



Exploring The Gradual Islamization of Tana Toraja in South Sulawesi: History, Development, and Challenges

The profound journey of Islam's expansion in South Sulawesi during the 15th century resulted in a gradual uptake of Islam within the Toraja region. This delayed acceptance, compared to other areas in South Sulawesi, is frequently attributed to the use of force during Islam's expansion. This perception highlights the challenge of promoting tolerance between the Muslim minority and Christian majority in the region. To understand the complexities of this phenomenon, this study seeks to explore factors beyond violence that contributed to the slow pace of Islamization. Employing a qualitative approach based in anthropology, the research delves into historical and cultural contexts. It finds that forceful Islamization efforts by figures like the Bone Kingdom, Kahar Muzakkar, and Andi Sose, actually hampered the spread of Islam due to the negative cultural impacts they created. Instead, it was the migration of Muslims to Toraja for trade that played a key role in introducing Islam to the region. Inter-marriages further altered the dynamics, shifting Islamization from a conversion-focused approach to one based on family connections. This had consequences for how Islamic communities developed, depending on the choices of second-generation Muslims. The slow pace of Islamization also influenced various aspects of social and religious life, leading the Toraja people to develop nuanced responses. They managed change by emphasizing positive aspects of Islam while minimizing negative ones, aiming to maintain peace within their religiously diverse society. Thus, the Toraja actively engaged in managing the evolving religious landscape, adapting their practices to maintain communal harmony.

Keywords: Islam, Toraja, Spread of Religion

Perjalanan penyebaran Islam di Sulawesi Selatan pada abad ke-15 yang signifikan menyisakan wilayah Toraja yang penerimaan terhadap Islam berjalan lambat. Keterlambatan penyebaran Islam di Tana Toraja yang lambat dibandingkan kawasan lain di Sulawesi Selatan sering kali diidentifikasi sebagai dampak kekerasan yang digunakan. Identifikasi ini menyisakan problem yang berkaitan dengan interaksi antara muslim yang minoritas dengan Kristen yang mayoritas yang berjalan toleran. Penelitian ini hadir untuk mengidentifikasi faktor lain yang menjadikan proses islamisasi berjalan secara lambat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan antropologi sebagai pendekatannya. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa kegagalan islamisasi dalam bentuk ekspansif dengan membawa dampak budaya negatif yang dilakukan kerajaan Bone, Kahar Muzakkar, dan Andi Sose mendapatkan hasil melalui migrasi umat muslim ke Toraja dalam motif perdagangan. Proses migrasi yang berlangsung dilanjutkan dengan pernikahan yang mengubah pola islamisasi yang cenderung bersifat konversi. Perubahan pola berdampak pada perkembangan komunitas Islam didasarkan pada kekerabatan dan pertumbuhan generasi kedua yang berjalan lambat. Proses islamisasi yang lambat berkonsekuensi pada perubahan berbagai dimensi sosial keagamaan dengan kesadaran untuk mengungkapkan perubahan positif dan menyembunyikan perubahan yang negatif. Kecenderungan ini dilakukan sebagai cara masyarakat Toraja menjaga perdamaian di antara keragaman agama.

Kata Kunci: Islam, Toraja, Penyebaran Agama

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Dates:

Received 28 Mar 2023

Revised 9 Jul 2023

Accepted 29 Jul 2023

Published 12 Aug 2023

How to cite this article:

Michael, Anthonius.

Siswanto Masruri, and

Fatimah Husein.

"Exploring The Gradual Islamization of Tana Toraja in South Sulawesi: History, Development, and Challenges".

ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu

Ushuluddin 24 (2),

<https://doi.org/10.14421>

[/esensia.v24i2.4450](https://doi.org/10.14421/esensia.v24i2.4450)

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Introduction

The Islamization in South Sulawesi began with the conversion of kings,¹ local leaders,² and preachers³. This led to the spread of Islam beyond the highlands, although the Toraja region lagged behind. Historians have scrutinized various factors hindering this process, including violence and negative cultural impacts associated with attempts to expand power.⁴ However, the lingering perception of conflict in the Islamization narrative fails to capture the present-day reality of tolerance among the Toraja people. Their respect for diverse beliefs suggests a more gradual conversion process, influenced by changing demographics rather than solely by forceful actions.

Researchers have moved away from characterizing the Islamization of Toraja solely as slow, instead focusing on three key trends that illuminate the region's unique socio-religious landscape. Firstly, scholars such as Salmiati et al.⁵ and Muh Ruslan Abdullah⁶ highlighted the community's tolerance, evident in their respect for minority religious practices. Mansyur Radjab et al. and Buhari Pamilangan and Anita Marwing further illustrated this tolerance through interfaith marriages, showcasing acceptance of differences.⁷ The tolerant socio-religious reality

in Toraja society was claimed by Alvary Exan Rerung as an integral part of the community manifested in traditions, such as *raputallang*.⁸ Secondly, the Toraja people embrace cultural adaptation, shaping distinctive traditions reflected in their worship structures.⁹ Thirdly, the process of Islamization, as uncovered by Risfaisal and Eliza Meiyani, demonstrates the Muhammadiyah's efforts in Tana Toraja, employing diverse approaches that significantly contribute to Islam's growth.¹⁰

This study seeks to uncover the reasons behind the delayed Islamization process in Tana Toraja, an aspect overlooked by previous researchers. By identifying two primary issues, the hindrances to the Islamization pattern and its various dynamics become clearer. Firstly, the research examines how demographic shifts have shaped the development of the Muslim community in Toraja, tracing the historical evolution of Islamization through population changes. Secondly, it explores the challenges posed by the Toraja people's strong tradition of religious tolerance and how this influenced the pace of Islamization. Through this analysis, the study aims to uncover previously neglected factors that are essential for understanding

¹ Christian Pelras, "Religion, Tradition, and the Dynamics of Islamization in South Sulawesi," *Archipel* 29, 1983.

² Ahmad M. Sewang, *Islamisasi Kerajaan Gowa (Abad XVI Sampai Abad XVII)* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2005).

³ Husnul Fahimah Ilyas, *Lontaraq Suqkuna Wajo: Telaah Ulang Awal Islamisasi Di Wajo* (Tangerang: LSIP, 2011).

⁴ Terance W. Bigalke, *Tana Toraja: A Social History of an Indonesian People* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2005).

⁵ Salmiati et al., "Eksistensi Pendidikan Islam Di Lingkungan Minoritas Muslim: Studi Kasus Di Lembang Sereale, Toraja Utara," *Al-Musannif* 5, no. 2 (2023): 109–24, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.56324/al-musannif.v5i2.110>.

⁶ Muh Ruslan Abdullah and Muh. Rasbi, "The Forming Factors of Religious Moderation and Islamic Happiness of The Muslim Minority in Tana Toraja," *Al-Qalam* 29, no. 2 (November 28, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.31969/alq.v29i2.1331>.

⁷ Mansyur Radjab et al., "Religious Tolerance Practices: A Case Study of Family With Different Religions in Toraja Ethnicity South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia," 2020, <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=3632700>.

⁸ Alvary Exan Rerung, "Nilai Hospitalitas Budaya Raputallang Sebagai Upaya Gereja Dalam Moderasi Beragama Pada Relasi Islam-Kristen Di Toraja," *Skenoo: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen* 2, no. 2 (December 28, 2022): 102–12, <https://doi.org/10.55649/skenoo.v2i2.34>.

⁹ Anthonius Michael, Fatimah Husein, and Siswanto Masruri, "Acculturation of Mosque and Church in Indonesia: Case Studies from Toraja," *Afkaruna: Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies* 19, no. 1 (July 1, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.18196/afkaruna.v19i1.16850>.

¹⁰ Risfaisal Risfaisal and Eliza Meiyani, "History And Da'wah of Muhammadiyah in The Muslim Minority Area of Tana Toraja Regency," *International Journal Ihya' Ulum Al-Din* 24, no. 2 (December 28, 2022): 105–13, <https://doi.org/10.21580/ihya.24.2.11126>.





delayed Islamization and fostering a more tolerant society.

This research challenges the notion that the delay in Islamization in Toraja, amidst the rapid spread of Islam in neighboring regions, is solely attributed to the typical conversion mechanisms employed. Graaf highlighted the discrepancy between the typical patterns of Islamization, such as economic incentives through trade, preaching by religious leaders, and warfare, which often lead to rapid conversions in Southeast Asia,¹¹ and the slower pace observed in Toraja. Instead, it suggests that the gradual process in Toraja may be linked to population growth facilitated by marriage. Drawing from Yusuf Courbage and Emmanuel Todd's assertion, the spread of Islam through marital ties tends to result in slower development within a homogeneous population.¹² The reality of Islam's gradual spread, coupled with the concentration of Muslim communities in specific areas, serves as a vital consideration in understanding the delay in Toraja's Islamization process.

This study employed a qualitative approach to investigate the multifaceted and evolving reasons behind the delayed Islamization process in Toraja, which remain unclear.¹³ Utilizing an anthropological lens, the research aimed to unveil the underlying factors contributing to this phenomenon, focusing on the symbolic and meaningful expressions within people's behaviors.¹⁴ Emphasizing the demographic dimension, the study scrutinized population changes over time. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews, conducted strategically with selected participants, allowing for an open and flexible exploration of the issues.

Interviewees were encouraged to share their opinions and ideas freely in response to the research inquiries. Additionally, documentation was utilized to corroborate historical experiences with relevant literature, enriching the analysis.¹⁵

History of Islam in Toraja

The history of Islam's arrival in Toraja as outlined by Nurdin Baturante presents three contrasting narratives: the Bone, the Teteaji Sidrap, and the Lawu versions. The Bone version emphasizes the influence of the 17th-century Bone kingdom, suggesting their political, economic, and religious dominance facilitated Islam's spread. However, Baturante questions the extent of the Bone kingdom's role in disseminating Islam, citing economic motives as their primary concern. The Teteaji Sidrap narrative focuses on 19th-century Guru Siduppa, who fled Dutch colonization and established the Makale Grand Mosque, later known as the Great Mosque of Tana Toraja. Conversely, the Lawu version attributes the introduction of Islam to Opu Demmakkalu' from Luwu, who responded to invitations from Ampulembang and Palullu' to aid in their conflict against Pong Tamba. Islamization progressed through Demmakkalu's marriage to Appulembang's sister, Rangga, with archaeological evidence showcased by the Jami' Makdandan Mosque, the oldest mosque in Tana Toraja.¹⁶

Pastor Antonie Aris van de Loosdrecht complemented Nurdin Baturante's account of Islamization in Toraja, offering additional insights into its arrival in the 1880s. He suggested that Islam entered Toraja primarily through economic channels, particularly coffee trade.

¹¹ H.J. De Graaf, "South in Asian Islam to the Eighteenth Century," in *History of Islam*, ed. P.M. Holf, vol. 2 (London: The Cambridge University Press, 1970), 123.

¹² Youssef Courbage and Emmanuel Todd, *A Convergence of Civilizations: The Transformation of Muslim Societies Around the World*, trans. George Hollock (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 109.

¹³ Asmadi Alsa, *Pendekatan Kuantitatif Dan Kualitatif Serta Kombinasinya Dalam Penelitian Psikologi* (Jakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2014).

¹⁴ Jack D. Eller, *Introducing Anthropology of Religion Culture to the Ultimate* (Oxfordshire: Taylor & Francis, 2007), 62.

¹⁵ Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kombinasi* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2012).

¹⁶ Nurdin Baturante, *Toraja, Tongkonan Dan Kerukunan* (Makassar: Pustaka Al-Zikra, 2019).





Local leaders such as Pong Maramba in North Toraja and Pong Tarongko in South Toraja collaborated with Muslim traders from outside the region. Pong Maramba partnered with Said Ali from Luwu, while Pong Tarongko worked with individuals from Sidenreng Rappang who had embraced Islam. This economic cooperation facilitated the migration of several Muslim coffee traders to Tana Toraja. Archaeological evidence, including Islamic tombs, supports de Loosdrecht's interpretation.¹⁷

The process of Islamization in Toraja continued after Indonesian independence, albeit with significant disruptions caused by events such as Kahar Muzakkar's DI/TII rebellion. Muzakkar, who aimed to Islamize Toraja forcefully, instilled fear through violence, coercing people into conversion under threat of execution and banning cultural practices deemed incompatible with Islam.¹⁸ However, this approach was met with resistance, evidenced by a large-scale rejection leading to a mass baptism movement involving tens of thousands of people.¹⁹ Following Muzakkar's initiatives, Andi Sose continued the Islamization efforts in 1953 and 1958, employing expansive strategies that often led to conflicts and contributed to the emergence of a negative religious stigma within the community.²⁰ In the 1980s, Islamization endeavors persisted, particularly through the involvement of Bugis traders in coastal areas. These traders established extensive networks within the community through marriage ties and settlement creation, furthering Islam's spread within Toraja.

The Development of Islam in Toraja: A Demographic Perspective

The concept of "demographic" in the study of religious development in regions was pioneered by Philippe Fargues, who initially examined the Christian population in the Middle East. This term pertains to the frequency of a specific characteristic—such as religious affiliation—across the entire population, illustrating how these characteristics evolve over an extended period.²¹ Fargues delineates this evolution into four key aspects: individual and group conversions from one religion to another; events such as massacres and mass migrations leading to religious shifts; the amalgamation of population groups from diverse religious backgrounds through intermarriage, resulting in a subsequent generation adopting one dominant religion; and differential population growth rates influenced by varying birth and death rates among different religious affiliations.²² The expansion of the Islamic community in Toraja employs diverse mechanisms, giving rise to distinct growth patterns.

The demographic trends of Islamization in Tana Toraja were significantly influenced by two primary types of migration from outside areas. Firstly, Dutch colonial expansion in Indonesia prompted the migration of resistance figures who spread their culture and religion. Guru Siduppa from Teteaji Sidrap exemplified this trend, opposing the colonizers and facilitating Islam's presence in Toraja. Secondly, the coffee trade motivated migration. Given that coffee was a pivotal trade commodity in Toraja, involving figures such as Pong Maramba in North Toraja and Pong Tarongko in South Toraja, trade

¹⁷ Roxana Waterson, *Paths and Rivers: Sa'dan Toraja Society in Transformation* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2009), 102.

¹⁸ Bigalke, *Tana Toraja: A Social History of an Indonesian People*, 258.

¹⁹ Toby A. Volkman, "Visions and Revisions: Toraja Culture and the Tourist Gaze," *American Ethnologist* 17, no. 1 (February 28, 1990): 91–110, <https://doi.org/10.1525/ae.1990.17.1.02a00060>.

²⁰ Edwin de Jong, *Making a Living between Crises and Ceremonies in Tana Toraja: The Practice of Everyday Life of a*

South Sulawesi Highland Community in Indonesia (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 142.

²¹ Philippe Fargues, "The Arab Christians of the Middle East: A Demographic Perspective," in *Christians Communities in the Arab Middle East: The Challenge of the Future*, ed. Andrea Pacini (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

²² Philippe Fargues, "Demographic Islamization: Non-Muslims in Muslim Countries," *SAIS Review* 21, no. 2 (2001): 103–16.





activities played a central role in the Islamization process. Pong Maramba's trade relationship with Said Ali from Bugis Bone led to the migration of Muslim coffee workers. Similarly, Pong Tarongko's links to Muslim communities in Sidenreng Rappang brought workers to Toraja. This migration significantly contributed to Islam's spread in Rantepao (North Toraja) and Makale (South Toraja).

The promotion of migration to Tana Toraja, driven by trade and colonial pressures, was a catalyst for Islamization, but its impact was further amplified by the establishment of kinship ties through marriage. For instance, the union between Opu Demmakkalu from Luwu and Rangga, the younger brother of Appulembang, established an Islamic community rooted in familial bonds within Torajan society. This kinship led to cultural transformations that incorporated Islamic elements, such as the use of Islamic procedures for animal slaughter in traditional ceremonies like Rambu Solo' and Rambu Tuka' in Madandan. Islamization through marriage continued into the 1980s, particularly among traders supplying daily goods to coastal Torajans. This approach to spreading Islam through matrimonial ties reflects ongoing da'wah efforts aimed at gaining acceptance and sympathy for Islam within the Torajan community.

The approach to Islamization adopted by coastal merchants by eliciting sympathy was markedly different from previous methods of Islamization, which often relied on coercion and violence. Unlike earlier attempts characterized by forceful conversions, these merchants presented Islam peacefully, leading to a more deliberative adoption of the faith. Previous endeavors, such as those by the Bone kingdom in the 17th century and Kahar Muzakkar's coercive

measures, including violence and murder, had proven unsuccessful and even sparked a mass conversion to Christianity among the Toraja people.²³ These historical wounds were, as Sulaiman suggests, reopened by Andi Sose's "Kopi Tai Politics" in 1953 and 1958 – a metaphorical stirring of the grievances left by Kahar Muzakkar's atrocities, reviving feelings of sorrow and resentment.

The demographic perspective on Toraja's Islamization reveals three distinct trends. Firstly, a coercive conversion model often faces resistance within the community. Secondly, migration replaces non-Muslim populations with Muslims from outside Toraja, quickening Islamization through assimilation in cultural structures and practices. Thirdly, intermarriage plays a crucial role by producing a Muslim second generation. This trend, an extension of migration, shapes the demographic landscape of Islam in Toraja through kinship and familial ties. These three models of Islam propagation in Tana Toraja significantly influence the gradual pace of Islamization.

Tana Toraja's slow Islamization stemmed from a spread model emphasizing kinship dynamics, leading to a demographic shift influencing religious transition.²⁴ This religious transition drove Islam's intensive expansion, focused on future generations. While immigrants embracing Islam entered Tana Toraja, negative historical perceptions limited their impact. Instead, Islam's spread relied heavily on the establishment of familial ties, with effects seen in subsequent generations. Peter Beyer viewed this pattern as an effective conversion method in diverse communities.²⁵ Islam's kinship-focused conversion strategy, contributes to its gradual development, particularly targeting ethnic, cultural, and regional homogeneity.

²³ Bigalke, *Tana Toraja: A Social History of an Indonesian People*, 258.

²⁴ Ashton M. Verdery, "Links Between Demographic and Kinship Transitions," *Population and Development Review* 41, no. 3 (September 15, 2015): 465–84, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1728-4457.2015.00068.x>.

²⁵ Peter Beyer, "Religious Identity and Educational Attainment among Recent Immigrants to Canada: Gender, Age, and 2nd Generation," *Journal of International Migration and Integration / Revue de l'integration et de La Migration Internationale* 6, no. 2 (March 2005): 177–99, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-005-1009-2>.





Religious transmission that hinges on kinship transitions often progresses gradually, as it aims to foster ethnic, cultural, and regional homogeneity. This underscores the complex relationship between social and cultural elements in religious dissemination, requiring a deep understanding of diverse social contexts.²⁶ In the Torajan community, misreading social dynamics has led to widespread rejection, leaving a legacy of negative experiences that reinforce apprehensions towards Islam. Attempting to intervene in the social structure without a comprehensive understanding of its diverse tendencies can result in rejection, limiting religious expansion to homogeneous kinship networks.

Challenges of Spreading Islam in Toraja: A Silent Demography

The concept of "silent demographic" refers to gradual shifts in population characteristics, often unnoticed despite ongoing processes.²⁷ Exploring this aspect offers an alternative perspective on the influence of the Islamization process, allowing us to look beyond widely recognized events. This section focuses on subtle, yet lasting, changes in social structures that have long-term ramifications. By delving into the quiet and gradual forces arising from the Islamization process in Toraja, we can gain deeper insights into the evolving religious landscape of Tana Toraja.

The Islamization process has instigated demographic changes among the Toraja people, manifesting in various forms influenced by the methods employed. The Kingdom of Bone's endeavor to propagate Islam, driven by

ambitions of expanding power and trade, introduced gambling practices like dice, *sibuuyang* (playing cards), and cockfighting. These practices proliferated within the community under the local supervision of Pakila' Alo (Pong Bu'tu), who collaborated with Bone representatives in the Toraja region, supported by the army of Arung Palakka (Sultan of Bone). However, the rise of gambling led to increased crime and social instability. In response, numerous Toraja figures and nobles resisted these changes, culminating in a conflict that killed Pakila' Alo and sparked a war against Arung Palakka's forces. This conflict was ultimately resolved through the Basse Kasalle Lepongan Bulan agreement.

The authoritative approach adopted by Kahar Muzakkar and Andi Sose in their proselytizing efforts had profound physical and psychological repercussions on the Toraja people. Their use of coercion, violence, and weaponry sparked widespread rejection and left lasting trauma associated with Islam.²⁸ The most palpable impact was evident in the Toraja people's resistance against the arbitrary actions of Kahar Muzakkar and Andi Sose, which were perceived as religious conflicts.²⁹ The hostile image of Islam propagated by Muzakkar and Sose brought about significant changes in societal customs, leading to the prohibition of traditions deemed incompatible with Islam. This suppression of cultural practices resulted in diminished cultural conflicts and a gradual acceptance of Islam. During this period, cultural artifacts and wood carvings that contradicted Islamic teachings were systematically destroyed.³⁰ This approach to Islamization ap-

²⁶ Sindung Haryanto, "The Sociological Context of Religion in Indonesia," in *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion, Volume 30*, ed. Ralph W. Hood and Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 67–102, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004416987_006.

²⁷ Fargues, "Demographic Islamization: Non-Muslims in Muslim Countries."

²⁸ Kathleen M. Adams, *Art as Politics: Re-Crafting Identities, Tourism, and Power in Tana Toraja, Indonesia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 18.

²⁹ Hetty Nooy-Palm, *The Sa'dan-Toraja: A Study of Their Social Life and Religion* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1979), 10, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-7150-4>.

³⁰ Kees Buijs, *Powers of Blessing from the Wilderness and From Heaven: Structure and Transformations in the Religion of the Toraja in The Mamasa Area of South Sulawesi* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2006), 16.





pears to disregard the rich cultural heritage and traditions of the Toraja people, consequently fostering resistance against Islam.

The societal changes triggered by the Bone Kingdom's disruptive Islamization efforts contrasted starkly with those under Guru Siduppa and Opu Demmakalu'. Unlike the forced changes imposed by external forces, both Guru Siduppa and Opu Demmakalu' embraced Islam through marriage, resulting in organic structural shifts within the society. The growth of the Islamic community paralleled the emergence of a second generation born into Islam, thereby fostering societal development. This evolution also influenced cultural practices, with the emergence of recitation groups as part of the da'wah mechanism. Additionally, the coffee trade facilitated the influx of Muslim communities, further increasing the Muslim population. Traditions also transformed, adapting rituals to conform to Islamic principles. Notable changes included modifications in funeral processions, which now exclude alcohol and pork and adhere to the Islamic practice of burial within twenty-four hours.³¹

The ongoing Islamization in Toraja gives rise to an unseen demographic framework characterized by two distinct tendencies. Firstly, there is the modality of diminishing tolerance stemming from past military expansion and violence. This has inflicted lasting wounds on the Torajan perception of Islam, creating sentiments that can be easily stirred. Secondly, there is the trend of cultural heritage transformation. The Islamization trajectory observed in Toraja, characterized by the migration of Muslim populations and the establishment of new communities across subsequent generations,

leads to assimilative changes in certain cultural aspects, adapting them to Islamic principles and regulations.

The unspoken shifts in demographic patterns play a crucial role in stabilizing the socio-religious dynamics within Toraja society. Neglecting these changes can lead to a shift in focus when interpreting the historical reality of Islamization, thereby deepening the cultural divide within the community.³² By reinforcing the impact of changes occurring in the clandestine process of Islamization, a narrative of darkness is etched into the collective consciousness of the community. Annemarie Samuels suggested that a community's painful experiences can serve as a bridge connecting past and present traumas, emphasizing the importance of acknowledging these experiences to prevent the emergence of anxiety.³³ The concealment of wounds endured by the Toraja people during the Islamization process serves as a strategic maneuver to uphold conducive religious interactions within a pluralistic society.

Recognizing the often-overlooked impacts of the Islamization process, even if not its primary focus, is crucial for maintaining stability in religious interactions. Identifying these neglected moments sheds light on the significance of addressing unacknowledged aspects to understand the underlying factors shaping prevalent narratives.³⁴ The difficulties faced by Islam in Tana Toraja, stemming from an approach that disregards local contexts, exemplify this issue. Similarly, Steedly's work highlighting the obscured roles of women in the Karo independence struggle in North Sumatra provides further insights into this pattern.³⁵ Unearthing marginalized stories within

³¹ Michaela Budiman, *Contemporary Funeral Rituals of Sa'dan Toraja: From Aluk Todolo to "New" Religions* (Prague: Karolinum Press, 2013), 95.

³² Waterson, *Paths and Rivers: Sa'dan Toraja Society in Transformation*, 12.

³³ Annemarie Samuels, "'This Path Is Full of Thorns': Narrative, Subjunctivity, and HIV in Indonesia," *Ethos* 46, no. 1 (March 5, 2018): 95–114, <https://doi.org/10.1111/etho.12194>.

³⁴ Ana Dragojlovic and Annemarie Samuels, "Tracing Silences: Towards an Anthropology of the Unspoken and Unspeakable," *History and Anthropology* 32, no. 4 (August 8, 2021): 417–25, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02757206.2021.1954634>.

³⁵ Mary Steedly, *A Story of Indonesian Independence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).





the Islamization context is vital for informing future actions aimed at maintaining peace in Tana Toraja.

Numerous studies affirm the dynamic and tolerant nature of Toraja society, highlighting how silent demographic changes contribute to peace-building efforts. By concealing the wounds inflicted by violent Islamization processes, acts of tolerance towards differences flourish,³⁶ disregarding distinctions between majority and minority groups.³⁷ This dismantling of barriers fosters acculturation in various aspects, allowing for the preservation of Toraja's distinct Islamic identity.³⁸ Forgotten historical experiences, crucial for peace maintenance, advocate for an Islamization model characterized by peaceful da'wah methods, prioritizing the practical application of Islamic values (*da'wah bi al-hal*).³⁹ These hidden religious conflicts from history play a pivotal role in shaping future Islamization patterns, fostering a culture of respect for differences.

Conclusions

This study reveals that Islamization in Toraja reflects a form of acculturation and respect demonstrated by the community in their social interactions. This acceptance stems from the community's acknowledgment of the changes brought about by the Islamization process, encompassing both its positive and negative impacts. While the violent methods of Kahar Muzakkar and Andri Sose were harmful, they were overlooked to prioritize peaceful relations. The core value of fostering a peaceful society led to the embrace of Islam, which spread through trade, migration, and marriage. Consequently, this mode of Islamization fosters

acculturation and the preservation of peaceful traditions within the community.

This study demonstrates that anthropological analysis, by deciphering the meanings and symbols embedded in community behaviors, can reveal hidden mechanisms for preserving peace. However, its focus is narrow, examining solely the ramifications of the Islamization process and overlooking its broader impact on community perceptions. By examining the repercussions of the covert violence within Islamization, we can understand shifts in interaction patterns and why Islam remains a minority. The identified limitations present opportunities for future research to further enrich our understanding of Islam's demographic spread in Indonesia.

Acknowledgments

The authors thankfully acknowledge all contributors for their contributions.

Competing Interests

The corresponding author is also responsible for having ensured collective agreement between co-authors in all matters regarding manuscript publication. Therefore, the corresponding author needs to submit a statement of competing interests on behalf of all authors of the paper.

Author's Contributions

None of the authors in this study have financial or personal relationships that could improperly influence the study's content.

Author's Contributions

All listed authors contribute to this article.

³⁶ Salmiati et al., "Eksistensi Pendidikan Islam Di Lingkungan Minoritas Muslim: Studi Kasus Di Lembang Sereale, Toraja Utara"; Abdullah and Rasbi, "The Forming Factors of Religious Moderation and Islamic Happiness of The Muslim Minority in Tana Toraja."

³⁷ Radjab et al., "Religious Tolerance Practices: A Case Study of Family With Different Religions in Toraja Ethnicity South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia."

³⁸ Michael, Husein, and Masruri, "Acculturation of Mosque and Church in Indonesia: Case Studies from Toraja."

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Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with all ethical standards and did not involve direct contact with human or animal subjects.

Funding Information

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or nonprofit sectors.

Data Availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were generated or analyzed in this study.

Disclaimer

The views and assumptions presented in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency.

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