

# REINVENTING “PATUNTUNG RELIGION” IN SOUTH SULAWESI, INDONESIA

**Muhammad Takbir, Rizal Mustansyir, Sindung Tjahyadi**

Faculty of Theology & Philosophy UIN Alauddin Makassar, Indonesia, Faculty of Philosophy. Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

E-mail: muhammad.takbir@uin-alauddin.ac.id, mustansyir@ugm.ac.id, sindungtjahyadi@ugm.ac.id

**Abstract:** This study re-scrutinizes *Patuntung* as a religious category. The aim is to see the various reasons why *Patuntung* is called religion and to re-examine the basic assumptions of these reasons. The method used in this research is critical discourse analysis which refers to the Foucauldian genealogy theory. As a result, it was found that the *Patuntung* religion was a new invention from Dutch Christian missionaries in the colony which was affirmed by Indonesian scholars in the context of Islam later. In addition, there is a construction bias towards *Patuntung* religion, both world religions (especially Christianity and Islam) and euro-centric bias. Thus, the term religion attached to *Patuntung* itself is ambiguous.

**Key Words:** Religion, *Patuntung*, re-invention, euro-centric, bias.

## A. Introduction

The Ammatoans of Kajang in South Sulawesi, Indonesia, for many persons viewed as adherents of the teachings of the ancestors that called the *Patuntung* religion or *Patuntung* belief (Renre, 2012; Maarif, 2012; Katu, 2014). Like

the *Tolotang* religion in Sidrap, the *Aluk* religion in Toraja, the Samin religion in Blora Central Java, and the Kaharingan religion for the Dayak Meratus in Kalimantan, the teachings of Pantuntung are believed by this community as a way of life passed down from generation to generation by their ancestors. Samsul Maarif (2017) said that this belief is called an ancestral religion or local religion. The term which is also often used to refer to indigenous religion and Indonesian context is also called "Archipelago/Nusantara Religion".

In the other words, these four terms (local religion, ancestral religion, indigenous religion, and national religion) refer to the same term, namely, indigenous religion. This term has begun popular after it was struggled by American Indian Movement (AIM) and The Canadian Indian Brotherhood in the 1970s, both of them have advocated the rights of indigenous people. And it is more massive after ratified at the International Labor Organization (ILO) conference in Geneva, Switzerland in 1989, which resulted in the indigenous people convention 169.<sup>1</sup> The demands of this

---

<sup>1</sup> Indigenous people have received attention in the ILO convention 107 of 1957, with the phrase indigenous and tribal population. In 1982, the World Bank paid the same attention to a broad spectrum of social groups with social and cultural identities different from those of the dominant society. Because of these differences, in the development process, this group is often disadvantaged. By the World Bank, this group is called indigenous ethnic minority, tribal groups, and scheduled tribes. At the ILO Convention 169 in 1989, these community groups were agreed to be indigenous people with three main characteristics, namely: (1) identifying themselves as different ethnic groups; (2) historical experiences concerning the vulnerability of their living conditions to disturbance, dislocation, and exploitation; (3) has a long relationship with its natural

convention were the struggle for the rights of indigenous people regarding economic, social, cultural, political, and religious rights. The assumption is that every society, including the indigenous people group, has its way of life and social system that is different from society in general and is spread throughout all countries in the world. The differences in their way of life, including the way of religious life (indigenous religion), have to be protected by the State.

In Indonesia, recognition of ancestral religions can at least be seen in the last two decades, especially after the application for judicial review of indigenous religions was granted by the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia. The applicants, represented by Nggay Mehan Tana, Pagar Demanra Sirait, Arnol Purba, and Carlim, petitioned to examine Article 61 paragraphs (1) and (2), and Article 64 paragraph (1) and (5) of the Law (UU) Number 24 of 2013 concerning the administration of citizenship in 2017. As result, the Constitutional Court (MK) allows adherents of indigenous religions to predicate “believers”/penganut kepercayaan or also to blank on their Identity Card column.<sup>2</sup>

---

area; and (4) the desire to maintain a different ideology (read Sangadji, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> According to Saldi Isra, the Chief of Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia, this granting refers to the Constitution of Indonesian 1945 Article 28 E paragraphs (1) and (2) and Article 29 concerning constitutional recognition of the right to freedom of religion and belief. As for Maria Farida Indrawati, who is also a judge at the Constitutional Court, emphasized that religion in the Constitution of Indonesia in Article 28 E paragraphs (1) and (2) and Article 29 is the same as or equal to belief itself (kompas/11/08/2017).

The Ammatoans as the adherents of ancestral religion refer to the recognition of this community group as indigenous people. According to Maarif that indigenous peoples consist of two kinds of groups adherents of faith and customary law communities<sup>3</sup> or according to the category of ILO Convention- although many of them refuse to identify themselves as adherents of local religions with various considerations. Furthermore, it was strengthened by the Ammatoans which become a member of Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN) – Alliance of Indigenous People of the Archipelago, an indigenous peoples' organization that was founded in 1999 to advocate for and fight for the rights of indigenous peoples in Indonesia.

The Ammatoans inhabit Tanatoa Village, which is a village that is administratively one of the villages in Kajang District, Bulukumba Regency. Tanatoa Village itself has been mutually agreed as a customary area and has been designated as the boundary for *ilalang embayya* or *rambang seppang* (inside area), and *ipantarang embayya* or *rambang luarayya* (the outside area) is not the customary area. The main characteristic of the people who live in the area is a simple way of life or what they call *tallasa kamase-mase* (modest life), which is a way of life that rejects modern things as well as products using machines/ industries.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Samsul Maarif, *Pasang Surut Rekognisi Agama Leluhur dalam Politik Agama di Indonesia*, (CRCS: Yogyakarta, 2017), h. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Many groups, especially academicians and researchers, see the Ammatoans as a community group that is separate from the whole of the

Nevertheless, the recognition of indigenous religions does not necessarily erase the pejorative labeling such as animist and dynamist practices of Indonesian society in the past. As admitted by Faisal Islam, Professor of Islamic Studies at Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII) Yogyakarta, that "hundreds of years ago the people of the archipelago originally embraced animism and dynamism which were purely rooted in local customs, traditions, and culture".<sup>5</sup> Meski dalam artikelnya Ismail tidak mendefinisikan agama, namun ia secara tegas membedakan kepercayaan lokal ini dengan agama. Although Ismail in his article does not define what religion is, he does clearly distinguish this local belief from religion. For him, "local belief cannot be called religion, because local belief is not a religion". Thus, the term of religion cannot predict or be predicted by the ancestors or local belief.

---

dominant society. They live in simple conditions and adhere to their customs and religious life. They are not affected or contaminated with dominant community life. But in the opinion of researchers, having observed at least the last two decades, this essentialist view is not true. They have connected with the dominant society. This connection presupposes the influence of one another. Therefore, although the customary areas, called *ilalang embaya*, have been maintained, in many aspects they have also been influenced by the life patterns of the dominant society. For example, in agricultural production, they have used machines in land management systems, and so on.

<sup>5</sup> Faisal Ismail, *Agama, Kepercayaan dan KTP*, (sindo, 16/11/2017). This article is written by Ismail especially in response to the decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia which granted the applicant's petition regarding the judicial review of the Population Administration Statute as explained previously.

Here, it is clear that the fundamental problem of the concept of indigenous religion deal with pantuntung religion is (1) the category and predicate of religion in the practice of ancestral belief is new construction; (2) the concept of indignity or indigenous is a form of unification, as explained by Linda Smith that the term indigenous from the very beginning collects various forms of population, even though their life experiences under colonialism are different from one another and presuppose inferiority - world religion is superior to indigenous religious - in the other side, namely; and (3) naming the Pantuntung religion as an abstract and imaginary concept.

E.P Thompson<sup>6</sup> said that adat, and of course also ancestral religion (Patuntung), were new inventions of claims for new rights. Adat is a scene of change and struggle, an arena in which competing interests make conflicting claims. Ancestral belief (Patuntung) is found in the research mechanism, the knowledge produced is discovered from complex interactions between individual and institutional authorities and scientific discourse.

According to this context, Edward Said argued that the East was imaginatively constructed by colonialism is important to observe. Linda T. Smith<sup>7</sup> explained that research itself is a mechanism of an encounter between the

---

<sup>6</sup> E.P Thompson, *Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture* (1993), h. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Linda T. Smith, *Decolonizing...*, h. 5

West and other parts. Research is a mechanism to organize and visualize the code that underlies imperialism and colonialism. The code is regulated based on formal institutions such as educational institutions and scientific methodology. In colonial countries, the method of research itself was not only an academic discipline but also a formal institution such as schools and other educational institutions.

Given the above, two important aspects need to be noted deal with patuntung religion, how the academic discourse contestation and political discourse shape it. The aim is to find the discourse interests intertwined between the academic and political spaces that have constructed the knowledge of *Patuntung* religion. This suggests that the result can appear a new horizon of knowledge that is more emancipative.

Dealing with *Patuntung* religion, a few relevant research are: (1) *The Patuntung in the Mountains of Kajang, Makassar*;<sup>8</sup> (2) *Striving for modesty: Fundamentals of Religion and Social Organization of the Makassarese Patuntung*<sup>9</sup>; (3) *The Patuntung in West Sinjai: a Socio-Cultural Perspective (Patuntung di Sinjai Barat: Suatu Perspektif Sosio-kultural)*<sup>10</sup>; (4) *Dimensions of Religious Practice: the*

---

<sup>8</sup> AA. Cence, *The Patuntung in the Mountains of Kajang, Makassar*, (KIT-LV: December, 1931).

<sup>9</sup> Martin Rosler, "Striving for Modesty: Fundamentals of Religion and Social Organization of the Makassarese *Patuntung*", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*.(146, 2de/3de, 1990).

<sup>10</sup> Abdullah Renre, *Patuntung di Sinjai Selatan" Suatu Tinjauan Sosio-Kultural*, (Makassar, Alauddin University Press, 2012).

Ammatoans of Sulawesi, Indonesia<sup>11</sup>; (5) Local Islam in Indonesia: Religion “Patuntung” in Kajang<sup>12</sup>; (6) The Women in *Patuntung* Religion (Perempuan dalam Religi *Patuntung*). Of the six studies, none of them examined the *Patuntung* religion discourse critically, how the *Patuntung* religion was constructed, discovered, and explained. Therefore, this research will analyze these three things both with the genealogical and the critical discourse approach.

## **B. “Agama”, Religion and Belief: Problematising Definition**

I will begin this discussion by re-examining the definition of religion. Whereas religion has been defined by many experts, due to the complexity of this problem, not a single definition is fixed between them. Like W. Schmidt who defines religion as the word of God, Clifford Geertz who sees religion as a symbol system in a society's culture, Talal Asad defines religion as a product of history itself, so there is no clear and universal definition of it. Therefore, the problem of definition is not a simple matter by referring only to dictionary consensus or semantic definition. However, it is further from, must be examined in three contexts which are intertwined; social, political, and theological.

---

<sup>11</sup> Samsul Maarif, *Dimensions of Religious Practice: the Ammatoans of Sulawesi, Indonesia* (doctoral thesis), (USA, Arizona State University, 2012).

<sup>12</sup> Samiang Katu, Local Islam in Indonesia: Religion “Patuntung” in Kajang, *Journal of Islamic Civilization in Southeast Asia*, December, Vol. 3, No. 2 (2012).



In Indonesia, although there is a desire to define religion, in practice the term religion is used very fluidly. Because of it, many groups often exchange the terms belief and religion (agama in Indonesia). The desire to define religion can be seen in Faisal Ismail's writing above. He provided a distinguished and essential definition. This Ismail's definition has represented the majority group in Indonesia, especially Islam. Because, when examined further, attempt to define religion conducted by the Ministry of Religious in 1952 by asking the basic criteria of religion, namely: the prophets, the scriptures, and international recognition,<sup>13</sup> and in 1961, added two more criteria, namely: belief in God Almighty and having a legal system for its adherents.<sup>14</sup> The willing the Ministry of Religion is none other than to reject local beliefs or ancestral religions to be recognized as religions. This later crystallized with the issuance of the statute (UU) No.1 / PNPS of 1965 concerning the Prevention, Abuse, and/or Blasphemy of Religion. This is seen for example in Article 1 that:

“Everyone is prohibited from deliberately publicly telling or proposing or seeking public support, to interpret something adhered to in Indonesia or to carry out religious activities that resemble the religious activities of

---

<sup>13</sup> Samsul Maarif, *Pasang Surut Rekognisi Agama Leluhur dalam Politik Agama di Indonesia*, (Yogyakarta, CRCS, 2017), p. 25.

<sup>14</sup> Samsul Maarif, *Pasang Surut ...*, p. 34.

that religion, which interpretations and activities keep from the points religious teachings”<sup>15</sup>.

According to Maarif, the phrase '... or conduct religious activities that resemble the activities of such a religion ... "departing from the general explanation (PENJELASAN UMUM) of this statute explains that:

“It has been shown that recently, in almost all parts of Indonesia, there have been several mystical / community beliefs or sects that contradict religious teachings and laws. Among the teachings/actions of adherents of these sects, many have caused things that violate the law, break national unity and tarnish Religion. From the fact it is clear, that the mystical / belief schools or organizations that legitimize and/or use religion as their main, have recently increased in number and have developed in a direction that is very dangerous to exist religions”<sup>16</sup>.

---

<sup>15</sup> (UU) No.1/PNPS Tahun 1965 about the Prevention, Abuse and/or Blasphemy of Religion. Enacted on January 27, 1965. Article 1 said that "Every person is prohibited from deliberately telling in public or proposing or seeking public support, to interpret something adhered to in Indonesia or carry out religious activities that resemble those activities. religion from that religion, interpretation, and which activities save from the main points of religious teachings.

<sup>16</sup> General explanation in statute (UU) No.1/PNPS 1965 said that “It has been shown that recently, in almost all parts of Indonesia, there have been several mystical / community beliefs or sects that contradict religious teachings and laws. Among the teachings/actions of adherents of these sects, many have caused things that violate the law, break national unity and tarnish Religion. From the fact it is clear, that the mystical / belief schools or organizations that legitimize and/or use

The issuance of this statute also seems to have influenced Koentjaraningrat, the founder of Indonesia Anthropology. Instead of explaining religion as a translation of religion, he adopted the term religion (Dutch - Religie) to refer to belief, which in principle is synonymous with religion (English). Therefore, in the anthropological studies in Indonesia, the term religion is often used interchangeably with belief to refer to the same practice, which is usually referred to as animism and dynamism practices. However, Koenjaraningrat is also not consistent in this distinction. Because, a lot of his writings, he equates both of them. Like in his books entitled *a few foundations of social anthropology* (Beberapa Pokok Antropologi Social<sup>17</sup>), He categorizes agama (religion) with 'religion on the other hand and differentiates on the other side.

To scrutinize these issues, it is important to trace the origin of these terms (religion, religi, and agama) along with the context of each. In Indonesia, agama is originally from the Sanskrit word, agomo (order) which refers to a legal system that regulates society so that it is not chaotic or orderly. However, in its later development, according to Bagir, it was adopted to explain Christianity in the sense of "religion" (English) and Islam in the meaning of ad-Din (Arabic). In other words, after being adopted, religion automatically gets titrated from the concept of world religion itself. Meanwhile,

---

religion as their main, have recently increased in number and have developed in a direction that is very dangerous to exist religions.”

<sup>17</sup> Koenjaraningrat, *Beberapa pokok Antropologi Sosial*, (Jakarta, Penerbit Dian Rakyat, 1967), p. 208-276.

these two terms, both "religion" and "ad-Din", never have an essential meaning, because they are the result of discursive construction and contestation in the long history.

In the context of Christian theology, Richard King found that the term religion was first adapted by Lactantius, a Christian writer, by redefining the term *religio* (Latin) proposed by Cicero. According to Cicero, this term is related to the pre-Christian word *relegere*, which means "to re-trace" or "to re-read". The meaning was the retracing of 'the lore of the ritual of one's ancestors'.<sup>18</sup> *Religio* was the belief by the 'pagan' roman empire in past (represented this the era), which ancient ritual practices and paying homage to the gods. thus, in this context, "religio" is virtually synonymous with "traditio" (English - tradition). The main characteristic of the religion is tolerance of different traditions, and without questioning them. But in contrast, Lactantius understood Cicero's understanding by explaining that *religio* was originally from "re-ligere", meaning to bind together or link. For him,

Religio is the worship of true; superstition of the false. The most important thing is why you worship, not how you worship, or what you pray for ... They are superstitious who worship many and false gods; but we, who supplicate the one true God, are religious.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Richard King, *Orientalism and ...*, p. 36.

<sup>19</sup> Richard King, *Orientalism and ...*, p. 36.

According to King, this is where the origin of 'religio' has a narrow meaning. Those who did not worship a single God were seen as pagan followers (paganus: village idiot), and not religious. Before the Christians were being considered not religious, because religious or 'religions according to them ('pagan' roman empire), is labeled to those who do not want to admit traditions of others. In the end, religion becomes exclusive with the normative monotheistic paradigm. Apart from this, this fact also has implications for the monotheistic religious hierarchy as true and modern while paganism is wrong and traditional.

This concept also applies in the Islamic context regarding the concept of *ad-Din*. The plural form is *Adyan*, which is a term that refers to an encounter with a particular community, which further understands *ad-Din* as a group that is different from the others. This difference is related to faith in carrying out Islamic teachings and then ratified in the definition and demarcation of Islam and non-Islamic religions.

Here it is clear that there is no *sui generis* definition of religion, namely religion as the main category of and as well as its authority that can protect itself, both for matters of a reductive nature as well as from other institutions. The search for the essence of religion, according to King, will only find a way to go astray or make a search within the shell of essentialism formed by the phenomenological method. Asad explained, the effort to define religion departs from the insistence that religion has an autonomous essence and is

transhistorical and transcultural. Furthermore, he said that the attempt to define religion is in line with the demands of liberalism; religion is separate from politics, law, and science, each of which has the authority to articulate modern life.<sup>20</sup>

### **C. *Patuntung* as Religion: The Power of Category**

Dealing with the problem of definition aforementioned definitions, that the definition of religion and its categories constructed by historical and socio-political context, including in Indonesia. First, "agama" is distinguished from religion - religion in this understanding is a belief and tradition; and second, "agama" is the same with religion - religion in a broad definition. Thus, religion in the second sense is divided into two, namely; world religions and ancestral religions or indigenous religions. According to this concept, *Patuntung* in the first understanding was referred to as "religi" or belief, but in the second meaning, *Patuntung* is an indigenous religion. These two definitions presuppose that this issue is not simple, so rather than it is important to pay attention to the context in which the category is constructed.

Here, it should be known that the Ammatoans themselves never call themselves followers of the *Patuntung* belief or religion in the above sense. Instead of *Patuntung*

---

<sup>20</sup> Talal Asad, *Genealogy of Religion: Discipline and reason of Power in Christianity and Islam*, (Baltimore and London, the John Hopkins University Press: 1993), p. 29.

categorized as a religion, the term religion has only recently been recognized. Therefore, even in their native language, *Konjo* language, this word or any word that is equivalent or synonymous with religion is not found. It is not surprising if they have never been made into *Patuntung* as an identity like Muslims or Christians identify themselves.

The term *Patuntung* is originally from the local language of Kajang called Konjo Language. The basic form of this word is *tuntung* (verb), the meaning is guided (the progressive form is *mannuntung*). A person who does or guides another individuals or people called *Patuntung*. *Tuntungan* is a noun (n) that means is guidance or the subject of guide. *Patuntung* also can be meant a person how fully learns to obtain or achieve things that are more abstract or valuable. Because *Patuntung* does learn, he knows both physics and metaphysics. Moreover, the Ammatoans consult a lot of things to him, including the problem of metaphysics. Maarif said that

the term *Patuntung* which means a state of being enlightened, Ammatoans accept it as a part of their tradition but not as the name of the community. They argue that their way of life is based on their oral tradition, the *Pasang ri Kajang*, and *patuntung* is one element of the *Pasang ri Kajang*.<sup>21</sup>

In *Pasang* (message), its term can seem in idiom, “*guru sara’ lata tappa ri patuntung tala assai kaguruanna, sanro tala tappa ri sara’*”

---

<sup>21</sup> Samsul Maarif, *Dimensions of Religious Practice...*, p. 28.

*assai patuntunganna*” (a Priest who do not believe with a Patuntung, he would not be recognized as a teacher, while a Patuntung who do not believe with a priest, he would not say as a healer).

To trace the term Pantuntung in the academic literature, it was first found in Matthes' dictionary in 1875<sup>22</sup> which mentions Patuntung is a person who can heal other people (sanro/shaman) only by use drinking water (*a sort van sanro, die uitstend met water genes*).<sup>23</sup> This term was later found again in the writing of another missionary work, A.C. Kruyt, *Het Animisme in der den Indischen Archipel*, published in 1906.<sup>24</sup> According to him, Patuntung is a teacher who is followed by Makassar people. However, Patuntung was referred to as the heatens or unbelievers. *Makassaren, die den guru Pantuntung volgen... beidenen order de Makassaren*<sup>25</sup> (the Makassarese who follow Patuntung teachers which is superstitious among Makassar people).

Although the term is found in the writings of Matthes and Kruyt, according to Rossler, W.A Penard is the first European to pay serious attention to Patuntung<sup>26</sup>. The Penard

---

<sup>22</sup>Matthes or Benjamin Frederick Matthes was a Dutch missionary who was assigned by the colonial government to translate the Bible in Bugis and Makassarese languages. He first arrived in South Sulawesi on December 20, 1848. After 23 years of living in this place, he then returned to his homeland and died in 1906. His major services were compiling the ancient manuscript, La Galigo, and transcribing it, together with a Bugis 'scholar', Colliq Pujie.

<sup>23</sup> Martin Rossler, *Striving for Modesty...*, p. 292.

<sup>24</sup> Martin Rossler, *Striving for Modesty...*, p. 290.

<sup>25</sup> Martin Rossler, *Striving for Modesty...*, p. 290.

<sup>26</sup> Martin Rossler, *Striving for Modesty...*, p. 290.



Writing's can be seen on the journal of *Tijdschrijf voor Indische Taal* entitled *De Patoengtoeng*, published in 1913. Like Kruyt, Patuntung, according to Penard, is the belief of the pre-Islamic Makassar people that nowadays it was heavily influenced by Islam. In addition, Penard writing's focuses more on the people of Malakaji, one of the sub-districts in the Tompobulu sub-district, Gowa regency, and does not focus on Patuntung in the Ammatoans in Kajang district Bulukumba.

A.A. Cense (1931) is the first person who specially wrote Patuntung in Kajang two decades later in a short article entitled "De Patoentoeng in het Berglan van Kadjang" (Patuntung in the Kajang high land). In this article, Cense describes the Ammatoans have a closed culture. However, they have managerial abilities in maintaining and preserving their trust and social organization. Its members have managed to preserve many features of an almost archaic type of religious and social organization.<sup>27</sup>

If Penard and Cense observed Pantuntung separately, Rossler weaves these relationships in a more comprehensive portrait. In his article, he found that at least the distribution of the Patuntung adherents was spread across five regions, including: Malakaji and Kasepekan (Gowa), Onto (Banteang), West Sinjai (Sinjai), and Kajang (Bulukumba). However, among Patuntung followers, according to Rossler,

---

<sup>27</sup> Martin Rossler, *Striving for Modesty...*, p. 290.

Kajang was considered a deviate. However, only Kajang himself considers 'Tanatoa', the residential area of the Ammatoans, as the birthplace of mankind, while the other four refer to Mount Bawa Karaeng, located in the highlands of Gowa Regency. Furthermore, Rossler also observed how Islam influences this local belief. In his observations, almost all the practices and rites of the Patuntung belief had penetrated the teachings of Islam, the religion adhered to by the majority of the people of South Sulawesi, except in two cases; wedding and death rituals.<sup>28</sup>

The *Patuntung* as a deviated religion was also denoted by Friberg (1993). He asserted that the *Patuntung* is usually expressed with people possessing 'black' magic.<sup>29</sup> In other words, Friberg's notions tend same or no different from previous writers.

The description of Pantuntung as a belief of the Ammatoans was later followed by Indonesian scholars such as K.M.A Usop (1978), Abdullah Renre (1987)<sup>30</sup> Samian Katu

---

<sup>28</sup>Martin Rossler, *Striving for Modesty...*, p. 302-302.

<sup>29</sup> B. Friberg, "Konjo Ceremonies", in M. Gregerson (ed.), *Ritual, Belief, and kinship in Sulawesi*, (Dallas, International Museum of Cultures), p. 100.

<sup>30</sup> A. Renre. (1978). *Patuntung di Kecamatan Sinjai Barat*. (Skripsi). Ujung Pandang: IAIN Alauddin. This writing was later published as a book by Alauddin University Press in 2012 with the same title.

(2000<sup>31</sup> & 2014<sup>32</sup>), Azhari Ismail (2007)<sup>33</sup>, Abdul Hafid (2013)<sup>34</sup>, and others. According to them, Patuntung is a belief or religion that is different from religion in the Islamic sense. Renre, for example, seen Patuntung not only as a 'religious or belief system but also as a ritual and worship system using offerings<sup>35</sup>. Although he tries to avoid judging him he compares to Islam based on the criteria of the Islamic religion itself.

The same opinion was expressed by Samiang Katu. Although Katu, on the one hand, called the Patuntung a religious practice in the form of local Islam, on the other hand, he called also it is different from religion. Moreover, the approach he used in his research is accommodation theory by placing Islam as the superior religion. So that, Islam has accommodated local/indigenous religions.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> Samiang Katu, *Pasang ri Kajang: Kajian Tentang Akomodasi Islam Dengan Budaya Lokal di Sulawesi Selatan*, Makassar, Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat (2000). This book is an author's dissertation at the Postgraduate Program, IAIN Jakarta, 1999.

<sup>32</sup> Samian Katu. Local Islam in Indonesia: Religion "Patuntung" in Indonesia. *Jurnal of Islamic Civilization in Soutesth Asia*, Vol. 3, No. 2, (2014), p.1-19.

<sup>33</sup> Azhari Ismail, *Perempuan Dalam Perempuan Religi Patuntung: Studi Tentang Pencegahan Tindak Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan Berdasarkan Ajaran Pasanga pada Komunitas Ammatoa Ilalang Embayya, Kajang Sulawesi Selatan*. (Doctoral thesis). Surabaya: Universitas Airlangga (2007).

<sup>34</sup> Abdul Hafid, Sistem Kepercayaan Pada Komunitas Adat Kajang Desa Tana Towa Kecamatan Kajang Kabupaten Bulukumba. *Jurnal Patanjala*, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 1-19.

<sup>35</sup> A. Renre, *Patuntung...*, h. 137-158.

<sup>36</sup> Samiang Katu, *Local Islam in Indonesia...*, p.

Based on this fact, it becomes clear that patuntung as a category of religion or belief cannot be separated from its contact with colonialism. Unfortunately, the categorization of patuntung as a religion is taken for granted by Indonesian scholars without question. In fact, according to Daniel Dubuisson, *The Western Construction of Religion* (2003), as quoted by Maarif, religion itself is a conceptual category built on western history and culture. According to him, the West Scholars was discovered and determined religious construction based on the conceptual building of Christian theology (of course also Islam) and the concept of colonial scholarship in the 19th century.<sup>37</sup>

### **Patuntung Religion as a Finding**

To consider the genealogy of the Patuntung religion above, it is clear that the category of the Patuntung religion is something new. This category appears for the first time in Kruyt's writing that called Patuntung as followers of animism and dynamism, so they can be called heathen or superstitious. His idea was then followed and reproduced by the next generation, including Indonesian scholars, and finally, it

---

<sup>37</sup> Samsul Maarif, "Meninjau Ulang Definisi Agama, Agama Dunia, dan Agama Leluhur", in Ihsan Ali-Fauzi (dkk.), *Kebebasan, Toleransi dan Terorisme: Riset dan Kebijakan Agama di Inonesia*, (Jakarta, Yayasan Paramadina, 2017), p. 17-18.

became a fixed category. This category itself is odd for the Ammatoans by itself.<sup>38</sup>

In this context, *Patuntung* religion is a new invention by the West. Like the indigenous religion in other places, this was originally practiced by Christian missionaries from colonized countries. The discovery of *Patuntung* by missionaries such as W.A Penard, A.C. Kruyt, A.A. Canse, is like finding a treasure. As explained by Linda T. Smith that missionaries like finding a big mine and challenging, because there are lost and mired souls who need to be saved. They are described and represented with pejorative words, such as savage, stupid, etc. These words have been embedded in their minds and thoughts. What was originally only delusional and opinionated is later called knowledge. The language (colonial) is a means of representation and dissemination of indigenous knowledge. This colonial practice is described by Smith as being described by the four avenues of indigenous research; they came, they saw, they named, and they claimed.<sup>39</sup>

According to Smith, these four roads then legitimized Western colonialization which at the same time obscured the interests of the colonizers in the colonized countries. Because

---

<sup>38</sup> Although this category has been recognized by the Ammatoans, it is then remembered that this category is so hegemonic and is used continuously to label this identity to them. However, the Ammatoans themselves never accepted this category. Until now, when they were asked about religion, this question was not answered or answered that they are the religion of 'Sallang' - even though this term refers to Islam, they still distinguish Sallang and Islam itself.

<sup>39</sup> Linda T. Smith, *Decolonizing...*, p. 83

their arrival in remote places in the colonial region was legitimized by a scientific vision. The experience is then retold heroically based on the colonial imagination and language, namely about how to survive in a natural condition and the customs of the indigenous people. They then gave it a name and claimed it based on their perspective. For these religious missionaries, the formation of this perspective aims to justify further financial support from the head office as well as to justify ideological motivation. The more excited and evil a tribe, the stronger the imperative to carry out God's work.<sup>40</sup>

The discovery of the Patuntung religion was in line with the discovery of the world religion paradigm. This paradigm was built in the 19th century in the context of relations between the West and non-Westerners. Moreover, the term religion has always been associated with Christianity by the West. Other religions that can be called world religions must follow the criteria and categories of Christianity. At the same time, anthropological studies are developing research that focuses on the beliefs (religion) of primitive societies. Instead of that, theories about religion, both reductionists like E.B. Tylor, Frazer, Karl Marx, Emile Durheim, Sigmund Freud, as well as apologetics such as Mircea Eliade, William James, Rudolf Otto, and others. All religions by primitive society are categorized as animism and superstitious. This can be seen in Tylor's view of religion which sees it as belief in spirit or animism. They believe in a supreme reality behind

---

<sup>40</sup> Linda T. Smith, *Decolonizing...*, p. 82

nature, so that in itself contradicts rationality. Unfortunately, Tylor's simplistic and reductionist views influenced missionaries a lot and legitimized their views on societies that were different from him.

Jonathan Z. Smith explains that the Western academic tradition, since Ancient Greek times, distinguishes between "us" and "them", which in "Greek Anthropology" is called between Greek and Barbarian (nonhuman representation)<sup>41</sup>. This form of Western divergence can also be seen in the ontological differentiation construction between West and East. In colonies, the West was seen as a whole human being, and the colonized is not a human or a colonizer like David and the colonized as Goliath. So it is not surprising then when in public spaces in colonized areas it is written: "dogs and inlanders (natives) are not allowed (Verboden voor Honden en Inlander)".

Furthermore, this is confirmed by the paradigms of modernism and universalism. These two paradigms mutually presuppose each other; modernization necessitates universalism and universalism necessitates modernization. As a result, the beliefs of animistic primitive societies such as the Patuntung religion were seen as artifacts of past religions or religions, whose viewpoint would develop into world religions. Therefore, the missionaries who come have the belief that they carry an 'enlightenment agenda', namely to

---

<sup>41</sup> Samsul Maarif, *meninjau Ulang Definisi Agama...*, p. 25.

convert animists into world religions, especially Christianity, and later by Islam.

Indonesia sebagai Negara dengan penduduk mayoritas muslim pada akhirnya tergoda untuk pengelompokkan agama berdasarkan pandangan Barat di atas. Dengan kata lain, kategorisasi agama di Negara ini mewarisi model studi dan pendefinisian agama di Barat [...] sehingga pengukuhan agama-agama dunia di Indonesia serupa dengan yang terjadi di Eropa.<sup>42</sup> In fact, after the establishment of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, Islam became the prototype of religion in this country. Religious criteria are determined based on the definition of the Ministry of Religion. In this context, in the end, Patuntung was not categorized as religion, but as “religi” or belief, an ambiguous term and category; refuse on one side but affirm on the other.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that Patuntung was a new finding of European missionaries in the colonies. The category religion and not religion (belief) is a European construction of local religion based on the categorization of Christianity itself. This construction was then followed by Indonesian scholars by affirming these Western criteria into Islam, considering that Indonesia's

---

<sup>42</sup> Samsul Maarif, *meninjau Ulang definisi Agama...*, p. 31-32



population is the majority of Muslims. As a result, Patuntung religion as an indigenous religion was never absent from the pejorative predicates such as animist, superstitious, heathen, and others. Therefore, instead of being categorized as a religion, religion itself has experienced a categorical bias and a Christian bias, and in the Indonesian context, of course, Islam. This is because, in principle, religion is not essential and autonomous, but is protected by other dimensions surrounding it, particularly its discursive and historical aspects. Thus, the temptation to essentialize religion based on fixed criteria is another heresy.

### References

- Asad, Talal. (1993). *Genealogy of Religion: Discipline and reason of Power in Christianity and Islam*, (Baltimore and London, the John Hopkins University Press.
- B. Friberg, "Konjo Ceremonies", in M. Gregerson (ed.), *Ritual, Belief, and kinship in Sulawesi*, (Dallas, International Museum of Cultures), p. 100.
- Cence, AA. (1931). "The Patuntung in the Mountains of Kajang, Makassar", *KIT-LV*, December.
- Hafid, Abdul. (2013) "Sistem Kepercayaan Pada Komunitas Adat Kajang Desa Tana Towa Kecamatan Kajang Kabupaten Bulukumba". *Jurnal Patanjala*, Vol., No. 51. <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2017/11/08/10581521/perjuangan-panjang-warga-penghayat-kepercayaan-atas-pengakuan-negara?page=all>

- Ismail, Azhari. (2007). *Perempuan Dalam Perempuan Religi Patuntung: Studi Tentang Pencegahan Tindak Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan Berdasarkan Ajaran Pasanga pada Komunitas Ammatoa Ilalang Embayya, Kajang Sulawesi Selatan* (Doctoral thesis). Surabaya: Universitas Airlangga.
- Katu, Samian. (2014). "Local Islam in Indonesia: Religion "Patuntung" in Indonesia". *Jurnal of Islamic Civilization in Southeast Asia*, Vol. 3., No. 2.
- Katu, Samiang. (2000). *Pasang ri Kajang: Kajian Tentang Akomodasi Islam Dengan Budaya Lokal di Sulawesi Selatan*. Makassar: Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat.
- King, Richard. (1999). *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and "the Mystic East"*, USA & Canada: Routledge.
- Koenjaraningrat. (1967). *Beberapa pokok Antropologi Sosial*, Jakarta: Penerbit Dian Rakyat.
- Maarif, Samsul. (2012). *Dimensions of Religious Practice: the Ammatoans of Sulawesi, Indonesia* (Doctoral Thesis). USA: Arizona State University.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2017). "Meninjau Ulang Definisi Agama, Agama Dunia, dan Agama Leluhur", in Ihsan Ali-Fauzi (dkk.), *Kebebasan, Toleransi dan Terorisme: Riset dan Kebijakan Agama di Indonesia*. Jakarta: Yayasan Paramadina.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2017). Maarif, Samsul. *Pasang Surut Rekognisi Agama Leluhur dalam Politik Agama di Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: CRCS.

- Renre, Abdullah. (2012). *Patuntung di Sinjai Selatan” Suatu Tinjauan Sosio-Kultural*. Makassar: Alauddin University Press.
- Rosler, Martin. (1990). “Striving for Modesty: Fundamentals of Religion and Social Organization of the Makassarese *Patuntung*”, *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 146, 2de/3de.
- Smith, Linda T. (1999). *Decolonizing Methodology, Research, and Indigenous People*. London & New York: Zed Book.
- UU No.1/PNPS tahun 1965 tentang Pencegahan, Penyalahgunaan dan/atau Penodaan Agama. Ditetapkan pada tanggal 27 Januari 1965.

