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**FOOD AND LOCAL SOCIAL HARMONY: PORK, COMMUNAL DINING, AND MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS IN FLORES** Abstract This study explores the relations between Catholics and Muslims in Manggarai based on their perspectives on pork being served in communal dining settings. Pigs carry a significant meaning for people in Manggarai as a sacrificial animal, a symbol of culture and belief, which is why pork has been served as the main course at various celebrations. It is common for a Muslim family to provide a pig at certain rituals, notwithstanding the fact that they will not eat it.

To cater for Muslim families, Catholic families have a tradition called woni, whereby they serve their Muslim guests a pork-free 'special menu'. This tradition, however, has become less popular over the past few years because of its sensitive and conflicting nature. Through a socio-historic approach, this study argues that food can be a medium to both strengthen and sever inter-faith relations. This includes a closer look at a new dakwah movement, the politics of identity, religious conflicts, majority-minority tensions in Indonesia and abroad are also key factors that can affect Catholic-Muslim relations in Manggarai.

Keywords: Pork, Muslim-Catholic relations, Flores, Eastern Indonesia, Tabligh Jamaah  
Abstrak Studi ini mengeksplorasi hubungan umat Katolik dan Islam di Manggarai yang dikaji dari perspektif makanan khususnya hadirnya daging babi di acara makan bersama. Bagi orang Manggarai, babi adalah hewan kurban, lambing identitas budaya, keyakinan dan menjadi menu utama. Sudah cukup lama, adalah normal bagi keluarga Muslim Manggarai menyediakan babi untuk ritual adat walaupun mereka tidak menyantapnya. Orang (Katolik) Manggarai sendiri memiliki tradisi "woni" yakni menyediakan "menu khusus" bukan daging babi untuk keluarga Muslim agar relasi dan makan bersama berjalan baik.

Namun tradisi ini mulai bergeser; menghadirkan babi di dalam ritual dan adanya daging babi di dalam acara makan bersama menjadi isus sensitif dan bahkan konfliktual. Melalui kajian sosio-historis penelitian ini berargumentasi bahwa makanan bias menjadi sarana penguat sekaligus membahayakan bagi relasi kedua agama. Di dalamnya, kehadiran gerakan dakwah baru, politik identitas, konflik agama, gesekan mayoritas-minoritas di Indonesia dan global menjadi faktor penentu perubahan relasi Katolik-Islam di Manggarai.

Kata Kunci: Daging Babi, Hubungan Islam-Katolik, Flores, Indonesia Timur, Jamaah Tabligh

Introduction Pigs have played a central role in the life of the people of Manggarai, Eastern Indonesia, long before Catholicism and Islam entered the region. Pigs and pork are not only seen as livestock and a source of food –they are rich in cultural value and form **a part of the** local identity. This is reflected by the many different terms used in Manggarai to describe pigs, as based on their functions in different traditional rituals. The pig is also of religious importance for Catholics in Manggarai.

Most Catholic households in Manggarai rear pigs, which are then sold or slaughtered to be eaten at religious celebrations, traditional rituals, and other communal gatherings. **On the other hand,** pork is considered haram in Islam. As Islam is a minority religion in Flores, including in Manggarai, however, it is inevitable for Muslims in the regency to encounter pigs or pork. This is especially so for those with Catholic family members or neighbors who rear pigs and eat pork on a daily basis.

If a Muslim family has a Catholic family member who is performing a ritual involving a sacrificial pig, it is tradition and the duty of the Muslim family to provide a sacrificial pig even if they cannot eat pork themselves. To accommodate restrictions on eating pork in Islam, celebrations in Manggarai involving communal eating (usually buffet style) also serve non-pork dishes, especially for the Muslim guests and family members. These dishes are served on a separate table away from the main dishes that contain pork. This tradition is called woni. This study analyzes the use of pigs in traditional rituals **and the presence of** pork dishes in communal dining in Flores, Eastern Indonesia.

The study explores how this tradition has been practiced from time to time, how it has changed or transformed, and what factors cause such changes. This leads to **a closer look at** how the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Western Flores has evolved, and whether pigs and pork in a communal setting can strengthen or challenge this relationship. As the perception and attitude of Catholics and Muslims in Flores about pigs, pork, halal food, and the relations between the two religious groups are also affected by various factors.

This study also looks at the situation on a regional, national, trans-national, and global scale, especially with regards to awareness **of the concept of** halal, dakwah and purification movements in Islam, and conflicts between Muslims and Christians in general. Scholars, including Allerton (2009a, 2009b, 2013), Erb (1999, 2006), Lon and Widyawati (2013, 2017, 2018, 2019), have found that people in Manggarai, Flores regularly adhere to local traditions, despite having adopted Catholicism or another religion. Their perspectives become the basis of understanding why rituals, including those involving pigs/pork, are significant.

None of these studies, however, focus on the significance of food, especially pork, in these rituals, as well as food's connection to the Muslim community in Manggarai. This study therefore seeks to contribute to the social understanding of food and relations between people of different religious groups. Notable anthropologists, including Tylor (1871), Frazer (1890), Kroeber (1920), and Freud (1913), have conducted studies on the significance of food (and the relevant animals and/or plants), which have included explorations of the totem and taboo of food consumption. Their analysis is the basis of understanding why many communities all over the world value certain animals and meat over others. This happens also for the Manggarai, which eventually gave birth to the tradition of woni.

Woni refers to the tradition of providing a special menu for guests with cultural restrictions at communal gatherings. The tradition is based in the concept of taboo. More recent studies by Riaz and Chaudry (2004), Dindyal and Dindyal (2004), Lupton (1996), Ceséro (2003), and Caplan (1997) underline that food consumption carries social, cultural, religious, moral, artistic, and even political values. These studies can be used to understand the phenomenon of communal eating in a community of Muslims and Catholics in Flores.

As the phenomenon of halal food awareness increases in many parts of the world, including in Indonesia, studies by Fischer (2015, 2016), Chamburi and Batt (2013), Sosilowati (2010), Sukesti (2014), and Ismoyowati (2015) will guide the understanding of similar phenomena in the local context of Flores, which challenges the local tradition of woni. These studies do not, however, specifically discuss the effect of different culinary traditions on Muslim-Christian relations, an issue raised in this study. This study finds that Muslim-Christian relations in Manggarai, Flores, Eastern Indonesia can be harmonious when both parties respect each other's understanding and perception of food, namely where Muslims respect the significance of pork for Catholic Manggaraians and Catholics, reciprocally, acknowledge that pork is haram for Muslims. Woni becomes the way for both parties to compromise, adapt, and accommodate. This paper will further discuss how this tradition is practiced in Manggarai.

Interestingly, in the last century, there has been increased disapproval from the Muslims in Manggarai of the practice of woni. This also triggers a debate about the validity of traditional Catholic-Muslim relations. This paper explores possible factors that have led to a shift in perspective and behavior of Muslims in the Catholic-majority region of Flores. It finds that the relations between the two groups at a local level are tied to the shift in perspective and Islamic movements at global, national, and regional levels.

In the past two decades, the dakwah (Islamic propagation) movement of Jamaah Tabligh

(Tabligh People) and Salafi groups, as well as the strengthening of Islamic education in a region where most schools are based on Catholic teachings, have likely led to a change in attitude of Muslims toward food and their relations with Catholics. Trans-national and national dakwah movements have been studied by many scholars, including Azra (2002), Aziz (2004), Din (2014), Hasan (2010), and Bruinessen (2002). This study seeks to find the link between these large-scale movements and changes at the local level, especially given that Flores is a region where Muslims are the minority.

It is also probable that the phenomena of religious conflicts and violence in other regions in Indonesia, including Java, Poso, Ambon, and in nearby Kupang, have shaped this new perspective among some Muslims of Muslim-Catholic relations at the local level. This argument is supported by studies by Klinken (2007), Aragon (2001, 2005), Wilson (2008), Arifianto (2009), and a local researcher in Flores, Tule (2014). They argue that violence has never stood alone. Conflict and violence, in turn, have been important in shaping the attitude and perspective of people of others, in particular to the group of opponents.

This study offers a new perspective by viewing the complexities of Muslim-Catholic relations through the simple affair of communal dining. Eating can be seen as a mundane activity, but it is also a fundamental event in a communal setting. It is not a mere biological activity, but also a cultural, social, political, economic, and religious one. This study also looks at how both parties – Catholics and Muslims – navigate their differing values in different ways, namely where the party that deems a particular food haram (forbidden) also provides the other party with that very same food.

This study argues that the relationship between Muslims and Catholics in Flores can be sensitive or conflictual depending on the context. For local Muslims who have family ties, as well as the same cultural and historical background as local Catholics, the negotiation of the inclusion of pigs and pork in rituals and communal dining is not a significant issue because there is an understanding of the cultural significance and, therefore, a kinship. In the absence of a contextual understanding or kinship, however, the relationship between Muslims and Catholics can indeed become sensitive and conflictual.

Religious preaching that excludes and segregates people, a history of violence in other regions, and majority-minority tensions are some of the factors that contribute to the lack of understanding between the two groups. Through socio-historical analysis, this study contributes to the understanding of the unique faces of Islam and Catholicism in Flores. Islam in Manggarai Manggarai is located in the western part of the island of Flores, in the province of East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). It covers a third of the island.

Manggarai used to be a single regency but was later split into three new districts: West Manggarai (in 2003), East Manggarai (in 2006) and Manggarai. The two new districts still bear the name "Manggarai" to reflect their cultural identity (Lon and Widyawati, 2017, 2018, 2019). According to the Population Census, the religious composition of all three districts is as follows: 87.81 per cent Catholic, 11.48 per cent Muslim, 0.64 per cent Protestant, and 0.07 per cent Hindu (BPS, 2017).\_ Islam was the first religion to reach Manggarai.

It spread rapidly and quickly became the dominant religion in the coastal regions of Kalimantan, Sumatra, and Sulawesi, but it spread more slowly in highland areas (Steenbrink, 2013). In Manggarai, Islam similarly spread rapidly in coastal areas and only started to resonate in highland towns in the mid 20th century, after the migration of people from Java, Sumatra, Sumbawa, and other parts of the archipelago. Islam was introduced in Manggarai in the 16th century by people from the Gowa and Bima sultanates. These two sultanates played an important role in the Islamization of Eastern Indonesia from the 1000s to the 1600s.

People from Bima and Gowa originally came to Manggarai to trade. They sought cinnamon, sandalwood, honey, wax, yellow wood, horses, and even slaves (Widyawati and Purwatma, 2013:59-70). In the 17th century, Gowa became a strong Islamic sultanate in Eastern Indonesia that often deployed soldiers to conquer various regions in Lombok and Flores (Parimatha, 2002). After the Sultanate of Gowa expanded to Manggarai in 1626, Islam started to spread quickly, mainly on the north coast (Reo and Pota), the west coast (Labuan Bajo), and the south coast (Nanga Lili and Nanga Ramut) (Toda, 1999: 232).

Gowa's power over Manggarai officially ended in 1667 after the defeat of Sultan Hassanudin in the battle against the Dutch. An agreement called Bongaya was formulated on 18 November 1667, which stipulated that Gowa would leave Manggarai. Manggarai was then subsequently ruled by the Sultanate of Bima (Widyawati and Purwatma, 2013: 63). In Manggarai, the Bima people mainly settled in Reo (north coast), Labuan Bajo (west coast), Pota (northeast coast), and Bari (northwest coast). They collected slaves, horses, and wax as an annual tax (Steenbrink, 2013: 108). The Bimanese also monopolized the business in Manggarai, disallowing locals to trade outside the island. This made their relations between the two peoples very unbalanced.

Coolhaas described the situation as follows: Native Manggarai people could be sure that they would be cheated and despised in the Bimanese coastal places if they were so lucky not to be injured or even to be taken away as slaves. Only in urgent cases, they

come to these places with the things that they could offer: wax, sleeping mats, and cinnamon. ... Bimanese people only went to inland regions in great and well-armed parties. Their common purpose was to collect fines (this was the name for their robberies) for their own profit and to incite one dalu\_ against another, which should lead to new wars and this again to new fines (Steenbrink, 2013: 109; from Coolhaas 1942: 171).

The spread of Islam in Manggarai weakened in the 18th century as a result of policies dictated by Sultan Abdul Hamid Syah. On 17 April 1784, he issued a statement that forbade the people of Bugis, Makassar, and Bima from staying near the people of Manggarai as he believed that "the Manggarai people can damage religion (Islam) and their culture. Bima people were required to remain in the coastal area" (Coolhas, 1942: 326-360). On the other hand, local Manggaraians were hesitant to convert to Islam as hunting and eating pork and dog meat was part of their local custom and culture.

For the locals, pigs were important sacrificial animals for various traditional rituals. Therefore, adopting Islam meant neglecting their culture, which was not an easy decision. Bima's power in Manggarai began to weaken as a result of the eruption of Mount Tambora in 1815, which caused the deaths of many important Bima leaders (Parimatha, 1999: 516). In the early 20th century, the development of Islam further weakened due to the presence of the Colonial Administration and Catholic missionaries.

In 1907, Dutch military officials, under the supervision of Captain Hans Christoffel, carried out a military attack that commenced in the east (Ende) and headed westward into Ngada, Bajawa, and Manggarai. Controleur A.J.L. Couvreur saw that Ngada and Manggarai had great potential due to their fertile land and large population, so he wrote a letter to the Catholic Mission in Larantuka, East Flores, to convince them to conduct a mission in these regions, especially to undermine the spread of Islam. After several attempts, the missionaries were finally sent into Manggarai. As a result, Bima was forced out and the spread of Islam slowed down (Steenbrink, 2013).

With the arrival of Dutch officials and missionaries, many Muslims were forced to convert to Catholicism and, therefore, the spread of Islam was confined to small coastal villages such as Bari, Pota, Reo, Nangalili, Labuan Bajo. One family in Kempo, West Manggarai, shared that, initially, all their family members were Muslim. Dutch officials and missionaries, however, forced them to convert to Catholicism. The family made a deal whereby some family members would be allowed to remain as Muslims in order to be able to slaughter goats and buffalo during traditional rituals according to the legitimate Muslim way.

The missionaries then opened schools in villages, including in coastal areas. Muslim children in these schools were mandated to be baptized (Rol, 2016; Jehanu, 2017). Many Muslim families remained Muslim but their children who attended Catholic schools became Catholic, meaning an immediate family could comprise both Muslims and Catholics. And so herein lies the genesis of the kinship between Catholics and Muslims in Manggarai: notwithstanding religious differences, inter-faith families remained harmonious and continued to carry out traditional rituals.

Looking back at history, Toda (1999: 55) has suggested that, initially, Islam as a culture had a wider influence than Islam as a religious institution. There were no systematic efforts behind the spreading of Islam as a religion, nor was there any effort to practice the religion institutionally. As a result, knowledge of Islam was limited and Islam was practiced loosely. Islam began to spread more significantly in the Manggarai highland areas in the middle of 20th century.

According to the Ambonese Muslim Hajj Amir (2018), who visited Ruteng, the district center of Manggarai, in 1961, the number of local Muslims could be counted on one hand. This number slowly increased from the 1970s onward as civil servants began to be employed in the Manggarai region. A very simple mosque in the city center was also built in the early 1970s. With government backing— including President Soeharto's program "building 999 mosques throughout the archipelago" – another larger mosque was constructed in the 1980s.

Teachers of religion, civil and private sector workers started to pour into Manggarai, as did traders from Bima, Sulawesi, Java, and Sumatra. The new migrants mostly dwelled in the highlands, where the towns were located. They started to dominate the businesses as the locals were not as innovative and competitive. They eventually brought their family and friends here, adding even more to the Muslim population. At this point, almost all dining places in town were owned by Muslims, while both street food and clothes vendors both in and out of town were predominantly Muslim, from Java, Padang, and Bima.

They conducted their business alongside the Chinese, who were mostly Protestants or Catholics. Since the 2000s, Muslim schools have been more popular in Flores. At the same time, Muslim studies have been introduced to the curriculum in public schools (and some private Catholic schools) in Flores as the number of Muslim students coming from other regions has increased significantly. As a result, Islamic symbols in the public sphere have become more apparent in this Catholic-majority region.

Muslim education, in addition to dakwah from official agencies under the supervision of



the Ministry of Religion and Muslim organizations like NU and Muhammadiyah, has become more intensive and has led to a heightened awareness of Islamic practices among local Muslim residents in Flores. Since the start of the 21st century, Islam in Manggarai has also faced transformation due to the advent of Tabligh Jamaah and Khilafah groups that start dakwah movements in this region. This movement is also tied to movements at the trans-national and national level (Bruinessen and Julia Day Howell, ed., 2008, Razak, 2009). These groups are generally exclusive.

They are typically reluctant to mingle with local residents, including local Muslims who do not share the same denomination or ideology. All these movements have contributed to the new face of Islam in Manggarai and the way in which Muslims interact with Catholics and Catholicism. Catholicism in Manggarai As compared to the region of East Flores, Catholicism's foray into Manggarai started late. Catholicism was first introduced to the eastern region of Flores by Portuguese missionaries in the 16th century.

Their efforts were then continued by Dutch missionaries until the 20th century. Even in the early 20th century, however, missionaries refused to expand their mission into Manggarai, the western part of Flores. It is believed that one of the main reasons was their fear of Islam under the power of Gowa and Bima. This was also likely due to topographical challenges and the limited number of missionaries (Widyawati, 2018: 99-110). In the early 20th century, Dutch Protestant missionaries in Flores overcame this fear and commenced their mission in West Flores. There was still, however, no Catholic mission. Only after 1906 when A.

Couvreur, a devout Catholic, was appointed as the official ruling over Flores did Catholic missionary work start. After his trip to the western region of Flores in October 1907, Couvreur wrote a personal letter to the mission head in Larantuka, East Flores. He explained that West Flores was potentially fertile ground for the spread of Catholicism. He expressed his concern that without a Catholic mission, Islam would occupy the area. His letter, however, was ignored. He later wrote to Mgr. Luypen, the bishop of Batavia: If we do not act fast, Islam will occupy the interior and we will lose this area forever. This is regrettable because the missionaries have settled in the most economically and spiritually backward part of Flores.

This is a region with potential but will never be able to match up to north Ende without the mission. Moreover, the population density in this region is much higher than in Maumere and Larantuka. If we act fast, Flores, with the exception of a few coastal places, can be secured by the Catholic Church. We will be able to take over the interior of Ende and the fertile Manggarai, which is currently under the power of Bima Muslims

(Steenbrink, 2013: 111).

In one of Couvreur's other official letters, written on behalf of Captain Christoffel and dated 1 October 1907, he also threatened that if the Catholic Church was unwilling to expand the mission to the western region, he would give the territory to the Batavia Protestant Church rather than allowing Islam to grow there. As a result, Jesuit missionaries sent their priests to Manggarai in 1915. Their work was continued by SVD (the Societas Verbi Divini/ Society of Divine Word) missionaries who began to make Ruteng a mission center in Manggarai. It was a big dream of the missionaries to make Flores a Catholic island.

They developed a precise strategy so that the western Flores region could become Catholic. That way, all of Flores would be dominated by Catholicism. Through the support of Dutch officials and the effective strategies of the missionaries, Catholicism spread rapidly throughout Flores. In just 25 years, the majority of Manggaraians converted to Catholicism, thereby hindering the development of Islam. The missionaries did not only spread religion but also carried out various development programs to improve education, health, infrastructure, drinking water, agriculture, and the economy.

Public facilities, such as schools, clinics, workshops, water pipes, and transport facilities, were owned by the Catholic missionaries, which the Muslims also used. They had no other options as the involvement of the Indonesian government in providing public facilities had been minimal. Intensive development only took place in the 1970s. Catholicism spread rapidly throughout the region and was conspicuous in the public sphere. All prayers recited during flag raising ceremonies, for example, were performed in the Catholic way, and many Catholic celebrations were held in the town square.

The development of Catholicism in Manggarai in the 20th century left Muslims as the minority. Consequently, Flores, as Webb (1990) writes, became a Catholic island and an island where "even trees, rocks and birds are Catholic." Pigs in Rituals and Celebrations Despite having converted to Catholicism, people in Manggarai still continue to engage in various rituals involving the superstitious beliefs of spirits and energies. Allerton (2009: 271-287) claims that the Manggarai people's engagement with their spiritual landscape is a form of 'agricultural animism'.

Allerton writes: "The landscape is intrinsic to their being-in-the-world, it is a 'lived environment', one constituted and animated by kinship connections, ancestral journeys, and potent spiritual energies." These rituals can be carried out by a family, a clan, a village, or several villages. A small ritual is commonly attended by fewer than 10 people. Some may involve 20s people, some involve 50s to hundreds people, and a big one may

involve more than 500 people.

In terms of location, rituals can be carried out inside an ordinary house, a traditional house, a bigger communal house, or in the village square. Some are carried out on farms, in the forest, or by a spring. Some rituals last only a few minutes, while others can last for hours, even days. Food is always served at these rituals – eaten together by the family and guests. During various rituals, pigs, buffalo, chickens, and dogs are important sacrificial animals presented to the ancestors. The type of animal depends on the type of ritual.

For example, male buffalo are usually sacrificed at bigger events involving the whole village or several villages. Roosters are commonly used in smaller and simpler rituals within the family. **On the other hand,** lamb or goat is rarely served, except in small communities. Animal offerings are prepared by people based on their role and position within the clan or the extended family. This is a customary obligation to which everyone must adhere (Tatul, 2017; Mbula, 2018; Marolla, 2018). Pigs – also known as *ela* in the local language – are commonly sacrificed as a part of rituals commemorating births, engagements, weddings, and deaths.

The significance of pigs as a sacrificial animal is reflected in the naming of pigs according to the rituals at which they are offered: *ela hang nai* (pig used to show **the presence of the** family to a deceased person on his/her day of passing), *ela tekang tana* (wake/vigil pig), *ela saung ta'a* (post-burial pig), *ela kélas* (death commemoration pig), *ela mbukut* (bride-wealth agreement pig), *ela lembet* (functions to accompany bride-wealth), *ela podo wina* (wife-escorting pig), *ela penti* (thanksgiving/new year's pig), *ela takung waé cebong* (to feed a spirit whom is believed as the guardian angel), *ela kalok uma* (to open a new farm), *ela itang beti* (healing pig), *ela céar cumpé* (baby-naming ceremony), *ela péntang pitak* (pig used in the ceremony of entering wife's village), *ela wagal* (pig used in a wedding ceremony), *ela tadu loma* (pig used in sanction against infidelity), *ela podo wa'u* (pig used in a divorce ceremony when wife is returned to her family), and many more.

Roosters do have some specific names, but not as many due to the fact that they are primarily used in small-scale rituals. No other sacrificial animals have such unique and extensive names. Hence, it is clear that pigs are fundamental for Manggaraians. Pigs used for ritual are provided by the family according to one's position in the family. For example, at a wedding ceremony, *ela wagal* (pig used for ratifying a marriage) is provided by the bride's family; *ela kelas* (death commemoration pig) is provided by the bride's brothers.

Thus, Muslim families will very likely have an obligation to provide pigs for a ritual. During a traditional ceremony, the animal offerings are cooked and eaten by all family members. In addition to the animal offerings (through a ritual), pork is still commonly served. Even at bigger ceremonies, where buffalo are sacrificed, pork is still served. This is also because a pig is cheaper than a buffalo. Moreover, many families already rear pigs at home, so they are easily available.

Pigs are not only used in traditional rituals, but also in other celebrations such as baptisms, first communions, birthdays, graduations, weddings, priesthood anniversaries, and Christmas. In a year, a family would require several pigs for traditional and non-traditional purposes. People in Manggarai always rely on pork to feed families and guests. Compromises for the Use of Pigs in Rituals Pigs are, for all intents and purposes, a requirement at Manggaraian rituals, notwithstanding the fact that Muslims deem them haram.

Both Muslims and Catholics have, therefore, at times, had to make compromises at certain celebratory events. This is especially so among families with both Muslim and Catholic members, particularly in villages such as Kempo, Rangka Watu, and Nggorang in West Manggarai, and Pota, Benteng Jawa, and Ntaram in East Manggarai. These villages were once dominated by Muslims or traditional believers. When Catholic missionaries came, people were pressured to convert. Negotiations at the time enabled some family members to remain Muslim.

In such villages, it is common for Muslims to provide pigs to Catholic families. Some Muslim families will request to provide money, rather than an actual pig, the money then being used to purchase a pig. Hajj Marolla (2018), one of our respondents who is a part of the royal family of Todo, a family that adheres strictly to traditional custom, explained that even though his family is Muslim, he would provide a pig for a ritual if required to do so. He explained that he would collect money from his family members and ask the host family to use that money to buy a pig. When the pig is sacrificed as part of the ritual, his family would fully participate in the ritual.

At mealtime, the host family would then provide his family with non-pork dishes. In recent decades, there have also been other forms of compromises whereby Muslim families bring goats instead of pigs for their Catholic families. If the rituals are held in a Muslim family's house, sacrificial pigs will be replaced by buffalo or goats. As a Manggaraian Muslim explained, "It is haram for pig blood to touch our home." Supardi (2018) has observed at Kempo that nowadays if a ceremony is held at a Muslim family's home, sacrificial animals such as goats or buffalo are not slaughtered in front of the house, as is the Manggaraian tradition.

Instead, they are slaughtered behind the house in order to conceal and hide it. Traditional prayers are still said, however, as the animals are being slaughtered. If the ceremony is held at a Catholic family's house, a pig must be slaughtered, even if that family has Muslim relatives. We have observed that Muslim family members are typically present during all parts of the ceremony, even witnessing the slaughter of the pig.

Deliberate avoidance of such ceremonies is considered an aberration of tradition, which is believed to warrant a curse from the ancestors, and which might then lead to excommunication. Muslim families must therefore attend traditional ceremonies but will be served non-pork dishes. In Benteng Jawa (Mbula, 2018), families with Muslim and Catholic members have made an agreement whereby pigs are never sacrificed, nor is pork served at every traditional ceremony.

The primary reason for this is to avoid the hassle and unnecessary inconvenience that comes with serving pork in front of Muslims. This is not, however, the case for non-traditional ceremonies such as first communion, holy matrimony, Christmas, and Easter. At such ceremonies, Catholic families may slaughter pigs and serve pork. A Catholic female teacher from Madrasah Aliyah Negeri in Pota shared her own wedding experience. Pota is a small town on the northern coast of Manggarai inhabited by an almost equal number of Muslims and Catholics.

As her friends are predominantly Muslim, she appointed her Muslim friends to be in charge of the food on her wedding day to ensure that everything served was halal. As a part of the Manggaraian tradition, pigs were still slaughtered, but out of sight of her Muslim neighbours. Goats were instead slaughtered at the front of the house (Supardi, 2018). There has also been one instance of a refusal to compromise. In Rangga Watu, a village in West Manggarai, we found a case whereby some Manggaraian Muslim families who used to attend all traditional ceremonies stopped coming at all after joining the Tabligh Jamaah (Jelahu, 2017).

Such a shift in attitude will be discussed further below. Woni: Practice and Acceptance Communal dining in Manggarai not only occurs at traditional ceremonies. As in many other Eastern Indonesian communities, Manggaraians also enjoy less formal gatherings. For Muslims to be able to participate, Catholic families usually provide a "special menu" with no pork or lard. The provision of such a menu derives from a local tradition called woni. Originally, woni is linked to the concept of the totem and taboo (see Tylor, 1871; Frazer, 1890; Kroeber, 1920, Freud, 1913). Like many other tribes in the world, some plants or animals in Manggarai are considered sacred and are forbidden from being consumed.

In Manggarai, this is referred to as ceki, which means taboo (Erb, 1999: 42) or ireng (prohibition), ceki-mawa (taboo) or toé hang (not eaten). It is believed that people who eat forbidden plants or animals will incur the wrath of their ancestors on themselves and their family. Such food can also result in physical ailments, including ulcers, itchiness, diarrhea, poisoning, and dizziness (Sutam, 2018). Each clan in Manggarai has its own ceki/taboo/totem.

In addition to ceki, there is also toé hang, which can be translated to mean 'not eaten' due to certain prohibitions. This term can be used to describe Muslims who cannot consume pork, dog meat, and alcoholic drinks. This term can also be used for people who cannot eat certain food due to health reasons or traditional sanctions (Sutam, 2018), such as a prohibition on eating ela réngé/tudak (pork used for traditional rituals). Woni was initiated to cater for people with special dietary needs. Nowadays, woni is commonly associated with only Muslims.

The Manggaraian dictionary, compiled by Verheijen (1967: 764), defines woni as "in accordance with the pillars of Islam", and ata woni as "one who does not eat pork". Today, woni is primarily used to refer to a special menu that does not contain pork or lard. We have observed different ways woni is served to Muslim guests/families in communal dining. Typically, the host of the celebration is in charge of the slaughtering, cooking, and serving of woni, which is all done separately so as to not contaminate it with pork.

Woni is also served on a different buffet table typically referred to as 'the special table'. Hence, woni is also commonly referred to as a "special menu" or "halal" menu as it does not contain pork. When a meal is served, the master of ceremonies or the host will announce the presence of two different tables: a common table and a special table. These are common terms often heard at all kinds of ceremonies in Manggarai. The Muslims will then avoid the common table and proceed to the special table. In some cases, the Catholic host will invite Muslim neighbors or friends to cook the special menu.

The food is typically cooked in a separate kitchen – it can be in another neighbor's kitchen, or in the Muslim person's kitchen. The host merely provides the raw ingredients. This ensures that the special menu is indeed free of pork. The foods are still served in the same manner at the special table. On occasion, the master of ceremonies will include as part of his/her announcement that the food was prepared by Muslim friends in order to relieve any concerns the Muslim guests might have about pork contamination, thereby enabling them to enjoy the meal guilt-free. When the Catholic host cannot find Muslim friends to help with food preparation, an alternative way is to

buy ready-made food from restaurants that do not sell pork (commonly owned by Muslims).

Today, there has also been a trend whereby pork is not served at all. The terms “common menu” and “special menu” are not used during such ceremonies. The master of ceremonies would usually announce beforehand that there is only one table, and the table is for all – the word “pork” is not even mentioned; it is already understood that all the dishes are pork-free. Such a trend can be seen in celebrations hosted by middle- to upper-class Catholic families. Instead of pork, beef is served, even though the cost of beef is significantly higher than that of pork.

This trend is especially prevalent among celebrations held in rented function halls that appear grander and more modern. People in Manggarai are also familiar with which rented halls generally cater food with no pork at all. To provide a context, other celebrations mentioned earlier are typically held at the host’s home or in a tent specially erected in a school field for the event. Muslims are generally pleased with such celebrations, as they can eat guilt-free. In actual fact, the pork-free food served in such cases is still mainly prepared by Catholic families at their homes. In addition, even though beef is served in event halls, pork is still present at home for family members and close friends to enjoy.

It is almost impossible for Catholic families to avoid pork altogether. People tend to feel that the event is incomplete without pork even though there is enough beef. As a result, some strict Muslims are still doubtful about the possibility of contamination. There are mixed responses from Muslims in Manggarai regarding the “special menu” (woni) as part of communal dining. Some are pleased with this arrangement. People who accept woni are generally a part of the Manggaraian Muslim group, which often refers to itself as local Muslims. This group of people view communal dining as a part of their culture and identity.

In this case, there is a presence of cultural understanding and kinship tie towards the Manggaraian Catholics. As a result, woni is seen as a form of compromise that bridges the relationship between the Muslims and the Catholics. The kinship, which is a part of the Manggarai community formed over several centuries, trumps the difference in religious beliefs, which is relatively new to Manggarai history. Similar groups of Muslims rooted in the history and local tradition of the region have also been encountered in studies by Azra (2002, 2015) and Huda (2013).

Up until the middle of the 20th century, these local Muslim groups in Manggarai had not received a formal Islamic education. They were also yet to be influenced by Muslim

immigrants from other parts of Indonesia. Many of these local Muslims received a Catholic education at school and were involved in local rituals. One of our correspondents, Hajj Marrola (2018), a senior figure in a local Muslim community, was a descendant of the royal family of Todo in Manggarai who studied at Catholic schools.

He believes that the rejection of local traditions and rituals equates to the rejection of his identity. He also believes that *woni* is the best form of negotiation and adaptation, which bridges tradition, kinship relations, and Islamic values. Tule (2000) refers to people like Hajj Marrola as indigenous Muslims – they are willing to perform rituals and make offerings to their ancestors, they attend the graves of their ancestors during Muslim celebrations, they possess a strong kinship culture, and they do not view such traditions as heathen/kafir. In the 1970s, many Muslim civil servants (Aparatur Sipil Negara, ASN) from Ambon, Java, and Sumatra were assigned to work in Manggarai.

During this period, ASN was considered an elite occupation in Manggarai. Many of these Muslim newcomers were affiliated with the traditionalist Islamic organization, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). NU followers in Indonesia are generally known for being accepting of the practice of traditional rituals (see Bruinessen, 2007), hence the practice of *woni* at that time was not an issue. These Muslims generally believed that their identity as Muslims would not be affected as long as they did not eat pork.

From a practical point of view, halal food was also difficult to find at that time due to the small size of the Muslim community, so they did not have many options when dining in a communal setting. Changes started to emerge in the 1990s when the number of Muslim immigrants from many regions in Bima, Makassar, Sumatra, and Java started to increase significantly. Many of these newcomers were affiliated with Muhammadiyah, a modernist and reformist Islamic organisation known for its stricter approach toward customary practices.

At the same time, many local Muslim Manggaraian youth started venturing outside Flores to study in Muslim-dominated regions or in Muslim higher education institutions run by Muhammadiyah. This resulted in **a new understanding of** many Muslim principles, including halal food. Questions about whether Muslims are allowed to participate in traditional rituals, whether pigs/pork in such rituals constitutes an offense, and similar concerns began to be discussed seriously within Muslim communities in Manggarai.

Some intellectual Muslim figures explained that they remembered this period as a time filled with doubts about their Muslim identity. Some of them explained that this period also marked the start of their disinvolvement in local rituals and communal dining with



local Catholics where pork is served alongside a woni menu. Some of our Muslim respondents explained that while they were honored to be invited by Catholic families to participate in their celebrations, they would politely decline to eat.

Even though they could eat from the special menu, seeing other guests eat pork was disturbing to their sensibilities. Some also explained that it was not just eating pork that caused them offense – the smell of pork for many was also haram meaning they would decline certain invitations. Recently, the head of Indonesia's Council of Ulama, the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), for the Manggarai Regency, emphasized that the Muslims had never intended to distance themselves from the Catholics.

He added that Catholics should understand the difference between no pork and halal. The key to what is determined as halal lies in the slaughtering process of the animal, the way it is cooked, and the way it is served. For example, a knife that has been used to slice pork, even after washing, is still considered haram if the washing process is not in line with Muslim custom. He also expressed his discomfort with the term 'special menu'. He believes that pork should be labeled 'special menu' instead, while the halal menu should be referred to as 'common menu'. The presence of pork made the menu no longer 'common', as the term implied that the food could be enjoyed by everyone.

This understanding of the concept of halal becomes even more prevalent with the increasing presence of Muslim schools in Manggarai, which were built at the start of the 21st century to cater for the influx of youth pursuing undergraduate studies at Muslim institutions in Java or Makassar, especially at institutions run by Muhammadiyah. The chance to eat together is still, however, an option. New Context and Changes Broadly speaking, significant changes typically occur as a result of external factors and the presence of outside agents.

Increasing awareness about halal food is one of the messages of the Muslim reformation movements, which aim to practice pure Islam based on the Quran and Hadith while discarding practices deemed kafir (non-believing) and shirk (idolatrous). In Indonesia, this movement was visible in Wahhabi and Salafi groups, which were initially supported by alumni of the Institute for the Study of Islam and Arabic (LIPIA) Jakarta. Pesantren (schools) and students associated these groups spread to other regions of Indonesia to preach about pure Muslim behaviors (Wahid, 2014).

The salafi group, which grew rapidly, was often involved in conflicts with local/traditional Muslim communities – the most phenomenal was the case of "Laskar Jihad", where a paramilitary group was formed aimed at mobilizing Muslims to attack Christians. This led to the shift of imagination of Islam as a peaceful religion to a 'conservative Islam'

(Bruinessen, 2013). According to Abdul, a Muslim figure in Manggarai, many Muslims from Manggarai have been exposed to teachings by Salafi Muslim immigrants. As a result, these people have also started changing their attitude toward *woni*, which is not deemed halal.

Aside from the Islamic preaching from such groups, there was also increased awareness of halal food from Lembaga Pengkajian Pangan, Obat-obatan dan Kosmetika Majelis Ulama Indonesia (LPPOM MUI), a halal certifying institution in Indonesia formed in 1989. This institution promotes the consumption of halal food as being a part of Muslim identity. This has given rise to controversy and, at times, affected interfaith relations between Muslims and non-Muslims. With the development of mass media, the awareness of halal products has increased, even reaching smaller, more distant regions, including Manggarai. Discussion of halal food became more prevalent among Muslims in Manggarai from the start of 2000.

Rumours among Muslim groups about people ignoring halal labels started to emerge, which led to a reluctance within the Muslim community to attend communal dining events organized by Catholic hosts. At the same time, there was a constant message from MUI in Manggarai to be more careful about communal dining specifically. MUI even openly shared its concern with Catholic leaders and suggested that, on such communal occasions, Muslims themselves should be the ones preparing, cooking, and serving the food to ensure that the food was halal (Amir, 2018).

As Muslim schools in Manggarai started to develop from kindergarten to high school level, knowledge of halal food was passed on and emphasized to students, especially the fact that they should be extra wary being in a Muslim-minority region with limited availability to halal food. The vigilance of Manggarai Muslims vis-à-vis pork has also been related to therevents outside the region. In Muslim-majority areas, the presence of pork or lard can potentially trigger a huge protest. This was the case in many other parts of Indonesia where large numbers of people protested parties at which pork was allegedly served.\_

For example, many protested against restaurants specializing in pork barbecue as the smoke was considered haram to Muslims. Some meatball vendors were also suspected of mixing pork in their ingredients. A pork festival in Semarang was even canceled after scores of people expressed their concerns. One of the most hostile reactions occurred in 2001, where people rallied to protest against a Japanese MSG producer suspected of using ingredients that contained pork – several employees of the company were arrested and a public apology was issued (Fischer, 2008). Those cases in many other regions have been a serious warning for Muslims in Manggarai. A minority, some strict

Muslims in Manggarai rather carefully redacted. The majority and minority positions also determined their action of the people.

This was the case in Bali and Batak. In 2014, the Head of the Department of Cooperatives and SMEs in Buleleng Regency, Bali mandated everyone operating in the food business to obtain a halal certification from the National Agency of Drug and Food Control (BPOM) and the Indonesian Ulema Council. Many business owners were angered and reacted sarcastically in response such as by putting up posters on their restaurants saying things like "100% Haram" or "Haram Certified". The majority of Balinese are Hindu who also enjoy consuming pork.\_

There was also another case of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) supporters who demanded the closure of a Karo Pork Barbecue restaurant in 2016.\_ This led to an angry protest by the Karo people who could not accept such an outcry over their traditional delicacy. The most phenomenal change occurs in the last decade where many Muslims have blatantly refused to participate in communal dining events with Catholic people. These are people who actively follow Tabligh Jamaah (societal outreach) and Kalifah groups.

According to several of our respondents, Tabligh Jamaah was introduced to Manggarai in 2004. They originally came in 'groups'—as they referred to them—coming directly from India. These people had a conspicuous appearance: they wore white robes with a vest and a white turban and had long beards. They came in groups of between five and 10 people. They slept in mosques and invited people to their sermons, which were held over a period of time ranging anywhere from three days to four months. This movement also occurred at trans-national and national levels.

Scholars such as Azra (2002), Aziz (2004), Din (2014), Hasan (2010), Bruinessen (2002), Razak (2009) conducted studies of these groups. Their preaching/dakwah mostly focused on the message of the diligent practice of Islam and the avoidance of non-Islamic practices. Their method was usually sympathetic, but their message was exclusive as they were fundamentalist. Aside from coming from India, many of these groups came from Tabligh Jamaah from Pondok Temboro Al-Fatah in Magetan, East Java. Some Muslim respondents shared that many of the Muslim immigrants in Manggarai were a part of this Tabligh Jamaah group.

After participating in the dakwah, many of the followers became new preachers, forming new groups and acquiring new followers, even from regions outside the island. This group was known to be exclusive as they blatantly refused to mingle with locals, including with local Muslims, who did not participate in the Tabligh Jamaah group. This

group, which has been in Manggarai for the last 14 years, has successfully reached out to the majority of mosques even in the most isolated parts of Manggarai, targeting local and immigrant Muslims.

As a result, many hard-line Muslims who refuse to interact with Christians can be seen in Manggarai today. **Not only do they** refuse to participate in local rituals/celebrations, they also typically refuse to be involved in any activity, even the funeral of a recently-deceased Catholic neighbor. In a region such as Manggarai, which is still considered a 'village', this behavior is deemed unacceptable. Unfortunately, they refused to be interviewed especially by non-Muslims.

Some local Muslim figures have expressed their disapproval of the exclusiveness of Tabligh Jamaah. This group had been forcibly removed from the pulpit when it has preached because its sermons have often advocated that Muslims not associate with non-Muslims. Many local Muslims believe that exclusiveness is dangerous to Catholic-Muslim relations, which are already long-established in Manggarai. In fact, Tabligh Jamaah has been banned from staying and preaching at the central mosque in Ruteng, even though its members are still allowed to preach at one small mosque in the town.

Other local Muslim leaders have shared their disappointment with the Tabligh Jamaah movement, which they believe has made some Muslims lazy and ignorant by not allowing them to work or conduct other activities while listening to its sermons. Besides Tabligh Jamaah, the face of Islam in Manggarai has also been influenced by Khilafah groups, which first entered the region in 2004. Studies by Osman (2009) and Muhtadi (2009), for instance, have shown that Khilafah groups have more radical tendencies. They are also exclusive and refuse to interact with non-Muslims. Thus, there is no way to dine with them in a communal setting. Their clothes are also conspicuous, namely they wear green turbans.

This group has not, however, been well-accepted in Manggarai, with followers being confined to West Manggarai, mostly comprising migrants from Bima. Their activities are also closely monitored by other Muslim groups and even by the local police. Some Muslim figures have voiced their concerns that unwillingness to integrate with the locals puts unnecessary strain on Catholic-Muslim relations in Flores. Furthermore, violence and religious conflicts in other Indonesian regions, such as Java, Poso, Ambon, and Kupang, contribute to the change **in the relationship between Muslims and** Catholics at the local level.

Studies by Klinken (2007), Aragon (2001, 2005, 2017), Wilson (2008), Arifianto (2009),

and a local researcher from Flores, Tule (2014), have shown that a close link exists between violence across Indonesia (or even in other countries) and the behavior of many at the local level. When a church is bombed or set alight in Java or Sumatra, local Catholics in Flores are typically more alert to, and suspicious of, local Muslims. For example, many believed that the violence against Muslims by Christians in Kupang in 1998 was an act of revenge for the tragedy of Church bombing in Java.

Similarly, violence by Catholics towards Muslim traders in 2000\_ at the Ruteng Manggarai were police station was believed to be in response to violence perpetrated by Muslims towards Catholics in other parts of Indonesia. Even though such acts of violence have no direct link to communal dining among Muslims and Catholics, the impact of such conflicts is apparent. For example, some Catholics were found to have purposely and provocatively displayed pork in the public sphere as a symbol of anger and to reflect their disharmonious attitude toward Muslims.

It is also common place for Catholics in Manggarai to exclaim, "If 'they' (Muslims) act up, let us shut them up with pork" (Else, Nobert, Deus, etc., 2018). These cases reflect another side of Catholic-Muslim relations in Flores. Conclusion This study has shown that food symbolizes the identity of a community. What people in a community can or cannot eat constructs a concept of who they are socially, culturally, and/or religiously. A community's identity is particularly noticeable when it encounters other communities. Catholics in Manggarai express their identity by serving pork in communal dining contexts. This identity becomes more apparent when they encounter Muslims.

Muslims, conversely, display their different identity by avoiding pork at such events. Hence, pork becomes the distinguishing feature of the two groups' identity. Food can be "a fundamental aspect of their identity both in terms of categories of inclusion and exclusion...and as a distinctive feature of which they are proud" (Cesáro, 2002: 23). Pork (or the absence thereof) is not simply a distinctive feature that defines the two groups; it also separates the two communities, especially when people refuse to compromise.

This study has identified certain Muslim groups who tend to be stricter and more unwilling to participate in communal dining. In Lupton's (1996: 13) study, food does not only form an identity, but also a subjectivity, which is "a less rigid term than identity". Food is changing, contradictory, and conflicting. Non-pork dishes served as part of communal dining might essentially be the same as the food the Muslims cook at home or eat at restaurants, but because they are served in a different context (served by an 'opposing' religious group), there is a shift in its meaning and it becomes conflicting. The presence of pork has disrupted Muslim identity. The Muslim identity is clearly

shown, as Fischer (1988) notes, when the identity is disturbed.

As discovered in this study, the presence of pork in communal dining in Manggarai is a sensitive issue vis-à-vis Catholic-Muslim relations. Expecting Catholic Manggaraian to relinquish pork from their rituals and celebrations in order to respect the preference of Muslims, however, is difficult or even impossible to do because pork is a signifier of their identity as a Manggaraian and as a Catholic. Similarly, expecting Muslims in Manggarai to tolerate pork **in the public sphere**, especially in a communal dining setting, is difficult. Analyzing pork in communal dining has shed a light on the Muslim-Catholic relations in Manggarai, Flores.

Differences should be valued and regarded as part of a unique identity in order to avoid conflict. Harmonious **relations between Muslims and** Catholics is therefore possible when both groups appreciate and respect each other's unique identity. Negotiations and compromises must be made in order to coexist harmoniously. Both the attitude toward, and perception of, food are also determined by the situation in other places, especially with regards to awareness **of the concept of** halal, conflicts between Muslims and Christians in general, and dakwah movements. The relations between the two groups at the local level are tied to the shift in perspective about halal food and Islamic movements at global, national, and regional levels.

Finally, **this study contributes to** understanding the face of Islamic-Catholic relations in Flores: traditional types of Islam and Catholicism that continue to struggle within the broader religious, social and political context.

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