

## **The Resistance of Local Wisdom Towards Radicalism: The Study of the Tarekat Community of West Sumatra, Indonesia**

**Welhendri Azwar**

*Department of Islamic Community Development, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication,  
The State Islamic University of Imam Bonjol Padang, West Sumatra, Indonesia*

### **ABSTRACT**

In West Sumatra, radicalism does not develop and even tends to decrease because of the self-defense system of the local society, in the form of the religious and socio-cultural system that arises from the doctrine, values and teachings of Islam practised by the Tarekat community. The study aims to understand the conceptual world of the Tarekat community faith towards radicalism and to explain the struggle of radical idealism in the midst of the dynamics of the religious Tarekat culture in West Sumatra. This research uses the descriptive-phenomenological approach. Focus group discussion was first conducted with the teachers (*mursyid*) and members of the Tarekat congregation followed by in-depth interviews with the teachers and members of the congregation. Observation was made to examine the socio-cultural conditions of the Tarekat community surrounding their activities in relation to their religious teachings and ideals. This study found that firstly, the fusion of Tarekat teachings with the Minangkabau culture was not conducive to the rise of radical idealism in West Sumatra; secondly, the resilience of Tarekat religious culture and the local wisdom of the Minangkabau prevented radicalism from taking root in the Tarekat community, thus reducing conflict, and; thirdly, the opposition of the Tarekat to radicalism seen in its practice of *dakwah* culture, has shaped its lifestyle and response to the world.

*Keywords:* Resistance, local wisdom, Tarekat community, radicalism

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*E-mail address:*

welhendri\_azwar@yahoo.co.id (Welhendri Azwar)

### **INTRODUCTION**

The escalation of violence due to radicalism and its growing intensity has made radicalism a hot topic of discussion locally, nationally and internationally. Whether carried out by individuals or groups of society, acts

of violence resulting from radical ideas derived from religious teachings is causing consternation around the world. It is not surprising, then, that suspicions arise that religious educational institutions, especially traditional ones, such as *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) in Java, the *surau*<sup>1</sup> or *meunasah* in Minangkabau, are suspected to be cells for the development of radical behaviour. For Muslims, this generalisation is a stigma that impedes efforts to deal with social unrest and social problems that should instead be addressed carefully and wisely. In the context of Minangkabau culture, the *surau* religious education institution, socio-historically, is the birthplace and development of many charismatic Muslim scholars who have been able to create a calm, peaceful and dynamic environment by emphasizing the importance of integration or social cohesion.

<sup>1</sup>*Surau* is the oldest educational institution in Minangkabau; even before Islam entered Minangkabau, *surau* already existed. With the coming of Islam, *surau* became Islamised but retained its name. The *surau* in Minangkabau culture is a great tradition of the Indonesian religious institution. *Surau* is a religious institution of society that acts as a prominent Islamic teaching centre and the starting point of Islamisation in Minangkabau. As a Tarekat centre, the *surau* is also a Minangkabau fortress against the negative influence of modernisation. *Surau* is not just a place to study religion, learn to read al-Qur'an or learn *adab*; it is also a place the centre of scholarship in Muslim communities; here, Muslims study their holy book and learn to debate on matters of religion and science (Azwar, 2015, pp. 293–308).

The emergence of Tarekat groups as a religious institution in Islamic society is a manifestation of the dynamism of Islamic teaching. The presence of the Tarekat group in the history of Islamic civilisation, according to Azra (2007), “contributes to the process of urban society formation, and plays an important role in spreading the idea of Islamic renewal to various Islamic worlds, including to the archipelago” (p. 145). The movement became known as neo-Sufism, a movement that attempted to reconcile Sufi and the Sharia teaching. Certain rituals in religious practice are typical of Tarekat groups, and this identity is an interesting phenomenon in the dynamics of Islamic societies.

In the Indonesian archipelago, Tarekat not only plays a role in the initial Islamisation process; it also contributes to various social, cultural, political and economic processes within urban society. The strength of the group's network is based on the collective piety and obedience to the teachers (*mursyid*), which allows them to develop a stable institutional network and to play a role in social reform and change, both structurally and culturally (Azra, 2007, p. 147).

Tarekat culture in West Sumatra is built on two main pillars, namely Islam and *adat* (custom) Minangkabau. These two pillars shape the attitude and behaviour of the people. The important implications of this compounding can be seen in the peaceful coexistence of humanist-inclusive, well-mannered and civilised people with socialist ideas and activities (Azwar, 2015, p. 153).

Therefore, it is difficult for radicalism to develop in Minangkabau society because it is blocked by cultural and religious mechanisms. It would be interesting to study how Tarekat teaching, which is the basis of the local wisdom of West Sumatera, blocks radicalism. How does Tarekat teaching fortify the people of West Sumatra from developing radical understanding?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Religious Understanding and Radicalism

Radicalism is the expression of extreme beliefs that are often expressed through aggressive and violent behaviour and provocative speech. As a movement, it seeks to overthrow an existing order whose beliefs are considered a watered down version of what they should be. Radicalist groups engage in and encourage extreme and violent acts to establish their own beliefs, which they proclaim are the true, correct and accurate version. Radicalist religious groups stretch religious teachings, giving them an emotional stance that leads to violence and anarchism. Typically, radicalism is the act of violent change by manipulating religious doctrine and using religious symbols. The word 'radical' is often used to indicate total rejection of all conditions.

The various complexities of life are a powerful impetus for the emergence of radical movements. Modern societies have given rise to an impersonal *gesellschaft*, what Riesman (1961) called a "lonely crowd", resulting from a deep sense of alienation in the modern psyche. Modern

society is characterised by the reversal of values, and this is a direct threat upon community, integration and togetherness (Sztompka, 2007, p. 330).

In the context of religious movements, radicalism, anarchism or violence has tended to increase or at least emerge and then disappear in recent years. The rise of radicalism and radical movements is rooted in the fact that there are growing interpretations, understandings, streams, denominations and even sects within (intra) one particular religion. In Muslim societies, religious radicalism is derived largely from literal, piecemeal and *ad hoc* religious understanding of certain verses of the Qur'an. Such understanding barely leaves room for accommodation and compromise with moderate Muslim groups, and therefore it threatens the mainstream of the *ummah* or society.

Religious radicalism in Islam can also originate from false readings of Islamic history combined with excessive idealisation of a particular period of Islam. This is seen in the views and movements of the *Salafi*, especially in the very radical beliefs of *Wahabiyyah*, which appeared in the Arabian peninsula in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and continues to develop today. The main theme of this Salafi group is the purification of Islam, and the focus is on cleansing Islam of beliefs and practices that the group see as *bid'ah* or heresy. Such cleansing is often done through violent means.

Religious radicalism can also gain additional impetus from the political, social and economic deprivation that may persist

in society. At the same time, disorientation, socio-cultural dislocation and the excesses of globalisation, among other social pressures, are additional factors important to the emergence of radical groups. These radical groups often take the form of a cult that is exclusive, closed and centred on someone who is viewed as charismatic. Groups with certain eschatological dogmas even view the world as nearing its end and the apocalypse, and proclaim that it is time to repent through their leaders and group. Such doctrines, with their particular eschatological slant, then draw reactions from mainstream religions, and this can lead to social conflict.

In the context of radicalism in the name of Islam in Indonesia, according to Azra (2011), the root of the problem begins with a fragmentary and *ad hoc* understanding of the verses of the Qur'an that barely provides accommodation space and compromise with other moderate mainstream Muslim groups. In this context, a narrow understanding of religion tends to be rigid and potentially false. Moreover, what exactly this understanding is is not openly discussed. Religious sentiment such as religious solidarity based on perceived oppression or emotional factors are played up as causes for radicalism. In essence, radicalism is a theological problem, as it is a religious movement that tries to completely overhaul an existing social order through violence.

Juergensmeyer in his book *Terror in the Mind of God* quoted Pranowo (2011), who asserted that "the factor of understanding of religion that is not right also resulted in

the emergence of a radical attitude. In his analysis, all existing religions, if they were to become exclusive and close the door to dialogue, will lead to justification of radical or terror acts. The growing tendency is to take verses to justify the group's ideology, such as *mati syahid* or martyrdom" (pp. 27–34). The same idea was expressed by Alwi Shihab (2003) in his book *Islam Inclusive*; he stated, "In fact the narrowing of the space of interpretation of religion that is bestowed upon human kinds will actually inhibit diversity in the direction of perfection. Religion is basically giving sufficient space for adherents to express Islam according to the social context surrounding it" (p. 12).

In its history and development, Islam in Indonesia was influenced by many experiences. Indonesian Islam is also inseparable from the interests of various parties, both local and transnational. In this context, according to eminent historian, Ricklefs (2006), cultural and religious transitions in Indonesia contributed to the present religious dynamics in Indonesia.

On the other hand, Azra (1999) saw radicalism in the name of religion or as a purely social phenomenon, as a deviant movement. In recent years, radicalism, anarchism or religious violence exhibited by radical Muslim groups has been increasing, not only towards other religions, such as Christianity, but also within the religion, towards moderate Muslim groups.

Like idealism, Islamic radicalism cannot be separated from fundamentalism or revivalism because both are rooted in the same spiritual movement. The flow of

Islamic radicalism was begun by radical Islamic groups both local and transnational. Bellah (2009) stated that Islamic teaching was too modern for its time so it was difficult to understand by the world at that time, even by Muslims themselves after the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The tendency towards radicalism and religious militancy can also be explained as a reaction against the disorientation of values brought about by modernisation. Modernisation disrupted life and brought about drastic change, not only in advanced industrial countries, but also in developing countries.

### Religious Beliefs of the Tarekat Community

A major religion, such as Islam, Christianity, Hinduism or Buddhism, will manifest itself in the ideology and behaviour of its followers in different ways throughout history and from place to place. An appropriate environment and understanding of religious doctrine will emerge from time to time as a special movement of religious behaviour. One variation of religious life in Islam was the emergence of the Tarekat movement pioneered by the Sufis.

Religious experience can be classified into two major types, esoteric and exoteric. Esoteric experience is concerned with the aspect of the *bathiniyah* (essence), while exoteric experience emphasises outward or formal religious concerns (*shari'at*). The Tarekat congregation emphasises the depth of inner experience while accepting diversity. The word 'Tarekat' is derived from the Arabic *tariiqah* (plural, *tharaaiq*) which

in language means 'path, state and flow of certain lines' (Luis Maklub, 1973). Ahmad Warson (1984) added that Tarekat also means *kaedah* or *usluub* ('system'), what is noble in people (*syariifal-qaum*). The same definition was proposed by Elias Authan and Edwar Elias, that Tarekat is a way, method and system of belief (Said 2007; Azwar, 2015, p. 178; Amar, 1980, p. 11).

Aboebakar Atjeh (1993) argued that "the Tarekat is the way, the guidance in performing a worship in accordance with the teachings determined and exemplified by the Prophet, and done by friends and *tabi'in*, from generation to generation, to the teacher, continuously like a chain sequence" (p. 67). The congregation attempts to approach God based on what the Qur'an and Sunnah teach. Thus, the Tarekat relies on the teachings of Islam. Sayyed Husein Nasr said of the Tarekat congregation that it "is the heart of the teachings of Islam, though hidden from view, it becomes the inner source of life and the center that governs all Islamic religious activities" (Azwar, 2015, p. 179). The use of the term Tarekat in the sense of Sufism is the result of the development of the semantic meaning of the word itself, as is the case with the word *Shari'at* used for Islamic law (Madjid, 1995, p. 257).

The Tarekat differentiate between the terms *Shari'ah*, *tariqat*, *haqiqat* and *ma'rifat*. According to them, *Shari'ah* improves the deeds of the body or physical deeds, *thariqat* improves the deeds of the heart and soul, *haqiqat* is the practice of the mystical secrets and *ma'rifat* is the ultimate goal, which is to know the nature of Allah

SWT (the Most Glorified, the Most High) in substance, nature and deed (Atjeh, 1993, p. 395–404). *Ma'rifat* is the appreciation of the absolute oneness of God s.w.t. in the form of the universe and in His own being. This understanding brings together the meaning of *tawakkal* and *tawhid*, referring to total surrender of the individual to Allah SWT, releasing him or her from absolute dependence on anything other than Allah SWT. People who have reached the stage of *ma'rifat* are called *wali*, and are believed to have supernatural abilities called *karamah*.

In the Sufi tradition, there is a postulate that says “*man 'arafa nafsahu faqad 'arafa rabbahu*,” meaning “one who knows himself or herself can easily know his or her God”. Thus, self-knowledge is the route to knowing God. Congeniality provides for a deeper meaning in approaching the teachings of Islam. The congregation emphasises sincerity, piety, patience and submission to Allah SWT. Some teachers such as those who teach on *fiqh*, *kalam* and *fuqahak* do not focus on these aspects and often regard the *Tarekat* as a misleading practice.

Azwar (2015) explained that the Tarekat congregation focused on four social functions, namely (1) providing emotional support for the failures and uncertainties of life; (2) offering transcendental connection through ritual worship ceremonies that can provide an emotional basis as a frame of reference for attitude and action, including in an atmosphere of conflict, disagreement and disagreements that promote stability, general security and the social system; (3)

establishing the value of ‘congregation’, which prioritises the common interest above the interests of individuals, serving to strengthen the legitimacy of the validity of values and social systems; and (4) teaching simplicity, nature of life and the value of optimism, while at the same time not encouraging consumptive and capitalistic behaviour such as explained in Weber’s *Protestant Ethics*, but rather, teaching on the importance of the effort to change based on the value of inner tranquility, as contained in the doctrine of *barakah* (p. 261–262).

The four functions of the Tarekat mentioned above can be observed from the thinking and behaviour of the *jama'ah* (congregation). Social relationships are based on the senses, and not just on the intellect. That is, people are taught to balance between their senses and thinking in all actions and deeds. This is the main purpose of the teaching and practice of Tarekat, namely, to train people in experiencing and applying Godliness, brotherhood and friendship, among other things. In these circumstances, the *Tarekat* forms a humanist perspective for the individual, guiding them in releasing their *fitrah* (natural tendency). The birth of mutual respect and good manners rather than an individualistic, materialistic attitude is the aim of Tarekat culture, and this is what characterises Tarekat groups.

In West Sumatra, especially among the Minangkabau, the meeting between sense and thought is known as *raso jo pareso*, and is a frame of reference in social relationships. The Minangkabau

hold firm to *adat* (custom) and Islam. The blend of *adat* and Islam creates a unique indigenous lifestyle that keeps attracting the attention of social scientists and people in general. The Minangkabau are known for their matrilineal system of hierarchy and inheritance and the unique balance of power between men and women. Today, these customs have become blended in with the traditions and teachings of Islam, making the Minangkabau a dynamic society. The dynamic blend of *adat* and Islam has given rise to the new wisdom practised by the Minangkabau. Their philosophy of *alam takambang jadi guru* (natural law as the teacher of life) is their interpretation of the teachings of Islam, namely *sunnatullah*, as expressed through their unique culture.

### **Radicalism and Its Movement in West Sumatera**

Radicalism in West Sumatra originated from a purification movement of teachings and religious practices (Islam) conducted by young men who had just returned from studying in Saudi Arabia and Egypt. These young men, referred to as 'The Youth Group', were influenced by the *Wahabi* movement started by Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab. However, Wahabiism was inconsistent with the teachings of Islam as practised by the Minangkabau. The group that chose to defend the local practice of Islam (Islam-Minangkabau) became known as the 'Old Group'.

In today's context, radicalism and its different movements, especially the religious ones, exist as organised movements in West

Sumatra. Inspired by the older religious movement, they also remain in contact with radical religious groups. Contact with radical religious groups is made possible because of religious education. Increasing opportunities for locals to pursue religious education in the Middle East has led also to exposure to other religious movements and their ideas, which are the brought back to the local community.

West Sumatra, since the advent of the Paderi (Padre) movement, has become the most popular area for exploring Salafi-style Islamic teaching (Bolland, 1985, p. 123; Wahid, 2009, p. 29) through the *hajj* performed in Saudi Arabia; the *hajj* journey exposes locals to the array of religious ideas propagated in the Middle East. After Indonesia's independence in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the organisation was mobilised by M. Natsir. Many West Sumatrans were sent to Saudi Arabia and the Middle East to learn about Islam. Those who returned continue to teach *salafi* ideology in West Sumatra in an effort to spread transnational ideology (Noer, 1987, p. 59).

Radical Islam in West Sumatra appears to have emerged after the 'New Order' government collapsed. Transnational models, such as Hizb ut-Tahrir and *Salafi*, are motivated by *Shari'ah (nizam al-Islam)* as practised by the Islamic caliphate. The Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) established *amar ma'ruf* and *nahyi munkar* to defend the teachings of Islam, while local Islamic radical groups such as 'Paga Nagari' and the Committee of Islamic Sharia Enforcement (KPSI) seek to enforce Islamic *Shari'ah*

through the Regional Regulation (Perda). Although there are differences between radical organisations and other Islamic organisations, both share the same goal of enforcing Islamic law.

The Islamic organisation, KPSI, seeks to reform the practice of Islam through the Paderi movement. The Paderi movement in West Sumatra was developed in the past. KPSI is a local Islamic organisation that was born and nurtured in West Sumatra, as documented in the groups records dated 2002. It was set up to respond to local social-religious and political phenomena. The effort of Islamic organisations like this was to win sympathy from the community in order to take over leadership of the community (Roy, 2005, p. 94; Abaza, 1993, p. 17). KPSI is one of the local organisations that is committed to enforcing Islamic *Shari'ah*. Their struggle is in the spirit of the Paderi movement and applies the religious principles of the Paderi movement.

KPSI, established in 2002, stems from the idea of a number of young people concerned about the development of West Sumatera society and the behaviour of Muslims who seemed to be drifting farther away from *sha'riah*. Society was beginning to show rampant moral misbehaviour; gambling and drunkenness were common, whereas originally, the people of West Sumatra had adhered to the philosophy of *adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah*. While West Sumatra had once been known for its religious flavour, it

seemed to have left that tradition far behind, and groups such as KPSI were determined to return the region to its original stance.

Today, Islamic radicalism in West Sumatra does not seem to have reached the alarming level of radicalism in other regions, such as Jakarta, Solo, Poso and West Java. More specifically, it is said that Islamic radicalism is far different from what the Paderi group had ever intended, and participation in radicalism in West Sumatra remains weak.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research used the descriptive-phenomenological approach to study the Tarekat group and its conduciveness for the growth and development of radicalism in Minangkabau society in West Sumatera. According to Nazir (1988), the "Descriptive research method is a study to examine the problems in society, as well as various phenomena that occur in society in certain situations, including about relationships, activities, attitudes, views and processes. The ongoing effect of a phenomenon" (pp. 63–64). Phenomenology, as described by Alfred Schutz, is "the attempt to interpret and explain the actions and thoughts of society by describing the reality that appears" real "in the eyes of every person" (Holstein & Gubrium, 2009, p. 336). In this study, research was conducted to interpret and explain the social activities of the Tarekat of West Sumatra. The various phenomena of Tarekat life are summarised

into constructs and limited categories to enable understanding and interpretation.

This research used the grounded research approach, a fact-based research approach relying on comparative analysis of empirical generalisations in establishing concepts and testing and developing theories through data collection and analysis to further explain how a phenomenon prevails. Grounded research is based on facts and uses comparative analysis. For grounded research, data are the source of theories; theory is grounded when it is based on data. The hallmark of grounded research is to use data as the source of theory, not logical thinking. Data are also the primary source for constructing hypotheses in grounded research (Nazir, 1988, p. 89).

This research tried to explain the thinking behind the social activities of the Tarekat in West Sumatra, and their effect on the emergence of radicalism in Minangkabau society in West Sumatra based on empirical data rather than on theories based on deductive logic because Tarekat or *tasawuf* as one embodiment of Islamic teachings contains symbols and ways of behaving that can only be understood by those within the community. The descriptive-phenomenological method of observing and understanding the social activities of the Tarekat can help to explain

its depth of meaning as a subjective reality that is understood and perceived by its followers.

To understand and comprehend the conceptual world of the Tarekat in West Sumatra, the researcher firstly collected, studied and understood the basic teachings of the Tarekat through the existing literature including manuscripts held by teachers and congregations (*jama'ah*). This was to comprehend in general the basic teachings of the Tarekat that had been developed in West Sumatra. Secondly, the researchers conducted a focus group discussion (*muzakarah*) with teachers and followers (*jama'ah*) of Tarekat related to their knowledge and understanding of the teachings. Thirdly, the researcher deepened the in-depth interview on the influence of the Tarekat community's understanding of their activities and social behaviour, including their response to the development of radical movements. In-depth interviews on the character of their teachers (*ulama/mursyid*) were performed in an effort to understand the various social activities and Tarekat relationships within the community.

The selection of informants was based on the reliability of the informants as the source of information using the snow-ball technique by determining the key informants.

Table 1  
Key informants

Name	Tarekat Group	Research Area
Mahyuddin Tk. Sutan	Syattariyah	Kota Padang
Zubair Tk. Kuniang	Syattariyah	Kota Pariaman
Tuanku Syofyan	Syattariyah	Kabupaten Padang Pariaman
Awis Karni Husein	Naqsyabandiyah	Kabupaten Agam
Azwar Dt. Bagindo	Naqsyabandiyah	Kota Bukittinggi
M. Nur	Naqsyabandiyah	Kota Payakumbuh
Zedriwarman	Naqsyabandiyah	Kabupaten 50 Kota
Effendi Sanusi	Naqsyabandiyah	Kabupaten Pasaman
Tuan Khalifah Abu Bakar	Naqsyabandiyah	Bonjol, Kabupaten Pasaman

The information obtained from the key informants was used as the basis for determining which other informants could provide the necessary further information. The selection of key informants based on depth of knowledge and knowledge of the various information required, was also based on the consideration of their ability to provide advice regarding other informants needed for research, thus deepening the process of collecting information through informants until saturation, which was decided as information obtained that was no longer new.

This study also used observation of circumstances, situations, processes or behaviour of the Tarekat and their social activities and their effects on people's lives. The technique of observation used was participant observation, that is observation of selected social activities of the Tarekat. The observations were made to take note of the socio-cultural conditions of the community, taking into account the various socio-cultural realities of the people related to the religious teachings and understanding of the

Tarekat as a sub-culture of Minangkabau culture.

To obtain empirical data on the activities of the Tarekat, the researcher observed two areas: the ritual process observed in the *surau* of the Tarekat and the social activities observed in the everyday life of the Tarekat. This entailed conducting participant observation for one year. However, observation of rituals was allowed for only certain rituals.

Data analysis was done in several stages: First, data were obtained through observation and interviews were complemented, compared and verified by cross referring with information from other informants and by consulting books, documents and related research results. The data were then classified into categories. Second, the categories were sought for their main features to know their equation and merging. Third, the categories connections between the categories were sought in order to formulate propositions. Fourth, the propositions were linked to one another so as to build a final understanding of

the congregation (*jama'ah*), and this was then analysed using related theories that ultimately led to a conclusion.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Religious Culture of the Tarekat Community as Local Wisdom for the People of West Sumatra

The presence of Tarekat groups in West Sumatra is not just a *da'wah* activity for the spread of Islam. Religious activities conducted by Tarekat groups also affect the socio-cultural systems of society. The Tarekat group are a functional social movement, as their presence is not a protest against the existing social system. The presence of Tarekat groups strengthens the existing social system of Minangkabau culture. The teachings of the Tarekat affect the mind and soul of the Minangkabau community. This is summed up in the Minangkabau adat philosophy, known as the *adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah* as *syarak mangato, adat mamakai* (according to *syarak*, the customs apply). The philosophy of *adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah* is historically the result of the dynamic process of Tarekat teaching with *adat* teaching. This is what Durkheim called the social fact. Durkheim said that social facts were the beliefs and rules of behaviour instituted by society (Ritzer, 1996, p. 77).

In religious life, the Tarekat play a role in giving deeper meaning to the teachings of Islam. This congregation places greater emphasis on formation of the heart, devotion, patience and submission to God. The Tarekat have also succeeded

in strengthening brotherly relations among community members. This factor has shaped the resilience of society against the negative influences of modernisation, Westernisation and capitalism that can undermine social structures.

The teachings of the Tarekat play a role in strengthening the mindset and intellect of the Minangkabau. The Minangkabau philosophy of learning from natural law, *raso jo pareso* (sense and thought), is compatible with Islamic teaching as practised by the Tarekat as it prioritises the senses or the soul. The rituals of the Tarekat prioritise the cleansing of the soul through *dhikr*, corresponding to Minangkabau *adat*. The application of Islamic teaching as developed by Tarekat groups through culture, makes Tarekat teaching acceptable to Minangkabau society. The meaning of the philosophy of Islamic teaching is more easily understood by the people through the approach of indigenous philosophy embedded in the minds of the people. Therefore, the Tarekat activities engaged in mainly by the Tarekat teachers of the Minangkabau create an ideal community, which is then imitated by the wider community. They do not reject the existing order of society, but offer alternative values for the whole community.

*Sheikh* or Tarekat teachers not only take care of issues related to religious life; they also play a role in improving the existing social system to conform to Islamic teaching. Their movement is neither in resistance to the existing system, nor is it meant to be a revolutionary movement. It is a cultural movement established through the system

and social structure of the existing society, where Tarekat teaching is transformed into the realities of life. The process is unfolded slowly, but surely, as Azwar (2015) explains: “the religious understanding of Tarekat originating from Tarekat teachings forms a distinctive value system in the social structure of West Sumatera society called Minangkabau” (p. 155). The religious faith of the Tarekat affects their philosophy of life and the intellect of the Minangkabau. This then creates ‘local wisdom’, which gives rise to the principles governing the life of the people, binding it with doctrine, *adat* and values that affect the mind and the sense of society more broadly to create a community typical of the Minangkabau.

### **Resistance of Local Wisdom to Radicalism in West Sumatra**

**Integration of religious beliefs with customary or *adat* values.** Radicalism did not develop in West Sumatra due to the strong integration between the Islamic teaching of the Tarekat and Minangkabau customs, values and philosophy. The robust process of integration was achieved after a long time. The initial process of contact between Islam and the local community was only surface contact, as the Minangkabau who became Muslims considered Islam and their culture to be on different planes. On the one hand, the people received the basic symbols of Islam, but adherence to the *adat* system was still very strong. Then, the people began to blend Islam and custom, and the two became *aua jo tabiang*, *sanda manyanda kaduonyo*. This

philosophy of life illustrates the merging of Islam and *adat*, with each reinforcing one another, considering the two to be inseparable. This *adat* philosophy meant that Minangkabau *adat* was the practice of Islam, *syarak mangato*, *adat mamakai* (according to *syarak*, the customs apply). This custom-based philosophy manifested itself in the symbols of the identity of the Minangkabau people. One will not be called and recognised as a Minangkabau if one is not Muslim. Therefore, for the indigenous Minangkabau, Islamic teaching is tangible if it is based on *adat*.

Zubeir Tuanku Kuniang, a cleric of Syattariyah Surau Pakandangan, Padang Pariaman, said:

“... the mixture of Islam with custom is not the same as the mixing of oil with water. Oil and water when mixed with one container will still appear to be separate. The oil will settle down and the water floats above the oil. The corresponding statement that exemplifies the blend of Islam and *adat* is like sweet tea water, they combine each other, whichever is water, which is the sugar is difficult to separate, and some even likens it like a fingernail with flesh beneath.”

The strong relationship between Islam and Minangkabau culture that shapes the religious awareness of the people of West Sumatra has led to the presence of radical groups that want to make changes because their thinking is not in line with that of the local community. Based on

observation in some areas of West Sumatra, a hardline denominational movement to purify Islamic teaching does exist. Such a movement seeks to rid religious practices of elements that are considered superstitious. In fact, this has long been happening in West Sumatra. These hardline religious groups are structured and systematic in their operation. For example, in performing *da'wah* (*tabligh*), they might gain entry into a *surau* and after some time, take a role in society and religious institutions, perhaps as *imam* or *khatib nagari*<sup>2</sup> on the mosque and *mushalla* board. This is to give them a foothold in the community from which they can spread their aggressive ideology. However, such movements are not getting a positive response from the community; they are not growing and the number of members is not increasing. Azwar Dt. Bagindo, the head of Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah Surau Tangah Rice Field of Bukittinggi, revealed:

“... groups that do the *da'wah* rather loudly, offering to the people the pure teachings of Islam while making a denunciation of the traditions that exist in the community, including the secular activities we undertake. That exist in societies are against the Islamic shari'ah. For them society has to change

rapidly. For them they seem impose in their preaching. A place in the hearts of society.”

Their ideology hits out at the religious traditions of the local society and their customs, which they say are incompatible with Islamic teaching, and so they are challenged by the people, especially the religious and traditional leaders. In denouncing local custom and religious practices, these radical groups are criticising the way of life of the Minangkabau, and therefore, they are rejected. For example, when these hardline groups mock the tradition of *maulud*<sup>3</sup>, *suluk*<sup>4</sup>, *basafa*<sup>5</sup>, *ziarah*<sup>6</sup> etc., the local people feel that their customs are being insulted. Religious activities to the Tarekat are not just for the sake of religious practice; they also contain dimensions of local cultural tradition. Religious activities are not only for practice by the *jama'ah*, but also for the entire society as a whole, *alek nagari*<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>3</sup>The commemoration of the birth of Prophet Muhammad SAW on 12 Rabiul at the beginning of the *hijriyah* year is one of the religious traditions the Syattariyah Tarekat.

<sup>4</sup>One method of soul/self purification for the Naqsyabandiyah congregation

<sup>5</sup>Ritual of pilgrimage to the grave of Sheikh Burhanuddin in Ulakan Pariaman every Syafar month

<sup>6</sup>Tradition of visiting the grave of Tarekat teachers as a form of respect, obedience and continuation of the commitment to Tarekat teachings

<sup>7</sup>The term used by the people of West Sumatra for the social or religious activities that have become customary traditions

<sup>2</sup>*Imam* and *Katik Nagari* are indigenous religious institutions established through the *Nagari* indigenous community consultation while *nagari* is the basic unit of settlement in Minangkabau. A Minangkabau customary territory, as well as the lowest government structure in West Sumatra that is autonomous.

Tuanku Sulaiman, a young leader in the Syattariyah Tarekat in Lubuk Alung, Padang Pariaman, said:

“... in my opinion, society in general, somewhat restless with reciting denouncements and considers the heresy of religious practices of society. Many people suspect that their ideas and movements aim to divide the community. As a young generation of Shattariyah I have never been frontal with the groups, but I am more encouraging and motivating the congregation to strengthen faith and increase worship and amaliah. I also encourage people to have noble character and good manners in social interaction in society. For me this is the meaning of custom *basandi syarak, syarak basandi kitabullah*.”

The community response to hardwing *da'wah* differs slightly among the various communities in Luhak and Rantau<sup>8</sup> areas. In the Luhak region, customs are stronger because in this region the structure and

<sup>8</sup>Minangkabau is divided into the Luhak and Rantau areas. Luhak is traditionally seen as the region of origin of the Minangkabau. It consists of three regions, namely Luhak Tanah Datar, Luhak Agam and Luhak Limapuluhkoto. These three areas, called Luhak Nan Tigo, are located in the hinterland around Mount Merapi. The region is also called Darek region. Now the third luhak is the name of each “district” in West Sumatra. While the overseas territory is an extension of the Minangkabau settlement community during its development.

function of these customs are still very influential. However, in Rantau, religious rituals are more prominent because they are more greatly emphasised. However, this variation does not result in partiality or polarisation of the community’s response to hardwing movements. In Pariaman and also in Pasaman, for example, the community’s response to these ideas and movements was demonstrated by inviting them to follow the religious rituals commonly practised by the Tarekat. The aim was to provide experience and understanding about the rituals so that they could see for themselves that the religious practices of the Tarekat did not deviate from Islamic teachings.

The rejection of ideology and radical movements in West Sumatra are limited to small groups that have no place in society. This is made possible by the solid integration of Islam and Minangkabau *adat* that took place gradually and naturally. In addition, the integration process was not done by violent means but in a persuasive-humanistic way. In this case the Tarekat certainly provide an important role in strengthening integration through cultural flexibility, as expressed in the parable: “*Kok kanai jilatang, the bio-bio doh ubeknyo*” (“Do not fight violence with violence, but welcome violence with friendliness). This tolerant attitude is the cultural character or local wisdom of Minangkabau society, as stated in their philosophy:

*Kandua badantiang-danting*

*Tagang manjelo-jelo*

*Lunak ndak dapek di sudu  
Kareh ndak makam takiak<sup>9</sup>*

The presence of radical ideas and movements in West Sumatra is not naturally well developed because Islamic teaching and Minangkabau *adat* system are likened to two sides of a coin that cannot be separated. Both sides are the *payuang panji* (protector) as well as the soul of the people. On the one side are the Tarekat clerics and on the other is *adat/niniek mamak*<sup>10</sup>. If one side of the coin is attacked, the other side also feels the pain and reacts.

**Flexibility of religious understanding (Wujudiyah-syuhudiyah).** The Tarekat are guided by the dynamics of *wujudiyah-syuhudiyah*. *Wahdatul syuhud*<sup>11</sup> is the antithesis of *wahdatul wujud*<sup>12</sup>. *Wahdatul syuhud* emphasises the transcendent nature of God. This view also suggests that the universe and everything in it was created by God as a symbol or sign of God's power

<sup>9</sup>This philosophy illustrates that society is flexible but firm in its principles.

<sup>10</sup>*Niniek mamak* is the collective name for all the leaders of the Minangkabau. The *penghulu* or *datuak* is the traditional leader of a tribe based on maternal lineage.

<sup>11</sup>Everything that exists (*a'yan kharijiyah*) is not *him 'ain Allah* and not also *mazhhar*, but *syuhud*, testimony of the existence of God.

<sup>12</sup>Nature is the *mazhhar* (manifestation) of God. The embodiment of all this is One. *Laa ilaaha illallah* means "There is no god but Allah." The point is "*la maujuda illallah*" (nothing exists but God). A collection of *Tarekat* belief states that "the union of beings is with the Khaliq."

and will as the Absolute Being. The logical consequence of this view is that God's signs can be witnessed in the creation of the universe and everything in it, including humans. Then everything that appears is a *surah* of essence (Substance of God). *Wahdatul syuhud* is the basis for the ideology or religious thought of *tasawwuf akhlaqi* or *tasawwuf Sunni*. The most influential figure of this thought is Imam al-Gazhali.

Historically, congregations have adopted the two concepts according to the needs and situation of the society in which they developed. In the initial process of Islamisation the Tarekat adopted *wujudiyah* because this concept was better suited to the character of the society encountered i.e. people who retained some belief in animism and dynamism. Later, Tarekat ideology shifted to the ideology of the *syuhudiyah* because the society encountered could better understand the pure and abstract concepts of religion. Thus, it can be said that the religious understanding of *wujudiyah* and *syuhudiyah* is essentially an open space for the interpretation and dynamics of contextual religious thought.

In terms of the development of the Tarekat in West Sumatra, *wujudiyah* was the religious starting point presented to the local community through syncretism-magic as the people were still bound then by animism and dynamism and had not been trained to comprehend God in abstract terms. Presented in this way by the Tarekat, Islam was eventually understood and accepted by the local community.

Subsequently, the *shuhudiyah* brought a deeper understanding of God in abstract terms. The Tarekat began to teach and develop the concept of the transcendence of God's. The local community came to see the distinction between God as creator and the universe as the created. Nevertheless, the universe and all its contents are understood as evidence of God's existence and power. The local people were also taught the attributes of God, summarised as His '20 properties'; these are the 20 attributes of God that must be known. The community was also given an understanding of the essence of Islam and the obligation to perform devotions to God through certain practices (*riyadhah*). The culmination of the given exercises was the spiritual achievement of closeness (*taqarrub*) with Allah SWT.

The development of Tarekat thought illustrates the dynamism or flexibility of Tarekat in *aqidah*, which further embodies religious behavior, thus forming world views derived from Tarekat teaching. The Tarekat is able to develop highly contextual thinking. Based on such understanding, Tarekat is also able to realise religious behaviour (charity) that does not seem rigid, constantly adjusting the concept of religious understanding along the lines of social dynamics. Tarekat thought and the social action was accepted because the *surau*, a culturally important centre of Minangkabau social structure and system, was the centre for the spread of Tarekat teaching. This is why the religious social movement of the Tarekat is called a structural movement.

Tarekat thought and behaviour influenced local society although the people at that time were not classified as a Tarekat congregation. The local community then grew into a culturally broad-minded, open and flexible society responding to the various changes that occurred. However, it remained consistent in maintaining its moral values, *sakali aie gadang, sakali tapian barubah, nan tapian tatap ado*. The Minangkabau religious mindset is highly contextual, departing from the belief that nature must change. Change is inevitable, but the essential values of life and humanity must not change. It is possible to change methods, but goals should not change.

The dynamism of religious thought remains the character of the Tarekat in general. Some people believe that the Tarekat are an exclusive social group, but this is not true. Interaction between the Tarekat and the local communities takes place openly. The Tarekat are in fact active and ever ready to serve the local communities in different ways, especially in religious matters. However, teaching the basic concepts of the Tarekat and their spiritual exercises (*riyadlah*) is done in an exclusive way through *bay'at*, a set of special agreements between teachers and students.

On one occasion, we observed the activities of one Tarekat group in the District of Limapuluh Kota in the *surau* of Buya Zedriwarman. When we arrived, a public recitation was being held. The *jama'ah* were from various regions in District of Limapuluh Kota. More than 250 members

of the congregation solemnly followed the recitation presented by Buya Zed. The teaching atmosphere was pleasant although the mosque was very simple, made of wood, the people sitting on simple woven mats. In one corner of the *surau*, a number of mosquito nets were installed; here, where the *salik* performed the ritual of *suluk*. The attendees were from various strata of society; there were farmers, traders, employees, students and lecturers from universities. The recitation lasted for nearly four hours. The most interesting part of the event was the last session of the recitation that involved discussion followed by questions and answers. The *jama'ah* were invited by Buya Zed to ask questions and to contribute their opinions on issues related to Tarekat teachings or daily problems. Interestingly, all questions asked by the community were answered in a straightforward, clear and polite manner.

The mindset, tolerance and flexibility of the Tarekat in dealing with and responding to various situations and circumstances were also reflected in the main points of thought that surfaced in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) fora conducted for this study. The FGD was followed by a discussion led by Tarekat leaders from Payakumbuh and Limapuluh Kota Regency. Three things surfaced during the discussion. First, the Tarekat maintained the harmony of the social relations of the community. Therefore, all thoughts and actions that could damage the social order had to be rejected. The Tarekat were never aggressive in dealing with circumstances that caused

chaos in society. Second, the Tarekat always made changes and improvements to the social and religious conditions of society through polite, persuasive and non-negative excesses. Third, when a condition considered a deviation arise, the Tarekat simply fixed it through advice, guidance and training and then handed the matter to Allah SWT.

During an interview with Buya Zed to understand the flexibility of the Tarekat in his thinking, attitude and actions, we learnt the following, as explained by Buya Zed:

“... ordinary people think simple, knowledgeable people think cause-effect, then people ‘wise think without limit. What kind of thinking do you choose? For me of course the way people think ‘wisely chosen. If you’ve heard the phrase, “do not return milk with poisoned water” then I would say “reply a glass of poison with a glass of milk”. This is the way of thinking, attitudes and actions of the Tarekat. And this is what should be disseminated to the public ... “

Radical groups may have members who are highly educated and intellectual, but their aggression and intolerance, as Buya Zed explained, showed them up as rigid and narrow-minded. Such groups are bent on destructive actions. Any group that does not think as they do is marked for destruction. Their ideas and methods are out of the present-day context. One example of this took place at Masjid Raya Pasie Agam District, where among the *muballiq* at that

time was a hardliner. *Dakwah* material that he conveyed hit out at the religious traditions of the local community. He claimed, for example, that *tahlil* was heretical, praying for the dead would never help the dead, including deceased parents and it was not necessary to use the word '*Saidina*' when mentioning the name of the Prophet as the Prophet had not liked to be praised. The response to him was negative because his teaching was not delivered in a persuasive manner, but in a very confrontational way that was demeaning and disturbing.

**Spirituality and rationality (raso-pareso).**

Maqam *ma'rifah* is the highest peak in one's spiritual journey using the method of *thariqah*. This view is usually used in the study of *Sunni tasawwuf* adopted from the thought of Imam Al-Gazali. Conceptually, *ma'rifah* is understood as a blend of two important dimensions of man, namely, the ability to capture reality through senses (*dzawq*) and the ability to capture reality through rationality ('*aql*). Therefore, man is a spiritual as well as a rational being. If the development of these two potentials is not balanced, then man will not be able to reach perfection.

In Tarekat thinking, especially since the development of the idea of reconciliation of *tasawuf-syari'at*, the achievement of *ma'rifah* must be done through methods and approaches rooted in the processing of taste potency (*dzawq*) as well as rational thinking ('*aql*). Processing of taste potential is usually done through spiritual exercises (*riyadlah*), while training rational thought is usually

done through the development of knowledge that emphasises the senses. The dichotomy of spirituality-rationality is essentially a manifestation of the human need for esoteric and exoteric values. Although the Tarekat seem to emphasise fulfilment of human needs over esoteric values, they do not abandon or ignore exoteric aspects of religion. Spiritual attainment through Tarekat must be done by obeying and practising *shari'ah*.

Socio-historically, the role that Tarekat played in the fostering and development of socio-cultural life cannot be ignored. Tarekat *teaching* has manifested itself in the socio-cultural system. In the context of Minangkabau society in West Sumatra, the training and development of spiritual and rational life in society can be seen in various symbols and patterns of social action. Of course, the process of the formation of social action in Minangkabau society is complicated and complex. Clearly, Minangkabau community is known as a spiritual and rational society.

The Minangkabau are guided by the expression *raso dibao naiak, pareso dibao turun*. This phrase means that the Minangkabau identify sense as the virtue that must be expressed or exalted, while the intellect is identified as the ability to think or reason appropriately. The movement of *raso dibao naiak* and *pareso dibao turun* will meet at one point, wisdom. These two concepts describe the character of Minangkabau society. *Raso* represents the power of spirituality, while *pareso* represents the power of rationality.

The principle of spirituality-rationality (*raso-pareso*) in Minangkabau society is elaborated in the pattern of thinking, attitude and action. When faced with certain situations or conditions or ideas, the Minangkabau usually think them over for a long time and are cautious in responding. This is illustrated in the following phrases:

*Babuek baiak pado-padoi – babuek buruak sakali jan*

*Hati-hati nan di ate – kok di bawah nan ka ma impok*

*Jarek sarupo jo jarami – ayam jantan babulu musang*

*Kok mandi di ilia-ilia – kok bakato di bawah-bawah*

*Cadiak enggak – gadang ta jua*

*Bantuak sipuluik – ditanak badarai*

The above phrases describe the character of Minangkabau society in responding to change. When it comes to radical ideas and movements in West Sumatra, it is understandable that these are rejected naturally. Buya M. Nur Dt. P. Bakuruang, the leader of the Naqsyabandiyah congregation in Payakumbuh explained:

“... in Payakumbuh this there are indeed pengajian-pengajian held by groups that wing hard. This is wrong, it’s wrong. It is customs that do not fit; the deeds of society are heresy, all sorts. On the matter they live here. For me *raso* is not on them even though their science is high. Someone without attitude and courtesy make their languages are inclined to harass others. In the case

of our religion, we are told to deliver a message in polite and polite language. There are manners in society that must be taken care of. And I’m sure such *dakwahs* will not be trash and will get rejection from the community. Because in our friendly and pleasant society in mind and in language.”

Another case was explained by Buya Awiskarni, head of Madrasah Tarbiyah Islamiyah, Pasie Agam:

“... I as a scholar here have indeed found many such studies. Many of the lectures delivered to the community are blasphemous, blaming, and even inciting. Sometimes they finish giving public anxious lectures. If it’s like that usually people ask me or ask me to give a real explanation. Once upon a time I invited the groups to debate or to zeal by showing strong references. Apparently they do not want to attend *muzakarah*. This means that their power of argument is sometimes not strong, or their studies are still raw. So in my opinion radical teachings will never get support from the community. Their efforts will be in vain.”

The testimony presented by the two Tarekat clerics above illustrates the fact that radical groups die a natural death because of the strong influence of the character and thinking of Minangkabau society in West Sumatra. Spiritually, the intelligence of the community identifies their need for *raso* reflected in kindness and courtesy in

language and behaviour, which leads to the rejection of distorted or extreme ideas. Rational ideas and radical movements are usually not sourced from extensive and profound study, so the arguments they propose are narrow-minded and unable to exceed the limits of the *pareso* power of Minangkabau society.

**Teacher-student relationship.** Disciplinary relationships such as the teacher-student relationship within the Tarekat institution can be described as, “The position of the student before the teacher is the same as the position of a man’s corpse in the hand that bathes him.” This expression highlights the student’s high level of obedience to his teacher. A teacher may do anything to lead his pupils to spiritual achievement as taught in the Tarekat ritual. However, in general, the Tarekat prevents the rise of any individual teacher as a cult figure. Respect and obedience to the teacher are seen as an absolute requirement for the success of the student.

Respect and obedience to the teacher is rooted in the *bay’ah* rituals that are the prerequisites for prospective students who wish to attend Tarekat education and training. *Bay’ah* rituals are done in certain ways and must meet certain terms and conditions. Usually, each Tarekat institution has several items of agreement that must be obeyed by the student in performing the ritual and the Tarekat exercises. Therefore, it can be said that the teacher-student relationship in the Tarekat institution is patterned after one-way communication (top down). Students should

not engage in prohibitions that are laid down by the teacher and the pupil should not argue or ask questions about the teaching and exercises. Thus, the teacher becomes the centre of Tarekat groups and the role model for the students.

The Tarekat group structure begins with education in the *surau*. The *surau* is a social institution that serves to strengthen the teacher-student relationship in Tarekat groups. The genealogy system that determines the authenticity of the Tarekat teachings. Historically, the *Surau Ulakan* founded by Sheikh Burhanuddin was the first educational and religious institution in Minangkabau. *Surau Ulakan* has a very big role in the development of Islam in all Minangkabau areas. The Tarekat movement in the social system of Minangkabau society originated from the *surau* built by a leader, a *Tuanku* or lord who completed his study of Tarekat. Each lord has his own *surau*, both as a place of worship and as a place of Tarekat instruction. At present, the *surau* functions primarily as a place for the practice of Tarekat, rather than as an educational institution. Every *surau* in Minangkabau has its own leaning, both in Tarekat practice and the emphasis of branches of Islamic science. *Surau* education alternates creates different Islamic study centres in deepening the teachings of Islam in the *surau*, covering worship, *mu’amalah* and science tools. For example, the *surau* in Kamang is a centre of science and nervous studies; *Surau Tuanku Nan Kaciek* in Koto Gadang is a centre for *mantiq* and *ma’ani*; *Surau Tuanku Sumaniak* is a centre for *hadith*, *tafsir* and

*faraidh*; Surau Tuangku Talang is a centre for *sharaf* and Surau Tuangku Salayo is a centre for *badi'*, *ma'ani* and *bayan*, while Surau Tuangku Nan Tuo is a centre for *tarbiyah*, *hadith*, *tafsir* and *mantik ma'ani* (Latief, 1982, p. 76).

The teacher-student structure can be seen in every Tarekat ritual event, such as the activity of the *Maulid Rasul*, or the *basapa* rituals of the Syattariyah congregation. Observation of the *basapa* activity revealed the strong relationship between the teacher and his students in the *jama'ah Syattariyah*. Teachers from different regions bring along their students to the *Surau Ulakan*; so, some groups of Tarekat *jama'ah* are led by *Tuanku* from different regions. The network of the *surau* is seen in the number of *surau* that stand around the *Surau Ulakan*. The *surau* are named according to its region of origin, such as Surau Koto Tengah Tilatang Kamang, Surau Lintau, Surau Bonjol Pasaman, Surau Limo Kaum Tanah Datar and Surau Koto nan Ampek Payakumbuh. There are many *surau* in Tanjung Medan, the beginning of the *pesantren* system of a campus of many *surau* known today. The number of *surau* also shows the dissemination of the teachings of the Tarekat Syattariyah in each region. This is called the movement of Tarekat group structures. The movement according to the pattern of teacher-student relationships. Azra (1992) called it the 'network of scholars'.

The congregation and the *surau* are able to conform to the existing social institutions in Minangkabau by not creating opposition

and upheaval. The *surau* was born and accepted by the whole community as an additional institution of life in the *nagari* or *korong*. The Tarekat group is adept at responding to situations and emphasises the doctrine on the effort of inner serenity as a servant of God. Psychic training and remembrance are held to remember Allah SWT so as to maintain the peace of life in the village.

With a charismatic leadership pattern, *Shaykh*, the leader or *Tuanku* in the Minangkabau community is highly respected. He is an influential figure in society. The charisma of the Tarekat teacher is one of its tools for creating influence in society. The charisma of the Tarekat teacher can be seen in two dimensions. First, in appearance, the Tarekat teacher is usually big built and has a loud voice and a sharp eye. Second, he is skilled at teaching, has an impressive personality and is known to be knowledgeable, pious, morally sound and generous. The personality of the Tarekat leader is very important. He is able to draw followers and retain their trust, loyalty, obedience and respect (Crappas, 1993, p. 179).

What Weber described as 'rational-legal' legitimacy can also be found in societies that are based on traditional and charismatic sources. The charismatic leader is not naturally erased because of the strengthening of rational-legal legitimacy. Rational leadership can create conflict, whereas charismatic leadership can be more robust. Charismatic leaders can change

the behaviour of society, including that of modern society (Sujuthi, 2001; Robertson, 1995; Jonhson, 1986).

The Tarekat cleric as a charismatic leader is the main factor of social change in Minangkabau. Various socio-cultural changes in Minangkabau society are made possible through the influence of charismatic leadership of Tarekat clerics up to this day. The charismatic strength of the Tarekat scholar makes him a highly respected leader, not only to his students, but also to the wider community. This can also be seen in modern and educated societies. As Berger (1980) argued, the power of charisma can overhaul and change a very strong social system. Charisma is the driving force and power that can change the social system of any community. Kojtaraningrat (1991) explained that “charisma will remain in every society, both traditional societies and modern societies. Charismatic leadership has its roots in the culture and history of every society” (p. 47).

The charisma of Tarekat teachers is not only built on spiritual, supernatural-magical powers but also on the teacher’s social roles. For example, a Tarekat teacher is usually also an *adat* functionary (*penghulu*) among his people, and some others also fill certain positions in traditional structures. Thus, the combination of spiritual and/or supernatural forces with social roles has its own value for Tarekat clergy as leaders of Minangkabau society in West Sumatra. In turn, it can be said that Tarekat scholars in West Sumatra

can play two important roles at once, in the religious system and in the social system.

The charismatic factor of Tarekat clerics in West Sumatra is a solid wall that is hard for radical ideas and movements to penetrate. The following explanation of Nasrul, a member of a Tarekat congregation, illustrates the power of the religious-emotional relationship between Tarekat teachers and their students:

“For us Tarekat students, respect for the Tarekat teachers is *adab* that must be preserved. Following the teachings that the teacher presented was a form of homage to him. When we ask *bay’ah* to the teacher, there must be belief and trust to him. So, for us the development of radical group teachings, which seem to combat our existence, will not have much effect. We will not do the same thing, fight them with violence anyway. If we can, we will discuss. But if not, we leave it to our teacher. It is better for us to follow our teacher only, because it has been seen by us the proof of his charity, and morals. How we will be able to believe in the radical group, while they show contrary to the morals of Islam. Because as far as I know, and what I used to accept my teacher’s dance, Islam never imparts the will to anyone, including to the religion of Islam. Moreover, those who impose the will to follow their teachings that is not necessarily also true.” (Interview, October 2015)

A similar statement was made by Abu Bakar Tuanku Saidina, teacher of the Naqsyabandiyah Order, Kumpulan Bonjol, Pasaman:

“... I am here as a teacher of Tarekat and also as *ninieki mamak*. Both of them I live with the best. In surau I guided and cultivated *jama'ah*, then in my people also nurture *kemenakan*<sup>13</sup>. Even in this Nagari Collection I also often solve community problems. Especially now that many problems arise in society, including what you mentioned ... the hard streams ... are often reported to me ... and thank God, people are not quickly affected, they always ask for my opinion.”

These interviews illustrate that radical ideas are not easily developed in Minangkabau society in West Sumatra because of the charisma of *ulama* leadership and *adat* leadership that is a strong influence on the social and cultural life of its people. The most interesting thing is that in certain areas of research, especially in the Darek region, clerical leadership and *adat* leadership unite in a charismatic figure, while in Rantau, although clerical leadership and *adat* leadership are not held by one figure, the cooperation between the *ulama* and the *ninieki mamak* is tight and firm. This defends the society from the onslaught of radical ideas in West Sumatra.

<sup>13</sup>All children of sisters of a Minangkabau man; in addition, all tribal members are called nephews by the *penghulu* or *Datuk* of the tribe.

## CONCLUSION

The solid blend of *adat* and Islam in West Sumatra is the result of the Tarekat movement. The growth and development of Islam in Minangkabau and the strong influence of Tarekat in unifying *adat* and Islam are caused by several factors. First, Islam contains many aspects of *tasauf* in its legal aspects. This means that the process of Islamisation of Minangkabau *adat* is done by the *ulama* or Tarekat teacher. The mystical aspects embodied in Tarekat teaching are due to previous influence by Hindu-Buddhist mysticism and the assimilation of local beliefs. Second, the relationship between teachers and their students in the Tarekat system facilitates the development of Islam in Minangkabau. The importance of genealogy combined with duty in cultivating *jama'ah* in its place of origin accelerates the process of spreading Islam through the Tarekat in Minangkabau communities. Third, the personality of the Tarekat teacher is the main attraction to Islam, making it easily accepted by the society. The charisma of the Tarekat cleric makes him a respected person. His knowledge and experience also make him important in society.

The influence of Tarekat teachings on the culture of the Minangkabau is reflected in their thinking, behaviour and culture. The Islamic interpretation of life merges local culture and Islam. The natural philosophy of being a teacher is interpreted as *sunnatullah*, an example of the intermingling of Minangkabau philosophy and Islamic values. The relationship of Islam and *adat* in Minangkabau is very

complex; the Minangkabau people remain firmly adhered to Islam on the one hand, and retain their customary system on the other. This shows that Minangkabau society is showing new social wisdom as a result of the tradition of integration brought about by cultural Islamisation.

Social wisdom that grows and develops in the dynamics of West Sumatera is guided by the philosophy of *adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah – syarak mangato, adat mamakai*, which rejects violence and force. The rational-critical attitude of social wisdom combined with the concept of *raso-pareso*, reinforced by the charisma of the *ulama*, makes new ideas that are conveyed in a negative manner or that have no solid foundation unattractive to the local community, causing them to reject such ideas. Evidently, Tarekat teaching has an effect on the cultural system of the people of West Sumatra. Tarekat teaching underlies the structural and cultural characteristics of social and behavioural systems of the community. This is achieved through the teacher-student relationship structure and the network of Tarekat teachers.

Tarekat scholars strengthen their position in the leadership structure of the Minangkabau community through charismatic leadership that prioritises the exemplary and virtuous personality of each Tarekat cleric. Charismatic leaders attract the adherence of their followers on the basis of personal excellence, such as a divine mission, heroic acts and rewards that make them different. Charisma is a force of personality whose power is based on

personal attributes of the individual. Such individuals win recognition and elicit high respect and loyalty among people. People are readily obedient to a charismatic leader not because of formalities or tradition, but because of the individual's personality.

The social movements of Tarekat groups in Minangkabau, apart from the structural movements, are patterned along the various socio-cultural activities of the community, which have become merged with the teachings of Islam and Tarekat traditions. These movements are easy for the clerics and the people to follow as they are familiar with them.

Because the religious culture of the Tarekat is inseparable from that of Minangkabau culture, radical ideas and movements are generally rejected in West Sumatra. This resistance prevents social conflict, causing radicalism to 'bounce off' the community in an 'elastic' way. Tarekat culture is a firm blend of Tarekat texts and customary values seen as local wisdom.

The pattern of cultural resistance to radicalism among the Tarekat in West Sumatra does not take place in sequence. Structural and cultural movement happens simultaneously, following the movement of religion or *da'wah* activities. *Da'wah* movements like this are 'cultural *da'wah*', performed through culture, and at the same time, creates culture. *Da'wah* activities create acculturation between Islam and Minangkabau culture. It is called acculturation because the mixing of the two cultures has not eliminated Minangkabau cultural identity. Instead, it has led to

‘Minangkabau Islam’. Minangkabau Islam is the practice of Islamic teaching from the platform of the local customs and traditions of Minangkabau society. This phenomenon now makes Islam and Minangkabau culture special. The combination of Islam and the local culture characterises and identifies Minangkabau community.

This study highlights that combating radicalism in religion does not necessarily need a legal approach. It can be done through local wisdom i.e. the potential and strength that exist in society can be harnessed to counter radicalism’ this would be a more effective and wiser method of defeating radicalism. The power of naturally formed ‘immunity’ arising from society can more effectively control and dampen, even kill, various forms of violence and ideology. This study provides a more effective and wise alternative in response to radical ideologies and movements that threaten established societies.

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