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The Idea of Pluralism in Indonesian Society: A Case Study of Cirebon City as a Cultural Melting Pot

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia is well-known as a country with diverse ethnicities, religions, and races. Although predominantly Muslim country, the largest population of Muslims of any country in the world today, the remainder of the population are Christians, Hindu, animist, or followers of varying Confucius and Buddhist beliefs. Indonesia today is not only a country with diverse religions, ethnicities, and races, but also a country with several challenges related to issues of religious pluralism. It takes the awareness and the political will to deconstruct what lies behind the various problems of the Indonesian nation by looking back to the Indonesian national identity as stated in the Pancasila principles and the 1945 Constitution. Indonesia's national motto, "*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*" (Unity in Diversity), articulates the diversity that shapes the country. After the fall of Soeharto's New Order regime, as a nation-state with a pluralistic society, Indonesia is prone to social unrest and intra-group tension in terms of race, ethnicity and religion. This paper focuses on two objects: first, the pluralism Indonesia's social culture and the case study of Cirebon as a cultural melting pot. The interpretation and critical reflection on method used to explore that there had been constant contact with both India and China. Hinduism and Buddhism, and later Islam, came to Cirebon. The purpose of this research is to understand the pluralistic Indonesian society, particularly Cirebonese people and the practice respect for the people in everyday actions and words.

Keywords: *Indonesia; civil Islam; Pancasila; pluralism; Cirebon.*

1. Introduction

It was Adolf Bastian from Humboldt University of Berlin who socializes the name of Indonesia on his book *Indonesien oder die Inseln des Malayischen Archipels, 1884–1894*. (R.E. Elson, 2008: 3-4). Describing Indonesia as a diverse and plural nation is an understatement, as it is an archipelagic country with roughly 6000 inhabited islands, 240 million citizens, 300 ethnic groups, 740 languages and dialects. Indonesia has historically always been a multicultural country, with people of ethnic groups, including those of indigenous background. It has six religions officially recognised by the state, but the actual number of religious, ethno-religious, animistic, atheist groups has never been properly documented. Indonesia's national motto, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity lit. many, yet one), articulates the diversity that shapes the country. It reflects the actual reality of Indonesian society.

Indonesia has the largest Muslim population of any nation. According to the 2000 census, there are 177.5 million Muslims in Indonesia, they make up 88.2 per cent of the total population and about 13 per cent of the world's 1.3 billion Muslims.[‡] The highest concentration of Muslims of the central and western islands of the archipelago. The most densely populated island, Java, is 94.1 per cent Muslim, Sumatra 91.2 per cent and Sulawesi 78.1 per cent. Some care is needed when interpreting this information as Indonesian citizens are required, for official purposes such as census data and citizen identity cards, to select one of six formally recognized religions. In addition to Islam, these are Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. This leads to some inflation in the number of Muslims, because citizens who follow an "unrecognised" faith or who are only nominally Muslim often find it expedient to list themselves as Muslim. Nearly all of Indonesia's Muslims are Sunni although a very small but growing number are interested in Shi'ism. (Greg Fealy, Virgiana Hooker, and Sally White, 2006:39). In Indonesia, Sunnis was divided into several religious social organization like Nahdhatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, Perti, al-Washliyah, Jam'iat Khair, Nahdhatul Wathan (NW) and so on. (Abd. Moqsith Ghazali, 2009:2).

There are more than 207 million Muslims living in Indonesia, mostly Sunni Muslims. One clear example of the lasting impact of European influence and Dutch colonial power on Indonesian society is the presence of around 23 million Christians currently living in Indonesia. Until the present day most inhabitants of Bali island (known as 'island of the Gods') practice Balinese Hinduism. Only 0.7 percent of the Indonesian population - or 1.7 million individuals - are Buddhists. Indonesia's Buddhist communities are concentrated in Riau, the Riau Islands, Bangka Belitung, North Sumatra, West Kalimantan and Jakarta. The clear majority of Indonesian Buddhists consist of the ethnic Chinese community. In fact there are many Chinese who actually practice Taoism and Chinese folk religion but are classified as Buddhist as the Indonesia government does not recognize these streams. In 2006, the Indonesian government acknowledged Confucianism as one of the six state religions. Confucianism was brought to the Archipelago (from

[‡]According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica Book of the Year, 2003, Pakistan has the next largest number of Muslims after Indonesia (140 million), followed by India (123 million), Bangladesh (112 million) and Turkey (65 million). See footnote of Greg Fealy, p. 39.

mainland China), primarily by Chinese merchants and immigrants starting from the 3rd century of the Common Era. (<https://www.indonesia-investments.com/culture/religion/item69>).

2. Islam in Indonesia: A Short History

Fazlur Rahman, the leading Muslim modernist intellectual, says that throughout the 13th and 14th centuries, Islam spread to the Malay Archipelago, mostly by Arab traders. Developing to Sumatra and Java peacefully, Islam spread to the Malay Peninsula. However Islam finds difficulties to establish the new power in the region when facing a military pressure and Western European governments. Therefore, Islam in Indonesia is still largely a kind of outer layer of cultural and sub-structures, which in many ways is still pagan. However, throughout this century new influences from the Middle East began to arrive, beginning with the Arabian Peninsula, and later Egypt, which led to the formation of orthodox clerical groups actively engaged in the Islamization of society.(2017: xxvi).

Today, Hanafi school predominantly embraced in West Asia, Lower Egypt, Pakistan, and some Indian Muslims. The Maliki school influents in West Africa, North Africa, and Upper Egypt, and Hanbali school in Central and North Arabia; while in Indonesia is the Shafi'i school.(Fazlur Rahman, 2017: 115-116).According to Rahman, in Indonesia, Islam came relatively late and did not have any opportunity to confirm its influence before the arrival of Western colonialism. Therefore, the religious culture of the local Muslim population is essentially still un-Islamic. Besides the influence of the incoming Muslim congregation, pre-Islamic mysticism is almost unchanged. (Fazlur Rahman, 2017: 246).

The Salafi movement in Egypt, through its journals, al-Manar, spread its view to Indonesia. (Fazlur Rahman, 2017: 337). Purification and modern movements in Islam agreed to counteract the Sufism to Indonesia. (Fazlur Rahman, 2017: 368). Rahman in summer 1985, recalled his experience in Pakistan while visiting Indonesia as a consultant to the Minister of Religious Affairs to propose an update on teaching Islamic Studies at universities in Indonesia and to express his views on the current state of Indonesian Islam in general. (2017: x). The important facts about Islam in Indonesia that Islam plays a major role in the struggle for independence, as happened in some countries, especially Pakistan. The second most important fact is that currently Islam in Indonesia must be practised culturally and socially (Fazlur Rahman, 2017: 374-375).

Some modernist Islam in Indonesia are Achmad Dahlan (Java, 1868-1923), Syekh Ahmad Surkati (Sudan-Java, 1872-1943), Hadji Agus Salim (Sumatra-Java, 1884-1954), Ahmad Hassan (Singapore-Indonesia, 1888-1958), and Muhammad Hasyim Asy'ari (Java, 1871-1947) (Charles Kurzman, 2002:vii). In Indonesia where Muslim scholars played an active role in nationalist movements, modernist Islam seems to have had greater staying power. (Charles Kurzman, 2002:26). Among some Muslim scholars from Pakistan known in Indonesia are Muhammad Iqbal (1873-1932), Fazlur Rahman, and Riffat Hassan.

Indonesia contains the largest Muslim population of all countries in the world. The current number of Muslim inhabitants is estimated to be around 207 million individuals, most of whom adhere to Sunni Islam. This large number implies that approximately 13 percent of the total number of Muslims in the world live in Indonesia, thus indicating that Indonesia contains a clear Muslim majority population. But despite this Muslim majority, the country does not constitute a Muslim or Islamic country based on Islamic law.

The establishment of the independent Indonesia as stated in the text of the proclamation that it is the will of all the people of Indonesia. In the text of the 1945 Constitution the word Allah was replaced by God which is more acceptable in general. Hatta said that the constitution must provide a common ground for all people, not just for Indonesian Muslims. (R.E. Elson, 2008:169-171).

The two most influential Islamic organizations in the country today, the Muhammadiyah, a social organization founded in 1912 on Java, represents the modernist Muslim stream that disapproves of the mystical (traditional) Javanese Islam (Charles Kurzman, 2002:344). As reaction to the establishment of the Muhammadiyah, traditional Javanese leaders founded the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in 1926 (Charles Kurzman, 2002:365). Members of the NU are influenced by mystical streams or pre-Islamic elements. Its leadership is also characterized by being more tolerant towards other religions. Its number of members is currently around 35 million, while the Muhammadiyah has around 20 million members. The Nahdlatul Ulama members, support the tolerant principles of Archipelago Islam.

Archipelago Islam, or Islam Nusantara as it is known locally, was built over the centuries on Islam that arrived from several other parts of the world and was initially intertwined with Hinduism and ancient Javanese religions. In a large and diverse country stretching over 3,000

miles from east to west and composed of more than 17,000 islands, a less tolerant and inclusive interpretation of the Muslim faith may have struggled to survive. It came to be based on Pancasila (five principles): (1) belief in one God, (2) a just and civilised humanity, (3) Indonesian unity, (4) government by the will and consent of the people, (5) social justice. (Mike Thompson, 2015).

In studying the Indonesian example, Hefner argues that proponents of civil Islam, those who believe that Islam is compatible with democratic values, were a key part of the amplification of a Muslim and Indonesian culture of tolerance, equality, and civility (2000: 218).

Although there have occurred some violent incidents between Muslims and Christians, most notoriously the 1999-2002 Muslim-Christian conflict in the Moluccas, as well as the forced closure of several churches over the years, worshipers of both religions generally live in social harmony across the country. (<https://www.indonesia-investments.com/culture/religion/item69>).

Patriarchy levels in Indonesia are not as high as Islamic countries in the Middle East. Muslim women in Indonesia have more rights than in Arab countries. Together with three non-Arab Muslim countries: Turkey before AKP Party, Pakistan and Bangladesh, Indonesian woman politician (Megawati Soekarnoputri) has become the president of Indonesia. (Bassam Tibi, 8 and 268). A number of Indonesian Islamic feminist thinkers came to the forefront of the Islamic gender discourse, such as Lies Marcoes-Natsir, Lily Zakiyah Munir, Etin Anwar, Siti Musdah Mulia, and many others. Before relating to some of their criticism of prevailing gender hierarchies and to their main arguments for an explicit version of Indonesian Islamic feminism, let us focus on the concrete emergence and expansion of Islamic feminism in Indonesia.

In addition the Muslim male feminist is K.H. Husein Muhammad. He is the leader of *Fahmina*, a Cirebon-based women's NGO and an adviser to the board of *Rahima*, a prominent Muslim women's NGO. K.H. Husein Muhammad is the author of many influential books on gender and Islam, especially the 2001 *Fiqih Perempuan (Fiqh related to Women)*. His progressive vision aims to reinterpret Islamic teachings as a form of universal humanism, "a conversation with contemporary needs and concerns" (Feener, 2007: 187). This explains the prominence given to him by these women's organisations.

Bassam Tibi participated on event took place in Jakarta, Indonesia, under the patronage of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs and the graduate school (UIN) of the Hidayatullah

Islamic State University. This conference carried progressive Islam— one that approves the separation of religion and politics, pluralism, individual human rights, and secular democracy— stands in clear opposition to Islamism. One of the mentors of civil Islam in Indonesia, Azyumardi Azra, a major opinion leader and the former president of Hidayatullah University, was among the speakers. He clearly rejected political Islam and its ideology of an “Islamic shari’a state” in favor of a civil Islam “compatible with democracy.” Similarly, M. Syafi’i Anwar, who runs the Center for the Promotion of Pluralism, argued for a progressive liberal democratic Islam that approves secular pluralism. These are highly promising statements. It is sad to see that many Western academics view these exemplary liberal Muslims as a “small slice,” to be written off. (Bassam Tibi, 2017:319).

The conference was a forum for liberal Muslim to express how important pluralism is for the sake of Islamic civilization of Islam. Indonesia is the Islamic country with the largest Muslim population in the world. Based on Tibi’s experience, there, it was possible for him, in teaching, lecturing, and writing in the media, to discuss pending issues with my coreligionists in Jakarta on several occasions. One of these occasions was the international conference on Debating Progressive Islam: A Global Perspective at Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) in Jakarta, July 2009. It was a forum for liberal Muslims to express the need for pluralism in Islamic civilization. UIN is the graduate school of Hidayatullah Islamic State University, which allowed him during his tenure there in 2003 to teach a course on his concept of a reform Islam. He also published several books in Bahasa, Indonesia, the language of the country. On pluralism and dialogue see the UIN volume edited by Karlina Helmanita et al., *Dialogue in the World of Disorder*, which includes his chapter “Islamic Civilization and the Quest for Democratic Pluralism.” Indonesia is also the country where U.S. president Barack Obama spent a part of his childhood. It is noteworthy to quote the report of *The International Herald Tribune* of April 25– 26, 2009, from Jakarta about the April 2009 election in Indonesia:

“From Pakistan to Gaza and Lebanon, militant Islamist movements have gained ground rapidly in recent years, fanning Western fears of a consolidation of radical Muslim governments. But here in the world’s most populous Muslim-majority nation, just the opposite is happening. . . . In parliamentary elections . . . voters punished Islamic parties. . . . The largest Islamic party, the Prosperous Justice Party . . . squeezed out a gain of less than 1 percent over its showing in 2004. . . . Indonesians overwhelmingly backed the country’s major secular parties even though more of them are continuing to turn to Islam in their private lives.”

This is a hopeful coverage about a civil Islam against Islamism. This “universal good” is best established in Indonesia as civil Islam. The global success of Islamism also occurs in Southeast Asia, but Indonesia seems to be an exception; see Robert Hefner, *Civil Islam*. (2017:312).

The long and exhausting process of Indonesia’s national elections spanned seven months in 2004. After the political turmoil in the country in recent years, observers were pleasantly surprised to see the elections go ahead peacefully, without a drop of blood spilled. (Azyumardi Azra in Asrori S Karni, 2006:xxv). The note of appreciation from Jimmy Carter, the 39th President of the United States, was accurate in describing the message the Indonesian elections sent to the rest of the world. (Asrori S Karni, 2006:1)

‘A milestone for us, this election also was a significant step forward for democracy worldwide. The people of Indonesia are providing a dramatic example of peaceful political change, and firmly negating the claim that Muslim societies are anti-democratic.’ (Jimmy Carter in “Surprisingly fair elections in Indonesia” International Herald Tribune (IHT), 15 July 2004).

The relationship between Islam and democracy has long been the source of academic debate among experts. Is Islam compatible with democracy, or are the two people apart? Experts like Samuel P. Huntington, a Harvard University professor in international relations; Bernard Lewis, a professor emeritus of Islamic history in Princeton University; or Seymour Martin Lipset, the president of the American Association of Sociologists, would contend that the cause of the “democracy deficit” in the Muslim world was caused by the political culture within Islamic societies. (Asrori S Karni, 2006:7). About half of the world’s 1.5 billion Muslims live under democratically elected governments. Among the largest populations of Muslims are found in such states as Indonesia.

Optimistic opinion about relations between Islam and democracy also come from scholars such as John L. Esposito, a professor of Islamic Studies at Georgetown University’s Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding. That point of view is underlined by former US president Carter. During the 2004 poll, his Carter Center, was directly involved in election monitoring and its report, made 10 days after the first round of presidential elections, reflected a conviction that Indonesia as a Muslim country was developing its own kind of democracy. (Asrori S Karni, 2006:9).

Until this day, there are those who continue to strive to include the Jakarta Charter in the nation’s Constitution. Since the Indonesian democracy was founded by rule of law and equality

before law, then those who push to establish Indonesia as an Islamic state are clearly against the country's democratic ideals (Abdurrahman Wahid in Asrori S. Karni, 2006: xii-xiii)

Image 1. Map of Indonesia



<https://www.indonesia-investments.com/culture/population/item67?>

However, in Indonesia, a democratic, secular republic with the world's largest Muslim population, the proponents of Islamic fundamentalism, extreme sharia law and terrorism, while they do exist, are certainly not in the majority. Questions as to whether a democrat can be a good Muslim have become somewhat irrelevant here. This is because the nation's journey to democracy has already provided us with some very surprising answers to such queries.

In Java, with its particularly strong agricultural and rural tradition, there has been an amazing degree of flexibility in terms of people's adaptation to outside cultures. The island's first belief system, Animism, absorbed Hinduism and Buddhism with little conflict, resulting in a form of syncretism. Later the arrival of Islam was welcomed, bringing the unique Javanese belief of Kejawen – a quest to realize the inner self – into being. Later the ideas of Christianity, modernism and philosophy were introduced by Portuguese and Dutch colonials and were also taken up (Yudhistira ANM Massardi in Asrori S. Karni, 2006:3).

In *Islam Observed* (1968), Clifford Geertz describes the classical style of Indonesian Islam as illuminationism, with its syncretic world view, in harmony with its adaptive, gradualistic, aesthetic, and tolerant ethos. The fact that Islam came into Indonesia brought by various agencies (Arab, Indian, Persian, Chinese), accompanied the reality of the "heteroglossia" (diversity) of the

archipelago - as an archipelagic society whose always opened to the process of cross culture, preconditioning the worldview and ethos of diversity. With a syncretic worldview and expressive ethos of diversity - the aesthetic presentation of Islam in the archipelago is like a colorful mosaic, while keeps maintaining harmonious harmony with the great Islamic universal tradition.(Yudi Latifin Moeflich Hasbullah, 2012: ix).

However, for the most part, differences in religion and ideology have been tolerated in Indonesia's multiethnic society. As it has grown and modernized, Indonesia has presented a unique answer to the Muslim-Democrat question – “An Indonesian can be both a democrat and a secular Muslim.” This idea has been developed by a long line of the country's Muslim thinkers and politicians: Tjokroaminoto, Soekarno, Mohammad Hatta, Ahmad Dahlan, as well as more recently by Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), Nurcholis Madjid, Amien Rais, and Akbar Tandjung. After three decades of authoritarian government, national elections, the manifestation of *vox populi*, are now regular, peaceful occasions. (Yudhistira ANM Massardi in Asrori S. Karni, 2006:3).

The New Order government sought to maintain this unity with a repressive policy of social tolerance provided that any action leading to the SARA (Ethnic, Religious, Race, Interethnic) issues should be avoided. Under the New Order government, people are forbidden to discuss any topics openly considered to sensitive to SARA issues. (Masykuri Abdillah, 2003:178).

The problem facing Indonesia as a pluralistic society is focused on the relationship between the government or the national system and the ethnic groups. President Soekarno once supported a policy of unification based on ethnicity during his reign. However during the Soeharto era, policies on unity and uniformity were supported, even military force was used to suppress ethnicity, religiousity and racial aspects as a tool to mobilize the masses in order not to oppose government policies.

On the other hand, the Suharto rezim used ethnicity and religion politically to gain support from the people. President Habibie, who succeeded Suharto, was caught up in the idea of democracy and the despotic and militaristic approach of the Soeharto style that produced erratic and contradictory policies. The reality reality has resulted a bloody ethnic conflict in some regions of Indonesia.

In Reformation era, the government encouraged substantial democratization and political freedom that has led to the "liberation euphoria". Under these circumstances, many people freely express their aspirations and interests, and part of this expression has led to conflict between social groups. Abdurrahman Wahid continues the process of democratization under challenging circumstances. The prominent ethnic and inter-religious conflicts were conflict in Ambon, Poso and Sampit. Another conflict arose in North Maluku, Papua, West Timor, problem caused by the homeless people of East Timor and the chaos perpetrated by pro-Indonesian East Timorese militants which caused massive humanitarian and social problems.

The diversity of culture in Indonesia began to be disturbed, marked by the emergence of various communal violent conflicts. The diversity of identity becomes a serious issue in of the Indonesian nation. Interethnic conflicts used to be existed such as conflicts in Lampung and Sampang (Madura) and elsewhere. However, it is important to realize that this conflict is not entirely religious or ethnic problem, but there are external factors, especially economic and political factors that have contributed to the conflict. In addition to external factors, the evidence shows that religious and ethnic tolerance in Indonesia is still unstable. Therefore, efforts to develop stable tolerance must be done not only by the government, but also by civil society through pluralism and democracy education.

3. Pluralism in Indonesian Frame

The term of pluralism can be defined the following:

"a state of society in which members of diverse ethnic, racial, religious, or social groups maintain an autonomous participation in and development of their traditional culture or special interest within the confines of a common civilization" (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Pluralism>).

Referring to definition above, pluralism does not only have religious dimension religion which is often understood people today. Pluralism has a wide dimension to the problem of ethnicity, economic and local culture. Pluralism is one of the most hotly debated themes today, especially among Muslims. The Summit Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in Dakar, Senegal, 13-14 March 2008 also made pluralism as the main topic. The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) issued a fatwa prohibiting the idea of pluralism, liberalism of thought and secularism. This makes the individuals and institutions that promote the idea of pluralism get stigmatized as a heretical and misleading group. Ahmadiyya members whom for decades could live without

problems, suddenly they had to experience a violence. Mosques and centers for activities learning were destroyed by anarchic inclined masses (Husein Muhammad in Abd Moqsith Ghazali, 2009: xi-xii).

In the context of Indonesia, pluralism is defined as pluralism and diversity. It is not only a social reality (plurality), but also as ideas, understanding, and thought. Diversity has been going on for centuries, long before the state of Indonesia independent. The 1945 Constitution as the constitution also states clearly that "the State guarantees the freedom of every citizen to embrace his or her own religion and to worship according to his religion and belief". On the basis of this law, all citizens, with a diversity of cultural identity, ethnicity, gender, religion, etc., shall be protected by the state.

The two largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, NU and Muhammadiyah since the beginning of independence have also unanimously agreed upon the constitution. At a conference at Pondok Pesantren Situbondo, East Java, 1984, NU reiterated its commitment to statehood and nationality and affirmed Pancasila as the foundation of the state in a final based on the Shari'a. K.H. Ahmad Siddik, a prominent NU scholar proposed three ideas of brotherhood: Islamic brotherhood (*Ukhuwah Islamiyyah*), nation brotherhood (*Ukhuwah Wathaniyyah*), and humanitarian brotherhood (*Ukhuwah Insaniyyah*). This shows that pluralism has been accepted by Islamic scholars of NU and Muhammadiyah along with his followers on the basis of Islam. (Husein Muhammad, xiii-xiv). The acceptance of pluralism is enough to answer the question of some Indonesian people who still look negative. If today pluralism is rejected still, it will pose a serious threat to Indonesia's national system and nationhood. Especially if the rejection of the pluralism to trigger violence.

4. Pluralism in Cirebon: A Case Study

Cirebon is located in the eastern part of West Java province, Indonesia. It has a diverse culture and tourism owned where the cultural interaction can reduce the characteristics of the local culture, which is increasingly valued by tourists all over the world. In terms of political administration, Cirebon refers to two types of administration, namely the *kotamadya* (municipality) and *kabupaten* (regency). The *kotamadya* is located in an area of 37.54 square kilometers with a total population of 298,995 inhabitants in 2008. Administratively, the municipality of Cirebon has 5 *kecamatan* (district) and 22 *kelurahan* (village) (Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Cirebon, 2009). From the capital city of West Java (Bandung), Cirebon is about 130 km away, while from

Jakarta is about 258 km. The three *kraton* (Kasepuhan, Kanoman and Kacirebonan) which become the legacy of Cirebon predecessors is located at the territory of Kotamadya Cirebon (Deni Hamdani, 2012:7).

Abdul Ghoffur Muhaimin wrote a book titled *The Islamic traditions of Cirebon :Ibadat and Adat among Javanese Muslims*, published by Australian University Press, 1995. This work deals with the socio-religious traditions of the Javanese Muslims living in Cirebon, a region on the north coast in the eastern part of West Java. It examines a wide range of popular traditional religious beliefs and practices. The diverse manifestations of these traditions are considered in an analysis of the belief system, mythology, cosmology and ritual practices in Cirebon. In addition, particular attention is directed to the formal and informal institutionalised transmission of all these traditions.

Being sceptical about pluralism, I wish to explore an alternative approach which renders a better understanding of Cirebonese social religious life. With special reference to Cirebon, a region in north-coast Java, I would like to face this challenge and then explore the extent to which Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism have influenced Javanese (Cirebonese) social life. I was born and raised in Cirebon, a northern coastal city of Java island, the border West Java and Central Java province. We are accustomed to speak 3 languages in everyday interactions: Javanese Cirebonese, Sundanese, and Indonesian. In our family also speak 3 languages. With the family from my father's side, we speak Sundanese. With the mother's side, we speak Javanese Cirebonese ; and Indonesian is used when communicating with families who are not raised with local languages. The language of unity (Indonesian) is used when we communicate with neighbors from East Java, Madura island, Palembang (South Sumatra), Ambon (Mollucas), Padang (West Sumatra), Arab, Chinese, and others. Our house is often visited by our father's colleagues from Sukabumi (West Java), Gorontalo (North Sulawesi), Bukittinggi (West Sumatra). Since childhood we have known empirically that the ethnics who live in our compound come from various regions in Indonesia we understand from different local languages.

In my neighborhood - Sitimulya which means a noble land - there are 2 blocks inhabited by Chinese namely Keminte and Bedeng. Keminte is a row house made of brick, while Bedeng block is a bamboo-walled house. They share public bath-rooms and toilets. Chinese who live in Kampung Bedeng are relocated from Pasar Balong. The house of our parents was flanked by a Chinese house from Bagansiapi-api who could not speak Indonesian; on the left side of the house

lived a Javanese Chinese who rented a house, in front of our house is a Chinese vermicelli factory. Behind the house are neighbors of Chinese and Sundanese. The rental house next to the house is inhabited by people from various ethnic groups: Javanese, Sundanese, Maduranese, and Chinese. Our father had a Chinese who lived in Kampung Bedeng we called him Oo Sang Lan (Brother Sang Lan). When Idul Fitri festival comes, we share food to non-Muslim neighbors. And so the Chinese do. In Chinese New Year or Christmas, our neighbors share sticky rice cakes and pastries.

When I was at the elementary level, my school is sometimes called pig house school. The possibility is my school used to be a Chinese pigs' house. My class mate is a Chinese girl Lenny Law Lian Mey. Other Chinese classmates are Tjoa Giok Nih and Fe Ming. Some teachers come from Sunda-Java ethnic Cirebon. I only knew a teacher surnamed Lubis from North Sumatra. I went to Junior High School Muhammadiyah I, where my class mates are fully 100% Muslim. I found new friends from Arab and Pakistani families. Friends of Arab named Sharif Zimah, Nelly Zimah, Najibah Afiff, Ismail Afiff, Ali Akbar, and others. My schoolmate of Pakistani named Muhammad whose was known as a clever student and speaks English very good. In the decade 1980s, there was an English course that is quite famous for its teacher, we called him Mr. Kamal, a Pakistani. My Minangnese dance knowledge was obtained from our teacher from West Sumatra. The teachers at Muhammadiyah School of Cirebon come from Cirebon and Yogyakarta. I remarked a different Javanese language dialect and felt a little bit heavy for my ears when teachers from Yogyakarta were teaching us. In high school, I knew my friends and teachers come various ethnicity such as Sundanese, Javanese, Manadonese, Batakese, Minangnese, Chinese, Arab and Indonesia-Dutch with their backgrounds of Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Hinduism.

I used to undertake an English course at a Chinese institute with the Chinese teacher from Surabaya, Dr. Erhans Anggawirya. My class-mates are majority of Chinese. My Chinese classmate, Hadi, often sends me home with his bike. In the English course I was a minority, but I did not feel the difference between indigenous and Chinese. Cirebon has representative in the state such Dr. Saleh Afiff, State Minister for Administrative Reform (1983-1988) and Vice Chairman of the National Development Planning Agency (1993-1998) (J.Paxton, 1986:686 and 692) is a Cirebonese-Arab; while a Cirebonese-Chinese, Enggartiasto Lukita is currently Minister of Trade.

In Cirebon there are Kampung Cina (Chinatown) and Kampung Arab (Panjunan). The Chinese hold a dominant economic role throughout the shopping areas from gold shops,

electronics stores, bike shops, sport equipment shops, clothing stores, pharmacies, gift shops to pastry shops. Arab descendants sell carving furniture from Jepara, religious bookstore, perfume shop, and souvenir shop for haji and umroh. Indians have textile stores with Indian names such as Bombay, D. Lillaram, Sunil Sunita, and others. Madura ethnic sells Maduranese chicken satay, Sundanese ethnic from Kuningan (West Java) sells green bean porridge and opens a small Indomie soup shop, Sundanese ethnic from Tasikmalaya (West Java) sells groceries and household necessities with credit system, Sundanese ethnic from Garut work as a barber and shoe repair, Javanese ethnic from Central Java selling Javanese noodles and herbal traditional remedies, ethnic Minangnese opens a restaurant Padang, while ethnic Batak as a renter who lend money with interests, like a commute minor bank.

Tabel 1 The Origin of People and Their Profession in Cirebon

No.	Ethnicity	City Origin	Profession
1.	Sundanese	Kuningan	Green Bean Porridge Noodle soup Vegetable seller Cookies Small shop
2.	Sundanese	Tasikmalaya Garut Bandung	Household Minor Creditor Shoe maker Barber Hotel staff Driver
3.	Betawi	Jakarta	Driver Sellerr: Soto Betawi
4.	Javanese	Tegal Solo Surabaya Jombang	Warung Tegal Bahari Driver Teacher Driver Seller: Javanese noodle

			Friedrice, Noodle rice Traditional Javanese Remedies Drinking Ice cream
5.	Madurese	Bangkalan	Madurese Chicken Satay ans Soup Wreckage Green bean Porridge Barber Dental maker
6.	Batak	Medan	Teacher Minor Creditor with interest Hotel staff Officer Small restaurant ice owner Technician
7.	Arab	Cirebon Madiun	Teacher Preacher Traditional Furniture from Jepara Parfum shop Islamic Books shop Hajj and Omra equipments and presents shop Religious teacher Bakery and cakes seller Pharmacy owner Pharmacist Hotel owner Physician Computer shop Optic shop
8.	Chinese	Cirebon Bandung Surabaya Medan East Belitong	Gold shop Car and motorcycle dealer Computer shop Electronic shop Bike shop Bakery Private Courses and Teacher Sport equipment shop Fashion shop Pharmacy and Drugstore

			Physician Hotel owner Restaurant Travel agent Building material stores Optic shop and optician Dentist
9.	Minangkabau	Padang	Teacher Tailor Padang Restaurant Video CD Hawker Officer
10.	Ambonese	Ambon	Officer Seller
11.	Pakistani	Cirebon	English teacher English and Computer Course
12.	Indian	Cirebon	Textile shop

Houses of worship of three religions (Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism) are scattered in the city of Cirebon. Sang Cipta Rasa Great Mosque and Red Mosque Panjunan are a historical mosque used everyday as a place of worship and visited by pilgrims from various cities. The biggest Catholic Church is the Saint Joseph, while the place of worship for Confucianist people is DewiWelas Asih temple close by the harbor. Cirebon has three palaces namely Keraton Kasepuhan, Keraton Kanoman, and Keraton Kacirebonan.

The culture of Cirebon is a meeting of Javanese, Arab (Islamic), Chinese (Confucian and Buddhist), Indian (Hindu), and Dutch (Christian) cultures that gave birth the character of "blakasuta" (out of spoken), and straightforward, (Nurdin M. Noer, 2012: 1 and 39). Based on this background, I would say that since my childhood we have been raised by a pluralistic environment and respect each other. I have never experienced any inter-ethnic or interreligious conflicts in our city.

The strategic location of Cirebon makes this city as the center of the harbor in ancient times, so the city was visited by people from various parts of the world, such as China, India, Arab, Persia, and Europe. They settled and married local people which cause cultural acculturation in

Cirebon as a city full of cultural values. Pluralism in Cirebon appears in culinary, batik art, glass painting, and architecture.

4.1 Batik Cirebon

Batik is regarded as a cultural icon with its own uniqueness. It contains symbols and a deep philosophy of the human life cycle — and it was submitted by Indonesia as a non-material element of cultural heritage. On 2nd October 2009, UNESCO has decided to add the traditional dyeing technique to its Intangible Cultural Heritage list. Batik was therefore Indonesia's third tradition to secure UNESCO's recognition as an element of non-material global cultural heritage. In 2003, the UN body named wayang (Indonesia's traditional shadow puppets) and keris (traditional wavy blades) as elements of non-material cultural heritage. (<http://www.kemlu.go.id/en/berita/berita-perwakilan/Pages/Batik-Selected-for-UNESCO-Cultural-Heritage-List.aspx>).

The wide diversity of patterns reflects a variety of influences, ranging from Arabic calligraphy, European bouquets and Chinese phoenixes to Japanese cherry blossoms and Indian or Persian peacocks. Often handed down within families for generations, the craft of batik is intertwined with the cultural identity of the Indonesian people and, through the symbolic meanings of its colours and designs, expresses their creativity and spirituality. (<https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/indonesian-batik-00170>)

In the ancient times, Javanese *keraton* had become the center of intellectuals as well as governance. The *keraton's* influence on batik designs thus showed the milestones of ancient intellectuals. For example, when the people of Cirebon, recognize two *keratons* (for any political reasons) i.e.: *kasepuhan* and *kanoman* (the older and the younger one respectively), both have characterizations of batik designs. The “cognitive attractors” on drawing the kingdom chariots, *Keraton Kasepuhan* drew the *singa barong* models while the *Keraton Kanoman* the *Paksi Naga Liman* (Hokky Situngkir, 7-8).

A very well known design of Cirebonese batik has motif called *Mega Mendung* which frequently becomes the basic ornamentation while it is recognized as stylization of clouds in the sky. The mega mendung cloud and the coral reef motif known as *wadasan* which originated from Chinese influence also enriched the batik.

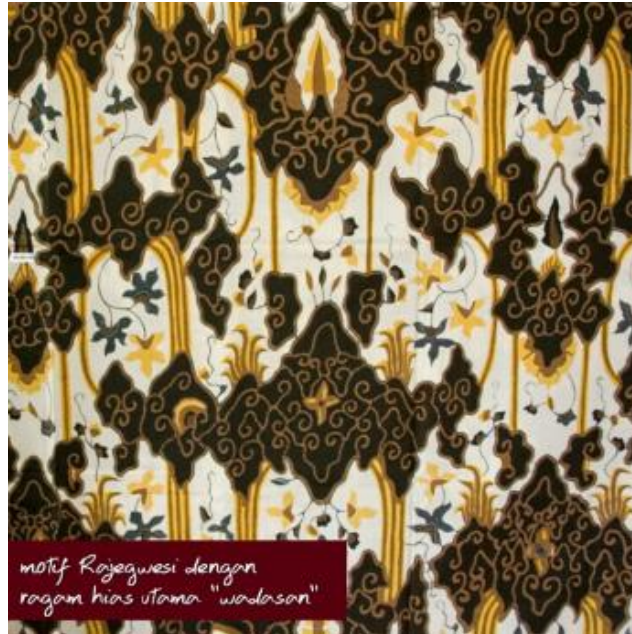


Batik Shirts with Mega Mendung Patterns (Bama, The Heritage of Cirebon, January 17, 2003)

The people of Cirebon view the mega mendung pattern to have been founded by their prince centuries ago. However, scholars say the ancient pattern is an example of cultural assimilation between the Chinese and Indonesians, as the cloud motif is largely found in historical Chinese cultural expression. This motif, together with the dragon, once adorned not just the robes of Chinese emperors but also their palaces (Joannes Ekaprasetya Tandjung, 2015).

The mega mendung patterns, you can truly see the Chinese influence in the way those clouds are drawn. *mega mendung* – literally cloudy skies – patterns on the lentic which are unique to Cirebon and might have been influenced by Chinese traditional patterns.

For the people of Cirebon whose the Muslim majority "Wadasan" motif has a philosophical meaning that the basis of religion and the one's faith must be solid as rock, strong and unsteady and always on the right path to face of temptation and obstacles. The strength of faith while expecting the descent of blessing, and the shade of the Almighty symbolized by "Mega Mendung". (Agus Nursalim, 2014: 35). The cultural acculturation recorded in this batik motif reinforced by the married of Sultan Cirebon (Sunan Gunung Jati) with the Chinese princess, Ong Tien Nio (Agus Nursalim, 2014: 35).



<https://kepulauanbatik.com/2016/03/31/batik-keraton-cirebon-1-wadasan/>

4.2 Glass Painting

Glass painting, a form of classic painting, was developed through the assimilation of wayang motifs as its central subject. These motifs were composed of the Arabic calligraphy used for the prayers and of verses from the Islamic holy book the Koran. The main purpose of the Arabic alphabet in these paintings was to fill in the surface of the wayang figures which were in turn made up of a string of words written in Arabic calligraphy.

The glass painting is part of Cirebon artwork. The paintings depict puppets such as Arjuna and Bharata Yudha, palaces with parks, Bouraq birds, chariots of the Keraton of Kesepuhan or Kanoman Keraton. The pictures in the glass painting are Arabic letters from the Qur'an. Glass painting shows the acculturation of Chinese culture, Islam, and Hinduism. Chinese elements seen in the ornaments of clouds and rocks, elements of Islam appear on the calligraphy of Arabic letters and Hindu elements reflected in the puppet pictures.

The use of calligraphy to convey a symbolic meaning is also seen in the glass paintings known as *Macan Ali* found in the Kesepuhan palace in Cirebon. *Macan Ali* is a kind of *glass painting* in which the form of a tiger is composed of Arabic letters to form to the symbol of the Kasepuhan palace (Nurdin M. Noer, 2012: 31)



Alif Gallery Cirebon

4.3 Architecture

In the 16th century Caruban (a place where different peoples mix – a melting pot), grew as an important trading port and the sultanate was considered a center of Islamic teaching in Java. Similar with the introduction of Islam to the Javanese society through the acculturation of Islamic values with Hindu-influenced traditions, the Sultanate of Cirebon heavily borrowed the cultural aspects of Hinduism and incorporated them in many forms, from the architecture of the royal palace to the rituals practiced by the people. The main *keraton* (royal palace) of Cirebon is a Hindu compound for its architectural and decorative elements are distinctively Hindu. The cultur transform process occuring during the period of established of Islamic authority by the Wali or Modern saints. In the coastal areas saw the artistic traditions of the Hindu period became the basis for the development of Islamic architecture in Indonesia.



<https://kepulauanbatik.com/2016/03/31/batik-keraton-cirebon-1-wadanan>

The two main types of structures left from the Islamic period are the mosques and palaces. The oldest mosques in Cirebon are examples of mosques where structural basis was derived from that of the pendopo meeting hall of the Hindu age (Kempers, 1959:17).

The art of building and decoration in Keraton Cirebon absorb many elements of Chinese art. In fact, the use of European decorative ceramic tile with the Biblical story was not a problem for Cirebon Islam. All show that Islamic society in Cirebon has a high level of tolerance and openness.



Biblical Scenes on the wall of the Kasepuhan Palace (Bama, The Heritage of Cirebon, January 17, 2003)



<http://www.disparbud.jabarprov.go.id/wisata/dest-det.php?id=222&lang=id>

Panjunan Red Mosque is a form of cultural acculturation in Indonesia that has occurred since centuries ago, even since the pre-Islamic period, namely Buddhism and Hinduism. The combination of Chinese, Arabic, and local cultures and the philosophical meanings and symbols that Hinduism brings is then adapted to the teachings of Islam and realized in a mosque that is acceptable to the people of Cirebon. Cultural acculturation at Kraton Kasepuhan Cirebon occurred

due to the influence of strategic location and open attitude of Sultan Cirebon. The influence of strategic location makes Cirebon as the center of trade, where the meeting of various tribes, religions and cultures among nations.

Accepting of Sultan Cirebon is the most important factor that resulted in the entrance of various cultural influences on buildings and society, especially in the architecture of Kasepuhan Palace Cirebon. Cultural acculturation in Kasepuhan Palace comes from China, Hindu, Buddhist, Java, Europe, Islam and Arab. (Happy India Dewi dan Anisa, 2009:66)



Hindu-Style Gates at the Kasepuhan Palace
(Bama, Cirebon: A Cultural Melting Pot, August 15, 2016)

Tabel 2 Cultural Analysis in Cirebon

No	Name	Culture Influences
1.	Keraton Kasepuhan	Hinduism/Buddhism
		Islam
		Chinese
		Dutch
2.	Sang Cipta Rasa Mosque	Hinduism
		Buddhism
		Islam
3.	Red Panjunan Mosque	Hinduism
		Buddhism
		Islam

		Chinese
4.	Batik Mega Mendung	Chinese
5.	Glass Painting	India
		Chinese
		Arab Islam
6.	Temple Dewi Welas Asih	Chinese
7.	BAT (British American Tobacco) Factory	Dutch

5. Conclusion

The values of tolerance have lived hundreds of years in the archipelago. Each place has a local wisdom that teaches tolerance values. A happy life, harmony, mutual respect, mutual care and secure serenity. This substance which is transformed into various forms of tradition. Cirebon is a melting pot city that successfully became a melting place of local culture with Chinese, Arab, Persian, Dutch and other cultural elements. Batik Cirebon brings together the Chinese cultural elements into its design patterns and motives. Tolerance is seen in traditional handicrafts of Cirebon batik. To my knowledge as well as my experiences, we have never been facing problem among Cirebonese, Chinese, Arabs and other ethnicities in Cirebon.

Cirebon is known to have a cultural uniqueness, namely meeting between the culture of coastal Java and Chinese culture. This uniqueness appears strongly in the work of batik Cirebon which takes the design of Mega Mendung. In addition, the architecture of Keraton Kesepuhan, Sang Cipta Rasa Mosque, Panjunan Mosque, Chinese Temple of Dewi Welas Asih are still well maintained in Cirebon city depicting the realization of pluralism as well as the responsibility of society to preserve the value of local wisdom that will strengthen tolerance in daily life. No one feels threatened by the differences of thought, aspiration and culture.

Intolerance measures that disrespect the differences of opinion, equality and diversity of aspirations should be prevented if all parties understand and practice the value of local cultural wisdom. By continuing to live the values of wisdom that can be extracted from the core values of the Pancasila, we have actually invested a secure, peaceful, equitable and prosperous future. Accepting to pluralism is a major contribution to the life of the nation and the state in Indonesia today and in the future, as well as to the world that loves peace, honor, human dignity, and other human relations. For this reason, Indonesia (including Cirebon) can be a role model for other Muslim countries as well as civil Islam.

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