RELIGION AND EDUCATION IN INDONESIA*

Gavin W. Jones

Introduction

To a considerable degree, religion as a source of conflict in Indonesia has been desensitized by the government's careful adherence to a policy of religious freedom. Enshrined as the first principle of the *Pancasila*, the "five principles" adopted at the time of Independence, is "belief in God." Admittedly it is mandatory to have such a belief, but the particular form this belief should take is not specified. Although in the 1971 census 87.5 percent of Indonesians declare themselves to be Moslems,[1] members of other religious faiths are treated officially with complete equality. There are six religions officially recognized by the Department of Religious Affairs: Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.[2] The Department of Religious Affairs contributes financially not only to the activities of Moslems but to those of the other recognized religions as well, including for example construction of church buildings and the educational and charitable work of the churches. This is in striking contrast to the situation in neighboring Malaysia, where Islam, although claiming adherence of only 50 percent of the total population, is enshrined as the state religion; resentments of non-Moslems have been reinforced by actions such as the use of general tax revenue to finance construction of the National Mosque in Kuala Lumpur.

Success in desensitizing the religious issue in Indonesia has not been easily attained, nor will it be maintained in the future without great care. At the time of Independence, pressure from Moslem political groups to declare Indonesia an Islamic state was very strong. However, the secular, western-educated nationalists represented by Sukarno and Hatta won the day and established the principle of religious freedom.[3] Since Independence, too, there have been periods of stress: the

---

*The author wishes to acknowledge valuable comments from Soebardi, Anthony Reid, Charles Coppel, Peter Weldon, Robin Pryor, and Jim Fox and an anonymous referee on an earlier draft of this paper. They are in no way responsible for remaining deficiencies in the paper.

[1]This estimate excludes the rural population of Irian Jaya, for whom detailed information was not collected in the census. Most of this population is not Moslem, but the numbers involved are only about half a million.

[2]J. A. Niels Mulder, "Aliran Kebatinan as an Expression of the Javanese Worldview," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, I, 2 (September 1970), pp. 105-14. Hinduism was officially recognized only in 1962, over Moslem protests.

[3]See Harry J. Benda. *The Crescent and the Rising Sun: Indonesian Islam Under the Japanese Occupation 1942-1945* (The Hague: van Hoeve, 1958), pp. 186-204.

Darul Islam rebellion of the 1950s which, although a political movement, advocated the creation of an Islamic state; periods of local Christian-Moslem conflict in the 1950s during which churches were burned in Aceh and Christian villages attacked by Darul Islam rebels in the Toraja area of South Sulawesi; persecution of the Chinese in some areas (e.g., in West Java in 1959-60 and in many regions of Indonesia in 1965-67) which no doubt had its religious elements;[4] and tensions in the late 1960s stemming from Moslem reaction to the rapid increase in church membership in areas such as East and Central Java and the Karo Batak areas of North Sumatra.[5]

In March 1975, there was a flurry of concern in Jakarta and West Java when pamphlets, allegedly issued by spokesmen of a church group, mysteriously appeared; these pamphlets advised their readers of the advantages, political and otherwise, of adherence to Christianity. The large number of Christians in positions of political and administrative power was apparently cited, along with the generally higher level of education of Christians in Indonesia. The real source of the pamphlets never became clear, at least to the general public, although official spokesmen stated that they were the work of remnants of the outlawed Indonesian Communist Party.[6] Whatever the source, the nervous reaction of the government to the appearance of these pamphlets reflected its appreciation of the potential divisiveness of the religious issue.

The preservation of religious harmony in Indonesia is further complicated by the identification of *suku bangsa* (ethnic-linguistic groups) with religion and by the religious dimension of the tension between Java and the Outer Islands. Although the majority of the Outer Islands population is Moslem, most of the non-Moslems in Indonesia also live there. Thus most persons professing a minority (i.e., non-Moslem) religion also belong to a minority (i.e., non-Javanese) *suku*. Ethnic groups strongly identified with non-Moslem religions include the Toba and Simalungun Batak, the people of Nias, and the Minahasans and Toraja of Sulawesi (all overwhelmingly Protestant); the Ambonese and Timorese (about half of whom are Protestant); the Balinese (predominantly Hindu); and the population of Flores (predominantly Catholic). Chinese, scattered throughout the urban areas of Indonesia, are predominantly "Buddha Konghucu" (Buddhist or Confucianist), but a substantial minority are Christian.

Religion, and the social and economic differences between different religious groups, is an important factor in Indonesian politics. Much has been written about its role in party politics, interethnic rivalries, and regional differences in education and the status of women. However, very little quantitative analysis has been done on trends in

---

[4]Certainly, objections to the Chinese religion played a role in the anti-Chinese actions in the east coastal areas of East Java and the expulsion of the Chinese from Aceh, both in 1966, and in East Java in 1967. See Charles Coppel, "The Indonesian Chinese in the Sixties: A Study of an Ethnic Minority in a Period of Turbulent Political Change" (Ph.D. thesis, Monash University, 1975), chapters 3 and 4.

[5]See D. Bakker, "The Struggle for the Future: Some Significant Aspects of Contemporary Islam in Indonesia," *Muslim World*, LXII, 2 (1972), pp. 131-33.

[6]*Kompas*, March 5, 1975.

the religious composition of the Indonesian population or the relationship between religion and education. With the publication of the 1971 census data, a start can be made on such an analysis, although the data are still very limited. It will be the purpose of the present article, then, to trace historical trends in the religious composition of the Indonesian population, and to throw some light on the changing relationship between religion and education. The writer recognizes the danger of stressing the effect of religion on education simply because the data on religion are available whereas data on variables correlated with religion, such as wealth, status, and degree of westernization, which may be more important in accounting for educational differentials than religion itself, are not. However, by taking an historical approach it is hoped to avoid this danger since the complex of factors influencing religious and educational change in different regions will tend to become apparent.

The History of Religious Change in Indonesia

Early in the Christian era, there was a movement of Indian cultural elements into the western half of present-day Indonesia. By the eighth century, Hinduism and Buddhism were deeply rooted in Sumatra and Java and formed the spiritual basis for a number of extensive empires, including Sriwijaya, centered in Palembang (seventh to eleventh centuries), and Mataram, Singasari, and Madjapahit in Java (ninth to the fifteenth centuries).

The eastward expansion of Islam reached Indonesia in the twelfth century. Islam was brought by traders to the coastal areas, but its expansion was slow until the first Westerners appeared at the end of the fifteenth century. Then Islam was used as a rallying cry for resistance to the successive encroachments of the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, and English. By the time the Dutch arrived in strength at the beginning of the seventeenth century, Islam was firmly implanted in most of Sumatra, Java, and eastward as far as Sumbawa, as well as in the coastal areas of Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and northern Maluku. But Catholicism had already made progress in Flores, Timor, and elsewhere under the Portuguese, while the mountain tribes in North Sumatra, Central Sulawesi, and the interior of Kalimantan had either resisted Islam or been little exposed to it.

Islam, coming to Indonesia as it did "filtered through the religious experience of India,"[7] had acquired mystical elements that fitted it well for acceptance in the Indonesian setting. Especially on Java, it long remained no more than a thin veneer on Javanese religion. But from the latter part of the nineteenth century onward, Indonesian Islam gradually began to shed some of its syncretic characteristics, partly because of greatly increased contact with Mecca as rapidly increasing numbers of Indonesians undertook the *haj*.[8] There remained on Java,

---

[7]Benda, *The Crescent*, p. 12.

[8]From about 1890 onwards, the number of Indonesians going to Mecca was about 10,000 a year, and in the years 1910 to 1931 this had grown to more than 20,000 each year, representing roughly one-quarter of all those undertaking the *haj*. See Bernhard Dahm, *History of Indonesia in the Twentieth Century* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1971), pp. 10-11 and 41; and J. Vredenbregt, "The Haddj: Some of Its Features and Functions in Indonesia," *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde*, 118 (1962), pp. 91-154.

however, a sharp difference between the *santri* and *abangan* variants of Islam.[9] In greatly simplified terms, the santri can be identified with a concern with Islamic doctrine, with observing the prayers, with intolerance for heterodox Javanese beliefs and practices and with a sense of the Islamic community, of *ummat*. By contrast, the abangan practice some form of the Javanese syncretic religion, though "the dominance of animistic as well as Hindu-Buddhist folk beliefs shifts to an emphasis on more sophisticated beliefs integrating Hindu-Buddhist concepts of fate, reincarnation, pantheism and magico-mysticism, while moving from the lower to the higher social levels."[10] Many abangan jokingly refer to themselves as "statistical Moslems."

The differences between the "statistical Moslems" and the more orthodox santri carry over into political, ideological and class conflicts. If Geertz' analysis is correct, in recent years the reluctance among many abangan even formally to be regarded as Moslems has increased, and there have been some pressures for including the *kebatinan* groups practicing various types of Javanese mysticism within the fold of recognized religious groups.[11] Though this has not yet happened, it is becoming increasingly recognized that "the Moslem community, properly understood, is a minority community in Java--a large minority but nevertheless a minority."[12]

Needless to say, the categorization of these diverse groups into one undifferentiated Moslem mass in the census seriously limits the analytic usefulness of the census data on religion. Outside Java, similar problems exist. Islam is generally known to be stronger and more orthodox in Aceh, among the Minangkabau of West Sumatra, in the Banten region of West Java, and among the Buginese and Makassarese of South Sulawesi.

The history of Christianity begins with the proselytizing efforts of the Portuguese in Maluku during the 1530s. Francis Xavier spent much of the year 1546 in this region. By the late sixteenth century the number of Catholics in Indonesia numbered around 50,000, most of them in present-day Maluku, East Nusatenggara, and North Sulawesi. As Portuguese power declined, many people abandoned Catholicism. With the ousting of the Portuguese by the Dutch in 1605, the Dutch East India Company prevented its further spread.[13] Only from 1800 onwards did the

---

[9]Geertz actually uses three divisions: *santri*, *abangan*, and *prijaji*. Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1960), esp. pp. 126-30 and 228-35. But Koentjaraningrat has argued that a *santri-abangan* dichotomy is more meaningful. See Koentjaraningrat's review of *The Religion of Java* in *Madjalah Ilmu-Ilmu Sastra Indonesia*, I, 2 (September 1963), pp. 188-91. See also Robert B. Cruikshank, "Abangan, Santri and Prijaji: A Critique," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, III, 1 (March 1972), pp. 39-43.

[10]See Koentjaraningrat's review cited above, at p. 189.

[11]Clifford Geertz, "Religious Change and Social Order in Suharto's Indonesia," *Asia*, 27 (Autumn 1972), pp. 68-70. For an analysis of *kebatinan*, see Mulder, "Aliran Kebatinan."

[12]Geertz, "Religious Change," p. 71.

[13]Frank L. Cooley, *Indonesia: Church and Society* (New York: Friendship Press, 1968), pp. 40, 43.

Dutch colonial government permit Catholic missionaries to resume their work. A steady growth then ensued, which has accelerated since Independence.

The growth of the Protestant church can be divided into three periods: the Dutch East India Company period, 1615-1815; the period of activity by foreign missionary societies, 1815-1930; and the period of autonomous Indonesian churches, 1930 to the present. During the first period, the Protestant church built on Catholic foundations, taking over most of the existing Catholic congregations.[14] This was the period of the "company church," which gave primary emphasis to serving Dutch congregations. Evangelization of the local population proceeded rather spasmodically, and the close identification of the church with the Company did not help.

It is important to recognize that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Islam and Christianity were both intrusive religions, equally alien in their struggle for influence in an already well-established civilization where the major faiths of Hinduism and Buddhism had already made a deep impact. Both were accommodating to, and being accommodated by, the culture and belief patterns in the different regions where they entered. The fact that many of those who still held essentially to these indigenous belief patterns went under the name of "Muslim" after the conversions of the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries or under the name of "Christian" after somewhat later periods of mass conversion did not really make the task of instilling the basic tenets of the two faiths much easier.

The second period in the development of Protestant Christianity commenced with the British returning the Indies to the Dutch in 1816, after the Napoleonic Wars. The Church of the Indies came under the direct control of the colonial government but the development of a monolithic church was prevented by two developments. The first was the independent efforts of foreign missionary societies, which flourished in western countries from the beginning of the nineteenth century, and whose efforts in Indonesia started in the 1820s. The second, somewhat later, was the establishment of the Reformed Church, a breakaway group from the Church of the Indies, whose first congregation was formed in Jakarta in 1873.

To the extent that the church was active among the non-European population in the Dutch East India Company period, it worked primarily among the minority peoples of East Indonesia. This was the area of special interest for Portuguese and Dutch trade, and where Islam had penetrated selectively. The Church of the Indies maintained the same pattern: its four branches were in Maluku, Minahasa, and Timor (all in Eastern Indonesia) and western Indonesia, centered in Jakarta. But the missionary societies from the 1820s onward ranged broadly throughout the country,[15] although they avoided areas where Islam was heavily entrenched and were not admitted to Java until 1849.[16]

---

[14]*Ibid.*, p. 40.

[15]For example, the Netherlands Missionary Society began working in Minahasa in 1822, the English Baptists in Tapanuli in the 1820s, the Rhenish Missionary Society in Kalimantan in 1836 and on Nias in 1865, and the Utrecht Missionary Society in Halmahera in 1866.

[16]Christian missions were expressly forbidden in Aceh, because of the fear of

The missionary societies left a strong cultural and theological imprint on the peoples among whom they proselytized. A Calvinist theological background characterized the churches serving roughly three-fourths of Indonesian Protestants. But other notable influences have been the work of the German Rhenish Missionary Society among the Toba and Simalungun Batak and on Nias, and the work of the Rhenish Missionary Society and later the Basel Mission in Kalimantan.

The late nineteenth century pattern of proselytization and of church government continued into the early decades of the twentieth century. But the 1930s marked the beginning of a new era in church growth. In the 1930s and 1940s, most of the Indonesian churches received autonomy not only from government administrative control but also from church bodies outside Indonesia. The churches not only survived the Japanese Occupation but in many respects were strengthened by the difficulties they encountered. Their support for the Independence struggle against the Dutch legitimized them as something more than foreign transplants. In the decades of autonomy that have followed, church growth has been very rapid indeed.

The areas of Indonesia longest Christianized are parts of Maluku, North Sulawesi, and East Nusatenggara. In these areas there is a continuous history of Christianity since the sixteenth century, together with a high proportion of Christians among the total population. This is not to say that a high proportion of the population has been Christian since the sixteenth century, because large scale conversion was delayed until the second half of the nineteenth century and, in the case of Timor, until the 1930s. But there has been Christian influence, and a continuous Christian community, since the sixteenth century. North Sumatra and parts of Kalimantan, Irian Jaya, and Central and South Sulawesi also have high proportions of Christians, but these are congregations of shorter standing. The period of heavy conversion in North Sumatra was in the 1880s and 1890s and into the early twentieth century. The period of mass conversions in Irian Jaya was around 1907 and again in more recent years. The growth of the Toraja Church in South and Central Sulawesi has been a product of the last seventy years, with very rapid growth in the early post-Independence period.[17] The Karo Batak Church in North Sumatra has grown remarkably since Independence, and it made mass conversions after the 1965 coup;[18] nevertheless, although Protestants now constitute a little more than 10 percent and Moslems also comprise a growing proportion of Karo Batak, most Karo continue to practice their traditional religion. In Timor, both the long-established Protestant church and the Catholics made rapid gains

---

violence. According to Furnivall, their exclusion from Java was also because of a fear of Moslem sensibilities. J. S. Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice* (New York: NYU Press, 1956), p. 337.

[17]Hildred Geertz notes that although Protestant missionaries arrived in 1892, they made no headway either in conversion or in attracting students to their schools until after 1905, when the foundations of Toraja belief were shaken by the Dutch administration's prohibitions on headhunting and the ceremony of cleansing the bones. Hildred Geertz, "Indonesian Cultures and Communities," in Ruth McVey (ed.), *Indonesia* (New Haven: HRAF Press, 1963), pp. 76-77.

[18]In a year and a half (June 1966 to November 1967) membership of the Karo Batak Church increased by 25,000, an increase of about 83 percent over its former membership of some 30,000. Cooley, *Indonesia*, p. 71.

after the attempted coup,[19] as did the church in East Java, whose membership doubled in five to eight years. Clearly, many of the mass conversions of the post-coup period were motivated simply by fear. There was safety in demonstrating adherence to a religion, given the strong official pressure to do so and the tendency in the post-coup period to equate lack of religious faith with communism.[20] Groups of people seeking membership of churches, provided they were not known to show loyalty to the communist cause, were often accepted immediately in recognition of their plight. That such "conversions of necessity" were occurring concurrently with genuine mass revivalist movements is perhaps not surprising in the context of the tense post-coup atmosphere.[21]

Finally, during this century there has been a rapid growth in the number of Chinese Christians. Very few Chinese were Christians at the turn of the century.[22] Today Christians constitute approximately 10 or 15 percent of the Chinese population in Indonesia,[23] and probably a higher percentage among the young. Conversion of Chinese to Christianity accelerated in the 1960s, especially in East Java, and for Indonesia as a whole the proportion of Chinese who were Catholics rose from 2 percent in 1957 to 6 percent in 1969.[24] The growth of Christianity has been greatest among the *peranakan* (local-born) Chinese. This growth appears to represent both a response to intensive missionary efforts and a search for acceptance and identification in the Indonesian community through espousal of a more acceptable, less "Chinese" religion[25] which at the same time removes the suspicion of communist sympathies.

---

[19]Frank L. Cooley, "The Revival in Timor," *Occasional Bulletin from the Missionary Research Library*, XXIII, 10 (October 26, 1972); George W. Peters, *Indonesia Revival: Focus on Timor* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Books, 1973), esp. pp. 93-94.

[20]See *Motives for Conversion in East Java since September 1965* (Singapore: Foundation for Theological Education in South East Asia, 1970).

[21]The coexistence of these two reasons for Church growth is discussed in Cooley, "The Revival in Timor." For a different view of the same events by a fundamentalist Protestant writer, see Kurt Koch, *The Revival in Indonesia* (West Germany: Evangelization Publishers, n.d.), esp. pp. 158-60, 282-84.

[22]Indeed, even in 1933, according to Rauws, there were only 4,099 Chinese Christians, or 0.3 percent of the Chinese population, but he admitted that the figure was probably an underestimate. Joh. Rauws et al., *The Netherlands Indies* (London: Dominion Press, 1935), p. 163.

[23]See Cooley, *Indonesia*, pp. 98-99. Some other studies lend support to Cooley's estimate. More than 10 percent of Semarang's Chinese population in 1955 was Christian, and the proportion was steadily increasing. Donald Earl Willmott, *The Chinese of Semarang* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1960), p. 230. Castles estimated that almost 11 percent of Jakarta's Chinese population were Christian in 1971. Lance Castles, "The Ethnic Profile of Jakarta," *Indonesia*, 3 (April 1967), p. 170. Tan estimated that 16.7 percent of the *peranakan* Chinese of Sukabumi were Christian. Giok-lan Tan, *The Chinese of Sukabumi: A Study in Social and Cultural Accommodation* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Monograph Series, 1963), p. 213.

[24]Coppel, "The Indonesian Chinese," p. 196.

[25]G. W. Skinner, "The Chinese Minority," in Ruth T. McVey (ed.), *Indonesia*, p. 108. Cooley notes that the peranakan Chinese, being almost entirely urban and more

The most noteworthy trend in the religious composition of the Indonesian population during the present century has been the large-scale conversion from the traditional native religions in the more remote areas to either Islam or Christianity.[26] Christianity appears to have made the larger gains, although it is impossible to be certain. There are no statistics for Moslems in the more remote areas comparable to the church membership data available for Christians, and from the 1930 census data it is not possible to determine the Moslem population of various regions with the same precision as can be done with the Christian population.

Dahm claims that Christians constituted only one percent of the Indonesian population in 1900.[27] By 1933 this proportion had grown to at least 2.8 percent. It had grown still further by 1961, and in 1971 had reached 7.4 percent of the population.[28] The main increase in the proportion of Christians appears to have come about in areas where there were still large numbers practicing traditional religions in 1930 (interior regions of Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Irian Jaya, together with some islands of Maluku and East Nusatenggara) and through steady conversion of the Chinese. In addition, the substantial increase in the size of the Christian community in Java is probably due in some degree to the conversion of Moslems (no doubt mainly of the abangan variety) to Christianity.

Through a careful comparison and reconciliation of data on church membership in 1933 with data on religion for certain regions and certain

---

familiar with western culture and secularization than most Indonesians, would tend to find Christianity attractive since it has had more experience in reacting to secularization than have Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism.

[26]Conversions, of course, can differ greatly in their nature including both the adoption of Christianity by entire villages on the decision of a village leader (as in some of the Toba Batak areas in the late nineteenth century), through fear of political persecution (as with many of the post-1965 conversions), as an outcome of mass revivalist movements (as in Nias in 1916 and in Timor in 1965-66), or as a perceived steppingstone to a civil service position in colonial times, as well as through the more "normal" process of an individual's acceptance of the tenets of Christianity. Different churches and mission groups differ in the criteria they use for including a person in church membership figures, but the normal precondition is baptism.

[27]Dahm, *History*, p. 17, and p. 270, n. 57.

[28]In the three regions for which data on religion are available for 1961, the proportion that was Christian rose between 1961 and 1971 as follows:

	1961	1971
Jakarta	4.8	8.1
Jogjakarta	2.8	4.6
East Java	0.9	1.7

Sensus Penduduk 1961 D.C.I. Djakarta Raya (Angka-angka tetap) (Jakarta: Biro Pusat Statistik, 1973), p. 13; unpublished 1961 census data for Jogjakarta and East Java; *Sensus Penduduk 1971*, Series E, Volumes for Jakarta, Jogjakarta and East Java, Table 12 (Jakarta: Biro Pusat Statistik, 1974).

However, it should be noted that in 1961 there was a substantial "others" and "unknown" category (2.7 percent in Jakarta, 5.2 percent in Jogjakarta and 0.9 percent in East Java) which almost disappeared in 1971. Some of the people so categorized in 1961 may have been Christians.

ethnic groups in the 1930 census,[29] it has been possible to reconstruct trends in the number of Christians in various regions of Indonesia between the early 1930s and 1971. These are shown in Table 1 and Maps 1 and 2.[30] Maps 1 and 2 can be directly compared visually because the same key has been used for both.

The 1933 figures may be underestimated for some regions,[31] but the massive increase in the number of Christians in the subsequent 38 years cannot be disputed. The Indonesian population increased 1.9 times during this period, whereas the Christian population grew by more than this in every region and by 4.9 times in Indonesia as a whole (see final column of Table 1). Large numerical gains were recorded in some traditional Christian areas but without much increase in the proportion of Christians--North and Central Sulawesi and Maluku are cases in point. In some other areas, both large numerical and relative increases were recorded. These regions and the probable reasons why growth exceeded the natural increase of the population are as follows:

> Java: migration of Christian groups,[32] especially Batak but also Minahasans and Ambonese; migration of Chinese Christians mainly from Sumatra and West Kalimantan. Migration was directed mainly to Jakarta and to a much lesser extent to other cities. Conversion of Chinese; conversion of "statistical Moslems."
>
> Tapanuli and Nias and Mentawai Islands: continuing conversion of local people.
>
> North Sumatra excluding Tapanuli: migration of Batak to the East Coast; conversion of Bataks, Chinese and other groups.
>
> Rest of Sumatra: conversion of Chinese and other groups.

---

[29]Data on religion were collected for Batak, Minahasans, and Ambonese wherever they were living, and also for the total "native population" of some regions of Sumatra and Sulawesi.

[30]In these and subsequent maps, West Irian and a small section of Maluku have been excluded because data are not available for the rural areas of West Irian and in the interests of keeping the maps to a manageable size. Data were plotted by *kabupatèn* (regency) but kabupatèn boundaries have been deleted if contiguous kabupatèn fall in the same range for the indicator.

[31]The census and church membership data were quite consistent in the regions with large Christian populations. This is not surprising in areas where whole villages belonged to the "ethnic church" and infant baptism was practiced. In a few other regions (e.g., West Java, the remainder of Sumatra, and Central Sulawesi), the census showed more Christians than the church membership data. This suggests that the church membership figures may also have been on the low side in some regions for which census data were not available. But the resulting understatement of the total number of Christians in Table 1 could not have been very great.

[32]General support for this contention comes from the fact that in 1971, 17 percent of all lifetime migrants to Java were born in North Sumatra and a further 8 percent in North Sulawesi or Maluku (*Sensus Penduduk 1971* [Jakarta: Biro Pusat Statistik], Series D, Table 23). Even if only half of these migrants were Christians, the proportion that was Christian among lifetime migrants to Java was clearly much higher than the proportion that was Christian among the 1930 population of Java, especially bearing in mind that some of the migrants from other provinces would also have been Christians. In 1971 the majority (62 percent) of the lifetime migrants to Java from North Sumatra, North Sulawesi, and Maluku were living in Jakarta.

Table 1. Approximate Trends in Number and Proportion of Christians in the Regions of Indonesia, 1933-71

Region	Number of Christians		Percentage of Population Christian		X-fold Increase (2)÷(1)
	1933 (1)	1971 (2)	1933 (3)	1971 (4)	(5)
West Java (incl. Jakarta)	34,600	614,300	0.3	2.3	17.8
Central Java (incl. Jogjakarta)	21,900	586,900	0.1	2.4	26.8
East Java	61,900	436,800	0.4	1.7	7.1
North Sumatra:					
Tapanuli Region*	349,000	892,000	30.2	55.3	2.6
Nias-Mentawai Is.	107,500	362,300	47.6	97.7	3.4
Remainder of N. Sumatra	8,200†	891,800	0.7†	19.2	108.8
Rest of Sumatra	12,200	250,300	0.2	1.8	20.5
West Kalimantan	6,400	361,900	0.8	17.9	56.5
South Kalimantan	10,100	22,300	1.2	1.3	2.2
Central and East Kalimantan	7,200	239,300	1.3	16.7	33.2
North Sulawesi	401,400	958,600	53.4	55.8	2.4
Central Sulawesi	70,200	223,900	16.3	24.5	3.2
South Sulawesi	38,100	408,600	1.4	7.9	10.7
S.E. Sulawesi	2,300	13,600	0.5	1.9	5.9
Maluku	205,700	509,900	33.9	46.8	2.5
West Irian	82,800	348,000‡	25.3	37.7‡	4.2
Nusatenggara Barat (incl. Bali)	500	29,400	0.0	0.7	58.8
Nusatenggara Timur	405,500	1,823,300	23.4	79.4	4.5
All Indonesia	1,825,500	8,973,200	2.8	7.5	4.9

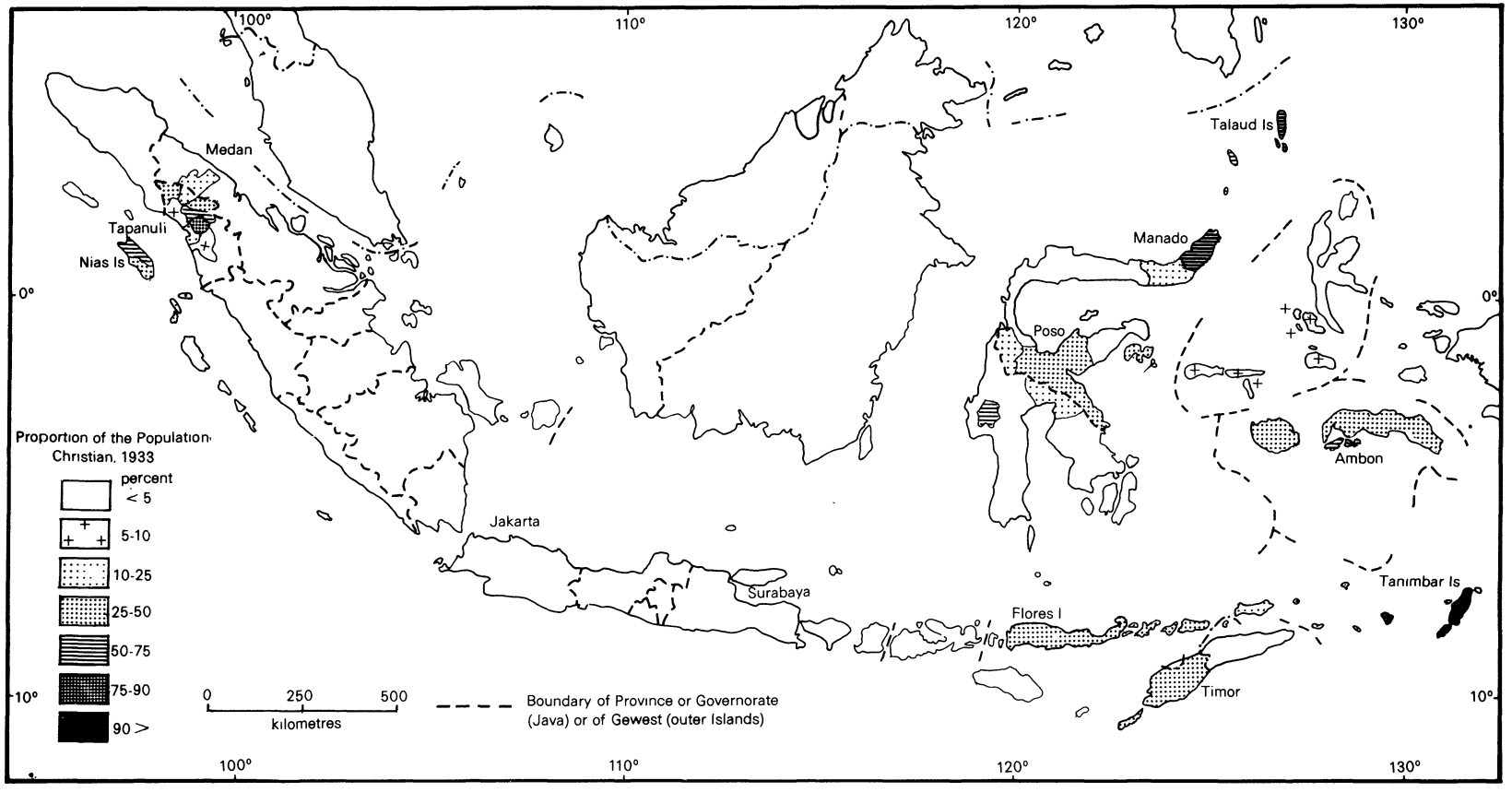
Source: Col. (1) computed from church membership data in Rauws et al., *The Netherlands Indies*, pp. 111-12, 159-62, 166-67, and 169; and *Volkstelling 1930* (8 vols.; Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1933-36), IV, p. 85; V, p. 93.

* In 1971, includes kabupatèn of Dairi, Tapanuli Utara, Tapanuli Tengah, and Tapanuli Selatan.

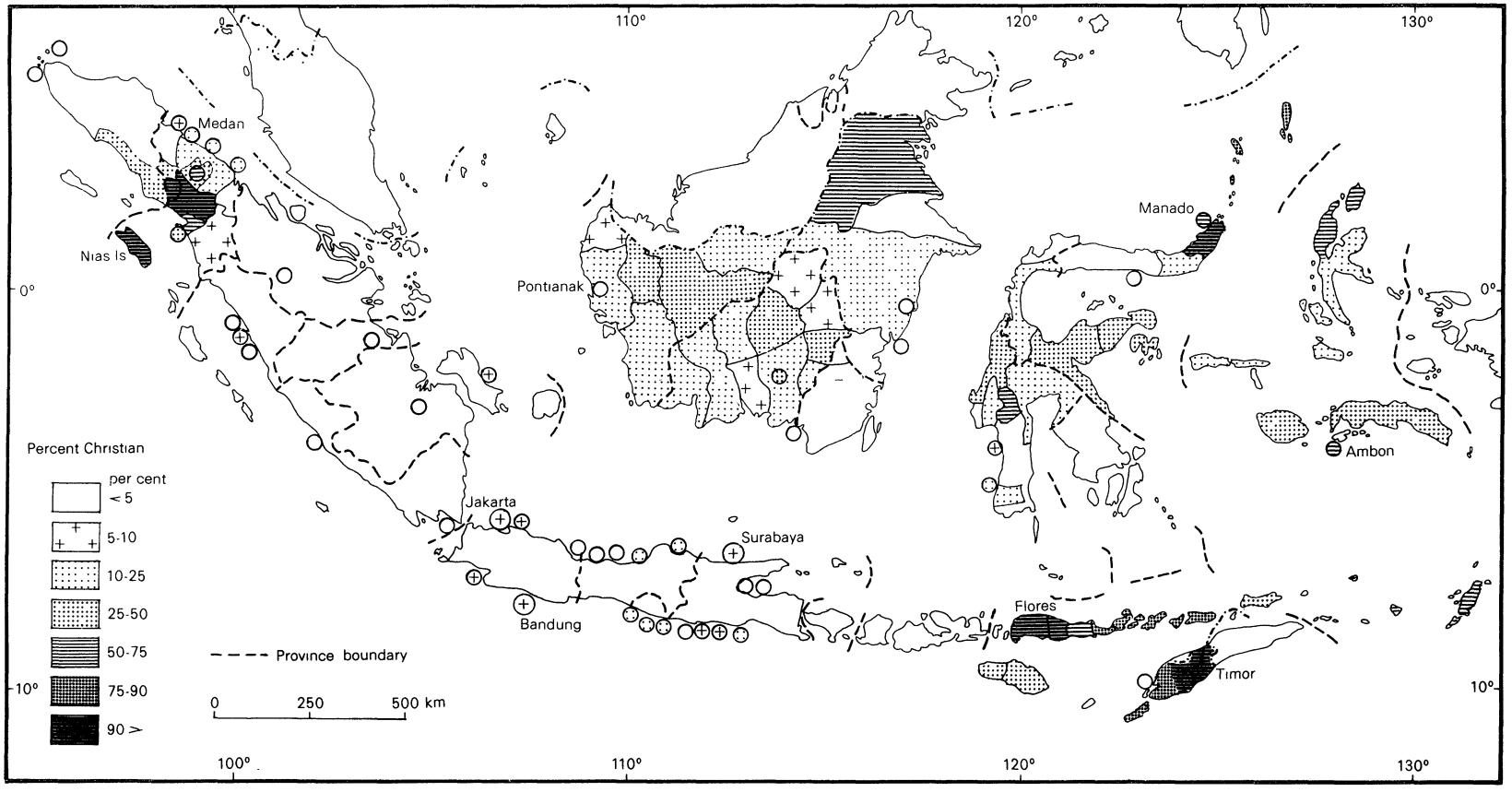
† This figure is probably an underestimate.

‡ Rough estimate based on published figures for religious composition of urban areas and assumption that Christians constituted 30 percent of the population of rural areas. Cooley, writing in 1968 (*Indonesia*, p. 60), stated that the total of Protestants and Catholics exceeded 210,000. But a few years later, in 1974, there were reported to be about 300,000 members of mainline Protestant churches, 140,000 baptized Catholics (and 80,000 preparing for baptism), and an unspecified number of members of Pentecostalist and fundamentalist groups. See *International Review of Mission*, LXIII, 251 (July 1974), pp. 367-68, 377. This implies a total of some 500,000 Christians in 1974, including about 45 percent of the rural population.

Map 1. Indonesia: Per Cent of Population Christian, 1930-33



Map 2. Indonesia: Per cent of Population Christian, by Kabupaten and Kotamadya, 1971



West Kalimantan: conversion of Chinese[33] and those following traditional native religions.

Central and East Kalimantan: conversion of those following traditional native regions; some migration of Christians from elsewhere.

South Sulawesi: massive conversion of Toraja peoples from traditional native religions.

East Nusatenggara: large-scale conversion from traditional native religions in the 1950s and 1960s.

West Irian: conversion from traditional native religions in the 1950s and 1960s.

By mid-1976, with the incorporation into Indonesia of about half a million Christians in the former Portuguese Timor, and conservatively assuming a population growth rate of 2.5 percent among the Christian population, the number of Christians in Indonesia must have reached approximately 11 million, even supposing that no further conversions took place after 1971.

Religious Composition of the Indonesian Population in 1971

A detailed picture of the religious composition of the Indonesian population in 1971 is given in Table 2 and Maps 2 and 3. There are sharp differences in the distribution of Moslems and Christians. Whereas 84 percent of Indonesia's Moslems live in Java and Sumatra (excluding North Sumatra), only 22 percent of the Christian population lives there. Bali, West Nusatenggara, and South Kalimantan also have very few Christians. In rural Java, the number of Christians is insignificant: only one kabupatèn out of the 82 in Java is more than 5 percent Christian. But Christians constitute 8 percent of the population of urban areas of Java (including Jakarta);[34] and 13 percent of all Indonesian Christians live in these cities. The important Christian areas in terms of total numbers are North Sumatra, East Nusatenggara, North Sulawesi, and the cities of Java.

Although Maps 1 and 2 do not distinguish between Catholics and Protestants, there are some important differences in the distribution of the two groups, and Catholics appear to have made even faster gains than Protestants in the period since 1933. Catholics are especially strong in Central Java, in West Kalimantan, and in their old stronghold of East Nusatenggara, particularly the island of Flores.

Given that conversion has clearly been an important factor in the recent growth of Christianity, the question arises whether this conversion has normally been one of family groups or whether it has tended to be age-selective. The 1971 census reports include data on religion by age which throw some light on this question. These data are summarized for certain key provinces in Table 3. In Indonesia as a whole, there is a clear tendency for the proportion of Christians to be highest

---

[33]Large numbers of Chinese in West Kalimantan have become Catholics.

[34]In urban areas of Central Java and Jogjakarta, the proportion of Christians climbs to 11.6 percent.

Table 2. Indonesia: Religious Composition of the Population, by Region, 1971

Region	Islam	Christian*	Hindu	Buddhist and Confucian	Other	Total
		Numbers (in Thousands)				
Jakarta	3,831	366	7	338	6	4,546
Rest of Java: urban	7,957	753	13	394	12	9,129
Rest of Java: rural	61,315	520	159	335	27	62,354
North Sumatra	3,989	2,146	13	275	197	6,621
Rest of Sumatra	13,416	250	34	451	29	14,180
North Sulawesi	744	959	7	7	1	1,718
South Sulawesi	4,597	409	11	44	119	5,180
Rest of Sulawesi	1,361	237	0	3	26	1,628
West Kalimantan	863	362	3	137	655	2,020
Rest of Kalimantan	2,519	261	7	31	314	3,133
Maluku	543	510	4	4	28	1,090
Bali	108	18	1,978	16	0	2,120
West Nusatenggara	2,110	11	60	22	0	2,203
East Nusatenggara	192	1,823	0	7	273	2,295
Irian Jaya†	33	116	0	1	0	151
All Indonesia†	103,579	8,742	2,296	2,064	1,686	118,368
		Percentage Distribution				
Jakarta	84.3	8.1	0.2	7.4	0.1	100
Rest of Java: urban	87.2	8.2	0.1	4.3	0.1	100
Rest of Java: rural	98.3	0.8	0.3	0.5	0.0	100
North Sumatra	60.2	32.4	0.2	4.2	3.0	100
Rest of Sumatra	94.6	1.8	0.2	3.2	0.2	100
North Sulawesi	43.3	55.8	0.4	0.4	0.1	100
South Sulawesi	88.8	7.9	0.2	0.8	2.2	100
Rest of Sulawesi	83.6	14.6	0.0	0.2	1.6	100
West Kalimantan	42.7	17.9	0.1	6.8	32.4	100
Rest of Kalimantan	80.4	8.3	0.2	1.0	10.0	100
Maluku	49.9	46.8	0.4	0.4	2.5	100
Bali	5.1	0.8	93.3	0.8	0.0	100
West Nusatenggara	95.8	0.5	2.7	1.0	0.0	100
East Nusatenggara	8.4	79.4	0.0	0.3	11.9	100
Irian Jaya†	21.9	76.8	0.0	0.7	0.0	100
All Indonesia†	87.5	7.4	1.9	1.7	1.4	100

Source: *Sensus Penduduk 1971*, Series D, Table 13.

Note: Small differences between totals and subtotals due to rounding.

* Includes the categories "Catholic," "Protestant," and "other Christian."

† Irian Jaya figures refer only to the towns.

Map 3. Indonesia: Per cent of Population Moslem, by Kabupaten and Kotamadya, 1971

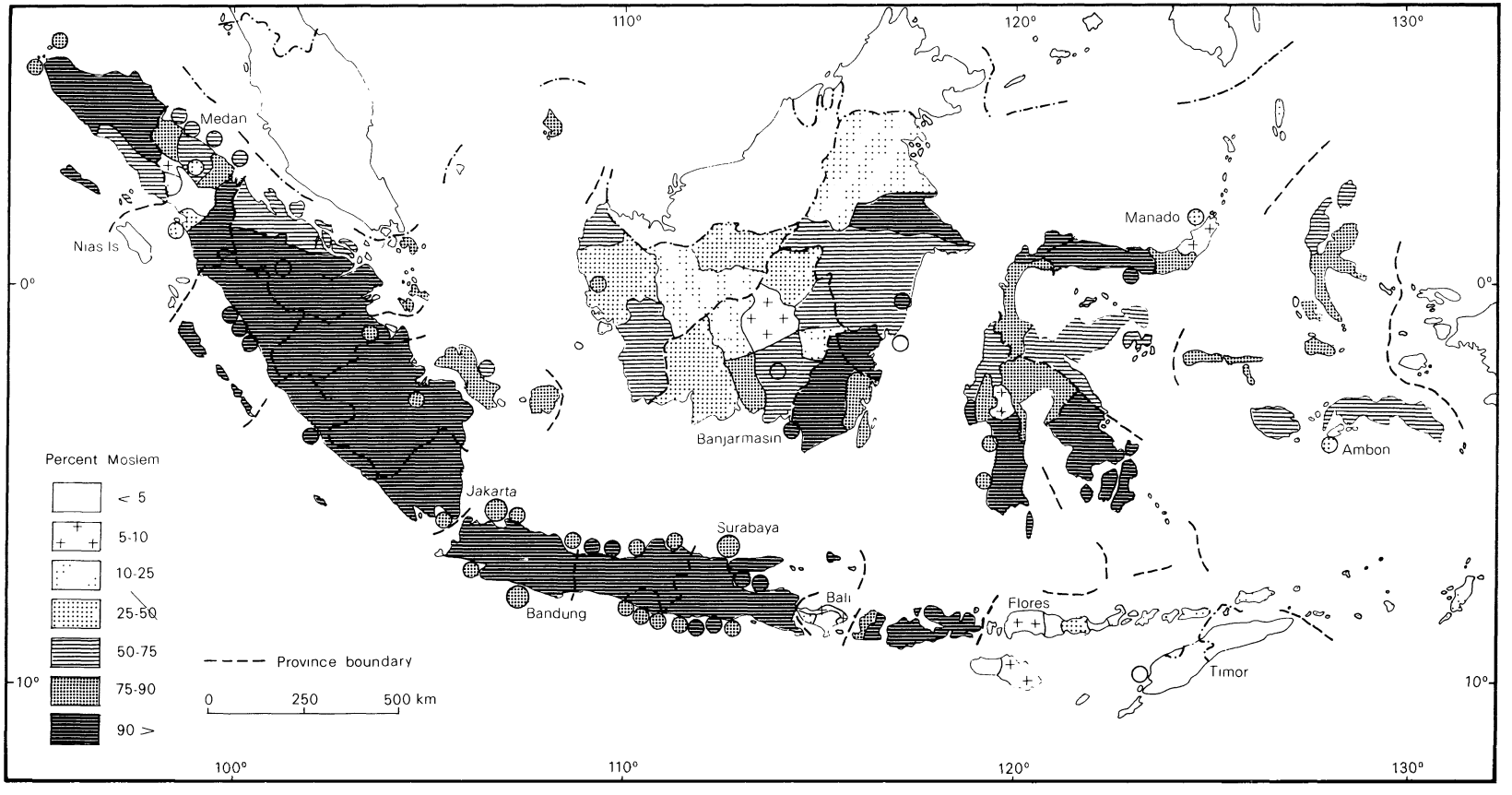


Table 3. Indonesia: Percentage Christian by Broad Age Groups, Selected Provinces, 1971

Age Group	All Indonesia		West Java		Central Java-Jogja		East Java		North Sulawesi	
	Urban	Total	Urban	Total	Urban	Total	Urban	Total	Urban	Total
0-9	10.1	7.4	4.9	1.0	11.1	2.2	6.9	1.5	51.9	52.4
10-19	11.2	8.1	6.0	1.3	13.4	3.0	8.0	2.1	54.1	56.0
20-29	12.4	8.1	7.5	1.4	15.8	3.3	9.3	2.2	51.7	52.9
30-49	9.6	6.4	6.0	1.1	9.3	1.9	6.6	1.4	57.8	59.3
50+	9.1	6.9	6.2	1.1	8.0	1.8	6.8	1.6	58.6	64.8
All ages	10.6	7.4	5.9	1.1	11.6	2.4	7.5	1.7	54.2	55.8
Ratio, 10-29/30+	1.24	1.24	1.09	1.26	1.61	1.65	1.27	1.40	0.92	0.90
Age Group	South Sulawesi		E. Kalimantan		Maluku		E. Nusatenggara		North Sumatra	
	Urban	Total	Urban	Total	Urban	Total	Urban	Total	Urban	Total
0-9	12.2	8.3	2.8	19.0	45.6	44.9	71.0	80.6	30.4	32.7
10-19	14.0	8.6	2.7	13.2	47.2	48.5	71.7	82.1	30.0	32.9
20-29	13.3	7.7	4.5	19.3	43.9	43.4	74.7	81.9	28.7	33.9
30-49	10.9	7.1	2.2	17.4	46.8	47.7	67.0	78.4	26.6	31.3
50+	7.5	7.1	1.2	14.7	50.1	52.0	62.8	68.8	17.7	30.3
All ages	12.2	7.9	2.8	17.1	46.4	46.8	70.5	79.4	28.3	32.4
Ratio, 10-29/30+	1.37	1.15	1.73	0.94	0.96	0.95	1.11	1.09	1.24	1.08

at ages 10-19 and 20-29. Above age 30 no clear age differentials emerge. The percentage Christian at ages 0-9 is intermediate between the higher figures at ages 10-29 and the lower figures at ages 30 and over, which is not surprising since such children would be considered to share their parents' religion and their parents would be included in both the below-30 and above-30 age groups.

The ratio of the proportion of Christians at ages 10-29 to those aged 30 and over is highest in Central Java, Jogjakarta, and East Java. It is also fairly high in West Java and South Sulawesi. The proportion of Christians reaches 16 percent among those aged 20-29 in urban areas of Central Java and Jogjakarta. These data suggest that conversion of Javanese (and perhaps Chinese) during the decade or so preceding the census had been heavily concentrated among young people.

By contrast, in Maluku and North Sulawesi no such tendency is apparent, nor is it very marked in areas such as East Nusatenggara and North Sumatra. These are all areas with large and long-established Christian communities.

Hindus are predominant only in Bali, but significant minorities are also found in East Java and Lombok. There have been some conversions to Hinduism in East and Central Java in recent years.[35]

Buddhists and Confucians are almost all Chinese, but many Chinese are Christians. Therefore, although the distribution of Buddhists and Confucians reflects in a general way the distribution of the Chinese, it must be borne in mind that a higher proportion of Chinese may be Christians in some areas than others. Buddhists and Confucians are scattered fairly widely through the archipelago in urban areas, as well as in rural areas of the large islands of Bangka and Belitung which lie east of Sumatra and belong to the province of Riau. They were formerly widely distributed also in rural areas of West Kalimantan and parts of the east coast of Sumatra, but in 1959-60 the Chinese were moved into the cities (in the case of West Java, military force was used), and they were forbidden to trade in rural areas.[36] The provinces with the highest proportion of Buddhists and Confucians are Jakarta, North Sumatra, Riau, and West Kalimantan.[37] In some other provinces where the

---

[35]Because the 1961 census data on religion (available for East Java and Jogjakarta but not for Central Java) combined Hindus with Buddhists and also contained a fairly large "others" category, comparison between 1961 and 1971 is difficult. In 1971, there were 98,000 Hindus in East Java, 54,000 in Central Java, and 16,000 in Jogjakarta. Numbers of Hindus have clearly increased sharply in the kabupatèn of Kediri, Blitar, Malang, and (most sharply of all) Banjuwangi in East Java and Gunung Kidul in Jogjakarta. In Central Java, most of the Hindus are in Klaten and Boyolali. See also Geertz, "Religious Change," pp. 76-80.

[36]At the time of these persecutions, more than 100,000 Chinese opted for repatriation to China (Coppel, "The Indonesian Chinese," p. 66).

[37]That the situation had not changed very greatly since 1930, despite the disruptions of the intervening period, is demonstrated by the following quotation from the 1930 census report: "it is only in certain districts that their settlements have attained any great numerical strength. These lie in a great circle around Singapore; in the north-western part of Borneo, the tin islands of Banka and Billiton, the Riouw archipelago and the Division of the East Coast of Sumatra. In these regions live a total of some 450,000 Chinese, or 17 percent of the total population living in those

proportion of Buddhists and Confucians is quite low, the proportion is more substantial in the urban areas because the Chinese are concentrated almost exclusively in these areas. For example, in urban areas of Central Java the proportion Buddhist and Confucian reaches 4.5 percent, compared with 0.7 percent in rural areas.

Religion and Education

One could expect religion to be an important factor in explaining some of the differences in the social characteristics of the Indonesian population, such as educational attainment and labor force participation of women. It *is* an important factor, but its role is difficult to isolate from the mesh of historical factors and cultural and ethnic differences of which it is an integral component.

Education had a key role to play in the struggle of both Islam and Christianity to gain acceptance in the Indonesian setting. Given the multiplicity of competing beliefs and value systems, the Moslem school played a key role in establishing a clear and positive identity for Indonesian Islam. Moreover, the doctrinal, legalistic, and scriptural quality of the mainstream of Islamic tradition and the limited role of institutions such as the priesthood, the sermon, and collective ritual left the school virtually alone as a means of imparting the doctrines of Islam.[38] For Christian churches and missions, the school, surrounded as it was by an aura of modernity and the power and success of the colonial order, and, as it promised, opening doors into desirable civil service employment, was a powerful tool for spreading the influence of Christianity.

It has long been evident that education is more advanced in certain heavily Christian areas of Indonesia than elsewhere. North Sulawesi, Maluku, and North Sumatra had the highest education attainment among the adult population of any provinces in 1971, and the equivalent regions had the highest literacy rates in 1930 (except for South Sumatra and Lampung). Java has always lagged well behind these regions in educational development. Moreover, it is the predominantly Christian regions within North Sulawesi, Maluku and North Sumatra (i.e., Minahasa and Sangir-Talaud, Ambon, and Tapanuli, respectively) which rank highest of all in percentages of the population that are literate or have completed a primary education.

However, it is not possible to draw the simplistic conclusion that the Christian areas are the better-educated areas of Indonesia. Although some of the Christian areas have clearly long been in the forefront of educational development, others are still relatively backward educationally. Moreover, not all the areas where Christianity has long been established are educationally advanced: North Sulawesi and Maluku are relatively advanced, while large areas of East Nusatenggara are

---

parts. Outside this area, it is only in Batavia and its environs that a large Chinese population is met with. . . ." (*Volkstelling 1930*, VII, p. 156.)

[38]Cf. Clifford Geertz, "Modernization in a Muslim Society: The Indonesian Case," in Robert N. Bellah (ed.), *Religion and Progress in Modern Asia* (New York: The Free Press, 1965), p. 96.

not.[39] By the same token, not all the areas more recently converted to Christianity are backward educationally: parts of Kalimantan and much of Irian Jaya are, but the Tapanuli and Toraja areas are not.

Comparable differentials are found with regard to education in Moslem areas. For example, the Minangkabau and the Mandailing Batak have long had a much higher proportion of the population educated than have, for example, the Banten and Pesisir areas of West Java or the Buginese-Makassarese areas of South Sulawesi. Moreover, the Minangkabau and Mandailing Batak are noted for producing a disproportionate number of intellectuals and national leaders.

To understand why these differences exist requires a careful reading of Indonesian history, with regard both to the timing and geographic allocation of missionary efforts, the timing and location of various Islamic reform movements, and other factors influencing the development of education.

In the beginning, the growth of Christianity was necessarily confined largely to the areas of Eastern Indonesia which had been little penetrated by Islam and were of special interest for Portuguese and Dutch trade. The second "wave" of missionary activity which began in the late nineteenth century was concentrated in interior areas among ethnic groups which had remained animist--the Batak of North Sumatra, the Toraja of South Sulawesi, the Dayak of Kalimantan, and the Irianese. These groups were characterized by fierce independence, relative isolation and cultural backwardness according to the lights of the more refined coastal-dwelling peoples (and particularly of the Javanese).

Given the heterogeneity of the suku which are largely Christian and the varied history of their contact with western influence, a wide diversity in their level of educational development could be expected.

---

[39]The religious and educational history of East Nusatenggara is complex, and mapping religion and education by kabupatèn disguises relationships which would show up more clearly if *kecamatan* (district) data were available. The areas where education was given most attention by the Dutch were Sikka and Larrantuka, both Catholic areas of Flores; and Roti and Savu, Protestant islands to the west of Timor. The kabupatèn of which these areas form a part show up well on all the educational indicators available in the 1971 census. It is likely that if data were available for Roti and Savu alone, they would rank higher still; though if the literacy data from the 1930 census is any guide, they would still be well below Minahasa and Ambon. See *Volkstelling 1930*, V, pp. 89-90, 207-8. The educational history of Roti is fascinating, with a continuous history of schooling since 1730, when the first Christian king of a Rotinese state requested a schoolmaster. The presence of a schoolmaster not only gave legitimacy to the claim of being a Christian state, but it also appeared to give an advantage in dealing with the Dutch. Thus states without Christian rulers were also soon demanding schoolmasters. In the nineteenth century, the Dutch, recognizing the educational "head start" the Rotinese had achieved, consciously fostered further educational advance. See James J. Fox, *A Clash of Economies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, forthcoming). The Rotinese remain the educational "elite" of the Timor area. See F. J. Ormeling, *The Timor Problem* (Groningen: Wolters, 1956), pp. 222-23.

Although the pockets of educational progress in Nusatenggara Timur clearly show a relationship between Christianity and educational development, it is also true that the areas most backward educationally include not only those with large animist populations (e.g., the island of Sumba) but also areas of "ceremonial Catholicism" in Timor (Belu and Timor Tengah Utara).

The role of the Christian missions in stressing educational development has been a common thread in their experience, but the degree of emphasis on education has varied in different regions at different times, and the spread of education has been strongly influenced by the geographic isolation and extreme poverty of some of these regions (for example, much of East Nusatenggara and the interior of Kalimantan).

As for the second key factor, the historical development of education, the Dutch were very slow to show an interest in fostering a relatively widespread basic education in Indonesia. They lagged considerably behind the British in India in this regard.[40] Dutch interest in education grew during the second half of the nineteenth century, but not without considerable ambivalence as to the desirability of establishing broad-based public education.[41] Even in 1900, in Java the budget allocation for education of Europeans was almost double that for the "education of natives,"[42] and there were only 562 schools in Java (one per 50,000 inhabitants), more than half of which had been established by private enterprise.[43] Thus the areas which had long been under effective Dutch control--notably Java--did not profit thereby in terms of a more widespread basic education. Only in Ambon and Minahasa did education flourish, and this for the special reasons that mission education was firmly established there quite early and the Dutch found educated Ambonese and Minahasans invaluable in administering their far-flung domain.[44] By the time the Dutch interest in educating their subjects developed, most other regions were also under effective Dutch control, and in this sense they all started off on an "equal footing" with Java.

Much of the early development of education in Indonesia was because of the work of Christian missions, which stressed education both as a means of imparting the Gospel and drawing unbelievers within the sphere of influence of the church, and as one of the benefits believers gained by accepting Christianity. Becoming a Christian also meant becoming westernized, and education was an integral part of westernization. This interest of the missions in education was especially important in Minahasa and Maluku, since Protestant Christianity was firmly established there earlier than in areas such as the Batak lands of North Sumatra or the Toraja area of South Sulawesi. And yet at the

---

[40]Furnivall attributes the difference to the smaller demand for clerks in Java under indirect rule and the Culture System (Furnivall, *Colonial Policy*, p. 377). The English writer Money, who visited Java in 1858 and was fulsome in his praise of Dutch colonial administration, nevertheless criticized this lack of attention to education. J. W. B. Money, *Java: or How to Manage a Colony* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1861), quoted in Clive Day, *The Dutch in Java* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 290.

[41]The first sign of a change in government policy was the grant of f.25,000 a year to be used for the education of native officials, but a more significant step forward was the establishment of a special department for education, religion, and industry in 1866 (Day, *The Dutch*, pp. 390-91). It has been argued that there was no widespread popular demand for education in Java (Rauws et al., *The Netherlands Indies*, p. 87).

[42]Day, *The Dutch*, p. 389. [43]Dahm, *History*, p. 15.

[44]As well as working for the Dutch as administrators and functionaries throughout the Indies, the Ambonese and Minahasans provided the backbone of the Netherlands East Indies Army.

turn of the century, not only Minahasa and Maluku, but also the Batak lands (Tapanuli) were dramatically ahead of the other regions when measured by the number of elementary schools per head of population (see Table 4). Even these figures do not tell the full story, because the mission schools frequently taught in Dutch, which opened the door to higher education for their graduates[45] and gave them an edge in obtaining civil service jobs.

The advanced state of education in Minahasa, the Batak country, and Ambon cannot be attributed simply to the efforts of the missions. Mission education was predominant in North Tapanuli and very important in Minahasa, and while it was not of great importance in Maluku, most of the private non-mission schools there were specifically Christian rather than secular schools. But in addition, in both Minahasa and Ambon the ratio of government schools to population was much higher than elsewhere, especially Java (see Table 4), and had been for some time; in 1882, out of 512 government native schools, 111 were in Manado and 29 in Sangihe-Talaud.[46] This favoritism in the provision of government education was undoubtedly largely with a view to maintaining the supply of clerks for the government service from these regions.[47]

To say that the Dutch favored these two areas in the provision of education, however, begs the question of whether the Minahasans and Ambonese were more receptive to education and to "westernization" in general than were the Javanese. There are elements of the chicken and egg problem here. By the early twentieth century, the Minahasans and Ambonese were both better educated and more westernized than the Javanese. But to what extent the westernization was the result of their greater exposure to western education and to what extent the exposure to western education was the result of the colonial government's reaction to their demonstrated receptivity to western influences is difficult to determine. Perhaps more important was the direct Dutch rule in Minahasa and Ambon, whereas the Dutch administration in Java was indirect, working through the local rulers.

Finally, even if the Dutch had been fairly even-handed in the provision of educational facilities, differences in educational development within the predominantly Moslem areas could have been expected as a result of the differing role accorded education by different Islamic groups and the varying strength of these groups in different regions. Within Java, Geertz argues, the santri variant of Javanese Islam, "because of its doctrinal complexity . . . its lack of close integration with some of the basic social forms and fundamental attitudes of peasant society, and the hostility to it on the part of most non-santris,"[48] needed the reinforcement of special schools, whereas the abangan variant did not. Thus in areas of santri dominance, the *pondok* or *pesantrèn*

---

[45]Dahm, *History*, p. 16.

[46]I. J. Brugmans, *Geschiedenis van het Onderwijs in Nederlandsch-Indië* (Groningen-Batavia: Wolters, 1938), p. 264.

[47]One author attributes the opening of government schools in Minahasa in the 1870s and 1880s to the "fanatically secular policy" of the Dutch East Indies Government, which preferred opening its own schools to supporting the existing mission schools. Hendrik Kraemer, *From Missionhood to Independent Church* (London: SCM Press, 1958), p. 12.

[48]Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, p. 177.

Table 4. Elementary Schools in the Dutch East Indies about 1900.

Territory	Government Schools	Private Schools	Mission Schools	Total	Population in 1000s	Population per School 1000s	Population per Government School 1000s
Java and Madura	269	231	62	562	28,386	50	106
Sumatra (except Batak country)	77	17	4	98	2,862	29	37
Batak country	19	6	175	200	321	1.6	17
Kalimantan	12	3	21	36	1,076	30	90
Sulawesi (except Menado)	14	-	-	14	1,442 (1895)	103	103
Menado*	115	14	237	366	423	1.2	3.7
Ternate (Maluku)	2	2	9	13	133	10	66
Ambon (Maluku)	74	75	17	166	271	1.6	3.7
Timor	15	10	16	41	306 (1905)	7	20
Bali and Lombok	4	1	-	5	1,039	208	260
Total	601	359	541	1,501	36,259	24	60

Source: Adapted from Bernhard Dahm, *History*, p. 16, Table 1.

* "Menado" refers to the present-day kabupatèn of Minahasa and Bolaang-Mongondouw in North Sulawesi.

(a mosque-linked religious school) developed. The teaching consisted of religious chanting in Arabic, with occasional commentaries or translations by the *kijaji* (the teacher or counsellor), and perhaps a very limited amount of general education. Since the 1920s, the modernists have succeeded both in establishing more modern forms of Islamic schools, called *madrasah,* in bringing elements of western education into many of the pondok, and in opening education more widely to girls. It is therefore very difficult to generalize about the forms of Islamic education. Some pondok devote less than half their time to religious education; others have not compromised at all with modern educational theories. The madrasah emphasize general education to a greater extent than the pondok and in some cases differ little from public schools.

There is no doubt that the madrasah have had a great impact on the amount of secular education available to orthodox Moslems in Indonesia. At the turn of the century there were virtually no madrasah; by 1954 there were about a million and a half pupils in madrasah compared with nearly two million in pesantrèn.[49]

It is noteworthy that education is more widespread in many of the more orthodox Islamic areas (Aceh, West Sumatra, South Sumatra, and the Priangan area of West Java, for example) than in the areas of Central and East Java where abangan elements are strong. Moreover, despite the clear tendency for the ratio of females to males among those receiving schooling to be lower among Moslems than among Christians, this ratio was lower in Central and East Java than in many of the areas where Islam was stronger and more orthodox.[50]

In 1930, some of the lowest adult literacy rates in all Indonesia were recorded in the sultanates of Jogjakarta and Surakarta, and one suspects that the feudal social structure and the poverty in these regions had militated against the extension of education for any but the *bangsawan* (nobility), whereas the religious schools established in the more devout Moslem areas, for all their shortcomings, did provide basic literacy for many of their pupils. Moreover, it was precisely in the more devout Moslem areas that the reform missionary and social action movement in Indonesian Islam, the Muhammadiyah, was most active and was therefore able to do most in the field of education.[51] Aside from this, special "ethnic" factors (e.g., the passion of the Minangkabau of West Sumatra for education) are widely believed to be important explanatory variables.

However, to stress such broad "ethnic" factors as explanations for differential educational progress while ignoring the historical context in which education developed would be as unwise in the case of the Moslem regions as it would be for the Christian regions. The rapid

---

[49]*Ibid.*

[50]One of the lowest ratios of female to male literacy of all was found among Arabs, a minority immigrant and immigrant-descended group who have adhered more strictly to the Middle Eastern version of Islam. But the Arab ratio for Java as a whole did not fall as low as the "native population's" ratio in parts of Central and East Java and Bali.

[51]The Muhammadiyah was actually founded in Jogjakarta, and continues to play a major role there; nevertheless its role is on the whole greater in the more devout Moslem areas than in areas such as Central Java.

progress of education in West Sumatra in the first two decades of the twentieth century was partly due to the rapid expansion of the government school system, especially in the second decade of the century.[52] But this expansion was partly in response to a rapidly developing taste for education as modernist movements developed in response to the challenge of expanding Dutch political and economic domination. There were both Islamic and more secular movements. The Kaum Muda, led by Datuk Sutan Maharadja, sought *kemajuan* (advancement or progress) through educational development and laid particular stress on education of girls.[53] The Islamic modernists also promoted their reforms through education. In the ferment of social change and the competition between *adat*, traditional and reformed Islam, and western ideas introduced by the Dutch, then, education played a major role.

Among the Mandailing Batak, too, the rapid spread of education in the second half of the nineteenth century appears to have been part of their cultural resurgence, which was to some degree stimulated by the crisis of increasing Dutch influence and control.[54] The question still remains, however, as to why a growing interest in education should have been one reaction to increasing Dutch influence among the Minangkabau and Mandailing Batak, but not to the same extent among many other Moslem groups.

In the twentieth century, particularly since Independence, the spread of education has been much less dependent on religious factors or the degree of government interest in different regions; it has been more dependent on a unified government education policy. At the time of the 1930 census, however, the diffusion of literacy among adults in particular regions reflected their religious history, along with other special circumstances (see Table 5).

A short diversion is necessary here to examine the comparability of the definitions of literacy in the 1930 and 1971 censuses, on which most of the analysis in the present section is based. As the English summary of the 1930 census report would have it,

> Literates were considered to be in general persons who (may it be with mistakes) were able to write a note to an acquaintance on an ordinary subject, no matter in which language or with which characters. Furthermore were usually regarded as literates persons that at the period of the census went to school and were at least in the third class of a village, Government or private school.

The 1971 census considered literates to be persons who could both read and write simple sentences in any kind of letter or character. Persons who could read but not write were classified as "illiterate."

The definitions in the two years, with their emphasis on ability to write, appear to be closely comparable. We can be less certain that this was also true of their actual application by the enumerators.

---

[52]Taufik Abdullah, "Modernization in the Minangkabau World: West Sumatra in the Early Decades of the Twentieth Century," in Claire Holt (ed.), *Culture and Politics in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), pp. 212-13.

[53]*Ibid.*, pp. 219-24.

[54]Cf. Lance Castles, "The Political Life of a Sumatran Residency: Tapanuli 1915-1940" (Ph.D. thesis, Monash University, 1972), pp. 23-24, 71, 180, 250.

Table 5. Literacy of the Native Population, by Division, 1930

Division (Gewesten)	Adult Population % Literate			(1)/(2)	% of Adult Literates with Elementary Education	Total Population % Literate			(6)/(7)	% of Literates with Elementary Education
	Males (1)	Females (2)	Total (3)	(4)	(5)	Males (6)	Females (7)	Total (8)	(9)	(10)
West-Java	14.7	2.7	8.2	5.4	74.3	11.7	2.7	7.1	4.3	80.6
Midden-Java	12.0	1.0	6.1	12.3	82.5	10.8	1.2	5.9	8.9	87.9
Jogjakarta	10.1	0.9	5.2	11.4	76.0	8.0	1.0	4.4	8.2	83.0
Surakarta	8.9	0.9	4.7	10.1	68.1	6.5	0.8	3.6	7.9	75.5
Oost-Java	9.1	0.6	4.6	14.0	78.2	8.2	0.8	4.4	10.5	85.0
All Java--Madura	11.4	1.3	6.0	8.7	77.4	9.7	1.4	5.5	6.8	83.9
Atjeh en onderh.	13.9	1.8	7.6	7.8	74.7	12.2	2.0	7.1	6.2	81.0
Tapanuli	28.4	3.6	15.6	7.9	87.8	21.2	3.7	12.4	5.8	91.0
Oostkust van Sumatra	17.5	1.4	9.8	12.7	62.8	14.7	1.6	8.4	9.3	69.5
Westkust van Sumatra	17.0	3.7	9.9	4.6	81.3	15.0	4.3	9.6	3.5	86.6
Riau en onderh.	13.4	1.1	7.0	12.5	65.3	10.0	1.0	5.6	9.7	72.3
Djambi	17.7	0.9	9.4	19.9	55.4	13.4	0.8	7.3	16.5	62.9
Palembang	29.1	7.4	18.2	3.9	38.6	20.1	5.0	12.6	4.0	45.2
Bengkulen	32.8	5.6	19.4	5.9	71.1	25.5	4.8	15.5	5.3	77.6
Lampung	46.3	34.3	40.3	1.4	16.7	31.0	22.7	26.9	1.4	22.1
Bangka en onderh.	23.5	1.9	12.6	12.1	77.3	18.5	2.0	10.4	9.4	82.4
All Sumatra	21.7	4.7	13.1	4.6	60.4	17.1	4.1	10.7	4.2	68.8
Borneo	13.1	0.7	6.8	15.4	58.0	9.6	0.8	5.2	11.9	65.8
Celebes en onderh.	9.9	1.5	5.4	6.6	33.9	7.3	1.2	4.2	6.1	47.0
Menado	36.6	21.8	29.0	1.7	93.8	26.4	17.3	21.9	1.5	94.7
All Celebes	17.2	6.6	11.6	2.6	73.3	12.5	5.4	8.9	2.3	78.2
Bali en Lombok	7.8	0.4	4.0	21.2	29.6	6.1	0.4	3.2	16.8	42.2
Timor en onderh.	7.1	2.4	4.7	2.9	87.2	7.5	2.8	5.1	2.7	91.2
Molukken	21.7	15.5	18.6	1.4	91.4	16.7	12.2	14.5	1.4	91.7
All Outer Islands	17.2	4.6	10.7	3.7	65.6	13.4	4.0	8.7	3.4	72.8
All Netherlands Indies	13.2	2.3	7.4	5.8	72.3	10.8	2.2	6.4	5.0	79.4
Chinese--All Neth. Indies	50.9	15.4	38.6	3.3		39.5	12.4	28.9	3.2	

Source: *Volkstelling 1930*, VIII, Table 14, pp. 110-11; IV & V, Table 22; I, Table 27; II, Table 26; III, Table 25.

To return to Table 5, in Java 94 percent of the adult population was still illiterate in 1930. Literacy was highest in West Java, especially in the Priangan region surrounding Bandung. Outside Java, adult literacy rates on the whole were substantially higher, though there were areas of extremely low literacy such as Bali,[55] southern Sulawesi and most of Borneo and Nusatenggara. Literacy was most widespread in the divisions of Lampung, Bengkulu, Palembang, Tapanuli, and Bangka in Sumatra (all above 12 percent), in Menado in Sulawesi (29 percent) and in Maluku (19 percent). In Tapanuli, Menado, and Maluku the influence of the missions is clear, not only in the high overall literacy rates[56] but also in the high female literacy relative to male and the high proportion of literates who had received formal education. The high literacy rates in southern Sumatra are, however, not explicable on the basis of religion. In Palembang and Lampung, the proportion of literates with formal education was quite low, suggesting that there may have been a massive overstatement of literacy in these two divisions. But the 1930 census report offers a different explanation: the prevalence of a village game in that part of Sumatra in which "the youths and maidens court one another with love letters (*mandjau*)."[57] This game, the census report claims, would account not only for the high overall literacy level but also for the outstanding high ratio of female to male literates.

The 1930 census report commented as follows on the regional differences in literacy:

> The explanation of the higher relative number of literates in regions where schooling has been furnished for the natives on a broader scale for many decades past and in places where opportunities for employment are offered for the better educated is obvious enough. In the cities much higher percentages are met with, while the Preanger owes its many literates to the fact that as early as the second half of the 19th century popular education had made great strides there. In the Minahasa, in the Moluccas and here and there in the Lesser Sunda Islands the educational facilities furnished by the missions,

---

[55]As in Jogjakarta and Surakarta, the feudal social structures in Bali no doubt militated against the spread of popular education.

[56]The emphasis on female education by the missions had long resulted in high proportions of females among pupils not only of the mission schools but also of the government schools. The following table (derived from Brugmans, *Geschiedenis*, p. 266) shows the number of males and females attending government native schools in Ambon and Java:

	Males	Females	% Females
Ambon 1877	3,162	2,384	43.0
Java 1877	12,498	25	0.2
Java 1897	24,732	301	1.2

[57]*Volkstelling 1930*, VIII, p. 53; see also IV, p. 109. One is struck by the parallel between this reason for literacy and the situation among the Buhid, a people of the southern mountain regions of Mindoro in the Philippines, who use an Indic-derived script to exchange bamboo-incised messages and to record their prayers, chants, and love songs. It is claimed that there is a 70 percent literacy rate among this people, although there is no established method or system of instruction in learning to write the script. See Anton Postma, "Contemporary Mangyan Scripts," *Philippine Journal of Linguistics*, II, 1 (June 1971), p. 7.

> both Catholic and Protestant, have borne fruit to the extent that in some regions already more than half of the adults, both male and female, can read and write.[58]

The figures in Table 5 mask some sharp differences in literacy rates revealed by the more detailed *afdeeling* (district) figures. For example, these figures reveal the higher literacy in the Priangan area of West Java and in certain districts of Central Java compared to Java as a whole. Rather than map them, I have chosen to map data which are of still more interest.

The proportion of literates with elementary schooling in 1930 differed sharply in the different districts. For example, in Lampung and Bali fewer than 30 percent of the adult literates had elementary education, whereas in Menado 94 percent did. Since literacy data are "soft" data subject to flexibility in interpretation at the collection stage, and since the influence of the missions on education was through the provision of formal education, Map 4 presents the proportion of persons in 1930 who were both literate and had an elementary education, by region. The pattern which emerges reflects very clearly the influence of the missions on educational development. Menado and the Sangihe-Talaud Islands, South Maluku, and Tapanuli emerge as the most "schooled" areas. Lampung does not stand out because its high literacy was achieved without the benefit of much schooling. Most striking of all is the overall very low levels of literacy and education. Over very large areas of the country fewer than 6 percent of adults had received enough schooling to make them literate. By almost any criterion, the Dutch had failed badly in their educational efforts. Literacy levels were much lower in Indonesia than in neighboring Malaysia and the Philippines, and the Dutch-native education commission estimated that at the rate of progress being made in 1928 it would require 167 years to wipe out illiteracy.[59]

It was clear enough from the 1930 figures that literacy rates were rising and that the overwhelming predominance of males among the literates was lessening over time.[60] It was also clear that only a tiny fraction of literates could read and write Dutch and therefore that the earlier hope that Dutch might become a *lingua franca* for the Indies would not be realized.

By 1971, the massive broadening of the educational base due to the vigorous efforts to widen educational opportunities after Independence had obliterated the earlier geographical and sex differentials to some extent, though these were of course still pronounced among the population above about age 40, who had received their education in the pre-Independence period. But the detailed data on literacy in each kabupatèn are available only for the total population 10 years of age and above. Map 5, based on these data, shows that most of the key geographic

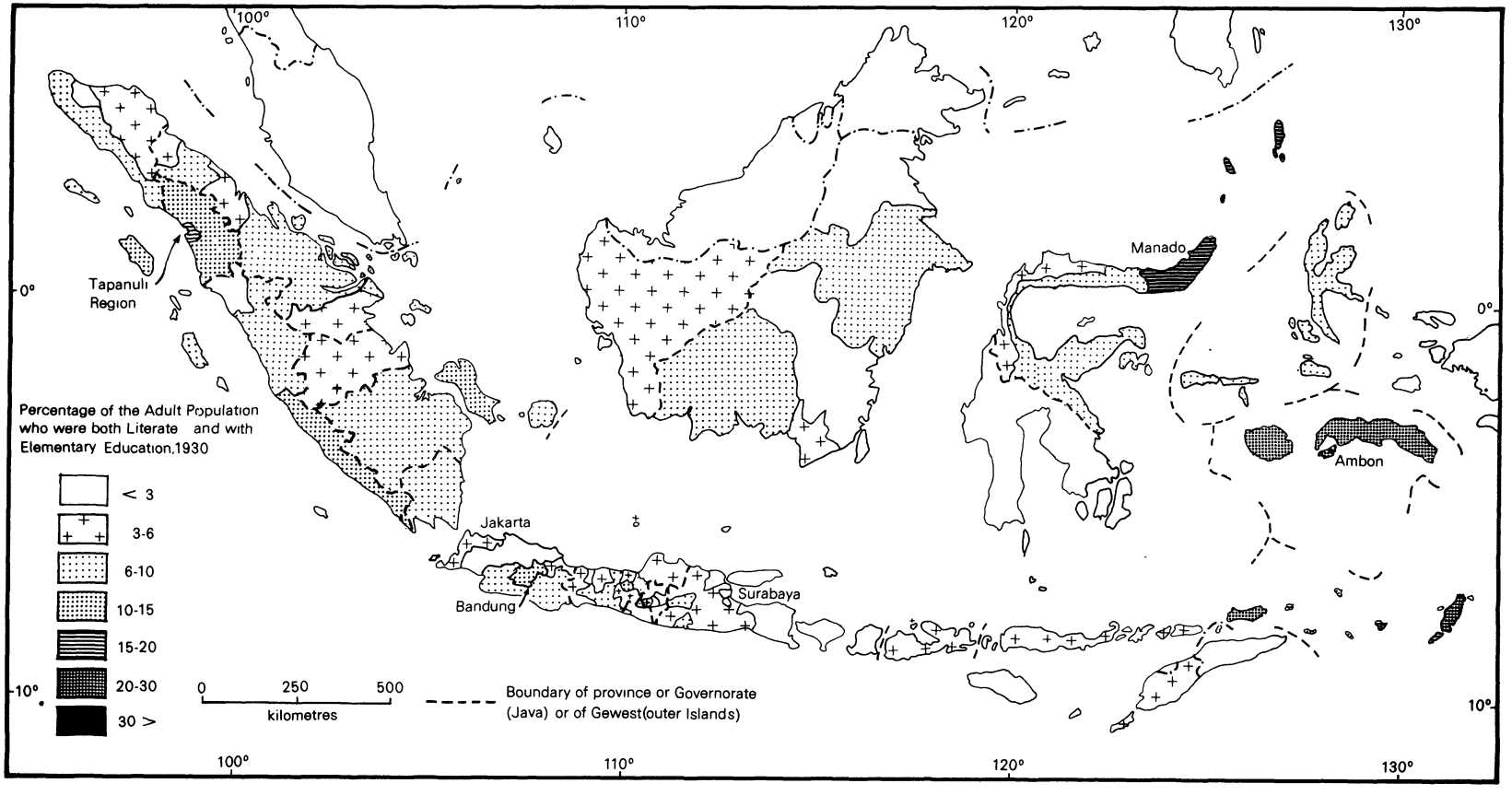
---

[58]*Volkstelling 1930*, VIII, p. 55.

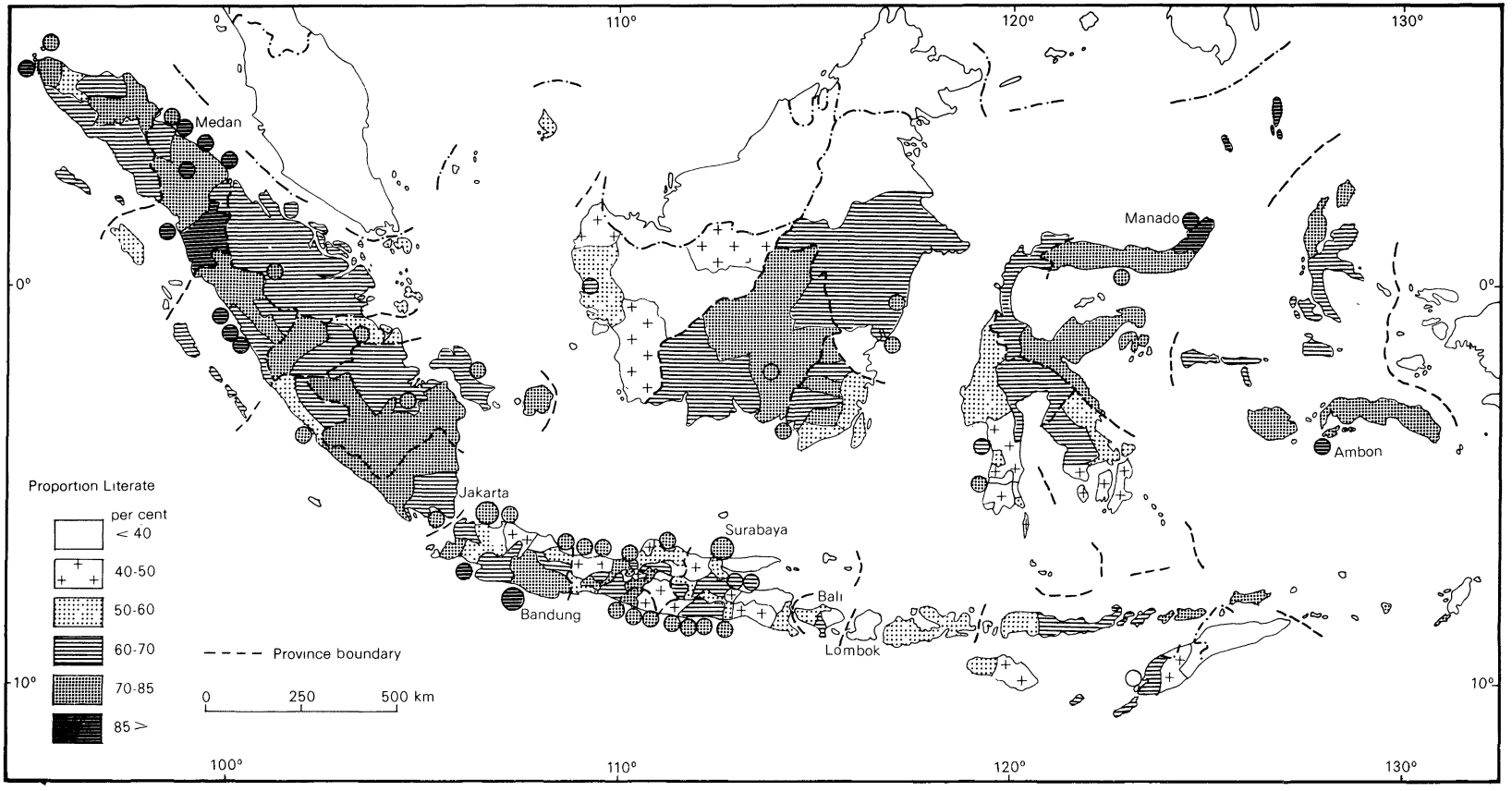
[59]Amry Vandenbosch, *The Dutch East Indies* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1944), p. 216.

[60]The rise in literacy rates is clear from a comparison of 1930 with 1920 figures, as well as from the fact that literacy among the non-adult population, almost half of whom would have been still too young to attend school, was almost as high as that of the adult population.

Map 4. Indonesia: Percentage of the Adult Population who were both Literate and with Elementary Education, 1930



Map 5. Indonesia: Per Cent of Population Literate, by Kabupaten and Kotamadya, 1971



differentials in 1930 (see Map 4) remain. Literacy rates, despite sharp increases in all regions, remain lowest in parts of Central and East Java, Bali, West Nusatenggara, South Sulawesi, and West Kalimantan. Within Java, the Priangan areas of West Java and the Banyumas-Jogjakarta-Salatiga area of Central Java remain far more literate than the north coastal areas of West Java and western Central Java or Madura and peninsular East Java. Tapanuli, Minahasa, and Ambon remain the most literate areas of all.

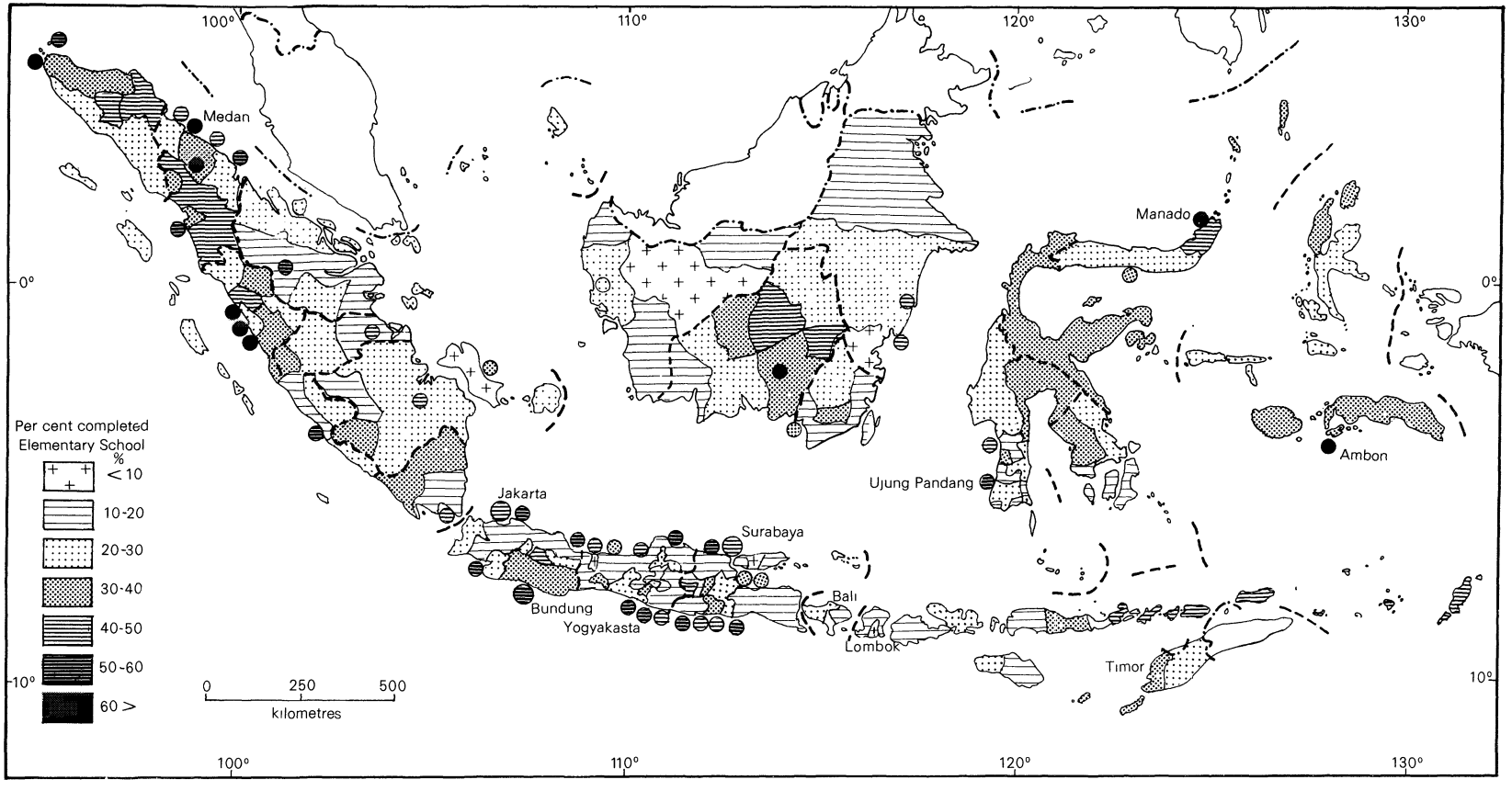
Similar differentials are evident when we compare educational attainment rather than literacy in 1971 (see Maps 6 and 7). The proportion of the population with completed primary school is higher in the areas where literacy is higher, with few exceptions. Java continues to rank relatively low, with the exceptions of the Priangan area and to a lesser extent a belt in south Central Java from Banyumas through to Jogjakarta and Klaten, and a section of East Java from Madiun to Sidoarjo and south through Kediri to Blitar. Central Kalimantan stands out in educational attainment, and the kabupatèn with higher proportions of Christians are also those with higher proportions of persons who have completed elementary school (cf. Map 2). The proportion of the population that has completed junior high school (S.L.P.) follows a similar pattern, although a few regions (e.g., the Kediri-Blitar area of East Java, NTT, Maluku, and parts of South Sumatra) rank relatively lower according to this measure than they do according to the measure of "proportion completed primary school."

The narrowing of the earlier geographic differentials in the provision of education is clearly apparent in Table 6, which compares educational attainment by age in a number of different provinces. Though North Sulawesi and Maluku still have the edge over most provinces at the younger ages, the difference is far less striking than at the older ages. Indeed, North and West Sumatra exceed North Sulawesi and Maluku in educational attainment at the younger ages. Other provinces such as Central and East Java, Bali, and South Sulawesi, though they are still well behind the educationally more advanced provinces in terms of proportion of young adults with completed primary education, lag much less than they did previously.

Sex inequality in education has also lessened dramatically over time (see Table 7). Among the population 60 years of age and over, the group who would have received their primary education in the 1920s or earlier, there are 6 to 8 males for every female among those who have completed a primary education in provinces such as East Java and North Sumatra, compared with 1 to 2 males for every female in North Sulawesi and Maluku. But for persons in their early 20's (representing those who have recently passed through the nation's educational system) there are only 1 to 2 males to every female who has completed a primary education in all the listed provinces except Bali. Judging by the sharp fall in the ratio between the cohort ages 30-34 and the cohort ages 15-19 in Central and East Java and in Bali, education for females in the post-Independence period would appear to have made particularly rapid strides in these provinces.

The analysis so far has noted the complexity of the educational situation in different parts of Indonesia, and some of the historical factors which account for this complexity. It is now time to focus directly on educational differentials according to religion.

Map 6. Indonesia: Per Cent of Population Aged 10 Years and Above who had Completed Elementary School, by Kabupaten and Kotamadya, 1971



Map 7. Indonesia: Per Cent of Population Aged 10 Years and Above who had Completed Junior High School, by Kabupaten and Kotamadya, 1971

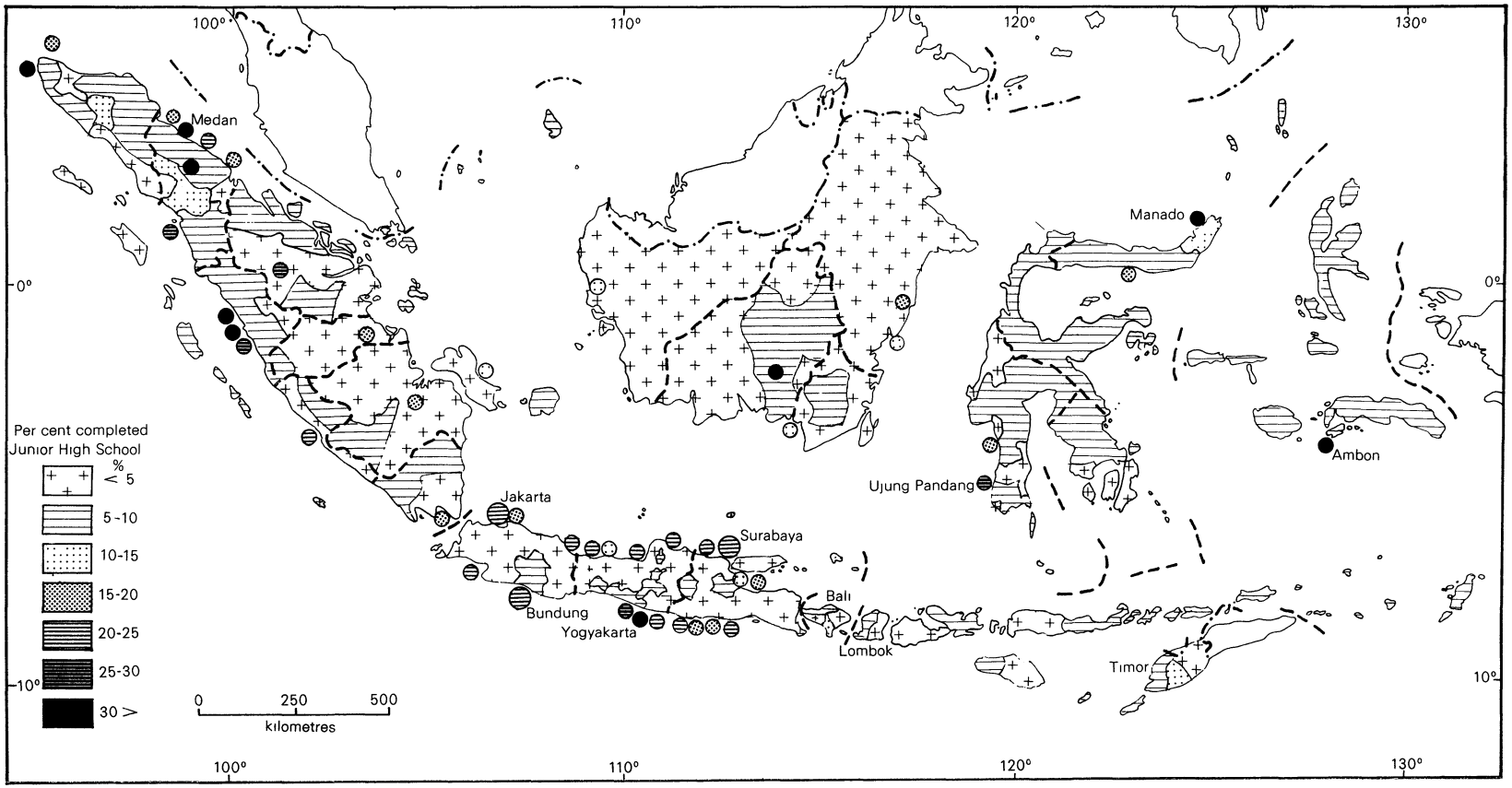


Table 6. Percentage of Population Completed Elementary School, by Age, Selected Provinces, 1971

Province	Age Group						
	15-19	20-24	30-34	40-44	50-54	60-64	70+
North Sumatra	57.4	61.8	47.2	33.5	22.9	13.4	8.1
West Sumatra	57.4	61.1	50.3	36.7	27.5	16.8	8.6
Maluku	56.5	60.5	46.1	35.9	32.5	30.3	27.3
North Sulawesi	53.8	59.5	50.9	35.2	34.6	31.0	25.1
East Nusatenggara	50.1	53.9	43.0	19.0	13.4	7.5	3.6
Aceh	52.0	53.8	40.2	27.0	18.3	12.1	9.9
South Sumatra	41.1	46.4	34.4	22.7	16.5	10.3	6.5
West Java	47.3	46.3	30.0	20.4	16.1	10.8	7.7
South Sulawesi	49.3	45.5	26.5	14.2	7.0	4.4	2.0
East Java	43.6	43.4	22.9	14.9	11.1	6.3	5.4
Central Java	40.8	40.8	20.6	13.3	10.3	6.0	4.6
Lampung	37.7	37.7	26.1	18.9	16.0	11.2	7.5
Bali	43.5	37.2	21.3	11.1	7.1	2.9	1.4

Source: *Sensus Penduduk 1971*, Series E, Table 16.

Note: These provinces are ranked according to the percentage with completed primary education among the age group 20-24.

Table 7. Ratio of Proportion of Males Who Had Completed Elementary School to Proportion of Females Who Had Completed Elementary School, by Age, Selected Provinces, 1971

Province	Age Group						
	15-19	20-24	30-34	40-44	50-54	60-64	70+
North Sumatra	1.16	1.29	1.73	2.18	3.45	6.47	5.52
West Sumatra	0.95	1.12	1.40	1.55	2.43	4.91	9.89
Maluku	1.16	1.20	1.40	1.41	1.33	1.32	0.89
North Sulawesi	0.90	1.01	1.20	1.46	1.47	1.76	2.27
East Nusatenggara	1.12	1.29	1.75	1.96	2.73	3.31	2.69
Aceh	1.15	1.36	1.90	2.76	5.10	11.80	3.29
South Sumatra	1.26	1.50	2.12	2.49	5.60	6.00	4.33
West Java	1.14	1.49	2.13	2.18	3.28	3.76	3.97
South Sulawesi	1.14	1.47	2.21	3.34	5.82	4.69	5.67
East Java	1.32	1.31	2.71	3.53	5.39	6.83	8.31
Central Java	1.37	1.70	3.09	3.16	4.65	8.00	9.44
Lampung	1.27	1.57	2.42	2.43	5.13	5.66	43.00
Bali	1.76	2.22	3.30	5.62	12.00	13.00	26.00

Source: *Sensus Penduduk 1971*, Series E, Table 16.

Note: The ordering of provinces is the same as in Table 6.

Using the 1971 census data, it is possible for the first time to compare specifically the educational attainment of those professing different religious faiths. Table 8, which summarizes these data, shows that despite the narrowing of differentials which has undoubtedly occurred at the younger ages, the contrast between Moslems and Christians 10 years of age and over remains sharp. Forty-one percent of Moslems have no education at all, compared with 22 percent of Christians. The proportion of Christians with high school education or better is three times as high as that of Moslems.[61] A small part of these differentials can be attributed to the greater concentration of Christians to that of Moslems in urban areas, where educational levels are higher; but Table 8 clearly demonstrates that in both urban and rural areas the average educational attainment of Christians is well above that of Moslems.

Buddhists and Confucians resemble Christians more than they do Moslems in educational attainment, but only because they are much more urbanized than the other groups. Within both urban and rural areas, their average educational attainment is far below that of the Christians. The extremely low educational attainment of "others" reflects the low educational levels of the Balinese population and of the adherents of traditional native religions scattered throughout various more isolated regions.

The figures in Table 8 reflect the tendency for Christians to be concentrated in those provinces where educational attainment is high (not forgetting, of course, that it is high partly *because* there are many Christians in these provinces). But what of Christian-Moslem differences in provinces where there are significant numbers of both? Unpublished data are available from the 1971 census for Maluku, North Sulawesi, and East Nusatenggara, and these are summarized in Table 9. Unfortunately, they are not available for other provinces of particular interest such as North Sumatra and Jakarta.

The data in Table 9 show that the average educational attainment of Christians is well above that of Moslems in Maluku and North Sulawesi but almost identical in East Nusatenggara. That the long-standing educational progress of Maluku and North Sulawesi has affected Moslems as well as Christians is evident from the fact that Moslems in these provinces, though less well-educated than Christians, are better educated than their fellow Moslems, and even the total population, in Indonesia as a whole.

The numbers of Buddhists and Confucians in these three provinces is very small, but it is of interest that their average educational attainment exceeds that of Christians in each province.

Although no data are available for North Sumatra on religious differentials in educational attainment, data are available on educational

---

[61]Differences between Catholics and Protestants are not very great. Overall, Catholics have higher proportions than Protestants at both ends of the education scale--those with no education and those with a university or academy education. Catholics in urban areas have higher proportions with university or academy educations than do Protestants. In rural areas, Protestants are somewhat better educated across the board. This no doubt reflects the high concentration of rural Catholics in Flores, where educational levels, as elsewhere in East Nusatenggara, are relatively low.

Table 8. Indonesia: Educational Attainment of Population Aged 10 Years and Over, by Religion, 1971 (Percentage Distribution)

Residence and Education	Moslem	Christian*	Buddhist and Confucian	Other†	All Religions
Urban					
No school	24.7	6.4	16.6	32.0	22.3
Some or completed primary	56.6	51.4	64.2	47.8	56.5
Completed junior or senior high	17.3	38.4	18.7	18.6	19.7
Academy/university	1.3	3.9	0.4	1.6	1.5
All levels	100	100	100	100	100
Numbers (in '000)	11,717	1,548	942	177	14,384
Rural					
No school	44.9	28.0	44.0	59.7	44.3
Some or completed primary	51.9	62.3	51.8	38.2	52.1
Completed junior or senior high	3.2	9.5	4.2	2.0	3.5
Academy/university	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.1
All levels	100	100	100	100	100
Numbers (in '000)	58,642	4,397	584	2,500	66,123
All Indonesia					
No school	41.5	22.4	27.1	57.9	40.4
Some or completed primary	52.6	59.4	59.5	38.8	52.9
Completed junior or senior high	5.5	17.0	13.1	3.2	6.4
Academy/university	0.3	1.2	0.3	0.1	0.3
All levels	100	100	100	100	100
Numbers (in '000)	70,359	5,945	1,526	2,677	80,507

Source: *Sensus Penduduk 1971*, Series D, Table 20.

* Includes Catholics, Protestants, and "other Christians."

† Includes Hindus and "others."

Table 9. Maluku, North Sulawesi, and East Nusatenggara: Educational Attainment of Population Aged 10 Years and Over, by Religion, 1971 (Percentage Distribution)

Region and Education	Moslem	Christian*	Buddhist and Confucian	Other†	All Religions
Maluku					
No school	34.7	12.6	20.5	70.8	25.0
Some or completed primary	59.3	75.9	66.4	28.7	66.6
Completed junior or senior high	5.8	11.2	13.1	0.5	8.2
Academy/university	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.2
All levels	100	100	100	100	100
Numbers (in '000)	360	349	4	20	732
North Sulawesi					
No school	22.0	9.6	4.7	37.7	14.8
Some or completed primary	69.4	76.1	67.4	54.3	73.2
Completed junior or senior high	8.2	13.7	26.6	7.6	11.5
Academy/university	0.4	0.6	1.3	0.4	0.5
All levels	100	100	100	100	100
Numbers (in '000)	480	664	6	5	1,155
East Nusatenggara					
No school	38.3	38.1	10.9	70.1	42.0
Some or completed primary	56.4	55.7	69.7	29.4	52.5
Completed junior or senior high	5.2	6.0	19.4	0.5	5.3
Academy/university	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.2
All levels	100	100	100	100	100
Numbers (in '000)	131	1,241	4	196	1,573

Source: Unpublished tabulations from the 1971 population census.

* Includes Catholics, Protestants, and "other Christians."

† Includes Hindus and "others."

attainment by kabupatèn, and by comparing kabupatèn with high and low proportions of Christians and Moslems respectively, it is possible to obtain a rough picture of religious differentials in education. On the whole, the kabupatèn and *kotamadya* with high percentages of Christians have a higher average educational attainment than those with low proportions of Christians. The two key exceptions are Nias, which although almost entirely Christian has a low educational attainment, and South Tapanuli, which although 95 percent Moslem has the highest educational attainment of all kabupatèn in North Sumatra. The explanation probably has to do with the isolation and relative poverty of Nias[62] and the rapid spread of education among the Moslem Mandailing Batak of South Tapanuli as part of their cultural resurgence during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Summary and Conclusions

The religious situation in Indonesia is still somewhat fluid. The most noteworthy trends between 1930 and 1971 were the decline in the number following traditional native religions as these groups embraced either Islam or Christianity, the adoption of Christianity by significant numbers of Chinese and Javanese, and a blurring of the identification of religion with suku. Though in the majority of cases, one's suku still reliably indicates one's religion, this is now less true than it was of suku such as the Dayak of Kalimantan, the Karo Batak, the Chinese, and the Javanese. (It never was true for the Javanese, of course, unless one was willing to overlook the deep and highly important divisions within Javanese Islam.) There is also a trend towards increasing diversity within Indonesian Christianity; groups such as Seventh Day Adventists and Pentecostalists are making inroads in areas such as Minahasa and Ambon where the "ethnic churches" to which most of the population adhere have married the indigenous culture with the Christian faith. One trend, common in many countries, but which is not occurring in Indonesia, is for an increasing proportion of people to claim not to profess a religion. But to assume that this situation reflects much more than the present political situation in Indonesia would be naive.

In interpreting educational differentials, it must be borne in mind that the quality of the data we are working with is poor. Literacy is a term subject to differences of interpretation. In addition, educational attainment, even if reported accurately, does not distinguish between schooling of different kinds and quality (e.g., comparisons between pesantrèn, madrasah, government, or Catholic schools). Nevertheless, meaningful patterns do emerge and these patterns on the whole are consistent with expectations based on a careful reading of Indonesian educational and religious history. I have not touched at all on the problems of tertiary education, particularly the fact that though the Outer Islands population on the whole is better educated than that of Java, the best institutions of higher education are in

---

[62]In 1930, the afdeelingen of Nias had a literacy rate intermediate between that of the Tapanuli region and the east coast districts of North Sumatra. By contrast with other areas, almost all those literate in Nias had had elementary schooling. Female literacy in Nias was as high as anywhere in North Sumatra. The other regions have clearly made faster progress than Nias since that time.

Java, thus accentuating the "brain drain" from the Outer Islands to Java.

Religion is still a good predictor of educational attainment, though it is becoming less so over time as previously existing differentials in the provision of education are blurred by the current policy of expanding state education towards the goal of at least primary education for all children. But differences will long remain. The benefit of schooling can be strongly reinforced in the home, and better educated parents are better situated in this respect. Moreover, access to education of better quality is still heavily dependent on wealth and status. In both these respects, Christians on the average are better able than Moslems to benefit from the educational opportunities now available. But this conclusion is drawn from a picture painted on a very broad canvas, as are many of the other conclusions of this paper. There is value in such an approach, for it helps give a broad perspective. But there are also dangers, especially the danger of failing to recognize the complexity of the relationships under consideration at the local level. Why, for instance, are the Rotinese so much more advanced educationally than the Timorese? Why are the Balinese on Lombok better western-educated than the Moslem Sasak? What has been the role of Christian missions in the development of education in Kalimantan Tengah? Questions such as this must be answered by much more intensive regional studies drawing on more diverse sources of information. Such studies will both complement and test the validity of the findings of the present study regarding religious and educational change in Indonesia.