

Collaborative Qur'anic Transmission in the *Ngaji* Tradition: The Case of Peripheral Muslim Community in Nusa Pandau, Indonesia

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Abstract:

How is the Qur'an transmitted within geographically peripheral Muslim communities? This article examines the dynamics of Qur'anic transmission within the *ngaji* tradition in Nusa Pandau, a remote Muslim community along the Melawi River in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. Drawing on qualitative field research with a socio-historical approach, the study is based on observation and in-depth interviews with Qur'anic teachers, students, and local religious actors involved in the transmission process. The findings demonstrate that Qur'anic transmission in Nusa Pandau operates collaboratively through multiple religious agents rather than through a single dominant authority. Within the *ngaji* tradition, transmission encompasses not only Qur'anic recitation but also the transmission of religious values, aesthetic practices of tilawah, and interpretive meanings embedded in communal religious activities. The study further reveals that Qur'anic transmission in this peripheral Muslim community developed through interconnected networks linking local traditions with Javanese and Sumatran Qur'anic pedagogical lineages, particularly through the circulation of the Baghdadiyah method and sanad-based learning practices. These findings suggest that geographical remoteness does not isolate Muslim communities from broader Qur'anic networks; instead, it encourages adaptive, collaborative, and non-contestative forms of religious authority and Qur'anic learning.

[Bagaimana transmisi Al-Qur'an berlangsung dalam komunitas Muslim yang berada di wilayah geografis perifer? Artikel ini mengkaji dinamika transmisi Al-



Qur'an dalam tradisi *ngaji* di Nusa Pandau, sebuah komunitas Muslim terpencil di tepian Sungai Melawi, Kalimantan Barat, Indonesia. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian lapangan kualitatif dengan pendekatan sosio-historis yang didasarkan pada observasi dan wawancara mendalam terhadap guru ngaji, murid, dan aktor-aktor keagamaan lokal yang terlibat dalam proses transmisi Al-Qur'an. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa transmisi Al-Qur'an di Nusa Pandau berlangsung secara kolaboratif melalui banyak agen keagamaan, bukan melalui satu otoritas tunggal yang dominan. Dalam tradisi *ngaji*, transmisi tidak hanya mencakup bacaan Al-Qur'an, tetapi juga transmisi nilai-nilai keagamaan, praktik estetika tilawah, dan pemaknaan ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an yang terintegrasi dalam aktivitas keagamaan komunal. Penelitian ini juga menunjukkan bahwa transmisi Al-Qur'an di komunitas Muslim perifer tersebut berkembang melalui jejaring yang saling terhubung antara tradisi lokal dengan genealogi pedagogi Al-Qur'an dari Jawa dan Sumatra, terutama melalui sirkulasi metode Baghdadiyah dan praktik pembelajaran berbasis sanad. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa keterpencilan geografis tidak mengisolasi komunitas Muslim dari jejaring Al-Qur'an yang lebih luas, tetapi justru mendorong terbentuknya model otoritas keagamaan dan pembelajaran Al-Qur'an yang adaptif, kolaboratif, dan non-kontestatif.]

Keywords:

Ngaji Tradition, Qur'anic Transmission, Peripheral Muslim Communities, Religious Authority, Baghdadiyah Method

A. Introduction

The tradition of transmitting the Qur'an in Indonesia has developed through various forms and geographical trajectories, ranging from urban centers to remote inland villages. Although many studies have examined tahfiz institutions and prominent Qur'anic figures in Indonesia, limited attention has been given to Muslim communities in peripheral areas that are relatively geographically isolated. In fact, such communities possess distinctive dynamics in the practice, preservation, and transmission of the Qur'an across generations. One area that deserves closer examination is Nusa Pandau Village, a settlement located along the banks of the Melawi River in West Kalimantan. The majority of its population is Muslim and maintains vibrant religious traditions despite limited access and geographical isolation. Against this background, this article seeks to explore how the transmission of the Qur'an takes place in Nusa Pandau, the forms of practice involved, and the dynamics of religious authority that accompany it.

In reality, the Qur'an reached Nusa Pandau, a village on the banks of the Melawi River, yet its presence has largely been overlooked within dominant academic discourse. Some scholars have indeed focused on key figures involved in the transmission process. The Institute for the Verification of Qur'anic Manuscripts (LPMQ), for example, conducted research on 41 *Tahfiz* institutions across Indonesia, including those in Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Nusa Tenggara. The study concluded that the transmission of the Qur'an in Indonesia can be traced back to several major figures, namely KH. Muhammad Sa'id of Sampang, Madura, KH. Munawwar of Gresik, KH. Muhammad Mahfuz of Pacitan, KH. Munawwir of Yogyakarta, and KH. M. Dahlan Khalil of Jombang, all of whom derived their sanad from scholars in Mecca.¹ This study by LPMQ certainly contributes to mapping the transmission of the Qur'an through these prominent figures. However, does this framework also explain the context of Qur'anic transmission in Nusa Pandau? This remains an open question.

Several studies demonstrate the existence of Qur'anic traditions in West Kalimantan, including in its remote regions.² Wendi Parwanto, for instance, highlights the existence of Qur'anic commentaries in West Kalimantan, such as *Āyāt aṣ-Ṣiyām* and *Tafsir Surat Tujuh* (1935) written by Imran. An

¹ Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an Indonesia, *Memelihara Kemurnian Al-Qur'an: Profil Lembaga Tahfiz Al-Qur'an Di Nusantara*, ed. Muhammad Shohib and M. Bunyamin Yusuf Surur (Jakarta Timur: Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Quran, 2011), 1–93; 113–367; 377–505.

² Wendi Parwanto, "Fungsionalisasi Al-Qur'an Dalam Tradisi Pekan Keempat Bulan Safar Di Kalimantan Barat," *Suhuf Jurnal Pengkajian Al-Qur'an Dan Budaya*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (2024): 1–22; Siti Faizah, Artani Hasbi, and M. Ziyadul Haq, "Al-Qur'an Dalam Upacara Tradisi Belamin (Studi Haidh Pertama Pada Keluarga Kerajaan Matan Ketapang Kalimantan Barat)," *Fassara: Jurnal Kajian Al-Qur'an, Tafsir Dan Qiraat*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2023): 27; Siti Faizah and Ainur Rosyidah, "Tradisi Pembacaan Ayat-Ayat Al-Qur'an (Kajian Living Qur'an Di TPQ-Nurussholah Kampung Marhaban Kecamatan Singkawang Selatan Kota Singkawang)," *Al-Bayan: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadist*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2022): 96–121, <https://doi.org/10.35132/albayan.v5i1.185>; Abdurrahman, Delfina Gemely, and Eka Junila Saragih, "Preservasi Moderasi Beragama: Studi Living Qur'an Masyarakat Kabupaten Ketapang," *Al-Mustafid: Jurnal of Quran and Hadith Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2024): 12–25; Wendi Parwanto, "Vernakularisasi Tafsir Al-Qur'an Di Kalimantan Barat (Studi Atas Tafsir Āyāt Aṣ-Ṣiyām Karya Muhammad Basiuni Imran)," *Suhuf*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (2022): 107–22, <https://doi.org/10.22548/shf.v15i1.711>; Wendi Parwanto, "Terjemahan Al-Qur'an Bahasa Dayak Kanayatn: Telaah Vernakularisasi Sebagai Upaya Awal Menuju Indigenisasi," *Substantia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2021): 108, <https://doi.org/10.22373/substantia.v23i2.9412>.

important point emphasized by Parwanto is that a Qur'anic commentary can never be separated from its locality, in this case, West Kalimantan.³ The use of terms such as *uwas* (remember) and *tembawang* (a hut left behind after farming activities), and references to rivers as depictions of the realities of West Kalimantan, constitute some of his major findings.⁴ Other Qur'anic traditions can also be observed in how the Qur'an is practiced and enlivened within community activities, such as its use in the Belamin traditional ceremony and in traditions observed during the fourth week of the month of Safar.⁵ The most important point emerging from these studies is that the Qur'an continuously interacts with the lives of Muslim communities wherever they may be, producing distinctive patterns and characteristics. Nevertheless, this does not diminish the fact that the Qur'an in Nusa Pandau has not yet received significant scholarly attention.

According to the 2023–2024 statistical records for Nanga Pinoh, Nusa Pandau Village has a population of 796 people, distributed across three hamlets and five neighborhood units (RTs). Among them, 673 residents are Muslim, five are Protestant Christians, and 18 are Catholics. The village covers an area of 31.69 km² and is the most distant village from the administrative center of Melawi Regency, namely Nanga Pinoh. Furthermore, the presence of a Muslim community in the village gives rise to the strong assumption that they interact with the Qur'an as a consequence of their Islamic identity. The existence of religious facilities such as Surau Miftahul Jannah and Hidayatush Shadiqin Mosque reinforces this assumption. In his research on Islam in the Tayu community, Dirdjosanjoto found that the surau, which he called langar, served as a center for religious instruction, activities, and even public gatherings. This observation is further supported by Aboe Bakar Atjeh, who argued that the presence of surau and

³ Parwanto, "Terjemahan Al-Qur'an Bahasa Dayak Kanayatn: Telaah Vernakularisasi Sebagai Upaya Awal Menuju Indigenisasi," 108.

⁴ Parwanto, "Vernakularisasi Tafsir Al-Qur'an Di Kalimantan Barat (Studi Atas Tafsir *Āyāt Aṣ-Ṣiyām* Karya Muhammad Basiuni Imran)," 107–22.

⁵ Parwanto, "Fungsionalisasi Al-Qur'an Dalam Tradisi Pekan Keempat Bulan Safar Di Kalimantan Barat," 1–22; Faizah, Artani Hasbi, and Haq, "Al-Qur'an Dalam Upacara Tradisi Belamin (Studi Haidh Pertama Pada Keluarga Kerajaan Matan Ketapang Kalimantan Barat)," 27; Faizah and Rosyidah, "Tradisi Pembacaan Ayat-Ayat Al-Qur'an (Kajian Living Qur'an Di TPQ Nurssholah Kampung Marhaban Kecamatan Singkawang Selatan Kota Singkawang)," 96–121; Abdurrahman, Gemely, and Saragih, "Preservasi Moderasi Beragama: Studi Living Qur'an Masyarakat Kabupaten Ketapang," 12–25.

mosques in Indonesia is closely linked to Qur'anic learning among village children. If this is the case, then how is the Qur'an practiced in Nusa Pandau?

The discussion above demonstrates that the Qur'an always develops dynamically alongside a community's socio-cultural context. It becomes an inseparable part of the lived practices of Muslim society. For this reason, this article aims to examine in greater depth the forms of Qur'anic transmission practices in Nusa Pandau, the roles of local religious figures, and the dynamics surrounding them. In other words, this article focuses on uncovering and understanding a phenomenon that is often complex.⁶ Furthermore, as a regionally based study centered on Nusa Pandau Village, Nanga Pinoh District, Melawi Regency, West Kalimantan Province, the issue of Qur'anic transmission is inevitably connected to broader social, historical, cultural, and political systems, all of which may contribute to the formation of its own distinctive characteristics.

B. Method

This article was designed as a qualitative study employing a socio-historical approach, as this framework is considered better able to provide a contextual perspective.⁷ The data traced from the practice of Qur'anic transmission in Nusa Pandau were centered on currently available sources, particularly through the presence of key figures involved in the transmission process. This approach was intended to preserve the authenticity of the data sources while minimizing reliance on information that did not originate from primary sources. Initial observations indicated that several individuals played significant roles in the transmission of the Qur'an in Nusa Pandau

⁶ Zuchri Abdussamad, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*, ed. Patta Rapanna (Makassar: Syakir Media Press, 2021), 87-96; Muhammad Hasan et al., *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*, ed. Muhammad Hasan (Mak: Tahta Media Group, 2022), 50-60.

⁷ Ulfah Zakiyah and Muhammad Ghifari, "Metode Pemahaman Hadis Dengan Pendekatan Sosio-Historis (Studi Atas Pemikiran Said Agil Husin Al-Munawar)," *Al-Isnad: Journal of Indonesian Hadist Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2021): 16-25; Nurul Djazimah, "Pendekatan Sosio-Historis: Alternatif Dalam Memahami Perkembangan Ilmu Kalam," *Ilmu Ushuluddin*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (2012): 43-60; Anisatul Fikriyah Aprilianti and Ansharuddin M, "Pendekatan Historis Sosiologis Dalam Studi Al-Qur'an: Telaah Pemikiran Fazlur Rahman," *CENDEKIA: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (2022): 13-25; Amelia Husna, Lukmanul Hakim, and Khairunnas Jamal, "Implementasi Pendekatan Sosio-Historis Terhadap Tafsir Kisah Pasukan Bergajah," *Madinatul Iman*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2023): 39-57.

and are still accessible today, including Sleman, who had been teaching the Qur'an since the 1960s, Rusdi, a migrant from Yogyakarta who arrived in 1981 and became a Qur'anic teacher in 1985, and other related parties, especially students who emerged from that generation.⁸

Interviews with these key figures, combined with direct observation, were selected as the primary methods for uncovering aspects relevant to this article's objectives. The collected data were then analyzed using a descriptive-analytical method. Findings from observations and interviews were presented as they were, so that the conclusions fully represented the object of study. This approach ultimately led to the conclusion that the transmission of the Qur'an is closely connected to its distinctive social and historical context.⁹

C. Result and Discussion

1. Nusa Pandau: a village on the banks of the Melawi River

Nusa Pandau Village is one of the villages in the interior of West Kalimantan, specifically within the Nanga Pinoh District of Melawi Regency. The village covers approximately 3,169.1 hectares, which is relatively large compared to those of several neighboring villages. Geographically, the village is divided into three hamlets: Laman Tapang Hamlet, Nusa Indah Hamlet, and Balai Serumpun Hamlet. Each hamlet has its own characteristics that shape the community's social life. Due to its relatively remote location, most residents still depend heavily on natural resources, including land, forests, and agricultural produce, for their livelihoods. As part of an inland region, access to the village is more difficult than in villages near the district center. However, this condition has strengthened social ties among community members. Despite its limitations and advantages, Nusa Pandau plays an important role in the socio-economic structure of Nanga Pinoh District. The village is not merely an

⁸ Interview with Rusdi, January 7, 2025.

⁹ Aimie Sulaiman, "Memahami Teori Konstruksi Sosial Peter L. Berger," *Society*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2016): 15–22, <https://doi.org/10.33019/society.v4i1.32>; Fahrudin Faiz, "Hermeneutika Modern Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Islamic-Studies," *Refleksi*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (2018): 1–16; Umar Suryadi Bakry, "Pemanfaatan Metode Etnografi Dan Netnografi Dalam Penelitian Hubungan Internasional," *Jurnal Global & Strategis*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (2017): 15–26, <https://doi.org/10.20473/jgs.11.1.2017.15-26>.

administrative entity, but also a living space for people who continue to preserve their traditions, culture, and local wisdom. Therefore, any discussion of Nusa Pandau Village cannot be separated from the social, economic, and cultural contexts that surround it.

According to the 2023 Demographic Data of Nusa Pandau Village, the village had a population of 755 residents. Of this total, 380 were male, and 375 were female, indicating a relatively balanced gender composition. Most residents rely on farming as their primary source of income, making agriculture the main pillar of the village economy. According to records from the local Family Planning Village (Kampung KB), approximately 1,000 hectares of village land are designated for agricultural activities. Meanwhile, another 960 hectares are allocated for plantation activities, which also contribute significantly to local livelihoods. This demonstrates the village's strong agrarian identity.

Nevertheless, not all residents work in the agricultural or plantation sectors. A small portion of the population is employed in other professions, such as civil servants, private-sector employees, and local traders. This diversity of occupations indicates evolving economic dynamics, though agriculture remains the dominant sector. Thus, life in Nusa Pandau reflects a combination of agrarian traditions and adaptation to emerging modern economic opportunities.

With its various potentials, Nusa Pandau Village has demonstrated significant progress in village development. In 2023, the village, together with Nanga Kayan Village and Tembawang Panjang Village, officially received the status of "Advanced Village" in Nanga Pinoh District. This recognition was granted after the three villages successfully passed the rigorous verification process of the Village Development Index (*Indeks Desa Membangun/IDM*). Achieving the status of an Advanced Village is a considerable accomplishment, as it indicates that Nusa Pandau has better basic infrastructure, higher-quality human resources, and better economic conditions than villages still categorized as developing. This achievement also indicates strong cooperation among the village government, community institutions, and residents in managing the village's potential.

Furthermore, the status serves as a new motivation to continue pursuing more inclusive and sustainable development. With this foundation, Nusa Pandau is expected not only to maintain its independence in the agricultural

sector but also to expand opportunities for improving education, healthcare, and access to technology. Ultimately, the village serves as a concrete example of how an inland rural community can advance toward better development while preserving its agrarian identity.

2. *Ngaji* as the transmission of Qur'anic recitation, values, and meaning

The transmission of the Qur'an in Nusa is closely associated with the activity known as *ngaji*. Over time, this activity has evolved into four forms. First, it appears through the basic process of learning the Qur'an. Second, it is manifested through the practice of reciting the Qur'an with melodic intonation. Although this is considered a form of practice, it also contains instructional elements, particularly in learning how to apply melodic patterns to Qur'anic recitation. Third, it takes the form of practices intertwined with local traditions and cultural expressions within the community, such as the activities of the *Majelis Taklim ash-Shadiqiyah*, which primarily involve the collective recitation of QS. Yasin, commonly referred to as *Yasinan*. It also includes Qur'anic recitation during major communal events, such as the commemoration of Isra and Mi'raj, usually held in the month of Rajab; the celebration of the Prophet's birthday (*Maulid Nabi*), commonly observed in Rabiulawal; *selamatan* ceremonies, which are generally incidental; and other similar occasions. Fourth, transmission also occurs through efforts to explain selected Qur'anic verses in accordance with these specific events. These four forms of Qur'anic transmission are interconnected, although each may also function independently.¹⁰

Students who learn the Qur'an from the elementary level commonly refer to their learning material as "*Juz Ammo*." This term refers to the thirtieth section (*juz*) of the Qur'an, beginning with QS. al-Naba', the 78th chapter, which opens with the verse *'amma yatasalun*, from which the name of the *juz* is derived, and ending with QS. al-Nās, the 114th chapter. The pronunciation "*Juz Ammo*"—with the vowel shift from *a* to *o*—represents a phonological phenomenon influenced entirely by the local dialect of the Nusa Pandau community. However, the term "*Juz Ammo*" does not exclusively refer to a book containing only the thirty-seven short

¹⁰ Interview with Rusdi, Islamic Religious Teacher and Qur'anic Instructor in Nusa Pandau, January 7, 2025.

chapters of the Qur'an found in the thirtieth *juz*. Rather, it is also associated with the method of Qur'anic instruction at the most basic level, beginning with the introduction of the Arabic letters (*huruf hijaiyah*), such as *alif*, *ba'*, *ta'*, and so forth, including vowel signs (*harakat*), *tanwin*, and continuing to lessons on reading longer combinations of letters and the chapters contained in *juz* 30. Over time, the meaning of "*Juz Ammo*" expanded among students in Nusa Pandau, so that some began using the term to refer to Qur'anic learning materials in general.

The use of learning media described above indicates that Qur'anic instruction in Nusa Pandau employs the Baghdadi method, or *kaidah Baghdadiyah*. According to Effendi, this is considered the oldest Qur'anic teaching method in the world, originating during the Abbasid period around the fourth or fifth century Hijri and later becoming widely used throughout the Islamic world. Different names in various regions also know the method. Among some Javanese communities, for example, it is called *Turutan*; in other Javanese and Sumatran communities, it is known as *alif-alifan*; among Malay communities, it is referred to as *Mengkadam* or *Menghadam*; while among Madurese communities, it is called *lip-alipan*, and so forth. Nevertheless, the designation "Baghdadi method" or "*kaidah Baghdadiyah*" is the most widely recognized term, referring to the city of Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasid dynasty. This designation later became known in Nusa Pandau as well, although some people referred to it as the Malay method.¹¹

Aboe Bakar Atjeh provides a simple description of how Qur'anic learning through the Baghdadi method was practiced in Indonesia. He explains that the teacher first recited the Arabic letters, which the students then repeated while pointing to and observing the written forms. During independent learning sessions, each student read their own assigned section aloud, creating, in Aboe Bakar's description, a sound that filled the *langgar* (small prayer house). When their turn arrived, students would come forward to face the teacher or the teacher's assistant and recite their reading, while the teacher carefully corrected any mistakes. Aboe Bakar further notes that these *ngaji* activities took place every day according to a schedule set by the teacher, either in the morning or the afternoon, and generally lasted less than

¹¹ Interview with Rusdi, January 7, 2025

2 hours. In this way, the teacher devoted time to guiding the students until they were able to read the Qur'an properly or even complete it, an achievement usually marked by a communal meal attended by the students' friends, parents, and, especially, their teacher. This practice was closely connected to Qur'anic learning activities conducted at home or in the *langgar*. A similar pattern was also practiced in Nusa Pandau.

In contrast to elementary Qur'anic instruction, melodic Qur'anic recitation does not use specific learning media. Participants simply refer to it as learning *tilawah*, usually by bringing their own copies of the Qur'an. The concept of *nagham* helps explain this activity. *Nagham* refers to melody or rhythm, namely an Arabic melodic system specifically used for Qur'anic recitation. In the Indonesian context, seven principal melodic patterns are generally recognized: Bayati, Hijaz, Saba, Nahawand, Rast, Sika, and Jiharkah. In Nusa Pandau, however, students do not necessarily complete all seven melodies. Ujang, who will be discussed in a separate subsection of this article, teaches only four melodic styles: Nahawand, Bayati, Saba, and Sika. Even then, among all his students, only two were considered to have completed instruction at that level. Nevertheless, from the beginning, these students primarily focused on learning melody and rhythm rather than studying the Qur'an in a formal sense. Despite this, the Qur'an itself continued to be transmitted, particularly through its aesthetic dimension.¹²

The aesthetic transmission of the Qur'an can also be found in various community-based activities that no longer emphasize instructional aspects, unlike formal *tilawah* learning. In Nusa Pandau, as mentioned earlier, many commemorative events are held, whether categorized as Islamic celebrations or as local communal events of an incidental nature. In these activities, melodic Qur'anic recitation consistently appears as part of the ceremonial sequence, with selected verses adjusted to suit the particular event. This aesthetic dimension is also evident in the communal activity known as *Yasinan*. As a communal practice, *Yasinan* functions not only as a collective activity aimed at achieving shared goals, fostering voluntary participation, and maintaining social bonds, but also as a source of aesthetic experience for its listeners during the recitation of QS. Yasin. The simultaneous recitation of QS. Yasin, performed by a group of community

¹² Interview with Titin Sumarni, daughter of Ujang Sayudi, June 1, 2025.

members with harmonious rhythm and synchronized voices, naturally creates a sense of harmony. This aspect makes Qur'anic recitation within such activities a form of cultural-aesthetic transmission of the Qur'an.

Another form of Qur'anic transmission in Nusa Pandau is the practice of explaining Qur'anic verses during communal religious activities. For example, during Isra and Mi'raj commemorations, although not consistently, there are occasional efforts to provide brief, simple explanations of the event from a Qur'anic perspective. In other words, the transmission of the Qur'an through interpretive explanation does not function independently. Rather than taking the form of formal Qur'anic exegesis sessions, such as thematic *tafsir* studies or lessons on *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, it becomes integrated into broader religious activities. Based on this pattern, it can be concluded that Qur'anic transmission in Nusa Pandau comprises three forms. First, the transmission of recitation through Qur'anic reading activities, both in elementary Qur'anic learning and in *tilawah* practice. Second, the transmission of Qur'anic values through the collective recitation of QS. Yasin, through which community members experience values such as togetherness, cooperation, and social solidarity. Third, the transmission of meaning, as reflected in efforts to explain Qur'anic verses in terms of specific occasions. In Nusa, all of these activities are collectively embodied in the practice of *ngaji*.

3. How, who, and where: Openness in the transmission of the Qur'an

The transmission of the Qur'an in Nusa Pandau was part of a collaborative effort involving several prominent figures. Sleman, for example, was a native of Nusa Pandau who taught Qur'anic recitation using the Baghdadi method, which he referred to as the Malay method. Ujang Sayudi came from Nanga Ella and later migrated to Nusa Pandau as a gold miner, where he became a teacher of *tilawah* (melodic Qur'anic recitation).¹³ Mukhlis was a migrant from Medan, North Sumatra, known as a preacher and regarded as one of the initiators of the Majelis Ta'lim-Yasinan together with Rusdi. Meanwhile, Rusdi migrated from Yogyakarta, Java, as a civil servant and Islamic Religious Education teacher at State Elementary School 23 Nusa Pandau. In addition to his formal profession, Rusdi played an important role in Qur'anic learning activities through the Baghdadi

¹³ Interview with Sulaiman, Local Religious Figure in Nusa Pandau, July 3, 2025.

method and, as needed, explained the meanings of Qur'anic verses during community gatherings.¹⁴ Besides these figures, Sleman also mentioned several other Qur'anic teachers, namely Hamzah, Atai Muchtar, H. Burhan, H. Japalis, and Sahrin. All of these individuals became key actors in the transmission of the Qur'an, each in their respective roles.¹⁵

The presence of these figures indicates that the transmission of the Qur'an in Nusa Pandau tended to be open and non-exclusive. Sleman and H. Japalis, for instance, came from families known locally for teaching the Qur'an. However, neither had the opportunity to study directly with their parents because both parents had passed away when they were still young. As a result, they were taught by their uncle, Abdul Ghani. Later, they traveled by boat to another village, Ella, to study with Ayub, a religious scholar originally from Padang, West Sumatra. Around the 1960s, both became active Qur'anic teachers.¹⁶ Similarly, Ujang studied *tilawah* under Supawi from Natai Suri Village, Ella Hilir District. From an early age, Ujang was already recognized in his hometown, Nanga Ella, for his talent in *tilawah*.¹⁷ In addition, his habit of reciting the Qur'an melodically after the dawn prayer further encouraged local people to study *tilawah* with him.¹⁸ Thus, the openness of the Nusa Pandau community can be seen not only from the fact that Qur'anic teachers came from various regions, but also from the absence of a single religious authority, as reflected in the diverse backgrounds and roles of these individuals.

In the early stages of Qur'anic learning, private homes served as the main centers for Qur'anic transmission, at both the basic and *tilawah* levels. Sleman used his own house to teach students who wished to learn the Qur'an. Likewise, Ujang conducted lessons at the house of Zulhijjah, his student and niece, who had already settled in Nusa Pandau. Rusdi also used his official residence, provided to him as a civil servant and teacher at State Elementary School 23 Nusa Pandau, for Qur'anic instruction. The decision to use private homes as centers of Qur'anic transmission reflected the social conditions the community faced at the time. There are no specific records

¹⁴ Interview with Rusdi, May 28, 2025.

¹⁵ Interview with Sulaiman, July 3, 2025.

¹⁶ Interview with Sulaiman, July 3, 2025.

¹⁷ Interview with Titin Sumarni, June 1, 2025.

¹⁸ Interview with Mariana, a student of Mr. Ujang Sayudi, June 2, 2025.

indicating the number of students each teacher taught. However, shorter travel distances and more flexible schedules became practical reasons for parents to approve a particular teacher or for students to choose where to study the Qur'an. Students could even move from one teacher to another. This situation also makes it difficult to trace the exact number of students who studied in each house.¹⁹

In the case of Rusdi, he arrived in Nusa Pandau in 1982 and began teaching Qur'anic recitation in 1985. He used the teachers' official residence as the learning space. The building measured approximately 7 x 8 meters and was divided into two units for two separate families. It was a stilt house made entirely of wood, including the walls, roof, and floor. Dardir became the first person, as well as Rusdi's close neighbor, to ask him to teach his children: Sulawardi, Rahmat Hidayat, and Imadudin. At the same time, Rusdi also established a close relationship with Dardir's father, Bagindo Taparuddin, a preacher in the Melawi Regency area originally from West Sumatra. Their good relationship was reflected in Rusdi's involvement in religious studies and preaching activities in the Ella Hilir District. A few days later, ten teenagers also came to Rusdi's house to study the Qur'an. Thus, as a newcomer, Rusdi's authority as a Qur'anic teacher was built not only upon his professional capacity as an Islamic education teacher, but also upon his relationships with local religious figures and his ability to respond to the actual needs of the Nusa Pandau community.²⁰

Over time, private homes no longer served as the only centers for Qur'anic learning. As noted by Aboe Bakar Atjeh, the langgar or surau later became another important center of religious learning, at least in the context of Rusdi's activities. As the number of students increased and his official residence could no longer accommodate them, Rusdi initiated Qur'anic lessons at Surau Miftahul Jannah, which had previously been used only for the five daily prayers. However, the surau also proved insufficient for the growing number of students. Several months later, Qur'anic learning activities were moved to Hidayatus Shadiqin Mosque in Nusa Pandau Village.

Furthermore, in 1992, Rusdi pioneered the establishment of a Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (TPA/TPQ) named al-Hidayah, derived from the

¹⁹ Interview with Rusdi, May 28, 2025.

²⁰ Interview with Rusdi, May 28, 2025.

name of Hidayatus Shadiqin Mosque. Unexpectedly, the number of students continued to grow, and the mosque was eventually unable to accommodate them. Consequently, the village head constructed a special building for Qur'anic learning beside al-Ittihad Mosque. The transfer of learning activities to al-Ittihad Mosque also signaled the unification of Qur'anic instruction that had previously been scattered across the houses of different teachers. This development illustrates the dialectical process of Qur'anic transmission, moving from homes to surau and eventually to the mosque, thereby undergoing institutionalization.²¹

Several students, in addition to those already mentioned, later succeeded Rusdi. These included Mariana, who was both Rusdi's student and wife, and who had previously studied basic Qur'anic recitation once with H. Burhan, studied *tilawah* with Ujang up to the level of four melodic patterns, and once studied with Japalis, along with Zulhijjah, Asdalia, Supawi Hamdan, Maryam, and Rika Sawiyah, all of whom were students of both Rusdi and Ujang in the field of *tilawah*. Other names included Nurul Afifah and Zulfa Muflihah, both daughters and students of Rusdi, as well as Ramli, Irawati, Rina, Bambang Sapardi, Rafly, Fajariansyah, and others. Their position as successors does not necessarily mean that all of them became Qur'anic teachers like Rusdi. Rather, their existence demonstrates that Rusdi functioned not only as a teacher but also as a mentor, preparing the next generation. Moreover, it was mentioned that the children of other Qur'anic teachers, such as Japalis, Sleman, and Burhan, also became students of Rusdi. This fact highlights that Rusdi's authority was based not only on his competence as a teacher but also on his ability to embrace all elements of the community, including fellow religious figures of similar standing.

The description above confirms that the transmission of the Qur'an through basic Qur'anic education underwent a dynamic process of development. This differed significantly from the transmission of the Qur'an through *tilawah* instruction, which tended to remain stagnant. Among the students of Ujang, only Mariana and Supawi Hamdan reached the stage of learning four melodic patterns. Similarly, in the context of cultural transmission through community activities, the dynamics mainly appeared in the increasingly semi-formal structure of religious events, with the

²¹ Interview with Rusdi, May 28, 2025.

addition of activities considered necessary by the community. In the Yasinan gatherings, which became the primary activity of the Majelis Ta'lim initiated by Mukhlis and Rusdi around the 1990s, the program initially consisted only of Yasinan, occasionally followed by the study of Safinah, a fiqh text, and prayer recitation. Over time, the gatherings began to include tahlil recitations. Likewise, events such as Isra Mi'raj commemorations and the celebration of the Prophet's birthday, which had originally been collective traditions conducted naturally within the community, gradually became more ceremonial in form through the involvement of event hosts, Qur'anic reciters, religious sermons, and formal prayers. The limited dynamics in this aspect demonstrate that the transmission of the Qur'an was never entirely uniform.²²

4. The *isnad* system and agency in the transmission of the Qur'an

It is difficult to determine who played the most significant role in the process of transmitting the Qur'an in Nusa Pandau. Sleman, who is regarded as one of the village elders, admitted he did not have sufficient information, even about who first brought Islam to the village. In *Penyebaran dan Pengaruh Budaya Melayu di Kalimantan*, written by Juniar Purba et al., it is stated that Islam entered West Kalimantan in the fifteenth century and gradually spread into the inland areas of Sintang and Melawi.²³ Although the practice of Islam during this early period was relatively simple, it eventually became closely associated with the Qur'an, which, together with the Hadith, is regarded as the primary source in Islam.²⁴ One consequence of this

²² Interview with Rusdi, January 7, 2025.

²³ Juniar Purba et al., *Penyebaran dan Pengaruh Budaya Melayu Di Kalimantan*, ed. Chairil Efendi (Pontianak: Direktorat Jenderal Sejarah dan Purbakala Kementerian Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata, 2011), 57-106.

²⁴ Miski Mudin, *Islam Virtual: Diskursus Hadis, Otoritas, dan Dinamika Keberislaman di Media Sosial*, ed. Nurul Afifah, 1st ed. (Bantul: BILDUNG, 2019), 3-11; 67-72; 173-175; Miski Miski, "Hadis Iftirāq Dalam Literatur Otoritatif: Potret Jaringan Dan Kepentingan," *Mashdar: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2022): 1-18, <https://doi.org/10.15548/mashdar.v4i1.4370>; Saifuddin Zuhri, Moh Hidayat Noor, and Miski, "Komunitas Online Www.Arrahmah.Com Serta Seruan Kembali Pada Al-Quran Dan Hadis: Identitas, Ideologi, Dan Imaji Fundamentalisme," in *Ancoms: 2nd Annual Conference for Muslim Scholars*, 2018, 144-60; Miski, "Kritik Atas Sunah Sebagai Bagian Tafsir Bi Al-Ma'sūr: Menyoal Otoritas Sunah Sebagai Acuan Penafsiran Dalam Tafsir Al-Jalālain," *Religia*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (2017): 49-70, <http://e-journal.stain-pekalongan.ac.id/index.php/Religia>.

development was the emergence of Qur'anic traditions, both in interpretation and in religious practice. In other words, the researchers seek to emphasize that Qur'anic traditions in West Kalimantan, including those in remote inland regions, are as prevalent as those in other parts of Indonesia.²⁵ This further confirms that the issue of the Qur'an, or even Islam itself, is part of a long historical process involving many interconnected actors, whether formally or informally linked.

Isnad is one of the fundamental concepts that explains the interconnectedness of Qur'anic figures across different generations and geographical locations. Abdul Munip explains that the theory of isnad in the context of Islamic knowledge transmission possesses distinctive characteristics. First, it is personal in nature, as reflected in teacher-student relationships, collegial relations, and spiritual connections; it is also continuous, meaning that individuals who were initially objects of transmission eventually become subjects of transmission themselves. Second, it is based on authority. Those who are part of sanad networks are individuals who possess recognized authority, particularly in granting sanad, which is generally formalized either through a written ijazah or oral authorization. Third, it is implemented across various forms of Islamic education, indicating that the sanad system is not a recent phenomenon but rather a practice that has existed in the Islamic world for centuries. Fourth, it is internal, meaning that isnad-based transmission operates exclusively within Muslim communities and does not extend to followers of other religions.²⁶ This concept of isnad ultimately leads to the important assumption that Qur'anic teachers in Nusa Pandau were connected to

²⁵ Parwanto, "Fungsionalisasi Al-Qur'an Dalam Tradisi Pekan Keempat Bulan Safar Di Kalimantan Barat," 1-22; Faizah, Artani Hasbi, and Haq, "Al-Qur'an Dalam Upacara Tradisi Belamin (Studi Haidh Pertama Pada Keluarga Kerajaan Matan Ketapang Kalimantan Barat)," 27; Faizah and Rosyidah, "Tradisi Pembacaan Ayat-Ayat Al-Qur'an (Kajian Living Qur'an Di TPQ Nurssholah Kampung Marhaban Kecamatan Singkawang Selatan Kota Singkawang)," 96-121; Abdurrahman, Gemely, and Saragih, "Preservasi Moderasi Beragama: Studi Living Qur'an Masyarakat Kabupaten Ketapang," 12-25.

²⁶ A. Turmudi, "Sejarah Transmisi Pembaruan Fikih Dari Timur Tengah Ke Nusantara Abad XIX - XX (Studi Pengaruh Al-Manār Di Indonesia Dan Respons Ulama Tradisionalis)," *Dissertation* (UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2019), 347-352; Abdul Munip, "Transmisi Pengetahuan Timur Tengah Ke Indonesia: Studi Tentang Penerjemahan Buku Berbahasa Arab Di Indonesia, 1950-2004," *Dissertation* (UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2007), 18-35.

previous generations. However, in this article, not all of these connections can be traced in full.

In the context of the Qur'an, *isnad* is recognized as one of the most important elements in assessing the validity of Qur'anic variant readings. Al-Jazari (d. 833 AH),²⁷ al-Suyuti (w. 911 H),²⁸ and al-Qashtalani (w. 923 H) were among the scholars who emphasized this point.²⁹ *Isnad*, therefore, became a crucial indicator in determining whether a person's Qur'anic recitation could be traced back to the Prophet. In al-Suyuti's extensive explanation, the connection between one figure and another in the context of Qur'anic transmission is mediated through the practice of *al-tahammul*, namely *al-qirā'ah 'alā al-shaykh* (a student reciting the Qur'an before a teacher either from memory or from written notes) and *al-simā' min lafẓ al-shaykh* (the teacher reciting while the student listens), although only the former is considered fully relevant. Within the *isnad* framework, everyone involved automatically functions as an agent of the preceding generation, even though they do not all occupy the same level due to differences in the forms of capital or authority they possess.³⁰ In Nusa Pandau, the *isnad* ultimately relates not only to the transmission of the Qur'an itself but also to the transmission of its instructional medium, namely the Baghdadiyah method or system.

In this regard, Rusdi becomes an important figure to examine further. Rusdi was born in Bantul, Yogyakarta, on June 29, 1957, as the third of eight siblings. In addition to receiving religious education directly from his devout family, he pursued formal education at SDN Tjepit 4 Bakalan, Pendowoharjo, Sewon, Bantul (1965–1971 or 1972), before continuing his studies at PGAN (State Islamic Teacher Education School) in Gandekan,

²⁷ Abū al-Kair Muḥammad, *Munjid Al-Muqri'in Wa Mursyid Al-Tālibin* (Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah, 1999), 18.

²⁸ Jalāl al-Dīn Al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Itqān* (al-Hai'ah al-Misriyyah, 1974), II, 344.

²⁹ Abū al-'Abbās Al-Qashtalanī, *Laṭā'if Al-Isyārāt Li Funūn Al-Qirā'āt* (Saudi Arabia, n.d.), I, 123–26.

³⁰ Zurmailis Zurmailis and Faruk Faruk, "Doksa, Kekerasan Simbolik Dan Habitus Yang Ditumpangi Dalam Konstruksi Kebudayaan Di Dewan Kesenian Jakarta," *Adabiyāt: Jurnal Bahasa Dan Sastra*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2017): 44–72, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajbs.2017.011103>; Nanang Martono, *Kekerasan Simbolik Di Sekolah* (Jakarta: Rajawali Press, 2012); Mohammad Adib, "Agen Dan Struktur Dalam Pandangan Piere Bourdieu," *BioKultur*, Vol. I, No. 2 (2012): 91–110.

Bantul, Yogyakarta, for six years. After graduating from PGAN, he enrolled at the State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. Still, his studies ended at the first propedeutic level (equivalent to the second semester) due to financial constraints. Several years later, Rusdi applied for a position as a GPAI (Islamic Religious Education Teacher) in West Kalimantan. He was accepted as a civil servant candidate (CPNS), and in 1982, officially became a civil servant, marking his first year in Nusa Pandau. Later, between 1993 and 1997, he completed an equalization program for a Diploma II in Islamic Religious Education at IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta.³¹ From these data, it becomes increasingly evident that among all Qur'anic teachers active before he arrived in Nusa Pandau, Rusdi is the only figure whose educational background and transmission network can be traced with relative clarity.

Rusdi began studying the Qur'an at an early age, alongside children of his generation, under the guidance of Kiai Haji (KH) Nawawi at Masjid ar-Ridlo in Ngrukem, through a systematic, disciplined approach. The Baghdadiyah method served as the primary medium for introducing *makhārij al-ḥurūf* and the basic rules of *tajwīd* through the pattern of *mushāfahah*, namely direct oral instruction between teacher and student. In this process, students observed the teacher's lip movements while pronouncing letters or verses, while the teacher carefully observed the students as they imitated the recitation. After completing this stage, Rusdi continued by memorizing short surahs, beginning from QS. al-Ḍuḥā to QS. al-Nās or vice versa, which KH Nawawi directly supervised. Once this process was considered sufficient, he advanced to the stage of *bi al-naẓar*, namely reading the Qur'an directly from the muṣḥaf from the first juz to the thirtieth. However, despite appearing ordinary, this process proved difficult for Rusdi. He completed the learning process over a relatively long period, from the first grade of elementary school through the third year of PGA, even though he studied with full dedication and intensity every Maghrib and Fajr prayer time, to the extent that he stayed in the mosque veranda during that period.³²

KH Nawawi's prominence in the field of the Qur'an was reflected not only in his memorization of the entire thirty juz of the Qur'an but also in his

³¹ Interview with Rusdi, January 7, 2025.

³² Interview with Rusdi, January 7, 2025.

mastery of the various Qur'anic recitations, namely the seven *qirā'āt*, referring to the recitations transmitted from Nāfi' (d. 169 AH), Ibn Kašir (d. 120 AH), Abū 'Amr (d. 154 AH), Ibn 'Āmir (d. 118 AH), 'Āšim (d. 128 AH), Ḥamzah (d. 156 AH), and al-Kisā'i (d. 189 AH). In this context, however, Rusdi was not known as a memorizer of the Qur'an, let alone as a specialist in the variants of Qur'anic recitation. Rather, his isnad referred to the authorization granted by KH Nawawi, affirming that he was qualified to teach the Qur'an in Nusa Pandau. As a student of KH Nawawi who had completed recitation of the entire thirty juz before his teacher, Rusdi, not only carried the Javanese Qur'anic tradition associated with KH Nawawi but also practiced it directly, including its instructional medium, namely the Baghdadiyah method, as reflected in his statement quoted by Irawati, one of his students: "If the sanad follows Father, then use Juz 'Amma." KH Nawawi, therefore, became Rusdi's primary authority for sanad.

The fact that elementary Qur'anic instruction in Nusa Pandau employed a Malay-style approach using Baghdadiyah instructional materials indicates that Rusdi's approach to Qur'anic teaching was not unfamiliar to the local community. The differences appeared mainly in pronunciation and spelling practices. In Rusdi's Baghdadiyah method, if the letter *alif* carried the vowel sign *fathah*, it was spelled *alif fathah A*; if it carried *kasrah*, it was spelled *alif kasrah I*; and if it carried *ḍammah*, it was spelled *alif dhammah U*, and the same pattern applied to the remaining hijaiyah letters. By contrast, local Qur'anic teachers at that time used expressions such as *alif di atas A*, *alif di bawah I*, and *alif di depan U*, and so forth. Beyond this difference, Rusdi also practiced the methods he had received from KH Nawawi, including reading QS. al-Fātiḥah and short surahs from QS. al-Nās to QS. al-Ḍuḥā as the formal opening of Qur'anic instruction. He also conducted Qur'anic lessons twice daily, after the Zuhr and Maghrib prayers, even though at that time only simple oil lamps were available for lighting. Through these activities, Rusdi consistently maintained the Javanese tradition while simultaneously adapting it within the local Nusa Pandau tradition.³³

Within the isnad framework, the concept of agency in the transmission of the Qur'an also becomes highly relevant for further examination. Rusdi, Sleman, and other Qur'anic teachers in Nusa Pandau represent

³³ Interview with Rusdi, January 7, 2025.

manifestations of such agency. Rusdi served as an agent of KH Nawawi; Sleman and Japalis served as agents of Ayub, while Ujang served as an agent of Sapawi. Their teachers, in turn, were also agents of earlier teachers or preceding generations. Furthermore, subsequent generations naturally positioned themselves as agents of their own teachers. One basic example of this phenomenon is that some of Rusdi's students later continued their Qur'anic studies elsewhere and, upon returning, became teachers in other Qur'anic institutions or in institutions established by Rusdi himself. Others did not continue formal Qur'anic education but still contributed by becoming Qur'anic teachers within their own communities. Ultimately, this phenomenon provides one of the simplest explanations for why the transmission of the Qur'an in Nusa Pandau has remained sustainable: the strengthening of networks that transcend geographical boundaries.

D. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Qur'anic transmission in Nusa Pandau is sustained through collaborative and non-contestative religious networks embedded within the local *ngaji* tradition. Rather than depending on a single centralized authority, the transmission process involves multiple religious actors who collectively maintain Qur'anic learning, recitation, aesthetic practices, and the transmission of religious values and meanings across generations. The study further reveals that Qur'anic transmission in this peripheral Muslim community developed through interconnected pedagogical lineages linking local traditions with broader Qur'anic networks from Java and Sumatra, particularly through sanad-based learning and the circulation of the Baghdadiyah method. These findings contribute to broader discussions on localized Qur'anic learning by showing that geographical remoteness does not isolate peripheral Muslim communities from wider Islamic intellectual networks; instead, it encourages adaptive and collaborative forms of religious authority. In this context, the *ngaji* tradition functions not merely as a mode of Qur'anic learning but also as a social mechanism for sustaining communal solidarity and the intergenerational transmission of Qur'anic knowledge. Further research may examine how subsequent generations negotiate and transform these transmission networks amid contemporary social and educational changes. []

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