



THE CONTRIBUTION OF SHEIKH SULAIMAN ARRASULI IN THE CONFLICT RESOLUTION BETWEEN KAUM TUA AND KAUM MUDA IN 20TH CENTURY

KONTRIBUSI SHEIKH SULAIMAN ARRASULI DALAM PENYELESAIAN KONFLIK ANTARA KAUM TUA DAN KAUM MUDA PADA ABAD KE-20

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Received: 31 July 2024, Revised: 27 November 2024, Accepted: 13 June 2025.



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Abstract

The number of conflicts within the Islamic community triggered by the issue of ikhtilaf is still frequent. Conflicts due to differences in religious understanding already occurred in Minangkabau in the early 20th century, namely the feud between the Kaum Tua and the Kaum Muda. This article examines Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli's role in reconciling the conflict in Minangkabau at the time. This research is a part of library research by using qualitative approach to elucidate the intellectual dynamics in the 20th century in Minangkabau. The findings are that the conflict occurred between the Kaum Tua and the Kaum Muda in Minangkabau had a major impact on the creation of polarization and division in society. In this case, although Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli was representation of the Kaum Tua, he was able to become a mediating figure who reconciled these groups. Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli not only acted as a defender of the Kaum Tua but also tried to find other alternatives to bridge the two sides for reconciliation. Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli took three steps to reconcile the conflicts. The first is instill an inclusive attitude and caution in giving fatwas to minimize the spread of erroneous fatwas that can disunite the community. The second is to reconcile Adat and religious groups. Thirdly, Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli maintained good relations with the Kaum Muda and persuaded the Kaum Muda to stop the conflict, because it harmed the public interest.

Keywords: *Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli, Conflict Resolution, Kaum Tua, Kaum Muda, Minangkabau.*

Abstrak

Moderasi beragama telah menjadi salah satu program terpenting di Indonesia. Namun program ini masih menghadapi tantangan. Banyaknya konflik di kalangan umat Islam yang dipicu oleh isu ikhtilaf masih sering terjadi. Konflik akibat perbedaan paham agama sudah pernah terjadi di Minangkabau pada awal abad ke-20, yaitu perseteruan antara Kaum Tua dan Kaum Muda. Artikel ini mengkaji peran Syekh Sulaiman Arrasuli dalam mendamaikan konflik di Minangkabau saat itu. Penelitian ini merupakan bagian dari penelitian kepustakaan dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif mengkaji dinamika intelektual abad ke-20 di Minangkabau. Temuannya, konflik yang terjadi antara Kaum Tua dan Kaum Muda di Minangkabau berdampak besar pada terciptanya polarisasi dan perpecahan dalam masyarakat. Dalam kasus ini, meski Syekh Sulaiman Arrasuli merupakan representasi Kaum Tua, namun ia mampu menjadi sosok mediasi yang mendamaikan kelompok tersebut. Syekh Sulaiman Arrasuli tidak hanya berperan sebagai pembela Kaum Tua tetapi juga berupaya mencari alternatif lain untuk menjembatani kedua belah pihak demi rekonsiliasi. Syekh Sulaiman Arrasuli mengambil tiga langkah untuk mendamaikan konflik tersebut. Pertama, menanamkan sikap inklusif dan kehati-hatian dalam memberikan fatwa untuk meminimalisir penyebaran fatwa keliru yang dapat memecah belah masyarakat. Yang kedua adalah mendamaikan kelompok adat dan agama. Ketiga, Syekh Sulaiman Arrasuli menjaga hubungan baik dengan Kaum Muda dan membujuk Kaum Muda untuk menghentikan konflik, karena merugikan kemaslahatan publik

Kata kunci: Syekh Sulaiman Arrasuli, Resolusi Konflik, Kaum Tua, Kaum Muda, Minangkabau.

INTRODUCTION

Religious moderation is one of the flagship programs of the Jokowi government through the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The idea of religious moderation emerged from inter-religious conflicts in several regions in Indonesia. This idea holds a significant role in the context of Indonesia, a nation comprising diverse ethnicities, cultures, religions, and traditions, which are susceptible to intergroup conflict (Ropi, 2019) Hence, fostering religious moderation is crucial for upholding national unity and harmony amidst Indonesia's diverse societal fabric. Religious moderation itself is included in "the National Medium-Term Development Plan" (*Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional/RPJMN*) 2020-2024 on the proposal of the Minister of Religious Affairs at that time, Lukman Hakim Saifuddin (Tim Penyusun Kementrian Agama, 2019).

In overseeing the socialization of religious moderation in the community, the Ministry of Religious Affairs is trying to establish several programs to strengthen religious moderation in all elite state institutions and society. Furthermore, foundational principles of religious moderation specific to Indonesia serve as

guidelines for integrating these values into the program. In the 2020-2024 RPJMN, there are at least four indicators of religious moderation from the perspective of the Ministry of Religious Affairs; 1. National commitment, 2. Tolerance, 3. Anti-violence, 4. Acceptance of local culture. These indicators aim to strengthen religious moderation that involves all elites, whether at the government level, among religious leaders, or social activists, as well as its implementation in the community (Fauzan Fauzan, 2023).

In practice, one of the main focuses of this moderation project is to strengthen tolerance among religious believers, where Muslims as the majority group are required to protect and respect the rights of Non-Muslims in Indonesia. The Ministry of Religious Affairs seeks to spread the value of religious moderation to reduce inter-religious conflicts in Indonesia and prevent acts of violent extremism and terror in the society (Taufiq & Alkholid, 2021). In this case, several policies formulated at the Ministry of Religious Affairs level have been quite successful in building inter-religious harmony. This can be seen from the 2023 Religious Harmony (Kerukunan Umat Beragama) index which has increased compared to the previous two years. In 2021 at 72.39, the index rose to 73.09 in 2022. Meanwhile, in 2023, the KUB index rose again to 76.02 (KumparanNews, 2023). Consequently, conflicts between religious adherents seem to disappear in the news and public discussion. In fact, what has been widely discussed is how harmony between religious adherents has taken place in recent times, for example the phenomenon of war Takjil (the phenomenon of buying iftar menu) carried out by a group of Muslims and non-Muslims in the month of Ramadan last year. It took place peacefully and showed an increased tolerance between religious adherents (Samawa Kantari, Febri Ashari, & Endar Purnawan, 2023).

Although tolerance among religious believers has improved, especially relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in Indonesia, the conflict between Islamic sectarian groups that developed in Indonesia still leaves some serious problems and challenges. Minority groups within the Islamic community, such as Wahabis, often get discrimination from the majority Muslim group. The current research on mapping traces of religious conflicts in the 2019 to 2022 timeframe stated that intra-religious conflicts (fellow Muslims) tend to cause higher conflicts. Most of these conflicts are rooted in intolerant and pro-violence attitudes that are still held firmly by some people. (Ferdiansyah et al., 2023). The same thing is also shown by a survey conducted by the Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI) where it shows that the attitude of intolerance targets Islamic

sectarian groups in Indonesia, such as Wahabi, Shi'a and Ahmadiyya. (Halida, Hanan, & Prasetyo, 2022)

The problem of intolerance and conflict between sectarian groups in Islam is basically influenced by differences in their interpretation of Islamic sources (Nasrullah, Hamdi, & Awalia, 2023). In this regard, it is a fact that Islam consists of various groups with different interpretations, resulting in an understanding that is not monolithic (Wijaya, 2020). However, this fact is not easily understood by Muslims in general. As a result, some Muslims seem to impose one interpretation of Islam and ignore the existence of other understandings, even often throwing accusations of heresy to other groups outside them. The destructive power of differences in religious views tends to create conflicts and feuds among adherents of certain sects. In fact, what is contested is only the truth of religious interpretations carried out by humans (mujtahids), not the ultimate truth that is only owned by Allah (Kemenag, 2019).

The conflicts within the Muslim community triggered by differences in understanding religious texts are not a new phenomenon but have occurred from the past until today. In the Indonesian context, one of the polemics that used to be often in the spotlight was the feud between the Kaum Tua and the Kaum Muda in West Sumatra in the early 20th century. The Kaum Muda were religious leaders who carried the idea of renewal and purification in all aspects of Muslim life and aimed to prevent Muslims from practicing *takhayyul* (superstition), *bid'a* (innovation or heresy), and as such. Meanwhile, the Kaum Tua is a group of scholars who adhere to traditional views and maintain the religious practices they are accustomed to. Most of them are practitioners of the *Tariqa Mu'tabarah* (legitimated Tariqa) in Minangkabau (Lathief, 1988). This polemic persisted for years, leading to pronounced polarization and competition among these groups.

This article will discuss the figure of Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli who was involved in several polemics between Kaum Tua and Kaum Muda. Although he was one of the most prominent representations of the Kaum Tua who later founded the Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (PERTI), he was the first Ulama of Kaum Tua who reformed the education system. However, there are some interesting things related to the perspective and attitude he showed in responding to the controversial issues that were heating up in that era. The stance of Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli is deemed significant in addressing conflicts and disputes within the Muslim community concerning the problems of Islamic

jurisprudence (*fiqh*), which remain integral to the lives of Muslims both past and present and will continue to be so in the future.

Academic studies on the thoughts and contributions of Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli in preserving religious harmony are still relatively few. Asril through his study revealed that Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli was a multi-talented scholar. This is based on the various works written by Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli which are not only limited to religious science, but also cover the fields of literature and Minangkabau customs (Asril, 2018). In addition, another study show that Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli had a major contribution in developing Islamic education in Minangkabau. Although he belonged to the ranks of the ulama of Kaum Tua, Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli showed an inclusive and progressive attitude in facing the dynamics of changing patterns of education in Minangkabau (Zulkifli, 2015). This is in line with what was found by Muhammad Kosim (Kosim, 2013), where he emphasizes that Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli is a figure of multicultural education.

In addition, Hilman Febri Nanda reveals Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli's philosophical values about the virtues of Minangkabau life (Nanda, 2017). Meanwhile, in the study of tafsir, Aldomi Putra reveals aspects of locality found in Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli's tafsir work. In addition, he also shows a defensive attitude in the face of accusations of heresy addressed by the Kaum Muda against the religious rituals of the Kaum Tua. (Aldomi Putra, 2021). Based on some of the literature reviews above, no specific study has been found that discusses the thoughts of Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli in fighting for moderation in reconciling religious conflicts that took place in Minangkabau in the 20th century. Therefore, this study has an important contribution in helping to reduce religious conflicts within the Muslim body. Because, the polemic between the Kaum Muda and the Kaum Tua in Minangkabau is one of the issues that is closely related to the problems faced by Muslims today, specifically many religious interpretations sourced from religious leaders circulating in cyberspace as well as in the reality of everyday life, all of which tend to provoke conflicts and disputes in Muslim societies, such as the conflict between Nahdhatul Ulama and Wahabi followers, (Ulum, 2016) and others.

METHOD

This study examines the role of Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli in addressing the conflict between Kaum Tua and Kaum Muda in the 20th century. It employs

qualitative methods and library research to understand the dynamic of religious life in Minangkabau in the 20th century. In addition, this research will also show how Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli's attitude and policy in responding to the phenomenon by examining some of his works in response to the polemic. Therefore, the main source of this research is the work of Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli himself. While, secondary data is obtained from articles or books that discuss the thoughts of Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli and the context of the dynamics that developed in the 20th century, specifically the feud between the Kaum Tua and the Kaum Muda. The research expects that Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli has become a moderate and tolerant figure in addressing the problems of societies in Minangkabau in the 20th century where his perspective and attitude can be used as a reference by religious leaders today and in the future.

DISCUSSION

A Brief Biography of Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli

Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli was born on December 10, 1871, or coincided with the month of Muharram 1297 H in Canduang, Agam Regency, West Sumatra. He was the eldest child of Muhammad Rasul and Siti Buliah. The "Arrasuli" at the end of his name is an attribution (*nisba*) to his father, Muhammad Rasul. In addition, he is also known as *Inyiaq Canduang*. This title indicates his expertise in religious knowledge and becomes a reference by the community. He was born into a family with a strong religious background. His father was a well-known scholar in his village, popularly known as *Angku Mudo*. During his early years, he was known as a child who had good manners and avoided quarrels with his peers. From a young age, the characteristic of leadership was already evident in him, so that he got respect from his colleagues (Zed & et.all, 2021).

Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli began his religious studies with his father, Muhammad Rasul. At the age of 10 years, Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli was sent by his father to Batu Hampar to learn to recite the al-Quran under the guidance of Sheikh Abdurrahman. He was the grandfather of Indonesian proclaimer, Muhammad Hatta (Azra, 2017). There, he also used his free time to learn reading and writing Latin with his friend, Angku Intan Nagari so that he managed to memorize the Qur'an and could also read and write in Latin for two years in Batu Hampa (Zed & et.all, 2021).

At 20 years of age, Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli studied with Sheikh Abdullah in Halaban, Lima Puluh Kota. There, he studied various scientific knowledge,

such as *fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence), *hadith*, *tafsīr* (the science of Quran interpretation), *tauhīd* (Islamic theology), *tasawūf* (Islamic Mysticism), and so forth. Sheikh Abdullah Halaban played a pivotal role as a teacher in shaping his character and attitude. Consequently, he became Sheikh Abdullah's favorite disciple, leading to his appointment as the "*Guru Tuo*" (a term for assistant teachers in Minangkabau in that era), to help his friends in their studies. Not only that, he was later appointed by Sheikh Halaban as his son-in-law. (Zed & et., 2021).

Two years after his marriage, he asked permission from his wife, Ummi Shafiyah, to perform the Hajj pilgrimage in Mecca and continue his studies there. In Mecca, he studied with Sheikh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi, Sheikh Mukhtar 'Athariq al-Shufi, Sayyid Ahmad Syatha al-Makki, Sheikh Usman as-Sarawaki and Sheikh Sa'id Ba Bashil, *Mufti* of Syafii school. Nevertheless, he not only studied the science of *fiqh*, but he also studied other Islamic sciences, such as Arabic grammatical science, *ushul fiqh*, *qawaid fiqh*, *tasawuf*, *tafsir*, *hadith*, and such forth (Putra & Ahmad, 2011).

In 1907, Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli returned to his hometown, Canduang. He opened a *halaqah* in Surau Baru. The *halaqah* represents a pedagogical approach rooted in tradition, eschewing conventional seating arrangements in favor of a circular gathering where students engage directly with the instructor's discourse. His students come from various parts of the region. In 1928, Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli changed the *halaqah* system into a madrasah system that used chairs and tables, similar to a learning model developed earlier by the Kaum Muda in Minangkabau. This was prompted by his colleagues' advice to reform the *halaqa* system. The educational institution was later named Madrasah Tarbiyah Islamiyah Canduang. This step, therefore, was followed by other scholar of Kaum Tua, such as Sheikh Muhammad Jamil Jaho, Sheikh Abdul Wahid as-Shalihi and others. In 1928, it was also agreed to strengthen the educational institutions between madrasahs established by the Kaum Tua, so they established the Association of Madrasah Tarbiyah Islamiyah (PMTI) which had thousands of student members (Zed & et., 2021).

Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli is popular as a Sunni scholar who is an expert in Shafii school of law and a practitioner of the Tariqa Naqshabandiyah. At first, he also criticized the teachings of the Naqsyabandiyah Tariqat just like his teacher Sheikh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi. However, he repented and regretted his position after receiving a rebuke from Sheikh Arshad Batu Hampar. Consequently, he was actively involved as part of Ulama in defending

Tariqa Naqsyabandiyah from those who criticized it in Minangkabau, such as Kaum Muda. He channeled his defense by writing several works related to the rebuttal of people who denied the teachings of the Tariqa Naqsyabandiyah (Putra & Ahmad, 2011).

Subsequently, Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli not only focused on teaching the students but was also known as a prolific scholar in writing. He often wrote treatises on handling the problems of the communities in that era, both religious aspects and customary matters. Among his works are *al-Aqwāl al-Mardiyyah fī al-'Aqāid ad-Diniyyah*, *al-Qaul al-Kāshif fī Rad 'alā man I'tiradh 'alā al-Kabāir*, *Ibthāl Hazzhi 'Ashbiyah fī tahrīm Qirā'atil Qurān bi 'Ajamiyah*, *Ijālatu ad-Dhalāl fī Tahrīm Iza' wa as-Sual*, *Tsamratul Ihsān fī Wilādati Sayyidi al-Insān*, *Pedoman Hidup di Alam Minangkabau Menurut Garisan Adat dan Syara'*, *Pertalian Adat dan Syara'*, *Dawāul Qulūb fī Qishah Yūsuf wa Ya'qūb*, *Kitab Asal Pangkat Penghulu dan Pendiriannya*, *al-Qaul al-Wāsifah fī dzikri wa Rābitah*, and such forth. Apria Putra and Chairullah Ahmad collected that there were 22 works of Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli (Putra & Ahmad, 2011). Most of these works can still be found today. Sheikh Sulaiman's works are written in Arabic and are mostly in Melayu Arabic (Arabic Pegon). His thoughts were not only expressed in the form of books, he also actively wrote in several magazines managed by PERTI, Soearti and al-Mizan.

During his lifetime, Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli held important positions in the community. In the Dutch era, he was appointed as Qadhi in the Canduang area, Baso in 1918. He also founded the Vereeniging Ittihādul Oelama Sumatra organization with Sheikh Abbas Qadhi Ladang Lawas and Sheikh Muhammad Jamil Jaho in 1921. In 1942 he opposed the Colonial Scorched Earth policy (Politik Bumi Hangus Kolonial) by forming the Anshar Scouts. During the Japanese colonial period he was appointed Chairman of the Minangkabau Higher Islamic Council (Majelis Islam Tinggi Minangkabau). After independence era, he was involved in initiating the establishment of the Shari'ah Court (Mahkamah Syari'ah) in 1947 in Sumatra. Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli's work in community service is extensive. This shows his stature in the community as well as being a reference for the community (Kosim, 2015). Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli breathed his last on August 1, 1970 at the age of 99. Muslims felt a great loss, especially the Minangkabau people.

Kaum Tua and Kaum Muda in Minangkabau in the 20th century

According to Azyumardi Azra, the 20th century was a problematic era in the context of Minangkabau society. The reason is that they are faced with two challenges that come simultaneously. The first is the pressure from Dutch colonial colonization in various sectors of life. And the second is the idea of religious renewal of religious practices that are considered established (Azra, 2017). However, the beginnings of the reform movement appeared at the end of the 19th century. This movement was spearheaded by Shaykh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi, who experienced a polemic on the issue of Rābithah in the teachings of the Tariqa Naqsyabandiyah with Shaykh Sa'ad Munka, one of the influential Murshīd of that Tariqa in West Sumatra. The debate between these two groups of scholars was very heated and resulted in scholarly works from both sides. Basically, Sheikh Ahmad Khatib was not an anti-Tariqa figure in general, he only criticized some of the concepts that thought in the Tariqa of Naqshabandiyah teachings. Sheikh Ahmad Khatib still practiced Tariqa affiliated with Sufis several centuries ago (Ilyas, 2017).

Later religious reforms were more influenced by the thoughts of Egyptian reformers such as Muhammad Abduh and Rasyid Ridha. The main figure of this movement was Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah, the father of Hamka. In Minangkabau, he was more popularly known as Inyia De-Er or Inyia Rasul because of the title he obtained from al-Azhar University. His struggle received support from several other students of Sheikh Ahmad Khatib, such as Haji Abdullah Ahmad, Sheikh Muhammad Jamil Jambek and Sheikh Thaib Umar. This group was later better known as the Kaum Muda movement (Nofa, 2021, p. 3). They actively spread the thoughts of Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Ridha in Minangkabau. Among them was calling on Muslims to return to the pure teachings of Islam, the Qur'an and Sunnah by eliminating the attitude of taqlid to certain madhhabs. For them, faith based on taqlid is not valid and they argue that human reason can still be used in formulating laws. Therefore, they believe that the opportunity for ijtihad is still open until now (Azra, 2017).

The ideas of Kaum Muda contradicted the established religious practices of the Kaum Tua. Orientalists recognize the Kaum Tua as an ancient and conservative group. Sanusi Lathief mentioned that B.J.O, Schrieke, an orientalist who researched religious phenomena in Minangkabau in the 20th century and he was once appointed as a judge in a debate between the Kaum Tua and the Kaum Muda regarding fiqh and Tariqa issues in 1921 (Zed & et.all, 2021), considered the Kaum Tua as a conservative group and he named this group as "*de ouderwetsche orthodoxen*" (the orthodox conservatives) (Lathief, 1988),

because they did not want to negotiate with the Dutch and were difficult to influence (Putra & Ahmad, 2011). Therefore, Martin Van Bruinessen argues that it is a big mistake to consider the Kaum Tua as a conservative and conservative group. According to him, from a socio-political point of view, the Kaum Tua were a religious group that was feared by the Dutch because they strongly opposed the colonization actions. On the other hand, Martin considered that the Kaum Muda was more favored by the Dutch because they were more cooperative with the Dutch (Bruinessen, 1992). The Kaum Tua is known as a religious movement that adheres to the Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jamaah ideology attributed to Abu Hasan al-'As'ari and Abu Mansur al-Maturidi, the Shafii school of thought, believes in and maintains a *Tariqa Mu'tabarah* (legitimated Tariqa) and maintains traditions that are inherent in various religious practices (Lathief, 1988). They realized that lay people were incapable of understanding the rulings directly from the Qur'an and Sunnah. Hence, they emphasized the importance of *Taqlid* or following a particular school, especially the Shafi'i school for lay people.

The polemics between the Kaum Tua and the Kaum Muda were quite fierce and each of them engaged in several debates related to religious issues. The Kaum Muda criticized some religious practices that were applied by the Kaum Tua and had claimed these traditions as wrong practices and they even denounced it as *bid'a* behavior because it was never done by the Prophet Muhammad. Meanwhile, in the view of the Kaum Tua, *bid'a* is divided into two dimensions, namely *bid'a* in the perspective of Arabic language and *bid'a* in the view of sharia. As for *bid'a* in sharia terminology, it is a new practice for which no argument can be found from the Qur'an and Sunna. Whereas *bid'a* in Arabic language is to create something new where the law is very varied, sometimes it is obligatory, sunnah, makruh or haram (Lathief, 1988). Thus, the understanding of *bid'a* according Kaum Tua based on the division of *bid'a* formulated by Imam Shafi'i, namely there is a praiseworthy *bid'a* (*bid'a hasanah*) where the person who does it, he will get a reward from Allah. For instance, giving punctuation marks to the Qur'an (harkat and others on the Quran). Meanwhile, there is also a blameworthy *bid'a* (*bid'a sayyiah*) where the perpetrator is considered sinful if he does it (al-'Asqalani, 1379).

This dispute between the Kaum Tua and the Kaum Muda has created tremendous polarization in society. One of the negative impacts of this phenomenon is the emergence of misleading attitudes towards each other, quarrels and even divorce between husbands and wives because of different religious views (Putra & Ahmad, 2011). The conflict lasted for years with each

camp insisting on their own ideology. Even the disputes between the two camps were considered very radical. The disputes used harsh words, were emotional and even equated the opposing party as infidels (*Kāfir*). This case is rampant in both groups. The Kaum Muda regard the Kaum Tua as a heretical group because they pray together after the obligatory prayers and make superstitions (*takhayul*). Conversely, the Kaum Tua also claimed the Kaum Muda as perverts because the Kaum Muda at that time often wore ties and suits, which were clothes commonly worn by infidels from the Dutch colonizers (Zaini et al., 2015).

For example, the impact of this dispute was felt directly by Yoesoef Sou'yb. Initially he studied at the Sumatra Thawalib school in Padang Panjang. Because his father wanted to go on pilgrimage, his father asked him to postpone his education process until his father returned from the holy land (Mecca) due to limited funds. But then he persuaded his brother-in-law to help with the cost of his education. But his brother-in-law was only willing to help if Yoesoef studied at Madrasah Tarbiyah Islamiyah Canduang under the guidance of Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli (the first Madrasa that established by Kaum Tua). Finally, he continued his studies in Canduang with financial support from his brother-in-law. Upon his father's return from Mecca, Yoesoef told his father that he was studying in Canduang and he asked his father for additional spending money. But at that time, his father refused and his father would only help with the cost of his studies if Yoesoef returned to study at Sumatra Thawalib Padang Panjang. This is one example of the strong clashes in the grassroots community due to the clash of the Kaum Tua and the Kaum Muda, where Yoesoef's father was a follower of the Kaum Muda and his brother-in-law was affiliated with the Kaum Tua (Yoesoef Sou'yb, 2019a).

In addition, the dispute was also described by Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli in his romance works, *Guidelines for Living in Minangkabau World* (*Pedoman Hidup di Alam Minangkabau*). Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli noted that;

"Another result - since the emergence of these bizarre fatwas - is that in one mosque, people pray Jumu'ah twice. So, the prayers are performed alternately. While the area of the village is so small, if only one Friday prayer is held, it is still adequate, even still spacious and airy. However, due to the strange fatwa, the implementation of Friday prayers, two or three times in one mosque." (Arrasuli, 1939).

This shows how the turmoil of disputes and conflicts between the Kaum Tua and the Kaum Muda has had a major impact on community life in Minangkabau. The split had a major impact on the collapse of harmony and a

sense of brotherhood among fellow Muslims. Divisions in the form of fights and insults will certainly not be seen from the figures of the two groups. However, disputes and misguidance between each other are real in the daily life of the community. It is the same with what happens in the current era where preachers have different interpretations in understanding Islamic sources, and then it has a negative impact on the behavior of their followers. So, it is not uncommon for each of them to insult each other. We can find this in the rampant content of fighting among fellow Muslims on social media today. For example, what happens between Muslims from the Wahabi group and Sunni Muslims. Each of them misleads each other and finds it difficult to accept diversity in religion.

Interestingly, however, the dispute between the Kaum Tua and the Kaum Muda was not one that led to heated debates on both sides. This phenomenon encourages them to go back to the depths of what they understand and believe. In defending their arguments and understanding, they are considered very productive in writing works related to the issues being debated, both from the Kaum Tua and the Kaum Muda. This has created a very unique intellectual dynamic in Minangkabau in that era. In addition, both groups were also active in spreading and maintaining their understanding by establishing several institutions, such as educational institutions, publishing magazines and books and even this dispute encouraged the birth of social organizations that had a great impact on society, one of which was PERTI (Putra & Ahmad, 2011).

The Impact of the Conflict between Kaum Tua and Kaum Muda and Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli's Attitude towards it

The dispute between the Kaum Tua and the Kaum Muda has continued for years and is prone to divisions and conflicts in the Minangkabau Muslim community. It has created tremendous polarization in the society. The two camps compete for the hearts of the people through effective measures. Unfortunately, this polarization has threatened their brotherhood and harmony in religious life. Some of the negative impacts of this conflict on society are inevitable. Sanusi Lathief revealed that initially the feud between the Old and the Young took place in the realm of scientific debate, with each group attacking the other through written works and open debate. However, this eventually led to physical conflict between the followers of the two groups (Lathief, 1988). Taufik Abdullah also stated the same thing, that it was not uncommon in reality in the life of the community at that time, this conflict had penetrated into a dispute between

relatives, even divorcing husbands and wives, because only different religious understandings (Abdullah, 2009).

The conflict between the followers of these two groups was triggered by their attitude to belittle and ridicule each other. In addition, fanatical attitudes to the leaders, both the Old and the Young, have also led to conflicts between them. As a result, issues that are considered *sunnah* (recommended) by the Old Ones, rather than obligatory, are seen as important to their followers. For instance, Sheikh Khatib Alo, a representative of the Old Believers, once sacked a mosque Imam simply because the Imam did not say the intention to pray *Jahar* out loud. In fact, he considered the *Jum'ah* prayer led by the imam to be invalid and invited the people not to pray with them (Lathief, 1988).

It is clear that the above phenomenon of conflict between the followers of the Old and the Young is in line with what is happening in this contemporary era. For instance, recently there has been a rejection of the presence of an Ustaz affiliated with the Wahabi Movement, such as Ustaz Syaifiq Reza Basalmah, Ustaz Khalid Basalamah and others (Bazikh, 2024). Ironically, the rejection of Ustaz Syaifiq Reza Basalamah's presence was specifically driven by the Anshar Youth Movement (GP Anshor) of Gunung Anyar Surabaya (Hengki Ferdiansyah, 2024), one of the autonomous organizations of the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia, Nahdhatul Ulama. GP Anshar officials claimed that their rejection was based on the reason that Ustaz Syaifiq Riza was considered to have often expressed hatred and insulted the religious practices and traditions of Nahdhatul Ulama followers. This phenomenon shows that the polarization and conflicts that occur among Muslims in the contemporary era are in line with the polemics that occurred between the *Kaum Tua* and the *Kaum Muda* in the past. That is, the conflict was triggered by their different perspectives in interpreting religious teachings.

In this context, Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli was a representative of the *Kaum Tua*, simultaneously, he emerged as the mediator and reconciler of the ongoing conflict. According to Sanusi Lathief, Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli was a more tolerant representation of the *Kaum Tua* (Lathief, 1988). He also was more concerned with unity within the Muslim community than putting forward his views on several issues that became hot issues among the *Kaum Tua* and *Kaum Muda*. This shows that Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli has shown the attitude of a religionist who is the glue of Muslim unity and has a big soul. The following are some of the steps taken by Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli in reducing the conflict between the *Kaum Tua* and the *Kaum Muda*.

1. Instilling a prudent and inclusive attitude in providing fatwas

Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli was known as an expert in Shafii fiqh and became a reference or a place to ask questions related to religious issues in the Minangkabau community. Thus, he was often asked questions by the community during his lifetime. In giving fatwas or religious statements, Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli always emphasized caution in giving fatwas. He avoided being hasty in issuing fatwas. Because he realized that understanding Islamic law requires a deep and thorough analysis so that the resulting fatwa is not flawed and misleads others. According to him, a fatwa born from a scholar who is in a hurry and does not examine more deeply the issues asked of him will produce a fatwa that is wrong and tends to disunite the ummah (Arrasuli, 1939).

In addition, Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli showed his professionalism as a religious figure and an ordinary person. He considered that he himself was also an ordinary human being who sometimes made mistakes and did not know everything related to religious matters. On this basis he emphasized that a mufti (Policymaker of fatwa) should sportingly admit his ignorance regarding a particular issue rather than insisting on answering the issue because this could result in an erroneous fatwa. Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli reminds us that:

“Hence, when you give a fatwa on a ruling, do not be hasty in issuing it. This is because haste comes from the devil or Satan (Saytān). It is better to regret not delivering a ruling, so that it must be promised tomorrow, then to regret delivering a ruling. Because a law that has been conveyed is very difficult to restore or withdraw it.” (Arrasuli, 1939).

On the other hand, although Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli was known as an adherent of the Shafii school, he was not a rigid person in issuing fatwas. He always prioritized the principle of benefit for the people in formulating fatwas. Nevertheless, he did the process of merging legal opinions from various Islamic jurisprudential traditions (*Talfiq*). As a Sunni scholar, he recognizes and believes in the validity of the four schools of thought in Islam, namely the Hanafi School, Maliki school, Shafi'i school and Hanbali school. Yoesoef Syuaib noted that in his graduation ceremony he received on January 25, 1936 at Madrasah Tarbiyah Islamiyah (MTI) Canduang there were several advices from Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli to his students. Among them was ordering the students who had completed their studies at MTI Canduang to issue fatwas based on the fatwas of the Shafii school of thought. However, if there is an urgent need, it is permissible to give fatwas based on other than the Shafii school of thought, such Hanafi School and others (Yoesoef Sou'yb, 2019c).

However, the content of the advice has changed over time. Unfortunately, it has not been found when the change in the content of the advice occurred and what was behind the change in the content of the certificate (Ijāzah). In the ijazah of MTI Canduang students in the last few decades, it contains an order to give fatwas to the people within the framework of the Shafii school of thought. However, in daily worship practices, Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli emphasized that doing good deeds is permissible if it is within the corridor of the four popular schools of thought in Islam, namely Hanafi, Maliki, Syafii, and Hanbali. Furthermore, another notable aspect of this certificate is the reasoning behind Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli's emphasis on issuing fatwas within the framework of Shafi'i scholars. This emphasis stems from the fact that the Shafi'i school of thought is the predominant one adhered to by the majority of Muslims in Indonesia. It is interesting to analyze that Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli indirectly instructs his next generation to always maintain and preserve the harmony of the ummah by spreading fatwas that are already understood in Indonesian society. The reason is that if the fatwa issued comes from an unfamiliar opinion in the community, this tends to cause conflict and dispute and confuse the people in religion (Yoesoef Sou'yb, 2019c).

It is the basic principle held by Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli in reducing conflicts that occur in the community. He pointed out that a scholar must be wise in giving fatwas to the community. He also emphasized that many conflicts and disputes that occurred during his lifetime were caused by fatwas that emerged from some scholars who were hasty in giving answers to the community.

2. Reconciling Adat leaders and Ulama

It should be noted that the polemics that occurred in Minangkabau in the early 20th century were not only about the dispute between the Kaum Tua and the Kaum Muda, but the dispute also involved the Adat leaders and the Kaum Muda. The Adat leaders considered that the spirit of renewal brought by the Kaum Muda could erode the traditions that already existed in Minangkabau (Azra, 2017). In this regard, Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli contributed to harmonizing the relationship between Adat (local tradition) and religion. He became a figure who was highly respected by the Adat group and the Kaum Muda, because of his expertise in reducing conflict at that time.

Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli's contribution in placing customary and religious issues in their respective portions can be seen through his many works related to customary and religious issues. For example, his work on *The Relationship*

Between Adat and Sharia (Pertalian Adat dan Syara) (Arrasuli, 2003). This work seeks to reconcile the conflicts that occurred between religious and traditional groups at that time (Nofa, 2021). According to Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli, Adat and religion in Minangkabau life are two things that are intertwined and cannot be separated. He said that *“Adat adalah tubuh dan syara’ adalah jiwa.”* (Adat is the body and Sharia is the soul).” (Arrasuli, 2003, p. 81).

Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli also positioned the ulama and Adat leaders as two important figures in Minangkabau life. According to him, these two figures are needed because they can lead the community to the path of truth. If these two groups disagree and fight with each other, then it will cause the destruction of life in society. This is illustrated in his explanation as follows:

“The first, the king and Penghulu as rowers in the Nagari and deliver the people to their destination. Second, the Ulama as the jury behind and straighten the course of the boat, so as not to deviate and miss to the left or right.” (Arrasuli, 1939).

In addition, he was also appointed as the head of the Sharia Court (hakim or judge on religious affairs). The position he holds allows him to formulate several policies related to religious and customary issues that seem contradictory in that era. He tried to find alternatives in solving the problem by not ignoring the interests of both parties. One of these policies was to establish the foundational relation between religion and customary. It was known as *“Syarak Mangato Adat Mamakai”*, it is literally meaning that Sharia prescribes, Adat practices. This phrase implies that the customary (adat) that deemed in Minangkabau society must be in accordance with the principles Islamic teaching. Nevertheless, Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli also established the prohibition of endogamy marriage (*Nikah Sasuku*) in Minangkabau, namely the prohibition of marriage between a man and a woman who share the same tribe. It was due to a tradition belief in Minangkabau that they have blood or kinship ties. His decision states that, *“Things that are permitted by religion and prohibited by custom will not be used, such as marrying within the same tribe and under the same roof (marriage of people who have the same customary leader).”* It means that the marriage between couples who have the same tribe or the same Adat leader not allowed even though it is permissible in Islam (Zed & et.all, 2021).

3. Establish Good Relationships with the Kaum Muda

Despite the disputes between the Kaum Tua and the Kaum Muda, Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli, as a member of the Kaum Tua, maintained good relations with some of the leaders of the Kaum Muda. He did this to reduce conflict in the

community. His hope was that the differences in understanding that occurred between them would not cause them to be hostile to each other because it could undermine unity and harmony in the community. On one occasion, Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli received an invitation to an area in Minangkabau. Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli went accompanied by some of his students in Canduang. He did not know who the invited figures were. Upon arrival at the place, Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli found several figures of the Kaum Muda already present. One of them was Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah. Yoesoef Ayub, one of the students who accompanied Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli, said that there was no dispute at the meeting. In fact, what he saw was the two clerical figures hugging and greeting each other. Likewise, in delivering religious sermon (*Tausiyyah*), these two figures did not mention sensitive issues that became a hot issue in that era (Yoesoef Sou'yb, 2019b). This shows how Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli was wise in dealing with differences. Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli can exemplify how to live in religious diversity.

In addition, Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli also constantly approached the Kaum Muda (Hamka, 2019). He always involved the Kaum Muda in several policies that he wanted to implement. This can be seen when Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli was visited by the government of Central Sumatra after the independence era who asked for his advice regarding the establishment of a religious affairs office. In this case, Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli did not immediately decide what he wanted to propose. Instead, he asked for time to discuss with the Kaum Muda. At that time, Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli consulted with Sheikh Ibrahim Musa, one of the leaders of the Kaum Muda. They agreed on four things: the first was to form a Fatwa Council, the second was to form a Mahkamah Sharia (religious court), the third was to have a council that would enjoin good and prevent evil, and the fourth was to have an educational council (*ta'allum*). Then the results of this discussion were submitted to the government. Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli was appointed chairman of the Sharia Court and Sheikh Ibrahim Musa was appointed chairman of the Fatwa Council (Zed & et.all, 2021, p. 78).

On the other hand, given the widespread fighting in the community due to the conflict between the Kaum Tua and the Kaum Muda, Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah was very concerned about this situation. On this basis, he then tried to meet Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli to ask for his opinion in overcoming this problem. Finally, Shaykh Sulaiman Arrasuli invited Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah to promise to disseminate to the public that the issue of *khilafiyah* (fiqh issues that are disputed by the scholars) remains a matter of *khilafiyah* and does not fall into the category of *bid'a* that lead to heresy. Shaykh Sulaiman added that

following one of the four madhhabs (taqlid) is obligatory for all those who are not mujtahids (lay people). These two figures then determined to always be together in proselytizing to the community regarding this matter so that the community would not be divided again. This agreement they later referred to as the “Divine Agreement” (Rusli, 1978).

RECOMMENDATION

This article suggest that the Ministry of Religious Affairs has to pay more attention to conflicts within sectarian Islam in Indonesia. The efforts made by Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli are important to consider where the ministry of religion can try to bring together figures from each sect that is in conflict. So that they can make an agreement to respect each other without any discrimination. In the current Indonesian context, the involvement of anti-mainstream groups, such as Wahabi, has received little attention from the Ministry of Religion. In an effort to create religious harmony, this institution tends to only involve mainstream Islamic organizations, such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, while other minority religious groups are often neglected. The involvement of all sects in conflict reconciliation can certainly change the attitude of their followers from exclusive to inclusive and can respect each other.

CLOSING

This research concludes that Islamic sectarian differences in interpreting teachings tend to trigger conflict, whether physical or not, and threaten intra-Muslim harmony and tolerance in Indonesia. Such conflicts have occurred in the early 20th century and are occurring again in the contemporary era. So far, the Ministry of Religious Affairs’ efforts to anticipate conflicts have focused more on the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims, and less attention to conflicts that occur among Muslims themselves. This research shows that some of Sheikh Sulaiman Arrasuli’s policies and attitudes have a major contribution in reducing religious conflicts between the Kaum Tua and the Kaum Muda. Despite being a representative figure of the Kaum Tua ulama, he managed in becoming a mediator in stopping the conflict that took place in that era. This success was achieved by developing several reconciliation efforts between hostile people. Shekh Sulaiman Arrasuli emphasized the importance of minimizing issuing fatwas that could trigger conflict. In addition, he also tried to involve hostile groups to participate in reconciling conflicts and prioritizing the unity of community harmony in the diversity of religious views.

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