

## **Islam, Migration, and the Decline of Agriculture in Buton**

Blair Palmer  
The Australian National University

### *Abstract*

Religious contestation in the all-Muslim village of Boneoge, Buton, focuses on the prohibition of agricultural ceremonies relating to the appeasement of territorial spirits. Modernist Islam acts as the idiom through which villagers are negotiating a more outward-looking and regional world view, at odds with a more local and particular world view exemplified by religious practices focused on local territorial spirits. This shift is contested, however, and aligns with shifts in livelihood strategies, with farming on the decline and trading emerging as the new ideal. Farmers retain practices appeasing territorial spirits, which are deemed bid'ah or idolatrous by the more 'modernist' Muslim traders of the village. These traders have embraced this modernist Islam over the past generation through their migration experiences, as they have lived and traded in various eastern Indonesian towns and cities. This paper discusses the struggle over proper religion in Boneoge, and its links with issues of social status, migration, and social and economic change.