages. Ibu Endah, for example, engaged in as an active cadre of Posyandu or Pos Pelayanan Terpadu (Community Integrated Health Service) for infants and the elderly. I consider that women in Kampung Solor regard Majelis Taklim as a space for them to express their Muslim religiosity and to be socially active.
Lifecycle Rituals

The Fourth Month of Pregnancy

In Kampung Solor rituals associated with pregnancy and delivering a baby are made public by inviting guests. During pregnancy, gatherings are performed in the fourth and seventh months. After the delivery, guests are also invited to a ritual of naming and shaving the hair of the baby (akekah). The purpose is for the parents and guests to pray for the safety of the baby through recitation of certain supplications and verses in the Qur’an. The fourth month is a crucial period of the pregnancy because Muslims believe it as the time when a soul is breathed into the flesh of the foetus, transforming it into a living human being. Ibu Indah explained, basically gathering in the fourth and seventh months of pregnancy was originally a tradition of the Javanese people in Kupang. She asserted that not all Muslims in Kampung Solor perform these rituals.

I attended a gathering to mark the fourth month of pregnancy of a mother of Javanese origin. The gathering started at around 4pm after ashar prayer. Around 20 women were invited as guests, comprising members of women’s Majelis Taklim and relatives, and 10 men who were mainly neighbours and relatives. The attendants were divided into three groups, comprising of two of women and one of men. These attendants were sitting forming a circle with their legs crossed. In the middle of the circle was a big bottle of mineral water and two large bowls containing water and flowers. The bottle was attached to the group of men, while the bowls were attached to the women’s groups.

Figure 7 The Fourth Month Pregnancy Ritual

The first women’s group recited Surah Yasin (the 36th chapter in the Qur’an), the second women’s group recited Surah Maryam (the 19th chapter), while the group of men recited the Surah Yusuf (the 12th chapter). It was said that Yasin was dedicated to all Muslims including those who have passed away, while both Surah Maryam and Surah
Yusuf were dedicated to the baby with the hope that the baby would be born alive and healthy, and lead a blessed life in the future. After each group completed the recitation, one by one, all attendants started to recite Al-Fatihah, the first Surah of the Qur’an, and continued with reciting supplications for the baby and the expectant mother. To conclude the occasion, meals and mineral water were then served to the guests. The water in the bowls and the bottle was later used to bathe the expectant mother. It was believed that the water was now blessed to ensure the health and safety of the mother and the baby.

When I asked one of Muhammadiyah’s figures about this practice, he explained that this is merely a tradition and is not mentioned in the Qur’an and hadith.

_Akekah and Circumcision_

On 19 February 2012 I received an invitation from Haji Tahir Zen to attend the _akekah_ ceremony for his granddaughter. The ceremony started in the afternoon, but I came early in the morning to ask his opinion about the _akekah_ ritual for Muslims in Kupang. In the middle of our conversation Ibu Hajah Siti Zahra arrived. She is known as _dukun khitan_ who provides circumcision services for adult women and female babies. I found out that Haji Tahir Zen’s granddaughter, who was 40 days old, was about to be circumcised at this occasion. When asked if I was allowed to observe the circumcision, Siti Zahra granted her permission. However, after seeing her carrying scissors and smelling the alcohol liquid, I decided to leave the room. I was afraid that I could not bear to watch the process and that my reactions might distract her. So, during the procedure, only the girl, her grandmother (Haji Tahir Zen’s wife), and Siti Zahra were present. I did not hear the baby crying, but I did hear supplications chanted by her grandmother. Haji Tahir Zen explained that his wife was praying that God bless the baby’s life and protect her from Satan.

According to Haji Tahir Zen, even though female circumcision is commonly practised in Kampung Solor, it is not obligatory. He added that the intention of performing circumcision for women is to raise women to an equally respectable position as men, for whom circumcision is obligatory. Therefore, the practice is largely symbolic. In many cases, _dukun khitan_ would only gently touch the clitoris with sterilised scissors. The procedure, Haji Tahir Zen said, does not put the women at risk or in danger because it is done only by an experienced person and all equipment has been sterilised. The ceremony is usually done with a degree of secrecy, and combining circumcision with the first hair cutting (_akekah_) is very common.
Haji Tahir Zen also combined circumcision and akekah for his granddaughter. Akekah, he explained, has the objective of expressing gratitude because one has been granted an offspring. Even though it has a noble purpose, akekah is not obligatory but a recommended ritual. Those who cannot afford it are not obliged to do it. The best time to perform akekah is when the baby reaches 40 days. It is when the mother has completed the post-natal recovery period and is considered to be clean again. Since it is a supererogatory ritual, the timing is highly flexible. It is best done by the parents when the child is still in infancy, but it is also acceptable to wait until the parents have enough money and the child has reached adulthood. Akekah can also be performed by the children themselves, when they have grown up and are able to afford it. Haji Tahir Zen added that it is also possible that a child perform an akekah for the parents who have passed away (the Isak Gayo community in Sumatra also shares the same opinion on this issue, Bowen 1993).

Stressing akekah as an act of showing gratitude, Haji Tahir Zen disagreed with an interpretation shared by many Muslims in Kupang that it had a symbolic meaning of parents paying a redemption fee (tebusan) to Allah to claim their child (see Chapter Six). This interpretation is based on an assumption that a child essentially belongs to Allah and will remain so until the parents pay the redemption ‘fee’ by performing the akekah ceremony. Unless akekah has been done, the parents do not ‘own’ the child. Inability to perform akekah will result in the parents and the child not recognising each other in the afterlife. According to Haji Tahir Zen, interpreting akekah as an act of redemption is illogical. To redeem something spiritual (the life of a newborn baby) over material items (insignificant amount of meat and gold) does not make sense for him. According to Haji Tahir Zen, akekah is essentially an act of redemption by the parents in the sense of obeying God’s command to show gratitude for having an offspring.

As part of the akekah ritual, one goat was slaughtered earlier on that day at around 6am. If the akekah is for a boy then two goats are required. The meat was cooked and distributed to the neighbours and the orphanages. After ashar prayer around 4pm, guests began to show up. Female guests went straight to the kitchen to offer help in preparing meals. Male guests entered the living room, welcomed by Haji Tahir Zen and the baby’s father, and sat on a carpet. The ceremony began with the reading of Barzanji. One by one, they took their turn in reading parts of the text. After the reading was completed, the attendants, now standing, began to sing marbahan (greetings for the Prophet). The father then took the girl and presented her to all the guests, who took
turns to cut her hair. After the shaving was done, Haji Tahir Zen fed a small amount of honey into the baby’s mouth. Feeding a small spoon of honey into the baby’s mouth symbolises a wish that Allah will render the girl a sweet soul and a joyful life ahead (see also Chapter Five).

Haji Tahir Zen explained that akekah is a tradition dating back to the era of the Prophet. The symbolic role of akekah can be seen in the use of goat. Well-to-do families certainly are able to prepare cows or buffalo, but at akekah occasions only goats are allowed to be ritually slaughtered. Muslims are told to weigh the hair and its weight is equated with the weight of gold or silver. The current value of the gold becomes an amount of money that the parents should donate to the poor. Haji Tahir Zen explained that it is acceptable to estimate the weight rather than actually measuring it, taking into account the money that the parents can afford to donate.

Muhammadiyah considers circumcision in Islam an obligation for male Muslims. Female Muslims are not obliged to observe it. Muhammadiyah also performs akekah and it is suggested to be undertaken when the baby is seven days old.

**Praying for the Deceased (Tahlilan)**

On 9 August 2011, during fasting month, a villager named Thayib Kelong passed away. I attended a tahlilan conducted on 11 August, the third day after the burial. Because Kelong died during the fasting month, the mourners came after completing traweh (evening prayer during Ramadan). By the time I arrived, around 10 men were sitting cross-legged reciting the Qur’an. These men included imam and the elderly. Other mourners, including female guests, close neighbours, and relatives, sat on chairs prepared in the front yard of the house. The Qur’an was recited only by those sitting inside the room. People sitting outside were just listening to the recitation. Since the tahlilan took place during the fasting month, the recitation also served as khataman (ritual to complete recitation of the Qur’an in the fasting month). After the recitation was completed, Haji Mardjoeki Kalake led the repetitive chanting of tahlilan. Then a family representative delivered a short speech thanking the guests and asking them to pray that Allah accept the spirit and Thayib Kelong’s good deeds in the worldly life and release him from the torment of the grave (siksa kubur).

Ustad Fariz Hafkah delivered a sermon after meals were served. He began by calling mourners to remember at all times that all living creatures will inevitably experience death and that Allah has predetermined how long human beings will be alive. Allah has
created human beings to one day return to Him and be accountable for his/her deeds in the worldly life. He then reminded the guests that as a human experience, death involves a dying process (sakratul maut), which can be painful. He presented an analogy that a dying person is like a fish helplessly floundering when being fried in boiling oil. After the burial, the five questions will be put to the dead by the two angels:


Ustad Fariz Hafkah explained that after someone dies, the spirit would enter the realm of the grave (alam kubur). In that realm there are only darkness, loneliness, and torments. The dead would experience torment; light torment for good Muslims and heavy torment for those who ignored the teaching of Islam. Only those who keep their body clean (from adultery) and practice ibadah (commanded rituals) will be protected from such torment. Torment of the grave is the reason why the dead still need the living. The living family members and relatives can offer prayers so that the dead person can be spared from the torment. Ustad Fariz Hafkah added that because Kelong died in the fasting month, he would be freed from the torment of the grave, but still would be held accountable for the deeds he committed on earth. Then he posed a rhetorical question, ‘Where are we now in our preparation to face death?’ He then asked the audience to personally reflect on this matter any time they have a chance, including when paying a visit to the grave of their loved ones or mourning the passing of another Muslim.

The ustad maintained that tahlilan reflects the good intentions of the Aswaja, to allow the living to deliver prayer to lighten the torment of the grave. However, Ustad Fariz Hafkah then asked the attendees not to be afraid of death, but to dedicate their lives to doing righteous deeds as a provision for the afterlife. He concluded his sermon by calling Muslims to carry out good deeds in this life in order to die in khusnul khotimah (ideal state of righteousness when a good Muslim dies) and be granted salvation in the afterlife.

On another occasion, Hamzah Iyang explained that tahlilan was a ritual based on a hadith by Abu Hurayrah that says, ‘When someone dies his deeds come to an end, except for the following three things: recurring charity, knowledge by which other people benefit, and pious offspring who pray for the deceased.’ The last point made in the hadith implies the obligation of the survivors to pray for the deceased. An important motivation of tahlilan is therefore to maintain relations with the spirit. Haji Tahir Zen
and Hamzah Iyang explained the Prophet did not forbid Muslims to pray for the deceased, visit the tomb, or to clean up the grave. What was forbidden, as the Prophet had warned, was for Muslims to ask for blessings from the spirit of the dead.

In Kampung Solor, the bereaved family is obliged to perform the *tahlilan* until the fourth day after the death. The *tahlilan* on the following days are considered *sunnah* (recommended). The importance of *tahlilan* for Muslims in Kampung Solor can be seen from the fact that it is common that Muslims of Kampung Solor village hold *tahlilan* on the 1000th day after the death or even several years after a person passed away. Hamzah Iyang explained that when someone dies the spirit would travel a very long journey until the judgement day arrives: ‘It is our obligation to continuously chant prayers to support the journey of a departed spirit. *Tahlilan* is an expression of love for the deceased.’

Proponents of Muhammadiyah are in opposition to *tahlilan*. Haji Idrus Lamaya emphasised that there is no need for a Muslim to pray for someone who has passed away. Referring to the *hadith* by Abu Hurayrah, he stressed that the key message of the *hadith* is not that continuous prayers from survivors will help lighten the torment of the grave. On the contrary, the *hadith* actually encourages Muslims to share beneficial knowledge with others, to raise pious children, and to do acts of charity continuously during their lifetime. He also added that since modernists consider the good deeds end when someone dies, consequently ‘after someone dies the salvation depends only on the judgement from Allah and his righteous deeds during his life.’

Employing similar logic, Haji Idrus Lamaya argued that modernists reject the chanting of *talqin*73 during the burial service and the practice of *tahlilan* that follows. He believes that Islam has taught Muslims to do acts of charity and good deeds in the worldly life as a provision for the afterlife journey. Therefore, it is incorrect to rely on offspring to continuously pray for him/her after he/she dies. Lamaya and Anwar explained that, when invited to attend *tahlilan*, they would usually attend and sit on chairs outside the house, and would not join the recitation of the chants.

### Islamic Festivals

Within a full cycle of the annual Islamic calendar, Al Fatah Mosque of Kampung Solor hosts celebrations of five Islamic festivals, as seen in Figure 8. I will elaborate on four

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73 *Talqin* is addressed to the deceased to explain what will be going on in the grave soon after the last mourner has left and what the deceased should do or say when the two angels come to examine him/her.
of these celebrations in the next section. I did not attend the celebration of Idul Fitri (‘Id prayer) in Kampung Solor because I spent the Idul Fitri day at Al Baitul Qadim Mosque in Kampung Airmata. Muslims of Kampung Solor performed Idul Fitri prayer at open public spaces, for example in the soccer field, which was organised by the Municipal Religious Office. Conducting an ‘Id prayer at an public space shows the influence of the modernist stream.

**Figure 8 Islamic Festivals in Kampung Solor**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Months of the Islamic Calendar</th>
<th>Festivals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Muharram</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Safar</td>
<td>Mandi Safar (communal bathing ritual held in the ocean or the river on the last Wednesday of Safar).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Rabiul Akhir</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Jumadil Awal</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Jumadil Akhir</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Rajab</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Sya‘ban</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Ramadan</td>
<td>The whole month is the month of fasting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Syawal</td>
<td>1st Syawal: Idul Fitri (the celebration of the end of the fasting month).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Zulkaedah</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Zulhijjah</td>
<td>10th Zulhijjah: Idul Adha (feast of sacrifice, held in connection with the annual pilgrimage).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Communal Bath of Safar**

Safar is the second month of the Islamic calendar. On the last Wednesday of the month, Muslims in Kampung Solor perform the ritual Bath of Safar (*mandi Safar*). Muslims in Kampung Solor as well as from other kampung who live near the beaches of Kupang Bay, especially from the neighbouring Kampung Bonipoi, observe a communal bathing ritual. The ritual, they believe, is an act of purification to eliminate sins and evils, and to
escape from disasters and bad luck. The communal bath of Safar is locally known as *mandi tolak bala* (taking a bath to avoid disasters and bad luck) in Safar month.

Safar is considered a precarious month, where accidents, disasters, illness, and bad luck may occur, especially on the last Wednesday. In Kupang, Aswaja Muslims will avoid having a wedding ceremony, engagement party, or other *kenduri* (thanksgiving gathering) for any purposes; otherwise they will bring about troubles. The proponents of Muhammadiyah did not participate in the communal bath of Safar. They believe that the ritual deviates from the teachings of Islam. The reason is that the communal bathing was inherited from the ancestors, not stated in the Qur’an. The communal bath of Safar is also found in other parts of Indonesia. Muhaimmin (2006: 123) suggests that in Cirebon, West Java, Muslims believe in the warning of Gnostics (ahl al-Kashf) Al-Dairaby, which states that the last Wednesday of Safar is the most precarious day of the year because of all 350,000 disasters revealed by Allah, most of them occur on that particular day.

Haji Tahir Zen explained that the observance of *mandi tolak bala* in the month of Safar is inspired by the story of Prophet Musa (Moses) and Prophet Yunus (Jonah). The two messengers of God had undergone disastrous experiences in their effort to spread God’s words. Prophet Moses encountered a number of difficulties when escaping from slavery in Egypt and preaching the words of God. Yunus was sailing when his boat was hit by a storm and he was thrown into the ocean. Yunus was then miraculously saved by being swallowed by a fish, before God commanded the fish to spew him out and save him. These two extraordinary occurrences are believed to have taken place in the month of Safar. Haji Tahir Zen added that the purpose of observing the communal bath of Safar is to ask for protection from Allah from any kind of danger. In addition to conducting a communal religious cleansing of the body and soul with water, on the last Wednesday of Safar Muslims were also encouraged to give donations to the poor.

I observed the communal bath of Safar on the last Wednesday of the month, which fell on 18 January 2012. I came to Ibu Endah’s house at around 11am. We agreed to go together with her children. Ibu Endah was preparing sunscreen powder (*bedak dingin* or cool powder) made of flour and mineral water or rose water. Before taking the bath of Safar the powder is applied to the face and the skin to protect the body from the sun’s rays. We went to the beach after her youngest daughter came home from school. As Kampung Solor was located near the beach, it took us less than 10 minutes on foot to get there. At the beach there were many Muslims, women and children, from Kampung
Solor as well as from Kampung Bonipoi. Muslims from Kampung Airmata visited the river to observe the bath of Safar, while in Kampung Oesapa the ritual was performed individually at their own homes. However, I did not see many adult men on that occasion, probably because it was a working day. It was cloudy that evening, but people seemed to be very enthusiastic in the observance of the bath of Safar. As Muhaimin (2006) shows in communal bath of Safar event in Cirebon, I also found that the whole activity of communal bathing at the beach looked like a family picnic. Despite the important religious meaning of purification, the Muslims celebrated the ritual cheerfully and joyfully. They expressed joy because soon they would leave Safar, the precarious month, behind.

**Figure 9 Preparation for Bath of Safar**

![Preparation for Bath of Safar](image1)

**Figure 10 Annual Communal Bath of Safar**

![Annual Communal Bath of Safar](image2)

One notable element of religiosity of the bath of Safar could be observed after the bathing finished. At around 3pm, people began to gather back on shore. Haji Muhammad Husein Abdulah, one of the respected community figures in Kampung Solor, was standing with a bamboo tray and incense. Those who had completed the bath donated money onto the tray. The money would be donated to the orphans. Haji Muhammad Husein Abdulah then burned the incense and recited Surah Al-Fatiha, followed by recitation of *doa selamat*, in particular asking for the safety for Muslims
living in Kampung Solor and Kampung Bonipoi. After the prayer, people went home. After *ashar* prayer, many of them continued the celebration by participating in a prayer ritual observed by Muslims in Kampung Bonipoi (see Chapter Four).

**Birthday of the Prophet**

It was 17 February 2012. In the evening, one of the most celebrated festivals in Kampung Solor Maulid, or sometimes called Maulid Nabi, was about to start. Muslims in the kampung were filled with excitement. It was the day when Al Fatah Mosque took its turn in hosting the celebration. It is a tradition among old mosques in Kupang that they would take turns in hosting the celebration of Maulid. The first mosque that enjoyed the privilege was Kampung Airmata Mosque (see Chapter Four). Kampung Bonipoi, Kampung Namosain, and Kampung Solor’s mosques took turns on the following weekends.

When I arrived at his house, deputy *imam* Hamzah Iyang warmly welcomed me. In the living room were many plates on which a variety of fruits were arranged, and a sizeable ornamental pillar called *siripuang*. *Siripuang* of a much larger size and made from a banana tree was also part of the ritual’s ornaments in Kampung Airmata. In Kampung Solor the *siripuang* was decorated with colourful papers and boiled eggs. Hamzah Iyang looked exceptionally cheerful. He was wearing a brown sarong, dressed up in a green-coloured blazer worn over a yellow shirt. He also wore *peci* (Muslim hat).

He admitted that he was exceptionally happy because he had been looking forward to celebrating Maulid. He said that even though some people in the *kampung* were opposed to Maulid celebration, he was glad that Muslims in Kampung Solor and Al Fatah Mosque were able to sustain the tradition. Certainly he was referring to the objections raised by the proponents of modernist Muhammadiyah, including deputy *imam* Haji Idus Lamaya, who considered Maulid an influence of the Hindu religion. Hamzah Iyang opined that it was impossible for the Muslims not to celebrate the birthday of the Prophet, the most beloved person by Muslims. He added:

> It is also unthinkable to blame the Islamic teaching on which the celebration of Maulid is based on. We are celebrating the birthday of the Prophet, chanting *shalawat* addressed to Him, spreading his teachings and story of His life. What is wrong with this practice? The important purpose of Maulid celebration is also to show younger Muslim generations that we are obliged to pray for the Prophet, his families, his companions, and his followers.
After the evening (isya) prayer, at around 8pm, children and youths in the kampung gathered at the house of Hamzah Iyang. These young people were assigned to carry out two tasks. The first group was to carry plates of fruits and siripuang. The other group played rebana musical instrument. They began the procession by chanting shalawat while marching slowly in a parade to the mosque. The distance from Hamzah Iyang’s house to the mosque was about 1 kilometre. Then they started to dance, spinning and twirling around, accompanied by the sound of rebana and shalawat songs. Their faces were filled with smiles and excitement. It somehow fascinated me to see that a Muslim religious parade—with all the rhythmic sound of rebana, chants of shalawat songs, and the noisy crowd cheering at the performers—could be performed outdoors on the street. For a moment I forgot that I was in a predominantly Christian town in Eastern Indonesia.

The procession ended when these groups of young people entered the mosque. The plates and siripuang were placed carefully on the carpets on the floor. Many people put their mineral water, in bottles and glasses, on the carpets. They believe that the utterance of prayers during the celebration will bring blessings to the water, which can be used later for many purposes. A number of respected figures were already sitting on the floor. Among others there were Haji Abdul Makarim (Chair of MUI of NTT Province), Haji Abdulrachim Mustafa (imam of Kampung Airmata Mosque), imam of Kampung Namosain Mosque, as well as Haji Mardjoeki Kalake, and Haji Muhammad Husein Abdullah, two important figures in the village. Deputy imam Hamzah Iyang took a seat in between Haji Abdulrachim Mustafa and Haji Muhammad Husein Abdullah. Then he began the reading of Barzanji accompanied by the rhythm of rebana.

Figure 11 Maulid Celebration at Al Fatah Mosque
It was almost midnight when the public reading of Barzanji finished. I noticed that children stayed inside the mosque during the public reading. None of them fell asleep. After the recitation was completed, everyone stood up, chanted the *shalawat* again, and uttered a prayer. Unlike the Maulid celebration in Kampung Airmata, the celebration here did not involve giving coins and flowers to the attendees. All the children who stayed at the mosque until the celebration’s end received a small parcel of fruits. At the end of the ceremony, those who brought mineral water took the bottles and glasses back and took them home.

**Figure 12 Parcels of Fruits, Siripuang and Water**

Muhammadiyah criticise the reading of the Barzanji tradition practised in Kampung Solor and other Aswaja mosques. They consider Barzanji to be a form of cultural art to praise the Prophet, like any other *qasidah* songs. They claim that reading the Bazanji would not be rewarded by God.

**The Fasting Month**

Haji Idrus Lamaya maintained that in determining the start and the end of fasting month all Muslims would refer to a *hadith* by Al Bukhari that says, ‘Do not fast unless you sight the crescent, and do not break your fast till you sight the following crescent.’ Aswaja interprets it as an instruction for Muslims to observe the moon by using physical sighting. If for some reason, for example bad weather, the moon cannot be seen then another observation shall be made on the following day. On the other hand, Muhammadiyah argues that physical sighting is no longer necessary because Muslims have acquired a reliable scientific method to calculate the position of the crescent.

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74 Notosudirdjo (2011: 298, 303) defines *qasidah* or *qasidahan* as ‘a vocal music genre accompanied by a set of frame drums called *rebana*; it is an indigenous genre of Islamic music.’
Scientific method is reliable to determine the start and end of the fasting month regardless of the weather conditions.

These groups also differ in the number of cycles of night prayer (traweh) performed during the fasting month. Muhammadiyah performs 8 (+3 witir) cycles of prayers, while Aswaja performs 20 (+3 witir) cycles. Muhammadiyah, according to Haji Idrus Lamaya, follows an example set by the Prophet who himself performed 8 cycles. Aswaja, on the other hand, follows a tradition introduced by the first successor of the Prophet, caliph Umar bin Khatab, who performed 20 cycles. The decision to add extra cycles, Haji Idrus Lamaya explained, was made on the grounds that it is better to do more prayers during the holy month than spending the evening doing unimportant things. Haji Idrus Lamaya explained that adding extra cycles is a form of unnecessary innovation. Ritual practices in Islam, in his view, should strictly follow examples set by the Prophet.

Negotiations between Aswaja and Muhammadiyah proponents in Kampung Solor have resulted in an important compromise concerning the conduct of traweh prayer. In Kampung Solor traweh prayer is performed in 8 cycles plus 3 cycles of witir prayer, in line with the Muhammadiyah stance. According to Hamzah Iyang, in the past Muslims in the kampung performed a full 23 cycles, comprising 20 cycles or traweh concluding with 3 cycles of witir prayer. The reform was introduced under the leadership of Ahmad Burhan, one of the late imam of Al Fatah Mosque. No-one could confirm when the reform actually took place. However, given that Muhammadiyah was only founded in Kupang in 1966 and, as many informants recalled, Ahmad Burhan served as imam in the 1960s, the best estimate is that the decision was made in the late 1960s. My informants were convinced that the process was done without any hostility.

This story truly astonished me: that a traditional Muslim kampung, who devotedly observe Aswaja rituals, would perform 8 cycles of traweh prayer during the holy month of Ramadan. Möller (2005b) in his study of Muslims in Central Java concludes that differences in the number of traweh cycles between traditionalists and modernists do not lead to serious disputes, mainly because both traditionalist and modernist have different mosques in the same area. Members of the two communities then could co-exist. I found that in Kampung Solor, despite being a minority Muhammadiyah, is well

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75 Witir is a prayer to conclude traweh prayer.
represented at the leadership of Al Fatah Mosque. This representation allows acceptance in the change of the number of traweh prayer’s cycles at the mosque.

Hamzah Iyang was very diplomatic when explaining that observing 8 cycles would allow the worshipers not to perform the congregated prayer in a rush, and could use more time to pray individually. Even though the number of cycles was reduced, however, the Aswaja tradition of publicly chanting shalawat and other invocations between the cycles were retained. The chant of shalawat between cycles is also practised by Aswaja Muslims of Kampung Airmata, Kampung Bonipoi, and Kampung Namosain. Hamzah Iyang pointed out another significant impact of the reform. The performance of 8 cycles of traweh had successfully attracted children and teenagers to join the congregation at Al Fatah Mosque as the traweh took shorter time compared to the 20 cycles. I observed that during the fasting month, Al Fatah Mosque was packed with worshippers. In August 2011, I went to observe traweh prayer at Al Fatah Mosque for two consecutive weeks and found that there were approximately 350-400 worshippers attending every evening. Some of them had to occupy the terrace and the second floor of the building.

After the prayers were completed and the sermon delivered, around 10-12 people, male and female, stayed at the mosque to conduct Qur’an recitation (tadarus). Ibu Endah and her peers from Majelis Taklim were among those who stayed. They sat in a circle and began the recitation. Like a similar undertaking in Kampung Airmata (see Chapter Four), the tadarus was done in small groups. The group would recite two Surah of Qur’an every evening and in the whole month they were expected to complete the recitation of the whole Qur’an (khataman of the 30 juz). Khataman was performed on the 15th day and the 30th day of Ramadan. The group finished the recitation at around 9pm every night.

For two weeks I stayed with Ibu Endah’s family. Ibu Endah is a mother of four children with two grandchildren. She still has to take care of her three daughters, while her son is already married and lives with his wife’s family. Her husband died a few years before. Ibu Endah made her living by running a small shop adjacent to her house. Her children all fasted during the holy month. During the fasting month, it is highly recommended that a Muslim take early meals before subuh (the dawn) prayer. Early meals were taken at around 3.30am. The night before, Ibu Endah had to ensure that she had enough to

76 Juz is part of the Qur’an. Qur’an is divided into 30 juz.
feed her children. However, not all of them woke up for early meals *(sahur)*. Two of her daughters often preferred to continue sleeping and did fasting without having early meals. Ibu Endah admitted that it was difficult to wake the children up early in the morning. However she was aware of the importance of having *sahur* as commanded in Islam in order to observe the fast well. She frequently raised her concern to her children that fasting without *sahur* runs a risk of getting sick. One way of ensuring that her children could wake up early was by asking them to turn off the TV and go to bed early. However, as during Ramadan there were many interesting programs, her children sometimes insisted on watching television. Ibu Endah maintained a routine of attending congregated *subuh* prayer at the mosque. Similar to the *subuh* prayer at Kampung Airmata, only 30-40 worshippers joined in congregated prayer at Al Fatah Mosque.

The 17th day of Ramadan is considered one of the most important days of the fasting month. It was when the verse of Qur’an was revealed for the first time to Prophet Muhammad. Muslims commemorated the night when the Qur’an was revealed (Nuzulul Qur’an), also referred to as Malam Lailatul Qadar. This year, it fell on Thursday 18 August 2011. On that evening, the worshippers observed *traweh* prayer as usual. The male worshippers formed seven lines *(saf)*, each comprising 30-35 people, while the women worshippers formed four lines. The difference was that prior to the performance of *traweh* prayer, there was a recitation of Surah Al-Mursalat (verses 1-5) and Surah Fussilat (verses 41-45), followed by the reading of their translation in the Indonesian language. A sermon was then delivered by Ustad Muchsin Thalib (who also gave a sermon at the Governor’s residence during the breaking of the fast, see Chapter Two).

He emphasised the importance of Muslims to not only believe in the Qur’an, but also in actually loving the holy book. He explained that the Qur’an was revealed to Prophet Muhammad to be passed on to the ignorant community *(jahiliyah)* of Mecca. The state of *jahiliyah* among the people of Mecca during Muhammad’s time did not refer to illiteracy, but rather to the practice of polytheism. He also talked about the Qur’an having a number of miraculous attributes, such as the content being fixed because it is protected by Allah from any effort to change it, and also because the whole book can be memorized word by word. He explained that the Qur’an would be the helper for believers on the day of the judgement *(akhirat)*. Muslims are commanded to recite and implement the teaching of the Qur’an. Recitation of the Qur’an is important, but understanding the sentences or correctly interpreting the meaning of Qur’an is also crucial.
The Feast of Sacrifice

On 4 November 2011, two days before the feast for sacrifice, I attended a routine gathering of women’s Majelis Taklim. On that occasion Uztadzah Jasmi delivered a sermon, and she picked a topic on the feast for sacrifice. She began by explaining to the audience the obligation for Muslims to offer sacrifice as commanded in two chapters in the Qur’an, namely Surah Al-Hajj (verses 34-38) and Surah Al-Kautsar. These chapters instruct Muslims to ritually sacrifice animals in the name of Allah.

Ustadzah Jasmi explained that Idul Adha is an annual festival to commemorate Ibrahim’s willingness to sacrifice his son, Ismail, and also Ismail's self-sacrifice at God’s order. The feast is celebrated on the 10th day of Zulhijjah, the last month of the Islamic lunar calendar, usually known as the month of pilgrimage (bulan haji). Ustadzah Jasmi explained that on this occasion Muslims are commanded to slaughter animals under certain conditions. Eligible animals for this ritual include cow/buffalo/bull, horse, camel, and sheep/lamb/goat. These animals should be healthy (free from illness and disease), not physically impaired (e.g. disabled, lame, blind, or handicapped, or have the ear or other parts cut off), of normal weight, and not under aged or too old (grownup animals). For example, the minimum age for a cow or a buffalo is two years or older, but not too old.

Ustadzah Jasmi then talked about the time of sacrifice. She mentioned that ideally sacrifice of the animal is offered in the morning on the day of Idul Adha after the ‘Id prayer, but is also permitted on the following three days (11th, 12th and 13th of Zulhijjah). When being slaughtered, the animal is placed facing towards the direction of Ka’bah (in Mecca). The last important thing that she mentioned is that the meat shall primarily be distributed amongst the poor and needy, but some portion of it may be retained for the consumption of one’s own family; or is given to the relatives and neighbours. However, it is unlawful to sell the meat.

On 6 November 2011, as early as 6am people gathered at Al Fatah Mosque to perform ‘Id prayer. Women worshippers had to use mosque’s terrace and also the second floor, while men worshippers were forced to occupy the front yard because the mosque’s main hall was already packed. Since morning, takbir (Allahu Akbar or God is great) was repeatedly chanted by the worshippers. A mosque official then announced that in this year’s feast, there were eight cows and 20 goats offered for sacrifice at Al Fatah Mosque. These animals were tied up at the side yard of the mosque and the nametags bearing names of villagers offering the animals were displayed on their necks. Then at
6.15am, a *bilal* (one who sounds the *adzan*) announced the call for prayer. Hamzah Iyang led the ‘Id prayer. Afterwards, Haji Abdullah Sagran delivered a sermon. He was the head of the provincial body for alms collection (Badan Amil Zakat), and had been regularly invited to preach at weekly Friday prayer, or at other important Islamic festivals at the mosque.

Haji Abdullah Sagran stressed the importance for a Muslim to follow the example of the Prophet Ibrahim and his son Ismail in observing God’s command, even by self-sacrifice. Prophet Ibrahim obeyed the command to sacrifice his only son, while his son obeyed the command of self-sacrifice. Ismail is praised for his willingness to offer his life to God. The drama of slaughtering, according to Sagran, turned into a happy ending as God eventually replaced Ismail with a sheep. This episode of history serves as the basis for the annual feast of sacrifice celebrated by Muslims all over the world. The sacrifice offered by Ibrahim and Ismail was praised as the true act of sacrifice, an unprecedented event that occurred only once in human history. It was through this process of sacrifice that Ibrahim was then rewarded with the title of the Father of all Prophets and *imam* of all human beings.

The way Prophet Ibrahim and Ismail had lived their lives was considered a fine example for Muslims. A Muslim should understand that at some point in his/her life, it is inevitable to make a sacrifice, in the forms of time, money, and labour, to help others, to uphold religious values, and to contribute to solving problems in the community. A Muslim should maintain the spirit of Ibrahim, as a symbol of voluntary submission to the will of God, and should be ready to offer sacrifice for the greatness of Allah, and God would promise to give a reward for this.

After the sermon, the mosque official once again announced the total number of animals offered in the feast of sacrifice and mentioned the names of the people who offered them. It was lawful, as practised by Muslims in Kampung Solor, to offer shared sacrifice. A group of minimum two and maximum eight individuals may share in offering a cow. This group sacrifice may come from one household or several households.

After the prayer, it is a tradition in the village that Muslims visit the graves of their family members. Ibu Endah and her children went to their house briefly for a rest before going to visit the tomb of her husband/the father, located at the village cemetery nearby. She took with her a small book of Surah Yasin. At the tomb they recited the Surah and then supplications. The villagers did not spend too long at the cemetery, as the real feast
would begin after the grave visit. Ibu Endah and her children returned to the mosque. There they found members of Remaja Masjid (Mosque Youth Organisation), Majelis Taklim, and a number of villagers were ready to volunteer in the slaughtering of the animals and distributing the meat. The front yard of the mosque was already full of people who wanted to volunteer and also to watch the ritual.

**Figure 13 Ibu Endah and her daughter visiting the grave**

When the animals were being prepared for slaughter, the ritual began with the chanting of *shalawat*. At around 8am, a big cow was taken by a group of five men to the slaughtering point at one corner of the yard, under a big tree. The beast was laid down facing toward the direction of Ka’bah. Its feet were tied firmly with a blue robe. These men then recited ‘Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar’ and *basmallah* (‘In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate’). Those who offered the sacrifice also witnessed the ritual. Once again their names were mentioned when the slaughterers recited a prayer that Allah receive the sacrifice.

At the point of slaughter, when the sharp knife was pointed to the cow, again the officials recited *basmallah*. This was when I decided to leave the area, but remained at the mosque compound. I could not bear to watch the slaughter, and was afraid that my reaction would create discomfort for others. When all the animals had been ritually slaughtered, the volunteers arranged for the cutting up and distribution of the meat. Ibu Endah and the other 20 people carefully cut the meat into small pieces, weighed them, and put them into plastic bags. 2.5 kilograms of meat were put into each of the plastic bags.
It was a common practice that the officials prioritised distribution of the meat to the following parties: first, the poor households in Kampung Solor, second the family of the people who offered the sacrifice, then mosque officials (including imam and deputies, mudin (mosque officials who are responsible to take care for the dead), cleaners of the mosque, as well as the volunteers. Chairperson of the Mosque Youth Organisation, Muhammad Fitrawan Saleh, explained that the meat was also distributed to the people of other faiths. There were a sizeable number of Christians and Catholics, as well as a handful of Buddhists and Hindus in the kampung. Non-Muslims who received the meat were those who often helped their Muslim neighbours at the time of death, by digging and preparing the grave. If there was enough meat, the rest of the villagers would be given a portion so everyone could feel the joy of the feast. It took almost the whole day to complete the slaughter and cutting up of the meat. The activities ended at around 5pm. I could see that people were satisfied that the ritual had been performed smoothly.
I was astonished by the ability of the slaughterers and volunteers to slaughter a total of 28 beasts in an open space surrounded by a large group of people, and to arrange distribution of the meat, all in less than 10 hours. Their faces looked tired but happy. In the evening I received a number of invitations to come to the houses of my informants, because they were cooking special menus for dinner, but regretfully I had to say no. Lamb satay is the famous dish eaten during the feast. Even though the slaughtering rituals were over, the smell of the blood made me feel dizzy and I wanted to go out and find some fresh air. In the village I have seen the Muslims offering or taking part in the feast of sacrifice for primarily religious reason, for example, reward for Allah, but simultaneously as a festive day celebrated together with non-Muslim neighbours. To include non-Muslim neighbours on the list of meat distribution was a simple but effective way of maintaining good relations with them. This year's celebration was even more special because nine of the Kampung Solor villagers took hajj pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Among the pilgrims were the imam of the mosque, Haji Tahir Zen, and his wife. The couple were giving thanks for financial help from a Muslim acquaintance from Madura (East Java).

Muhammadiyah reformed the practice that has been concerns the sacrificial feast of Idul Adha. In the past, the imam of the mosque was individually responsible for taking care of the purchase of the animal and distribution of the meat. Muhammadiyah introduced a committee, comprising a number of people, to handle the feast to have a more transparent system.
Conclusion

Since their arrival in Kupang, the Solorese as the only Muslim ally of the Dutch, became integrated into the mixed population of Kupang, which is comprised mainly of Christian Rotinese and Savunese, and other groups. Intermarriages between the Solorese and the other ethnic groups were not uncommon, according to my informant Haji Tahir Zen. Throughout the history of Kupang, Muslims of Kampung Solor showed a degree of openness to new migrants. They were also exposed and receptive to various political ideas. When political activism began to flourish in Kupang in the 1920s, Kampung Solor was the home of political activism of all streams: nationalist, Islam, and communist organisations.

The openness to new ideas is also shown by Al Fatah Mosque’s leaders. Al Fatah Mosque is arguably unique in the sense that the leadership comprises *imam* from Aswaja and Muhammadiyah backgrounds. The *imam* is an Aswaja Muslim, but two of the deputies are Muhammadiyah proponents. Aswaja and Muhammadiyah have differences in their religious teachings, especially in rituals related to *lifecycles* and Islamic festivals. Aswaja Muslims in Kampung Airmata have adopted the teaching of Muhammadiyah regarding the conduct of Ramadan *traweh* prayer, from 20 cycles to 8 cycles. This adoption is a significant reform in the religious practice, because observance of 20 cycles of *traweh* prayer is actually a defining feature of Aswaja traditions elsewhere in Kupang. The practice is preserved in Aswaja Muslim communities in Kupang, especially the oldest mosques in Kampung Airmata (see Chapter Four), Kampung Bonipoi, and Kampung Namosain.

The other significant reform is in the conduct of the special prayers (on Idul Fitri and Idul Adha). The prayer is no longer performed inside the mosque, as in Aswaja tradition, but outside the mosque, in an open yard. Muhammadiyah also introduced the formation of a committee on the occasions of alms collection and the giving ritual. They claimed that many mosques had been following this idea to form a committee to organise collection and distribution of alms in a more transparent manner. The adoption of Muhammadiyah teaching is apparently made possible because Muhammadiyah figures are represented in the mosque’s leadership. Moreover, the attitude of the Mosque Youth Organisation allowed the reform to take place smoothly. The younger generation of Muslims in Kampung Solor accepted the changes of religious practice. They observe 8 cycles of *traweh* prayer and at the same time maintain other Aswaja traditions in lifecycle rituals and important days. This process has been smooth because
the decision to change was made by the mosque leadership, which the Muslims of Kampung Airmata respect.

The acceptance of 8 cycles of *traweh* prayer is not the end of negotiations between Aswaja and Muhammadiyah in Kampung Solor. Muhammadiyah seeks to reform other practices, and on many occasions expressed their disagreement with the existing Aswaja traditions, calling them deviant. The existing Aswaja rituals include celebration of Maulid, recitation of *talqin, tahlilan, doa selamat*, the reading from the Book of Barzanji, the chanting of *shalawat*, the observance of communal bath of Safar, and Sufi order.77 Even though Muhammadiyah considers these practices deviant to Islamic teachings, in my observation, the advocates of Muhammadiyah make an effort to attend when invited to *tahlilan* to respect the family of the deceased. Muhammadiyah followers, however, did not participate in Maulid and in the communal bath of Safar. I found the nature of negotiation of religious practices between the two parties was more persuasive than confrontational. The Aswaja Muslims accept some Muhammadiyah teachings, while the advocates of Muhammadiyah maintain a degree of toleration of the existing Aswaja traditions in Kampung Solor.

This chapter has shown that the introduction and adoption of modernist ideas took place without triggering tensions in the society. This chapter has also shown that Muslims in Kampung Solor, both the Aswaja and Muhammadiyah, have a moderate attitude and openness toward differences in Islamic practices. In the words of the mosque’s leaders, the two groups have been able to negotiate differences and find a way out. Consensus with Muhammadiyah on *traweh* prayer is not the first example of reform in the Aswaja Muslims of Kampung Solor. Previously, the mosque leadership abandoned a Solorese tradition of an hereditary system in the appointment of *imam*. In the past, only the descendants of Atulaga Nama and Sangaji Dasi were eligible. In present-day Kampung Solor, any Muslims with particular qualifications are eligible to become *imam*. I argue that Muslims in Kampung Solor tend to open themselves to negotiation, and to avoid hostilities, partly as a way to strengthen the bond within the Muslim community in the *kampung*, considering their position as a minority group in the Christian environment of Kupang. It is their view that the open character of the community has been crucial in their ability to adapt to the environment and to survive against external challenges.

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77 The other Sufi Order is Naqsabandiyah al Kholidiyah, whose presence in Kampung Solor is in the form of a *zikir* (Islamic invocation) group led by Mochtar Gehak, a high-school teacher. The Naqsyabandiyah al Kholidiyah Sufi Order was established in Buktittinggi in 1950 by the late Prof. Dr. H. Kadirun Yahya known as Sayyidi Syaikh (1917-2001).
The moderate stance and openness of Muslims in Kampung Solor in the negotiation of religious ideas can be found in the explanation offered by deputy imam Hamzah Iyang. He maintained that despite different views on conducting rituals, there is a mutual understanding among imam and the deputies that Islam as a religion goes beyond rituals and touches many aspects of human life. Religious leaders should not only consider the ritual aspects of Islam, but also the importance of encouraging Muslims to fulfil their obligations with utmost sincerity (ikhlas). He said, ‘the perspectives of Aswaja and Muhammadiyah may differ in matters concerning rituals, but both streams share the principle of tauhid (oneness of God).’
Chapter Four
The Second Muslim Enclave: Kampung Airmata, Kampung Bonipoi, and the Hadhrami

Introduction: The Second Muslim Enclave

This chapter examines three Muslim communities who constitute a second enclave of Muslims in Kupang. They are the Muslim community in Kampung Airmata, Kampung Bonipoi, and the Hadhrami community in these two kampung. I describe these communities as the second enclave, primarily on the grounds that they established themselves in the early 1800s, around 50 years after the first Muslim enclave of Kampung Solor was founded in the 1750s. The other reason for grouping these communities in the same enclave is their physical and cultural proximity. Kampung Airmata and Kampung Bonipoi share a history of opposition against the Dutch colonial government. The first Muslim settlers in Kampung Airmata, unlike those in Kampong Solor, did not ally themselves with the Dutch. Moreover, a number of proselytising figures whose descendants still live in Airmata and Bonipoi were anti-Dutch exiles from various parts of the archipelago. The Hadhrami, who began to arrive in Kupang in the early 1900s, traditionally reside in Kampung Airmata and Kampung Bonipoi. Due to the significant number of the Hadhrami, Kampung Airmata has become known as Kampung Arab (Arab Quarter).

While the Solorese and the Hadhrami are the dominant groups in this enclave, there are also substantial numbers of Muslims from Java, Madura, West Sumatra, and some other neighbouring islands of Timor such as Alor. The descendants of exiles from Yogyakarta and Bangka Island also still live there. Similar to the first enclave, the community of the second enclave also follows the Aswaja tradition. This chapter aims to examine the practice of Islam in the daily lives of Muslims in these villages through the conduct of rites of passage and Islamic festivals. Mosques and imam in Kampung Airmata and Bonipoi play a central role in the attempts to sustain Aswaja tradition. The main characteristic of the Muslim community in Kampung Airmata is a dyadic structure, which divides the community into Kampung Imam (religious leadership) and Kampung Raja (the custom official). This chapter will examine its origin, the allocation of duties between the two entities in the preservation of the Aswaja tradition, and efforts to sustain the structure in modern times. In Bonipoi, I will specifically look at the role of mosques in the implementation of the Aswaja tradition in death rituals, religious
instruction, and the role of gambus music group\(^{78}\) in celebration of important religious days and in sustaining the Solorese tradition. In these two kampung I will examine the role of Hadhrami in religious instruction and how the Hadhrami community maintains its identity by way of marriage, genealogy, and family associations.

The Muslim community of the second enclave is facing challenges in its effort to sustain Aswaja tradition. In Airmata the challenge relates to a crisis in the leadership of Kampung Imam and Kampung Raja. In Bonipoi the challenge concerns tension between imam as a traditional religious authority and Mosque Foundation as a new entity. The presence of Mosque Foundation also deepened the crisis in Kampung Imam of Airmata Muslim community. The observance of important religious festivals in these communities, however, appeared to be unaffected by tensions at the leadership level.

A. The Muslim Community of Kampung Airmata

Kampung Airmata is nestled on the banks of a small river, known as Kali Kaca. It is located close to Kupang Port, a business and trading centre, and government offices. In Kupang language, Airmata derives from the word oe, which means water, and mata, which means source. Oe mata therefore means sumber mata air (water spring), but in Indonesian airmata literally means teardrop. Airmata is in walking distance from the main road, Jalan Raya Soekarno (Soekarno Street), where Kupang’s Grand Mosque is situated. On top of the gateway at the entrance to the village there is a sign saying ‘Selamat Datang di Kampung Airmata’ (Welcome to Airmata Village). Walking towards the housing settlement, Kali Kaca with its fresh water is visible along the road, flowing out to the ocean. In the morning the river is filled with women doing laundry, while in the afternoon children play and swim in it. A few days before the holy month of Ramadan, the river is used for communal bathing as part of a cleansing ritual.

Kampung Airmata is one of the villages in Kelapa Lima sub-district (kecamatan), bordered by Lai-lai Besi Kopan to the north, Mantasi to the south, Fontein to the east, and Fatufeto to the west. It is around 12 hectares, divided into three RW and eight RT.\(^{79}\) According to the BPS (2010) statistics, the population numbered 1,614, of which more than 80 per cent (1,316) were Muslims, followed by Protestants (269), and Catholics (29). The Christian villagers were concentrated only in RT 8. The village has a

\(^{78}\) Gambus musical group is a small ensemble. Th music features Arab-derived instruments, such as gambus lute (Berg 2011: 207).

\(^{79}\) RW = administrative unit under village administration consisting of several RT; RT = neighbourhood unit consisting of several households.
kindergarten, TK Nur Hasanah, and elementary school, SD Persitim, both of which are Islamic schools. SD Persitim is the second oldest Islamic school in Kupang, founded during the Dutch rule in 1948 by an Islamic organisation Persitim, in which a number of Hadhrami figures actively took part. Bintang Timur (Eastern Star), the first Islamic organisation in Kupang, opened the first Islamic school, Al Chairiyah, in Kampung Airmata in 1935. SD Persitim occupied the land that previously belonged to Al Chairiyah, which was closed due to lack of funds. During my fieldwork, there were no higher-level education facilities in the kampung. Students were usually enrolled to higher schools outside the kampung.

Even though Kampung Airmata is located near the seashore, fishing is not the primary occupation for the villagers. Government statistics (BPS 2010) recorded that almost 200 people work in the government sector, including in the police and military, while the rest have occupations including fishermen, drivers, teachers and lecturers, technicians, middlemen, and in the private sector. Small enterprises seemed to be flourishing. Along Trikora Street, which connects the kampung and Kupang city, there were around 100 small shops (warung) selling groceries and daily requirements. A number of female informants owned these shops and occasionally interviews took place there. One shop owner told me that she was able to generate approximately IDR1,000,000 (AUD100) in
profit per month, which was slightly higher than the minimum wage for formal sector workers.

Burhan Mustafa, my informant, explained that the first generation of Muslims in Airmata came from Menanga village on Solor Island. Menanga village was not a member of the Watan Lima coalition. He spoke of how in the 18th century Menanga played an important role as a hub of sandalwood trade connecting Timor and the Islamic Kingdom of Ternate. The Portuguese were the only European power involved in this trading before the Dutch drove them out. When the Dutch were in control, trading activities in Menanga began to decline. This triggered migration to Kupang.

One of the bands of migrants from Menanga was led by Sya’ban bin Sanga who, together with his family and around 40 followers, arrived in Kupang Bay in about 1780. Included in this group were Sya’ban’s father Imam Sanga, Sya’ban’s wife, and their three children Birando, Abdullah, and Bovek. They settled and established a small prayer house (langgar) at Batubesi (currently known as Fatubesi). The langgar moved several times before settling permanently in its current location by the side of the Kali Kaca. It was first displaced when the Dutch built a residential compound for government employees. In 1805, due to the expansion of the Kupang Resident’s office, the langgar was moved near to Kali Dendeng River. Unfortunately, this location was again taken over by the government to build a detention facility. Raja Am Abi, a Christian ruler (raja), who had maintained a good relationship with the Muslims, donated 2 hectares for a new location for the mosque. The construction began in 1806 and was completed six years later. The first Friday prayers in this mosque were held in 1812.

Sya’ban bin Sanga, leader of the first generation of settlers, became the first imam. Two prominent proselytisers, Muhammad Badaruddin (from Palembang in Sumatra) and Syeekh Abdurrahim (a Hadhrami from Bengal who had come by way of Sumbawa), helped Sanga in religious dakwah (proselytising) (Goro 1977). In later years Airmata became home for the exiles from the failed anti-Dutch struggles in Java and Sumatra. Prince Ali Basyah Mahmud Gondokusumo and Raden Sutomo, followers of Prince Diponegoro the leader of the Java War (1825-1830), were exiled there. Dipati Amir

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80 Solorese Muslims, who were opposed to the Portuguese, cooperated with the Dutch, and many of them fought on the Dutch side against the Portuguese in later years on Timor (Leirissa et al. 1983).
81 Interview with Haji Abdurachim Mustafa. Widiyatmika (2004) suggests a different version, that the mosque was built in 1818. See Sejarah Islam di Nusa Tenggara Timur (The History of Islam in East Nusa Tenggara).
Bahren and Hamzah Bahren, leaders of the Mountain Miras rebellion on Bangka Island in Sumatra, were exiled in Airmata in 1860 before eventually residing in Bonipoi.

The Hadhrami migration to Kupang occurred in the early 1900s, but Arabic traders from Java were said to have visited Kupang as early as 1812 (Goro 1977). In the second part of the 19th century, the numbers increased significantly. One important figure was Syarif Abdurrahman bin Abubakar Al gadrie. He was the descendant of the Sultan of Pontianak in West Kalimantan. Syarif arrived in Sumba for business, where he became successful in trading horses. He was given permission from the Dutch authority to establish Waingapu Port. The Dutch sent him into exile to Airmata in 1877, where he died in 1897, and was buried at Batu Kadera cemetery (Widiyatmika 2004). Haji Usman Al gadrie (born 1936), a fifth-generation descendant now lives in Airmata as a Qur’an teacher.

**Dyadic Structure of Kampung Imam and Kampung Raja**

Since the establishment of the *kampung*, Sya’ban bin Sanga and Badaruddin came together to form a joint leadership of the community. The alliance between these two figures gave birth to the formation of Kampung Imam (which signifies religious leadership) and Kampung Raja (which signifies customary authority). In this regards, the term *kampung* does not refer to a geographic entity, but denotes a community whose members are determined on the basis of ancestry. The head of Kampung Imam automatically becomes *imam* (the leader of the mosque). This position is a hereditary title given only to male heirs of Sya’ban bin Sanga, especially from his first son Birando. If the privileged person is not available for any reason, the position may be given to male heirs of Sanga’s second or third sons (Abdullah and Bovek).

The descendants of Badaruddin, on the other hand, belong to Kampung Raja. The rest of the population, including Muslim migrants or newcomers to the settlement in later

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82 Syarif Abdurrahman bin Abubakar Al gadrie was born in Pontianak in 1807. He was among the fourth generation of descendants of Hussein Al gadrie (from Trim, Hadramawt), the founder of Pontianak Sultanate. In Sumba, Syarif took four wives. His wives were among the first converts in Sumba (Widiyatmika 2008).

83 Fox (1977) writes that Syarif Al gadrie was sent to exile to Airmata because he was implicated in continuing the slave trade via Ende. Syarief Al gadrie, who had been a personal representative of Kupang Resident DJ van den Dungen Gronovius on Ende since 1838, married the daughter of one of the leading nobles at Ende. Supported by Gronovius, he established Waingapu Port on Sumba and exported horses from 1841. Following his exile, the horse trade was passed into the hands of his family who remained in Waingapu (Fox 1977: 171).
period, are also considered members of Kampung Raja. The head of Kampung Raja is chosen from male descendants of Muhammad Badaruddin. If an eligible person is unavailable, another person may be elected in an acting position until Badaruddin descendants become available. The head of Kampung Raja is considered as the custodian of customary practices and automatically becomes the deputy *imam*.

This dyadic structure involves allocation of certain roles in the public domain. Kampung Imam and Kampung Raja have different sets of authorities and responsibilities in the conduct of prayer, life passage rituals, and Islamic festivals. As a general rule, *imam* as the head of Kampung Imam leads the prayers and religious festivals. Head of Kampung Raja is in charge of lifecycle rituals such as celebrations of births, circumcisions, marriages, and deaths. The head of Kampung Raja usually also acts as *mudin* who leads the washing of dead bodies. At circumcisions, he is the *dukun khitan* (traditional circumcision expert). In wedding ceremonies, he is invited to witness the marriage contract. In the past, the head of Kampung Raja was authorised to represent the community in dealing with the colonial government in non-religious matters. The dyadic structure of Airmata has changed over time due to external factors. After independence, the role of the head of Kampung Raja in representing the village has declined and has been replaced by the village-level apparatus under the Indonesian Government. However, duties as deputy *imam* and in lifecycle rituals remain.

On certain religious occasions, Kampung Imam and Kampung Raja are obliged to work together. On Maulid, the *imam* leads the whole ceremony, including the public reading from the book of Barzanji, while Kampung Raja takes the lead role in preparatory works, including cleaning the venue and preparing *siripuang* (an ornament to be carried out in the Maulid procession). On Nisfu Sya’ban these two entities also have complementary roles. In Kampung Airmata, Nisfu Sya’ban is performed twice. The major occasion takes place on the 15th of the month of Sya’ban, hosted by Kampung Imam. The second ceremony, hosted by Kampung Raja, is a minor one on the 25th. In the month of Ramadan there is a tradition of *tadarus*. From the 1st to the 15th day of Ramadan, Kampung Imam organises the *tadarus* and provides meals and refreshment. In the second part of the month, *tadarus* becomes the responsibility of Kampung Raja. Breaking the fast ceremony is also conducted twice. Kampung Imam becomes the host

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84 *Tadarus*: (Qur’an recitation) takes place after *traweh* (nightly prayers performed during Ramadan), and is done every night during Ramadan. It concludes with an inauguration after the participants complete the recitation of the whole Qur’an (*khataman*).
on the 25th day of Ramadan, while Kampung Raja hosts a similar occasion on the 27th. Figure 4.2 summarises the different features of Kampung Imam and Kampung Raja in a number of religious and social aspects.

The local narratives concerning the Imam states that Sya’ban bin Sanga as the first Imam deemed (mewakafkan) that his family would be responsible for maintaining the mosque. Sya’ban bin Sanga decided that his first son Birando and his descendants would become the Imam; his second son Abdullah and his descendants would become

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85 The night of the Lailatul Qadar (the night of power), marked the revelation of the first Surah of the Qur’an. Muslims expect blessings on this special night by reciting Qur’an and observing recommended prayer at midnight.
the mosque’s official preacher for Friday prayers (*khatib*); and his third son Bovek and his descendants would become *bilal* (announcer of the call for prayer) and the official who looks after the mosque.

Throughout the history of the mosque, the position of *imam* has been in the hands of Sya’ban bin Sanga’s male heirs. The names of *imam* are written down at the front of the wooden podium (*mihrab*) of the mosque. The names of the *imam*, as seen at the podium, are below.

**Figure 18 Names of Imam on the Podium of Airmata Mosque**

This was written on the podium:

Names of *Imam* of Airmata Mosque since 1812:

1. Sya’ban bin Sanga
2. Birando bin Sya’ban
3. Ali bin Birando
4. Djamaludin
5. Abdul Gani
6. Tahir bin Ali bin Birando
7. Haji Birando bin Tahir (was born in 1963)

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86 The podium was made in 1812 and is still kept at the mosque, but can no longer be used because of its age.
The new name of the mosque, Al Baitul Qadim, was proclaimed in 1994. The list of the names of *imam* was signed by Haji Birando bin Tahir (the seventh *imam*) on 12 Rabiul Awal 1426 (or 22 April 2005).

There were periods where a legitimate heir of Sanga was not available to become an *imam*. On these occasions, an acting *imam* (*imam perantara*) was chosen from Sanga’s female heirs. One example was Alidin, who served as an acting *imam* after Birando bin Sya’ban (the third *imam*) passed away. His name as acting *imam* was not written down at the podium. There was, however, another version of the names of *imam*. Badan Agama (a body of leadership consisting of *imam* and his staff, or known as Takmir Masjid in other mosques) of the Al Baitul Qadim Mosque issued a decree stating that the names of the *imam* are as follows:

- Imam Sya’ban (1806)
- Imam Birando bin Sya’ban
- Imam Ali Birando
- Imam Djamaluddin
- Imam Tahir bin Ali Birando
- Imam Birando bin Tahir (passed away 16 March 2006)
- Imam Abdurachim bin Jamaluddin Mustafa (inaugurated on 16 Sya’ban 1433 H or 18 August 2008).

Haji Abdurachim Mustafa himself signed this decree on 22 February 2012. The names of *imam* in this decree are different to those on the podium. The name of Abdul Gani was not listed in the decree. The issuance of this decree was part of a crisis in the leadership of Kampung Imam as Haji Abdurachim Mustafa put his name on the decree as the seventh *imam*.

The crisis began in March 2006 when Haji Birando bin Tahir (born in 1963, the sixth *imam* based on the list on the podium) passed away. Muslims in Kampung Airmata saw him as a charismatic figure. He died of illness at a very young age (43 years old). His son, Muhammad Devghan Ali Birando, was then only three. When I was doing my fieldwork, he was still studying in an Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) at Gontor, East Java. Based on the heredity principle observed by descendants of Sanga, the young Birando is the most legitimate person to become *imam*. He is expected to take up the position when he reaches 17 or has completed his education.
When Haji Birando bin Tahir passed away, Haji Abdurachim Mustafa was the only deputy imam. Haji Abdurachim Mustafa is related to Birando because his mother is the younger sister of Tahir bin Ali Birando. In other words, he is the cousin of the late imam (Haji Birando bin Tahir). The head of Kampung Raja, who is ex officio deputy imam, happened to be vacant too. The decree, signed by Haji Abdurachim Mustafa himself, justified his appointment as the new imam. When questions were raised on this decree, Haji Abdurachim Mustafa claimed in a public meeting that before Haji Birando bin Tahir passed away he had personally asked him to become an imam, not just a deputy. The supporters of Haji Abdurachim Mustafa believed his claim and accepted his leadership. They argued that Haji Abdurachim Mustafa was the right person. He has a proven track record in dedicating his life to the mosque, is a Gontor Pesantren graduate, has been active in the local branch of NU, and is well connected to this organisation. These people were convinced that the vast majority of Muslims in Airmata supports the appointment of Haji Abdurachim Mustafa.

Meanwhile, others thought that a personal request from the late Haji Birando bin Tahir could not justify his appointment. They insisted that Sanga’s heirs should have conducted a meeting to determine who should be the acting imam through deliberation. Deliberation is important because there were a number of people eligible as acting imam due to the familial link to Birando from the female line. Some informants told me that the disagreement between these two parties triggered an open conflict. I met some informants who perceived that Haji Abdurachim Mustafa’s leadership was less accommodating to the aspiration of Muslims in the kampung, in comparison to the late imam. They said that Haji Abdurachim Mustafa was unable to build consensus and continued to make controversial decisions. For example, he appointed temporary traweh imam to help officiating traweh prayers without consultation with members of the congregation.

Despite disagreement from some members of the congregation, Haji Abdurachim Mustafa moved quickly to consolidate his power. He appointed three more deputies to help with his tasks: Ahmad Weru Dista (a Savunese, newly elected head of Kampung Raja), Saleh Laudu (a Bugis), and Ahmad Alidin (descendant of Birando from the female line, previously acted as the mosque’s bilal). Unfortunately after a while Saleh Laudu and Ahmad Weru Dista could not fulfil their tasks due to personal reasons. In practice, Haji Abdurachim Mustafa and Ahmad Alidin were in charge of almost all aspects of rituals and festivals.
Haji Abdurachim Mustafa also elected the *khatib*. The mosque had five *khatib*, whose task was to deliver the sermon at Friday prayers. In the past, only the descendants of Syaban bin Sanga’s second son Abdullah could become a *khatib*. However, for unspecified reasons, the tradition was changed and the responsibility as *khatib* was delegated to the descendants of Badarudin (the first head of Kampung Raja). Since the 1970s this position has been open to any Muslims who are qualified, as long as both head of Kampung Imam and Kampung Raja endorse the person (Goro 1977: 92-93). However, the mosque is not open to receiving *khatib* from external institutions, including from the Office of the Religious Affairs of Kupang Municipality. The five *khatib* that Haji Abdurachim elected were: Zainudin Saleh, Rachmat Beleng, Syaifudin, Bau Amin, and Ambarak Bajher. According to some informants, at one Friday prayers, a *khatib* in his sermon mentioned that Muslims should celebrate Maulid in a very simple way and not waste a lot of money. According to the informants, Haji Abdurachim Mustafa was very upset hearing this and fired the *khatib*. When another two *khatib* resigned as a sign of protest, Haji Abdurachim Mustafa did not offer any reconciliation. Instead, he replaced them with his own men and invited additional *khatib* from outside the *kampung*. I noticed that these additional *khatib* were Hadhrami, such as Ahmad Sayid Hamud Alkatiri and Habib Abdussalam Alhinduan. At some Friday prayer occasions, Abdurachim Mustafa became the *khatib* himself.

The conflict entered a new phase when the Mosque Foundation, Yayasan Al Baitul Qadim, intervened. The Foundation, chaired by the younger brother of Haji Abdurachim Mustafa, Burhan Mustafa, issued a number of letters in 2010 and 2011. In one letter, it requested Mustafa to organise a reconciliation meeting, inviting all parties. The Mosque Foundation proposed that one item on the agenda was to deliberately choose an acting *imam*. In another letter the Foundation went further by giving a warning to Haji Abdurachim Mustafa to return his mandate to members of the congregation. In the last letter, Haji Abdurachim Mustafa was even fired by the Foundation. Haji Abdurachim Mustafa ignored these letters and hired lawyers to help him. In a press conference, the lawyers stated that Burhan Mustafa’s claim on the leadership of Foundation was illegal, because his mandate as chairperson of the Foundation had expired in March 2009. Haji Abdurachim Mustafa also declared his plan to form a team to dissolve the Foundation, take over its assets, and select a new
The conflicting parties seemed to loose an opportunity for reconciliation. The Foundation refused to be dissolved and made an accusation that Haji Abdurachim Mustafa intended to take over the ownership of the mosque, by changing the land certificate into his name. Burhan Mustafa then reported Haji Abdurachim Mustafa to the police. The case escalated into a legal dispute.

When I completed my fieldwork, the dispute had not been settled. Haji Abdurachim Mustafa, in a number of interviews, insisted that he respect the Solorese tradition that only Sanga’s male heirs have the right to become imam. He admitted that he never claimed the position of imam, but intended to help the mosque in the capacity as an acting imam until a permanent solution could be found. Despite this controversy, Haji Abdurachim Mustafa remained in his position as an acting imam. Enjoying support from Remaja Masjid (Mosque Youth Organisation), he was able to mobilise necessary human resources to conduct large celebrations of Maulid in 2011 and 2012, and Ramadan in 2011, to demonstrate that under his leadership the role of the mosque in fulfilling religious tasks continued uninterrupted. In the absence of a conclusive solution, some of his rivals remained loyal to the village mosque and came to observe prayers and to participate in religious activities. But some decided to attend prayers, especially Friday prayers, at other mosques, such as the Kupang Grand Mosque.

Kampung Raja also suffered a crisis when in 2009 the former head of Kampung Raja, Hasan Badaruddin, passed away. The crisis emerged because his two sons were not willing to take up their father’s position because they were living in Jakarta. However, compared to Kampung Imam, the solution to this was less problematic. The acting imam Haji Abdurachim Mustafa appointed Ahmad Weru Dista as the acting head of Kampung Raja. The appointment of Ahmad Weru Dista, who was born in Airmata from Savunese parents, did not trigger any complaints. He had a reputation as dukun khitan and mudin. His skills fitted perfectly with his new responsibility as acting head of Kampung Raja, particularly with regard to lifecycle rituals.

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87 ‘Remaja, Pemuda, dan Warga Dukung Sepenuhnya Imam Masjid Airmata’ (The Youth and the Community Fully Support Imam of Airmata Mosque) at www.voa-islam.com (29 November 2011).
The official name of the village mosque is Masjid Al Baitul Qadim, meaning ‘the first house of God’. Located at Trikora Street, it is popularly known as Masjid Airmata (Airmata Mosque). Built in 1806, it is considered to be the oldest mosque in Kupang. The mosque was renovated and extended into a two-storey building in 1994 to accommodate the growing number of Muslims. The then Minister of Social Affairs Mrs Inten Suweno inaugurated the new mosque on 8 February 1994, accompanied by Governor Major General Herman Musakabe.

The Muslim community in Kampung Airmata is of Aswaja tradition. As strongly emphasised by Haji Abdurachim Mustafa in a number of interviews, Airmata Mosque positions itself as ‘the defender of Aswaja’ (benteng Aswaja). Islamic rituals in Airmata Mosque are essentially in line with the teaching of NU and Syafi’i School of Islamic jurisprudence. He stressed that the mission as the defender of Aswaja aimed at protecting Muslims from the negative influences of liberal and radical Islam. He told me there are two tasks for Muslims in Airmata to preserve Sanga’s legacy: first, to ensure that the mosque is led by and is taken care of by Sanga’s descendants; and second, to ensure that the mosque fulfils its mission to sustain Aswaja tradition. Both Kampung Imam and Kampung Raja implement this mission through the organisation of the eight most important occasions in a full cycle of the Islamic calendar (Figure 20).

In addition to these two entities, Majelis Taklim (religious learning forum) both for men and women in the village also play an important role in the preservation of Aswaja tradition. Abdurachim was the person who formed Majelis Taklim Umul Mu’minin in 1980. The Majelis Taklim performs recitation of tahlil, and utterance of doa selamat (a prayer to express gratitude for blessings from Allah on auspicious occasions such as
graduation and circumcision). Monthly gatherings at the houses of the members are scheduled. In Ramadan they perform a complete recitation of the Qur’an (*khataman*) and dedicate the rewards (*pahala*) to their family members who have already passed away. The Majelis Taklim Nurul Jadidah, for women, also has its regular performance of *tahlilan* and the reading of Surah Yasin every Thursday night at the mosque. These sets of rituals mark the identity of Airmata Mosque as ‘the defender of Aswaja’.

In addition to the annual Islamic festivals, the following Aswaja traditions are maintained. *Adzan* (call to prayer at prescribed times) is recited twice before the weekly Friday prayers. The first *adzan* is to summon worshippers to the mosque, while the second is a sign that the *khotbah* (sermon) is about to begin. The sermon is delivered by a *khatib*, who holds a wooden stick during the speech. Another important Aswaja tradition relates to rituals concerning death and mourning, which involve the conduct of *tahlilan* at certain times as a means to devote *amal* (pious acts) on behalf of the deceased. Fasting month and the celebration of Idul Fitri are filled with Aswaja rituals, including the observance of a 20-cycle *traweh* prayer and grave visitation. In the following section I will describe the conduct of some lifecycle rituals and Islamic festivals in accordance with Aswaja tradition in Kampung Airmata.

**Figure 20 Islamic Festivals in Kampung Airmata**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Months of the Islamic Calendar</th>
<th>Festivals held by Muslims in Kampung Airmata</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Muharram</td>
<td>1st Muharram (Islamic New Year) and 10th Muharram (Assyura fasting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Safar</td>
<td>Annual communal bath of Safar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rabiulawal</td>
<td>12th Rabiulawal: Maulid Nabi (the birthday of Prophet Muhammad).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rabiulakhir</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Jumadilawal</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Jumadilakhir</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Rajab</td>
<td>27th Rajab: Isra Mi’raj (celebration of the mystical journey of the Prophet, marking the beginning of obligatory daily prayers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sya’ban</td>
<td>15th Sya’ban: Nisfu Sya’ban (in Javanese this month is also called Ruwah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ramadan</td>
<td>Recitation of Qur’an (<em>tadarus</em>) in the whole month of fasting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lifecycle Rituals in Kampung Airmata

Circumcision

In Kampung Airmata circumcision is obligatory for male and female Muslims, either young girls or boys and adult converts. This ritual is an important mark of Islamic identity, as it demonstrates the important concept of cleanliness for a Muslim to come before God. Female circumcision is performed with a degree of secrecy. It is done at the same time as a hair-shaving (akekah) ceremony when a girl is 40 days old. If the parents cannot afford to hold akekah for a baby girl, the circumcision can be postponed until when she is four to five years old. If done separately from akekah, the ceremony is simplified, and is attended by core family members and close neighbours. Akekah can also be held later when the girl has reached adulthood. After the circumcision, the father says a prayer for her wellbeing. Unlike lavish circumcision ceremonies for boys, the ceremony for girls is usually a simple one.

Ahmad Weru Dista, acting head of Kampung Raja is a dukun khitan who conducts circumcision for boys. Traditional circumcision is done with a horn tip of a cow and a knife, which is very similar to a razor. Usually the boys’ parents do not pay money, but give staples (such as cassava and corn) and chicken as compensation. Ahmad Weru Dista told me that nowadays the number of dukun khitan in Kupang has been decreasing because people prefer to use medical practitioners. He realised that the traditional mode of circumcision would be difficult to sustain in the future. However, some segments of the community still opt for traditional circumcision. Ahmad Weru Dista had been teaching his son-in-law the necessary skills for a traditional circumcision, expecting that he would become his replacement. His son-in-law usually joined in every time Ahmad Weru Dista received an invitation as dukun khitan.

In Kampung Airmata, circumcision is also a religious obligation for adult women converting to Islam,\(^88\) part of the obligatory ceremonies of entry into Islam.\(^89\) Unlike

\(^{88}\) In Kampung Oesapa, a predominantly Bugis Muslim village in Kupang, female circumcision is not required as part of a ceremonial entry into Islam for converts (see Chapter Five).
circumcision for males, which can be done by dukun or modern physicians, circumcision for females is only done by a female dukun. Halimah Duru has been practising as a female dukun since 2006, not long after converting to Islam. She shared her story of when she was circumcised following her conversion to Islam. A female dukun merely cut off a very small part of her clitoris. The blood flowed from the wound but she could walk normally within 10 minutes of having the procedure: ‘Overall I thought that the circumcision did not do any harm to me. After being circumcised, I felt that I became completely clean to become a Muslim.’

Having been circumcised as an adult herself and once having seen the procedure, she claims to have understood and mastered circumcision procedures for women. When it done to a little girl, the mother or close female family members accompanied her. The mother was asked to keep the girl calm by chanting shalawat or simply having a chat with her. While the girl was engaged in a conversation with the mother, the dukun would quickly circumcise her with scissors, which has been sterilised in boiling water and wrapped in a cloth that has been washed in 70 per cent alcohol liquid. She emphasised the importance of completing the circumcision as quickly as possible.

Siti Hatijah, another female dukun, explained the meaning of female circumcision for Muslims in Airmata. She said female circumcision shows that Islam gives equal opportunity for men and women to become clean before Allah. She added, ‘Basically Islam acknowledges that women have a quality of being worthy of honour and female circumcision is a way of respecting their honourable position.’

Citing Schrike (1922), Feillard and Marcus (1998) explain that in the second half of the 19th century female circumcision was found in three locations in Lesser Sunda Islands: Karangasem (Bali), Alor, and Pantar. In Karangasem, baby girls were circumcised at the age of about three months, while in Alor and Pantar the girls were older and they were requested to personally give a present to the dukun the next day while they were recovering. On these two islands, adult men converting to Islam were circumcised, but female converts were not. This practice spread to other regions, including Kupang, in accordance with the spread of Islam.

**Wedding Ceremonies**

Wedding ceremonies begin when representatives of the groom’s family pay a visit to

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89 Other ceremonies include reciting the confession of faith before a panel of mosque officials and witnesses, and taking a bath as a cleansing ritual.
the house of the bride to express their intention to propose to the girl on behalf of the boy. Usually it is a senior member of the groom’s extended family, but not his parents, who come to the first meeting. It is a symbolic step since usually the prospective couples are already aware of the planned engagement. In the second meeting the two families negotiate gifts for the bride and the amount of money to be paid by the groom’s family to cover the wedding expenses. On a mutually agreed date, the groom’s family comes back again to present the gift and the money. Both parties then negotiate the date and time of the akad nikah (Islamic marriage ceremony). Saturdays are the most common day, while popular times for akad are at 10am, at 3pm, or after the sunset prayers. In this meeting, bridewealth is also agreed upon. The bride is allowed to ask for whatever kind of bridewealth she wishes, either in the form of money, jewellery, or gold, or a combination of these. Items needed for worship are also usually added to the list. Finally, detailed plans of the akad nikah and reception are laid out.

I will now describe my observation of a wedding in the Abdullah family in Airmata, which took place on a Saturday. One week before the akad, a wedding stylist was hired to redecorate the bride’s bedroom and design new bed nets (kelambu). This step is called pica kelambu (putting on the bed nets). The bride’s family hosted the pre-wedding party and akad nikah. Since many families in Airmata are related to each other through kinship or marriage, a wedding committee was formed entirely on a voluntary basis. Women were mainly involved in cooking meals and making cakes. A catering service is rarely needed in weddings in Kupang. A typical wedding menu involves cooking almost all parts of the cow’s intestines with vinegar (this is the same as in Sumatra), as well as the other meals such as kebuli rice (fragrant lamb rice), fried goat, and meat satay. ‘The older the cow, the tastier the offal will be,’ said an informant.

One day before the wedding, after the late afternoon prayers, a man called male neighbours and relatives to gather by hitting a gong. They were summoned to perform berdiri tenda (erecting a tent), which comprises activities such as cleaning the front yard of the house, erecting a tent for the wedding, and playing gambus music as well as preparing chairs and a variety of decorations made of young coconut leaves. Later in the

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90 An informant told me that in the past, after being proposed to, a bride was not allowed to meet the groom until the Islamic marriage ceremony (akad nikah).

91 Gifts may be simple and practical, such as home appliances and necessities such as makeup sets, underwear, shoes, or a handbag. Well-to-do families usually offer livestock, either goats or cows. If the gift is to be goats, the minimum quantity is three. As for cattle, one is sufficient but an older and bigger cow is preferred. The livestock will be slaughtered and cooked for the wedding reception.
evening, everyone was ready for a pre-wedding party, known as Dana-dana Night.\(^{92}\) The groom’s family had hired a gambus music group as the entertainment.\(^{93}\) The singer sang Arabic and Malay songs containing pantun (poems), called ‘songs of the desert’ (lagu-lagu padang pasir). Most of them were love songs to cheer the couple and to entertain guests. Refreshments were served while the guests were enjoying the music. After a number of love songs, male guests came down to the floor to dance in pairs. The dance is called zapin dance. They danced until late in the night. Only men were seen on the dance floor.\(^ {94}\) At some point, the groom was also asked to show his ability to dance zapin. The bride stayed in her bedroom, accompanied by her female friends and cousins. Incense was burned in the room. Flower patterns were painted on the bride’s palms and feet using henna. She could only enjoy the music and songs from the room while chatting with the other girls.

**Figure 21 The Dana-dana Night**

The party reached its climax at around 11pm. Some members of the bride’s family placed a carpet in the middle of the crowd. The groom was requested to stand at the centre. Around 10 men came and held the carpet, lifted the carpet up together, and threw the groom in the air. They repeated this a number of times, while the music and songs were still playing. The groom was looking nervous but had to accept this

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\(^{92}\) Berg (2011: 210) also observed Dana-dana performances in Gorontalo, North Sulawesi, especially in government-sponsored cultural performances as a form of budaya daerah (regional culture), not in wedding ceremonies.

\(^{93}\) Instruments used in the performance were mainly percussion such as gambus, tam-tam, marawis, hijir, as well as a violin. The male singer and male musicians were wearing Islamic clothes and fez. The tradition of gambus performance on the night before the wedding is sustained among families of Hadhrami, Solorese, and Alorese origin. Other ethnic groups, such as the Bugis, do not have Dana-dana Night. Instead, Bugis couples would conduct Qur’an recitation (khataman) on the night before akad nikah (see Chapter Five).

\(^{94}\) In Airmata, only male guests were dancing zapin, but when I attended a Dana-dana Night at Kampung Bonipoi, I saw some female guests dancing in pairs too.
challenge. This was a mental test for the groom, and the guests were enthusiastically giving him support. Afterwards, female members of the bride’s family put henna on the groom’s toenails. The grandmother, the mother, and the aunties took turns in putting on the henna. This procession, which symbolises acceptance from the bride’s family, concluded the Dana-dana Night. At the very end of the Dana-dana Night, a set of janur (decorated young coconut leaves), known as bok by the locals, were installed at the front of the house. Therefore, Dana-dana Night is also known as malam picabok (the night when a bok is placed, indicating that a wedding is taking place in that house the day after).

The Islamic marriage ceremony took place on the next day at 3pm. The host family was chanting shalawat to welcome the groom’s family. The ceremony was conducted in the living room and only close family members and witnesses were permitted to be there. The bride need not be present during the akad and she stayed inside her room. The reading of the book of Barzanji opened the ceremony, and then an official from a Religious Office (penghulu) chaired the ijab kabul (offer and acceptance of vows). Ijab kabul marked the legality of the union according to Islam, but has to be registered legally with the Office of Religious Affairs. The official then delivered a speech, typically emphasising the virtue of marriage and mutual obligations of the newlyweds. After the speech, the bride was asked to come out of her room, to shake hands with the groom and all guests.

Even though the wedding processes had fulfilled the religious requirements and government requirements, there was another adat (customary) requirement that needed to be completed. The groom had to take his parents back to their house. Later in the evening, accompanied by some family members, the bride visited her parents-in-law bringing meals for dinner. After the family dinner, the newlyweds were allowed to go home to the bride’s house as husband and wife. The guests and relatives welcomed the couple at the bride’s house. The last procession occurred when the groom took his wife into the bridal room, he had to give a certain amount of money, in an envelope, to his wife’s aunties. This is a symbol of the groom asking for permission to take the bride into the bedroom. Three days later, doa selamat was performed. The family chanted doa selamat to express gratitude that they have successfully conducted all the required ceremonies and the newlyweds have performed their duties as husband and wife. The couple was requested to wear the same dress as at the akad. Even though doa selamat was performed at the bride’s house, it was the groom’s family who paid for it. The new
couple then delivered a short speech thanking everyone for their contributions. The gratitude could be expressed by giving small gifts, such as sarong or batik, but not money.

**Taking Care of the Dead**

One evening, after completing a congregational prayer to welcome Islamic New Year, a mosque official made an announcement that Bapak Abdullah had passed away. Neighbours were saddened by the news, since only one week earlier that he had hosted a wedding ceremony for his daughter. It is common that if someone dies, mosque officials announce the news of the death through the loudspeakers. The announcement notes who has passed away, their address, and details of the date and time of the funeral prayer (*shalat jenazah*) and interment.

In Islam, burial should be performed at the earliest opportunity. Upon hearing the announcement, relatives, mosque officials, and neighbours—Muslim and Christian alike—gathered at the house of the deceased, which was located near the Airmata village office. Some were talking with the deceased’s family members about the arrangement of the burial, which was planned for the next morning, while others simply sat at the house to provide consolation. At the rear of the house, some women were busy preparing meals, while others were trying to comfort female family members. More mourners came to the house the next morning. A donation box was placed at a corner of the house. Extra chairs were borrowed from the village government office. They put some money into a box; the money was to help the deceased’s family to cover the funeral expenses. Some women offered condolences to comfort the wife and the daughter who were still in mourning. The deceased’s family were repeatedly asked to accept this unfortunate event as God’s will.

I visited the house and sat on a chair on the veranda, by the side of a window of a bedroom. I only found out later that the body was laid out in that room for the washing. At around 10.30am a group of four *mudin* came.95 The daughter, who was crying when I arrived, began to cry more, knowing that the *mudin* had arrived. The arrival of the *mudin* can be a very emotional moment, because it means that the washing would begin shortly and female family members were no longer allowed to stay close to the body. The body was now in the hands of the *mudin*. Male relatives were allowed to help with

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95 Almost every mosque in Kupang has a group of *mudin* who among other things are responsible for washing the dead body. Usually *mudin* comes one hour before the performance of the funeral prayer. A group of *mudin* consists of three to five people.
the washing as a sign of respect for the deceased, but those who did not dare to do so were requested to stay inside the house. From the window, there was a smell of incense to reduce the body odour. When the washing was being performed, water was flowing out of the room through a small canal near my chair. I was overwhelmed as my head was filled with very strong smell of incense combined with the smell of the corpse.

For the washing ritual, a white cloth (kafan) was prepared to wrap the body. The mudin washed the body carefully to remove any unclean material. After the body was dried off and perfumed, the mudin put on the sarong (made from the white cloth) and wrapped the body in the remaining part of the cloth.

A mudin I talked to explained the importance of washing the body prior to the burial. Death is understood as coming back to Allah, therefore dead people must be cleaned properly before going back to Allah. Washing the corpse is the responsibility of all adult Muslims, but not everyone is gifted to become a mudin. It requires skills and a set code of conduct, the most important being the ability to be trusted (amanah) to keep secrets on the state of the corpse. A mudin must respect corpses. He/ she is expected not to show any signs of disgust, such as spitting or throwing up while washing the body. Whatever the condition is, all Muslims deserve the same honour: to be washed properly according to the Islamic teachings before burial. He explained that it was very important that mudin carried out their work with sincere intentions. Mudin are not paid for their service, even though usually the family of the deceased would give them some money to express gratitude:

Merit (pahala) for the mudín’s work is plentiful. But we’ve been warned that that reward is like a mountain of sand. It can grow high, but falls apart easily. The reward is gone if a mudin tells anyone regarding the state of the corpse.

(Interview with Ahmad Weru Dista, 1 August 2011)

The funeral prayer was performed at the mosque. Only men participated in the funeral prayer. The imam led the prayer. One of the relatives told me, ‘It is best if as many people as possible can join the prayer. His soul will be at peace if more Muslims pray for forgiveness.’ The next step was burial. A group of men carried the corpse and walked up to the Batu Kadera Islamic cemetery. The cemetery is located in a hilly area

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96 The cloth is 15 metres long if the deceased is a man, 13 metres for a woman, and 5 metres for a child. It is cut down to make a sarong and fez (or veil for women). For the purpose of washing, two bars of soap and camphor are used. Meanwhile, for the wrapping, the mudin needs one or two bottles of alcohol-free fragrance, two ounces of sandalwood powder for the body, cotton wool to close the ears and nose. Sandalwood powder is optional. During the washing, incense is burned.
on the outskirts of Airmata, and can be reached on foot in around 20 minutes from Airmata Mosque. A number of women joined other mourners at the cemetery. At the very bottom of the grave, a few pieces of bamboo were placed as a foundation. The body was slowly placed into the grave facing west (*kiblat* or direction of prayer). More pieces of bamboo were put above the body, leaving some space between the body and covering.

One of the deceased’s sons entered the grave and moved close to the body and recited *adzan*\(^{97}\) into the man’s ear. An *imam* explained to me that ears are the most sensitive organs. *Adzan* was recited to remind them of the confession of faith (*syahadat*); that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is His messenger. When the burial was completed, *talqin* was recited.

After the evening prayers (at around 8pm) the first night of *tahlilan* began. Respected male guests, such as *imam*, *ustad*, the elderly and close relatives, sat cross-legged on the floor of the living room. Other attendants sat on chairs outside the house. On this occasion incense was burned. The *imam* led the recitation of *tahlil*, Surah Yasin, and other short chapters from the Qur’an. After the recitation, an *ustad* delivered a sermon. The topic was the importance of accepting one’s fate, and obligation for the living to keep praying for the dead (one of the core Aswaja traditions). To conclude the first day of *tahlilan*, a family representative delivered a short speech, expressing gratitude on behalf of the family to all relatives and guests for their kind assistance. He also invited anyone with whom the deceased was indebted to settle the debts. After dinner and refreshments were served, a piece of paper containing pages of the Qur’an was distributed for the guests to recite at home. It was expected that seven days later recitation of all the chosen chapters would be completed.

Aswaja Muslims interpreted the *tahlilan* ritual as a way to help the deceased. After someone dies, the soul is believed to be making a long and difficult journey until the judgement day comes. It is believed that prayers from the living, especially from the deceased’s descendants, are required to prevent the soul from suffering.

In Kampung Airmata *tahlilan* is commonly conducted at the house of the deceased, until the 100th day after the passing, unless the survivors cannot afford it. *Tahlilan* that takes place after the 100 days, for example to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the death, is recommended (*sunnah*). However, in this kampung it is common to

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\(^{97}\) Call for prayer containing the confession of faith. *Adzan* is also recited into the ear of a newborn baby.
perform tahililan for years and years after the death.

**Islamic Festivals in Kampung Airmata**

*Maulid Nabi (the birthday of the Prophet)*

Traditionally in Kupang, Airmata Mosque would begin the festival of Maulid because it is considered as the oldest mosque. On this occasion, imam from the other old kampung Kampung Solor, Kampung Namosain, and Kampung Bonipoi—attend the celebration and will take turns to host Maulid in their kampung mosques in the following days.

In 2011 Maulid fell on 15 February. On the morning of 14 February, I went to Airmata Mosque to observe the preparations. When I arrived, the lower level of the mosque was already full of people. Ahmad Weru Dista supervised the preparatory activities. Some men were cleaning the mosque compound, others were cutting sugar cane and preparing ornaments. Women were cleaning and cutting a variety of fruit and putting them in decorative boxes or wrapping them in plastic bags. Each basket and plastic bag comprises a variety of local fruit, such as oranges, bananas, salak, and sliced sugar cane, which were donated by members of the community. Baskets filled with fruit would be distributed as a gift, symbolising the gratitude of Muslims for the blessing of a good harvest in the dry-land fields. After the late afternoon prayers, women started cutting flowers into small pieces and wrapping them in fabric, into which fragrance was sprayed. They also put coins together with the flowers.

The most important Maulid celebration ornament was siripuang, a small decorative pillar made from a banana tree. A banana tree was cut down and divided into two pieces and each was decorated with flowers, fruit, leaves, and other ornaments. Siripuang symbolises togetherness and mutual collaboration among Muslims. At 8pm, after the opening ceremony, the siripuang was carried in a carnival. Male participants carried the siripuang and baskets of fruit from the house of the late Haji Birando bin Tahir to the mosque, while others played tambourines and recited shalawat. Abdullah Ismail, chairperson of the Maulid committee, explained that in Maulid all Muslims were obliged to recite more shalawat. He said, ‘For every single shalawat that was chanted, Allah will give a reward through the angels with a splash of water to the face of a

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98 Government representatives, including the Kupang Mayor, attended the Maulid and delivered a speech. The Mayor stated that Islamic festivals in Kampung Airmata were cultural assets and were projected as tourist attractions. The government provided financial support for the celebration of Maulid.
Muslim.’ Some informants explained that Muslims in Airmata started to celebrate Maulid festival in 1840.

People entered the mosque and started reciting the book of Barzanji led by Haji Abdurachim Mustafa. Sitting cross-legged, all *imam* (from Kampung Airmata, Kampung Solor, Kampung Bonipoi, and Kampung Namosain) sat in the front row facing the audience. In between the group of *imam* and the attendants, white cloth was laid down. Here they put two *siripuang*, fruit gifts, and burning incense. Many people put bottles of mineral water above the white cloths, around the *siripuang* and incense. Groups of males took turns playing *rebana* and reciting the book of Barzanji.

Children were encouraged to participate in the whole process, even though many fell asleep during the celebration. Women, who sat at the back of the mosque, also recited the book of Barzanji, which continued until midnight. At 12.30am everyone got up and stood in a row, as they would do during a congregational prayer, while they continued chanting *shalawat*. Sleeping children were asked to wake up and join the ritual. The *imam* began to push the smoke of the incense into their faces, followed by all those in attendance. Then, flowers and coins were distributed. Participants took the flowers and coins with them to their homes and kept them in the closet. Those who had placed bottled water took them back and kept them. The water was believed to receive the prayers and could be used to heal sickness. The Maulid ceremony ended at 1.30am.

**Figure 22 Maulid celebration in Kampung Airmata**

Banner at the Mosque saying Maintaining the Maulid Tradition at Al Baitul Qadim  
Cutting the Sugar Cane
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Image</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Putting Fruits in the Plastic Bags</td>
<td>![Image of people putting fruits in plastic bags]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting Flowers and Pandan Leaves</td>
<td>![Image of people cutting flowers and pandan leaves]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making the Siripuang</td>
<td>![Image of a Siripuang tree]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siripuang</td>
<td>![Image of a decorated tree with flowers]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayor of Kupang Opened the Maulid Festival</td>
<td>![Image of the mayor opening the festival]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kids Celebrating Maulid</td>
<td>![Image of children celebrating the festival]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nisfu Sya’ban

Nisfu Sya’ban is a rite performed in the middle of the month of Sya’ban to welcome Ramadan. Some informants in Kampung Airmata called it ruwahan (from the word ruwah). Ruwah is the name of the eighth month of the Javanese calendar. It derives from the Arabic word ruh (plural: arwah), which means spirit (Muhaimin 2006: 133; Möller 2007: 269). Muslims in Airmata consider the objective of observing Nisfu Sya’ban is twofold. On the one hand, it is an important moment to prepare oneself to welcome the holiest month of the year, Ramadan. A Muslim should prepare his soul to enter the fasting month, including by settling any pending disputes, cleaning the tombs of one’s parents or dead family members, and also cleaning one’s house. Secondly, the chant also aims to pray for the souls of ancestors.

In Kampung Airmata, ruwahan was performed twice. The first occasion took place at the mosque on the night of the 15th of Sya’ban, hosted by Kampung Imam. It began after the sunset (maghrib) prayers. More than 75 people were in attendance, including men, women, and children. Ahmad Alidin, the deputy imam, led the recitation of Surah Yasin. The Surah, which comprises 83 verses, was recited three times. In between the recitation, prayers were uttered, mainly devoted to the deceased parents and ancestors,
and asking for a strengthened faith and well-being. After completing the recitation, all attendants chanted *tahlil* for the souls of the deceased. The second *ruwahan* took place on the night of 25th of the month, hosted by Kampung Raja at the house of the late head of Kampung Raja, Hasan Badaruddin. It was held before the *maghrib* prayers and observed without the recitation of Surah Yasin.

Muhaimin (2006) asserts that Nisfu Sya'ban relates closely to a belief concerning the effect of fate on life and death. There is a belief among Muslims that names of the living are written on the leaves of the tree of life. On the night of the 15th of the month, the tree of life shudders, causing some leaves to fall. These leaves bear the names of people who will die in the coming year. The rite is intended to ask for safety so dangers can be avoided. Möller (2005a) argues that it is intended as a commemoration of the dead and is reflected in the tradition of praying for the deceased and visiting the graves. In Blora (Central Java) families perform *ruwahan* by praying for the deceased and inviting neighbours and relatives to join the praying. In other towns in Central Java, *ruwahan* is also a big festivity involving outdoor activities such as a carnival, procession, firecrackers, and other entertainment. The core intention is for a Muslim to prepare for the coming of the fasting month.

**Ramadan**

Fasting during Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, is obligatory for Muslims. During Ramadan, Muslims are instructed to avoid food, drink, and sexual relations during the day, from dawn to sunset. In the evening, some time between the evening (*isya*) prayers and dawn, Muslims are summoned to perform recommended prayers called *traweh*, congregationally at the mosque or individually at home. *Traweh* prayers may not be performed outside Ramadan.

In 2011, the government announced the start of Ramadan would fall on 1st August. Muslims in Airmata acted according to the decision and begin to fast on that day. For two weeks (from 2 to 15 August 2011), I stayed with the family of Nur Aini Wahid. I

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99 Exceptions are given to women who are menstruating, women recovering from child-birth bleeding, sick persons, travellers, people who are too old, and children who haven’t reached puberty (Muhaimin 2006: 104).

100 The start and end of Ramadan is determined based on the appearance of the new crescent moon. Muhammadiyah employs the astronomical calculation (*hisab*), while those of traditionalist orientation depend on physical observation (*hilal*). These two groups often come up with different dates which sparks controversy. As the post of the Minister of Religion is traditionally held by a representative of NU (a traditionalist group), the government bases its decision in accordance with the result of *hilal*. Airmata Mosque always follows the traditionalist way.
called her Kak Nur, from the Indonesian word *kakak* (older sister). Kak Nur is a teacher in an Islamic school (*madrasah*) and chair of women’s Majelis Taklim of Airmata. She is a widow who lives with her mother (whom I called Mama), a younger brother, two nieces, and a female colleague teaching at the same school. I was also fasting during Ramadan.

In the evening, some time between *maghrib* and *isya* prayers, from the Airmata Mosque one could hear Haji Abdurachim Mustafa uttering the chant of ‘Ratib al-Haddad’, which was composed by Abdallah bin Alwi al-Haddad. Some men who had finished the congregational *maghrib* prayers at the mosque remained inside, singing the chant along with the *imam*. They were waiting for the time for *isya* and subsequent *traweh* prayers. Kak Nur’s family members were ready to go to the congregational *traweh* at the mosque. After performing ablutions, these women, who were all wearing *mukena* (a special dress that covers the head and half of the body or sometimes the whole body, worn for daily prayers), walked to the mosque. Nur’s younger brother, then in his 20s, went to another mosque near the Governor’s office. He said that 20 cycles of *traweh* was too long and preferred the eight cycles of *traweh*. Mama did not participate due to her poor health. In her 70s, she preferred to stay at home reciting the Qur’an.

After the *isya* prayers, more and more people came to the mosque. It seemed that many people had already performed *isya* prayers individually at home before coming to join the *traweh* prayers. The *traweh* started at 8.05pm. The mosque was divided into two parts: the front was the male domain and the rear was for women. Male worshippers formed five lines (*saf*), each comprising 25-28 people. The number of women attending *traweh* was roughly the same as the men. They also formed five lines. I noticed that some people left after completing eight cycles. Haji Abdurachim Mustafa led the first 10 cycles, then his deputy replaced him in the second part. During Ramadan, as mentioned earlier, two deputies were chosen to assist the *imam*. The prayers were completed at around 8.50pm, including a three cycles of *witir* prayers, again led by Haji Abdurachim Mustafa. Children usually took a break after the first 10 cycles. They merely sat at the back or played outside and came back only to observe *witir* prayers. After *witir*, these children approached Haji Abdurachim Mustafa asking him to sign an activity booklet assigned to them by their schoolteachers.

Dozens of men and women stayed at the mosque for Qur’an recitation (*tadarus*). The number of participants varied every night, but was usually around 12-13 people. As discussed earlier, Kampung Imam and Kampung Raja took turns to host *tadarus*. That
night, Kampung Imam was in charge. Representatives of Kampung Imam, comprising three households every evening, prepared tea and snacks. Women conducted *tadarus* at the rear of the mosque, whereas men occupied the front hall. The Qur’an is divided into 30 *juz* (sections) and these groups recited 2 *juz* every evening. In the whole month, they were able to complete the recitation (*khataman*) twice. It is important to note that *tadarus* participants were not necessarily those who had mastered the ability to read the Qur’an. Those who were still learning were also encouraged to participate. Occasionally skilled readers helped the beginners to correct their pronunciation. *Tadarus* finished at around 11.15pm.

In the village, enthusiasm to actively participate in various Ramadan rituals was obvious. Men and women, children and adults, showed up at the mosque to perform *traweh* prayers. *Tadarus* was performed every day, even though there were fewer participants than in *traweh* prayers. My informants said at the start of Ramadan the mosque was well attended and packed with people. The participation slightly decreased in the middle of the month, but packed up again as the end of the holy month was approaching. Muslims consider the fasting month of Ramadan as a truly special occasion. They believe that in this holy month good deeds would be granted greater *pahala*, up to 70 times more than in other months. The *pahala* to recite one verse of Qur’an was equal to recitation of the whole book in non-fasting months. They believe that Ramadan was the best opportunity to earn extra *pahala*. Mustafa explained that observance of obligatory and recommended prayers during Ramadan receives multiple *pahala*. The rewards will be of help in the afterlife.

Every day before dawn, mosque officials were playing compact discs containing recitation of Qur’anic verses over the mosque loudspeakers. This is a way of waking people up for early meals (*sahur*) before fasting begins. The volume was set at a moderate level. In Kampung Airmata it was not common to see a gang of youths going around the neighbourhood shouting ‘*Sahur, Sahur!*’, while playing traditional bamboo gongs (*kentongan*) commonly seen in Jakarta. I found that sound from the CD was peaceful and not noisy. Mama patiently woke her granddaughters up for *sahur* meals at around 4am. Children usually had light meals while watching TV.\(^{101}\) The family did not usually cook for *sahur* meals, instead, they served the leftover dishes made for breaking

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\(^{101}\) During *sahur* time, TV stations in Indonesia aired a variety of programs containing religious content and comedy. *Kultum* (*’kuliah tujuh menit’* meaning ‘seven minutes preaching’) delivered by prominent preachers is a typical religious program during the fasting month.
the fast the day before. They finished _sahur_ meals before _adzan_ summoned by the _bilal_ to attend dawn prayers at the mosque. The number of villagers who participated in dawn prayers at the mosque was usually not as many as at _isya_ and _traweh_ prayers. There were usually two lines of men and only one line of women. After performing dawn prayers, many went out _jogging_ or did some other kind of exercise, as they normally did in non-fasting months. In the afternoon, another attraction in Ramadan was the presence of food stalls near the Grand Mosque of Kupang. Famous among the locals, this establishment was known as JAM (Jajanan Airmata or Airmata snacks) and opened everyday from 4.30-7pm. There were up to 20 stalls offering a variety of local foods and snacks.

During the fasting month, children attending public schools attended as usual, while students at _madrasah_ were on holiday for the whole month. However, the students were not really having a one-month break. They still went to school from 9am to 1pm to attend short courses on religious subjects (_pesantren kilat_). Kak Nur went to school as per her regular hours to teach at _pesantren kilat_. Prior to that, she spent one hour every morning teaching the Qur’an to a number of female _mualaf_ (converts). These converts had embraced Islam many years before and acquired basic reading skills, but during Ramadan they engaged in a special Qur’an learning sessions to improve their skills. For Kak Nur, teaching the Qur’an was a pious act and Ramadan was a good opportunity because generally Muslims had more spare time than in other months.

The women’s Majelis Talkim hosted a breaking the fast ceremony in the third week of Ramadan inviting some 50 orphan children. A car was rented to pick up these children from an orphanage on the outskirts of Kupang and to drive them back. They were given an envelope of pocket money. When I asked Kak Nur how much money was in the envelope, she politely refused to disclose, saying that telling others about our charity was not approved in Islam.

When Idul Fitri was approaching, people were occupied with a number of activities to welcome the holy day, which celebrates the end of Ramadan. Some houses had their walls repainted or their interiors redecorated. Various cakes to celebrate Idul Fitri were also prepared. Members of Remaja Masjid (Mosque Youth Organisation) visited houses to collect _zakat fitrah_ (annual obligatory alms). A Muslim is obliged to pay alms of 3.5 litres of rice, which can be paid in cash. A committee was set up by the mosque officials to collect alms and arrange the distribution. People could also directly hand the rice to the committee at designated hours, usually after the evening prayers in the last week of
Ramadan. The last evening of Ramadan until the next morning before the ‘Id prayer was the time when most alms were collected and redistributed to eligible recipients.

Idul Fitri

On 30 August 2011, after the government confirmed the date of Idul Fitri, people began to chant takbir to exalt God. It may be a simple phrase of *Allahu Akbar* (God is great), but there were other longer phrases as well. People gathered at the mosque after the *maghrib* prayer and performed takbir, accompanied by continuous rhythmic sounds of people beating *bedug* (drum). After *isya* prayers a carnival procession was organised to mark the end of Ramadan and welcome Idul Fitri. People, especially the youth, gathered in front of the Governor’s office, where he announced the beginning of the procession. The participants drove around Kupang chanting *takbir*. Drums and music were played, and posters bearing names of organisations and good wishes of Idul Fitri were displayed. The longer phrase of the *takbir* says:

*God is great, God is great, God is great.*

*There is no god but God and God is greater.*

*God is greater, and all praise is due to God.*

On Idul Fitri day, the principal obligation is to perform the ‘Id prayer. At Airmata Mosque, the prayer started at 7am. That morning the mosque was full of worshippers. Some had to sit on the terrace because the mosque was so full. After the prayer a sermon was delivered. Then people shook hands with *imam* and with each other. They wished each other happy ‘Id and asked for forgiveness for any wrongs which they may have been done in the past.

After ‘Id prayer, I went to Kak Nur’s house. The family did not go to Airmata Mosque. She believed that it is best that ‘Id prayer is not performed in a mosque, but in an open field following the example set by the Prophet. Kak Nur’s family went to pray at an open yard near the regional police headquarters. At around 8.30am, all the family members had returned from ‘Id prayer. Members of the extended family gathered at Kak Nur’s house. One tradition during Idul Fitri was the ritual of asking for forgiveness of past wrongdoings by prostration. People of younger age prostrated themselves on the lap of older people. Kak Nur and her nieces subsequently prostrated themselves on Mama’s lap while solemnly asking for forgiveness and blessings.

After eating breakfast and a variety of cakes, Kak Nur asked me to join the family to visit the graves (*ziarah*). On our way to Batu Kadera cemetery, I saw many people
selling flowers. The tradition here was that visitors put flowers on the graves, even though it is not obligatory. When we got there, I was astonished to see so many people at the cemetery. Most of them were wearing Islamic clothes and many brought with them the Qur’an or a book containing Surah Yasin. Kak Nur’s family went straight to the tombs of their ancestors. Their father, grandparents, and great grandparents were buried there. After cleaning the tombs, they began to recite Surah Yasin and uttered prayers. People looked happy. They took the opportunity to wish each other a happy ‘Id and ask for sincere forgiveness.

On returning from ziarah, people visited relatives and neighbours. I visited a number of houses in the village and also in neighbouring villages. People congratulated each other because Idul Fitri was seen as a victorious day for Muslims, where Muslims have been successful in completing the spiritual tests during the fasting month. Completion of fasting and pious acts marked a new phase of their lives, where they believed that they had been reborn and purified. Some informants talked to me about mixed feelings concerning the end of the fasting month. Idul Fitri brought about happiness and a sense of victory, but at the same time there was a feeling of sadness because they had to leave Ramadan behind. It was during Ramadan that they felt the joy of performing religious rituals. All informants mentioned the hope that they would still be alive to see Ramadan the following year and in the years to come.

102 There are two cemeteries at Kupang town, Batu Kadera and Namosain. In many kampung, dead people were buried in front of the family’s house, such as in Kampung Oesapa and Kampung Solor. Kampung Solor also has a smaller cemetery used exclusively for the people of the kampung.
B. The Muslim Community of Kampung Bonipoi

Brief History of the Kampung

Kampung Bonipoi is part of Kota Lama sub-district, bordered by Kampung Solor to the north and east. The *kampung* is around 12.5 hectares, comprising six RW and 12 RT. In 2010, the population of Kampung Bonipoi numbered 1,545 of which almost 68 per cent (1,044 people) were Muslims. Protestantism was the second largest religion (23.6 per cent) followed by Catholic (8.5 per cent). The *kampung* was highly diverse with respect to ethnic composition. The statistics record that the largest group was Timorese (245), followed by Javanese (225), Rotinese (147), and Flores (Salorese included in this group, 139). The next two largest groups were Alorese (116) and Madurese (101). The remaining groups included people of Sumba, Savu, Bugis, Makassar, Bima/Lombok, Padang (West Sumatra), and Chinese. The number of Hadhrami was small, only 44 people.

The *kampung* has a mosque (Al Ikhlas Mosque), a Protestant church (GMIT Agape Congregation), and a Catholic church (Cathedral Christ the King). In Kampung Bonipoi, there were six elementary schools, comprising two government schools and four Protestant schools. There was no Islamic elementary school in this *kampung*, but there was an Islamic kindergarten called Siti Khadijah.
Depati Amir Bahren was an important proselytising figure in Kampung Bonipoi. He was the leader of the anti-Dutch rebellion in Mountain Miras on Bangka Island (Sumatra), who was sent into exile to Kupang in 1851. It was said that the Dutch suffered from a lot of casualties, including those of its high-ranking officials. In order to crush the rebellion, the Dutch mobilised military support from Palembang and Batavia. Depati Amir Bahren was arrested and sent into exile one year later to Kupang together with Hamzah, his right-hand man. He temporarily stayed in Airmata, before eventually settling in Bonipoi until his death in 1885. During his exile, he engaged in religious propaganda and becoming a patron to the local Muslims in Bonipoi. He was the key figure in the establishment of the Bonipoi Mosque.

The descendants of Bahren can be found in many villages in Kupang, primarily in Bonipoi, but also in Airmata, and some other kampung including Lurasi in the district of Belu. Kamarudin, whose wife is a descendant of Depati Amir Bahren, explained that contemporary descendants of Bahren in Kupang are the sixth generation. Many intermarried with the Hadhrami, including Thalib, Atamimi, Djawas, and Djanab. In Kampung Airmata I met Sarijah Bahren who married a Thalib. According to him, the

103 ‘Segi Messianistik Perjuangan Depati Amir’ (The Messianistic Aspect of the Struggle of Depati Bahren), a paper by Dr H. Zulkarnain Karin, MM, Mayor of Pangkal Pinang, 24 August 2004. Some informants mentioned another version, that he was exiled to Kupang in 1860.
history of Bonipoi and the role of Bahren were sustained through oral recitation, but most of those who have knowledge about them have passed away.

An important development concerning the descendants of Bahren in Kampung Bonipoi occurred in 1998, when attempts to reconnect with their kinship in Sumatra were pursued. After an initial exchange of communications in 1998, around 30 delegations from Bangka visited Kupang. The objective was to prove the location of the tomb of Depati Amir Bahren. They visited Batukadera cemetery, which was believed by the people of Kupang as the location of his tomb. Haji Kamarudin recalled:

An elderly person put a wooden stick on the ground of the tomb. Suddenly the stick was shaking. That was how they came to believe that the tomb really belonged to Depati Amir Bahren. A thanksgiving party was held in the afternoon.

A series of exchange visits between the two lineages followed the first visit. In 2010 representatives from Kampung Bonipoi were invited to attend a seminar on the role of Depati Amir Bahren during Dutch colonialism, and to attend Mandi Balimau bathing ritual, which was held to welcome the fasting month of Ramadan. Furthermore, a perkumpulan (association) was established to support the initiative. Burhan Mustafa, who is related to Bahren through his wife, became one of the chairs. The association collected information on the names and residences of the descendants of Bahren in Kupang, by birth or by marriage. The descendants of Bahren in Kupang were important in sustaining his legacy because they were descended from the male line.
The government of Bangka Belitung Province has recognised the important role of Depati Amir Bahren in the struggle against the Dutch. They helped in facilitating efforts to reconnect the lines of descent of Bahren in Kupang and Bangka. The government granted funding amounting to Rp300 million (AUD30,000) to the association, which was used for the renovation of the tomb and renovation of Airmata Mosque and Bonipoi Mosque. The renovation was completed in 2011 and the Governor of Bangka Belitung attended the official inauguration ceremony at Bonipoi Mosque on 21 September 2011. Around 40 delegations from Bangka participated, including the Mayor of Pangkal Pinang and spokesperson of the parliament. The delegation brought with them a gambus musical group, which performed jointly with Al Kahfy gambus group from Kampung Bonipoi.

Another heir of Bahren, Mukhtar, informed me that local kingdoms of Timor have also recognised the role of Depati Amir Bahren. He mentioned that representatives of Nisnoni and Tenau kingdoms attended the inauguration ceremony in 2011. Kings of Timor princedoms had met the kin of Bahren from Bangka at the gathering of royals in Palembang at the end of 2010. These kings of Timor agreed that there is a need to make the role of Depati Amir Bahren in the struggle against the Dutch in Timor known to larger audiences. He added that a team from the government, led by historian Dr Anhar Gonggong, had been formed to examine the contribution Depati Amir Bahren made against the colonial power. This initiative was part of a plan to obtain recognition from the central government. The ultimate goal is for Depati Amir Bahren to be awarded the title of national hero.

**Al Ikhlas Mosque**

The local narratives say that Depati Amir Bahren was the founder of Al Ikhlas Mosque of Bonipoi. All informants could not recall when exactly it was established, but they generally mentioned that Bahren built the mosque in the first year of his exile in Bonipoi, and their recollection of the year varied between 1851, 1860, and 1885. The mosque had been renovated several times and its current appearance can be seen in Figure 4.9. I was told that originally the mosque was 16 square metres or only half its

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104 The gathering is called Festival Keraton Nusantara (Festival of Royals in the Archipelago). Started in 1997, it brings together royalty from across the Indonesian archipelago every two years. The objective is to celebrate traditional arts and culture and to establish a network of royals for the purpose of preserving local traditions.

105 Haji Kamarudin told me that the renovations have been done several times, including in 2001-2002 and 2004 (when the roof was replaced with light steel structure).
current size. Originally the word ‘Allah’ was written on the roof, before the roof was replaced with a kubah (dome). A dedicated room for Qur’an learning for children was added recently at the back of the mosque. An informant told me that when the kubah was about to be installed, a ceremony was held, in which important figures and a number of youths together placed the dome at the top of the roof as a symbol of unity.

Even though it was acknowledged that Depati Amir Bahren founded the mosque, his descendants were not automatically entitled to the position of imam. Members of the congregation chose the imam of Masjid Al Ikhas Bonipoi. Usually it is a lifetime position, and is replaced only when the imam dies. An important qualification of an imam is fluency in Arabic. Ideally he is also a local villager. The current imam is Haji Ridwan Murawi (86 years), usually called imam tua (old imam). Unfortunately I was unable to conduct an interview with him, since his hearing ability has declined due to old age. Two deputies imam assisted the old imam: Muhammad Ramli Nurawi—the old imam’s nephew—and Mahdi Salama. In the past there were three, but the third deputy imam Kahar Manu resigned. Manu’s resignation was triggered by a conflict, but all informants I met refused to talk about it, to respect his decision.

Muhammad Ramli Nurawi (born in 1959) has been deputy imam since 1992. He told me that when he was nominated, some members of the congregation raised an objection. The reason was because his current residency was at the Perumnas compound, located outside the kampung. However, the controversy did not last long, because he managed to secure support from the majority of the members, by convincing them of his willingness to take up the title of imam as a religious duty, rather than a personal aspiration. Muhammad Ramli Nurawi explained that his nomination was eventually approved because most of the congregation members had seen his active support for the mosque for a long time.

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106 His grandfather, Nurawi Ishak, was a Madurese, who was exiled to Bonipoi in 1914. He told me that it was his grandfather’s younger brother who had rebelled against the Dutch, but his grandfather was implicated and arrested.
The challenge for Muslims in Bonipoi was not the succession of the imam, as happened in Kampung Airmata. What was more problematic here was the emergence of Mosque Foundation (Yayasan). Yayasan Al Ikhlas Bonipoi was established in 1992, as an implementation of a government regulation. The chairperson was Arifin Saban SH, of a younger generation of Muslims. According to the regulation, the Foundation is responsible for matters concerning finance and management of the mosque. It included fund raising, managing co-operation with and grants from external parties, managing assets, and budget allocation for programs. The presence of the Foundation has brought about a number of consequences, the most important being the dualism of authority between the Foundation and Takmir Masjid (mosque leadership, consisting of imam and his staff). Previously both budget management and implementation of festivals fell under the domain of imam, but now authority of the imam was restricted to religious affairs, primarily leading the prayers. For example, in the last celebration of Maulid, the imam established an organising committee for the celebration. This committee could not work properly because the Foundation formed its own committee.

The issue became more complicated when the Foundation changed its name from Yayasan Masjid Al Ikhlas Bonipoi to Yayasan Al Ikhlas Bonipoi—by omitting the

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107 Based on Government Regulation No. 63/208 on the establishment of Mosque Foundation, every mosque is required to obtain the status of Yayasan (Foundation) as a legal entity to allow them to become recipients of government funding.
word *masjid* (mosque). The new name was proposed to the municipal authorities two years before, but had not been legalised. The mosque leadership were of opinion that the Foundation should not have changed the name, because it was an inseparable part of the mosque. In fact, the very reason for establishing the Foundation was the mosque. The mosque leadership saw the change of name as an attempt to detach the Foundation from the mosque. Some figures in the mosque leadership would like to see authority over financial matters returned to them, especially with regard to financial contributions from the members of congregation. The argument was that voluntary contributions from the congregation were intended to support the mosque, not the Foundation. Informants in favour of the *imam* mentioned a number of issues that triggered their disappointment. These included dissatisfaction with the transparency of financial reports and a perception that the Foundation has been slow in implementing programs and activities. Muhammad Ramli Nurawi went on by saying that if one day he were elected *imam*, he would use his power to return the financial affairs to the authority of *imam*. However, despite tension between the mosque leadership and the Foundation, during my fieldwork I observed that the activities in the mosque appeared to be conducted as normal.

Al Ikhlas Mosque has set the preservation of Aswaja tradition as a mission, just like Al Baitul Qadim Mosque of Kampung Airmata. The observance of Aswaja tradition can be seen at an individual level, in women’s Majelis Taklim, in lifecycle rituals, and in Islamic festivals. Muslims in Bonipoi consider the recitation of *wirid* and *zikir* are important Aswaja practices. They recite long *wirid* and *zikir* after evening, dawn, and Friday prayers. Muhammad Ramli Nurawi explained that these traditions have been in place for a long time and every prescribed ritual has its own reasoning and noble purpose. Recitation of *zikir* and *wirid* are highly recommended after obligatory prayers because a Muslim never knows whether the prayers have been performed correctly. There is a possibility that a Muslim lost concentration or unintentionally made a mistake during the prayer. The chanting of *wirid* and *zikir* gives an opportunity to ask for forgiveness for the mistake. If done regularly, it will enhance the ability to remain focused when performing the prayer.

Another important feature of Aswaja tradition in Bonipoi is the chanting of *shalawat*. Muslims were advised to chant *shalawat* to venerate the Prophet whenever there is

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108 *Wirid* and *zikir* (intensive, collective, repetitive chanting of the confession of faith or of other Qur’anic formulae) are often used interchangeably.
opportunity, as a way of extending appreciation to the Prophet. Students at TPA (Taman Pendidikan Al Qur’an or Qur’an Learning Centre) Bonipoi, for example, were asked to chant *shalawat* before starting a class. Fatimah Saleh, one of the teachers at TPA, explained that the Prophet did not instruct Muslims to chant *shalawat* but this tradition was invented by great *ulama* from past generations for the benefit of Muslims. The Prophet was not the one who needs the *shalawat*. It was the chanter who actually needs to chant it on his or her behalf in order to obtain *pahala* (reward). She believed that *shalawat* would bring blessings to the chanter with the help from the Prophet. In this regard, the Prophet as the messenger of God, is viewed as a medium (*perantara*) between a Muslim and Allah: ‘For example, we were asking our Prophet that we would like to recover from sickness. By asking help from the messenger of God, it is more probable that Allah will answer the prayer.’

Another Aswaja tradition is the observance of *tahlilan*, also known as *slametan*, on the occasion of death. It is a meal ritual where Muslims gather at the house of the departed to recite Surah Yassin of the Qur’an and other chants. Outside, on the occasion of death, recitation of Surah Yassin is also important. It is a regular activity at the women’s Majelis Taklim in Bonipoi. A member of Majelis Taklim, Sofia Elida Lubis (born in 1968) stressed the significance of reciting Surah Yassin in *tahlilan*:\textsuperscript{109} ‘All Surah in the Qur’an are equally important, but I feel that Surah Yassin is the most suitable *surah* to recite in times of death or sickness. It fits perfectly with *tahlilan*.’

Muslims in Bonipoi also observe Aswaja tradition in Islamic festivals. In determining the start and end of Ramadan, Muslims in Bonipoi follow the method of physical sighting of the moon (*hilal*), as commonly practised by Aswaja Muslims in other areas in Indonesia. In the month of Safar, Muslims in Bonipoi perform communal bath of Safar. After the bathing ritual, they would attend a prayer ritual, which would take place along the main street in front of Al Ikhlas Mosque. Maulid is an important Aswaja tradition to celebrate the birthday of the Prophet. In addition to the chanting of *shalawat* and the outdoor procession, there is a sermon on the reflection of the Prophet’s mission. Similar to Muslims in Kampung Airmata, the celebration involves the public reading

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\textsuperscript{109} Sofia Elida Lubis is an example of a migrant with a modernist Islam background who has adapted to the Aswaja tradition of Bonipoi. Growing up as a Muslim Batak in Padang (West Sumatra), she moved to Bonipoi to follow her husband and became a member of the women’s Majelis Taklim, where she began to observe Maulid and participate in *tahlilan*.
from the book of Barzanji. The list of Islamic festivals observed by the Muslim community of Kampung Bonipoi is presented in the Figure 27.

**Figure 27 Islamic Festivals in Kampung Bonipoi**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Months of the Islamic Calendar</th>
<th>Islamic Festivals in Kampung Bonipoi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Muharram</td>
<td>Islamic New Year at Al Ikhlas mosque.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Safar</td>
<td>Communal bath of Safar (held on the last Wednesday of Safar at the beaches of Kupang Bay) followed by prayer ritual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rabiul Awal</td>
<td>12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Rabiul Awal: The birthday of Prophet Muhammad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rabiul Akhir</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Jumadil Awal</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Jumadil Akhir</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Rajab</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sya’ban</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ramadan</td>
<td>Fasting, and observance of 20-cycles <em>traweh</em> prayer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Syawal</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Syawal: Idul Fitri (the celebration of the end of the fasting month).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Zulkaedah</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Zulhijjah</td>
<td>10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Zulhijjah: Idul Adha (feast of sacrifice, held in connection with the annual pilgrimage).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Islamic Festivals in Kampung Bonipoi**

**Islamic New Year**

The Bonipoi Mosque held a prayer ritual and sermon to celebrate the new Islamic year of 1 Muharram 1433 Hijriyah. The event was held inside the mosque, attended by over 50 people. It began with the recitation of Surah Al-Imran verses 102-104 and a sermon by Haji Muhammad from Al Muttaqin Mosque of Kampung Kotabaru. After the sermon, two prayers were chanted: an end of year prayer by deputy *imam* Muhammad Ramli Nurawi, and prayer for the new year by another deputy *imam* Mahdi Salama. These deputies chanted the two prayers shortly before the call for evening prayers. The call for evening prayers, announced when the sun went down, marked the beginning of
Islamic New Year 1433. To conclude the event, the attendees then performed the evening prayers in congregation.

In his sermon, Haji Muhammad emphasised that entering a new Islamic year was essentially a journey (hijrah), in which a Muslim should improve the quality of all aspects in his/her religious and social life. These aspects include faith (iman), Islamic knowledge (ilmu), the observance of prayer (ibadah), and compassion for others (akhlak ukadimah). At the same time it was important for a Muslim to improve the quality of ukhuwah (brotherhoods) in their relations with other people. Islam teaches that the notion of brotherhood is not limited to Muslims, but also the brotherhood of people of the same nation and the brotherhood of humanity. The goal of hijrah is that a Muslim should be able to lead a useful life and strive for improvement.

Prayer Ritual after the Communal Bath of Safar

The communal bath of Safar was observed on the last Wednesday of the Safar month at the beaches of Kupang Bay. After the communal bath of Safar was completed, the Bonipoi Mosque hosted a ritual prayer. To my knowledge, this practice only exists in Kampung Bonipoi. I noticed many Muslims from other kampung after joining the communal bath of Safar, came to Bonipoi to participate in the prayer ritual. Over 100 people, including myself, attended the ritual on 18 January 2012. It was held in an open area outside the mosque. When I arrived at the mosque after afternoon prayers, people gathered waiting for the old imam. Under a huge tent, erected on the street in front of the mosque, the attendants sat neatly on a carpet and prayer mats. The sound system was on, while meals and drinks were prepared on the terrace of the mosque.

The old imam arrived and then sat cross-legged on a prayer mat. In front of him were incense and two plates of cone-shaped yellow rice and side dishes. He burned the incense as a sign that the prayer was about to begin. Deputy imam Mahdi Salama led the recitation of Surah Al-Fatihah, the most important verse of the Qur’an, and this was followed by recitation of Surah Yassin, which he repeated three times. After the recitation was completed, the old imam chanted doa selamat. This ritual was performed to pray for protection for Muslims from danger and unfortunate fate, and also to pray for their faith to be strengthened and prosperity improved. To conclude the ritual, several young men collected money for the donation to an orphanage. Afterwards, the guests enjoyed meals and refreshments. In addition to the meals prepared by the mosque, it was also a tradition that families brought their own meals, usually snacks, to be shared with others. The joy and warmth this ritual brought to the attendees, who
came from many *kampung*, truly fascinated me. The gathering served to maintain the community bonds. These people, old and young alike, celebrated the ritual cheerfully and joyfully. They believe that the passing of Safar, the month of misery, gave them peace of mind.

**Figure 28 Prayer ritual after the Bath of Safar**

Death and Funeral Assistance

In Bonipoi, arrangement for death rituals were organised using modern principles, by a mosque-affiliated organisation called Badan Santunan Untuk Kematian (Death and Funeral Assistance). The core team comprises a group of five *mudin*. The *imam* of the mosque selected members of the *mudin*. In 2010 Haji Kamarudin was the chair. The Badan owns a hearse,\textsuperscript{110} tents and chairs, and a sound system, all to be used in a burial procession. It also has three basins for bathing the body of the deceased.

Haji Kamarudin claimed that this organisation had over 1,000 household members. Every member is given a number and is required to pay a monthly contribution of

\textsuperscript{110} The vehicle was a donation from the Municipality Government of Kupang. The old vehicle was given to Kampung Namosain Mosque.
Rp5,000 (AUD 5 cents). Extra voluntary contributions are also welcomed. In 2011, it collected a total of Rp60 millions (AUD6,000) of contributions. Financial reports are announced at the mosque every three months. The monthly contribution fee was relatively cheap because for many people in Kupang funeral expenses could be expensive, up to Rp1,000,000 (AUD100). Usually funeral expenses consist of the cost to dig the grave (Rp600,000); to purchase white cloth (kain kafan) and other necessary items (Rp50,000); to prepare the announcement board (Rp50,000); and to rent an ambulance or hearse (minimum Rp250,000 depending on the distance from the house to the hospital to cemetery). In addition to burial costs, the family of the dead also has to pay for the cost of the tahlilan ritual. The Badan Santunan only covers funeral-related costs. There are no labour costs because neighbours and relatives who help with the funeral are not paid. Their participation is completely voluntary, as they expect nothing but divine reward. Poor families receive the service for free.

After the burial, tahlilan on the first to the third day of the death are the most important, inviting relatives and neighbours. On the seventh day to the ninth day, only close family members attend. Tahlilan on the 40th and 100th day, again more guests are invited. Some people conduct tahlilan after the 100th day, which is permissible. However, the most important tahlilan is marked on the first to the third day, the 40th day, and 100th day after the death.

If a family member dies, the Badan Santunan Untuk Kematian will take over all the responsibilities concerning burial from the family. They will announce the death, will inform and invite neighbours to visit, to bath and bury the corpse, as well as to perform associated prayers and rituals, such as burial prayers and recitation of talqin. In certain cases, they also help the family conduct tahlilan on the first to the third day. The Badan Santunan Untuk Kematian is also responsible for purchasing all the necessary items for the death rituals. Haji Kamarudian gave an example, when an old man died recently. His children, who were living outside Bonipoi, were surprised to learn that they did not have to pay for the burial service. It appeared that they did not know their father was a

111 A corpse needs 15 metres of white cloth. In Kupang the price is Rp15,000 per metre, while in Surabaya it costs only Rp6,000-7,000 per metre. Badan Santunan would purchase 30-40 pieces, each 35 metres, at the cheaper price. A cloth of 30 metres can be used for two bodies, while the remaining 5 metres is for an infant corpse. The other items include non-alcoholic perfumes, sandalwood powder, soap bars, cotton wool, and incense, and camphor. These items were purchased in Surabaya, except for the sandalwood powder which came from Nik-nik village in South Central Timor (TTS) district. A wooden coffin can be bought in Kampung Oesapa.
member of Badan Santunan. He added, sometimes mourning Christian families would come and borrow equipment, particularly the funerary vehicle.

Haji Kamarudin, being a mudin for over 20 years, believed that Allah has extended a real blessing for him: physical health. He said that he never fell sick, with serious illness, since he became a mudin: ‘I believe that is because I have been taking care for the dead with the sole intention to serve Allah.’

In recent years finding a mudin from a younger generation has become increasingly difficult. The young people show little interest in taking up such a responsibility. The mosque leadership in Bonipoi are aware of this challenge. On a number of occasions, the mosque has organised a training program for the youth on death rituals. It is important that skills of a mudin are properly transferred to the younger generation, as a way to ensure that death rituals can be properly preserved in accordance with Aswaja teachings.

Qur’an Learning Centre

Qur’an Learning Centre at Al Iklhas Mosque in Bonipoi, known as TPA Bonipoi, was one of the most popular TPA in Kupang. It began in 1992. Initially learning activities were held at the rear terrace of the mosque, but then the TPA was given a separate room adjacent to the mosque. During the month of Ramadan, the TPA was closed and reopened one week after the Idul Fitri. In the past, it had only one teacher, but by 2011 there were four. All the teachers were female.

Halimah Balich, the coordinator, and a teacher named Fatimah Saleh were my informants. Balich (born in Alor in 1965) was educated in PGA a junior high school for religious teachers. Prior to becoming the coordinator of TPA Bonipoi, Balich taught the Qur’an to children in Kampung Solor. In 1992 the secretary to the imam asked her to handle TPA Bonipoi when the TPA collapsed. Fatimah Saleh (born in Kupang in 1983) studied Islam at Pesantren Ibnu Rusd in Tasikmalaya (West Java) for four years before joining the TPA in 2000.

An important factor behind the popularity of TPA Bonipoi is the teaching method, which enables children to learn Arabic considerably quickly. The TPA employs a method called ‘Kaidah Bagdadiyah’. Basically the method teaches the children to acquire basic understanding of Arabic letters, not to memorise verses by verses. The method allows the children to master Arabic letters within 14 days and to recite simple verses in the Qur’an after three months. Halimah Balich said she learned this method
from the PGA and developed it to suit the needs of TPA.\textsuperscript{112}

In 2011 TPA had over 200 active students coming from Kampung Bonipoi, Kampung Solor, Kampung Airmata, Kampung Fatufeto, and Kampung Oebobo. Generally students were enrolled from the ages of four or five years, and were studying at TPA until Grade 5 of elementary school. Grade 6 students would usually withdraw from TPA to concentrate on their final-year exam. Many returned to the TPA after enrolling in junior high school, to learn a more advanced technique of Qur’an recitation. Students were grouped into several classes according to their ability. The most advanced students were grouped in one class and were trained to become qory and qoriah (qualification of a reciter, male and female respectively, to compete in competitions of Qur’an recitation).

\textbf{FIGURE 29 TPA BONIPOI}

TPA Bonipoi, according to Halimah Balich, has the objective of teaching Qur’an to the children and to build character in accordance with Islamic values. In addition to Qur’an learning, the students are taught Islamic songs, some of which composed by Fatimah Saleh. Most of the messages of these songs were taken from the verses of the Qur’an. They introduce various obligations for Muslims, such as praying and fasting, and important aspects of Islamic values, such as halal and haram, as well as compassion to other human beings. Moreover, the pupils are taught about Aswaja tradition, such as the chanting of tahlil and baca maulud (a shorter version of the book of Barzanji for children). These children also participate in Maulid celebration, usually by carrying small siripuang in a carnival procession.

\textsuperscript{112} Balich grew up in a poor family. She was out of school twice because the family moved to TTS district before attending in a junior high school for religious teachers (PGA) in Kupang for two years (1985-1986) but did not graduate. Her father was also a Qur’an teacher.
Gambus Musical Group

Gambus is a popular form of music in Kupang, and in the city there are a number of gambus musical groups. They perform in various religious events. Gambus music performance is an important part of the Dana-dana Night vigil prior to an Islamic wedding ceremony, especially among the Hadhrami or Solorese families. Gambus musical groups can also be seen at circumcision ceremonies, or at breaking the fast ceremonies, celebration of Idul Fitri, including those organised by the government. Islamic organisations in Kupang also often invite gambus musical groups to the anniversary of the organisation or other regular events.

Al-Habul Kahfy gambus musical group from Kampung Bonipoi is one of the most popular. It performs on many occasions, including on Kupang TV. The group was formed in August 2007. The persons behind the success of Al-Habul Kahfy are Haji Kamarudin, the founder, and two key personnel: Muktar Mulang the gambus instrument player and Hasyim Mustafa the lead vocal. Hasyim Mustafa, the eldest son of imam of the Airmata Mosque, is a Gontor Pesantren graduate who can write the Arabic lyrics of the songs he listens to on compact discs. Muktar Mulang is a skilful gambus player and can sing Indonesian and Malay songs. Management of Al-Habul Kahfy is well staffed, with a chairperson and treasurer. So far, all of the musicians have been from Bonipoi or Solorese origin. None of them were of Hadhrami descent. The only Hadhrami involved in Al-Habul Kahfy was a dancing trainer. ‘The Arabs cannot sing,’ Haji Kamarudin said.

Haji Kamarudin shared the history of Al-Habul Kahfy gambus group. He long had a plan to form a gambus musical group, but he could not find someone to work with.

113 According to the founder, Haji Kamarudin, the name Al-Habul Kahfy, which means ‘journey of travellers’, was taken from a folk story about three travellers who were chased by evil men and were forced to hide in a cave for safety for 300 years.

114 When the Bangka Belitung delegation came to the inauguration of the tomb of Depati Amir Bahren, the gambus musical group from Bangka Belitung Province performed. Mukhtar was invited to play with them as an additional player.

115 An informant named Alkatiri expressed his concern that all gambus musicians and singers in Kupang are non-Hadhrami. He told me his dream was that one day he would be able to form a gambus group of his own so the Hadhrami of the younger generation could learn gambus as an Arabic cultural heritage. Farram (2010) notes that in 1955 Hadi Djawas led a famous gambus orchestra in Kupang called Orkes Cempaka of Kampung Airmata. In addition to traditional instruments, Orkes Cempaka used modern instruments such as guitar. In that period Arab musical instruments were widely used in wedding ceremonies and celebrations of Islamic festivals. But Orkes Cempaka is no longer active.

116 In NTT Province good gambus players were the people of East Flores, Weiwerang, Adonara, and Alor. Their ability was inherited from older generations, including women. Despite their skills, the
Fortunately his dream came true when in 2006 he was introduced to Muktar Mulang. After learning that Muktar was a skilful gambus player, Haji Kamarudin invited him to join the gambus group. Muktar Mulang, born in Lamaker village on Solor 38 years before, had just arrived in Kupang to work as a welder after spending 10 years as a migrant worker in Malaysia. He also became a bilal at Bonipoi Mosque. Muktar accepted the invitation from Kamarudin, thinking that joining a gambus musical group would heal his longing for playing gambus in his home village.

Muktar Mulang maintained that gambus on Solor Island is different than in Kupang. He considered gambus in Bonipoi as Arabic gambus. With regard to the instrument, the gambus in Solor is smaller and only has six strings, while in Kupang it has 12 strings. Gambus instruments in Kupang are made in Surabaya, while the Solor gambus instruments usually a home-made product.

The gambus musical group has a mission to preserve the tradition of Dana-dana Night among the Solorese and Hadhrami communities in Kupang. At wedding parties, Al-Habul Kahfy usually played Malay songs, and popular Indonesian songs. The musicians learned songs from compact discs. The other mission of Al-Habul Kahfy is to perform religious proselytising (dakwah). On certain occasions, they also performed songs with Islamic themes, such as songs about Prophet Muhammad and Prophet Sulaiman. On the

153
occasion of a Dana-dana Night party, zapin dance was always performed as part of the attraction. The dance was done in pairs. On Dana-dana Night, Al-Habul Kahfy would sing up to 20 songs and the performance would usually finish at 12pm sharp. The cost to book Al-Habul Kahfy is Rp1 million (AUD 100). The fee has remained the same since the group was formed. Al-Habul Kahfy sometimes receives donations. Usually every year in the fasting month, the Governor or the Mayor give grants to gambus musical groups in Kupang, including Al-Habul Kahfy. Even though some think that the fee is too small, Haji Kamarudin refused to increase it, to avoid people saying bad things about this group. His strategy for the survival of the group was to find ways to perform as frequently as possible.

C. The Hadhrami Community in Airmata and Bonipoi

Hadhrami immigrants began to settle in Kupang in the early 1800s. Goro (1970: 65) suggests that they went to Timor as early as 1812 to engage in trading activities. However, van der Berg maintains there were no records of Hadhrami migration to Kupang until 1859. In 1885, there were 30 Hadhrami in Kupang. Under the Dutch Government, the Hadhrami immigrants belonged to vreemde oosterlingen (foreign orientals), which stood one level above the native people. In major economic centres, on Java and Madura, they were clustered in separate neighbourhoods as part of the quarter policy. However, Jonge (1997, 2004) notes that these systems were not enforced in the outer islands. Presumably the formation of the Hadhrami Quarter in Bonipoi and Airmata was not a result of the quarter policy of the colonial government, but rather a voluntary process.

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119 If a member of Al-Habul Kahfy is getting married, the group will perform for free. If the client are relatives of an Al Kahfy member, a discount is given.

120 In 1859 only two Hadhrami were registered as living in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). By 1885, the number had risen to 93 comprising 58 people settling in Sumba, 30 in Kupang, and the other 5 in Rote (van der Berg 2010: 99). Migration of Hadhrami to the archipelago increased significantly in the second half of the 19th century. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the invention of steamboats, and the Dutch policy of integrating the archipelago into the global market after 1870 were the main factors behind this development. There were around 80,000 Arabs when the Dutch colonial administration ended in 1942 (ven der Kroef 1953, van der Berg 2010: 99, Jonge 1997: 95).

121 A grouping of subjects consisting of Hadhrami, Chinese, Moors, Tamils, Bengalis, and Arabs (from Hejaz) migrants (Jonge 1997).

122 The quarter system was implemented initially on Java and Madura in 1852 and extended to the outer islands in 1866. In Java and Madura especially, it was accompanied by passes to prevent the Hadhrami from travelling without valid permits. This system was removed in 1919 (Jonge 1997).
Between the turn of the century and the 1920s was the period of the Ethical Policy. The Hadhrami were active in a number of organisations flourishing in this period. In 1925 Muslims in Kupang founded Bintang Timur (Eastern Star), the first Islamic organisation in NTT Province. Ten years later Bintang Timur opened the first Islamic school Al Chairiyah in Kampung Airmata. Four of the eight teachers were Hadhrami: Umar Djawas, Ahmad Badzher, Muhammad Ghafar Badzher, and Habib Muhammad Alhadad. Following a disagreement with the Malay faction of Bintang Timur, the Hadhrami circles withdrew and formed Al Furat, which focused on social activities. In 1938 Perkumpulan Pergerakan Pemuda Islam (Association of the Muslim Youth Movement) emerged in Kupang as a branch of the Surabaya-based Perkumpulan Pergerakan Pemuda Arab (Association of the Arab Youth Movement). The word ‘Islam’, rather than ‘Arab’, was used to allow non-Hadhrami Muslims in Kupang to join. This organisation focused on education, music, and sport, but closed within a year (Goro 1977, Leirissa et.al 1983, Widiyatmika 2004, Farram 2010).

In April 1946, after Japan lost the war and the Dutch regained power, dozens of Muslim figures initiated Persit (Persatoean Islam Timor, Timor Islamic Association), including two Hadhrami Achmad Badjideh and SA Gudban. Another Hadhrami, Hamud Alkatiri, was chosen as a member of the executive committee. Persit had a strong influence in Kupang. By November 1946 it had 180 members, increasing to 195 members by 1947. It worked on education, economic mutual assistance, and religious dakwah. It had three units: religious affairs, education, and economic development, in which some of the Hadhrami played a key role. In the religious affairs unit there were Muhammad Badjeher, Said Badjideh, and Abdul Alhabsy. Hamud Alkatiri chaired the economic unit, whose members included AA Djawas and Hasan Djawas. In 1948 Persit opened an Islamic elementary school in Airmata village using old Al Chairiyah buildings. In 1948 the youth wing of Persit was formed. On 15 October 1948, Badan Urusan Sandiwara (Arts Performances Body) was established with the specific aim of organising arts

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123 The Dutch officially began the Ethical Policy in 1901, as a strategy to address the welfare of the native, by providing education, irrigation, and facilitating migration (from Java to outer islands). Driven by humanitarian and economic motives, it aims to support colonial enterprises especially in the outer islands and to gain advantage from the natives’ potential market. Among the consequences were the creation of educated elite and the rise of political activism (Ricklefs 2001).

124 In the late 1940s, there were around 1,000 Muslims in Kupang (Farram 2010: 226).

125 Some Hadhrami youth activists were involved, such as Salem Djawas (deputy chairperson), AD Djawas (secretary), and three members of the committee: Said Aziz Alkatiri, Husen Alhabsy, and Hadi Djawas.
performances. Young Hadhrami activists dominated the committee of this body.\textsuperscript{126} It produced plays on a regular basis as part of \textit{dakwah} and fund-raising activities.

Kupang Hadhrami has been largely assimilated into the social and political life of the city. The Hadhrami formed an exclusive organisation for the people of Arab origin, Al Furat, but they engaged in many inclusive organisations, both religious and nationalist. They did not pursue political aspirations on the basis of their ethnicity. Kupang Hadhrami was also active in fulfilling religious functions. Religious instruction was generally conducted at the private houses of Hadhrami teachers. In the mid-1940s, some Hadhrami ran notable learning centres including those led by Salim Djawas in Kampung Bakunase and Abdullah Djawas in Kampung Honbala, with 33 and 40 pupils respectively. Initially operated as an independent activity, these learning centres later received financial assistance from Persit (Goro 1977, Farram 2010). Despite their insignificant numbers, they were actively involved in some of the important events leading to independence. A number of Hadhrami actively supported the Indonesian nationalist movement. In the mid-1940s Persit became heavily inclined towards independence, as seen in pro-independent tones in \textit{dakwah} activities, Maulid celebrations, and public meetings. One example was in December 1948 when the authorities arrested Salem Djawas and HA Alhabsy for their roles in political activism (Goro 1977, Farram 2010). In the post-colonial period, Hadhrami in Kupang remained an influential group. Some of them, including those from \textit{duafa} stratum, found ways to achieve important political positions.\textsuperscript{127}

From interviewing a number of Hadhrami, I noticed that not many of them are fluent in Arabic. Those who are fluent include the Qur’anic teachers, the \textit{tarekat} teacher, \textit{khatib}, and employees of the Office of Religious Affairs. The title \textit{haji}, for those who have made a pilgrimage to Mecca, is also an important identity marker for a pious Muslim. Some have performed the pilgrimage several times. When asked about their views on their homeland, almost all informants shared a similar view that they considered Hadramaut (in Yemen) as the place of origin of their ancestors, but no longer as their

\textsuperscript{126} Hamzah Alhabsy as chairperson, Husen Alhabsy as deputy chairperson, Idrus Aljufri as advisor, Abdullah Djawas as secretary, as well as Said Aziz Alkatiri and Umar Badzeher as members.

\textsuperscript{127} One example is Haji Abdul Kadir Makarim. He is currently chairperson of the MUI of NTT Province. He has been elected as MUI chairperson three times, even though the maximum term of service is two periods. He retired as a Governor’s Office employee to become a member of parliament in 1997. From 2000-2004 he was appointed as a member of the Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (People’s Consultative Body, the highest political institution in the national political system) representing NTT Province.
homeland. It is not a priority for them to visit Hadramaut or to send their children there for education. Some families sent their children to pesantren (Islamic boarding school), usually in Gontor (East Java), but many opted to send their children to government schools. With respect to religious instruction for their children, they entrusted it to Hadhrami Qur’anic teachers, usually of sadah background.

Roles of Hadhrami in Religious Instruction

The majority of the Hadhrami in Kupang live in Kampung Airmata. I do not have the data but an informant gave an estimate that 40 per cent of the Hadhrami live there. In Kampung Bonipoi, the number of Hadhrami is relatively small, only 44 of the total 1,545 population. Many of the Hadhrami are Qur’anic teachers, khatib, or government employees of the Office of Religious Affairs. Some Hadhrami are also known in their role in facilitating conversions and teaching Islam to new converts. To my knowledge, none of the Hadhrami have held the position of imam at a mosque. Habib Ali Gudban, for example, is eligible to become deputy imam or even acting imam at Airmata Mosque, because he is related to the late Haji Birando bin Tahir from the mother line. However, he was not interested in becoming an imam and preferred to focus on his business activities. I observed that Qur’an teacher in Kupang was not exclusively the role of Hadhrami of the sadah group. Non-sadah Hadhrami were also actively engaged in teaching the Qur’an. Hadhrami Qur’anic teachers in Airmata and Bonipoi usually prefer to run a private TPA at their own houses, not affiliated to the mosque.

One of the private TPA is Radhatul Jannah in Kampung Airmata. The teacher is Habib Haji Usman Al gadri (75 years old), a sadah who is a descendant of Syarif Al gadri. Al gadri’s family comes from sadah group and is highly respected in the field of religion. Al gadri was born in Sumba and studied Islam from Kyai Syekh Muhammad Zainuddin bin Abdul Majid at Pesantren Nahdlatul Watan in East Lombok for seven years.

128 I met Ali Bin Abdullah Alhabsy (70 years old), a Kupang-born Hadhrami who had migrated to Darwin (Australia) in 1971. He said Kupang is his home, while Yemen is the land of his ancestors. Every year during Ramadan and Idul Fitri he visits Kupang to see his relatives.
129 In addition to religious functions, many of them engaged in the private sector, running businesses such as contractor, hotels, and accommodation; or owning small businesses such as shops or stores.
130 Habib Usman Al gadri is the great-great-grandchild of Syarif Abdurrahman bin Abubakar Al gadri. Usman Al gadri is a key bearer (juru kun ci, a person who takes care of sacred places or shrines) of Syarif Al gadri’s tomb. Al gadri’s grave is recognisable as it is almost 1 metre in height and is protected by a gate. If visitors are unable to enter the tomb because the gate is locked, they often put Kamboja flowers at the gate as a sign of respect. The tomb is known as a white grave (kuburan putih) because some people claimed they have seen a white ray of light on certain nights. Usman Al gadri is married to a non-Hadhrami woman from East Java. Previously he had married a woman from Mataram. From his first wife he has four children; one lives in Ende and the other three live in Mataram.
years. In addition, he spent three years studying with Kyai Ahmad Misbah, a Mecca graduate, in a pesantren at Ampenan town in Lombok. Prior to moving to Kupang, he taught the Qur’an in a number of places including on the islands of Flores, Komodo, Rambut, and Nangaramu. He made a living from selling books on Islam. He also taught religion at madrasah ibtidaiyah (Islamic elementary school) in Kampung Mauwaru, Ngada District of NTT for three years.

Figure 31 Habib Usman Algadri in front of Syarif Algadri’s tomb

Algadri moved to Kupang in 1996. Initially he taught children of a sadah family in Kampung Koinino, before accepting more students in Kampung Bonipoi. He moved to Kampung Airmata in 1998, taking over a place that previously belonged to another Qur’anic teacher (a Hadhrami named Assegaf) who had passed away. He used the place as a classroom for junior students, while senior students learned at his house. He rented a house, located around 200 metres from the Airmata Mosque, and used a 3 x 4 square metre living room as a classroom. In 2001, he named the learning centre TPA Radhatul Jannah. The TPA has 43 students comprising 30 senior and 13 junior students. Habib Usman Algadri was assisted by two TPA graduates. The pupils began their education learning Arabic letters (iqra) as a foundation, and continued to learn compositions (juz amma) before mastering the Qur’an. Some of the graduates pursued their education to Pesantren Assalam in Solo, Central Java.

The other TPA is owned by Zainab Djawas (born in 1945). She is an example of a non-sadah Hadhrami Qur’anic teacher in Kupang. Zainab Djawas is an active member of women’s Majelis Taklim Nurul Jadidah at Kampung Airmata. She has been teaching

131 He prayed several times before coming up with that name, which literally means ‘Park of Eden’ but can also mean ‘a place to learn’. He then came to Mataram to seek approval from his teacher Kyai Syeikh Muhammad Zainuddin bin Abdul Majid. Upon approval, the name was adopted.
the Qur’an since the 1970s after being asked by the late Haji Birando bin Tahir. In 2011, she had up to 40 students. These children learn six days a week (excluding Thursdays), starting after the late afternoon (ashar) prayers until maghrib prayers.

In these two TPA, I observed that the students not only learn how to read the Qur’an. To attract the interest of children, additional activities were conducted. Zainab Djawas gave training to perform prayer correctly on Sundays. At TPA Raudatul Jannah, the students were taught to play rebana (percussion instrument). In accordance with Aswaja tradition, rebana is an important instrument to play while reciting shalawat to the Prophet on certain occasions. Habis Usman Al gadri said that money is not his motivation in teaching children. His main motivations for teaching children is to keep them away from alcohol and other bad behaviours, and to teach his students how to be a good Muslim.

These two TPA are run on a voluntary basis. Habib Usman Al gadri did not require any fees from his pupils. He relied on voluntary contributions from students’ parents and other parties. His TPA received learning materials from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Kupang. Furniture and carpets in the classroom were also donations. Zainab Djawas received small financial contributions from the students. Both Habib Usman Al gadri and Zainab Djawas mentioned that teaching Qur’an to children gave them satisfaction. As a teacher, it has always made her proud to see her students slowly become able to read the Qur’an and to eventually complete the recitation of the whole Qur’an.

Despite his limited income, Habib Usman Al gadri was able to perform the hajj in 2009. The money came from his former students, relatives, and his followers who gave donations on hearing of his intention to go to the Holy Land. He recalled around 400 people gathered to say prayers before his departure. Upon his return, a thanksgiving ceremony was held to welcome him home. He mentioned that during the hajj, the faces of his parents and children who had passed away appeared to him when he was reciting the Qur’an in Arafat. He considered this experience a divine reward for his long-term dedication in teaching the Qur’an.

Maintaining Hadhrami identity

Book of Genealogy

Hadhrami of sadah families are expected to register their genealogy (nasab) in a Book of Genealogy (Buku Nasab) with an official Jakarta-based institution, Rabithah
Alawiyah. Established in 1932, Rabithah Alawiyah has an autonomous body called Maktab Daimi, which is responsible for documenting and recording descent line to the Prophet. Ali bin Ja’far Assegaf, the chairperson of Rabithah Alawiyah in Indonesia, explained that the genealogy linking the sadah with the Prophet is virtuous because it contains the most virtuous genetic qualities from the Prophet, and therefore its purity should be maintained. The registration can be done directly or via post or online. A sayyid will be asked to fill in a form, which can be downloaded from the website, and provide detailed information on names of the forefathers up to six or seven generations.

A committee at Maktab Daimi will verify if the applicant is of sadah descent and was born of a legitimate marriage according to Islam. Two sadah witnesses are needed in the verification.

Maktab Daimi has 39 representative offices in provinces and districts across Indonesia. In NTT Province, the only representative office is in Ende. In Kupang, since 2011 Habib Abdussalam Alhinduan has been volunteering for Maktab Daimi to collect data on sadah families. He offered help for sadah families to obtain the Book of Genealogy, including assistance to sadah families who have difficulty in identifying their forefathers. Alhinduan said that the data collection on sadah families in Kupang is very important to ensure that all sadah families have a Book of Genealogy. He mentioned that Allah has obliged all Muslims to love and respect the Prophet’s family and his offspring. Allah confers the Prophet and his family a very honourable place and protects them from sin. That was the reason, he added, why it is very important for sadah to properly maintain their genealogical lines with the Prophet. Prior to the arrival of Alhinduan, sadah families in Kupang usually sought help from relatives in Jakarta to obtain the book. Informants from the Alatas, Alhabsy, and Gudban clans confirmed this practice.

132 [www.rabithah-alawiyah.org](http://www.rabithah-alawiyah.org). When submitting an application, some supporting documents are needed, such as two photographs, a copy of an identity card, the family card (kartu keluarga), and birth certificates of the children. Maktab Daimi is authorised to issue the Genealogy Book in Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, and Thailand.

133 In issuing the nasab, Maktab Daimi uses a number of books published in Hadramaut and in Indonesia as references, for example, seven volumes of Syajarah Ansab Al Alawiyyin (History of the Genealogy of the Alawy) composed by Habib Abdurrahman bin Muhammad Al Masyhur and written by Salman bin Said bin Awadh Ba’Ghauts, and three volumes of Syajarah Ansab Al Alawiyyin (in Indonesian) by Habib Ali bin Ja’far Assegaf. There are also 15 volumes of Al Maktab Addaimi, which is said to have combined the Hadramaut and Indonesian volumes, written by Abdillah bin Isa bin Hud Alhabsyi.

Ali bin Ja’far Assegaf mentioned that Buku Nasab is issued only for male sadah. Female sadah will have their names recorded in their father’s book. The book is passport size (see Figure 4.17) containing information of the sayyid, his nasab, and names of his children (both sons and daughters). Buku Nasab is important for the identity of sadah families in relation to inheritance and marriage. Hajah Opong Alatas added that the book has practical benefits for a habib. When a habib sayyid (male sadah) wishes to propose to a syarifah (female sadah), it is expected he will show the book to the bride’s family as proof of his sayyid status.

**Figure 32 Genealogy Book (Buku Nasab)**

Ali bin Ja’far Assegaf emphasised that rigid verification procedures are performed because there have been cases where an applicant intended to deceive officials by pretending he was of sadah descent for personal motives. According to Ali bin Ja’far Assegaf, deception of sadah’s family origin is disgraceful: ‘It may be equated to a deceitful act against the Prophet and will be cursed by Allah.’

**Marriage**

In marriages, the Kafa’ah system is imposed to ensure a sadah marries a partner of equal rank. Marriage between sadah is considered as the best arrangement from which the best offspring may be descended. In this system, ideally a sayyid is to marry a syarifah, but is allowed to marry non-sadah or a non-Hadhrami woman without losing his privileges as a descendent of the Prophet. On the other hand, when getting married to a non-sayyid, a syarifah retains her sadah status, but any children born of the marriage will lose the sadah status (van der Kroef 1953, Slama 2012, de Jonge 2004).
Consequently, the pressure for *syarifah* is greater.\(^{135}\) I was told that some *syarifah* remain unmarried or married, but not as the first wife. A *syarifah* informant told me that the system has forced some single *syarifah* to look for *habib* outside Kupang, including in Jakarta and Java. I met a *syarifah* of Kampung Airmata who had gone as far as Kwitang in Jakarta, Pekalongan in Central Java and Banyuwangi in East Java in search of a prospective *habib* husband. She benefited from the help of her clan and finally met a *habib* who was available and willing to marry her. She explained that she was willing to travel around looking for a *habib* husband because for her preserving a descent line with the Prophet is very important:

Maintaining the blood line with the Prophet is a virtuous act. It is also an honour to be able to form a family of *sadah*. I believe *sadah* has an honourable status before God.

I met some moderate *sadah* families in Kupang who were not strictly imposing the Kafa’ah system. Habib Ali Gudban of Kampung Bonipoi was one example. Habib Ali Gudban, a successful and wealthy businessman, had no objections when both of his daughters decided to marry Javanese men. He was aware that he had earned a highly respectable status in the community owing to the genealogical line, but said that is not something to boast about.\(^{136}\) He believed that Allah has created human beings with their good virtues and that marrying a non-*sadah* was not something to be ashamed of. He had taught his children the importance of pursuing a good education, instead of relying on their privileged status as *sadah*, for their future. ‘If my children are well educated, they would be better equipped to make choices, including in choosing a marriage partner,’ he said.

Another *sadah* family allowed two of their daughters to marry non-Hadhrami men. Their first daughter married a Javanese man, while the younger one married a man of Chinese descent who became *mualaf*. The decision to approve the marriage triggered tension. Her oldest son objected and the relatives criticised her and her husband for not setting a good example. She admitted that initially deep in her heart she felt somewhat reluctant to give permission. She explained that because the number of *sadah* Hadhrami

\(^{135}\) In Sulawesi, a *syarifah* who marries a man of non-*sadah* status may receive severe consequences, including the breaking of her familial ties (Sila 2005).

\(^{136}\) He claimed to be the 39th descendent of the Prophet. His grandfather Habib Hasan bin Muhammad Gudban married Naima binti Ali Birando, the daughter of the third *imam* of Airmata Mosque and descendant of Sya’ban bin Sanga, the founder of Kampung Airmata. He lives in Kampung Bonipoi and owns a number of business activities, including a fuel station.
in Kupang was small, it was difficult to strictly implement the Kafa’ah system. She added that even though her sons-in-law are not sayyid, she felt somewhat relieved because the wedding was conducted according to Arabic tradition:

Initially I felt we could not fulfil our responsibilities in finding habib for my daughters. However, it was my husband’s decision and over time I could fully accept the marriages knowing that both my sons-in-law are good Muslims.

**Family Association and Gathering**

Hadhrami of the same clan organised themselves in a family association. This association gathered once every month, usually in private houses, to conduct various activities. I had the opportunity to observe the gatherings of Alhabsy and Djawas families. In Kupang, Djawas clan formed a family association called Seroja (Serumpun Keluarga Djawas or Association of Djawas Family). In Indonesian the word *serumpun* derives from *rumpun*, meaning people descended from the same ancestor. Seroja, which was initiated in the 1970s by the late Abdullah Djawas, was the first Hadhrami clan association in town. The Seroja monthly gathering involves the chanting of *tahlilan* and *shalawat*.

The Alhabsy clan conducted the gathering on a monthly basis on Sundays. Interestingly, some Hadhrami called this gathering Maulid, because in this event they observed rituals similar with annual Maulid celebrations at the mosque. The gathering of Alhabsy clan that I attended took place in Kampung Airmata. The event started at 4.30pm and in the living room incense was burned. It began with the recitation of Maulud Diba,137 Surah Yasin, and concluded with the chanting of *tahlil*. Then a senior member of the clan touched the ashes of the burning incense and rubbed it onto his face. All attendees also did the same thing to their faces. After this ritual, meals were served.

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137 Maulid Diba contains history and veneration to the Prophet.
The other goal of a family gathering, besides the recitation of Maulid Diba, Surah Yasin and tahlilan, is to have an opportunity to discuss issues concerning family members. A wide range of issues were discussed there, from health to financial problems, jobs to schools, as well as a more private matter such as advice for young Alhabsy who was looking for a wife or husband. A young Alhabsy, who has been joining the gatherings for five years, explained that it is important to show other clans that the Alhabsy in Kupang are committed to maintaining this tradition. As for him, among the benefits are knowledge of his genealogical line and his family history. He added that he was able to write down all names of his paternal forefathers up to the Prophet. Moreover, this gathering had motivated him to find more about Alhabsy and being a sayyid from books and the Internet.

For the Hadhrami, participation in a clan association and regular gathering is a way to preserve the Hadhrami identity. Clan gatherings provide an opportunity to find a wife or husband of Hadhrami background and implement Ka’faah marriage system. This is especially true for sadah families, who prefer cousin marriage as a way of maintaining the genealogy to the Prophet. Cousin marriage is permissible in Islam as long as the two persons were not related through the same nursing mother. Clan gathering is also therefore an opportunity to introduce a sayyid or syarifah to the prospective partner.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have examined the religious practices in the second Muslim enclave of Kupang. The enclave comprises two kampung: Airmata and Bonipoi, and the Hadhrami community in these two kampung. Very similar to the first Muslim enclave, in Airmata and Bonipoi the village mosque and its leadership play a crucial role in the preservation of Aswaja tradition. Hadhrami in both kampung are important actors in religious dakwah, who fulfil their religious obligations as Qur’anic teachers. None of them
assumed the position of *imam* and the Qur’an learning centre maintains a degree of independence from the village mosque.

Since the 19th century the Hadhrami has been concentrated in Airmata and Bonipoi. I have shown that despite their small number, this group has played a very active role in social and political aspects, especially since the advent of modern organisations in the early 20th century. Both *sadah* and non-*sadah* Hadhrami have been well assimilated into Kupang society, but each group has been successful in maintaining their distinct identities. Assimilation can be observed in the wedding ceremonies, and in the *gambus* musical groups, among others. In both *kampung*, the Hadhrami (especially the *sadah*) maintain their identities by way of marriage, the genealogy book, and family gatherings. The Aswaja tradition of recitation of Maulid Diba, Surah Yasin, and *tahlilan* are maintained in the family gatherings.

Unlike the first Muslim enclave in Kampung Solor, the Muslim community in the second enclave is relatively closed to the influence of modernist Islam. The challenge facing the Muslim community in the second enclave comes from the internal issues. In Airmata, a dyadic structure that divides the community into Kampung Imam and Kampung Raja is facing a serious crisis with regard to succession of its leaders. In Bonipoi, the challenge also comes from within the community. Following establishment of Mosque Foundation, there has been a tension between the Foundation and the mosque leadership. The presence of Mosque Foundation, as required by a government regulation of 2008, has curtailed the traditional roles of *imam*. The authority of an *imam* is now reduced to matters related to prayers, while overall management issues of the mosque have been taken over by the Foundation.

Muslims in Airmata and Bonipoi are struggling to find a new balance. In Bonipoi, the changes have not caused disruption in religious practices of the community. In Airmata, however, the tension between the Foundation and *imam* has exacerbated the existing crisis in the leadership of Kampung Imam. Despite crisis and internal challenges, the communities in this enclave are committed to preserving Aswaja tradition, in the conduct of rituals, the celebration of important Islamic festivals, and the observance of lifecycle ceremonies.
Chapter Five
The Third Muslim Enclave: Kampung Oesapa

Introduction
This chapter discusses the Muslim community in Kampung Oesapa, which represents the third Muslim enclave in Kupang. Established in the 1970s, this neighbourhood is relatively new compared to the first and second Muslim enclaves. Muslims in Oesapa form the minority group representing 15 per cent of the total population of 24,158. In this kampung Protestants are the largest group (59 per cent) followed by Catholic (23 per cent) and Buddhist/Hindu (3 per cent).138 The Muslim neighbourhood in Kampung Bugis is located by the seaside, surrounded by non-Muslim housing and churches. A village mosque (Al Fitrah Mosque) and an Islamic kindergarten and elementary school are distinct features of this community. These buildings are visible to anyone entering the neighbourhood.

This chapter discusses how the Muslim community maintains the Bugis traditions in Islamic festivals and lifecycle rituals. The key Islamic festivals include Maulid and Isra Mi’raj (the ascension of Prophet Muhammad to heaven), while other rites celebrate akekah, circumcision, and the wedding ceremonies.139 It will also discuss about women mualaf (new converts), their conversion stories and their involvement in the women’s Majelis Taklim. Relations between Muslims and their Christian neighbours will also be examined.

I argue that Bugis Muslims in Oesapa maintain distinctive practices devoted to calendrical and lifecycle rituals that are critical to their religio-cultural identity. The Muslim community in Oesapa acknowledges the importance of performing the ‘five pillars’, mastering the Qur’an reading, and uttering a set of doa selamat (prayers for families and Muslims who are still alive), doa arwah (prayers for families who have passed away), and shalawat in a Muslim's lifecycle passages. In conducting these festivals and rituals, public readings of the book of Barzanji mark the distinct identity of Aswaja tradition.

138 Kampung Oesapa has five Protestant churches and one Catholic church (BPS 2011).
139 I selected Maulid, Isra Mira’j, akekah, circumcision, and the wedding eve to be discussed in this chapter because I had opportunities to observe those activities in Oesapa during my fieldwork.
An important feature of Muslim-Christian relations in this kampung relates to the fact that many Muslim men marry non-Muslim women. In this case, the non-Muslim spouses convert to Islam (and are referred to as mualaf or the new converts). I argue that conversion, as part of an Islamisation process, was conducted smoothly. In this process, the Bugis Muslim community, despite being migrant and a minority, appears to exercise a high degree of dominance over the local community in relation to intermarriage.

My fieldwork in Kampung Bugis in Oesapa was rather brief. My interaction with and visit to the informants were not as frequent as in other kampung. However, I managed to observe the conduct of some important occasions mentioned above. My informants in Kampung Bugis include Haji Badar Daeng Pawero, the family of Suaib and Rahma, ustad, members of women’s Majelis Taklim, and a number of converts. This chapter is divided into seven sections. After the introduction, the second section provides a brief description of the kampung and its mosque, the process of migration, and a literature review on Bugis tradition in the homeland and as migrants. In the two following sections, I present discussions on how the Bugis community of Oesapa maintains their tradition in lifecycle passages and important Islamic days. I also examine two aspects of their existence as a Muslim community in a Christian environment; namely, relations with their Christian neighbours and issues concerning conversion to Islam. The last section concludes the chapter.

The Muslim Community of Kampung Oesapa

Kampung Oesapa is located around 15 kilometres south of Kupang Municipality and is part of Kelapa Lima sub-district. In an area of approximately 2.23 square kilometres, it is situated along the coast of Kupang Bay. The settlement is well connected to outside villages, as it is located along the main road from Kupang to Atambua; the latter is a border town between Indonesia and Timor Leste. The main road, Timor Raya Street, is asphalted and in good condition, and is served by public transport such as intra-city public vans (angkot) and motorcycle taxis (ojek). Along the main road there are a number of hotels, motels, and restaurants.

Kampung Oesapa comprises 17 RW. It has relatively good public facilities. There is one community health centre attended by physicians and midwives, and three chemist shops. As in many other areas in Kupang, education facilities are managed by either government or religious organisations (mosque or church). The facilities range from

140 In Kupang, he or she will still be called mualaf even years after conversion. Mualaf (Arabic) implies that his/her heart is attracted to Islam.
early-age education (playgroups) to universities. Al Fitrah Foundation has one kindergarten and one Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic elementary school), while the GMIT runs one kindergarten and one elementary school. The government also runs junior and senior high schools. Kelapa Lima sub-district is also home to the State University of Nusa Cendana and two private colleges/universities. Many people are employed by the local government as well as by the private sector. Cattle and poultry husbandry are important sources of livelihood. There are also several types of non-agricultural employment such as ojek drivers, small entrepreneurs, and casual labourers.

As many as 800 people work in fisheries (BPS 2011). I was told that many fishermen own boats with outboard engines, for their own use or for rent. Quite a lot of people work as artisanal fishers and fish porters. Well-to-do fishermen usually engage in deep-sea fishing using large boats. Large boats can sail as far as the maritime border with Australia, mainly in search of trepang (holothurians, commonly known as sea cucumber)
cucumbers). This enterprise involves a large amount of capital and big risks. The construction of one of these boats costs Rp50 million (AUD 5,000). Many have crossed into the northern Australia border and been caught by the authorities. The boats are usually confiscated and burned and the fishermen arrested and jailed.

Haji Badar Daeng Pawero (born in 1925), a Bugis, was the first Muslim to settle there in 1973. He initiated Al Fitrah Mosque in 1980, the first mosque in the kampung, and was the founding imam. Migration of Haji Badar Daeng Pawero’s family opened the way for other Bugis families from Bone in South Sulawesi; many were relatives. These families were early Bugis Muslim settlers in Oesapa. Haji Badar Daeng Pawero explained, ‘In the beginning there were seven families, but the number was slowly growing and has now reached hundreds.’ It is common for local people to refer to the Muslim community in Oesapa as the ‘Kampung Bugis’ (Bugis Quarter).

**Al Fitrah Mosque**

Al Fitrah Mosque was built in 1980, approximately one year after the first group of seven Bugis families settled in the kampung. In the past these families had to attend Kampung Airmata or Kampung Bonipoi for weekly Friday prayers and Islamic festivals. Within just one year, these settlers were able to purchase 233 square metres of land. With help from the head of the local religious office, a Catholic named Nanggeang, a permit was obtained to build a mosque. A committee was formed, comprising Benyamin Thobias (a Protestant, Head of the Kupang Attorney’s Office) as chairperson, Abdurahman Manaje as secretary, and Pawero as a committee member. Haji Badar Daeng Pawero recalled that a number of Christian neighbours helped in the construction of the mosque. The construction of Al Fitrah Mosque was completed in 8 months and 15 days. The first Friday prayers at Al Fitrah Mosque were on 11 July 1980.

Haji Badar Daeng Parewo has been the imam of Al Fitrah Mosque since its establishment. In managing his daily responsibilities, he is assisted by four deputies, currently three Bugis and one from Flores. Their assistance is required on three major occasions. First, they are responsible for leading daily prayers at the mosque; weekly Friday congregational prayers; and they act as khatib at the Friday prayers when the khatib from the Office of Ministry of Religious Affairs is not available. Second, deputies are assigned to represent the imam at wedding ceremonies or other lifecycle rituals. Lastly, deputies are in charge of the organisation of Islamic festivals. Deputies also take turns to perform the call for prayers (adzan). As a rule, the selection of the imam and the deputies is based on the ability to read the Qur’an, to chant prayers, and
their ability to socialise with the community members. Only one of the deputies is a Haji.

In addition to the deputies, the *ustad* is another important figure in the management of Al Fitrah Mosque. As in many other villages in Kupang, religious instruction begins at the age of four or five, when children join a daily Qur’anic learning (*pengajian*) to train them in reading verses of the Qur'an. *Pengajian* at Al Fitrah Mosque was led by Ustad Maman. He also coordinated activities of Remaja Masjid. They organised *tadarusan*, *qasidah*, regular sermons, and helped the arrangements of Islamic festivals.

**Figure 35 Al Fitrah Mosque**

In 1983 Al Fitrah Mosque and the Family Association from South Sulawesi (KKSS or Keluarga Kerukunan Sulawesi Selatan) established a Diniyah religious school close to the mosque. As much as 70 per cent of the curriculum covers courses on Islamic religion, while the remainder are general courses. This follows the pattern of religious and secular education called *madrasah* in Indonesia. In 1994 the school was renamed Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, adopting a regular *madrasah* curriculum with some emphasis on Islamic features, such as obligation to wear the *jilbab* for female students and additional courses on Islam after regular hours. In Indonesia, *madrasah* schools are under the administration of the Ministry of Religion, not the Ministry of Education. In 2011, Madrasah Al Fitrah had 431 students, 75 per cent of whom had parents from South Sulawesi and 25 per cent came from Alor, Flores, Java, and Kalimantan. Al Fitrah Foundation, chaired by the youngest son of Haji Badar Daeng Pawero—Haji Arif Badar Pawero, has also run a kindergarten since 1983.

Al Fitrah Mosque is the centre of Muslim activities. Children aged 5-12 years attend *pengajian* every afternoon (except weekends) on the mosque terrace. *Pengajian* for
women mualaf are held on Mondays, and on Tuesdays and Thursdays Remaja Masjid conduct tadarusan. Women members of Majelis Taklim conduct two pengajian every month. On Fridays the mosque was packed with members of the congregation for Friday prayers, including university students, whose campuses are nearby. Celebration of Isra Mi'raj, gathering for breaking the fast, traweh prayers during Ramadan, and communal prayers of Idul Fitri and Idul Adha were also held at the mosque. The exception was the Maulid celebration, which was held in the open space in front of the Madrasah. Islamic wedding ceremonies are often held at the mosque.

**Bugis Migration to Kampung Oesapa**

Pawero has been the patron of Kampung Oesapa. Pawero was born in Cellu village, Barebbo sub-district, in Bone district of South Sulawesi in 1925; father J. Mappe Daeng Mekkelo and mother J. Cabbe. He only completed a three-year primary education and joined the Japanese military training for a short period when the Japanese troops occupied Sulawesi. He then found a job on a ship and began to sail to various towns in what is now Southeast Sulawesi. When Indonesia proclaimed independence in 1945, he joined a paramilitary nationalist group called the village police (polisi kampung) where he served as a group commander. Pawero returned to his maritime trading activities after the revolution ended in 1949. He married Khatijah Daeng Talumu. He went as far as Toli-Toli (Central Sulawesi), Kendari (Southeast Sulawesi), Tawau, and other towns on Kalimantan to trade in copra.

In the 1950s, however, South Sulawesi was not a safe place due to Kahar Muzahar and the Darul Islam rebellion. In search of a safer place, in June 1959 Pawero went to Kupang. He gave up his fishing job and moved to Kupang permanently. He settled in Kampung Airmata where some relatives from his Bone village had migrated earlier and done quite well. He recalled that when he first arrived in Kupang, there were a number of Muslim communities especially in Kampung Bonipoi, Kampung Solor, and Kampung Airmata. He started a new business in Kupang: selling clothes in markets. He travelled extensively to the local markets surrounding Kupang, joining a mini-van owned by a fellow trader from Savu. Pawero found opportunities in Kupang and his business began to pick up. By end of 1960, he brought his wife and children from Sulawesi to stay at Airmata. By 1961 he was able to purchase his own mini-van and went on the hajj pilgrimage in 1965.

Since his arrival in Kupang, Haji Badar Daeng Pawero had been taking part in and supporting religious activities of the Bugis community, such as the celebration of
Islamic festivals. In 1961 he was appointed to chair the Badan Amil Zakat, which was responsible for organising alms-giving in the fasting month. He and his wife began to organise pengajian for children at their house. Later the pengajian was granted assistance from the local religious authority. In addition to pengajian for children, Haji Badar Daeng Pawero organised pengajian for market sellers and traders. He also helped establish a mosque in Kampung Camplong, one of the oldest Bugis settlements in Kupang, in 1968. He maintained close relationships with other Bugis migrants, who had spread out to many villages in Kupang. He also began to help his relatives in South Sulawesi to follow him. Over the course of a few years he had helped as many as 40 members of his extended family to migrate and settle in Kupang.

In 1973 Haji Badar Daeng Pawero purchased land and built a house in Kampung Oesapa. At the time there were Christian households in Oesapa, but he built a house in an uninhabited area of the village. Later he brought a number of relatives and followers to build a new settlement. After settling there, he changed his business from selling clothes to fishing. He did quite well and began to engage in deep-sea fishing. Slowly more and more Bugis came to settle there. Pawero and his wife continued to hold regular pengajian for children in their house. Haji Badar Daeng Pawero has been active in Islamic organisations and was an elected member of the executive board NU of NTT Province from 1994 to 1998. The family has five children, the youngest being a government employee at the local office of Ministry of Religious Affairs. In October 1987 his wife passed away. He now lives with one of his daughters, in a house located across from the Al Fitrah Mosque.

**Bugis Traditions in the Homeland and as Migrants**

Migration is a typical enterprise of Bugis men before and after marriage. If a married man is engaged in seasonal or temporary migration, the wife will stay in the homeland and is responsible for keeping their wealth. A wife joins her husband if he migrates permanently. Sometimes the family will stay at home for years before the husband is ready to permanently settle in the new place and bring his family. Many maintain contacts and reinvest their wealth in their natal villages. Migration is a way of pursuing personal achievement and achieving a more respectable ‘social location’ (Millar 1989).

In the new settlements, a Bugis settler can become wealthy and obtain more esteem through marriage and religion. A successful Bugis migrant can increase his status by marrying a woman of noble family. Usually he would be asked to pay a high amount of bride wealth (Lineton 1975). Being Muslim is an important identity for a Bugis, at
home and as a settler. Successful Bugis Muslims consider undertaking the *hajj* pilgrimage as a major goal symbolising their personal achievement and higher status. A Bugis who has made the *hajj* pilgrimage to Mecca enjoys a respected position in the community (Robinson 2002).

The literature on Bugis often states that being Bugis and being Muslim are synonymous (Pelras 1996, Said 2004). Historically the Bugis people converted to Islam from the beginning of the 17th century. Pelras (1993) states that there is an obligation for the Bugis to fully accept Islam as an inseparable part of *pangadereng* (custom or *adat*).143

According to Pelras (1993), the development of Islamic identity among the early Bugis Muslim community occurred in several stages. The first stage was the introduction of the ‘five pillars’, circumcision, avoidance of pork, celebration of festivals, and Islamic ways in important lifecycle rituals (marriage and funerals). In this state, aspects related to moral or behaviour in public were not emphasised, therefore rent-seeking, gambling, alcohol and opium, and the old practice of giving offerings to sacred entities, were tolerated. The second stage was the adoption of Islamic institutions into *adat*. Bugis kingdoms began to reform the ruler’s council.144 Pelras (1993) maintains that an important impact of these processes can be seen in the changes in lifecycle rituals, which are now characterised with Islamic teachings. For example, in lifecycle rituals people read the Qur’an and the book of Barzanji.

In their homeland, Bugis society is highly hierarchical, but at the same time flexible and competitive (Millar 1989). The hierarchy can be seen in the complex division of Bugis people into the different layers of nobles and commoners. Bugis descent is maintained bilaterally, which means kinship can be determined by both the mother’s and father’s lines. After marriage, both husband and wife retain their natal membership (Pelras 1996: 152, Millar 1989: 25).

Despite its complexity, the system of rank offers fluidity, which can be observed in marriage, patron-client arrangements, and religion. In Bugis marriage, the flexibility is reflected in ceremonies related to the marriage, especially in determining the marriage partners, amount of the bride-wealth payment, and varying principles of endogamous

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143 The concept of *adat* in Bugis comprises four interlinked principle values, namely *rapang* (B. good social behaviour), *bicara* (B. law/jurisprudence), *wari* (B. rules of descents and hierarchy), and *sara’* (B. Islamic law and institutions).

144 The council comprises both *adat* officials (B. *paréwa ade’) and religious officials (*imam, khatib, bilal, and kadhi*). The religious officials, known as *paréwa sara’* (B. the instruments of the Sharia), enjoy equal status as their *adat* counterparts in the council.
marriage (Millar 1989, Idrus 2004). For noble families, first-cousin marriage is preferred. However, among the commoners, second- and third-cousin marriages are widespread. Acciaioli (2000) found that among migrants in Jambi (Sumatra), cousin marriage is still favoured. Many young men in Jambi were sent to their natal villages to marry their cousins. Saenong (2012) asserts that cousin marriage has transformed into endogamous marriage on the basis of village, sub-ethnicity, and even ethnicity in contemporary Bugis society.

In patronage alignment, a patron (B. tau matoa) can be a noble or a commoner, male or female, but is usually an elderly person who has the personality, knowledge, and resources to protect and guide followers. The alignment between patron and followers can be developed on the basis of familial kinship, residential (people of the same village), or occupational (people engaging in the same occupation) ties. The Bugis patronage system is also hierarchical. A patron may be a follower of a stronger and more influential patron (Pelras 2000). Patrons are expected to lend support to their followers in matters like finding a job, basic needs such as accommodation or land to cultivate, and to help out if the followers are involved in issues related to crimes or disputes. On the other hand, a follower would provide his labour, other required services, and loyalty.

The patronage system is maintained in migration. The common pattern of Bugis migration involves a process whereby a patron facilitates migration of their followers, in addition to a chain migration involving horizontal ties of kinship (Acciaioli 2000). To my knowledge, Bugis settlers in Oesapa comprise mainly commoners. However, I noticed that to some extent the patronage system was in place, represented by the role of Haji Badar Daeng Pawero, a respectable imam, who facilitated migration of a number of Bugis from Bone prior to and after the establishment of the village.

Important features of Bugis society in the new settlement include the practice of Islam in their everyday life and the maintenance of customs in ceremonies related to lifecycle and Islamic festivals, and also in the system of ranks and patronage. The typical pattern of migration of Bugis is often referred to as chain migration, a process whereby first settlers in the new destination invite relatives or act as patrons to summon their clients/followers to join them. Bugis migrants usually maintain contact with their relatives in the natal village, who are asked to take care of their properties, and they often go back to marry.

Searching of a better life is the primary motivation of the migration. As migrants, Bugis
are known for their reputation and status in becoming economically successful in the new places. Their dominance in economic and religious fields often allowed the Bugis migrants to act as ‘agents of assimilation’, where their domination and influence over the local people by way of economic and cultural practice are exercised (Ammarella 2002).

**Lifecycle Rituals**

In this section I will elaborate how the Bugis community in Oesapa maintain the cultural and religious practices from their homeland in the celebration of lifecycle rituals and Islamic festivals. For Bugis people, it is crucial to read the book of Barzanji, and to chant *shalawat, doa selamat,* and *doa arwah* in lifecycle rituals. The tradition of the reading from Barzanji was brought from Bone. Al Fitrah Mosque has formed a Barzanji reading group comprising 10 men including Haji Badar Daeng Pawero and the four deputies. The group is always present at *akekah, khitanan* (circumcision), and pre-wedding ceremonies (*B. mappenremme’, mapacci, and tudampenni*).

I made a number of observations where Haji Badar Daeng Pawero himself or other members of the Barzanji group led the chanting of *doa selamat* and *doa arwah* in lifecycle celebrations. *Doa selamat* and *doa arwah* began with the recitation of Surah Al Fatiha, the first chapter of the Qur’an. While uttering these *doa* (prayers), the attendees sat on a mat with their legs crossed and raised their arms to place their palms in front of their faces. In *doa selamat*, Al Fatiha is followed by prayers for the living, asking for protection and wellbeing. In *doa arwah*, Al Fatiha is followed by prayers for the dead, primarily asking for forgiveness and a decent place for their spirits in the afterlife. *Shalawat* is usually chanted at the celebration of Maulid.

Public reading from the Barzanji is also conducted when Muslims of Oesapa are preparing to go to the *hajj* pilgrimage. On this occasion, reading from the Barzanji along with *doa selamat* are undertaken every Friday night (for around 40 minutes) at the mosque before the pilgrims depart and until their return. The intention is to pray for pilgrims’ safety in their journey and for their families at home.

**The First Hair Cutting (Akekah)**

The hair-shaving ceremony for a newborn baby is known as *akekah* (from Arabic ‘*aqiqah*). Usually the baby is given a name prior to *akekah*. If the baby is female, a goat

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145 In his study on the Sayyid of Cikoang in South Sulawesi, Sila (1998) shows that there are ten members of *Parate* (readers of the Barazanj) doing *A’rate* (recitation of the Barazanj) in the celebration of *Maudu’* (the birth of the Prophet).
is slaughtered, whereas if it is male, two goats are slaughtered. In Oesapa, akekah is usually held when a child is 40 days old or less. However, the timing of akekah is not rigid. It can be done whenever the parents are financially ready. Once the parents are ready, they are advised not to delay, because akekah is considered an important occasion to express gratitude to Allah. Usually the ritual takes place in the house rather than in a mosque.

Following is my observation of an akekah occasion for a two-year old boy. The ceremony started at around 11am, before the early afternoon (zuhur) prayers. Two goats were prepared. One day before the ceremony, they were slaughtered and the meat was distributed to neighbours and orphanages. The parents invited the Barzanji group, close neighbours, and relatives. Haji Badar Daeng Pawero led the akekah ritual. In the living room, where the occasion took place, incense was burned. The Barzanji group members gathered in a living room, sitting cross-legged on a carpet, while women guests sat on the veranda. The little boy’s father was also in the room.

Haji Badar Daeng Pawero started the ceremony by chanting doa selamat. After that, Barzanji was recited. Banana and sticky rice were served on two trays and were placed beside the burning incense during the recitation. When Barzanji was completed, the congregation stood and performed shalawat. Meanwhile, a young coconut palm was placed close to Haji Badar Daeng Pawero. The father took the boy to Haji Badar Daeng Pawero, who placed scissors in the coconut water and then cut a lock of the boy’s hair. The young coconut symbolises a healthy and strong character, and expectation of a good life ahead. After the hair was shaved, the imam gently uttered a prayer in the boy's ear. Later the father took the boy and presented him to all members of the Barzanji group, who took turns to cut his hair. The hair was then weighed, and its weight was equated with gold or silver whose current price became an amount of money that the parents, on behalf of their son, should donate to the poor.
To conclude the occasion, Ustad Nursalim (a JT follower) delivered a sermon. He stressed that akekah had a symbolic meaning of parents paying a redemption fee (tebusan) to Allah to completely claim a child. A child essentially belongs to Allah and will remain so until the parents pay the redemption ‘fee’ by performing the akekah ceremony. Unless akekah has been undertaken, the parents do not ‘own’ the child. As a consequence they will not be able to recognise each other in the afterlife.\textsuperscript{146} He added that by completing the akekah, the parents symbolically claimed possession of the child which means that when the parents passed away the utterance of doa arwah from the child would reach them and help to lighten their sufferings in the afterlife. He stressed that parents who could afford akekah should do it at the earliest time possible.

\textit{Circumcision}

Circumcision is an important rite of passage among Muslims. Some studies conclude that in many Muslim communities, male circumcision is a hallmark of being a Muslim (Muhaimin 2006). In Oesapa, circumcision is undertaken when a boy is between five and seven years. The ceremony can be done in a modest or lavish fashion, depending on the social status of the parents.

If conducted at home, circumcision is announced and celebrated by inviting neighbours and relatives. It is also common for female babies to be circumcised when they are 40 days old or less. Babies are circumcised by dukun khitan. For adult women in Oesapa converting to Islam, however, circumcision is not obligatory. This practice was different than in Kampung Airmata, where adult women converting to Islam were circumcised (see Chapter Four).

\textsuperscript{146} Bowen (1993) found that the Gayo community’s kikah has a symbolic meaning of ‘redeem the child from God’. The parents are indebted to God and the sacrifice offered in kikah aims at cancelling the debt. Kikah also establishes ties between the parents and the child.
Many poor families opt for group circumcision (sunat/khitan massal) for their children. These are generally held by Muslim organisations as charity events marking occasions such as school holidays, celebration of Islamic festivals, or even the country’s Independence Day. Children from various villages can register for free.

On 23 June 2011, during the school break, I attended a group circumcision for children at the Muhammadiyah University of Kupang. A large tent was erected in the university compound for the occasion. Many guests were present, including Muhammadiyah leadership and the Kupang Mayor. The Mayor, a Christian, made the opening remarks thanking all parties for organising the group circumcision for orphans and children from poor families. He said that as a child he was also circumcised, and he stressed the importance of the procedure for health reasons.

All the necessary tools for the surgical operations, including anaesthetic drugs, were arranged around the tables (as beds) on the terrace of the university. There were five doctors doing the circumcision for a total of 51 children. The children were dressed in formal shirts called baju koko, with peci (cap) and sarongs. Most were accompanied by their parents. Doctors began to call them one by one to lie on the tables.

Syahran (six years old, the great grandson of Haji Badar Daeng Pawero), who was not registered as a participant, came with his mother Rahma. Rahma seemed anxious after being told to wait until the last participants had finished before knowing if the doctors were willing to do an extra circumcision for her child. Syahran at the beginning looked enthusiastic, but after a while became restless because his name had not yet been called. He was a bit disturbed on hearing some children crying and smelling blood from the
terrace. His face grew pale. Moreover, knowing that his participation was still unconfirmed, he asked his mother to cancel and go home. Rahma successfully persuaded him to wait a little longer. It was already 1pm when the doctors had finished circumcising 50 children. Luckily one doctor had no objection when he was asked to perform another circumcision. The procedure on Syahran was completed in around 15 minutes. After completing the circumcision, the children received refreshments and envelopes of money (Rp50,000 or AUD 5).

Several days later, Syahran’s circumcision was celebrated with a simple syukuran (thanksgiving ceremony) at home several days later. The house was small, only 36 square metres, and packed with guests. It is important for the parents to inform neighbours and relatives if their son has been circumcised. Neighbours and relatives helped in cooking and preparing food. The parents and other guests sat on chairs outside the house and at the rear of the building. The imam began the thanksgiving ceremony by chanting doa arwah and doa selamat. Incense was burned in the living room. Barzanji was also recited after the doa selamat. After the recitation, meals were served. Syahran was playing outside the house with his friends while the ceremony took place. When the guests were about to leave, Syahran was called in. He kissed his great grandfather’s hands and then stood beside him, while the guests came to congratulate him and gave him small amounts of money as gifts. Syahran kept smiling to the guests as if the pain from the surgery had healed. To speed up the recovery process, he was encouraged to bathe at the beach as often as possible.

![Figure 38 Syahran and his great grandfather Haji Badar Daeng Pawero](image)

The thanksgiving ceremony after circumcision is optional, held only if the circumstances permit. However, the recitation of doa selamat and doa arwah is obligatory. The parents are obliged to invite at least three persons for the prayers, one of them being an imam or an elderly person who is able to lead the recitation of the doa.
Syahran’s parents expressed their gratitude after their son was circumcised. Circumcision marked a transition state through which their son was now considered a Muslim and his good deeds would be rewarded.

**Marriage**

For Bugis, marriage in existing kinship networks is regarded as ideal. The most desirable arrangement is marriage between cousins, either parallel or cross cousins (Idrus 2003). Saenong (2012) observes that endogamous marriage is rooted in Bugis culture. Among the nobility, first-cousin marriage is desirable, while among non-nobles marriage between second, third, and fourth cousins is preferred. The preference for endogamous marriage is aimed at bringing extended family members closer together. Saenong (2012: 2) says that initially cousin marriage was strictly practised, but several generations later they also practised endogamy between Bugis families in the same village, or at least with other Bugis. The notion of *namu to laing napubainé assala' Ugi' mua* (B. it is acceptable to marry ‘the Other’ as long as s/he is a Bugis) reflects the importance of this principle.

Concerning social stratum, marriage should be between two persons of equal birth status. However, it is not unusual for a man from a lower status to marry a woman of a higher status. This is justified by the man’s personal achievements, such as his position in the bureaucracy, a higher education degree, or wealth (Millar 1989).

Selection of a marriage partner is typically based on the following four criteria: religion, kinship, status, and personal qualities. Religion is the most important criteria. A marriage partner has to be a Muslim, whether or not the partner originally comes from another religion. In their homeland, marriage between Bugis Muslims and non-Muslims are unacceptable and mostly unknown. However, intermarriages are not an alien practice for Bugis migrants living in heterogeneous places. In this case, a non-Muslim partner marrying a Bugis is required to convert to Islam. This relates to an expectation that part of a wife’s role is to pray for her husband’s safety and wellbeing (B. *tuling mélauangngi dêcêng lakkainna*) and to lend support to the household (Idrus 2003: 92).

Personal qualities for male and female marriage partners differ considerably. The desired personal qualities for women are wealth (B. *sugi*’), beauty (B. *makessi-kessing*), good descent (B. *mappasiabatireng*), and piety (B. *pagama*). These qualities complement each other, but as Idrus (2003: 7) observes, piety is the most important attribute, as it allows a woman to control her behaviour and protect the family’s *siri* (B. honour). A prospective husband is ideally brave (B. *warani*) to protect the family’s
honour, clever (B. \textit{macca}), wealthy (B. \textit{sugi'}), and a religious leader (B. \textit{panrita}) so he can guide his family. Possession of these characteristics is especially important if a man intends to marry a woman of higher status. Of these four qualities, Idrus (2004) notes that \textit{panrita} is the most important. A different emphasis is placed on piety between men and women. Piety for a woman (B. \textit{pagaman}) denotes the importance of an individual’s piety in everyday life, while for a man the term \textit{panrita} refers to the knowledge and authority as a religious leader in his community (Idrus 2004, Pelras 2000).

In this section I present my observations of two types of marriage in Oesapa. The first was between a Bugis couple and the second was between Bugis men and non-Bugis new converts. I particularly look at the changes between Bugis wedding procedures and ceremonies in their homeland and those in Oesapa.

\textit{Wedding Ceremonies}

In the Bugis tradition, marriages are always preceded by the presentation of a proposal (B. \textit{madduta massuro}), calculation and payment of the bride wealth and spending money for the wedding festivities (B. \textit{dui’ ménré’}), the Islamic marriage vow (\textit{akad nikah}), and celebration of a customary wedding party. In a Bugis wedding, the Islamic wedding ceremony and wedding party (\textit{resepsi}) are often held on different occasions. In Islam, \textit{akad nikah} is the most important step in the entire wedding procedure, as it officially marks that the union is legal according to Islam and the state. The \textit{akad} is conducted by an \textit{imam} and is registered in the Religious Office. The groom signs a marriage contract after repeating Islamic marriage vows and paying the bride wealth. Apart from the groom, the bride’s legal guardian and two witnesses from both parties need to be present in the \textit{akad}. The wedding party, on the other hand, is an \textit{adat} requirement.

I attended the ceremonies on the night before the \textit{akad} at the bride’s house in Oesapa. The ceremonies began after the evening (\textit{isya}) prayers and comprised four continuous events: the Qur’anic reading graduation ceremony (B. \textit{mappenretem’}), a public reading from the Barzanji book, a cleansing ceremony (B. \textit{mapacci}), and a night's vigil (B. \textit{tudampenni}).

In the graduation ceremony, also known as \textit{khataman}, the bride was required to recite the Qur'an in front of the guests.\footnote{Ability to read the Qur'an is essential for Bugis. Children are given religious instruction from kindergarten onwards. Qur'anic learning is usually conducted in stages and is given by an \textit{ustad} at a} She was accompanied by four women, including her

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\footnote{Ability to read the Qur'an is essential for Bugis. Children are given religious instruction from kindergarten onwards. Qur'anic learning is usually conducted in stages and is given by an \textit{ustad} at a}
grandmother, mother and aunties. On this occasion the presence of the imam and the Barzanji group was required. The bride sat and opened the Qur'an, then read some verses before the imam, witnessed by the members of the Barzanji group and close relatives. The imam sometimes helped to correct her pronunciation. After the bride completed the recitation, the Barzanji group performed a public reading from the book of Barzanji. The next step was a cleansing ritual for the bride. Wearing traditional Bugis dress, the bride sat on the floor near a bowl of henna (innai) leaves, with hands upturned. Close family members and relatives took turns to paint the bride’s palms with the henna dye. The ritual symbolised love and protection from the family to the bride. I was told that brides from well-to-do families were usually given jewellery or gold from their grandmothers, mother, or aunties. After the cleansing ritual, the imam led the chanting of doa selamat. The guests were not expected to leave the venue afterwards. Some guests stayed awake at the bride's house all night long (B. tudampenni). Meals were served and the guests socialised with each other until dawn to show respect for the bride's parents. At the house of the groom, similar rituals were performed for the groom, except for the cleansing ritual with henna dye.

FIGURE 39 BUGIS PRE-WEDDING CEREMONIES

mosque. Traditionally a celebration is held following a completion of each level (Pelras 1996: 194). The celebration can also be postponed until the pupil is ready to get married.
FIGURE 40 THE NEWLYWED AFTER THE ISLAMIC MARRIAGE VOWS
The Mayor (on the left side of the bride) and Head of Kampung Oesapa (on the far left) attended the Wedding Party.

In their homeland the system of rank determines how the bride wealth is calculated. The sum varies from one family to another, depending on the hereditary rank, wealth, and level of education (Millar 1989). In the Bugis custom, the calculation of bride wealth is quite rigid. For example, a bride of different social status may be worth 22 riyal, 44 riyal, 88 riyal and so forth. In the past, 22 riyal was equal to 22 perak, probably Rp22 million at the present time. In Oesapa, bride wealth in commoner marriages amounting to a 2-gram gold ring and paraphernalia for worship (seperangkat alat shalat) is acceptable. In addition to the bride wealth, the groom is required to pay a certain amount of spending money, determined by the bride’s family.

The second case were marriages between Bugis men and non-Bugis new converts, representing free-choice marriage and elopement. I met a number of women from Timor and other islands who married Bugis men. These women converted to Islam before the marriage. A marriage between a Bugis man and a female convert can be seen as a process ‘to make a non-kin into kin’ or to make an ‘outsider’ (B. to laing) into ‘insider’ (B. tennia to laing) (Idrus 1993). Upon becoming a Muslim, these women are expected to acquire proper knowledge of Islam. They use a number of sources to learn about their new religion, including their husband, their husband’s relatives, and by becoming a member of Majelis Taklim for mualaf in Oesapa. Many express the importance of becoming a good Muslim, by performing obligatory rituals, such as prayers and fasting, and learning to read the Qur’an.

Rosita (a mualaf) and her Muslim husband opted to elope because her parents disapproved of the marriage. She converted in 1996 and conducted a nikah siri with her
husband. By *nikah siri*, they became husband and wife, but the wedding was valid only according to Islamic law. Two years later, they went to re-marry at KUA and had it officially registered. Another informant who eloped with her Bugis Muslim husband said that her parents finally accepted her family after the couple had a child.

Many elements of a Bugis wedding are maintained in Oesapa. But I observed that the way the bride wealth was calculated in Oesapa was a less rigid method of calculation, reflecting the social stratification of Bugis migrants in Oesapa who were commoners. I also observed that new converts marrying Bugis men put considerable efforts into learning Islam. I found that for these new converts, attaining proper knowledge of Islam and being a pious Muslim are ways to act befitting a Bugis.

Regarding the celebration of Islamic festivals, Muslims in Oesapa celebrate the Islamic New Year, annual bath of Safar, Maulid, Isra Mi’raj, Ramadan, Idul Fitri, and Idul Adha. I was only able to observe two—Maulid and Isra Mi’raj—which I present in the following section.

**Islamic Festivals: Maulid and Isra Mi’raj**

In contrast to larger festivities of Maulid in other *kampung* such as Kampung Solor, Kampung Airmata, and Kampung Bonipoi, Maulid in Oesapa had no carnival aspects, and was a more simplified ceremony. Celebration of Maulid, according to Haji Badar Daeng Pawero, is a way to remember that Muhammad is the Prophet of God who calls Muslims to ‘obey what Allah commanded and avoid what Allah prohibited’.

The day before the ceremony, youth of the Remaja Masjid volunteered to erect the tents, stage, and arrange chairs for the guests in front of the Madrasah. They then put up a banner and decorated the stage with colourful streamers and balloons, and hung decorative eggs. When Haji Badar Daeng Pawero was still strong and healthy he would be the one who supervised and led the organisation of the Islamic festivals. But now he leaves it to his deputies and Ustad Maman. The ceremony started at around 10am on 15 February 2011, which was a national holiday for Maulid. The Head of Kampung Oesapa (a Christian) attended the ceremony. A fashion show of small children wearing ‘Islamic clothes’ opened the ceremony. *Qasidah* performance by members of women’s Majelis Taklim, and South Sulawesi dance by a group of child dancers wearing traditional Bugis clothes continued the celebration. After the performances, an *ustad* began his sermon about the importance of following the way Prophet Muhammad had lived.
There were several speeches after the ceremony, including one by the Head of Kampung Oesapa who expressed his gratitude for being invited as a guest, and his appreciation that mutual respect and understanding existed between Muslims and Christians in Oesapa. At the end of the occasion, all guests received a decorative parcel filled with fruits, eggs, and sticky rice. These are symbols of *berkah* or blessings. Sticky rice symbolises the bond of brotherhood among the Muslims, while eggs represent purity of the heart.

Haji Badar Daeng Pawero explained that Maulid rituals maintained in Oesapa were a mix of Bugis tradition from Bone and new elements practised by the Bugis settlers in Kupang. He said that sticky rice and eggs were of Bone origin, but Muslim people here were allowed to add new elements such as a variety of fruits and vegetables. For Haji Badar Daeng Pawero the important thing was that the Islamic festivals, especially Maulid, are celebrated, even in a modest way. He added, ‘We celebrate birthdays of our family members, so it would be a pity if we do not celebrate the birthday of Prophet Muhammad. Our children in particular should understand the importance of Maulid. That is why the youth from Remaja Masjid were assigned as the committee in the celebration of Islamic festivals.’

I had the opportunity to observe the celebration of Isra Mi’raj at the mosque on 29 June 2011. At 8.50am Haji Badar Daeng Pawero entered the mosque, where members of the congregation sat crossed-legged on the floor. The Remaja Masjid members began the occasion by chanting *shalawat*. The host of the ceremony then recited *basmallah* followed by the reading of the Qur’an (Surah Al-Azhab verses 40, 41, and 42) by the Qur’an reader:

> Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but He is the Messenger of God and the seal of the Prophets. God has full knowledge of everything. O you
who believe! Remember and mention God much and glorify Him in the morning and in the evening. He is who bestows His special blessings upon you, with His angels that He may lead you out of darkness into light. He is all compassionate toward the believers.

After the recitation of the Qur’an, an *ustad* was invited to deliver a sermon. In his lecture, he emphasised the importance for Muslims to uphold Prophet Muhammad as the last prophet. The event of Isra Mi’raj was the second biggest miracle (*mujizat*) given by Allah to Muhammad after the revelation of the holy Qur’an. The primary message of the celebration is for Muslim to obey the obligation to do *shalat*. He said:

Allah helped the Prophet Muhammad to undertake a journey from the Sacred Mosque (al-Haram Mosque) in Mecca to Al-Aqsa Mosque in Palestine. It took the Prophet only one night to complete an otherwise two-month trip on camel. It is difficult to grasp this event by reason alone, but this is a miracle from Allah. In the *mi’raj* (journey), Allah gave an order to the Prophet that all Muslims are obliged to do *shalat*. I believe that *shalat* is a form of *mi’raj* of human being towards Allah and to come close before Him. For a believer to abandon *shalat* is the source of calamity.

In his sermon, the *ustad* emphasised the importance of performing *shalat* as it is a way for human beings to worship Allah. The *ustad* gave Haji Badar Daeng Pawero as an example, saying that despite the physical constraints, Haji Badar Daeng Pawero always makes the effort to perform obligatory prayers and recommended (*sunnah*) prayers. The *ustad* encouraged Muslims in Oesapa to perform obligatory and *sunnah* prayers.

*Figure 43 Isra Mi’raj celebration at Al Fitrah Mosque*
Converts and Islamisation

Conversion as a result of marriage is common in Kampung Oesapa. There are no formal statistics of the new converts in Oesapa, but it is said that as many as 20 new converts were registered as members of Majelis Taklim for *mualaf* at Al Fitrah Mosque. These women *mualaf* are of different ethnicity, including Roti and Flores, and were previously Protestant or Catholic.

The Process of Conversion

From following stories from a number of new converts, conversion was done through the following procedures. Since most of the conversions were marital conversions, the ritual of conversion took place before the Islamic wedding vows. The ritual comprises *mandi bersih* (taking a bath to cleanse the body) assisted by an *imam* and witnessed by the future husband or, in some cases, the local religious authority. After bathing, a convert is guided to recite *syahadat* (testimony of faith). Then a convert is required to take ablutions and perform a *shalat*. Before these rituals can be performed, a convert should declare an intention (*niat*) to enter Islam sincerely only for Allah.

In the whole process of the conversion ritual, two witnesses are required. The witness can be mosque officials or certain figures in the community. The above procedures are the basic requirements for becoming a Muslim. Of all my informants, only one *mualaf* was circumcised before converting to Islam. A new convert will also change her name to an Islamic name, and change her identity documents accordingly. After legally becoming a Muslim, a process of learning the religion will begin. In Kampung Oesapa, the learning process of these new converts was facilitated by a Majelis Taklim of Al Fitrah Mosque, which was formed and dedicated to help these converts.

Rahma who converted to Islam due to her marriage with Suib, a grandson of Haji Badar Daeng Pawero, shared her story as follows. Her father is a Rotenese and her mother is from Amarasi (West Timor). When in high school, she was pregnant with Suaib and they decided to marry. To be able to do so, she converted to Islam. Rahma was fortunate because her father had no objection as long as Suaib was responsible and had a reliable job to support his family.

One week prior to the wedding ceremony, Haji Badar Daeng Pawero conducted a conversion ritual for Rahma. She had to perform *mandi bersih* assisted by Haji Badar Daeng Pawero and witnessed by close members of the family. Rahma wore a sarong. Pawero recited prayers during *mandi bersih* and helped Rahma with the bathing. The objective was, according to Pawero, to cleanse the sins and purify the body of the
mualaf—from haram foods and earthly sins. The prayers that Rahma recited during the mandi bersih were:

I am pouring this first bath water over my body as an intention to convert to Islam. I am washing my body in the hope that Allah will forgive my sins. I hope that Allah takes me out of the dark into the light as if I am a newborn.

After having a mandi bersih, Rahma was asked to recite syahadat witnessed by Haji Badar Daeng Pawero, Rahma’s husband, and her father in law. After becoming a Muslim, Rahma was asked to take a wudlu and performed isya prayer. Even though she had seen how a prayer is performed, she had no understanding whatsoever about the meaning of the Arabic words. However, Rahma believed she was destined to become a Muslim when she met her husband:

Having done the wudlu and covered my body with mukena, I felt clean and protected when I did shalat. It has always been my idea too that when coming before God someone must be clean and covered.

On this occasion she changed her name from Regina Messakh into the ‘Islamic name’ Rahma. She was very enthusiastic when explaining the meaning of her name. The word ‘rahma’ means blessing. ‘From that moment, I became Rahma. My marriage certificate and ID card bear the name of Rahma Suaib. However, old documents such as school certificates still bear my old name Regina Mesakh because it was not easy to change it,’ she added.

The other informant convert was Rosita (35 years). She was a Catholic from Kefa, a predominantly Catholic town in Timur Tengah Utara District and converted to Islam in 1996 when she married a Bugis fisherman. Now a mother of four, her name was previously Rosinah and she met her husband—a nephew of respected local figure Haji Ake Alidin—when he was working on a fishing boat. The path to their wedding was not at all easy. She explained, ‘My parents rejected his proposal. He even went to the respected figures in my village, including the village head and the priest, asking for permission. In my village, marrying a Muslim and converting to Islam was hard to accept.’

Despite disapproval from her parents, however, Rosita insisted on sticking to her decision. She said that it was her intention to convert. Rosita was Islamised by an imam in Kefa. She was having similar conversion rituals as other new converts. The imam led the bathing. He poured the water three times after reciting doa, then her husband also
poured the rest of the water. Then the *imam* led her to recite *syahadat*. She was given a new name, Rosita, and changed her legal identity accordingly.

For Harti Maryamah, whose parents came from Aimere in Flores, the process was slightly different. She was circumcised before having the bathing ritual, reciting *syahadat*, and changing her name.

I converted because I was marrying a Muslim. My husband is a Bugis man, from a very religious family. When I met my husband and found out his background, I knew that it was me who would need to convert. Initially my mother objected. However, I insisted. My parents eventually accepted my marriage after we had a baby. I did my conversion at Kampung Airmata. I was circumcised, bathed at the river, and recited *syahadat*. An official from the Religious Office led the occasion and legally registered my conversion.

The other new convert was Sauna, a Protestant who converted to Islam when she lived in Merauke, West Papua. Her father is from Roti and mother from Flores. Her conversion was also because of marriage. Conversion was the only way out that she and her boyfriend could think of, because she was pregnant and they had to get married. *Nikah siri* was conducted in 2004, and then four years later *akad nikah* was done and registered at the Religious Office when the couple moved to Kupang. Her husband is originally from Bau-Bau in Southeast Sulawesi. She explained, ‘my mother accepted my decision to convert, I think, that was because she was a Muslim herself before converting to a Christian when getting married to my father.’

The Meaning of Conversion: Stories from New Converts

While conversion rituals seem simple, what happens after the conversion is complex. There were issues and difficulties, naturally, of being a new Muslim. However, when asked about what had changed after the conversion, my informants related it to a wide range of issues: personal improvement, the feeling of becoming a cleaner and healthier person, as well as being empowered after becoming a member of Majelis Taklim.

Sauna told a story of what she thought had changed about her life after the conversion. She said that when she was a Christian she was underweight and often easily got sick. Now she felt healthier and she believeed that it was because of the decision to become a Muslim. Sauna refused to explain further about the illness, but stressed that she was convinced that Allah had healed her disease especially after she completed one month fasting in Ramadan 2006. ‘After practising fasting, I felt that I am healthier. Fasting
also taught me to control my anger. I became more patient. People said that my face is
glowing after I changed my religion to Islam,’ she added.

Harti related her conversion to Islam to what happened to her mother. As a new
Muslim, she began to actively learn the religion. She then became active in a number of
*pengajian*, and became familiar with some of the verses in the Qur’an and came to
believe that certain verses have a healing power. When her mother was sick, she put her
hands on top of her mother’s stomach while reciting Surah Yasin and chanting *shalawat*: ‘I did that for two consecutive days and my mother got well. I believed that
Allah had answered my prayers. That makes me want to learn more about *doa.*’

Harti is an active member of Al Fitrah Majelis Taklim for *mualaf*, and she is also
member of two other women’s Majelis Taklim and is actively involved in Forum
Silaturahmi Majelis Taklim (Majelis Taklim Association Forum, FORSIMATA) in
Kupang. She added, ‘I learn many things, not only about the religion but also the
organisation. I am just a housewife, so Majelis Taklim is the place where I can learn
new things and make friends.’

Rahma, on the other hand, saw that personal improvement was the major thing about
her life that had changed after becoming a convert. She learned that the most important
virtue, among others, of performing a *prayer* is to become a responsible person before
God. She explained, ‘We do not live forever. When we die, we will bring nothing
except our good deeds. God will hold us accountable for our life.’

Another convert, Junaedah, said that Islam is the most compassionate religion. She gave
an example that in Islam *mualaf* are being taken care of. They are privileged to receive
daging *kurban* (meat of goats or cows slaughtered for the Idul Adha ceremony). She
told about the state of poverty that her family was now in. Her husband worked as a fish
porter. If the ships did not catch many fish, it meant no fish for him to carry and he did
not get paid. She was struggling to get money to pay for school fees for her daughter,
who was going to high school.\(^\text{148}\) She said, even though she did not have the money just
yet, she was assured that God would fulfil their needs. She added, ‘I believe Allah has
determined our wealth. Islam is the most compassionate religion and Muslims will offer
helps to each other.’

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\(^{148}\) Junaedah explained that entrance fee for the high school that her daughter plan to enroll is Rp1.6
million (AUD 160).
Majelis Taklim for Mualaf Women

In our conversations, Haji Badar Daeng Pawero frequently mentioned that Islam stresses the importance of paying attention to mualaf. He said mualaf are people who will always be in need of guidance to Islam. Therefore it is an obligation of every Muslim to teach mualaf about Islam and to give the necessary guidance. The purpose of taking care of mualaf is to prevent them losing their new faith or returning to the old faith. He added, ‘That is one of the reasons why mualaf is an eligible group to receive alms (zakat fitrah).’

Since 1961 Pawero had facilitated conversion of 33 mualaf. They came not only from Kampung Oesapa but also from other areas in Kupang. Since the number of mualaf in Kampung Oesapa has been increasing, Haji Badar Daeng Pawero took an initiative to form a Majelis Taklim for mualaf women. Majelis Taklim for mualaf women was established at Al Fitrah Mosque in 2000. In its early years, it was run rather poorly and was revitalised in 2010. Rahma was chosen as chair of the Majelis Taklim for mualaf women in 2010, with an obligation to conduct a set of learning activities for its members.

Majelis Taklim for mualaf women conducts regular meetings for its members every Monday afternoon, from 4-5.30pm. A councillor from the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, named Ibu Ana, was assigned to give Islamic lessons at the Majelis Taklim for mualaf women. The number of the participants varied from 6 to 10 women aged 20-55 years old and the meeting took place on the mosque’s terrace. The main agenda of the meeting was learning the Qur’an. The learning was conducted in stages, starting from the beginner level where they were learning from a reading module called Iqra or little Qur’an. Those who acquire the ability to recite Qur’an verses in Iqra books may teach other mualaf. Upon completion of Iqra lessons, a pupil is allowed to continue to the next stage to learn the Qur’an or ‘entering the big Qur’an’.

The second agenda of the meeting was lectures on various topics about Islam. On Monday 27 June 2011 the topic was about morals (akhlak). In the sermon, Ibu Ana explained that in Islam a Muslim is required to have good conduct in daily life. It can be

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149 The other seven categories of people who are eligible to receive zakat fitrah are the poor, the needy, zakat collectors, those who are enslaved, those who are in debt, those who work for the cause of Allah, and the wayfarer.

150 I went almost every Monday to this Majelis Taklim and saw how passionate all these mualaf are to learn how to read the Qur’an. They will refer to the Indonesian translation of the Qur’an when they need to understand the meanings of certain verses.
simple things, such as being polite when talking to other people. However, a Muslim should be aware that human *akhlak* may be degraded due to certain *akhlak* diseases caused by *subhat* (human reasons) and *syahwat* (instinctive lust). *Akhlak* diseases may take the following forms: 1) being arrogant when receiving compliments from others; 2) satanic *syahwat* of hatred towards others; 3) beastly *syahwat*: rage or intense form of anger (which is described as a feeling like a burning fire); and 4) animal *syahwat*, that is, excessive desire to satisfy physical and sexual needs. Ibu Ana then emphasised that a Muslim should be able to avoid these diseases. In addition Ibu Ana stressed that it is important to live as a good Muslim/people with good *ahlak*.

In another meeting, the topic of fasting was presented. Ibu Ana explained that situations where Muslims are obliged to fast and that it is *haram* (forbidden) for women to fast during her menstruation period and within 40 days after childbirth. Another important topic discussed during the meeting was the obligation for Muslims to perform *shalat* (prayer) five times daily in any circumstances. If a Muslim is travelling and finds it difficult to get clean water for ablutions, he or she may replace it with *tayammum* (dry ablution), by touching the surface of soil, sand, or rock, or even a wall, and use the dust for ablution. Ibu Ana emphasised that Allah has given many kinds of derogations for a Muslim to perform *shalat*, regardless the situation he or she is in. There should be no excuses not to do it. Members of Majelis Taklim seemed to be particularly interested in the topic of rituals, such as fasting and *shalat*. They posed many questions after hearing Ibu Ana’s lecture.

**Figure 44 Women mualaf learning to read Qur’an**

Religious learning was a process that many of my informants found difficult to deal with. Not all *mualaf* enjoy the necessary support they need in learning the new
religion. As a chair of Majelis Taklim, Rahma was responsible for persuading other mualaf to join the activities of the Majelis Taklim. Some mualaf, she asserted, were hesitant to join the Majelis Taklim on the grounds that they were not practising shalat yet, or were still not able to read the Qur’an properly.

Sauna, who joined the Majelis Taklim in 2012, explained her motivation to learn shalat. In her understanding, the obligation of prayer is for the benefit of herself and her husband. If a mualaf does not perform shalat, the burden in the afterlife will consequently be on the husband, as an imam of the family.

In addition to Majelis Taklim, some mualaf learned about the new religion through a number of resources. Rosita first learnt Iqra and she started to learn reading the Qur’an only since 2008. She learned to do shalat from a book. Her husband, a fisherman, never taught her about shalat or how to read the Qur’an. She felt lucky that in Oesapa she had many friends of mualaf with whom she could learn together about Islam and how to read the Qur’an.

The other option was to take short intensive courses on Islam (pesantren kilat) organised by Islamic elementary schools, usually during the fasting month. Normally the participants were students and the class ran during school break. Rahma was one example. She was advised to take an intensive class at the Madrasah in Kampung Oesapa soon after she gave birth to her first son. The class ran for two weeks and the participants learned how to read the Qur’an and about Islam. She said that pesantren kilat was open to anyone but back then she was the only housewife in the class. She learned how to correctly perform shalat, take ablutions, and memorise doa.

As explained in Chapter Two, the 1974 Marriage Law and the prohibition of interfaith marriage by Muslim scholars were contributing factors to conversion. However, from conversion narratives of the mualaf, we can see that these mualaf considered their decisions to change their religion to Islam were not an external imposition (structural coercive power of the state) but rather an independent decision, on the basis of: God’s will, they believe that God has arranged for their conversions to Islam as a predetermined life path; they believe that embracing Islam has made them a cleaner, healthier person and sinless associated with rituals of bathing, circumcision, and

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151 Ideally a husband bears responsibility to teach the mualaf wife. However in practice more mualaf were taught by ustad/ustadzah or must learn about Islam from books. Some mualaf were learning Islam from their children, who since childhood would receive information about Islam and have skills in reciting the Qur’an from school or pengajian.
ablution/wearing a veil when praying; feeling accepted by the community through the practice of alms distribution; and feeling empowered by finding their roles in Majelis Taklim dedicated for new converts. This forum has provided them with a place to learn, allowed them to connect with other converts, and played a role in teaching/helping (motivating etc.) newcomers who convert and join Majelis Taklim later.

Haji Badar Daeng Pawero considered Majelis Taklim one of the best ways to guide new converts. However, learning the religion in the Majelis Taklim is only part of the obligation. He added that, Al Fitrah mosque officials encouraged the new converts to be involved in Islamic festivals, which is an inseparable part of being a good Muslim.

**Muslim-Christian Relations in Kampung Oesapa**

As a predominantly Christian village, Oesapa has five Protestant churches and one Catholic church. The Muslim settlement, where Al Fitrah Mosque and Islamic education facilities are located, is only around 200 metres from the GMIT Protestant Church and a Christian school, and it is surrounded by Christian settlements. During my fieldwork, I observed that the two communities had a relaxed attitude toward each other. Muslim-Christian relations were generally peaceful. Many informants referred to the history of Al Fitrah Mosque as proof of the peaceful relations. It was the head of the local office of the Ministry of Religion, a Catholic named Nanggeang, who helped the establishment of the mosque, by obtaining necessary permits.

Kampung Oesapa, however, suffered heavily in a riot in November 1998. Nevertheless, Haji Badar Daeng Pawero argued that the 1998 riots\(^\text{152}\) were quickly resolved, primarily because religious harmony was maintained through everyday engagement of both community members. These interactions work in several layers, for example the attendance of religious leaders at festivals is important. The mosque usually invites priests and pastors to attend the celebration of Islamic festivals. The elected Head of Kampung Oesapa, who is a Christian, also attended important Muslim festivals. At the community level they have engaged in many forms of interfaith mutual works. Members of Remaja Masjid (youth) often helped to guard the Christmas celebrations or sports competitions conducted at the church. During the celebration of Idul Adha, the Christian youth in the neighbourhood helped their Muslim neighbours to slaughter cattle and distribute the meat.

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\(^{152}\) See Chapter Two.
The other factor that strengthened ties between Muslims and Christians in Kampung Oesapa is intermarriage. Despite conversion to Islam, a woman convert usually maintains relations with her Christian parents and relatives. The *mualaf* and their Muslim husbands maintain the tradition of visiting and receiving family members at Christmas. The obvious mark of tolerance was that the host family would separate *halal* food and food containing pork, serving items on separate tables. Suaib gave an example, that he was surprised to learn that Rahma’s parents had stopped breeding pigs at their house. The decision was taken, according to Suaib, as a sign of respect so that he would not find it awkward to stay overnight at their place.

The attitude of some Muslims that I met towards pig husbandry was actually somewhat relaxed. They were used to seeing a pig passing by in their neighbourhood, or by the beach near the Muslim housing, and I never heard my informants complain about it. I also found a similar attitude among the Muslim informants, with some non-Muslim households making a living from raising pigs in stalls located near Muslim houses. In an interview, Rahma recalled that when a Bugis relative came to visit her family, she was curious to see a strange animal passing by the beach. Rahma said that she was astonished when told that that animal was a pig because back in Bone she had never seen one. For them, it was not a big deal, as long as they did not eat the meat and the pigs did not come into contact with their kitchen utensils.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have shown the development of the Bugis Muslim community in predominantly Christian Oesapa in Kupang. I have also discussed the role of Haji Badar Daeng Pawero in the establishment of the Muslim community. As an *imam* and a Bugis, Haji Badar Daeng Pawero acted as *paréwa‘ sara‘* (instrument of the Sharia) and *paréwa‘ ade‘* (instrument of Bugis traditions). The practice of lifecycle rituals and Islamic festivals in Oesapa revealed that the Bugis community retained elements of Aswaja Islam and Bugis traditions. In the Maulid celebration, the Bone Bugis tradition of serving sticky rice and boiled eggs was maintained. On the wedding eve, a cleansing ceremony (*B. mapacci*) was retained. An adjustment of tradition was made in the calculation of bride wealth, which was simplified, and spending money was open for negotiation. Important features in lifecycle rituals were the reading from the book of Barzanji, and recitation of *doa selamat* and *doa arwah*.

Religious instructions and celebrations of Islamic festivals were centred at Al Fitrah Mosque. Haji Badar Daeng Pawero was assisted by four deputies, one *ustad* and one
ustadzah in managing his daily responsibilities. Their roles were primarily to ensure that children, teenagers, and adults are able to recite the holy Qur’an, perform the five pillars, and actively participate in the celebration of Islamic festivals.

As a minority group, Muslims in Oesapa have unique ways of maintaining good relationships with Christian neighbours and relatives, as well as maintaining their identity as Muslims. Consumption of pork was prohibited, but Muslims accepted the presence of pig husbandry in the village. Muslims maintained exchange visits with their Christian neighbours and relatives at Christmas and weddings. On these occasions, halal food was prepared on separate tables. Usually, a Muslim man marrying a mualaf would come with his wife and children to visit his wife’s Christian family members, including on Christian feast days like Christmas. Tolerance was shown in relationships between Remaja Masjid and Pemuda Gereja (the youth group of the church), which usually helped each other in ensuring safety at the celebrations of religious festivals.

Al Fitrah Mosque facilitated the mualaf women in learning Islam through the Majelis Taklim. The new converts maintained independence in utilising available resources, such as ustad or ustadzah, and family members and relatives, to learn Islam. Despite being a minority, the Bugis Muslim community appears to exercise a high degree of dominance in relation to intermarriage. The new converts were expected to practice obligatory rituals, such as daily prayers and fasting, as a sign of piety befitting Bugis culture. Conversion took place in the form of learning and performing religious commitment. For the new converts, shalat, fasting, and reciting the Qur’an were the most important rituals. In this phase, the new converts began to discover the meaning of being a Muslim, as an individual, or as a member of a Muslim community where they shared a space and care with other converts and Muslims in general.
Chapter Six
New Dakwah in Kupang

Introduction
In previous chapters I examined three enclaves in Kupang (Kampung Airmata and Bonipoi, Kampung Solor, Kampung Oesapa) where Islamic communities have developed strong localised identities in their everyday lives and in the way they practise Islamic calendrical and lifecycle rituals. These are Muslim residential communities, whose activities are centred on the presence of principal mosques in the kampung. The vast majority of the communities are followers of Aswaja Islam, who seek to sustain a set of religious traditions marked by preservation of local traditions. Many influential local Muslim figures in these groups, including imam and scholars, are affiliated to the traditionalist organisation NU. The presence of the modernist organisation Muhammadiyah since the 1970s has resulted in a number of impacts on religious practices, especially in Kampung Solor and new Muslim neighbourhoods where Muhammadiyah dakwah activities are concentrated. From the 1970s to the early 2000s, religious discourses in Kupang have mainly been derived from negotiation and contestation between efforts by the Aswaja community to sustain traditions and those by the advocates of Muhammadiyah to modernise religious practices. Muhammadiyah has enjoyed considerable success in Kampung Solor with their modernisation agenda (see Chapter Three).

In this chapter I will examine the presence of JT and HTI in Kupang, which respectively were established in 2002 and 2008. These two groups are non-residential, dispersed Muslim communities, whose agendas represent a new form of dakwah. An important characteristic of the new Islamic dakwah movements is that the organisations are transnational. The new dakwah began in foreign Muslim countries and began to pay attention to Indonesia with its huge Muslim population as an important mission field. In addition, there has been increased visibility of Indonesian Muslims among the global Muslim community from around the fall of the New Order regime in 1998 and post-Suharto Indonesia when a more open political system came into place (Bruinessen 2011, Muhtadi 2009).

JT and HTI are not the first transnational movements to arrive in Indonesia. The first
influential movement was DDII (The Indonesian Council of Islamic Dakwah or Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia) in 1967, which in the latter period received support from Saudi Arabia. DDII facilitated the spread of the pan-Islamist Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi movements. After the success of the Iranian Revolution, Shi’i ideology began to attract more followers in Indonesia. As a response, predominantly Sunni Muslim countries, led by Saudi Arabia, actively supported a number of measures to prevent the growing influence of Shi’i. In addition to the strengthened support to Salafi groups and DDII, Saudi Arabia also sponsored the establishment of the Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies (LIPIA) in Jakarta from 1980 (Bruinessen 2011).

According to Metcalf (2002:2), JT is defined as ‘a quietest movement of spiritual renewal’, which aims at bringing about changes in the life of Muslims, encouraging them to return to the religious practices in the original form set by the example of the Prophet. This effort, Metcalf (2003) maintains, represents the ethical dimension of the movement. JT emphasises that the responsibility to perform dakwah lies with all Muslims, not only with the learned Muslims (ulama). These lay Muslims should be more educated and be able to spread the teachings of Islam to their fellow Muslims.

HTI is known for its radical goal of the global reinstatement of the Islamic caliphate. In pursuing this goal, HTI works in three stages: recruitment of as many members as possible; propagation within society; and ‘taking’ and ‘accepting’ power. Members are recruited initially in study circles (halaqah), and these are then expanded into networks of halaqah. After openly declaring their existence to the public, the next stage is to launch campaigns and propagation through means such as publications and mass rallies. The primary aim is to persuade Muslims to accept the idea of an Islamic caliphate, which they see as promising, and able to end social evils such as poverty. The third stage is to infiltrate and collaborate with elements in the state structure to gain political support. It is said that this method is adopted from the example of the Prophet, who had sought assistance from tribal leaders before migrating to Medina to start an Islamic state (Ward 2009).

According to Nisa (2014), as revivalist movements, HTI and JT have a number of similar characteristics. Both share the goal of purification of Islamic beliefs among Muslims, and strictly reject any forms of shirk (the association of anyone or anything with God), bidah (innovation which is forbidden in Islam), and taqlid (imitation of past interpretations of religious texts), and they place much emphasis on the principle of tauhid (oneness of God). In their mission to change the life of Muslims, they call for
implementation of Islamic teachings as practised by the Prophet and his companions. However, these movements have different strategies to achieve those goals. Tablighi Jama’at is perceived as a moderate movement that employs a peaceful approach. On the other hand, HTI tends to be more threatening in pursuing its agenda, not necessarily by advocating violence, but by using provocative rhetoric, such as in banners during rallies or in publications.

This chapter focuses on JT and HTI and explores the transformation of the nature of Islamic identity in the context of their presence in Kupang. It discusses the emergence of JT and HTI in Kupang, important figures behind their development, the dakwah agenda and strategies, and examines the impact of their presence on the Muslim community in Kupang.

Jamaah Tabligh: Preaching Tours by Lay Muslims

My first encounter with JT in Kupang was when I attended an akekah ceremony (hair-shaving ritual for a newborn baby) in Oesapa Village on 30 November 2011 (see Chapter Five). In this Bugis Muslim community, akekah is an important occasion, marked by prescribed rituals and a sermon by an invited ustad. On that occasion, Ustad Nursalim (a JT follower) delivered a sermon. I noticed that he was linked to JT from his physical appearance and outfit. He sported a beard, was wearing a tunic, and his trouser legs were above his ankle joints. It was interesting to observe that an ustad affiliated to JT was invited to deliver a sermon in a Bugis Muslim community at such an important religious occasion. His presence indicates that the Muslims of Oesapa welcome JT in the village and recognise his religious knowledge.

Ustad Nursalim talked about how to raise a pious child from the stage of pregnancy. Islam teaches that during the pregnancy a mother is expected to recite zikir (remembrance of Allah), perform daily prayers, recite shalawat, and do good deeds to others. By doing so, the ustad stressed, the child will grow up as a pious individual, and will be committed to religious duties, including daily prayers. It is also advisable that the birth be assisted by people with good ahlak (morality). When the baby is born, the adzan (announcement to pray) is to be recited in the right ear, and iqamat (calls for prayer containing the confession of faith) in the left ear. Then, recitation of one of the surah in the Qur’an, Al-Ikhlas, follows. In the future, the ustad explained, it is believed that the child will thus always be under the protection of Allah. The akekah ceremony is expected to take place when the baby is seven days old. It is also the time when the baby is given its names. Ustad Nursalim advised that the parents should be careful in
choosing names, to make sure the baby has proper and blessed names. He also stressed that *akekah* has a symbolic meaning for parents paying a redemption fee to Allah to completely claim a child. A child essentially belongs to Allah and will remain so until the parents pay the redemption fee by performing the *akekah* ceremony. Unless *akekah* has been done, the parents do not ‘own’ the child. As a consequence they will not be able to recognise each other in the afterlife. He stressed that parents who could afford *akekah* should do so at the earliest time possible.

JT (also known as Tablighi Jama’at) is described as ‘probably the world’s biggest transnational Muslim movement for faith renewal’ (Masud 2000 and Medcalf 1982 and 2002 in Noor 2010). JT is a transnational India-based movement founded by Muhammad Ilyas (1885-1994) in 1921 and formally established in 1926. According to Mumtaz Ahmad (2001, in Junaedi 2013), JT emerged as a response by Maulana Muhammad Ilyas to the many social and religious problems in India in that period. First of all, it was an effort to renew the Islamic faith and reaffirm religious and cultural identities of Muslims. In this context, Ahmad argues, the birth of JT in India can be seen as an emergence of an Islamic orthodoxy in a refreshed form. Secondly, JT was also a direct response to some aggressive proselytising Hindu movements. Lastly, JT also aimed at introducing the correct forms of Islam to Muslims who were still influenced by pre-Islamic rituals. Under the leadership of Ilyas’ son Maulana Muhammad Yusuf (1917-1965), JT expanded its influence to Pakistan, Bangladesh, South-East Asia, the Middle-East, Africa, Europe, and the United States (US) (Noor 2010).

JT was introduced to Indonesia in 1952, led by Miaji Isa in Medan, and arrived in Jakarta in 1955 (Amrullah 2008: 4). JT did not become popular until 1974 when Masjid Jami Kebon Jeruk,\(^\text{153}\) Jakarta, was officially chosen as the *markaz* (headquarters of JT in Indonesia). The selection of this mosque was after several unsuccessful attempts to infiltrate other mosques in Jakarta. The Kebon Jeruk Mosque welcomed JT because the *imam*, H Zulkafar, was recruited as a JT member. JT then appointed Zulfakar as one of the *amir* (leader) and the mosque became the centre of JT activities in Indonesia. The establishment of the *markaz* marked the beginning of JT’s expansion across the country and it started to gain prominent followers (Azra 2006, Amrullah 2011, Junaedi 2013).

\(^{153}\) Masjid Jami Kebon Jeruk was built in 1718. It was a *mushala* (a place for prayer, smaller than a mosque). In 1786, it was transformed into a mosque with the financial assistance of a Muslim couple from China, Chau Tsien Hwu and his wife, Fatimah Hwu (Anom 1998 in Amrullah 2008).
Noor (2010) maintains that JT has been successful in communities of different cultural, language, and ethnic backgrounds. Adaptability to the local environment is an important factor behind the spread of JT across Indonesia.

In NTT Province, JT was established in Kupang, Rote, and Flores. I interviewed a number of key JT members in Kupang, namely Ustad Nursalim, his wife Maghafiroh, and Rajab Ghani. Ustad Nursalim originally came from Ngawi district in East Java, where he spent a number of years working in a pesantren before joining a JT mission to Flores. Ustad Nursalim and Maghafiroh were married in August 2005 and moved to Kupang shortly after. Now the couple have three children. Initially Ustad Nursalim and his wife lived in Sikumana Mosque and then moved to Namosain village in Alak sub-district. Rajab Ghani, a Bugis person originally from Sulawesi, has been a member of JT since 2002 when he lived in Rote.

These informants told me that as a dakwah movement, JT does not have an official name. According to Nursalim, it is the people who give certain names to the group. In Lampung and East Java, for example, the movement is known as ‘Jamaah Jaulah’. Both Ustad Nursalim and Rajab Ghani were unable to recall when exactly JT came to Kupang. However it estimated that JT began its early mission in Kupang in 2002.

According to Ustad Nursalim, JT conducts two types of works in Kupang. The first is kerja makoni, which is performing dakwah to followers’ family members and close neighbours. For example, asking Muslim neighbours to come to pray at the mosque, to attend taklim (religious study groups), and to attend Qur’an recitations. The basic regulation is that a member is expected to spend most of his dakwah time doing kerja makoni. The second type is khuruj, which requires travel to another city, island, or country. In performing khuruj, which literary means ‘going out (keluar) to do dakwah (preaching tour)’, members are expected to leave their families behind to work on religious tasks for a set period of time. A member should spend a maximum of only 10 per cent of his time on khuruj. For example, in one month a member may use up to three days travelling, or up to 40 days in one year. Ustad Nursalim explained that khuruj, despite requiring only 10 per cent of time, is actually the core mission of JT. “The primary aim of khuruj is to call other co-religionists to implement Islam correctly,” he explained.

Instruction to perform khuruj, according to Hussain bin Muhammad Ali Jabir (1987, in

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154 The word ‘jaulah’ comes from Urdu language, meaning traveling around.
Kemala 2008), is stated in the Qur’an, in the verse of Surah Al-Imran, which says: “You are the noblest community being raised up for mankind. You enjoin justice and forbid evil. You believe in God.” The term ‘being raised up’ (A. *akhirat*, I. *dilahirkan/dibesarkan*) is interpreted as an obligation to perform *khuruj* (literally meaning ‘going out’ in Arabic) or a *dakwah* tour to the Muslim community. A different explanation is given by Junaedi (2013), who maintains that the term ‘*khuruj*’ is derived from ‘yakhruj’ stated in Surah An-Nisa verse 100 in the Qur’an:

> He that leaves his home in the cause of God [fi sabilillah] shall find many a refuge in the land and great abundance. He that leaves [yakhruj] his dwelling to fight for God and his apostle and is then overtaken by death shall be recompensed by God. Surely God is forgiving and merciful.

The destination of *khuruj* varies. A member of JT in Kupang can go as far as another city (Atambua at the border of Timor), other islands (Rote, Flores), or other countries. Ustad Nursalim had just visited Java, Flores, and Kupang. According to Rajab, when it comes to travelling to other countries, members of JT are advised to prioritise India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh (known by the term IPB). If a member has completed a mission to IPB, then the next destinations could include other Muslim countries or even Western countries that have Muslim communities, for example the United Kingdom (UK). Rajab told his story of doing *khuruj* abroad:

> I went to India, Bangladesh, and Malaysia in 2006 [as part of an Indonesian delegation]. Allah gives *rejeki* [halal earnings] as He pleases, so I could afford to pay for the trip. I had no difficulties in obtaining visas to enter these countries. The program of the visit to these countries was similar to those in mosques here. Language has never been a serious obstacle, because interpreters were easy to find among us. In each group, there were members who were knowledgeable in foreign languages, such as Urdu and Arabic. So we delivered a sermon in Bahasa Indonesia, and then simultaneously translated into Urdu or Arabic, and the other around in the discussion session. There were three interpreters in one session. The translation was good, very easy to understand. I wish my next trip is to Japan, if God permits. JT *dakwah* mission has spread in more than 200 countries (Rajab Ghani, Interview, 19 February 2012).

*Khuruj* also serves as a means of coordination of JT activities at higher levels. It raises opportunities to connect with other branches and to start certain types of cooperation in the *dakwah*. Ustad Nursalim gave an example. A few years before, he attended
Pesantren Sirojul Mukhlasin (a JT pesantren founded by KH Siradj and KH Mukhlasin) in Magelang district of Central Java. This pesantren is linked to JT in NTT, Kalimantan, and Papua. The result of this visit was a decision to open a branch in Kupang. Back then there were already a number of Muslims in Kupang who associated themselves with JT. These people responded positively to the plan and Ustad Nursalim was sent to help with its execution. He and his wife began to teach the Qur’an to children there:

I got an offer to lead a new JT pesantren in Kupang. I did not choose to come here, but here I am now. We must be ready to be stationed anywhere, depending on the instruction from the pesantren (on Java), because the main mission is to open a pesantren here. I am here for a cause I believe in, to call Muslims to implement Islam correctly. (Ustad Nursalim, Interview 12 March 2012)

The other important principle concerns the funding of activities. It is highly desirable for a JT member to work to earn his own income, because it is the obligation of a member to fund his dakwah activities. Rajab Ghani earned money from selling imported perfumes from the Middle East and he said the income is sufficient to allow him to perform khuruj. Every time he travels, he is never a burden to his family. ‘In the beginning some members may find it difficult to fund frequent travels, but if committed, they will be able to afford it,’ he added.

In Kupang, JT activities are centred at Nurussa'adah Grand Mosque (Masjid Raya), the biggest mosque in the city, which is owned by the government. The mosque is situated in a very strategic location and is easily accessible. Rajab explained that the reason why the Grand Mosque was chosen is because JT considers big mosques the best places to perform dakwah. JT members are not required to ask for permission because it is a government building and open to the public. Moreover, according to Rajab, every mosque belongs to Allah and is the house of God, so every Muslim has the right to use it.

In the Grand Mosque, a gathering for JT members is organised every Thursday, while members of the executive body meet every Tuesday. The gathering on Thursdays takes the form of a lecture in the evening, after maghrib prayers and finishes before isya prayers (approximately 40 minutes). After performing isya prayers the congregation listens to the reading of stories of the Prophet and his close friends, and heroic stories of the early generations of Muslims. Every week around 70 members usually turn up, out
of the total 100 JT members in Kupang. On another occasion, those in attendance listened to stories of other members who had recently returned from *dakwah* travel. This activity is called *takrir*, reporting the result of a mission, and the report is called *karguzari*. The Tuesday gatherings are filled with an organisational agenda. For example, every four months representatives of JT in Kupang convene in a national meeting, and they report results of the meeting.

Members of JT in Kupang were actively doing *kerja makoni* by visiting mosques on a regular basis. The regular programs at the village mosque level include visiting other members (*tauziah*) performing *dakwah* (lecturing in a small group) and teaching or practising *zikir*. There is also a discussion (*muzakarah*) program, where members discuss various topics on Islam. Qur’an recitation is usually done in the morning (called *mutalim*). Every day groups of JT members are on the move. Therefore, some mosques will be visited daily, and other mosques once every two days. According to Rajab, to his knowledge, so far visits from JT members had not received any kind of resistance from the local people.

JT calls its followers to base the performances of daily routines on the six basic principles of the movement (A. *al-ushulus sittah*). The first principle is *syahadat* (the same as the basic principles for all Muslims), a belief that there is no God but Allah and Prophet Muhammad is His messenger (A. *laa illaha illallah Muhammadan rasulullah*). The second principle is prayer, which is ideally performed with full concentration and submission to God. The third is knowledge (*ilmu*) and praising God (*zikir*). A Muslim is required to obtain knowledge about the religious teachings. The fourth principle is to treat other Muslims with full respect (A. *ikramul muslimin*). Junaedi (2013) maintains that the implementation of the fourth principle can be observed in JT activities. JT advocates do not consider differences in religious *mahzab* or performances of rituals as a problem. JT advocates welcome Muslims coming from various *mahzab* backgrounds, and the *dakwah* focuses on calling for Muslims to perform their obligations properly. ‘Properly’ here means among others, for example, to do the five times daily prayers in congregation at the mosque and to join the Qur’anic learning and religious study group.

The fifth principle is declaration of intention sincerely for Allah (*niat ikhlas*). Allah will be pleased if a Muslim performs the daily activities with the main intention for God.

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155 This is only an estimate provided by Ustad Nursalim. He repeatedly mentioned that as the *dakwah* movement, JT is not adopting any rigid organisational structure, therefore members were not registered.

156 Read more on *karguzari* in Metcalf (2003).
The sixth and the most defining principle of JT is *tabligh*, which means to perform a *dakwah* tour (A. *da’wa wa al-tabligh*) in the neighbourhood or by travelling to other places. *Tabligh* is a method through which JT can preach about the first five principles to other Muslims (Kemala 2008, Amrullah 2011, Junaedi 2013).

JT in Kupang also has women members, whose numbers are fewer than for men. They convene once a month, not at the Grand Mosque, but in private houses. In the monthly meeting, the lecture is delivered by a male member. When asked about a reference book for JT women, Maghafiroh, Ustad Nursalim’s wife, showed me one entitled *Fadhilah Wanita Shalihah* (*The Virtue of Pious Women*). Authored by Abdurrahman Ahamda As-Sirbuny (n.d.), the book among other things talks about the importance of pursuing religious knowledge, piety, the relationship with one’s husband, polygamy, *aurat*, and some practical issues including how to manage the husband’s earnings, what to consider when travelling, at work, divorce, and women in politics.

Maghafiroh explained that Tablighi women also have a similar duty to perform *khuruj*. The regulation is less demanding for women. They are expected to spend at least three days in three months, 15 days in one year, and 40 days in two years. In performing *khuruj*, Tablighi women have to be accompanied by a *muhrim*, such as a woman’s immediate family member, her husband, her husband’s immediate male kin, or another woman, and be granted permission from her husband. In the book *Fadhilah Wanita Shalihah* it is argued that in accordance with instruction from the Prophet, a woman who is faithful to God and the Judgement Day is not allowed to travel more than three days unless accompanied by her father, her husband, her brother, or her son, all of whom are considered as her *muhrim* (As-Sirbuny n.d.: 110).

Amrullah (2008) suggests that over recent years, more women have become involved in JT. Previously, JT in Indonesia was a male-dominated enterprise, where women’s role in *dakwah* was not encouraged. JT men dominated the mosque, while women were required to perform a number of activities, including religious study group (*taklim*), and daily study, at home. A visit from Mastura Jamaat (group of Tablighi women) from Pakistan to Indonesia in 1985 opened up an opportunity for JT women in Indonesia to play a bigger role in *dakwah*. Amrullah (2008) further explains that initially lower

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157 The term referring to parts of the body that must be covered in public as stipulated in the Qur’an, which is subject to a number of interpretations.

158 When it comes to daily routines, women are allowed to go alone if it is a short distance, for example to the market.
middle-class and poor housewives joined because of male family members’ association with JT.\textsuperscript{159}

Maghafiroh explained that she became a JT member simply because her father had already been an active member in JT Magelang (Central Java). She started with active participation in a range of JT activities because she was instructed by her father, before eventually becoming a member:

\begin{quote}
I joined many JT activities since I was a child, but back then I could not really understand the meaning. Upon completing Madrasah Tsanawiyah, I was told to enrol in a JT Pesantren Madinatut Taklim of Jombang [East Java]. Its leader was Kyai Muhammad [a JT follower]. It was when I returned to Magelang that I met my husband Ustad Nursalim. (Maghafiroh, Interview 12 March 2012)
\end{quote}

When asked to express her feelings after becoming a member of JT, Maghafiroh said it allows her to get closer to Allah and to be afraid of doing sinful acts because she has been taught about correct Islam. She believes that the modern era has brought negative consequences, for example hedonism, drugs, infidelity, etc. Therefore she is thankful to have been given proper guidance on Islam. Tablighi women are taught how to behave in front of their husbands and to fully commit themselves in performing daily prayers. They are not allowed to use birth control. It is advisable to give a time interval between pregnancies, but they cannot avoid having children, because the Prophet has asked people to increase the number of Muslims on earth. When I visited her in her house, she was lulling her six-month baby to sleep. She considered herself ‘lucky’ for giving birth to three children with a comfortable time interval in between. Many of her colleagues in JT become pregnant and deliver a baby almost every year.

Maghafiroh explained that Tablighi women are taught to accept polygamy. In her understanding, polygamy is permissible in Islam because Allah knows what we do not know. For example, naturally women are able to bear children until they are 45 before entering menopause. Meanwhile, men are able to reproduce until they are 70. That is why polygamy is permissible under certain circumstances. As a creator, Allah knows his creations better than us. As a JT woman, she has been taught that giving permission (to polygamy) and being sincere is a noble virtue. She showed me that the basis for

\textsuperscript{159} Amrullah relates the rise in professional women’s association with taklim to their independent social and professional lives, and observes the emergence of taklim in upper-class suburbs of Jakarta. For more detail see her study on JT’s house-based women’s prayer group (Amrullah 2008 and 2011).
polygamy could be found in Surah An-Nisa: 3 (which was also quoted in the book *Fadhilah Wanita Shalihah*), which says:

> If you fear that you cannot treat orphan girls with fairness, then you may marry other women who seem good to you: two, three, or four of them. But if you fear that you cannot maintain equality among them, marry one only or any slave girls you may own. This will make it easier for you to avoid injustice.

In her understanding, the book argues that polygamy is not only permissible in Islam, but is encouraged (A. *sunnah*), because the Prophet and his companions also had more than one wife. The Prophet has asked Muslim couples to increase the number of the Muslim population on earth. However, she found it difficult to answer when being asked whether or not she is ready if in the future her husband decides to take a second wife:

> If my husband wants to take a second wife, I will try to find out the reason. In my marriage, I have been trying my best to show obedience to my husband, not betraying the marriage, and satisfy his needs. By doing so, I am sure that Insha Allah my husband will not even think about taking a second wife. I think the key is to get to know your future husband, from other persons or relatives, whether he is a good Muslim or not.

In Kupang, members of JT can be easily recognised from their physical appearance. As a principle, a JT member, either male or female, is encouraged to imitate the Prophet, as far as the circumstances allow. This principle applies at three levels. The lowest level is called *suro*, imitating the physical appearance of the Prophet, including the way the Prophet dressed, his hairstyle, etc. (the information about his appearance can be found in *hadith*). As for women, they are advised to follow the wives of the Prophet, for example, wearing loose dresses and covering their faces and hands. The second level is called *siroh*, imitating the way the Prophet lived his life to the extent it is possible. For example, they will try to conduct daily activities such as sleeping, eating, drinking, educating their children, marrying the daughter, etc., following the example set by the Prophet.

The highest level is called *sarioh*, which means imitating the spirituality of the Prophet. At this level, a member is required to try their best to follow the way the Prophet followed the commands of God, for example, always fearful of Allah knowing that Allah is watching; believing in Allah (*taqwa*) and accepting fate (*tawaqal*); being
sincere when giving charity (the fifth principle of the JT movement). Another tradition of the Prophet that the JT followers consider important is the practice of zikir (the third principle of JT movement). This can be done individually or in a group. Zikir is considered a way to surrender one’s self to the almighty, reflecting the essence of the spirituality of the Prophet. The purpose of doing zikir is to seek salvation in the afterlife.

In terms of physical appearance, generally Tablighi women wear a full-face veil, but it is not always the case. According to Maghafiroh, the use of veil is not an exclusive character of Tablighi women. Salafi women also wear the full-face veil and she knew some Tablighi women who did not wear it. Maghafiroh explained about the use of the full-face veil:

The most important thing is really to cover the aurat. The full-face veil is not obligatory if a woman is wearing hijab. It is recommended when the situation permits. If it does not, a loose dress and hijab will do. But again the full-face veil is the most desirable. (Maghafiroh, Interview 12 March 2012)

Noor argues (2008, 2009) that JT’s expansion happens in a number of stages. The first stage is the probing mission, where a small delegation of JT is sent to ‘test the ground’. A better-equipped mission involving more labour and capital soon follows. JT begins to create a local network, primarily based in an existing mosque or other community centres. Slowly JT is able to take over the mosque, or able to develop its own mosque. In addition to recruiting members, its mission also aims at securing financial and logistical support from local members. The whole process can be seen as arrival, consolidation, and development.

Since its arrival in Kupang, JT can be said to have completed the stage of consolidation and is currently enjoying significant development. After a number of probing missions from Java, Rote, and Flores, JT began to consolidate its mission in Kupang by conducting a better-equipped mission from the early 2000s, and was successful in recruiting members. The consolidation can be said to have been completed when JT was able to use Masjid Raya (Grand Mosque) as a base for its regular activities. The Grand Mosque provides a base for visibility and expansion and now JT Kupang is able to conduct its mission in village mosques across Kupang. JT also built its own pesantren and mosque called Sirojul Hidayah in 2011 in the Alak sub-district, on the outskirts of Kupang. It has around 50 students who come in the afternoon to study the

160 Interview with Ustad Nursalim (12 March 2012).
Qur’an. Unlike mainstream pesantren on Java, the students do not live in the school boarding house.

These developments show that JT in Kupang has obtained sufficient support from the local members as well as connections from JT on Java. In terms of the organisational structure, JT Kupang has been granted the status of an independent unit by the central command of the JT in Jakarta. It has the authority to send and receive delegations under certain conditions set out by JT in Jakarta. JT in Kupang is also allowed to organise its own activities funded by contributions from local members.

An important characteristic of JT in Kupang is that each of the members, male and female, is requested to be able to perform *dakwah*. For them, *dakwah* conveys a reminder to other Muslims to implement the Islamic teachings correctly. It is not only a duty of an imam or ulama, but a duty of all Muslims. This is a strong message to members of JT in Kupang. Women especially were encouraged to actively take part in a noble cause, by undertaking a *dakwah* tour, or by performing it to their peers. This encouragement arguably has attracted more Muslims to join JT in Kupang. Both Ustad Nursalim and Rajab were convinced that more Muslims in Kupang would join JT in the future, and more JT members would be able to afford to do *khuruj*. However, they also emphasised that JT *dakwah* should be performed in a persuasive way. It is an important principle of JT *dakwah* that a decision to join JT must be taken with sincerity (*ikhlas*) because of Allah.

**Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI): Saving Indonesia through *syari’at***

Sheikh Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani (1909-1977) founded HT (the Party of Liberation) in Jerusalem as a political party with an Islamic ideology in 1952. Following his exile, HT began to gain support in some countries. However, due to the repressive political system in the Middle East, many of its proponents fled and opened HT branches in Western countries including Australia (Muhtadi 2009). In the beginning, Sheikh al-Nabhani focused this campaign in Arab countries, such as Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt. It was initially not intended as a global movement as it is now. The organisation has as its objectives reawakening of the Muslim world, detachment of Muslims from the Western social, political, and economic ideas and systems, and the reinstatement of the Islamic caliphate system (Osman 2010).

HT found its way to Indonesia from Australia in the 1970s. A Palestinian-born migrant in Sydney, Abdurrahman al-Baghdadi, introduced HT to Abdullah bin Nuh, who led the Al-Ghazali pesantren (Islamic boarding school) in Bogor, West Java. Abdullah bin Nur
visited Sydney. He then invited al-Baghdadi to Indonesia to work on the dissemination of HT ideas to students and to start recruiting followers (Muhtadi 2009). After several visits to Indonesia between 1979 and 1980, al-Baghdadi decided to migrate to Indonesia. He taught Arabic at Abdullah bin Nuh’s pesantren, and started a chapter of HT in Indonesia (Osman 2010).

HTI (Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia) quickly enjoyed significant growth. Since its initial phase, the pesantren has been the centre of the HT movement in Indonesia. Students were recruited through halaqah (study circles) and daurah (training) methods. The first batch of recruits were students of the IPB (Institut Pertanian Bogor or Bogor Agricultural Institute), who had been taught by al-Baghdadi himself in 1984. To avoid political repression during the New Order, these early recruits did not establish HT branches, but rather built networks of HT sympathisers in a number of universities using an existing intra-campus organisation called the Campus Proselytizing Network (Lembaga Dakwah Kampus, LDK). This network of LDK in a number of universities played a significant role in spreading HT ideas in Indonesia.

When al-Baghdadi started his mission, LDK was already under the influence of Ikhwan al-Muslimin doctrines. Ikhwan al-Muslimin, which later transformed itself into the PKS Party, was advocating ideas similar to those of HT. These included a universal Islamic state and the radical and comprehensive implementation of Islamic law. However, these two movements differed in their strategies. The LDK, then controlled by Ikhwan al-Muslimin, believed that democracy in Indonesia should be accepted to promote the idea of the Islamic state including through parliamentary struggle. On the other hand, HTI strongly rejects the idea of democracy and the nation-state because of its Western origin and insists on the idea of the caliphate.

HTI began to make itself visible to the Indonesian public after the collapse of the New Order regime in 1998. As argued by Muhtadi (2009), political freedom post-New Order provided HTI with an opportunity to operate openly. HTI began to promote its ideas by way of publications, seminars, public meetings, and rallies. HTI officially declared itself a centralised organisation in Jakarta in January 2000. The first international conference on the caliphate in August 2000 in Jakarta increased the visibility of HTI among the Indonesian public. A series of public events was then held in major cities on Java, including Surabaya, Bogor, Bandung, and Tangerang. In 2007, HTI organised an international conference on the caliphate, attended by around 100,000 Muslims, to reaffirm its goal to revive the Islamic caliphate. In less than 10 years since its
establishment, HTI was able to build branches at the district level in all provinces in the country (Osman 2000).

During my fieldwork in Kupang, my first encounter with HTI was through its Friday flyers, which were distributed in a number of mosques on the occasion of Friday prayers. The flyers bore the name and contact details of Ustad Mukhlis as HTI representative in Kupang. Shortly afterwards I contacted him and he was willing to give me two interviews.

Ustad Mukhlis, originally from Bima town on Sumbawa Island, migrated to Kupang in 1999. He studied Biology at Muhammadiyah University of Kupang and currently is a science teacher at a high school. He said that in he past he did aspire to become a preacher because back then did not consider himself a pious Muslim. He was introduced to HTI in 2003 after meeting an acquaintance from Lombok. The meeting was an ‘eye opener’ for him, especially because he was made to realise that Islam as a religion does not consist merely of rituals (fasting, praying, alms giving, and going on the pilgrimage), but is a comprehensive system that regulates the social, political, legal, and economic life of human beings. He was then introduced to some of HTI’s key readings, including a book called *Midhomul Islam* (*Rules of Life in Islam*). He was particularly interested in Chapter I, ‘Torikul Iman’ (Path to Faith), which talks about how to get to know Allah, understand the origin of human beings and their mission in the worldly life, and where they go in the afterlife.

Once becoming a member of HTI, he then began to disseminate HTI ideas to his family and circle of friends. HTI has recruited many cadres, all of whom are university students. As in other places in Indonesia, HTI activities are coordinated under the LDK at the university. He explained that the strategy to focus on university students is based on the consideration that they are generally curious and interested in learning more about new ideas. When asked about the exact number of HTI in Kupang, he refused to reveal it, but he explained that HTI in Kupang at that time focused on recruiting students from Universitas Cendana (UNDANA, a local state university). Most of the members of HTI are students from the English Department, Faculty of Science, and Engineering.

HTI’s strategy and its *dakwah* are coordinated by Jakarta headquarters which carefully selects and targets certain mosques. In Kupang, HTI relies on the weekly flyer called
Al-Islam as one of its means of propaganda. Ustad Mukhlis was responsible for coordinating the dissemination of the Friday flyers to a number of mosques in Kupang. These flyers are written and published by the HTI central committee in Jakarta. As many as 1,250 exemplars of weekly flyers were sent to Kupang every Wednesday and distributed to 23 mosques (out of 56 mosques in total) every Friday. During my fieldwork, I collected a number of these newsletters, and following are summaries of articles which present solutions to current social problems.

One of the topics in the Friday flyers was an anti-drug campaign. The title was ‘Drug Related Crime, Crime of Capitalism’. The article argued that the use of drugs had been on the rise due to poor policing and law enforcement. Light punishment for drug-related crimes failed to provide deterrence. The article argued that the increase in drug-related crime is an impact of capitalism, liberalism, and secularism. These Western ideologies are considered responsible for a hedonistic lifestyle, which promotes physical pleasures. People are encouraged to pursue individual freedom and seek pleasures. One of the consequences is that nightlife venues, where drug trafficking and abuse occur, are easily found everywhere. Capitalism is said to have given birth to secularism, which marginalises the role of religion. ‘As a result, standards of decency in the society have deteriorated. It is evident that the root of drug-related crime is secularism and capitalism as a way of life,’ the article concluded.

The article offered a solution to the problem: a radical and comprehensive implementation of Islamic law. Use of drugs is not only a crime but also a sinful act. An offender should not only be cured and rehabilitated, but should also be punished. Drug-related crime is the same as adultery with respect to the level of its destruction to the community. Therefore the punishment, ranging from financial penalties to the death penalty, should be given immediately. If a death sentence is given, the execution shall be done in public so other people can witness it, as in the case of adultery (the article makes reference to Qur’an Surah An-Nur 24: 2):

> The adulterer and the adulteress shall each be given a hundred lashes. Let no pity for them cause you to disobey God, if you truly believe in God and the Last Day; and let their punishment be witnessed by a number of believers.

The other edition, published in December 2011, attempted to reflect on important social

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161 Besides Al-Islam, HTI also publishes a monthly journal, Al-Wai’e (The Reality), but I did not see this journal during my fieldwork in in Kupang. HTI also has a website: http://www.hizbut-tahrir.or.id.

and political developments that took place that year. It discussed five major problems, namely: the severity of poverty, rampant corruption, liberal and repressive laws, unrest in Papua, and the irony of the de-radicalisation program.\(^{163}\) The root cause of persistent poverty and unemployment is global capitalism and the domination of foreign economic powers in Indonesia. Meanwhile, the root of corruption is the political system (i.e. democracy), which is essentially high cost and is not favourable. The article argued that due to the high cost of political recruitment and processes, corruption is inevitable. With regard to laws that are perceived to be liberal and repressive, the article focused on a number of recent laws, such as UU BPJS (Law on Social Security System or Undang-undang Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Sosial). HTI considers this a neo-liberal law, because of its stipulation that the state is not fully responsible in funding health insurance for the citizens, and citizens should share the obligation to pay the premium, which can be burdensome. On the issue of unrest in Papua, the article discussed the ongoing separatism and labour strikes at PT Freeport Indonesia, which ended in violent clashes between labourers and the security forces. The way the government handled these issues reflects how the US exerts strong influence on the Indonesian government.

HTI also criticised the de-radicalisation program conducted by the government. The program, with a total budget of Rp400 billion, was said to target Muslim activists who were fighting for the adoption of Islamic law. The program was problematic because of the assumption that Islamic law is a threat, and because the label ‘radical’ addressed to these activists is biased and merely serves the interests of the US. The article stressed that US is the real problem of global injustice and the de-radicalisation program is driven by policies and recommendations developed by a US think tank, Rand Corporation. The article cited one of the publications by Rand, which explains that de-radicalisation is a process through which a person’s extreme religious stance is shifted back to a moderate (Rand Corporation, 2010). Therefore, de-radicalisation is an effort to make radical Muslims into moderate ones, those who upload values of liberalism, pluralism, secularism, and capitalism, and possesses a friendly attitude towards the US and other Western countries. The article concluded that the program benefits the foreign countries, especially the US, and disadvantages the Muslim community.

The underlying assumption of the argument built by HTI in this newsletter is that every system that is not based on guidance from Allah, the most knowledgeable, is essentially destructive to human beings and will eventually collapse. No matter how strong a


214
regime is, supported by modern arms and powerful nations, it will collapse in disgrace, if it is corrupt, authoritarian to its subjects, and disobeys the words of Allah. The fall of Ben Ali, Mubarak, Qaddafi, Ali Abdullah Saleh, and possibly Bashar Assad of Syria, as well as other repressive leaders in other countries, are clear evidence. HTI calls for a better political system led by a responsible leader. A good system, HTI argues, can only be built based on the divine words of Allah, that is, Islamic law, and a good leader is one who submits to the Islamic law system. HTI therefore calls for the adoption of Islamic law to save Indonesia as the only solution to the many problems facing the country. The Islamic law system would allow the revival of the Islamic caliphate and this would ensure that Indonesia would be a better place for its citizens.

Another edition of *Al-Islam* talked about the importance of the unity of the Muslim community (*ummah*). The article argued that a principle of unity of the *ummah* (*wahdah al-ummah*) is the most important message behind the performance of pilgrimage. According to HTI, the gathering of Muslim pilgrims from across the globe would lead to a realisation among Muslims that Islam as the religion of Allah—not nation, colour, or race—is the only unifying force of the *ummah*. The unity of the *ummah* is the basis for the concept of one nation for all Muslims (*dawlah wahidah*), that is, a caliphate state led by a caliph.

HTI considers the mosque as an important venue for recruitment and propagation. As observed by Osman (2010), this strategy to utilise the mosque dates back to the 1980s, and is implemented by infiltration and domination. In the beginning, infiltration targeted nearby mosques, at campuses or in the neighbourhoods, where HTI activists would perform congregational prayers and other activities. Domination of a mosque would take place in a later stage, when HTI activists would engage in mosque activities other than rituals, for example, becoming the mosque leadership.

In Kupang, HTI regularly uses a number of mosques as venues for their activities. Study circles are conducted in a number of mosques in rotation, inviting speakers from other HTI branches or occasionally speakers from MUI (Council of Indonesian Ulama). Study circles in mosques are usually attended by 40-50 people. It is interesting to note that the study circles are conducted not only at the mosques located in new Muslim neighbourhoods, but also at the traditional/old mosques, such as Al Fatah Mosque in Kampung Solor. Kampung Solor, the oldest Muslim neighbourhood in Kupang (Chapter Three), is known for its openness to new religious ideas and practices. Ustad Mukhlis told me that because they were conducted at the mosques, he was unable to
invite me to those study circles on the grounds that as a non-Muslim I was not allowed
to enter a mosque. However, he gave me copies of some of the presentations from the
study circle. One of the papers talked about the caliphate and Islamic law, and also
about the danger of Western thought such as secular law and liberalism. The author also
emphasised that the views of HTI on secularism, pluralism, and liberalism are in line
with the legal opinion of the MUI.

In accordance with the MUI rulings, Ustad Mukhlis explained that HTI rejects the idea
of secularism because it implies separation between religion and public life and because
religion is considered private business, a relationship between an individual and God.
HTI considers Islam is the answer to all human problems and the Islamic system must
be implemented at the state level. Indonesia has experienced a moral decadence because
it has adopted a secular and capitalistic system. Furthermore, liberalism\textsuperscript{164} is seen as a
threat to the purity of religion because its overemphasis on reason alone limits the
ability to grasp religious doctrines. Freedom to exercise human reasoning therefore
brings about danger to human beings.

The content of HTI propagation, Ustad Mukhlis explained, is a manifestation of an
ideological war, not a religious war, between Islam versus socialism, capitalism, and
liberalism. He stressed that the danger of pluralism lies in the view that all religions are
equal, which, among other things, leads to the unwarranted innovation of Muslims and
Christians celebrating Christmas and Idul Fitri together. He explained that the true
meaning of tolerance (toleransi) is freedom to let other people practice whatever
religion they choose and not interfere with each other. Instead of joint celebrations, he
gave examples of religious tolerance, which, among other things, involved neighbours
visiting each other on the birth of a newborn baby, after the death of a family member,
or during sickness.

When asked how realistic the implementation of the idea of caliphate is in a multi-
ethnic country like Indonesia, Ustad Mukhlis argued that the caliphate will prove that
Islam is rahmatan lil alamin (a blessing for the universe, not only for Muslims). Only if
Islamic law is implemented under the supremacy of an effective caliphate will the
nature of Islam as rahmatan lil alamin be observed. He further argued that under that
circumstance, everyone regardless of his or her faith would benefit from the
implementation of Islamic law. Ustad Mukhlis emphasised that the strategy pursued by

\textsuperscript{164} The use of liberalism relates to JIL (Jaringan Islam Liberal or The Liberal Islamic Network), not the
same as the Western understanding of liberalism.
HTI is basically awareness and public-opinion building through education targeting both Muslims and non-Muslims. However in Kupang, to my knowledge, HTI does not aim at preaching to non-Muslims as in the case of Papua.165

The basic argument is that the existing system is corrupt and fails to deliver prosperity and safety; to which the solution is the caliphate:

We have to continuously preach for this idea (on the revivalism of the Islamic caliphate and implementation of Islamic law) in the community, as well as in our workplace. In the school where I am teaching, there were only two Muslim teachers, but every time I engage in a discussion, on topics such as economy, I will take the opportunity to inform them on how this issue is taught and regulated in Islam (Ustad Mukhlis, Interview 17 February 2012).

On the involvement of women in HTI, Osman (2010) writes that female participation in HTI is better than in other Islamist organisations. Their participation is facilitated in a women’s organisation Perempuan Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (Women Activists of HTI). It was unfortunate that I was not able to meet and conduct interviews with female members of HTI in Kupang. Ustad Muchlis did not grant my repeated requests for interview. I concluded that probably these women were not members, but had the status of sympathisers and were not allowed to give interviews.

The HTI membership structure is organised in three levels (Osman 2010). The lowest level is for sympathisers, who usually have become involved in a study circle but are not formal members. Those at the second level were members who have gained knowledge of the movement and have sworn allegiance (bai’ah). The highest level of the membership structure is filled with people who hold positions within the organisation.

The HTI movement is a political struggle, as well as intellectual reform. However, HTI prefers to operate outside the democratic system. Rather, it aims at building support to change the system outside the parliamentary system through revolutionary measures; not a violent revolution but revolution to continuously develop understanding about Islamic ideology. Ustad Mukhlis was convinced that when people eventually welcome the Islamic ideology and are willing to support them, the radical changes will be

165 The expansion of HTI in Papua was made possible following the recruitment of a native Papuan convert by the name of Mohamed Fadzlan Garematan. Upon his conversion to Islam, he formed a Jakarta-based charity organisation called Al Fatih Kaafah Nusantara (AFKN) which is active in many areas in Papua (Osman 2010).
unstoppable. In practical terms, he added, as a consequence of a non-parliamentary struggle, support from the military is also a necessity in HTI’s political struggle. HTI is equipped with thoroughly thought-out concepts, ready to be implemented when HTI is in power.

**Receptions and Impacts on the Muslim Community**

I interviewed a number of Muslim leaders in Kupang, exploring their perceptions of the presence of JT and HTI in Kupang, and their views varied. There is a general perception that the presence of JT is less threatening than HTI. The call of JT for an increased piety among Muslims is more positively perceived than the agenda of HTI which concerns more structural issues. Haji Kamarudin, a *mudin* of Al Ikhlas Mosque (see Chapter 4), was aware that members of JT frequently went there to pray. He was familiar with their appearance, which according to him reflects their intention to follow the examples of the Prophet and his companions. He was also familiar with the JT routine *dakwah* tour, where a small group (up to three people) would knock on doors reminding people that the time to pray is imminent, and asking them to pray in congregation at the mosque. They also remind other Muslims to routinely recite *zikir* (Haji Kamarudin, Interview 19 February 2012). He opined that while JT is doing a noble cause for the Muslim community, he is not yet interested in joining them. He argued that apart from becoming a JT member, a Muslim still could carry out other noble religious duties. Becoming *mudin*, he said, was his dedication to the religion.

Haji Makarim, head of MUI NTT, had a similar view. In his opinion, JT followers were good Muslims. They dedicated themselves to do *dakwah* tours, calling ‘lazy and drunk’ Muslims to return to the right path. Makarim told me that the JT mission is strictly targeting Muslims, as they are not allowed to preach to non-Muslims. Makarim was also aware of the arrival of JT members from outside Kupang on a periodic basis, and JT members from outside Indonesia had also visited. In his view, as long as JT was in Kupang and it brought positive impacts to the local Muslims, then he welcomed its presence (Makarim, Interview 19 June 2011).

On the sermon delivered by Ustad Nursalim at an *akekah* occasion in Kampung Oesapa (see above), Haji Taher Zen (*imam* of Kampung Solor mosque) expressed some disagreement. He disagreed with Nursalim’s opinion that unless *akekah* has been done, the parents do not ‘own’ the child and that they will not be able to recognise each other in the afterlife. He disagreed with the interpretation that *akekah* has a symbolic meaning of parents paying a redemption fee (*tebusan*) to Allah to claim their child. According to
Tahir Zen, interpreting *akekah* as an act of redemption is illogical. To redeem something spiritual (the life of a newborn baby) with material items (insignificant amounts of meat and gold) does not make sense to him. For him *akekah* is essentially an act by the parents in the sense of obeying God’s command to show gratitude for having an offspring.

As I discussed in Chapters Three, Four, and Five, the performance of *zikir* is common among Muslims in Kupang, and especially among members of Tarekat. The practice of *zikir* is also emphasised by JT. Both JT and Aswaja Muslims usually recite *zikir* with a raised voice. The common practice of *zikir*, I observed, was one of the factors that contributed to JT’s good reception by Muslims in Kupang, with the exception of Muhammadiyah. According to Muhammadiyah, when performing *zikir* it is best to do so silently. They use Surah Al-Araf verse 205 as a reference: ‘When the Koran is recited, listen to it in silence so that you may be shown mercy. Remember your Lord deep in your soul with humility and reverence, and without ostentation: in the morning and in the evening; and do not be negligent.’ *Zikir* may be performed with a raised voice (vocal *zikir*) only if the intention is to give an example to new converts. On one occasion, a Muhammadiyah preacher made a firm statement that Tarekat (Sufi orders) are a deviant practice (*bid’ah*) because the performance in Tarekat is not in accordance with the teaching of Islam in the Qur’an, but merely follows the teaching of a teacher, especially by raising their voices in performing *zikir*.

Regarding the physical appearance of JT members, Maghafiroh told me that it made people afraid. She said, ‘I noticed that at first some people were afraid to see us. However, after a while, they would know that we’re not doing anything bad and could accept us. They understand that we’re not radical Muslims. We are lucky to reside in a Muslim community in Kupang, where there are not too many non-Muslims.’ Maghafiroh explained that suspicion and fear among non-JT Muslims and non-Muslims alike would disappear once they got to know them well and understood that the nature of the JT mission in their neighbourhoods is to propagate increased piety among Muslims. She believed that people would not find it difficult to see that their mission is not harmful. Further she opined that the member of JT who makes a living by conducting their own business would find it easier to express their physical identity compared to those who work as employees in an institution or firm whose superiors or workmates were likely to be Christians.
Most of the informants whom I talked to mentioned that they were fully aware of the agenda of HTI, particularly in preaching for the restoration of the Islamic caliphate as the key solution for problems facing modern society. According to many of these informants, as an idea, the HTI propagation must be respected. Haji Makarim, Chairperson of MUI NTT, remained sceptical about the *Al-Islam* bulletin. However, as long as the content of the bulletin does not provoke hatred against other groups, then MUI would tolerate HTI to carry out its activities.

With regard to legal aspects, Makarim said he was informed that HTI had not reported its presence to the Kesbang Linmas (an authority within the Ministry of Home Affairs which deals with domestic politics). According to Makarim, any social or political organisation is required to report prior to starting activities in a region, and HTI had not complied with this stipulation. However, Makarim said that he was more concerned about the reception of HTI propaganda by Muslims in general. He explained that Muslims who have acquired a limited knowledge of Islam are likely to be more easily influenced. Since HTI newsletters are published and written in Jakarta, there is a risk that the views propagated in the newsletter are not sensitive to specific needs and issues concerning Muslim-Christian relationships in Kupang.

What bothers members of Muhammadiyah in Kupang about HTI is their perception that HTI tends to avoid dialogue with other Muslim organisations, including Muhammadiyah. A Muhammadiyah informant explained that the choice of *halaqah* (study circles) as a *dakwah* strategy has made it difficult for Muhamamdiyah to engage in dialogue. *Halaqah* is conducted by HTI from one mosque to another across Kupang, inviting a small group of people, and employing a standardised argument for the reinstatement of the caliphate system and never includes Muhammadiyah Mosque.

In the demographic context of Kupang, where Muslims form a minority, a number of Muhammadiyah proponents maintained that it is unlikely that the majority of Muslims in Kupang welcomed HTI. The primary reason is because one of HTI's points of propagation is to see pluralism and tolerance as a threat to Muslims. This standpoint contradicts with the fact that the majority of Muslims in Kupang consider pluralism as a core value, partly due to familial ties among many Muslims with Protestant and Catholic relatives.

However, some people I spoke to agreed with HTI on the importance of not mixing rituals and faith when respecting pluralism. Haji Abdul Fatah Ahmad, Head of MUI Kota Kupang, explained that a Muslim should draw a clear line between social life and
religious principles. A Muslim is instructed to show respect to his neighbours and colleagues of different religions. It is acceptable to wish Merry Christmas or to come to a Christmas celebration, but not to participate in the ritual parts of Christmas such as the prayer mass and the lighting of Christmas candles (see Chapter Two).

Haji Abdul Fatah raised another issue, the constant criticism of HTI towards the Indonesian Government. Despite agreement with HTI on certain issues, he became less sympathetic to its propaganda because it persistently blamed the government in all aspects, as if the government had not done anything good for the people. He added that the Muslim community in Kupang had good relations with the local government to date. In fact, it was good relations with the local authorities, many of whom were Christians, that provides the Muslims with a sense of security in a predominantly Christian town.

Many Muslim figures of mainstream organisations in Kupang rejected arguments by HTI that attack the notion of tolerance. An online portal reported on 28 October 2013 that a group of university students in Kupang staged a demonstration commemorating the Youth Pledge Day (Sumpah Pemuda). In the demonstration, these students rejected the presence of HTI and FPI in Kupang.166 The reason was because these organisations have missions that are contradictory to the national motto of Indonesia, Bhineka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity).167

Conclusion

JT and HTI came to Kupang as a non-residential and dispersed Muslim community. JT, as I have shown, is on its way to becoming residential. Arriving in 2002, it is currently at the phase of consolidation. It has been able to acquire land and build its own pesantren, mosque, and a new settlement in Alak sub-district, on the outskirts of Kupang. This development shows that JT in Kupang has obtained sufficient support from local members and has been granted the status of an independent unit by the central command of the JT in Jakarta. JT Kupang is also allowed to organise its own activities funded by contributions by local members. JT, however, still bases their activities at the Nurussa’adah Great Mosque (Masjid Raya). The presence of JT in this mosque is important for its visibility. This mosque belongs to the local government and has more capacity to accommodate the increasing JT members than the other mosques.

166 FPI: Islamic Defenders Front, another radical group based in Jakarta with branches in regions. I did not have an opportunity to meet and interview any FPI members.

HTI, on the other hand, locates its activities on campuses and mosques as venues for regular study circles (*halaqah*). I doubt whether HTI will be a residential Muslim community in Kupang, because its campaign focuses on building awareness about the importance of the Islamic caliphate, not reforming the existing religious traditions in the community. HTI distributes *Al-Islam* flyers in more than 50 per cent of the mosques in Kupang prior to the Friday prayers without creating any tense debate. The people see it as a discourse, not a threat. But some Muslim leaders are vigilant and critical of the content of the flyers.

Both JT and HTI can operate freely in Kupang. In Oesapa village, not only can HTI circulate its publications in the village mosque, many HTI followers—who are mostly students of UNDANA—frequently participate in Friday prayers. The reason is the village mosque is a short distance from the university compound, a centre of HTI activities. I also observed that HTI was trying to do their *dakwah* at Al Fatah Mosque in Kampung Solor by conducting study circle activities there. Even in Kampung Airmata (whose mosque claims itself as the defender of Aswaja), *Al-Islam* flyers were distributed among Muslims there every Friday. The presence of HTI in Kampung Airmata, however, is limited to the circulation of its newsletter.

JT also enjoys the freedom to perform their mission in Kupang. It is common for JT followers to perform daily prayers in congregations in many different mosques in Kupang. This activity was the most visible presence of JT in Kupang. They would knock on the door of Muslim houses asking their fellow Muslims to come and pray with them at the nearby mosque. It is not uncommon for a JT leader to be invited to deliver a sermon at religious events such as certain lifecycle ceremonies and Islamic festivals. Again, however, it appears that Kampung Airmata is the exception. I did not see them performing prayers at Airmata Mosque. In a traditional Muslim community like in Airmata, where mosque leadership is highly hierarchical and the position of *imam* is inherited, it is natural that the JT idea of allowing every Muslim to perform *dakwah* is difficult to accept. Mosque leadership in this village plays an important role in the religious sphere, and it would be difficult for a commoner to take over their roles, or to accept the religious authority of another lay Muslim.

Over the last 10 years, the JT membership in Kupang has been growing substantially, reaching as many as 100 people. In general, Muslims in Kupang warmly welcome their presence, primarily because of their positive perception towards their mission. They generally understand that the JT mission is to call Muslims to return to proper Islamic
rituals and to make the mosque ‘prosperous’ (memakmurkan masjid)—a term used to describe the expectation that that a mosque becomes the centre of Muslim activities. The local Muslims also welcome the performance of zikir by JT followers, because zikir is widely practised among the local Muslims as followers of Aswaja (see Chapter Three and Chapter Four), with the exception of the Muhammadiyah members.

JT followers are also noticeable from their physical appearance. They are determined to follow the example of the Prophet and his wives in daily activities, starting from growing of a beard, wearing of a white garment and turban for men, and wearing loose dresses and face-veils for women. Their prescribed rituals and dakwah activities are also said to follow those of the Prophet. It is difficult to imagine that one day JT in Kupang will gain more and more followers, whose distinct appearance stands out in this Christian town.

One aspect of JT dakwah that has attracted attention, in my opinion, is JT’s emphasis on individual obligation in the religious dakwah. As outlined by Metcalf (2008), JT introduced a radical change in religious dakwah, whereby the responsibility to do dakwah lies in the hands of all Muslims, not just a handful of ulama. Dakwah can be done in a simple way, such as asking fellow Muslims to pray in a mosque, or delivering a sermon at a simple religious occasion. Khuruj (preaching tours) have become a venue where a JT member can express his piety and strengthen his identity. Travelling in small groups allows them to gain experience outside their vicinity and to get to know JT members from other places. Khuruj can be costly, but many were determined to be able to afford it, considering the significant meaning of khuruj in the construction of the identity as a JT member.

There were not many JT female members in Kupang. They were usually the wives of male JT members. Most Muslim women in Kupang have already joined Majelis Taklim in their village. JT would have to approach these Majelis Taklim if they wanted to recruit female members, but to my knowledge JT in Kupang had yet to do this. The presence of JT in Kupang was not raised by Majelis Taklim informants in interviews.

HTI’s programs and agenda are primarily Jakarta based. Furthermore, topics discussed in study circles are apparently developed centrally in Jakarta to serve the HTI interests in the political discourse at the national level, such as the topics of secularism, pluralism, and liberalism as discussed above. The strict view of HTI concerning the prohibition of Muslims to celebrate Christmas or celebrate Idul Fitri with their Christian neighbours, for example, heavily reflected the discourse of Muslim-Christian relations.
in Muslim-dominated areas in Indonesia. However, in Kupang, this view would be perceived as less tolerant and shows a lack of understanding about Muslim-Christian dynamics in a place where Muslims are the minority. On this particular issue, many informants expressed their disagreement with the view of HTI. In Kupang, many Muslims have familial links with Christians, mainly through marriage, and have Christian neighbours or bosses. Celebration of Islamic important festivals is usually attended by local authorities, many of whom are Christians. Exchange visits between the two groups were common on religious holy days of Idul Fitri and Christmas. The Head of MUI Kupang was even once invited to deliver a sermon in a Christmas celebration (see more in Chapter Two). Some informants also criticised HTI propagation that persistently blames the government for every problem in the society. Government institutions are generally highly respected, and there is a perception shared by Muslims that the local government has a friendly attitude toward Muslims as a minority group.

HTI is also preaching for a radical change and the importance of a global Muslim community (*ummah*), the need to implement Islamic law, and the reinstatement of the Islamic caliphate. The HTI discourse that focuses on abstract issues like the caliphate is less of a concern for the traditional Muslim villagers, whose interests are primarily in the preservation of traditions in their rituals. With respect to HTI propagation on the importance of Muslim unity as one *ummah*, Muslims in Kupang understand this concept as a platform to help other Muslims, not as a marker of a clear-cut identity between them and their Christian neighbours. Familial relations remain an important factor that determines their views toward Christians.

Despite the small number of followers, HTI and JT are very active in their *dakwah* activities. It is likely that JTI will grow in Kupang, while HTI will get more followers among the youth, because the idea of reinstating the Islamic caliphate and stories about the glorious past of Islam are appealing. This can be observed from the fact that HTI has established itself in UNDANA and study circles in a number of mosques attracted followers among university students. As for JT, its routine activities at the Nurussa’adah Great Mosque of Kupang and its ability to establish a *pesantren* and a mosque in Alak sub-district show that its influence is growing. The openness of Muslims in Kupang towards new religious ideas was an important factor that contributed to this development.
Chapter Seven
Conclusion

This thesis has been an examination of the everyday Islamic practices of Muslims living in a Christian majority town. It has investigated the historical genesis of differing sets of religious practices in what I term the Muslim enclaves in Kupang, and the ways in which these distinctive practices are reproduced. The thesis has set the study of local practices in the context of contemporary Indonesia and recent national trends to increased public expressions of piety, and new international proselytising movements. Investigating how Kupang has responded to these new trends provides and important insight into the conditions for harmonious inter-faith co-existence in Indonesia, as well as emerging potential threats.

Kupang began as a colonial town in 1653, when it was established to replace Solor as the centre of Dutch rule in the region, The Dutch moved to Kupang, taking over a Portuguese fortification left after the Catholic mission in Kupang failed. Kupang developed as a city of migrants, and Dutch-sponsored migrations marked its formative years. Rotenese, Savunese, and Solorese migrants allied themselves with the Dutch, and settled in separate settlements near the Dutch outpost. Settlers from a village called Lamakera on Solor Island formed the first Muslim community in Kupang (1749). They helped the Europeans defend the city against attacks from enemies in the interior, and in a number of military campaigns on Timor.

The rule of the Dutch allowed the Protestant mission to expand, resulting in the adoption of Christianity, initially among the Rotenese and Savunese, and later among local Timorese. Protestantism was introduced initially by private missions and its acceptance by the Rotenese and Savunese paved the way for them to become dominant ethnic groups in Kupang, occupying various posts in the colonial bureaucracy. Kupang developed as a Christian town, while Muslims remained a minority group. Of the Dutch allies, only the Solorese remained Muslims.

One of the legacies of the Dutch was the formation of settlements based on ethnicity. Solorese Muslims settled on land granted to them next to the Rotenese and Savunese Christian settlements. Years after the first Muslim settlement in 1749, the second enclave of Muslims emerged, consisting of the settlements of Kampung Airmata,
Kampung Bonipoi, and of the Hadhrami. Unlike in the first enclave, inhabitants of the second enclave shared a history of opposition to the Dutch. Moreover, Kampung Airmata and Kampung Bonipoi were homes for a number of Muslim exiles from other parts of the Netherland East Indies during 1800s. The other main group in the second enclave were the Hadhrami, who have been concentrated in Kampung Airmata and Kampung Bonipoi since the colonial period. Kampung Oesapa hosts the third enclave of Muslims. Established in the 1970s, during the New Order period, it is home to a community of Bugis migrants who form the minority group in the kampung. Muslims in these four kampung reproduce their distinctive traditions of Islamic practice, and I have found that the roles of Imam and mosque are important in this process.

**The Roles of the Imam**

Kampung Solor and Kampung Airmata attempt to preserve the Solorese tradition on basis of the hereditary principles of mosque and community leadership. In Kampung Solor, until relatively recently only men from the lineages of Atulaga Nama and Burhan bin Dasi were eligible to become the Imam. Reform occurred after Muhammadiyah entered the kampung in 1967 and established schools, with teachers were from Java who settled in this kampung. The presence of a group of educated Muslims began to affect mosque leaderships. An opportunity arose for Muslims who are not descended from Atulaga Nama and Burhan bin Dasi to assume the position of Imam, as long as they met certain criteria. This reform explains the current diverse backgrounds of the leadership of Kampung Solor Mosque: a descendant of Atulaga Nama who is an Aswaja Muslim (Hamzah Iyang); a descendant of Atulaga Nama but has a Muhammadiyah background (Haji Idrus Lamaya); a practitioner of Sufism who is not a descendant of Atulaga Nama (Haji Tahir Zen); and a teacher at the Muhammadiyah school (Muhammad Qistian Anwar). An important reason for this reform was the increasing difficulty of retaining the Solorese tradition of the hereditary principle because there were too few male heirs of Atulaga Nama in the kampung, or because some of them were already elderly, or because the younger generation of the descendants showed little interest in taking up the position of Imam.

The presence of Imam with Muhammadiyah background in Kampung Solor Mosque leadership has produced a unique feature in the observance of rituals, in which they accommodate both Aswaja and modernist traditions. They observe travah prayer according to modernist teaching, while continuing to observe important Aswaja traditions such as Maulid and tahlilan. This conforms the observation by Fox (2004)
that the encounter of modernist and traditionalist in the Indonesian history has shown mutuality, rather than dichotomous opposition. The youth and educated Muslims in Kampung Solor play a crucial role in accommodating both traditions, a situation similar observed by Möller (2005b) when examining traveh in modernist and traditionalist mosques in Java. Youth and educated groups of both traditionalist and modernist mosques tend to tolerate differences in rituals and consider them as a blessing. The Muslim community of Kampung Solor in Kupang shows even stronger signs of tolerance, as a Muhammadiyah imam is a leader in an Aswaja mosque.

In Kampung Airmata, Sya’ban bin Sanga as the first imam replicated a Solorese tradition whereby the community was organised into a system of distribution of power into the hands of certain clans. Founders Sya’ban bin Sanga and Muhammad Badaruddin formed a joint leadership group and divided the community into two entities, Kampung Imam and Kampung Raja, each with distinct roles. This kind of dyadic structure is a common characteristic of social and political organisation in eastern Indonesia especially in Lesser Sunda Islands (currently part of the provinces of NTB or West Nusa Tenggara, NTT, Bali and Maluku) (Fox 1989). On some islands in NTT province, such a dyadic structure involves division of religious and customary responsibility among the people of the same kinship group, even though they are divided into Muslim and Christian (Rodemeier 2010). The crucial role of the dyadic structure in Kampung Airmata is to maintain Aswaja traditions. I found that the division of roles between the two entities was very evident, especially in the performance of Islamic festivals and lifecycle rituals, despite the challenges concerning the succession of the leaders of these two entities.

In Bonipoi, the most significant role of the imam is to lead the prayer ritual after the observance of the communal bath of Safar, and they also lead the congregation in the recitation of wirid, zikir, and shalawat. The imam also appoint the mudin to the core team for death and funeral Assistance, whose responsibility is to take care of the dead, an important ritual for Aswaja Muslims.

In Kampung Oesapa, Haji Badar Daeng Pawero acted as the authority both in regard to the syari’at and to Bugis traditions. The Bugis tradition emphasises the importance of Islamic learning especially in learning to recite the Qur’an and to read of the book of Barzanji, reciting shalawat, doa selamat and doa arwah in the celebration of the Islamic festivals and life cycle rituals. In managing his responsibilities, the imam was assisted by four deputies; one ustad who teaches children at a TPA; a religious councillor who
teaches *mualaf*; members of the Barzanji reading group; members of women’s Majelis Taklim; the Mosque Youth Organisation; and the Association of Families from South Sulawesi. Haji Badar Daeng Pawero (who is very old) expects that his replacement, either one of the deputies or his son, will be able to retain his dual role in regard to the reproduction of the Islamic *syari’at* and also Bugis traditions.

**Emerging Revivalist Organisations**

Despite the reproduction of these distinctive local traditions, Muslims in Kupang are not immune from influences on their religious practice coming from outside. JT (Jamaah Tabligh) has now developed a *dakwah* mission, building a *pesantren*, a mosque, and a housing settlement in the outskirts of Kupang. They conduct *dakwah* calling Muslims to follow their path. JT has been well-received by the Muslim community of Kupang and it is not uncommon that a JT leader is invited to deliver a sermon at lifecycle ceremonies. Moreover, the performance of *zikir* by JT followers is concordant with the *zikir* tradition of Aswaja Muslims.

HTI (Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia) has concentrated its mission by targeting university students, many of whom do not have attachments to *kampung*-based mosques because they come from outside Kupang, places such as Flores, Alor, and Sumbawa. But the prohibition by HTI on Muslims to celebrating Christmas or celebrate Idul Fitri with their Christian neighbours or families is perceived as intolerant and shows a lack of understanding about Muslim-Christian dynamics in Kupang, where Muslims are the minority. HTI preaches for the importance of the global Muslim community (*ummah*), the need to implement Islamic law, and the reinstatement of the Islamic caliphate. The abstract issue of the caliphate is not of immediate interest to the Muslims in the three enclaves, whose concerns are primarily the preservation of Aswaja traditions, and whose identities are based on attachment to the *kampung* mosque. With respect to the notion of the *ummah*, Muslims in Kupang understand it as a platform to help other Muslims, not as a marker of a clear-cut identity differentiating them from their Christian neighbours, families and colleagues. Familial relations remain an important factor that determines their views toward Christians.

**Important Aswaja Traditions in Kupang**

Muslims seek to sustain Aswaja traditions through the conduct of rites of passage and Islamic festivals. Taking care of the dead, reading the book of Barzanji, and celebrating Maulid Nabi are among the important Aswaja traditions in Kupang.
Taking care of the dead

Every Aswaja mosque has a group of mudin among the mosque officials. In Al Ikhlas Mosque of Kampung Bonipoi, the mudin are granted authority in a body called Death and Funeral Assistance. Even though washing the corpse is the responsibility of all adult Muslims, not everyone can become a mudin. This office is highly respected, not only because they posses particular skills regarding the washing of the corpse, but also because they have a standard of conduct, which requires the quality of being trusted (amanah), to keep secrets on the state of the corpse.

Tahlilan is a crucially important aspect of taking care of the dead. On prescribed days up to the 40th days after the death, its observance is obligatory. Beyond the 40th days it is recommended, for example, on the 100th day and to commemorate the first year of the death. However, many Muslims in Kupang observe tahlilan for many years after the departure. I observed two tahlilan to commemorate 7th years after the death in Kampung Solor and in Kampung Airmata. On these occasions, families of the deceased asked the help of the Majelis Taklim writing out the names of the deceased so that they would be mentioned before the women’s Majelis Taklim started the tahlilan, which is a regular agenda of their weekly or monthly gatherings.

Aswaja Muslims interpreted the tahlilan ritual as a way to help the deceased. Following Van Gennep (1960), I maintain that the conduct of tahlilan is related to the understanding that the period between the death (as separation phase) and the judgment day (as integration phase) is a liminal period. After the death, the soul will enter realm of the grave and will be making a long and difficult journey waiting for the judgment day. It is believed that prayers from the living, especially from the deceased’s descendants, are required to prevent the spirit from suffering. This liminal period has three stages: first is when the death is announced and the family members are allowed to mourn near the body; second, when mudin come to lead the rituals for washing the dead body, funeral prayer at the mosque, and the burial; the last stage is when the series of tahlilan begin. Tahlilan serves the purpose of maintaining connections between the deceased and the family. Aswaja Muslims pray for the spirits of the deceased and expect that their descendants will later on pray for them, until the coming of the judgment day as the integration phase.

That tahlilan in Kupang as performed years after the death, done collectively, and is also a function of represented by a Majelis Taklim is a unique character of Aswaja Muslims of Kupang, differing from for example, compared to what was practiced by
Muslims in Gayo, Aceh (Bowen 1993) and in Cirebon (Muaimin 2006). This practice is a result of a synthesis; how Muslims in Kupang interpret the meaning of the *hadith* regarding praying for the deceased, the responsibilities of the communities to take care for the deceased and the role of the Majelis Taklim to help the families of the deceased by performing the *tahlilan*. (The Muslim Bugis community of Kampung Oesapa, pray for the deceased through the recitation of *doa arwah*.)

**Reading the Book of Barzanji**

According to Gade (2004:13), the Barzanji tradition is characteristic of Eastern Indonesia, but it also occurs in Java and is widespread throughout the Muslim world. Gade observed great variation in Barzanji readings, even within the city of Makassar. She maintains that there are regional variations in Barzanji practices in melodies used and in the relative participation of men and women. In Kampung Solor, Kampung Airmata and Kampung Bonipoi, the Barzanji was read publicly during the celebration of Maulid Nabi, led by *kampung imam*. Groups of males took turns playing *rebana* and reciting the Barzanji. Because the public reading was accompanied by the performance of Arabic songs and *rebana*, the mood was joyful, and lasted for hours, from around 8 pm until 12 midnight. Women also recited the Barzanji but they sat at the back of the mosques. The congregation stood up at the point in the Barzanji that talks about Muhammad’s birth, and they rub the smoke of the incense into their faces. In these old Muslim communities, a shorter version of the book of Barzanji was recited at celebration of *akekah* and circumcision.

In Kampung Oesapa, the reading of Barzanji was observed in all life cycle celebrations and when Muslims of Oesapa were preparing to go on the *hajj* pilgrimage. The Barzanji reading group in Oesapa comprises 10 men including Haji Badar Daeng Pawero (*imam* of Al Fitrah Mosque). Members of this group also stood up when reciting the section on the birth of the Prophet. In Kampung Oesapa it was only the 10 male members of the group who performed the public reading. Muslim men who were not members of the Barzanji reading group, and female Muslims did not participate. The traditions of Bugis Aswaja Muslims of Kampung Oesapa, in establishing Barzanji reading group, reciting *shalawat*, *doa selamat*, and *doa arwah* were brought by Haji Badar Daeng Pawero from Bone district, South Sulawesi, who fled when the Islamic rebellion of Kahar Muzakar broke out in the 1950s.

**Celebrating Maulid Nabi**
Despite the fact that Muhammadiyah *imam* repeatedly criticised Maulid celebration, arguing that this showed was an influence of Hindu religion especially with respect to the carrying of Sirupuang flower offerings in the carnival parade, the Aswaja *imam* of Al Fatah Mosque were grateful that the mosque was able to sustain this tradition. Imam Hamzah Iyang said that it is impossible for Muslims not to celebrate the birthday of the Prophet, the most beloved person in the Islamic world.

The old Islamic settlements (Kampung Solor, Kampung Airmata, Kampung Bonipoi and Kampung Namosain) engage in a unique form of cooperation in the celebration of Maulid. Airmata Mosque begins the festival of Maulid in Kupang because it is considered as the oldest mosque. *Imam* of the three old *kampung* attend the celebration, to collectively lead the recitation of the Book of Barzanji. Mosques in the other three *kampung* take turns to host Maulid in the following days, and these all follow similar rituals. The celebration begins after the evening prayer and the recitation of the Book of Barzanji is accompanied by the *rebana* players. A procession carrying Siripuang from the house of the *imam* of the mosque, accompanied by the chanting of *shalawat* is a distinct feature of the old Aswaja mosques in Kupang.

Maulid is the most celebrated religious festival in Kupang. I was surprised that in a Christian town, these celebrations would take place outside the mosque, very visible to the public. Muslims have created a space to express their religiosity and traditions, almost everyday during the month of Maulid. Celebrations in mosques and at the Majelis Taklim, are merrily and repeatedly conducted throughout the whole month. Maulid festivals in Aswaja mosques outside the four old *kampung* do not involve a procession carrying Siripuang, but a kind of Siripuang of smaller size is displayed in mosques, along with fruit parcels. The public reading from the Book of Barzanji is not observed in these *kampung*, but they do chant of *shalawat*. In addition, a sermon emphasising the importance of following the way Prophet Muhammad had lived is delivered in the Aswaja mosques (outside the old *kampung*).

In Kampung Oesapa, it is most interesting to observe is preservation of Bugis culture in the festival of Maulid. Sticky rice and boiled eggs represent original Bugis elements, while new elements such as a variety of fruits and vegetables (like Siripuang) are added. Celebration of Maulid in Kampung Oesapa is different from that in the old *kampung*. The celebration takes place outside the mosque, not in the mosque building. The overall ambience is more relaxed, because the celebration takes place on a stage decorated with colourful streamers and balloons. There is a fashion show of children wearing ‘Islamic
clothes’, something that, in my experience, would be unthinkable to see in old *kampung* mosques.

The burning of incense is another characteristic in the performance of *tahlilan* and the public reading of the Book of Barzanji. *Imam* in the four Aswaja *kampung* explained that when prayer is uttered, a sacred atmosphere is required and the room needs to be clean and filled with perfume of such a substance. The incense produces smell that creates a comfortable and relaxing ambience, which allows the attendance to stay comfortably in the mosque for hours until all rituals are completed.

**Rituals to Become a Muslim**

Many Muslims consider that *syahadat* and circumcision as primary markers for men to become Muslim. In Kampung Airmata, circumcision is obligatory for males and females, both young girls or boys and adult converts. Female *muwash* in Kampung Airmata explained that circumcision made them feel clean to come before God (when observing prayer) and to become completely a Muslim. In Kampung Solor, circumcision is performed for young girls and adult female converts, even though I heard Haji Tahir Zen state that female circumcision is not obligatory. In the old *kampung*, circumcision is part of the rituals to welcome a *muwash* to Islam, as well as the recitation of *syahadat*, the declaration of intention to enter Islam sincerely only for Allah, *mandi bersih*, and performance of *shalat*.

In Kampung Oesapa, circumcision is not obligatory for adult females converting to Islam. A bathing ritual is considered sufficient to cleanse the sins and purify their bodies from *haram* foods and earthly sins. Being clean is important in Islam. As mentioned in Winn (2002:148) in his study in Banda (Maluku), ‘being Muslim in Lonthoir equated to *bikin bersih’* (to become clean) such as ritual cleansing in the context of washing before prayer (ablution), circumcision and restrictions related to menstruation, as well as being of good intentions and behaving morally.

**Islamic Learning**

Bowen (2012:12) maintains that the primary objective of Islamic learning is to gain knowledge to ‘know how’: how to recite the Qur’an, to perform ablutions and prayer, and *ibadat* in general. The next step is to practice them in daily ritual and to understand the meaning of these embodied actions. In Aswaja mosques, *imam* assume the responsibility for guidance to members of the congregation. However, the formal religious learning activities are in the hands of private Qur’anic teachers—mostly from
among the Hadhrami, and in TPA (Qur’an Learning Centres), both affiliated to the mosque, as well as other private centres. The Hadhrami play a dominant role as proselytisers and some Hadhrami facilitate conversion to Islam. In Kampung Airmata typically they fulfil their religious obligations as Qur’an teachers for children and converts. Some own TPA, located in their private houses, and they rely on voluntary financial contributions to support this activity. To my knowledge, none of the Hadhrami assumed the position of *imam*.

Al Fitrah Mosque of Kampung Oesapa facilitates the *mualaf* in learning Islam through the Majelis Taklim. According to Haji Badar Daeng Pawero *mualaf* will always be in need of guidance. The purpose of teaching them about Islam and giving ongoing guidance is to prevent them losing their new faith or returning to the old one. A councillor from the Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs was assigned to give Islamic lessons at the Majelis Taklim for *mualaf* women. The lessons were on learning to read Qur’an and lectures on various topics about Islam.

In Kampung Airmata, Kak Nur (chair of women’s Majelis Taklim) spent one hour every morning during Ramadan teaching the Qur’an to a number of female *mualaf*. They had embraced Islam many years before and the sessions were to improve their reading skills. Kak Nur dedicated more of her time during Ramadan to teach Qur’an, partly because of the promise of amplified merit during the holy month, and because school where she normally taught has a one-month break. In Kampung Solor there is no Majelis Taklim dedicated exclusively for female *mualaf*, but Qur’an learning is usually the first agenda of the weekly Friday meeting. Experienced members would help the *mualaf* and those who were not yet fluent.

*Women’s Majelis Taklim*

Majelis Taklim is an outlet for women to engage in religious learning. Over the last few years this organisation has flourished in 43 *kampung* (out of 51) in Kupang.¹⁶⁸ Kak Nur Wahid, the founder and chair of women’s Majelis Taklim in Kampung Airmata, told me that she had formed the idea to create a space for Muslim women to help each other with Islamic knowledge and social-economic capacity since she was in high school. What she remembered during her childhood was that girls and women were not encouraged to perform *shalat* in the mosque. Only in 1984 when the old mosque of Kampung Airmata was renovated they created a space for women. However, she

¹⁶⁸ Interview with the chair of FORSIMATA/ Majelis Taklim Association Forum (19 February 2012).
maintains that the role of women in the mosque was still less significant than that of men, especially in the mosque leaderships or managerial positions at the Mosque Foundation. The typical role for women is to become mudin, responsible for taking care of female corpses. They also prepare meals for meetings, but are rarely asked to participate in them. However since the establishment of women’s Majelis Taklim in Kampung Airmata in 2006, women have found an outlet to improve their Qur’an reading skills, fulfil their needs in terms of religious learning as well as to learn practical knowledge on managing the organisation. The other significant role of Majelis Taklim is to support the conduct of Islamic festivals; to facilitate charity or social events, such as free circumcision for children from poor families, and to organise micro-credit schemes to assist the Majelis Taklim’s members.

Members of women’s Majelis Taklim in other kampung enjoyed similar benefits. It is a space for them to express their religiosity. Members of women’s Majelis Taklim in Kampung Solor stated that among the many benefits, the opportunity to participate in regular lectures by representatives from the local office of religious affairs, on topics fit their needs is the most important. Mualaf in Bugis Muslim community of Kampung Oesapa find that becoming member of Majelis Taklim is useful in their efforts to learn the Qur’an and Islam in general. Learning activities at Majelis Taklim allowed them to feel more confident in Qur’an recitation. Gaining confidence is crucial for women mualaf of Kampung Oesapa, because as mothers these women are expected to be able to help their children in learning the Qur’an, as part of a highly valued role of a wife to protect the family’s honour (B. siri) in Bugis culture.

In a study of women’s Majelis Taklim of Jamaah Tabligh, Amrullah (2008:11) explains that women enjoy the opportunity to learn the religion and to participate in dakwah activity upon joining the group. Winn (2012) considers the prominence of Majelis Taklim in many regions in Indonesia is related to the relatively recent development of a more obvious public expression of religious sensibilities among Muslim populations, and to the emergence of piety movements. As Nisa (2012) understands, ‘public piety’ is the expression of religious commitment that requires visibility in the community. The Majelis Taklim is a place where women’s religious commitment can be displayed. As for members of women’s Majelis Taklim of Aswaja mosques in Kupang, it also provides an outlet for them to participate actively in the preservation of the Aswaja traditions.

*Muhammadiyah Schools*
Islamic learning in formal educational institutions takes place not only in madrasah but also in Muhammadiyah schools. Since its arrival in the 1970s, Muhammadiyah has been running several schools and a university in Kupang. One important mission of these schools is to propagate the modernist ideas of Muhammadiyah. Subjects on Islam take up to 40 per cent of the total hours, while 60 per cent of the student’s time is spent on general subjects. What is interesting in Kupang is that non-Muslim students made up 70 per cent of the total 4,000 or more students of Muhammadiyah University and these students are obliged to take a subject on Islam. According to a lecturer at the university, this method is a small but important step in building understanding about Islam among non-Muslims students, which then serves as a basis to promote religious tolerance.

Conversion

As shown by the statistics (in Chapter 2), the number of Muslims in Kupang continues to steadily increase. The most significant factor is migration. The other is marital conversion. Despite being a minority, conversion to Islam is an ongoing process. The prohibition of interfaith marriage by Muslim scholars and the 1974 Law on Marriage (Law No. 1/1974), are contributing factors to conversion. However, from conversion narratives of the mualaf, we can see that they considered their decision to change their religion to Islam not as an external imposition (structural coercive power of state) but rather as an independent decision, on the basis of God’s will. They believe that God has arranged for their conversion to Islam as pre-determined life paths and that embracing Islam has made them cleaner, healthier, and sinless, associated with rituals of bathing, circumcision, and ablution/wearing a veil when praying. They feel accepted by the community through the practice of alms distribution; and they feel empowered by finding their roles in Majelis Taklim dedicated for new converts. Majelis Taklim has provided them a place to learn, allows them to connect with other converts, and to play a role in teaching other mualaf in the Qur’an reading group.

Inter-religious Harmony

The histories of development of the Muslim communities as minorities in a Christian majority town have laid the foundations for practices of inter-religious harmony. The building of places of worship was an index of tolerance and harmony: gifting land, the help of Christian officials to obtain permit for building mosques, the help of the Christian officials on the reconstruction of Grand Mosque of Kupang, and the close proximity of mosques and churches. However, recently Muslims in Kupang have had to face challenges to respond to the dynamics of Muslims-Christian relations at the
national level. Forced closure of a church in Bogor (West Java) in 2010 triggered protests against the construction of Batuplat Mosque in Kupang. Anti-Christian unrest in Temanggung (Central Java) caused a rumour of a riot in Kupang. Harmonious relations between Muslims-Christsians were strained by government policies, especially a decree in 1996 that stipulated that a permit to build places of worship requires a list of at least 90 members of the congregation and approval from at least 60 residents in the same village. While prior to this decree the building of places of worship in Kupang was relatively without problem, it is now difficult for the minority to meet the requirements in the decree. The legal requirement became an obstacle for the minority who used to rely on cooperation with the Christian neighbours and public figures in building places of worship.

However, I found that despite some tensions, the responsiveness of the Kupang elite as well as community engagement have contributed to the containment of tensions by negating provocative rumours, and preventing provocation from the radical elements in the community. State intervention, such the above-mentioned law that prohibits interfaith marriage (Law of Marriage No. 1/ 1974), appears not to have had a serious impact in Kupang. They accommodate to the law through what seems to be uncontroversial marital conversion to Islam, which is not uncommon and has not incited tensions from the Christian side. In fact, intermarriage emerges as an important factor that fosters peaceful relationships. The mualaf and their families maintain the tradition of visiting their Christian families during Christmas, and their Christian families visit them on Idul Fitri.

Despite their status as a minority group, Muslims in Kupang have freedom to celebrate Islamic festivals in public spaces, such as the festive parades in the streets at Maulid mentioned above. Prayer ritual after the communal bath of Safar was also held in an open area outside the mosque with much merriment. These major festivals are usually well-attended by representatives of local government—most of whom are Christians. There was no prohibition or restriction from the Christian authorities or communities with regard to the celebration of religious festivals in open space. The presence of Christian representatives at Islamic festivals shows the respect of the Christians towards Muslims and is a sign of tolerance. Tolerance is also shown in relationships between the Mosque Youth organisation and Pemuda Gereja (the youth group of the church), which usually help each other in ensuring safety in the celebration of religious festivals. Such responsiveness among elite and friendly attitudes among members of the community at
the grassroots level have helped to ‘inoculate’ Kupang against the inter-religious violence occurring elsewhere in Indonesia.

Islam in Kupang is a hybrid of different Islamic traditions that have their distinctive historical grounding. Each *kampung* and its mosque attempts to preserve traditions they brought from their places of origin, and they also share influences. Changes and adaptation in religious practices and traditions are inevitable, and the number of Muslims in Kupang will continue to grow and their Islamic traditions will become more diverse.

The Muslim communities of Kupang living in the three enclaves actively seek to preserve Aswaja tradition and consider affiliation with the *kampung* mosque an important pillar of identity. Kampung Airmata and Kampung Oesapa are the most adamant when it comes to resisting changes and reforms. Kampung Airmata Mosque has declared its mission as the defender of Aswaja Islam and takes the lead in the observance of important religious days. Despite being a minority, the Bugis Muslim community in Kampung Oesapa exemplifies the importance of intermarriage as a mode of Islamic conversion. The new converts are expected to practice rituals as a sign of expressing piety befitting Bugis culture. On the other hand, Kampung Solor and Kampung Bonipoi are more open to changes. However, like elsewhere in Indonesia, the Muslim community of Kupang will continue to encounter challenges, ideas of reform, and new thinking. However, the everyday differences in the practice of Islam and their lived experience of tolerance, among each other and with their Christian neighbours seems to fit them to face the challenge of new waves of Islamic influence, which is often critical of their Aswaja practice. Kupang offers many lessons for interfaith dialogue and religious lives lived in tolerance.
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