SHAMANISM IN INDONESIA

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Preface

This paper is written with the purpose to investigate in someone or something in Indonesia that I have no knowledge about but what I wish to get to know better. It did not take a long time for me to decide on my subject which is; Shamanism. Before this task was assigned to me I already had much interest in understanding and get to know the lives of the Shaman, or also called as “Dukun”, in Indonesia. What makes it interesting for me to know about this subject is that such people using magical power are not common in the country I come from. This is why I questioned myself; what cause shamanism to be a common thing in Indonesia while this term is rarely used in Western countries?

Introduction

This paper is going to give a broader insight in the lives of the shaman. The data collected in this research includes primary and secondary data. The primary data is obtained by conducting an interview with a current shaman and through observations made during this interview. The secondary data collection consists of the use of books and internet sources.

The purpose of this paper is mainly to find out how the outside people view shamanism and how shamans view themselves. Since this includes many factors, the answer to this question will be elaborated throughout this paper. Most people already have this stereotype image of a shaman in their mind however I want to know if this overall image of a shaman is correct. Besides, the aim of my research is also to discover if there is hidden information about shamans or shamanistic practices that most people do not know about.

Moreover, this paper focuses on the Indonesian shaman rather than shamans in general that are spread over the world. Therefore I will describe the differences of the western perception towards shamanism and the Asian, with emphasize on the Indonesian perception. To begin, a short background will be given to explain the meaning of shamanism and other information about shamans that help you as reader to understand this specific group of people.
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1. Background information.

1.1 What is Shamanism?
Shamanism is a healing technology practiced by people called; Shaman. The name shaman has been given to these practitioners by anthropologists. In Indonesia, these people are referred to as Dukun which plays the role of a traditional healer. The healing technology in Shamanism is based on spirits and the human world. The people practicing Shamanism approach healings from body, mind and soul perspectives but are also able in giving treatments that involve herbal remedies, meditation, special healing massage, exorcism, special diets and ceremonial healing magic.

There is a variant of Shaman in Indonesia that offers different practices in Shamanism. On the one hand there is the Dukun, the healing Shaman offering the above mentioned treatments, while on the other hand there is the existence of the somewhat seen as “feared” Shaman that is well-known by people as the practitioners of black magic called the Bomoh.

1.2 Bomoh and its black magic practices.
As mentioned before, a Dukun fulfils the role as being a healer while the Bomoh is feared by many people. What makes people anxious towards Bomohs is that they are able to use black magic; magic used for evil purposes using evil spirits. They are specialized in performing revenge or spells against people who have been doing wrong to someone else.

1.3 Where is Shamanism practiced?
Shamans are spread through many places in Indonesia but are especially to be found in the area of East Java and Bali. Banyuwangi, which is a place in East Java, is one of the most well-known places for the practice of black magic. Other powerful centers of black magic are located in Banten, West Java and there are also a lot of Shamans located in Lombok.

1.4 Banyuwangi and its history
As said before, there are a lot of Shamans located in Banyuwangi that practice black magic rather than healing treatments. Because of the large number of black magic practitioners, this place has been known as the most powerful centers of black magic for a long time. But what exactly is the reason for this place to grow into a culture that views black magic as an important practice?

This is due to its history when lots of violence occurred which eventually lead to failure. Because of its struggle of violence and fertility, the inhabitants of Banyuwangi became obsessed with sorcery in their village. This is according to anthropologist Kusnadi who said: “Banyuwangi’s fertile land has bred a farming culture with close links to the spiritual world.”

1 http://www.insideindonesia.org/weekly-articles/the-banyuwangi-murders
There are two forms of black magic in Banywangi which are called; sihir and rapuh. The practice of sihir involves killing another person using black magic. In this case a victim mostly dies because of a growing size of the stomach due to objects growing inside of them. Hereby a shaman is able to put a spell on someone using the most absurd objects such as; pans, knives, glass, nails and even animals.

Rupah is the second type of black magic that a shaman in Banywangi performs in which they make a victim suffer throughout their lives. These shamans are able to make their targets blind, deaf, paralyzed or make them uncontrollable in forms of shaking and trembling.

Up until now, Banyuwangi is known by people as the place of black magic practitioners. Today, black magic is a combination of animistic beliefs and Islamic mysticism. This mixture arose from an inter-religious conflict during the Matarm court in the 16th century. A code of ethics has been created to ensure that black magic would not be used against villagers in Banyuwangi. A shaman who does use his power against villagers has to undertake an oath in the local mosque. However, if villagers believe that he is still guilty for his deed this shaman will be exiled from the village and his possessions will be taken away from him.

Before 1998 it was not common to take revenge on the dukun santets living in Banyuwangi. Actions taken to prevent them from using their black magic against villagers are explained as above. However, after the downfall of President Suharto the people living in Banyuwangi abandoned cultural limitations and were acting more violently to the laws. As result from the downfall, figures of the dukun santet murders increased after August 1998. In August itself, the number of murders counted only 47 cases but this number increased till 80 cases in September 1998. The following month from September till October the murders on dukuns reached its peak till it became a bloodbath. This bloodbath is nowadays referred to as the mass murder in Banyuwangi, a short period in which many people who were suspected to be dukun santets were killed. The number of killings as showed by a Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) investigation team counted 143 murders on suspected dukun santets living in Banyuwangi only. Murders also found place in neighboring regions of Malang Selatan, East Java from which Jember, Sumenep and Pasuruan were the affected areas with a total number of 105 murders.2

The murders were carried out or at least claimed to be triggered by the army and other political actors who were against the acts of the NU. The leadership of the NU organization was convinced that the killings were a plot directed against the members of this organization. After the first sorcerers were killed they claimed that the next victims of the killings would be members of the NU which according to them are the village Koran teachers which were often referred to as dukuns or curers. After all the Koranic teachers who are part of the NU were killed, members of the leadership thought they would be the next victims. Because of the many threats against them they started to set up nightly patrol teams. Eventually, none of the members of the leadership have been harmed because the murders ceased over the time.

The dukun santets that have been killed over this period were claimed by villagers to be witches capable of using “bad” magic. Mostly, killings took place even without having clear evidence or proof that these people being murdered are using witchcraft. These murders have been taken place in many different forms; some have been cut in pieces, some have been beheaded, eyes have been ripped off and so there have been more cruel ways. These killings on witches have left a lot of stories from which a few of them can be found in Appendix 1.3

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2 http://www.insideindonesia.org/weekly-articles/the-banyuwangi-murders
1.5 How to become a shaman?
It is believed that shamanism can only be learned by the ones who have a shaman background. Practitioners have to be previous shamans or either have some shaman ancestors since it is assumed that the powers they possess are hereditary. Except for the fact that it is believed that the powers of shamanism can be passed over to members of the family, one must participate in some previous preparations in order to gain those powers. This usually consists of a long period of meditation and fasting. After gaining the powers by following these rituals, this person has to learn the skills and knowledge of how shamanism is practiced. This study to obtain knowledge is taught by a shaman, the so called Gurus, but can also be learned from books.

Stephen and Suryani had a different view of how people become a healer. According to them it is difficult to locate what people are in process to become a healer and because of this reason they conducted interviews with people who are already identified as a healer. Their research was held under 108 healers with the aim to discover cultural beliefs and practices that are related to the experiences these people had in becoming healers which was the focus point of their study.

Shamans view their work as an art and their power as something that is given to them by God to help people out, at least most of the good shamans do. Still, there are numerous bad shamans or even false shamans that act as one. Most of the good shamans do not train themselves in order to make a living of becoming a shaman but have a main job. Therefore it is impossible to distinguish them from the normal everyday people; so can someone who is a teacher in school possibly be a shaman, someone who works in a restaurant and so on. The only fact that can be said about shamans is that these are mostly male.

Since most shamans believe that their power is given as a gift from God, they do not ask their clients much for a consultation. Payments made by clients are mostly just small amounts of money as token of appreciation but it is also common to give a shaman tobacco or consumables in return for their work.

2. What is magic and what is religion?

2.1 The meaning of magic
There are two basic thought behind magic from which the first is that in magic an effect resembles in a cause; the second is that once “things” have been in contact with each other, it will continue this contact from a distance after the physical contact has been created. 4

According to James George Frazer, magic is a spurious system of natural law as well as a misleading guide of conduct; it is a false science as well as an abortive art. According to him, magic always includes the concept of spirits and people have higher powers which also can be referred to as supernatural powers.

Marcel Mauss, a French sociologist, however argued that magic is private, secret, and mysterious and approaches the limit of a prohibited rite. Magical rites are ideas and beliefs that correspondent to magical actions. Magic is not about the structure of the rites but the circumstances in which they occur. He also says that magic is often confused by people with legal actions, techniques and religious rituals. As a matter of fact, elements used in magic consist of officers, actions and representations. Someone who is able to use these elements is called a magician. Besides, it is claimed that a practice cannot be called magic if it is not repeated and if a specific group or community does not believe in the efficiency of an action.\(^5\)

Some cultures in the world have religious beliefs; they believe in supernatural powers that can be used by specific people for either evil or good purposes. It is believed that these supernatural powers are created by rituals, rituals that include specific formulas. One can see these formulas as magical since the effects of using these ritual formulas create and cause supernatural actions.

2.1.1 Types of magic
There are different ways in conducting magic and therefore different types to distinguish. In sympathetic magic it is believed that the magic used will have an imitative effect. An example of this type of magic is the use of Voodoo dolls; whatever happens to an image of a person will happen to them in reality. Some places in Indonesia where the practice of Voodoo is common is in Sumatra and Kalimantan.

Another type of magic is called the contagious magic; this type of magic explains that things or persons that once have been in contact with each other will influence one another. To put it in different words, it is believed that contagious magic will put a permanent relationship between two subjects. In order to practice this type of magic, a magician use fingernails, teeth or a hair.\(^6\)

2.2 The meaning of religion
There are different perspectives towards religion and how it is defined. So did Karl Marx say that; “religion is the opium of the people and is a social construction.”

Engels however argues that all religion is nothing but the reflection in men’s minds of those external forces which control their daily life, a reflection in which the terrestrial forces assume the form of supernatural forces.

According to Durkheim and Mauss religion functions to maintain a society and reflects its social structure. Two British anthropologist called Douglas and Beattie, continued the work of Durkheim and Mauss. Their view towards religion is that religion symbolizes social structure and social value.\(^7\)

2.3 Weber’s view on magical religion.
Weber is an anthropologist who faced problems in distinguishing between religion and magic. He came up with three types of magical religion which are; naturalism, animism and symbolism.

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\(^6\) http://anthro.palomar.edu/religion/rel_5.htm
\(^7\) Book: Religion and Magic: Approaches and theories, Graham Cunningham
Naturalism refers to the magical religion in which objects or magicians are thought to be gifted with a power that Weber refers to as charisma.

The second type is animism in which spiritual forces are thought to be the source of the charisma as mentioned in naturalism.

The third type, symbolism, is when charismatic objects symbolize the spiritual forces. The importance of these symbolic actions is especially stressed since it takes effort to create these effects in real life by using spiritual powers.

2.4 Shamanism: magic or a religion?
So after analyzing the differ aspects of religion and magic, what can be said about Shamanism? Is it a religion or do people view these practices as magic?

When using James George Frazer’s theoretical framework on magic, it can be said that shamanism definitely includes magic. This because Frazer’s definition on magic includes the concept of spirits and supernatural powers causing supernatural actions, which as explained is used in a shaman’s practice.

Also when looking from Marcel Mauss’ point of view towards magic, it can be concluded that shamanism contains magic. This statement can be made according to the repeated rituals and the acceptance by the community for these actions which both relate to shamanism.

Religion is more related to the society as a whole and how believes within a social structure can affect people’s thought. It explains how the environment can have an impact on someone’s point of view in life rather than explaining which factors create these believes.

Even though the conclusion is made that practices of a shaman contain magic, it does not mean that religion does not play any role in it. For some reason, shamanism plays a bigger role in one country than another and this is where the religion comes in. This is because religion creates a person’s believes and faith which will be explained later on in this paper.


3.1 The reformation of the shamanistic concept.
It is believed by many people that shamanism is a system of an ancient and universal belief created decades ago by the hunters who gatherers. In this system, the community depended on the shaman as a person with exceptional powers and abilities that was able to trance with spirits in order to contribute to a better community. However, there is only little evidence of these ancient aspects. Most of the historical evidence found about shamanism is derived from the beginning of the nineteenth century. This is when missionaries, explorers and anthropologists began to notice the religious practices of ethnic people and began to study and observe this culture.8

8 Book: Culture and Health: Applying Medical Anthropology, Michael Winkelman
3.2 Practices of a shaman

Shamanism consists of different practices which involve divination, offerings, sacrifices and prayer. A practice falls in the shamanistic context when the communication includes supra-natural forces in which the one who elaborates the practice does not transform him or herself into another being and in which they call spirits to receive offerings. 9

In general, shamanism includes practices such as meditation and visualization; trance and out-of-body experiences; contact with the spirit world; spirit possession; psychic-spiritual healing; dream work; crystal work; psychotherapy; occult ritual; sensory stimulation/deprivation; body work methods and hypnosis.10

There is not something like a common ability or power that every shaman possess, since there are different types of shaman to be found in Indonesia. In general it can be said that all shamans who are white magic practitioners have the power and ability to do good to a person. The shamans using black magic on the other hand all have the ability and power to harm a person.

White magic shamans have numerous of different practices from which one of them is to get a sickness out of a person by using a black chicken called “ayam cemani”. In this ritual, the person being sick visits the shaman and tells him or her about his sickness. A shaman will hold a black chicken which is still alive next to the patient and analyze what his or her sickness is and how it came to their body. After the analysis, the shaman will transfer the sickness out of the body of the patient and move it to the black chicken. When all of the bad spirits are removed from the person’s body, the shaman will kill the chicken from which can be seen that the blood is black. Sometimes during an analysis, a shaman will conclude that the person being sick has some objects in their body which can divers from knifes to glass and so on. After the body is cleaned and the chicken is killed, these objects were found in the body of the chicken

This ritual is not only done with black chickens but some shamans also have the ability to transfer someone’s sickness from their body to an egg by rubbing it softly over their skin.

Also shamans using black magic have different practices. So is there the “susuk” in which the visitor can ask for beauty, confidence or strength. In this practice, the shaman will place a small piece of gold into the body of the person. For example, if someone visits the shaman to ask for more strength in his or her leg in order to play sports, the shaman will place this little piece of gold in the person’s leg. The shaman will place the small piece of gold in his hand, presses on the body part where his patient wishes for and without harming the skin, the gold is places in the body. Even though the shaman who practices the susuk is giving something good to their patient, it is still seen as black magic. The reason why it is claimed as black magic is that people who ask for susuk will have a painful death.

9 Book: Shamanism: history and the state, Nicholas Thomas; Caroline Humphrey
10 Book: Knowing the facts about shamanism, John Ankerberg; John Weldon
4. Interview, a better understanding of the life of a shaman in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Before I started to write this paper I was thinking about the way to approach it. I already had little knowledge about shamans and their practices and therefore I had this particular view towards shamanism. The people who informed me about the shamans in Indonesia are living in the same apartment as me and the stories they have been telling me were about the shamans that use black magic. Therefore I unconsciously created this somewhat negative view towards shamanism.

Because my knowledge about shamans was only limited to the stories I have heard, I became curious towards this particular group. For me, it was interesting to find out if the image I had created in mind is similar to the view about shamans by other people. Nevertheless, my aim was to enrich my knowledge to see if this is comparable to the real life of a shaman.

Therefore I decided to do some preliminary research on shamans and shamanism before I started an interview. This method I used is probably not the way others would have approached it but I decided to do it this way to see if there would be some surprising information and other factors that might change my point of view on shamans.

While doing research on shamanism, I tried to look for contacts to visit a shaman and conduct an interview and observe their living circumstances. It has been hard for me to find a shaman which eventually drove me ask my teacher of anthropology and sociology for contact information of a shaman. In the end I managed to find a shaman living in Jakarta by asking a friend who has a friend from which his parents know this specific person. I asked my friend if it was possible to get the contacts of this shaman in order to make an arrangement to visit him. Since this shaman’s English is only limited to a few words, my friend made a call for me and managed to get an appointment to visit him.

To be honest, I was nervous to visit a real shaman and a little bit scared too. This because next to the stories I heard I also found some odd but also somewhat frightening stories on shamanism. This was one of the reasons why I asked my Indonesian friend, Eriel to accompany me to visit the shaman after he made the phone call but next to that, it also came in handy because he has been helping me with translating and keeping the conversation going. The interview took place in his house in early afternoon.

So, before I met this shaman I did not have a clear idea of what to expect since I have not seen his picture before. All I knew about him was that he is a good shaman that practices white magic to heal other people. This already made me feel more relieved but also because my friend told me that there is nothing bad he could do gave me a bit more comfort.

The vague image of the shaman I had in mind was an old man aged around 42 years old wearing white clothes like the people who are in hospital. Besides I thought I would meet a guy that has shoulder long, messy hair and dreamy eyes. I imagined his house to be a little bit dark inside, with a lot of flowers and especially herbs. Because I never been to the place he lives, I imagined
that he was living in a neighborhood for middle income classes with a small garden where he plants his herbs.

As I wanted to research if my stereotype image of a shaman in general matches the shaman I was going to meet in real, I put my mindset on zero before I went there. I asked him questions about shamans and shamanistic practices that I already wrote about during my preliminary research to found out if there are any outstanding differences or new facts I did not know about.

The shaman that I visited is a Muslim shaman of age 39 living in Tanjung Duren, a place in West Jakarta. The observations I made before I went in his house was that he is living in a small house that is not located besides a big street but rather in a district with lot of other houses surrounded. People living in this area are assumable to be from the lower income class since the neighborhood seems to be poor.

I was very surprised when I first saw this shaman since I was expecting that shamans wear unique clothes that are different from the normal people in Indonesia. In fact when I finally got to meet him, this image did not suit my expectations at all. He was wearing white Muslim clothes called Baju koko in Indonesia. On this white clothing was a little bit of gold batik printings. He had short hair and just looked like a casual, every day person.

As soon as I got invited to come in his house, there were no outstanding things that caught my eye. Everything just looks like a normal house, no weird objects or any of the things that I had in mind before I arrived.

Since there were no other people to be seen in his house, I asked him if he is living by himself or has a wife and children and he answered yes. His wife was working in Warung, which means she was selling snacks and cigarettes on the streets and he has one boy who was playing outside with his friend so I did not get the chance to meet them. He also mentioned that during his practices he does not allow the visitors to meet his wife neither his son since he says that his focus should be on the person in the room and he cannot be distracted.

Since he mentioned that he has a son, I was curious to ask if his son has the same power as him to cure people. He told me that practicing shamanism is indeed blood related but shamans are not able to pass their powers to every one of their kids. Even though he only has one child, only the chosen ones are able to practice these kinds of rituals and are able to obtain these powers. Besides, he tells me that there is no school to teach how to use powers to practice shamanism.

From his way of speaking which looked hesitating, I noticed that he did not want to tell more about his way of living with his family so this is when I stopped asking further questions concerning this subject.

To move on with the conversation I asked him further questions that were more focused on him and his practices. That is when I asked how he got to know that he possessed this power to heal people. He answered that mostly to know if someone has the power to become a shaman, that person will have a dream in which someone is wearing white clothes. That person who is wearing white clothes will teach how to practice shamanism. Since there are many forms of shamanism these dreams are not always the same. It depends on what the God wants to teach you which can diverse from teaching you how to make herbs to how to practice prayers to heal
someone. He tells that when he was having this dream, he felt that he was given a gift and did not feel frightened.

The next thing I asked is, if he has another job next to being a shaman. He told me that he does not see being a shaman as a job and therefore he usually helps his wife by selling items on the street which is his main job. He tells that approximately 7 people are coming for a consultation in one week and said that the age of these visitors are mostly between 40 and 45 years old.

He tells that he does not present himself as being a shaman in public so that is when I asked him how people looking for a shaman can find him. He said that most of the visitors that come for a consultation have a relation with past visitors so most of his visitors hear about his practices from word to word.

I was also curious if it is common for younger people to come by for consultations and he told me that there have been young people who came by to ask for his help but compared to the number of older people, this is just a small group. Most of them did not come for healing purposes but asked him for advice.

I was curious why it is more common for older people to visit this shaman than younger ones and he told me a story about how the culture is changing. The older people still believe and have faith that the rituals used by a shaman to cure someone are not just fake magic. People nowadays are less convinced and do not always have faith in the powers of a shaman. Also because older people still have commitment towards their God and therefore older people are more likely to believe in the supernatural power of him.

After this, I asked him what kind of shaman practices he is able to do and how his rituals look like. He tells me that his power is only to heal and cure people from their illness and that he does not have the power to practice black magic.

The practices he uses consist of soft healing, which means curing someone by praying only. Since he is practicing this kind of healing his explains that he belongs to the Prewangan shamans. This shaman was able to pray to a person in three ways from which he explains the first practice as a praying by touching a sick body and analyze the person’s sickness. The second healing practice consists of praying by massaging the body on the place the shaman feels as the center of the sickness and the third praying includes praying to water in which the shaman prays to normal mineral water in order for it to become the curing medicine which the patient has to drink afterwards.

Besides the healing practices, he also said that he is able to give advice. He names an example that some people come to visit him when they have lost an object. The practice he does in this case is calling a spirit to tell him where the person has lost his or her object and where the object is at that specific moment of time. The shaman closes his eyes while calling the spirit and will be in a trance for a few minutes. The time the shaman will be in trance is different in every consultation when he is trying to find the missing object. The shaman adds that it also depends on when a person has lost his or her possession. He is only to see where a specific object is when the person who lost it will contact him within 2 until 3 days.

Since he explains that he is able to use three different methods of healing I was asking him how he knows when he has to use which method. He said that when a person comes to visit him, the shaman listens to the symptoms of that person first and will analyze how the sickness came to
that person’s body by using his hands. While analyzing the sickness using supernatural powers, the shaman will hear a sound that whispers how he has to cure the patient. This analysis always takes place before a shaman will conclude what method is able to cure a specific person’s illness.

Another thing I was wondering about is, if this shaman or shamans in general are allowed to decline using his powers to help the visitor. He answered this question direct and clear by saying that he cannot decline someone’s wish to be healed. That is when I asked him why and he answered that he believes that their powers are given to them by their God and if they are able to help someone, they always have to try.

The next and last thing that came up in my mind is, if a practice has ever failed so that the shaman could not cure a person’s sickness. He repeated as he said before that their power is given to them by their God and that this is also the reason why some people cannot be cured even though the shaman used his power to try to heal them. He says it is God’s will to decide if their practices will have an effect to cure someone who is sick and also mentioned that using his powers to cure a patient that does not believe in God mostly does not succeed to heal. It is a matter of trusting, believing and having faith in God.

5. View towards shamanism in Indonesia vs. Western countries, the Netherlands.

5.1 View on Shamanism in Western countries.
A shaman occupies different roles in each culture and under different circumstances. In some cultures the role of the shaman is more dominant in ways that the shamanistic ideology, techniques used and rituals creates social interaction. Indonesia is a good example of such country in which a great number of people still believe in the practices of the shaman. In other cultures shamanism has only little influence. Asian countries are more likely to believe in supernatural powers than Western countries.

5.2 What creates the difference?
Shamanism is commonly skillful in Indonesia and some other Asian countries while there are only a small number of shaman practitioners to be found in Western countries. Why is shamanism usual in Indonesia and for example not very usual in the Netherlands, to name an example? And how does it come that it is “accepted” or seen as “normal” for Indonesian inhabitants while shamans are seen as a rare culture by the Western people?

In order to find the answer to these questions, anthropologists have been studying the Asian medical system as cultural system and compared it to the Western. An outstanding fact is that Asian societies present many different aspects on healing practices. They divide healing in three different kinds which they call local-, indigenous- and traditional healing.

For most of the Western people on the other side, it is not common to visit a shaman since there are so many medical systems available. As it is common for Western people to visit a
doctor when they are infected with some kind of sickness, it is common for Indonesian people to visit shamans to find out about their decease. In many cases, when the Indonesian doctor or hospital cannot find a proper reason to explain why a person is sick, they are triggered to involve a shaman for a consultation to get to know how this sickness came to them and how it can be cured. Therefore the availability of medical treatment available in Western countries compared to the ones offered in Indonesia plays a small role in creating the difference in their belief in the power of a shaman.

5.2.1 Religion, faith and beliefs.
This is how we come to talk about religion, faith and beliefs. As said before, religion forms a cultural society in which people more or less influence each other and share the same faiths and beliefs. Indonesia is known as the biggest Muslim country, a country in which most people have a strong feeling towards their religion and therefore have a strong faith and belief in their God.

I have been questioning myself what could be the reason for Indonesian people to have this strong belief, how is this created and why do some of the people from the current generation still have this same view? Moreover, what has created this big difference in believing and faith between people in Indonesia and people in Holland?

As I already received the information when I went to visit the shaman that mostly older people still believe in the stories they were told by the ancestors, I wanted to investigate more in this matter. The best way to answer the questions mentioned above was by asking some of my Indonesian students to see if these believe are taken over by the younger generation too. I have been asking different people of age 19 till 22 if they believe in supernatural powers that cause supernatural actions as for example shamanism is one of them. Outstanding is that all of the responses I received were yes, they do believe in these powers. I wanted to know the reason why and also the cause for them to believe in these powers. What I was told is that in their culture it is common for parents to tell historical stories and they have been taught about these things when they were little. The reason for them to pass these stories is because it has created the roots of Indonesia and they think that it is important that their children know how to be a good person so that spiritual and magical things can be controlled.

When talking in the shamanistic context, I asked them specifically if they believe that shamanistic practices can heal people. Again, they believe that shamans have the power to cure and that it is not always faked. I have been explaining that in the Netherlands such practices are not been used because people always involve medical assistances in order to get rid of their diseases. They have told me that people in Indonesia do the same but whenever a doctor cannot find the cause or a way to cure them, people are involving shamans because they want to find an explanation for things to happen. According to them, Indonesians strongly believe that a disease does not just happen to someone but that it involves some evil spirits.

Indonesians strongly believe in spirits and things that cannot be seen. So do a lot of them believe in lucky charms called Jimat. These are jewelry as necklaces; rings; bracelets etc. in a form of an animal and mostly contain a stone and some Arabic words writing on the charm. They believe that inside this Jimat, there is a spirit that protects you.

From the stories I have been hearing I can say that Indonesian people indeed have a strong feeling and believe in spiritual happenings and supernatural causes. After the conversations I realized the difference between their view and that from most Western people is created because of their religion faith and belief. This does not mean that Western people do not have a religion
and do not have faith and beliefs but clearly, their connection towards and their view on God is different than that from the Indonesian people.

Some of them have been telling me that the Kraton in Yogyakarta plays an important role for Indonesian people to stick to their roots. They claim that Indonesia will always keep this strong belief in spirits and supernatural actions unless the Kraton will disappear.

5.2.2 Modernization.
According to Giddens and Therborn, modernity refers to the beginning of capitalism, industrialism, rational-legal bureaucracies and state control of military power and surveillance. The cultural dimension of modernity addresses the aspects of rationality, scientism and improvement through economic development.11

Why does modernization play a role in the different perception towards shamanism in Indonesia and the image Western people have in mind? It is a fact that Indonesia is less moderated than the countries in the West. Indonesians have the custom to stick to their roots and it is important in their culture to know where you come from and how your ancestors have lived. For Western people it is a different story since everything has been modernized which creates people to adapt to its environment.

Conclusion

After writing this paper I can say that I have broadened my knowledge on shamanism. It has been interesting to read about this subject and the fact that I experienced to be in a house of a shaman has contributed a lot to this paper.

Since the purpose of writing this paper was to find out if the stereotype image that I created, match how shamans are in real life I especially put the focus on this. After the interview I realized that my view on shamans was negative and were not equal to how they are in real. In fact, shamans are just normal people and are not frightening at all, at least not the one I have been visiting.

Besides, the aim of my research was also to discover if there is hidden information about shamans or shamanistic practices that most people do not know about. Therefore I visited a shaman and tried to get to know more information. This shaman has been telling me about some practices that I did not know before which were very helpful. Also the fact that he brings in that he has this strong believe in God helped me to create a more positive image of shamans.

11 Book: Healing Powers and Modernity: Traditional medicine Shamanism and Science, Linda Connor and Geoffrey Samuel
Appendix

Appendix 1.

A woman stands with her mother from the Banyuwangi countryside. Here is part of her statement:

"Dad was accused of being a witch by the neighbors. He was a farmer and went to the fields everyday. He wasn't a witch. He was just ordinary. Every day he would take part in the arisan [neighborhood gatherings], he would be with his friends [silaturahmin, a word popular in the New Order which means something like "forging the bonds of friendship"] and so on.

"Then the house was stoned. My brother was in Bali working. I waited till midnight for Dad to come home. Next morning I went to where they had the neighborhood gathering, I saw blood. I followed the traces. I just followed them. Then I looked for him in the gardens and in the fields. Then, at five o'clock in the morning, on the edge of the road, covered with banana leaves, there he was. His leg was cut off. He was crushed all over. His neck had a rope around it and his trunk was cut almost all the way through. (She weeps.)

"I waited till 9 o'clock to report it to the village headman and to tell the police, the doctor, and so on. Then he was brought home. He was bathed like an ordinary corpse. Why not? He was already a corpse."
Photo 4
This man's father and brother, who were also his neighbors, were killed as witches. The village headman asked them to move, in anticipation of the attack. They refused. The man in the picture said it was because "They had to guard their good name. If someone is a witch, it's better to kill them. But really, truly, they were not witches."

When the mob came to get them, he tried to rush out of his house to protect them, but his wife and daughter sat on him to keep him safe.

Photo 6
A mob, as usual wearing "ninja" masks, came for this woman's son. Her son ran to her house. The mob came and shouted, "Suwandi-out, Suwandi-out." She blocked the door but they pushed their way in. They dragged her son outside onto a bench and beat him to death. She tried to get to him but they managed to tie one of her arms with wire. She used her other elbow against them.

She showed us with gestures where her son was when he was killed. Using a pail, she said "This was his head" and stretched out her arm to show us his feet. "His face was shattered and his eye hung out." After they left, she replaced the pieces of bone missing from his skull. She spoke without pathos.

Since his death, her son returned once, dressed in blue clothes. She asked him if he was well. He did not answer.

As in all the other cases, it was the neighbors who were arrested and who formed the mob.
This man was a curer, he said, but he practiced only white magic. He is a member of Nahdatul Ulama. He was dragged from his house, beaten, made deaf and his throat was cut. But he dragged himself back to the village and eventually recovered.

This woman's daughter married Muki's son. Neither she nor her daughter wanted the marriage but they were convinced that if they did not comply with Muki's wish they would fall ill. After the marriage she fell ill in any case. Her legs swelled to such an extent that she could not urinate. The rest of her body also was swollen to the point where she had to sleep sitting up. Her husband was also afflicted. After Muki was killed she got well. "Proof" [that Muki was a witch], she said.

This man sells noodle soup. His wife was a relative of Muki's. Muki's son ran off with her and then he, the noodle soup merchant, fell ill. His arm swelled. He went to a clinic and was told he had an infection. "What infection?" he said to us. "There was no wound."

As with many others in the village, after Muki was killed this man got well. "Proof" he said, in the phrase used throughout the village.