



Sufism and social cohesion: The role of Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan Tariqa in pluralistic religious life in East Lombok

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ABSTRACT

Tariqa, within the framework of Sufism, refers to a system of religious thought and practice cultivated and exemplified by adherents of Sufi orders (tarekat) who embody a pluralistic orientation. This study seeks to elucidate the evolution of a diversity-orientated mentality embedded in tariqa (tasawuf) practices in East Lombok during the New Order era. Employing a historical research approach, this study adopts the established stages of historical inquiry is heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The findings indicate that the development of tariqa in East Lombok constitutes a long-standing historical process, rooted in the introduction of Islam to the region in the 15th and 16th centuries. This development has been consistently preserved as an integral element of the religious fabric of East Lombok society. The mentality of diversity has been culturally nurtured through a sustained and profound relationship between spiritual teachers (murshid) and their disciples within tarekat institutions. During the New Order period, the transformation of tariqa adherents into a community committed to fostering a culture of inclusivity and social cohesion was notably evident. Remarkably, the region experienced no communal conflict throughout the era, contributing to the formation of a harmonious society. This study aspires to contribute meaningfully to scholarly discourse on tariqa practices that embody tolerance and serve as exemplary models within pluralistic societies.

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INTRODUCTION

Islam is believed to have entered the Indonesian archipelago (Nusantara) around the 15th century CE (Febrianti et al., 2019). This assertion is supported by the theory proposed by Emanuel Godinho de Eradia, a Spanish scholar, who stated that "the creed of Muhammad was accepted in Pattani and Pam along the east coast, and subsequently embraced and developed by Paramesyawara in 1411 CE" (Hasjmy, 1993). The expedition led by Admiral Cheng Ho to the archipelago further gave rise to the hypothesis that Islam may have arrived through Chinese intermediaries. At that time, the prevailing consensus acknowledged only two major routes of Islamisation—via Gujarat and the Middle East. The emergence of alternative theories regarding the role of Chinese communities in the

diffusion of Islam enriches the historiographical discourse of Islamic development in Indonesia (Saepudin, 2006). Islam's peaceful spread in Indonesia occurred primarily through avenues such as trade, intermarriage, artistic expression, educational endeavors, and, notably, the influence of Sufism. Through these peaceful channels, Islam gradually expanded and embedded itself throughout the Nusantara (Ricklefs, 2008). In addition to trade, which contributed significantly, Sufism played a critical role in drawing the interest of indigenous populations, facilitating their acceptance of Islam through a spiritually nuanced approach.

Lombok, located in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), is one of the prominent islands formerly known as part of the Lesser Sunda Islands (Nusa Tenggara). It is the second most populous island in the province, following Sumbawa. The majority of Lombok's inhabitants are Muslim, and they hold a vital role in shaping the island's socio-cultural landscape. The spread of Islam in Lombok began around the 16th century CE (Basarudin, 2019), primarily through the missionary work of Sunan Prapen, the son of Sunan Ampel. His efforts were part of a broader Islamic expansion that had already taken root in Java. The process of Islamic dissemination and establishment in Lombok was largely carried out through religious propagation and community engagement.

Indonesia is inherently a pluralistic nation, characterized by its vast ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and religious diversity. This heterogeneity is a fundamental component of the nation's identity and must be recognized as a valuable national asset. Nevertheless, such diversity also presents inherent vulnerabilities that may trigger conflicts of interest among different societal groups if not carefully managed. The concept of diversity forms an essential pillar of Indonesia's national philosophy, underpinning both its cultural and civic life. Since before the country's independence, the Indonesian nation has been envisioned as a collective of various ethnicities, groups, and religions unified by a shared commitment to nationhood. Within this framework, fostering a *diversity mentality* becomes crucial to sustaining national unity and identity. The ability of Indonesians to coexist peacefully despite differing backgrounds reflects a collective appreciation of this diversity. The country's extensive cultural resources offer a strong foundation for promoting diversity grounded in collective wisdom (Winoto et al., 2023).

Within the broader discourse on national diversity, the role of *Tariqa* (Sufi orders or *tasawuf*) in Islamic communities in Lombok holds a vital position in shaping both cultural identity and the ethos of pluralism. *Tariqa* represents a significant pillar of Islamic diversity, functioning as a spiritual discipline and behavioral path through which Muslims strive to attain higher levels of piety (*taqwa*). The awareness of Islamic identity and the need to adapt to evolving social, political, economic, and cultural dynamics have made *tasawuf*-oriented movements particularly relevant and functionally impactful (Mufid, 2006). Exploring the role of *Tariqa* in fostering diversity in East Lombok requires examining various lived experiences related to ethnicity, religious identity, tolerance, and intercommunal harmony (Budiwanti & Eidhamar, 2024)(Suprpto & Huda, 2023). The intersection of *Tariqa* and diversity offers a valuable lens to understand how spiritual practices can shape social cohesion, facilitating more harmonious social and cultural interactions among the people of East Lombok.

The primary object of this study is to examine the position of *Tariqa* within the context of pluralistic life in East Lombok, with a particular focus on the diverse character inherent in the *Tariqa* tradition that has developed in the region. This diversity is most prominently manifested in the existence and practices of the *Tariqa* that flourished in Lombok, especially the *Tariqa Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan* (NW). The *Tariqa Hizib NW* was established by a prominent Islamic scholar from Pancor, East Lombok—TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid. This *Tariqa* incorporates devotional practices (*dzikr*) comprising Qur'anic verses and supplications composed by revered scholars and saints of Islam. The significance of this study lies in its attention to the diversity-oriented character embedded within *Tariqa* practices, particularly the *Tariqa Hizib NW*, which plays a vital role in shaping the socio-cultural dynamics of the Lombok community.

Historically, the island of Lombok experienced dual colonial subjugation—first by the Kingdom of Karangasem (Bali), and later by the Dutch colonial administration. The ideological domination exerted during the Balinese occupation left a deep socio-cultural trauma that continues to influence the collective memory and identity of the local Muslim population. In this context, the present study seeks to offer a constructive response by highlighting that within the intellectual and

spiritual treasury (*khazanah*) of the *Tariqa* tradition in Lombok, there exist intrinsic values and principles conducive to cultivating religious harmony. These values may serve as a foundational framework for promoting sustainable interreligious coexistence in the region.

Extensive scholarly works on *Tariqa* and Sufism in Indonesia have previously been conducted. These include explorations of neo-Sufism as a vehicle for religious tolerance (Sarr, 2019), investigations into the presence of religious pluralism within Sufi traditions (Hamdie, 2019), studies on the spiritual life of Lombok communities (Suprpto, 2017; Suprpto & Huda, 2020), the role of Sufism in advancing diversity in Indonesia (Ni'am & Nurhayati, 2019), typologies of Muhammadiyah Sufism and its thought leaders (Biyanto, 2017), analyses of moderate Islamic expressions and their cultural-religious dialectics within Muslim communities in Lombok (Mutawali, 2016), historical developments of Sufi orders in Southeast Asia (van Bruinessen, 1994), and more specific studies concerning the *Tariqa Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan* and its female spiritual leaders (*murshidah*) (Muzayyin, 2020; Rasyad et al., 2021; Smith, 2021; Smith et al., 2023)).

However, most of these studies have not specifically addressed the role of *Tariqa* in constructing a diversity-oriented religious mentality among its adherents. It is worth noting that Islam was introduced to Southeast Asia through peaceful means—primarily preaching (*da'wah*) and trade—marking one of the most distinctive features of the Islamic tradition in this region. In particular, the *Tariqa Naqshabandiyah* and *Qadiriyyah wa Naqshabandiyah* have played instrumental roles in disseminating Islam across the archipelago (Aljunied, 2025; Hidayat & Syahrul, 2017; Lindsey & Steiner, 2025; Sevea, 2023). This article offers a critical contribution to the body of knowledge surrounding Islamic movements by presenting an in-depth analysis of the *Tariqa Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan*. It aims to articulate the historical trajectory, spiritual ideals, symbolic meanings, and existential aspirations of the East Lombok community during the New Order period. Ultimately, this research aspires to enrich the discourse on religious pluralism by demonstrating how *tasawuf* practices have facilitated the growth of tolerance and social harmony in East Lombok—contributing to the broader objective of strengthening social cohesion within Indonesia's multicultural society.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a historical research methodology, which encompasses four fundamental stages: heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography (Kuntowijoyo, 2015). Data collection was conducted through comprehensive literature reviews involving primary and secondary sources, including scholarly books and peer-reviewed journal articles relevant to the *Tariqa (tasawuf)* of Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan. In addition to document-based research, qualitative data were also obtained through in-depth, face-to-face interviews with *Tariqa* practitioners in Lombok. These informants were individuals directly engaged with the subject of the study and possessed significant biographical and historical knowledge pertinent to the development of the *Tariqa* tradition under investigation. The *Tariqa* of Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan was compiled by TGKH. Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid from Pancor, East Lombok, is the founder of the Nahdlatul Wathan organization. In the first printings of Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan, the date 30 Ramadhan 1383 H was written, which coincided with February 14, 1964 AD. This date is believed to be the birth of the Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan order (Madjid, 1964). In 2017, he was even designated the first national hero in West Nusa Tenggara. Confirmation is done with the Tuan Guru is a student of TGKH. Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid confirmed the book written about the *Tariqa* of Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan. It is known that the *Tariqa* of Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan is a routine reading for Nahdlatul Wathan members every Monday night and is a characteristic of this order's congregation. This research was conducted in East Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, because of that all historical construction will describe the community of East Lombok in the context of the existence of the community as a practicing *Tariqa (tasawuf)* in diversity in East Lombok.

This historical research adopts Giddens' structuration theory as its analytical framework, which posits that social structures are not entirely external to individuals; rather, they are internalized

and reproduced through human agency. In this theoretical perspective, individuals possess autonomous capacities and play an active role in shaping and maintaining the very structures in which they operate (Giddens, 2009, 2010). Structuration theory is thus employed in this study to analyze the praxis of *Tariqa* (*tasawuf*) within the East Lombok community during the New Order era. Within this context, *Tariqa* practitioners are conceptualized as social actors who, through their individual and collective agency, contribute to the emergence of social transformation. Their roles are examined in relation to how they sustain and cultivate a culture of diversity through spiritual and communal practices.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

History of the Development of *Tariqa* in East Lombok

Sufism (*tasawuf*) is a branch of Islamic scholarship and practice that originates from the dimension of *al-Ihsan*, which emphasizes spiritual refinement and moral excellence. It is generally believed that Sufism emerged after the passing of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), as a spiritual response to the desire for greater closeness to Allah SWT (Muttaqin et al., 2023). From an academic standpoint, the development of Sufism is traced back to the third century of the Islamic Hijri calendar, rooted in early Islamic civilization. Sufism encompasses all aspects of human behavior, including both internal dispositions and external actions, as manifested through ritual worship (*ibadah*) and social conduct (*mu'amalah*). The concept of *ihsan* or Sufism is often regarded as the soul of both *iman* (faith) and *Islam*. Faith, when formed through a synthesis of knowledge and belief, finds expression in acts of worship. The integration of *iman* and *Islam* in a person's life eventually manifests as *akhlaq al-karimah*, or noble character (Syukur, 2014).

While *tasawuf* refers to the doctrinal and spiritual teachings of Sufism, *Tariqa* represents the institutionalized path that facilitates the actualization of those teachings. It signifies a spiritual journey undertaken by devout individuals who seek divine proximity through self-purification and disciplined practice. The institutional structure of *Tariqa* can be observed in established and widely recognized orders such as the *Naqshabandiyyah* and *Qadiriyyah*, along with other *Tariqa Mu'tabarah* that are considered authoritative within the Sufi tradition (Nurwendah et al., 2024).

The emergence of *Tariqa* is inseparable from the historical development of Islam itself. Islam originated in Mecca and was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad SAW as a comprehensive and universal message. After his death, the religion was propagated by his companions, particularly the four Rightly Guided Caliphs, who upheld Islam as a continuation and perfection of previous prophetic teachings intended as mercy for all humanity.

In Indonesia, the development of *Tariqa* closely followed the spread of Islam, which began in the fifteenth century CE (Ahmad et al., 2021). As Islam expanded throughout the archipelago, *Tariqa* also gained prominence. The exact number of Sufi orders that have existed in Indonesia is not precisely known. According to the *Jam'iyah Ahl al-Tariqa al-Mu'tabarah al-Nahdiyyah* (JATMAN), there are approximately forty-five officially recognized *Tariqa*, not including other orders such as the *Sidiqiyyah* and *Wahidiyyah* which are not categorized as *mu'tabarah*. The dynamic nature of Sufism allows for the evolution of new orders, the merging of existing ones, or the decline of others (Azis et al., 2024; Tohri et al., 2020, 2022). Bruinessen (2000) outlines several major *Tariqa* that shaped the Sufi landscape in Indonesia. These include the *Sammaniyyah* introduced by Abd al-Samad al-Palimbani, the *Khalwatiyyah* by Yusuf al-Makassari, the *Naqshabandiyyah* by Abdurrauf as-Sinkili, the *Qadiriyyah* by Hamzah Fansuri and Syamsuddin as-Sumatrani, the *Syattariyyah* and *Rifa'iyyah* by Nuruddin al-Raniri, and the *Qadiriyyah wa Naqshabandiyyah* by Abdul Karim al-Bantani.

The historical development of *Tariqa* in East Lombok is closely tied to the broader Islamization of the island. Islam has been present in Lombok since the fifteenth century. Although the region experienced political domination by the Balinese kingdom in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Alfarisi et al., 2016), the spread of Islam remained strong. The growth of *Tariqa* in

Lombok is particularly evident in the nineteenth century, marked by numerous resistance movements led by *Tariqa* teachers and their followers against Balinese rulers (van Bruinessen, 1992b).

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, commercial exchanges between traders and the Sasak people facilitated the spread of Islamic teachings. Religious figures known as *Tuan Guru* played an instrumental role in this process by conveying Islamic values infused with Sufi spirituality. These teachings fostered a deeply rooted spiritual ethos among the Sasak community, integrating Sufi principles into the local worldview and aligning religious life with the foundational principles of Islam, namely the Five Pillars.

The emergence and development of Islam within the Sasak community can be attributed to two interrelated factors. First is the influence of Islamic teachings, particularly those imbued with Sufi spirituality. Second is the acculturation between indigenous spiritual traditions on the island of Lombok and the spiritual experiences gained by the local Muslim population through participation in the pilgrimage to Mecca (*Haji*). Within this syncretic religious landscape, the Sasak community came to recognize prominent Islamic leadership figures primarily through the institutional presence of *Tariqa* in Lombok (Tohri et al., 2020). Among the various Sufi orders that have taken root in Lombok, the most influential to date include the *Naqshabandiyyah*, *Qadiriyyah*, and the *Qadiriyyah wa Naqshabandiyyah* orders. Historically, the dissemination of the *Naqshabandiyyah* order on the island is estimated to have begun in the 19th century. This process was catalyzed by the return of several *Tuan Guru* who had studied at the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca under the guidance of caliphs appointed by Sheikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas. Notable among these Lombok-based caliphs were Tuan Guru Haji Muhammad Amin of Pejeruk Ampenan, Tuan Guru Haji Muhammad Siddiq of Karang Kelok Mataram, and Tuan Guru Haji Muhammad Ali of Batu Sakra, East Lombok (van Bruinessen, 1992b).

In the context of the socio-religious life of the Lombok community, the *Qadiriyyah wa Naqshabandiyyah* order has received notable reverence. This is evident in several respects: first, the widespread diffusion of its teachings across nearly all areas of Lombok; second, the deep respect (*ta'zhim*) shown by followers towards the *mursyid* (spiritual guides); and third, the cultural practice of venerating the graves of these spiritual leaders (Alfarisi et al., 2018). Empirical findings from recent studies affirm that the *Naqshabandiyyah* order continues to dominate the landscape of *Tariqa* in Lombok (Quddus, 2020). This dominance reflects a continuation of historical developments that began in the 19th century (van Bruinessen, 1992a). In East Lombok, *Tariqa* communities are especially prevalent in rural areas, where their distribution is relatively even across sub-districts. These regions remain a legacy of the teachings propagated by the disciples of Tuan Guru Ali Batu Sakra (TGH. Zulkarnain, Interview, December 14, 2023). In addition to the *Naqshabandiyyah Mazhariyyah* order, which has developed extensively in every district of East Lombok, the *Tariqa Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan* has also gained considerable traction. Adherents of this *Tariqa* are primarily affiliated with the *Nahdlatul Wathan* organization, which regards the practice of this order as integral to its spiritual identity (TGH. Zulkarnain, Interview, December 14, 2023).

The development of the *Naqshabandiyyah Mazhariyyah* order, as inherited and transmitted by Tuan Guru Ali Batu Sakra to his students, did not materialize through formal institutional structures as is commonly found among followers of *Nahdlatul Ulama* or *Nahdlatul Wathan*. Nevertheless, on an individual basis, adherents of this *Tariqa* are widely dispersed throughout various regions in East Lombok. In the southeastern part of the region, one of the most influential figures associated with the *Naqshabandiyyah* order is Tuan Guru Mutawalli Jerowaru. He serves as a *mursyid* (spiritual guide) of the *Naqshabandiyyah* and is particularly respected among communities in the districts of Montong Gading, Terara, Keruak, and Jerowaru. In the 1970s, Tuan Guru Mutawalli frequently conducted *da'wah* (Islamic propagation) through the lens of *Tariqa*-based spirituality, especially in the Terara subdistrict (Amaq Salbiyah, Interview, December 19, 2023).

According to various sources, Tuan Guru Ali Batu Sakra was known to practice and teach *Naqshabandiyyah Mazhariyyah*. However, among his students, he is more widely recognized as a *mursyid* of *Haq-Naqshabandiyyah*. His disciples are found across both the southern and northern parts of East Lombok, including areas such as Lepak, Tanjung Luar, Sakra, Terara, Pringgabaya, Apitaik, and Pohgading. In addition to his preaching and religious instruction, he was also involved in the construction of mosques and the development of local religious infrastructure (Alfarisi et al.,

2018). Since the 1970s, one of the most widely practiced orders among members of the *Nahdlatul Wathan* organization has been the *Tariqa Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan* (Fahrurrozi, 2018). This *Tariqa* was compiled by TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid of Pancor, East Lombok (Wijaya, 2024). The *Tariqa* is recited collectively by *Nahdlatul Wathan* followers every Monday night. Officially established in 1964, it has continued to grow and spread among *Nahdlatul Wathan* communities (Fattah et al., 2017). TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid conceptualized Islamic practice as a continuum, wherein *shari'a* represents the formal expression, *Tariqa* the path of implementation, *haqiqa* the spiritual state, and *ma'rifa* the final objective—namely the intimate recognition of God. He metaphorically likened *shari'a* to a boat, *Tariqa* to the sea, and *haqiqa* to the pearl within. One cannot attain the pearl without embarking across the sea by boat (Dahri, 2010). Guided by this spiritual vision, he sought to establish the *Tariqa Nahdlatul Wathan* as a vehicle for integrating both *shari'a* and *tasawuf*, thereby facilitating the journey toward divine proximity. This aspiration was inspired by his recurrent spiritual experiences. Since 1964, he is said to have received indirect spiritual messages—often through his students—that encouraged him to institutionalize the *Tariqa*. Prior to its formal establishment, *Nahdlatul Wathan* members had long practiced *dhikr*, including the recitation of *Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan* and *Hizib Nahdlatul Banat*, but these practices had not yet been formally organized into a recognized *Tariqa*. The institutionalization of the *Tariqa Hizib NW* therefore served to complete and formalize the spiritual practices of *Nahdlatul Wathan* adherents (Irawan & Nurjannah, 2016).

As a highly esteemed religious leader among the Sasak people, TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid regarded the establishment of the *Tariqa* as a theological and cultural imperative. Oral accounts suggest that the idea to found the *Hizib NW* congregation stemmed from a mystical experience during his pilgrimage. While worshiping at the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, he was spiritually visited by Sayidina al-Khidr, who conveyed a greeting from Prophet Ibrahim. The message declared that *Nahdlatul Wathan* would attain perfection only upon the establishment of its own *Tariqa*. On the basis of this spiritual experience, the *Tariqa Hizib NW* was established in 1957. Following its formal institutionalization, the *Tariqa* quickly gained popularity not only among members of *Nahdlatul Wathan*, but also beyond its organizational boundaries. To this day, the practice of reciting the *Tariqa Hizib NW* every Monday night remains a deeply rooted ritual among its adherents (TGH Zulkarnain, Interview, December 30, 2023).

Tariqa Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan in Preserving Tradition and Diversity in Lombok

In the mid-nineteenth century, the *Tariqa* movement in Lombok embodied an ideological spirit of resistance against the dominion of the Karangasem Kingdom of Bali, which was centered in Mataram (Alfarisi et al., 2018). As Indonesia progressed toward independence and later entered the New Order era, the *Tariqa* movement, particularly in the rural areas of East Lombok, underwent a significant transformation. What was once a form of resistance evolved into a cultural movement rooted in Islamic values. The propagation of Islam through *Tariqa* practices adopted a peaceful and culturally integrative approach, consistent with the intrinsic nature of *tasawuf*-based movements. This transformation became especially apparent during the New Order period. Historical records indicate that there were no instances of communal conflict involving religious groups in Lombok during this time, which suggests that the *Tariqa* had succeeded in fostering a communal mentality that embraced religious and social diversity (TGH Zulkarnain, Interview, December 14, 2023).

The contribution of *Tariqa* to the development of education in Lombok is also noteworthy. Historically, this is reflected in the establishment of centers for religious and social instruction modeled after the exemplary lives of *Tariqa mursyid* (spiritual leaders). These centers functioned as holistic educational institutions and spiritual retreats, typically comprising the residences of the *shaykh* and his family, rooms designated for *dhikr* instruction, student dormitories, mosques, kitchens, guesthouses, and facilities for Islamic schooling (*madrasah*). The *shaykh* fulfilled multiple roles as imam, teacher, spiritual guide, and supervisor of student development (Faisol & Sa'i, 2005). Given the central role of *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) in the religious and social fabric of Lombok, a number of prominent figures from the post-independence generation established educational institutions that adopted the *halaqah* system inspired by those in Mecca and Medina. Alongside the favorable conditions of economic stability and evolving educational policies issued by

the government, several *Tuan Guru*—many of whom were also *mursyid* and alumni of prominent Islamic institutions—founded new *pesantren* that adopted classical Islamic educational models. The various methods employed by Sufi practitioners all share a common goal: increasing remembrance (*dhikr*) of God and performing virtuous deeds while avoiding both external and internal acts of moral transgression. Although the essence of *dhikr* is consistent across different Sufi orders, its methods of practice may differ. Consequently, *Tariqa* may be understood as a methodological path or spiritual discipline within *tasawuf*, with each order developing its own doctrines and practices over time (Mufid, 2006). These evolving traditions naturally foster a rich diversity of spiritual expressions, cultivated through a long process of devotion and struggle.

In principle, the number of legitimate *Tariqa* cannot be precisely determined, as the spiritual paths to God are as numerous as the souls who seek Him. The core teachings are often not explicitly codified. Some adherents focus on the path of *dhikr*, others on *muraqabah* (mindful awareness of God), tranquillity of the heart, or the fulfilment of all religious obligations such as prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and jihad. Others pursue the path of charitable giving, such as through *zakat* or financing acts of piety. There are also those who seek spiritual purification by abstaining from worldly temptations, including through *khalwat* (spiritual retreat), reducing sleep, and practicing moderation in food and drink. None of these spiritual pursuits can be undertaken effectively without strict adherence to the *shari'a* and the *sunnah* of the Prophet. The *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) organization plays a vital role in preserving the Islamic traditions that have developed within the *Nusantara*. These traditions have been significantly shaped by the thoughts and teachings of *ulama* who studied in the sacred cities of Mecca and Medina. The influence of these scholars continues to guide the intellectual and spiritual orientation of NU in Indonesia (Ismail, 2011; Rusli & Yanto, 2018).

The presence of *Tuan Guru* as religious educators significantly contributed to the intellectual and spiritual advancement of the Sasak community. A number of these *Tuan Guru* pursued religious studies in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Upon returning, they established places of learning. Those who did not found formal *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) often taught in mosques, small prayer halls (*musalla*), and even in their own residences or the homes of fellow scholars (*kiyai*) (Basarudin, 2019). In addition to teaching the *shari'a*, these *Tuan Guru* also transmitted *Tariqa* teachings to their communities across Lombok. Religious life and social interaction in rural areas generally proceeded harmoniously, characterized by a high level of tolerance. Significant conflict among followers of different religious organizations, especially among *Tariqa* practitioners, was rare. One scholarly interpretation suggests that this pattern of coexistence is influenced by the sociopolitical and cultural homogeneity within the Sasak community, as well as the absence of strong ideological divisions. This context has fostered a tendency among Sasak people to minimize intergroup differences and avoid sectarian tensions (Bartholomew, 2001).

The establishment of *Tariqa Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan* (NW) by TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid was, in part, a response to the complexity and strict requirements associated with other established *Tariqa*, such as *Qadiriyyah* and *Naqshabandiyyah*, which had already developed in Lombok. In contrast, *Tariqa Hizib NW* was designed to be more concise and practical. Despite its simplified structure, the *Tariqa* contains profound esoteric messages and meanings, and its practices are accessible to individuals across different age groups. Over time, *Tariqa Hizib NW* has evolved into a routine spiritual practice that is deeply embedded in the everyday social and cultural life of *Nahdlatul Wathan* adherents. It is traditionally performed in congregational settings every Monday night within NW-affiliated neighbourhoods. The doctrinal foundations of this *Tariqa* were firmly established by TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid, as documented in his work *Wasiat Renungan Masa* (Wills of the Meditation of Times), initially written in 1970 and later revised in 1981 (Wijaya et al., 2024, 2025). This textual affirmation underscores the deeply rooted presence of the *Hizib NW* congregation within the religious landscape of *Nahdlatul Wathan* communities (Ziadi, 2018b, 2018a).

As with other Sufi orders, becoming a member of *Tariqa Hizib NW* entails a set of prerequisites. These include obedience to the *mursyid*, commitment to practicing the *Tariqa* following the five daily prayers, willingness to contribute to the struggle and mission of *Nahdlatul Wathan*, and readiness to fulfil financial obligations through voluntary contributions. Formal acceptance into the *Tariqa* involves the process of *bai'at* (spiritual oath) and is legitimized through the issuance of a

diploma (*ijazah*) as a symbol of initiation. Historical records indicate that the authority to confer *bai'at* and issue such diplomas was vested in TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid himself, or delegated to his appointed representative, TGH M. Muhsin Maqbul (now deceased), who served as the official coordinator of *wirid* within *Nahdlatul Wathan* and was entrusted with qualifying and pledging new members (Sukarnawadi, 2015).

The institutionalisation of the *Tariqa* as a form of social capital for *Nahdlatul Wathan* in promoting pluralism must be viewed in the context of the nation's political transitions. Following the collapse of the Old Order and during the rise of the New Order regime, Indonesia experienced a period of political instability, particularly in the aftermath of the 1965 coup attempt by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). In response to these tumultuous conditions, TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid frequently encouraged members of *Nahdlatul Wathan* to engage in collective remembrance (*dhikr*) and recitation of *Hizib NW* as a form of spiritual protection against disaster and moral degradation (TGH Zainuddin, Interview, December 15, 2023). Over time, *Tariqa Hizib NW* became deeply integrated into the religious lives of its practitioners. The consistent performance of this spiritual practice every Monday evening reinforced the collective religious commitment of the NW community. The position of *Tariqa Hizib NW* within the broader religious landscape of Lombok is widely respected and remains unchallenged. Even in Hindu-majority areas of West Lombok and North Lombok Regency, it is not uncommon to hear the communal recitation of *Hizib NW* resonating through loudspeakers in Muslim villages adjacent to Hindu settlements. This illustrates the public visibility and cultural embeddedness of the *Tariqa* in promoting coexistence across religious boundaries.

During the New Order era, the *Tariqa Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan* (NW) became firmly integrated into the religious life of *Nahdlatul Wathan* followers. Each year, the process of receiving spiritual diplomas and pledging allegiance (*bai'at*) within the *Tariqa* was conducted regularly. Even after the passing of TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid in 1997, the existence and vitality of *Tariqa Hizib NW* did not decline. Its continuity stems from the foundational educational philosophy that shapes the orientation of the *Tariqa Hizib NW* community. This philosophical foundation encompasses several interrelated dimensions, including theological doctrines, socio-cultural functions, spiritual values, and a transformative dialectic. The *Tariqa* also operates through agents of thought and action, dynamic patterns of development, and the accumulation of spiritual and social capital. As a result, *Tariqa Hizib NW* has taken root deeply within the cultural and religious identity of NW adherents (Nahdi, 2013; Rasyad et al., 2021).

For TGKH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid, human beings, as stewards on earth, carry both theological and social responsibilities. To fulfil these responsibilities, each individual is expected to lead themselves and those within their moral sphere of influence. He expressed concern that his teachings might not be fully appreciated by the broader Sasak community, particularly given their challenging socio-cultural and economic circumstances. He recognized that many marginalized individuals do not realise their condition of oppression, and some even perceive it as a normal part of life. His commitment to founding *Tariqa Hizib NW* was therefore driven by a deeply humanistic concern—a genuine expression of compassion and solidarity toward the Sasak community. Through the *Tariqa*, he sought to strengthen the religious resilience of the community while fostering mutual respect across social differences (Dahri, 2010; Harnish, 2021).

As religious life became increasingly conducive under the New Order and continued into the Reformasi period, the number of *Tariqa* followers showed a steady and significant rise (Robinson, 2008; Ubaedillah, 2015). This development has been acknowledged by several *mursyid* who observed consistent growth in the number of adherents. However, they are generally reluctant to disclose quantitative estimates. The reasons for this hesitation are twofold: first, commitment to the *Tariqa* is based on personal choice and awareness, and practitioners are expected to uphold its practices sincerely even without formal registration; second, many *mursyid* avoid publicizing follower counts to prevent pride or self-promotion (*sum'ah*), which they view as contrary to spiritual humility.

Tasawuf akhlaqi or *tasawuf amali* refers to a form of Sufi practice that emphasizes strict adherence to the spiritual disciplines of the *Tariqa*, grounded in high reverence for the guidance of the *mursyid*. One well-known figure who exemplifies this approach is Tuan Guru Muhammad Shaleh Lopan.

According to several of his students, he was renowned for his piety, consistency in *dhikr*, and unwavering commitment to worship. He frequently delivered religious sermons in the Terara region, always traveling on foot to each gathering. His dedication earned him widespread respect, particularly for his efforts to instill spiritual discipline among his followers (Amaq Salbiyah, Interview, December 19, 2023).

The social capital embedded in the *Tariqa* tradition is reinforced by communal solidarity and direct obedience to spiritual leaders. This institutional structure has enabled the *Tariqa* to develop into a dynamic social movement with the capacity to generate a culture of high social cohesion. In East Lombok, *Tariqa* institutions have shaped not only religious rituals but also collective values and attitudes toward diversity. Over time, *Tariqa* practitioners have articulated a shared vision, mission, and orientation centered on piety. Their engagement has extended beyond spiritual concerns to include a sense of social responsibility. Thus, the *Tariqa* serves not only as a path to spiritual enlightenment in the hereafter but also as a meaningful framework for addressing real-world social issues within the community.

Therefore, it is important to learn from the historical development of the Tariqa of Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan in East Lombok and apply it to current decision-making and to shape societal perspectives. Examining how religious structures interact with evolving social and political contexts is crucial. The resilience of the congregations of Tariqa of Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan during the New Order era reflects its ability to adapt to social change. The emotional bond within the congregation's practices of the Tariqa of Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan, through shared spiritual leadership and rituals, builds trust and cohesion, a key concept for strengthening contemporary community organization (Khotimah & Sukron, 2023). Building a framework for cultural transmission is achieved through the internalization of spiritual values, maintained from generation to generation, with an emphasis on continuity (Fahmi et al., 2025).

The emphasis on sufism and morals demonstrates that religiosity is rooted in daily practices and ethics, not merely ritual formalism. The Nahdlatul Wathan Hizib Order plays a transformative role, transforming it from a mystical practice to a social movement with cultural impact that can foster piety, social sensitivity, and active problem-solving. From a historical perspective, it can inspire development initiatives based on the model of social cohesion of the Nahdlatul Wathan congregation through spiritual obedience. The growing spirit of humility and commitment exemplified by murshids and figures like Tuan Guru can foster an unregistered religious network that plays an impactful role in the social and cultural life of the community, balancing spiritual concerns with social sensitivity for the common good.

CONCLUSION

The concept of *Tariqa* within the framework of diversity, as understood through the Sufi tradition in Lombok and more broadly in Indonesia, offers an alternative paradigm for addressing the challenges that often lead to disharmony in a pluralistic society. The religious attitudes and behaviors demonstrated by *Tariqa* practitioners in the development of religious life in Lombok serve as a valuable model for fostering harmony within communities of diverse faiths. These practices represent a living embodiment of tolerance, drawn from the normative foundations of classical *tasawuf*, which have been carefully adapted to suit the cultural pluralism of Indonesian society.

Historically, the establishment and development of *Tariqa*-based diversity by practitioners in Lombok reflect a rearticulation of classical Sufi teachings, repackaged in ways that align with the ethos of peaceful coexistence. The presence of *Tariqa* in such a context contributes to the spiritual and cultural dynamics of society, emphasizing the importance of mutual respect, humility, and ethical conduct. The dynamic contextualization of diversity in local communities can therefore serve as a reference for broader social implementation—both at the communal and national levels—rooted in Indonesia's unique traditions and socio-cultural values, particularly those of the Lombok region. As such, the presence and practice of *Tariqa* in a diverse society is not merely a spiritual tradition, but

a lived reality that reflects the richness of religious life in the midst of cultural plurality. Moreover, the commitment to diversity cultivated through *Tariqa* teachings holds the potential to safeguard and strengthen the foundational principles of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, the 1945 Constitution, and the national philosophy of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity). Through religious ideologies grounded in universal values of goodness and truth, *Tariqa* practitioners contribute to a pluralistic discourse that affirms the legitimacy of multiple paths to truth without negating the value of others.

This research highlights the concept of Sufism in Diversity—as practiced by the community of the *tariqa* of Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan in Lombok—as a profound spiritual and cultural framework that fosters harmony in Indonesia's pluralistic society. The practices of the community of the *tariqa* of Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan offer a peaceful and inclusive model of religious life that embraces diversity without sacrificing spiritual depth. The respectful and well-crafted adaptation of classical Sufism teachings to local culture helps reduce tensions and misunderstandings among various religious groups. The Nahdlatul Wathan Hizib community in Lombok reflects a dynamic contextualization of spirituality that aligns with Indonesia's rich socio-cultural traditions. It serves as a concrete example of how Islamic mysticism can be aligned with local values, strengthening a shared identity rooted in *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity). The religious attitudes and practices of the community of the *tariqa* of Hizib Nahdlatul Wathan in Lombok are a valuable resource for scholars, policymakers, and interfaith leaders seeking models of coexistence. Their lived experiences offer practical insights into how spirituality can be a force for social cohesion and a cultural and civic asset that fosters peace, unity, and resilience in Indonesia's diverse mosaic of beliefs.

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