

Magic, Religion, and Authority: Performing Magic of *Kyai* and *Jawara* in Banten

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Abstract

*This paper deals with magical performances of two Bantenese charismatic figures, *kyai* (religious figures) and *jawara* (local strongmen). They become my research focus because both of them are two informal leading figures that have influence over the geographical boundaries. They are also well known as the teachers, the performers, and the specialists of magic who make use of their magical powers for various purposes. Indeed, they can manage their magical power for obtaining and maintaining their authorities among the Bantenese society. Because of their capability in Islamic knowledge and in magical sciences, the *kyai* of Banten have respectable and high position in the society. Meanwhile, because of their magical power obtained from *kyai* and their persevering and hard-struggle for years, the *jawara*'s family becomes the center of power that has great influence toward political, economic and social life of Banten at the present day.*

Keywords: *Kyai, Jawara, magic, Islam, authority, Banten*

Abstrak

*Artikel ini menjelaskan tampilan magis dari dua figur karismatik Banten, yakni *kyai* (tokoh agama) dan *jawara* (jagoan lokal). Mereka menjadi pusat kajian dalam penelitian ini karena keduanya merupakan figur informal yang memiliki pengaruh di berbagai tempat. Mereka juga dikenal sebagai guru, penampil, dan ahli magis yang menggunakan kemampuan magisnya untuk berbagai tujuan. Mereka dapat mengelola kekuatan magisnya untuk meningkatkan dan memelihara pengaruh mereka dalam masyarakat Banten. Oleh karena kemampuan mereka dalam keislaman dan ilmu magis, *kyai* di Banten memiliki kehormatan dan posisi yang tinggi dalam masyarakat. Sementara itu, karena kekuatan magis yang mereka peroleh dari para *kyai* dan ketekunan serta perjuangan keras mereka selama bertahun-tahun, keluarga *jawara* menjadi pusat kekuasaan yang memiliki pengaruh besar terhadap kehidupan politik, ekonomi, dan sosial Banten saat ini.*

Kata Kunci: *Kyai, Jawara, magis, Islam, otoritas, Banten*

A. INTRODUCTION

Banten, the thirtieth province of Indonesia located in the Westernmost part of Java, is well known as the area in which Islam is the religion that is practiced by the majority of the Bantenese people. Bantenese society, as recorded by Dutch Colonial reports, was home to the second most fanatical Muslims in the archipelago – after the Acehnese. The Bantenese were known as the most rebellious society in Indonesia in the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. From 1813 until 1890, there were no less than 80 uprisings in this area.¹ The two most famous revolts happened in Banten; *the peasants' revolt of Banten in 1888*² and *the communist revolt in 1926* in which many *kyai* and *jawara* supported by their followers were actively involved.³

Moreover, Banten has a well-established reputation as 'a haven of the occult sciences', both white and black magic, and quite a few Bantenese have made use of this reputation, acting as bone-fracture *dukuns*, soothsayers and diviners, and bringers of wealth, status, supernatural protection and peace of mind.⁴ Indeed, several people derived benefit from this reputation, deceiving other people by acting as if they had magical powers, trying to gain a lot of money quickly and easily.

Magic, defined by Mauss as 'the earliest form of human thought and the foundation of the whole mystical and scientific universe of primitive man,'⁵ is as a matter of fact still practiced by Bantenese society up to the present. It indicates that magic still has loyal adherents in some areas of Banten and it has probably become one of the cultural-religious identities of Bantenese society. This situation is in accordance with O'Keefe's view that the practice of magic is found not only in the Paleolithic band stage or in primitive man, but also almost everywhere, in every era, in almost every society; and that it appears in many cultures.⁶

The population of Banten, as Snouck Hugronje observed, was 'more faithful than other Javanese in the observance of religious obligations such as fasting during *ramadhan* and paying *zakat*'.⁷ However, some of their religious rituals were contaminated by syncretic aspects derived from pre-Islamic rituals. This can be seen in several magical practices which often use techniques and magical formulas which seem not to be from Islamic sources. It can be traced in many *mantras* (magical formulas) which use the local language (*jangjawakan*), and the meaning of these *mantras* sometimes contains animist elements such as a belief in the spirit of ancestors. These *mantras* are sometimes followed by the word *basmallah* or certain verses of the Qur'an so that they *mantras* seem to be Islamic *mantras*.

Many of the magical skills cultivated in Banten are closely associated with the martial arts and the world of the *kyai* (Islamic traditional leader) and *jawara* (local strongman). Both of these figures are important subjects in this research because they

¹ Mufti Ali et.al., *Peran Tokoh Tarekat Dalam Pemberontakan Muslim Banten 1926: Studi Kasus K.H. Abdul Hamid Ilyas Muhammad Muqri AL-Qutub Labuan (1860-1959)*, (Unpublished), Serang: IAIN SMH Banten, 2007, p.1

² Sartono Kartodirdjo, *The Peasants' Revolt of Banten in 1888: Its Condition, Course and Sequel*, 'S-Gravenhage-Martinus Nijhoff, 1966.

³ Michael C. Williams, *Sickle and Crescent: The Communist Revolt of 1926 in Banten* (New York: Monograph Series in Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, 1982).

⁴ Martin van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren Dan Tarekat: Tradisi-Tradisi Islam Di Indonesia* (Bandung: Mizan, 1995), p. 276

⁵ Marcell Mauss, *A General Theory of Magic* 1972, p.16 (New York: Routledge Classics, 1972) P.16

⁶ Daniel L. O'Keefe, *Stolen Lightning: The Social Theory of Magic* (New York: Continuum, 1982), p.1

⁷ Martin van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren Dan Tarekat...*, p.246

are considered to be those who understand, practice and teach magic to the Bantenese. Both of them are the charismatic figures often mentioned by historians and anthropologists when discussing Banten. Their involvement in many uprisings against the Dutch colonial government made them the solidarity symbol and they were seen as the informal leaders by the majority of Bantenese society. Regarding these figures, Tihami argues that one of the characteristics which cause these charismatic figures to be the community's leaders is their magical powers.⁸

The present study, therefore, aims to explain comprehensively how magic is used by *kyai* and *jawara* as a legitimization in obtaining authorities among the Bantenese society. The purpose of the present work is to deal with the following research questions: how is the role and position of *kyai* and *jawara* among the Bantenese society? To what extent is the significance of magic for *kyai* and *jawara*?

B. RESEARCH METHOD

Magic is a socio-religious phenomenon which has long, established roots in Banten society. Despite many challenges from Islamic Puritanism, magical practice still survives up to the present. It must reflect a loyal adherence to the practice of magic that still exists in some parts of Muslim society in Banten.

I suggest that this surviving practice should be explained using an anthropological approach. The data were gathered by conducting library research and interviews.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Sketching *kyai* as the core of religious figures

The title *kyai* is usually given to those who are considered to master Islamic knowledge, have 'charisma', and have a lot of influence in society. It is also given to people who are seen to be having supernatural powers (*ilmu gaib*). Because of these magical powers, a *kyai* is said to have respectable dignity (*wibawa*) in society, therefore he is able to influence and motivate his followers or his students to do something without coercion.

In different areas of Indonesia, other terms are also used instead of *kyai*, i.e. *ulama*; *ajengan* (Sunda); *tengku* (Aceh); *syekh* (North Sumatra/ Tapanuli); *buuya* (Minangkabau); and *tuan guru* (Nusa Tenggara, Lombok and Kalimantan/Borneo). The term most often used interchangeably with *kyai* is *ulama*.

Zamakhsari Dhofier in his study about the *pesantren* tradition portrays *kyai* as 'the most essential element, as well as often being founder, of a *pesantren*'.⁹ On the same page he remarks that the term *kyai* commonly refers to traditionalist *ulama*. It seems that he gives no different meaning to the terms *kyai* and *ulama*.

Contrarily, Horikoshi seems to distinguish *kyai* from *ulama*. She writes:

"The *kyai* are distinguished from the *ulama* by possessing a large-scale charismatic influence. They are believed superior both morally and as scholars, and their influence is reckoned by both the national authorities and the general public as being far more significant than village *ulama*."¹⁰

⁸ Tihami, M.A "Kiyai Dan Jawara Di Banten: Studi Tentang Agama, Magi, Dan Kepemimpinan Di Desa Pasanggrahan Serang, Banten." (Universitas Indonesia, 1992).

⁹ Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *The Pesantren Tradition: The Role of the Kyai in the Maintenance of Traditional Islam in Java* (Arizona: Monograph Series Press, 1999), p. 34

¹⁰ Hiroko Horikoshi, *A Traditional Leaders in a Time of Change: The Kijaji and Ulama in West Java*. (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1976).

The explanation above, regardless of the different terms used instead of *kyai*, clearly demonstrates that all definitions of *kyai* or *ulama* refer to the same figures, that is, those who are masters in religious knowledge and are able to practice, transmit, and transfer their knowledge to the *ummah* (Islamic society). They themselves practice it in their daily lives, therefore the *ummah* considers them religious figures that can influence and motivate them to live in accordance with Islamic law.

Portraying *Jawara* as the ambiguous figures

Discussions on *jawara* lead us to a general understanding that this group is one of the important elements of Bantenese society. *Jawara* is presented as a Bantenese term for those who are skilled in *pencak silat* (martial arts) and possess supernatural elements (magical power) which makes their relationship with the villagers ambiguous; sometimes they are feared and sometimes admired.

Sartono Kartodirdjo's view that *jawara* is a group of people 'without permanent occupation who often engaged in criminal activities'.¹¹ He continues to explain that what *jawara* did was actually aimed at sabotaging the Dutch colonial government. However, their actions often damaged and harmed local society.

M.A.Tihami and Horikoshi compared *jawara* with Hobsbawm's concept of a 'social bandit.' Like 'social bandits,' *jawara* groups are also said to be have performed social unrest in the community's benefit, therefore they received support from society.¹² However, to some extent, comparing *jawara* with Hobsbawm's concept of 'social bandits', seems vague to me. It requires a sharp analysis. If we analyze in depth the concept of 'social bandit' which Hobsbawm presents in his book, it seems that there are some criteria which differentiate *jawara* from 'social bandits'. In his book, Hobsbawm mentions nine characteristics of a 'social bandit'.¹³ In my analysis, several characteristics mentioned by Hobsbawm might not apply to *jawara*.

Williams views *jawara* as groups of people consisting of a leader and several members who are united by inner ties, and strengthened by possessing and practicing their own style, customs, ceremonies, symbols, a code of honor and even a language. For their performance, they usually dressed in black and had magical power, often expressed in the individual leader's possession of an *ilmu*, the charm with which it was possible to work magic.¹⁴ Furthermore, he explains that the relationship between *jawara* and villagers was ambiguous; they were both feared and admired. 'Some exercised a virtual reign of terror in their regions, but others were seen as champions of peasant rights against the Dutch and the priyayi, the native ruling elite. The latter was likely to be the case if the *jawara* carried out their criminal activities outside the area of their own villages.'¹⁵

From the description above, it is obvious that most of the writers have a dualistic picture of *jawara*. *Jawara* are, on the one hand, depicted as good figures that have a good personality, defend the poor and guarantee safety and security in the village, because of which local society admires them. However, on the other hand, they

¹¹ Kartodirdjo, *The Peasants' Revolt of Banten...*, p.57-58, Williams, *Sickle and Crescent: The Communist...*, p.45

¹² Tihami, "Kiyai Dan Jawara Di Banten...", p. 13, See also Ota Atsushi, *Changes of Regime and Social Dynamics in West Java: Society, State and the Outer World of Banten, 1750-1830* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), p. 157

¹³ Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Bandit Sosial*, (Translated by Moh. Zaki Hussein) (Jakarta: Teplok Press, 2000), p. 33-34.

¹⁴ Williams, *Sickle and Crescent: The Communist...*, p. 48

¹⁵ Williams, *Sickle and Crescent: The Communist...*, p. 46

are portrayed as bad figures that often commit crime, using violence to solve problems. They are also pictured as insolent, arrogant, rude and defiant people.

The role and the position of *Kyai* in Banten society

The position of *kyai* as leader in the community puts them as the solidarity symbol of social life as well as the defender of the community's interests.¹⁶ Moreover, because of their charisma, they are dominant figures who are able to unite various groups of people in society. They have the responsibility to take care of religious education, the implementation of religious rituals, as well as performing social services. Their roles in social life consist of giving religious advice, defending and protecting their society, being the arbiter during conflicts in society, and even curing diseases.

As Banten is a religious area, in which Islam is the religion that is professed by a majority of the Bantenese people, it makes sense that *kyai* occupy a high position in the social structure of Banten, and are considered as 'the symbol of social prestige'.¹⁷ The first ruler and founder of Banten, Maulana Makhdum or Sunan Gunung Jati, was renowned as one of the saints of Java. Moreover, the first three rulers of the Banten Sultanate, i.e. Hasanuddin, Yusuf and Muhammad, obtained the title *maulana* as a recognition of the fact that they were not only masters in Islamic knowledge, but had also reached the position of *wali* and possessed esoteric knowledge and power (*ngelmu*).¹⁸

In the history of the Banten Sultanate, sultans were recognized not only as rulers, but also as religious leaders. Several sultans were renowned pious *ulama* and preachers (*muballigh*) who had a great interest in spreading and teaching Islam. Babad Banten, as quoted by Halwany Michrob, stated that Sunan Gunung Jati, accompanied by his son Hasanuddin, came into Banten to disseminate Islam in Bantenese society.¹⁹ They first arrived in Banten Girang, and then went to Gunung Pulosari where Sunan Gunung Jati taught Hasanuddin Islamic knowledge. In this place also 800 Hindu priests, then, converted to Islam.²⁰ Furthermore, after Hasanuddin had obtained Islamic knowledge from his father, he went to several places around Banten to disseminate Islam in local society for seven years. As a result of the sultan and his son's endurance, persistence and seriousness, many Bantenese people converted to Islam. Even the regent of Banten in that period and most of his citizenry converted to Islam. The successfulness of Sultan Hasanuddin and his father in propagating Islam indicates that they were great preachers.

Maulana Muhammad (r. 1580-1596), the third ruler of the Banten sultanate, and his successor, Sultan Abul Mafakhir Mahmud Abdul Kadir (r. 1596-1651) were also renowned as pious Sultans. They wrote many Islamic books (*kitab*) and gave them to Bantenese society.²¹ After that, Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa (1651-1672), like previous sultans, had a great interest in religion as well. During the time of sultan Ageng, scholars and students from various parts of the Muslim world continued to come to Banten. Sultan Ageng himself, most of the time, was accompanied by these Muslim

¹⁶ Supariadi, *Kyai c> Priyayi Di Masa Transisi* (Surakarta: Pustaka Cakra, 2001), p. 156.

¹⁷ Kartodirdjo, *The Peasants' Revolt of Banten...*, p. 84.

¹⁸ Martin van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren Dan Tarekat...*, p. 248

¹⁹ Halwany Michrob and Chudari A. Mujadid, *Catatan Masa Lalu Banten* (Serang: Saudara, 1993), p. 67.

²⁰ Halwany Michrob and Chudari A. Mujadid, *Catatan Masa Lalu...*, p. 67, Atsushi, *Changes of Regime and Social Dynamics...*, p. 32

²¹ Halwany Michrob and Chudari A. Mujadid, *Catatan Masa Lalu...*, p. 125.

scholars (*ulama*). Thus he was able to maintain the reputation of Banten as an important centre of Islamic learning in the Archipelago.²²

The explanation above indicates that several sultans acted not only as rulers, but also as *ulama*, and they were the propagators who succeeded in making Banten known as one of the most important Islamic centres of Java. To improve the religious knowledge of Bantenese society, the sultans tried to invite *kyai* from outside Banten to teach Islamic knowledge in Banten. Indeed, the sultans delegated their officials to go to Mecca and ask the *khalifah* of Mecca to send religious teachers (*kyai*) to Banten.

In the sultanate period, the sultans' great interest in Islamic knowledge was a good reason for their endeavor to create good relationships with both local and foreign *kyais*, many of whom achieved positions of great influence at the court. Moreover, religious institutions obtained the complete acknowledgement and protection from the sultans.²³ From the first period of the Sultanate until Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa's period, the Sultans always engaged *kyai* in policy-making in order to obtain support from society.

Kyais held crucial roles and occupied high positions in the sultanate bureaucracies. *Qadhi*, or supreme judge, was part of the bureaucratic elite of the Bantenese Sultanate, and played an important role in decisions about every important policy made by the Sultan. Around 1650, a *qadhi* was given the title of *Pakib Najmuddin* and it is by this title that most if not all *qadis* during the following two centuries were known. The position of *qadhi* or *Pakib Najmuddin* was held by an *ulama* or *kyai* who was an expert in the knowledge of *Sharia* (Islamic law). According to Martin van Bruinessen, the position of *qadhi* was 'at the head of a considerable hierarchy of religious functionaries'.²⁴

Because many people believe that the charismatic *kyai* have *karamah* and *barakah*, it makes sense that the *kyai* had no difficulty in mobilizing people against the Dutch colonial government. In the nineteenth century, with the spirit of *jihad* and the spirit of nativism, revivalism, as well as anti-colonialism, the *ulama* (*kyai*) of Banten often became the main mobilizers in various social uprisings.²⁵ The peasants' revolt of Cilegon in 1888 as studied by Sartono Kartodirjo epitomizes how great the authority and the influence of the charismatic *kyai* was in mobilizing Bantenese society to fight against the Dutch colonial government and the indigenous bureaucratic elite, whom they considered to be the henchmen of the Dutch. The reputation of K.H. Abdul Karim, a leader of *tarekat Qadariyah wa Naqshabandiyah*, and other respected *kyais*, i.e. K.H. Ismail, K.H. Marjuki, and K.H. Wasid, had boosted the religious spirit of Bantenese society to get involved in kicking out the colonizers. The success of *kyai* in mobilizing Bantenese people in this revolt and in other uprisings had been an inspiration for the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) to recruit and engage *kyai*, besides *jawara*, to achieve their goal in taking over the power from government in the communist revolt of Banten in 1926.

In the revolutionary era of 1945, *kyai* were also actively involved in the fights to defend the independence of Indonesia. Indeed, in this era, *kyais* were trusted by the

²² Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern 'Ulama' in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2004), p. 9-96.

²³ A. Chumaidi Sjamsuddin, et.al. "Laporan Penelitian Sejarah Masuk Dan Berkembangnya Islam Di Banten, (Unpublished)" (IAIN Syarifhidayatullah Jakarta, 1985), p. 82, Kartodirdjo, *The Peasants' Revolt of Banten...., p. 135.*

²⁴ Martin Van Bruinessen *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren Dan Tarekat...*, p. 252-257.

²⁵ Nina H. Lubis, *Banten Dalam Pergumulan Sejarah: Sultan, Ulama, Jawara* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 2004), p. 99.

Bantenese and were appointed by the president of Indonesia to carry out the administrative bureaucracy of Banten. On 19 September, K.H. Ahmad Khatib²⁶ was appointed by Soekarno as the regent of Banten, and K.H. Syam'un²⁷ was appointed to handle the military sector. In addition, *kyais* were also actively involved in preparing Banten to be a new province. K.H. Aminudin, a leader of *pesantren* Darul Iman, for instance, was one of the Bantenese *ulamas* who were actively involved in this event.²⁸ This shows us that the existence, the position and the role of *kyai* are very important in Banten and they were considered capable of carrying out all duties which became their responsibility.

In addition, the socio-religious roles of *kyai* in Banten consist of teaching Islamic knowledge, both *Qur'an* and Classical Arabic texts (*kital*); giving guidance and giving a good example to society of how to live in accordance with Islam; giving spiritual advice and assisting people in solving their practical problems by using magical powers; giving *khotbah* (sermons) or *ceramah* (religious speeches); providing moral and spiritual support for people who suffer from death of a dear one, disease and disaster; encouraging people to live based on Islamic law; participate in various socio-religious activities conducted in society; and be indeed actively involved in politics.

The role and the position of *Jawara* in Banten society

In the colonial era, the concept of *jawara* was often connected to violent and criminal activities as has been written about by several authors. For some people, the activities of the *jawara* such as stealing, robbing, and creating disturbance, which caused terror and fear in society, were considered an abnormal and deviant profession. In the past, these activities were considered the social profession of *jawara*, as stated by Sartono Kartodirdjo who wrote that the concept of *jawara* refers to 'people without permanent occupation who often engage... in criminal activities.'²⁹

However, as we know that the uprisings and resistance of Bantenese society to the Dutch colonial government involved all elements of Bantenese society, including *jawara*. After the Bantenese sultanate had been abolished by Daendels in 1808, the situation in Banten was becoming chaotic and the social order of society almost collapsed. Because of this situation, the local leaders, both *kyai* as religious leaders and *jawara* as social leaders, rose to boost the spirit of Bantenese society to fight against the Dutch and the native officials. Their struggle gained much support and sympathy from the community because they fought for the community's interests.

In the New Order era, because the governmental policy marginalized Muslims and tended to be 'anti-Islam,' the government tried to reduce the power of Muslims in political life. In this regard, the government cooperated with *jawara* and engaged them to calm down the political life of Banten in order to strengthen its position. Many

²⁶ Halwany Michrob and Chudari A Mujadid, *Catatan Masa Lalu Banten...*, p. 238, Nina H. Lubis, *Banten Dalam Pergumulan Sejarah...*, p. 168, Suharto, "Banten Dalam Masa Revolusi, 1945-1949; Proses Integrasi Dalam Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia" (Universitas Indonesia, 200 AD) p. 89-99.

²⁷ K.H. Syam'un was a respected *ulama* from Banten, born in Citangkil, Cilegon, Serang. He was a grandson of K.H. Washid, one of leaders in the Cilegon revolt of 1888. He had once studied in Mecca for 5 years (r. 1905-1910) and then continued at Al-Azhar University, Cairo. He had also taught in Mecca, less than a year. Halwany Michrob and Chudari A Mujadid, *Catatan Masa Lalu Banten...*, p. 239.

²⁸ Nina H Lubis, *Banten Dalam Pergumulan Sejarah...*, p. 211-224

²⁹ Sartono Kartodirdjo, *The Peasants' Revolt of Banten...*, p. 57-58, Michael C. Williams, *Sickle and Crescent: The Communist...*, P. 45.

jawara were then appointed as cadres of *Golkar*³⁰ to mobilize the masses in the general elections. Because of this relationship, *jawara* became closed to the political leaders and thus obtained many benefits. They received political privileges from the government, which were then used by this group to create links of hegemony and power with all elements of Bantenese society, especially the bureaucratic elite and businessmen. They also made use of these privileges to train and to sharpen their political and economic skills. As a result, it makes sense that nowadays this group is able to dominate the political, economic and social life of Banten.³¹ For instance, Tb. Chasan Sochib³², a leading figure and a leader of the *jawara* of Banten, was able to place her daughter, Rt. Atut Chosiyah, in the position of governor of Banten in 2006.

In legislation elections of 2009, a charismatic leader of Jawara, H.Tb.Chasan Sochib succeeded to place his son in law, Hikmat Tomet (Governor's husband) as a member of Legislative Assembly of RI (DPR RI), his great son, Andika Hazrumy (a son of Governor) as a member of DPR, his daughter, Tatu Hasanah (a sister of Governor) as a member of Provincial Legislative Assembly (DPRD) Banten, and one of his wives, Ratna Komalasari, as a member of DPRD. He also succeeded to place his son, Zaman, as a deputy mayor of Kota Serang in 2008. He also was able to place 7 *jawaras* to be the members of local legislative. His interest by placing his people in the DPRD Banten was to get the development projects funded by APBD.³³ His successfulness in placing his family and his people (*Jawara*), according to Romly, was supported by his lobbies to political parties and also by practicing money politics, intimidation and suppression to Bantenese society.³⁴

The social changes in Banten society have put the *jawara* in a strategic and high position. The negative images attached to this group are slowly changing. Some people even suggested replacing the term *jawara* with *pendekar*, due to its negative connotations.

The Significance of Magic for *Kyai* and *Jawara*

Kyai and *jawara* are both informal leaders in Bantenese society. They are considered the community's leaders because of several superior qualities. *Kyai* are regarded as community leaders when they are able to serve the community's need concerning religion. He must have charisma and authority (*wibawa*); both of these characteristics may be obtained by practicing magic cited from religious sources. Since the majority of Bantenese society believes that there are supernatural aspects in religious doctrines which can be used to meet their practical needs, such as curing diseases, evoking authority (*wibawa*), and others. *Kyai*, as those who have the authority to interpret and transmit religious knowledge, are then supposed to be able to use magical formulae taken from some verses of the *Qur'an*. The trust of the Bantenese

³⁰ Golkar is a political party established by the government for technocrats and civil servants. It is an abbreviation of *Golongan Karya*.

³¹ Lili Romli and Taftazani, *Jawara Dan Kekuasaan: Peranan Jawara Dalam Politik Paska Pembentukan Provinsi Banten* (Jakarta: The Habibie Center, 2006), p. 1-3.

³² H. Chasan Sochib is a charismatic leader of a group of *jawara* who occupy more than 20 important positions in Banten, such as leader of *Satkar Ulama*, leader of *Pengurus Besar Pendekar*, and leader of Kadin Banten. He also leads several firms, such as PT Sinar Ciomas. Khatib Mansur, *Profil Haji Tubagus Chasan Sohib, Beserta Komentar 100 Tokoh Masyarakat Sepertai Pendekar Banten* (Jakarta: Pustaka Antara Utama, 2000).

³³ Lili Romli, "Jawara Dan Penguasaan Politik Lokal Di Provinsi Banten (2001-2006)" (Dissertation, Universitas Indonesia, 2007).

³⁴ Lili Romli, *Jawara Dan Penguasaan Politik...*, p. 248-249.

people in the *kyai*'s capability to do so, according to Tihami, is made use of by several *kyais* to legitimate and maintain their leadership in the community.³⁵

In connection with this, Zamakhsyari confirms Tihami's view mentioned above: he states that a *kyai* can be a charismatic leader because the community believes that a *kyai* has spiritually superior skills which make it so that a *kyai* can give *karomah* and *barokah* (*blessing*) for his followers. However, this belief works only as long as the *kyai* is *wira'i*,³⁶ capable of avoiding contemptible actions both in the view of Islamic law and according to social norms.³⁷ It seems that the behavioral aspects are crucial for a *kyai* to be a charismatic leader.

Jawara are also seen as community leaders when they have several characteristics similar to *kyai*. However, different from *kyai* who have to master Islamic knowledge, for *jawara* it is not necessary to completely understand this religious aspect. Like *kyai*, *jawara* also have to have charisma and authority, both of which may be gained from having magic, which is often obtained from *kyai*. It means that *jawara* have to have a good relationship with a *kyai*, because *kyai* are those who give *jawara* magical powers. As a consequence, *jawara* in Banten pay a lot of respect to *kyai*. Like *kyai*, *jawara* also use their magical power to maintain and legitimize their leadership. However, having magical powers is not sufficient for *jawara* to be regarded as community leaders, because many Bantenese people have the same magical power as the *jawara*. To be an informal leader in their community, *jawara* have to be brave and rich and both of these should be used for serving and assisting the community.³⁸

Jawara, in the view of Bantenese society, are those who have magical power. One cannot be called a *jawara* when one does not have this element.³⁹ Concerning this issue, Martin van Bruinessen notes that 'many of the magical skills cultivated in Banten are closely associated with the martial arts and the world of the *jawara*.⁴⁰ *Jawara* generally obtain their magical power from *kyai* in the form of *jimat* (amulet) or *rajab* (wafk or magical formulae written in a piece of paper, clothes, wood, etc.). However, Suharto remarks that based on their magical power, *jawara* are divided into two groups. The first group consists of those who possess white magic deriving from Islamic sources; the other one consists of those who have black magic from non-Islamic sources. The latter is called *ilmu rawayan* or *ilmu orang baduy*.⁴¹ This means that not all *jawara* obtain their magical power from *kyai*. Some of them acquire it from *dukun* (traditional healer, sorcerer and witch), either ordinary *dukun* or black-magic *dukun*.

Because of his supernatural powers, a *kyai* has two kinds of followers. The first kind is his *santri* (disciples or students) who reside in his *pesantren* (Islamic traditional school). It is common in Banten that aside from learning classical Islamic texts, *santri* also request magical power from their *kyai*. Indeed, even when the *santri* do not ask for it, *kyai* usually give their *santri* who want to leave the *pesantren*. It seems that it has become a necessity for *kyai* to give all of their *santri*'s magical power, or at least give *amalan* or *wirid* for salvation. The second kind of follower of a *kyai* is common people (non-*santri*) who have a moral and spiritual tie with the *kyai*, both those who have ever obtained a magical formula from him, such as *jawara*, as well as those who have ever

³⁵ Tihami, "Kiyai Dan Jawara Di Banten...", p. 175-181

³⁶ *Wira'i* means a man who always refrains from *shubbah*, from all conduct prohibited by Islam.

³⁷ Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *The Pesantren Tradition: The Role...*, p. 175-181

³⁸ Tihami, Kiyai Dan Jawara Di Banten..., p. 175-181

³⁹ Tihami Kiyai Dan Jawara Di Banten..., p. 100.

⁴⁰ Martin van Bruinessen, "Shari'a Court, Tarekat and Pesantren: Religious Institutions in the Banten Sultanate," *Archipel* 50 (1995): 187.

⁴¹ Suharto, *Banten Dalam Masa Revolusi...*, p. 153

received the *kyai*'s help by use of his magical powers. In this regard, the latter kind is dispersed not only in Banten but also outside of the country.

According to Mansurnoor, a *kyai* needs a kind of popular legitimacy to fit the *kyai*ship.⁴² As an informal leader, a *kyai* has to win popular acceptance for his leadership. This may be achieved in specific ways, such as fulfillment of public expectations, generosity, bravery, and others. Concerning this issue, Tihami states that one of the specific ways to fit the *kyai*ship is by practicing magic. A *kyai* is culturally demanded to have magical powers aimed to overcome the practical problems of society. Indeed, Tihami argues that in Pasanggrahan, a place where he conducted research about *kyai* and *jawara*, one would be called *kyai* when one possesses magical power and practices it to serve society, either regularly or at random times. Performing magic for curing certain diseases and other purposes has become one of the characteristics of a *kyai*.⁴³

From the explanation above, it seems that a *kyai* is recognized and well-respected by the community not only because of his comprehensive understanding of religious knowledge and his good behavior and morals, but also because of his mastering of the occult sciences (*ilmu gaib*) and the use of it for the community's interests.

Conversely, a *jawara* usually uses his magical power only for his own interests.⁴⁴ However, several *jawara* make use of their magical power to serve other people, such as curing diseases and teaching *silat*(martial art)and *magic*. A *jawara* who practices his magical power for curing diseases sometimes uses his skill to be a *dukun*.

Several *jawara* sometimes make use of their magical power, obtained from a *kyai*,for negative purposes. For instance, this group is in demand by rich people and businessmen to press for the payment of debt. Similarly, the candidates for the position of head of the village also often employ *jawara* to oppress their rivals so that they will win in the elections; indeed, several politicians exploit *jawara* to intimidate their rivals.

People believe that because of his spiritual power, a *sufi* or a *wali* can perform miraculous actions. It is sure that many *sufis* and *walis*(saints)are said to have supernatural powers to do something that is apparently in contradiction with laws of nature. There are many stories about their miracles and powers, such as being capable of discerning somebody's *batin* (inner/mind/heart); practicing *buriq* (exteriorization) or being capable of being present in several places at the same time; being invisible; *tayy al makan* (being in a state of being able to overcome space borders); manifesting oneself in various forms; being present unexpectedly when one of his students is in a dangerous condition; and others. All of these miraculous stories can be read in their historiographies which are spread out over almost all the Muslim world.⁴⁵

Concerning this issue, Bantenese society also believes that several *kyai* who have occupied the position of *wali* (saint) or *sufi* are capable of performing such miraculous actions. For instance, Buya Dimyati (head of *pesantren* Cidahu, Cadasari, in Pandeglang, who died several years ago) was believed to be capable of detecting one's *batin* (inner/mind/heart). It was said in society that he could know one's problem before the person himself told it. K.H. Mufasir (a *sufi* who was head of *pesantren* Cipulus, Barugbug, Serang) is also believed to be able to practice *buriq*. Indeed, many

⁴² Iik A. Mansurnoor, "Rato and Kyai in Madura: Are They Twins?," *International Workshop on Indonesian Studies No. 6: Madurese Culture and Society: Continuity and Change* (Leiden, 1991).

⁴³ Tihami, Kiyai Dan Jawara Di Banten..., p. 95

⁴⁴ Tihami, Kiyai Dan Jawara Di Banten..., p. 97.

⁴⁵ Annemerie Schimmel, *Dunia Mistik Dalam Islam*, 1st Ed (Translated by Sapardi Joko Darmono) (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 2000),p 258-261.

people who live around my village believe that he sometimes prays at the Friday service in two places, in his *pesantren* and in Mekka. These stories are a religious phenomenon which is spread in Bantenese society until now. Making a cult of these figures, according to Helmy, the stories are sometimes told abundantly by people.⁴⁶

The belief in the supernatural powers of certain religious figures is not only prevalent in Banten, but also in Java. Rafless remarks that 'every Arab from Mecca, as well as every Javan who had returned from a pilgrimage thither, assumed on Java the character of a saint, and the such persons supernatural powers.'⁴⁷ As a result, they were well-respected by the community; it was not difficult for them to influence and to boost the spirit of society to fight against the Dutch interests. To provoke the uprisings, many *kyai* or *hajis* made use of their magical power; they even distributed *jimat* (amulets) and *air suci* (holy water for salvation or invulnerability) to their followers. For instance, *kyai* Wakhia was said to be capable of performing invulnerability (*kekebalan*) of bullets when he led an uprising in Waringin Kurung in 1820;⁴⁸ and K.H. Tubagus Ismail, one of the leaders of Banten's revolt in 1888, was believed to be a sacred saint who had *ilmu kebal* (invulnerability science) and was able to manifest himself in different faces and shapes.⁴⁹ Sartono describes how in the morning of 10 July, 1888 one of the leaders of the peasants' revolt, Haji Mohamad Asik, ordered his followers who gathered together in great numbers at Bendung in Banten 'to drink holy water in order to make them invulnerable in battle.'⁵⁰ Furthermore, some religious teachers involved in the communist revolt of Banten in 1926 were arrested and exiled to Boven Digul because of several reasons; they urged their followers to fast for several days and anointed them with holy water to make them invulnerable; they also sold amulets to their followers.⁵¹

Concerning this issue, Cees van Dijk argues that the belief in invulnerability and other magical powers occurred not only in Banten, as presented by Kartodirjo, but it has also been a characteristic that runs through the Indonesian and Malaysian story, and it has been manifested in Singapore and South Thailand, in this last case related to the resistance against the expanding Thai Buddhist state power in the early decades of the twentieth century. He also says '...the role belief in magic played in the uprisings against colonial rule and in a number of recent examples of religious-inspired dissent spilling over into violence falls within the sphere of religion....'⁵²

Discussions on *tarekat* (*mystical brotherhood*) and *ilmu hikmat* (Islamic magical sciences) in Banten have been presented by several authors, such as Sartono, Martin van Bruinessen, and Athoillah. Some of them mention the key role of *kyai tarekat*

⁴⁶ Helmy Ulumi F.B, "Magi Orang Banten Dalam Perspektif Ontologi, MA Thesis" (Yogyakarta: UGM, 2004) p. 112.

⁴⁷ T.S. Raffles, *The History of Java, Vol II*, Oxford (London & Glasgow: Oxford University Press, 1978) p. 3.

⁴⁸ Tihami, "Kiyai Dan Jawara Di Banten...", p. 20

⁴⁹ Paguyuban Keturunan P.A. Achmad Djajadiningrat, *Memoar Pangeran Aria Achmad Djajadiningrat* (Jakarta: Paguyuban Keturunan P.A. Achmad Djajadiningrat, 1996) p. 49.

⁵⁰ Quoted from Kees van Dijk, *Religious Authority: We Have Forgotten God*, a paper for the conference 'Dissemination of Religious Authority in 20th Century Indonesia', 2005, p.17

⁵¹ See Appendix 1 "List of Persons from Banten Exiled to Boven Digul" in Williams, *Sickle and Crescent: The Communist...*, p. 69-79. The list shows that Tb.H.Abdulhamid (Adung) and Tb.K.H. Abdulhadi were both religious teachers who urged their followers to fast for several days, made them recite 300 times the "Fatekhah" and fourteen times the "ahyat korsi," to make them invulnerable. Moreover, Salikin, a religious teacher, was arrested because of selling amulets.

⁵² Kees van Dijk, "Religious Authority: We Have Forgotten God," in *Dissemination of Religious Authority in 20th Century Indonesia*, 2005.

(religious figures who are actively involved in mystical brotherhood) in the uprisings in Banten. Sartono, for instance, remarks that *tarekat* and *kyai* were both the main powers that caused the Banten revolt in 1888. *Kyai tarekat* were much respected figures due to their knowledge, as well as their magical and mystical powers.⁵³ K.H. Abdul Karim, K.H. Tubagus Ismail, H. Marjuki and K.H. Wasid are all charismatic figures who were able to boost the spirit of the Bantenese to rebel.⁵⁴

Similar to other *kyai tarekats*, Buya Moekri was depicted in his hagiography as a leading figure that possesses magical powers and often performs miraculous actions.⁵⁵ He also taught and distributed his magical powers to his students and his followers. Several of his students and followers interviewed during this research acknowledged Buya Moekri's supernatural powers. Indeed, most of them still perform the *amalan*, *wirid*, *dzikir*, *hizib* and *wafaq* meant for magical practices which they obtained from Buya Moekri.⁵⁶

According to Van Bruinessen, the tradition of Islamic magic which is often called *hikmah* or *thibb* (medicinal treatment) has long existed in the Islamic culture of the Middle East. Both *ilmu hikmah* derived from pre-Islamic culture (such as *wafaq*, *rajah*, etc.), and *thibb* which is based on *fawa'id* of the verses of the *Qur'an*, are regarded by the majority of Muslims as part of Islam. Indeed, several orthodox *ulamas* such as Al-Ghazali, Al-Suyuthi, Ibn Qayyim al-Jauzi have written about both. Van Bruinessen also explains that this knowledge of magic is often attached to *tarekat*; many *tarekat* teachers are also called *ahli thibb* and *ahli hikmah*.⁵⁷ Recently there were two very famous *kyai hikmah* from Banten. The first one was Ki Armin (KH. Muhammad Hasan Amin) from Cibuntu near Pandeglang (d.1988), the second one was Ki Dimyati from Dahu in Cadasari (north of Pandeglang).⁵⁸ Numerous stories were (and still are) told about

⁵³ Kartodirdjo, *The Peasants' Revolt of Banten...*, p. 239-240.

⁵⁴ The first figure, K.H. Abdul Karim was a great *kyai tarekat*, considered a saint who was well-respected by the majority of the Bantenese, both the elite and non-elite people. He was also well-known as *kyai agung* due to his charisma and his *keramat*. K.H. Tubagus Ismail and H. Marjuki were also leading figures in this revolt. They are both students and loyal followers of K.H. Abdul Karim. K.H. Wasid was a leading figure who convinced many *kyai* in several areas in West Java to support this rebellion and led this revolt until his death. He was a son of Abas, who was actively involved in the Wakhia revolt in 1850. Kartodirdjo, *The Peasants' Revolt of Banten...*, p. 257-274.

⁵⁵ To mention some of the supernatural powers attributed to him: it was said that he was able to be invisible of pursuit and capture by the Dutch military (p. 47). He was also able to discern one's *batin* and know one's identity of those he did not know before. He had also been delegated by President Soekarno to assist the King of Saudi Arabia to muffle social unrest in Saudi Arabia at the time and due to his supernatural powers, he succeeded in arresting the leader of the rebellion in Saudi Arabia so that the king awarded him a big house in Mina. This house was then occupied by his second son, Ahmad Syatibi. For further reading, Mufti Ali, *Peran Tokoh Tarekat Dalam Pemberontakan Muslim Banten...*, p. 46-48.

⁵⁶ To mention some of Buya Moekri students: KH. Marwan (d. 1982) was born in Batu Karut, Pandeglang. He was a famous *kyai hikmah*. He received *ijazah tarekat*, *ilmu hikmat*, *hizib* and other magical formulas from Buya Moekri and taught them to his students and his children. Furthermore, H. Supriadi was born in Tapos of Tigaraksa, Tangerang in 1912. He is a famous bone-fracture specialist who still performs his skills up to the present. He obtained his skills after performing *wirid al-Waqi'ah* obtained from one of Buya Moekri's student, KH. Mufti Ali (Mufti Ali, *Peran Tokoh Tarekat Dalam Pemberontakan Muslim Banten...*, p. 76-78, 81-82.)

⁵⁷ Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren Dan Tarekat...*, p. 338.

⁵⁸ Besides being well-known as *kyai hikmah*, both of these *kyai* were also famous as *tarekat* teachers. The former was a *tarekat* teacher of Qadariyya and the latter taught *hizib* of *tarekat syadziliyah*. Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren Dan Tarekat...*, p. 279-282.

both of these kiai's' miraculous powers, their clairvoyance, the rapid careers or sudden riches that befell some of those who had won their favours.⁵⁹

Athoillah confirms Van Bruinessen's explanation described above that the majority of *kyai tarekats* in Banten also perform *ilmu hikmat*. He argues that there are some similarities between *ilmu hikmat* and *tarekat*; both of these perform *rijadhab* and *mujahadah* in their rituals and their purposes are meant for *kemaslahatan umat* (the benefit of the ummah).⁶⁰ Several classical Islamic texts are used as the sources of *ilmu hikmat* in Banten. To mention some *ilmu hikmat* (magical science) sources: *Syams al-Ma'arif wa Lathāif al-'Awārif* and *Manba' Ushul al-Hikmah* of Imam Ab al-Abbas Ahmad bin Ali Al-Bunī, *Mujarrabat al-Dairab* (*Fath al-Malik al-Majid al-Muallaф li naф al-'Abid*) of Sheikh Ahmad al-Dairabī, *Khazinah al-Asrār Jalilah ab-Adzkār* of al-Sayyid Haqī al-Nāzīlī, *Syumiūs al-Anwār wa Kunīz al-Asrār* of Ibn al-Haj al-Tilimsāni al-Maghribī, *Al-Jawāhir al-Lumā'ah fi Istiħħdar Muлük al-Jin fi al-Waqt wa al-Sa'ah* of Syekh 'Ali Ab Hayyullāh al-Marzūqī, *Dalāil al-Khairat* of Imam Ab 'Abdillah Muhammad bin Sulaiman, *al-Awfaq* of Imam al- Ghazali, *Tashīl al-Manāfi' fi al-thib wa al-Hikmah* of Syekh Ibrahim bin Abd al-Rahman al-Azraq, *Al-thib al-Nabawi* of syekh Muhammad bin Ahmd al-Dzahabī, *al-Rahmah fi al-Thib wa al-Hikmah* of Syekh Jalaluddin Abd al-Rahman al-Suyūthī. *Al-Sir al-Jalil fi Kħawaddha Hasbunallāh wa ni'mal-Wakil* of Sayyid ab al-Hasan al-Syadzlī, and etc.

Even though numerous *kyai* practice *ilmu hikmat* in Banten, there is no *pesantren* designated specifically to study it. Most of the *pesantren* teach *ilmu hikmat* as a side activity rather than a primary activity which is sometimes practiced to meet their economic needs. For instance, KH. Ja'al Maqsud, leader of *pesantren* "Sabilu Rosyad" in Batu Kuwung, Padarincang, and K.H. Fayumi, leader of *pesantren* "Al-Ikhlas" in Barugbug, Ciomas, teach *Qur'an* and other classical Islamic texts to their *santris* as the main activity, but they also practice *ilmu hikmat* and teach them to their *santris* and non-*santris* or the common people.⁶¹

There are three methods to obtain *ilmu hikmat*: the first one is by inheritance, when a *kyai hikmah* teaches his *ilmu hikmat* to one or several of his children; the second one is by learning it from other *kyai hikmah* or *kyai tarekat*. The third one is by reading *ilmu hikmat* sources (*kitab*) and self-study.⁶² Indeed, a *kiai hikmah* sometimes carries out a great event at a certain time and place to give *ijaza* of *ilmu hikmat* consisting of many *bizibs*, *wafaq*, *amalan* and other magical formulas. In this event, *santris* and non-*santris* who want to obtain this *ijaza* should pay a sum of money as *mahar*.⁶³

⁵⁹ Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren Dan Tarekat...*, p. 280.

⁶⁰ Athoillah notes that both *ilmu hikmat* and *tarekat* perform the same rituals, but the method and the way they use it are different. While the ritual of *Ilmu hikmat* is usually performed in a simple way, the ritual of *tarekat* is more complicated and has to be performed in several phases, from the soul purification phase until the *tabarruk* phase. M. Athoullah Ahmad, *Ilmu Hikmat Di Banten, Dissertation, Unpublished* (Jakarta: UIN Syarifhidayatullah, 2005), p. 109-110.

⁶¹ Interview with K.H. Ja'al Maqsud in Padarincang, Serang, Banten (August 22nd 2021) and K.H. Fayumi in Ciomas, Serang, Banten (August 27th 2021).

⁶² Ahmad, *Ilmu Hikmat Di Banten, Dissertation, Unpublished*, p. 94-96.

⁶³ Recently, the pesantren of al-Ghazali, in Kampung wadas, sindangsari, Petir, Serang, conduct a great event by giving *ijaza kubra* of *ilmu hikmat* containing various supernatural powers. During the event, this pesantren also sold various amulets and other magical objets such as rings, belts, tasbih, turbans, and etc. Interview with Ust. Rohman, in Padarincang, Serang, Banten (February, 2nd 2021)

Furthermore, nowadays there are many *kyai* from Banten who practice *ilmu hikmah*, such as Salman Farisi,⁶⁴ Yahya Ibn Ma'mun,⁶⁵ Abah Sakin,⁶⁶ Ahmad Abbas bin Ma'mun,⁶⁷ Ubing Al-Maraghi ZA,⁶⁸ and Anis Fuad.⁶⁹ Many visitors, both from around and from outside Banten, come to their houses to ask for charms, amulets, *wafak* and other things for various purposes.

D. CONCLUSION

This study has shown that Banten is not only well-known as a religious area where the population was famous as the fanatical Muslims who often rebelled against the Dutch colonial government, but also that it has a well-established reputation as a haven for occult sciences.

Kyai and *jawara* are charismatic figures who play many roles in Bantenese society and make use of their magical powers for various purposes, such as for political, economic, social, and religious interests. Indeed, they make use of magic to legitimize their traditional leadership in the community.

In the history of Banten, *kyai* and *jawara* were often mentioned as the charismatic figures that had great influence on the community and played crucial roles in several uprisings against the Dutch colonial government. Many stories were spread in the community saying that these figures often used and dispensed magical formulas to their followers in order to boost their morale in fighting against the Dutch. Their ability in managing and maintaining their magical power, besides Islamic knowledge for *kyai*, place them as the leading figures among the society. *Kyai* have succeeded in maintaining their authority because they are able to play good role among the society by making use of their Islamic knowledge and magical power for the society's interests; meanwhile, *jawara* have succeeded in obtaining and maintaining their authority because they used their bravery and magical power for protecting the weak and the poor people among their society.

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⁶⁴ Salman Farisi was born in Babakan Kopomaja Pasirbuyut, Jawilan, Serang in 1954. He is a head of pesantren Al-Ikhlas and active in social and politic organizations, such as GOLKAR, SATKAR ULAMA, and MDI.

⁶⁵ Yahya Bin Ma'mun was born in Walantaka, Serang in 1968.

⁶⁶ Abah Sakin was born in Cakung Carenang.

⁶⁷ Ahmad Abas bin Ma'mun was born in Kasemen, Serang in 1953.

⁶⁸ Ubing Al-Maraghi ZA was born in Cikaduen Pandeglang 1964.

⁶⁹ Anis Fuad was born in Cimuncang, Serang in 1957.

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