

Cultural Appropriation and Ritual Negotiation: Salafi and HTI Strategies in Minangkabau, Indonesia

Zakirman^{1*}, Elva Mahmudi², Shafwatul Bary³

¹ UIN Imam Bonjol Padang, Indonesia; Email: zakirman@uinib.ac.id

² STAIN Mandailing Natal, Indonesia; Email: elvamahmudi@stain-madina.ac.id

³ UIN Imam Bonjol Padang, Indonesia; Email: shafwatulbary1995@gmail.com

* Corresponding author

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Abstract

Purpose: This study explores the cultural and spiritual appropriation strategies employed by transnational Islamic movements, specifically Salafi and Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), in their expansion and dissemination of religious teachings in West Sumatra, Indonesia. The research focuses on how these groups utilize local cultural identities, values, and symbols to embed themselves within the social and religious landscape of the region. **Methodology:** Using a qualitative, descriptive-analytical approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, content analysis, and literature review from books, websites, and academic studies. West Sumatra was chosen as the case study due to its historical openness to Islamic teachings and its recent ranking as one of the least religiously moderate provinces in Indonesia. **Findings:** The findings revealed that transnational Islamic groups successfully appropriate local cultural elements to minimize resistance and enhance acceptance, mirroring the historical spread of Islam in the region. These groups utilize various vehicles, including educational institutions, traditional and digital media, and religious gatherings, to advance their ideological missions. **Implications:** This study expands the application of cultural appropriation theory by examining how transnational religious ideologies adapt symbolically to local cultures. The findings are also practically relevant for policymakers and communities in formulating religious moderation strategies and detecting ideological infiltration through cultural channels. **Originality and Value:** Its originality lies in its regional focus and its interdisciplinary analysis of religious expansion through the lens of cultural adaptation, providing a nuanced understanding of contemporary Islamic movements in Indonesia.

Keywords: Cultural appropriation; Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia; Minangkabau identity; Salafi; transnational Islamic movements.

Introduction

Over the past two decades, Indonesia has witnessed a significant rise in the activities of transnational Islamic movements such as Salafism and Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI). These movements promote a puritanical and ideological vision of global Islam, propagating concepts such as the caliphate system, the purification of faith, and the rejection of local values considered *bid'ah* (religious innovation) or un-Islamic (Hasan, 2009; Hilmy, 2021). In West Sumatra—a region historically known for its synthesis of Islam and local customs through the philosophy of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (literally, “customs are founded upon religious law, and religious law is founded upon God’s Word”)—the presence of these movements introduces a new dynamic into the religious landscape. Unlike their earlier confrontational approach, Salafi and HTI groups have recently adopted more subtle strategies of cultural penetration, infiltrating educational institutions, economic activities, social media platforms, and local communities (Kersten, 2017). Reports from the National Counterterrorism Agency

(BNPT) and recent studies indicate that West Sumatra ranks among the provinces with low levels of religious moderation and rising activity from Islamist groups (Novi & Hardi, 2023; Ulyana et al., 2023). Their *da'wah* activities now extend beyond mosques and *pesantren* to digital platforms such as YouTube, WhatsApp groups, and other social media channels that reach younger audiences on a large scale.

This phenomenon has sparked identity tensions within Minangkabau society. On one hand, the region's rich cultural heritage, rooted in tolerance and (Al-Farabi et al., 2023) communal values, faces challenges from an exclusive and literalist religious narrative. On the other hand, many—especially among the younger generation—are drawn to the seemingly “pure” and “universal” version of Islam offered by these transnational movements (Azwar, 2018; Sabna, 2022). These tensions are not limited to community-level conflicts but also manifest at the individual level, where people find themselves torn between loyalty to local traditions and adherence to a “true” Islam as defined by these movements. Thus, this phenomenon warrants in-depth examination, not only to enrich scholarly discourse in religious and cultural studies but also for practical purposes such as fostering social cohesion and safeguarding local values that form the Minangkabau identity. By mapping out the strategies and impacts of these movements, policymakers and educators may better formulate responses in religious education and cultural preservation in the face of Islam's ideological globalization (Nur Kholis et al., 2023).

Scholarly investigations into the rise of transnational Islam in Indonesia—particularly regarding Salafi and HTI—are abundant. Farabi et al. (2023) highlight Salafi's development through structured *da'wah* and education strategies and the utilization of digital media for global ideological dissemination. Mufid (Mufid, 2011) discusses HTI's use of campus networks and ideological recruitment to promote the caliphate concept, often clashing with Indonesia's national identity. Afkar and Sundrijo (2023) further note that even organizations like *Nahdlatul Ulama* can be viewed as transnational actors, considering their global cultural, structural, and ideational influence. However, these studies mostly emphasize ideological, institutional, and political dynamics, lacking focus on how such movements adopt and reconfigure local cultures to increase their social acceptability in target regions.

Meanwhile, existing studies on Islam and Minangkabau culture generally portray a normative harmony under the philosophy of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (Febrian, 2024), or explore the integration of Islamic values into local traditions such as *batagak penghulu* (ritual inauguration of leaders in Minangkabau) (Althafullayya & Akbar, 2023). Faslah (2020) illustrates how the *syattariyah Sufi* order plays a vital role in preserving traditional Islamic values amid social and religious changes. However, most of these works idealize the compatibility of Islam and custom without delving into conflicts and negotiation processes triggered by the infiltration of transnational *da'wah* that carries a puritanical interpretation of Islam. Resistance practices, such as the preservation of *randai* (folk theatre), *silek* (martial arts), or rejection of anti-traditional fatwas, are often overlooked as symbolic defense mechanisms against cultural appropriation. This gap in the literature indicates a lack of explicit analysis on how transnational Islamic movements strategically appropriate local culture and how such practices contribute to the transformation of symbolic and social identities in local communities.

To address this gap, the present study aims to examine how transnational Islamic movements, particularly Salafi and HTI, employ cultural appropriation strategies in West Sumatra. The primary focus is on how these groups adopt local Minangkabau symbols,

such as language, clothing, and social structures, to craft a socially acceptable image. This research critically explores how a formerly puritan and exclusivist da'wah is now being repackaged into seemingly inclusive narratives aligned with local values. By doing so, the study uncovers how these movements attempt to blend into local contexts without compromising their overarching ideological goals.

Furthermore, the study seeks to analyze how Minangkabau communities respond to such cultural appropriation strategies, ranging from acceptance and critical adaptation to symbolic resistance. Through a qualitative descriptive approach involving interviews, observations, and content analysis of da'wah media, the research investigates the symbolic transformations and religious identity shifts that occur because of interactions with transnational Islamic movements. This objective not only fills the void in existing literature—often overly normative or structurally focused—but also contributes theoretically to the discourse on cultural appropriation and religious identity. Practically, the findings are expected to offer insights for policymakers, educators, and community leaders in safeguarding cultural diversity and promoting social harmony in the face of rising religious globalization.

This study draws on the theory of cultural appropriation developed by James O. Young, which posits that appropriation involves more than merely borrowing cultural elements such as symbols, rituals, or artifacts. It also entails processes of reinterpretation and recontextualization by actors who adopt these elements. In this context, transnational groups like Salafi and HTI do not merely adopt Minangkabau cultural features; they reframe and reinterpret them—such as *adat* terminologies, traditional attire, and kinship structures—within their ideological frameworks. The result is a hybrid cultural expression that is neither fully local nor identical to the imported Islamic culture. Such appropriation is far from neutral, as it raises moral concerns outlined by Young and Brunk (O. Young & Brunk, 2009): violations of cultural ownership and the marginalization of deeply rooted local identities. Through this cultural strategy, transnational da'wah movements can construct a locally familiar image of Islam while simultaneously replacing historical meanings and symbols in Minangkabau society.

Based on this theoretical grounding, the study argues that transnational Islamic movements like Salafi and HTI employ cultural appropriation in West Sumatra to enhance social acceptance and reinforce their religious legitimacy. However, this process also contributes to symbolic transformations and shifts in the religious identity of local communities, which traditionally adhere to the philosophy of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*. Therefore, the more intensive the practice of cultural appropriation, the greater the potential for identity conflicts and the erosion of local cultural values. This argument aligns with the research objectives: to understand the appropriation strategies, community responses, and identity implications. Using a qualitative descriptive-analytic approach, complemented by interviews and analysis of da'wah media, this study seeks to test and contextualize these arguments within the socio-religious landscape of the Minangkabau community.

Methods

This study examines the cultural appropriation strategies employed by the Salafi movement and Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) in West Sumatra, focusing on how these groups adopt, reinterpret, and integrate Minangkabau cultural symbols, values, and social structures into their religious and ideological agendas, as well as how local communities respond to such practices. A qualitative approach with a case study design was adopted

to capture the complex, contextual interactions between transnational Islamic ideologies and local traditions in a specific socio-cultural setting. This method was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of cultural-political dynamics that are embedded in localized contexts (Creswell, 2014). West Sumatra was selected as the research site due to its relatively low religious moderation index and the active presence of Salafi and HTI networks (Novi & Hardi, 2023).

The data comprised both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through non-participant observations of da'wah activities and ideological dissemination, particularly the use of Minangkabau cultural symbols in religious events and media; and semi-structured interviews with 15 key informants, including religious leaders, traditional elders, school administrators, and community members in Solok and Padang who interact directly with institutions such as the Dar el-Iman Foundation and Rahmatan Lil Alamin International Islamic Boarding School (RLAIIBS). Secondary data included books, peer-reviewed journal articles, online news reports, organizational documents, and local religious media content such as Ray FM broadcasts and the “*Suluah Minang*” program on Surau TV. All sources were purposively selected for their relevance to cultural appropriation and religious identity transformation (Flick, 2018).

The data collection process in this study employed a combination of ethnographic fieldwork, document analysis, and in-depth interviews to ensure comprehensive and context-sensitive results (Creswell & Poth, 2018). First, the researcher conducted non-participant observations of Salafi and HTI-affiliated activities in West Sumatra, including religious gatherings, public seminars, and institutional events, particularly those organized by the Dar El-Iman Foundation and RLAIIBS. These observations focused on how cultural elements, such as local symbols, clothing, titles (e.g., *Buya*, *Datuak*), and language, were strategically appropriated to convey ideological messages.

Additionally, semi-structured interviews were carried out with key informants, including local religious leaders, cultural elders, school administrators, and ordinary community members in Solok and Padang. The researcher also collected and analyzed media content disseminated by Ray FM and Surau TV, focusing on how their programs frame religious messages within Minangkabau cultural narratives. Supplementary data were gathered through online archives, news articles, books, and academic journals that documented the broader ideological context of the Salafi and HTI movements in Indonesia. All data were systematically coded and analyzed thematically, with attention to patterns of cultural adaptation, symbolic transformation, and public responses.

The data were analyzed thematically using the procedures of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014): data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Coding was conducted inductively to identify recurring themes, including reinterpretation of custom, symbolic religious framing, and moral contestation. These themes were interpreted within James O. Young's theory of cultural appropriation, which distinguishes between the adoption of cultural elements and their ideological reframing (O.Young & Brunk, 2009). To ensure validity and reliability, source and method triangulation, member checking, peer debriefing, and prolonged engagement in the field were applied. Reflexive notes were maintained throughout the research to account for the researcher's positionality and potential bias, ensuring a robust and ethical inquiry into the cultural-political dynamics of transnational Islam in the Minangkabau context.

Results

Cultural Appropriation Strategies by the Salafi and HTI Movements

Field observations, in-depth interviews, and media analysis indicate that the cultural appropriation strategies employed by the Salafi movement and Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) in West Sumatra are manifested through four main interrelated aspects. These four aspects include the use of traditional symbols to build social legitimacy, the use of local language and terms to create cultural closeness, the application of selective acculturation of customary values and practices deemed in line with their teachings, and the involvement of traditional leaders in da'wah and social advocacy activities. These findings provide a comprehensive picture of how both groups adapt their da'wah strategies to the Minangkabau cultural context without abandoning their transnational ideological agendas.

a) Adaptation of traditional symbols

Observations in Solok show that the Rahmatan Lil Alamin International Islamic Boarding School (RLAIIBS), founded by a figure with the title *Datuak* and led by a cleric with the title *Buya*, practices a form of symbolic leadership rooted in Minangkabau tradition. This leadership is reflected not only in the foundation's formal structure but also in visual representations and institutional rituals that consistently link the pesantren to local traditional identity. The use of traditional attributes is evident in ceremonial events such as the inauguration of a new building or the opening of the school year. At these events, figures holding the title *Datuak* wear complete Minangkabau traditional attire—consisting of a *destar* (head covering), a *black shirt* decorated with gold embroidery, and a *sarawa galembong* (headscarf)—while clerics holding the title *Buya* wear white robes and turbans, signifying religious authority. This combination creates a visual image that combines customary and religious authority on a single stage (see Figure 1).



Figure 1 Minangkabau *Datuak* clothing

The direct involvement of traditional leaders in religious forums is also evident in activities such as large-scale religious study groups and village gatherings. In these events, traditional leaders not only attend as guests of honor but are also given the role of opening the event with a traditional welcome, using the Minangkabau language, rich in proverbs and sayings. This reinforces the impression that Islamic boarding schools respect local social structures and position themselves as part of legitimate traditional networks.

The use of honorary titles as a social legitimacy strategy is evident in the way the foundation's leaders' identities are presented in various public media. In school promotional billboards, registration brochures, and radio broadcasts, the titles *Datuak* and *Buya* are always listed before their names, as if they constitute a moral and cultural guarantee for the community. This strategy implicitly conveys the message that the institution has strong roots in Minang land, despite its ideological orientation being transnationally Salafi.

The use of the traditional titles *Datuak* and *Buya* within the RLAIIBS leadership structure serves as an instrument of social legitimacy within Minangkabau society. In the Minangkabau socio-cultural context, traditional titles are not merely a sign of status but also a symbol of moral authority and a widely recognized representation of collective identity. Integrating these titles into the leadership of Islamic educational institutions is an effective cultural appropriation strategy, as it links the transnational Salafi da'wah message with local symbols that have emotional and historical resonance for the community.

This approach allows institutions to minimize the cultural resistance that typically arises against external ideologies by packaging religious messages in a format familiar to the community. Within the framework of cultural appropriation strategies, this step can be understood as an effort to adapt local symbolic elements to support ideological goals, while simultaneously creating the impression that the institution has an organic connection to its social environment. This practice not only strengthens public acceptance but also opens up space for the penetration of new values into the Minangkabau socio-religious realm without directly confronting customary norms.

One of the teachers at RLAIIBS who was involved in the recruitment process for traditional leaders explained:

We recruited traditional leaders to become part of the foundation to gain greater community acceptance. They're not just symbols, but also bridges of communication with the community (Agung Arnezio, Personal Communication, February 17, 2025).

This quote emphasizes that the involvement of traditional figures is not merely intended as an image-building strategy, but also to establish effective communication channels between the institution and the community. This practice strengthens the institution's position as an entity that understands and respects the Minangkabau social structure, while also facilitating the acceptance of the preaching messages it carries.

These findings indicate that traditional figures are utilized not merely as symbolic elements to strengthen the institution's image, but also play a strategic role as social mediators, bridging interactions between the organization and the local community. Within the framework of cultural appropriation, their involvement serves a dual purpose: enveloping religious ideology in traditionally recognized symbols, while simultaneously creating a channel of legitimacy that is difficult for the community to reject. This strategy reinforces the first pattern of cultural appropriation identified in the study, namely the

adaptation of traditional symbols to build cultural familiarity and broaden ideological acceptance.

b) Use of local language and terms

Field observations of Salafi Islamic preaching media show the intensive use of Minangkabau-style terms and vocabulary in various forms of content presentation. Surau TV, a YouTube-based and local television platform for Islamic preaching, consistently displays program titles, program segments, and speaker identities using local terms such as *Ranah Minang* (Land of Minangkabau), *Suluah Minang* (Pelita Minangkabau), *Buya*, and *Mamak-Kamanakan* (Uncle and Niece). The *Suluah Minang* program, for example, regularly features speakers who are introduced with the title *Buya*, a religious title that has strong resonance in Minangkabau. The program's visualization shows a stage backdrop with traditional Minangkabau house ornaments and carved motifs, thus reinforcing the cultural nuances it aims to highlight (see Figure 2).



Figure 2 Suluah Minang Program

On Ray FM, a radio station with a network of listeners across various regencies in West Sumatra, the use of local terms is evident in broadcast slogans such as “The Voice of the Minang Realm for the People” and the use of the Minangkabau honorifics for presenters. These terms are used not only in the formal context of Islamic preaching programs but also in casual interactions with listeners through question-and-answer segments or on-air greetings, creating a personal, emotionally engaging experience for the audience.

This form of local terminology is also evident in promotional materials on outdoor media such as billboards and banners. Several advertisements for the *Suluah Minang* program or announcements for major religious gatherings published by Surau TV feature phrases such as *Mamak-Kamanakan Bersatu* or *Ranah Minang Bertauhid*, combining Minangkabau kinship identity with Salafi ideological messages. This choice of diction

reflects a semiotic strategy that combines local cultural symbols with transnational da'wah messages, so that ideological messages can be conveyed within a linguistic framework that feels familiar to the local community.

This practice of using local language and terms is not limited to formal broadcasting. Observations of live religious studies broadcasts on YouTube show that speakers often incorporate Minangkabau proverbs such as “*Alam takambang jadi guru*” (Nature is the teacher) or “*Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*” (literally, “customs are founded upon religious law, and religious law is founded upon God’s Word”) into their sermons. These expressions serve not only as rhetorical embellishments but also as identity markers that lend cultural legitimacy to the speakers and reinforce the impression that their preaching messages are rooted in local values.

In the context of Minangkabau culture, language is not merely a means of communication, but also a marker of identity deeply embedded in the social life of the community (Santana et al., 2024). Terms such as *Buya*, *Mamak-Kamanakan*, *Ranah Minang*, and *Suluah Minang* carry symbolic meaning that reminds audiences of their values, kinship structures, and collective history. By using local vocabulary, da'wah media such as Surau TV and Ray FM not only facilitate the process of conveying messages but also build a psychological closeness that is difficult to achieve with foreign languages (Rahmat, 2016). This strategy is effective in reducing the cultural distance between the transnational ideologies promoted by Salafi and HTI groups and the local realities of Minangkabau society. Furthermore, the use of local languages functions as a symbolic bridge that allows da'wah messages to be framed as if they are in line with the community’s cultural identity, thereby increasing the chances of acceptance and minimizing resistance to the ideological agenda being carried.

A Surau TV content creator involved in program planning and broadcast production explains the strategy for selecting local vocabulary:

If we use foreign terms, Minang people feel alienated. But if we use words like ‘Suluah Minang’ or ‘Buya,’ they’re more interested (Muhammad Elvi Syam, Personal Communication, January 15, 2025).

This quote shows the strategic awareness of the managers of Islamic media regarding the importance of language resonance in attracting the attention of the audience and building emotional attachment to the Minangkabau cultural identity. The quote underscores that the choice of local terms is not simply a linguistic decision, but a consciously planned strategy of cultural appropriation to build emotional and cultural closeness with Minangkabau audiences. By using vocabulary such as *Suluah Minang* or *Buya*, da'wah media activate collective memory and a sense of local pride, so that da'wah messages are wrapped in familiar and trusted symbols. This approach not only facilitates acceptance but also serves as an entry channel for transnational ideological values to flow without triggering initial resistance. In the context of ideological penetration, this strategy allows Salafi and HTI groups to insert their da'wah agendas into existing cultural spaces in a way that appears to support and even strengthen Minangkabau cultural identity.

c) Selective acculturation

Field observations of a number of da'wah and social activities organized by Salafi groups and Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) in West Sumatra show a pattern of selective acculturation, namely an adaptation process that selects and accommodates customary values that are considered in line with the teachings of monotheism, while simultaneously

rejecting cultural practices that are deemed to be contrary to these principles. In Agam Regency, for example, a monthly *communal cleaning activity for mosques and public facilities is held. This activity is led by a religious teacher affiliated with the Salafi Islamic missionary network, involving local youth, mosque administrators, and village traditional leaders. The division of tasks is carried out according to customary law: men handle yard cleaning and building repairs, while women prepare communal meals. The religious teacher who leads the activity inserts a short sermon after the communal cleaning, emphasizing that collective work is a pious deed enjoined by religion.*



Figure 3 Community Mutual Cooperation Activities

The value of respect for parents was also accommodated. At a *family religious study group* in Solok Regency, a speaker from the HTI community began his lecture by quoting the Minangkabau proverb “*children are held in the lap, children are guided, and the village people are paved,*” and then linked it to the Quranic command to be devoted to parents. The use of local proverbs in the opening of this event gave the impression that the preaching material was based on traditional values, so it was received positively by the participants, the majority of whom were family figures.

In contrast, the tradition of *Balimau*¹, a communal bathing in rivers or public baths before Ramadan, is openly rejected by both groups. In Padang Panjang Regency, during the last week of Sha’ban, members of the Salafi community distributed a pamphlet titled “*Leave Balimau, Welcome Ramadan with the Sunnah*” at the village market. The pamphlet contained arguments stating that *Balimau* was never exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad and has the potential to lead to *ikhtilat* (mixing of men and women who are not mahram). Furthermore, at a pre-Ramadan study at the Padang Panjang Grand Mosque, an HTI preacher explicitly urged the congregation to replace *Balimau* with *self-reflection activities* at the mosque (see Figure 3).

This form of selective acculturation is consistent across research sites. Values

¹ *Balimau* is a term in the Minangkabau culture that refers to the tradition of bathing together or cleaning itself with water mixed with lime (oranges) before the month of Ramadan.

compatible with puritanical Islamic ideology are accommodated and given a sharia basis, while traditions deemed to contain heretical elements or contradict the principles of faith are eliminated or replaced with alternative practices. This pattern demonstrates a conscious effort to integrate transnational ideological messages with local cultural frameworks, ensuring that da'wah (Islamic preaching) can be accepted without fully adopting all elements of Minangkabau customs.

The selective acculturation practices carried out by Salafi and HTI groups in West Sumatra reflect a strategic cultural appropriation strategy (*selective adaptation*) — an approach that utilizes local cultural elements that are compatible with their ideological teachings, while eliminating elements that are considered contradictory (Roszi & Mutia, 2018). In the context of Minangkabau culture, where *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* is a normative principle, this strategy is very relevant because it allows the group to position itself as the guardian of the purity of sharia as well as the inheritor of customary values.

Sociologically, values such as mutual cooperation and respect for elders have dual legitimacy: they are recognized as part of traditional identity and are also aligned with Islamic teachings. By accommodating these values, Salafis and HTI not only build cultural capital that increases social acceptance but also strengthen their symbolic capital as moral authorities rooted in local traditions (Bourdieu, P, 1986).

On the other hand, the rejection of the *Balimau* tradition—an annual communal bathing ritual in rivers or public baths before Ramadan—illustrates the dimension of boundary work (Lamont, 2002), namely the process of asserting the boundaries of ideological identity through cultural selection. By replacing *Balimau* with alternative activities such as *muhasabah* (self-reflection) at the mosque, these groups created a mechanism of “cultural substitution” that preserved the social framework of pre-Ramadan communal events while infusing it with new meanings in line with their theological vision.

This approach can be understood as an attempt to minimize social resistance to puritanical Islamic ideology by packaging it in a format familiar to the Minangkabau people. This strategy combines cultural resonance, the appropriateness of the message to the local cultural framework, with an ideological framing that gradually shifts the value orientation from pluralist customs to a more exclusive interpretation of religion (Snow, David A & Robert D. Benford, 1988) . Within the framework of cultural appropriation, selective acculturation is not merely passive adaptation, but rather an active intervention in local cultural structures to reshape social meanings and practices according to the movement's goals (Sitti Aisyah & Irwanuddin, 2025) .

This selective acculturation approach is openly acknowledged by practitioners in the field as a da'wah strategy that combines social acceptance with the affirmation of the principle of monotheism. For example, an administrator at the Salafi Islamic boarding school, Muhammad Andika, in Solok Regency, explained on February 23, 2025:

Gotong royong is good; even the Prophet taught us to help each other. That's why we still participate in gotong royong in the village, especially when cleaning the mosque or helping the sick. But when it comes to *Balimau*, there's no guidance in the Sunnah for that. So we don't participate, because it's considered bid'ah (Muhammad Andika, Personal Communication, February 23, 2025).

In line with this, an HTI activist, Salman Alfarizi, on February 27, 2025, in Padang Panjang, explained the strategy to replace the tradition that they implemented:

We're replacing *Balimau* with a self-reflection activity at the mosque. So, residents will still have pre-fasting activities, but they'll include dhikr (remembrance of God), communal prayers, and religious sermons. This is more in line with Islamic law and still strengthens ties (Salman Alfarizi, Personal Communication, February 27, 2025).

These two statements demonstrate that acceptance of traditions such as mutual cooperation and respect for elders is not passive, but rather accompanied by a process of selection and modification of customary practices deemed contrary to religious principles. Thus, selective acculturation becomes a strategic instrument for maintaining cultural legitimacy while simultaneously infiltrating ideological agendas in a measured manner.

The above quotations demonstrate that the selective acculturation carried out by Salafi and HTI groups in West Sumatra is not simply a process of cultural adaptation, but a measured and targeted strategy of appropriation. 69Ocia values aligned with the teachings of monotheism—such as mutual cooperation and respect for elders—are maintained to strengthen an inclusive image and maintain social acceptance. Meanwhile, traditions deemed illegitimate in the Sunnah, such as *Balimau*, are rejected or replaced with activities framed within the framework of sharia, such as *muhasabah* (religious reflection) and collective dhikr (remembrance of God).

This approach has two main functions: first, it reduces the potential for cultural resistance by maintaining traditional elements familiar to the community; second, it gradually shifts the orientation of local culture to align with the group's ideological agenda. Thus, selective acculturation becomes an effective mechanism for bridging the gap between transnational ideological demands and Minangkabau social realities, while simultaneously creating a space of legitimacy that is difficult for the local community to reject.

d) Involvement of traditional figures

Field observations during the campaign against the construction of Siloam Hospital in Padang City, West Sumatra, revealed the direct involvement of traditional leaders in the event organized by Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI). The event took place in an open field in the city center and was attended by hundreds of participants, including HTI members, the general public, and representatives of traditional organizations. The traditional leaders were present not only as ceremonial invitees but also played an active role in the event. This involvement was evident in the traditional leaders' participation in the coordination meeting before the rally, where they sat alongside HTI administrators and provided input on messaging strategies. On the day of the rally, several traditional leaders appeared on the main stage as opening speakers, delivering speeches linking the rejection of the Siloam Hospital construction to the values of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK). Figure 4 shows the scene during the rally, with traditional leaders actively participating and delivering speeches.



Figure 4 Siloam Hospital Rejection Action

Indigenous identity was visually displayed through the use of traditional Minangkabau attire, such as black shirts embroidered with gold thread and the *destar* (head covering) typical of Minang men. Several speakers also included Minangkabau proverbs, such as “*Nan tuo penyebab, nan mudo disayangi*” (the old are respected, the young are loved), to strengthen the message’s resonance with the local audience. Furthermore, traditional symbols such as the red-yellow-black flag—colors often associated with Minangkabau—were placed on the side of the stage alongside a banner reading “ABS-SBK Harga Mati.”

The rejection of Siloam Hospital was positioned as a threat to the cultural integrity and religious values of the Minangkabau people. In each speech, traditional leaders emphasized that their support for the movement was based on a commitment to maintaining the purity of ABS-SBK, which they viewed as a fundamental identity of the Minangkabau people. This involvement transformed the campaign not only into a religious ideological movement but also into an action wrapped in a narrative of traditional preservation, thus attracting sympathy from segments of society that may not have previously been directly involved in HTI’s agenda.

The involvement of traditional leaders in the campaign against the construction of Siloam Hospital by HTI in Padang cannot be understood simply as spontaneous support for public health issues, but rather as part of a planned cultural appropriation strategy. In the Minangkabau socio-cultural context, traditional leaders hold a strategic position as guardians of the values of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK) and as representatives of moral legitimacy within the community. Their presence in a movement carries significant symbolic weight, as they are considered to represent the collective voice of the indigenous community.

For HTI, linking its ideological agenda to local customary symbols and narratives is an effective way to secure public support while minimizing resistance to its identity as a transnational Islamic movement. By framing the rejection of the Siloam Hospital construction as an effort to maintain the purity of ABS-SBK, HTI successfully shifted public perception from a technical or administrative issue to a matter of shared cultural identity and morality. This strategy demonstrates how customary elements are not simply borrowed as ornamentation but integrated into the framing of issues to broaden support across societal segments.

Academically, this practice represents the third pattern of cultural appropriation strategies identified in the research, namely the use of local actors and symbols to strengthen the legitimacy of ideological movements. This approach aligns with the concept of cultural framing in social movement studies, where political or religious actors adapt local discourse to align with their messages, thereby creating cultural resonance that facilitates the penetration of ideology into broader social spaces (Widiyanto, D et al., 2024).

A female member of HTI with the initials MP, who was directly involved in the campaign to reject the construction of Siloam Hospital in Padang, explained the strategy of linking the issue to Minangkabau traditional values:

We brought up the Siloam issue because it touches on Minang values. If it weren't linked to ABS-SBK, people wouldn't care (MP, Personal Communication, March 11, 2025).

This quote explicitly reveals HTI's strategic awareness in utilizing customary frameworks as a gateway to issues, not merely to add weight to their arguments but also to spark emotional engagement and a sense of ownership among the community. This emphasizes that the involvement of customary leaders was no accident, but rather a deliberate move to ensure the movement's message had strong cultural legitimacy. The quote shows that the involvement of traditional leaders in HTI's campaign is part of a structured cultural appropriation strategy. By linking the rejection of the Siloam Hospital construction to the principles of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK), HTI successfully framed its ideological agenda within a framework of values that have historical and emotional legitimacy for the Minangkabau people. This strategy serves a dual purpose: first, as a way to minimize resistance to movements carrying transnational ideologies; second, as a means to build broad support through the mobilization of cultural identity. The involvement of traditional leaders, symbols, and narratives allows HTI's message to be perceived not merely as external political or religious discourse, but as a form of protection for the cultural and moral heritage of the local community.

The findings of this study confirm that the cultural appropriation strategies employed by the Salafi and HTI movements in West Sumatra are multidimensional and complementary. The four identified patterns—adaptation of traditional symbols, use of local language and terminology, selective acculturation, and involvement of traditional figures—do not stand alone but interact to form a cohesive strategic framework. Each strategy has a specific function in building social legitimacy, strengthening cultural resonance, and minimizing resistance to transnational ideological agendas. As illustrated in table 1, these strategies are interconnected, showing the relationship between their forms, concrete examples in the field, and their broader strategic significance in the context of cultural appropriation.

Table 1 Strategic Cultural Adaptation in Islamic Da'wah Practices

Strategic Aspects	Practice Description	Concrete Examples (Location/Media/Event)	Strategic Objectives
Adaptation of Traditional	Combining Minangkabau	- RLAIIBS Islamic Boarding School in Solok:	- Strengthening legitimacy in

Symbols	traditional symbols with religious symbols to create social legitimacy and an image rooted in local culture.	leaders have the titles <i>Datuak</i> and <i>Buya</i>. - Minangkabau traditional clothing (destar, black shirt with gold embroidery, <i>sarawa</i> galembong) combined with robes and turbans. - Building inauguration ceremony and opening of the school year with traditional greetings.	the eyes of the community. - Reducing resistance to transnational ideologies. - Creating an organic image with local customs.
Use of Local Language and Terms	Incorporating typical Minangkabau vocabulary and proverbs into Islamic preaching media to build cultural closeness.	- <i>Suluah Minang</i> program, <i>Buya</i> title, traditional house background. - Ray FM: slogan “The Voice of the Minang Realm for the People”, greeting Uda/Uni. - Use of the proverbs “Nature is a teacher” and “<i>Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah</i>” in lectures.	- Activating collective memory and local pride. - Minimizing cultural distance with the audience. - Wrapping ideological messages in familiar language.
Selective Acculturation	Maintaining customary values that are in line with the teachings of monotheism and replacing/rejecting traditions that are considered contradictory.	- Accommodate: mutual cooperation to clean the mosque, respect for parents. - Reject: the <i>Balimau</i> tradition, replaced with muhasabah in the mosque. - Location: Solok Regency, Padang Panjang.	- Maintaining social acceptance while asserting ideological boundaries. - Shifting local value orientations to align with puritanical Islamic teachings. - Maintaining cultural and symbolic capital.
Involvement of Traditional Leaders	Inviting traditional figures to participate in preaching activities or social actions to provide	- Campaign to reject Siloam Hospital in Padang: traditional figures attended the coordination meeting, opened the event, gave speeches with proverbs and	- Strengthen the framing of the issue as protecting cultural identity.

moral and cultural legitimacy.	sayings, wore traditional clothing. - Traditional symbols (red-yellow-black flags) side by side with the banner “ABS-SBK Price is Dead”.	- Trigger emotional involvement of the community. - Minimize resistance to transnational ideology.
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Simply put, the table shows how Salafis and HTI exploit elements of Minangkabau culture to make their da’wah messages more easily accepted. First, they use customary symbols such as traditional clothing, the honorific titles *Datuak* or *Buya*, and distinctive Minangkabau visual attributes to create an image of being rooted in Minang land. Second, they use local language and terms—for example, Minang proverbs, honorifics like *Uda* and *Uni*², or phrases like “*Suluah Minang*”—to create a sense of familiarity and evoke a sense of cultural pride. Third, they practice selective acculturation, accepting only traditions that align with their teachings (e.g., mutual cooperation or respect for elders) and rejecting traditions deemed inappropriate, such as *Balimau*, replacing them with activities they deem more *shar’i* (Islamic law). Fourth, they involve traditional figures in their da’wah and campaign activities, so that their messages receive moral support and legitimacy from respected figures in the community. All of these strategies are interconnected and aim to ensure that their ideology can penetrate the Minangkabau social space without triggering major rejection, even as if it were a natural part of local culture.

Interpretation of these findings suggests that the cultural appropriation strategies employed by Salafis and HTI in West Sumatra are not merely superficial adaptations, but rather a deliberate process to build social legitimacy, expand influence, and minimize resistance to their ideological agendas. By combining traditional symbols, local languages, selective values, and traditional figures, both groups successfully create a narrative that their ideologies align with the Minangkabau cultural identity.

These findings broaden our understanding of the phenomenon of transnational ideological penetration into local contexts. Previous literature has often explained this strategy within the framework of *glocalization*, where global values are packaged in local contexts to enhance public acceptance (Swastiwi, Anastasia Wiwik, 2024) . However, these data demonstrate that in the Minangkabau case, this strategy goes beyond mere cosmetic adaptation—it forms a multi-layered network of social legitimacy through symbols, language, values, and cultural actors that command high public credibility.

The implication is that understanding the dynamics of interactions between transnational ideological movements and local cultures requires examining cultural power relations, not just the content of the preaching messages. This strategy of cultural appropriation has the potential to shift the meaning of traditional symbols and values, allowing symbols that were originally neutral or based on the philosophy of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* to be reinterpreted to reinforce certain ideological agendas. This opens up space for critical discussion about how local identities can become arenas for contestation of meaning between imported traditions and ideologies.

² *Uda* and *Uni* in Minangkabau culture, *Uda* is a greeting for older siblings, while the *Uni* is aimed at older sisters. Both of these terms are not only kinship calls, but also forms of respect and intimacy that reflect the value of courtesy and social ties of the Minang community.

Local Community Responses and Negotiations

a) Acceptance

Observations in Solok Regency revealed a strong pattern of acceptance of the Rahmatan Lil Alamin International Islamic Boarding School (RLAIIBS), affiliated with the Salafi movement. This acceptance is evident through the active involvement of traditional leaders in various official Islamic boarding school activities and public support from local residents. The most visible form of acceptance is seen at the graduation ceremony for students and the large-scale religious study held at the end of each academic year. At these events, traditional leaders with the title *Datuak* attend wearing complete Minangkabau traditional attire—a *destar* (a distinctive head covering), a black shirt embroidered with gold thread, and a sarawa galembong—and sit in the seat of honor alongside the boarding school leader with the title *Buya*. This presence and placement demonstrate the boarding school's social recognition of traditional authority and affirm the institution's place within the *nagari* (village or customary socio-political unit) social network, as illustrated in Figure 5.



Figure 5 Inauguration of the Rahmatan Lil Alamin International Islamic Boarding School (RLAIIBS)

In addition to ceremonial activities, community acceptance is also reflected in the active participation of residents in Islamic boarding school programs, such as mutual cooperation in cleaning the school environment, providing food for events, and participating in general study classes open to the community. In some residents' homes, small banners with the Islamic boarding school logo and the words "*Congratulations and Success for the Graduation of RLAIIBS Students*" can even be seen, which are displayed on fences or stalls, as a form of moral support for these educational activities.

Another indicator that reinforces this acceptance is the posting of photos and videos of Islamic boarding school events on local social media, complete with hashtags like #SekolahKito or #NagariAripanBerbenah. These posts not only document activities but also demonstrate collective pride that their village is home to a quality and traditional

Islamic educational institution. As illustrated in Figure 6, a social media post from Sirukam Dairy Farm highlights the visit of Rahmatan Lil Alamin International Islamic Boarding School students, accompanied by captions expressing gratitude and encouragement. Such uploads not only serve as digital archives of the boarding school's activities but also expand its visibility and recognition beyond the immediate community, strengthening the sense of belonging and pride among residents.



Figure 6 Social Media Screenshot of Community Uploads (Source: Instagram @surukamdairy)

The acceptance of the Arian *Nagari* (customary village unit) community in Solok Regency toward the Rahmatan Lil Alamin International Islamic Boarding School (RLAIIBS) can be understood within the framework of the cultural appropriation strategy implemented by the Salafi movement. In the Minangkabau socio-cultural context, social legitimacy is determined not only by the quality of services or programs offered, but also by the extent to which an institution is able to adapt to customary values summarized in the philosophy of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK, “customs are founded upon religious law, and religious law is founded upon God’s Word”). The involvement of traditional figures holding the title *Datuak* (clan leader) in official *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) events, the use of customary attributes in ceremonial moments, and the active participation of community members in social activities indicate that RLAIIBS consciously combines symbols of customary and religious authority to build psychological closeness with the community. This approach reinforces the impression that the *pesantren* does not appear as an external force threatening local values, but rather as an organic part of *nagari* society.

From the perspective of cultural adaptation and cultural identity negotiation theory, this strategy minimizes resistance to Salafi ideology, which is often perceived as “foreign” or transnational. By positioning themselves in line with Minangkabau social norms, Islamic boarding schools not only gain legitimacy but also social access that allows for more effective dissemination of their values and teachings (Utami, 2015). This situation contrasts with other areas in West Sumatra, where the inconsistency between the preaching style and customary values has sparked resistance. In the case of Nagari Arian,

the community's acceptance demonstrates that symbolic and social accommodation of custom can be key to successful ideological penetration, especially in communities with strong customary social structures.

To provide a clearer picture of the factors driving community acceptance, one important finding comes from the direct statements of traditional leaders involved in interactions with these missionary institutions. The following excerpts demonstrate how social legitimacy is constructed through symbolic involvement and respect for traditional values:

We feel helped by this school, especially since traditional leaders are also invited to participate in the activities. As long as it doesn't violate customs, we have no problem (Datuk Suherman, Personal Communication, May 12, 2024).

This quote emphasizes that the presence of traditional figures is not merely a decorative element, but serves as a cultural guarantee that the Islamic boarding school operates within the framework of local norms. Community support stems from a combination of practical benefits, such as free education, and the belief that the institution continues to respect Minangkabau customs. This quote demonstrates that community acceptance of Salafi institutions in Nagari Arian is the result of an effective cultural appropriation strategy. By actively involving traditional leaders in the institution's activities, the movement is able to frame its transnational da'wah message within a framework of recognized and respected local values. This approach serves as a cultural bridge that reduces potential resistance while strengthening social legitimacy in the eyes of the community. Within the framework of cultural appropriation strategies, this practice can be categorized as symbolic integration (Susilawati et al., 2024), in which customary authority is utilized to create the impression of harmony between the religious ideology it carries and the cultural identity of the Minangkabau people.

b) Rejection

Field observations in Padang City, West Sumatra, documented open protests against the activities of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), particularly those linked to the campaign opposing the construction of Siloam Hospital. The main protest sites were in front of the Padang City Council (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah*, DPRD) office and several strategic locations in the city center, including the Khatib Sulaiman intersection. The rejection manifested in two primary forms: (1) open demonstrations by community groups consisting of traditional leaders, representatives of local community organizations (*organisasi masyarakat*, or *ormas*), and administrators of *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) in Padang City, who carried banners with slogans such as "Minang Rejects the Caliphate – *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK)" and "Stop Politicizing Customs for Group Interests." This protest, held in front of the DPRD office on May 12, 2017, was attended by approximately 200 participants from various sectors of society. The demonstrators not only voiced their rejection of the caliphate idea promoted by HTI but also condemned the appropriation of the ABS-SBK principle—"customs are founded upon religious law, and religious law is founded upon God's Word"—as an instrument to legitimize transnational political agendas.

In their speeches, several traditional leaders emphasized that the ABS-SBK principles constitute a cultural-religious philosophy that serves as a social unifier for the Minangkabau and should not be used for the benefit of certain groups that could potentially divide society or threaten the state ideology. This view aligns with Hilmy's

(2021) study, which states that the instrumentalization of local cultural symbols by transnational ideological groups often triggers strong resistance because it is perceived to diminish the symbols' original meaning. This resistance also demonstrates a mechanism of cultural boundary maintenance, where local communities actively establish clear boundaries between the original ABS-SBK values and modified interpretations for external political purposes. (Kusno, Ferdy, 2023).

The official statement of rejection, read by representatives of the *ninik mamak* (leaders of the Islamic community) in an open forum, urged HTI not to use the concept of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK) as a tool to legitimize their political agenda. The *ninik mamak* emphasized that ABS-SBK is a legacy of Minangkabau philosophy born from a historical agreement between traditional leaders and ulama to maintain a balance between Islamic teachings and the traditional social order. The use of this concept outside its original framework—especially to advocate for a caliphate political system—is considered a form of deviation from its meaning and a threat to social stability and the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

This stance is consistent with Hilmy's (2021) findings, which show that the instrumentalization of local cultural symbols by transnational ideological movements often triggers strong resistance, as it is considered symbolic appropriation that undermines the legitimacy and authority of cultural owners. Within the framework of boundary maintenance (Kusno, Ferdy, 2023; Lamont, 2002), the actions of the *ninik mamak* can be seen as an effort to define the boundaries of the meaning of ABS-SBK so that it remains in line with its original values—namely uniting customs, religion, and national commitment—and preventing its misuse for political agendas that conflict with Pancasila. Thus, this statement not only functions as an ideological rejection, but also as a strategic step to maintain the sovereignty of Minangkabau cultural interpretation amidst the current of ideological globalization.

Observable actions included the forced disbandment of a discussion forum organized by HTI sympathizers in a local meeting hall, the removal of banners promoting an HTI mass religious gathering near the West Sumatra Grand Mosque by Public Order Agency (*Satuan Polisi Pamong Praja*, Satpol PP) officers, and the closure of public facilities used for activities identified as connected to the caliphate movement. These measures were taken in response to concerns that such activities were not purely religious in nature but also carried transnational political content that potentially conflicted with the state ideology of *Pancasila* and the Minangkabau philosophical principle of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK, “customs are founded upon religious law, and religious law is founded upon God's Word”).

The steps of disbanding, lowering banners, and closing public facilities are in line with the government's policy after the issuance of Perppu (*Peraturan Pemerintah Pengganti Undang-Undang*, Government Regulation in Lieu of Law) No. 2 of 2017 concerning Community Organizations, which gives authorities the authority to stop the activities of mass organizations deemed to threaten the state ideology (Lubis, A, 2018). From the perspective of social movement containment (Tarrow, S, 2011), this action can be understood as a strategy of the state and local governments to limit the space for HTI's movements through direct intervention in the symbolic infrastructure and logistics of their activities. In addition, this action also reflects a cultural defense mechanism, where protection of local values—especially the integrity of ABS-SBK—is carried out through law enforcement and control of public spaces.

The indicators of rejection were clearly visible: red and black rejection banners were installed around the city's main roads, several traditional figures wore complete

Minangkabau traditional clothing when giving public statements, and the red and white flag symbol combined with the traditional house symbol was used to emphasize that this rejection was based on the spirit of defending the nation's customs and sovereignty.

The event description indicates that the peak action took place on May 12, 2017, involving approximately 200 participants consisting of traditional leaders, mosque administrators, women activists, students, and members of religious organizations. The sequence of events began with a coordination meeting of community leaders at a prayer house in West Padang District, followed by a convoy to the city center, the reading of a statement of position in front of the DPRD Office, and ended with the removal of HTI symbols in public spaces by authorities. This action was not only symbolic, but also a form of organized social mobilization, affirming the collective position of the Minangkabau people in defending the principles of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK) from interpretations that are considered deviant.

Theoretically, this series of actions can be understood through the concept of collective action framing (Snow, David A & Robert D. Benford, 1988), in which the HTI issue is framed as a threat to the cultural sovereignty and ideology of the state, thus triggering the involvement of various social groups. The involvement of traditional figures, religious leaders, and civil society elements indicates that the rejection of HTI in Padang has a broad basis of social legitimacy. This is in line with Hilmy's (2021) findings that resistance to transnational Islamic movements often strengthens when the movement is perceived as disrupting the balance between religious values and local socio-cultural structures. Thus, the May 12, 2017, action not only became a crucial moment in affirming the ideological boundaries of Minangkabau society but also a concrete example of boundary maintenance practices amidst contestations over the meaning of cultural symbols. (Lamont, 2002).

The rejection of HTI in Padang City cannot be separated from the Minangkabau people's sensitivity to issues concerning state ideology and customary authority. The Minangkabau adhere to the *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK) philosophy, which has long served as the foundation for integrating custom and Islamic teachings. This principle serves as a socio-cultural mechanism to maintain harmony between cultural identity and religious teachings, while simultaneously avoiding the dominance of external ideologies that could shift this balance (Davidson, Jamie S et al., 2010).

In this context, HTI's attempt to link the campaign against the construction of Siloam Hospital with ABS-SBK is considered by most traditional and religious figures to be a form of instrumentalization of custom for transnational political interests. The Padang community has a long history of defending its customary autonomy against external intervention, both from the colonial government in the past and ideological movements deemed inconsistent with local values. Therefore, HTI's actions have sparked a strong reaction, not solely because of the Siloam issue itself, but because of the way HTI utilizes cultural symbols to garner support for its caliphate agenda, which is considered contrary to Pancasila and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

Furthermore, the relationship between Minangkabau customs and national politics is also a significant factor in this rejection. In public discourse in West Sumatra, maintaining ABS-SBK is often interpreted as maintaining national integrity within a local cultural framework. Therefore, when HTI uses the ABS-SBK idiom to advocate for an ideological agenda that has the potential to change the country's political structure, the resulting rejection is based not only on theological differences but also on geopolitical considerations and the cultural security of the Minangkabau people.

As confirmed by several informants directly involved in the incident, the rejection of HTI in Padang was based not only on ideological concerns, but also on the perception that the movement was “using” traditional symbols for its political agenda. Muhammad Yassir, a Nahdlatul Ulama cleric in Padang, stated:

They’re exploiting traditional issues to spread the idea of a caliphate. This is not in line with Minang values (Muhammad Yassir, Personal Communication, February 20, 2025).

This quote demonstrates that the criticisms that emerged were twofold: first, a rejection of the caliphate ideology, which was deemed contrary to Pancasila; second, an objection to the practice of appropriating local cultural symbols to package a transnational political agenda. Thus, the Padang community’s rejection reflects a critical awareness of attempts to manipulate cultural symbols as a strategy for mass mobilization.

The quote shows that HTI’s attempt to link the rejection of Siloam Hospital with the principles of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK) was actually interpreted by some as a form of manipulative cultural appropriation. Within the framework of cultural appropriation strategies, this action is an example of how traditional symbols are used as an entry point to legitimize a transnational ideological agenda (Davidson, Jamie S et al., 2010). However, the response of rejection from local religious leaders indicates the existence of cultural boundaries maintained by the community, where traditional symbols cannot be used freely without considering the alignment of the values and goals of the movement. This rejection also emphasizes that cultural legitimacy can only be achieved if the appropriation of symbols is carried out consistently with the original meaning held by the community, not simply as rhetorical packaging for certain political interests.

c) Selective Negotiation

Field observations in Solok Regency, West Sumatra, revealed selective negotiation practices between local communities and the HTI group. This negotiation was evident in the community’s acceptance of HTI’s presence in certain capacities, particularly when the material presented was purely religious, but their firm rejection when the narrative began to touch on politics and the ideology of the caliphate. One prominent example of this acceptance was HTI’s permission to use traditional halls (*ulama*) to hold religious studies on topics such as Quranic interpretation, Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) of worship, and morals. However, based on the agreement reached at a village meeting in March 2024, there were restrictions on the themes that had to be mutually agreed upon before the event took place. Local organizers typically requested a list of materials from HTI speakers and verified the information with representatives of local traditional and religious leaders.

The concrete negotiating activity was also evident in the attendance patterns of the residents. During lectures discussing topics of worship or morality, residents were fully present and actively engaged through question-and-answer sessions. However, when the speaker began to relate the material to the discourse of the caliphate or criticism of Pancasila, some residents, particularly traditional leaders, slowly left the room in symbolic protest.

Supporting this practice of selective negotiation is the presence of event banners that explicitly state a non-political theme, such as “*Islamic Studies: Strengthening the Morals of the Young Generation*.” At the bottom of the banner, the nagari logo is displayed alongside a Minangkabau traditional symbol (a picture of a traditional house), indicating that the event has passed the customary approval filter. Furthermore, at the opening

ceremony, traditional leaders and village heads are often seen sitting in the front row alongside the HTI committee, but they leave if the material begins to deviate from the agreement.

This incident was recorded as occurring at least three times between June and December 2024. The negotiation process typically took place through coordination meetings between HTI representatives, mosque administrators, and the Nagari Customary Council (KAN), which set limits on the event's theme and format. In one case, in August 2024, the Nagari committee even stopped an event prematurely because the speaker was deemed to have violated the agreement by presenting a political narrative.

The observed selective negotiation practices reflect how local communities position themselves as active actors in the cultural filtering process against the influence of transnational ideologies such as HTI. Within the framework of cultural appropriation strategies, this phenomenon demonstrates that the process of acceptance of religious movements is not absolute, but rather conditional, determined by the suitability of the material with prevailing customary values and social norms (Tarumingkeng, 2025).

In the context of Minangkabau culture, the "*adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah*" (the principle of "the principle of the Book of God") serves as a fundamental principle governing the relationship between religion and custom. This principle allows for the acceptance of religious content that aligns with customary norms, while simultaneously legitimizing the community's rejection of elements deemed detrimental to social harmony or threatening national integration. Therefore, the filtering of HTI's preaching material by customary and religious leaders is not merely a supervisory measure, but also a strategy to defend local cultural sovereignty from the penetration of political ideologies that conflict with the values of ABS-SBK and Pancasila.

This phenomenon can be seen as a form of cultural negotiation in which communities are willing to open up space for interaction with transnational actors, while maintaining full control over the boundaries that may be violated. This strategy aligns with theories of *cultural negotiation* and *boundary maintenance*, which emphasize that local groups are not simply objects of acceptance or rejection but have the autonomy to determine the terms of engagement with outsiders (Tarumingkeng, 2025). Thus, this selective negotiation serves a dual function: maintaining relatively harmonious social relations with immigrant groups while protecting the integrity of local values.

This principle of conditional acceptance is clearly visible in the statements of local religious figures who were directly involved in the process of filtering HTI's preaching materials in Solok Regency.

We accept religious studies, but if they involve politics and are anti-Pancasila, we will clearly withdraw (SH, personal communication, February 17, 2025).

This statement underlines the existence of a clear boundary line in the interaction between local communities and transnational ideological groups, where acceptance only applies to aspects that are in accordance with local values and do not threaten the socio-political order.

The quote shows that the cultural appropriation strategy employed by HTI in the negotiation observation location was only partially successful because the local community practiced a strict selection mechanism for the content they received. The presence of da'wah based on purely religious material was acceptable because it aligned with local religious values and did not create friction with customary norms or national ideology. However, when the material began to contain a transnational political agenda—such as the idea of a caliphate or anti-Pancasila stance—the community actively resisted,

either by withdrawing from activities or terminating events.

This demonstrates that conditional acceptance is a subtle yet effective form of cultural resistance, in which communities utilize customary frameworks and collective identities to filter out external influences. From the perspective of cultural appropriation strategies, this phenomenon demonstrates that successful symbolic and linguistic adaptation does not guarantee full acceptance; ideological factors remain the primary filter determining the boundaries of interaction between transnational movements and Minangkabau society.

To clarify and facilitate understanding of the varying community responses to the presence of the Salafi and HTI movements in West Sumatra, the previously presented field data is presented in comparative table form. This table summarizes the location, form of response, concrete activities, symbolic indicators, background context, and key quotations from each category—acceptance, rejection, and selective negotiation. As illustrated in table 2, this format allows readers to concisely see patterns of differences and similarities and grasp the essence of the field findings without having to wade through lengthy descriptive narratives.

Table 2 Community Responses to Salafi and Hizbut Tahrir Movements in West Sumatra

Response Categories	Location & Time	Response Form	Real Activities	Visual/Symbolic Indicators	Background Context
Acceptance	Nagari Aripan, Solok Regency, since the establishment of RLAIIBS (late 2010s – 2020s)	Full support for the Rahmatan Lil Alamin International Boarding School (RLAIIBS) affiliated with Salafi	The presence of traditional figures at graduation ceremonies and large-scale religious studies; community participation in mutual cooperation, provision of food, and general studies	A traditional figure with the title <i>Datuak</i> wearing full traditional attire; a banner of support at a resident's house; a social media post with the hashtag #SekolahKito	Cultural appropriation strategy: the incorporation of symbols of customary & religious authority for social legitimacy, in line with ABS-SBK
Rejection	Padang City, 2017 (protest against the construction of Siloam Hospital)	Protest action against HTI which linked ABS-SBK with the rejection of the construction of Siloam Hospital	Demonstration in front of the DPRD, removal of HTI banners, disbandment of discussion forums, closure of public facilities	A red and black banner with the words rejecting the caliphate; traditional figures dressed in full traditional attire; the red and white flag and the traditional house symbol	Rejection of the instrumentalization of customs for transnational political agendas that are contrary to ABS-SBK and Pancasila
Selective Negotiation	Nagari X Koto Diateh, Solok, 2020s	Limited acceptance of HTI for purely religious activities, rejection when the material enters the political realm	Use of traditional halls for non-political studies; verification of themes by traditional/religious leaders; residents leaving events when political material is discussed; termination of events that violate agreements	Event banner with non-political theme and nagari logo + traditional symbols; traditional figures were present at the beginning, leaving when the material deviated	ABS-SBK based cultural filtering; conditional acceptance to maintain social harmony and national integrity

These findings indicate that the responses of local communities in West Sumatra to the Salafi and HTI movements fall into three interaction patterns, reflecting the dynamic

relationship between transnational ideology and local cultural values. In the acceptance pattern, full support is given when the institution is able to integrate customary symbols and values, as seen in the RLAIIBS, which combines customary and religious authority in ceremonial activities and social programs. The strategy of cultural appropriation through the use of customary attributes and the involvement of figures with the title *Datuak* serves to build cultural legitimacy while minimizing resistance to the ideology being promoted. Conversely, in the rejection pattern, the community takes a firm stance against efforts perceived as manipulating customary symbols for political agendas, as in the case of HTI in Padang. This rejection is driven not only by ideological differences with the caliphate but also by the perception that such actions threaten cultural sovereignty and the alignment of ABS-SBK with Pancasila. Meanwhile, the selective negotiation pattern demonstrates the community's capacity to regulate interaction boundaries through cultural filtering mechanisms, where religious material aligned with customary norms is accepted, but transnational political elements are systematically filtered and rejected. These three patterns emphasize that acceptance of transnational movements in Minangkabau is conditional, determined by conformity with local value frameworks and the success of external actors in maintaining harmony between custom, religion, and national identity.

These findings reveal that the interaction between local communities in West Sumatra and transnational movements such as Salafi and HTI cannot be understood solely within the dichotomy of "acceptance" or "rejection." Instead, the data demonstrates a spectrum of responses influenced by cultural, symbolic, and ideological factors. Full acceptance occurs when transnational actors are able to frame their ideological messages within local values, utilize customary symbols, and respect prevailing authority structures. This supports the theory of cultural appropriation and symbolic integration, where social legitimacy can be achieved through targeted symbolic adaptation (Davidson, Jamie S et al., 2010). Strong rejection, as in the case of HTI in Padang, demonstrates that local communities possess strong cultural defense mechanisms to resist the appropriation of customary symbols deemed manipulative or contrary to the basic principles of ABS-SBK and national ideology. Meanwhile, selective negotiation shows that communities are not passive, but rather actively filter content through boundary maintenance and cultural filtering, maintaining a balance between openness to external influences and the protection of core values (Davidson, Jamie S et al., 2010). The implication of this finding is that the success or failure of transnational ideological penetration in indigenous-based areas is largely determined by the actor's ability to understand, respect, and navigate local value systems. Thus, this study broadens the understanding of cultural appropriation strategies not only as symbolic integration efforts, but also as a dynamic negotiation process whose outcomes depend on the bargaining position and cultural awareness of the recipient community.

Symbolic Transformation and Religious Identity

a) Symbolic Transformation in the Form of Clothing

Field observations conducted in Solok Regency on February 23, 2025, and at the Rahmatan Lil Alamin International Islamic Boarding School (RLAIIBS) on the same date revealed a significant transformation in community clothing styles, particularly among the younger generation. This shift was clearly visible at public events such as student graduations, large-scale religious gatherings, and Eid al-Fitr prayers. At the RLAIIBS student graduation ceremony, all female students wore long black *syar'i hijabs* (long

Islamic headscarves that cover the chest and back), with some also wearing *niqabs* (face veils). Meanwhile, male students appeared in white or gray *gamis* (long robes) combined with *cingkrang* pants (ankle-length trousers) and white *peci* (traditional caps). In contrast, traditional Minangkabau attire such as *baju kurung* (traditional blouse-dress), *sarawa galembong* (loose traditional trousers), and *tengkuluk* (women's head covering) were only worn by a few traditional leaders who attended as guests of honor, as illustrated in Figure 7.



Figure 7 Minangkabau Traditional Clothing

A similar shift was also observed during the Grand Recitation on May 17, 2024, where the majority of female congregants wore wide *khimar*-style headscarves (cape-like veils) or black *niqabs*, while most male congregants wore white *gamis* or *koko shirts* (collarless shirts commonly used for religious purposes) paired with ankle-length trousers. Archival photos from the village in 2018 show that similar events were still characterized by traditional clothing such as *kurung kebaya* (traditional blouse-dress), *songket* (handwoven brocade fabric), and horn-shaped *tengkuluk*. The same pattern was evident during the Eid al-Fitr prayer on April 10, 2024, when almost all male congregants wore white *gamis* and *cingkrang* trousers, while only a handful wore *sarawa galembong* and the distinctive black Minangkabau cap, marking a gradual decline in the visibility of traditional attire.

Other evidence supporting this finding includes photographic documentation of a student graduation ceremony featuring a banner with the words “5th Class of RLAIIBS Student Graduation” as the backdrop, a religious study banner displaying a speaker wearing a *gamis* (long Islamic robe), and archived photographs of the 2024 Eid al-Fitr prayer, which clearly show the dominance of *cingkrang* pants (ankle-length trousers) among male worshippers. This shift in clothing is not only occurring within the Islamic boarding school environment but has also extended into the surrounding community.

At the entrance of the Islamic boarding school, a notice board requires students to wear *sharia attire* (*busana syar'i*) on a daily basis. For male students, this consists of a *gamis* or *koko shirt* (a collarless Islamic shirt) with pants falling above the ankles, while female students are expected to wear a long *shar'i hijab* (headscarf covering the chest and

back), which is recommended to be accompanied by a *niqab* (face veil). Interestingly, a number of non-students have also begun adopting this dress code when attending religious events. Two local traders confirmed that since the Islamic boarding school's establishment in 2017, demand for *gamis*, *cingkrang* pants, and long *khimar* (cape-like headscarves) has increased rapidly—an indication of the penetration of Salafi-style clothing culture into the broader social sphere of the village community.

Changes in clothing styles in Solok Regency and the Rahmatan Lil Alamin International Islamic Boarding School (RLAIIBS) Islamic Boarding School environment cannot be separated from the symbolic adaptation strategy implemented by the Salafi movement. In the context of Minangkabau culture, clothing is not just a covering for the body, but is a marker of social identity, traditional status and gender roles in society. Traditional clothing, such as the brackets, *sarawa galembong* (baggy trousers for men), and *tengkuluk* horn (horn-shaped headcloth), contains cultural meanings that are closely related to the *Basandi Syarak Indigenous philosophy*, *Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK), where traditional and religious values are positioned as mutually reinforcing.

However, since the emergence of Salafi-affiliated educational and da'wah institutions in the late 2010s, a process of symbolic substitution has occurred, gradually replacing traditional clothing with clothing that adheres to Salafi standards of piety—*gamis*, *cingkrang* trousers, *syar'i hijab*, and *niqab*. In cultural appropriation theory, this phenomenon can be interpreted as a form of integration of external symbols into the local cultural space, but accompanied by a shift in meaning that shifts the authority of traditional symbols toward the authority of transnational religious symbols.

This strategy serves a dual purpose. First, it establishes a unified visual identity within the global Salafi community, thereby strengthening a sense of connectedness across national borders, or what can be described as a transnational ummah identity. Second, it provides religious legitimacy that gradually supplants customary legitimacy, particularly among the younger generation, who are more receptive to narratives of global-puritan piety (Bruinessen, M. van, 2013). Consequently, the symbols of traditional clothing are undergoing a process of *desubstantialization*—losing their social function as markers of cultural tradition—as they are replaced by symbols of religious attire associated with piety, modesty, and the purity of Salafi Islamic teachings.

This context aligns with findings on Islamic fashion as a field of identity contestation, where clothing serves not only as a marker of faith but also as a symbolic political instrument. By using visual modes as the primary channel, this movement implements a form of symbolic domination (Bourdieu, P., 1986) that works subtly: replacing local cultural attributes with universal religious ones without direct confrontation, but rather through a gradual adaptation process framed as an expression of piety. This strategy allows for the reshaping of society's symbolic landscape based on religious legitimacy that is difficult to openly challenge, because it is wrapped in moral and religious rhetoric.

This change is not merely a superficial phenomenon, but is also explicitly acknowledged by those directly involved in the education and development process at Salafi-affiliated institutions. This view was clearly captured in a field interview with a teacher at the Rahmatan Lil Alamin International Islamic Boarding School (RLAIIBS), who explained the rationale and purpose of implementing a dress code for students and members of the community involved in boarding school activities.

We do guide our children to display their true Muslim identity, including in their dress and demeanor. That's part of their education (Yoni Marlius, personal communication, March 21, 2025).

The teacher's statement indicates that changes in clothing styles did not occur spontaneously due to the influence of global Islamic popular culture, but were part of a structured educational policy. Within the framework of cultural appropriation strategies, this step can be categorized as symbolic substitution, namely replacing local cultural symbols (traditional Minangkabau clothing such as *baju kurung* and *sarawa galembong*) with symbols of global religious identity (*gamis*, *cingkrang*, *jilbab syar'i*, *niqab*) that represent Salafi ideology. This substitution has two strategic functions: first, strengthening transnational religious identity among the younger generation; second, gradually eroding visual and emotional attachment to traditional symbols, so that local cultural space is filled with universal religious symbols that align with the movement's narrative. This process shows that cultural appropriation is not always carried out through direct confrontation, but rather through educational mechanisms and internalization of values that occur in daily activities, so that they are more accepted by the target community.

b) Symbolic Transformation in the form of Language & Religious Terms

Field observations in Agam Regency indicate a shift in the use of religious terms in public spaces and official activities. The local term "*pengajian*" (religious study gathering), which was previously common in prayer rooms (*surau*, small neighborhood prayer houses) or mosques, has been increasingly replaced by the term "*dauroh*" on banners, brochures, and social media. A concrete example can be seen on an activity banner in the courtyard of the Lubuk Gadang Grand Mosque, which reads "*Dauroh Ramadhan Bersama Ustadz Fulan*" (Ramadan *Dauroh* with Ustadz Fulan) without including any local equivalent.

A similar shift occurred with the term "*majlis taklim*" (women's religious study group), which was commonly used in female congregational activities. In brochures distributed through WhatsApp groups, the term was replaced with "*ta'lim*" (Arabic term for Islamic study or teaching session). For example, one brochure read: "*Muslimah Ta'lim Schedule – Al-Ikhlas Mosque*." This new terminology was also found in broadcasts on *Surau TV* and *Ray FM*, where announcers routinely used the phrase "*ta'lim tonight*" instead of "*pengajian malam ini*".

The use of the terms *dauroh* and *ta'lim* was documented in various situations, including formal events such as Ramadan study sessions and student graduations, promotional activities on social media, and radio broadcast announcements. Visual documentation includes: (1) a photo of a "*Dauroh Akbar*" (Grand *Dauroh*) banner displayed on the mosque door, (2) a snapshot of the Al-Ikhlas Mosque's weekly schedule that lists "*Ta'lim*" for all sessions, and (3) a screenshot of the Instagram account @SurauTV_minang promoting "*Dauroh Tauhid*" (Tauhid Study Seminar) on May 17, 2024.

This change was initially transitional, with the old and new terms appearing side by side—for example, in the poster "*Pengajian/Dauroh Anak Muda*" (Young People's Study Group/*Dauroh*) in early 2023. However, by 2024, the local terms such as *pengajian* (religious study gathering) had been almost completely abandoned in favor of *dauroh* and *ta'lim*. No written explanations or translations of these new terms were provided, suggesting that they were adopted directly from Arabic without interpretation, reflecting an implicit assumption that the audience would adjust to the imported terminology.

In the context of Minangkabau culture, language is not merely a means of

communication, but also a means of transmitting values, identity, and social cohesion. Religious terms such as *pengajian* (*religious study group*) and *majlis taklim* (*Islamic study group*) have become entrenched as markers of the connection between Islam and local customs (*Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*). The shift toward Arabic terms such as *dauroh* and *ta'lim*, introduced by Salafi and HTI missionary networks, reflects a strategy of cultural appropriation through language.

This strategy served a dual purpose: first, to establish religious authority associated with the purity of their version of Islamic teachings, and second, to introduce a transnational identity framework distinct from local religious expressions. By adopting terms symbolically linked to the global Islamic world, this movement shifted the cultural reference point from the Minangkabau locality to a more puritanical and universal religious identity.

For the community, the acceptance or rejection of this term is not simply a linguistic choice, but part of a collective identity negotiation process. Changes in vocabulary have implications for how people understand religious authority, their value orientations, and even their position within the global Islamic landscape. Therefore, this phenomenon is not only linguistically relevant but also strategically relevant within the broader framework of cultural appropriation.

This change in terminology did not occur spontaneously, but rather through a conscious internalization process among those involved in da'wah. Interviews with da'wah media managers and key figures in the movement revealed that the use of Arabic terms is perceived as having legitimacy and special appeal, particularly to the younger generation exposed to global Islamic discourse.

Ustaz Faisah Rahman, February 17, 2025, one of the managers of Surau TV, explained:

We chose the words *dauroh* or *ta'lim* because they are more precise in a sharia sense. Terms like *pengajian* or *majlis taklim* are too generic and sometimes associated with traditional customs. We want to differentiate ourselves (Faisah Rahman, Personal Communication, February 17, 2025).

This quote demonstrates that the shift in religious terminology is not simply a linguistic preference, but rather part of a consciously designed strategy of cultural appropriation. Research findings indicate that Salafi and HTI groups consistently replace local terms such as *pengajian* (*religious study group*) or *majlis taklim* (*Islamic study group*) with Arabic terms such as *dauroh* and *ta'lim*. This terminological shift has strategic significance, as it semiotically creates a symbolic distance between their religious practices and the local Minangkabau Islamic tradition, which was previously closely integrated with custom (*Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*).

In the perspective of cultural appropriation theory (Young, J. O, 2008), this practice includes a form of symbolic reframing, namely the adoption of foreign cultural elements that are then reinterpreted and positioned as new standards in a different social space. This shift in vocabulary not only changes the language used in religious activities, but also functions as a mechanism for identity formation. First, it asserts a religious affiliation that is more aligned with the transnational Islamic discourse, thereby strengthening the group's image as part of a global puritan community. Second, it gradually shifts symbolic legitimacy from local customary vocabulary to global terminology and concepts that are considered to have higher religious authority.

This process can also be explained by the concept of semiotic appropriation

(Bourdieu, P, 1986), where the replacement of terms creates new meanings that influence how the audience views a practice. By using Arabic terms, the audience is directed to internalize the norms and values attached to the terms, while implicitly eroding the role of traditional terms and symbols that have long been markers of local Islamic identity. Furthermore, within the framework of cultural hegemony, language is seen as an instrument of cultural power capable of shaping collective consciousness (Young, J. O, 2008). This shift, therefore, is not only a linguistic act but also a hegemonic strategy that reorganizes the religious semiotic landscape in Minangkabau.

Thus, the shift from *pengajian* (religious study) to *dauroh* (religious study group), or from *majlis taklim* (religious study group) to *ta'lim* (religious study group), is not simply a modernization of vocabulary, but rather part of a process of symbolic domination that accompanies the penetration of transnational ideology. This strategy exploits society's emotional attachment to religious symbols to instill new norms, while gradually pushing traditional symbols and terms to the margins of religious discourse.

c) Symbolic Transformation in the form of Authority Symbols

Field observations conducted on March 20, 2025, revealed a phenomenon of shifting symbols of authority in the religious public sphere. At a major *daurah* event organized by the Salafi da'wah network at the At-Taqwa Mosque, the event banner listed the speaker as "Ustadz Zainal Abidin" without mentioning his traditional title, even though he was known locally as a *Mamak* (maternal uncle) and a community leader in his village. In the forum, the title *Mamak* was not mentioned at all, either by the host or by the participants, and was completely replaced by a religious title with a universal nuance.

A similar situation was also found at the *mass religious gathering* at the *Paninggahan* Traditional Hall Field, co-organized by HTI activists in early June 2024. In posters circulating on Facebook and Instagram, the woman, traditionally known as *Bundo Kandung* in the village, was written as "Ummu Ahmad" (according to the original), complete with a photo of herself wearing a niqab and a black robe. In her opening remarks, the host called her "a role model for a Muslim woman who follows the Sunnah," without mentioning her role or traditional title at all.

The phenomenon of shifting symbols of authority from traditional Minangkabau titles—such as *Bundo Kandung*, *Mamak*, or *Saluak*³—to religious titles such as *Buya*, *Ustaz/Ustazah*, *Syaikh*, or other honorifics derived from Arabic vocabulary, reflects a deliberate strategy of cultural appropriation within the framework of transnational da'wah. In Minangkabau tradition, traditional titles are not merely markers of social status, but symbols of moral authority, genealogical links, and representations of legitimacy within the *nagari* structure. Field findings indicate that the Salafi and HTI movements exploit this shift to shift the source of social legitimacy from a local customary framework to a global-puritanical framework of religious authority. For example, at the Rahmatan Lil Alamin International Islamic Boarding School (RLAIIBS) Islamic Boarding School, the titles *Datuak* and *Buya* are deliberately juxtaposed in the identities of the institution's leaders, both at official events and in public media, thereby

³ In the Minangkabau custom, *Bundo Kandung* is a title for women who are elder and respected as guardians of customary values, heirloom owners, and the main support of the family and community. Meanwhile, *Mamak* refers to the brother of the mother who plays an important role in guiding and protecting Kamanakan, especially in terms of education, customs, and inheritance of heirlooms. The *Saluak* is a traditional Minangkabau male head cover which is usually used at traditional events as a symbol of authority, honor, and social status. These three terms reflect the important role of figures and symbols in maintaining social order and strengthening the Minangkabau cultural identity.

creating the image that the institution is deeply rooted in Minang land despite its transnational ideological orientation.

This strategy is effective because it touches two layers of identity simultaneously. First, the global religious title provides an image of authority that is considered “more Islamic” and in accordance with the Salafist method, which according to social identity theory (Tajfel, H & Turner, J. C, 1986) can increase group status through association with an identity that is perceived as symbolically higher. Second, the gradual elimination of traditional symbols erodes the psychological attachment of the community to the Minangkabau cultural structure, a process that can be understood through the concept of cultural displacement, namely the shift in the center of cultural reference due to the dominance of new narratives. This shift facilitates the internalization of an ideological agenda that places religion as the sole source of legitimacy, in line with Bourdieu’s (1986) view of symbolic power that regulates the hierarchy of values and authority in social space.

Furthermore, the weakening of adat’s position as a foundation for shared values indicates a shift from the ABS-SBK (*Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*) paradigm toward a narrower interpretation of sharia within a transnational framework, as explained by Roy (2004) in his analysis of globalized Islam. This shift in symbols of authority is not merely a linguistic or cosmetic phenomenon, but rather part of an identity repositioning (Jenkins, 2008) that systematically shifts the collective orientation of society. Thus, this transformation serves as an effective instrument in reconstructing the landscape of religious identity and authority in Minangkabau.

This shift in symbols of authority is also clearly reflected in the statements of sources directly involved in Salafi-based da’wah and educational activities in West Sumatra. One ustadz, Muhammad Kadri, a teacher at a Salafi educational institution in Padang City, explained:

We are more comfortable using terms like ‘Ustadz’ or ‘Syaikh’, because they signify scholarly authority recognized widely in the Islamic world. Traditional titles like ‘Mamak’ or ‘Bundo Kanduang’ we still respect, but they are socio-cultural, not religious authority (Muhammad Kadri, Personal Communication, February 27, 2025).

The quote emphasizes that the transformation of traditional titles into global religious titles is part of a selective and transformative cultural appropriation strategy. According to cultural appropriation theory (Rogers, 2006), this process involves taking certain cultural elements to be reinterpreted according to the interests and ideological framework of the adopting group. In this context, the Salafi movement and Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) practice selective appropriation by maintaining respect for traditional titles in the socio-cultural realm, but replacing them in religious contexts with religious titles that have transnational resonance. This shift aligns with the concept of symbolic power (Bourdieu, P, 1986), in which symbolic authority is shifted from local customary structures to transnational religious authority that gains legitimacy from global Islamic networks. This strategy not only changes the symbolic structure in public interactions but also strengthens a collective identity that is more aligned with the global ummah narrative (Roy, 2004), while simultaneously eroding the symbolic dominance of Minangkabau culture in local religious spaces. Thus, this title transformation functions as an instrument

of repositioning authority, which in the long term has the potential to reconstruct the cultural and religious landscape in the Minangkabau public sphere.

Based on the series of field observations, visual documentation, and interviews presented above, a consistent pattern of symbolic transformation can be identified across three main domains: dress, language and religious terminology, and symbols of authority. This pattern indicates a significant shift from markers of Minangkabau cultural identity to markers of transnational religious identity promoted by the Salafi and HTI da'wah networks. To facilitate reading and comparison of these findings, the collected primary data are presented in the following summary, as illustrated in table 3, which outlines the location and time of observation, descriptions of changes, supporting visual indicators, and relevant field notes.

Table 3 Symbolic Transformations in Minangkabau Culture

No	Symbolic Transformation Forms	Location & Time of Observation	Description of Changes	Visual Indicators	Additional Notes
1	Fashion	- Rahmatan Lil Alamin International Islamic Boarding School (RLAIIBS), in May 2024 - Grand Recitation on May 17, 2024 - Eid al-Fitr Prayer on April 10, 2024	The shift from traditional Minangkabau attire (<i>baju kurung</i> , <i>sarawa galembong</i> , <i>tengkuluk</i>) to Salafi-style attire: <i>gamis</i> , <i>cingkrang pants</i> , <i>syar'i hijab</i> , and <i>niqab</i> . Female students at RLAIIBS all wear long black hijabs, some wearing niqabs; male students wear white/grey <i>gamis</i> and <i>cingkrang pants</i> .	- Graduation photos of RLAIIBS students - Banner "Graduation of the 5th Class of RLAIIBS Students" - Photo archive of Eid Prayers 2024 - Photo banner of the religious study with speakers wearing robes	The demand for <i>gamis</i> , <i>cingkrang</i> , long <i>khimar</i> has increased since 2017 (testimony from local traders).
2	Religious Language & Terms	- Lubuk Gadang Grand Mosque, March 2024 - Al-Ikhlas Mosque, May 2024 - Surau TV & Ray FM	The term " <i>pengajian</i> " (study) was replaced by " <i>dauroh</i> ," and " <i>majlis taklim</i> " was replaced by " <i>ta'lim</i> " on banners, brochures, social media, and radio broadcasts. The transition (<i>pengajian/dauroh</i>) initially began in early 2023, and by 2024, the local terms had almost disappeared.	- Photo of the "Dauroh Ramadhan" banner - Brochure "Muslimah Ta'lim Schedule" - Screenshot of IG @SurauTV_minang promoting "Dauroh Tauhid" - Snapshot of the weekly schedule of Al-Ikhlas Mosque	The new terms are taken from Arabic without translation; considered "more appropriate according to Sharia" by da'wah activists.
3	Symbol of Authority	- At-Taqwa Mosque, May-April 2024 - Paninggahan Traditional	Traditional titles like <i>Mamak</i> , <i>Bundo Kanduang</i> , and <i>Saluak</i> were replaced by global religious titles like Ustadz,	- Banner "Scientific Dauroh with Ustadz Dr. Fulan bin Fulan" - Poster for the grand tabligh with "Ummu Ahmad" -	This change shifted social legitimacy from customary authority to

Hall Field, early June 2024	Ummu, and Syaikh on banners, posters, and religious publications. Traditional identities were removed from official forums, used only outside of religious events.	Video recording of the event's welcome	transnational religious authority.
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Simply put, the findings of this study indicate that the community in the observation area has experienced significant changes in three important aspects. First, the way of dressing has shifted from traditional Minangkabau attire—such as the *baju kurung*, *sarawa galembong*, and *tengkuluk*—toward clothing identified with the Salafi community, such as the gamis, cingkrang pants, the *syar'i jilbab*, and the *niqab*. Second, religious terms once rooted in local languages, such as *pengajian* (religious study group) or *majlis taklim* (Islamic study group), are increasingly used less and are being replaced by Arabic terms such as *dauroh* and *ta'lim* (Islamic study group). Third, traditional titles that previously symbolized authority—such as *Bundo Kanduang*, *Mamak*, or *Saluak*—are beginning to be replaced by global religious titles such as *Ustadz*, *Syaikh*, or *Ummu*, especially in the context of da'wah activities and religious publications. This change is not only visible at major events such as student graduations, large-scale religious studies, and Eid prayers, but also in public media such as banners, social media, and da'wah radio broadcasts. In fact, this shift has begun to influence clothing habits, ways of communicating, and the way people refer to characters in everyday life.

These findings have significant implications for our understanding of the dynamics of interaction between local Minangkabau customs and transnational Islamic narratives. First, the patterns of symbolic substitution in dress, language, and titles suggest that cultural appropriation by the Salafi and HTI movements is not simply the adoption of external symbols, but a process of identity reconstruction that shifts the reference point of authority from custom to religion in a more puritanical form. This reinforces theoretical findings that cultural appropriation does not always take the form of open confrontation but can instead occur through symbol-based “soft power” strategies internalized through education, media, and public activities.

Second, this shift reveals how language and appearance become ideological instruments. The shift from local terms to Arabic terms without translation creates a symbolic distance from local traditions, while simultaneously fostering a sense of connectedness with the global community (*transnational ummah*). This shift is not merely a matter of vocabulary, but a repositioning of the framework of thought—directing the community's religious understanding toward a more exclusive and textualist method.

Third, the repositioning of authority titles from *Bundo Kanduang* or *Mamak* to *Ustadz* or *Ummu* demonstrates a transformation in the landscape of moral leadership. Religious authority associated with global piety has begun to replace customary authority, which has long been a pillar of Minangkabau society. This shift has implications for the weakening of customary law's role as a supporter of social cohesion and the ABS-SBK value system, as well as the strengthening of legitimacy patterns based on transnational religious authority.

Thus, these data not only document visual and linguistic changes but also confirm that cultural appropriation strategies in West Sumatra operate through symbolic channels

that touch three domains simultaneously—visual identity, language, and authority—simultaneously reshaping collective identity. These findings expand knowledge of how transnational Islamic movements utilize symbols to effect profound yet gradual cultural transformations, minimizing social resistance.

Discussion

The discourse on transnational Islam is complex because, as stated in the introduction of the text, “Islam itself is a transnational ideology.” This means that from the beginning, Islam has transcended geographical boundaries and emerged as an ideological force that crosses nations and cultures. However, in contemporary contexts, the term “transnational Islam” refers to multinational Islamic groups that emerged after the initial spread of Islam. As explained by Miles et al. (2014), the term does not refer to the spread of Islam by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), but to modern organizations such as Hizb ut-Tahrir and Salafism. Ahmad Syafii Maarif described Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) as a form of transnational Islam (Maarif, 2009), while Hasyim Muzadi viewed it as the antithesis of traditional Islamic groups that reject Indonesia’s cultural values (Hasyim & Puritan, 2019). This indicates that the influence of transnational Islam cannot be separated from discourses of religious, political, and local cultural identity.

In terms of doctrine and authoritative interpretation, Islamic authority lies with the ulama as the heirs of the Prophet (Dabashi, 2017). The interpretations they promote greatly influence the way Muslims think and, in many cases, can lead to the erosion of a society’s original values. As stated in the text, “Humanitarian values, culture, and so on, to name a few, are certainly based on faith in Islam itself” (Weber, 2001). Therefore, it is not surprising that Islamic ideology can negate previously held local values, especially when these interpretations are not moderate but rather rigid and puritanical. In the cases of HT and Salafism, we see how local cultural values are appropriated to support their ideological projects.

Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), as written in the text, is “a revolutionary Islamic party seeking to establish an expansionist superstate in Muslim-majority countries.” They view the world in a dichotomy of *Dar al-Harb* and *Dar al-Islam* and permit “killing civilians” to transform non-Islamic nations into Islamic ones (Ahmed & Stuart, 2009). In the Indonesian context, HT’s strategy was to append “Indonesia” to its name, becoming HTI. This represents a form of cultural appropriation: “merging two cultures, HT’s culture with all its ideology, and Indonesian culture with all its ideology.” The aim is to create a new culture in the form of a political system based on the Caliphate (*Khilafah*). Within the framework of cultural appropriation theory, this action does not merely unite cultural elements but also risks damaging or unilaterally seizing local cultural identity.

Two HTI activities in West Sumatra demonstrate this appropriation in practice: their involvement in opposing the construction of Siloam Hospital and organizing a women’s leadership seminar. In the hospital case, an HTI figure declared that the hospital “not only threatens Islamic values as a religion but also the cultural values of Minangkabau’s ABS-SBK” (Zulfadli & Arrasuli, 2017). This illustrates how HTI aligns its ideological narrative with local discourse. In the women’s seminar, HTI cited local figures like Rahmah El-Yunusiah as champions of their ideology, although the main goal remains to “transmit the ideology of the Caliphate.” By using local symbols to serve a transnational religious agenda, HTI strategically blurs the lines between local culture and global Islamic political projects.

The Salafi movement, although different from HT in its political approach, also

demonstrates similar patterns of appropriation. Salafism, as explained in the text, is “a puritan Islamic movement” aiming to revive “the historical legacy of the Prophet Muhammad, his companions, and the two subsequent generations” (Duderija, 2007). Although initially apolitical, the global expansion of Salafism has been heavily supported by Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia. In Indonesia, Salafi networks began to grow in the early 19th century through Middle Eastern alumni who formed communities and educational institutions. In West Sumatra, they established institutions like Yayasan Dar el-Iman (YDI) and RLAIIBS. These operate not only in the field of education but also build close relationships with local religious and customary authorities, such as Buya Gusrizal Gazahar, who also holds the traditional title “*Datuak* Palimo Basa.”

The involvement of local figures like Gazahar in Salafi networks shows that the appropriation process has been effective. As noted in the text, “the authority held by Gazahar is sufficient to assert the existence and development of RLAIIBS.” On the other hand, Salafis have employed other strategies, such as offering free education and engaging traditional leaders as promotional agents. This reflects the use of economic, social, and cultural symbols to expand their ideological influence. According to Richard Jenkins, the construction of religious identity in public spaces is heavily influenced by “similarities and differences” individuals share with their group (Jenkins, 2014). Thus, the use of customary symbols in Salafi preaching activities represents a reframing of identity to gain broader acceptance.

The use of new media, such as Ray FM and Surau TV, shows that Salafi expansion also strategically leverages technology. Surau TV, for instance, uses the term “surau”—a key symbol in Minangkabau religious and cultural life (Azra, 2017). Taglines such as “Radio Dakwah from the Minang Land, Purifying Aqidah, Spreading the Sunnah” indicate an appropriative intention that combines local values with Islamic puritanism. Furthermore, programs like *Suluah Minang* address highly contextual topics, such as inheritance or age changes, framed within Minangkabau culture. The use of identities like “Buya,” “Mamak,” and “Kamanakan” in these programs signifies the deployment of customary symbols to build ideological legitimacy in a localized format.

Nonetheless, there exists a paradox in this Salafi appropriation. On one hand, they adopt local cultural symbols and forms, yet on the other, they maintain the distinct Salafi visual identity, long beards, and ankle-length trousers. The text states that this practice creates “an internalization process of Salafi ideas through the appropriation of cultural elements.” Thus, the public may come to accept Salafi features as part of local culture. If this phenomenon continues to develop, it is conceivable that “Minangkabau traditional figures with Salafi ideology” may emerge, forming a new cultural identity resulting from the synthesis of local culture and transnational puritanism. This is where transnational identity undergoes localization, and simultaneously localizes culture (Kasri et al., 2020).

The implications of such appropriation can be examined through José Casanova’s framework of the “de-privatization of religion.” When religion becomes actively visible in public spaces, traditional authorities begin to fragment (Cassanova, 2014). In the context of Salafism, this fragmentation causes traditional institutions like madrasas and pesantren to lose dominance over religious discourse. As Olivier Roy points out, this may lead to the emergence of a “lumpen-intelligentsia”, religious figures without proper Islamic education who nevertheless wield great influence due to media exposure (Roy, 2004). This is dangerous because religious legitimacy is no longer based on competence but on popularity and media access. Hence, the symbolic power of cultural appropriation is not merely a tactic for acceptance but also a battle for authority.

Ultimately, the cultural appropriation conducted by transnational Islamic

movements such as HTI and Salafism brings double-edged consequences. On one hand, as explained by O.Young and Brunk (2009), it can lead to “symbolic distortion,” “cultural exploitation,” and “the formation of new stereotypes.” On the other hand, this practice may also be interpreted as a “strategic shift from exclusive puritanism to a more contextual religiosity,” as discussed in the book *Religious Moderation*. Therefore, a more in-depth and interdisciplinary analysis is needed to determine whether this reflects ideological compromise, missionary tactics, or symbolic domination. Thus, the dynamics of transnational Islam in West Sumatra are not only ideological struggles but also battles over cultural symbols and meanings in an increasingly complex public sphere.

The findings of this study reveal that the strategy of cultural appropriation employed by transnational Islamic groups, particularly Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) and Salafism in West Sumatra, has produced complex and multidimensional impacts. On one hand, this approach demonstrates an adaptation to local values, such as the use of terms like *Buya*, *Mamak*, or *Surau*, reflecting an effort to engage with the socio-cultural context of Minangkabau society. This accommodative stance can serve to strengthen Islamic proselytization (da’wah), enhance Muslim solidarity, and make ideological outreach more palatable and locally resonant.

However, on the other hand, these appropriation strategies also pose significant social dysfunctions. The strategic use of local cultural symbols by HTI and Salafi groups risks diluting their original meanings, reducing them to mere tools for ideological expansion. This process may undermine local Minangkabau identity and marginalize traditional religious groups or underrepresented segments, such as women. As O.Young and Brunk (2009) argue, cultural appropriation often leads to symbolic disrespect, misrepresentation, and commodification of sacred traditions.

From a functionalist perspective, the appropriation of local culture by transnational Islamic groups has proven effective in consolidating their followers and spreading their ideologies through education and media. It functions as a medium of political-religious expression and community-building. From a critical perspective, however, this phenomenon also contributes to the fragmentation of religious authority, conflict over symbolic ownership, and the emergence of new, potentially exclusionary norms. Thus, these findings affirm that cultural appropriation cannot be interpreted in a simplistic binary of good or bad but requires a nuanced, interdisciplinary understanding of identity, power, and religious expression in public life.

Based on the findings, several strategic actions should be considered to address the cultural appropriation strategies of transnational Islamic movements. Local governments, in collaboration with customary institutions and Islamic organizations, should facilitate open forums for cultural-religious dialogue. These platforms would promote mutual understanding between local traditions and various Islamic expressions, helping to prevent social polarization. Furthermore, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) and Islamic preaching institutions should create guidelines for culturally contextual da’wah that promote inclusivity, respect indigenous values, and avoid using cultural symbols for instrumental purposes. These guidelines should extend to digital media, including radio and YouTube broadcasts, to ensure the responsible dissemination of Islamic teachings.

Additionally, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education should strengthen multicultural education in both formal schools and *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools). The curriculum should integrate local cultural literacy as an essential spiritual and social asset, emphasizing coexistence and diversity. Local traditional leaders and ulama should also play an active role in offering alternative narratives that harmonize Minangkabau values with inclusive Islamic teachings. Such efforts are crucial to

preserving cultural roots while promoting religious integrity and social cohesion.

Broadcasting authorities, like the regional branches of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPID), should work closely with local religious media outlets to ensure that their content is theologically sound and culturally sensitive. If these recommendations are executed through collaborative, cross-sectoral partnerships, they will be both realistic and applicable. The goal is to strengthen Islamic values without undermining local identity, fostering integrative approaches that enrich both cultural and religious traditions. Ultimately, this research emphasizes the importance of collective awareness, recognizing that cultural diversity and religious expression are not threats, but opportunities for civilizational growth if managed wisely.

Conclusion

This study finds that both Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) and the Salafi movement employ strategies of local Minangkabau cultural appropriation to expand the influence of their religious ideologies in West Sumatra. HTI utilizes local issues and symbols, such as the ABS-SBK (*Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*) philosophy, in their opposition to the construction of Siloam Hospital. Meanwhile, the Salafi group adopts cultural terms and identities such as *Buya*, *Surau*, and *Ranah Minang* in their da'wah media to establish emotional connections with the local community. The community responds to these acts of appropriation with varying forms of social negotiation, ranging from selective acceptance to cultural resistance. These appropriation strategies have contributed to a symbolic transformation and reconfiguration of local religious identity, marked by the emergence of religious practices that blend Minangkabau cultural attributes with transnational puritan symbols, thus shaping a new, hybrid, and contextual religious identity.

This research makes a significant contribution to the development of Cultural Appropriation theory in the context of transnational Islam by demonstrating how groups such as HTI and the Salafis strategically adapt Minangkabau cultural symbols to increase the acceptance of their ideologies. It enriches empirical discourse on the relationship between religion, culture, and local identity by examining concrete practices of da'wah, religious media, and social interactions taking place in West Sumatra. Furthermore, the study introduces a new approach by integrating semiotic analysis, religious identity studies, and observations of public social dynamics—an area that has been largely underexplored in the fields of contemporary da'wah and the anthropology of religion. As such, these findings fill a gap in the existing literature, which has seldom examined the intersection between transnational Islam and local cultural contextually and critically.

This study acknowledges several limitations. First, its scope is confined to the local context of West Sumatra, and thus the findings may not fully represent the dynamics of cultural appropriation by transnational Islamic movements in other parts of Indonesia. Second, the limited number of informants and the focus on media documentation and religious practices may introduce interpretive bias in analyzing community responses. Third, rapid socio-political changes may affect the long-term relevance of the data. Therefore, future research is encouraged to expand the geographic scope to other provinces with different cultural characteristics, employ more integrative mixed-method approaches, and conduct longitudinal studies to capture deeper and more sustainable transformations in religious identity.

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