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Post-authoritarian diversity in Indonesia's state-owned mosques: A *manakiban* case study

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Indonesia's state-owned mosques are important sites for observing changes in religious life that have taken place since the demise of the Suharto regime. During the New Order period, ideological and political factors restricted access to mosques owned and managed by provincial and regency governments. In contemporary West Java, access to such mosques has been broadened, and they now display a diversity of religious programs and practices. Drawing on recent fieldwork, this article makes a case study of the intercession ritual known as manakiban *which has recently emerged in government-owned mosques of West Java. It identifies two dominant factors behind the new inclusiveness: a desire for visibility and public legitimacy on the part of some members of the Sufi order that promotes the ritual, and secondly, a broadening of access to state-owned mosques as a result of more inclusive participation in the electoral process. The article contributes to knowledge of the politicisation of religion in contemporary Indonesia, and suggests new possibilities for understanding the meanings of public Islamic infrastructure.*

Indonesia's Muslims display a remarkable diversity of religious observances and interpretations. But the performances, expressions and observances taking place in state-owned Islamic infrastructure have, in the past, never given an accurate impression of this diversity. Rather, the visibility of an observance or expression in state-owned mosques has been subject to conditions of access and permissibility

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determined by gatekeepers with authority over that infrastructure. Under the New Order regime, public Islamic observance was shaped by a developmentalist ideology enforced through authoritarian structures. In his historical and anthropological study of Gayo religion, John Bowen observed a mutual accommodation between a forward-looking nationalism and a program of religious modernisation gathering momentum in a supra-local ethos. This combination resulted in the exclusion of a 'broad range of village practices' from state-owned infrastructure.[1] Robert Hefner's observations of religious change in Java's eastern mountain subdistricts revealed a state-sponsored program of religious transformation that set itself in opposition to deeply rooted Islamic conventions of the region, which included the regular holding of *selamatan* (ritual meals) and ritual offerings at shrines. Government support, available mostly to supporters of the nationalist Golkar party, was not made available to practitioners of those rites.[2] Ahmad Baso identifies similar developments in his critique of Indonesian bureaucratic modernity: New Order developmentalism demanded a 'critical/rational' public sphere, which found its religious counterpart in the scripturalist methodologies of modernist Islam, and simultaneously stigmatised other forms as 'primordial' and 'mystical'.[3] These analyses make it clear that during the New Order there was an authoritative consensus that certain religious forms, symbols and performances were considered appropriate for public space, while others were not.

This picture requires updating: several scholars have described significant developments in religious life, along with political change, since the Reformasi period. First, the fall of the authoritarian Suharto regime in 1998 enabled the public expression of identities — ethnic, religious and other — that had been previously submerged beneath the regime's top-down national project, but which were rapidly politicised in the newly autonomous regional political spheres.[4] Second, the normative models for religious identities shaped by the New Order's developmentalist ideology lost some of their grip on public religious expression.[5] Third, Indonesians are now witnessing virulent public competition amongst Islamic groups for moral supremacy, especially around issues involving religious freedom, Islamic sects, women, marriage and sexuality.[6] Fourth, while various sections of the Indonesian mass media had been

1 John Bowen, *Muslims through discourse: Religion and ritual in Gayo society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 73.

2 Robert W. Hefner, 'Islamizing Java? Religion and politics in Rural East Java', *Journal of Asian Studies* 46, 3 (1987): 533–54.

3 Ahmad Baso, *Plesetan lokalitas: Politik pribumisasi Islam* (Jakarta Selatan: Asia Foundation/Desantara, 2002). See also Martin Slama, '*Wisata religi* – Religiöser tourismus: Spirituelle ökonomien und Islamische machtkämpfe in Indonesien', *ASIEN* 123 (2012): 77–94.

4 See *The revival of tradition in Indonesian politics: The deployment of adat from colonialism to indigenism*, ed. Jamie Davidson and David Henley (London: Routledge, 2007); Amin Mudzakkir, 'Politik Muslim dan Ahmadiyah di Indonesia pasca Soeharto: Kasus Cianjur dan Tasikmalaya', paper presented at Seminar International Kesembilan, 'Politik identitas: Agama, etnisitas, dan ruang/space dalam dinamika politik lokal di Indonesia', Kampoeng Percik, Salatiga, 2008.

5 Baso, *Plesetan lokalitas*; Julia Day Howell, 'Muslims, the New Age and marginal religions in Indonesia: Changing meanings of religious pluralism', *Social Compass* 52, 4 (2005): 473–93.

6 John Bowen, *Islam, law, and equality in Indonesia: An anthropology of public reasoning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Suzanne Brenner, 'Holy matrimony? The print politics of polygamy in Indonesia', in *Islam and popular culture in Indonesia and Malaysia*, ed. Andrew Weintraub (New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 212–34.

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expanding before Reformasi, post-1998 deregulation stimulated the diversification of media forms and an unforeseen plurality of expression.[7] Fifth, consumption and commodification have dramatically transformed many religious practices and observances,[8] and sixth, Islamic political groups exert far more influence in public and political life than they did previously.[9]

This article adds to this literature through an analysis of a significant change in Islam's public manifestation that has emerged since the end of the New Order. We have observed that West Javanese public Islamic infrastructure is now host to a far wider range of Islamic expressions and practices than during the New Order. Using a specific Islamic observance as an example, we focus here on the contextual changes that have broadened access to state-owned Islamic infrastructure (*mesjid raya*, provincial mosques and *mesjid agung*, regency/municipal mosques). Why has a specific religious observance, for so long excluded from being performed within officially sanctioned Islamic infrastructure, quite suddenly begun to be practised within that infrastructure? Focusing on West Java, and more specifically the municipality (*kota*) of Tasikmalaya, we argue that the contemporary Islamic public sphere is more inclusive of observances that were previously not or rarely seen. We identify two major developments behind this increased inclusiveness. The first is the desire for publicity that has motivated discrete religious affiliations to seek higher visibility through performance and display in state-owned mosques. Second, we point to broader participation in regional electoral processes. Elected office-holders and candidates strive to obtain electoral approval from Muslims across a range of religious constituencies, and furthermore, often enter into coalitions with partners of different Islamic persuasion. Political networks have diversified, and because of this, political actors are more sensitive to the range of Islamic dispositions encountered within their electorates, and the constraints on what kind of Islamic observances may be practised in state-owned Islamic infrastructure have weakened. Our article focuses on a ritual — known widely in West Java as *manakiban* — that was rarely if ever practised in government-run mosques, but which has been highly visible in the provincial and regency/municipal mosques of West Java since around 2005.

What is *manakiban*?

Manakiban is a ritual practice in which Muslims gather to listen to the reading, singing or recitation of anecdotes which narrate the distinctive qualities of a saint

7 Robert W. Hefner, 'Civic pluralism denied: The new media and *jihadi* violence in Indonesia', in *New media in the Muslim world: The emerging public sphere*, ed. Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), pp. 158–79; Philip Kitley, '*Playboy Indonesia* and the media', in *Islam in Southeast Asia: Critical concepts in Islamic Studies*, vol. III, ed. Joseph Chinyong Liow and Nadirsyah Hosen (London: Routledge, 2010 [2008]), pp. 294–319; Andrew Weintraub, 'Introduction: The study of Islam and popular culture in Indonesia and Malaysia', in *Islam and popular culture in Indonesia and Malaysia*, pp. 1–18.

8 Greg Fealy, 'Consuming Islam: Commodified religion and aspirational pietism in contemporary Indonesia', in *Expressing Islam: Religious life and politics in Indonesia*, ed. Greg Fealy and Sally White (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008), pp. 15–39; Slama, *Wisata religi*.

9 Ariel Heryanto, 'Pop culture and competing identities', in *Popular culture in Indonesia: Fluid identities in post-authoritarian politics*, ed. Ariel Heryanto (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 1–36.

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(*wali*).[10] Participants generally understand the ritual as a supplication or expression of thanks (*syukuran*), although they also read other kinds of meanings into it. In Arabic, the term *manqaba* refers to an anecdote conveying a saint's special closeness to Allah. *Manāqib* is the plural of *manqaba*, so a *manāqib* book is one that contains multiple anecdotes conveying the special qualities of a Muslim saint, and providing proofs of his favoured status with Allah. In Sundanese, the suffix *-an* is added to the noun *manakib* to signify the practice of reading/listening to *manakib*. In the majority of Indonesian *manakib* traditions, the saint whose special qualities are celebrated is 'Abd al-Qadir Al-Jaelani (d. 1166). This man, born just south of the Caspian Sea in what is now Iran, had a successful career as an orator and teacher in Baghdad, the city in which his tomb is located. He is revered as an intercessor in Islamic communities the world over.[11] The observance is not new in West Java: anecdotes of Jaelani's sanctity were translated into Javanese in Banten during the eighteenth century. The uptake of the ritual in West Java's highland regencies (the Priangan) was remarkable, something attested by the sheer number of manuscript copies that were made: in the collections of Sundanese manuscripts, only the narratives of Amir Hamza rival Jaelani's.

In contemporary West Java, *manakiban* is most frequently practised by followers of the Tarekat Qadiriyah and Naqsyabandiyah Sufi (TQN), which has its West Javanese headquarters at the *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) of Suryalaya, at Pager Ageung in the regency of Tasikmalaya. TQN stipulates *manakiban* as a monthly observance for its followers. The *pesantren* holds a monthly '*manakiban besar*' (great *manakiban*) at the Suryalaya *pesantren*, which commonly attracts around ten thousand participants. Most of those who participate in the great *manakiban* come from elsewhere in West Java, but some come from other Indonesian provinces, and even from overseas.

During the twentieth century the *pesantren*'s following spread throughout West Java, and Suryalaya found it necessary to establish a legal body in the form of a foundation. This foundation now has officials (*pengurus*) representing TQN in an hierarchical structure that replicates the divisions of government (province, regency/municipality, and so on). These officials perform a largely administrative function, but TQN also appoints representatives with the authority to induct new followers into the order, a process known as *talqin*.[12] The *pengurus* is responsible for overseeing *manakiban* in a defined area. Followers register their private homes as

10 For a descriptive overview of *manāqib* in the Islamic world see Ch. Pellat, 'Manākib', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. VI (Leiden: Brill, 1960–2005), pp. 349–57. For a study of *manakiban* in Indonesia see Julian Millie, *Splashed by the saint: Ritual reading and Islamic sanctity in West Java* (Leiden: KITLV, 2009).

11 General sources on Al-Jaelani include Drewes and Poerbatjaraka, *De Mirakelen*; Jacqueline Chabbi, 'Abd al-Kâdir al-Djîlânî personnage historique: Quelques éléments de biographie', *Studia Islamica* 38 (1973): 75–106; and for Indonesian settings, Martin van Bruinessen, 'Shaykh 'Abd al Qâdir al-Jîlânî and the Qâdiriyya in Indonesia', in *The Qâdiriyyah order*, ed. Thierry Zarcone, Ekrem Isin and Arthur Buehler, special issue, *Journal of the History of Sufism* 1–2 (2000): 361–95.

12 The *talqin* (Arabic: *talqīn*, instruction) takes place when the teacher conveys the 'good words', namely 'There is no God other than Allah', to the aspirant. See Muhammad Abdul Goas Saefulloh Maslul, *Saefulloh Maslul menjawab 165 masalah: Pemahaman Qodiriyyah Naqsyabandiyyah Pondok Pesantren Suryalaya* (Bandung: Wahana Karya Grafika, 2006).

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locations for the ritual, and rosters are created specifying the monthly locations for the holding of the *manakiban*. In practice, then, *manakiban* are constantly being held in private homes registered under the Suryalaya umbrella. Nevertheless, the Suryalaya *pesantren* provides an ongoing, authoritative focal point: neighbourhoods will frequently organise bus trips to carry followers to the monthly great *manakiban* at Suryalaya.

TQN followers are found across the social spectrum.[13] However, the largest proportion of followers are from West Java's rice-growing communities and urban kampung, for whom TQN stands for Islamic concepts, forms and practices that have long been authoritative in these communities, and participation often represents a continuation of family-based practice.[14] TQN also attracts members from other segments of society: business people are attracted to the transactional dimensions of TQN's supplication practices and mediatory conventions; middle-class people respond to its overtly spiritual rather than formalistic orientation; academics and artists find a satisfying esoteric element within its mysticism.

Invisibility

Up until the recent developments discussed below, *manakiban* rituals were held predominantly at the Suryalaya *pesantren* and in the homes of TQN followers. It was also practised in mosques where sufficient support for the Sufi order enabled it.[15] But while *manakiban* was being openly practised before crowds of thousands in Suryalaya's Nurul Asror mosque, it was absent from the government-owned mosques of the regency and municipality. It had a low level of public visibility despite significant support from the Muslims of Tasikmalaya since the late nineteenth century and Suryalaya's excellent relations with Golkar, the most powerful government-linked party during the New Order.[16]

We argue that the absence of *manakiban* from government-owned major mosques was a result of a broad consensus about which Islamic forms and practices were appropriate for public space. This consensus conflated national development priorities and scriptural modernism, and had compelling social power because it was a component of the New Order's hegemony over political and public life. And it determined the texture of the public Islamic sphere, which aspired to what Julia Day Howell has referred to as 'Enlightenment ideals of highly rationalised social

13 See Julia Day Howell, M.A. Subandi and Peter L. Nelson, 'New faces of Indonesian Sufism: A demographic profile of Tarekat Qodiriyyah-Naqsbandiyyah, Pesantren Suryalaya, in the 1990s', *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 35, 2 (2001): 33–61.

14 Millie, *Splashed by the saint*, pp. 81–4.

15 *Manakiban* is not a new phenomenon in some of Tasikmalaya's 'private' mosques such as the Masjid Haji Bakri in Cihideung.

16 Tasikmalaya was the site of religio-political powerplays during the New Order period. The Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (United Development Party, PPP) drew strong support in Tasikmalaya during that time, but the Golkar-dominated government gave preferential treatment (project funding, etc.) to religious schools that supported Golkar, and discriminated against those that supported the PPP, forcing religious figures to make painful but highly consequential decisions about which party to support. See Amarah Tasikmalaya: Konflik di basis Islam, ed. Thoriq Hadad (Jakarta: Institut Studi Arus Informasi, 1998), pp. 96–119.

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forms and scripturalist religious expression'.[17] In other words, Muslims under the New Order were so influenced by a conception of religion that implied 'notions of progress, modernisation, and adherence to nationalist goals' that it seemed natural that certain practices did not belong within public infrastructure, while others did.[18]

How did *manakiban* fall on the wrong side of this consensus? This question requires consideration of the different understandings of the practice of *manakiban*, which can be summarised under three categories. First, objections to the ritual have frequently been based on theological grounds. *Manakiban* participants understand the ritual, in basic terms, as an intercessory supplication. That is to say, they use it (amongst other motivations) to ensure a good outcome for an intention (*hajat*) through the mediation of a third party (*wali*, meaning friend or saint) whose special relationship with Allah distinguishes him as a powerful mediator. This transactional understanding of the human–God relationship, as well as the intercessory model on which it relies, has always been problematic for scriptural modernists, who are sensitive to the attribution of divine agency to any other than Allah.[19] They cite Islamic authority in support of a limited range of intercessory possibilities in Islam, and are generally critical of supplications that rely on intercessory frameworks.[20]

Second, the ritual also conjures up images of backwardness in the minds of some of its critics. In some settings, the ritual includes acts, utterances, symbols and meanings that many Indonesians consider outdated. In some households where the ritual is performed, Sundanese conventions are prominent: families prepare large feasts and assemblies of symbolic objects. These feasts, symbols and objects are often considered as means for communicating with the spirits of deceased ancestors and other notables. Furthermore, surprising and idiosyncratic ritual acts are carried out on the authority of household tradition, and are considered to be necessary for the efficacious performance of the ritual. Sundanese vocal performance genres are sometimes mobilised for the verbalisation of the anecdotes.[21] When performed in this way, the *manakiban* can be a sensory affair that is rich in symbolic acts and objects, busy in its singing and audience participation, and generous in its provision of food, drink and cigarettes. For many Indonesians, this way of performing ritual belongs to the ancestors, not to the public forums of a rapidly modernising country.

17 Julia Day Howell, 'Modernity and Islamic spirituality in Indonesia's new Sufi networks', in *Sufism and the 'modern' in Islam*, ed. Martin van Bruinessen and Julia Day Howell (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), p. 227.

18 Jane Monnig Atkinson, 'Religions in dialogue: The construction of an Indonesian minority religion', *American Ethnologist* 10, 4 (1983): 684–96.

19 An exemplary study of this conflict of interpretation is Arthur Buehler, 'Charismatic versus scriptural authority: Naqshabandi responses to deniers of meditational Sufism in British India', in *Islamic mysticism contested: Thirteen centuries of controversies and polemics*, ed. Frederick De Jong and Bernd Radtke (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 468–91.

20 On the polemics over the scriptural correctness of *manakiban*, see Imron, *Kitab manakib Syekh Abdulqadir Jaelani merusak aqidah Islam disertai POLEMIK: Drs. Imron AM vs Choiron Chusen tentang 'Kitab manakib Syekh Abdulqadir Jaelani merusak aqidah Islam'* (Bangil: Yayasan al-Muslimun, 1990); Maslul, *Saefulloh Maslul menjawab*; Millie, *Splashed by the saint*, pp. 139–58. Dadang Kahmad has discussed the phenomenon of TQN followers dissembling about their affiliation in response to such stereotypes, especially in urban areas where opposition to the *tariqah* is expressed openly. See Dadang Kahmad, *Tarekat dalam Islam: Spiritualitas masyarakat modern* (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2002), pp. 122–4.

21 Millie, *Splashed by the saint*, pp. 87–125.

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Third, the overall image of *tariqah* (Sufi orders) is relevant also to the exclusion of *manakiban* from the public sphere. Against the background of the rapid modernisation programs undertaken by both the Sukarno and Suharto governments, elements of *tariqah* Sufism appeared incompatible with authoritative notions of progress.[22] The strictly hierarchical relations between teacher and adept, for example, appeared more suitable to the pre-independence period, and the *tariqah*'s doctrinally justified reverence of the past suggested resistance to change. Other *tariqah* stereotypes were that their leaders were unworldly, poorly educated traditionalists who did not follow prescriptions about ritual worship, but who enjoyed a privileged position in their isolation thanks to the respect offered to them by farming communities. TQN's preference for loudly vocalised repetitions (*dzikir*) did not help its image amongst Muslims not used to that observance (see below).

Such perceptions about *manakiban* underpin its low public visibility, rather than the ritual being disapproved of by a majority of Indonesians on theological grounds. It was not the case that the West Javanese bureaucrats in charge of public Islamic infrastructure were all progressive scripturalists wishing to modernise public ritual: scriptural literalists did not control public Islamic infrastructure. Yet *manakiban* fell foul of a public consensus about what should be visible or invisible in public space, given its varied meanings. This consensus reflected the fact that in West Java of the New Order period, religion and development were mutually implying and mutually supporting concepts in public discourse. Like the East Javanese examples of state-funded Islamisation described by Hefner,[23] under Suharto, West Javanese Muslims witnessed massive Islamic projects involving collaborations between the government, Golkar, the armed forces, and religious elites.[24] These projects were built to facilitate public religious forms that would serve the goal of Islamically legitimised development and modernisation. They were not built to facilitate localised, 'syncretic' rituals of West Javanese Islam, and the practitioners of such rituals had no voice in the huge public collaborative projects. The civic leaders behind these projects were mindful only of religious meanings that could be rationalised by prevailing notions of civil progress. In this way, Islamic practice was divided into forms that were acceptable for public performance, and those that were properly performed in private.[25] It seemed natural to mosque committees that the *manakiban* should not be visible in the public sphere.

This consensus, without doubt, favoured the scriptural orientation that has historically been prominent in West Java. Unlike in Central and East Java, where well-established indigenous elites nurtured spiritual and cosmological conventions that gave a heterogeneous character to Islam, the spread of the religion in West Java

22 Julia Day Howell, 'Sufism and the Indonesian Islamic revival', *Journal of Asian Studies* 60 (2001): 701–29; Howell, 'Modernity and Islamic spirituality'.

23 Robert W. Hefner, 'Islamizing Java?'; Robert W. Hefner, 'Where have all the *abangan* gone? Religionization and the decline of non-standard Islam in Indonesia', in *The politics of religion in Indonesia: Syncretism, orthodoxy and religious contention in Java and Bali*, ed. Rémy Madinier and Michel Picard (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 71–91.

24 Examples are the establishment of the Bandung Islamic University (Unisba), the 'Centre for Islamic Dakwah' (Pusdai, completed in 1998), and the At-Ta'awun Mosque in Puncak, Bogor (completed in 1997).

25 John Bowen, *Muslims through discourse*, pp. 315–19.

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was not so 'impeded' by alternate authoritative spiritual traditions. The Islamic communities of the region have been more scripturally oriented than those of many other regions in Indonesia.[26] According to Karl Steenbrink, the province 'lacked the *abangan* variant', meaning it lacked a concentration of Muslims who attached a low priority to ritual and doctrinal correctness.[27] And in the 1955 election, when voters had the option of choosing between parties representing religious programs, West Javanese voters showed a preference for the modernist Islamo-democratic party Masjumi.[28] This support can be understood partially as a rejection of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), which was frequently read in West Java as a 'Javanese' (i.e. Central and East Javanese) party, but also as an indication of approval of Masjumi's ideological platform, which was based on a specifically Islamic vision of a modern Indonesia. Similarly, when it comes to self-identification, many Sundanese have grafted their ethnic identity to their religious one through widespread use of the phrase 'Sunda is Islam, and Islam is Sunda', a move interpreted by some as an effort to distinguish themselves as being 'more Islamic' than their Javanese neighbours.[29] In West Java, therefore, we encounter a public sphere open to a seamless congruence of Islamic reformism and modernisation, something not so possible in the rest of Java.

But this did not mean that state-owned mosques were easily accessible by all scriptural modernists. Other processes of exclusion were at work during the Suharto era, and even the paradigmatic Indonesian scriptural modernist group, the Islamic Association (Persatuan Islam, or Persis), felt their effect. A Persis official explained to us that during the Suharto era the organisation's preachers were generally not permitted to take part in the rostered Friday sermons in West Java's state-owned mosques, even though Persis was quite widely supported in the province. In the case of Persis, the reasons were political: the group's preachers included vocal critics of the New Order and Golkar.[30] Religious figures and groups that aligned themselves in opposition to Golkar were generally denied access to government resources and state-owned Islamic infrastructure.[31]

TQN was not blind to the realities of the West Javanese public sphere just described. Suryalaya has presided over a redirection of the *manakiban* that responds to the dual discourses of Islamic reform and development/modernisation. Since at least 1976, it has stipulated a *manakiban* that is shaped by contemporary realities: while in its older forms the ritual would last from evening to morning, the TQN version can be completed in an hour, reflecting the realities of contemporary lifestyles;

26 C. Snouck-Hurgronje, *Mekka in the latter part of the 19th century. Daily life, customs and learning; The Moslims of the archipelago*, trans. J.H. Monahan (Leiden: Brill, 1970), p. 264; Michael C. Williams, *Communism, religion and revolt in Banten* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1990).

27 Karel Steenbrink, 'A Catholic Sadrach: The contested conversion of Madrais adherents in West-Java between 1960–2000', in *Een vakkracht in het Koninkrijk: Kerk- en zendingshistorische opstellen aangeboden aan dr. Th. van den End ter gelegenheid van zijn vijfenzestigste verjaardag*, ed. Chr. G.F. de Jong (Heerenveen: Groen, 2005).

28 Herbert Feith, *The Indonesian elections of* 1955 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1957).

29 Lynda Newland, 'Under the banner of Islam: Mobilising religious identities in West Java', *Australian Journal of Anthropology* 11, 2 (2000): 199–222.

30 See Howard M. Federspiel, *Islam and ideology in the emerging Indonesian state: The Persatuan Islam (PERSIS), 1923 to 1957* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

31 Hadad, *Amarah Tasikmalaya*.

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TQN stipulations regarding the ritual's performance do not mention the ritual setting (i.e. the *selamatan*) that reveals continuity with well-established Sundanese convention; the great monthly public *manakiban* contains multiple affirmations of loyalty to the Indonesian Republic; efficacy paradigms sourced to Sundanese Islamic convention are absent; and discourse about ʿAbd al-Qadir has a tone that is more didactic than intercessionary, acknowledging the sensitive scriptural discourses triggered by the concept of intercession.[32] This shaping of the ritual in the direction of prevailing conceptions did not, however, directly cause the ritual to emerge on the public stage. This emergence can be attributed to specific events to be discussed below.

Emergence in public space

The emergence of *manakiban* in government mosques is a recent phenomenon. In 2005 it was first practised in the West Java provincial mosque, the Masjid Raya Jawa Barat, in Bandung. The Masjid Agung Cimahi, in the western part of greater Bandung, saw its first *manakiban* in approximately 2009. A historic moment for TQN followers was in 2007, when the first *manakiban* was conducted in Indonesia's national mosque, Masjid Istiqlal in Jakarta. It has since been held there (at least) another four times.

This increase in visibility should not be confused with an increase in participation in TQN, nor do we claim that it indicates a corresponding increase in the size of TQN's following. The available literature suggests that during the New Order era *manakiban* had been steadily spreading geographically as well as across the social spectrum.[33] Suryalaya staff claim to have observed a recent increase in the numbers attending the *manakiban besar*. They also report an increase in the number of *manakiban* locations. According to Suryalaya figures, over the period of 2009–10 the number of registered *manakiban* locations in Tasikmalaya, most of them private homes and *musholla* (prayer rooms), increased from around 600 to 800.[34] Our observations of growth should be treated with caution, given the lack of reliable statistics, but we have nevertheless observed high interest in joining TQN in Tasikmalaya. On one visit to the Masjid Agung (*kota*) of Tasikmalaya in December 2010, we observed a group of 250 people waiting to participate in the brief ritual that signifies acceptance into TQN. Other mosques showed similar numbers.

These sources point to an increase in the frequency of *manakiban* and the volume of participants over a long duration.[35] But, this is not our primary focus. Rather, we are interested in the emergence of the ritual in public Islamic space. The remainder of this article examines four contextual changes that underpin this

32 Millie, *Splashed by the saint*, pp. 139–58.

33 Howell et al., 'New faces of Indonesian Sufism'; Kahmad, *Tarekat dalam Islam*; Asep Usman Ismail, 'Tradisi manakiban di lingkungan tarekat Qadiriyyah-Naqsyabandiyyah (Pengamatan awal pada beberapa tempat)', paper presented at the conference on 'Sufism and the "Modern" in Islam', Bogor, 4–6 Sept. 2003.

34 The source of these figures was the secretary of the Suryalaya Foundation.

35 As Dadang Kahmad has pointed out, however, many converts to TQN hope for worldly benefits from doing so, and upon disappointment, cease their affiliation with the group. The Sufi order's 'dropout rate' is high: Kahmad estimates that 60 per cent of converts eventually cease TQN practice. See Kahmad, *Tarekat dalam Islam*, p. 84.

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emergence. The third and fourth of these are minor in significance in comparison with the first two.

The turn to visibility

Academic reflections on post-Suharto Islamic society frequently refer to its diversity. New Order repression and regulation prevented the public display of specific Islamic identities, programs, expressions and practices. The fall of the regime enabled all these aspects of Islam to emerge as a euphoric release of pressure in the public sphere, leading to competition among rival ideological positions. To a limited degree, and with some ambivalence, TQN has been an active participant in this burgeoning of public expressions of Islam. A significant motivation behind this move into the public sphere has been a desire for visibility, or more accurately, for publicity. By publicity, we mean the public witnessing of an act performed before spectators, and the subsequent legitimacy that arises out of that witnessing.[36] Islamic groups now understand the public sphere as a 'performative space',[37] and as a result, Indonesian Islam is performed and mediatised to a degree never before seen. In this environment, some worry that the continued 'secrecy' or 'privacy' of *manakiban* encourages doubt over its legitimacy and value. In the eyes of some *tariqah* actors, the long period of marginalisation needed to redressed, and the widespread stereotypes about *tariqah* Sufism needed to be changed. Publicity provides the way to do so.

The major driver behind the turn to visibility has been Muhammad Abdul Gaos Saefulloh Maslul, a Sundanese cleric born in Ciamis in 1944. Ajengan Gaos had become a confidante of the TQN leader Syeikh Shohibul Wafa Tajul Arifin (Abah Anom) before the latter's death in 2011.[38] In an interview with us he explained that he had received an instruction from Abah Anom to develop the *manakib*. Gaos interpreted this to mean (authors' translation):

> 'Develop the *manakib,* reveal and clarify its meaning and significance so that people know and understand what it is. The mosque is the place of the *kyai* [religious leader], and it is time for the *kyai* to lead *manakib* in the mosques, and to cease playing hide and seek in private homes because of a worry that there could be an issue about [TQN] being a deviant group, when in fact, in the past, it wasn't the case that we did not want to hold it in the mosques, but some ulama forbade it because loud recitations [*dzikir jahar*] like those of the TQN might cause a disturbance. In fact, the Prophet and his companions recited their *dzikir* loudly in the mosque'.[39]

In 2006, Gaos took the further step of writing and publishing a book entitled *Saefulloh Maslul answers 165 questions about the meaning of the Qadiriyyah/Naqsyabandiyyah Sufi Order*. The book intends to counter the 'ongoing wrong perceptions that turn people away from practising the teachings of Sufism'.[40] The questions deal with specific misunderstandings about TQN and *manakiban*, explaining these as religious

36 John B. Thompson, *The media and modernity: A social theory of the media* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995).
37 Kitley, 'Playboy Indonesia', p. 306.
38 *Ajengan* is the Sundanese equivalent of the word *kyai* (leader of an Islamic school).
39 We interviewed Ajengan Gaos in Ciamis on 19 Dec. 2011.
40 Maslul, *Saefulloh Maslul menjawab*, p. 9.

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forms completely within the practice of the Prophet Muhammad and the accepted meanings of the Qur'an. Gaos's motives for publishing this work overlap with those behind the move into the state-owned mosques. Both ventures serve TQN's interests by asserting the religious legitimacy of the ritual; enabling the broader Muslim public to develop a more accurate impression of *tariqah* programs and activities; and dispelling the aura of secrecy around *manakiban*.

Gaos's initiative is in fact an example of a broader Indonesian trend. In their discussion of the recent swell in the popularity of public rituals held by Sufistic piety movements, Zamhari and Howell have identified the movements as responses to an Indonesian Islamic sphere in which 'many institutions, products, and supposed authorities call for people's attention'.[41] This clamour has not gone unnoticed by *tariqah* leaders. Some have responded by abandoning the detachment characteristic of Sufism's quietist project of critical distance from the world, and are mobilising contemporary cultural and media trends in order to create a public presence.[42] They are 'taking Sufism to the streets'.

The turn to visibility requires an important qualification. We found that not all TQN followers agree with the emergence of its activities into the public gaze. Suryalaya and its *manakiban* ritual now have a small presence in the tumult of an Islamic public sphere mediatised to saturation point. For some, the true place of the *tariqah* and its teachings is the private sphere. One follower told us that TQN's teachings were dedicated to improving the heart through Islamic teachings and practice, and that the worldliness implied by publicity is in fact not conducive to making progress in this project. These objections express rarely heard resistance to the publicity oriented impetus of religious competition in post-Suharto Indonesia.

Democratisation and accountability of mosque management

The democratisation of electoral processes at the subnational level has been instrumental in enabling the recent flourishing of *manakiban* in state-controlled mosques in West Java. The case of the Masjid Agung Tasikmalaya (the city mosque) is illustrative. The construction of the Masjid Agung commenced in 1886. The land was a gift from the Regent of Sumedang. The large mosque has always been under the authority of local government.[43] We have no knowledge of whether *manakiban* were ever held in the mosque in the nineteenth century or in the pre-independence period. We are reasonably certain, however, that the ritual was not practised in the mosque during the New Order; and we are certain that the ritual was not practised during the last decade or so of that regime. So, although *manakiban* has long been a popular form of Islamic observance in Tasikmalaya, it was probably not practised in the Masjid Agung until around 2008.[44]

41 Arif Zamhari and Julia Day Howell, 'Taking Sufism to the streets: Majelis zikir and majelis salawat as new venues for popular Islamic piety in Indonesia', *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 46, 2 (2012): 53–4.

42 Achmad Zainal Arifin, 'Re-energising recognised Sufi orders in Indonesia', *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 46, 2 (2012): 77–104.

43 Up until 2001, it was under the Regency government. After the formation of the City of Tasikmalaya in 2001, it fell under the jurisdiction of the City government.

44 We received conflicting accounts of the year of the first *manakiban*. Informants offered the years 2006 and 2008.

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It was clearly not the turn to visibility alone that accounted for its appearance. Changes to mosque management and attendant political significance also played an important role. During the Suharto period, the mosque was not managed by the community-based Mosque Maintenance Boards (DKM) that were responsible for the management of non-state mosques.[45] Being a government mosque, it was run by a structure called the Badan Pengelola Masjid Agung (Management Body of the Masjid Agung, BPMA), as well as a related body concerned with practical management called the Badan Pengelola Harian Masjid Agung (Daily Management Board of the Masjid Agung, BPHMA). Board members were mostly bureaucrats from the city government (Pemkot, Pemerintah Kota), from the Departemen Agama (Department of Religion), and from the Religious Affairs Office (KUA, Kantor Urusan Agama).[46] The committee members were appointed by the regent and, after 2001, by the mayor, who in practice delegated the task to the Department of Religion. Public expectations and accountability were not components in this process. During the Suharto period, the regent (*bupati*) was appointed by the regional parliament (DPRD). This was not a period of political openness: as is well known, party contest was limited to three parties, and structural impediments restricted the potential of two of those parties (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, PPP and Partai Demokrasi Indonesia, PDI). Political participation was difficult for those who did not join Golkar, the government-supported party. In short, the regent was not accountable to the voting public, but to Golkar.

This changed with the democratisation of the electoral process. In 2001 the regent of Tasikmalaya was selected, for the first time, by the legislative assembly, and in 2005 residents of Tasikmalaya voted for the position for the first time.[47] In 2002, the mayor of Tasikmalaya was appointed by the legislative assembly, and in 2007, by popular election. This democratisation brought changes to the management of the Masjid Agung. In 2005, the management structure of the mosque was changed. The BPMA and BPHMA were replaced by a DKM. The decision to make this change was made by consultation between a number of organisations: Majlis Ulama Indonesia (the Indonesian Council of Ulama, MUI), the Dewan Masjid Indonesia (Mosque Board of Indonesia, DMI, a New Order creation), the Department of Religion, and other organisations. This change was significant because the adoption of the DKM structure suggests a far greater role in the management of mosque affairs on the part of its users.

Currently, the leadership of the DKM extends for a three-year term, and the leader is appointed by the mayor. At the time of our fieldwork, the head of the Tasikmalaya DKM was the vice-mayor. The task of making appointments to the DKM has been delegated to MUI.[48] Other board members are high-ranking officials in the municipal

45 In West Java the acronym DKM is variously interpreted as Dewan Keluarga Masjid (Board of the Mosque Family) or Dewan Kemakmuran Masjid (Board for the Prosperity of the Mosque). In other locations in Java, the DKM is frequently called *takmir*.

46 The KUA deals with routine matters requiring religious administration and verification.

47 Mudzakkir, *Politik Muslim*.

48 Some Muslim figures were critical of this delegation. They saw it as a strategic move reflecting a politically motivated agreement between MUI, which represents a clique of well-positioned religious leaders, and the *kota* government. For critiques of the political brokerage performed by religious elites in Tasikmalaya, see *Pluralisme, sekularisme dan liberalisme di Indonesia: Persepsi kaum santri di Jawa*

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government, religious bureaucrats, the police commissioner, business people, *kyai*, retired parliamentarians, as well as MUI officials.

The changes to the electoral process have been instrumental in the turn to broader participation in the mosque's activities. We see two relevant developments. First, and rather obviously, is the increased vertical accountability that has resulted from the democratisation of regional politics.[49] Elected officials and aspirants need to appeal to a wide range of religious constituencies. The impression that a candidate is too strongly affiliated with a specific religious current is therefore something to be avoided. Second, elected officials no longer represent the ideological singularity conventionally implied by party affiliation. They are supported by coalitions of parties that defy the political borders that defined the Indonesian political landscape in the past. Sandra Hamid has observed how this trend has blurred ideological and policy distinctions, noting that in contemporary Indonesian politics, 'nothing is impossible when it comes to coalition building'.[50] These changes encourage the mayor and other political players to view the mosque's management through an entirely new frame of political calculus. The risk today is that specific actors and groups might feel they are unfairly being denied access to public infrastructure. So although the office-bearers and functionaries of the mosque are still appointed by the mayor, the political meanings of this task are wholly different.

In post-Suharto Tasikmalaya, religious-based identities are being asserted and performed in public to a degree not previously evident, hence Muslims of various persuasions are making stronger claims for access to the mosque. The earlier consensus that produced strict conditions of access to public infrastructure has weakened, for public religion is no longer a component of a top-down, authoritarian project. The mayor and his party, accountable to an electorate and subject to ideologically diverse coalitions, now treat the mosque as an environment in which the contrasting claims of diverse religious constituencies should be met (subject to limitations discussed below).

According to the administrator of the secretariat of the Masjid Agung's DKM, the relative diversity of the mosque's contemporary activities results directly from the demands made by religious communities in Tasikmalaya. The mosque receives proposals from a wide variety of organisations seeking to hold rituals, speeches and study-oriented events (*pengajian*) in the mosque. In his words, the current DKM has a policy of instilling a 'sense of belonging' in the mosque for all Muslims, and it now allows access to a broader range of Islamic segments than previously. Routine activities held in the mosque at the time of writing include:

Barat, ed. Syafiq Hasyim (Pondok Indah: ICIP, 2007); Mudzakkir, *Politik Muslim*; A.Z. Noor, 'Keingingan dan niat buruk', in *Nuhammadiyah bicara nasionalisme*, ed. Binhad Nurrohmat and Moh. Shofan (Jogjakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2011): 49–62.

49 Michael Buehler, 'Decentralisation and local democracy in Indonesia: The marginalization of the public sphere', in *Problems of democratization in Indonesia: Elections, institutions and society*, ed. Edward Aspinall and Marcus Mietzner (Singapore: ISEAS, 2010), p. 273.

50 Sandra Hamid, 'Indonesian politics in 2012: Coalitions, accountability and the future of democracy', *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* 48, 3 (2012): 325–45. In the 2012 mayoral election, the successful ticket was supported by the Koalisi Masyarakat Madani (Civil Society Coalition) made up of the Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (Prosperous Justice Party, PKS), PPP, Reform Star Party (PBR), Partai Bulan Bintang (Crescent and Star Party, PBB), Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (National Awakening Party, PKB), and Partai Demokrasi (Democratic Party, PD).

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- Majelis Taʿlim Masjid Agung (MTMA). This is a weekly study group (*pengajian*) held every Wednesday morning. It consists of general Islamic instruction attended by women from various backgrounds. The event is not managed by any specific religious group or organisation.
- A special *pengajian* for the DKM is held routinely once a week on every Thursday night after the *maghrib* prayer. Although this event is specifically intended for the DKM management, it is also attended by others.
- The Islamic Association (Persatuan Islam, Persis) holds a monthly study group called *Al-Ittihad* every Tuesday afternoon of the second week of the month.
- The Crescent Star Party (PBB) holds a monthly *pengajian* called *Al-Hilal* on every Saturday of the fourth week. The mosque management states that although this event is held by a political party, the party does not politicise the event. It is largely attended, according to the management, by 'Muhammadiyah followers'.
- The *manakiban* of the Suryalaya pesantren is held once a month on every Monday morning of the fourth week. This is generally attended by TQN followers from within and outside Tasikmalaya.
- *Dzikir* (recitation/remembrance) and *istighotsah* (group supplication) are held once a month on every Sunday morning of the second week. These are attended by Muslims from various backgrounds.
- An instruction in Sufism (*tasawwuf*) provided by the Dar al-Tauhid organisation of the Bandung-based preacher Aa Gym is held once a month on the Sunday of the first week.
- The mass Islamic organisation NU holds an event once a month on every Sunday of the third week. This event is open to the public.
- Another general oratory/study event (*ceramah umum*) is held monthly by the mosque's education committee (Badan Koordinasi Masjid Mushola, BKMM). This is attended by Muslims from various backgrounds.
- The Co-ordinating Body for Islamic Women (Badan Kerja Sama Wanita Islam, BKSWI) holds a monthly instruction for Muslim women from various backgrounds.

The diversity is enhanced by the irregular users of the mosque, which include ideological activist groups such as Front Pembela Islam (FPI), Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) and Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI). Like the events mentioned above, they generally use the mosque for the delivery of sermons, often labelled as *tabligh akbar* (great preaching). Through these groups, ideological contest is waged from the mosque: the FPI, for example, has several times held instruction with the purpose of 'guiding the misguided' (*sesat*) followers of the Ahmadiyah sect back to the 'right' way.

Clearly, the Masjid Agung Tasikmalaya has become a location for the practice and promotion of many variants of Islam, not just the *manakiban*. Not surprisingly, the DKM is pleased with the resulting levels of usage. Of the activities mentioned above, *dzikir* and *istighotsah* draw the largest number of participants. The second-largest audiences attend the *manakiban* and Majelis Taʿlim Masjid Agung. The DKM administrator confirmed that the *dzikir* and *istighotsah*, as well as the *manakiban*, have only been introduced to the mosque schedule in recent years.

The above implies that there is greater public accountability in the management of state religious infrastructure; there are nevertheless clear limits to the resulting

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access. All Islamic persuasions are not equal in Tasikmalaya. In his study of the politicisation of religion in Tasikmalaya in recent years, Mudzakkir identified a process of 'minoritisation'.[51] Ideologically motivated Muslim activists have stigmatised minorities as a threat to the greater community, and these views have been adopted and transformed into formal measures by political actors intent on assuring voters of their Islamic credentials. In August 2007 provincial resolutions (SKB) banning the activities of the Ahmadiyah sect were signed by the mayor and regent of Tasikmalaya as well as heads of other government agencies in their jurisdictions. The Tasikmalaya city government made a similar resolution about the Islamic group known as Wahidiyah in October of the same year.[52] The decision-makers were no doubt fully aware of the dubious legal status of these resolutions, but they did serve the purpose of indicating the government's support for the same messages contained in a MUI fatwa. These decisions indicate clear limits to the expanded participation in Tasikmalaya's state-owned Islamic infrastructure in the post-Suharto period.[53]

Dana Pilkada

Suryalaya's relationship with the government, and especially with Golkar, has been frequently commented upon.[54] During the Suharto era, the *pesantren* was frequently visited by political elites, and received material support from them for its projects. While other *pesantren* in Tasikmalaya were opposing New Order policies such as the promotion of *Pancasila* as the state ideology, Suryalaya was 'assiduous in support of government policies'.[55] This positive disposition brought electoral benefits to Golkar, and financial benefits to the *pesantren*. But although Suryalaya's ties to the New Order government were unusually warm, the relationship was typical of the broader religio-political landscape during the Suharto era: institutions that supported Golkar received largesse, while those that supported the PPP went without.

The post-Reformasi situation presents different realities. Since 2005 and 2007, when the first direct elections of regents and mayors were respectively held,

51 Mudzakkir, *Politik Muslim*.

52 We rely on various media reportage from the time here: 'Ahmadiyah dilarang beraktivitas', *Pikiran Rakyat*, 10 Aug. 2007; 'Massa rusak tempat ibadah', *Pikiran Rakyat*, 17 Sept. 2007; 'Wahidiyah dilarang melakukan aktivitas', *Pikiran Rakyat*, 1 Oct. 2007. For background on the Ahmadiyah situation in West Java see Melissa Crouch, *Indonesia, militant Islam and Ahmadiyah: Origins and implications* (Melbourne: University of Melbourne/Centre for Islamic Law and Society, 2009).

53 The resolutions throw the spotlight on a further reality emerging from the developments discussed here, namely MUI's increasing public role. Since the end of the Suharto period, the Council has been granted a role in the appointment of DKM members. Furthermore, the regency and municipal governments have passed pseudo-regulations implementing MUI's ideological positions about minority Islamic movements. In their public aspects, the lives of Tasikmalaya's Muslims are becoming more and more exposed to the Council and its agendas.

54 Accounts of Suryalaya's positive relationship with Golkar and successive Indonesian governments refer to ties existing as far back as the Indonesian war of independence and the Darul Islam conflict of the post-independence period. See Unang Sunardjo, *Menelusuri perjalanan sejarah pondok pesantren Suryalaya, pusat pengembangan tarekat Qodiriyyah wa Naqsyabandiyyah abad kedua puluh* (Tasikmalaya: Yayasan Serba Bakti Pondok Pesantren Suryalaya, 1995); Zulkifli, *Sufism in Java: The role of the Pesantren in the maintenance of Sufism in Java* (Leiden and Jakarta: INIS, 2002); Hadad, *Amarah Tasikmalaya*.

55 Zulkifli, *Sufism in Java*, p. 79.

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Indonesians have voted frequently. Golkar is not the only party with money to spend for political goals, and the sums of money expended for campaign purposes, known as *dana pilkada*, have increased remarkably.[56] The majority of these sums are sourced from private backers (such as contractors), while some are derived from party funds, the candidate's own fund-raising, and the state's political party financing system. Significant sums flow for the financing of religious activities. Candidates for office in West Java perceive that religious gatherings, especially those conducted on a large scale, provide good opportunities to create a positive impression with voters.[57] Like other Islamic observances such as *istighotsah* and preaching events, *manakiban* is a religious practice around which large crowds can be mobilised, and the ritual has frequently been financed from campaign funds.

In our experience, these events are not usually managed as party rallies, but as religious gatherings at which a singer or popular preacher will be the central attraction. The candidate will appear on stage during the event. In the 2007 mayoral and the 2010 regency elections, candidates cooperated with TQN officials to organise *manakiban* in the province's mosques. In the 2010 election, no fewer than 41 *manakiban* locations were visited by candidates of various parties. On such occasions, local *manakiban* networks are mobilised, and participants are provided with food and transport expenses. Honorariums are provided for preachers and ritual leaders. One of the authors of this paper attended a *manakiban* at which a political aspirant pledged to the appreciative audience that he would provide 50,000 rupiah (approximately US$ 5) to cover the expenses of every person wishing to attend a *manakiban* held at Jakarta's Istiqlal mosque. This financial support reveals a further effect of the democratisation of electoral processes on the prominence of the practice in the public sphere: *manakiban* are funded in a way that they were not before the era of regional autonomy.

For some observers, this politicisation of Islamic observances empties them of their value. The Tasikmalaya-based painter and writer Acep Zamzam Noor has published such a critique of the practice of *istighotsah*.[58] It is often stated that Gus Dur was the person responsible for transforming the group-prayer known as *istighotsah* (lit., an appeal for aid) into a tool for achieving party political goals.[59] Political aspirants often fund large-scale *istighotsah* in Tasikmalaya. In Noor's view, now that the group prayer has become a political 'tool for assembling the masses', its social and ritual functions have disappeared.

56 See Marcus Mietzner, 'Funding Pilkada: Illegal campaign financing in Indonesia's local elections', in *The state and illegality in Indonesia*, ed. Edward Aspinall and Gerry van Klinken (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2011), pp. 123–38.

57 The first Regent elected by the voters of Tasikmalaya was in fact an *ikhwan* ('brother' in the sense of follower) of Suryalaya, Tatang Farhanul Hakim, a PPP representative. It would be a mistake to read too much into this affiliation. Tatang was known for establishing good relations with a wide range of political and social partners (see Mudzakkir, *Politik Muslim*). Furthermore, Suryalaya did not actively support his campaign. He served two terms between 2001 and 2011.

58 Acep Zamzam Noor, 'Istighotsah' (2007), Blog: Acep Zamzam Noor, http://budaya-acepzamzamnoor.blogspot.com.au/ (last accessed 23 June 2013).

59 See Asep Saepul Muhtadi, *Komunikasi politik Nahdlatul Ulama: Pergulatan pemikiran politik radikal dan akomodatif* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2004), pp. 205–21.

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Nevertheless, this injection of funding has certainly increased the frequency of *manakiban* in public infrastructure. Yet it also warns us against making hasty conclusions that the practice of *manakiban* is displaying a rapid rise in popularity. In a materially underprivileged environment such as rural West Java, travelling to a religious observance provides Muslims with an attractive and rewarding undertaking that has social as well as religious value, and those attending *manakiban* inevitably include Muslims happy to attend a group celebration without paying great attention to the specific observances being conducted.

Freedom to move

The Reformasi period brought changes to Indonesians' perception of their freedom to move. The authors of this article have heard many stories in West Java of people being detained without trial during the New Order, and sometimes beaten, simply because they were physically present at an event (religious or cultural) that was held without a permit from the local police. Yet although religious gatherings without a permit were prohibited during the New Order, this policy was not enforced equally. According to senior preachers in Bandung, permits were compulsory only for those events at which preachers under surveillance by the authorities were engaged to speak. Where the event did not involve such a person, a permit was not required.

It was not only preachers who could be affected by the requirements to obtain a permit. Consequences could flow also for organisers and even audience members. In 2011, the activist Mursalin Dahlan published his account of the Kadugede affair.[60] In 1974, Dahlan was the general secretary of the Badan Pembangunan Muslimin Indonesia (Organisation for the Development of Indonesian Muslims, BPMI).[61] Along with the Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation, DDII), it held an instruction course for preachers at a *pesantren* in Kadugede, in Kuningan, West Java. An informant reported to the local military command that the meeting involved incitement to violence, an accusation denied by Dahlan. All participants were arrested, detained and interrogated. After the audience members were released, the speakers and organisers, eleven people in all, remained in detention. Ten days later, the committee members were released, leaving Dahlan and two others. Dahlan was released after being detained for one hundred days. According to his account, at the local headquarters of the secret police he was tortured, his family was threatened and he was forced into making a confession. Such events were, it seems, not rare.[62]

News of such happenings, not uncommon during the New Order, naturally spread throughout the community, and led people to attach the risk of arbitrary detention to attendance at religious events, especially where this involved travelling a significant distance from the address inscribed on one's identity card.

In such a climate of fear, *tariqah* activities posed specific risks. Successive Indonesian governments, encouraged by ideological actors, have drawn a strict line

60 See Mursalin Dahlan, 'Revolusi "Pisang Goreng"', *Pikiran Rakyat*, 2 Apr. 2011.

61 In Solahudin's account of Salafi jihadism in Indonesia, Dahlan is named as a plotter in a conspiracy to assassinate President Suharto. See Solahudin, *NII sampai JI: Salafy jihadisme di Indonesia* (Depok: Komunitas Bambu, 2011), pp. 159–98.

62 For an account of the intimidation of religious figures in Tasikmalaya by the security–military apparatus, see Hadad, *Amarah Tasikmalaya*, pp. 115–19.

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between 'religions', permissible under Indonesian law, and spiritual practices and belief systems that do not qualify as religion, and which also pose potential risks for followers.[63] This has contributed to public concern about 'threats and dangers' posed by deviant currents (*aliran sesat*). In his sociological study of conversion to TQN in urban Bandung, Dadang Kahmad notes the suspicion arising in some neighbourhoods towards *tariqah* practice, and especially towards the loud recitation, which could often be heard clearly outside a home or mosque.[64] In fact, Kahmad recounts narratives of a TQN follower who ceased *tariqah* activities in his neighbourhood after the village head received complaints about his 'unconventional and strange teachings' (*ajaran-ajaran yang liar dan aneh*).[65] In a climate charged with fear and suspicion, many would have been reluctant to participate in activities that might attract undue attention on account of their 'strangeness'.

West Javanese Muslims now feel far less constrained in their movements.[66] Requirements for obtaining permits have been lifted, and as a result, a plurality of Islamic dispositions have emerged into public view. Some observers are concerned at the variety of religious expressions emerging in the public sphere, while others welcome it. Importantly, a number of TQN followers mentioned that people were no longer as fearful of being accused of participating in a 'deviant current' as they were during the New Order period. This is despite the conflict currently breaking out over religious differences in West Java.

Increased mobility is relevant to understanding the contextual changes under analysis here. Our research on *manakiban* in the Masjid Agung revealed that many, and perhaps a majority of attendees, were from outside Tasikmalaya city, and some had travelled from areas quite distant (we encountered groups from Cikalong, Cikatomas and Karang Nunggal). Groups of women, some from remote areas, were strongly represented. This finding reflects characteristic patterns of women's pious spectatorship, in which women tend to travel greater distances to attend religious events, and enhance their experience by simultaneously enjoying other social activities (such as shopping).[67] Financial help for such trips provided by political aspirants has added to the accessibility of the ritual.

Conclusion

In the changed atmosphere of post-Suharto Indonesia, *manakiban* has been one of a diverse range of Islamic practices and affiliations, previously excluded from state-owned mosques, to have emerged in these very same mosques. In the case of

63 See Howell, 'Muslims, the New Age and marginal religions in Indonesia'.

64 Kahmad, *Tarekat dalam Islam*, pp. 182–8. After completing their group performance of ritual worship (*salat*), TQN members perform loud repetitions of the phrase '*la illaha illa Allah*' (There is no God other than Allah). The verbalisation is often accompanied by distinctive body movements performed in a sitting position. The phrase and its repetition are familiar to all Muslims in Indonesia, but it was the loud volume that, in Kahmad's account, attracts neighbours' suspicions.

65 Ibid., p. 124.

66 For descriptions and analyses of the dramatic increase in the frequency of pilgrimages to graves and the phenomenon of 'religious tourism', see Slama, '*Wisata religi*'; George Quinn, 'Throwing money at the holy door: Commercial aspects of popular pilgrimage in Java', in *Expressing Islam*, pp. 63–79.

67 See Julian Millie, 'Women's spectatorship and Islamic oratory in West Java', *Australian Journal of Anthropology* 22, 2 (2011): 151–69.

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manakiban, two enabling factors stand out. First, some *tariqah* figures have made efforts to obtain publicity and visibility for their organisation and its practices, leading them to seek access to public Islamic infrastructure. Second, the democratisation of regional politics has opened access to state Islamic infrastructure. Regents and mayors are now accountable to voters, and furthermore, their political fortunes rely on their participation within coalitions that function over the bracketing and privatisation of Islamic differences. With the important exceptions of a number of Islamic groups subjected to stigmatisation, the barriers that previously prevented a diversity of Islamic groups, ideas and practices from gaining access to state-owned mosques have weakened.

We conclude with three reflections about these findings in the broader context of Indonesian Islamic society. First, our findings draw attention to the value of publicity to Islamic constituencies, and indirectly, to the highly mediatised nature of the Indonesian Islamic public sphere. Indonesia's Islamic groups are performing their programs in public space and through various media.[68] Just as print and electronic mediation has publicity value for groups, the public visibility enabled by access to state-owned mosques is valued highly by some actors within the *tariqah* movement. In this case, the central motivation is not to prosecute a moral position or to achieve commercial goals by lodging the *tariqah* in the market for religious consumption. And political goals are not a motivation (at least from the *tariqah* perspective). Rather, against the background of the constant mediatisation of Islamic possibilities in contemporary Indonesia, it seems that public visibility is understood as a prerequisite to legitimacy and acceptance. To be witnessed is to have legitimacy. The New Order period no doubt laid the seeds of this development. Many of the main actors currently pushing their Islamic programs into public space had experienced the marginalisation of their views and practices during the New Order; they now observe other Islamic currents filling media space and gaining the visibility and legitimacy that public witnessing seems to bring.

Our second reflection poses the question of whether these findings are parts of a greater trend or evolution. They can be located, we argue, in the evolving nexus between democratic processes and religious diversity. This nexus appears to be shaped by functional and strategic rather than ethical imperatives: there is no emergent ethic of civic pluralism behind these changes.[69] Rather, the emergence of *manakiban* from private space appears as an inevitable consequence of two occurrences: the democratisation of control over public infrastructure and the simultaneous increase in the value of publicity for Islamic actors. This creates an Islamic diversity that is not underpinned by an ethic of tolerance, but which nevertheless cannot be wished away. For political aspirants, even those affiliated with religio-political programs like the PPP politicians who have been so successful in Tasikmalaya, electoral success requires a policy of inclusiveness towards the diversity of Islamic dispositions. This aspect of Islamic politics in Indonesia has been noticed by previous commentators.[70]

68 See Kitley, *Playboy Indonesia*.

69 Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and democratization in Indonesia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

70 See Greg Fealy, 'Divided majority: Limits of Indonesian political Islam', in *Islam and political legitimacy*, ed. Shahram Akbarzadeh and Abdullah Saeed (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), pp. 150–68; Greg Fealy 'Islamisation and politics in Southeast Asia: The contrasting cases of Malaysia and

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In the Indonesia of today, there is no political benefit to be gained from excluding a particular Islamic current or affiliation. As noted, there are limits to this, for some movements, such as the Jaringan Islam Liberal (Liberal Islam Network, JIL) and the Ahmadiyah sect, fall on the wrong side of politicised ideological boundaries. However, the activities currently taking place in the Masjid Agung Tasikmalaya convey a broad range of ways of being Islamic, and the range implies a number of significant ideological cleavages. Success for the Islamic parties in Tasikmalaya, ironically, seems to require a level of disengagement from the substance of Islamic practice.

Our final reflection concerns religion and the mediated public sphere, and its implications for mosque spaces. What sort of religious space has the Masjid Agung Tasikmalaya become? It is to be expected that it would not resemble its condition during the New Order: the idea that public religious expression should replicate a bureaucratic rationality was a top-down initiative that would not survive the end of its authoritarian setting. But what we see now is something wholly new: a mosque that has become a forum for the expression of rival and disparate positions, each claiming a right to public space, and each valuing the Masjid Agung as a privileged space for achieving publicity and visibility. The mosque resembles the contemporary print and electronic mediascapes that are so busy with assertions, performances and promotions of religious programs of all kinds. Mosques are commonly understood as environments for worship (*'ibadah*), for doing service to Allah in the ways established by the Prophet and his companions. We should now consider West Java's state-owned mosques as pluralistic sites shaped by the same publicity-seeking initiatives that enliven the contemporary Indonesian mediascape.

Indonesia', in *Islam in world politics*, ed. Nelly Lahoud and Anthony Johns (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), pp. 152–69.

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