

Harmonization of Tradition and Islam: Mediating Culture and Religious Beliefs in *Maccera Tasi* Ritual in Luwu, South Sulawesi

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Abstract

This study explores the Maccera Tasi tradition in Bonepute Village, Luwu Regency, South Sulawesi, examining its intersection with Islam and local culture. Recently, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) of South Sulawesi deemed this long-standing tradition as *shirk*, or polytheistic, asserting that it contradicts Islamic law. This declaration was made by the MUI's fatwa commission following public reports about rituals involving offerings of livestock heads, such as cows, buffalo, or goats, or other food into the ocean. In response to these reports, the Regional MUI team conducted a field research whose findings were reported to the South Sulawesi MUI. This report served as the basis for the aforementioned announcement. While some perceive the Maccera Tasi practice as an expression of gratitude for the harvest, others label it as *shirk* (polytheism). The present study employed field research, utilizing qualitative descriptive analysis. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The research participants included religious leaders, traditional leaders, community leaders and local government representatives from Bonepute. The findings of this research suggest that religion and local traditions can

coexist, fostering social cohesion without infringing upon Islamic law. This harmonious coexistence encourages the Bonepute community, particularly fishermen, to express gratitude for the blessings bestowed by Allah SWT. This gratitude is manifested through prayer, the release of seeds, and marine fish food, which are interpreted as forms of environmental stewardship. Therefore, this study contends that the perception of the Maccera Tasi practice as polytheistic is inaccurate. Instead, this practice represents an Islamic expression of preserving local culture through a process of religious and cultural assimilation.

Keywords: *Maccera Tasi Tradition, Local Culture, MUI Sulsel, Local Religious Practices, Bonepute Village*

Abstrak

Artikel ini mendiskusikan tradisi Maccera Tasi di Kelurahan Bonepute Kabupaten Luwu kaitannya dengan Islam dan budaya lokal. Belakangan tradisi tersebut dianggap syirik oleh Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) Sulawesi Selatan. Meskipun sudah dilaksanakan turun-temurun, namun dalam praktiknya menurut MUI bertentangan dengan syariat Islam. Hal tersebut dikeluarkan oleh MUI komisi fatwa, setelah menerima laporan dari masyarakat di beberapa tempat sehingga tentang ritual atau sesajen dengan kepala hewan ternak seperti sapi, kerbau, atau kambing ataupun makanan lainnya ke lautan. Berdasarkan dari laporan tersebut, maka MUI melakukan penelitian lapangan oleh Tim MUI Daerah yang kemudian dilaporkan ke MUI Sulsel, dengan dasar laporan tersebut dikeluarkanlah maklumat ini. Walaupun ada anggapan bahwa praktik Maccera Tasi sebagai bentuk ungkapan syukur atas hasil panen, namun tidak sedikit yang menyebut perilaku tersebut sebagai bentuk kemusyrikan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan yaitu penelitian lapangan dengan analisis deskriptif kualitatif, teknik pengumpulan data melalui proses observasi, wawancara dan dokumentasi. Subjek dalam penelitian ini yaitu tokoh agama Bonepute, tokoh adat, tokoh masyarakat dan pemerintah setempat. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa agama dan tradisi lokal dapat menjadi titik temu dalam membentuk kohesivitas sosial tanpa melanggar syariat Islam, perjumpaan tersebut justru menuntun masyarakat Bonepute khususnya para nelayan untuk mensyukuri nikmat yang diberikan oleh Allah swt yang termanifestasikan dalam panjatan doa (syukur), pelepasan bibit dan pakan ikan ke lautan yang dimaknai sebagai bentuk pemeliharaan terhadap alam. Oleh karenanya, penulis berargumen, anggapan terhadap praktik Maccera Tasi sebagai bentuk kemusyrikan tidak benar adanya, justru praktik tersebut sebagai bentuk ekspresi Islam dalam melestarikan budaya lokal melalui proses asimilasi agama dan budaya.

Kata Kunci: *Tradisi Maccera Tasi, Budaya Lokal, MUI Sulsel, Praktik Keagamaan Lokal, Kelurahan Bonepute*

Introduction

This article examines the intersection of local culture and Islam, as manifested in the *Maccera Tasi* tradition—a practice of expressing gratitude for the sea products obtained by fishermen. However, a recent pronouncement from the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) of South Sulawesi has deemed this tradition as incompatible with Islamic law. The council’s contention stems from the belief that the practice of offering tributes to the sea, as a gesture of appreciation for the fishermen’s harvest, is heretical and deviates from the Prophet’s teachings (CNN Indonesia, 2023).

Indonesia’s abundant natural resources have fostered a rich tapestry of traditions and rituals within its communities, primarily as expressions of gratitude to the Creator (Ayu, 2018). Numerous annual rituals across various regions share the common objective of acknowledging the bounty of natural resources. These include the Seba Baduy in Serang City (Rusnandar, 2013), Katto Bakko in Maros Regency (Jumadi et al., 2020), Nyabak Ritual in Bengkayang Regency (Kiyai @ Keai et al., 2020), Ulur-Ulur in Tulungagung Regency (Santoso et al., 2021), among others.

These rituals, each unique in its own right, mirror the cultural diversity of Indonesia, where locals participate wholeheartedly in celebrations to honor nature’s gifts. Some rituals may appear extreme, such as the Madewayu ritual in Karangasem Regency, which involves the use of sharp weapons (Juniasa, 2022). However, these rituals serve not only as expressions of gratitude but also as vehicles for reinforcing the cultural identity of the local community. Despite the unique or extreme elements involved in some rituals, they remain an integral part of the cultural heritage that underscores

Indonesia's rich diversity and should be respected and preserved (Baidhawiy, 2007).

Inhabitants of the coastal region of Luwu Raya, which lies adjacent to the sea in South Sulawesi, engage in unique traditions as a means of expressing gratitude for the bountiful blessings bestowed by the Almighty. The Luwu Regency, characterized by its extensive coastline, is home to a rich cultural heritage manifested in rituals such as the *Mappangre Galung* performed by farmers (Pabbajah, 2012), and the *Maccera Tasi*, a tradition upheld by fishermen. The *Maccera Tasi* ritual, conducted as an expression of gratitude by fishermen for the divine blessings they receive, involves the giving of offerings, known as *Sebbu kati* (Yuliaty et al., 2019). Despite its profound significance as an expression of gratitude, this tradition faces opposition from some quarters who view it as incorporating elements of *shirk*, or deviation from the teachings of Allah SWT. This perspective is linked to historical beliefs predating the advent of Islam when the Luwu people were thought to worship deities (Nuruddin, 2018).

This tradition, rooted in the beliefs of the Luwu people, presents diverse interpretations (Nuruddin, 2018). On one hand, it serves as a vehicle for fostering social relations among communities, particularly in the city of Palopo, South Sulawesi, where this event is held annually. Conversely, there are those who perceive this tradition as a futile exercise, either due to its incongruity with their beliefs or its lack of appeal to certain individuals. This present study aims to explore further about how *Maccera Tasi* was perceived by local communities and by the formal entity (MUI Sulsel) and how it is now understood.

Literature Review

Maccera Tasi in Luwu

Despite the widespread acceptance of Islam within Indonesian society including South Sulawesi, tensions often arise between Islamic principles and local values (Mutawali, 2016). These conflicts are typically sparked when Islamic social groups employ harsh rhetoric to critique or judge the execution of certain societal rituals (Effendi et al., 2021). Such “judgments” against the implementation of rituals frequently incite resistance from the practitioners of these rituals (Aghajani, 2023). One ritual that frequently attracts negative criticism from some Islamic groups in Sulawesi is *Maccera Tasi*. This ritual, performed by the Bugis tribe residing in coastal areas, serves as an expression of gratitude to God for the natural wealth bestowed (sea products) upon humanity. Although this ritual is known by various names, such as the *Mocera Tasi* ritual by the Wotu tribe in East Luwu, its core essence aligns with the *Maccera Tasi* tradition.

At its core, this traditional ceremony is philosophically understood to aim at invigorating and fortifying the spirits of fishermen, while also serving as a form of protection from disaster. Moreover, the traditional *Maccera Tasi* ceremony represents an expression of joy and gratitude for the abundance of marine products gifted by God to the fishing community. In the Wotu region, this ritual also functions as a means of validating traditional leaders. The divergent perceptions of this tradition underscore the complexity of integrating local values with religious teachings (Putkonen & Poulter, 2023). While some individuals may choose to preserve and continue traditions as cultural heritage, others may reject them as deviations

from a purer Islamic faith (Umar Faruq Abd-Allah, 2009). This dynamic reflects the ongoing effort to strike a balance between local traditions and religious teachings.

The traditional Maccera Tasi ceremony is essentially viewed by the people of Bonepute Village as a spirit that can boost the enthusiasm of fishermen for the fruits of their labor. Although this practice has evolved by integrating elements of Islam and local culture, the MUI maintains that this practice cannot be sanctioned within the framework of Islamic sharia. The discord between local beliefs and the views of the MUI illustrates that despite the community's attempts to align their traditions with Islamic values, a tension persists between traditional practices and religious mandates (Jamalie & Wibowo, 2023). This reflects the intricacy of maintaining a balance between cultural heritage and religious values in society (Ridho, 2020).

The interplay between religion and culture

According to Kuntowijoyo, religion and culture can coexist, mutually critiquing and influencing each other in people's lives (Kuntowijoyo, 2001). Meanwhile, Weber's terminology, as explained by Putra, posits that religion is not merely a belief in the supernatural but can also foster robust cohesion within the social structure, despite each religion having distinct traditions (Putra, 2020). The interplay between religion and culture demonstrates their clear manifestation in daily life. The analogy that religion and culture are akin to two sides of a coin underscores their close relationship. This intimate connection between religious and cultural elements engenders complex dynamics. They not only coexist but can also significantly impact each other (Arifin & Harpiani, 2023).

New changes and challenges can emerge from the interactions between Islamic and cultural entities, which can, in turn, influence the lives of their followers (Abdullah, 2014). This perspective underscores the importance of understanding that religion and culture do not always align but can sometimes influence each other and even incite conflict or change in society. Analyzing this relationship is pertinent for understanding the complexity of social and cultural dynamics within a society.

Several studies have explored the interrelationship between religion and culture, including research conducted by Hadi Pajarianto et al., entitled "Tolerance between religions through the role of local wisdom and religious moderation." This study found that the value of religious moderation is strongly influenced by the family environment in shaping moderate attitudes through local traditions of *kasiuluran*, *tengko situru*, and *karapasan* (Pajarianto., 2022). Additionally, research conducted by Faizal Bachrong et al., on "Religious Moderation In Karapasan The Local Culture Of Tana Toraja Community In South Sulawesi," showed that one of the values of religious moderation was formed from Aluk Tondolo and the Tongkonan traditional house as part of the local culture in Tana Toraja. This cultural heritage symbolizes harmony between tribes and religions in Tana Toraja (Bachrong & Ansar, 2021). Other research was also carried out by Abu Muslim et al., on "Iko-iko Siala Tangang (Tracing Moderatism of Religious Concept from the Oral Traditions of Bajau)". The results of his research explain that the Bajau oral tradition called Iko-iko in Wakatobi has long been the basis for developing the value of religious moderation through the integration of religion and culture, each of which contains a moral message in forming a moderate attitude (Muslim et al., 2020).

Research was also conducted by Eko Saputra et al., on “Online Media Reporting: Case Study of Cultural Conflict (Sedekah Laut in Pantai Baru, Ngentak, Bantul, Yogyakarta)” (Saputra et al., 2020). The research showed that the conflict surrounding the practice of Alms to the Sea in Pantai Baru was triggered by differences in the interpretation of Islamic law related to the concept of *Sedekah Laut* (*Sea Offerings*). Groups with conservative views tend to consider the practice of *Sedekah Laut* as a deviation from Islamic teachings, and even as an act of haram and shirk, which can result in someone leaving the Islamic religion. On the other hand, moderate Islamic groups and the local community believe that *Sedekah Laut* does not conflict with Islamic principles. In fact, the existence of this practice is considered to strengthen the community’s spirituality, increase religious beliefs, and strengthen bonds of togetherness among them. Thus, *Sedekah Laut* is not a deviation from Islamic values, but rather a tradition that strengthens religious diversity and social solidarity in the community.

The present study is distinct from the previous studies that generally described the concepts and practices of the harmonization of tradition and Islam in various regions. First of all, this study specifically examines the *Maccera Tasi* tradition, a thanksgiving ritual carried out by fishermen in Bonepute, Luwu, South Sulawesi. This specific focus provides a more detailed depth of analysis of one particular tradition that has not been widely discussed in previous research.

Secondly, this study also emphasizes the role of *da’wah* as a tool to harmonize local traditions with Islamic teachings. While several previous studies discussed the adaptation of local traditions to Islamic values, this research specifically examines how *da’wah*

strategies are implemented to minimize deviations from Islamic law in the practice of *Maccera Tasi*. In addition, this research involved active participation from various elements of Bonepute society, including fishermen, traditional leaders, religious figures and local government. This participatory approach provides a more comprehensive and in-depth perspective on how people understand and adapt their traditions in a religious context.

Thirdly, this research also reveals how practices in *Maccera Tasi*, such as releasing seeds and feeding marine fish, are interpreted as a form of preserving nature in line with Islamic values. This adds a new dimension to the discussion about the harmonization of tradition and Islam, namely the role of tradition in environmental conservation as a religious expression. Thus, this research will make a significant contribution to the conceptual understanding of how cultural and religious assimilation can occur without sacrificing the essence of both. By showing that *Maccera Tasi* can be practiced without violating Islamic law through a process of wise assimilation, this research offers a theoretical model that can be applied to similar studies in various cultural and religious contexts.

Finally, this research will also respond to a circular from the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) which criticizes several practices in the *Maccera Tasi* tradition. This research provides a field perspective on how society responds and adapts to recommendations from religious authorities, something that has not been widely discussed in previous literature. Overall, this research enriches the literature on the harmonization of tradition and Islam by providing in-depth and specific case studies and emphasizing the approach of *da'wah* and environmental conservation as an integral part of the process of cultural and religious adaptation.

Method

This research was conducted for approximately a month in Bonepute Village, South Larompong District, Luwu Regency. The selection of research location was based on three aspects. First, Bonepute is an area in South Sulawesi that still maintains the *Maccera Tasi* tradition. Second, the encounter between Islam and tradition in Bonepute is intriguing to study, because the local MUI responded to this tradition by issuing a *fatwa* for it. Third, the presence and availability of key participants: religious figures, traditional leaders and community leaders who are active in Bonepute provide a rich source of data for this research. This research is field research using a phenomenological approach to qualitative descriptive analysis. This approach does not only limit itself to data collection, but also emphasizes the importance of describing in detail and systematically various aspects related to the phenomenon under study (Yilmaz, 2013). Data was collected through observation, interviews and documentation. The participants of this research were Bonepute religious leaders, traditional leaders, community leaders, and local government. Data was analysed thematically based on its relevance to the research questions.

Result and Discussion

a. The Perspectives of Local Community on the *Maccera Tasi* Tradition

The term *Maccera Tasi* originates from the combination of *cera*, signifying ‘blood’, and *tasi* denoting ‘sea’. Terminologically, *Maccera Tasi* can be translated as a traditional ceremony involving

the spilling of animal blood into the sea (Mustafa, 2019). This ceremony typically takes place on the beach at the furthest tide, symbolizing the convergence of two distinct ecosystems—land and ocean habitats.

The ceremony involves the provision of *Sebbu kati* or offerings, believed to be received by various sea creatures. The associated activity, known as *Massorong Sebbu Kati*, commences with the casting of a buffalo's head into the sea, followed by the presentation of various other offerings. These include four-colored sticky rice (*sokko patanrupa*) topped with an egg, two chickens, and agricultural tools such as a hoe and plow, symbolizing peace between farmers and fishermen. Additionally, betel and palm nuts are included as symbols of unity and affection, while a white cloth represents cleanliness and purity. At first glance, this tradition appears to be a form of worship to the sea god involving offerings and prayers. However, due to this perception, the activity often faces criticism from the Islamic community in Luwu.



Figure 1. *Maccera Tasi* ceremony (source: muisulsel.or.id)

Maccera Tasi is a traditional ceremony held as an expression of gratitude for the marine products obtained by the fishing community

(Maulidyna et al., 2021). This ceremony reflects the joy and gratitude of the fishing community for the abundance of good fortune bestowed by God (Ningsih, 2020). *Maccera Tasi* is not merely a ritual but also a profound expression of the spiritual connection between fishing communities and the sea. This tradition demonstrates a sense of dependence and gratitude towards natural resources, especially marine products, which constitute the primary livelihood for fishing communities (Ferrol-Schulte et al., 2013). By involving this ritual, the fishing community respects and celebrates the abundance given by God through the sea. In essence, *Maccera Tasi* is not only a manifestation of spiritual beliefs but also a cultural heritage that enriches the identity of the fishing community. This tradition reflects the values of unity, gratitude, and respect for nature, which can deepen the bond between humans and their environment.

An interview with AMR (pseudonym), a traditional leader in Bonepute, revealed that:

"This series of traditional *Maccera Tasi* activities were held as a forum to strengthen relations between the people of Bonepute Village and the government, especially with coastal communities. It is important to note that the *Maccera Tasi* tradition carried out in this context has an Islamic nuance in accordance with the principles of Islamic law. This is done with the aim of ensuring that there are no elements of polytheism that occur in its implementation, as well as to strengthen the quality of the faith of Muslims in Luwu Regency, South Larompong District, especially in Bonepute Village." (Interview with AMR)

AMR statement above underlines the importance of maintaining the conformity of tradition with Islamic teachings, with special emphasis on eliminating elements of polytheism. In addition, he perceived that *Maccera Tasi* is a means of strengthening ties between society, government, and religious values. With an Islamic

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approach, he hoped that this tradition can make a positive contribution to increasing the faith of Muslims in the region. A community leader of Bonepute village (AW) added:

"It is important to note that the implementation of the Maccera Tasi tradition has become part of the culture of the people in coastal areas. This tradition is carried out as part of a hereditary inheritance which is held once a year. The successful implementation of this tradition can be achieved thanks to close collaboration between the government, traditional leaders, community leaders and youth leaders. As a result, the implementation of the Maccera Tasi tradition is maintained and in line with the principles of Islamic law." (Interview with AW)

As a community leader, AW viewed *Maccera Tasi* tradition as not only an annual activity but also as an integral part of the cultural identity of communities in coastal areas. He added that, cooperation between various parties, including the government and community leaders, is recognized as a key factor in maintaining the continuity and sustainability of this tradition, by ensuring that its implementation remains in accordance with Islamic teachings.

Both interviews reflect that although *Maccera Tasi* tradition has been part of people's lives for generations, gradual adaptation was required when Islam was introduced (Habib Shulton Asnawi, 2018). These adaptations may reflect how communities are gradually integrating Islamic values into their local traditions. As time progressed, the implementation of the *Maccera Tasi* tradition was appropriated, so that it remained in accordance with Islamic teachings, showing the complexity of maintaining cultural heritage while respecting the religious values adhered to.

Indeed, eliminating cultural tradition that is not in line with Islamic values from a long-lasting ritual such as *Maccera Tasi* is challenging, as expressed by AMR:

"This *Maccera tasi* tradition is a tradition from our ancestors, so it is actually very difficult for us to eliminate it, but we are trying to improve this tradition so that it does not smell like shirk in its implementation, we of course use an approach to the cultural values that exist in society" (Interview with AMR)

Similarly, AB, head of Bonepute Village, added that:

"*Maccera tasi* is actually an expression of gratitude for the abundant catch of fishermen and if we think this is in line with Islamic teachings that we must be grateful for all gifts from Allah SWT, then it is better to prevent society from deviation when carrying out this tradition, we always look for harmony between tradition and teachings of Islamic law" (interview with AB)

The above interview results indicate that the community is employing an approach rooted in cultural values that have long been ingrained in society. This approach signifies an effort to preserve and respect local cultural roots, while ensuring these traditions do not conflict with Islamic principles (Alserhan, 2010). In doing so, the community is committed to practicing the traditions passed down from their ancestors in a manner more aligned with the religious values they uphold. This approach embodies the spirit of striking a balance between preserving local traditions and adhering to religious values, thereby creating a space where cultural heritage can be maintained without violating the religious principles held by the community.

The author posits that ritual practices which contained *shirk* (polytheism) have, in fact, been long been removed from this traditional event. However, this does not alter the essence of the *Maccera Tasi* ritual or sea offerings as previously described. With the advent of Islam, the *aqidah* (beliefs) and rituals inherent in this tradition have been adapted to align with Islamic *aqidah* and *sharia*. These modifications demonstrate the community's efforts to

amalgamate and adapt local traditions with Islamic values, ensuring no idolatrous elements are contained in its implementation (Arsyad AT, 2012). Consequently, the *Maccera Tasi* tradition can still be preserved and celebrated by the local community of Luwu as part of their cultural heritage, while concurrently adhering to the principles of the religion they practice. This reflects the adaptability and harmonization between local traditions and religious values held by the local community.

b. Bonepute Community Response Regarding Local MUI Announcement

On June 7, 2023, the Maklumat Commission of the South Sulawesi Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) issued an edict, Maklumat-05/DP.P.XXI/VI/2023, addressing the *Maccera Tasi* ritual ceremony conducted in various regions of South Sulawesi (Rizkayadi Sjukri, 2023). This edict was promulgated by the MUI fatwa commission in response to public reports concerning rituals involving offerings of livestock heads, such as cows, buffaloes, or goats, or other food into the ocean. In response to these reports, the MUI conducted field research through the Regional MUI Team. The findings were then reported to the South Sulawesi MUI, forming the basis for this edict. The edict provides clarification on the legal position and traditional values inherent in the *Maccera Tasi* ritual. It contains three key points:

1. The public is encouraged to perform religious rituals in accordance with the instructions of Allah SWT and His Messenger. Expressing gratitude for Allah SWT's blessings is a commanded act, but it should be done in a manner that does not conflict with Allah SWT's instructions. The

Maccera Tasi ritual, widely practiced in several places in South Sulawesi as a form of gratitude for what nature (the sea) provides, is not recognized in Islamic law. Therefore, its practice is considered forbidden.

2. The Islamic community is urged to perform thanksgiving rituals in line with the teachings of Allah SWT and The Prophet. This includes expressing gratitude for the blessings of Allah SWT through prescribed acts of worship. One such act of worship to express gratitude to Allah SWT is the performance of the Qurbani service.
3. The Government is appealed to refrain from promoting the preservation of cultural practices that contradict Islamic law. Similarly, religious scholars, youth, educators, and parents are urged to pay special attention to the faith issues of our generation. It is recommended that we collectively learn the correct Islamic beliefs and instil them in our children and grandchildren. The hope is for them to become a strong generation in all fields, especially in faith and belief (MUI Sulawesi Selatan, 2023).

This edict reflects the efforts of the South Sulawesi Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) to provide clarity and guidance regarding religious and cultural roles and rituals, particularly in the context of the *Maccera Tasi* tradition. In this regard, the South Sulawesi MUI can be viewed as an institution that offers direction and guidance in understanding Islam in response to local rituals. The edict represents MUI's endeavor to uphold the continuity of religious and traditional values, while taking into account Islamic perspectives and laws concerning the execution of the *Maccera Tasi* ritual in South Sulawesi.

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In responding to this edict, AB, the head of Bonepute village, revealed:

"We always try to provide the best for society, especially if it is related to Islamic law, of course it is the government's duty to protect society from any actions that are outside the rules of Islamic teachings" (interview with AB)

In line with AB, AMR a Bonepute Traditional Leader also said that:

"The government's response to every change that occurs also supports us in improving every aspect of implementing traditions that were previously considered deviant from Islamic teachings, especially after the release of the South Sulawesi MUI announcement, we are certainly helped by the government's good response to every change from time to time." (interview with AMR)

These statements from the participants reflect the local government's commitment to always strive to provide the best for their community, particularly in the context of compliance with Islamic law. The local government perceives it as its primary responsibility to protect the community from any actions that violate Islamic teachings. By prioritizing the principles of Islamic teachings, the government plays an active role in efforts to maintain the continuity of religious values in society (Karimullah et al., 2023). These statements not only reflect awareness of the local government's crucial role in protecting society from practices that are not in line with religious teachings but also underscore the government's efforts to act as a guardian and protector of community especially in a moral and religious context.

Generally, the response from traditional, religious, and local government leaders aligns with the MUI's edict, indicating a need for a gradual alignment between Islamic teachings and local culture (Azka, 2023). They essentially accepted the edict, acknowledging

that modifications to certain practices would need to be incremental. This consistent response underscores the importance of maintaining a balance between cultural heritage and religious values in society. While change is recognized as necessary, a gradual approach is deemed a solution that can minimize resistance and preserve the integrity of local culture.

c. Appropriating Maccera Tasi to Islamic principles

Some adaptations were made by local communities to adhere to the local MUI edict, i.e. to delete *shirk* elements from *Maccera Tasi* ritual. A traditional figure in Luwu Regency, AMR, has demonstrated his commitment to aligning the Maccera Tasi activities with Islamic principles (Observation 1). This commitment is evident in several concrete steps, including the use of loudspeakers for the call to prayer, the elimination of the procession of throwing buffalo heads and offerings into the sea, and its replacement with the release of small fish and fish food as a symbol of the traditional event. These steps underscore the seriousness of integrating Islamic teachings into local traditions (Supriyadi, 2023). The call to prayer adds a stronger Islamic religious dimension to the event, while the elimination of processions that could be viewed as inconsistent with Islamic principles, such as throwing buffalo heads and offerings into the sea.

Another effort to make Maccera Tasi more socially and religiously acceptable was by incorporating this ritual in the festival. For instance, The Maccera Tasi events in September 2019 were incorporated into the XIII Nusantara Palace Festival (FKN) held in the city of Palopo. The traditional Maccera Tasi procession occurs at Ulo-ulo harbor, involving the Bojo Boat and the Puawang Boat

circling the *ance* (traditional ceremonial tower) three times. The floats in the competition do not participate in the procession but remain around the *ance*. The atmosphere is further sanctified with the call to prayer being proclaimed from the four corners of the *ance* simultaneously, adding a religious dimension to the event. This is followed by the *Mallambe* procession and then *Mallapessang*, which involves releasing fish seeds and food into the sea.

The participation of *Maccera Tasi* in the Nusantara Kraton Festival demonstrates efforts to broaden the reach of this traditional event and to introduce and promote local cultural richness at the national level through a larger festival platform. The transformation of the *Maccera Tasi* ritual into a festival demonstrates efforts to involve the broader community, not just fishermen. This can serve as a step to expand understanding and appreciation of local traditions while ensuring that the event aligns with Islamic religious values. These measures embody the spirit of integrating cultural heritage with Islamic values, fostering harmony between local traditions and adherence to religious principles (Harahap et al., 2023).

In explaining about this local community's response to adapt to Islamic principle, AMR added:

"Because we adhere to the Luwu principle, namely *pattupu i ri ada e pasanre i ri syara e*, then after the arrival of Islam we adhered to that principle, therefore we will continue to improve this tradition so that it does not disappear in society because this is local wisdom in Luwu, but apart from that, we also have a responsibility to always pay attention to Islamic values in this tradition" (Interview with AMR)

A positive response also came from (AMB) as a Bonepute religious figure regarding the adaptation. He said that:

"The influence of the surrounding community in Bonepute Village also has an important role in efforts to minimize

deviations from Islamic teachings in the Maccera tasi tradition. This is because, according to our beliefs, a good environment will have a positive impact on our behavior. God willing, if we are in a good environment, we will also tend to become good people. On the other hand, if our environment is inhabited by people with bad behavior, then we can also be influenced and become similar to that environment." (interview with AMB)

These interview results reflect an understanding that the social environment significantly influences individual values and behavior. In the context of *Maccera Tasi*, the surrounding community in Bonepute Village is considered an important factor that can shape positive norms and values, thereby helping to prevent deviations from Islamic teachings in the implementation of these traditions. Collective efforts to create a good environment can be a strategy to ensure that traditions are maintained without compromising the religious values held by the local community. HI, the Secretary of Larompong Selatan Subdistrict, added that:

"After the arrival of Islam in Luwu, the concept of the Maccera Tasi tradition slowly began to change. For example, in the past, in this tradition when we slaughtered a buffalo, its head was thrown into the sea. However, now of course this has changed because our environment is mostly Muslim, and according to Islamic teachings, such actions are not permitted." (Interview with HI)

HI statement above confirms the adaptation of the *Maccera Tasi* tradition to Islamic values and teachings after Islam was accepted in Luwu. This change in concept shows a response to the religion recognized by the majority of local people. In this way, local traditions strive to integrate Islamic teachings so that they remain relevant and can be implemented without violating the provisions of the religion they adhere to.

In addition, there are also concrete efforts made by the local government to minimize deviations that occur in this tradition.

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Based on the results of an interview with (AB), the Head of Bonepute Village, he stated,

"Our efforts to prevent irregularities in Maccera Tasi are of course carried out through a persuasive approach to the community. We always emphasize a family approach as a strategy to minimize irregularities in the implementation of Maccera Tasi, with the hope of preventing misunderstandings between us." (Interview with AB)

AMR also conveyed a similar approach as a first step in minimizing the occurrence of irregularities. He said that:

"In an effort to minimize deviations from this tradition, we always adopt a gentle approach towards society. This is done in the hope of getting a positive response from them." (Interview with AMR)

From both participants' accounts above, a gentle approach was employed in adapting *Maccera Tasi*, and it reflects awareness of the importance of respecting and understanding society in dealing with changes or adjustments to local traditions. By providing a gentle approach, it is hoped that the community will be more open to accepting and understanding the changes made, as well as actively participating in maintaining these traditions in accordance with the desired values.

Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest a symbiotic relationship between religion and local traditions, serving as a nexus that promotes social cohesion without infringing upon Islamic law. Specifically, within the context of the Maccera Tasi tradition in Bonepute, practices such as prayer, the release of fish seeds, and feeding marine fish, previously deemed controversial, can be reinterpreted as expressions

of gratitude to Allah SWT for His blessings and as efforts to nurture nature.

This study challenges the notion that the Maccera Tasi practice is a form of polytheism, proposing instead that it represents an amalgamation of Islamic values and local culture through a process of assimilation. This opens up the possibility of a novel understanding of how local traditions can be harmonized with Islamic teachings without diminishing cultural diversity. However, this research is not without limitations, particularly its geographical focus on Bonepute village only. This study delineates deliberate modifications made by communities and traditional leaders, such as the removal of contentious processions and the incorporation of Islamic elements. The novelty of this research lies in its detailed account of these changes and the community's reception of them. Future research could extend this study by undertaking comparative analyses with other regions that continue to uphold the Maccera Tasi tradition or similar customs.

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Interview:

AMR (53 Years), Bonepute Village Traditional Leader, Interview, March 24 2023.

AB (44 Years), Head Of Bonepute Subdistrict, Interview, 24 March 2023.

HI (58 Years), Secretary Of South Larompong District, Interview, March 25 2023.

AMB (60 Years), Religious Figure, Interview, March 25 2023.

AW (47 Years), Bonepute Village Community Figure, Interview, March 23 2023.