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ISLAMIC IDENTITY NEGOTIATION IN RURAL SOCIETY OF BANGKA ISLAND : BETWEEN GLOBAL AND LOCAL

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Abstract

This ethnographic study examines how a traditional Muslim community in Payabenua village, Bangka Island, Indonesia, negotiates Islamic identity amid globalization. Drawing on nine months of fieldwork (2024), the research explores the interplay between local traditions, global Islamic symbols, and social pluralism. Using cultural hybridity theory (Bhabha), multiple modernities framework (Eisenstadt), and everyday pluralism concepts, the study reveals three key findings: (1) global Islamic architectural forms coexist with local traditions through strategic appropriation—the new Middle Eastern-style mosque amplifies rather than displaces the traditional nganggung *ritual; (2) potentially controversial symbols like niqab gain acceptance through mediation by local religious authorities (guru kampung) who integrate them into Shafi'i jurisprudential frameworks; (3) everyday pluralism grounded in economic interdependence and ritual reciprocity remains resilient despite Islamic revivalism. The study contributes theoretically by extending hybridity theory to rural contexts, demonstrating Islamic modernity through tradition revitalization rather than replacement, and revealing practice-based pluralism's durability. Findings challenge narratives portraying Muslim communities as*

E-ISSN: 2614-5820
Vol. 16 No. 02 (2025), pp. 275– 302

passive recipients of global influences, instead revealing active, creative negotiation processes that produce distinctive hybrid modernities simultaneously global and local, modern and traditional, revivalist and pluralist.
Keywords: *Islamic Identity, Cultural Hybridity, Multiple Modernities, Everyday Pluralism, Bangka Malay Muslim.*

A. Introduction

The encounter between local Islamic traditions and global religious symbols has emerged as one of the most significant phenomena shaping contemporary Muslim societies across Southeast Asia. As transnational Islamic movements, architectural styles, and dress codes circulate across borders through migration, media, and religious networks, Muslim communities find themselves navigating between inherited traditions and newly available expressions of religiosity. This process is particularly evident in Indonesia, home to the world's largest Muslim population, where diverse local Islamic traditions coexist with, and are increasingly challenged by, standardized forms of Islamic practice associated with the Middle East.

Although scholars have spent considerable attention exploring how local Islam in Indonesia interacts with the global Islamic way of thinking (Feillard & Madinier, 2011; Hasan, 2006, 2009; Machmudi, 2008; Rakhmani, 2017), there is a noticeable gap in the research. Most studies have focused on urban areas, treating them as the main sites where Islamic identity evolves dan transforms. Consequently, such phenomena in rural Muslim communities remain understudied. This urban bias creates an incomplete picture of how Islamic globalization actually operates across diverse social landscapes.

The island of Bangka in eastern Sumatra offers a compelling case for examining these dynamics. Historically known as a cosmopolitan trading hub shaped by tin mining (Heidheus, 1992)and remarkable ethnic diversity (Idi, 2011), Bangka's Malay Muslim communities have long practiced a traditional form of Islam rooted in the Shafi'i school of jurisprudence (*madhhab*)(Zulkifli, 2007, 2010). Yet in recent decades, something striking has been happening, in which global Islamic symbols have been appearing throughout the Island. The existence of Middle Eastern architectural styles in mosque construction and the adoption of *niqab* (face veils) among young women represent an instance of a global Islamic ideas permeating local society. These

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E-ISSN: 2614-5820
Vol. 16 No. 02 (2025), pp. 275– 302

developments have occurred against the backdrop of severe economic crisis following the collapse of the tin industry, marked notably by a corruption scandal involving PT Timah with estimated losses of nearly IDR 300 trillion. (Hidayatullah, 2024)

In term of this new Islamic development, the existing scholarship has produced two dominant narratives. The first, drawing on secularization and modernization theories, predicts the erosion of local traditions as communities adopt standardized, "purified" forms of Islam associated with Salafi or Wahhabi movements (Gellner, 2013; Roy, 2006). The second, emphasizing resistance and cultural preservation, portrays local communities as defensive actors protecting authentic traditions against external influences (Van Bruinessen, 2013). However, both narratives tend to position local communities as either passive recipients or reactive opponents of global Islamic flows, overlooking their active role as selective agents who negotiate, reinterpret, and creatively appropriate global symbols within local frameworks of meaning and authority.

Moreover, the relationship between Islamic revivalism and social pluralism remains theoretically underdeveloped. A fundamental question that emerges is whether communities can adopt "conservative" Islamic symbols such as Middle Eastern Mosque architecture and the niqab while maintaining inclusive and pluralistic social orientations. What mechanisms enable the coexistence of potentially exclusivist religious symbols with inter-religious cooperation also constitutes a critical question requiring examination.

Therefore, this study focuses exclusively on exploring three interrelated research questions. First, how do rural Muslim communities negotiate the adoption of global Islamic symbols while preserving their local religious traditions. Specifically, how are Middle Eastern architectural styles and dress codes integrated into or contested within the existing framework of traditional Islamic practice. Second, what role do local religious authorities play in mediating between global Islamic influences and traditional practices. How do *guru kampung* (village religious teachers) legitimize, filter, or reinterpret global symbols through local knowledge systems, particularly Shafi'i jurisprudence and classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*). Third, how does social pluralism persist in traditional Muslim communities experiencing Islamic revivalism.

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E-ISSN: 2614-5820
Vol. 16 No. 02 (2025), pp. 275– 302

What mechanisms enable the coexistence of ethnic and religious diversity in village contexts where global Islamic symbols might be expected to promote exclusivism.

In order to address the research questions, this study draws on three interconnected theoretical frameworks to explain changing religious practices and their implications for community bonds in traditional Muslim societies. The first is Homi Bhabha's concept of cultural hybridity (Bhabha, 1994), which helps explain how global and local religious symbols interact. Bhabha's idea of "third spaces" highlights zones where meanings are negotiated rather than simply accepted or rejected. Hybridity, in this sense, is not mere cultural mixing but a process of reinterpretation that challenges fixed binaries such as modern versus traditional. when applied to religious context, this idea suggests that the adoption of Middle Eastern mosque architecture or the niqab should not be seen as the simple importation of foreign practices. Instead, these symbols are creatively reworked through local traditions, producing religious expressions that are simultaneously global in form and local in meaning.

This perspective then aligns well with recent research on Islam and globalization in Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia. Scholars have shown that what people call "Arabization" isn't simply about local culture being replaced, but rather it's a more dynamic process where global influences get localized and made meaningful in specific contexts. While Islam in the region has always blended different traditions (Ricklefs, 2012; Woodward, 2011), new connections with Middle Eastern texts, symbols, and institutions have been growing since the 1970s (Fealy & White, 2018; Van Bruinessen, 2013).

In response to these global influences, Indonesian Muslims creatively adapt global influences, selectively adopting media (Hoesterey, 2015) and consuming Arab-style dress and cuisine to express piety which are particularly occurring among urban society (Jones, 2010), a process termed "glocalization" (Hidayatullah, 2023; Robertson, 1995), wherein global and local religious forms interact and mutually shape one another. However, Bhabha's hybridity theory, which describes such cultural blending, is critiqued for neglecting power dynamics (Ahmad, 1995; Parry, 1987) and an urban focus (Mitchell, 1997; Werbner, 2001). This study therefore extends this theory to rural

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E-ISSN: 2614-5820
Vol. 16 No. 02 (2025), pp. 275– 302

Muslim communities, investigating how cultural hybridization functions where traditional authority is strong and economic resources limited.

The second theoretical framework employed in this study is Shmuel Eisenstadt's (Eisenstadt, 2003; S.N. Eisenstadt, 2000) theory of multiple modernities, which fundamentally challenges the conventional assumption that modernity follows a singular, universal trajectory necessarily associated with Western secularization. Eisenstadt argues that modernity's core features can be realized through diverse cultural programs shaped by civilizational traditions. This theoretical perspective holds particular relevance for understanding Islamic societies, as it suggests that religious revivalism and adherence to tradition need not be construed as impediments to modernization. Rather, as Hefner (Hefner, 2005)and Salvatore and Eickelman (Salvatore & Eickelman, 2004) have argued, these religious elements can serve as legitimate foundations for alternative forms of modernity that diverge from Western secular models while remaining authentically modern in their own right. This study enriches the framework by examining how Islamic modernity emerges through selective creative appropriation and tradition revitalization at the village level.

The third theoretical pillar informing this analysis is the concept of everyday pluralism, which shifts analytical attention from formal institutional arrangements and ideological commitments to the practical, routine interactions across difference that constitute the fabric of pluralistic societies. This perspective, as articulated by Wise and Velayutham (Wise & Velayutham, 2009, 2014) as well as Amin (Amin, 2002), emphasizes that social cohesion emerges not primarily from abstract principles or official policies, but from the mundane, daily encounters and negotiations that occur between diverse community members in shared spaces. Applied to religiously diverse contexts, everyday pluralism emphasizes how markets, workplaces, and festivals enable cross-religious interaction (Hutabarat, 2023). Rather than assuming tolerance requires ideological agreement, this perspective recognizes that practical cooperation even amid value disagreements can sustain pluralistic societies. In Indonesian contexts, everyday pluralism manifests through practices like shared ritual spaces and inter-religious economic partnerships (Aragon, 2000). However, most research examines urban settings or regions with substantial religious minorities, leaving underexplored

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E-ISSN: 2614-5820
Vol. 16 No. 02 (2025), pp. 275– 302

how such dynamics operate in predominantly Muslim rural contexts with small non-Muslim populations.

The case of Bangka Island, particularly Payabenua village, provides a rich empirical setting for examining cultural hybridity, multiple modernities, and everyday pluralism. The village displays three interconnected dynamics: the coexistence of global Islamic symbols with local traditions, the pursuit of modernity through religious commitment, and sustained inter-ethnic and inter-religious cooperation despite potential exclusivism. Shaped by Bangka's history as a tin-mining region that brought together Malay, Javanese, and Chinese communities, Islam in Payabenua developed through ongoing dialogue with local customs and social diversity. The village maintains Shafi'i-based traditions and *pesantren* learning while absorbing global Islamic influences, shown in the performance of customary religious rituals within mosque designed in the Middle Eastern style, as well as between local religious leaders (*guru kampung)* and emerging dress practices such as the niqab. The presence of economic integration alongside religious orthodoxy and continued Muslim–Chinese Christian cooperation makes Payabenua an ideal site for advancing these theoretical frameworks.

Through the integration of these three theoretical frameworks applied to the specific context of Payabenua village, this study makes several significant scholarly contributions. *First*, it extends hybridity theory beyond its typical urban and cosmopolitan applications to rural traditional contexts, introducing the concept of "authorized hybridity" to account for the mediating role of religious authorities in legitimizing cultural synthesis. *Second*, it enriches the literature on multiple modernities by empirically demonstrating how Islamic modernity can be achieved through selective and creative appropriation of global symbols coupled with the revitalization rather than abandonment of tradition. *Third*, it advances scholarship on everyday pluralism by revealing both the remarkable durability of practice-based tolerance in the face of potentially exclusivist religious symbols and the crucial legitimating role that local religious authorities play in sustaining such pluralistic social arrangements in predominantly Muslim rural communities.

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E-ISSN: 2614-5820
Vol. 16 No. 02 (2025), pp. 275– 302

B. Methods

This study employs qualitative ethnographic research to investigate how traditional Muslim communities negotiate Islamic identity amid globalizations. Ethnography proves particularly suited to research questions concerning cultural meaning-making, identity negotiation, and everyday social practices, as it enables researchers to observe and participate in the lived realities of communities over extended periods (Geertz, 1973; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). The methodological approach prioritizes thick description, contextual understanding, and interpretive analysis over quantitative measurement, recognizing that religious transformation involves complex symbolic negotiations best understood through immersive fieldwork.

Payabenua village, situated in Mendo Barat sub-district, Bangka District, Bangka Belitung Province, lies approximately 12 kilometres from Petaling and 25 kilometres from the provincial capital, Pangkalpinang. The village comprises approximately 4,540 residents organized into eight hamlets and sixteen neighborhoods (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Bangka, 2025). This research site was selected through purposive sampling due to its theoretical significance. The community demonstrates traditional Islamic orientation following Shafi'i jurisprudence, while recent completion of a Middle Eastern-style mosque in early 2024 provided opportunity to examine negotiations between global Islamic symbols and local practices. Despite its entirely Muslim population, ethnic Chinese non-Muslim entrepreneurs dominate local business sectors, including palm oil plantations and construction supply stores. These inter-ethnic commercial relationships, historically sustained through longstanding networks with Chinese traders in Pangkalpinang, enable examination of inter-religious dynamics. The village's economic foundation rests on rubber and palm oil cultivation, with monthly household incomes ranging from IDR 1.5-3 million, positioning residents within Indonesia's lower-middle economic stratum. The post-2020 tin industry collapse provides context for understanding religious investment priorities during economic adversity.

Fieldwork was conducted over nine months from March through November 2024, a duration that enabled observation of seasonal agricultural cycles,

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E-ISSN: 2614-5820
Vol. 16 No. 02 (2025), pp. 275– 302

documentation of complete ritual sequences including Ramadan and Eid celebrations, gradual establishment of rapport with community members, and longitudinal tracking of emergent patterns. The timing proved particularly advantageous as it encompassed Eid al-Fitr 1445 H in April 2024, marking the inaugural celebration in the newly completed mosque and providing critical opportunity to observe negotiations between tradition and innovation. This extended engagement facilitated movement beyond surface impressions toward nuanced understanding of community dynamics.

Participant observation served as the main methodological approach, combining systematic observation with active engagement across everyday village settings. The researcher regularly attended Masjid Nurul Iman for daily prayers, Friday sermons, Eid celebrations, and Quran study circles to closely examine religious practices and discourse. Home visits and shared meals enabled access to domestic religious life and personal reflections, while sustained presence in grocery stores, rubber tapping, and palm oil fields revealed how economic activities shape daily rhythms, social relations, and inter-religious cooperation. Participation in weddings, funerals, and village meetings provided insights into ritual life and collective decision-making processes. Field notes were first recorded as brief jottings and expanded into full narratives within twenty-four hours.

Semi-structured interviews complemented these observations by allowing participants to articulate their own meanings and motivations. Fifteen informants were recruited through purposive and snowball sampling, representing diverse social positions, including local religious leaders, farmers, young women exposed to urban and digital influences, and non-Muslim Chinese business owners. Interviews lasted forty-five to sixty minutes, were conducted in Bangka Malay dialect, audio-recorded with verbal consent, and anonymized using pseudonyms.

Data analysis followed an iterative, inductive approach combining grounded theory principles with thematic analysis procedures. Analysis occurred throughout fieldwork, enabling theoretical sampling and progressive refinement through constant comparative method. Open coding generated four hundred thirty-seven descriptive codes, which were grouped through axial coding into twenty-eight analytical categories, then synthesized through selective coding into three major thematic

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E-ISSN: 2614-5820
Vol. 16 No. 02 (2025), pp. 275– 302

clusters: local tradition under global architecture, negotiated appropriation of niqab, and everyday pluralism amid revivalism. As an Indonesian Muslim researcher, I occupied a partial insider position requiring sustained reflexivity documented through detailed fieldwork journals. Rigor was ensured through prolonged engagement, methodological triangulation, thick description, and reflexive analysis.

C. Results and Discussion

Results

The empirical findings of this study reveal complex negotiations between global Islamic symbols and local religious traditions in Payabenua village, challenging simplistic narratives of cultural displacement or resistance. The following analysis examines three interconnected domains through which these negotiations occur: the persistence and transformation of the *nganggung* communal feasting ritual amid architectural modernization, the selective appropriation of global Islamic dress practices through local religious authority mediation, and the maintenance of inter-religious cooperation despite intensifying Islamic orthodoxy. Each domain illuminates distinctive mechanisms through which rural Muslim communities navigate between inherited traditions and contemporary global Islamic influences, demonstrating agency, creativity, and strategic selectivity rather than passive reception or wholesale rejection.

1. *Nganggung*: Local Tradition Under Global Architecture

Payabenua's 2024 Eid al-Fitr celebration took place amid severe economic hardship that profoundly shaped long standing ritual practices. The collapse of Bangka's tin mining sector, worsened by the massive PT Timah corruption scandal with estimated losses of nearly IDR 300 trillion, had devastated the local economy and sent ripple effects through rural communities. Plantation workers were hit by declining international prices for rubber and palm oil; small traders experienced consumer spending shrink sharply, and remittances from relatives working in cities decreased; all them had cut off an important source of household income. This

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E-ISSN: 2614-5820
Vol. 16 No. 02 (2025), pp. 275– 302

convergence of economic shocks created what residents described as the hardest economic condition they had ever experienced.

The effects of the crisis were immediately visible in Eid preparations across the village. Amang Saleh, a fifty-year-old rubber tapper whose monthly earnings had dropped from approximately IDR 2.5 million to less than IDR 1.5 million, described the contrast vividly. In previous years, Eid meant new clothes for his four children and at least three chickens for the festive meal (Amang Saleh (a), 2024).This year, purchasing new clothes was no longer possible, and his family could afford only one chicken. Still, he stressed that the essentials endured: his children could still enjoy ketupat, and the family could still gather at the mosque for communal prayers and the *nganggung* ritual. Similar stories surface throughout the interviews, revealing a clear hierarchy of priorities, where core religious and communal rituals were carefully maintained even as material abundance gave way to restraint.

Field observations confirmed this pattern in a systematic way. Every household that we visited prepared traditional Eid dishes- *gulai ayam* (chicken curry), *ketupat* (a dish made of rice packed inside a woven pouch of young coconut leaves), and *lepet* (glutinous rice wrapped in coconut leaves)- but in substantially smaller quantities. Families that once cooked four or five chickens now prepared only one or two, often bought on credit from Chinese shopkeepers. Middle-income households that previously offered a wide selection of cakes limited themselves to just one or two varieties. Crucially, however, no household abandoned these foods altogether. Their symbolic value outweighed immediate financial pressures, highlighting food as a key material expression of cultural continuity and religious identity.

The crisis produced what might be called a form of "austere festivity", a celebration deliberately pared down in terms of material abundance, yet carefully preserving core ritual elements seen as non-negotiable. Wak Maryam, a forty-five-year-old housewife, captured this sensibility clearly. Although families could not provide plentiful food, they still arranged their tables neatly and attractively, presenting simple dishes with care and dignity. In this way, Eid remained a time for sharing happiness and reaffirming social ties, rather than merely displaying wealth (Wak Maryam (a), 2024; Wak Maryam (b), 2024).

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E-ISSN: 2614-5820
Vol. 16 No. 02 (2025), pp. 275– 302

Against this backdrop of widespread economic hardship, the completion of Masjid Nurul Iman stood out as a striking contrast. The mosque, whose renovation took seven years and cost nearly IDR 3 billion, represents what could be described as "aspirational architecture", a built form that expresses religious ideals and collective aspirations rather than mirroring current economic conditions. It features prominent Middle Eastern–inspired elements, including a large golden dome roughly eight meters in diameter, twin minarets rising about twenty-five meters at the entrance, intricate arabesque interior decorations, marble floors with imported carpets, and modern audio-visual systems.

The mosque's location along the main roads leading into the village made it instantly recognizable as Payabenua's most important landmark. People from different backgrounds described it in strikingly similar terms, calling it "a symbol of the village's greatness" and "proof that Payabenua is moving forward" despite ongoing economic hardship. In this way, the mosque became a marker of progress that did not rely on conventional economic measures, but instead linked development to religious achievement and collective pride.

It is important to note that the villagers did not see the Middle Eastern architectural style as something foreign. Instead, they associated it with Islamic authenticity. Those who had performed hajj or umrah often compared the new mosque to the grand mosques of Mecca and Medina. Amang Mahmud, a sixty-three-year-old retired civil servant who went on hajj in 2019, explained that pilgrims from Payabenua were deeply impressed by the beauty of mosques in the Holy Land. After returning home, they spoke about bringing a sense of that sacred atmosphere back to their village. For him, the renovated mosque fulfilled that dream. Praying there made him feel spiritually closer to Islam's center, as if the architecture itself shortened the distance between Bangka and Arabia (Amang Mahmud, 2024).

Amang Mahmud's perspective shows how global Islamic architectural styles function in rural Southeast Asia. The Middle Eastern–style mosque acts as a kind of "pilgrimage substitute," enabling villagers who cannot afford the high cost of the hajj to experience a symbolic connection to Mecca. Importantly, the renovation was financed largely through local contributions, including donations from affluent

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E-ISSN: 2614-5820
Vol. 16 No. 02 (2025), pp. 275– 302

villagers and migrants, community-wide fundraising across economic groups, and support from Payabenua natives working in mining. This strong local investment fostered a sense of collective ownership, framing the mosque as a village asset rather than an external influence. By observing the communal ceremonies held within the mosque, we can understand how Middle Eastern–style mosques relate to local spiritual life. Beyond a prayer space, the mosque serves as a social hub where global Islamic forms and local traditions intersect and are continually reinterpreted. Through everyday religious practices, the mosque expresses communal belonging and affirms a distinct Bangka Malay Islamic identity.

One of the most distinctive expressions of Bangka Malay Islam is the *nganggung* ritual, which blends Islamic devotion with local traditions of communal eating. After Eid prayers, each household brings a *dulang* (a large covered tray filled with food) to the mosque. Usually between 120 and 180 trays are lined up neatly across the prayer hall. The guru kampung then lead collective recitations, including the shahada, tasbih, and selected Qur'anic verses. After the prayers, everyone eats together, sampling food from many trays regardless of who brought them. This shared meal dissolves household boundaries and reinforced a strong sense of community solidarity.

The 2024 Eid marked the first time *nganggung* was held in the completed Masjid Nurul Iman, creating a moment where long-standing traditions met a new setting. Observations showed both continuity and change. The basic structure of the ritual remained exactly the same, following the familiar sequence known to villagers. At the same time, the new mosque shaped the experience in subtle ways. Its larger space allowed around 180 trays to be arranged, compared to about 120–130 in earlier years, enabling broader participation. The sensory atmosphere also changed. The familiar smells of traditional food mixed with the scent of new carpets, marble floors, and air conditioning. While visually, Arabic calligraphy on the walls stood alongside trays of Malay dishes.

It is essential to note that the new architecture did not replace or weaken local traditions. Instead, villagers described it as providing "a more beautiful stage" for existing practices. Wak Minah summed up a common feeling: *while people were proud of having such an impressive mosque, what mattered most was that traditional rituals*

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E-ISSN: 2614-5820
Vol. 16 No. 02 (2025), pp. 275– 302

did not disappear. On the contrary, nganggung felt more festive, spiritually powerful, and emotionally meaningful when performed in this beautiful space (Wak Minah (a), 2024; Wak Minah (b), 2024). This statement means, for the community, there was no tension between global Islamic forms and local ritual life. The global architectural "container" enhanced rather than threatened local traditions, allowing them to continue in a renewed yet familiar form.

2. Negotiated Appropriation of Niqab

The appearance of the niqab among young women in Payabenua sheds light on how potentially sensitive global Islamic symbols are negotiated, made acceptable, and gradually domesticated within a traditional rural Muslim community through the mediating role of local religious leaders. The practice first became publicly noticeable during the 2024 Eid al-Fitr prayers at Masjid Nurul Iman, when four young women attended wearing the niqab, a clear break from the dress norms that had remained largely unchanged in the village for decades.

Their performance attracted varied reactions among the roughly four hundred worshippers (*jamaah sholat*). Elderly women and middle-aged men expressed visible surprise, often expressed in brief staring followed by quick gaze aversion to maintain respectful behaviour. While younger people, particularly those familiar with different Islamic practices through social media or urban lifestyle, were more curious than concerned. Importantly, no one confronted or openly criticized the four women. This quiet acceptance, even among those who may have felt unsure, reflects strong local norms of respecting individual religious choices, as long as they are not seen as clearly contradicting established teachings.

This relatively peaceful acceptance contrasts sharply with other parts of Indonesia, where the adoption of niqab has sparked open conflict, bans, or intense public debate. Therefore, to understand why Payabenua responded differently, it is important to look at how local religious authorities framed the practice. The village's religious life revolves around three recognized *guru kampung*, whose authority permeates daily ritual, legal matters, and religious education. Their legitimacy derives from their deep knowledge of *kitab kuning* especially on Shafi'i jurisprudence, their

Url Publication : https://rumahjurnal.iainsasbabel.ac.id/maw/article/view/6038

E-ISSN: 2614-5820
Vol. 16 No. 02 (2025), pp. 275– 302

scholarly lineages linking them to earlier scholars; and locally recognized piety cultivated over decades.

Interviews with these figures identified a remarkably consistent way of interpreting the niqab: they justified it through established Islamic legal precedent rather than promoting it as a normative or obligatory practice. Guru Muallim, a 32-year-old teacher educated at a *pesantren* in Java, explained that covering the face has a recognized basis in authoritative Shafi'i texts. Although he acknowledged that it represents a minority view, he emphasized that opinions held by qualified scholars remain valid and may legitimately be followed. Because the practice rests on clear *fiqh* foundations, he argued, religious authorities have no grounds to prohibit women who adopt it based on knowledge and personal conviction (Guru Muallim, 2024; Guru Muallim (b), 2024; Guru Muallim (c), 2024).

Guru Bujang, aged 41, echoed this position while placing greater emphasis on preserving local tradition. He argued that face covering is neither alien to Islam nor to the Shafi'i school long practiced by Bangka Malays. For generations, he noted, this school has acknowledged the obligation of niqab in certain contexts. From this perspective, therefore, the niqab should not be dismissed as an imported ideology but must be understood as part of the community's own intellectual and religious teaching (Guru Bujang (a), 2024; Guru Bujang (b), 2024; Guru Bujang (c), 2024).

In general, these statements perform several layers of discursive work. By grounding the niqab in Shafi'i jurisprudence rather than linking it with contemporary Salafi or Wahhabi movements, the guru kampung reframed it as a legitimate internal option rather than a foreign cultural intrusion. This strategy preserved their interpretive authority, since the validity of the practice was presented as deriving from *kitab kuning* scholarship accessible only to trained scholars. At the same time, by defining the niqab as "permissible but not obligatory," they created space for diversity in practice without demanding community-wide conformity.

Interviews with the four young women who adopted niqab revealed diverse motivations they had which show how global Islamic practices move through multiple overlapping pathways. Nur, a seventeen-year-old *pesantren* student in Java, emphasized personal choice and engagement with religious texts. Her reading of

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E-ISSN: 2614-5820
Vol. 16 No. 02 (2025), pp. 275– 302

religious texts written by some *fiqh* scholars had led her to believe that face covering as obligatory, and she also found that the practice brought her a sense of spiritual calm (Nur, 2024). While Ani, Ani, twenty-one and a university student, linked the niqab to contemporary ideas about practising Islam in a more comprehensive way (*kaffah*), ideas she encountered through campus study groups (Ani, 2024). Siti, nineteen and working in her family's shop, first tried niqab out of curiosity after seeing it on Instagram. Over time, she felt it helped her focus more on religious duties rather than physical appearance (Siti, 2024). Fitri, twenty and employed at a Chinese-owned business, described how her mother's initial worried eased after Guru Muallim offered reassurance, highlighting how guru kampung play an important role in easing family tensions around the practice (Fitri, 2024).

The stories described above, show that niqab adoption grows out of some factors: personal engagement with religious texts, peer influence, exposure to digital media, and developing forms of personal spirituality. At the same time, wider community attitudes remained ambivalent. Some villagers, such as Wak Menah, a fifty-one-year-old housewife, accepted the practice but worries that wearing the niqab might lead young women to "withdraw' socially. Yet these concerns did not lead to exclusion. All four wearers continued participating in community events, celebrations, and daily economic activities.

It is important to note that none of the villagers interviewed attributed the niqab to Wahhabi or Salafi influence, an explanation often found in wider Indonesian discourse. When asked directly about possible Middle Eastern influence, respondents consistently pointed to its legitimacy within Shafi'i jurisprudence. This indicates that the *guru kampung* successfully "domesticated" the *niqab*, transforming what might have been seen as an external ideological import into a locally validated religious choice. Their role as mediators thus becomes crucial in determining whether global Islamic symbols become sources of tension or were smoothly integrated into components of local religious life.

3. Everyday Pluralism: Inter-Religious Coexistence

Url Publication : https://rumahjurnal.iainsasbabel.ac.id/maw/article/view/6038

E-ISSN: 2614-5820
Vol. 16 No. 02 (2025), pp. 275– 302

Based on the observation, this study also finds that the situation in Payabenua shows that stronger expressions of Islamic identity do not automatically lead to social exclusion or hostility toward religious minorities. Even as global Islamic symbols and practices have become more visible such as Middle Eastern–style mosque architecture and the growing use of conservative dress like the niqab, the village has maintained peaceful and cooperative relations with a small but economically important Chinese Christian minority. To understand how this pluralism works, we need to look at how religious differences are handled in everyday life, how economic interdependence encourages cooperation, and how local religious leaders actively legitimize inclusive attitudes.

Among these factors, everyday economic life emerges as the most tangible arena in which interreligious relations are negotiated and sustained. It is within routine economic interactions that principles of cooperation, trust, and mutual dependence become most visible. In the village, there are Chinese-owned businesses that play a central role in village life and create daily patterns of cooperation that cross religious boundaries. Two businesses are especially influential: Fingki's building supply store and Afen's palm oil enterprise. Both are owned by Chinese residents whose main homes are in Pangkalpinang, yet whose businesses are deeply embedded in Payabenua's economic and social networks.

Fingki's building supply store, located near the *pesantren* at the edge of the village, provides essential materials for house construction and renovation. Because traveling to the district capital is costly and time-consuming, the store functions as a near monopoly for these goods. From the observations over several weeks showed Muslim customers visiting daily, not just to shop but to chat at length. Conversations were relaxed and friendly by which people joked, exchanged local gossip, teased each other about family matters, and talked about wider economic or political issues. These interactions indicated that the relationships built over many years, going far beyond simple buying and selling.

In everyday economic exchanges, religious difference never emerged as an issue. Muslim customers freely shopped at non-Muslim stores without questioning their religious validity, treating them as trusted parts of village life. This absence of religious

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E-ISSN: 2614-5820
Vol. 16 No. 02 (2025), pp. 275– 302

framing contrasts sharply with contexts where commerce is strongly shaped by religious identity. Economic cooperation becomes even clearer through employment relations. Afen's palm oil plantation business, for instance, illustrates deep interdependence between Muslim villagers and Chinese Christian entrepreneurs. Afen employs around fifteen Muslim workers in fieldwork, processing, transport, and administration. While he depends on their skills, local knowledge, and reliability, the workers rely on his capital, market access, and stable income in a setting with limited job opportunities. This mutual dependence fosters cooperation and conflict avoidance. As a minority business owner, Afen reported strong community acceptance, noting that social relations in Payabenua are shaped more by fairness and respect than by religion or ethnicity (Afen (a), 2024; Afen (b), 2024; Afen (c), 2024). Fingki expressed a similar view, noting that religion had never been used as a barrier in business relations (Fingki (a), 2024; Fingki (b), 2024; Fingki (c), 2024).

Beyond the economy, pluralism in Payabenua appears through mutual support during religious celebrations. People of different faiths exchange visits, greetings, and food during Imlek and Eid while respecting clear ritual boundaries. This everyday interaction reflects "cooperative pluralism," marked by solidarity and respect without blending religious beliefs. During *Imlek* (Chinese New Year), Muslim villagers visit Afen's and Fingki's homes to exchange greetings and share food, while avoiding religious rituals. These gestures are reciprocated during Eid, when Chinese business owners visit the villagers to convey their greetings.

A particularly meaningful moment occurred during the 2024 Eid celebration. At that time, several Chinese business owners donated chickens for the *nganggung* practices. At the time of serious economic hardship, this was a significant contribution. Although the donors did not join religious rituals or eat together with Muslims, their contribution helped ensure that an important Islamic tradition could still take place. As Amang Bujol explained, they often also help with preparations when they are in the village, showing respect without crossing religious boundaries.(Amang Bujol, 2024).

Such acts of practical support are not only socially accepted but also morally reinforced by local religious leaders (*guru kampung*). *Guru Kampung* play a significant role in sustaining this pluralism. They provide Islamic justification for inclusive

Url Publication : https://rumahjurnal.iainsasbabel.ac.id/maw/article/view/6038

E-ISSN: 2614-5820
Vol. 16 No. 02 (2025), pp. 275– 302

practices, preventing stricter religious expressions from turning into social exclusion. Guru Nizam explained this clearly by referring to Islam as *rahmatan lil alamin*—a mercy for all creation. From this perspective, diversity is not a threat but an opportunity to strengthen *silaturahmi* (bonds of mutual care and fellowship). By framing cooperation across religious lines as an Islamic value, not just a practical necessity, religious leaders give pluralism strong moral and theological grounding (Guru Nizam (a), 2024; Guru Nizam (b), 2024; Guru Nizam (c), 2024; Guru Nizam (d), 2024)

This everyday pluralism proved especially resilient during the severe economic crisis that followed the collapse of the tin industry. Even in difficult time, no anti-Chinese sentiment appeared in Payabenua. As Amang Saleh put it, *everyone—Malay, Javanese, Chinese, Muslim, Christian—is facing the same struggles. They are senasib, sharing the same fate, so blaming one another makes no sense*. (Amang Saleh (a), 2024; Amang Saleh (b), 2024; Amang Saleh (c), 2024).This resilience suggests that pluralism rooted in daily cooperation, economic interdependence, and religiously endorsed mutual respect can be more durable than abstract ideas of multiculturalism alone.

Discussion

The evidence from Payabenua demonstrates that local Islamic practices both support and complicate the three theoretical frameworks used in this study. Concepts such as cultural hybridity, multiple modernities, and everyday pluralism help explain how rural Muslims engage with global Islamic influences, but they do not fully capture local dynamics. In Payabenua, global–local interactions are shaped by specific mechanisms, mediating institutions, and power relations often overlooked in theory. Traditional religious leaders play a central role in legitimizing cultural blending, hybrid practices develop differently in rural contexts, and pluralistic relations remain strong despite the presence of potentially exclusivist symbols. These findings suggest the need to refine and extend existing theoretical approaches.

Url Publication : https://rumahjurnal.iainsasbabel.ac.id/maw/article/view/6038

E-ISSN: 2614-5820
Vol. 16 No. 02 (2025), pp. 275– 302

1. *Extending Cultural Hybridity Theory*

This study extends Bhabha's idea of hybridity in three significant aspects, showing both its limits and its use beyond the contexts, he originally focused on. Bhabha (Bhabha, 1994)formulated the concept mainly from colonial and postcolonial urban contexts, characterised by pronounced cultural differences and direct interactions. The case of Payabenua elaborated in this study shows that hybridity can manifest in relatively homogeneous rural settings, rather than only in urban, a context that typically dominates hybridity discourse. In rural society, however, hybridity works differently. In Payabenua, for instance, cultural encounters are predominantly indirect and mediated: returning hajj pilgrims bring home architectural styles and religious goods, digital media circulates global Islamic images and ideas, and buildings themselves materialize distant religious traditions. As a result, hybridity develops gradually through ongoing negotiation and reinterpretation, rather than by instantaneous cultural mixing. These phenomena suggest that theories of hybridity need to pay more attention to mediation and the temporal dimension of cultural change.

The findings also introduce the idea of "authorized hybridity," which contrasts with Bhabha's emphasis on mimicry as a subtle form of resistance to power. In Payabenua, hybridity does not emerge through subversion but is actively shaped by traditional religious authorities, the guru kampung. These figures evaluate global Islamic symbols such as the niqab, using classical Islamic scholarship, particularly Shafi'i jurisprudence and the *kitab kuning* tradition. By selectively accepting some practices while rejecting others, they confer religious legitimacy on particular hybrid expressions. Far from weakening their authority, this selective process actually strengthens it, as the *guru kampung* act as gatekeepers who interpret and manage global influences. Here, hybridity gains acceptance not through ambiguity or resistance, but through clear endorsement by established religious authority, challenging the idea that hybridity must always undermine power.

Finally, while power imbalances within global Islamic networks remain significant especially considering the influence of Saudi-funded educational and media institutions (Eliraz, 2004), the adoption of Middle Eastern symbols in Payabenua

Url Publication : https://rumahjurnal.iainsasbabel.ac.id/maw/article/view/6038

E-ISSN: 2614-5820
Vol. 16 No. 02 (2025), pp. 275– 302

should not be seen as simple imitation or passive absorption. In the context of Payabenua, the villagers actively adapt these symbols to local realities: adjusting clothing styles to the tropical climate, blending Middle Eastern Mosque architectural designs with local building traditions, and combining Arabic ornamentation with indigenous ritual aesthetics. This reflects what Appadurai calls grassroots globalization, where global forms are creatively reshaped through local agency. In Payabenua, such hybridity emerges through ongoing negotiation among transnational media influences, returning pilgrims, and local religious authorities, producing practices that are simultaneously mediated by global Islamic discourse, authorized by local religious leaders, and deeply rooted in the specificities of local life.

2. Multiple Modernities Through Tradition

Payabenua's experience demonstrates that Islamic societies can pursue modernity without discarding tradition, instead revitalizing and selectively reinterpreting it. This experience aligns with Eisenstadt's argument that modernization takes diverse, culturally embedded forms (Eisenstadt, 2003; S.N. Eisenstadt, 2000). It challenges the old assumption that becoming modern means following a single Western, secular path. In Payabenua, for instance, engagement with technology, institutional change, and global Islamic networks coexists with and is strengthened by traditional scholars (*guru kampung*), communal rituals (*nganggung*), and continued use of classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*) as the foundation of religious knowledge.

Contrary to classical theories that treat religion and modern development as inherently incompatible, the case of Payabenua shows a form of religious modernization has been rooted in ethical continuity and local institutions. Here, change does not occur through the abandonment of tradition, but through its reinterpretation. Central to this process are the guru kampung, who function as moral interpreters. They guide villagers in engaging with new technologies, educational reforms, and transnational Islamic aesthetics, while ensuring these innovations remain consistent with Shāfiʿī jurisprudence. This pattern closely reflects what Saat describes as a negotiated Islamic modernity in Southeast Asia, where Muslim societies selectively

Url Publication : https://rumahjurnal.iainsasbabel.ac.id/maw/article/view/6038

E-ISSN: 2614-5820
Vol. 16 No. 02 (2025), pp. 275– 302

adopt Middle Eastern religious influences while grounding them in local moral, cultural, and institutional contexts (Saat et al., 2023).

In Payabenua context, the people's approach to modernity involves careful selection and creative adaptation. Rather than adopting global Islamic symbols wholesale, villagers evaluate, modify, and reinterpret them according to local values. Middle Eastern–style mosque architecture demonstrates connection to the broader Islamic world, yet traditional Malay practices that integrate religious and home spaces remain intact. Women's clothing choices follow a similar pattern: while some wear the niqab, most favor the jilbab as better suited to local context, a decision reflecting personal agency rather than simple imitation. This selective approach is particularly evident in economic decisions. Constructing a mosque during financially difficult times reveals an underlying moral economy where religious donations are understood as spiritual investment. Villagers believe these contributions generate *barakah* (divine blessings) that can support both material wellbeing and social harmony which challenges conventional development models focused solely on economic rationality.

3. Everyday Pluralism's Mechanisms and Limits

The enduring interreligious harmony in Payabenua illustrates that everyday pluralism operates through routine cooperation based on religious teachings. Drawing on Wise and Velayutham's concept of everyday multiculturalism, pluralism here emerges from practical interdependence in economic, agricultural, and communal life. Partnerships between Chinese merchants and Muslim farmers, combined with joint participation in neighborhood groups and *nganggung* tradition, have built familiarity and trust that transcend doctrinal differences. These repeated interactions make tolerance part of daily life that turn to coexistence from an ideal into a habitual moral practice.

A key element sustaining this pluralism is the mediating role of *guru kampung*. By providinng the Qur'anic principles of justice and compassion as practical guidance for engaging with non-Muslims as well as framing Islam's universal mission as *rahmatan lil alamin*, these leaders endorse cooperation with others while discouraging exclusivist behavior. This reflects Feener's notion of vernacular pluralism arguing that

Url Publication : https://rumahjurnal.iainsasbabel.ac.id/maw/article/view/6038

E-ISSN: 2614-5820
Vol. 16 No. 02 (2025), pp. 275– 302

tolerance can emerges organically within Islamic interpretive traditions. Religious authority in Payabenua does not undermine cohabitation, rather, they actively strengthen pluralism through moral and theological legitimation.

4. Integrated Framework: Negotiated Religious Modernity

The case of Payabenua illustrated a multifaceted negotiation of religious modernity that resists simple binaries. Following Eisenstadt's multiple modernities thesis, the community shows that modernization does not require adopting Western secular trajectories. This is evident from the way how traditional authorities play a central role in mediating global Islamic symbols, selectively integrating them in ways compatible with local practices. Unlike Bhabha's concept of cultural hybridity, hybridity in rural Payabenua is actively facilitated by the guru kampung, who act as interpreters and gatekeepers of global influences. At the same time, everyday pluralism, as described by Wise and Velayutham, is maintained through practical interdependence based on inclusive religious teachings.

These dynamics reflect a "glocalized" model in which global and local forces shape each other. Tradition-based modernity produces hybrid forms that enable contemporary Islamic practice while sustaining pluralist social relations. The Payabenua's experience shows that Islamic revival, modernity, and pluralism can coexist through negotiated synthesis rather than zero-sum trade-offs, which is highlighting the creative potential of locally rooted modernization processes.

Tabel 1.
Conceptual Model*: Negotiating Islamic Modernity in Payabenua*

Analytical Dimension	Core Description	Underlying Theory	Empirical Example in Payabenua	Integrative Concept (*Glocal Model*)
Islamic Modernity (Multiple Modernities)	Modernization does not need to follow Western secular paths. Communities construct their own forms of Islamic modernity.	S. N. Eisenstadt (*Multiple Modernities)*	Adoption of global Islamic symbols such as Middle Eastern–style mosque architecture and contemporary modest dress.	*Tradition-based Modernity* (modernity grounded in inherited religious tradition).

Url Publication : https://rumahjurnal.iainsasbabel.ac.id/maw/article/view/6038

E-ISSN: 2614-5820
Vol. 16 No. 02 (2025), pp. 275– 302

Mediation of Tradition (Cultural Hybridity)	Local tradition mediates global influences. *Guru Kampung* as religious authorities selectively interpret global Islamic flows through classical scholarship.	Homi Bhabha (*Cultural Hybridity)*	*Guru kampung* act as interpretive gatekeepers, evaluating innovations through *Shafi'i fiqh* and *kitab kuning* learning.	*Authorized Hybrid Forms* (religiously legitimate hybridizations of global and local Islam).
Everyday Pluralism (Social Cohesion)	Inter-religious harmony is sustained through daily cooperation and interdependence based on inclusive religious teachings.	Wise & Velayutham (*Everyday Multiculturalism)*	Communal *ngan ggung* feasts and neighborhood cooperation across religious boundaries.	*Pluralist Islamic Revival* (deepening piety coexists with inter-religious solidarity.

As illustrated in the table, the conceptual model reveals three interrelated analytical dimensions operating simultaneously in Payabenua's religious transformation. The first dimension addresses Islamic modernity, rooted in Eisenstadt's multiple modernities framework, wherein the community's adoption of global Islamic symbols such as Middle Eastern-style mosque architecture and contemporary modest dress exemplifies modernization paths that diverge from Western secular models, producing what can be termed tradition-based modernity. The second dimension concerns the mediation of tradition through cultural hybridity, drawing on Bhabha's theoretical insights to explain how guru kampung function as interpretive gatekeepers who evaluate global innovations through Shafi'i *fiqh* and *kitab kuning* scholarship, thereby producing authorized hybrid forms that carry religious legitimacy. The third dimension examines everyday pluralism, informed by Wise and Velayutham's work on everyday multiculturalism, wherein practices such as communal *nganggung* feasts and neighborhood cooperation across religious boundaries sustain what can be characterized as pluralist Islamic revival, the coexistence of deepening piety with inter-religious solidarity. In general, these three analytical dimensions can be seen in the following table.

Url Publication : https://rumahjurnal.iainsasbabel.ac.id/maw/article/view/6038

E-ISSN: 2614-5820
Vol. 16 No. 02 (2025), pp. 275– 302

Table 2.
Overall Synthesis Pattern

Conventional Binary	Payabenua's Negotiated Synthesis
Globalization ↔ Localization	*Glocalization*: global and local mutually constitute one another.
Modernity ↔ Tradition	*Tradition-based Modernity:* inherited traditions serve as the foundation for modern development.
Islamic Revival ↔ Pluralism	*Pluralist Islamic Revival:* renewed Islamic commitment alongside inter-religious cooperation.

The data of Table 2 suggest that the transformation in Muslim religious practices in Payabenua Village cannot be adequately explained through conventional binary frameworks of religion versus modernity. Instead, the processes often framed as contradictory-globalization and localization, tradition and modernity, Islamic revival and pluralism-are actually interacting synergistically which is producing a negotiated model of glocal Islamic modernity.

D. Conclusion

This ethnographic study of Payabenua village demonstrates that rural Muslim communities are not passive recipients of global religious influences, but active negotiators of Islamic identity. Over nine months of fieldwork, this study identifies three key dynamics that challenge common ideas about Islamic revival and social cohesion. First, the adoption of Middle Eastern Mosque architecture enhances rather than replaces local communal feasting traditions (*nganggung*), by which it provides "a more beautiful stage" for revitalized rituals. Second, the contribution of *guru kampung* in mediating and integrating global Islamic practices with local Shafi'i legal frameworks make symbols like the niqab more acceptable. Consequently, it creates an "authorized hybridity," where innovations gain legitimacy through traditional authorities. Third, everyday practices such as economic ties and community cooperation, sustain

Url Publication : https://rumahjurnal.iainsasbabel.ac.id/maw/article/view/6038

E-ISSN: 2614-5820
Vol. 16 No. 02 (2025), pp. 275– 302

diversity through practice based on religious teachings provided by guru kampung as guardian of local tradition.

Theoretically, the study expands Bhabha's concept of hybridity into rural contexts and enriches the multiple modernities framework by showing a tradition-based pathway. It also contributes to pluralism studies by demonstrating how religious authority actively supports practice-based tolerance. Practically, it encourages moderate religious education, minimal state interference to foster local cooperation, and interfaith programs led by community leaders.

This study has several limitations that include the study's single-site design, a nine-month snapshot of ongoing processes, limited focus on gender based dress and non-Muslim perspectives. Future research should include comparative village studies, digital ethnography, women's agency, and political anthropology. Overall, the Payabenua case shows that rural Muslim societies can sustain Islamic orthodoxy, pluralism, and local traditions simultaneously, creating hybrid modernities that are global and local, traditional and modern, revivalist and inclusive.

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