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Adaptation and Negotiation of Muslims within the Local Catholic Community in Eastern Indonesia

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Abstract

Muslims are a minority group in Manggarai, Flores, East Nusa Tenggara. They live alongside the Catholics who make up the majority of the population. The Catholics are known to have a strong sense of tradition in addition to their faith. The tradition is centered around rituals involving sacrificial animals and food deemed haram in Islam. As a result, Muslims are faced with a challenge that hinders their practice of the halal lifestyle. They are compelled to find ways of adaptation and negotiation, through which they can practice their faith while living in harmony and integrated with the Manggarai community. This study explores some common models which have been adopted by Muslims in Manggarai to adapt and negotiate their standing in society and factors that influence such behaviors. This ethnographic study found various working models of adaptation and negotiation that enable Muslim minorities to integrate into society while maintaining their halal lifestyle. The models depend on many factors such as cultural background, interpersonal relationship, place and time, bargaining power, personal preference, peer pressure, mindset, and interpretation of the sacred text. This study argues that the Muslim minority in Manggarai applies the non-monolithic nature of Islam. The practice of a halal lifestyle in Islam is not only a religious matter but also a socio, economic, and political one.

Keywords: Islam minority, Halal, Eastern Indonesia, Pork, Adaptation, Negotiation

Introduction

Awareness to practice the halal lifestyle among Muslim populations around the globe has seen a significant increase in the last decades. Studies regarding this matter have also piqued the interest of scholars around the world, such as Kan, et.al., Rahim and Saladin, Rezai and Shamsudin[1], Ramli and Jamaludin[2] and Khan[3]in Malaysia, Awan, Siddiquie and Haider[4] in Pakistan, Regenstein[5] in the USA, Araújo[6] in New Zealand and Brazil, and in many other parts of the world. In Indonesia, the same trend has also been observed.[7] This heightened awareness has been linked to the growth of the Islamic faith,[8] and the rise of awareness over healthy lifestyles such as clean, hygienic eating.[9]

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[1] Mussadiq Ali Khan et al. (2022), "Antecedents of halal brand equity: a study of halal food sector of Malaysia," *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, Vol. 13, No. 9, pp. 1858-1871; Hainnuraqma Rahim, Hamidah Irpan, Mohamed Abdul Rasoo Saladin (2022), "Consumers Attitude toward Halal Food Products in Malaysia: Empirical Evidence from Malaysian Millenial Muslims," *International Journal of Industrial Engineering & Production Research*, Vol. 33, No. 3, pp. 1-15; Mohamed Golnaz Rezai and Mad Nasir Shamsudin (2012), "Assessment of Consumers' Confidence on Halal Labelled Manufactured Food in Malaysia," *Pertanika Journal of Social Science & Humanity*, Vol. 20, No. 1, pp. 33-42.

[2] M. A. Ramli and M. A. Jamaludin (2012), "Sumbangan Syeikh Muhammad Arshad b. Abdullah al-Banjari dalam Fiqh al-At 'imah (Makanan) di dalam kitab Sabil al-Muhtadin," *Jurnal Al-Tamaddun*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 61-76.

[3] A. Khan (2021), "An Integrated Model of Brand Experience and Brand Love for Halal Brands: Survey of Halal Fast Food Consumers in Malaysia," *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, Vol. 12, No. 8, pp. 1492-1520.

[4] Hayat M. Awan, Ahmad Nabeel Siddiqui and Zeeshan Haider (2015), "Factors Affecting Halal Purchase Intention–Evidence from Pakistan's Halal Food Sector," *Management Research Review*, Vol 38, No. 6, pp. 640-666.

[5] J. M. Regenstein (2020), "Halal food in the USA," *The Halal Food Handbook*, pp. 393-411.

[6] S. H. Araújo,(2021), "Desired Muslims: Neoliberalism, Halal Food Production and the Assemblage of Muslim Expertise, Service Providers and Labour in New Zealand and Brazil," *Ethnicities*, Vol. 21, No. 3, pp. 411-432.

[7] Iwan Vanany et al. (2020), "Determinants of halal-food consumption in Indonesia," *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, Vol 11, No. 2, pp. 507-521.

[8] A. Arifin (2021), "An Investigation of the Aspects Affecting Non-Muslim Customers' Purchase Intention of Halal Food Products in Jakarta, Indonesia," *Future of Food: Journal on Food, Agriculture and Society*, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 1-13.

[9] Chitarus Ratanamaneichat and Sakchai Rakkarn (2013), "Quality Assurance Development of Halal Food Products for Export to Indonesia," *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 88, pp. 134-141.

To accommodate the growing demand for halal products due to both religious and health reasons, there has been a rise in halal-labelled products. Manufacturers in industries such as food and beverages, drugs and supplements, and cosmetics have introduced and advertised more halal-certified products, including for the sake of economic benefits.[10] There have been cases where people use halal advertisements irresponsibly for mere economic gain.[11]

In Indonesia, where Muslim populations make up the majority of the demographics, practicing a halal lifestyle is easy, primarily due to the great accessibility to halal products. In many local places in Indonesia, such as the market, butchers, or local restaurants, it is uncommon to see a sign or a label to indicate halal products because it is generally assumed. In small local eateries, official halal certifications issued by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) are often forgone because Muslims know that the preparations and the ingredients are very likely to be halal. Many Muslims in Muslim-majority cities in Indonesia often do not have to worry about encountering or buying non-halal products.

However, the circumstance is different in other parts of Indonesia where Muslims are the minority group, such as Bali, East Nusa Tenggara, Maluku, Manado, and Papua. In such places, the Muslim populations often encounter difficulties in practicing their halal lifestyle. Access to halal products is not as easy; for example, local butchers likely do not perform the animal slaughtering as practiced by Muslims. Even if halal products or ingredients are available in the local market, there is always a concern over mishandling. This is especially so because, in these parts of Indonesia, the local communities enjoy delicacies deemed haram in Islam, such as pork and dog meat. As a result, even in local markets, there is a concern about mixing halal and haram products and ingredients. The entire environment is not designed to support a lifestyle free from non-halal products. Even the issue of halal tourism gets a rejection from these areas.[12]

In these Indonesian communities, non-halal delicacies like pork, which is haram for Muslims, have roots in traditions cultivated over hundreds of years. These foods are often not a simple matter of preference. For many, such foods have significant cultural meanings or symbols, such as a sacrificial animal. As a result, it is also not easy for non-Muslim locals to forgo these foods or accommodate Muslim populations. For Muslims in these communities, encountering haram products, especially food, becomes inevitable.[13] Muslims in these communities have no choice but to be more careful to avoid accidental consumption of non-halal products.

It is possible that Muslim minorities in such communities face the dilemma of choosing to practice a strict halal lifestyle and maintain a harmonious relationship with the non-Muslim populations. Studies have indicated that in such situations, minority groups tend to make adaptations to their lifestyles to align with the majority's values and at the same time, make negotiations to preserve their identity and prevent it from being completely swallowed by the prevailing/dominant cultures.[14]

This study delves into the challenge faced by Muslim populations in Manggarai, Flores, East Nusa Tenggara in their practice of the halal lifestyle and the associated dilemma, focusing mainly on halal/haram food. Flores has a solid Catholic identity formed by a long history of Catholicism on the island. People in Flores also hold on to their traditions and practice them close to this day. As in many traditional communities,

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[10]Abdul Hamid, Muhammad Said and Endah Meiria (2019), "Potency and Prospect of the Halal Market in the Global Industry: An Empirical Analysis of Indonesia and United Kingdom," *Business and Management Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 54-63; Halimin Herjanto, Muslim Amin and Mulyani Karmagatri (2023), "A Systematic Review on Halal Cosmetic Consumption: Application of Theory Method Context – Attributes Decision Outcome Framework," *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 58-79; C. Batubara (2022), "Halal Industry Development Strategies Muslims' Responses and Sharia Compliance in Indonesia," *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 103-132.

[11] Juri Lestari and Kamilia Adnani (2020), "Resepsi Komodifikasi Halal Pada Iklan Jilbab Zoya," *Academic Journal of Da'wa and Communication*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 1-14.

[12] Dewi Sumiati (2021), "Intercultural Communication Based on Local Wisdom That Made the People of Bali Reject Sharia Tourism," *Asian Journal of Media and Communication*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 137-146; Lies Utamai Efni (2021), "Conflict Management of Lake Toba Halal Tourism Planning in the Perspective of Organizational Communication," *Jurnal Studi Komunikasi*, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 349-364.

[13] Yohanes S. Lon and Fransiska Widyawati (2020), "Food and Local Social Harmony: Pork, Communal Dining, and Muslim-Christian Relations in Flores, Indonesia," *Studia Islamika*, Vol. 26, No. 3, pp. 445-474; Fransiska Widyawati (2020), "The Tradition of Woni: Models of Adaptation of Manggarai Catholics in Encounters with Muslims," *Religió: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama*, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 252-277.

[14] Johan Fischer (2011), *The Halal Frontier, Muslim Consumers in a Globalized Market*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1-30.

food is an important cultural aspect. In Flores, pork becomes an essential and irreplaceable food because of its cultural and religious identity, which is present at the center of each cultural and religious ceremony. On the other hand, Islam and its strict practices, such as the halal lifestyle, have formed an essential identity for its followers. This study is intended to understand the adaptations and negotiations that the Muslims have to make to thrive in the Manggarai community.

It is important to note that despite being the minority group in Nusa Tenggara Province, including in Manggarai, Muslims make up the majority of the Indonesian population. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, for East Nusa Tenggara Province, Muslims make up 8.09% and Christians (Catholics and Protestants) make up 91.61%. The rest are followers of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and local religion.[15] Muslim ideologies have a strong influence at a national level. In the capital and major cities of Indonesia, Muslims and Islamic practices dominate. Generally, people in these major cities have higher socio-economic status than people in East Nusa Tenggara. In Manggarai, some Muslim populations are comprised of immigrants from major cities in Indonesia with higher socio-economic status. The clash between Muslims and non-Muslims in Manggarai is not a simple matter of religious or cultural practices of halal and haram food, but also one influenced by disparate socio-economic and political status.

This research used an ethnographic approach. The researcher collected data by using in-depth interviews, discussion, and observation techniques. The informants and respondents involved were Muslim communities in urban-mountainous areas (Ruteng and its surroundings) and coastal areas covering the north coast (Reo and its surroundings) and the south coast (Iteng, Nanga Woja, Nanga Pa'ang). Some interviews were conducted individually and some were conducted within the family. Some families were gathered in one house and some were invited purposively to attend the focus group discussion. The characteristics of the respondents varied: women and men, those with religious and lay backgrounds, leaders and ordinary people, the elderly and the young.

This study argues that Muslim populations in Manggarai have a unique adaptation model on the issue of halal food, which is created and practiced to preserve their relation to the local Catholic people. At the same time, because of their higher socio-economic and political standing, the Muslim communities can negotiate their power and impose adaptations on the local Catholic communities. This situation challenges the theory of adaptation, which argues that minority groups have to adapt and take the brunt. It demonstrates that the majority groups are also pressured to make adjustments due to socio-economic and political imbalance. In other words, socio-economic and political power can play an enormous role in determining a religious minority's negotiating power in a community.

A Short History of Islam in Manggarai

Islam was the first world religion to enter Manggarai, Flores which at that time the population adhered to animism and dynamism as the original local religions. Traces of Islam had been detected in this region as early as the 16th century, three centuries earlier than the entry of Catholicism in the western part of Flores Island through European missionaries. In the 16th to the 18th century, the trading route in eastern Indonesia brought along traders from Arab and Persia.[16] At the same time, Islam began to spread in the region. In 1603, the King of Gowa in Sulawesi converted to Islam, resulting in all the followers also being converted. As he became the Sultan of Gowa, the sultanate grew to become one of the most influential Islam powers in eastern Indonesia.[17] Since the 16th century, Gowa had a close relationship with the kingdom of Bima in Sumbawa. After the Sultan of Gowa converted to Islam, the king and the people of Bima followed suit in the 17th century. Bima became an Islamic sultanate and the center of Islamic missions in the region, spreading the religion to neighboring islands.

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[15] Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur (n.d.), "Persentase Pemeluk Agama (Persen), 2020-2022," https://ntt.bps.go.id/indicator/108/84/1/persentase-pemeluk-agama-.html.

[16] Hans Hägerdal (2016), "Trajectories of the Early-Modern Kingdoms in Eastern Indonesia: Comparative Perspectives," *HumaNetten*, Vol 37, pp. 66-87.

[17] Thomas Gibson (2007), *Islamic Narrative and Authority in Southeast Asia*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 55-83.

As trading became more prevalent in eastern Indonesia in the 16th-19th century, traders who mainly came from Gowa and Bima started expanding their search for commercial goods to other nearby islands. Manggarai in Flores became one of their areas of interest because of its lumber. The traders were after commodities such as sandalwood, honey, wax, and other types of lumber. They were also looking for people to be sold as slaves. Through trading and exploitation, Gowa and Bima took control of Manggarai.

At the same time, Gowa and Bima introduced Islamic teachings in Manggarai, although this was not their main intention. According to a note by Koolhaas[18], the Gowa and Bima traders were manipulative and exploitative. They lied to the local traders in Manggarai and would not hesitate to steal their commodities. They also forcefully took men to be sold as slaves. Because of the ill-treatment they received, the people of Manggarai were unsympathetic towards the traders from Gowa and Bima and chose to distance themselves. As a result, there was limited cultural integration between the groups.

The traders who migrated to Manggarai settled near the coast for easy access to the sea. On the other hand, the local communities tend to settle at the highlands, causing segregation between the two groups. There was limited interaction between the two groups up to the 19th century. However, the leaders from the Bima and Gowa sultanates communicated with village heads in order to appoint their delegates and to assert power.

The integration of Islam within the local community was not done intentionally, primarily due to the ultimatum issued by Bima's Sultan Abdul Hamid Syah on 17 April 1784. He explicitly forbade Bugis, Makassar, and Bima to interact with the local people in Manggarai unless necessary for business purposes because he believed the local people in Manggarai would taint their Muslim faith with their culture. Presumably, the Sultan saw the harm in the traditional practices of people in Manggarai, which involved using a pig as a sacrificial animal. With this ultimatum, Islam did not spread among the local people in Manggarai.[19] The growth of Islam in the region also saw a downturn. Islam faced even more deceleration at the end of the 19th century. In 1815, the Tambora volcano in Sumbawa erupted, claiming the lives of many people in Bima. This caused the influence of Islam in Manggarai to dissipate.[20] Up to the start of the 20th century, the Muslim communities in Manggarai remained settled in coastal areas with minimum interaction and integration into the local Manggarai culture. There was no significant movement of conversion to Islam, such as observed in Bima. There were some conversions noted at a small scale, typically through marriage. Despite being present in Manggarai for over three centuries, Islam did not integrate into the local communities.

At the start of the 20th century, more specifically in 1907, the Dutch army began a Pacific operation, forcing all local leaders of Manggarai under their control. Before this occupation, Manggarai was under the jurisdiction of local leaders. Most were under Gowa and Bima sultanates' control. Hence only in 1907, Manggarai officially fell under the Dutch occupation. In the year 1920, thirteen years after the Dutch occupation, Catholic missionaries were sent in. The primary purpose was to mainly get rid of the Islamic influence from Gowa and Bima and to evangelize the people in Manggarai.[21] This was part of a systematic plan to turn Flores into a Catholic Island. The plan was a success. In under two decades, most people in Manggarai had been converted to Catholicism. By the mid-20th century, the majority of people in Manggarai had become Catholics. The Catholic Church in Manggarai then has become the largest Church in Indonesia.[22]

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[18] W. P. Coolhaas (1942), "Bijdrage tot de Kennis van het Manggaraische Volk (West Flores)," *Tijdschift van het Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*, Vol. 59, pp. 148-177 and 328-357; Karel Steenbrink (2013), "Dutch Colonial Containment of Islam in Manggarai, West-Flores, in Favour of Catholicism, 1907-1942," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, land-en volkenkunde/Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia*, Vol. 169, No. 1, pp. 104-128.

[19] Coolhaas (1942), "Bijdrage tot de Kennis," pp. 148-177.

[20] I. Gede Parimatha (2002), *Perdagangan dan Politik di Nusa Tenggara 1815-1915*, Jakarta: Djambatan, p. 516.

[21] Fransiska Widyawati (2020), "When Love and Faith Collide: Women's Conversion to Husband's Religion in Flores," *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 335-358.

[22] Fransiska Widyawati and Yohanes S. Lon (2020), "The Catholic Church and the Covid-19 Pandemic: Case Study of Bishop Ordination in Ruteng, Flores, Indonesia," *Journal of Law, Religion, and State*, Vol. 8, No. 2-3, p. 299.

The spectacular growth of Catholicism diminished Islam and hindered its growth in the region. By the mid-20th century, Islam was only popular among descendants of Bima, Bugis, Gowa, and Sulawesi traders. Because the Muslim communities settled near the coast, the people in Manggarai referred to them as *ata wae* or *ata wa wae*, which can be translated to 'sea people' or 'coast people.' The settlements or villages where the Muslims dwelled were also called by names containing the word *nanga*, which means 'delta or coast'. Some examples of villages we still see today are Nanga Woja, Nanga Ramut, and Nanga Lili on the southern coast of Manggarai, Nanga Banda on the northern coast, and Nanga Nae on the southwest coast. Today, the Islamic or Bima/Gowa/Sulawesi influence can still be observed in these villages, for example, through the architecture. Many houses in these regions are built on stilts, similar to traditional houses in Bima and Sulawesi. Furthermore, many people still communicate in the Bima language/Bahasa Bima. They also still practice many traditional Bima ceremonies, such as in their wedding ceremony.

With time, the population started to grow more rapidly, and villages began to expand. Interaction with people from other communities or villages became inevitable in their jobs or public spaces, such as in the markets, schools, and offices. As such, segregation began to diminish. More of the Muslims began to "enter into" the living spaces of the Catholics significantly because the Catholic Church helped develop various public facilities such as schools, clinics, workshops, farms, and irrigation systems.

During their mission in Manggarai, the Dutch missionaries focused on evangelizing and educating the population and developing infrastructure. The Catholic Church played a massive role in the development of Manggarai. [23] After Indonesia became independent and government bodies were formed, the Catholic Church remained a significant influence. The influence of the Church on the public sector still dominated even up to the 1980s. Most schools, clinics, and other infrastructures were privately managed and funded by the Church. The Muslim communities also benefitted from the infrastructures developed by the Catholic Church. In the 1990s, most Muslim children were still enrolled in Catholic schools.

Naturally, the daily interactions between Muslims and Catholics led to the integration of the two communities. Many Muslims who were descended from Bima and Gowa settlers started to identify as people of Manggarai. The settlements also became less segregated – many Catholics began to settle along the coast, and many Muslims also began to settle in the highlands. Inter-religious marriage became more common, forming a kinship between the Muslims and the Catholics. Both communities became more familiar with each other's traditions and ceremonies. During this time, the concept of the halal lifestyle was not a strict a matter. The only consensus between the two communities was that for every joint ceremony or celebration involving both groups, some alternative menus containing no pork would be served alongside other menus containing pork.

A new chapter in the spread of Islam in Manggarai began in the 1970s, referred to as the second wave of Muslim migration into Manggarai. What prompted the migration was the effort to strengthen government presence in the region. Government offices were introduced in multiple communities, such as at sub-district, district, and regency levels. To kick start this plan, civil servants from other parts of Indonesia were sent to work in Manggarai. Most came from regions in Indonesia where Muslims are the majority group, such as Java. Some government officials brought along their families or married local people. This trend eventually led to the rise of middle-class Muslim communities in Manggarai.

Manggarai became even more developed, and along with this came more migrants, mainly traders from Java, Sumatra, Mataram (West Nusa Tenggara), and Sulawesi, who also happened to be Muslims. They settled and brought along their family members. Many of them succeeded, and through words of mouth, more Muslim migrants came to settle in Manggarai, especially in the last decade. Unlike the first Muslim in Manggarai from Bima and Gowa who settled in the coastal area, the new Muslim migrants bought or rented houses among the local communities.

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[23] Fransiska Widyawati and Yohanes S. Lon (2019), "Mission and Development in Manggarai, Flores Eastern Indonesia in 1920-1960s," *Paramita: Historical Studies Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 2, pp. 178-189.

Although still the minority, Muslims became more involved in people's daily lives in Manggarai as many worked in the government, schools, local eateries, and local markets. The encounter between the Muslims and the Catholics became more common.

Additionally, the Muslim migrants in Manggarai were known to have the tenacity and creativity which made them succeed financially. Many opened eateries or street food stalls offering food from their hometown, quickly becoming a hit among local people in Manggarai. Many also sold enticing goods and new ingredients, such as at the market. As time passed, the new Muslim communities in Manggarai became successful and dominated the middle- and upper-class groups. With the rapid increase of the Muslim population, more prominent mosques were also built. Two big mosques can be found today in the capital city of Manggarai, Ruteng, a city of "a thousand churches". In the 2000s, Islamic schools from kindergarten to high school levels were also constructed to cater to this new community.

Regarding their interaction with the Catholic people in Manggarai, the Muslim community today can generally be categorized into a few groups. One group, mainly comprised of long-time Muslim settlers in Manggarai or the descendants of Gowa and Bima traders, is also the group with strong familial ties and kinship with the local Catholic people. Another group, mainly comprised of people coming during the second wave of Muslim migration in Manggarai, is the group with a little but amicable relationship with the local Catholic people, as most interactions happen at a professional or formal level. There is also another group, which chooses to disengage the local Catholic people, preferring to interact within their Muslim community.[24] These different types of Muslims have different attitudes toward Catholicism in Manggarai and different ways in adapting and negotiating the situation regarding halal lifestyle, which is discussed further in the following chapters.

Non-Halal Environment

The question about how halal-friendly, or perhaps more crudely, how haram the Manggarai environment, is important to the research. This question helps map the situation and the challenges in the adaptation model and the negotiation of Muslim communities regarding the halal/haram law. As this study focuses on the aspect of food, the most obvious clue to the answer to this question lies in the presence of pork/lard, the possibility of contamination of other food with pork/lard, and the slaughtering process and the preparation of other meat.

Before discussing the situation in Manggarai, we can look at the situation in other places with predominantly non-Muslim populations both in big cities in Indonesia and overseas. In such places, pork is likely sold at traditional markets or supermarkets like any other meat – perhaps with dedicated stalls selling them and with clear labels. Similarly, restaurants serving pork dishes would likely label and indicate them on the menu. This is usually done out of common decency for other Muslim populations. However, in this case, pork is just like any other ingredient. It is simply a product for consumption.

In Manggarai, pork is not just another ingredient or another meat for consumption. Pigs have traditionally been used in many ceremonies and carry an irreplaceable symbolism. Even though people in Manggarai have been converted to a modern religion of Catholicism, the traditional ideologies and practices remain strong in the community.

Pig or boar is the most common animal to be used as a sacrificial animal in rituals practiced in Manggarai. For each ritual, a unique name is used to refer to the sacrificial pig. The frequency of such rituals can vary, but typically at least once a year during the annual ancestral rites. Depending on the ritual, the sacrificial pig can be slaughtered in the village square, in the front yard, in the backyard, or even inside a house. Each time, tens of pigs can be slaughtered at once. However, a pig is not a cheap commodity. These rituals have been noted as one of the causes of poverty in Manggarai.

[24] Lon and Widyawati (2020), "Food and Local Social Harmony," pp. 445-474.

Because of how pigs are slaughtered, the blood may splatter all over and remain on the ground for some time. In some rituals, the pig's blood may also be smeared on the front door or in other sacred places. After they are slaughtered, the pigs are set on fire to get rid of the hair and prepare for cooking. The smoke and the smell would fill the air for some time. The meat is then butchered and sometimes distributed to a few families. Finally, the meat is cooked and eaten together. In other words, the entire process from the slaughtering of the pig and the consumption is a common sight in Manggarai, and even people who are not involved in the ritual are affected in every sense – sight, smell, and even hearing.

Besides being used as sacrificial animals for consumption, pigs are also commodities used in various transactions. For example, they can be used as a bride-wealth or marriage payment. In this case, pigs symbolize a prized possession as such pigs are regarded with value. Therefore, it is common for people in Manggarai to rear pigs, both at a commercial level (e.g., on a big farm) or just in their backyard.

Hence, pigs are essential animals for people in Manggarai. It would not be an exaggeration to say that many aspects of people's lives in Manggarai revolves around pigs or pork. Activities such as rearing pigs, preparing for their feed, slaughtering the pigs, distributing the pork to family members, buying and selling pigs are just ordinary realities of daily life in Manggarai. In short, pigs are everywhere in Manggarai.

There are no dedicated pigs or stalls to sell pork in traditional markets – one can find pigs being slaughtered and pork being sold anywhere, even at home. Based on our observation in the traditional market in Ruteng, Manggarai, pork can be sold anywhere and may even appear random. They are sold not just in the meat section – they can be found by the sidewalk, next to non-meat items, and even next to non-food items, sometimes manned by Muslim stall-owners. Anyone who goes to the market has no chance of avoiding the sight of pork. Pork is also sold outside the market, such as in small neighborhood shops. Some people go around the neighborhood selling pork by carrying them around on foot while shouting "pork! pork" or something similar. Some vendors sell them in their mini trucks going around the neighborhood. As such, for Muslim people in Manggarai, the encounter with pork is simply unavoidable.

Many local eateries also sell pork dishes. Sometimes such eateries would don a clear sign outside to indicate pork in their menu, but most places do not put such a sign. Moreover, even if some eateries do not sell pork, the chance of contamination is high, as most of these eateries are just an extension to the sellers' house, where they might cook pork or use the same utensils used when they eat pork. Many Muslim people in Flores do not typically go to eateries owned by locals, assumed to be Catholics who eat pork. Most Muslims only frequent restaurants or eateries owned by other Muslim migrants, selling food from other parts of Indonesia, such as Padang food or Javanese food.

However, we have also observed that in coastal areas where first Muslims in Manggarai had settled and still dwell, pork is not sold in traditional markets. They are only sold at a dedicated slaughterhouse or by some vendors outside the markets but still easily accessible. Of course, similar to other parts of Manggarai, the local Catholics also can be found rearing pigs in their backyard and performing rituals as mentioned.

Partying is one of the most favorite pastimes in Manggarai, which in this context means throwing a big celebration, inviting hundreds of neighbors and extended families, and having a big meal together. Some non-traditional ceremonies and celebrations can be religious, such as baptism and first communion, wedding anniversary, and graduation party. Pork is always the star of such a party. As such, pork is not limited to traditional rituals, but it is served on every momentous occasion. The party hosts would often invite Muslim guests, either friends, neighbors, or colleagues. However, that does not mean pork is not served – other non-pork dishes are also provided. Usually, the dishes are served buffet style, and separate tables would be used for pork and non-pork dishes. As a result, there is a concern about contamination. The same pots and utensils could have been used for both dishes. Even on occasions where only non-pork dishes are served, there is always a concern over the preparation of the meal, which is often done at home using 'contaminated' utensils.

The food scene in Manggarai is dominated by pork. The environment is not ideal for a halal lifestyle. How then do Muslim people in Manggarai adapt and negotiate the situation? What challenges arise in the Muslim-Catholic relation in Manggarai? What are some factors that influence the practice of the halal lifestyle? The following part discusses the models of adaptation and negotiation practiced in Manggarai.

The Adaptation and Negotiation Model among Manggarai Muslims

The halal/haram law in Islam, particularly regarding food, goes as far back as the religion itself. It is also one of the most fundamental laws in Islam (al Ma'idah, 5:3; Al-Baraqah, 2: 173). Among many things that are deemed haram in Islam, the consumption of pork is one thing that is non-negotiable and uncompromisable. On the other hand, pork is often used to attach to Islam (cf. case of roasting a pig in front of a mosque in Eindhoven or pork headshot into the mosque in Malaysia)[25]. Some other misconducts deemed haram in Islam, such as usury, corruption, premarital sex, and alcohol intoxication, are often judged more loosely than the consumption of pork. The avoidance of pork is not only observed in Islam – it has become part of the social and cultural identity of Muslims around the world.

Avoiding pork becomes one of the most distinguishing attributes of Muslims, including those in Manggarai. Muslims in Manggarai are often referred to by this characteristic, which in the local lingua is known as *ata woni* which translates to non-pork-eating people (*ata* means people, and *woni* means not eating pork).

However, for Muslims who also identify as people of Manggarai (hereafter referred to as 'Manggaraian Muslims'), the encounter with pork is part of their experience and culture. As previously mentioned, and as also discussed by other literature,[26] the use of pigs and pork is part and parcel of the Manggarai culture. The Manggaraian Muslims grew up with this culture, familiar with pigs and pork. Many grew up watching and being actively involved in rituals involving pigs. For this group of Manggaraian Muslims who are vastly aware of the cultural symbolism represented by pigs, their form of adaptation is avoiding touch and the consumption of pork.

When Manggaraian Muslims host a ritual, a negotiation process occurs, whereby pigs are replaced with other animals such as cows or goats. The processes involved remain unchanged except for the sacrificial animal. For generations, this model of negotiation is expected. The Manggaraian Catholics/non-Muslims understand and can adjust to this modification. In this case, both parties adapt and adjust to each other's needs.

An exciting change has also been observed recently. Along with the modification in terms of the animal used in the ritual, when it involves Muslims, a ritual is often led by a Muslim religious leader instead of the tribe chief as it is usually done. This is a phenomenon that illustrates the impact of religion on cultural shifts. This amalgamation of religion and culture in Indonesia has been observed since the New Order. Culture has transformed with a new touch of religion.[27]

As also discussed previously, pigs are sacrificial animals and prized commodities used in various transactions. Another common form of negotiation is to replace pigs in such transactions with other animals when a Muslim family is involved. However, there are some cases where pigs are irreplaceable, and in such cases, money is typically used as a replacement. This money is referred to as a "rope" or "pig rope". Ropes are typically used to tie pigs up, and money is used symbolically to represent the intention to present pigs. If a Muslim family is at the receiving end of the "rope", it can be replaced by another animal.

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[25] Margaretha A. van Es (2020), "Roasting a Pig in front of a Mosque: How Pork Matters in Pegida's Anti-Islam Protest in Eindhoven," *Religions*, Vol. 11, No. 7, pp. 1-16; BBC (2012), "Pig's Head Outside Malaysia Mosque Causes Outrage," https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-16854036.
[26] R.P. Deka et al. (2014), "Sharing Lessons of Smallholders' Pig System in South Asia and Southeast Asia: A Review," National Conference on Opportunities Strategies for Sustainable Pig Production, India, 20-21 December 2014.
[27] J. Davidson and D. Henley (eds.) (2007), *The Revival of Tradition in Indonesian Politics: The Deployment of Adat from Colonialism to Indigenism* London: Routledge.

Sometimes, no symbolism is associated; money is simply presented to buy a pig. In this way, despite the animal's lack of physical involvement, the essence is still present. This form of negotiation can be seen as a win-win solution for the culture and the religion without prioritizing one over the other. In Manggarai, violation of cultural teachings/laws is an absolute taboo, and the violator is deemed immoral for causing disrespect to the ancestors. On the other hand, religious violations are also deemed unforgivable. Through such negotiation, people can be at ease knowing they are not compromising culture over religion or vice versa.

In this adaptation model, both the Muslims and the Catholics play a part in modifying and changing some of the traditional aspects of their religion or culture. The traditional definition of the theory of adaptation, which suggests that a minority group is constantly forced to adjust and adapt to the majority group, is not necessarily true in the context of religion. In the original context of the theory, the dynamic between the minority and majority group is influenced mainly by the strength in numbers, thus forcing the minority group to take the brunt.[28] In religion, the strength in numbers is not necessarily the benchmark that defines the relationship between clashing religious groups. In religion, the clash is rooted in long-established sacred teachings with very little negotiating power. In other words, the clash between the Muslim and Catholic Manggaraians is rooted in a non-negotiable law of halal/haram in Islam, and therefore even though Muslims are the minority group, both Muslim and Catholic Manggaraians have to adapt and find an alternative way that poses as little distress as possible to both groups.

However, the demographic of Muslims in Manggarai has also changed in the past decades. With the rise of the Muslim population in Manggarai, who comes from other parts of Indonesia where Islam is a major religion, there is a shift in the adaptation model between the Catholics and the Muslims regarding the halal/haram law clash with the Manggaraian culture.

The Muslim migrants in Manggarai do not have a relationship with the culture like the Manggaraian Muslims do. They do not feel a sense of attachment to the culture and are not actively involved in the rituals. Their involvement is limited, playing a role as a guest rather than a participant. The rise of this group of Muslims leads to a new adaptation model, which is based on the attitude of "I will respect your ritual, and I will be a guest, but I do not want to be involved with the whole pig situation". Perhaps we can call this a partial involvement. This is different from the adaptation model in the Manggaraian Muslims, who are actively engaged in the rituals once adjustments are in place.

This partial involvement is another form of negotiation. The cultural aspects are conserved through this type of negotiation, but the religious (Islamic) aspects are more explicitly expressed. It also ensures an amicable relationship or a sense of kinship is maintained. It illustrates how one can reinterpret religious obligations in the social context for the sake of a harmonious society. Some sayings express similar sentiments, for example, "tradition has been here longer than religion" or "religion is between you and God, but tradition is between you and your family". One can still respect the tradition despite religious obligations.

In the history of the politics of identity in Indonesia, the New Order represents a period that emphasizes the clash between culture/tradition and religion. During this period. Politics are deeply rooted in religion and consequently put religion above culture and tradition.[29] Religious teachings are deemed more sacred than cultural teachings. As a famous adage goes, "Religion comes from God, and tradition comes from man." Many people in Indonesia today still adopt this ideology by prioritizing religious obligations above cultural ones. Some traditional rituals are disappearing and becoming more marginalized, replaced by more religious rituals. This is not only applicable to Islam as the major religion in Indonesia but also to other religions.

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[28] Young Yun Kim (2020), *Becoming Intercultural: An Integrative Theory of Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation*, California: Sage Publications.

[29] Davidson and Henley (eds.) (2007), *The Revival of Tradition in Indonesian Politics*.

There is also a different form of adaptation unrelated to the use of pigs/pork in the traditional rituals but related to the consumption of pork in daily lives or religious/Catholic celebrations. This form of adaptation has been practiced for a long time in Manggarai and is referred to as *woni*. This involves the provision of non-pork menus in ceremonies/celebrations where Muslims are also present as guests. The menus containing no pork (but not necessarily halal in a strict sense) are referred to as "special menus" or "*woni* menus." A study by Widyawati has identified several types of Woni,[30] One type of *woni* involves food prepared and cooked by Muslims at their home to be served separately at a ceremony hosted by a Catholic family. Another type of *woni* involves food prepared and cooked by Muslims at the Catholic family (the host)'s house. Another type involves non-pork food prepared and cooked by the Catholic family (the host). These days, a new type of *woni* involves food catered by Muslim-owned eateries or restaurants. The different types of *woni* suggest different levels of adaptation to different strictness levels of halal lifestyle. When the Muslims are stricter about their halal lifestyle, more adaptations are required. Whatever the case, the purpose of *woni* is to maintain a harmonious society, leaving no one out, especially in the celebration of life.

What do Muslims think about *woni*? There are some complexities and variations observed through their behavior when invited to ceremonies/celebrations involving *woni*. Some Muslims want to be part of the celebration, choosing to attend such ceremonies despite knowing that pork is also served. Some only want to attend if the ceremonies are held at public locations, e.g., hotels, knowing that pork might not be served in such places. Some may attend but choose to skip the meals. Some also prefer not to attend at all. There are multiple responses, and they can be attributed to various reasons ranging from cultural background, interpersonal relationships, personal preference, and peer pressure. Generally, Muslims are respectful of the alternatives presented through *woni*. After all, getting an invite already shows the host's generosity and consideration of them as a close friend or even family.

In other forms of communal eating under a more formal setting, for example, during a meeting at a workplace among colleagues or during a public seminar, the consensus is usually different. In such cases where a personal relationship does not play a central role in the event, it is common to serve boxed meals/buffet-style food catered by Muslim-owned eateries. It is sporadic for pork to be served in such settings. It is also because Muslim migrants own most major restaurants/eateries that cater to significant events, although the workers can be local Catholics. The menu usually includes chicken, beef, fish, or tofu. Many Muslims feel less concerned about pork contamination, so many are more willing to eat them. There are, of course, cases where some Muslims still feel anxious about whether the food is halal and prefer not to take the risk, but in such situations, many choose to take the food home out of respect and give them away to non-Muslim friends/family members. Today, it is common in such formal events to appoint a Muslim to be in charge of the food to prevent food from being not halal.

This form of adaptation and negotiation in a formal setting is unique. As elaborated earlier, pork is central in traditional and religious celebrations in Manggarai, even when Muslim people are involved. However, things completely change in a formal setting, even if the majority of the participants are also Catholics. It appears that in a formal setting, there is pressure for Catholic people to observe stricter halal requirements.

Outside the context of communal eating, many Muslims adhere to a stricter halal lifestyle. For their consumption, many Muslim families only buy food ingredients from Muslim sellers or eat at Muslim-owned eateries because there is less concern over pork contamination. Some are even stricter, choosing to purchase non-food items only at Muslim-owned stores. Of course, some are also more flexible and have no problem buying food items from any store, even if it is not Muslim-owned.

To support the halal lifestyle, eateries, especially in bigger cities like Ruteng, can apply for a halal statement from MUI. This is quite different from the process of halal certification. The halal statement is a less formal way to identify Muslim-owned eateries. Muslim communities also continuously educate their members

[30] Widyawati (2020), "The Tradition of Woni," pp. 252-277.

about halal/haram matters to increase awareness and prevent misunderstanding. Many Muslim families start teaching their kids about the halal lifestyle at a young age, primarily to educate them to be more careful about what they eat when they are at school or when playing with non-Muslim friends. Some Muslim parents would tell their neighbors not to give their kids any homemade food. Many Catholics are also aware of halal food requirements. This is another example of social control.

However, this study has also found a group of Muslims who, despite adhering to the halal lifestyle, i.e., not eating pork, still chose to rear pigs. Pigs are a prized commodity and can be a profitable business. This group of Muslims usually also sell other food items such as tofu and *tempeh*. The waste products from making tofu and *tempeh* are used to feed the pigs, thus maximizing profit. There are various reactions from other Muslim communities regarding this matter. Many are unhappy. A delegate from the local MUI once issued a warning letter for Muslims to stop any business activities involving the rearing of pigs. However, the warning was ignored. This is an example of how the economic situation can lead to the reinterpretation of religious concepts.[31]

This study has also discovered another group of Muslims. Many came from outside Manggarai, and entirely disregarded the halal lifestyle. This group of Muslims worked as traders travelling from village to village and intentionally sought pork and eat it. In this case, their morality overrides their Muslim values. It also shows that the practice of the halal lifestyle depends on personal values. It is a complex matter shaped by cultural background, personal values, peer pressure, and socio-economic backgrounds.

Some Muslims can adopt multiple models of adaptation, sometimes even opposing ones, depending on the situation. For example, some Muslims are stricter about their halal lifestyle in their daily lives but cannot afford to be as strict in a work situation; for example, if their boss offered them non-pork (but potentially not halal) food, they cannot help but accept it out of the pressure to be respectful. In another example, some Muslims who are invited by a party hosted by a high-profile figure such as the Bishop or the regent where *woni* menus are served (along with pork menus) also tend to feel more pressured to eat the non-pork food even though they might be stricter at other ceremonies.

Some Muslims can also adopt different attitudes depending on the peer pressure from fellow Muslims. In ceremonies where many Muslims are invited, they tend to feel more pressured to adhere to a stricter adaptation model. Conversely, in ceremonies where very few Muslim people are present, they tend to choose a more relaxed model.

In some cases, the time can also affect the level of strictness among Muslims. For example, during Ramadan, some feel the need to adopt a stricter adaptation model by avoiding any *woni* food or food from non-Muslim eateries, even though they would be less strict in other times. Some also feel the need to be stricter only when they are in Flores. Once they go to other cities with the Muslim majority, they are more relaxed about eating out even though the eateries may not be halal-certified.

The Halal Practice: Religion, Tradition, and Identity Linkage

This study has demonstrated the complexity of adaptation and negotiation of Muslims in Manggarai in the practice of the halal lifestyle. There is no one standard or common model. Even though Muslims make up a small part of the population in Manggarai, there is a wide variety of responses. These responses are not monolithic, nor are they mono-cultural. This unique encounter of the Manggaraian culture and Islam has also formed unique groups of Muslims. This is a reality of Islam in Indonesia.[32]

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[31] Rachel M. McCleary (ed.) (2011), *The Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Religion*, New York: Oxford University Press.

[32] Martin Van Bruinessen (2013), *Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam*, Singapore: ISEAS Publishing; Azyumardi Azra (2015), "Jaringan Islam Nusantara," in Akhmad Sahal and Munawir Aziz (eds.), *Islam Nusantara dari Ushul Fiqh hingga Paham Kebangsaan*, Bandung: Mizan.

Moreover, this study has shown that the practice of the halal lifestyle is not just a religious matter. It is connected to many issues such as tradition, culture, kinship, harmonious society, identity, economy, power, politics, and also the dynamic relationship of the minority and the majority groups. Any religion has cultural ties. In one way or another, religious practices are rooted in cultural practices – and that is also how religion thrives. A rigid religion that dismisses cultural contexts is headed towards failure. In Manggarai, where pigs/pork plays a central cultural role, Muslim communities grow accustomed and can respond through various adaptation models. The responses are based on rational rather than emotional/dramatic thoughts and the determination to preserve a harmonious society. Other Muslim communities in other parts of Indonesia or overseas may not understand or sympathize with the use of pigs/pork and their presence in the public space. Many might even react in conflictual manners.[33]

After all, culture is dynamic. Culture is also not something closed and cannot be changed. A culture that meets another tradition can influence and be influenced reciprocally. It is not the right one. It is manufactured and can continually be reinterpreted and reconstructed. Culture can change with the influences of religion. In Manggarai, some aspects of the local culture have seen changes in Muslim communities, such as using another sacrificial animal instead of pigs or the tradition of *woni* (provision of non-pork menus in a communal gathering). This is also an example of an intercultural dialogue that is mutually beneficial.

However, it is undeniable that factors that affect the behavior of Muslims in Manggarai in halal practice are due to contradictory values and culture. Clash of ideas between two cultures can be a trigger to strengthen their identity. This happened in this research. Pork is at the center of the Catholic Manggaraian identity. Halal lifestyle is at the center of the Muslim ideology. Competing identity may affect the Muslims to practice their halal law to avoid pig/pork while for the Manggarai Catholics to maintain their local culture close to pig/pork.

One takeaway from this study is that differences do not have to end in conflicts. With mutual understanding, respect, and harmony, differences can be bridged. In Manggarai, pigs/pork does not pose a tremendous challenge to many Muslims. Similarly, Muslims who do not consume pork is not seen as a threat to cultural practices. Of course, there will always be issues. It is perhaps a chicken or an egg issue – differences can lead to segregation, and segregation only emphasizes differences. Every community member has the responsibility to learn and embrace differences and prevent radical movements and violence from breeding.

Conclusion

In Manggarai, we see the Muslim minority and Catholic majority who adhere strongly to their culture centered around rituals involving pigs/pork. At a glance, Manggarai is not a halal-friendly environment, and thus Muslims might be forced to take the brunt and submit to the majority views. However, the reality shows that both Muslim and Catholic communities adopt various adaptation models to bridge their differences while maintaining their religious and cultural values. The strictness levels of each adaptation model differ; some are loose/flexible and some are more stringent. They reflect different faces of Muslims in Manggarai – there is no one singular identity of Muslims in Manggarai. In addition to adaptation models, negotiation shows Muslims' negotiating power to alter the majority/dominating culture to cater to their Islamic identity. Both adaptation and negotiation models are not monolithic. The adaptation models differ from one individual to another and from one group to another. Many factors influence them, ranging from social, identity, economic, and political powers.

[33] There have been cases how Muslims reacted to the issues regarding the contamination of pork within food or pork menus of some restaurants as by the following online media: Kaskus (2016), "FPI Protes Babi Panggang Karo, Josua Siregar Surati Jokowi," https://www.kaskus.co.id/thread/5796d6b098e31bc9348b4569/fpi-protes-babi-panggang-karo-josua-siregar-surati-jokowi/; Bangun Santoso (2018), "Hasil Penyelidikan Polisi Soal Heboh Bakso Daging Babi di Kampus Unja," *Liputan 6*, https://www.liputan6.com/regional/read/3426466/hasil-penyelidikan-polisi-soal-heboh-bakso-daging-babi-di-kampus-unja.

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