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Travelling with the Idea of Taking Sides

Indonesian Pilgrimages to Jerusalem

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Abstract

Israel and Indonesia share no diplomatic relations, and considering Indonesia's cordial bonds with the Palestinian Authority, Indonesian society is deemed to be critical of Israel. However, the ways in which Indonesians relate to 'Others' in Israel and Palestine are not monolithic. Indonesian perspectives on the Middle East are far more nuanced, as might be assumed from the largest Muslim society in the world, and the idea of 'taking sides' is challenged by encounters on the ground and by inter- and intra-religious rivalries. Contemporary pilgrimage tourism from Indonesia to Israel and the Palestinian Territories shows how Christian and Muslim Indonesians engage in conflictive identity politics through contrasting images of Israeli and Palestinian Others. Indonesian pilgrims' viewpoints on these Others and on the Israel–Palestine conflict mirror the politicization and marketization of religious affiliation. This reveals peculiarities of the local engagement with global politics and the impact of travelling, which can inspire both the manifestation of enemy images and the blurring of identity markers.

Keywords

identity politics – othering – enemy images – pilgrimage – conversion – inter-religious encounter – Muslim–Christian relations in Indonesia

1 Introduction: Jerusalem is Ours

Jerusalem is a highly contested city—and not only in the Middle East. Around the world, people relate to the Palestine–Israel conflict and to the city's status. However, does the flying of the Palestinian or Israeli flags in places like North-

ern Ireland, South Africa, Cuba, or Indonesia really relate to the city's status, or does it say more about internal conflicts in these places?

In contemporary Indonesia the interest in the Middle East features prominently in political power-gambling and in religious tourism. While some people consider Jerusalem to be a shared, holy place and a meeting point of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, others see it as a place of conflict, where different religious, ethnic, and national groups fight over ownership, access, and influence. When I asked Inayah,¹ an Indonesian travel agent, about her motivations for organizing Muslim pilgrimages from Indonesia to Jerusalem, she explained: 'Making the pilgrimage to the Al-Aqsa Mosque contributes to securing the Muslim character of the site.'² Through this statement the young, female travel agent from Jakarta engages with two controversies. Firstly, the status of the Al-Aqsa Mosque complex, the *Haram al-Šarīf*, and secondly, the question of boycotting Israel. This is just one example of the complex dynamics found in Indonesians' views on Jerusalem.

Inayah takes a stance against the Jewish and Israeli influence at the site, such as Ariel Sharon's visit in 2000, which initiated the second Intifada or the Jewish Temple Movements' claim to the right to pray at the site, which in fact conflicts with Israel's Chief Rabbinate's prohibition for Jews to enter the Temple Mount. At the same time, Inayah opposes fellow Muslims who demand that people abstain from visiting Al-Aqsa as long as Jerusalem is under Israeli rule.

Inayah positions herself in a conflict that she perceives as clear-cut, as a Muslim–Jewish and Israeli–Palestinian confrontation. However, the regulation of the Chief Rabbinate (and some Jews' violation of it) is one of the many examples that indicate internal frictions within the Israeli and Palestinian societies. Nevertheless, Inayah visits Al-Aqsa with the idea of 'taking sides'; by doing so, she also engages in intra-Muslim and intra-Indonesian conflicts concerning attitudes towards travel to Israel. Inayah argued that it was important to fill the area around the Al-Aqsa Mosque with Muslim life, even though her decision to organize tours from Indonesia to Jerusalem had made some of her closest friends break off all contact with her because they considered it not politically correct to accept that one must apply for an Israeli visa to visit Al-Aqsa. Thus, while the layers of conflict are characterized by multipolarity—both in Indonesia and the Middle East—the tourism from Indonesia to Jerusalem cre-

1 The names of research participants used in this article are pseudonyms, unless they are public figures whose statements are publicly accessible.

2 Personal communication with a female, Muslim Indonesian travel agent, Jerusalem, 19-6-2018.

ates ideas of clearly identifiable sides. This article seeks to analyse these ideas of taking sides and the stereotypical images of 'Others' that feature prominently on a narrative level in Indonesian pilgrimages to Jerusalem. Furthermore, I contrast these ideas of clearly identifiable sides with practical experiences of blurring affiliations. These practical experiences during travels to Jerusalem reveal complexities and contradictions and question the effects of guided tourism.

The analysis departs from the understanding that components of social identities are not static, but underlie contextual processes of identification. In the words of Gerd Baumann (1999:119): 'Multicultural society is not a patchwork of five or ten fixed cultural identities, but an elastic web of crosscutting and always mutually situational, identifications.' Thus, categories like 'Self' and 'Other' are not clearly identifiable entities from an analytical perspective, but rather subject to ideas of such entities within complex identity constructions. I argue that Indonesians' ideas of taking sides in the Israel–Palestine conflict transpire in symbolic acts and in interactions with globalized narratives of separation.

With the term 'narratives of separation' I describe narratives, images and discourses that draw on dichotomous categories of Self and Other. These narratives promote ideas of bipolarity and of competing sides, which—as I shall show—often do not grasp the multipolarity and complexity of social belonging. Despite this discrepancy, narratives of separation can enforce actual social separation between different ethnic, religious and social groups.

As an example, such narratives of separation inspire the question 'to whom does Jerusalem belong?', which arises in pilgrimages to the 'holy city'. Relating to Edith Turner's (2005) definition of pilgrimage as a journey in hope of miracles and strengthened faith to a holy place beyond believers' immediate surroundings, Jackie Feldman (2014:106) speaks of pilgrimage space as a 'storied place', as 'a distant space beyond a horizon that becomes a focus of vision and imagination'. These visions and imaginations are relevant in pilgrims' home context, where their representation of 'taking sides' can express internal social boundaries.

Like Inayah, many people come to Jerusalem with the idea of taking sides when it comes to the city's status. The recent relocation of the US embassy, which is a *de facto* recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, fuelled the controversy once more and Palestinians' slogan 'Jerusalem is ours' (in Arabic: *Al-Quds lana*) is a symbol of international, anti-imperialist liberation movements and Muslim solidarity movements. Thus it might not come as a surprise that the flying of the Palestinian flag is widespread among Muslim political activists on the streets of Jakarta. Some of these activists, like the

controversial public figure Habib Rizieq, even voice their intention to lead the liberation of Jerusalem.³

Less well known is the fact that there are also many Indonesians who wholeheartedly support Israel. A 62-foot-tall *menorah*, the seven-armed chandelier that is a symbol of Judaism and of the state of Israel, stands in the Indonesian city of Manado in North Sulawesi.⁴ Among Indonesia's Christian minority of around 24 million people, pro-Jewish and pro-Israeli symbols are widespread. A prominent example of an Indonesian community that supports the people of Israel are the people of Papua, who are mostly Christian and have a strong independence movement, demanding separation from the Indonesian state.

Henri Myrntinen (2015) speaks of Papua as a society 'under two flags', obviously none of them being the Indonesian flag: one is the outlawed Papuan Morning Star flag of the separatist movement and the other one, the Israeli national flag (Myrntinen 2015:124). Myrntinen noticed an 'Israel boom' in Papua with the adoption of Jewish and Israeli symbols and pro-Israeli graffiti, T-shirts, smart-phone wallpaper, and other accessories (Myrntinen 2015:126). This corresponds with my observations of Papuans' pro-Israeli positioning during pilgrimages to Jerusalem, which is well known among Jerusalemite travel agents and tour guides. With great pride, pilgrims and Jewish tour guides showed me videos of Papuan children learning the Hatikvah, the Israeli national anthem, in school and of Israeli flags in Papuan cities. For Christian Papuans Israel is more than an ally against Islam. Myrntinen argues that Papuans believe in the existence of a spiritual connection between the Holy Land and the land of Papua. Papuans do not only look at Jewish Israel as the 'Other', but as part of the Self. As Myrntinen (2015:142) summarizes, 'Papua becomes the Holy Land and the Holy Land becomes Papua'. The 'imagined community' (Anderson 1983) and the identification with Others beyond Indonesia is nourished by inter- and

3 During one of the Aksi Bela Islam (Action to Defend Islam) demonstrations in Jakarta in May 2018, the radical Front Pembela Islam (Islamic Defenders' Front) used a poster with the slogan 'Habib Rizieq Syihab siap memimpin pembebasan Al-Quds' (Habib Rizieq Syihab is ready to lead the liberation of Al-Quds), showing the Dome of the Rock, the Palestinian and the Indonesian flags, a picture of Habib Rizieq, and the label of his new movement, called Gerakan Indonesia Bangkit (Indonesia Rises Movement). All translations are mine, unless otherwise indicated. I sincerely thank Ray Yen for his photographic documentation of the demonstration.

4 Niruban Balachandran, 'In Jewish-Indonesian relations, many hopeful signs', *Tablet*, 19-4-2018. <http://www.tabletmag.com/scroll/260303/in-jewish-indonesian-relations-many-hopeful-signs/?print=1> (accessed 30-10-2018); Norimitsu Onishinov, 'In sliver of Indonesia, public embrace of Judaism', *The New York Times*, 22-11-2010. <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/23/world/asia/23indo.html> (accessed 30-10-2018).

intra-religious polarization in Indonesia, by the increased use of internet-based media, and through pilgrimages to the Holy Land (Myrntinen 2015:142).

Such ‘narratives of separation’ contextualize Indonesians’ journeys to Jerusalem. In the following, I show how these narratives shape ideas of taking sides and how they manifest and blur categories of Selves and Others—in and beyond Indonesia.

The ethnography on which this article is based stems from ongoing research on Indonesian pilgrimages to Jerusalem. Since January 2018, I have been studying the activities of Indonesian travel groups in and around Jerusalem, as well as those of Indonesian and Jerusalemite travel agents, clerics, tour leaders, and local guides.

While many Indonesians feel connected to Jerusalem, Israelis and Palestinians know little about these visitors from afar. Widespread comments by Israelis relate to the lack of diplomatic relations and the perceived hostility of Indonesians. They wonder: ‘How can they even come here?’, and express thoughts such as, ‘I thought they didn’t like us’ or ‘Indonesia is not a friendly country, isn’t it?’ That a German anthropologist is conducting research on Indonesia in Israel of all places does not make sense to most of my Israeli and Palestinian interlocutors—unless they work in tourism and know about the increasing number of Indonesian tourists. This article may show that Jerusalem features in Indonesians’ contemporary worldviews in more nuanced ways than it might seem at first sight. I shall firstly describe the setting of Indonesian pilgrimages to Jerusalem and subsequently lay out the complex narratives on Israeli and Palestinian Others in the context of Indonesian pilgrimages to Jerusalem. I relate these ‘narratives of separation’, to current political tensions in Indonesia. Furthermore, I show that the performance and exploration of religious identities sometimes exceeds the discursive level and results in acts of conversion. Lastly, I provide an outlook of encounters that have challenged the stereotypical images of the Other and of taking sides.

2 Indonesians in Jerusalem

The Dewi Cinta restaurant, a restaurant in East Jerusalem with an Indonesian name, is one of the few traces of an Indonesian presence in Jerusalem. You can find Indonesians walking on the Via Dolorosa in the Old City, or see them when they step out of a coach at the panorama viewpoint on the Mount of Olives, or during sunset prayers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque. They eat in places that suit Asian tourists’ tastes and shop in souvenir shops where even the shopkeepers know *bahasa Indonesia*.

Despite the lack of diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Israel, more than 30,000 Indonesians visit Israel each year via guided package tours (Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics 2014, 2015, 2016, The Times of Israel 2019).⁵ Most of them are members of Indonesia's Christian minority, who join so called 'Holy Land pilgrimages'. A smaller but increasing number of Muslim Indonesians come to visit the Al-Aqsa Mosque in tours that are designated as *ziarah Al-Aqsa* (Al-Aqsa pilgrimages) or as a *napak tilas di bumi para nabi*, 'brief excursions' or 'pilgrimages' to the 'lands of the prophets'. Further ascriptions reveal even more about religious affiliation, as they indicate Muslim and Christian sub-groups or denominations. Mainstream Catholic or Protestant tours are often advertised with the neutral term *wisata rohani* (spiritual tourism), while evangelical, Pentecostal, and charismatic agents and priests advertise their packages as pilgrimages to the 'promised land' (*tanah perjanjian*). Among Muslim travel agencies the concept of *wisata halal* (*halal* tourism) has become common and represents the modern piety and the conservative turn among the urban middle classes. These nuances hint at the relevance of intra-religious differences in Indonesians' religious travels and their ideas of taking sides in the Israel–Palestine conflict.

Travel groups are usually organized according to denominational affiliation, which means that there are hardly any mixed groups. When I asked a Catholic travel agent in Yogyakarta, Central Java, if he saw any potential for 'inter-religious groups', he answered: 'Oh yes, we once had a Catholic–Protestant group.'⁶ His answer pointed me to a terminological specification in formal Indonesian. When I asked him in Indonesian about *ziarah antar-agama*, which means 'interreligious pilgrimage', his first thought was of the 'other' Christian religion. In Indonesia, Protestantism and Catholicism are counted as separate religions among the six religions that have official status under Indonesian law. However, he defined cooperation with adherents of Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism as *lintas iman* (interfaith) and clarified that, in his opinion, it would be impossible for an interfaith group to go on pilgrimage together. He considered it already a challenging undertaking to bring people from different Christian denominations together, let alone Muslim–Christian groups. My other interlocutors from travel agencies and religious authorities shared this understanding. Moreover, travel agents for incoming tourism in Jerusalem reported that it was difficult to mix groups, because of

5 Even though Indonesians comprise only 1% of total tourist arrivals in Israel, in guided package tours Indonesians rank number five, according to Jerusalemite travel agencies.

6 Personal communication with a male, Catholic travel agent, Yogyakarta, 31-8-2018.

the different procedures in the visa application process: At the time of inquiry the Israeli administration used to handle Christian and Muslim applications differently.

2.1 *Holy-Land Pilgrimages*

Indonesian Christians follow the biblical stories about the Holy Land. They usually start in Egypt with stories from the Old Testament/the Torah about the Israeli peoples' exodus from Egypt to the 'promised land'. Besides visiting biblical places and ancient churches, like the monastery of St Catherine and Mt Sinai, the groups take pictures at the Pyramids of Giza, go on a Nile cruise, and a boat ride in Sharm el-Sheikh. Upon reaching the Holy Land, the travel narrative jumps to the New Testament, following the story of Jesus to Bethlehem (his alleged birthplace), Jerusalem (the city of his crucifixion and resurrection), the lake of Galilee, Nazareth, Capernaum, Tiberias, and the Jordan River. After one week in the Holy Land they cross the northern border between Israel and Jordan, go on a brief excursion to Petra and then fly back to Jakarta from Amman.⁷

Generally, pilgrimage groups tend to be homogenous. Christian groups consist of people who belong to the same Christian denomination, quite often from the same church and accompanied by a cleric from their home congregation. The worldwide growth and increasing influence of evangelical Christianity⁸ is reflected in the growing importance of these groups in 'Holy Land' tourism (Bajc 2007). Many evangelicals and Pentecostals are wealthy and come from urban areas. Monetary exchange plays a crucial role during the pilgrimage. When I accompanied a group of charismatic evangelicals, I saw dollar notes being placed into the hands of the priest by each member of the group individually. Israeli and Palestinian tour guides are experts in accommodating the denominational preferences. As an example, they give evangelicals and Pentecostals room for testimonies and personal stories, which are often told over the coach speaker system.

Catholic and Protestant itineraries vary only slightly. For instance, Catholics visit the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which they consider as the burial site of Jesus; Protestants, however, consider the Garden Tomb, located outside today's city wall of the Old City, as the authentic burial site. When it comes to religious rituals, Catholics remain fond of the idea of one holy mass with a Eucharist per day, while Protestant and Pentecostal groups have varying prayer

⁷ This is a typical itinerary, which varies slightly between different groups.

⁸ For an account on evangelical Christianity in Southeast Asia, see Chong 2018.

times, sometimes lengthy worship sessions, and more extensive rituals, like baptism in the Jordan River. Clerics explained that they were looking for more authenticity and for new places. Since many of their customers go on Holy Land pilgrimages more than once, they become bored of the conventional routes and rituals.

2.2 *Al-Aqsa Pilgrimages*

Most Indonesian Muslims who can afford to travel to Jerusalem are members of urban (upper) middle classes, which means that they do not represent the multifarious Islamic landscape of Indonesia, but particular Muslim middle-class lifestyles that have emerged over recent years and have been described as a 'conservative turn'. However, even though the conservative turn marks a contrast to other local traditions, it is not homogenous but characterised by ambiguities and regional peculiarities (see: Van Bruinessen 2013). Among other things, consumption and spiritual business, entertainment and new media communication are popular among Indonesian Muslims who turn towards more conservative lifestyles (see Fealy and White 2008).

Speaking of middle classes in the plural hints at the diversity of Indonesians who identify as members of middle classes (see Berenschot and Van Klinken 2014). However, in many cases, a certain lifestyle reveals more about the aspiration of being part of a middle class rather than an actual economic status. Religious tourism is part of this overall '*halal* lifestyle', which represents ideas of belonging to urban segments of society. This *halal* lifestyle turned out to be of political relevance in contemporary Indonesia. In his analysis of the 2019 Indonesian presidential and legislative elections, Greg Fealy described the election campaign as a 'pitched contest between competing forces within Islam';⁹ I will discuss this in more detail below.

The term *halal*, which defines things that are permitted according to Islamic law, has become a label for popular piety in which all aspects of life have a religious colouring. In the course of expanding Islamic-themed consumerism and entertainment, interest in making the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina grew exponentially. In particular, the minor Mecca pilgrimage trips, the *umrah*, are fashionable and wealthier tourist-pilgrims have a liking for so-called '*umrah-plus*' packages, which combine the *umrah* pilgrimage with visits to other destinations, like '*umrah-plus Istanbul*', '*umrah-plus Cairo*', or '*umrah-plus Aqso*' (Lücking 2014, 2016). The latter package has only relatively recently

9 Greg Fealy, 'Indonesia's growing Islamic divide. The polarisation as seen in latest election will affect interfaith and intra-faith relations in years to come', *The Straits Times*, 3-5-2019. <https://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/indonesias-growing-islamic-divide> (accessed 4-5-2019).

been offered by agencies but, reportedly, has great potential, considering the special status of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Muslim tourism to Jerusalem grew generally in 2018, with people from Indonesia, Malaysia and Turkey as the most important national groups of tourists (The Times of Israel 2019).

Muslim pilgrims follow the stories of the Qur'an and the *hadith*, which recounts that the Prophet Muhammad performed a nightly journey from Mecca to Al-Aqsa—the 'farthest' mosque in 'Al-Quds', the 'holy one' or holy city, which is deemed to refer to Jerusalem. According to Islamic belief, in the first part of this night journey (*isrā*) the mythological creature Buraq carried the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to the 'farthest mosque', where he met other prophets and led them in prayer. In the second part of the night journey (*mi'rāj*), he ascended to the heavens from the rock that is located inside the Dome of the Rock.¹⁰ The Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem is the third-holiest place in Islam and, according to a *hadith* by Bukhari, the Prophet Muhammad commanded his followers to make a pilgrimage to three mosques: the Holy Mosque containing the Kaaba in Mecca (*al-masjid al-ḥarām*), the Prophet's Mosque in Medina (*al-masjid an-nabawī*), and the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

Most Muslim groups spend about three days in Jerusalem. If they combine the visit to Al-Aqsa with the *umrah* pilgrimage, they travel from Saudi Arabia to Amman and enter the West Bank via the Allenby Bridge border crossing, the only direct border crossing into the Occupied West Bank.

Coming from Egypt, they visit the famous mosques and shrines in Cairo, like the Al-Azhar Mosque and the Shrine of Imam Shafi'i, the founder of the Shafi'i school in Sunni law, which is the dominant school of Islamic thought in Indonesia. As with Christian groups, the pyramids and Mount Sinai are on their route. As the Al-Aqsa Mosque is the major destination of the pilgrimage, groups spend a significant amount of time there, taking a tour with historical and theological explanations and performing prayers at Al-Aqsa and the Dome of the Rock. Moreover, they visit the tomb of Ibrahim (Abraham) in Hebron and a memorial site for Musa (Moses) near Jericho.

10 In Islamic belief, this rock is also considered as the location of the beginning of creation. Jews likewise consider the stone as a foundation stone, where God created Adam, the first human. However, in contrast to Muslims, Jews also relate the site to the story of Abraham showing his willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac, which Muslim people consider as having been the sacrifice of Abraham's/Ibrahim's other son, Ishmael, occurring near Mecca.

2.3 *Package Tours*

Despite the different narratives and slightly differing itineraries, all Muslim and Christian package tours resemble one another. The package tours are advertised as a journey to 'three countries'. These 'three countries' are named as Egypt, Palestine, and Jordan for Muslim tours and as Egypt, Israel, and Jordan for Christian packages. Usually, there is a guiding trio consisting of an Indonesian tour leader, who is responsible for organizational matters, an Indonesian cleric (a priest, minister, imam, or *ustadz*), and a local tour guide, who holds an official tour guide licence from the Israeli Ministry of Tourism. Evangelical groups often demand to be guided by a Jewish Israeli guide; other Christian groups are guided by Jewish Israelis or by Palestinians with Israeli citizenship or East Jerusalem residency. If the local guide is Jewish Israeli, he or she will not join the group in West Bank cities like Hebron, Bethlehem, and Jericho, as Israeli law forbids Israelis to enter the West Bank territory of Area A. Here, a local guide from the West Bank takes over.¹¹ For Muslim groups, the local guides are Muslim Palestinians from East Jerusalem.

Women usually form the majority in travel groups—especially in Muslim groups. Most participants are in their fifties or older and retired, which allows them to travel. This means that they are not the young segment of society that is often discussed with regard to religious consumerism. They mostly come from Indonesia's urban areas, even though for some groups—like groups from Papua—some participants stress that they are 'simple villagers'.

The differing travel narratives and itineraries, preferences concerning the ethnicity/religion of the local guide, and the way in which country names are displayed not only illustrate the differences between Muslim and Christian groups, but also the frictions between different Christian denominations and the different branches of Islam. When taking a closer look at the conflictive and dividing narratives in Indonesian pilgrimages to Jerusalem, it becomes obvious that the Muslim–Christian divide is intertwined with intra-Christian and intra-Muslim tensions.

2.4 *The Idea of Taking Sides: Narratives of Separation*

Despite the similarities of all Muslim and Christian package tours, the travels appear to strengthen separation. The dispersion of enemy images beyond bor-

11 The West Bank is divided into the areas A, B and C. Area C, which forms the largest part of Occupied Palestinian Territory, is under Israeli military control. In the small zone of Area B, there is shared security control between the Israeli military and the Palestinian Authority; in Area A, which consists of the big cities in the West Bank, the Palestinian Authority is fully in charge.

ders, in fact their globalization, became strikingly obvious to me when I met Muslim and Christian travel agents in Jakarta in July 2018. Two videos that were sent to me by Jakarta-based travel agents are vivid examples of travel agents' and tour leaders' engagement with globalized enemy images.

3 Broadcasting Enemy Images

The first video was sent to me by Lutfi, a young, male tour leader from Jakarta. In two meetings I learned about Lutfi's perspectives on Muslim tourism, Islam, and politics in Indonesia. He deemed it highly important to create safe spaces for Muslims, as he saw an increase in harmful environments for Muslims—environments in which they would face confrontation with *haram*/forbidden influences, such as alcohol consumption or inappropriate dress, or where they were underprivileged because of their religious needs. He argued: 'We as Muslim people are marginalized in our own country,'¹² and further mentioned that he considered democratization and capitalism as Western, Christian, and Jewish tools to rule the world. To support his argument he later sent me a video about the 'characteristics of the Jewish people' through a YouTube link.¹³ The video is broadcast on the Indonesian Islamic YouTube channel Al-Hujjah, and shows the Islamic teacher Ustadz Adi Hidayat, an Indonesian Salafist YouTube and TV preacher who studied in Cairo and Libya. In the video he interprets the *sūrah* al-Baqarah from the Qur'an and *hadith* transmissions that mention Jewish people. The simplistic perspectives of contemporary YouTube preachers contrast with the views of Indonesian Muslim intellectuals, who have more balanced views on Jews and Judaism (see Ali 2010).

With reference to this video, Lutfi explained to me that in his opinion, and according to what he claimed to be the right interpretation of the Qur'an, Jewish people are highly intelligent but also hypocritical people, whose only intention is to rule the world and do harm to Islam, in particular to the Palestinian people. Therefore, he saw a need to defend Islam. As an active member of Front Pembela Islam he had joined Aksi Bela Islam demonstrations in Jakarta and the #GantiPresident movement, which demanded a change of president. He considered his activity for *halal* tourism to be part of the endeavour to create safe spaces for Muslims and to spread Islam.

12 Original in Indonesian: 'Kami sebagai orang Muslim dipinggirkan di negeri sendiri.' Personal communication with a male Muslim tour leader, Jakarta, 19-7-2018.

13 The original title of the video is 'Watak orang Yahudi' (The character of Jewish people). Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Q2dJnGRjgc> (last accessed 22-10-2018).

The second video was sent to me by a Christian travel agent. Like Lutfi, his motivation to accommodate religious tourism was rooted in his own spirituality and—as he described it himself—his wish to strengthen Christianity around the world, especially in the wake of what he considered to be growing Islamization. The video file he sent to me was in American English with Indonesian subtitles, without any indication of who had been the producer or distributor. It talked about demographics in Europe, claiming that immigration from Muslim countries would cause an ‘Islamization of Europe’. The figures can be easily debunked as completely wrong, like the claim that Belgium has a Muslim population of 25% or that the Muslim population of Germany will exceed the number of ‘original Germans’, quoting the terminology used in the video, within the next 15 years. Enquiring about Germany, the travel agent asked me if I had heard of Angela Merkel’s conversion to Islam. He was concerned about developments in Europe and, of course, in Indonesia. He argued that the turning point from a pluralist Indonesia to an Islamic Indonesia became clear to him when Ahok, the Chinese and Christian governor of Jakarta, was sentenced to two years in prison because of allegations of blasphemy. Therefore, it was highly important to him to strengthen people in their faith. Pilgrimages to the Holy Land would contribute to this.

These two contrasting videos and my interlocutors’ explanations of them represent two extremes in Indonesians’ understandings of Others beyond Indonesia. These narratives can be seen as narratives of separation in that they use the idea of a separation between harmful Others and the threatened Selves. In religious tourism, these narratives of separation, which are inspired by globalized conspiracy theories and hoax news, are widespread. Virtually every Indonesian travel agent with whom I talked argued that their business activities are grounded in missionary intentions and the wish to accommodate the needs of believers in a harmful environment.¹⁴ Both Muslims and Christians in Indonesia feel that they suffer as an underprivileged minority: as a Christian minority in a predominantly Muslim Indonesia, or as a Muslim minority in a world that is seen as dominated by Western hegemony. That these ‘enemy images’ are particularly prevalent in an atmosphere of fear is typical (Schlee 2006). Brandon Hamber shows this for Northern Ireland, where the appropriation of Israeli and Palestinian flags expresses people’s fear (Hamber 2006:129). Thus, the ideas of Others are related to fear and to claims of being on the ‘right side’ of the imagined division. This means that as well as

14 Anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish conspiracy theories have spread in Indonesia and Malaysia from the 1980s, with the consumption of the Tsarist forgery *The protocols of the elders of Zion* (Reid 2010:373).

negative images of Others, there are also positive and romanticizing images, which actually constitute part of the Self.

Entertainment and the search for meaning and restored faith are present in pilgrimages and tourist journeys alike (Badone and Roseman 2004:5). Pilgrims/tourists depart on their journeys with imaginations and expectations. Salazar (2010) shows that tourists look for the 'strange', the 'exotic', and the 'authentic', which tour guides ultimately provide through essentialist narratives and performances. In Bauman's (1996:29–30) words, the encounter with the 'strange' comes 'in a package deal with safety'. Images of Jewish, Israeli, Palestinian, and Muslim Others apparently meet the expectations of Indonesian pilgrims who move in the 'environmental bubble' (Cohen 1972) of the tourist group. Narratives of separation help to explain the world. Indonesian Muslims and Christians might experience fear and uncertainty as a result of the above-mentioned discourses of marginalization, socio-economic insecurity and because of the nature of travelling itself as a liminal experience. Thus, these images of Others are very much related to the position of the Self within the pilgrims' home context in that they relate to globalized narratives of separation.

3.1 *Others in Faith, Ethnicity, and Class*

The Indonesian engagement with these globalized narratives of separation and Indonesian tourists' ideas of taking sides, mark intra-Indonesian boundary makings along features of faith, ethnicity and class. As a general tendency, Muslim groups travel with an image of Palestinians as victims and as brothers and sisters in faith. Feelings of solidarity with Palestinians stand in contrast to the image of Israel as a constant aggressor and powerful oppressor, along with conspiracy theories about Zionists ruling the world. Their views tend to be bipolar, assuming that all Israelis are Jews and that all Palestinians are Muslims. Christians likewise hold this bipolar view of Israelis and Palestinians, believing that Jews are generally friendly towards Christianity, while Muslim/Palestinian people are perceived as being anti-Jewish and anti-Christian. Among Christian and Muslim Indonesians there is a widespread perception that being Arab is equivalent to being Muslim (Lücking 2016). This perception ties in with Indonesian Christians' liking for Jewish and Israeli symbols and the Hebrew language—especially among evangelical and Pentecostal groups. The names of several travel agencies are inspired by a pro-Jewish narrative, like Menorah Tours & Travel, Sharon Wisata, or King David Tours. The Star of David is popular in logos and advertisements, and slogans like 'I stand with Israel' are printed on tour T-shirts.

Among Muslim groups there is hardly any mention of Israel at all. In advertisements and travel booklets, Muslim travel agencies refer to the country by

substituting it with 'Jerusalem'. As an example, on the website of Cheria Holiday, a travel agency for *halal* tourism, the itinerary from Egypt to Israel is described as follows: 'On this day, participants make their way towards the border crossing at Taba to go through the immigration process to enter Jerusalem.'¹⁵

The description speaks of 'entering Jerusalem', even though the Taba–Eilat border crossing is 360km away from Jerusalem. Like this itinerary description, the website also does not mention Israel in a section on visa regulations, describing the visa as a 'visa to enter Jerusalem'.

Through contrasting narratives, travel agents, guides, and pilgrims not only take sides with either Israel or Palestine in a Christian–Muslim divide, but also mark boundaries within their own religious community. These intra-religious boundary-makings are rooted in historical evolvments and contemporary competition between different religious streams and political actors. Ethnicity, religious affiliation, and class are intertwined here.

Historically, Muslim–Christian tensions are rooted in the Dutch colonial policies of privileging certain groups, and in the so called 'transmigration programmes' of the Indonesian government, which caused bloody conflicts in Kalimantan, Ambon, Sulawesi, and Papua. Moreover, throughout Indonesian history there has been discrimination against the Chinese Indonesian minority (Tionghoa), whose role in Southeast Asia is sometimes compared to the role of Jews in Europe (Reid 2010). Historian Blake Smith argues that the Dutch introduced comparisons between the Jews in Europe and the Chinese in Southeast Asia, scapegoating them for their role in trade and commerce and spreading hostility against them.¹⁶ Most severe were the anti-Chinese riots in 1965, which led to the genocide of an estimated one million Chinese Indonesians and alleged communists in 1965/66, and also those in 1998.

Under the authoritarian regime of Soeharto, Indonesia was promoted as an example of a pluralist, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious society with great tolerance and inter-religious harmony. However, the state philosophy of *Bhinneka tunggal ika* (Old Javanese language, meaning 'Unity in diversity') and the identification of its people as Indonesian nationals across religious and ethnic boundaries has been and continues to be challenged. While it is undoubtedly

15 'Pada hari ini peserta akan melakukan perjalanan menuju perbatasan Taba untuk proses imigrasi menuju kota Jerusalem.' Cheria Holiday, 'Ziarah Masjid Al Aqsa'. <http://www.cheria-travel.com/2017/11/tour-ziarah-masjidil-aqso.html> (accessed 30-10-2018).

16 Blake Smith, 'Indonesians hate the Chinese because they are Jewish', *Tablet*, 17-4-2018. <https://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-arts-and-culture/257183/indonesians-hate-the-chinese-because-they-are-jewish> (accessed 30-10-2018).

an idea of a multi-ethnic society that many Indonesians believe in, it is also an instrument of political propaganda, and certain religious groups (both Muslim and Christian) disapprove of granting all religions and ethnicities the same status.

Since the transition from autocracy to democracy, many Indonesians are more outspoken about religious affiliation. An example of this is contextual theology in Indonesian Christianity. As in Islamic traditions, Christians in Indonesia incorporated pre-Christian culture and customs into their religious traditions. This is known as ‘indigenous Christianity’ and ‘contextual theology’ (Schröter 2010:11)—for instance, the combination of Lutheran Christianity and animism on Nias Island (Hummel and Telaumbanua 2007). However, this type of ‘indigenous Christianity’ or ‘traditional Christianity’ of the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist churches is today challenged by a proliferation of numerous new churches of evangelist, Pentecostal, and charismatic streams. As in Islam, the divide follows class affiliation and rural/urban differences, and is rooted in the history of the spread of the religion in Indonesia.¹⁷ A minister from one of these churches recently posted on Facebook: ‘In former times Nias people greeted each other with the greeting “Yaahowu”. Nowadays, it is replaced by “Shalom”. Let’s return to that meaningful greeting!’¹⁸ The Hebrew greeting ‘Shalom’ has become a trademark of charismatic churches, which are competing with the traditional churches. Strikingly, this is almost equivalent to the controversies about Islam and Arabness, which are epitomized in a meme that is widely shared on Facebook. The meme shows a picture of Abdurahman Wahid, known as Gus Dur, who was the president of Indonesia from 1999 to 2001, while the text states that ‘being Muslim doesn’t mean becoming Arabic’, thus criticizing the use of Arabic, such as the personal pronouns *ana* and *antum*.

‘Arabness’ and ‘Jewishness’ have become markers of identity in the intra-religious frictions. These identity markers can be essentializing. Competitors of traditional Muslim and Christian institutions adopt some Jewish or Arabic elements, like language, clothing or religious customs, with the claim that these cultural features are more authentic than other ones. Thus, the idea of taking sides in the Israel–Palestine conflict does not only mark inter-religious, but also

17 While Islam has spread in the coastal areas of the archipelago and on the island of Java from the fourteenth century onwards, Christian missionary activities of the seventeenth century focused on indigenous people in remote areas on the outer islands and in the highlands, or what was called the ‘hinterland’ (Schröter 2010:10).

18 Original in *bahasa Indonesia*: ‘Zaman dulu orang Nias saling memberi salam: Yaahowu! Zaman kini diganti Syalom. Balik yuk ke salam yang bermakna itu.’

intra-religious divides. Those who disapprove of the new popular religious symbolism promote concepts like *Islam Nusantara*, the Islam of the archipelago, which means distinctive Indonesian Islamic traditions with ethnic features. Representatives of Indonesia's largest Muslim organization, Nahdlatul Ulama (Renaissance of the Ulama, NU), define *Islam Nusantara* as the historically grown Islam of the Indonesian archipelago that does not abolish diverse local cultures but, rather, embraces them and brings them into line with Islam (Lücking 2016). In the recent presidential election, the re-elected president Joko Widodo, prominently known as Jokowi, was styled as the 'father' or 'protector' of *Islam Nusantara*, while his opponent Prabowo was supported by those of a more conservative outlook.

Greg Fealy (2019) analyses how the complex contestation over identity and ideology affected the elections. Even though both presidential candidates come from secular political backgrounds, they were supported by competing coalitions of Muslim groups. Muslim groups and political parties like the Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (National Awakening Party, PKB) and the Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (United Development Party, PPP), which are affiliated with NU, supported Jokowi. Furthermore, NU's president, Ma'ruf Amin, was picked as Jokowi's running mate for the position of vice president, which was widely seen as a strategy to appease Muslim voters. In fact, Ma'ruf Amin had signed the fatwa against Ahok about blasphemy accusations, which shows that the affiliations with, and demarcations from, Others can be fragile and contradictory. Jokowi's competitor, Prabowo, was backed by 'new, trendy forms of Islamic pietism, such as the hijrah movement, a revivalist phenomenon which has drawn in tens of thousands from the young urban middle-classes' and by 'Islamists of long standing, such as the vigilante grassroots movement, the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), or the puritanical Salafist groups' (Fealy 2019). These groups are organized in the political parties Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (Prosperous Justice Party, PKS) and Partai Amanat Nasional (National Mandate Party, PAN), the latter one being aligned to Muhammadiyah, Indonesia's second-largest Muslim organization and a competitor of NU.

Greg Fealy shows that various groups in this Islamic cleavage feel marginalized. As in Indonesian election campaigns, the tourist narratives relate to these feelings of marginalization and create ideas of clearly identifiable 'sides', which gloss over the layers of conflict.

In this situation, some see 'Arabness' as a marker of fanaticism, while others see it as a sign of originality (Eliyanah and Lücking 2017; Lücking 2016). Among Al-Aqsa pilgrims, the adoption of an Arab style symbolizes the completion of the prestigious journey. This is very similar to the 'flirtation' with Arabic language, clothing, and paraphernalia among Mecca returnees (Lücking 2014,

2016). Embracing the style of the Other contrasts with the propagation of ethnic peculiarities by *Islam Nusantara*.

According to Hadiz, these cultural and religious identity markers are instrumentalized by oligarchs in conflicts over power and resources (Hadiz 2017:262). They feature in election campaigns and economic and cultural activities. The ‘success’ or ‘failure’ of different groups and ideologies depends on their ability to please their clients. They compete for their adherents, who move between different religious movements as they ‘shop’ from the shiny array of competing offers. Tourism is a lucrative field for spiritual entrepreneurs (cf. Schlehe 2015) and political actors. As an example, local governments sponsor participation in pilgrimages and the religious journeys of politicians and celebrity pilgrimages are documented on tv and social media.

Obviously, the Muslim–Christian tensions in Indonesia are embedded within internal frictions among Muslim and Christian groups in Indonesia. Generational conflicts, class affiliation, and competition over resources and political influence fuel the identity politics. Furthermore, globalized narratives of separation (as mentioned above) entered the Indonesian political controversies. At the beginning of this article, I posed the question of whether the flying of the Palestinian or Israeli flags in places like Northern Ireland, South Africa, Cuba, or Indonesia really relates to the situation in the Middle East, or whether it says more about internal conflicts. Through their representative character, pilgrimage journeys become a platform through which to engage with identity politics; these journeys are inspired by global narratives of separation but rooted within Indonesian society. The Israel–Palestine conflict serves as a surrogate conflict and Indonesian ideas of taking sides relate to the competing sides of Islam and Christianity within Indonesia.

3.2 *A Surrogate Conflict*

When I asked a well-known evangelical minister, who is also a tour guide, about the widespread use of Jewish and Israeli symbols among Christian Holy Land tour operators, he said: ‘You know why many of us Indonesian Christians support Israel and are a bit anti-Palestine? Because every time a Palestinian is shot, a church in Indonesia will burn.’¹⁹ Only a few weeks later, I was reminded of his words—except that on this occasion the churches burned before the Palestinians were shot.

On 13 May 2018, three churches in Surabaya were attacked: the Gereja Katolik Santa Maria Tak Bercela (Catholic Church Saint Mary Immaculate, STMB),

19 Personal communication with a male, Christian tour guide, Jerusalem, 26-4-2018.

the Gereja Kristen Indonesia Diponegoro (Diponegoro Indonesian Christian Church), and the Gereja Pentakosta Surabaya (Surabaya Pentecostal Church). Twenty-five people were killed, including thirteen suicide bombers. The perpetrators apparently came from the same family and were aligned with Islamic State (IS). One of them was the leader of the East Java branch of Jamaah Ansharud Daulah (Community for the Formation of a State, JAD), a pro-Islamic State group.

Only one day later, on 14 May, Benjamin Netanyahu and members of the US leadership celebrated the relocation of the US embassy to Jerusalem, while at the fence that separates Gaza from Israel more than 50 Palestinians were shot dead and more than 2,500 were wounded, fired upon because they approached the fence. Again I received messages from research participants: from Christians who claimed that Muslim fanatics burned churches in Indonesia because they were angry at Donald Trump, and from Muslims who sent me videos of a convoy adorned with Israeli flags in Papua, claiming that people in Papua celebrated the deaths of Palestinians. It turned out that the video from Papua was several years old; it was distributed after the Gaza killings, apparently to denounce Papuans' support for Israel in the light of the recent atrocities. These events that happened in two different parts of the world are connected through globalized 'narratives of separation,' even though lastly the local engagement with world politics reflects internal conflicts.

The way Indonesians relate to politics in the Middle East shows how the idea of taking sides serves as a symbol within intra-Indonesian frictions. This is similar to the engagement with the Israel–Palestine conflict in other parts of the world. In Northern Ireland, Catholic Republicans expressed solidarity with Palestinians through mural graffiti and by flying the Palestinian flag, while pro-UK Unionists adopted the Israeli flag (Hamber 2006; Hill and White 2008; Rolston 2004). Juxtaposing the Northern Irish and the Indonesian cases suggests that globalized symbols can have different local meanings. In Northern Ireland, the Palestinian flag symbolizes the international solidarity of liberation movements along with references to Cuba, South Africa, and the Basque Country (Rolston 2004:467). In Indonesia, the Palestinian flag carries connotations of international Muslim solidarity and is not adopted by Indonesian Christians, who fly the Israeli flag.

However, the adoption of the Israeli flag does not only happen in reaction to, or to provoke, Palestine supporters in their own community; it also indicates an engagement with a globalized intertwinement of certain fears. Hill and White (2008:40) show for Northern Ireland that the proliferation of the Israeli flag among loyalists happened in the wake of the 11 September attacks, when 'Israel was perceived as occupying a frontline position in the War on Terror' and in the

perceived ‘clash between Western modernity and Islam.’ They suggest that the use of the Israeli flag among Northern Irish loyalists is indicative of their desire ‘to position themselves on the “right side” in the War on Terror’ (Hill and White 2008:40). The videos that my research participants showed to me indicate that Indonesians engage with these globalized fears of Islamic terrorism and concerns about the marginalization of Islam and the threat from Islamophobia in the West. These fears are exploited in politics and business.

The simplifications of friend and foe are a selling point in religious tourism. This type of tourism underlies the harsh competition between an increasing number of travel agencies and between the respective religious institutions behind these agencies. Giving customers the feeling of being on the right side is a well-working marketing strategy. That being on the ‘right’ side refers also to subgroups and sects becomes obvious through another example of Indonesians’ engagement with Israel and Palestine. In June 2018, travel agencies were shocked by the termination of visa arrangements between Israel and Indonesia, and the controversy surrounding an Indonesian cleric’s participation in a Jewish congress.

The famous Indonesian intellectual Yahya Cholil Staquf from NU attended the annual meeting of the American Jewish Congress (AJC) in Jerusalem.²⁰ In Indonesian and Palestinian media coverage, and even more so on social media, Staquf was harshly criticized. The Palestinian authorities criticized him and his delegation for entering Jerusalem at the invitation of a Zionist organization. After the AJC, Staquf spoke at the Hebrew University, where he clarified: ‘I am here for the Palestinians. I would not be here if not because of my concern about the Palestinians.’²¹ In a personal conversation, he and two members from the NU youth organization ANSOR, who accompanied him, further clarified that they deem it important to speak with all sides in order to play a bridging role in the conflict.²² They referred to the legacy of Abdurrahman Wahid/Gus Dur, who had established friendly relationships with Israel.²³

However, on the social media platforms Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram even some NU and Gus Dur adherents condemned Staquf’s visit to Jerusalem. At the same time, Front Pembela Islam posted pictures of Ramadan *iftar* events

20 Staquf is a leading member of Nahdlatul Ulama. Before his visit to Jerusalem, he was on the advisory board of Indonesian president Joko Widodo.

21 Yahya Cholil Staquf at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 13-6-2018.

22 Personal communication, 13-6-2018.

23 In his talk at the Hebrew University, and in later media statements, Staquf elaborated on the concept of *rahmat* in Islam (and its equivalent, *rahmanut*, in Judaism). He said that he doesn’t want to contribute to the perpetuation of the conflict, but to helping to overcome it.

in Gaza and at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which they had financed. Obviously, these events produced strong images. The pictures of FPI's support for Palestinians were contrasted with photos of Staquf shaking hands with Benjamin Netanyahu.

Furthermore, these images played into a crisis concerning visa arrangements between Indonesia and Israel, in which both countries announced a ban on tourist visas.²⁴ In a critique of Staquf, Indonesia's council of Muslim scholars, the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (Council of Indonesian Ulama, MUI), considered formulating a fatwa against visits to Israel. The incident is reminiscent of a situation in Egypt in 2012, when Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, one of the world's leading Muslim preachers, issued a fatwa against foreign Muslims visiting Jerusalem, as a critique of Egypt's Grand Mufti Sheikh Gomaa's visit to Al-Aqsa (Bartal 2015). In light of these events, travel agents who offered Al-Aqsa tour packages received more and more questions from customers who expressed doubts about the effect of their trips to Israel. As a solution, some agents advised their customers to balance the benefits that Israel gains from tourism by giving alms and by undertaking 'solidarity shopping' to support Palestine.

Considering these political quarrels, Indonesians' images of Israeli and Palestinian Others reveal yet another layer in the competitive narratives of separation. Obviously, Yahya Staquf's visit to Jerusalem and the visa crisis put Indonesian travel agents and guides under pressure to take sides. In order to reassure customers and differentiate themselves from competitors, Muslim travel agencies strongly stressed their loyalty to Palestine and their rejection of Israel. Polarized stereotypical images of Israelis and Palestinians enforce boundaries between Muslims and Christians. However, their emergence is also inspired by intra-Muslim and intra-Christian competition. When evangelicals say 'I stand with Israel', they appear to be the 'better Christians', emphasizing being on the 'right side'. Their competitors from traditional Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist churches can hardly oppose this. Similarly, no Muslim would criticize solidarity with Palestine. Regarding the competitive element in pilgrimages, Feldman (2014:107) concludes:

24 After the relocation of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and the killings of Palestinians who protested at the border fence in Gaza on 14 May 2018, the Indonesian government announced that it wouldn't issue any tourist visas to Israeli citizens, as had been planned earlier. In return, the Israeli government announced that starting on 9 June no more visas would be given to Indonesians. After a few days of uncertainty, this decision was postponed until 27 June, and eventually the ban was lifted altogether (Lücking 2018).

Should one lapse into comfort, into taken-for-grantedness at such a place, some other will be there to remind one that claims and stories must be voiced (yet again), flags unfurled and rituals displayed to reassert a sense of belonging to what cannot be fully possessed.

Thus, when public actors and travel agents promote the idea of taking sides in the conflict, this also happens due to the fear of losing one's legitimacy.

4 Journeys of Conversion

Sometimes, the sense of being on the 'right side' exceeds the practice of Othering and blurs the boundaries between Self and Other. 'Flirtation with the Other' is especially prevalent in settings of intra-religious conversion, when a Muslim moves from traditionalist Islam to a modern piety or when Christians believe in the idea of 'being born again' after a spiritual experience in Pentecostalism. Intra-Christian converts love to purchase Jewish paraphernalia, like a *kipah*, *talid*, or *shofar*; take pictures with the Israeli flag and selfies with the soldiers; or put on a Beitar Yerushalayim jersey, regardless of the ideological credentials of Beitar Yerushalayim, which has now been renamed Beitar Trump Yerushalayim.

That the adoption of Jewishness goes beyond a symbolic value became clear to me when one Saturday morning a Jerusalemite tour guide called me and claimed that he had a Jewish group from Indonesia. I met the group on the Shavuot weekend in 2018 in a synagogue of reformed Judaism in Jerusalem. They had come to Israel during Shavuot to experience the holiday in a Jewish environment, visiting Rachel's tomb near Bethlehem, the cave of the patriarchs in Hebron (*Me'arat ha-Makhpela*), King David's tomb, and the Western Wall—but not a single church. They were praying in Hebrew over dinner in prayers that they had learned from the Internet. In July 2018, I met them again, visiting their very own Shabbat service in Jakarta.

In the proliferation of various charismatic, evangelical, and Pentecostal streams of Christianity in Indonesia, a movement that calls itself 'messianic' emerged in the early 2000s. Apparently, the movement has its roots in a discussion about the 'sacred name' of God. In Indonesian Christian tradition, among other terms like *tuhan* (lord) or *yang maha esa* (the almighty), one of the commonly used words for God comes from Arabic: Allah. Thus, Indonesian Bible translations and common prayers and songs use the term 'Allah' too. A controversy arose claiming that 'Allah' is the name of the Muslim God and that Christians should not use it. This controversy was probably also pro-

voked by the Malaysian government banning the term 'Allah' from Malaysian Bible translations in 2014—here because of a demand from the Muslim side.

While many people opposed this, saying that Arabic is just a language and that 'Allah' is common in Christian as well as Muslim traditions, others looked for alternatives, which they found in Hebrew and Jewish approaches to the sacred name. On several Internet platforms²⁵ adherents of the Sacred Name Movement promoted the use of the terms 'Adonai' or 'Elohim'; using the abbreviation YHWE; and speaking of Jesus, whom they see as the messiah, as Yeshua. They keep the Shabbat, eat kosher, and some of them abandon what they see as pagan rituals—like Christmas celebrations. There are obvious similarities with the Hebrew Roots Movement and the Sacred Name Movement of Adventist traditions. However, it appears that not all of Indonesia's messianic or Sacred Name Movements are Adventists. Some of them appear to be interested in a serious conversion to Judaism. A Sulawesi-based sect, calling themselves 'Messianik' (Messianics, referring to messianic Judaism), traces family trees back to Jewish ancestors in Europe.²⁶ The Indonesian scientist Leonard Chrysostomos Epafros (2017) argues that the Sacred Name Movement in Indonesia is becoming more and more polemical towards other Indonesian Christians and more offensive towards the Muslim majority in society. He sees the movement as a new form of communicating Muslim–Christian hostility and intra-Christian competition.

The group that I had met is not the only Indonesian 'messianic' group visiting Jerusalem. Other tour guides and travel agents report on other so called messianic groups from Indonesia. Apart from 'Jewish sacred places', some of them visit the Friends of Zion Museum and the Temple Institute, where they donate money to support the preparation for the (second) coming of the messiahs. Donations of gold from Papua are embedded in the narrative of 'building a 'golden bridge' from Papua to the Holy Land' (Myrntinen 2015:135), which they see as related to the building of the third temple.

In many regards, Indonesian pilgrimages to Jerusalem manifest boundaries in the idea of taking sides. The blurring of some boundaries—such as the boundaries between Judaism and Christianity—enforces other boundaries—in the example at hand, between Islam and Christianity and within Christianity. The example of conversion shows that Othering is not only an act of

25 In order to protect the security of research participants, the names and addresses of these websites cannot be given here.

26 Theo Kamsma (2010) analyses this case through the family history of the Dutch Jewish entrepreneur Abraham Fontein and his descendants.

re-emphasizing one's identity but that it can also result of the questioning of one's identity and an actual change of religious convictions and practices.

Israeli tour guides shared their irritation about the Zionism of Indonesian people as they found it difficult to accommodate their customers' demands regarding encounters with Judaism. The Orthodox authorities of Israel would not recognize these groups as Jewish and sometimes the visitors' ideas of Judaism were very different from what they encountered in Israel. Palestinian tour guides lamented that Indonesian Christians were "too Jewish" and had no interest, in fact no awareness, of Arab Christianity. However, the journey sometimes inspired reflection about this.

In contrast to the narratives of separation and conversion, some encounters on the way challenged this boundary-making. In the subsequent outlook, I suggest that this division between discourse and practice complicates the ideas of taking sides and the narratives of separation.

5 Outlook: Unexpected Encounters

Indonesian pilgrimages to Jerusalem happen in the context of the general politicization and marketization of religious identities in Indonesia. While the situation on the ground is highly complex—both in Indonesia and the Middle East—the actors in religious tourism draw on rather stereotypical images of the Self and the Other in their narratives of separation. And yet, when Indonesians travel with ideas of taking sides, this ironically reveals the multipolarity within the images of the Self and the Other. The appropriation of Israeli and Palestinian symbols can serve to communicate local boundaries between the Self and Others 'at home', and sometimes seems to be detached from Israeli and Palestinian realities. Intra- and inter-religious rivalries in Indonesia appear to me to be more pressing than the actual engagement with Middle Eastern reality. In fact, knowledge of the Middle Eastern context is minimal.

The examples in this article also show that the idea of taking sides can emerge from the pressure of de-legitimizing accusations from local opponents. The fear of being defamed by intra-religious competitors fuses with globalized feelings of fear and marginalization. This shows that Indonesian identity politics engage with globalized narratives of separation. These demarcations from and identifications with Others show the ambiguities in the processes of Othering. For Indonesian pilgrims, identifying with Others in the Middle East marks boundaries within Indonesian society and affiliations beyond Indonesia. For some Muslim Indonesians the Jewish Other in the Middle East represents Western imperialism and anti-Islamic agitation, while the Palestinian Other is part

of the Self—of the Muslim community. For some Christian Indonesians the Palestinian Others represent the threat of Islamic terrorism, while Jewish Others are seen as an authentic part of the Christian religion. Thus, the flying of Israeli and Palestinian flags by Indonesian pilgrims does ultimately say more about the Indonesian context than about their actual encounters with Israel and Palestine, which are very limited in guided tourism.

Coming back to Inayah's experiences, this becomes obvious. Inayah, who had been so very outspoken about her solidarity with Palestinian people, naming it as her major motivation to organize pilgrimages to Jerusalem, confessed to me that in fact she was terribly curious to see 'the Jewish Jerusalem'. She had accompanied many groups on visits to Al-Aqsa but she had never been to West Jerusalem. 'So let's go tonight', I suggested to her. 'But is it possible? Is there no barrier between East and West Jerusalem? Can we just go?', she asked. 'Well, it's only a three-minute tram ride', I replied, to her great surprise.²⁷

Like Inayah, many travel agents are curious. They explained to me that they had to stick to conventional itineraries because of the demands of their customers, who would compare package deals and basically wanted to visit exactly the same places as other groups. Narratives of separation and essentialist images of Israeli and Palestinian Others, or Muslim and Jewish Others are part of the design of Holy Land/Al-Aqsa pilgrimages. The theming in narratives of separation creates the impression of bipolar oppositional blocs in which Arab/Palestinian appears to be synonymous with Islam, and Israel with Jewishness and Zionism. Within the 'environmental bubble' (Cohen 1972) of tourist pilgrimages, travellers find what they are looking for (cf. Salazar 2010). Nevertheless, this does not mean that the images of Others are fixed. On the contrary, they are subject to processual adaptations and sometimes carry contradictory meanings. The political and economic exploitation of the narratives of separation enforces the idea of taking sides. Despite the fact that there are more than two sides within these affiliations and demarcations.

Inayah took the opportunity to blur the imaginary boundaries by physically crossing from East to West Jerusalem. Together with the imam who guided her group spiritually and another group member, we took the three-minute tram ride to 'the other side'. On the evening of 23 June 2018, we walked from their hotel in East Jerusalem to Damascus Gate, where people sat in front of coffee houses, smoking shisha and watching the football World Cup match between Germany and Sweden. We got on the tram at half time. After just two stops

27 Personal communication with a female, Muslim travel agent, Jerusalem, 23-6-2018.

we got off at 'Jaffa centre', which is the central shopping street in West Jerusalem. As usual on Saturday evenings, after the end of Shabbat, the streets were filled with crowds of young people who had gone out for a drink and to meet friends, watch the World Cup, listen to street musicians' music and go shopping. Inayah and her companions were astonished by the lively atmosphere. When we stopped at a bar to watch the second half of the match, Inayah expressed her surprise that people in West and East Jerusalem were doing basically the same thing (watching the World Cup), and what struck her even more was that she was not the only woman with a headscarf. Her comment did not refer to Jewish Orthodox women wearing headscarves, but to a group of young, Palestinian women. Before we had left the hotel, she had asked me if it was safe to go to the West with her headscarf on.

Inayah had moved out of her comfort zone and out of her imagined, clearly identifiable blocs in Israel and Palestine. Her curiosity and our meeting inspired her boundary-crossing. However, the blurring of boundaries might not last long when pilgrims move back from liminality to structure. When we returned to East Jerusalem, I interviewed Inayah and her companions about their impressions. Apparently one of them felt that they had responded in a too-balanced way, later sending me a WhatsApp message in which he clarified:

The result from our interview yesterday night [...] FREEDOM AL AQSO FROM JEWS ISRAEL! For sure Muslim visits to Al-Aqsa will increase [...] Al-Aqsa will be crowded again as in former times.²⁸

The ambivalence between discourse and encounter is obvious here. The reaction of peers to one's position determines the representations of Others in the Middle East. Even though attitudes towards Israel and Palestine are multifarious in Indonesia, the politicized and marketized representations are often essentialist.

What Inayah had experienced in West Jerusalem is similar to Christians' experiences in Palestinian cities. Christian groups are surprised when they see a Bible written in Arabic on the altar of the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem, or when they hear Arabic expressions such as *Alhamdulillah* (thank God) from Palestinian Christian tour guides. Arab Christianity does not fit with their picture of Israel and Palestine.

28 Original in Indonesian/English: 'the result dari wawancara semalam [...] FREEDOM AL AQSO FROM JEWS ISRAEL, pasti pengunjung muslim akan banyak ke Al Aqso [...] Al Aqso akan ramai seperti dahulu lagi.' (WhatsApp message, male Al-Aqsa pilgrim, 24-6-2018, emphasis in original).

These situations hint at the fact that narratives of separation are not fixed and can be challenged by interpersonal encounters. In guided tourism, the ability to have actual interpersonal encounters with Others is extremely limited, but does exist. The guides, bus drivers, and shopkeepers are often the only locals whom tourists meet. Therefore, their role is significant for shaping perceptions and inspiring reflection. As an example, a Muslim Palestinian bus driver who sings along with Indonesian church songs, memorized as a driver for Indonesians for more than a decade, has been recorded on numerous Indonesian smart phones. Even though Indonesians move as a 'travelling microcosm' in an environmental bubble where narratives of separation affirm their worldviews, there are moments of surprise, curiosity, and reflection. This holds true not only for encounters with Israeli or Palestinian guides, shopkeepers, and bus drivers, but also for encounters with other Indonesians. This is especially obvious when it comes to food. Indonesian pilgrims of different religious backgrounds emphasize the boundaries through contrasting narratives, but they all eat the same food. When I presented some research results at an Indonesian university, a Jerusalem returnee in the audience argued 'Politics divides us but Indomie unites us',²⁹ making reference to Indomie, Indonesian instant noodles, which are taken on the journey by pilgrims as an 'emergency food' and which she—a Christian—had exchanged with Muslim pilgrims whom she had met in the same hotel.

In actual encounters—even if they are limited—lies the possibility to blur boundaries, identify commonalities, and question ideas of taking sides. Fostered by personal encounters, Indonesian tour guides who visit the area frequently look behind the scenes. They maintain friendly relationships with partners in Egypt, Israel, Palestine, and Jordan—regardless of their religious background. Similarly, Israelis, Palestinians, Jews, Muslims, and Christians in the Middle East pragmatically cooperate in tourism, despite competition and conflict. In fact, money often appears to be much more relevant than religious or ethnic affiliation. And maybe this is at the core of the contradiction: the simplistic images and narratives of separation 'sell better' than more complex ones. Thus, stereotypical images of Others and one's own religious affiliation are not only politicized in contemporary Indonesia, but also commercialized. The growing competition between travel agencies and political actors fuels conflicting claims of authenticity, legitimacy, and ideas of being on the 'right side'. This idea of taking sides relates to finding part of the Other in the Self—

29 Original in Indonesian: 'Politik memisahkan kita tetapi Indomie menyatuhkan kita' (female Jerusalem returnee, Yogyakarta, 17 July 2018).

as in the case of the Christian conversion to Judaism or the Papuan feelings of being connected to the Holy Land. Therefore, the idea of taking sides does not remain a merely symbolic act but is manifested in the changing religious and political landscapes in Indonesia and the Middle East.

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