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Aligning religious law and state law: street-level bureaucrats and Muslim marriage practices in Pasuruan, Indonesia

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Part Two

PRACTICE



CHAPTER 3

Pasuruan: Islam and Other Contexts

1. Introduction

This thesis deals with the reform of the bureaucracy concerned with marriage and how it has affected the everyday legal practice of marriage in a rural society. It includes an analysis of the local practices and lived experiences of marriage in a Muslim community in a regency in the northeastern part of the province of East Java: Pasuruan. This chapter offers an introduction which will assist in understanding the socio-economic history, the religious and cultural life and the development of Islam in Pasuruan. It consists of three sections. It first sets the scene by delineating the historical development of Pasuruan, including the history of Madurese migration and the historical development of Islam. Secondly, it addresses current cultural, religious and political life. The last section centres on specific elements of the community in which I did my fieldwork.

2. Historical Context

According to the *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indië*, the name Pasuruan derives from the Javanese word *suróh* which means betel. The *Encyclopaedie* mentions the *kromo* (high) Javanese equivalent of the name, which is *paredahan*, from the root *sedah* which also means

betel.¹ However, this name has gone out of use and the fact that Pasuruan was once a place where the betel (areca) palm grew in abundance has long since faded from people's memories. The alternative name of Pasuruan, Gembong (the name of a river dividing the town), which was used by many Javanese in the past is also no longer used.

The district of Pasuruan is located around 65 kilometres south-east of Surabaya, the capital city of the province. Today Pasuruan is home to 1,501,798 Muslim people or 98 percent of the whole population. A group of Hindus, around 15,612 (1%), most of whom live in the southern highlands around the volcano Mount Bromo, constitute the second largest population.² Historically, it was not until the Mataram kingdom occupied the southern part of Surabaya in the 1600s that Pasuruan became an important town. After the advent of Mataram, Pasuruan was ruled by regents who were subordinates of the Mataram sultanate in Central Java. The area surrounding Pasuruan was a frontier area of Mataram, especially in view of its close relationship with the "stubborn remnants of Hinduism in the easternmost corner of the island". Elson says it "served both as a field of combat and a redoubt for rebels".³

¹ P.A. van der Lith and Joh. F. Snelleman, *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indië*, vol. 3 edition (Amsterdam: KIT Royal Tropical Institute, 2010), p. 233.

² BPS Kab. Pasuruan, *Kabupaten Pasuruan dalam Angka 2016* (Pasuruan: BPS Kab. Pasuruan, 2017).

³ R.E. Elson, 'Sugar and Peasants: The Social Impact of the Western Sugar Industry on the Peasantry of the Pasuruan Area, East Java, from the Cultivation System to the Great Depression' (Monash University, 1979).

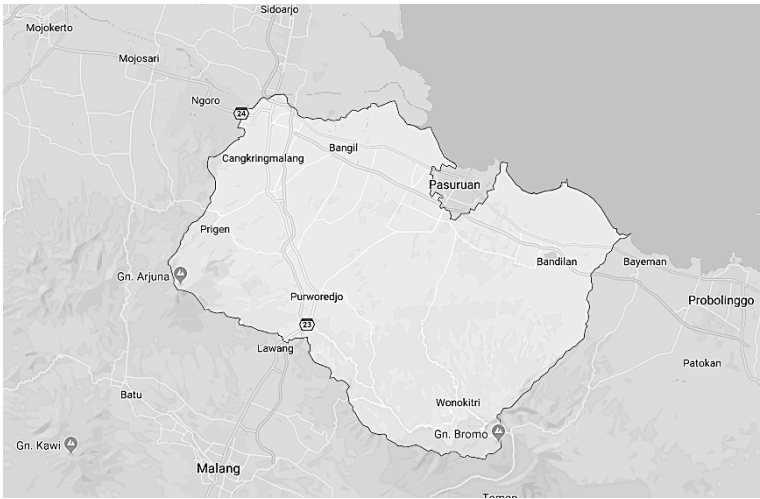


Figure 3.1. Map of Pasuruan

This section elucidates the history of Pasuruan, including the arrival of Madurese migrants, the socio-economic situation in the colonial period and the development of Islam, rounding off with the changes which occurred after the Proclamation of Independence and under the New Order era.

2.1. Madurese Out-Migration to Pasuruan

Pasuruan, and this is generally true of other areas located in the Eastern Salient of Java (*tapal kuda*), is home to people of Madurese descent. The historical ties between Madura and Pasuruan go back a long way to the thirteenth century, when Raden Wijaya, the founder of the Majapahit kingdom, agreed to grant Wiraraja, the Regent of Madura, the Eastern Salient of Java in gratitude for his support of the kingdom. Nevertheless, earlier literature suggests that both Javanese and Madurese were already conscious of belonging to the same cultural community. Husson categorizes Madurese out-migration to East Java into six chronological orders. He claims that Madurese serfs first went to East Java in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, to colonize agricultural land and support the Majapahit kingdom. This

migration was partly the result of geographical factors such as scarcity of good soil, deforestation and erosion in their own island.⁴ This marks the first out-migration wave of Madurese to Java.

The second wave of migration took place between the sixteenth and the nineteenth century. At the time, Madura was a source of soldiers for the powers fighting for supremacy in East Java. The military missions stimulated population movements. To take one example, a thousand Madurese were recruited by the VOC for the war against Blambangan in 1741. Madurese soldiers who had been involved in different battles in East Java remained there afterwards. If they did return to Madura, they brought back such glowing stories about the prospects in East Java they motivated other Madurese to move there.⁵ The third migration was an exodus of Madurese peasants between 1820 and 1850. During this period, Madura had the status of a free province under the terms of the 1745 agreement between the Regent of West Madura and the VOC which stated that the Regent would be allowed to govern independently in return for an annual contribution of money and troops. This situation continued until the liquidation of the VOC in 1799 when Madura lost its special self-rule status, which had had a severe consequence for the locals. They had to pay crippling taxes and retributions and therefore many left their island to begin a new life in East Java with their families.⁶ The emigration disadvantaged the local agriculture in Madura in terms of the decrease in manpower during the planting and harvest seasons. The island was spun into an economic downturn and its dependence on Java became more marked during this period.⁷

As I have mentioned before, the scarcity of good soil in Madura has been an enduring problem and always formed to the barrier to agricultural development. Agricultural harvests in the nineteenth century were far from enough to satisfy local needs. There are

⁴ Laurence Husson, 'Eight Centuries of Madurese Migration to East Java', *Asia and Pacific Migration Journal*, vol. 6, no. 1 (1997), p. 79.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 81–3.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 84–5.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

references which indicate the widespread use of coolies and seasonal and permanent workers from Madura in East Java, particularly in Pasuruan, Besuki, Jember, Probolinggo, Bondowoso and Lumajang. These areas were the important cash-crop centres of the province. A report shows that in 1892, 40,000 Madurese migrated to East Java. The big demand for workers in East Java really began when the Dutch East Indies government opened a whole series of plantations there between the 1830s and the 1870s. In addition to the very large-scale government project, enterprising individuals also set up their own private plantations. The establishment of these private plantations produced a rapid spurt in Madurese migration. Madura quickly became a reservoir of the manpower which was so vital to this development. For instance, Probolinggo experienced a 5.19 percent population increase in 1854, attributable to the arrival of Madurese. The expansion of the government plantation project and private enterprises meant that the cane-sugar industry of Java was the second largest in the world after Cuba.⁸ This seasonal migration marked the fourth wave of migration which took place in the latter part of the nineteenth century. According to Husson,⁹ with reference to Weddik, kinship ties meant that migrants from Sampang and Bangkalan chose to reside in Pasuruan. Quoting Van Nes, Elson reveals that, in the 1830s, demographically, Madurese constituted around 35 percent of Pasuruan residents, approximately 170,049 Javanese and 92,463 Madurese.¹⁰

The fifth round of migration occurred during the Japanese occupation (1942-1945). During this period, Madurese peasants suffered famine and poverty because of the continual worsening of the island's economy, the result of failed harvests and crippling taxation. A very large group of Madurese made their way to East Java on foot, travelling at night to avoid the sun, in their battle to survive seeking to find food and work in Java.¹¹ The last wave of migration occurred

⁸ Ulbe Bosma, 'The Cultivation System (1830-1870) and Its Private Entrepreneurs on Colonial Java', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 38, no. 2 (2007), pp. 275–91.

⁹ Husson, 'Eight centuries of Madurese migration to East Java', p. 86.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 88–9.

between the 1950s and the 1960s and still continues today. Big cities in East Java have experienced a rapid rate of urbanization as a consequence of natural population increase and migration from rural areas. And it has been the Madurese who have supplied the workforce, labourers and coolies for the plantation around these cities. They have also worked as shopkeepers, run food-stalls (*warung*), become rickshaw-drivers (*tukang becak*) and fruit-sellers. Internal solidarity among Madurese seems to play an important role in the group's economic situation.¹² Interestingly, the migratory influx has led to a more fluid social structure in Pasuruan. The Madurese who have settled there were not really inclined to submit to the pretensions of Javanese aristocrats.¹³

2.2. Colonial Occupation

As I mentioned earlier, a huge wave of Madurese migrants arrived in Pasuruan during the course of the nineteenth century, when the Dutch East Indies government set up a project encouraging the establishment of plantations and sugar-factories. The Pasuruan area first figured as an important area on the stage of Java's history when, in 1830, Governor-General Van den Bosch decreed that it was part of the Cultivation System. This was a policy introduced by the Dutch government which imposed on the Javanese population the obligation to grow and make compulsory deliveries of coffee, sugar-cane and other export products in exchange for crop payments.¹⁴ The expansion of agricultural commodities required thousands of labourers and coolies. Although the Dutch introduced many commercial crops, the two most successful during the life of the System proved to be coffee and sugar.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 90–2.

¹³ Robert W. Hefner, *The Political Economy of Mountain Java: An Interpretive History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 195.

¹⁴ Fasseur Cornelis, 'The Cultivation System and its Impact on the Dutch Colonial Economy and the Indigenous Society in Nineteenth-Century Java', in *Two Colonial Empires. Comparative Studies in Overseas History*, ed. by Bayly C.A. and Kolff D.H.A. (Dordrecht: Springer, 1986), pp. 137–54; Melissa Christina van Bijsterveld, 'Continuation and Change on Dutch Plantations in Indonesia' (Leiden University, 2018).

At the height of the Cultivation System, the labour force mobilized for government enterprises was coerced and their sheer numbers massive.¹⁵ Meanwhile, the number of coffee trees planted grew significantly until eventually 70 percent of all Javanese families were involved in compulsory cultivation and more than half of them worked with coffee. However, the payment for these products was not commensurate with the market value or with the efforts required by the planters. The value of the export product amounted to 11.3 million guilders in 1830 and rose to 66.1 million in 1840.¹⁶ Although, as a consequence of its astonishing profitability, coffee remained a government monopoly longer than any other crop,¹⁷ the northern littoral stretching from Pasuruan to Surabaya became Java's largest sugar-growing region, and would remain so for the duration of the Cultivation System. Hence, it goes without saying, this system had a considerable impact on the economic and social life of the Pasuruan people. Nevertheless, in contrast to areas in Central Java, Pasuruan did not suffer under the Cultivation System.¹⁸ Certainly the cultivation of sugar-cane and the sugar industry offered the native elites of the area prosperity but did not have any considerable impact on the ordinary people.¹⁹

In terms of the administrative development of the area, the Pasuruan regency was officially inaugurated in 1901. Besides sugar, the regency had centres of forestry and copper-mining. The town of Pasuruan served as the capital of the regency and it was also made the capital of the present-day regencies of Probolinggo, Malang and Lumajang. As time passed, the economic position of the Pasuruan regency declined as the result of various factors. One of the most important was that the Gembong River, which divided the town, gradually silted up.²⁰ At the precisely same time, the early twentieth

¹⁵ Hefner, *The Political Economy of Mountain Java: An Interpretive History*, p. 45.

¹⁶ Cornelis, 'The Cultivation System and its Impact on the Dutch Colonial Economy and the Indigenous Society in Nineteenth-Century Java'.

¹⁷ Hefner, *The Political Economy of Mountain Java: An Interpretive History*, p. 43.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Dédé Oetomo, 'The Chinese of Pasuruan: Their Language and Identity' (Australian National University, 1987).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

century, Surabaya Harbour was expanded and the Surabaya-Malang railway was opened. The opening of this railway rather undercut the importance of Pasuruan and it slipped into an industrial decline. Much of its trade was diverted to Probolinggo. The capital of residency was transferred to Malang in 1930.²¹

2.3. Pre-Independence

The historical background of orthodox understanding of Islam in the pre-independence era explains the rapid growth of Sarekat Islam (SI, Islamic Union) in Pasuruan²² and later of the NU. SI was a party which grew out of an association of Muslim merchants who wanted to improve their economic interests to put them more on a par with those of Chinese merchants in Java. It became a political party in the 1920s. Trying to trace the history of SI in Pasuruan is a difficult exercise because of the lack of sources. What is known is that a representative of SI was quite active in his visits to those villages in Pasuruan with which he had personal and financial ties and in them he would set up a village religious leader as a sort of a local organizer. Because of its configuration, SI attracted peasants and quickly became an organization embraced by the peasants in their struggles against the infidel rulers and the *priyayi*, a social class comprising the elites and government officials. This idea of struggling against the rulers and social elites struck a profound chord among traditionalist Muslims. Another reason SI expanded its influence was that it slotted neatly into the wave of Islamic revivalism which swept Java around the 1910s and shared the SI ideals of communal solidarity and belonging.²³

The development of SI was interrupted by the onset of a severe economic crisis, popularly known as the Great Depression, in Indonesia during the 1930s. Although this Great Depression had a detrimental effect on the Pasuruan economy, it did not change the

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Harry J. Benda, 'The Pattern of Administrative Reforms in the Closing Years of Dutch Rule in Indonesia', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 25, no. 4 (1966), p. 592.

²³ Elson, 'Sugar and Peasants: The Social Impact of the Western Sugar Industry on the Peasantry of the Pasuruan Area, East Java, from the Cultivation System to the Great Depression'.

political face of Pasuruan very much. Under this calm surface, the NU quietly began to expand its influence.²⁴ It pursued a slightly different strategy to that of SI. It adopted a nonconfrontational strategy towards the rulers and, on the ground in the villages, it encouraged rural religious teachers to promote its own style of religious platform. Students in *pesantren* (*santri*) were sent into areas of the countryside to organize *pengajian* (classes in *Qur'an*), thereby laying the groundwork for the establishment of a new chapter of the organization. In short, its strategies were apolitical.²⁵ Its priorities could be said to have been: do not provoke immediate anticolonial resistance but concentrate on disseminating traditional Islam. By deploying this cautious approach, the NU won the hearts and minds of that section of the population which was a still less 'Islamic', succeeding in spreading its base to the southern highlands, despite the fact that the contest between Islam and Javanism (*kejawen*) in the highlands was still ongoing.²⁶

The Dutch colonial rule was powerful enough to curb attempts to establish Indonesian sovereignty but was not strong enough to eliminate the Nationalist spirit. At that point, the Indonesians still did not have the power to compete with the colonial ruler and therefore needed outside help. Beginning in March 1942, the Japanese provided just this help by taking over Dutch power in Indonesia. Sadly, it was a false dawn and Indonesians would soon have to face the reality of the hardship of Japanese rule: a scarcity of food, clothing and medicines as well as forced labour on a large scale. Pasuruan people remembered the Japanese occupation (1942 to 1945) as a difficult and frightening period.²⁷ The policy the Japanese employed towards Islam was virtually the reverse of that of the Dutch and exploited the old antipathy towards Christian rulers. The Japanese authorities courted religious teachers in the villages and rewarded them by increasing their local power. In a nutshell, the effect of the Japanese policy was to

²⁴ Hefner, *The Political Economy of Mountain Java: An Interpretive History*, p. 197.

²⁵ Harry J. Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun: Indonesian Islam under the Japanese Occupation, 1942-1945* (Dordrecht: Foris Publications, 1983).

²⁶ Hefner, *The Political Economy of Mountain Java: An Interpretive History*, p. 197.

²⁷ Oetomo, 'The Chinese of Pasuruan: Their Language and Identity', p. 14.

expand the growth of the Islamic movement. In return, the Japanese were eager to obtain the aid of these religious leaders in the fight against the return of the former rulers.²⁸ Moreover, Japanese support was also crucial to the establishment of the *Masyumi*, a federation of all Indonesian Muslim organizations, in which the NU executive played important roles. The NU then became part of the government bureaucracy through its involvement in the *Shumubu*, the Japanese-created Office of Religious Affairs.²⁹ In the final months of the Japanese occupation, *Hizbullah*, a military arm of the *Masyumi*, launched an intensive campaign to win mass membership in Pasuruan. The resultant success guaranteed Muslim supremacy in lowland Pasuruan.³⁰ *Hizbullah* was potentially challenged by the establishment of Nationalist youth corps in 1944, Peta (*Pembela Tanah Air*, Defenders of the Homeland). However, Peta failed to obtain a significant influence on the Muslim communities in Pasuruan, which remained a firm NU bastion.

2.4. Post-Independence and the New Order Era

With the Proclamation of Independence in August 1945, the new state of the Republic of Indonesia came into being in the territory of the former Dutch East Indies. However, the dream of an independent Indonesian state was opposed by the former colonial power. At the end of the Second World War, the Dutch asserted their intention of regaining the colony with the support of their European allies. The war of attrition, popularly known by Indonesians as the Revolution, lasted for more than four years.³¹ The Dutch organized a military expedition in 1946 but it failed to raise resistance in urban Pasuruan.³² Nevertheless, in some ways it did encourage a republican movement in the southern part to resist the infiltration of NU influence from the

²⁸ Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun: Indonesian Islam under the Japanese Occupation, 1942-1945*.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Hefner, *The Political Economy of Mountain Java: An Interpretive History*, p. 198.

³¹ Kevin W. Fogg, 'Islam in Indonesia's Foreign Policy, 1945-1949', *Al-Jami'ah*, vol. 53, no. 2 (2015), p. 308.

³² Hefner, *The Political Economy of Mountain Java: An Interpretive History*, p. 198.

north. This movement caught the Islam-based organizations in Pasuruan at a disadvantage and led to the establishment of Nationalist dominance in the region following the war. However, greatly assisted by the vast development of *pesantren*, traditionalist Muslims did manage to preserve their entrenched socio-structural power.

A year earlier, in 1945, Indonesia had declared its Independence. Soon after Independence, the government sought to hold a legislative election. But, given the prevailing political instability, the election was not possible. In 1953, the government was able to pass a bill on elections which was enshrined as a law. It gave the right to vote to everybody over the age of eighteen or who was or had been married. The election campaign followed hard on the heels of the passing of the law and the first election was held in September 1955. In this general election, devout Muslims were drawn to the *Masyumi* and NU, whereas Nationalist Javanese chose to pursue their struggle through either PNI (*Partai Nasional Indonesia*, the Indonesian National Party) or PKI (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*, the Communist Party of Indonesia).³³ This division shaped the development of the Islamization in Pasuruan, which was very much bound up in the *aliran* (stream) pattern of party mobilization. Political parties infiltrated rural areas canvassing votes. The NU enjoyed a major success and won a significant number of seats (18.4%) in the Parliament.³⁴ The *Masyumi* scored an even bigger win, as the runner-up, with 20.9 percent of the votes. Religion featured prominently in the political campaign.

Compared to other areas, the polarization in Pasuruan was relatively simple: split between the NU-dominated northern lowlands and the Nationalist southern highlands, although the influence of the *Masyumi* in Pasuruan was inescapable. The NU was highly critical of the *Masyumi*, disagreeing with its modernist ideology. Nevertheless, the NU and *Masyumi* leaders met on common ground in their ideas about Communism. They identified communists with atheists.

³³ Justus M. van der Kroef, 'Indonesia's First National Election: A Sociological Analysis', *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, vol. 16, no. 3 (1957), p. 238.

³⁴ Robert W. Hefner, 'Islamizing Java? Religion and Politics in Rural East Java', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 46, no. 3 (1987), p. 550.

Although certain figures in the NU condemned the PKI as an anti-Islamic organization, some NU leaders were less concerned about the communists than about their modernist Muslim rivals.

In Pasuruan where religious issues have always loomed large, Islam has wielded a significant influence. *Masyumi* leaders and radical *kyai* from the NU demanded that the traditional ritual practices in the highland south be outlawed. Their opposition came to a head prior to the 1955 election when tensions escalated after a group of Muslim activists (linked to radical factions in the NU) occupied a famous upland *dhanyang* (a sacred place). Although overall the Islamic political parties were disappointed with the result of the first election of 1955 on the national level, in Pasuruan itself the election results confirmed the dominance of the NU, which enjoyed a significant win, 61 percent of the votes, in that election. Only Madura produced a more stunning result than Pasuruan.³⁵ This NU electoral victory in Pasuruan put the Pasuruan's Javanist highlanders in a tricky situation. The election results meant that the major success of the Islam-based political parties posed a serious threat to their religious traditions.

Another development in the wake of the election was the growing influence of the PKI. The economic decline in Indonesia which dogged the late 1950s and early 1960s had a severe impact on inflation. The PKI took the opportunity presented by the deteriorating economic situation to expand its rural constituency. At the end of 1963, the PKI introduced a campaign to make the land reform enacted in 1960 Agrarian Law a reality. The PKI mobilized farmers into 'unilateral actions' (*aksi sepihak*) to seize the land of large landowners and hold demonstrations in support of sharecropping. Unsurprisingly, this initiative provoked strong reactions from the Muslim landlords.³⁶ East Java was the scene of some of the most violent confrontations between Muslims and communists. Tellingly, in lowland Pasuruan the PKI failed to gain the support of the rural people as the power exerted by the *kyai*

³⁵ Hefner, *The Political Economy of Mountain Java: An Interpretive History*, p. 200.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

proved too strong. Realizing it was flogging a dead horse, the PKI in Pasuruan soon focused its attention on the uplands.³⁷

In the years 1965 to 1966, Indonesia experienced a dark chapter in its national history as large-scale killings and civil unrest rocked the country. The killings generally targeted members of the PKI and its comrade organizations. The trouble began on the evening of 30 September 1965 when a group of militants who proclaimed themselves Soekarno's protectors executed six of Indonesia's top military generals allegedly to pre-empt a possible coup. However, Soekarno refused to associate himself with this movement. Now the cracks in the façade of his poor leadership begin to show. Major-General Soeharto, who at the time was the leader of Kostrad (*Komando Strategis Angkatan Darat*, Army Strategic Command), capitalized on the situation to claim control over the country. He deployed troops while propagating the idea that the movement's actions posed a danger to the nation. Masterminded by Soeharto and his military forces, propaganda associating the coup attempt with the PKI began to be disseminated.³⁸ The campaign was successful, convincing both Indonesian and international audiences that the murders were a PKI attempt to undermine the government under President Soekarno. Nevertheless, the writing was on the wall and public opinion began to shift against Soekarno, disturbed by his undisguised sympathy for the events of 30 September and his tolerance of communist elements.

Soeharto presented the campaign as a nationwide conspiracy to commit the mass murder of large segments of the population associated with the PKI. The army removed those top civilian and military leaders it thought sympathetic to the PKI. By the end of October, the propagation of this conspiracy theory had easily won the support of the Muslim leaders. These leaders, many of whom controlled large swathes of agrarian land, felt threatened of the PKI's efforts to speed up land reform. Furthermore, groups of devout Muslims joined in the purges against communists, arguing that it was

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

³⁸ Jerome R. Bass, 'The PKI and the Attempted Coup', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1970), pp. 96–105.

their bounden duty to cleanse Indonesia of atheism. In March 1967, the Parliament stripped Soekarno of his remaining power and Soeharto was appointed as Acting-President. In 1968, Soeharto was appointed to the first of his five-year terms as President. The term New Order was used to distinguish Soeharto's regime from Soekarno's Old Order.

During the New Order era, under the banner of Pancasila, the New Order attempted to control Islamic forces. Islamic political parties were weakened and merged into a single one in 1973 and, later, this new body was obliged to replace its Islamic foundation with Pancasila.³⁹ The philosophical foundation of the nation, ideologically Pancasila is not secular. Instead, it comprises five principles, the first of which is belief in One God. To reinforce this state ideology, a number of local governments initiated the idea of creating so-called Pancasila villages. Behind the concept lies the desire for people to have peaceful and prosperous lives and to strive for equality before the law. It was also meant to encourage citizens to make strong a commitment to practising their religious doctrine, particularly Islam. Consequently, it is not too farfetched to say that this idea was meant to be the New Order's strategy orchestrated to gain Muslim support. The Pasuruan government was also encouraged to establish these villages.⁴⁰ In its campaign the central government stressed that commitment to the religious principle in Pancasila was the determinant in the application of the other principles. Therefore, the development of traditional Islamic schools (*pesantren*), which produced Islamic leaders, was considered consistent with the spirit of Pancasila.

Despite the success of this tactic, the New Order felt it necessary to establish another channel of communication with the Muslim community. In 1975, The MUI, was established as a vehicle through which to mobilize support for its development policies from Muslims. In the 1990s, the New Order seemed to reach a turning point when it

³⁹ Martin van Bruinessen, 'Islamic state or state Islam? Fifty years of state-Islam relations in Indonesia Hamburg: Abera-Verlag', in *Indonesien am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. by Ingrid Wessel (Hamburg: Abera-Verlag, 1996), pp. 19–34.

⁴⁰ Pemda Kab Pasuruan, *The Present Day of Kab Pasuruan* (Pasuruan: Pemda Kab Pasuruan, 1974).

established the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Se-Indonesia, ICMI). Some argued that the ICMI reflected the growing influence of Islam in the bureaucracy and the rise of a Muslim urban 'middle class'.⁴¹ However, some others have claimed that it was an expression of the continuing Islamization of daily life which had occurred in the 1970s and 1980s.⁴² In Pasuruan the trend towards the growing influence of Islam among the Muslim middle class did not seem to happen. *Pesantren* were not dislodged from their position as the key social institution which sustained the development of Islam in the area.

3. Cultural, Religious and Political Life

Islam, which came from the northern part of Central Java, penetrated into this area in the first part of the sixteenth century.⁴³ As Islamization took hold in this region it led to the development of what is known as coastal Islam (*Islam pesisir*) and slowly but surely it emerged as the centre of so-called traditionalist Islam.⁴⁴ The most fundamental feature of this type of Muslim community is its deep commitment to upholding religious traditions such as collectively reciting *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah, a series of devotional acts) dedicated to the dead and reciting prayers for the Prophet (*solawatan*) as well as deep-seated obedience to religious leaders.

The influence of Islam was reinforced by the expansion of traditional religious schools (*pesantren*) in the northern lowlands during the last half of the nineteenth century. These schools became centres of the propagation of traditional Islam. On a wider scale, they were also crucial to lowland politics and social structure. Marital ties

⁴¹ Robert W. Hefner, 'Islam, State, and Civil Society: ICMI and the Struggle for the Indonesian Middle Class', *Indonesia*, vol. 56, no. October (1993), p. 32.

⁴² Bruinessen, 'Islamic state or state Islam? Fifty years of state-Islam relations in Indonesia Hamburg: Abera-Verlag'.

⁴³ M.C. Ricklefs, *A history of modern Indonesia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), p. 34.

⁴⁴ M.C. Ricklefs, *Polarising Javanese society: Islamic and other visions, c. 1830-1930* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2007); Koentjaraningrat, *Javanese Culture* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 318.

connected wealthy families to *pesantren* teachers. Ordinary villagers were also expected to make gifts of money and land to religious teachers to support the running of the *pesantren*.⁴⁵

Nevertheless, Hefner remarks that Pasuruan is one of the most heterogeneous regencies in Java⁴⁶ As I have already mentioned, *kejawen* holds sway in the south while Islamic traditionalism predominated in the north. This Islamic orientation is not the preserve of certain social classes, but spans them all. In this section, I wish to explain particular traits of the Pasuruan people who live in the northern lowlands, including their culture, religion, patron-client ties and politics.

3.1. Cultural Life

My personal acquaintance with this area began when I studied in an Islamic secondary school (*madrasah aliyah*) in the town of Jember in the late 1990s. I passed through this area on my way back and forth to my hometown, Sidoarjo. The character of the people living in the vicinity of my school was not so much different from the people living in Jember. The most distinctive feature of a community is its language. By and large the people speak in Madurese or, when they do speak in Javanese or Indonesian, they do so with a Madurese accent. As discussed earlier, the strong influence of Madurese culture in this area, and other eastern East Java parts in general, has a long historical trajectory. The emigration from Madura constituted a new diaspora in Java.⁴⁷ After an intense socio-cultural interaction with the natives of the eastern part of Java, a new-hybridized culture was formed called *pedalungan* or *orang campuran* (mixed people).⁴⁸ This new culture displays special characteristics, namely: the use of local language, the pattern of economic activities and political participation.⁴⁹ Another

⁴⁵ Hefner, *The Political Economy of Mountain Java: An Interpretive History*, p. 195.

⁴⁶ Hefner, 'Islamizing Java? Religion and Politics in Rural East Java', pp. 533–554.

⁴⁷ Husson, 'Eight Centuries of Madurese Migration to East Java'.

⁴⁸ Konstantinos Retsikas, 'The Power Of The Senses: Ethnicity, History and Embodiment in East Java, Indonesia', *Indonesia and the Malay World*, vol. 35, no. 102 (2007), p. 970.

⁴⁹ Retsikas, 'The Power Of The Senses: Ethnicity, History and Embodiment in East Java, Indonesia'; Konstantinos Retsikas, *Becoming – An Anthropological Approach to Understandings of the Person in Java* (London: Anthem Press, 2012).

reference calls them *pendhalungan*. The term comes from the word “*dhalung*” in Javanese which means a big pot in which rice is cooked. This area has become a melting pot of Javanese and Madurese culture.⁵⁰ The society is identified with an agrarian culture, hard work, strong feelings of solidarity and great respect for Islamic leaders.

The other major sub-cultures of East Java are known as *arek* or *arek'an* and *matraman*. I spent my childhood in Sidoarjo in which both language and culture are characterized as *arek'an*. Geographically, *arek'an* culture is located in the central part of East Java, stretching from Surabaya to south coast of Malang regency. The term *arek'an* itself comes from the Javanese word *arek* which means children or young people. *Arek'an* is associated with being ‘modern’ in terms of open-minded, rational, well-educated and able to adapt easily to new situations. From the religious point of view, if *pendhalungan* are said to be very fervently attached to a traditional type of Islam and are identified by their great respect for Islamic leaders, *arek'an* tend to practise Islamic traditionalism rather less assiduously. The third sub-culture, *matraman*, is situated in the western part of East Java, from the north to the south coast, bordering the province of Central Java. They still preserve a culture which has been inspired by in the Mataram sultanate in Central Java. They are identified with a more subtle use of language, their respect for kingship and their embracing of the most refined values of Javanese culture such as their facility in the use of a polite language in daily conversations. Local norms are set on the basis of patriarchy and hierarchy.⁵¹

Besides the language marker, another indication of the *pendhalungan* community is the way people dress. Although they follow a similar traditional model of understanding Islam as in other places in East Java, the women in this area show distinct peculiarities in dressing. Embracing the Madurese culture, the women, both young

⁵⁰ Christanto P. Raharjo, *Pendhalungan: Sebuah 'Periuk Besar' Masyarakat Multikultural* (presented in *Jelajah Budaya* 13 August, 2006), p. 3.

⁵¹ Mufidah Ch, ‘Complexities in Dealing With Gender Inequality: Muslim Women and Mosque-Based Social Services in East Java Indonesia’, *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, vol. 11, no. 2 (2017), pp. 459–88.

and old, wear *kebaya* (traditional Indonesian blouse), traditional hijab (*kerudung*) and sarongs or wrap-around skirts in bright, contrasting colours. The idea behind the selection of such colours is that they reflect courage, openness and a certain straightforwardness. The men wear a loose black blouse with red and white stripes. The sharp stripes are meant to encourage the building of a firm character and fearlessness in facing challenges. The loose clothes indicate freedom and openness. This outfit is called *pesa'an*, and is worn on both formal occasions and in daily life. The women like to wear accessories and really conspicuous jewellery. It can be fashioned from either gold or silver and sometimes includes unique motives. Jewellery is worn to display social and economic status.⁵²

3.2. Religious Groups

The regency of Pasuruan has long been one of the most important centres of Islamic traditionalism in Java. As a channel of traditionalist Muslim clerics, after its foundation, the NU quickly attained dominance in lowland political life. In the Indonesian religious landscape, a 'traditionalist' is someone who embraces one of the four Sunni schools of jurisprudence.⁵³ Islamic traditionalism is the main feature which distinguishes the NU from Muslim 'modernist' or 'reformist' organizations.⁵⁴ In addition to its adherence to traditional Islam, the NU has been forthright and quite active in promoting the role of a religious civil society by criticizing the state power and by becoming a vehicle for social cohesion among citizens in the 1980s and 1990s. The NU became a political party in the 1950s but was merged into the Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP, the United Development Party) in 1973. Finally, at the NU Situbondo National Congress (*Muktamar*) in 1984, a group of its intellectuals and activists urged for a return to the *Khittah* (Guidelines) of 1926. This would have meant that the NU abandon politics and revert to being purely religious and social

⁵² Etty Herawati, *Kain dan Pakaian Tradisional Madura* (Jakarta: Dinas Museum dan Sejarah, Pemerintah DKI Jakarta, 1979).

⁵³ Rumadi, *Islamic Post-Traditionalism in Indonesia* (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2015), p. 23.

⁵⁴ Faisal Ismail, 'The Nahdlatul Ulama: Its Early History and Contribution to the Establishment of Indonesian State', *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, vol. 5, no. 2 (2011), pp. 247–82.

organization.⁵⁵ However, since the collapse of the New Order, many NU leaders have dominated strategic positions in the central government bureaucracy, let alone in Pasuruan.

Within NU itself a diversity of religious tendencies is apparent. Some NU leaders in Pasuruan adhere strictly to classical *fiqh* doctrines when it comes to the relationship between religions, religious minorities and some particular issues within Islam, such as polygyny. They are quite critical of the central organizers of the NU who have promoted modern ideas of tolerance and pluralism. This critical group is anecdotally known as *NU Garis Lurus* (Straight Path NU). *Kyai* who have limited education and live in *kampung* (village) are likely to be proponents of this group.

Despite this divide, the majority of NU leaders in Pasuruan prefer to cultivate an understanding of the middle path of Islam. They promote an idea called *Islam Nusantara* (Archipelago Islam) which represents the close interaction between Islam and local cultures. *Islam Nusantara* emphasizes the understanding that to be a Muslim, one does not have to ignore national and local identities. Instead, both national and local identities can co-exist with an Islamic identity. The combination of the two can assist one to be a devout Muslim and a Nationalist at the same time. This 'progressive' line of NU began to gain popularity among NU members when Abdurrahman Wahid chaired this organization from 1984 to 1999). Wahid successfully led NU in its adoption of values such as democracy and religious tolerance.⁵⁶

The NU is not the only Islamic group active in Pasuruan. Although the Muhammadiyah and Persis (Persatuan Islam, Islamic Union) also have a presence, they are less popular. Both organizations were inspired by the reformist movement inaugurated by Muhammad Abduh in the magazine *Tafsir Al-Manar*. The Muhammadiyah chose to follow a path which emphasizes both religious and secular education and a tolerance of other faiths. In contrast to the NU, the

⁵⁵ Robin Bush, *Nahdlatul Ulama and the Struggle for Power within Islam and Politics in Indonesia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009), p. 28.

⁵⁶ Alexander R. Arifianto, *Islam Nusantara & Its Critics: The Rise of NU's Young Clerics*, no. 18-23 January 2017 (Singapore, 2017).

Muhammadiyah encourages its followers to use their own legal reasoning (*ijtihad*) rather than adhering to tradition. Adherence to legal decisions made by previous jurists (*taklid*) should be avoided. This religious idea is designated *pemurnian akidah* (purifying the faith).⁵⁷ As did the Muhammadiyah, Persis has evolved in the direction of reforming traditional Islamic practices. It opposes the practice of kissing the hand of another person as a sign of respect, a practice which remains part of NU tradition.⁵⁸

Furthermore, Bangil, the capital of Pasuruan, is home to the headquarters of Shi'a Islam in Indonesia. The rapid development of this Islamic stream led to an anti-*Shi'a* protest in 2007. The protest, mainly championed by older NU members, took place in front of the YAPI (Yayasan Pesantren Islam) in Bangil. The YAPI is a *pesantren* which belongs to *Shi'a* Muslims. It was founded by Husein al-Habsy, an Indonesian of Arab descent, in 1976 and has expanded into an established educational institution covering primary to high school which welcomes students not only from *Shi'a* but also *Sunni* families. The same protest recurred in 2011. The attackers threw stones at a female *pesantren* of the *Shi'a* community.

This action angered the youth wing of the NU, *Ansor*, which urged police to investigate the attack. This youth wing of the NU is genuinely concerned with the right to exist of religious minorities and is not in favour of the far-right wing of Islam. Other youth forums also showed their concern and organized a rally in front of the YAPI, claiming that the protection of diversity is enshrined in the national motto of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*.⁵⁹ This stand on a point of principal demonstrates that there is a tendency among the younger generation of the NU to embrace a more moderate understanding of Islam, one which encourages the protection of religious minorities.

⁵⁷ James Lowe Peacock, *Purifying the Faith: the Muhammadiyah Movement in Indonesian Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978).

⁵⁸ Jeremy Menchik, *Islam and democracy in Indonesia: tolerance without liberalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

⁵⁹ Samsu Rizal Panggabean, 'Policing Sectarian Conflict in Indonesia: The Case of Shi'ism', in *Religion, Law and Intolerance in Indonesia*, ed. by Tim Lindsey and Helen Pausacker (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 280–1.

Another recent development is that the right-wing Islamic organization established in August 1998, the Islamic Defender Front (FPI, Front Pembela Islam), which is most strongly represented in the urban areas, has begun to gain influence in rural areas. From a theological point of view, it is not different to the NU and a number of local *kyai* have even shown an interest in it. The FPI promotes the idea of *amar makruf nahi munkar* (commanding what is good and forbidding what is evil) and even allows the use of violence in its implementation. Its principal attraction to this idea is that the organization perceives it to be part of real *dakwah* (propagation/proselytization). The FPI has become rather notorious for its paramilitary division which carries out intensive raids on massage parlours, bars, karaoke venues, gambling centres and other 'evil places', especially during Ramadhan.⁶⁰

The relationship between the FPI and the NU is not always good. During the last few years, the local branches of the FPI and the local NU youth organizations have often been at loggerheads and in 2017 the tension intensified, resulting in an attack committed by a group of FPI members on a house which belonged to a member of *Ansor*. The attack was triggered by a misunderstanding about a Facebook post which was believed to have humiliated the top FPI leader.⁶¹ In mid-2017, the local FPI invited its top leader, Rizieq Syihab, to deliver a speech in the *tablig akbar* (great congregation). This sermon elicited a harsh reaction from the audience since he severely criticized the government and the leaders of the NU for not supporting the idea of assigning the *Sharia* a formal place in the fabric of the nation.

The traditional understanding of Islam as practised by the NU has influenced local people's social life in northern Pasuruan. Important phases of life, such as birth, marriage, birthdays and death, are celebrated and commemorated in a localized form of Islamic ritual.

⁶⁰ Helen Pausacker, 'Pink or Blue Swing? Art, Pornography, Islamist and the Law in Reformasi Indonesia', in *Religion, Law and Intolerance in Indonesia*, ed. by Tim Lindsey and Helen Pausacker (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 290.

⁶¹ Muhajir Arifin, 'Gara-gara Postingan di Medsos, Ansor dan FPI Pasuruan Bersitegang', *Detik.com*, <https://news.detik.com/berita-jawa-timur/d-3495695/gara-gara-postingan-di-medsos-ansor-dan-fpi-pasuruan-bersitegang>, accessed 14 Oct 2018.

Beatty remarks that all rituals reflect the interests of orthodoxy in creating social harmony in the neighbourhood by recommending adjusting one's behaviour to unorthodox others.⁶²



Figure 3.2. Traditional way of celebrating a birthday which is calculated on the basis of Islamic lunar calendar. The ceremony involves recitation of Quranic chapters, led by a religious leader.

3.3. Patron-Client Relations

The growth of traditionalist Islam is affecting the relationship between the state, religious leaders and the Muslim people. The robust commitment to Islamic traditions and the strict obedience to religious leaders (*kyai*) it requires have led to a complicating of the relationship between religion and the state. Community-level politics operate on the basis of the patron-client ties which characterize society in the easternmost part of East Javanese.⁶³ The bulk of these are manifested in informal institutions, for instance, *kyai* and *santri* (people of *pesantren*). These Islamic institutions and religious leaders are two

⁶² Andrew Beatty, *Varieties of Javanese religion: an anthropological account* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 155–157.

⁶³ Phillip Drake, *Indonesia and the Politics of Disaster: Power and Representation in Indonesia's mud Volcano* (New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 5.

fundamental entities which maintain such power relations.⁶⁴ *Pesantren* serve as centres in which knowledge of Islam is transferred to pupils (*santri*) and *kyai* are reproduced.⁶⁵ *Pesantren* are not only considered to be the guardians of traditionalist Islam as a whole, but become part of both religious and socio-cultural institutions in which *kyai* are the main actors.⁶⁶ They preserve the chain of traditionalist Islam within the structure of intellectual and social networks, to which marriage and kinship make a considerable contribution. Both *pesantren* and *kyai* co-maintain the entity known as *santri* culture,⁶⁷ which entails a mixture of Javanese and Islamic cultures.⁶⁸ To put it simply, the religious orientation of traditionalist Islam is imbued with the people's devotion to a strict observance of Islamic principles and their intensive performance of religious rituals⁶⁹ and is inextricably identified with the core position of *pesantren* and *kyai* or *ulama* (religious leaders). These religious leaders are the main actors in the social relations⁷⁰ which uphold not only religious authorities through Islamic scholarship but also strongly define social and political roles. The relationship between them and local people is embodied in a patron-client tie.

After more than half a century, the time has come to re-assess Clifford Geertz's important 1960 work on Javanese *kyai* which has

⁶⁴ Dhofier, *The Pesantren Tradition: The Role of the Kyai in the Maintenance of Traditional Islam in Java*; Robert W. Hefner, 'Reimagined Community: A Social History of Muslim Education in Pasuruan, East Java', in *Asian visions of authority: religion and the modern states of East and Southeast Asia*, ed. by Charles F. Keyes, Laurel Kendall, and Helen Hardacre (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), pp. 75–95.

⁶⁵ Azyumardi Azra, Dina Afrianty, and Robert W. Hefner, 'Pesantren and Madrasa: Muslim Schools and National Ideals in Indonesia', in *Schooling Islam: The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education*, ed. by Robert W. Hefner and Muhammad Qasim Zaman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), p. 174.

⁶⁶ Ronald Alan Lukens-Bull, 'A Peaceful Jihad: Javanese Islamic Education and Religious Identity Construction' (Arizona State University, 1997), p. 5; Hiroko Horikoshi, *Kiai dan Perubahan Sosial* (Jakarta: P3M, 1987), p. 114.

⁶⁷ Yanwar Pribadi, 'Religious Networks in Madura: Pesantren, Nahdlatul Ulama, and Kiai as the Core of Santri Culture', *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 51, no. 1 (2013), pp. 1–32.

⁶⁸ Zamakhsyari Dhofier, 'Kinship and Marriage among the Javanese Kyai', *Indonesia*, vol. 29 (1980), pp. 47–58.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁷⁰ Lukens-Bull, 'A Peaceful Jihad: Javanese Islamic Education and Religious Identity Construction', p. 5; Horikoshi, *Kiai dan Perubahan Sosial*, p. 114.

been a basis for further studies about their changing position in the complexity of social transformations in Indonesia. He argues, instead of being alienated from the pressures of Nationalism and Islamic modernism, the *kyai* transformed themselves into a kind of cultural broker for a different sort of interest. *Kyai* have not only played a significant role in transmitting Islam to the ordinary people and occupied a focal position within the traditional social structure, they have also managed to carve themselves out and play a new social role which has offered them the possibility to enhance their social power and prestige.⁷¹ The political role of *kyai* has been most conspicuous in their function as a mediator of the political issues concerning Nationalism for the villagers surrounding them. Mansurnoor remarks *kyai* are, and always will be, embedded in the socio-political and religious lives of Muslims. He emphasizes the roles they play in maintaining the balance between their attachment to religious tenets and the local setting in which they operate.⁷² The critical role played by *kyai* can take a variety of forms as either *kyai pesantren* or *kyai tarekat* (in Sufi orders). As suggested by Turmudi, as a group, *kyai* have striven either to make the existing social order compatible with religious ideals or to mould these religious ideals to be compatible with the existing order.⁷³

Patronage is also a part of formal institutions, especially when religious leaders enter politics and the state bureaucracy. This tendency is incontrovertible when we look at the reality in Pasuruan in the last decade. Furthermore, *kyai* are commonly wealthy landowners, and therefore part of the social elite.⁷⁴ The upshot is that the local people in Pasuruan are heavily dependent on *kyai* socially and, even more importantly, in all matters related to religious normativity. For instance, they come to *kyai* to ask for blessing and

⁷¹ Clifford Geertz, 'The Javanese Kijaji: The Changing Role of a Cultural Broker', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 2, no. 2 (1960), p. 230.

⁷² Iik Arifin Mansurnoor, *Islam in an Indonesian world: Ulama of Madura* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1990).

⁷³ Endang Turmudi, *Struggling for the Umma: Changing Leadership Roles of Kiai in Jombang, East Java* (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2006).

⁷⁴ Dhofier, 'Kinship and Marriage among the Javanese Kyai'.

prayers or seek advice on an appropriate name for their offspring or the date of a marriage ceremony. It is only the *kyai* who has the authority to interpret the *Sharia*. In any interpretation of marriage and familial matters, rather than state regulations, it is *Sharia*, as embodied in *fiqh*, which is taken as the authoritative norm in the management of their daily lives, with a helping hand from the influence of local traditions.

How the state deals with religious issues remains an important topic of public debate in present-day Indonesia. The following short sketch illuminates how traditionalist Islam interacts with, or at least contests, the state in the Pasuruan context. It was at the end of the Islamic holy month of Ramadhan in mid September 2008 when a terrible tragedy hit the town of Pasuruan. Thousands of people, many of whom were mothers between the ages of forty and sixty, went to the private home of the famous and wealthy Saychon family. They descended on the house upon hearing news about an alms distribution which had spread like wildfire a few days before. In the early morning, they gathered in front of the gates in the hope of collecting the sum of Rp. 40,0000 (\$ 3.07) in a cash donation. This distribution is supposed to be an annual tradition observed by that family. Unfortunately, the cash delivery turned into a deadly stampede. The women in front fought to scream as they were pushed from behind in the crowd. More than twenty people were crushed to death. Called to account, a Saychon son, Faruq, was named by the police as a suspect as he was the co-ordinator of this distribution. The local criminal court decided to sentence Faruq to three years' imprisonment, indicting him with negligence causing death.⁷⁵

Unhappily that year, the Saychon family had not chosen a charitable institution to distribute the alms as had been its custom since the 1980s. Among the many reasons for this change of heart was that the family did not want to delegate its long-established identity as a philanthropist to other agencies. The Saychon family thought it

⁷⁵ Tempo.co, 'Trauma "Zakat Maut", Haji Syaichon Salurkan Zakat ke Badan Amil', *TEMPO Interaktif* (2009), <https://m.tempo.co/read/news/2009/09/07/151196632/trauma-zakat-maut-haji-syaichon-salurkan-zakat-ke-badan-amil>, accessed 15 Jun 2017.

important to maintain its social standing as a donor showing solidarity with the poor. Another version has it that, by holding such a self-managed-distribution, family members were more confident that the funds would reach the intended recipients, as it was dubious about the trustworthiness of existing private and state-run charitable institutions.

Not unnaturally, the tragic incident gave rise to religious debates about the legal status of the direct distribution of almsgiving. The head of the National Almsgiving Body (Badan Amil Zakat Nasional, BAZNAS), Didin Hafiduddin, was harsh in his criticism. He stated that direct distribution is not an Islamic tradition, but owes far more to feudal tradition. Nevertheless, he did not deny that there was a problem about social trust in government almsgiving agencies.⁷⁶ Taking a different tack, Hasyim Muzadi, the general head of the NU, was reluctant to accept the impermissibility of such private distributions. In his view, the path chosen by the Syaikhon family was a genuinely good one but the negligence shown during the distribution was of legal matter subject to police investigation.⁷⁷ This case reveals several interesting social aspects. Undeniably individuals with a higher socio-economic status have the right/duty to employ their resources to provide protection and benefits to persons of lower status who reciprocate this gesture by owing obedience to their patron.⁷⁸ However, if its social status is to be preserved, this initiative should be undertaken privately, eschewing the involvement of the state agencies. The rationale is that, whenever the state sees an opportunity, it will try to usurp the mechanisms sustaining these patron-client relations.

⁷⁶ Tempo.co, 'Tebar Zakat ala Haji Syaikhon Tak Sesuai Quran', *TEMPO Interaktif* (2008), <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/news/2008/09/16/058135727/tebar-zakat-ala-haji-syaikhon-tak-sesuai-quran>, accessed 15 Jun 2017.

⁷⁷ Tempo.co, 'Pembagian Zakat Haji Syaikhon Fikri Tidak Haram', *TEMPO Interaktif* (2008), <https://m.tempo.co/read/news/2008/09/16/058135791/pembagian-zakat-haji-syaikhon-fikri-tidak-haram>, accessed 15 Jun 2017.

⁷⁸ James C. Scott, 'Patron-Clients Politics and Political Change in Southeast Asia', *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 66, no. 1 (1972), p. 92.



Figure 3.3. Each family adopts its own respected *kyai* whose photos are commonly hung on the wall in the front room.

3.4. Political Sphere

Scholarly discussion has linked politics in East Java to *politik aliran* (stream politics). First proposed by Clifford Geertz, this is a political force which was built on deeply rooted streams present in socio-religious communities. Scholars have argued that the first democratic election in 1999 reflected the old pattern of *aliran* politics. Certainly this rings true when applied to East Javanese society. Despite the complex multi-party system available in Indonesia, electoral competition in East Java has unquestionably been dominated by two major *aliran*-oriented parties: the Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB, The National Awakening Party), the NU-based political party which broadly represents the traditionalist *santri* community, and the PDI Perjuangan which tends to attract the ballot-papers of the *abangan* voters. As times have changed, some scholars argue that the intense competition between individual candidates, publicly known as *perang figure* (war of personalities) has challenged the old *aliran* politics. These political candidates have not only managed to win votes from their traditional communities, but are now increasingly looking beyond the old *aliran* identities. *Aliran* remains central to the political life. Yet, current social changes have meant that *politik aliran* has lost

a lot of its significance.⁷⁹ The latest development has led to the rise of 'new clientelism' in which patron-client relations within *aliran* are weakening (*dealiranisasi*) and are being replaced by more open arrangements.⁸⁰

During the four general elections held in Pasuruan since 1999, the PKB has won the most votes on the regency level. In the 2009 election, fifteen out of the fifty seats or 30 percent of the local members of Parliament were from the PKB. In the 2014 election, the PKB suffered a dramatic decline, gaining only twelve parliamentary seats or 24 percent. Second in the race were the nationalist parties, namely: PDI Perjuangan and Partai Gerindra, each with seven seats. Despite this decline, the PKB has succeeded in having one of its representative appointed president of the Parliament. Not only this, the current Regent, Irsyad Yusuf, who was a PKB member of the Parliament in the previous term, is an overarching icon of the triumph of both the PKB and NU. In the 2018 election for a new Regent, none of political parties proposed candidates to stand against him. He, supported by Gus Mujib Imron, the leader of the renowned Pesantren Al-Yasini, put himself up as the only single candidate (*calon tunggal*).

4. Social Life in Sumpersari

This section explores some particular aspects of the area in which I have been conducting my fieldwork. Sumpersari is a pseudonym of a sub-district. It is composed of seventeen villages in which the majority of the people, especially in the southern part, speak Madurese. Only those living in the north, bordering the town of Bangil, speak Javanese. Now, in spite of speaking in Madurese, all the local residents identify themselves as Javanese.

⁷⁹ Andreas Ufen, 'From Aliran to Dealignment: Political Parties in Post-Suharto Indonesia', *South East Asia Research*, vol. 16, no. 1 (2008), pp. 5–41.

⁸⁰ Rubaidi, 'East Java: New Clientelism and the Fading of Aliran Politics', in *Electoral dynamics in Indonesia: money politics, patronage and clientelism at the grassroots*, ed. by Edward Aspinall and Mada Sukmajati (Singapore: NUS Press, 2016), p. 277.

According to Retsikas, the area is characterized by an interesting idea of the endless transformation from one culture, Madurese, to another culture, Javanese, which he calls “becoming”. Local people tend to describe the major character trait of the Javanese as the quality of *halus* (refinement), while the Madurese side is perceived as *kasar* (rough-and-ready).⁸¹ Anthropologists have said that among Javanese people to ‘behave as a Javanese’ means ‘to conduct him/herself with urbanity. In everyday life, a person is said to be “Javanese” if his or her daily behaviour mirrors the ideal of *sejatining becik*, which means aspiring to a character based on *pituduh* (acting advisedly) in the Javanese tradition. Conversely, somebody is said to be “not Javanese” if his or her daily way of life fails to reflect the good values embodied in Javanese culture.⁸² Under these circumstances, Madurese try to become ‘Javanese’. Despite their best intentions, this does not alter the negative stereotype of Madurese in circulation among the Javanese. Some Javanese still think that Madurese migrants are reluctant to integrate into Javanese society. Husson argues that Madurese are “the victims of a deep-seated prejudice which pictures them as coarse and brutal”.⁸³ The situation is not improved by the fact they tend to resist exogamy and favour self-segregated residence.⁸⁴

Sumbersari, as is common in Maduro-Javanese areas, has to contend with an array of social problems, chief among them poverty⁸⁵ and a tendency not to participate in formal education. This avoidance of the established formal educational system has made *pesantren* a central institution. *Pesantren* offer an alternative educational institution which is perceived to be adequate to fulfil their needs as it inculcates in students not only the knowledge they require to function

⁸¹ Retsikas, *Becoming – An Anthropological Approach to Understandings of the Person in Java*, p. xiv.

⁸² Ayu Sutarto, ‘Becoming a True Javanese: A Javanese View of Attempts at Javanisation’, *Indonesia and the Malay World*, vol. 34, no. 98 (2006), p. 41.

⁸³ Husson, ‘Eight Centuries of Madurese Migration to East Java’, p. 91.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁸⁵ Gerben Nooteboom, *Forgotten People: Poverty, Risk and Social Security in Indonesia, the Case of the Madurese* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015).

in society but also instils religion and character-building in them. In the following, I seek to explore two major elements in Summersari.

4.1. Economy and Education

Based on the 2015 official record, Summersari has around 63,635 residents, with birth rate of 1.49 percent per year. The majority of the people of Summersari work as farmers and labourers (*kerja serabutan*). Seventy percent of the economic resources of the villagers is generated by the agricultural sector. The rate of unemployment is fairly high. Although the land, 50 percent of which is rice-fields, is generally fertile, the crops cultivated do not make any significant amount of money. The smaller area of the land is given over to dry cultivation (*tegal*) on which the people do plant rice here during the rainy season. However, as this is impossible in the dry season, they change to planting maize, mango trees and tuberose flowers. When adverse weather conditions mean that the going gets tough, the farmers raise cattle and goats. The majority of the women do not earn money outside the household. They sometimes do work at home embroidering the costume worn by women during Islamic prayers (*mukena*) but this generates only a very low income.

Participation in formal education of people ten years and older is generally low. Twenty-eight percent of them (or about 17,799 persons) have only completed primary school and not continued on to a higher level. This percentage decreases significantly on junior and senior high school levels. Only 6,171 people (9.7 percent) have a first-level secondary school certificate, while a mere 4,146 (6.5 percent) have finished senior secondary school. Nevertheless, it should be noted that these figures relate to secular education. This is a society which pays great attention to their children's religious education in various Islamic education institutions, ranging from small-scale *pesantren* to very large ones. Hence, their participation in informal *pesantren* education appears to be the best explanation of why the number going on to the last two levels of formal education is so low. It must also be said that, though youngsters are increasingly going on to

higher education (university), their number is still very small, 0.6 percent.⁸⁶

On the level of the Pasuruan regency, it can be simply said that the number of formal Islamic schools is lower than that of formal public schools. However, coming down to the Sumbersari sub-district, Islamic schools appear to be at least as important as their public counterparts. Even on the level of middle school, Islamic schools are dominant. Leaving that aside, what is obvious on both district and sub-district levels is that informal schools, *pesantren* and *madrasah diniyah*, are the most common educational institutions in the area. A *madrasah diniyah* is an out-of-school institution teaching subjects related to Islam. Its curriculum spans primary to high school level. As just mentioned above, the high number of *madrasah diniyah* on primary (*ulā*) level is an indication of the concern among the locals about equipping their children with adequate knowledge of and skills related to their religion from an early age.

Quite aware of the situation, the local government has recently drawn up a policy designed to support the importance of *madrasah diniyah*. In 2016 the local regent (*Bupati*) issued Regulation No. 21/2016 which obliges Muslim pupils in the primary and junior high schools to attend *madrasah diniyah* for at least two hours in the afternoon.⁸⁷ Article 4 of the Regulation states that, as an informal school, the purpose of the *madrasah diniyah* is to expand children's capacity so as to form them into pious and well-behaved persons. The regulation also urges people to support the operation of *madrasah diniyah* financially.

4.2. Pesantren Atmosphere

Sumbersari is nowadays home to nearly thirty *pesantren* or about 10 percent of all the *pesantren* in Pasuruan. Based on statistical records, in 2014 there were 320 *pesantren* in Pasuruan alone. All the *pesantren*

⁸⁶ BPS Kab. Pasuruan, *Kecamatan Rembang dalam Angka 2015* (Pasuruan: BPS Kab. Pasuruan, 2015), pp. 46–8.

⁸⁷ Peraturan Bupati Pasuruan (Regent's Regulation of Pasuruan) No. 21 of 2016 On the Obligation to Study in a *Madrasah Diniyah*.

run *madrasah diniyah*, while some also run formal Islamic schools. However, not all *madrasah diniyah* belong to *pesantren*. Consequently the number of *madrasah diniyah* far exceeds the number of *pesantren*.⁸⁸ *Pesantren* represent a discourse of what it is to be a devout Javanese Muslim.⁸⁹ For people living in the lowlands, a *pesantren* education is considered to be an important factor in shaping their children's lives. Commensurate with this mindset, the ideal pattern is that, after completing primary school, female teen-agers study in *pesantren*. Middle-class religious families want their daughters to study in major *pesantren* which are renowned for their long-established tradition of the training of Islamic subjects.

Parents send their daughters to *pesantren* to equip them with a good understanding of Islam to assist them in their future. They are firmly convinced that *pesantren* will give a guarantee of the inculcation and protection of female morality. To ensure the system works properly, a *pesantren* education generally adopts the concept of educational segregation, keeping male and female pupils separated.⁹⁰ Although they are happy for their daughters to participate in this, for women in particular general education is still perceived as less important than religious education. This is because women are supposed to work in the home and raise children. The general line of thinking is that women do not need a good educational foundation to carry out these tasks. Local people seem to ignore the fact that a mother has more influence on educating children than a father. They refer these jobs to *dapur* (kitchen), *sumur* (well) and *kasur* (bed). Confirming this assertion, the general pattern shows that the number of female students in informal *pesantren* is significantly higher than the male students. To give an example, *Pesantren Miftahul Ulum* in Krajan village has around 600 female students and just 30 male students who board (*mukim*) in its dormitories (*pondok*).

⁸⁸ BPS Kab. Pasuruan, *Kecamatan Rembang dalam Angka 2015*, p. 54.

⁸⁹ Muhammad Latif Fauzi, 'Traditional Islam in Javanese Society: The Roles of Kyai and Pesantren in Preserving Islamic Tradition and Negotiating Modernity', *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, vol. 6, no. 1 (2012), pp. 125–44.

⁹⁰ Eka Srimulyani, *Women from Traditional Islamic Educational Institutions in Indonesia: Negotiating Public Spaces* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012), p. 118.

Here is a review of how central informal Islamic education is that taught in *pesantren*. In mid-March 2017, I met Alfi from Summersari, a female student at a local Islamic university. I was eventually invited to visit her house and was introduced to Gus Raibin, her forty-seven-year-old father, who serves as an *imam*, leader of a small mosque (*langgar*), and her mother. In spite of its strong commitment to Islamic normativity, this family appears to present a notable exception. Their daughter is the only one from among other religious family members and others in their surroundings who has managed to reach a university education. Nearly all the women of Alfi's age are already married and busy with their children. I was curious about how local people generally view the relationship between religion and education. They explained me:

“Sumbersari is different. Religion is the prime instrument in preserving morality. Girls are encouraged not to obtain a fully rounded education (*sekolah tinggi*). This is nothing to do with the lack of financial resources. People do not comprehend the contribution made to life by (secular) education. When women are assumed to become housewives, why spend much money for schooling? Furthermore, they believe that vocational high school only provides students with the skills required to work in a factory. There is a stereotype it is morally improper for a devout woman to do menial work.”

However, the winds of change are coming and in the last decade, parents have been increasingly insistent that their children acquire not only a good understanding of Islam, but also acquire general knowledge and practical skills. Consequently, *pesantren* have been expanding their curricula to respond to these new aspirations. In my fieldwork I have found that, over the last few years a number of *pesantren* in Summersari have been attempting to reduce the gap between religious and secular education. This is coincident with the development on the national level which has shown a growing tendency for Islamic schools to be more open to change. In 2009, Pesantren Al-Ikhlas set up a vocational school (*sekolah menengah kejuruan*). Likewise, some year ago, in addition to the informal *madrasah diniyah*, Pesantren Roudlotunnajah expanded its range of formal schools. It opened an Islamic junior high school (*madrasah*

tsanawiyah) which educates students in both Islamic and secular subjects. Since the opening of this school, this *pesantren* has been enjoying a considerable increase in the number of students, although not all of them are boarders. This all suggests that parents are now aware that having a diploma in formal education is the touchstone to a much better life future for their children.⁹¹

Sumbersari itself does not have many major *pesantren*. The number of students who board in many of them generally number between twenty and one hundred. Only a few of them have more than 200 students. The majority of the students are local, but a few come from neighbouring areas and from places in Madura. The majority of the *pesantren* in Summersari have been established by *kyai* who are linked by ties of descent, marriage and education, forming an Islamic linkage which extends across eastern Java and Madura.⁹² Many of them are graduates of the respectable Pesantren Sidogiri in Pasuruan. For this reason, numerous *madrasah diniyah* in Summersari are official branches (*ranting*) of the Pesantren Sidogiri's Madrasah Miftahul Ulum (MMU) which has been going since the 1930s. The MMU runs *madrasah diniyah* on four levels: *isti'dadiyah* (preparatory), *ibtida'iyah* (basic), *tsanawiyah* (middle) and *aliyah* (high). These *ranting madrasah* teach the same curriculum, subjects and references which are taught in the MMU headquarters.

Among East Javanese Muslim traditionalists, Pesantren Sidogiri enjoys the reputation of being the most distinguished and important centre for studying the classical books (*kitab*) on *fiqh* used by the Shāfi'ī school. Among the references taught are the *kitab* written by the Abū Shujā' family, including *Matn al-ghāya wa al-taqrib* by the Baṣra jurist Abū Shujā' al-Iṣfahānī (d. 1197) and its commentary *Fatḥ al-qarīb al-mujīb* by Muḥammad Ibn al-Qāsim al-Ghazzī (d. 1512) and those produced by the Malībarī family such as *Fatḥ al-Mu'in bi sharḥ*

⁹¹ This is based on my interviews with the leader of this *pesantren*.

⁹² Hefner, 'Reimagined Community: A Social History of Muslim Education in Pasuruan, East Java'.

Qurrat al-'ayn by Zayn al-Dīn al-Malībarī (d. 1579).⁹³ Pupils on the *alīyah* level are taught using *fiqh* sources from a comparative perspective. Its alumni network is well maintained, joined together in an association called *Ikatan Alumni Santri Sidogiri* (IASS, the Association of the Sidogiri Alumni). This network, encompassing district representatives throughout East Java, regularly holds a *bahsul masa'il* forum in response to the need to find solutions to everyday religious problems.

5. Conclusion

This chapter has offered a brief description of the historical context and the current developments in Islam and other fields in Pasuruan. Pasuruan is a regency in the province of East Java which is inhabited by a majority of Muslim communities which generally show a tendency towards practising the traditional Islam⁹⁴ encouraged by the NU. This religious orientation draws strength from the fact that many Pasuruan residents have historical roots in the island of Madura. For many centuries, Pasuruan has been the destination of Madurese migrants. Their migration certainly gathered strength because of the job opportunities offered by the sugar-plantation project in the nineteenth century. The migrants have acculturated with the Javanese, a mingling which led to a distinct sub-culture called *pedalungan* or *pendhalungan*. This community has been established on the basis of patron-client relationships in which *kyai* or the leaders of *pesantren* act as the patron.

The influence of Islam in Pasuruan was strongly reinforced by the expansion of traditional religious schools (*pesantren*) in the northern lowlands during the last half of the nineteenth century and the early

⁹³ Martin van Bruinessen, 'Kitab Kuning: Books in Arabic Script Used in the Pesantren Milieu, Comments on a New Collection in the KITLV Library', *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, vol. 146, no. 2 (1990), pp. 244–6; Scott C. Lucas, 'Justifying Gender Inequality in the Shāfi'ī Law School: Two Case Studies of Muslim Legal Reasoning', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 129, no. 2 (2009), p. 242.

⁹⁴ Dhofier, *The Pesantren Tradition: The Role of the Kyai in the Maintenance of Traditional Islam in Java*, p. xix.

part of the twentieth century. These schools served as centres for the propagation of traditional Islam. Although the influence of the NU is predominant, Pasuruan is home to different Muslim groups. These include modernist organizations such as the Muhammadiyah and Persis, albeit their influence is less strong. In addition to Sunni Islam, followers of Shi'i Islam can also be found in Pasuruan. Although they have a centre for their religious education, their existence sometimes provokes harsh opposition from the local people.

The development of traditionalist Islam in Pasuruan constantly affects the relationship between the state, religious leaders and the Muslim community. The commitment to practising Islamic traditions and the strongly inculcated obedience to religious leaders (*kyai*) have led to a complicated relationship between religion and the state. Community-level politics operate on the basis of the patron-client ties which characterize the eastern part of East Javanese society in general. This social configuration appears to have infiltrated and influenced political life. Since 1999 in Pasuruan, PKB, an NU-based political party, has been the winning party on the regency level in the last four general elections. Furthermore, Irsyad Yusuf, the current Regent who is an ex-member of the PKB faction in Parliament can be considered an overarching icon of the triumph of the NU.

The political and social situation in Pasuruan is not significantly different from that in other areas in eastern part of East Java. Areas such as Probolinggo, Lumajang and Jember also have a big number of Madurese migrants who have evolved into a *pendhalungan* community. Nevertheless, Pasuruan does have its own idiosyncrasies which set it apart. Firstly, Pasuruan is geographically close to the capital city of Surabaya. The most obvious consequence of this proximity is the presence of a huge industrial complex in Pasuruan. On the bright side, the industrial development in this area has provided an ample range of job opportunities for the local youth. After finishing high school, there is a tendency for young people to want to make money as factory workers rather than going to university. Secondly, Pasuruan borders areas with an *arek'an* sub-culture. As I mentioned earlier, the *arek'an* sub-culture is considered 'modern'. There is a local

anecdote which says that *pendhalungan* people are deemed modern after they have adopted the Javanese *arek'an* sub-culture, speak Javanese or go to state schools. Thirdly, in its southern part Pasuruan is home to Mount Bromo, the centre of a non-Islamic movement, which makes Pasuruan one of the most heterogeneous regencies in Java.

Sumbersari, the area in which I have been doing my fieldwork, can be identified as an agrarian society. Agriculture contributes 70 percent of economic resources of the villagers. Summersari has to contend with an array of social problems, chief among them poverty and a tendency not to participate in formal education. This avoidance of the established formal educational system has made either *pesantren* or *madrasah diniyah* a central institution. *Pesantren* offer an alternative educational institution which is perceived to be adequate to fulfil their needs as it inculcates in students not only the knowledge they require to function in society but also instils religion and character-building in them. However, the winds of change are coming and in the last decade. *Pesantren* have been expanding their curricula to respond to a new aspiration, i.e. providing general knowledge and practical skills. This is coincident with the development on the national level which has shown a growing tendency for Islamic schools to be more open to change.

The next chapter focuses on marriage practices in a village in Pasuruan. It tries to understand the entanglement of local norms and the roles of local actors, namely *kyai* (religious clerics) and *pengarep* (voluntary traditional matchmakers) in the everyday practice of marriage. It specifically questions in what ways does the social structure of traditionalist Islam influence the practice of marriage in the community of Summersari in Pasuruan. Significantly, it also includes an analysis of the roles of the individual agencies of the couples in shaping a marriage.

