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# Rajo Alim Rajo Disambah, Rajo Zalim Rajo Disanggah: Religious and Cultural Capital for SDGs in Agam's Civil Disobedience Movement

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## Abstract

**Objective:** This study examines the role of religion and culture as the primary foundations of the Agam community's civil disobedience movement against Government Regulation No. 84 of 1999 on the expansion of Bukittinggi City. **Theoretical framework:** The study is grounded in the Islamic concepts of al-isyān al-madani (civil disobedience) and critical obedience, emphasising the protection of religion, communal property, and social identity, while aligning with SDG 16 on justice and strong institutions. **Literature review:** Existing studies on civil disobedience largely focus on political and legal dimensions, with limited attention to the integration of Islamic theology and local cultural values as sources of resistance and legal legitimacy. **Methods:** A qualitative case study employing an Islamic legal sociology approach was conducted through in-depth interviews with customary and religious leaders, supported by historical document analysis. **Results:** The findings reveal that resistance was sustained by the Minangkabau philosophy “rajo alim rajo disambah, rajo zalim rajo disanggah,” which combined religious and cultural legitimacy to oppose perceived injustice. **Implications:** The study highlights the need for more deliberative and culturally responsive law-making processes that recognise local authority structures to support sustainable governance and SDG achievement. **Novelty:** This research introduces the concept of theo-cultural civil disobedience, demonstrating how religious and cultural legitimacy produced statutory dormancy for 25 years and ultimately contributed to policy change through Law No. 53 of 2024.

**Keywords:** civil disobedience, cultural capital, maqashid syariah, sdgs, living law.

## INTRODUCTION

In the anatomy of the legal system, the effectiveness and validity of a state policy do not depend solely on its structural strength or formal legality, but rather on the level of sociological legitimacy and the legal culture that authentically exists in society [1]–[4]. Law does not exist in a vacuum; it operates on layers of norms, ethics, and traditional sensitivities that have been ingrained for centuries. If a state legal product is found to clash head-on with these values, resistance in the form of civil disobedience becomes a certainty as a corrective effort by citizens. Unlike revolutionary movements that tend to be destructive and radical, civil disobedience offers an alternative, gradual, and measured scheme of resistance to challenge

bureaucratic domination and the abuse of political power considered oppressive [5], [6]. This phenomenon reflects a civil maturity in which society is no longer a passive object of the Law, but rather an active subject with the moral right to evaluate every decree of power against higher standards of justice.

The manifestation of civil disobedience is a multi-layered socio-political dialectic, where there is a sharp intersection between positive legal mandates, profound moral considerations, and efforts to safeguard the community's cultural identity. Sociologically, this action is understood as a peaceful, open, and non-violent public protest activity against regulations deemed to violate a sense of collective justice [7]. The perpetrators acted with full awareness of all possible legal consequences, yet they chose this path to fight for a more just social order. More than simply a reaction to administrative ineffectiveness, this defiance was, in fact, a strategic instrument for a community in upholding the foundations of its collective values and social doctrines, which it believed to be the ultimate truth. Several interdisciplinary literatures have paid significant attention to this discourse, ranging from philosophical perspectives that question the limits of the obligation to obey, to historical perspectives that record the traces of human resistance, to political dimensions and socio-psychological analyses of mass behaviour [8]. As evidenced by various global events, the pattern of civil disobedience has been observed from the anti-colonial movement to various people's revolutions, firmly confirming that civil disobedience has clear moral limits, especially when faced with authorities deemed oppressive.

In Indonesia, the phenomenon of civil disobedience has been etched in the long and significant trajectory of history, often marking a turning point in the nation's civilisation. This historical reality can be traced back to the 1998 reform movement, which successfully overthrew the authoritarian New Order regime through the power of the masses who refused to submit to tyranny. Similar traces are also found in the dynamics of labour protests in the post-authoritarian era as a means of fighting for workers' rights in the face of capital and state hegemony. Several studies have also highlighted local resistance manifesting as dissent across various regions, such as the Kedung Ombo incident in the 1980s, which employed civil disobedience to oppose large-scale development projects that displaced people from their homes. Recent research continues to document similar patterns of community rejection of development policies deemed to ignore the rights of indigenous and local communities across various parts of the archipelago [9], [10].

This landscape of resistance found its most authentic and ideological expression in West Sumatra through the massive rejection by the people of Agam Regency of Government Regulation (GR) No. 84 of 1999, which changed the boundaries between Bukittinggi City and Agam Regency. Although the government technocratically designed this regulation under the pretext of economic acceleration and the efficiency of regional administration, the people of Agam read it as a real existential threat to the integrity of their sociocultural identity and to economic and political sovereignty at the local level. The resistance that erupted in Agam was not merely a momentary outburst of anger or narrow regional sentiment, but rather a structured movement that received full support from elements of the local government, the legislature, and even moral and religious institutions such as the Agam Village Heads Association and the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) of Agam Regency. This struggle even gave rise to a special resistance body that represented the village children in carrying out systematic administrative defiance and in conducting persistent legal litigation for more than a quarter of a century [11], [12].

The consistency of the Agam community's collective action ultimately yielded significant results with the enactment of Law Number 53 of 2024 concerning the City of Bukittinggi. In substance, this latest piece of legislation accommodates the community's aspirations and, *de facto*, ends the prolonged dominance and controversy

sparked by previous policies. This phenomenon provides strong empirical validation that laws that lose social and cultural support lose their moral authority, thereby naturally triggering acts of civil disobedience as a form of citizen correction against the state [13], [14]. The momentum of ratifying this new law marks a phase in which the collective voice of the public, dismissed for decades as a fad, finally compels state authorities to respond to public dissatisfaction with policies that better align with a sense of justice. This demonstrates that community unity in voicing morally grounded objections can drive fundamental structural change within the national legal system.

Beyond its social and political dimensions, the disobedience in Agam Regency is deeply rooted in Islamic doctrine, intertwined with local wisdom. In Islamic thought, obedience to the authority of a leader, or *ulil amri*, is not absolute, but rather closely tied to the principle of justice and an orientation toward the public good, or *al-maslahah al-ammah*. If a policy is deemed oppressive or manifestly detrimental to the welfare of the people, Islam legitimises resistance as part of the sacred obligation to enjoin good and forbid evil [15], [16]. This principle is strengthened by the consensus of the ulama, who emphasise that every government regulation must be oriented towards the interests of the people, so that if a regulation actually causes harm, then the community has the moral and religious right to reject it. In the local Minangkabau context, which adheres firmly to the *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (custom based on Sharia, Sharia based on the Quran) philosophy, policies that conflict with Islamic values and the benefit of society are a very valid reason for collective rejection. Therefore, resistance to territorial expansion is a manifestation of the defence of the values of religious justice held by the majority of the population.

While previous studies on this territorial expansion conflict have focused solely on technocratic analysis, conflict management, and administrative and governance issues, this study takes a broader, more fundamental perspective. These studies failed to address the dimensions of popular resistance, which are deeply rooted in religious ideology and local sociocultural value systems that underpin the disobedience [17]. The dynamics in Agam clearly demonstrate that disobedience is not merely a matter of bureaucratic disputes, but rather a way for the community to use religious and cultural instruments as capital to challenge policies deemed oppressive. According to the philosophy of *rajo alim rajo disambah, rajo zalim rajo disanggah*, this rejection arises naturally when state regulations clash with society's fundamental interests and traditional values.

This study aims to explore the driving factors and how Islamic values strengthen the legitimacy of this resistance through the concept of critical obedience. The primary focus of this study is to dissect the in-depth background, the real manifestations of this civil disobedience, and the significant influence of the justification of Islamic teachings in shaping a pattern of resistance that has been resilient for decades in West Sumatra. Thus, this study is expected to make theoretical contributions to understanding how cultural and religious capital is transformed into a political force capable of balancing the authority of the state, which tends to be hegemonic. Furthermore, this study bridges a critical gap by aligning this localised theo-cultural civil disobedience with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). It argues that, in a Muslim-majority society, achieving the SDGs requires an integrative approach in which global sustainability targets are anchored in local Islamic epistemologies, such as *Maqashid Syariah* (Objectives of Islamic Law). By articulating the novelty of theo-cultural civil disobedience, this paper elucidates its theoretical and practical implications for both Islamic Studies and the broader SDGs discourse.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The discourse on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has prompted scholars to revisit the ethical foundations underlying development strategies. Noting that the SDGs often reflect a secular orientation, recent academic literature published in international journals has increasingly integrated the SDGs with the framework of *Maqashid Syariah* to provide a balanced, value-based approach suitable for Muslim-majority contexts [18]. Studies validate that integrating *Maqashid Syariah* into the SDG framework enriches the moral, social, and spiritual dimensions of sustainable development, effectively addressing the limitations of purely quantitative and material SDG indicators [19]. The Islamic concept of welfare (*al-rifa'iyah*), for instance, encompasses a holistic view of social, ecological, and spiritual well-being that structurally complements the 2030 Agenda by aligning it with divine guidance [20].

The *Maqashid Syariah* consists of five essential dimensions of protection: religion (*hifz al-din*), life (*hifz al-nafs*), intellect (*hifz al-aql*), lineage/identity (*hifz al-nasl*), and wealth/property (*hifz al-mal*). Scholars emphasise in recent international publications that these dimensions serve as a meta-framework that not only complements but actively enforces the SDGs [21]. Specifically, *hifz al-din* provides the ethical imperative for peace, justice, and strong institutions (SDG 16). At the same time, *hifz al-mal* and *hifz al-nasl* are crucial for protecting communal assets and ensuring equitable, sustainable communities [22]. Furthermore, contemporary strategic frameworks map *hifz al-mal* and *hifz al-nafs* directly to the ethical governance pillars of SDG 16, demonstrating that Islamic values actively drive institutional transparency, accountability, and participatory decision-making. Religious moderation has also been identified as critical social capital for achieving SDG 16, promoting social harmony, protecting human rights, and fostering inclusive dialogue among diverse actors.

Research from prominent international Islamic socio-legal and economic journals indicates that the targets of SDG 16, which seek to establish peaceful, inclusive societies with access to justice and accountable institutions, are fundamentally analogous to the Islamic principles of *Salam* (peace), *'Adl* (justice), and *Ihsan* (benevolence). Islam mandates the establishment of strong institutions and equitable governance, recognising that true peace cannot exist without systemic justice. Political development within an Islamic context refers to the evolution of governance structures that integrate justice (*'Adl*), equity (*Qist*), and accountability (*Mas'uliyah*) as foundational principles [23]. When the state imposes regulations unilaterally without consulting local communities, it inherently contradicts SDG Target 16.7, which demands responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels [24].

In such scenarios, the Islamic doctrine of civil disobedience (*al-isyan al-madani*) provides theological legitimacy for communities to resist unjust laws in pursuit of social justice and accountable governance. Recent Islamic political and theological analyses published in international journals reinforce that peaceful civil disobedience, protests, and speaking truth to power are recognised and honourable traditions in Islam for combating systemic injustice, tyranny, and policies that lack moral legitimacy [25]. The civil disobedience movement is an attempt by citizens to pressure the government to review moral standards when formally existing channels are deemed unable to work, thereby shifting the law from a mere formal rule to a reflection of social justice. Therefore, this study views civil disobedience not as a disruption to peace, but as a culturally and religiously justified mechanism to recalibrate state policies toward the genuine realisation of SDG 16.

## METHODOLOGY

This research applies an Islamic sociology of law approach to dissect the dynamic interaction between formal legal norms, in this case, Government Regulation Number 84 of 1999, with sociological realities and collective reactions that manifest in society. Methodologically, this study employs a qualitative case study design, enabling an in-depth investigation of the civil disobedience process, conflict dynamics, and regulatory effectiveness. The research location focused on villages directly affected by the expansion policy in four sub-districts: Tilatang Kamang, Banuhampu, IV Angkek, and IV Koto, Agam Regency. However, the scope of observation also encompassed the Agam Regency and Bukittinggi City areas in general, given the disparity in reactions between the elite and the Agam community, as well as the West Sumatra Provincial Government's role as a key mediating authority. Data were collected through in-depth, face-to-face interviews with key informants, using open-ended, unstructured questions. Informants were selected purposively, prioritising key actors in the resistance, including traditional elites (*niniak mamak*), religious leaders (*alim ulama*), activists, leaders of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) for the relevant period, and former regional heads (Regents and Mayors). In addition to interviews, researchers conducted extensive document analysis of relevant public and private documents, including mass media archives, official government reports, meeting minutes, and private correspondence, spanning the formulation stage to the rebellion. The analysis followed an interactive, ongoing model encompassing data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Validation was confirmed through source triangulation, matching narratives from various factions with historical literature to guarantee the dependability of the findings.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Historical Roots and Government Dialectics in Regional Expansion Plans

The tension over the change in the territorial boundary between Bukittinggi and Agam is a long epic that culminated in President BJ Habibie's enactment of Government Regulation (PP) No. 84 of 1999. This policy did not emerge instantly, but instead grew out of two contrasting political civilisations: the New Order era, with its centralist-authoritarian character, and the Reformation era, which prioritised openness and decentralisation. This shift in the political climate gave its own colour to the dynamics of local resistance, where the administrative policy space became a battleground full of turmoil.

The initiative to expand the administrative area of Bukittinggi City began with Mayor Oemar Gafar's intention on August 8, 1983. Through an official letter to the Governor of West Sumatra, Bukittinggi sought to gain legitimacy to expand north, east, and south, traditionally within the sovereign territory of Agam Regency. The request was driven by a multitude of urgent factors, primarily the severe spatial limitations of Bukittinggi's land area, which spanned approximately 25.24 km<sup>2</sup> and was heavily constrained by the Sianok Canyon and undulating terrain. Compounding this issue was the mounting demographic pressure, which triggered an urgent need for land development. Furthermore, land-use stagnation posed a significant challenge, as around 50% of the city's area remained a productive agricultural zone (rice fields). This reality made land conversion exceptionally difficult without an in-depth study, leading to an inevitably disproportionate distribution of development. Ultimately, the natural capacity and the rapid pace of urban modernity could no longer be accommodated by the availability of suitable land, making it administratively necessary to transfer the burden of development outside the city's jurisdiction [26].

Responding to these administrative pressures, Governor Syaekani issued a directive on January 3, 1985, stipulating that the expansion process must be pursued through formal procedures, including a comprehensive study encompassing economic projections and a persuasive approach to the Agam Regency authorities. The Regent of Agam, M. Nur Syafi'i, subsequently issued a critical response on January 28, 1985, explicitly outlining several indispensable principles of territorial protection. He emphasised that the addition of mandatory areas must focus strictly on areas technically capable of accommodating urban functions. He further insisted on maintaining absolute territorial integrity, warning that the expansion must not trigger the fragmentation of the Agam region or create isolated enclaves. The utilisation of natural geographic boundaries as new jurisdictional demarcations was also strongly demanded. Moreover, the need to maintain administrative stability was highlighted, ensuring that expansion was carried out within large regional groups to preserve bureaucratic integrity and minimise the potential for future social conflict [27].

Adhering to these principles, the Agam Regency authorities firmly rejected the initial scenarios proposed by Bukittinggi. This rejection was deeply rooted in concerns that the requested area was located on the slopes of Mount Singgalang and Mount Marapi, making it technically challenging to develop as an urban space. Additionally, there was profound anxiety that the potential destruction of the village administration system would severely isolate the eastern part of Agam, turning it into a remote area. As a moderate solution, the Agam Regional Government offered a scheme that included select fragments of the Banuhampu Sungai Puar, IV Angkat Candung, Tilatang Kamang, and IV Koto Districts. This alternative projection would imply an increase in the number of village entities in Bukittinggi, from 24 to 84 units, a massive expansion of the city area from 25.25 km<sup>2</sup> to 98.64 km<sup>2</sup>, and a population increase of 116,469 people.

The dynamics of regional spatial planning entered a new phase on July 10, 1985, when the Mayor of Bukittinggi, Burhanuddin, formulated a comprehensive text regarding the city's Development vision. The argument for this expansion was rooted heavily in the social dimension, aiming to firmly position Bukittinggi as the epicentre of public services, residential areas, and educational centres. It also strategically considered the economic dimension by strengthening the city's role as a major hub for trade, tourism, and the service sector. Lastly, the geophysical dimension aimed at overcoming land limitations in the hilly areas of the old city, which were no longer deemed representative of future Development. In the document, the mayor proposed four expansion options with ambitious projected coverage areas ranging from 83.28 km<sup>2</sup> to 198.69 km<sup>2</sup>.

The response from Agam Regency arrived a year later, on October 14, 1986, in the form of DPRD Decree No. 02/SP/DPRD/Ag-1986. The legislative body gave the green light in principle, but still fenced the process with exceedingly strict corridors. They demanded that the expansion be oriented towards urban functions, without tearing apart the integrity of the Agam region, and that it utilise natural demarcations, while critically ensuring the continuity of the bureaucratic order and social cohesion of the community. The Agam DPRD specifically approved the maximum limit, which affected 43 villages within the scope of four main sub-districts (IV Koto, Banuhampu Sungai Puar, IV Angkat Candung, and Tilatang Kamang).

The intervention of the central government began to be seen on September 4, 1987, with a letter from the Minister of Home Affairs, Soepardjo, approving the addition of 66 villages to the jurisdiction of Bukittinggi based on field verification results. However, the implementation of this policy experienced chronic stagnation, prompting Governor Hasan Basri Durin to act decisively in September 1988 to break the deadlock immediately. Only in 1995 did communication between the two regional leaders intensify again, focusing on preserving Nagari's existence and reconciling

assets. A strategic agreement on November 17, 1995, finally stipulated the transfer of 15 intact *nagari*. The Agam legislature reinforced this in late 1995, which agreed to hand over 120.06 km<sup>2</sup> of land, while Bukittinggi responded with a restructuring plan into six new sub-districts to accommodate a population surge of 174,559.

However, the difficult road to implementation was still hampered by deeply unresolved material disputes. On November 15, 1997, the Regent of Agam sent a stern warning note to the Governor regarding the failure to resolve several crucial issues. The regional government demanded a clear profit-sharing formula for the use of water resources from the Tanang River, an equitable distribution of income from the Nagari Union Market, and fair rental compensation for the former village head's rest house assets used by the city.

After a torturous 16-year negotiation phase, the formal legal phase was finally achieved. On October 7, 1999, President BJ Habibie officially signed Government Regulation (PP) Number 84 of 1999. Legally, this regulation authorised the administrative annexation of part of the Agam region into the jurisdiction of Bukittinggi City. Table 1 below details the administrative regions integrated into the new scheme.

**Table 1. Details of Agam Regency Territories Annexed via GR No. 84 of 1999**

District Name	Number of Affected Villages	Specific Areas/Villages Affected
Banuhampu Sungai Pua	12	Kubang Putih Ateh, Kubang Putih Bawah, Taluak IV Suku, Ladang Laweh I, Ladang Laweh II, Padang Lua, Sungai Tanang, Cingkariang I, Cingkariang II, Pakan Sinayan Tengah, Pakan Sinayan Timur, Pakan Sinayan Barat
IV Koto	6	Guguak Tinggi, Guguak Randah, Koto Gadang, Subarang Tigo Jariang, Sianok, Jambak
Tilatang Kamang	8	Sidang Induriang, Pandan Basasak Kapau, Pasia Kapau, Tigo Kampuang, Kampuang Tujuh, Ranggo Malai, Aro Kandikia, Pulai Sungai Talang
IV Angkek Candung	8	Batu Taba, Biaro, Limo Balai, Surau Kamba, Balai Baru, Parik Putuih, Ampang Gadang, Pasia

This legislation ended the long wait for the administrative process initiated in 1983. However, from the perspective of public policy and legislation, the unilateral, non-participatory nature of this lengthy, top-down process, often employing an elite model, laid the groundwork for severe violations of the principles of responsive governance. Consequently, this administrative manoeuvring completely alienated the indigenous community and fundamentally contradicted SDG Target 16.7, which strictly mandates responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels.

### **The Clash of Central Authority and Regional Disobedience**

An executive instrument immediately strengthened the legal existence of GR No. 84/99, namely the Instruction of the Minister of Home Affairs Number 33 Year 1999, issued on November 20, 1999. The central mandate instructed the Mayor of Bukittinggi and the Regent of Agam to immediately synchronise implementation. At the same time, the technical details of the operation were delegated to the Governor of West Sumatra. However, before these technical instructions were adequate in the field, resistance from the regional legislative body escalated into violent protests. On October 28, 1999, the Agam Regency DPRD took radical steps to revoke the policy by issuing Decree No. 07/SK.DPRD/AG-1999, which officially revoked the 1995

agreement and declared its total, unwavering rejection of the implementation of Government Regulation No. 84 Year 1999.

Responding to this defiance, Minister of Home Affairs Surjadi Soedirdja on March 7, 2000, issued a stern warning, stating that Agam's legislative manoeuvres could not be legally justified and demanding regional consistency with previously made commitments. Instead of abating, political tensions reached their absolute peak on November 23, 2001, when the Regent of Agam formally issued a note of rejection through official letter No. 100/4549/Pem-XI/2001. The Agam Regency Government argued vigorously that the regulation was substantially flawed because it ignored the principle of distributive justice, as its implementation benefited only Bukittinggi while causing multidimensional losses to Agam [28], [29].

The arguments for rejection put forward by the Agam Regency authorities were grounded in the core pillars of governance. Primarily, they highlighted a severe legal imbalance, pointing out the direct contradiction between Government Regulation No. 84 Year 1999—which relied entirely on the outdated, centralistic regulation of Law No. 5 Year 1974—and Law No. 22 Year 1999 concerning Regional Autonomy, which strictly mandates collaborative agreement between the executive and legislative branches in regional changes. Furthermore, the authorities warned of massive economic losses, arguing that the transfer of the area would result in the loss of centres of economic productivity that had long served as the backbone of Agam's PAD (Regional Gross Domestic Product).

This administrative expansion was also predicted to pose a profound threat to local autonomy, triggering the rapid erosion of financial and human resources and completely disrupting the stability of the village government system previously regulated by Agam Regional Regulation No. 31 of 2001. Finally, the policy was considered a counterproductive administrative annexation that would cause deep sociocultural disharmony, damaging the community's social integration and clashing violently with local aspirations, even though functional relationships—such as union markets and water management—had long been peacefully established. This phenomenon, in which the local bureaucracy ultimately severed its hierarchical loyalty to the central government in favour of aligning with the community's cultural demands, represents a form of structural rebellion. By ignoring a centralist decree that threatened the social order, the local government upheld the Islamic ethical principle of *mas'uliyah* (accountability and responsibility) to protect its citizens from administrative tyranny and to ensure institutional integrity [30], [31].

As a way out, the Regent of Agam proposed a paradigm shift from regional expansion to inter-regional collaboration of a mutually symbiotic nature, while urging the suspension of the PP. However, Bukittinggi continued to make administrative intervention efforts through Mayoral Decree No. 188-45-27-2002 in February 2002, which attempted to confirm several village heads in the disputed area. This policy was immediately annulled by the Governor of West Sumatra, Zainal Bakar, on April 6, 2002. The Governor emphasised that the change in jurisdictional boundaries was not legally valid without an official Handover Report from Agam Regency to Bukittinggi City, as required by Article 11 of Government Regulation No. 84 Year 99.

Obstacles to the realisation of GR No. 84 Year 99 not only arose from bureaucratic corridors, but had firmly taken root in society long before the regulation was passed. The seeds of resistance were first sown by the IV Candung Adoptive Family Association (IKAT) on January 17, 1987. Although they accepted integration with Bukittinggi in principle, IKAT imposed an absolute condition: that the expansion respect regional sovereignty without tearing apart the structure of the *nagari* as a complete customary law community. They demanded that the entire Ampek Angkek

Kenagarian be absorbed to avoid the creation of enclaves that would fatally undermine social cohesion.

A similar but much stronger response came from the Seven Nagari Traditional Councils in Ampek Angkek. They strongly protested the exclusion of three *nagari* (Panampuang, Lambah, and Balai Gurah) from the new Bukittinggi map. They believed these seven *nagari* constituted an inseparable customary entity. This meant that administrative separation would only disrupt the synchronisation between governance and the established customary legal system. They firmly stated that they would rather remain under the jurisdiction of Agam Regency than experience identity fragmentation.

A wave of profound objections was also personally voiced by national figure Emil Salim, who represented the concerns of Koto Gadang residents through a comprehensive note of objection to the central government. He articulated deep concerns regarding sociological transformation, fearing a shift in village lifestyle patterns from a community-based nature (*Gemeinschaft*) to an urban, individualistic character (*Gesellschaft*). He further warned of cultural threats, including changes in the status of local Leadership and the invasion of physical Development, which would damage cultural stability and gravely threaten the existence of agricultural land belonging to local people [32].

Emil Salim sharply criticised the lack of deliberation, pointing out that the merger decision was made unilaterally without a consensus mechanism or consultation with the *Niniak Mamak* and other traditional leaders. He also highlighted intense concerns over the legality of Customary Land, specifically the fear that the status of communal land would be converted to government property under the pretext of public interest. Lastly, he raised alarms regarding natural conservation, warning of the severe threat of ecological environmental damage in the Sianok Canyon area due to the rapid expansion of the city's jurisdiction.

In line with this, the Koto Gadang Village Customary Council (KAN) also sent a note of disapproval in September 1996. They were immensely concerned about the loss of Koto Gadang's historical identity as the birthplace of outstanding national figures, as well as the destruction of the village etiquette diligently maintained by the Koto Gadang Foundation.

In response to this impasse, the Integrated Team formed by the Governor of West Sumatra in March 2002 attempted to offer a compromise. They claimed that Government Regulation No. 84 of 1999 was legally valid and free of legal defects, and that its implementation was a logical consequence of the spirit of decentralisation. They offered guarantees that the division of administrative regions would not interfere with the prevailing customary order and proposed a revenue-sharing mechanism (such as the Tanang River water levy) to compensate for the decline in Agam's regional revenue (PAD). However, they distorted the reality of rejection by viewing it as merely an elite concern rather than a genuine reflection of grassroots aspirations.

The Integrated Team's arguments failed to quell the unrest. The Regent of Agam, on March 14, 2002, again urged the Governor to suspend the implementation of the regulation due to massive opposition from residents directly affected. This immense pressure ultimately resulted in an official postponement letter from the Governor on March 17, 2002. This series of events, from the postponement of implementation to the cancellation of the Mayor of Bukittinggi's policy, beautifully underscores the complexity of the conflict, which involves legal, economic, and sociocultural factors deeply rooted in Minangkabau tradition and in fundamental aspects of accountable governance, and which echoes the targets of SDG 16.6.

## Dynamics of Disobedience and Legitimacy of GR No 84, Year 1999

The historical track record of Government Regulation (GR) No. 84 Year 99, which regulates the expansion of the region between Bukittinggi and Agam Regency, reflects a long, tense, and high-risk collective action struggle. The initiation of this regulation dates back to 1983, but after a gruelling 16-year bureaucratic process, it was ratified, only to stagnate for a quarter of a Century without ever being operationalised. The entire series of events, from the preparation period to the end of this controversy, took approximately 41 years. The final point of the total failure of GR 84 Year 1999 was marked by the issuance of Law No. 53 Year 2024, which officially restored the territorial demarcation to its original condition.

The people of Agam Regency gracefully practised a persistent form of systemic noncompliance known in legal studies as statutory dormancy. This was done highly effectively without triggering physical destruction, yet it completely paralysed the binding power of the government regulations. This phenomenon demonstrates the powerful presence of a latent, authentic, and autonomous force within the societal structure that can fundamentally influence the effectiveness of implementing state laws [33]. To better map how these cultural and religious factors actively eroded the state's positivist paradigm, Table 2 identifies the moral grounds used by the Agam community.

**Table 2. Moral Reasons and the Delegitimisation Process of GR No. 84 Year 1999 Triggered by Religious and Cultural Factors**

Dimensions of Resistance	Cultural & Moral Justification in Agam	Alignment with SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, Strong Institutions)
Philosophical and Legal Authority	Central government policies lack legitimacy if they bypass participatory consensus ( <i>mufakat</i> ). Regulation is deemed morally illegitimate by the public.	SDG 16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.
Protection of Identity & Kinship	Separation of territories threatens the historical integrity of the <i>nagari</i> structure, kinship ties, and inheritance systems unique to the Minangkabau ethnicity.	SDG 16.b: Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development that respect local community rights.
Safeguarding Resources & Property	Administrative changes risk the commercialisation of <i>tanah ulayat</i> (customary communal lands), threatening economic justice and resource sovereignty.	SDG 16.4: Combat all forms of organised exploitation and ensure the protection of communal assets from arbitrary state annexation.

In the collective view of Agam residents, GR 84 Year 1999 is not merely an administrative order that has positive legal certainty. The regulation is interpreted as a concrete threat capable of destroying the foundations of tradition, historical memory, social structure, and the dignity of their group. This policy is seen as a glaring form of the central government's withdrawal from democratic space amid the reform movement [34]. Therefore, civil disobedience becomes a vital instrument for addressing the democratic deficit caused by unilateral interference by those in authority. The public considers the regulation morally illegitimate, even though their actions are not intended to defy the supremacy of national Law as a whole, because Nagari, for the Minangkabau people, plays an irreplaceable role in regional autonomy, kinship, inheritance, and property relations, as well as in the identification of their ethnicity [35].

Consolidation efforts were carried out through a series of meetings from August to September 1999 involving representatives from *tigo tungku sajarangan (niniak mamak, alim ulama, and cadiak pandai)*, as well as the younger generation from six sub-districts. The forum concluded that the East Agam (Agam Tuo) region constitutes a single cultural entity passed down through generations. If forced integration with Bukittinggi is carried out, this cultural unity will violently fragment, ultimately undermining the established order of life. Furthermore, this policy is seen as a top-down directive that blatantly ignores grassroots aspirations. Community leaders such as Muchtar Naim even highlighted the severe legal flaws in this regulation, given that it was drafted during President Habibie's retirement and signed amidst a hasty political transition. As an alternative to rejecting Bukittinggi's expansion, the idea of dividing Agam Regency into two independent entities, West Agam and East Agam (Agam Tuo), emerged.

This movement was then formalised with the formation of the Forum Koordinasi Anak Nagari Agam Tuo on September 16, 1999, as a frontline organisation opposing the expansion of this jurisdiction. Following the ratification of the GR, this institution urged the central government to review the regulation, citing two fundamental arguments. Primarily, President Habibie's outgoing status at the time of the GR's signing was considered a product of the old regime that was not pro-people. Additionally, the GR's substance conflicted heavily with the spirit of reform, proving highly detrimental to the region both morally and materially. This rejection also received support from the former Mayor of Bukittinggi, Akmal, SH, who predicted new complications for residents in the remaining areas not included in the expansion zone.

Although the central government had issued Minister of Home Affairs Instruction No. 33 of 1999 as technical guidelines for implementation, the collective agreement between the community, the legislature, and the executive in Agam remained firm in their stance to reject the expansion. Implicitly, residents believed the state had violated the social contract by failing to respect their rights to participate and their interests. This act of defiance, from a Habermasian perspective, constitutes a contestation in the public sphere that allows marginalised groups to speak out when formal channels no longer accommodate their needs.

This means that the conflict triggered by Government Regulation No. 84 of 1999 is a manifestation of the violent clash between two distinct legal epistemologies. On the one hand, the central government rigidly upholds the legal positivist paradigm, in which Law is viewed as a set of universal rules valid solely because competent authorities establish them. From this perspective, changes to territorial boundaries are a technocratic administrative action aimed at improving development efficiency [36]. However, the Agam community is grounded in the sociology of Law, which views Law as a socially constructed institution that must align with living law. For the Minangkabau people, Law does not "fall from the sky" unilaterally; instead, it must go through a careful process of consensus. When the state imposes regulations without regard for this harmony, the Law loses its moral authority. Collective disobedience in Agam demonstrates that sociological validity is often more crucial to the success of Law than merely formal-judicial validity.

Shortly after President Habibie signed GR No. 84 Year 1999 on October 7, 1999, the wave of rejection at the local level escalated significantly. Although provincial authorities, such as the 1st Assistant of the West Sumatra Regional Secretariat, claimed that the expansion of Bukittinggi served West Sumatra's broader strategic interests, legislative elements in Agam Regency responded swiftly by taking protective measures. At a mid-October 1999 Agam Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) commission meeting, the commission officially agreed to postpone the implementation of the policy while rejecting the release of their regional assets to

the city. The legislature found the central government's move far too hasty, failing to consider the profound sociocultural and economic implications for Agam. This expansion was seen as a form of spatial injustice that only took productive areas (*bungo kadai*) and left the peripheral areas (*si pareh batu*), which would automatically cripple the stability of Regional Original Income (PAD).

The peak of legislative-administrative resistance was manifested in Agam DPRD Decree No. 07/SK.DPRD/AG-1999, which annulled all past agreements and outright opposed the implementation of Government Regulation No. 84 of 1999. The basis for this defiance was incredibly firm. It sought to prevent massive Bureaucratic Paralysis due to the potential degradation of PAD, which threatened the service functions of regional governments. It also aimed to stop the Disruption of Customary Structures, as this policy violated the core principle of "*adat salingka nagari*," which guarantees local sovereignty within each customary legal area. The legislature highlighted the severe risk of Social Fragmentation, where divisions in the Nagari region were forced into different administrative jurisdictions [37]. This inevitably led to Institutional Delegitimization, evidenced by the outright rejection by customary authority institutions such as KAN and LKAM of a merger with Bukittinggi. Legal Hierarchy issues were also loudly raised, affirming that the GR conflicted with Law No. 22 of 1999, which held a higher position in the legislative hierarchy. Finally, the unresolved Asset Dispute regarding the distribution of vital resources, including the Tanang River and the Serikat Market, remained a critical sticking point.

This legislative step was immediately supported by civil power through the BK-ANAT coordination meeting, which was then transformed into Limbago Agam Tuo as a representative forum for the aspirations of the village children to fight for the integrity of Agam Tuo for future generations. Seen in this context, the escalation of rejection following the enactment of Government Regulation No. 84 of 1999 was also triggered by what is known as moral shock. The sudden enactment of the GR by President Habibie at the end of his term created deep, lingering public anger. The public felt utterly betrayed by a process deemed "rootless" and "baseless." The fear of losing identity, as expressed by the KAN Koto Gadang, became a powerful driving force for independent advocacy. This action was not merely an administrative protest, but rather an empowerment mechanism to reclaim identity sovereignty from central hegemony. Their staggering success in maintaining consistency for 25 years proves that when a policy is deemed insulting to a community's dignity, resistance will forcefully continue until substantive justice is achieved.

In the anatomy of legal sociology, the space of compliance and disobedience is two interconnected and inseparable dimensions. They are like two sides of a knife that determine the sharpness of justice in a country. When a citizen must obey and when he is permitted to disobey is a crucial discourse in the civil disobedience movement. The fundamental basis of every act of disobedience is not anarchism, but rather a morality that stems from a deep inner conviction that there is a moral authority that is far higher than positive Law or state policy.

The substance of this moral foundation is the individual and collective conscience that demands the upholding of substantive truth and true justice. In this context, the need to pursue justice becomes a moral imperative that trumps legal obligations, even if this requires society to contradict formally applicable Law. For the Agam community, when GR No. 84 of 1999 is perceived as a legal instrument that violates this sense of truth, disobedience becomes the only way to maintain the integrity of their conscience and human dignity in the face of power perceived as deviating from the path of justice. This aligns perfectly with what Robert T. Hall argued, that any act of civil disobedience must not arise from a lack of values; it must have a solid moral foundation (moral grounds of disobedience). This moral component serves as a sociological and philosophical foundation, providing society with the ethical

authority to criticise, challenge, and even reject the implementation of positive laws deemed substantially flawed.

Hall identified pillars that provide moral legitimacy for such disobedience, which operate simultaneously in the context of rejecting Government Regulation No. 84 of 1999. From the perspective of natural Law, the Agam people fervently believe in the existence of eternal natural rights to territory and identity that any administrative regulation cannot override. Through the lens of utilitarianism, this territorial expansion policy is seen as failing to provide benefits for the majority of Agam residents, instead bringing significant economic harm [38]. Crucially, religious belief is the most determinative pillar, in which the command to uphold justice and oppose injustice is considered a theological mandate that beautifully transcends obedience to the state. Furthermore, humanistic idealism emphasises that the Law must humanise the villagers, not make them mere objects of power interests. The synergy of these moral reasons transformed the rebellion in Agam into a movement that is not only legally sanctioned but also ethically sacred.

### Threats to Cultural Dignity and Integrity

The roots of this rebellion stem from a fundamental dimension focused on protecting the sovereignty of customary dignity. The total neglect of the role of the *niniak mamak* in the policy deliberation process is deeply seen as a serious threat to the Minangkabau social order. For traditional leaders, policies born of insufficient deliberation are considered baseless decisions, likened accurately to the proverb "*maagihan pisang lah bakubak*" (giving something without proper communication etiquette).

In Minangkabau political philosophy, the legitimacy of power should not be authoritarian from the centre down (*manitiak dari ateh*), but rather grow organically from the aspirations of the grassroots (*mambusek dari bumi*). This blatant disregard for deliberative principles is considered an affront to the dignity of traditional leaders and communities with egalitarian traditions [39]. Furthermore, this policy is seen as violating the principle of collective justice, also known as "*mamijak batuang sabalah*" (stepping on a split bamboo unevenly), because the regulation favours Bukittinggi's expansionist interests while imposing losses on the East Agam community.

The crucial issue that subsequently triggers resistance is the immense threat to the integrity of customary law communities as a whole. The implementation of GR 84 Year 99 was deeply feared to destroy the historical foundations and social order that had long been the pillars of civilisation in the region. The change in status of a *nagari* (village) to a *kelurahan* (urban village), mandated by the regional autonomy law at the time, was seen as a devastating attempt to administratively "tear apart" the Minangkabau social system.

Specifically, this policy triggered fragmentation in villages that traditionally formed an inseparable whole, such as the Tilatang Sapuluah Suku area. The administrative division that separated Nagari Gadut into Bukittinggi, while Koto Tengah and Koto Rintang remained in Agam, was considered to severely undermine the collective right to control customary land and village resources. Customary leaders passionately asserted their unity based on the principle of "*diasak layua, dibubuik mati*," meaning customary provisions and territorial bonds cannot be changed by force. A similar case occurred in the Balai Gurah Gadang area and IV Angkek Candung, where four of the seven *nagari* with a single historical origin and customary system were separated jurisdictionally. Residents remained resolute in maintaining their territorial unity within the Agam Regency.

The conclusion from this dynamic is that planning for the region's expansion could be catastrophic, destroying the cultural and kinship ecosystem that is inherent to the

Nagari's identity. The attempt to enforce this regulation has been satirically likened to separating the functions of shirts and trousers into distinct areas. This incident eloquently demonstrates a massive clash of paradigms between the government, which views Law as a universal, positivistic rule, and the Agam community, which interprets Law as a living social institution. This inability of state law to align with societal norms has given rise to ongoing disharmony and collective rebellion [40].

Another fundamental issue that catalysed resistance was the Nagari institution's intense fear of losing cultural identity. For the Minangkabau community, the *nagari* was not merely an administrative unit, but a microcosmic manifestation of the macrocosmic order, reflecting the perfection of community life. Unfortunately, this noble aspiration was severely distorted during the New Order era through the hegemony of Law No. 5 of 1979, which standardised villages and stifled Minangkabau autonomy.

The transition to the Reformation era brought brilliant new hope through Law No. 22 Year 1999 concerning Regional Autonomy, which was responded to progressively by West Sumatra Province with Regional Regulation No. 9 Year 2000, and concretised by Agam Regency with Regional Regulation No. 31 Year 2001, which gloriously restored the existence of 73 *nagari* (village units). These local regulations were considered the "soul" for preserving traditional life systems. Therefore, for the Agam community, the elimination of *nagari* sovereignty automatically meant the tragic loss of popular sovereignty, considering that *nagari* were the primary forum for their political and social expression.

If Bukittinggi City forces territorial expansion, the most feared legal consequence is the transformation of the *nagari*'s status into a *kelurahan*. In Minangkabau customary law, the term "kelurahan" is a foreign entity lacking sociological roots. This change in status also carries profound implications for the land ownership regime. Under the customary system, land transfers are subject to strict, communal mechanisms. At the same time, integration into the city is feared to facilitate the conversion of customary land into private or state property, thus threatening the agrarian existence of the *nagari* and undermining economic justice.

Furthermore, the threat of identity fragmentation also touches on vital aspects of the harmony system (Budi Caniago and Koto Piliang), which are the pillars of traditional Leadership. The majority of the Agam community, who adhere to the egalitarian Budi Caniago pattern, are worried about a severe clash of authority if they are merged into the Bukittinggi structure. From the perspective of the indigenous Bukittinggi community (the Kurai Tribe), the massive wave of administrative migration from the Agam region, which is expected to be up to 200% higher, is predicted to undermine the Kurai's dominance and original identity. This fear of cultural anomalies spectacularly strengthens the community's position to continue rejecting the uniformity of jurisdiction, thereby maintaining their dignity and historical Authenticity.

### **Islam as a Capital of Disobedience**

The authority and socio-political legitimacy of the Minangkabau people, particularly in Agam Regency, are always united in a beautiful knot of tradition and Sharia, which have been harmoniously and eternally intertwined in every breath of communal life. From the perspective of the sociology of Islamic Law, when unilateral state policies violently violate the foundations of these values, the community has a remarkably strong justification for collective resistance and defiance. This defiance is not merely narrowly interpreted as fulfilling moral obligations within the customary order. Still, it is deeply integrated with the doctrine of Sharia, which has strong theological roots in the doctrine of critical obedience [41].

The Minangkabau people fully understand that deliberation and consensus are positioned at the highest level above all else. Philosophically, consensus is even likened to a "king" who must be obeyed above any formal authority, so that ignoring consensus is considered a heinous form of injustice that must be totally refuted. This is eloquently emphasised in the expression:

*Kamanakan barajo kamamak* (The nephew obeys his uncle),

*Mamak barajo ka pangulu* (Uncle obeys the headmaster),

*Pangulu barajo ka mufakaik* (The headmaster obeys the consensus),

*Mufakaik barajo ka nan bana* (Consensus is obeying what is right),

*Nan bana badiri sendirinyo* (The absolute truth stands on its own).

This fundamentally reinforces the principle that every policy discourse, action, or collective deed within the Minangkabau social ecosystem must be subject to a strict consensus mechanism. In local Leadership philosophy, the good or bad of a decision is not determined by unilateral authority, but must be tested strictly through the dialectic of deliberation, as the saying goes: "*elok diambiak jo etongan, buruak dibuang jo mufakaik*" (the good is taken through deliberation, the bad is discarded through agreement). In the context of the implementation of Government Regulation No. 84 of 1999, the government's fatal failure in constructing policy stems from its blind neglect and structural inability to understand this cultural mechanism. The absence of a deliberative space that respects the sovereignty of consensus is ultimately the primary trigger for the emergence of civil disobedience movements as a form of restoring the injured dignity of customs and social order.

The active involvement of religious institutions, especially the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), from the regional to the village level, on the other hand, boldly confirms that the resistance of the Agam community goes far beyond mere socio-political issues. This phenomenon represents a potent form of ideological resistance that tightly integrates religious values with local wisdom. The fundamental concerns of religious and traditional leaders stem from the potential degradation of the order, grounded in the philosophy of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK). The penetration of the urban village system is widely predicted to marginalise the role of religion and tradition in policy-making, given that the city structure has a governance system entirely different from the *nagari* ecosystem, which places religion at the centre of public authority. As eloquently conveyed by the Chairman of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) in Agam Regency:

*"Tapi apo nan manjadi masalah disitu adolah duduak tagak awak indak jaleh di dalam tu, ka jadi apo awak disitu, apo sajo hak hak nan awak dapek, indak ado pembahasan arah kasitu doh. Mudaraik se nan kadapek kalau indak jaleh duduak tagak tu jadinya, ibaraik antimun go, awak lai masuk karuang tapi ndak masuk etongan. Tu mangkonyo katiko tu kami dari MUI juo manulak PP tu untuak dilaksanakan. Taniayo masyarakat awak beko. Di kaji kan alah jaleh juo tu, kan lai baraja darul mafasid muqaddam ala jalibi almasalih, dari pado mandahulukan kemaslahatan, labiah utamo mencegah kerusakan"*

(The issue is that our position is unclear: Bukittinggi, what we want to be there, and our rights are not discussed at that level. There will only be harm if our position there is not clear. Like cucumbers, we are in the sack but not counted. Therefore, we at the MUI also rejected the GR for implementation. Our society will be persecuted later. In the book lessons, it is clear that we have studied *darul mafasid muqaddam ala jalibi al masalih*, meaning that, rather than prioritising benefit, preventing damage is more important)

Theologically, the central point of this rebellion is a massive preventive effort against the destruction of the order of life that is deeply rooted in Islamic values. The Minangkabau people view the integrity of the *nagari* as a sacred unity that unites custom and Sharia in practice. Urban modernity, with all its heterogeneity, is considered a serious threat that could undermine the socio-religious harmony passed down beautifully through generations. In the logic of customary Law, Sharia is a substance that requires a cultural (customary) framework for its implementation. Therefore, weakening the customary structure, such as the loss of the authority of the Nagari Customary Council (KAN), will automatically erode religious authority in the public sphere. Therefore, for the people of Agam, this civil disobedience is interpreted as an obligation of "civil jihad" to protect the absolute purity of Islamic teachings and ensure that Sharia remains the primary reference point for life.

In addition to the protection of value systems, there are specific, intense concerns regarding assimilation and the risk of "Christianization" due to uncontrolled patterns of urban population mixing. The dominance of non-Muslim urban populations with access to land ownership is feared to trigger the construction of non-Islamic houses of worship in areas that have historically been strongholds of Muslims. This preventive approach aligns perfectly with the principle of "*maminteh sabalun anyuik*" (preventing before it is swept away) to avoid broader harm and administrative injustice. The Agam community's argument is theologically validated heavily through the discourse of *al-isyan al-madani* (civil disobedience) in the Sunni tradition [42]. This concept powerfully emphasises that obedience to the government is conditional, not absolute; it is obligatory only as long as the ruler does not order sin and remains securely grounded in the value of justice. According to the Quran, Surah An-Nisa, verse 135, efforts to uphold justice are prioritised over blind obedience to human authority. This *maqasidi* (goal of Sharia) approach robustly supports the theory of peaceful resistance as a form of critical obedience, where moral imperatives limit obedience to the state.

Within the framework of *maqasid sharia*, the legitimacy of civil disobedience in Agam is based on several essential pillars of protection (*dharuriyyāt*). The primary pillar is the protection of religion (*hifz al-din*), which entails safeguarding the integrity of the faith and the sharia system from external threats and the deconstruction of secular urban values [43]. It also serves to safeguard religion's vulnerability from intervention by entities within the urban system. Furthermore, within the *Nagari* ecosystem, religion and custom are beautifully united through the principle of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK). Scholars are deeply concerned that the transformation of *nagari* into sub-districts will cut off formal channels of religious involvement in local policy-making. In *Nagari*, the power of *ulama* is integral to public order, while in cities this role tends to be marginalised by secular bureaucratic mechanisms.

Equally important is the protection of descendants (*hifz al-nasl*). This pillar ensures the continuity of the social system and the moral control exercised by the *niniak mamak* for future generations, so that they do not lose their identity as Minangkabau people. Precisely, defending the Agam Tuo region is an active, passionate effort to maintain the continuity of the matrilineal social system for future generations. If the *nagari* becomes fragmented, the social control exercised by the *niniak mamak* over their nephews will inevitably weaken.

The final pillar is the protection of property (*hifz al-mal*). This critical dimension focuses on protecting the *Nagari's* customary rights and economic assets from commercial exploitation and the heavy burden of urban taxes, which are predicted to cause immense suffering for the people. For the Minangkabau people, customary land is a sacred basis for their existence. Therefore, resistance to GR No. 84, Year 1999, is not categorised as an act of treason, but rather a religious-cultural obligation to

maintain religious honour and social justice in Minangkabau land. The integration of Maqasid al-Shariah with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) demonstrates that these Islamic values actively drive institutional transparency, accountability, and participatory decision-making [44]. When the state imposes regulations unilaterally without consulting local communities, it inherently contradicts SDG Target 16.7, which demands responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels.

In line with the argument above, this atmosphere of defiance is further strengthened by the Minangkabau cultural validation that emphasises hierarchical legitimacy as mentioned above: *kamanakan barajo ka mamak, mamak barajo ka pangulu, pangulu barajo ka mufakaik, mufakaik barajo ka nan bana, nan bana stands alone*. This chain of authority masterfully emphasises that power in Minangkabau is not absolute but conditional and strictly limited by truth. Herein lies the foundation of the doctrine of *rajo alim rajo disambah, rajo zalim rajo disanggah*, where civil obedience is not a blank check, but a form of obedience based entirely on the justice of the leader. The legitimacy of a leader depends entirely on their adherence to consensus or consensus based on Sharia. When consensus is positioned as "king," every policy born unilaterally is deemed oppressive. The phenomenon of rejection of GR No. 84 Year 1999 is a striking manifestation of the principle of *"buruak buang jo mufakaik, cilako dek basilang"*. In Minangkabau logic, disobedience is understood as a way to overthrow evil and unjust policies through collective disagreement. The failure to reach consensus since the regional design stage in 1983 legally and culturally invalidates the regulation's legitimacy. The absence of consensus is not merely a technical obstacle, but a profound form of political withdrawal from the relationship of obedience to the state. This brilliantly confirms that if the ruler ignores the path of deliberation, he has lost the right to be "worshipped" or obeyed, because the lack of consensus is seen as a social disaster (*cilako dek basilang*) that vehemently justifies rejection.

At the pinnacle of this hierarchy is the theological dimension, beautifully expressed in the phrase *"nan bana berada sendirinyo."* Absolute truth (*nan bana*) refers to the integration of natural Law and God's Law (Islam). In this context, defiance of government policy becomes a mere political act, and then a potent theological imperative. If state regulations fundamentally contradict the principles of the Qur'an and Hadith, which serve as permanent ethical standards, society is obliged to resist them. Peaceful civil disobedience, protests, and speaking truth to power are recognised and honourable traditions in Islam for combating systemic injustice and policies that lack moral legitimacy [45]. This is exactly where the doctrine of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK) comes into play; refuting administrative injustice is no longer merely a right, but a solemn religious obligation to ensure that truth remains established above formal authority.

The foundation of this defiance is reinforced by the principle of *"lawan guru jo kaji, lawan mamak jo tuah"* (resist teachers with knowledge, resist uncle with good fortune), an ingrained mechanism for critical evaluation of intellectual and customary authority holders. Every resistance must be based on valid arguments (*kaji*) and legitimate moral legitimacy (*tuah*). If a leader or state loses its sense of justice and no longer weighs according to the Sharia of *"manimbang samo barek, maukua samo panjang"* (weighing equal weight, measuring equal length), then the "luck" of its power is considered utterly lost. In situations where the ruler deviates from the line of *nan bana*, the principle of *"rajo zalim rajo disanggah"* applies as a vital moral mandate for the community, its neighbours, and communal members to demand justice.

Ultimately, this profound awareness is encapsulated in the metaphorical warning *"ingek-ingek nan di ateh, kok di bawah nan kamaimpok."* This poetic proverb warns

those in power that power can rapidly collapse under pressure or defiance from those below. Although, by Law, the natural objects below do not override, in the dialectic of Minangkabau power, the masses at the bottom of the structure have the immense sociological power to overthrow authorities who deviate from the line of truth. The collective defiance movement against GR No. 84/1999 is clear, undeniable evidence of how the people of Agam put this philosophy into practice to maintain a harmonious balance between state power and the moral sovereignty of society.

The above argument simultaneously reinforces Hall's thesis that ethical and moral foundations are the most fundamental basis for rejection and defiance, thereby providing strong justification for delegitimising positive Law. Discursively, there are essential components that intricately underlie this reasoning. From the perspective of natural Law, which is internalised as an eternal law whose position transcends all forms of state-made regulations, if a legal product like GR No. 84 Year 1999 is proven to invade the natural rights of the people, then the Law automatically loses its validity based on the principle of *lex injusta non est lex* (an unjust law is not a law).

Additionally, there is a profound religious belief that obligations derived from religious doctrine are far superior to legal obligations to the state. Axiologically, without diminishing the validity of any revealed teachings, sociological reality shows that, in the understanding of society's beliefs, God's commands occupy the highest hierarchy above the commands of state authority. For a religious society, placing obedience to state law above God's Law is seen as a form of idolatry in a meaningful sense. In the case of resistance to GR No. 84, Year 1999, in Agam, religious elements are not merely complementary but boldly become the absolute moral foundation that validates the defiance. The movement is no longer simply a struggle against administrative injustice. Still, it has transformed into a 'sacred command' rooted in Islamic doctrine, actively upholding justice on Earth and harmoniously aligning with the broader targets of SDG 16 to build inclusive and peaceful societies.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the failure to implement Government Regulation Number 84 of 1999 for more than two decades—which was ultimately implicitly annulled by Law Number 53 of 2024—was the result of structured civil disobedience that obtained immense popular legitimacy in Agam Regency. The root of this collective disobedience was deep anxiety regarding the degradation of the philosophical order of *Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah* (ABS-SBK), and threats to the integrity of the faith (*hifz al-din*), social identity (*hifz al-nasl*), and customary property (*hifz al-mal*). The forms of defiance manifested in persistent non-violent actions, involving the active role of the *tigo tungku sajarangan* (*niniak mamak, alim ulama, and cadiak pandai*). The justification of Islamic teachings in this movement was central; Islam acted not only as a spiritual catalyst but also as a source of legitimacy for resistance, positioning defiance against policies deemed oppressive as a religious obligation (*al-isyan al-madani*). The community applied the principle of *sadd al-dzara'i* (preventing losses before they occur), justifying their actions as a form of critical obedience (*rajo alim rajo disambah, rajo zalim rajo disanggih*) to avoid greater social damage (*mafsadah*). The theoretical novelty of this study demonstrates that grassroots civil disobedience, grounded in the principles of *Maqashid Syariah*, organically advances the universal agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically SDG 16. The community demanded transparent state governance (SDG 16.7), forced local bureaucratic elites to disobey *institutional orders* to protect their constituents (SDG 16.6), and prevented capitalist exploitation of customary communal lands (SDG 16.4). The Agam community's success in forcing regulatory change through Law No. 53 of 2024 demonstrates that the state's legal sovereignty cannot be separated from sociocultural acceptance. This rejection

emphasizes that the validity of a legal product depends heavily on the harmony between formal state norms and the living law (*living law*) within society. Sustainable development cannot be engineered in an authoritarian, top-down manner; inclusive institutions can only be realised when the state's positive law synchronises itself with the theological and cultural justice thriving within the community.

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### Author Contribution

This work is a product of equal collaboration among all listed authors. Each has participated in the development of the manuscript, approved its final content, and affirms that no conflicts of interest exist that could influence the results or interpretation of this study.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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