Charisma and Rationalisation in a Modernising Pesantren: Changing Values in Traditional Islamic Education in Java

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Dedication

My beloved wife, Irfatul Hidayah, and my children, Muhammad Zeva Wagiswari and Athifa Ramaniya, for your patience and support during my study

My parents, Bapak Tholchah Aziz (Alm.) and Ibu Aisyah, and brothers and sisters, Mbak Iva, Mas Barok, Mas Mus, Mbak Ema, Yuni and Nuk, for your sincere prayers for my success

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Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

Achmad Zainal Arifin

18 December 2012
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Notes for Non-English Words
and Transliteration

This work contains many non-English words, in languages such as Indonesian, Javanese, and Arabic. I write the non-English words in italics, then provide an explanation in box parentheses ([ ]), for short meanings, or in footnotes, for long explanations. For writing Arabic words I use the transliteration system of the University of Paramadina, as follows:

| ﴾ = a | ﴽ = z | ﴻ = f |
| ﷲ = b | ﷼ = s | ﷺ = q |
| ﴵ = t | ﴵ = sh | ﷺ = k |
| ﷸ = th | ﷸ = s | ﷹ = l |
| ﷱ = j | ﷱ = d | ﷹ = m |
| ﷲ = h | ﷲ = t | ﷺ = n |
| ﷳ = kh | ﷳ = z | ﷹ = h |
| ﷴ = d | ﷵ = w |
| ﷶ = dh | ﷶ = gh | ﷹ = y |
| ﷷ = r |

Short:  ﴾ = a  ﴹ = i  ﷹ = u
Long:  ﴾ = ā  ﷹ = ī  ﷹ = ā
Diphthong:  ﴾ = ay  ﷹ = aw

However, some Arabic words that have been incorporated into Indonesian or Javanese and are used to indicate certain events or names of institutions and persons are written in their original forms, such as: ‘ngalap berkah’ instead of ‘ngalap barākah,’ ‘Nahdlatul Ulama’ instead of ‘Nahdah al-‘Ulamā’, and ‘Abdurrahman’ instead of ‘Abd ar-rahmān.’
Abstract

This thesis examines the process of transmission of charismatic authority from an Islamic religious leader, called a kyai (sometimes also spelled ‘kiai’), to one of his sons, given the title ‘gus,’ within his teaching community [pesantren]. There are four topics addressed in this research in order to analyse the transmission process: (1) the curriculum and learning structure changes made by pesantren in responding the modernisation of educational system throughout the country; (2) the appearance of bureaucratic-like organisation within the traditional pesantren, so called “pengurus pondok” [pesantren’s board] that represent an administrative rationalisation of pesantren; (3) the adaptability of charismatic authority of kyai, which relies mostly on the gift of grace [barākah] and working-miracle [karāmah], to a more modernised and rationalised community; and (4) the routinisation of charisma, especially regarding to the issue of succession.

To address those topics, I conducted a case study at Pesantren al-Munawwar, particularly in Komplek L, part of the pesantren which lead by a young kyai, who had to lead the pesantren after the death of his father in 2001. I conducted my fieldwork for nearly 11 months in total. I did two weeks pre-research in June 2009, before doing my confirmation of candidature. Then, from September 2009 to July 2010, I did my fieldwork for data collection. My last visit was for nearly three weeks in December 2011 for updating some information. During my fieldwork, I participated in most pesantren’s activities, ranging from the daily activity of madrasah, weekly agenda of jam’iyahan [gathering], to yearly khaul [commemorating the death] of Kyai Ahmad. I also conducted several interviews with Gus Munawwar, some family members, alumni, ustadz (teachers), and santri (students). Most of these interviews were done in informal ways within the daily activity to keep the natural setting of the research.

From my fieldwork, I found that the processes of modernisation and rationalisation of pesantren have both challenged and reinforced the charismatic authority of the kyai. They have contributed to increase the number of santri, and this increase in itself is seen as evidence of the charismatic authority of the kyai. However, by implementing the madrasah system, as well as employing the pesantren board, the kyai is forced to share
his authority with new teachers, who provide an alternative perspective through which the santri may interpret their social realities. The way the kyai engages with the tension of preserving traditional values, while at the same time accommodating modern ones, has resulted in a unique amalgam of traditional and legal-rational authority which preserves his charismatic authority. Importantly, the rationalisation process does not really change the values system of pesantren, although it has, in some ways, changed the perception of some santri of the charisma of their kyai.

The administrative rationalisation of charismatic authority, offers an alternative way of seeing the relationship between rational-legal and traditional authority. In the everyday life of pesantren, rational-legal authority can fit and work well within the traditional authority. The pesantren board, which has responsibility for ensuring the running of most activities in the pesantren, also functions, during the absence of kyai, as his badal [representation] in teaching and leading the prayers. Therefore, in my opinion, it is necessary to reconsider the use of a tripartite categorisation of authority, as proposed by Weber, in examining the authority of the traditional Islamic leader, especially in consideration of the possibility of the three forms of authority being combined within a single phenomenon.
Chapter One

Introduction

This thesis examines the process of transmission of charismatic authority from an Islamic religious leader, called a kyai (sometimes also spelled ‘kiai’), to one of his sons, given the title ‘gus,’ within his teaching community [pesantren]. Using the concept propounded by Weber, this phenomenon can be considered as routinisation of charisma, more precisely in the form of hereditary charisma. However, in this case, the influence of the rationalisation process of the institution (which can be seen through the implementation of the madrasah system and the appearance of bureaucratic organisation within the pesantren) results in a unique relationship between the leader and his disciples that goes beyond the common understanding of the three models of authority as proposed by Weber (Weber, Roth & Wittich, 1978). Weber proposed that “charismatic” authority contrasts with “traditional” and “legal-rational” authority, which are commonly placed in binary opposition (Weber, Roth & Wittich, 1978, p. 215). Interestingly, both forms of authority seem to be mixed in the daily activities of pesantren. Moreover, the notion of the charismatic leader, who relies on gifts of grace, also remains strong in pesantren, even in those undergoing a process of modernisation, as shown in this research, and becomes an important factor in determining the success of the intergenerational transmission of authority. The particular case examined here, I argue, shows that there is an alternative way of understanding and interpreting the phenomenon of charismatic authority in Muslim communities, which broadly share similar concepts regarding the authority of their leaders. Throughout this thesis, I will show how a pesantren community engages with modernisation, in particular through implementing processes of rationalisation, and actually uses them to enhance the charismatic authority of the religious leader, the kyai.

The authority of kyai within the traditional pesantren, as indicated by Zamakhshyari Dhofier (1980), is similar to that of the leader of a small kingdom, in that all the pesantren’s policies, including setting up the curricula, receiving or rejecting new santri
[students of pesantren], and even regulating all aspects of the everyday life within the pesantren, are in the hands of the kyai. The total obedience of santri to their kyai has been clearly reflected in the phrase popular among them, “pejah-gesang nderek kyai” [Lit. following the kyai, die or live]. As most pesantren are owned by kyai, santri also consider a gus as the only possible successor to the present kyai. These phenomena indicate that the authority of kyai can be categorised as a form of traditional authority within Weber’s conception. Under traditional authority, according to Weber, commands and obedience are legitimised on the basis of the sanctity of age-old tradition which governs the authority relationship (1964). This differs from, or is even commonly understood as opposite to, legal-rational authority, under which commands and obedience are legitimised on the basis of legal norms, according to which they can be shaped and modified with an ease unknown to traditional authority. This legal-rational authority, as predicted by Weber, has also become a dominant form of authority outside the pesantren community.

The authority of kyai, as well as the existence of the traditional pesantren, has been challenged by the emergence of the madrasah system, pioneered by modernist and reformist Muslims in the early of twentieth century (Azra, 1999; Steenbrink, 1986; Yunus, 2008). The madrasah system, which combines Islamic studies with secular subjects such as mathematics, physics, biology and the social sciences in its curriculum, is aimed at producing Muslim students equipped with the skills necessary to fulfill the requirements of available jobs. Moreover, the decision of the new Indonesian government to continue the Dutch education system has placed pesantren in a marginal position. Some kyai, initiated by KH. Hasyim Asy’ary, started to adopt the madrasah system, in terms of a formalised progression through levels of study, into his pesantren, Tebuireng, but without changing the pesantren’s curriculum or adopting any secular subjects (Arifin, I., 1993; Qomar, 2005; Zaini, 1998). When the leadership of the madrasah was taken over by his son, KH. Wahid Hasyim, some secular subjects were included in the curriculum (Wahid and Lajnah Ta’lif wa Nasyr-DIY, 1995; Zaini, 1998). Later on, some pesantren across Java started to follow the madrasah model of Tebuireng because this pesantren was known as a centre [kiblat] for the development of pesantren in the early twentieth century. This status cannot be separated from the figure
of KH. Hasyim As’ari, the founder of the Nahdlatul Ulama\(^1\) (the biggest Islamic organisation in the country) with his special title of Hadratus Syaikh (the grandmaster of the kyai).

Besides the pesantren’s own initiative to modernise, the Indonesian government also launched several policies to modernise religious institutions, including the madrasah and the pesantren. The culmination of these policies is contained in the *SKB Tiga Menteri* [Three Ministers Joint Decree] which rules that the curricula of madrasah should comprise 70 per cent secular subjects and 30 per cent Islamic subjects (Muhammad, Z., 2005; Ziemek, 1986). Although not all kyai accepted and implemented this regulation, most pesantren implemented the madrasah system but determined various percentages for the general subjects to be taught within their own madrasah. Some simply followed the instruction of the Joint Decree, but many other pesantren decided their own curricula and used ratios of 60:40, 50:50 or 40:60 (Islamic studies: secular subjects) depending on their needs (Direktorat Jenderal Pembinaan Kelembagaan Agama Islam, 2003; Kholiq, Mas’ud, Ismail & Huda, 2002). For example, Pesantren with a long, outstanding reputation for teaching the Qur’an would be likely to apply a ‘40:60’ model, or give even less attention to the secular subjects.

It seems that the ‘modernisation’ of pesantren, regardless of whether it is self-motivated or government initiated, has been a source of anxiety in the traditional (NU) Muslim community. There is always a tension between the desire to preserve the characteristics of pesantren as centres for transmitting Islamic knowledge and the need to adjust to modernity. The inclusion of secular subjects, even though sponsored by the government, has been equated with ‘secularisation’ (understood in the popular sense of weakening religion), which most kyai believe will affect the value system of pesantren (Prihardiyoko, 2001). The implementation of the madrasah system within pesantren, however, is an obvious example of how pesantren engage with modernisation.

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\(^1\) Nahdlatul ‘Ulamā, shortened to NU, is a religious organisation that was established in 1926 by some traditional kyai or ulama [I. the leaders of pesantren, or clerics] as a reaction to the emergence of revivalist and modernist movements which threatened the existence of traditional ulama with a variety of religious traditions that the revivalists and modernists viewed as containing elements of TBC, which stands for *Tahayyul* [I. and A. myth], *Bid’ah* [I. and A. heresy], and *Churafat* [I. and A. superstition] (see Bush, 2002; Fealy & Barton, 1996).
This modernisation process, to some extent, has put the authority of kyai into competition with that of the teachers brought in from outside pesantren to teach secular subjects, which most kyai have no competence to teach. These new figures, whose authority derives from their technical competence in secular subjects and who provide different lenses for viewing the world, can offer santri [students] more attractive explanations about the world than those provided from a religious perspective by kyai.

The implementation of the madrasah system has also resulted in the increasing number of santri in pesantren, to the extent that it is nearly impossible for kyai to maintain personal relationships with them. Consequently, most big pesantren also add a new structure, the pengurus pesantren [pesantren board], to the traditional elements of pesantren, which, according to Dhofier (1982), consist of kyai, pondok [boarding facilities], masjid [mosque], santri [students] and kitab kuning [classical texts]. The pesantren board, a bureaucratic organisation, often assumes the functions of a kyai in the pesantren, although still under the kyai’s supervision. Thus board members may lead regular prayers and teach some kitab kuning, functions which are considered as the main duties of kyai in pesantren.

Some board members, mostly chosen from among senior santri who have the necessary Islamic knowledge to teach other santri, can also be serious competitors for authority with the son of the kyai, who is considered as a ‘prince,’ as is indicated by his special title of ‘gus,’ derived from the phrase si bagus [handsome one]. In the past there would have been no challenge to gus for the position of kyai. Senior santri unrelated to the kyai, lacking his darah biru (literally, ‘blue blood,’ meaning ‘nobility’) actually still have little chance to win the competition, but their implicit challenge may be felt nonetheless.

Modernisation in Indonesia has, of course, not only affected the lives of traditionalist Muslims. The general picture of Islam in Indonesia has also been much changed. The appearance of some transnational Islamic movements, such as Hizbut Tahrir (Arifin, S., 2005; Tahrir, 2008), Salafi (Hasan, 2006; Jamhari & Jahroni, 2004), and Tarbiyah (Machmudi, 2008; Rahmat, 2008), has changed the scenario of there being just two mainstream organisations, NU and Muhammadiyah, dominating Indonesian Islamic life. There is also the phenomenon of the resurgence of some local groups,
whose spirituality, once expressed through *kebatinan* groups, is now finding other Sufi or Sufi-like forms of expression (Bruinessen & Howell, 2007; Howell, 2001; Laffan, 2006; Zamhari, 2008). Therefore there is a need to reconsider previous categorisations of Islam in Indonesia, particularly in modern Java, as proposed by some scholars (Geertz, 1960b; Woodward, 1996). These changes, to some extent, also create a significant challenge for the authority of *kyai*, in contributing to the development of Islam in a wider context.

In the midst of these changes, the status of the charismatic authority of the *kyai* is clearly problematic, and a series of questions arise. Do these changes influence the way *santri* perceive the figure of the *kyai*? Will the *kyai* lose his charismatic authority? How does the routinisation of charisma take place in this more modernised and rationalised *pesantren*? More importantly, in the case of charismatic succession, does this type of *pesantren* still evidence hereditary charisma, as most *pesantren* did in the past. These questions will be addressed in this thesis using material from my fieldwork in Pesantren al-Munawwir Komplek L, in Yogyakarta. With more than a hundred universities and colleges in the city, Yogyakarta makes an especially suitable place to study the viability of charismatic authority in religious schools (*pesantren*), especially since secular education is so well developed and prevalent there.

1.1. Weber, Authority and the Routinisation of Charisma

Observing the meaning of ‘charisma’ in the modern era is not an easy task because the term is widely used in almost every field, from religion, social sciences, politics and economics, to sports and celebrities. Some sociologists have even suggested that certain corporations, and their products, have charisma (Swatos, W. H. Jr., 1981). A similar situation is also evident in modern Java, as has been shown from recent studies on the charisma of some politicians and celebrities. The expanded meaning of the term, which was originally used only in a theological sense, is commonly associated with German Sociologist, Max Weber, when he used the term to describe his concept of authority. Therefore, to provide an understanding of the usage of the term ‘charisma’ in sociology, I will discuss Weber’s notion of charisma and charismatic authority, especially as it relates to the notion of rationalisation, and the elaboration and modification of Weber’s concept by other scholars. I will also examine the ways in which the increasing
importance of rational-legal authority, in comparison with charismatic authority, is related to what Weber called ‘the disenchanted of the world.’

Weber’s understanding and categorisation of forms of authority, undoubtedly, remains dominant today, not only among sociologists, but also for other social scientists in politics, management and psychology. The concept of authority, from Weber’s perspective, begins with the idea of domination. For him, domination means “the probability that certain specific commands (or all commands) will be obeyed by a given group of persons” (Weber, 1968, p. 121). This implies that the relationship between two or more actors, in which the commands of certain actors are treated as binding by the others, is essential. The orientations of social actions within this relationship are justified forms of authority as developed by Weber. Regarding social actions, Weber provides a clear explanation:

Social action, like other forms of action, may be classified in the following four types according to its mode of orientation: (1) in terms of rational orientation to a system of discrete individual ends (zweck-rational), that is, through expectations as to the behaviour of objects in the external situation and of other human individuals, making use of these expectations as ‘conditions’ or ‘means’ for the successful attainment of the actor’s own rationally chosen ends; (2) in terms of rational orientation to an absolute value (wert-rational); involving a conscious belief in the absolute value of some ethical, aesthetic, religious, or other form of behaviour, entirely for its own sake and independently of any prospect of external success; (3) in terms of affectual orientation, especially emotional, determined by the specific affects and states of feeling of the actor; (4) traditionally oriented through the habituation of long practice. (1964, p. 115)

These four orientations within Weber’s concept of authority make it possible for us to distinguish between norms and authority. ‘Norms’ refers to rules of conduct towards which actors orient their behaviour (Weber, 1964), while ‘authority’ relies on a relationship between two or more actors in which the commands of certain actors are treated as binding by others (Weber, 1964). Thus authority is understood as a sphere of legitimate command that is based on these norms.

The relationship between norms and authority can be understood by examining the development of Weber’s three forms of authority, that began with charismatic authority. This, of course, does not aim to describe a real development of authority within the society, but only to help us to understand and distinguish distinct characteristics of each form of authority. Society has not moved gradually from charismatic to rational-legal, as indicated by Parsons (1968, p. 752). Rather, as Mommsen asserted, “charismatic
domination was in no way to be found exclusively at a primitive stage of development, but was generated also in societies classifiable in principle as of the bureaucratic type” (1967, p. 183).

The purest form of charismatic authority, according to Weber, was represented by the prophet, in which form it claims the right to break through all existing normative structure. As a consequence, charismatic authority creates a charismatically certified norm, such as the sacred law of the prophet. In regard to the succession issue, Weber pointed out an important process, which he called ‘routinisation of charisma,’ in which charismatic authority becomes encrusted in sacred norms. This process shows that the legitimate basis of the transformed charisma is in affectual orientation (Spencer, 1970). In other words, the charismatic authority is not bounded by norms, because the prophet can destroy old norms and create a new one. All of the prophet’s deeds and words are commonly considered by his followers as new sacred norms. These new sacred norms function to limit the authority of the successor to the original charismatic leader or to the prophet. Therefore, in charismatic authority, the leader generates norms.

In the case of ‘traditional’ authority, the relationship between norm and authority is reversed. The bearers of traditional authority, whether they were kings or other hereditary chiefs, based their authority on the traditional norms, which particularly derived from the norms created by the prophet. The traditional leader claims a legitimate right to the throne by virtue of the traditions which define succession. Therefore, traditional authority rests upon the legitimacy of traditional norms. This implies that the traditional leader is limited by customs in regard to his edicts. A similar relationship is found in ‘rational-legal’ authority. In this case, legal norms become a basic legitimisation of the authority. The leader of rational-legal authority derives his authority from the legal norms. Similarly to traditional authority, which is bounded by traditional norms, rational-legal authority is bounded by legal norms. But in contrast, rational-legal authority rests upon “a belief in the ‘legality’ of patterns of normative rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands (legal authority)” (Weber, 1964, p. 328). Furthermore, Weber describes rational-legal authority as a system that relies on people’s acceptance on some important factors. First, when people follow the command of a rational-legal leader, it has nothing to do with personal...
relationships or traditional norms. Instead, it is oriented to the office that a person holds on the basis of competence, training or knowledge. This indicates the impersonal nature of the rational-legal authority. Second, the norms are codified and ideally based on expedience or rational values, which is reflected in the implementation of the most effective means to reach the goal. Third, since it is based on competence, there is no absolute authority, in the sense that there is no power or legitimacy to regulate all aspects of human conduct. The rational-legal authority is limited only to governing a particular subject. The most obvious example in this case is the authority of a religious leader within a rationalised system. When he or she gives a command or instruction to pray properly, people will be likely to follow the command, but if he or she gives an instruction to vote, which is out of his or her range of competence, people will, most likely, ignore it.

The widespread use of rationality in a modern society, as represented by the domination of rational-legal authority over the other forms of authority, marked what Weber called ‘rationalisation.’ This term refers to the process by which modes of precise calculation based on observation and reason increasingly dominate the social world. Thus rationalisation can be seen as a habit of thought that replaces tradition, emotion and values as motivators of human behaviour. As shown in some of the characteristics of rational-legal authority above, the key concepts of rationalisation are closely related to the notion of ‘office,’ which implies the process of depersonalisation that replaces personal relationships, and the dominance of meritocracy, in which most aspects of social life are examined and evaluated on the basis of competence, intelligence, credentials and education. Weber mentions some examples of rationalisation in various aspects of human life. In the area of law, for example, the rationalisation process is characterised by the transformation of the system that was dominated by the tradition of common law, into a systematised, generalised, and codified set of universally valid legal principles, coupled with professionalism (Schechner, 2006). At the level of authority within a system, the rationalisation process is characterised by changes from traditional and charismatic authority to rational authority, where legal authority is derived from achieving a leadership position based on a set of legally prescribed steps, such as an election or the acquisition of certain job-specific competences required for the
performance of a task (Gane, 2002; Swatos, W. H., 1992; Weber & Eisenstadt, 1968). In the religious sphere, the gradual ‘rationalisation of religious life’ has led to the displacement of magical procedure by Wertrational systematisations of man’s relationship to the divine, which basically shows how prophets with their charismatic appeal had undermined priestly powers based on tradition (Coser, 1977).

Although Weber saw that the process of rationalisation provides great benefits in human welfare, particularly through the emergence of bureaucratic systems that are considered efficient and predictable, he was also fully aware of the negative impact of the rationalisation process. Brubaker (2002) adequately indicates and elaborates on the negative impact of the process of rationalisation as examined in almost all of Weber’s works. Brubaker showed that negative impacts of the rationalisation process occur in various fields. In the area of administrative systems, for example, rationalisation requires the complete elimination of the “official business of love, hatred, and all purely personal, irrational, and emotional elements which escape calculation” (Weber et al., 1978, p. 975). Within a bureaucratic administration, individuals experience dehumanisation. The more rational a bureaucratic administration becomes, the more the individual is trapped into becoming a “small cog in a ceaselessly moving mechanism which prescribes to him an essentially fixed route of march” (Weber et al., 1978, p. 988). Last but not least, the rationalisation process that has occurred in the field of thought is also creating a negative impact in the development of human civilisation. The presence of modern science has led to the ‘disenchantment of the world,’ which has in turn increasingly driven people away from the values and meaning in their lives.

Within Weber’s conception, the term ‘charisma’ refers to an extraordinary power. In his massive two volume work, Economy and Society, Weber applied the term to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary. (Weber, 1968, p. 241)

However, it is clear that the term ‘charisma’ as used by Weber was not merely concerned with the quality of a person, but, more importantly, it rested on acknowledgement by his or her followers. Thus, he further indicated:
Its bearer seizes the task for which he is destined and demands that others obey and follow him by virtue of his mission. If those to whom he feels sent do not recognize him, his claim collapses; if they recognize it, he is their master as long as he ‘proves’ himself. (Weber, 1968, pp. 1112-1113)

Therefore, the most important aspect of charismatic authority lies in the relationship between leaders and their followers or disciples. As long as leaders are capable of maintaining the belief of their disciples, their authority will remain legitimate.

However, according to Weber, it is not an easy task to retain the belief of the disciples, because they usually require a ‘sign’ or proof from their leader, especially in overcoming any problems they might have. Besides, Weber thinks, since pure charismatic authority is activated during periods of social strain and rapid change, other persons might stake similar claims to authority. This kind of competing claim can usually be resolved only through a contestation of power among the claimants. In most cases, this contestation requires magical acts or miracle working. Weber thus maintained that a charismatic leader “must work miracles if he wants to be a prophet or to perform heroic deeds, if he wants to be a warlord” (Weber, 1968, p. 1114). Most importantly, this proof must be able to bring well-being to his followers in order to maintain recognition of his legitimacy. Further, Weber noted that it was the absence of hierarchy or official power that generally made this kind of authority dependent on qualities of the individual. And that is why, according to Weber, “the existence of charismatic authority is specifically unstable” (1968, p. 22).

Weber’s recognition of the instability of charismatic authority led him to anticipate what he called the ‘routinisation of charisma,’ which could preserve legitimacy. By emphasising the devotion by followers to an individual leader with charismatic authority, he focuses mainly on its dependence on the validity and practice of charismatic personal qualities. Once charismatic authority is declared, it cannot be stable, but tends to be either traditionalised or rationalised, or both. Weber clearly explains the reasons for such transformations:

…the following are the principle motives underlying this transformation: (a) The ideal and also the material interests of the follower in the continuation and the continual reactivation of the community, (b) the still stronger ideal and also stronger material interests of the members of the administrative staff, the disciples or other followers of the charismatic leader in continuing their relationships. (Weber, 1968, p. 246)
So, continuing the legitimacy of charismatic authority relies on preserving the importance of the relationship between the leader and his followers. As long as the followers still believe they are gaining benefits from the status of charismatic authority of their leader, they will be likely to continue the relationship.

In considering the issue of succession, Weber identified six ways of searching for a successor to the charismatic leader. First, it is common among followers to base their search for a new charismatic leader on the criteria of certain qualities that will fit him or her for the position of authority. Second, they can use a revelation, manifested in oracles, divine judgments or other techniques of selection. Third, the new charismatic leader can be chosen through the designation by the original charismatic leader of his or her successor and recognition and acceptance of this on the part of the followers. Fourth, it is possible to choose a new charismatic leader through designation of the successor by the charismatically qualified administrative staff, and the recognition of this choice by the community. Fifth, a new charismatic leader can be chosen based on the idea of hereditary charisma. Finally, Weber suggests ritual as a means of transferring charismatic authority from one bearer to another, or for creating it in a different person.

In addition, Weber explains that all these types of leadership succession are “only in the initial stages, and so long as the charismatic leader acts in a way which is completely outside everyday social organization, that it is possible for his followers to live communistically in a community of faith and enthusiasm” (Weber & Eisenstadt, 1968, p. 57). He also realised that the process of routinisation is not free from conflict, but it nevertheless helps the charismatic authority to achieve stability. Weber thus made a clear distinction between what he called ‘genuine’ charisma and ‘transformed’ or ‘routinised’ charisma. Since all forms of authority are derived from the revolutionary characteristics of charismatic authority, various transformations or routinisations, whether they are hereditary or democratic in form, or carry the charisma of office, are a stable form of domination that enters into a mix with either traditional or rational-legal structures or both (Shils, 1975). According to Swatos, “the hereditary charismatic leader, for example, is to be understood as succeeding and existing in reference to some genuine charismatic leader who preceded him or her, but the two are not to be identified” (1981, pp. 124-125). It is possible for persons and events in both traditional and legal-rational
systems to have charismatic quality, but this is a transformed charisma, routinised into an authority structure corresponding to a different type of domination.

1.2. Weber’s Concept of Authority and the Authority of Kyai

There are some problems, however, in applying this concept of charisma in examining the charismatic leadership of kyai. Most of Weber’s discussion on charismatic authority refers to a genuine charismatic leader, whom he saw as a product of the social strains within the society. He dedicated a large amount of his writing to the routinisation process of charisma, especially to examples regarding various forms for overcoming the succession issues, but he did not give sufficient attention to the issue of charismatic authority within a relatively peaceful society. Although he did mentioned the specific issue of charismatic legitimisation of an existing order, his discussion of it is basically similar to his explanation of the nature of charismatic authority in times of crisis. In both cases he thinks economic motives are essential. As he explains:

…[they] largely account for the routinisaton of the charisma: the needs of privileged strata to legitimate their social and economic conditions, that is to transform them from mere resultants of power relationships into acquired rights, and hence to sanctify them. (Weber, et al., 1978, p. 1146)

His emphasis on economic motives underlying the routinisation of charisma is not totally wrong, because some spiritual movements do indeed show a development in this direction (Muttaqin, 2012; Turner, 2011).

However, the charismatic authority of the kyai in the educational institution examined in this thesis seems to evolve in a different direction. The main sources of the kyai’s charisma, the barākah and karāmah [I. barokah and karomah], are believed to result from a long process of spiritual cultivation called riyādah [I. riyadloh] that requires a simple life and setting aside material things. Some leading kyai are even described as persons who are not interested in worldly comforts [tidak butuh dunia], and indeed reject them. Moreover, one important and traditionally recognised indicator of the level of a kyai’s karāmah [supernatural power] is his ability to control his desire for worldly things [hubud dunya]. The more a kyai can release himself from all material needs, the more people perceive him as having a high level of karāmah (Amin, 2008). This, of course, does not mean that working is not important in the life of kyai. Indeed, all kyai consider work obligatory for every Muslim.
The practice of a simple life among the *kyai* can to some extent be considered similar to that of the Calvinists in Weber’s work, in the sense of avoiding luxuries and not spending money for pleasures. While the ascetic life of Calvinism, according to Weber, triggered the rise of capitalism as a result of accumulation of wealth, the simple life among the *kyai* did not show the same direct result. This difference is due to the differing orientations of Calvinism and the traditional Islam of the *kyai*. In Calvinism the notion of ‘calling,’ in which worldly success becomes a sign of salvation, has effectively forbidden wastefully using hard-earned money and identified the purchase of luxuries as a sin. Donations to an individual’s church or congregation were limited and donations of money to the poor or to charity were generally frowned on as it was seen as furthering beggary. Conversely, within the teachings of the *kyai*, worldly success is not considered parallel to salvation, but it can be used to acquire salvation through charity and giving alms or supporting other religious activities. Therefore the notion of accumulation of money is absent in the doctrine of traditional Islam.

The fact that the notion of the charismatic authority of the *kyai*, including his supernatural power [*karāmah*], remains influential within the *pesantren* community is in opposition to Weber’s prediction of the domination of rational-legal authority, particularly with the increase of bureaucracy in society. This prediction has been criticised by some scholar following the revivalism of some millenarian groups, which heavily depend on charismatic leaders with magic or supernatural powers (Stark & Bainbridge, 1985; Wilson, 1973; Wilson & Cresswell, 1999), but the *pesantren* differ from these groups, especially concerning the economic interests behind their resurgence. In *pesantren* the notion of using supernatural power for marketing religious spirituality is considered less important, or even to be avoided, in order to preserve the possession of those powers.

The administrative rationalisation of charismatic authority, as shown in my case study by the appearance of the *pesantren* board, offers an alternative way of seeing the relationship between rational-legal and traditional authority. In the everyday life of *pesantren*, rational-legal authority can fit and work well within the traditional authority. The *pesantren* board, which is responsible for ensuring the running of most activities in the *pesantren*, also functions, during his absence, as *badal* [representation] of the *kyai* in
teaching and leading the prayers. Therefore, in my opinion, it is necessary to reconsider the use of a tripartite categorisation of authority, as proposed by Weber, in examining the authority of the traditional Islamic leader, especially in consideration of the possibility of the three forms of authority being combined within a single phenomenon.

1.3. Thesis Objectives

This research addresses several topics regarding succession issues associated with the charismatic authority of kyai. First, it deals with curriculum and learning structure changes of pesantren, where the kyai has traditionally been considered as the only source of authority. Current development of pesantren shows more complex features, especially since most pesantren implemented the madrasah system, or even the public school system. The pesantren’s policy of accommodating secular subjects in their curricula is solely in the hands of the kyai. Various responses in deciding the percentage of secular subjects to be included, in my opinion, shows tensions within the pesantren community in coping with modernisation. On one hand, the kyai wants to preserve his pesantren as centres for transmitting Islamic knowledge and preserving traditional values. But on the other hand, he has to consider social changes within the wider society, with students requiring more skills, other than religious knowledge, to fill available jobs outside the pesantren.

Second, this thesis particularly looks at the emergence of bureaucratic organisation within the traditional pesantren, through the so called ‘pengurus pondok’ [pesantren board]. The pesantren board, which is elected annually by all santri, has various divisions with different tasks to ensure efficiency in running the activities of the pesantren. This notion of administrative rationalisation has affected the absolute authority of kyai. Although most board members are elected from the senior santri, who are still considered as the students of the kyai, in many cases they share authority with the kyai. Most of them are also involved with teaching processes at the pesantren and even replace the kyai in leading the congregational prayer.

Third, this thesis observes how the charismatic authority of the kyai, which relies mostly on the gift of grace and on miracle working, known respectively in traditional Islamic terms as barākah and karāmah, is preserved and maintained in this modern and rational environment. In this case, Weber’s prediction of the adaptation of the
supernatural or magic in a more rationalised community can be questioned, because, in
fact, though the pesantren has become more rationalised, the tradition of ngalap berkah
[seeking blessing] from the kyai is still widely practised among the pesantren
community.

Finally, this thesis deals with the routinisation of charisma, especially regarding the
issue of succession from the kyai to gus, the son of the kyai, which is a unique model of
what Weber suggested. The notion of hereditary charisma, of course, is clearly seen in
the status of gus. However, gus needs to work hard, mostly through riyādah, in order to
obtain recognition from the community. Interestingly, the pesantren’s board can also
play an important role in fostering the image of gus in his community. The board,
perhaps, can be seen as functioning, at a small and local level, in the role of church, as
this body is considered ‘missing’ in Islam. So, it can be said that there is a combination
of hereditary charisma and the charisma of office within the transmission process of
charismatic authority of kyai. This phenomenon can also be seen as the mixture of
traditional (from the notion of hereditary) and legal-rational (from the role of the board
members) authorities, rather than as an opposition, as it is commonly considered.

1.4. Kyai as Focal Figures in Changing Javanese Islam

Kyai, along with their pesantren networks and the NU, have become influential
forces for the development of Islam in Indonesia. Much research has been done to
document the role of kyai, not only in transmitting Islamic knowledge and values
(Bruinessen, 1995a; Dhofier, 1980), but also in shaping the political constellation
(Suaedy & Sulistyo, 2000; Suprayogo, 2007; Turmudi, 2006), coping with social
changes (Horikoshi, 1987; Rahardjo, 1988), promoting economic development (Buresh,
2002; Zarkasyi & Zarkasyi, 2011), and even supporting gender studies (Muhammad, H.,
2011; Sri & Jamil, 2009; Taufiq, 2009). These various roles of the kyai in society show
us that he is a focal figure in changing Javanese Islam. This section covers three topics
related to the figure of the kyai that have been well documented by scholars. The first
topic describes the role of the kyai as the successor of Walisongo in his role in modern
Indonesia. The second examines the traditional Islam of NU, which provides the
historical background of the establishment of NU and its relationship with the kyai. The
third examines the position of Kyai in pesantren, especially in relation to changes within the pesantren institution to accommodate the requirements of modern society.

1.4.1. Kyai: from ‘Medium,’ to Cultural Broker, to Presidency

Within Javanese tradition, the word ‘kyai’ is commonly used to refer to everything that is considered or believed to have supernatural powers. According to Dhofier (1999), the title ‘kyai’ is used for at least three purposes. First, it is given to sacred objects or the heirlooms of keraton [palace]. For example, Kyai Guntur Madu is a gamelan used in every Sekaten ceremony, Kyai Garuda Kencana is a carriage in Yogyakarta Palace that is used by the Sultan on ritual occasions and Kyai Slamet is an albino buffalo in Surakarta Palace. Second, the title ‘kyai’ is used as a term of respect for older people, especially in rural areas. Third, the title is given to a learned Muslim who teaches Islam to his community or to someone who leads a pesantren. A Muslim in the third category is also known as ‘alim’ [expert in Islamic knowledge].

However, the word ‘kyai’ is not used for every learned Muslim who teaches Islamic knowledge to the people around him, as is commonly understood in modern Java. More importantly, a person would be given the title because of his supernatural powers or karāmah. The history of the Walisongo, the founding fathers of Islam in Java, as revealed in many oral traditions, babad [quasi stories] or other scholarly books, is often illustrated by stories of karāmah exhibited in their journey to spread Islam across the Island of Java. Sunan Bonang, for example, was well known with his sacred stick, which could be used to change certain objects into gold (Ricklefs, 2008). Sunan Kaliijaga, the student of Sunan Bonang, was also famous for his ability to read the Qur’an so that the sound of his voice could be heard clearly from a great distance. These early missionaries of Islam were elevated to the status of ‘wali,’ an Arabic term for ‘saint’ and assigned the title ‘sunan,’ a Javanese epithet akin to ‘honourable.’ Over the centuries, many stories have been told concerning the lives of these men and their exploits. Among

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2 This karomah is similar to a famous narrative concerning the second caliph, Umar ibn al-Khattab (d. 644), giving a sermon for Friday prayer in Madinah. Suddenly he said, ‘Sariyyah, come to the mountain…come to the mountain.’ After the prayer, Ali ibn Abu Thalib (d. 661), the third caliph in Islamic history, asked him about what he was saying to Sariyyah. Umar replied that he saw that Sariyyah and his army were surrounded by the enemy and spontaneously said that sentence to him. A month later, when Sariyyah came back victorious from the war, he told the story that he clearly heard Umar order him to go to the mountain, as if Umar was in the battle (see Amin, 2008).
these stories, the most famous concern the *Walisongo*, the ‘nine saints’ who succeeded in Islamising most areas of Indonesia, especially in Java, between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Ricklefs, 2006; Wahjoetomo & Firmansyah, 1997).

As the successor to the *Walisongo*, the *kyai* is believed to have similar exceptional abilities. Because of these abilities, the *kyai* is commonly perceived as a charismatic leader, not only by his santri, but also in the wider context of traditional Muslims in Indonesia. This perception is also based on a common understanding of the establishment of *pesantren* throughout Java. The *Kyai* usually built his *pesantren* in a place where the level of crime was high. This ‘tradition’ is known as *mbabat alas* [Lit. opening the jungle]. It was very common for the founder of *pesantren* to have to face local rulers, who were supported by criminal leaders. The success of the *kyai* in defeating criminal leaders to some extent attracted people in the area as his pupils. The *kyai* then started to teach Islam and *ilmu kanuragan* [martial arts] through strict *riyādah* [religious exercise].

Another major function of the *kyai*, especially in rural areas, is replacing the position of exalted pre-Islamic religious leaders as the ‘medium’ between the divine world and the profane. For lay believers, the *kyai* is considered to have sacred knowledge and supernatural powers which channel them to the divine world (Machasin, 2010). This pivotal function is based on a belief that the divine world is inaccessible to common people but has a big influence in their lives. In return for this service, people will give money, agricultural products and other gifts to the *kyai*. In many cases, some will work for the *kyai* as a sign of gratitude and are ready to do any jobs he may order. For many communities, especially in villages, the *kyai* is considered the people’s only source of knowledge concerning religious obligations and rules. Thus, the endorsement of *kyai* as successors to the *Walisongo* has placed them in a central position within the structure of society, especially within the peasant communities where most *kyai* build their *pesantren*.

Geertz provides an interesting description of the changing role of *kyai* during the formation of the new Indonesia. He describes the classical role of the *kyai* thus:

…he is a specialist in the communication of Islam to the mass of the peasantry. As an established religious scholar directing his own religious school, he has long
occupied the focal position in the social structure of tradition through which the
monotheistic, exclusivist Moslem creed has penetrated the tolerant, syncretic-
minded countryside. (Geertz, 1960a, p. 230)

This role has been slowly changed following the rise of nationalism, Islamic modernism,
and the whole complex of social transformations. Geertz noted that, in his perception,
the kyai tried to be a cultural broker:

…he is becoming, or attempting to become, a new kind of broker for a different sort
of society and a different sort of culture, that of the nationally centered,
metropolitan-based, intelligensia-led ‘New Indonesia.’ (Geertz, 1960a, p.230)

Geertz, however, was not optimistic about the kyai’s ability to be cultural brokers
between Indonesia and ‘modernity’ (Lukens-Bull, 2001). His pessimistic view of their
ability in facing modernisation seems to underestimate those kyai with progressive and
modern thinking. It seems that he has also forgotten the basic principle among the kyai
in adjusting to innovations: al-Muhafadzah ‘ala qadim as-shalih wa al-akhdu bi al-jadid
al-ashlah [preserving good traditions and taking new and better innovations]. Their
ability to adjust to rapid social changes has been noted by some scholars (Horikoshi,
1987; Rahardjo, 1988). This can be seen from the role of kyai in shaping most aspects
of the lives of traditional Muslims in Java, from nurturing nationalism (Moesa, 2007; Zaini,
1998) and strengthening civil society (Feillard & Dharwis, 1994; Pohl, 2006), to shaping
the political constellation in the country (Bruinessen, 1994; Suaedy & Sulistyo, 2000;
Suprayogo, 2007). The culmination of their role in the country occurred when KH.
Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) was elected as the fourth President in 1999. Although
he ran the presidency only for a short period, many people appreciated his policies of
bringing the state closer to the people (Barton, 2002; Rasyidin, Halawa & Tumin, 2000).
This can be seen as a strong indication that the kyai has been able to preserve his focal
position in influencing the development of Islam in Indonesia.

Though most scholars have shown the kyai’s successes, these do not mean that his
role in society has been perfectly executed without any challenges. Indeed, some
research indicates a decrease in the kyai’s role, particularly in politics (Bustami, 2009;
Koirudin, 2005; Suprayogo, 2007; Thoha, 2003). For example, Turmudi (2006) shows
that there is a significant decrease in the kyai’s influence in directing people’s preference
in elections. The *kyai*’s involvement in politics has created tensions at the grassroots level of traditional Islam across Java. Some *kyai* even prefer to spend their time working in a political party’s interests rather than developing their *pesantren*. The primary function of *kyai* in preserving and transmitting the values of traditional Islam in Java is threatened, to some extent, by their involvement in politics (Musyfiqoh, 2009).

Other challenges have come from the rise of the printing industry and the use of internet media in society. As observed by Jajat Burhanudin (2010), the printing press enabled ‘ulamā (*kyai*) to extend their influence in the wider community, but it also endangered their authority as interpreters of the texts, since many of these classical texts are now printed and translated into the Javanese or Indonesian language. Because of the ease of accessing these classical texts, including their various translations, the function of *kyai* in reading and translating them, as has been practised for centuries, has become less important. Similarly, the impact of the wide use of the internet can also endanger the authority of *kyai*. People who do not have a proper knowledge of Islam can easily provide religious edicts or advice by creating a blog or other social media provided through the internet. Though this last phenomenon is relatively new, some research indicates that the internet is capable of eroding the authority of religious leaders (Castells, 1999; Eickelman & Anderson, 2003; Turner, 2011).

1.4.2. Traditional Islam of the NU

Since Geertz (1960b) offered his well-known categorisation, many attempts have been made to accommodate changing orientations of Islamic thought, especially after the revolution in Iran in 1979. This changing situation has forced some observers of Islam in Indonesia to review the existing categorisations. In the 1980s, for example, Syafi’i Anwar elaborated on the term ‘*santri*’ which was popularised by Geertz (along with the terms ‘*abangan*’ [nominal Muslim] and ‘*priyayi*’[aristocrat]), dividing it into two categories: *old- santri* and *neo-santri*. According to Anwar, ‘*old-santri*’ refers to the various *santri* of established Islamic organisations, such as NU, Muhammadiyah\(^3\) and

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\(^3\) Muhammadiyah is an organisation founded in 1912 by KH. Achmad Dahlan, an official preacher of the Grand Mosque near the Sultan’s Palace in Yogyakarta. This movement is inspired by a wave of revivalism and modernisation in the Muslim world, especially the reformist ideas of Muhammad Abdurrahman (d.1905) and Rashid Ridha (d. 1935). As have the revivalist and modernist movements in the Islamic world, this movement has brought the idea of purification, with a jargon of ‘back to the al-Quran and al-Hadith.’ For further information about this organisation, see Alfian (1989) and Noer (1973).
Persis,\(^4\) while *neo-santri* refers to the groups of *santri* who are reluctant to engage in political activities and are more interested in responding to global issues such as poverty, education and pluralism (Anwar, 1995). More recently, Yon Machmudi (2008) has offered a revision of this categorisation in response to the recent political situation. He divided *neo-santri* into three groups: ‘convergent,’ reflecting the convergence between NU and Muhammadiyah during the 1970s; ‘radical,’ characterised by the emergence, at campuses such as *Lembaga Dakwah Kampus* [Dakwah Campus Institution, LDK], of Islamic activists such as Darul Islam (DI) and Negara Islam Indonesia (NII) who, during the 1980s, supported the idea of an Islamic state; and ‘global,’ with obvious evidence of transnational networking of Islam, such as the *Tarbiyah* movements, Hizbut Tahrir, and *Salafi Dakwah* movements of the 1990s (Machmudi, 2008).

In addition to these religio-political based classifications, a more specific classification has been made by Haedar Nashir, in order to cover the variations in Islamic thought on the issue of enforcing Islamic law. Instead of using the term ‘*santri*,’ he used the term more familiar in the Muslim world, ‘*salafiyah*.’\(^5\) He divided *salafiyah* into four categories: traditional, modern or revival, *dakwah* [mission], and ideology (Nashir, 2007). With this categorisation, we can say that Nashir called attention to the fact that most Sunni groups have the notion of *salafism*, which, in its most general meaning, is following the way of the first three generations of Islam. It seems that Nashir’s classification is similar to Azyumardi Azra’s views on the broader meaning of *salafiyah*. He mentioned that *salafiyah* movements have many variants, ranging from those that concentrate mainly on *dakwah*, or education, and social welfare, to those that promote radicalism to achieve their goals, for example, Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia in the eighteenth century and the Padri movement in West Sumatra in the nineteenth century (Azra, 2005).

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\(^4\) Persatuan Islam, commonly shortened to Persis, was founded by H. Zamzam and H. Muhammad Yunus in Bandung, on 12 September, 1923. Like other modernist Islamic organisations, Persis was heavily inspired by Muhammad Abduh through his articles in al-Manar magazine. The main figure of this organisation is A. Hassan, who joined it in 1924. For further information see Federspiel (2001) and Noer (1973).

\(^5\) The word ‘*salafiyah*’ is derived from the word ‘*salaf,*’ literally meaning ‘forefather’ or ‘ancestor.’ Within Islamic discourse, ‘*salafiyah*’ is understood as those who follow the tradition of the first three generations of Islam, based on a popular Hadith. Later this term became more complicated, since some Islamic groups, especially Wahabis, have used it in a narrow and strict interpretation.
Woodward (1996) suggested that there are five basic religious orientations within the Indonesian Muslim community: (1) indigenised Islam, in which religion is seen as an integrated component of a larger cultural system, known by Geertz’s term ‘abangan’; (2) the traditional Sunni Islam of Nahdlatul Ulama, which emphasises the study of the classical legal, theological, and mystical texts; (3) the Islamic modernism of Muhammadiyah which rejects mysticism and concentrates on modern education and social agendas; (4) a highly politicised and anti-Western interpretation of Islam espoused by some Islamist groups; and (5) Neo-modernism, an attempt to find an Islamic foundation for many features of modernity, including democracy, gender equity, and pluralism.

The emergence of NU cannot be separated from the establishment of the reformist and modernist Islamic group Muhammadiyah. Direct tension between traditionalist and modernist Muslims in Java has appeared since 1912, when KH. Achmad Dahlan, along with other Islamic modernists, proclaimed Muhammadiyah as the first modern Islamic organisation. Muhammadiyah, like similar groups around the world, pays serious attention to the idea of purification. This organisation is deeply rooted in the ideas of Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Ridha in Egypt (Alfian, 1989). Its main supporters are those who have returned from their education in Cairo, especially at al-Azhar University, where these two figures were the principal professors. Generally, modern movements in Indonesia in the early twentieth century, including Muhammadiyah, have four basic goals (Alfian, 1989; Nakamura, 1976). First, they encourage piety and a serious attitude to performing all kinds of religious obligations. Second, they want to apply the idea of purification by rejecting the so-called animist or Hindu-Buddhist elements of Javanese culture. Third, they provide to the community the sort of social services that the Dutch were unwilling to provide, especially in the fields of health and education. Fourth, they urge the development of modern and sophisticated expressions of Islam that are able to respond to the challenge of modernity and gain benefits from modern technology and scientific advances.

To accomplish these goals, they first argued in favour of *ijithad* [diligence], rationalism, individualism and interpretations of the Qur’an and the tradition of the prophet. This reformation of Islamic thought was really in opposition to the established
traditional Islam in Indonesia that urged lay people to perform *taqlid*, the uncritical acceptance of established interpretations of the Qur’an provided by four orthodox *madzhab*, or schools in Islamic jurisprudence: Syafi’i, Hanbali, Hanafi, and Maliki (Nakamura, 1976; Noer, 1973). Thus, the main slogan of most modernist movements in Islam is, ‘return to the Qur’an and the tradition of the prophet.’ They reject the authority of ‘*ulamā* or Islamic scholars to take *ijmak*, or concensus, in facing certain problems.

In addition, their ideological reform generally rejects four basic principles of the Sunni School or traditional Islam in Indonesia. The modernists, specifically, reject the idea of following one of the four imams or *madzhab* because they believe that to understand and perform the pure Islamic teachings, one must rely directly on the Qur’an and the Hadith. They also disapprove of all kinds of Sufism that teach asceticism and the repetition of *dzikr* [recollection or remembrance of God’s names]. These rejections made the members of *pesantren* aware of the need of consolidation to preserve and defend their beliefs from the modernists’ attacks.

In 1926, as a reaction to this modern movement, along with the spread of Wahabism that had conquered Hejaz, or Mekkah and Madinah, in 1924, some leaders of traditional Muslims, led by Hadarat al-Syaikh Hasyim Asy’ary, proclaimed the establishment of Nahdlatul Ulama in 1926, commonly shortened to NU, which literally means ‘the awakening of Islamic scholars’ (Fealy & Barton, 1996; Feillard & Dharwis, 1994). The role of the NU, as an umbrella organisation of traditionalist Muslims, in articulating the interests of *kyai* is undeniable. This can be seen from the reasons for the organisation’s formation. Its main goal is to preserve the existence of the traditional ‘*ulamā* (*kyai*) and their *pesantren*, as well as the teachings of Sunni Islam and Sufism. This is stated by Hasyim Asy’ari, the founder of NU (as well as of Pesantren Tebuireng, the biggest *pesantren* in early modern Indonesia), as quoted by Dhofier:

> You *ulama* [Islamic scholars] and friends who are *taqwa* to God, who follow the teaching of the *ulama* of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama’ah*, who follow the teaching of the *madzhab* of the four imams, you are people who received Islamic knowledge from the *ulama* of the previous generation. With great care, you have chosen these *ulama*. Whenever you have needed a teacher, you have selected him carefully; only with great consideration have [you] chosen him from whom you received knowledge. You are, then, the chosen *ulama* who hold the key to Islamic knowledge. Only to you do people turn to receive the wisdom of Islam. (Dhofier, 1999, p. 157)

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According to Article 5 of the 1979 NU Constitution, the NU has four main activities. First, the NU pursues activities that will accomplish the establishment of an Islamic community. Second, the NU makes every effort to supply sufficient educational and cultural facilities for the people and for the extension of Islamic education for NU members. Third, NU directs its activities towards achieving social justice. Fourth, NU actively supports the government’s economic development plan, particularly the development of private cooperatives (Mastuhu, 1994). The main goal of NU, then, is not only, as indicated by Geertz, “to enclose the traditional religious social forms focusing around the pondok [pesantren] within a modern political party structure with minimum alteration of such forms” (Geertz, 1960b, p. 176). It becomes more appropriate to consider the NU as a modern manifestation of the religious and social life of the kyai and of the other members of pesantren.

To accomplish these aims, according to Dhofier (1999), kyai have been evaluating their pesantren and seeking to preserve the essential aspects of these institutions as centres for maintaining and spreading the teachings of traditional Islam in Java. Furthermore, Dhofier (1999) sees that in so doing, the kyai have been able to “readjust the inner structure of their religious life while maintaining their unity within the ideological fold of ahl al-sunnah wa al-jama’ah, usually shortened to Aswaja”.

The attractiveness of the ideology of Aswaja lies in its concept of what constitutes proper behaviour for Indonesians in the material world. Unlike the modernists, who reject any form of Sufism, kyai and the members of pesantren see the material world only as a tool for achieving a better life in the hereafter. The material world is seen as amanah, or trust, from Allah, who will question how responsibly we used it. Therefore, zuhud, or ascetism, becomes a central attribute of Sufism practised in daily life. Zuhud, in this case, does not mean a total rejection of the world, but only a lack of positive love for worldly life. The practice of the values of Aswaja can be clearly seen in the daily life of pesantren. In accordance with Sufism, for example, the students of pesantren are trained to live plainly, sleeping on the floor or sharing a small room with seven to ten other students, even though some of them come from wealthy families. Other spiritual attributes based on Aswaja values are wira’i [cleanliness from forbidden and reprehensible acts], khusu’ [intimate feelings and remembrance of God], tawakkal.
[absolute reliance on God], sabar [patience], tawadhu’ [humility], ikhlas [sincerity] and siddiq [righteousness].

Further, the ideology of Aswaja has stressed a belief that we are created by God as servants. So, it is essential for God’s servants to serve Him. This implies that life in this world revolves around the relentless execution of religious duties, or ibadah. This kind of ideology has a serious impact on every aspect of life, even in political preferences, such as in equating a vote for an Islamic party with ibadah to God (Dhofier, 1999). The emphasis on these Sufi teachings in most pesantren, regardless of whether they are officially following a certain tarekat [Sufi order] or not, has placed the kyai in a special position in the hearts of his santri and the people around the pesantren. In the daily activities within the pesantren total obedience of the santri to their kyai becomes a common phenomenon, especially for those who live in rural areas.

Although the relationship between NU and pesantren is like two sides of a coin, this does not mean that all policies adopted by the board of NU will automatically be implemented in the pesantren. In most cases, the pesantren remains independent and the Kyai, as its leader, has absolute discretion as to whether or not his pesantren will follow those policies. Tension between local kyai and NU, as a religious organisation, are obvious. Machasin has a popular example of this tension:

In the Musyawarah Nasional (Munas or National Consultation, the second biggest gathering of Nahdlatul Ulama) in 1997, the Nahdlatul Ulama decided that women could take responsibility in public life. The decision reads (…that the door is open for women to hold positions in the system of the nation state, especially in this pluralistic society, based always on quality, capacity, capability, and acceptability. This does not mean that they should put aside their inevitable natural functions as women). Two years later, when there was a possibility that the party of Megawati Soekarnoputri might win the general election, many local kyai argued against the validity of women—from Islamic perspectives—being president. (2010, p. 120)

The tensions between the organisation and local kyai seem hard to resolve because in religious issues religion is not always the only consideration and in many cases one can easily detect economic and political interests behind the endorsement of religious edicts or fatwas. Moreover, in the relationship between NU and local kyai, the tension occurs more often because the autonomy of the kyai is so great that they sometimes see NU more as a nuisance and hindrance than as means for unification. In other words, many local kyai believe that they, with the support of their pesantren community, can work
without NU, but not vice versa. Therefore, it is necessary to look at the relationship between kyai and santri within the pesantren, especially in relation to the issues of the kyai’s authority and social change.

1.4.3. Kyai and Pesantren

As already mentioned, the pesantren has been associated with traditionalist Islam, especially with members of NU. However, recent development indicates that the term ‘pesantren’ is not merely concerned with NU. Many Muslims or santri from different religious orientations are also adopting this traditional Islamic educational institution, with some modification, especially in their curricula. The modern Pesantren of Gontor, for example, is the biggest modern pesantren in Indonesia and has produced many national leaders. The kyai in this pesantren do not officially state that they follow a certain religious group in Indonesia, neither NU nor Muhammadiyah. However, from their perspective of fiqh, or Islamic jurisprudence, it seems that this pesantren is close to Muhammadiyah. Pesantren Ngruki is another well-known pesantren that belongs to santri of other affiliations. This pesantren has gained renown because its leader, Abu Bakar Ba’asyir, is supposed to be a leader of Jama’ah Islamiyah, which, it is claimed (especially by the US government), is one of the most important organisations under which the al-Qaeda network operates in Southeast Asia. To avoid misunderstanding concerning the meaning of the term ‘pesantren,’ a brief definition of it in this research will be helpful.

Within Indonesian culture, there are various terms that are used to refer to the traditional Islamic educational system or pesantren. In Java, it is most commonly referred to as ‘pesantren’ or ‘pondok’ or ‘pondok pesantren’ (Dhofier, 1999). In Aceh, it is known as ‘dayah’ or ‘rangkang’ or ‘meunasah,’ while in Minangkabau local people called it ‘surau,’ Literally, according to Abdurrahman Wahid (1999), the pesantren is a place where the santri lives and pursues Islamic knowledge. Similarly, Mas’ud (1998) defines the word ‘pesantren’ as stemming from ‘santri’ which means one who seeks Islamic knowledge. Usually the word ‘pesantren’ refers to a place where the santri lives and devotes most of his or her time to acquiring knowledge. Geertz (1960b), as an anthropologist, tends to define pesantren as a derivation from Hindu-Buddhism,
especially from the word ‘shastri’ which means a Hindu-Buddhist scholar who is an expert in writing.

There are some other characteristics of the pesantren that make it different from other educational institutions. Mukti Ali explains that pesantren has at least the following characteristics:

1. There is a close relationship between santri and kyai because they live in the same place. 2. Santri show obedience to their kyai. 3. A modest or simple life is pursued in their everyday lives; 4. A spirit of giving mutual aid is stressed among the santri to create a strong brotherhood in the pesantren. 5. Discipline is an important characteristic in pesantren life. 6. Willingness to make sacrifices to gain certain aims is apparent. 7. A rightly guided religious life can be gained by santri in pesantren. (1987, pp. 17-18)

These characteristics indicate that there is a unique connotation when we talk about the world of the pesantren—namely, the pesantren as a subculture (Rahardja, 1988). The pesantren, as the centre of the traditionalists’ social, cultural and religious lives of the traditionalists, has created a subculture, which socio-anthropologically can be called the pesantren’s society. Furthermore, Wahid explains that there are three basic elements of the pesantren that should be noted regarding its function as a subculture: (1) an autonomous pattern of leadership, which is free from the state intervention; (2) yellow books or kitab kuning that have been used for centuries; and (3) a value system used in a pesantren that is a part of the value system of society (Rahardja, 1988, p. 14).

In the last few decades the existence of pesantren has been challenged by difficult situations, as a result of people’s orientation changing towards being more rational and pragmatic. School, or the education system, for example, is seen more as a means to getting a better job (Mahfudh, 1999; Rahardjo & Wahid, 1974; Steenbrink, 1986; Wahid, M., 1999), and pesantren institutions are faced with the dilemma of maintaining their traditional values or adopting the values of modern society. In this case, the implementation of the madrasah system within pesantren institutions can be seen as a solution (Mastuhu, 1994; Oepen, Karcher, Kingham & Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung, 1988; Wahid, M., 1999). By combining Islamic subjects with general subjects as taught in public schools, the pesantren can expect to produce graduates who have strong ethical and moral value but are able to compete with other public school graduates.

The implementation of the madrasah system in pesantren has resulted in a paradoxical situation regarding the kyai’s authority in society (Prihardiyoko, 2001). On
the one hand, the increasing number of santri, the presence of new teachers from outside the pesantren, and the introduction of new secular subjects have caused a significant change in the everyday life of the santri, especially in relation to their acceptance of the authority of their kyai. On the other hand, the increasing number of santri increases the influence of the kyai within a larger community. The greater the number of santri studying and living in the pesantren, the more powerful the kyai becomes in the eyes of people from outside it. This phenomenon shows that the charisma of the kyai is still recognised, not only by his santri, but also in the wider society. This obvious recognition can be observed in the various forms of ‘ngalap berkah’ [blessing] traditions, from a simple sowan [visit] to the house of the kyai (Dhofier, 1982; Fattah, 2006) to a ‘spiritual tour’ of ziarah [pilgrimage] to the shrines of auliya’ or saints (Chambert-Loir, Guillot & Couteau, 2007; Ruslan & Nugroho, 2007).

Other scholars have noted that the idealism of some kyai, as guardians of traditional Islam, is waning as a result of their success in implementing the madrasah or public school system within their pesantren. Financial aid and formal recognition from the Ministry of Religious Affairs has been given only to the pesantren or madrasah that follow the curriculum set by the government. This has resulted in the marginalisation of Islamic knowledge within the pesantren. The role of the kyai in the pesantren is also marginalised because his competence in providing religious explanations becomes less attractive for the santri. Moreover, most kyai have no competence in dealing with the bureaucratic system of the madrasah. The strong position of the kyai within this kind of pesantren is due to his position as its owner, regardless of his expertise in Islamic knowledge.

Interestingly, although the kyai’s position in this more modernised pesantren tends to be marginalised in term of his involvement with its formal activities, another aspect of his ability, the karāmah, has become more popular during the last few decades. Hundreds of books telling of the karāmah of kyai are available in bookshops across the country (Buhari, 2007; Rachman, 1999; Turmudzi, 2011). Books on the karāmah of

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6 Although some researchers have indicated that the popularity of kyai has decreased (Allen, 2007; Arifin, I., 1993; Sukamto, 1999; Turmudi, 2006), the phenomenon of visiting the pesantren and asking the kyai’s blessing for politicians still exists. This indicates that, for politicians at least, the kyai is still seen as an important figure in furthering their political interests.
some popular kyai have even been reprinted two or three times within a year. However, although there are hundreds of books about the phenomenon of karāmah, most of them provide only the stories, without further discussion or explanation. In other words, most of them are intended as popular reading material. Only few of them can be categorised as academic literature. Among these is the work of Rozaki (2004), which addresses the role of kyai and blater [thug] as twin regimes in Madura. The title of his book indicates that the figure of the kyai is commonly perceived as orang sakti [sacred person], who is always considered as the opposite of preman [thug], bajingan [villain], or other local names commonly associated with the use of black magic (Amin, 2008). This research also aims to fill the gap in information on the karāmah of kyai, or at least to discuss it within the academic milieu.

1.5. Methodology

In this research I used a case study to observe the rationalisation process of pesantren. A case study, as indicated by Yin (2003), aims to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and work with this technically distinctive situation. This aim fits with the purpose of this research, which is to examine the rationalisation process within the world of the pesantren through the implementation of the madrasah system. This research included phenomena of everyday life within the pesantren that, to some extent, are distinct from the culture existing outside the pesantren (Rahardjo & Wahid, 1974). An advantage of using a case study is the role of theory development. For a case study, theory development as part of the design phase is essential, whether the ensuing case study’s purpose is to develop or test theory (Yin, 2003). This is one point of difference between case studies and other related methods such as ethnography (Brauchler, 2004; Ellis & Bochner, 1996) and grounded theory (Creswell, 2007; Hedoin, 2009; Johnson, 2009).

I conducted a case study at Pesantren al-Munawwir, particularly in Komplek L, part of the pesantren which is lead by a young kyai, who had to assume leadership after the death of his father in 2001. Pesantren al-Munawwir is located in the hamlet of Krapyak, Bantul, Yogyakarta. This pesantren was selected for several reasons. First, it is known as a traditional pesantren, especially in its Qur’anic teaching, and has produced not only
leading Qur’anic kyai across the country, but also some progressive and moderate Islamic thinkers, including the fourth president of Indonesia, KH. Abdurrahman Wahid, known as Gus Dur. Second, this pesantren is located in the urban area of Yogyakarta Special Territory, only three kilometres south of the Yogyakarta palace. Yogyakarta is well known as ‘kota pelajar’ [student city]. This has stimulated the pesantren to open its doors for the santri to pursue formal education outside the pesantren, for example, in public schools, colleges, or universities. Yogyakarta is also known as the home base of the reformist and modernist Islamic organisation of Muhammadiyah, and as a ground for the initial development of Salafi Dakwah movements. However, the majority of the population is still seen as the abangan who, according to some modernists and Salafi activists, have to be ‘Islamised.’ As a consequence, a high level of contestation among the Islamic groups in this province is apparent. These conditions have contributed to some extent to the intellectualisation within the pesantren. The final reason for choosing this pesantren is that nearly all studies of pesantren are concentrated in the northern coastal region of Java, particularly in East Java, where traditional Muslims are dominant. It will be worthwhile to study pesantren from the perspective of ‘minority’ groups, to give an alternative view to current information on the pesantren’s development.

I conducted my fieldwork for nearly eleven months in total. I did two weeks pre-research in June, 2009, before doing my confirmation of candidature. Then, from September 2009 to July 2010, I did fieldwork for data collection. My last visit, for updating information, was for nearly three weeks in December 2011. In this research, I consider myself an insider. In fact, I spent more than ten years becoming a santri at this pesantren. I even gained the scholarship for pursuing this doctoral degree partly using my status as a teaching staff member at madrasah diniyah at Komplek L. My position as an alumnus, as well as a teaching staff member, gave me some privileges in conducting this research. Gus Munawwar, the kyai at Komplek L, gave me a special room to use and provided the necessary access for interviewing his relatives during the fieldwork, so I had no significant barriers in entering and conducting research in the site. I believe there are advantages in being an insider researcher (Berg, 2001; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007), but I am fully aware that it can also have shortcomings. Prior knowledge, underlying personal bias, and preconceived ideas, for example, can be disadvantageous
for the research. In this case, I relied on my experience conducting similar research (as an insider) for my bachelor’s and master’s degrees both in sociology and comparative religion. What I present here is a sociological study, not to defend the ‘right’ of certain religious doctrines, but to observe how those doctrines are perceived by and influence the behaviour of members of the pesantren, in their daily activities.

Although I had no difficulties in entering the site, this did not mean that there were no challenges. For example, most Muslims have a relatively negative view of many Western concepts, or at least they are suspicious of them. I encountered a terminological difficulty in doing some interviews. Some of my respondents spontaneously rejected the use of the term ‘rationalisation.’ For some of them the term simply meant to take people away from their religion, or it was understood as in connection with a Mu’tazilah, a theological group in Islam which favours the use of reasoning over the religious texts (Gibb, 1983; Watt, 1973). However, when I mentioned some characteristics of rationalisation, such as the emergence of bureaucratic organisations, efficiency, predictability and so forth, most respondents were relatively in agreement that their pesantren has undergone the process.

For data collection, I used several methods simultaneously. First, I made participant observations, by joining in various activities in each type of pesantren. Sometimes I accompanied the kyai and senior santri when they gave lessons to communities around the pesantren, especially when they were asked to deliver a speech on certain special occasions, such as commemoration of an Islamic holiday, a marriage celebration, or sunatan [circumcision] party. Participant observation enabled me to closely examine how santri and people around the pesantren interact with, and behave in front of, their kyai. This gave me an initial insight into how they actually perceived the kyai figure. I then conducted several in-depth interviews. Using snowball random sampling, I started with teachers as my key informants and then asked them to nominate either their colleagues or their students. In total, I conducted in-depth interviews with three kyai, seven teachers and nineteen santri. Most of these interviews focused on seeking further information on several issues, including the implementation of the madrasah system and other educational activities for santri outside the pesantren, the pattern of social interactions among the members of the pesantren, the way santri understand and
interpret various Islamic tenets (in order to verify behaviours or attitudes of the *santri* related to the values system of the *pesantren*), and the *santri*’s perception of the leadership model of their *kyai*.

In addition, I collected and analysed some primary sources of *kitab kuning* [religious texts] that are used in the *pesantren*, especially texts relating to ethical issues, which are often seen as doctrinal sources legitimising the authority of *kyai*. This literature study is important in providing a theological basis for the values system of *pesantren*, since it is mostly based on these texts. Next, I coded my collected data according to four topics: the *madrasah* and other formal educational activity outside the *pesantren*; perception of the sources of charismatic authority; opinions concerning the previous *kyai* and the current *kyai*; and the issue of succession of leadership in *pesantren*. Finally, I analysed the data using the theoretical framework I have mentioned, in order to examine the changing view of the influence of rationalisation in determining the charismatic authority of *kyai*.

### 1.6. Overview of Following Chapters

Since the concept of the charismatic authority of *kyai* is fully practised within the institution of the *pesantren*, the following chapters describe the current position of *pesantren* within the Indonesian education system, present some of the distinct values of *pesantren* that support the charisma of the *kyai*, and examine how these values contribute to preserving the charismatic authority, especially during the succession period.

Chapter two presents an historical account of the institutional transformation of the *pesantren*, and its distinct characteristics compared to other education systems in Indonesia, including the core teachings of the traditional *pesantren* and some issues regarding the charismatic authority of its leader, the *kyai*. I start with a discussion of the institutional transformation of the *pesantren* from its simplest form, known as *langgar*, to the incorporation of the *madrasah* system. I then map the current position of *pesantren* within the Indonesian education system. I compare it particularly with other Islamic educational institutions that seem to have become more complex in the last decades. Finally, I examine features of the traditional *pesantren* in the modern era, including its values system which supports the charismatic authority of the *kyai*.
Chapter three addresses, more specifically, the sources of the kyai’s charismatic authority, drawn from fundamental concepts taught in pesantren communities. I first describe various models of the kyai and how he achieves recognition of his legitimacy from his followers. Then, I examine two important concepts that are the basis of the kyai’s charismatic authority—barākah [gift of grace or blessing] and karāmah [miracle of the kyai]. I discuss both concepts based on their canonical and non-canonical sources, in order to understand the reasons behind the legitimisation of the kyai’s authority. I conclude this chapter with a discussion on some means that are popularly used by the pesantren community to obtain these charismatic qualities, especially through inheritance, ilmu laduni [divine knowledge, which is acquired without learning process] and riyāḍah [religious exercise]. These means inform us about the possibility of charismatic qualities being transferred to a successor.

In chapter four, I start presenting the results of my fieldwork by describing the social structure of Pesantren al-Munawwir Komplek L. First, I describe the development of Pesantren al-Munawwir, in which my pesantren is located. I then discuss the current situation of Komplek L, by giving information on each member of the pesantren (kyai, ndalem [kyai’s family members], ustadz [teachers] and santri), including their roles in the learning processes and other daily activities. By focusing on the social structure of Komplek L, I show the emergence of the pesantren board, which can be seen as a form of rationalisation within the pesantren.

Chapter five focuses on the charisma of the late Kyai Ahmad Munawwir, the founder of Komplek L, and the current kyai, Gus Munawwar, his only son. First, I describe the charisma of Kyai Ahmad, especially regarding the popularity of his barākah and karāmah among the santri. Then, I describe the situation in Komplek L, including the position of Gus Munawwar in the pesantren, after the death of his father. Finally, I provide some stories about how Gus Munawwar re-built his pesantren after the deadly earthquake in 2006, which, in my opinion, clearly indicate the influence of Kyai Ahmad’s charisma, inherited by Gus Munawwar.

Chapter six analyses the transmission of charismatic authority in Komplek L. First, I examine the role of each member of the pesantren concerning the issue of succession. This shows us that the transmission of the kyai’s charismatic authority is not simply
hereditary. The notion of charisma did not automatically attach to Gus Munawwar when 
Kyai Ahmad passed away. There is an obvious contribution from other pesantren 
members, including the pesantren board, in fostering charisma in Gus Munawwar. I also 
examine the individual effort made by Gus Munawwar to obtain charismatic qualities 
through practising riyādah. In conclusion, I show how the santri eventually perceived 
Gus Munawwar as a charismatic leader, and how through these long processes of 
transmission the pesantren community overcomes the issue of succession of their leader, 
redirecting the process of routinisation of a charismatic leader, as explained by Weber.

Chapter seven summarises the discussions. I discuss three topics related to the issue 
of the transmission of charismatic authority of the kyai—rationalisation of pesantren, the 
concepts of barākah and karāmah, and the routinisation of charismatic authority of the 
kyai—as my theoretical reflections of Weber’s ideas on charismatic authority.
Chapter Two

Transformation of Pesantren in Modern Java

The ability of *pesantren*, the oldest type of Islamic educational institution in Indonesia, to adapt to social changes has been acknowledged by both local and foreign scholars (A’la, 2006; Bruinessen, 1995a; Dhoﬁer, 2009). This adaptability cannot be separated from the role of *kyai*, the leaders of the *pesantren* and of the communities which develop around them (Buresh, 2002; Mas’ud, 1998; Rahardjo, 1988). The *pesantren* community, which is not only limited to those who live within it, but also includes people who live around it, including followers or sympathisers of the *kyai* from surrounding villages or suburbs, is of a unique type. It has its own value system which is often somewhat different from that of the wider society. This phenomenon is described by Abdurrahman Wahid, the former President of Indonesia, as the *pesantren*’s subculture (see Rahardjo, 1988).

Interestingly, the modernisation of the *pesantren*, as part of its adaptation to social change, has not automatically erased its traditional character, as many have assumed (Geertz, 1960a; Mas’ud, 2004). Although many *pesantren* have adopted a modern type of education system, such as incorporating general studies subjects into their curricula through the implementation of the *madrasah* system and using some advanced facilities, such as computers and the internet, these adaptations have not radically changed the value system of *pesantren*, especially the traditional ones. Moreover, the dependence of members of the *pesantren* community on their *kyai* is still apparent and undeniable. Stories about the *barakah* and *karāmah* of certain charismatic *kyai* have not disappeared from the everyday life of *santri* and the surrounding communities. This chapter discusses what the existing literature on Indonesia’s *pesantren* tells us about the effects of engagement with modernisation, particularly on the traditional *pesantren*, by focusing on its general features and the role of its leader, the *kyai*, including the notion of his charisma, in modern Java.

The development of *pesantren*, especially after the fall of the New Order in 1998, has impressed some scholars (Dhoﬁer, 2009). According to recent data released by the
Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), the total number of *pesantren* in 2009/2010 was 25,785, more than three times the number from the data released in 1998, which was only 7,536. Dhofier even estimated that the total will reach 35,000 by 2019. In Table 2.1 we can see the steady progress, within the last three years, in the number of *pesantren*, though the number of students is relatively stable.

### Table 2.1. *Pesantren* in the Last Three Years

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<td><em>Pesantren</em></td>
<td>24,206</td>
<td>25,785</td>
<td>27,218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Santri</em></td>
<td>3,647,719</td>
<td>3,652,083</td>
<td>3,642,738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Teaching Staff</em></td>
<td>278,709</td>
<td>264,288</td>
<td>221,783</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Table 2.2. Development of Three Types of *Pesantren*

![Bar chart showing the development of three types of *pesantren*]


However, from the statistical data concerning *pesantren* released by MORA in the last three years, it is quite surprising to observe the number of *pesantren salafiyah* [I.

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traditional *pesantren*. As the wider society becomes more rational and modern, many might assume that the number of *pesantren salafiyah* would be significantly decreased. In fact, as seen in Table 2.2, the number of *pesantren salafiyah* has tended to increase in the last year. This shows that traditional Muslims in Indonesia, particularly in Java, have their own ways of engaging with modernity without damaging their traditional characters and values. It seems that tension between traditional and modern values, as is always persistent within a modernising society, can be resolved quite well by the members of a *pesantren* community. The increasing number of *pesantren salafiyah*, though most of them are located in rural areas, also indicates that preserving tradition is considered by traditional Muslims in Java at least as important as adopting the new values of modernisation. This perception is clearly seen in the development of *pesantren salafiyah* in Yogyakarta, which is the home ground of Muhammadiyah, the biggest reformist/modernist Muslim organisation, as well as being the foremost city for education in Indonesia. To some extent this special feature of Yogyakarta, as a city of education, has presented *pesantren salafiyah* in this region with greater challenges in adopting modernity, compared to similar institutions in other cities.

In this chapter, I will clarify the position of the *pesantren* within the national education system, particularly compared with other Islamic education institutions. I will give an historical account of the *pesantren*, including its institutional and curricular transformations, describe its current features and value system, and then focus on how the recent phenomenon of mushrooming *Sekolah Islam Terpadu* [Integrated Islamic School] and Salafi *pesantren*, with their support from Middle East countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, has contributed to the diversity of Islamic educational institutions across the country. The latter institution differs ideologically from *salafiyah pesantren*, the focus of this research. The Salafi *pesantren* is a relatively new institution, started in the late 1980s by some alumni of LIPIA (Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab [Institute for the Study of Islam and Arabic]), a Saudi Arabian funded institution formed in 1980 in Jakarta (Azra, 2005; Hasan, 2006, 2008).
2.1. *Langgar, Pesantren* and *Madrasah*: A Historical Account of Islamic Educational Institutions

The words ‘*pondok*,’ ‘*pesantren*’ and ‘*pondok pesantren*’ are commonly heard among Javanese Muslims. These three terms are used to refer to a traditional Islamic educational institution, in which a *kyai* and his *santri* live in a building complex consisting of a *masjid* [mosque], the house of the *kyai*, and rooms for the *santri*. Basically a *pesantren* is similar to a school with its dormitories but is under the direct and strict supervision of the *kyai* who also lives in the complex. Of these three terms, I prefer to use the word ‘*pesantren*’ in this thesis for the following reasons. The first word, ‘*pondok*’ (a derivation of the Arabic word ‘*funduq,*’ which literally means ‘room’ or ‘hostel’) is also commonly used to refer to any simple building made of wood or bamboo. The last term, ‘*pondok pesantren*,’ is considered, in *pesantren* circles, as being *jami’ mani’* [not efficient, or containing redundancy]. This last term is nonetheless used in everyday speech, but in the shortened form ‘*ponpes*’ (Qomar, 2005). So, ‘*pesantren*’ is the most specific term of the three and free of redundancy.

The existence of *pesantren* in modern Java cannot be separated from the fact that Islamic learning in Indonesia started with the establishment of a *langgar*. ‘*Langgar*’ is a Javanese word for a simple building where Muslims pray and learn Islamic knowledge. However, its current meaning differs from that from the early history of Islam in the archipelago. In the past, the *langgar* had a similar meaning to the *masjid* [I. and A. mosque], in which almost all Islamic activities, such as daily obligatory prayer and *ngaji* [learning Islamic knowledge], took place. As Islam has developed, the meaning of *langgar* has contracted to the similar meaning of *musāla* [J. small mosque], a place where some Islamic activities cannot be conducted, such as Friday Prayer and *i’tikaf* [seclusion].

Although there is no adequate evidence explaining when this change began, I believe that it was related to the shift of dominance from Sufism to *fiqh* [Islamic jurisprudence] in the late nineteenth century, because the differences between the two usages are mostly based on the arguments of *fiqh*.

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7 ‘*Surau,*’ a popular word from Minangkabau, West Sumatera, as undergone a change in meaning similar to that of ‘*langgar.*’ It also was used with a similar meaning to ‘*masjid*’ but currently its function has also been reduced to a *musāla* (see Azra, 1999).
Only a few scholars have paid serious attention to explaining why the word ‘langgar’ is historically more popular for some Javanese Muslims, especially in rural areas, than the words ‘masjid’ or ‘musāla.’ Ridwan Saïdi (2008), for example, when he described the history of Islam in Betawi (Jakarta) noted that the word ‘langgar’ was not created by Muslims, but was used by the elites of Padjajaran kingdom to call an early Muslim community in Betawi ‘kaum langgara’ [offenders] because they violated the teachings of Sanghyang Siksha Kandang Karesian, a local deity prior the coming of Islam. Their place of worship then was called a langgar. It seems that the popularity of some local terms in Indonesian Islam, particularly in Java, is a result of tolerant and accommodative dakwah (proselytisation) models of the founding fathers of Islam in Java (Bruinessen, 1995a; Johns, 1961). Local (Javanese) terms for some important concepts in Islam are more popular than their original Arabic words, such as surga instead of jannah [heaven], neraka rather than nār [hell], sembahyang rather than salat [prayer], and puasa instead of saum [fasting].

Notwithstanding this change in meaning, scholars agreed that the transmission of Islamic knowledge began in this simple building, the langgar. When more people were drawn to learning about Islam, some langgar were transformed into pesantren to provide a place for those who came from remote areas and had transport difficulties in attending on a regular basis. The learning process at langgar is commonly called pengajian. It is conducted using the traditional methods of sorogan [individual lessons], especially in studying the Qur’an, and bandongan [group lessons] in studying other necessary Islamic knowledge, such as shalat [the proper form of prayer], puasa [fasting], zakat [obligatory alms], and haji [pilgrimage to Mekkah].

To understand the figure of the kyai, especially how he is perceived as a charismatic leader, it is necessary to reconsider the transformation of a langgar to a pesantren, which, according to Dirdjosanjoto (1999), has created distinct characteristics of kyai langgar and kyai pesantren. Understanding the contemporary figure of the kyai also requires understanding the shift of dominance from tasawuf [Sufism] to fiqh [shari’ah] oriented Islamic learning in pesantren, which started in the late eighteenth century with the return of some young kyai from their study in Mekkah. This internal shift in orientation has also contributed to the polarisation of kyai into kyai tarekat and kyai.
shari’ah as described below. These changes, to some extent, have contributed to changing the notions of a kyai’s charisma, especially in this modern era.

2.1.1. Institutional Transformation: From Langgar to Pesantren

Tracing the origin of pesantren is not an easy task. The scarcity of historical evidence, such as buildings, monuments or documents, has been the biggest challenge for historians in this search, and, as with a controversial debate on the coming of Islam in the archipelago, there is also still no agreement among scholars in explaining the origin of pesantren. Prior to the nineteenth century, little can be found about the pesantren, as an Islamic educational institution as we know it today, except some speculative claims based on stories written in babad and serat, Javanese chronicles and literature (Azra, 2006; Bruinessen, 1995a). However, some writers have suggested that it is fair to assume that the pesantren was started as soon as Islam was established in Java, though not in its full sense of an Islamic educational institution. Atjeh (1955) and de Graaf (1970), for example, assert that the earliest pesantren in Java was established by Sunan Giri, one of the Walisongo members, at Giri Kedaton, East Java. Some students who graduated from Giri pesantren were later on known as wandering preachers in the eastern part of Indonesia. Some other scholars go even further, to acknowledge Syaikh Maulana Malik Ibrahim, the oldest member of Walisongo, as the founding father of pesantren in Java (Islam & Luhur, 1975; Mas’ud, 2002). Another possible account of the origin of pesantren can be drawn from the story in Serat Centhini, in which the protagonist, named Jayengresmi, studied at Pesantren Karang in West Java in the late 1630s or early 1640s under Syaikh Ibrahim bin Abubakar or Ki Ageng Karang (Bruinessen, 1995b).

Apart from these different accounts there are, according to Steenbrink (1986), at least two major opinions on the origin of pesantren. First, the pesantren is seen as an adaptation from other religious education systems, particularly from Hinduism and Buddhism, which existed prior to the advent of Islam in Indonesia. Second, the pesantren system is claimed to have had its original form within the Islamic traditions in the Middle East, particularly the madrasah model developed by the Abbasid dynasty (750–1258). Mujamil Qomar (2005), however, claims that there are seven theories explaining the origin of pesantren. The first theory states that the pesantren is an
imitation and adaptation of Hindu-Buddhism’s model of education before Islam came to the archipelago. The second theory sees the pesantren system as coming from India. The third claims that the pesantren is a form of education imported from Baghdad. The fourth theory states that the pesantren was influenced by local cultures, while the fifth theory sees pesantren as a combination of Hindu-Buddhism and Arab cultures. The sixth theory emphasises that the pesantren is a result of an acculturation process between Indonesian and Indian cultures. The final theory tends to accommodate all elements by stating that the pesantren is a result of the process of adaptation among Indian, Middle Eastern, and local cultures. It seems that these seven theories agree with Steenbrink’s opinion, that the pesantren is made up of elements from India, through the advent of Hinduism and Buddhism, and from the Middle East, either from Arabia (Mekkah and Madinah), Egypt (al-Azhar), or Baghdad (from the Abbasid period). However, since evidence concerning the pesantren prior the nineteenth century is slight, I prefer to base my explanation of its origin on Steenbrink’s view above.

Some scholars, such as Ziemek (1986), Geertz (1960b), Johns (1961), Berg (1955), and Kuntowijoyo (1991), claim that the pesantren is an adaptation of a form of Hindu-Buddhist education system that existed prior to the coming of Islam. This can be seen from the word ‘pesantren,’ which literally means a place for ‘santri.’ Johns (1961), for example, believed that ‘santri’ is derived from a word in the Tamil language, which means ‘a teacher who is also studying.’ Another scholar, C. C. Berg (1955), claims that the word ‘santri’ is derived from the Indian word ‘Shastri’, which refers to a Hindu scribe, a person who understands the sacred book of Hinduism. Moreover, Dhofier (1999) shows that the word ‘shastri’ derives from the word ‘shastra,’ which means sacred books or religious books. In a similar claim, Geertz also noted that the word ‘santri’ is derived from ‘shastri’ meaning ‘literate person’, but from Sanskrit. Another possible derivation of ‘santri’ is a Javanese word, ‘cantrik,’ meaning a student who always follows his teacher wherever he goes (Madjid, 1997).

Beside this etymological issue, some traditions within pesantren, such as the central position of the kyai, the pattern of social relationships between kyai and santri or among fellow santri, and learning processes (especially the use of chanting), are similar to the social life within the Hindu-Buddhist monastery. Azra, for example, claims that the
pesantren was a “Hindu-Buddhist monastery used for training and reproduction of religious functionaries Later on, when Islam came, the pondok or pesantren was Islamised; it was now adapted for Islamic religious purposes” (Azra, 2006). Other scholars hold different opinions on the origin of pesantren. Geertz, for instance, though he supported the idea of Hindu-Buddhist influence on Javanese Islam, asserts that the “pesantren is only superficially like a monastery, for the santri are not monks. They have made no vows. They come to the pesantren when they wish, and they leave it when they wish.” It seems that Geertz’s argument is not quite true because within traditional pesantren, the kyai has absolute authority for giving permission for santri to leave the pesantren. Nonetheless, these explanations indicate that the pesantren system has been influenced by local Hindu-Buddhist monastery systems.

The second theory of the origin of the pesantren, as identified by Steenbrink, claims that it originally comes from Islamic traditions in the Middle East. Martin van Bruinessen (1995a), for example, sees that there is a similarity between pesantren and the education system in al-Azhar, especially its riwaq system, education that is conducted in riwaq [nave of the mosque]. Dhofier (1999) claims that the pesantren is a combination between madrasah, as a centre of education, and tarekat [Sufi order] activities. It is interesting to note here that the madrasah system was first introduced in Java at the end of the nineteenth century and rapidly developed in the early twentieth century, though this system was fully developed in the Middle East, especially in Baghdad, from the twelfth century, under the ‘Abbasside dynasty.

The influence of the Middle East on the early pesantren in Java can also be seen from the word ‘pondok,’ which denotes the same meaning as ‘pesantren.’ The term ‘pondok’ has possibly derived from the Arabic word ‘funduq’ meaning ‘hut’ or ‘hostel,’ that is, a special building temporarily inhabited by travelers or theologians (Dhofier, 1999; Simanjuntak, 2006). Moreover, as indicated by Bruinessen (1995a), the word ‘pesantren’ was not used in Serat Centhini, which used instead ‘paguron’ or ‘padepokan,’ meaning a place for study. Currently, these two words are commonly used for studying something related to traditions, such as traditional dancing and martial arts, including acquiring some supernatural powers. It seems that the martial arts have
become part of study in most pesantren, especially the salafiyah pesantren. I will further discuss the relationship between pesantren and martial arts in the next chapter.

Further support for the account of Arab influence in the early history of pesantren can be seen from the widespread use of Pegan (local languages written using Arabic letters) as the main languages used in transmitting Islamic knowledge within the pesantren communities. Simanjuntak (2006), in his book Archaeology: Indonesian Perspective: R.P. Soejono’s Festschrift, provides evidence of Arab influence in the establishment of the santri’s community. He shows the widespread use of Pegan characters, or even Arabic script, in the works of kyai, instead of the Hanacaraka (Sanskrit) letters used by most Javanese, especially within the palace. Although Bruinessen (1995a) identified the most widely known author using Pegan script as Kyai Sholeh Darat (Sholeh bin Muhammad Umar al-Samarani), who lived in the late nineteenth century, this does not mean that the Pegan script was not used before then. Uka Chandrasasmita (2008), an Indonesian archaeologist, deduced that Pegan script was used to teach Islam in the early period as a part of the dakwah [proselytisation] model, as shown in the works of Sunan Bonang or Syaikh Bari (d. 1525).

Aside from the differing accounts of the origin of pesantren, most scholars agree that a langgar (similar in meaning to ‘mosque’) is considered the first building of an Islamic institution (Dirdjosanjoto, 1999; Qomar, 2005). The function of a langgar as a centre for Islamic activities, ranging from five times daily prayer to educational purposes, is evident across Java. The Prophet Muhammad, for example, built a mosque prior to building the city of Madinah. He even used the Madinah Mosque as a headquarters in ruling Madinah (Armstrong, 2000; Gibb, 1983). This model, the building of the mosque before the establishment of the government, was imitated by the Walisongo [nine saints] when they supported the establishment of the first Islamic kingdom in Java, the Sultanate of Demak in the fifteenth century (Florida, 1995). Further evidence of the importance of langgar, not only as places of worship but as centres for transmitting Islamic knowledge and spreading Islam across Java, can be found in most shrine complexes of the Walisongo, where the langgar has become the main building along with the tombs of the wali [saint] and their early followers.
For example, in the shrine complex of Maulana Malik Ibrahim, the oldest member of the Walisongo, the langgar is located at the front of the complex, right behind the entrance gate, while the saint’s tomb is located in the west side of the langgar. It is therefore not surprising when some scholars claim, as indicated by Lembaga Research Islam (1975), that Maulana Malik Ibrahim, also known as Syaikh Maghribi (d.1419) was believed to be the initiator of the pesantren, in its simplest form. This tradition was then continued by his son, Sunan Ampel, who built Pesantren Kembang Kuning in Surabaya, East Java. Later, other pesantren were built by other members of Walisongo throughout the island of Java (Qomar, 2005). The main function of these pesantren was to attract people to convert to Islam and to educate them with the necessary Islamic knowledge.

Historically, the transformation of langgar to pesantren, was in many cases based on the needs of those who were attracted to pengajian [the study of Islamic knowledge] which was conducted in langgar, but who were unable to attend on a regular basis due to the long distance between the langgar and their homes. Therefore, they built simple rooms, called ‘pondok,’ around the langgar (Dhofier, 1999; Qomar, 2005). However, this transformation did not take place in all langgar. Some remain in their original form and continue to be used as centres for Islamic activities only for local people who live around the langgar. They can still be seen in many places across Java.

This transformation, to some extent, differs from the phenomenon of the establishment of pesantren after the twentieth century. Most pesantren, post twentieth century, are built in one package, which consists of at least four buildings: the house of the kyai, mosque, rooms for santri, and rooms for study. In some cases, the pesantren has started only with a kyai who conducted regular pengajian [Islamic lessons] at his house and then gradually added other buildings around his house to accommodate the needs of his growing audience. An example of this evolution process can be seen from the establishment of Pesantren Darut Tauhid in Bandung (Solahudin, 2008).

The next institutional transformation of Islamic educational institutions occurred in the early twentieth century, when the madrasah system was introduced as a response to the implementation of the Western schooling system across the country (Daulay, 2001; Kholiq, Mas’ud, Ismail & Huda, 2002; Steenbrink, 1986). The first madrasah was established in the Sumatra region by reformist/modernist Muslims. In 1908, Abdullah
Ahmad initiated the establishment of Madrasah Adabiyah. This was followed by the emergence of other madrasah, such as Madrasah Schoel in Batusangkar, founded by Syaikh M. Taib Umar. In 1918, Mahmud Yunus established the Diniyah Schoel as a continuation of the Madrasah Schoel. The Madrasah Tawalib was formed by Syaikh Abdul Karim Amrullah in Padang Panjang in 1907 (Yunus, 1979).

In Java, the madrasah system was introduced along with the establishment of Muhammadiyah in Yogyakarta. In 1918, KH. Achmad Dahlan founded the Madrasah Qismul Arqa. Later on, it was renamed ‘Hogere Muhammadijah School,’ and then finally it became ‘Kweekschool Muhammadijah.’ Following the 23rd congress of Muhammadiyah (19–25 July 1934) in Yogyakarta, ‘Kweekschool Muhammadijah’ became ‘Madrasah Mu’allimin Muhammadijah’ and this name is used now. This change stemmed from criticisms by Muhammadiyah members, who questioned using the name of the Dutch school when the diplomas and curricula of the two schools were clearly different.

Within the pesantren, the madrasah system was introduced for the first time by KH. Hashim Asy’ari in 1919, at his pesantren, Tebureng. He established Madrasah Salafiyyah Syafiiyyah. This madrasah adopted the class system, with its method of evaluating the achievements of santri at the end of a school year, which was unknown within the pesantren system, but the curriculum was still dominated by kitab kuning or Islamic knowledge and no general subjects were taught until 1929, when KH. Wahid Hasyim, the son of KH. Hasyim Asy’ari, took over the leadership of the madrasah (Arifin, 1993b; Qomar, 2005).

The madrasah model of Pesantren Tebuireng soon became widely adopted by other pesantren across the Island of Java, including some pesantren in Yogyakarta. This cannot be separated from the fact that KH. Hasyim Asy’ari held the highest position of a

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8 It is interesting to see the combination of Arabic and Dutch language in naming these schools. Although there is no ‘official’ explanation found about this naming, it is obvious that it is related to the fact that ‘madrasah’ implies an Islamic identity and ‘schoel’ represents a formal and modern education system. So the aim of combining the madrasah or other Islamic identities with the term ‘schoel’ is to show that the school is using a modern education system, as introduced by the Dutch colonial system, but without sacrificing the importance of Islamic lessons.

9 It is interesting to note here that the reason KH. Achmad Dahlan changed the name of the school that he founded to ‘Kweekschool’ was inspired by his visits to the Katholieke Kweekschool in Muntian, Central Java. For further information on the history of Madrasah Muallimin Muhammadiyah, see Soeara Muhammadijah, July 1941 and the official website of the madrasah (http://www.muallimin.org).
kyai, with his special title ‘Hadratus Syaikh’ [A. grand master]. Also, Pesantren Tebuireng was considered as a kibat [model] for other pesantren (Misrawi, 2010; Qomar, 2005). In Pesantren al-Munawwir, for example, the madrasah system was fully adopted in the 1960s under the leadership of KH. Ali Maksum (Syakur, 1998). Starting with Qur’anic teaching in 1910, the pesantren has been modernised by the establishment of the madrasah system from elementary to high school level, and has become one of the most influential pesantren in Indonesia. Nowadays, nearly all pesantren in Yogyakarta have the madrasah system. Some have moved even further, by incorporating the public school model, which means that the pesantren operates a public school under the Ministry of Education and santri learn Islamic knowledge informally, outside school time. This phenomenon seems to make boundaries between pesantren and other educational institutions even more blurred and complicated.

The implementation of the madrasah system has influenced the characteristics of pesantren, which previously relied much on the expertise of the kyai. The notion of specialised pesantren (such as pesantren Qur’an, pesantren kitab, or pesantren alat) which created the phenomenon of wandering santri (Dhofier, 1999), has faded. Since most pesantren have offered a more comprehensive study of Islamic knowledge through the madrasah system, the number of santri who move from one pesantren to another to pursue different Islamic knowledge has dramatically decreased. Although this does not mean that the specialised expertise of the kyai is no longer significant, it is no longer a determining factor for santri when choosing a certain pesantren (Haedari & Hanif, 2006; Mastuhy, 1994). Rather, the changed curricula of pesantren have, to some extent, become the basis for the students’ choice. This also suggests that there is a

10 Pesantren Qur’an is a pesantren that specialises in the study of the Qur’an, including tahfiz [memorisation], tajwid [knowledge of reading the Qur’an properly], and Qiro’ah Sab’ah [knowledge of seven different ways in reading the Qur’an]. Some popular examples of the pesantren Qur’an are: Pesantren Al-Asy’ariyah, Kalibeber, Wonosobo (established in 1832), Pesantren al-Munawwir in Yogyakarta (1910), and Pesantren Yanbu’ul Qur’an in Kudus (1973).

11 Pesantren kitab are pesantren that specialise in studying the kitab kuning or classical texts written in Arabic on subjects of Islamic knowledge, such as kitab tafsir [books of Qur’anic exegesis], kitab hadith [books on the Prophet traditions], kitab fiqh [books of Islamic jurisprudence], etc. Examples of pesantren kitab are: Pesantren Tremas, Pacitan (1830), Pesantren Tebuireng, Jombang (1899), and Pesantren Lirboyo, Kediri (1913).

12 Pesantren alat are pesantren that specialise in ilmu alat [tools to master Arabic language], including nahwu [Arabic grammar], shorof [Arabic syntax], and balaghah [Lit. to reach: meaning how the language used can really influence the listener]. Some of popular pesantren alat are: Pesantren Langitan, Lamongan (1852) and Pesantren Bendo, Kediri (1886).
changing perception of the figure of the kyai. In the past, santri went to certain pesantren merely because of the particular expertise of the kyai, and hoped that they could obtain the barākah of the kyai and thereby absorb his expertise. Although the concept of the kyai’s barākah is still apparent in most pesantren, the santri are less concerned about acquiring it. Eventually, the perception of the charismatic figure of the kyai may also be changed, because one of the sources of the kyai’s charisma is a belief, especially among the members of pesantren community, that he has the ability to give barākah to others.

2.1.2. The Shift of Islamic Knowledge in Pesantren: From Sufism to Fiqh

Before discussing current features of traditional pesantren and their charismatic leader, another phenomenon needs to be considered, besides the institutional transformation. In the late nineteenth century the kind of Islamic knowledge taught at pesantren changed from Sufi learning to legal (fiqh-oriented) learning. A popular differentiation of kyai into ‘kyai tarekat’ (kyai who promote Sufism and become members of a Sufi order) and ‘kyai shari’ah’ (kyai who prioritise shari’ah in their teachings) is a result of this shifting paradigm. The dominance of kitab fiqh [books of fiqh] and kitab ilmu alat [books of Arabic grammar], as we will see, has had a significant influence in shaping the leadership of the kyai, especially affecting his charisma. Some kyai, who are oriented toward Sufi teachings and use that to justify an eccentric style and occasional breach of shari’ah law, are considered as kyai jadhab [divine influence] by legalistic or shari’ah kyai.

To understand the dominance of Sufism in the history of Islam in Java, we must examine the long debate among scholars on the coming of Islam to the archipelago. According to Ricklefs (1993), there are at least three supported theories about the arrival of Islam. First, he mentioned that Islam in Indonesia came from India, more specifically from the Gujarat areas, in the thirteen century. This theory was devised by Snouck Hurgronje, based on old inscription found in Sumatera, dated 1297. Other scholars supporting this theory include Vlekke (1960) (whose argument is based on Marco Polo’s witnessing that many people in Perlak in 1929 were Muslims), Schrieke (1955), Geertz (1960b), and Bastin and Benda (1977). Other evidence supporting this theory can be found in some old tombs, including a grave marker found around the tomb of Malik.
Ibrahim, which is made of stone from Khambat, a region of India (Akbar, 2009; Tagliacozzo, 2009). However, for certain reasons it is hard to accept this theory. First, at that time, Gujarat and other regions of the Indian sub-continent were dominated by Shi’ah, while in the archipelago a Shi’ah community is rarely found. Second, there is the historical evidence of a tomb in Leran, near Gresik, dated 1028, and a Chinese manuscript explaining the existence of an Arab community in Barus (part of Sriwijaya kingdom) in 625 (Ahmad, 1979; Hamka, 1965; Leur, 1955).

The second theory of the arrival of Islam in Indonesia claims that it came from Persia (now Iran). This claim is supported by similarities in the traditions of Islam in both regions (Qomar, 2005). Islam in Persia, at the time when Islam was coming to the archipelago, was dominated by Shi’ah. One of the Shi’ah traditions, that can easily be found in Indonesian Sunni practices, is a special charity to help orphaned children in the month of Muhamram, the first month in the Islamic calendar. This tradition still exists in Indonesia today and is known as Muharaman. Further supporting evidence comes from historical sites, especially old gravestones in several places, such as Gresik, Surabaya, Tuban, and Demak, which have similar patterns and forms to old gravestones in Persia (Azra, 1994; Hasmy, 1981; Jamhari & Jabali, 2002). However, since there is no indigenous Islamic community in Indonesia which claims to be Shi’ah, this theory is not accepted by the majority of Islamic scholars.

The third theory holds that Islam came directly from Arabia. It is supported by the existence of Arab merchants who interacted with local merchants in some ports, especially in the north of Sumatera Island and along the north coast of Java. There are some Arab villages in those areas, though it is hard to know when they were built. However, in some places, such as in Gresik and Surabaya, Arab kampung are located in the same places as the tombs of Sunan Malik Ibrahim and Sunan Ampel respectively. This indicates that some Arab kampung may be as old as the founding fathers of Islam in Java. Other evidence supporting this theory comes from Hamka (1965), who relied on a manuscript from China describing the presence of some Arab people in Barus, a part of Sriwijaya kingdom in Sumatera, in 625.

The most important thing to consider regarding these different theories is the relatively strong agreement among scholars that the Islam that came to the archipelago
was dominated by Sufis (Bubalo & Fealy, 2005; Hasymy, 1981; Johns, 1961), who played an important role in introducing it. A. H. Johns (1961), for instance, claims that Sufis were the primary agents of conversion in the early development of Islam in Indonesia. The Sufis’ role in spreading Islam in Indonesia, more specifically in the regions of Java, is revealed in a collection of quasi-factual Javanese manuscripts collectively known as Babad Tanah Jawi [History of the Land of Java] (Sabdacarakatama, 2009). These early missionaries of Islam were elevated to the status of wali, an Arabic term for ‘saint’ and ascribed the title ‘sunan,’ a Javanese epithet akin to ‘honorable.’ Over the centuries, many stories surrounding the lives of these men and their exploits have been told. Among these men, the most famous are called ‘Walisongo,’ the nine saints who succeeded in Islamising most areas of Java in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Florida, 1995; Wahjoetomo & Firmansyah, 1997).

As most of the Walisongo’s followers were practising tasawuf [Sufism], this became the main subject taught in langgar and pesantren. Martin van Bruinessen (1995a) reported that before the eighteenth century, books on tasawuf and akhlaq [Islamic ethics] dominated the list of books studied in pesantren throughout Java, especially from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century. Sufi books, such as Ihya’ Ulumuddin, written by Imam al-Ghazali, and al-Hikam, written by Ibn ‘Aṭa’īllah al-Iskandari, are still popular among the members of pesantren communities today, although the study of both is restricted to advanced santri.

As indicated by many scholars (Schimmel, 2006; Simuh, 1995; Suwirta, 2002), Sufism is adaptive, accommodative, and has similar characteristics to Hindu-Buddhist traditions that emphasise mystic or supernatural phenomena. For example, most members of the Walisongo used local culture as a means to attract people to Islam, and transformed it to confirm with the faith. Sunan Kalijaga, for example, used wayang, or shadow puppet stories, the most popular attraction derived from Hinduism’s Mahabaratha and Ramayana epic. He created some new figures to introduce and teach Islam to local people. Sunan Bonang also created a musical instrument and popular Javanese songs called pucung and dandang gulo to attract people to Islam. The ability to accommodate and modify local culture to fit in with Islamic teachings was key to the success of their mission to convert people to Islam.
It was not until the eighteenth century that the dominance of Sufism gradually decreased and was replaced by *fiqh* [A. Islamic Jurisprudence]. Bruinessen (1995a) noted that there are at least four reasons why *fiqh* replaced Sufism as the main subject taught in *pesantren*. First, *fiqh* is a subject within Islamic knowledge that regulates the daily life of a Muslim, both in *ibādah* [worship] and *mu’amalah* [social relationship]. Second, a purification movement, initiated by Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (d.1792) in the Arabian Peninsula and carried to the Indonesian archipelago in the late eighteenth century, banned Sufi practices on the grounds of purifying Islam from elements of local culture. Third, the *pesantren* were influenced by the appearance of the *Naqshbandiyah* order, which gave greater emphasis to *fiqh* or *shari’ah* [Islamic law] as an essential basis for Sufi purification. Fourth, reputable traditional Muslim scholars, such as Imam Nawawi al-Bantani (d.1897), Syaikh Achmad Khatib (d.1915), Kyai Mahfuż Termas (d.1919), and Kyai Kholil Bangkalan (d.1923), returned from their studies in Mekkah and established *pesantren* that emphasised studying *fiqh* and *shari’ah*.

The return of some younger clerics from the Arabian Peninsula at the end of the nineteenth century appears to have had a significant effect on the development of the *pesantren* (Bruinessen, 1995a). After studying for some years, mostly in Mekkah, they acquired a broader range of expertise in Islamic studies, including Qur’an and Hadith studies and legal or *fiqh* studies. The specialisation of *pesantren*, based on the kyai’s expertise, was increasingly apparent and the main attraction for *santri kelana* [wandering students]. Some of these young clerics, such as KH. Cholil of Bangkalan, KH. Hasyim Asy’ari from Pesantren Tebuireng Jombang, KH. M. Moenawwir from Pesantren Krupyak Yogyakarta, became the most prominent figures in the world of the *pesantren* in modern Indonesia. Furthermore, Azra (1994) showed that by the time these young clerics studied in Mekkah, *fiqh* and *shari’ah* had already replaced Sufism in dominance.

This dominance continues today. Although some scholars indicate a revival of Sufism and other forms of spiritual activities (Bruinessen & Howell, 2008; Howell, 2001; Zamhari, 2008), the curriculum of the *pesantren*, as shown in Table 2.3 below, is still dominated by legal or *fiqh* oriented studies. The number of *kitab alat* [books on Arabic grammar] is still higher than the number of books on Sufism studied. *Pesantren*
that strictly follow the curriculum set by MORA, which allocates only 30 per cent of the curriculum to Islamic subjects, or those that run public schools under the Ministry of Education, may have no Sufi books in their curricula except for a few books on *akhlāq* [A. Islamic ethics] for *santri* at a beginner level, such as *al-Akhlāq li al-Banīn/Banāt* by Umar ibn ʿAbd ar-Rahmān ibn Aḥmad Bārajā, *al-Washāyā* by Muḥammad Syākir, and *Taʿlim al-Mutaʿallim* by Imam Zarnuji.

The institutional transformation of *pesantren*, their change in orientation from religious to legal or *fiqh*-oriented, and challenges from reformist or modernist Muslims who established a *madrasah* system in the early twentieth century, have contributed to changes in the learning system within the *pesantren*. A simple type of *pesantren* with its pure traditional methods of *sorogan* and *bandongan* is rarely found in modern Java. Although many *pesantren* still preserve these traditional methods, it seems that both are no longer considered as the main activities. They are only complementary to the *madrasah* system, which is widely incorporated as the main institution in the world of *pesantren*.

**Table 2.3. Distribution of Islamic Subjects in Pesantren**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject of Studies</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aqidah/Theology</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiqh</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasawuf/Sufism</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tafsir/Exegesis</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadith</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tahfidh</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nahwu/Arabic Grammar</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2. Pesantren and the Diversification of Islamic Education

Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia have diversified rapidly. They are not limited only to the pesantren and the madrasah models, but also include public schools at all levels, from elementary to tertiary education. They differ according to their model and, more importantly, their affiliation with Islamic voluntary organisations. Currently, for example, pesantren need not be affiliated only with the Nahdlatul ‘Ulamā, as many still assume. Nearly all Islamic voluntary associations have adopted elements of the pesantren system into their educational institutions. In addition, the pesantren themselves are becoming increasingly different from their traditional image, as a result of their implementation of the madrasah system or even the public school system. Sometimes public schools operate within pesantren and are owned by the members of pesantren. Some people consider this phenomenon a distortion that has blurred the boundaries between various models of Islamic educational institutions, making it necessary to reconsider the general features of Islamic educational institutions.

In order to make it easier to understand recent developments in Islamic educational institutions, we can classify them into three categories: pesantren, madrasah, and sekolah Islam [Islamic school] as shown in table 2.4 below. Pesantren, as already mentioned, can be purely traditional in their learning process, without adopting the madrasah or public school systems. This model of pesantren is commonly known as pesantren salaf or salafiyah [traditional pesantren]. If some of these pesantren have adopted the madrasah system, it is usually limited to madrasah methodology or to its class system, and does not include the madrasah’s general curriculum. This adapted model of madrasah is known as madrasah diniyah [I. religious school]. Recently however, most pesantren have adopted the full madrasah system, including its curriculum as set by MOR, and some are even running public schools, in which they follow the curriculum set by the Ministry of Education. In this case, pesantren and madrasah or public schools become an integrated system. In other words, santri of this model of pesantren have to study in both pesantren and madrasah, or pesantren and public school, in the grounds of the pesantren.
Madrasah is the second type of Islamic educational institution. It differs from the madrasah within the pesantren only in its ownership, and in its process of recruitment of students. Madrasah outside the pesantren are mostly owned by members of the local

Table 2.4. Education System in Indonesia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Age</th>
<th>Year of Schooling</th>
<th>Secular</th>
<th>Level Degree</th>
<th>Islamic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kindergartens</td>
<td></td>
<td>Raudatul Athfal / TK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Madrasah Ibtida’iyah / SD Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Madrasah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>+ SMP (junior high)</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Madrasah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pesantren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Senior High: SMU/general</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Madrasah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aliyah /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>SMK/vocational</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>SMU Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Polytechnics</td>
<td>S0 (diplomas)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Academies</td>
<td>S1 (Bachelor)</td>
<td>Ma’had ‘Aly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Institute</td>
<td></td>
<td>/ Islamic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>University</td>
<td></td>
<td>Institute /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>University/Institute</td>
<td>S2 (Master)</td>
<td>University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>School of HE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>University / Institute</td>
<td>S3 (Tertiary / Doctor)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
community or by the government. They are also open to anyone who wants to join, whereas the madrasah within the pesantren are usually owned by the kyai or his relatives and are specifically designed for the santri of the pesantren.

In general, madrasah, both within and outside of the pesantren, can be divided into two models. The first is the madrasah diniyah [A. religious school], which only offers Islamic knowledge. It is commonly considered as an informal education and mostly run in the afternoon or after the formal school’s activities. In many places, this model of madrasah still uses langgar, local mosques or other separated buildings built around the local mosques. The second model is the formal madrasah, which combines Islamic knowledge and general subjects. Most follow the curriculum set by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This formal madrasah has various levels as in the public school, such as Madrasah Ibtidaiyah for sekolah dasar [I. elementary school], Madrasah Tsanawiyah for sekolah menengah pertama [I. junior high school], Madrasah Aliyah for sekolah menengah umum [I. high school] and recently, Ma’had ‘Aly for pendidikan tinggi [I. higher education]. In general, all variants of the pesantren and madrasah are run under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

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13 Ma’had ‘Aly (in some places called Pesantren Tinggi [Higher Pesantren]), is the highest level of Islamic education within the pesantren. The first Ma’had ‘Aly was founded in Sukorejo, Situbondo, East Java in February 1990. Currently there are no more than 20 Ma’had ‘Aly across the country. Although similar to the level of IAIN (State Institute of Islamic Studies), not all Ma’had ‘Aly offer a diploma for their graduates because they do not want to be dictated to by the Ministry of Religious Affairs in setting their curriculum. (For further information on this issue see Karni, 2009.)
The third type of Islamic educational institution is called *sekolah Islam* [I. Islamic school]. It is a model of public school that is affiliated with and managed by certain Islamic organisations. For example, Muhammadiyah runs educational institutions at all levels of formal education, from *sekolah dasar* to university. Nearly all of these are named using the name of the organisation, such as Sekolah Dasar Muhammadiyah or Universitas Muhammadiyah. Similarly, the Nahdlatul ‘Ulamā also has this model of school under the name of Yayasan Ma’arif, an educational foundation of the NU. They also operate schools from *sekolah dasar* to university but not as many as Muhammadiyah. Another interesting example has appeared recently under the name *sekolah Islam terpadu* [I. integrated Islamic school], which offers a full day school model and adds more subjects on Islamic knowledge while still following the formal curriculum set by the Ministry of Education. This *sekolah Islam terpadu* has been pioneered by the PKS (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* [Prosperous Justice Party]), activists and members of other *Tarbiyah* movements that flourished rapidly, especially after the collapse of the New Order regime.

The emergence of *sekolah Islam terpadu* in the last decade has created a more competitive atmosphere in the recruitment of potential students for *pesantren* and other established Islamic educational institutions. Although most *sekolah Islam terpadu* are

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**Table 2.5. Percentage of the Formal Madrasah Based on Ownership**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Negeri/State</th>
<th>Swasta/Private</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madrasah Ibtida'iyah</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>92.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madrasah Tsanawiyah/Junior High</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>90.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madrasah Aliyah/High School</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>88.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

centred in urban areas, there is an indication that they have recently started to reach people in the rural areas, where many pesantren and madrasah are located, especially through establishing preschool education known as taman kanak-kanak Islam terpadu [integrated Islamic kindergarten], shortened to TKIT. This challenge has put pesantren into a problematic situation, especially when they come to set their curriculum. On one hand, they have to maintain their characteristics as pesantren institutions, which require more subjects on Islamic knowledge. On the other hand, they need to adopt many general subjects to fit with the government rules and the demand from society.

In response to this challenge, most pesantren decided to adopt the madrasah system, with 70 per cent general subjects and 30 per cent religious subjects, as recommended by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Some modify the percentage of Islamic subjects taught, offering 60 per cent general subjects and 40 per cent Islamic subjects (Kholiq, et al., 2002). However, some pesantren have decided to set their curriculum without considering the recommendation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and with no concern for the status of their pesantren in the eyes of the government. One example of this is the Ma’had ‘Aly (higher education in pesantren) of al-Munawwir, which is quite popular. Although the level of education in this Ma’had ‘Aly is equal to a bachelor degree at college or university, it does not offer a diploma because the mundir [rector] does not want intervention from the Ministry of Religious Affairs in its curriculum (Karni, 2009).

This situation shows that traditional pesantren not only still exist across Java but have also found their own innovative ways of responding to social changes and the modernisation process. By adopting and modifying the modern education system, traditional pesantren continue to play a significant role in educating people, especially in the remote areas where the government has failed to provide free or cheap education. As indicated in Table 2.4, the government still owned only 10 per cent of the total madrasah in 2011. Most madrasah are owned and run by pesantren, which shows, importantly, that traditional pesantren are able to adapt to modernity without losing their traditional values and identity.
2.3. The Current Features of Traditional Pesantren

Current development of traditional pesantren indicates that more elements are being included within the learning process. New features, such as rooms for study and vocational training seem to have been added to the five basic elements of the pesantren, as listed by Dhofier (1999): pondok, mosque, santri, teaching of kitab kuning [classical Islamic texts], and kyai. As a popular Islamic educational institution, pesantren have attracted many people, not only from surrounding villages but also from distant areas, to reside and study. Pondok have been built around the mosque to provide accommodation for these students. According to Dhofier, the pondok is “a special feature of the pesantren tradition that distinguishes it from mosque education in most other areas of the Islamic world” (1999, p. 26). All the students of pesantren are required to live in the pondok and had to be willing to share with other students. They are assigned by the pesantren board to a particular room just to keep their belongings in. Santri have to share a small room with others and there are no special privileges (or private rooms) for those who come from wealthy families. The reason for this rule is to maintain togetherness and equality among the students and to make it easier for the kyai, the owner of the pesantren as well as the teacher, to control the students.

The second element, the langgar or the mosque, is considered inseparable from traditional pesantren and is commonly seen as the most appropriate place for training the students, especially for practising daily religious obligations, such as conducting five times daily prayer and reading the Qur’an. The use of the mosque as the centre of the learning process was adopted from the tradition of the prophet Muhammad, who built the first mosque as a place for Islamic teaching as well as for practising daily prayers (Asrohah, 2004; Nigosian, 2004). Most Javanese people believe that the mosque is the most important building in their village, and similarly, the members of a traditional pesantren consider the mosque as the most influential building in the pesantren. A crowd of santri in the mosque during their daily activities is a source of pride to the pesantren community. Pengajian that are held in the mosque of the pesantren are often attended by more people than those in the house of the kyai or in other buildings. The audience is not only limited to the santri, but also includes people who live around the pesantren. The mosque is, in fact, the most accessible building in the pesantren for the
public, and becomes the most favorable place for the kyai to maintain his relationship with people around the pesantren.

The third element of traditional pesantren is the teaching of classical Islamic texts. According to Dhoefier (1999) and Bruinessen (1995a), classical Islamic texts can be divided into eight groups: (1) nahwu [syntax] and sarf [morphology];\(^{14}\) (2) fiqh [Islamic jurisprudence]; (3) ushul fiqh [principles of Islamic jurisprudence]; (4) hadith [tradition of the prophet]; (5) tafsir [exegesis of the Qur’an]; (6) tauhid [Islamic theology]; (7) tassawuf [Islamic mysticism and ethics]; and (8) miscellaneous texts on tarikh [history of Islam] and balaghah [rhetoric]. Basically, all students of pesantren are required to study this kind of Islamic knowledge, especially ilmu alat from brief classical texts under a hundred pages to the most sophisticated ones, which can contain more than a thousand pages. Santri at a beginner level will study more books on Arabic grammar than other subjects. When they have the necessary knowledge of Arabic, they can start attending pengajian in any subjects they want, because the reader or translator of the higher level of texts, usually the kyai or senior students, does not simply read the texts but, rather, gives his own interpretation of it. Readers or students without the necessary knowledge of Arabic grammar would have difficulty following the pengajian.

The fourth element of the pesantren is the santri or student, whose importance is evident in the name itself. According to Mas’ud (2006), the word ‘pesantren’ stems from ‘santri’ which means ‘one who seeks Islamic knowledge.’ Other scholars indicate that the word ‘santri’ derived from the Tamil or Indian word ‘shastri,’ meaning ‘learned person’ (Bruinessen, 1995a; Dhoefier, 1999). ‘Pesantren’ thus refers to a place where the santri devotes most of his or her time, living and acquiring knowledge. Santri are commonly distinguished by seniority, based on the assumption that the more senior the santri, the more expert he or she will be in religious knowledge.

There are three common reasons for santri to leave their villages and live in pesantren: (1) they want to pursue advanced training that is not available in a pesantren closer to home; (2) they want to have training in a very well known pesantren; or (3) they want to concentrate on their study in the pesantren without being interrupted by their obligation to family or relatives (Dhoefier 1999). However, there is another reason

\(^{14}\) Both are sometimes called ilmu alat, or knowledge of Arabic grammar in mastering other Arabic texts.
that needs to be emphasised here, regarding the commercialisation of the modern education system within the last two decades. Some parents choose a traditional pesantren for their children simply for the flexibility to follow other formal education outside the pesantren and, more importantly, for its cheap fees. Machasin (2010), for example, shows that many students at UIN (Islamic State University) Kalijaga, Gadjah Mada University, and UNY (State University of Yogyakarta), choose to stay at pesantren around Yogyakarta, including Pesantren al-Munawwir, because they provide cheap accommodation and offer free Islamic teaching.

The final and most essential element of the pesantren is the kyai. He is its founder as well as its most important teacher, and its growth is directly dependent on his personal integrity (Dhofier, 1999; Horikoshi, 1987; Yasmadi, 2002). The special title ‘kyai’ is usually given by the community to a Muslim scholar who has a pesantren and teaches kitab kuning to his students, along with another title, ‘Haji,’ given to those who made a pilgrimage to Mekkah. These titles are shortened to KH and written in front of the kyai’s name. There is an assumption among traditional Muslims that the pesantren is similar to a small kingdom (Sulistyo, 1986), in which the kyai has absolute power and authority. His authority can not be challenged by santri or other members of the pesantren, only by another, greater kyai (Sukamto, 1999). Usually, the greater kyai are those who have larger numbers of santri in their pesantren, so the more santri they have, the higher their influence and social status.

The influence of the kyai is not limited to religious matters, but also includes most aspects in daily life, ranging from politics to personal matters such as match making or choosing a baby’s name. In political life, for example, the kyai have played a significant role in shaping the political preference of their followers. In many elections at local and national levels, they are still considered as a determining factor in directing the preference of voters, though this trend is decreasing, especially among urban voters (Suprayogo, 2007; Turmudi, 2006).

Besides these basic elements, there are some other characteristics of traditional pesantren that differ from other educational institutions. Mukti Ali (1987) explains that the pesantren has at least the following characteristics: (1) there is a close relationship between santri and kyai because they live in the same place; (2) santri show obedience
toward their *kyai*; (3) a modest or simple life is pursued in their everyday lives; (4) a spirit of giving mutual aid among the *santri* is stressed so as to create a strong brotherhood in the *pesantren*; (5) discipline is an important characteristic in *pesantren* life; (6) a willingness to make sacrifices for gaining certain aims is apparent; (7) a rightly guided religious life can be gained by *santri* in *pesantren*. These characteristics indicate that there is a unique emphasis when we talk about *pesantren* as a subculture (Rahardjo & Wahid, 1974) created by the centrality of the *pesantren* in the traditionalists’ social and religious lives, and we can speak of a *pesantren*’s society.

Furthermore, Ali explains that there are three basic elements of *pesantren* that should be noted regarding its function as a subculture: (1) an autonomous pattern of leadership, which is free from state intervention; (2) yellow books, or *kitab kuning*, that have been used for centuries; and (3) a value system used in a *pesantren* that is part of the value system of society, though in some cases, there is a significant difference between the *pesantren* values and the values of communities surrounding the *pesantren* (Rahardjo & Wahid, 1974). The *kyai* will not be successful in preserving the traditional values of a *pesantren*, and at the same time adopting some new modern values from outside the *pesantren* (including those coming from the government’s policies), without his obvious influence in leading his *pesantren*, both as its owner and main teacher.

The leadership of *kyai* in *pesantren* today is unique because it is based on a pre-modern system of leadership. Social relations between *santri* and *kyai* are based on trust, understood by the *kyai*, and a hope, on the part of the *santri*, of gaining *barākah* [blessing] from the *kyai* according to Sufi understanding. Although, as pointed out by Sukamto (1999), recent developments indicate that some external factors, such as modern education systems and profit oriented economics, have reshaped their relationship with *pesantren* of the more general model, among the *santri* the concept of *barākah* is still dominant and distinctive. This relationship model has its basis in the value system of the *pesantren*, which, as they see it, is mostly prescribed in the Qur’an, the Hadith, and the *kitab kuning*, based on the canonical texts.

2.4. The Value System of Traditional Pesantren

As would be expected, the value system developed in the *pesantren*, like other Islamic institutions, is rooted in Islamic teachings, especially those according to Sunnis,
also known as *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah* [A. followers of the prophet’s tradition and the consensus of the ‘ulamā], usually shortened to Aswaja (Madjid, 1997). The basic teachings of Aswaja rely on three important thinkers. In matters of theology, Aswaja relies on the teachings of Abu Hasan al-Asy’ary (d. 935) and Abu Mansur al-Maturidy (d. 944). In jurisprudence, it follows one of the *madhāhib al-arbaʿah*, or four schools, namely Hanafi (d. 765), Maliki (d. 796), Syafi’i (d. 820) or Hambali (d. 844). In the area of *tasawuf* [Sufism] it practises the teachings of Junaidi al-Baghdadi (d. 910) and al-Ghazali (d. 1111) (Huda, El-Mawa & Basyir, 2006; N. U. (Organisation), 2007).

Aswaja, with its distinctive teachings, can be seen as an alternative school within Islam that has tried to reconcile opposing tendencies in Islam: the belief in *jabariyah* [predestination] and the belief in *qadariyah* [free will].

In reconciling these orientations Aswaja uses, equally, *dalil naqly* [arguments based only on the Qur’an and the tradition of the prophet] and *dalil aqly* [arguments based only on rational consideration] in understanding the teachings of Islam. Beyond these methodological and theological differences, the main difference between this school and other Sunni schools in Indonesia, such as Muhammadiyah and Persis, is in its use the *kitab kuning*. The use of *kitab kuning* in *pesantren* is considered by modernist or reformist Muslims to cause backwardness in Muslim society, since it blocks, or at least hinders, the creative ability of Muslims to re-interpret and contextualise Islamic doctrine within the changing society. They believe the culture of *taqlid* [blindly follow] to the *kyai* or the leaders of certain *madhhab* [legal school], as widely practised within the *pesantren* world, should be changed.

Muhammadiyah and other Islamic modernist groups therefore use only the Qur’an and the Hadith in their religious orientation. Aswaja strictly uses the *kitab kuning* along with the Qur’an and the Hadith, giving as their main reason for this their belief in the Hadith, which states that the best period for Muslims was the time of the Prophet, which was the period of the *shahābah* [companions], followed by the time of *tabiʿin* [followers of *shahābah*], then the time of *tabiʿut tabiʿin* [followers of the *tabiʿin*] up to the recent time (Bakar, 1995). According to Aswaja, since most works of *shahābah*, *tabiʿin*, and

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15 For further information on these two opposing schools, *Jabariyah* and *Qadariyah* see Gibb (1983) and Watt (1973).
tabi’ut tabi’in are included in the *kitab kuning*, it is necessary for Muslims to use them for guidance in understanding Islamic teachings (Abdusshomad, 2008; Zahro, 2004).

Therefore, most members of the *pesantren* community use the *kitab kuning* as their main references in any decision making processes when they face religious problems (Bruinessen, 1995a; Mastuhu, 1994), and also new problems such as banking, family planning, and cloning. These kinds of recent issues are discussed by certain ‘ulamā or Islamic scholars in special events called ‘bahtsul massail’ [discussion of problems] (Zahro, 2004). In facing new problems they usually try to find similarities with the old problems from the *kitab kuning*, using analogies and comparing the essentials of the new problem to those of problems discussed there.

An interesting example of this process concerns the ethical problem of test-tube babies. In this case, most kyai based their argument on the explanation in the *kitab kuning* of the important status of marriage and *nasab* [descent], and also considered health reasons, such as being unable to have a baby in the normal way. They came to the conclusion that test-tube babies are allowed as long as the ovum and the sperm come from a married couple, because this will guarantee the status of the baby, from the Islamic perspective, as a lineal descendant and heir (Mahfudh, 1999). Otherwise, from the point of view of traditional Islam in Indonesia, test-tube babies are prohibited.

Traditional Muslims’ reliance on the *kitab kuning* is limited to the works of those who come from the same school. In fact, within the *pesantren* world, the *kitab kuning* that have become the main references, especially in the area of *fiqh* [Islamic jurisprudence], are the Syafi’i works (Bruinessen, 1995a; Mastuhu, 1994). By strictly following the doctrines of the Syafi’i school of law, ‘ulamā or kyai tend to limit the study of works from other schools in the curricula of their *pesantren*. Modernist Muslims, who vowed not to follow the classic *madhāhib al-arba’ah* (the four imams of the legal schools), and the Wahabis, who have an idiosyncratic pre-modern construction of *fiqh* (and tried to destroy the tombs around *Ka’bah* in 1924 (Mastuhu 1984; Zaini 1994; and Dhofier 1999), including the tomb of the prophet in Madinah), have become targets of condemnation by people of the *pesantren* world. This hatred can be seen clearly during lessons at the *pesantren*, where a most popular phrase is ‘laknatullah
alaih’ [may God curse them]. This phrase is usually read loudly by the santri every time the word ‘Wahabi’ is mentioned (Dhofier 1999).

Within the pesantren tradition, the culture of taqlid, or following the ‘ulamā unquestioningly, is rooted in the basic value system of pesantren. Although a basic principle of pesantren is ‘al-muhāfadzah alā al-qadim al-shālih wa al-akhdu bi al-jadīd al-ashlah’ [preserving the good in tradition and taking the better of new things], within the pesantren’s value system only the first step, preserving the good traditions, functions well. This principle clearly indicates the possibility of accommodating new things, but in practice, it is hard for the pesantren’s community to accept something new, especially if it will change or replace their traditions. Above all, preserving the good in tradition is the main value within the pesantren.

However, as pesantren have started to open up in response to modernity, their value system is now strongly affected by other things. The implementation of the madrasah system, following the national curriculum, has seriously impacted on pesantren life. Teachers from outside the pesantren, who have come in to teach general subjects in the madrasah, have become new competitors to the kyai and implicitly challenge his authority. To some extent, general subjects taught in pesantren also change social relationships within the pesantren’s tradition. Santri no longer view their kyai as the only source of knowledge or see religious knowledge as the only knowledge of value. As a result, the level of obedience toward kyai in many places has decreased. In considering these kinds of changes, it is important to assess the ability of the pesantren to maintain the characteristics of traditional life. We also need to see how pesantren now actually do or do not differ from other educational institutions, including in the way they perceive their kyai.

2.5. Conclusion

There is no single opinion among scholars about the origin of the pesantren. Some claim that it was originally adopted from an existing religious educational institution, particularly a Hindu-Buddhist type of temple or monastery. Others assert that the pesantren is influenced by Islamic educational institutions that developed in countries in the Middle East, such as riwaq in Egypt and madrasah in Baghdad. Apart from this aspect of the debate, the pesantren in the early period of Islam in Java differs from our
current understanding of the *pesantren*, in its full sense as an Islamic educational institution.

The *pesantren* began with the building called ‘*langgar,*’ which was seen merely as a place for learning the Islamic knowledge necessary to conduct religious obligations, or as a centre for practising the Sufi teachings that dominated the early period of Islam in Java. To accommodate the needs of an increasing number of people, especially those who came from remote areas to participate in Islamic lessons, some simple buildings called *pondok* [hut] were built around the *langgar*. These *pondok* and *langgar*, along with the house of the *kyai*, were then called ‘*pesantren.*’ No exact curriculum was imposed except for a few books used in this initial stage, at least until the introduction of the *madrasah* system into *pesantren* in the early twentieth century. Since then, the *pesantren* has been considered an Islamic educational system as we see it now across Java. Some *kyai* have even run public schools within their *pesantren*. This phenomenon has contributed, to some extent, to blurring the boundaries between supposedly different Islamic educational systems.

Another form of transformation within *pesantren* occurred in the nineteenth century when the religious orientation of Islam changed from Sufi to *fiqh* or *shari’ah*. The practice of Sufism within the daily life of the *pesantren* has significantly decreased under the dominance of *fiqh* in the curriculum, except in some *tarekat pesantren*. This change, along with the establishment of *madrasah* in *pesantren*, has implicitly challenged the authority of the *kyai*. Teachers from outside the *pesantren*, who have come to teach general subjects in the *madrasah*, are able to attract *santri* by providing different perspectives for seeing and interpreting religious doctrines, an area of study previously monopolised by the *kyai*.

Beside these internal transformations, the rise of transnational Tarbiyah and Salafi movements has changed the ‘traditional’ image of Islam in Indonesia, which was dominated by Muhammadiyah and NU. The Tarbiyah movement has established *sekolah Islam terpadu* [integrated Islamic school], which directly challenge the established *madrasah* system. Meanwhile, the Salafi movement has built dozens of *pesantren* across the country with their own value system that, in most cases, opposes the value system of established *pesantren* under the NU. These phenomena have contributed to the rapid
diversification of Islamic educational institutions, and, more importantly, have challenged the existence of traditional pesantren, not only in their recruitment of new santri, but also in their leadership.
Chapter Three

Transmitting Charismatic Power

In the previous chapter, it was demonstrated that the pesantren that we see across Java today differ in some ways from the early pesantren established by the Walisongo. Although some current pesantren claim to have been established in the eighteenth century (such as Pesantren Sidogiri in Pasuruan, East Java (1718), Pesantren Jamsaren, Solo (1750), and Pesantren Buntet, Cirebon, West Java (1785)), the lack of evidence that these institutions functioned in their early history as pesantren do now has led scholars to argue that pesantren did not appear, in the full sense of an Islamic educational institution, until the nineteenth century (Bruinessen, 1995a). The kyai is seen as the central figure of the pesantren, and so institutional transformation influences his role, especially in relation to the issue of transmitting supernatural power to the santri.

Different models of kyai, I argue, have distinct policies on this transmission of supernatural power, at least on implementing rules and requirements for santri to acquire it. This chapter discusses various models of kyai, according to their expertise and roles within the pesantren and surrounding communities. First, I will address this variation in relation to institutional transformation from langgar to pesantren, as well as the shift in religious orientation from Sufism to fiqh or shari‘ah. Then, I will describe the charisma of the kyai as reflected through two important concepts within the traditional Javanese Muslim community: barākah and karāmah. Finally I will emphasis my description of the sources of charisma and three popular ways to obtain the charismatic quality within the pesantren community.

3.1. Kyai in Modern Java

The Kyai in modern Java has to face more sophisticated social problems than those of the past. As an independent figure, the kyai is expected by his followers to provide an appropriate response to social changes. Various ways of responding to modernisation have emerged as a result of differing ways of seeing modernity and of interpreting the Islamic doctrines, which have been institutionalised, in the tradition of the pesantren,
through the use of *kitab kuning*. According to Rahardja, as quoted by Anwar (1995), three types of response are shown by *kyai* to the issue of accepting or rejecting modernity: apologetic, resistant, and creative. *Kyai* demonstrating the first type, apologetic, accept and adopt modern values and see this as necessary to meet the demands of society. Some of these *kyai* have incorporated modern values and systems into their *pesantren*, especially in education. *Kyai* who show resistance, the second type, see the modernisation process as similar to the westernisation and secularisation of society. A good example of this type can be seen in *pesantren* that are isolated from the outside world, and in which the use of any means of communication, such as radio, television, or mobile phone, is prohibited. The third response, creative, comes from those who believe that Islamic doctrines can be re-interpreted to provide an astute and creative response to the modernisation process.

Studies on the role of *kyai*, especially after the fall of the Suharto regime in 1998, have focused on politics. The works of Suprayogo (1998), Warsono (2003), and Turmudi (2006), for example, clearly portrayed the involvement of *kyai* in political parties. Some new terms for classifying different types of *kyai* have emerged from these studies. Suprayogo (1998), for example, divided *kyai* into four types, based on how they respond to problems of politics, the economy, society, and education. The first is *kyai spiritual* [spiritual *kyai*] referring to those who focus only on teaching at their *pesantren*. The second is *kyai advokasi* [advocacy *kyai*], who teach at *pesantren*, but are involved at the same time in the development of the community around their *pesantren*. The third is *kyai politik adaptif* [adaptive politician *kyai*], including those who are involved in political parties that support the government. The fourth is *kyai politik mitra kritis* [critical partner politician *kyai*] who are actively involved in political parties that oppose the government.

Using similar typology, Turmudi (2006) has categorised *kyai* into four types based on politics and the cultural dimension of the relationship between *kyai* and *santri*: *kyai pesantren, kyai tarekat, kyai politik*, and *kyai panggung*. The last type, *kyai panggung* [on stage *kyai*], refers to those who continually move from one place to another to give *pengajian* [Islamic speeches] on various occasions. The third type, *kyai politik*, is similar to *kyai panggung*, but is broader in meaning, and includes *kyai* who are involved in
political parties. I will further discuss the first two terms, kyai pesantren and kyai tarekat, but in relation to the transformation of the pesantren institution. First, I will contrast kyai pesantren with kyai langgar, based on the institution led by the kyai. Then I will discuss the contrast of kyai tarekat and kyai shari’ah.

3.1.1. Kyai Langgar and Kyai Pesantren

Since the title ‘kyai’ is given by the community, there is no way to earn it except through making a real contribution to developing Islam in that community. Although there is no adequate evidence explaining when the terms ‘langgar’ and ‘pesantren’ were attached to the title ‘kyai,’ it seems that this distinction coincided with the transformation from langgar to pesantren. Since not all langgar were transformed into pesantren, traditional Muslim communities, especially in Central and East Java, distinguish between kyai in two categories, kyai langgar and kyai pesantren. According to Dirdjosanjoto (1999), there are some characteristics which contrast kyai langgar and kyai pesantren, particularly in regard to their authority.¹⁶ Most kyai langgar, especially those who have no genealogical relationship with previous or contemporary kyai, need to prove their ability in mastering Islamic knowledge through giving a pengajian or leading a daily prayer at the langgar. Sometimes it takes years of dedication to gain recognition from the community.

In contrast, for kyai pesantren the process of becoming a kyai is relatively simple, except for those who have just started to build a new pesantren and have no blood relationships with other kyai. The son of the kyai pesantren shares the privileges of his father. Before becoming a kyai he has already been awarded the special title ‘gus,’ which stands for ‘si bagus’ [the handsome] and has been treated differently by the surrounding traditional Muslim communities. Even when a gus breaks the law, most traditional Muslims will be willing to forgive him. During his study at the pesantren, the gus should also be treated differently from ordinary santri. Sometimes he is given exclusive knowledge taught only to a limited number of santri. Thus he may be given a special ijazah [permission] to acquire certain exceptional abilities, like invulnerability or

¹⁶ Actually, Dirdjosanjoto distinguished kyai into three categories: kyai langgar, kyai pesantren, and kyai tarekat [Sufi order]. However, in this thesis, the last category will be discussed in opposition with kyai shari’ah. In fact, many kyai langgar and kyai pesantren are also well known as kyai tarekat, such as the late Kyai Abbas of Buntet, KH. Ahmad Shohibulwafa Tajul Arifin also known as Abah Anom of Pesantren Suryalaya, and KH. Ahmad Asrori al-Ishaqi of Pesantren al-Fitrah Surabaya.
methods of curing, through strict *riyādah* [religious exercises]. When he finishes his studies and returns to his father’s *pesantren* or builds his own, he will automatically be called *kyai*, without having to wait for the community to bestow the title, as a *kyai langgar* must do.

Regarding the influence of *kyai langgar* and *kyai pesantren* in their communities, Dirdjosanjoto (1999) found that the authority of *kyai langgar* is limited to local people around the langgar except for those *kyai langgar* who are also *kyai tarekat* and belong to a Sufi order. *Kyai tarekat* usually have followers not only among local people but also among people from surrounding districts. This is related to the fact that in certain cities or regions there are only one or two *mursyid* [leader of *tarekat*] with authority to accept new members.

The influence of *kyai pesantren* is different. Through extensive networks of kinship and other relationships, it can reach to national level. Over generations, the practice among the *pesantren kyai* of endogamous marriage (Dhofier, 1980) has created wide networks of older and newer *pesantren*, all linked by descent and ties of marriage, giving them greater influence than *kyai langgar*. Moreover, the alumni of *pesantren*, who come from many different places across the country, also contribute to spreading the influence of their *kyai pesantren*.

Although there are characteristics which distinguish *kyai langgar* from *kyai pesantren*, both have similar qualities—their highly respected knowledge and the supernatural abilities deriving from the closeness to God that their knowledge gives them. Both *kyai langgar* and *kyai pesantren* (especially those who are also known as *kyai tarekat*), are believed to have *karāmah* [supernatural powers]. Most are acknowledged not only as *kyai*, in the sense of teaching Islam to others, but are also believed to have special abilities (such as healing the sick, making people invulnerable to weapons, or even curing the insane) which are the result of their close relationship with God achieved through their consistency in doing *riyādah*.

3.1.2. *Kyai Tarekat* and *Kyai Shari’ah*

In the first half of the twentieth century, the growing dominance of *fiqh* studies caused a significant change in the orientation of the *pesantren*. Although Sufism was still studied in most *pesantren*, its intensity was greatly reduced. Furthermore, the
pesantren as an institution seemed to become divided into two distinct types. First, pesantren officially affiliated with certain tarekat came to be known as ‘pesantren tarekat.’ Examples are Pesantren Darul Ulum and Ploso in Jombang, Pesantren Sawapulo and al-Fitrah in Surabaya, Pesantren Mranggen in Demak, Pesantren Suryalaya in Tasikmalaya, Pesantren al-Falah in Bogor and Pesantren Buntet in Cirebon. Second, pesantren not affiliated with any tarekat, and which usually emphasised the teaching of shari’ah or fiqh, came to be known as ‘pesantren shari’ah.’ Examples include Pesantren Langitan in Tuban, Pesantren Tebuireng in Jombang, Pesantren Blok Agung in Banyuwangi, Pesantren Kajen in Pati and Pesantren Krapyak in Yogyakarta (Bruinessen, 1995; Dhofier, 1999; Zamhari, 2010; Zulkifli, 2003). Just as the pesantren have diverged into two types, so have their leaders, the kyai. Thus people speak today of kyai tarekat and kyai shari’ah.

Tension between pesantren tarekat and pesantren shari’iah is not uncommon in the recent historical development of pesantren. Pesantren Tebuireng, for example, is a prominent example of pesantren shari’iah. Syaikh Hasyim As’ary, the founder of this pesantren and of the NU, banned the practices of the tarekat at his pesantren (Pringle, 2010). However, this did not mean that this pesantren was against Sufism. Indeed, at Pesantren Tebuireng, as in other non-tarekat pesantren, books of Sufism, especially the magnum opus of al-Ghazali, the ‘Ihya’ Ulumuddin,’ are still being studied, though with less ardour (Dhofier, 1999; Qomar, 2005). It seems that the figure of Imam al-Ghazali, who was a master of Sufism but did not belong to any tarekat, became a role model for some kyai not directly affiliated with any established tarekat.

Syaikh Hasyim’s prohibition of Sufi practices at his pesantren resulted from careful assessment by the kyai shari’ah of Sufi teachings and their judgment that some Sufi concepts could lead to dangerous syirik [I. polytheistic] ideas and practices (Pringle, 2010). It was also based on the fact that most santri involved in tarekat at that time only wanted to obtain kesaktian [supernatural powers]. They believed that some wirid or hizb when properly practised under the guidance of the kyai tarekat, also known as mursyid, who was an expert in practices that attracted God’s ‘blessing’, could help

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17 Wirid is similar to dzikr but it is done in a more routine and intense way, while hizb is a combination of do’a [prayer] and dzikr. Among the muktabarah tarekat, the Sadziliyah order is known for its variety of hizb (Mulyati, 2004). (For a study of Sufism as a means to obtain supernatural power, see Arifin, 1993.)
students gain such powers also. So, we might well understand Syaikh Hasyim’s prohibition as arising from his concerns about the possible misuse of Sufi teachings by santri.

In pesantren tarekat, unlike in pesantren shari’ah, Sufi teachings, including various kinds of fasting, wirid, and dzikr, have become part of the core curriculum. In Pesantren Tegal Rejo in Magelang, founded by KH. Chudlori, for example, all students are advised to practise certain riyādah, mostly in the form of fasting, such as ngrowot, mutih, dahr, or ndawud, along with studying some books of Sufism, such as ‘Ihya’ of Imam al-Ghazali and ‘al-Hikam’ of Ibn ‘Atho’illah.

The tension between kyai tarekat and kyai shari’ah has also resulted in unflattering stories about kyai tarekat, with their exceptional abilities, becoming khawāriq al-‘ādah [strange] and even jadhab [ecstatic]. Stories of jadhab kyai have been very popular among traditional Muslims across Java since the early period of Islam. From the time of the Nine Saints and the figure of Syaikh Siti Jenar (Mulkhan, 1999; Wahyudi, 2006), to the modern era, stories have been told about eccentric kyai such as KH. Chamim Jazuli (Gus Mik), KH. Muslim Rifa’i Imam Puro (Mbah Lim), and even KH. Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), who eventually became the president of the republic. Most jadhab kyai are believed to have been endowed with special karāmah by God. Although these stories usually become more popular after the death of the kyai, some of those kyai are considered as living saints (Amin, 2008; Zamhari, 2010).

The following famous story about KH. Kholil of Bangkalan as jadhab kyai, for instance, has been told in various media, including in Tempo magazine, one of the most popular magazines in Indonesia.

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18 Stories about the karāmah [I. supernatural power or miracle] possessed by some great Sufis are not uncommon within the pesantren tradition and other traditional Muslim communities. (See: Amin, 2008; Johns, 1961; Kartodirdjo, 1966; Mulyati, 2004.)

19 Ngrowot is a form of fasting to avoid any foods except from trees, such as cassava, potato, and corn.

20 Mutih is a form of fasting eating only rice and salt to break the fast.

21 Dahr is a fasting for the whole year, except for a few days when fasting is prohibited.

22 Ndawud is fasting on every other day, as used to be practised by the Prophet Daud (David).

23 The word ‘jadhab’ is falsely considered as similar to the word ‘majnun.’ The first term is commonly used to refer to one stage of Sufism, where someone loses his or her everyday awareness because of their deep feeling of love for God, while the second term is commonly used to refer to someone who has a mental disorder. The phenomenon of jadhab can be found in a popular book of Sufism, al-Hikam, written by Syaikh Ahmad ibn ‘Atho’illah al-Askandari.
He was once leading the Friday prayer when he suddenly went outside through a special door for the prayer leader (imam) and began feeding his chickens. The whole community was thrown into confusion. When he saw the students were in disarray, he returned and beat them, saying, “Didn’t we teach you to replace the imam whose prayer is invalid? Don’t you know that the one in the front row should move forward in case this happens? I have an obligation to feed the chickens. If the chickens die because of hunger, I would be guilty. After I feed my chickens, I shall return and pray in the congregation.” The students then understood the actions of their eccentric teacher. They realised that in *fiqh*, the teacher’s attitude is always correct. (Tempo Magazine, 5 June 2000)

Besides being *jadhab*, KH. Kholil was also believed to have much *karāmah*. One of his famous powers was shown when he was captured by the Dutch. Suddenly, when he was brought to the jail, none of the doors could be closed properly. The Dutch officials were kept busy guarding the inmates day and night. During the next few days, hundreds of people came from across Madura and East Java to give *Kyai* Kholil food, and many of them insisted on staying with the *kyai* in jail. These astonishing events caused the Dutch to release him (Amin, 2008; Rachman, 1999).

Another popular figure famous for being *jadhab* and having special *karāmah* is KH. Chamim Jazuli, better known as *Gus* Mik, son of the founder of a famous traditional pesantren of Lirboyo, in Kediri, East Java. He was known for his peculiar calling to preach in night clubs. He used to preach from one night club to another and frequently spent his nights in a pub at Elmi Hotel in Surabaya. He was seen many times drinking *bir hitam* [black beer]24 at pubs and bars. Some ‘*ulamā* even started calling him ‘*kyai bar*’ and ‘*kyai beer*’ to censure his misbehavior (Zamhari, 2010). Zamhari collected the stories about the *karāmah* of *Gus* Mik, one of which was from his teenage years.

One day his parents asked *Gus* Mik to come and visit the mourning family of *Kyai* Romli, the late leader of Pesantren Darul Ulum and the Qadiriyah wa Naqshabandiyah Sufi group in Jombang. His parents hoped that during this visit, they could ask the *kyai* who attended the burial ritual to pray for their son. *Gus* Mik refused to come with his family to the funeral of *Kyai* Ramli. However, when his parents arrived at *Kyai* Romli’s, they found that *Gus* Mik had already arrived and was sitting at the side of *Kyai* Romli’s corpse. (Zamhari, 2010)

Another source even said that *Gus* Mik had accompanied *Kyai* Romli a week before he died (Surawijaya & Maryadi, 1992).

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24 The majority of ‘*ulamā* agreed that drinking anything that caused drunkenness was considered as prohibited [*haram*]. However, Imam Abu Hanifah, one of the four imams in *fiqh*, stated that there is a distinction between *khamr* [wine] and *nabidh* [drink made of other than wine]. Although both cause drunkenness, *khamr* is prohibited because of its essence. In other words, drinking *nabidh*, including beer, is not prohibited if it does not cause someone to be drunk. (See Zamhari 2010, p. 224.)
The many stories of *jadhab kyai* indicate that most of them are considered *tarekat kyai* and are taught to have certain *karāmah*. Their actions, when *jadhab* and breaking *shari‘ah* law, are believed have potential danger for those who have no prior knowledge or understanding of Sufism. However, many *kyai shari‘ah*, though not officially affiliated with a certain *tarekat*, acknowledge the teachings of Sufism, including the phenomenon of *jadhab* exhibited by some *kyai tarekat*. Those who criticise *kyai jadhab* say the *jadhab* phenomenon becomes a problem when ordinary Muslims use it as justification for their wrongdoing. For example, it is possible for ordinary Muslims to drink alcohol or to neglect their five times daily prayer by saying that they follow those *jadhab kyai*. *Kyai shari‘ah* therefore try to remind Muslims not to obey certain *kyai* when they order something opposed to *shari‘ah* law.

Interestingly, though there is tension between *kyai shari‘ah* and *kyai tarekat*, most traditional Muslims, especially the communities of *pesantren*, see the *jadhab kyai* as having a special position in their lives. The ability of some *kyai jadhab* to give barākah through their *do‘a* [prayer], to overcome their followers’ problems, is seen as part of their *karāmah* and a desirable attribute. They are thus believed by their followers to have a special and close relationship with God. The popularity of some *kyai jadhab* can be seen from their success in attracting people to attend their preaching. *Gus Mik*, for example, had succeeded in establishing *Majlis Semaan Al-Qur’an* [Assembly for Listening to the Qur’an Recitation] ‘Mantab’ and *Majlis Dzikr* [Dzikr Group] ‘Dzikrul Ghafilin.’ These two institutions currently have branches in most cities in East and Central Java, with thousands of people attending each event (Zamhari, 2010).

The fact that most *kyai jadhab* are successful in directing traditional Muslims in performing their religious obligations has to some extent softened the tension between *kyai shari‘ah* and *kyai tarekat*, especially within the *pesantren* community. However, this tension is still obvious between the *kyai tarekat* and ‘ulamā shari‘ah’ from other Islamic communities, especially those who come from literalist groups, such as Wahabi, Salafi, and even Islamic modernist groups, who basically oppose all Sufi teachings (Howell, 2010a).

Some scholars, like Surawijaya and Maryadi (1992), have predicted that the charismatic *kyai*, with their *barākah* and *karāmah*, will continue to play a significant
role in colouring the religious expression of traditional Muslims in Indonesia, particularly across Java. This prediction is based on the fact that traditional Muslims believe the qualities of charisma can be transmitted to others, particularly to gus, the sons of the kyai, especially through riyādah, and supported by nasab [blood relationships] and ilmu laduni. I will discuss in detail this transmission process after describing the concepts of barākah and karāmah, which are considered by the people of the pesantren as the main sources of the kyai’s charisma.

3.2. Understanding Barākah and Karāmah among Traditional Muslims in Java

The words ‘barākah’ and ‘karāmah’ are very popular among pesantren communities, and can easily be heard in their daily conversations. The level of barākah and karāmah of certain kyai indicates their religious and social status in the eyes of the members of the pesantren. People also believe that the kyai who has high levels of barākah and karāmah implicitly shows that he has a closer relationship to God compared to other kyai. Understanding these terms helps to clarify the notion of charisma, commonly believed to be a gift from God to those who are able to maintain their close relationship Him. Before looking at how these terms are interpreted in practice by the members of the pesantren, it is necessary to understand their historical development within Islamic communities.

3.2.1. Ngalap Berkah: A Tradition among Indonesian Traditional Muslims

The word ‘barākah’ (spelled by some Javanese Muslims as ‘berkah’) is derived from the Arabic word ‘baraka’ meaning ‘to bless,’ ‘invoke a blessing on’ or ‘to sanction’ (Gilsenan, 2000). Among the pesantren community, it is commonly understood as ‘al-ziyādah wa al-nama’ fi al-khair’ [Lit. addition and development in goodness]. For example, when someone works, he will receive wages. From an Islamic perspective this wage is understood as rahmat or ni’mat [grace]. When we are able to maximise the use of our wages, our wages become barākah. From the term ‘baraka’ comes the word ‘tabarruk,’ which means ‘thalab al-ziyādah al-khair min Allah’ [Lit. seeking further goodness from God]. For traditional Muslims in Java, this becomes an important custom called ‘tabarukan’ or ‘ngalap berkah’ (Junaidi, 2008; Zainuddin, 2004).
Before exploring the tradition of *ngalap berkah*, it is necessary to understand the meaning of the concept of *barākah* within a broader perspective of Islam, and thereby find reasons why this tradition is deeply embedded in the lives and faith of traditional Muslims in Indonesia, especially in modern Java. Colin (2012, n.p), in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, explains that the term *baraka* is understood as “beneficent force, of divine origin, which causes superabundance in the physical sphere and prosperity and happiness in the psychic order.” According to Nasr (1999), as quoted by Ruhimta (2005), *barākah* is the continuity of spiritual presence and revelation that begins with God and flows through that and those closest to God. Therefore, the concept of *barākah* in Islam is not of a state, but of a flow of blessing from God to those closest to Him. As described in the Qur’an, the correct attitude of the recipient becomes a requirement for receiving *barākah* from God: “We would have opened blessing [*barākah*] for them from the heavens and the earth had they only behaved well, but they did not so they suffered the ultimate fate of disobedience and evil” (Qur’an: 7:96).

Moreover, the word ‘*barākah*’ in the Qur’an is only mentioned with reference to God or God’s other names, known by the term ‘*Asmaul Husna*’ [the good names of God]. This asserts that *barākah* belongs solely to God. It comes from God and God gives *barākah* to various things, such as physical objects, places, and people (Howell, 2010b). There is no doubt among Muslims, of course, that *barākah* belongs only to God. However, since there is a clear indication in the Qur’an, Surah al-A’raf, verse 96, that the *barākah* of God will be given based on *iman* [faith] and *taqwa* [piety], those who fulfil both these necessary conditions are considered as mediators for revealing the *barākah* of God. Therefore, the Prophet, *shahābah* [companions], *tabi’in* [followers of the companions], and ‘*ulamā* [Islamic scholars], including *waliullah* [friends of God] and *kyai*, are believed to have the ability to reveal the *barākah* of God.

Within the history of Islam, the concept of *barākah* has become a prominent concept in Sufism. This basic understanding implies that *barākah* can be acquired through various kinds of effort in maintaining the relationship with God, such as through *tazkiyah al-nafs* [purifying heart] and other forms of *riyāḍah* [religious exercise] under the supervision of the Sufi master (Nasr, 1999). In Islam, Sufis are known for their consistency in preserving and maintaining the closeness of their relationship with God.
Some Sufis even claim that the ultimate Sufi goal is to be unified with God, as reflected in the concept of ‘Hulul,’ coined by al-Hallaj (d. 922), and the concept of ‘wahdatul wujud’ [the unity of Being], introduced by Ibn Arabi (d. 1240). This model of Sufism, known as tasawuf falsafi [I. philosophical Sufism] had spread throughout Java, especially before the seventeenth century. Its teachings can be seen through the popular concept of ‘manunggaling kawulo lan Gusti’ [J. unity between human and God], introduced by Syaikh Siti Jenar, and then continued and elaborated by his pupils, for example, Ki Ageng Pengging, Syaikh Amongraga, and Sunan Panggung (Bakhtiar, 2003; Mulkhan, 2001). Although this model of Sufism had been banned by Dewan Wali  [the Assembly of Saints], Sunan Giri, one member of the Walisongo, led the spreading of the teachings which is still apparent across Java (Islam & Luhur, 1975).

As described in the previous chapter, Islam in Indonesia, particularly in Java, has come from various schools and sects, such as Shi’ite, Sunni, and Sufi. Each of these groups has its influence on shaping the leadership model within Javanese Muslim communities. The Shi’ia concept of imamah, combined with the doctrine of the importance of sanad in Sufism and the caliph system from the Sunni’s legacy, were clearly seen in the Islamic sultanates across Java, from Demak and Mataram Islam to the current Surakarta and Yogyakarta Sultanates. Although, to some extent, the concept of the Sultanate was heavily influenced among the Sunni community by the caliph system, the influences of the imamah [leadership] concept and the doctrine of sanad in Sufism are obvious, especially in the way each of the Sultans tried to legitimise his authority. Most Sultans have been reported, in babad and serat, as claiming a relationship, in terms of genealogy or authority, to the Prophet Muhammad, or at least as having a valid authorisation from those who were considered to have these special relationships. The most common attempt to show this relationship is by creating silsilah [genealogy] from the Sultan to the Prophet Muhammad (Ricklefs, 1974, 2006).

As well as from the importance of silsilah, the influence of the imamah concept can be seen from the title used by the Javanese sultan. Most sultans, especially in the Mataram Sultanate, have used the title ‘Sayyidin Panotogomo Khalifatullah’ [religious ruler and God’s representative] as a part of their official title, which clearly indicates that they have also become a religious leader (though the use of such a title is at variance...
with the perception of the majority of Sunnis in the Middle East who tend to consider a caliph as merely a political leader (Watt, 1960). As a result, the sultan is seen by Javanese Muslims as the source of barakah for his people. Anything that has a relationship with the sultan, such as keris [Javanese dagger], kereta Garuda Wisnu Kencana [horse-carrier], or even the Guntur Madu gamelan [Javanese musical instrument], is considered as sacred. People scramble for the water that was used to wash these heirlooms. This practice is analogous to some hadith that described how the companions had to use the water from the Prophet’s ablutions to wash their bodies in order to obtain his barakah (Dhofer, 1999). Other hadith showed that some companions kept the hair of the Prophet for the same reason (Amanullah, 2003).

Like the Sultan, the kyai is considered a charismatic figure, based on the belief among traditional Muslims in Java that he can reveal the barakah of God for the benefit of his people. Since the beginning of Islam in Java, as is told in some babad and serat [Javanese chronicles], its carriers had a special position within the elite of the royal community. Babad Gresik (Graaf, 1970), for example, described the journey of Syaikh Maulana Malik Ibrahim (the oldest wali among the Walisongo) from Campa (modern day Myanmar) to Majapahit, to meet his aunt who had been married to the king of Majapahit. Therefore, it is not surprising that some kyai were known not only for their expertise in Islamic knowledge, but also for their social and economic status, which, according to Rozaki (2004), who conducted research on kyai and blater [thug] in Madura, becomes an important factor in fostering the perception of the kyai as a charismatic figure. A high social and economic status will give him a better chance to give real benefits, in economic terms, to his people. In other words, on the practical level, most traditional Muslims respect the kyai who has high economic status but practises a simple life more than those who have limited economic resources, especially in relation to the implementation of the concept of barakah within the daily activities of his people.

3.2.2. The Karāmah of Kyai

It is common among scholars to interpret ‘miracle’ in Islam using the term ‘mu’jizah.’ They interpret an exceptional power possessed by, or event experienced by wali, kyai or other pious Muslims, using the same term. The word ‘miracle,’ which is
derived from an old Latin term ‘miraculum’ [Lit. something wonderful], is actually similar to the Arabic term ‘khawāriq al-‘ādah,’ [Lit. extraordinary]. In the Islamic perspective, the khawāriq al-‘ādah experienced by the prophet is called ‘mu’jizah,’ but when experienced by wali or other pious Muslims, including kyai, it is called ‘karāmah.’ The concept of khawāriq al-‘ādah can also be experienced by ordinary people or even bad people. These phenomena are called, respectively, ‘ma’unah’ and ‘istidraj.’ In practice, it is perhaps hard to differentiate between these terms. However, Islam emphasises the importance of the person who experienced the miracle. Mu’jizah and karāmah can be similar in form. For example, the well known miracle [mu’jizah] of the Prophet Ibrahim [Abraham] being burnt by the King Namrud is similar to the karāmah of Syaikh Siti Jenar when he was burnt in front of Dewan Wali. However, the mu’jizah is usually followed by the claim of prophecy, while in karāmah there is no such claim (Amanullah, 2003).

Stories of the karāmah of wali or kyai within traditional Muslims communities in Indonesia are quite popular. We can easily find this kind of story in biographical books about the popular kyai, which shows that the life of kyai cannot be separated from supernatural phenomena. I have already mentioned some examples of khawāriq al-‘ādah of kyai in the previous chapter, particularly in discussing the phenomenon of kyai jadhab. However, it is necessary to further discuss the nature of karāmah within the perspective of traditional Muslims, in order to understand why, even in this modern era, karāmah is considered an important aspect in creating the charismatic figure of the kyai.

As with the tradition of ngalap berkah, most traditional Javanese Muslims also consider karāmah as an important feature of the kyai’s charisma. We can say that no kyai is without stories of karāmah, though some of them are limited only to the kyai’s community. The forms of karāmah can be closely related to the ability to do ‘magic,’ extraordinary or ‘irrational’ things, such as walking on the top of water, flying, being invulnerable to weapons, attending several events at the same time, making rain, or performing other deeds related in the stories about the struggle of kyai against Dutch colonialism (Amin, 2008; Buhari, 2007). Although the stories of the kyai’s karāmah are spread merely through the oral tradition, they have a special position in the hearts of traditional Javanese Muslims, especially those with a pesantren background.
It is evident that most stories of a kyai’s karāmah become popular after his death, spread orally or written by his pupils. This phenomenon is implicit in the nature of karāmah, which tends to be hidden by those who possess it, as a requirement of their sālik [journey] to God (Amin, 2008), thus eliminating negative attitudes such as arrogance and insincerity. Also, according to Syaikh Yusuf an-Nabhani, in his two-volume discussion of the karāmah of 625 ‘ulamā from the era of the shahābah to the nineteenth century, most auliya [pl. of wali] feel uncomfortable with karāmah because they fear that their khawāriq al-‘ādah is a form not of karāmah but of istidraj, and they therefore tend to hide their karāmah from the public. In the book of al-Hikam, one of the favourite books of Sufism taught in pesantren (Bruinessen, 1995), Imam ibn Atho’illah explained that karāmah is sometimes given to those who are still in the process of suluk [learning process] or are trying to reach perfection through worshipping God. If they are lulled with karāmah, their suluk will fail and never reach God. In other words, the physical karāmah that is obtained by wali or kyai is not originally intended (Khaldun, 1958), but can be seen as the fruition of the journey to God.

In spite of the requirement not to show off karāmah (especially for those who are still in the process of suluk), according to Amin (2008), physical karāmah, such as flying, immunity from weapons, or walking over the river, sometimes needs to be displayed. The most legitimate reasons for showing karāmah are to defeat sinners who challenge the kyai by rejecting the truth, or to save the lives of others. Nevertheless, among wali or kyai, the physical aspect is considered only a small part of karāmah because a magician or shaman can also perform similar activities. The principal karāmah, according to the teachings of Islam, especially within Sufism, is istiqomah [continuity] in worshipping God. There are many warnings made by ‘ulamā concerning the display of physical karāmah in public. Abu Yazid, a prominent Sufi leader quoted by Amin (2008, p. 6), suggested: “[i]f you see someone who is able to spread his prayer mat on the air and then pray or sit on it, do not be fooled by it until you really know how he performs the shari‘ah.”

Theoretically, the validity of the phenomenon of karāmah is hard to identify. The most common way to distinguish karāmah from magic or witchcraft is by looking at the seriousness of the person who implements physical karāmah in his religious obligations.
However, since the title ‘kyai’ is bestowed by society based on the kyai’s ability in mastering Islamic knowledge, people usually tend to take his karāmah for granted. Even when the kyai breaks the shari’ah law, as do some kyai jadhab, both the kyai and his followers always find reason to legitimise his actions. For some Indonesian modernist Muslims, and recently for some Salafi groups, this model of karāmah has become a target of criticism (Jaiz, 1999; Jaiz & Akaha, 2001). This criticism, however, seems to be ignored by most traditional Muslims.

In modern Java, however, the karāmah of the kyai has taken a different form. Although physical karāmah has not disappeared from the daily life of traditional Muslims, there is a tendency among them to consider istiqomah in worshipping God, or karāmah bathiniyah [inner karāmah] as an important part of determining the karāmah of the kyai. In summary, the combination of his good personality, as a result of implementing tazkiyah al-nafs, and his ability in performing both physical and inner karāmah, have promoted the figure of the kyai as a charismatic leader in society. A belief that ‘there are no charismatic kyai without karāmah’ is still deeply embedded among traditional Muslims in modern Java.

3.3. Transmitting Charismatic Qualities

Before discussing the process of transmission of the charismatic qualities of the kyai (particularly the concepts of barākah and karāmah) through two popular rituals of traditional Muslims in Java, it is necessary to recall some ideas of Sufism, especially the concept of tazkiyah al-nafs [purifying heart] as its core teaching, especially since traditional Muslims believe the concepts of karāmah and barākah are a result of practising it through several methods, depending on the teachings of particular tarekat [Sufi order]. As I briefly mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, any Muslim will agree that barākah and karāmah belong only to God. God will give these gifts only to those who consistently implement their religious obligations in their daily lives. In other words, barākah and karāmah are believed to be the results of a person’s faith and piety, and so for most Muslims, maintaining a close relationship with God is seen as a priority in life.

Within the pesantren tradition the most popular means of acquiring a close relationship with God is through riyādah. There are several forms of riyādah popular
among pesantren communities, such as puasa [I. fasting] and hundreds of dzikr [remembering God] formulas, including wirid,\textsuperscript{25} hizib,\textsuperscript{26} and asma’.\textsuperscript{27} These practices are more popular in tarekat pesantren than in shari’ah pesantren, but this does not mean that shari’ah pesantren do not teach their santri to practise riyādah. Nonetheless, since the dzikr formulas within Islamic tradition are mostly created by mursyid [leader of tarekat], it is obvious that pesantren tarekat provide more comprehensive knowledge on practising riyādah, including the fadāil [purposes] of practising a specific dzikr formula.

Although it is not the main goal of riyādah to acquire certain abilities in performing supernatural or magic feats, the fadāil listed in every form of dzikr increases the santri’s motivation to practise it. Santri are free to choose the kind of dzikr, including the fadāil, which suits their needs. The ultimate goal of repeating a certain dzikr formula hundreds or thousands of times a day, and avoiding certain prohibitions as mentioned in the instructions of the dzikr formula, is tazkiyah an-nafs, purifying oneself from the heart’s diseases (Amin, 2008). It is believed, among the members of pesantren, that only with a cleansed heart, can the wisdom of knowledge from God be revealed. Therefore, to some extent, the everyday life of the members of pesantren is in accordance with Sufi teachings, though some pesantren do not officially belong to a specific tarekat [Sufi order]. As mentioned in the previous chapter, some pesantren have followed the example of Imam al-Ghazali (d. 1111), the most prominent Sufi figure within the pesantren communities, who was not affiliated with any tarekat. There are also huge numbers of dzikr formulas that can be practised without being affiliated to a certain tarekat.

Some of these dzikr formulas are actually written in the kitab kuning taught in pesantren. However, obtaining ijazah [permission] from the kyai to practise certain riyādah is a must, in both tarekat and shari’ah pesantren, otherwise santri will never acquire the goals of conducting riyādah. The book ‘Shams al-Ma’arif al-Kubro,’ written by Ahmad ibn ‘Ali al-Buni (d. 1225), is still regarded as the most ‘sacred book’ in pesantren explaining what Sufis refer to as ‘ilm al-hikmah [knowledge of wisdom].

\textsuperscript{25} Set of dzikr formulas recited regularly.
\textsuperscript{26} Set of dzikr formulas, usually written by mursyid [tarekat leader] and practised by the aspirants based on the instructions given by their mursyid.
\textsuperscript{27} A simple dzikr, consisting of certain asma’ al-husna [good names of God].
Bruinessen (1999) noted that most of the so called *mujarrabat* [time-tested method] books on sorcery in the Muslim world that are popular across Java are simplified excerpts from *Shams al-Maʿārif al-Kubro*. Other similar books that are commonly studied in *pesantren* are the works ‘*al-Aufaq,*’ written by Imam al-Ghazali (d. 1111), and ‘*Dalāil al-Khairāt,*’ written by al-Qutub al-Fāḍil Muhammad bin Sulaiman al-Jazuli (d. 1465).

The last book is very popular among the *pesantren* communities. The practice of ‘*Dalāil al-Khairāt,*’ whose complete title is ‘*Dalāil al-Khairāt wa Shawāriq al-Anwār fi dīžkr al-Shalāt ‘ala al-Nabi al-Mukhtar*’ [Guide of Good Deeds and the Brilliant Burst of Sunshine in the Remembrance of Blessings on the Chosen Prophet], has become a daily ritual among the members of *pesantren*, including most traditional Muslims in Java. The popularity of practising this *kitab* can be seen from the establishment of *Komite Hejaz* [Hejaz Committee], after the Hejaz (Mekkah and Madinah) was conquered by Wahabis in the early 1920s. One aim of the committee was to ask the Saudi government to ensure the freedom to practise various *madhhab* in the holy sites in Mekkah and Madinah, including reciting *Dalāil al-Khairāt* (Noer, 2003; Rumadi, 2008).
Figure 3.1. Kitab Kuning on Riyāḍah

Popular *Kitab Kuning* on *riyāḍah* studied in *pesantren*: *Shams al-Ma’arif* (top left), *al-Aufaq* (top right), *Dalail al-Khairat* (bottom left), and the translation of *Dalail al-kKhairat* (bottom right)
There are several ways for *santri* to obtain *ijazah* [permission] from the *kyai* to practise certain *riyādah*, the most two popular being to ask the *kyai* in person, or to wait at the end of a lesson studying certain *kitab*. The first method is rarely used because, as is prescribed in some *akhlq* [Islamic ethics] books, such as the work of al-Zarnuji (2003), it is commonly considered impolite to ask something directly of the *kyai*. However, the initiative may come from the *kyai*, and he may ask certain *santri* to come to his house and there give them this permission. The second method is the most common in *pesantren*. At the end of the study of certain *kitab*, the *kyai* will issue an ‘official’ statement to the audience, that all *santri* who have participated in this study are collectively given permission to practise certain *riyādah* mentioned in the *kitab*.

Thus it is not a simple task to obtain *ijazah*, especially by the first method. Most *kyai* will not easily give formulas of *dzikr* to the *santri*, and although some *santri* have spent several years at the *pesantren*, there is no guarantee that they will acquire the *ijazah* they want. Obtaining *ijazah* can be more complicated when the *kyai* is affiliated with a certain *tarekat*. Each *tarekat* has its own method for *dzikr*, including having special *dzikr* formulas that are divided into several levels and are distinct from those of other *tarekat*. Some *tarekat* even require their new aspirants to abandon any *dzikr* formulas that they practised before (Bakhtiar, 2003; Mulyati, 2004). Therefore, practising *riyādah*, especially for a high level of *dzikr* formulas, is complicated. Moreover, no *santri* can predict how long they need to move from one level of *dzikr* formulas to the next. Some take one or two months to move to the next level, but many have to spend years gaining new *dzikr* formulas.

However, recent phenomena show that some people who have knowledge in *ilmu hikmah*, which literally means ‘knowledge of wisdom’ but is commonly understood as Islamic sorcery, have simplified the process of obtaining *ijazah*. Just by paying a certain amount of money as *mahar* [dowry] someone can directly practise certain *dzikr* formulas. In some cases, when the value of the *mahar* is set high, a person can obtain supernatural powers even without doing *riyādah* (Muttaqin, 2012). Though this is very popular among Javanese Muslims, practising *riyādah* in a normal way is still regarded as the most popular and proper way for *santri*, because the ultimate goal of being close to God will never be acquired through this instant method.
It is evident that *riyāḏah* requires a serious and continuous effort from *santri*. They spend years reciting certain formulas of *dzikr* hundreds or even thousands of times every single day. However, within the tradition of *pesantren*, most *santri* also believe in the important concepts of inheritance and *ilmu laduni*. Both concepts indicate that the results of *riyāḏah* done by other people, usually father or grandfather, will be acquired later by their sons or grandsons.

As mentioned in chapter one, the importance, among Javanese Muslims, of the concept of inheritance is influenced by the central position of holy lineage in Islamic history, especially relating to the issue of *Ahl al-Bait* [descendants of the Prophet Muhammad]. The veneration of Javanese Muslims to *Ahl al-Bait* does not necessarily indicate that they are influenced by Shi’ah. It is actually the teaching of their Shafi’i *madhab*, as can be seen from a popular poem written by Imam Shafi’i.

O *Ahl al-Bait* of the Prophet, God has been obliged to love you in the revealed Qur’an. There is sufficient evidence for the glory of your position that those who do not read *shalawat* [praise] to you have no prayer for Him. (al-Musawi, 2008, p. 56)

On another occasion, Imam Shafi’i made a strong statement when he was accused of being a Shi’ah follower: “If it were due to devotion to the *Ahl al-Bait* of Rasulullah that I am accused of being Rafidhi (Shi’ah), then bear witness that in fact I am Rafidhi” (Rakhmat, 2009, p. 226). It is therefore not surprising if most Javanese Muslims, especially the members of *pesantren* that follow the legal school of Imam Shafi’i, are heavily influenced by the concept of holy lineage.

However, the idea is not that charismatic qualities can be transferred through blood ties (inheritance) without a continuous effort in practising *riyāḏah*. Most members of *pesantren* believe that the *kyai* practises certain *riyāḏah* for the sake of his children. Stories concerning some popular *kyai* have mentioned this phenomenon. For example, a long time before KH. M. Moenawwir became the leading *kyai* in Qur’anic studies, his grandfather, KH. Kasan Besari, and his father, KH. Abdullah Rasyad, had done many kinds of *riyāḏah* for memorising the Qur’an. Both had the same *ilham* [intuition] that one of their descendants would be a leading *kyai* of the Qur’an (Fat’thurrohman, 2011). Also, most sons of the *kyai*, as mentioned in chapter one, share the privileges of their fathers, meaning that they are treated differently from other regular *santri*, and have
easier access to the sacredness of certain \riyādah\. The concept of the \darah biru [nobility] of \kyai is essential in transmitting his charismatic qualities.

Similarly, the concept of \ilmu laduni is believed to be the result of the continuous effort of doing \riyādah through generations. Although \ilmu laduni is believed by most members of \pesantren to be a \hidāyah [gift] from God, by which God directly planted His wisdom of knowledge into the hearts of the chosen people (Amin, 2008), as in the case of inheritance, most also believe that this process is related to the \riyādah that had been done by others, most often by the father or grandfather of the chosen person. Within Javanese culture, this concept is known by the popular phrase ‘\weruh sak durunge winarah’ [knowing without learning]. Stories about this special knowledge are very popular among the members of \pesantren, from the story of \Nabi Khidir, who lived in the era of the Prophet Moses, to the story of \Gus Dur, the fourth President of Indonesia, who is also believed by his followers to have this special gift (Turmudzi, 2011).

3.4. Conclusion

Within \pesantren tradition, the charisma of the \kyai can clearly be seen from the implementation of the concepts of \barākah and \karāmah. Since both concepts belong to God, the abilities of \kyai in bestowing \barākah and conducting miracle-like actions indicate their special relationship with God. The popular tradition of \ngalap berkah [searching for blessing of \kyai] indicates that members of \pesantren believe in the function of the \kyai as a medium for revealing the \barākah of God to them. Many members of \pesantren are still fully reliant on their \kyai when facing problems, not only those limited to other-worldly interests, but also concerning their needs in this world.

\barākah and \karāmah, as the basic sources of the \kyai’s charisma, result from a long process of \riyādah. The consistency in conducting \riyādah, through a combination of different forms such as fasting and reciting \dzikr formulas hundreds to thousands of times every day, is similar to the concept of \tazkiyah an-nafs in Sufism. Not all \pesantren are affiliated with \tarekat [Sufi order], but this does not mean that they reject the practice of \riyādah. Indeed, these \pesantren also teach some \kitab kuning explaining various forms of \riyādah, such as \Shams al-Ma’arif al-Kubro, al-Aufaq, Dalail al-Khairat, and \Ihya’ ‘Ulimuddin.
The charismatic qualities of kyai can be transmitted to others through this riyādah process. All santri or Javanese Muslims may acquire these qualities by conducting continuous riyādah. However, certain members of pesantren have a greater chance of acquiring them, especially those who have nasab [genealogy] or a blood relationship with the kyai. The requirement to receive ījazah before practising any kind of riyādah shows that access to the practice of certain dzikr is not equal for everybody, though this does not mean that others can not obtain the charismatic qualities of kyai.

Santri do not automatically become kyai after succeeding in acquiring certain charismatic qualities. Regardless of how long they have spent practising riyādah, they will not be called ‘kyai’ if they do not show a real contribution to society or have not been acknowledged by other popular kyai. Pesantren, though known as places for producing kyai, have no authority to call their graduates ‘kyai.’ This title is mostly bestowed by the community, though sometimes it is given on the recommendation of influential kyai. In chapters 4, 5, and 6 of this thesis I will discuss these phenomena in more detail by focusing on one traditional pesantren in Yogyakarta. I will focus my discussion on how the charismatic authority of the kyai is transmitted to his successor, and especially on the issues of riyādah, nasab, and creating the charismatic image of the new leader.
Chapter Four

Social Structure of Komplek L

One day, after conducting Ashar [Afternoon] prayer in the congregation at Langgar al-Mubarok Komplek L, I decided to stay on its porch while waiting for the activities of the *madrasah* that usually start at 4 pm. I wanted to know how the students of the *madrasah* interact and behave in front of their *kyai* and other *ustadz* and to compare this with their daily relationships in informal situations. The *langgar* is situated at the back of Komplek L, surrounded by some separate buildings for *santri*, including a small complex with bathrooms and a pond for taking *wudlu* [ablution], a place for watching television, and a small wooden house used as a public kitchen. So, most daily activities of *santri*, such as cooking, washing, or even relaxing in their rooms could be clearly observed from this porch. I was sitting in the corner of the balcony near the backyard of the *kyai* house, which is used for the *ndalem* [*kyai’s house*] kitchen. I was accompanied by Sulaiman, a *ndalem santri* 28 who has been serving the *kyai* and his family for nearly eleven years. Just five minutes after starting the conversation with him, I saw *Bu Nyai* open the backyard door and ask Sulaiman to find Andhika, a *lurah* at Komplek L, and ask him to meet her. Soon Sulaiman stood up and walked to a room called L-Paska, which is reserved only for the board members and some senior *santri*.

A minute later, I saw Andhika come out of his room trying to use a long sleeved shirt to cover up his t-shirt. It seemed that he had tried to find proper sandals in front of his room but he could not find them. He then grabbed different coloured thongs, one red and one blue, and rushed to meet *Bu Nyai*. I could not hear what *Bu Nyai* said to him, but I could clearly see that Andhika always bowed his head during the conversation and put both of his hand in front of his belly.

My attention in observing how Andhika behaved in front of *Bu Nyai* was disturbed by a loud bell which signaled the start of the *madrasah*. I saw one of the board members walk around the rooms of the *santri* shouting, “ayo, halaqoh...halaqoh...!” [Come on, it’s time for the *madrasah!*] I saw some *santri* come to the *langgar*, which is used for level one of the learning process or an intermediate level at the *madrasah*. I decided to stay at my place because I still had a perfect view to observe the activity. Besides, I did not want to interrupt the learning process and tried to maintain the natural setting of the activity as much as possible. (Fieldnote, 26 October 2009)

I have quoted my fieldwork notes here to show that in the study of *pesantren* there is one actor who is often ignored or neglected. The role of close relatives of the *kyai*, otherwise known as ‘*ndalem*’ [Lit. insiders], in supporting the *pesantren*’s activities has not been adequately addressed when discussing the everyday life within a *pesantren*. Most studies have drawn attention only to the relationship between the *kyai* and his

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28 *Ndalem santri* is a *santri* who lives in the *kyai’s* house and becomes a helper for the members of the *kyai’s* family
santri, while other actors, especially ndalem [family members or the household of the kyai] tend to be neglected. Perhaps many scholars assume ndalem are not an important element of pesantren since, in many cases, they are not directly involved in the learning processes. Although this is a valid opinion, the position of ndalem should be considered an important part of the pesantren due to the fact that they share the authority of the kyai. The barākah and karāmah of kyai are believed to extend to include ndalem members. The way a board member behaves in front of Bu Nyai, the wife of the kyai, as illustrated in the event quoted above, clearly indicates how ndalem are perceived and treated similarly to the kyai.

This chapter will further discuss the social structure of pesantren, particularly in Komplek L. First, I will present its historical development, including the current features of Pesantren al-Munawwir, of which Komplek L is a part. Then, I will discuss the current situation of Komplek L, focusing on information on the education system, learning processes, and other activities of the santri. The final part of this chapter will examine the social structure of Komplek L, focusing on the everyday life of kyai, ndalem, ustadz, and santri, and how they interact and contribute to the continuity of learning processes in Komplek L.

4.1. Current Features of Pesantren Al-Munawwir

Krapyak is distinct in comparison with surrounding areas. Located in the village of Panggungharjo, in the north part of Bantul district, this small place is famous nationwide because of Pesantren al-Munawwir, which has produced many nationally leading kyai. The presence of thousands of santri from across the country has made Krapyak unique compared with surrounding villages. Every day many santri using their traditional sarung [skirt], and santriwati [women students] with their kerudung [headscarf] are to be seen walking around KH. Ali Maksum Street (formerly DI. Pandjaitan Street) carrying their kitab kuning. There are three komplek or blocks (L, N, and Q) located approximately 200 metres to the north of the centre buildings of the pesantren, so santri who live in these three blocks must use KH. Ali Maksum Street in order to attend the pesantren’s activities, which are regularly held in the centre of the pesantren.

Pesantren Al-Munawwir was established on November 15, 1910 by KH. M. Moenawwir, who had previously spent 21 years studying Islam in Mekkah. His
expertise in memorising the entire Qur’an had been widely recognised in Indonesia. According to his 
ahl al-bait [relatives], as mentioned in the official book of Pesantren al-Munawwir, one of the most important aspects of KH. M. Moenawwir’s expertise lay in the fact that he had a sanad [lineage] back to the prophet Muhammad in studying the
Qur’an. Sanad has a special position when considering whether or not someone is recognised as authentically mastering Islamic knowledge, since this knowledge is, in general, transmitted orally from one generation to the next through memorisation. The continuity of the sanad, then, becomes the most important way to guarantee that the knowledge has direct connection back to the prophet Muhammad.

Pesantren Al-Munawwir has been popularly recognised throughout Indonesia, and even Southeast Asia, as the specialist in Qur’anic studies. This can be seen from the background of the santri, who come from various regions, including Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand. The historical development of Pesantren Al-Munawwir can be divided into four periods, based on the different kyai who have led it. KH. M. Moenawwir was its leader for more than 20 years, from 1910 to 1942. Under his leadership, the santri were not only limited to studying the Qur’an, but were also actively involved in the war against Dutch colonialism. Immediately after the death of KH. Moenawir, his eldest son, KH. Affandi Moenawwir, together with his brother KH. Abdul Qodir Munawwir, and brother in-law, KH. Ali Maksum, took over the leadership. In 1968, the leadership of the pesantren was held solely by KH. Ali Maksum, which seems surprising because, according to the tradition of pesantren, the eldest son of the kyai or his brothers usually become the successor to the kyai.

Under the leadership of KH. Ali Maksum, the pesantren achieved great success, both in the quality of its curriculum and the quantity of santri, a result not separable from the social status of KH. Ali Maksum who, at that time, also became ra’is am [chairman] of the NU, the organisation with which most pesantren in Java are affiliated. Besides his status, KH. Ali Maksum’s expertise in mastering the kitab kuning had a significant influence on the direction of the pesantren’s policy. Though the Qur’anic emphasis of the pesantren is still dominant, several studies of the kitab kuning were introduced as mandatory for the santri in their everyday lives. Furthermore, KH. Ali Maksum significantly changed pesantren affairs by combining the traditional education system with a national education system under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The introduction of the madrasah system during the KH. Ali Maksum period has contributed

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29 For further information on this sanad (silsilah) see Dhofier (1999) and Fathurrohman (2011).
to the progressive development of the pesantren, especially the increase in the number of women santri.

It is interesting to note that this policy of accepting women santri and providing female accommodation in the pesantren alongside that for males was widely criticised by most Islamic scholars from the Middle and Near East. As mentioned by Dhofier (1999), there was a widespread view that this kind of policy showed that the Javanese were ‘bad’ Muslims, whereas, in fact, it shows the accommodative and tolerant attitudes of traditional Muslims in Indonesia toward rapid social change. In other words, this policy reflects the fact that Islam in Java is distinctive in that Javanese women enjoy more responsibility and freedom than do women in other Muslim countries.

KH. Ali Maksum passed away in 1989 after leading the pesantren for more than twenty years, and an internal conflict took place over the issue of who should take his place. His eldest son wanted to lead the pesantren but the sons of KH. M. Moenawwir wanted the position to be returned to their own relatives, because KH. Ali Maksum was only the son-in-law of KH. M. Moenawwir (the founder of the pesantren). The pesantren was eventually divided into two, when KH. Attabik Ali established the Ali Maksum Foundation and renamed his pesantren ‘Pesantren Krapyak,’ instead of using the name ‘al-Munawwir.’ Meanwhile, the sons of KH. Moenawwir, led by KH. Zainal Abidin, continued to lead the Pesantren al-Munawwir, which focuses on the development of the madrasah huffadz, a place for memorising the entire Qur’an and for various studies on the kitab kuning, or, in other words, remains a salafiyah pesantren [Lit. traditional pesantren].

According to Gus Dzakir, one of the young kyai, Pesantren al-Munawwir was formerly divided into 18 komplek [blocks], which were named using letters of the alphabet ‘A’ to ‘R,’ but later on some komplek were merged, in the name of efficiency and expansion of the pesantren buildings. For example, block A and block B were combined into one block called AB (Personal communication, 12 May 2009), and blocks I and J have now become block IJ. Some other blocks were merged and given a new name, such as the huffadz block, which used to be blocks C and D. Some blocks are no longer part of the pesantren, as a result of the establishment of Pesantren Krapyak.
under the Ali Maksum Foundation, such as block H which was then renamed ‘Diponegoro.’

Gus Dzakir explained that each block has around 100 to 300 santri or santriwati, depending on its room capacity. Although Pesantren al-Munawwir has its pesantren board, commonly called pengurus pusat [central board], each block is autonomous and has its own board, chosen by its santri. The position will normally be held for one or two years, depending on the rules of each block. Board members are responsible for supervising the daily activities in their block, such as madrasah salafiyah, pengajian Qur’an [study of the Qur’an], and other regular activities. Usually the board in each komplek consists of lurah,\(^{30}\) secretary, treasurer, and several divisions, such as madin (short for ‘madrasah diniyah’), security, and public relations, depending on the needs of each komplek.

Under the leadership of KH. Zainal Abidin Moenawwir, the pesantren focused on developing the salafiyah [traditional] types of education. This can be seen from the rapid progress of the madrasah huffadz and the establishment of Ma’had ‘Aly [higher education] in 1993. The Ministry of Religious Affairs also classified this pesantren as salafiyah, but, unlike most other traditional pesantren, al-Munawwir gives its santri opportunities to take formal education outside the pesantren. This is forbidden in only a few komplek who set their curriculum and learning processes for the whole day.

Currently, Pesantren al-Munawwir runs several educational institutions [lembaga pendidikan] and some special programs, held weekly or monthly, for the public. It has four types of educational institution, namely: Ma’had ‘Aly [tertiary education], Madrasah Huffadz [school for memorising the Qur’an], Madrasah Salafiyah, and SMK or Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan [vocational high school].

Perhaps the most remarkable educational innovation within Pesantren al-Munawwir is the establishment of Ma’had ‘Aly. Ma’had ‘Aly can be seen as the most recent response by pesantren, especially the traditional ones, to modernity, and aimed to improve the quality of pesantren alumni, which had severely degenerated due to the adoption of the state-designed system of education. Besides this, according to Wahid

\(^{30}\) Within the Indonesian government system, the term ‘lurah’ is widely used to name the head of kelurahan [village], and sounds more familiar to santri than the word ‘ketua’ [chief], which is commonly used for organisations outside pesantren.
the main reasons for establishing this institution clearly come from a growing awareness among pesantren leaders of the real need for pesantren to have a higher standard of education. The first Ma’had ‘Aly was established in 1990 in Pesantren Situbondo, East Java. In 2011, the Ministry of Religious Affairs reported that there were 25 new Ma’had ‘Aly scattered around the country, most of them attached to salafiyah pesantren, and a few affiliated with the UIN [Islamic State University] or other private Islamic organisations (Karni, 2009).

Among these Ma’had ‘Aly, the one in Pesantren al-Munawwir is distinct, since most of its santri also undertake other formal education at universities across Yogyakarta, such as Gadjah Mada University, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, and State University of Yogyakarta (formerly IKIP). Since its opening in 1993, Ma’had ‘Aly al-Munawwir has consistently recruited only a small number of santri, not more than 30 each year, to ensure the quality of its learning process. The main aim is to produce graduates who have adequate knowledge in reading the kitab kuning and are qualified in anticipating and solving any legal issues in society. Although Ma’had ‘Aly is equivalent to a bachelor’s degree—some claim even equivalent to postgraduate study—the learning process is conducted in a style similar to that of the madrasah salafiyah. Students of Ma’had ‘Aly, and most of their teachers, use sarung [skirt] and peci [skullcap, and they rely mostly on the kitab kuning. The most obvious difference from the madrasah salafiyah is in the level of kitab kuning, which in Ma’had ‘Aly are more complex and sophisticated. There is only one major program, Shari’ah [Islamic Law], which has to be completed in four years or eight semesters. At the end of this period of study, the students are asked to write a talkhis [summary] of certain kitab kuning and defend it in munaqashah [oral exam] in front of examiners, the aim of this process being to ensure the quality of students and evaluate their ability in mastering the kitab kuning.

To retain independence in setting up the curriculum, the mundzir [director] rejects support offered by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which is commonly seen by traditional kyai as a form of intervention by the government. The mundzir does not want to be involved with complicated administrative rules to obtain a legal or formal acknowledgment from the Ministry. As a result, the Ma’had ‘Aly does not offer any official degree for its graduates. Nonetheless, almost none of the santri at Ma’had ‘Aly
feel unhappy with this situation, because many of them are also registered as students at universities or colleges outside the pesantren. Masadin, a student from Cirebon, West Java, who is also registered as a student at UIN or Islamic State University of Sunan Kalijaga, expressed it in the following way:

> The learning process here is more intense and enjoyable than in UIN. We purely study here. We do not think about a title or diploma because the most important thing in learning is how we can really understand what our teachers have taught in the class or even outside the class. So, at Ma'had 'Aly we do not only study the kitab kuning, but Ma'had 'Aly also provides us with a way to directly practise what we have learnt in an everyday life setting. (Personal communication, 5 March 2009)

The second educational institution, the Madrasah Huffadz al-Munawwir, is divided into two blocks: Madrasah Huffadz I, located next to the mosque of Krapyak and led by KH. R. Muh. Najib Abdul Qadir, and Madrasah Huffadz II led by KH. R. Abdul Hafidz Abdul Qadir. These two madrasah concentrate on memorising the Qur’an, so santri who wish to do this are commonly assigned here, except for those who prefer to stay at other blocks, including at Komplek L. According to Zaidun, a graduate santri at the Madrasah Huffadz I, there are three stages in memorising the Qur’an. The first is tahqiq, which means a very slow recitation. It has the longest duration and the most complete articulation. Within the tradition of pesantren, this kind of recitation is called ‘qiro’ah’ and it is usually performed in the opening ceremony of certain formal events, such as marriage, circumcision, and slametan [communal feast]. The second stage is tartil, which refers to a straightforward and murottal [private] style of reciting the Qur’an. This style of recitation is commonly used in everyday life and gives more attention to the rules of reading the Qur’an [tajwid]. The third stage, qira’ah sab’ah [Lit. seven recitations], is the way to recite the Qur’an based on the recitation by seven imams in the second century of Hijrah who are believed to have a continued sanad [lineage] to the Prophet, and which matches the mushaf [written text] made by the third caliph of Islam, Utsman ibn Affan.

The third educational institution is called Madrasah Salafiyah. There are five of these madrasah scattered across the pesantren. Three of these (madrasah I, III, and IV) are located on the west side of Ali Maksum Street, around 200 metres to the north of the centre of the pesantren buildings, where the Krapyak Mosque is located. Four of these
Madrasah Salafiyah consist of four halaqoh levels. They name these using Arabic numbers—Ula [first], Tsani [second], Tsalis [third], and Arba’ah [fourth]—or instead they call the first year ‘I’dadiyah’ [preparation], and use ‘Ula’ for the second year, ‘Tsani’ for the third, and ‘Tsalis’ for the final year. The Madrasah Salafiyah I, however, is different. It is divided into six levels, which means santri need six years to complete the madrasah program if they start from the first level. But in many cases, new santri can go directly to the second or third level, depending on their ability in reading and understanding the kitab kuning. There is a placement test to evaluate new santri before entering the madrasah. So the recruitment of the santri for these madrasah is not based on their age or formal education level, but merely on their ability in mastering Islamic knowledge, and it is possible for santri who are still in the junior or senior high school to be in the same class as those from university level.

All of the madrasah are run early in the morning or in the evening, except for Madrasah Salafiyah II, whose santri are not allowed to have formal education outside the pesantren. Madrasah Salafiyah I and II are designed for both male and female santri. Madrasah Salafiyah III and V are specifically for female santri, while Madrasah Salafiyah IV recruits only male santri. However, although Madrasah Salafiyah I and II have both male and female santri, most learning processes are conducted separately. If they have to attend a special lecture in a big room, such as when they have a guest speaker, male and female santri are usually separated by a long curtain so they cannot see each other.

The kitab kuning taught in each madrasah are basically similar. Most of them were written by ‘ulamā of Syafi’i madhhab (one of four great imams within the Sunni tradition), and range from very simple ones, in tens of pages—such as Matan Jurumiyah (about Arabic syntax), Safinatun Najah (in fiqh), Washoya lil banin (about akhlaq or ethics), Ta’limul Muta’alim (about ethics for the students)—to the more sophisticated ones, running to hundreds of pages, like Fathul Wahab (on Fiqh), Alfiyah (on Arabic syntax), Tafsir al-Maraghi (about Qur’anic exegesis), and so forth. Nearly all activities in these madrasah are done lesehan [sitting on the floor], with a small table for each.

Historically, halaqoh [Lit. circle] refers to learning activities in the mosque, where the students sit around the teacher. However, more recently, it has a similar meaning to the words ‘groups,’ ‘level,’ or ‘class.’

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santri to write at. According to Sigit (Personal communication, 7 April 2010), the learning process usually starts with the teacher reading the *kitab kuning* word by word and translating into Javanese, and *santri* will listen and make notes of these translations in their *kitab*. After this, the teacher will give an explanation in Indonesian. During one hour of study, the teachers are usually able to read less than two pages. So, there is no target of completing the *kitab* within one year. In many cases, when *santri* move to the next level, they just continue with the previous *kitab*. However, these *madrasah* are not the only way to learn *kitab kuning* in the *pesantren*. There are other options for *santri* to exercise their ability in understanding Arabic texts, such as through *pengajian wetonan* or other programs offered directly by the *kyai* or through the *pesantren* management.

The fourth educational institution within Pesantren al-Munawwir is *Sekolah Menegah Kejuruan*, shortened to SMK [vocational high school]. This school is formed in cooperation with *Yayasan Ma’arif* (an educational foundation under the NU) to provide *santri* with the necessary practical knowledge to be professional businesspersons with strong Islamic values. There are two programs within the SMK: automotive and fashion design. Each year, the SMK recruits 30 students for each program. Unlike in the *Madrasah Salafiyah* or the *Madrasah Huffadz*, the students of SMK are not obliged to stay in the *pesantren*. Only those who do so are obliged to attend the *Madrasah Salafiyah*. However, to ensure that the students master Islamic knowledge, more Islamic subjects are added to the curriculum than in other regular SMK.

Beside these educational institutions, Pesantren al-Munawwir has several Islamic programs for the public, such as *Majlis Ta’lim*[^32] IKAPPAM in every *Ahad Wage[^33]*, *Majlis Semaan al-Qur’an* in every *Jum’at Wage*, *Majlis Ta’lim wal Mujahal-‘ādah lil Masyayikh* in every *Sabtu Wage*, JTMJP Padang Jagad in every *Jum’at Pon*, and the *Masyayikh* program.[^34] Most of these *Majlis Ta’lim* are conducted through lectures and speeches, sometimes followed by question and answer sessions. The topics are varied,

[^32]: *Majlis Ta’lim* literally means a place of study. The forms of *Majlis Ta’lim* can be *pengajian* or *mujahal-‘ādah* [reciting certain prayers loudly in congregation].
[^33]: *Ahad Wage*, *Sabtu Wage*, or *Jum’at Pon* is the combination of Javanese and Arabic lunar systems, as created by Sultan Agung. Each of those days will be repeated every 35 days and this is called *selapanan*.
[^34]: As its name indicates, the *Masyayikh* program is designed for elderly people to learn about Islam privately. The *kyai* will assign certain *santri* to come to the house of these people to teach them what they want to know about Islam.
ranging from the current issues to the daily religious obligations, such as ablution, prayer, fasting, and so forth. Each Majlis Taklim can be attended by hundreds of local people, some even coming from remote areas. Usually they come together, renting buses or trucks. Hadi, one of the attendees at Majlis Taklim wal Mujahal-‘ādah lil Masyayikh, who comes from the district of Pandak, around 29 km to the south of the pesantren, told me that the main reason that he and others join this Majlis Ta’lim is ngalap berkah [to gain blessing] from Kyai Zainal, the leader of the pesantren (Personal communication, 15 May 2010). These programs show that the role of pesantren is not limited only to educating their santri, but also to providing free education for the larger communities.

In addition to these programs of Islamic studies, the pengurus pusat [central board] has supported and developed some other activities to provide entrepreneurial skills for the santri and people around the pesantren to prepare for their future. Some of these activities that were conducted during my fieldwork include angkringan, and workshops on handicrafts, running a small shop [kelontong], modeling, and computer literacy. These activities were usually free of charge. The participants either provide their own, or have to pay a small amount of money to buy, materials necessary for direct practice following the workshops.

4.2. Social Structure of Pesantren

There are four elements that should be considered in understanding how a pesantren operates on a daily basis: kyai, ndalem, ustadz, and santri. To provide more detailed information on how the members of each part of of the pesantren interact, I will focus on describing daily activities within one block, Komplek L. The main focus of this study was to observe the transmission of charisma from its founder Kyai Ahmad to his son, Gus Munawwar.

4.2.1. Kyai

As in other traditional pesantren, kyai at the Pesantren al-Munawwar have absolute authority in directing the policy of their pesantren. However, there is an interesting phenomenon in this pesantren concerning the specialisation of knowledge among the

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35 Angkringan is a small business selling foods and drinks using a wooden cart. This kind of stall is very popular and can be found on nearly all roadsides across Yogyakarta. They usually open from 6 pm to 4 am. According to Zaidun, one of the board members at Madrasah Huffadz I, this program aims to enable santri to develop their entrepreneurial skills (Personal communication, 8 March 2009).
current kyai. While Kyai Ali Maksum, the son in-law of its founder, helped to run the pesantren, he strictly directed and supervised the learning activities of the sons of Kyai M. Munawwir, who currently lead the pesantren. Kyai Ali Maksum’s expertise in mastering the kitab kuning has thus endowed the current kyai with various specialties in teaching.

For instance, Kyai Zainal Abidin Munawwir, the current leader of Pesantren al-Munawwir, is known for his expertise in Sufism. Kyai A. Warsun Munawwir, author of the most popular Arabic-Indonesian dictionary, ‘Kamus al-Munawwir,’ is known for his expertise in the Arabic language. Kyai Dalhar Munawwir, who passed away during my field research, is best known for his knowledge of fiqh [Islamic law]. The late Kyai Ahmad Munawwir, the founder of Komplek L, was known for his expertise in teaching the Qur’an and his ability in mastering supernatural powers. According to Musthofa, an alumnus from Cilacap, these different specialties of the kyai at Pesantren al-Munawwir influenced the decision of where a new santri should be lodged, based on his particular interest in studying Islam (Personal communication, 25 May 2010). For example, a santri who wanted to memorise the Qur’an would most likely be directed to stay at Komplek L, with Kyai Ahmad Munawwir.

When the Madrasah Huffadz was established in 1986 as a special block reserved for those who wanted to memorise the Qur’an, and each block started running its own Madrasah Salafiyah, this situation changed. According to Sigit, a former secretary of the central board, the specialisation of the kyai does not completely determine where a santri will stay because all blocks offers similar opportunities to learn most aspects of Islamic knowledge through their Madrasah Salafiyah (Personal communication, 23 February 2012). Each block, then, tends to compete to recruit new santri. In this situation, the kyai’s network, especially through his former pupils or alumni becomes important in attracting new santri. Most santri who choose to stay at a certain block come as a result of recommendations from their relatives or parents’ friends who are alumni of that block.

Nevertheless, as in other traditional pesantren, the figure of the kyai is still considered the most important element in the pesantren. As its owner, as well as its leader, he is the only person who has power to direct the policy of his pesantren.
Programs initiated by the government to modernise pesantren, such as by unifying their curricula, will not succeed if they do not get support from him. The absolute authority of the kyai has been supported also by a belief that he has the ability to bestow barākah and perform acts of karāmah. Stories regarding barākah and karāmah of some kyai in Pesantren al-Munawwir can be found within the everyday life of santri. Zaidun, a huffadz santri from Jakarta, mentioned that these stories are commonly discussed among the santri to increase their respect for the kyai and intensify their dedication to their study at the pesantren (Personal communication, 23 May 2010).

In Komplek L, stories about the barākah and karāmah of Kyai Ahmad are very popular among his santri, though they are only spread orally. These stories of his extraordinary powers include his being invulnerable to injury from weapons, his flying, praying on the top of a coconut tree, and having special santri who are jinn [genies or spirit beings]. According to Mbah Brahim, one of Kyai Ahmad’s santri, who helped build Komplek L, mentioned that Kyai Ahmad was born in 23 January 1937. He was known as the most jadug [sacred] kyai at Pesantren al-Munawwir. “Although he was the youngest son of KH. M. Moenawwir, his expertise in the Qur’anic teachings and his ability in mastering supernatural power made him one of the most respected kyai in the pesantren” (Personal communication, 29 December 2009).

Perceived as a charismatic leader by his santri, Kyai Ahmad not only played the role of religious teacher, as is the case in other general educational institutions, but he also provided for the daily needs of the santri, giving them rooms and food, and fulfilled the role of spiritual advisor. Interestingly, this role was not limited to religious matters. Sometimes Kyai Ahmad was asked by santri and people around the pesantren to solve various problems ranging from financial questions to matchmaking. Thus the leadership of Kyai Ahmad, though primarily based on his religious abilities, surpassed religious boundaries when dealing with the everyday lives of his followers. Nasrullah, an alumnus from Grobogan, gave an interesting explanation regarding this phenomenon:

Kyai has to deal with all aspects of human life because in Islam all activities can be seen as part of ibal-‘ādah [worship]. He further explained that all acts depend on their intention. Many that are considered as worldly acts can be changed into otherworldly acts (or become parts of ibal-‘ādah ) because of the right intention. This perception is based on the first Hadith in a popular kitab kuning, al-Arba’in al-

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36 Some examples of barākah and karāmah will be given in the next chapter.
Nawawi, which consists of forty two Hadith. (Personal communication, 29 December 2009)

In addition, the strong position of the kyai is supported by Islamic teachings, as mentioned in some of the kitab kuning taught in pesantren, ranging from the books of the Hadith to the books of Akhlaq [Islamic ethics]. For example, Maman, an ustadz at Madrasah Salafiyah IV, mentioned an, excerpt from Ta’limul Muta’alim, a popular kitab kuning dealing with the etiquette for a student in pursuing knowledge, that states “we should be like a newly deceased person in front of our teacher; we can only follow what he wants us to do” (Personal communication, 21 May 2010). Thus, the absolute authority of kyai in pesantren is commonly perceived as a normal situation, and obeying the orders of kyai is seen as a part of ibal-‘ādah [worship].

Sulaiman, a ndalem santri who served Kyai Ahmad for more than ten years, told me about the daily activity of Kyai Ahmad:

*Kyai* Ahmad was a very energetic person. He slept only four or five hours a day. His daily activity usually started at around 2 am or 3 am, with tahajud [recommended night prayer]. He then continued reading the Qur’an to keep his memorisation until the coming of Shubuh Prayer at around 4.30 am. After leading a Shubuh Prayer at the langgar or musāla, he taught the Qur’an for some santri who wanted to memorise it. 7 am to 10 am was usually considered as his private time, except when he had to welcome guests. But most guests, especially people from areas surrounding the pesantren or those who have a pesantren background were aware of this situation. His activities then ranged from receiving guests to taking care of a small pond filled with ikan lele [catfish] at the backyard of Komplek L, or visiting other fellow kyai around the Bantul area. Sometimes, he asked his badal [representative, usually some senior santri] to lead the Dhuhur [Midday] and Ashar [Afternoon] prayers at the langgar. Maghrib [Evening] prayer at langgar is considered as an obligation for all santri because right after the prayer, the pengajian al-Qur’an with sorogan method is conducted for all santri. It sometimes took until 9 pm or 10 pm, and then it closed with performing Isya’ (Night) prayer in congregation. (Personal communication, 29 November 2009)

*Kyai* Ahmad thus devoted most of his time to his pesantren activities. He taught on many occasions and supervised all the activities conducted at Komplek L. Though he did not teach at the madrasah, he advised which kitab kuning should be taught. He had to be consulted on all important matters, such as receiving a new santri or deciding forms of punishment for those who broke the rules of Komplek L. He even had the right to choose a lurah [board's leader] from two or three candidates who were chosen through the election process (Personal communication with Musthofa, a former santri of Kyai Ahmad, 23 May 2010).
To sum up, Kyai Ahmad’s role at Komplek L was very significant in many areas of the pesantren’s life. In the recruitment process, all future santri had to be approved by Kyai Ahmad. During their study at the madrasah, he decided what kind of kitab kuning should be learnt by santri at all levels. If, at the end of their study at the madrasah, Kyai Ahmad wanted certain santri to stay longer, no one would dare to reject his request. The combination of Kyai Ahmad’s status as the most authoritative teacher, the pesantren’s owner, and a charismatic leader resulted in the santri’s total obedience in following his orders. Moreover, most of them believed that Kyai Ahmad would never use his absolute authority for his personal or financial interests. Mustofa, an alumnus from Cilacap expressed this in the following way:

Kyai Ahmad was a simple person who had a moderate perspective on Islam. He dedicated all of his resources to the needs of his santri. One example of this could be seen from his efforts in cultivating ikan lele [catfish] in some ponds at the backyard of the pesantren. He knew that some of his santri, including me, used to catch the fish almost every night while cooking the rice in the public kitchen, just beside the ponds. As you know, when we cooked together, there were more than eight santri who participated. That meant we also needed to catch at least eight fish. Therefore, it was not surprising that Kyai Ahmad never harvested his catfish. So, it seemed that he cultivated the catfish to provide good food for his santri. (Personal communication 24 May 2010)

The current kyai, Gus Munawwar, however, has been perceived slightly differently by the santri. Some santri see him as being as charismatic as his father, but others claim that he is still too young to be considered a charismatic kyai. He started to be fully involved in running Komplek L in his early 20s and sometimes looked hesitant when he had to communicate with older santri or guests who visited him for various purposes. He always used, and still uses, kromo inggil [highest level of Javanese language] to communicate with them. There is nothing wrong with this language usage, but sometimes it has caused confusion for some of the older santri. For example, Maman, an ustadz at the madrasah, told me:

*Jan-jane sing kudu boso ki kan aku, lha kok gus-e bosone malah luwih alus.*
*Kadang-kadang aku malah dadi sungkan yen dijak ngobrol gus-e. Masio aku sing luwih tuwo, ning gus-e kan kyai sing kudu diajeni santri-santrine.*

[It should be me who uses the subtle language, but he (Gus Munawwar) has used it even better. Sometimes I feel hesitant if he wants to chat with me. Although I am older than him, he is the kyai who has to be respected by all of his santri.] (Personal communication, 27 February 2010)
It seems that *Gus* Munawwar’s age influences the way his *santri* perceive him. Although his father actually started teaching the Qur’an to the *santri* at a similar age, the situation that *Gus* Munawwar has to face is more complex. *Kyai* Ahmad started to build Komplek L after he had already become a *kyai* by teaching the Qur’an at the mosque of Pesantren al-Munawwir for several years. Although *Gus* Munawwar only continued to do what his father had done, he had to face the fact that when he started he had yet to complete his Qur’anic memorisation, while also trying to manage hundreds of *santri*, who also needed to acquire other Islamic knowledge.

![Figure 4.2. Kyai Ahmad’s Family: Kyai Ahmad (insert), Gus Munawwar (left) and Bu Nyai Shofiyah (right).](image)

Fortunately, in the face of these challenges *Gus* Munawwar’s mother has been able to take on some of *Kyai* Ahmad’s role, especially in identifying and welcoming older *santri* and guests and introducing them to *Gus* Munawwar. She was also able to function as a good manager in running the *pesantren*. Therefore, the roles of *Bu Nyai* in particular, and the members of *ndalem* in general, need to be addressed proportionally in discussing the everyday life of the community of the *pesantren*. Though *Gus* Munawwar is considered by some *santri* to be too young to lead Komplek L, this does not...
significantly reduce his authority in directing the policy of the pesantren. He is still believed to have the same total authority as his father,\footnote{The santri’s perception of Gus Munawwar, especially in regard to his leadership capabilities and the notion of charismatic authority, will be further discussed in chapters 5 and 6.} with full support from ndalem, ustadz, and santri.

4.2.2. Ndalem

The term ‘ndalem,’ which literally means ‘insider or household,’ is very popular among santri in most pesantren, especially in Komplek L. In the first instance, it refers to the family members of the kyai, who include his wife (or wives), sons and daughters, and some relatives who live in his house for a variety of reasons, whether to study or to help the kyai run the pesantren. The members of ndalem have been considered as important as kyai within the pesantren tradition. The concept of barākah, which is crucial in understanding some ‘irrational’ acts by the members of the pesantren community, such as competing to kiss the hand of the kyai or to drink from his glass, is believed also to extend to ndalem. This can clearly be seen from pesantren values as prescribed in some kitab kuning, the main texts used in a pesantren community. As clearly stated by al-Zarnuji in his ‘Ta’lim al-Muta’allim,’ respecting the members of ndalem, in order to obtain the barākah of the kyai, is considered as part of respecting the kyai himself.

Revering the teacher includes respecting the teacher’s children and those related to him. Imam Burhan al-Din, the author of the Hidayah, narrated that one of the greatest imams of Bukhara used to sit when lecturing and at times rose in the middle of his discourse. When asked the reason [for rising] he explained, “The son of my teacher was playing with the boys on the street and sometimes came to the gate of the mosque. As often as I saw him, I arose for him in order to honour my teacher.” (al-Zarnuji, 2003)

The special position of ndalem in Komplek L was confirmed by Agussalim, a former lurah during the late period of Kyai Ahmad’s leadership. He pointed out in our interview that Bu Nyai was often directly involved in recruiting new santri, especially from Cirebon and Indramayu (Personal communication, 25 May 2010). As the daughter of a well-known kyai in Cirebon, Bu Nyai has some influence in giving advice to parents.
in both cities as to whether they should send their children to Komplek L or to another Komplek at Pesantren al-Munawwir. Agussalim showed me an old book of santri registrations, in which I could see from the list that nearly 20 per cent came from Cirebon or Indramayu. Salam, another former lurah at Komplek L, who also has a blood relationship with Bu Nyai, told me that “the position of ndalem, although it is not officially mentioned in the structural organisation of Komplek L, is similar to the position of Kyai, which is above the lurah” (Personal communication, 26 February 2010).

The position of ndalem, especially Bu Nyai, in Komplek L had an even more significant influence during the transformation period. When Kyai Ahmad died and Gus Munawwar was not yet ready to take over the leadership, Bu Nyai played a crucial role in directing most policies that were adopted by the board, which had to consult with her before taking any important decisions that affected the everyday life of santri. For example, when the board wanted to raise the tuition fee to support the operation of the madrasah, they had to obtain permission from Gus Munawwar through Bu Nyai. She also organised majeg [meal plan] for the santri at Komplek L, including handling the fees for it. She even occasionally asked the treasurer for funds to provide food or snacks during regular and special events, such as weekly Jam’iyyahan, khaul (the celebration to remember the death of Kyai Ahmad and KH. M. Moenawwir), and ro’an (working together to clean the Komplek or build a new building).

Bu Nyai was not the only member of ndalem to give support to Gus Munawwar’s leadership. Members of Kyai Ahmad’s extended family, who were at the time staying at Komplek L, also made a significant contribution to running its everyday affairs. For example, Gus Hafid, a cousin of Gus Munawwar, helped to organise the madrasah, teach the Qur’an, and sometimes lead daily prayers at the langgar. Although he has his own pesantren in Klaten, around 60 km from Komplek L, he continues to support the learning processes at Komplek L, as his father had done for several years during Kyai

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38 Jam’iyyahan literally means ‘get together.’ In Komplek L, jam’iyyahan is held every Thursday night after conducting Isya’ prayer. All santri are obliged to attend and participate. The agenda includes reciting the Qur’an as the opening of the event, followed by a reading of shalawat burdah, shalawat Diba’ or ratib haddad, sometimes accompanied by rebana [tambourines] and other instruments, practising speeches for new santri, and concluding with the mauidlotul hasanah [general speech] by a senior santri or a guest speaker. This event runs for about two hours.
Ahmad’s final illness. He successfully ran the madrasah and the pengajian Qur’an because most santri perceived him as a member of ndalem, who had to be respected in the same way as the kyai (Personal communication with Gus Dzakir, 21 April 2010).

Thus, at Komplek L, it is clear that ndalem have played an important role in helping most activities to run smoothly. Although they are not formally listed in the organisational structure, they are believed to share the kyai’s authority in directing the policies of Komplek L, especially during the leadership transition from Kyai Ahmad to Gus Munawwar. The strong position of ndalem at Komplek L has also been supported by most ustaz, who provide both theological arguments for, and living examples of, how santri should perceive them and behave towards them.

4.2.3. Ustadz

The third important element of the social structure at Komplek L is the ustaz [teacher]. In this, a traditional Islamic educational institution which uses the madrasah system, the ustaz are influential, and to some extent are considered to be direct representatives of the kyai, especially since some ustaz are chosen directly by the kyai. At Komplek L most ustaz are chosen from among senior santri and alumni, or even from among scholars who have no direct relationship with Komplek L but who live nearby and have a reputation for having acquired outstanding Islamic knowledge. More importantly, the ustaz need to be very dedicated people, because teaching at the madrasah in Komplek L, as at other traditional Islamic educational institutions, can be categorised as a voluntary job. The only direct benefit is a good reputation, not only among the santri, but also among people around the pesantren, but most ustaz believe that in return for teaching at Komplek L they will gain barakah.

Suhadi, for example, an alumnus who succeeded in running a printing business, told me of Kyai Ahmad’s barakah as part of his success story.

I started my printing business while I was studying at Komplek L. It can be said that I started this business with nothing, except high spirits. I started by going door to door to schools or other institutions offering to make their personal calendar or ID cards. It was not easy to start a business in this field because there were so many competitors. However, being a santri of Kyai Ahmad gave me a better chance in dealing with people in the Bantul region. Some formal madrasah, including Pesantren al-Munawwar, started to give me a chance to print their calendar and ID cards. Since then, orders came one after another and I did not need to go door to door again offering my products. In all, I would say that being a santri of Kyai Ahmad and an ustaz at Komplek L during the leadership of Gus Munawwar gave
me a greater chance to develop my business. (Personal communication, 23 February 2010)

Like ndalem, ustadz have shared the authority of kyai, especially in shaping and directing the behaviour of santri. Some senior ustadz are even considered to have a similar level of authority as the kyai, particularly in Komplek L, where the current kyai (Gus Munawwar) is seen as lacking experience in leading a pesantren with hundreds of santri. Their mastery of Islamic teachings, combined with their long experience of being santri of Kyai Ahmad, has made the ustadz important figures at Komplek L, not only for the santri but also for Gus Munawwar, helping him, for example, by introducing Kyai Ahmad’s former colleagues and followers, or even the alumni of Komplek L. Keeping a good relationship with these people is very important for the continuity of Komplek L because the parents or relatives of most current santri were santri or followers of Kyai Ahmad. They can also be an important source of funding to support the daily activities of santri, including the building of a new infrastructure at Komplek L.

Currently, four ustadz at the madrasah come from outside Komplek L. Three of these are alumni of Komplek L and one is a former student of Kyai Ahmad who stayed at a different Komplek. All of them live around Komplek L and have their own businesses, ranging from a printing business to kelontong\(^{39}\) shops. Other ustadz are senior santri who still stay at Komplek L. Most of them have previous experience at other pesantren, such as Pesantren Lirboyo in Kediri, Pesantren Tambak Beras in Jombang, and Pesantren Buntet in Cirebon. It is understandable that some ustadz are seen by santri as role models, and are highly respected for their educational backgrounds or, at least, for their success in balancing their Islamic learning and entrepreneurial abilities.

Budi, a santri from Jakarta, clearly expressed his respect for one of his favourite ustadz in Komplek L:

As the most senior ustadz, who has succeeded not only in acquiring outstanding knowledge of Islam but also in his daily life as a businessman, Pak Hadi can be a source of inspiration for us to plan our future. His dedication in teaching at Komplek L in the midst of his busy schedule as a businessman should be highly appreciated by all santri. Sometimes I feel ashamed when he has had to wait for us in class. But

\(^{39}\) Kelontong shops sell almost every item needed for everyday life, such as soap, snacks, bread, and medicine. They are similar to a minimarket but simpler in form. Most kelontong shops around the pesantren use the front of the owner’s house to display the items.
Fortunately Pak Hadi is so patient with the various attitudes of santri. He always
smiles when certain santri make trouble in class. (Personal communication, 23 April
2010)

Similarly, some younger ustaz also respect senior ustaz and see them as their role
model. For example, Ustadz Rofi’i, who was appointed to teach at the madrasah last
year, expressed his admiration for Ustadz Maman, who recently succeeded in becoming
a lecturer at Gadjah Mada University:

I am impressed with the commitment of Ustadz Maman in teaching at this madrasah
in the middle of his busy schedule as a new lecturer at Gadjah Mada University
(UGM). For me, he gives an excellent example to other santri that nothing is
impossible if we really work hard to reach what we want. The fact that he is not an
alumnus of UGM (for his BA), but was able to become a lecturer at UGM, is an
outstanding achievement. Perhaps, this is a barākah for being an ustaz here.
(Personal communication, 3 June 2010)

The above passage highlights the importance of ustaz in directing and shaping the lives
of santri. For Budi and other santri, ustaz, especially those who have succeeded
materially in their lives, such as Pak Hadi or Ustadz Maman, have set a good example,
giving those who graduate from the pesantren a positive perception of their future.

Seniority, among the ustaz at Komplek L, indicates a higher level of authority.
Junior ustaz have less influence on the santri, except for those ustaz who have an
especially close relationship to the kyai. Although within the structural body of Komplek
L ustaz are placed below lurah, in practice the opposite is true, and the lurah of
Komplek L seem to have less influence than senior ustaz. When I was invited, as an
alumnus, to a meeting at the madrasah to discuss its curriculum, the dominance of
senior ustaz in the decision making process was obvious. Salam, the lurah of Komplek
L at that time, explained to me after the meeting that he was delighted with the active
role of senior ustaz, though he felt unhappy when his suggestion of using some recent
books as part of the curriculum for the highest level at the madrasah was rejected by
Pak Hadi (Personal communication, 7 June 2010).

The importance of ustaz in determining the success of the santri’s activities is
evident. Their integrity and experience in dealing with the everyday lives of santri, and
their close relationship with the kyai and other members of the ndalem, place them in a
special position within Komplek L. Although, according to the structural organisation of
Komplek L, the official position of all ustaz is subordinate to the lurah, some of them
have more influence than the lurah because of their status as alumni, which clearly indicate that seniority is important within the pesantren community.

4.2.4. Santri

The lowest status in the social structure of Komplek L is that of santri. In Komplek L there are around 145 santri from across Java. The largest proportion of them, nearly 20 per cent, comes from the region of Cirebon, including districts like Indramayu, Majalengka, and Kuningan. The second largest proportion comes from the Tegal and Brebes areas. The rest come from almost all regions across Java. Only five santri come from outside Java: three from Sumatera and two from Kalimantan. According to Andhika, the secretary of the Komplek, the number of santri active at Komplek L may actually be more than that, because there are some who have stayed in rented accommodation outside the pesantren since the earthquake in 2006 destroyed most of their rooms.

Andhika further explained that those 145 santri have to share 18 rooms, 16 of which are divided among five blocks: L-Paska, with three rooms reserved for the board members and huffadz santri; L-Baru, with four rooms that are mostly used for high school level santri; L-Villa, with two rooms designated for those at university level; a room called L-Kandang, provided for senior santri; and L-Ndalem, with six rooms designated only for those who want to have meal plans with Bu Nyai (Personal communication, 27 December 2009). Two rooms at Musāla are provided for santri at university level who are intending to memorise the Qur’an. However, in practice, this division is not strictly applied. I met some santri at university level who stay in L-Baru, which designated for high school santri.
When I talked to Tahripuddin, a new graduate from UIN Sunan Kalijaga who stays at L-Baru, he explained that it is hard for the board members to strictly apply the rule, for several reasons. First, it is hard to separate two brothers or close relatives, especially when their parents have asked the kyai to put their sons in one room. Second, there is a strong preference among the santri to stay with those who come from the same village or city. Third, some senior santri are intentionally spread across the several blocks to supervise all the santri’s activities (Personal communication, 7 January 2010). In L-Paska, however, the rules are strictly applied. One room is reserved for those who wish to memorise the Qur’an and two other rooms are provided for those who have become board members and for guests who want to stay overnight at Komplek L.

4.2.4.1. Board Members

The main function of the board members is to ensure that all activities of the santri are run smoothly. The board consists of a lurah, a vice-lurah, a secretary, a treasurer, and five department coordinators, and its members are known as pengurus harian [Lit. the daily board]. The five departments are: Inventaris [Inventory], Keamanan dan Konseling [Security and Counselling], Kesehatan Lingkungan [Environmental Health],

**Figure 4.3. Formal Education of Santri at Komplek L**

Source: Data Santri at Komplek L 2010/2011, combined with personal communication with Andhika, secretary of Komplek L, 27 December 2009
Humas [Public Relations], and Sosial dan Budaya [Social and Cultural]. Each has around two or three santri. Board members are changed every year through an election, which is commonly held on the night of the last Thursday of August or the first Thursday of September, during Jam’iyyahan.

Within the structural organisation of Komplek L, as shown in Figure 4.4, there is one independent body, called Madin or Madrasah Diniyah, which has its own board members, and which has responsibility for conducting all learning activities in Komplek L. Besides this, some ustadz and alumni who live around the pesantren are included in an advisory board to give necessary advice, especially to pengurus harian, in implementing their programs, and some former pengurus harian, who have not been re-elected, are still involved within the structural organisation as a supervisory board (Personal communication with Andhika, 29 December 2010).

![Organisational Structure of Komplek L](image)

**Figure 4.4. Organisational Structure of Komplek L**

During the first week after the lurah has been elected, with the final approval from the kyai, he and other candidates have to discuss and choose fellow santri to fill all available positions. The elected board members must then make their programs for the year. Most of them just follow previous programs, with small modifications, especially
related to technical issues such as times, speakers, guests, and topics of events. Normally each section will have two or three regular activities and one special event or occasion to commemorate the Islamic holidays.

*Departemen Sosial dan Budaya* [Social and Cultural], for instance, have marked some Islamic holidays, such as *Maulid Nabi* [the Prophet’s Birthday] and Islamic New Year, with competitions among the *santri*, both individually and in groups based on the five blocks or the hometowns of the *santri*. Budi, a board member of this department, gave an example of activities that were held to commemorate the Islamic New Year:

Two months ago, in the first of *Muharam* (the first month in *Hijriyah*, Islamic lunar calendar system), we held some competitions among the *santri* at Komplek L, such as *Qiro’atul Qur’an* [reading the Qur’an], *Qiro’atul Kutub* [reading the *kitab kuning*], and Islamic calligraphy. We even invited *santri* from other komplek to participate in a soccer competition called ‘Komplek L Cup.’ (Personal communication, 25 February 2010)

Fahmi, another board member, who accompanied Budi during our conversation, added that although “we did not provide expensive prizes for the winner, all participants were very excited because of the ethnicity or regional issue” (Personal communication, 25 February 2010). As the *santri* of Komplek L come from many regions or cities across the country, local sentiment sometimes colours their everyday lives, including through the tendency among them to share a room with fellow *santri* from the same or nearby regions.

The *santri* of Komplek L meet almost all of their own needs and run their own activities, even in dealing with people outside the *pesantren*, with the support of the board members. *Departemen Keamanan dan Konseling* [Security and Counselling Department], for instance, besides having responsibility for ensuring safety in Komplek L, also has responsibility for participating in *ronda* [patrolling] every Wednesday night, starting at 10 pm. Usually three or four *santri* will be sent to take part, They have to stay at *pos ronda* [patrol post], which is located around 300 metres from Komplek L.

According to Tahripuddin, the Security Section coordinator,

[t]hose who stay at *pos ronda* have to walk around the village at least two times. First, at around 12.30 am to observe the situation around the village. Second, at
around 2.30 am to take *jumputan*\(^40\) from any house and bring them home. Sometimes, they cook the rice directly after the *ronda* is over for *sahur* [eat in early morning before the sunrise] because some of them fast [during the day] on Thursday. (Personal communication, 26 February 2010)

According to Salam, a former *lurah* of Komplek L, this sort of involvement in the village’s activities was ordered a long time ago by Kyai Ahmad, to keep a good relationship with people around Komplek L (Personal communication, 23 February 2010).

Perhaps the most important section of the structural organisation is *Madrasah Diniyah*. This section has more members than the others. In the period 2009 to 2010, it had six members and one coordinator. They have responsibility for running learning activities in Komplek L on a daily basis, ranging from finding *ustadz* to providing the *kitab kuning* that are used at all levels of the madrasah. Compared to those of other sections, the members of this section have a closer relationship with the *kyai*, which gives them more prestige in the eyes of *santri*. However, being a member of the *Seksi Madrasah Diniyah* is not as easy as working in other sections.

According to Salam, the former *lurah*, there are three considerations when including *santri* in this section. First, the *santri* has to be widely recognised for his Islamic knowledge. Most *santri* who join this section already have a *pesantren* background before staying at Komplek L. Second, *santri* have to have been at Komplek L for at least one year. The final consideration, and perhaps the most unpredictable, is permission from the *kyai*. Although many *santri* may pass the first two requirements, only a few will be given permission to join this section. *Santri* believe that the *kyai* has his own reasons for choosing certain *santri* to help run the madrasah and this is commonly considered as part of his *karāmah* (Personal communication, 2 March 2010).

For most *santri*, being a member of the board is a good opportunity to develop their leadership skills in a practical situation. The various backgrounds of *santri*, their different ethnicities, cultures, and knowledge, present board members with an interesting challenge, not only in terms of how to live according to Islamic teachings but also how to exercise social skills in communicating with others. Fitri, an alumnus who became

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\(^{40}\) *Jumputan* refers to a small cup of rice collected from every household in the village every night. The amount of rice might vary depending on the agreement made during the village’s meeting. Every household is obliged to put their *jumputan* in front of their house, to be collected by people who do *ronda*. However, there is no social sanction for those who forget or have no rice to provide on a regular basis.

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kepala desa [head of village] in his hometown, said that his experience of being a board member was helpful in dealing with his daily activities:

I remember when I was a member of Seksi Humas [Public Relations Section], I had not only to deal with the santri but was also actively involved in the village’s activities. I learnt a lot from being involved in the village’s meetings, social events, and so forth. At least, when I became kepala desa, which I had never imagined before, I already knew how to and was used to facing people with different backgrounds and interests. (Personal communication, 27 March 2010)

A similar experience was recounted by Sardi, an alumnus from Cilacap, who has currently become a school principal in his hometown. He felt that being a board member at Komplek L had helped him learn how to maintain good relationships with both students and fellow teachers at school (Personal communication, 24 May 2010).

Being a board member also gives prestige. As a board member, a santri is seen as a badal or representative of the kyai in running the pesantren. Although the kyai is considered the only person within the pesantren with absolute authority in the decision making process, the board members have a better chance than do other regular santri to offer their opinions to the kyai before he decides on policies. Moreover, according to Salam, a former lurah at Komplek L, Kyai Ahmad was known as a moderate figure, who always considered the board’s opinions before taking any decision related to the needs of santri (Personal communication, 25 March 2010). Sulaiman, a ndalem santri, gave an interesting anecdote related to Kyai Ahmad’s moderate view:

In 1994, when the World Cup was held in the USA, many santri went out from the pesantren in the early morning to watch the soccer game in warung makan [eateries] or other shops. Although this action was considered as prohibited, the number of those who broke the law was very large, and included some board members. At that time, all komplek within Pesantren al-Munawwir forbade their santri to watch television. Considering this situation, the lurah of Komplek L took the initiative to sowan [visit] Kyai Ahmad and asked for his permission to have a television set for the santri, instead of watching outside Komplek L. After considering the arguments of the lurah, Kyai Ahmad gave his permission and asked the lurah to have a meeting with the board members to discuss how to buy a television set and to set a particular time for santri to watch it. (Personal communication, 5 May 2010)

This close relationship shows how a board member shares some of the authority of the kyai in running the pesantren. Even though, at the structural level, board members are considered less authoritative than ustadz, especially regarding the way they are chosen, being part of the board is still considered prestigious. The board has, in fact, more intense interaction with the kyai than do the ustadz. Moreover, the requirements for
being a member of the board are not as onerous as for being an *ustadz* at Komplek L, so most *santri* prefer the former option. Andi, a *santri* from Jakarta, states that he has no dream of being an *ustadz* at Komplek L, because he feels that he has not enough knowledge of Islam, though he can read the *kitab kuning*.

It is hard to be an *ustadz* here. We have to have a broad knowledge of Islam, not only the ability to read the *kitab kuning*, but more importantly to have the ability to understand and teach them to the students. Moreover, being an *ustadz* also needs high commitment, including our willingness to stay here although we have graduated from our study at the university. For me, being a member of the board is more reasonable, in terms of the time management, and more importantly, it will give me enough experience when I have to return to my hometown. (Personal communication, 24 April 2010)

4.2.4.2. Kinds of Santri

Apart from the hierarchical division into board members and regular *santri*, the *santri* of Komplek L can also be divided into *santri mukim* and *santri kalong*. *Santri mukim* stay at Komplek L, while *santri kalong* follow the *madrasah* or other activities at Komplek L, but live outside. Both types of *santri* have to obtain permission from the *kyai* and the board before they can be involved in any activities, but there are some differences in requirements for them. *Santri mukim* must be accompanied by their parents or relatives when asking permission to stay at Komplek L. They also have to pay fees, such as for room and electricity, tuition for the *madrasah*, and a voluntary donation for building development. These fees are usually paid in advance before the new *santri* commence their study at Komplek L. In some cases, according to Andika, the secretary of Komplek L, new *santri* may seek a waiver of these fees if they are not able to pay, and usually the *kyai* will instruct the board members not to take fees from certain *santri* (Personal communication, 19 January 2010).

*Santri mukim* and *santri kalong* also have different responsibilities. *Santri mukim* must obey all Komplek L rules, including to pray in congregation for *Maghrib*, *Isya’*, and *Shubuh* prayers, to use *sarung* [skirt] and *peci* [skullcap] when attending all activities, not to leave Komplek L between 11 pm and 5 am, and to show respect to the *kyai*, *ndalem*, *ustadz*, board members, and fellow *santri*. There are also written sanctions for those who break the rules. These are divided into three levels of severity. First, those who break the rules will be given an admonition or a written warning. Second, they will be asked to clean bathrooms or other public facilities in Komplek L as a punishment.
The third level is to return them to their parents. Before this last punishment is given, the board has to consult with the kyai, who decides whether or not the santri will be expelled from Komplek L.

Santri kalong are not constrained by these rules. Their only responsibility is to follow certain activities at Komplek L which suit their needs, and to show a high level of respect to the kyai and the ustadz. There is no written sanction governing them. However, if they disrupt the activities or are considered by the ustadz as trouble makers, they can be expelled and prohibited from attending all activities at Komplek L. Their number has significantly decreased since the death of Kyai Ahmad, and there have been no new santri kalong except for those who moved to rented rooms around Komplek L during the earthquake and decided to stay. Currently, according to Andika, there are only four or five who are actively involved in the madrasah and pengajian Qur’an.

4.3. Conclusion

It is clear that there is a structure of hierarchical authority framing everyday life at Komplek L. Although, as many people assume, a pesantren is like a small kingdom, where the kyai is considered the ‘king,’ with absolute authority, the ndalem, ustadz, and board are also influential in governing the santri’s activities. Each element of Komplek L contributes to the development of its learning processes. It is impossible for the kyai to handle all the learning activities, especially since the establishment of the madrasah system, which divided santri into four levels or classes and offered various subjects in Islamic knowledge. The kyai must therefore share his authority with other elements of the hierarchy to ensure that the system at Komplek L runs successfully, but he is still considered the most authoritative person because of his status as the pesantren’s owner, and his ability to bestow barakah and perform acts of karāmah.

Although modern notions of administration are evident in Komplek L, especially through the establishment of the board and the madrasah system, the relationships among its various status groups are mostly based on trust rather than on written rules. The election of the lurah and the designation of ustadz, for instance, clearly show that written rules do not mean anything if the kyai wants something different. This is also evident where punishment is being meted out. Although the written rule says that a santri who steals the property of Komplek L or of fellow santri will be expelled from...
the pesantren, if the kyai or ndalem prefer not to send him back to his parents the written rule will be set aside (Personal communication with Salam, 20 January 2010). So, in the daily relationships among the members of Komplek L, it is apparent that there is always an ‘invisible hand’ operating behind the written rules. This ‘invisible hand’ is commonly seen by santri as part of the karāmah of the kyai, who is believed to know the reasons why certain santri break the rules and why they should not be expelled from Komplek L.
Chapter Five

Portrait of a Charismatic Kyai

This year, 2010, the khaul of KH. M. Moenawwir is held on Monday night, 23 May. A tradition in many pesantren, khaul of their founders is always considered a special event, especially for their alumni. I hope I can meet many alumni during this event to explore their attitudes toward the kyai as the descendant of the founder. The kyai asked me, as one of the alumni, to welcome guests who will sowan [visit] him. Therefore, since the afternoon, I have been ready at L Block of Pesantren al-Munawwir to fulfil this task. Using traditional sarung, combined with a long-sleeved shirt of batik, and more importantly, wearing a traditional peci (brimless stiff hat, usually made of black velvet), I have been sitting in front of the kyai’s house, just on the left side of the entrance door, where I would be able to greet the guests as they arrived.

The kyai’s house is decorated to welcome everyone who wants to visit him. Two large red carpets are stretched in its living room. A large table full with a variety of foods is also placed in the room. I see some guests are in a queue for the food, while others are involved in light conversation, waiting for the kyai to come out from his room. Some santri are busy carrying glasses of tea, while other santri are taking out dishes that have been used by guests.

I then turned my attention to two motorcycles that just entering the gates. A santri seemed to advise the guests to park both motorcycles in the parking area in the south of the kyai’s house. I noticed that the parking area was previously a two-story building, consisting of 15 rooms for santri, but it was now gone, due to the earthquake three years ago.

Suddenly, someone tapped on my shoulder and gave a greeting. I turned around and said to him, “Wow, it seems we have a guest from far away!” He is Ali Imron, one of the alumni from Surabaya, East Java. We stayed in the same room at the pesantren around seven years ago and we also went to the same university at IAIN Sunan Kalijaga. After having a short chat, I told him to go inside the kyai’s house to sowan. But he said spontaneously, “I will do it later, take it is easy man!” Sulaiman from Bantul, another santri who also has the same duty to greet the guests, said, “Well, be careful what you are saying, so you will not be kuwalat [cursed]!” In a humorous way, Ali replied, “Are you sure Kyai would get you cursed? So, what is the difference between him and a cat?” After that, he went to Panjaitan Street to see the many merchants along the street offering various items, ranging from foods, drinks, and toys, to Islamic articles such as the Qur’an, sarung, and hijab. I saw Sulaiman just shake his head. (Fieldnote, 24 May 2010)

As is evident from this passage from my fieldnotes, the charisma of the kyai is commonly perceived by his santri as not only related to his ability to demonstrate karâmah [supernatural powers], but also as related closely to his ability to give barâkah [blessing] or cause kuwalat [misfortune] to others. This perception can be inferred from the various responses given to me when I ask santri about the charisma of their kyai.
Some give examples of his extraordinary powers, such as flying, being seen in different places at the same time, or his involvement in magical contestations. Others explain that the charisma of their kyi is related more to the unexpected benefits they got from obeying him or, as shown in the above excerpt from my fieldnotes, indicate yet another aspect, which relates to the concept of kuwalat. In consideration of these various responses, I argue that the charisma of the kyi, and the process of transmitting this charisma to others, specifically to his successor, is not as simple a concept as many might think. Charisma is commonly described in scholarly literature as hereditary, but in fact it also involves serious efforts by the successor to obtain the charismatic qualities, and an active role by the elite group in fostering the charisma of the new leader. In this chapter, I will show first a portrait of the charismatic kyi and illustrate the possibility of transmitting charisma within the daily activities of a traditional pesantren, specifically at Komplek L Pesantren al-Munawwir, Yogyakarta. Then, in the following chapter, I will further discuss the transmission process, including those efforts made by the successor, and the role of the elite group.

5.1. Barakah and Karāmah of the Late KH. Ahmad Munawwir

Among the kyi at Pesantren al-Munawwir, KH. Ahmad Munawwir (Kyai Ahmad) is famous for his expertise in teaching al-Qur’an and also for his supernatural feats. Before deciding to build his own pesantren in 1967, Kyai Ahmad taught the Qur’an at the Pesantren al-Munawwir mosque for several years, filling the position of KH. Abdul Qadir Munawwir, who passed away on February 2, 1961. KH. Hasyim Syafi’i, leader of Pesantren Miftshul Ulum II in Bantul, told me that al-maghfurlah Khai Ahmad is the youngest kyi to have taught the Qur’an at this mosque. Some of his santri were older than he was (Personal communication, 23 December 2009). Nasrullah, an alumnus from Grobogan, Central Java also gave evidence of Kyai Ahmad’s integrity in mastering Qur’anic knowledge, stating that he was able to memorise the Qur’an not only in the normal way, but also in hafalan sungsang [reversed memorisation]. This means that he was able to recite the Qur’an page by page from the back to the front. This feat is

41 The word ‘al-maghfurlah’ literally means ‘God forgives him.’ It is used as a term of respect, but most specifically for a kyi who has passed away. It is commonly placed in front of the person’s name. Another similar term that is used more generally is ‘almarhum’ [beloved] and this can be used before or after the name of a person.
confirmed by Kyai Ahmad’s most loyal santri, KH. Ibrahim from Banyuwangi, better known by most santri at Komplek L as Mbah Brahim, who helped Kyai Ahmad build his pesantren in 1967. (Personal communication, 29 December 2009).

Agussalim, a former lurah of Komplek L from 1997 to 1999, noted that the way Kyai Ahmad taught the Qur’an to his santri had shown his exceptional ability. Every evening, except for Thursday night, after performing Maghrib prayer in congregation at around 6.15 pm, all santri were obliged to recite the Qur’an individually in front of him, the section depending on which surah they had read the previous night. All santri sat in four lines in front of a rectangular table, two lines in front of Kyai Ahmad, and the other two on his right and left sides. Pengajian al-Qur’an [Qur’anic learning]\(^{12}\) started with the recitation by all santri of Surah al-Fatiha [the Opener, the first surah in the Qur’an], after Kyai Ahmad gave a sign by hitting the table twice with a small stick made of rattan wood. At the completion of the recitation, Kyai Ahmad hit the table once to signal that those who sat in front of him should read their own part of the surah out loud. Others should read to themselves to practise while waiting for their turn. When a santri made a mistake, Kyai Ahmad would signal this by hitting the table in front of that santri and give instruction on how to read properly. Occasionally, Kyai Ahmad asked certain santri, especially those who were memorising the Qur’an, to sit on his left and right sides and asked them to start their memorisation. Listening to six santri who read different surah at the same time, and being able to correct them when they made mistakes was an exceptional feat. Each santri usually repeated his surah four to six times, depending on Kyai Ahmad’s instruction. When he felt a particular santri had recited his surah enough, Kyai Ahmad signalled this by hitting the table twice in front of that santri, who then kissed the kyai’s hand before leaving the room. As they kissed his

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\(^{12}\) In Komplek L, pengajian al-Qur’an consists of reciting al-fatiha, doa tasyahud akhir [a prayer that has to be read during the last sitting in shalar], juz amma [30th juz of the Qur’an] starting from surah an-Nas [the People] up to surah an-Naba’ [the Great News]. All santri are obliged to memorise these. Then, seven special surah are recited: al-Mulk [Dominion], al-Waqi’ah [Event], ar-Rahman [Most Gracious], ad-Dukhon [Smoke], Yaa sin [one of the names of Prophet Muhammad], as-Sajdah [Prostration], and al-Kahfi [Cave]. It is strongly recommended that these special surah be read bil ghaib [without seeing the texts] by all santri. After finishing them, santri start to read from juz 1 or surah al-Baqarah [Cow] to the end of the Qur’an bin nadlor [seeing the texts] (for santri who do not intend to memorise the Qur’an). In each pengajian Qur’an, santri would only read one page in front of Kyai Ahmad and repeat it several times until Kyai Ahmad gave a sign to finish. Usually it takes three years for santri to completely finish pengajian al-Qur’an bin-nadlor (Personal communication with Maman, an ustaz at Madrasah Salafiyah IV, 12 June 2010).
hand, Kyai Ahmad would tell the santri whether they had to repeat their surah in the next pengajian or continue to another surah. (Personal communication, 24 April 2010)

There is an unwritten rule related to the way santri should leave the pengajian. A santri has to remain jalan jongkok kebelakang [squatting backward] until he is the last santri in the line, before he is allowed to stand up and walk out from the musāla. This is considered a form of respect to the kyai, although there is no punishment for those who do not do it, except for being stamped by others as impolite. Besides this, santri have to follow the adab [etiquette] in ngaji Qur’an, which includes wearing a sarong, long-sleeved shirt, and peci [special hat] during the pengajian and always having wudlu [ablution].

It seems that Kyai Ahmad’s ability in mastering Qur’anic knowledge became one of the attributes of his charisma. As mentioned by Nasrullah, many people made sowan [visit] to Kyai Ahmad because they wanted to receive barākah from ahli Qur’an [Qur’anic expert]. For some people, even sending their son as santri ndalem was seen as an honour. For them, whether their son would have an opportunity for ngaji or not, was not a big problem. They believed that by serving the daily needs of ahli Qur’an sincerely, the son would become someone important in the future (Personal communication, 29 December 2009). This kind of belief is still deeply rooted in the hearts of traditional Muslims in Indonesia, especially those who have a pesantren background. A similar reason underlies the motivation for santri to stay at Komplek L. Gus Adhin, one of the huffadz santri, asserts that instead of staying at Madrasah Huffadz, which is located beside the pesantren mosque, he prefers to stay at Komplek L to seek the barākah of al-maghfurlah Kyai Ahmad, even though he has to setor hapalan [perform the memorised Qur’an] every day to KH. Nadjib Abdul Qadir, the leader of Madrasah Huffadz at Pesantren al-Munawwir (Personal communication, 5 March 2010).

From the perspective of santri, barākah is not limited only to when the kyai is alive, but it is also believed to exist after he has passed away. This concept of perpetual barākah can be seen in the tradition of the huffadz santri, of reciting the entire Qur’an at their kyai’s tomb when they have completed their memorisation. Nasrullah, a santri of Kyai Ahmad, who succeeded in memorising the entire Qur’an several years before Kyai Ahmad passed away, even followed this tradition when he learned of his death.
Nasrullah went to Kyai Ahmad’s tomb and spent the whole day reciting the entire Quran (Personal communication, 30 December 2009). For the santri, seeking barākah of the kyai is very urgent, and it may be done through any means that they believe will please him, even after his death.

The results of activities seeking barākah cannot be predicted, but many santri are quite satisfied with the testimony of some of those who are supposed to have received it. Suyanto tells a story of his older brother who, like him, became a ndalem santri of Kyai Ahmad. “Right now, my brother Samidi lives happily with his family because of the barākah of Kyai Ahmad. If we think of my brother’s activities during his stay here, he was only serving the daily needs of Kyai Ahmad and his family, such as cooking, washing, and so forth, except for a bit of an opportunity to study the Qur’an with Kyai Ahmad. But now, he can get rizqi [good fortune] from anywhere. All of this comes from the barākah of Kyai Ahmad” (Personal communication, 7 January 2010). When I asked him to elaborate his statement, he mentioned verses from the Qur’an (65:2-3): “And for those who fear Allah, He (ever) prepares a way out, And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine.” According to Suyanto, obeying the kyai is a part of obeying God.

A similar story is told by Sardi, an alumnus from Cilacap, who took care of Kyai Ahmad during his sickness, until he passed away. “Many of my fellow santri did not believe me when I told them that I become a school principal in my hometown. They only knew me as a santri who sold foods at Komplek L and served Kyai Ahmad” (Personal communication, 24 May 2010). He further explained to me that he himself could not believe that he obtained this position so quickly after returning from Komplek L. Irfangi, another alumnus from Kebumen, commented:

When Sardi told me that he had become a school principal, I could not believe him. I knew he took a bachelor’s degree in education, but he was very busy selling indomie rebus [boiled instant noodle] and drinks every night, and then stopped selling them when he was ordered to take care of Kyai Ahmad almost every night. So, I did not even know whether or not he graduated from his study. (Personal communication, 24 May 2010)

These success stories are undeniable evidence of Kyai Ahmad’s barākah. Barākah is seen as an inseparable part of the santri’s life at Komplek L. However, the method of obtaining that barākah differs from one santri to another. Some santri, as shown from
stories above, believe that total obedience to the kyai is an unalterable requirement for receiving his barakah. Others, such as Ali Imron, an alumnus from Surabaya, believe that barakah can be obtained from the kyai without giving him extreme respect, by touching or consuming something belonging to him (for example, by kissing his hand or snitching his drink), or by doing particular things to please him. He believes that the main duty of santri is to learn as intensely as possible (Personal communication, 24 May 2010).

The converse of barakah is the concept of kuwalat [misfortune], but this is less in evidence than the former concept. During my fieldwork, I could not find any stories about santri at Komplek L who had suffered kuwalat for not obeying Kyai Ahmad, though some stories of persons who are cursed by their teachers are to be found in kitab kuning taught there. For instance, Ta’limul Muta’alim, one of the most popular books dealing with Islamic ethics in the pesantren world, relates:

The judge Imam Fakhr al-Din al-Arsabandi was the chief Imam in Marwa; the Sultan held him in the highest regard. Fakhr al-Din frequently said, “I have reached this rank only by serving my teacher, for I have served my teacher, Imam abuZayd al-Dabusi. I both waited on him and prepared his food for thirty years, but I never ate anything thereof.” Imam al-Hulwani left Bukhara and settled for some time in a certain town because of an incident which befell him. His students visited him with the exception of Abu Bakr al-Zaranji. When he met him, al-Hulwani asked him, “Why did you not come to visit me?” Abu Bakr replied, “I was occupied serving my mother.” Al-Hulwani answered, “You will obtain a livelihood but you will not attain the splendor of teaching.” And this is just what happened, for [Abu Bakr] lived most of his life in villages and was unable to carry on lectures. Thus one is deprived of the fruits of learning when he slights his teacher, and only in a small way does he profit from his knowledge:

Neither the teacher nor the physician advises you unless he is honoured
So bear your disease patiently if you have wronged its healer and be satisfied with your ignorance if you have wronged a teacher. (al-Zarnuji, 2003, pp. 14-15)

Ali Imron provided me with an interesting analysis regarding barākah, and the dearth of stories involving kuwalat in the actual lives of santri at Komplek L. He said that barākah and kuwalat each require action from both santri and kyai in order to be realised. The concept of barākah requires that santri should actively obey and please their kyai and that the kyai should also be active in praying for the success of his santri. If one or other does not fulfil his role, it is unlikely, or even impossible, that the santri will receive barākah from the kyai. Instances of kuwalat are few because it seems that the kyai would never hope for misfortune for his santri, unless in very exceptional circumstances, if the santri committed a really serious sin. This very rarely occurs, because a charismatic kyai is believed to be a wise person, who has ‘double’ patience (Personal communication, 24 May 2010).

Karāmah is another concept that is supposed to have a direct relationship with the charisma of the kyai. Its Western translation, ‘miracle,’ is similar in meaning to the Islamic term ‘mu’jizah.’ However, mu’jizah is given only to the Prophet, while karāmah is given to waliu'llah, which literally means a lover of God (Amin, 2008; Zainuddin, 2004). Within the pesantren world, some charismatic kyai are considered as wali [lover of God], or are at least known as ‘alim’ [pious person], one who has a very close relationship with God due to his consistency in performing his religious duties and avoiding any of God’s prohibitions. Kyai Ahmad is believed by his santri and people around the pesantren to be included in this category.

Kyai Ahmad’s prowess in performing supernatural feats is widely known among the santri of al-Munawwir and traditional Muslims in Yogyakarta, especially those who live in the Bantul region. It seems that his karāmah is bound to his expertise in Qur’anic teaching. An interesting anecdote to emerge from my discussion with santri about the karāmah of Kyai Ahmad concerns the existence of his ‘special santri,’ who are spirits or jin [jinn]. According to Musthofa, an alumnus from Cilacap, these ‘special santri,’ are believed to learn the Qur’an from Kyai Ahmad. Musthofa said that they were occasionally seen during his stay at Komplek L from 1987 to 1995. They were seen in many forms—sometimes in the shape of women with long hair, or of old men wearing a turban, and so forth. But he asserts that they were usually seen for only a few seconds,
except by certain santri who have a special ability to see spirits (Personal communication, 23 May 2010). Kyai Ibrahim from Banyuwangi, who helped Kyai Ahmad build Komplek L, also told me that there are many jinn learning how to read the Qur’an from Kyai Ahmad (Personal communication, 27 December 2009).

These ‘special santri’ became a common phenomenon within the daily lives of santri at Komplek L, especially before 1994, when Kyai Ahmad was still actively teaching the Qur’an. At that time, there were certain places which were believed to be their ‘homes.’ Luthfi, another alumnus from Bojonegoro, who has the ability to deal with spirits, told me that some of those ‘special santri’ were staying in the guest room—a small room dedicated for guests, mostly the parents of santri, who wanted to sleep overnight at Komplek L, and which is now used for the Komplek L office—and at the left corner of the musāla [small mosque] of Komplek L, particularly around its big column (Personal communication, 24 May 2010). Aziz, an alumnus from Demak said of this column: “Whoever sleeps near this big column, with his head to the north (similar to the position in which Muslims bury a dead person) will be disturbed by the jinn. Sometimes [this person] laughs loudly and suddenly cries during his sleep, until another santri wakes him up” (Personal communication, 23 November 2009).

Luthfi told another story regarding the ‘special santri’ and the high level of Kyai Ahmad’s karāmah. One night, he persuaded three other santri, Aziz, Tomi, and Arif, to tease these ‘special santri.’ Luthfi was the only one who was able to communicate with spirits, and he wanted to show these ‘special santri’ to the others. He devised a plan to place a jacket in front of a santri’s room and ask one of the ‘special santri’ to use it. Luthfi hoped that his friends would able to see, from inside the room, what happened. Luthfi started reading certain verses of the Qur’an and combined them with some wirid to call the ‘special santri.’ Shortly afterward, they clearly heard a sound like footsteps coming from the roof. Luthfi signalled to his friends that one of the ‘special santri’ was coming. Suddenly, with his eyes closed, Luthfi said that the jacket outside the room had been taken away and dumped in a kitchen area, around 20 metres from the room. He asked his friends to find the jacket. It had been dumped in the kitchen as Luthfi said. They put the jacket back before the room, wanting to try to contact the ‘special santri’ again. But, before they could do it for the second time, Kyai Ahmad opened the door of
his house. He did not do anything, except to look into the room where Luthfi and his friends had tried to tease his ‘special santri.’ Kyai Ahmad then closed the door. Feeling safe, they tried to continue the plan. Luthfi closed his eyes and started to read the same wirid, but now, no one came. After trying several times, Luthfi gave up and said that the ‘special santri’ had refused to come because of Kyai Ahmad (Personal communication, 25 May 2010).

Evidence of Kyai Ahmad’s karāmah is found not only in stories about ‘special santri,’ but also in the widespread belief that he had mastered many kinds of ilmu kesaktian [supernatural powers]. Arif, an alumnus from Demak, for example, told a story of Kyai Ahmad’s strength when he was duko [angry]. Arif witnessed Kyai Ahmad easily lift up a motorcycle with one hand and break it into pieces (Personal communication, 24 November 2009). Mbah Brahim also witnessed these supernatural powers, especially during Kyai Ahmad’s early period of staying at his new pesantren. According to Mbah Brahim, when Kyai Ahmad wanted to observe the situation in the area around Komplek L, which at that time was still considered as daerah merah [red area] supporting Communist sympathisers, he used to jump up seven meters high onto a palm tree beside the musāla (Personal communication, 29 December 2009).

These supernatural phenomena have rarely been in evidence since the 1990s. Kyai Ahmad still gave ijazah [authority] to some santri to practise certain riyādah but he did not mention their practical uses, only general spiritual purposes, such as to be more patient or to increase the santri’s ability to memorise the Qur’an. Nasrullah told me a story about Syamsuddin, a huffadz santri from Kulon Progo, who was given ijazah by Kyai Ahmad to fast every day for three years to aid his efforts in memorising the Qur’an. Though Kyai Ahmad had given him this order to fast just to help his memorisation, immediately after he completed it a wealthy family from Gresik asked him to marry their daughter, and he became a teacher of the Qur’an, in Gresik. Many santri believed that this was a result of the three year fast ordered by Kyai Ahmad (Personal communication, 29 December 2009).

However, the karāmah of Kyai Ahmad most commonly experienced by santri was his gift of weruh sak durunge winarah [knowing before someone told him]. Mustofa, an alumnus of Komplek L, told me:
One night, five santri and I went to see a movie in the city. When we got back to the pesantren at 11.30 pm, the gate was closed. The only way to get into the pesantren was to climb a two metre high wall at the back of the pesantren. After waiting for a moment to make sure that no one was watching us, we started to climb the wall and directly sneaked out to our own rooms. Surprisingly, after performing Shalat Shubuh [Morning Prayer] in congregation at the musāla, Kyai Ahmad said to all santri, “Last night, there were six santri who came late and climbed the wall.” He then mentioned our names one by one and ordered us to clean the bathrooms as a punishment. (Personal communication, 24 May 2010)

Another similar event was witnessed by most santri at Komplek L during Yasinan and Tahlilan [for remembering the day of Kyai Ahmad’s death]. When almost all of the santri were gathered at Gus Munawwar’s house for reading Yasiin and Tahlil, an old man, around 50 years of age, came to Kyai Ahmad’s house. He sat on the balcony because the guest room was full with santri and neighbours who wanted to participate in the event. After it was over, the old man went inside the house to meet Gus Munawwar. He told Gus Munawwar that he was a friend of Kyai Ahmad when he stayed at the pesantren in Banyuwangi. He started crying as he said that he had come today because Kyai Ahmad had visited him at his house in Banyuwangi the day before, and ordered him to come. He had not known that Kyai Ahmad already knew of his impending death (Personal communication with Maman, 5 March 2010).

Kyai Ahmad’s mastery of the Qur’an, not only memorising it in its entirety but also practising its teachings in daily life, combined with his ability to bestow barākah and perform karāmah, has given him his reputation as a charismatic kyai among his santri and the people around the pesantren. It is clear that his supernatural power [karāmah] is not the only determining factor in his being seen as a charismatic figure within the pesantren world, and that recognition of his charisma also stems from instances of his barākah that were experienced by, or gave benefit to others. More importantly, his barākah and karāmah indicate the possibility of transmitting this charisma to other people through riyādah and other religious exercises. This process can be seen in the transition of leadership in Komplek L, after Kyai Ahmad died.

5.2. Waiting for Putera Mahkota: A Transition Process

After fighting diabetes mellitus and bronchitis for nearly six years, Kyai Ahmad passed away on 23 Ramadhan 1426 Hijriyah. Thousands of people, including many who came from other cities, gathered at Komplek L to attend his funeral. Kyai Ahmad was
buried in a family cemetery at Dongkelan village, around 1.5 km from Pesantren al-Munawwir. According to Gus Hafidz, the son of Kyai Tanwir, who is currently assisting Gus Munawwar in managing Komplek L, the number of mourners who attended the funeral reflected people’s great appreciation for the contributions made by Kyai Ahmad during his life.

*Shalat Jenazah* [special prayer for a deceased person] had to be performed four times at the pesantren mosque to accommodate those who wanted to give *penghormatan terakhir* [last appreciation] to Kyai Ahmad. For the whole week following the funeral, many people, mostly santri, alumni, and members of the communities around Komplek L, gathered at Kyai Ahmad’s house after *Isya* prayer, to perform *yasinan* [recite Surah Yaasin, the 36th *sura* in the Qur’an] and *tahlilan* [recite certain *dzikr* formulas] (Personal communication, 24 February 2010).

Immediately after Kyai Ahmad’s death, the leadership of Komplek L became a serious issue. Gus Munawwar, his only son, had no choice but to take his father’s position. However, his relatives, as well as some alumni of Komplek L who live in the surrounding areas, saw that Gus Munawwar was still too young to lead the Komplek, and not ready to manage its more than a hundred santri. Most importantly, as Gus Hafidz told me, “We, as his relatives, wanted Gus Munawwar to finish his memorisation of the Qur’an and develop his Islamic knowledge by being a santri at other pesantren. Being a santri at different pesantren, it was thought, would benefit him not only by strengthening his Islamic knowledge, but also by giving him direct experience in dealing with santri. But this is a difficult situation because Gus Munawwar is the only son of Kyai Ahmad. So, he is the only one who has right to fill his father’s position” (Personal communication, 24 February 2010).

After a long discussion among Gus Munawwar’s close relatives and some alumni, two options were raised. The first was to give Gus Munawwar an opportunity to study at different pesantren and let his uncles or other relatives take care of Komplek L. The second option was to provide assistance for him in leading the pesantren, while he learnt Islamic knowledge from his uncles at Pesantren al-Munawwir. Both options, according to Gus Hafidz, had their advantages and disadvantages, in terms of the leadership position at Komplek L. If the first option were chosen, Gus Munawwar would have a
greater chance to develop his Islamic knowledge with other kyai, but he would have no experience of how to deal directly with his own santri. Conversely, choosing the second option would give him direct experience in dealing with his santri, with help from his relatives, but he would have no experience of being a santri in other pesantren, which is very important for the future kyai (Personal communication, 24 February 2010). Finally, after considering the situation and the advice from relatives and alumni, Gus Munawwar decided to stay on weekdays at Komplek L, and at weekends spend two or three days at a pesantren in Kebumen, Central Java, around 110 km from Komplek L.

Fortunately, the pengajian Qur’an at Komplek L had already been taken over, for two years, by KH. Tanwir Asy-Syatibi, one of Gus Munawwar’s uncles, since Kyai Ahmad was unable to teach regularly due to his health problems. So the main activity of santri in ngaji Qur’an was not really disturbed. Because of KH. Tanwir’s expertise and patience in Qur’anic teaching, his santri hold him in high esteem. Tahripudin, an alumnus from Brebes, Central Java, is impressed with the way KH. Tanwir teaches the Qur’an at Komplek L, describing him as a tawadlu’ [humble] teacher, who never felt cleverer than his santri (Personal communication, 4 November 2009). Although KH. Tanwir could not stay full time at Komplek L, due to his responsibility for teaching at his own pesantren at Purworejo, he was able to run the pengajian Qur’an at Komplek L nicely and was seen by most santri as a charismatic kyai.

Senior santri, such as Mbah Brahim and some of the other huffadz santri, have also played an important role in fostering the image of Gus Munawwar as perceived by santri in general. According to Mbah Brahim, the situation of Komplek L was, at least, relatively conducive to the learning process. Pengajian Qur’an ran smoothly, as before, except when KH. Tanwir passed away in 2004, when it stopped for around three months (Personal communication, 29 December 2009) until Mbah Brahim and Gus Adhin, both haffidz Qur’an, decided to take over running it. Gus Munawwar became involved in teaching at Madrasah Diniyah three times each weekday, while also studying at his relative’s pesantren in Kebumen during the weekend. Thus, the support Gus Munawwar received from all parties, especially relatives and alumni, for his involvement in managing the activities of santri helped smooth the leadership transition at Komplek L.
However, it cannot be denied that the relationship between Gus Munawwar and his santri, especially during his early leadership, looked a bit formal and rigid. Sulaiman, a ndalem santri, told me that sometimes Gus Munawwar was hesitant to meet guests, particularly the elders, who wanted to sowan [visit] him, especially when they asked for special doa [prayer] for some purpose or other. So he usually asked a senior santri, who might know those elders better, to accompany him (Personal communication, 2 February 2010). The role of his mother, Ibu Nyai Hj. Shofiyah, in this kind of situation is also important. In many cases, she was able to act as ice breaker when dealing with guests and santri at Komplek L. Her role in softening the leadership transition process is widely recognised by alumni, as is described by Suhadi, an alumna from Blitar, who also helped in teaching at Madrasah Diniyah Komplek L: “All santri and people around the pesantren still show great respect for Ibu Nyai. The central position of Ibu Nyai in assisting Gus Munawwar dealing with almost all aspects of leadership is undeniable” (Personal communication, 23 February 2010).

Unfortunately, a dramatic change took place when a big earthquake shook Yogyakarta in May 2006. Almost 80 per cent of the buildings at Komplek L were destroyed, including the musāla, a centre of activities for santri. This situation forced some santri to return to their hometowns because of trauma, or to ngekos [rent a room] around Krapyak village, away from Komplek L. As a result, the number of santri at Komplek L dramatically decreased from 154 before the quake to less than 30 after it. All santri activities stopped for several months, including Gus Munawwar’s study at the pesantren in Kebumen. The earthquake forced Gus Munawwar to rebuild his pesantren, not only in terms of its buildings, but also in every aspect of pesantren life, most importantly, rearranging all activities in Komplek L to adjust to the decreased number of santri.

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43 The number is approximate because some santri who decided to ngekos [rent rooms] outside Komplek L are still following activities at Komplek L (Personal communication with Salam (secretary of Komplek L at the time the earthquake occurred), 9 January 2010).
5.3. *Gus* Munawwar: Slowly but Surely

Born in 23 September 1985, Muhammad Munawwar Ahmad, better known as *Gus* Munawwar, received his early Islamic education, especially in Qur’anic knowledge, from his father. He went to Sekolah Dasar Negeri (State Elementary School) Jageran II, which is located around 400 metres from his home. He also studied at Madrasah Diniyah al-Munawwir in the evenings. According to his mother, *Gus* Munawwar was a smart boy, who was always champion of the class (Personal communication, 8 December 2009). After graduating from elementary school, he went on to Madrasah Tsanawiyah (equivalent to junior high school) and Madrasah Aliyah (senior high school) of Yayasan Ali Maksum, in Krapyak. *Gus* Munawwar then continued his studies, pursuing a bachelor’s degree in the *Tafsir Hadith* [Qur’anic exegesis and the Prophet traditions] program at the State Islamic University (UIN) Sunan Kalijaga in Yogyakarta. Unfortunately, he decided not to finish these studies, although he only needed to write a thesis to complete his degree. Some relatives and alumni, including one professor at the program, who is alumnus of Pesantren al-Munawwir, had persuaded him to write a simple thesis, but he finally rejected the idea. According to Sulaiman, a *ndalem santri*, *Gus* Munawwar is very similar to his father, in terms of being a *tawadlu’* [humble] person. Perhaps he does not want the title, he just needed the knowledge (Personal communication, 23 January 2010).

It seems that the 2006 earthquake became a turning point in the career of *Gus* Munawwar, as an opportunity to show the quality of his leadership. The loss of such a
large number of santri, including some who were board members of Komplek L, greatly challenged Gus Munawwar to develop his leadership skills. His success in overcoming this challenge would determine the future of Komplek L. Rebuilding a pesantren complex, especially a traditional one, which commonly has no economic resources except those from its santri and alumni, is not an easy task. Moreover, being a part of Pesantren al-Munawwir, Komplek L could not freely ask for donations from the public without receiving permission from the leader of Pesantren al-Munawwir, KH. Zainal Abidin Munawwir.

According to Maman, one of the ustadz at Komplek L, there were actually many institutions worldwide offering full support in rebuilding Pesantren al-Munawwir. One network that offered help was that of Alwi Shihab, a former Minister of Social Affairs. Alwi Shihab offered to rebuild the whole complex of the pesantren. But after ascertaining that some church institutions are included within the network, KH. Zainal Abidin Munawwir rejected the project (Personal communication, 3 March 2010). Sigit, a former leader of Kopontren (koperasi pondok pesantren [pesantren business unit]), told another, similar, story. One day, two big trucks carrying a donation of around 1000 sacks of cement were ready to unload in front of the pesantren. But when one of the board members told KH. Zainal Abidin Munawwir about this donation, he rejected it and asked to have it sent to other victims in the Bantul region. This strict attitude, of not using donations from non-Muslims to build the pesantren, or more specifically, to build a mosque or a musāla, slowed the reconstruction process, including that at Komplek L.

Since his relatives had also become victims of the earthquake, Gus Munawwar turned to some of the alumni for help in setting up a committee for the reconstruction of Komplek L. The main task of the reconstruction committee was to build a new musāla, as a centre for santri activities, and to renovate some blocks for santri, through maximising donations from alumni. Gus Munawwar’s active involvement of in the reconstruction process was greatly appreciated by most of the santri and alumni who were directly involved as committee members. For example, Suhadi, the leader of the reconstruction project, said that the earthquake was a blessing in disguise, in that Gus
Munawwar became totally involved in leading the santri at Komplek L⁴⁴. In a similar statement, Salam, former lurah of Komplek L said: “We are happy with the high spirit of Gus Munawwar in leading us in cleaning up Komplek L from the massive debris of the earthquake. Without any doubt, the presence of Gus Munawwar in ro’an (gotong royong [mutual help]) makes us more excited in cleaning up Komplek L” (Personal communication, 10 February 2010).

Gus Munawwar’s leadership was also appreciated outside the pesantren. During the first month after the earthquake, at least five voluntary groups from surrounding cities, such as Purworejo, Bantul, Magelang, and Kebumen, came to Komplek L to help clean up the debris. They came by small buses or trucks with 18 to 25 men in each group. Most of them were led by alumni or former pupils of Kyai Ahmad. Purwoto, an alumnus from Purworejo, said that he brought 18 volunteers from his village. Most of them were farmers who wanted to help the kyai to clean up his pesantren, and to obtain barâkah from him (Personal communication, 24 May 2010). According to Salam, some of these groups even provided their own lunches. It seems they did not want to increase the kyai’s burden by asking him to provide food and drinks for them (Personal communication, 10 February 2010).

To some extent, Kyai Ahmad’s reputation has made the leadership transition in Komplek L easier for Gus Munawwar to handle. Although, like his uncle KH. Zainal Abidin, Gus Munawwar has strict views on using donations, he was able to build a new musâla and renovate other buildings for his santri. Gus Hafidz (the son of KH. Tanwir), who lives with his family at Komplek L to assist Gus Munawwar, said that slowly but surely Gus Munawwar has succeeded in managing Madrasah Diniyah (which now is called Madrasah Salafiyah IV as a part of Madrasah Salafiyah in Pesantren al-Munawwir), taking over the pengajian Qur’an, and reviving some pengajian kitab kuning using the bandongan [collective] system (Personal communication, 24 February 2010). Step by step, with full support from relatives and alumni, he has been able to attract more santri. Currently, there are 116 santri from across Java, Sumatera, and Nusa

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⁴⁴ This statement was made at the second meeting of the committee at his house, on June 3, 2006. Indeed, this became an important memorandum for the committee to totally support Gus Munawwar and to give him more chance to informally lead the project.
Tenggara. Most of them are also studying various majors at universities in Yogyakarta (Personal communication with Andhika, a lurah of Komplek L, 6 March 2010).

Figure 5.2. Community service to clean up debris after the earthquake
However, this success has not automatically made Gus Munawwar a charismatic kyai like his father. Maman, an ustadz in Komplek L, admits that the barākah and karāmah of Gus Munawwar are not yet apparent in the daily lives of santri. According to him, Gus Munawwar is still too young to be associated with the image of a charismatic kyai. Although he might have supernatural power, most santri at Komplek L have never seen him use it. There is also no information about Kyai Ahmad’s ‘special santri,’ except a rumour that they are now handled by Mbah Barahim, since the death of Kyai Ahmad (Personal communication, 5 March 2010).

Indeed, since Kyai Ahmad’s death, spirits have rarely appeared to santri at Komplek L. Sulaiman, a ndalem santri, had an interesting comment about this. He mentioned to me that supernatural powers, including communication with spirits, are perhaps not considered as interesting phenomena by more modernised santri. He also quoted what the late Kyai Ahmad always said when santri asked for certain wirid to gain supernatural power: “Wis ra model meneh koyo ngono kuwi” [No need to have kekebalan [immunity] any more, it is out of date] (Personal communication, 29 May 2010). Sulaiman added that the last practice of kekebalan among the santri of Komplek L, especially among the board members, was during the escalation of political unrest before the general election in 1997:

Around a month before the general election of 1997, Kyai Ahmad ordered most board members and some senior santri to langgar and warned them of a possible threat to Komplek L. He then gave a gotri [buckshot] to each santri and asked them to eat it with a banana while reciting some verses of the Qur’an and dzikr formulas. However, that night, after eating the buckshot, there was no demonstration of invulnerability to weapons, in the way similar rituals were usually followed by a practical demonstration with a sword or other weapons, to test its effectiveness. The gathering was closed by a special do’a [prayer] led by Kyai Ahmad. He reminded all his audience not to be arrogant and to keep their religious obligations. Otherwise, the power of the buckshot would automatically be gone. (Personal communication, 29 May 2010)

Overall, a progress report of the development of Komplek L would show that Gus Munawwar’s leadership, especially in ensuring continuity in the learning process, is, without any doubt, successful. However, some other aspects of his leadership do not yet come up to the standard of his father’s. The notions of the kyai’s karāmah and barākah, which under the leadership of Kyai Ahmad were very important in determining the relationship between the santri and their kyai, figure little in recent days. The stories of
barakah and karāmah are mostly about Kyai Ahmad. However, Sulaiman, a ndalem santri, asserts that Komplek L is in much better condition than some other pesantren which have had to be closed following the death of their charismatic kyai. He believes that Gus Munawwar, with his goodhearted personality and intellectual capability, will be able to lead Komplek L even better than did his father (Personal communication, 29 May 2010).

5.4. Under the Shadow of Kyai Ahmad’s Charisma

One problematic aspect of Gus Munawwar’s leadership of Komplek L is the notion of his charisma. Since his father is considered a charismatic kyai, because of his barakah and karāmah, it might be supposed that the same would be true for Gus Munawwar. This expectation would arise from the belief among traditional Muslims, especially those with a pesantren educational background, that charisma can be transmitted to anyone through certain religious practices and rituals. This belief, along with the idea that barakah is still active after a kyai’s death (as shown by the tradition followed by some huffadz santri of reciting the Qur’an at Kyai Ahmad’s tomb to seek his barakah), would suggest that Gus Munawwar should also be considered charismatic by his followers, who are mostly the followers of his father.

However, this perception has not automatically been attached to Gus Munawwar. According to Mbah Brahim, Gus Munawwar has had to work hard to finish his memorisation of the Qur’an, practising certain wirid and particular riyādah [religious exercises], such as fasting, to help him increase his concentration (Personal communication, 27 December 2009). Sulaiman, a ndalem santri, informed me that Gus Munawwar performed these special riyādah, as well as his memorisation, under the strict guidance of his uncles. He reported:

Actually when Kyai Ahmad was still alive, Gus Munawwar used to spend one or two hours, usually after 10 pm, in his room with his father. I did not know exactly what they did but I heard Gus Munawwar read the Qur’an or certain wirid. But when Kyai Ahmad died, these activities continued with the guidance of his uncles until several years ago, before the earthquake. (Personal communication, 16 June 2010)

Traditionally, in pesantren, almost all gus will be given special treatment by the kyai, compared to his treatment of other santri. In many cases, this is done in secret, so no one can know what kinds of riyādah that are being practised by the gus, or what fadlilah...
benefit] can come of it. Luthfi, a former santri from Bojonegoro, who is also the son of a kyai in his hometown, confirmed that gus receive special treatment, but he assured me that the practices involved are actually those popular in the pesantren world.

You can find those kinds of practices in some kitab kuning, such as Syamsul Ma’arif, al-Lubab, and al-Aufaq. But you cannot just practise the contents of those kitab kuning without ijazah [permission] from the kyai who has already mastered those practices; otherwise you will end up with a psychological disorder. (Personal communication, 25 May 2010)

It seems that this ijazah is only provided for particular santri, including most gus.

Many santri at Komplek L believe that Gus Munawwar has had to be specifically trained by his father and uncles, and may lack his father’s charisma (which is still prevalent in the life of most santri at Komplek L). The introduction of new santri occurs during Jam’iyyah Ushbukhiyyah, a regular event held in Komplek L every Thursday night. Each new santri has to introduce himself in front of the audience, stating his name, hometown, schools, and purpose in staying at Komplek L. At one such event, three new santri had to introduce themselves. One of these was Rohmat, a huffadz santri, who had graduated from Pesantren Lirboyo in Kediri. He mentioned that he was currently studying in the Tafsir-Hadith program at UIN Sunan Kalijaga and wanted to seek barākah to help his memorising of the Qur’an. Interestingly, his main purpose in staying at Komplek L was to fulfil the order of his kyai at Lirboyo to seek barākah from Kyai Ahmad and his father, Kyai Munawwir (Participant observation, 15 Oktober 2009).

Respect and appreciation for Gus Munawwar, as the son of Kyai Ahmad, can nonetheless be seen from the tradition of ujung [visit] to Kyai Ahmad’s house during Idul Fitri [Islamic holy day to celebrate the end of the month of fasting]. I was calling on Gus Munawwar [sowan], on the second day of Idul Fitri, to inform him that I was going to visit my relatives in Gresik, East Java. A little way into our conversation, I saw a minibus and two cars stop in front of Komplek L. The vehicles looked very crowded

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45 The main agenda of Jam’iyyah Ushbukhiyyah is reciting shalawat nabi [compliment to the Prophet] from one of three popular books: Maulid ad-Diba’i, written by Abdurrahman bin Muhammad bin Umar bin Ali bin Yusuf bin Ahmad bin Umar al-Diba’i al-Syaihani al-Yamani (d. 944 H), Shalawat Barjanzi, written by Ja’far bin Hasan bin Abdul Karim bin Muhammad bin Rasul al-Barzanji (d. 1184 H), or Shalawat Burdah, written by Syarafuddin Abu Abdillah Muhammad bin Said bin Hamad as-Shonhaji al-Bushiri (d.696 H). Recently, at Gus Munawwar’s suggestion, a different shalawat called Simthud Durar, written by Habib Ali bin Muhammad bin Husein Al-Habsyi (d.1333 H), is also recited, along with its traditional musical instruments, rebana [tambourine], played by santri. Besides this recitation, the agenda of this event includes the introduction of new santri, and khitobah [speech exercises] by junior santri, and concludes with mauidlotul hasanah [general speech] performed by senior santri.
with men, women, and some children. Gus Munawwar asked me to inform Bu Nyai of the arrival of these guests, so I went inside to the family room to look for her, while he went to greet the guests. When I got back to the guest room, I saw the male guests were queuing to shake hands with Gus Munawwar, who stood in front of the door. Meanwhile, the women and children went directly to a different guest room—actually the same room as the men’s guest room but separated by a curtain—to meet Bu Nyai. I saw all of the guests, including the elders, try to kiss Gus Munawwar’s hand, but it seemed, from the way he quickly pulled back his hand every time they wanted to kiss it, that he was a bit uncomfortable about this. Afterwards, when all the guests were sitting around on a green carpet inside the house, I asked Gus Munawwar’s permission to leave, before he began conversations with the guests (Fieldnote, 24 September 2009).

From the perspective of santri, the attitude of these guests, when shaking Gus Munawwar’s hand, indicates a high level of respect for the kyai. Suyanto, a ndalem santri, informed me that those guests are his neighbours and that they come to visit Gus Munawwar and Bu Nyai in order to obtain the barākah of Kyai Ahmad, who contributed to the development of Islam in their village. For them, respecting members of the kyai’s family is an integral part of respecting the kyai himself (Personal communication, 24 September 2009). Therefore, although Gus Munawwar is still young, and many may not yet consider him a charismatic kyai, his father’s position among the santri and the people around the pesantren at least gives him a better chance to become a charismatic kyai in the future.

It seems that, within the pesantren community, age is important in determining whether charisma will be attributed to a person. As mentioned by Maman, Gus Munawwar is still considered too young to be perceived as a charismatic kyai. Moreover, his single status contributes to his being seen as immature, because for Javanese people, marriage is the most significant sign of maturity (Personal communication, 5 March 2010).

General descriptions of charismatic kyai, given by the santri of Komplek L, also associate barākah and karāmah with the maturity of age. Joko, the principal of Madrasah Salafiyah IV, for instance, described a charismatic kyai as an old man who never talks except when he needs to, is tawadlu’ [humble], and sakti [supernaturally
powerful] but far from arrogant (Personal communication, 21 May 2010). Supardi, a santri from Jakarta, also included age as an important aspect of the image of a charismatic kyai, stating that charismatic kyai should be tawadlu’, mature, able to protect others, not oriented towards worldly matters, and not talk more than necessary (Personal communication, 23 May 2010). However, both these santri believed that Gus Munawwar has the potential to become a charismatic leader like his father.

The belief that charisma can be transmitted to the next generation is apparent among the santri of Komplek L. Here, the concept of enduring barākah is particularly significant. Many believe that they are still able to gain barākah from the late Kyai Ahmad (as shown by the tradition of reading the Qur’an at his tomb), but they also believe that Gus Munawwar has the potential to be a charismatic kyai. They take as evidence the way santri at Komplek L and people around it perceive and behave in front of him. According to Gus Adhin, a huffadz santri who helps to teach Qur’an at Komplek L, Gus Munawwar is, at least, already seen as a washilah [transmitter] for those who want to obtain the barākah of Kyai Ahmad (Personal communication, 23 February 2010).

Although the influence of Kyai Ahmad’s charisma is still dominant in Komplek L, and perhaps will not be replaced (since many believe in the concept of enduring barākah), that same paternal presence also gives Gus Munawwar a greater chance of becoming a charismatic kyai in his own right in the future. In the next chapter, I will further discuss this possibility, focusing on several issues associated with the process of transmission of charisma, such as the roles of ndalem [relatives] and senior santri in fostering Gus Munawwar’s charismatic image, some concepts that are used in expediting the transmission of charisma, and some factors which determine the success or failure of the transmission.

5.5. Conclusion

Among the santri of Komplek L, the stories of kyai Ahmad’s barākah and karāmah remain strong and influential. Although he passed away nearly twelve years ago, his charisma is still apparent in the daily life of santri at Komplek L. Several means are used by the members of pesantren to preserve those stories, ranging from the daily activities, such as learning process at the madrasah, to the yearly program of pesantren, such as
haul of Kyai Ahmad. Most santri believed that keeping these kinds of stories alive is part of venerating their teacher, which is considered as an obligation for all santri to attain ilmu yang bermanfaat [useful knowledge]. Besides, a strong belief on the enduring concept of barākah, which can be inherited by the ndalem members, especially gus, also has a significant contribution in keeping the loyalty of the followers.

The initial stage of Gus Munawwar’s leadership was clearly influenced by the charisma of his father. Most santri and people around the pesantren give their respect to Gus Munawwar was merely based on the barākah and karāmah of Kyai Ahmad. The success of Gus Munawwar in rebuilding his pesantren from the earthquake in 2006 was undoubtedly a result of this influence. Although Gus Munawwar enjoyed the privileges of his father, he is fully aware that it is not an easy task to manage the pesantren and to keep the loyalty of parents who sent their children to Komplek L. In this case, supports from all members of Komplek L in running most learning processes are influential. In the next chapter, I will explain how the members of Komplek L help Gus Munawwar in dealing with the issue of leadership transmission, especially in regard with the charismatic qualities of kyai.
Chapter Six
Transmitting the Charisma of Kyai Ahmad

At the time of my fieldwork, it had been ten years since al-maghfurlah Kyai Ahmad passed away, and most santri currently at Komplek L have not had direct experience with him, except for a small number of senior santri. Interestingly, the stories of Kyai Ahmad’s charisma are still occasionally heard in everyday conversation among the santri. This shows that the relationship between the kyai and his santri, or other members of pesantren community, will not automatically disappear with the death of the leader. We can see that there is a strong need among the pesantren community members to preserve this relationship, especially when we consider the meaning of barākah, which suggests enduring blessing or grace. Further, according to Sulaiman (a ndalem santri):

Being a santri of a charismatic kyai, such as Kyai Ahmad, will give you benefits. Many people, especially in Bantul area, will respect you when they know that you are a santri of Kyai Ahmad. As if being santri of Kyai Ahmad becomes a warranty for the integrity of persons who become his santri. (Personal communication, 28 May 2010)

The kyai’s charisma is thought to have supernatural and other potent social benefits for his students. This means his charisma is a social asset that the community does well to perpetuate. Therefore, the continuity of charismatic leadership becomes important for the pesantren community. The ‘routinisation of charisma’ is normally marked by the process of depersonalisation of charisma, in which charismatic authority is attributed to the office, not to a person. In this chapter, I will show that the process of transformation of the charismatic authority of the kyai indicates that personal charisma is still very influential, although the notion of office (even though many scholars claim that Islam has no ‘office’ like in Christianity) is also evident in the daily life of the pesantren community through the institution of the pesantren.

Within the pesantren community, routinisation of charisma becomes important, not only for ensuring the charismatic authority of the next leader, but also for preserving the relationship between the leader and his disciples in order to retain the barākah of the kyai for the community. Several practices of the pesantren community can be seen to
ensure the continuity of this relationship, including *khaul* [annual remembrance of the death of a key person], alumni gatherings, and *ziarah makbarah* [grave visits]. In most cases, all three activities are undertaken in one package during the *khaul* event.

Since Komplek L is a part of Pesantren al-Munawwir, the biggest *khaul* event is that of KH. M. Moenawwir, the founder of the *pesantren*, which is held on every 11th of *Jummadil Awwal* (the fifth month of the Islamic calendar system). In this event, alumni of Pesantren al-Munawwir, including from Komplek L (which is registered under Ikatan Alumni Pondok Pesantren al-Munawwir [Alumni Association of Pondok Pesantren al-Munawwir], shortened to IKAPPAM), also have their regular gathering. In addition to this *khaul*, in which the whole *pesantren* joins, some *komplek* within Pesantren al-Munawwir also hold their own commemorations of the deaths of their founding *kyai*, at different times depending on when they died. All these activities can be seen as a means for preserving relationships, not only between the current *kyai* and his *santri*, but also between *santri* and the late *kyai* of the *pesantren*.

Below I excerpt from my fieldnotes on the *khaul* of Kyai Ahmad at Komplek L to describe how the community of Komplek L preserves and maintains their relationship with their now deceased spiritual head.

In Komplek L, the *khaul* of Kyai Ahmad is held every 23rd of Ramadhan (the ninth month of the Islamic calendar system). This year, *khaul* is held on Saturday, 12 September 2009. The event starts right after performing *Subuh* Prayer at musāla. At around 5.15 am, all *santri* of Komplek L and some alumni are ready to go to the *makbarah* [gravesite shrine] of Kyai Ahmad, which is located around 1.5 km away from the *pesantren*. Some of them go by motorbikes, while others use their bicycles. But most *santri* go on foot. I decided to ride my motorbike with Sulaiman, a *ndalem santri*, so I could arrive early and find a good position at the *makbarah* to observe the activity, before they came.

At the *makbarah*, I saw some *santri* already sitting around the *makbarah* but they had left the right side of it empty. I believed they did not sit there because they were leaving the place for Gus Munawwar (son of Kyai Ahmad), some *ustadz*, and some alumni. I decided to sit at the left corner of that empty space, near the wall, so I could have a good view observing the activity. Shortly after, I saw Gus Munawwar come with several *ustadz* and sit at the empty space. Most other *santri* who came a bit late and found no place to sit on the *tikar* [floor mat] provided, just sat in between the tombs, using their sandals or some pieces of newspaper. After giving a short announcement about the aim of visiting the *makbarah*, Gus Munawwar started to lead *yasinan* [reading the 36th surah or chapter of the Qur’an] and *tahlilan* [reciting some *dzikr* formulas to remember God] for Kyai Ahmad and others buried in this *makbarah*, including the founder of the *pesantren*, KH. M. Moenawwir, Gus Munawwar’s grandfather.
After around 40 minutes reading yasin and tahlil, the event was formally closed with the *do’a* [prayer]. Right after reading surah *al-fatiha*, as a sign that *yasinan* and *tahlilan* were over, Gus Munawwar gave a short speech to remind us that we should not visit Kyai Ahmad’s shrine only once a year, but should do it regularly every Friday morning or evening. Visiting the tomb, he continued, will give benefit not only to the *mayit* [deceased person], but also us; we can receive *barakah* from him, and more importantly, the visit will remind us that we, sooner or later, we will be a *mayit* too. This will make us more careful before we act. After saying a *shalawat* [praise to the prophet], which was then followed by others, Gus Munawwar stood up ready to leave the *makbarah*. I saw some santri walk closer to him to shake and kiss his hand before leaving the *makbarah*. I then gave a sign to Sulaiman for us to leave the *makbarah*. (Fieldnote, 12 September 2009)

In two other kinds of events, *muqoddaman* and alumni gatherings, Gus Munawwar, or *ustadz* representing him, tell stories about the late Kyai Ahmad, so that the audiences can learn a lesson from those stories. These occasions, in addition to the ordinary *madrasah* teaching (where stories about the former *kyai* are also told), help socialise the *santri* to the values and beliefs of the community and help maintain the relationship between the *kyai* and his *santri*. *Khoul*, *muqoddaman*, and alumni gatherings are also a way for the relatives of Kyai Ahmad, especially his son, Gus Munawwar, to maintain recognition from the wider community surrounding Komplek L.

As charismatic authority is not merely based on the claims of the successor, but more importantly, also relies upon recognition from the community, those who have a close relationship with the new charismatic leader have an important role in fostering his image in the eyes of the followers of the former leader. In the case of Komplek L, the role of the *pesantren* community, especially *ndalem*, senior *santri*, and alumni, in fostering the image of Gus Munawwar, as the inheritor of the charisma of Kyai Ahmad, is particularly important. In this chapter, I will discuss the routinisation process in Komplek L by focusing on the way the *pesantren* community smoothly transmits the charisma of Kyai Ahmad to their next leader, Gus Munawwar.

### 6.1. Fostering the Image of Gus Munawwar

Charismatic authority within a traditional *pesantren* is commonly considered to be transmitted through heredity, with the son of the leader expected to become the next

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46 *Muqoddaman* is similar to *khataman al-Qur’an* [reading the entire Qur’an]. During *khataman al-Qur’an*, the Qur’an is read aloud by certain *huffadz*, while others only listen to them with the Qur’an in their hands. *Muqoddaman* involves reading the entire Qur’an together, with the Qur’an being divided into 30 *juz* and each participant reading one or two *juz* of it.
leader. However, there is no guarantee that this will automatically happen. In many cases, the death of a charismatic kyai signals the closing down of the pesantren, when his son fails to secure recognition from the pesantren community. So, preparing the successor, especially ensuring his integrity so that he can be perceived as the next charismatic kyai, is very important.

This was not an easy task in Komplek L because Gus Munawwar was considered too young to lead a pesantren when Kyai Ahmad died. More importantly, many were concerned with his intellectual capacity as a leader. In particular, his memorisation of the Qur’an was still considered weak. That was a significant problem in this institution, which is basically known as a pesantren al-Qur’an (or pesantren specialising in memorisation of the Qur’an). The importance of preparing Gus Munawwar for the leadership, especially in developing the integrity of his Islamic knowledge, was unquestionable.

However, as became evident in Komplek L, individual preparation is not the only factor in determining the success of the leadership transmission. The ndalem, senior santri, and alumni played a key role in fostering Gus Munawwar’s image as a kyai, regardless of his individual attributes.

### 6.1.1. The Role of Ndalem

The ndalem [inner circle] are important in pesantren communities. Their position is similar to that of the kyai. Members of the ndalem, who, basically, are the members of the kyai’s family and some santri who serve them, are considered exempt from the pesantren’s rules. For example, although ordinary santri of a traditional pesantren may be strictly prohibited from watching television, this rule is not applied to ndalem santri or other members of ndalem, and a huge television set, attached to a parabola antenna to catch worldwide channels, may be seen in the kyai’s house, as a manifestation of the special status of ndalem within the community of the pesantren.

The current notion of ndalem santri in Komplek L is somewhat distinctive, because it actually includes ‘regular santri’ who stay in rooms at the back of the kyai’s house. The only difference between these santri and other regular santri is in the way they are required to pay their syahriyah [monthly fees]. Ndalem santri have to pay it directly to Bu Nyai [the kyai’s wife] and they are also obliged to majeg [receive lunch and dinner.
from by Bu Nyai], while other regular santri have to pay their syahriyah to the treasurer of Komplek L. For regular santri, majeg is an optional. They can choose to take majeg, cook for themselves, or simply buy food from outside Komplek L. Regardless of this minor variation in Komplek L, when I talk about ndalem in this research I refer only to the members of the kyai’s family and some santri who help them on a daily basis, and my usage will exclude regular ndalem santri who have to pay their syahriyah.

Among the key ndalem figures is Bu Nyai. As in many other pesantren, Bu Nyai merits the same high level of respect from santri as the kyai. Although Komplek L only accepts male santri, this does not mean that Bu Nyai has no significant role in directing the policy of the pesantren, as is commonly the case in other pesantren for only male santri. According to Sulaiman, a ndalem santri, Bu Nyai’s involvement is not limited only to the issue of majeg. She has been involved in the recruitment of new santri. In many cases, when ndalem, Bu Nyai or Kyai Ahmad wanted someone to be accepted as santri, the boards of Komplek L had no choice but to accept him. Moreover, Bu Nyai’s status as daughter of a kyai in Cirebon, West Java, also gives Komplek L an advantage. Around 20 per cent of santri at Komplek L come from Cirebon, Indramayu, and surrounding suburbs. Masruri, a santri from Indramayu, admitted that he chose to stay at Komplek L, instead of another komplek, because of Bu Nyai’s suggestion to his parents (Personal communication, 23 April 2010).

Considering Bu Nyai’s special position, her role in softening the leadership transition process is important. During the transition era, she actively persuaded some alumni, especially those who live around Komplek L, to give more support to Gus Munawwar. Suhadi, an alumnus from Blitar who lives near Komplek L, told me that Bu Nyai had asked him to inform all alumni to support Gus Munawwar’s leadership,, and had also ordered him to activate an alumni association when the earthquake hit and destroyed most buildings at Komplek L (Personal communication, 27 December 2009). According to Shohib, a vice chairman of the alumni, Bu Nyai’s active support, in contacting alumni, especially those who come from Cirebon, Indramayu, and Tegal, is integral to the effective running of an alumni association of Komplek L. He mentioned that more than two hundred million Rupiah could be collected from alumni for rebuilding the Komplek L (Personal communication, 4 May 2010).
Bu Nyai has played a significant role in the transmission of charismatic authority from Kyai Ahmad to Gus Munawwar. Besides her position as the wife of Kyai Ahmad, which gave her great respect from the members of the pesantren community, her talent in communication has made Gus Munawwar more comfortable in dealing with this process. Sulaiman, a ndalem santri, told me how Bu Nyai has drawn the attention of santri, alumni, and almost all guests who visit her or Gus Munawwar, to the similarities between him Kyai Ahmad, especially relating to the way they memorised the Qur’an. Sometimes, according to Sulaiman, Bu Nyai also told the guests about Gus Munawwar’s outstanding achievements during his time at school. (Personal communication, 7 January 2010).

Bu Nyai’s only concern about Gus Munawwar is his single status. She told me about this issue during my last visit to Komplek L, and even urged me to talk to Gus Munawwar about it. When I asked her about his future wife, she answered that there are some kyai who are interested in marrying their daughters to him, but she could not do anything when Gus Munawwar is still not willing to get married (Personal communication with Bu Nyai, 9 June 2011). Although some senior santri, relatives, and alumni, including myself, have tried several times to raise this issue with him, it seems that he still does not want to discuss it and prefers to talk about the development of Komplek L. Traditional Muslims in Indonesia commonly consider that marriage marks the time when a person should be socially accepted by the community as orang dewasa [mature person], and so many people regret Gus Munawwar’s decision.

Other ndalem members, especially Gus Munawwar’s relatives, also have an important contribution in fostering his image as a young kyai who should be fully respected by his santri. Gus Hafidh, a son of KH. Tanwir who assists Gus Munawwar in ensuring the continuity of Madrasah Salafiyah IV, often gives examples of how to behave and show respect towards Gus Munawwar, even though he is not yet fully involved in running the madrasah. Gus Hafidh position as an ustadz who teaches courses at all levels, and as the son of a Qur’an teacher at Komplek L, gives him more and better chances to be listened to by santri than other ustadz. Gus Hafidh fully understands that it is not easy for Gus Munawwar to deal with a hundred santri with different backgrounds, and who are the same age as him. He therefore decided to stay at
Komplek L with his family (as he was also ordered to do by his father), to help Gus Munawwar in running learning activities at Komplek L (Personal communication, 5 March 2010).

Full support from the members of ndalem for Gus Munawwar’s leadership have contributed to easing the leadership transition. The concept that Gus Munawwar is the only person who has the right to succeed Kyai Ahmad has been instilled by ndalem members in the hearts of the santri, as can be seen from the respect they show towards him when they meet him at Komplek L or elsewhere (for example, by kissing his hand, even though some of them are older than he is). Since this kind of attitude is also indirectly exemplified by some senior santri and alumni when they visit Gus Munawwar, I will discuss further their contribution in fostering his image as a respected kyai in the eyes of his santri.

6.1.2. The Role of Senior Santri and Alumni

The presence of senior santri at Komplek L, especially those who have been willing to stay after finishing their study, has been very important during the leadership transition period. Their assistance with Madrasah Salafiyah IV and other santri activities has helped ensure the continuity of key programs, especially when Gus Munawwar has been absent while studying in other pesantren. They have also played an important role in fostering Gus Munawwar’s image as a respected kyai, through their attitudes toward him and their advice for santri studying at the madrasah. Some senior santri, especially the huffadz (who have memorised the whole Qur’an), have been seen as role models for santri during the transition process.

According to Rofingi, a santri from Semarang, Mbah Brahim and Gus Adhin have been the most highly respected santri during the transition period. Their role in teaching Qur’an to other santri before Gus Munawwar became fully involved in teaching at Komplek L was highly valued (Personal communication, 8 November 2009). While these senior santri carried much of the teaching burden during the transition, they nonetheless offered respect to the young kyai. Another santri, Dede from Cirebon, was impressed with the way Gus Adhin behaved in front of Gus Munawwar:

One day, I went to sowan [call on] Gus Munawwar to ask leave to go home. I saw him talking with Gus Adhin in the guest room of his house. I did not know what they were talking about but I could hear just Gus Adhin’s voice repeatedly saying
nggih [yes] to Gus Munawwar. When I came closer to the door, I heard Gus Adhin ask for leave and then saw him kiss Gus Munawwar’s hand. It was surprising to me because Gus Adhin is older than Gus Munawwar, and at that time, Gus Adhin was already a huffadz while Gus Munawwar was still in the process of memorising the Qur’an. (Personal communication, 9 December 2009)

This kind of living example from senior santri demonstrates to relatively new santri like Dede how they should behave in front of their kyai, regardless of his formal qualifications.

For most senior santri, the teachings of Islamic ethics as prescribed in the kitab kuning must be applied strictly in their everyday lives. The way that they show respect to the kyai, and to his family members, is clearly based on these teachings. For instance, Ta’limul Muta’alim, a book on Islamic ethics that is used at Madrasah Salafiyyah IV, directs students as follows:

ومن توقير المعلم أن لا يمشي أمامه، ولا يجلس مكانه، ولا يبتدأ الكلام عنده إلا بإذنه، ولا يكثر الكلام عنه، ولا يسأل شيئا عند ملالته، ولا يجلس مكانه، ولا يبتغى ملالته، ولا يبتغى مكانه، ولا يبتغى بغير مصالحه.

In venerating the teacher, avoid walking in front of him and sitting in his place. And do not begin speaking in his presence without his permission. One should not ask him any [question] when he is weary. One should observe the correct time and refrain from knocking on [his] door, but have patience until [the teacher] comes out. In short, one should seek his approval, avoid his resentment, and obey his commands in those things which are not sinful in the eyes of God, for [the Prophet said], “Never should a created man be obeyed in rebellion against the Creator.” The Prophet also said, “Indeed, the most evil man is he who relinquishes his religion for the material world of other men. In this, he is sinning against God.”

Revering the teacher includes respecting the teacher’s children and those related to him. Imam Burhan al-Din, the author of the Hidayah, narrated that one of the greatest imams of Bukhara used to sit when lecturing and at times rose in the middle of his discourse. When asked the reason [for rising] he explained, “The son of my teacher was playing with the boys on the street and sometimes came to the gate of the mosque. As often as I saw him, I arose for him in order to honor my teacher. (al-Zarnuji, 2003, p. 14)

Regardless of their motivation in showing great respect to Gus Munawwar, it is clear that senior santri have contributed to fostering his image as a respected kyai at Komplek L. After telling the story about Gus Adhin, Dede stated that it would be a shame for him
and other santri if they did not follow what Gus Adhin had demonstrated (Personal communication, 9 December 2009).

Another santri, Arsyad from Tangerang, also credits the role of senior santri in directing him to be more respectful to Gus Munawwar, telling me that he had been criticised by Mbah Brahim for being impolite to Gus Munawwar, even though it was, according to Arsyad, in only a small thing.

That morning, I wanted to bring my motorcycle to the backyard of Komplek L to wash it before using it to go to campus. When I brought it past Gus Munawwar’s house, I saw him open the door and then sit in the balcony. Because I was walking with my motorcycle, I just passed him without doing anything. As soon as I parked my motorcycle around by the well near the musāla, I saw Mbah Brahim walk over to me. He said, “Next time, when you meet Gus Munawwar, although you are walking your motorcycle, just stop for a moment and try to shake hands with him. Do not pass him by without shaking his hand, it is impolite.” I was shocked, but later on, as I learned from kitab Ta’lim, I found that Mbah Brahim was right. (Personal communication, 9 January 2010)

While senior santri at Komplek L foster Gus Munawwar’s image mostly in front of their fellow santri, another group, the alumni, influence not only the santri at Komplek L, through the respect they show when visiting Gus Munawwar, but also influence the wider community in their home villages.

Alumni of pesantren are commonly considered, especially in traditional rural Muslim communities, to be representatives of their kyai, and whatever they do, their attitudes will be associated with their kyai, or at least with the pesantren institutions where they graduated. Expressions such as ‘lho dia kan muridnya kyai krapyak’ [Lit. you know, he is the student of the kyai from Krapyak], or ‘dia kan lulusan pesantren Krapyak’ [you know, he graduated from pesantren Krapyak], are very popular among traditional Muslims across Java. Because of this, alumni of Komplek L have a special role in fostering Gus Munawwar’s image in their communities. The information they provide to villagers, about him and his pesantren, is not only vital for maintaining a positive image of Gus Munawwar outside the pesantren, but more importantly, it is significant to parents in deciding to which pesantren they will send their children.

Suhadi, a head of the Komplek L alumni association, confirmed that support from fellow alumni in spreading information about current conditions at Komplek L is important because they are the most effective means of preserving its good reputation. To some extent, therefore, the future of Komplek L depends on the quality of its alumni.
As long as the traditional method of promotion, mouth to mouth, is still considered as the main tool in recruiting new santri, the role of alumni is influential (Personal communication, 25 April 2010). In fact, according to Andhika, secretary of Komplek L, the backgrounds of current santri reveal that most of them have some connection with alumni, either as relatives or as coming from the same village (Personal communication, 16 December 2009).

During the leadership transition at Komplek L, alumni have made a significant contribution in fostering Gus Munawwar’s image as a potential charismatic kyai. As mentioned in the previous chapter, some have succeeded in mobilising people at their villages to help clean up the massive debris at Komplek L resulting from the earthquake. Purwoto, an alumnus from Purworejo who twice brought 18 people from his village, told me that their willingness to help is based on the fact that he and his fellow alumnus, Mubin, offer regular pengajian at the mosque in their village. When he and Mubin heard about the plight of Komplek L after the earthquake, they decided to ask their jama’ah [audiences] to help, and they were very enthusiastic to do so (Personal communication, 25 May 2010).

When I called Mubin on his mobile and asked him to tell the story behind that participation, he told me that he used to tell his jama’ah of his experiences when staying at Komplek L. Therefore, when he told them about the conditions there after the earthquake, people were spontaneously willing to help. They even provided their own tools and food for that purpose. One who wanted to participate told Mubin that he wanted to know Gus Munawwar in person (Personal communication, 27 May 2010).

In summary, support from ndalem, senior santri, and alumni, especially during the leadership transition in Komplek L, have been relatively successful in fostering respect for Gus Munawwar as kyai, at least from his santri. However, this support means nothing without a serious effort from Gus Munawwar himself to learn, and to behave properly as a kyai. It is not an easy task for him to replace Kyai Ahmad, who is considered by his santri and by people around the pesantren as a charismatic kyai. Moreover, the barakah and karāmah of Kyai Ahmad is still much valued, and this has become a challenge for Gus Munawwar in taking over the legacy of his father.
6.2. Individual Efforts: Memorising Qur’an and Practising Riyāḍah

Since Kyai Ahmad’s death in 2001, several efforts have been made by ndalem, senior santri, and alumni to prepare Gus Munawwar for his position, and assist him in running Komplek L. This has helped soften the leadership transition. No one questioned the right of Gus Munawwar, as Kyai Ahmad’s only son, to be the next leader, but many were concerned with his ability to lead Komplek L, and especially with his capacity to teach Qur’an, because, when Kyai Ahmad died, Gus Munawwar was still in the process of memorising it. Therefore, according to Bu Nyai, finishing his memorisation of the Qur’an became his first priority before leading Komplek L, which had an outstanding reputation for producing huffadz under the leadership of Kyai Ahmad (Personal communication, 27 November 2009).

6.2.1. Memorising the Qur’an

Since many people believed that Kyai Ahmad’s charisma was based on his expertise in teaching the Qur’an, Gus Munawwar’s first priority in preparing to assume his father’s position was to complete his memorisation. This was not easy, because ngaji [learning to read the Qur’an], within the tradition of Pesantren al-Munawwir, requires proper tajwid [knowledge on how to read the Qur’an] and Pesantren al-Munawwir has a distinct way of reciting the Qur’an. There was absolutely no quick way to learn how to read the Qur’an in Pesantren al-Munawwir, particularly under the supervision of Kyai Ahmad, who had been known for his assertiveness in teaching his santri. Mbah Brahim, a huffadz and senior santri at Komplek L, explained to me the characteristics of ngaji Qur’an in Pesantren al-Munawwir, which are slightly different from those of regular ngaji Qur’an conducted at many other mosques or musāla across the country.

Reciting the Qur’an with tartil [clarity] according to proper tajwid as conducted at this pesantren is the trademark of this pesantren. The special waqf [a place we can stop to take a breath during our reciting of the Qur’an] and how our mouth should move when reciting the Qur’an are really emphasised during the ngaji Qur’an. It was very common for a new santri, though he might have already khatam [finished] in reading Qur’an in his village, to spend one or two months just learning how to read surah al-Fatihah, the first surah in the Quran, which consists of only seven verses, in front of Kyai Ahmad. This is only a regular way of ngaji Qur’an in this pesantren. We do not yet talk about qira’ah sab’ah [seven ways in reading the Qur’an], which is only taught for those who want to memorise the Qur’an. (Personal communication, 28 December 2009)
Gus Munawwar had to concentrate fully on finishing his memorisation of the Qur’an following this sophisticated method. According to Sulaiman, a ndalem santri, when Kyai Ahmad died Gus Munawwar had memorised no more than one third. Gus Munawwar started his memorisation process with his father after completing ngaji Qur’an bin-nadhor (by reading the texts of the Qur’an) when he was twelve years old. He used to memorise the Qur’an page by page using ‘Qur’an pojok’ with his father almost every night. Then, in the evenings he often asked Sulaiman or other santri to listen to his memorisation (Personal communication, 2 June 2010).

After Kyai Ahmad died, Gus Munawwar was ordered by his mother and other relatives to continue his Qur’anic memorisation under the strict guidance of KH. Nadjib Abdul Qodir, who currently leads the Madrasah Huffadz al-Munawwir. Gus Munawwar had to go to Kyai Nadjib’s house almost every day, and sometimes twice a day, depending on Kyai Nadjib’s availability. Surprisingly, Gus Munawwar succeeded in completing his memorisation in less than two years. This achievement is considered exceptional and is highly appreciated by most santri. Sulaiman, for instance, told that Gus Munawwar’s success in finishing almost two thirds of the Qur’an in less than two years is amazing. Perhaps this was achieved through the barākah of Kyai Ahmad. He remembered that Kyai Ahmad often asked his santri to read Fatiyah for Gus Munawwar before starting ngaji Qur’an (Personal communication, 28 May 2010).

Although Gus Munawwar’s success in completing his Qur’anic memorisation is appreciated, that is not all that is necessary for him to take his father’s place as a charismatic kyai. Other factors have to be considered. For example, belief in the possibility of transmitting the charisma of a kyai is based on the idea that his son can play a significant role as washilah [intercessor], revealing the barākah of the late kyai. Therefore, Gus Munawwar has to prove to members of the pesantren community that he is someone whose prayers are heard and granted by God. As mentioned by Agussalim, a former lurah of Komplek L, being a good intercessor is not as simple as mimpin do’a

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47 Qur’an pojok means the Qur’an that has the end of a verse in each page. It is designed to help someone who wants to memorise the Qur’an. Qur’an pojok is very popular among santri. The most popular Qur’an pojok in Indonesia is the one that has been tahqiq [corrected] by KH. Arwani from Kudus, one of the most well known santri of KH. M. Moenawwir. Qur’an pojok is also known as ‘Qur’an Kudus’ (referring to place of KH. Arwani’s pesantren) and ‘ayat pojok’ which literally means ‘corner verse’ (Personal communication with Nasrullah, 30 December 2009).
leading a prayer; it requires recognition from others that one’s prayers are mustajabah [granted by God]. This stage can only be reached through years of consistency in practising riyāḍah [religious exercises] (Personal communication, 24 April 2010).

6.2.2. Riyāḍah: A Way to Obtain Barākah and Karāmah

‘Riyāḍah’ is very popular among santri in traditional pesantren, commonly believed to be a spiritual way to achieve one’s desires. Although this popularity is decreasing from year to year, due, I would argue, to modernisation and rationalisation, many santri still believe that riyāḍah is the best way to obtain to barākah and karāmah. Mbah Brahim, for instance, asserted that almost all charismatic kyai got their barākah and karāmah from their istiqomah [diligence] in performing certain riyāḍah. He then gave a famous example concerning KH. M. Moenawwir, who practised riyāḍah for his memorisation by reading the Qur’an for forty days continuously and khatam [in entirety] forty times (Personal communication, 27 December 2009). An autobiography of Kyai Abdul Qodir, the founder of Madrasah Huffadz al-Munawwir, also mentioned that the riyāḍah of KH. M. Moenawwir, in memorising the Qur’an for nine years and forty days, was as follows:

For the first three years, once in every week, he finished reading the whole Qur’an; the second three years, he did it once in every three days; for the third three years, he did it in every day; and finally, he read the Qur’an non-stop for forty days.
(Fathurrohman, 2011)

Only with earnestness and sincerity can someone achieve the results of practising riyāḍah. Although obtaining karāmah is not considered as the ultimate goal of this practice, most santri agree that karāmah is important and symbolises closeness to God.

Under the leadership of Kyai Ahmad, almost all santri in Komplek L had to practise certain riyāḍah. The most common was reading wirid [particular potent litanies] after obligatory prayers. This concluded by reading, seven times, the end of surah at-Taubah (the Repentance, the 9th surah), known as ‘ayat laqod ja akum.’ Agussalim, the former lurah of Komplek L, explained to me that ayat laqod ja akum has becomes the regular wirid after shalat in Komplek L. Practising this simple riyāḍah has many benefits. For example it can lead someone to be more patient, relieve his sadness, and increase his means of sustenance. But Agussalim also warned me that practising any kind of riyāḍah requires keikhlasan [sincerity] and istiqomah [diligence], and in most cases, it cannot be
guaranteed that the benefits will come at certain times. Usually they comes when we are in a very difficult situation. Even though the results of practising riyaḍah are not guaranteed, santri are not discouraged from seeking ijazah [permission] from their kyai to practise it (Personal communication, 25 April 2010).

According to Nasrullah also, keikhlasan is an important factor in determining the success of practising riyaḍah. But it is hard to get detailed information. Stories of the riyaḍah practised by some well known charismatic kyai are mostly revealed after their deaths. Telling others about riyaḍah that are still being practised is considered a form of ujub [arrogance] and it will affect the result of the practices (Personal communication, 27 December 2009). So when I tried to ask to Gus Munawwar about certain riyaḍah that he practised for completing his memorisation, he just smiled and said simply, “pokoke onok lah kang [just something].” He prefers to talk about riyaḍah in more general terms, not specifically related to himself. He admitted that he obtained many ijazah to practise riyaḍah from his father, uncles, or from former pupils of his father. However, in his opinion, not all of those ijazah should be implemented. There should be priorities in practising riyaḍah and we also have to consider our condition. So, everything that is excessive is not good in Islam (Personal communication, 3 June 2010).

Several interviews concerning this particular issue, conducted with those who have a close relationship with Gus Munawwar, only revealed some general forms of his riyaḍah. Sulaiman, a ndalem santri, explained that Gus Munawwar used to fast. Sometimes he performed poso senin-kamis [fasting every Monday and Thursday] and sometimes he did poso ndawud [fasting on every second day]. However, Sulaiman had no exact information on how long and for what purpose Gus Munawwar followed those fasting practices (Personal communication, 20 May 2010). Suyanto, another ndalem santri, told me that he believed Gus Munawwar was practising some dzikr riyaḍah, because almost every midnight he could hear him quietly reciting dzikr or wirid in his room (Personal communication, 20 may 2010).

Though I could not get direct information of the riyaḍah practised by Gus Munawwar, this does not preclude the possibility of explaining the process of transmission of charismatic leadership in Komplek L with reference to it, particularly with regard to the concepts of barākah and karāmah. These two concepts involve
recognition by others. So, detailed information about how certain *riyāḍah* are done is not as important as what people consider to be the results of practising them. That can be directly experienced and reported by the members of the *pesantren* community.

Moreover, the members of a *pesantren* community seem to pay particular attention only to exceptional cases of acquiring a certain *karāmah* or supernatural power, such as through *riyāḍah* that are mixed with the notion of *ilmu laduni* [a mystical way to obtain specific expertise]. In the case of *Gus Munawwar*, some *santri* believed that his success in completing his memorisation of the Qur’an is a part of the *ilmu laduni* that he inherited from *Kyai Ahmad*. But others believe that it is due to the *barākah* of *Kyai Ahmad*, who often asked his *santri* to recite *al-fatihah* for *Gus Munawwar* (Personal communication with Nasrullah, 30 December 2009). This example indicates that among Javanese traditional Muslims, the notion of *riyāḍah*, as discussed in chapter three, can also be practised with the particular intention of giving benefits to certain other people. This belief, to some extent, supports the possibility of transferring supernatural powers from the *kyai* to his son or to other people.

While there are different ways of viewing his successful memorisation, there is a strong belief among *santri* of Komplek L that *Gus Munawwar* is able to draw on supernatural powers. Andhika, secretary of Komplek L, asserted that “there is no doubt among the *santri* that *Gus Munawwar* has the ability to use supernatural power. The most common example of this among the *santri* is his ability to know what *santri* want when they *sowan* to him” (Personal communication, 5 November 2009).

Recognition of this ability is also evident outside the *pesantren*. Some people, particularly those who were followers of *Kyai Ahmad*, often come to *Gus Munawwar* with a bottle of water and ask him to pray over it for certain purposes, mostly to cure their ill relatives (Personal communication with Sulaiman, a *ndalem santri*, 20 May 2010).

Thus, within *pesantren* tradition, charismatic qualities like the ability to dispense *barākah* and *karāmah* are believed to be transmitted to other people through *riyāḍah*. This belief is supported by *kitab kuning* that specifically show the possibility of supernatural power. However, *pesantren* communities hold that *riyāḍah* must be practised under the strict supervision of *kyai*, or in other words, should be based on
ijazah, spiritual authorisation by a kyai. For Gus Munawwar, as the son of a charismatic kyai, all of these requirements are fulfilled, and many santri at Komplek L believe that it is only a matter of time before his ability to use all of the ijazah he received from his father and from other kyai becomes evident.

Although many members of the pesantren community have, at least to some extent, perceived Gus Munawwar as charismatic like his father, there are still some santri who believe that he is too young to be recognised as a charismatic kyai and that he still needs to provide more evidence of his own ability to dispense barakah and karāmah to others. Therefore, the last part of this chapter will discuss the issue of how santri, as the main subjects of Gus Munawwar’s leadership, actually conceive of a charismatic kyai, and how those views fit with the current image of Gus Munawwar.

6.3. Gus Munawwar in the Eyes of his Santri: Building up the Notion of Charisma

Suyanto is an extreme example of a santri who perceives Gus Munawwar as just as charismatic as Kyai Ahmad. As a ndalem santri, he follows in the footsteps of his brother, Samidi, who previously served in the same position as close assistant to the kyai, during the leadership of Kyai Ahmad. When Kyai Ahmad passed away, Suyanto’s intention to serve as a ndalem santri was not weakened. He believed that there is no difference between Kyai Ahmad and Gus Munawwar with regard to barakah and karāmah. In his opinion, Gus Munawwar should be regarded as being just like his father, since the biological relationship was, for him, the most important factor testifying to the barakah of a kyai (Personal communication with Suyanto, 24 January 2010).

Furthermore, Suyanto admits that his close relationship with the ndalem members on a day to day basis has increased his respect for them. Stories circulating in this environment are also important for him. These include, especially, his brother’s story about how Kyai Ahmad directed Gus Munawwar in studying Qur’an, and more importantly, in respecting others, including all ndalem santri. So Suyanto finds no reason not to believe that Gus Munawwar’s personality and integrity will closely resemble his father’s. This includes Gus Munawwar’s ability to bestow barakah upon people around him (Personal communication, 24 January 2010).

Another santri who shares Suyanto’s view is Gus Adhin, a senior santri, huffadz, and ustadz at Komplek L. The way Gus Adhin behaves in front of Gus Munawwar, as
described before, reveals his perception of Gus Munawwar’s status. Gus Adhin’s motivation for remaining at Komplek L is to obtain barākah from Kyai Ahmad, especially associated with expertise in teaching the Qur’an. He considers treating Gus Munawwar in the same way as Kyai Ahmad the most important requirement for attaining this barākah. According to him, such a view is clearly prescribed in some of the kitab kuning used as main sources in the pesantren. Although Gus Munawwar is younger than he is and started memorising the Qur’an later, Gus Adhin believes that Gus Munawwar deserves to be fully respected as kyai. He explained:

I believe there is ilmu laduni. I think, based on his father’s charisma, Gus Munawwar is likely to be gifted by God with that special knowledge. This means that regardless of Gus Munawwar’s stage of development, he is special like his father. (Personal communication, 27 January 2010)

Nasrullah, another huffadz santri, made clear the importance of biological lineage in justifying such trust, regardless of the age of the successor or the degree of evidence of his accomplishment. He told me:

Most young kyai who are perceived as charismatic kyai are those who inherit barākah from their father or grandfather. It is impossible for an ordinary person to gain the title of kyai a young age without having a biological relationship with a charismatic kyai. (Personal communication, 29 December 2009)

These santri who give Gus Munawwar virtually the same respect as Kyai Ahmad, all do so because they credit him as a full recipient of the barākah of his father, that permeates to him.

Other santri, like Ali Imron (mentioned in the previous chapter) hold a slightly different view regarding the charismatic capacities of Gus Munawwar. Whereas the santri described above clearly believe that the charisma of Kyai Ahmad has been inherited by Gus Munawwar through the biological relationship and ilmu laduni, Ali Imron includes kedewasaan [maturity] as an important quality for determining who is a charismatic kyai. He believes Gus Munawwar is still too young and has not enough capabilities to be considered charismatic like his father. He explained to me what he understood about a charismatic kyai:

For me, charismatic qualities cannot be reached through an instant process. It needs years of consistency in being a pious person. Besides, karāmah as one of indicators for a charismatic person can only be attained through a really close relationship with God. Again this close relationship is very difficult to reach, except through performing ibal-‘ūdah [worship] intensely. Therefore, if you ask people around the pesantren about the charismatic kyai, I believe that the first thing that comes to their
mind is a picture of an old man with a turban, holding *tasbih*, being *khusyu*’ in *shalat* [concentrating on prayer], calm, *tawadlu*’ [humble], talking little, and so forth. It means that a charismatic *kyai* is the result of a long process with high consistency in being a *muttaqin* [someone who performs orders from God and avoids His prohibitions] and recognition from community members of that process. (Personal communication, 25 May 2010)

Although his clear description of the figure of a charismatic *kyai* does not fit *Gus* Munawwar, Ali Imron still believes that one day *Gus* Munawwar will be a charismatic *kyai*. He stated, “*Gus* Munawwar has almost all the characteristics of a charismatic *kyai*, such as being humble and calm, talking little, and so forth. So I believe that *Gus* Munawwar only needs more time to be really considered as a ‘proper’ charismatic *kyai*” (Personal communication, 25 May 2010).

Dede, another young *santri* from Jakarta, would, likewise, delay giving *Gus* Munawwar the title ‘charismatic.’ However, unlike Ali Imron, Dede is more concerned about *Gus* Munawwar’s supernatural power than his piety. He told me:

I have stayed at Komplek L for three years and I have never seen *Gus* Munawwar practising *kesaktian* [supernatural power] in front of his *santri*. So I do not really know whether *Gus* Munawwar is *sakti* or not. For me, charismatic *kyai*, as I know from the stories of some *kyai* in Jakarta and Banten, are always related to supernatural power. At least, they are proved to be protected from sword, gun, or other weapons, when they are involved in conflict with bad people or just demonstrate this in front of their *santri*. (Personal communication, 27 February 2010)

However, he admitted that *Kyai* Ahmad is a charismatic *kyai*, as attested in the famous stories about his performing supernatural powers, that are related by senior *santri* at class or during the *khaul* event. So, when I asked him about the possibility of *Gus* Munawwar inheriting the *kesaktian* of his father, he did not reject this idea. “Yeah, what I know from some charismatic *kyai* in Banten, their sons are likely to have similar abilities to their fathers” (Personal communication, 27 February 2010).

Tahripudin, a senior *santri* and *ustadz* at Madrsah Salafiyyah IV, has an interesting explanation regarding the absence of the exhibition of supernatural power during the leadership of *Gus* Munawwar:

I think the situation under the leadership of *Gus* Munawwar is quite different from the era of *Kyai* Ahmad. Now, most *santri* at Komplek L are those 1990s generations who are more interested in advanced technology like computers, laptops, or cellphones than supernatural things. They can find everything from those gadgets to entertain themselves. Almost all *santri* nowadays have one of those gadgets and it is now allowed at Komplek L. During the era of *Kyai* Ahmad, *santri* were not allowed to watch television. So they had more time to explore everything in Komplek L,
including the possibility of dealing with supernatural feats. Practising kesaktian [supernatural power] became an alternative entertainment for santri, such as playing fire-football\(^{48}\) and other games. (Personal communication, 3 March 2010)

This explanation indicates that current santri’s view of supernatural power differs from that of previous santri. For previous santri, it was an important aspect in their everyday life, and learning and practising supernatural powers became part of their social life. It was also commonly used as a determining factor in measuring the level of their social status among their peers. Indeed, this kind of perception is still evident in some traditional pesantren in rural areas. However, the current santri of Komplek L tend to use a different measurement to determine success. Since most santri at Komplek L are students at universities across Yogyakarta, they are likely to relate their success as a santri to their formal studies. This, of course, does not necessarily mean that they reject everything related to supernatural activity. Some of them have ability to perform supernatural feats.

During the leadership of KH. Ali Maksum, in the early 1990s, all santri in Pesantren al-Munawwir were prohibited from practising supernatural powers. KH. Ali Maksum wanted all of his santri to concentrate more on studying Qur’an and kitab kuning rather than learning klenik [supernatural feats]. Although this warning has never fully stopped the activity of santri who are interested in supernatural powers, it significantly reduced the practice. Since then, the notion of the charismatic kyai, especially in Pesantren al-Munawwir, is associated more with the figure of a kyai who is expert in teaching the Qur’an and kitab kuning and widely recognised for his piety in leading his santri, rather than one who exhibits his supernatural power (Personal communication with Nasrullah, 29 December 2009).

These situations have influenced some santri, including those at Komplek L, toward reworking their image of the charismatic kyai. The ability to perform supernatural feats, which was previously considered as a significant determinant of the charisma of the kyai, is now viewed differently. Though Gus Munawwar has never demonstrated supernatural power in front of his santri, some of them, such as Suyanto, Gus Adhin, and Nasrullah, fully acknowledge him as being as charismatic as his father. Most santri

\(^{48}\) Fire-football is a game similar to regular football or soccer, but using a coconut shell soaked in petrol for a day as a fire ball. The players are usually bare-foot and wearing a sarong. This game is, of course, played at night.
in Komplek L still believe that kyai have this special ability, due to their piety and close relationship with God, though they have never seen it demonstrated in their everyday lives (Personal communication with Maman, an Ustadz at Madrasah Salafiyah IV, 26 February 2010). This firm opinion is based on the concept of karāmah as a special gift from God to those who have close relationships with Him. Since the kyai is still considered as having a closer relationship with God than do other ordinary people, he is commonly believed to have been endowed with that special ability.

Although at Pesantren al-Munawwir, and particularly at Komplek L, the practice of supernatural powers is decreasing, this does not mean that the supernatural has relinquished its influential role in the daily lives of pesantren members. People around the pesantren, and those who are former followers of Kyai Ahmad, still consider barākah and karāmah important, and believe them to have been inherited by Gus Munawwar. Some of these people still regularly visit Gus Munawwar for many reasons, including to ask from him what they used to ask from Kyai Ahmad. Likewise, most santri believe Gus Munawwar to be a charismatic kyai like his father, even though they have still some reservations, especially regarding the issue of his age and single status.

6.4. Conclusion

The process of transmission of charismatic authority in Komplek L indicates that the depersonalisation of charisma, commonly considered an important aspect of the routinisation of charisma, is not the only determining factor in ensuring the continuity of charismatic leadership. Most traditional Muslims, particularly the members of a pesantren community, still hold a strong belief in the sanctity of the biological relationship in transmitting the charismatic qualities of a kyai. This belief suggests that the transformation of charismatic authority in Komplek L would simply come about in the form of hereditary charisma, which, according to Weber, tends to ignore the qualities of the successor. However, this is not the case in Komplek L. The great concern shown by ndalem, alumni, ustadz, and senior santri to enhance the capabilities of Gus Munawwar indicates the importance of the charismatic qualities attached to a particular person (Gus Munawwar), though the notion of ‘office’ has played an important role in providing other ways to obtain karāmah and barākah, through riyāḍah and ilmu laduni.
Further, the notion of administrative rationalisation, which is represented by the implementation of the madrasah system and the appearance of the pesantren board, contributed to the routinisation process of charismatic authority in Komplek L. The role of the pesantren board during the transmission period was pivotal. This phenomenon suggests that rational-legal authority, as formulated by Weber, should not always be contrasted with traditional authority. In the case of Komplek L, it is evident that rational-legal authority enhanced the charismatic authority of Gus Munawwar, and that perhaps it would have been more difficult to build up his image as a respected kyai without the contribution of the pesantren board.

In the next chapter, I will present some theoretical reflections on these phenomena, using the theoretical framework provided in chapter one, and discuss them using the most popular theory of charisma, coined by Max Weber. It would be interesting to see a comparison between the phenomenon of the charismatic kyai and that of other charismatic figures which Weber referred to in his book, such as prophet, priest, and magician, and, importantly, to note the process by which this charismatic authority is preserved and maintained. The appearance of both official and hereditary charisma, as the results of the routinisation of charisma, has presented difficulties for some researchers in explaining the phenomenon of the charismatic kyai. The way the pesantren community maintains the role of their charismatic kyai indicates a slightly different explanation, especially related to the emergence of bureaucratic organisation and the intellectualisation of the santri resulting from the implementation of the madrasah system and the opportunity to pursue formal education at schools or universities outside the pesantren.
Chapter Seven

Conclusion: Theoretical Reflections on the Charismatic Authority of Kyai in Modern Java

It has been shown throughout this thesis that the charismatic authority of the kyai is still evident within the pesantren community. The implementation of the madrasah system—which required the introduction of new kinds of teachers, with technical competence and alternative explanations of social reality other than the religious explanation provided by the kyai—has challenged the authority of the kyai, but the dependence of santri on their kyai remains strong. Similarly, the introduction of the pesantren board, which can be seen as an indicator of rationalisation within the pesantren, has not diminished the notion of the supernatural power [karāmah] of the kyai, as Weber’s model of authority would predict. Rather, the charismatic authority of the kyai has become stronger. The tradition of seeking for blessing [ngalap berkah] from the kyai is still apparent within modern, profoundly rational society, and even within modernising pesantren.

This, of course, suggests that the rationalisation and routinisation of charisma can follow different courses. In this concluding chapter, I will present some theoretical reflections on the charismatic authority of kyai, especially examining the rationalisation process and its influence, with the aim of providing a better way to understand the phenomenon of charismatic leadership in traditional Islamic communities that are responding to modernisation, especially in Java. I will first focus on the implementation of the madrasah system and the appearance of the pesantren board within the pesantren community, and their influence in changing the perception among santri of the charismatic authority of their leader. Second, I will examine the concepts of barākah and karāmah, as the main features of the kyai’s charisma. Finally, I will focus on routinisation of the charismatic authority of the kyai, during succession. The discussion of these three topics will summarise the ongoing relevance of Weber’s ideas on rationalisation, charismatic authority, and the routinisation of charisma, and also show...
how that theoretical framework needs to be modified in the light of developments in
traditional Javanese Muslim communities today.

7.1. Structural Rationalisation of the Pesantren

It is obvious that from the perspective of the government, the implementation of the
madrasah system is a part of their efforts to modernise the traditional Islamic institution
of the pesantren. The main goal of the madrasah system has been to produce a pious
pupil [santri] who also has the necessary skills to fulfill certain tasks in this modern
world, and who can compete with those who graduate from public schools (Hefner &
Zaman, 2007; Subhan, 2010). However, pesantren leaders, including those in Pesantren
al-Munawwir, have shown different views on implementing this system. Some
government policies, which aimed at regulating the curricula of the madrasah, by setting
a requirement for 70 per cent general or secular subjects and 30 per cent religious
subjects (Muhammad, 2005), elicited various responses from the kyai, the leaders and
the owners of their pesantren. Some of them simply did not care and totally rejected the
idea, preferring to declare themselves pesantren salafiyyah [traditional pesantren]. Some
accommodated the policies with certain modifications on the percentages of subjects in
the curricula and were later recognised as pesantren kombinasi [mixed pesantren].
Others went even further than the policies required and declared themselves pesantren
moderen [modern pesantren].

To some extent, these various responses can be seen as a result of different views
among the kyai on the interpretation of one of the important principles within the
document of traditional Islam: al-muhafadhah ‘ala qadim al-shalih wa al-akhdu bi al-
jadid al-ashlah [preserving good traditions and adopting new and better innovation].
Some kyai are more concerned with preserving the good traditions than with adopting
the new and better innovation, but others prefer the opposite approach. In Pesantren al-
Munawwir, the current leaders tend to follow the policy of the previous ones, but
include the opportunity for santri to undertake formal education, mostly at certain
universities, outside the pesantren. Therefore, in coping with the modernisation which is
taking place within society, there is always tension between preserving traditions,
including the authority of kyai, and the need to accommodate new values that are
embedded within the rationalisation process.
Whichever of the various responses is chosen, the implementation of the madrasah system in pesantren has resulted in the need to find competent ustadz [teachers] other than the kyai, because now pesantren have to provide a broader range of subjects, even, if they are not offering secular subjects, in Islamic studies. As is mentioned by many scholars, the main characteristic of the traditional pesantren was its reliance on the expertise of the kyai. Hence, traditional pesantren are known for their expertise in a particular field of Islamic knowledge, such as Qur’anic studies [pesantren Qur’an], Hadith studies [pesantren Hadith], and Arabic language studies [pesantren alat]. These specialisations, though they have not totally disappeared, have apparently become less significant as determining factors in santri’s choice of pesantren.

The appearance of these new teachers, with their ability to offer alternative ways to understand and interpret Islamic doctrines, can be seen as new competition for the kyai’s authority. Santri no longer see their kyai as the only person within the pesantren who can provide religious explanations for social realities. These new competitors can also become alternative role models for santri. Although in Pesantren al-Munawwir Komplek L—and it seems to be the case in most pesantren—the position of the kyai remains strong, this new situation at least poses a dilemma for them. On the one hand, to compete with other secular educational institutions, pesantren have no choice but to implement the madrasah system, or even to operate a public school system, along with their traditional Islamic studies program. But on the other hand, the kyai has to be willing to share his authority with the new teachers.

Also, the increase in the number of santri, as a result of the implementation of the madrasah system, necessitates a relatively new way to manage the pesantren as an organisation. Most pesantren, including Pesantren al-Munawwir Komplek L, currently have written rules of conduct, and a pesantren board, elected annually by all santri, whose members who have responsibility for enforcing the rules in everyday life within the pesantren. To some extent, the board can be seen as the advent of modern bureaucracy in pesantren. It implements some division of responsibilities, has specific job descriptions, and authority to punish those who break the pesantren rules, and thus shows some characteristics of modern bureaucracy as pointed out by Weber:

1. The regular activities required for the purposes of the bureaucratically governed structure are assigned as official duties.
2. The authority to give the commands
required for the discharge of these duties is distributed in a stable way and is strictly delimited by rules concerning the coercive means, physical, sacerdotal, or otherwise, which may be placed at the disposal of officials. (3) Methodical provision is made for the regular and continuous fulfillment of these duties and for the exercise of the corresponding rights; only persons who qualify under general rules are employed. (1978, p. 956)

Therefore, the implementation of the madrasah system, with its formalised progression through levels of study, and the appearance of the pesantren board can be seen as instances of the rationalisation that has occurred in the pesantren, although associated with values different from those described by Weber. The influence of both processes can be clearly observed through the examination of some influential concepts of charisma, such as the barākah and karāmah of the kyai.

7.2. Barākah and Karāmah: The Continuity of Charismatic Authority

It is evident that in the everyday life of the traditional Islamic community in Pesantren al-Munawwir Komplek L, the kyai’s charisma, in the full Weberian sense (Sharot, 1980; Swatos, 1981; Watt, 1960; Weber & Eisenstadt, 1968), has not diminished. Weber’s prediction that the notions of supernatural powers and magic will be altered when people’s lives become more rational is not supported by this case. Values that support charisma, especially a belief in barākah [gift of grace] and karāmah [supernatural power or miracle] are still evident within daily conversations among members of the pesantren. This does not mean, however, that the rationalisation process has no influence at all on the charisma of the kyai (as is shown by the examples, presented in the previous chapter, of how santri with various educational backgrounds hold different views concerning the charisma of Gus Munawwar.

Throughout the thesis, I have emphasised two values that support the charisma of the kyai, namely barākah and karāmah. Both concepts, in my opinion, are crucial in shaping charismatic authority, as Weber noted:

The charismatic hero derives his authority not from an established order and enactments, as if it were an official competence, and not from custom or feudal fealty, as under patrimonialism. He gains and retains it solely by proving his power in practice. He must work miracles, if he wants to be a prophet. He must perform heroic deeds if he wants to be a warlord. Most of all, his divine mission must prove itself by bringing well-being to his faithful followers; if they do not fare well, he obviously is not the God-sent master. (1978, p. 1114)
From the way the pesantren community interprets these two concepts, we can understand why the charismatic authority of the kyai remains strong today. For traditional Muslims, barākah undoubtedly belongs to and comes from God. The kyai, within his community, is believed to have the closest relationship with God. So, he is considered to have the capacity to reveal and disperse barākah to the community. This barākah is not only exercised as an aid in achieving salvation, but is also manifested in worldly assistance for members of the community. Interestingly, the kyai’s ability to access barākah is also attributed to his close relatives, most particularly to his son. As described in the previous chapter, the barākah of Kyai Ahmad has allowed Gus Munawwar to be perceived as similar to his father. Most traditionalist Muslims, particularly in Pesantren al-Munawwir Komplek L, simply continue their tradition of ‘ngalap barākah’ by visiting Gus Munawwar, along with ziarah [pilgrimage] to the tomb of Kyai Ahmad.

Thus the concept of holy lineage plays a significant role in the process of transmission of the kyai’s charismatic authority, and also exemplifies a characteristic of traditional Muslims in Java which is distinct within the Sunni community worldwide. The concept of holy lineage is commonly believed to be a characteristic of Shi’ism (Turner, 1974; Weber, et al., 1978), or to apply, in its broader meaning, to Sufism within the Sunni communities. As described in chapter two, the teachings of Sufism in pesantren recognised the importance of this concept in this broader sense, in which it is not limited only to a biological relationship to the Prophet, as in Shi’ism, but also includes the intellectual chain of Sufi teachings back to the Prophet. The adoption of this concept indicates that Shi’ism has significant influence on traditionalist Islam in Java.

In terms of the charismatic authority of the kyai, the concept of holy lineage clearly indicates that the transformation of charisma within the pesantren community is associated with the notion of hereditary charisma, considered by Weber as a form of depersonalised charisma. Weber explained:

The most frequent case of a depersonalisation of charisma is the belief in its transferability through blood ties. Thus the desires of the disciples or followers and of the charismatic subjects for the perpetuation of charisma are fulfilled in a most simple fashion. (1978, p. 1136)
Furthermore, he noted that the hereditary charisma does not assure the unambiguous identification of the successor. This implies that a belief in hereditary charisma is commonly based on the belief in the charisma of primogeniture (Weber, 1978).

However, in Pesantren al-Munawwir Komplek L, the transformation of the charismatic authority of the kyai requires other efforts in fostering the charismatic image of Gus Munawwar, especially to convince santri who also pursue formal education outside the pesantren. Gus Munawwar’s relatives, especially his mother, and also alumni, устадз, and members of the board have played significant roles in preserving the notion of hereditary charisma. Intense social reinforcement of the importance of obeying Gus Munawwar in order to obtain the barākah of Kyai Ahmad was very apparent during the transition period. (Some examples of these activities have been presented in the previous chapter.) In this pesantren, then, the transmission of charismatic authority of the kyai is not a simple case of hereditary charisma as suggested by Weber. Barākah [gift of grace], though most traditionalist Muslims believe in its transferability through blood ties, will not automatically be inherited without serious efforts from Gus Munawwar and other key members of the pesantren.

Similarly, most traditionalist Muslims believe in the transferability of karāmah [supernatural powers]. Weber was right, however, when he stated that access to these charismatic qualities is limited (Weber, et al., 1978). Although traditional Muslims in Java believe that karāmah is basically available to everyone, as long as they can maintain a close relationship with God through certain riyāḍah [religious exercises], in practice, gus, the son of the kyai, always has a better chance to be credited with obtaining karāmah. Several examples illustrate this distinction. First, as for barākah, the concept of holy lineage influences perception of the chance of acquiring karāmah. Traditionalist Muslims in Java believe that the son of the kyai inherits the karāmah of his father, or, at least, gus is seen to have an inherent potency to acquire it the way his father did. Second, there is a strong belief in the concept of ilmu ladunni, whereby God gives a certain ability to someone without their undergoing the ordinary learning process. Third, practising riyāḍah requires an ijazah [special permission] from the kyai. There is a perception among traditionalist Muslims, that whoever practises certain riyāḍah without having permission or guidance from the kyai will end up with a mental
disorder [I. gila]. Finally, gus tends to be treated differently from other santri when he stays at the pesantren of other kyai. In most cases, he will have his special room in the kyai’s house and more opportunity to interact with the kyai than do other santri. These special privileges have, to some extent, blocked the chance of other santri to acquire the charismatic quality of karāmah.

Contrary to Weber’s prediction, the importance of karāmah, among traditionalist Muslims in modern Java, is not declining. However, there is a change in the way they view the karāmah of the kyai. In today’s more modernised and rationalised society, the notion of proving the karāmah of the kyai is less evident. In Pesantren al-Munawwir Komplek L, stories of displays of karāmah by the late Kyai Ahmad are very popular, but Gus Munawwar seems hardly ever to show his karāmah in front of his santri. Interestingly, this does not mean that he is not thought to have karāmah. Most santri still strongly believe that he has inherited the karāmah of his father, and some people, mostly former disciples of the late Kyai Ahmad, still continue to visit Gus Munawwar for various purposes, including for curing certain diseases or for help in achieving worldly success. Therefore, less public display of the kyai’s karāmah does not necessarily mean that karāmah has lost its significance for the traditionalist Muslims. Most of them will simply look at the evidence of the kyai’s piety as a sign of his karāmah, such as the way he consistently performs religious obligations and recommendations, as prescribed in the doctrines of traditional Islam in Java.

From my fieldwork, I found the main reason for this phenomenon is the policy of KH. Ali Maksum, the former kyai of Pesantren al-Munawwir, who discouraged the public display of supernatural powers, and, rather, ordered the santri to focus on their textual learning, acts of piety, and the performance of Islamic rituals. This policy has contributed to shaping the opinion among the santri that being pious is more important than acquiring the supernatural powers. Eventually, this policy, along with the changing social environment within the pesantren, as described in chapter four, has resulted in a new attitude towards karāmah. Most santri at Pesantren al-Munawwir Komplek L believe in the karāmah of the kyai without requiring him to display it in the setting of everyday life. Karāmah is believed to be attached to him automatically, as a result of his consistency in performing religious obligations and recommendations.
Extrapolating from current developments of these two concepts (*barākah* and *karāmah*), as understood by most *santri* at Pesantren al-Munawwir Komplek L, it seems that the charismatic authority of the *kyai* will continue to play a significant role in serving traditionalist Muslims in modern Java. Weber clearly suggested, in discussing the continuity of charismatic authority, that the transformation of charismatic authority depends on two factors:

(1) The ideal and also the material interests of the follower in the continuation and the continual reactivation of the community, (2) the still stronger ideal and also stronger material interests of the members of the administrative staff, the disciples or other followers of the charismatic leader in continuing their relationships. (Weber, 1968, p. 246)

This suggestion indicates the importance of the disciples’ perceptions of their leader. As long as they think that they can take advantage, both materially and non-materially, of the charismatic powers and status of their leader, his charismatic authority will continue to play a significant role in that community.

### 7.3. Routinisation of the Charisma of the *Kyai*

A further important result of my fieldwork at Pesantren al-Munawwir Komplek L is a unique transformation model of the charismatic authority of the *kyai*, and its implication for the existing understanding of Weber’s three models of authority.

The continuity of charismatic authority, as indicated above, depends on its dealing with regular or everyday situations, which, according to Weber, is contrary to the nature of charismatic authority, especially with its revolutionary features and its tendency to instability. Weber’s discussions on the routinisation of charisma, however, tend to portray only its transformation from the genuine form to other new forms within a more stable society. He made only a short comment on the transformation of charismatic authority within the existing order:

If the legitimacy of the ruler is not clearly identifiable through hereditary charisma, another charismatic power is needed; normally this can be hierocracy. (1978, p. 1147)

So, it is apparent that Weber’s idea on the transformation of charismatic authority is following these two forms (whether hereditary charisma or the charisma of office) particularly through the institution of the church. This model, however, will create difficulties in understanding the transformation of the charismatic authority of the *kyai*. 
As I have shown, although in most cases we can say that it follows the course of hereditary charisma, the fact is that *gus*, the successor of the *kyai*, does not automatically inherit the charisma of his father. He still needs to work hard, through various forms of *riyādah*, to obtain recognition from his followers. The absence of a church-like authority in Islam has turned this transformation in a unique direction, and, in my opinion, the function of centralised authority is fulfilled by the *pesantren*, albeit on a smaller and more locally oriented scale.

The advent of modern bureaucracy within Pesantren al-Munawir Komplek L, resulting in its rationalisation, has played a significant role in fostering the charismatic image of *Gus* Munawwar. The board members, along with his close relatives, alumni, and *ustadz*, advise *santri* to perceive and treat the *gus* as they would his father. Rationalisation has thus contributed to the continuation of charismatic authority within the *pesantren*. The board members can also act as *badal* [representative] of the *gus*, when he is away being trained in other *pesantren*. They have taken on almost all of the *kyai’s* responsibilities in providing teaching and seeing to other needs of the *santri* during the absence of the successor. However, this does not diminish the charismatic authority of *Gus* Munawwar when he returns from other *pesantren* and is ready to lead his *santri*.

Some scholars have verified the phenomena of supernatural powers or magic within the charismatic authority extant in modern society, especially related to the resurgence of charismatic authority within cults and other millenarian groups worldwide (Gane, 2002; Muttaqin, 2012; Partridge, 2004; Stark & Bainbridge, 1985). However, these movements have operated under the obvious influence of the economic interests of their founders or of elite groups. They are, therefore, not far from Weber’s explanation of the routinisation of charismatic authority, which cites economic interests as determining factors for the continuation of this form of authority. In the *pesantren*, economic interests have less influence, due to the natural characteristics of *karāmah*, which requires simple lives and sincerity in the process of acquiring supernatural powers.

The notions of *barākah* and *karāmah*, as supports for charisma in Javanese Islam, remain unchanged. People still continue to practise ‘*ngalap berkah*’ or ask the *kyai* for worldly success. This clearly indicates that legal-rational authority, as represented by the
pesantren board, can coexist comfortably with traditional authority, in the form of hereditary charisma. As an example, when the leading kyai, Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), became the fourth President of Indonesia, the authority of the state bureaucracy was implemented along with the traditional authority of the kyai in running the presidency (Barton, 2002; Junaidi & Wahid, 2010). Therefore, a common assumption that traditional authority runs counter to legal-rational authority and cannot coexist with it needs to be reconsidered.

7.4. Concluding Remarks

Considering all three aspects of the rationalisation process in this modernising pesantren, it is apparent that they have both challenged and reinforced the charismatic authority of the kyai. They have contributed to increasing the number of santri, and this increase in itself is seen as evidence of the charismatic authority of the kyai. However, by implementing the madrasah system, as well as employing the pesantren board, the kyai is forced to share his authority with new kinds of teachers who provide an alternative perspective through which the santri may interpret their social realities. The way the kyai engages with the tension of preserving traditional values while at the same time accommodating modern ones has resulted in a unique amalgam of traditional and legal-rational authority which preserves his charismatic authority. Importantly, the rationalisation process does not really change the values system of pesantren, although it has in some ways changed the perception of some santri of the charisma of their kyai. However, the dependence of his disciples on his ability to dispense barākah and to perform karāmah remains strong, and this means that the kyai, with his charismatic authority, will continue to play his significant role in directing the religious life of traditionalist Muslims in modern Java.
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