

**The Qur'an and the Saminist Religious Tradition in
Indonesia's Post-*Reformasi*: Negotiation and
Appropriation**



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DISSERTATION

“Submitted as a partial fulfilment of the requirements to
obtain a doctoral degree in Studi Islam”

**The School of Graduate Studies
State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga
Yogyakarta
2026**

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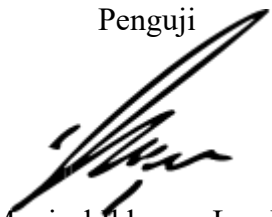
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Subkhani Kusuma Dewi, M.A., Ph.D

TRANSLITERATION GUIDELINE

This work contains many non-English words in languages such as Indonesian, Javanese, Dutch, and Arabic. I write non-English words in italics except for conceptual words. Short explanations of non-English words are written inside square brackets [] and in footnotes for longer and more detailed explanations. To write Arabic words, I use the transliteration system of the Library of Congress and the International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, with slight variations.

Arabic	Transliteration	Arabic	Transliteration
ا	A	ط	ṭ
ب	B	ظ	ẓ
ت	T	ع	‘
ث	Th	غ	Gh
ج	J	ف	F
ح	ḥ	ق	Q
خ	Kh	ك	K
د	D	ل	L
ذ	Dh	م	M
ر	R	ن	N
ز	Z	و	W
س	S	ه	H
ش	Sh	ء	‘
ص	ṣ	ي	Y

ض	ḍ		
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Further, for the long vowel (*madd*), an additional macron is inserted, such as ā, ī, ū in *qāla* (قال), *qīla* (قيل) and *yaqūlu* (يقول). The diphthong is transliterated by combining two letters, such as “ay” and “aw”, such as *kawn* (كون) and *kayfa* (كيف). The ta *marbuta* (ة) is omitted and transliterated as “h” in isolation, such as *ṭawīlah* or pause, such as *al-ummah al-‘āmmāh*. When it occurs within an *idāfah* (genitive construct) it is written “t”, such as *warāsat al-Anbiya’*, or *sidrat al-muntaha*, Arabic, Javanese that indicated certain events, name of institution and person, or those word that has been absorbed in Indonesia may be written in Indonesianized form such as “*syawal*” instead of “*shawal*”, or “*Ramadan*” instead of “*Ramadhān*”. So does, some term such as “*hadis*”, instead of “*ḥadīth*”, or “*tafsir*” instead of “*Tafsīr*”. Yet for some purposes, the original transliteration such as “*ḥadīth*” also use accordingly.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an ethnographic account of the Saminist Muslims in Southern Rembang and Blora. The purpose of this thesis is to describe and analyze the role and significance of the Qur'an in the contemporary religious tradition of Saminist, especially in the post-*reformasi* period in Indonesia. I investigate how and under what conditions Saminists reconstruct and negotiate their religious tradition, both individually and collectively, in their public and everyday lives. By focusing on the negotiation and appropriation of the Qur'an in their everyday lives, this thesis examines its role in reconstructing their religiosity and identity. This is significant because Saminists have been categorized as a *kebathinan* group or an *adat* community bound to their religious group. Since the beginning, the *Adat* community had established the "religion" known as "Agama Adam". The term is rooted in the Qur'anic narrative of the first human on earth. Historically, the followers of Saminism opposed the formal form of Islam while accepting its mystical dimension, creating a syncretic religious tradition that incorporated some verses of the Qur'an and Javanese prayer (*du'a*).

This religious tradition was unrecognized due to the politics of religion in Indonesia. To the present day, it has been objectified and treated as a locus for the state to exercise its power. It has become an object of the developmentalism project and of modernization through industrialization, religious education, and Qur'anisation. The promoted tradition is transmitted through popular culture, the media, religious agents, and the political elite who support it. Furthermore, contemporary Saminists also experience the ambiguity of Islamic cosmopolitanism, which promotes new Islamic practices based on the Qur'anic tradition while neglecting the religious diversity of Islam itself.

Employing Reinhart's idea of Colloquial Islam to describe lived Islam in everyday life and Asad's concepts of discursive tradition, this research highlights several points: *first*, the reception of the Qur'an in the religious practices of Saminism is typically mystical, mixing the Qur'an with their Javanese *du'a*. The condition had changed slightly, especially in the post-*reformasi* period, when local

political decisions and religious agents influenced Saminist religious customs. *Second*, as Saminists began to accept Islam in the formal sense, they also cultivated religious values and ties, a closer relationship with the distinct Qur'anic tradition. The relationship is expressed in their behavior and linguistic expressions that signify the worldview and religious orthopraxy among the lay Muslims. The cultivation mediated by a religious agent is not only accepted but also negotiated and appropriated. For the contemporary tradition was influenced by social relations, this research called it “Qur'anic-*stelsel*,” which mirrors the history of their uprising during the period of Dutch culture-*stelsel*. Third, as historically rooted, the presence of the Qur'an in the Saminist religious tradition was conceived as integral to their religious and cultural identity. Only, the relation was limited through their oral accent and dialect. A process that is linguistically called a derivative, for it derives the standard version into the local version. Hence, this research introduced “derivative religiosity,” which mirrored the linguistic process of accepting and producing a new word.

This narrative then challenges the essentialist idea of seeing religious identity as fixed, historically rooted, and territorially bounded. The distinction between *santri-abangan* and orthodox-heterodox was blurred and complex in post-reformasi Indonesia. This thesis then argues that religious identity and pious expression are products of historical narrative; they are derivative, customized, fluid, and evolving over time. Further, despite Saminists being a minority and in small numbers, studying their religious tradition is significant to comprehend the “Qur'anic tradition” in the religious life of the *adat* community in present-day Indonesia. Meaning, despite their acceptance of Islam and incursion of modernity, the Saminist community persists, transforms, and changes their religious and cultural practices. It is also contributing to understanding the nature of multivocal religious practices, creole, and the colloquial aspect of religiosity in the Islamic community that are constantly appropriated as Muslim (“*muallafāt al ummah*”).

Keyword: Samin, the Qur'an, the *adat* community, lay Muslim, Negotiated Religiosity-Identity,

The Qur'an and the Saminist Religious Tradition in Indonesia's Post-Reformasi: Negotiation and Appropriation

ملخص

هذا البحث دراسة ميدانية (إثنوغرافية) أُجريت على جماعة سامين المستوطنين في الجهة الجنوبية من منطقتي رُمْبُغْ وبُورا في إندونيسيا. ويهدف هذا البحث إلى بيان دور القرآن الكريم ومكانته في التقاليد الدينية لدى هذه الجماعة في العصر الحاضر، ولا سيما في المرحلة التي أعقبت الإصلاحات السياسية والاجتماعية في إندونيسيا. (Post-reformasi) ويدرس هذا البحث الكيفية التي يُعيد فيها قوم سامين بناء تقاليدهم الدينية وصياغتها من جديد، سواء أكان على المستوى الفردي أم الجماعي، في المجال العام وفي حياتهم اليومية. ومن خلال التركيز على مسار التفاعل مع القرآن الكريم وتوظيفه في ممارساتهم الحياتية اليومية، يثير هذا البحث جملة من التساؤلات حول الكيفية التي يُستخدم بها القرآن الكريم في بناء التدين وتشكيل الثقافة للمجتمع المحلي. وتكتسب هذه الدراسة أهميتها من كون جماعة سامين كثيرًا ما تُصور بوصفها جماعة من أهل الباطنية أو مجتمعًا عرقيًا غير قائم على الثقافة الكتابية، يرتبط ارتباطًا وثيقًا بموروثها الديني وتقاليدها الموروثة. ومنذ نشأتها، عرفت هذه الجماعة باعتناق ما يُسمى بـ«دين آدم»، وهو مصطلح يستند إلى القصة القرآنية المتعلقة بآدم عليه السلام بوصفه أول البشر على وجه الأرض. ومن الناحية التاريخية، أبدى أتباع سامين موقفًا رافضًا للمظاهر الرسمية للإسلام، مع تقبُّلهم لبعض أبعاده الروحية والصوفية، مما أفضى إلى نشوء تقليد ديني تركيبي يجمع بين بعض الآيات القرآنية والتعاليم الجاوية في أدعيتهم وممارساتهم التعبدية. غير أن سامين، في مسيرتها التاريخية، وُصفت بأنها مذهب منحرف، بل عُدت ديانة مستقلة منفصلة عن الأديان الأخرى. ومن الناحية السياسية والقانونية، لا تُعَدُّ من الأديان المعترف بها رسميًا من قبل الدولة. ومنذ نشأتها، كانت جماعة سامين موضعًا لسياسات الدولة وتدخلاتها المستمرة، حيث عملت الدولة على تنظيم شؤونها الاجتماعية والدينية وإعادة توجيهها بما يتوافق مع مشروعات التنمية والتحديث، وذلك عبر التصنيع والسياسات الدينية ومؤسسات التعليم الديني. وعلاوة على ذلك، تُظهر هذه الدراسة مفارقة الزعة الإسلامية العالمية التي تُعزز ممارسات دينية جديدة قائمة على التقاليد القرآنية. وتنتقل هذه التقاليد عبر الثقافة الشعبية ووسائل الإعلام والقاعين الدينيين والنخب السياسية المؤيدة لها. غير أن اتساع نطاق هذه الزعة، مع ما تحمله من انتشار للممارسات المستندة إلى القرآن الكريم، قد أسهم في الوقت نفسه في تهميش بعض أوجه التنوع الديني داخل المجتمعات الإسلامية وإغفال تعدد تجاربها الدينية. واستنادًا إلى مفهوم رينهارت (Reinhart) للدين اليومي ومفهوم أسد (Asad) للتقليد الخطائي، تُظهر هذه الدراسة أن تعامل جماعة سامين مع القرآن الكريم في ممارساتها الدينية يتسم بطابع روحي، إذ يجمعون بين الآيات القرآنية والأدعية الجاوية في أدعيتهم. ويُعَدُّ هذا من الممارسات التي تُظهر حالة من الغفوض والتداخل في ثقافتهم الدينية. غير أنه في مرحلة ما بعد الإصلاحات، ومع تزايد تأثير السياسات المحلية والفاعلين الدينيين في العادات الدينية لدى جماعة سامين، أصبح هذا النمط من التلقي أكثر رسميةً واقترابًا من الممارسات الإسلامية السائدة. ثلثيًا، عندما بدأ أتباع السامينية في قبول الإسلام بصورة رسمية، أخذوا كذلك في تنمية القيم الدينية وتعزيز صلتهم بالقرآن الكريم. وقد تجلّت هذه الصلة في سلوكياتهم وتعبيراتهم اللغوية التي تعكس رؤيتهم للعالم وممارساتهم الدينية في حياتهم اليومية بوصفهم من عامة المسلمين. وهذا

التطور الذي قام به الفاعلون الدينيون لم يلقَ القبول مباشرة، بل تخلفه نقاش وتفاوض. ولما كانت التقاليد الدينية الجديدة قد تأثرت بالعلاقات الاجتماعية، يشبه الباحث عليها بنظام كولتور ستسل (*Cultuur-stelsel*) الذي عُرف في زمن الاستعمار الهولندي. ثالثاً، كان حضور القرآن الكريم في التقاليد الدينية لدى جماعة سامين، من الناحية التاريخية، جزءاً من هويتهم الدينية والثقافية. غير أن صلتهم بالقرآن الكريم كانت تقتصر على طريقة نطقهم ولهجتهم المحلية. ويُعرف هذا في علم اللغة بالاشتقاق، لأنه انتقل من الصيغة الأصلية إلى الصيغة المحلية. ولذلك، يُقدّم هذا البحث مفهوم «التدين الاشتقاقي»؛ للدلالة على الكيفية التي يتلقى بها المجتمع الألفاظ الدينية ويُنتج منها صيغاً جديدة تناسب بيئته. وتتحدى هذه الدراسة النظرة التي ترى أن الهوية الدينية ثابتة، بل تدل على أنها تتغير بتغير الظروف. ولذلك، أصبح التمييز بين السنترى والأبنغن (*santri and abangan*)، أو بين الأرثوذكسية وغير الأرثوذكسية، غير واضح. وتخلص هذه الرسالة إلى أن الهوية الدينية ومظاهر التدين هما نتاج مسار تاريخي اشتقاقي، يتكيف مع الظروف، ويتسم بالمرونة، ويستمر في التطور مع مرور الزمن. وعلاوة على ذلك، على الرغم من أن جماعة سامين تُعد من الأقليات قليلة العدد، فإن دراسة تقاليدهم الدينية تُسهم في فهم التقاليد القرآنية في الحياة الدينية للمجتمعات العرفية في إندونيسيا المعاصرة. ويظهر ذلك أنهم، مع اعتناقهم الإسلام وتأثرهم بعملية التحديث، لا يزالون يحافظون على تقاليدهم الدينية، وإن طرأت عليها بعض التغييرات. كما تُسهم هذه الدراسة في فهم الممارسات الدينية لدى المسلمين، وبيان تنوعها وارتباطها بالحياة اليومية، في ظل مجتمع إسلامي يشهد تغيراً مستمراً في فهم الدين وممارسته.

الكلمات المفتاحية: سامين، القرآن الكريم، المجتمع العرفي، عامة المسلمين، التفاوض بين التدين والهوية .

The Qur'an and the Saminist Religious Tradition in Indonesia's Post-Reformasi: Negotiation and Appropriation

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini adalah penelitian etnografis untuk Masyarakat Samin di Selatan Rembang dan Blora. Tujuan dari thesis ini adalah membahas dan menganalisis peran serta signifikansi Al-Qur'an dalam tradisi keagamaan komunitas Samin saat ini, khususnya pada periode pasca-reformasi di Indonesia. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana dan dalam kondisi apa kaum Samin merekonstruksi dan merundingkan tradisi keagamaan mereka, baik secara individual maupun kolektif, dalam ruang publik dan kehidupan sehari-hari mereka. Dengan memfokuskan perhatian pada proses negosiasi dan pengapropriasian Al-Qur'an dalam kehidupan keseharian mereka, tesis ini mengajukan pertanyaan-pertanyaan mengenai bagaimana Al-Qur'an digunakan sebagai cara untuk mengkonstruksi religiositas serta Identitas Masyarakat *adat*. Kajian ini penting karena komunitas Samin kerap diposisikan sebagai kelompok *Kebathinan* atau komunitas *adat* non-literer yang terikat kuat pada kelompok keagamaannya. Sejak awal, komunitas ini telah menetapkan "Agama Adam", sebuah istilah yang berakar pada narasi Al-Qur'an tentang manusia pertama di bumi. Secara historis, pengikut Saminisme menentang bentuk formal Islam, namun menerima dimensi mistiknya, menciptakan tradisi keagamaan sintesis yang menggunakan beberapa ayat Al-Qur'an dan mantra Jawa dalam doa mereka.

Namun dalam perjalanannya, Saminisme dianggap sebagai aliran yang menyimpang, dan sebagai agama sendiri yang terpisah. Akan tetapi secara politis agama ini tidak termasuk dalam agama yang diakui negara. Sejak awal, komunitas *adat* tersebut telah mengalami proses objektifikasi dan dijadikan locus bagi negara untuk menjalankan proses kekuasaan. Mereka menjadi objek proyek developmentalism dan modernisasi melalui industrialisasi serta politik agama dan termasuk pendidikan keagamaan. Lebih lanjut, riset ini juga menunjukkan ambiguitas kosmopolitanisme Islam yang mempromosikan praktik baru Islam berdasarkan tradisi Al-Qur'an. Tradisi yang dipromosikan ini ditransmisikan melalui budaya

populer, media, agen agama, dan elit politik yang mendukung tradisi Al-Qur'an tersebut. Pertumbuhan masif kosmopolitanisme ini pada saat yang sama juga mengabaikan keragaman agama Islam itu sendiri.

Dengan menggunakan gagasan Reinhart tentang Colloquial Islam untuk mendedah Islam yang hidup dalam kehidupan sehari-hari dan konsep Asad tentang "Tradisi Diskursif", penelitian ini menyoroti beberapa poin. *Pertama*, pola resepsi Al-Qur'an dalam praktik keagamaan komunitas Samin adalah resepsi mistik dan terjadi percampuran antara Al-Qur'an dan doa Jawa. Satu praktik yang menegaskan ambiguitas dalam budaya keagamaan mereka. Akan tetapi, pada era *pasca-reformasi* ketika politik lokal dan aktor-aktor keagamaan memengaruhi *adat* keagamaan masyarakat Samin, resepsi ini menjadi lebih formal. Kedua, ketika Saminis mulai menerima Islam secara formal, mereka juga mengembangkan nilai-nilai keagamaan dan menjalin hubungan yang lebih erat dengan Al-Qur'an. Hubungan ini diekspresikan dalam perilaku dan ekspresi linguistik mereka yang menandakan pandangan dunia dan ortopraksi keagamaan di kalangan Muslim awam. Pengembangan yang dimediasi oleh agen keagamaan ini tidak hanya diterima, tetapi juga dinegosiasikan, dan diperdebatkan. Karena tradisi kontemporer dipengaruhi oleh hubungan sosial yang sangat kuat, penelitian ini menyebutnya "*Qur'anic-stelsel*" yang mencerminkan sejarah kebangkitan mereka di Belanda, yaitu *culturestelsel*. Ketiga, secara historis, kehadiran Al-Qur'an dalam tradisi keagamaan Saminis dibayangkan sebagai bagian dari identitas keagamaan dan budaya mereka. Hanya saja, hubungan tersebut terbatas pada aksen dan dialek lisan mereka. Suatu proses yang secara linguistik disebut derivatif, karena berasal dari versi standar ke versi lokal. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini memperkenalkan "religiusitas derivatif" yang mencerminkan proses linguistik dalam menerima dan menghasilkan bentuk kata baru.

Narasi ini menantang pandangan esensialis yang memaknai identitas keagamaan sebagai sesuatu yang tetap, berakar secara historis, dan terikat secara teritorial. Perbedaan antara apa yang disebut sebagai *santri-abangan* maupun ortodoks-heterodoks menjadi kabur dan kompleks. Tesis ini kemudian mengajukan bahwa identitas religius dan ekspresi kesalehan merupakan produk

narasi historis yang derivative, dikustomisasi, cair, dan terus berkembang seiring waktu. Lebih jauh, meskipun komunitas Samin merupakan kelompok minoritas dengan jumlah relatif kecil, mengkaji tradisi keagamaan mereka penting untuk memahami “tradisi Qur’ani” dalam kehidupan keagamaan “komunitas *adat* terpencil” di Indonesia kontemporer. Artinya, meski mereka telah memeluk Islam dan modernisasi juga mauk dalam kehidupan mereka, mereka tetap mempertahankan Tradisi, meki terdapat perubahan perubahan. Kajian ini juga berkontribusi bagi pemahaman mengenai sifat praktik keagamaan masyarakat Muslim yang multivokal, bersifat kreol, serta aspek keseharian religiositas dalam konteks keberagaman “umat Islam yang terus “memuallafkan diri”

Kata kunci: Samin, Al-Qur’an, komunitas *adat*, Muslim awam, negosiasi religiousitas-identitas.

List of Glossary and Abbreviations

<i>Abangan</i>	: (Jv) lit. red. a nominal or less observant Muslim
Adam	: (Ar) lit. The proper name for the first human being in Islamic tradition
<i>Agama Adam</i>	: The foundational belief system of the Samin movement, rooted in the first human (Prophet Adam), emphasizing absolute human equality and radical environmental protection.
<i>Brokohan</i>	: (Jv) lit. consuming more food. A traditional Javanese thanksgiving ritual and ceremony performed for a particular reason.
<i>Blandong</i>	: (Jv) Forced labor to work as woodcutters in the forest
<i>Culturestelsel</i>	: (Dc). Lit. The cultivation system introduced during the Dutch colonial period.
Colloquial Islam	: (Lt). lit. informal spoken language. Used for informal expressions of Islam active at the local level that employ local customary dialects
Cosmopolitan Islam	: The formal, textbook tradition produced and maintained by intellectual-political elites, scholars, and the <i>ulama</i> .
Derivative Religiosity	: Religiosity that is adapted from standard or orthodox versions into local dialects and cultures, mirroring the linguistic process of derived words.
DPRD	: Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah or Regional People's Representative Council
<i>Dukun</i>	: (Jv). lit. The specialist. Magical specialist and/or curer, shaman
<i>Fatwa</i>	: (Ar). Non-binding law

Formal Islam	: Islamic tradition according to the main source of Islam.
<i>Hadīth</i>	: (Ar). Lit. The new. An account of the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad transmitted through a chain of narrators.
Houtvesterijen	: (Dc) Forestry department, forest district.
<i>Ilmu</i>	: (Jv) The normative religious knowledge, see <i>ngelmu</i>
<i>Istigosah</i>	: (Ar). Lit. asking for help. Traditional Muslim communal prayer
<i>Juz</i>	: (Ar). Section of the Qur'an.
<i>Juz Amma</i>	: (Ar). The 30 th section of the Qur'an begins with <i>Amma yatasā'alūn</i> . This referred to memorized sections of the Qur'an in SSN program.
<i>Karomah</i>	: (Ar) Religious respect
<i>Kejawen</i>	: (Jv). Mystical beliefs emphasizing Javanese religious, ethical and spiritual values.
<i>Kiai</i>	: (Jv). Male noble figure, a title for a religious scholar or leader
Koiné Islam	: Koiné (Greek). A lingua franca that is mutually intelligible. Koiné Islam: Universal element of Islam shared by Muslim across the world.
KTP	: Kartu Tanda Penduduk (Identity Card)
KUA	: Kantor Urusan Agama (Religious Affair Office)
<i>Manakiban</i>	: (Ar). Lit. Hagiography. A Ritual by reciting the Arabic text of the <i>manaqib</i>
<i>Manaqib</i>	: (Ar). Lit. Hagiography. Refers to the hagiography of Sheikh Abd al-Qadir al-Jailani's
<i>Mbah</i>	: Javanese title for the respected figure

- Modernist : The adherent of text-centric religious authority
- Muallafat al-Ummah* : A conceptual categorization of localized Muslim groups who remain in a continuous, lifelong process of negotiating and adapting their identity to align with the wider Muslim body.
- MUI : Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), the Indonesian Ulama Council, served to issue a *fatwa*
- Ngelmu* : (Jv) lit. inner knowledge. The Javanese experiential spiritual knowledge, through rigorous inner discipline, asceticism, and mystical internalization. See also *ilmu*
- Ngoko* : (Jv). The lowest and most common speech level in the Javanese hierarchical language.
- NU : Nahdlatul Ulama, a traditionalist Muslim organization
- Nyamin* : (Jv). To act like a follower of Saminism
- Nyai* : (Jv). A woman noble figure, or woman religious leader
- Orthodox : The adherence to authorized, conventional, and officially sanctioned doctrines
- Pengajian* : Islamic study session
- Penghayat* : (In) The legal and administrative status designated for indigenous belief systems in Indonesia.
- Pegon* : (Jv) Javanese written in the Arabic script.
- Post-Reformasi : (In) The political and chronological era defining contemporary Indonesian democratization since the fall of the New Order in 1998. It functions exclusively within modern Southeast Asian history and bears no relation to

	the Eurocentric, post-Reformation religious period.
<i>Pitutur</i>	: (Jv). lit. advice. Oral knowledge
PKI	: Partai Komunis Indonesia / Indonesian Communist Party
PUBEI	: Pedoman Umum Ejaan Bahasa Indonesia/ General Guideline for Indonesian Spelling
<i>Qur'anic-stelsel</i> ,	: En-Dc A sociological framework coined to describe the systematic habituation and institutional structuring of Qur'anic practices into Samin life by external actors.
<i>Santri</i>	: (Jv). Student at a traditional Muslim school, pious Muslim
<i>Sayyid</i>	: (Ar) lit. the lord. Also refers to the Arab scholar (' <i>Ulama</i>) who arrived in Java. The term is also used to refer to the descendants of the Prophet.
Sekolah Sisan Ngaji (SSN):	(Jv). A local government policy that integrates formal Qur'an recitation into elementary and Junior High Schools.
<i>Sesajen</i>	: (Jv). Offering
<i>Sesat</i>	: (In) Deviant, misguided
<i>Slametan</i>	: (Ar). Lit. peace or save. In Java, it is customary to observe occasions of ritual importance
<i>Stelsel</i>	: (Dc) a system to operate the work
<i>Sunatan</i>	: (Ar). Lit. the prophetic tradition. Used for the circumcision ritual
<i>Syirik</i>	: (Ar). Idolatry, polytheism
<i>Syatariyyah</i>	: (Ar). Lit. fast-moving. It refers to the tarekat Syatariyyah within Islamic mystical tradition.
<i>Tahlilan</i>	: (Ar). Lit. to recite <i>la illa ha illa Allah</i> . Used as the reciting of Qur'anic verses to mark life

	crises, in particular the death of family members and respected figures.
<i>Tirakat</i>	: (Ar). Lit. to leave or leaving. Used to describe leaving mundane pleasures for religious purposes.
<i>Tolak Bala</i>	: (Jv). Ward off misfortune
<i>Turutan</i>	: (Jv). lit. order. It is also used to describe a book for learning the Qur'an using the Baghdadi model
TPQ	: Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (Al-Qur'an Learning Center for Children)
<i>Ulama</i>	: (Ar). Islamic scholars
<i>Ummah</i>	: (Ar) Islamic community
<i>Wali</i>	: (Ar). Muslim saint or guardian
<i>Ziarah</i>	: (Ar). Visiting sacred places, such as the tombs of Muslim saints, for prayer and worship
<i>Zikir</i>	: (Ar). Islamic Mystical Chanting
(Ar)	: Arabic
(Dc)	: Dutch
(Gr)	: Greek
(In)	: Indonesian
(Jv)	: Javanese
(Lt)	: Latin
Lit.	: Literally

Disclaimer

This dissertation is written in English. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Javanese, Arabic, and Bahasa Indonesia into English were rendered by the author. Due to the historical nature of the source material, initial translations from Dutch to English were assisted by Google Translate; however, the author has carefully reviewed them to ensure conceptual accuracy and contextual fidelity. Any remaining minor discrepancies are the sole responsibility of the author



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Research on the Qur'an in the everyday lives of non-literate *adat* communities in Indonesia, such as Saminism, remains limited. This research gap rests on the premise that academic discourse always links the sacred text to the religious orthodoxy. It thereby neglects those who have no comprehension of the textual basis.¹ Such a limitation ignites academic inquiry into how the *adat* community interacts with the Qur'an and for what purposes.

These inquiries are significant for the *adat* community, which is often seen as “syncretic” and lacks proficiency in reciting the Qur'an. To address these boundaries, many scholars are increasingly adopting the framework of “lived Islam” to place greater emphasis on the diverse practical levels of Muslims.² This approach is beneficial for observing the ordinary Muslim, such as the Saminist community, and locating them within the broader Muslim *ummah*, engaging with the fundamental sources of Islam through diverse and localized practices.³

Further, studying the Qur'an in the life of Saminists may contribute to academic insight not only because this non-Arabic-speaking group uses the Qur'an in ways that go beyond normative use,⁴ but also because of their historical positioning. The Saminist was a unique community, historically characterized by accepting mystical Islam on the relationship between human and God, and

¹ A Kevin Reinhart, *Lived Islam Colloquial Religion in a Cosmopolitan Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), 20.

² Nadia Fadil and Mayanthi Fernando, “Rediscovering the Everyday Muslim Notes on an Anthropological Divide,” *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 5, no. 2 (September 1, 2015): 59–88.

³ Reinhart, *Lived Islam Colloquial Religion in a Cosmopolitan Tradition*, 25.

⁴ Ahmad Rafiq, “The Reception of the Qur'an in Indonesia: A Case Study of the Place of the Qur'an in a Non-Arabic Speaking Community,” *Dissertation*, Temple University, 2014.

“opposing” formal Islam. The mystical Islam is through adopting the Qur’anic idea of the first human being on earth, Adam, and the religion called “Agama Adam”. In the practice of mystical Islam, they mixed Javanese and Arabic prayers drawn from the verses of the Qur’an into their *du’a*. In practice, Saminists run a social-religious and political movement that propagates the idea that human beings are the children of Adam and must protect the land, which is given by God, for all of humanity.⁵ For opposing the formal Islam, and their unique way of life, in modern day, this community was classified as *kebathinan* or an *adat* community; the two different terms are used interchangeably. In this research, I used the term *adat* to refer to all Saminists with diverse religious preferences, both Muslim and *penghayat*, who are affiliated with the “Masyarakat Adat” group.

Here, I shall be clear about the term *adat* in the study of Saminism, for the term *adat* in Indonesia has a double reference. First, it is an Arabic loanword that is literally equivalent to “custom” or “*kebiasaan*”.⁶ That refers to cultural practices, such as “*adat istiadat*”. The second refers to the category of local religion to distinguish between world and local religions, such as “*agama adat*”. The last refers to a community tied to specific geography, customs, and religious practices, called “*Masyarakat Adat*”.⁷ This study refers to the third, namely the community under the umbrella of the *Adat* community, called Paguyuban Sedulur Sikep. Yet, the *adat* community is not necessarily embracing “*agama adat*”. Inside the community, there is diversity, among them are embracing ‘*Penghayat Kepercayaan*’, and yet the majority embraced Islam. Further, Saminist religiosity is unique, and their conversion to Islam is complicated; some of them embraced Islam for political

⁵ Mangoenkoesoemo, *Het Saminisme: Rapport Uitgebracht Aan de Vereeniging “Insulinde”* (Semarang: Semarang Drukkerij en Boekhandel H.A. Benjamins, 1918), 10.

⁶ Michel Picard and Remi Madinier, *The Politics of Religion in Indonesia Syncretism, Orthodoxy, and Religious Contention in Java and Bali*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2011), 21-45.

⁷ *ibid.*

reasons⁸, and for social and historical encounter with the Muslim community.⁹

Focusing on the Muslim community with an *adat* background, they have often been labelled as "nominal" Muslims or "*kebathinan*," an Arabic loan word which translates as "the inner," focusing on the inner aspect of Islam.¹⁰ A categorization excludes them from broader discussions of Islamic civilization. Such exclusion is the result that Islamic civilization often privileged the expert on the text, the Middle East tradition as pure, pristine, and the "center" of Islam. Hefner called it dual marginalization.¹¹ It is the tendency to see what is not "Islam" in the religious life of a nominal Muslim.¹²

The marginalization is rooted in the early colonial historiography about Islam in the non-Arabic areas. Since the colonial period, Tom Pires¹³ has written about the "heretic" practices of Mohammedans in Southeast Asia. Similarly, Raffles, a British East Indies governor in the early 19th century, clearly stated that Java, in general, while they believe in the Supreme God and that Mohammad is the prophet, they were not acquainted with the doctrine of the religion, and even "bigoted" from the shallow expression of Mahomedanisme.¹⁴ Such scholarly traditions have persisted in the modern perception of Islam in Java and, more

⁸ Robert W Hefner, "Public Islam and the Problem of Democratization," *Sociology of Religion* 4, no. 62 (2001): 491–514.

⁹ Renny Oktafia and Imron Mawardi, "Islamic Values in the Tradition of Samin Community In East Java," *Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies* 5, no. 1 (2017): 97–114.

¹⁰ Mark Woodward, *Islam Jawa Kesalehan Normative Versus Kebatinan*, ed. Nuruddin Amirudin, IV. (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2010), 20.

¹¹ Robert W. Hefner, "Islamizing Java, Religion and Politics in Rural East Java," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46, no. 3 (1987), 31.

¹² Mark Woodward, *Java, Indonesia and Islam*, ed. Gabriele Marrancy, 1st ed. (Singapore: National University of Singapore, 2011), 56.

¹³ Armando Cortesão, *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires: An Account of the East, from the Red Sea to Japan, Written in Malacca and India in 1512-1515*, 2nd ed. (London: The Hakluyt Society, 2011), 15.

¹⁴ Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, *The History of Java*, 2nd ed. (London: John Murray, n.d.), 1-10

generally, in Southeast Asia.¹⁵ It is an essentialist view that sees Islam only in terms of its text and origin.¹⁶ Even the influential anthropological work about trichotomies in Javanese religion¹⁷ and religious comparative practices¹⁸ is still limited in seeing the community solely based on the practice and its symbolism.¹⁹ It neglects the Muslim relationships with their primary sources and the varieties of local practices.²⁰

Amid the debate, scholars such as Asad²¹ and Shahab²² insisted on the idea that Muslims are heterogeneous, the tradition is discursive and explorative. Meaning, the pre-community understanding of their religious teachings shapes and constructs religious expression and tradition.²³ Therefore, it is crucial to investigate Muslims practicing Islam in their local context. In the *Anthropology of Islam*, Asad clearly stated that:

“If one wants to write an anthropology of Islam, one should begin, as Muslims do, from the concept of a discursive tradition that includes and relates itself to the founding texts of the Qur’an and the hadith. Islam is neither a distinctive

¹⁵ William R Roff, “Islam Obscured?: Some Reflection on Studies of Islam and Society in Southeast Asia,” *Archipel* 29, no. 7 (1985):29-50

¹⁶ Hans Küng, *Islam, Past, Present and Future*, ed. John Bowden, 1st ed. (England: Oneworld, 2007), 23.

¹⁷ Clifford Geertz, “The Religion of Java-University of Chicago Press (1976)” (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976),10-50.

¹⁸ Clifford Geertz, “Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia,” *The University of Chicago Press* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), 11.

¹⁹ Andre Moller, *Ramadan in Java*, ed. Tord Olsson, 1st ed., vol. 53 (Sweden: anpere.net, 2007), 28.

²⁰ Dale F Eickelman, “The Study of Islam in Local Context,” *Contribution to Asian Studies* XVII, no. 1 (1982):16.

²¹ Talal Asad, “The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam,” *Qui Parle, Duke University Press* 17, no. 2 (2009): 1–30.

²² Shahab Ahmed. *What is Islam? The importance of being Islamic*. Princeton University Press, 2016. 125

²³ Ovamir Anjum, “Islam as a Discursive Tradition: Talal Asad and His Interlocutor,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* (1997): 656–672.

social structure nor a heterogeneous collection of beliefs, artifacts, customs, and morals. It is a tradition.”²⁴

Asad’s statement aimed to emphasize that Islam should be understood as an observable anthropological object; that is, as a religious tradition that represents a form of institutionalized discursive practice. Tradition was neither homogeneous nor static, as it was always positioned historically; it continues and grows through generations. At this point, the community’s relationship with the Qur’an must entail the historical record of tradition, and therefore it is essential to be examined to unpack the diverse religious tradition,²⁵ the multivocal, the emotions, the feelings, and the aesthetic register legitimized or non-legitimized by Islamic authority.²⁶

Based on the anthropological problem, this research takes the Qur’an in the life of Saminist as an analytical point of departure. It frames the Saminist community as a critical subject of inquiry for three primary reasons. First is the historical construct of the Saminist community, which followed the legacy of Suro Sentiko, the community’s founder, who initially rejected formal Islamic structures, state modernization, and colonial governance, yet accepted mystical Islam.²⁷

Second, contemporary Saminist religious traditions, which frequently utilize the Qur’an in their rituals, are the product of social, political, and religious encounters and negotiations, encompassing both strategic acceptance and religious appropriation in becoming a Muslim. Third, it argues that the ongoing dialogue between Saminists and Islamic religious agents has cultivated a unique tradition centered on the most sacred text of Islam, the Qur’an. As an integral element of their daily lives, the Qur’an has acquired profound religious and sociocultural significance within Saminist communities.

²⁴ Asad, “The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam.”, 30.

²⁵ Reinhart, *Lived Islam Colloquial Religion in a Cosmopolitan Tradition*, 71-76.

²⁶ Anne Rasmussen, *Women, the Recited Qur’an, and Islamic Music in Indonesia* (Univ of California Press, 2010), 20-30.

²⁷ Mangoenkoesoemo, *Het Saminisme: Rapport Uitgebracht Aan de Vereeniging “Insulinde.”*, 23.

Academically, the paradigm idea of the relationship between Islam and local practices has produced many terms. In Java, the term “Javanese Islam” is used as an alternative to “Javanism” (*kejawen*), which is often associated with primitivism or animism. A euphemistic term, such as “local Islam,” is also presented to show the hybrid and the heretic instead of the syncretic belief of Islam in Java.²⁸ Indeed, this paper uses the term “Saminist Muslim” not for euphemistic purposes, but for validating and describing the subject of study as a part of the whole Muslim community.

Further, I specify my research in the context of post-Indonesian *reformasi*. There are some significant reasons for this synchronic-diachronic specification. First, historically, during the colonial period, Saminism rose as a religious movement against the aristocratic Muslim and Dutch administration. Tjipto noted that such oppositions are due to aristocrat Muslim accusing the Saminist as a heretic religious group and as being outside of Islam. This religious movement was also politically monitored and under the Dutch surveillance for its opposition to taxation.²⁹

The second is the politics of religion or *agama* as an emic category; since Indonesian independence, there has been a strong demand from Islamic religious groups to accommodate Islam as the main pillar of the nation-state. Although the first attempt had failed, it had successfully established the Department of Religious Affairs to govern the religious life of Indonesian. One of its successful policies is obligating Indonesians to embrace one of the recognized religions and to integrate it into the civil administration system.³⁰ Initially, it was aimed to provide access to basic citizenship rights such as education, healthcare, government aid programs, marriage registration, and so on. However, in the following years, it was also

²⁸ Jochem van den Boogert, “Rethinking Javanese Islam. Towards New Descriptions of Javanese Tradition” (Universiteit Leiden, 2015), 20-50.

²⁹ T. Mangoenkoesoemo, *Het Saminisme: Rapport Uitgebracht Aan de Vereeniging “Insulinde”* (Semarang: Semarang Drukkerij en Boekhandel H.A. Benjamins, 1918), 10.

³⁰ Robert W. Hefner, *Islam in an Era of Nation-States*, ed. Robert W. Hefner and Patricia Horvath, *Islam in an Era of Nation-States*, 1st ed. (Hawaii: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1997), 34.

used to control and govern the society, especially after communist *coups d'état*.³¹

By adopting the Western colonial perspective on religion, early Indonesia recognized only five world religions: Islam, Christianity (Protestant and Catholic), Buddhism, and Hinduism. In the post-*Reformasi era*, Abdurrahman Wahid, the fourth Indonesian president, recognized Confucianism as one of the recognized religions.³² Conversely, the local religious group remained an *adat* community, and, in line with the policy, it should choose one of the five recognized religions. For Picard³³ The distinction between what is called religion and *adat* is obscure and quite problematic since the definition of religion taken is completely Eurocentric. As a political bias, “Agama Adam” was classified as *adat*, a custom emphasizing *kebathinan*, a religious tradition that emphasizes the inward element of religion.³⁴

In the context of religious administration, Islam is regarded favorably by Saminist religious groups. This preference stems largely from their origins as a “sect” of Javanese mystical Islam, their historical relationship with the Islamic community against the Dutch, and their resistance to modernism rooted in Western Christian tradition. According to Hefner, this preference was also common in Javanese rural areas because of the historically and culturally close relationship between the *abangan* and *santri*.³⁵

Further, the political situation since 1998 has been changing the nature of democracy in Indonesia. The major result of *reformasi* is freedom of religion, in which the government guarantees all citizens the right to embrace and express their religious beliefs. During this period, administrative restrictions on local religious beliefs were lifted by Law Number 23 of 2006 on Population Administration, and their religious existence was

³¹ Samsul Maarif, *Pasang Surut Rekognisi Agama Leluhur Dalam Politik Agama Di Indonesia*, ed. Linah Khairiyah Pary, *Center for Religious & Cross-Cultural Studies UGM* (Yogyakarta: CRCS UGM, 2018), 12-30.

³² Ibid.12.

³³ Ibid.45.

³⁴ Mark Woodward, *Islam Jawa Kesalehan Normative Versus Kebatinan*, ed. Nuruddin Amirudin, IV. (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2010), 20.

³⁵ Hefner, “Islamizing Java, Religion and Politics in Rural East Java.”, 60-90.

recognized by Constitutional Court Decision Number 97/PUU-XIV/2016. Taking the constitutional decision, Saminists were more polarized based on their acknowledgement of their identity card; among them are those who emptied their religious column and converted to “*Penghayat Kepercayaan*.” And among them is the persistence to be Muslim.

The *penghayat* acknowledge that the religious column on their identity cards is a state-imposed administrative category. It has nothing to do with their religious practices, as Sedulur Sikep practices Agama Adam. However, the majority of Saminists living in Rembang and Blora remain committed to their Muslim faith. In some villages, such as Tegaldowo in Rembang or Klopoduwur in Blora, Saminists continue to embrace Islam. This persistent commitment reflects a long process of absorbing the mystical aspect of Islam and the growing idea that Islam and Javanese are not enemies.³⁶

The last context concerns the growth of the Qur’anic tradition within the present Muslim community. In the post-*reformasi*, Islamic political activism in contemporary Indonesia had flipped the nature of state and religion, from passive secularism to a “semi-religious state”.³⁷ It is positively influencing religious public life and political policies, which are inclined towards Islamic orthodoxy.³⁸ Short examples include some regencies in North Sumatra and Western Sumatra that made serious attempts to implement Islamic religious norms, such as veiling and modest dress, as well as granting Aceh the power to implement *shari’ah* in criminal law.³⁹ At the national level, the paved condition also intensifies Muslim engagement with the Qur’an, such as by testing

³⁶ Niels Mulder, *Inside Indonesian Society: Cultural Change in Java*, 1st ed. (Amsterdam: Pepin Press, 1996), 20-30.

³⁷ Ahmet T Kuru, “Passive and Assertive Secularism Historical Conditions, Ideological Struggles, and State Policies toward Religion,” *World Politic: A quarterly journal of international relation*, 59 (2007). 568 - 594

³⁸ Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*, 2011, 23-30.

³⁹ Moch Nur Ichwan, “Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam,” in *Explaining the “Conservative Turn,”* ed. Martin van Bruinessen (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2013), 60–104.

Qur'anic literacy as a requirement for school graduation and national competitions.

Further, the act of reciting the Qur'an has also been aired publicly through radio, television, cassettes, and online media. Making Qur'anic recitation and learning in various Islamic communities had been intensified. In many urban areas, the issue of the Qur'an is quite sensitive and can be politically problematic.⁴⁰ On the other hand, the thousands of "Rumah Tahfidz," One Day One Juz (ODOJ)⁴¹ Movements have intensified the strong, intimate relationship between the community and its religious scripture.⁴²

As the Qur'an has been widely propagated in the lives of modern Muslims, it has paved the way for its growth in the daily lives of Muslims in rural areas, such as Saminist. Unintentionally, the growth had also produced an ambiguity in Saminist religious life.⁴³ Short example: they invited a Qur'an reciter during their communal rituals, such as Sedekah Bumi and Suronan, and for personal purposes, such as helping with childbirth and funerals. On one hand, they were mimicking what the other Muslims did, and continuing to internalize the values, on the other hand, they were maintaining Saminist religious traditions. For the Qur'an becomes the vital element of Saminist religious expression and instrument of religious ritual, it is also constructing modern Saminist religious identity.

This research takes place mainly in villages in Rembang and Blora, where Saminism remains sizable. Specifically in these regions, two conditions were accepted as academic reasons: the growth of the Qur'anic tradition in Saminist religious life and the serious condition of Saminists in the face of multiple government

⁴⁰ Iswandi Syahputra, "Activities on Twitter and the 212 Defend Islam Rally through the Perspective of the Indonesian Ulema Council," *Al-Jami'ah* 58, no. 2 (2020): 323–354.

⁴¹ Eva F. Nisa, "Social Media and the Birth of an Islamic Social Movement: ODOJ (One Day One Juz) in Contemporary Indonesia," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 46, no. 134 (2018): 24–43.

⁴² Anna M Gade, *Perfection Makes Practice: Learning, Emotion and the Recited Qur'an in Indonesia*, 1st ed. (Hawai: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 23–40.

⁴³ Thomas Bauer, *A culture of ambiguity: An alternative history of Islam*. (Columbia University Press, 2021), 24.

modernization projects, such as “Islamization” and “Industrialization”.

Historically, it is believed that Indonesia was Islamized by the nine saints (Walisongo), whose graves were in the coastal areas of northern Java. Facing the Javanese Sea and as an administrative city during the Javanese Islamic kingdom, Lasem was a harbor city and hub in the age of maritime trade. Historically, Lasem-Rembang has been an important gateway connecting Java and the rest of the world. According to Reid, citing the Memoir of the Conquest of Java, Lasem, during maritime trade in the 12th–19th century, connected Java, Siam, Malacca, Malabar, and the Arabian Peninsula. The port had made the harbor city a hub for trade and cultural-religious exchange, connecting the land below the wind and the globe, thereby intertwining the polyglot and transient citizenry with local people.⁴⁴

During the massive Islamization and the strong connection between Java and Mecca in the 18th century, Azra⁴⁵ and Ricklefs⁴⁶ noted that the harbor city was vital in making an intellectual connection between the local *‘ulama* (*ashab al-jawiyyin*) and the scholars in the Holy Land (*ard al-haramain*), which also influences the nature of Islamic reformation. Specifically in Java, such as in Lasem, Tuban, and Sidayu the Muslims figures of *‘ulama*, and *kiai* mastering the Qur’an in the coastal areas become a distinctive power both in religion and politics. They were continuing to stimulate the Islamization processes in the port and harbor cities in northern Java.⁴⁷

Remarkably, in Rembang and Blora, religious figures such as *kiai* were powerful in both religious and secular spheres.⁴⁸ In the second half of the 19th century, *Kiai* Makshum’s father continued

⁴⁴ Anthoni Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce: Land Below the Wind*, 7th ed. (Connecticut: Yale University, 1988), P.25-70.

⁴⁵ Azyumardi Azra, *Islam in the Indonesian World: An Account of Institutional Formation*, 1st ed. (Bandung: Mizan, 2006), 12-17.

⁴⁶ M. C. Ricklefs, “A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1200: Third Edition” (2001): 515.

⁴⁷ Jajat Burhanudin, *Ulama Dan Kekuasaan, Pergumulan Elite Muslim Dalam Sejarah Indonesia*, 1st ed. (Bandung: Mizan, 2012), 23-30.

⁴⁸ Peter L Berger, *The Desecularization of the World; Resurgence, Religion and World Politic*, ed. Peter L Berger, 1 st. (Michingan: Grand Rapid, 1999), 45.

the close relationship with Meccan ‘Ulama and built a *pesantren*, which became the forerunner of *pesantrens* in Rembang and Blora, to produce the Qur’anic tradition and *santri*’s culture more vibrant and visible. The condition had affected the religious life of Saminists in the corner of Rembang and Blora, in which local religious agents were continuously anchoring normative Islam and the Qur’an.

The second condition is the modern project that threatened the Saminist religious life in both Blora and Rembang. The common narrative for Saminist is on their cultural resistance to normative Islam and their agrarian tradition that opposes the government project. Indeed, after the political ideas of decentralization, Saminist areas became the target of development. The policy of decentralization enabled local government to manage and prioritize development based on regional characteristics and values, as well as to tailor development to the national development agenda.⁴⁹ Based on the idea, human development and regional planning must be standardized. Both Rembang and Blora issued a policy of “Sekolah Sak Ngajine” (SSN) or “Sekolah Sisan Ngaji.”⁵⁰ which obligated public education to hold the program for learning the Qur’an in elementary and Junior High School, and to pursue the growth of the national development index for religious literacy and education.

Further, the programs were also to accelerate the project of the human development index (HDI). One of the plans was done by mining the mountainous areas, which were considered pivotal elements for the sustainable life of Saminist. It causes serious conflict and protest against the government for its potential to threaten the local religious life and their ecological sustainability.⁵¹

⁴⁹ F. von Benda-Beckmann, *Political and Legal Transformations of an Indonesian Polity: The Nagari from Colonisation to Decentralisation.*, vol. 46 (New York: Cambridge University press, 2013), 23.

⁵⁰ Dinas Pendidikan Kabupaten Blora, *Petunjuk Pelaksanaan Program Sekolah Sisan Ngaji*, ed. Salmat Dwi Cahyono, Kariyono, and Tulus Prasetyono, 1st ed., vol. 1 (Blora: Dinas Pendidikan Blora, 2024), 24.

⁵¹ Dewi Candraningrum, “Politik Rahim Perempuan Kendeng Menolak Tambang Semen,” *Jurnal Perempuan* (2014): 45-67.

In Blora, the government initiated the exploration of Saminist life as a tourism attraction in “Kampung Samin”. The government builds public facilities and finances cultural events for economic development. The government reconstructed the Kampung Samin in Klopoduwur to preserve its historical and cultural heritage. To attract more visitors, the government also holds a series of events to introduce Saminist culture. In a mutually beneficial relationship, the communities should support all government programs in education, tourism, and modernization. These conditions led to a serious problem for Saminist religious life, for they were against modernization, Islamization, and governmentalization.

B. Research Questions and Objectives

This research investigates the contemporary issues of the Qur'an within the religious traditions of Saminist Muslims in the context of Indonesia's post-*reformasi* era. The academic discussions often saw the Saminist religious tradition as a heterodox or even syncretic form of Islam. The assumption gives them fewer possibilities to connect with the most sacred element in Islam, the Qur'an. By investigating their historical background, their relation to the Qur'an, this thesis discusses the diversity, the process of negotiation and appropriation between the local tradition and the universal element of Islam. As this research seeks to understand the Qur'an in the life of the *adat* community, it focuses on a single, comprehensible framework as a backdrop to ensure the research is recognizable. The questions that I propose for this research are:

1. How is the historical construct of Saminism, and why do the Saminists use the Qur'an as a means to reconstruct their religious identity as Muslims?
2. How do the religious agents play their role in “Qur'anizing” Saminist tradition, and how is the Qur'an negotiated and appropriated by Saminists in the context of post-Indonesia *reformasi*?
3. How the appropriated tradition shifted Saminist interaction with the Qur'an.

The objective purpose of these questions is to describe the community's relations with the Qur'an and the constructed identity within the life of the Saminist-Muslim tradition. The next question also investigates the socio-political context, including multiple layers of Islamization, knowledge transmission, and social relations in Samin's religious life. Furthermore, this research presents the Qur'anic tradition as a set of tools for both the past and the present. The negotiation and appropriation processes are crucial in social-religious research, for they explain the negotiated elements, myth, and worldview, and even how to communicate with others, not only with acceptance but also with resistance. By investigating Saminist daily use of the Qur'an, this thesis narrates Saminists' outlook on their relationship with the Qur'an. All these questions aim to explain the function of the Qur'an in the contemporary lives of Muslims.

C. Literature Review

This dissertation is not the first work to discuss the Qur'an within the religious tradition. Most of the research conducted by previous scholars is based on the idea that the Qur'an in the life of Muslims is not only a source of information but also serves multiple purposes, such as healing and gaining a religious blessing and divine grace (*baraka*). In other words, the Islamic community has used the Qur'an as an intermediary between human beings and God. Many scholars interested in the subject of the Qur'an in the context of society mainly used an anthropological approach. The Scholars, such as Gade⁵², Rasmussen⁵³, Rafiq,⁵⁴ Jamil,⁵⁵

⁵² Anna M Gade, *Perfection Makes Practice: Learning, Emotion and the Recited Qur'an in Indonesia*, 19.

⁵³ Rasmussen, *Women, the Recited Qur'an, and Islamic Music in Indonesia*, 17.

⁵⁴ Rafiq, "The Reception of the Qur'an in Indonesia: A Case Study of the Place of the Qur'an in a Non-Arabic Speaking Community."

⁵⁵ Muhammad Jamil, "Exploring the Qur'anic Literacy Tradition: A Review of Traditional and Modern *Pesantren* in Tuban Indonesia," *Fikri: Jurnal Kajian Agama, Sosial Dan Budaya* 9, no. 1 (2024): 1–25.

Harahap⁵⁶ and Wahid,⁵⁷ are observing the relationship between the non-Arabic community and the Qur'an in everyday life.⁵⁸ These studies mostly focus on the reception of the text and its function within the Muslim community. The question that remains unanswered in these studies is how the condition arose in the non-literate *adat* community and what plausible conditions made it happen, especially in the post-*reformasi* period. To address the *adat* community, this research considers prominent scholars such as Hefner⁵⁹, Michael Picard,⁶⁰ Ma'arif⁶¹, Yance⁶² and Sakai⁶³ who discuss the community based on political perspective, especially during the New Order, and were continuously persecuted during the post-*reformasi* era.⁶⁴ They were offering multiple perspectives on the design of nationalism, the politics of religion in Indonesia, and how these contribute to the dynamics of Islamization in modern Indonesia. They also discussed the decline of *abangan*, the

⁵⁶ Muhammad Yunan Harahap, "Character Education for Islamic Boarding School Students through the Living Qur'an Approach Based on Technology Integration," *Fitrah: Journal of Islamic Education* 6, no. 2 (2025): 401–416.

⁵⁷ Abd Wahid, Dewi Putri Erdina, and M Mahmudhassan, "Study of the Practice of Reading Surah Al-Isra Verses 79-82 At Duha Time at Hidayatul Islamiyah Pesantren," *QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies* 1, no. 3 (2022): 290–306.

⁵⁸ Muhammad Afif Assegaf, "Pembacaan Dzikir Ratib Al-Attas Dan Al-Haddad Di Pesantren Modern Al-Qur'an Pekalongan: Studi Living Qur'an," *Journal of Islamic Scriptures in Non-Arabic Societies* 1, no. 1 (2024): 76–87.

⁵⁹ Hefner, "Islamizing Java, Religion and Politics in Rural East Java.", P. 125-130

⁶⁰ Picard and Madinier, *Polit. Relig. Indones. Syncretism, Orthodox. Relig. Contention Java Bali*. 23-40.

⁶¹ Samsul Maarif, *Shifting Waters in The Politics of Religion and Its Impacts on Indonesian Indigenous Communities*, ed. Kelli A. Swazey, 1st ed. (Yogyakarta: Center for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies, 2017), 20-50.

⁶² Yance Zadrak Rumahuru, *Islam syariah dan Islam adat: Konstruksi identitas keagamaan dan perubahan sosial di kalangan komunitas Muslim Hatuhaha di negeri Pelauw*. Kementerian Agama RI, 2012.

⁶³ Minako Sakai, *Kacang Tidak Lupa Kulitnya: Identitas Gumat, Islam, Dan Merantau di Sumatera Selatan* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2017), 1-20

⁶⁴ Ahmad Najib Burhani and Mu'ti Abdul, "The Limits of Religious Freedom in Indonesia: With Reference to the First Pillar Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa of Pancasila," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 9, no. 1 (2019): 1–29.

deterioration of the religious groups, such as Wetu Telu,⁶⁵ Tengger community⁶⁶ and the political distinction between religion and *adat*, to the current religious expression and religious violence.

Although they have different perspectives on the Islamization of Indonesia, they have common ideas and a political approach as a point of departure. That is the state's design, which favors and inclines to Islam, which contributed to the decline of the *abangan*. As the religious view on Indonesian Islam becomes dominant, Azra calls it '*santri-nization*'.⁶⁷ Their ideas raise a novel question about the modern spectrum of *adat* or *kebathinan* religious groups within contemporary religious practices. However, all of these studies focus on the political outlook and lack detailed information about the everyday life of the *adat* community.

Regarding the subject of study, Saminism, many scholars interested in a similar subject also focus on detailed descriptions of the concept of religion and its historical present. Scholars such as Victor⁶⁸ and Korver⁶⁹ are observing the genealogy of Saminism as a distinctive religion. At the same time, Tarling and⁷⁰ Shiraishi⁷¹ look at Samin's movement within the political context of resistance to colonialism and view Saminism as a sect of Javanese Islam. In discussing Saminism, scholars focus on ethnographic works that provide thick, detailed descriptions of symbolic meaning, interpret

⁶⁵ Umam, F. "Dialectics Between Islam and Local Culture in Wetu Telu Lombok Muslims' Merariq Tradition: An 'Urf Perspective". *Al-Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum & Pranata Sosial*, vol 19, no 1(2024), pp.104-125.

⁶⁶ Robert W. Hefner, "Islamizing Java, Religion and Politics in Rural East Java," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46, no. 3 (1987), 31.

⁶⁷ Azyumardi Azra, *Islam in the Indonesian World: An Account of Institutional Formation*, 1st ed. (Bandung: Mizan, 2006), 12-17.

⁶⁸ Victor T King, "Some Observations on the Samin Movement of North-Central Java: Suggestions for the Theoretical Analysis of the Dynamics of Rural Unrest," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 129, no. 4 (October 23, 1973): 457-481.

⁶⁹ A Pieter E Korver, "The Samin Movement and Millenarianism," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 132, no. 2/3 (October 23, 1976): 249-266.

⁷⁰ Nicholas Tarling, *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia: Religion and Anti-Colonial Movements*, 1st ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

⁷¹ Farid Shiraishi, Takashi & Hilmar, *Zaman Bergerak: Radikalisme Rakyat Jawa Di Jawa 1912-1926* (Jakarta: Pustaka Utama Grafiti, 1997), 50-80.

the culture, and discuss the historical narrative of Saminism. Yet all of these studies focus on the Saminist political movement; they have nothing to do with the construction of religious identity in their everyday lives.

In the context of Saminism in Rembang and Blora, I mention that some researchers have studied similar subjects, Arifin.⁷², Mutholib⁷³ and Widiana⁷⁴ who had observed the use of the Qur'an and the mystical tradition of Saminist Muslim to protect their environment and their daily activities, such as learning the Qur'an. These researchers were discussing two main subjects: the function of the Qur'an in the religious life and how the mystical tradition in respecting the Ibu Bumi (Mother Earth) is also rooted in mystical Islam. These studies are the closest to this research, with a different point of departure, that is, on the matter of the politics of religion and the process of negotiation and appropriation.

Unlike the previous research above, this research focuses on the Qur'an within the present Saminist religious tradition, within the framework of lived Islam and discursive tradition. Completing the perspectives, this research also examines the Qur'an in the life of the Saminist community by focusing on their historical narrative and the social and political conditions that led to this situation. This research contributes to the idea that the relationship between world religion, Islam, and local religion is not always asymmetrical; it is also complementary. In the context of Saminist, they use the Qur'an to reconstruct their identity as being a pious Muslim without really leaving their identity. Further, such reconstruction is rooted in the genealogy of Saminism, which synthesizes mystical Islam and Javanese religious tradition.

Further, unlike previous studies that often portray the Saminists as a static *adat* or "*abangan*" (syncretic) group isolated

⁷² M. Zaenal Arifin. "Gerakan Ekologi dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat Muslim-Samin: Studi Living Qur'an di Desa Tegaldowo Gunem Rembang." *Al-Itqan: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an* 6.1 (2020): 45-68.

⁷³ Abdul, Mutholib. "*Nilai sufisme dalam gerakan nirkekerasan masyarakat Kendeng terhadap pembangunan pabrik Semen Indonesia dalam perspektif humanisme tasawuf*." UIN Walisongo, 2022, 45-67

⁷⁴ Widiana, Nurhuda. "Pergumulan Islam dengan budaya lokal studi kasus masyarakat Samin di dusun Jepang Bojonegoro." *Jurnal Theologia* 26.2 (2015).

from Islamic orthodoxy, this dissertation explores how they have been actively "*Qur'anising*" their traditions to negotiate a modern religious identity and to remember their origins. It also focuses on the dynamic intersection of religion, politics and custom. This research provides a cultural and historical analysis of the *adat* community and discusses the dynamics of power that made the tradition plausible.

D. Theoretical Frameworks

This research is about the Qur'an in the everyday life of the *adat* religious community, Saminism, after the post-*reformasi* in Indonesia. The theoretical frameworks are expected to answer the proposed question about how to study Islam and the Muslim community and how they interact, engage, and negotiate the Qur'an in their cultural-religious performance. The choice of this subject gives sufficient opportunity to combine the two lines of inquiry, sociological and historical-anthropological. The historical-anthropological conditions were used to explain the conditions that made the gradual process of their interaction with the Qur'an plausible. Social conditions, such as economic and political issues, are also used as a powerful framework for analyzing the rise of Islamic cosmopolitanism. Indeed, to avoid overwhelming the aspects of complex phenomena, the context must be properly situated. Here, I use Reinhart's framework of lived Islam, the discursive tradition for non-literate relation to the Qur'an.

1. The Lived Islam

The idea of lived Islam is a primary framework of this research. Reinhart metaphorizes Muslims' religiosity with a sociolinguistic model to characterize the diversity, the colloquiality, the spectrum, and different commonalities. From the sociolinguistic model, he introduces the term "koine Islam," which represents the universal and recognized element, and the colloquial Islam, which represents the lived Islam, which is ordinary, informal, and dialect-rooted in regional custom. He introduces the concept of "Cosmopolitan Islam" as a sophisticated and prestigious aspect of Islam. As legitimate discourse, scholar Islam or the expert

Islam in cooperation with principal institutions of government pushed the ideas to the ordinary Muslim.

Further, to grasp the idea, the term “Cosmopolitan Islam” is best analogized to studying a language standardized in the “Standard version”. In the Indonesian context, it is standardized through Pedoman Umum Ejaan Bahasa Indonesia (PUEBI [General Guideline for Indonesian Spelling]). Through rules of grammar, phonetics, and phonologies, the language was standardized by a government institution and operated by a language expert. They provide a dictionary, writing role, and punctuation, with standard writing and spelling for uniformity.

Apart from the idea of “Standard English” or PUEBI, there were also dialects or colloquial contexts such as Singlish (Singapore English) and Malaysian English, which are typically creoles, mixtures of European and “indigenous” languages. However, as Standard English has privileged access to the information, media, and education, it serves as a reference for what English is. Therefore, it is impossible to narrate “Standard English” without examining the underlying power relations and their impact on the present, where Standard English has been relegated to the margins of the colloquial. An illustration of standard English and its phonetic derivation is as follows.

The sentence	Dialect	Phonetic transcription
"There is something I want to tell"	American English	/ðer iz 'sʌmθɪŋ aɪ wʌnt tu tel ju/
	Indian English	/de:ɪ iz 'sʌmtɪŋ aɪ wɑ:nt tu tel ju: a/
	singapoeran English	/de: iz 'sʌmtɪŋ aɪ wɒn tu tel ju lah/
"/Bismillahirrahmanirrahim/	Arabic	/bis.mil.la:.hir.rah.ma:.nir.ra.hi:m/
	Samunist	/səmɛl.lah/

Figure 1. An illustration of standard and colloquialisms. The non-standard was derived from the standard version.

In the linguistic model, the colloquial aspect is derived from the standard model. The derivative process is by changing,

deleting, or inserting phonological rules. As the language was adjusted, it was reclaimed as the embedded language and used colloquially. In the derivative model, the meaning and message of language are still maintained, but the phonological utterance is adjusted based on the local context. Borrowing the linguistic model, this research also uses the model of derivative language to examine the formation of colloquiality in understanding the expression of Saminist religiosity, which I call derivative religiosity.

Derivative religiosity is the comparison of the derivative process in language to that in religion. Both aim to understand the fluidity, incoherence, and ambiguity in expressing language and religion. As it is derivative, it was not always accepted as a non-standard version. Indeed, the main features of expert-government-minded are to control language and to make it standard. The government education system installs and propagates a 'standard' version of the "cosmopolitan language" as the standard norm and disregards the colloquial and the creole. The unintended consequence of control is that language also serves as a means of perpetuating a hierarchical power structure and establishing notions of 'truth,' 'order,' and 'reality.'⁷⁵

Further, the colloquial language is not only the product of self-community construction, but also a social-context imposition. Surely, in the sociolinguistic model, one could argue that language, like religion, is bounded by certain geographic borders, a socio-historical condition that constitutes the inhabitants of a group or sub-group within a community. Besides, it sees "language" as a singular and essential phenomenon that tends to label and stereotype; it is also aware of social contact, cultural barriers, and the historical struggles of a group or sub-group. Therefore, it is safe to say that by using the sociolinguistic model, I should be concerned with where the language is found without essentializing the location to understand the complexity of "colloquial".

Hence, epistemologically, focusing on colloquial Islam also shifts the religious discourse from "the expert" to the laity,

⁷⁵ Thomas Bauer, *A culture of ambiguity: An alternative history of Islam*. (Columbia University Press, 2021), 21.

from a top-down view to anthropological discovery.⁷⁶ It is about locating the laity as subjects of knowledge and discussion, to talk about themselves and engage dialogically. Knowledge of religious discourse has distinguished between the ideas of the orthodox and the heterodox, and between the body and the mind, in which the power of religious discourse is contested. Within the contestation,

The idea of lived Islam is in dialogue with the idea of discussing the genealogy of knowledge and the instrument of power. Asad proposed the view that there are dimensions and dynamic power in a society where adaptation happens, and the change becomes so unconscious and subtle. Borrowing from Bourdieu, this dynamic of power has fostered a distinct habitus, a set of dispositions wherein Islamic discursive traditions are no longer perceived as external impositions but as internal realities.⁷⁷

Further, Asad emphasized the idea of unconscious systems of thought, perception, and character that become a negotiation between structure and practice. The family, religious-educational institutions, and hierarchical structure of society are agents that transmit the unconscious system of power. It deals not only with expression but also with reproduction, social action, and cultural dominance.⁷⁸ In this perspective, culture and religion are dynamic within the existing social structure. The social relation is not meant solely as social order; it also has a reproductive power in which one dominates the other.

Specifically, in reading Saminist Muslims in Rembang and Blora in the post-*reformasi*, understanding the ambiguity of cosmopolitan Islam is significant for understanding the idea of modernization and the homogenization of the state in managing society. The limitations of cosmopolitan Islam align with the ambitious state planning to create a certain agenda. In the

⁷⁶ Anwar Alam, "'Scholarly Islam' and 'Everyday Islam': Reflections on the Debate over Integration of the Muslim Minority in India and Western Europe," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 27, no. 2 (2007), 241–260.

⁷⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, "A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste," *Cambridge, MA* (1984), 23.

⁷⁸ Ovamir Anjum, "Islam as a Discursive Tradition: Talal Asad and His Interlocutor," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* (1997): 656–672.

beginning, the standard was to control the citizens and manage society through administration, and the state's program was based on the development index so the state could operate effectively.

2. Discursive Tradition

Completing the idea of lived Islam, I use the idea of discursive tradition to theorize the subject. It is like a paradox that Saminism and Islam may be seen practically as contradicting each other. Saminism, seen as inclined to an "animistic" religious belief, differs from Islam. Yet, mystically it is not, for the idea of Saminism on Agama Adam itself is rooted in the Qur'anic narrative. Indeed, I deliberately use the concept to emphasize that Saminism also has its own discursive tradition, namely, mystical Islam. Meaning, the nature of the Saminist teaching was to synthesize Qur'anic and Javanese ideas on the myth of celestial and terrestrial terrain. Historically, Saminist reception of the Qur'an has typically been mystical, and Saminism was inherently ambiguous. The process that constitutes the body of Islamic knowledge is similar to the santri's discursive tradition, which is rooted in normative Islam.

The idea of discursive operates on the logic that Islamic tradition is derived from Islamic authoritative texts, such as the Qur'an and *hadīth*.⁷⁹ Following this concept, the discursive tradition must be understood as a set of discourses embodied in practice and rooted in the body of Islamic knowledge and the institutions of Islamic society. At this point, Asad challenges the conventional social-anthropological approach, seeing tradition as merely a social, political, and cultural product. Indeed, but it is discursive based on the body of the religious text.⁸⁰

In the dialogue with Asad's idea, Shahab Ahmed argues that what is called Islamic tradition is also a matter of hermeneutical interpretation. Defining Islamic tradition solely on the basis of the authoritative text reduces the pre-textual condition that influences

⁷⁹ Asad, "The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam.", 13.

⁸⁰ Anjum, "Islam as a Discursive Tradition :", 658.

the Muslim's understanding of the text.⁸¹ Shahab proposes that Islamic tradition, rooted in the text, could be interpreted differently depending on the socio-historical conditions of Muslim society. Shahab's idea offers the possibilities to understand that the Saminist religious tradition, for example, such as giving offerings to the forest, is also an Islamic tradition, and it gives a sense of authentic expression of being a Saminist Muslim.

Besides Shahab's idea, which offers ample room to understand pluralistic forms of Islamic tradition according to the particular Muslims around the world, this idea also has limitations.⁸² On the one hand, it breaks the boundaries of what is considered Islamic tradition. On the other hand, it shapes subjective distinctions within Islamic tradition and ignores the mechanisms of power in creating the meaning of religious tradition.⁸³ Further, considering that the Saminist religious tradition is ambiguous and dynamic, their Qur'anic tradition in the present day is shaped by mechanisms of power that must be taken into account as variables that make the meaning plausible.

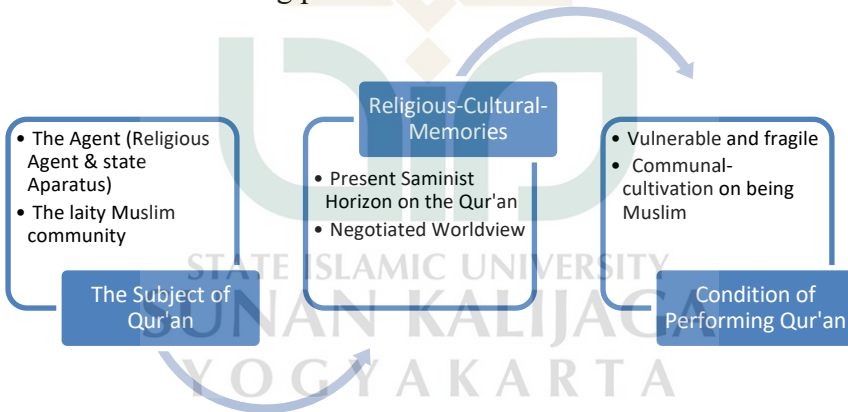


Figure 2. The table of performed Qur'an among Saminist

⁸¹ Shahab Ahmed. *What is Islam? The importance of being Islamic*. Princeton University Press, 2016. 125.

⁸² *ibid*

⁸³ Irfan Ahmad. "Drinking Secularism: A Critique of Shahab Ahmed's What is Islam?." *Religion and Society* 15.1 (2024): 23-46.

The mechanism of power in the process of cultivating and giving meaning to the Qur'anic tradition normatively is what I call "Qur'anic-*stelsel*". It refers to the idea that tradition is habitual and meaning is cultivated within the community. It is not only an internal acceptance, as in the idea of "Qur'anic reception", but also pays more attention to the process that involves more agents in disseminating the tradition. Further, the term also emphasizes the complexity of Islam and Muslim⁸⁴ as well as acknowledging the historical and transformative process of Muslim community.⁸⁵

Further, in discussing the mechanism of power, it is necessary to locate the local religious leaders, *kiai* and *nyai*, as mediators of ideas from Islamic textual sources to their communities. In seeing *Kiai*'s role, Geertz recognized them as a 'cultural broker' who mediates between the source of Islam rooted in Arabia and the local context of Java.⁸⁶ The role is significant in maintaining the community's understanding of the textual source of Islam, as well as continuously infusing the idea and worldview of Islam.⁸⁷ Here, the local *kiai-nyai* and some figures of *pesantrens* serve as mediating agents, assisting the community group in navigating their Islamic-cultural tradition, such as by providing information on the use of the Qur'an in particular situations and conditions as well as nurturing the community.⁸⁸

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⁸⁴ Fadil and Fernando, "Rediscovering the Everyday Muslim Notes on an Anthropological Divide.", 34.

⁸⁵ Thomas Bauer, *A culture of ambiguity: An alternative history of Islam*. (Columbia University Press, 2021), 45.

⁸⁶ Hiroko Horikoshi, *A Traditional Leader in a Time of Change: The "Kijaji" and 'Ulama in West Java* (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1976), 51.

⁸⁷ Zamakhsyari Dhofier, "The *Pesantren* Tradition; A Study of Role of The *Kiai* in the Maintenance of the Traditional Ideology of Isla in Java" (Australian National University, 1980), 30-90.

⁸⁸ Pradjarta Dirdjosanjoto, *Memelihara Umat; Kiai Pesantren-Kiai Langgar Di Jawa*, ed. Hairus Salim H. S., 1st ed. (Yogyakarta: LKiS Pelangi Aksara, 1999), 22.

E. Research Methods

This research is an interdisciplinary study integrating the idea of the living Qur'an, the anthropology of the Islamic community, and the politics of religion in Indonesia. The Saminist community in the present is an ample laboratory for observing the practice of Islam within modern Muslim society, and is significant for examining scripture in the modern life of a community whose religiosity was rooted in mystical Islam and political biases.

In dealing with the Saminist community, I have to acknowledge my personal experience to locate my position as a researcher. Since I was a child, I was educated in the traditional *pesantren* that even limits formal education. The earliest information I got about Saminism came from my late maternal grandfather. He was from a village where many Saminists reside. Whenever I visited him during my childhood, he told me about the Sedulur Sikep, the religion of Adam, and some mystical elements of Saminism, such as Javanese *du'a* that started with *semelah*. Although he had passed away, the community, especially the elderly, remembered me. During the research, the community around me recognized me as a “*guru madrasah*” (teacher) from the *pesantren*, or as the grandchild of Mbah Karino, my maternal grandfather. This ancestral root and historical background as a *santri* are beneficial in limiting bias in this research.

This study is both a theoretical perspective and an empirical investigation. Theoretically, this study examines and challenges the existing theoretical perspective, while empirically it observes the present community through field study. The method used is library and field research. In the library, I do some bibliographical studies, collecting some relevant sources, and listing some relevant works to enrich my data. Some unpublished document archived in the regional library was also used to enrich my data.⁸⁹

During field research, I collected data on my proposed question, conducted in-depth conversations, and participated in important moments. I regard this research as ethnographic work;

⁸⁹ John W Creswell and Cheryl N Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* (Sage publications, 2016), 46.

therefore, I reside for a couple of months to understand their worldview, religious activities, norms, and values as reflected in certain ritual practices.

1. Data Collection Techniques

This research gathers information from daily conversations, community leaders, and ordinary folks by listening to their stories.⁹⁰ There are almost 20 (twenty) Saminists that I structurally arranged for an interview. These figures were selected as reliable sources. Among them are the head of Saminist, the heads of villages and figures, ordinary Saminist people working in the field, a Qur'anic teacher, and other Saminists participating in many activities. As a participant observer, I was also involved in the traditional religious practices and in social activities. The activities that I have followed, such as being a participant in certain religious traditions and some festivals.

As a researcher living with the subject, the data collection process was structured through daily interactions with people at the food stall, *warung*, *madrasah*, *langgar*, and other sites where information could be obtained. The interaction shapes snowballing information. The entire interview was also conducted through various activities, such as religious sermons, cultural events, and some activities with objective purposes. To complete the data, I also travel to Pati, Bojonegoro, and other parts of Blora to confirm some of it. The visit was also to validate the historical narrative and to compare the nature of Saminism in other areas with that of Saminist Muslims in Rembang and Blora. This research also uses the official document that is preserved mainly in the Rembang-Blora archival documentary, as well as in recent information about religious activities in Southern Rembang and Blora.

2. Data Analysis Techniques

In examining the proposed question, I use synchronic and diachronic methods, with a historical method applied accordingly.⁹¹ The synchronic method was applied by comparing the processes of

⁹⁰ Ong, "Literacy and Orality in Our Times.", 67.

⁹¹ Moh. Nazir, *Metode Penelitian*, 11th ed. (Bogor: Ghalia Indonesia, 2014), 67.

religious ritual and the formation of ‘Islamic tradition’ across different places at the same time. In contrast, the diachronic process compares the data at different times within the same communities. If the material data are not found, the writer employs the community's collective memory or oral stories to figure out how the sequence of traditions unfolded. Therefore, this study uses a data triangulation technique by examining historical-textual sources, present behavior, and oral stories from Saminists.

The data are abundant yet selectively presented, intended only to investigate the contemporary use of the Qur’an. Further, this study analyzes their dialect in reciting the Qur’an and the community's recitation and pronunciation, including phonetic variation. This analysis, as inspired by Reinhart, attempts to capture the process where the Qur’an, which originated in Arabic, meets the Saminist tongue, which was historically persistent in maintaining its Javanese *ngoko*. Through the diachronic process of internalizing the Qur’an in their daily lives, this research identifies some differences and changes, especially across generations.

F. Chapter Outline and Structure

This work presents the contemporary Islamic tradition in rural areas by outlining the Qur’anic performance in certain rituals of Saminist Muslims. It links the idea of lived Islam, a discursive tradition of negotiation, to the contemporary social and political conditions in Indonesia. This work is organized into five sections and a conclusion. The outline of the structure is the first chapter, explaining the research problems and gaps. It consists of the introduction of the study, the research background, the research question and its objectives, the previous studies, the theoretical framework, and the method.

The second chapter focuses on the root of Saminism, the historical background, and the construction of Saminist-Muslim identity in Rembang and Blora. In this chapter, I explore the brief history of Saminism, Saminists as a distinct community, and the present condition of the economy and education of Saminists, including their daily religious practices and political and socio-economic aspects. The historical construct depicts the Qur’an as an

“alien text” for Saminist. Further, these chapters also highlight the politics of religion and Saminism in Rembang and Blora as subjects of the Islamization-development program.

The third chapter explains the agent and the relations of the agent and Saminist to the Qur'an, the transmission, and the discursive religious practices. In this chapter, I explore how the Qur'an is a “Political requirement” for the Saminist community. There are two points in this sub-chapter: first, exploring the core and fundamental tradition of the Qur'an within the prophetic tradition, and problematizing the idea of scripture and how lay people, such as Saminists, relate to and engage with it. The second point is the role of agents in the context of Indonesian *reformasi*. This sub-chapter explores the role of the agent in disseminating the Qur'anic tradition, the religious reform, and the politics of making modern Saminist through Qur'anic learning.

The fourth chapter analyses the practice of Qur'an in the life of Saminists, as well as investigating the use of the Qur'an in constructing their “new” identity as Muslims. This chapter explores the Qur'anic texts and the religious traditions among Sunni Muslims. This chapter explains the use of the Qur'an and any derivative tradition as well as the role of local religious leaders in informing the use of the Qur'an in certain traditions, such as Suronan, Sedekah Bumi, Temon Banyu, Malem Selikuran, and any kind of everyday practice, such as the practice of Qur'anic learning and Qur'anic competition.

The fifth chapter analyses the present-future condition, the Qur'an in the cosmopolitan tradition, and Saminist colloquially. At this point, I explore young Saminist as fully Islamic societies and their dialectical encounters with the outside world. Focusing on the Qur'an, I narrate how it is becoming part of their religiosity, an expression of their piety. By looking at their interaction with the Qur'an, I also explore the present Saminist as an active agent who appropriates the majority in interacting with the Qur'an.

The last chapter is the conclusion and academic suggestion. This chapter briefly concludes the main findings of my research in the context of the Qur'an in everyday life of Saminist and the discursive tradition. Further, this chapter also explores the Saminist Muslim relationship in the post-Indonesian *reformasi* era and local

government policies. This last chapter also provides the academic nuance to depict the situation and condition of Saminist community. Surely the last chapter is a reflection that may be useful for the discussion of the Qur'an in the strong Islamization process and the formation of Islamic tradition in the democratic transformation of society.



CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

A. Conclusion

This is my last point: observing cosmopolitan Muslims and the Qur'an within the lived tradition of Saminism, especially how this idea contributes to the discourse of Islamic studies in Indonesia today. At the beginning of my research, I identify this study as a dynamic religious discourse in Indonesia more generally and examine the processes of Islamization and modernization through the community's relationship with the Qur'an. This standpoint is significant for *adat* communities in Indonesia, in this case, the Saminist, who accept Islam in the sense of its mystical element.

Given the multifaceted nature of Saminist religiosity, it is difficult to draw precise conclusions from everyday conversation and interaction. This difficulty stems largely from the permeable ideas and religiosity that shift over time, which I found to have no clear boundaries between being a Muslim and being a Saminist. Rather than generalizing my findings, I will offer a broader perspective and a more nuanced understanding of Saminist religiosity. This helps us draw a bigger picture of the Qur'an and the dynamics of religious identity in Indonesia. By analyzing their relationship with the Qur'an, I also explore the Saminist tradition, the agent, and Islamic cosmopolitanism in contemporary Indonesia. Further, I point out some considerations that might benefit other studies on the Qur'an in the life of the *adat* community.

Drawing on Reinhart's idea of lived Islam in the post-*reformasi* period, I have highlighted certain ambiguities to illustrate the dynamics of Saminist religious life. The first ambiguity is religious standardization, in which state and religious agents attempt to "modernize" and "civilize" the Saminist community. While this effort has made the community more Islamized, it neglects diversity and simultaneously increases social segregation within the *adat* community. The problem of modernization has been seen as a malicious aspect of the Saminist religious tradition.

The second ambiguity concerns the Saminist model of Qur'an acceptance. Historically, the Saminist had accepted the Qur'an in a mystical sense and, as part of their body of knowledge, integrated it into their *du'a*. Yet, they were refusing formal Islam and still maintaining their distinct Saminist religious identity. On the one hand, their religious practices are called syncretic. On the other hand, they show a culture of ambiguity in the history of the intersection between Islam and local religious beliefs.

The last ambiguity concerns the cosmopolitan tradition that shapes the Saminist future generation to be more of a "Qur'anic generation" and to recite the Qur'an properly. However, this mastery may have altered how they relate to their own culture and how the Qur'an is absent from the local nuances of their particular religious tradition. All of those ambiguities result from Saminist religious construction, the agent's role, and the political conditions that marginalize them. Moving beyond the ambiguities, I conclude with some points.

First, since the colonial period, Muslims have been distinguished by their territorial origin: one is the center, and the other is the periphery; the first is pure and pristine, while the second is typically syncretic. Objectification is further perpetuated in the academic field by reducing religiosity to a binary between the *santri* and *abangan* groups; the first is religiously pious and orthodox, while the second is heterodox and syncretic. Taking a peripheral community as the locus of study, this thesis unpacks how Saminist religiosity-identity has historically been objectified in the narration of *kebathinan*, which is more bound to the Javanese religious tradition. Such a position has much to do with the colonial concept of religion adopted in modern Indonesia. The rigid term "Agama" was so problematic in the face of the Saminist community, who understood "agama" in the sense of way of life. As the concept was formulated to determine recognized and unrecognized religions, it has severe consequences for the distinction between *adat* and religion. Significantly, Indonesia, through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, had officially recognized only five religions, and Saminism, as an *adat* community, must embrace one of them.

Further, with this legal political charge, Saminist embraces Islam as a religious belief. However, the image and narrative of

Saminist remains the same. They were narrated as a *kebathinan* group, an *adat* community rooted in agrarian tradition, and historically as a peasant rebellion, anti-modernization, and “Islam”. The prejudice against Saminists goes on for many Saminists who converted to Islam, who were identified as “Islam KTP” or a Muslim by the document. Therefore, their Islamic religiosity is seen as shallow, unauthentic, impure, and their identity was corrupted. Surely, Saminist conversion to Islam may be seen as the product of religious-political engineering, but this study shows that it is not solely a determining factor. Indeed, this study found that Saminists had already embraced Islam in the mystical and theological senses, and had utilized the Qur’an from the beginning in their religious tradition.

This paper then examines both religiosity and identity within a social, political, and historical narrative. In the post-1998 period, after the introduction of regional autonomy, locally in Blora, the region empowers Saminist identity by designating the annual Samin festival as a local identity, recognizing *mbah* Samin as a local hero, and establishing Kampung Samin, which signifies a political relationship between Saminists and the religious-political elite. So does in Rembang, Saminist rejection of the development project led them to ally with religious agents. Post-*reformasi* is a condition that has brought the Saminist community into a close relationship with the political elite and religious agents. At the same time, *paguyuban* Sedulur Sikep, as a union of Saminist families for maintaining religious-cultural identities, began to be religiously fragmented- socially segregated between those who persist in being *penghayat*, and those who profess to be Muslims. Among the community's internal disputes, the presence of the Qur’an in their tradition serves as a marker for inclusion and exclusion of relatives, family, and their Sunni counterparts.

Second, interestingly, since they were Muslims, there was a growing awareness as part of the broader Muslim *ummah*, which drives them to self-consciousness (*kesadaran*) and awareness to practice Islam in more appropriate ways. It is by establishing a distinct Qur’anic tradition in their religious life. Historically, Saminists’ way of “acquiring” the Qur’an is based on oral and aural dimensions. Meaning, there is no official historical record of Saminist learning the Qur’an intensively. However, it does not

mean that they have violated an orthopraxy, the proper way to recite the Qur'an. It is safe to say that Saminists are in the process of cultivating the religious tradition into their daily life. The act of being a more proper Muslim was expressed in their everyday life. Although it is not fully, they were appropriating the idea of being a Muslim by practicing Islamic tenets, such as praying, fasting, inviting the reciter of the Qur'an in their ritual, and so on.

Further, the act of interacting with the Qur'an in the Saminist community becomes more intense in the post-*reformasi*, and it is typically based on the performative function rather than the informative function. It functioned in their daily purposes individually, such as in the ceremonies of marriage and childbirth, and collectively in *adat* rituals and the community's commemoration of their struggle against the political decision of developmentalism. Thus, it is proper to argue that although Saminist is non-literate and bound in *adat*, they were in an effort to apply the Qur'an to most critical situations in their lives; it is not complementary; it is a vital element.

Third, Saminists' understanding of the Qur'an does not mean that they lack any interpretative or informative aspects of it. Surely, the idea of the informative aspect shall not be limited to the capability to read and comprehend its meaning in a pure sense; it must be extended to the idea of sounding, accepting, and acquiring the information about the Qur'an. Indeed, the very basic meaning of the Qur'an itself is to verbalize the recitation. They acquire the information through daily interaction with their neighbors, local *kiai*, preacher on television, and other media, as well as other religious agents that perpetually shape their understanding of the Qur'an. These agents stimulate the practice, providing guidance and detailed information about the Qur'an as practiced in their daily lives.

In the context of daily life, the distinct Qur'anic tradition, such as *Khataman*, becomes a medium for negotiating Saminist multi-layered religiosity-identity. It is a symbol to distinguish themselves from others. These ideas become the subject of profound and complex discourse in the scholarly tradition. Various views have emerged between those seeing Islam in a "standard" way and those accepting the colloquial aspect of Islam. This paper argues that acknowledging the colloquial and local aspects of Islam

is beneficial for understanding the social, cultural, and political circumstances, as well as the process of cultivating values among Muslims in dealing with the Qur'an. Such cultivation drives them to apply the Qur'an in their daily activities, thereby perpetually rejuvenating, reconstructing, and reproducing their religiosity and piety. They were perpetually becoming the *muallafatil ummah*, an ongoing process to accept Islam and situate themselves as proper Muslims and a community of believers with equal status. Likewise, *Iman*, which is increasing and decreasing (*yazīdu wa wānquṣ*), so does identity, the expression of religiosity and piety; it is fluid, growing, and evolving.

At the end, this research offers a novel perspective on the intersection of sacred texts and *adat* community by investigating the role of the Qur'an in the everyday lives of the Saminist community in post-*reformasi* Indonesia. Unlike previous studies that often consider the Saminists as a static *adat* or "*abangan*" (syncretic) group isolated from Islamic orthodoxy, this dissertation explores how they have been using the Qur'an in their religious tradition and continuously "Qur'anizing" their traditions to negotiate a modern religious identity. Indeed, such reception was historically rooted in their daily life. Here, I introduce the concept of "derivative religiosity" to describe the ongoing and often contested process where local ethical and cosmological commitments intersect with Islamic discourse. This concept allows a unique reproduction of piety that is neither purely traditional nor strictly orthodox. By framing the Qur'an as "the sacred," the community had been cultivating and performing in rituals. Further, the study moves beyond simple conversion narratives to show how non-literate groups reclaim belonging within the wider "proper Muslim" community.

B. Academic Contribution and Suggestion

Academically, this work contributes to the Anthropology of Islam and Javanese studies by challenging the anthropological framework that oversimplifies the complexity of religious life. Drawing on Talal Asad's framework of "discursive tradition," the research demonstrates that religiosity in rural Indonesia is fluid and historically situated rather than a fixed category. It provides an

anthropological account of how non-literate communities engage with the Qur'an through oral, aural, and performative means, highlighting the role of local religious agents (*Kiai*) and the political elite as mediators between textual authority and local custom. Ultimately, the study enriches the discourse on the Qur'an in the life of the *adat* community and on Islamization in contemporary Indonesia, portraying it as a multivocal and "colloquial" process influenced by local politics, state modernization projects, and the rise of cosmopolitan Islam.

This thesis focuses on capturing the full narrative of Saminism and Saminist relations with the Qur'an. Time and space for observation are limited, but they provide a significant reference for studying the Saminist community. Indeed, Saminist, as an *adat* community, and its relationship with the Qur'an are broad and diverse subjects. Given the limitation, my research may be a comprehensive study or a detailed ethnography that provides information about the Qur'an in the present Saminist ritual, in its historical context, and in everyday life. Instead, I also focus on how, under what conditions, and why Saminists use the Qur'an to construct their identity and religiosity, especially in the post-*reformasi* period in Indonesia. There are a few aspects of Saminist religiosity and their relationship with the Qur'an that need further examination, such as their reception of the Qur'an after becoming *penghayat*, Saminist religious life outside the Saminist community, especially in urban areas, and the Saminist way of reciting the Qur'an.

Here, I would also like to suggest a few possibilities for deepening study of Saminism, or even for comparative research between Saminism and other religious communities. In deepening the research, investigating the Saminist theological view is an interesting subject, especially its spiritual root. It would give more sense and meaning to their religious expression and the diverse ways of community practice within the inner form of Islam. So does it in the linguistic field, for they were producing terms that represent their worldview and religiosity. Socio-linguistic analysis will deepen their social-religious structure expression in their daily life. From a comparative perspective, further study could examine the Saminist relationship with the Qur'an and with other *adat* communities, such as Badui, Sunda Wiwitan, Madraism,

Kaharingan, and so on. It is interesting that many indigenous communities are embracing Islam and examining how far they accept Islamic religious texts in their daily life. Further, another research on comparing the Saminist and *santri* communities would be an interesting subject to pursue. The research re-examines the distinction between two religious groups in Java, often seen as binary. Surely, there is a broad range of studies about Saminism, and the various subjects will always bring about our limitations and position. Last but not least, this limitation reminds us to see the complexity of Islam and Muslim society.



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 Ngaisah, a Qur'anic teacher in Klopoduwur, 20 November 2024
 Sutiban, an active Saminist in Paguyuban, in Tegaldowo
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