

The Synergy Between Islam and The Local Culture of Maluku, Indonesia

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Abstract: The cultural context of the *Maluku* archipelago is greatly influenced by Islam, which profoundly impacts the way of life of its diverse communities. Religion exists alongside and interacts with society's social dynamics while incorporating specific cultural values. This study aims to analyze and gain insight into the distinct concept of Islam in Maluku as it undergoes continuous development in conjunction with the local culture. A qualitative research approach is employed, specifically focusing on emic perspectives. Priority is given to the views and interpretations of local informants. Moreover, the ideation process is enhanced by incorporating literature studies; efforts to conceptualize the ideas in this writing were enriched by using qualitative research methods, selected data sources, and prioritizing the emic perspective. The informants' views were prioritized in terms of how they view and interpret the world from their perspective, together with literature studies and various references related to the topic. The study findings indicate that Islam has experienced growth and evolution in Maluku as a religion, resulting in its interaction with diverse local cultures. The culture of the Moluccans has changed over time, originating in their early settlement. This has resulted in forming a community that has developed its distinct values, which revolve around human relationships and the environment. Islam offers a logical reasoning for preserving Moluccan culture, promoting peaceful coexistence among the people of Maluku, and serving as an example of socio-religious integration.

Keywords: Islamic culture, moluccan culture, acculturation, assimilation

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A. Introduction

Culture is an integral part of human existence, intricately intertwined with every facet of life and inseparable from it (Cassirer, 2023). As the creators of culture, humans undergo development and transformation in tandem with it, emphasizing the universal nature of human creativity as individuals across different locations contribute to the realization of their ideas, thoughts, and inventions by creating sophisticated and tangible cultural expressions. However, it is important to note that individuals are not solely influenced by culture but also reap its advantages. The human experience is influenced and elevated by the principles transmitted through cultural heritage across generations.

In the Islamic faith, man is regarded as the most flawless creation of God and is said to have sprung from Adam and Eve (Walton, 2015). After being expelled from heaven, Adam and Eve proceeded to partake in the reproductive process, resulting in the subsequent dispersion of their progeny throughout different regions across the globe. Human evolution led to the formation of distinct tribes and nations characterized by the development of unique cultural and civilizational traits.

Maluku is a region of great importance as a center for Islamic promulgation. It is known for its abundant cultural heritage and significant influence in the area. Culture substantially impacts the formation and direction of different facets of existence in multi-sub-tribe and religious societies (Izogo, 2020). The presence of Islam in Maluku has resulted in a distinct cultural context. Humans highlight the significance of establishing and promoting Islam within the Moluccas region, emphasizing its specific contextual relevance. The primary objective of this approach is to create benefits for individuals on a global scale. The research problem in this article revolves around examining the synergy between Islam and the local culture. This study aims to analyze and explore the enduring presence of Islam in Maluku, together with its evolution and integration with local cultural practices. conducted.

B. Methods

Utilizing qualitative research methods, specifically prioritizing direct "first-hand" data, enhances the ideation process. The methodology employed in the study involves triangulation, which improves the accuracy and reliability of the findings. The researchers emphasize the importance of including contextual details to comprehensively understand the subjects being studied. The subjects were given equal importance as the researcher, ensuring a balanced perspective. An emic

perspective was prioritized, focusing on the viewpoints and experiences of the subjects themselves. To ensure the validity of the findings, verification was conducted, including consideration of negative cases. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants who could provide valuable insights into the research topic. An "audit trail" was maintained, documenting the decision-making process and data analysis procedures. The study allowed participation without interference, ensuring that the subjects' voices were accurately represented. Finally, analysis was conducted from the beginning of the study, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the research findings. The research design is a crucial component of the research process and is informed by extensive literature studies from various relevant references.

C. Results and Discussion

History of The Entry of Islam into Maluku and its Development

Muslim merchants from Java and Malay lived on the Banda coast in Maluku throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. During the Ternate period, it should be noted that both Tidore and Bacan had already established Muslim monarchies (Ternate, Tidore, and Bacan are the names of villages in the Maluku region). The use of the title 'Sultan' and Arabic names among the kings provide evidence for this. The development of Islam in Ternate can be traced back to its origins in Shi'a ideology, which was introduced by four sheiks from Iran and Basira (Uneputty, 2012). The development of Islam is significantly influenced by trade activities between the local population and Muslim traders from external regions (Palombo, 2021).

The development of Islam was influenced by tribal religious beliefs, including *Gikirimoi*, *Diarad Jere*, and *Wongi Wongi*. The belief system known as *Gikirimoi* posits that the entirety of the universe, along with all its components, originated from the creative force of a supreme Spirit referred to as *Gikirimoi*, whose name derives from the combination of *gikiri*, meaning 'person', and *moi*, meaning 'entity'. Objects found on Earth are inhabited by spirits commonly called *mate*, *madubo*, *meki* and *gudo* in the local language. These objects possess perceived supernatural abilities that have the potential to yield advantageous or detrimental outcomes for the populace. The belief in *Diarat Jere* revolves around the notion of sacred places, particularly cemeteries, that are believed to be connected to the spirits of the deceased. The term *Wongi-wonga* refers to an idol house situated in the backyard of a residential property,

a specific location where ceremonial activities occur. Such ceremonies offer tributes and respect to the spirits of individuals who have passed away (Uneputty, 2012).

In the 16th century, the Portuguese, led by Francisco Serrao, made significant advances by entering the Moluccas (specifically Hitu) in 1512 (Jack-Hinton, 2022). During this time, they established an economic monopoly and actively promoted Catholic Christianity. In addition, they engaged in expansion wars with various populations, including Islamic countries. The Dutch, led by Cornelis van Houtmann, embarked on a journey in 1605 to spread Protestant Christianity, following the Portuguese's footsteps. The Portuguese and Dutch implemented a process of Christianisation through the use of warfare, which had a significant negative effect on the hold of Islam.

Due to trade area expansion issues, the VOC fought Hitu (Kakiali) forces joined by Ternate troops at Hoamual and Makassar in 1633 (Hagerdal, 2024). In 1650, an internal coup d'état occurred, prompting King Ternate Mandar Shah to seek assistance from the VOC. As a result, a trade agreement was established, including a provision prohibiting clove and nutmeg tree cultivation in all areas, except for Ambon and Banda. The agreement was subsequently implemented in Batavia. From 1657 to 1689, Sultan Tidore Saifuddin sought assistance from the VOC (Dutch East India Company) to remove the Spanish presence from their land. A trade agreement was established, wherein the parties agreed to eradicate illicit spice plants in return for financial remuneration from the VOC. In 1783, the island of Ternate strategically decided to align with the Dutch East India Company to launch an offensive against the neighboring island of Tidore. In 1796, the ruler of Tidore, Kaicili Nuku, strategically decided to align with the British forces. This alliance aimed to capture Jailolo and Tidore, launching an attack on Ternate. The primary motivation behind this collaboration was to secure a trade agreement with the British, enabling the exchange of spices for the VOC.

Development of Islam in The Moluccan Cultural Context

Culture refers to the shared knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors consistently observed and transmitted within a particular community (Islam, 2020). Moluccan culture is characterized by a comprehensive collection of values maintained, passed down, and developed within the society of Moluccan people, who demonstrate strong appreciation for multiple dimensions, including their thoughts, social values and objects, and particularly their culture. The development of Moluccan culture exhibits a strong correlation with the advancement and evolution of the Moluccan population. The phenomenon is not static but rather dynamic, continuously evolving

in sync with the community. The origins of Moluccan culture can be traced back to the early stages of societal development. When viewed through a sociological lens, the concept of cultural roots pertains to the fundamental values ingrained in the formation of early personalities in the region of Maluku.

Moluccan society can be understood within the framework of its tribal basis; it is a society comprised of different sub-tribes, such as in Central Maluku and Southeast Maluku. These sub-tribes are characterized by their diverse religious affiliations, including Islam, Protestant Christianity, and Catholic Christianity. The pluralization of tribes and religions experienced further development due to population mobilization when many European traders, including the VOC, invaded Maluku in search of spices (Adnan, 2023).

The concept of inculturation in cultural studies involves the integration of new teachings into the local cultural context (McEvoy, 2022). This integration occurs through a process of accommodation or adaptation. According to Abdurrahman Wahid (2001), Islamic indigenization involves a reciprocal exchange and acquisition of knowledge between Islam and other ideas or cultures. The logical result of needing to embrace Islam as a unifying element among different cultures is the emergence of openness. As stated by Abdurrahman Wahid, as a form of Islamic indigenization:

“...the process of taking on and learning from each other occurs between Islam and other ideas or cultures. Openness like this is a logical consequence of the necessity to accept Islam as a connecting factor between various local cultures. Serving all local cultures will foster the universality of new views without being uprooted from their respective historical roots.” (Abdurrahman Wahid, 2001)

Our study reveals that the acceptance of Islam in the North Maluku and Central Maluku regions is significantly influenced by Islamic teachings and culture, particularly in shaping customary values, culture, and traditions. The presence and open process of spreading Islamic teachings had a significant impact. Sociological reality in the Sultanate of Tidore and Ternate in the northern region, as well as in the kingdom of customary village [*Negeri Adat*] Iha in the customary village [*Negeri Adat*] of Saparua, Sirisori Islam and Kulur in the central Maluku region, is worth analyzing, Mus Huliselan's (1993) research results show the government area and cultural sphere in Central Maluku as a cultural area of rural republics characterized by the existence of autonomous powers at the state or village level. Putuhena (2009) explains that Islam can significantly impact the transformation of local society and culture through two main principles. The first is the influence of invasion, which refers to the development of local cultural elements due to Islamic influence. The

second principle is accommodation, which involves the acceptance of cultural elements from outside sources and is the result of the interaction between local and Islamic cultures. According to Heny Gustini Nuraeni and Muhammad Alfian (2013), cultural penetration can happen in two ways: peacefully and violently. In the case of Islamic culture in Maluku, it is believed to have spread peacefully, indicating a process of acceptance within the local culture.

Acculturation, assimilation, and synthesis are three potential outcomes resulting from the peaceful spread of culture. Acculturation is a process whereby two different cultures come together and create a new culture while also maintaining the unique aspects of each original one (Karatas, 2020). Assimilation is the phenomenon in which two distinct cultures encounter each other (Alba, 2020), engage in interactions and merge, leading to the emergence of a novel culture. Finally, synthesis is the process of forming a unique culture by combining and interacting two separate ones, leading to the development of a new culture that is different from the original two (Nuraeni & Alfian, 2013).

Synergy Between Islam and Moluccan Culture

Islam was among the faiths that flourished and interacted with the many indigenous cultures of Maluku. Since the Moluccan people first settled in the country, their culture has expanded and changed, forming a social life with values that are shared by all people and the environment and which is an integral part of life itself. Islam entered Maluku through trade routes in the 15th century; at the beginning of the century, Maluku was known as a spice island, so foreign traders targeted it in search of cloves and nutmeg. Islam in Maluku is growing and developing and interacting and forming connections with the local Maluku culture. According to Koentjaraningrat and other scholars, culture encompasses various interconnected elements, including religious systems and ceremonies, community systems and organizations, knowledge systems, languages, arts, livelihood systems, and technological systems. Koentjaraningrat (2015) later provided a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between Islam and Maluku culture, identifying the specific aspects of the culture that have influenced and interacted with Islam throughout its historical development.

Elements of Religious Systems and Religious Ceremonies

The interaction between Islam and Moluccan culture, particularly in Central Maluku, involves instances of religious rites and systems of belief, such as those detailed below.

Ma-a tenun is a traditional ceremony that involves meditation in the mountains for a whole day. This practice is believed to enhance people's abilities and make them immune to sharp weapons. As part of the ceremony, participants test their newfound immunity by cutting each other's bodies. The religious systems and ceremonies in Maluku culture, particularly Central Maluku, are influenced by Islam. In Islam, it was then recognized that in the world, not only live humans but also other creatures (evil spirits) that can disturb them. Therefore, Islam gives strength to this tradition through the meaning of obedience to worship. This example highlights the intersection between Islam and the local culture. Repairing a damaged *Baileu*, a building in the form of a hall that represents the typical vernacular architecture of the Maluku Islands, which is often described as a traditional house and can be found in both Maluku and North Maluku Provinces and has a very important function for people's lives together, is commonly done with the intention of seeking blessings for the future. The ceremony is centered on the belief that ancestors hold significant power. In Islam, it is recognized that there are beings beyond humans, including evil spirits, which possess the ability to disrupt human lives. The tradition of obedience in worship is reinforced by Islam, as it places great emphasis on its importance (Department of Education and Culture & Center for Historical and Cultural Research, 2007)

The *Isahoy maanahu sanomel* (mourning bath) ceremony is a customary ritual aimed at protecting pregnant women from potential risks, such as miscarriage or the death of their spouse. According to a publication by the Department of Education and Culture and the Center for Historical and Cultural Research in 2007, the ceremony is typically conducted at the two-month point of the pregnancy. It holds significance in Islamic culture as it is performed when the fetus reaches two months of development. This timing is derived from the historical account of Prophet Muhammad's life, as his father passed away when his mother was two months pregnant. The ceremony is believed to serve as a protective measure against bad luck for pregnant women.

The *Hetu keur* ceremony is a cultural practice observed by indigenous communities. It is performed to eliminate any negative traits that may manifest in a newborn baby. The process involves trimming a portion of the baby's hair. The tradition of the haircut ceremony was later adopted by Islam.

The *Maahaji* ceremony is a significant step in a traditional initiation ceremony. According to the Department of Education and Culture & Center for Historical and Cultural Research, (2007), circumcision was later adopted by Islam as a means of fulfilling a religious obligation.

Elements of Social Systems and Organizations

In how Islam intersects with Maluku culture in Central, North, and Southeast Maluku, the following communal organizational structure exists.

According to Cooley (2000), the term *pela* is believed to have originated from the indigenous language. More specifically, it is derived from the word Pelau, which translates as "brother." The term "bond" describes the friendship or brotherhood formed between indigenous individuals from different villages in Central Maluku, irrespective of their family ties. This bond originated from the actions of their ancestors in distinct situations and includes specific rights and responsibilities for each party involved. The formation of ties between villages can occur due to events involving two or more villages. This customary ceremony involves two types of *pela*: '*pela keras/pela batu karang*/blood *pela* and *pela tanpa siri*.

First, *Pela karas* is a formal agreement between two or more countries or villages to address a significant event, a bond of friendship or brotherhood institutionalized between the entire Indigenous population of two or more villages outside the existing genealogical relationship in Central Maluku. This agreement usually pertains to compromises, unresolved conflicts in which neither side is victorious or defeated, or the provision of specific aid from one country to another.

Second, *Pela tanpa siri* is a form of soft *pela* not stipulated through an oath. However, both represent the value of living together to help each other. The purpose of this type of *pela* is typically to enhance transaction associations. The bond between multiple villages, *pela*, is marked by affiliations between Christian and Islamic communities. The *pela* bond is a unique ability that allows individuals who have made a solemn oath to form a binding connection. Multiple individuals can share the responsibility for an item or possession. For example, in the scenario in which one party undertakes the construction of a school, mosque, church, or *baileu*, another will offer their support by supplying the required building materials and manpower. If individuals who are part of a *pela* group are on a journey and take a break in their *pela*'s village and who have built sibling or family relationships with a promise or oath of allegiance, they will receive a warm reception and be treated with the same care and hospitality as if they were relatives. There are multiple customary villages located in the Saparua and Seram regions, each of which is connected to distinct religious communities. Saparua is home to two distinct customary villages, Haria and Sirisori. Haria is known for its Christian traditions, while Sirisori is known for its Islamic customs. In addition, there are two notable villages in the Maluku region: Booy, which is a Christian village located in Saparua, and Hualoy, an Islamic

village situated in Seram. In Seram, there are two customary villages with different religious affiliations. One is Makariki, which is a Christian customary village, and the other is Sleman, which is an Islamic customary village. Aditjondro (2001) argues that since the solidarity amongst the many groups in a *pela* coalition is based on their hostility against other parties, *pela* has the potential to exacerbate conflict. Aditjondro believes that *pela* actually also has the potential to exacerbate conflict because the unity between two or more parties involved in a *pela* alliance is based on opposition to a third party. According to Abidin Nurdin (2013), indigenous communities have traditionally promoted a feeling of togetherness and opposition to outside influences by cultivating a shared sense of unity.

Conversely, *negeri-negeri* (one of the administrative divisions in Maluku which is located under the sub-district and is led by a head of state government who has the title of king) outside kinship is not included in the alliance of brothers, maintaining individuals extremely susceptible to the possibility of conflict, even if certain 'negeri' make internal commitments as brothers. According to anthropologists and sociologists, the population in Maluku can be categorized into four groups: the internal Maluku groups, such as the Tuni people from Seram Island, and the Wahan people from the islands of North Maluku, Southeast Banda (an archipelago in Maluku) and Buru. According to the Department of Education and Culture and the Center for Historical and Cultural Research (2007), there are external groups in Maluku such as the *Moni* and *Mahu*.

The term *Gandong* is derived from the word *kandung*, which signifies a sense of brotherhood rooted in shared lineage or genealogy. Tawainella (2007) states that during the formation of the first settlements in Maluku, it was common for one gene to branch out and search for a new location to settle. In early community life, when the first settlements were formed in Maluku, a community from one gene (family) usually radiated out to look for a new settlement that was suitable according to the nomadic nature of traditional community life. This was in line with the nomadic characteristics of traditional community life. The search resulted in the gene being spread to various new *uli/hena*, which is referred to as a territorial genealogical alliance which focuses more on its genealogical elements or where the genealogical elements are dominant, locations, leading to the formation of a community that eventually evolved into an '*aman*', or village (Abdul Manaf Tubaka, 2018). This geological relationship led them to defend and aid one other. Some examples of *Gandong* relationships are *Negeri Siri-sori Islam*, *Negeri Siri-sori Sarani* (located in Saparua Sub-district), *Negeri Tamilaouw* (an Islamic Negeri in Seram), and *Negeri Hutumury* (a Christian Negeri in South Leitimur Sub-district, Ambon Island). History

demonstrates that they are (a family relationship of one blood/genealogy) descendants of brothers from various regions, including North Seram, *Negeri Seith* (an Islamic State on Ambon Island), *Negeri Ouw* (a Christian State on Saparua), *Negeri Pelauw*, *Rohomoni*, *Kabauw*, *Kailolo*, and *Hulalui on Haruku Island (Amarima Hatuhaha)*. *Kay Wai* on the island of Buru demonstrates a similar form of culture. In this context, *kai* refers to an older brother, and *way* refers to a younger brother (Watloly Aholiab, 2005). The culture portrays the children of Buru who are dispersed from their original Buru homeland. Despite being scattered across various regions of the country and practicing different religions, they still maintain a connection as '*basudara gandong*' (An alliance as brothers was formed to take care of each other, promise to live in love with each other, with the right and obligation to help each other and each serve individuals).

The Moluccan 'children of the country' on Buru Island, known as '*basudara gandong adik-kakak*' (*kae to yako kai wai*), uphold the belief that they are brothers (*kakak-adik*), symbolizing their close bond. The traditional rite in Buru, known as the 'children of the country,' perpetuates the belief by displaying four animal heads, which symbolize the distinctiveness and specificity of each 'child of the country' regarding their chosen 'country' group and religion. However, despite these differences, they remain united by the traditional rite. The four animal heads symbolize different groups of people in the region. The head of a chicken and a goat represent the Islamic children of the country who migrated from the interior of Buru to settle on the coast known as '*orang pante*' (*Geba Masin*). On the other hand, the head of a *kusu* (the term for Kuskus, a marsupial animal which is endemic to Eastern Indonesia) and pig represents the Christian 'children of the country', who continue to reside in the mountains as 'indigenous people' (*Geba Emlia*). The text highlights the observance of the Buru ancestors, who demonstrated respect towards their fellow community members, regardless of their religious beliefs. According to a traditional decree, '*ku toho fa la masi, ku wihi teput olon tu bibi olon*', which means to send chickens and goats to the seashore and '*kusu*' and pigs to the mountain (Watloly Aholiab, 2005). This suggests that customary symbols serve multiple purposes, including ritual significance and the ability to bring people together as a cohesive unit known as 'Gandong.'

Aru is known for its cultural practices of '*Ur-sia and Ur-lima*', which are referred to as interconnected siblings within a cohesive adaptive system (Watloly Aholiab, 2005). According to the beliefs of the Indigenous people of Aru, their ancestry can be traced back to a shared origin, which is believed to be the result of migration from two specific islands, 'Enu' and 'Karang,' located at the southern end of the Aru

archipelago. After leaving the Aru Island, the individuals embraced various religions such as Protestantism, Catholicism, and Islam. However, despite their religious differences, the brotherhood among them remains as strong and united as it was during their time on the island. The phrase '*Jar ta bana, jar ta muli*' (which means 'he is gone but will return') reflects a persistent sense of longing, suggesting that despite someone's departure, their eventual return is expected. The *gandong* culture demonstrates a sense of unity and camaraderie, despite the geographical and religious differences between its members. Moluccan Muslims recognize their Christian brothers and engage in various activities together, driven by this spirit.

The terms *Masohi* in Central Maluku, *Marimoi* in North Maluku, and *Maren/Hamaren* in Southeast Maluku are used to describe the socio-economic collaboration among the people of Maluku. The terms refer to the cultural practice in which members of a community support and help each other during different events or situations. The support provided in these activities relies on voluntary labor rather than financial transactions. The *Marimoi culture* is known for its philosophy of *marimoi ngone fo turu, marimoi ua ngone fo ruru, ma out ngone fo jaha*, which can be translated as United we stand, divided we fall (Watloly Aholiab, 2005). The culture of *Maren/Hamaren* in Southeast Maluku is characterized by the belief in the importance of unity and togetherness, as expressed in the concept of *Ain ni ain*, a philosophy of life that plays a very important role in the lives of the people of the Kei Islands. Its function is to unite the diversity (social and religious) of the Kei Islands community which has been inherited from the past (Watloly Aholiab, 2005). Cultural philosophies play a significant role in enabling one to acknowledge the needs of individuals, irrespective of their religious beliefs, as being interconnected with our own. The construction of churches and mosques in Masohi involves a collaborative effort, a cultural practice commonly known as *Badati*. The *masochist activity requires more than simply labor* assistance; it also involves providing necessary materials and is a collective effort. In construction activities, it is a frequent practice for neighboring villages to assist by supplying both labor and the required building materials. The terms *pela* or *gandong* are commonly used to describe this.

The term *Fam/Famili* refers to the kinship that is based on the similarity of a clan or family. In this view, the *clan/fam of one negeri* in Maluku is scattered throughout different *negeri*, either in the same form or with subtle phonemic changes, but they are still one nuclear family. The connection is affected by the presence of scattered *gandong* relationships. Some specific clans or families can be found in both Islamic and Christian regions. Examples of these clans include the

Pelupessy, *Holle*, *Fokaubun*, *Nuhuyanan*, *Tihuleley* (Islam/Kulur) *Tahalele* (Christian/Booy), *Tawainella* (Islam/Tulehu) and *Bakarbessy* (Christian/Waay). These clans may also undergo phonemic changes over time (Watloly Aholiab, 2005). The culture being referred to is strongly connected to that of *gandong*.

The practice of '*Makan Patita*' (eating together) is usually held at certain moments to show gratitude for something considered to benefit society and is often seen during certain events as a means of showing appreciation for something that is believed to benefit the community. The *Makan Patita* event signifies the Muslim community's acknowledgment and recognition of the dietary restrictions and preferences of the Christian community to the food that is being prepared. The recognition is grounded in the principles of '*basudara*', which include the notions of familial ties, friendship and communal connections. The event ensures that the food provided is mindful of both halal (permissible) and haram (forbidden) considerations. In the past, due to the event in a *Negri* with a Christian majority, it was a prevalent belief that family members would traditionally prepare and serve halal cuisine.

The term *Sasi* refers to a practice enforced by the village authority, which prohibits the harvesting or gathering of crops, animals or marine products during a specific period Cooley (2000). The *sasi* ritual is performed by the *kewang*, who is the guardian of the forest or sea, together with the landlord and the '*mauweng*,' representing the tribal religious official. This ritual takes place in the *baileu*. The practice of *sasi* is still noted in traditional Islamic villages, such as those in Geser (East Seram) and Haruku (Central Maluku). The customary system highlights the importance of organizing and maintaining a balance in life. This includes prioritizing the well-being of both humans and the environment, as they are integral to the overall integrity of human life. *Sasi* is one of the traditional institutions as a form of local wisdom of the Maluku people, a culture of preserving the environment and certain natural products within a time period determined jointly through deliberation by the Maluku community. An example of sea *sasi* is the prohibition on taking shellfish and fish that cannot be used in a timely manner.

The customary system and philosophy of life for the people of Southeast Maluku are known as *Larvul Ngabal*. The *Larvul Ngabal* comprises seven articles that eventually formed the philosophical foundation of the Southeast Maluku people's cultural framework. These are:

1. *Uut entauk atvunad* (As we rest, our head gently cradles on the nape of our neck, finding solace in its support);

2. *Lelad ain fo mahiling* (Our necks, graceful and strong, command respect, and admiration, standing tall amidst the chaos);
3. *Ul nit envil atumud* (Our skin, a delicate shield, lovingly embraces our body, providing a comforting embrace);
4. *Lar nakmud ivud* (Within the depths of our being, our blood flows silently, carrying life's energy with quiet determination);
5. *Rek fo mahoiling* (The boundaries of our personal space, like sacred chambers, deserve reverence and consideration);
6. The phrase *Moryain fo kelmudun* emphasises the importance of honouring and valuing the institution of marriage. It reminds us that marriage is a sacred bond that deserves utmost respect and reverence. Similarly, the statement;
7. *Hira ni ntubfo I ni, it did ntub fo it did* (what people have is still theirs, what is ours is still ours. This is a basic rule that guarantees and recognises ownership of goods by other people) highlights the significance of personal ownership and individual rights. It emphasises that while everyone's possessions should be respected and protected, it is equally important to acknowledge and safeguard our belongings.

Analysis of these seven articles highlights the universal worth of human life, regardless of religious affiliation. The description of these seven chapters shows that the value of a man's life is without distinction in a particular religious community.

Language Elements

The phrase *Ay hata ela-ela, mansia lepu-lepu* (meaning that large or heavy jobs can be completed with the spirit of cooperation) emphasizes the importance of collective action and collaboration in accomplishing significant objectives. This philosophy is rooted in the Islamic faith and the cultural traditions of Maluku, specifically in Central and North Maluku. The statement highlights the importance of collaboration and unity when dealing with difficult tasks. It suggests that by working together, individuals can overcome any significant challenge, especially in the context of *Masohi*. The concept revolves around shared accountability and reciprocal assistance among community members.

When many hands come together, big tasks become small in English, conveying that when people work together and unite, challenging tasks become more manageable. The translation presented here upholds the intended meaning and context of the statement, aligning with the principles of cooperation and mutual accountability found in Islamic and Maluku cultural traditions.

The phrase *Anja maa hesi paire lauwi*, is a metaphorical expression that advises individuals to acquire sufficient spiritual knowledge to prepare for life's challenges.

It translates as the *pulan tukan* (an expression usually addressed to someone who is unable to read or recite the Koran, who is compared to the Pulan, which can only peel or prepare the fiber leaves to weave into mats) who peels the leaves of the mat. In Kailolo culture, it is a common practice for the bride and groom to have the ability to recite the Qur'an. The phrase *Lew takan tahalee* (meaning returning to meet eternally, advice or a recommendation for people to uphold human values reflected in family life) is commonly understood to symbolize the idea of everlasting reunions. The statement advises how individuals can prioritize and uphold the fundamental principles linked to family values. Families leaving on the trip often say this. The phrase *Nundatu kura nurulembe, nurulembe kura nundatu* (meaning that a mosque is the same as a traditional house and that a traditional house is the same as a mosque) . The statement implies that a comparison is being made between the mosque and the traditional house, indicating that these buildings have similar characteristics or features. The definition's objective is to clarify the notion that progress should be equitable and foster social justice. Ceremonies that commemorate the birth of the Prophet Muhammad are commonly practiced in traditional Islamic regions. The celebrations often occur in traditional homes and follow established customs and procedures.

Expressions from North Maluku emphasize the importance of respecting other religions. These include *Fangare ne adam se hawa ma ngofa* (we are all descendants of Adam and Eve); *Hau fo matai, maro marofo maku ise* (fishing separates our fishing spots, singing separates our songs, but we still listen to each other); and *Kusumbunga yo-sai fo marasai kuno kuno ma duko mai fo mangungano* (like the floating flowers, we feel the young sugarcane grass, and we hope for unity). The people of North Maluku embrace differences as a normal part of life and recognize that they can be beautiful when properly managed.

Elements of the Livelihood System

A *maano* is an undertaking in which both parties agree to participate in the benefits. People commonly utilize this as a means of subsistence; for instance, a means purchase a small village, which is worked at harvest time and then split in half. For example, *maano* is used to share business results from one village. Our analysis shows that Islam and Maluku culture have many points of contact, which shows that Islamic teachings and culture can easily embrace and combine local Maluku culture. From the description of the various intersections between Islam and Maluku culture, as described above, it is shown that Islamic teachings and culture can openly accept and accommodate local Maluku culture. At the same time, Islam

introduces Islamic culture and customs to the local community. However, depending on the context, Islam remains committed to reforming customs and traditions that are considered incompatible with its teachings. For example, rejecting belief in spirits and cutting heads to fulfill traditional obligations in wedding processions was replaced with a dowry. Imadun Rahmat (Indonesian Character Wasathiyah Islamic Da'wah Guide. 2017) emphasized that Islam can be integrated into various human cultures while maintaining their identity. Incorporating Islamic values has become a significant element in shaping the identity of various ethnic groups in Indonesia. This Islamic character has become the primordial identity of every ethnic entity in Indonesia. It is called that because the Islamic religion that comes to every society's culture always experiences adaptation to the place where that religion is present. Therefore, the colors of Islam and culture work together to become a resource and not an obstacle. This shows that Islam has helped enrich the cultural treasures of Maluku.

Islam is in synergy with Maluku culture. In this context, Islam also experiences synergy with the cultural context. The Maluku people have a cultural tradition of living together and adhering to religious beliefs without questioning them. This tradition has developed into cultural wisdom that regulates their behavior. Appropriate behavior in the social and religious relations of the Maluku people is highly emphasized in their cultural wisdom, which explains why all this happens. The text explores the process of inheriting values and meanings in the context of Islam and local wisdom. It highlights how this interaction contributes to understanding life in Maluku society. This shows that religion and culture are experiencing a process of strengthening, which is significant for strengthening and discovering new values in the collective consciousness of the Maluku people. It can be explained that Islam deeply respects local cultural treasures that uphold human values and appreciate and respect diversity, both in the context of cultural and religious life. It emphasizes the appreciation and respect for diversity, both in cultural and religious aspects of life.

Islamic wisdom promotes inclusivity and acceptance of individuals from diverse religious, racial, and ethnic backgrounds through the concept of brotherhood known as *pela* and *gandong*. Islam recognizes and acknowledges that individuals may have varying religious beliefs, racial backgrounds, and ethnicities, which can influence the cultural connections of brotherhood and social solidarity known as *Ilouwe* and *Mash*. Islam embraces individuals from diverse backgrounds who work together to preserve environmental resources sustainably while upholding the cultural bond of *sasi*. The presence of racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious differences in Maluku

should not be used as a justification to dismiss the universal values upheld by local culture and Islamic teachings. The differences should be leveraged as social capital to foster awareness of mutual acceptance, appreciation, and respect.

Millions of Moluccan children are dispersed from the tip of Halmahera to the far Southeast; Tiwery (Tiwery, Salatalohy 2004.) describes Maluku as their mother. This encompasses a diverse range of sub-tribes and religions. The mother protects all humans residing in Maluku.

The local wisdom of Islam in Maluku showcases distinct characteristics in the dynamic interaction between Muslims and Christians in the region, highlighting their noticeable differences. In the interaction between Maluku Muslims and Maluku Christians, the differences between them are visible through language dialect, which is a characteristic marker and becomes a form of uniqueness and social capital in building an alliance of Maluku people. The distinction between individuals becomes more flexible and welcoming when local knowledge is utilized to view them as *basudara* individuals within the same cultural identity sphere. The model describes the differences of Maluku society as a form of social capital, which is part of local wisdom in viewing Maluku society as brothers and sisters in the same cultural identity space. This interaction contributes to the development of a culturally relevant Islamic theology. In the given context, Maluku is a region consisting of numerous islands with diverse and vibrant cultural heritage. However, certain cultural similarities have been observed across different areas within Maluku. For instance, in Central Maluku, the cultural jargon includes terms such as *patasiwa* and *patalima*, while in Southeast Maluku, *Orsiw Orlim* is commonly used. Similarly, in West Southeast Maluku, the cultural jargon includes *Kidabela*. Maluku, with the characteristics of a thousand islands, has rich cultural characteristics but has the same cultural jargon about building a life together as brothers, between *Patasiwa* and *Patalima* in Central Maluku, *Orsiw Orlim* in Southeast Maluku, and *Kidabela* in West Southeast Maluku.

The harmonious life of *orang basudara* in Maluku is characterized by kinship, camaraderie, and community bonds, which serve as a significant cultural identity. Religion offers a logical basis for the long-term viability of Maluku culture. All of this characterizes the harmonious life of the *Basudara* people among the people in Maluku as a cultural identity. Religion provides a rational justification for the continuity of Maluku culture itself. From this level, the dialectic of Islam and local culture in Maluku continues to exist. The field of culture is a practice that strengthens this existence and becomes a model of socio-religious integration. Maluku culture is a cultural unity that is increasingly beautiful to be interpreted and actualized in the

search for identity. Maluku Islam universally places itself and places value on local cultural traditions in various creeds, sharia, and morals. Maluku culture is a cohesive cultural identity whose interpretation and realization are increasingly appreciated in forming a universal Maluku Islamic identity. This identity respects and combines local cultural traditions, such as beliefs, laws, and ethics.

D. Conclusion

The growth of Islam in Maluku is characterized by its successful integration of local cultural elements. The historical facts demonstrate the influence of Islamic values on different aspects of the local culture in Maluku, showcasing a harmonious relationship between Islam and the diverse traditions of the region. In addition, the continuous development of Islam in Maluku has contributed to the enhancement of the region's already abundant and varied cultural heritage. The evolution and flourishing of Islam in Maluku contribute to preserving and enhancing the region's unique cultural treasures. Islam in Maluku is characterized by its contextual nature, enabling it to seamlessly blend with and significantly impact the social fabric of local culture. Maluku Islam aims to create positive changes and benefits for all the people of Maluku by promoting and embodying the values of Islam.

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