

Socio-Intellectual Construction of Mandailing Clerics in the 20th Century and Their Contributions

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Abstract

Ulama play a crucial role as agents of social control through their knowledge and leadership in society. In the Mandailing region, the presence of *Ulama* is significant and has contributed meaningfully to the development of Islamic scholarship in the archipelago. Among them, three prominent figures, Shaykh Abdul Halim Khatib, Shaykh Syihabuddin, and Shaykh Abdul Qadir Bin Shabir, stand out with intellectual capacities comparable to other renowned *Nusantara Ulama*. This study aims to analyze their scientific networks and intellectual social constructions. Using a qualitative approach and library research methods, including documentation and content analysis, the research explores the underlying patterns of their scholarly engagement. Findings show that Mandailing *Ulama* focuses more on community movements than written scholarship. This is largely because the local society values *Ulama* as religious scholars and traditional and social leaders. Their active involvement in communal life limits the time and opportunity for writing. Nonetheless, the intellectual focus of these three *Ulama* centers on fundamental Islamic theology, particularly the 20 attributes of Allah (sifat 20). Shaykh Syihabuddin is especially noted for his contribution to the *Naqshbandiyyah Sufi* order, which he elaborates in his book *Fath al-Qalb*. This work extends beyond theoretical insights into practical spirituality. Similarly, Shaykh Abdul Halim Khatib was deeply engaged in Sufi practice and reportedly taught such knowledge at the *Mustafawiyah Pesantren*. The three *Ulama* exemplify a blend of spiritual leadership and theological scholarship rooted in the Mandailing context.

Keywords

Clerics; Intellectual Construction; Socio

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1. INTRODUCTION

The urgency of writing has also been mentioned in the Qur'an through a fairly unique concept. At least in the Qur'an, we can see diction related to "writing/writing" through 3 terms: *kataba*, *qara'a*, and *Qalam* (Yumiarty et al., 2021). Words have various meanings according to the context and derivation of the sentence. Apart from that - because it is not the focus of this writing - since the Qur'an was revealed, Allah has outlined for humans one "obligation" to form a new civilization, namely, reading, writing, and its technology.

In a more classical context, for example, the writing of the Qur'an became an important milestone



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to make it a subject that can be studied from various scientific angles. From a linguistic perspective, for example, only with the existence of the Qur'an in written form can it be translated accurately according to its true meaning (Jasafat, 2022). In terms of meaning, it seems quite difficult to interpret the Qur'an if it is only delivered verbally; the masterpieces of the *mufasssirin* found today cannot be separated from the aspect of reviewing the literal Qur'an. Thus, the written tradition has many benefits, especially in developing science.

To describe the productivity or tradition of writing in the context of Indonesianness, Aceh is the most fair initial spotlight for this. As one of the early centers of Islamic studies in the archipelago, Aceh produced many scholars and works, such as Nuruddin al-Raniry and Abd Ra'uf al-Singkily (Ichsan et al., 2021). Azyumardi Azra mentioned, no less than 29 works were written by Nuruddin al-Raniry, while Abd Ra'uf al-Singkily has 22 works. The writings have various themes, such as Islamic jurisprudence, Sufism, the *Koran*, and faith (Aliyah, 2018).

Meanwhile, seen in a smaller area, namely the Mandailing area, Islam also developed in this area. In many literatures, it is mentioned that Islam entered the Mandailing area through 3 (three) stages, first, during the period before the Paderi of West Sumatra, which is often mentioned, the approach in this is displayed in the form of *tarekat*, especially the development of *naqsyabandiyah*; second, during the paderi era, this movement was more on the invasion of regional conquests using the *fiqh* approach; third, the post-paderi period, this movement was more massive and complex where the presence of preachers with various approaches, from *tarekat*, *fiqh*, to the emergence of Islamic organizations that had begun to mature at that time.

Ulama with their knowledge become a social control within society. The statements of the *Ulama* are used as the basis for important considerations for taking legal action. Therefore, the fatwa of the *Ulama* can also be a "scientific reference" to be explored further (Afandi, 2011). In certain situations, *Ulama* feel called to write down recipes for the spiritual needs of society through writing, which lasts relatively longer to be studied compared to oral traditions.

Not enough to stop there, another thing that is urgent to write among scholars is the movement of changes in the method of preaching, which is very fast, by writing will be free without any obstacles to pour out the contents of thoughts and ideas (Iswanto, 2013). With writing, he does not have to interact directly with society; it is intended for people in his time and the next generation. For the next period, the presence of writing is interpreted as a message or picture of thought, which can then be interpreted or used as an identification mark for the writer.

Studies on Indonesian scholars have been widely described in the academic world, but their content tends to be more universal and cannot touch the deepest part of scholars in a narrower space.

These studies, in turn, are stagnant and ignore the role of local scholars who also have a large role in contributing thoughts, movements, and societal influences. Mandailing scholars are one of the many regions with minimal studies, so their great names become a small contribution to the encyclopedia of Indonesian scholars.

In fact, the quantification of Mandailing scholars is no less in number and has a role in the path of Islamic knowledge in the archipelago, just to mention some names, among the most important are Sheikh Syihabuddin Nasution (d. 1967), Sheikh Musthafa Husein, Sheikh Ja'far Abdul Kadir, Haji Ali Husen Siregar, Haji Maraluddin Rangkuti, Haji Ja'far Abdul Wahab, Fakhruddin Razi Harahap, Haji Yahya Lubis 5, Sheikh Ahmad Zein (d. 1950), Sheikh Abdul Halim bin Ahmad Khatib Al-Mandili who is more familiarly called Tuan Naposo, Sheikh Syamsuddin bin Abdurrahman Al-Mandili (d. 1991), Sheikh Ja'far Abdul Wahab, Sheikh Abdul Wahab, Sheikh Abadul Manan, Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad, Sheikh Muhammad Nur, Sheikh Kasim, Sheikh Abdul Kadir, Shaykh Mukmin, Shaykh Sulaiman, Shaykh Malim Itam, Muhammad Rasyid, Muhammad Saleh, Shaykh Ahmad Daud Siregar (d. 1981), Shaykh Mukhtar Harahap (d. 1948), Shaykh Muhamad Daud Hasibuan (d. 1965), Shaykh Muhamad

Yunus from Sibuhuan, Shaykh Ustman from Barumun, and Lobe Umar from Barumun (Dahlan, 2018).

According to its characteristics, historical studies fall into the category of qualitative research, so the data found will be described as a narrative descriptive report. Moleong said that activities in qualitative research must be continuous, interactive until the research data is saturated. Continuing the explanation of data processing above, the interpretation of the data found will be written in two forms: first, historiographic, and second, content analysis (Moleong, 2016).

The author will not describe knowledge dynamics from this study's abovementioned series of names. This research study reduces Mandailing scholars' knowledge through their written works. In this case, the author focuses on 3 Mandailing scholars whose figures and roles are quite familiar in society: first, Syaikh Abdul Halim Khatib; Second, Syaikh Syihabuddin; third, Shaykh Abdul Qadir bin Shabir. In his research, Mardan Umar finds that each educational institution has moderate character values: 1) *tawasuth*, 2) *tawazun*, and 3) *ta'addul/I'tidal*. These values are embodied in learning to form a moderate Muslim character and become a mercy to the world (*rahmatan lil alamin*) (Umar et al., 2024). In his research, Asari finds that the new state-sponsored curriculum, *Al Washliyah Madrasa*, loses the ability to produce young generations of '*ulamâ*'. The 1990s witnessed the scarcity of '*ulamâ*' and became more alarming ever since; nonetheless, a viable strategy has yet to meet the challenge (Asari, 2019). Meanwhile, Iswanto studied Burhanuddin's book, which concluded that scholars always work hand in hand with rulers in addition to developing knowledge (Iswanto, 2013). Fadil et al. found the *mufasssir* in their interpretation using twenty-two books, three *mu'jams*, several Islamic references written by Muslims and orientalist, and even the Bible. While the method of interpretation uses *manhaj tahlili*, the interpretation style is social (*al-adab al-ijtimâ'i*) (Fadil & Suparwany, 2022). The book written by Azyumardi Azra, which describes the Nusantara *Ulama* network, also does not discuss this research (Azra, 2013). The curriculum at the Mustofawiyah Islamic boarding school has also been studied (Aziz et al., 2022). However, it has not yet explained the three scholars' knowledge and intellectual social construction.

This search focuses on searching for written works in various forms such as books, handwritten, printed media, clippings, etc., to be interpreted thematically and textually in each study's content. Then, another section traces how the writings contribute, are used, or studied in today's society.

2. METHODS

To continue this step, the researcher uses two methodologies to represent the writing tradition of 20th-century Mandailing scholars: an intellectual history approach and a content analysis approach. Following the development of historical study methodology, in the first part above, the researcher's view of the writing tradition of Mandailing scholars is traced using a synchronic and diachronic approach at the same time. This opens up a wider space in the analysis and systematically arranges events according to the time they occurred. In contrast, the content analysis in the second part above is intended to provide a thematic interpretation of the writing tendencies of 20th-century Mandailing scholars.

Data collection, or more familiarly known as heuristics, is the initial step in searching for historical sources related to the research topic. Writings written directly by 20th Century Mandailing *Ulama*, in this case Shaykh Abdul Halim Khatib, Shaykh Abdul Qadir bin Shabir, and Shaykh Syihabuddin. The writings may be in handwriting, manuscripts, personal notes, articles, papers, online or printed media, or those published officially. In addition to the primary sources mentioned above, researchers will also search the written traditions of Mandailing *Ulama* through supporting writings, such as articles, journals, papers, theses, dissertations, or related quotations (Pranoto, 2020). This is done by researchers to facilitate the collection of writings by the scholars above and to help reduce the data collected.

Another step that researchers are trying to take is to reach as many people as possible related to the scholars being studied as a form of confirmation of research data.

After the research data is collected, the next step is to select, categorize, group, and critique the sources obtained. Categories and groupings are intended to select and sort data that explains the theme, while source critique filters sources unrelated to the research theme (Mertens, 2009). Generally, the stages of processing this research data are carried out in source critique and data verification.

According to its characteristics, historical studies fall into the category of qualitative research, so the data found will be described as a narrative descriptive report (Umiarso, 2022). Those activities in qualitative research must continue interactively until the research data is saturated (Moleong, 2016). Continuing the explanation of data processing above, the interpretation of the data found will be written in two forms: first, historiographic, and second, content analysis (Husnullail & Jailani, 2024).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

The Mandailing scholars who are the object of this, as mentioned above, are Abdul Halim Khatib, Abdul Qadir Bin Shabir Al-Mandili, and Shihabuddin (Nasution), who have works as listed in the table below:

Table 1. List of the book

Name	Title of Book
Abdul Halim Khatib	Kasyfu al-Gummah
	Bayan al-Syafi
	Sairut al-Thalabah
	Tazkiyah al-Sahy
Shihabuddin	Adab al-Muridin
	Fath al-Qalb
Abdul Qadir bin Shabir	Fathul al-Rahman Fi Aqaid al-Iman

Abdul Qadir bin Shabir

Author's Note: Sheikh Abdul Qadir bin Shabir once wrote the book *Fath Al-Rahman Fi Aqaidil Iman*. This book was written in 1342 H in Egypt. The original text of this book is 10 pages in Arabic Jawi/Malay. As a formal writing, the book *Fath al-Rahman* is relatively simple, or it could be that this book is a summary of him when he received education in the Middle East. It is said that a summary is not entirely true, considering the neatness of this writing is printed neatly. There is seriousness in the aspect of its production.

If assumed as a small note, this book is quite surprising that it can still be found and maintained in various institutions in several regions. The information is that this book is indeed popular in the neighboring country, Malaysia. This book is quite sought after as a connoisseur of manuscripts, although it has never been used as a scientific reference in its studies.

Referring to the year this book was published, it seems that the direction of writing this book can be guessed, or it can also be examined why the theme chosen in this book is about the Science of *Tawhid* (faith). It could be because the tendency and concentration of his knowledge is the science of tauhid, or because it is based on observations of the social interests of the Indonesian people at that time, which required the strengthening of Islamic faith. These aspects are certainly not mentioned in the book of

Fath *al-Rahman* and are not found in other studies. However, if associated with the writings of scholars of the same age as him in the land of Mandailing, such as Syaikh Musthafa Husein (founder of the Mustafawiyah Islamic Boarding School), in his will, he also mentioned to follow the understanding of *ahl sunnah wa al-jama'ah*, he even recommended frankly to follow the understanding of *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) as a reference for faith. Messages that can be compared considering the attention are not much different.

Abdul Halim Khatib

As is commonly known, Syaikh Abdul Halim Khatib became a pioneer in leading the Mustafawiyah Islamic Boarding School after the leadership of Syaikh Mustafa Husein, as the heir to the knowledge of his predecessor, Syaikh Abdul Halim Khatib, was also attached to another scientific lineage in the nomenclature of scholars in Mandailing, Tuan Naposo. This title became popular in the title because of the recognition of the community and the decree of scholars in the Mandailing area to continue the previous *Ulama*, who was called Tuan Natobang (Syaih Mustafa Husein).

At the same time, Islam, along with its knowledge, has spread in the Land of Mandailing, even at the stage of counter-productive dialogue. Two things that he noticed at that time; first, a study of the intellectual condition of students who began to look for the roots of knowledge or sources of knowledge and the emergence of issues of Islamic understanding, such as about *qunut* dawn prayer, the number of *rakaats* of *tarawih* prayer, the problem of *ushalli*, and so on; second, the same issues also emerged among the general public but at different frequencies. That is why he saw the tendency of the Mandailing Natal community in religious knowledge in the fields of *fiqh* and *fiqh* of worship. Sheikh Abdul Halim Khatib immediately responded to this condition by simplifying the discussion of the developing issues by compiling four books, namely, Sayfut Thalabah, Bayan Al-Syafi, Kasf Al-Qummah, and Tadzkirah Al-Syahi. Each of these books has different characteristics of study.

Shaykh Syihabuddin

Shaykh Syihabuddin's most popular movement, if traced from a social perspective, was as a figure of the *Naqshbandiyah Tarikat*, which was quite popular in Mandailing Natal. This practice continued with his son, Shaykh Sulaiman, and then with his grandson, Shaykh Mulkan bin Yusuf. Even though this movement is the most well-known social movement of Shaykh Syihabuddin, there are also written works thought to have been the basic material for him in providing religious views to society. Of course, the practice of *Tarikat* is not a basic study in the Islamic religion; *Tarikat* is precisely considered a high-level practice in Islamic teachings. Following *Tarikat* is only permitted if someone has mastered the *ushul* matters in Islam, such as the basic teachings of monotheism, jurisprudence, and other authentic practices contained in the hadith of the Prophet

Discussion

To mention the progress of Islam in the classical era, it is rather difficult to ignore the element of science. Mehdi Nakoseten in his book "Contribution of Islam to the Western Intellectual World (trans.);" mentions a series of scholars who have contributed, all of which contributed to the aspect of science. The selection he made almost did not mention a single name of a ruler as someone who contributed to scientific civilization.

The method used by Mehdi Nakoseten. After mentioning the names of a series of names, he reviewed the contribution by mentioning the names of books the scholars had written. To complete the data, he also provided a series of library names as places to accommodate the development of science (Zailani, 2018).

At that, it can be seen how the previous society greatly appreciated writing. Then, the West used the books as the most sought-after "treasure". Reading became a tradition recognized as important as a transformation of science. Books are also considered a container for pouring out the essence of thought,

so books are not empty information that is poured out carelessly. Awareness of science is important to the West because it is the standard of Islamic progress at that time (Akbar & Ismail, 2018).

If not mentioning the period of decline of Islam, after the collapse of the Abbasids, Islam then came with a new face. Islamic civilization, which had been recorded as advanced with science indicators, began to change color with counter-power and community issues (Azra, 2002). The conflict of power, in turn, ignored scientific indicators, which affected the decline of Islamic civilization; no more scholars were experts in geology, physics, mathematics, etc. This phenomenon, of course, occurred because there was no more accommodation of power, such as Caliph Harun Al-Rasyid, to support the development of science, there was no more book publishing, no more library upgrades, *madrasah* began to lag, and so on (Azra, 2013).

Relating this context to Mandailing scholars, there appear to be similarities and differences that can be mentioned as a continuation of the story of the decline of Islam mentioned above. The majority of experts say that the communication aspect is the strongest in the socio-cultural tradition of society. The language of instruction in Mandailing is very thick, which can be used as an obstacle across the sciences. Therefore, it is not surprising that the introduction of science in general uses Mandailing (Pulungan, 2018). The language factor is a supporting factor and another factor in mentioning it as one of the shortcomings in scientific transformation.

The presence of *Ulama* in the Mandailing Natal area is different compared to Middle Eastern ulama. The majority of Mandailing *Ulama* became known due to the movement and were then appreciated by the community as a figure in the religious field. As another introduction, *Ulama* are not the only figures in the Mandailing community because there are also traditional figures with a central function in communication instruments (Fadil & Suparwany, 2022). *Ulama* are present in the community and their existence is recognized because they have affiliations with certain institutions, such as educational institutions (Islamic boarding schools), religious studies, and other religious movements such as Al-Quran memorization institutions (Basit et al., 2023).

The presence of Mandailing *Ulama*, especially in the 20th century, is generally familiar because they have two access points: an intellectual network with Middle Eastern ulama; second, they have access to translate traditional books. These two aspects are advantages; The first is that they prioritize scientific lines, where the Middle East is considered the source of Islam, while the second is also considered authoritative because of their ability to access information in the book. These two characters of accessibility of *Ulama* then have similarities in the character of dissemination, namely, becoming a mouthpiece for Middle Eastern ulama. The teachings of Islam that are disseminated often refer to books of heritage from the Middle East. This practice is seen so massively, starting from the level of formal society in the world of education, such as Islamic boarding schools and other religious institutions, to the delivery of Islam to the general public. For educated people, *Ulama* build a curriculum of religious studies based on the format of Middle Eastern studies and literature, or at least follow the traditions of other Islamic boarding schools (Mahdali et al., 2022). Islamic boarding schools' books of *fiqh*, *tasawuf*, *nahwu*, *saraf*, and other science tools generally take Middle Eastern literature (Iswanto, 2013). These books are taught and used as standards of religious knowledge in Islamic boarding schools. Likewise, with religious education for the general public, the pattern of delivering religious material often refers to books of heritage from the Middle East. This condition is quite common from year to year in the tradition of the Mandailing Natal ulama. At the stage of the educated people above, mastery of these traditional books became the highest caste of knowledge; there were almost no new books produced locally, and then used in Islamic boarding schools as formal studies (Siregar et al., 2023). In this, two things are important, first, the words of the scholars are used as fatwas because they are considered authoritative based on mastery of the books and based on the Middle Eastern scientific line, and; second, the traditional books of Islamic boarding schools often become limitations to the breadth of knowledge and become the only standard of truth of religious information (Pulungan, 2018). Of course, there are many more credible books, such as *fiqh*, *tarikh*, and *tasawuf*, from Middle Eastern scholars, compared to

the standard books that have been maintained until now. Still, because of the accessibility and standards created, the algorithm of the religious curriculum has not moved from time to time. In line with that, one aspect that makes this phenomenon mentioned is that the Mandailing community in the 20th century was not a society with a tradition of readers. Returning to the initial aspect, the available readings are the traditional books; another supporting aspect is the difficulty in accessing information due to language limitations (Salamuddin, 2019).

In the 20th century, the phenomenon of Mandailing society towards reading has indeed become unique to observe. One thing that is quite encouraging is that the interest, enthusiasm for study, and religious practice are quite high in Mandailing Natal. At the same time, the stagnation of religious knowledge is limited to practice originating from the teacher's fatwas. If not active learners, this teacher's fatwa is the only source of binding law in argumentation and religious practice. Fanaticism and stagnation of religious knowledge in Islamic literature show a very positive phenomenon (Abdurrisal et al., 2022). However, at the same time, the scholars in Mandailing did not revitalize Islamic literature as the classical scholars did in the past. Very few scholars wrote down their knowledge, and very few Mandailing scholars tried to elaborate on the works of previous scholars to be used as general references in educational institutions and society. To be mentioned, writing, Mandailing scholars in the 20th century were accustomed to providing small notes on the edge of the turats book as comments (Asari, 2019). Methodologically, commenting on written works with scientific standards is part of the development of knowledge (*tahqiq*). Still, it seems that this practice is not continued to be recapitulated, so that it is scattered, and in turn, the notes follow the book's condition. When it changes hands, the book will be applied by its new owner, until the marginal notes disappear.

The three scholars who are the objects of this research study are a series of names of 20th-century Mandailing scholars who wrote their thoughts. As mentioned above, the writings contain basic materials in Islamic education, such as basic *fiqh*, basic *tauhid*, and *tasawuf*. The next question that should be considered is whether these writings can survive and exist in formal education and non-formal studies. This study reflects, especially for the Mandailing Natal community, on accommodating the thoughts of the scholars.

If the previous section has reviewed the theme of their thoughts, then the revitalization of the thoughts of local scholars should also be used as literature for Islamic studies. In the researcher's search, the following is the formula for distributing and utilizing the works of the three Mandailing scholars mentioned earlier. There are at least 7 (seven) books that are used as objects of study in the context of their distribution, namely *Kasyfu al-Gummah*, *Bayan al-Syafi*, *Sairut al-Thalabah*, *Tazkiyah al-Sahy*, *Adab al-Muridin*, *Fath al-Qalb*, and *Fathul al-Rahman Fi Aqaid al-Iman*. Throughout the researcher's search, all of the books mentioned above have unique aspects and specifications, both in writing methods and in discussion structure methods; in order not to mention that the book is lost in circulation, the author deliberately chooses negative substance as an introduction to the argument (Waldi et al., 2023).

Not Looking for Sources

Generally, when the Mandailing Community introduces people, their personnel is mentioned based on their characteristics and services. *Ulama* gain recognition from society if they have movements that can be felt directly, such as building Islamic boarding schools, appearing in various religious lectures, having good looks, and being able to teach science. At that time, the majority of the Mandailing people had heard of these three *Ulama* (Shaykh Abdul Qadir Bin Shabir, Shaikh Abdul Halik Khatib, and Shaykh Syihabuddin) as *ulama*, but to further mention their figures, the narrative that emerged was always their movements, Shaykh Abdul Qadir Bin Shabir was known as the originator and pioneer of *Ma'had Tahfiz Al-Quran* as well as the founder of the *Al-Qurra Wa Al-Huffaz* mosque which is in *Pasar Lama* (now) as its initial venue; Shaikh Syihabuddin is known as the originator of the *Tariqat Naqsabandiyah* movement in *Aek Libung* which many people visit to take blessings; while Syaikh Abdul Halim Khatib is better known as *Tuan Naposo* whose blessing of knowledge continued the first struggle

replacing Syaikh Mustafa Husein in leading the *Mustafawiyah* Islamic boarding school (Mustakim, 2021).

The existence of the three scholars is recognized in Islamic preaching, but there is almost no narrative of written works mentioned to commemorate the three scholars. Based on the search, Researchers of the book written by Syaikh Syihabuddin for the *Suluk* congregation in *Aek Libung* found a unique fact, where the *Suluk* guidebook, which was written in the book *Fath al-Qalb*, is no longer a guide for the congregation; the majority of them never even knew about it. Sheikh Syihabuddin once wrote a book. The teachings of the *Naqshbandiyah Tariqat* that are currently applied are illustrations described by its caliphs to be followed and practiced. The congregation did not receive any guidebooks to be used as references. When the existence of this book was mentioned and its contents were explained, the response found was a kind of neglect, and it became a shortcut to the conversation. There seems to be no interest or curiosity in referring to the book, even though the current practice of the *Naqshbandiyah Tariqat* refers to *Fath Qalb*, written directly by Sheikh Syihabuddin.

No Reprints

The publication of various books by the Mandailing *Ulama* mentioned above was initially based on the number of orders and users. The book Abdul Halim Khatib wrote, for example, was not even during his lifetime, the book was not able to spread evenly to his students. This book was used as a small book to support and facilitate students in understanding *khilafiyah*. Students who have a religious spirit, especially regarding the issue of *khilafiyah* at that time, are the ones who consume these books well (Nurhidin, 2022). However, in its network, this book was not found in the community, so there were no reprints to reproduce it.

The *Darut Tauhid Jambur Pesantren*, after the researcher confirmed it, reproduced the book of Syaikh Abdul Halim Khatib through a photocopy process, whose quantity was adjusted to the number of students there. The durability of this book is predicted only to last if it continues to be used as academic literature by the *Darut Tauhid Pesantren*. After that, if it is not lost, it can be predicted that this book of Syaikh Abdul Halim Khatib will become a manuscript with the potential to be lost. Likewise, the book of *Fath al-Qalb*, the only *suluk* practice considered as the realization of this book, ignores authoritative guidance. If traced from its type, a book of *suluk* practices like *Fath al-Qalb* is rarely found in Indonesia; the widely found concept is the teaching of Sufism, which is still very basic in *suluk* science (Munjiat, 2021). The book of *Fath Qalb* once attracted attention and was in great demand by the community, especially the congregation who participated in *suluk*. This book was printed several times neatly in the Arabic font of the *Sakkal Majalla* Font. Later, this book was no longer produced for many reasons, the most important in this case was the change in the basic learning methodology in *suluk*, which prioritized lectures by teachers and small notes by the congregation (Firman & Anam, 2021). What the teacher said was written personally; this method was considered easier to understand than studying the book. If there is nothing new, then the researcher's findings so far are that the book of *Fath al-Qab* has only reached the 3rd printing of its first publication

Book Distribution

The presence of a book is always motivated by certain motives, perhaps because of academic interests, scientific appreciation, or even to calculate credit points. The scholars above are certainly apart from this pattern. If one examines the content of the books, the themes studied, and the writing methods, it is almost certain that the books written are all responsive to phenomena occurring around them (Ziemek, 1991). Because it is a response, zoning applies where these books are used and needed if they encounter the same context.

Shaykh Abdul Halim Khatib, for example, has 4 (four) books written in the form of rebuttals and responses to religious phenomena in society, which is currently busy with the issue of *khilafiyah*, so it is considered that specific books are needed to answer this challenge (Anjarahmi & Alamin, 2023). The

book is not used as learning material in Islamic boarding school classes; it is discussed in general forums. Not only intended for class 5 (five), for example, but the psychology of the book seems to recommend all students from class 1 to class 7, or even the entire community, to study this book as material in responding to the *khilafiyah* issue at that time. Then this issue faded with his new identity (Ali, 1984). The issue suddenly mushroomed and also faded away. Along with the disappearance of the issue of *khilafiyah*, the book as a study also disappeared. Of course, if the book is studied continuously from generation to generation, it will give rise to ongoing issues that will not be finished. The disappearance of the book as a study can also be considered positive, considering that if it continues to be studied, it will arouse new criticism to bring up the same context repeatedly. The problem, in turn, is said to have disappeared along with the cessation of studies on the books written

Books Are Not Formal Studies

In general, religious study literature in Indonesia uses books from Middle Eastern scholars from basic to advanced levels. These books are recognized for their credibility by scholars in Indonesia because they have a scientific network. This historical side cannot be simply erased, considering that the Islamic heritage, both in the context of understanding and practice in the archipelago, is quite strong in taking Middle Eastern standard references (Sabil & Diantoro, 2021). When religious learning was formalized, these books were also used as literature to contain the contents of the curriculum that was compiled. To mention Islamic learning institutions, Islamic Boarding Schools could perhaps be used as a real manifestation of formal education whose curriculum is filled with literature on books of heritage originating from the Middle East (Maarif & Bakar, 2024).

The history and tradition of using Middle Eastern heritage books have been effectively implemented in formal Islamic educational institutions. In reality, Islam in Indonesia does not fully describe Middle Eastern Islam when associated with existing socio-religious facts. In this, scholars in Indonesia can filter the socio-religious aspects of the Middle East so that they do not enter and are used as social references, but are instead objectively able to take the Islamic values contained in the books of the turats.

The existence of the Middle Eastern turats books as Islamic study literature has, in turn, become a scientific standard that is difficult to shift from time to time, even to this day. In a formal context, in Mustafawiyah itself until now, they have not used books written by Mandailing scholars, more broadly, even or perhaps not using books from Indonesian scholars (Arifin & Turmudi, 2019).

Several things may cause this fact, first, the books written by Mandailing scholars are considered not on par with the books of Middle Eastern scholars; second, considering the existing books to be sufficient; third, the lack of self-confidence to include books written by Mandailing scholars (Indonesian archipelago) for various reasons, and; fourth, feeling it is inappropriate to degrade the previous scholar's book (Ichsan et al., 2021).

The Sacredness of the Teacher

It is estimated that all the books the scholars above wrote were taught in the preaching room using the lecture method. Based on information on the preaching pattern carried out by the 20th century Mandailing scholars, it was based on religious studies where the teacher explained a material in general, and sometimes also used, read, and brought books in front of him as a guide to giving lecture material (Usman & Hadi, 2019). However, at the same time, the books the teacher brought and read were not always mandatory for the students or congregation.

The present assembly, whether students or from the general public, waited for what was conveyed by the Shaykh. Therefore, small notes, such as reading notebooks, were more commonly done to record what was mentioned by the teacher, not to write down the book's meaning. It is not uncommon for the congregation that was present not to know or even not to care about what book was read in the assembly (Adib, 2021). This also coincides with the fact that, in practice, the material in the assembly often does

not correspond to or expand from what has been written in the book brought by the teacher (Abdurrizal et al., 2022).

Scientific Authority

Ulama in Mandailing Natal have a very strategic position in religious matters. Moreover, the social context, full of complexity, is also part of the scope of religious studies. In this case, the knowledge of *Ulama* is not only considered correct but also used as a reference by the community; therefore, the "*fatwa*" uttered by the *Ulama* is considered "valid," and there is no need to confirm its truth. There may be errors in it. In addition, in their preaching practices, *Ulama* do not always display and mention sources of information, such as mentioning the name of a book, for example, most often heard mention of literature is limited to stating that there is a hadith or there is a verse of the *Koran* that states the law on the matter in real terms (Handayani, 2023).

The community's trust in *Ulama* creates a socio-legal atmosphere oriented towards the *Ulama's* fatwa that is heard directly. The authority of the *ulama's* knowledge is considered a representative of the embodiment of literature (Wasehudin et al., 2023). While that is also the case, *Ulama* rarely provide recommendations for literature to be referred to; this is possible because the awareness of the Mandailing *Ulama* regarding the community's accessibility to books is less in demand. These two phenomena are important reasons scholars' books are not evenly distributed.

Oral Tradition

Any issue that arises or is developing, it is almost certain that the source does not come from reading. Thus, it simply describes the socio-intellectual conditions of society that accept Mandailing Natal. As mentioned in the beginning, in the body of the world community, there will be a tradition called mahkobar where the main supporter of information transformation activities is through direct communication, how people prefer to listen to or talk about something through personal analysis. One of the concepts in the Mandailing designation and customs is known as markobar. This markobar contains messages conveyed through oral intermediaries that are adjusted to certain needs, such as messages in marriage, celebrations, deaths, thanksgiving, and so on (Aliyah et al., 2023). These celebrations are always filled with events for pronouncing messages (markobar), which are given the opportunity to those present by adjusting to certain positions.

This tradition can be considered an advantage because it contains the art of speaking. Still, on the other hand, this tradition can also be a disadvantage if it only stands alone as a tradition of information transformation. Imagine if the content of this oral communication tradition could be compiled in the form of quantitative data from time to time, it would certainly describe the pattern of movement or shift in the form of communication, as well as being able to map the message of issues that develop across generations (Aziz et al., 2022). The high tradition of oral communication in Mandailing seems to be one of the reasons that makes the community believe that all existing information has been conveyed perfectly, including, in this case, religious information (Shaleh & Aziz, 2020). Mandailing scholars as part of a society that is strong in oral tradition are believed to have similarities in communication patterns, where these scholars are also believed to provide information in the book perfectly or even exceed that in the book through oral intermediaries.

4. CONCLUSION

Many factors make Mandailing scholars prominent in the movement and minimal in writing. Namely, because the community's need for scholars is in line with the community's need for traditional figures, the existence of scholars is seen as having meaning if he has a social movement that is directly felt by the community. Along with this, the series or busyness of Mandailing scholars in the movement, in turn, impacts their writing productivity. The next perception that emerged was that Mandailing

scholars provided views that were not much different from Islamic literature in other educational institutions such as those used in many Islamic boarding schools on the island of Java, where the books of Middle Eastern scholars are still used as the main reference, so that it is not uncommon for Mandailing scholars to be busy explaining the books to students and the community. Another more obvious factor is the effect of the socio-economic conditions of the Mandailing Natal area, which has not become an industrial city, as is known that in Mandailing Natal until now, there has only been one book publisher. This is one of the causes of the lack of accommodation for the writings of scholars. The books that are currently available are still handwritten and continue to be reproduced in the form of photocopies

Map of scientists from Mandailing Natal scholars, when referring to the 3 three scholars who were used as the object of study, Syaikh Abdul Halim. Khatib, Shaykh Syihabuddin, and Shaykh Abdul Qadir Bin Shabir have the same concentration: cultivating basic monotheistic knowledge. The three scholars have books containing the characteristics of 20 (twenty) Allah Swt. In other matters, Shaykh Syihabuddin specifically concentrates on *Naqshbandiyyah* tradition, which is written in his book *Fath al-Qalb*. This book is not limited to theoretical mutants. Meanwhile, Shaykh Abdul Halim Khatib also has the same attention to the practice of Tarikat, it is said that he also teaches the same knowledge at the *Mustafawiyah Pesantren*.

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