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in Selected Federal University Libraries in Southeastern Nigeria**
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Pekojan: Image of an Arab Kampong during the XVIII to XIX Centuries Batavia

Johan Wahyudi, M. Dien Madjid

1. Department of Madrasa Ibtidaiya Education
STAI Al-Aqidah Al-Hasyimiyah Jakarta, Indonesia

2. Department of Islamic History and Civilization, Faculty of Adab and Humanities,
UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Indonesia

email: Johan7790@yahoo.com
dienmadjid49@uinjkt.ac.id

Abstract

This study discusses the social dynamics of a kampong in Batavia during the XVIII to XIX centuries. Pekojan has already emerged as the center of commerce for Arabs and Muslim Indians community since the 16th century. By the eighteenth century, many Arab immigrants from Hadramawt (Southern Yemen) settled here. Its initial landscape can be traced by the theory of the coming of Islam in the Archipelago. One of the theories says that it was driven by international trade by the Arabs, which also carried Islam along with them. The Hadramis went through the naval journey passing the Indian Ocean to the Malaka Strait. They stopped over in Singapore then went on to Batavia, especially Pekojan. This study found Pekojan became a place where Arab culture and ideas were constructed yet negotiated within a local context. There prominent ulamas, merchants, writers, educators, the initiators of independence, the benefactors, and artists socialized under close racial surveillance of the Dutch East Indies government.

Keywords: Hadrami, Pekojan, Batavia, Arabs, Arab Settlement, Ulama, Dutch East Indies, Dutch Colonization.

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Introduction

Geography occupies a separate place within the study of history. Concerning Arabs settlement in Batavia, these place not only serves as a place to live but also a place to study religion and do business (Kaptein, 1998). This complexity was portrayed in the media, taking forms of travelogues and news with the Dutch language, among others.

The authors present a discussion about the history of one historic *kampong* in Jakarta, namely Pekojan. This place is known as an Arab settlement which was considered central to the formation of Muslim communities in Jakarta before the founding of Batavia back in the 18th century.



The Dutch East Indies government in Batavia looked at Pekojan as two sides of the same coin. Firstly, this *kampong* was considered a strategic location for Arabs to carry out all economic actions. By placing them at the right locus, it was hoped that their business could be well concentrated. This also made it easier for the government to control their activities (Brakel, n.d.). Secondly, Pekojan was a place for Islamic fanaticism (Laffan, 1999). However, Arabs had a high position in the native eye. They were religious experts and community leaders who brought people to the glory of Islam. This effort often intersected with the spirit of driving away from the Dutch, who considered Arab invaders which had to be defeated.

The discussion emphasized in this article leads to the story of Pekojan in the 17th to the 18th centuries, when Jakarta was still named Batavia. The authors believe that during Dutch colonization, the occupation of the Dutch government, there was an important change in this *kampong* which became a foothold for the development of Islamic society in the future. A variety of Arab cultures were born in this *kampong*, such as Gambus, which indicates that the dynamics in this place also targeted the cultural expression of the community.

Method

The study on Pekojan uses a historical approach based on descriptions of the historical area. Usually, this type of history is divided into two parts, namely the history of the city, and the history of the *kampong*. Pekojan occupied a unique position because it was called a *kampong*, but its position was located within the Batavia region. Looking at the close position with the center of Batavia (*Stadhuis*), it seems more appropriate to discuss this study in the term of the history of a *kampong*.

Many factors cause a city to progress. Migrant groups are important element that possibly colors the activities of the city. In Bremen and Newcastle, for example, the city government issued several regulations aimed at the supervision and protection of immigrants. Newcastle is considered a promising place for immigrants from South Asia, while Bremen is a location that is believed to increase the prosperity of the lives of Turkish migrants (Hackett, 2017). Arab settlers who inhabit Pekojan, also have similar desires with other immigrant nations, namely to seek a better future by doing some activities which generate bigger income.

Departing from the above, the author is interested in discussing the contribution of Arabs in Pekojan which was later felt by other Batavia residents (especially the Betawi Malay). They are known as figures of Islam; merchants as well as artists. This profession makes Pekojan a place full of the values of the development of Islam. This phenomenon can be discussed more complex within the limits of the history of the city.

This study employs a descriptive and chronological explanation of Pekojan within social history perspective. From this point, readers are expected to be able to absorb information that is populist from historical writing. (Zipin, L., Sellar, S., Brennan, M., & Gale, 2015) This is important as a material for reconstructing Pekojan's contributions, especially in the development of Islamic societies amid during Dutch East Indies government rule.

Result and Discussion

In this section, the authors will present several interesting findings regarding Pekojan. Starting from the establishment of this *kampong*, how he faced Dutch supervision and its dynamics in the present era

1. Formation

Pekojan is one of the many settlements where the Arabs live in Indonesia. In this settlement, the Arabs have lived and ran their daily lives. Pressure from the Dutch colonial was not able to break the spirit of life and propagation of Islam echoed from this kampong. Today, Pekojan becomes the name of a kampong (*kelurahan*) in West Jakarta. The past inheritance that is now settling on the surface of Pekojan does not at all decrease the uniqueness for the history observer to reveal more the role of Pekojan as the center for trade of the Arab society and the core of propagation in Jakarta in the past.

Pekojan's name comes from one of the ethnics of the Indian peoples, namely *Koja* or *Kojan people*. Pekojan word means *the abode of Koja people*. This toponym is similar to when calling the place where Chinese people live, namely *Pecinan*, which means *the abode of Chinese people*. Naming a region in Batavia was inseparable from the unique phenomena that were endemic. For example, the mention of the name *Matraman* was taken from the phenomenon of the emergence of the temporary settlement of Mataram troops when in charge of invading Batavia in the seventeenth century. *Tanjung Priok* was taken from one of the amazing events closely related to the pottery experienced by an Arab preacher named Habib Hasan al-Haddad. He was buried near Tanjung Priok port area.

Pekojan was established around the eighteenth century. Initially, this kampong was home of Kojan people from the Indian subcontinent. Most of them worked as traders, either large or small scale (Hurgronje, 1994). In general, the Kojan people were Muslims. Gradually, many Arabs lived in this kampong. Their existence did not disturb the previous residents, even with the arrival of new guests, it increased the majesty of the face of this kampong. Almost the same as the Kojan people; many Arab immigrants relied on their life as traders. Some of them were also known as the persistent spreaders of the teachings of Islam. They opened a small Islamic study (*pengajian*) attended by neighbors and some people from areas outside Pekojan. This kampong was slowly showing its dynamics, from merely a kampong of traders into a kampong where Islamic teaching was growing.

C. Van Vollenhoven has a view on the arrival of Arab traders in Pekojan area (Van Vollenhoven, 1918)

De toestrooming van Arabieren naar onze oost en haar omgeving valt allerminst samen met de binnenkomst van den islam; is een paar eeuwen jonger dan deze. De eerste moslimsche immigranten toch in onze oost waren kooplui niet uit Arabië, doch uit Voor-Indië, van wie slechts enkelen Arabische herkomst bezaten of voorwendden ; vandaar het, soms misleidend, gebruik om Arabieren wijken in Indië nog steeds pekodjan, wijken der chödjah's of Voorindische kooplieden, te noemen. Pas veel later — in de achttiende eeuw — ontstond een rechtstreeksche toestrooming uit Zuid-Arabië. Was het Arabische kustrijk Siak op Sumatra gesticht (i 791) door Hadramitische sajjid's, die uit Përak, op het Maleische schiereiland, waren gekomen, het waren Hadramitische gelukzoekers van voorname geboorte, die omstreeks 1772 en 1780 de rijken Poentianak (met Mampawah) en Koeboe op West-Borneo grondvestten.

Which means:

The influx of the Arabs into the East and its surrounding area was side by side with the coming of Islam. They came earlier than such activities

(Islamization). The first Muslim immigrants in the East were not traders from Arab, but India. Even if there were the Arabs, the numbers were few. This is one of the (potentially) misleading descriptions. When the Arabs from India came, they would soon be in touch with Pekojan, an environment of people of Khojah or pre-India. Around the eighteenth century, there was an influx of the busy arrival of the Arabs from South Arabia. There is an assumption that the founder of Sultanate of Siak in Sumatra is the Arab named Sayid Hadrami (1791) who came from Perak, Malaya Peninsula. He is a layman trying to find luck. The same thing was done by the Arab group (by becoming king) in 1772 and 1780 in the Sultanate of Pontianak (Mempawah) and Kubu in West Borneo.

Van Vollenhoven's explanation above insists that the Arabs have contributed in spreading Islam. Their arrival in Batavia was immediately connected with their fellow countrymen who had already settled in Pekojan. Pekojan became a liaison point between settlers and immigrants in which they gradually gained higher social rank. A similar pattern can be seen in the establishment of several Islamic kingdoms in West Borneo (Kalimantan), such as Mempawah and Kubu. (Van Vollenhoven, 1918)

L.W.C. Van den Berg, who had ever conducted a study on Pekojan in 1884 and 1886, said that Pekojan was previously inhabited by the Kojan. They came from Bengal, the eastern part of sub-continent India. Later, the kampong was also inhabited by Hadrami Arabs who penetrated the country by steamboat. Since the seventeenth century, the Bengal had appeared as accomplished sailors and traders in the Bengal Bay and began to diligently carry out regular voyage to the Archipelago, which no exception to Sunda Kalapa (Gommans, 1995).

Unlike Van den Berg, Van Vollenhoven assumed that Kojans were not from Bengali. They were wealthy Persian traders called *hodja*. *Chodja* is a religious title. The same thing is also found in the title of the Ismaili Shia group, that is the Aga Khan followers who resided in India. In this group, there is a call showing the respect that is *hodja*. In Turkish society, it is also found a similar title. This title is similar to the greeting "honorable mister" in European societies (Van Vollenhoven, 1918)

The emergence of the commercial guild in Batavia before the eighteenth century had been a necessity and important trading center in Java island (Dick, 1975). Sunda Kalapa not only was visited by domestic traders but also became the traders' destination, such as Arab, Keling, Koja, Persians, Pegu, Malay, Makassar people, Portuguese, Dutch. The intensity of trade was increasingly high, making some foreign traders decided to settle in Sunda Kalapa. The economic motive was the most dominant as the driving force. These traders then formed the trader's community whose members came from the same areas of origin. This association is known as a guild (Wade, 2009).

The activities of the Indians and Arabs in Pekojan had not experienced any significant obstacles until the implementation of a colored-skin policy in the eighteenth century. The people of Arab, Indian, Chin and other people from Foreign East were not allowed to mingle one another, especially with natives. They were grouped in certain areas occupied by the same ethnic people. The Arabs resided in Pekojan, while the Chinese lived in *Pecinan* or Chinatown around today Glodok, Jakarta. The relationship among races was so closely observed as if between one ethnic group and the other ethnic group must be separated (Suprihatin, A., Antariksa, A., & Meidiana, 2012)

2. Under Dutch's Surveillance

The Dutch East Indies did not agree with the merge of Batavian society. They administered the colony preferably for the Dutch and European, Foreign East Community (*De Vreemde Oosterlingen*) ranked second, followed by indigenous people, the later who totaled the highest among both groups yet never received any benefits as urban citizens as those enjoyed by the European and Foreign East groups.

The following is Hurgronje's comments about the position of Arabs, especially Hadrami Arabs in nineteenth century Batavia (Hurgronje, 1907):

De wetgeleerden onder de Hadhramieten van Java zijn in den regel de vraagbaken hunner Inlandsche vakgenooten. Zij vertegenwoordigen eene stoeve rechtzinnigheid, even dor als de bodem van hun vaderland. Het daar heerschende fanatisme weten zij in den vreemde te matigen, tenzij het door pan islamitische invloeden van elders aangemoedigd wordt.

From the words above, it is known:

Hadrami Arabs became important figures among the indigenous people. They come from a cruel environment. From their homeland, they carry strong Islamic fanaticism. However, they succeeded in suppressing this thought, unless they were influenced by pan-Islamism elsewhere.

Although many Arabs and Chinese emerged to be the part of the elite in the association of Batavian society for their economic income, they were not necessarily positioned like the European elite. They were still regarded as a second class society. Generally, they were only allowed to engage in the economic field. Hence, the marginalization of this role caused them to become inclusive in their commerce activity, so it emerged a wide gap with indigenous society who in average, was from the poor. Simply, the Arab and the Chinese people were restricted to trade only, while the natives remained marginal who working in the field of economics and often had low income (Van Mastenbroek, 1934)

Furthermore, the colonial government also issued a regulation of pass (*passenstelsel*) for Foreign East society. When they went out and entered their residence in Pekojan and Chinatown, they were required to report to officers who had been authorized by the Batavian government. This action was done to control their activity to create peace and order in Batavia public spaces (*open bare rust en orde*). Batavia city council already thought carefully about the possible creation of a riot (*onrust*) caused by the creation of understanding between the Arabs and the natives.

Although the degree of the Arabs was under the Europeans, their position was higher than the indigenous people, especially the Arabs who were the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, called *Habib*, *sayyid*, *syed*, and others. The genealogical root connected to someone highly sanctified by Muslim was what elevates the position of the *sayyid*. Not infrequently, among them working as religious experts became the reference of the society in asking about the religious and social issues. Sayyid Usman bin Yahya, a *mufti* (an Islamic legal expert who qualify to give legal opinions) of Batavia, for example, was still classified as a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad. Besides having good *nasab* (genealogy), his expertise in religious knowledge and his accommodative stance with the colonial government caused his reputation highly respected either among the colonial officials or among another *Sayyid* family circle.

The Arabs in Pekojan were among the elite class in the level of association of Batavia society. They were not only rich but also charismatic and more able to tie a friendship with the natives compared to other Foreign Eastern groups. Respect to the *sayyids*, for example, was regarded as one of the forms of glorifying the Prophet Muhammad, which finally raised the degree of the Arab class. A kind of transcendental nuance emerged when indigenous Muslims had a special relationship with their teacher who had a family background of *sayyid*. Taking advantage of Islamic knowledge from him, imitating his behavior, obeying orders, and restrictions conveyed by some circles is regarded as a path toward true goodness.

The proximity between the Arabs and locals was, of course, something shunned by the Dutch East Indies government. With the enactment of the policy of *wijkenstelsel* (*kampong* regulation), it made the activity of Arabs became more controlled. Behind the relationship between Europeans and Arabs was a concern that one day, the Arabs would lead the locals against the Dutch colonization. The social and genealogical attachments for the Arab group emerged as a tool to gather the Muslim community in the capital city.

By the twentieth century, the Arabs remained the entity to be wary of. Reported by *De Locomotief* on June 16, 1900, the Dutch East Indies police was asked to increase their vigilance against the Hadrami Arab (*van Hadramaut Zonen*) who were not lived in their settlement or special settlement of the Arabs. (Anonim, 1900b) Said Toha bin Ahmad al-Haddad who lived in Kampung Jawa (probably involved a dispute with the colonial law) was fined 100 guilders, and forced to move to Pekojan region. He was not allowed to live in his house in Kampung Jawa. The Arabs who lived not in their community environment, in this daily paper was called “the lost sheep.”

It was also stated that the government had held a special inspection toward the Foreign Eastern society who did not dwell in their community. The Batavian police did it, and hopefully, it would also be done in Semarang. This inspection was intended not only for Arabs but also for Chinese people (Anonim, 1900b)

Kampong grouping policy based on races did not always create comfort and regularity. In *De Tijd* published by Dutch, June 15, 1887, in the *colonies* section, reported that one night in May 1887 there was a riot involving three hundred Arabs and Indians living in Pekojan against the Chinese living in Patuakan (Patoka). Pekojan’s group visited and invaded the Chinese in the Chinatown. The trigger was on the previous day when a Chinese torn off the portrait of a young Arab. Then the Arab masses carried stones and pieces of iron, but both ethnic groups did not carry kris (asymmetrical dagger/*keris*). In the middle of the battle, a Dutch man named Gastelaars was forced to fire his revolver to disperse the crowd. A total of 80 people were suffered from severe and minor injuries (Anonim, 1900)

The determination of *Wijkenstelsel*, on the one hand, caused social decadence among Batavian residents, but on the other hand, it became a driving force of a new passion for working. When oppression was aimed at spying on the movement of the Arabs in Pekojan, it did not necessarily make people feel threatened. On the contrary, their unity was getting more solid and strong. Religious teachers of Arab descendants who opened the Islamic classes in Pekojan can continue their propagation activities without any significant obstacles. Even if there were obstacles, the scale was not widespread until it invited a troop of Company soldiers to come and checked this kampong.

Despite suspecting the activities of the Arabs, in some cases, the colonial government also heard the aspirations of Pekojan residents. In a publication, it was reported that Chinese

who raised pigs often let go of their livestock on the banks of the river adjacent to Muslim settlements. Arabs who objected to the pig's passing which by Muslims were thought to pollute the river, then reported it to the government. The government responded to the complaint and promised to find a solution (Anonim, 1900)

It seems that the government wanted the society under its rule to live in peace. Although they were often wary of Arabs as agents of Islamist fanaticism that potentially parsed the colonial position in the East Indies, they still gave attention to the Arabs like to other European citizens. Based on the news above, even by measuring the sincerity of the editorial board incorporating this kind of news, it appears (though still vague) that the government was concerned to pay little attention to the public interest of the Arab descendants.

3. Synergy of *Da'wa*, Education, and Music

Some wealthy people in Pekojan in the colonial period were respected businessmen and preachers. Among them, many were motivated to build mosques and *mushalla* (smaller than mosque) as the centers of propagation in this kampong. One of the old mosques that hold many memories of the Arabs is An-Nawir Mosque, built in 1760. Later, it called as the Pekojan Mosque. Its founder was Syarifah Fatmah, whose tomb is located just behind the mosque building. In a later development, this mosque has been expanded by the initiative of Sayyid Abdullah bin Husein Alaydrus, a wealthy landowner. To note, the name Alaydrus then was made one of the street names in Jakarta.

An-Nawir Mosque is a silent witness to the spread of Islamic propagation in Batavia. In this mosque, Sayyid Usman bin Yahya taught Islamic studies. Sayyid Usman was one of the famous *ulamas* of this period. He was born around 1822 in Pekojan. He was known as an Arab who had a high reputation in the colonial period, due to his collaborative work in *Het Kantoor voor en Inlandsch Arabisch Zaken* (Bureau of Native and Arabs Affairs). Van Koningsveld called him *een bongenoot van Netherlands Indies* (friend of the Dutch government) (Van Koningsveld, 1989) He had several famous students and in subsequent times became the driving force of Islam in the region of origin, such as Habib Ali al-Habsyi Kwitang, Habib Habib Umar Purwakarta, and Habib Falak Bogor. He was also a prolific *ulama*. His *kitab*s were *solutive* for answering some of the social and religious questions addressed to him. Approximately 50 titles are still reviewed in *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) and *pengajian* (Islamic learning) in Jakarta (Shahab, 2004) until today, and one of the popular ones is the *Sifat Dua Puluh (the Twenty Characteristics)*.

Arabs Hadramawt legacy in designing Islamic nuances in Batavia are also seen in the Zawiya Mosque. The mosque was established by Habib Ahmad bin Hamzah al-Attas who came from Tarim, Hadramaut. In 1877, Habib Ahmad came to Batavia to preach. Initially, this mosque was just *mashallah*. One of his famous students was Habib Abdullah bin Muhsin Al-Attas Empang Bogor.

Another historical building is the Langgar Tinggi Mosque built on Pekojan Raya. The mosque was built by the Arab Captain named Shaykh Said Naum. Before living in Pekojan, he had settled in Palembang. In his lifetime, he owned several ships and donated (*waqf*) some of his lands for the Public Cemetery (TPU/ *Taman Pemakaman Umum*). Today, on the *waqf* land it has been established a flat (*Rumah susun*), built during the time of the governor of Jakarta, Ali Sadikin (ruled 1966 – 1977). In addition to the mosques that have been reviewed, there are several more mosques that cannot be separated from the development of Islamic propagation in Jakarta, among others are al-Anshar Mosque,

Kampung Baru Mosque, Raudah Mosque (the congregations are women who live around Pekojan) (Shahab, 2004).

The Langgar Tinggi Mosque is a unique mosque of the ripples of Islam in Pekojan. Founded in 1829, this mosque architecture is a fusion of European building, a little Chinese and laced with some Islamic ornaments. In some parts of the building, there are fine carved works lacquered with Palembang style. The mosque is located on the second floor, while the first floor is used as a shop. At the beginning of its establishment, the first floor of the mosque is occupied by four families. In February 1859, Shaykh Said Naum granted a pulpit. He was a wealthy Arab Captain.

He was a descendant of a wealthy Arab family in Palembang named Syarifah Mas'ad Babrik Ba'alawi. In addition to donating *waqf* land for the cemetery in Tanah Abang, the land occupied by the Langgar Tinggi Mosque is owned by Shaykh Said Naum. Since the description of the Langgar Tinggi was made (i.e., 1985), Langgar Tinggi is no longer used as a place for Friday prayer, but the Pekojan people tend to perform the Friday prayer in larger mosques such as the Zawiyah Mosque. Nonetheless, the Zawiyah mosque is smaller than Langgar Tinggi (Chambert-Loir, n.d.).

Langgar Tinggi Mosque is a form of trade and propaganda expression inherent in the identity of the Arabs. The second floor is used as a place for worshiping, while the first floor is used as a shop. Until now, there are still some stores that are still open. Although this building is already included in the cultural heritage, economic activity still becomes traditions. Presumably, mosque administrators still intend to maintain the tradition of the management of this mosque which, on the other hand, is evidence of the root of propagation and trade activities in the daily life of Arab descendants.

The writers find a unique propagation pattern from the Arab descendants in Jakarta while researching the propagation activity of Sayyid Usman bin Yahya. The Islamic study of the Arabs is divided into two kinds, namely public study, and special study. The public study is held openly with congregations coming from various circles and professions. Meanwhile, the special study is usually attended by fellow Arab descendants. In contrast to the usual public studies held in *majelis taklim* (place of Islamic learning) or later on open area, the special study of the Arabs is held from house to house. After the study ends, usually the congregations carry merchandise belonging to the teachers which then they sell themselves.

Between indigenous groups and Arab groups, there were a warm social cohesion. In his review G. F. Pijper told about the close relationship between them as explained below (Pijper, 1934) :

Aldus, de Mi'radj-viering in de moskee van Pekodjan, die en door de vergaderde menigte en door haren innerlijken eenvoud indruk maakt. Wat de Arabieren te Batavia betreft, voor valen hunner is deze korte dienst hunne eenige herdenking van den nacht der Hemelreis. In het algemeen trouwens maken de Arabieren minder werk van Mi'radj dat de Inheemse bevolkingsdeel. Een godsdienstige maaltijd is voor de Arabieren niet de vaste aanvulling van de herdenkingsbijeenkomsten. Wel zijn er die na afloop van de viering in de moskee thuis eenige gasten ontvangen, maar dit gebruik is noch vast noch algemeen. Sommige Arabieren lezen op of omstreeks den 27^{sten} Radjab thuis Al-Zahr al-basim met hunne zonen en vrienden. Dit is ook de geschied, dat de Arabische vrouwen bezigen bij hare huiselijke Mi'radj-herdenken.

It means:

I (Pijper) once witnessed an *Isra Mi'raj* celebration at Pekodjan Mosque. There, Arabs and natives sat together in the shade. In that atmosphere, Arabs contributed (in the preparation of the event) less than the natives. After the program was over, a small number of Arabs received guests from the indigenous community. This habit is not permanent and general. Some Arabs chose to celebrate the *Mi'raj* in their homes, by reading songs in *al-Zahar al-Basim* with their children and friends. Arab women celebrate *Mi'raj* privately

Isra Mi'raj is a Muslim celebration to commemorate the Prophet Muhammad's short journey from al-Haram Mosque to al-Aqsa. Usually, Muslims in the Dutch East Indies commemorate this with Islamic lectures and prayer together. In this event, the presence of Arabs is very much needed. Besides giving lessons on the secrets behind the *Isra Mi'raj* event, they were also appointed as a prayer leader. Generally, Muslim prayers are recited using Arabic. The Arabs are accustomed to using Arabic, while many natives cannot speak Arabic (Kaptein, 1998). The prayer offered by the *Sayyid* group was considered to bring blessings for they were the Prophet's descendants.

Pekojan is a silent witness to the birth of many famous figures in Batavia, one of whom is Sayyid Abdullah bin Alwi al-Attas. By Alwi Shahab, he was named "Baghdad trader from Betawi." Baghdad was not his home country, but his father-in-law's country. Born in 1840, Sayyid Alwi was one of the richman of Batavia. He has a large fortified land in Pondok Betung, Bintaro until Pondok Cabe, Ciputat, Tangerang. The wide of his land is five thousand hectares.

Sayyid Abdullah had a unique residence which is now becoming a Textile Museum in the area of Jati Petamburan in Tanah Abang. In his spare time, he often gathered small traders in his home. He bought their goods and gave them to the poor who lived around his house. Around the nineteenth century to the twentieth century, behind the house of Sayyid Alwi were still kampongs. Every day, he dressed like a Betawenese in ancient time, but in official occasions, he wore a suit. Once upon a time, he had been reprimanded for not wearing a robe (*gamis*) like the Arabs in general. He replied that one's Islam did not lie on the robe. Abu Lahab, the uncle of the Prophet Muhammad remained a *kafir* (infidel) despite wearing a robe and turban (*sorban*).

Sayyid Abdullah is a science lover. His trade activities did not necessarily diminish his passion in examining a number of qualified books in his day. He has a collection of books and *kitab* of 30 thousand pieces. After he had died in 1929, all his collection was donated to the Jamiat al-Kheir school in Tanah Abang. He is remembered as a figure of Arabs who loved Western instruments composed by Mozart, Beethoven, and Strauss (Shahab, 2004). Inevitably, these unique personalities signed his name as one of the famous Arab leaders in Batavia. Apart from his activities, he is part of the Pekojan, the legendary Arab kampong in north Jakarta.

It is known that not all Arabs lived in Pekojan. Some of them mingled with the locals. Thus, called "Malay Arabs." There was no cultural rigidity between them. Of course, the Dutch government did not justify this relationship. For Arabs living outside Pekojan, the writer believes that they had managed to come out of racial, political shell mounted by the colonial government. Living with more heterogeneous kampongs seemed to establish no grouping of natives, Arabs, Chinese, and others (Van Leent, 1868)

Wealth for the descendants of Batavian Arab was something essential for the necessities of life as well as social capital. In addition to trade, profits from trading were also used to trace the ancestry of the Arab descendants to the Prophet Muhammad. The availability of sufficient money was also used to support relatives who just came from Hadramaut. Later on, they possibly used the wealth of their relatives for the benefit of opening trading opportunities or other endeavors. (Mobini-Kesheh, 1999)

Entering the National Movement Era that took place after 1900, Pekojan transformed into a kampong of thinkers, educators, and fighters. In this kampong, the educational and propaganda institutions were designed, in which Jamiat al-Kheir was established. Some of the young Arab descendants such as Ali bin Ahmad Shahab, Muhammad bin Abdullah Shahab, Muhammad al-Fachir, Idrus bin Ahmad Shahab and Said Basandeid, all of whom lived in Pekojan, made a method to divide the propagation and social needs of the Muslims in the capital city. The results of their discussion were later poured out as a basic foundation of the establishment of Jamiat al-Kheir in 1901 before then concentrated in Tanah Abang. The matter of permission of the Jamiat al-Kheir in the Dutch East Indies administration was relatively complicated. This educational and social institution only received after June 17, 1905 (Shahab, 2004)

Aside from being a center of propagation, Pekojan was also a dimension for the development of Arab music. Around 1947, a young Arab in this kampong named Husein Aidid, along with several other young men, founded the association of OG music (*Orkes Gambus/ Lute orchestra*) named *al-Usysyaag*. The emergence of this *gambus* group received a warm welcome from music lovers in the capital city. Along with the bestselling OG led by Husein Aidid, another brilliant musical rhythm also developed and competed with the flow of *gambus* music, named *musik Melayu* or the music of Malay. At this time, there was a famous Malay music group named Harmonium Orchestra SM Alaydrus from Tanah Abang. The result of the arrangement of Alaydrus musicians was played regularly by NIROM (now *Radio Republik Indonesia* or RRI). The model of Malay songs performed usually had a long duration of about 10-15 minutes. The popularity of Malay music was also underpinned by the many films from Malaya (Today Malaysia).

Encouraged by the spirit of modernization, Husein Aidid then changed his OG into OM (*Orkes Melayu* or Malay Orchestra) named *Kenangan*. In 1950, OM Kenangan made its performance live at RRI. At that time, RRI became the most popular hearing-tourist arena for Jakarta people. In every appearance, this group performed 6 to 8 songs. The most popular RRI event at that time was *Panggung Gembira*, and OM Kenangan appeared on a regular basis.

Popularity in the hearing sphere brought other advantages in the public sphere. OM Kenanga getting a request to perform at wedding events and performances on music platforms. On the sidelines of the concert, they took themselves into the recording that was at that time still using a vinyl record. Some of the record companies that had ever launched the work of OM Kenangan were Serimpi, Irama, Remaco, Bali Record, Gembira Record, and others.

Husein Aidid was a professor of music of his time. He was the pupil of M. Sardi, the father of a legendary Indonesian violinist Idris Sardi and the grandfather of a famous Indonesian actor Lukman Sardi. Along with his career, he had created as many as 219 songs with various rhythms, starting from *gambus*, Malay *langgam* (Malay rhythm), *cha-cha* rhythm, *rumba*, *kalipso*, *waltz*, *samba* and dance (*joget*) rhythm. One of his biggest

achievement was making songs for background music in the National films in the 1960s which at that time were struggling against Indian films. The dedication of Husein Aidid in music opened another possibility of the spread and the legendary of a popular kind of music in this country, namely *dangdut* (Shahab, 2004).

The expertise of Husein Aidid was recognized as one of the glories of musical art of this country. He changed the lyrics of Deli Malay songs which consisted of rhymes to the lyrics with a love theme between two persons. He was another person born by Pekojan. Although Husein Aidid was alive in the twentieth century, the writer points out that the music blood that flowed in himself did not come accidentally. It is an inheritance from the musical tradition which had developed previously in Pekojan.

The *gambus* music itself is identically played by the Arabs. Several instruments of the music are original instruments commonly found in the Middle Eastern area. The influx of kinds of music and rhythm of the desert was nearly the same time as the arrival of the Arabs to the East Indies. This art lived hand in hand with the spread of Arab settlements such as in Pekojan.

Conclusion

Pekojan has an important contribution to the formation of Islamic society. The racial policy imposed by the Dutch colonial government which separates of Arab settlements with local Muslims proved unsuccessful in holding back their influence in the formation of Muslim societies which progressed in the seventeenth century to the nineteenth. The synergy between trading and preaching becomes a synergy in shaping the situation. Although the role of Pekojan has decreased, due to a large number of Arabs who did not live in this *kampong*, the historical charm that covered it did not fade.

Arabs have always been an interesting subject studied, especially their role in Indonesian society. Their toughness goes through a complicated cultural process, by providing accommodation with the culture of the local community should be appreciated. Their position as traders and Islamic preachers also indicated their central role as agents of change in the field of religious beliefs and the local economy.

Pekojan proves that though it is only a *kampong*, it deserves to be analyzed under a historical explanation where researchers tend to study a larger locus, such as Batavia. From the story of the periphery, it can create novelty in telling local history.

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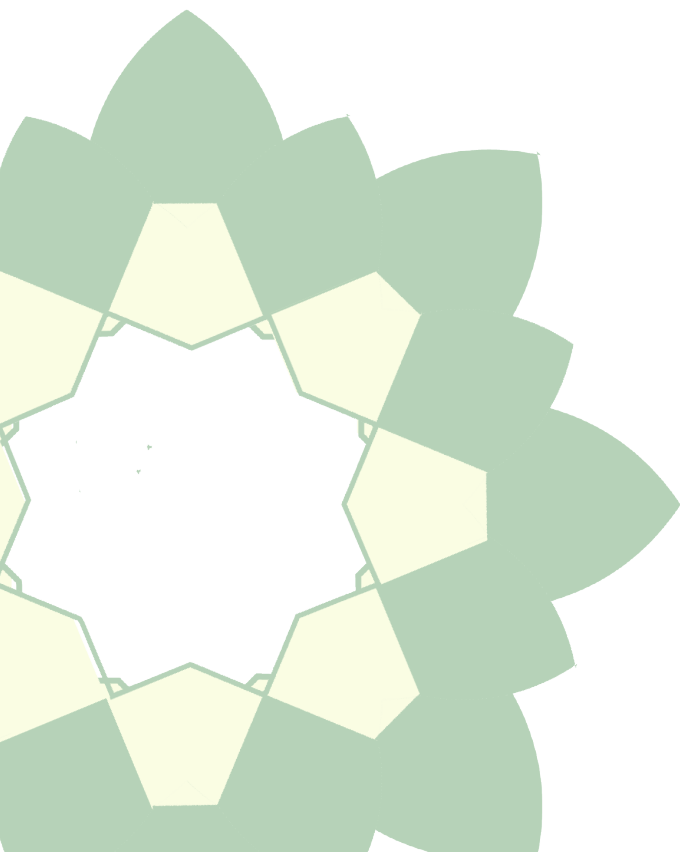
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