

Social Inclusion as a Counter-Radicalism: A Study on Traditional Religious Institution in West Sumatra

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Abstract

This research explores social inclusion as a countering radicalism. The value of social inclusion stems from local community traditions, centered in the *surau*, and plays a vital role in fostering inclusive behavior. This study employs a qualitative approach, utilizing in-depth interviews and participant observation as data collection techniques. The results indicate that, first, West Sumatra is one of the regions susceptible to radicalism. Second, the traditional value system within *surau* religious practices serve as an effective medium to counter radicalism due to their inherently inclusive core values. Third, the values of social inclusion are manifested in the *mamakiah* tradition, which is cultivated among students (*santri*) within the *surau*. *Surau* is more than just a place of worship; it is a traditional religious educational institution and the central hub of the cultural system for the people of West Sumatra. The social inclusion found within the religious tradition of *mamakiah* underscores a significant value within the context of urban society. This study confirms that social inclusion stemming from local values serves not only as a preventive measure but also as a transformative approach to building moderate awareness. This is essential to counter radicalism, which has evolved alongside socio-political dynamics that have now permeated the field of education.

Keywords: *social inclusion; counter-radicalism; traditional religious institution; urban society*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji inklusi sosial sebagai strategi mengkonter faham radikalisme. Nilai ini tumbuh dari tradisi masyarakat lokal, berbasis di *surau*, dan berperan penting dalam pembentukan perilaku inklusif. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa wawancara mendalam dan observasi partisipatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa; pertama, Sumatera Barat merupakan salah satu daerah yang rentan terhadap radikalisme. Kedua, Sistem nilai tradisional yang hidup dalam praktik keagamaan di *surau* merupakan media efektif untuk mengkonter radikalisme karena nilai-nilai dasarnya yang inklusif. Ketiga, secara spesifik, nilai inklusi sosial tersebut ditemukan dalam tradisi *mamakiah* yang dibudayakan di *surau* terhadap santri. *Surau* tidak saja sebagai tempat ibadah, melainkan sebagai tempat sekolah keagamaan tradisional dan sentral dari sistem kebudayaan masyarakat Sumatra Barat. Inklusi sosial yang ditemukan dalam tradisi keagamaan *mamakiah* juga menegaskan nilai penting dalam konteks masyarakat urban. Studi ini menegaskan bahwa inklusi sosial yang tumbuh dari nilai lokalitas tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai upaya preventif melainkan sebagai pendekatan transformatif dalam membangun kesadaran moderat untuk mengkonter radikalisme yang tumbuh seturut dengan perkembangan dinamika sosial-politik yang telah merambah ke dalam dunia pendidikan.

Kata Kunci: *inklusi sosial; kounter-radikalisme; institusi keagamaan tradisional; masyarakat urban*

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Introduction

Urban society is characterized by a diversity, individualism, mobility, and formal social relationship. Such conditions can render certain individuals vulnerable to alienation. Diversity, as a core characteristic of urban life, is not always accompanied by robust tolerance (A Sa'ir et al, 2020). Consequently, this potential for identity conflict may serve as an entry point for the dissemination of radical ideologies based on a 'us versus them' perspective. In the context of radicalism, this situation can be exploited by certain groups to recruit members by offering a sense of identity, belonging, and a life purpose perceived as more meaningful." Radical ideologies proliferate in tandem with the weakening of social inclusion. A feeble social inclusion creates a vacuum that facilitates the emergence of exclusive and intolerant perspectives. As the antithesis of social inclusion, radicalism maintains a profound nexus with social exclusion (Pfundmair et al, 2022). The experience of exclusion, or at least the perception thereof, may constitute a primary condition that facilitates the growth of radicalism and extremism (Pfundmair & Mahr, 2023).

Over the past few decades, the prevalence of terrorism-related violence has engendered a stigma linking such acts to radical and exclusionary ideologies, often conflated with religious doctrines (Hager & Sharma, 2023). Consequently, these circumstances have cast a shadow of suspicion over religious educational institutions specifically traditional educational system regarding their potential role as conduits for radical doctrines. This premise is further reinforced by documented instances showing the affiliation of certain *pesantrens* with terrorist networks, alongside the participation of a marginal number of their graduates in radicalization and terrorist acts (HS et al., 2022).

Data from the National Counter-Terrorism Agency (BNPT) in 2018 indicates that within the Indonesian landscape, nineteen *pesantrens* (Islamic boarding schools) were identified as allegedly supporting radical and terrorist activities. These institutions include, among others, Pesantren Al-Mukmin Ngruki in Surakarta, Pesantren Darus Syifa' in East

Lombok, Pesantren Darul Wahyain in Magetan, and several other establishments. Networks of Islamic educational institutions are regarded as highly effective conduits for the dissemination of radical doctrines (BNPT, 2018). Furthermore, data from PPIM and Maarif Institute extend this analysis to formal educational institutions. It is noteworthy that these schools exhibit significant vulnerability to external infiltration during radicalization processes. Research by the Maarif Institute in four public schools highlights how external social entities penetrate intra-school student bodies via religious mentoring. These groups systematically integrate intolerant materials and radical ideologies into their training curricula. Meanwhile, a study by PPIM revealed the presence of intolerant content toward diversity and teachings that condone religious-based violence in responding to differences. These findings were identified within Islamic Education textbooks utilized for Islamic religious instruction in schools (Nasuhi et al, 2018).

Drawing upon the aforementioned studies, this research is designed to focus on *pesantrens* and religious schools within the West Sumatra region. The selection of *pesantrens* and religious education as the primary location of study is predicated on several considerations.

First, as the foundation of religious education in West Sumatra, *pesantren* is the oldest institution traditionally recognized for its capacity to produce *ulama* (religious scholars) of distinct character, possessing intellectual and Islamic depth, while remaining culturally grounded. Consequently, historical evidence suggests that *ulama* in the Minangkabau region have been more accommodative toward local cultural values. Second, the institutional transformation of religious education in West Sumatra has seen the emergence of numerous Integrated Islamic Schools (*Islam Terpadu*) and modern *pesantrens*. These institutions tend to dismantle long-standing local wisdom, thereby creating vulnerabilities that allow radical ideologies to infiltrate more easily.

Third, this study refers to the works of Hadler and Azra regarding radicalism. Hadler (in Noorbani, 2023) asserts that, historically, Minangkabau experienced an Islamic reform movement in the 18th century, characterized as 'the first Muslim-against-Muslim Jihad in

Southeast Asia.' The history of Padri movement, led by Tuanku Imam Bonjol, essentially constitutes an effort to trace the ideological confrontation between Wahhabism and the matrifocal traditions of Minangkabau. Conversely, Azra argues that the roots of radicalism within the Indonesian Muslim community are discernible in the rise of the Paderi movement in West Sumatra at the end of the 18th century (Usman et al., 2023). Characterized by a predisposition toward violence and terrorism, the Paderi movement is framed by Azra as a form of radicalism that, in some respects, surpassed the sophistication of modern organizations like Laskar Jihad and the Front Pembela Islam.

The alleged connection between religious schools and radicalism, coupled with the involvement of their alumni in various acts of violence, terrorism, and radicalization, constitutes a phenomenon that warrants rigorous scrutiny. This is particularly critical within the sphere of educational institutional systems. Consequently, education is increasingly expected to identify strategic pathways to insulate itself from ideologies that justify acts of terror and violence.

Based on the considerations outlined above, this study is designed to examine religious values in traditional *pesantren* amidst the evolving dynamics and challenges posed by radicalism. More specifically, This study aims to elucidate social inclusion values derived from locality-based traditional religious practices that serve as a cornerstone in countering radicalization. This context is built upon the argument that while existing studies identify the *Surau* the traditional educational system in West Sumatra as historically exclusive and an early precursor to radical movements, this research uncovers an alternative perspective regarding the traditions and values emerging from the *Surau*.

In relation to this objective, a study by Jubba (2020); Sair & Elanda (2021); and Sair & Sholahudin (2025) reveals that in local communities are deeply-rooted wisdoms and values that offer a resilient framework against radical ideologies. And the involvement of non-state actors is paramount in the prevention of radicalism itself (Prislan et al., 2019). This study is predicated on the argument that social

inclusion serves as a cornerstone for fostering moderate attitudes and constitutes the most fundamental means of countering radicalism, which has evolved alongside the socio-political dynamics permeating the educational sphere, particularly within the context of urban societies, which are characterized by diversity, high mobility, and the potential for social fragmentation.

Method

This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to analyze social inclusion as a strategy to counter radicalism within traditional religious institutions in West Sumatra. This approach was selected as it allows the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the values, practices, and socio-religious dynamics evolving within local institutions that are rich in inclusive values. The study is located in West Sumatra, focusing on traditional religious institutions (*surau*) that continue to fulfill educational and social functions within the community. Specifically, the research area in West Sumatra was taking into account the cultural divisions of the Minangkabau region and the complex social dynamics of both urban and rural areas. Consequently, the research sites were selected to represent these two geographical aspects. Based on specific considerations, the study was conducted in the *Luhak Nan Tigo* region, specifically Agam Regency and Bukittinggi City, as well as Limapuluh Kota Regency and Payakumbuh City. Furthermore, the research also covers areas representing the *Rantau* region, namely Padang City, Pariaman City, and Padang Pariaman Regency.

The research subjects include institutional administrators, religious leaders, educators, as well as students (*santri*) or congregants directly involved in religious activities. The number of informants was 40. The data were collected through in-depth interviews and observations. The study was conducted throughout June-July 2025. Data analysis in this study used Miles and Huberman's approach (2014). Miles and Huberman offer several stages in analyzing data they are, first, data reduction; second, data display; and third, drawing conclusions and verification. The analysis was further informed

by the methods offered by Babbie (2013) in conducting qualitative data analysis, namely coding, memoing, and concept mapping. First, “coding” is the process by which researchers classify or categorize data in connection with various retrieval systems. Therefore, Babbie defines coding as a physical action. Second, “memoing” is the simultaneous note-taking or recording of data obtained in the field. Third, “concept mapping” is the effort to connect the concepts with data. Based on this approach, the study applies the systematic analytical framework that ensures conceptual coherence and analytical rigor in examining social inclusion as a counter-radicalism based on local wisdom.

Results and Discussion

Radicalism and Religious School in West Sumatra

The intersection of radicalism and religious education specifically *pesantrens* and *madrasahs* manifests as a multifaceted phenomenon characterized by a dualistic role. While these institutions are often scrutinized as potential breeding grounds for extremist ideologies, they simultaneously serve as pivotal centers for fostering religious moderation. Data concerning the involvement of religious schools in radicalism indicate that only 0.007% of the total number of institutions equivalent to 198 out of 27,722 schools are implicated. These institutions, alleged to have radical indications, are identified as being affiliated with Jemaah Islamiyah and Jemaah Ansharut Daulah (CNN, 2022). This context suggests that while radicalism in religious educational institutions is not a majority phenomenon, its presence warrants serious concern. The potential consequences are profound, especially for vulnerable youth who are increasingly exposed to propaganda through intolerant teachers and digital media platforms.

In the context of West Sumatra, the National Counter-Terrorism Agency (FKPT and BNPT, 2024) reported a high Radicalism Potential Index (IPR) for the year 2023. West Sumatra is categorized among the 32 provinces exhibiting a persistently high IPR, notwithstanding substantial mitigation initiatives undertaken by the regional

government, the FKPT, and other relevant authorities. Such potential is corroborated by recent apprehensions of radical actors, as illustrated in the data provided below.

Table 1. Data of Radicalism

Year	Phenomenon	Quantities and Key Data
2025	The apprehension of supporters of the ISIS-affiliated group (Ansharut Daulah)	4 suspected terrorists have been apprehended in West Sumatra and North Sumatra
2024	The arrest of NII members across several provinces, including West Sumatra	8 members of the NII have been detained, including four in West Sumatra
2023	National Counter-Terrorism Task Force 88 Operation	59 terrorists were apprehended nationwide, one of whom is from West Sumatra
2022	The geographical distribution of NII members by region.	Dharmasraya: 833 people Tanah Datar: 292 people
2022	In relation to the neutralization of the NII network in West Sumatra, law enforcement has apprehended terrorist suspects linked to the group	16 people
2022	Estimated number of NII network members in West Sumatra	There is a total of 1,125 members, with 400 currently active

Source: Mass Media and Indonesian National police (2025)

The data provided in the aforementioned table suggests that radicalism in West Sumatra is not merely a collection of discrete events, but signifies the presence of networks that are socially and ideologically embedded. This is evident in the period spanning from 2022 to 2025. This timeframe indicates a continuity of radical ideologies and actions. In other words, this phenomenon is evidenced by a chronological continuum of incidents and the estimated framework of radical networks, which

includes both institutionalized operations and non-affiliated radical elements. In the contemporary era, the proliferation of radical ideologies increasingly exploits the digital sphere as a primary vehicle for propaganda and provocation.

The aforementioned circumstances suggest that radicalism proliferates via systematic processes, entailing a network of interconnected actors, nodes, and social spheres across both local and transregional scales. Such patterns underscore a pervasive mechanism of ideological reproduction, sustained through social networks, informal religious circles, and digital interaction platforms that pose significant oversight challenges. Moreover, the nature of societies possessing robust communal ties can serve as a conduit for ideological infiltration, especially when religious discourse is merged with grievances regarding injustice, identity, and social disillusionment. Therefore, radicalism in West Sumatra should be framed as a structural and cultural phenomenon that is inextricably linked to social dynamics, technological advancements, and local specificities, rather than being viewed solely as a series of sporadic individual incidents.

Empirically, the development of radicalism does not indicate a direct or systemic correlation between religious educational institutions such as *madrasahs*, *pesantrens*, or integrated Islamic schools and acts of terrorism or violent extremism. Data regarding the apprehension of individuals affiliated with radical networks, such as the NII or ISIS sympathizers in West Sumatra, generally involve adult actors operating outside the structures of formal education. Furthermore, these activities are not explicitly linked to any specific educational institution.

Despite the absence of direct engagement, religious educational institutions exhibit a significant vulnerability to radical influences permeating through external channels, including digital platforms, social surroundings, and informal religious circuits. Consequently, religious schools in West Sumatra are navigating an ideological struggle, balancing indigenous cultural values against the encroachment of radicalized ideologies.

Educational institutions in West Sumatra historically maintain a robust relationship with

the cultural system centered around the *Surau*. As a quintessential symbol of Minangkabau culture, the *Surau* serves as a vessel for the reproduction of religious values and socio-cultural systems, including the *nagari*, the matrilineal system, and other integral elements of Minangkabau tradition. In this context, religious institutions particularly traditional ones occupy a neutral position and essentially function as spaces for mitigation and moderation due to their socially inclusive nature. These inherent values provide a fundamental basis for countering radicalism. Through the *Surau* pedagogical framework within the traditional education system, there is a profound integration between religious principles and socio-cultural values.

In the historical context of Minangkabau in West Sumatra, the term *pesantren* or religious school is traditionally referred to as *surau*. Historically, the *surau* represents a metamorphosis of worship sites originally belonging to Hindu-Buddhist communities. During the process of Islamization, these sites gradually transitioned into places of worship for the Minangkabau Muslim community. The *surau* subsequently underwent a process of contextualization, functioning not merely as a religious sanctuary but also as a multifaceted hub for social and educational activities (Azra, 2017). Amidst the modernization of education, the nomenclature of *pesantren* has become more prevalent, superseding the traditional *surau* in West Sumatra. Within the Minangkabau community, the *surau* functions as a cultural cornerstone. Historically, *surau* construction was a communal endeavor undertaken by kinship or tribal units, designating the space as a primary site for the social interactions and integration of the collective group.

Furthermore, the *surau* functions not merely as a center for religious activities, but also as a site of social reproduction that facilitates a dialectic between external reformist values, local cultural traditions, and religious tenets. This dialectical process occurs because the *surau* serves as a multifaceted medium for religious interests, communal activities such as deliberative assemblies (*musyawarah*) and the transmission of customary knowledge (*adat*). Consequently, the *surau* acts as a social institution that reproduces societal values and

norms. This process manifests in various forms, most notably through religious education, which is contemporary recognized as the *pesantren* system.

The modernization of education has precipitated a shift in the role of the *surau* as a pedagogical institution. Traditional *pesantrens* rooted in the *surau* system are becoming progressively marginalized, whereas religious schools and modern *pesantrens* are witnessing a significant proliferation. Based on 2020 data, there are 335 *pesantrens* (Islamic boarding schools) distributed across various regencies and cities in West Sumatra (BPS, 2022). The majority of these institutions have adopted modern curricula. Furthermore, modern religious schools based on the Integrated Islamic (*Islam Terpadu* or IT) model are also expanding, particularly in urban areas centrally concentrated in Padang City. The backwardness of traditional religious schools, which originated from the *surau* system, eventually led them to adapt extensively to modern schooling systems. Consequently, this process demonstrates a gradual transformation of many core *surau* values.

In the context of radicalism, schools that have undergone modernization are, paradoxically, those most susceptible to infiltration. This radical infiltration is alleged to stem from various external movements that permeate educational institutions through extracurricular religious activities (BNPT, 2026). Despite the widespread modernization of *pesantren* schools in West Sumatra, a number of traditional establishments remain firmly committed to the traditional *surau*-based pedagogical system. Traditional structures are regarded as more resilient to the infiltration of external radicalism due to the inclusive ethos of the *surau* social system, which remains integrally connected to local cultural frameworks and maintains a synergistic relationship with the community and kinship groups (*kaum*). This paradigm of social inclusion is empirically observable in the practice of *mamakiah*, a pedagogical tradition that exemplifies the educational model of the *surau*.

Social inclusion within traditional pesantren-based religious traditions

The study underscores the essence of traditional religious education in *suraus* as a vehicle for counteracting radicalism through the framework of social inclusion. A prominent feature of this *surau* educational model is the practice known as *mamakiah*. *Mamakiah* refers to the practice of visiting local households to solicit alms, a tradition carried out by *santri* (students) residing in the *surau*. According to Azra, *mamakiah* was initially performed by *pakiah* to sustain their basic needs throughout their studies at the *surau*. The education of *pakiah* within the *surau* is entirely gratuitous, encompassing the waiver of tuition, accommodation, and all ancillary costs. Conversely, a significant segment of the community maintains the conviction that religious instruction in the *surau* requires no dedicated financial provision, predicated on the belief that their sustenance is divinely guaranteed.

Gradually, *mamakiah* has evolved into a cultural heritage passed down through generations. At first glance, this activity may resemble begging performed by *pesantren* students (*santri*). However, in essence, this traditional learning system serves as a *surau* curriculum designed to train students and community members to interconnect, foster social bonds, and integrate seamlessly into the socio-cultural fabric of society. The character of tolerance and the natural acceptance of cultural diversity are inherent elements harmonized by the *pakiah* or *santri* and the broader community. This reflects the inclusive nature of religiosity fostered within the *surau*, characterized by openness, accommodation, and a profound receptivity to difference.

Within the context of the *pakiah*, their transition into the role of *tuanku* upon completing their studies is inherently tied to the ethos of 'reciprocating benevolence.' This perspective stems from the realization that a *pakiah*'s needs during their education were not met through self-sufficiency alone, but through the collective support of the local community. Through the religious tradition of *mamakiah*, students are taught to synchronize religious tenets with cultural values, enabling them to

navigate the relationship between faith and custom (*adat*) with wisdom and discernment.

There are four aspects of social inclusion values within the *mamakiah*-based religious tradition practiced in the *surau*, as follows.

First, *mamakiah* constitutes the application of social learning processes through the community. In essence, *mamakiah* serves as an endeavor to comprehend various socio-cultural realities within society. Identifying social typologies and characteristics enables students to gain a profound understanding of their immediate communities. The experiences and insights gathered through the *mamakiah* process serve as invaluable assets for students upon their inauguration as *Tuanku*. Consequently, students are able to internalize and comprehend the knowledge acquired by observing and engaging with the phenomena within their social environment.

The essence of mamkiah does not fundamentally stem from financial insufficiency, nor is it dictated by a family's economic incapacity. Rather, it centers on the profound moral values inherent in the act of performing mamkiah itself. The objective is to ensure that students (santri) truly realize the struggles inherent in navigating life. In the past, my grandfather instructed me to perform mamakiah (traditional alms-seeking). Despite my grandfather being the proprietor of the surau (prayer house), he insisted that I participate in mamakiah due to my previous arrogant demeanor. Following the experience of mamakiah, there was a distinct emergence of self-awareness and a subsequent transformation in my personal attitude and conduct (Focus Group Discussion, 2025).

Second, the cultural dimension entails the internalization of cultural values through the embodiment of local community ethos. This embodiment occurs in direct contact with social reality, whereby the *pakiah* can implement and impart religious and educational principles while concurrently integrating the prevailing cultural values within the society. This process fosters the embodiment of knowledge acquired at the *surau* through direct implementation

within the community. The *mamakiah* process undertaken by students fundamentally encompasses pedagogical values and character-building essential to the development of a *Pakiah's* personality.

The journey of a *Pakiah* encompasses more than a rigorous examination of theological understanding; it serves as a conduit for internalizing traditional customs and social decorum through communal interaction. Within the domestic sphere, a *Pakiah* is not perceived as a mendicant but is instead honored through the traditional rites of hospitality. Typically, upon entering a residence, the *Pakiah* is ushered into the reception area and provided with sustenance, reflecting the community's profound respect for their role.

A dialogue ensues between the *Pakiah* and the host community. The conversations between the hosts and the *Pakiah* occasionally extend into the realms of customary knowledge, ethics, and the specific Minangkabau cultural norms prevalent in the region. Furthermore, the *Pakiah* is instructed by the community on the established 'etiquette' and social codes of conduct that govern daily life.

Essentially, prior to embarking on the *mamakiah* (traditional alms-seeking) tradition, the teacher (*Guru*) at the *surau* provides the students (*Murid*) with a foundational understanding of customary values and cultural norms. This preparation includes teachings on how to maintain one's conduct when faced with public ridicule, as in practice, they may encounter individuals who perceive them with disdain or looking down upon their status. In this context, students are equipped by their educators to confront multifaceted socio-cultural realities. The community serves as a secondary source of enlightenment, contributing practical knowledge derived from their own experiential backgrounds. Furthermore, the insights gained during the *mamakiah* tradition are pivotal to the character building and cognitive refinement of the *Pakiah* in their trajectory toward becoming an *Ulama*.

Thirdly, *mamakiah* serves as a process of internalizing and externalizing values that fosters the development of an open, civilized, and independent character. These values emerge from an accurate understanding of the self and the social environment. *Mamakiah* can be

described as a process of self-reflection; drawing upon Cooley's 'looking-glass self' theory, a *pakiah* imagines how they appear to society, interprets the reactions of others, and draws conclusions regarding how they are evaluated, subsequently developing a self-concept. The practice emphasizes a process of discovery and inquiry into social realities, enabling the *pakiah* to understand both themselves and others. This process cultivates an independent personality and robust resilience. Ultimately, the experience of *mamakiah* instills an awareness of communal interconnectedness in the student, serving as a vital process for personality strengthening.

Fourth, *mamakiah* constitutes a pedagogical process for communal living. This practice involves the direct absorption of values and experiential learning within the community, fostering the ability to coexist harmoniously amidst a plurality of cultural values. It encompasses the habit of living together, mutual respect, openness, and the reciprocal exchange of various life aspects within society. Under such conditions, it becomes possible to cultivate a mutual understanding and acceptance of racial, ethnic, and religious diversity. Within the *surau* tradition, the practice of *mamakiah* serves as a method for assessing students' capabilities through direct engagement with the community; consequently, students indirectly learn to navigate and comprehend the various social realities they encounter.

A *Pakiah* (traditional religious student) must adhere to the various prevailing norms of the community they visit to ensure their presence is well-received. Consequently, the practice of *Mamakiah*, while superficially appearing as 'soliciting alms,' is essentially a process of character building and an educational journey in communal living. Furthermore, *Mamakiah* is not conducted for personal gain, but rather for the collective benefit of fellow students.

The proceeds gathered from the students' *mamakiah* activities, in the form of both rice and monetary donations, are pooled to meet the daily operational needs of the *surau*. Students are prohibited from disputing the individual amounts collected; whether the contribution is modest or substantial, it is viewed with equal merit. This tradition underscores the principles

of togetherness and equality as fundamental values within traditional religious education through the practice of *mamakiah*.

Making Sense of Social Inclusion as a Counter-Radicalism Through the Lens of Religious Traditional Values

Radicalism is in constant motion and produces a wide range of social changes through the use of violence and calls for violence. Radicalism impacts different age categories, different faiths, the educated as well as the non-educated, the employed and the unemployed, and men as well as women (den Elzen et al., 2025). Many people who become radical undergo a radicalization process that involves the gradual adoption of an extremist worldview that legitimizes the use of violence to reach their goals (Dono et al., 2024). Radicalism itself refers to the term used to describe acts of violence that aim to achieve behavioral change and political objectives by creating fear in larger populations. One key factor that may promote radicalization is social exclusion (Pfundmair, et al. 2022), a condition characterized by the severance of an individual's social ties within the community. Social exclusion itself is inherently inextricably linked with the concept of social inclusion.

Within the discourse on radicalism, extensive efforts have been undertaken to counter its proliferation (Prisan, 2019; Ozer & Bertelsen, 2019; Holdo, 2021). The findings of this study reflect that traditional religious schools, through the practice of *mamakiah*, exemplify a cultural practice and a social learning mechanism that explicitly affirms the values of social inclusion within community life. As a learning process facilitated through direct interaction in social spaces, *mamakiah* serves as a medium for internalizing local values that emphasize openness, independence, and civility. Ultimately, these elements form the foundation for developing a social character that is adaptive toward diversity.

The aforementioned conditions of connectivity, openness, and active engagement serve as pivotal components in the effort to counteract radicalism. In this regard, social inclusion functions as a foundational framework for the cultivation of moderate thinking. According to the Ministry of Religious Affairs

(2019), moderation is characterized by tolerance, cultural accommodation, non-violence, and adherence to state ideology. This study contends that social inclusion rooted in local values cultivates a disposition of openness. It facilitates respect for the religious rights and expressions of others, encourages a commitment to dialogue and collaboration, and maintains a principled rejection of anarchic behavior in response to diversity and shifting social dynamics.

The social inclusion is defined as the process of improving the terms for individuals and groups to take part in society and the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of people, disadvantaged based on their identity, to take part in society. Social inclusion is also a process that ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living that is considered normal in the society in which they live (Sair & Sholahudin, 2025; Sair, 2019). It ensures that they have greater participation in decision making which affects their lives and access to their fundamental rights (Pečnikar Oblak et al., 2023).

Moreover, this study elucidates a particular type of doctrine present within the *surau* institution. In this sense, it refrains from generalizing that all *surau* are inherently untainted by radicalism or act as a definitive deterrent against it. This premise is supported by literary evidence concerning the historical trajectory of radicalism in West Sumatra. According to historical accounts by Hadler (Noorbani, 2023) and Azra (2017), radicalism has roots that trace back to the *surau*, notably seen in the evolution of the Padri movement.

This argument is reinforced by social facts regarding the development of radicalism in West Sumatra, as disclosed in the radicalism data (presented in Table 1). These data reflect that radical ideologies still possess the capacity to persist and regenerate. This can be interpreted as both an ideological and a social phenomenon operating through community networks. From an analytical perspective, these findings strengthen the argument for a social inclusion-based approach. The continuity of these networks indicates gaps in social integration,

where individuals or groups involved in radicalism may feel marginalized or unaccommodated within the broader social and political structures

Lastly, the social inclusion found within the religious tradition of *mamakiah* underscores a significant value within the context of urban society. The findings regarding connectivity, openness, and active engagement within the *mamakiah* tradition can be analyzed more profoundly when situated in the context of urban society, which is characterized by high mobility, social heterogeneity, and predominantly impersonal relationships. In urban spaces, individuals often experience social fragmentation and the weakening of community bonds, factors that many studies associate with an increased vulnerability to radicalization. Recent research suggests that social exclusion and marginality in urban settings contribute to the emergence of radical tendencies, as individuals lose access to supportive social networks (Pfundmair et al., 2022; Sandberg et al., 2023). Consequently, the practice of *mamakiah*, with its emphasis on social connectivity, can be understood as a mechanism for building social networks that strengthen cohesion and mitigate social isolation in urban communities.

Furthermore, the dimension of openness within the *mamakiah* tradition holds significant relevance in pluralistic and multicultural urban societies. In a social context, open interaction is key to preventing social segregation and identity exclusivism. Urban studies research indicates that social inclusion plays a vital role in creating more adaptive urban spaces and reducing social inequalities that may trigger conflict (Pineda, 2024; Azrananda et al., 2025). The value of openness in *mamakiah* functions not only as a cultural practice but also as a form of social inclusion production that serves as a 'social buffer' against the spread of radical ideologies in urban communities.

And, the active engagement manifested in the practice of *mamakiah* demonstrates the internalization of values through direct social experience. In an increasingly transactional urban society, such active involvement is imperative for fostering a sense of belonging. Studies in urban sociology affirm that community-based social participation and

networks play a significant role in strengthening social resilience and preventing radicalization (Alhassan, 2025; Abbas & McNeil-Willson, 2025). Consequently, the three elements of the *mamakiah* tradition can be understood as social mechanisms for enhancing inclusion and as cultural strategies for counter-radicalism, particularly within urban contexts susceptible to social fragmentation.

Conclusion

This study examines how social inclusion practices function as a counter-radicalism strategy within traditional religious school environments in West Sumatra. The research highlights the role of religious educational institutions in fostering values of moderation, tolerance, and social cohesion amidst the challenges of radicalism.

Furthermore, this study emphasizes that social inclusion is conceptualized as a social value profoundly embedded within religious traditions and indigenous cultures. It underscores the embrace of diversity, the acknowledgment of local specificities, and collective participation in socio-religious spheres. These principles derive from religious tenets and local wisdom that accentuate the nexus between theological norms and the social fabric. Such tradition-based social inclusion carries vital implications for de-radicalization efforts. Radicalism typically flourishes via exclusionary narratives that bifurcate the world into a 'us-and-them' dichotomy, thereby delegitimizing pluralism. Conversely, traditional religious institutions in West Sumatra embed inclusive values within their pedagogical frameworks, manifested through the formation of social consciousness and moral accountability toward the wider society.

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