



TABE' CULTURE IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF URF

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Abstract :

The tabe' culture is one of the customs that has been preserved within the Bugis Makassar community in South Sulawesi. This culture is based on the principle of respecting fellow human beings. On the other hand, the Bugis Makassar community, which is now predominantly Muslim, also believes in and implements Islamic law in their social life. Therefore, an in-depth study is needed to analyze the tabe' culture from an Islamic perspective. Urf is one of the tools in ushul fiqh that can be used to examine the compatibility of the tabe' culture with Islam. This is important in order to maintain harmony between local culture and Islamic law.

Keywords: *Tabe', Islamic Law. Urf.*

Abstrak :

Budaya tabe' merupakan salah satu adat yang hidup lestari dalam kelompok Bugis Makassar di Sulawesi Selatan. Budaya ini memiliki substansi berupa menghormati sesama manusia. Di sisi lain, kelompok Bugis Makassar yang sekarang mayoritas memeluk agama Islam juga mengimani dan mengimplementasikan syariat Islam dalam kehidupan sosial. Sehingga dibutuhkan kajian mendalam untuk menganalisis budaya tabe dalam kacamata Islam. Urf adalah salah satu alat dalam ushul fiqh yang dapat digunakan untuk meneliti kesesuaian budaya tabe' dalam Islam. Hal ini penting agar menjaga harmonisasi antara budaya lokal dengan syariat Islam.

Kata Kunci: Tabe, Hukum Islam, Urf.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with a rich diversity of cultures, including customs and local value systems that are still alive and deeply rooted in society. Due to the strong sense of locality, the majority of people in Indonesia continue to maintain and preserve customs that originate from their ancestral cultures. Along with customs, norms have also emerged from culture. These customs and norms have then become traditions. Traditions themselves can be defined as moral customs that are preserved from generation to generation as a reflection of the life of a community. Unlike formal legal norms that have legitimacy from state institutions, customary norms tend to originate from local ethics and morals (Arifin, 2025).

One of the wise local cultures in society is tabe'. This culture, which originated from the Bugis Makassar group in South Sulawesi, contains moral and ethical values. Tabe' is an expression of respect conveyed in the form of words and body movements (such as bowing). It is considered a representation of politeness towards others and recognition of social hierarchy. Therefore, if someone is unable to apply the value of tabe', that person will tend to be considered ignorant of customs and manners or receive a negative paradigm from the community (Rahma, 2023).

Meanwhile, Islam arrived in Indonesian society centuries ago and has coexisted with social dynamics until the modern era. After undergoing acculturation with various cultures, there was a paradigm shift in the teachings of Islam by the community. Initially, Islam was considered foreign because of the deep-rooted Hindu-Buddhist culture, which forced early Muslims to blend in with the local culture. This reached a point where Islam no longer merely regulated theological aspects but dominated every aspect of social life, so that local customs and culture were filtered by Islamic teachings (Mu'in Husni & Rahman, 2020).

These historical and sociological factors often cause conflicts between Islamic norms and local customs. This is because Sharia law not only regulates theological matters but also ethics and other social values. Basically, Islamic law does not reject the customs and local culture of a region, but rather the Qur'an and Sunnah serve as a filter to maintain pure monotheism, which is the essence of Islamic teachings. However, it cannot be denied that there are some local customs that are quite difficult to integrate with Islamic law (Habibi Miftakhul Marwa, 2021).

Therefore, in the *ijtihad* method, custom is recognized as one of the sources of Sharia law, or termed *Urf*. This is to respond to the complexity and dynamics of society in each place, especially those with strong local values. This also proves the flexibility of Islamic law to eliminate all difficulties and bring convenience to humans. However, the problem is that not all customs can be categorized as *urf*. Further and in-depth study is needed to categorize whether a custom that exists within a community can be called *urf* so that it can be used as a basis for Sharia law. This is because the main requirement for a custom to be recognized as *urf* is that there is no conflict or contradiction with the texts of Sharia (the Qur'an and Sunnah) (Sidanatul Janah, 2023).

This research has certainly not reached the stage of efforts made by *mujtahids* in exploring a law, so this paper is not intended to create new norms in Islamic law. Rather, this paper is an academic study that uses literature as its main source to find out how *fiqh*, in this case *urf*, views the customs of the Bugis Makassar group. By integrating and comparing the texts of Sharia law and the facts on the ground regarding the *Tabé'* culture.

RESEARCH METHOD

This type of research is library research, in which the author uses *fiqh* books and journal research as the main sources. By accumulating all these sources, the author then draws conclusions from each excerpt of the research results. The approach used by the author in this study is a normative Sharia approach, in which the author examines an issue from the perspective of Islamic law. In this case, the concept of *Urf* is used as an analytical tool to examine issues related to the *tabé'* culture in South Sulawesi.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Definition and Implementation of Tabé Culture

Etymologically, as explained in Jon Gonda's book *Sanskrit in Indonesia*, the word *tabé* is derived from the ancient Sanskrit word *ksantavya* or *ksantawya*, which means "sorry." Since Malay people had difficulty pronouncing this word, the sound of the letter *v* was changed to *b*, resulting in *santabé*, which then transformed into *tabik* or *tabé*. However, each region has its own version of *tabik* or *tabé*. One example is in Lampung. The word *tabik* is used to say hello. This word is commonly used to begin greetings at traditional events. This is different in Bugis Makassar, where the word *tabé* is interpreted as excuse me (Iqbal & Irawan, 2021). However, in essence, this culture of *tabé* reflects politeness and courtesy towards older people or those who are considered respected.

Nowadays, the practice of *tabé* has shifted from words to gestures. *Tabé* is practiced when walking past someone while saying "tabé" with a slightly bowed posture followed by a downward movement of the right hand. Philosophically, this gesture actually reflects two things, namely: 1) The value of politeness, which means placing someone according to their age and position. It also applies noble character rooted in the Bugis Makassar environment. 2) The value of religiosity, which means that everyone is required to be humble as a form of faith in God Almighty (Faiga et al., 2024).

This is a sociocultural aspect of Bugis Makassar society that stems from local norms and customs, shaping character based on humility and faith in God. This also proves that the culture of *tabé* is not a feudal practice closely related to a hierarchical system of domination. Rather, the culture of *tabé* is a moral approach that is an implementation of the highly respected Bugis Makassar philosophy of *Siri'*.

Siri' is one of the foundations of life that is firmly upheld by the Bugis Makassar tribe. Literally, *Siri'* means shame or pain. However, when viewed from its true meaning, *Siri'* can be interpreted as self-respect that must be maintained at all costs, or it can also be interpreted as a manifestation of an attitude of not being greedy for worldly things. Thus, five important principles of *Siri'* are described, namely always speaking the truth (*ada' tonging*), respecting fellow human beings (*sipakatau*), and surrendering oneself to God Almighty (*mappesona ri dewata seuwae*). Of these five core principles of *Siri'*, the culture of *tabé* falls under the context of mutual respect (*sipakatau*). (Darussalam, 2021).

Thus, it can be concluded that the value of *siri'* forms a moral framework that guides the behavior of the Bugis Makassar people in maintaining personal integrity and social harmony. Through the principles it embodies, this value affirms that a person's dignity does not only depend on themselves, but also on how they treat others and live a spiritually meaningful life. In this context, the practice of *tabé* is a concrete manifestation of social ethics that emphasizes respect and politeness in daily interactions. Thus, *siri'* serves as a foundation that unites the moral, social, and religious dimensions of Bugis Makassar culture.

The History Of Islamic Acculturation And Culture In South Sulawesi

There are many views regarding the origins of Islam in South Sulawesi. One of the most popular views in historical studies argues that Islam entered South Sulawesi due to the arrival of three great scholars from Minangkabau, namely Datuk ri Tiro, Datuk ri Bandang, and Datuk ri Pattimang. Based on this view, it can be concluded that Islam first spread in South Sulawesi in 1605 and was officially recognized in 1607 when King I Mangngerangi Daeng Man Rabbia issued a decree making Islam the official religion of the Gowa kingdom. I Mangngerangi Daeng Man Rabbia then changed his name to Sultan Alauddin and reformed the kingdom's government into a sultanate based on Sharia law (Mukti et al., 2022). This then had an impact on community life in South Sulawesi, where people flocked to embrace Islam. Thus, a top-down pattern can be seen, where state leaders became Muslim and were followed by their people.

The process of Islamization then spread to the Bugis community through the expansion of the Gowa sultanate after Sultan Alauddin declared Islam as the state religion. This led other Bugis kingdoms to adopt Islam as their religion and change the title "Arung" to "Sultan." This had significant cultural implications among the people, where the Bugis people's theological beliefs, which were originally based on the concept of Dewata Suwae, changed to the doctrine of Tawhid. This was also true in other aspects, such as religious rituals, changes in the caste system, and the reconstruction of the government system, which underwent a transformation after the arrival of Islam (Dwiayama, 2024). Thus, it can be seen how Islam has been acculturated and well accepted by the Bugis people. Although, of course, Islam did not immediately replace all Bugis customs.

Tabé' In The Context Of Islamic Law

Urf is one of the methods of Ijtihad in ushul fiqh that is used to justify or find out the truth of the law regarding customs in a certain area. Urf itself comes from the word arafa, and has an affixation with the word al ma'ruf which means something that is recognized. In terms of terminology, urf is a good deed or custom. Abdul Wahab Kallaf defines urf as a custom practiced by humans in terms of speech, deeds, or things that are abandoned and carried out continuously (Siregar & Muhammad, 2025). Therefore, it can be concluded that urf is a custom or tradition of a community that does not conflict with the principles of Islamic law.

The argument of urf in the Qur'an is found in Surah Al-A'raf verse 199, which reads:

حُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ

"Be forgiving, command (people) to do what is right, and turn away from ignorant people." (QS. Al A'raf: 199)

However, the term adat basically has its own definition in the study of

usul fiqh. Adat or al adah comes from the word al audah or al tikrar, which means repetition. So, among Arab communities, adat is also referred to as al tabi'ah al tsaniyah or the second nature of humans. Meanwhile, when associated with urf, the majority of fuqaha do not distinguish between urf and adat because the definitions of the two are similar both linguistically and in general understanding. Although there are a small number of scholars who continue to distinguish between the two, this is because urf is more general in nature, covering both verbal customs and actual customs, whereas adat only covers actual customs (Yusril & Tanjung, 2024). Nevertheless, it can be concluded that urf is synonymous with adat itself and in this case, tabe can be categorized as urf because it is included as adat that is practiced in South Sulawesi society.

Before being used as evidence in legal arguments, urf must fulfill the main requirement that the custom or tradition does not contradict the complete sources of Islamic law, namely the Qur'an and hadith. Therefore, urf is divided into two categories based on its validity:

a. Bad urf (fasid), which is a custom in a society that contradicts Sharia law. The customs in question can be in the form of legalizing what is forbidden or forbidding what is permissible. An example is drinking alcohol at parties.

b. Good customs (shahih), which are customs of people that do not contradict Sharia law. Customs or traditions such as this can be used as a legal basis, for example, the culture of visiting relatives' homes on Eid al-Fitr, which is popular in Indonesia (Putri Darnela, 2020).

Therefore, in order to ascertain the truth of the tabe' culture as urf, it is necessary to first examine whether the tabe' culture contradicts the nash or not. However, the main issue is that the practice of tabe', which is a form of respect and honor towards elders in the form of bowing slightly with hands extended downward when walking towards someone older, is considered to be textually contradictory to one of the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, which reads:

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ قُلْنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَيَنْحَنِي بَعْضُنَا لِبَعْضٍ قَالَ « لَا ». قُلْنَا أَيُعَانِقُوا
بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا قَالَ لَا وَلَكِنْ تَصَافَحُوا

From Anas bin Malik RA, we asked the Messenger of Allah: "O Messenger of Allah, is it permissible for some of us to bow to those we meet?" The Messenger of Allah said, "No!" We asked again, "Is it permissible for us to embrace each other when we meet?" The Prophet said, "No. What is correct is that you should shake hands with one another." (Reported by Ibn Majah, no. 3702, and deemed authentic by Al-Albani)

Thus, there is an ideal gap between the practice of Tabe' culture, which involves bowing when passing by elders, and one of the hadiths. However, it is necessary to first understand the context of the hadith before drawing conclusions about the legality of the practice of Tabe' in the eyes of Islamic law. This is important in order to understand the main essence of the culture of Tabe' and the purpose of the prohibition of bowing to humans in Islam.

Essentially, the interpretation of this hadith essentially commands us not

to bow down to humans when interpreted in two ways, namely as worship (considering the practice of bowing down as an act of deifying humans) and bowing down to humans because of their wealth. This is because the substance of the cultural practice of respecting elders by bowing down slightly can be categorized as *tawadhu*. Therefore, when linked to the culture of *tabé'*, it can be concluded that the culture of *tabé'*, which involves bowing, falls within the sociocultural dimension and not the theological one. This is because in implementing it, the Bugis Makassar community does not intend to worship humans but to appreciate and respect others.

The validity of *tabé'* culture as *urf* in Islamic law is proven by the essence of *tabé'* itself. There are three main principles of this culture, namely *sipakatau* (humanizing humans), *sipakalebbi* (mutual respect and honor), and *sipakainge* (mutual reminders). These three are the basic philosophies of the *tabé'* culture that shape the character and manners of South Sulawesi, especially the Bugis Makassar community. Therefore, it can be concluded that the *tabé'* culture does not contradict the texts of Sharia and can be used as *urf*. In fact, the practice of *tabé'* itself has an essence that is in accordance with Islamic values of respecting and honoring elders.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the *tabé'* culture practiced by the Bugis Makassar people is an expression of social ethics deeply rooted in the values of respect, politeness, and humility. From an Islamic legal perspective, the culture of *tabé'* cannot be understood solely in textual terms, but must be placed in its sociocultural context and the purpose of its practice. The results of the study show that *tabé'* does not contain elements of servitude, human worship, or theological dimensions that contradict the principle of *tawhid*, but rather functions as a form of *tawadhu'* and a mechanism for maintaining social harmony.

Through the '*urf* approach, the *tabé'* culture meets the criteria as '*urf shahih* because its substance and practice are in line with the basic values of Islamic law, particularly in honoring fellow human beings, maintaining social etiquette, and strengthening social ethics. Thus, the tension between custom and Sharia law in the case of *tabé'* is not substantive, but rather stems from differences in the context of interpretation and the purpose of the practice.

This study also demonstrates the flexibility of Islamic law in responding to local cultural realities without losing its normative principles. Therefore, the *tabé'* culture is not only acceptable within the framework of Islamic law, but also has the potential to become a means of internalizing Islamic moral values in social life. Further research is recommended to examine similar customary practices in other regions in order to enrich the discourse on the integration of '*urf* and Islamic law in the Indonesian context.

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