

The Islamization of Southern Kalimantan: Sufi Spiritualism, Ethnic Identity, Political Activism

Ian Chalmers

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Abstraksi: Agama seringkali dikaitkan dengan masalah etnis, dan begitulah yang terjadi berabad-abad lamanya dengan Islam dan proses Islamisasi di Indonesia, lebih khususnya di Kalimantan bagian Selatan. Namun, dalam beberapa tahun terakhir, di wilayah yang kini terbagi dua – Kalimantan Tengah dan Selatan – muncul anggapan bahwa agama semakin mengendur fungsinya sebagai faktor penentu identitas etnis. Namun, benarkah demikian? dan sejauh mana proses itu berjalan, dan mempengaruhi polarisasi agama-etnis seperti pada masa yang lampau?

Tulisan ini ingin menjelaskan bahwa, dalam konteks sosial yang berubah – yang diwarnai dialektika antara pemikiran teologis dan aktivisme politik dalam rentang waktu yang panjang – agama seringkali tidak lagi terikat dengan jenis etnis tertentu. Pada gilirannya, hal itu membawa agama tampil lebih sebagai sebuah sistem nilai yang universal. Meskipun demikian, permasalahan semakin kompleks karena jika pendulum ortodoksi semakin meninggi, riak-riak pertentangan agama-etnis bisa kembali muncul kapan saja, yang biasanya ditandai dengan bangkitnya semangat kesadaran etnis di kedua belah pihak yang berseberangan.

Pasca kerusuhan etnis di Kalimantan pada 2001, yang melibatkan etnis Dayak dan Madura, hubungan antar etnis di Kalimantan mulai mencair. Hal ini ditunjukkan, misalnya, dengan banyaknya masyarakat Muslim Banjar mulai mengakui latar belakang etnis Dayak mereka – sesuatu yang tadinya seringkali menjadi garis pemisah yang tegas di antara kedua etnis tersebut. Pada gilirannya, pemisahan agama dari masalah etnis ini mengakibatkan naiknya gerakan untuk menerima Islam yang lebih normatif dan universal.

Penulis memulai argumennya dengan, pertama, menjelaskan pentingnya Islam di dalam pembentukan identitas masyarakat Banjar. Ada anggapan bahwa Islam merupakan bagian yang tidak terpisahkan dari norma dan kehidupan sosial orang Banjar. Meskipun Banjar sebagai kelompok etnik ditengarai muncul belakangan, Islam sering menjadi kekuatan pemersatu bukan hanya di antara pemeluk Islam di Kalimantan, tapi juga dengan dunia Islam yang lebih luas. Terlebih lagi, pada kurun waktu tertentu, ekspansi Islam berjalan seiring dengan perkembangan ekonomi yang nyata bagi masyarakat Banjar dan sekitarnya.

Kedua, inti ajaran tasawuf sebagaimana yang dipraktekkan di Kalimantan bagian Selatan bercirikan mistik, tapi masih tetap berada dalam koridor tasawuf al-Ghazali yang menggabungkan antara kesalehan sufistik dan ketaatan kepada syari'at. Pada gilirannya, paham seperti ini, membawa pengaruh munculnya Islam yang lebih lentur beradaptasi dengan konteks lokal. Ketiga, seperti dijelaskan penulis lebih lanjut, sejak abad ke-18 M telah terjadi ketegangan antara penganut tasawuf dan kelompok Islam pembaharu. Gaungnya tetap terasa hingga kini, di mana wacana Islam ortodoks menjadi lebih mengemuka. Hal ini ditunjukkan dengan munculnya ketegangan antara kelompok Islam ortodoks dengan pengikut tarekat yang terbiasa dengan penafsiran agama yang lebih lentur, seperti yang terjadi dengan Beratib Beamaal hingga akhir abad ke-20 M. Ajaran tasawuf dan tarekat memang tidak hilang dari

masyarakat Banjar, namun menurut analisis penulis, doktrin-doktrin "lokal" mereka telah terkikis oleh ajaranajaran Islam "universal" yang lebih ortodoks. Pada level organisasi, hal ini juga diperkuat dengan semakin meningkatnya hubungan antara lembaga lembaga pendidikan dan keagamaan lokal dengan lembaga sejenis yang bertaraf nasional seperti Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN), Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah dan Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI).

Terakhir, intensifikasi dakwah Islam ke wilayah pedalaman, khususnya ke wilayah-wilayah Dayak non-Muslim, ternyata semakin menarik gerbong Islam menjadi semakin lebih ortodoks. Dalam beberapa tahun terakhir, mencairnya polarisasi etnis-agama juga diperkuat dengan semakin banyaknya kalangan Dayak yang, setidaknya secara teologis, memeluk Islam.

Dengan demikian, perubahan komposisi etnis dalam masyarakat sangat berpengaruh terhadap redanya ketegangan antara Islam nonortodoks seperti tasawuf dan tarekat, dengan Islam universal yang lebih ortodoks. Pada saat yang sama, wajah Islam universal di Kalimantan Selatan pun menjadi semakin menonjol, dan secara perlahan namun pasti menenggelamkan afinitas etnisnya dengan Banjar.

Sufism was the first form of Islam to be brought to Kalimantan, as was the case throughout most of Southeast Asia. Increasing numbers of Muslim traders and itinerant Sufi preachers came to the Indies from the 13th century onwards, and by the 16th century Islam had become a significant presence throughout the archipelago, especially in port cities and elsewhere on the coast. The popularity of Sufism grew rapidly in the 18th and 19th centuries as increasing numbers of the faithful returned from the pilgrimage (haj) to Medina and Mecca, bringing the faith back with them to various communities scattered throughout the islands. This growth in the numbers of pilgrims (haji) had direct political significance, for they had inevitably come into contact with new religiopolitical ideas while in the Holy Land. Many hajis were particularly influenced by politically engaged forms of Sufism, and returned with the conviction that Islam involved struggle against Western imperialism generally and against Dutch colonialism specifically; a conflict such as the 1856 Crimean War was interpreted as a victory of Islamic Turkey over the Christian West. Kartodirdjo has shown how this attitude influenced the religious revival that took place in Java in the second half of the 19th century: an "embryonic Pan-Islamism" transformed local Sufi orders (tarekat) into religio-political organizations (Kartodirdjo 1966: 142).

In Kalimantan, the local popularity of Sufism also had direct political implications. In 1859 an armed rebellion against colonial rule broke out in Banjarmasin, at the time a major port city and today the capital of South Kalimantan. Originally led by local aristocrats and landowners, the revolt took on broader implications when local *hajis* joined the fray, promoting *jihād* as a legitimate means of opposition to the infidel rule of colonialists. Significantly, they garnered support from the general population by mobilizing members of to form the Beratip Beramal, a movement based on a local *tarekat*.¹

The ferocity of the Banjar rebellion raises two questions about the relationship between Sufism and religious identity in southern Kalimantan.² The *hajis* who mobilized thousands of Banjarese farmers to charge into Dutch guns armed only with spears and daggers (*keris*) had previously conducted mystical chanting ceremonies (*ratib*) intended to make the practitioners invulnerable to bullets. This rebellion clearly

illustrates Sufism's potential to generate belief in personal mystical prowess. The *tarekats* today still have a strong following in the region, and we will see that many Sufi ideas have entered the local popular discourse on religion. The first question then is, to what extent is the widespread belief of the Banjarese in mystical power actually based on Sufi doctrine?

A related question concerns the socio-political authority of religious leaders. The clerics who mobilized mass support for the Banjar rebellion preached that victory would usher in the rule of the *imam mahdi* ('Messiah') who would restore Islam to its rightful place in the world. They promised that those who perished in the struggle would become martyrs, and thus gain direct entry to heaven.³ The army of the sultanate was defeated relatively swiftly by the superior Dutch forces, but in 1861 Pangeran Antasari of the Banjar royal household again used the Beratib Beramal movement to mobilize support for a guerrilla war, one that extended up the Barito River deep into what is today the province of Central Kalimantan. Antasari died of smallpox in 1862, and according to Dutch authorities the 'Banjar War' ended a year later. However, the struggle lingered on, and violent outbreaks in the upper reaches of the Barito and other rivers continued until 1905. The original palace rebellion and the messianic nationalist feelings that it engendered during the half-century of this 'Barito War' demonstrate the political potency of religious authority at the time. The obvious question this poses is, does the same unstinting loyalty to religious leaders persist to the present, and is Sufism today also capable of such massive political mobilization?

This brings me to the title of this article. Exploring the link between theology and political activism, I am concerned here to describe how a changing social context has shaped the evolution of Sufi mysticism.

To present my conclusion at the outset, I argue that mystical Sufi ideas remain strong at the local level among the Banjarese, but have gradually been replaced by the tenets of orthodox Islam. The first section of this article outlines the important place of Islam in the identity of the Banjarese. The second section examines the doctrinal basis for Sufi mysticism as it is practised in southern Kalimantan. The third section describes the doctrinal tensions associated with Islamic renewal that became evident in the 18th century, but which persisted long afterwards.

The final and more speculative section suggests that the expansion of Islam within the non-Banjarese community in southern Kalimantan has gradually encouraged a shift towards orthodoxy. Conflict between followers of orthodox Islam and 'heterodox' interpretations of Sufi mysticism, such as the Beratib Beramal, lasted until almost the end of the 20th century, and occasionally erupted in physical violence. Although mystical Sufi ideas remain strong, I propose that they have been eroded by the universalizing principles of orthodox Islam. A revival of ethnic consciousness amongst Dayak communities has actually reinforced this trend, for mobilization on the basis of local ethnic identity has driven both Muslim scholars and practitioners towards the recognition of the diverse traditions that exist within Islam.

Islam in the identity of the Banjarese

In Indonesia, the Banjarese people certainly have a reputation for being *Muslim fanatik*. The term *fanatik* in this context differs, however, from the English 'fanatical',

and does not imply that an individual will blindly adhere to religious directives; it certainly does not mean that the faithful are ready to mount violent *jihad* against unbelievers. Rather, it implies simply that the Banjarese are pious Muslims who perform their ritual religious obligations devoutly, and for whom important decisions in life are determined by their faith. Indeed, the Banjarese are renowned for the enthusiasm with which they build mosques and local prayer houses (*langgar*). Alfani Daud observed the rural and urban communities of South Kalimantan for many decades, and has described this intermingling of faith and identity as a defining characteristic of this ethnic group. "Islamic teachings have now become an integral part of the norms and social lives of the Banjarese" (Daud 1997: 189).⁴

It is only relatively recently that 'Banjarese' came to be used as a classifier for a distinct ethnic group. These people trace their ancestry to a variety of blood-lines: Malay, Dayak, and Javanese and, to a lesser extent, Buginese. Banjarese therefore cannot be considered a primordial category in the same sense as these four ethnic groups, which have specific cultural markers extending back thousands of years. There is some speculation about when the term 'Banjarese' (*urang Banjar*) came to be used to describe the whole ethnic community. Mary Hawkins (2000) argues that in the 19th century the term 'Banjar' referred only to the royal court and that it was not until the 1930s that *urang Banjar* was used as an ethnic designation. Tjilik Riwut is the most famous figure in the history of Central Kalimantan, both a nationalist hero and the province's principle 'founding father'. In one of his detailed socio-historical studies, he suggests that the term Banjar became popular only in the 1940s and 1950s – around the time that 'Kalimantan' came to replace 'Borneo' as the common name for the Indonesian part of the island (Riwut 2007: 227). However, it seems likely that a distinct Banjarese community with a sense of its own ethnic identity had emerged well before this, and probably prior to the 19th century.

Even though the Banjarese constitute the tenth-largest ethnic group in Indonesia – only slightly fewer in number than the Malays – remarkably few historical and ethnographic studies of this people have been written. It is, nevertheless, possible to sketch the broad outlines of their evolution. The *Hikayat Banjar*, the legendary tale of origin of the Banjar court, mostly refers to 'Banjar' in a courtly context, for its subject is indeed the royal court. Yet the compiler and translator of these tales also notes that a colloquial *basa Banjar* was used in everyday life at the time the *Hikayat* was written, probably between the 16th and 18th centuries.⁵ Riwut (2007) records that the original Banjarese people lived in the region surrounding Banjarmasin and Martapura. These people were already a mixture of various ethnic blood-lines, as reflected in the language in which the *Hikayat* was written; it was "a rather archaic type of Malay, superimposed on a substratum of Dayak dialects, with an admixture of Javanese" (Ras 1968: 8). In other words, even by the 19th century the Banjar language reflected the geographical origins of the various peoples who had moved to southern Kalimantan in earlier centuries, swelling the numbers of people who originally settled in the Banjar delta region.

Clearly, this 'Banjarese expansion' was closely related to the region's economic wealth. We know that small communities of Malay seafarers, traders, and fishermen first settled near the coast and in port towns, probably before the 14th century and

possibly from the great Buddhist Riau-Malay maritime empire of Srivijaya (8th to 14th centuries). Between the 15th and 17th centuries the region was a major producer of pepper and Banjarmasin a centre for textile trade (Hall 1996). The town of Nagara in upriver southern Kalimantan was an important metal working town by the 16th century, and would become perhaps the largest centre for the manufacture of guns and bronze in the archipelago (Reid 1984: 158-160). In these centuries the greater relative wealth of these Malay communities allowed them to gradually expand inland, absorbing various Dayak communities while attracting Javanese and Buginese migrants from elsewhere. These migrants would have gradually adopted Malay norms and language. But in the process the 'Malayness' of the original peoples had been diluted, eventually evolving into a distinct ethnic group. Local historians date the formation of the ethnic category to the 16th century (Daud 1997: 541).

Regardless of when precisely the term 'Banjarese' came into currency as an ethnic category, it is certainly true that religion was of great significance for this conglomeration of peoples. "Islam, then, is of supreme importance in Banjar life, and is perceived as a unifying force, linking the people of South Kalimantan not only to each other, but also to other Indonesians and to the wider Moslem world" (Hawkins 2000: 32). We might go further, and note that it is adherence to the Islamic faith that came to define membership of this ethnic community. As the number and social influence of the Banjarese grew, it was the adoption of Islam that marked entry into this ethnic group. As described at greater length below, many ethnic Dayaks today still 'become Banjar' when they convert to Islam. In other words, to be an ethnic Banjarese is, by definition, to be a Muslim.

There are many indications of the religious piety of the Banjarese, the most obvious being the figures on religious affiliation. Over 97 per cent of the population of South Kalimantan is Muslim, a figure which has remained unchanged for decades.⁶ The province is widely considered to be the 'homeland' of the Banjarese, who make up over three-quarters of its population of three million.⁷ There are also growing numbers of Banjarese in Central Kalimantan, which was previously part of South Kalimantan. And as implied in the process of 'becoming Banjar', the recent growth in the number of Banjarese occurred through conversion rather than through migration.

As mentioned earlier, there is a mosque or *langgar* in virtually every village, and a great many in the major towns, especially in Banjarmasin, Amuntai, and Martapura. However, the most impressive indication of the devoutness of the Banjarese is the regularity with which locals have for a long time performed the expensive and dangerous pilgrimage to Arabia. Of the five religious obligations for Muslims, the injunction to make the *haj* pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina during one's lifetime is probably the most difficult for people of the region to meet. This was certainly the case before the advent of air travel, when many *hajjis* from Southeast Asia never returned from the long and perilous sea voyage to the other side of the world. Yet Banjarmasin has long been a major port of embarkation for visitors to the Holy Land, and by the 19th century already had the largest number of pilgrims in the Indies (Soeroto 1976: 173 fn 18). In the early decades of the 20th century the expansion of the local economy permitted about 10,000 devout pilgrims to leave for Arabia each year. "Southeast Kalimantan suddenly counted the highest proportion of *hajjis* in the entire Islamic world" (Lindblad & Verhagen 1988: 70). It is still the case today that many pious

Banjarese use their life savings to perform this religious duty.⁸

What, then, was the historical process that resulted in Islam becoming such an important element of Banjarese identity? And if so many of their predecessors were from one of the many Dayak ethnic groups, how did their conversion take place?

The conventional account for the entry and consolidation of Islam in the region is that it was a process overseen by the Banjar court, under the tutelage of Java. Such an account almost certainly gives a royal gloss to a process that was much more complex. The exact date when Islam first came to Borneo is not known with any certainty, but it is probable that there were communities of Muslim traders in port cities by the end of the 15th century (Anshary AZ 2002: 27).⁹ What is certain is that Islamization gathered pace after the political centre adopted the new religion. Previously, a series of kingdoms had been ruled by Hindu kings, but between 1526 and 1540 Pangeran Samudra converted to Islam, defeated his uncle in a struggle for the throne, and adopted the title of Sultan Suriansyah. There are various interpretations of the way this process took place, differing chiefly on the timing of Samudra's conversion. One possibility is that the king's conversion was the outcome of a deal he had made with the Sultan of Demak. According to the *Hikayat Banjar*, Demak sent 1,000 troops to help Samudra defeat his uncle - on the condition that he convert to Islam (Ras 1968: 46-48). On the other hand, there is evidence that Samudra had already converted to Islam: the letter seeking Demak's support was written using Arabic script, which may be an indication that Muslim scholars were already established at court (Anshary AZ 2002). Rather than symbolizing Banjarmasin's inclusion within the Javanese sphere of influence, the use of Demak's forces might thus simply show Suriansyah's diplomatic skill in using a Javanese army to help him defeat his rival.¹⁰

Whatever the exact nature of the relationship between Demak and the Banjar court in the 16th century, a precedent of state sponsorship for Islam had been set. Islamization generally proceeded peacefully thereafter, for intermarriage and intensifying trade links both within Kalimantan and beyond created a conducive social context (Sjamsuddin 1991). An important example had been set by the first sultan: most of the royal retinue converted soon after Suriansyah had done so, and it is likely that first court officials and then groups dependent on royal support followed suit. The eighteen sultans who succeeded Suriansyah continued to provide important material and cultural support for the promulgation of the religion, and in the following three-and-a-half centuries Islam penetrated all levels of Banjar society.

Two examples illustrate the profound impact of such state support. Firstly, the religious doctrines promulgated within Kalimantan - and in Southeast Asia more generally - were strongly influenced by the particularly talented scholar Muhammad Arshad al-Banjari (1710-1812). Various local scholars had already studied in the Middle East, but state support for Muhammad Arshad al-Banjari would prove to have the most profound impact.¹¹ The adopted son of the eleventh Banjar sultan Hamidullah (1700-1734), Arshad (or 'Arsyad') was a precocious child who had memorized the Qur'an by the age of seven. Later sent to Arabia to familiarize himself with Islamic doctrines, he studied for over three decades in Mecca and Medina, where he earned an international reputation for his scholarship.¹² He then began a long career during which he wrote a number of major works. Importantly, his most famous

work, *Sabilul Muhtadin*, was written in Malay, thereby making Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh, fikih*) accessible for the first time to a wide audience in Southeast Asia.¹³ He also attracted colleagues from his homeland to the 'Haramayn', the holy region of Islam surrounding Medina and Mecca, where a Banjarese community had gathered. In about 1772 he returned to his hometown Martapura, just upriver from Banjarmasin, and soon began to spread the faith. On land donated by the sultan he opened a school for religious studies, and made Martapura the major centre for Islamic studies in the region, a reputation it retains to this day. He also established the position of *mufti* within the Banjar sultanate, an office which he occupied for forty years. Arshad's writings and teachings thus served to transmit new Islamic ideas directly to the people in the region, while during his long life his close relationship with the court resulted in the consolidation of direct contacts between southern Kalimantan and the Middle East.

The second example of state support for Islam was equally important, for it was during the rule of the sixteenth sultan that these religious teachings were disseminated among the general population. In 1835 Sultan Adam al-Wasik Billah (r. 1825-1857) issued a famous law that systematized the state's administrative apparatus, issuing rulings that Islamicized public administration, the judicial system, land ownership, and marriage laws; it also clarified the role of the *mufti* (Pemda Kalsel 2003: 149-167). This so-called 'Sultan Adam Law' (*Undang-undang Sultan Adam*) is best remembered, however, for its rulings on religious doctrine and practices. It proclaimed the Syafi'i school of Sunni Islam to be approved doctrine, and outlawed the teachings of unorthodox mystics such as the Sufi preacher, Syekh Abdul Hamid Ambulung. Importantly, the law decreed that either a mosque or a prayer-house (*langgar*) was to be built in every village, and that all residents were obliged to pray there; if they did not, they were to be reported to the Sultan. It was thus this law which led Banjarmasin to gain the title of 'the city of a thousand *langgars*'. If the reign of Hamidullah had symbolized the strength of the alliance between the sultanate and leading Islamic scholars, the reign of Sultan Adam symbolized the penetration of Islamic mores deep into local community structures.

The profound influence of Syekh Arshad and Sultan Adam supports the proposition that the Islamization of the region was primarily a top-down process. The original conversions to Islam may have followed contact with Arabian, Gujerati, and perhaps Malay traders, but the historical process that underpinned its consolidation was a political alliance with the court. The approved religious doctrine 'trickled down' from the political centre, and was gradually adopted by various social groups. And as a result, more and more people dropped their original ethnic affiliation and became Banjarese. In short, South Kalimantan is notable for a remarkably close correlation between ethnicity and religion.

As noted earlier, it was Sufi Islam that was first introduced into the archipelago. Martin van Bruinessen has argued that Sufi orders were generally introduced into Indonesia through political patronage, and only later spread amongst the general population (Bruinessen 1994: 9). In a later section we will see that various forms of Sufism were introduced into southern Kalimantan, and that the state-sanctioned version was only one of them. It does seem, however, that political patronage encouraged the dissemination of the Ghazalian form of Sufism favored by Arshad.

Banjar mysticism and the advance of Ghazalian 'high Sufism'

The belief system of the people of southern Kalimantan is imbued with a particularly strong sense of the mystical. Religious practices typically revolve around efforts to communicate with the spirits of the mystical world (*tokoh-tokoh gaib*). While it is a common practice throughout Indonesia to hold ritual ceremonies to seek the blessing of ancestors or to placate powerful spirits, such ceremonies are particularly frequent among the Banjarese; they are conducted "in almost all aspects of life" (Daud 1997: 13).

Daud identifies three sources for this mystical belief system, the first being the teachings of Islam itself. The Qur'an states that in addition to creating humanity, the angels and the devil, God also created good and bad spirits. Many Banjarese differentiate 'Islamic spirits' (*jin Islam*) from 'infidel spirits' (*jin kafir*) who try to distract us from the correct path (Daud 1997: 8). While the teachings of large mosques and religious teaching institutions are broadly similar to orthodox doctrines taught nationally, at a popular level everyday religious practices amongst the Banjarese are marked by an overwhelming belief in the supernatural.

A second source for mysticism is specific to the social structure of the Banjarese. In the recent past, Banjar society was organized into clan-like totemic descent groups called *bubuhan*, a kind of extended family grouping that was so extensive that it included family members as far as away from ego as third-cousins (Daud 1997: 8-9, 71-73). Each *bubuhan* was governed by a respected figure, a dominant leader who supervised important internal social, religious, and political functions, and who represented the interests of the group externally. These leaders based their legitimacy on their genealogy, which many could trace back to the time of the sultanate, and even before. Their forebears were believed to have originated from, and to be able to communicate with, mythical dragons (*naga*), crocodiles, and leopards. The political significance of this social structure became clear when the royal Antasari *bubuhan* united with the largely Dayak Surapati *bubuhan* to join in the prolonged Barito guerrilla war (Sjamsuddin 1989: 195-299). The Dutch abolished this *bubuhan*-based political system in the late 19th century,¹⁴ and today's society is no longer as hierarchical as it was in the past. But *bubuhan* social structures lasted well into the 20th century, and Daud finds that the Banjarese still construct their world according to a *bubuhan* mentality (Daud 1997: 504-510). People still believe in the mythical origins of their families, and there are still rituals held to communicate with the totemic 'otherworldly creatures' (*tokoh gaib*) from which they consider themselves to originate. For our purposes, the significance of this hierarchical social structure is that the social leaders of different communities may still base their authority on access to mystical power.

The third source for the belief of the Banjarese in a magical world is closely related to the belief system of their Dayak progenitors. The religions of the various Dayak communities differ considerably, but Dayaks generally believe that there is a spiritual universe that exists alongside, and sometimes within, the universe of perceived reality. Daud calls this the 'belief in the environment' (*kepercayaan lingkungan*):

The jungle is inhabited not only by wild animals ... but also by otherworldly people, magical leopards, saints, and so forth. It is believed that in this other world the untamed jungle, the

scrub, the deep swamps and the mountains are actually busy towns, villages, and palace communities (Daud 1997: 9-10).

Sorcerers (*tabib*) endowed with special powers can access this world. They can thereby use plants, animal products and other objects that have *tuah*, a capacity to heal physical disabilities such as poor eyesight as well as social inadequacies such as shyness.

This last observation raises questions concerning the extent to which the Banjarese belief in the supernatural derives from Dayak ethnic roots. Have the Banjarese simply included Islam in a Dayak cosmology? Although Daud provides considerable detail on the manifestations of Banjar mysticism, it is unfortunate that he does not address such historical or theological issues in any depth. Others do, however, locate the source of Banjar mysticism in the survival of 'pre-Islamic' beliefs. One scholar of Islam in southern Kalimantan thus describes certain Dayak religious rituals as essentially unchanged, but now provided with an Islamic gloss (Noorhaidi 1999: 80-84). However, I suggest this is not the whole story. Undoubtedly, mystical beliefs would have been even stronger in the centuries during which the southernmost Dayak communities blended into the emergent Banjar community; it is not surprising that many of the mystical practices of the Banjarese accord with a Dayak worldview. But the sense of the numinous that pervades the Banjar worldview is more than a leftover from a pre-Islamic past: it also draws on teachings from within Islam itself.

Sellato (2002: 89) has distinguished the social structures of the coastal regions of Borneo from the Dayak communities of the hinterland, noting that the external orientation of the port cities created multi-ethnic societies. We can also note that this external orientation favored the evolution of a distinctly Islamic belief system. In the case of the Banjarese, the centuries during which their community coalesced was a time of regular contact with the Middle East and Western Asia. Scholars and travelers from Kalimantan traveled to the Muslim world in increasing numbers from the 16th century onwards, and undoubtedly came into contact with Sufi mystics. Sufism reached the height of its popularity in the 17th and 18th centuries, when many *ulama* studied under well-known Sufi teachers, either in the Holy Land or in Sumatra or Java. A strong local tradition of what has been called 'high Sufism' was established, one which drew on the mystical teachings of al-Ghazali.¹⁵

Before outlining the main features of this belief system, it may be useful to recall how Sufism emerged as a response to the dogmatism that had previously dominated religious discourse. The original religio-political goals of Islam were both spiritually and socially revolutionary. By the 7th century the societies of Arabia had descended into social turmoil as rival clans struggled for domination and wealth. This social dissipation was also evident in religious life, for the different clans worshipped a multiplicity of gods, each accessed through the intercession of a priesthood that used its knowledge for money-making and to garner political influence. Muhammad sought to rid Arabian society of this political and moral corruption, and attacked the social and political domination of the clans at the core. In spiritual terms, his famous message was one of an uncompromising monotheism: he proscribed polytheism and idolatry (*syirik*), and sought to replace them with an understanding of the mystical as an expression of God's unity (*tauhid*). In other words, Muhammad's theology emphasized both inner mystical experience and social engagement.

In the decades and centuries following the death of the Prophet a more rigid discourse gradually developed; attention focused on the outer meaning of faith, on the codification of personal behavior. Such a development was perhaps inevitable. In the Qur'an, each individual is enjoined to behave morally, adhering to a code of conduct laid down in the *shari'ah* rather than to the instructions of a religious authority. This code was subsequently expressed in the Traditions (*Hadis*), the sayings of the Prophet formulated after his death (Gibb 1975: 49-59). The collection of these Traditions was subject to strict procedures to authenticate their accuracy, and it is not surprising that doctrinal debates focused on what Muhammad had prescribed as behavior appropriate for the devout believer.

Philosophical developments also resulted in a more formalistic theology.¹⁶ The early Muslim era had been marked by considerable theological diversity, and important debates took place between different schools of thought. One such debate involved the balance between reason and predestination in determining an individual's destiny. Many thinkers at the time were influenced by Greek philosophy, giving birth to Mutazilism and its libertarian *qadariyah* philosophy. They held that individuals could exercise free will in choosing whether or not to follow a moral code, while emphasizing that the application of reason would lead to eternal truths. Others such as Hanbal and Malik adhered to a *jabriyah* philosophy, according to which an individual's fate is predestined. After the 10th century the influence of Mutazilism declined, opening the way for the latter, more literal, interpretation; the view became widespread that God's power is unlimited, and cannot be debated. People must therefore submit to law as codified in the *shari'ah*. Paradoxically, it was precisely when Islam began its rapid expansion to embrace different cultures around the globe that what Hamilton Gibb has called the 'Medinian brand' of orthodoxy came to dominate religious discourse (Gibb 1975: 75).

Such an emphasis on outward behavior also became evident in Sunni Islam, which would become the dominant tradition within Southeast Asia. The 10th century philosopher Abu 'l-Hasan al-Ash'ari took something of a midway stance between the two world-views mentioned above. While he did not go as far as a *jabriyah* philosophy, he certainly rejected the libertarians and emphasized adherence to prescribed rules of conduct. Ash'ari's position became accepted doctrine within the four large schools of mainstream Islam, and definitions of *shari'ah* and *fiqh* became increasingly fixed. After the 10th century "all subsequent generations of Sunni jurists were bound to accept the decisions of their great predecessors as authoritative" (Riddell 2001: 55). *Ijtihad*, the reinterpretation of accepted doctrine, became the preserve of certain Islamic scholars (*mujtahid*), and for several centuries Islamic theology was dominated by an 'anti-rationalist tide' (Fakhry 1999: 289).

Sufism emerged as a response to this rigidification of doctrine. Despite the efforts of legal scholars to standardize the faith and formulate a detailed code, alternative visions of the supernatural had persisted, and would become more common. Sufism's best-known feature is the importance placed on mystical understanding (*hakekat*, *haqîqa*) in the striving for spiritual empathy with God. Such understanding can be gained in various ways, but is usually achieved by chanting (*zikir*, Ar. *dhikr*) or repeated invocations to God, leading to an ecstatic state and eventually enlightenment. Different 'pathways' (*tarekat*, Ar. *tariqa*) can be used to achieve this

understanding, usually under the authority of a *syekh* (*shaikh*). As Islam spread in the following centuries and new lands were incorporated in the Islamic world, a wide variety of *tarekats* with strong local followings emerged. Sufism was especially associated with Persian and later Indian influences, and challenged the authority of the Arabian religious establishment.

As described in the following section, many such *tarekats* involved idiosyncratic practices, and such 'heterodox' doctrines frequently met with fierce opposition from the religious establishment. Many Sufi teachings were banned, and some of their leaders executed, often following the advice of local scholars trained in Islamic orthodoxy in Arabia. One response to such restrictions was to go underground, avoiding contact with people not trained in the specific doctrines and practices of the sect; many *tarekat* became closed circles of initiates. Other sects became involved in social movements, and Sufism became increasingly associated with political dissidence. The example of the Beratib Beramal in southern Kalimantan is only one of a number of rebellions in the archipelago in the 19th century in which Sufi *tarekats* played an important role.¹⁷

Such mysticism was in fact a distinctive characteristic of the Islam that first evolved in the Malay-Indonesian world. Considerable numbers of Muslim scholars from Southeast Asia began to arrive in the Middle East in the 17th and 18th centuries, a period when Sufism had become popular. Bousfield and Riddell have described that, upon their return, these scholars promulgated a kind of Islam that emphasized *tasawuf* (mystical practice) as a path to enlightenment (Bousfield 1983; Riddell 2001: 169-171). By this time, however, Sufi mysticism had already reached a compromise with mainstream Sunni Islam. What Indonesians call 'Sunni Sufi sm' (*tasawuf Sunni*) draws heavily on the ideas of the medieval Islamic theologian al-Ghazali (1058-1111), who is often credited with blending *shari'ah* and Sufism.¹⁸

Almost all religious teachers at the time subscribed to the ideas of al-Ghazali, "whose writings constitute a virtual spiritual textbook of Islam" (Bousfield 1983: 126). His works were translated into Malay in the 18th century, and a Ghazalian approach was later adopted by Hamka, the foremost proponent of Sufism in 20th century Indonesia (Riddell 2001: 275). It is therefore worthwhile examining his thought more closely, for his theological compromise between radical experiential mysticism and orthodox legalism lay the basis for the subsequent dissemination of Sufism in Indonesia.

The most important element of Ghazali's formula is the emphasis he puts on listening to one's 'inner voice'. He attacked those who propagated an uncritical adherence to *fiqh* as a sign of Muslim piety, for he believed that the basis of religious belief must be ecstatic experience. On the other hand, Ghazali also recognized the danger that an overemphasis on the mystical combined with a tolerance of unorthodox methods could lead to practices outside the realm of Islam, and he therefore insisted that devotees must observe the *shari'ah*. Accordingly, the second element of Ghazalian Sufi practice is that it be conducted within a recognized *tarekat* under the guidance of a master steeped in Sufi tradition. This *syekh* could only be recognized if he had received authority (*ijaza*) from another recognized master. In other words, mystical learning must take place within a hierarchical socio-religious structure.

The relevance of this theological discussion is that the adoption of Ghazalian

formulae legitimized Sufism in southern Kalimantan, where *tarekats* remain active in both urban and rural regions to this day. As with most religious matters in southern Kalimantan, the popularity of Sufism today is also commonly linked to Syekh Arshad. It was during the zenith of Sufism in the 18th and 19th centuries that Arshad and other Banjarese scholars went to Arabia, and many returned with a Ghazalian version of Sunni Sufism. Arshad himself studied with the Sufi master Syekh Samman al-Madani, and is widely credited with the introduction of the Sammaniyah order into Kalimantan (Azra 2004: 118; Daudi 2003 [1980]: 87). However, the popularity of Sufism in southern Kalimantan implies more than the activities of particular *tarekats*; it also entails acceptance of mystical practices based on Sufi doctrines. *Tasawuf* is an obligatory subject in religious studies, and is taught at a basic level in junior high school (SMP); students in senior high school (SMU) are expected to master more advanced Sufi teachings such as 'the twenty attributes of God'.¹⁹ Skilled *ulama* would therefore be expected to disseminate information on *shari'ah*, *fiqh*, *kalam* (philosophy), *akidah* (theology) – and *tasawuf*.

In order to understand the nature of popular Sufism in the region we therefore need to look beyond al-Ghazali. Here, it becomes apparent that Syekh Arshad was not the only doctrinal influence. The overwhelming weight of the literature on Sufism in Indonesia deals with Java and, to a lesser extent, Sumatra. Yet the island of Borneo was also an important centre for the dissemination of Islam, and for the consolidation of the Malay-Indonesian form suggested by Bousfield and Riddell. Azra (2004) has described how various chains of transmission (*isnad*) brought a wide range of doctrines into the Malay-Indonesian world in the 17th and 18th centuries. Many unorthodox teachings were introduced and adapted to local conditions under the influence of leading *ulama*. The latent tension between *tasawuf* and *shari'ah* within Sufism was also played out in southern Kalimantan, but in a distinct manner.

'Renewal' within Sufism, and the controversies over *bid'ah* and *wujudiyah*

It is well-known that the global movement towards the renewal of Islam, also called 'modernism' or 'reformism', essentially concerns the redefinition of the original moral message of the Prophet in a changing contemporary context.²⁰ This movement has affected the entire Muslim world, but specifically in relation to Sufism an enduring concern of Islamic theologians has been to ensure that its mystical beliefs and practices abide by the basic principles of the faith. In Southeast Asia, *shari'ah*-minded Muslims have long been concerned that the general focus on *tasawuf* might lead people to ignore the norms of personal behavior as laid down in the holy texts. Particularly in Indonesia, orthodox scholars believe that Sufi prayer rituals that do not conform to the *shari'ah* could lead to the grave sin of *syirik*, the belief that there exists divine power beyond or apart from that of God.

The reconciliation of *shari'ah* and mystical Sufism gained ground in the 13th and 14th centuries in a movement which the Pakistani scholar Fazlur Rahman (1979) has termed 'neo-Sufism'. Extending the tradition of al-Ghazali, this theology considers Sufi techniques a legitimate means to achieve an understanding of a deeper inner spiritual reality (*haqiqah*), but emphasizes that they should be based on the *shari'ah*. It was a "reformed Sufism largely stripped of its ecstatic and metaphysical character and

content, these being replaced by a content that was nothing other than the postulates of the orthodox religion" (Azra 2004: 33).

In Southeast Asia, Islamic renewal gained momentum in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but the movement to subject mystical practices to orthodox norms had actually begun much earlier. In the 17th and 18th centuries well-established networks linking Indonesia to the Haramayn region had introduced new intellectual currents to areas as geographically dispersed as Aceh, West Java, and South Sulawesi, where heterodox Sufi doctrines were replaced by more normative forms of Islam, including neo-Sufism (Azra 2004: 109111). The process was then repeated elsewhere.

When we turn to southern Kalimantan, however, it becomes clear that there was only a very partial dissemination of ideas associated with neo-Sufism; a renewed Islam was never able to fully supplant pre-existing belief systems. Arshad returned to Martapura in 1772, and immediately began to popularize his teachings on Islamic law and theology. But two interrelated historical factors, one political and the other religious, prevented a thorough renewal of Sufi practices. As we have seen, the considerable influence enjoyed by Arshad and like-minded scholars had largely been due to the strong support they received from the Sultanate; the role of the *mufti* formalized this support. But the sultanate was abolished following the Banjar war, and this seriously jeopardized the opportunity for reformist scholars to popularize their ideas. Moreover – and this is our second factor – the absence of this local religio-political authority allowed unorthodox doctrines to go unchallenged. The number of *tarekats* proliferated, building on the local Sufi folk practices that had been established in earlier centuries.

Southern Kalimantan's previous contact with Sufi Islam had followed its economic expansion. As described above, the Banjarese community coalesced from the 16th century on, initially from Malay-speaking merchants who had been drawn to Kalimantan's resources. The region's economic expansion meant that Banjarmasin soon became an important port-city, controlling access to inland resources while enjoying strong trade relations with Sumatra, Java, Malaya, China, and India. It developed the cultural characteristics of other hybrid Muslim port-cities of Southeast Asia: cosmopolitan, outward-looking, and ethnically mixed (Federspiel 2007: 22-32). And the intensifying involvement in international trade attracted proponents of various religious movements.

Al-Attas's description of common religious practice in the peninsular of Malaya provides a clear picture of the form of Sufism typically adopted throughout the archipelago between the 15th and 17th centuries. He describes about a dozen *tarekats*, each with comparable doctrines and structures. Although each novice had to start with *shari'ah* observance, this was considered to be only the most basic form of spiritual existence. With discipline and devotion he or she would pass through various stages (*maqam*) of spiritual growth, before eventually gaining complete knowledge of God (*ma'arifah*) (Attas 1963: 35-36). Crucially, this journey (*tariqah*) had to be undertaken under the guidance of a spiritual teacher (*syekh*) whose authority derived not from knowledge of the scriptures, but from personal charisma and the miracles that he claimed to have performed (Attas 1963: 46-50). And because each *tarekat* was represented by a number of *syekhs* each with local spiritual authority, this clearly provided a context in which heterodox movements with idiosyncratic

interpretations of the holy texts could emerge. As the case of the Beratib Beramal shows, even an order such as the Sammaniyah based on the teachings of al-Ghazali could provide a doctrinal basis for unorthodox movements.²¹

Such unorthodox practices were one of two targets for those urging Islamic renewal, a movement which gained momentum in the early 20th century. One of the main concerns for those seeking to establish a normative orthodoxy was the eradication of folk practices that were not based on the Qur'an or Sunnah, and which therefore were considered *bid'ah*, 'innovations'. In Islam there are some innovations considered praiseworthy, and enhance the faith. They are called *bid'ah hasanah* (Gibb & Kramers 1974: 62), a category especially applied to the innovations proposed by followers of al-Shafi'i, the school which predominates in Southeast Asia. However, most innovations are considered illegitimate, *bid'ah dalala* or, in Indonesian, *bid'ah tercela*. Common examples include ceremonies involving self-castigation while in a trance (*dabbus*), ceremonies involving the repetition of God's name to induce a state of ecstatic trance (*ratib*), prayer litanies for the dead held at regular intervals after someone's death (a form of local ancestor-veneration) and, perhaps the most common practice of all, visits to saints' graves (*ziarah*). In the view of reformists, the danger of such acts of *bid'ah* is that they might lead to a search for spiritual sustenance from other sources than those of God, ultimately leading to *syirik*. And as Sufi sects proliferated throughout Southeast Asia after the 15th century, they brought with them particular mystical techniques that many would later come to consider *bid'ah*.

The second target of the reformists was philosophical, and concerned the theological justification for ecstatic religious experience. At this point it is useful to distinguish the metaphysics of Ghazalian 'high Sufism' from the rituals of what has been called 'popular Sufism' or 'folk Islam' (Riddell 2001: 168-171).²² The distinction between the two becomes clearer in the context of religious renewal.

Many Sufi practices take place outside the mosque, and a lasting concern of orthodox scholars has been that unorthodox doctrines might legitimate activities such as those mentioned above. At an early stage, repressive measures were taken to prevent the dissemination of doctrines that might take the religion beyond the authorities' control. The 10th century Persian mystic al-Hallaj, for example, had introduced gnostic elements into his *Wahdat al-shuhud* ('Unity of Witness') doctrine, enabling a believer to identify directly with God (Riddell 2001: 71). According to one authority, Hallaj had in fact returned to "the true spirit of popular Islam" and freed it from "the abstractions of the theologians", thereby recapturing the revolutionary intent of early Islam (Gibb 1975: 89). Whatever the accuracy of this observation, Hallaj was adjudged to have committed heresy and was executed. The cruel way in which he met his end and the popularity of his teachings made him a Sufi martyr *par excellence* (Gibb & Kramers 1974: 127-128); mystics advocating religio-political change would later use his experience to justify resistance to the political order. However, the adoption of the 'high Sufism' represented by Ghazali and the subsequent evolution of his ideas into neo-Sufism re-injected the sense of the mystical into conventional Islamic discourse; the more liberal philosophies of neo-Sufism legitimated various Sufi practices (Gibb & Kramers 1974: 111-112). Al-Hallaj's doctrine of *Wahdat alshuhud* clearly distinguishes humanity from God, and was no longer regarded as heretical.

For our purpose, a more important and controversial source of Sufi mystical teaching emanated from the ideas of the Spanish-Arabic scholar, Ibn al-Arabi (1165-1240), a Shiite Muslim who claimed that he had special access to an inner light. The doctrine with which he was to become closely associated was *Wahdat al-wujud*, ('Oneness of Being' or the 'Unity of Being'), which held that all creation was a manifestation of God and that enlightenment entailed the realization of one's own godliness. Another of his key doctrines was that of *al-Insan al Kamil* ('the Perfect Human'), according to which someone who has passed through various stages of mystical experience will have finally gained complete understanding; he or she thus becomes the bridge to the real world of God, the *haqiqah* (Baldock 2004: 160-168). Although many theologians took exception to his teachings and accused him of heresy, he also gained many followers and supporters (Gibb & Kramers 1974: 146-147). Islamic mysticism of the 13th to 14th centuries came to be dominated by his unconventional ideas and many of the sects formed in later centuries developed local applications of his *wujuddiyah* theology.

The relevance of these theological debates is that at an early stage *wujudiyah* doctrines attracted a strong following throughout Southeast Asia. *Wujudiyah* Sufism held sway in northern Sumatra by the early 16th century, largely due to the efforts of two Acehese scholars who were devotees of al-Arabi: Hamzah al-Fansuri and Shams al-din al-Sumatrani (Azra 2004: 52-53, 59); on the Malay peninsula, the numerous *tarekats* identified by al-Attas were strongly influenced by Hamzah (Attas 1963: 22-24). And long before Arshad brought orthodox Sufi theology to southern Kalimantan, the key ideas associated with *wujudiyah* Sufism had been widely disseminated in the region.

Sufism in southern Kalimantan was largely shaped by the direct links that had been forged with the Middle East. Banjarmasin and Martapura were also close to Aceh in cultural and religious terms since about the 14th century, and the teachings of Hamzah al-Fansuri and other Sumatran intellectuals were well-known. However, the most important scholar responsible for the consolidation of a local Islamic mystical tradition was the Banjarese *syekh* Muhammad Nafis al-Banjari. Nafis's reputation as a Banjarese scholar of Islam is commonly cited as second only to Arshad, with an expertise in *tasawuf* rather than *fiqh*. A contemporary of Arshad, Nafis is thought to have studied in Arabia at about the same time and under the same masters. But he draws heavily on a different theological tradition.²³

Being both a theologian (*ahli kalam*) and a mystic (*ahli tasawuf*), Nafis supported an activist Islam and was an important figure in the revitalization of Islam (*tajdid*) during his time. He was certainly touched by the movement for renewal, and he stressed the importance of an individual's physical and spiritual adherence to the *shari'ah* in order to reach a visionary state (*kasyf*). He thus clearly entertained a Ghazalian form of Sufism. However, his ideas were also in accord with those of Ibn Arabi, and all of his teachings were imbued with *wujudiyah* ideals. For example, he believed that God is beyond description or rational understanding, and that the physical world came into being through seven stages of manifestation (*martabat tujuh*). Similarly, the Sufi novice had to pass through seven spiritual stations (*maqam*) before he or she could unite with God. Indeed, he taught that the final purpose of religious study and discipline was the attainment of the state of *al-Insan al-Kamil* ('the Perfect Human') when unity with God

would be realized. Nafis's teachings thus illustrate the potential for Sufi mysticism to break free from the normative rules applied by more *shari'ah*-oriented theologians.

Even though Nafis's reputation in regional or international scholarly circles may not match that of Arshad, there are a number of factors which suggest that he had the more profound influence locally. Firstly, he returned to Banjarmasin at an earlier period than Arshad; while Arshad was building his international reputation in Arabia, Nafis was spreading his interpretation of the holy texts throughout southern Kalimantan. Second, Nafis was affiliated with six *tarekats* (including three of the most popular ones: Qadiriyyah, Sammaniyyah, and Naqsyabandiyah), and he wrote his own major work, *al-Durr al-Nafis*, after having consulted many Sufi texts; his influence thus spread via numerous local mystical organizations. Third, he wrote in Jawi (Malay in Arabic script), so his teachings on *tasawuf* were available to a wider audience than the rather difficult Arabic works consulted at best by a small elite; this text expounds a popular version of *wahdat al-wujud*, and was widely studied from an early period – as it still is.²⁴

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, many of the ideas Nafis promoted accorded with mystical ideas that had already entered the religious discourse. The dominant belief system in southern Kalimantan at the time – and perhaps still today – has been called 'philosophical Sufism', *tasawuf filosofis/falsafi*, a form of Sufism that draws strongly on the teachings of Ibn Arabi. In keeping with the *wujudiyah* tradition, many of its proponents warn that too strict an observance of the *shari'ah* might be an obstacle to one's discovery of the *haqiqah*. It has even been suggested that it became the kingdom's official religion for the duration of the Sultanate, i.e. between the late 16th and the mid-19th centuries (Buseri, Humaidy & Juhadi 2006: 273-274). When Nafis promulgated his religious message in the late 18th century, it is therefore likely that local adherents of *wujudiyah* Sufism popularized his mystical visions, de-emphasizing his teachings on the *shari'ah* while drawing on his mystical doctrines to legitimize their own spiritual claims.

Arshad emphatically opposed such ideas and practices during his long lifetime. Although closely linked to the Sammaniyyah *tarekat*, he was very critical of *wujudiyah* concepts. For example, Datu Abdul Hamid Ambulung was a well-known proponent of such views, and attracted a loyal local following. But when Arshad acted as *mufti* he issued a fatwa that declared his teachings heretical; Hamid was subsequently executed for blasphemy by the order of Sultan Suriansyah (Tim Sahabat 2003: 48-53). The second target against which Arshad campaigned untiringly was those ceremonial practices that he considered to be *bid'ah*. He issued a fatwa against the ceremonies commonly held to propitiate ancestral spirits, declaring them *bid'a dalala*, 'false innovations.' In theological terms they were clearly *syirik* because they require the presence of divine power apart from God. These practices were not easily removed, however, having become an integral part of the Islamic belief system of the *bubuhan* communities of the southern Kalimantan hinterland, as Noorhaidi has described in some detail.²⁵ Although Arshad is today remembered as a pioneer in the efforts to bring local Islamic religious practices in line with accepted doctrine, he was therefore only partially successful in these efforts, at least during his lifetime.

The contemporary relevance of this debate on *bid'ah* and *wujudiyah* is that such popular practices long outlived Arshad, and the tension between orthodox and

unorthodox Islam continued well into the 20th century. As is well-known, by 1900 increasing numbers of *ulama* familiar with universalist doctrines were returning to Southeast Asia from the Holy Land, where they had been in contact with the teachings of modernist scholars such as Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida (Riddell 2001: 84-88). Advocates of Islamic renewal, these *ulama* sought to purify the faith by removing local practices that they considered contrary to scripture. In an important study, Achmad Fediyani Saifuddin has described the tensions that emerged as reformists encountered fierce opposition from local religious officials. In a case study of Alabio, a large town in the Banjar 'cultural heartland' in upriver South Kalimantan, Saifuddin describes how the *ulama* who oversaw local religious activities defended practices that had been carried out for generations - and which they believed to be an essential part of Banjar religious life. The dispute was partly material, for established *ulama* were threatened by the loss of social status if these practices were discontinued. But the conflict was fundamentally theological, and centered on efforts to eradicate five common death rites that reformists considered *bid'ah*.²⁶ Positions on both sides hardened, and in the mid-1920s the religious community split irreversibly into the 'Old Guard' (*kaum tua*) and 'New Guard' (*kaum muda*) (Saifuddin 1986: 37-62).

Another target of the reformists were popular practices involving veneration of local saints. During their lifetimes these saints may have been *mualims*, people with supernatural powers, or *gurus*, the term used locally for preachers learned in the holy texts. Having made the *haj* to the Holy Land they would have returned as 'tuan *gurus*' (master teachers), and would have had the dominant say in local religious matters. Some would have become *syekhs*, namely experts on mystical texts with virtually absolute authority over their followers. After their deaths many became *datus*, and are today revered as pioneers in promulgating the religion in the area (In Kalimantan a *datu* is roughly similar to a Javanese *wali* [saint]). Their graves became sites for local pilgrimages (*ziarah*), and came to be visited regularly by locals who offer prayers - and sometimes money - in the hope of being granted a boon or a blessing (*berkah*).

This conflict over doctrine was sharpened by political mobilization on both sides of the divide. A branch of Sarekat Islam had been established in Banjarmasin in 1912, the very same year of its inception, and local reformists' efforts gathered pace in the 1920s (Pemda Kalsel 2003: 258). In 1926 traditionalist Muslims in Martapura responded by forming a branch of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in the massive Darrusalam religious school, which became a center for the organization of the *kaum tua* in other rural districts (Pemda Kalsel 2003: 259). An organization (*Musyawartuttalibin*) to represent the *kaum tua* was formed in Alabio and later became the local NU branch. Meanwhile, the efforts of the reformists continued, and in 1930 Muhammadiyah branches were opened in Alabio and Banjarmasin. Tensions mounted as the *kaum tua* tried to prevent Muhammadiyah preachers from delivering their sermons which almost led to armed conflict in 1931, and again in 1940 (Saifuddin 1986: 37-62).

Tensions between populist Sufism and normative Islam persist. The conflict between traditionalists and supporters of renewal re-emerged in the 1970s when orthodox reformists launched a campaign against superstition and saint worship, reminiscent of the earlier struggles against the *kaum tua*. Nicknamed the struggle to fight the 'disease of tuberculosis', after its Indonesian initials,²⁷ this campaign was only partially successful. The frequency of pilgrimages to the graves of *datus* provides

another measure of the widespread acceptance of popular Sufism. The two best-known *datu*s are Sultan Adam and Syekh Arshad (who is also often called, after his gravesite, 'Datu Kalampayan'). Adam and Arshad are revered throughout Kalimantan, and people will come from afar to seek their blessing. But there are at least 35 other commonly recognized *datu*s, each associated with a particular region of southern Kalimantan (Tim Sahabat 2003). Significantly, the grave of Datu Hamid Ambalung in Martapura is still a popular site of pilgrimage. The continued popularity of local *datu*s – including supporters of *wujudiyah* doctrines – indicates that local belief systems are still uppermost in the minds of many Banjarese.

The continued belief in spiritually powerful individuals thus remains a part of the belief system of the Banjarese, a good example of which is the late Muh. Zaini Abdul Ghani ('Guru Ijai'), the leader of the local branch of Sammaniyah. At the height of his influence Guru Ijai had tangible political authority: prominent local politicians and visiting dignitaries would customarily seek an audience to win his blessing. He died in 2005 but his symbolic influence survived, making him the embodiment of religious piety: his photo is still displayed prominently in virtually all local shops and restaurants, usually next to that of Syekh Arshad. According to the head of research at IAIN Antasari, Guru Ijai is today one of the five most revered *syekhs* in southern Kalimantan.²⁸

This belief in the mystical potency of spiritually powerful objects and individuals makes renewal difficult; reformists often regard the hold of Banjarese mystical spiritualism as the main obstacle to doctrinal purity. As the rector of IAIN Antasari observed, the strength of both reformist orthodoxy and mystical beliefs associated with Sufism means that it is as if there are two Islamic discourses in southern Kalimantan, each with its own chain of logic (Interview, Kamran Buseri, 8 Feb 2007).

Despite the gap between popular Sufism and orthodox teachings, tensions between traditionalists and *shari'ah*-minded reformists nevertheless seem to have diminished in recent decades, for a number of reasons. But I suggest that changing ethnic identities has been an important element in this process: the changing ethnic composition of the Islamic community has meant that, in this region, the religion has lost its close affinity with the Banjarese, pushing it toward the direction of a more universal message and away from mystical local variants.

Islam within Dayak revivalism in Central Kalimantan

The social changes that accompanied rapid economic development during the first two decades of the New Order regime lay the basis for more rapid cultural change within the Muslim community. Saifuddin has described the convergence between followers of village-based Sufism and normative Islam that had taken place in South Kalimantan by the mid-1980s. Social and educational programs run by both central and provincial governments had integrated the province more closely into national development plans; the informal community leaders (*pembakal*) who previously represented the religious community were thus largely replaced by government appointees. Modernization also meant that people were better educated, making it more difficult to mobilize them by appealing to 'primordial' loyalties. Finally, greater social interaction between individuals meant that, over time, both *kaum tua* and *kaum*

muda had become more aware that they actually shared many beliefs and practices. These various factors thus encouraged greater tolerance between factions within the Banjar community, and a greater openness to new ideas (Saifuddin 1986: 70-97).

A number of the trends identified by Saifuddin in the 1980s continued in subsequent decades, contributing to growing self-confidence within the Muslim community. Firstly, the local political culture has become more conducive to cooperation between socio-religious organizations. It is now widely accepted that the historical divide between 'modernist' and 'traditionalist' Islam that was such a feature of national politics is now largely a thing of the past. The convergence between the NU and the Muhammadiyah at the national level is also evident at the local level.²⁹ Traditional religious leaders feel less threatened by Muhammadiyah activities at the local level, while religious activists and officials affiliated with the Muhammadiyah have come to tolerate local practices that would have previously been regarded as unacceptable *bid'ah*. They may consider these practices irregular and unnecessary, and predict that they will eventually be discarded as people become more familiar with doctrine; but they also believe that they are relatively harmless – and that opposing them would be counterproductive for it might alienate the community. Indeed, in line with its new policy of 'cultural proselytization' (*dakwah kultural*), local Muhammadiyah figures now seek culturally appropriate means to spread the faith.

Second, the increase in the number of government-funded and government-coordinated infrastructural projects in South Kalimantan has reinforced a sentiment within the local *umat* that it is part of a national and global community. The provincial government has established religious courts (*Balai Sidang Peradilan Agama*) in each district, and increased the funds available for the construction of local places of worship (Pemda Kalsel 2003: 637-639). The largest building in Banjarmasin today is the massive Great Mosque completed in the 1980s and named after Arshad's most famous scholarly work, the '*Masjid Raya Sabilal Muhtadin*'. More importantly, greater financial assistance has been provided to each neighborhood area (*RT=Rukun Tetangga*) for maintaining prayer houses (*langgar*), traditionally the centre for local community activities. Finally, the province has been one of the leading participants in prestigious Quranic reading competitions (MTQ) ever since they commenced in the late 1960s, with competitions now extending down to the sub-district level.³⁰ These various government efforts have generally created a more conducive social environment for the Muslim community.

Another reason the Muslim community has become more confident is associated with economic development generally. In the past, a distinctive feature of South Kalimantan was that its economic and cultural heartland was in the interior, in the rice-growing communities of Hulu Sungai. The large *pesantrens* that have educated notable Banjarese social figures are near the large inland towns of Martapura, Amuntai, and Kandangan. However, economic development and urbanization has transformed the rather sleepy town of Banjarmasin into the administrative, industrial, and educational centre of the province. This greater 'urban primacy' means that the capital city has increasingly become the medium for internationalization, and the transmission of new ideas. Civil society is still relatively weak, but Islamic non-government organizations are becoming more prominent.³¹

The final factor contributing to the growing confidence of the Islamic community in

southern Kalimantan is that more Dayaks openly identify themselves as Muslim. This factor is perhaps the most significant in theological terms, because the belief system of the Dayaks is commonly associated with animism and nativist mysticism. As we have seen, many Muslim scholars explain the mysticism of the Banjarese as the residue of a Dayak past. As I have tried to show, however, their mystical belief system also has strong roots in Sufi theology. It is therefore ironic that the public prominence of Muslim Dayaks today is challenging the common association with mysticism – and may actually be encouraging a trend towards greater religious orthodoxy.

In this context, a closer examination of the place of Islam within the largely Dayak province of Central Kalimantan is instructive, for it indicates its diverse historical roots. Many of the reasons for the growing popularity of Islam here are the same as in its neighboring southern province. NGOs have become more active, while more rapid development has opened up society to a range of new social and cultural influences. Importantly, the Muslim community now also enjoys a significant level of official sponsorship from the provincial government. Funding for mosques and prayer houses has grown, while increased education budgets have produced more qualified Islamic scholars. In 2001 the national MTQ Quranic reading competition was held in the capital city of Palangka Raya. Such provincial government support came later than in South Kalimantan, but the increase in official attention given to the religion means that people in Central Kalimantan also benefit from identifying more strongly as Muslims.

The greater prominence of the Muslim community in Central Kalimantan goes beyond political and material incentives, however, and the reason for its growing confidence is specific to the province. In an earlier paper I suggested that the statistical increase in the number of Muslim Dayaks was primarily due to a process of conversion (Chalmers 2006). While conversion may be an important factor, a recent visit leads me to consider that the revival of Dayak cultural identity is perhaps more significant. A number of works on the cultural politics of this revival have appeared in recent years. Widen, for example, notes that local Dayaks have now successfully demanded a degree of local, cultural, and political autonomy – after 600 years of colonialism by Javanese, Dutch, and New Order overlords (Widen 2002).³² Importantly, there has also been a resurgence of confidence within various local Muslim Dayak communities, although it has not yet received a great deal of scholarly attention.

The cultural forms that this revival has taken are diverse, reflecting the various ways in which the religion was introduced. In mid-2003 a conference on the ‘The coming of Islam into Central Kalimantan’ was hosted by the National Academy of Islamic Studies, Palangka Raya (STAIN-PR).³³ Although a wide range of topics were discussed, one common theme was that this revival was not a process controlled by political and religious elites. As one of the leading participants notes, a distinctive feature of the growth of Islam in Central Kalimantan is that it did not involve prominent *ulamas* or *kyais* (Abdurrahman 2003: 5). No sultanate ever dominated this region in the same way that Banjarmasin dominated South Kalimantan – even though the Banjar royal household was an important influence. Rather, Islam was spread very much ‘bottom-up’, and involved processes that were more strongly based on societal forces: trade, Sufi activism, intermarriage, and education. The religion has thus been

shaped by local contexts to a large extent. And the localized nature of religious practices brought local historical processes into play; inevitably, Islam took varied forms in different regions.

The following examples are by no means exhaustive; time constraints meant that I was only able to visit a few districts in the province. These descriptions are also somewhat provisional since what is described below is not based on extensive investigation. Nevertheless, I suggest that it is possible to distinguish a number of religious traditions by drawing on the papers delivered at the 2003 conference, my own brief observations, and several other written sources. These traditions can be differentiated in terms of the timing of Islam's initial entry, the nature of its introduction, and the sociopolitical forces that sustained these traditions. The following five traditions are arranged roughly in chronological order.

Kotawaringin: a Dayak sultanate

Kotawaringin on the south coast of the province used to be the only sultanate in what was to become Central Kalimantan. Established as an outpost of Banjarmasin in 1679, Kotawaringin's foundation myth mentions that it was a kingdom on the banks of the Lamandau river which was founded after agreement was reached between king Adipati Antakusuma and Kyai Gede, the leader of the local Tumon Dayaks.³⁴ Religious practices revolved around the royal Dayak family, who presumably converted as a result of the agreement with the Banjar royal household. For many centuries the ruling Dayak family paid tribute to Banjarmasin, and during the Dutch period Kotawaringin remained its vassal. Nevertheless, the distance from Banjarmasin and the difficulty of communication gave the sultanate considerable autonomy; it formed its own diplomatic ties with Java, Brunei, Malaya, and the kingdoms of the west coast of Kalimantan (UNPAR 2006: 37). It was also able to dominate local societal forces, reinforcing a syncretic religious tradition that was strongly influenced by Java: local social and political structures today are still generally run by individuals with royal titles (*raden, gusti, andin*). The present-day king is an active advocate of local autonomy for the district, and plays a prominent role in a range of social, political, and religious organizations (Interview, Pangeran Muasjininsyah, 3 March 2007).

I was unable to establish with any confidence the extent of royal influence within the Muslim community, but it is unlikely to extend far beyond the immediate vicinity of Pangkalan Bun, the town to which the sultanate moved in 1815. The society on this part of the south coast is ethnically mixed, and consists of descendents of Malay-speaking groups who intermarried with local Dayaks and Javanese migrants. The socio-cultural tradition of the Dayak sultanate was not tied closely to this polyglot community and is unlikely to have been a powerful force for Islamization. The devoutly Muslim people of the southern coastal region were more strongly influenced by later Muslim traditions.

The riverine Sufi tradition

Our second tradition involves the geographical spread of Islam along the various river systems of Central Kalimantan. A glance at a map tells us that its geography is

dominated by the rivers that rise in the mountains to the north and flow south to the Java Sea.³⁵ Until recently land transport was very limited; only since World War Two have serviceable roads linked major inland towns to the coast. Eight major rivers – but especially the Kapuas and Barito – were therefore the main means of communication and transportation. Banjarese and later Bakumpai traders plied their business along these rivers, buying forest products from Dayaks in exchange for imported salt, bronze, ceramics, and cloth.

Although many local accounts attribute the Islamization of the communities in the middle and upper section of these rivers to the efforts of particular *syekhs*, mostly descendents of Arshad, these efforts were undoubtedly preceded by trade. Trade was concentrated on two entrepôts: Marabahan, the ‘home-town’ of the Bakumpai which lies about 50 kilometers north of Banjarmasin, and the largely Banjarese town of Nagara further to the north. Prior to the advent of steam-ships in the late 19th century, traders could comfortably cover about 50 kilometers a day before seeking shelter. As traders moved along the south coast westward from the Barito and then northwards up the various rivers, small settlements providing traders with lodging were established at about this distance apart. Some traders undoubtedly settled permanently, perhaps marrying into local Dayak families; today descendents of Banjarese and Bakumpai traders are scattered along the length of these rivers (Interview, Khairil Anwar, 23 Feb 2007).

As these communities grew, prayer houses and later mosques were built for the performance of religious obligations, and a distinct riverine Muslim culture emerged. With the growth of these communities they eventually drew teachers from religious institutions in the south. In the 19th century a close relationship developed, for example, between various Barito communities and the towns of Marabahan and Martapura, where famous *syekhs* instructed hundreds of pupils from the north. A Sufi form of Islam was practised along the rivers, reflecting the prevailing teachings of the time. Prominent clerics, many of them descendents of Syekh Arshad, promulgated the kind of Ghazalian Sufism that is still practised among these river communities today.³⁶

The impact of the spread of this riverine Muslim culture upon the neighboring Dayak communities was profound. As we have seen, in the southernmost regions many Dayak communities merged into the emerging Banjarese ethnic group. Some Dayak groups steadfastly rejected Islamization, however, and progressively retreated before the Banjar expansion. The peoples of the south who maintained their Dayak religio-cultural traditions moved into the Meratus mountains in South Kalimantan’s central ‘spine’ (Tsing 1993, 1994). Further to the north, in what is today Central Kalimantan, most Maanyan Dayaks also rejected Islam in favor of well-established religious practices; many later converted to Christianity. But some Maanyan did emulate the lifestyles of their Muslim neighbors, and converted. Importantly, this did not entail a change in ethnic identity. In his account of the Banjarese penetration of a community in the East Barito district, Kumpiady Widen (2001: 222) describes how Maanyan converts maintained both ethnic and religious identity markers: they called themselves Muslim Maanyans. Nevertheless, a partial acculturation towards Banjarese norms did take place: to distinguish themselves from non-Muslims they felt obliged to speak Banjar-Malay and adopt other Banjarese identify markers. The impact of the spread of Muslim trading groups amongst ethnic Dayak communities

was thus a cultural accommodation between Muslim and non-Muslim traditions, and took a variety of local forms in different parts of Kalimantan.³⁷

Religion in the identity of the Bakumpai Dayaks

The spread of this riverine Muslim culture was, in turn, the precursor of a third tradition that involved the early Islamization of an entire Dayak community. The emergence of the Bakumpai Dayaks is especially significant, for it was followed by the Islamization of other Dayak ethnic groups. A subgroup of the Ngaju Dayaks, the Bakumpai originally lived in the village of Marabahan on the Barito River, which, by the 18th century, had developed into an important trade centre. The Bakumpai had the advantage of speaking both Ngaju and Banjarese, and they became intermediaries with up-river Dayak communities. Importantly, contact with the Banjarese led most Bakumpai to convert to Islam. As Bakumpai traders moved up the river and established new settlements, increased social contact and intermarriage led to more conversions. Even though the Bakumpai were originally indistinguishable from the Ngaju, by the end of the 19th century they considered themselves to be a distinct ethnic group (Sjamsuddin 1991). The legacy of this development is that religion became the key identity marker for the Bakumpai Dayaks.

The conversion of the Bakumpai had a major social impact precisely because of their extraordinarily high level of geographic mobility. Sjamsuddin (2001) notes that the Bakumpai had spread up and down the Barito by the mid-19th century, and there is today a major concentration at Puruk Cahu at the headwaters of the Barito, 800 kilometers from its mouth; many Bakumpai later settled on the upper reaches of the Mahakam river in East Kalimantan (Sellato 2002: 49). Bakumpai traders can today be found along the major rivers and towns throughout Kalimantan, leading to many hundreds of conversions, either through marriage or by example. Their strong sense of Dayak identity combined with a strong commitment to the faith meant that the Bakumpai people set a powerful example for other Dayak communities, resulting in the dissemination of Islam throughout Kalimantan.

Today the Bakumpai is one of the most devout Muslim communities in Kalimantan, annually sending many people on the *haj* and producing many *ulamas* – many said to be Arshad's descendants (Abdurrahman 2003: 10). The centuries during which they were Islamized was the high-point of *wujuddiyah* Sufism, and many old manuscripts have been found written by local *syekhs* who taught this form of Sufism. More mainstream Sufism entered the area from the early 19th century onward, especially under the influence of Arshad's grandson, Datu Abdussamad Bakumpai (1822-1899). Abdussamad promoted the Naqsbandiyah and Syadzaliyah orders, and many of his students came from inland regions of what is now Central Kalimantan; his teachings are still practised in the East Barito district. The scholarly learning and trading activity of the Bakumpai people thus established a powerful ethno-religious tradition for the transmission of Ghazalian teachings into Kalimantan.³⁸

* * *

It is thus evident that Islam's different modes of introduction into the communities of modern Central Kalimantan gave it a wide variety of local forms. In some areas

highly syncretic forms emerged, allowing the expression of local Dayak beliefs; in other regions – perhaps most – the dominant form was closer to the mysticism of early Sufism. Yet other communities were introduced to the more normative form of Sufism disseminated by traders, especially the Bakumpai. If the first two traditions tended towards more localized forms of faith, the last opened the way towards a more universal form – and eventually towards processes of renewal. In this context, it remains to mention briefly two further traditions involving the widespread dissemination of Islam.

The Barito tradition of political Islam

At the outset of this article, mention was made of the 1859 Banjar rebellion and its prolonged aftermath. After his initial military losses, Pangeran Antasari retreated from the area around Martapura and Banjarmasin to start a guerrilla campaign. He established a sophisticated command structure throughout southern Kalimantan, with a government-in-exile (*pemerintahan pagustian*) near Puruk Cahu at the source of the Barito River. Operating in the upland Tanah Dusun district, Antasari mobilized tens of thousands of mostly Siang and Murung Dayaks under the command of the Dayak general, Surapati. Dayak communities had their own grievances against the Dutch, especially over taxation, and many willingly joined the rebellion led by the fleeing Banjar royal household. In fact, it was mainly Dayak generals who took command, and Dayak soldiers who sustained this war. The importance of the rebellion in bringing Dayaks into contact with Islam is signified by the fact that when the *pagustian* was formed Antasari was appointed to three positions: commander of the army, head of government, and supreme religious authority.³⁹

It is difficult to comprehend how the mostly non-Muslim Dayaks supported Pangeran Antasari as supreme religious leader... The situation where an Islamic state dealt with non-Muslims on an equal basis is a rare event, one which we might only discover here in Central Kalimantan (Abdurrahman 2003: 17).

The deep involvement of various Dayak communities in the rebellion gave birth to our fourth socio-cultural tradition, one of a politically- and socially-engaged Islam. After Antasari's death in 1862 he was succeeded by Muhammad Seman; this chapter of the conflict ended with Seman's death in Puruk Cahu in 1865. But various outbreaks occurred in the following decades, and lasted into the early years of the 20th century. Many of these struggles took place in areas largely populated by Banjarese.⁴⁰ But Dayaks were often the most effective fighters. An important arena for the conflict was the upper sections of the major rivers dominated by various Dayak communities. According to Moh. Usop, a prominent Dayak historian, battles took place in the upper reaches of the Kahayan (1885-6), the Kapuas (1893-5), the Katingan and Mantaya (1901-2), the Kapuas (1903), and the Barito (1905) (UNPAR 2006: 48-50). Dayaks fought side-by-side with Banjarese during this extended campaign, and it is very likely that significant numbers converted to Islam; we know that Surapati himself became a Muslim.

For our purpose, the significance of the sustained opposition against the Dutch is that Dayak resistance to colonial rule came to be more closely associated with Islam,

and has now become a component of official nationalism within the province. A history recently published by the provincial government even argues that the so-called 'Barito War' was comparable to the Aceh War in terms of the strength and duration of anti-colonial struggle (UNPAR 2006). In other words, the dynamics of Dayak political activism in Central Kalimantan have maintained this tradition, but transformed the rebellion into a component of Dayak revivalism.⁴¹

A stern Islam and Dayak cultural denial

Our final and most recent religious tradition dates from the early 20th century, when an increasing number of scholars returned from the Holy Land with new theological teachings associated with modernist Islam.⁴² The south coast of Central Kalimantan became an important basis for propagation. The river-port town of Sampit on the Mentaya River had become a centre for the Islamic revival of the mid-19th century, and its expanding economy attracted foreign traders; an Arab businessman financed the construction of a large mosque there in 1885. In the early 20th century many returning *ulamas* were attracted to Sampit and other towns on the south coast such as Pangkalan Bun, where they established local social and political organizations; such towns became centers for proselytizing into inland areas; both the Sarekat Islam and the Muhammadiyah opened branches in Sampit, for example. Although clerics (*mubaligh*) based in these town had long been active on the lower reaches of rivers such as Mentaya and Kahayan, by the turn of the century they had also begun to attract significant numbers of followers in upland towns such as Kuala Kurun.

The theological debates taking place within the Muslim world at the time these preachers came to southern Kalimantan crucially affected their impact on the surrounding Dayak community. Unlike earlier *mubalighs*, these preachers had an uncompromising attitude towards the faith, and were dedicated to the struggle against unacceptable practices. Dayak converts were obliged to reject their existing belief system. In fact, many changed their ethnic identity completely and 'became Banjar', *masuk Banjar*, dissolving their identity into that of this ethnic group. The stern theology of these preachers thus created a tradition that persisted in parts of Central Kalimantan for many decades. As late as the 1970s Miles notes that the Ngaju Dayaks of Kuala Kurun on the upper reaches of the Kahayan were divided between those who maintained traditional religious practices and those who had converted to Islam. The latter no longer carried out Dayak ceremonies, and had begun to no longer consider themselves to be Ngaju (Miles 1976: 89-90).

The activities of these preachers also resulted in divisions within the Islamic community based on theological differences. As was the case with the *kaum muda* in South Kalimantan, the *ulamas* who arrived in central Kalimantan in the early decades of the 20th century were generally also very critical of unorthodox Sufi practices. Reflecting the challenge then being launched on traditional syncretism by advocates of Islamic renewal, advocates of this stern approach came into conflict with Muslims who had achieved an accommodation with local Dayak beliefs. Undoubtedly, this criticism would have been framed in terms of *bid'ah*. Even as late as the 1970s the rivalry between the Muhammadiyah and local Islamic organizations was causing tensions in Kuala Kurun (Miles 1976: 90-92).

Concluding comments: towards a normative Islam

I have suggested here that there are a number of Islamic traditions in southern Kalimantan, each with its own construction of the supernatural and with different perspectives on the validity of Dayak religious beliefs. These traditions can be distinguished, in part, by reference to the time of the arrival of Islam. Initially, Sufi forms of Islam adjusted to the local environment, establishing a tradition in which Dayak rituals were maintained but given significance within an Islamic worldview; the belief system of the Banjarese today gives expression to this worldview. Later traditions built on mystical *wujudiyah* Sufism; others are basically Ghazalian in orientation, locating mystical experience within the framework of the *shari'ah*. Although these traditions differ in terms of the importance placed on doctrine, a common feature is their syncretic nature: to varying degrees they all incorporate local ritual practice within an Islamic worldview.

A more recent tradition dating from the turn of the 20th century denies the legitimacy of Dayak ritual practices, which are considered contrary to the faith. This last of the five traditions in ethnic identification suggested here has in fact become widespread throughout Kalimantan, where common discourse draws a sharp distinction between Islam and Dayak beliefs – which are sometimes referred to as ‘pre-Islamic’. As Vickers (2004 [1997]: 43-47) notes, the divide between Malay and Dayak was set in stone in the late colonial period, with the latter cast as primitive, mystical, and elemental. Ever since then the common term for conversion to Islam on the island is to ‘enter Malayness’, *masuk Melayu* or *turun Melayu* (King 1993: 31-32). For many decades – and perhaps centuries – Dayaks who converted to Islam thus lost their previous ethnic affiliation. One important result of the denial of Dayak ethnic markers is that most ‘Malays’ in contemporary Borneo may actually have Dayak ancestors. In both Kalimantan and the states of northern Borneo “the great majority of [Malays] descend from Dayak groups converted to Islam” (Sellato 1994: 10).

In Central Kalimantan, however, the survival of other Islamic traditions has meant that the divide between Dayaks and Muslim Malays has never been particularly sharp. I suggest that Central Kalimantan has been important in maintaining these traditions, for syncretism has a strong societal base amongst the Dayaks. Family is the primary social unit commanding an individual’s loyalty, and behavior is judged primarily according to how it will affect the family, both in this life and in the hereafter – no matter what one’s religion. And in the context of a Dayak cultural revival, one can sense that since the 1990s these other, more syncretic Islamic traditions are becoming more evident.

The first conclusion of this study is that in recent decades religion has become a less important determinant of ethnic identity throughout southern Kalimantan. Beginning in Central Kalimantan and then extending beyond, a certain fluidity in identity became evident after the ethnic clashes of 2001. For example, many Banjarese families in South Kalimantan recall that they too had Dayak ancestry and they claimed to have Dayak cultural traditions. Although such observations are largely anecdotal, the frequency with which they were mentioned lends them credibility.⁴³ There is evidence that there has also been a wider questioning of ethnic ascriptions throughout Kalimantan. The ‘*masuk Melayu*’ tradition is well-established in West Kalimantan, for example, but here too it is coming under challenge.⁴⁴

The second conclusion is that this 'uncoupling' of religion and ethnicity has encouraged a longer-term movement towards the acceptance of a more normative form of Islam. We have seen that in South Kalimantan there has been a blurring of the historical divide between local syncretic forms and the orthodox Islam first brought by proponents of renewal. While this also seems to be the case in Central Kalimantan, I suggest that here the more fluid nature of religious faith has also changed the nature of that renewal: Dayak converts are less obliged to adhere to the stern Islam that characterized the modernist movement in the early 20th century. In other words, the faith has become less tied to a specific ethnic group, pushing it towards a more universal value system.

At this point, it may be useful to refer to a dichotomy used by anthropologists some decades ago, contrasting the 'little traditions' of village life to the 'great traditions' associated with civilizations such as those of Greece, China, and India. Referring to Islamic civilization specifically, Grunebaum (1955) contrasts the great tradition of the Middle East to villages which are nominally Muslim, but which maintain their own rituals and customs. Similarly, Redfield (1956: 67-104) contrasts the popular culture of everyday ritual with the great traditions of the 'reflective few'. Significantly, he notes that strong civilizations are those which effectively transfer this more philosophical great tradition to the masses. As we have seen, there are diverse religious and ethnic traditions throughout southern Kalimantan; the Dayak cultural revival of recent years has probably raised awareness of this diversity, also among the Islamic community. But there has also been increased interaction with institutions that operate on a national scale such as the IAINs, STAINs and MUI, as well as social organizations such as the Nahdlatul Ulama and the Muhammadiyah. This has undoubtedly increased awareness within the local community that it is part of a broader national and international *umat*. In this light, the increasing numbers of Bakumpai and other Dayaks with links to international networks of Islamic learning serve to transfer the knowledge of the great tradition of universal Islam to the various 'little traditions' of southern Kalimantan.

Endnotes

1 Soeroto (1976: 167-177) describes the divergent interests of the religious and palace elites who supported the revolt, while Helius Sjamsuddin's detailed investigations locate the revolt within the emergence of early nationalism (Sjamsuddin 1989, 1991). Matheson (1982) notes the long-harbored economic grievances the Banjarese nobles held against the Dutch, but shows that religious fervor was the immediate catalyst for the revolt. It is likely that members of the Beratib Beramal were drawn from local branches of the Sammaniyah and Naqsyabandiyah orders, but the movement later disappeared and the rituals it conducted to prepare for war are no longer remembered (personal communication, Ahmad Syadzali, December 2007).

2 'Southern Kalimantan' here refers to the two modern provinces of South and Central Kalimantan, which only took on their present shape in 1957 after demands by Dayak elites for a distinct 'home province' had been honored, largely to offset the perceived domination of South Kalimantan by the Muslim Banjarese (Miles 1976: 114-124; PPPKB 1978a). This political divide may seem somewhat artificial because the two provinces are closely interlinked in geographical, social, economic, and cultural terms. But we will see below that the two provincial governments have become increasingly important in determining how religious affairs are conducted.

3 Sjamsuddin (1989; 1991) compares the Imam Mahdi cult to the *ratu adil* cult in Java, and

describes how the involvement of Dayak elites accounts for the longevity of the struggle in Kalimantan. But this movement also had a basis in Muslim thought. In the millenarian construct of Sufi and, to a lesser extent, Shiite doctrines, the arrival of the Mahdi presaged Islam's global triumph (Gibb & Kramers 1974: 310-313). In the Qur'an a *shahid* (*syahid*) was a 'witness' in the application of law, but in later centuries it came to mean 'martyr' in the context of *jihad* (*ibid*: 515-518).

4 Daud was professor of social sciences at IAIN Antasari in Banjarmasin until his recent death. His book is based on his PhD dissertation, and has become a widely cited text on Banjar society.

5 Ras divides the *Hikayat* into two 'recensions' (i.e., textual expositions), and notes that one was written before and the other after Pangeran Samudra's conversion to Islam in the mid-16th century (Ras 1968: 80).

6 According to the provincial office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, 98 percent of the population was Muslim in 1978 (Daud 1997, Table 4: 52). This figure had fallen insignificantly by the time of the 2000 census, to just over 97 percent (Suryadinata, Ananta & Arifin 2003, Table 4.2.2: 110).

7 In 2000 over 76 percent of the population was Banjarese (Suryadinata, Ananta & Arifin 2003: 25). Other large and predominately Muslim ethnic groups include the Javanese (13 percent) and Buginese (2 percent), as well as Madurese, Bakumpai, and Sundanese (each one percent). Most Banjarese live in South Kalimantan, although there are significant concentrations in Central and East Kalimantan, where they make up 24 and 14 per cent of the local population respectively (*ibid*: 24-25).

8 Despite its low average per capita income and although it accounts for less than two percent of the nation's population, the province sends the third-largest number of Indonesian pilgrims to Mecca each year; only Jakarta and Aceh send more (Hawkins 2000: 35 fn 4).

9 Some local historians speculate that Islam reached Kalimantan before the 14th century, and perhaps as early as the 10th century (Tim Sahabat, 2003: 58).

10 The debate over whether Java was responsible for the court's conversion is unlikely to be resolved quickly. Azra (2004: 117) records that Samudra's conversion followed his military victory, and a recent official history of the Banjar people also recounts the story as laid out in the *Hikayat Banjar* (Pemda Kalsel 2003: 63-67). On the other hand, local scholars suggest that Banjarese *santris* who had studied in Java under Sunan Giri and Sunan Bonang provided critical support for Samudra: they convinced Demak to come to the assistance of their king (Buseri, Humaidy & Juhadi 2006: 269).

11 Hamidullah's full title was 'Sultan Tahmidullah bin Sultan Tahlil'. Arshad actually left for Mecca during the rule of his successor, Tamjidillah (1734-1759), returned during the reign of Tahmidullah (1761-1787), and died during the reign of Sulaiman al-Mu'tamidillah (1801-1825). But it was Hamidullah who brought him into the court and fostered his scholarship (Daudi 2003 [1980]: 41-43).

12 This description of the life of Arshad is based on Azra (2004: 117-122) and Daudi (2003). Pemda Kalsel (2003: 133-149) describes his profound influence on local religious practices and doctrines in Kalimantan.

13 A second text containing his teachings on *tauhid* and *fiqh*, *Kitab Parukunan*, was compiled by his granddaughter.

14 This hierarchical social system extended central authority down to the villages. In the 'bubuhan administrative system' (*pemerintahan bubuhan*), a royal *bubuhan* dominated the palace, while in the regions locally-dominant *bubuhans* were answerable to the king. During the centuries of the sultanate, leaders of village *bubuhan* were appointed by the sultan (Daud 1997: 44 fn 21).

15 Riddell (2001: 79) prefers Nicholson's (1914) distinction between 'high' and 'popular' Sufism to the distinction sometimes drawn between Sufism and 'folk Islam'.

16 The following two paragraphs are derived largely from Fakhry (1999: 278-284). See also Gibb (1975: 73-85) and Riddell (2001: 20-29).

17 *Tarekat* were centrally involved in the 1888 revolt in Banten (Kartodirdjo 1966: 140-175) and

other anti-colonial protest movements in Java (Kartodirdjo 1973). The *ratib* in the name of the Beratib Beramal refers to a form of *zikir* sometimes practised in Southeast Asia (Gibb & Kramers 1974: 470).

18 The English term 'Sufism' carries a broader meaning than the Indonesian '*sufisme*', which is generally associated with membership of a *tarekat* and the practice of *zikir*. Indonesians generally refer to Sufi mystical theology as *tasawuf*.

19 I am indebted to Drs Setia Budhi, a lecturer at Banjarmasin's Universitas Lambung Mangkurat and NGO activist, for this information (personal communication, 14 July 2007).

20 Scholars of Islam often refer to theological movements to apply more orthodox principles as 'Islamic reformism'; Azra (2004) refers to it as a movement of both 'renewal and reformism'. However, we might note that 'renewal' is a more neutral descriptor of the movement – and happens to be a more accurate translation of the Indonesian term *pembaharuan*.

21 Al-Attas also describes how a 'counterfeit Order' which used *ratib* ceremonies in combination with drugs and alcohol to induce a form of 'orgiastic mysticism' (pp. 89-96).

22 'Philosophical Sufism' is sometimes contrasted with 'folk Islam'. Following Nicholson (2002 [1914]), Riddell rejects this, noting that it implies a distinction between Islam and Sufi mysticism – which actually have the same theological source. Nevertheless, I find it useful to distinguish between the ritual practices of popular Sufism and the metaphysics of philosophical Sufism.

23 For the following two paragraphs I am indebted to the insights shared by Ilham Masykuri Hamdie, an amateur preacher (*mubaligh*) and senior official with the local branch of the Department of Religious Affairs (Interview, 9 Feb 2007). His views are summarized in his graduate thesis (Hamdie 1989), and two shorter unpublished manuscripts (Hamdie 1999, 2000).

24 This text constitutes the scriptural base for various *tarekats*, including Junaidiyah (Van Bruinessen 1994: 40). In the 1990s, at least, it was still found in great numbers in bookshops in South Kalimantan (Van Bruinessen 1990: 57).

25 *Menyanggar* are ceremonies to request that the spirits prevent disasters; *membuang pasilih* are ceremonies to encourage spirits to lift curses that have already been invoked. Noorhaidi describes these beliefs as originating in Dayak 'pre-Islamic' practices (Noorhaidi 1999). Khairil Anwar has recently completed a PhD thesis on Arshad's theology at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, Ciputat (personal communication, October 2007).

26 These practices were: *talkin* (giving advice to the corpse on how to answer questions from the angels of death), *asyrakal* (special celebrations commemorating the death of the Prophet), *hilah* (seeking redemption for people for religious shortcomings after their death), *aruh* (ritual meals or *selamatans* held for people after their death), and *usali* (stating one's purpose before prayers) (Saifuddin 1986: 44-49).

27 In the case of 'TBC' (tuberculosis), the B stands for *bid'ah*, while the other two terms can be translated as 'superstition', with slightly different usages. The T is *takhayul*, or beliefs associated with practices such as ritual meals (*slametan*) and visits to local shamans (*bomoh*, *dukun*). The C of *charopat* (*khurafat*) is belief in the efficacy of objects such as amulets or in saint-worship (Interview, Wahyudin, 9 Feb 2007).

28 Each *syekh* is associated with a different region: Syekh Arshad (Banjarmasin), Datu Hamid Ambulung (Martapura), Datu Nafis (Tabalong), Datu Sanggul (Tapin), and Guru Ijai (Martapura). It is widely rumored that the current Governor, Rudy Ariffin, became Guru Ijai's 'adopted son' (*anak angkat*) before his successful campaign in 2004 (Interview, Wahyudin, 15 Feb 2007; personal communication, Ahmad Muhajir, Jan 2008).

29 Interviews with over thirty clerics, scholars, academics, journalists, and government officials involved in local religious affairs were conducted in various regions of Central and South Kalimantan during February and March 2007. All noted that the various doctrinal conflicts of the recent past had abated.

30 The third national MTQ (*Musabaqah Tilawatil Qu'ran*) was held in Banjarmasin in 1970. MTQ

competitions are now held at district, sub-district, and even local residential levels (RT) to prepare the young participants to compete on the national stage (Pemda Kalsel 2003: 638-639).

31 For example, the religious organization LK3 has now become an important forum for discussing new socio-cultural ideas. Established in 1994, the active members of *Lembaga Kajian Keislaman dan Kemasyarakatan* ('Institute for Islamic and Social Research') are a unique blend of government officials, social activists, and religious scholars (Interview, Norhalis Majid & Mariatul Asiah, 7 Feb 2007). LK3 holds regular public seminars and is active in local advocacy work; in 2002 it launched a quality magazine focusing on Banjar society and culture entitled *Kandil*.

30 Other relevant works on this revival include those by Usop (1994), Kusni (2001), and the revised edition of the memoirs of the founding governor of Central Kalimantan (Riwut 2007). On some accounts, this mobilization is essentially an expression of the interests of indigenous political elites (Van Klinken 2000, 2006). But the revival of ethnic politics also has a strong cultural element; demands by indigenous ethnic communities for cultural autonomy is evident throughout Kalimantan (Widjono 1998).

31 A book consisting of excerpts taken from sections of the papers delivered at the conference was published several years later (Anwar 2006 [2005]). Where it has been possible to identify the author, the citations that appear below refer to the original paper.

32 *Kyai* in this region is not a religious term, but the local word for a commoner who has served the royal household (Interview, Gusti Djendro Soeseno, 2 March 2007; see also PPPKB (1978b: 63-64) and Darlan & Nisa (1996).

33 The main rivers are the Barito with its major tributary the Kapuas, the Kahayan, Katingan, Mantaya, Seruyan (or 'Pembuang'), Arut, and, in the far west, the Lamandau.

34 One famous *syekh* was Datu Asma, Arshad's grandson by his marriage to a Banjarese woman from Nagara, who drew students to his Syadziliyah *tarekat* from as far away as Muara Teweh – a town in the far north of the Barito watershed (Haderanie 2003: 3).

35 The ambiguous nature of this accommodation is illustrated by a ceremony I witnessed in the Maanyan heartland in East Barito District, near the centre of the ancient mythical kingdom of Nansuranai. The ceremony was conducted by a *balian*, a Maanyan sorcerer skilled in the sacred *sanghiang* language which is used to address the spirits of the deceased and to seek their protection. Such practices are anathema to devout Muslims, and would be shunned as *syirik*. Muslims nevertheless live within the community, and participate actively in community activities; the *balian* stated that she performs such ceremonies for local Muslims. A local government official and activist for local cultural rights noted that Maanyan Muslims actually have their own sorcerers, *ba dewa*, 'the callers of gods' (Interview, Ardianto, 5 Feb 2007).

36 This paragraph draws mostly on Syadzali (2006: 12) and Hamdie (1989). See also Syadzali (2004) and Anwar (2006 [2005]: 68). However, Hamdie (1989: 44) states that Abdussomad remained an advocate of *wujuddiyyah* Sufism.

37 His official title was *Panembahan Amirudding Khalifatul Mukminin*, given at a ceremony in March 1862 attended by Dayak representatives from Kapuas, Murung, Muara Teweh, Sihong, Kahayan, and Dusun Hulu districts.

38 Bondan records that battles took place in Sampit (1867-8), Amuntai (1869), Banjarmasin (1870), Alai (1881), Amuntai, Tanjung and Balungan (1883), Tanah Bambu (1886), and Kandangan (1898) (Bondan 1953: 56).

39 This book suggests that the Barito War should be renamed the 'Upper Barito-Kapuas-Kahayan-Katingan-Mantaya War', for the widespread support Dayak warriors offered to the Banjar government-in-exile meant that it spread across all these rivers (UNPAR 2006: 50). This publication makes no mention of Sufi political activism, however, and I was unable to establish the extent of support given to non-orthodox movements such as the Beratib Beramal in areas dominated by Dayak communities.

40 This and the following paragraph is based on Anwar (2006 [2005]: 85-88) and Miles (1976:

90-94).

41 A lecturer in theology in Banjarmasin and an expert on Dayak societies notes that, after decades of cultural denial, Dayaks in South Kalimantan are now becoming more assertive (Interview, Marko Mahin, 24 March 2007).

42 This observation is based on interviews conducted in April 2007 in rural and urban West Kalimantan, where there is an increasing number of Chinese and Dayak converts.

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Ian Chalmers is senior lecturer in Indonesian Studies in the Faculty of Humanities, Curtin University of Technology, Western Australia. This study is part of a larger project exploring the politics of identity in Borneo. For assistance in preparing this article, he expresses his particular appreciation to the scholars of religion in Kalimantan who are cited in the text - as well as an anonymous editor of *Studia Islamika*.

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