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A Weberian Critique and Reconfiguration of Sufi Ethics: Transforming the Spiritual and Economic Ethos of TQN Followers in Banten

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Abstract: *This article examines the reconfiguration of Sufi teachings and economic ethos among followers of the Qadiriyah and Naqshabandiyah Orders (TQN) in Banten, Indonesia. Challenging Max Weber's thesis in* The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, which dismisses Islamic spirituality—particularly Sufism—as economically irrational and fatalistic, this study demonstrates how local Sufi practices can generate a productive and ethical economic habitus. Drawing on ethnographic data collected through interviews and participant observation, the study reveals how values such as* zuhd *(asceticism),* sabr *(patience),* faqir *(spiritual poverty), and* tawakkul *(trust in God) are reinterpreted by TQN followers not as a retreat from the world but as a form of disciplined spirituality that enhances resilience, responsibility, and ethical entrepreneurship. The findings contribute to a broader theoretical dialogue on religion and capitalism, offering an alternative model of economic rationality grounded in spiritual commitment and communal solidarity. This research not only critiques Weber's Eurocentric assumptions but also expands the horizon of Islamic economic ethics by highlighting how Sufi traditions can cultivate inclusive and sustainable economic behaviors.*

Keywords: Sufism, TQN, Weberian critique, Economic ethos, spirit of capitalism

Abstrak: *Artikel ini mengeksplorasi rekonfigurasi ajaran Sufi dan etos ekonomi di kalangan pengikut Tarekat Qadiriyah wa Naqshabandiyah (TQN) di Banten, Indonesia. Menentang tesis Max Weber dalam* The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, yang menganggap spiritualitas Islam—khususnya Sufisme—sebagai sesuatu yang irasional dan fatalistik secara ekonomi, studi ini menunjukkan bagaimana praktik Sufi lokal dapat menghasilkan habitus ekonomi yang produktif dan etis. Berdasarkan data etnografi yang dikumpulkan melalui wawancara dan observasi partisipan, studi ini*

mengungkap bagaimana nilai-nilai seperti zuhd *(asketisme),* sabr *(kesabaran),* faqir *(kemiskinan spiritual), dan* tawakkal *(tawakal kepada Tuhan) diinterpretasikan ulang oleh para pengikut TQN bukan sebagai pengasingan diri dari dunia, melainkan sebagai bentuk spiritualitas yang disiplin yang meningkatkan ketahanan, tanggung jawab, dan kewirausahaan etis. Temuan ini berkontribusi pada dialog teoretis yang lebih luas tentang agama dan kapitalisme, menawarkan model alternatif rasionalitas ekonomi yang berlandaskan komitmen spiritual dan solidaritas komunal. Penelitian ini tidak hanya memberikan kritik terhadap asumsi Eurosentris Weber, tetapi juga memperluas cakrawala etika ekonomi Islam dengan menyoroti bagaimana tradisi Sufi dapat menumbuhkan perilaku ekonomi yang inklusif dan berkelanjutan.*

Kata Kunci: Sufisme, TQN, kritik Weber, Etos ekonomi, Semangat kapitalisme

Introduction

Max Weber's foundational thesis on the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism has, for decades, served as a crucial framework for understanding the intricate interplay between religious values and economic development. In his seminal work, Weber argued that the ethos of Protestant asceticism, with its emphasis on hard work, rationality, frugality, and wealth accumulation as signs of divine grace, significantly contributed to the emergence of modern capitalism in the West.[1] However, within his analytical framework, Weber and his followers often viewed Islam as a belief system less conducive, or even detrimental, to economic progress. This perspective stemmed from the interpretation that Islamic values, particularly Sufism, tended to encourage world-renouncing asceticism, fatalism, or passive submission, thereby hindering economic initiative and innovation.[2]

From a global and theoretical standpoint, Sufism, as the mystical and esoteric dimension within Islam, has long sparked debates regarding its relationship with economic and worldly activities. Some traditional views appeared to interpret Sufi values as a rejection of materialism, advocating voluntary poverty (*faqir*), absolute patience (*sabr*), and surrender to divine will (*tawakkul*), which at first glance seem to contradict the dynamic ethos of modern business.[3] On the other hand, a growing body of scholarship suggests that these same values can serve as the foundation for a resilient work ethic, personal integrity, and economic perseverance, creating a harmonious bridge between spirituality and productivity.[4]

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[1] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (London and New York: Routledge, 2001).

[2] Bryan S. Turner, *Weber and Islam* (New York: Routledge, 1998); Maxime Rodinson, *Islam and Capitalism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974).

[3] Abu al-Hasan Ali bin Uthman al-Jullabi Al-Hujwiri, *Kashf Al-Mahjub* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Thaqafa al-Diniyya, 2007); Abu Nasr Abdullah ibn Ali al-Sarraj Al-Tusi, *Kitab Al-Luma' Fi Al-Tasawwuf* (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Haditha, 1960); 'Abd al-Karim al-Qushayri, *Al-Risala Al-Qushairiyya*, ed. Abd al-Halim Mahmud (Beirut: Dar al-Mahjah al-Bayda', 2008).

[4] Irwan Abdullah, *The Muslim Businessmen of Jatinom: Religious Reform and Economic Modernization in a Central Javanese Town* (Amsterdam: Universiteit van Amsterdam, 1994); Nathan Hofer, *The Popularisation of Sufism in Ayyubid and Mamluk Egypt* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University

In Indonesia, tarekat (Sufi orders) play a significant role in the religious and social structure of Muslim communities.[5] The Qadiriyah wa Naqsyabandiyah Order (TQN), particularly in Banten, stands out as one of the major Sufi networks with a large and active following.[6] TQN followers in Banten are known not only for their deep spiritual practices but also for their active participation in diverse economic endeavors. This phenomenon raises a compelling question: How do the Sufi values embraced by TQN adherents in Banten interact with—or even reconfigure—their business ethos? And to what extent does this dynamic challenge Weber's conventional view of Islam as economically stagnant?

A considerable number of studies have explored the applicability of Weber's thesis in Islamic contexts. Some have supported his view, while others have rejected or offered more nuanced interpretations.[7] Several studies highlight Islamic teachings that encourage trade and economic justice, while others point to structural or cultural barriers that may hinder economic dynamism. Nonetheless, debates persist regarding the extent to which Weber's generalizations apply across the diverse spectrum of Islamic traditions—especially Sufism.

A critical contribution to this discourse comes from Sukidi, who challenged Weber's thesis by examining the Muhammadiyah organization in Indonesia. Sukidi argued that Muhammadiyah, with its emphasis on scripturalism, rejection of *bid'ah* (unwarranted innovation), advocacy for simplicity, and promotion of hard work, embodies characteristics similar to Protestant ethics. However, it is worth noting that Sukidi's critique does not engage with Sufi traditions, focusing instead on a puritan movement that in many respects contrasts with Sufi practice. This leaves open an essential space for further exploration of the relationship between Sufism and economic ethics.[8]

Literature discussing Sufi values such as *sabr, faqir*, and *tawakkul* typically interprets them as spiritual pillars aimed at purifying the soul and fostering closeness to God.[9] *Sabr* is understood as resilience in the face of trials, *faqir* as independence from

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Press, 2015), 146; Adam Sabra, "Economies of Sufism," in *Sufi Institutions*, ed. Alexandre Papas (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2021), 29–30.

[5] Martin van Bruinessen, "The Origins and Development of Ṣūfī Orders (Tarekat) in Southeast Asia," *Studia Islamika: Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* I, no. 1 (April-June) (1994): 1–23; A. H. Johns, "Islam in Southeast Asia: Reflections and New Directions," *Indonesia* 19 (1975): 33–55; Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII Dan XVIII: Melacak Akar-Akar Pembaruan Pemikiran Islam Di Indonesia*, IV. (Bandung: Mizan, 1998).

[6] Sri Mulyati, "The Educational Role of The Tariqa Qadiriyya Naqshabandiyya with Special Reference to Suryalaya" (McGill University, 2002); Ajid Thohir, *Gerakan Politik Kaum Tarekat: Telaah Historis Gerakan Politik Antikolonialisme Tarekat Qadiriyah-Naqsyabandiyah Di Pulau Jawa* (Bandung: Pustaka Hidayah, 2002); Ade Fakih Kurniawan, *Cultural Negotiation, Authority, and Discursive Tradition: The Wawacan Seh Ritual in Banten* (Yogyakarta: Pascasarjana UIN SUKA Press, 2020).

[7] Ernest Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992); Timur Kuran, *Islam and Mammon: The Economic Predicaments of Islamism* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004).

[8] Sukidi, "Max Weber's Remarks on Islam: The Protestant Ethic among Muslim Puritans," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 17, no. 2 (2006): 195–205.

[9] Muhammad bin Muhammad Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' Ulumiddin, Juz 1* (Beirut: Daar al-Ma'rifah, n.d.); Sachiko Murata, *The Tao of Islam: A Sourcebook on Gender Relationships in Islamic Thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992).

material attachment and awareness of worldly impermanence, and *tawakkul* as full submission to divine will after making maximal effort.[10] While some studies have attempted to link these values to economic behavior, they often remain within the realm of theoretical analysis or case studies that stop short of demonstrating explicit reconfigurations of these values within progressive business practices.

Meanwhile, existing studies on the TQN order—particularly in Banten—have extensively explored its historical background, teachings, and ritual practices.[11] Some have explored the social and cultural aspects of the community.[12] However, there remains a lack of in-depth empirical research that examines how TQN followers in Banten actively reinterpret and reappropriate values such as *sabr, faqir,* and *tawakkul* in ways that foster a progressive business ethos—one that may directly challenge Weber's broad generalizations about Islam's economic stagnation.

This literature review reveals a significant research gap. Although previous studies have examined Weber's thesis in relation to Islam and discussed Sufi values, there has yet to be a study that analyses explicitly how TQN followers in Banten reconfigure the values of *sabr, faqir*, and *tawakkul* into a dynamic economic ethic. This gap limits our understanding of the evolving relationship between Sufi spirituality and economic activity at the community level. This understanding could ultimately enrich or even contest Weberian assumptions about Islam and the economy.

Against this backdrop, this study aims to (1) identify how members of the Qadiriyah wa Naqsyabandiyah Order (TQN) in Banten reconfigure core Sufi values within their business practices; and (2) analyze how these reconfigurations challenge or contribute to a rethinking of Max Weber's thesis on Islam and economic development.

The significance of this research lies on multiple levels. Theoretically, it contributes to a critical reexamination of Weber's thesis by presenting empirical evidence from an Indonesian Sufi community that exhibits a progressive economic ethos—contrary to conventional Weberian assumptions. It offers a new conceptual framework for understanding the plurality of religion-economy relationships beyond the binary of Western versus non-Western models. Empirically, field data from Banten provides rich insights into how spiritual values are interpreted and enacted in the daily economic lives of TQN members, addressing a key gap in current research. Practically, this study offers valuable insights for the TQN community and broader stakeholders by demonstrating the potential of religious values to support ethical and sustainable economic development.

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[10] Al-Hujwiri, *Kashf Al-Mahjub*; 'Abd al-Karim al-Qushayri, *Al-Risala Al-Qushairiyya*.

[11] Martin van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren Dan Tarekat* (Bandung: Mizan, 1999); Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyai* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1985); Mulyati, "The Educational Role of The Tariqa Qadiriyya Naqshabandiyya with Special Reference to Suryalaya."

[12] Ade Fakih Kurniawan, "Konsep Tajalli 'Abd Allah Ibn 'Abd Al-Qahhar Al-Bantani Dan Posisinya Dalam Diskursus Wujudiyyah Di Nusantara," *ULUMUNA: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 17, no. 2 (Desember) (2013): 275–302; Ruby Ach. Baedhawy, *Wawacan Seh: Praktek Dan Fungsi Dalam Kehidupan Sosial Di Banten* (Serang: Lemlit IAIN SMH Banten, 2009); Hamidah, "Gerakan Petani Banten: Studi Tentang Konfigurasi Sufisme Awal Abad XIX," *Ulumuna* XIV, no. 2 (2010): 323–340.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with an interpretive case study design, aiming to explore in depth the reconfiguration of Sufi values and business ethics among followers of the Qadiriyah wa Naqsyabandiyah (TQN) Order in Banten. This approach allows for a holistic understanding of how participants interpret and embody religious values within their economic practices.[13] The fieldwork was conducted within TQN communities in Banten. Participants were selected through purposive and snowball sampling techniques, focusing on active members engaged in various business activities. The number of participants was determined by data saturation, estimated to range between 10 and 15 key informants.

Primary data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews designed to elicit participants' understanding and application of the values of *sabr* (patience), *faqir* (voluntary detachment from materialism), and *tawakkul* (reliance on divine will) in their business practices. Participant observation was also conducted during community religious activities to understand the social context better and embodied dimensions of Sufi practice. Secondary data were gathered through document analysis, including texts on TQN teachings, historical accounts of the order, and literature on Weber's thesis and its critiques. All collected data were analyzed thematically, following a process of data familiarization, initial coding, theme identification, theme refinement, and final definition of core themes. The analysis focused specifically on how Sufi values are reconfigured within the lived economic experiences of TQN members and the implications of this reconfiguration for revisiting Weber's thesis on Islam and economic development.

Weber, the Protestant Ethic, and Critiques of Islam

Weber's seminal work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, remains one of the most influential contributions in the sociology of religion and economic thought. Weber argued that a significant causal link existed between ascetic Protestant ethics—particularly Calvinism—and the rise of the modern "spirit of capitalism" in the West.[14] At the heart of Weber's thesis is the idea that specific religious values can unintentionally foster rational, systematic economic behavior, which in turn lays the foundation for capitalist development.

According to Weber, Protestant ethics—rooted primarily in the Calvinist doctrine of predestination—created a unique psychological condition among believers. The doctrine posits that God has already predetermined who will be saved—the "elect"—and who will not. This engendered a deep sense of existential anxiety, as no individual could know their own fate. In response to this anxiety, Calvinists sought "signs" of their salvation. These signs were not pursued through sacramental rituals or acts of merit (as in Catholicism), but rather through worldly success in one's vocation (*Beruf* or calling).

[13] John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2018); Robert E. Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1995).

[14] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

The concept of "calling" is central to Weber's analysis. It refers to the belief that every individual has a God-given task in this world, and that diligent, honest, and methodical work constitutes a form of religious devotion. Hard work was no longer merely a means of subsistence but became a moral end in itself—an expression of piety and ethical duty.[15]

Weber further emphasized the role of "inner-worldly asceticism" inherent in Protestant ethics. Unlike monastic asceticism—which advocates withdrawal from the world—Protestant asceticism encourages engagement with the world while rejecting indulgent pleasures and wasteful consumption. Wealth obtained through one's divine calling was not to be spent on luxury or personal enjoyment but reinvested or accumulated. This rejection of unproductive consumption, when combined with the drive for systematic and rational work, generated capital surplus essential for investment and capitalist growth. This process of rationalization extended beyond economics to permeate all aspects of life—promoting careful planning, efficiency, and calculability—all of which became defining features of the "spirit of capitalism." Importantly, for Weber, capitalism was not merely the pursuit of profit, but an ethos—a moral orientation that regarded wealth accumulation as an ethical imperative, not just a means to personal pleasure.[16]

Weber contrasted Protestantism with other religious traditions to highlight its unique contribution to capitalism. He contended that other religions—including Catholicism, Confucianism, Hinduism, and Islam—lacked the specific combination of doctrines and psychological motivations that could foster systematic economic rationalization. In his view, these traditions tended to preserve elements of "traditionalism" that hindered the emergence of modern capitalism. Traditionalism, in this context, refers to the tendency to preserve established ways of life, resist innovation, and accept limited profits rather than pursue unlimited, rational gain.[17]

When turning his attention to Islam, Weber's analysis became more critical—and, to many contemporary scholars, problematic. He classified Islam as a "warrior religion," more oriented toward military conquest and political expansion than toward internal economic rationalization. Early Islam, in Weber's assessment, was driven by a spirit of conquest and patrimonial empire-building. In patrimonial systems, power and administration rest on personal relationships and loyalty to rulers rather than on impersonal, rational-legal bureaucracies. This, Weber argued, inhibited the development of formal and rational legal systems necessary for capitalism.[18]

Weber's critique of Islam in relation to modern capitalism can be summarized into five main points:

1. *Absence of systematic inner-worldly asceticism*. Weber claimed that Islam did not develop a form of systematic, internalized asceticism akin to Protestantism. While ascetic practices exist in Islam, particularly in Sufism, he perceived them more as otherworldly, mystical experiences or as monastic withdrawal, rather than as a

[15] Sukidi, "Max Weber's Remarks on Islam: The Protestant Ethic among Muslim Puritans"; Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

[16] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

[17] Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology, Vol 2*, ed. G. Roth and C. Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

[18] M Weber, *Critique of Stammler*, ed. Guy Oakes, Social theory (New York: Free Press, 1977); Sukidi, "Max Weber's Remarks on Islam: The Protestant Ethic among Muslim Puritans."

source of rational work discipline or capital accumulation. Sufism's emphasis on ecstasy, self-surrender, and renunciation of material attachments was, in Weber's view, more likely to divert energy away from rational economic pursuits.[19]

2. *A legal system lacking formal rationality*. Weber criticized Islamic law (Sharia) for lacking the formal rationality required to support modern capitalism. He saw Sharia as grounded in divine revelation and moral traditions, favoring substantive (value-oriented) rather than formal (procedural) reasoning. The perceived lack of predictability and universal application in Islamic legal practice, according to Weber, hindered the legal certainty essential for long-term investment and complex commercial contracts. This stood in contrast to Roman and Western legal systems, which Weber regarded as more conducive to capitalism.[20]
3. *Fatalism and the absence of a worldly calling.* Weber interpreted the Islamic concept of *qadar* (divine destiny) as fostering a fatalistic outlook that may suppress individual initiative and economic innovation. If all outcomes are preordained by God, why strive or plan rationally for the future? This contrasts with Calvinist predestination, which paradoxically encouraged believers to seek signs of election through worldly success. Additionally, Weber argued that Islam lacked a concept equivalent to the Protestant "calling," in which everyday work is seen as a divine duty to be pursued with rigorous dedication.[21]
4. *Patrimonial social and political structures*. Weber saw Islamic societies as characterized by patrimonial governance, where power is personalized and authority is exercised through loyalty rather than legal rules. This, he claimed, differed from the rational-legal bureaucracies that emerged in the West, based on impersonal rules and technical competence. Patrimonialism, with its arbitrary governance and weak property rights, was seen as inimical to capital accumulation and long-term investment.[22]
5. *Emphasis on traditionalism.* More generally, Weber argued that Islam preserved strong elements of traditionalism that resisted innovation and economic transformation. Although trade and markets flourished in many Muslim societies, Weber considered these forms of commerce to be examples of "adventurer capitalism" or "political capitalism," lacking the systematic rational foundations of Western industrial capitalism.[23]

In short, Weber concluded that Islam—characterized as deterministic and economically non-progressive—lacked the "elective affinity" with modern capitalist ethos that Protestantism possessed. Internal factors within Islamic doctrine and its social structures, he argued, inhibited the rationalization processes essential to capitalist development.[24] While Weber's claims have generated extensive debate, especially among scholars who argue that he oversimplified the diversity of Islamic history and economic

[19] Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology, Vol 2*; Bryan S. Turner, "Islam, Capitalism and the Weber Theses," *The British Journal of Sociology* 25, no. 2 (1974): 230–243.

[20] Turner, *Weber and Islam*; Rodinson, *Islam and Capitalism*.

[21] Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology, Vol 2*; Sukidi, "Max Weber's Remarks on Islam: The Protestant Ethic among Muslim Puritans."

[22] Weber, *Critique of Stammler*.

[23] Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology, Vol 2*.

[24] Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion*; Kuran, *Islam and Mammon: The Economic Predicaments of Islamism*; Rodinson, *Islam and Capitalism*.

practices, his thesis nonetheless remains a foundational framework for exploring how religious values interact with economic dynamics.

However, Weber's monolithic portrayal of Islam and Sufism often fails to capture the internal dynamism and contextual adaptations within Muslim religious practice. Particularly in Sufi traditions, values such as *sabr* (patience), *faqir* (voluntary poverty), and *tawakkul* (reliance on God)—though traditionally understood within a spiritual and ascetic framework—can be reinterpreted and reapplied in everyday life, including the economic domain. The next section of this paper presents empirical findings from field research conducted among members of the Qadiriyah wa Naqsyabandiyah (TQN) Order in Banten. These findings illustrate how Sufi values are being reconfigured and embodied in economic life, offering a fresh perspective that challenges Weberian generalizations.

D. The Tarekat Qadiriyyah wa Naqsyabandiyah in Banten

1. Historical Background and Development

The development of Sufi orders in Indonesia has continued uninterrupted since the early Islamization of the archipelago. Although colonial authorities imposed strict surveillance on Sufi activities during the 19th century, their expansion was never truly stifled.[25] One such order that has not only survived but flourished since that period is the Tarekat Qadiriyyah wa Naqsyabandiyah (TQN).

As a Sufi order that emphasizes the inward and spiritual dimensions of Islam, TQN has played a vital role in the Islamization process and has significantly shaped the spiritual character of Indonesian Muslim society.[26] This order is a synthesis of two major and influential Sufi traditions in the Islamic world—the Qadiriyyah and the Naqshbandiyyah. Historically, it is not uncommon for Sufi scholars to simultaneously adhere to multiple orders. However, TQN in Indonesia evolved not merely as a dual affiliation but as a distinct and unified Sufi system formulated by Shaykh Ahmad Khatib Sambas.[27]

Shaykh Ahmad Khatib Sambas was a distinguished Sufi master and an accomplished Islamic scholar. He was well-versed in core Islamic sciences, including Qur'anic exegesis, Hadith (Prophetic traditions), and Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and he taught numerous students in Mecca during the mid-19th century.[28] His intellectual foundation was built through rigorous study with at least nine renowned scholars in Mecca, each of whom specialized in different branches of Islamic knowledge. These teachers included Shaykh Dawud ibn Muhammad al-Fatani, Shaykh Syam al-Din,

[25] Azyumardi Azra, *The Origin of Islamic Reformism to Indonesia: Networks of Middle Eastern and Malay-Indonesian Ulama in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004); Masdar Hilmy, "Islam and Javanese Acculturation: Textual and Contextual Analysis of the Slametan Ritual" (McGill University, Montreal, Canada, 1999); Michael Francis Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam: Orientalism and the Narration of a Sufi Past* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011).

[26] Mahmud Suyuthi, *Politik Tarekat Qadiriyah Wa Naqsyabandiyah Jombang: Hubungan Agama, Negara Dan Masyarakat* (Yogyakarta: Galangpress, 2001), 54.

[27] Mulyati, "The Educational Role of The Tariqa Qadiriyya Naqshabandiyya with Special Reference to Suryalaya"; Zulkifli, *Sufi Jawa: Relasi Tasawuf-Pesantren* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Sufi, 2002), 36–37; Sri Mulyati, *Mengenal Dan Memahami Tarekat-Tarekat Muktabarah Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Kencana Predana Media Group, 2005).

[28] Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyai*, 17–18.

Shaykh Muhammad Salih Ra'is, Shaykh Umar Abd ar-Rasul, Shaykh Abd al-Hafiz al-'Ajami, Shaykh Basir al-Jabiri, Sayyid Ahmad al-Marzuki, Sayyid Abd Allah al-Mirgani, and Shaykh 'Usman al-Dimyati.[29]

Tarekat Qadiriyah wa Naqsyabandiyah (TQN) was first introduced and taught in Indonesia by Sheikh Ahmad Khatib ibn 'Abd al-Ghaffar from Sambas, West Kalimantan, who lived and taught in Mecca during the mid-19th century and passed away there in 1878.[30] Unlike other Sufi teachers who often taught multiple orders alongside Qadiriyah, Sheikh Ahmad Khatib did not teach the two orders separately but as a unified practice that must be observed as a whole. The integration of these two orders (Qadiriyah and Naqsyabandiyah) presents a mutually complementary core teaching, especially regarding types and methods of dhikr (remembrance). Both also share a common emphasis on the importance of shari'a (Islamic law).

As the principal *mursyid* (spiritual guide), Ahmad Khatib Sambas appointed khalifahs (deputies). A student who had reached a certain level, according to the Sheikh's normative standards, was granted authority to act as a sheikh. Among Sheikh Sambas's khalifahs in Indonesia, three figures were regarded as having high authority: Sheikh Abdul Karim from Banten, Sheikh Ahmad Hasbullah ibn Muhammad from Madura, and Sheikh Tolha from Cirebon. These three are credited as the most influential in spreading TQN in Indonesia, particularly in Java and Madura.

The role of these khalifahs in spreading TQN led to its expansion into neighboring countries, especially Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei Darussalam—most notably during the tenure of Sheikh Abdul Karim Tanara as the principal khalifah after the passing of Sheikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas. Today, many of his followers are spread throughout Indonesia and some parts of Southeast Asia.[31] The spread of TQN followed a unique pattern—as a spiritual movement, it formed a distinct religious-spiritual ideological pattern among its *ikhwan* (brotherhood). TQN has become one of the most renowned Sufi orders in Indonesia, considered the largest and most popular, especially on the island of Java.[32]

Historically, the spread of TQN in Indonesia is believed to have started in the mid-19th century, coinciding with the return of Sheikh Khatib Sambas's disciples from Mecca after many years of study. In Kalimantan, for example, TQN was disseminated by two scholars: Sheikh Nuruddin and Sheikh Muhammad Sa'ad. Because this dissemination did not occur through formal educational institutions (such as pesantren or other formal bodies), most of its followers came from specific communities. In Java, however, TQN was spread through Islamic boarding schools founded and led directly by Sufi scholars. Consequently, TQN developed rapidly and became the largest and most influential tarekat in Indonesia.[33]

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[29] Zulkifli, *Sufi Jawa: Relasi Tasawuf-Pesantren*, 38–39.

[30] Mulyati, "The Educational Role of The Tariqa Qadiriyya Naqshabandiyya with Special Reference to Suryalaya"; Suyuthi, *Politik Tarekat Qadiriyah Wa Naqsyabandiyah Jombang: Hubungan Agama, Negara Dan Masyarakat*, 54.

[31] Dadang Kahmad, *Tarekat Dalam Islam: Spiritualitas Masyarakat Modern* (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2002), 100.

[32] Martin van Bruinessen, *Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah Di Indonesia* (Bandung: Penerbit Mizan, 1992), 98; Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi Tentang Pandangan Hidup Kyai*, 14.

[33] Kahmad, *Tarekat Dalam Islam: Spiritualitas Masyarakat Modern*, 103.

By the 1970s, four major pesantren became important centers for spreading TQN in Java: Pesantren Mranggen in Semarang, under Sheikh Muslih; Pesantren Rejoso in Jombang, led by Sheikh Romli Tamim, representing the Ahmad Hasbullah lineage; Pesantren Pagentongan in Bogor, under Sheikh Thohir Falak; and Pesantren Suryalaya in Tasikmalaya, led by Sheikh Ahmad Sahih al-Wafa Tajul Arifin (Abah Anom), representing the lineage of Sheikh Abdul Karim Banten and his successors.[34]

In the context of its development in Banten, TQN was directly taught and spread by Sheikh Abdul Karim Tanara in the mid-19th century. His influence and charisma allowed the order to gain a substantial following in the region. In Banten, TQN is seen as a community involving total commitment from both its leaders and members. Due to the esteemed position and authority of the kyai (religious leaders), they are regarded as charismatic leaders, and the members of the order show great respect and obedience to their teachers.

Most TQN followers in Banten were farmers. Sheikh Abdul Karim had several disciples who lived communally under relatively loose regulations.[35] These farmers generally continued their regular work but gathered at set times to participate in the tarekat teachings led by the kyai. The obedience of disciples to their murshid in Banten was notably visible in the 19th century through the Banten peasant rebellion in 1888—an uprising against Dutch colonial rule. Historian Sartono Kartodirdjo refers to this as the "Banten Peasant Rebellion," which was directly led by TQN leaders.[36]

In Banten, Sheikh Abdul Karim had a khalifah named Kyai Asnawi (also known as Kyai Ageng Caringin) from Caringin, whose charisma was later exploited by communist rebels in the 1926 Banten uprising.[37] After Kyai Ageng Caringin passed away, leadership of the TQN was continued by his son, Kyai Kazhim, who taught the order in Menes (Labuan). The teachings were then passed on to his son, Kyai Ahmad. TQN also continued to grow in Cibeber (Cilegon), where it was initially taught by Kyai Abdul Latif bin Ali. His son, Kyai Muhaimin, succeeded him, and later, leadership passed to Kyai Suhaimi, his student. The TQN lineage in Cilegon traced its ijazah (spiritual license) through Kyai Asnawi Caringin. As of the late 1980s, Kyai Armin, a nephew of Kyai Asnawi, remained a TQN khalifah and was well-known in Cibuntu (Pandeglang). Although he first studied tarekat under his uncle, Kyai Armin claimed to have also studied with several scholars in Mecca and Baghdad.

To this day, TQN continues to grow in Banten and has successfully influenced the broader religious culture of society. The TQN congregational community in Banten today originates from the lineage of Sheikh Abdul Karim Tanara. Therefore, despite the presence of many mursyid in Banten, their teachings and methods are generally similar.

One example is the TQN led by KH Rd Muhammad Yusuf Prianadi Al Mubarok, well known as Abah Yusuf. The leader of the al-Mubarok TQN pesantren, Abah Yusuf, claims to have two TQN lineages, both of which trace back to Sheikh Abdul Karim Tanara

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[34] Ibid.; Mulyati, "The Educational Role of The Tariqa Qadiriyya Naqshabandiyya with Special Reference to Suryalaya."

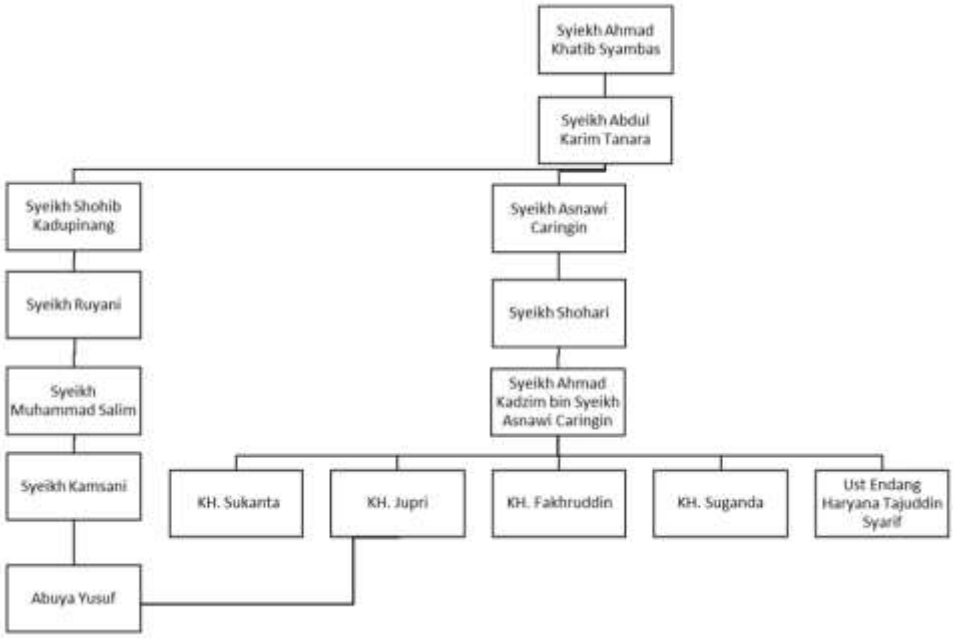
[35] Harun Nasution, *Islam Rasional* (Bandung: Mizan, 1996), 366.

[36] Sartono Kartodirdjo, *The Peasants' Revolt of Banten in 1888, Its Conditions, Course and Sequel: A Case Study of Social Movements in Indonesia* (Springer Science+Bussiness Media, B.V., 1966).

[37] Michael C. Williams, *Arit Dan Bulan Sabit: Pemberontakan Komunis 1926 Di Banten* (Yogyakarta: Syarikat, 2003).

and Sheikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas. His TQN lineage is as follows: Sheikh Ahmad Khatib Sambas → Sheikh Abdul Karim Tanara → Sheikh Shohib Kadupinang, and (through the second sanad): Sheikh Asnawi Caringin → Sheikh Shohib → Sheikh Ruyani → Sheikh Muhammad Salim → Sheikh Kamsani → Abah Yusuf.

This lineage is illustrated as follows:



Apart from Abah Yusuf, there are several other spiritual lineages of the TQN (Tarekat Qadiriyah wa Naqsyabandiyah) still active in Banten today, each with its own distinct chain of transmission (silsilah):

a) Ustadz Habibullah Al-Faqir[38] Ilallah Endang Haryana Tajuddin Syarif, who received ijazah (authorization) from Shaykh Ahmad Kadzim, who in turn was connected through Shaykh Sohari, Shaykh Asnawi of Caringin, Shaykh Abdul Karim of Tanara, and ultimately Shaykh Ahmad Khatib Sambas. Ustadz Habibullah currently resides in Tigaraksa and leads the Pesantren and Dhikr Assembly Majelis Dzikir Al-Ikhlas in Tangerang Regency, Banten.
b) Ustadz Nu'man (popularly known as Abah Maman), who also traces his *silsila* back to Shaykh Ahmad Kadzim, via Shaykh Sohari, Shaykh Asnawi of Caringin, and Shaykh Abdul Karim of Tanara, culminating in the lineage of Shaykh Ahmad Khatib Sambas. He now resides in Menes and continues the leadership of Pondok Pesantren Nadzwatu Dzikri in Pandeglang, Banten.

2. Tarekat Discipleship and the Conception of Business Ethos

Since the founding of the Pesantren TQN Al-Mubarok in 1998, Abah Yusuf has initiated (through bai'at) more than 5,000 individuals into the TQN brotherhood (Ikhwan

[38] The word *alfaqir* here is the name of the *laqob* given by his teacher, namely Sheikh Ahmad Kadzim bin Sheikh Asnawi Caringin

TQN). These followers come not only from Banten but also from other regions of Java and beyond. Despite being a pesantren with a specialization in tarekat (Sufi order), the resident students at TQN Al-Mubarok live and study much like those in traditional pesantren, receiving instruction in classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*) covering *fiqh*, *tauhid*, Qur'anic studies, in addition to the distinctive dhikr (remembrance of God) and *wirid* practices of the TQN.

The community is composed of two groups: those who reside in the pesantren (*santri* cum *salik*) and undergo intensive spiritual training, and non-resident disciples (*salik*) who attend regular teachings and dzikir events without living on-site. Currently, approximately 150 resident disciples live at the pesantren. Most of them are over 30 years old and are engaged in completing their phase of spiritual retreat (*khalwat*) as part of the TQN's *suluk* (spiritual journey).

Regular dhikr and religious study gatherings at the pesantren TQN Al-Mubarok are conducted consistently weekly (every Thursday night), monthly (every Jumat Kliwon night), and annually (during the commemoration of Shaykh Abdul Qadir al-Jailani's *haul*). In addition to the mandatory dhikr and spiritual retreats (*khalwat*) for initiated disciples or *salik*, these routine gatherings are attended by both initiated disciples and the general public. The weekly dhikr and study sessions, held every Thursday night, typically draw between 200 and 500 participants, while the monthly and annual events can attract up to 1,000 attendees.

The disciples of Abah Yusuf come from diverse family backgrounds and professions, including reformed ex-convicts, entrepreneurs, civil servants, private sector employees, small-scale traders, Islamic scholars (kyai pesantren), farmers, and even members of local councils. Despite their varied backgrounds, they are united by a shared desire to seek inner peace through the path of the tariqa.

The spiritual teachings and disciplines of TQN have a profound impact on its disciples. According to Ahmad, one of the disciples, the initial training in spiritual practices, such as dhikr and *khalwat*, leaves a lasting impression on his soul. Furthermore, regular guidance from the murshid (spiritual guide) during specific moments serves as a reminder to remain steadfast (*istiqamah*) in the path of righteousness.[39] In addition to delivering religious sermons (*tausiyah*) before dhikr sessions, the murshid consistently engages in personal follow-ups, inquiring about the disciples' progress and experiences. These interactions serve as a paternal reminder, akin to a father advising his children. The guidance provided often extends beyond religious matters to include advice on social interactions (*muamalah*) and, frequently, business-related issues.

Interviews conducted with several disciples who have completed their "spiritual incubation" (*khalwat*) and resumed their daily activities reveal that TQN's teachings and spiritual experiences have significantly shaped their perspectives, including their approach to business activities. For instance, Uwew, a disciple of Abah Yusuf and owner of a clothing store in Serang, acknowledges that the teachings of asceticism (*zuhud*), piety (*wara'*), patience (*sabr*), and reliance on God (*tawakkul*) have fostered a strong work ethic. He believes these principles have made him resilient, enabling him to face failures

[39] Interview with Ahmad in Anyer, August 10, 2023

and losses without despair, as he trusts that everything is under God's control, while he has to exert maximum effort as an act of submission to God.[40]

Furthermore, Uwew shared that his tariqa activities, such as dhikr, do not interfere with his business; on the contrary, they provide him with a sense of security, comfort, and increased enthusiasm. Every day, before starting his business, Uwew performs dhikr in addition to the obligatory dhikr after the five daily prayers. He believes that dhikr calms his heart and mind throughout the day. Moreover, it instills a sense of being watched over, encouraging him to act cautiously and feel protected by God, which enhances his confidence and motivation in running his business.

Similarly, Arfan, a street vendor operating an *angkringan* (food stall) at night, shares a comparable experience. Like Uwew, he performs dhikr before starting his work. Arfan notes a fundamental change in his outlook since joining TQN. Previously, he frequently complained and even blamed God when faced with repeated business failures. However, through the tariqa's teachings and consistent dhikr, he has overcome economic setbacks, developed resilience, and—most importantly—gained renewed enthusiasm for his business and responsibilities as a family provider.[41]

Nearly all interviewees from the TQN community in Banten echoed the sentiments of Uwew and Arfan. Despite their busy work schedules, they remain committed to remembering God through dhikr after the five daily prayers, at specific times, and before engaging in business activities. Even Abah Yusuf himself operates a general trading business (CV), though he now delegates operational management to trusted disciples while maintaining oversight.

Other TQN disciples actively engaged in business include Rd. Faruq,[42] who runs a construction services and general trading company under a limited liability corporation (PT), and performs dhikr before his business activities. Similarly, other members such as Mansyur (an employee at a company in Cilegon),[43] Suhardi (an employee at Rd. Faruq's CV),[44] Aziz Jajuli (a lecturer at a private university and owner of a religious bookstore),[45] Ujang (a building materials entrepreneur),[46] Hidayatullah (a small-scale trader),[47] and many others follow the same practice.

Though expressed differently, all interviewees agree that TQN's teachings and rituals do not hinder their business activities. On the contrary, the tariqa's principles make them more resilient, less prone to despair, and instill a stronger business ethic, rooted in the belief that running a business is an act of obedience to God's commands, while the outcomes are entirely in God's hands.

E. Revisiting Weber: A New Theoretical Perspective on Islam and Capitalism

[40] Interview with Uwew (nick name) in Serang, August 12, 2023
[41] Interview with Arfan in Kota Serang, August 12, 2023
[42] Interview with Rd. Faruq in Cinangka, August 10, 2023
[43] Interview with Mansur in Cilegon, August 26, 2023
[44] Interview with Suhardi in Cinangka, August 10, 2023
[45] Interview with Aziz in Kota Serang, August 12, 2023
[46] Interview with Ujang in Cilegon, September 9, 2023
[47] Interview with Hidayatullah in Serang, September 8, 2023

Criticism of Max Weber's thesis on the Protestant ethic and capitalism has long been a central debate in the sociology of religion. In his classic work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber argued that the work ethic cultivated by Protestantism—particularly Calvinism—created the psychological and cultural foundation for the rise of modern capitalism. The idea of a "calling" (*Beruf*), the framing of work as a form of devotion, and the emphasis on self-discipline and delayed gratification were seen as forms of rational and productive worldly asceticism.[48] In contrast, Weber regarded Islam—especially in its Sufi expressions—as economically irrational, fatalistic, and mystical in ways that distanced its adherents from worldly productivity.[49] His thesis has often been taken as a foundational framework for understanding the relationship between religion and capitalism, despite early critiques challenging both its methodology and its assumption of cultural universality.

This study engages directly with Weber's assumptions by examining the praxis of local Sufism in Indonesia. Fieldwork among followers of the Qadiriyah wa Naqsyabandiyah (TQN) Sufi order in Banten reveals that Sufi practices in this context cannot be generalized as spiritually anti-world or economically passive. Instead, the values taught and embodied within the TQN community have undergone a reinterpretation that aligns them with productivity, social participation, and economic engagement.

Conceptually, these findings invite a reassessment of the binary opposition Weber draws between Protestant rational asceticism and Islamic mysticism. Within the TQN community, values such as *zuhud* (asceticism), *sabr* (patience), *faqr* (spiritual poverty), and *tawakkul* (trust in God) are not understood as escapism or fatalism. Rather, they are rearticulated as spiritual disciplines that enhance social and economic performance. For instance, *zuhud* is not seen as rejecting wealth, but as resisting greed and detachment from material possessions. A *zahid* (ascetic) may own wealth, but he is not possessed by it—he controls it, rather than being controlled. Likewise, *tawakkul* is not interpreted as passive surrender, but as a harmony between maximal effort and spiritual acceptance of outcomes. *Faqr*, too, is reimagined not merely as a state of material lack, but as an awareness of human limitation before God—a perspective that fosters solidarity and collective work.

These reinterpretations are deeply embedded in the communal structure of the Sufi order. TQN operates not just as a spiritual institution, but also as a node of social, economic, and even political production. Historically, the TQN in Banten was involved in political life during the Sultanate era and played a central role in anti-colonial resistance through its spiritual networks and charismatic leadership. Today, the order continues to inspire its members in their economic and social lives through community cooperatives, savings-and-loan groups, and participation in small- and medium-sized enterprises.

The empirical findings from TQN Banten directly challenge Weber's generalizations about Islam and economic development. They provide strong evidence that Sufi practice can cultivate a productive, ethical, and inclusive economic habitus. This counters Weber's claim that Islamic asceticism is inherently anti-capitalist, instead

[48] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

[49] Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology, Vol 1*, ed. G Roth and C. Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

showing that it can underpin an alternative economic ethic rooted in spirituality and social cohesion.

This aligns with arguments by so-called "New Weberians," who argue that non-Protestant religious traditions can also support distinct forms of capitalism. Cassidy, for example, observed that Muslim communities in various countries exhibit strong work ethics grounded in spiritual motivations not identical to Protestantism.[50] Cassidy's findings further suggest that Islamic spirituality positively influences job satisfaction and organizational commitment via work ethic. These results substantiate the TQN case and reinforce the broader idea that spiritual motivation can drive economic productivity within Muslim contexts.

Similarly, Turner's research has shown that Weber's understanding of Islam is oversimplified and fails to account for the diversity of religious practices and the historical dynamics that influence Muslim economic behavior.[51] Turner criticizes Weber's view as "Orientalist," judgmental, and overly fixated on Western perspectives in understanding religion and society. Turner argues that Weber viewed non-Western religions as less rational or advanced than Protestantism, which Weber saw as the basis of modernity.[52] This also led to his failure to explain the peaceful spread of Islam through Sufi merchants. Turner's critique provides crucial academic groundwork for challenging Weber's monolithic portrayal, demonstrating that his theoretical lens is too narrow and biased to capture the complex realities of Islamic economic engagement, particularly within the Sufi tradition.

Empirically, this study reinforces the findings of other scholars. Djakfar, for example, in his study of the economic behavior of Sufi followers in East Java, demonstrated a similar trend in which spiritual values form the basis for integrity, trust, and long-term orientation in business practices.[53] Djakfar's research on the values of *mujahadah* for Muslim entrepreneurs and the business behavior of Sufi followers (Syadziliyah and Shiddiqiyah) directly supports directly supports the findings of this study on TQN. It demonstrates how spiritual endeavors and values such as non-control by property (associated with asceticism) are integrated into business, reinforcing the notion that Sufi values can form a strong foundation for ethical and resilient economic behavior.

Further validation comes from Kato, who applied mathematical modeling to compare economic distribution efficiency under capitalism and Islamic economics. He concluded that Islamic mechanisms based on profit-sharing and social solidarity—such as *mudarabah*—offer more equitable and stable economic outcomes. His *econophysics* model provides quantitative evidence that Islamic principles can reduce wealth inequality and improve macroeconomic stability.[54] These findings align with TQN Banten's

[50] John Cassidy, "The Islamic Ethic," *The New Yorker* (New York, 2011).

[51] Turner, *Weber and Islam*.

[52] Mukhyar Mukhyar, "Pendidikan Berbudaya Perspektif Pemikiran Max Weber," *Edusiana: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan* 1, no. 1 (March 30, 2023).

[53] Muhammad Djakfar, "Business Behavior of Tariqa Followers in Indonesia: The Relation of Religion, Sufism, and Work Ethic," *ULUL ALBAB Jurnal Studi Islam* 19, no. 2 (December 28, 2018): 253–271, http://ejournal.uin-malang.ac.id/index.php/ululalbab/article/view/5571.

[54] Takeshi Kato, "Islamic and Capitalist Economies: Comparison Using Econophysics Models of Wealth Exchange and Redistribution," ed. Dao-Zhi Zeng, *PLOS ONE* 17, no. 9 (September 22, 2022): e0275113, https://dx.plos.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0275113.

spiritual-economic model, which includes community cooperatives and collective zakat—demonstrating that their practices are not only ethical but also economically efficient.

Within this framework, rationality is redefined—not as Western capitalist individualism centered on accumulation, but as a communal and transcendent form of logic. Economic decisions are made not solely based on profit-loss calculations, but also in consideration of blessings (barakah), justice, and social sustainability. Spiritual capital becomes a source of motivation, while community networks distribute risk and benefit collectively.

The convergence between TQN Banten's empirical data, New Weberian arguments, and Kato's quantitative model signals a paradigmatic shift in the religion-economy discourse. The conversation moves beyond a Western-centric model toward a pluralistic one sensitive to cultural context. The inclusion of mathematical validation is especially significant—it strengthens the sociological argument by providing empirical support for the efficiency and equity of Islamic economic models.

Fieldwork from the TQN community in Banten reveals that Sufi interpretations of core values, such as asceticism and *tawakkul*, actually strengthen a productive ethos, rather than diminishing worldly orientations. In-depth interviews and participant observations revealed that the practices of congregational cooperatives, savings and loan businesses, and collective agricultural management operate on the principles of transparency, mutual trust, and a blessing orientation. This mechanism clearly contradicts Weber's assumption that Sufism isolates oneself from the world and weakens economic rationality. The rationality that emerges is not merely a calculation of capital accumulation, but a moral rationality that combines work discipline, self-control, and social responsibility. Thus, the patterns of production and distribution within the TQN network demonstrate how local spirituality can serve as an ethical framework that supports economic sustainability, while simultaneously undermining the Weberian dichotomy between "productive Protestant asceticism" and "inefficient Islamic mysticism." This fieldwork confirms that asceticism within the TQN is not a rejection of the world, but rather the management of material desires in harmony with the collective mission and values of justice.

In short, this study reconfigures the debate on religion and capitalism. It argues that the central question is not whether religion can support capitalism, but what kind of capitalism it supports. It proposes that diverse religious traditions—including Sufism—can produce ethical and sustainable economic models that prioritize collective well-being over individual accumulation. This opens up new pathways for comparative economic sociology and broadens our understanding of how spirituality can shape alternative modernity.

Conclusion

The case study of the Qadiriyah wa Naqshabandiyah Order (TQN) in Banten provides compelling empirical evidence that Islamic spirituality—particularly local Sufism—is neither otherworldly nor economically passive, as commonly assumed in Max Weber's thesis. On the contrary, the reinterpretation of Sufi values such as *zuhd*

(asceticism), *sabr* (patience), *faqr* (spiritual poverty), and *tawakkul* (reliance on God) actively nurtures a productive, resilient, and community-oriented economic ethos.

Theoretically, this research expands the conceptual landscape of religion-economy relations by demonstrating that Weber's Protestant model is not the sole paradigm of rational and productive ethics. The lived experience of TQN followers shows that Sufi practices can foster an economic habitus that is not only productive but also ethically grounded and socially inclusive—resonating with Islamic economic principles such as distributive justice, the prohibition of *riba* (usury), and the pursuit of *barakah* (divine blessing) in transactions.

These findings challenge the widespread assumption—held by both the general public and many scholars—that the economic underdevelopment of Muslim communities in Indonesia, particularly in Banten, stems from a religious worldview that overemphasizes the afterlife at the expense of worldly engagement. Contrary to this narrative, this research reveals that members of Sufi orders—specifically those affiliated with the TQN—have actively reinterpreted traditional values such as *faqir*, *zuhd*, *sabr*, and *tawakkul* in a more progressive light. Rather than signifying detachment from the world or fatalistic resignation, these concepts are now infused with meanings that support economic resilience, ethical striving, and spiritualized entrepreneurship.

However, despite this shift in spiritual-economic outlook, the empirical reality shows that only a small number of TQN members have achieved significant material success or wealth accumulation. This suggests that their limited economic prosperity is not rooted in Sufi values or religious paradigms per se, but rather in other structural, educational, or systemic constraints. These insights open a new line of inquiry for future research—one that moves beyond religious explanations and probes the broader socio-economic factors that shape the lived realities of Sufi communities engaged in business and livelihood.

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Interview

Ahmad, interview by researcher, August 10, 2023

Arfan, interview by researcher, August 12, 2023

Aziz, interview by researcher, August 12, 2023

Hidayatullah, interview by researcher, September 8, 2023

Mansur, interview by researcher, August 26, 2023

Rd. Faruq, interview by researcher, August 10, 2023

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Uwew, interview by researcher, August 12, 2023