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Islam and politics in Madura : ulama and other local leaders in search of influence (1990-2010)

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Citation

Pribadi, Y. (2013, August 28). *Islam and politics in Madura : ulama and other local leaders in search of influence (1990-2010)*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/21539>

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Issue Date: 2013-08-28

Chapter 1

Introduction

Madura: an island of piety, tradition, and violence

Madura is an island located off the north eastern coast of Java, separated from Java by the Madura Strait. Administratively, it is part of the East Java province. The island consists of four regencies, from west to east: Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan, and Sumenep. It comprises an area of approximately 4,250 km². Geographically, Madura is a lowland area with only a few hills up to 500 metres above sea level. Compared to Java, Madura is arid and infertile. According to the 2007 census, the island has a population of 3,751,977, most of whom are Muslims.¹

The main language spoken on the island is Madurese. There are two dialects of Madurese: that of the western part (roughly Bangkalan and Sampang), which is considered less refined (*kurang halus*), and that of the eastern part (roughly Pamekasan and Sumenep), which is considered more refined (*lebih halus*). Many Madurese people are bilingual, with the other language being Javanese. Nowadays, Bahasa Indonesia (the official language of Indonesia) is widely spoken and in some places and among educated people, this language has replaced Javanese as the second language. However, among higher status Madurese (both nobility and non-nobility), the Javanese lifestyle still prevails. The manners and attitudes of noble Javanese are seen as the main symbols of Madurese grandeur. These symbols are exhibited mostly in rite of passage ceremonies, such as a child's first haircut, circumcision, wedding, and pilgrimage.

Madurese people are often stereotyped as crude, impolite, extrovert, outspoken, ill-mannered, and unrefined (De Jonge, 1995:

1 Badan Pusat Statistik Propinsi Jawa Timur, <http://jatim.bps.go.id/?cat=60>, accessed on 29 December 2011.

11). These stereotypes stem from colonial times and were used by the Dutch, yet they have survived to this day, reinforced by other ethnic communities in Indonesia, particularly those on neighbouring Java who consider themselves to be ‘more refined’. Moreover, Madurese have traditionally been associated with touchiness, suspiciousness, being temperamental, fierceness, vengefulness, combativeness, and violence (De Jonge, 1995: 13). Aside from this negative image, Madurese have also been perceived to have positive characteristics such as courage, bravery, adventurousness, faithfulness, loyalty, diligence, thrift, cheerfulness, enthusiasm, and humour (De Jonge, 1995: 14).

Due to its strong bond with Islam, the island has been labelled by Indonesians and the Madurese themselves as ‘*pulau santri*’ (the *santri* island).² Due to its history as the major producer of salt in the colonial period, it has also been called ‘*pulau garam*’ (the salt island), and thanks to its famous bull racing (*kerapan sapi*) tradition, it has also been dubbed ‘*pulau kerapan*’ (the *kerapan* island). These labels show that Madura has a strong religious character and a distinctive culture, and became a major salt producer.

In general, the great majority of the inhabitants function primarily within the context of their local community. Besides showing a strong Islamic character, Madurese also firmly hold on to syncretist traditions that are a mix of Islamic cultures and influences from Javanese and local Madurese perspectives. This is apparent in syncretist religious activities such as *slametan* (religious meal feasts), *khaul* (annual celebrations held on the anniversaries of the death of religious leaders), and *ziarah* (pilgrimages to graves) and in cultural forms associated with fraternity, wealth, status, and violence, such as *remo* (feasts characteristic to the *blater* (local strongmen) community), *kerapan sapi*, *sabung ayam* (cock fightings) and *carok* (distinctive Madurese forms of fighting using sharp weapons, and the last resort in terms of defending one’s honour). This wide range of cultural forms has provided the Madurese with ample opportunities to express their identity, while making sure that their cultural and religious values do not clash. While the *kiai* as religious leaders clearly represent the *santri* culture, the *blater*

² The term *santri* has several meanings (as explained in the following chapters). Here it simply refers to devout Muslims.

characterise the non-*santri* culture or what I call the *abangan*-like culture.³ With this study, I hope to expand our understanding of Madura as not only an island of piety, but also an island of tradition and of violence in different forms.

Previous studies

The work of Iik Mansurnoor (1990) on Madurese *kiai* is significant in understanding, among other things, the characters and functions of the *ulama* (Muslim scholars of Islamic disciplines)⁴ of Madura. Mansurnoor distinguishes between *ulama* in other Muslim regions who operate as 'bureaucratic *ulama*' and those in Indonesia who are mostly non-bureaucratic. According to this author, the differences lie primarily in the economic resources of the *ulama*. Unlike bureaucratic *ulama*, most *ulama* in Indonesia stand outside the ruling class. They derive their income, for the most part from their families, mostly from land, gifts, and donations. Secondly, unlike bureaucratic *ulama*, the *ulama* in Madura do not experience an ambiguous legitimisation of religious leadership. They simply never assume the *ulama* position by virtue of official appointments. Thirdly, a dichotomy of *ulama* and Sufis has never become a significant issue (1990: xvii). Mansurnoor, however, seems to neglect the existence of other variants of Islam in Madura, besides the *santri* variant. He suggests that 'with the exception of occasional eccentrics, religious uniformity among the Madurese makes it difficult for us to observe overt representatives of a strange [sic] tradition comparable to Javanese *abanganism*' (1990: 4). In fact, my study will reveal that the *abangan*-like culture is central to the identity of some segments in Madurese society.

In his all-encompassing study, Huub de Jonge (1989) demonstrates that tobacco merchants in Sumenep are entrepreneurs and intermediaries all at once. As entrepreneurs they combine and manipulate material resources for profit. As intermediaries, they act as sources of information on local issues and concerning development at the regional, inter-island, and national levels, while

3 The term *abangan* has several meanings (as explained in the following chapters). It often refers to less devout Muslims. The *santri* and *abangan*-like cultures in Madura are further explained in Chapter 4.

4 The use of the terms of *kiai* and *ulama* is further elaborated on in Chapter 2.

simultaneously informing outsiders on the situation in their village. With these dual roles, they have a central position in society, giving them significant influence. Although the main focus of De Jonge's economic anthropology study is trading, some parts of it deal with Islam and religious leaders. De Jonge also sketches politics in a village in Sumenep, and at the end of his work he focuses on the relationship between religious leaders and merchants in the village. However, like Mansurnoor, he seems to overlook the roles of local strongmen and hardly accounts for the *klebun* (village heads) and the role he plays in village politics. Despite his coverage of local politics in Madura, De Jonge does not show how political parties play important roles and shape the development of Islam in Madura. More importantly, unlike Mansurnoor, he does not differentiate between the hierarchical levels of the *kiai*, which I deem crucial in determining the roles different *kiai* play in society.

The significance of Madurese religious leaders has been depicted in other works. Recently, the roles of Madurese *kiai* in Bassra (Badan Silaturahmi Ulama Pesantren Madura - The Association of Friendship of Madurese *Pesantren Ulama*) were discussed by Ali Maschan Moesa, a university teacher, *kiai*, and politician (1999). In my own study, I also deal with *kiai* in Bassra and their rejection of the government's plan for *industrialisasi* (to introduce industrialisation and to create industrial estates) in Madura. The *industrialisasi* plan was included in the gigantic project to build the Suramadu Bridge that would connect the islands of Java and Madura and become the country's longest bridge. Moesa, however, argues that, in principle, the *kiai* of Bassra supported *industrialisasi* (1999: 5). As I will show, the *kiai* of Bassra supported the establishment of the bridge while still rejecting *industrialisasi*. That is why there was a series of polemics, heated debates, and negotiations between the *kiai* of Bassra and regency, provincial, and central governments in the 1990s, until the plan was postponed in 1997 due to the Asian financial crisis. The polemics between the *kiai* of Bassra and the authorities in the Suramadu Bridge affair are discussed in more detail in an important work by Muthmainnah (1998). She argues that debates concerning *industrialisasi* centred on, firstly, the polemic in the central government's plan to make *industrialisasi* an inseparable part of the construction of the bridge. Secondly,

the polemic in the types of industry that would be introduced in Madura. Thirdly, the polemic in the land acquisition for the bridge and the industrial estates (1998: 72). Unlike Moesa, she argues that the *kiai* of Bassra accepted *industrialisasi* conditionally, demanding that their opinions be taken into consideration before its implementation (1998: 117, 128). Once again, however, her work also contradicts my own analysis in which I would maintain that the *kiai* of Bassra supported the establishment of the bridge but rejected *industrialisasi*.

As my study also discusses local strongmen, it is important to provide an overview of literature dealing with this topic. One of the groups discussed in my study are the *blater*. The *blater* seem to resemble the mafiosi in Sicily. Indeed Elly Touwen-Bouwisma (1989) compared the violence in Madura to that in Sicily. In the Indonesian version (the original article was published in *De Gids* in 1983), she mentions 'orang berani' (brave men) who in my study are identified as the *blater*. De Jonge (2002) also mentions 'orang berani'. The *blater* have some things in common with the Sicilian mafiosi. Both groups came into being as rural phenomena. Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that they differ in certain respects. In his study (1988), which discusses the rural mafiosi in western Sicily in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries through an examination of their overall social networks, Anton Blok reveals the conditions under which mafiosi became a powerful force in the western Sicilian hinterland and relates them to the distinct stage of development reached by Italian society at large, or its southern periphery in particular (1988: xxvii-xxviii). According to Blok, mafiosi are:

[r]ural entrepreneurs of sorts, who were until recently an outstanding feature of peasant communities in Sicily's western interior. Recruited from the ranks of peasants and shepherds, and entrusted with tasks of surveillance on the large estates (*latifunda*) of absentee landlords, they constituted a particular variety of middlemen (1988: xxvii-xxviii),

while the mafia itself is a form of unlicensed violence (1988: 6). His work is important to my study because it shows patterns of violence in a different context, which can be applied to my own study.

Moreover, according to Diego Gambetta (1993), the mafia

is 'a specific economic enterprise, an industry which produces, promotes, and sells private protection' (1993: 1). Gambetta highlights an important link between the mafia and the state. He argues that 'the parallel between the mafia and the state has clear limits, and consequently, that the view of the mafia as a legal system in its own right does not actually stand up' (1993: 7). His study contributes to the study on strongmen groups by emphasising that 'mafiosi are not entrepreneurs primarily involved in dealing with illegal goods, nor are they entrepreneurs in the sense of handling violently the production of legal goods' (1993: 9). This proposition is also undoubtedly found in the characteristics of the *blater*; they are not simply criminals as some authors mentioned below suggest.

The most important study on the *blater* to date is the work of Abdur Rozaki (2004). This book is the first study that deals with the *blater* per se. The study discusses power relations between the *kiai* and the *blater* in the cultural and political economic spheres. Rozaki argues that the *blater* are an important actor in society as village elites (2004: 9). However, he seems to have a very negative opinion about the *blater*. For instance, he mentions that:

[b]later are the representatives of another "social world", which is closer to the criminality and violent actions (*carok*) [...] therefore, it is not surprising to find out that the violent actions exercised by the *blater* are often religiously legitimated (2004: 13).

Moreover, Rozaki also argues that there are at least two cultural processes in which someone can be regarded as a *blater*. Firstly, his ability in martial arts, daring attitudes, networks, and victories in *carok* (2004: 11). Secondly, his involvement in criminality and direct and indirect violent actions (2004: 12). In my study, I will first demonstrate that, in principle, the *blater* are not criminals, though some of them may be involved in criminal activities. They are local strongmen who become part of the general Indonesian phenomenon of strongmen, which includes the vanished *jagoan* of nineteenth century Java and the *jawara* in Banten. In general, these strongmen resemble the mafiosi in Sicily in that they offer protection to those who need it or those who are thought to need it. They act as power brokers in local politics, as fixers in relations between the people and security forces (*aparat*), and as the main

guardians and supporters of the *abangan*-like culture on the *santri*-dominated island. Secondly, contrary to what Wiyata notes (in the following paragraph), I will show that *carok* is not a distinctive characteristic of the *blater*. In Madura, anyone, including women, can commit *carok* if they feel insulted and wish to regain their honour by killing or injuring their adversary. More importantly, the winner of a *carok* action is not automatically regarded as a *blater*.

Another important study on the *blater* is the work of Latief Wiyata (2006). Although his main focus is actually *carok* actions, Wiyata, like Rozaki, also argues that in order to become a *blater* who is held in awe (*disegani*), someone must first commit murder. He also states that someone will not be considered a *blater* if he has not committed *carok* (2006: 114), and that *carok* is considered by some perpetrators as a tool for obtaining a higher position or social status as a *blater* in their community or within the *blater* community (2006: 230). Moreover, Wiyata also says that *carok* actions are only committed by men, never by women (2006: 176-177, 184). As I will show, these violent actions are also known to have been committed by women, and *carok* is not a decisive factor for one to be recognized as a *blater*.

Some authors have also contributed to my study by dealing with local politics and village politics, in particular with the reference to village heads. One of the most important works on village politics during the New Order (1966-1998) is probably the work of Hans Antlöv (1995). He argues that:

[t]he key to understanding the distinctive features of agrarian differentiation and local politics on contemporary Java lies in recognizing that the rural elite is not so much a pure capitalist class but privileged clients (*anak mas*, favourite children) of the state, whose opportunities to accumulate and rule depend on their crucial links with higher authorities (1995: 7).

As many villages in West Java (his area of study) were heavily dominated by the influence of Golkar (the ruling party during the New Order), he reveals that people experienced the fusion of the state and local government. Therefore, people experienced the state as a force from outside that influenced their lives in a variety of ways (1995: 8). The situation in West Java, as demonstrated by

Antlöv, is quite different to that in Madura. As I will show, even though in the second half of the New Order administration Golkar was victorious in Madura, Golkar did not influence the life of the villagers to any significant extent, since the influence of the PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan – the United Development Party) and religious leaders associated with the party was stronger.

Local politics in the post-New Order period are discussed in two edited volumes by Edward Aspinall and Greg Fealy (2003) and Henk Schulte Nordholt and Gerry van Klinken (2007). The first volume deals with the relations between Jakarta and the regions (*pusat* and *daerah*). The volume attempts to show that the rise of local powers have affected virtually every aspect of Indonesia's politics, economy, and society (2003: 2). The main purpose of this volume is to examine the impact of decentralisation and democratisation on local politics and power relations. A core proposition advanced in this volume is that:

[d]ecentralisation is closely bound to the wider politics of democratisation. The flourishing of the local in Indonesian politics has fundamentally been a product of the breakdown of Soeharto's centralised authoritarian system (2003: 9).

As I will show in the Madura case, the decentralisation process in Indonesia is not synonymous with the process of democratisation. In fact, my argument is influenced by the second volume, which indeed criticises the study by Aspinall and Fealy. Schulte Nordholt and Van Klinken deal with the dynamics of decentralisation in the post-Suharto era. In doing so, the authors investigate the nature and role of regional elites, particularly in the fields of bureaucracy, economy, and identity politics. The most important argument derived from this study is that decentralisation does not necessarily result in democratisation, good governance and the strengthening of civil society at the regional level. Instead, the authors argue that what is prevalent is the decentralisation of corruption, collusion and political violence that once belonged to the centralised administration of the New Order, and is now transferred to the existing patrimonial patterns at the regional level (2007: 18).

What I have learned from the works mentioned here is that

there is a lack of scholarship dealing specifically with the history of the development and the relationships between Islam, religious leaders, local strongmen, local and national officials at the local level of politics. Therefore, in order to respond to the above issues, this study attempts to answer questions related to those specific features and contribute to the discussions on Islam and politics in Indonesian society in Madura during the previous government system (the New Order) and the present one (the post-New Order).

Focus of the study

This study is about the history of the relationships between Islam and politics in Madura, Indonesia from 1990 until 2010. It covers two periods; the first is the last years of the New Order (1990-1998) and the second is the first years of a period that is known in Indonesia as *Era Reformasi* (the Reformation Era) or, more neutrally, the post-New Order period. The years 1990 and 2010 were selected for practical purposes and the need to choose a time limit, rather than because of any specific events. Certain topic limitations are made in this study because events that occurred during the twenty year (1990-2010) time span are simply impossible to capture in one single study. The discussion here is directed towards exploring local politics in Madura in the two different periods in which Islamic complexities and local cultural elements coexist, flourish, interlace, and strive in complex, pragmatic, and mutually beneficial relationships. The study is an attempt to give an account of Islam in Madura; the actors participating in its local politics; and socio-political, socio-cultural, and socio-religious events during the periods under study. Manifestations of Islam in Madura range from Islamic educational institutions (such as the *pesantren*) to Islamic mass organisations (such as the Nahdlatul Ulama – the NU). The main actors discussed are local leaders: the *kiai* (religious leaders), the *blater* (local strongmen), and the *klebun* (village heads), the people who successfully claim a domination over the use of religious authority, physical force, and formal leadership, respectively, within a given territory. The events underlined include polemics and conflicts between the governments and some segments of society in two cases from the 1990s (the 1993 Nipah dam incident and the strong opposition of

Bassra towards *industrialisasi*), elections at all levels, local-Islamic traditions, and cultural festivities.

In order to explore and comprehend interdependencies between the *kiai*, the *blater*, the *klebun*, and the state, we must resist the assumption that groups and structures are separated from the individuals composing them. Generalisation, therefore, should be avoided because every individual and every event is unique. Yet, categorisation is unavoidable because it is useful in identifying who belongs to which group, or what comprises a particular event.⁵ The central problem of this study is to discover how and why Islam and local cultures, as well as groups of local leaders influence and characterise local politics in Madura. For practical reasons, several general questions need to be addressed: What is the nature and what are the characteristics of Islam in Madura? What is the nature of Madurese *kiai* and Madurese *blater*? What is their position in society and how do they characterise Islam and local cultures? How were *pembangunan* (development, modernity) programmes implemented in Madura and how did segments of society respond to these plans? What are elections in Madura all about and how do segments of society perceive them? What is local politics in Madura and how do village leaders form relationships with each other and with the villagers? All of this is discussed specifically within the context of the formation and transformation of political culture in Madura since the previous era, the New Order. Moreover, as we will see, the actors, groups of local leaders, are part of larger configurations of interdependent individuals within Madurese society, and Indonesian society at large. The Islamisation process, the larger political development, the wide impact of authoritarian rule, the 'floating mass' policy, the economic growth, and the decentralisation era, are all connected to the development of Madurese society.

The argument of this study is that changes, continuities, repetitions, and developments in the relationships between Islam and politics in Madurese society in two different periods (the New Order and the post-New Order) should be understood as the

⁵ The categorisation of hierarchical levels of Madurese *kiai* in this study is, for instance, useful in identifying which *kiai* played the most central role in rejecting *industrialisasi*.

accumulated outcome of a long historical process of interactions between different segments of society. To be specific, what we see in Madura now should not be segmented, but instead should be understood from what has happened in the past, most importantly the New Order, and what has happened in other regions. A thumbnail description of the Madurese would include an extensive use of Islamic symbols in daily life, a strict obedience to religious leaders, and a persistent effort to preserve old and deep-rooted traditions.

As the theme of this study suggests, I will concentrate on identifying and analysing particular categories of individuals and groups of local leaders. Concise biographical information of particular individuals and a thorough description of types of local leaders will be one of the main points. Madura as an island, Bangkalan and Sampang as regencies, two villages in Bangkalan, Tapal Kuda (the East Java Eastern Salient) areas as the main migration destination of Madurese, and the East Java province, which Madura is part of, make up the geographical context of the study. Before that, however, the structures and configurations that form and influence Madurese society and groups of local leaders will be elucidated in order to provide a foundation for this study; or, more specifically, Islam in Madura will be observed to build the foundation. Finally, having sketched the foundation, the actors, and the setting of the study, the other main discussion concerns major socio-political events of the past and ‘present’ (for there is no real present time) at the regional, regency and village levels. Discussions about the Nipah dam incident, the Suramadu Bridge affair, all types of elections, and politics at the village level will contribute to the core argument of this study—that these events should not be viewed separately, but rather as part of a larger whole in order to understand local politics in Madura.

By focusing on the local level,⁶ I also hope to show how Islamic symbols and cultural elements are employed and promoted to reinforce the positions of local elites, and that they can also be found in other places in Indonesia. Actors such as the *kiai*, the

⁶ Depending on the context, local can mean the village, regency or even the province. In this study, unless stated otherwise, the term ‘local’ primarily refers to Madura as an island.

blater, and the *klebun* who concern themselves with conflicts and accommodations within society can be found, for instance, in Banten where *kiai* traditionally have a strong influence in society, where the *jawara* act as private security forces and political actors, and where the *jaro* (village heads) are responsible for guiding and guarding the village. Therefore, it might be argued that despite the narrow geographical focus, this study offers a broader analysis that might be useful in examining the relationships between Islam and local politics in other places in Indonesia.

Methods and sources

The approach of this study is diachronic. Historical and anthropological approaches are jointly employed. Historical events in complex societies like the Madurese are undoubtedly impossible to understand without consulting historical information. However, chronological data alone are insufficient in grasping the complexities and relationships between actors in all the social, political, cultural, and religious events under study. In order to explore past events, library research with special attention given to periodicals was conducted in a number of libraries in Leiden and a national archive in The Hague in the Netherlands; libraries in Jakarta, Surabaya, and Bangkalan and a national archive in Jakarta in Indonesia; and libraries in Canberra, Australia. ‘Present’ events were captured from two sets of fieldwork from July 2009 until January 2010, and from October 2010 until July 2011. These periods of fieldwork also included library research in the cities in Indonesia mentioned above.

This is a study with a historical-anthropological perspective. While staying on the island, I not only dealt with the experience of the people at the particular point in time when I was staying there, but also concentrated on past events within living memory. Nevertheless, as my fieldwork might well be considered anthropological work, ‘present events’ became my concern as well. Within Madura, I mainly focus on two regencies in the western part of the island, the Bangkalan and Sampang regencies, with more emphasis on Bangkalan. For example, in my discussions of village politics, I examine a village head election and politics at the village level, and two regency head elections in 2003 and 2008.

All the geographical contexts here are derived from Bangkalan. In addition, there is particular emphasis on Sampang when I examine the Sampang riot in the 1997 general elections and the 1993 Nipah dam incident. Further, this study includes a general discussion of Islam in Madura, descriptions of the *kiai*, the *blater*, and the *klebun*, coverage of the Suramadu Bridge affair, and an explanation of the 2008 gubernatorial elections in the two regencies specifically, but with two other regencies on Madura, the Pamekasan and Sumenep regencies, also in mind.

Library research can be tedious. For instance, my survey of periodicals in search of the word ‘*blater*’ proved troublesome. Despite my expectations that a search for the word would yield many results, in fact, it is seldom mentioned, even in regional and local newspapers. Moreover, it is difficult to approach the best direct sources or to gain access to the most interesting areas of enquiry since many *kiai*, *blater*, and *klebun* initially refused to talk to me. Local politicians and local notables were often equally reluctant. Only after I was represented or accompanied by ‘trustworthy’ intermediaries or informants, was I able to approach several sources. While a number of them did not mind their identity being revealed as a result of the interviews and chats, the majority preferred to remain anonymous, and so names of certain villages and people are camouflaged. The field-work is not ethnographic in the sense that I did not live close to the sources. Although I stayed in a number of places in Bangkalan, I never stayed in two of the villages I observed; rather, I stayed in the periphery and visited the villages on appointment. The reasons are obvious: the two villages are not the only subject of my study, but part of a bigger scheme. For obvious reasons, I also stayed in Surabaya where the majority of the written data were collected. Given the proximity of Surabaya to Bangkalan, I could also conduct my observations, participations, interviews, chats, and hang-outs in Bangkalan while staying in Surabaya. And, when the same processes were required but with sources in faraway places in Bangkalan and Sampang, I chose to stay in Bangkalan.

The structure of the study

This study is divided into eight chapters. In the first chapter,

the introduction (this chapter), a concise description of Madura, previous studies, focus of this study, methods and sources of this study, and the structure of this study are presented. The foundation of this study is presented in Chapter 2. It provides a general description of Madurese society, the distinctive aspects of Islam in Madura, the eminence of Islamic educational institutions, Islamic mass organisations, and the background of the emergence of the *kiai* on the island.

Chapters 3 and 4 sketch the main actors of this study, namely the groups of local leaders. Chapter 3 gives an analysis of Madurese *kiai* in which the socio-political roles of two prominent *kiai* of Bangkalan and Sampang are presented as an example. Chapter 4, meanwhile, describes the *blater*, cultural forms associated with them, some aspects of local belief, and the *blater*'s relationship with religious and cultural aspects and segments of Madurese society.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 constitute the main parts of this study. Chapter 5 is devoted to discussions on the Nipah dam incident and the Suramadu Bridge affair. The two *kiai* discussed in Chapter 3 played vital roles in the two events which occurred during the New Order. Sketching these events is important due to the nature of the roles played by the *kiai* on New Order Madura.

Chapter 6 concentrates on several elections on Madura. The 1997 *pemilu* (general elections) in Sampang that was marked by a riot provides a Madurese case study about violence surrounding elections in the New Order. The 2008 East Java gubernatorial election shows how the *kiai*, the *blater*, and the *klebun* play important roles in influencing elections. The 2003 and 2008 regency head elections in Bangkalan are outlined in order to discover how a *kiai-blater* figure (Fuad Amin Imron) was able to tap into wide-ranging networks. Finally, a village head election in the 'present' time is depicted in order to show politics at the village level.

Chapter 7 focuses on politics at the village level. Specifically, a village in Bangkalan becomes the setting. The village can be seen as a microcosm of villages on Madura, or at least in Bangkalan, since the presence and influence of local leaders is very evident. Finally, the last chapter, the conclusion, discusses the findings in the context of the relationships between Islam and politics in Madura during the New Order and the post-New Order eras.