

# Conflict and Accommodation of Indigenous and Religious Groups with the Government in West Sumatra--Indonesia in Reformation Era

Yanti Mulia Roza<sup>1</sup>, Iman Asroa. B.S.<sup>2</sup>  
{[yanti.mr@iainbatusangkar.ac.id](mailto:yanti.mr@iainbatusangkar.ac.id)<sup>1</sup>, [imanasroab@gmail.com](mailto:imanasroab@gmail.com)<sup>2</sup>}

IAIN Batusangkar, Indonesia

**Abstract.** This study aims to identify conflict and accommodation between traditional and religious groups and the government in West Sumatra (Case Study in Tanah Datar Regency). This type of research is qualitative with descriptive analysis method. The form of the research is a case study with a historic and sociological approach. Sources of data from interviews with the *Lembaga Kerapatan Adat Alam Minangkabau* (LKAAM), Nagari Adat Density (KAN), *Majelis Tinggi Kerapatan Adat Alam Minangkabau* (MTKAAM), Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), officials and former government officials, along with books and articles. The results of the study stated that conflict was caused by differences in each group in understanding its role and the lack of communication and interaction between group actors. If there is communication and accommodation, there will be harmonization between groups.

**Keywords:** Conflict; Accommodation; Customs; Religion; Government

## 1 Introduction

During the Old Order, religious and intellectual groups in West Sumatra had begun to take part in determining the nagari-level government to give birth to a government system in *Minangkabau* called *Tungku Tigo Sajaringan* which consisted of traditional groups (*niniak mamak*), religions (*alim ulama*), and intellectual (*cadiak pandai*).[1] This is in line with the philosophy of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* which is a binding and philosophical foundation for adat and religion in *Minangkabau* society.[2] However, in practice it still causes conflict, eventually giving rise to various socio-religious movements that aim to avoid a gap between religious obligations and social life.

During the New Order era, conflicts[3] arose among village communities due to the certification system in the name of individuals on *tanah ulayat* (collective tenure rights).[4] Another conflict is the establishment of a centralized system that disrupts the *Minangkabau* traditional order. This system is considered unable to accommodate the aspirations of indigenous groups in government. This caused *Minangkabau* traditional leaders to start efforts to restore the *nagari* government system which eventually resulted in the policy that *Nagari* was a *Customary Law Community Unit* encoded in adat, *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* with autonomous authority within the scope of statutory regulations.[5]

During the Reformation Order, policies on Regional Autonomy began to be established.[6] This triggers the desire of indigenous groups to return to preserving customs, thus giving rise to

the discourse of *Kembali ke Nagari* and *Kembali ke Surau*. The hope is that this discourse can give back the role of traditional and religious groups in the government system *Nagari* autonomous based on *Islam* and *Minang* customs. However, this discourse has resulted in conflicting perceptions between indigenous groups and the government and religious groups with the government.

Studies on conflict and accommodation of adat and religion in *Minangkabau* have been studied by academics and researchers, both at home and abroad, such as research by Taufik Abdullah on the perspective of conflict between adat and religion in *Minangkabau*.<sup>[7]</sup> Research by Benda Backman on the comparison between conflicts in Ambon and *Minangkabau*<sup>[8]</sup> regarding land disputes, inheritance, the struggle for inheritance titles, the system *matrilineal* (lineage and ethnicity from the mother).<sup>[9]</sup> There are similarities with what happened to the Minang tribe. However, no research has been found that specifically examines conflicts and accommodation of customs and religion with local governments in the Reformation Era in the lives of the people of West Sumatra, especially Tanah Datar Regency. Therefore, this research focuses on a study with the title, *Conflict and Accommodation of Indigenous and Religious Groups with the Government in West Sumatra--Indonesia in the Reformation Era*.

The formulation of the problem in this research is how are the cases and patterns of conflict and accommodation between traditional, religious groups and the government in the field of leadership and regional policies? The focus of this research is how cases and patterns of conflict between customary and religious accommodations with the government in West Sumatra during the Reformation Era (case study of Tanah Datar Regency). The general purpose of this research is to identify cases and patterns of conflict and accommodation between adat and religion and the government in the areas of leadership and regional policy.

## 2 Method

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative which describes a number of phenomena of conflict and accommodation of traditional and religious groups with the government in real terms.<sup>[10]</sup> The form of the research is a case study that describes a phenomenon thoroughly and in depth in order to gain an understanding of the phenomenon of conflict and accommodation of traditional and religious groups with the government in Tanah Datar Regency.<sup>[11]</sup>

The problems in this study were investigated using historical and sociological approaches. A historical approach is used to collect information in chronological order to understand the background of the conflict between adat and religious groups and the government in Tanah Datar Regency.<sup>[12]</sup> The sociological approach is used to identify the social aspects of each customary group, religious group and government in social and religious interactions.<sup>[13]</sup>

Data collection is carried out by direct observation of facts regarding religious social activities and traditional rituals carried out by the community, both personally and in groups.<sup>[14]</sup> Observations were made in December 2015, for six times. Primary data sources come from local government documents of Tanah Datar Regency and West Sumatra Province regarding regional regulations, customary and religious agreements, interviews, and government documents. While secondary and supporting data were obtained from magazines, local and national newspapers, wise words of adat and religion, as well as contemporary diaries, books in libraries, scientific journals, articles and results of field observations.<sup>[15]</sup>

Data analysis was carried out using descriptive qualitative methods to describe conflict and accommodation data between customs and religion and the government obtained from interviews, observations and empirical documentation without data manipulation.[16] The indicators that are the focus of data collection are the areas of leadership, regional policies, institutions and traditional life. The data analysis procedure was carried out by reducing data, presenting data, and drawing conclusions from data verification.

### 3 Result and Discussion

The *Minang* community is known to be fanatical about traditional values, culture and religion, where the majority are Muslims. That is why the *Minang* people make customs and religion the foundation and order of life. This is in line with the philosophy of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*. [17]

In the Reformation Era, the government has made a policy in the preservation of customs and culture which is one of the characteristics of a pluralistic Indonesia. This policy led to conflict and accommodation among the *adat*, religious, and government circles in *Minangkabau*. This conflict and accommodation was investigated in a time constraint from 1998 to 2015 especially in Tanah Datar.

Before Indonesia's independence, traditional leaders (*niniak mamak*) formed a traditional organization in West Sumatra, namely the *Majelis Tinggi Kerapatan Adat Alam Minangkabau* (MTKAAM) which aims to fight for the independence of the Republic of Indonesia. During the New Order (Orba) period, the government established the *Lembaga Kerapatan Adat Alam Minangkabau* (LKAAM) which was established at the government's initiative to embrace indigenous groups. LKAAM was active until the Reformation Era although during the Reformation there was a change in orientation. Likewise with the organization *Bundo Kanduang* which was born during the New Order era as the aspirations of Minang women which existed until the Reformation Era with its changes.

During the Reformation Era, in Tanah Datar Regency there were several Sharia regulations and government appeals to support customs and religion. In everyday life, it is seen that there is accommodation of Islamic teachings and customs in the ceremonial ceremonies of the *Minangkabau* community. This accommodation can be seen in traditional rituals, weddings, to death ceremonies. However, people find it difficult to separate traditional ceremonial and religious rituals because it contains several elements of Islamic *syi'ar*, and vice versa. This pattern of life has become a polemic for some scholars and religious leaders, some confirming it and some not.

Another conflict arose when the Ministerial Decree No. 29 of 2008 article 4 paragraph 4 came into effect which discussed the limitations in terms of providing assistance in the form of grants and social assistance each year in succession to non-governmental institutions. This triggers conflicts in the form of demands from non-institutions governmental such as KAN, LKAAM and MUI to accommodate the interests of these institutions. These institutions assess the lack of government support in terms of budget for traditional and religious institutions which are non-governmental institutions.

In Tanah Datar District, the central regulation on grants and social assistance is very beneficial for indigenous groups such as LKAAM and KAN as well as religious groups such as MUI. This is evidenced by the increasing number of grants and social assistance funds. In terms of finance, the allocation fund has *nagari* also increased, since 2009 it has reached

approximately 2-3 hundred million per year and in 2016 it has reached about 1 (one) billion *rupiah* per year, a five-fold increase compared to the previous year. In this program *nagari* there are those that stand alone and there are also those that work together and synergize with related institutions.

With a budget from the government, traditional institutions can carry out activities for the preservation of customs, such as traditional training for youths, coaching activities for *penghulu* and others. Likewise, Tanah Datar MUI also received budget funds from the government to carry out community development activities, activate research activities, *muzakarah*, counseling as well as for the administration of the MUI office secretariat. However, in terms of regional development, MUI, LKAAM and KAN feel that the government has not been involved in policy making. For example in the deliberation on the RPJMD (Regional Medium-Term Development Plan). They feel that they are only involved when the government needs them, for example there are cases that cannot be handled by the government and things that are incidental.

In general, the culture of deliberation is still a tradition of the Minang community as evidenced by the existence of *Badan Permusyawaratan Nagari*. The *Badan Permusyawaratan Nagari* cooperates with the *Wali Nagari* to determine the rules of the Nagari, as well as accommodate and channel the aspirations of the community.[18] In the preparation of Regional Regulations in *Nagari*, the process begins with hearings with all elements of the community to solicit public opinion and input, starting from elements of the Government of Nagari, *wali nagari*, *cadiak pandai*, *niniak mamak* (traditional leaders), *alim ulama*, *Bundo Kanduang* and youth who are members of the *Badan Permusyawaratan Nagari*.

The concept of the philosophy *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* which has existed since the beginning of the Reformation, was continued by the Tanah Datar Regency Government. According to some circles the concept has met expectations. This has been applied to the reality in the norms of society, such as forbidden to drink alcohol, men and women not to roam at night, commit immorality, and so on. However, its application is still quite difficult in the community. This program will be successful if it is supported by *penghulu adat* (*ninik mamak*), *cadiak pandai*, dan *alim ulama*. However, the problem is that the role of *ninik mamak* is already weak in the midst of *anak kamanakannya* (nephews) and society in general.

One form of government support for religious values is the issuance of a regional regulation (*Perda*) regarding the obligation to recite and read the *Koran* (newspaper). If this regulation is implemented properly, there will be coolness in the community. In addition to the Regional Regulation concerning the obligation to read and write the *Koran*, there is a Regent Regulation on Educational Institutions Al-Quran and a Regional Regulation on *zakat*. There are also Al-Quran educational institutions that have been facilitated by the government from various aspects. However, this regional regulation has not been fully implemented because religious values are still not deeply rooted in society. It is not easy to realize it in the community because not all people can be regulated by government policies. Sometimes a persuasive approach is needed from the government, *ulama* and *penghulu* (tribal leaders).

Government support for indigenous groups involves KAN (*Kerapatan Adat Nagari*). This can be seen in the issuance of the Regional Regulation on the establishment of the BPRN and the regulations regarding the BPRN which are regulated in the Tanah Datar Regent Regulation Number 13 of 2008 regarding decision making in the *nagari*. The problem is that the person chosen to carry out the mandate in KAN lacks leadership skills, lacks intellectual and religious insight.

## 4 Conclusion

Conflicts in the field of leadership are caused by differences in each group in understanding its role. Each group wants to have a role in leading the community and preserving ABS-SBK. Another factor is dissatisfaction with the government in terms of involvement in formulating development programs and planning. Conflict is also caused by the lack of communication and interaction between each group (*Adat*, Religion and Government). The government that interferes too much in traditional and religious matters creates conflicts in the formulation of policies and programs. The government makes regulations to accommodate customs and religions, but it is still not in accordance with their wishes. If the government tries to accommodate the two groups, there will be harmonization between groups.

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