

THE NEGOTIATING OF NON-BINARY GENDERS IN MUSLIM BUGIS SOCIETY: BETWEEN RELIGION AND TRADITION

A Thesis

**Submitted to the Master's Study Program of Islamic Studies at the
Faculty of Islamic Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of**

Master of Arts (M.A.)



by:

Nur Aisyah Fadillah

01212210003

UNIVERSITAS ISLAM INTERNASIONAL INDONESIA

DEPOK

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ABSTRACT

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This research examines the concept of five genders in the Muslim Bugis Society in Bone, South Sulawesi. The Bugis society recognize five gender such as *oroane* (male), *makkunrai* (female), *calabai* (male who take on female gender roles), *calalai* (female who take on male gender roles) and *bissu* (a gender considered to represent the full spectrum of gender). There is a gap between the belief of the gender system in the local tradition of Bugis society and the Islamic perspective, as it is known that the majority of the people are Muslim. The focus of this research study refers to three points. First, of the existence of non-binary gender adapts to the Islamic religious norms that apply in the Bugis Muslim society as well as the discussion of non-binary gender in Islamic studies discourse, second, how the identity of non-binary gender understood, accepted and negotiated in the context both religion and tradition and last, their challenges and opportunities that non-binary genders face in fighting for their identity. this research uses a qualitative method with a case study in Bone region, South Sulawesi, the data collection technique include interviews with the individual who identify as non-binary gender, the community leader and the government agency as well as document analysis from several sources. This research argues that the existence of non-binary genders in Bone region is a form of traditional belief that demonstrates a unique diversity of gender identity that does not violate the pure teachings of their religion. In fact, the path of *bissu* is one way to lead a path that is in accordance with Islamic teachings. Their existence also faces challenges such as pros and cons due to various issues as well as stigma and discrimination embedded in society. The findings of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of non-binary genders as part of gender diversity and explain the resilience of cultural traditions in face of social and religious change.

Keywords: The Muslim Bugis Society, Non-Binary Gender, Negotiation, Tradition and Religion, Bone Region.

خلاصة

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الماجستير في الدراسات الإسلامية

الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية الإندونيسية

يتناول هذا البحث مفهوم الأجناس الخمسة في المجتمع بوجيس المسلم في بوني، سولاويسي الجنوبية. يعترف بوجيس بخمسة أنواع من الجنس، وهي الأوران (ذكر) مكونران (أنثى) كالاباي (رجل يلعب دور المرأة) وجالاباي (مرأة تلعب دور الرجل) وبيسو (الجنس الذي يعتبر أنه يشمل الجنس) وسيكتروم (الجنس الكامل). هناك فجوة بين المعتقدات حول النظام الجنسي في التقاليد المحلية في مجتمع بوجيس في نظرة الاسلامية باعتبار الأغلبية أن مجتمعه مسلمون. ومحور هذا البحث يدور حول ثلاثة أمور: الأول، وجود جنس غير ثنائي تتوافق مع الأعراف الدينية الإسلامية وهو ما ينطبق في المجتمع البوجيسي المسلم وكذلك من مناقشات عدم ثنائية الجنس في خطاب الدراسات الإسلامية. الثاني، كيف يتم ويقبل وتم التفاوض عليه فهم الهويات الجنسية غير الثنائية في إطار الدين والتقاليد. والأخير، التحديات والفرص التي يواجهها الجنس غير الثنائي في الكفاح من أجل هويته. تستخدم هذا البحث المنهج النوعي مع دراسات الحالة في منطقة بوني سولاويسي الجنوبية. وتشمل تقنيات جمع البيانات مقابلات مع الأفراد الذي يعرفون على أنهم جنس غير ثنائي، شخصية عامة، والجهات الحكومية. وكذلك تحليل الوثائق من مصادر مختلفة. هذا البحث يجادل بأن الوجود عدم ثنائية الجنس في منطقة بوني هو شكل من أشكال المعتقد التقليدي مما يظهر هوية فريدة لا تخالف تعاليم دينية النقية. بينما طريق بيسوهو اتجاه واحد اتباع الطريق الذي يتوافق مع تعاليم الإسلام. ويواجه وجودهم أيضا تحديات مثل إيجابيات وسلبيات بسبب مشاكل مختلفة وكذلك عن الوصمة والتمييز متأصلة في المجتمع. توفر نتائج هذا البحث فهما أعمق للجنس غير الثنائي كجزء من التنوع بين الجنسين ويشرح مرونة التقاليد الثقافية في مواجهة التغيير الاجتماعي والديني.

الكلمات الدالة: مجتمع بوجيس المسلم، جنس غير ثنائي، التفاوض، التقاليد والدين، منطقة بوني.

TRANSLITERATION GUIDE

Arabic	Roman	Arabic	Roman	Arabic	Roman
ا	a	س	s	ل	l
ب	b	ش	sh	م	m
ت	t	س	ṣ	ن	n
ث	th	ظ	ḍ	و	w
ج	j	ط	ṭ	ه	h
ح	ḥ	ظ	ẓ	ي	y
خ	kh	ع	'		
د	d	غ	gh		
ذ	dh	ف	f		
ر	r	ق	q		
ز	z	ك	k		

Short Vocal

Arab Alphabet	Roman Alphabet	Arabic Example	Transliteration
اَ	a	جَلَسَ	<i>jalasa</i>
اِ	i	رَكِبَ	<i>rakiba</i>
اُ	u	كُتِبَ	<i>kutiba</i>

Long Vocal

Arab Alphabet	Roman Alphabet	Arabic Example	Transliteration
اِي/اِي	ā	جَرِي/سَافِر	<i>jarā/sāfar</i>
يِي	ī	سَلِيم	<i>salīm</i>
وِي	ū	سُجُود	<i>sujūd</i>

Diphtong

Arab Alphabet	Roman Alphabet	Arabic Example	Transliteration
اُو	aw	مَولَا	<i>mawlā</i>
اَيِي	ay	غَيب	<i>ghayb</i>

Notes:

1. Consonant with shaddah (◌ّ) for instance, أمة is written as *ummah* (double letters).
2. Arabic letter *hamzah* (ء) at the beginning of a word is transliterated into “a” not into “ʿa”. For instance, أحمد is written as *aḥmad* not *ʿaḥmad*.
3. Arabic script of *alif-lam qamariyah* (ال) is written as “al” at the beginning of words and *alif-lam shamsiyah* (ا) is written in accordance with the first letter at the beginning of words. For instance:
المائدة : al-mā'idah
الرحمان : ar-rahmān
4. Arabic letter *ta' marbutah* (ة) is written as “h” when it is located at the end of the words, such as البقرة is written as *al-baqarah*. When located in the middle of a sentence is written as “t”, such as أمة وسطا is written as *ummatan wasaṭan*.

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Contents

STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY	ii
ANTI-PLAGIARISM STATEMENT	iii
THESIS ATTESTATION	iv
ABSTRACT	vi
TRANSLITERATION GUIDE	viii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	x
CHAPTER I	1
INTRODUCTION	1
A. Background of Study	1
B. Research Objectives	5
C. Research Question	6
D. Literature Review	6
1. Non-Binary Genders: Islamic Perspectives	6
2. The Role of <i>Bissu</i> in South Sulawesi	9
E. Theoretical Framework	11
F. Research Significance	12
G. Methods	12
H. Thesis Structure and Outline	14
CHAPTER II	16
GENDER IN ISLAMIC DISCOURSE	16
A. Introduction	16
B. Gender Discourse in Indonesia	16
C. Tradition in Islamic Theology	21
1. <i>Tashabbuh</i>	23
2. <i>Khunthā</i>	26
D. Theoretical Framework: The Habitus	30
E. Conclusion	33
CHAPTER III	34
THE EXISTENCE OF NON-BINARY GENDER IN THE BUGIS MUSLIM COMMUNITY	34
A. Introduction	34
B. Exploring Bugis Gender Identity: <i>Calalai</i> , <i>Calabai</i> and <i>Bissu</i>	34

1.	<i>Calabai & Calalai: A Living Legacy of History</i>	34
2.	Crossing Bugis Gender Boundaries: <i>Bissu</i> as a sacred gender	37
3.	The emergence of the <i>Bissu</i>	38
4.	Between Islam and Tradition: The decline of the <i>bissu</i>	41
C.	Five Genders in Harmony: Enduring Beliefs in the Bone City, South Sulawesi	43
D.	Conclusion	53
CHAPTER IV		55
BEYOND THE BINARY: BETWEEN FAITH AND GENDER IDENTITY		55
A.	Introduction	55
B.	Acculturation and Negotiation Tradition within Religious Community	55
1.	The process of Acculturation	56
2.	The Negotiating Between Tradition and Beliefs	60
C.	Modern ideology, tradition and religion: reflection on the acceptance of non-binary individuals in society	65
D.	Conclusion	70
CHAPTER V		72
CONCLUSION		72

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

The Indonesian archipelago is made up of 17,508 islands along the equator, half of which are inhabited with 86,7% of its population following Islam, which the largest Muslim country in the world. Indonesia is home to over 360 ethnic groups and more than 720 local languages. The Bugis ethnic group is one of the largest in Indonesia and uniquely recognizes five distinct genders. The island of Sulawesi shaped like an orchid is located in the center of the Indonesian archipelago, north of Bali and west of Kalimantan. South Sulawesi is home to the Bugis ethnic group, numbering six million. The Bugis are renowned as skilled sailors¹ and have extensively migrated to various parts of Asia. Although the majority of the Bugis earn their living from fishing, agriculture and cultivation are also important daily activities.²

Islam as the majority religion in Indonesia, so the religious texts, doctrines, practices, institutions and even leaders are often interpreted to mean that the binary gender concept is a divinely determined aspect of humanity. This reflects that humans are always and only male and female seen as a fixed theological principle rather than a dynamic characteristic of human culture. Similar with Sa'dan argument that the majority of Muslims view human reality within the strict confines of *fiqh* law, distinguishing between halal and haram, reward and sin, heaven and hell, in a firm and inflexible manner.³

The Bugis community is one of the ethnic groups in Indonesia that still preserves its customs and culture. Within the Bugis culture, there are unique values including a gender system that differs from the more common system in Indonesia. The arrival of Islam to the Bugis people in the late 16th century, marked by a shift from pre-Islamic syncretism to Islamic formalism has positioned them among the insular communities with a strong Islamic identity. Since then, religion has become an integral and essential

¹ Ammarell Augene Emil, "Bugis navigation" (Dissertation, New Haven, 1999), 299, (Yale University Southeast Asian Studies).

² Gregory L Acciaioli, "Searching for Good Fortune : The Making of a Bugis Shore Community at Lake Lindu, Central Sulawesi," 1989, 20, <https://doi.org/10.25911/5D7633F0DCC2C>.

³ Masthuriyah Sa'dan, *Spiritualitas Waria: Perjuangan Menemukan Identitas Gender dan Makna Hidup* (Yogyakarta: SUKA Press., 2022), xxii.

part of the Bugis culture and way of life.⁴ The Bugis culture recognize the existence of five genders such as *oroane* (male) *makkunrai* (women), *calalai* (women taking on male gender roles), *calabai* (men taking on female gender roles) and *bissu* (a gender considered to represent the full spectrum of gender). This culture has been constructed in the lives of the community, passed down through generations. The beliefs in these five concepts originates from the bugis community's guidebook *La Galigo* written between the 13th and 15th centuries in Bugis poetic language using the old *Lontaraq* script and ancient Bugis language (*Galigo* language). It contains socio-cultural life of the Bugis people, drawing from elements of the old Bugis beliefs before they converted to Islam.⁵

In the gender beliefs of the Muslim Bugis community those three non-binary gender hold unique and respected social roles. *Calalai* and *calabai* frequently involved in jobs like bridal makeup in wedding ceremonies which same with *bissu* and they also occupy a highly important and respected position in Bugis society because they are believed to embody both masculine and feminine forces.⁶ The *bissu* played a central role in the *matompang arajang* ceremony, a sacred ritual involving the purification of royal heirlooms in the Bone Kingdom. Despite facing some cultural shifts, the *bissu* still seem to maintain their ancestral traditions tenaciously. Moreover, the Bugis society's enthusiasm for these traditions remains evident in their active participation in sacred ceremonies led by the *bissu*.

Unfortunately, the presence of *bissu* has been diminishing over time. In historical discussion, *bissu* played the role of leaders in local beliefs known as *attoriolong* (ancestral faith). However, since Islam became part of *pangadereng* (custom), their role has significantly shifted. Once leaders in ritual practices, they are now only responsible for managing or caring for the royal heirlooms. Some *bissu* can still be found in Luwu, Sigeri, Wajo, Soppeng, Pinrang, Sidenreng Rappang, Pare-pare and Makassar with the largest population currently being in the city of Bone.

⁴ Christian Pelras, *The Bugis, The Peoples of South-East Asia and the Pacific* (Oxford, OX, UK ; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 4.

⁵ Rétna Kencana Colliq Pujié Arung Pancana Toa, *La Galigo Menurut Naskah NBG 188 jilid 3* (Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2017), 1.

⁶ The Bissu community perceives themselves as holy beings who do not procreate, mirroring the Islamic belief that God does not have offspring. Yovita M Hartarini, "Komunitas Adat Bissu : Waria Bertalenta Sakti Sebuah Analisis Sosio-Budaya Etnis Bugis" 3, no. 2 (2012): 208.

Meissner defines gender as an individual's internal experience that is part of their personal identity.⁷ The societal constructions who recognize only two gender expressions masculine and feminine with the ideal assumption that masculine is synonymous with male and feminine with female. It is often viewed as incorrect for a male to exhibit feminine characteristic or assume social roles typically associated with women or vice versa. However, this situation differs in traditional societies with their own traditions and cultures as a backdrop. Even though *calalai*, *calabai* and *bissu* are small population, this does not prevent them from choosing to be one of these three genders and the Bugis community accepts this as part of the cultural traditions of their ancestors, established before the arrival of Islam in the Bugis land.

In the current situation, there are indications that some Bugis individuals who identify themselves within the category of non-traditional gender often face challenges and stigma in their daily lives. Such as the expansion of Islam in South Sulawesi led to a transformation of the ancestral belief system and a process of renewal and adaptation occurred between local and Islamic cultures.⁸ As a result, the cultural combination that has survived to this day is considered to be in accordance with local customs, in harmony with the character of the community and contains elements of Islamic culture. However, the continued presence of the *bissu* and their traditional beliefs has generated both support and opposition among the Bugis society, particularly among devout Muslims. Because of that, in the 1950's, the DI/TII (*Darul Islam*/Islamic Army of Indonesia) group in Sulawesi engaged in the destruction of the *bissu*. They attempted to purify Islamic teachings. The DI/TII group considered *bissu* activities to be contrary to Islamic religious principles and categorized them as acts of *mushrik*.⁹

The existence of non-binary gender in the modern era are often associated with the *LGBTQ+* community has become a prominent phenomenon in society. this is due to the issues surrounding free sexuality, *LGBTQ+* rights and the cultural practices of the *bissu* which are often misunderstood by certain groups particularly the conservative

⁷ W. W. Meissner, "Gender Identity and the Self: I. Gender Formation in General and in Masculinity," *The Psychoanalytic Review* 92, no. 1 (February 2005): 12, <https://doi.org/10.1521/prev.92.1.1.58709>.

⁸ Musyrifah Sunanto, *Sejarah Peradaban Islam Indonesia*, 1st ed. (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada, 2005), 7–8.

⁹ Barbara Sillars Harvey, "TRADITION, ISLAM, AND REBELLION: SOUTH SULAWESI 1950-1965," in *Cornell University*, A Thesis Doctor of Philosophy (Cornell University, 1974), 19.

Islamic organization.¹⁰ They perceive all *bissu* activities as contradictory to pure Islamic teachings, labeling them as deviant and even accusing them of polytheism. As a result of these accusations of involvement in practices considered *shrik* (polytheism)¹¹, the role of the *bissu* as pre-Islamic Bugis priests has been marginalized with their rituals and ceremonies no longer accepted. This has led to a decline in their traditional practices and loss of their cultural significance.

Durkheim as cited by Sanderson emphasized that communal gathering in rituals serve to reaffirm and strengthen the bonds between individuals, fostering a sense of collective unity. He concludes that religious rituals hold paramount importance, as they symbolize the binding force that holds communities together.¹² Despite the shifts and adaptations that the *bissu* belief system has undergone to accommodate modern realities, its core essence has not been entirely lost. This means that their “*magis religious orisinal*” is still maintain eventhough they are forced to make several excuses and compromises to save their community. So that syncretism has occurred among the *bissu* as a presentation of non-binary gender. Syncretism aims to reconcile significant differences and contradictions between various belief system. This can be applied as a means of fostering tolerance among religious communities, leading to the creation of harmonious societies through mutual understanding and acceptance. However, if the outcome is negative, it can result in tension that may escalate into conflict.

Briefly speaking, the belief in gender is not only a traditional legacy of the community but still exists today among the Bugis people and it continues to hold a place in their society, being highly respected. Despite the strong influence of Islam, traditional customs and daily practices continue to be shaped by more traditional customs. So, what is the position of religion in dealing with the belief in the five genders in society? I assume that while the acceptance of non-binary gender generates both pros and cons within society. the Bugis people remain deeply committed to their

¹⁰ apart from the DI/TII rebellion led by Kahar Muzakkar, a similar accident occurred in recent years when the *bissu* were conducting a traditional ceremony in another district. a group from the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) disrupted and disrupted the event. the perception that the *bissu* are deviant and their lives are threatened due to LGBTQ+ issues has led to their discrimination Andi Nur Isman, “Tantangan Bissu Bugis di Era Modern, Minim Generasi hingga Tekanan Penolakan,” *detiksulsel*, March 30, 2022, <https://www.detik.com/sulsel/budaya/d-6007327/tantangan-bissu-bugis-di-era-modern-minim-generasi-hingga-tekanan-penolakan> accessed in 20 April 2024.

¹¹ Lathief Halilintar, *Bissu : Pergulatan Dan Peranannya Di Masyarakat Bugis* (Depok: Desantara, 2004), 69.

¹² Stephen K. Sanderson, *Makro Sosiologi : Sebuah Pendekatan Terhadap Realitas Sosial*, 2nd ed. (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2000), 555.

customs and traditions. The presence of Islam has provided a framework for the practice of these customs and traditions within Bugis society.

The focus of this research is on how to address the existence of the traditional five genders and adapt to Islamic religious norms. It explores how interacts with local cultural practices, influencing gender identity and social practices within the Muslim Bugis community in Bone with the aim of providing new insights into the dynamic relationship between gender, local traditions and religion. It also seeks to recommend further areas of research within this context in the Bone region.

I limit this research to focus on Bugis society, especially in Bone. Based on the previous study, it is evident that the bissu community still maintains its existence in the Bone region to this day. They actively participate in various traditional and community activities including *mattompang arajang* tradition (a ritual involving the care of royal heirlooms) and *calabai* as individuals who are engaged in organizing wedding.¹³ Although their population may not be as numerous as it was before independence, the *bissu* continue to represent one of the five genders under study.

The research chose Bone as a case study several things. First, bone is known for having a relatively high population of *bissu*.¹⁴ second, the active involvement of bissu in various traditions is still notable and they continue to needed for various local traditional events such as *mattompang arajang*, *mappalili* and others.¹⁵ Third, historically Bone has been one of the largest centers for the spread of Islam in South Sulawesi alongside Gowa. Its expansion of Islamic teachings reached other cities making bone predominantly inhabited by devout Muslim communities.¹⁶ However, the author intends to conduct research focuses on the five genders belief tradition of the Muslim Bugis community in Bone region to uncover this phenomenon.

B. Research Objectives

This research investigates the existence and dynamics of non-binary gender (*calabai*, *calalai* and *bissu*) in the Muslim Bugis community in Bone region, South

¹³ Syamsurijal Adnan, "BISSU YANG ENGGAN MEMBISU Proses Encountering Islam dan Kebugisan," *Al-Qalam* 15, no. 2 (November 11, 2018): 404, <https://doi.org/10.31969/alq.v15i2.502>.

¹⁴ Andi Muhammad Akhmar et al., "Ritual Performance as Gradual Recognition: Sere Bissu Maggiriq Dance of South Sulawesi Indonesia," *SAGE Open* 13, no. 4 (October 2023): 8, <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231209634>.

¹⁵ Siti Rahmadani Nur Bakhtiar, Malarsih Malarsih, and Eko Sugiarto, "Performing Sere Bissu Maggiri as Character Education Content for the Bone Community," *Edumaspul: Jurnal Pendidikan* 7, no. 1 (March 1, 2023): 2, <https://doi.org/10.33487/edumaspul.v7i1.6421>.

¹⁶ Feby Triadi, "Bissu and Toboto Domain; Lanskap, Islam, dan Negosiasi," *ETNOSIA : Jurnal Etnografi Indonesia* 4, no. 1 (June 23, 2019): 83, <https://doi.org/10.31947/etnosia.v4i1.6163>.

Sulawesi. More specifically, the challenges and opportunities encountered by non-binary genders in fighting for their identity as well as with the case of non-binary within the Islamic discourse. Furthermore, and more importantly, this research also investigates the negotiation process between tradition and religion regarding non-binary genders which raises pros and cons in society. thus, one does not only cause by the role of Islam but also the stigma created by the surrounding society.

C. Research Question

The research question of this research are as follows: first, how does Islam perceived the other gender? second, how does the existence of non-binary genders recognized by the Bugis Muslim community, which is predominantly Muslim, still have space in the public sphere? last, to what extent does the negotiation process regarding the existence of non-binary gender in Muslim Bugis society?

D. Literature Review

Various scholars have conducted research on gender in Islamic perspective and previous research has generally focused on how tradition and religions negotiate. This is different from specializing in the five-genders belief tradition, given that this belief existed long before the spread of Islam and has faced various challenges that are not in accordance with Islamic understanding. For this mapping process, I divide the literature review into two parts, which is how non-binary genders discourse within Islamic perspective either how the discourse of five genders belief especially *bissu* as the representative of them in the Muslim Bugis society.

1. Non-Binary Genders: Islamic Perspectives

The current issues related to evaluate Islamic perspectives on social and legal issues related to *khunthā*. Qureshi and Pakeeza argue that Islam provides comprehensive guidance on *khunthā*, emphasizing the importance of determining gender for *khunthā* individuals to avoid legal and social problems, as well as ensuring that they receive the same rights and treatment as other Muslims.¹⁷ In line with the phenomenon of trans women and trans men in Indonesia often experiences discrimination and negative stigma, both from society and from a religious perspective. This is explained by Abdillah that the factors that cause a trans woman or trans man include biological,

¹⁷ Mahnoor Waheed Qureshi and Shahzadi Pakeeza, "Evaluation of Islamic Perspectives on Social and Legal Issues of Intersex (Khunthā)," *Al-Hameed Islamic Studies Research Journal* 2, no. 3 (2023): 37.

psychological and environmental factors. Where the findings conclude that although there is a conflict between transgender identity and religious and social norms, there is room in Islamic law to understand and accommodate the existence of trans women and trans men as part of human diversity.¹⁸

On the other hand, In Pangkep Regency, South Sulawesi, the implementation of the Indonesian Ulema Council's (MUI) fatwa concerning transgender individuals faces challenges. This fatwa contradicts the law that protects human rights, including the right to determine one's gender identity. Additionally, the MUI fatwa does not have legally binding power in Indonesia. In areas that recognize the existence of transgender individuals, the fatwa cannot be fully implemented. However, sex reassignment surgery offers a solution for transgender individuals with certain medical conditions, providing them with legal recognition of their gender identity.¹⁹ Similar research were discussed by Tsalis and Yulianingrum, their research found that judges consider religious aspects in deciding cases of sex change requests, even though there is no law that explicitly regulates this. In the two cases studied, the judges used different religious considerations. The judge at the Banyumas District Court referred to the MUI fatwa in deciding the validity of a sex change operation, while the judge at the Kediri District Court referred to the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW in deciding the name change request. This shows that even though there is no specific law, religious values are still an important consideration in making legal decisions regarding sex change.²⁰

Discussed the perspective of Islamic law, in general discussion, Noralla's research the discourse on transgender identity which is *khunthā* and its influence on law and policy in Egypt, showing a shift from legal independence to alignment with Sharia, especially in the fatwas issued since the 1980's regarding gender change criteria. This discourse also influences official health policies regarding transgender identity.²¹

¹⁸ Muhammad Abdillah et al., "Transwomen and Transmen from Islamic Family Law Perspective," *IAS Journal of Localities* 1, no. 1 (December 19, 2023): 67, <https://doi.org/10.62033/iasjol.v1i1.13>.

¹⁹ Misbahuddin Misbahuddin et al., "The Implementation of MUI's Fatwa on the Position of Transgender Individuals, Gender Reassignment Surgery and Genital Refinement," *Jurnal Adabiyah* 23, no. 2 (August 20, 2023): 118, <https://doi.org/10.24252/jad.v23i2a1>.

²⁰ Khodijah Nur Tsalis and Aullia Vivi Yulianingrum, "ANALISIS PERTIMBANGAN AGAMA DALAM HUKUM PERGANTIAN KELAMIN: (STUDI PUTUSAN MA No 177/Pdt.P/2021/PN Gpr Dan No. 64/Pdt.P/2021/PN Bms)," *Tafāqquh: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Kajian Keislaman* 10, no. 1 (June 1, 2022): 151–52, <https://doi.org/10.52431/tafaqquh.v10i1.1072>.

²¹ Nora Noralla, "Gender Trouble in the Land of the Nile: Transgender Identities, the Judiciary and Islam in Egypt," *Yearbook of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law Online* 1, no. aop (July 13, 2023): 35, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22112987-20230052>.

While in focusing in Indonesia's discussion, The issue of *khunthā* in Islamic law is viewed from the perspective of *maslahah mursala*, which means considering benefits and minimizing losses. If a person's gender is unclear, surgery may be performed to determine it, taking into account the greatest benefit to the individual. However, positive law in Indonesia does not yet have clear regulations regarding changing gender, only regulating changes in identity such as name and place of residence. Decisions regarding gender reassignment often depend on the judge's interpretation. individuals with intersex conditions did not choose their condition and should not be discriminated against or excluded.²²

Adding some of the same findings stated that in modern medicine, *khunthā* is considered an uncommon but identifiable and treatable genital condition. The treatment is similar to the gender reassignment procedure. Although this is different from the classical fiqh view, contemporary *fiqh* allows it with several considerations. One of the considerations is the rules of *fiqh* which emphasize the importance of eliminating difficulties, which is also a strong reason to determine the status of *khunthā* clearly.²³

Referring to the discussion of contemporary Islamic law, Zaharin in his article states that the Fatwa of Tantawi and Khomeini in his research which allows sex assignment operations under certain medical conditions, is presented as evidence that there is room for transgender acceptance in Islam. with the aim of emphasizing the need for more understanding and empathy towards the transgender Muslim community thereby sparking dialogue and encouraging a more inclusive and progressive interpretation of Islam regarding gender and identity.²⁴

In sum, the issue of *khunthā* in Islamic law is still a matter of debate and interpretation among academics. Some Islamic legal scholars advocate a more inclusive and progressive approach, there are also those who adhere to traditional

²² Limansyah Fasnur, "HERMAFRODIT WARIA DAN AKIBAT HUKUMNYA DALAM HUKUM ISLAM (STUDI ANALISIS FILSAFAT HUKUM ISLAM)" (Makassar, UIN ALAUDDIN, 2017), 69, <http://repositori.uin-alauddin.ac.id/3125/1/Limansyah%20Fasnur.pdf>.

²³ Ilham Ghoffar Solekhan and Maulidi Dhuha Yaum Mubarak, "Khuntsa Dan Penetapan Statusnya Dalam Pandangan Fiqh Kontemporer," *Al Hurriyah: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 5, no. 2 (December 31, 2020): 162, <https://doi.org/10.30983/alhurriyah.v5i2.3324>; Dede Hilman Rasyid and Winda Fitri, "Telaah Fenomena Operasi Penggantian Kelamin Bagi Khuntsa (Studi Komprehensif Hukum Islam Dan Hukum Positif)," *Jurnal Risalah Kenotariatan* 4, no. 2 (December 19, 2023): 133, <https://doi.org/10.29303/risalahkenotariatan.v4i2.133>.

²⁴ Aisya Aymanee M. Zaharin and Maria Pallotta Chiarolli, "Countering Islamic Conservatism on Being Transgender: Clarifying Tantawi's and Khomeini's Fatwas from the Progressive Muslim Standpoint," *International Journal of Transgender Health* 21, no. 3 (July 2, 2020): 236, <https://doi.org/10.1080/26895269.2020.1778238>.

interpretations that may limit certain medical interventions. However, in contemporary studies there has been much research that facilitates the determination of sex for *khunthā* individuals by considering the dominant sex so that surgery can be performed.

2. The Role of *Bissu* in South Sulawesi

Studies on gender beliefs can be exemplified by the existence of a fifth gender, the *Bissu* in certain regions. This highlights the complex understanding of gender in south Sulawesi, acknowledging non-binary genders position.

In the study of the Bugis society and the existence of the non-binary gender *bissu* special attention is drawn particularly in the context of their interaction with the values and teachings of Islam adopted by most of the Bugis society. The *bissu* negotiate their identity within the framework of Bugis Islam which can be described with three research findings: first, the current position of the *bissu* has been marginalized due to the homonormativity of western culture.²⁵ Second, the *bissu* are still considered in the public sphere due to the deeply rooted and practiced “*pangaderreng*” by the Bugis society even only within the spectrum of Islam. Third, how the *bissu* are able to negotiate their identity into aspects of piety by performing hajj adhering to pillars of Islam and the pillars of faith.²⁶

Titiek also argues that the long historical journey of the *bissu* community shows a strong social bond between the *bissu* and the Bugis community, with the *bissu* playing a crucial role in ceremonial customs and their existence being threatened by religious leaders and modernization pressures. This impacts the preservation of Bugis culture, and local governments with *bissu* communities are expected to act wisely in maintaining the *bissu* cultural heritage to prevent its extinction amidst modern society.²⁷

Rahmat and azis argue that the continued presence of *bissu* in society today demonstrates the strong social bonds they share with the community. They play a crucial role in traditional ceremonies for prosperity and well-being and have managed to persist despite facing challenges. The *bissu* has been adapted to modern times with some working as “*Indo Botting*” and “*Sandro*” performing makeup and healing rituals. Their existence is maintained due to their ability to adapt to the environment and

²⁵ Pelras, *The Bugis*, 165.

²⁶ Nur Aedah and Muhamad Muchsin, “Seeking Allataala in Everyday Life’: Understanding Queer Spiritual Space of *Bissu* Community in Indonesia,” *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding* 8, no. 10 (October 2, 2023): 58, <https://doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v8i10.2999>.

²⁷ Titiek Suliyati, “*Bissu*: Keistimewaan Gender Dalam Tradisi Bugis,” *Endogami: Jurnal Ilmiah Kajian Antropologi* 2, no. 1 (December 1, 2018): 51.

religion along with the support of the community that values their ancestral traditions.²⁸ The participation of the *bissu* in Bugis traditions especially the *sere bissu maggiriq* dance also serves as a way to represent the *bissu* gender identity in society and establish their position as subjects other than women and men.²⁹

However, as time goes by, there will always be significant changes in the social status and roles of the *bissu* because their religious customary practices have been influenced and transformed by Islamic values over time. Suheri argues that there is a decline in the role and respect of the *bissu* in customary rituals and daily activities replaced by Islamic puritanism.³⁰

On the other hand, by examining the origins of *bissu*, their social roles and ritual practices. Their unique role as sacred figures that combine female and male elements is revealed thereby challenging conventional gender norms.³¹ This is in line with Adnan's argument which explores the relationship between five genders and Islam. He argues that the encounter between Islamic traditions and teachings gives rise to a new model of Islamic religiosity which allows tradition and religion to coexist without marginalization.³² However, Suliyati highlighted concerns about the potential extinction of the *bissu* community due to their dwindling numbers and irregular ceremonies being held thus hampering *bissu* regeneration.³³

The last discourse, Sharyn Graham Davies offers deeper insights into gender in Sulawesi challenging conventional binary gender norms and highlighting the interplay of factors in defining gender which can provide a broader understanding of how *bissu* maintain their existence in an ever-changing society³⁴. In the other book, Davies researched how the Bugis people think and feel about gender, specifically she examined the subjectivity of non-binary genders (*calalai*, *calabai* and *bissu*) because

²⁸ Muhammad Saleh and St Aminah Azis, "Eksistensi Bissu dalam Masyarakat Suku Bugis Studi Kasus Bissu di Segeri Kabupaten Pangkep" 2, no. 1 (2023): 38.

²⁹ Akhmar et al., "Ritual Performance as Gradual Recognition," 12.

³⁰ Suheri Suheri et al., "Bissu on Contesting Indigeneity with Islamic Puritanism in the Sacred Arena," *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 22, no. 1 (August 8, 2021): 127–38, <https://doi.org/10.14421/esensia.v22i1.2804>.

³¹ Leonard Y. Andaya, "The Bissu: Study of a Third Gender in Indonesia," in *Gender in Focus*, ed. Andreea Zamfira, Christian de Montlibert, and Daniela Radu, 1st ed., Identities, Codes, Stereotypes and Politics (Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2018), 71, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvddzn5f.5>.

³² Adnan, "BISSU YANG ENGGAN MEMBISU Proses Encountering Islam dan Kebugisan," 413.

³³ Suliyati, "Bissu," 60.

³⁴ Sharyn Graham Davies, "Thinking of Gender in a Holistic Sense: Understandings of Gender in Sulawesi, Indonesia," in *Advances in Gender Research*, vol. 10 (Bingley: Emerald (MCB UP), 2006), 20, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1529-2126\(06\)10001-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1529-2126(06)10001-6).

these identities challenge gender norms.³⁵ Davies also challenges simplistic understandings of gender. she argues gender in Indonesia is a complex and multifaceted concept shaped by a various of factors including biology, performance, sexuality and cultural context.³⁶

In sum, these studies provide insight into the complex interactions between gender identity, traditions, and religious values in South Sulawesi with a particular focus on the bissu community and its social change. The research gap identified in this subsection is the lack of in-depth research on the interactions between Muslim communities and gender itself. In addition, research conducted in the Bone region only focuses on the role of *bissu* but there has been no adequate discussion regarding how communities that live side by side with this gender belief tradition interact.

My research continues Sharyn Graham's research but focuses on Muslim communities identifying gaps in the literature such as the lack of research on the existence of these five genders in particular (*calabai*, *calalai* and *bissu*) which still exist and have space in the context of Muslim communities. Public reality in the Muslim community in Bone which is still unexplored.

E. Theoretical Framework

This research employs Pierre Bourdieu's theory of Habitus, represented by the formula (Habitus x Capital) + field = Practice.³⁷ The author considers Bourdieu's theory relevant for examining the forms of capital possessed by non-binary gender that have enabled their continued existence and resilience within society. Habitus as defined by Bourdieu is an internalized cognitive structure through which individuals perceive and interact with the social world. In this context, the non-binary gender especially *bissu's* habitus is shaped by their unique cultural practices and beliefs influencing their social position and interaction.

Capital, in Bourdieu's theory encompasses not only economic resources but also cultural, social and symbolic capital. The *bissu* as traditional Bugis priests, possess all these forms of capital. Their economic capital is derived from their work as bridal attendants while their cultural capital is evident in their knowledge of rituals and

³⁵ Sharyn Graham Davies, *Challenging Gender Norms: Five Genders among Bugis in Indonesia*, Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology (Belmont (Calif.): Wadsworth Publishing, 2007), 131.

³⁶ Sharyn Graham Davies, *Gender Diversity in Indonesia: Sexuality, Islam and Queer Selves* (Routledge, 2010), 208, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203860953>.

³⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Harvard University Press, 1984), 145.

ability to handle sharp weapons. Their social capital stems from their position as ritual leaders and their interactions with the community. Finally, their symbolic capital is rooted in their status as holy figures and symbols of cultural heritage.

The field, in Bourdieu's terms is the social arena where individuals and groups compete for power and recognition. The non-binary gender navigates this field using their diverse forms of capital, struggling to maintain their cultural identity and social relevance in the middle of social change and challenges.

This study will investigate the complex interplay of habitus, capital and field in shaping the social dynamics and power relations within the non-binary gender community. These findings will provide a deeper understanding of the non-binary gender's role in Muslim Bugis community and their ongoing struggle for cultural preservation and social acceptance.

F. Research Significance

This research is significant for several reasons. First, this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of non-binary genders in the context of Islam, such as how this belief has integrated and adapted Islamic practices into their traditional beliefs and rituals surrounding non-binary genders like *calabai*, *calalai* and *bissu*. Second, this study fills a gap in the existing literature by examining non-binary gender from a historical perspective through to their present-day existence. This study will offer a comprehensive historical to enriches the academic discourse on gender and sexual identity while also highlighting the evolution of perceptions and representations of non-binary individuals within various social, cultural and religious context. By tracing their historical roots, this research seeks to understand how non-binary individuals have fought for recognition and acceptance throughout history as well as the challenges they have faced in societies that often enforce rigid gender binaries. Third, this study will reveal the insights into the complex relationship between gender, local traditions and religion, highlighting the factors that contributes to the persistence of such practices even in the face of evolving societal norms and values.

G. Methods

This research uses qualitative methods to draw non-statistical conclusions.³⁸ The main focus is on two forms of qualitative data collection techniques: interviews and

³⁸ Moh Soehadha, *Metode Penelitian Sosial Kualitatif Untuk Studi Agama*, vol. 1 (Yogyakarta: Suka-Press, 2018), 85.

documentation. Interviews follow a semi-structured format of at least 50 minutes, while documentation³⁹ aspect includes evaluating information about the existence of non-binary genders in Bone region society from several sources such as journals, these, internal document and online sources.

The interviewees were non-binary individuals, specifically those who identify as *Bissu*, *Calabai*, and *Calalai*, as well as community figures and traditional leaders. A several people were gathered through snowball sampling. Interviews were conducted according to the participants availability and preferences, both offline and online, over approximately five months (February to June). Scheduling interviews with some of the figures was challenging due to their busy schedules. Fortunately, they were all open to answering my questions and very appreciative of my research.

The table below contains the primary data of my interviews (all names are pseudonyms).

No	Name	Position
1	Syamsul Bahri a.k.a Puang Matoa Ancu a.k.a Bissu Angel)	Bissu
2.	Muhammad Yunus	Passere Bissu/Calabai
3	Bissu Lolo	Pessere Bissu /Calabai
4	Bissu Santi	Pessere Bissu/Calabai
5	Bissu Bella	Pessere Bissu/Calabai
6	Bissu Yuyun	Pessere Bissu/Calabai
7	Bissu Andira	Pessere Bissu/Calabai
8	Fatma Jauharoh	the promoters of religious moderation communities (KMB) also as Islamic religious instructor from Bone
9	Abdi Mahesa	Young cultural practitioner from Bone, South Sulawesi focusing on Bissu's

³⁹ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches*, 4th ed (Sage Publications, 2013), 191.

The interview instrument for *calabai*, *calalai*, and *bissu* individuals included questions about their initial involvement in bissu organizations, experiences of discrimination, factors contributing to their gender identity construction, how they defined themselves as non-binary within a Muslim community, and their views on the intersection of culture and religion that leads to their marginalization and the societal stigma that perceives their position as sexual orientation rather than gender identity. For interviewees outside these three genders, the discussion focused on their opinions regarding non-binary gender within the Muslim community in the Bone region.

This research analyzed data through three steps: reduction, visualization, and conclusion drawing.⁴⁰ The first step involved sorting data, discarding irrelevant material, and identifying important details to make the analysis more organized and focused. After gathering the interviewees' opinions on the experiences and existence of *calabai*, *calalai*, and *bissu* regarding their gender identity, I transcribed the interview recordings, selected data relevant to the research questions, and removed unnecessary elements. The second step was data systematization, where data was presented. This process involves placing different data points in their respective logical positions. In the final step, I utilized a theoretical framework to methodically arrange the sorted data.

H. Thesis Structure and Outline

This research comprises several chapters. The first chapter provides an overview of the research objectives, emphasizing the importance of understanding the discourse surrounding non-binary genders. It also outlines the thesis structure, including the main chapters and their perspectives areas of focus. The second chapter delves into the discourse surrounding the understanding of non-binary gender within Islam. It explores how gender is perceived across several cultures, particularly focusing on the Bugis community in Indonesia, which uniquely recognizes five genders. This chapter contrasts the perspectives with traditional Islamic views, often adhering to a binary gender system. It also examines the concept of *Tashabbuh* (imitating the opposite sex) and *Khunthā* (Intersex individuals) in Islamic teachings, highlighting the challenges how Indonesia law and social dynamics have evolved to acknowledge gender diversity while emphasizing the ongoing debate between cultural practices and religious interpretations.

⁴⁰ Amir Marvasti, *Qualitative Research in Sociology, Introducing Qualitative Methods* (Sage, 2003), 88.

The third chapter explores the intricate world of non-binary gender within the Bugis Muslim community specifically focusing on *calabai*, *calalai* and *bissu*. It delves into their historical significance, cultural roles and the challenges they face in contemporary society. Furthermore, the chapter examines the evolving dynamics of gender identity within the Bugis community, highlighting the tension between tradition and modernity and the ongoing struggle for acceptance and inclusion. The thesis's final chapter concludes the key findings and insights from the preceding chapters. Emphasizing its contribution to the understanding of non-binary genders. The conclusion also identifies potential avenues for future research and encourages readers to engage with the broader implications of the study's findings.

CHAPTER II

GENDER IN ISLAMIC DISCOURSE

A. Introduction

This chapter delves into the historical analysis of gender in general, providing context for the current discourse on gender in Indonesia. By examining gender discussion in Indonesia, this chapter reveals a unique relief among the Bugis people that there are five genders: *oroane*, *makkunrai*, *calabai*, *calalai* and *bissu*. This belief exists before the arrival of Islam in Bugis. However, since the majority of Bugis people are Muslim, the discussion of gender needs to be integrated with Islamic perspective on gender. This chapter addresses the concepts of *tashabbuh* and *khunthā* within this context. By examining the historical context of gender discussions, this chapter seeks to establish an understanding of gender diversity and its existence within Muslim communities as well as the discussion of gender in Islamic perspective.

B. Gender Discourse in Indonesia

When discussing human identity, there are two interconnected but fundamentally different terms: gender and sex. Sex refers to the biological traits that distinguish males and females at birth, such as chromosomes, hormones, and reproductive organs.⁴¹ According to Fakih, Gender is a grammatical classification of words and other related words that broadly relate to the existence of two sexes or neutrality. Gender also refers to the differentiation of roles, functions, and responsibilities of men and women as a result of agreement or social constructs.⁴² The concept of gender has been widely studied and debated across several fields, including sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, and feminism. One of the most influential perspectives is that gender is not determined by biology, but rather is shaped by social and cultural factors. This view challenges the idea that the roles, behaviors, and identities of men and women are naturally determined by their sex.

The term "gender" derived from the Latin word "*genus*" denotes type, order, or class, and can also be interpreted as differences in function, roles, status, and responsibilities between men and women as a result of social and cultural constructions ingrained through the process of socialization and passed down from

⁴¹ Hungu, *Demografi Kesehatan Indonesia* (Jakarta: Penerbit Grasindo, 2016), 43.

⁴² Fakih Mansour, *Analisis Gender Dan Transformasi Sosial* (Yogyakarta: Insist Press, 2016), 112.

one generation to the next.⁴³ Gender is a social construct that refers to the roles, behaviors and identities associated with men and women in a given society. This social construct varies across cultures and throughout history, indicating that gender is neither universal nor fixed.⁴⁴ Instead, gender is a product of social norms, cultural values, and practices that are learned and internalized by individuals from an early age.

According to Quraish Shihab, gender is defined as something socially and culturally attached, codified, and institutionalized to men and women, involving functions, roles, rights, and obligations within the realm of gender.⁴⁵ In contrast, Nasaruddin Umar argues that gender predominantly determines aspects of masculinity and femininity rather than biological sex. This cultural concept seeks to create distinctions in terms of roles, behaviors, mentalities, and emotional characteristics between men and women that evolve within society.⁴⁶ A prominent example of gender construction is the differing roles in patriarchal societies. Traditionally, men are associated with public roles and leadership, while women are associated with domestic roles and caregiving.

In the other hand, Sex is more accurately defined as biological, whereas gender differs in meaning, emphasizing the sociocultural aspects. Referred to Hungu, sex refers to the biological differences between males and females. This encompasses biological characteristics distinctive to males or females, such as males typically having Adam's apples, producing sperm, and possessing a penis, while females have vaginas, produce eggs, have breasts, a uterus, undergo menstruation, and are capable of breastfeeding.⁴⁷ Quraish Shihab in his book argues that sex is something natural from Allah and remains fixed, which cannot be exchanged or altered.⁴⁸

Gender discourse has been a long-standing topic of discussion, attracting interest from various fields to provide insights and analyze according to their expertise. Elaine Showalter, a prominent figure in gender studies, noted a significant

⁴³ Riant Nugroho Dwijowijoto, *Gender dan strategi pengarus-utamaannya di Indonesia* (Pustaka Pelajar, 2008), 17–18.

⁴⁴ Juditha Christiany, “Gender Dan Seksualitas Dalam Konstruksi Media Massa,” *Jurnal Kementerian Komunikasi Dan Informatika RI* 1, no. 1 (2015): 2.

⁴⁵ Quraish Shihab, *Membincang Persoalan Gender*, cet 1 (Semarang: RaSAIL, 2013), 3.

⁴⁶ Nasaruddin Umar, *Arguments for Gender Equality: A Qur’anic Perspective* (Puslitbang Lektur dan Khasanah Keagamaan, Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, 2014), 33–34.

⁴⁷ Sofyan A. P. Kau and Zulkarnain Suleman, *Fikih feminis: menghadirkan teks tandingan* (Pustaka Pelajar, 2014), 2.

⁴⁸ Shihab, *Membincang Persoalan Gender*, 3.

shift in the early 1977's. During that time, feminist groups in London began to move away from traditional issues like patriarchy and sexism, and instead focused on gender discourse.⁴⁹ The emergence of women's movements in other parts of the world also had an impact on the women's movement in Indonesia.

In the Indonesian discourse, the spirit of the struggle for gender equality emerged in the early 20th century, pioneered by figures such as R.A.Kartini. In her renowned work "*Habis Gelap Terbitlah Terang*" (Out of Darkness Comes Light), Kartini advocated for women's rights in education and self-reliance while also criticizing customary practices that disadvantaged women. Kartini's advocacy for women's emancipation marked a turning point for the women's movement in Indonesia. As a pioneer, Kartini successfully elevated the status of women through education. Her unwavering spirit inspired Indonesian women to challenge oppressive traditions, ultimately leading to an improvement in the quality of education for women.⁵⁰ This movement then expanded to several regions with the formation of women's organizations sharing similar goals.

In recent decades, the discourse on gender in Indonesia has become increasingly developed and diverse. The emergence of feminist movements, LGBTQ+ groups and other advocacy organizations has enriched the understanding of gender and championed the rights of marginalized individuals. Issues such as non-binary gender identities, sexual orientation and reproductive rights have become increasingly open for discussion.

Tracing Genders Diversity in Indonesia

Throughout Indonesian history, diverse spiritual beliefs and religions have shaped societal understanding of identity, encompassing national, religious, gender, and sexual dimensions. In the modern context, Islam in Indonesia presents various perspectives, ranging from support for syncretism with local religions to adherence to more conservative Wahhabi and Salafi ideologies.⁵¹ However, one thing is certain that Islam has been an influential force in shaping Indonesian nationalism as well as how issues of gender and sexuality are discussed and interpreted within society.

⁴⁹ Syahrul Amar, "Perjuangan Gender Dalam Kajian Sejarah Wanita Indonesia Pada Abad XIX," *Fajar Historia: Jurnal Ilmu Sejarah Dan Pendidikan* 1, no. 2 (December 14, 2017): 106, <https://doi.org/10.29408/fhs.v1i2.587>.

⁵⁰ Tashadi, *RA. Kartini* (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan Kebudayaan, 1986), 82.

⁵¹ Giora Eliraz, *Islam in Indonesia: Modernism, Radicalism and the Middle East Dimension* (Liverpool University Press, 2013), 26, <https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.4116434>.

For instance, the Bugis community in South Sulawesi recognizes the concept of *bissu*, who are considered spiritual transgender shamans with significant spiritual power. The existence of *bissu* serves as tangible evidence that the Bugis community have long acknowledge and valued gender diversity. Other than that, there are exists an understanding of five gender categories, indicating that they do not adhere solely to the binary concept of male and female. This openness has created space for discussion on queer sexuality⁵² which has become a primary focus in understanding the interconnectedness of gender identity and sexuality within the broader Indonesian society.

Particularly among the Bugis community numbering around six million people, there exists a longstanding unique tradition. The Bugis people, renowned as travelers and entrepreneurs have influenced the entire region of Sulawesi Island, the third largest island in Indonesia. One significant aspect of the bugis culture is the beliefs of five gender which is *calabai*, *calalai* and *bissu*.⁵³ *Calabai* are individuals who are assigned male at birth but feel more comfortable expressing themselves and living look like a woman. They often take on traditional female roles in society such as becoming bridal makeup artists or traditional dancers. *Calalai* are individuals who are assigned female birth but feel more aligned with male roles and identity. And the *bissu*, often interpreted as transgender shamans who have been an integral part of the Bugis royal court since the 1500s, playing a crucial role with strong spiritual powers, seen as a result of the fusion of feminine and masculine characteristics.

Similar thing also happened in Ponorogo, East Java. Renowned for its traditional *Warok* art. *Warok* are mystical figures believed to be invulnerable to sharp weapons. To enhance their supernatural abilities. It required to undergo various rituals and sacrifices, including abstaining from sexual relations with women until their knowledge is sufficiently advanced. To fulfill their sexual needs, *Warok* has *gemblak*, young men aged 9-17 who serve as assistants and companions. *Gemblak* with attractive and feminine appearances is typically chosen by *Warok*. This is due to the prohibition against sexual relations with women before the *Warok's* knowledge reaches a certain

⁵² Evelyn Blackwood, "Transnational Sexualities in One Place: Indonesian Readings," *Gender and Society* 19, no. 2 (2005): 42; Tom Boellstorff, "Between Religion and Desire: Being Muslim and Gay in Indonesia," *American Anthropologist* 107, no. 4 (2005): 85, <https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.2005.107.4.575>; Davies, *Gender Diversity in Indonesia*.

⁵³ Pelras, *The Bugis*, 166.

level. Once their knowledge is mastered, *Warok* are permitted to marry and engage in sexual relations with their wives.⁵⁴

The distinction between the gender conception in Bugis society and the sexual tradition in other islands of Indonesia lies in the unique social role and recognition of the "*bissu*". *Bissu* is a non-binary gender figure regarded as an intermediary between the human world and spirits playing a significant role in Bugis customary rituals. The concept of *bissu* extends beyond a mere fusion of masculine and feminine traits. They are perceived to possess spiritual power by virtue of this combination, enabling them to perform religious tasks and rituals that cannot be undertaken by individuals identifying strictly as male or female. Although many voices express rejection towards sexual minorities from Islam often through misinterpretation of religious sources that do not specifically address issues related to transgender or homosexual individuals, some individuals have worked towards inclusive interpretations of queer communities through alternative expositions. It is worth noting that scholars and religious figures advocating for the rights of sexual and gender minorities in Indonesia remain a minority themselves. Several scholars have studied how the Indonesian government responds to uncommon gender and sexuality issues. An example is *ludruk*, a type of theater from East Java where actors dress as the opposite gender. This theater has experienced a decline in performances due to pressure from the government influenced by religious views.⁵⁵

According to Blackwood,⁵⁶ during the new order era in Indonesia, there existed stringent and restrictive views on how individuals should express their gender particularly in the realm of theater, resulting in discrimination against those displaying gender-nonconforming behaviors. Following the end of the Suharto led new order regime and the transition to a more democratic regime, various Islamic groups with diverse perspectives began utilizing new avenues such as social media to voice and advocate for their interests as evidenced by Eva F Nisa's exploration of how new technologies play a role in advancing religiously linked social movements like One day

⁵⁴ Setya Yuwana, "Homoseksualitas Di Kalangan Warok, Warokan, Sinoman, Gemblak Di Desa Somoroto, Kecamatan Kauman, Kabupaten Ponorogo" (1994), 6.

⁵⁵ James L. Peacock, *Rites of Modernization; Symbolic and Social Aspects of Indonesian Proletarian Drama* (University of Chicago Press, 1968); Abi Utomo, Taufik Dermawan, and Yuni Pratiwi, "Transformasi Cerita Dalam Ludruk Menjadi Cerita Gambus Misri Di Kabupaten Jombang," *Satwika : Kajian Ilmu Budaya Dan Perubahan Sosial* 7, no. 1 (April 13, 2023): 22, <https://doi.org/10.22219/satwika.v7i1.25373>.

⁵⁶ Evelyn Blackwood, *Falling into the Lesbi World: Desire and Difference in Indonesia* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2010), 40, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt6wqj73>.

One Juz programme⁵⁷. Meanwhile, Robinson delineates various perspectives within Indonesian Islam including the emergence of Islamic feminism in the country. This feminism is grounded in a more humanistic and global understanding of Islam, emphasizing humanitarian values drawn from the Quran.⁵⁸

The relationship between the *bissu* tradition of the Bugis ethnic group and the Islamic beliefs within the predominantly Muslim Bugis society illustrates how local customs can coexist with global religions such as Islam. Among the Bugis, there is a more open and accepting understanding of gender and spirituality allowing the *bissu* to become an integral part of their social and spiritual life. Despite Islam generally holding stricter views on gender, many Bugis Muslims have managed to integrate and respect the role of the *bissu* in their community life.

This open and adaptive approach illustrates how the *bissu* tradition manages to endure within a predominantly Muslim society. It occurs through ongoing cultural dialogue where traditions, religious beliefs and modern values mutually influence one another. This serves as an example of how cultural and religious diversity can peacefully coexist and mutually respect each other albeit sometimes facing complex challenges and negotiations. For the Bugis community, the body also plays a significant role in determining gender since birth and the sex of babies as determined by their physical characteristics is closely observed and considered.⁵⁹

C. Tradition in Islamic Theology

The tradition in Islam plays a crucial role as one of the primary sources guiding religious understanding and practice. This tradition predominantly refers to Hadith which comprises records of the sayings, actions, and silent approvals of Prophet Muhammad regarded as an elucidation and complement to the Quran. Hadith serves not only as a practical guide in various aspects of life, such as worship, ethics and law but also aids in developing a profound understanding of theological concepts such as *tawhid*, eschatology (views on life after death) and *al-'Adl*. Therefore, the tradition in Islamic theology not only reflects historical norms but also influences the

⁵⁷ Eva F. Nisa, "Social Media and the Birth of an Islamic Social Movement: ODOJ (One Day One Juz) in Contemporary Indonesia," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 46, no. 134 (January 2, 2018): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2017.1416758>.

⁵⁸ Kathryn Robinson, *Gender, Islam, and Democracy in Indonesia* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 110.

⁵⁹ Sharyn Graham, "It's Like One of Those Puzzles: Conceptualising Gender Among Bugis," *Journal of Gender Studies* 13, no. 2 (July 2004): 110, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0958923042000217800>.

interpretation and adaptation of Islamic teachings in various social and cultural contexts throughout history.

Discussing the existence and recognition of non-binary individuals as observed among the Bugis ethnic group in Indonesia. The Bugis community acknowledges five genders including the *bissu* traditionally regarded as non-binary or transcendent gender. The presence and role of *bissu* are often perceived as challenging the predominant Islamic values that adhere to a binary gender system of male and female deemed as the inherent nature of humanity. Acceptance of *bissu* and broader gender concepts among the Bugis community has the potential to generate tensions both within local Muslim communities and within the broader Islamic context in Indonesia where there is a strong tendency to adhere to more conservative interpretations. The prevalence of non-binary individuals in certain traditional communities such as the Bugis challenges normative understandings and invites discussions on how flexibility in religious interpretations can serve as a bridge between local traditions and broader Islamic teachings.

In the case of non-binary gender among the Bugis ethnic group, they can be considered transgender based on the understanding of transgenderism. In Arabic, the word for transgender is *Mukhannath*, derived from a root word meaning to behave like a woman. By definition, *Mukhannath* are individuals who wear women's clothing and exhibit behaviors and speech patterns resembling those of women.⁶⁰ Transgenderism is regarded as a condition in which an individual feels that the assigned sex at birth based on their physical characteristics does not align with the gender identity they perceive to be true for themselves. This implies that although someone may be physically born with certain sex characteristics, they do not feel that these characteristics reflect who they truly are. Additionally they do not identify themselves with or present the gender assigned at birth.

Recently there has been considerable critique directed towards non-binary gender groups which encompass individuals displaying sexual behaviors deviating from societal norms where males may present themselves as females. Such behavior is perceived as highly conflicting with Islamic Sharia values or regulations. Nevertheless, what is noteworthy is that transgender individuals are provided with opportunities to showcase their talents and contribute to society. Those opposing non-binary gender groups often regard their behavior as deviations and sins capable of

⁶⁰ Munawwir Munawwir, *Kamus Al-Munawwir Arab-Indonesia* (Surabaya: Pustaka Progresif, 1997), 1321.

disrupting social order and potentially endangering human survival.⁶¹ Eventhough, the Human Rights principles embedded in Pancasila advocate that every individual is created by God and possesses two crucial facets: the personal and societal dimensions.⁶² Hence, the freedom of each individual must take into account the rights of others. This implies that everyone should respect and acknowledge the rights of others. This responsibility extends to every organization and institution, including the government and the state, particularly in Indonesia.

In the Quran, God declares that He created humanity in pairs as one of the manifestations of His magnificence, as mentioned in Surah *Az-zāriyat* verse 49. Despite this general rule, exceptions are elucidated such as in cases where an individual's gender is ambiguous, known in Islamic jurisprudence as *khunthā*. Such conditions are acknowledged and accepted as they are deemed to be the unalterable will of Allah. Meanwhile, the phenomenon of transgender individuals such as the category of *mukhannath* within the Islamic context is considered distinct and receives special attention in Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*).⁶³ Within the discourse of jurisprudence, there are two topics relevant to non-binary gender: *Tashabbuh* and *Khunthā* which will be further elucidated in this subsection.

1. *Tashabbuh*

In a diverse society with many different groups and cultures, interactions between groups can be complicated. This is especially the case when there is interaction between Muslim and non-Muslim communities who have different religious beliefs and principles of life. The social and cultural interactions that occur between these two groups ultimately give rise to phenomena such as the adoption or imitation of practices, culture and lifestyles between the groups especially with the transfer of culture from the dominant group and the adoption of culture by the less privileged group. In other words, this social condition can be referred to as "*al-tashabbuh*".

⁶¹ Yudiyanto, "Fenomena Lesbian, Gay, Biseksual Dan Transgender (LGBT) Di Indonesia Serta Upaya Pencegahannya," *Nizham: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 4, no. 1 (October 12, 2017): 63.

⁶² "UNDANG UNDANG REPUBLIK INDONESIA," n.d. Law Number 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights states that human rights are rights that are inherent in the nature and existence of humans as creatures of the Almighty God. Thus, the state and government are responsible for protecting, respecting, guaranteeing and defending the human rights of every citizen and resident.

⁶³ Muh. Bahrul Afif, "Islam and Transgender (A Study of Hadith about Transgender)," *International Journal of Nusantara Islam* 7, no. 2 (August 9, 2019): 95, <https://doi.org/10.15575/ijni.v7i2.6138>.

Literally the term "*tashabbuh*" comes from Arabic with the root word "*sha-ba-ha*", which refers to the likeness or similarity of something to another in terms of colour, nature, or other characteristics. The term can also be referred to as "*shibh*", "*shahbah*", or "*shaybih*".⁶⁴ According to *Mu'jam al-Mujīz*, the word *tashabbaha* means to resemble or imitate something to the point of confusion.⁶⁵ According to al-Ghazi, *tashabbuh* is when a person tries to imitate or resemble the thing he wants to be similar to whether in behaviour, style, dress or characteristics. In other words, *tashabbuh* is a way of expressing one's desires and actions to become the thing they want to be.⁶⁶ One religious scholar who paid close attention to this issue was Ibn Taymiyyah in his famous work '*Iqtidā' al-Ṣirat al-Mustaqīm li Mukhālafah Ashāb al-Jahīm*'. In his work, he discusses the issue of imitation in the context of Muslims participating in festivals that are not of their religion.

Tashabbuh according to Ibn Taimiyyah is a Muslim who imitates the actions of infidels (*kafir*). His firm stance is based on the *wasatiyyah* approach namely as a basic axis in interacting with non-Muslims especially groups that fight Muslims.⁶⁷ The existence of obvious similarities between two people can lead to similarities and commonalities between them which in turn can influence their actions and character, this is a natural and frequent occurrence. That when people are in similar environments or situations they tend to mimic and conform to others. This can have an impact on one's behaviour and character. For example, someone who looks like a knowledgeable person tends to adopt a more thoughtful attitude and behaviour. In the case of non-binary, a man imitates a woman's appearance, the man is subconsciously adopting a more feminine behavior. However, this is not always the case if there are other influencing factors.

By showing difference and not imitating others there will be a real difference from the person being imitated. This makes Muslims different and keep away from things that can lead to misguidance and the wrath of God and draw closer to His mercy. Imitating other groups can cause us to get so mixed up that it becomes difficult to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong. There are many reasons and wisdoms why Islam forbids imitating those whom it frowns upon

⁶⁴ Abi Husain Ahmad bin Faris Zakaria, *Mu'jam Maqayis al-Lughah* (Beirut: Dar al-Jayl, 1994).

⁶⁵ Majma' al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah, *al-Mu'jam al-wajiz* (Maktabat al-Shuruq al-Dawliyyah, 2012).

⁶⁶ Muhammad Al-Ghazi, *Husn Al-Tanabbuh Lima Warada Fi al-Tasyabbuh* (Beirut: Dar al-Nawadir, 2011).

⁶⁷ Ibnu Taimiyyah, *Majmu' al Fatawa* (Beirut: Darul Fikr, 1980).

and those who go wrong. Ibn Taymiyyah had a strong stance on the importance of not imitating the lifestyles of non-Muslims which was based on scientific arguments and not on mere emotional impulses. Muhammad Bin Salih al-Uthaimin interpreted Ibn Taymiyyah's words in his book *Sharh Iqtidā al-Ṣirāt al-Mustaqīm* saying that although Ibn Taymiyyah's views were from his time which had not yet seen the adverse effects of imitation, his words were forward-looking and the adverse effects were later seen in subsequent generations.⁶⁸

Ibn Taymiyyah argued that imitating non-Muslims in permissible matters is not haram unless it relates to aspects of their disbelief. This can provide a perspective in understanding and responding to contemporary issues such as non-binary gender identity. In this context, Ibn Taymiyyah's perspective can be seen as a warning against assimilating values or practices that contradict with the basic principles of one's religion. However, if certain aspects of non-binary identities or expressions do not directly contradict the principles of faith then tolerance or acceptance may not contradict his religious teachings.

Tashabbuh can be defined as resembling not only the clothes but also the traits attached to the object. Mimicry of the opposite sex can be categorised as perversion. *Tashabbuh* is prohibited in the hadith which states that it is unlawful to imitate or alter God's creation without a valid reason. Prophet Muhammad said in the hadith which means that a man who imitates a woman and vice versa will be cursed.⁶⁹ In the Qur'anic verse 4 verse 119, a message is conveyed about changing Allah's creation. Quraish Shihab argues that changing here means changing one's original body shape which human are actually born with a pure soul and *fitrah*.⁷⁰ Therefore, humans are expected to think and understand the true essence of their religion. The verse also states that men and women were created by God from the beginning to love each other and be partners with each other. However, the actions of some people such as gender non-binary are considered as actions against what has been established by God. So, homosexual behaviour such as what happened to the people of Prophet Lot who received a curse from God is considered to be

⁶⁸ Mohd Nuba et al., "Perspektif Ibn Taimiyyah Tentang Al-Tasyabbuh Dengan Orang Bukan Islam: Analisis Terhadap Kitab Iqtida' Al-Sirat Al-Mustaqim Li Mukhalafah Ashab Al-Jahim," *UMRAN International Journal of Islamic and Civilizational Studies* 4 (March 14, 2017): 12.

⁶⁹ Abdullah Muhammad bin Ismail al Bukhari, *Shahih al Bukhari*, Kelima (Dar al-Yamamah - Damaskus: Dar Ibn Kathir, 1993), 2207.

⁷⁰ M. Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan Al-Quran: Tafsir Tematik atas Pelbagai Persoalan Umat* (Mizan Pustaka, 1996), 367.

against the laws of Islam and human nature as well as the wisdom contained in human creation.⁷¹ Resembling the appearance of the opposite sex has been noticed since the time of the Prophet as a measure to prevent gender confusion.

In sum, the discussion on *Tashabbuh* is not only limited to imitating non-Muslims, but also includes imitating or resembling the opposite sex to the point of causing a change in God's absolute creation. For those who find it difficult to let go of feminine traits in behaviour or language, despite trying various treatment methods, this can lead to stigma and humiliation for them.⁷²

2. **Khunthā**

Khunthā, is a term used to describe the intersex condition; that is, individuals born with physical features of genitalia that are not clearly either male or female. In the Islamic context, *Khunthā* are treated with sensitivity and understanding with special *fiqh* provisions designed to accommodate their needs in terms of worship, inheritance and marriage laws. Transgender hadiths are found in the ruling of *Khunthā*, in the past there was no transgender, gender determination there is the division of heirs "Judging by the genitals that emit urine (that is where the status is determined). Through mimicking the opposite sex and in terms of clothing due to blunt sexual education, there is a desire to change gender through surgery. "There is no change in the creation of Allah" *ar-rūm*:30,⁷³ whereas God has created mankind as the best of creatures. From the perspective of Islamic law (*fiqh*), the second type of transgender is considered *khunthā* which is a condition in which a person is born with genital features that make it appear that they have two sexes both penis and vagina.

In the hadith of ad-Darimi, two concepts are mentioned: *Khunthā Musykil* and *Ghairu Musykil*. *Khunthā musykil* refers to something that is uncertain, while *Ghairu Musykil* refers to something that is certain. The Hadith states that *Khunthā* or confusion is determined by the first discharge of urine. Although the validity of this hadith is questioned due to weaknesses in the chain of narrators Ahmad Rofiq's book entitled *Fiqh Mawaris* states that the scholars still use this Hadith as a basis

⁷¹ Norhidayah Mohamad Nawawy and Hasan Ahmad, "Pembinaan Akhlak Transgender Mak Nyah Muslim," *Pusat Bahasa Moden & Sains Kemanusiaan Universiti Malaysia Pahang*, 2018, 374.

⁷² Nuba et al., "Perspektif Ibn Taimiyyah Tentang Al-Tasyabbuh Dengan Orang Bukan Islam," 46.

⁷³ M.A.S Abdel Haleem, trans., *The Qur'an* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 258.

for the division of inheritance.⁷⁴ *Khunthā musykil* is a person who is difficult to identify even after biological identification, the gender is still difficult to determine because the physical characteristics of the person do not show a certain gender tendency. *Khunthā ghairu musykil* is a type of *Khunthā* that is relatively easier to identify their gender based on clearer physical characteristics. Before reaching adulthood, gender can be determined by the channel through which urine is discharged. If urine comes out of the male genitalia then the person is considered a male. Conversely, if urine comes out of the female genitals then the person is considered a female. After entering puberty if a person begins to grow a moustache and emit sperm then it is determined as a male. Meanwhile, if there is breast development menstruation and pregnancy, then the person is recognised as female.⁷⁵

According to Imam Shafi'i, a *khunthā* is a person who has body parts that resemble both male and female or neither. They usually only have one outlet for defecation which can make it difficult to know their gender. Imam Shafi'i said that if we want to know the sex we can look at where the urine comes from. If the urine comes out of the genitals like the testicles then he is a male and everything else is just an addition. But if the urine comes out of the vagina then he is a woman and everything else is just an addition.⁷⁶ If the case of both sexes is functional, according to *Hanabilah* and *Malikiyah* then it is seen from the gender which is more functional. If the case is that the individual has reached puberty then look at the characteristics of puberty can be seen from the growing a beard, menstruation and so on⁷⁷.

If a person who is *khunthā* urinates through both genitalia at the same time then his status is determined based on which genitalia started urinating first. If the first to start is the male genitalia followed by the female genitalia, then the person is considered a male. But if the first to start is the female genitalia followed by the male genitalia then the person is considered a female. This is because the genitalia

⁷⁴ Nurul Wafa Maulidina, "Analisis Fatwa MUI Nomor 03/Munas/VIII/2010 tentang Perubahan dan Penyempurnaan Jenis Kelamin dan Kaitannya dengan Implikasi Hukumnya" (SEMARANG, UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI WALISONGO SEMARANG, 2015), 9.

⁷⁵ Khoirul Abror et al., "Method of Determination of Double Gender and Marriage in Islamic Law," *Karachi Islamicus* 2, no. 1 (June 30, 2022): 4, <https://doi.org/10.58575/ki.v2i1.17>.

⁷⁶ Abu Al-Hasan Ali bin Muhammad bin Habib Al-Mawardi, *AL-Ahwi Al-Kabir*, vol. juz VIII (Beirut: Daar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah, 1994), 168.

⁷⁷ Kementerian Wakaf, *Al-Mausu'at al-Fiqhiyya al-Kuwaitiyya*, 1st ed., vol. Juz 20 (Kuwait: Dar al-Salasil, 1984), 22–24.

that started first indicate the true gender. If this method does not give a clear result then the person is considered a complicated *khunthā* and his status will be determined when he reaches adulthood.⁷⁸

In *Fathu al-Mannān*,⁷⁹ the term "*khunthā*" refers to a person who has physical features that are a combination of male and female, or has a condition where they cannot be clearly divided into male or female. They have male-like urinary tracts but that does not make them automatically considered male. If they urinate through the male reproductive organs, they are regarded as men and the laws associated with men are applied to them in the context of inheritance and other matters. Al-Hasan Al-Basri noted that if their bodies have a certain shape, they are considered to have a different rib structure. The *tsiqah* narrator *munqathi'* Muhammad bin Ali his grandfather is *mursal* according to Husain Salim Asad ad-Daroni.

Based on the decisions of Islamic Legal Scholars (*Mujtahid*), there are two methods to determine sex of a *khunthā*. The first method is by observing which genitalia is first used for urination. This method is based on a hadith of Prophet Muhammad narrated when he was holding an intersex infant from the Anshar tribe which means: "it is narrated that the Messenger of Allah met a *khunthā* from among the Ansar so he said: "gave the inheritance of this *khunthā* child (like the share of a boy or girl) considering from which genitalia he first used to urinate".⁸⁰

A similar hadith is mentioned in *al-Kaafi* written by Sheikh Kulaini which translate as follows "From Abu Ali al-Ash'ari, from Abdul Jabbar, from Sofwan bin Yahya and Muhammad bin Ismail, bin Fadhil bin Sadzan, both of them, from Sofwan, from Ibnu Maskan, from Dawud bin Farqad, from Abi Abdillah, it was said: He was asked about the birth of a baby who has a vagina and a penis, how is their inheritance? He said: If they urinate from the penis, then they inherit as a man inherits and if they urinate from the vagina then they inherit as a woman inherits".⁸¹

The second method is by examining signs of maturity. The Ulama commented in relation to determining the gender of *khunthā* as follows. First, some Hanbali and Shafi'i scholar argue that the sex of a *khunthā* is determined by which

⁷⁸ Abu Abdillah Muhammad bin Abd Al-Rahman Al-Dimasyqi, *Rahmat Al-Ummah Fi Al-Ikhtilaf Al-Ummah* (Beirut: Daar Al-kutub Al- Ilmiyyah, 1986), 205.

⁷⁹ Nabil Hasyim Al Ghamri, *Fathul Mannān Sharh Al-Musnad al-Jāmi'* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Bashaer al-Islamiyah, 1999).

⁸⁰ Shalih bin, *At-Takmil Mafata Tahribihi Min Idwaul Ghalil* (Riyadh: Darul Asshimat, 1996), 110.

⁸¹ Kulaini, *Al-Kaafi*, Juz 7 (Iran: Darul Kitab Islamiyah, 1367), 156.

genitalia releases more urine. Their reasoning is that determining rulings based on the majority state is a fundamental principle in Islamic law. Second, Hanafi scholars, one shafi'i scholar and some Hanbali scholars argue that a *khunthā* remains classified as *khunthā* if there are no clear signs (in the case of *khunthā* mushkil). They argue that the amount of urine released from one genitalia is not a definitive indicator of the *khunthā* 's original sex. And the last, Ibn Utsaimin argues that the use of medical methods is permissible in determining the sex of a *khunthā* for example by examining the uterus.⁸²

Meanwhile in the field of medicine, the condition of *khunthā* is considered an unusual genital abnormality. This abnormality is known and studied under the term ambiguous genitalia or sex ambiguity which is a condition where a person has unclear genetic, anatomical and physiological characteristics between male and female.⁸³

The main difference between *tashabbuh* and *khunthā* lies in the aspect of choice versus birth conditions. *Tashabbuh* is a conscious act of imitating the opposite sex that is often seen as a violation of social or religious norms, whereas *Khunthā* is a medical/biological condition unrelated to individual choice. In the Third National Conference, Fatwa No. 03/MUNAS-VIII/2010 concluded the following regarding gender reassignment: Firstly, if a person deliberately changes his/her genitals from male to female or vice versa, for example through sex reassignment surgery, such action is considered religiously haram and does not affect the status of sharia law related to such change. Secondly, if a person who has the condition of *Khunthā* where the male genital function is dominant or vice versa, performs surgery to protect the genitals, it is religiously permissible and has the essence of sharia law related to the act of improvement.

In the current situation, the process of gender determination is no longer limited to biological phenomena as indicated by the first discharge of urine. Instead with the increasing awareness of individual identity gender determination is now mostly done through legal processes. In Indonesia, this is regulated in Law Number 24 Year 2013 on gender change. Law No. 23/2006 on population administration defines "important events" as events that are important in a person's life, including birth, death, stillbirth, marriage, marriage, child recognition, child attestation,

⁸² Bagus Purnomo Putro Prasetyo, Liliek Istiqomah, and Yusuf Adiwibowo, "Tinjauan Yuridis Perkawinan Al-Khuntsa (Kelamin Ganda) Menurut Hukum Islam," 2013, 2.

⁸³ Kate Davies, "Disorders of Sex Development—Ambiguous Genitalia," *Journal of Pediatric Nursing* 31, no. 4 (July 2016): 46, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pedn.2016.04.007>.

calling a child, change of name and change of citizenship status. Although not explicitly mentioned in the paragraph, the concept of gender reassignment remains in the provisions of article 56 paragraph (1). The term "other events" refers to events that are regulated by the district court to be recorded by the implementing agency. One example is a change of sex.⁸⁴

Islam addresses sex reassignment as an issue that has emerged in modern Islamic jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) because the concept of changing one's sex is a modern phenomenon made possible by surgical procedures, although practices like castration which also alter sexual characteristics have existed since ancient times. Fundamentally, sex reassignment surgery is not automatically forbidden in Islam. Islamic law assesses actions based on their underlying reasons, determining whether they fall into the category of forbidden or permissible (*mubah*). This principle is particularly relevant to contemporary issues such as sex reassignment surgery. For example, in cases of *khunthā*, sex reassignment surgery may be permissible if it aims to correct or improve their condition. Zuhroni argues that sex reassignment is permissible in Islamic law if it is possible and there is a strong reason for it such as in the case of intersex individuals. This permissibility can even become an obligation if one of the sexes in an intersex individual poses a risk to their health.⁸⁵

However, in the context of modern intersex case management, al-Jirahat (*ámaliyat*) al-tajmiliyyat emphasizes that body reconstruction surgery is only permissible if it meets several conditions that must be fulfilled cumulatively to avoid unwanted consequences. These conditions if the materials used to repair or cover defects such as skin, bone or other organs must come from the individual's own body or from someone who has passed away and the doctor performing the surgery must be confident that the procedure will be successful.

D. Theoretical Framework: The Habitus

This research used the (habitus x capital) + field = Practice.⁸⁶ theory offered by Pierre Bourdieu to examine the phenomenon of the non-binary gender within the

⁸⁴ I Nyoman Satria Perwira, Ida Ayu Putu Widiati, and Diah Gayatri Sudibya, "Perubahan Status Jenis Kelamin Dalam Perspektif Hukum Positif Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Interpretasi Hukum* 2, no. 1 (March 26, 2021): 74–78, <https://doi.org/10.22225/juinhum.2.1.3095.74-78>.

⁸⁵ Zuhroni, Nur Riani, and Nirwan Nazaruddin, *Islam Untuk Disiplin Ilmu Kesehatan Dan Kedokteran 2 (Fiqh Kontemporer)* (Jakarta: DEPAG, 2003), 199.

⁸⁶ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 101.

Muslim Bugis community in Bone Region. In Bourdieu's perspective habitus can be defined as the framework of thought or cognitive structure embedded within an individual.⁸⁷ This structure is shaped by life experiences and social interactions from an early age, encompassing values, beliefs, perceptions and behavior considered normal or acceptable within one's social movement. In relation to the social world, individuals cannot be separated from interaction and social scape. To meet the demands or gain social acceptance, individuals must possess capital to fulfill their interactions and social space with others.

Bourdieu identifies four types of capital: economic, social, cultural and symbolic. The field (arena) is a competitive marketplace where these various forms of capital are used and exploited.⁸⁸ Bourdieu's concept of capital cannot be separated from other concepts of domination so that Bourdieu's argue that is related to other concepts of power namely habitus and field (arena). The field (arena) is defined as a network of relations between objective positions within it. These relationships are separate from individual consciousness and desires and are not simply interactions or intersubjective bonds between individuals. Positions within the field can be occupied by agents or institutions as determined by the structure of the field. Bourdieu further suggests that the field can be likened to a battleground or a realm of struggle.

Bourdieu describes the social arena as a space where individuals and groups compete for power and influence. The structure of this arena shapes the strategies employed by the social actors to secure and enhance their positions within the power hierarchy. It is said so because this is where people both individually and collectively support and direct strategies to secure or prove their power positions and implement the most relevant hierarchical principles. Within the field (arena), social "battles" always exist. Those who possess capital and habitus similar to most individuals will be more capable of taking actions to maintain or change the structure compared to those who lack capital. Capital is defined as an important instrument in the preservation of political power.⁸⁹ The function of capital according to Bourdieu is social relations in an exchange system that presents itself as something rare, worth seeking in a particular social form. Various forms of capital can be converted into one another. The most significant transformation happens in the symbolic realm where

⁸⁷ George Ritzer, *Teori Sosiologi Klasik-Post Modern Edisi Terbaru (Trans:Nurhadi)* (Yogyakarta: Kreasi Wacana, 2012), 581.

⁸⁸ Ritzer, 583.

⁸⁹ Abd Halim, *Politik Lokal; Pola, Aktor & Alur Dramatikalnya* (Yogyakarta: LP2B, 2014), 109.

different types of capital are perceived and acknowledged making them easier to legitimize. The following explanation delves into Bourdieu's classification of capital below.

First, Economic capital, consisting of resources that can be used for production and financial means is a form of capital than can be easily converted into other types. It encompasses tools of production (machinery, land and buildings), material assests (income and possessions) and more. All of these forms of capital are versatile and can be inherited by future generations. In the context of this research, the non-binary gender particularly *calabai* and *bissu* utilize their makeup skills to generate income from services such as bridal makeup and participating in *Maggiri* dance events. Additionally, *bissu* are often active as speakers in cultural events or seminars that discuss about the *bissu* community which also provides them with financial compensation. The income they earn from these activities constitutes a form of economic capital.

Second, cultural capital refers to the knowledge, skills and social assets that individuals process. Which can be gained through education, family background or cultural experiences.⁹⁰ In the context of this research, the *bissu's* ability to hold sharp weapons is an example of cultural capital as it is a unique skill that is valued and respected within their community *bissu* also has in-depth knowledge of oral traditions, *Lontara* scripts and customary rituals which is not all the Bugis people understand. This knowledge has been passed down through generation to generation and become important part of Bugis cultural identity.

Third, Social capital defined as the network of relationships that determine social standing is a valuable resource for navigating society. Bourdieu conceptualized social capital as the valuable social connections between individuals, exemplified by interactions between different social classes.⁹¹ Social capital can be viewed as an investment in acquiring new resources with the resources used for this investment referred to as capital. It is a broad and complex concept encompassing not only material assets but also the social capital inherent within individuals. For instance, the *bissu* possess social capital as ritual leaders granting them a high social position within certain contexts. Their role as traditional Bugis priests, performing essential rituals exclusive to them, fosters cooperation between the *bissu* and the community. Similar to other forms of capital, the utility of social capital depends on the efforts made to

⁹⁰ Halim, 110.

⁹¹ Ritzer, *Teori Sosiologi Klasik-Post Modern Edisi Terbaru (Trans:Nurhadi)*, 583.

preserve, maintain, strengthen, renew and utilize it effectively. The misuse of social capital can cause losses and negative impact, while the management and utilization of social capital can have a positive impact for a parties involved.

Forth, Symbolic capital refers to the resources utilized to achieve symbolic power. Symbolic power often requires symbols of authority such as titles, luxury cars, offices, prestige, degrees, status and prominent family connections. In this context, symbolic capital signifies recognition by a group, whether institutional or non-institutional. Symbol themselves have the power to construct realities, influencing people's beliefs, recognitions and perceptions of an individual, a group, a political party or a nation. The symbolic capital held by the *bissu*, besides their role as ancient Bugis priests, includes the title of holy person bestowed upon them by society due to their perceived inherent value. Additionally, the *bissu* serve as symbols of cultural heritage that must be preserved.

In sum, the existence and roles of non-binary gender within the Muslim Bugis community can be understood through Bourdieu's theory. This shows that the current existence of non-binary gender, regardless of the pros and cons within the society is facilitated by utilizing various forms of capital (economic, social, cultural and symbolic) to interact and negotiate within their social environment.

E. Conclusion

This chapter discusses the discussion of gender in general in Indonesia related to gender diversity and the discussion of gender form in Islamic perspective. In the bugis tribe, there is a unique belief in five genders: *oroane*, *makkunrai*, *calabai*, *calalai* and *bissu*. The Bugis community in Indonesia exemplifies the complexity of gender discourse, recognizing diverse gender categories, including the revered *Bissu*, who represent both feminine and masculine traits. This tradition challenges conventional Islamic views of the gender binary, fuelling discussions about religious interpretation and social acceptance. The concepts of *tashabbuh* and *Khunthā* emphasizes that in Islam there are only two genders both male and female. Resembling the opposite sex is not justified in the concept of *tashabbuh*, but in the discussion of *Khunthā*, there is an explanation regarding non-binary gender. *Khunthā* requires complex legal and ethical considerations in Islamic *fiqh* studies.

CHAPTER III

THE EXISTENCE OF NON-BINARY GENDER IN THE BUGIS MUSLIM COMMUNITY

A. Introduction

The Bugis community, originating from South Sulawesi, Indonesia has a unique and rich view of gender which differs from the binary gender concept commonly known in many other cultures. In the Bugis tradition, there are five culturally recognized gender categories which reflect a more complex and inclusive understanding of gender identity. The five categories are: *oroane* (men), *makkunrai* (women), *calabai* (men who behave like women), *calalai* (women who behave like men), and *bissu* (prayers who are considered to have elements of all genders).

In this chapter, the author examines the world of different genders, focusing on *calabai*, *calalai* and *bissu* in the Muslim community in Bone and how these identities have been part of Bugis traditions and beliefs for a long time and the challenges they faced as the minority from the Muslim Bugis community.

B. Exploring Bugis Gender Identity: *Calalai*, *Calabai* and *Bissu*.

1. *Calabai* & *Calalai*: A Living Legacy of History

The word is referred to the subjectivity of *calabai*. The general referred to “*banci*, *bencong*, *wadam* (women of adam), *walsu* (fake woman) and *waria* (men’s women)”. Davies defines this subjectivity as *calabai* because of two reasons. First, it does not show the singular term even *waria* probably the polite terms. Second, the identity *waria* and *calabai* are different. Such as the position of *calabai* in south Sulawesi as the make-up artist (*indo’ botting*) which roles that *waria* elsewhere do not have.

Davies define *calabai* as a “fake female” but it cannot be interpreted as female impersonator.⁹² *Calalai* are born with female bodies but traditionally take on male gender roles, they may wear shirts and trouser, smoke cigarettes, keep their hair short and do daily chores. While *Calabai* are born with male bodies but take on female gender roles wearing dresses and make-up and growing their hair long. Davies argues that *calabai* do not undercover as a female but they show off their

⁹² Davies, *Challenging Gender Norms*, 63.

feminine behavior that would be loved in *makkunrai* (women) such as wearing short skirt, smoking cigarette and act with a more outwardly sexualized way.⁹³

Becoming a *bissu* generally refers to individuals from the *calalai* and *calabai* genders. Some references state during the kingdom period, *bissu* originated from the *calalai* group as explained in the *La Galigo* script. Recently the majority of *bissu* have come from the *calabai* group because the process of becoming a *bissu* is very long, there are several distinct classifications regarding *calabai*.⁹⁴ First, *calabai tungke'na lino* are those who have met the qualifications and earned the title of *bissu*, a highly respected title in Bugis culture. This title is not given to just any *calabai* but to those considered to have received blessings from the *dewata* (Gods). As *bissu*, they play a crucial role in various traditional and spiritual ceremonies, serving as mediators between the human world and the spiritual realm. However, this does not mean that other *calabai* cannot become *bissu*. If they also receive blessings from the *dewata*, they have the right to be appointed as *bissu* indicating that this belief system is open and inclusive to all the meet the spiritual and ritual criteria.

Second, *pacalabai* are *calabai* who have a flexible sexual orientation, capable of engaging in intimate relationships with anyone whether male or female. Their sexual orientation can be categorized as bisexual. In Muslim Bugis society, *pacalabai* often have unique and important roles in social life due to their ability to interact with various segments of the community without rigid gender boundaries. Their adaptability and ability to relate to different individuals make them an important force in social and cultural interactions, strengthening inclusive and open social networks.

The last, *Calabai kedo-kedonami* are *calabai* who only adopt the style and appearance of *calabai* but fundamentally remain true males. They do not fully identify as *calabai* and maintain their male identity. For the *bissu*, the presence of *calabai kedo-kedonami* is considered dangerous because they can deceive women with their ambiguous appearance and behavior. This can cause tension within the

⁹³ Daniel Stables, "Mengenal lima gender dalam Suku Bugis di Sulawesi yang kerap alami stigma dan diskriminasi," *BBC News Indonesia*, April 25, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/vert-tra-56854166> accessed June 12 2024.

⁹⁴ Lathief Halilintar, *Bissu : Pergulatan Dan Peranannya Di Masyarakat Bugis* (Depok: Desantara, 2004), 39.

community as they blur the established gender identity boundaries leading to confusion and potential conflict in interpersonal and social relationships⁹⁵.

Hence, Bissu are indeed *calabai* but not every *calabai* is *bissu*. This distinction is why many *bissu* resist being equated with *calabai* and why many *calabai* strive to become *bissu*. The difference between *calabai* and *bissu* are significant, becoming a *bissu* is considered a divine calling from *dewata sewwa'e* which mean God. While becoming a *calabai* can be influenced by environmental, social or psychological factors. The journey to becoming a *bissu* requires extensive rituals and a profound spiritual journey making it a challenging path. On the other hand, being a *calabai* often involves adopting specific behavior (*kedo-kedonami*) that can be shaped by one's environment and may even be artificially constructed. This clear distinction emphasizes that while a *calabai*'s identity can be influenced by external circumstances, a *bissu*'s identity is deeply rooted in spiritual calling and elaborate ceremonial practices.

Calabai are often performing at weddings, birthday parties and cultural fairs. Their presence in the events not only as the entertainment but also brings a touch of creativity and innovation of fashion. *Calabai* often became the main inspiration for many people to find the latest fashion trends. Their striking and stylish looks often steal the show and became the centre of attention at every event they attend. However, *Calabai*'s appearance also has another, more profound dimension. Besides becoming a fashion inspiration, their performances are often used as an example of how males and females should not behave.⁹⁶ In the context of Bugis culture, the position of *calabai* which overemphasizes femininity and includes behaviors that are considered deviant from traditional gender norms bring a critical perspective on the construction of gender in society. Hence, the performance of *calabai* not only entertaining but also triggers reflection and discussion on gender identity and prevailing social norms.

In general perspective, society argue that the life of *calabai* is full of sin. This perspective comes from a strict religious interpretation where the behavior and identity of *calabai* are considered opposite to the teachings of Islam. Those who hold this view often see *calabai* as deviant individuals from social norms and commonly accepted religious practices. As a result, the tolerance level and the

⁹⁵ Suheri et al., "Bissu on Contesting Indigeneity with Islamic Puritanism in the Sacred Arena," 129.

⁹⁶ Davies, *Challenging Gender Norms*, 70.

acceptance of *calabai* vary widely within Bugis society depending on individual beliefs and values. This various perspective reflects the complexity and social dynamics in Bugis society where tradition and modernity often intersect and influence people's perceptions of gender identity and social roles.

In sum, no singular perspective about *calabai* in Bugis. Some people are accepted and respected the contribution of *calabai* in Bugis society through their position in weddings event. *Calabai* are often considered important because they bring special expertise and creativity to organizing and beautifying weddings. Their unique position gave the aesthetic touch and the beauty that respected by most of people. In this context, *calabai* as seen as the part integral and culture tradition which riched of Bugis society.

2. Crossing Bugis Gender Boundaries: *Bissu* as a sacred gender

Bissu refers to someone who plays a role as a leader in traditional procession and Buginese spiritual practices taking on a central figure in every ceremonial custom. Their existence dates back to the classical Buginese era as described in *La Galigo*, the longest epic in the world. In the Buginese language, *bissu* comes from the word "*Bessi* or *Mabessi*" which means sacred (not bleeding) nor "not menstruate" for the female. Pelras define the word of *bissu* comes from word "*bhiksu*".⁹⁷

In *La Galigo*, *bissu* referres to a religious pastor who embodies both male and female elements and is able to occupy both human and spirit realms.⁹⁸ Since communication between human and God is believed to be impossible, a religious tradition emerged where a person of indeterminate biological sex was chosen to lead sacred ceremonies. According to Trianto, these individuals are known as "*waria*".⁹⁹ Only the true *bissu* who embody both male and female elements are able to make this journey. If only one gender present, they belief that they will not emerge the spirit world. Davies has different definition of *bissu*, which he calls "*shaman*" because it seems to be the closest equivalent to the concept of *bissu*. A *shaman* is described as a healer and spiritual leader. They heal through dance, believing that during the dance, the shaman will journey to another world to seek

⁹⁷ Pelras, *The Bugis*, 68.

⁹⁸ Irma Indriani and Sangkala Ibsik, "Persepsi Masyarakat Terhadap Eksistensi Bissu Di Bontomatene Kelurahan Bontoma Kecamatan Segeri Kabupaten Pangkep," *Jurnal Tomalebbi*, no. 4 (December 11, 2016): 151.

⁹⁹ Trianto Medi, "Di Sini Ia Terhormat," 2003, <http://wap.Indosiar> accessed June 15 2024.

blessings and heal diseases and other misfortunes. Referring to the nature of *bissu*, Davies uses the term “androgyny” which means the existence of both male and female characteristics in one individual body.¹⁰⁰

3. The emergence of the *Bissu*

During the time of the Bone kingdom, *bissu* held a respected position in Bugis society as spiritual advisors to the kingdom. The *bissu* were considered special and being a *bissu* was believed to be a gift from the god. not all people including *calabai* could become a *bissu* by their own choice. Many *bissu* initially had a tendency to be *calabai*. As davies argues in his interview that God has no gender, only people who has both elements can act as intermediaries with spirit world and become possessed as it called as “*Kadongkokang*”.¹⁰¹

There are several historical records that cite *bissu*, including in a portugese observer’s account of *bissu*, a historian named Antonia de Paiva who visited the siang kingdom on the west coast in south Sulawesi in 1545s described a *bissu* as “priest of the king” who has the characteristics of long hair, clothing and behavior such as voice, movement and customs imitating a woman. They marry and have sex with other men because they believe that having relations with women both in thought and action will damage their religion. Any *bissu* who breaks this rule will be punished by being burnt alive.¹⁰²

Andaya noted as quoted by Hamonic based on his observations, he had studied the *bissu* situation in depth. He discovered the differences between *bissu*, *calalai* and *calabai*. However, based on his observations, *bissu* is higher because of its unique spiritual role in society. The believe that the signs of mutism were visible at birth, which is characterized by a sexual abnormality in which the penis retracts into the groin, which is called the *koro* concept¹⁰³.

The description of *La Galigo*, during the early modern era around c.1400- c.1800 appeared to be both nobility of the land and as religious practitioners but the main function of the *bissu* was not solely as religious figures and ritual leaders, they also created verbal magic to develop the enhance the strength of white-bloods.¹⁰⁴ The position of the *bissu* did not change until 19th century. although their

¹⁰⁰ Davies, *Challenging Gender Norms*, 87.

¹⁰¹ Davies, 92.

¹⁰² Andaya, “The Bissu,” 77.

¹⁰³ Andaya, 80.

¹⁰⁴ Andaya, 81.

main job was in the palace but the increasing wealth of white-blooded people like Chinese give another support for the spiritual power of *bissu*.

Hakim as quoted by Sharyn, outline four main roles of the *bissu* in society.¹⁰⁵ First, the *bissu* act as the medium between humans and God through rituals and the customary ceremonies where they use the *torilangi Language* or God's language. The purpose of these ritual is invoke God's favor to achieve fertility and peace in the world. Second, *bissu* serve as the guardians and inhabitants of the sanctuary called *arajang*. This place is mentioned in the sacred book "*La Galigo*" which they keep sacred with dedication. The figure of *bissu* before Islam came in society, serving as a ritual leader for life cycles such as housewarming ceremonies, baby births, deaths, special sacred days and marriages.¹⁰⁶ And the third, *bissu* as the advisors to the king in decision-making. In this capacity, the *bissu* use their power as beings that transcends the boundaries of gender, mortality and divinity to offer advice that is considered wise and neutral, also reflecting the deep spiritual perspective.

Muhaemin argues that before the acceptance of Islam, the position of the *bissu* played an important role in the consideration of the accepting either Islam or Christianity in South Sulawesi. The *bissu* is a religious leader with the function similar to that of a Pastour, they lead spiritual ceremonies that focus on safety and spiritual aspects. They act as intermediaries between God and humans, playing a key role in local rituals and religious traditions. In contrast, Islam does not have a pastoral system and its religious rites are simpler, centered on prayers that must be performed directly to God without intermediaries. So, this significant difference in both the cultural and religious contexts of South Sulawesi society, where the role of the *bissu* as religious leader and as the spiritual intermediaries contrasts sharply with the Islamic approach that emphasizes direct prayer.¹⁰⁷

Christianity and Islam in South Sulawesi were competing each other to influence the rulers. Even though Christianity was introduced by Portuguese, the

¹⁰⁵ Abdul Hakim, "A Long Path of Bissu in South Sulawesi, From Glory to Disappearance," accessed June 8, 2024, https://www.academia.edu/6172991/A_Long_Path_of_Bissu_in_South_Sulawesi_From_Glory_to_Disappearance.

¹⁰⁶ Andi Muhammad Yauri, "BISSU GAUL : Reinvensi Budaya Kelompok Bissu Di Kabupaten Wajo Sulawesi Selatan," in *Agama Dan Kearifan Lokal Dalam Tantangan Global*, 1st ed. (Yogyakarta: Sekolah pascasarjana UGM, 2008), 320.

¹⁰⁷ Muhaemin Elmahady, "ISLAM DAN KEARIFAN LOKAL DI SULAWESI SELATAN PASCA ISLAMISASI," *HIKMAH* Vol. VII, no. No. 1 (2011): 91.

influence was not significant. There is no concrete proof that Christian religious elements were successfully integrated into the norms and systems of life of the Bugis-Makassar people.¹⁰⁸ The Christian endeavor to influence local culture seemed unsuccessful. Hence, their influence was limited and did not appear in social life. In contrast, Islam brought a big impact when successfully accepted as the central religion. The Islamic teachings brought deep changes to the social system of the Bugis-Makassar society. Islam is not only influenced the religious rites but also shaped the identity and social character. The changes that Islam brought covered various aspects of life and the influence felt deep and continued to shape the social order of society in South Sulawesi.

Since the 16th century there have been two major political powers in South Sulawesi: The Kingdom of Bone and Gowa competing to expand their influence over the surrounding kingdoms. The kingdom of Bone and Gowa tried to consolidate their powers and secure their regions. In effort to prevent attacks from the Gowa Kingdom, Bone formed an alliance called *Tellumponco* (three powers) with Bone as the eldest brother, Wajo as the middle brother and Soppeng as the youngest.¹⁰⁹ Political competition occurred alongside the spread of Islamic teachings in South Sulawesi. Dato ri' Bandang an important figure in the spread of Islam played a crucial role in establishing a relationship with the Gowa Kingdom, which then embraced Islam. the first ruler of the Gowa Kingdom to embrace Islam was known as Sultan Alauddin. After embracing Islam, the Gowa kingdom launched expansions into other kingdoms encouraging them to embrace Islam as well. This spread of Islam quickly reached other kingdoms in South Sulawesi. For instance, Sidenreng and Soppeng embraced Islam in 1609 CE followed by Wajo in 1610 CE and finally Bone in 1611 CE making Islam their central religion¹¹⁰. After the three bugis kingdom has *bissu* tradition adopted Islam as the country religion, the *bissu* position in the sosial structure and religion, their position replaced by the *ulamas*.

¹⁰⁸ Harun Kadir, Muchlis Paeni, and La Side Daeng Tupali, *Sejarah daerah Sulawesi Selatan oleh Proyek Penelitian dan Pencatatan Kebudayaan Daerah Tim peneliti Harun Kadir, Muchlis Paeni, La Side Daeng Tupali*, 1st ed. (Jakarta: Jakarta Depdikbud, 1978), 40.

¹⁰⁹ Leonard Y. Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka: A History of South Sulawesi (Celebes) in the Seventeenth Century* (Springer Science & Business Media, 2013), 39.

¹¹⁰ Triadi, "Bissu and Toboto Domain; Lanskap, Islam, dan Negosiasi," 82.

4. Between Islam and Tradition: The decline of the *bissu*

In 1950 CE there was an attack in South Sulawesi led by Kahar Muzakkar. This attack then became a part of the *Darul Islam* Movement/Indonesian Islamic Soldier (DI/TII) which centered in West Java. This movement aimed to establish Islam as the foundation of the country and to enforce Shari'a Islam.¹¹¹ Kahar Muzakkar and his followers implemented several rules aligned with the teachings of Islam. The Islamic Shariah they referred to is the pure Islamic teaching without any mixture of local traditions. This is reflected in their attitude of rejecting feudal rule.

The rebellion brought significant impact to the society in South Sulawesi, including the social aspect and culture. The shifting ideology of the Kahar movement which adopted Islam as the main ideology influenced not only the followers of the movement but also the general society in Sulawesi. This shifting ideology not only changed the society's perspective but also influenced the social structure and culture that had existed as well. During this period there were reports of the rebellion attacking the Christian majority regions causing fear and uncertainty among the residents. The community that continued to practice local traditions was enforced to convert back to Islam, which was considered pure by the rebels.

An example is the region of Pangkep, where the community became the target of this enforcement which they ran away until Bone city to hide from the rebels.¹¹² The *bissu* who were the tradition caretakers and local religious ritual leaders lost their political and social power because of the pressure from the rebels. They faced not only physical attacks but also psychological attacks to change their identity and position in society. Enforcing strict regulations Kahar Muzakkar forced the *bissu* to return to their natural order of human "*kodrat*" role as a man and work in the fields, a role contrary to their identity and function in local culture. Those who ignored this command faced death threats, adding another layer of fear and suffering to the community.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Barbara Watson Andaya, "The Changing Religious Role of Women in Pre-Modern South East Asia," *South East Asia Research* 2, no. 2 (1994): 20.

¹¹² Eko Rusdianto, "Beberapa Kesaksian Tentang Kahar Muzakkar," *Historia - Majalah Sejarah Populer Pertama di Indonesia*, December 27, 2015, <https://historia.id/politik/articles/beberapa-kesaksian-tentang-kahar-muzakkar-6kRE1> accessed June 11, 2024.

¹¹³ Halilintar Lathief, "Galigo : Seksualitas dan Bissu dalam tradisi bugis," in *Erotisme & Religiositas dalam Kitab-Kitab Nusantara* (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2018), 119.

This thing happened in 1966 related to the rebellion of PKI in Indonesia also known as *Toba*’ operation which was held in South Sulawesi to eradicate the people who were not included the official religions in Indonesia. *Bissu* became one of the targets because they were considered as infidels (*kafr*). The enforcement of Islam as the dominant religion in society impacted the perspective of five genders and specially *bissu* which were no longer accepted as normal. For most of people, the existence of *Calalai*, *Calabai* and *Bissu* was considered a deviation from the natural order of humans that needed to be corrected.

On the other hand, the development of education in society and the process of modernization strengthened the perspective that past traditions were ancient and irrelevant to maintain. Modernization brought a different perspective to society about the identity of non-binary genders and traditional position such as *bissu*. This has led to a decline in respect for the cultural heritage that has been safeguarded by these communities. As a result, *bissu* and related traditions are under tremendous pressure, both socially and culturally, resulting in the slow erosion of long-standing cultural values and practices.¹¹⁴

In 1957, the kingdom of Bugis officially closed. In that time, the declined of the *bissu* had already begun. Also, the rapid development of Islam diminished the position of *bissu*. This started with the acceptance of Islam as official religion in the kingdom by king of Gowa. Hence, the rituals of the *bissu* for the kingdom were discontinued. Like the obligatory of *Mappalili* tradition which is usually performed for 40 days straight was reduced to just three days. The decline of new order marks the new beginning of the history of Indonesia in various aspects, including the admitting to the custom communities that exist in Indonesia that showed with launched KEPRES RI No.111 in 1999 about fostering the social welfare of remote indigenous communities.

Based on the author’s observation, this became the beginning of revitalitation of tradition. In 90’s, the perspective of *bissu* changes where the *bissu* considered it as violated of Islamic teachings. But still, the belief of non-binary gender still became the tradition of South Sulawesi which can found in Bone, Soppeng, Wajo and Pangkep. The process of assimilation and negotiation of Islamic culture make the community of *bissu* changed. Which was originally as the traditional religious turned to the culture movement.

¹¹⁴ Nurul Azizah, “AGAMA DAN TRADISI: PERGUMULAN BISSU’ MASYARAKAT BUGIS DI SULAWESI SELATAN,” 2022, 69.

For the current situation, the figure of *bissu* is seen only as an attraction that does not provide much value.¹¹⁵ In contrast Rahmat argues that current situation of the *bissu* not only related to royal heritage affairs but also become makeup artist for the wedding and *Sandro*. Along with the diminished of the population of the *bissu* because of the acceptance of Islam, so the Bugis community also abandoned sacred beliefs but some of them still preserve it. Such as the belief of the Bugis Muslim community in Bone city which most of the society beliefs that the *bissu* as the sacred.

In sum, *bissu* are spiritual leaders in Muslim Bugis community who have existed since the classical era as described in the *La Galigo* epic. Despite having deep roots in local traditions, the position of *bissu* declined with the arrival of Islam and the process of modernization. Islam became the official religion of the kingdom and society replacing the role of *bissu* with ulama. However, the belief in non-binary gender identities like *calalai*, *calabai* and *bissu* still persists in some areas of South Sulawesi especially in Bone region. The decline became more pronounced during the *Darul Islam/Indonesia Islamic Soldiers (DI/TII)* movement led by Kahar Muzakkar which rejected local traditions and enforced pure Islamic teachings. Despite this, some communities have continued to preserve the tradition of *bissu*, although they are now more often seen as cultural attractions rather than spiritual leaders. The efforts to revitalize these traditions highlight the attempt to maintain cultural heritage in the middle of significant social and religious changes.

C. Five Genders in Harmony: Enduring Beliefs in the Bone City, South Sulawesi

1. Overview of Bone Regency

The majority of people in Bone Regency are Muslim, as evidenced by the number of Islamic places of worship. Based on 2019 data, there are 1,447 mosques and 1,584 smaller prayer rooms (*mushallah*) spread throughout the districts and villages of Bone Regency.¹¹⁶ Biographically, bone regency is located at 4° 13' to 5° 06' south latitude, and 119° 42' to 120° 40' east longitude. Geographically, bone regency is bordered by Wajo, Soppeng and Barru regencies to the west, and the

¹¹⁵ Muhammad Yauri, "BISSU GAUL : Reinvensi Budaya Kelompok Bissu Di Kabupaten Wajo Sulawesi Selatan," 322.

¹¹⁶ BONE, "Agama, Adat, Budaya, Pendidikan, dan Kesehatan di Kabupaten Bone," Website Resmi Pemerintah Kabupaten Bone, December 24, 2019, <https://bone.go.id/2019/12/25/agama-adat-budaya-pendidikan-dan-kesehatan-di-kabupaten-bone/> accessed in 20 June 2024.

gulf of Bone to the east. Bone regency is one of the regencies located on the eastern coast of south Sulawesi province, approximately 174 km from Makassar city. It is the third largest regency in s\South Sulawesi province with a total of 27 districts. The area of Bone regency is 4,559 km², with the largest area being in Bontocani district and the smallest area in Tanete Riattang district.¹¹⁷

In its development, Bone Regency continued to grow and eventually became a large area with Law Number 29 of 1959, positioned as a Level II Region of Bone which is an integral part of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Bone Regency has great potential that can be utilized for development for the prosperity of the community. This potential is quite diverse in the fields of agriculture, plantations, marine affairs, tourism, and other potentials.

Bone city is one of the autonomous regions in South Sulawesi province, Indonesia with its capital located in Watampone. This city covers an area of 4,559 km² and has a population of approximately 700,000 people. Located on the eastern coast of South Sulawesi, Bone regency holds a strategic position in the trade of goods and services in eastern Indonesia. Administratively, the regency consists of 27 districts, 333 villages, and 39 urban wards. It is situated 174 km east of Makassar city, at coordinates 4° 13' to 5° 06' South Latitude and 119° 42' to 120° 30' East Longitude. In Bone city, there are also mountains and hills with rivers flowing through their valleys. Surrounding them are fairly deep valleys. During the rainy season, there are about 90 rivers that flow in this area. However, during the dry season, many of these rivers dry up, except for some large rivers like Walenae, Cenrana, Palakka, Jaling, Bulu-bulu, Salomekko, Tobunne, and Lekoballo.¹¹⁸

Based on historical facts, the bone kingdom was one of the kingdoms in the Nusantara that existed and played an important role in resisting Dutch rule in the eastern region of the Nusantara during the 17th to 19th centuries. This significant role began after Manurunge ri Matajang was inaugurated as the first king of Bone by the people of Bone.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Bone, *Kabupaten Bone dalam Angka 2022* (bone: BPS Kabupaten Bone, 2022), 5.

¹¹⁸ Wikipedia, "Kabupaten Bone," in *Wikipedia bahasa Indonesia, ensiklopedia bebas*, May 30, 2024, https://id.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Kabupaten_Bone&oldid=25772106 accessed in 13 June 2024.

¹¹⁹ Hafidz Ayatullah, "Tradisi uang belanja (DUI MENRE), perkawinan Suku Bugis perspektif URF, konstruk sosial Kabupaten Bone Sulawesi Selatan" (masters, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim, 2017), 64, <http://etheses.uin-malang.ac.id/10813/>.

In the early formation of the Bone kingdom during the reign of the first king of Bone, Manurunge ri Matajang who was given the title *Matasi Lompoe*, the kingdom's territory was still small, only about 2 km². The name "Bone" comes from a type of yellow soil mixed with sand, which in the Bugis language is called "*kessi*" and is found in the city of Bone. Over time, the Bone kingdom reached its peak of glory in the 17th century, during the reign of the 15th king of Bone, Latenri Tatta Daeng Serang Petta Malampe Gemmena who is better known as Arung Palakka.¹²⁰ In the Lontara Bone (Buginese ancient language), it is mentioned that during the reign of Arung Palakka as the king of Bone, Bone was at the peak of its glory. At that time, bone was likened to a full moon shining brightly on the fifteenth night, symbolizing its perfection. During this period, Bone successfully dominated trade in the Gulf of Bone.¹²¹

After the period of glory achieved by Arung Palakka, the Bone Kingdom experienced a decline. The decline of Bone began in the mid-19th century and culminated in 1905 when Bone finally fell to the Dutch after fierce battles. However, the decline of the Bone kingdom was not limited to 1905, it had started much earlier. The people of Bone recognize four periods of resistance against Dutch imperialism in 1824-1825, 1857-1858, 1859-1860 and finally 1905-1909.¹²²

Referred Palloge found in the *Lontara*, the first king who convert to Islam is the tenth king of Bone, Wa Tanritappu titled *Maddussila*. King We Tanritappu converted to Islam personally before died in Sidenreng, Sidrap region. But there are significance opinions noted in Wajo language who says that the first king of Bone converted islam is La Tenriruwa Matinro ri Bantaeng. He is personally converted to islam earlier.¹²³ When islam come to Bone in 23 November 1611. This recognition marks the big changes in spiritual life and the culture of Bone Kingdom. Islam not only became personally religion of the kings but also accepted officially as the city's religion. With this recognition, both the teachings and practice of Islam start to sink in bugis society's life, shaped new foundation of kingdom governance and social interaction.

¹²⁰ A. Muh ali, *Bone Selayang Pandang* (Watampone: Depertemen Kebudayaan dan Pendidikan propinsi Sulawesi Selatan kantor Kabupaten Bone, 1986), 84.

¹²¹ Muhammad Sikki, *Lontarak Bugis* (Jakarta: Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1995), 15.

¹²² Palloge Petta Nabba (Andi), *Sejarah Kerajaan Tanah Bone: masa raja pertama dan raja-raja kemudiannya sebelum masuknya Islam sampai terakhir* (Yayasan Al Muallim, 2006), viii.

¹²³ Nabba (Andi), 297.

To deepen their understanding of Islam in the Bone kingdom, the king and the kingdom's dignitaries made a journey to Gowa every three years. They studied under the sole preacher Dato Ri Bandang who was titled Sultan Abdullah Matinroe ri Tallo. This journey demonstrated the strong commitment of the Bone kingdom to adopting and spreading Islamic teachings as well as strengthening the relationship between Bone and Gowa as centers of Islamic learning in the region. Eventhough, Islam becoming an integral part of the Bone kingdom's identity, local traditions and beliefs such as the concept of five genders (*oroane*, *makkunrai*, *calabai*, *calalai* and *bissu*) have persisted to this day.

As of June 2019, the population of Bone Regency was 806,889, consisting of 394,477 males and 412,412 females. Among this population, there are still some *bissu* in Bone Regency. However, their numbers have decreased due to reduced regeneration and lack of interest from the community after they were no longer supported by the kingdom or government. Before the presence of medical personnel in Bone Regency, people often sought the help of *bissu* for healing various ailments. However, the role of *bissu* as traditional healers has now been largely replaced by medical professionals, although some people still seek traditional healing from *bissu*.

The concept of five genders reflects the cultural richness and diversity of gender identities within the Bugis society. The existence of *bissu*, who are priests embodying characteristic of all genders shows that the Bugis community has long respected and accommodated gender diversity. Even today, the *bissu* community plays a crucial role in traditional and spiritual ceremonies in South Sulawesi, including in Bone. For instance, Davies argues how this belief remains alive and respected among the Bugis people. This study, traditional values and local wisdom are still preserved and respected, creating harmony between religion and culture in South Sulawesi.¹²⁴

The *Bissu* community has its own classification of *calabai*, recognizing three distinct levels: *calabai tungkena lino*, *paccalabai*, and *calabai kedokedonami*. The first type, *calabai tungkena lino*, are *calabai* who have earned the right to identify themselves as *bissu*. It is possible for these *calabai* to become *bissu* if they receive a divine blessing. The second type, *paccalabai*, meaning they can have relationships with both men and women. They are also called *piso sile* (razor

¹²⁴ Davies, *Challenging Gender Norms*, 131; Davies, *Gender Diversity in Indonesia*, 198.

blade), implying they can cut on both sides. The third type, *calabai kedo-kedonami*, are *calabai* who merely imitate the style of others.¹²⁵

Oneway *bissu* is still a part of Bugis culture is during celebrations for the region's anniversaries. They play an important role seen as deeply connected to the kingdom's heritage and traditions. During these celebrations, the *bissu* is responsible for collecting holy water from seven special wells in different areas such as Laccokong, Manurunge, Lassarong, Lemoape, and Lampoko. This ritual is known as Malekke Uwae.¹²⁶

Historically, in the Bone Kingdom, the *bissu* community held a respected position in Bugis society as spiritual advisors to the royalty and were considered extraordinary individuals. Becoming a *bissu* was believed to be a gift from the gods as not everyone, even those with *calabai* tendencies could become one by their own will. Although most *bissu* initially had *calabai* inclinations, their existence as a community has diminished over time as old values have been replaced by new ones in Bone Regency.

In Bone Regency, the traditional dance known as *maggiri* is still practiced where dancers demonstrate invulnerability to sharp objects. *Maggiri* means a duel of invulnerability with sharp weapons in a ritual. The *maggiri* dance tradition, performed by stabbing body parts with a *badik* (a type of sharp weapon typical of the Bugis people) aims to determine whether a powerful deity or ancestral spirit has possessed the *bissu* during a ceremony. In the *matompang arajang* ceremony during Bone's anniversary, *bissu* often plays a vital role. In their current role, *bissu* only perform specific rituals or ceremonies.

After the holy water ceremony, the *bissu*'s next task is to awaken the royal heirlooms, a ritual called "Mattedu Arajang." The lead *bissu*, known as *Puang Matoa*, and another *Bissu* called *Inang*, work together to perform this ritual. Once the heirlooms are awakened, the *bissu* then carefully clean them in a ceremony called "*Matompang Arajang*." This involves cleaning various artifacts such as daggers, swords, spears, and gold sashes. The final step in this series of rituals is for the *Bissu* to carry the heirlooms and display them to the guests or parade them around.

¹²⁵ Andi Misdayanti, "FUNGSI DAN PERAN SOSIAL KOMUNITAS BISSU DI KABUPATEN BONE," *Journal of Anthropology* 3, no. 1 (2021): 5–6.

¹²⁶ based on, Pessere Bissu Puang Bella, Interview, May 13, 2024.

In Bugis tradition, the *bissu* are responsible for returning royal heirlooms called *Arajang* to their proper place especially during regional celebrations. *Bissu* and these heirlooms are closely connected in Bugis culture. However, the *bissu* community has faced challenges and rejection. For example, during Bone's 692nd anniversary in 2022, the traditional role of *Bissu* was removed. Even though the *Bissu* were willing to present themselves in a more masculine way, they were still replaced. This highlights the ongoing struggle for acceptance faced by the *bissu* community in Bone Regency as they try to maintain their place within Bugis culture. but on *Bissu*'s 694th anniversary, they were involved again.¹²⁷

2. The five sexes in contemporary Bone Regency

Bissu, as an integral part of Bugis culture, has long played an important role in people's lives in Bone, South Sulawesi. Their existence as guardians of tradition and spirituality has become an inseparable part of Bone's history and identity. However, behind this important role *bissu* also face various challenges in maintaining their existence and carrying out their role in modern society. Davies explained in his book that the division of male sexuality and female sexuality called gender dualism.¹²⁸ In the Bugis Muslim community, particularly in Bone, South Sulawesi, *calabai*, *calalai*, and *bissu* have long been recognized as an integral part of local tradition and culture. However, their existence also faces complex challenges, especially in terms of social and religious acceptance. While valued for their cultural contributions, they often encounter stigma, discrimination, and confused identity conflicts. This sub-chapter will delve deeper into the dynamics of their lives, how they navigate tradition and change, and their struggle to maintain their unique identities within an evolving society. following are some of the challenges faced by non-binary gender positions in Bugis society.

First, Discrimination and social stigma. One of the most significant obstacles hindering the well-being and acceptance of non-binary gender in Bone regency is the persistent discrimination and social stigma they face for people who are against them. Deeply rooted in conservative views on gender and sexuality, a

¹²⁷ BONE, "Pj. Bupati Bone menerima Komunitas Bissu Bone yang akan melakukan prosesi 'Massimang' (pamit) untuk melaksanakan prosesi mallekke toja dari 7 sumur peninggalan kerajaan Bone," Website Resmi Pemerintah Kabupaten Bone, April 18, 2024, <https://bone.go.id/2024/04/18/pj-bupati-bone-menerima-komunitas-bissu-bone-yang-akan-melakukan-prosesi-massimang-pamit-untuk-melaksanakan-prosesi-mallekke-toja-dari-7-sumur-peninggalan-kerajaan-bone/> accessed in 20 June 2024.

¹²⁸ Davies, "Thinking of Gender in a Holistic Sense," 2.

considerable portion of society still struggles to understand and embrace the unique identity of *bissu*. This lack of understanding often manifests in discriminatory practices and unfair treatment towards them. The challenges faced by the non-binary gender community in Bone Regency, South Sulawesi, are mainly related to acceptance and recognition of their identity in a Muslim-dominated society. Even though they are recognized as local cultural icons, their existence is often seen as contrary to Islamic values, especially because they are considered not following their natural qualities as men. The MUI fatwa which prohibits transgender behavior further complicates their position. Apart from that, *bissu* beliefs and ritual practices that differ from mainstream Islamic teachings are also a source of conflict and opposition.¹²⁹

A big problem for *bissu* communities today is the conflict between religion and culture. This was seen on August 19th 2023 when a *bissu* art performance called "*Rindu Bissu Monologue*" was canceled in Bone Regency. Even though the organizers had gotten permission from different organizations, the show was stopped at the last minute because it featured *bissu* performers.¹³⁰ According to Marzuki, the *bissu* community in Bone Regency is a valuable part of Indonesian culture that deserves to be protected. He believes they can create their own event that can attract many visitors. However, *bissu* faces challenges because some people associate them with LGBT issues. According the interview with *bissu* Lolo¹³¹:

"There was an event called "rindu bissu monolog" but it canceled because the government official was forced it to forced disbanded because of the issue of LGBT within the bissu community in society." He stated.

Bissu's performance entitled "*Monolog Rindu Bissu*" was canceled because it was accused of showing LGBT elements. Apart from that, the exclusion of *bissu* from Bugis cultural celebrations and the cancellation of their artistic performances threatens their existence in the modern era. It is important to see *bissu* as part of the world of art and culture to ensure its continued existence. As Siswanto argues

¹²⁹ Misbahuddin et al., "The Implementation of MUI's Fatwa on the Position of Transgender Individuals, Gender Reassignment Surgery and Genital Refinement," 103; Siti Yona Hukmana, "MUI Jangan Beri Izin Acara LGBT," July 12, 2023, <https://mediaindonesia.com/politik-dan-hukum/596105/mui-jangan-beri-izin-acara-lgbt> accessed in 23 May 2024.

¹³⁰ Ridwan Marzuki, "Bissu Tak Tampil di Acara Sakral, Agama Campuri Kebudayaan?," *Harian Fajar*, March 29, 2022, <https://harian.fajar.co.id/2022/03/29/bissu-tak-tampil-di-acara-sakral-agama-campuri-kebudayaan/> accessed in June 20 2024.

¹³¹ Passerre Bissu Puang Lolo, Interview, May 14, 2024.

that humans must embrace their freedom. With freedom, human existence is not without meaning. Humans need freedom to express themselves, make their own choices, and shape their own lives. Siswanto further emphasized that life becomes more authentic when humans are truly free, not dependent on external rules and expectations.¹³²

On the other hand, *bissu* frequently find themselves ostracized and excluded from mainstream social circles. They are often labeled as deviants or outcasts for not conforming to traditional gender roles and expectations. This marginalization can have detrimental effects on their emotional well-being, self-esteem, and overall quality of life. *bissu* are denied opportunities for equal participation in various aspects of life including employment, education and social interactions, perpetuating a cycle of inequality and exclusion at that time.

Second, economic marginalization is a significant challenge faced by non-binary individuals in Bone. They often encounter difficulties in accessing decent work opportunities and adequate economic resources. Deep-rooted social stigma based on their unique gender identity is a major factor limiting their opportunities. In particular, *bissu* are often looked down upon and perceived as unable to contribute productively to the formal economic sector as their role is primarily considered suitable for informal work related to tradition and culture. Apart from discrimination, limited access to education and skills training also narrows *bissu*'s employment options, this is due to the lack of support from the local government regarding the position of *bissu* in society. The majority of them only have the opportunity to work in the informal sector, such as being make-up artists at traditional events and holiday celebrations in Bone.¹³³ Their makeup skills are valued in their local culture but this doesn't guarantee them financial security or long-term well-being. Because they rely on seasonal work and lack of social safety nets, they are vulnerable to economic ups and downs. When there are no cultural events or celebrations, they struggle to find other ways to make money. This leads to many *Calabai*, *Calalai* and *Bissu* living in poverty and struggling to meet their basic needs.

¹³² Joko Siswanto, *Sistem-Sistem Metafisika barat : dari Aristoteles sampai Derrida* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1998), 5.

¹³³ the evidence of the existence of *bissu* today in "Pj. Bupati Bone menerima Komunitas *Bissu* Bone yang akan melakukan prosesi 'Massimang' (pamit) untuk melaksanakan prosesi *mallekke toja* dari 7 sumur peninggalan kerajaan Bone" accessed on 8th June 2024. 20.25 .

However, it's important to note that *bissu* possess valuable skills and knowledge, particularly in the arts, culture, and spirituality. They often play significant roles in traditional ceremonies and rituals, and they have a deep understanding of Bugis history and traditions. They are also frequently invited as speakers at various gender related dialogues in Bone.¹³⁴ Hasbi and Zainuddin argue that this potential can be harnessed to contribute to the creative economy and tourism sectors, which can benefit both the *bissu* community and the wider Bugis society. *Bissu* often face prejudice and unfair treatment in Bugis society which can make it difficult for them to get an education and good jobs. Traditional ideas about gender roles and strict social rules can limit their career choices pushing them into informal work or jobs related to traditions and rituals. To fix this problem, it needs to change how people think about *bissu* and create policies that are more inclusive and supportive of different genders in the workplace. By making a more welcoming environment that values everyone's contribution, regardless of their gender, Bugis society can fully benefit from all its members, including *bissu*, to achieve lasting economic and social progress.

Third, The advancement of undeveloped culture. The *bissu* community, an important part of Bugis culture in South Sulawesi faces a contradiction in how the government treats them. In one hand, their rich knowledge and traditions are often used to promote tourism and local culture but on the other hand, their sacred rituals do not get much attention or protection from the government.¹³⁵ *Bissu* rituals which are full of meaning and spiritual values are often reduced to exotic performances for tourists. The beautiful of *Sere Bissu* dance and the extreme *Maggiri* dance, where they stab themselves, are often just seen as interesting shows, without understanding the deeper meaning and spiritual consequences behind them.

This phenomenon shows how some researchers and anthropologists are using *bissu* culture for their own gain. They take *bissu's* identity and practices and use them to make money without thinking about how it affects the *bissu* community. They see *bissu* as unique and interesting, so they share information

¹³⁴ Andi Hasbi and Muh. Zainuddin Badollahi, "Analisis Partisipasi Masyarakat dan Pemerintah dalam Pengembangan Sektor Pariwisata Kabupaten Bone, Sulawesi Selatan," *Pusaka : Journal of Tourism, Hospitality, Travel and Business Event*, June 7, 2024, 22, <https://doi.org/10.33649/pusaka.v1i2.15>.

¹³⁵ Altriana Pramana Putra Basri, "Dua Tahun PENCEKALAN *Bissu* Bone Dan Problem Pemajuan Kebudayaan Di Sulawesi Selatan," *Bollo.Id* (blog), January 9, 2024, <https://www.bollo.id/ceritaan/dua-tahun-pencekalan-bissu-bone-dan-problem-pemajuan-kebudayaan-di-sulawesi-selatan/> accessed in 10 June 2024.

about them online and in the media to get people interested. They even try to sell *bissu's* skills. This kind of exploitation not only cheapens the important cultural values of the *bissu*, but it also ignores their right to practice their traditions in their own way, without being taken advantage of. This exploitation does not protect or support *bissu's* beliefs, traditions, skills or knowledge.

Despite laws and regulations that should protect cultural expression such as the Cultural Advancement Law No. 5 of 2017 and the South Sulawesi Provincial Regulation No. 3 of 2020 their implementation remains inadequate. This is evident in the discrepancies between the provincial and regency cultural development plans regarding the recognition of *bissu* as well as the discrimination and censorship experienced by the *bissu* community. This issue highlights a gap between the government's rhetoric about cultural advancement and the reality on the ground. The hardening of primordial identities and sectarian sentiments as identified in Presidential Regulation No. 114 of 2022 is one of the factors hindering the protection and recognition of the *bissu* community. Therefore, the government needs to do more to protect and respect the *bissu* community. They should not just be seen as a cultural attraction but as an important part of Indonesia's rich culture. This can be done by teaching people more about *bissu* identity and traditions and by making sure there are rules in place to protect their right to practice their traditions and express themselves freely. Local communities like the *bissu* in South Sulawesi often struggle to keep their cultural traditions alive. Even though they play a big role in preserving cultural heritage, they are often pushed aside and not protected enough by the government.

This is evident in the censorship, disbandment, and intimidation they experience, which demonstrates a lack of respect for their freedom of cultural expression.¹³⁶ The presence of the state should not be a threat to local communities but rather a protector and guarantor of their rights including the right to freely express their culture. Existing laws, such as the Cultural Advancement Law and related regional regulations should provide a strong foundation for safeguarding cultural expression from discrimination and suppression. However, in practice the

¹³⁶ Agung Pramono, "Fakta-fakta Pentas Seni Bissu Bone Dituding Tampilkan LGBT Dibubarkan Aparat," *detiksulsel*, accessed July 1, 2024, <https://www.detik.com/sulsel/berita/d-6892622/fakta-fakta-pentas-seni-bissu-bone-dituding-tampilkan-lgbt-dibubarkan-aparat>; Agung Pramono, "Peran Bissu di Ritual Hari Jadi Bone yang Tak Bisa Digantikan," *detiksulsel*, 2022, <https://www.detik.com/sulsel/budaya/d-6623672/peran-bissu-di-ritual-hari-jadi-bone-yang-tak-bisa-digantikan> accessed June 1 2024.

implementation of these laws remains inadequate, especially in protecting vulnerable communities like the *bissu*.

Umar's argument, as mentioned by Tania Murray Li, further clarifies this issue. Local communities are often seen as irrelevant to economic growth and political stability, leading to their needs and rights being neglected by the government. Yet, communities like the *bissu* play a crucial role in preserving cultural diversity and enriching the national identity.¹³⁷ Therefore, it is essential for the state to be more proactive in protecting the cultural expression of local communities, including the *bissu*, and ensuring that they are not subjected to discrimination and marginalization.

In sum, the non-binary gender in Bone, South Sulawesi faces a complex set of challenges in maintaining their unique identity and cultural practices within a changing society. They encounter discrimination and stigma due to their non-binary gender identity, often confused with LGBTQ+ identities and marginalized economically due to limited access to formal employment. Additionally, their cultural practices are sometimes exploited for commercial gain without adequate recognition or protection from the government. The society should be highlight the need for greater understanding, acceptance and legal protection for the *bissu* community, as well as a more nuanced approach to cultural preservation that respects their traditions and autonomy.

D. Conclusion

The existence of non-binary genders, particularly the Bissu community, within the Bugis Muslim community of Bone, South Sulawesi, presents a complex interplay between tradition, religion, and modernity. While deeply rooted in Bugis culture and history, these non-binary individuals face significant challenges in navigating their identities within a society that is often influenced by conservative interpretations of Islam and Westernized notions of gender. The *bissu*, with their unique role as spiritual leaders and cultural custodians, have experienced a decline in status due to historical shifts and societal pressures.

In the other hand, their presence remains integral to Bugis cultural heritage and traditions. The challenges faced by the *bissu* community include discrimination, economic marginalization, and the commodification of their cultural practices.

¹³⁷ Umar Thamrin, "How Economy Matters to Indigenous Identity of Bissu, Transgender Priests of South Sulawesi, Indonesia," no. 241 (n.d.): 5.

However, their resilience and adaptability in the face of these challenges highlight the dynamic nature of gender identity and cultural expression. It is crucial to promote understanding and acceptance of non-binary identities within the Bugis community while also safeguarding their cultural practices and ensuring their economic prosperity. This requires a nuanced approach that recognizes the intersectionality of gender, religion and cultural identity, and that recognizes the valuable contributions of the Bissu community to the richness and diversity of Bugis culture.

CHAPTER IV

BEYOND THE BINARY: BETWEEN FAITH AND GENDER IDENTITY

A. Introduction

This chapter identifies a tension between the tradition of Bugis Bone society who believe in five genders and the more conservative Islamic views that often view non-binary with skepticism. Which led to discrimination, marginalization and misunderstanding regarding the non-binary gender's role in the community, especially the role of *bissu*. This chapter also explained the tendency to conflate the position of *bissu* with LGBTQ+ activism, which is inaccurate and further to conflate complicates their acceptance.

Furthermore, this chapter explained about the negotiation and acculturation of non-binary gender within the Muslim Bugis community in the Bone region. Emphasize the importance of understanding the distinction between gender identity and sexual orientation, as well as the need to decolonize the narrative surrounding non-binary genders in order to foster a more inclusive and equitable society.

B. Acculturation and Negotiation Tradition within Religious Community

In the Bone region, where ancient Bugis traditions blend with the Islamic faith, a delicate balance is being struck between old ways and new beliefs. The *calabai*, *calalai* and *bissu* once celebrated figures in Bugis culture are now navigating a complex landscape where their identities are being questioned and reinterpreted through the lens of Islam. For centuries, these individuals have held special roles in Bugis society. The *bissu*, embodying both male and female energies, are revered as spiritual guides who connect the human and divine worlds. The *calabai* and *calalai*, who embrace gender roles opposite to their birth sex have been important figures in cultural ceremonies and everyday life. However, Islam has become the main religion in Bone as new perspectives have emerged. Some Muslims believe that the existence of *calabai*, *calalai*, and *bissu* goes against Islamic teachings about gender and sexuality. This has created tension between keeping old traditions alive and following religious rules.

The *calabai*, *calalai*, and *bissu* communities have responded to this tension in different ways. Some have tried to find ways to reconcile their identities with Islam focusing on the spiritual aspects of their roles and seeking acceptance within

religious texts. Others have chosen to continue their traditional practices keeping their cultural heritage alive in private settings and within their own communities.

To stay relevant in the modern world with all its technology and new ideas, the Bissu community in Bone is finding different ways to keep their traditions alive. They do this both as individuals and as a group. They actively recruit new members, hold meetings and continue performing their traditional roles. In addition, some *bissu* have taken up jobs like cooking and doing bridal makeup, showing how they can adapt to modern life while still preserving their cultural identity.¹³⁸

1. The process of Acculturation

Acculturation is a two-way street where cultures exchange ideas and customs while still maintaining their unique identities. Also define on the understanding the existence of other culture.¹³⁹ When different groups interact over long periods of time and sincerely accept each other, they do not only become more aware of their own cultural heritage but also develop a deeper appreciation of the diversity around them. This cultural exchange is beautifully illustrated by the *bissu* community in Bugis society. They competently weave their traditional rituals and beliefs into the fabric of Islam and local customs. This doesn't mean they abandon their old ways. Instead they found creative ways to adapt and integrate, enriching their own traditions and the broader cultural landscape.

This process of adaptation which Aziz quoted from Marshall called localization or indigenization shows the extraordinary flexibility of Islam as a universal religion.¹⁴⁰ Islam does not apply a universal model because it embraces and reflects the unique cultural context in which it is rooted. Islam in Indonesia has its own flavor so does Islam in other parts of the world. The dynamic interaction

¹³⁸ Andi Batara Indra et al., "The Existence of Bissu in Bugis Culture in the Contemporary Era," *Palita: Journal of Social Religion Research* 9, no. 1 (May 31, 2024): 87, <https://doi.org/10.24256/pal.v9i1.4208>.

¹³⁹ Limyah Al-Amri and Muhammad Haramain, "AKULTURASI ISLAM DALAM BUDAYA LOKAL," *KURIOSITAS: Media Komunikasi Sosial Dan Keagamaan* 10, no. 2 (November 24, 2017): 94, <https://doi.org/10.35905/kur.v10i2.594>.

¹⁴⁰ Sitti Aminah Azis, "ANCIENT LOCAL CULTURE OF THE BUGINESE AND ISLAM: PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ACCULTURATION OF ISLAM AND THE BISSU TRADITION," *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 15, no. 3 (November 3, 2023): 365, <https://doi.org/10.24204/ejpr.2023.4266>; Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Classical Age of Islam* (University of Chicago Press, 1974).

between tradition and change does not only occur in bissu or Islam. This is a universal phenomenon that occurs whenever different cultures come into contact.

The beauty of acculturation according to Marshall lies in its ability to foster understanding, respect and appreciation for different cultures even between one place to another.¹⁴¹ Opening oneself to new ideas and ways of living not only broadens one's horizons but also contributes to a more inclusive and harmonious society. *Bissu* with its unique blend of tradition and modernity, serves as a powerful reminder that cultural identity is not static but a dynamic and ever-evolving process.

In the current situation where different cultures constantly meet and interact, it can't avoid the process of acculturation, the blending and adapting of traditions and beliefs. This is not just about changing but also opening new ways of thinking and being. By embracing the rich tapestry of human diversity, it can build stronger connections with each other, creating a world where everyone feels valued and respected. The *bissu* community in Bugis society beautifully exemplifies this process. They have a deep-rooted cultural heritage that they hold dear, yet they also adapt to their changing surroundings. This is evident in how they have integrated aspects of Islam into their traditional rituals while still maintaining their unique identity.

Such as first, adaptations of rituals to avoid conflict. Umar argues that the *bissu* are deeply rooted in their traditional belief system.¹⁴² Adnan emphasized that the *bissu* not only recognize Islam as a noble and universally applicable religion but also believe that its teachings can be fully integrated into their own traditions. This cultural fusion of *bissu* and Islam is the result of ongoing interaction between the *bissu* community and Islamic teachings.¹⁴³ Every ritual is performed to worship the Almighty God. *Bissu* Angel stated in his interview that every ritual performed by the *bissu* always aims to praise and worship the one God. Such as the *mappalili* ritual, the mantra that is recited aims to ask for ease in the process of planting rice. The same thing happens with other rituals, such as the *bissu* ritual of worshipping between obligatory prayers, such as between Isha prayer and Fajr prayer, called

¹⁴¹ Hodgson, *The Classical Age of Islam*, 3.

¹⁴² Umar, "Dancing with Spirits: Negotiating Bissu Subjectivity through Adat" (Colorado, University of Colorado, 2008), 1.

¹⁴³ Adnan, "BISSU YANG ENGGAN MEMBISU Proses Encountering Islam dan Kebugisan," 413.

"*mattengnga benni*," at which time the *bissu* chant praises to God. *Bissu* Angel said in his interview:

"From the noon and evening, I prayed. In the middle of Isha and Subh pray, we had ritual. *Zikr* and chanting some praises in Torilangi language called "*mattengnga benni*". in the middle of subh and zuhr prayer called "*mattangngasso*". Which aims to pray for one God. So, in the middle of that time, we pray".¹⁴⁴

Second, the adaptation of symbolic meanings. Some symbols in *bissu* rituals, such as the *keris* or *badik*, originally had animistic meanings. In the *maggiri* ritual, the *badik* was used by the *bissu* to stab themselves, aiming to demonstrate their spiritual power and to test whether ancestral spirits or deities had entered them during the ceremony. The Bugis community believed that if the *bissu* were immune to the *badik's* stab, they and the possessing spirit would bestow blessings upon those who sought them¹⁴⁵. Also, the *badik* is believed to possess supernatural powers that can influence the owner's life, bringing about peace, prosperity, and well-being. The *badik* and its owner are not in harmony, it can also cause misfortune, poverty, and suffering¹⁴⁶. This perception, however, led to practices considered shirk (polytheism) and incompatible with Islamic monotheism. Nowadays, the *badik* or *keris* is no longer considered sacred but rather as a symbolic representation of historical heritage.

Third, the active participation of *bissu* in Islamic religious activities demonstrates the integration of their gender identity with religious practices. This is reflected in their involvement in various activities such as recitation (Islamic study groups), celebrations of major Islamic holidays, *barazanji* (a form of Islamic devotional chanting), *takziah* (condolence gatherings), and other communal religious gatherings. This participation indicates that *bissu* have not only embraced Islam as a personal faith but have also integrated it into their social and communal lives¹⁴⁷. *Bissu* Angel said that:

¹⁴⁴ *Bissu* Angel (Samsul Bahri), Interview, May 20, 2024.

¹⁴⁵ Tuti Bahfiarti, "MISTIFIKASI 'BISSU' DALAM UPACARA RITUAL ADAT ETNIK BUGIS MAKASSAR," *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 1 (2011): 165.

¹⁴⁶ Abdul Rahman, "FETISISME PADA BADIK OLEH MASYARAKAT DI DESA DUAMPANUAE KABUPATEN SINJAI," *Jurnal Cakrawala Ilmiah* 2, no. 7 (March 23, 2023): 4, <https://doi.org/10.53625/jcijurnalcakrawalailmiah.v2i7.5039>.

¹⁴⁷ Sabara Nuruddin, "ISLAM DALAM TRADISI MASYARAKAT LOKAL DI SULAWESI SELATAN," *MIMIKRI* 4, no. 1 (June 1, 2018): 55.

*“I am muslim, sister. After bridal makeup, I join the barazanji. Also takziah and pengajian when the event held. I always join the ritual.”*¹⁴⁸

This active participation in Islamic religious activities shows *bissu's* commitment to living in harmony within the Islamic context. They believe that ancestral traditions and Islamic beliefs do not stand alone but complement each other in their identity. By embracing both, they seek to create a sense of balance and unity within their community. Other *Bissu* Yuyun, add some opinion. *“We are all the bissu converted to Islam. We have the God like other Muslim which called “Puang Allahu Ta’ala.”*¹⁴⁹

In the other hand, in the face of stigma and negative societal views towards the *bissu* community, they have demonstrated remarkable adaptability. One form of this adaptation is their embrace of Islamic teachings. Many *bissu* have studied and practiced Islam deeply with some even completing the Hajj pilgrimage, a sacred duty for Muslims who are able.¹⁵⁰ This phenomenon shows that the *bissu* not only maintain their ancestral traditions but also strive to live harmoniously within the predominantly Islamic context of Bugis society. They recognize that by demonstrating adherence to Islam, they can reduce resistance and build bridges of understanding with the wider community.

Oneway *bissu* demonstrates their devotion to Islam is through their appearance. Some *bissu* choose to wear Islamic clothing such as white robes and turbans, similar to the attire worn by Hajj pilgrims. Even when the author conducted an interview with *bissu* Angel, he showed his identity by wearing a *songkok* and white turban to show his religious identity. This is not merely a symbol but also a manifestation of their religious beliefs and practices. The *bissu* community's dedication to ancestral traditions and Islamic beliefs is a proof of their resilience and adaptability. They have successfully navigated the complexities of their cultural identity while remaining loyal to their core values.

In sum, the acculturation process within the *bissu* community shows the dynamic interaction between tradition and adaptation. While upholding the unique cultural heritage, *bissu* quiet enough to integrated the practice of Islamic beliefs into their ritual and social life. The integration is manifested through the adaptation of rituals, reinterpretation of symbolic meanings and active participation in Islamic

¹⁴⁸ Interview, May 20, 2024.

¹⁴⁹ Bissu Yuyun, Interview, June 1, 2024.

¹⁵⁰ Saleh and Azis, “Eksistensi Bissu dalam Masyarakat Suku Bugis Studi Kasus Bissu di Segeri Kabupaten Pangkep,” 26.

religious activities. The phenomenon shows the flexibility of both cultural identity and religious practice. Highlighting the potential for harmonious coexistence and mutual enrichment between seemingly disparate traditions. Furthermore, the *bissu*'s adaptability show the potential case for marginalized groups to navigate societal pressures while preserving their distinct identity, so the contribution to a more inclusive and diverse social landscape.

2. The Negotiating Between Tradition and Beliefs

Stepping back to the acceptance of *bissu* remains strong despite the changing values and norms brought about by modernization and religious influence. Deep rooted cultural heritage and an appreciation for *bissu*'s spiritual role form the foundation of this acceptance. In Bone Regency, where belief in the supernatural remains strong, the position of the *bissu* is considered sacred as they are believed to communicate with spirits and offer blessings. The acceptance of *bissu* is also driven by the understanding that diversity is integral to the richness of Bugis culture. Bugis society has historically recognized five genders and *bissu* are seen as one manifestation of this diversity.

Acceptance of *bissu* in certain Bugis communities is not just passive tolerance, but active appreciation for its role and contribution in maintaining cosmic balance and continuity of ancestral traditions. In villages that still uphold traditional values especially in Bone Regency, *bissu* is considered a central figure in various ceremonies and rituals that mark the community's life cycle. For example, their presence at a wedding not only brings blessings but is also considered a link between the human world and the spirit world so that the wedding is expected to be blessed with fertility, harmony and good fortune. Also, the *calabai* have taken on aspects of their former role in the organization and celebration of weddings.¹⁵¹

When studying the attitudes of people in Bone Regency towards *bissu* two distinct perspectives emerge. The first group supports *bissu*, holding a strong belief in the unseen powers or the power of the deities and thus, their belief in *bissu* remains strong. The second group, often referred to as "fanatical Muslims" in this research are those who have received higher education and tend to reject ritual practices. This group includes religious leaders who while not completely rejecting

¹⁵¹ Pelras, *The Bugis*, 167.

bissu express disapproval particularly due to certain behaviors of *bissu*. This research aims to present a balanced view without taking sides and focusing with the process of negotiation of non-binary gender in Bugis regency.

The *bissu* themselves do not consider their practices to be a separate belief system from Islam. This might be due to the lingering fear from past events like the rebellion and purification movements led by Kahar Muzakkar. However, the author field research contradicts existing literature that often labels *bissu* practices as a distinct belief system often referred to as "*attoriolong*" which predates Islam such as findings the previous scholars.¹⁵²

In an interview, *Bissu passere* Yunus expressed a unique perspective on Islam. They believe that the Bugis customs and traditions predate Islam and are deeply ingrained in their culture. Therefore, practicing Islamic rituals while upholding these customs is a harmonious blend that should be embraced by the Bugis people.

*"The language we used to pray for God is different. We used the "memmang rangi-rangi" language. Which is not all the bissu understand that, so do I. I only practiced what I understand because I am scared it will cause shriek. But for all, the goal is same, worship to God. Only the different language we used."*¹⁵³

Which means that even though Islam is deeply rooted as a teaching and governs the way of religious life, *bissu* and some groups of people still believe in rituals as a complement to their Islamic faith. *Passere bissu* Yunus emphasizes that in practicing Islamic law, *bissu* consistently operates within the temporal realm. This means that when adhering to Islamic precepts, he can conform to male gender

¹⁵² It mentions that the pre-Islamic Bugis belief, *Attoriolong*, had a system of worship different from Islam and was considered shirk (polytheistic). *Bissu*, as priests of *Attoriolong*, were considered to have an important role in the rituals of this belief. With the arrival of Islam, the existence of *bissu* became marginalized because it was considered contrary to Islamic teachings. However, some *bissu* maintained their practices and rituals, although they had to adapt to the dominant Islamic context. Nurlina Syahrir, "Sere Bissu :: Sebuah Ritual Adat Masyarakat Segeri Mandalle Sulawesi Selatan; Fungsinya Dahulu Dan Kini" (Universitas Gadjah Mada, 1996), https://etd.repository.ugm.ac.id/home/detail_pencarian/17828; Lathief Halilintar, *Bissu : Pergulatan Dan Peranannya Di Masyarakat Bugis* (Depok: Desantara, 2004), 12; Umar U, "Dancing with Spirits: Negotiating Bissu Subjectivity through Adat." (Boulder., University of Colorado, 2008), 17; Feby Triadi, "Bissu and Toboto Domain; Lanskap, Islam, dan Negosiasi," *ETNOSIA : Jurnal Etnografi Indonesia* 4, no. 1 (June 23, 2019): 85, <https://doi.org/10.31947/etnosia.v4i1.6163>; Batari Oja Andini, "The Islamization in Bugis Society during the Darul Islam Era under Kahar Muzakar in 1960s," *DINIKA : Academic Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 1 (April 30, 2017): 2, <https://doi.org/10.22515/dinika.v2i1.107>.

¹⁵³ Muhammad Yunus (Passere Bissu/Calabai), Interview, May 10, 2024.

norms. In this way, Islam continually guides *bissu* back to their natural state as adherents of the Islamic faith.

In an effort to harmonize Islamic teachings and ancestral heritage, the Bugis Muslim community has shown a strong commitment to understanding the *bissu* position comprehensively. Various discussion forums whether held officially by religious institutions or casual discussions in coffee shops have become a space for various perspectives to meet. In these spaces, ulama, intellectuals, cultural figures and ordinary people mingled, shared views and delved deeper into the meaning of *bissu's* existence in the context of Islam and the richness of Bugis culture.

Such as “*Project Budaya Bone*” event successfully held a cultural FGD (Focus Group Discussion) themed "Strengthening Moderation, Affirming Diversity for an Advanced Indonesia" on September 5th 2023 for Volume III. The initiative began with Volume I, collaborating with the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemenag RI). This event successfully brought together the *bissu* community district-level policymakers, leaders of religious community organizations (ORMAS) and interfaith religious leaders. One of the main focuses of this activity was to discuss understanding conflicts with a religious dimension. It emphasized that the reality of diversity in Indonesia is undeniable. Some cultural rituals that can be preserved such as *maccera tasi*, *massappo wanua* and *mappalili*, have been influenced by Islam and contain noble religious values.¹⁵⁴

For the volume II as titled "*Project Budaya Bone II* replacing *bissu* as a subject no Longer an object” held from October 2022 to January 2023. Attended by *bissu* chairmen in four districts which are Pangkep, Soppeng, Wajo and Bone. Eight local researchers conducted research and assistance to the *bissu* community in South Sulawesi. These researchers come from various backgrounds such as academics like Jessy Ismoyo, Feby Triadi and others practitioners like the *bissu's* and arts workers. With a decolonizing methodological approach, they seek to understand and translate *bissu's* daily life and place *bissu* as research subjects, not objects. The results of this research were then exhibited at the *tudang sipulung* event.

¹⁵⁴ Harian Fajar, “Project Budaya Bone Vol III Inisiasi FGD Kebudayaan antara Bissu, Pemerintah Daerah, Ormas, dan Tokoh Agama,” Harian Fajar, September 5, 2023, <https://harian.fajar.co.id/2023/09/05/project-budaya-bone-vol-iii-inisiasi-fgd-kebudayaan-antara-bissu-pemerintah-daerah-ormas-dan-tokoh-agama/> accessed 14 June 2024.

The tudang sipulung event also includes discussion and dialogue sessions. On the first day, there was a dialogue session between *bissu* and researchers as well as a discussion session about new perspectives in understanding *bissu*. The second day was filled with sessions on advocacy and strengthening *bissu* groups, as well as a roundtable discussing strategies for strengthening *bissu* in South Sulawesi. However, the *tudang sipulung* event aims to revive the discourse about *bissu* understand diversity as part of perfection and strengthen the *bissu* group in South Sulawesi. It is hoped that this event will produce an academic text containing recommendations for strategies for strengthening *bissu* including government cooperation, integrating *bissu* as a cultural and tourism icon as well as community initiatives in digital literacy.¹⁵⁵

Cite in Fatwa's argument as the promoters of religious moderation communities (KMB) also as Islamic religious instructor from Bone, South Sulawesi, in his opinion said: "*Through collaboration with cultural observer groups, we initiated steps to hold hearings with stakeholders and law enforcement officials such as the Bone Regional Government, Regent and Regional Secretary, Culture Service, Kesbangpol, Prosecutor's Office, TNI. TNI, POLRI (State Police of the Republic of Indonesia), Religious Organizations, Religious Figures, Traditional Leaders, Cultural Observer Groups, DPRD, Karang Taruna, Bone Community Gusdurian Network, and of course the Bissu Traditional Group. We sat together in a forum to get to know each other better and understand the challenges faced by indigenous communities*".¹⁵⁶ Fatma emphasized that society needs to eradicate the stigma and stereotypes faced by the *bissu* traditional group. With a religious moderation approach, it is hoped that this will be a strategy to provide space for customs and culture, namely acceptance of traditions. Fatwa's proactive approach to religious moderation as evidenced by its collaborative efforts with diverse stakeholders and law enforcement, demonstrates a real commitment to fostering understanding and acceptance of indigenous communities like the *bissu*. By bringing together diverse voices in dialogue forums, the fatwa initiative not

¹⁵⁵ Harian Fajar, "Project Budaya Bone II, Menempatkan Kembali Bissu sebagai Subjek, Bukan Lagi Objek," Harian Fajar, February 4, 2023, <https://harian.fajar.co.id/2023/02/04/project-budaya-bone-ii-menempatkan-kembali-bissu-sebagai-subjek-bukan-lagi-objek/> accessed in 14 June 2024.

¹⁵⁶ Kendi Setiawan, "Upaya Pelibatan Kelompok Adat Bissu di Bone untuk Aktif di Kegiatan Masyarakat," NU Online, June 8, 2024, <https://www.nu.or.id/daerah/upaya-pelibatan-kelompok-adat-bissu-di-bone-untuk-aktif-di-kegiatan-masyarakat-ESrIX> accessed in 20 June 2024.

only fights stereotypes and stigma but also paves the way for a more inclusive society that respects religious principles and cultural traditions.

I had an interview with Fatmah Jauharoh a representative from the Ministry of Religion as a functional religious counselor. The focus on the involvement of *bissu* in Bone Regency has been ongoing for four years. This is because one of the functions and duties of religious counselors is to act as advocates, advocating for vulnerable groups. According to her, the challenges faced by *bissu* in Bone intersect with religious understanding. So, the Ministry of Religion held a meeting and invited the cultural office, religious leaders, law enforcement, community leaders, and religious organizations to a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with a religious moderation approach.

This statement emphasizes the intersectionality of *bissu's* position as representatives of both traditional identity and religion. However, misunderstandings arose within the *bissu* community due to certain government actions, such as excluding *bissu* from Bone anniversary celebrations and canceling the "Rindu Bissu Monologue" dialogue event. These actions led the *bissu* community to believe that they were being targeted by law enforcement.

"In 23rd December 2023, we held the focus group discussion (GFD) about the strengthen of religious moderation for the government official. At the policy level, our advocacy includes socializing the values of religious moderation. We engage law enforcement officials, local government and the bissu community. Encouraging bissu to also voice their support for religious moderation with support from the sub-directorate of Islamic Religious Understanding and Conflict Management (SUB BPKI-PK). With the aim of opening a space for dialogue to clarify the stigma that develops in the community." She stated.

In conclusion, the misunderstanding has been resolved. The representatives from law enforcement expressed that they also felt uncomfortable when they had to cancel the dialogue in the previous event, due to humanitarian considerations. The interview with Fatmah Jauharoh explained the complex relationship between the *bissu* community, the government, and religious institutions in Bone Regency. While the government's initiative to promote religious moderation is commendable, it is evident that misunderstandings and miscommunications can arise when addressing the unique cultural identity of the *bissu*. This highlights the importance of ongoing dialogue and collaboration between all stakeholders to ensure that religious moderation efforts are inclusive

and respectful of diverse cultural traditions. Furthermore, it underscores the need for clear communication and transparency from both the government and law enforcement to avoid creating a sense of alienation within marginalized communities.

However, the meeting did not end there. On June 20th 2024, another meeting happened about "Developing a religious moderation ecosystem based on KUA" (religious affairs office).¹⁵⁷ This time, everyone has a role to play, like different groups and people. The first meeting was only for people of the same religion, but this time different religions and people from the same religion came together. Groups like Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, and Ahmadiyah were there. Even though there aren't as many Ahmadiyah people as other groups, they are more open-minded. In the end, they decided that *bissu* should also talk about religious moderation, especially within their own community. However, some traditional leaders and local government people still disagree on whether *bissu* should be part of Bugis society.

In sum, the negotiation and cultururation of non-binary gender within the Muslim Bugis society is a complex and dynamic shaped by cultural heritage, religious influence and ongoing dialogues between several stakeholders. While the non-binary genders especially *bissu* practice have historically been viewed with skepticism by some due to perceived conflicts with Islamic principles, recent efforts towards religious moderation have facilitated a more nuanced understanding and acceptance of *bissu's* role in the community. Through initiatives like the "Project Budaya Bone" and discussions involving religious leaders, government officials and the *bissu* community itself a space for cultural change and mutual understanding has been created. This process of negotiation highlights the resilience of Bugis culture and its ability to adapt to changing social and religious landscapes while preserving its unique identity.

C. Modern ideology, tradition and religion: reflection on the acceptance of non-binary individuals in society

The acceptance of non-binary gender in society is a complex issue, often complicated by the intersection of modern ideologies, traditional values and

¹⁵⁷ Ahdi Hidayat, "Advokasi Pengembangan Moderasi Beragama Di Watampone," <https://sulsel.kemenag.go.id>, June 20, 2024, <https://sulsel.kemenag.go.id/daerah/advokasi-pengembangan-moderasi-beragama-di-watampone-Wm6rP> accessed in 23 June 2024.

religious beliefs. While modern ideologies increasingly recognize and validate non-binary identities, a significant challenge arises from the frequent conflation of non-binary gender with LGBTQ+ identities.¹⁵⁸ This misconception caused by a lack of understanding and nuance discourse that can hinder the acceptance and integration of non-binary gender within the broader society.

“There are many issues around the community that bissu are a deviant group, violating the religion and not in accordance with Islamic law. Such an understanding has developed in the community. This had a structural impact. Around three years ago, the governor of Bone city issued a circular letter related to the LGBTQ+ issues which affected non-binary gender in Bone region. The challenges they got from these issues including the prohibition of activities and events related to bissu because it considered vulnerable to waria and LGBTQ+ groups which mean give them the existence of these groups.”¹⁵⁹

In response to this issue, Fatma engaged in direct dialogues with cultural observers and the researches focusing on *bissu*. They highlighting the difference between public assumptions and the reality of the *bissu* community. Fatma argues that the *bissu* are a non-mainstream gender group who are also devout Muslim adhering to religious ritual. The misunderstanding stems from society’s difficulty in differentiating between gender identity and sexual orientation. This needs to provide an alternative narratives to be presented to the Muslim society to reduce the stigma and stereotypes surrounding *bissu* as the issue has escalated to a national level. Therefore, the Ministry of Religious Affairs collaborated with cultural observers to reflect on the evolving issues and challenges faced by the community as in the dialogue, *bissu* expresses his feelings of being restrained and attacked by negative stigma by society.

The differences in traditional values and religious beliefs in each culture and community can further complicate the acceptance of non-binary gender. Some interpretations of these beliefs may not easily accommodate non-binary identities leading to potential conflict and marginalization. Such as the way *bissu* show their gender through their clothes and makeup both in rituals and everyday life. What they wear and how they do their makeup for rituals is something they are still talking about. I saw this when I talked to the leader of the *bissu* community in

¹⁵⁸ Isman, “Tantangan Bissu Bugis di Era Modern, Minim Generasi hingga Tekanan Penolakan” accessed in 23 May 2024.

¹⁵⁹ Fatma Jauharoh, Interview, June 22, 2024.

Bone, Bissu Angel. He was wearing a white turban during our interview which made him look very religious. However, many traditions and religions are not inherently opposed to gender equality and interpretations can evolve over time to embrace a more inclusive understanding of gender.

Jasbir K. Puar emphasizes the importance of understanding the struggles of non-binary gender within a broader context, moving beyond the western narrative that often dominates global discourse on human rights and gender diversity. She argues that homonationalist nations construct a binary between “democratic”, “modern” and “secular” countries, which are considered “gay-friendly” and other nations labeled as “homophobic”, “despotic”, “traditional” and “religious”. This binary creates an ambiguous space that follows the north/south, developed/developing and west/east divides. In the process of decolonization, the interpretation of “LGBTQ+ rights” should not be limited to a single naratvies.¹⁶⁰ Within this binary, the west is characterized by “liberal gay rights activists” advocating for same-sex partnerships and adoption rights, while the “campaign” for other countries is marked by the absence of these rights and the criminalization of same-sex sexual activity.

Historically, the presence of LGBTQ+ individuals in global politics is not a recent pccurence but has deep historical roots. Initially referred to as the Gay community, the terminology evolved into LGBT in the 1990’s. this concept, often seen as a deviation from traditional sexual norms due to its focus on same sax relationships has been a contentious topic globaly especially in the 2010’s. however, the landscape is shifting with 33 countries now legally recognizing same sex marriage.¹⁶¹ The global prominence of LGBTQ+ issues is a result of sustained pro-LGBT advocacy further amplified by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Political Shifts towards democracy which are sometimes mistakenly equated with unrestrained personal freedoms. Wealthier, secular nations are generally more open to LGBTQ+ rights particularly those with democratic systems. However, while not universal in all democracies, LGBTQ+ rights are almost entirely absen in non-democratic nations.

Understanding the LGBTQ+ perspective within the framework of Human Rights is not a simple matter, especially regarding sexual orientation, gender

¹⁶⁰ Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Duke University Press, 2007), 19–20, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1131fg5>.

¹⁶¹ Wikipedia, “Perkawinan sejenis,” in *Wikipedia bahasa Indonesia, ensiklopedia bebas*, September 16, 2023 accessed in 30 July.

identity and gender expression. However, various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Human Rights activists and the LGBTQ+ community continue to fight for the recognition and protection of LGBTQ+ rights at both national and international levels. Their efforts have brought positive changes to LGBTQ+ issues in Indonesia. Political reforms and democratization in Indonesia have also pushed LGBTQ+ issues to the forefront, leading to the development of LGBT organizations.¹⁶²

Indonesian LGBTQ+ activists, Yuli Ristinawati highlighted six main focuses of their movement. First, they strive to correct public misconception that LGBTQ+ is not a disease and does not need to be cured. Second, they urge the government to protect members of the community from various forms of violence including sexual, physical, economic, cultural and psychological violence. Third, they demand fair and equal treatment from the state for all citizens without discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals. Fourth, they advocate for their basic rights as citizens including the right to live free from discrimination. Fifth, within their community, they build solidarity and learn from each other to overcome various challenges. Finally, they utilize the LGBTQ+ community website as a platform for public education about LGBTQ+ campaigning against violence towards LGBTQ+ individuals and preventing sexual harassment against anyone.¹⁶³

It is important to understand that the struggles of non-binary gender group is different from those of liberal gay right movements. In the context of Indonesia conflating the *bissu* with “liberal gay right” activism and the “five genders” narratives within homonationalist frameworks is detrimental. The perception that the *bissu* are overexposed as a symbol of gender diversity and sexuality has impacted the power imbalances within their gender, sexuality and ritual roles.¹⁶⁴

An understanding of *adat* (customary law) and Islam is crucial within the *bissu* structure. In an interview with a *adat* figure, he expressed that *bissu* are currently perceived merely as performers or entertainers unlike the “true” *bissu*. He stated that *bissu* in the past had a deep understanding of *adat*, whereas their

¹⁶² Destashya Wisna Diraya Putri, “LGBT Dalam Kajian Hak Asasi Manusia Di Indonesia,” *Ikatan Penulis Mahasiswa Hukum Indonesia Law Journal* 2, no. 1 (February 2, 2022): 95, <https://doi.org/10.15294/ipmhi.v2i1.53739>.

¹⁶³ Yulianti Muthmainnah, “LGBT Human Rights in Indonesian Policies,” *Indonesian Feminist Journal* 4, no. 1 (2016): 15.

¹⁶⁴ Petsy Jessy Ismoyo, “DECOLONIZING GENDER IDENTITIES IN INDONESIA: A STUDY OF BISSU ‘THE TRANS-RELIGIOUS LEADER’ IN BUGIS PEOPLE,” *Paradigma: Jurnal Kajian Budaya* 10, no. 3 (December 11, 2020): 280, <https://doi.org/10.17510/paradigma.v10i3.404>.

current understanding is lacking. He cited an example of Puang Lolo who sought permission to become *Puang Matoa* which is the highest ranking *bissu* but the *adat* figure felt that Puang Lolo did not fully comprehend the duties of a *bissu* which encompass not only art but also traditions, customs and culture. He expressed concern that if *bissu* solely focus on art, they could face extinction. Additionally, he voiced his apprehension about associating *bissu* with LGBT as he believes they are not part of that community. He argued that if Puang Lolo held a such a view, it would be same to considering their ancestor as infidels.¹⁶⁵

From the author perspective, the tradition of non-binary gender within the Bugis community, particularly the *bissu* should not be equated with LGBTQ+ activism advocating for rights in other countries. This is because the belief in non-binary gender is rooted in spiritual beliefs that do not focus on sexual orientation. The *bissu* as a representation of non-binary gender play a crucial role in preserving and maintaining Bugis traditions rather than solely fighting for sexual rights as often associated with the LGBTQ+ movement. The efforts to preserve the identity and role of *bissu* are a form of respect for ancestral cultural and spiritual heritage, not a political movement demanding social or legal changes related to sexual orientation.

The application of religious moderation values within the Muslim Bugis community is crucial, particularly in addressing the existence of *bissu*. moderation does not only mean tolerance but also acceptance and appreciation of diverse gender identities within the framework of noble religious values. by prioritizing dialogue, mutual understanding and respect for human rights, it is hoped that a more inclusive space will be created for *bissu* to carry out their roles and identities peacefully and coexist with other communities.

In line with Fatma's argument, a representative from the Ministry of Religious Affairs who seeks to implement religious moderation values in the Bugis Bone community, one of the indicators of religious moderation is accommodating local wisdom. *Bissu* are considered a noble example of local wisdom because they are seen as individuals who have moved away from negative behaviors of their past before becoming *bissu*. Thus, one commitment to break free from deviant behaviors is the path of *bissu*.

It is generally known that *calabai* and *calalai* often engage in actions that deviate thing or contradict Islamic teachings. However, the path of *bissu* is a way

¹⁶⁵ Passerre Bissu Puang Lolo, Interview.

for them to leave behind their dark past and improve themselves to get closer to the God. It is undeniable that there are diverse genders within the *bissu* community in Bone. The way to respect non-binary genders is as citizens and religious individuals, regardless of their identity. The important thing is for fellow religious communities to embrace each other because if society stay away from them, they will become further alienated and ultimately not accommodated.

Efforts to promote the acceptance of non-binary gender should focus on bridging the gap between modern ideologies, tradition and religion. This involves engaging in open and respectful dialogues, challenging stereotypes and misconceptions and advocating for policies and practices that recognize and protect the rights of non-binary gender. By fostering a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of gender diversity, society can create a more equitable and accepting environment for all individuals, regardless of their gender identity.

D. Conclusion

The negotiation and acculturation between non-binary gender and the Muslim Bugis community in Bone region highlights the dynamic interplay between tradition, religion and modernity. While deeply rooted in Bugis culture, the non-binary gender, especially for the position of *bissu* have adapted and integrated iIslamic practices into their rituals and daily lives, showcasing the flexibility of cultural identity and religious expression. However, they face significant challenges including discrimination, economic marginalization and the commodification of their cultural practices. These challenges are often fueled by misunderstandings and conflation with LGBTQ+ identities highlighting the importance of distinguishing between gender identity and sexual orientation.

A nuanced approach is crucial to address these issues promoting understanding and acceptance of non-binary identities within the Bugis community. This involves fostering dialogue between religious leaders, government officials and the *bissu* community, while also safeguarding their cultural practices and economic prosperity. However, decolonizing the narratives surrounding non-binary genders and recognizing the unique cultural and spiritual significance of the *bissu* tradition are essential steps towards creating a more inclusive and equitable society. by acknowledging the complexity of these issues and working collaboratively, a harmonius coexistence between tradition, religion

and modernity can be achieved, ensuring the preservation of Bugis cultural heritage and the prosperity of the non-binary gender.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The discourse of gender in Indonesia particularly within the Muslim Bugis community which recognizes five genders: *oroane* (male), *makkunrai* (female), *calabai* (man taking on female gender roles), *calalai* (woman taking on male gender roles) and *bissu* (a gender considered to represent the full spectrum of gender). However, the rapid spread of Islam in South Sulawesi led to changes in the activities of *bissu*. The Muslim community in South Sulawesi showed *bissu* as deviating from the natural order and considered them infidels or polytheists. This conflicted with the theological concepts of Islam, the majority religion among the Bugis people. The Islamic discourse on gender is discussed under the concepts of *Tashabbuh* (imitation of the opposite sex) and *Khunthā* (intersexuality). Imitating the opposite sex is not permissible under the concept of *tashabbuh* but the discussion of *khunthā* involves non-binary genders which requires complex legal and ethical considerations in Islamic Jurisprudence (*fiqh*). In response to the negative views of society towards the *bissu* community, they adapted to the societal conditions. In fact, some *bissu* have studied and practiced Islamic teachings and some have even completed the Hajj pilgrimage. *Bissu* also demonstrate their adherence to Islam through their appearance, wearing Islamic clothing such as white robes and turbans, similar to the attire worn during the Hajj.

Using Bourdieu's theory of Habitus provides a valuable framework for understanding the existence and roles of non-binary gender individuals within society. How the habitus of non-binary gender particularly the *bissu* in Bugis culture is shaped by unique cultural practices and beliefs. These factors influence their position and interactions within society especially amidst social change and negative stigma from the local community. Frequently, their economic capital is limited and their cultural capital may not be widely valued outside their community. Social capital is diminished due to discrimination and stigma while their symbolic capital can be challenged by conservative interpretations of Islam. Despite these challenges, the *bissu* have demonstrated adaptability. They strategically utilize their capital to negotiate their position in society, engage in diverse religious dialogues and advocate for greater acceptance and understanding. The *bissu* holding a historically sacred and unique role in Bugis society remain an integral part of Bugis cultural heritage and traditions. They are seen as a pathway to prevent *calabai* and *calalai* (other gender identities in Bugis culture) from engaging in behaviors deemed deviant within Islam.

The existence and dynamics of non-binary genders particularly *calabai*, *calalai* and *bissu* are deeply rooted in the traditions and culture of the Bugis Muslim community in Bone Region. However, they face challenges in terms of social and religious acceptance in the modern era. *bissu* historically revered as spiritual leader and keepers of tradition have experienced a decline in status and discrimination with the growing influence of Islam and modernization. Nevertheless, beliefs surrounding non-binary gender persist especially in Bone, where *bissu* continue to play roles in traditional ceremonies and religious rituals. Non-binary gender face challenges such as discrimination, economic marginalization and cultural exploitation as the effort to maintain the identity and roles in an evolving society.

The negotiation of non-binary gender identity in Bugis society has create pros and cons in Bugis society. Institutions such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs and local governments have expressed support, recognizing non-binary gender as a form of cultural preservation. This is evidenced by the Ministry's efforts over the past four years to engage religious educators in addressing the negative stigma associated with *bissu* often equated with LGBTQ+ through dialogues involving various religious organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah and Ahmadiyah. Then, for the cons organization such as Islamic conservative organization who did not included in the Religious Ministry dialogues because they are closed minded and do not accept the existence of non-binary gender.

This thesis allows readers to gain a deeper understanding of how non-binary gender is perceived and navigated within Muslim Bugis society in Bone region, South Sulawesi. It can significantly contribute to the field of non-binary gender studies especially in the Indonesian context. The existence of non-binary gender especially *bissu* who have historically held important role in Bugis rituals and spirituality, demonstrates that non-binary identities not only endure but continue to play a significant role in the lives of Bugis Muslims in Bone, despite facing social and religious challenges. However, this research also highlights the need for other studies to understand how similar dynamics unfold in other Bugis Muslim society across South Sulawesi. Different regions may have varying interpretations and practices regarding gender identity and religion. Therefore, other studies maybe can provide a more comprehensive picture of how Bugis Muslims throughout South Sulawesi navigate the complexities of the relationship between religion, tradition and gender identity.

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