

## **READING THE RELIGIUSITY OF HOLIANG PEOPLE (RELIGIOUS ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE LOCAL BELIEFS OF THE HOLIANG PEOPLE)**

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### **Abstract**

The core discourse discussed and analyzed in this paper is related to the problem of the religiosity of the holiang people in Maros Regency. The purpose of this study is intended to examine how the phenomenon of local community beliefs, especially the Holiang people who live in Maros Regency with an emphasis on the knowledge and understanding possessed by the Holiang community, as well as the manifestation of these beliefs in socio-cultural, economic and political life. In addition, the purpose of this research is to analyze and justify the existence of local beliefs in the future, as well as the possibilities that can occur from beliefs that are continuously held and maintained. The research method used in this research is descriptive-qualitative, where this research is more of a case study. The research method used aims to examine and describe social reality by using a certain theoretical analysis knife of various religious phenomena that occur in the context of the life of the Holiang people in Maros Regency in relation to their knowledge, their conception of God, and how the manifestation of this understanding it in their life. Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the Holiang community in Maros Regency has its own uniqueness in interpreting and practicing their religious understanding. For the Holiang people in Maros Regency, they formally adhere to Islam, but the local beliefs passed down by their ancestors are still maintained. This fact is proven by the practice of a number of traditions which are closely related to religion. Acculturation and syncretization processes are very thick. It can be said, the practice of religiosity and tradition combine with each other and form a form of unpretentious culture. If analyzed, this interesting combination can occur because of high respect for ancestral traditions, as well as a living understanding that God does not forbid humans to maintain traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation. Therefore, the religiosity and beliefs of the Holiang people in Maros Regency can be an illustration of how the face of local beliefs also lives in a number of other areas in Indonesia which still respect the traditions and habits that were carried out by their predecessors in society.

**Keywords:** Religion, religiosity, belief, god, culture, tradition, community, local

### **INTRODUCTION**

For some people, Islam is often seen as a religion that has rules that conflict with many traditional traditions in our society. Rigid religious interpretations and the spread of religious views that tend to be fundamental have made the development of Islam increasingly worrying.

Imagine, the conservative perspective in viewing the Islamic religion has implications for the emergence of attitudes contrary to the traditional culture that is currently living in society. Ironically, this point of view is often accompanied by efforts to eradicate traditional traditions that are considered inconsistent with the Islamic values that they understand.

Whereas in reality, not all aspects of the local cultural tradition vis a vis Islam as the majority religion in Indonesia. Factually, we can find many local traditions that have developed in Indonesian culture, especially the Bugis and Makassar cultures if they could work harmoniously and combine synergistically with the Islamic religion which was originally brought by traders from the Arabian Peninsula in the past.

Islam, which was born in Arab countries and then brought to the archipelago, although it has undergone many changes, it cannot be denied that at the beginning of its entry into the archipelago, it tends to take advantage of the traditions and culture that already live in our society. Islam is considered appropriate and as if it has become part of the archipelago, especially the Makassar Bugis. This is because the nature and values are consistent with what is the customary value that applies in Bugis Makassar. Believing in God as the One Supreme Magical power is not something foreign to us. The concept of dewata seuwae, for example, is the concept of divinity which when interpreted literally is not much different from the spirit of monotheism inherent in Islamic divinity teachings brought by the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

In addition to the concept of divinity, the Bugis Makassar people also effortlessly accept the orders of the Islamic Shari'a which are part of the religious package introduced by the propagators of Islam in the past. There are many historical narratives and cultural caravans written in academic texts through in-depth exploration and research which explain that Islam as rahmatan lil alamin entered the archipelago so smoothly without bloodshed. This is more because Islam which contains "good values" and "world culture" has a number of logical reasons why it is a religion worthy of being embraced. We can read in Wali Songo's historical narration how the Wali Songo who are in charge of spreading and teaching Islam in Java tend to use traditions that are already inherent in Javanese society and use them as a means of introducing Islam to the public.

Crossing the island from Java to Sulawesi, we can also be presented with historical stories in the past that Islam entered the Land of Makassar through the embrace of a number of cultures that live in society. Therefore, Islam has finally developed to this day into a religion that is not only believed to be a teaching for good, but is also believed to be an inseparable part of Makassar Bugis culture, as well as for the people of Holiang Hamlet, Maros.

### **Islam in South Sulawesi**

The arrival of Islam in South Sulawesi is estimated to have started around the 16th century brought by traders, both directly from Arab countries and from archipelago traders who had previously embraced Islam. The development of Islam began in the 16th and 17th centuries around 1653 AD and became the official religion of the people of South Sulawesi. Therefore, it is not surprising that in the South Sulawesi region there are many traces of the development of Islam.

The arrival of Islam in South Sulawesi brought not only teachings and ideology but also customs, art, language, writing and other cultural elements. The existence of this Islamic culture caused a mix of cultures, as it is known that before the arrival of Islamic culture in South Sulawesi there was already a prehistoric culture and animist beliefs and dynamism that developed. The divine system in pre-Islamic times already existed. Makassar Bugis people believe in a single god who governs this life, such as the mention of Patotoe (He who determines fate), Dewata Sewwa-e (single God), Turiea'arana (highest will) (Koentjaraningrat, 2002: 278). In addition, after the arrival of Islamic culture in South Sulawesi, it also influenced the system of norms and customary rules. This can be seen in the element of pangadereng / pangadakkang which later increased by one, namely the element of sara ' which is associated with Shari'a (Islam).

sara ' element in the socio-cultural order of the people of South Sulawesi has led to cultural acculturation and has allowed syncretism to occur in society. This is because the existing cultural elements are not eliminated completely but try to be synchronized with foreign cultures that come. As stated by Koentjaraningrat (2009: 202) regarding the process of cultural acculturation in society, that social process that arises when a group of people with a certain culture is confronted with elements of foreign culture in such a way that the elements of foreign culture gradually accepted and processed into their own culture without causing the loss of the personality of the culture itself.

In addition, the presence of a new religious element, namely Islam, allows syncretism to occur in the socio-cultural life of the Bugis-Makassar people. This is because before the arrival of Islam, people had embraced animism and dynamism which were hard to get rid of. However, society tries to align the newly entered beliefs with previous beliefs. As explained by Suhirman (2009: 12) that syncretism is creating something new by combining certain elements or some components of the teachings of several beliefs to become an integral part of the new belief. This mix of beliefs can be traced through artifactual and non-artifactual cultural forms.

### **The Theistic View of the Holiang People; A Cultural Theistic**

It is also interesting to talk about the religiosity and beliefs of the Holiang people. Even though they formally adhere to Islam, the local beliefs passed down by their ancestors are still maintained. This is evidenced by the fact that some of the traditional rituals carried out by the residents of Holiang hamlet have been practiced for generations. In carrying out traditional rituals, the prayers and readings that are recited tend to be in the form of syncretization, namely a combination of the regional language (dentong) and divine words. The well-known traditional rituals, for example the ma'dengeng and mappadandang traditional rituals also contain syncretization elements in their implementation. Ma'dengeng is a traditional pre-planting ritual, while mappadandang is a traditional post-harvest celebration for the Holiang people, the majority of whom are farmers.

In addition to the above rituals, the Holiang people also have a traditional celebration called manno' salo' which is held as part of the wedding procession of Holiang hamlet residents. Then there are also other traditional celebrations that are still often carried out by the Holiang people, namely the eating together at Bukit Bimpa. Before eating together, they do a kind of prayer and

reading at the place led by a certain figure who is believed to be a "smart person." This ritual is a requirement for Holiang residents who have long wandered and intend to settle back in Holiang village. Then, there is also the traditional ritual of releasing chickens or goats in a place called manu' buleng as a condition for the Holiang people when they want a certain wish. The implementation of these social parties and traditional rituals contains elements of local beliefs which are considered to be inherited from previous generations. Violating traditional traditions and beliefs is the same as violating the teachings of the religion they adhere to.

Historically, religion emerged because of human interest in supernatural things. Humans believe that this supernatural power is a greater power outside of humans which then guards and protects all kinds of life in this world. Along with the development of society, the thinking about these supernatural powers also changed. In the beginning, humans only assumed that this magical power pervaded the world, and then incarnated and lived (personified) into various kinds of certain forms.

The theory of the limits of reason put forward by Frazer<sup>1</sup> states that humans can solve their life problems with reason and their knowledge system. However, the reason and knowledge systems that exist in humans have limits. The more advanced human culture, the wider the limits of reason. However, in many cultures the limits of human reason tend to be narrow. Consequently, the problems of life that cannot be solved by reason and knowledge are solved by humans with the power of magic, namely occult (supernatural) knowledge<sup>2</sup>.

The concept of magic is a human act to achieve a goal through the forces that exist in nature, as well as all the complexities of the assumptions behind it. Humans use occult knowledge/magic to solve life's problems that are beyond the limits of their ability and knowledge of their minds which are manifested in various forms of activity or activities, such as traditional ceremonies or other sacred ceremonies for places that are considered to have supernatural powers (God).

Therefore, discussing divine views must be viewed wisely and proportionally. Likewise in the context of the Holiang people. Issues concerning the relationship between God and humans, between God and the world, and God himself can be observed growing and developing as part of the tradition of religious thought in the archipelago which has been carried over to South Sulawesi. Belief in God is part of the community's life experience which later becomes an important part of the culture of the Makassar Bugis people.

In the minds of the Bugis Makassar people, the belief of the Bugis Makassar people in God is not part of a revelation process, nor is it based on a cognitive-essentialistic analysis. Talking about monotheistic<sup>3</sup>, it is necessary to add another approach as a differentiator from Divine Monotheistic and Philosophical Monotheistic. It is not quite right if the thought concerning the relationship between God and human beings is categorized as a type of pantheism or monism<sup>4</sup>. Even though we are very much aware of the essential unity between God and human beings, "being" and "alive", there is still an awareness of separation and distinction. The term that seems appropriate to refer to the relationship between humans and God in the perspective of this society is cultural monotheistic; the pattern of the relationship between man and God is based on life experience and life, a relationship that is fundamentally experimental in nature,

while still being aware of the difference between God and man.

Interestingly, discussions about God in Bugis Makassar society do not recognize deterministic reasoning and definite descriptions. In relation to the Holiang people, they do not feel the need to be preoccupied with proving *de esse et essentia Dei*<sup>5</sup>. This is because in the oral tradition of the Makassar Bugis community, a principle about the existence of God has been imprinted from generation to generation. Before the arrival of Islam in South Sulawesi, the Makassar Bugis community already had an "ancestor belief" and called God 'Dewata SeuwaE', which means our one God<sup>6</sup>.

Such attitudes and patterns of understanding in general actually grow from the view that God is All-All, able to overcome all things. This is where there is implicitly a transcendent aspect. Because it is Absolute, it is impossible for God to be described with verbal words or even human reasoning, because the result will only be words or what will remain is only the limited human mind itself. God is transcendent, and therefore incapable of being described by humans in a limited space. Even so, God is not a substance that cannot be discussed, discussed, but God also deserves to be acknowledged for His existence.

This does not mean that God is then completely separated from the world and humans. God actually has a deep meaning for life and life, which however turns out to depend on the breadth of God's will. The relationship between man and God is essential. The 'existence' and 'life' of man is completely determined by God Himself. Life and life happen, exist, are born, grow but eventually die. It is on this basis that this thought does not recognize or even shuns tendencies towards absolutism and determinism.

Because only God is absolute and what is out there is only relative, manifestation (*tajalli*) and therefore cannot be absolute. The cognitive-experiential approach was also shunned. In this conception, life is not defined or defined essentially, humans are more preoccupied with the problem of how humans live.

More broadly and in depth, Franz Magnis Suseno (1985)<sup>7</sup> considers that the view of cultural society about God and religion is not in a narrow sense (such as the understanding that has been developing in Western and Islamic society and in general). According to him, human views about God are manifested in various rites, for example in planting rice and harvest celebrations, religious ceremonies, as well as in family life and dances, or also in power and so on.

According to him, there are four circles that encompass people's thinking in viewing God: The first circle is extroverted, namely the attitude towards the natural external world with numinous unity (spiritual experience) between nature, society and the supernatural realm. This experience is manifested in various rites, without any explicit reflection on one's own inner dimension. The unity of society, nature and the supernatural realm is actually revealed from the belief that every event that is empirical in nature is always related to something supernatural or meta-empirical. This unity of society, nature and the supernatural is realized by respecting the ancestors, performing ritual offerings, thanksgiving and various other rites.

Because every event in this empirical realm is always related to the supernatural realm, a person in his behavior must pay attention to and perform these rites as an effort to save himself from

various unwanted events.

Apart from that, so that all his actions are properly controlled, a classification system was also created regarding direction, nature, and the cosmos. It is in this context that a number of traditional teachings and advice are known, which contain good instructions in carrying out worldly activities. These teachings and advice are then used as references for the treatment of various diseases, determining auspicious days, and various other matters related to the supernatural world.

The second circle contains political appreciation and power as an expression of the numinous nature. Power in society is not mere empirical power, the gift of divine light (God) can be understood that power is a gift from the supernatural. Someone who will receive power will first receive *pulung*, or revelation.

Power is also understood as a manifestation of the power of the cosmos. Concentration of cosmic power within the ruler is sought through asceticism (contemplation), *lalana*, selfless and so on. Power will be said to be successful if the king is able to give peace and calm to his people. On the other hand, if chaos had occurred this meant that the king had either given up spiritual practice, or that the king had been self-serving and indulging in his lusts. So it can be said that power in a cultural society is closely related to morality, this morality rests on the control of passions. If he is not able to control it, then naturally that will fade the cosmic power or revelation (*pulung*) that has been entrusted to him so far.

The third circle is centered on the experience of the self as a pathway to union with the numinous. Although the ultimate goal of this spiritual practice is the union of the servant with God, the emphasis is not on the experience of transcendence itself. The emphasis lies precisely on the elements themselves, namely theory and belief. Because this element is a powerful tool to round up the power of its own existence. The value of pragmatism in the union of servants with God results in the view that whatever religion one adheres to is not so important, but rather what is most important is whether the experience is appropriate and meaningful in one's life. A spiritual experience that reassures his way of life which is the basic essence of the religious pattern of cultural society. This attitude which is more concerned with the value of pragmatism also actually has a positive value for efforts to build a harmonious society, without being bound by formal forms of religion.

The fourth circle is destiny. The belief that human life has been determined by God greatly colors the behavior of cultural society. The community cannot avoid the provisions that have been determined previously. Birth, death, matchmaking, fate, are forms of destiny that cannot be resisted. Society must carry out its life according to its level and position because it will not be able to change its destiny definitively. Therefore, the Bugis Makassar people must be able to understand and understand it so that they can live this life in harmony and balance.

## CLOSING

To end this article, it is necessary to look wisely at the Holiang's appreciation of God. Wisdom in seeing the uniqueness and differences of humans in understanding, reasoning and experiencing God. This is the spirit of postmodernism and postcolonialism which recognizes

diversity in experiencing God in every community, especially marginalized communities, communities that have not been given 'space' to speak up so far.

The spirit of postmodernism also accommodates various ways of understanding God, if in modernism God is only understood through reason and quantitative reasoning, which tends to be simplistic in God's reasoning and even has negative implications for human civilization. Thus, the era of postmodernism teaches us that it is not enough to grasp God with reason alone, but God can actually be understood through *zauq*, taste, intuition, inner experience, namely human potential which has been neglected so far (Griffin in Gunawan, 2005).

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### Notes

1. Sir James George Frazer FRS FRSE FBA (1 January 1854, Glasgow – 7 May 1941, Cambridge), was a Scottish social anthropologist who was influential in the early days of the modern study of mythology and comparative religion. He is also considered the father of modern anthropology.
2. A complete explanation can be read by Koentjaraningrat's work in his book entitled 'History of Anthropological theory' published by UI Press.
3. The belief that God is one/single and has full authority over all things.
4. Monism is the metaphysical and theological concept that there is only one substance in nature. Monism is opposed to dualism and pluralism. In dualism there are two substances or realities, while in pluralism there are many realities. The concept of monism is often associated with pantheism and the concept of an eternal God.
5. Thomas Aquinas' view of 'de esse et essential dei' can be translated as everything that exists (existence) originates from the form of perfection (God).
6. Described by Prof. Mattulada (1974) in an article entitled "Bugis-Makassar: Humans and Their Culture" in the Special Issue of *Anthropology News* No. 16. Department of Anthropology, Faculty of Letters UI.

7. Rom. Prof. Dr. Franz Magnis Suseno, SJ whose real name is Franz Graf von Magnis or his full name is Maria Franz Anton Valerian Benedictus Ferdinand von Magnis. Born in Eckersdorf, Silesia , Poland (now Bożków , Nowa Ruda , Poland ), May 26 1936 ; 84 years old) is a Catholic priest and humanist Indonesian . He comes from a noble family. Magnis-Suseno is also known as the Director of the Postgraduate Program at the Driyarkara College of Philosophy the Driyarkara College of Philosophy . As a priest The Society of Jesus Magnis-Suseno has the nickname Romo Magnis. Magnis-Suseno came to Indonesia in 1961 at the age of 25 to study philosophy and theology in Yogyakarta. Arriving in Indonesia, he immediately learned Javanese to help him communicate with local residents. After being ordained a priest, he was assigned to study philosophy in Germany until he obtained a doctorate in philosophy with a dissertation on Karl Marx . Before becoming an Indonesian citizen in 1977 , Magnis-Suseno was a German citizen named Franz Graf von Magnis. When changing nationality, he added 'Suseno' behind his name. His writings have been published in the form of books and articles. The book "Javanese Ethics" was written after he underwent a sabbatical year at the Hati Kudus Jesus Parish in Sukoharjo, Central Java. Another very influential book is "Political Ethics" which is the main reference for students of philosophy and political science in Indonesia.