



## **The Islamization in Bugis Society during the Darul Islam Era under Kahar Muzakar in 1960s**

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### **Abstract**

This paper describes one of the reasons why Islam is so embedded in the identity and the culture of Bugis society. By studying some works of literature about Darul Islam in South Sulawesi and the Bugis pre-Islamic religion, the Islamization process in South Sulawesi was colored by fears, terror, and massacre. It was in Darul Islam Era, under Kahar Muzakar, when Bugis pre-Islamic religion was brutally replaced by Islam since the gerombolan wanted to establish Indonesia Islamic State (NII). This paper also offers a description of Indonesian politics in micro view, the local history of the politics in South Sulawesi.

### **Keywords:**

Islamization, Darul Islam, Bugis, and Kahar Muzakar

### **Introduction**

Islam is the majority religion in Indonesia. It also becomes the religion which is identical with some ethnic groups in Indonesia. One of the Indonesian ethnic groups which are identical with Islamic culture is Bugis. There is no single Buginese who is not a Muslim. I personally never meet a non-Muslim Buginese. There was one part of the Bugis history in southern Sulawesi that could be the reason why this Islamic identity is constructed in recent Bugis society and how Islam is replaced the Bugis pre-Islamic religion.

This paper aims to describe the hypothesis of the Bugis history mentioned above by compiling and relating literatures about the Darul Islam movement in South Sulawesi and the Bugis pre-Islamic religion. This paper also describes the relation of the variables, the Darul Islam movement and the Bugis pre-Islamic religion, and how they are related in constructing Islamic identity in recent Bugis society. The period of Darul Islam was the breaking moment in replacing Bugis identity, from Bugis pre-Islamic religion into Islam.

Another purpose of this paper is to remark the Indonesian political history in a micro view. The political history in eastern Indonesia, or in this case southern Sulawesi, is as dynamic as the national history of Indonesia that most of scholars refer to Javanese history as the center of the Indonesian political history.

### **Bugis Pre-Islamic Religion**

Tome Pires, an apothecary who had spent three years surveying Islam in Indonesian/Malayan archipelago, said that Islam was such a foreign belief in Indonesia in 1512-1515 (Ricklefs 2001, 8-10). Although most kings in Sumatra were Muslims, there were several non-Islamic kingdoms in Sumatra. In the same period, Central Java and East Java were claimed as the center of Hindu-Buddhist civilization in the archipelago. Pires also reports that Brunei in Kalimantan (Borneo) had a king who became a Muslim although the rest of Kalimantan Island had not yet been familiar with Islamic tradition. A similar case was found in South Sulawesi. When Pires was surveying Islam in Indonesia, Bugis and Makassar in South Sulawesi had not possibly recognized Islam yet.

Before the people in southern Sulawesi converted into Islam, there were various belief systems there. According to Lathief (2008, 8-9) the Bugis society had already converted to some particular beliefs, called as *Attoriolong*, which literally means “the guidance from the people in the

past” or “the order from the ancestors”. It is the heritage of the Bugis ancient kingdom, *La Galigo*, which history cannot prove whether it is a real kingdom or a sheer myth. The essence of the Bugis ancient religion is the conception of the supreme-spirit, called as *ToPalanroe*, “one who create”; “a creator”. Besides, they also recognized some names of deities and practiced some features of ritual. The typical worshipping system of the Bugis ancient religion is that most of them are offering activities.

Furthermore, the way Bugis people converted to Islam was different from how Javanese did it. Javanese tended to syncretize Islam with Javanese Hindu tradition; they called it as *Islam Kejawen* or Javanestic Islam; so they could embrace Islam and practiced their Javanese pre-Islamic tradition at the same time. Bugis people were more sensitive in combining Islam and their tradition to prevent *syirik* or shirk the deification or worship of anyone or anything other than Allah. Even though *Attoriolong* worships one creator called *ToPalanroe*, the worship tradition is different with Islamic tradition. Thus, it is considered as *syirik*.

One of the *syirik* practices done in Bugis ancient traditions is the existence of *Bissu*. *Bissu* are Bugis priests of *Attoriolong* who are believed as genderless, besides other four genders namely: male, female, *calabai* (male acts like women), and *calalai* (female acts like male). *Bissu* are commonly transvestite men or high rank of noble women (Lathief 2008, 1-3). The word ‘*bissu*’ comes from Bugis language, *mabessi*, which means clean. They are called as *bissu* since they are holy, not dirty, have no breast, and no menstruation. *Bissu* are basically *calabai*, transvestite men, but *calabai* are not always *bissu*.

Although both *bissu* and *calabai* dress like women in their daily life and wear Bugis princess’ clothes in the ritual, *bissu* have higher noble status than *calabai*. In ancient times, *calabai* were often bullied by people while *bissu* were respected and honored. *Bissu* are believed to have miracle and ability to communicate with the spirits. Therefore, they play the most

important role in the kingdom ritual. Beside their recognized function in Bugis tradition, *Bissu* are priests who behave in a more classic and noble manner in compared with *calabai*, who usually dress vulgarly. *Calabai* usually act aggressively while *bissu* act elegantly. *Bissu* are noble or *malebbi* in Bugis language.

As the spreading of Islam increases rapidly, it significantly affects the previous Bugis tradition of *bissu*. According to the statistical data in one of the districts in South Sulawesi named Sigeri Mandale, a place where the *bissu* exist, 100 percent of the total population has embraced Islam (Lathief 2008, 91-95). The people are considered as good Muslims; meaning discipline in practicing the orders of Islam and manifesting the teachings in their daily behaviors (Trofimova 2017; Kovalskaya 2017; Elbasani & Puto 2017). It has been proved by the existence of a big mosque in the district town. The mosque is always filled with Muslim people in the prayer time, especially in Friday prayer.

According to the Muslims in Sigeri, the whole doctrine of *bissu* is contradicted with the Islamic teaching. Thus, even though several *bissu* live in Sigeri, the tradition has faded away and replaced with Islam and the ambition of modernization. The most challenging task for *bissu* community is to adapt to the dynamic political atmosphere of the nation state or religion. The concrete point of this is the leadership and the regenerating for the continuity of the existence of *bissu*. Living among the Islamic society leads the *bissu* to embrace Islam. They are legally Islam in their National Identity Card. Moreover, their leader, *Sanro Barlia* or *Puang Matowa*, went to Macca to do Hajj pilgrimage. It is to prove that they are true Muslims. By doing these Islamic religious activities, they hope that they are still allowed to practice their dances and rituals there (Abdugafurov & Moran 2016; Rudenko et al. 2016; Akaev & Soltamuradov 2016).

## The Era of Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia (DI/TII)

The most estimated menace for the Indonesian Military was the menace from the right party, the Extremist Islam, Darul Islam, and the menace from the left party, the Communist Party, PKI (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*, Indonesian Communist Party) (McGregor 2008, 314). The military perception of these threats refers to the historical aggression that had been conducted by the both parties. The most dramatic aggression from the communist party was the rebellion in Madiun 1948. Meanwhile, the dramatic movement from the right party was Darul Islam. Both actions were intended to fight against the Indonesian constitution.

According to the Indonesian government, Darul Islam was considered as a brutal movement (Parolin 2016; Janson 2016; Jensen 2016; Kloos 2016). In a film entitled *Mereka Kembali* produced by the Waspada Purbawisesa Museum, Darul Islam was described as the paramilitary with no value of religiosity at all (McGregor 2008, 332). They were called as terrorists who brutally killed innocent people. The head of the museum claims that the purpose of the movie production is not to marginalize one particular religion. It was only a sheer show to give education to the new generation about the cruelty of Darul Islam (McGregor 2008, 341).

In the middle of revolution, there was a riot in Madiun on 1948 (Hatley in Lindsay & Liem 2011, 9-10). It destroyed the image of the royal young Indonesian who fought the Dutch with sharp bamboos in their hands. On August 1949, only four months before the legal handover sovereignty to Indonesian Government, the Darul Islam movement proclaimed the independent of Indonesia Islamic State (*Negara Islam Indonesia* or NII). The based camp of this movement was in West Java. On the beginning of 1950s, the rebellion movement of Darul Islam became more local. On April 1950, the separatist movement in Maluku declared Republic of Southern Molucas (*Republic Maluku Selatan* or RMS). Then on September 1953, three years later, there was a chaos in Aceh caused by a

similar type of local separatist movement. On the same year, the leader of the separatist movement in South Sulawesi, Kahar Muzakar, claimed that his movement was related with *Darul Islam* movement. Indeed, Kahar Muzakar's movement had already run since 1951.

There was an increasing awareness of political affiliation after the declaration of Political Manifesto by President Soekarno in 1959. In South Sulawesi, the member of the rebellion movement of Darul Islam, Kahar Muzakar, was called *gerombolan* or gangster. They were labeled as a dangerous enemy for the Indonesian government and the whole nation as well. Thus, protecting the member of the *gerombolan* was a crime that could cause legal punishment.

Although, they were haunted by the Indonesian army in their guerilla, the *gerombolan* of Darul Islam was close to many noble and land lords in South Sulawesi. Most of the land lords joined the *gerombolan* since they did not want their land to be dominated by the country. They demanded a privilege to be as powerful as before, as the noble peers and land lords, although Indonesia had been established as a country. The land lords contributed significant supports to the *gerombolan* of Darul Islam under Kahar Muzakar. On the other hand, the government spread a discourse stating Darul Islam as an illegal movement that caused disadvantages for the local people in South Sulawesi since they fight for land lords' interest rather than local farmers' interest.

The establishment of Darul Islam was merely a political issue. It was a response for the Renville counsel, which was led by Amir Sjarifoeddin in 1948 (Suryanegara 2010, 328). Indonesian government planned to stabilize the institution of Indonesian Military Army (Suryanto 2011). The plan was responded anxiously by local paramilitaries that had fought against the Dutch for the Indonesian independence. They expected that they were required as Indonesian army and become the member of Indonesian Army Institution (APRI). However, most of paramilitaries did not fulfill the

standards to become Indonesian National Army. Kahar Muzakar as one of the commanders of the paramilitary from South Sulawesi established his own army. Unfortunately, he established the army in the form of rebellious movement. He was inspired by the similar type of movement established by Kartosuwirjo, who declared Indonesian Islamic State.

Kartosuwirjo was a leader of Darul Islam in West Java. He claimed that Indonesian government was failed in making fair decision on their pretension. Meanwhile, Darul Islam was only an ally without any shared idea for Kahar Muzakar and his troops. He braided cooperation with other rebellious movements in Indonesia for the sake of maintaining the sustainability and increasing the power of his own movement in South Sulawesi. He established his own state in South Sulawesi, called RPII, which referred to Islamic law as their constitution.

### **The Toba Operation**

Regarding Bugis Pre-islamic religion, *gerombolan* Darul Islam under Kahar Muzakar claimed that *bissu* tradition was not along with Islamic teaching about the One and Only Almighty God (Lathief 2008, 79-82). The tradition was a form of idol worshipping besides worshipping Allah. It was considered as *syirik*, the biggest unforgiving sin in Islam. Therefore, the ritual activities in *bissu* tradition, such as their instruments and the practitioners, were eradicated. Hundreds of the ritual instruments were burnt or drowned in the sea. Many *sanro*, the Bugis shaman, and *bissu* were killed or induced to be men and to work hard as men.

At that time, local people were afraid of the *gerombolan*, as well as of the Indonesian army. Indonesian army conducted similar deed to the local people. They burnt all rice fields so there were no food left for the *gerombolan*. On the other hand, the *gerombolan* did not only ask for food but also kill anyone who practiced the ancient *bissu* ritual or worshipped other than Allah in Islamic ways.

The crisis of the *bissu* tradition was continued when the Old Order era was replaced by the New Order era under Soeharto in 1965. The chaos pointed the ritual of the ancient tradition. *Arajang*, the most sacred object for *bissu* community, the hierophany, was almost destroyed by paramilitary. A *bissu* and whoever believed in the sacredness of the *arajang* was labeled as communist or a member of Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI). They were labeled as atheists, people who have no religion, *syirik* people, and animists. Thus, anyone worshipped the *arajang* was considered as a true sinner of Islam.

A *bissu* who was caught by the *gerombolan* would be killed or must change the identity into a real man and be a Muslim. Then, there was a rumor in the society telling that whoever met a *bissu* would be unfortunate for 40 days and 40 nights. The good deeds and *amal* done by them during the 40 days would not be accepted by Allah. Therefore, *bissu* and transvestite people in South Sulawesi had to be expelled as far as possible that no one would even see them. A *sanro* and a *bissu* that were used to be respected in the society then became an object of bullying.

That action of purifying Islamic doctrine was called *Toba*' Operation or *Operasi Taubat*. This operation was very intense in 1966. At that time, the ancient ritual was forbidden although it is no longer applied in the society nowadays. Some Bugis people secretly believed and practiced their ancient religion although they were forced to be Islam. They must act as if they supported the *Toba*' Operation. Thus, no one would care of the existence of Bugis pre-Islamic religion even if they did they had to pretend that they did not.

On the other hand, Bugis people still believed that if the harvest was not satisfying; it was because they did not conduct rituals for the Deities. Thus, some local farmers tried to protect the last *bissu* who was still alive. This *Toba*' operation was one of the settings that constructed the Islamization in South Sulawesi.

## Conclusion

The rebellious movement of the *gerombolan* Darul Islam of Kahar Muzakar in South Sulawesi has played an important role in the cultural system of the local people's belief or religion. The breaking moment was crucial in shifting the local people's belief from the animism into the modern religion, Islam. Therefore, Islam becomes a religion which is identical with the Bugis identity. The Bugis society was concerned with the political situation at that time. Thus, it had an impact to the people's security from many military aggressions and riots. It can be concluded that the successful spreading of Islam in South Sulawesi has been coloured by fears and necessity of local people.

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