

Fake Sacred Tomb Business in The Coastal Areas of West Kalimantan in The Era of Regional Autonomy

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Abstract: In the coastal areas of West Kalimantan, several new sacred tombs have recently become the subject of community discussions, first emerging around 2020. This study seeks to uncover the existence of these tombs and reveal the underlying facts so that the true events can be accurately explained. To achieve this, the study employed qualitative methods and a phenomenological perspective to address the research focus. Data were collected through observations at the research sites and interviews with relevant stakeholders. All data were validated using member-checking techniques to ensure accuracy and credibility. Subsequently, the data were analyzed in detail, developing concepts that explain the actual events. The study's findings indicate that business activities drive the emergence of these new sacred tombs. Among the tombs identified are the tomb of Hasan in Pontianak, Muhammad in Kubu Raya, Usman in Mempawah, and the Nine Sacred Tombs in Ketapang. These tombs have been established based on the claims of individuals who assert their origin from dreams and/or supernatural events rather than from historical evidence. The analysis suggests that the context of Regional Autonomy plays a significant role, as it reflects a policy trend of developing sacred tombs for pilgrimage into religious tourism aimed at boosting the regional economy. This policy has seemingly inspired the creation of fake sacred tombs, which copy well-known tombs that are centers of religious tourism. The business activities surrounding these fraudulent tombs include selecting tomb sites, socialization, promotion, site management, and the economic benefits of pilgrim donations. The phenomenon of new sacred tombs is not unique to West Kalimantan but is also observed in other regions of Indonesia. Given the scope of this trend, further research is needed to provide a comprehensive explanation of the emergence of these new sacred tombs to enlighten the community.

Keywords: Business, Fake Sacred Tomb, Regional Autonomy, West Kalimantan Coastal Area

A. Introduction

Sacred tombs in Indonesia are renowned as pilgrimage destinations for Muslims¹. Notably, the tombs of the Wali Sanga in Java attract hundreds to thousands of pilgrims daily from various regions². Similar sacred sites are also found in the coastal areas of West Kalimantan. Mid-19th-century Dutch literature, such as accounts of the tombs of old scholars in Sukadana, highlights these sites, which also receive many visitors³. In Ketapang, several ancient tombs are revered as sacred and serve as pilgrimage destinations. These tombs are frequented due to their sacred status, rooted in oral traditions. This phenomenon mirrors the Wali Sanga in Java, where sacred stories are not only shared orally but also documented in writing⁴. However, many academic works discussing the Wali Sanga struggle to find primary sources, as noted in the research by Abdul Mujib⁵. Over time, oral stories about sacred tombs have attracted pilgrims, though these stories sometimes contain anachronisms. This pattern is common in Indonesia. For instance, Sekh Subakir on Bukit Tidar is portrayed as an early cleric in Java⁶, while in Ketapang, the Seven Sacred Tombs in Sandai are known only through tales of supernatural events⁷. Despite the lack of concrete information, these sacred tombs continue to draw numerous pilgrims from various regions.

Within the context of Regional Autonomy, which grants significant authority to local governments, the pilgrimage phenomenon is viewed as economically beneficial. This perspective is evident in studies such as⁸, which highlight the translation of pilgrimage from a worship activity into religious tourism in Banjar,

¹ Asmaran As, "Membaca Fenomena Ziarah Wali Di Indonesia: Memahami Tradisi Tabarruk Dan Wassul," *Al-Banjari* 17, no. 2 (2018): 173–200, <https://doi.org/10.18592/albanjari.v%25vi%25i.2128>.

² Fat, "Berharap Berkah, Warga Berziarah Ke Makam Wali Songo," *News.Detik.Com*, 2008.

³ Peter Johannes Veth, *Bornoe's Westerafdeeling: Geographisch, Statistisch, Historisch, Deel I Dan II* (Zaltbommel, 1854).

⁴ Arif Masykur, "Wali Sanga," *Laksana*, 2016.

⁵ Abdul Mujib, "Culture in Da'wa Wali Songo," *Ri'ayah* 5, no. 1 (2020): 65–72.

⁶ F.N. Naililhaq, "Kearifan Lokal Bertajuk Religi Dalam Mite Gunung Tidar: Kajian Antropologi Sastra," *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra* 20, no. 1 (2019): 61–70, <https://doi.org/10.17509/bs.jbps.v20i1.25972>.

⁷ Achmad Mundzirin, "Ziarah Makam Tujuh Keramat Di Idul Fitri," *Equator.Co.Id*, 2016.

⁸ M. Arif Anwar, "Kajian Pengembangan Wisata Religi Di Kabupaten Banjar Kalimantan Selatan," *Jurnal Kebijakan Pembangunan* 4, no. 2 (2019): 179–190.

South Kalimantan. A similar idea is explored⁹, which examines the development of religious tourism at the tombs of Sunan Kudus and Sunan Muria as a strategy to address economic decline in Kudus City. As a result, regional governments often invest in restoring and promoting sacred tombs as tourist destinations. This is illustrated in a study¹⁰, which discusses the economic impact of developing religious tourism at the tomb of Sunan Malik Ibrahim on the local community. The tombs of the Wali Sanga in Java have undoubtedly inspired many regions, including the West Kalimantan coast, which also has its sacred tombs. For instance, the Head of the Pontianak Tourism Office desires to model the city's religious tourism after Surabaya's Sunan Ampel tomb¹¹. Such policies preserve cultural and historical heritage and boost local economies. However, this trend has been accompanied by new tombs that some consider sacred. These new tombs are often used as pilgrimage destinations, with their sacred status based on oral stories rather than biographical or historical research. Local governments are not typically involved in the creation of these new tombs. This phenomenon was observed in Pontianak, Kubu Raya, Mempawah, and Ketapang between 2019 and 2021. The new tombs' sacredness is largely derived from community oral stories, frequently used to legitimize their sacred status. The emergence of these new sacred tombs parallels local government initiatives promoting religious tourism, as seen in Pontianak¹².

The emergence of new sacred tombs raises significant issues. Unlike the Wali Sanga tombs, which are supported by oral stories and historical evidence of their contributions as scholars in Java, some newly appeared sacred tombs in the West Kalimantan coastal area lack historical documentation and are supported only by oral stories. For example, the tombs of Tuan Besar Idrus in Kubu Raya and Daeng Menambon in Mempawah have been arranged by local governments with

⁹ Moh Rosyid, "Destinasi Wisata Religi: Solusi Peningkatan Perekonomian Pelaku Wisata Di Kudus," *Jurnal Bisnis Dan Manajemen Islam* 2, no. 2 (2014): 42–60.

¹⁰ Anwar, "Kajian Pengembangan Wisata Religi Di Kabupaten Banjar Kalimantan Selatan."

¹¹ Kiwi Kiwi, "Pontianak Rancang Pengembangan Sektor Wisata Religi," *Suara Pemred*, 2017, <https://www.suarapemredkalbar.com/read/ponticity/16052017/pontianak-rancang-pengembangan-sektor-wisata-religi>.

¹² Kiwi.

historical studies as their foundation¹³. Such disparity highlights a key difference: many of the new sacred tombs in West Kalimantan do not have a historical basis, relying solely on oral narratives. This article aims to uncover the real facts behind the emergence of these sacred tombs in various cities and to explain this phenomenon within the context of regional autonomy and its role in developing religious tourism. Similar phenomena have been observed elsewhere. For instance, the sacred tomb of Sekh Abdul Karim in Sekupang Batam¹⁴ and a comparable tomb in Bogor also lack substantial historical documentation, and their emergence has largely been overlooked in academic studies¹⁵. Meanwhile, much research has focused on the economic aspects of sacred tombs in the context of Regional Autonomy. For example, it examined the commodification of religious tourism at the tomb of Sunan Kudus, involving local government and community engagement, while exploring similar themes at the tomb of Sekh Burhanuddin in Padang Pariaman¹⁶. These studies highlight the economic impact of religious tourism on regional economies, not just for well-known tombs but also for those of local clerics¹⁷, for instance, studied the commodification of religion at the tomb of Sekh Ahmad Mutamakkin in Kajen Pati village, which also has a historical basis. This research informs a theoretical framework for understanding the issues behind the emergence of these new sacred tombs. This article specifically focuses on the tombs of Hasan in Pontianak, Muhammad in Kubu Raya, Usman in Mempawah, and Keramat Sembilan in Ketapang, all managed by residents without local government involvement.

A qualitative research method was employed to conduct this study. This approach is useful for exploring and understanding the core issues of the research problem¹⁸. It allows for a detailed examination of the newly emerged sacred

¹³Rendra Oxtora, "Kerajaan Kubu Gelar Haul Ke-229 Raja Kubu," *Antarakalbar*, 2017, <https://kalbar.antaranews.com/berita/351210/kerajaan-kubu-gelar-haul-ke-229-raja-kubu>.

¹⁴ Alf, "Juru Kunci Makam Bukit Sekupang, Sugeng: Saya Didatangi Sosok Dalam Mimpi," *Batamnews.Co.Id*, 2015.

¹⁵ Diana, "Wow, Kuburan Berusia 97 Tahun Ini Mengelurkan Cahaya Saat Malam," *Dream.Co.Id*, April 2016.

¹⁶ Ellyas Suryani and dkk, *Sejarah Mempawah Dalam Cuplikan Sejarah* (Mempawah: Yayasan Penulis 66 Kalimantan Barat, 2021).

¹⁷ A Zaenurrosyid, "Komodifikasi Agama Dalam Islamic Tourism Dan Aktivitas Ekonomi," *Islamic Review* 5, no. 1 (2016): 109–123.

¹⁸ J Raco, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif Jenis, Karakteristik, Dan Keunggulannya*. (Grasindo, 2010).

tombs within the context of regional autonomy, contributing to the academic understanding of this phenomenon. The study focused in the coastal areas of West Kalimantan, including Pontianak, Kubu Raya, Mempawah, and Ketapang, where reports of new sacred tombs have surfaced. The qualitative research framework links the existence of these tombs with their communities, fostering a comprehensive understanding¹⁹. Key data sources include the tomb sites, community activities and traditions, oral information, photographs, and video recordings. Data collection involved interviews and observations. Interviews were used to collect detailed information as a method of communication between researchers and subjects. To ensure the accuracy and completeness of the data, interviews followed specific procedures and were conducted in structured and unstructured formats within a dynamic atmosphere, minimizing researcher bias. Observations were used to collect data on events, incidents, and factual conditions through direct sensory experience²⁰. Data accuracy and credibility were verified using member checking, where interview and observation results were reviewed with research subjects or relevant parties to correct errors²¹. Additionally, group discussions were held to enhance data credibility by bringing together stakeholders for a broader perspective. The entire qualitative process was guided by phenomenological theory. Data analysis involved detailing information and developing general concepts. This analysis aimed to understand the focus of the research on sacred tombs and their associated pilgrimage activities. The findings were interpreted within the context of regional autonomy and its role in promoting religious tourism, particularly concerning sacred tomb sites that attract pilgrims. Previous studies were reviewed to support the interpretation.

B. Emergence of Fake Sacred Tombs in the Coastal Areas of West Kalimantan

The West Kalimantan coastal areas stretch from Tanjung Datu in Sambas to Air Hitam in Ketapang. They are known for its significant Muslim settlements, including Mempawah, Pontianak, Kubu Raya, and Sukadana. Colonial records

¹⁹ And Denzin, Norman and vonna. S. Lincoln, *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2018).

²⁰ Ahmad Rijali, "Analisis Data Kualitatif," *Alhadharah* 17, no. 33 (2018): 81–95.

²¹ Raco, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif Jenis, Karakteristik, Dan Keunggulannya*.

indicate that these areas were among the first regions to embrace Islam. As a result, many tombs of earlier religious figures are considered sacred and serve as pilgrimage centers for residents. Notably, the tomb of Husin in Mempawah, mentioned in both local and colonial literature²², is a prominent example. The tradition of pilgrimage to his tomb is well-established and deeply rooted. Other notable tombs include Keramat Tujuh in Ketapang and Batu Layang in Pontianak. These sites have historical significance and feature oral stories with supernatural elements, making them appealing destinations for pilgrims. Recently, these tombs have been restored, and the local government has redeveloped their areas to serve as religious tourist destinations. Amid these tombs' historical and developmental context and pilgrimage traditions, new sacred tombs have emerged along the West Kalimantan coastal areas. Unlike the historically established sites, these new tombs are not supported by historical research but are based on oral stories circulating within the community. Despite the lack of local oral tradition confirming their authenticity, these tombs are managed by residents rather than the local government.

The tomb of Hasan in Siantan, Pontianak, was reported as a sacred site in 2019. Although the tomb's structure, including its *jirat* [rectangular structure of the tomb], appears relatively new-constructed from cement and brick-the tombstone itself is made of *belian* [iron] wood (Interview Marhaban 2021). Initially, the tomb was unrecognized, lacked an identity, and had no known heirs (Interview Usna, 2021). It had been damaged, leading to its restoration into a new structure. The restoration was prompted by reported supernatural communication between the tomb's occupants and a shaman. This communication transformed the tomb's origin story, elevating it to a sacred status²³. Despite its original age being estimated at over 150 years, the tomb was given a new roof, resembling a simple house, to accommodate pilgrims. The area is surrounded by a yellow mosquito net and furnished with mats, prayer books, *tahlil* booklets, incense sticks, and mineral water. The true origin of Hasan's tomb remains unknown (Interview Usna 2021).

²² Veth, *Borneo's Westerafdeeling: Geographisch, Statistisch, Historisch, Deel I Dan II*.

²³ Eka Yulyana and Evi Priyanti, "Penguatan Kelembagaan Pengaruh Dan Keutamaan Gender Dan Anak (Studi Implementasi Kebijakan Pada Dinas Pemberdayaan Perempuan Dan Perlindungan Anak Kabupaten Karawang)," *Moderat: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pemerintahan* 6, no. 4 (2020): 831–848.

The second tomb, under the name of Muhammad, is located in Sungai Raya, Kubu Raya. Supernatural experiences and dreams inspired its construction, with the tomb being reported in 2020. The structure, including the tombstone, appears relatively new, built from cement and brick materials (Interview Hamid, 2021). The tomb was constructed on land, featuring a dome covered with new cloth and a zinc roof designed in the style of a simple house to accommodate pilgrims. The site is enclosed by green and yellow mosquito nets and furnished with mats, prayer books, *tahlil* booklets, *stanggi* [incense sticks], a donation box, and mineral water. Unlike many sacred tombs, Muhammad's tomb is not a restoration of an older site but was built from scratch by a resident with community assistance (Interview Usman, 2021).

The next sacred tomb, under the name of Usman, is located in Sungai Pinyuh, Mempawah²⁴. The tomb's structure appears new, built from cement and brick, including the tombstone. The origin of the land on which the tomb is built is unknown to residents. The tomb features a new roof made of wood and zinc, designed in the style of a simple house to accommodate pilgrims. Green and yellow mosquito nets surround it, including a courtyard with mats, prayer books, *tahlil* booklets, incense sticks, mineral water, and a donation box. The tomb, known as the Bukit Tinggi Sacred Tomb, is estimated to have appeared in 2020 (Interview Satimah, 2020). According to residents, this tomb is not a restoration of an old site, and they were previously unaware of the land's use as a cemetery.

Various narrative stories have accompanied the emergence of the three tombs above. While the specifics vary, the theme is consistent: the tombs are considered sacred and are attributed to individuals of exceptional significance, such as scholars or guardians. These narratives were initially introduced by the tomb caretakers, who spread the stories orally within their communities. Others, informed by these caretakers, also helped disseminate the tales. As the stories circulated, they reached communities in different areas. One common element in these stories is the portrayal of the tomb as a pilgrimage site. Over time, the narratives have evolved within communities, leading to additional stories and

²⁴ Jemi Ibrahim, "Ziarah Ke Makam Batu Layang, Kenang Pendiri Kota Pontianak," *Pontianak.Go.Id*, 2020.

embellishments. Consequently, tracing the source of each story has become challenging.

The tombs in Siantan are associated with sacred stories, such as reports of light emanating from the tombs, which locals have observed at night. A person claiming to communicate with the tomb's guardian through a special ritual provided the guardian's name and a message to care for the tomb. Following this, a prohibition was imposed on treating the tomb disrespectfully, as it was believed that such behavior would lead to reprimands from the guardian (Interview Ismail, 2021). For instance, a local youth reportedly contracted a strange, incurable disease after acting inappropriately toward the tomb. Additionally, the tomb was said to be a source of healing, exemplified by blessed water from the tomb that reportedly alleviated a child's fever (Interview Usna, 2021). Such stories are accepted by some, as evidenced by a young man from outside the village who claimed that he would get goosebumps and feel the hair on his neck stand up when passing by the tomb (Interview Ismail, 2021). In Kubu Raya, the tomb of Muhammad is associated with a story of light descending through the dense foliage and entering the burial ground, an event reportedly witnessed by a local woman in the early morning²⁵. The tomb received its identity from a person who claimed to communicate with supernatural beings, thus giving it the name Muhammad (Interview Hamid, 2021). Similarly, the tomb of Usman in Mempawah is also said to have been illuminated by a descending light. According to the story, two figures in white robes and beards appeared in the light. This story, shared by residents based on a dream, led to the tomb being referred to as the Sacred Tomb of Bukit Tinggi²⁶. Mystical tales further support this, including a story about a blessed pool left by the tomb owner's wife, whose water is believed to have healing properties. Pilgrims are told that this water is only effective at certain times, specifically when the spirit of the tomb's owner returns to the pool (Interview Nikmah, 2021).

²⁵ Ibrahim.

²⁶ Ibrahim.



Pilgrims on the way to the Bukit Tinggi Sacred Tomb

The emergence of these sacred tombs seems to have drawn significant attention from some Muslims. This is evident from the many pilgrims visiting the Bukit Tinggi Sacred Tomb, with daily reports indicating dozens of visitors (Interview Satimah, 2021). Economic hardships, often seen as the root cause of many societal issues, appear to drive some people to seek blessings in the form of sustenance, employment, health, and other tangible benefits through their pilgrimages. These blessings are often the primary motivation for their visits. However, not all pilgrims are motivated by such desires; some engage in pilgrimage as pure worship, without worldly interests or expectations. Despite this, for many, pilgrimages are closely tied to the hope of fulfilling specific needs or solving life's challenges (Interview Satimah, 2021). Several Bukit Tinggi Sacred Tomb pilgrims have confirmed this, acknowledging that their visits are driven by a search for solutions to their problems rather than purely spiritual devotion (Interview Fadil, 2021). Similar beliefs are held by those visiting the tomb in Pontianak, where water blessed at the tomb is reputed to cure illnesses (Interview Nur, 2021). Each of the three fictional sacred tombs mentioned experiences varying levels of pilgrimage activity. In particular, the Bukit Tinggi Sacred Tomb frequently receives a steady stream of pilgrims. According to a resident, the tomb sees dozens of visitors daily, sometimes even reaching higher numbers (Interview Bukhari, 2021), with most pilgrims coming from Mempawah and Pontianak. This level of activity is not seen at the other two tombs. Additionally, pilgrimages to the Bukit Tinggi Sacred Tomb occur at various times

of the day, including morning, afternoon, evening, and sometimes even late at night (Interview Samhuri, 2021).

C. Fake Sacred Tomb Business in the Regional Autonomy Era

The emergence of these tombs coincided with local government policies aimed at restoring and organizing areas around tombs considered sacred. Among these are the Batu Layang tombs in Pontianak, a major destination for pilgrims in West Kalimantan. Consequently, various efforts have been made to improve the area, transforming Batu Layang from a sacred site into a religious tourist destination. The Mayor of Pontianak, in an official statement published on [Pontianak Kota] (<https://www.pontianakkota.go.id>), stated as follows:

“... the Batu Layang Tombs must be preserved, protected, and maintained. He added that a design is currently being developed for improvement. In addition, the Kapuas River area, which is an attractive place to visit, will be part of this development. The area will become neater and more organized by maintaining the cemetery’s traditional concept and organizing retaining walls along the waterfront. He emphasized that his administration will arrange the arrangement in stages, according to the local government’s financial capabilities”.

The mayor’s plan garnered support from the Indonesian House of Representatives for West Kalimantan’s coastal electoral district in Commission V. The Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing was urged to promptly follow up on the Batu Layang area development plan (Interview Abdullah, 2021). Previously, the area was quite basic, lacking adequate facilities and infrastructure, and had been managed with minimal resources. However, local government policy made significant improvements, including constructing roads, parking areas, river embankments, bathrooms, prayer rooms, stalls, and rest areas (Interview Usman, 2021). Additionally, the caretakers of the tombs received official appointment letters from the relevant agency, along with their allowances.

The same policy was implemented for the tomb of Kubu, a resting place of an Islamic preacher known for establishing the Kubu Raya region. Infrastructure and facility development included the construction of tomb domes, roads, river

embankments, and boat stops. Previously, the tomb area was quite neglected and had minimal management. The tomb of Mufti Ismail Mundu, which holds sacred significance for the Kubu residents, also received attention from the local government. This tomb is considered an important site, positioning its area as an independent village and a destination for cultural and religious tourism (Kubu Raya Regency Government, 2021). The Mempawah local government adopted a similar approach for the tomb of Daeng Menambon in Sebukit. Facilities for pilgrims were provided to ensure their comfort, sacred sites like royal bathing places were given attention and proper arrangements were made. The local government also actively worked to excavate and promote previous tombs, adding sacred narratives to them. Examples include the tombs of Keramat Songkok and Keramat Siti Sa'diyah, registered in the Mempawah Regency Tourism and Culture Database Information System as pilgrimage destinations (Department of Education, Youth, Sports and Tourism, 2020). Additionally, Mempawah restored and introduced many sites through the YouTube channel "Mempawah Tourism," featuring the Kepiting Sacred Tomb, Jin Sacred Tomb, Wan Salim Sacred Tomb, etc. Similarly, the Kubu Raya Regional Government undertook restoration projects, such as the tomb of the Kubu Kingdom commander.

The Regional Government's policy aligns with the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 10 of 2009 on tourism, which emphasizes that the nation's historical heritage is a valuable resource and asset for tourism development aimed at enhancing the prosperity and welfare of the people. These development efforts are essential to support equal business opportunities and to capitalize on potential benefits amidst the evolving landscape, from local to international levels (Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 10 of 2009). Article 23, Section 1(c) of the law mandates that Regional Governments must maintain, develop, and preserve national assets that serve as tourist attractions and potential assets yet to be utilized. Furthermore, Article 30 of the law grants regional authorities the power to organize tourism within their regions. This includes drafting and determining the master plan for district/city tourism development, designating district/city tourist destinations and attractions, facilitating the development of new tourist sites, and allocating the necessary budgets for tourism. This national legislation led to the creation of West Kalimantan Provincial Regulation No. 03 of 2018, which outlines the Regional Tourism Development Master Plan for 2017-2032.

This regional regulation details the framework for implementing tourism development in the region, including policies, strategies, plans, programs, indications, and measures for supervision and control (West Kalimantan Provincial Regulation No. 03 of 2018).

As outlined in the aforementioned legislation, sacred tombs that are part of the local Islamic historical heritage can be classified as resources and capital for tourism development. In this context, these sacred tombs transition into religious tourism sites due to their economic potential. Consequently, these tombs are no longer solely recognized as sacred places but are now promoted as religious tourist destinations. This shift is communicated through various mass media outlets. For example, Batu Layang is often highlighted in the media as a religious tourism site. One article titled "Religious Tourism to the Tomb of the Founder of Pontianak City"²⁷ refers to pilgrims as tourists, aligning with this rebranding. Other media outlets have cited statements from the Islamic Community Guidance of the Ministry of Religion of West Kalimantan, which also promotes Batu Layang as a religious tourist destination²⁸. This transformation of Batu Layang into a religious tourism site, as publicized in the media, aligns with the objectives of the local government. The mayor of Pontianak has echoed these sentiments²⁹. As a result, the sacred tomb is now promoted alongside other tourist attractions, such as the Equator Monument. This change in perception explains why the Mempawah Regional Government has tasked its tourism management agency with promoting sacred tombs to the people of West Kalimantan. This promotion is carried out through platforms like the YouTube channel *Mempawah Tourism*. Similarly, through its tourism agency, the Pontianak Regional Government has marketed Batu Layang as a religious tourist destination. The pilgrimage activities during the Anniversary of Pontianak have also been designed as cultural events to attract tourists. The Kubu Raya Regional Government has adopted a similar approach, emphasizing the significance of the Kubu tombs and promoting them as tourist destinations in the area. All these efforts align with the goals set forth in

²⁷ Ekarina, "Berwisata Religi Ke Makam Pendiri Kota Pontianak," *Katadata.Co.Id*, 2021.

²⁸ Anonymous, "Makam Batu Layang, Pusat Ziarah Dan Wisata Religi Di Pontianak," *Minanews.Net*, November 2015.

²⁹ Ibrahim, "Ziarah Ke Makam Batu Layang, Kenang Pendiri Kota Pontianak"

the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 10 of 2009, aimed at enhancing the prosperity and welfare of the local community.

As discussed above, the local government's policy on sacred tombs appears to be closely linked to regional economic interests. Transforming pilgrimage activities at sacred tombs into religious tourism highlights their economic potential. This is supported by³⁰, who discusses how religious tourism helped improve the local economy in Kudus City following the decline of the clove cigarette industry. In Indonesia, religious tourism is expanding, bringing economic benefits to the areas involved. This type of tourism merges three elements-people, nature, and spirituality-making it a unique economic driver³¹. Religious tourism is increasingly framed as a journey of worship that uplifts the spirit rather than presenting sacred tombs as neglected or eerie locations. Consequently, pilgrimage sites are now developed to be visually appealing and are managed to enhance the comfort of visitors. This shift suggests that religious tourism can positively impact local economic development, as shown by³² in his study of the Tomb of Sunan Maulana Malik Ibrahim in Gresik, where regional economic growth followed the development of religious tourism.

The emergence of the tombs under Hasan in Pontianak, Muhammad in Kubu, and Usman in Mempawah aligns positively with the local government's policy of restoring, arranging, socializing, and promoting sacred tombs as religious tourism sites. This trend is not unique to the West Kalimantan Coast but reflects a broader pattern across Indonesia. The development of religious tourism, driven by the spirit of Regional Autonomy, has led to similar practices in other regions. For example, three new sacred tombs have appeared in the Pelabuhan Ratu protected forest in Sukabumi, reported by their caretakers as the hermitages of three Javanese saints, attracting pilgrims³³. Similarly, in Padang

³⁰ Rosyid, "Destinasi Wisata Religi: Solusi Peningkatan Perekonomian Pelaku Wisata Di Kudus."

³¹ Syihabul dkk. Furqan, "Ekowisata Dan Wisata Religius Sebagai Relasi Antara Manusia, Alam Dan Tuhan," *Journal of Community Services in Tourism* 2, no. 1 (2021): 1–12.

³² Fahrizal. M Anwar, "Analisis Dampak Pengembangan Wisata Religi Makam Sunan Maulana Malik Ibrahim Dalam Kehidupan Sosial Dan Ekonomi Masyarakat Sekitar," *Jurnal Administrasi Bisnis* 44, no. 1 (2017): 186–93, <https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/87795-ID-analisis-dampak-pengembangan-wisata-reli.pdf>.

³³ Alamsyah, "Makam Keramat Palsu Di Pelabuhanratu Dibongkar Polisi," *News.DetikCom*, 2015, <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-2986400/makam-keramat-palsu-di-pelabuhanratu-dibongkar-polisi>.

Pariaman, West Sumatra, an old tomb was restored and described as sacred. The local caretaker established it as a pilgrimage site³⁴. These tombs share characteristics with the ones found in the West Kalimantan coastal areas. The trend of new sacred tombs continues to emerge in various areas. In Kalicutang Wonosobo, several parties claimed the tomb of Wali Telu as a sacred site³⁵. In Panggung Village, Tanah Laut, South Kalimantan, a new sacred tomb was reported as the resting place of the village's ancestors³⁶. Additionally, 48 tombstones appeared in the same area two years earlier and were reported as sacred tombs³⁷. Some of these tombs were later dismantled due to concerns from the community and local government. This phenomenon of new sacred tombs and their development into religious tourism sites appears part of a broader trend associated with Regional Autonomy. It is not unique to the West Kalimantan but is evident in many other regions across Indonesia.

The emergence of the three tombs on the West Kalimantan Coast is related to the development of religious tourism and reflects an element of imitation. A common thread links these new tombs to the established religious tourist destinations in West Kalimantan, such as Batu Layang, suggesting that a model was taken from it. The similarities are evident in the design of the tombs. Each of the three sacred tombs features a simple roof structure and mosquito nets covering part of the tomb. Yellow is the dominant color for the roof, the rectangular structure of the tomb, and the tombstone. Additionally, all three have a floor area for pilgrims facing the tomb, with items such as *Yasin and tahlil booklets* and prayer books present, creating a clear impression of a pilgrimage site. These characteristics mirror those found at the Batu Layang cemetery. Another similarity is the claim of historical connection to the prominent religious figures.

³⁴ Anonymous Anonymous, "Makam Batu Layang, Pusat Ziarah Dan Wisata Religi Di Pontianak," *Minanews.Net*, 2016, <https://minanews.net/makam-batu-layang-pusat-ziarah-dan-wisata-religi-di-pontianak>.

³⁵ Arga Balarama, "Dugaan Makam Wali Abal-Abal Di Kalicutang Terbukti Tidak Berijin, Audiensi Permintaan PKP Di Sekda Wonosobo Tidak Menuai Hasil," *MetroTimes.News*, 2022, <https://metrotimes.news/breaking-news/dugaan-makam-wali-abal-abal-di-kalicutang-terbukti-tidak-berijin-audiensi-permintaan-pkp-di-sekda-wonosobo-tidak-menuai-hasil>.

³⁶ Suhardadi. Suhardadi, "Resahkan Warga, Aparat Desa Bersama TNI Dan Kemenag Bongkar Nisan Makam Keramat Palsu," *Dutatv.Com*, 2022, <https://dutatv.com/resahkan-warga-aparat-desa-bersama-tni-dan-kemenag-bongkar-nisan-makam-keramat-palsu>.

³⁷ Ali Ali, "Puluhan Makam Palsu Di Tabalong Dihancurkan," *Kalselpos.Com*, 2020, <https://kalselpos.com/2020/08/05/puluhan-makam-palsu-di-tabalong-dihancurkan>.

Efforts to build legitimacy for the new tombs include linking them to established sites like Batu Layang. This approach is also seen in other locations, such as the Sajira tomb in Lebak Banten. Among twelve tombs in the village, some are claimed to be the hermitages of Sheikh Abdul Qadir and Sayidina Ali³⁸. This strategy aims to associate new sacred tombs with renowned figures to enhance their legitimacy as pilgrimage sites. Thus, the emergence of the Hasan, Muhammad, and Usman tombs is not solely driven by the development of religious tourism but also involves an effort to emulate established tourist attractions.

The emergence of the three sacred tombs on the West Kalimantan Coast can be understood as a business practice rather than a historical fact. These tombs, often fabricated and narrated through stories by unreliable sources, are considered fictitious. Their development is closely tied to the growing trend of religious tourism, transforming sacred sites into profitable destinations. Sacred tombs are sites where significant amounts of money circulate, drawing pilgrims who are believed to be attracted by the tomb's purported sacredness. This context has inspired the creation of fictitious sacred tombs as a business venture. Such practices are relatively easy to implement, given that many existing sacred tombs often lack detailed historical records and rely primarily on traditional oral stories that include supernatural elements. New sacred tombs emerge across various regions in this context, reflecting a desire to generate economic value through their management. These new tombs are designed to attract pilgrims and capitalize on the religious tourism market, even though their origins may be fabricated rather than grounded in historical fact.

The choice of location is a key indicator of the fake sacred tomb business. The tombs in Kubu Raya and Mempawah have been strategically positioned to capitalize on their potential as business ventures within religious tourism. In contrast, Pontianak's tombs do not have the same business potential. The locations of these tombs are closely related to the travel experience they offer pilgrims. The tombs in Sei Pinyuh, Mempawah, are situated on mountains that provide a natural and immersive experience. The surrounding area retains a forest-like quality, and pilgrims can enjoy views of the ocean and distant cityscape.

³⁸ Dewa Dewa, "Makam Para Wali Palsu Gegerkan Warga Sajira Lebak," *Www.Bantenraya.Com*, 2021, <https://www.bantenraya.com/daerah/pr-1271103182/makam-para-wali-palsu-gegerkan-warga-sajira-lebak?page=2>.

The uphill, wild, plant-filled access adds a climbing experience to the pilgrimage. Similarly, the tombs in Sungai Raya, Kubu Raya, are situated among extensive tree-covered rural areas, with a large old tree providing natural shade. Generally, sacred tombs in West Kalimantan are found in mountains or highlands. For instance, the Sebukit cemetery complex³⁹ and the Tombs of the Kings of Tanjung Pura in Ketapang are forested. However, in the context of religious tourism, the sacredness of these places may diminish. Instead, the focus shifts to providing a serene and picturesque atmosphere away from the urban hustle. The environments of the tombs in Kubu Raya and Mempawah make them ideal for business-oriented religious tourism, offering a pleasant journey and atmosphere for pilgrims. In contrast, the sacred tomb in Pontianak is situated in a traditional village setting, which is less strategic for pilgrimage tourism.

The location selection is followed by efforts to socialize the tomb to inform the public about its status as a pilgrimage destination. In a business context, effective socialization is crucial. The three tombs were promoted using conventional methods rather than online mass media. For instance, the tomb in Sungai Pinyuh was marked with a sign to guide the public, a method also employed for the Sungai Raya tomb. Both tombs feature large signs that serve multiple purposes: they not only identify the tomb but also assist pilgrims in finding the location, which is situated in mountainous and forested areas rather than urban centers. These signs usually display the identity of the tomb's owner. They are positioned along roadsides or at the tomb, ensuring that information reaches the intended audience. The signs vary in size, some being simple nameplates while others are large, up to 2 meters long. The content typically includes the tomb owner's name but omits details such as birth and death dates. The information from these signs often circulates within the community, generating discussions and spreading beyond the local area. Online media then play a role in further disseminating this information, with stories and images shared across WhatsApp groups and social media platforms like Facebook. Consequently, news about the sacred tombs in Kubu and Mempawah reached Pontianak, becoming the subject of word-of-mouth conversations and online

³⁹ Suryani and dkk, *Sejarah Mempawah Dalam Cuplikan Sejarah*.

discussions. Ultimately, using name signs proved successful in socializing the tombs within the community.

Promotion is the next crucial stage. The Sungai Pinyuh Mempawah tomb is effectively marketed as the Sacred Tomb of Bukit Tinggi. This naming strategy aligns with practices in Ketapang, where similar names are used, such as the Seven Sacred Tombs and the Nine Sacred Tombs. In Sandai Ketapang, there's also a Sacred Tomb of Bukit Meranse. The term "sacred" is a common designation for tombs in West Kalimantan, as seen in names like the Sacred Tomb of Songkok and the Sacred Tomb of Siti Sa'diyah in Mempawah. Among the three tombs, the Sacred Tomb of Bukit Tinggi is reported to be the most successful in attracting pilgrims. Its promotion highlights the experience of nature tourism, including activities like climbing a hill through a dense forest, which adds an adventurous element for pilgrims. Additionally, the emphasis on the tomb's sacredness enhances its appeal. By positioning the Sacred Tomb of Bukit Tinggi similarly to other well-known sacred tombs in West Kalimantan, its promotion effectively leverages local naming conventions and the associated sense of sacredness.

Following promotion, the next step is to condition the tomb to accommodate pilgrims. Seating areas are set up before the tomb for visitors to perform dhikr and prayers. Essential reading materials, such as *Yasin* and *Tahlil* booklets, are provided for pilgrims. *Stanggi* [incense sticks] and other ritual items, typically used in prayers to spirits or supernatural beings, are also available. Access roads are improved to facilitate pilgrims' journeys, as seen in Sungai Pinyuh, where ropes assist travelers. Adequate lighting is installed to ensure the surroundings are well-lit. Ablution facilities are included to meet ritual requirements, and mineral water is available at each tomb location. Roofed areas are provided to keep pilgrims protected from the heat and rain. These facilities and amenities are designed to create a welcoming environment for pilgrims, enhancing their experience and comfort.

Donations are another aspect of managing sacred tombs. Pilgrims may offer monetary donations to compensate for the services provided by tomb caretakers. Donations can be given directly to the caretaker or placed in a donation box. These methods of giving donations are typically perceived differently: money given directly to the caretaker is considered personal property, akin to wages for services rendered, while donations placed in a donation box are generally viewed as contributions to management costs. This distinction between personal

property and management costs does not always apply in practice. At the three sacred tomb locations discussed, caretakers perform similar roles to those at religious tourism sites. In Kubu Raya and Mempawah, donation boxes are present to collect contributions from pilgrims. For example, at Muhammad's tomb, the donation box reportedly accumulated hundreds of thousands of rupiah within a few weeks, consisting of various denominations. Pilgrims to the Mempawah tomb are also known to donate livestock, such as chickens, likely tied to specific rituals or spiritual practices. In contrast, the tomb in Pontianak is overseen by an elderly man who handles related matters. Although there is no donation box at this location, he accepts cash donations in envelopes.

No formal organizational structure is evident in managing the three fake sacred tombs. The tombs are operated as informal enterprises, with residents taking charge of the business. Their management involves designing, restoring, and promoting the tombs. These local managers are responsible for on-site duties, including guarding the tombs, welcoming visitors, and maintaining cleanliness. The lack of a formal organization means that the tombs remain largely unknown to local government authorities and are not recognized as cultural heritage or historical sites. The management is closed, with minimal public awareness and no official oversight. The individuals in charge of the tombs also spread stories about their sacredness to attract pilgrims and enhance their appeal as religious tourist attractions.

The role of the tomb manager often emerges from narratives involving supernatural events or dreams, which are integral to the legitimacy of their role. These narratives frequently involve a divine or supernatural mandate for an individual to oversee the tomb's maintenance, restoration, and security. This kind of story validates the manager's role and enhances the tomb's sacredness. For example, in the Bukit Sekupang Batam Tomb case, the tombkeeper's role was established through a dream, legitimizing their position as caretakers⁴⁰. Such stories reinforce the manager's authority and influence over the tomb, allowing them to claim responsibility for its care and represent it in interactions with pilgrims. This method of gaining legitimacy through supernatural validation is a

⁴⁰ Alf, "Juru Kunci Makam Bukit Sekupang, Sugeng: Saya Didatangi Sosok Dalam Mimpi."

common theme in many fake sacred tombs, reinforcing the manager's role and enhancing the appeal of the tomb as a pilgrimage site.

The use of storytelling to enforce security and respect for fictional sacred tombs is a fascinating method. It leverages the power of local beliefs and superstitions to maintain the sanctity and integrity of these sites, even in the absence of formal security measures. By embedding the narrative of supernatural consequences, the community is encouraged to adhere to expected behaviors, thus preserving the tomb's status and protecting it from vandalism or misuse. This approach also highlights how cultural beliefs can be utilized effectively in managing and maintaining sites that have both religious and economic significance.

The phenomenon of fake sacred tombs can be viewed through the lens of religious commodification. In theory, religious commodification involves turning the functional value of religion into a marketable or exchangeable commodity for business purposes. This process transforms religious elements, such as teachings and symbols, into commodities⁴¹. Within this framework, the spiritual benefits and rituals associated with sacred tombs are turned into marketable goods for the community. This shift occurs because there is a perceived demand for such transformations. Thus, sacred tombs are redefined as commodities with practical value⁴². Signs of commodification are evident across various regions⁴³. In Indonesia, the commodification of sacred tombs began in the 1970s, with the tombs of Sunan Kudus and other saints in Java serving as notable examples. Economic factors have driven this transformation, converting previously sacred sites into commodities that benefit the local community⁴⁴.

As a result, ideas for managing the Bukit Tinggi Sacred Tomb began to emerge within the community. Many stakeholders became involved in the discussion. These ideas arose amid numerous pilgrimages to the site, which attracted not only kings, clerics, and their students but also religious study groups and non-Muslim residents. The concept that developed focused on transforming

⁴¹ Zaenurrosyid, "Komodifikasi Agama Dalam Islamic Tourism Dan Aktivitas Ekonomi."

⁴² Mujib, "Culture in Da'wa Wali Songo."

⁴³ Andi Rahman, "Komodifikasi Agama: Sebuah Kajian Tafsir Fenomenologis," *Hermeneutik: Jurnal Ilmu Al Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 10, no. 2 (2016): 101-115.

⁴⁴ Aldyan, "The Commodification of Religious Tourism in the Tomb of Sunan Kudus."

the tomb area into a religious tourist destination. To support this vision, mystical stories were created, and incidents like pilgrims fainting from exhaustion were linked to supernatural aspects of the site. Inspiration was drawn from the Sebukit Rama religious tourism area owned by Opu Daeng Menambon in Pasir Village of Mempawah Hilir, largely because of the similar hilltop location. The idea was well-received by the management, leading to the installation of lighting on the hill. This lighting made the sacred tomb glow brightly at night, visible around the Pinyuh River. The development plan appeared feasible, given that the area was still natural and offered a beach view. The community continued to discuss the project, with various parties involved and cooperative efforts to support the construction of the cemetery and road access.

Thus, new tombs appear even if they are not explicitly promoted as sacred. Often, this involves assigning new identities to old, abandoned tombs with no known heirs. For example, the Tomb of Husin in Mempawah is an old tomb where the tombstone indicates that the deceased is a woman due to its flat shape. Dreams frequently serve as a basis for promoting the sacredness of such tombs. A new identity based on dream narratives is then introduced to the community. Similar stories are common among other sacred tombs, such as the one on Temajo Island in Mempawah⁴⁵. A resident claimed to have had a dream instructing them to guard the tomb, identified as belonging to Utin Fatimah. This tomb is now a pilgrimage site for those seeking sustenance and inspiration. These practices often have underlying business interests.

Similar to the three mentioned earlier, the large-scale construction of sacred tombs has also appeared in Ketapang, where one of the guards refers to them as the Nine Sacred Tombs. The name comes from the number of tombs in that area. The Nine Sacred Tombs have historically been used for the tomb complex of the Matan Sultanate dating back to the 15th century in Benua Kayung. The newly reported Nine Sacred Tombs began with a fisherman's story. One night, while out at sea, he saw a light on the shore, which turned out to be coming from the location of the nine tombs. Later, he had a dream in which one of the tomb guardians instructed him to guard the tombs. Another version of the story, told by a different tomb guard, involves a hunter who was shown the realm of another world- the

⁴⁵ M Zain, "Kisah Makam Keramat Di Pulau Temajo Mempawah: Tak Tergerus Ombak Dan Pasang Laut," *Kumparan.Com*, 2021.

realm of genies- at the Nine Sacred Tombs location. Three genie creatures are said to guard the tombs and will harm anyone who tries to damage them. These stories aim to establish the sacredness of the tombs. In this context, white sand from Padang Dua Belas, an area considered sacred by the Ketapang community, was sprinkled on the tombs of the Nine Sacred Tombs to enhance their sanctity.



Nine Sacred Tombs at the tourist attraction of Tanjung Belandang Beach, Ketapang

The new Nine Scared tombs are strategically located within the Tanjung Belandang coastal tourist area, included in the regional tourism development master plan for 2017-2032, as outlined in West Kalimantan Provincial Regulation No. 3 of 2018. The construction of the sacred tomb has been complemented by additional facilities, including a prayer room, spaces for pilgrimage rituals, rest and service areas for pilgrims, bathrooms and ablution facilities, and even a room seemingly designated for the tomb's caretaker. The design ensures that pilgrims experience comfort, with the beach view and expanse of sand adding to the site's appeal. The surrounding area has also been enhanced with decorative flower arrangements, further beautifying the location. Securely fastened to pillars, iron donation boxes are strategically placed around the tomb. Today, the site resembles a well-organized religious tourist destination.

D. Conclusion

The emergence of the sacred tombs under Hasan in Pontianak, Muhammad in Kubu Raya, and Usman in Mempawah is not grounded in an academic framework but rather based on oral stories derived from dreams or supernatural events. As such, these tombs are considered fake. Their existence is seen not as a genuine historical fact but as a phenomenon driven by other motives. The development of religious tourism in the era of Regional Autonomy by the Regional Government provides some insight into this phenomenon. The Regional Government started converting sacred pilgrimage sites into tourist attractions to capitalize on their economic potential. This shift led to promoting these sites in the mass media, inspiring the creation of new tombs considered sacred through stories. Hasan, Muhammad, and Usman's tombs exemplify this trend, showing elements that imitate the prominent religious tourist destination in West Kalimantan, i.e., Batu Layang. The tradition of venerating tombs as pilgrimage destinations in Indonesia, often based on oral narratives, appears to support the emergence of these new tombs. This trend is not isolated, as similar instances are found across Indonesia, aiming to gain economic benefits from pilgrimage activities, such as donations for caretaker services and tomb maintenance. The creation of new sacred tombs with similar economic motives continues, as evidenced by the Nine Sacred Tombs in Ketapang, which have begun to attract local community interest.

The emergence of commercialized fake sacred tombs highlights the impact of the Regional Government's policy in the era of Regional Autonomy, which transforms sacred tombs from pilgrimage centers into religious tourist destinations for economic benefit. This trend also critiques the existence of sacred tombs and their pilgrimage traditions, often based on supernatural stories. The phenomenon requires attention from educational institutions, the government, and socio-religious organizations to educate the community. Allowing these tombs to persist can distort local history, as they might become accepted as truth. Therefore, further research is essential. Investigating within a socio-religious framework can provide a broader understanding of the existence of sacred tombs and religious tourism. As noted in previous studies, such research is challenging due to the lack of information. However, this should not be a deterrent, as studying these occurrences is important, given that they are widespread across various regions.

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