

## Islamization in North Sulawesi XIX Century: Political Networks and Trade

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**Abstract:** The dynamics of Islamization in North Sulawesi, the activities of outside traders, made this area a crossroads for the spice trade in the Maluku region. The spread of Islam did not escape the influence of political networks from several sultanates such as the Sultanate of Ternate, the Sultanate of Makassar and the Sultanate of Sulu. This study aims to reveal the Islamization network in North Sulawesi in the XIX century with a focus on the influence of political hegemony and trading activities. This research is a historical research using historical methods; heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography which are descriptive analysis with a literature study approach. The results of this study indicate that integration and economic accumulation that make political power, encounter with other religions and increase in activity and trade encourage the spread of religious teachings.

**Keywords:** *Islamization, Political Networks, Trade, North Sulawesi*

### Introduction

Islam in Indonesia (Southeast Asia) is one of the seven branches of Islamic civilization (after the destruction of the unity of Islamic civilization based in Baghdad in 1285 AD). The seven branches of Islamic civilization are in full, the civilization of Arabic Islam, Persian Islam, Turkish Islam, Black African Islam, Indian Subcontinent Islam, Malay Arabic Islam and Chinese Islam. Culture (a civilization called Arabic Malay, which is spread in Southeast Asia has universal characteristics, causing that civilization to retain its integral form, but at the same time still have elements that are unique to the region (Sunanto, 2005).

The mass conversion of the people of the archipelago to Islam during the trading period occurred for several reasons as follows; a). Pertability (ready to use) the Islamic faith system. It has a flexible nature compared to the previous local religions so that followers of the faith cannot be far from their environment. Islamic belief system by believing in God who is everywhere and ready to provide protection. the result was when the Arab Malay region contributed to the international trade of Muslim traders abroad playing an important role in driving the mass conversion that took place in a port city which later developed into a Muslim political entity. b). Islamic association with wealth. When the indigenous people of the archipelago met and interacted with Muslim immigrants at the port they were wealthy traders. Due to their wealth and economic strength they can play an important role in the political sphere of local entities and in the diplomatic field. This can be seen, for example, in the 10th and 12th centuries no less than twelve Muslims (merchants became Srivijaya ambassadors in politics and trade with China and Middle Eastern countries. C) military victories, d) introduced writing. Islam has introduced writing to various regions of Southeast Asia, most of which are unfamiliar with writing, while others are familiar with Sanskrit letters. d) teach rote memorization,

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memorization becomes very important for new adherents, especially religious interests such as prayer. f) cleverness to heal. g) teaching about morals. Islam offers salvation from various evil forces and Islam introduces the promise of a pleasant heaven (Azra, 1995).

The encounter of religion in the trade route in North Sulawesi became a common thing at that time, local religions with religions subordinated to traders (Islam) and Christianization were played by colonial actors (Portuguese and Dutch) as capital, political and economic forces. Christianization in Southeast Asia, especially in North Sulawesi, was the clear mission of the Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch. When the Portuguese conquered Malacca in 1511, commercial relations expanded. The Moluccan Emporium became the main destination for traders around the world in the early 16th century. Through this route, Lapian (2008) shows the strategic location of the Sulawesi Sea Peninsula in the shipping and spice trade routes. Ternate, as an influential Islamic Sultanate in the Maluku islands, was able to control several islands to Semananjung the Sulawesi Sea through political expansion. The Sultan of Ternate was able to open and maintain trade routes and networks between the Maluku Strait-Sulawesi Sea-Sulu Sea to mainland Southeast Asia (Lapian, 2008).

Thus, apart from being interesting to trace the Islamization process in North Sulawesi after a period of conversion or "religious revolution" in Reid's terms, it has become the key word for understanding the socio-political changes in the Southeast Asian region, especially in North Sulawesi. This tracing departs from a historical question, how was the influence of political and trade networks on the Islamization process in North Sulawesi in the 19th century?

## **Literature Review**

In this study, the authors realized that they were still constrained by limited resources in addition to time and funds in research. The relevant previous studies include the article on Islam in Bolaang Mongondow Utara, North Sulawesi: The dynamics of Islamization in the Kingdom of Kaidipang Besar and Bintauna in the 7-19th century AD by Donald Qomaidiansyah Tungkagi on the role of the Sulawesi Sea route with a narrower scope, namely a focus on the region. Bolaang Mongondow Utara as an area within the Sulawesi Sea peninsula. Bolaang Mongondow Utara in the Sulawesi Sea region, the dynamics of Islamization in the North Bolaang Mongondow area also received influence from the surrounding kingdoms, especially the Sultanate of Ternate.

Many data sources are disclosed in Ariel C. Lopez's dissertation entitled "Conversion and Colonialism: Islam and Christianity in North Sulawesi, c. 1700-1900." By discussing Christianization in Minahasa and Islamization in Bolaang Mongondow and Sangir-Talaud by considering the political, economic and social environment of the religious conversion process. The Islamization of the Sulawesi Sea Region in the 19th century was discussed by Muhammad Nur Ichan Azis

The results of this study indicate that the influence of Islam begins with the trade process, in the Sulawesi Sea region, for traders who connect to Maluku as a pattern of Islamization, so that in the next period the Muslim community is able to create a Muslimclave in the Sulawesi Sea Peninsula.

Islamization in the Sulawesi sea region in the 19th century was discussed by Muhammad Nur Ichan Azis. This study is compared with previous studies where this study discusses political networks and trading activities that are the focus of the Islamization process in North Sulawesi.

## **Research Methods**

The research method used in this research is descriptive research method with historical research approach. Historical research consists of 4 steps. 1) heuristic, collecting historical sources that are related to research. 2) criticism, the data obtained, is criticized to obtain

subjective facts. 3) interpretation, meaning of historical facts. Historical facts can be described and put together so that they are related to each other's meanings. 4) historiography, pouring out all abilities, not only technical skills in the use of quotations and notes, the most important thing is the use of critical thoughts and analysis because historians ultimately have to produce a synthesis of all the results of their research or findings in a complete writing (Sjamsuddin & Nursam, 2007). This research is a descriptive analysis with a literature study approach based on the use of fact-explanatory theory.

### **Findings & Discussion**

The strategic position of the Sulawesi Sea forms a network and maritime trade routes between Sulawesi and Maluku. In the southern part of Sulawesi Island, the Sultanate of Makassar experienced rapid development after opening international trade routes. Makassar, as one of the entrepots, was in the Sulawesi Sea Peninsula area before entering the Maluku Sea. Furthermore, the Sultanate of Makassar has a conquered area up to the Manado mainland (Mattulada, 2011).

The peak is when this area becomes a stopover area due to weather and monsoons, so that several ports along the coastline between the Makassar Strait and the Sulawesi Sea include: Tontoli (Toli-Toli), Gorontalo, Bolaang and Mongondow, Belang, Manado, Kema, and Banggai (Moelsbergen, 1928: 8-9). Whereas in other areas there are small islands, Sangihe and Talaud, as natural and entrepot connections, for traders along the Luzon Strait for Chinese traders, and Sulu then to Maluku (Ulaen, 2016).

When the Portuguese conquered Malacca in 1511, commercial relations expanded. The Moluccan Emporium became the main destination for traders around the world in the early 16th century. Through this route, Lapian (2008: 56-57) shows the strategic location of the Sulawesi Sea Peninsula in the shipping and spice trade routes. Ternate, as an influential Islamic Sultanate in the Maluku islands, was able to control several archipelago areas, to Semananjung the Sulawesi Sea, through political expansion. The Sultan of Ternate was able to open and maintain trade routes and networks between the Maluku Strait-Sulawesi Sea-Laut Sulu to mainland Southeast Asia (Lapian, 2008: 56-57). These areas connected the Sulawesi Sea, Sulu Sea, and Maluku during the spice trade era in the 16th century. Of the European powers, the first to have more than bait of significance in northeast Sulawesi was Spain. Over the decades, there has been an occasional presence of Spaniards, who have arrived from Manila for food and to preach the gospel. Minahasa thus became a distant suburb of Spain, at the very end of the chain linking the Iberian nation through Mexico and the Philippines to what is now northeast Indonesia (Schouten).

The Spaniards were eventually overthrown by the VOC, who began in 1655 to build a fort in what would later become the city of Manado. The VOC, soon becoming the only European power in this part of the archipelago, was primarily interested in food supplies. It strengthened its presence after the conquest of Gowa and the withdrawal, in 1677, of the Spaniards from Siau, their last stronghold. The VOC was then made a contract with a political union in North Sulawesi, but with the greatest consequence was that representatives of the regional political community (walak) around Manado declared themselves to be followers of the Company (Molsbergen 1928). This 1679 treaty marked the beginning of colonial rule in this zone. Minahasa was administratively subjected to the Gouvernement of Ternate, which was under the Governor-General in Batavia, and he was responsible to the VOC headquarters in Amsterdam (schouten)

Apart from the Ternate Sultanate, the Makassar Sultanate also has influence and a role in the Sulawesi Sea Peninsula area. Makassar's role in trade and the spread of Islam was seen during the time of Sultan Alauddin who implemented an open economic policy. For Sultan Alauddin, no area can be controlled by a particular group or nation, but all areas are open and

free areas for anyone, because all of that is a gift from God (Mattulada, 2011). Based on this, Makassar then establishes relationships with anyone regardless of their nation, ethnicity and religion, which has an impact on the glory of Makassar in the Sulawesi Sea Peninsula area.

The Sulu Sultanate tried to exert influence in the north, especially in Mindanao, Manguindao, Sangihe-Talaud, and several areas in the north coast of the Sulawesi Sea. This process indicated that there were two camps trying to exert influence in the Sulawesi Sea Peninsula, namely the surrounding rulers and the role of European colonization. This position then made the Sulawesi Sea Peninsula and some of its land areas a "prima donna" area for traders heading to Malaku, especially in the 19th century AD (Azis, 2019).

Reid and Azra argue that the acceleration of Islamization, especially in the 16th century, was driven by competition between Islam and Christianity. Reid said "what has happened since the half of the 15th and 17th centuries is the strengthening of religious polarization and exclusivity, especially between Muslims and Christians. This sharper increase in polarization between adherents of the two religions is primarily due to the 'race between them' for new converts.

In the early modern period, the wider significance of this territory was associated with it close to Maluku where the Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch successively established monopoly regimes to control the lucrative spice trade. The Maluku kingdom of Ternate had previously claimed control, albeit very weakly, of various governments in northern Sulawesi. During the period of the Dutch East India Company from the 1670s to 1790s, North Sulawesi supplied various commodities to the Dutch-dominated market, coconut oil from Sangir, rice from Minahasa, and gold from Mongondow.

In the Western world, spices are seen as not just a commercial commodity but because of their expensive and scarcity as well as their properties, spices have become a legendary item that encourages various parties to dominate them. Initially, the supply of spices was supplied by India and Sri Lanka. It is thought that spices from the archipelago only entered the global market along with the development of the sea trade routes between India and China in the early century AD. Archipelago spices were more complete, quality, and inexpensive so that they dominated the trading commodity in trade by sea between Europe and China. It is very reasonable to call the trade route between Europe and China that passes through the ocean as the spice route (Marihandono, 2020).

Indeed, these products continued to be the main export commodities of each of these regions until the nineteenth century. Rice is grown mainly in the fertile areas of the Minahasa highlands, around Lake Tondano, while gold is mostly mined in the Mongondow highlands. despite these (occasional) exports, Sulawesi's northern economy is largely self-sufficient. Cultivating food crops (especially rice and maize) is the main economic preoccupation of the population. David Henley identified several important factors hindering trade growth in the region. The first is that it lacks economic specialization. Different communities and regions tend to produce the same types of crops and products which essentially inhibits market demand. The second is persistent violence or threats, especially during head hunting season. The third is the practical difficulty in transportation.

Sailing to Sangir-Talaud and down the north coast of Sulawesi is dangerous due to bad weather and rocky beaches. Economic independence, however, gradually eroded in the nineteenth century. While the most decisive factor was the intervention of the colonial state - especially in Minahasa - which required the delivery of rice and coffee, private traders (Chinese, Bugis and Arab) were also important participants in the initiation of regional commercialization. These commercialization trends, although occurring unevenly across the world, appear to have parallel population growth. In 1850, Sangir Raya already existed

The Mongondow region developed the most centralized government in the early modern period. This may be due to the relative concentration of the population in upland valleys

which results in the relative ease of population control. The top rulers (kings) even repeatedly claimed territorial rights over parts of neighboring Minahasa before the last consolidation as a political entity in the late eighteenth century.<sup>80</sup> The Sangir-Talaud region, in contrast, was relatively stable although it frequently competed against six small sultanates (Manganitu, Kendahe, Taruna, Siau, Tagulandang, and Tabukan). Of the three regions discussed, the area which came to be known as the Minahasa had the most fragmented political structure prior to formal colonial rule, it was more of a village congregation that often fought than a government in the mirror of neighboring Gorontalo or even Mongondow. One sign of its extreme fragmentation is that many languages (for example, Tontemboan, Tondano, Tonsea, and Tombulu) are spoken by people who live in relatively close proximity to one another (in contrast to the relatively more homogeneous linguistic landscapes of Sangir and Mongondow in which the inhabitants share a area of the same language, each language a Sangir and Mongondor (Lopez, 1986).

The claims of difference by the main classes, especially the kings, are primarily likely to be anchored in lucrative natural resource control and external trade. However, in order to maintain their dominance, they tried not only to monopolize tangible goods but also symbolic power. Thus, what Anthony Reid calls "the religion of Southeast Asia" or simply "Animism", functions together with other factors to demonstrate the efficacy, and thus legitimacy, of the main class. "Religious practitioners" (guardians) who themselves or themselves may belong to the ruling class (Lopez, 1986).

The last decades of the eighteenth century have been marked both as a period of decline in the Company and a revival of indigenous trade (including practices previously considered piracy) in the Indonesian archipelago. The growth of the archipelago economy over these decades reflected the movement of the first stage of the Dutch East India Company and the rise of indigenous trade while the second stage saw the entry of the Dutch colonial state as a major economic player.

These Arabs were likely "a distinct community with wealth and influence proportionate to their numbers. Their wealth was obtained from inter-island trade with ships which were the largest and longest of the other fleets operating in Indonesian waters except for those from the Netherlands. As a group, Arabs have traditionally competed with European burgers. A report on the mid-nineteenth century colonialism in North Sulawesi revealed that Arabs had "done a great deal of damage to European private trade" by offering lower prices for textiles and other goods (Lopez, 1986).

In the nineteenth century, Arabs were known to offer higher prices for highland competitive cocoa, coffee, and rice, placing Arabs in direct competition with European burgers. The opening of Manado and Kema as free ports in 1849 and other small ports in the so-called "self-governing territories" in 1859 as well as laws allowing Arab ships to participate in coastal trade in 1850 all encouraged Arabs to participate. settled in North Sulawesi. Even though their freedom of movement is severely restricted. As in other colonial port cities, the Arabs had to "live in special camps in the main city, and apply for a permit whenever they wish to leave their place of residence. "Manado in the 1860s already had a Chinese village (Chinese settlement) and a separate Islamic village (Muslim Quarter). In 1894, Manado had an Arab village separate from the original Islamic village. Arabs were allowed to set up shop in what appeared to be a safer Chinese neighborhood, but they were prohibited from residing there. Even though the Chinese were allowed by the government to trade in the Minahasa highlands for a certain period of time, the Arabs and also the Bugis did not. The prohibition to trade in the Minahasa highlands was rooted especially in the colonial era of the government's fear of Arab preaching (Lopez, 1986).

Looking at the facts, it can be seen that the entry of Islam in Minahasa was carried out in three ways: through trade, politics and socio-cultural channels. Trade routes were carried out

by Middle Eastern traders, political channels were carried out by Dutch colonial political prisoners who were exiled to Minahasa, and socio-cultural routes were carried out by migrants from around the Minahasa (Ternate, Tidore Makassar, Bugis, Bolaang Mongondow, Gorontalo, and Sangir Talaud). The channel of Islamization through marriage by marrying indigenous women is also a part that is closely interwoven with Islamization. Marriage ties form kinship ties and are rooted in society (Rahman, 2020).

Geographically, Islamic settlements in Minahasa can be classified into two classifications, namely: coastal settlements and rural areas. The coastal settlements included those who came from around the Minahasa (Ternate, Tidore, Bugis, Makassar, Gorontalo), and Arabs who settled in Minahasa. Islamic settlements in rural Minahasa areas were settlements of several Dutch political prisoners who were brought from Java and Sumatra, especially located in Tondano, Pineleng, and Tomohon (Palar, 2009).

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