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Sulawesi: Aspirations of Local Muslims

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ABSTRACT

In parts of Sulawesi, where Muslims made up the predominant majority, Islam has a long history. However, in a region that is rich with local customs, Islam is deeply entangled with local practices. There are many masyarakat adat (traditional community) that comprised of Muslims but engaged in local customs, which many Muslims outside the community labelled as heresy. Meanwhile, there exist several Islamist organizations that want to impose a puritan brand of lslam on the local communities in Sulawesi. The call for the implementation of Sharia in Sulawesi by these Islamists has been very vocal, particularly after the fall of Soeharto.

In the reformasi era, there was a growth of political parties with Islam as its ideology, and radical and fundamentalist Islamist movements. In this euphoria of democratic transition, many Islamist organizations including the KPPSI (Komite Persiapan Penegakan Syariat Islam) and Wahdah Islamiyah emerged in South Sulawesi, each with their aspirations of an Islamic state and the implementation of Sharia laws. With an almost non-existent control and regulation over mass publications and the activities of some of these groups, virtually any materials on Islam were allowed to proliferate in Indonesia. As a result, there were a lot of debates on Islam to the extent that that it was not uncommon to find Islamist groups, some with political backing, attacking another and competing to exert their influence on the local Muslims. Hence, the paper aims to highlight the differences in the perception of Islam and Sharia among the various Islamist circles and the political elites and contrast this with that of the general public and the aspirations of the latter.

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Sulawesi: Aspirations of Local Muslims

Development of Islam in Sulawesi

There are four phases of Islamization in Sulawesi. The first phase is the coming of Islam in the sixteenth century. Three individuals played a prominent role in the spread of Islam. They are Abdul Makmur Khatib Tunggal (also known as Dato Ribandang), Sulaiman Khatib (also known as Dato Patimang) and Abdul Jawab khatib Bungsu (also known as Dato riTiro).[1] The kingdoms of Luwu and Bulukumba were the two main kingdoms where the Islamization process began. Islam was spread through a top-down approach and quickly became the religion of the two kingdoms following the conversion of its rulers. However, different approaches were used to spread Islam in the two kingdoms, considering the different social and cultural context. Dato Patimang, in spreading Islam to Luwu, placed an emphasis on *tauhid* (Islamic monotheism), whereas Dato riTiro, in spreading Islam to Bulukumba, placed a greater emphasis on *tasawuf* (mysticism). This was done because local beliefs had developed a stronghold in the latter community.[2] Two important characteristics from this phase was the top-down approach of Islamization and its emphasis on cultural Islam.

The second phase is marked by the Dutch colonialization of Indonesia. Dutch missionaries brought Christianity into Indonesia. Christianity spread quickly in Tanah Toraja, a district that did not fall under any of the Islamic kingdoms. That phase lasted until 1945, when the Dutch occupation ended.

The third phase is characterized by the DI/TII (Darul Islam/ Tentera Islam Indonesia) struggle that set up an Islamic state in Indonesia. The DI/TII was a struggle at the national level and South Sulawesi was one of the strongholds of DI under the leadership of Kahar Muzakkar. The DI/TII armed struggle was marked by attempts to enforce textual Islam. Anyone seen to be opposing the struggle was labelled as an enemy.

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[1] Interview with Aswar Hassan, a former secretary-general of KPPSI and current member of KPPSI Council of Experts, Makassar, 13 November 2006; Suriadi Mappangara and Irwan Abbas, *Sejarah Islam di Sulawesi Selatan* (p. 66–69), Makassar: Lamacca Press, 2003; Subair Umam, "*Formalisasi Syariat Islam Perjuangan Ahistoris: Belajar Dari Bulukumba dan Luwu*", *Nawala The Wahid Institute*, No. 1/ TH. 1/ November 2005 – February 2006.

[2] Interview with Subair Umam, Coordinator of Tolerant and Transformative Islam Campaign, LAPAR, Makassar, 14 November 2006.

The fourth phase started with the New Order era where Islam was seen as incompatible to Pancasila and was repressed by the state. It was given no space to develop until the later years of the regime and that, too, was seen by some as the manipulation of Islam by the state for political purposes. The fifth and the final phase is the Reformasi era, where there was a growth of radical and fundamentalist Islamist movements. It was in this phase that KPPSI (Komite Persiapan Penegakan Syariat Islam) emerged in South Sulawesi, among many others in Indonesia, each with its own aspirations of an Islamic state and the implementation of *sharia* laws.

Mapping out the Social Actors

The social forces in Sulawesi that shaped the perception of Islam can be roughly divided into four categories: the mainstream, comprising Nadhlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah and Indonesia's Clerics Council (MUI); the hardliners, comprising KPPSI, Wahdah Islamiyah and the Aliansi Muslim Bulukumba (AMB); civil societies that advocate pluralism and opposed to the implementation of *sharia*-based *perda* such as Forlog (Forum Antar-Agama), LKPMP (Lembaga Kajian Pengembangan Masyarakat dan Pesantren) and LAPAR (Lembaga Advokasi Pendidikan Anak Rakyat); and the political elite.

NU, Muhammadiyah and MUI take a moderate stance towards the Islamization process in Sulawesi. NU and Muhammadiyah are the oldest and biggest Islamic organizations in Indonesia whereas MUI has always been associated with the government. While they support the presence of *sharia* Islam in everyday life, they believe that its implementation should be done gradually and in line with the local context. The head of Muhammadiyah South Sulawesi, Dr. Arifuddin Ahmad, believed that the "frame for the formalization of *sharia* Islam should be tailored to today's context. It cannot be done within a classical frame".[3] Culture and religion should be jointly developed and the former does not necessarily have to clash with the latter. In addition, he did not deny that the implementation of *sharia* Islam would be most effective if done through the political route since, ultimately, power lies in the hands of the ruling elite. However, Muhammadiyah focuses on education, *dakwah*, social activities and the economy. Within Muhammadiyah itself, there are some who are also members of KPPSI. Thus, among its members, there are some who share the same aspiration

[3] Interview with Dr. Ariffudin Ahmad, Head of Muhammadiyah South Sulawesi, Makassarm, 6 November 2006.

as KPPSI: working towards the achievement of special autonomy for South Sulawesi and modelling the region after Aceh. As for MUI, it claims that it is just an adviser to the implementation of *sharia*. In addition, MUI acts as an umbrella organization and embraces the various Islamic movements.[4] MUI supports the Islamization process but, at the same time, does not rule out democracy as incompatible with Islam. Indonesia is a country characterized by the slogan "unity in diversity" and thus democracy is the best option for such a diverse country. Similarly for NU, it supports the Islamization process and the holistic implementation of *sharia* Islam but believes it has to be done gradually.[5]

Hardliners such as KPPSI, Wahdah Islamiyah and AMB promote a more formal and textual Islam. They do not tolerate the efforts of some circles to hold inter-faith dialogues or dialogues on pluralism. KPPSI is an umbrella organization that emerged as a result of discussions on the implementation of *sharia* laws that took place at the Forum Ukhuwah Islamiyah in 2000. The law that granted special autonomy to Aceh inspired its members. Abdul Aziz Kahar Muzakkar, the son of the former DI commander in South Sulawesi, Kahar Muzakkar, leads KPPSI. The former is also in the DPD (Dewan Perwakilan Daerah or Regional Representative Council) for South Sulawesi. Due to the leadership, many saw KPPSI as a continuation of DI's struggle, which was undertaken by Kahar Muzakkar. However, unlike DI, KPPSI conducts its struggle through constitutional means. KPPSI's long-term objective is the attainment of special autonomy for South Sulawesi and the holistic implementation of *sharia* in the region. The organization believes that the *sharia*-based *perda*—already implemented in some districts—is a stepping stone to the attainment of its goal. KPPSI is active in areas with a Muslim majority although recently its popularity is said to be waning. Many locals in Sulawesi saw it as a political party in the guise of a mass organization.[6] Wahdah Islamiyah was formed in 2002 and has a close relationship with KPPSI. It is a social organization that is active in *dakwah* and the promotion of a greater understanding of Islam among the local community. The leaders of the organization claimed that they do not possess a fundamentalist or extremist understanding of Islam.[7] The Wahdah Islamiyah strategy is one that is labelled as "purification of transformation" (*purifikasi*

[4] Interview with Rahim Yunus, Secretary of MUI, Makassar, 5 November 2006.
[5] Interview with KH Mahdy Hakma, member of NU, Bulukumba, 6 November 2006.
[6] Focus Group Discussion, Bulukumba, 9 November 2006; and Focus Group Discussion, Maros, 12 November 2006.
[7] Interview with Qosim Saguni, secretary-general for Wahdah Islamiyah, 25 March 2005.

transformatif)[8], meaning to return the Muslims' knowledge and understanding to the fundamentals of Islam. In the group's view, Muslims need to have a strong grasp of the fundamentals of Islam before Islamic values can be inculcated in them. As for AMB, it is rather similar to the Islamic Defender Front (FPI). It conducts raids on places of vices and stalls selling alcoholic drinks. AMB was previously known as Jundullah but later changed its name because the community was wary of Jundullah, which was then seen as rather militant. The leader of the group claims that he is willing to gather all groups that advocate the implementation of *sharia* Islam to assist the government that is not well-versed in Islam, towards this end.[9]

Civil societies, particularly those that advocate pluralism and religious tolerance, oppose the formalization of *sharia* and the implementation of *sharia*-based *perda.* Civil societies such as LKPMP, Forlog and LAPAR reject the formalization of *sharia* and instead advocate inter-faith dialogue and pluralism. They are of the view that the formalization of *sharia* Islam promote religious intolerance and will gradually wipe out local culture as well as lead to a rigid Islam rather than the more palatable transformative Islam. They are also very critical of the sharia-based *perda* that have already been implemented, seeing them as nothing more than mere symbols that are being exploited by the regional government and certain Islamist groups.

The political elite includes members of political parties, governors and head of districts who have an interest in the Islamization process in Sulawesi. They comprise those with the sincere intentions of wanting to see the implementation and the formalization of sharia and those who use Islam merely for their own political agenda. Although they are not authorities on Islam, they play a significant role in determining the future of *sharia*-based *perda* in the region.

Perception of Islam and Other Related Issues

In Islam, there is no single assigned authority to speak and pass binding decisions on related issues. As a result, most Muslim societies are marked by deep disagreement over just who is qualified to speak as a religious authority and how seriously ordinary Muslims should take

[8] Interview with Ustaz Ikhwan Abdul Jalil, head of Wahdah Islamiyah, 6 November 2006.
[9] Interview with Ridhwan Abang, leader of AMB, Bulukumba, 7 November 2006.

the pronouncements of individual scholars. Similarly, in Sulawesi, there are many conflicting views and disagreements on *sharia* Islam.

The meaning of sharia Islam

There is a general consensus on the meaning of *sharia* Islam. *Sharia* Islam is based on Ahlul Sunnah Wal Jamaah with the Quran and the Sunnah as the basis of it. Islamic jurisprudence, faith and practices are all components of *sharia*. However, when probed into the details of *sharia* and the punishment for the violation of *sharia* laws, opinions vary. While many of the Islamic mass organizations advocate the formalization of *sharia* in the form of *perda*, the general public and civil societies in Sulawesi seem to be of the view that *sharia* Islam is already a part of their daily lives. They stress that more emphasis should be placed on the promotion of values that are in line with *sharia* Islam than just the mere formalization of it. In this regard, they adopt a more favourable attitude towards cultural Islam. While the *perda* that have been implemented in several districts in South Sulawesi have been labelled as *sharia*-based *perda*, many see the *perda* as "*amar maaruf nahi mungkar*" [promote good, forbid evil] rather than as *sharia* laws per se. The current *sharia*-based *perda* that have been implemented are seen as paving the way for the eventual holistic implementation of *sharia* in the region.

Hudud laws

On the topic of *hudud* laws, there are obvious differences in the opinions of those from the three categories mentioned above: the mainstream, the hardliners and the civil societies. Those from the mainstream category agree that although *hudud* laws are mentioned in the Quran, one has to be careful in carrying out such harsh punishment. One has to know the details and justifications for *hudud* laws before implementing it. In addition, Islam is a forgiving religion. If punishment such as the severing of a hand for stealing brings more hardship to the person and the community, an alternative punishment can be considered. Those from the civil societies, particularly those who promote pluralism and religious tolerance, reject *hudud* laws on the belief that it clashes with human rights. Although it may create fear within the community, it may not be an effective deterrence. They also argue that this clashes with the existing criminal laws in Indonesia. However, in contrast, hardliners support *hudud* laws and believe in the textual implementation of it. They believe that it

addresses the high rate of crime in Sulawesi and other moral issues within the local community. Representatives from the local community share the same opinion with those from the first two categories mentioned. They believe that the existing criminal laws in Indonesia are sufficient. The issue that needs to be addressed is rather the problem of uniform and consistent implementation of the existing laws.

Jihad

On the issue of *jihad*, all interviewees share the opinion that *jihad* is not the indiscriminate suicide bombings that have been conducted by those labelled as terrorists. Rather, *jihad* is to engage in armed struggle in conflict zones where Muslims are under attack, such as in Israel and Palestine. The purpose of *jihad* is to improve a situation, not to worsen it. However, this writer is of the opinion that some of the answers given on *jihad* are rather diplomatic and not a reflection of the true opinion of the interviewees.

Islamic state

Most of the Muslim interviewees, except for a handful, expressed that they would like to see the implementation of *sharia* Islam but it does not necessarily mean the creation of an Islamic state. Islamic values should be inculcated in everyday life or even formalized in the form of regional regulations (*peraturan daerah*) but it does not necessarily need to lead to the creation of an Islamic state. Moreover, they added that to make the Quran the basis of the country's constitution requires a major revamping of the existing constitution, something that is unlikely to happen. These are also the same people who believe that Pancasila does not clash with the implementation of *sharia*. Pancasila guarantees the freedom to religion. Meanwhile, the handful who support the creation of an Islamic state and making the Quran the basis of the country's constitution are those who subscribe to textual Islam.

Those who outright rejected *sharia* Islam and the creation of an Islamic country comprise mostly of non-Muslims and members of civil societies that advocate pluralism. For this group, Pancasila is the ideology that unites Indonesians and the implementation of *sharia* Islam threatens this ideology. *Sharia* Islam will polarize the Indonesian nation, leading to fragmentation. In addition, even though Pancasila guarantees religious freedom, it does not champion one religion over another. Being non-Muslims, they fear that there will be discrimination against them and unequal rights granted to them if *sharia* Islam is

implemented both at the district or national level. To this group of people, the current laws are sufficient to deal with the various problems in Indonesia. However, a weak government and incompetent security forces prevent the effective enforcement of the laws. They foresee similar problems with *sharia* laws. There will not be any improvement in the country's condition if the problem of implementing it remains flawed.

Islamization and Arabization

One issue that has appeared during the interviews is how there seems to be attempts at the elite level to associate Arabization with Islamization. Banners and signs in Arabic are prevalent in areas where *sharia*-based *perda* have been implemented. However, due to direct translation from Bahasa Indonesia, some words are translated or spelled wrongly. Participants of a focus group discussion in Maros and Bulukumba[10] claimed that it was nothing more than exploitation of symbols to reflect increased Islamization within the community when the reality is far from it. Moreover, the participants added that, in the Middle East, even names of night clubs are in Arabic.

Islam and democracy

None of the interviewees spoke negatively of democracy. They felt that Islam and democracy is compatible. In fact, democracy provides the space for the Islamization process to take place. One interviewee claimed that democracy is the voice of the majority and thus Islam is the voice of the majority.[11] However, on the contrary, a Christian interviewee remarked that democracy is about majority in politics and not majority in religion.[12]

Sharia Islam and pluralism

There are distinct differences in opinions regarding the implementation of *sharia* Islam and its relationship with pluralism. While religious figures, members of Islamic mass organizations and the political elite claim that the formalization of *sharia* Islam does not have negative implications for pluralism in the region, this view differs from that of the general public. According to the former, the implementation of *sharia*-based regulations does not

[10]Maros and Bulukumba are two districts in South Sulawesi that have implemented *sharia*-based *perda*.
[11] Interview with Ustaz Ikhwan Abdul Jalil, head of Wahdah Islamiyah, 6 November 2006.
[12] Interview with Priest Sulaiman Manguling, lecturer at STKN Rantepao, Tanah Toraja, 11 November 2006.

affect non-Muslims as they are not subjected to it. Rather, its implementation may also have positive effects for non-Muslims. As such, the ongoing Islamization process does not threaten pluralism in the country. However, representatives of the local community differ on this. According to them, the formalization of Sharia Islam has already breed intolerance and is gradually wiping out local culture. Non-Muslims have been told to put on headscarf at certain events, even though they are not subjected to the regulation governing Muslim headscarves and customary community (*masyarakat adat*) has been attacked by certain Islamist circles for their seemingly less-than-Islamic religious practices.

The U.S.-led War on Terrorism

A remark that came up several times during the discussion on the War on Terrorism with the various interviewees is that the U.S. itself is the terrorist. The U.S. has a biased foreign policy as it supported the Israel against Palestine. Some saw the War on Terrorism as part of the U.S. political game and Osama bin Laden as a creation of the U.S. Anti-U.S. sentiments were prevalent during discussions on the War on Terrorism.

Case Study: Bulukumba

Bulukumba makes an important case study in understanding the Islamization process that is going on in South Sulawesi. A pioneer district in the implementation of *sharia*-based regulations, it embodies the issues and problems that has plagued the Islamization process in Sulawesi. So it is not surprising that many from other districts in Sulawesi have gone to Bulukumba to study the implementation of *sharia* Islam there. Thus, the model is borrowed from Bulukumba.

The Islamization process and the implementation of *sharia*-based regulations in Bulukumba were initiated by its previous *bupati* (head of district), Patabai Pabokori. Under his leadership, four *sharia*-based regional regulations were implemented.

- Perda No. 3/2002: Banning the use and distribution of alcoholic drinks
  In villages that are labelled as “Muslim Villages”, alcoholic drinks are prohibited from being sold. Meanwhile, in other villages, alcoholic drinks are prohibited from being sold within one kilometre from a mosque or a market. There are currently 12 Muslim Villages in Bulukumba.
- Perda No. 6/2003: Literacy in the Quran for Muslims

Literacy in the Quran is a requirement for the promotion of civil servants and for those who want to get married.

- Perda No. 5/2003: Use of headscarf for Muslim women
  Women in the civil service are expected to put on the headscarf. Female visitors to the *bupati's* office and the houses of the village headman are also expected to put on the headscarf.
- Perda No. 2/2002: Compulsory payment of *zakat, infak* and *sadakah*.
  A component of this is the zakat *profesi*, where Muslims are expected to contribute 2.5 per cent of their monthly salary to the relevant bodies.

Prior to the implementation of these regulations, Patabai had initiated a *dakwah* programme called the "Crash Programme Keagamaan" (Religion Crash Programme). The programme was designed to create greater awareness among the local community in Bulukumba. With support from several religious figures and Islamic mass organizations, the programme was officially launched in 1998. The programme comprised six components: development and expansion of Mosque Youths; development and expansion of *Taman Kanak-kanak Al Qu'ran dan Taman Pendidikan Al Qu'ran*; development and expansion of Majelis Taklim (Qu'ran reading ceremony); development and expansion of mosque libraries; development and expansion of memorization of the Quran programmes; and the development of arts compatible with Islam.[13]

Patabai is held in high regard for his efforts in Islamizing the local community in Bulukumba. He was said to have led by example. He had always made efforts to attend religious events, carrying headscarves in his vehicle to give to women who are seen without them and leading mass prayers at religious events. Thus, the Islamization efforts in Bulukumba was closely associated with one figure—Patabai Pabokori. He served as the *bupati* of Bulukumba for two terms as he had broad support from the Muslim community in Bulukumba. However, since no one can serve as *bupati* for more than two terms, Andi Sukri Sappewali replaced him in the 2005 regional election. There seems to be a general consensus that there has been a gradual decline in the Islamization process and the enforcement of those *perda* already implemented in Bulukumba since the new *bupati* took over. Coming from a military background, he is said to have a different focus from Patabai and is more concerned with the development of infrastructure. He is hardly seen at religious events. Since the

[13] "Mengapa Kongres di Bulukumba?" *Tribun Timur*, 26 March 2005.

Islamization process in Sulawesi is very much a top-down approach, its rise and fall is also associated with the rise and fall, and the agenda of the government of the day.

Interviews with the religious figures and ruling elite in Bulukumba paint a rosy picture of *sharia* Islam in the district. The interviewees claim that there is broad acceptance of *sharia* Islam in Bulukumba among the local community—figures cited ranged from 90 to 99 per cent. The reason given is that the majority of the locals in Bulukumba are Muslims and thus do not reject the implementation of the *sharia*-based regional regulations. Rather, the formulation of *sharia*-based *perda* is a response to the demands from the ground as a result of increased religiosity in the local community. There was consultation and socialization of the *perda* with the local community before it was implemented. The implementation of these *perda* has brought about positive effects to the local community. There has been a decline in crime and street fights. Street fights were often associated with drunkards and the cause—alcoholic drinks. With the ban on the sale and provision of alcoholic drinks, the incidence of street fights at night has dropped. In addition, more women are putting on the headscarf and the number of Quran illiteracy has also dropped. This group of people has also provided assurance that the formalization of *sharia* Islam in the form of *perda* does not threaten pluralism and religious tolerance. Non-Muslims are not subjected to the regulations. Moreover, they claim that these *sharia*-based regulations are designed to protect the harmony of the community and not to discriminate against anyone.

However, discussions and interviews with representatives of the local community and members of civil societies reveal a different reality from the one painted by the group mentioned above. Claims that the *sharia*-based regulations have not brought about significant changes to the local community in Bulukumba are prevalent. There is much vocal criticism on the Islamization process, particularly as to how it seems superficial and nothing more than mere symbols. Participants of the focus group remark that instead of regulating symbols such as the wearing of headscarves or the selling of alcoholic drinks, the spiritual side and the values associated with Islam should be promoted instead. On several occasions, suggestions were made that it would be better to have regional regulation on such issues as corruption. Some also argue that the “Crash Programme” implemented by Patabai is sufficient and there is no need to formalize *sharia* Islam in the form of *perda*. Due to the flawed implementation process, the existence of those *perda* has not brought about significant changes to the

community. Moreover, some express concern that the practice of *sharia* Islam will be only limited to the four areas touched upon by the *perda.*

There are criticisms on the *perda* and the flawed implementation of them. Thus, contrary to remarks made by religious figures and the political elite, there is opposition to the implementation of the *sharia*-based *perda.* Some participants of the focus group also question the percentage of acceptance cited by some of these individuals. However, this opposition has never been vocally expressed to the relevant bodies or authorities. There was a general consensus during the discussion that the mentality of the locals in South Sulawesi is very accepting of any decisions or rules passed by the authorities. There is no culture of questioning the actions of higher authorities. Nevertheless, there have been protests against the *perda* on *zakat*. The locals complain that it is hard to contribute 2.5 per cent of their income every month since they earn very little. Technically, *zakat* from their income is only made when there is extra money after putting aside expenses for necessities. When there is no balance left after this, there is no need to contribute to *zakat*. Meanwhile, there is no fixed amount for *infaq* and *sadakah* as these contributions depend on how much one is willing to offer. These procedures have not been followed due to the lack of consultation with the *ulamas* in formulating the *perda.* For all the four *perda* that have been implemented, no detail on it has been provided to the local community. There is also a lack of transparency in the formulation of these regulations.

There is no criteria provided in the choice and selection of Muslim Villages (Desa Muslim). According to some interviewees, it is a high-level decision that does not involve the community. Ideally, a Muslim Village should be one where there are *pesantren* in it, is economically stable and has a relatively good infrastructure. However, some Muslim Villages have the highest poverty rate. Some claim that the selection is based merely on the prevalence of symbols such as banners in Arabic language and other Islamic symbols. With no criteria released on the selection, it has given rise to many questions among the locals and to the sentiment that a Muslim Village is more Islamic than one that has not been given the label. In addition, there has been a lack of coordination between those at the top and those responsible for implementing it on the ground. For instance, a Muslim Village was named as a “Muslim Exemplary Village” (Desa Percontohan Muslim) when the idea was first formulated. However, its name became Muslim Village when it was implemented by those on the ground.

There is also no uniformity and consistency in the implementation of the four *perda.* With regard to the *perda* on Muslim headscarf, while the ruling elite claims that non-Muslims are not subject to it, there have been accounts where non-Muslims are expected to put it on while attending certain social functions, leading to a diminished respect for other religion. According to a participant of the focus discussion group, he had witnessed an incident where outsiders entering a Muslim village were told to put on the headscarf. However, within the village itself, he saw females who were not wearing the headscarf. Thus, there is no consistency in the implementation of the *perda.*

Some feel that the sincerity of the regional government in promoting a more Islamic community is questionable. For instance, while there is a regional regulation banning the use of alcoholic drinks, they are still allowed to be sold in Bira, a tourist area in Bulukumba. Interviews with the ruling elite reveal that Bira is an important source of income for the regional government. Banning alcoholic drinks in Bira may have negative implications for the tourist industry. In addition, there is no punishment for the violation of these *sharia*-based regional regulations. Thus, some see the implementation of the *perda* as half-hearted efforts and symbols of Islam that can conveniently be exploited by the ruling elite for its own political agenda.

One of the main themes that recur during the discussion on the *perda* is the lack of consultation and socialization of the *perda* with the public, in contrast to claims made by religious figures and the ruling elite. The *perda* was only socialized to the community after their implementation. Socialization is also not carried out consistently but only at certain social events. There is no opposition or rejection of the *perda* because the locals are generally unaware of them. And ignorance leads to acceptance. When the rigid nature of Islam that certain Islamic mass organizations are advocating were explained to them, they outright rejected it.

In sum, the case of Bulukumba reveals that the Islamization process is a top-down effort with no consultation with the community and its implementation lacks consistency. As a result, there is a gap between the aspirations of the political elite and those of the community. The political elite claims that it is acting in response to the demands of the community when, in effect, that demand may have come from a small group of vocal Islamic mass organizations. This situation is also not unique to Bulukumba.

Dynamics Outside Muslim-dominated Areas in Sulawesi

The Islamization process in areas where Muslims do not made up the dominant majority are not as prominent as areas with a dominant Muslim majority. In Luwu, the historical stronghold of the DI struggle, the *bupati* has rejected any attempt to implement *sharia*-based regulations. The *bupati* is aware that the composition of Muslims and non-Muslims in Luwu is quite balanced and to implement any *sharia*-based regulations will create tension within the community. Similarly, there is no distinct Islamization attempt going on in other areas outside South Sulawesi because of the almost equal composition of Muslims and non-Muslims.

In Tanah Toraja, a Christian-dominated area where Christians and Muslims live in harmony, Muslims take it upon themselves to guard against the influence of external Islamist groups. There was a particular incident where a group of Muslims wanted to pray in a mosque. (They were described as having beards, wore pants that were slightly above the ankle and possibly from Jamaah Tabligh, based on the description.) However, the local Muslims turned them away. Inter-religious marriage is prevalent in Tanah Toraja. As a result, there is a high level of respect and tolerance for other religions. Moreover, Islam in Tanah Toraja is deeply entangled with local culture. Formalization of *sharia* Islam will not be well-accepted. However, the locals in Tanah Toraja do not reject the formalization of *sharia* Islam in other districts so long as it does not affect them.

The way forward

There are mixed reactions to the future of *sharia* Islam in Sulawesi, particularly in South Sulawesi where the Islamization process has been going on strongly. The religious figures and political elite claim that there will be more *sharia*-based *perda* in the future. However, for now, efforts have to be concentrated on socializing the *perda* that have already been implemented. Meanwhile, the general public has expressed scepticism towards the future of *sharia* Islam in Sulawesi. They believe that in general the local community is now more aware of the flawed implementation of *sharia*-based *perda* and will eventually reject further attempts to pass more of such regulations. Moreover, even with the existing *sharia*-based regulations, there have not been any significant changes to the society as there is no proper implementation or working programme for these regulations. Most are in favour of cultural Islam as opposed to a formal and rigid Islam. Thus, the end result will depend on how vocal

the opposition from below will be for the government to reconsider its decision on passing more *sharia*-based *perda*.

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