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## Islam Aboge Between Heritage Tradition and Religious Sect in the Horseshoe Area

**Suhermanto Ja'far**

*suhermanto.jafar@uinsby.ac.id*

State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Indonesia

**Haqqul Yaqin**

*haqqulyaqin@uinsby.ac.id*

State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Indonesia

**Muhammad Febriansyah**

*febrian@usm.my*

School of Social Science, Universiti Sains Malaysia

### **Abstract**

*This article discusses Islam Aboge in East Java's Horseshoe (Tapal Kuda) area as a heritage of tradition or a religious sect. This article explores the acculturation of Islam with the Aboge Community in the Horseshoe area. The main problems in this article are: first, Islam Aboge between traditional heritage and religious sects. Second, Islam Aboge in the changing times. The methodology used is qualitative research through field research. Islam Aboge, as a hereditary tradition, is widely followed by local people in East Java, including in the Horseshoe (Tapal Kuda) area, which has its cultural character. The Islam Aboge community spread across Probolinggo is widely followed by most ethnic Madurese, so their interaction pattern quickly adapts to mainstream Islamic society. The adherence to the Kiai and involvement in the culture of slametan, tablilan and other cultures is so strong that it is difficult to distinguish between them. Islam Aboge, as a religious socio-cultural fact of the people of Probolinggo and Jember, does not wholly mark the representation of the Santri-Abangan dichotomy ala Geertz. However, to a certain extent, the Aboge Probolinggo and Jember communities have similarities with the characteristics of the Abangan people. The Aboge community is a community that grows and develops with its level of holiness without abandoning the basic things of Islam, such as prayer and fasting. The Islam Aboge Community tends to shrink due to the challenges of changing times which are slow to anticipate, and the movement of the Islam Aboge Community to mainstream Islam.*

**Keywords:** *Islamic Aboge, Traditional Heritage, Religious Sects, Horseshoe, Movement of Change*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The presence of Islam Aboge in East Java, especially the Horseshoe (*Tapal Kuda*) area, reflects the acculturation process of Islam with the Aboge community. Islam Aboge

adherents in East Java are scattered in areas such as Jombang, Mojokerto, Blitar, Madiun, Probolinggo and Lumajang. Islam Aboge also has adherents in Central Java, such as Banyumas, Wonosobo and Cilacap. The existence of Islam Aboge in the East Java and Central Java regions has different characters, figures and challenges according to their geography and culture. At the same time, Islam Aboge has gradually used the large currents of its group's cultural practices, which have been accepted as manifestations of an established religion. The integration of Islam with the culture of the Aboge community is no longer adaptive but instead leads to acculturative changes. Because within these elements, there is not only a process of imitating or adapting one another but accommodating the two elements into a new whole (Mahdi et al. 2003; Wahid 2001: 111; Syam 2005; Wahid 1989: 80-85).

Islam Aboge in Wonosalam Jombang, Madiun and Blitar developed as a form of acculturation of Islam with Javanese cosmology, especially the calculation of the Javanese calendar in determining Islamic holidays since ancient times before Islam entered this land of Java (Ulfa 2107; Imania 2017; Azizah 2018 ). According to Ihya' Ulumuddin's research, Islam Aboge in Mojokerto (2016:91-113) emphasizes the Aboge community as a stream of belief in religious and social relations with Indonesian social and political conditions. He says Aboge is often controversial for Muslims and the government environment. Negative and positive assumptions are attached to them in the socio-political reality. Some Beliefs, including the Aboge Community, are still being persecuted by religious extremists and the State. He also explained state intervention in the religious life of the Beliefs based on the perspective of the six official religions.

Islam Aboge in Probolinggo and Lumajang emphasizes discrimination by some teachers at MTs Maulana Utama who commit symbolic violence in a repressive-intimidating pattern. However, a dialogic pattern is developed by teachers towards students who adhere to Aboge, who are in the minority. According to him, even though it seemed democratic, MTs Maulana Utama indicated that it did not carry out a policy of recognizing minorities and freedom of religion. Because of this, their identity as Aboge adherents has been revealed or known to the public; they often deny it to avoid harassment and labelling that is not beneficial for their social interactions (Ardiansyah 2020: 51-77). Yaqin's research on Islam Aboge in Probolinggo emphasizes the existence of cultural acculturation between Islam and the Aboge Community. His study focuses on the problem of Javanese

cosmology, which the Aboge Community embraces as a belief system in determining the celebration of Islamic cultural traditions (Yaqin 2019: 17-29).

In Central Java, Islam Aboge has followers in the Banyumas, Wonosobo and Cilacap areas. In Banyumas, Islam Aboge in Sulaiman's research (2013) found two different characteristics. He described that in Pekuncen Village, most of the Islam Aboge Community belonged to Nyandi Muslims who focused their religious activities on "punden" (the graves of their ancestors), namely Eyang Bonokeling. Meanwhile, in Cikakak Village, most of the Islam Aboge Community are classified as Nyantri Muslims because most have prayed the five daily prayers. However, they are still strong in their local traditions.

Ahmad Sodli's research (2016) took the exact location (Banyumas) using a sociological perspective. In his research, he portrays the Islam Aboge Community in its social relations with mainstream Muslims and adaptation strategies in relations with Muslims who are not Aboge adherents. Mochammad Lathif Amin (2014: 131-150) relates his study of Islam Aboge to the environmental crisis. According to him, the Islamic Ecosufism style of Aboge Cikakak is embodied in the process of understanding life which is dynamic toward God, the symbolic meaning of the names of the calendar year Aboge (ada-ada tumandang gawe lelakon urip bola bali marang suwung), the appreciation of the unity of God-man-nature, transformation self from Abdullah to khalifatullah, natas (awareness, self-emptying), nitis (filling God's nature into oneself), and dripping (overflowing kindness to others). Aboge Muslims live in the middle of plantations and pine forests that are still well preserved, as evidence of the closeness of Aboge Muslims and nature.

In Wonosobo, Islam Aboge, according to the study of M. Yusuf Amin Nugroho and Muhtar S. Hidayat (2021:68-77), focuses more on the spiritual dimension (Sufism) in the traditions of Suronan, Ruwahan and Sadranan, Fasting, and Ngubeng jagad. This tradition is to preserve the ancestral culture, which is full of noble values and morals. In other words, the religious traditions of the Aboge people in Mudal Village are very thick with the values of Sufism. The essence of Sufism is an effort to train oneself from the negative influences of world life so that noble morals are reflected and close to God. The religious tradition carried out by the Aboge community has this tasawuf goal. He concluded that

only about 50 per cent of Aboge adherents in Mudal Village understand that their religious traditions contain Sufism values.

Abdurrahman Misno Bambang Prawiro (2013:102-117), in his research on Islam in the Aboge Community in the village of Ujungmanik, Cilacap, focuses more on syncretism. He stated that Islam Aboge (Cilacap) is a syncretic form resulting from mixing Islam with the local culture, producing a distinctive and unique variant of Islam. This variant of Islam is not Islam that has lost its purity but contains local values and culture. Furthermore, this process gave birth to patterns of relationships and religious actors based on belief in ancestors. This community is considered part of Kejawen Islam, which in Geertz's terms, is called Abangan Islam.

Based on the problems above, the fundamental reason why Aboge is the object of this research is that the Aboge community, which is spread across the Horseshoe (*Tapal Kuda*) area of East Java, especially Probolinggo and Jember Regencies, has always been the target of da'wah activities carried out by mainstream Islamic groups. Islam Aboge, by some Islamic communities, is still identified as a stream within Islam that tends to go astray. In the last few decades, many parties have tried to enter intensively into the Aboge group to purify deviant practices. The practice of mixed marriages carried out the purification movement. This article focuses on the problem of Islam Aboge as a legacy of cultural traditions or as a heretical sect and the phenomenon of changing movements of the Aboge Community facing the challenges of the times and the movement of the Aboge community to mainstream Islam.

This article is qualitative research, i.e. research that relies on field data collected and expressed in the form of words and images or documentation. In accordance with the character of qualitative research, this research seeks to obtain as much information as possible about the Aboge Community in the practice of its religious beliefs. Information was dug through in-depth interviews with informants (religious people, teachers, or centres), practitioners or diversity experiments, and documentation. In addition, this article also uses an ethnographic approach that tries to describe and interpret the culture, social group or system that exists among the Aboge communities. Because the cultural meaning is very wide, the ethnological study here is directed at the patterns of activities, language, beliefs, rituals and ways of life of Aboge Islamic communities in the Probolinggo district.

## DISCUSSION

### 1. Relations between Islam and Local Traditions in the Horseshoe

The presence of Islam in the Horseshoe (*Tapal Kuda*) area of East Java is inseparable from the development of Islam in Java. Experts have differing opinions about the early history of the arrival of Islam in Java. The need for more reliable sources regarding the contact period and the occurrence of conversion is a complex problem to resolve. Citing the opinions of several experts, Woodward admits that in the 14th century, a Muslim community had begun to exist in Java (Damais). This fact also began to spread among the Majapahit palace (Robson). The transition and conversion of Central Java's population to Islam is gradual, uneven, and even continues today. Meanwhile, Chinese sources state that Muslim communities began flourishing in the north coast region in the early decades of the 15th century (Woodward 1999: 79-80).

The struggle in the dialectical process of Islam in Java has at least resulted in several theories relating to when and from where Islam came and developed in Java. Among them is that Islam came to Java through trade. This is the dominant opinion of several Western scholars, especially the Netherlands. Among them Wertheim and Pijnappel. However, several other scholars reject this opinion with another perspective that it is doubtful that massive Islamization will occur through trade or marriage, as seen by Van Leur and Schrieke (Syam 2005: 59-69; Azra 2005; Abdullah 1989). There are several religious typologies of traditional Islamic communities in Indonesia (Java) as practitioners of religious traditions such as syncretistic Islam (Geertz 1981; Beatty 2001), acculturation (Woodward 1985; Muhaimin 2004), local (Mulder 20010, and collaborative (Syam 2002) ) The cultural form of the Javanese people who live in inland areas often preserve their *kejawen* tradition as a symbol of their culture, they see that this tradition is a continuous tradition that is fully alive, this is often used as an example in all actions and traditions that are naturalistic (Picard & Madinier 2011).

Java Island is the basis of traditional Islam in Indonesia. One of the characteristics of the traditional Islamic community in East Java, especially the Horseshoe (*Tapal Kuda*), is that they refer to the thoughts of the clergy, *fiqh* experts and Sufis in understanding Islamic teachings. Another feature is their connection with the *Kiai*. Van Bruinessen, in his research, stated that the *Kiai* in traditional Islamic society in Java is a crucial element. Apart

from that is its closeness to the schools of Islamic fiqh, namely Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali. Fiqh is the primary science because it is the basis of religion. Traditionalist clerics prioritize and focus on the works of their predecessors and underline the need for taklid. The holy Qur'an and hadith must be understood with the help of the predecessors. This was done to avoid mistakes in understanding the text of the Koran and hadith. In addition, as van Bruinessen wrote, the content of traditional Islamic intellectuals revolves around the Ash'ari creed and the moral teachings or tasawuf of al-Ghazali. (Bruinessen 1995).

## 2. Islam Aboge in the Horseshoe Area

Horseshoe (*Tapal Kuda*) refers to the eastern region, part of the province of East Java. Named Horseshoe (*Tapal Kuda*) because the shape of the area on the map is similar to that of a Horseshoe. The Horseshoe (*Tapal Kuda*) area includes Pasuruan (eastern part), Probolinggo, Lumajang, Jember, Situbondo, Bondowoso, and Banyuwangi. The area has three large mountains: the Bromo-Tengger-Semeru Mountains, the Iyang Mountains (with the highest peak, Mount Argopuro), and the Plains. Ijen Height (with the highest peak of Mount Raung). Horseshoe is a subcultural area in East Java with a long rebellion history. The majority of Horseshoe (*Tapal Kuda*) residents are ethnic Madurese. Even though there is a Javanese ethnic minority, the powerful Madurese influence causes the cultural character in this region to have a more Madurese flavour. The Horseshoe (*Tapal Kuda*) people are also very synonymous with Islam. More specifically, Nahdatul Ulama.

During the Majapahit era, the Horseshoe (*Tapal Kuda*) became the East Majapahit region. Whereas during the Mataram period, the Horseshoe (*Tapal Kuda*) was called Blambangan. Extraordinary courage became a prominent character in the Horseshoe (*Tapal Kuda*) community. Majapahit never received fierce resistance from the rebels led by Minak Djinggo. Likewise, the VOC also needed help sticking its imperialism in this region. Fortunately, Suropati, a Balinese child who was brought up by the Dutch and eventually hunted down by his masters, found powerful support here so that he was finally able to build a kingdom in Pasuruan. The Horseshoe (*Tapal Kuda*) has many legends that tell of the people's resistance to the attempts of oppression by the authorities. In Pasuruan, there once lived Sakera, who always carried a celurit, a dissident company that moved from one sugarcane field to another. In Situbondo, there is Prince Situbondo; in Jember, it is famous

for the struggle of Prince Tawang Alun; in Lumajang, there is Minak Koncer which some people consider to be the first kingdom to embrace Islam long before Majapahit.

During the Dutch and Japanese colonial periods, the Horseshoe (*Tapal Kuda*) area became one of the bases of resistance for Muslims - the pesantren - against colonialism. Even the Syafi'iyah Salafiyah Sukorejo Islamic Boarding School became a restricted area (heilige, zone) for Dutch troops to enter the area. The Islamic boarding school community worked hand in hand with the Indonesian people and army to form volunteer troops to stem Dutch and Japanese aggression. Through the axis of Syaikhona Khalil Bangkalan, Jombang and Sidogiri, the pesantren community also spreads Islam Nusantara. As an area that is part of the Horseshoe (*Tapal Kuda*), of course, the socio-religious development of Islam in the people of Probolinggo and Jember historically cannot be separated from social turmoil and development in the context of the Horseshoe (*Tapal Kuda*). Geographically, Probolinggo Regency is located on the slopes of mountains that run from West to East, namely Mount Semeru, Argopuro, Lamong and Tengger. In addition, there are other mountains, namely Mount Bromo, Widodaren, Gilap, Gambir, Jombang, Cemorolawang, Malang, and Batuajar. Judging from the altitude, Probolinggo Regency is 0 – 2500 m above sea level with an average temperature of 27°C - 30°C.

Geographically, when viewed from the map, Probolinggo Regency is included in the part of the area called the Horseshoe because the shape of the area on the map is similar to the shape of a Horseshoe. Apart from Probolinggo, the Horseshoe area includes Pasuruan (eastern part), Lumajang, Jember, Situbondo, Bondowoso and Banyuwangi. The Horseshoe area is one of the subcultural areas in East Java with a history of rebellion. The majority of the inhabitants of this area are people of Madurese ethnicity, resulting in a more Madurese-scented cultural character. Probolinggo Regency is an area coloured with powerful religious nuances. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) is a religious organization that is followed by most of the people of Probolinggo. While Muhammadiyah organizations can be found in several districts, such as Kec. Gending, Kec. Leces, and Kec. Kraksaan. Ethnic background, the majority of whom are of Madurese descent, may cause the large number of NU followers in the Probolinggo District. The people of Probolinggo Regency are of Madurese descent, most of whom cannot speak Javanese, even though they live in Javanese land. They are reluctant to be called Madurese and prefer to be called *pandhalungan* (mixed) people because

their ancestors are an intermingling of ethnic Javanese and Madurese, or Javanese who are Madurese.

### **3. Conflict of Interpretation between Tradition and Sect**

The development of Islam Aboge in Probolinggo and Jember must be connected to the culture of religious life, which always upholds the values of tolerance among community members (Ghani 2013). Even though it has many followers, this group does not want to be called adherents of sects (religious sects). They argue that they only carry out the teachings they have received from generation to generation. Although for that purpose, they must be supervised by the state apparatus every year. The difference in views between mainstream Islam and Aboge Community Islam leads to efforts to herd Aboge opinions as streams (beliefs). According to him, the definition of the sect has a dark history in religious life in Probolinggo and Jember.

Probolinggo Regency has twenty-four districts that stretch from the northern coast to the slopes of the Bromo mountains in the south. In the South East Region, Probolinggo is bordered by the northern tip of Tanggul and Sumberbaru sub-districts, Jember Regency. The Aboge community base in Jember is spread across several villages in the Kraton and Puger Districts. Meanwhile, in Probolinggo, the distribution of the Aboge community is in five sub-districts: Leces, Dringu, Bantaran, Tegalsiwalan and Kuripan. The villages that form the basis of the Aboge community are demographically in an inseparable area. They spread across five districts and ten villages with an estimated congregation of more than 900 people. As a social phenomenon, it has yet to be known precisely when the Aboge community started living in Probolinggo, only according to K. Mariye, pilgrims who use Aboge in Probolinggo, especially those in the Bantaran and Leces Districts, are students of Kiai Sepuh Majungan. Meanwhile, Kiai Majungan is a student of Kiai Sepuh Sumber Kedawung, Probolinggo. The Aboge community has for years lived within a religious tradition and a social environment with its character.

Meanwhile, the distribution of the Aboge community in Jember includes the Kraton and Paseban Villages, Kencong District. In Kraton Village, there is a heritage site from the Aboge tradition in the form of an ancient mosque estimated to be more than one and a half centuries old. According to Masduki, the mosque, which the local people call the Ireng Mosque, is the first mosque in Kraton Village. Masduki, nicknamed Pak Duki, is the



fifth generation who continues the Aboge tradition in Kraton Village. Apart from Kencong District, the Aboge Jember community is also in Puger District, in Wonosari Village, to be precise. Kraton Village, which is relatively close to the centre of Kencong District, makes the Aboge community in this area have a different topography from Aboge communities in other areas. A more modern topographic style with urban typologies and conditions makes the Aboge community in Kraton Village far from traditional. Before entering the Aboge community area, there is a relatively large and luxurious tourist attraction, complete with a hotel. The road to the Ireng Mosque has also been built with many housing estates. Pak Duki, the fifth generation, shows how the Aboge community in Kraton Village has existed for a long time. According to him, his family origins came from Jombang Regency.

Kiai Mariye and Kiai Rasuli always convey this affirmation as a hereditary tradition at every opportunity for interviews with media crews and other events. The two figures are aware that some parties have different views on the beliefs of the Aboge community. The negative stigma given by certain parties to the Aboge community influences interaction and communication patterns and narrows the space for the movement of community members. The situation became even more apprehensive when the government itself had to provide direct security by deploying officers at essential moments of Aboge ritual activities. Even if based on mutual security and convenience, the existence of security forces surveillance is still considered odd by the Aboge community. They argued that they worshipped, not acting against the government or treason.

Every Eid Al-Fitr, there are always intelligence officers from the police and district police, even the district military command, who come to supervise the implementation of the holiday prayers. Extra supervision was implemented during the New Order. Even two days before the holiday, intelligence had been deployed to places that were the centres of religious activity for the Aboge community. In the last two years, the police have visited, both from the regional police and the regional police. The questions still revolve around Eid which does not coincide with other Muslims. The security forces argued that it was feared that the implementation of the holidays, which did not coincide, would trigger social segregation. They assume that social anomalies always lead to social conflict. Ustadz Madzkur says:

The police have questioned us for the past two years. Last year those who came here were from the police, and yesterday's Eid was from the police. They

always ask why it is different. I explained that matters of belief are our prerogative. In the era of Megawati, we were also monitored, especially during the New Order era; we were often threatened (Madzkur 2021).

The leaders of the Aboge Community are adamant that what is being done is not a form of deviation from religious beliefs. Like Kiai Mariye, he also believes that Aboge is a tradition that does not conflict with Islam. Aboge is the reality of Islam, like the realities of other Muslim groups. Therefore Aboge is not a sect; this phenomenon has been around for decades, even since Indonesia was not yet independent (Kistoro 2021). Aboge read basmalah with lafadz like other Muslim groups. Even the term Aboge itself adopts many letters and terms that use Arabic. The aboge is indeed ancient, familiar and not a heretical religious sect. The aboge has been used since K Sepuh Majung.

.....Aboge is still a priest of the Koran. In my opinion, the terms alif, ba, and jim still include the Koran. Listen to people reading talqin: wa al-Ka'batu Qiblata wa al-Qur'anu imami wa al-mu'minuna ikhwani, it is like that (Mariye 2021).

Beliefs disseminated from generation to generation over a long time have slowly made Aboge in Probolinggo grow widely in five districts: Dringu, Leces, Tegalsiwalan, Bantaran and Kuripan, with a population of over two thousand followers. In general, they still have a kinship. This kinship pattern runs naturally based on sectarian and genetic emotionalism, so this condition allows the Aboge ideology to survive. Kiai Mariye was adamant that he would not leave Aboge because Aboge was a testament entrusted by his Abah to continue. Likewise, his father also received a will from his grandfather. He has also prepared his son to continue Aboge's life and beliefs in his area. The transition from one character to another Aboge character runs smoothly and naturally. Each character has prepared the next generation to continue the traditions of their ancestors.

During the New Order era, around the 80-the 90s, there was a period of strict supervision from the government. The logic and policies that make the security sector a sector that guarantees ongoing development require regional officials and governments to pay close attention to the dynamics and developments of social life in the regions. Even though the Aboge community is relatively small in quantity, the tradition carried out is considered full of SARA content because it involves religious life. Moreover, Aboge figures such as Kiai Rasuli are considered to have alignments with opposition political parties.

Several Aboge figures, Kiai Rasuli and Kiai Mariye, have clear views and political alignments regarding party treatizes in Indonesia. As if to justify the thesis about sectarian politics in Indonesia, as religious figures associated with Abangan, both have views and attitudes supporting nationalist parties (read: PDI/PDI-P). On the wall of Kiai Rasuli's house, several photos of Bung Karno were pasted in various sizes, from the smallest to more than one meter. It is said that the beduk in his house's mushalla also had a bull's head drawn on it. Furthermore, even more extreme, according to one of his students, Arifin, Kiai Rasuli has a keris that can be used to carry out an imaginary dialogue with Bung Karno (Arifin 2021).

The above fact has wider social consequences, namely continuous control and surveillance, which are intended to narrow the space for community movement. The realization that is most commonly felt by the community is uneven development, especially the construction of road infrastructure and slowing the entry of the electricity network. Two areas of development are strategic sectors in driving the economy and public security. This fact is a general pattern practised by the authorities; when an area is considered not a constituent of the authorities, the area will experience delays in receiving access to regional development policies (Fadil 2019).

Politically and socially, religious life in Indonesia has experienced ups and downs caused by ambiguous government regulations and policies. The state guarantees the freedom of its citizens to believe and worship according to their respective religions and beliefs. Nevertheless, at the same time, the state only recognizes six religions to get full rights in religious life in Indonesia (Alam & Pradhan 2021). This reflects that regulations are made considering fragile social balances and historical compromises. The government monitors and oversees every activity of the Islam Aboge Community because, politically, it does not support the Government party, so it is imaged as a religious sect. Thus, Islam Aboge is a legacy of traditions passed down from generation to generation with all its paradigms in its daily activities. The negative image as a religious sect is influenced by existing political factors.

The Islam Aboge Community in Jember differs from the Islam Aboge Community in Probolinggo. They tend not to be too closely monitored by the government because the leaders are not involved in practical political activities. The pure Islam Aboge Community is a legacy of hereditary traditions, as in the Aboge community in Kraton Village, Kencong,

Jember. Masduki is one of the bearers of the Aboge traditional relay baton who firmly adheres to Aboge beliefs—starting from the ornaments and building of the mosque in his yard to efforts to regenerate tradition in his family. For the Kraton and its surroundings, Pak Duki is the most authoritative and determines the future of the Aboge community.

"As long as my family and I are alive, Aboge will continue to be here. My parents have given me this trust. And this process has been going on for generations. Others cannot replace me. Because it's been a tradition since ancient times."

The regeneration process is exclusive and applies only to Pak Duki's family. In this custom, outsiders cannot take over the leadership of Aboge in Kraton Village. No formal regulations (such as AD-ART) exist because Aboge is not a religious organization. Pak Totok, a follower of Aboge, who lives not far from Pak Duni's house, confirmed this practice.

"Since I was small, even according to my great-grandfather, his family (Pak Duki) has always been the elder in carrying out the Aboge tradition. Although in general, what we do is not much different from other communities, but we have a strong bond. It's as if we don't pray here (Masjid Ireng) it feels like something is not perfect."

As his father prepared the generation, young Duki was housed in several Islamic boarding schools in Jember, even up to Kyai Hamid Islamic boarding school, Pasuruan. While studying at several neighbouring Islamic boarding schools nearby, many did not recognize him. While studying, Duki rarely came home. He prefers to follow and listen to recitations at the Islamic boarding school rather than having to commute for holidays. However, during his stay at the Islamic boarding school, Pak Duki never bought books for collection, like most students. Nevertheless, he prefers to listen to the descriptions and explanations conveyed by the clerics.

"I don't have a single collection of books (which are taught in Islamic boarding schools). In my view, if the books were collected and then placed in the house, it would become a source of division. Differences of opinion contained in the book when it is not able to be understood properly and correctly will become a problem in the midst of society. The most important thing of all is to do it. And able to be wise in seeing the difference. Because from all that the direction remains the same. We only worship Gusti Allah in our own way."

Just as his father did to Pak Duki, so does Pak Duki's treatment of his two children. They are currently in Islamic boarding schools to gain religious knowledge. Pak Duki has

never particularly indoctrinated his children with Aboge's understandings and traditions. This condition was deliberately created, so the two children learn from the family's habits. Based on his own experience, loyalty begins with the instilling of beliefs that are conveyed naturally. The intensity of daily communication and their involvement in the activities of religious traditions is considered more effective in instilling attitudes and emotional maturity.

#### **4. Islam Aboge and Community Vibration Facing Change**

Social conditions that move dynamically and always impact change at any level of society are challenging for local communities, including the Aboge community. The development of information technology has unexpectedly affected the traditions and beliefs that have been adhered to so far (Babb 1995). The base of the Aboge community, which is in the midst of a relatively advanced society, has fewer followers than the Aboge community in the villages. The Aboge community in Probolinggo and Jember cannot avoid the above trends. The development of information technology brings its rationality and promises novelty so that this phenomenon quickly targets young people in the Aboge community. The experiences resulting from these technological developments provide alternative views on caring for traditions (Hoover & Clark 2002).

Globalization, with the emergence of information technology, has spread to almost all levels of society. The era of the technological revolution was able to conjure up such rapid developments in people's lives (Evolvi & Giorda 2021). This development that feels wild also infiltrates the life of the Aboge community. Information technology devices in their homes now have more than televisions or radio tape recorders. Aboge youth are now very familiar with gadgets or cell phones. In the era of the 1980s and 1990s, television and radio were media that members of the community could access to obtain information related to many things, including information about rituals and religious ceremonies. They know and hear news about tellasan (Eid), disagreements over the timing of Eid, Mawlid Nabi, Isra' and Mi'raj through television and radio. Even neighbours who do not have a television will usually watch it at the neighbour's house with a television. They watch together while chatting. The information dissemination atmosphere needs to be improved. At the same time, young people have no interest in watching television (Meyer & Moors 2006).

The arrival of the mobile phone era gave a new face to the Aboge community. They began to interact intensely and communicate across borders. The entered information is not filtered; it does not know when and where (Isetti.et.al. 2021). The phone is always in the pocket; at any time, they can communicate in contrast to television, which limits the information only to certain stations with shows and programs that are not all alike. Television media can only obtain information and news about religious activities in Indonesia for decades. Meanwhile, newspapers and magazines have yet to become a literacy tradition in this community. Village officials still need to provide newspaper wall boards as media that can be accessed en masse for the village scope. The presence of television is enjoyed as a medium of entertainment amidst the community's fatigue after a day of working as farm labourers (Meyrowitz 1985).

The existence of traditions can still be firmly rooted, and community members have yet to budge from their ancestral beliefs and beliefs. This condition benefits from an institution formed by the state intended to control the publication of print media and electronic media broadcasts. Reports and broadcasts that cause public unrest will be censored and indirectly under state supervision. Debates and differences of opinion are not vulgar to be enjoyed by the public. Safety and a calm atmosphere are a priority. The flow of information that is not widely accessible also slows down community awareness to be more able to respond to differences. At least to realize how dramatically political developments can affect religious culture. Hefner notes that there is a tendency for kejawen Muslims and orthodox Muslims to exclude each other's traditions through elements identified with opposing parties. Although he also admitted that the relationship between the two was always very dynamic (Hefner 1999: 94-94).

However, the increasingly widespread use of mobile phones among Aboge youth certainly makes it easier to disseminate and absorb information on religious activities from various religious groups and communities in the universe. Conditions that have been difficult for the mainstream Islamic community to provide proper understanding in their view. This communication pattern runs more effectively so that Aboge youths have a balancing medium to open up new understandings regarding traditions carried out so far in a taken-for-granted manner. An open social environment and a blended lifestyle allow the Aboge community to interact with outsiders (Hoover 2006). However, one of the Ormas administrators in Kramat Agung complained that his preaching efforts to the Aboge's

enclaves had always been deadlocked. Several methods have been carried out, primarily through group events such as *syarwaan*, village forums, and sometimes even at the mau'idzah hasanah walimah event, where the guests of the Aboge community.

In the last three decades, the Aboge community in Blok Kramat Agung village has begun to shrink. Previously, one village adored the Aboge tradition; now, their number is only confined to a few settlements. However, besides the shift factors above, the Aboge figure in Kramat Agung Village, Kiai Pangkat, has been ill for a long time, so he could be more optimal in providing coaching. Aboge youths are starting to turn to the traditions and beliefs held by mainstream Muslims. They start fasting by following the determination of the beginning of Ramadan as agreed in the assembly of itsbat and ending Ramadan fasting and celebrating Eid al-Fitr. Aboge adherents in Kramat Agung are starting to follow the government's official announcement for holding two holidays and worship as is practised by the Probolinggo Muslim community in general.

For the Bantaran District and its surroundings, Kiai Sekar Sepuh is a role model who manages the education of the oldest pesantren in Bantaran. After the leadership of Kiai Sekar Sepuh, the pesantren management was transferred to his son, Kiai Sekar Anom. In this second generation, they still carry out the Aboge tradition. Furthermore, now the pesantren has been managed by the grandson of Kiai Sekar Sepuh. In this third generation, Aboge's understanding has begun to be abandoned and switches to the calendar pattern made by the government. However, according to Kiai Sabhat, on specific activities, Kiai Sekar Sepuh's grandson still asked Kiai Sabhat. For example, when building a house or when planning to hold a wedding reception, it is still based on the Aboge Petangan pattern (Sabhat 2021).

Ustadz Madzkur, for example, the successor of Aboge in Bantaran, alums of an Islamic boarding school in Probolinggo City, remains unmoved by the Aboge tradition. Aboge's observances and cosmological views remain referenced in his religious rituals and practices. What is different from his older brother, Kiai Syabhat, Ustadz Madzkur is more open and flexible in interpreting the direction and meaning of the ritual so that the community does not receive too many taboos and taboos from life:

"I do not use all of Aboge's concepts and formulations to help solve community problems. The development of society requires processing the ritual more simply. Because if we stick to the old formula, we will inevitably be unable to move freely. These formulations strictly regulate step-by-step community activities. Foresight and

prudence are required to determine and give the day and time to the community. Because if there is something unwanted in the future, it is easy to cause slander. Sometimes there are cases in the community, for example, marriage problems, especially community members who, when they return from overseas, immediately bring a spouse, so the family is forced to hasten the contract. On the other hand, the contract could not be carried out according to the agreement because the calculations met unlucky. Nevertheless, conditions do not allow it. So I do not use all the formulas. For example, I ignore technical engineering calculations" (Madzkur 2021)

Ustadz Madzkur admits that the development of society continues to move, creating dilemmas between traditional beliefs and community mobilization. Compromises are built while still paying attention to traditional values and internal dynamics. He realized it was necessary to be flexible in holding on to the principles of tradition, which could lead to slander (Kramer & Schmidtke 2006). The slightest problem the community faces is at risk of being pinned on the traditional figure. Aboge cosmology formulated in the concept of petangan often contradicts contemporary developments. Community activities in commerce, family, and farming continue to develop in such a way. The application of occasional traditions must be flexed according to these developments in applying the concept of grim and unlucky in a constantly changing community while still being guided by the aboge pattern.

For Ustadz Madzkur does not need to be disputed between the understanding of Aboge and Islam from the mainstream. Differences only occur in matters that are *furu'iyah*. These differences can still be accepted as long as these differences do not damage Islamic *aqidah*, according to Ust. Madzkur is natural and does not only occur in the Aboge community. He illustrated that the existence of certain groups or groups could be felt because of differences between one another. Furthermore, and vice versa, these differences eventually raise problems when they continue to be criticized as a contradiction (Madzkur 2021).

Pak Duki admits to the decline of Aboge followers in his environment. As an elder figure in his community, Pak Duki knows one by one the people around him who still want to follow in his footsteps. Furthermore, the decreasing number of followers is felt when religious activities and rituals are carried out which involve many members of the community.

"My most important principle is that we as a family can huddle together. As someone who received the mandate from my elders, I am limited to maintaining this tradition.



And I will protect it as best as I can. Although I realize that circumstances are constantly changing" (Masduki 2021).

However, Pak Duki is well aware that he cannot guarantee the survival of the Aboge tradition in his environment. Even towards his two children, there was a feeling of worry and surrender if this tradition would fade away one day. He then made an analogy with the television in his house which is no longer used because his two children have switched to other technologies and gadgets. The same fate will likely be experienced by the tradition he has believed in for decades.

*Ngelumpuk* (gathering) is the basic concept of community that is strived by Pak Duki. *Ngelumpuk* reflects a sense of togetherness that is upheld and fosters sympathy and empathy for the beliefs held by other people and groups. As an elder of the Aboge community in Kraton Village, Pak Duki sees many views and assumptions that do not respect other people's differences. People with their professions sometimes come to see pak Duki but have yet to look in more detail for the most profound meaning of their beliefs. "They just make us objects to continue to be spread outside," he concluded.

"That's why I limit those people. They could only enter this location up to the boundary of the gate. I really warned not to go beyond the gate. I even had to threaten. I've tried to explain that we're just carrying on the tradition. Just as they also carry out what is their belief" (Masduki 2021)

The facts above imply a shift in the interaction between individuals in a community that has started to change, educational processes and outcomes, and external penetration among the triggers for change. Ideologically, internal factors – educational processes and outcomes – are more prominent than external influences – the social environment – in providing a convective impact from Aboge to non-Aboge. Community awareness formed through increased scientific competence allows community members to make more variant choices regarding ideology and politics.

## CONCLUSION

The Aboge community in Probolinggo and Jember Regencies is a group of Muslim communities that practice their faith based on numerological beliefs. As a separate community from other Muslim communities, the Aboge community in the two districts also performs several ceremonies and rites, such as the life circle ceremony, the ceremony

of rejecting reinforcements, and the ceremony of auspicious days. These ceremonies are social values internalized by members of the community and created through a process of socialization that lasts a long time so that it settles into a way of thinking and behaviour patterns settled within the members of the community.

Islam Aboge in Probolinggo and Jember Regencies has developed from generation to generation. The inheritance of the tradition of the Aboge Community depends a lot on the prominent role of community leaders. The various ceremonies and rites carried out by the Islam Aboge Community practically rely on the role and charisma of figures such as kiai as community elites. In the social realm, the aim of carrying out the rituals and ceremonies of the Aboge community in Probolinggo is to obtain blessings and safety. At the same time, the Aboge community in Jember is an effort to build internal and external social cohesion.

However, religiously-culturally, these locally based ceremonies and traditions are inseparable and are in the process of a tug-of-war between various socio-religious classifications in Probolinggo and Jember. This situation is overcome by emphasizing Aboge's cosmological mindset, which works in two systems of resistance: working externally and internally, where the role of the Aboge figure acts as the cultural broker. Community elites run these two systems by making the mushalla (in Probolinggo and the mosque in Jember) a cultural arena emphasizing distinction and resistance to the possibility of subordination.

The fact that some Aboge communities have switched to mainstream Islam further demonstrates cultural dynamics in how Islam is spread in Probolinggo and Jember, henceforth how Islam is absorbed, accommodated and expressed. This dynamic also underlies the process of spreading and understanding Islam as a long and continuous fact in antagonism, assimilation, and acculturation, which continues to move simultaneously.

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