

## CONTESTING ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL VALUES: A MINANGKABAU RESPONSE TO INDONESIA'S NATIONAL HIJAB POLICY

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### ABSTRACT

Indonesia's Joint Ministerial Decree (*SKB Tiga Menteri*), which prohibits schools from mandating the hijab, has sparked significant controversy, particularly in Minangkabau society, where Islamic norms are strongly interwoven with adat and educational traditions. This study aims to analyze the roots of Minangkabau resistance to the hijab policy and to understand what this conflict reveals about broader negotiations between state authority and local Islamic educational values. Employing a qualitative fieldwork approach, the research integrates in-depth interviews, field observations, and digital documentation. These primary data are complemented by qualitative content analysis of media reports, public statements, and community narratives to capture both grassroots and public discourses. Findings show that Minangkabau communities interpret the policy as undermining the moral development of children and disrupting the long-standing normalization of hijab practice in schools. Their resistance signifies a strong assertion of educational autonomy and reflects a challenge to the state's attempt to centralize religious policy. This contestation is rooted not only in religious doctrine but also in cultural heritage and communal identity. The Minangkabau reaction highlights the persistent dissonance between national education policies and local religious-cultural frameworks, demonstrating that uniform regulations may fail to accommodate Indonesia's plural sociocultural landscape. The study underscores the need for culturally responsive policy-making in Islamic education, encouraging future decisions to integrate local values, community participation, and context-sensitive approaches to avoid conflict and strengthen policy legitimacy.

**Keywords:** Hijab Policy, Islamic Education, Minangkabau Society, Local Resistance, Religious Identity

### INTRODUCTION

The hijab has been perceived and treated differently across global contexts. In many Middle Eastern countries, such as Saudi Arabia, the hijab is strictly mandated, often restricting women's access to education and participation in public life (Aladsani, 2022; Aloraini et al., 2024; Azim & Happel-Parkins, 2019; Hilal et al., 2024; Mahmood et al., 2015). Although such practices have drawn widespread criticism, Saudi Arabia has recently relaxed these strict requirements, signalling a shift in state attitudes toward gender and dress codes (Alhassan & Németh, 2023). In contrast, in many Western countries, including the United States and Europe, the hijab is often perceived negatively and is even prohibited in some public educational institutions (Fattali & Smith, 2023; Syed, 2021; Najib & Teeple Hopkins, 2020). The hijab has been framed as a symbol of backwardness, religious extremism, or female oppression, and has become a target of discrimination, racism, and Islamophobia (Ahmed & Gorey, 2023; Akou, 2021; Brayson, 2021; Brooks et al., 2023; Chaudry, 2021; Cheng, 2019; Fernández de Casadevante, 2023). Even in Muslim-majority nations like Turkey, state secularism has at times resulted in bans on hijab in educational institutions (Öztürk et al., 2022; Seggie, 2015). In Southeast Asia, perceptions of

the hijab also vary; in Singapore, it is seen as a symbol of Malay identity and deemed culturally incompatible with national values (Ang et al., 2022; Ramakrishna, 2019).

These global debates resonate with the Indonesian context, particularly in response to a highly controversial policy: the Joint Ministerial Decree (*SKB Tiga Menteri*, hereafter SKB) on school uniforms. The policy prohibits public schools from compelling students to wear religious attire, including the hijab. Although designed to protect religious freedom, the policy has been met with resistance, especially in West Sumatra, where Minangkabau society maintains strong integration between Islam and adat (customary law). The case that triggered the SKB involved a non-Muslim student at Public Vocational Secondary Schools (SMKN 2) Padang, who a teacher allegedly pressured to wear the hijab. Rather than resolving the issue, the decree sparked broader contestation among community members, religious councils, traditional institutions, and even local government leaders.

Key informants interviewed for this study, including a West Sumatran senator (IM1), members of the Minangkabau customary council (IM2), and a city mayor (IM3), openly criticized the SKB and refused to comply with its directives, arguing that it contradicts local moral and religious values. Public intellectuals and policy analysts have also criticized the policy as hastily implemented and disconnected from local sociocultural realities. Without careful negotiation, such resistance risks escalating into a deeper conflict between state authority and local autonomy in Islamic education.

Existing literature on ideological contestation in Indonesian education can be broadly categorized into three thematic strands. First, political-historical analyses have highlighted ideological tensions in post-Suharto Indonesia, including the rise of religious nationalism and the contest between secular and Islamic educational frameworks (Bourchier, 2019; Hefner, 2019; Sirozi, 2004). Second, studies focusing on religious education institutions have examined how diverse Islamic groups shape educational ideologies, revealing the dialectical relationship between religious identity and school policy (Kosim et al., 2023; Saparudin, 2017, 2018). Third, more recent scholarship has explored how Islamic educational actors contest their identities and authority in digital spaces, competing to define Islam through media and content production (Jubba et al., 2022; Salam-Salmaoui et al., 2025).

While these studies have made significant contributions to understanding ideological dynamics in Islamic education, few have examined grassroots resistance to national policy through the lens of local socioreligious identity. This article addresses that gap by investigating how Minangkabau society interprets and resists the SKB as a form of ideological contestation in education. It builds on the proposition that in Minangkabau culture, Islam and adat are inseparable and jointly shape the moral education of children (Elfira, 2006, 2019, 2023; Huda, 2008, 2020). Theoretical guidance is drawn from Antje Wiener's framework of contestation, which views resistance not merely as rejection but as a negotiation of norms, authority, and legitimacy.

This article investigates the emergence of Minangkabau resistance to the SKB by examining how community actors articulate their objections to the policy and how this opposition shapes broader implications for Islamic education and national policy implementation. By exploring how resistance developed, why local actors opposed the decree, and what these reactions reveal about the governance of Islamic education, the study provides a fresh analytical lens on state–society dynamics. Its novelty lies in uncovering how a culturally distinct Muslim community interprets, negotiates, and contests national religious policy not merely through formal legal arguments but through everyday educational values, cultural norms, and moral expectations rooted in Minangkabau adat and Islamic identity. This approach moves beyond existing studies that emphasize policy mechanics or bureaucratic processes, offering instead an interpretive account of how local educational meaning is constructed through the

interplay of religion, culture, and state authority. In doing so, the article expands current understandings of policy contestation in plural Muslim societies and highlights the cultural embeddedness of Islamic educational governance.

## METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to explore ideological contestation between the Minangkabau community and the Indonesian government regarding the implementation of the national hijab policy in public education (Denzim, 2009). The analytical framework is grounded in Antje Wiener's theory of norm contestation (Wiener, 2007, 2014, 2017), which views contestation as an ongoing struggle between legality and legitimacy grounded in divergent normative orders. Norms in this framework refer to principles, doctrines, and regulations that serve as behavioral standards and offer orientation to members of a social institution or organization. In the context of this research, contestation is understood as a form of social interaction expressed explicitly through opposition, rejection, and argumentation, and implicitly through disregard, denial, and indifference. These contestations are observed within Islamic education as it navigates tensions between local religious and cultural values and increasingly secular state norms.

Data collection was conducted through three primary methods: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Key informants included local government officials, Islamic educators, school leaders, adat council members, and Islamic education experts in West Sumatra. Observations were conducted in public schools and community settings in West Sumatra, particularly in areas affected by the hijab regulation. Document analysis focused on public statements, government circulars, and digital content, including audiovisual materials disseminated via platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook.

Data were analyzed using an inductive approach combined with Wiener's theoretical framework. The analytical process followed three primary stages: restatement (summarizing field findings), description (identifying patterns of resistance as mechanisms of social cohesion), and interpretation (theoretical integration of empirical findings). These stages parallel the classical model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. This integrated analytical approach enabled the identification of contestatory patterns and the underlying ideologies that inform social practices surrounding Islamic education in the Minangkabau context.

To ensure validity, this study employed triangulation, focusing on source diversity and document analysis. Source triangulation was achieved by engaging various stakeholders, including government officials, educators, school leaders, adat leaders, and Islamic education experts in West Sumatra, so that multiple perspectives were represented. Document triangulation was applied through the analysis of government circulars, school regulations, and public statements, complemented by digital media content from platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook. Cross-checking interviews with official documents and media narratives enhanced the credibility of the findings and highlighted how contestation was expressed in both state policies and public discourse.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study reveals that the implementation of the SKB on school uniform policy has triggered multi-layered forms of resistance in Minangkabau society. The resistance is not merely a reaction to policy content. However, it reflects a deeper ideological contestation between the state's universalist, secular norms and the localized religious-cultural values embedded in the Minangkabau educational system. The analysis of empirical data suggests three interrelated

dimensions of this contestation: (1) the forms of resistance, (2) the underlying factors, and (3) the implications for Islamic education.

### **Forms of Resistance: From Cultural Opposition to Constitutional Challenges**

The implementation of the SKB prohibits public schools from requiring religious attire, such as the hijab, triggering a robust, multifaceted wave of resistance in West Sumatra. This resistance, far from being limited to individual school-level objections, evolved into a broad-based cultural, political, and even legal movement, reflecting deep-rooted tensions between national secular governance and local Islamic-adat moral frameworks. The Minangkabau case thus presents a unique convergence of cultural contestation, ideological dissent, and constitutional engagement in response to centralized education policy.

At the grassroots level, resistance emerged in the form of symbolic defiance by school leaders and teachers who chose to reinterpret or silently bypass the SKB. As previously documented, some educators continued to “encourage” hijab use as part of character education, despite the decree’s explicit prohibition of such encouragement. Beyond the schoolyard, intellectual resistance was vocally expressed by scholars and experts in Islamic education. One prominent Islamic pedagogue from State Islamic University (UIN) Imam Bonjol Padang publicly denounced the SKB, arguing that the hijab is a religious obligation mandated by Qur’anic verses such as Surah al-Ahzab (33:59), and that moral education, including the inculcation of modest dress, requires coordinated support from families, schools, and state institutions. He further warned that the SKB’s language, which prohibits even “encouraging” the hijab, effectively undermines the religious mission of Islamic education and alienates Muslim-majority regions from national education discourse (IM5, personal communication, August 2025).

A critical ideological analysis came from another academic at Universitas Negeri Padang, who identified the decree as a symptom of ideological hybridity, combining religious tolerance rhetoric with aggressive secularism. In this regard, framing the hijab solely as a symbol of religious coercion reveals a lack of cultural nuance. In the Minangkabau context, she argued, the hijab is not just a religious garment but a manifestation of *marwah* (honor), deeply embedded within both Islamic and adat traditions. “Freedom, he argued, must include the right of regions to implement religious-cultural values consistent with their historical narratives.” (IM6, personal communication, August 2025).

These intellectual responses were echoed in formal institutional resistance. The West Sumatra Education Council submitted an official letter (No. 004/DP-SB/A/I/2021) to the national government, calling for the SKB’s revocation. The council expressed concern that the decree ignored regional sociocultural realities and could aggravate, rather than resolve, tensions in school environments. A member of the council criticized the central government’s use of viral social media incidents as justification for legal change, arguing that policy-making should be grounded in dialogue, not digital sensationalism (IM8, personal communication, August 2025).

Legislative actors at both regional and national levels also became vocal critics of the SKB. The Chair of the West Sumatra DPRD emphasized that Indonesia’s founding principles are neither secular nor liberal, referencing Article 18 of the 1945 Constitution to argue that regions possess legal autonomy to preserve and practice adat-based systems. He stressed that Minangkabau’s foundational axiom, *adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah*, is not merely symbolic; it is a normative system embedded within the region’s legal, moral, and educational frameworks (IM13, personal communication, August 2025). In alignment with this view, a member of Commission II of the national parliament asserted that the SKB contradicted not only Islamic teachings but also local values that synthesize theology and culture (IM2, personal

communication, August 2025). The Chair of Commission X (IM9), responsible for education, expressed support for regional discretion in promoting religious dress codes, framing such guidance as integral to character development and moral order.

Local government authorities further reinforced resistance. One mayor of a major West Sumatran city publicly rejected the SKB in a televised interview, asserting that the decree violates both local values and the legal principles of regional autonomy as protected under Law No. 23/2004 (revised by Law No. 12/2008) (IM3, personal communication, August 2025). He also criticized the SKB's inconsistency with the National Education System Law No. 20/2003, arguing that national laws should accommodate the cultural and religious character of diverse regions (Munir & Pandin, 2018).

The most striking escalation of resistance culminated in a constitutional challenge. A formal *judicial review* of the SKB was submitted to the Supreme Court by the Minangkabau Customary Council (*Lembaga Adat Sumatera Barat*) (IM4, personal communication, August 2025), in collaboration with the provincial branch of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) (IM14, personal communication, August 2025) and prominent community leaders. In a joint assembly, the MUI declared that the SKB undermines, rather than protects, intercommunal harmony and that it fails to appreciate the integrative model of Islam and adat as practiced in West Sumatra. By pursuing legal recourse, local actors transformed their cultural dissent into a constitutional question, challenging the central government's authority to override regional moral frameworks in the name of national standardization.

Taken together, these layers of resistance, ranging from symbolic disobedience and intellectual critique to legislative opposition and judicial review, reflect a sophisticated and deeply embedded defense of Minangkabau identity. In this context, the hijab is not merely an article of clothing, nor is it solely a religious obligation. It is a symbol of cultural sovereignty, moral legitimacy, and regional autonomy. Its regulation, therefore, is perceived not as a benign act of policy correction, but as a challenge to the normative universe in which Islamic faith, adat wisdom, and educational practice are inextricably linked.

### **Underlying Factors: Normative Conflict between State and Society**

The resistance to the SKB in West Sumatra did not emerge in a vacuum; it reflects a deeper normative conflict between the state's secular educational agenda and the religious and cultural lifeworlds of Minangkabau society. At its core, this contestation centers on the divergence between central government norms, framed as universalist, rights-based, and secular, and local communal norms rooted in a theological-cultural synthesis encapsulated by the axiom *adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah* (custom is founded on Islamic law, and Islamic law is founded on the Qur'an).

Whereas the previous section addressed the forms of resistance enacted by individuals and institutions, this section elucidates the *underlying factors* that animated and legitimized such resistance. Drawing on Wiener's (2014) framework of norm contestation, this phase constitutes a *mobilization of counter-normativity*, a process in which local actors respond to perceived norm imposition by activating alternative legal, moral, and pedagogical orders.

The issuance of the SKB was widely perceived as an infringement on religious freedom, parental rights, and regional autonomy. The backlash was not merely spontaneous; it involved a coordinated mobilization across a network of actors, religious scholars, school principals, legislators, customary institutions, women's organizations, and digital influencers, who collectively articulated the decree as illegitimate. This illustrates what Wiener (2017) refers to as the contestation of norm legitimacy, not merely its legality.

Several actors emphasized that the decree violated existing national legal frameworks. The West Sumatra Education Council cited Article 31(3) of the 1945 Constitution, which

obliges the state to promote religious education; Government Regulation No. 17/2010, which mandates moral-spiritual development; and Presidential Regulation No. 87/2017 on Character Education, which integrates religious virtues into school curricula (IM12, personal communication, August 2025). These legal instruments were invoked to assert that the SKB undermines the normative infrastructure of the Indonesian education system itself.

From a religious-educational standpoint, one Islamic education expert argued in *Republika* that the decree promotes moral relativism by allowing students to opt out of religious obligations such as the hijab. He framed the issue not as a matter of coercion but as one of moral formation, in which religious identity must be cultivated consistently across school, family, and community. From this view, permitting students not to wear the hijab equates to legitimizing religious disobedience and weakening the authority of Islamic pedagogy (IM5, personal communication, August 2025).

This sentiment was echoed by a member of the national parliament's Commission X (IM9), who stressed that adolescence is a critical phase for moral development. He argued that schools must retain the authority to implement dress codes aligned with the dominant religious values of their respective regions. To deny this authority, he claimed, is to erode the cultural relevance and formative function of education.

From the perspective of *adat*, the SKB was interpreted as a direct challenge to Minangkabau cultural identity. Leaders such as IM2 and IM8 emphasized that school uniform policies in West Sumatra were never top-down mandates, but the result of local deliberation between parent-teacher associations and customary councils (IM2, personal communication, August 2025). IM8 specifically stated that the decree “violates the spirit of *adat basandi syarak*,” reducing the school to a neutral site devoid of its historical function as a moral institution (IM8, personal communication, August 2025).

These views were institutionalized in legal and political actions. The Lembaga Kerapatan Adat Alam Minangkabau (LKAAM) initiated a judicial review against the SKB at the Supreme Court, asserting that the decree eroded constitutional protections for indigenous cultures under Article 18B of the 1945 Constitution. According to LKAAM's chairperson, the state cannot impose uniformity on a society whose cultural logic intertwines religiosity with customary practice. He described the decree as an “insult” to the community's moral architecture and an affront to the collective identity of Minangkabau women (IM4, personal communication, August 2025).

Women's organizations, such as Bundo Kanduang, also issued public critiques, highlighting the symbolic threat posed by the SKB to Minangkabau womanhood. IM11, a senior member, warned that allowing girls to abandon Islamic dress codes under the pretext of individual freedom risked “disorienting” the next generation. The expression *banyuiklah sarantau kito* (we will be swept away as a community) was used to convey fears of moral and cultural dissolution (IM11, personal communication, August 2025).

Mass media figures and digital platforms became sites of alternative norm diffusion. Through viral videos, op-eds, and online forums, Minangkabau actors reframed the SKB not only as a flawed policy but as a broader project of secularization and cultural homogenization. Contestation thus extended beyond formal arenas into the digital public sphere, creating what Wiener would describe as “communities of practice” that perform and amplify counter-hegemonic norms.

In short, the normative conflict over the SKB reveals a layered structure of resistance. It is simultaneously legal (through judicial review), cultural (through *adat* institutions), religious (through moral pedagogy), and epistemic (through media narratives). At stake is not merely a piece of educational policy, but the legitimacy of the state's role in defining the moral boundaries of public life. The Minangkabau case illustrates how local actors marshal a plurality of normative

orders to contest centralized policy-making, asserting that the state must recognize and accommodate the sociocultural configurations of Islamic education across diverse regions.

### Implications for Islamic Education and Policy Reform

Beyond legal mobilization and public protest, the controversy surrounding the SKB in West Sumatra reveals critical implications for Islamic education and the future direction of national policy reform. At its core, the contestation over school dress codes is not merely a reaction to administrative changes; it is a reflection of deeper epistemological and pedagogical tensions between centralized educational governance and the vernacular, religious-cultural ecologies that shape everyday schooling in Muslim-majority regions, such as Minangkabau.

The empirical data reveal that the resistance to the SKB is rooted in a locally embedded model of Islamic education that integrates religious doctrine (*syarak*) with customary norms (*adat*). This model is not confined to formal classroom instruction; rather, it permeates socialization processes, moral discourses, and community expectations. For many Minangkabau actors, the hijab is more than a religious garment; it functions as a symbol of moral integrity, communal continuity, and pedagogical obligation.

IM4, a local cultural leader, described the hijab as an intrinsic element of Minangkabau womanhood, invoking expressions such as *perempuan batuduang* (veiled women) and *laki-laki basaruang* (men wearing sarongs) as pedagogical idioms passed through generations. These expressions act as moral templates, shaping not only religious identity but also behavioral norms within educational and domestic contexts. For him, prohibiting schools from mandating hijab equates to cultural erasure: “*If wearing the kerudung is not allowed, that is what makes us feel insulted*” (IM4, personal communication, August 2025).

School administrators also experience this policy as an attack on their moral mandate. IM15, a principal, stated: “*I have been entrusted to protect these norms. What is the point of my role if I cannot safeguard them?*” (IM15, personal communication, August 2025). His statement reflects a broader sentiment among educators who see themselves not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as custodians of local values and religious character-building. They perceive the SKB as not merely limiting institutional autonomy but undermining the spiritual mission of Islamic education itself.

This convergence of religious and cultural imperatives is formally expressed in the Minangkabau axiom ‘*adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah*’, a lived epistemology that guides educational philosophy. IM7 emphasized that this foundational principle is not merely symbolic rhetoric but a binding social logic, in which religious and customary norms cannot be separated without undermining the moral foundations of society. When national education policy fails to accommodate such locally grounded frameworks, it creates friction not only with community identity but also with the normative architectures of religious formation.

The implications of this conflict are far-reaching. First, it exposes the limitations of a one-size-fits-all model of secularism in education, particularly in pluralistic and religiously devout regions. Second, it challenges policymakers to reconsider the assumption that school neutrality can be achieved by eliminating religious expressions. For many local actors, such neutrality is perceived not as impartiality, but as a marginalization of their cultural and religious values.

IM7 described the hijab as an extension of the Minangkabau educational philosophy, where religious piety and cultural identity are inseparable. This reveals that Islamic education in West Sumatra operates not solely through curriculum and instruction but through a communal moral ecology, one that is deeply sensitive to dress, language, symbolism, and emotional norms. Attempts to reform national policy without attending to this local context risk generating further dissonance and alienation.

In conclusion, the case of the SKB in West Sumatra underscores the need for more context-sensitive educational policy-making, one that recognizes the legitimacy of local religious pedagogies, respects regional educational autonomy, and bridges rather than imposes normative divides. Rather than framing Islamic symbols such as the hijab as threats to pluralism or neutrality, policymakers might engage them as expressions of lived religiosity that contribute to the ethical fabric of schooling in Muslim communities. Integrating this understanding into future education reforms could foster a more inclusive, dialogical, and culturally responsive framework for Islamic education in Indonesia.

This study reveals three interconnected phenomena: resistance to the perceived secularization of national education policy, the ontological integration of Islam and adat in Minangkabau society, and the increasing formalization of Islamic norms at the local level. Drawing on Antje Wiener's framework of norm contestation (Wiener, 2014, 2017), these findings can be understood not merely as cultural reactions but as instances of deeper normative struggles between state-imposed formal norms and entrenched local normative orders.

Wiener's theory is particularly instructive in analyzing how formal legal norms encounter resistance when they contradict deeply embedded cultural expectations and historical meaning structures. In this case, the 2021 SKB on school uniforms, which permits students not to wear the hijab, was interpreted by many in West Sumatra as an imposition of secular principles that undermine the moral fabric of the community. While the state framed the decree as a measure to protect religious freedom and individual choice, it was received locally as an attempt to detach religious identity from public life and, by extension, from the communal ethos.

Empirical data demonstrate widespread resistance to this policy from a broad spectrum of society in West Sumatra, including educators, regional officials, and particularly *adat* leaders organized under the LKAAM. For these actors, the hijab is not merely a religious symbol but a moral imperative rooted in the Minangkabau cosmological principle of *adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah*. This paradigm embodies a normative fusion of Islam and local custom, wherein religion and culture are mutually constitutive. Thus, the SKB was not seen as protecting personal freedom but as threatening the collective normative order, a view reinforced by statements from religious leaders, public intellectuals, and regional authorities.

Such resistance can be understood as a form of justificatory contestation, in which the legitimacy of formal norms is not categorically rejected. However, their local application and meaning are actively debated. The Minangkabau response suggests a friction between the abstract universality of liberal secular norms and the contextual specificity of local values. From this perspective, the SKB does not merely regulate attire; it regulates meaning, identity, and the boundaries of legitimate normativity. Contestation thus arises not only at the level of policy, but also at a deeper level of ontological difference.

Historical trajectories further contextualize this contestation. The integration of Islam and adat in Minangkabau has evolved through a dialectical process, from an initial separation to a subsequent synthesis (Kamal & Rozi, 2020; Rozi, 2012). Initially, *adat* and *syarak* operated in separate domains: customary social regulation on the one hand, and religious observance on the other. Over time, however, Islam came to be seen as completing and legitimizing adat, culminating in the principle that "*syarak mangato, adat memakai*." At this stage, Islamic values are no longer perceived as external to adat, but as its very foundation. Thus, when national policies appear to threaten Islamic practices, they are also seen as endangering adat itself.

The normative entanglement of Islam and *adat* has also found expression in formal governance (Taufik, 2024). Since the post-Reform era of decentralization, West Sumatra has enacted numerous local regulations inspired by Islamic norms, ranging from dress codes to Quranic literacy requirements and *zakat* administration (Burhanuddin et al., 2020; Burhanuddin & Khairuddin, 2022; Taufik & Taufik, 2023). This formalization is not simply an outcome of



religious revivalism; it is a strategic response to the perceived marginalization of local moral orders by the central state. Through local legal instruments, Minangkabau communities assert their authority to define the moral contours of public life.

Such developments mirror broader trends across Indonesia, where regions such as Aceh (Qodir et al., 2022), West Java, and West Nusa Tenggara have pursued local Islamic governance. In these cases, as in West Sumatra, formalization serves both as a reflection of grassroots religiosity and as a response to the political opportunity structures enabled by decentralization (Taufik & Taufik, 2023). Nevertheless, Hefner (2017) and Berenschot and van Klinken (2018) As we have warned, the proliferation of sharia-inspired regulations raises critical questions about pluralism, minority rights, and the potential exclusion of alternative moral and religious expressions.

Nevertheless, interpreting Minangkabau resistance to the SKB merely as a conservative backlash (Yahya & Susilo, 2024; Zuhdi, 2018) or cultural essentialism misses the deeper dynamics at play. This contestation is better understood as a dialectical engagement with national norms, an effort to reassert communal agency in defining the normative parameters of public life. As Wiener (2017) has argued, contestation itself is constitutive of norm development. Rather than signaling fragmentation, it reflects the active participation of local actors in shaping the evolving moral architecture of the nation-state.

The Minangkabau case illustrates how national education policy, framed around individual rights, collides with collective notions of religious and cultural responsibility. It also exemplifies how resistance is not necessarily oppositional but dialogical, rooted in a long tradition of negotiating identity, belief, and governance through the intertwined languages of adat and syarak. In this context, the protest against the SKB becomes not only an expression of discontent but a form of normative claim-making, a demand that national frameworks recognize and accommodate the plural moral orders that constitute Indonesia's sociocultural reality.

As Taufik Abdullah and others have noted, contestation in Minangkabau tradition often serves integrative purposes (Abdullah, 1966, 2018). It is through debate, negotiation, and dialectical tension that social harmony is recalibrated. The current tensions over religious symbols in public education may thus be seen not as a breakdown of national unity, but as a moment of renegotiation, an opportunity to recognize the normative plurality that underpins Indonesia's democratic and multicultural fabric.

## CONCLUSION

This study has shown that the resistance of Minangkabau communities to the SKB reflects a deeper ideological contestation over Islamic educational values and cultural autonomy. The decree's prohibition on schools enforcing the hijab is perceived locally as an intrusion into the moral and religious formation of children, which, in the Minangkabau worldview, is inseparable from the integration of Islam and adat. Using Antje Wiener's framework of norm contestation, this resistance can be understood not merely as defiance of state authority, but as a normative response to policies that are seen to conflict with embedded communal traditions and educational practices.

Rather than rejecting the concept of religious freedom outright, Minangkabau actors contest the meaning and implementation of that freedom within a moral framework shaped by generations of religious and cultural synthesis. The local pushback highlights how centralized policy interventions can trigger value-based conflicts in culturally distinct regions. As such, this case calls for greater sensitivity to local religious epistemologies in the development of national Islamic education policy. It contributes to broader debates on Islamic education and governance by illustrating how local communities negotiate, resist, and reinterpret state-driven religious norms to defend their own visions of moral and educational order.

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