

**Badingsanak Banjar-Dayak: Religious Identity and Ethnic Economy in South Kalimantan**

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The Dayak-Banjar relationship is tied up by the myth of the origins of the kinship (Badingsanak) between the Sandayuhan (origins of the Meratus Dayak people) and Bambang Basiwara (origins of the Banjar), but in its development, this issue attracted the attention of some researchers to uncover the beginning of the relationship between these two ethnic groups. This is described by Mujiburrahman, et al., in the book *Badingsanak Banjar-Dayak: Religious Identity and Ethnic Economy in South Kalimantan*. According to Alfani Daud (1997: 1-4) as quoted by Mujiburrahman et al., In light of the great similarities between the Banjar and Malay languages, it is possible that the Banjar ancestors were descendants of the ethnic Malay who, in the past thousands of years, immigrated from Sumatra and the surrounding areas in this region. He assumed that Meratus were descendants of earlier Malay immigrants, who were driven away by later Malay immigrants. The latter then became the core group of the Banjar.

Radam (1995), as quoted Mujiburrahman et al., put forward a more complex theory of Banjar origin, taking into account two hypotheses. First, the melting pot hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, Banjar people are the end result of mix between various tribes, such as Ngaju, Maanyan, Lawangan, Bukit, Malays, Bugis, Javanese, etc. In this case, Malays play a major role in the process of immersing the various tribes. Second, the local genius hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, the community of Bukit people in coastal areas or alluvial plains of South Kalimantan is the predecessor of Banjar people. The Bukit people then came into contact with Malay merchants. Through the influence of the Malays, the coastal Hill people then developed themselves from collecting societies into a more organized society in a tribal society. These are the predecessors of the Banjar people.

According to Mujiburrahman et al, as described in this book, it is suggested that some of the theories mentioned above assume that Banjar and Meratus have the same language and the same origin or common ancestors. However, the question that must be answered next is that despite having similarities in some respects, the two ethnic groups call themselves with different names. In this case Mujiburrahman et al, suspected religious differences are the main cause of it. Banjar people generally convert to Islam, whereas Meratus still adhere to the beliefs of their ancestors, or embrace Christianity. (P.29)

Apart from the general response inherent in the community, at least it is not the only reason which separates these two ethnic groups. Another reason is that if the Meratus embrace Islam, then they are considered to be a Banjar. The statement that has been rooted in this society also further widens the fact that Islam is the majority in South Kalimantan. In contrast, the Meratus who settle in the mountains makes a significant difference in this context. Therefore an impression arises if Banjar people are Muslims. their residence in a city, full of important access to meet the necessities of life such as education, health, and power. As for the Meratus people, to meet the needs of life a little bit harder compared to the majority of Banjar people in the city. This is what makes the difference striking for both. Due to the fulfillment of life needs, Banjar people eventually work more as traders, businessmen or civil servants. In contrast, The Meratus work more as farmers, rubber tappers, and jobs that use forest products as their main sustenance.

The uniqueness of statement after statement that identifies the identity of the the Meratus and the Banjar mentioned earlier is not a mere illusion. This statement is corroborated by a story that developed among the Meratus people, as quoted by Mujiburrahman, et al., Tsing (1998: 75-80) found a story developed among the Meratus people who explain ethnic differences with the Banjar. According to this story, the origin of the Banjar and the Meratus is from the descendants of two brothers, Ayuh or Sandayuhan, while the younger brother was Bambangwara. Ayuh was the ancestor of the the Meratus, while Bambang Basiwara the ancestor of the Banjar. In the story, Ayuh was a lazy, stupid and undisciplined person, so he never succeeded in achieving wealth or power. Instead, Bambang Basiwara was a diligent and intelligent man, so he achieved success in his life. God blessed these two brothers each a holy book. Instead of reading it, Ayuh even ate it. Therefore, the Banjar religion has a holy book, the Meratus religion has no written sources. In this story, the assumption

is clearly illustrated that the Banjar people are higher than the Meratus. However Tsing immediately noted that how ambitious the Meratus figures were when mentioning this story, sometimes they bring up some of Bambang's character in Ayuh. (Pp. 29-30). However, all of the above statements and stories come from one source that has become part of the past. The period itself will change from time to time depending on the social, economic, and cultural conditions that developed in the people of South Kalimantan in particular and Indonesia in general.

Interestingly, as described in this book, although in some ways there is a gap and tends to lead to conflict between these two ethnic groups, but in terms of understanding the myth about the genealogical relationship between Prophet Muhammad and Prophet Isa that is badingsanak, both ethnic groups have a view that does not look down on each other. For the Dayaks, most of whom are Kaharingan followers, it would be all right to regard Isa only as a prophet, not a "savior" whose position is very high and incomparable to Muhammad as in Christian theology. As for the Muslim Banjar people, saying the two prophets are badinsanak should not mean that both are siblings. As already mentioned, badingsanak can mean having a close relationship. Moreover, Muhammad is believed to continue the prophethood of Isa. In a row of 25 names of Apostles known in Islam, Isa is the 24th Apostle, and Muhammad the 25th. (P.45)

The reality, the myth of badingsanak between the two prophets can be used as a means to resolve the differences of origins between Banjar who have been identified as immigrants where the majority follow Islam, and Dayaks being identified as indigenous people who are Kaharingan or Christian. This myth affirms the relationship between the Dayak and Banjar as reflected by the extension of the definition of the *bubuhan*. Currently the term *bubuhan* is used to refer to social units formed on a new basis outside the blood relation, such as ethnic, religious, and territorial equality. Therefore, the Dayak people in Hulu Banyu refer to themselves as the *bubuhan* Dayak Hulu Banyu, while Banjar people call themselves as *bubuhan* Banjar Hulu Banyu.

In the book published by CRCS UGM, there are two villages that have different environment. The first village, Hulu Banyu village, based on population statistics in 2007, the population was 1078 people, consisting of 1053 Banjars (98%) and 25 Meratus Dayaks (2%). Thus Banjar people are the majority in this village so sometimes people in the region call it "Banjar village". Banjar people here are generally economically classified as prosperous. They control the rubber business. In addition they also

have public transport vehicles for the Loksado-Kandangan line. They also trade daily necessities. In the village also stands a hotel with a natural hot water bath which is managed by Local HSS Government, employees are also mostly from Banjar people. In contrast, the Meratus Dayaks generally live near the forest and work as farmers, rubber tappers, and sellers of cinnamon. (Pages 42 and 43).

However, what is seen in the village of Hulu Banyu conversely proportional to Loksado village which according to statistics in 2007 had a population of 1021 people with a population density of 108 people per km<sup>2</sup>. 408 were Muslims, 490 Christians, and 123 of other religious groups. The heterogeneous population composition is of course very possible for the occurrence of conflict caused by differences in the implementation of the teachings or in social relationships. But as described in this book, as observed, there has been no friction of open conflict despite the fact that such conflict will indeed arise if the current balance is disrupted. (P. 72)

The description of the two villages has at least provided information that different environments do not trigger open conflict. Each village knows its own religious identity and economy. The village of Hulu Banyu with its majority Banjar Muslim in that place, does not necessarily take over all types of work there, instead they make adjustments to the environment and the minorities in the village. Later in the village of Loksado with heterogeneous population seemed to make the competition wide open. But the reality as described in this book, the 'division' of livelihoods is a major factor that open conflict does not take place. Nevertheless, according to each character of the three religious identities (Kaharingan, Islam, Christianity) as described in this book, it appears that the difference in identity is increasingly highlighted but in general, people all return to the myth of Banjar-Dayak badingsanak. They believe that their ancestors were brothers. Broadly speaking at one point this estrangement and competition are melted instantly.

A carefully conducted study and a wise, objective story, this book provides both a picture and a reflection for our heterogeneous society. We are all brothers. Perhaps, our ancestors were siblings. In general, this book breaks the myth of Banjar-Dayak badingsanak. The religious identity and ethnic economy have become a central issue in the local scientific and cultural treasure in South Kalimantan in particular and Indonesia in general.