



ISLAMIZATION OF MINANGKABAU CUSTOMS THROUGH THE EMPOWERMENT OF SURAU INSTITUTIONS: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS STUDY IN THE 17TH CENTURY

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Abstract

Indonesia is known as the country with the second-largest Muslim majority in the world. Historically, Islam entered Indonesia in the 13th century through trade routes in the Strait of Malacca. The extensive spread certainly creates a diversity of Indonesian Islamic culture, where each region has its distinctive style. The Minangkabau people are a community that adheres to Islamic teachings, where Islam has merged with customs and vice versa. One of the known methods of spreading Islam in Minangkabau is through Surau, which is a traditional Islamic educational institution. The article focuses on the spread of Islam in Minangkabau through Surau, considering the socio-cultural context of that century. It also examines the character of Islam introduced by the central figure, Sheikh Burhanuddin Ulakan, who brought the Sufi teachings of the Syatariyah order. The related questions are how Islam spread in Minangkabau, what conditions of the Minangkabau customary culture allowed for the acceptance of Islamic teachings, and why Minangkabau customary culture not only accepted but also integrated these teachings, transforming old customs into practices based on Sharia. The article employs qualitative analysis with a historical approach, referencing history books, documents, and related articles. The central argument presented is that the Islam applied to Minangkabau customs is not an Islam that erases culture but can synergize with it.

Keywords: Minangkabau, Surau, Burhanuddin Ulakan, Matrilineal

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is known as the country with the second-largest Muslim majority in the world. Historically, Islam entered Indonesia in the 13th century through trade routes in the Strait of Malacca.¹ From there, the widespread dissemination began, reaching the eastern regions of Indonesia. The extensive spread certainly creates a diversity of Indonesian Islamic culture, where each region has its distinctive style. It can occur due to the previous cultural mix with the incoming Islamic values, like the acculturation in the wayang culture in Java, where the bearers of Islam tried to introduce Islam through performing arts, because the medium is the best means for spreading Islamic teachings.² Therefore, many ways of Islam's entry will be found through similar methods where the bearers try to apply Islam through local customs.

The Minangkabau people are a community that adheres to Islamic teachings, where Islam has merged with customs and vice versa. It seems reasonable from the present point of view. Let's look at the era when Islam was not widely encountered. Minangkabau is the region most difficult for outside customs to penetrate because its territory (kingdom) was isolated by mountains and hills surrounding it. However, thanks to the strong culture of migration in Minangkabau, Islam gradually entered through its people who returned from abroad.³ One of the known methods of spreading Islam in Minangkabau is through *Surau*. The traditional Islamic educational institution uses the classical method of Islamic teaching through circle teaching, with one teacher surrounded by students in a circle. The method has long been practiced in Islam, although it has also been developed into a new teaching style known as madrasa in the 11th century.⁴

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this article, I will use the theory of acculturation proposed by John W. Berry, where acculturation means cultural change as a result of the ongoing contact between two cultures.⁵ Experience, values, and other essences when confronted with a new cultural

¹ Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam*.

² Anggoro, "'Wayang Dan Seni Pertunjukan' Kajian Sejarah Perkembangan Seni Wayang Di Tanah Jawa Sebagai Seni Pertunjukan Dan Dakwah."

³ *Sedjarah Islam Di Sumatera*, 1950.

⁴ Makdisi, *Rise of Colleges*.

⁵ Berry et al., "Acculturation and Psychological Adaptation."

environment, cause significant shifts in meaning and adjustments. However, unlike assimilation, which indicates the merging of meanings and symbols between one another, resulting in fusion and incorporation. The intimate unification creates a significant loss in the two cultures that come into contact with each other.⁶ In its form, changes in the process of acculturation can occur in various forms, such as physical changes, biological changes, political changes, institutional changes, and social relationships. In addition, one of the main aspects that will be discussed is the factor of cultural acceptance, where the local culture, in an open-minded manner, provides space for the acceptance of new things that are considered more effective and useful for the development of culture and society. Thus, in order to analyze the changes occurring in the function of the surau, this article can contribute to the discussion on the theme of social contact or interaction.

RESEARCH METHODS

Given the complexity of the above description, the article focuses on the spread of Islam in Minangkabau through *Surau*, considering the socio-cultural context of that century. It also examines the character of Islam introduced by the central figure, Sheikh Burhanuddin Ulakan, who brought the Sufi teachings of the Syatariyah order. The related questions are how Islam spread in Minangkabau, what conditions of the Minangkabau customary culture allowed for the acceptance of Islamic teachings, and why Minangkabau customary culture not only accepted but also integrated these teachings, transforming old customs into practices based on Sharia. The article employs qualitative analysis with a historical approach, referencing history books of Minangkabau, Biography of Burhanuddin Ulakan, documents written by colonizer, and related articles. The central argument presented is that the Islam applied to Minangkabau customs is not an Islam that erases culture but can synergize with it. The question that arises is how surau become a central in spreading Islamic teaching in Minangkabau meanwhile the culture has already been strong since long time ago?

⁶ Park and Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sheikh Burhanuddin Ulakan As A Reformer Of Minangkabau Customs

The Spread of Islam in West Sumatra is closely linked to the contributions of the notable Sheikh Burhanuddin Ulakan, born in Batipuah, Padang Panjang. It has not been definitively determined when he was born. According to Azyumardi Azra, he was born in the 1645-1692 century.⁷ According to other sources, he was born in the 1606-1691 Century.⁸ Although the exact year is still uncertain, it can be confirmed that he was born in the 17th century. His childhood name is mentioned in several versions, first Buyung Panuah, which means a stable and strong boy. Second, Buyung Pono, which comes from his title, Samparono, meaning perfect. The third nickname is the Qanun.⁹ He was born into a distinguished family lineage through his father's bloodline. His grandmother was Puteri Aka Lundang, "Puteri" (Princess). His grandfather was known by the name Tantejo Guruhano. Syekh Burhanuddin's father, Pampak Sati Karimun Merah, was known as a datu (a healer) and a mighty ascetic. His mother was Puteri Cukuep Bilang Pandai, just like his grandmother, who held the title of puteri. It should be noted that she was born before embracing Islam because, at that time, Islam was not widely practiced by the Minangkabau community.

Growing up in a respected family has shaped his strong character and morals. His family instilled in him the Minangkabau philosophy of "Alam Takambang Jadi Guru," meaning that nature is a teacher. Samad Duski's book states that Syekh Burhanuddin had multiple teachers from a young age. His first teacher was a Gujarati trader named 'Illapai' when he was 7 years old. The title later became a mark of honor for those who taught Islam in Pariaman, West Sumatra. His second teacher, who introduced him to Islamic teachings, was Syekh Abdul Arif in Tapakis. Known as Tuanku Madinah, he had studied Islam in Madinah. However, Syekh Burhanuddin's time with Sheikh Abdul Arif was brief, lasting only about 3 years before the teacher passed away in 1619 AD. The validity of the narrative has been criticized by Azyumardi Azra due to the discrepancy in the lifespan of Sheikh Burhanuddin and Sheikh Abdul Arif, with a difference of 50 years.

⁷ Azra, *Surau*.

⁸ Syahril and Marjoni, "Jejak Perjuangan Syekh Burhanudin Dalam Mengembangkan Ajaran Islam di Kabupaten Padang Pariaman."

⁹ Samad, "Syekh Burhanuddin Dan Islamisasi Minangkabau (Syarak Mandaki Adat Manurun)." He quoted from Khatib Munaf Imam Maulana on his book "*Mubalighul Islam*"

After studying Islamic religious knowledge and following his teacher's preaching practices, he was motivated to study Islam in depth. With the advice from his teacher, he was encouraged to seek knowledge from the great scholar of that time, Sheikh Abdurrauf As-Sinkili (d.1693), in Sinkil, Aceh.¹⁰ From the teacher, the lineage of the Syatariyah Sufi order of Sheikh Burhanuddin originates, which he later developed into methods and teachings at the Surau he established in Ulakan, West Sumatra.

The lineage of the Syatariyah teachings that Sheikh Burhanuddin follows originates from the Syatariyah tradition in Makkah. His instructor, Abdur Rauf As-Sinkili, received the Khirqah—a legitimate inheritance represented by a white shawl—from his mentor Sheikh Ahmad Qusyasyi (d. 1660) in Makkah, as well as from Sheikh Ibrahim Kurani (d. 1689) in Madinah. Additionally, Maulana Syekh Abil Mabib Abdullah bin Ahmad Al-Tanwi Tayyibullah learned from Maulana Sultan Al-Arifin Saidi Sibgatullah, who was taught by Saidina Wajh al-Ddin Al-Alawi. The lineage continues with Saidina Syekh Muhammad Gahoust, Saidina Syekh Haji Hushur, and Auliaul Arifin Syekh Hadiatullah Sarmasat. They learned from Maulana Syekh Qadhim Al-Syathary, tracing back to the founder of the order, Syekh Abdullah al-Syathary (d. 1428), an Indian national.¹¹

The order first arrived in Indonesia in 1665, coinciding with the “pengayangan” event targeting the Wujudiyah group, followers of *wihdatul wujud*. The entry of the Syatariyah in Minangkabau began in the Ulakan area at the end of the 17th century. From Ulakan, it then spread to Panindjauan and Mensiangan in Agam, and then to Kota Tua. The order was not the first to enter the region; instead, it was preceded by Tuanku, who taught the Naqsyabandiyah order that arrived in the early seventeenth century. In contrast to the Syatariyah, the Naqsyabandiyah order strongly rejects the doctrine of *wihdatul-wujud*, which is associated with the renowned Islamic figure, Ibn Arabi.¹²

There are two forms of teaching in the Syatariyah order: the first is practical, which is related to the recitation of Dhikr or a form of glorification of God to remember Allah. The second is philosophical, with a fundamental interpretation of the phrase “*la ilaha illa Allah*,” there is no god but Allah. Its teaching is pantheistic, different from

¹⁰ Samad.

¹¹ Wahab and Duri, “Pengembangan Dakwah Kelompok Tarekat Syattariyah Di Sumatera Barat.”

¹² Dobbin, “Islamic Revivalism in Minangkabau at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century.”

monism in Hinduism.¹³ In Indonesia, Syatariyah has its characteristics as follows: it is recommended to visit the graves of the prophet and righteous people; commemorating death after three, seven, and one hundred days; celebrating the birth of Prophet Muhammad Saw. in the month of Rabiul Awwal by reciting Barjanzi, phrases of praise, and narrating the prophet's stories with specific tones and rhythms; and there is the teaching of the "twenty-one Amanah."¹⁴ The concept of insan kamil (perfect human), which includes matters of the heart, studies about humans, and discussions about the path to God, also becomes a central teaching in the Syatariyah order.¹⁵ From the teaching, Syekh Burhanuddin would later establish an Islamic educational institution, such as a ribat – a learning lodge specifically for Sufi order education – called Surau. Thanks to his contributions, the spread of Islam occurred massively in West Sumatra, becoming inherent in local customs.

What led the Minangkabau people to embrace Syatariyah Burhanuddin's teachings? It should be noted that the Minangkabau people believe that Minangkabau customs are the original creation of their ancestors from the Malay, namely Sri Maharaja Diraja, which have been passed down for centuries. Hence, maintaining customs is the same as preserving the honor of their ancestors. Because of their steadfastness in upholding their culture, it isn't easy to imagine how society could accept Syekh Burhanuddin's teachings at that time. Thus, understanding it requires examining the levels of customs they uphold, which will allow us to align Sheikh Burhanuddin's teaching methods with those of his Syatariyah order.

There are four levels of customs in the Minangkabau tradition, with the earlier ones having higher authority than the later ones. The four customs are (1) the true custom, which is materially certain, like the custom of fire burning and water wetting. By nature, customs in the context cannot be changed because the law of causality is a permanent natural law from time to time (2) customs that have been established, which are customs that have previously been designed by the customary leaders and have become customary due to the nature of inheritance and preservation of these customs because of their

¹³ Wahab and Duri, "Pengembangan Dakwah Kelompok Tarekat Syattariyah Di Sumatera Barat."

¹⁴ Adlan Sanur, "Sjech Tuanku Aluma Koto Tuo Dan Pengaruhnya Dalam Pengembangan Tarekat Syatthariyah Di Minangkabau."

¹⁵ Faslah and Fata, "Islam, Adat, Dan Tarekat Syattariyah Di Minangkabau."

sacredness. In the context, the Minangkabau have two formulators of customary law: Datuk Ketumanggungan and Datuk Perpatih Nan Sabatang. Customs at this level result from the customary formulators' interpretation of natural phenomena, customs, and traditions, becoming the foundational ideas for subsequent customs. (3) Customary law refers to habits that can increase or decrease. The custom is adapted to specific contexts and can be adaptive in various conditions. The manifestation of custom can be seen in the proverb "Lain padang lain balalang Lain lubuak lain ikan Cupak sapanjang batuang Adaik sapanjang nagari," and (4) customary practices. Namely, customs regarding behavior are implemented for supplementary matters with the aim of enjoyment. Therefore, in its implementation, the custom can conflict with noble morals in Islamic teachings. An example of the custom is the habit of cockfighting.¹⁶ Considering its level, the question arises about where Islam's position lies when it enters Minangkabau customs by looking at the nature and essence of Islam. Therefore, I will examine each one by conducting a critical analysis to find the compatibility between Islam and the four levels of adat.

According to Aboul Khalid Fadhl, the teachings of Islam, as stated in the Quran, demonstrate a terminology of ethics and morals by using past morals as a reference and foundation for the moral trajectory in the future.¹⁷ The explicit rules in Islam do not require a specific form. Still, the instructions aim to convey a moral purpose so that they can be adaptive and flexible when Islam encounters various forms of culture and customs. Flexibility becomes essential when the doctrine of Islam, as a universal religion, is able to reach all people on Earth with diverse cultures and traditions. Thus, Islam, as a teaching that emphasizes moral purpose and trajectory, will more easily adapt to the Minangkabau society because the flexibility of Islam will not disrupt traditional rituals and social practices as long as they do not conflict with the essence of Islam, which is monotheism and sharia.

Furthermore, the Islam brought by Sheikh Burhanuddin is specific to Sufism, which emphasizes the spiritual relationship between humans and God, as mentioned above, with teachings in rituals and practices. The activity focuses on purifying the soul from all forms of pollutants through a continuous remembrance activity with God as the

¹⁶ Wahab and Duri, "Pengembangan Dakwah Kelompok Tarekat Syattariyah Di Sumatera Barat."

¹⁷ Abou El Fadl, *Reasoning with God*.

central focus of worship, because He has granted everything bestowed.¹⁸ Enhancing the connection to God by cultivating awareness of the goodness of the environment and surroundings, through which humans can benefit. The form of harmony in the order, which views the environment and nature as part of God, adds flexibility to the acceptance of local Minangkabau customs and culture. Therefore, its arrival does not become a problem that needs to be contested because, not only is it flexible, but it also has a high level of compatibility with Minangkabau customs such as the teachings of deliberation, the teachings of equality, the teachings of the importance of morality, and the veneration of women.

The harmony between morality and spirituality positively impacts the da'wah activities of Sheikh Burhanuddin Ulakan. The form of Islam brought can be positioned at the highest level of custom, namely the true custom, because, as it has been examined, the true custom is the absolute law of nature. Humans cannot construct that form of custom and will remain the same from the past to the present without the need for preservation by the indigenous community. It aligns with Islam's moral and spiritual values, where the essence of humanity is a moral being manifested through etiquette or behavior based on local customs. Islam is considered suitable and capable of enhancing the long-standing Minangkabau customs. The steadfastness of the Minangkabau people in their morals made them willingly accept Islam as their religion. Therefore, the famous saying that forms the foundation of Minangkabau customary law is very fitting: "adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi kitabullah" (customs based on syara' provisions, syara' provisions based on the book of Allah).

Surau: As A Religious And Cultural Institution In The Minangkabau Community

A successful da'wah strategy used by Sheikh Burhanuddin involved establishing an Islamic religious education institution called Surau. The institution was not created from scratch; instead, it adopted the old function of the building by renovating and adjusting the curriculum taught through Islamic teaching. By utilizing long-standing resources and being used by the community as a central place for traditional gatherings, the spread of Islam through the institution reached its peak in the 19th and 20th centuries. Many prominent Muslim figures were born through the system, such as Sheikh Ismail al-

¹⁸ Hidayat, "Tariqa Shattariyya (TS) and Spiritual Tourism in Pariaman, Indonesia."

Minangkabawi, Sheikh Thaher Jalaluddin, Sheikh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi, and Sheikh Janan Thaib Bukittinggi;¹⁹ and nationalist figures like Mohammad Hatta, the first Vice President of Indonesia. H. Agus Salim was a prominent figure in Indonesian diplomacy during the early independence period, and Sutan Sjahrir was a figure of the Indonesian revolution.²⁰ Today, the Surau is mainly viewed as a place for prayer and Quran recitation. However, its historical role was much more extensive; it transitioned from a venue for customary discussions to a hub for various social-religious activities, including the planning of war strategies during the Padri War. The Wahhabi purification agenda primarily targeted the Surau of the Syatariyah order, which suffered significant destruction and burning during that time.²¹ For that reason, the section will discuss the history and function of Surau before and after Islam.

Surau Pra-Islam

Literally, Surau means chapel. The terminology is not only found in the Minangkabau area but is also spread across various places in the Malaya region, such as Malaysia and Patani. The word *suro* also has a similar meaning in multiple languages, such as in Fiji *Soro*, which means supplicate for peace or pardon; *i-soro*, what is presented as amends; Sundanese *soroh*, to ask someone's aid; in Batak *pardembanan suro*. All the meanings contained here have a similar meaning, which is related to animistic religious rituals. The Surau in Minangkabau is no different because historically, the word Surau is a continuation of the pagan *suro*.²²

Architecturally, the building must be constructed at a height exceeding that of other buildings. in the article *The Function of Surau in Minangkabau Culture* written by Achmad Hufad, in the year 1356, King Adityawarman, a Minangkabau Maharaja, who still had family ties with Majapahit.²³ establishing a Buddhist Surau around Gombak Hill. The building that was erected is used for Hindu-Buddhist ritual activities. It also serves as a place for learning cultural customs and a discussion venue to solve essential issues related to social interest.²⁴ The Surau becomes a residence for teenage boys,

¹⁹ Alfurqan, "Evolution and Modernization of Islamic Education in Minangkabau."

²⁰ Natsir and Hufad, "The Function of *Surau* in Minangkabau Culture," 2019.

²¹ Azra, *Surau*.

²² Kern, "The Origin of the Malay *Surau*."

²³ *Sedjarah Islam Di Sumatera*, 1950.

²⁴ Natsir and Hufad, "The Function of *Surau* in Minangkabau Culture," 2019.

unmarried men, and widowers. Besides being designed for character building, the men also cannot stay at home due to customary regulations that state men do not have the right to have a room in the house.²⁵ Additionally, the pa-suro-an, the temple found in Batak, is used as a place for offering ceremonies to provide food called tondi to the spirits, namely debata (gods) and padju-padjuhan (ancestors). The establishment of the pasuro-an is sanctified by planting crops offered to the gods, such as coconut trees, palm and durian, plants whose fruits will be made into palm wine for offerings to the gods, and other fruit-bearing plants.²⁶

Rituals and practices of Hinduism and the belief in ancestor spirits have merged with Minangkabau customs. Shamans, who act as intermediaries between the spirit and human worlds, hold the highest authority in the customary community. He is also considered a healer for the sick, a demon repeller by reciting his memorized mantras. To ensure smooth progress, the community will seek advice in determining dates for significant projects such as weddings, construction, and others. Also, becoming someone believed to have the power to ward off rain. Hamka emphasized in his book that although Islam has come, the practice of belief in Spirits continues and is difficult to eradicate due to the strong influence of the previous religion.²⁷

Traditionally, Surau is built as a complementary place to Rumah Gadang (big house), which is intended for hereditary legacy in a matrilineal system. However, not all Rumah Gadang have a Surau, because the function of Surau can still be accommodated by Rumah Gadang, such as a lodging place for men, travelers, and merchants as a place to stay overnight.²⁸ That function makes the Surau a center of information where people come and go to share information from all over the region and abroad. It is said that it would be shameful if a man were to live in his mother's house; his friends would laugh at him. Traditionally, men do not have the right to a sleeping space in their mother's house. Therefore, it becomes a necessity for men to stay and sleep in the Surau.²⁹ As a place of religious and cultural socialization, the Surau becomes very crucial and sacred, where, for the community, the Surau is not just a building but a manifestation of God's

²⁵ Syamsudin et al., "Islamic Education System of Minangkabau Society."

²⁶ Kern, "The Origin of the Malay *Surau*."

²⁷ *Sedjarah Islam Di Sumatera*, 1950.

²⁸ Natsir and Hufad, "The Function of *Surau* in Minangkabau Culture," 2019.

²⁹ Azra, *Surau*.

house. The sacredness built within it creates authority among the Minangkabau community, thus requiring significant reform to make such changes.

Surau Post-Islam

The transformation of Surau from a Hindu style to an Islamic style occurred gradually rather than abruptly. Sheikh Burhanuddin continued utilizing the traditional functions and terminology of Surau without implementing significant changes. After his arrival, the Surau's functions became more intricate and organized, focusing on character development and mental education for both youth and men. The form of education, rooted in Islamic principles, aims to foster moral and wise individuals. Consequently, Surau plays a vital role in the Minangkabau community's efforts to cultivate a strong social fabric.³⁰

Surau is led by a "Tuanku," who has completed religious education at Surau and obtained a teaching license. Parents will entrust their children to Tuanku for education from childhood onward, into adulthood.³¹ The material taught at the Surau includes Quran teaching. The teaching is focused on recitation, not on writing. The system has two levels: the low level, intended for children learning basic Tajwid taught in the evening and morning after the Fajr prayer; the upper level, with lessons on reciting the Quran using melody, learning Qasidah songs, and chanting. Other materials taught include learning to read religious texts. Studies are conducted in the morning, afternoon, and evening. Two teachers guide, and each teacher will serve many students. Then there is the subject of tafsir with the book used being Tarjuman al-Mustafidini, a tafsir book by Sheikh Abdurrauf as-Sinkili. Another book that is taught is Tafsir al-Jalalain. Then, there is the science of hadith, which the book Syu'b al-Iman by Imam al-Baihaqi illustrates. The following subject is Sufism, an advanced topic because it is a direct bridge between humans and their God. Of course, the Sufi order being taught is the Syatariyah order.³²

Surau can generally be classified into two types: Surau gadang and Surau Ketek. The Surau gadang acts as the main center for the surrounding smaller Surau. It is home to the respected sheikh of the area, whose students will ultimately become the "Tuanku"

³⁰ Syamsudin et al., "Islamic Education System of Minangkabau Society."

³¹ Syahril and Marjoni, "Jejak Perjuangan Syekh Burhanudin Dalam Mengembangkan Ajaran Islam Di Kabupaten Padang Pariaman."

³² Syamsudin et al., "Islamic Education System of Minangkabau Society."

in the smaller Surau. Surau gadang is named after its locality, for instance, Surau Tanjung Medan in Ulakan, Surau Inyiak Candung in Bukittinggi, Surau Inyiak Jaho in Padang Panjang, and Surau Koto Tuo in Koto Tuo Ampek Angkek. In contrast, Surau Ketek represents a smaller Surau that accommodates the students of Surau Gadang. Surau Ketek is also utilized for various religious and community activities, such as Quran recitation, martial arts, and traditional speech learning. Surau can generally be categorized into two types: Surau gadang and Surau Ketek. The first, Surau gadang, is the central hub for the smaller Surau around it. It serves as a residence for the renowned sheikh of the place. His students will become the “Tuanku” in the small Surau. The Surau gadang is named after its region, such as Surau Tanjung Medan in Ulakan, Surau Inyiak Candung in Bukittinggi, Surau Inyiak Jaho in Padang Panjang, Surau Koto Tuo in Koto Tuo Ampek Angkek. As for Surau Ketek, it is a small Surau that serves as a residence for the students of Surau Gadang. Surau Ketek is also used for religious and community events such as Quran recitation, martial arts activities, learning traditional speeches, etc.³³ In Azyumardi Azra’s book, he states that a medium Surau serves the same purpose as a large Surau, with the only difference being the number of students, approximately 80 students.³⁴

Surau education is offered free of charge to students and visitors staying at the Surau. Everyday necessities, including food, are provided through a self-sustaining economic framework where students assist Tuanku or Syekh with farming in the fields and gardens. The produce from these agricultural efforts serves as sustenance for Surau residents, with any excess available for sale. Additionally, the Surau features a lapau, or shop, managed by students skilled in carpentry and woodworking, who handle its operations and sales. The economic interactions between the Surau and local residents foster a harmonious social atmosphere, leading to students receiving essential supplies from the surrounding community. The support is partly rooted in tradition, as it embodies a communal responsibility to uphold customs of mutual assistance and sharing. The system of mutualism, where the Surau imparts moral education and character development based on Islamic teachings to children and men, while the community provides economic

³³ Samad, “Syekh Burhanuddin Dan Islamisasi Minangkabau (Syarak Mandaki Adat Manurun).”

³⁴ A small *surau* has 20 students, a medium *surau* has 80 students, and a large *surau* has 100 to 1000 students, referring to the work of Verkerk Pistorious., “De Priester en zinj Invloed op de samenleving in de padangsche Bovenlanden”, 1896.

backing for Surau residents, strengthens the connection between faith and community tradition.³⁵

The entry of Islam into the core of Surau effectively conveyed the moral and spiritual messages of Islamic teachings, so that coherently, they would blend into a unity that would be ingrained and continuously maintained for centuries thereafter. It turns out that the rigidity of the Minangkabau people in adhering to customs became an advantage for Islam because, in the right way, Islam could be smoothly recognized and even transformed into a new customary entity that became the centrality of Minangkabau customs. Thus, the Minangkabau people, whether they like it or not, would massively preserve Islam, which had come to be regarded as a custom, of course, thanks to the role of the Surau. It can be learned here that the tendency of Syekh Burhanuddin's preaching style, which respected customs by not destroying the sacred places of old customs, but instead utilizing and transforming them into more structured preaching arenas, had an extraordinary impact on the development of Islam in Minangkabau. Thus, Islam, scholars, and Surau will receive full attention and become a model of education that will continue to influence the Minangkabau community in the future.

The Integration of Matrilineal Traditions with Surau Development

Minangkabau is a tribe located in the mountainous region of western East Sumatra. Consists of four river valleys that stretch in a row. The westernmost valley is situated at an altitude of approximately 30,000 feet above sea level. The easternmost valley is located at less than 1,500 feet near the Malacca Strait. The area is generally divided into two parts: darek (highland) and rantau (coastal). Three central mountains surround the highlands: Mount Merapi, Mount Sago, and Mount Singgalang. From the region, they spread and settled in the area now known as West Sumatra Province.³⁶ Looking at the geographical location, Minangkabau customs become unique, where it will be difficult for foreign cultures to penetrate due to its very isolated position by the high mountain plateaus. The location also influences the character of Minangkabau customs, which are famously very fanatical about their culture.

³⁵ Azra, *Surau*.

³⁶ Azra.

The Minangkabau tribe is recognized for its matrilineal society and is among the largest globally. For instance, property division is granted to women, whereas male children do not possess rights to it, a consequence of the Merantau culture, which mandates the practice for men.³⁷ There is a folk tale that explains the origin of the rule. Long ago, two founders of Minangkabau customs, Datuk Katumanggungan and Datuk Perpatih Nan Sebatang, wanted to sail to Aceh with their children and sororal nieces and nephews. They boarded a ship to reach their destination. On the way, the sea suddenly ebbed. So these two elders asked the children and nephews to push their boat. The children refused, citing fear of being crushed by the ship. But the nephew was willing to obey the elders' orders and move the ship to its destination, with the help of the spirits. Due to the obedience of the nephew, he was rewarded with all the property owned by the datuk. The story is said to be the foundation of matrilineal customary law.³⁸ The names of the two ancestors, Adat Perpatih and Adat Temangung, were used as customary laws in Minangkabau.

1. The Minangkabau matrilineal customary system is defined by four key characteristics that highlight women's predominant role in its society: The female bloodline connects the family lineage (Payung). Each tribe (nagari) has several matrilineal groups such as Chaniago, Melayu, and Piliang.
2. Each large matrilineage group has a leader who organizes traditional ceremonies called Penghulu, a man with the title of Datuk. Each matrilineage possesses significant property, including agricultural land, Rumah Gadang (Big house), fish ponds, heirlooms, etc.
3. Men do not have a designated room, which means that after getting married, they must live with their wives at the wife's parents' house. However, his residency status is still registered at his mother's house.
4. The maternal uncles (the Kemanakan) hold the highest authority, not the father. The maternal uncles (the maternal uncles or Kemanakan) hold the highest authority, not the father. In this case, it can also be interpreted that authority is

³⁷ Tanner, "The Nuclear Family in Minangkabau Matriliney."

³⁸ Kato, "Change and Continuity in the Minangkabau Matrilineal System."

given to the penghulu. It shows that authority is still held by the female lineage, not by the father.³⁹

The strategic role of women in the custom offers considerable benefits for the emergence of Islam, as socio-cultural factors necessitate that men depart and become “alienated” from their homes. It results in more outdoor activities and brings men together in a central customary location, namely the Surau. The involvement of individuals in a community fosters deep dialectics on the topics raised. The ease of information dissemination becomes an advantage when new information and understanding can enter the discussions in that place. That is what happened in the missionary agenda of Sheikh Burhanuddin; in the folk tales, the Minangkabau people at that time still enjoyed practicing gambling, such as cock fighting. Seeing that, Syekh Burhanuddin did not immediately condemn the bad behavior, but instead asked to be included in the game. In the game, he taught a “mantra” that could ensure his victory, and the mantra consisted of phrases of remembrance (dzikr). Because he often wins, the community considers it an actual practice of magic. With that method, Islam was accepted by the Minangkabau community.

Moreover, it does not imply that women are excluded from preaching; instead, the return of men from the Surau, equipped with morals and Islamic teachings, can positively impact men’s morals, which women will welcome. However, it is noted that the matrilineal culture diminished with the spread of Islam, partly due to the Islamic orthodox reform movement that targeted the Culture.⁴⁰

CONCLUSION

The history of Islam’s spread in Minangkabau is closely linked to the Surau, a vital Islamic educational institution that has been deeply ingrained in the community for centuries. Sheikh Burhanuddin Ulakan emerged as a reformist figure whose family legacy and adept efforts in promoting Islam resonated profoundly with the indigenous population. The version of Islam he introduced served as a foundation for his teachings, emphasizing Sufi principles that cherished spirituality while prioritizing theological and

³⁹ Kato.

⁴⁰ Abdullah, “Adat and Islam.”

social aspects over strict legal interpretations. The approach facilitated the Minangkabau community's acceptance of Islam. Additionally, the strong influence of matrilineal culture played a pivotal role, as it encouraged men to engage actively outside the household, further enhancing the widespread adoption of Islam in the Minangkabau area.

The correlation reaches perfection once the Minangkabau community officially acknowledges the Surau's role as an institution of Islamic teachings. Customs grounded in religious law, which are themselves based on the Quran, highlight the profound integration of Islamic teachings within its culture. Consequently, when customs and Islam merge into a singular entity, challenging the unity becomes difficult, as Islam is perceived not as an external doctrine but rather as a belief system sanctified by local culture.

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