

Existence of *Alkhairaat* on Central Sulawesi Politics: Opportunity of Alhairat friendly political parties

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Abstract— This article aims to examine the dynamics of political Islam especially the existence of *Alkhairaat's* politic in Central Sulawesi. It is chosen due to an increasing influence of *Alkhairat* as a great organization. The performance and organizational strength of *Alkhairat* as a friendly political party may give the hints of the future trajectory of political Islam in Central Sulawesi. In 2015, the gubernatorial election of Central Sulawesi shows that *Alkhairaat* supported one governor candidate openly. This direct involvement was never seen previously on the political attention. Interest became a significant determinant of it. However, these organizations were approached by the local politicians to gain the sympathy of the people. The emergence of Muslim groups has aroused an expansion of political influence that attracted broad attention from the large Muslim population. It leads to multiple ties and interactions that involved many people. Even though the organizations are getting more acknowledgment, a wide variety of 'translocal' are challenging political imaginary of Muslim politics. This research uses the qualitative approach that presents an analysis using the theory of Patronage and Clientelism. Based on these findings, the research further discusses and applies the opportunity of *Alkhairat* to build a good relationship with political parties as well as the implications of the case study on this research.

Keywords –Patronage and clientelism, local politics, political opportunity

I. INTRODUCTION

As a country that embraces the principle of democracy, Indonesia guarantees the freedom of every individual or group in determining their political choice through the implementation of elections both at the national and regional levels. In every election, the support from individuals and groups to one particular candidate has become a natural thing. Similarly, in the gubernatorial election of Central Sulawesi, something rare happened during the history of provincial level election in Central Sulawesi. One of the big Islamic organizations in Indonesia, especially in the eastern part of Indonesia named *Alkhairaat*, through its chairman showed the support to one of the Central Sulawesi Governor Candidate, Rusdi Mastura (familiarily called by people in Palu as Cudy).

The domicile of *Alkhairaat* is in Palu, Central Sulawesi. The chairman, Habib Seggaf Aljufri, said:

At this time the best son of Central Sulawesi is only Rusdi Mastura, if Cudy is not winning, *Alkhairaat* will be embarrassed. For me, being lost or win is the second thing. The most important thing is assertiveness, to tell truths. It needs the leader that cares about society and can resolve the problem in the area, and I see Cudy can do it.

This support became a good news for Rusdi Mastura that would participate in the election, which means this significant influence of *Alkhairaat* gave a lot of voters to Cudy. The support that was provided by *Alkhairaat* to Cudy came without a particular reason. Hence, it becomes interesting for the researchers to analyze this phenomenon. How could a big organization like *Alkhairaat* give its support to Cudy openly? It is the first time for *Alkhairaat* to do so. So, the researchers are also interested in finding out the opportunities obtained by *Alkhairaat* after giving support to one of Central Sulawesi Governor and Vice Governor candidates.

II. LITERATURE AND THEORY

Some research examines the role of *Alkhairat* in Central Sulawesi such as Sulaiman [1]; Godal [2] Rasyid, L. A [3] in "The Role of *Alkhairaat* in the Socio-cultural Changes," and Syamsuri [4] in research about political communication. Different from the previous research, this study tries to find out the different side of *Alkhairaat* to explain its involvement in Central Sulawesi politics.

This study uses the theory of Patronage and Clientelism to answer the research questions. According to Shefter in Sukmajati [5], patronage is defined as a profit sharing among politicians to distribute something individually to electors, workers or activists of the campaign, to get support from them (Sukmajati, 2015) [5]. Patronage is the giving of cash, goods, services and other economic advantages (such as the employment or contract of the project). They are distributed by politicians, including the profit given to individuals (for

instance, envelopes containing cash) and to a group or community (for example, a new soccer field for youth in the village). Patronage can be in the form of cash or goods that are given to voters who come from the personal fund of the politician (for example, in polling) or from the public fund (for example, pork barrel projects financed by the Government). In his book “The politics of money in Indonesia, the Patronage of the National Legislative Clientelism in 2014” Edward and Mada (2015) [6] elaborates the relationship between patronage and clientelism as follows, patronage refers to the material or profit distributed by politicians to voters or supporters. In contrast, the clientelism relates to the character of the relationship between politicians and the supporters. The definition of clientelism contains three things. First, the contingency or reciprocity; the awarding of goods or services from one party (the patron or client) is a direct response to the granting of the advantages of the other side. Second, hierarchical; there is an emphasis on the relationship between the unbalanced powers of the patron with the client. Third, aspects of repetition; clientelistic exchange takes place continuously.

On the other side, it relates to the influence of the local political act. As a concept, the meaning of political influence can be explained as follows:

Political influence is the ability of private individuals and groups to influence, condition, shape, and thereby control the sound decisions and actions of those who possess the formal-legal authority to take these decisions and actions. Such individuals and groups exercise significant influence over particular policy decisions made by particular government offices and institutions. These individuals and groups have acquired and are exercising that form of political power called "political influence [7]. (Way, 2012)

Floyd Hunter and Frederich Cark (2008) [8] explain that power is the way of understanding the subject matter and its particular influence. Sometimes the influence has a psychological factor that can touch the heart of those who are influenced, so it often can influence people successfully. However, the influence is usually the only factor that affects the actions of people.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This research mainly utilizes the qualitative method to analyze the condition of *Alkhairaat* after supporting a candidate on the 2015 local election by seeing what opportunities *Alkhairaat* can get by giving their political support. The research tries to look at (1) the opportunity received by *Alkhairaat* after the 2015 election in terms of the relationship with the political actor, (2) the dynamics and existence of *Alkhairaat* in the local election, (3) the explanation on the influence of *Alkhairaat* to the politician in the election. Data is classified into primary and secondary data. The primary data is collected by in-depth interview with the stakeholders related to this research, especially the

member of *Alkhairaat* organization in local government. We analyzed the collected data by using the theories of Patronage and Clientelism.

As the research is required to answer the research questions, the qualitative research approach can directly go to the object that will be examined to get clear answers. Qualitative research methods are used to examine the conditions of natural objects, in which the researcher is a key of an instrument. This study combines the data analysis and the results of the qualitative research that emphasized to the significance of generalization [9]. (Sugiyono, 2007)

The qualitative research method is a method that aims to understand the phenomenon that is experienced by the subject of the research, for examples, behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions, holistically, and by means of the description. They can be in the form of words and language, in a particular natural context by utilizing a variety of natural methods.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Opportunity of *Alkhairaat* after the 2015 local election in term of building good relationship with the politicians

In the regional election on 9th of December 2015, there were two candidates for the gubernatorial election; they were Rusdy Mastura and Ikhwan Datu Adam. During the election, a reputable organization expressed its support to one of the candidates. *Alkhairaat* provided support to Cudy with no one knowing the reason behind this support. Based on the interview, a respondent mentioned, “his support to Cudy is because he didn’t agree with the other candidates, he talked as the chairman of *Alkhairaat*” (Habib, 2017) [10]. Moreover, it was considered based on the situation that Sudarto was serving as the legislative member and he felt disappointed and betrayed by the candidate that he had chosen in the past. Indirectly, the person would change his position as the head of legislative and then replaced by the person who is not Muslim.

A supporting statement for Cudy was stated by the chairman of *Alkhairaat* in issuing an Edict (*Maklumat*) that contained support to the candidate of Cudy and Ikhwan. He asked *Alkhairaat* followers to choose the candidate in the election of 2015. The political campaigns were also combined into the celebration of Islamic New Year. Besides, the campaign was attended by thousands of *Alkhairaat* and main boards of the organization. Ummar Assegaf stated that “supporting the candidate was natural and purely for the benefits certain peoples” (2016) [11]. Moreover, the situation showed that a democratic system is common if a mass organization gave support to the candidate in the election. Meanwhile, it was an unusual phenomenon if *Alkhairaat* supported the candidate of the governor in term of the election.

Besides, *Alkhairaat* has essential roles to be involved in the election. It might influence the existence of the organization if the candidate was elected in the election. Some reasons for *Alkhairaat* to give their support to Cudy was because his

performance as the mayor of Palu City has brought benefits to them. Such as establishing Islamic tourism in Alkhairaat areas, establishing the name of Alkhairaat founder as the name of the local airports in Palu and as well as priority distribution of the local budget from the government for Alkhairaat operational budgeting. It is beneficial to any Islamic centre and operational activities. However, there might one particular reason behind the group's open support to the politician.

It should be noted that the support that had been given by this organization was based on consensus during the organization's national meeting (*Rapat Kerja Nasional, Rakernas*) and the decision was also announced to all members and main board of the organization.

B. *The Dynamics Existence of Alkhairaat in the Central Sulawesi Local Election*

The support given by *Alkhairaat* to Cudy through edict proves the existence *Alkhairaat's* political constellation in Central Sulawesi. When *Alkhairaat* declared to provide support to Cudy, many people considered that was an unusual phenomenon. It is because previously, *Alkhairaat* had never given support to the politicians openly in the election. The existence of *Alkhairaat* makes politician want to be closer to support them. Unfortunately, it does not show up to the public.

Alkhairaat, as a prominent organization in Central Sulawesi, has a significant influence on people around the area. The influence of *Alkhairaat* can be seen by many contributions and assets of *Alkhairaat* in education, *da'wa*, and social activities. The number of *Alkhairaat* assets now is more than hundred thousand assets. They consist of 1585 *Madrasahs*, 88 Boarding Schools, 1 University, 1 Hospital, 1 News Paper and 2 Radio Stations. Numbers of assets owned by *Alkhairaat* caused a financing problems. According to Lukman (2016) [12], every year *Alkhairaat* spend 600-800 million rupiahs to finance all their activities. However, the cost is not sufficient to fund all of them.

Currently, *Alkhairaat* requires about 1.9 billion rupiahs to finance all their activities (Lukman, 2016) [12]. To cover it, every year *Alkhairaat* get operational fund from Palu Government for about 500 million rupiahs. The fund was given by Palu Government when Cudy acts the Mayor of Palu in periods 2005-2010 and 2010-2015.

The support from Cudy to *Alkhairaat* was really helpful for the continuity of *Alkhairaat* activities. If Palu government could not provide the fund for *Alkhairaat*, they will experience around 950 million deficit every year (Lukman, 2016) [12]. Operational costs support supplied by Palu Government during Cudy period made *Alkhairaat* feel that Cudy has a high respect to *Alkhairaat*. It lead to a closeness between Cudy and *Alkhairaat* which is triggered by Cudy respects to *Alkhairaat*. Therefore, *Alkhairaat* gave support to Cudy openly. According to Lukman (2016) [12], Cudy's consideration to *Alkhairaat* makes *Alkhairaat* feel grateful for it. Considering that Cudy is not a person having a background related to or graduated from *Alkhairaat*.

V. DISCUSSION

The existence of *Alkhairaat* has changed the Islamic situation among the people of Central Sulawesi. The other Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah have a strong influence on education and sociality. Nevertheless, *Alkhairaat* has a powerful influence in the society, especially in the eastern part of Indonesia.

A significant influence becomes an intense fascination. It frequently becomes attractive for those who get support from the great organization. In this case, the norm that emerged as strong fascination happened simultaneously in the regional election. The potential sources when the elections occur when many politicians come and approach an influential organization. It was the way how Central Sulawesi provincial government under Longki leadership showed to the Central Sulawesi societies that *Alkhairaat* makes government become more attractive to the influential organization.

Lukman also explained that the support by *Alkhairaat* was a spirit for Cudy, remembering that Cudy's only had three months to prepare himself for the election. Another reason is also intended to make the political situation became more democratic. There were no other candidates previously to oppose incumbent candidate, Longki Djangola. According to Lukman, this thing was becoming a political study for the people on how the democracy's situation was formed by the chairman of *Alkhairaat*. However, its many aspects should be considered in measuring the condition of this phenomenon, such as the possibility to get support in winning the local election.

Then it can be convinced that the closeness between those two sides will be intertwined continuously. If he was elected to be the Central Sulawesi governor, the concerns that Cudy has done would be continued. In other words, the supports that will be provided to *Alkhairaat* will be continued. It could be every year that *Alkhairaat* will get the funds allocation regularly from the Central Sulawesi government. It was pointed out that *Alkhairaat* will have a chance to get support after the local leaders' election if Cudy became the Central Sulawesi governor.

VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation above, the existence of *Alkhairaat* in Central Sulawesi politics become strongly influence and fascination to the politicians for those who will get support in the election. This phenomenon may cause the internal problem which makes the organization involved in the political practice. Regarding democracy system, it is very usual for individual or groups to support politicians openly. However, it can be unusual when the organization previously did not involve the political practice but suddenly, give support to the politician and both take advantages from that. As a big organization that has many contributions to the societies, what *Alkhairaat* did is reasonable. Based on what *Alkhairaat* did to Central Sulawesi societies, government should appropriately pay attention to help them.

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