Between Tradition and Religious Doctrine: Questioning Kiai’s Status as Zakāt Recipient

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Abstract:  
Commonly, people pay their zakāt to asnāf groups based on their preferences and considerations. However, in Madura, the distribution of zakāt continues to adhere to the traditional notion, wherein it is mainly allocated and prioritized to kiai. This faces a debatable phenomenon whether Kiai could be zakāt recipients or not. Therefore, this research aims to explore the diversification role of Kiai in zakāt payment and describe the theological and social construction among zakāt payment in Madura. The present study employed qualitative research methodologies, specifically utilizing interviews as the primary data collection technique. The participants in this study included kiai, community members, and leaders from Madurese community. This research study indicates that the Madurese Muslim community designates kiai as mustahīqq zakāt under masākin, fi sabīlillāh, and anīl categories. The diversification of the Kiai’s role is predicated upon the theological perspective held by Madurese Muslim community which posits that the kiai
is a rightful recipient of zakāt. Additionally, Madurese Muslim community keeps a social perception that kiai is a revered individual deserving of compensation. Consequently, even though Madurese people understand the existence of religious doctrine to whom they have to spend zakāt, they still prioritize giving zakāt to kiai as the result of their typical social construction.

Keywords:
Kiai; Zakāt; Diversification

Introduction

In Indonesian society, zakāt distribution has been influenced by local knowledge and values. Villagers of Lipursari in Wonosobo (Central Java) spend zakāt fiṭrah on their under two years old infants to the traditional birth attendants or dukun bayi.⁴ This has also been practiced by people of Negeri Lha in Maluku by preferring the traditional midwife or so-called mama biang² as the zakāt recipient. Among the justifications for this practice is that most of the traditional birth attendants are economically disadvantaged and are considered under fi sabi lillāh category. Meanwhile, the practice of zakāt distribution for morticians is maintained by West Pasaman and Pariangan society in West Sumatera.³ In Pariangan society, the morticians called angku nan ampek play a significant role in people’s religious lives not only as graveyard field owners, but also the one

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dealing with marriage and Islamic doctrine. Similar reasoning applies to them as considered as *fi sabîlîl-lâh* category while some of them are economically disadvantaged.

These two examples show how *zakât* management often involves local customs or *adat*, including to whom it is distributed, like what occurs among Madurese people in which the *zakât* is given to *kiai*. Madurese people like to give *zakât fiṭrah* to Qur’anic teachers, the ones who taught them to recite the Qur’an at young ages, *kiai*, or ulama. This preference relies upon assumption that *kiai* is under *fi sabîlîl-lâh* category as one of *mustahîqqs* or those who deserve to receive *zakât*. In addition to it, there are cultural reasons for preferring the *kiai* as *zakât* recipient, namely priority put to those considered influential in social life.

Ideally, *zakât* is supposed to serve as a significant financial resource for fostering economic growth within communities. However, alignment between the development of *zakât* distribution and *zakât* management organizations is not consistently observed, as conventional methods of *zakât* distribution are frequently employed. In other words, *zakât* management institutions are still trying hard to persuade the public so that they can trust the institution to distribute their *zakât*. The public, on the other hand, demands openness and strong accountability from *zakât* management organizations along with varying demands for the functions and benefits of *zakât*. This shows how large the gap between ideal and real situation of *zakât* management in Indonesia.

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4 Surizal, “Angku Nan Ampek Sebagai Penerima Zakat Menurut Undang-Undang Zakat No. 23 Tahun 2011 di Pariangan Kabupaten Tanah Datar.”
Effective management and competent human resources are therefore essential in zakāt management institutions. Additionally, it is imperative for zakāt management institutions to actively engage in educational endeavors to enhance public awareness regarding the significance of zakāt, its effective administration, and the beneficial outcomes that generate for individuals’ need. Public needs to be educated that the maximum role of zakāt institutions potentially impacts household economic growth. Furthermore, through good management, zakāt is proven as an effective tool to foster unity between the rich and the poor, primarily because the wealthy will always seem to be more socially conscious than the destitute. Sympathy will give birth to empathy between communities and help society overcome criminal cases such as theft and robbery. The maximum role of zakāt will erode the jealousy and hatred (al-ḥasad wal-karāhiyyah) of the poor towards the rich because the former feel sincerely helped and cared of quite well. Meanwhile, if the rich seem to ignore their situation without any concern, it can create hatred and envy towards these rich people.

This all shows how the existence of zakāt contributes to the peace and harmony of life among Muslims. This is in line with zakāt’s etymological meanings which include purification, sanctity, development, growth, and praise. In a common term, zakāt refers to a portion of Allah’s property that is required to be spent by several people who are eligible to receive it. Zakāt, in short, is a form of economic and social worship. The distribution of zakāt is set in such

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9 Oni Sahroni et al., Fikih Zakat Kontemporer (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2018), 18–19.
a way because it is a method of distributing wealth for the benefit of mustad'afin or weak people.\textsuperscript{12}

The obligation to pay zakāt is one of the pillars of Islam that is valid for ownership of one’s assets based on written rules in the Qur’an and hadith. So far, ordinary people tend to misinterpret zakāt as merely a manifestation of one’s charity which appears to be voluntary.\textsuperscript{13} This viewpoint, among others, is widely held in Madurese society which likes to give petra (zakāt fitrah in Madurese) to kiai and their very first Qur’an teachers called ghuru tolang. Kiai, according to Madurese community, are those most entitled to zakāt fitrah. When a Madurese studied the Qur’an in a langgar (small prayer place) before studying with kiai at Islamic boarding schools, the position of the ghuru tolang is still respected, including in the preference of zakāt recipients.\textsuperscript{14} Some following cases are in line with this.

Distribution of zakāt in Karang Penang, Sampang is still held in a traditional consumptive manner. It is delivered directly to people entitled to receive zakāt. The muzakkī (zakāt givers) distribute the zakāt assets to the community or religious leaders surrounding the community who are eligible to receive zakāt. This closely relates to low trust in zakāt management institutions as well as a lack of public understanding about productive zakāt distribution.\textsuperscript{15} In fact, good zakāt distribution potentially influences people’s economic condition as long as it is distributed correctly. This is in line with a previous study showing how zakāt becomes an instrument of poverty alleviation through good management of zakāt institutions. For this


\textsuperscript{14} Hefni, Islam Madura: Sebuah Studi Konstruktivismis Strukturalis Tentang Relasi Islam Pesantren dan Islam Kampung di Sumenep Madura, 175–76.

idea to be successful, there must be resources for mustahiq's business capital (either in cash or required equipment), a business consultant or companion, and collaboration between mustahiq, BAZ and LAZ, the government, and business actors through a partnership program. Besides, the accurate data about mustahiq availability is another contributing aspect.16

The paradox or contradictory issue appears when Madurese kiai become zakat recipient while some of them are not poor. Pre-observation makes it clear that a lot of Madurese Kiai are economically settled or even rich.17 They have both passive and active income every month. However, they still get zakat at zakat distribution sessions, usually during Ramadhan month. This is partly caused by people’s assumption, like what was found in Bangkalan, that zakat must still be given to kiai regardless of their economic conditions otherwise local society will mock them.

Many zakat studies have been conducted by several researchers such as Suaidi,18 Harisah and Zainulloh,19 and Firmansyah.20 However, that research mainly talks about the practice of zakat for social life. They found that zakat can reduce the amount of poverty rates as long as it is well-managed. Meanwhile, relating to studies on kiai, Zamakhsyari Dhofier,21 Arifin,22 Al Firdaus,23 and

17 Abd. Muni, a Kiai from Bangkalan Regency, Madura, Interview.
19 Harisah and Zainulloh, “Praktik Distribusi Zakat Konsumtif Tradisional di Karang Penang Sampang.”
Niam revealed how varied their roles in societies are. They maintain traditional Islamic ideology in Java while holding traditional religious leadership in the field of education and socio-political spheres. At the same time, kiai is counted on voicing counter-narrative of radical interpretation of Islam by offering religious moderation in understanding Islamic doctrine. From those two research themes, it is assumed that there is still limited research about the role of kiai as both zakāt managers and recipients. Therefore, we want to fill this missing piece through a deep exploration and analysis.

The primary objective of this research is to explore kiai's position in receiving zakāt both as mustahiqq and traditional amil (informal ones), either through consumptive distribution or productive in supporting Islamic boarding school development. It limits the scope to zakāt fiṭrah and zakāt mal. Besides, this research also wants to reveal the theological and social construction of zakāt distribution to Madurese kiai. Examining customs and principles that form the foundation of zakāt allocation can provide valuable insights into the intricate cultural fabric of Madurese society. Furthermore, this study holds significance in elucidating the importance of kiai's involvement in the allocation of zakāt funds, hence facilitating an assessment of the degree to which traditionalism impacts decision-making processes about the collection and distribution of zakāt. This study possesses the capacity to generate novel insights within the scientific literature about Islamic studies, the sociology of religion, and social anthropology. It has the potential to serve as a significant reference for future studies by recording zakāt practices in Madura as well as directing relevant decision-making. By comprehending the function of kiai in the diversification of zakāt distribution, this study offers valuable insights into establishing sustainable and contextually appropriate distribution patterns that align with contemporary demands and situations.

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Methods

This research is a case study with a qualitative descriptive approach. We gathered the data from four districts, namely Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan and Sumenep Regency through interview and observation techniques. The interview engages three primary categories of informants: 1) Kiai as Islamic scholars with religious authority who, in this context, become zakāt recipients as well as managers, 2) Madurese people who spend zakāt to kiai, and 3) Community leaders. Additionally, we also conducted observations to gain insights into the routines and behaviors of Madurese community in the distribution of zakāt with a particular focus on allocating funds to kiai. The study encompassed observations conducted throughout multiple districts on Madura Island aiming to capture the diverse community habits that may exhibit regional variances. Additionally, to check the validity of the data, we use sources and methods triangulations. In analyzing the data, we use the concept of qualitative analysis technique by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana as can be seen in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. Analysis Technique by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana](image)

As can be seen in Figure 1, we use four steps that consist of data collection, data condensation, data display, and verification.

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Those four steps of analysis techniques are used interactively from the start of taking the data until the research result is revealed. Meanwhile, the primary objective of this study is to observe and analyze various approaches that the community employs in distributing zakāt to kiai. This includes the methods employed for zakāt collection which may involve direct collection, utilization of institutional channels, or electronic platforms.

Result and Discussion

Diversification of Kiai’s Position in Zakāt Distribution

Zakāt distribution in Madura is unique compared to that of other regions. The existence of kiai and the culture of Madurese societies are the reasons beyond this. For Madurese, kiai have very important roles because of their expertise in religious knowledge and their services in developing the community.26 Abdur Rouf, one of the informants, argued that zakāt in Madura is still distributed in a very traditional manner, mainly in a special case in which the muzakki are migrants. He further stated that:

“… The muzakki appoints an amīl to collect the mustahāqq and disburse the zakāt funds. This method is typically used by migrants. For example, when several relatives are working in Malaysia, a member of each family will appoint an amīl to collect money and then distribute it to the community.”27

It can be seen from Rouf’s statement that Madurese sometimes pointing the amīl by themselves. Amīl here tends to be culturally based rather formally one, and kiai are often the ones entitled to play the role of amīl. They do not pay the zakāt to a formal amīl zakāt agency. This statement is also emphasized by Asnawit as follows:

“… I also did the same thing. I pay my zakāt directly to one of aṣnāf, especially for those who need it. Since years

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27 Abdur Rouf, reading Quran teachers in Karang Penang Sampang, Interview, September 9, 2020
ago, I never pay my zakāt to the amīl even though some people here pay their zakāt to amīl…”

From those two interviews, we found that Madurese communities tend to pay zakāt by themselves, either by doing it directly or appointing someone whom they trust, namely kiai, when they are far away. It doesn’t mean that all of Madurese do the same thing, but it can represent how Madurese people put their trust in this specific matter. Besides those facts, it is found that some kiai in Madura also accept zakāt, as mentioned by Abd. Muni as follows:

“…In Bangkalan, some kiai accept zakāt from the community even though this is a debatable issue. My relative who is a kiai, for example, still accepts zakāt. It even becomes a compulsory thing to prefer kiai when spending zakāt. This aims to support the development of institutions (boarding schools) he is running…”

Abd. Muni’s testimony is in line with Asnawi, a kiai, who mentioned so:

“…some people still give me zakāt every year. Actually, I personally reject it with a certain reasoning such as by saying that it is better if they give their zakāt to any correct person rather than to me. I did this for both zakāt maal and fiṭrah…”

It is obvious that some kiai feel ok becoming zakāt recipients, while some others do not share the same. Another kiai in Pamekasan, A. Farid, further explained the reasons why some Madurese people keep giving zakāt to kiai like him. He further said as follows:

“Madurese people, mostly, still believe that their preference to pay zakāt to kiai is a correct decision. They argue that kiai is part aṣnāf group which is entitled to

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28 M. Asnawi, a Kiai in Yayasan Roudhotul Jannah Batu Putih, Sumenep, Interview.
29 Abd. Muni, a Kiai in Tanah Merah, Bangkalan, Interview.
receive zakāt. To be specific, they are categorized as fi sabīlillāh. Meanwhile, in Pamekasan itself, I predict there will be some kiais who are economically unstable. It means, as well, that kiai also has the right to get zakāt from masākin category.”

What A. Farid mentioned implies that kiai itself varies enough not only in the sense of how the scale they engage in social activities and religious doctrine, but also in economic situation. Therefore, it is highly assumed that there are three statuses of kiai in receiving the zakāt. Kiai accepts zakāt in term one of three conditions based on each circumstance, namely masākin, amil, and fi sabīlillāh.

Many kiai in Madura still fall into masākin category, particularly those serving this role without managing any Islamic boarding schools. They play a role in serving a langgar (small mosques) where the children learn to recite the Qur’an and basic daily worship, particularly doing prayers. Madurese people also consider this type of kiai when spending their zakāt rather than others. This is consistent with Zainulloh’s statement that the community will be very concerned about kiai who are still in economic insufficiency, particularly in spending zakāt fitrah. If a family has six members and they find the type of kiai nearby, they tend to give all of their family members’ zakāt fitrah to that one kiai.

For masākin, zakāt is deemed to be able to improve their lives and social conditions. However, this is only valid when the distribution is set for productive instead of consumptive ones. Some studies show how community businesses significantly affect mustahiq welfare. To ensure that the productive zakāt program runs smoothly and significantly improves the welfare of the poor, all Muslims,

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30 A. Farid Mawardi Sufyan, a Kiai in Pamekasan, Interview.
31 Zainulloh, Lecturer at Pondok Pesatren Miftahul Ulum College Panyeppen Pamekasan and Treasurer of Wali Songo Sampang Sharia Cooperative, Interview, April 19, 2022.
32 Hermanto, People of Karang Penang Sampang, Interview, March 12, 2022

including the government, amīl zakāt bodies, and Indonesian community, are required to work together to develop zakāt according to its potential so that it can be used for its intended purpose. This ideal scheme, unfortunately, is not implemented at the case of spending zakāt to Madurese kiai because it tends to fit with consumptive criteria.

The second is kiai’s position as amīl zakāt. This occurs, for instance, in the case of migrant workers as mentioned above. Most of the time, kiai do not declare themselves as an amīl, yet the community themselves trust him to find the right recipient(s) of the zakāt. If a kiai runs an Islamic boarding house, for example, then the zakāt spent on him can be redistributed to build new infrastructure for the boarding house, schools, etc. Whether or not a kiai manages an Islamic boarding school, this role puts him as a channeling person between zakāt payer and recipients so that it can be spent on the right target. Usually, when the funds collected by an amīl are only a few, the priority will be set to mustahiqq individuals even if for consumption purposes. However, if the funds are more than sufficient, they can be used for productive investments involving groups of people experiencing poverty. This is obviously in line with one of zakāt’s functions in poverty alleviation programs by channeling zakāt.

People’s preference for kiai as the amīl whom they trust typically happens in spending zakāt māl. This is mainly because compared to zakāt fītrah, zakāt māl is far more flexible and can suit each payer’s preference in the sense of form, volume, the way they spend, and the one whom they choose as the recipients. On the other hand, the preference closely relates to how Madurese obeys kiai and makes them good examples in various life aspects. According to Bustami, the obedience of Madurese people to kiai is particularly at morality and ukhrowi (hereafter) issues. When kiai tell them such knowledge about

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35 Schmidt, “Aesthetics of Authority: ‘Islam Nusantara’ and Islamic ‘Radicalism’ in Indonesian Film and Social Media.”

fortune and works, for instance, it will really influence how Madurese people’s way of thinking even some important life decisions.\(^\text{37}\)

Third, *kiai* as *fi sabīllīlāh* category. *Fi sabīllīlāh* is one of the multi-interpretative concepts among *mustahīq aṣnāf* of zakāt. In contrast to the other seven *aṣnāf*, *fi sabīllīlāh* seems to imply a wider meaning and it is not clear to whom and what it is aimed. The word *fi sabīllīlāh* which means ‘in the way of Allah’ requires a companion word to explain its scope and meaning.\(^\text{38}\) Otherwise, *fi sabīllīlāh* is only specific to people who fight to defend the religion of Allah which can be irrelevant when fighting is only limited for war situation. In fact, zakāt assets can be spent for building mosques, madrasas and the like for general interest. Therefore, the meaning of *fi sabīllīlāh* can be enlarged to various contexts, including *kiai* someone who fights in the religion of Allah SWT, either through da’wah or by positioning himself as someone who greatly contributes to education and people’s empowerment.

To some extent, *kiai*’s influence exceeds that of other formal leadership institutions because it covers religious, cultural, as well as social realms. More particularly, *kiai* hold a critical position in providing knowledge or information to develop people’s awareness of giving zakāt much more any formal studies such as lectures or seminars.\(^\text{39}\) Broader than that, *kiai* are the prominent figures in various affairs, such as being the one to consult with about religious issues, healing treatment medicine, fortune, wedding spouse, house building, farming, social conflict, career, politics, and other life issues. It makes very much sense, therefore, to choose *kiai* as the zakāt recipient according to their strategic roles in both religious and social matters.

In addition to showing differences in *kiai*’s individual situation, three statuses of *kiai* as zakāt recipients imply their various roles in society that make them deserve flexibility to accept zakāt,


whether as direct recipients or channels. However, when compared, it is *fi sabiillah* category that can be valid for *kiai* with whatever situations they deal with. Whether or not they are economically settled or running Islamic boarding schools, the role they play puts them as serving *fi sabiillah* mission either in education, society empowerment, guidance and consultation service, or others. Meanwhile, *nasākin* or *amīl* category depends on their own specific situation, particularly their economic condition and how trustworthy they are to be entitled as the *amīl* in mediating the *zakāt* payers and recipients. This furthermore shows how the decision to prefer *kiai* as *zakāt* recipient closely relates to both theological and social construction among Madurese people as the following section will explore.

**Theological and Social Constructions of Kiai as Zakāt Recipients**

Zakāt is one of the Islamic pillars that Muslim are familiar with. Although it is still in dispute whether it ranks third or fourth, obedience to paying zakāt among Madurese is relatively unquestionable, including that of zakāt *fiṭrah* and zakāt *māl*. Furthermore, spending zakāt is labeled a *māliyah* *ijtimā’īyyah* worship which has a very important, strategic and decisive position in terms of developing people’s welfare.\(^\text{40}\) The distribution of assets serves as a method and instrument for empowering people experiencing poverty and making it easier for them to gain access to capital for doing business.\(^\text{41}\) This concept is built from theological construction which people have to pay their zakāt to eight categories of people. They are known as *asnāf* groups.

Compared to other Islamic pillars, zakāt is the one that potentially impacts on people and society at general in a clear way, namely in poverty alleviation and welfare distribution. It also implies social care and solidarity among the riches and the poor. Not spending zakāt potentially leads to social sanction because this activity can be easily seen by others. Moreover, zakāt spending has a sort of

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\(^{40}\) Hakim, “Konsep *Asnāf* *Fi* Sabiillah: Kajian Komparatif Pendapat Ulama Salaf Daan Kontemporer.”

specific period, namely during Ramadhan month. This is initially only valid for zakāt fītrah, but other types of zakāt, specifically zakāt māl, also take place at the same moment. This is the one that makes zakāt intertwined with not only religious issues, but also cultural ones.

Consequently, diverse statuses of kiai as the zakāt recipients are also reviewed using those two aspects. Asnawi, one of the informants, mentioned that kiai as the zakāt recipients due to their status of fī sabīlillāh must be evaluated. He personally argues as follows:

“… KIAI receives zakāt (because deemed) as fī sabīlillāh category. In my point of view, it is recently not relevant enough. As time goes by, some kiai have recently done a bit differently from kiai in previous eras. Years ago, I do believe that they did not run any business so that they could focus on developing their Islamic institution and serving their people. However, recently, besides managing the boarding schools, some kiai also run any business and have some jobs. In my point of view, they cannot be categorized as fī sabīlillāh anymore. However, personally I cannot refuse when people spend the zakāt to me…”

Asnawi’s argument is in line with Abd. Muni’s statement as stated below:

“…In my region, it’s a bit different. Some Madurese still give their zakāt to kiai due to their opinion that kiai is a part of fī sabīlillāh or masākin. When the kiai have adequate economic income, they are not counted as masākin anymore. Rather, they are deemed as fī sabīlillāh and the zakāt is dedicated for the development of the institution they are running, not for the individual kiai…”

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42 K. Abd Wahid, Pengasuh Yayasan Al-Hafidz Kramat Pamekasan, Interview.
43 Asnawi, a Kiai in Yayasan, Interview.
44 Muni, a Kiai in Tanah Merah, Bangkalan, Interview.
Both Asnawi and Abd. Muni actually have a similar point of view about the shifting concept of both masākin and fi sabīlillāh. Using different accentuations, they argue that there is a shift in those concepts following kiai’s current situation. Some expand roles by running businesses and getting adequate income in addition to managing the boarding school. This type is considered not eligible any more in masākin, let alone to receive zakāt as individuals. However, as some people keep preferring them when spending zakāt, they are counted as fi sabīlillāh category instead due to their community service and Islamic education. This concept, however, is not free from polemic considering the emergence of the assumption that the level of fi sabīlillāh of nowadays kiai is relatively not the same or lower than the divine dedication that the kiai in previous era did.

Additionally, the shifting concept potentially occurs in amīl. When a kiai engages in any formal amīl or zakāt collector, the potential to gain much zakāt can increase due to the social capital and authority that the kiai holds. This is certainly advantageous for both kiai and amīl institutions because the preference on the institution will be higher than not involving kiai. On the other hand, by engaging at the amīl institution, kiai can enjoy some privileges, including access and income, even though that this involvement might reduce fi sabīlillāh scale beyond their activities. In fact, when this specific case happens, it is believed that in essence, kiai is not the main goal to receive the zakāt, but rather channeling persons to manage and distribute the zakāt for educational facilities such as madrasas, mosques and other social institutions.

In Islamic legal literature, this practice is still a dispute or of a different opinion. Some allow it, and others don’t allow it and even forbid it. The legal basis for the impermissibility of zakāt spending to infrastructure development comes from 4 madzhab (fiqh school) Imāms (leader or pioneer), namely Imam Syafi’i, Imam Maliki, Imam Hanafi and Imam Maliki. Asy-Sya’rani clearly stated that “the Imāms of four fiqh schools have agreed that it is not permissible to distribute zakāt for building mosques.”

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Apart from the controversy and no matter the shift had or might happen, the culture of paying zakāt has been shaped among Madurese. An informant named Hermanto commented below:

“...the distribution of zakāt fiṭrah in the form of money or rice to people experiencing poverty every Eid is through kiai as (they are considered) fi sabīlillāh.”47

Similar to Hermanto, Dari stated so:

“...in Karang Penang, the distribution of zakāt māl had become a custom that takes place in the last week of the fasting month. Most people like to distribute it to kiai, particularly the economically less fortunate ones. They hold both fi sabīlillāh and masākin categories...”48

Those excerpts highly suggest how important kiai’s position among Madurese people is, let alone in issues regarding zakāt. They are the leading figures to emulate and protect the community by giving and distributing zakāt to the right recipients. Madurese' obedience to kiai sometimes exceeds reasonable limits to the point where they do not dare to argue against or correct the kiai. Instead, they frequently accept kiai’s every word and deem their every deed as accurate. Therefore, criticizing a kiai can be disastrous because they tend to avoid kiai’s anger.49 Furthermore, kiai are still the main figures to direct and even control people’s activities. This also happens in zakāt distribution which only serves to meet the community’s needs in the short term, namely assisting in the purchase of necessities during Ramadan or Eid.50 This practice has become a culture and characteristic of Madurese Islam sabīlillāh.

47 Hermanto, People of Karang Penang Sampang, Interview.
48 M. Dari, Marketing Employee of Wali Songo Sampang Sharia Cooperative, Interview, September 12, 2022
49 Amir Syaefudin, Garis Besar Fiqih (Jakarta: Prenata Media, n.d.), 34.
Madurese motivation beyond their obedience to kiai, including preference to make them zakāt recipients with various entitlements,\textsuperscript{51} is actually a hope for getting blessings. They commonly believe that kiai can make it easier to get blessings because of the community service they run or the simple life they choose to live.\textsuperscript{52} This is a belief preserved across generations that become well maintained despite the criticism from recent generations. Kiai, on the other hand, keeps trying to build horizontal and vertical dimensions with fellow kiai and society so that their authority remains strong.

In a wider scope, Madurese culture of \textit{buppa’-bhabsu’-ghuru-rato} is still prevalently believed in society with the ghuru as one of the most respected persons. Ghuru here can include kiai as the one who provides information, knowledge, teaching to guidance. Therefore, it makes sense to find the distribution of zakāt to kiai in both Ramadhan month and every agricultural crop harvest. Before selling something from the harvest, Madurese people pay zakāt to kiai nearby. They consider it obligatory to prioritize zakāt to kiai before spending it anywhere else.\textsuperscript{53}

To sum up, even though Madurese people understand the religious doctrines or the theological construction of zakāt, in paying zakāt, they still consider their local culture. The local culture was formed by social construction which Madurese people tend to pay their zakāt to Kiai. They prioritize giving the zakāt to Kiai as part of \textit{aṣnāf} rather than the other \textit{aṣnāf} groups if in their societies there exists a Kiai. Considering both theological and social contexts beyond zakāt spending to kiai, it therefore needs reconsideration so that the distribution of zakāt is more directed towards creating long-term benefits for people and the welfare of people who really need it. Having that in mind, the purpose of zakāt is more likely to be achieved. Certainly, the role of kiai is very much strategic in driving the change from the consumptive and short-term advantages of zakāt into long-term productive ones.

\textsuperscript{51} K. Muhammad Taufiq, Member of NU Branch Board Tlanakan Subdistrict Pamekasan Madura, \textit{Interview}, January 20, 2021.
\textsuperscript{53} K. Abdul Haq Sawqy, Student Association Board of Nadhatul Ulama Pamekasan Madura, \textit{Interview}, March 5, 2021.
Conclusion

Madurese community has established the status of the kiai as a recipient of zakāt out of gratitude and reverence for kiai’s educational and social contributions to the community. This practice also reflects the community’s aspirations for divine favors. The categorization of kiai as mustahiqq zakāt encompasses three distinct groups. The initial category is referred to as “amīl,” which is typically occupied by kiai due to their reputation as individuals possessing the highest level of trustworthiness in the distribution of zakāt. Another significant aspect is the kiai’s role as fi sabīlillāh, encompassing their responsibilities as the progenitor, enforcer, and advocate for religious principles. The third place is occupied by kiai commonly seen as impoverished or masākin. The Kiai who are regarded as the most esteemed masākin in this role are mostly those recognized as ghuru tolang, or the instructors who initially introduced the Qur’an. This research is limited to the three positions attached to Kyai as zakāt mustahiqq. However, we have not yet seen the impact of these three positions. So, it is very necessary to carry out research to explore the impact of this position on the sharpness of social values given by society to Kiai.

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