Islam Nusantara, ulemas, and social media: understanding the pros and cons of Islam Nusantara among ulemas of West Sumatera[1]

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Abstract

The concept of Islam Nusantara, which is defined as Islam that accommodates the customs and culture of the (Indonesian) Archipelago, has been rejected by the West Sumatera branch of Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI). Meanwhile, other groups in West Sumatera support the Islam Nusantara concept. This article explains the pros and cons of Islam Nusantara among religious leaders in West Sumatera in the context of social media activities. Ulemas rejected Islam Nusantara in West Sumatera based on the perspective that Islam as a religion has reached peak perfection, adding the word Nusantara is, thus, unnecessary. Other religious leaders in West Sumatera have embraced Islam Nusantara based on the view that in terms of customs in Minangkabau, the principle of *Adaik Bersandi Syarak, Syarak Bersandi Kitabullah* is followed. This is a field study employing the qualitative method of approach. Data were obtained via in-depth interviews with four West Sumatran religious figures (ulemas) and subsequently analyzed in an interpretative and descriptive manner. The findings in this study show that the ulemas' rejection of Islam Nusantara via Facebook indicates a shift in the definition of ulemas as religious leaders to that of opinion makers. This is a new finding that has never been studied before as it places the pros and cons of Islam Nusantara within the context of virtual culture. Consequently, this study has implications on the definition of ulemas as religious leaders overlapping with their part as opinion makers and opinion leaders in the current era of new media.

Gagasan Islam Nusantara sebagai Islam yang mengakomodir adat dan budaya Nusantara ditolak kehadirannya oleh Majelis Ulama Indonesia wilayah Sumatera Barat. Sementara itu terdapat kelompok lain yang mendukung gagasan Islam Nusantara di Sumatera Barat. Artikel ini menjelaskan pro dan kontra di antara pemuka agama tentang Islam Nusantara di Sumatera Barat dalam konteks aktivitas di media sosial. Islam Nusantara di tolak oleh Ulama di Sumatera Barat didasari oleh pandangan umum bahwa Islam sebagai agama telah mencapai sempurna, sehingga tidak diperlukan penambahan kata Nusantara. Sedangkan pemuka agama lainnya menerima Islam Nusantara di Sumatera Barat karena didasari oleh pandangan umum bahwa adat di Minangkabau Sumatera Barat berpegang pada prinsip *Adaik Bersandi Syarak, Syarak Bersandi Kitabullah.* Data penelitian dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam terhadap empat pemuka agama (ulama) di Sumatera Barat. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa aktivitas ulama yang menolak Islam Nusantara melalui *facebook* menggambarkan pergeseran makna Ulama dari *religius leader* ke *opinion maker.* Namun pergeseran tersebut justru mengokohkan ulama sebagai pemilik otoritas keagamaan. Temuan ini dapat berimplikasi pada terminologi ulama sebagai *religius leader* pada era media baru akan berhimpitan dengan terminologi *opinion maker* dan *opinion leader* sebagai terminologi baru pada era media baru.

Keywords: *Islam Nusantara*; *Ulema*; *Social media*; *West Sumatera*

Introduction

Islam Nusantara may be understood as a cultural movement pertaining to Islam in the Indonesian archipelago. This understanding relates to the history of Islam's peaceful introduction into the archipelago by way of compromise with local cultures prior to Islam's widespread entry

throughout the entire Indonesian region.[2] The idea of Islam Nusantara should, thus, be understood as Islam with distinctive features of Indonesian culture. Nevertheless, such understanding undoubtedly raises several points of debate, which are caused, among others, by the fact that Indonesia's geographical position is far-removed from Mecca, the holy city famously known as the birth place of Islam. Geographically speaking, Indonesia is an extensive land area in itself comprising of thousands of islands. This geographical fact is a significant element we need to understand in order to explain when, where, and how Islam entered Indonesia.[3]

Even so, the idea of Islam Nusantara was instead rejected by the Indonesian Ulema Council (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia* – MUI) of West Sumatera. Referring to the Facebook page of West Sumatera MUI's Chairman, Buya Gusrizal Gazahar, it is stated that *"West Sumatera MUI and Regional/Municipal MUI offices throughout West Sumatera declare without any doubt that 'Islam Nusantara' by concept or any definition is not needed in Ranah Minang (West Sumatera). We believe that 'Islam' is already complete and perfect without requiring any additional term"*. His status on the Facebook page had subsequently become an extensive conversation topic among netizens, and it even gained wide mass media coverage.

Islam Nusantara, as both a form of practice and concept or idea, has initially become a discourse topic on social media since its introduction during the *Nadhatul Ulama* (NU) Conference (*Muktamar*) in Jombang in

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[2]Ahmad Sahal, "Prolog: Kenapa Islam Nusantara?", in Ahmad Sahal (eds.), *Islam Nusntara dari Ushul Fiqh hingga Paham Kebangsaan*, Bandung: Mizan, 2015, 15. Also see Zainul Milal Bizawi, *Masterpiece Islam Nusantara: Sanad dan Jejaring Ulama Santri*, Ciputat: Pustaka Compass, 2016, 3; Nur Khalik Ridwan, et.al., *Gerakan Kultural Islam Nusantara*, Yogyakarta: Jamaah Nahdliyin Mataram (JNM), 2015, 3; Luqman Nurhisam and Mualimul Huda, "Islam Nusantara: A Middle Way?", *Qudus Internasional Journal of Islamic Studies*, Volume 4, Number 2 (2016), 152-166; Ali Murfi and Fitriyani, *Islam Nusantara: Religion Dialectic and Cultural for Pluralism-Democratic Society*, 2018. Cited from: https://knepublishing.com/index.php/Kne-Social/article/view/2324/5141

[3]Azyumardi Azra, *Islam Nusantara Jaringan Global dan Lokal*, Bandung: Mizan, 2002.

2015.[4] The idea has, since then, instigated numerous debates at various different levels. The center of the debate lies in the intersection between Islam as text and Nusantara as context.

This is a field study employing the qualitative method of approach. Data were acquired by conducting in-depth interviews with four religious leaders (ulemas) in West Sumatera. The collected data were subsequently compiled into several categories or themes that were then arranged according to the information gathered from the field.

The Islam Nusantara discourse on social media

Currently, a number of studies and articles on Islam Nusantara have considered it as a concept or ideology put in opposition against ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria). This also clarifies that threats against the honor and glory of Islam not only comes from the outside but also from within Islam itself.[5] For that reason, Bilfagih[6] views Islam Nusantara as NU's cultural strategy amidst numerous global challenges, specifically ideologies that are managed in an extreme, severe, and exclusive manner. Islam Nusantara is intended to be showcased as Islam that is peaceful, polite, calm, and Islam washatan.[7]

Yet, other studies have positioned Islam Nusantara as a manifestation of NU's religious organization into moderate Islam that is peaceful and a blessing for the universe *(rahmatan lil 'alamin).* Therefore, epistemologically speaking, the idea of Islam Nusantara should be acceptable since it contains dialectics between religious teachings and the culture and traditions of

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[4]Akhiyat, "Islam Nusantara antara Ortodoksi dan Heterodoksi", *Al-Tahrir*, Volume 17, Number 1 (2017), 247-268.

[5]Abdul Chalik, "The Position of Islam Nusantara in Geopolitical Dynamics of Islamic World", *Miqot*, Volume XL, Number 2 (2016), 431-448.

[6]Taufik Bilfagih, "Islam Nusantara; Strategi Kebudayaan NU di Tengah Tantangan Global", *Jurnal Aqlam*, Volume 2, Number 1 (2016), 53-68.

[7]Luqman Nurhisam and Mualimul Huda, "Islam Nusantara"....

the Indonesian community.[8] Via such understanding, NU as a religious organization intends to maintain the character of Islam Nusantara as Islam that is well-mannered, peaceful, open-minded, and tolerant.[9] In practice, Islam is reflected through its moderate, balanced, tolerant, and inclusive socio-cultural behaviors.[10]

Based on the above perspective, Islam Nusantara is, thus, not a response from Islam that had developed in the context of Arabian culture. It is instead the harmony or contextualization of local culture, given that it does not oppose the essence of Islam.[11] Such understanding is actually in accordance with the philosophy of Minangkabau tradition in West Sumatera. The relationship between local tradition of Minangkabau and Islam as a religion of Arabian origin is captured in the adage *Adaik Bersandi Syarak, Syarak Bersandi Kitabullah (ABS/SBK – Adat* (customary practices/ traditions) is based on sharia, sharia is based on the Holy Book/Al-Qur'an – Researcher). Historically speaking, ABS/SBK was a middle ground taken by Padri leaders and customary leaders in the past who succeeded in reaching a compromise and maintaining the distinctive attributes of Minangkabau culture.[12]

Nevertheless, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) of West Sumatera rejected the idea of Islam Nusantara instead. The rejection of Islam

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[8]Alma'arif, "Islam Nusantara: Studi Epistemologis dan Kritis", *Analisis*, Volume 15, Number 2 (2015), 265-291. Also see: Khabibi Muhammad Luthfi, "Islam Nusantara: Relasi Islam dan Budaya Lokal", *Shahih*, Volume 1, Number 1 (2016), 1-12; Ahmad Baso, *Islam Nusantara Ijtihad Jenius dan Ijma' Ulama Indonesia*. Jakarta: Pustaka Afid, 2015.

[9]Ahmad Sahal, *Islam Nusantara...*, 239–242.

[10]Asril P. Rahmad, *Toleransi Inklusif Menapak Jejak Sejarah Kebebasan Beragama dalam Piagam Madinah*, Yogyakarta: Kaukaba, 2014, 144.

[11]Hamzah Junaid,   "Kajian Kritis Skulturasi Islam dengan Budaya Lokal", *Sulesana*, Volume 8, Number 1 (2013), 1-14. Also see Ismail Suardi Wekke, "Islam dan Adat: Tinjauan Akulturasi Budaya dan Agama dalam Masyarakat Bugis", *Analisis*, Volume XIII, Number 1 (2013), 27-56; Luqman Nurhisam, and Mualimul Huda, "Islam Nusantara"...

[12]Jeffrey Hadler, *SengketaTtiada Putus: Matriarkat, Reformisme Agama, dan Kolonialisme di Minangkabau*, Jakarta: Freedom Institute, 2010.

Nusantara by West Sumatera MUI was mostly observed on social media such as Facebook, particularly via the Facebook account of the Chairman of West Sumatera MUI, Buya Gusrizal Gazahar. The rejection via Facebook not only became a hot conversation topic among netizens, it also received news coverage from several online media.[13]

The rejection of Islam Nusantara through various social media channels is interesting to study since current social media power has a cultural effect that is extensive, difficult to predict, and disruptive, while concurrently changing the dynamics of human relations as well.[14] Hoover[15] explains that religious understanding mediated via internet based new media is at times challenging or it purifies religious aspirations and considers the prospect of religious leaders (ulemas) in a more critical manner with a proclivity to debating them.

The participation and interactivity occurring among netizens in this era of new media is a keyword in that change. According to Lavinson[16] the environment of new media is deemed as new new media, which is the instantaneous and expansive distribution of information about anything in any form that may lead to numerous forms of new community, new way of life, and new power structures within society. Facebook is one of the new media platforms that has contributed substantial changes in various

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[13]Ihsan Dalimunthe, "*MUI Sumbar: Islam Nusantara Tidak dibutuhkan di Ranah Minang*". Retrieved on September 29, 2018 from https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20180725184710-20-316977/mui-sumbar-islam-nusantara-tidak-dibutuhkan-di-ranah-minang Also see: Danu Damarjati, "*MUI Sumatera Barat Tolak Islam Nusantara*". Retrieved on September 29, 2018 from https://news.detik.com/berita/4133086/mui-sumatera-barat-tolak-islam-nusantara

[14]Christopher J. Davey, et. Al., "New Media and The Courts the Current Status and A Look at The Future. A Report of the New Media Committee of the Conference of Court Public Information Officers", retrieved on September 27, 2018 at: http://ccpionewmedia.ning.com/

[15]Stewart M. Hoover, *The Media and Religious Authority*, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016.

[16]Paul Levinson, *New New Media*, Boston: Pearson, 2014.

personal and social relations.[17]

Based on available Katadata,[18] Facebook users in Indonesia had reached 130 million in 2017, which is equivalent to around 48% of the total social media user population. In this era of Facebook, religious understanding may be present via social media[19] or it may even be nonexistent at all. However, it may also be the case wherein religious understandings are rapidly transforming into other virtual forms that are rather fake and misleading.[20]

Unconditional absolute Islam without Nusantara

The rejection of the Islam Nusantara idea by ulemas in West Sumatera is founded on the general view that Islam as a religion has already been perfected and is complete unconditionally, adding in the word Nusantara as an adjective is thus unnecessary. According to Zulkifli Zakaria, a revered ulema in Padang Pariaman Regency, as a complete and perfect religion, Islam does not require the word Nusantara as an addendum.

"The way I see it, the understanding of Islam Nusantara implies as if the existing Islamic teachings are imperfect. Meanwhile, in accordance to

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[17]Muhamad Zaki Mustafa, et. al., "Facebook as Social Media Tools among Muslim Youths in Malaysia", *American International Journal of Social Science*, Volume 2, Nomor 8 (2013), 173-177.

[18]Katadata, "Berapa Jumlah Pengguna Facebook di Indonesia". Retrieved on September 27, 2018 from: https://databoks.katadata.co.id/datapublish/2018/04/11/berapa-jumlah-pengguna-facebook-di-indonesia

[19]Karen Marie Yust, "Digital Power: Exploring the Effects of Social Media on Children's Spirituality", *International Journal of Children's Spiritualty*, Volume 19, Number 2 (2014), 133-143. Also see: Maryam Hasanshahi, and Maryam Amidi Mazaheri, "The Effects of Education on Spirituality through Virtual Social Media on the Spiritual Well-Being of the Public Health Students of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences in 2015", *International Journal of Community Based Nursing and Midwifery*, Volume 4, Number 2 (2016), 168-75; Paul K. McClure, "Faith and Facebook in a Pluralistic Age: The Effects of Social Networking Sites on the Religious Beliefs of Emerging Adults", *Sociological Perspektif*, Volume 59, Number 4 (2016), 818-834.

[20]Ray Kurzweil, *The Age of Spiritual Machines: When We Will Live, Work and Think in the New Age of Intelligent Machines*, New York: Penguin, 2000. Also see: Alessandra Vitullo, "New Age Goes Online: Relocating Spirituality in Virtual Spaces: The Study of Damanhur", *Methaodos Revista de Sciencias Sociales*, Volume 4, Number 2 (2016), 339-348.

the holy verse of the Al-Qur'an, it is mentioned that Islam is a perfect religion. "This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed my favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion ..." [Al-Maa-idah: 3][21]

This is the reason why, according to Zulkifli Zakaria, past ulemas of the archipelago (Nusantara) discussed and preached Islam as a pure religious teaching without associating it to any particular area or region. As a religion that has been perfected, the religious teachings of Islam can be directed at anyone, anywhere, and anytime. These ulemas of Nusantara, such as Fatani, Limbani, or Arsyad Al-Banjari and even Buya Hamka, had written books on Islam without associating it to a specific area or region. Arsyad Al-Banjari the author of *Sabilul Muhtadin* for instance, discussed the Islamic jurisprudence of the Syafii school in his book. Al-Limbani wrote *Hidayatus Salihin* which discusses *Hidayatul Hidayah* the work of Al-Ghazali. These books were Arabic script of written Malay.

The explanation on Islam being a perfect religion that must be preached is then followed by the understanding of Islam that is completely absolute and unconditional (*kaffah*). The idea of unconditional and absolute Islam is referred in the Quran surah Al-Baqarah verse 208, *udkhulu fi as-silmi kaaffah*, which can be translated as *enter into Islam completely [and perfectly]*. The word *kaffah* means completely without reserve.[22] The need for Islam *kaffah* implies a directive to believers to carry out all Islamic teachings based on total submission and sincerity to Allah SWT. Embracing Islam completely (*kaffah*) is similar to returning to Islamic sharia totally. Ultimately, the concept of Islam as a blessing for the whole world can be achieved by implementing and upholding Islamic sharia in a comprehensive manner.[23]

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[21]Interview in Pariaman, September 13, 2018.

[22]Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah: Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian al-Quran*, Ciputat: Lentera Hati, 2000: 419.

[23]T.N. Srinivasan, *The Future of Secularism*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007: 204. Also see: Arif Zamhari, *Rituals of Islamic Spirituality A Study of Majlis Dhikr Groups in East*

In practice, the understanding of Islam as a perfect religion that must be implemented according to the Islamic sharia in an absolute manner (*kaffah*) had confronted various social traditions that had existed prior to Islam's arrival in the archipelago. The existing traditions found in Nusantara prior to the introduction of Islam were at times in line with the teachings of Islam, such as the marriage custom of the Buginese.[24] There were also customary rituals unacceptable in Islam such as the *Rah Ulei* ritual carried out by the community in Pidie, Aceh. This ritual is conducted by those requesting blessings from the soul of the dead whom they revered as holy individuals.[25] Moreover, there were vaguely defined customs that may be in line or in opposition to Islamic teaching (sharia) such as *Marhaban* or *Maulid Nabi* conducted by Sundanese[26] or *Jenengan* as a traditional Javanese art.[27] These processes are described as Islamization of culture, not Arabization of culture.[28]

The elaboration above is one of the significant points in the discussion of Islam Nusantara. However, according to Zulkifli Zakaria, we should

Java, Canberra: ANU E Press, 2010; Michael R. Feener, "Social Engineering Through Shari'a: Islamic Law and State- Directed Da'wa in Contemporary Aceh", *Indonesia Law*, Volume 3, Number 3 (2013), 285-310.

[24]Ismail Suardi Wekke, *"Islam dan Adat dalam Pernikahan Masyarakat Bugis di Papua Barat"*, *Thaqafiyyat*, Volume 13, Number 2 (2012), 307-335.

[25]Muhammad Arifin and Khadijah Binti Mohd Khambali, "Islam dan Akulturasi Budaya Lokal di Aceh (Studi terhadap Ritual *Rah Ulei* di Kuburan dalam Masyarakat Pidie, Aceh)", *Islam Futura*, Volume 15, Number 2 (2016), 251-284.

[26]Ridhoul Wahidi, "Budaya dan Agama sebagai Identitas Islam Nusantara; Kajian atas Tradisi Marhaba'an/Maulid Nabi di Tanah Sunda", *Jurnal Madania*, Volume 5, Number 2 (2015), 200-218.

[27]Akhmad Arif Junaidi dkk, "Janengan sebagai Seni Tradisional Islam-Jawa", *Walisongo*, Volume 21, Number 2 (2013), 469-490.

[28]Bahrul Ulum, "Islam Jawa: Pertautan Islam dengan Budaya Lokal Abad XV", *Jurnal Pusaka*, Volume 2, Number 1 (2014), 28-42. Also see: Hasani Ahmad Said, "Islam dan Budaya di Banten: Menelisik Tradisi Debus dan Maulid" *Kalam Jurnal Studi Agama dan Pemikiran Islam*, Volume 10, Number 1 (2016), 109-138; Buhori, "Islam dan Tradisi Lokal di Nusantara (Telaah Kritis terhadap Tradisi Pelet Betteng pada Masyarakat Madura dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam)", *Al-Maslahah*, Volume 13, Number 2 (2017), 229-249.

not worry that the teaching of Islam, as a perfect religion, will clash with the local traditions of Nusantara. Hence, there is no need to implement Islamic teaching with the context of local traditions.

"If there were any concern (of Islamic teachings -researcher) clashing with local traditions, Islam is a religion that straightens out man. If there are traditions unaware about the teachings of Islam, this is actually a point in which Islamic teachings can be introduced. For example, concerning the veneration of cows, we must convey to them that cows should not be revered. If it continues to be venerated, we will continue to submit (to local traditions) and sacrifice the teachings of sharia for the sake of maintaining traditions. If a tradition goes against Islam or aqidah, then it should be changed gradually".[29]

Meanwhile, the potential clash between Islamic teachings and local traditions in the archipelago, according to the Chairman of West Sumatera MUI, Buya Gusrizal Gazahar, could not be instantaneously resolved by introducing Islam Nusantara.

"If we want to explain about Islam, we should explain it with all its khususiat (characteristics, particularities – Researcher), not in parts. If there were issues of radicalism (or customs opposing Islam – Researcher), then we discuss radicalism (or customs opposing Islam – Researcher), instead of discussing Islam. So, there shouldn't be any terminology such as tolerant Islam, Islam Nusantara, this or that kind of Islam. If the challenge were radicalism, then wasathiatul Islam (Islamic moderatism or tolerance – Researcher) should be raised, if the problem were liberalism, then siyadatul nushus fil Islam (the power of nash in Islam - Researcher) should be employed".[30]

The explanation provided would then fundamentally result in a grammatical criticism on the definition and term of Islam Nusantara being used. This linguistic criticism is centered on the question of whether Islam

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[29]Interview in Pariaman, September 13, 2018.
[30]Interview in Payakumbuh, September 14, 2018.

Nusantara is *idhafah* or *na'at*? If Islam Nusantara is *idhafah,* the the term implies the meaning of *fi*, which may be defined as Islam in Nusantara. Or it may imply *min*, which may be defined as Islam from Nusantara, yet it could also mean *li*, which may be defined as Islam of Nusantara. If Islam is *na'at,* then Nusantara would be an adjective to Islam. Simply put, this would mean Islam with Nusantara features or attributes.

According to Buya Gusrizal Gazahar, from a linguistic perspective, the use of the term Islam Nusantara is inherently flawed. This is undoubtedly similar with several other terms such as *Islam washatiyah* (moderate Islam), tolerant Islam or liberal Islam, because they emphasize the adjectives *(na'at)* of the word that they modify *(man'ut).* While in fact those adjectives are *mumayyizat* (salience) of Islam that should be inherent within Islam and be based on aqidah (the belief and faith in God).

> "Is Islam Nusantara Indonesian or Arabic? This becomes ambiguous. It is an Indonesian phrase yet it uses Arabic grammar. But, OK, this is an idhafah, which means that the word Islam is propped up against the word Nusantara. This needs to be criticized. If the phrase were considered as na'at man'ut, it would be even worse. Islam as the more general man'ut is positioned as naat to Nusantara which is more specific, even (if it were justified) then the term Nusantaraiy should have been used. So, this Islam Nusantara term is a mess. When this term appeared, there were many questions about what the true intentions are?[31]

Islam Nusantara: Islam based on customs

The support given to the concept of Islam Nusantara by West Sumateran ulemas is based on the general perspective that customs in Minangkabau West Sumatera uphold the principle of *Adaik Bersandi Syarak, Syarak Bersandi Kitabullah* (*Adat* (customary practices/traditions) is based on sharia, sharia is based on the Holy Book) This adage is commonly known as

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[31]Interview in Payakumbuh, September 14, 2018.

ABS/SBK. According to Ramayulis,[32] ABS/SBK, is the peak intersection, clash, and combination between Minangkabau customs, which have existed since the time of their Minangkabau ancestors, and the religion of Islam, which came later. The amalgamation between custom and religion in Minangkabau can be described to occur in the following three stages;

First stage, customary practice and sharia (Islam) ran separately without having influence over each other. The Minangkabau community carried out their religious teachings in accordance with their *aqidah* (belief and faith in Allah) and *ibadah* (Islamic rituals/service), while in terms of social life, the old customary practices were still applied. This is as stipulated in the Minangkabau maxim that is regarded as their customary philosophy "*Adat Basandi Alur dan Patut–Syara' Basandi Dalil* (ABAP–SBD)" (*adat* is based on rules and suitability, sharia is based on *dalil* (proof)).

Second stage, both *adat* and sharia demanded their rights of existence without pushing away each other's respective position in society. This was the period wherein the philosophy of: "*Adat Basandi Syara'– Syara' Basandi Adat* (ABS–SBA)" (*Adat* (customary practices/traditions) is based on sharia, sharia is based on the Holy Book) had emerged. This traditional adage implies that *adat* and sharia mutually need each other and are inseparable.

Stage three, a consensus between Minangkabau *adat* and teachings of Islamic sharia took place. This religious purification movement was led by ulemas known as the Padris. The consensus between ulemas and *ninik mamak* (clan leaders) was reached in the 19th century in Marapalam Hills, Tanah Datar Regency, West Sumatera.[33] The consensus has since been

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[32]Ramayulis, "Traktat Marapalam "Adat Basandi Syara'- Syara' Basandi Kitabullah": Diktum Karamat Konsensus Pemuka Adat dengan Pemuka Agama dalam Memadukan Adat dan Islam di Minangkabau – Sumatera Barat", *Teologia*, Volume 5, Number 1 (2011).

[33]Mursal, Amiur Nuruddin, and Saparuddin Siregar, "Strengthening the Role of the Local Wisdom Tungku Tigo Sajarangan as a Basis for the Development of Sharia Microfinance Institutions: Study at Sharia Microfinance Institutions in West Sumatra", *Journal of Humanities And Social Science*, Volume 22, Number 8 (2017), 50-55.

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known as the "Traktat Marapalam" (Marapalam Hills Treaty). ABS/SBK is a middle path taken by Padri and customary leaders of the past, wherein they succeeded to make a compromise and maintain the special attributes of Minangkabau culture.[34]

According to Risman Bustaman, a religious leader who actively participates in religious organization in Tanah Datar Regency, West Sumatera, the conflict between *adat* and Islam (sharia) in West Sumatera has already been resolved through the philosophy of ABS/SBK. In practice, the philosophy of ABS/SBK is implemented through the expression: *Syara' Mangato, Adat Mamakai* (Sharia regulates, *Adat* utilizes). The presence of Islam Nusantara should, therefore, not be a problem in West Sumatera.

> "Sharia is religious proof (dalil), while adat implements them. This is the argumentation or logic behind the use of Islam Nusantara (in West Sumatera – Researcher). Sharia proofs must be interpreted and implemented according to the local Nusantara-based logical reasoning in certain things that relate particularly to ibadah, not aqidah, things that are social in nature and are carried out in their rituals. The practice of Islam should be done according to local customary conditions, as expressed in the Minangkabau saying, di mana bumi dipijak, di situ langit dijunjung (literal translation: we uphold the sky above the earth where our feet stand; free translation: when in Rome, do as the Romans do)".[35]

According to this perspective, in principle, the implementation of Minangkabau customs is not in opposition against Islam. In short, Minangkabau customary practices are the implementation of Islamic teachings, or Minangkabau traditions may be considered as being significantly Islamic. Concerning the practice of ABS/SBK in Minangkabau, there are two social polarization acknowledged, namely the old and young generations. People of the older generation are more flexible in translating

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[34]Jeffrey Hadler, *Sengketa Tiada Putus...*
[35]Interview in Batusangkar, September 15, 2018.

Islamic sharia into customary practices. Pre-existing cultures or customary practices found prior to Islam's introduction in West Sumatera are not automatically deemed *haram* or accused as *bid'ah* (heresy). Whereas people of the younger generation, who are mostly members of Muhammadiyah (a major non-governmental Islamic organization in Indonesia), tend to be more selective in implementing or specifying sharia in customary practices. According to Risman Bustaman, it is difficult to bring the opinions of the older and the younger generations together in relation to the practice of *Syara' Mangato, Adat Mamakai* (Sharia regulates, *Adat* utilizes).

> "In a lot of aspects, we cannot bring the two together. For instance, concerning inheritance law in Minang. The younger generation still questions whether Minang inheritance law is in accordance with sharia? But for the older generation, (the debate on) inheritance law is done. The older folks are more accommodative in combining adat and sharia. Such as the practice of praying while using incense, visiting cemeteries while having Hindu elements involved, or tahlil (a form of dhikr or repetitive recital of la ilaaha illa Allah – Researcher), these are considered as a non-issue to the older generation, but the young regard them as problematic".[36]

The religious debates of both sides were recorded by B.J.O. Shrieke[37] in a book titled *Pergolakan Agama di Sumatera Barat.* According to Schrieke, the presence of the younger generation as modern Islamic intellectuals had led to religious purification and it also went against the social institution protected by customary tradition. This movement originated from the revivalism movement advocated through the Padri war that ended in 1837. It surfaced as a new episode of modern Islamic thought movement in West Sumatera that was pioneered by Syekh Karim Amrullah who founded *Surau Jembatan Besi* in 1914.

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[36]Interview in Batusangkar, September 15, 2018.
[37]B.J.O. Schrieke, *Pergolakan Agama di Sumatera Barat Sebuah Sumbangan Bibliografi,* Jakarta: Bharatar, 1973.

According to Asasriwarni, a professor of Islamic jurisprudence and a religious figure in West Sumatera, the idea of Islam Nusantara still maintains the purity of Islamic teachings. However, in practice the teachings are aligned with the culture and customary rituals of Minangkabau.

"We practice Islam in accordance with our culture in Indonesia. This does not mean that we have changed Islam. Al-Qur'an, Sunnah, Ijma' Qias remain to be used, albeit they are adapted to Indonesian cultures. Islam Nusantara is no aqidah, teaching or doctrine. ABS/SBK, that is Islam Nusantara. Sharia regulates means that Al-Qur'an and Hadith state so and so, then we practice them here. Adat in Minangkabau adjusts itself accordingly. The idea is from Islam and the implementation aligns with customary practices".[38]

The idea of ABS/SBK as a philosophy of the Minangkabau people, which describes the peaceful convergence between *adat* and Islam in West Sumatera under the principle wherein (Islamic) sharia regulates, by placing the Quran as the source of conception, and *adat* practices these ideas while making various adjustments accordingly. As an example, concerning the art of Minangkabau dance, a study was conducted on dance art that is in accordance with the philosophy of ABS/SBK. If the Minangkabau dance were against the decree of the Prophet, then it would be haram since Islam forbids dances simultaneously conducted by both male and female dancers.[39]

Ulema: from religious leader to opinion maker

In the current era of new media, religion, religious teachings or religious thoughts, including ulemas as religious leaders, are entering a

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[38]Interview in Padang, September 14, 2018.

[39]Afifah Asriati, *The Figure of Minangkabau Dancers an Entity of Minang Dancer Based on the Value ABS-SBK.* Prooseding International Seminar Languages, 2015. Also see: Afifah Asriati, "Tari Pasambahan dan Falsafah Minang: Dalam Perspektif Alim Ulama Kota Padang", *Humanus,* Volume XI, Numer 2 (2012), 145-159; Sidi Gazalba, *Pandangan Islam Tentang Kesenian,* Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Antara, 1977.

new stage. Hajarvard[40] calls it *The Mediatization of Religion*, which asserts that religious processes are increasingly penetrating into media logics, in terms of organizational relations, contents, and practice. Meanwhile, Hoover[41] considers religion or religious contents in the current media era have led to obscurity as religion becomes more and more connected with the public wherein everyone has access to the media.

In the West Sumatera context, ulemas of the past would interact with their followers through the *surau* (place of worship smaller than a mosque), madrasah, or religious study groups, the advent of social media as a form of new media has, however, altered these relations.[42] Social media serves as a 'neutral ground' for ulemas and the public to convey and deliberate on any topic they are interested in discussing. According to Helland[43], this era offers an interactive atmosphere in which every individual experience and idea can be exchanged via virtual space. Such relations have subsequently formed a difference between the concept of 'online religion' (information pertaining to religion found on the internet) and 'religion online' (religious practices or experiences undertaken via the internet).[44]

Within such perspective of new media, this study found that the concept of Islam Nusantara had been rather actively discussed on Facebook than in discussion forums, religious study groups, seminars, or other direct face-to-face assemblies. Ustad Zulkifli Zakaria, who is also an active Facebook user, even admitted to knowing and being surprised about the debate on Islam Nusantara via social media.

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[40]Stig Hjarvard, "The Mediatization of Religion a Theory of the Median Agent of Religious Change", *Northern Lights*, Volume 6, Issue 1 (June 2008), 9-26.

[41]Stewart Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age,* London and New York: Routledge, 2010.

[42]Iswandi Syahputra, "New Media, New Relations: Cyberstalking on Social Media in the Interaction of Muslim Scholars and the Public in West Sumatra, Indonesia", *Malaysian Journal of Communication,* Volume 34, Number 1 (2018), 153-169.

[43]C. Helland, "Surfing for Salvation", *Religion,* Volume 32, Number 4 (2000), 293-302.

[44]D. E. Cowan (eds), *Religion Online: Finding Faith on the Internet,* New York: Routledge, 2004.

"I was so taken aback reading about it (the debate on Islam Nusantara – Researcher) on social media. I had the impression that it seems where human rights are justly accepted, then sharia is there (to follow – Researcher). It's as if the initial standard were worldly knowledge, then Islam follows accordingly. On it (social media – Researcher) the success story of Walisongo in preaching across Nusantara was told."[45]

Facebook as one of the forms of new media has concurrently positioned netizens as users, consumers, and producers of contents. Such novel phenomenon occurring on social media has generated the term prosumer (producer and consumer).[46] As a consumer, Ustad Zulkifli Zakaria is a netizen who reads various contents on Facebook. However, at the exact same time, other netizens who write or convey their opinions via Facebook are content producers. This kind of situation may occur in this era of Facebook or other forms of social media given that the relationships have the attributes of being participatory, open, hyper-interactive, community-based, and mutually interconnected.

These features that Facebook has are instead considered by Buya Gusrizal Gazahar as an opportunity to disseminate the myriad of thoughts he holds, including his rejection of Islam Nusantara. According to Buya Gusrizal Gazahar, using Facebook to widely publicize his thoughts, particularly to reject Islam Nusantara in West Sumatera, is a lot cheaper, easier, and faster, and his messages can also be safely cited by journalists.

The first reason is cost. The second reason, I used Facebook so that journalists are not burdened and the language I use cannot be spun by them. That is why every time I post my status I would use long sentences and figures. Before, my statements were often spun by journalists. I felt safer publishing it (rejection of Islam Nusantara – Researcher) on Facebook. But, prior to posting it on Facebook, there were discussions

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[45]Interview in Pariaman, September 13, 2018.
[46]Andrew F. Wood, and Matthew J. Smith, *Online Communication: Linking, Technology, Identity, And Culture,* London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005, 41.

with other ulemas regarding the key points that I would present on Facebook.[47]

In Indonesia, activities on social media can take place freely and unrestricted as they are supported by the growing climate of democracy. Given social media's specific characteristics within a climate of liberal democracy, activities on Facebook have become progressively dynamic. The extent and magnitude of activities on Facebook relating to discussions of Islam Nusantara had quite frequently triggered and caused tensions among netizens. According to Zukifli Zakaria, Risman Bustaman, and Asariwarni, these conversations on Facebook are quite disconcerting. It is, thus, necessary to consider whether Facebook should be used as a means to deliver materials or concept pertaining to Islam Nusantara.

Moreover, the increase of activities on Facebook relating to conversations about Islam Nusantara would often trigger and cause virality to reject Islam Nusantara in West Sumatera. These viralities are mobilized by actors known as opinion makers, who stand alone on social media but are interconnected between one another. Such social media condition has been described by Klein (via Porta)[48] as a *'web like image'*, wherein activities on social media are likened to the web of a spider with the core of the web being the center that can expand through other actors involved in social media activities. Borgatti and Lopez-Kidwell[49] consider that the actors playing the role as mediators actually have a weak connection with other actors outside the main actors, who are at the heart of the web. However, these mediators engage in intense relations on social media allowing them to mutually stimulate one another.

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[47]Interview in Payakumbuh, September 14, 2018.

[48]Della D. Porta, *Can Democracy Be Saved? Participation, Deliberation, and Social Movement,* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2013.

[49]Stephen P. Borgatti and Virginie Lopez Kidwell, "Network Theory" via John Scott and Peter J. Carrington (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Social Network Analysis,* London, Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE, 2011, 167-179.

In the matter of Islam Nusantara's rejection in West Sumatera via Facebook, the core of the spider web was Buya Gusrizal Gazahar as the opinion maker. His opinion on the rejection of Islam Nusantara that was conveyed through Facebook was then redistributed by other actors. Eventually, the opinion had spread extensively due to Facebook's interactive feature. The various relations found in the virtual phenomenon in this era of Facebook indicate the shift of ulemas' role as religious leaders to that of opinion makers. According to Cheong[50], communication that is mediated by new media (Facebook) may present reality and reinforce religious authority. This means that although the era of Facebook has shifted the role of ulemas from being religious leaders into opinion makers, the shift has strengthened the ulemas stance as the bearer of religious authority instead.[51]

Conclusion

The rejection of Islam Nusantara in West Sumatera may be understood as the efforts of the West Sumatera Indonesian Ulema Council in defending their belief that Islam is the perfect religion and that it should be practiced unconditionally (*kaffah*). If there were any consideration that Islam Nusantara is Islam that accommodates local traditions and cultures prior to Islam's introduction in West Sumatera, then the appropriate term to use should be Islam in the Archipelago or Islam from the Archipelago. The aspect of language usage is, thus, another reason presented to reject islam Nusantara in West Sumatera.

Meanwhile, the acceptance of Islam Nusantara in West Sumatera by several other religious leaders is based on the reasoning that customary

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[50]Pauline Hope Cheong, "The Vitality of New Media and Religion: Communicative Perspectives, Practices, and Changing Authority in Spiritual Organization", *New Media and Society,* Volume 19, Number 1 (2017), 25-33.

[51]Stewart Hoover, *The Media and Religious Authority…*

practice in Minangkabau West Sumatera is founded on the principle *Adaik Bersandi Syarak, Syarak Bersandi Kitabullah* as a basic philosophy that regulates the relationship between tradition and religion in West Sumatera. In practice, this basic philosophy is implemented through the maxim *Syara' Mangato, Adat Mamakai* (*Sharia regulates, Custom utilizes*). It can, thus, be understood that the presence of Islam Nusantara in West Sumatera should not be a problem.

The discourse on the rejection of Islam Nusantara in West Sumatera had been more actively discussed as a conversation topic by netizens on Facebook. Such is the case given that the ulemas who rejected Islam Nusantara understood the power of Facebook as a means to persuade, influence, or form public opinions. This phenomenon shows that in this era of Facebook, there has been a shift in the definition of ulemas as religious leaders into opinion makers. However, such shift has in fact reinforced ulemas as the bearer of religious authority. Therefore, this finding may have implication on the definition of ulemas as religious leaders because the role they traditionally have may overlap or even shift into that of opinion makers and opinion leaders thereby resulting in a new definition within the current era of new media.

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