

COMMODIFICATION OF RELIGION IN THE REALM OF LOCAL POLITICS: A STUDY OF THE TAREKAT NAQSABANDIYAH IN ROKAN HULU REGENCY

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Kata kunci

Komodifikasi Agama,
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Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis hubungan antara guru dan jamaah tarekat Naqsabandiyah dalam aksi politik lokal dan hubungannya dengan elit politik lokal. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif yang bertujuan untuk menginterpretasikan suatu kasus yang akan diteliti dan dianalisis dengan menggunakan metode analisis deskriptif yang dilakukan secara berkala. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan pola relasi antara guru dan jemaah kelompok Naqsabandiyah dalam aksi politik lokal di Kabupaten Rokan Hulu cenderung lebih akomodatif kepada otoritas, dimana orientasi politik kelompok ini telah mengalami transisi dari tradisional ke tindakan rasional dengan pilihan politiknya sendiri. Kemudian, relasi antara kelompok Naqsabandiyah dan elit politik lokal dalam praktik sosial keagamaan menegaskan adanya relasi agama dan politik yang sangat kuat, dimana kelompok Naqsabandiyah memandang Achmad (elit politik lokal) sebagai representasi kelompok yang dirunut dari keberadaan ikatan kekerabatan.

Keywords

Commodification
Religion, Local
Politics, Tarekat
Naqsabandiyah

Abstract

This article aims to analyze the relationship between the teacher and the congregation of the Naqsabandiyah in local political action and their relationship with local political elites. This study uses a qualitative approach that aims to interpret a case that will be carefully examined and analyzed using periodic descriptive analysis methods. The results of this study indicate that the pattern of relations between teachers and congregation of the Naqsabandiyah groups in local political action in Rokan Hulu Regency tends to be more accommodating to the authorities, where the political orientation of this group has undergone a transition from traditional to rational action with its own political choices. Then, the relationship between the group and local political elites in socio-religious practices has confirmed the existence of a very strong religious and political relationship, where the Naqsabandiyah sees Achmad (local political elite) as a group representation traced from the existence of kinship ties.

Introduction

The commodification of religion is fascinating because it is always seen and used in various economic, social, and political activities (Amna, 2019). In the political field, religious symbols in campaigns are still part of Indonesia's democratization process (Juba & Hidayati, 2017). Although the commodification of religion does not dominate the political field, the use of religious symbols is still used by candidates at crucial moments such as religious holidays and others (Pribadi & Ghufron, 2019). Then, in a democratic climate, religious symbols in political space are increasingly emerging and developing (Zainuddin, 2018), in various political advertisements used by political parties and political elites using religious symbols (Malik & Batubara, 2014).

Fikri (2016), explains that Islam has the same basic principles as democracy elements. This is also supported by the absence of any arguments stating that democracy is contrary to Islam because democratic values such as active citizen participation, freedom of opinion, responsibility, justice, openness, and supervision are in line with Islamic values (Qodir, 2012). Then, the phenomenon of the commodification of religion in politics does not only occur in Indonesia, but western countries have also already experienced that phase because it can be understood from the development of western democratic life that focuses on individual freedom and limits the role of the state in religious activities (Hakim, 2014). Even so, the issue of religion remains a study that is always used in general election practice (politics), for example, in the United States (Lambert, 2017), Germany (Fischer & Mohrman, 2020), and France (Everett, 2018). Therefore, we see that in practice, there is no pure state that can separate religious life from politics. Likewise, spiritual life in developing countries can be seen from the unity of religious leaders who can mobilize the spirit of unity and integrity and become a milestone for establishing the state (Abdul Jamil, 2012; Budiman et al., 2020). The decisive role of religion in developing countries has institutionalized it into community groups and religious organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), recognized by the state with such a large and influential number of followers (Darajat, 2017).

In the context of the commodification of religion in the political realm, political actors (political elites), through their different methods, will try to make religion an instrument which will then be translated into a group to achieve their power and interests. According to research by Malik & Batubara (2014), the commodification of religion in the political realm has a clear difference in scope from the politicization of religion, where the commodification of religion in the political sphere will be more specific when compared to the substance of the word politicization of religion. Then, Word The politicization of faith (religion) will be more specifically from the Word commodification of religion. The difference in meaning and substance is shown in the following figure:

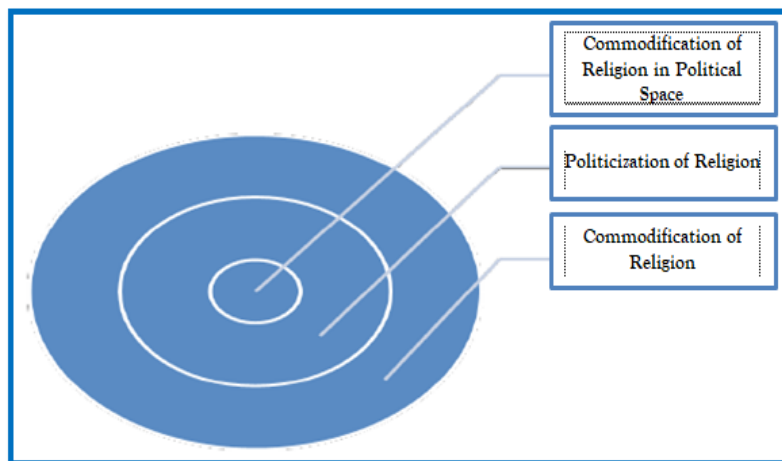


Figure 1. The Scope of the Commodification of Religion and the Politicization of Religion (Source: Malik & Batubara, 2014).

Then, Various current political trends underline something opposite, where there is a tendency of religion and politics to share interests. Religion is considered by some political figures only as a luring weapon to be "sold" to the public for political purposes, such as seizing the masses, gaining influence, and other cynical political interests. This, of course, has changed the role of religion, which should be a reference for behavior in the political sector itself (Malik & Batubara, 2014; Zainuddin, 2018). Currently, the commodification of religion in democratic political life seems to be growing; it is indicated by the more muscular religious groups' position in influencing Indonesia's political life (Rozaki, 2013). This is happening at the national political level and increasingly felt in the local realm (Alifahmi, 2016).

In the local political sector, the commodification of religion also occurs in Rokan Hulu Regency, Riau Province. This can be seen from the Naqshabandiyah Tarekat group's influence on the local political structure of the Rokan Hulu Regency. In general, this group is not formally institutionalized, but this group influences social life with various variants of its Tarekat groups. At first, the Tarekat Naqshabandiyah in Rokan Hulu was founded in 1290 AD by Sheikh Abdul Wahab Rokan Alkhaldi Naqshabandi. In the history of Tarekat teachings, the role of Sheikh Abdul Wahab Rokan in his religious learning system has had a significant impact on the development of the Tarekat Naqshabandiyah. In Rantau Rokan, for example, several mosques have been built as places of worship for the Congregation and several other areas such as Kampar, Bangko, Minas, Kandis, and Duri and Bengkalis. The enthusiasm of the community for the spiritual activities of the Naqshabandiyah Tarekat in Rokan Hulu cannot be separated from the characteristics of its people who adhere to culture and customs so that Rokan Hulu is given the nickname "*The Land of a Thousand Suluk*" and the Tarekat Naqshabandiyah is the basis of this nickname (Abduh, 2012).

Then, in the context of the Rokan Hulu community's socio-religious life, the Tarekat Naqshabandiyah is one of the religious organizations that has received many

observations from the public, where three things strengthen this perspective. *First*, the teaching activities of the Tarekat, which are characteristic of this community, apply to almost all areas of Rokan Hulu and its surroundings, both from spiritual practice and from contemplative activities such as dhikr in every mosque. *Second*, the students' attitudes and actions who respect the teachers (Murshid) by the members of the Naqsabandiyah Tarekat group. *Third*, respect for the graves of the Naqsabandiyah teachers (Murshid). This causes the Tarekat to become a socio-political force that is quite influential, both concerning socio-religious activities and political activities with a large and potential social base (Suhandi, 2019). Therefore, this study aims to analyze the relationship between Murshid (teachers) and congregation (students) of the Tarekat Naqsabandiyah in local political action and their relationship with the political elite Rokan Hulu Regency. This is done to identify forms of commodification of religion in local politics and trace various political support orientations for the Tarekat Naqsabandiyah congregation in Rokan Hulu Regency, Riau Province.

Thadi & Novaldi (2019), explains that Commodification has value and quality and is used as a commodity that is not commercially having. Initially, Commodification was only concerned with matters such as labor, land, health affairs, and the arts. However, in its current development, religion and religious symbols have been commodified by the community (Pribadi & Ghufron, 2019). Even today, the Commodification of religion continues to develop among the wider community, where Islam has become a transformed symbolic commodity (Juba & Hidayati, 2017).

The presence of religion will inspire the democratic process. However, due to religious elites' tendency to be so quickly influenced by state power's interests, it has an impact on the lack of religious authority in fighting various injustices seen in the public area (Hasan, 2014). According to Amna's (2019) research, the commodification of religion is an act of trading religious symbols to achieve popularity in an interest. Then, according to a study by Malik & Batubara (2014), it is explained that the commodification of religion is a debate about sharing preferences. Where the beliefs and orientations attached to it can using as assets which are then traded for the benefit of the actors who do so; based on this, it can be said that the commodification of religion in the process will only form the perspective of faith as an industrial commodity (Syah, 2013). For this reason, religion should be able to emphasize its role in precise classification so that it is not easily exploited by various political interests in the public area (Jamil, 2012; Hasan, 2014).

Various trends in society's increasing spirituality today have led to the rapid development of multiple sects, such as the Qadiriyyah Tarekat and the Naqsabandiyah (Suhandi, 2019). Historically, the Naqsabandiyah Tarekat has played an essential role in shaping personal development and promoting religious reform with a broad platform for social change in the Muslim world (Hafidzah, 2010; Makhasin, 2015). In the process, the Tarekat Naqsabandiyah has a religious and social role and has a role in national politics and the realm of local politics (Erawadi & Sati, 2019). Even nowadays, the

existence of the Naqsabandiyah Tarikat continues to experience significant developments in several regions in Indonesia such as South Tapanuli (Erawadi & Sati, 2019), Bandar Lampung (Suhandi, 2019), Padang (Suriani, 2017), Blitar (Nurika, 2017), West Kalimantan (Elmansyah & Patmawati, 2019), Rokan Hulu (Lubis, 2018), and several other areas in Riau and North Sumatra Provinces (Abduh, 2012).

Fundamentally, Tarekat Naqsabandiyah teaches its followers to keep a distance from political and state officials. However, the facts show that Tarekat Naqsabandiyah has been actively involved in practical politics in the realm of local politics (Abza et al., 2019; Setiyawati, 2017). As explained by the study of Abza et al., (2019), that the relationship between Tarekat Naqsabandiyah and contemporary politics is mutually beneficial and dependent on one another. This is due to a dynamic power relationship and a shift in orientation from the Tarekat caused by globalization and forcing spiritual institutions to survive in maintaining their identity (Muzakir, 2015). Thus, it can be understood that religious elites' involvement in practical politics today is due to the assumption about the interests of spiritual elements in power, which must be carried out through political channels (Juba & Hidayati, 2017). And this, of course, contradicts some of the views of religious elites that develop in society about 'politics is sadistic' because there is no eternity except interests (Hasan, 2014; Juba & Hidayati, 2017). Currently, someone is a friend. The next time, they will still have the potential to become an opponent depending on their interests in the practical political context. Therefore, it is clear that, in general, religion and politics cannot be separated as a whole.

In contrast to previous studies that have discussed the phenomenon of the relationship between religion and politics, this article focuses on the analysis of the relationship between the teacher and the tarekat congregation as well as the relationship between the tarekat naqsabandiyah and the local political elite. Seeing the many phenomena of religious commodification that occur, it is important to know the various forms of commodification of religion in local politics and to trace patterns of support orientation in religious and political matters.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach that allows researchers to investigate and understand a phenomenon (Creswell, 2014; Mohajan, 2018). Qualitative research can then look at complex cases to be studied and sifted through (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018). Furthermore, this study was conducted in Rokan Hulu Regency, Riau Province, where the location selection was based on several reasons. First, Rokan Hulu Regency is the gateway to the western region of Riau Province, which is directly adjacent to the Provinces of West Sumatra and North Sumatra. Second, immigrants' role in the economic sector is considered very important because Muslim immigrants control various economic activities in Rokan Hulu Regency, especially in the plantation sector. In general, the data sources in this study come from primary and secondary data.

Primary data is data generated from a direct collection of information by research sources. Secondary data is collected from supporting records such as journals, books, proceedings, and various social media to collect related results (Sugiyono, 2013).

The data collection techniques used in this study were observation and documentation techniques. In the observation technique, we make observations on the distribution of areas, which are the basis for the activities of the Tarekat in Rokan Hulu. Then, in the documentation technique, we collected some literature and online media that contained the information needed in the research context. We conducted periodic qualitative descriptive analyses to interpret the collected data (Miles & Huberman, 2014). It consists of several systematic terms, including the data coding stage, data presentation, and concluding. At the data codification point, we observe the data collected to describe the data easier to understand. Then, at the data presentation stage, we classified the data relevant to the research objectives. Next, conclusions are drawn to answer the problem formulations that have been raised in the research.

Results and Discussion

In terms of terminology, Tuan Guru (murshid) is a pioneer and figure in a pesantren who devotes himself to teaching and spreading the faith through education and Islamic norms as a whole. Then, from the perspective of society in general, Tuan Guru (murshid) is a person who has authority in the field of religion, both in knowledge and in his sacred behavior, and is considered capable of protecting society (Dahlan, 2015). Thus, it is only natural that the current Tuan Guru (murshid) figure is a model that is still adored by the community because it is believed to impact society's social fabric significantly. The magnitude of the murshid's influence stems from their charisma and their position, which teaches their students/congregation and becomes the filter base for selecting the incoming foreign culture (Mudin, 2016). Then, although not all Tuan Guru (murshid) are involved in the political sector, their role is so dominant in determining the congregation's political orientation. This is based on the existence of social changes that have occurred both in the pesantren environment and in the surrounding community. Under these conditions, the role of Tuan Guru (murshid) as cultural brokers (cultural agents) in the existing social order.

In general, Tuan Guru (murshid) is known as an elite who has authority both formally and informally at the local level. Tuan Guru (murshid) will be a traditional (formal) elite if he holds administrative positions such as the executive and legislative branches. Meanwhile, informally, Tuan Guru (murshid) only occupies a strategic role that directly impacts society, such as religion and social organizations. But theoretically, Tuan Guru (murshid) can hold a position of legitimacy, both formal and informal. Then, fundamentally the existence of Tuan Guru (murshid) is only limited to being a guide in religious matters that occur and is prohibited from being in the political realm because from an Islamic theological point of view Tuan Guru (murshid) is the subject of 'Rahmatan Lil Alamin' which makes Islam as a basis for living life in all fields

(Suharto, 2019). If Tuan Guru (murshid) is involved in politics, various forms of criticism will appear dominant in the public area.

In the context of this research, the political orientation of the murshids in Rokan Hulu Regency is only seen to be expressive and not instrumental. In the context of this research, the political direction of the murshids in Rokan Hulu Regency is only seen to be expressive and not instrumental. Expressive includes Islamic symbols consisting of the moon and star's signs, holding Istighotsah Kubro, and performing grand ceremonies when there are political dynamics. Meanwhile, the instrumental political orientation tends towards emphasis and expertise on the political lobby's indirect political decision making. Along with the rapid development of the times, the influence and strength of the murshids in the local politics of Rokan Hulu continue to grow when there is a democratic party, both during the general election and regional head elections. Many of the contestants who took part in the regional election competition in Rokan Hulu District came to Tuan Guru (murshid) to get the blessing and support of the Naqshabandiyah Tarekat group. This political safari is a strategy that contestants always use to get the votes of Santri-based voters who have potential influence and mass. However, due to differences in political views between Tuan Guru (murshid) in the Naqshabandiyah Tarekat group, it has presented the potential for split voters who are classified based on pesantren. The position of Tuan Guru (murshid) has become more cult because many political actors ask for their blessing, and Political support was not only centered on one Tarekat group but also came to several other Tarekat groups such as Luhak Rambah, Luhak Kepenuhan, Luhak Kunto, Luhak Rokan and Luhak Tambusai. The following is a cluster of Tarekat distribution in Rokan Hulu Regency, Riau Province:

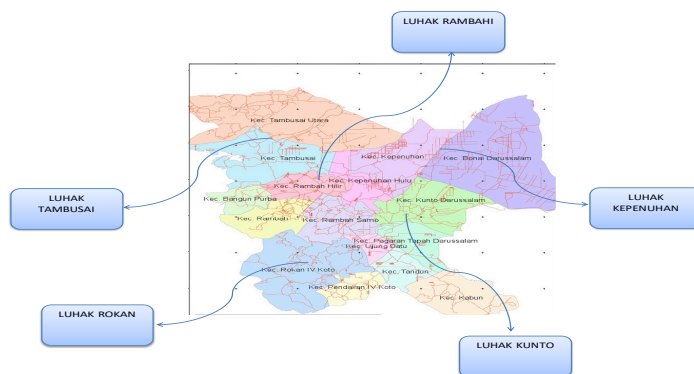


Figure 2. Map of the Distribution of the Tarekat in Rokan Hulu (Source: Research Data, 2019).

The figure above is a cluster of the spread of Tarekat teachings in Rokan Hulu, which is centered on 5 (five) Luhak. The term Luhak is a term for a large zone consisting of several zones. This term is popular among Tarekat congregations to describe the origin of the mosque where it recites and become the congregation's

identity in Tarekat associations. This identification also applies to the local level's social and political context, which describes local elites' behavior who represent themselves as part of the Tarekat Naqshabandiyah. The role of Tuan Guru (murshid), which was initially engaged in the cultural sector in the middle of the current political phase, seems to have developed into an actor that offers political legitimacy. The struggle for the Kyai (murshid) began to move along with the shift in local politics. Tuan Guru (murshid) begins to enter the realm of partisan politics with all the tactical maneuvers that are sometimes referred to as hospitality. This mechanism is associated with a symbiosis of mutualism with these interests to gain influence or get help from political elites sponsored by formal and non-formal institutions. Meanwhile, on the other hand, the political elite will have religious, spiritual authority as the campaign material for the Kyai (murshid). In a realistic political sense, the Kyai (murshid) can legitimize the political elite by using religion because religion and belief are powerful forces capable of sublimating and purifying a profane universe.

According to Weiberg & Salzman (2020), Religion has always been used as an instrument to strengthen politics in all human behavior. In this sense, Tuan Guru (murshid) will not only become leaders in the pesantren, but they will also influence society and even prestige in society. Then, Tuan Guru (murshid) is also considered capable of being the protector of his people in paternalistic relationships (Dahlan, 2015). The capability of Tuan Guru (murshid) in the religious sector has made them the owner of sacred religious authority. The recommendations and fatwas of Tuan Guru (murshid) can often be seen as socio-political preferences held by followers. With their strength and moral legitimacy, Tuan Guru (murshid) can also move people to make political decisions. It is no wonder that in the implementation of democratic momentum, the Kyai (murshid) is still used to represent voters by political elites.

At present, the Kyai (murshid) existence in the political sphere seems dominant in the public sphere, such as providing political support for the momentum of the democratic party to contestants related to their interests. In practice, the Kyai (murshid) behavioral symptoms who are active in the political sphere are more likely to be triggered by the weakness of the economic sector and the difficulty of covering the increasing costs of building pesantren. Then, the apathy and indifference of the local government to the pesantren's challenges had a significant impact on the role of Tuan Guru (murshid), who tended to be involved in politics. This is where the momentum of meeting the political elite and Tuan Guru (murshid) is always carried out. This phenomenon is ultimately believed to be able to eradicate the sacredness of Tuan Guru. Because, if the Kyai (murshid) who participate in the political stream based on unlimited support will raise concerns that they will be trapped in the logic of political power by exploiting the ummah and society for momentary political interests, which in essence will make the Kyai (murshid) as an agent who appears cooperative, hegemonic, and dishonest. Not only that, the fundamental principles that promote sincerity and commitment to murshid will undoubtedly be reduced, destroyed, and will be defeated

by the logic of political power. In the process, Tuan Guru (murshid), who is directly involved in practical politics, will reduce his authority. Since Tuan Guru (murshid) will be considered an agent of "interest," their recommendations will not be followed by society, will no longer be considered role models, and will increasingly lose their congregation. The presence of the Kyai (murshid) in the political field will impact the pesantren, Santri, and culture, which are mostly neglected because their role models have moved with political elites based solely on interests. Supposedly, the authority of Tuan Guru (murshid) is not obtained through power and politics, but attitudes, intelligence, and spiritual actions. Practical politics does not strengthen the dignity of Tuan Guru (murshid). On the other hand, the religious image of Tuan Guru (murshid), which the public so highly respects, disappears when they become involved in it. Moral Politics The Murshid play various roles, namely religious leaders, social advisers, and politicians. As a spiritual leader, Tuan Guru (murshid) functions as the worship leader (prayer, zakat, fasting) and religious fatwas. As a social consultant, he is seen as a forum by his students for formation, healing, and advisory figures. In politics, he can play a normative role relevant to the public interest in various political platforms, both verbally and non-verbally.

The connection between teacher and student in the perspective of Sufism is called 'Shubhah.' At the same time, the trend of the relationship expressed in the essence of Tasawwuf is 'Ihsan,' which is a spiritual peak that passes through Islam and Iman (Mudin, 2016). Converting to Islam is the beginning of anyone who enters the circle of divine law, who then does 'dhâhir.' Then, from the perspective of the Tarekat, a student who learns from his teacher, and a teacher who sincerely instructs his students, will make the relationship between the two more harmonious. Also, a student who knows from his teacher is considered to acquire sacred and useful wisdom. If the relationship between students and teachers is generally referred to as knowledge transmission, then the relationship between students and master teachers (murshid) in the Tarekat community is transmitted through spirituality (Dahlan, 2015; Mudin, 2016; Suharto, 2019). The strong relationship between the teacher and pupil of the Tarekat is a social force for the Tarekat group in its role in social and political life, including the socio-political conditions of the Naqshabandiyah Tarekat in Rokan Hulu Regency. The patronage built up between students and murshid Tarekat at each mosque has formed intense bondage and mutual need. The strong relationship between the student (congregation) and Tuan Guru (murshid) has made the Tarekat group a religious group that is always taken into account by political institutions and actors. Many parties assign their cadres to become congregations of a specific mosque. There are also political parties that recruit communities of Tarekat, which are considered to have a strong influence on becoming part of that political party. As a potential political base, the Naqshabandiyah Tarekat certainly does not want to be visualized as a representation of specific political forces, both institutions, and political actors, so that with the ability to position themselves like that, the public considers the Tarekat's actions to be unbiased.

This description expresses the Tarekat movement's position and its role during social change, It shows that the Tarekat Naqsabandiyah has always had a responsibility not only individually but also socially (Abitolkha et al., 2020).

In the context of this research, various phenomena of the commodification of religion in the realm of local politics can be seen from all the activities carried out by Islamic organizations (tarekat naqsabandiyah) with local political elites in Rokan Hulu. This condition then confirms the influence of Sheikh Abdul Wahab Rokan and his descendants in the historical development of the Tarekat in Rantau Rokan and the high adaptability of its followers to the historical reality of Rokan Hulu. The Tarekat Naqsabandiyah and Political Relations in Rokan Hulu illustrate that these two entities cannot be separated. Based on this fact, it can be said that the political attitudes of the Tuan Guru (murshid) and the Tarekat group tend to be accommodating to the ruler. The political mindset of teachers (murshids) in this Tarekat community rests on medieval Sunni fiqh, which maintains the role of Islam and its adherents to stay away from all models of action that can endanger physical and spiritual health (Ziadi, 2018).

The attitude of Tuan Guru (murshid) Tarekat can be seen as a symbol of political support for institutions and actors in the political constellation at the local level. In the local election of Rokan Hulu Regency in 2006 and 2011, for example, the orientation of the support of Tuan Guru (murshid) and the Naqsabandiyah Congregation was visualized through searches of Nasab experts (descendants of the father) and certain symbols. Then, in the 2015 regional election, Tarekat affiliation in the political sector was not as dominant as in the previous year because the existing contestants were deemed not to have direct lineage in the Tarekat Naqsabandiyah Syekh Abdul Wahab Rokan. This study found that the phenomenon of emotional relationships that became the source of the unity of Tarekat adherents gradually began to fade and along with the entry of political interests into the Tarekat region because political interests were more focused on rational-pragmatic issues. The Tarekat Group as a social entity has disappeared along with the melting of the bonds of religious feeling because political concepts that are firmly derived from religious conceptions have now begun to shift to a more logical basis.

There are two contradictory interpretations of the political role played by the practitioners of the Tarekat Naqsabandiyah. First, According to the Tarekat Group, teacher fanaticism will soon turn into political fanaticism that influences society to achieve political goals. Second, this group sees the growth of the Congregation as a symptom of depoliticization that must focus more on the afterlife rather than worldly problems. All these interpretations provide an analytical framework for seeing how the democratic process influences religious elites in enhancing the relationship between religion and politics itself. Then, the formation of political orientation by the Tarekat group cannot be separated from the above perception. The birth of the Tarekat group as a religious group with strong influence and bargaining value has had a significant impact on the tendency of its political attitudes. Tuan Guru (murshid) explicitly as the

highest leader of the Tarekat group at each mosque in Rokan Hulu did not mobilize his congregation to join or be affiliated with certain political parties. Still, Tarekat group members' involvement in the political sector was more likely due to sociological and psychological factors, which links the interests of the Naqsabandiyah Congregation. Furthermore, we find that the political orientation of the Naqsabandiyah Tarekat group in the local political domain in Rokan Hulu Regency is more likely to be rational, where the direction of political action they are currently undergoing is transforming the traditional activities of charismatic authority that have evolved into reasonable actions with their own political choices.

The democratic transition in Indonesia, one of which was marked by the implementation of the first direct election in 2005, was successful in causing unrest among political parties and Tarekat groups due to the unclear authority they have in decision making at the local level. For example, from the side of the Tarekat, the leader who is an extension of the Lord Guru (murshid) does not have full authority and sufficient charisma to make decisions. Meanwhile, in political parties, the strengthening of central domination impacted the delegation of party officials in the regions. From these two problems, in the process, the need arises for a relationship between the Naqsabandiyah Tarekat and political parties. Because on the one hand, political parties need Tarekat groups to attract people's attention, and Tarekat groups need political parties to stand out. Then, the Tarekat Group is not only a supporting force for political parties that carry regional head candidates. However, in some cases, they are even involved in political party roles. These various phenomena in the public space are concrete phenomena amid the increasingly open democratic climate in Indonesia.

The implementation of local election in Rokan Hulu Regency in 2006 and 2012 illustrates the strong religious and political relations in Rokan Hulu. The election of Achmad as Regent of Rokan Hulu for 2 (two) periods shows a common thread between the interests of the Tarekat and political contestation at the local level of Rokan Hulu. The common thread that is meant here is about the orientation of the Tarekat, which sees Achmad as a representation of the Tarekat Naqsbandiyah group, which is traced from the Nasab (descendant) expert of the Tarekat group. The election of the Achmad-Sukiman pair also correlates with the increasing alignment of the Regional Government towards the Tarekat, which is manifested in regional policies such as the construction of the most massive Islamic religious symbol in Riau Province, which has become known as the Grand Mosque Madani Islamic Center complex which is allocated from the Rokan Hulu Regency of Regional Budget. Another strategic policy as a form of relationship between Achmad (local political elite) and the Tarekat group is the policy of giving the obligation to wear robes (traditional Islamic clothing) to all local government bureaucratic apparatus in Rokan Hulu Regency every Friday and the implementation of congregational prayers at mosques.

Not only that, the relationship between Achmad and the Naqsabandiyah Tarekat is also evident from the construction of the Mushola Gading as a congregational prayer

room in Ngarai hamlet across from the old village of Sebotih where Syekh Ibrahim was born. Furthermore, political support from the Naqshabandiyah Congregation in Rokan Hulu continues to appear dominant in the local political arena, where 22,125 members of the Tarekat group have expressed their stance to support Achmad (Regent of Rokan Hulu 2 Period) to advance and participate in the 2013 Riau gubernatorial election (RiauPos.co, 19 April 2012). As proof of support, the Naqshabandiyah congregation has signed a 50-meter-long white cloth as shown in the following picture:



Figure 3. Political Support by the Tarekat Naqshabandiyah Group in Rokan Hulu
(Source: Halloriau.com, 2012).

The relationship between the Naqshabandiyah Tarekat Group and Achmad (political elite) in social and religious practice shows that the relationship built between Tarekat groups and local political elites is mutually beneficial. This relationship strengthens the findings of Abitolkha et al., (2020) which states that the contribution of the Tarekat in political life is not solely for the interests of power. However, their political participation is developed to achieve ideals of morality and religiosity in the local government's socio-political forces or the bureaucratic elite. Even so, the commodification of religion in the realm of local politics in Rokan Hulu Regency will still have a negative impact in the public sphere because it can eliminate the substance of the noble values possessed by the Tarekat Naqshabandiyah group, as explained in the study of Malik & Batubara (2014), which states that it is time for religion must be able to clarify and reinforce its role in the public sector so that it is not easily exploited by various political interests in the local area.

Conclusion

The relationship between Tuan Guru and the Tarekat Naqshabandiyah Congregation in local political action tends to be accommodating to power. Where explicitly, Tuan Guru as the highest leader of the Tarekat group does not mobilize his congregation to be affiliated with certain political parties. However, the involvement in political action that occurs is caused by the existence of sociological and psychological

factors that connect their interests. Thus, currently the local political ideology of the Tarekat Naqshabandiyah in Rokan Hulu has undergone a transition from traditional charismatic authority which developed into rational action in their own political choices.

Then, the relationship between the Naqshabandiyah Tarekat group and the local political elite in social and religious practices has emphasized the existence of powerful religious and political relations that are mutually beneficial for both parties. The election of the Achmad-Sukiman pair to become Regent and Deputy Regent of Rokan Hulu for the second period has indicated an interest in the Tarekat and political contestation at the local level of Rokan Hulu. Also, the Tarekat sees Achmad as a representative of the Naqshabandiyah Tarekat group, which is traced from Nasab experts (descent) and has an impact on There is the alignment of the Regional Government to the Tarekat which is manifested in regional policies such as building the Grand Mosque of Madani Islamic Center in Pasir Pengaraian which is allocated from the Regency of regional budget, and also the construction of the Mushola Gading as a Tarekat prayer room in Rokan Hulu Regency.

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