



ISLAM AS ADAT OR ADAT AS ISLAM? REEXAMINING MINANGKABAU IDENTITY IN CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL CONTEXT

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Abstract

This article aims to know why “adat bersendi Syara, Syara bersendi kitabullah” is so important today for Minangkabau community? In this sense, why is Islam so important to the Minangkabau community? Is it true that the need to reemerging Islam in Minangkabau as it was in the early days was running similarly or was deviating from its direction and purpose? I will put this on the grassroots view as reflected from the various academic resources of the Minangkabau history of the pre-Colonial and Colonial Islam, which became the basis of the revival of Islam in Minangkabau known as the Paderi movement.

Keywords: Minangkabau, globalization, religion, Padri War

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui mengapa “adat bersendi Syara, Syara bersendi kitabullah” saat ini begitu penting bagi masyarakat Minangkabau? Dalam pengertian ini, mengapa Islam begitu penting bagi masyarakat Minangkabau? Benarkah kebutuhan untuk menghidupkan kembali Islam di Minangkabau seperti dahulu, berjalan serupa atau menyimpang dari arah dan tujuannya? Penelitian ini berupaya meletakkan pandangan ini pada akar rumput yang tercermin dari berbagai

sumber akademis Minangkabau, di antaranya adalah sejarah Islam pra-Kolonial dan Kolonial yang menjadi dasar kebangkitan Islam di Minangkabau yang dikenal dengan gerakan Paderi.

Kata Kunci: Minangkabau, globalisasi, agama, Perang Padri

Introduction

At the end of 2018, the Council of Indonesian Ulama of West Sumatra Province initiated efforts to re-establish the *Marapalam* declaration (Harian Haluan, 2018). This declaration is a form of a statement that is considered the most important in Minangkabau history because it confirms the compatibility between indigenous customs (so-called *Adat*) and Islam (as religion) in the Minangkabau community. The declaration reads “*adat bersendi Syara, Syara bersendi kitabullah*” (Trans: tradition is based on religion, religion is based on tradition). In its history, this declaration emerged as a form of peace treaty between indigenous groups and Islamic groups after a series of civil war in the Minangkabau community, widely known as the Padri war. Furthermore, this term becomes a marker of identity in Minangkabau society. In general, Minangkabau people believe that Islam is inherent in Minangkabau.

The statement to return to the *Marapalam* declaration suggests ambiguity in today context. The initiative to recall the *Marapalam* declaration was carried out by Islamic institutions established several decades after Indonesia's independence, even after the first declaration in 1837s. The Council of Indonesian Ulema is an institution that has a central board based in Jakarta and has branches almost to the village level in Indonesia. In fact, as a group that was known before the independence of the Republic of Indonesian. That is also the Minangkabau have had their own religious and traditional institutions.

This context continues to lead to an important problem that today is often the topic of conversation in terms of imagination as identity. Many scholars have argued that imagined community could not be seen merely as something born and inherent naturally to an organisation or group. A prominent theorist about the nation's history, Benedict Anderson revealed that the nature of nationalism produced from historical contestation results could not simply be understood as a product of the awareness of political ideology but the existence of a cultural system that preceded it.¹ Anderson argues that nationalism becomes part of the

¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of*

history of modern development. Here, Anderson asserts that nationalism will manifest as an empirical reality when a set of base structures exists. In this case, Anderson mentioned the important role of technology and the media's role in creating „the imagined community of nationhood“. In line with him, Merlyna Lim said that reality today proves that in some Islamic community contexts, the real influence of technological development seems inevitable.²

Based on this argument, Anderson further gave an example that someone can become bound and connected in a community even though they did not know each other and see each other. The Minangkabau, wherever they may say, has a uniform identity based on these kinship and clientship nets.

The imagination of Islam in the Minangkabau community must be placed in its historical context. In reading today's phenomena, various assumptions about the symptoms of Minangkabau imagined community are significantly seen as a form of a dynamic and dialectical process in history. I will propose two of the most important moments or events in which the history of religious dynamics and globalization in Minangkabau. These two contexts were pre-colonial times which were conceived as the initial period of global and local meetings. The colonial and post-colonial period gave birth to various new historical momentum in the Islamic context in the Minangkabau community. Based on these two moments, it can be assumed that structural indications that place Minangkabau as Islam result from the construction of historical discontinuation of localization and globalization.

Religion and Globalization in Minangkabau Community: Early Encounter between Global and Local

The encounter between religion and globalization is in line with the idea of the spread of religion networks. It means that the history of religion plays an essential role in the formation of global history. Anderson mentions that as a religious community, religion's spread through religious networks has occurred throughout history. For instance, the vast territorial stretch of the ummah Islam from Morocco to the Sulu Archipelago, Christendom from Paraguay to Japan, and the Buddhist world from Srilanka to the Korean Peninsula.³

Nationalism, Nationalism (London and New York: Verso, 2006), p. 12.

² Merlyna Lim, 'Life Is Local in the Imagined Global Community: Islam and Politics in the Indonesian Blogosphere', *Journal of Media and Religion*, Vol. 11, No. 3, (2012), p. 138.

³ Amartya Sen, 'How to Judge Globalism', *The American Prospect*, Vol. 13, No. 1, (2002), A2-6; Manuel A. Vasquez and Marie Friedmann Marquardt, *Globalizing the Sacred: Religion Across the Americas* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003).

Thus, the Minangkabau is not unique. Its tradition develops and grows in history. This argument is often overlooked by scholars who examine the history of religion in the Minangkabau. Some of the assumptions underlying Islam in Minangkabau are rarely seen as a global and local process. Understanding the reality of religion and globalization in the Minangkabau must be placed in the history of transnational context entry.

Referring to a report of the history of the religious tradition in the Minangkabau community, Benda-Backmann suggested placing it in the archipelago's broader area. Some historical evidences including archeological sources and manuscripts mostly argue that since the archipelago there have been exist the Hinduism and Buddhist traditions from Indian in the third and fourth centuries.⁴ Minangkabau is one of the ethnic communities that are in the early Malay culture.⁵ That world was based around the powerful and prosperous Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms of Srivijaya, based in Bukit Seguntang in Palembang, and Melayu, associated with the Batang Hari River in Jambi in the seventh century (Andaya 2001: 31). The religious activities which strengthened in the early period influenced the Minangkabau community as a matrilineal group. The matrilineal culture was formed by a wave of external influences brought about by Hinduism and Buddhism traditions.⁶

Until when the Malay kingdom began to dominate the Malacca region, 1347 when the Minangkabau Kingdom founded by Adityawarman also helped identify itself as a Malay than Minangkabau because of the influence of Malacca Malays. Traders from Aceh started introducing Islam in the second half of the fourteenth century, first at the trading posts on the west coast and from there into the interior during the sixteenth century. The Islamic tradition which first developed in Minangkabau was Sufism. However, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the first tarekat was the Naqsabandiyah before the tarekat brought by Sheikh Burhanuddin Ulakan, known as the Sattariyah in the late seventeenth century.⁷

⁴ Leonard Y. Andaya, 'The Search for the "Origins" of Melayu', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, No.32, Vol. 03, 2001, p. 315–30.

⁵ Peter Bellwood, *Prehistory of the Indo-Malaysian Archipelago*, Animal Genetics (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2008), p. xxxix. A Reid, "Understanding Melayu (Malay) as a Source of Diverse Modern Identities", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 3, (2001), p. 295–313. William Van der Heide, 'Malaysian Cinema, Asian Film : Border Crossings and National Cultures', *Film Culture in Transition*, 2002, p.301.

⁶ Delmus Puneri Salim, *The Transnational and the Local in the Politics of Islam: The Case of West Sumatra, Indonesia* (New York: Springer US, 2013).

⁷ Christine Dobbin, 'Islamic Revivalism in Minangkabau at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 3, (1974), p.326.

In this case, it was recognized that *adat* had become a popular terminology at the time. However, *adat* in the initial sense includes all dimensions such as law, morality, customs, etiquette, ceremonies, dress, art, songs, dances, and pre-Islamic Hindu-Buddhist and animistic beliefs⁸.

Although the report above confirms that there are many religions lived and developed in the Minangkabau. This does not mean that Islam in Minangkabau ends as the only religion adhered to by all society levels. It is proved that in practical matters, the Minangkabau community, until the end of the eighteenth century, still practised various beliefs and traditions. In the colonial historian's report, William Marsden (1811), accounts that "the Minangkabau of the *Darat* (central) as mostly pagan, or rather without religion, with the exception of the notables, who consider themselves Mohametans" Benda-Beckmann also states "Hindu and Buddhist tenets had found their way into Minangkabau, amalgamating with animistic beliefs". Indeed, it is recognized that colonial historians' records were still very biased to be influenced by the world religious paradigm. So, they did not mention traditions that were different from Islam as religion. However, in a local religious perspective,⁹ strong suspicion that the Minang people's tradition was strengthened with the articulation of various traditions including Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and even local beliefs of the people.

From the explanation above, I argue that global and local encounter have amalgamated the Minang community since the pre-colonial period. Indeed, there are a variety of factors that encourage globalization in the Minang community at that time. One of the important things in this period is where Islam became the dominant political force in the Minangkabau community. It seems that the Islamic tradition became a political identity of power at that time. In the next section, I will explain how social and economic realities influence the Minangkabau people's articulation in identifying themselves as Islamic societies.

⁸ Franz Von Benda-Beckmann and Keebet Von Benda-beckmann, *Political and Legal Transformations of an Indonesia Polity: The Nagari from Colonisation to Decentralisation* (St Ives plc: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 43–44; J. S. Kahn, "Tradition", *Matriliney and Change Among the Minangkabau of Indonnesia*, *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land-En Volkenkunde*, Vol.132, (1976), p. 64–95.

⁹ Cox, James L., *From Primitive to Indigenous: The Academic Study of Indigenous Religions* (Burlington: Ashagate, 2007)

Paderi War and the Resurgence of Islam in Minangkabau: The Later Developments

The Minangkabau community is characterized as an agricultural, horticulture, artisanal production and trade society. At the end of the eighteenth-century, coins were first introduced in society. It then continued to shape the Minang community to engage in broader trade activities. The 11th century marked the Minangkabau as an area that became an important centre of trade, especially gold. Gold exported through the west coast and through rivers that are lifted from the Minangkabau heartland and flowed eastwards to the straits of Malacca.¹⁰ The main trading activity in the Minang community was gold which was concentrated in flatland areas.¹¹ Admittedly, at that time, the Minangkabau community had very strong economic activity and also had a strong relationship with other communities across the world.

Paderi War has emerged in a context where dominant economic factors more influenced it. This opinion is widely expressed by those who understand that revivalist Islam in the Minang Community is a grassroots reaction.¹² In general, Kevin Fogg argues that it is inevitable that in any rejection of the dutch will always play religious and nationalist rhetoric towards a more economic motive. In the context of the emergence of the Padri movement in Minangkabau, Christine Dobbin gave a lengthy argument in proving this. According to him, the Paderi movement was fully supported by non-subsistence farmers out of the valley. Initially, these farmers were economically independent community groups. To support their trading activities, this community needs guarantees for economic mobility. They are people who see that Islam offers a strict set of rules covering moral and legal aspects.

In line with this, the emergence of the military movement in 1774 was considered by some to be the earliest Islamic fundamentalism in the archipelago.¹³

¹⁰ Christine Dobbin, 'Economic Change in Minangkabau as a Factor in the Rise of Padri Movement, 1784-1830', *Indonesia*, Vol. 23, (1977), p. 2.

¹¹ Joel S. Khan, *Minangkabau Social Formations: Indonesian Peasants and the World-Economy*, 2007; Joel S. Kahn, *Constituting the Minangkabau: Peasants, Culture, and Modernity in Colonial Indonesia* (Providence: Berg Publishers, 1993); Joel S. Kahn, *Minangkabau Social Formations: Indonesian Peasants and the World-Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Dobbin, 'Economic Change in Minangkabau as a Factor in the Rise of Padri Movement, 1784-1830'; Franz von Benda-Beckmann, *Property in Social Continuity* (Springer-Science Business Media, B.V., 1979).

¹² Dobbin, 'Economic Change in Minangkabau as a Factor in the Rise of Padri Movement, 1784-1830'; Kevin W Fogg, 'Evaluating The PRRI Rebellion as a West Sumatran Peasant Movement', *Tingkap*, Vol. XI, No. 2, (2015), p. 160-74.

¹³ Abd A'la, 'The Genealogy of Muslim Radicalism in Indonesia: A Study of the Roots and Characteristics of the Padri', *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, Vol. 02, No. 02, (2008), p. 267-99.

The movement gradually became more militant and, in 1803, ended in a religious war, known as the Padri War, between orthodox Islamic leaders and a more conservative *adat* protagonist. The religious movement known as The Padri began to attract the attention of Minangkabau from 1804 to 1837. They were orthodox Islamic movements founded by some religious leaders who had studied in Mecca during their visit to pilgrimage in 1803. These were the people who witnessed the Wahhabis group's conquest and was greatly influenced by the strictest Wahabi teachings.¹⁴

However, according to some experts, the impact of this Paderi war is considered the beginning of the realization of radicalism with extreme understanding not fully believed by some scholars. This indication is reinforced because not all communities fully accept this movement.¹⁵ The Islamic revivalist movement in Minangkabau in the late eighteenth century and the Padri movement, which followed differences, influenced it in traditional local and global.¹⁶ So that not all people in West Sumatra fully accept the teachings of the Paderi. The *darek* (central) area of the Minangkabau could not get the Paderi Islam to accept the puritan movement on the remote area (border).¹⁷

Likewise, it should be recognized that after the contact of local and western colonial traditions many things have changed, primarily related to *adat*. If previously, *adat* was not categorized within certain boundaries and ideals, then at this time, *adat* began to be distinguished from other traditions (including Islam) by indigenous experts at that time. In the 18th century, Minangkabau indigenous philosophy began to be defined by positioning the Minangkabau matrilineal social political organization's philosophy with Islamic teachings. At that time, religious institutions were formally separated from the matrilineal organization to become their organizations centred on mosques and the centre of religion at that time (Salim 2013). Until the 19th century, several Minangkabau *adat* experts also began to write systematic differences and distinctions.

The assumption that the religious revivalist movement in Minangkabau is so capable of changing the whole system of the Minang community is also seen as an overly excessive view. Dobbin shows the strong influence of *adat*,

¹⁴ Franz Von Benda-Beckmann and Keebet Von Benda-beckmann,..p. 61.

¹⁵ Dobbin, 'Islamic Revivalism in Minangkabau at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century'; Syafwan Rozi, "Dari Islam Radikal Ke Islam Pluralis: Genealogi Gerakan Paderi Dan Pengaruhnya Terhadap Islam Pluralis Di Perbatasan Minangkabau", *Masyarakat Indonesia*, Vol. 41, No.1, (2015), p.15-27.

¹⁶ Dobbin, 'Islamic Revivalism in Minangkabau at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century', p. 342.

¹⁷ Syafwan Rozi,..p. 15-17.

which has lived in the community in Minangkabau first.¹⁸ It is also reinforced because The Padri has not changed much of the inheritance system in the Minang community's descent-based properties.

Although Islam in the past came peacefully, it cannot be considered merely to run without dynamics. The colonial period has provided many important lessons in looking at global and local intersections' dynamics and contexts. Here, it seems clear that Islam in Minangkabau does not appear in a vacuum. This period's dynamics show an essential moment of contestation between local values and the Western civilisation system through colonialism. These influencing factors continuously reconstruct the identity of the Minangkabau people. However, it needs to be underlined that colonial Islam in West Sumatra was the most significant in reconstructing identity.

The Dutch's role, which seeks to change the economic system of the Minang community, is precisely in line with the spirit to institutionalize Islam and *adat*. The fact that the Minangkabau as a matrilineal society is believed to be the arena of discourse contestation between Islam and *adat* began the birth of the religious revivalist movement in West Sumatra. It is evidenced that since Islamic and Dutch fundamentalism movements entered the Minangkabau simultaneously, there was a genuine effort to define affirming one of the identities that were considered to represent the community's spirit at that time.

Is it Fundamentalism, Fear or Politic of Identity?

Many factors greatly influence the identity of the Minangkabau community. Expressing identity in history is not limited to being inspired by a mere local context and globally. The above explanation has demonstrated the interplay between transnational and local factors from the beginning of the encounter between Minangkabau locality and globalization. In the broader spectrum, I have explored the context of religion in the Malay world. Thus, most Muslims' imagination in today's Minangkabau society is not merely seen as nature. But, in the reality of history, the dynamics and complexity of the Minang community always seem continuous.

What exactly is the moment that made the Minang people's imagination continually trying to construct themselves with Islam turned out to be a significant influence from the war of war and colonialism itself? As the cases discussed here are matrilineal, economic or customary land or inheritance and

¹⁸ Dobbin, "Islamic Revivalism in Minangkabau at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century", p. 342.

Islam or custom. This Islamic Revivalism movement developed in many Muslim communities recognized by scholars of the history of Islam occurred in the late eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century. The nineteenth century was the beginning of the entry and development of a more influencing Islamic influence in the West Sumatra region.¹⁹

Seeing this context in global politics and identity defined based on cultural similarity is the fruit of symptoms that have been interpreted from the outset of the cold war ²⁰. Huntington said that if the identity was driven by ideology in the past, then it was not so precisely the difference based on cultural differences. During the post-Cold war world, global politics has become multipolar and multicivilizational for the first time in history. So, it is absorbing from the symptom of strengthening Islamic identity and *adat*, which is also actually a global phenomenon, namely the awakening of the political identity in the name of local culture.

The Islamic revivalist movement referred to in this narrative was emerged in the same historical context as the colonial period. So the significance of the need to refer to the past leads to a form of religious fundamentalism. This movement itself was born at least to the early twentieth century. Peter Beyer acknowledged that this term was so strong that referring to a particular kind of religion and political movement only gained widespread use after the 1970s.²¹

Indeed, fundamentalism cannot simply be understood as a symptom of returning to traditional era. It can be considered as a merely adequate argument. However, the emergence of various forms of fear is also a global phenomenon. Later, this concern can be assumed as a form of indigenous strains of political paranoia and millenarian thinking. In some cases, this is similar to various forms of ways and efforts intensified by some who want to reproduce fears. As happened in the protocol of the elders of Zion in Japanese society. The Japanese example demonstrates that Protocols will adapt to the new age.²² So, the birth of the desire to idealize Islam as the Minang people's culture's real character should be placed in a part of this process.

¹⁹ Dobbin, "Islamic Revivalism in Minangkabau at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century", p. 319–25.

²⁰ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilization and the Remarking of World Order* (New York and London: Simon & Schuster, 1996), p. 21.

²¹ Peter Beyer, 'Religion out of Place?: The Globalization of Fundamentalism', in *The Routledge International Handbook of Globalization Studies*, ed. by Bryan S. Turner and Robert J. Holton, Second (New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 269.

²² David G. Goodman, 'The Protocols in Japans', in *The Paranoid Apocalypse: A Hundred-Year Retrospective on The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, ed. by Richard Landes and Steven T. Katz (New York: New York University Press, 2012), p. 147.

Conclusion

This research has explained the influence of globalization which began in the pre-colonial period, towards changes in religion, customs and social and political life in the Minangkabau community. This research argues that the Minangkabau community articulate their imagined identity after they came into contact with the outside and global world at that time. Local and global encounters in the early history of the religious tradition in Minangkabau prove that Islam was not a religion that originally existed in Minangkabau society. Islam is a continuation of various global interactions since the third and fourth centuries. At its peak, Islam was the final tradition developed in Minangkabau society in the early fourteenth century. It led to bring the discourse in the pre-colonial period, which did not involve much of religious factor, even though *adat* was so very dominant at this time.

Religion in the early period was nominal. Religion and custom became the battle of debate and contestation when Islam began to enter and contact Dutch colonial politics in the early nineteenth century. During the colonial period, it began to have a global influence that confirmed the fight for the Minang people's identity to date. At this time, religion began to be separated from *adat*. I find that religious fundamentalism has the most role in giving various interpretations of the Minang community's identity. What is in the imagination of the people today, if they consider Minang as Islam, is only historical construction. Especially in the colonial period and post-Islamic advent. Indeed, various kinds of traditions and identities of Minangkabau people are present and grow in a dynamic tradition.

Therefore, the need to recall the *Marapalam* declaration is identical with the substance of the historical construction of the Islamic revival movement. I can not entirely agree with several views that merely say that only Islam and *adat* contest in West Sumatra are literally written in term "*adat basandi syara, syara basandi kitabullah*" (Trans: tradition is based on religion, religion is based on tradition). This view will encourage the idealization of certain values in the Minangkabau community. The history that is interpreted solely by rational consciousness is certainly not relevant today. The search for fixed identity by referring to the late tradition is a kind of idealization. However, it must be seen as a result of the internalization of various forms of influence that are social, political and economic.

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