

Integrating Faith and Tradition: The *Baralek Tuanku* Ceremony in Minangkabau

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Abstract

This study explores the acculturation process between Islam and Minangkabau customs, focusing on the traditional *Baralek Tuanku* ceremony. Fieldwork was conducted at Pesantren Nurul Yakin in Padang Pariaman, employing qualitative research methods, including observations, interviews, and participation in ceremonies. Data were analysed using thematic and narrative analysis. The study reveals that the acculturation of Islam and Minangkabau customs through *Baralek Tuanku* occurs in two forms: First, before the conferment of the *Tuanku* title, where Minangkabau values are institutionalised in the education of the students, particularly through teaching *rundiang*. Second, during the conferment process, where two elements of Minangkabau customs are involved: *niniak mamak* (customary leaders) who bestow the customary heirloom title alongside the *Tuanku* title, and *bako* (father's sister) who prepares traditional food for the pesantren teachers. These pesantren inherit the values of the Syattariyah Order, particularly those related to maintaining the harmony between Islam and local culture, as the pesantren are managed by figures from this *tarekat*. This study offers a conceptual framework for understanding how dual identities can be harmoniously integrated within a community. It enriches the theoretical discourse on acculturation by providing a successful example of cultural and religious amalgamation.

Keywords: Acculturation; *Baralek Tuanku*; Minangkabau customs; Syattariyah Order; *Tuanku* title.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi proses akulturasi antara Islam dan adat Minangkabau, dengan fokus pada upacara tradisional *Baralek Tuanku*. Penelitian lapangan dilakukan di Pesantren Nurul Yakin di Padang Pariaman, menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif, termasuk observasi, wawancara, dan partisipasi dalam upacara. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik dan naratif. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa akulturasi Islam dan adat Minangkabau melalui *Baralek Tuanku* terjadi dalam dua bentuk: Pertama, sebelum pengukuhan gelar *Tuanku*, terdapat pelebagaan nilai-nilai adat Minangkabau kepada santri dalam proses pendidikan, yaitu mengajarkan *rundiang*. Kedua, dalam proses pengukuhan gelar *Tuanku*, terdapat dua unsur adat Minangkabau yang terlibat, yaitu *niniak mamak* (pemimpin adat) yang memberikan gelar pusaka adat sebagai pendamping gelar *Tuanku*, dan *bako* (saudara perempuan ayah) yang menyiapkan makanan adat bagi guru-guru pesantren. Pesantren-pesantren ini mewarisi nilai-nilai Tarekat Syattariyah, khususnya nilai-nilai yang berkaitan dengan menjaga keharmonisan Islam dengan budaya lokal, karena pesantren ini dikelola oleh tokoh-tokoh tarekat tersebut. Penelitian ini menawarkan kerangka konseptual untuk memahami bagaimana identitas ganda dapat diintegrasikan secara harmonis dalam suatu komunitas. Penelitian ini memperkaya wacana teoretis tentang akulturasi dengan memberikan contoh sukses dari penggabungan budaya dan agama.

Kata Kunci: Akulturasi; *Baralek Tuanku*; Adat Minangkabau; Tarekat Syattariyah; Gelar *Tuanku*.

INTRODUCTION

Interactions between social groups, differentiated by religious and ethnic identities, invariably lead to patterns of acceptance and rejection. The integration of a new culture into an existing one—a process central to acculturation—requires adjustments by individuals from both groups. This cultural process is essential for maintaining the integrity of both original and new cultural elements without altering their essence. Adapting to cultural diversity is crucial in diverse public settings to prevent social conflicts. Such interactions foster cultural exchanges that enrich religious and ethnic expressions through language acquisition, personality development, insight enhancement, maturation, and the enrichment of social practices (I. Abdullah, 2010, p. 83).

An illustrative event of such acculturation between Islam and Minangkabau customs is the *Baralek Tuanku*. This celebration, held to inaugurate the title of '*Tuanku*', is significant among the graduates of Salafiah pesantren under the Tarekat Syattariyah, who, after seven years of intensive study, master various Islamic sciences including tafsir (interpretation of the Quran), fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), *nahwu* (Arabic grammar), and *sharaf* (morphology of Arabic words (Tanjung, 2008, p. 24). The Pesantren Nurul Yakin in Padang Pariaman district, West Sumatra, exemplifies this tradition, operating 36 branches that propagate the values of the Tarekat Syattariyah, particularly in aligning Islamic practices with Minangkabau customs. The title of '*Tuanku*' signifies religious achievement and embodies a cultural identity conferred through a deliberation process involving *niniak mamak* (custom leaders) and ulama (clerics).

Scholarly studies have examined the nexus between religion and customs on various scales, exploring topics such as the influence of the jihad love movement in India, which is perceived as a threat to Hinduism by potentially reducing Hindus to a minority (Strohl, 2019), and the division of Catholic kinship in England, where religion serves as a cohesive force amid political fragmentation (Kelly, 2009). Other research has focused on how religious and kinship practices bolster socio-economic cooperation (Ratanapruck, 2007) and the active engagement of Muslims in regions like Chechnya, Dagestan, Kabardin-Balkaria, Tatarstan, and Bashkortostan (Lehmann, 1997). Additional studies have explored the dynamic between custom and religion during the Paderi war in Tanah Rao (Rozi, 2017) and the socio-political impacts of Muslim cleric migrations in The Gambia (Touray, 2016). In a different location, the following research explores the impact of the migration of Muslim clerics and the creation of Muslim settlements on the socio-political structure of the South Bank of The Gambia (Touray, 2016).

Studies on Minangkabau customs further underscore the significance of local traditions in preserving cultural identity. For instance, the *Mandi Ka Luak tradition in Nagari Sungai Antuan* reveals the symbolic meanings embedded in various ritual elements and their role in fulfilling community needs (Utami, Ahmad, & Wahyuni, 2023). Similarly, the tradition of *tolak bala* in Nagari Bungus highlights how such practices contribute to social cohesion and economic improvement while reinforcing religious beliefs (Lisman, Darmaiza, & Wahyuni, 2023).

Several studies related to *Tuanku* have been conducted. These include an analysis of the political role of *Tuanku*, specifically their support for candidate pairs in regional head elections in West Sumatra (Kurniawan, 2023). Building on previous research, Yuliana (2019) explores the political influence of figures from the Tarekat Syattariyah, such as Tuanku Kuniang, in the Padang Pariaman district. Further, Winando (Winando, 2021) focuses on the role of a Tuanku as a Syattariyah cleric supporting the regent candidate, Suhatri Bur-Rahmang, in the 2020 Padang Pariaman regional head election. Yunus (2016) examines the role of Tuanku Syiah Kuala in reconciling the two major schools within the Tarekat Syattariyah, namely *Wahdatu al-Wujud* and *Wahdatu al-Syuhud*. Beyond these reconciliatory roles, Wimra (2020) investigates the involvement of *Tuanku* in identity conflicts between religious, state, and customary

actors. Additionally, Faslah et al. (2020) study how the Tarekat Syattariyah continues to exist amidst conflicts between the Padri and custom people, which extended to conflicts between *Kaum Muda* and *Kaum Tua* (the Young and the Old) who also address issues related to the Tarekat. Hidayat (2023) explores the identity formation of the Pariman trans-local community through Tarekat Syattariyah, ensuring their connection to the Tarekat regardless of their migration. This study attempts to analyse how the inauguration of the title of *Tuanku*, commonly referred to as *Baralek Tuanku*, integrally relates two identities—religious and customary. This relationship is an embodiment of the Minangkabau motto, *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*, signifying a negotiated coexistence between Minangkabau customs and Islam. Thus, *Tuanku* serves to mitigate tensions between these two elements, as has been historically observed.

The primary objective of this study is to explore the acculturation process between Islam and Minangkabau customs, specifically through the traditional *Baralek Tuanku* ceremony. This research aims to identify how the integration of religious and customary identities within this ceremony reflects the broader socio-cultural dynamics of the Minangkabau community. It seeks to understand the mechanisms through which these identities are negotiated and maintained and their impact on social cohesion and cultural continuity. Additionally, the study will investigate the role of religious education in shaping these identities, particularly within the framework of the Tarekat Syattariyah and its affiliated educational institutions.

This research posits that the *Baralek Tuanku* ceremony serves as a cultural celebration and a vital platform for reinforcing and negotiating Minangkabau's dual identity of religion and tradition. The hypothesis is that by integrating Islamic teachings with local customs, this ceremony facilitates a unique form of cultural acculturation that supports preservation and adaptation. This dual process helps maintain social harmony and provides a model for balancing traditional values with modern influences. The research will test the hypothesis that such integrative practices can mitigate potential conflicts between conservatism and progressive attitudes within the community, thereby strengthening the social fabric of the Minangkabau people.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study centred on the *Baralek Tuanku* ceremony, which was selected as the primary case to examine the synthesis of religious and customary practices. Fieldwork was conducted in the Padang Pariaman district, specifically at the Pesantren Nurul Yakin, known for its deep-rooted involvement in the Tarekat Syattariyah. This location was chosen due to its historical and cultural significance in the practice of *Baralek Tuanku* and its role in preserving Minangkabau customs.

A qualitative research approach was employed to better understand the cultural practices and their meanings. Primary data were collected through observations, interviews, and active participation in ceremonies. Secondary data were sourced from historical records, academic journals, and previous studies concerning Minangkabau customs and Islamic practices. Participants encompassed a diverse group from the Pesantren Nurul Yakin, including religious leaders (*ulama*), custom leaders (*niniak mamak*), and students (*santri*) either undergoing or having completed the *Tuanku* title process. Additionally, family members of these participants and local community leaders were interviewed to gather broader insights into the community's perceptions and practices.

The research was conducted in several distinct phases, each contributing significantly to the depth and breadth of the data collected. Initially, during the preparatory phase, key informants were identified and contacted to establish a foundational understanding of the research context and to plan detailed field

visits. The core of the study, the data collection phase, involved immersive participant observation at *Baralek Tuanku* ceremonies, directly observing the dynamic interplay between Islam and Minangkabau customs. Alongside these observations, both structured and semi-structured interviews were conducted with a variety of informants, from religious leaders to family members of those receiving the *Tuanku* title. Community artefacts and documentary evidence were also collected to enrich the understanding of the local cultural practices. The final stage involved follow-up interactions; returning to the field was crucial for clarifying initial findings and gathering additional insights, ensuring a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the cultural phenomena under study.

Data were processed and analysed using thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes related to the integration of religious and customary identities. Coding was conducted manually to categorise data into thematic clusters, facilitating the identification of underlying mechanisms in the acculturation process. Narrative analysis was also employed to construct a comprehensive understanding of the community's practices and beliefs. All data were triangulated to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings, comparing observational data, interview transcripts, and secondary sources to form a holistic view of the ceremonial practices.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Relationship between Custom and Islam in Minangkabau

The relationship between custom and Islam in Minangkabau manifests as acculturation, a process whereby cultural change occurs when individuals from different backgrounds engage in prolonged and continuous direct contact. There are four orientations of acculturation aimed at preserving cultural heritage or adopting a new culture. Integration, as a form of acculturation orientation, reflects the choice to maintain key aspects of both intersecting cultures; assimilation involves the rejection of cultural heritage in favour of adopting new cultural elements; separation indicates maintaining cultural heritage while rejecting new influences; and marginalisation denotes the rejection of both cultures (Şafak-Ayvazoğlu, Künüröçlü, Van de Vijver, & Yağmur, 2021, p. 3). As a value system, religion not only regulates levels of belonging, including ethnic affiliation but also acts as a signifier of identity and a means for group identification. Within the context of acculturation, religion plays a crucial role in the formation of dual identities, underscoring the inextricable link between religion and ethnicity. A devout religious believer often holds a strong ethnic identity, and since religion and ethnicity are distinct entities, this dual identity is typically the result of extensive negotiation. This leads to a culture of mutual acceptance of differences and mutual enhancement and strengthening of both identities, which becomes institutionalised (Gattino, Miglietta, Rizzo, & Testa, 2016, pp. 1–3). The adjustment process between two differing cultural elements during acculturation results in modifications to both cultures involved. These changes may include alterations in values, norms, beliefs, language, cultural practices, and religious observances, occurring at both psychological and sociological levels, impacting individual behaviours and group or institutional structures (Adams & van de Vijver, 2017, pp. 116–117). Specifically, the acculturation of Muslim immigrants to Belgian culture is significantly shaped by conservatism, wherein conservative religious tendencies make it challenging for Muslims to assimilate into Belgian culture, often leading to a stronger identification with their cultural heritage (Saroglou & Mathijsen, 2007, p. 195). Conversely, a progressive mental attitude, which is the antithesis of conservatism, facilitates the acceptance of new cultural elements. The Tarekat Syattariyah, as part of the Islamic ideology associated with Nahdatul Ulama, exemplifies a local Islamic community's tolerance towards local culture, as evidenced by their acceptance of

Minangkabau customs alongside religious elements, encapsulated in the title of *Tuanku* (Kato, 2002, pp. 106–107).

From the perspective of acculturation, the relationship between custom and Islam in Minangkabau exhibits an orientation towards integration, having undergone extensive negotiations with various challenges. While Islam is associated with patrilineal descent, Minangkabau customs are fundamentally matrilineal. Despite these differences, both can coexist peacefully, though the recent strengthening of transnational Islamic variants has slightly disturbed this harmony. The negotiation between custom and Islam in Minangkabau is epitomised by the interpretation of the local motto, *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*. In this context, the term *sandi* in this motto cannot be literally translated as *sendi* in Indonesian. Instead, *sandi* should be understood in terms of its original meaning, which reflects the philosophy embedded in the construction of the traditional Minangkabau house, *rumah gadang*. During the construction of a *rumah gadang*, after levelling the land, a wooden house is erected. Subsequently, a *manyandi* ceremony is performed, where flat stones from the river are placed under the house's pillars to prevent rapid decay from soil moisture. Thus, in Minangkabau, the stability of a house's pillars, even without *sandi*, is precarious, quickly deteriorating due to moisture. If *sandi* were interpreted as *sendi*, implying that religious law supersedes customary law, then the historical coexistence of custom and religion (Kaum adat and Wahabi-Padri) in Minangkabau would be untenable. Such a misinterpretation would suggest that Minangkabau's social structures, such as *paruik*, *kaum*, *suku*, *kampung*, and *nagari*, have been obsolete since the eighteenth century. The negotiative relationship between custom and *syarak* (religion) aligns with the Minangkabau proverb, *adat jo syarak ibaraik aua jo tabiang sanda manyanda kaduonyo* (religion and custom are like bamboo and cliff, supporting each other), where neither bamboo falls nor cliff collapses (Abna, 2000, pp. 2–3).

In this context, the advent of Islam did not dismantle the pre-existing order of Minangkabau customs. Rather, Islam has enhanced these customs, as evident in the political power structure of Minangkabau. Historically, two main elements of political authority existed: *Raja Alam* (King of Nature) and *Raja Adat* (King of Custom). *Raja Alam* was responsible for governmental affairs, while *Raja Adat* managed customary matters. With the introduction of Islam, this dual system was augmented by the creation of a new role, *Raja Ibadat*, assigned the duties of overseeing religious and worship activities (Syarifuddin, 2000, p. 4).

The harmonious relationship between custom and Islam is evident at the *nagari* (traditional village) level, where religious functionaries are integrated into the *nagari's* governance. Custom plays a crucial role in maintaining social harmony, while religion strives to harmonise the individual with the natural order. The unity within the *nagari* is symbolised by two key elements: the *balai* (meeting room of the custom leader) and the mosque, representing custom and religion respectively (T. Abdullah, 2009, p. 13). The ability of matrilineal Minangkabau customs to coexist with patrilineal Islam stems from both systems fostering an attitude that harmonises their differences, thereby achieving balance (Brakel, 2004, p. 10). This symbiosis is encapsulated in a traditional Minangkabau proverb: *elok aturan di Minangkabau, adat jo syara' sanda- manyanda, umpamo aur dengan tabing* (good rules in Minangkabau, custom and religion provide mutual support, like bamboo with cliffs) (Izmy, 2003, p. 24). Thus, Islam and custom are not contradictory; they form the *weltanschauung* for the Minangkabau people, where Islam complements custom. The interplay between custom and Islam is akin to the mixture of water and oil in milk, distinct yet cohesive (T. Abdullah, 1966, p. 3).

The pattern of acculturation between Islam and custom within the Minangkabau is particularly pronounced in the Syattariyah Tarekat community, as evidenced by the pesantren educational institutions

they operate. In Minangkabau, the adherents of the tarekat maintain close ties to both custom and political power at the local level, known as *nagari*. The Islamicity of the *tarekat* in Minangkabau represents a variant of local Islamicity, distinct in its character and nuances due to its unique cultural and contextual origins. Unlike the more conservative forms of Islam, local Islam here is an actualisation of Islamic practices within the region. The rituals of the tarekat Syattariyah adherents in West Sumatra are deeply imbued with local nuances, as exemplified by the *basapa* ritual and the art of *salawat dulang* (Fathurahman, 2008, pp. 129–139).

Tuanku and Religious Authority of Tarekat Shattariyah

The term *tuanku* carries various meanings, including its derivation from the Minangkabau language, combining *tuan* (brother) and *ku* (me), which translates simply as "my brother". Additionally, *tuanku* also emerges from the Acehese language as *tengku*, a title of nobility reserved for the pious in the field of *Syara'* (religion). It is speculated that *tuanku* may also derive from *daulat tuanku*, a phrase associated with the title of the kings of *Yang di-Pertuan Agung* in Malacca. In the Minangkabau context, *tuanku* is influenced by the Acehese *tengku*, signifying a title for those who are pious, wise, and possess deep religious and intellectual insights. This association is supported by historical data illustrating Aceh's influence in Pariman. In Minangkabau, *tuanku* is an honorary title awarded to individuals deemed capable and wise in disseminating religious values. The conferment of the *tuanku* title differs from that of other traditional scholarly titles such as *Imam*, *Khatib*, and *Labai*, as it is not solely based on descent but rather on profound knowledge acquired through extensive religious education in one or several *surau* (traditional Islamic learning centres) in Minangkabau (Samad, 2003).

Regardless of its diverse meanings, within pesantren under the guidance of Tarekat Syattariyah leaders in Padang Pariaman, *tuanku* is an academic title awarded by the management of *salafiah pesantren* to their graduates. This title is conferred upon those who have undertaken religious education using *kitab kuning* or *kitab gundul* (unlined books) as learning materials. However, the title gains legitimacy or recognition from the Minangkabau traditional group, known as *niniak mamak*. Thus, *tuanku* represents a figure who not only understands religion but also deeply comprehends Minangkabau customs. The title reflects the philosophy of Minangkabau custom, encapsulated in the motto *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (custom is strengthened by religion, religion is strengthened by the book of Allah). *Tuanku* also signifies those who have spent seven years studying at a *salafiah pesantren*, thereby mastering Islamic sciences such as *tafsir*, *fiqh*, *nahwu*, and *sharaf*. The conferment of the *tuanku* title occurs during a ceremony known as *baralek mengakhiri kaji* (the celebration of ending the study), which does not imply the completion of their studies. Indeed, those awarded the *tuanku* title continue studying and teaching at the pesantren for at least one more year as a form of service to their Islamic boarding school (Tanjung, 2008).

There are several prerequisites for being appointed as a *tuanku*: Firstly, one must memorise the book of Tarekat Syattariyah, as Pesantren Nurul Yakin is managed by figures from this *tarekat*. A *tuanku* serves as a custodian of the tarekat's values. Secondly, the candidate must perform *Burha* prayers at Syekh Burhanuddin's grave. Thirdly, they are required to teach at the pesantren for one or two years to provide guidance to students. Fourthly, candidates must understand and be proficient in *rundiang* (deliberation) within Minangkabau culture, a practice that helps integrate the pesantren into the local culture. Key aspects of *rundiang* include deliberations during *tasyakuran* (thanksgiving) prayers and those related to traditional feasts in Minangkabau (SA, Personal Communication, December 5, 2023). (SA, Personal Communication, December 5, 2023).

Within the context of Tarekat Syattariyah, *tuanku* serves as a pivotal agent for the enculturation of its teachings. Through their profound understanding of Islamic sciences under the Syattariyah framework, *tuanku* are esteemed as *ulama* expected to fulfil the tarekat's mission, which is embodied within the pesantren educational institutions they oversee. One such institution is Pesantren Nurul Yakin, which is committed to developing scholars who grasp Islam through classical texts within the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah framework (Ashadi, 2011, p. 41). This pesantren adheres to three main principles: the *aqidah* of Ahl al-Sunnah wal al-Jamaah, Shafi'i *madhhab* in worship and *muamalah*, and the teachings of Tarekat Syattariyah as passed down by Sheikh Burhanuddin (Nurdin, 2010). Known as *wasathiyah* orthodoxy, this approach promotes a mature and inclusive religious outlook. In the *nagari* of Sungai Buluah in Padang Pariaman Regency, this orthodoxy not only serves as the dominant religious framework but also acts as a medium to counter transnational Islamic influences while integrating ethnic Nias individuals with Christian and Catholic backgrounds into the community (Sefriyono, 2020, p. 228).

Tarekat Syattariyah represents a localised form of Islam, distinct from the puritanical traditions that often conflict with local beliefs. This local Islamic tradition does not seek to override or eliminate existing customs but rather to enrich and gradually Islamise them through a process of selection, acculturation, and adaptation. Historical figures such as Abdurrahman Wahid, Azyumardi Azra, and Zainul Bilal Bizawie have noted that this tradition of local Islam has evolved through a process of vernacularisation followed by *pribumisation*, embedding Islam within the Indonesian cultural context (Bizawie, 2016, p. 4). At Pesantren Nurul Yakin, this approach is illustrated by the adherence to al-Ash'ari's theology, Al-Ghazali's Sufism, and Shafi'i's fiqh, chosen for their balanced perspectives in religious discourse. Al-Ghazali's emphasis on servitude to the Creator and opposition to *Wahdatul Wujud* (the unity of existence), alongside Shafi'i's rational yet tradition-respecting fiqh, ensure that the teachings align with moderate Islamic practices. This moderation is crucial in maintaining the harmony between traditional and contemporary Islamic teachings as preached by Nahdatul Ulama, which upholds *Al Muhafadzatul 'alal qadimish shalih, wal akhzu bil jadidil ashlah*—preserving noble old traditions while embracing new, better ones (Sulaiman, Personal Communication, December 30, 2019. Nahdatul Ulama's commitment to Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah underscores its focus on historical religious practices and their interaction with local customs (Syam, 2005, p. 113).

This Islamic community upholds harmony with local culture. Consequently, at the onset of Islamisation by the tarekat, this group could seamlessly integrate into the pre-Islamic *surau* system in Minangkabau, thus being readily accepted as part of village life in several villages. The tarekat groups were particularly skilled in assimilating local nuances, prioritising the spiritual growth and intentions of individuals over their actions and ethical demands, which allowed them to blend into host villages without imposing the need for these villages to function as Islamic societies (Dobbin, 1992, pp. 142–143).

The pesantren, under the stewardship of *tuanku* and embodying the values of the Syattariyah, represent local Islamic groups that foster a harmonious relationship with Minangkabau customs. Sheikh Burhanuddin, a pivotal figure in this Tarekat Syattariyah, adopts numerous cultural approaches in his teachings, ensuring that the introduction of Islam enhances rather than undermines Minangkabau traditions. As practiced within the Tarekat Syattariyah, Sufi Islam interprets Islam in alignment with the Minangkabau backdrop, influenced by Hindu-Buddhist syncretism and local traditions. This Sufi order is notably tolerant of traditional practices and ideologies that contrast with the more rigid forms of Islamic practice. It is thus apt to describe early Minangkabau Islam as both syncretic and mystical. The integration of Islam into Minangkabau's belief system and social structure has not supplanted the native customs but has instead enriched the very essence of Minangkabau culture (Azra, 2003, p. 44). Islam and custom are

complementary, enhancing each other's value, which is vividly embodied in the persona of *Tuanku*. *Tuanku* not only mirrors religious identity but also embodies customary identity.

Baralek Tuanku: Being Muslim and Minangkabau

Although the title of *tuanku* is conferred within a religious educational institution, it conceptually represents not only a religious entity but also a customary one. At Pesantren Nurul Yakin, the conferment of the *tuanku* title is commonly known as *baralek tuanku*. The term *baralek* derives from *alek*, which means party. *Baralek* encompasses a series of Minangkabau tribal customs for organising events or celebrations such as marriages, the appointment of *penghulu* (tribal leaders), house building, and more. However, *baralek* is predominantly associated with wedding receptions. In this context, the concept of *baralek* involves significant tribal participation, wielding considerable authority. At Pesantren Nurul Yakin in Padang Pariaman, the inauguration of the *tuanku* title includes not only religious leaders but also customary institutions at the tribal level. Customs play a crucial role in both the preparatory and implementation phases of the conferment of the *tuanku* title. The title itself amalgamates two distinct honors: one originating from customary practice, following an agreement among stakeholders within the extended family of the candidate, and another bestowed by the pesantren in recognition of completing seven years of religious education.

The involvement of Minangkabau custom institutions in *baralek tuanku* occurs in two stages: before the inauguration of the *tuanku* title and during the inauguration procession itself. Prior to the inauguration, while *santri* (religious students) are still undergoing their educational process at the *pesantren*, custom involvement takes the form of institutionalising Minangkabau values within the curriculum. One such value is *rundiang*, which involves deliberation or seeking approval for the conduct of activities, both religious and customary. These might include family prayers marking the start of Ramadan or *tasyakuran* prayers, and customary events such as *kenduri* (feasts) or weddings. The rationale for teaching *rundiang* to *santri* lies in its value as social capital, essential for students who will eventually integrate into societies deeply rooted in Minangkabau customs, particularly in Padang Pariaman, the heartland of Tarekat Syattariyah.

In practice, *rundiang* during a *tasyakuran* involves not just religious elements like the *tuanku*, but also customary figures such as *ninik mamak* (customary leaders). A typical *rundiang* includes formal requests for permission to commence the prayer, directed at the *ninik mamak* who acts as the tribal elder. The *ninik mamak* also fulfils the role of a customary ruler within the family. The phrasing of *rundiang* might be:

Baanyo ngku, kito mulai bado'a lai, kok padi alah boneh, kok karambia alah panen, lah sapatuiknyo kito bado'a untuk aruah yang lah tadahulu. Karano boneh padi jo panennyo karambia ndak bisa dilapeh dari jaso-jaso baliau (Tuanku, can we start praying? The rice has ripened, the coconuts have been harvested, it is time for us to pray for the souls of the departed. The ripening of the rice and the harvesting of the coconuts are inseparable from their efforts) (SA, Personal Communication, January 16, 2023).

The involvement of Minangkabau custom institutions in the inauguration of the *tuanku* title is exemplified by the kinship roles played during the ceremony, notably by *niniak mamak* (custom leaders) and *induk bako* (father's sister). Before the inauguration, the *niniak mamak* convene at the candidate's home to deliberate on the appropriate customary title to accompany the *tuanku* title. In Minangkabau tradition, a *mamak* (mother's brother) plays a pivotal role in preparing his nephews to become future community leaders, potentially succeeding him. This significant responsibility includes not only guiding

the nephews towards leadership roles but also imparting Minangkabau customs, as these nephews are deemed the inheritors of these traditions (Kasim, 2010, pp. 54–55). Beyond educational duties, the *mamak* must bestow upon his nephews a customary title, a practice known as *sako* inheritance. *Sako* represents an intangible wealth that crucially influences the moral fibre of the Minangkabau people and fosters the harmony of *adat* (customary law). This inheritance typically includes an heirloom title, underscoring its cultural significance (Amir, 2001, p. 92).

The inauguration of the *tuanku* title took place at the Nurul Yakin Islamic boarding school, where I received my seven years of education. The title of *tuanku* is traditionally accompanied by a custom title, reflecting the characteristics of the Minangkabau people who are not only devout followers of Islam but also staunch upholders of their customs. This custom title, a tribal heirloom, was determined through the deliberations of our extended family, the Panyalai—one of the tribes in Minangkabau. Days before the inauguration, the title was formally handed over by our *penghulu* (tribal leader) to the *buya* (leader of the *pesantren*). During the inauguration, this title was officially conveyed to the initiated *santri* (students), their families, and the guests attending the *baralek* (ceremony) marking the conferment of the *tuanku* title (Irfat Mizon, Personal Communication, November 21, 2023).

In the confirmed title of *tuanku*, it is evident that two titles coexist harmoniously: *tuanku* as an academic religious title, legitimising the Islamic sciences mastered during education in the *pesantren*, and the Minangkabau customary title, which signifies strong adherence to local customs. Despite their differences, these titles peacefully coexist, reinforcing the role of the Tarekat Syattariyah as an Islamic community that effectively integrates Islam with local Minangkabau customs. In this context, the presence of Islam does not supplant local customs as has been the case with puritanical Islamic groups like Wahabi-Padri in Minangkabau's history; rather, it strengthens the fabric of Minangkabau tradition.

During the *baralek tuanku* ceremony, the *buya* (head of the *pesantren*) bestowed his blessing on the title. In the *malewakan gala* ceremony, where titles are announced, my customary title followed my *tuanku* title. Thus, at this ceremony, my name was formally extended to include three elements: my birth name, Irfat Mizon; my academic-religious title, *tuanku*; and my customary title, Khatib Rajo, a family heirloom from the Panyalai tribe, awarded after deliberation by the *niniak mamak* prior to the inauguration ceremony at the *pesantren* (Irfat Mizon, Personal Communication, November 21, 2023).

Rahmat Tuanku Sulaiman, one of the managers at the Bustanul Yakin Islamic boarding school—a branch of the Nurul Yaqin Islamic boarding school in Padang Pariaman Regency—acknowledges that the confirmed title of *tuanku* represents an acculturation between Islam and local customs. Besides its various meanings, in Padang Pariaman, *tuanku* is recognised as an academic title for graduates of Salafiah *pesantren*. This title is awarded to those who have completed their religious education, which includes studying the 'yellow books' authored by Middle Eastern scholars. The awarding of the *tuanku* title is conducted by the *buya* or teacher within the *pesantren*. However, it must also be authorised by the local customs, specifically by the *niniak mamak*, thus making it not merely a religious title but a customary one as well (Sulaiman, Personal Communication, March 19, 2023)

A *penghulu* present at the inauguration of his nephew's *tuanku* title remarked that the title represents both religious and customary significance. The customary title is inscribed alongside the *tuanku* title, reflecting the agreement among tribe members. This tribal title is granted following the consensus of the *candidate's niniak mamak*, coordinated by the tribe's head. Datuak Putiah, a *niniak mamak* from the Jambak tribe in Nagari Gunung Rajo, Tanah Datar Regency, shared the account of his nephew's designation as *tuanku* during the ceremony at Pesantren Nurul Yaqin Pakandangan Ringan-ringan. Before receiving the *tuanku* title, his nephew had acquired a customary title, *labai sutan*, from his

hometown, as determined by the *niniak mamak*'s deliberations. Thus, behind his *tuanku* title, the title *labai sutan* appears, derived from these deliberations. Consequently, he is addressed as Andi Tuanku Labai Sutan, denoting both his religious and customary statuses (Putiah, Personal Communication, December 30, 2019).

Confirming the title of *tuanku* is not merely a religious matter but also a customary one, necessitating the presence of the *penghulu* at the ceremony. If the *penghulu* of the tribe cannot attend, the tribal head must designate a customary leader from within the tribe to participate in the ceremony. A guardian whose brother underwent the *baralek* ceremony for the inauguration of the *tuanku* title informed me that due to the absence of the headman of the Panyalai tribe, Datuak Rajo Amek appointed their *niniak mamak* to attend the inauguration (Deni, Personal Communication, July 18, 2017). The role of *niniak mamak* is crucial not only in the inauguration of the *tuanku* title but also that of *induk bako* (father's sister). The kinship termed *induk bako anak pisang* describes the relationship between a person and their father's sisters or between a woman and her brother's children. The father's sisters are termed *induk bako*, their sons are known as *anak pisang*, and their daughters as *bako* (Munir, 2016, p. 29)

The *anak pisang* and their *induk bako* share a profound relationship, influenced by four key factors: firstly, the *anak pisang* are often viewed as *urang babangso* (noble), held in high esteem within society; secondly, their commendable attitude and behaviour; thirdly, the affection the *bako* hold for the *pasumandan* (daughter-in-law), who is the mother of the *anak pisang*; and fourthly, the harmonious familial ties between the *anak pisang*'s family and the *bako* (Muis, 2005, pp. 144–145).

The integration of Minangkabau customs in the title of *tuanku* highlights kinship's pivotal role, particularly reflected in the lifestyle of the *bako*. For the *bako*, their nephews and nieces are as revered as their own children. Even if parental ties are severed by divorce or death, the bond between the *anak pisang* and their *bako* remains intact. During the *tuanku* title inauguration ceremony, the *bako* play a crucial role by providing gifts to the educators of the *anak pisang*. If the candidate is female, her *bako* must provide *nasi samba*, a customary dish set, while for a male candidate, *juadah*—traditional snacks—are required (Nafriandi, Personal Communication, March 12, 2023). This culinary offering, typically prepared during weddings to unite two families, includes items such as *kanji*, *wajik*, *luo*, *kue sangko*, *kipang*, *jala bio*, and *tukua* (Fardayanti & Nurman, 2013). At the *tuanku* inauguration, *juadah* is presented as a token of the *bako*'s appreciation for the educators who have nurtured their *anak pisang* over seven years (SA, Personal Communication, December 5, 2023).

CONCLUSION

The acculturation of Islam and local culture necessitates a confluence of two distinct cultural elements, exemplified by the interaction between Islam and Minangkabau culture. *Baralek Tuanku* serves as a critical venue for this acculturation process, marking the conferment of academic titles for graduates of Pesantren Nurul Yakin after seven years of study. This *pesantren* adheres to the teachings of the Syattariyah Order, which integrates religious and customary identities without allowing one to dominate the other. This integration reflects the Syattariyah Order's accommodation of Minangkabau culture. Consequently, *Baralek Tuanku* could not have been achieved without the involvement of Minangkabau custom elements such as *niniak mamak* and *bako*. The Islamic Boarding School of Nurul Yakin affirms the Minangkabau identity, which combines devout Muslim faith with strong adherence to customs. For the Minangkabau people, Islam and their customs relate in a negotiation rather than a dominant manner. This research could be further enriched by comparing Islamic boarding schools affiliated with the *tarekat* and those outside it concerning similar issues.

A significant contribution of this study lies in its conceptual framework, offering a model for understanding how dual identities can be harmoniously integrated within a community. This framework enriches the theoretical discourse on acculturation by demonstrating a successful example of cultural and religious amalgamation.

However, the research has its limitations. Focusing on a single district may not capture the full diversity of practices and beliefs across the broader Minangkabau region or other cultures with similar complexities. Future research should expand the geographical scope to identify variations and commonalities in cultural practices. Additionally, emphasising the Tarekat Syattariyah may have limited the exploration of other religious or customary perspectives within Minangkabau culture. Including other Islamic schools and customary groups in future studies would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the community's cultural landscape. Moreover, the impact of globalisation and modernisation on traditional practices warrants further investigation to determine whether these influences facilitate or disrupt the existing cultural synthesis.

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