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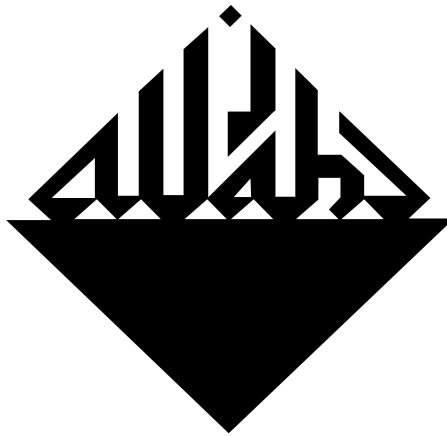
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Item Type	Journal volume
Authors	Brice, M. A. Kevin
Publisher	UIN Jakarta
Rights	With permission of the license/copyright holder
Download date	2026-07-10 07:41:42
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/156208

STUDIA ISLAMIKA

INDONESIAN JOURNAL FOR ISLAMIC STUDIES

Volume 22, Number 1, 2015



SI BULE MASUK ISLAM:
WESTERN CONVERTS TO ISLAM IN INDONESIA -
MORE THAN JUST CONVERTS OF CONVENIENCE?

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Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies

Vol. 22, no. 1, 2015

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STUDIA ISLAMIKA (ISSN 0215-0492; E-ISSN: 2355-6145) is an international journal published by the Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University of Jakarta, INDONESIA. It specializes in Indonesian Islamic studies in particular, and Southeast Asian Islamic studies in general, and is intended to communicate original researches and current issues on the subject. This journal warmly welcomes contributions from scholars of related disciplines. All submitted papers are subject to double-blind review process.

STUDIA ISLAMIKA has been accredited by The Ministry of Education and Culture, Republic of Indonesia as an academic journal (SK Dirjen Dikti No. 56/DIKTI/Kep/2012).

STUDIA ISLAMIKA has become a CrossRef Member since year 2014. Therefore, all articles published by STUDIA ISLAMIKA will have unique Digital Object Identifier (DOI) number.

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Editorial Office:

STUDIA ISLAMIKA, Gedung Pusat Pengkajian
Islam dan Masyarakat (PPIM) UIN Jakarta,
Jl. Kertamukti No. 5, Pisangan Barat, Cirendeu,
Ciputat 15419, Jakarta, Indonesia.

Phone: (62-21) 7423543, 7499272, Fax: (62-21) 7408633;
E-mail: studia.islamika@uinjkt.ac.id

Website: <http://journal.uinjkt.ac.id/index.php/studia-islamika>

Annual subscription rates from outside Indonesia, institution:
US\$ 75,00 and the cost of a single copy is US\$ 25,00;
individual: US\$ 50,00 and the cost of a single copy is US\$
20,00. Rates do not include international postage and
handling.

Please make all payment through bank transfer to: **PPIM,
Bank Mandiri KCP Tangerang Graha Karnos, Indonesia,**
account No. **101-00-0514550-1 (USD),**
Swift Code: bmrriidja

Harga berlangganan di Indonesia untuk satu tahun, lembaga:
Rp. 150.000,-, harga satu edisi Rp. 50.000,-; individu:
Rp. 100.000,-, harga satu edisi Rp. 40.000,-. Harga belum
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Pembayaran melalui **PPIM, Bank Mandiri KCP Tangerang
Graha Karnos, No. Rek: 128-00-0105080-3**

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Islam dan Kolonialisme: Sayyid Usman
dan Islam di Indonesia Masa Penjajahan

M. A. Kevin Brice

Si Bule Masuk Islam:

Western Converts to Islam in Indonesia -
more than just Converts of Convenience?

Abstract: *In discussing converts to Islam, two different types of converts are often identified based on the reason for conversion: converts of convenience and converts of conviction. The common view is that in most (if not all) cases, conversion to Islam in Indonesia by Westerners is about facilitating marriage and so the converts should be classified as converts of convenience. Evidence of the commonality of this view is considered by reference to advice offered to Westerners about marriage to Indonesians on specialist web sites and examples of coverage of the topic in Indonesian social media. By considering a number of brief case studies, the common view is challenged. The binary of “convert of convenience” versus “convert of conviction” is revisited to suggest that individuals may move between the types over a period of time. Finally the paper will consider whether there is anything about Islam in Indonesia which contributes to the phenomenon of “transnational” conversion by Westerners in Indonesia.*

Keywords: Conversion to Islam, convert of convenience/conviction, Westerners, Islam in Indonesia, *bule*.

Abstrak: Terdapat dua jenis alasan pindah agama ketika dikaitkan dengan Islam: pindah agama karena kenyamanan atau karena keyakinan. Pandangan umum bahwa hampir (kalau tidak semua) kasus masuk Islam orang-orang Barat di Indonesia hanyalah untuk mempermudah pernikahan dan karenanya perpindahan agama itu harus dimasukkan ke dalam jenis “pindah agama karena formalitas.” Dalam konteks ini, pandangan yang mengaitkan alasan perpindahan agama karena kenyamanan mengacu pada nasehat yang ditawarkan di dalam laman-laman tertentu kepada orang-orang Barat mengenai pernikahan dengan orang Indonesia dan contoh-contoh dari liputan topik tersebut di media sosial di Indonesia. Dengan memperhatikan beberapa kajian kasus yang singkat, pandangan umum itu ditantang. Dua hal yang saling bertentangan antara “pindah agama karena formalitas” dan “pindah agama karena keyakinan” ini akan dikaji ulang untuk menunjukkan bahwa seseorang bisa saja pindah di antara kedua jenis ‘pindah agama itu’ pada jangka waktu tertentu. Akhirnya, tulisan ini akan melihat apakah ada sesuatu tentang Islam di Indonesia yang dapat memberikan sumbangsih bagi fenomena pindah agama “transnasional” oleh orang-orang Barat di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: Masuk Islam, Pindah Agama karena Formalitas/Keyakinan, Barat, Islam di Indonesia, Bule.

الخلاصة: بالنسبة إلى اعتناق الاسلام، هناك نوعان من استبدال الدين يتم تحديدهما بناء على أسباب التحول إلى ديانة أخرى وهما: التحول إلى ديانة أخرى بناء على أسباب شكلية، والتحول بناء على يقين واقتناع. طبقاً للرأي العام فإن حالات التحول إلى الاسلام من جانب الغربيين باندونيسيا إن لم يكن جميعها كانت لمجرد تسهيل إجراءات الزواج من الاندونيسيات، ولذلك يجب إدخال هذه الحالات ضمن التحول الديني لأسباب شكلية. الشاهد المشترك لهذا الرأي هو بناء على المشورة التي تعرضها مواقع معينة للاوربيين حول الزواج من اندونيسيات وكذلك الأمثلة من التقارير حول ذلك الموضوع في الوسائل الاعلامية الاجتماعية الاندونيسية. فبالنظر إلى عدد من البحوث القصيرة، تمت المعارضة لهذا الرأي العام. موضوعان متعارضان وهما التحول الديني لأسباب شكلية والتحول الديني لأسباب اعتقادية، سيتم إعادة بحثهما لإثبات أن المرء قد يتحول فيما بين النوعين من أسباب التحول خلال فترة معينة. في النهاية، تتناول هذه المقالة ما إذا كان هناك أمر يتعلق بالاسلام باندونيسيا ما يسهم في ظاهرة التحول الديني عبر الوطنية الذي يقوم به الغربيون في اندونيسيا.

الكلمات الاسترشادية: اعتناق الاسلام، التحول الديني بناء على أسباب شكلية/ اعتقادية، الغرب، الاسلام في اندونيسيا، الخواجه

Conversion to Islam is a subject that attracts significant attention in Western countries where Muslims are relatively small minority groups and Islam is perceived by many as a foreign religion which is increasingly seen as linked to extremism and terrorism. The main focus of the attention is on indigenous members of those Western countries who have converted to this “alien” religion and is presented in terms of seeking an answer to the question “Why would anyone want to convert to Islam” (with the clear implication that such an act is somehow irrational and questionable).

Conversion to Islam also generates significant interest in Muslim majority countries, although the interest is often more focused on reports of conversion in Western countries and is presented as evidence of the “truth” of Islam. However, in some predominantly Muslim countries there is an additional phenomenon which is of interest – that of “transnational” conversion (conversion to Islam by individuals who are not nationals of the country). In such cases the question of why the individual has converted is supplemented with the additional question of “Why here?”

One of the major problems facing any study of conversion to Islam in any country is that of quantification. While it may be argued that the numbers are less important than understanding the reasons and motivations for the conversion, without some idea of numbers, any research into conversion is in danger of becoming little more than individual case studies which may have little or no relevance beyond the individual cases themselves. However, it is often very difficult to obtain reliable or meaningful numbers to show how many individuals have converted to Islam (or the relative size and importance of these numbers). National censuses may ask about religious affiliation, but even in countries where there is a question on religion or religious affiliation, there is rarely a question that would allow conversion to be identified either directly or indirectly. However, national censuses which ask about religion or religious affiliation are unlikely to be able to provide any useful information regarding “transnational” conversion.

In discussing conversion to Islam, two main types of converts may be identified based on the underlying reason for conversion: converts of convenience and converts of conviction. For converts of convenience the conversion is seen as an insincere act which is done for some ulterior motive and results in little or no interest in Islam or the practices

associated with it – the convert will typically not self-identify as Muslim and will not be a practicing Muslim. This type of convert is exemplified by the person who converts purely in order to facilitate marriage to a Muslim partner and so the reasons and motivations for conversion are seen as completely divorced from religion. The convert of conviction on the other hand converts in response to some intellectual, emotional or spiritual reason and will generally self-identify as Muslim and may become very meticulous in their adherence to Islamic teachings.

Qualitative research undertaken on conversion to Islam in Western countries has generally focused on the second type of convert, the convert of conviction (although it is not always clear whether this focus was intentional or not), as to be included in the research an individual will need to have self-identified as a Muslim. The small amount of quantitative research which has been undertaken on conversion in Western countries has also mostly focused on converts of conviction, as estimates of numbers have generally been based on government surveys or censuses where self-identification of religious affiliation is key. Where the numbers are based purely on reports from mosques or other organisations, both types of convert will tend to be covered.

Conversion to Islam by Westerners in Indonesia

Looking at the phenomenon of conversion to Islam in Indonesia, there are two main groups of converts – indigenous converts, that is those who are Indonesian citizens (*Warga Negera Indonesia* or WNI) and non-Indonesian converts, that is those who are foreign citizens (*Warga Negara Asing* or WNA). Given that Indonesia is a majority Muslim country (according to the 2010 Census 87% of the population are Muslim)¹, conversion to Islam by Indonesian citizens represents the adoption of a majority identity by a minority group. While this phenomenon deserves to be explored, it is not the focus of this paper. This paper is interested in the non-Indonesian converts, more specifically those who come from Western countries - those who are usually labelled as *bule*² in Indonesia. There appears to be very little research into this phenomenon, although it has received significant attention in popular discourse. The aim of this paper is to provide a brief introduction to some of the questions of this phenomenon and obviously there is a clear need for further fieldwork to collect both quantitative and qualitative data to fully investigate this new trend of conversion.

Obtaining even rough estimates for the overall numbers of Westerners converting to Islam in Indonesia is very difficult. The only possible source is from the mosques or organisations which have facilitated the conversion. Limited data from two large mosques in Jakarta is available and this can be used to provide some sort of indicator of the possible order of magnitude for this phenomenon. In 2009 the Indonesian language web site Voice of Islam reported that on average there were around 13 individuals converting to Islam each month at *Masjid Istiqlal* (Indonesia's largest mosque), but during Ramadan this number had risen to 18 of which 4 were Westerners.³ This would suggest around 30 to 40 Westerners converting at *Masjid Istiqlal* in a year. In addition to this, according to a report in the on-line version of the Indonesian national newspaper *Republika* in January 2012, there were 345 recorded conversions in *Masjid Sunda Kelapa*,⁴ Jakarta during 2011. Of these, 30% (just over 100) were non-Indonesians. It was further reported that since 1993, the total number of recorded conversions was 16,345.⁵ An earlier report from the same newspaper had indicated that 20% to 30% of all conversions in the mosque were non-Indonesians⁶ – suggesting that on average around 200 non-Indonesians have converted each year since 1993. Although the figures from just two mosques in Jakarta (neither of which is probably very representative of mosques across the country as a whole) cannot be used to produce an overall estimated figure for Western converts in the country as a whole, it is safe to assume that the total number will be in the hundreds across the whole of Indonesia each year. As already noted, this figure will cover both converts of convenience as well as converts of conviction as the numbers are based on reports from those mosques.

Having determined that the order of magnitude of Westerners converting to Islam in Indonesia is sufficient to be viewed as more than just an oddity or one-off, it is reasonable to ask if there are any underlying reasons for this phenomenon; why are these Westerners converting to Islam, and why are they converting in Indonesia as opposed to their countries of origin?

Conversion for Marriage

The common view, both from within and from outside of Indonesia, is that the majority of cases of conversion of Westerners in Indonesia will be examples of conversion of convenience undertaken

to facilitate marriage. There is some quantitative evidence to support such a view. Dickson in her study of the *da'wah* [Islamic outreach] activities of the Chinese Muslim Association of Indonesia relates the view of one of her interviewees that “75% of those who convert do so because they want to marry a Muslim” (Dickson, 2008: 8). This figure does not refer exclusively to Western converts however. An article on the *Suara Istiqamah* web site notes that in roughly one quarter of cases of Westerners converting in *Masjid Istiqamah* in Bandung, the conversion is then followed by a marriage ceremony suggesting that the conversion was at least partly motivated by marriage.⁷

Marriage is seen to play a pivotal role in the conversion to Islam by Westerners in Indonesia due to Indonesia's laws on marriage which are set out in the 1974 Marriage Law (*Undang-Undang Nomor 1 1974 tentang Perkawinan*). Marriage between an Indonesian and a non-Indonesian is covered in Chapter 12, Section 3, Mixed Marriage (*Bab XII, Bagian Ketiga – Perkawinan Campur*). Article 59, verse 2 states that mixed marriages carried out in Indonesia are subject to the regulations set out in the Marriage Law.⁸ Although there are alternative views, the most commonly held interpretation of this verse is that if a marriage takes place in Indonesia, marriage between religions is not acceptable as it is deemed contrary to article 2 verse 1 states marriage must be carried out in accordance with the rules of the religion of those getting married.⁹ In addition, article 8 letter f states that marriage is forbidden if the marriage would not be permitted under the laws and regulations of the religion of those wishing to marry.¹⁰

This interpretation is strengthened by the *fatwa* [authoritative legal opinion] issued by the *Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (MUI) [Indonesian Council of Islamic Scholars] in 1980 which states that marriage between a Muslim woman and a non-Muslim man is *haram* [prohibited in Islamic law].¹¹ The *fatwa* also states that a Muslim man is prohibited from marrying a non-Muslim woman: amid that there is a difference of opinion regarding marriage of a Muslim man with a woman from the *Ahlu Kitab* [People of the Book, normally understood to be Christians and Jews]. Accordingly, after considering that the disadvantages outweigh the benefits, the MUI considers such marriages *haram*.¹² In 2005, due to perceived confusion over the permissibility of mixed marriages, MUI restated its position by issuing a new *fatwa* which stated that marriage between different religions is *haram* and unlawful,¹³ and

that the marriage of a Muslim man with woman from the *Ahlul Kitab*, according to the strongest opinion, is *haram* and unlawful.¹⁴ This view was formalised by the prohibitions set out in Book 1 of the Compilation of Islamic Laws in Indonesia (*Kompilasi Hukum Islam*) that a Muslim man cannot marry a woman who is not a Muslim¹⁵ and that a Muslim woman cannot marry a man who is not a Muslim.¹⁶

The View from Outside

This common interpretation of the Marriage Law is presented as the official position by a variety of information sources which give advice to individuals considering marriage in Indonesia. “Living in Indonesia” is a web site designed specifically for expatriates living in or planning to live in Indonesia and it provides information for expatriates intending to marry Indonesians. The web site states that the 1974 Marriage Law does not allow marriages between different religions and that both parties must be of the same religion in order to get married legally.¹⁷ The web site of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta gives advice on what steps need to be taken by Australians wishing to marry in Indonesia.¹⁸ The web site states that, according to the 1974 Marriage Law, both parties must be of the same religion and introduces the idea that one of the parties must convert to the religion of the other party. The web site advises that, “[a]necdotal evidence suggests that the process of converting to Islam is not a lengthy one”.¹⁹ The implicit message is that converting to Islam is a relatively simple action and just one of the required steps to facilitate marriage to a Muslim in Indonesia.

“Angloinfo Indonesia”, another web site aimed at expatriates, notes that under Indonesian law a couple must be of the same religion if they wish to get married. The web site offers the following advice:

If a foreigner and an Indonesian do not share the same religion, the only practical alternative is for one of the two to convert to the other’s faith. If conversion is necessary, the foreigner is obliged to convert.²⁰

Having presented conversion as the only “practical” option and an “obligation” for the Westerner, the web site notes that for a Westerner converting to Islam, “it is not uncommon for the conversion to take place in a mosque, immediately followed by the marriage ceremony”.²¹ The conversion to Islam is thus presented almost as part of the process of marriage itself.

The requirement for the Westerner to convert is stated even more strongly on the web site “Women for Marriage” which, on a page dedicated to marrying Indonesia women, notes that “[b]oth parties must share religious faiths. If a conversion is required, the foreigner must convert to the nationalist’s faith”.²² The web site “Living in Indonesia” mentioned earlier, clearly working on the assumption that expatriates will always be of a different religion to their potential Indonesian spouses, states that conversion is a legal requirement for marriage and also acknowledges that in some cases this will only be a conversion of convenience:

If you want to be married in Indonesia, the official government regulation is that either the bride or groom must convert to the other’s religion.... While for some this is a true conversion, for others this is simply a paperwork formality to enable the couple to marry and ease documentation procedures... In Islam, it is forbidden for a Muslim woman to marry a man who is not Muslim - thus the pressure will build from the Indonesian fiancé and her family for the expatriate non-Muslim man to convert.²³

The emphasis is on expatriate men marrying Indonesian Muslim women and there is a separate page dedicated to giving advice to expatriate men who intend to convert to Islam in order to marry an Indonesian Muslim woman, again stating that “[f]or many expatriate men wishing to marrying a Muslim Indonesian woman, they will find that she, her family, or their religious leaders will insist that the expat fiance convert to Islam before the marriage”.²⁴

The web site runs a web forum²⁵ which allows posters to ask questions and provide advice to others on specific topics of interest. Within the different forums there are numerous threads giving advice for individuals considering converting to Islam to facilitate marriage.²⁶ Browsing through comments in the relevant threads, it is apparent that the dominant view is that the expatriate man should (or is even required to) convert to Islam when marrying an Indonesian Muslim woman and that this is a relatively simple process which does not imply any need for any actual belief in Islam:

If you want to marry a Muslim woman in Indonesia and have that marriage recognized by the Indonesian government (with paperwork), you have to convert to Islam... You will most likely not be required to do anything extensively to prove your sincerity about entering Islam, as long as you are willing to learn and say the words of shahada in Arabic.²⁷

It's usually more convenient for the foreigner to change religion instead of the local, mostly because it appeases family, neighbours, and basically most people.²⁸

If you convert at a mosque, as I did (Sunda Kelapa Mosque in Jakarta), at the end of the process they will issue you a certificate of conversion... the legal conversion to Islam happens whether or not you are sincere in your heart.²⁹

...the easiest method is to accept Islam and then have a Muslim marriage, particularly if you wish to live in Indonesia. It's the easiest way in terms of paperwork, relatives and local affairs.³⁰

Many posters openly share their own experiences and in the vast majority of cases the conversion to Islam is reported as having been done purely to allow the marriage to take place with no further impact for the individual converting:

My conversion was also 5 minute phrase repeating in a mosque , and that was it ..., then carry on with life as normal as you know it.³¹

I converted with the simple 5 minute ceremony, some cash in an envelope, a few chairs and pastries for the KUA office. No problem, I think even the head of the KUA office was sure I was just doing it for marriage.³²

My Muslim wife married an Atheist, who many years ago pretended to be a Muslim for 15 minutes to get the marriage certificate and another 30 minutes at the marriage ceremony.³³

The view that this approach is very widespread, such that in almost all cases of marriage between an expatriate man and an Indonesian Muslim woman the conversion was one of convenience, is expressed by several posters:

I was ... a non religious Church of England Christian and converted to Islam in order to get legally married... 95% of the expats that I know here have done exactly the same thing to appease their wives family and maintain the harmony within their extended family. To become a Muslim you just repeat a few Arabic sentences after the Imam and thats it job done.³⁴

There are, of course, a large number of expats who accepted a formal conversion without belief.³⁵

At least one poster goes as far as to suggest that in all cases (of which he is personally aware), the conversion was one of convenience:

In all honesty (at least in Jakarta) no one I know who has converted to Islam for marriage, keeps up even the slightest pretense that they are a

Muslim. I don't know a single convert who attends mosque, fasts during Ramadan, stopped drinking or eating pork or even slightly believes in Islam and this is out of my network of 100's of converts throughout the years.³⁶

Not all comments endorse the view that conversion is only for marriage; there are one or two individuals who indicate that conversion occurred prior to marriage and that marriage was not the only reason for conversion:

I also converted but a year before I was married. I converted partially for marriage law but mostly because Islam attracted me over a few years anyway.³⁷

While accepting that the majority of converts lack any real faith in Islam, one poster suggests that those who have converted due to 'sincere belief' are unlikely to engage with the web forum (and so be under-represented):

I guess the main difference between myself or Dan and the majority of *bule* men who marry Muslim women in Indonesia is that, as attested to by many here on this forum, they did it without a trace of actual belief, whereas I was actually ready to accept and believe in the "melarkey"³⁸ they seem to despise so much. But there are probably many others that fall in the category of believers or "sincere tryers", you probably just won't find a lot of them here bothering to talk about it publicly.³⁹

At least one poster notes that there are additional perceived benefits of converting to Islam other than just facilitating marriage:

Generally, Muslims here are very appreciative of foreigners who have accepted Islam, particularly if you're of European stock. It could be a boon for you in business relationships, and I can personally attest to receiving superior treatment to other foreigners specifically because I am identifiably Muslim.⁴⁰

However, this positive view is not shared by all. There are those who suggest that the general perception amongst Muslims in Indonesia is that all Western converts are converts of convenience and that expatriates should be under no delusion about how they are seen by most Indonesians:

...you will be excused for thinking that you fit in and are well accepted as a Muslim. Once you understand what is being said, verbally and otherwise, around you, you'll come to the realization that their acceptance is in large part tokenism for, after all, to them you are nothing more than a *bule*

Muallaf, a convert who to Islam by way of marriage. Search the Internet, and see for yourself what many of your correligious think about bule converts by way of marriage.⁴¹

It is clear, both from the formal advice given on various web sites and from the personal comments posted in the various threads of the “Living in Indonesia” advice forums that the majority view is that converting in order to get married (that is being a convert of convenience) should not be seen as problematic, and is both a practical solution to the restrictions of the Marriage Law and officially sanctioned. There appears to be little consideration that the conversion would be anything other than a conversion of convenience or that the Westerner may actually consider practicing his new religion.

In both the formal advice given on various web sites and from the personal comments posted in the various threads of the “Living in Indonesia” advice forums there appears to be an assumption that in most (if not all) cases expatriate men will be marrying Indonesian Muslim women – the “Living in Indonesia” web site has a page specifically aimed at this group (the “Women for Marriage” web site is clearly for this group) and almost all comments on the advice forums are posted by male expatriates. The gender balance of converts appears to be significantly different to that found in Western countries - for example, in a major study of conversion to Islam in the United Kingdom (Brice, 2011) it was found that the majority of converts – over 60% - were female.

The View from Indonesia

What then is the view from within Indonesia? A quick review of on-line mainstream media in Indonesia shows that, as noted earlier, a lot of coverage of conversion to Islam is about conversion outside of Indonesia – often translating stories which have appeared in the Western media. For example many of the conversion stories in the ‘*Mualaf*’ [convert] sub-section of the on-line version of the Indonesian national newspaper *Republika*⁴² are about non-Indonesians. For conversion that takes place in Indonesia, the most popular topic is conversion stories featuring Indonesian celebrities – for example liputan6.com, the web-site of a national television station news programme, devotes a page to *artis mualaf* [celebrity converts].⁴³ The majority of the celebrity conversion stories are linked to marriage and often refer to Westerners who have converted in order to marry female Indonesian celebrities – for example the Indonesian

entertainment web site *kanlagi.com* reports on a number of Western converts in the story “*Selebriti Ini Sukses Membuat Bule Menjadi Muallaf*” [These celebrities successfully made Westerners become converts].⁴⁴

Anecdotal evidence suggests that Indonesian women are increasingly interested in dating and marrying Westerners. A number of sources refer to this growing trend without actually providing any real empirical evidence – an article originally published in *The Jakarta Post* on 5 November 2000 and reproduced on the “Living in Indonesia” web site suggests that “[d]ating or marrying foreigners has become a trend for some young relatively low-paid or unemployed native women”.⁴⁵ A humorous article on the citizen media web site *kompasiana.com* claims that “Indonesians certainly really like outsiders – that is *bule*. If they can get married to a *bule* they will be very proud”.⁴⁶ It is suggested that it is now much easier for Indonesian women to make contact with Western men (for example through the Internet) for dating and then marriage and that the main reasons for Indonesian women’s interest in Westerners are to improve their current financial and social situation and to *memperbaiki keturunan* [improve one’s descendants].

A huge rise in interest in the subject of Indonesian women marrying Westerners in the last few years is also evidenced by the number of books published in Indonesia. These books present accounts of women who have married Westerners such as *Nikah Sama Bule* [Marrying a *bule*]; *Istri-istri Orang Seberang: Kisah Hidup Pasangan Kawin Campur* [Wives of foreigners: Life stories of mixed marriage couples]; *Perkawinan Antarbangsa: Love and Shock* [Transnational marriage: Love and shock], Other books offers advice on issues faced by those in mixed marriages (*Perkawinan Antarbangsa: Love and Shock; Dilema Kawin Campur* [The dilemma of mixed marriages]) or offer advice and tips to Indonesian women who are interested in dating and marrying a Westerner (*How to Catch Mr Bule*). The most recent book *Bule Hunter: Kisah Para Perempuan Pemburu Bule* [*Bule Hunter: Stories of women who hunt bule*] presents a number of case-studies of Indonesian women who, for various reasons, actively seek out *bule* mostly for dating.⁴⁷

There is very wide coverage of this subject in Indonesian social media, particularly blogs. Blogs on this subject are too numerous to list – a search on *blogsearchengine.org* for *nikah dengan bule* [marrying a *bule*] gives over 130,000 results, while a search for *pacaran dengan bule* [dating a *bule*] gives over 145,000 results. Many of these blogs

give information on how to date and marry a *bule*, frequently based on the bloggers personal experience (the vast majority are written by Indonesian women who are married to Westerners). The information provided in these blogs echoes the information given on the web sites aimed at expatriates and the “Living in Indonesia” forum discussed earlier. For example, much of the content of Desi Sachiko’s blog⁴⁸ is relevant to dating and marrying a *bule*, with articles such as *Kriteria Untuk Dapat Cowok Bule (Baik)* [Criteria for getting a male *bule* (who is good)], *Suka Duka Punya Pasangan Bule* [Ups and down of having a partner who is a *bule*], *Pasangan Saya Bule, Ada Masalah??* [My partner is a *bule*, is that a problem?], *Mau Menikah dengan WNA? Buat Prenup!* [Want to marry a foreign citizen? Make a prenuptial agreement!], and *Cara Mengurus Pernikahan WNI dengan WNA di KUA* [How to organise a wedding between an Indonesian citizen and a foreign citizen at the Office of Religious Affairs]. In another article, *Prosedur Mualaf WNA di Indonesia* [The procedure for converting for foreign citizens in Indonesia], she offers advice on how to obtain a conversion certificate (one of the documents required to facilitate marriage when one of the parties has converted) and compares the requirements of a number of mosques and Islamic organisations in Jakarta.⁴⁹

Despite the obvious popularity of dating and marrying Westerners amongst some Indonesian women, the results of an on-line survey of Indonesians undertaken by Stuart Jay Raj (an expert in cross cultural training) indicates that about 70% of respondents did not approve of foreign men dating Indonesian women without the intent of marrying them and a majority of respondents did not approve of cross cultural marriage, especially not across religions.⁵⁰

The content of some blogs reflects this more negative view and a number focus on the issue of Westerners converting to Islam purely in order to get married. In his article *Bahayanya Menikah Dengan Orang Yang Masuk Islam Karena Mau Menikah* [The danger of marrying someone who has converted to Islam in order to get married], Gene Netto, who is a convert and a *bule* himself, tells of his meeting with a *bule* who converted so that he could get married. Netto notes that conversion is used by many purely as a means to an end:

So, for him and thousands of others Islam is just a prerequisite for marriage with an Indonesian woman. Islam is not seen as a true path which should be followed.⁵¹

Netto notes that he has met many Indonesian Muslim women who complain that their Western husbands show no interest in practicing Islam after having converted in order to get married. Netto's advice is that marriage should not be rushed, the Westerner should convert first and then be given time to show his commitment – “if within 6 months it seems he is serious about Islam, then get married. But if not, the relationship should be broken off...”.⁵² Netto is introducing the idea that, while a Westerner's initial interest in converting may be due to a desire to marry an Indonesian Muslim woman, the conversion may become more than a conversion of convenience if the Westerner is given time before the actual marriage to practice Islam.

Responses to Netto's article are representative of comments on this subject found in other social media; the trend for conversion in order to marry is attested by one anonymous response: “I remember when I was still actively involved with a mosque in the Tebet area, almost every month I would see *bule bersyahadat* [say the declaration of faith] with the purpose to marry a Muslim woman”.⁵³ There is generally strong support for Netto's advice, a response from an individual with the username “inot” suggests that “[i]f you want to get married to a *bule*, marry a *bule* who really is Islam, not one who becomes a *mualaf* [convert] for the reason of marriage”⁵⁴ (with the introduction of the idea that there may be some *bule* who are “real” Muslims). The view that conversion solely for marriage should be avoided is also found on page 132 of the book *Nikah Sama Bule* [Marrying a Westerner] edited by Rahmadiyahanti (quoted by Harawti in a comment on Gene Netto's blog):

Don't convert to Islam ONLY for the reason of marriage without any interest in Islam itself. It is a mistake to assume that after marriage it will be an easy thing for a *mualaf*[convert] to learn about Islam in more depth.⁵⁵

However, there are a minority of responses which point out that an individual's conversion is a matter between the individual and God and that not all Westerners who convert for marriage do so without any faith – “[a]nd from the foreign men who convert to Islam because they wish marry an Indonesian Muslim woman, I believe some of them are convinced of the truth of Islam and of course will need time to become devout Muslims”.⁵⁶ This also presents the idea that over time the Westerner may become a (better) Muslim.

There are often strong stereotypes at play in how such relationships are seen by many Indonesians (and by Westerners). One response to

Netto's article suggests that Westerners cannot really be blamed for taking religion lightly and being content to convert only in order to get married as the religiosity of the Indonesian women they are marrying is questionable:

...where do the women meet (the Westerners)? In a bar, a discotheque, a nightclub, at the shopping mall? So of course there is some doubt about how religious (these women) are. If they met at a religious study group or in the mosque it would be different.

Imagine where the meeting takes place in the bar, what type of Muslim women is it who goes to bars looking for *bule*? The religion of the woman herself is surely in question.⁵⁷

The view that any Indonesian Muslim woman who dates or even marries a Westerner must be of "bad character" and probably *Islam KTP* [identity card Muslim]⁵⁸ is still quite common among many Indonesians, as is the stereotype expressed by Sachiko in one of her blog entries:

The general impression is that women who go out with *bule* are "village girls", with ugly faces, dirty dark skin, wear revealing clothes, materialistic, speak pigeon English with a provincial accent, and appear overly proud because they are with a *bule*.⁵⁹

This is supported by the view of many Indonesians that Westerners prefer woman who are characterised as *bertampang pembantu* [look like servant girls] – i.e. dark skin, snub-nose, often wearing inappropriate clothing. This sort of stereotyping is not limited to the Indonesian woman – the character of the Westerner who wishes to marry an Indonesian is also often questioned, as noted by Sachiko:

Bule men do not escape from negative comments. Many people say that the *bule* who look for a partner in Indonesia are poor and cannot get a girlfriend in their own country... or alternatively are playboys who want to change partners easily.⁶⁰

In turn the fact that the Westerner is apparently happy to become a convert of convenience is taken as proof that most Westerners have little or no respect for religion.

The view from within Indonesia in some cases appears to be very similar to the view from outside discussed earlier – a conversion of convenience for marriage is generally seen as a practical solution to the requirements of the Marriage Law and officially sanctioned. There is a contrary view put forward by some which suggests that a pure

conversion of convenience is not acceptable and should be avoided, although there also emerges the idea that Westerners could be (or become) converts of conviction after marrying.

The coverage of Westerners converting to Islam in Indonesia in on-line mainstream media in Indonesia, in books published in Indonesia and in Indonesian social media supports the idea that in most (if not all) cases of conversion expatriate men will be marrying Indonesian Muslim women. The gender balance in the coverage of converts appears to be significantly different to that found in Western countries - coverage of conversion in Western media focuses very strongly (almost exclusively) on female converts.

Not Only Converts of Convenience – Some Case Studies

While the most common view both from outside and from within Indonesia appears to be that the majority of instances of Westerners converting to Islam in Indonesia is more about marriage than anything else, there are also examples of Westerners who have converted to Islam in Indonesia for reasons other than marriage. In such cases, the Westerner may well marry a Muslim after they have converted, but for such individuals marrying someone who shares the new faith can be seen as a natural thing to do. This particularly if they adopt a “traditionalist” approach to Islam and are guided by the *fatwa* of the MUI or the interpretation supported by Book 1 of the Compilation of Islamic Laws in Indonesia which only allows a Muslim to marry another Muslim.

In many cases these conversions of conviction may pass with little notice as they are likely to involve “ordinary” people in their “ordinary” lives – not generating the same level of interest as stories of Westerners converting to marry Indonesian celebrities or the same level of self-publication as Indonesian women discussing the best ways to “catch” a *bule*. In some cases the Westerner concerned may be considered newsworthy or become so after their conversion – five very brief case studies of Westerners who have attracted attention after converting are presented below. In each case there is a slightly different story behind the conversion but each is clearly an example of conversion of conviction rather than conversion of convenience. These cases are used purely as evidence that not all instances of conversion are directly linked to marriage and so are not presented in detail. Further investigation of these cases to understand what attracted these Westerners to Islam, to identify

their views on various internal debates in Islam and to ascertain if there is anything about Islam in Indonesia specifically which contributed to their decision to convert would be useful as part of further research of the phenomenon of conversion of Westerners in Indonesia.

Gene Netto

Gene Netto, originally from New Zealand, rejected religion when he was 10 years old (although he still believed in God), but first became interested in Islam after meeting with an Indonesian student at University in Australia. He formally converted to Islam in Indonesia in 1996 after studying Islam for several years and becoming convinced that Islam was clear, logical and based on common sense. Netto has lived in Indonesia since 1995 and studied under Kyai Haji Masyhuri Syahid (member of the MUI and Head of the Daarul Qur'an Islamic Boarding School for Orphans) after his conversion. Netto is active in education and teacher training and in providing support for converts.⁶¹

Dale Andrew Collins-Smith (Wahyu Soeparno Putro)

Dale Andrew Collins-Smith, an Australian citizen originally from Scotland, moved to Indonesia in 1994. He was adopted by a security guard at his place of work and moved in to live with his adopted family. The family house was close to a mosque and Collins-Smith was at first annoyed by *adzan Subuh* [the early morning call to prayer] but later saw this as the thing that brought him to Islam as it made him want to learn more about Islam. After converting to Islam in 1999 he changed his name to Wahyu Soeparno Putro. Since 2006 he has been active in Indonesia soap operas and religious programming.⁶²

Yusuf Burke

Yusuf Burke, from the United States, was raised as a Catholic. After studying as an engineer he became a field engineer working on power projects in various countries around the world. In 1994 he worked in Indonesia and became interested in Islam after experiencing the hospitality of Indonesians. He converted in 1996 and shortly after that married. He lived in Malaysia, Singapore, Australia and Thailand before moving back to the United States in 2002 where he became active in the Council on American Islamic Relations.⁶³

Mohamed Lorand

Mohamed Lorand was born in Romania but moved to Australia with his mother when aged 19. While visiting Indonesia in 1974 he found himself in Surabaya without any money, but was given somewhere to stay by a group of young men he met on the streets. While staying there he first heard *adzan* and was moved to find out more about Islam and then converted to Islam in 1975. After living and working in various countries he returned to Indonesia and in 1989 started looking after orphans in Jakarta. In 1991 he married an Indonesian woman (who was a Catholic, but converted to Islam in 1992). In 1992 he formally set up the Nusantara Foundation orphanage in Jakarta. Lorand passed away in 2010.⁶⁴

Chaim Fetter

Chaim Fetter had a successful e-commerce business in his home country of the Netherlands which he sold when he moved to Indonesia. He was initially suspected of being a Christian missionary by locals when he tried to set up a foundation to help street children on the island of Lombok. After convincing locals of his intentions, he set up the Peduli Anak Foundation in Lombok in 2006. He was drawn to Islam while living in Lombok by hearing *adzan*, seeing people around him praying regularly and seeing children *mengaji* [recite the Qur'an] and finally converted there. Fetter set up Jualo.com, an Indonesian ecommerce business, at the start of 2014.⁶⁵

From the five case studies a number of common themes emerge. In all five cases there is mention of how close contact with Muslims in Indonesia had an influence on the decision to convert (in two cases the friendliness and hospitality of Indonesians is mentioned explicitly). In three cases it is stated that hearing *adzan* stimulated interest in Islam (even if initially it was found to be annoying).

Transnational Converts – Why Here?

Having gained an insight into some of the reasons why Westerners have converted to Islam (for converts of conviction), the second question of why these Westerners chose to convert in Indonesia as opposed to their countries of origin can be considered. Is there anything special about Indonesia (and Islam in Indonesia) which means that it

attracts “transnational” conversion? A simplistic explanation may point to the role that contact with Muslims plays in conversion - for instance in the study of conversion in the UK (Brice, 2011), 86% of converts indicated that they received some or a lot of help in deciding to convert from Muslim friends or acquaintances – and that Indonesia, as a Muslim majority country, offers significantly increased opportunities for contact with Muslims to visiting Westerners. In this view, there is nothing “special” as such about Indonesia (or Islam in Indonesia) – it is merely a question of relative numbers. However, while this may help explain the number of Westerners wanting to marry in Indonesia (although without a comparative study of this phenomenon in other majority Muslim countries it is impossible to determine if the number is unexpectedly large or not), it does not on its own explain why they are willing to convert to Islam to marry (or why Muslims in Indonesia appear willing to accept these converts of convenience) and certainly does not explain why converts of conviction are converting in Indonesia.

There is a popular view that Islam in Indonesia is ‘different’ to that found in other places in the world – a “moderate and accommodative, and it is the least Arabicized form of the religion” (Azra, 2008: 199) and it has often been presented as “Islam with a Smiling Face” (Bruinessen, 2013, Burhanudin & Dijk, 2013, Friend, 2011). This view of Islam in Indonesia appears to fit well with one of the themes identified in the case studies considered earlier - the friendliness and hospitality of Indonesians – and an Islam that is “compatible with modernity, democracy and plurality” (Azra, 2008: 199) may well be seen to be more attractive to Westerners. Coupled with the increased opportunities for contact with Muslims, the “attractiveness” of this form Islam may provide an explanation of why Westerners chose to convert in Indonesia.

However, since the fall of Suharto (in 1998) there has been a “conservative turn” to Indonesian Islam (Bruinessen, 2013) with violent inter-religious conflict, incidents of ‘Islamic terrorism’, and the emergence of radical groups alongside a move towards more fundamentalist view of Islam by the mainstream Muslim organisations. This change may be reflected in the attitudes of Muslims in Indonesia in general as “[n]ational surveys confirm... Muslims in Indonesia have become more religious in their attitudes and practices” (Burhanudin & Dijk, 2013:7), but such a view is contested and it is often suggested that “the vast majority of Indonesian Muslims are moderate and tolerant,

and that it is only a fringe minority that acts and thinks differently” (Burhanudin & Dijk, 2013:11). It is difficult to judge whether or not such a change affects the perceived “attractiveness” of Islam to Westerners. A comparative study of conversion before and after the “conservative turn” would help throw some light on this.

The perception that Islam in Indonesia was “tolerant and inclined to compromise” (Bruinessen, 2013: 1) may explain why Muslims in Indonesia would be willing to accept Westerners converting in order to marry. However, if the “conservative turn” in attitudes was widespread amongst Indonesian Muslims, it would be natural to assume that such acceptance (an example of a tolerant position) would decline – and here there is a slight contradiction. As Bruinessen notes:

[t]he clearest expression of the conservative turn was perhaps given by a number of controversial *fatwas*, authoritative opinions, issued by the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI, Indonesian Council of Islamic Scholars) in 2005... Other *fatwa*... declared inter-religious marriage *haram*, even in the case of a Muslim man marrying a non-Muslim woman. (Bruinessen, 2013: 34-)

Thus, the *fatwa* that strengthens the understanding that Westerners must convert if they wish to marry Muslim Indonesian women (and so lead to an increase in conversions of convenience) is part of the “conservative turn” which should also mean that Muslims would not accept conversion where this was only in order to marry.

What the five short case studies make clear is that not all Westerners who convert to Islam in Indonesia are motivated only by marriage; for some at least it is not a conversion of convenience, but a conversion of conviction. The “common view” presents (as is so often the case) an overly simplified view, which is ultimately mistaken because it attempts to give a single, simple answer to a complex question. What is not clear (and will remain unclear without rigorous fieldwork to collect data) is the relative proportion of converts of conviction to converts of convenience amongst Western converts to Islam in Indonesia. And while individual cases studies of converts of conviction, such as those noted above, may provide some insights as to why Westerners have converted (and even why this happened in Indonesia), as noted at the start of the paper, without any firm idea of numbers, such insights cannot be taken as having any relevance beyond the individual cases themselves.

Converts of Convenience and Converts of Conviction - A False Binary

The identification of two types of converts (converts of convenience and converts of conviction) may give rise to an assumption that any particular convert must be (and remain) either one type or the other, particularly if the two are considered to be mutually exclusive. However, this assumption should be challenged; while some individuals may convert purely to facilitate marriage to a Muslim partner and then have no connection to Islam again afterwards, there will be others who may have initially viewed their conversion merely as means to an end, but after time begin to engage with Islam as a religion and a way of life. It may be that many converts sit somewhere between these two extremes, but over a period of time may move closer to one type or the other.

This paper has tried to show that the common view that most (if not all) conversions to Islam in Indonesia by Westerners are about facilitating marriage is an inaccurate oversimplification. While it would appear that the common view is supported by the evidence from outside of Indonesia (the formal advice on expatriate web sites and forums and on Embassy web sites), it must be kept in mind that this advice is specifically targeted at individuals who fit the common view (and so the evidence actually presupposes that which it is claimed to be evidence of). This advice (of how to convert to Islam in order to marry) would be of little use or interest to someone who has already converted for other reasons and wanted to get married or someone who was interested in converting with no thought of marriage.

Likewise the views expressed on the many Indonesian blogs about dating and marrying a *bule* say more about the attitudes and beliefs of the Indonesian women who write (and read) them than anything else. Even those blogs which give alternative views, such as Gene Netto's blog, can be seen as making the mistake of generalising from the particular – he moves from discussing one individual, to noting that there are dozens of cases where he has been contacted by the wives of “converts of convenience”, to the suggestion that this is always the case where a Westerner converts and marries an Indonesian women. There is a slight irony in this view, given Netto's own status as a Western convert, which is picked up by one respondent who humorously notes that “this is the reason Gene Netto is so popular, he is not only a *bule* but also it appears a pious Muslim”.⁶⁶

More nuanced views, which are probably closer to the truth, come through in some of the comments on the “Living in Indonesia” web forum (“I converted partially for marriage law but mostly because Islam attracted me over a few years anyway”)⁶⁷ and in comments on Gene Netto’s blog (“I believe some of them are convinced of the truth of Islam and of course will need time to become devout Muslims”)⁶⁸.

Finally, while attempting to dispel the myth that all Westerners who convert to Islam in Indonesia only do so for the sake of marriage, this paper has considered the supplementary question posed by these “transnational” converts – the question of “Why here?”. For converts of convenience the answer is in part rather mundane – the conversion takes place in Indonesia because that is where the future spouse is (and the “conservative turn” may ironically be contributing to this phenomenon as it will make the family of the Indonesian spouse more likely to require the Westerner to convert, even though there is an inherent contradiction in this as the “conservative turn” should also mean that Indonesian Muslims are less likely to accept converts of convenience). For converts of conviction, the answer may be provided by the approach to Islam in Indonesia (“Islam with a Smiling Face”), but it is not clear whether the “conservative turn” has had any impact on this.

As has been noted throughout this paper, there is a need for rigorous fieldwork to collect both quantitative and qualitative data to achieve a greater understanding of the phenomenon of conversion to Islam in Indonesia by Westerners.

Endnotes

- This paper was first presented at the international conference on “Southeast Asian Islam: Legacy and New Interpretation”, Syahida Inn, PPIM, UIN Jakarta, 14th – 16th August 2014.
 - All translations from Indonesian are the author’s except where otherwise noted (the original Indonesian is provided in the endnotes). Where quotations from web forums and blogs are provided, the spelling and grammar of the original are maintained even where these are clearly incorrect.
1. Badan Pusat Statistik, Sensus Penduduk 2010 “Population by Region and Religion,” <http://sp2010.bps.go.id/index.php/site/tabel?tid=321&wid=0>.
 2. According to *Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan* [Education and Culture Department] *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* [Large Indonesian Dictionary] *bule* means “*orang berkulit putih*” [person with white skin] and according to Echols and Shadily *Kamus Indonesia Inggris: An Indonesian-English Dictionary* it means “white person, Caucasian (derog.).” The use of the word *bule* is considered as derogatory by some (hence the entry in Echols and Shadily) but “can be used in a neutral fashion, as well as carrying positive or negative connotations” (Fechter, 2005: 95). In this paper the word *bule* is not intended to be used in a derogatory way, but to reflect the usage in the various sources under consideration.
 3. Voice of Al Islam, “4 Bule Jadi Muallaf Pasca Bom Mega Kuningan 2,” 3 September 2009. <http://www.voia-islam.com/news/features/2009/09/03/967/4-bule-jadi-muallaf-pasca-bom-mega-kuningan-2/>.
 4. Masjid Sunda Kelapa in the Menteng area of Jakarta is well known for helping Westerners convert to Islam and runs a support programme for converts.
 5. Damnahuri Zuhri, “Masjid Sunda Kelapa Islamkan Sepertiga WNA dari 345 Muallaf,” *Republika Online*, 11 January 2011. <http://www.republika.co.id/berita/dunia-islam/islam-nusantara/12/01/11/lxmsda-masjid-sunda-kelapa-islamkan-sepertiga-wna-dari-345-muallaf>.
 6. Damnahuri Zuhri, “Muallaf Butuh Dirangkul dan Diayomi.” *Republika Online*, 11 April 2011. <http://www.republika.co.id/berita/dunia-islam/muallaf/11/04/08/ljbpccj-muallaf-butuh-dirangkul-dan-diayomi>.
 7. Suara Istiqamah, “Muallaf Bule Istiqamah,” 22 March 2014. <http://suaraiستiqamah.net/muallaf-bule-istiqamah/>.
 8. *Perkawinan campuran yang dilangsungkan di Indonesia dilakukan menurut Undang-undang perkawinan ini* Pasal 59, ayat 2 dari Bab XII, Bagian Ketiga, *Undang-Undang Nomor 1* 1974.
 9. *Perkawinan adalah sah apabila dilakukan menurut hukum masing-masing agama dan kepercayaannya itu* Pasal 2, ayat 1 dari Bab I, *Undang-Undang Nomor 1* 1974.
 10. *Perkawinan dilarang antara dua orang yang: (f) yang mempunyai hubungan yang oleh agamanya atau peraturan lain yang berlaku dilarang kawin.* Pasal 8, huruf f dari Bab II, *Undang-Undang Nomor 1* 1974.
 11. *Perkawinan wanita muslimah dengan laki-laki non muslim adalah haram hukumnya.* Keputusan Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia dalam Musyawarah Nasional II tahun 1400/1980 Tentang Perkawinan Campuran.
 12. *Seorang laki-laki muslim diharamkan mengawini wanita bukan muslim. Tentang perkawinan antara laki-laki muslim dengan wanita Ahlu Kitab terdapat perbedaan pendapat. Setelah mempertimbangkan bahwa mafsadahnya lebih besar daripada maslahatnya, Majelis Ulama Indonesia memfatwakan perkawinan tersebut hukumnya haram.* *ibid.*
 13. *Perkawinan beda agama adalah haram dan tidak sah* Keputusan Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia Nomor : 4/Munas VII/MUI/8/2005 Tentang Perkawinan Beda Agama.

14. *Perkawinan laki-laki muslim dengan wanita Ahlu Kitab, menurut qaul mu'tamad, adalah haram dan tidak sah.* Ibid.
15. *Dilarang melangsungkan perkawinan anantara seorang pria dengan seorang wanita karena keadaan tertentu: c. seorang wanita yang tidak beragama Islam.* Pasal 40c Bab VI dari Buku I, Kompilasi Hukum Islam di Indonesia.
16. *Seorang wanita Islam dilarang melangsungkan perkawinan dengan seorang pria yang tidak beragama Islam.* Pasal 44 Bab VI dari Buku I, Kompilasi Hukum Islam di Indonesia.
17. Living in Indonesia, "Validity of Marriage." <http://www.expat.or.id/info/validityofmarriage.html>.
18. Australian Embassy in Jakarta, "Marriage in Indonesia," July 2013. <http://www.indonesia.embassy.gov.au/jakt/MarriageInd.html>.
19. Ibid, Section: Couple must be of the same religion.
20. Angloinfo Indonesia, "Religion and Marriage," <http://indonesia.angloinfo.com/family/marriage/religion-marriage/>.
21. Ibid, Section: Religious conversion.
22. Women for Marriage, "Marrying an Indonesian Woman is Complicated," 10 August 2012. <http://www.womenformarriage.org/indonesian-women-for-marriage/>.
23. Living in Indonesia, "Getting Married in Indonesia," Section: Inter-faith marriages. <http://www.expat.or.id/info/validityofmarriage.html>.
24. Living in Indonesia, "Conversion to Islam." <http://www.expat.or.id/info/conversiontoislam.html>.
25. Living in Indonesia Expat Forum. <http://www.livinginindonesiaforum.org/>.
26. Examples of relevant threads in the Expat-Indonesian Marriages forum include: "Marrying a Muslim Girlfriend", "When Christian and Muslim fall in love?", "Indonesian or foreigner change religion". In the Laws, Visas, Money Matters and Documents forum there is a thread "Converting to Islam and marrying my amazing Indonesian fiance in Indonesia".
27. Mister Bule, Marrying Muslim Girlfriend [Online forum comment], 6 June 2014. <http://www.livinginindonesiaforum.org/showthread.php/44932-Marrying-Muslim-Girlfriend?p=404568&viewfull=1#post404568>.
28. MadCat, Indonesian or foreigner change religion? [Online forum comment], 12 May 2012. <http://www.livinginindonesiaforum.org/showthread.php/23508-Indonesian-or-foreigner-change-religion?p=252662&viewfull=1#post252662>.
29. ReveurGAM, Indonesian or foreigner change religion? [Online forum comment], 24 May 2012. <http://www.livinginindonesiaforum.org/showthread.php/23508-Indonesian-or-foreigner-change-religion?p=255145&viewfull=1#post255145>.
30. DanInAceh, Indonesian or foreigner change religion? [Online forum comment], 9 May 2012. <http://www.livinginindonesiaforum.org/showthread.php/23508-Indonesian-or-foreigner-change-religion?p=251823&viewfull=1#post251823>.
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52. *Kalau dalam 6 bulan, sudah kelihatan bahwa dia serius tentang Islam, silabkan menikah. Tetapi kalau tidak, sebaiknya ditinggalkan...* Ibid.

53. ...aku jadi ingat dulu waktu masih aktif di sebuah Masjid di daerah Tebet, hampir tiap bulan aku melihat bule bersyahadat, yang tujuannya untuk menikahi seorang muslimah. Anonymous, 6 July 2010, comment on Gene Netto, "Bahayanya Menikah Dengan Orang Yang Masuk Islam Karena Mau Menikah." <http://genenetto.blogspot.com/2010/07/bahayanya-menikah-dengan-orang-yang.html?showComment=1278428363451#c6348689872601579380>.
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55. ...jangan sampai masuk Islam HANYA karena alasan menikah tanpa ada minat terhadap Islam itu sendiri. Adalah hal yang salah kalau orang beranggapan bahwa ketika sudah menikah akan memudahkan seorang mualaf untuk belajar lebih dalam tentang Islam. Harwati, 6 July 2010, comment on Gene Netto, "Bahayanya Menikah Dengan Orang Yang Masuk Islam Karena Mau Menikah." <http://genenetto.blogspot.com/2010/07/bahayanya-menikah-dengan-orang-yang.html?showComment=1278415167489#c3686600487682985129>.
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57. ...wanita2 itu ketemuanya di mana? bar?, diskotik?, club?, mal? ya pastinya dah jelas2 meragukan agamanya. kl emang ketemuanya di majelis pengajian or masjid bolehlah di pertimbangkan. Bayangkan, ketemuanya aja di bar, apa itu muslimah yg berkelieran cari bule di bar?, agama si wanita aja dah di pertanyakan hera, 9 March 2011, comment on Gene Netto, "Bahayanya Menikah Dengan Orang Yang Masuk Islam Karena Mau Menikah." <http://genenetto.blogspot.com/2010/07/bahayanya-menikah-dengan-orang-yang.html?showComment=1299618583683#c7211397597076310991>.
58. Identity cards in Indonesia include the religion of the holder and Indonesians must choose affiliation to one of the state recognised religions even if they do not actively practice the religion, hence the term "identity card Muslim" for someone who is Muslim on their identity card only.
59. Kesan rata-rata anggapan orang tentang wanita yang berpasangan dengan bule adalah cewek kampung, mukanya jelek, kulitnya hitam kecil, pakai baju terbuka sana-sini, matre, ngomongnya campur-campur Inggris beraksen daerah, dan terlibat bangga sekali kalau bisa jalan sama bule. Desi Sachiko, "Pasangan Saya Bule, Ada Masalah?," 11 March 2014. <http://www.desisachiko.com/2014/03/11/pasangan-saya-bule-ada-masalah/>.
60. Pria bule pun tak luput dari komen negatif. Banyak yang bilang kalau bule-bule yang mencari pasangan di Indonesia adalah bule miskin dan tidak laku di negaranya ... atau malah bule playboy yang ingin ganti-ganti pasangan dengan mudah. Ibid.
61. <http://genenetto.blogspot.co.uk/2007/07/about-me.html> and <http://www.republika.co.id/berita/dunia-islam/mualaf/10/03/15/106751-gene-netto-dengan-rasionalitas-menemukan-islam>.
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68. *Saya percaya sebagian dari mereka menyakini kebenaran Islam dan tentu butuh proses untuk bisa menjadi seorang Muslim yg taat*. Anonymous, 25 April 2012, comment on Gene Netto, “Bahayanya Menikah Dengan Orang Yang Masuk Islam Karena Mau Menikah.” <http://genenetto.blogspot.com/2010/07/bahayanya-menikah-dengan-orang-yang.html?showComment=1335362829060#c7247991599821102945>.

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2. Booth, Anne. 1988. "Living Standards and the Distribution of Income in Colonial Indonesia: A Review of the Evidence." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 19(2): 310–34.
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7. Interview with K.H. Sahal Mahfudz, Kajen, Pati, June 11th, 2007.

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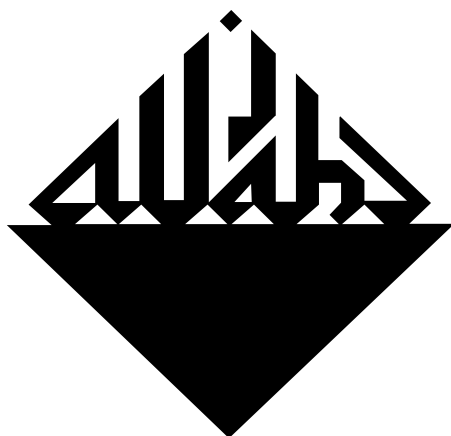
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السنة الثانية والعشرون، العءء ١، ٢٠١٥



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علي منحنف

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سلطنة بروناي والاستعمار الأوربي في بورنيو
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