

## THE SPIRIT OF WASATIYYAH: SUFISM AND LOCAL WISDOM IN INDONESIA

Hurnawijaya<sup>1</sup>, Apipuddin<sup>2</sup>, Dony Handriawan<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas PTIQ Jakarta  
hurnawijaya@mhs.ptiq.ac.id

<sup>2</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram  
apipuddin@uinmataram.ac.id

<sup>3</sup> Institute of Arab Research and Study, Jami'ah Dual Arabiyah, Cairo, Mesir  
dony\_hand@yahoo.co.id

### Abstract

This article explores the spirit of Wasatiyyah within the context of Sufism and local wisdom in Indonesia. Wasatiyyah, which translates to "the middle path" or "moderation," is a significant concept in Islam that emphasises balance and harmony. Through in-depth study, this article highlights how the principles of Sufism intersect with Indonesia's local wisdom, creating a unique and inclusive form of religious practice. The study employs a qualitative approach, using ethnographic methods to collect data from various Sufi communities in Indonesia. The findings reveal that the values of moderation within Sufism not only enrich individual spirituality but also strengthen social cohesion and foster tolerance among religious communities. Practices such as dhikr (remembrance of God), tahlil (recitation of the phrase 'La ilaha illallah'), and religious gatherings commonly conducted by Sufi communities incorporate elements of local wisdom, enriching Indonesia's spiritual culture. In conclusion, the integration of Sufism and local wisdom in Indonesia gives rise to an adaptive and harmonious religious model. The embodiment of the wasatiyyah spirit in these practices contributes significantly to peace and social harmony in a multicultural society.

**Keywords:** Wasatiyyah, Sufism, Local Wisdom, Moderation

### A. INTRODUCTION

In the realm of social interactions (*muamalah*), Muslims must always respect various local wisdom practices that do not violate Islamic law (*Sharia*) and are obliged to rectify them when they conflict with Sharia. Thus, local wisdom must remain subject to Allah's rules, not vice versa, as not all local wisdom aligns with Islamic teachings.<sup>1</sup>

Local wisdom is an integral part of a community's culture and is inseparable from the language of that community. Each region possesses its own distinct local wisdom, dependent on its unique culture and customs. The discourse on local wisdom has gained significant

---

<sup>1</sup> Sukari, *Islam dan Kebudayaan* (Tahta Media Group, 2024), 9.

attention amidst the apparent erosion of moral values resulting from scientific and technological progresses and cultural changes. This shift has also given rise to an understanding of the importance of these values. This reality has fostered an awareness of how fragile and transient our world is, acknowledging the limits to which the Earth can tolerate human intervention.<sup>2</sup>

Local wisdom is typically passed down from one generation to the next through oral traditions within the local community. It aims to enhance welfare and create peace.<sup>3</sup> Local wisdom is derived from cultural products that concern the life and livelihood of the community that owns it, including value systems, beliefs, religion, work ethic and even how these dynamics unfold.<sup>4</sup>

Local wisdom encompasses various aspects of community life, such as value systems, religious beliefs, work ethics and the dynamics of cultural change. It is a rich source of knowledge that reflects the collective experiences and insights of a community, developed over generations to address local challenges and maintain social harmony.

In the context of Islam, whilst respecting local wisdom, it is crucial to ensure that these practices align with Islamic principles. This approach allows for a harmonious integration of local cultural heritage with religious teachings, fostering a balanced and culturally sensitive practice of Islam.

## B. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach utilising ethnographic methods to explore the relationship between Sufism and local wisdom in Indonesia within the context of the *Wasatiyyah* spirit. This methodology was chosen as it enables researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the religious and cultural practices present within Sufi communities. The research design aims to provide a comprehensive portrayal of how the *Wasatiyyah* spirit is manifested in Sufi practices and local wisdom in Indonesia.

---

<sup>2</sup> John Mansford Prior, *Berdiri Di Ambang Batas* (Maumere: Penerbit Ledalero, 2004), 120.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Sibarani, *Foklore Sebagai Media Dan Sumber Pendidikan: Sebuah Ancangan Kurikulum Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Siswa Berbasis Nilai Budaya Batak" Dalam Kearifan Lokal. Hakekat, Peran, Dan Metode Tradisi Lisan* (Endraswara Suwardi Ed.) (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Lontar, 2012), 22.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Scholten Paul, *Struktur Ilmu Hukum. Alih Bahasa B. Arief Sidharta* (Bandung: Remaja Rosda Karya, 2002), 121. Robert Sibarani, *Foklore Sebagai Media Dan Sumber Pendidikan: Sebuah Ancangan Kurikulum Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Siswa Berbasis Nilai Budaya Batak" Dalam Kearifan Lokal. Hakekat, Peran, Dan Metode Tradisi Lisan* (Endraswara Suwardi Ed.), 21–22.

## C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Religion and Local Wisdom in Nusantara

Whilst each region possesses a distinct culture and varied local wisdom, these indigenous practices have consistently provided concrete solutions to local and regional issues within communities. Among these local wisdom traditions are customs and customary laws. Customs primarily represent a more abstract value system, whereas customary laws have evolved into social norms with associated rewards and punishments. Communities believe that every action, in all its forms, will receive either reward or punishment from a divine entity. Prior to the advent of organised religion, the prevalent mode of thought in these societies involved a belief in supernatural entities inhabiting physical objects. In Scholten's perspective, such legal regulations are not solely based on rational thought but also involve spiritual considerations.<sup>5</sup>

Customary law has long served to resolve various societal issues across the Indonesian archipelago, including horizontal conflicts related to ethnicity, religion or belief systems. Although operating under the umbrella of statutory law, indigenous communities possess a form of local wisdom in their normative law, collectively agreed upon as an instrument for resolving localised issues. This approach has proven highly effective in addressing problems within these communities. Indigenous legal communities assume that each member is an integral part of the overall customary law society. The communal principle in these communities advocates for members to uphold principles of harmony, kinship and mutual cooperation, prioritising collective well-being over individual interests. The customary legal system emphasises maintaining social cohesion and resolving conflicts through traditional mechanisms that have been refined over generations. This approach often involves mediation, consensus-building and restorative justice practices that aim to repair relationships and restore balance within the community.<sup>6</sup>

Indonesia, with its thousands of islands and diverse ethnic groups, undeniably possesses a wealth of local wisdom (*kearifan lokal*). The term '*kearifan*' (wisdom) literally

---

<sup>5</sup> Paul Scholten Paul, *Struktur Ilmu Hukum. Alih Bahasa B. Arief Sidharta*, 121.

<sup>6</sup> Jawahir Thontowi, "Pengaturan Masyarakat Hukum Adat Dan Implementasi Perlindungan Hak-Hak Tradisionalnya," *Pandecta: Research Law Journal* 10, no. 1 (June 30, 2015): 22, <https://doi.org/10.15294/pandecta.v10i1.4190>.

originates from the Arabic root word "عرف – يعرف" ('*arafa-yarifu*'), meaning to understand or internalise. It then forms the word "*kearifan*," which can be interpreted as a high level of awareness, understanding and attitude towards something.

Local wisdom represents a universal truth, and when combined with the term "*local*," it can sometimes narrow the understanding of wisdom itself. Whenever we discuss wisdom, we inherently engage with universal truths and values. Rejecting local wisdom would mean rejecting universal truths. In reality, universal truths are an accumulation of local truth values. There is no universal truth without local wisdom. Thus, it is inappropriate to juxtapose local wisdom against universal truth.

This is why the Qur'an, in Surah Al-Imran (3:104), states: "*And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful.*"<sup>7</sup>

Regarding matters of goodness, Allah uses the term inviting and for "*makruf*" (what is right), the term enjoining is employed. The term "*makruf*" (مَعْرُوف/ma'ruf) can be synonymous with wisdom that is universally accepted by the community. On the other hand, "*al-khair*" (الخير) refers to goodness that may not be immediately accepted by some non-Muslims.<sup>8</sup>

Local wisdom has become a term denoting exceptional and superior values within a society. Whilst this perception holds true, it still implies that local wisdom is not immediately recognised as universal truth; rather, it often takes considerable time to be acknowledged as national wisdom, transcending various ethnic values.<sup>9</sup> Examples of local wisdom include communal efforts in maintaining public facilities such as road repairs, neighbourhood watch programmes, tolerance during religious ceremonies, abstaining from hasty decisions in leadership matters and relying on customary institutions to resolve locally occurring conflicts.

In the current era of globalisation, local wisdom is increasingly necessary to address specific issues that cannot be adequately resolved by our general formal legal system.

---

<sup>7</sup> Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahnya* (Jakarta: Dirjen Bimbingan Masyarakat Islam, 2017).

<sup>8</sup> Abd al-Rahman bin Nashir bin Abdillah al-Sa'di, *Taysir Al-Karim al-Rahman Fi Tafsir Kalam al-Mannan*, Vol. 1 (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Risalah, 2000), 112.

<sup>9</sup> Rinitami Njatrijani, "Kearifan Lokal Dalam Perspektif Budaya Kota Semarang," *Gema Keadilan* 5, no. 1 (October 1, 2018): 18, <https://doi.org/10.14710/gk.2018.3580>.

Local wisdom can also help resolve religious-themed conflicts. Typically, disputing parties may have different religions, sects and schools of thought, but they share the same ancestral culture. It is this noble culture that has the potential to bridge the gap between conflicting parties. The term “noble culture,” which is synonymous with local wisdom, can help mend strained relationships. Culture is viewed as the manifestation of every individual’s or group’s life, perpetually shaping their interactions with the natural environment. Culture represents human efforts, the struggles of each person or group in determining their future. It is an activity that can be directed and planned.<sup>1011</sup>

Despite its many positive impacts, local wisdom sometimes deviates from the teachings of Islamic law. Within local wisdom, wrapped in customs and traditions, there are numerous practices predominantly followed by Muslims in Indonesia that diverge significantly from the pure and authentic values of the Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad.

We often witness, observe, hear and even participate in age-old ritual traditions passed down from generation to generation, even in today’s digital age. However, some of these practices conflict with Islamic principles, which are the very essence of life for Muslims.

According to cultural expert Koentjaraningrat, as outlined in his book, there are three forms of culture within customs and traditions. First, culture exists as ideas, concepts, values or norms. Second, culture manifests as human activities or behavioural patterns within society. Third, culture takes the form of objects created by humans.<sup>12</sup>

In line with this definition, traditions and customs constitute a cohesive, systematic and hereditary unity. The values upheld within specific tradition – for instance, the concept of “*sirri na pacce*” (dignity and shame) in Makassar – are ancestral treasures still believed by the Bugis-Makassar community in South Sulawesi. And it’s not just in

---

<sup>10</sup> Van Peursen, *Strategi Kebudayaan* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1976), 10–11.

<sup>11</sup> Masnun dan Apipuddin. Perwajahan Moderasi Beragama Pada Aras Lokal : Potret Moderasi Beragama Masyarakat Sasak. *Jurnal Pemikiran Sosial Dan Keagamaan*, 1(2), 2023, 108–128. <https://doi.org/10.62367/silatulafkar.v1i2.86>

<sup>12</sup> Sumarto Sumarto, “Budaya, Pemahaman Dan Penerapannya: ‘Aspek Sistem Religi, Bahasa, Pengetahuan, Sosial, Kesenian Dan Teknologi,’” *Jurnal Literasiologi* 1, no. 2 (July 9, 2019): 16, <https://doi.org/10.47783/literasiologi.v1i2.49>.

Makassar; numerous traditions across different Indonesian ethnic groups serve as sources of pride and unification.<sup>13</sup>

Every rule, recommendation and command will undoubtedly have a positive impact, and every heeded prohibition will bring good fortune to human life. One of the prohibitions that will benefit humans is to distance oneself from ancestral habits that contradict Islamic teachings. This is reflected in Allah's words in the Qur'an (Surah Al-Baqarah: 170): "*And when it is said to them, 'Follow what Allah has revealed', they say, 'Nay, we shall follow the ways of our fathers'. What! Even though their fathers were void of wisdom and guidance.*"<sup>14</sup>

A similar verse is also explained in (QS Al-Maidah: 104) as follows: "*And when it is said to them, 'Come to follow what Allah has sent down and to follow the Messenger', they say, 'It is enough for us what we have found our fathers doing'. Will they follow their fathers also, though they knew nothing and were not guided.*"<sup>15</sup>

These two verses tell us about people who adhere to the teachings and customs of their ancestors rather than the Shari'ah revealed by Allah in the Qur'an. This is exemplified by certain beliefs in rituals that promise salvation, tranquillity of life, and the warding off of bad luck, which have become entrenched traditions in various regions of Indonesian society.

One example of local wisdom in Indonesia can be found in the Sulawesi community, particularly in the traditional death ceremony of Tana Toraja. This region is renowned for its distinctive and unique funeral customs, commonly known as *Rambu Solo'* (not *Rambu Tuka*, which is a different ceremony). In Tana Toraja, the deceased are not immediately buried; instead, their bodies are placed in the *Tongkonan* (traditional ancestral house) for a considerable period. This duration can extend beyond a decade, allowing the family sufficient time to amass the funds necessary for conducting a proper ceremonial farewell. Following the elaborate funeral rites, the body is transported to its final resting place, typically a cave or a niche in a mountain wall. The presence of skulls at these sites indicates that corpses were not interred but rather placed on or under rocks, or in shallow

---

<sup>13</sup> <https://wahdah.or.id/menyikapi-tradisi-adat-istiadat-dalam-perspektif-islam/> diakses pada Sabtu, 29 Juni 2024. Pukul 12.23.

<sup>14</sup> Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahnya*.

<sup>15</sup> Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia.

cavities. The funeral festival season traditionally commences after the final rice harvest, usually occurring between late June and July, and no later than September.<sup>16</sup>

In the original belief system of the Tana Toraja people, known as *Aluk Todolo*, there is a strong awareness that human existence on Earth is merely temporary. The myth prevalent among followers of the *Aluk Todolo* faith states that those who have died will eventually journey to a place called *puyo*, which is the realm of spirits where all souls gather. This domain is believed to be situated in the southern region of the planet. Nevertheless, not all souls or spirits of the deceased are automatically permitted to enter *puyo*. To gain access to this realm, one must undergo a funeral ceremony in accordance with one's social status during life. Should the requisite ceremony not be performed or not be conducted in accordance with the *Aluk Todolo* teachings and procedures for worship, the individual will be unable to achieve entry to *puyo* and their soul will be lost.<sup>17</sup>

In the absence of a proper ceremonialisation, the deceased will become a spirit in the form of a demigod. This spirit, which is the incarnation of the soul of a human who has died, is referred to as a *tomebali puang*. During the period preceding the offering of sacrifices by family and relatives at a funeral ceremony, it is believed that the spirit will continue to observe closely the lives of their descendants. Consequently, death ceremonies are of paramount importance, and all *aluk* related to death must be carried out with the utmost precision in accordance with the prescribed provisions. Prior to the decision regarding the time and location of the burial, the family must convene, and the sacrificial animal must be prepared in accordance with the stipulated requirements. The implementation of the ceremony must be carried out to the highest standard in order for it to be accepted as an offering ceremony for the deceased, enabling them to reach the afterlife. The more meticulous the funeral ceremony, the more perfect the life of the deceased will be in the afterlife, which is referred to as *puyo*.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Anggun Sri Anggraeni and Gusti Anindya Putri, "Makna Upacara Adat Pemakaman Rambu Solo' Di Tana Toraja," *Visual Heritage: Jurnal Kreasi Seni Dan Budaya* 3, no. 1 (January 1, 2021): 79, <https://doi.org/10.30998/vh.v3i1.920>.

<sup>17</sup> Anggraeni and Putri, 80.

<sup>18</sup> Mei Nurul Hidayah, "Tradisi Pemakaman Rambu Solo Di Tana Toraja Dalam Novel Puya Ke Puya Karya Faisal Oddang (Kajian Interpretatif Simbolik Clifford Geertz)," *Fakultas Bahasa Dan Seni Universitas Negeri Surabaya* Vol 5 No 1 (2018): Volume 5 edisi Yudisium (2018): 8.

Various forms of tradition, carried out from generation to generation by adherents of the Aluk Todolo faith, including the widely known Tana Toraja traditional death rites, can still be witnessed today. Although there have been modifications over time, this custom is currently observed not only by adherents of Aluk Todolo but also by the population of Tana Toraja, who are Christians and Catholics.

## 2. Characteristics of The Local Wisdom in Nusantara

The characteristics of local wisdom may be defined as a form of environmental wisdom that exists in social life in a specific place or region. Consequently, the characteristics of local wisdom are invariably specific to a given locality and community. Local wisdom may be defined as the values or life behaviours of local communities in their interactions with the environment in which they live. As a form of human behaviour, local wisdom is not static but changes over time, contingent upon the social and cultural order and ties that exist within society.<sup>19</sup>

A number of characteristics of local wisdom can be identified as follows. Firstly, the capacity to withstand foreign culture, which implies that local wisdom persists despite numerous interactions with other cultures. Secondly, local wisdom is capable of accommodating foreign cultural elements, as it can create a dialectic with other cultures. Thirdly, the capacity to incorporate elements of foreign culture into the native culture. This integration can take the form of assimilation and acculturation, resulting in a more developed and diverse culture. Fourthly, the capacity to regulate is also a defining feature of local wisdom. Those who adhere to this form of knowledge consider it to be a control mechanism for other cultures, ensuring its continued preservation. Fifth, the capacity to provide direction to cultural development, thereby guiding the evolution of culture within a community.<sup>20</sup>

Local wisdom offers numerous benefits to Nusantara, including:

### a. Economic sector

Employing local wisdom as the primary strategy for improving the economy, particularly a sustainable one, is highly appropriate. It enables the public to better

---

<sup>19</sup> Maridi, "Mengangkat Budaya Dan Kearifan Lokal Dalam Sistem Konservasi Tanah Dan Air," *Proceeding Biology Education Conference* Convergence Event 2023 (2023): 23.

<sup>20</sup> Francisco Noerjanto, "Relevansi Psikologi Lintas Budaya Dalam Memahami Kearifan Lokal," *Jurnal Masalah Pastoral* 4, no. 2 (October 2, 2016): 1, <https://doi.org/10.60011/jumpa.v4i2.33>.



understand the necessary actions and requirements for conducting economic activities in accordance with an area's potential. Consequently, economic activities in a region can flourish.<sup>21</sup>

b. Education sector

Education is a conscious effort by humans to comprehend themselves and their environment. Therefore, it must foster and cultivate awareness of human existence in relation to the environment and the universe. By basing education on local wisdom, we can be optimistic about creating an educational system that imparts meaning to the lives of Indonesian people. This approach will imbue education with a spirit that can influence the dynamics of Indonesian society in the future. Our national education system must be capable of forming individuals with high integrity and strong character, thereby producing exemplary and dignified citizens in line with the fundamental principle of education: the humanisation of humans.

c. Political sector

In the political arena, indigenous peoples face even more challenging circumstances compared to other community groups that constitute the Indonesian nation. This condition has led to the systematic and continuous destruction of traditional governance systems, particularly throughout the New Order (*Orde Baru*) regime. This destructive effort is evident in the imposition of a uniform village concept across Indonesia, as stipulated in Law No. 5 of 1979 concerning village government.

### 3. *Wali Songo* and Local Wisdom: The Roots of Moderation

The *Wali Songo* truly understood that Islam, which was developing in Indonesia, originated from the Arabian Peninsula. The character and culture of Arab people were vastly different from those of Indonesian. The patterns of Islamic teachings that developed in Arabia, based on their culture, could not simply be imparted to the Indonesian people. Whilst the Arab people were characterised by harshness and egoism, Indonesians prioritised their "*ngejaw*" (Javanese) character. Consequently, the patterns and strategies of preaching could not be identical.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Bambang Sutikno and Jati Batoro, "Analisis Kearifan Lokal Terhadap Pembangunan ekonomi Hijau Di Kabupaten Pasuruan," *Program Studi Ekonomi Syariah Universitas Yudharta Pasuruan* Volume 8, Nomor 2, Juni 2017 (n.d.): 17.

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.kompas.com/skola/read/2020/02/12/140000269/wali-songo-penyebar-islam-di-tanah-jawa?page=all> Diakses pada Sabtu, 29 Juni 2024 Pukul 15.32

This is why the communication pattern employed by the *Wali Songo* in their preaching utilised local culture. They did not believe that culture must be changed; rather, they greatly appreciated the local culture with the addition of Islamic values. The *da'wah* strategies used by the *Wali Songo* varied significantly, depending on the region and conditions of the community. Most of these spreaders of Islam adapted flexibly so that their message of Islam was accepted by society. The name *Wali Songo* is often associated with the area of their preaching. As a result, most people are unaware of the real names of each *wali*.

The nine *Wali Songo* figures, their real names, strategies, and areas where their preaching spread indicate the importance of local wisdom in supporting the success of their *da'wah*, as written by Agus Sunyoto in the book "*Atlas Wali Songo*:"

#### 1) Sunan Gresik

Sunan Gresik, also known as Maulana Malik Ibrahim, is regarded as the individual who initiated the dissemination of Islam in Java. He initially arrived in Sembolo village, which is now known as Laren Village in Manyar subdistrict, situated nine kilometres north of the city of Gresik. His preaching strategy commenced with a focus on trade, which was subsequently augmented by a political approach. Sunan Gresik established a relationship with the ruler of the time and founded Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) and mosques with the intention of propagating Islam. Furthermore, Sunan Gresik employed a Sufism approach to disseminate Islamic teachings that could adapt to the local culture.<sup>23</sup>

#### 2) Sunan Ampel

Sunan Ampel, whose given name was Raden Rahmat, was born in 1401. His preaching area encompassed the region around Surabaya. He established the *Pesantren* Ampeldenta in the Denta area of Surabaya. His renowned *da'wah* strategy involved the education of preachers and the subsequent arrangement of marriages between these preachers and the offspring of Majapahit's subordinate rulers.<sup>24</sup> This approach of educating preachers was strategic, equipping them with teachings that were highly adaptive to the developing local culture. Sunan Ampel also employed a

---

<sup>23</sup> Agus Sunyoto, *Atlas wali songo*, Edisi revisi (Depok: Pustaka IIMaN, 2016), 161.

<sup>24</sup> Sunyoto, 193.

Sufistic approach to engage with the surrounding community, inviting them in a prudent manner and adapting to their circumstances.

### 3) Sunan Kudus

Sunan Kudus, born Ja'far Sadiq in 1400, concentrated his preaching activities in Kudus, Central Java. He was renowned for his unwavering commitment to Islamic law and was acknowledged as the executor of Ki Ageng Pengging and Sheikh Siti Jenar.<sup>25</sup> Sunan Kudus' da'wah strategy for the dissemination of Islam involved addressing the community's practical needs. He instructed his students in the techniques of carpentry, goldsmithing, the art of crafting *keris* (traditional daggers), and other related trades.<sup>26</sup>

### 4) Sunan Giri

Sunan Giri, whose real name was Muhammad Ainul Yakin, was born in 1442. His parents were Shaikh Maulana Ishaq and Dewi Sekardadu, the daughter of Menak Sembuyu, who was the ruler of the Balambangan region at the end of the Majapahit. Sunan Giri is known to have held both the titles of king and holy teacher. He played a pivotal role in the advancement of Islamic proselytization in Nusantara. His renowned preaching strategy employed the use of power, commerce, and education. This method of preaching enabled Sunan Giri to exert influence over a number of areas, including Banjar, Martapura, Pasir, Kutai, and Nusa Tenggara and Maluku.<sup>27</sup>

### 5) Sunan Gunung Jati

Sunan Gunung Jati's actual name was Syarif Hidayatullah. He was born in 1448 in Cairo, Egypt. In Egypt, he was the son of Sultan Hud and was once the prince in line to succeed his father as king of Egypt. Nevertheless, he declined this role and opted instead to disseminate Islamic teachings with his mother in Java. The da'wah strategy employed by Sunan Gunung Jati was designed to enhance his political standing. He established connections with prominent figures in Cirebon, Banten and Demak in order to facilitate the dissemination of his teachings.<sup>28</sup>

### 6) Sunan Kalijaga

---

<sup>25</sup> Sunyoto, 321.

<sup>26</sup> Sunyoto, 340.

<sup>27</sup> Sunyoto, 221.

<sup>28</sup> Sunyoto, 292.

Sunan Kalijaga, also known as Raden Said, was born in 1450 in Tuban. His father was Tumenggung Wilatikta, the Regent of Tuban. Sunan Kalijaga's da'wah strategy is renowned for its utilisation of art and culture. He was adept at the art of puppetry, creating both puppet forms and *carangan* plays.<sup>29</sup> The approach to da'wah through *wayang kulit* (shadow puppetry) represented an extraordinary innovation in Islamic preaching. Sunan Kalijaga integrated the core elements of Islamic teachings into the *wayang* performances he presented. The da'wah approach, packaged in *wayang* plays, was enhanced with a Sufistic perspective that was readily accepted by society.

#### 7) Sunan Muria

As the son of Sunan Kalijaga, Sunan Muria, whose given name was Raden Umar Said or Raden Said, was born with artistic talent inherited from his father. He was born in 1450 and is regarded as the youngest of the Wali Songo, or Sunan. In disseminating Islam, Sunan Muria maintained the traditions of *gamelan* and puppetry as a means of proselytising. He composed a number of songs with the intention of disseminating Islamic teachings.<sup>30</sup>

#### 8) Sunan Bonang

Sunan Bonang, born in 1465, was originally named Raden Maulana Makdum Ibrahim. He was the son of Sunan Ampel and Nyai Ageng Manila. The sobriquet Sunan Bonang is derived from the village of Bonang in the Rembang district. Renowned for his expertise in *fiqh*, *ushuluddin*, Sufism, art, literature, and architecture, Sunan Bonang's preaching area was primarily the Kediri. In this region, he disseminated Islamic teachings through the medium of *wayang kulit* (shadow puppetry), songs, and Sufistic literature. His most celebrated literary work is the *Suluk Wujil*.<sup>31</sup>

#### 9) Sunan Drajat

Sunan Drajat, born Raden *Qasim* or Syarifuddin in 1470, was the youngest son of Sunan Ampel and Nyai Ageng Manila. His preaching area was Paciran, Lamongan, where he concentrated on moral education for society. Sunan Drajat advocated for the care of the impoverished and the prioritisation of their wellbeing. Furthermore, he was

---

<sup>29</sup> Sunyoto, 265.

<sup>30</sup> Sunyoto, 372.

<sup>31</sup> Sunyoto, 244.

renowned for imparting knowledge regarding the construction of houses and palanquins.<sup>32</sup>

The Wali Songo exemplify religious moderation in Indonesia. They adopted a moderate approach towards local culture, blending indigenous traditions with Islamic values without resorting to violence or coercion.<sup>33</sup> Despite their status as the majority, the Wali Songo maintained a moderate stance, coexisting harmoniously with local communities of diverse cultural and religious backgrounds.<sup>34</sup> The Wali Songo developed a plethora of Islamic cultural creations with the objective of adapting Islam to local culture. In terms of artistic output, the Wali Songo created *macapat* songs, religious praise songs, and *dolanan* songs, as well as games for children and teenagers. They refined the lyrics and style of *macapat* songs, which subsequently became widely popular, infusing them with Islamic values.<sup>35</sup> The *macapat* styles that they sang included *gambuh*, *sinom mijil*, and *dandang gula*. Additionally, the Wali Songo composed religious praise songs with lyrics reminiscent of consolation songs, such as "*Lir-ilir*," which was intended for the general public. For children and teenagers, they created *dolanan* songs, such as "*jublak-jublak uweng*" and "*jamuran*."<sup>36</sup>

#### 4. Revitalising the Interaction Between Religion and Local Wisdom

One illustrative example of the potential for religion and local wisdom to inform and enrich one another is their use as a preventative measure or tool to reduce the rise of radicalism in the current era of globalisation. Radicalism is a phenomenon that transcends national and religious boundaries. To date, all countries continue to regard radicalism and extremism as common enemies. In addition, religious leaders must reinterpret their doctrine as a counter-discourse against extremist groups that exploit religion for their own purposes.

---

<sup>32</sup> Sunyoto, 308.

<sup>33</sup> Syamsurijal, Wasisto Raharjo Jati, and Halimatusa'diah, "Religious Moderation Within Islam Of The Archipelago," *Pusat Riset Masyarakat Dan Budaya Badan Riset Dan Inovasi Nasional* Vol. 24 No. 3 (2022) (2023): 365.

<sup>34</sup> Suparjo Suparjo, "Islam Dan Budaya: Strategi Kultural Wali Songo Dalam Membangun Masyarakat Muslim Indonesia," *KOMUNIKA: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Komunikasi* 2, no. 2 (January 1, 1970): 178–93, <https://doi.org/10.24090/komunika.v2i2.100>.

<sup>35</sup> Suparjo, 239.

<sup>36</sup> Mr. Suparto, "Tembang Macapat Sebagai Sumber Ide Gending-Gending Karya Ki Nartosabdo," *SELONDING* 1, no. 1 (January 10, 2013): 117, <https://doi.org/10.24821/selonding.v1i1.66>.

Two key differences can be identified between the symptoms of pre- and post-globalisation radicalism. Firstly, in the pre-globalisation era, radicalism was relatively straightforward to identify, and it was relatively simple to ascertain the identity of the actors and their location. This was because groups engaged in radical-anarchist actions were typically those excluded from power, marginalised, or those seeking to separate from the sovereign state.<sup>37</sup> Conversely, in the era of globalisation, radicalism is characterised by a lack of discernible patterns and a global reach (Juergensmeyer, 2000). It is challenging to ascertain the actor, locus, or cause. Radicals may originate from educated circles, the middle to upper economic classes, or even from those with a deep religious understanding.

Secondly, prior to the advent of globalisation, radicalism was primarily concentrated in peripheral areas. In the contemporary era, radicalism has become a prominent feature within the central institutions of government. As Armstrong (2001) observed, since the Iranian Revolution, the epidemic and its actors have entered the centre of power, no longer confined to working on the periphery. This can be evidenced by the fact that numerous officials, policymakers, educators, and members of the State Civil Apparatus (*Aparat Sipil Negara: ASN*) have been infected with the virus of radicalism.<sup>38</sup>

##### **5. The revilatisation of Local Wisdom**

The two aforementioned trends in radicalism undoubtedly necessitate the implementation of distinct approaches. It is imperative that unique problems are addressed with tailored strategies. In this context, local wisdom, as part of a highly valuable ancestral heritage, gains significance and can become a resource for detecting, preventing and even combating the spread of radicalism.

The revitalisation of local wisdom represents a strategy for reinvigorating long-standing traditions and philosophies of life within society. The revitalisation movement can be implemented by maximising the role of traditional and religious leaders. Involving community and religious leaders at the local level can prevent the spread of radicalism

---

<sup>37</sup> Herdi Sahrasad and Al-Chaidar, *Fundamentalisme, terorisme, dan radikalisme: perspektif agama, masyarakat dan negara* (Jakarta: Freedom Foundation, 2017), 77.

<sup>38</sup> Neli Rahmah and Nelmaya Nelmaya, "Islamic Fundamentalism Karen Armstrong's Perspective and Its Implications for the Identification of Fundamentalism Groups in Indonesia," *Islam Realitas: Journal of Islamic & Social Studies* 5, no. 2 (December 31, 2019): 210, [https://doi.org/10.30983/islam\\_realitas.v5i2.2250](https://doi.org/10.30983/islam_realitas.v5i2.2250).

and limit its accessibility. To date, the majority of prevention efforts have been concentrated at the centralised level, employing a narrow range of rigid tactics and procedures. At the local level, however, the role of traditional and religious leaders is demonstrably effective.<sup>39</sup>

The strategic role of traditional and religious figures can be observed in the traditional motto "syara," which likens the two to two sides of a coin, inseparable. Community issues are initially resolved through local and wise familial intervention before entering formal institutions. This strategic role can be optimised to advance the values of peace, harmony and tolerance.

Furthermore, the optimisation of community institutions and the revitalisation of local rituals have been demonstrated to be highly effective in countering radicalism. Community institutions, whether in the form of tangible artefacts such as traditional houses and gathering spaces, or intangible entities such as tribal ties, clans and family systems, serve a function in deterring radicalism.

The primary clan ties within the Batak tribe of North Sumatra serve a crucial role in mitigating conflict. In the context of the tribal system, the clan represents a sibling bond. When clan A encounters clans B, C and D, they are already considered siblings. Indeed, for some individuals, clan ties are perceived to be of greater significance than religious affiliations. Despite the fact that they may practise different religions, individuals belonging to the same clan are considered brothers. Consequently, conflicts and disputes can be managed effectively.

A comparable phenomenon can be observed on the island of Java. The tradition of grave pilgrimages to sites considered sacred has been observed to have the effect of minimising societal conflicts. Despite the existence of various differences, upon entering the environment of a holy tomb for pilgrimage, individuals are able to blend and merge with one another in a harmonious manner. To date, the strategic role of local wisdom has been widely publicised by the media. For example, the tradition of mutual cleaning of places of worship in certain areas of Maluku is noteworthy. During Eid al-Fitr, Christians clean the mosque, and conversely, when Christmas arrives, Muslims clean the church. It

---

<sup>39</sup> Rahmah and Nelmaya, *"Islamic Fundamentalism Karen Armstrong's Perspective and Its Implications for the Identification of Fundamentalism Groups in Indonesia.."*, hlm.209.

is imperative that dialogue, mutual greetings and encouragement be maximised in order to eradicate the spread of radicalism.

#### **D. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Despite the diversity of cultures and local wisdom across regions, it has been demonstrated that local wisdom provides concrete solutions to local and regional issues within societies. Among the various forms of local wisdom are customs and customary law. Customs primarily represent a more abstract value system, whilst customary law has evolved into social norms with associated rewards and punishments. The Wali Songo, revered Muslim saints, greatly appreciated the developing cultures, enriching them with Islamic values. The strategies employed by these Islamic propagators in disseminating their message varied significantly, depending on the region and the conditions of the community. Most of these Islamic propagators adapted flexibly, ensuring their message was accepted by society. The local wisdom of the archipelago, which remains alive and continues to evolve, can serve as a spirit of religious moderation, particularly when viewed through the lens of the moderate religious model inspired and passed down by the Wali Songo.

#### **REFERENCES**

- Abd al-Rahmân bin Nashir bin Abdillâh al-Sa'dî. *Taysîr Al-Karîm al-Rahmân Fî Tafsîr Kalâm al-Mannân*, Vol. 1. Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Risalah, 2000.
- Anggraeni, Anggun Sri, and Gusti Anindya Putri. "Makna Upacara Adat Pemakaman Rambu Solo' Di Tana Toraja." *Visual Heritage: Jurnal Kreasi Seni Dan Budaya* 3, no. 1 (January 1, 2021): 72–81. <https://doi.org/10.30998/vh.v3i1.920>.
- Bambang Sutikno and Jati Batoro. "ANALISIS KEARIFAN LOKAL TERHADAP PEMBANGUNANEKONOMI HIJAU DI KABUPATEN PASURUAN." *Program Studi Ekonomi Syariah Universitas Yudharta Pasuruan* Volume 8, Nomor 2, Juni 2017 (n.d.).
- John Mansford Prior. *Berdiri Di Ambang Batas*. Maumere: Penerbit Ledalero, 2004.
- Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia. *Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahnya*. Jakarta: Dirjen Bimbingan Masyarakat Islam, 2017.
- Masnun dan Apipuddin. Perwajahan Moderasi Beragama Pada Aras Lokal : Potret Moderasi Beragama Masyarakat Sasak. *Jurnal Pemikiran Sosial Dan Keagamaan*, 1(2), 2023, 108–128. <https://doi.org/10.62367/silatulafkar.v1i2.86>



- Maridi. "Mengangkat Budaya Dan Kearifan Lokal Dalam Sistem Konservasi Tanah Dan Air." *Proceeding Biology Education Conference Convergence Event 2023* (2023).
- Mei Nurul Hidayah. "TRADISI PEMAKAMAN RAMBU SOLO DI TANA TORAJA DALAM NOVEL PUYA KE PUYA KARYA FAISAL ODDANG (KAJIAN INTERPRETATIF SIMBOLIK CLIFFORD GEERTZ)." *Fakultas Bahasa Dan Seni Universitas Negeri Surabaya Vol 5 No 1* (2018): Volume 5 edisi Yudisium (2018).
- Njatrijani, Rinitami. "Kearifan Lokal Dalam Perspektif Budaya Kota Semarang." *Gema Keadilan* 5, no. 1 (October 1, 2018): 16–31. <https://doi.org/10.14710/gk.2018.3580>.
- Noerjanto, Francisco. "Relevansi Psikologi Lintas Budaya Dalam Memahami Kearifan Lokal." *Jurnal Masalah Pastoral* 4, no. 2 (October 2, 2016): 107–9. <https://doi.org/10.60011/jumpa.v4i2.33>.
- Paul Scholten Paul. *Struktur Ilmu Hukum. Alih Bahasa B. Arief Sidharta*. Bandung: Remaja Rosda Karya, 2002.
- Rahmah, Neli, and Nelmaya Nelmaya. "Islamic Fundamentalism Karen Armstrong's Perspective and Its Implications for the Identification of Fundamentalism Groups in Indonesia." *Islam Realitas: Journal of Islamic & Social Studies* 5, no. 2 (December 31, 2019): 217. [https://doi.org/10.30983/islam\\_realitas.v5i2.2250](https://doi.org/10.30983/islam_realitas.v5i2.2250).
- Robert Sibarani. *Foklore Sebagai Media Dan Sumber Pendidikan: Sebua Ancangan Kurikulum Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Siswa Berbasis Nilai Budaya Batak" Dalam Kearifan Lokal. Hakekat, Peran, Dan Metode Tradisi Lisan (Endraswara Suwardi Ed.)*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Lontar, 2012.
- Sahasad, Herdi and Al-Chaidar. *Fundamentalisme, terorisme, dan radikalisme: perspektif agama, masyarakat dan negara*. Jakarta: Freedom Foundation, 2017.
- Sukari. *ISLAM DAN KEBUDAYAAN*. Tahta Media Group, 2024.
- Sumarto, Sumarto. "Budaya, Pemahaman Dan Penerapannya: 'Aspek Sistem Religi, Bahasa, Pengetahuan, Sosial, Kesenian Dan Teknologi.'" *Jurnal Literasiologi* 1, no. 2 (July 9, 2019): 16. <https://doi.org/10.47783/literasiologi.v1i2.49>.
- Sunyoto, Agus. *Atlas wali songo*. Edisi revisi. Depok: Pustaka IIMaN, 2016.
- Suparjo, Suparjo. "Islam Dan Budaya: Strategi Kultural Wali Songo Dalam Membangun Masyarakat Muslim Indonesia." *KOMUNIKA: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Komunikasi* 2, no. 2 (January 1, 1970): 178–93. <https://doi.org/10.24090/komunika.v2i2.100>.
- Suparto, Mr. "TEMBANG MACAPAT SEBAGAI SUMBER IDE GENDING-GENDING KARYA KINARTOSABDO." *SELONDING* 1, no. 1 (January 10, 2013). <https://doi.org/10.24821/selonding.v1i1.66>.

Tahiro : *Journal of Peace and Religious Moderation* Vol. 01 No. 01 (2024): 65-82

Syamsurijal, Wasisto Raharjo Jati, and Halimatusa'diah. "RELIGIOUS MODERATION WITHIN ISLAM OF THE ARCHIPELAGO." *Pusat Riset Masyarakat Dan Budaya Badan Riset Dan Inovasi Nasional* Vol. 24 No. 3 (2022) (2023).

Thontowi, Jawahir. "Pengaturan Masyarakat Hukum Adat Dan Implementasi Perlindungan Hak- Hak Tradisionalnya." *Pandecta: Research Law Journal* 10, no. 1 (June 30, 2015). <https://doi.org/10.15294/pandecta.v10i1.4190>.

Van Peursen. *Strategi Kebudayaan*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1976.



© 2024 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY SA) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)