



## The Madurese Bongso Wetan Tribe and the Existence of Hindu Identity

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**ABSTRAK.** *Sejarah agama Hindu di Bongso Wetan dimulai pada tahun 1910. Intensitas interaksi menyebabkan penduduk tertarik untuk berpindah agama Hindu, dan upacara Sudhi Wadhanai dilakukan sebagai sistem untuk membaptis seseorang ke dalam agama Sanathana Dharma. Awalnya, hanya ada 27 orang Hindu di Bongso Wetan. Hingga akhirnya, berkembang menjadi 223 rumah tangga. Berasal dari Bangkalan, Madura, komunitas Hindu di Bongso Wetan masih mempertahankan budaya asal mereka. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis latar belakang sosial atau stimulus komunitas Hindu Bongso Wetan dalam upaya mereka mempertahankan identitas keagamaan serta latar belakang sosial mereka. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif, memilih lokasi di Desa Pengalangan, yang terletak di Kecamatan Menganti, Kabupaten Gresik, Provinsi Jawa Timur. Jika kita melihat hubungan antara akumulasi modal dan penerimaan sosial, pada akhirnya hal itu digunakan oleh Bongso Wetan untuk membentuk 'pusat sosial'. Jalinan yang mengarah ke simpul dibaca sebagai hasil internalisasi nilai, gagasan, dan 'modal' yang dijunjung tinggi oleh kelompok terkait. Penerimaan komunitas non-Islam di wilayah tersebut menandakan bahwa kelompok Bongso Wetan telah mengalami agregasi. Agregasi dalam konteks ini berarti upaya kelompok minoritas atau kelompok imigran untuk menciptakan 'ikatan sosial' dengan penduduk asli. Upaya untuk menciptakan koneksi ini memiliki implikasi bagi pembentukan 'perekat sosial', atau ikatan dua elemen sosial yang sebenarnya memiliki latar belakang berbeda. Secara kontekstual, dapat dijelaskan bahwa keberadaan komunitas Hindu Bongso Wetan diposisikan sebagai 'agen' dan komunitas Jawa Timur dengan basis agama Islam sebagai 'pemegang kekuasaan'. Kedua kelompok sosial ini berada di arena sosial, tempat mereka memainkan 'permainan' pertukaran, dan bernegosiasi.*

**ABSTRACT.** The history of Hinduism in Bongso Wetan began in 1910. The intensity of interaction caused residents to become interested in converting to Hinduism, and the Sudhi Wadhanai ceremony was performed as a system to baptize someone into the Sanathana Dharma faith. Initially, there were only 27 Hindus in Bongso Wetan. Until finally, it grew to 223 households. Coming from Bangkalan, Madura, the Hindu community in Bongso Wetan still maintains the culture of their origin. This research aims to analyze the social background or stimuli of the Hindu Bongso Wetan community in their efforts to maintain their religious identity as well as their social background. This research uses a qualitative method, selecting a location in Pengalangan Village, which is located in Menganti District, Gresik Regency, East Java Province. If we look at the relationship between capital accumulation and social acceptance, it was ultimately used by Bongso Wetan to form a 'social hub'. The weaving that leads to the knot is read as the result of internalizing the values, ideas, and 'capitals' maintained by the relevant group. The acceptance of non-Islamic communities in the region signifies that the Bongso Wetan group has undergone aggregation. Aggregation in this context means the efforts of minority groups or immigrant groups to create 'social ties' with the native population. The effort to create this connection has implications for the formation of 'social glue', or the bonding of two social elements that actually have different backgrounds. Contextually, it can be explained that the presence of the Hindu Bongso Wetan community is positioned as the 'agent' and the East Java community with an Islamic religious base as the 'incumbent'. These two social groups are in the social arena, where they play the 'game' exchange, and negotiate.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The sociological perspective on religion views the existence and constellation of belief systems, which are then manifested as religion thru a very long social history. This began with pagan religious rites – later known as '*agama ardhī*' or 'earth religion'. The liturgy of this religion emphasizes the nature of cosmology, eschatology, and theology (Kaunda, 2021; Mingming, 2023). The accumulation of these three paradigms is implemented thru the socio-cultural practices of their adherents. This is what causes the practices of pagan believers to always contextualize their theological expressions with diverse micro and macrocosmic existences (Hilderbrand & Sritrakool, 2021; Sherma, 2021; Truschke, 2016). The way to 'bring' the essence of the universe into religious rituals is done thru various specific symbols or signs. This becomes a fundamental element, the existence of pagan religions, closely linked to the combination of religion as a system of belief and culture as a system of action. What is included in paganism consists of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and other ancient religions (W. R. Cameron, 2023; Harrington, 2016; Rycroft, 2012). However, the long history of the birth and development of religion in a linear historical context, and the spatial and temporal existence of these institutions, are precisely simplified based on territorial context. For example, in Indonesia in 1952, only three religions were recognized as the basis of society's beliefs: Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism. Why are only three religions recognized? This reality can be understood contemplatively, where after the birth of pagan religions, there emerged a revitalization or renewal of belief systems, marked by the emergence of Abrahamic religions.

The heavenly system emphasizes both the process of revelation and the prophetic system, where the basis of belief is believed to come directly from the first cause entity, and teachings are disseminated sporadically thru the line of prophets. And, most importantly, the foundation of this belief system is to view the supernatural existence within a monotheistic typology – believing in the One Supreme Being. This is different from paganism, which sees the existence of God in various dimensions. Such as, polytheism or henotheism (Kurki, 2015; Wasserman, 2021; Włodarczyk et al., 2018). This dominance of the paradigm regarding the existence of the One God is what caused the existence of 'earthly religions' to become a marginal discourse, and the discourse of belief was dominated by the system of oneness from 'heavenly religions'. The strong influence of heavenly religions caused earthly religions to have to declare a new concept of divinity – monotheism. Because only in this way can paganism in Indonesia be recognized as a 'religious institution'. Hindus classified as pagans want to declare themselves as a religion in order to obtain constitutional rights. Hindu practices are massively implemented by Balinese society, and religious rites are performed with animistic, dynamic, totemic, and polytheistic practices – all four of which are paradoxical with the monotheistic demands as a formal call to be recognized as an official religion.

Hindu figures such as Ida Bagus Sugriwa, Narendra Pandhit, and several young Balinese scholars were sent to study at Shantiniketan Vishva Bharaty University, Banaras Hindu University, and the International Academy of Indian Culture. On June 14, 1958, a joint petition was submitted demanding the establishment of a Hindu-Balinese section within the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This petition argued that Hinduism in Bali was not in conflict with *Pancasila*. President Sukarno, who strongly supported unity, would certainly welcome the petition. On January 1, 1959, the government established the Hindu Affairs Section of Bali within the Ministry of Religious Affairs. In the same year, all major religious organizations merged into a single body called the Parisadha Dharma Hindu Bali. In 1963, the bureau was renamed the Bureau of Hindu Religious Affairs Bali. The following year, the Parisada Hindu Dharma Bali changed its name to Parisada Hindu Dharma. During the period 1966-1980, many Javanese people in Central and East Java, such as the Tengger people in the Bromo area of East Java, the Bugis people in Wani, Lotang, Toraja-Mamasa, and Toraja Sa' in South Sulawesi, and some Karo people in North Sumatra, as well as the Ngaju and Luangan people in South Kalimantan, declared themselves as Hindu. In 1986, the Parisadha Hindu Dharma changed its name to the Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia, in order to encompass the community. The formation of this organization is part of the journey of the Balinese Hindu community's struggle to demand Hinduism as a religion, not as a belief system. This reality can be read as a sociological momentum, due to the dominance of the system of thinking among the agents (Duarte, 2021; Kendrick, 2018; Stolow & Meyer, 2021). The complexity surrounding the way of viewing the supernatural, whether 'earthly' or 'heavenly', is a fascinating discourse within the constellation of belief systems in Indonesia.

Speaking of Hinduism, the majority of the Balinese population adheres to this system of belief. Bali, in various literature and discourse constructions, is known as the Island of the Gods. This discourse symbolically and hermeneutically implies that 'deities' and 'temples' are personifications of Bali. Therefore, territorially, this region becomes the most important base for the spread, preservation, and maintenance of this religion. However, the spatial entity showing Bali as the 'Hindu Island' turned out to be non-deterministic. It turns out that sporadic instances of Sanatha Dharma were found in other regions of Indonesia. One of them is in the Madura Island area, specifically the Bongso Wetan region. The history of Hinduism in Bongso Wetan began in 1910. Aiming to find a place to live, a group of people from Bangkalan, Madura, cleared the forest at that location. It turns out that the place where they cleared the land held 'small fragments' of Hindu religious teachings. The intensity of interaction led residents to become interested in converting to Hinduism, and the Sudhi Wadhani ceremony was performed – a system for baptizing someone into the Sanathana Dharma faith. Initially, there were only 27 Hindus in Bongso Wetan. Until finally, it grew to 223 households. Coming from Bangkalan, Madura, the Hindu community in Bongso Wetan still maintains the culture of their origin. Combining traditional clothing with the traditional Balinese head covering – the *udeng*. This head covering is a distinctive feature and a confirmation of identity as a Hindu Madurese person, and is worn during religious ceremonies. In their

daily lives, the Hindu community in Bongso Wetan uses Madurese and Javanese to communicate, and even during prayer rituals, the Madurese dialect is often used, adding another layer to Hindu culture with a very strong social intersection.

A distinctive characteristic shared by Hindus and Muslims in Bongso Wetan is that the rituals they perform are always closely tied to Javanese traditions, which are the true cultural roots there. Like the tradition of death, it is mandatory to bury the deceased without waiting long. This is a hereditary Javanese tradition practiced by the Hindu community of Madura. This context can be read as a 'medium of negotiation' within a 'dispositive trajectory'. This means there is always 'negotiation' at the heart of the social field. Forms of 'negotiation' such as tolerance or the fluidity of the system of norms allow the existence of diverse societies to form their own social nodes. Without having to face various potential conflicts (Howes, 2022; Ritts & Bakker, 2022; Russell, 2016). The strength of social capital makes plural conditions construct tolerant social agents.

The development of Hinduism in the region did not always go smoothly. There are various socio-political situations and dynamics that sporadically distract from the compilation of Hinduism. For example, in 1965 there was political upheaval, which had an impact after 1965, when all Indonesian people were required to convert to a religion, especially the 'official' religions recognized by the government. Factually, Bongso Wetan at that time was ethnically recorded as Madurese and Muslim. However, some people from Bongso Kulon and Wetan felt this was far from their locality. They identified themselves as Madurese ethnic group who practiced Javanese rituals. Therefore, in the 1970s, one of the Balinese communities living in Surabaya provided guidance to local residents on Hindu religious practices. The internalization of Hindu values slowly shapes the character and beliefs of the local community. Ultimately, they converted to Hinduism, characterized by the acculturation of Madurese, Javanese, and Balinese rituals. Social mixing is a sociological method that is consistently implemented by minorities. The liquidity of diverse interactions creates a degradation of fanaticism, egosectoralism, or sparks of primordial spirit. Because, by affirming diverse differences, it creates a conducive social environment, providing a space for conversation between individuals or specific social groups (Behr & Shani, 2021; Conway, 2018; Warde et al., 2017). In conclusion, in a diverse society, there is always a way to create multiculturalism in the midst of existing differences in a consolidating manner.

The cultural blending of three ethnicities – Madurese, Javanese, and Balinese – as the basis for existence and identity preservation, can be seen in the chanting and recitation of mantras. Songs and mantras are cultural manifestations of Bali and Java. However, the language and dialect used are actually spoken in the style of the Madurese people. Furthermore, identity is strongly maintained thru the strength of the cultural knot of Java. The Hindu communities of Bongso Wetan and Kulon are agrarian social communities and view the environment or universe as an inherent element in their lives (Corazza, 2023; Davies, 2022; Leach, 2014). This reciprocal relationship prompted the group to pay homage to cosmic entities thru various rituals (Gabrys, 2019; Hutchins & Lester, 2015; Shoshtaishvili, 2020; Veldhuis et al., 2019). Among them are earth alms, seed planting ceremonies, and the Nite of One *Suro*, which is held on the day of the ninth new moon. As can be seen, some of the rituals above are forms of social adaptation, while still adhering to their original identity (Madura), but performing other rites (Javanese and Balinese) – *sedekah bumi* and *Tilem Kesanga*, as important elements of self-preservation amidst the reality of social diversity in society.

However, there's something interesting about the presence of Hindu followers in the Bongso Wetan community, specifically after 1965. Hindu identity is determined and dynamically practiced, specifically during the celebration of *Malam Satu Suro*. This event was replaced with the *Pangrupukan* celebration or ceremonial activities before the *Nyepi* holiday. This can be read as an attempt to strengthen identity and affirm the local community's religion. However, the 'diagonal' tradition as a form of social adaptation, such as the earth offering, is still practiced. Uniquely, this celebration is not only performed by the Hindu community, but also by the Muslim community in the area. If interpreted, this is an implementation of social acceptance or affirmation from each different group, and the unification or acceptance of each group is done across cultures or beliefs (Beck, 2016; Brighenti, 2018; Demeulenaere et al., 2021; Song et al., 2023). This tradition is performed during the *Sasih Jyesta*, or the fourth month in the Gregorian calendar. However, the efforts to engage in social struggle by the Hindu Bongso Wetan were not easy. There are various dynamics that need to be addressed. One of them is in the field of education. The young Hindu generation in Bongso Wetan faces several conditions of scarcity. The limited teaching staff meant they had to study independently with the guidance of *Romo Mangku*, not to mention the lack of facilities they had, due to the requirement to learn religion not in a temple, but in the courtyard of *Pura Kerta Bumi*, not in a school. These limitations often lead to despair, but the internalization of social survival makes this young generation ready to defend the existence of their religion. The description of the existence of the Hindu Bongso Wetan community in Madura, who have diverse ways of maintaining the essence of their original identity, and the various social dynamics they face, ultimately led to various research questions in this study. Therefore, this research will formulate two types of questions, namely: a) why do the Hindu Bongso Wetan people maintain their Hindu identity? and b) how do the Hindu Bongso Wetan people maintain their Hindu identity amidst the reality of Islam in the Madura region? Formulating questions, which are manifested thru two research questions, will ultimately help the researcher formulate the research objectives. This research aims to explore and analyze the dynamics of the Hindu community of the Madura Bongso Wetan tribe in maintaining their Hindu identity. The results of this research are ultimately expected to lead to recommendations, particularly for the guidance of Hindu communities in minority areas. With the aim of fostering militancy in preserving religious identity and passing on that belief system to future generations.

Specifically, this research aims to analyze the social background or stimuli of the Hindu community of Bongso Wetan in their efforts to maintain both their religious and social identities. This is important as an attempt to conduct

sociometry, or to interpret the 'map' of the distribution of minority religious systems amidst the activity of majority religions. Additionally, the maintenance of identity by certain communities – in this case, the Bongso Wetan – aims to provide a social interpretation of the nature and urgency of the spirit to maintain their 'original aspects' – their status as followers of Hinduism. On the other hand, this research also aims to analyze the various ways or strategies of self-preservation used by the Hindu community of Wetan Bongso in maintaining their culture and liturgy amidst a pluralistic society.

## 2. METHOD

The type of research uses a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is a research approach that focuses on the depth of understanding of the research object and uses narrative as the basis of the research's strength. This context confirms that the researcher themselves is the research instrument (Langer, 2016; Lester & Paulus, 2023). Therefore, their presence becomes important when approaching the research site. The purpose of qualitative research is to explain phenomena holistically, thru the systematic collection of data. Therefore, qualitative research emphasizes the depth of data obtained by the researcher and the interpretation of the meaning behind the data collected (Au, 2022; Page et al., 2022). In this case, the researcher collected data on the dynamics of the Hindu community of the Wongso Wetan ethnic group, specifically regarding their efforts to maintain their Hindu identity. This included the origins of the Madurese ethnic Hindu community, their social system, and the efforts they made to preserve their Hindu identity. This research was conducted in Pengalangan Village, Menganti District, Gresik Regency, East Java Province. The reason for choosing this location is to obtain information regarding the dynamics of the Madura Bongso Wetan Hindu community in maintaining their Hindu identity. The Hindu community of SMadura Bongso Wetan lives in the village, spread across 2 (two) hamlets: Bongso Wetan Hamlet and Bongso Kulon Hamlet. Of these 2 (two) hamlets, the majority of the population is Hindu, residing in Bongso Wetan Hamlet, near the water park and Ciputra Housing. The theoretical background for choosing this location is because: (a) The Hindu community of the Madura Bongso Wetan tribe is only found in this village, (b) The Madura Bongso Wetan Hindu tribe is a minority community among the Muslim population, and (c) cultural acculturation has occurred between the Hindu Balinese, Javanese, and Madurese tribes, bound together within the territory of Pura Kertha Bhumi. These three reasons are strong justifications for the selection of the research location.

The type of data used in this study is qualitative data, supported by quantitative data. The data sought thru the questions of what, why, and how aims to uncover processes – obtained thru interviews and direct observation, which are manifestations of the qualitative method (Ravenek & Rudman, 2013; Vaughn, 2020). Meanwhile, a quantitative approach is used to delve deeper into supporting data, in order to deepen the study's findings, such as: population data, community education data, and land area as statistical data at the research location. Then, based on the data source, it can be divided into two groups: primary data sources and secondary data sources. Primary data sources are data sources obtained directly from the research object by conducting step-by-step observations in the field (Chafe, 2023; Correa, 2012). Data was collected independently based on existing realities, obtained thru data collection techniques such as observation and interviews. In this study, to obtain primary data sources, direct interviews will be conducted with the Chairman of the Indonesian Hindu Religious Council (PHDI) of Pengalangan Village, the Chairman of the Indonesian Hindu Religious Council (PHDI) of Menganti District, the Chairman of the Indonesian Hindu Religious Council (PHDI) of Gresik Regency, community leaders, and the Bongso Wetan group. Then, secondary data sources are facts obtained and collected by other researchers who conducted similar studies. This data is usually obtained from literature or from reports by previous researchers, such as manuscripts, official archives, and journal books, as supporting material whose content is related to the research topic. Contextually, the secondary data sources for this research were gathered from articles, books, documents, and other sources related to the dynamics of the Hindu community of the Madura Bongso Wetan tribe in Pengalangan Village, Menganti District, Gresik Regency, East Java Province.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

The strength of the Samawian influence caused the Ardhian to have to declare a new concept of divinity – monotheism. Because only in this way can paganism in Indonesia be recognized as a 'religious institution'. Hindus classified as pagans want to declare themselves as a religion in order to obtain constitutional rights. Hindu practices are widely implemented by Balinese society, and religious rituals are performed with animistic, dynamic, totemic, and polytheistic practices – all four of which are paradoxical with the monotheistic demands as a formal call to be recognized as an official religion. Hindu figures such as Ida Bagus Sugriwa, Narendra Pandhit, and several young Balinese scholars were sent to study at Shantiniketan Vishva Bharati University, Banaras Hindu University, and the International Academy of Indian Culture. On June 14, 1958, a joint petition was submitted demanding the establishment of a Hindu-Balinese section within the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This petition argued that Hinduism in Bali was not in conflict with Pancasila. President Sukarno, who strongly supported unity, would certainly welcome the petition. On January 1, 1959, the government established the Hindu Affairs Section of Bali within the Ministry of Religious Affairs. In the same year, all major religious organizations merged into a single body called the Parisadha Dharma Hindu Bali. In 1963, the bureau was renamed the Bureau of Hindu Religious Affairs Bali. The following year, the Parisada Hindu Dharma Bali changed its name

to Parisada Hindu Dharma. During the period 1966-1980, many Javanese people in Central and East Java, such as the Tengger people in the Bromo area of East Java, the Bugis people in Wani, Lotang, Toraja-Mamasa, and Toraja Sa' in South Sulawesi, and some Karo people in North Sumatra, as well as the Ngaju and Luangan people in South Kalimantan, declared themselves as Hindu. In 1986, the Parisadha Hindu Dharma changed its name to the Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia to accommodate these communities. The formation of this organization is part of the journey of the Balinese Hindu community's struggle to demand Hinduism as a religion, not as a belief system.

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A distinctive characteristic shared by Hindus and Muslims in Bongso Wetan is that the rituals they perform are always closely tied to Javanese traditions, which are the true cultural roots there. Like the tradition of death, it is mandatory to bury the deceased without waiting long. This is a hereditary Javanese tradition practiced by the Hindu community of Madura. This context can be read as a 'medium of negotiation' within a 'dispositive trajectory'. This means there is always 'negotiation' at the heart of the social field. Forms of 'negotiation' such as tolerance or the fluidity of the system of norms allow the existence of diverse societies to form their own social 'nodes'.

## Discussion

### ***Background of the Hindu Bongso Wetan Community in Maintaining Their Hindu Identity***

Dynamics is a system of interconnected and mutually influencing bonds between these elements. If one element of the system changes, it will also bring about changes in the other elements. Group dynamics as a field of social knowledge that focuses on understanding the nature of group life. Dynamics is the study of behavior within a community to develop knowledge about its nature, development, intra-social relationships with its members, and larger inter-group relationships. Therefore, in the context of this research, what is meant by dynamics is the reciprocal pattern that occurs within a community group, bringing about changes for that particular group, especially the Hindu Madurese ethnic community. The social context, particularly its connection to social dynamics, serves to examine the existence of the Hindu Madurese ethnic group, specifically how this community can still exist, especially in East Java, where the majority of the population is Muslim. This context becomes interesting when minorities are able to create patterns of social struggle, using their minority status to form diagonal interactions with the majority group (Banks, 2014; Frimpong Boamah, 2022). Social dynamics is the study of social science, particularly sociology, to trace the existence of individuals or a social institution, especially amidst changes or cultural occupation that are actively pursued by dominant groups (Damsa & Franko, 2023; Witt et al., 2023), but those identified as a recessive group are able to maintain their otherness to intersect, especially to create a social equilibrium scheme amidst the social constellation (Mendieta, 2005; Sutherland, 2014; Woods, 2017). It can be explained that, as a recessive group, their social status does not directly degrade the nature and existence of the Hindu community in Bongso Wetan. However, its minor quantity makes it a social instrument for self-preservation. Certainly, there are various contested accumulations of capital, so their otherness does not become a source of exclusion (Arnason, 2022; Stoetzler, 2015). The proof is that the Madurese ethnic group who are Hindu experienced social acceptance by the local community. It can be seen that there is a connection between capital accumulation and social acceptance, which was ultimately used by Bongso Wetan to form a social hub. The weaving that leads to the knot is read as the result of internalizing the values, ideas, and capitals maintained by the relevant group. That capital is manifested in economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital (Delanty & Harris, 2021; Engster, 2016). Without those four things, it would be impossible for them to survive within the 'social orchestration' of East Java society. In other words, the social dynamics of these Hindu followers cannot be separated from the power and aggregation of the above-mentioned 'capitals'. The dominant reception of society toward the recessive society is negotiated amidst the 'dispositive trajectory', or there is always flexibility amidst the strong influence of non-Hindu elements in the East Java region. Factually, the operation of capital proves the strong influence of Hinduism, as evidenced by the fact that the initial 27 Hindu residents eventually grew to 223 households.

*Jamali: Identitas Hindu di Dusun Bongso Wetan dan Kulon Desa Pengalangan Gresik Jawa Timur* (Gunawan et al., 2020) stating that the people in Bongso Hamlet are Madurese ethnic group and have been practicing Hinduism since

the political turmoil of 1965. Although they chose to convert to Hinduism, their social relationships with other villagers in their hamlet are very good. The local community still upholds Javanese traditions and cultural values. Interestingly, the Hindu community in Bongso Wetan identifies itself as Javanese, Madurese, and Balinese. This identity formation took a very long time, thru quite flexible adaptation, resulting in the hybridity they call Jamali: Javanese, Madurese, and Balinese. The life of this social group is bound by a single place of worship, called Pura Kertha Bumi. This place of worship serves as the religious, social, and educational center. Research ([Gunawan et al., 2020](#)) It is at the level of general information about the existence of the Madurese Hindu community of Bongso Wetan, and has not comprehensively elaborated on the origins, social system, and efforts to maintain the Hindu identity of the Madurese Hindu community. Therefore, in this study, these three aspects were analyzed in depth. Nevertheless, the research ([Gunawan et al., 2020](#)) contributing initial information about the research locus being studied, as both are Hindu Madurese from the Wetan Bongso tribe, which is the material object of the research.

Next, the research ([Kartini, 2011](#)) It shows that the Muslim community has been living in Bali for centuries. To this day, the existence of old Muslim villages remains and is scattered throughout almost all of Bali. The existence of these communities demonstrates the diversity of religious communities as well as cultural diversity, including the cultural acculturation of Islam with Hinduism, and can be traced thru cultural relics. Social relations that have been established since the kingdom era are not only characterized by cooperation between communities, but also by problems that are often caused by miscommunication and a lack of understanding of each other. The issue is further complicated by socio-economic jealousy disguised as the indigenous population versus immigrants, and manifested in the Ajeg Bali discourse. The social and economic problems that arise are certainly a major challenge not only for the Muslim and Hindu communities to respect, understand, and share with each other, but also for the local government to work together to resolve the existing issues. This is important in order to obtain the best solution for maintaining the harmony between religious communities in Bali, which has been established since ancient times. In this regard, government policies should not only favor the majority but must also consider the rights of minorities.

Publication of scientific articles ([Kartini, 2011](#)) more focused on the dynamics of the Muslim community in Bali, which is categorized as a minority group, and fundamentally discusses social and economic issues for this social group in Bali, as well as efforts to maintain harmony. Therefore, this publication contributes as a model and approach for conducting similar research, namely discussing the social dynamics of the Hindu minority community of the Madura Bongso Wetan tribe. The only difference lies in the research locus; if ([Kartini, 2011](#)) conducting research in Bali with Muslims as the subject, while the research to be conducted focuses on the Hindu Madurese community in Gresik Regency, who are also a minority social group in East Java.

Then, in research conducted by ([Wijaya, 2014](#)), the structure of Balinese – Hindu religion, which consists of ancestor worship and the forces of the universe, remains stable and unchanged. Changes occur in the outer structure, which includes symbols, prophets, holy books, and the practice of Balinese Hinduism. Its elements are not taken from Balinese religion but from Hinduism. The inclusion of Hindu elements found in the lontar manuscripts is clearly influenced by the challenges posed by *Pancasila*, especially the First Principle of Belief in the One and Only God, and by Islamic organic intellectuals within the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. Thus, Balinese Hinduism, which later became known as Hinduism and subsequently Hindu Dharma, is an articulation. As an articulation, Hinduism can be called an invented tradition. This means a religion that is officially co-created, built, and realized. Simultaneously, it is a religion that emerged in a relatively short time – just a few years – and is considered an established belief system. As an invented tradition, Hinduism is a religion governed by rules, explicitly or implicitly recognized, and ritualistic or symbolic in nature. This context aims to instill Hindu and Balinese practices thru repetition, automatically reflecting the continuity of the past in the present.

Scientific article ([Wijaya, 2014](#)) contributing to research as a study material on the existence of Hinduism and Islam amidst the diversity of Indonesian society. Therefore, this research provides an overview of Hindu society and its development. Research differentiation with ([Wijaya, 2014](#)) lies in its material and formal objects. Where, the research conducted focuses on the dynamics of the Madurese ethnic Hindu community in Gresik Regency, while the research ([Wijaya, 2014](#)) focusing on the development of Hinduism in Bali.

Finally, research ([Fahham, 2016](#)) In conclusion, the Nuaulu tribe still preserves its religious system. The Nuaulu tribe's religious system contains rules for life and a system of rituals. The tribe's belief system is evident in their belief in a supernatural power that controls them from beyond the universe. This power is referred to by several different names, such as *Upuku Anahatana*, *Anahatana*, *Upu Anahatana*, *Upu Kuanahatan*, *Upu Ama*, *Upu Lanite*. Although there are differences in pronunciation, what they mean by these names is the Almighty God. There are five rituals performed by the local community: pregnancy, birth, coming-of-age, marriage, and death. In their belief, pregnancy rites need to be performed to save the mother and baby from evil spirits. Then, the *pinomou* rite is performed to purify girls, the *pataheri* rite aims to guide boys toward adulthood and responsibility, the marriage rite is done to preserve lineage, and the death rite is performed to guide the spirit toward *Upuku Anahatana*. Publications, ([Fahham, 2016](#)) contributing to the research being conducted as a guide and study material because we are both conducting research, particularly on indigenous communities. This research can serve as a guideline and the steps taken in conducting similar research.

## **How the Hindu Community of Bongso Wetan Maintains Its Hindu Identity Amidst the Islamic Reality in the Madura Region**

Identity in various literature is viewed as the essence of self-inherent in an individual's physical and psychological entity. The existence of this 'essence of self' is inherent or inseparable from the existence of social entities. Fundamentally, the existence of a self-marker – identity – is constructed thru two mechanisms: nature and nurture (Boucher, 2021; Sarkela, 2022). Nature means 'self-marker' which is given from birth, for example, identity regarding skin pigment, eye shape, body posture, which is called race (James, 2017; Kozlarek, 2021). There is also nurture, as a self-marker that is socially formed thru individual interactions in the social arena (J. D. Cameron, 2018; Chatterjee, 2016). One of them is religion. Religious identity can be categorized as nature, but individuals, who are inherently dynamic, have the probability of changing their religious status throughout their lives. Therefore, religious identity is a fluid social element, its fluidity always forming and continuing as long as humans believe in the existence of a prime or supernatural cause, as an unavoidable element for every individual as a religious being.

The nature of the individual as homo religious places an assumption on the existence of religion and the entity of God worshiped as a support in understanding the cosmological, theological, and eschatological realities of life's stages. Therefore, in an effort to understand these three aspects, individuals position themselves as religious beings, as well as beings of God. To maintain that nature or nurture identity, the existence of a particular person or social group must uphold their beliefs so that the foundation for understanding life based on divine principles does not degrade (Lamb, 2013). Minimizing distortion by strengthening religious identity is a fact of this era. Not only as a way to interpret the supernatural, but also as a platform for contestation within the social constellation. Identity always pushes itself to be considered existent, to be present, and desires its existence to always be counted, even if that presence must confront the identity of the majority religion adopted by most of society. The desire to continue to be considered existing and to survive with the existing dynamics is a representation of the 'stable self' or the individual's reality that does not want to be intervened with, especially intervention in beliefs due to their private nature.

Similarly, the preservation of Hindu identity. This is not just a way to understand God's existence, but in social theory, it is more inclined to maintain oneself within the social arena. At the same time, it dispels the stigma that minorities always lose. Social groups defined as minorities are not necessarily excluded from the playing field, but their presence has the potential to endure because they possess agency strategies. This strategy is manifested in various ways, including capital ownership. This ownership has implications for the acceptance of a new identity amidst the dynamic social practices of the dominant group. What is described here can be seen in the Madura Bongso Wetan community, where they still maintain their 'territory' to this day, not only as a spatial entity but also as a belief-based entity as the foundation of their identity. The Hindu context that developed in a non-Hindu majority region can be read as a social strategy to infiltrate ideas or concepts about the Sanathana Dharma teachings amidst the development of other teachings or religions, particularly in areas where Islam is prevalent – specifically in East Java (Block & Proctor, 2020; Cornille, 2016). This social reality is interesting because the foreignness or strangeness of non-Islamic teachings in the land of Java – in this context, Hinduism – actually received affirmation from the majority group. Maintaining the identity of a recessive group within a dominant community is indeed not easy, but the expansion of teachings or ideas indicates that Hinduism can 'live' outside the region that is the main base for its development – Bali (Brookes & Enery, 2019; Karuvelil, 2021; Mu & Ma, 2022). In conclusion, the survival of the Hindu Bongso Wetan community is a representation of 'social calculation' by combining the ownership of 'capital' with the potential acceptance of the local community – East Java – toward their presence – the Hindu community. In an effort to understand the existence and preservation of the Hindu Bongso Wetan community's identity, the research to be conducted will use a theoretical perspective as an 'optic' to understand the existence of this social entity. The theoretical horizon to be used is the post-structuralist paradigm of the French thinker Pierre Bourdieu. Social field theory is Bourdieu's analysis which asserts that every individual or specific social group is located in the middle of a 'social arena' where the 'game' takes place. The 'game' process on the 'battlefield' unfolds according to pre-existing rules of the game. Every social entity there can survive if it is able to negotiate or exchange the 'capital' it possesses. Additionally, the 'social arena' as an encounter between social elements will ultimately shape the structure of action and simultaneously construct social structures (Bochmann, 2023; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2013). Based on the actors involved, Bourdieu classifies them into two groups: 'agents' and 'incumbents'. 'Agents' are the 'new group' entering the 'field of battle'; they are usually small in number but have the ability to aggregate social structures or the probability of changing them. 'Incumbents', on the other hand, are the 'old players'; they are usually more numerous than 'agents' and occupy a specific territory (Ricky, 2017). The consequences of the encounter between the 'agent' and the 'incumbent' are the potential for social transformation or social stagnation.

The acceptance of non-Islamic communities in the region signifies that the Bongso Wetan group has undergone aggregation. Aggregation in this context means the efforts of minority groups or immigrant groups to create 'social ties' with the native population. The effort to create this connection has implications for the formation of 'social glue,' or the bonding of two social elements that actually have different backgrounds. Intimacy between the two also developed from the process of adaptation within the Hindu community, by implementing Javanese traditions, using the Madurese dialect to assert their original identity, and combining a 'hybrid culture' – a fusion of Javanese, Madurese, and Balinese cultures. Therefore, it can be explained that in the 'playing field', both the 'agents' and the 'incumbents' are in competition – factually displaying their identities as groups of Hindu and Islamic faith. However, amidst these disparities in social background, an intersection or blending of differentiated individuals into a field of convergence is formed. Thus, the

'playing field' results in social transformation, leading to the formation of new social structures that are more diverse. Therefore, this results in a pattern of East Java society that is not monocultural, but multicultural. Because it is filled with all social elements from various backgrounds. And, thru this theory, it can also be understood why the Hindu Bongso Wetan community maintains its Hindu religious identity. This is due to social acceptance from the dominant group, as a consequence of social restructuring, where the formation of egosectoral spirit (based on religious or ethnic similarities) was unsuccessful, due to the negotiation process among different groups to live equally and side by side. In conclusion, collectivist values are stronger than the essence of tribalism within the 'social playing field'.

Forms of capital theory is Bourdieu's second horizon. This theory is an advanced aspect of the 'social arena' paradigm. Briefly explained, forms of capital theory is an attempt by 'agents' to maintain themselves and avoid being marginalized from the social playing field (Swartz, 2022). Capital or capital must be created or accumulated, because only then can the existence of social entities, individuals, or groups continue to aggregate, or at least exist within the 'arena of contestation'. The capital referred to by Bourdieu is not only limited to economic aspects. However, this perspective will lead us to believe that, in order to take defensive or offensive action, the 'agent' must possess at least three other forms of capital. These-capital are classified into four parts: economic capital, social capital, cultural capital, and symbolic capital. Elaboratively, it can be understood that the ownership of economic capital leads to aspects of material capital accumulation, such as wealth (Atkinson, 2021; Swartz, 2022). Then, social capital tends toward the process of creating a 'safety net', where each individual or group has intimate relationships not only within their own scope, but also across community boundaries. Meaning, 'social ties' are not only created from in-group relationships, but are also intertwined with the out-group (Campos & Lima, 2017; Cheliotis, 2011). Next, cultural capital. Cultural capital, from a theoretical perspective, is not biased toward customs, but this capital leads to calculation and cognitive ownership of knowledge. Because the ownership of intellectual ability becomes a formula and mechanism for disseminating one's self-identity, as well as an action to internalize one's original identity to the next generation (Croce, 2015; Thevenot, 2011). Finally, symbolic capital. The context of symbolic capital speaks to the existence of a past reality for a social group, where historical facts indicate the origins or genealogical principles of a group (King et al., 2021; Weib, 2021). Typically, the social pride of the group is demonstrated by their being direct descendants of a great figure or specific individuals who have significant influence across various fields. Contextually, if we apply Pierre Bourdieu's theory of 'forms of capital', it will be empirically evident in the substance of social actions that represent specific forms of capital. Such as, the ownership of economic capital. This can be seen from the local community's ownership of agricultural land. Where they can be self-sufficient. Because they are self-sufficient, the community does not become a dependent community, but rather an independent social entity. Independence indicates the creation of opportunities to strengthen relationships among fellow Hindus and minimize interaction with followers of Islam.

Therefore, this non-intimate relationship is one indication that Bongso Wetan is still trying to maintain its Hinduism – an effort to maintain 'domestic territory' thru strengthening the intra-group economic system. Second, social capital. Social capital in the life of the Bongso community is not only emphasized in the 'domestic territory', but also extends to the 'public territory'. It is in this 'public arena' that cultural hybridization occurs, a fusion of three cultural backgrounds simultaneously: Javanese, Madurese, and Balinese. The merging of these three forms of culture demonstrates the position of the Bongso Wetan community, which can maintain its 'private sphere' – economy and religion on one hand, while also engaging in diagonal interaction by 'marrying' local culture as an actualization of the 'domestic sphere' – social cohesion on the other. Therefore, this can be read as a way to gain social affirmation while maintaining social identity, without losing private identity – religious or belief status. Third, cultural capital (knowledge). As a way to maintain their original identity, in the context of science, the Bongso Wetan community internalizes itself, particularly regarding knowledge of Hinduism thru kekidungan (a type of song specifically for praising God in His manifestation as *Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa*), but sung in the Madurese language. Javanese culture is also emphasized as a way to prevent disruption and is performed in the central part (*Madya Mandala*) of the Pura Kertha Bhuana Bongso Wetan temple. Finally, symbolic capital. Symbolic capital as an identity inherent in this group is evident in their identification as descendants of Arya Madura. This identification of noble lineage is what strengthened the presence of this 'Hindu-Madura' community in maintaining its religious identity – Hinduism. In conclusion, the ownership and accumulation of capital mentioned above are ways/strategies for how Bongso Wetan can still survive to this day amidst the 'surrounding' East Java community, which is predominantly Muslim.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Contextually, it can be explained that the presence of the Hindu Bongso Wetan community is positioned as the 'agent' and the East Java community with an Islamic religious base as the 'incumbent'. These two social groups are in the social arena, where they play the 'game', exchange, and negotiate. Exchange or negotiation between different groups results in the reproduction of meaning between them. The Bongso Wetan community is defined as a minority group that came to a majority area inhabited by the people of East Java. They are both in the same 'social space'. However, the differentiation between the two produces a 'social trajectory of the dispositif', meaning there is always flexibility in the interaction process, which leads to affirmation or acceptance by Hindu society.

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