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# Chapter 2

## Religious Networks: Pesantren, Nahdlatul Ulama and Kiai as the Core of Santri Culture

### Introduction

Although Madura is not entirely different to other parts of Indonesia with regard to socio-religious characteristics, a stronger religious tradition appears to have emerged as a result of a long-term Islamisation process on the island, somewhat comparable to what has occurred in Aceh and Banten.

At least two forms of Islam can be identified on Madura: the *santri* culture and the non-*santri* culture. In this study, the latter is taken as being an *abangan*-like culture due to its resemblance to the *abangan* culture in Java. In the *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) tradition, *santri*<sup>7</sup> are pupils of *pesantren*. However, in this study, as well as referring to as the term in relation to the *pesantren* tradition, *santri* is used primarily to refer to the majority of Madurese Muslims who are proponents of a more orthodox Islam based on the global influences of Sunni Islam, the largest denomination of the religion. In comparison, people of the *abangan*-like culture are in the minority among Madurese Muslims. While this last group also adheres to Sunni Islam, they are proponents of a less orthodox form of the religion that is influenced more by local mystical belief systems. This *abangan*-like culture is further sketched in Chapter 4.

I would maintain that the *santri* culture in Madura can be

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<sup>7</sup> In the Indonesian languages, such as Javanese, Madurese, and Bahasa Indonesia (the official language of Indonesia), the term *santri* can be used in both singular and plural forms. Other non-English terms in this study can be used as both singular and plural forms as well.

represented by three main elements: Islamic education institutions, Islamic groupings and Islamic leaders. Like other religiously-associated regions, such as Aceh (Morris, 1983: 22; Saby, 1995: xix) or Banten (Van Bruinessen, 1995: 165), in Madura, where the society is traditionally linked to a religious world view, many of the traditions and customs have become linked with religion. Consequently, it is not easy to draw a clear distinction between culture and traditions in rural areas and urban quarters. Perhaps the most distinctive aspect that distinguishes the culture and traditions of the villagers from those of townsmen is the level of consciousness that was shown towards constitutional politics during the New Order. During the Suharto administration, villagers were kept ignorant of political life by the government, whereas townsmen seemed to be able to demonstrate a higher degree of awareness. After the New Order collapsed, the situation underwent a gradual shift. Madurese in both the countryside and urban areas in the post-Suharto era now seem to have become more aware of political configurations, and consequently, they have exercised more pragmatic orientations in politics.

This chapter focuses on the foundation of this present study, aspects of *santri* Islam in Madura. It deals specifically with the principal ways in which three main elements of the Madurese *santri* culture—the *pesantren* that represent Islamic education institutions, the Nahdlatul Ulama (the NU) that represent Islamic groupings, and the *kiai* that symbolise Islamic leaders—have characterised and have become central elements of both Islam and politics in Madura. Two major questions addressed in this chapter are: what are the nature and character of the *pesantren*, the NU, and the *kiai* within the whole tradition of *santri* Islam in Madura? How does each of these elements form relationships with the others?

Clearly, the *kiai* are the main actors in state-society relations in Madura. Along with other groups of local leaders, such as the *blater* and the *klebun*, they are social, political, economic, and cultural brokers, a function which, as this study will show, carries its own rewards. It should be kept in mind that the general situation in Madurese villages is not free of conflict, not only between village officials and *kiai*, but also between individuals in the whole area. Villagers are divided into a number of loose groups with different

orientations and interests. Utilising their capabilities and resources, village officials and *kiai* seem to have, openly or not, challenged each other in order to secure their own interests. The state, via village officials, has attempted to reduce the political influence of *kiai*, especially during general elections. Meanwhile, through the networks of *pesantren* and the NU, the *kiai* have cautiously responded to state power by distancing themselves from the state. This has created an odd situation, as the *kiai* are in fact needed by the state to ensure that things go smoothly at the grassroots level. As Touwen-Bouwsma observes, at the village level, the support of the *kiai* is key to involving villagers in the implementation of government programmes (Touwen-Bouwsma, 1992: 100).

### **Sketching pesantren as the core of Islamic education in Madura**

In the history of Islam in Indonesia, *pesantren* are generally regarded as traditional Islamic educational institutions. *Pesantren* are traditional in terms of the content of education, which is primarily religious; in terms of teaching and learning processes; and of management, which is mainly in the hands of traditional *ulama*. There are at least three important roles of *pesantren* within the Muslim community: first, as a centre of transmission of religious knowledge; second, as a guardian of Islamic tradition; and third, as a centre of *ulama* reproduction. *Pesantren* and similar institutions in other parts of Southeast Asia, such as *surau*, are the centres of rural religious life and they tend to be tradition-oriented and socially conservative (Azra & Afrianty, 2005: 1; Van Bruinessen, 2008: 218). *Pesantren* have been a crucial force in the *santri* culture since the nineteenth century Dutch East Indies. Despite their traditional characteristics, *pesantren* as the centre of education developed into a central component of modernisation.<sup>8</sup> Besides providing regular Islamic teachings, in the contemporary period, *pesantren* have offered general secular subjects as acknowledged in state curricula,

<sup>8</sup> Along with *pesantren*, the Sarekat Islam (the SI) in the early twentieth century introduced Madurese to the modern world. The SI provided Madurese with a new alternative in vertical relations between villagers and those who resided in town areas. A new alliance between urban intellectuals and rural religious leaders marked a new phase in the history of Indonesian politics (Kuntowijoyo, 1988: 109).

such as history, Western languages and science, along with Islamic knowledge and other lessons. Thus, these institutions have endeavoured to modernise their *santri* using a distinctive method (Lukens-Bull, 2000: 26).

In the contemporary period in Indonesia, the Ministry of Religious Affairs has reported that in the whole country there were 4,195 *pesantren* with around 677,384 *santri* (the pupils) in 1977, while in 1981 the numbers grew to 5,661 and 938,397, respectively. The number increased again in 1985, when the total number of *pesantren* and *santri* were 6,239 and 1,084,801. This increasing trend was also evident in 1997, when the number reached 9,338 for *pesantren* and 1,770,768 for *santri* and by 2003-2004 the ministry noted that there were 14,647 *pesantren*.<sup>9</sup> In the Indonesian archipelago, the East Java province has been acknowledged as one of the centres of the *pesantren* world. In Madura, Bangkalan and Pamekasan even label themselves *kota santri* (*santri town*), whereas other regencies in Madura, Sampang and Sumenep, have frequently voiced their strong adherence to Islam.<sup>10</sup>

In Bangkalan alone, based on statistical records, the number of *pesantren* in 2000 was 169, a growth from 145 in 1995. The number of male *santri* in 2000 was 21,131 and female *santri* numbered 20,013. In 1995, the number of male *santri* was 13,711, while the number of female *santri* was 12,314. In 2000, the number of *pesantren* custodians, that is, the main *kiai* and other *guru ngaji* (teachers of Islamic knowledge and Quran reciting), was 2,323 males and 258 females, while in 1995 the custodians had numbered 734 men and 455 women (*Bangkalan dalam Angka 2000*: 83). In 2006, the number of *pesantren* in Bangkalan was 305 with 34,013 male *santri* and 30,013 female *santri*. The number of male custodians in *pesantren* was 2,427, while there were 1,283 female custodians (*Bangkalan dalam Angka 2007*: 146).

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<sup>9</sup> Departemen Agama RI, *Data Potensi Pondok Pesantren Seluruh Indonesia Tahun 1997* (Jakarta: Departemen Agama RI, 1997), and Departemen Agama RI, *Daftar Pondok Pesantren Seluruh Indonesia, 2003- 2004* (Jakarta: Departemen Agama RI, 2004) (quoted in Burhanudin, 2007: 2).

<sup>10</sup> Nowadays such claims are rather common in Java. Pandeglang in the Banten province has called itself a *santri town*, while in the provinces of West Java and East Java, the regencies of Tasikmalaya and Jombang have strongly pushed the same claim.

In Sampang, the number of *pesantren* in 2000 was 106. The number of male *santri* in the same year was 17,612, while female *santri* numbered 11,934. There were 1,055 male and 426 female *pesantren* custodians (*Sampang dalam Angka 2000*: 48). The number of *pesantren* in Sampang in 2009 grew to 282, while male *santri* in the same year counted 33,650 and the number of female *santri* was 22,745. The number of custodians in 2009 was 3,907 males and 316 females (*Sampang dalam Angka 2010*: 97).

As we can see, despite the introduction of secular public and private schools in villages in Madura in recent years, the number of *pesantren* has grown, rather than shows signs of decline. One of the most important factors in the survival of *pesantren* in the history of Islam in Indonesia is their ability to accommodate the rapidly changing situation without losing some of their fundamental distinctions (Azra & Afrianty, 2005: 2). This is to some extent unsurprising, given the historical fact that religious education has played a significant role in the history of education in Indonesia. For example, *pesantren* were the only form of education in Java prior to the twentieth century (Abdullah, 1988). In nineteenth-century Madura, religious education fulfilled the need for Islamic knowledge, which was also seen as general knowledge. There were hardly any mosques in nineteenth-century West Madura, only one in Bangkalan and one in Sampang (Touwen-Bouwsma, 1992: 111).<sup>11</sup> However, *langgar* (small mosques) were abundant. *Langgar*, besides functioning as houses of prayer, also served as the lowest level

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<sup>11</sup> Mosques usually had *penghulu* (state religious officials) attached to them. At the end of the eighteenth century in Nusantara (Indonesia before independence), *penghulu* at the regency level were appointed by the VOC as court advisors. In West Sumatra a *penghulu* was a head of the *nagari* (similar to Javanese villages), whereas in Riau the position was at the same level as a village head. In Java and in Madura *penghulu* were religious officials in Islamic kingdoms and in regencies under Dutch rule. They had full authority in all state affairs concerning Islamic matters, mostly in the implementation of *shari'a* law (Islamic law). They also served as the heads of mosques, their main duties being to lead prayers and educate the *umat* (community). *Penghulu* had higher authority than *qadi* (judges) or *mufti* (one who issues *fatwa* - non-binding opinions concerning Islamic law) in classical Islamic countries because of their roles in religious education in addition to their roles as heads of mosques (Hisyam, 2005). In West Madura in the nineteenth century, *penghulu* were appointed and paid by the West Madurese rulers like most of the officials (Touwen-Bouwsma, 1992: 111).

education institutions and belonged to local religious teachers. In 1893, there were more than 50,000 institutions like this in Madura where children were introduced to basic Quran recitation, while the next step was entry into a *pesantren* if they wished to advance their knowledge (Kuntowijoyo, 1989: 43).

It was probably in the eighteenth century that religious leaders founded religious centres, particularly in Madurese rural areas.<sup>12</sup> Touwen-Bouwsma has outlined two reasons which explain why religious centres were able to develop independently of the ruling powers. Firstly, unlike the political elite, *kiai* had to support themselves and perhaps they expanded new places with the help of villagers. Secondly, it seems that the villagers gave them land since they believed that the *kiai* were members of the elite group (Touwen-Bouwsma, 1992: 114). Touwen-Bouwsma seems to follow the notion of *desa perdikan* (villages during the time of the traditional kingdoms and afterwards under Dutch colonial rule which were exempted from paying taxes to the government) as being the places where *pesantren* originated. *Desa perdikan* were granted special status, they functioned primarily for religious purposes and were exempted from tax. This began in the pre-Islamic time, where almost two hundred such villages seem to have existed in Java during the Majapahit era. It continued during the Islamic kingdom of Mataram (Steenbrink, 1984: 165-172; Geertz, 1960: 231). The idea that villagers provided *kiai* with land may well be in line with the fact that Javanese rulers gave land to religious people, land that was later transformed into *desa perdikan*.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, only a small number of *pesantren* in Java have a *desa perdikan* background (Van Bruinessen, 1994). Since we have no reliable statistical records regarding *desa perdikan* in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Madura, we may assume that

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12 It is more appropriate to say religious centres rather than *pesantren* since the term *pesantren* might have emerged in the later period, and not before 1500, even though in Madurese legendary history, the term *santri* is widely used to refer to people who studied under the guidance of a religious teacher during the early generations of the Madurese (before 1500) (Zainalfattah, 1951: 31).

13 In Aceh, *dayah* (the local name for *pesantren*) were separated from the village. *Dayah* frequently owned lands that were lent out to villagers or worked by the pupils. Such lands were commonly donated by well-off people (Siegel, 1969: 48). It seems that it was rather common for people to providing *pesantren* with land in the Indonesian archipelago in the nineteenth century.

the situation in Java regarding the small number of *pesantren* which have a *desa perdikan* background is similar in Madura, with only a small number of *pesantren* having a *desa perdikan* background.

*Pesantren* in Madura are similar to those in Java and on the Malay Peninsula. These institutions are centres of the transmission of traditional Islam with *kitab kuning* (the yellow books) serving as classical texts of various Islamic knowledge taught by the teachers (Van Bruinessen, 1994: 121) in order to maintain tradition as well as to mould human beings who will guard the tradition. These Islamic education institutions did not emerge before the eighteenth century, and in fact, they only became widespread in the latter half of the nineteenth century in the Netherland East Indies (Van Bruinessen, 1994: 131-133; Van Bruinessen, 1995: 173-176; Ricklefs, 2007: 52-72).

*Pesantren* exclusively belonged to *kiai* or a *kiai* family and were seen as religious centres for the education of *santri* who wished to become religious leaders or for those who were simply sent by their parents to study Islamic knowledge. *Pondok* (lodges) as part of *pesantren* were built in order to facilitate *santri* who came from afar to reside in the *pesantren*. In Pamekasan, according to oral tradition, *Pesantren* Batuampar was established around the second half of the nineteenth century and in Bangkalan, *Pesantren* Syaichona Kholil Demangan of the famous *Kiai* Kholil, was also said to be founded at the around the same time. During this time, and in fact it has remained a major trend up to the present day, many *pesantren* drew *santri* from outside the local area. At the boarding schools, *santri* usually resided in small *pondok*, separated from the *kiai*'s residence. A number of *pesantren* were well-established and had built up good reputations over the years, with the leadership of the *pesantren* often being passed on from a *kiai* to his eldest son or to other sons who had adequate capabilities in Islamic teaching. In the nineteenth century, there were statistical reports about the number of *santri* in Madura. For instance, in 1865 there were 2,504, in 1866 9,674, and in 1871 there were 18,106 (Kuntowijoyo, 2002: 331).

Children of the Madurese elite had more options in schooling when the Dutch administration introduced secular education among the ruling aristocracy in the late nineteenth century. Even though the establishment of secular schools somewhat affected the

number of *pesantren* pupils, religious learning was still well-suited to the prevailing expectations among the *priyayi* (local aristocracies) who wished their heirs to have wide-ranging knowledge of both worldly and religious concepts.<sup>14</sup> To cope with the popularity of the religious schools, in 1905 the Dutch government issued a regulation to register all pupils and teachers at religious school, as well as teachers of *ngaji* (Quranic recital), *kitab* (religious books) and *tarekat* (Muslim mystical brotherhoods) (Kuntowijoyo, 1989: 46). It was apparently common for assiduous *santri* to undertake lessons in different *pesantren*. Studying in *pesantren* in Java became the next phase for highly motivated *santri* who, subsequently, would go to Mecca if their families could meet the expense.

Many modern *pesantren* in Madura have attempted to combine secular subjects and Islamic teaching. According to Lukens-Bull, mixing the two is a way in which *kiai* and other *pesantren* figures (who together make up the *pesantren* custodians) are arranging 'Islamic modernity' (Lukens-Bull, 2000).<sup>15</sup> Like those in Java, *pesantren* in Madura emphasise certain Islamic teachings in their curricula, including, among others, Arabic learning, canonical collections of traditions (*hadith*), Quran recitation and Quranic exegeses (*tafsir*). Some offer Madurese mystical Islam exercises. Some offer Quranic memorising<sup>16</sup> or martial arts lessons<sup>17</sup> as key subjects, in addition

14 One example is Pangeran Aria Achmad Djajadiningrat, who spent some time in *pesantren* in the 1880s before the Banten revolt in 1888. He went on to continue his studies at the Willem III School in Batavia (Burhanudin, 2007: 121-122). Meanwhile, several members of the *kraton* (palace) of Yogyakarta were also educated in *pesantren* (Pemberton, 1994: 48-49).

15 In his study of three *pesantren* in East Java, Lukens-Bull suggests that *kiai* are redefining modernity, which is rather different from that in the West. Modernity in the *pesantren* world is seen as a set of normative values that must be compatible with Islamic norms. Therefore Western materialism does not suit the criteria of Islamic modernity. For *pesantren* people, modernity is the combination of religious learning, development of character and secular schooling. These variables are designed to make Muslims capable of living in a material world without losing their Islamic values (Lukens-Bull, 2000: 34, 38, 42).

16 Such as *Pesantren Bustanul Ufat Assyaiin* in Sampang.

17 Such as *Pesantren Nuril Islam Gili* in Kamal sub-district of Bangkalan, established in 2000 by *Kiai* A. Bazids. Initially, it was a *perguruan beladiri* and *tenaga dalam* (martial arts and inner power college). *Kiai* Bazids is not of *kiai* descent, yet he was traditionally trained in *pesantren*. In his youth, he often went in search of esoteric sciences. Unlike many contemporary *pesantren* which offer

to the regular textual tutorials. Although many *pesantren* in Madura now run their education systems in a more modern manner, in keeping with their more traditional counterparts, strict obedience to the *kiai* remains a distinct tradition that is maintained in every *pesantren*.

Most *pesantren* hold an annual celebration on the anniversary of the death of their founding *kiai* (*khaul* or *haul*). Renowned *pesantren*, such as *Pesantren Demangan Bangkalan*, are visited regularly during *khaul*. Such an event sometimes takes place in locations outside the *pesantren* itself and is also frequently arranged together with politically associated events.<sup>18</sup> For the most part, many *pesantren* keep devotional and mystical elements in their religious traditions, such as *khaul*, as a means of maintaining the *pesantren*'s reputation of being sacred. Therefore, *khaul* are usually held in their own *pesantren*, instead of in other places.

After Suharto came to power, most *pesantren* leaders have developed a more dynamic mindset in response to the challenges posed by the New Order administration to fulfil the rising demands of employment in the business and government sectors following the development plans established by the new administration. *Pesantren* have been modernised, including in terms of their

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formal education recognized by the government, this *pesantren* does not offer such a formal education. At Nuril Islam Gili, the *santri* may have formal education outside the *pesantren*. Nuril Islam Gili applies *taqror* (memorising) and *tahfidul quran* (reciting and memorising the Quran) methods in its tutoring system. Both are conducted every evening, except Thursday evening when martial arts lessons and inner power practices are taught.

18 Prior to the 2008 Bangkalan regency head election (*pilkada bupati*), a *khaul akbar* (grand *khaul*) for *Kiai Kholil* and *Kiai Mahsin* was held at *Pesantren Al As'adiyah* in Planggiran, Blega village, Blega sub-district of Bangkalan, on 30 November 2007 (*Radar Madura*, 2 December 2007). Thousands of visitors gathered in the most eastern sub-district of Bangkalan not only to commemorate the legendary *Kiai Kholil*, but also to welcome Fuad Amin Imron (this figure is described further in Chapter 6), a descendant of the *kiai*, as well as the incumbent regent and candidate regent who would participate in the 2008 *pilkada*. In that event, Siti Masnuri, Fuad's wife, gave presents to members of Muslimat (the women's organisation of the NU). In Madura, as well as in other places in Indonesia, political figures giving presents or attending religious events where constituents are present is common prior to general elections, as they believe that this will generate more votes. Meanwhile, many people are sceptical about these practices.

education system; for example, by setting aside seventy per cent of the curriculum for secular subjects. As a result, many *pesantren* graduates have been involved in various sectors and governmental services, as well as modern business structures (Hasan, 2009: 5). The modernisation process has also been evident in the participation of some *pesantren* people in politics. The involvement of *kiai pesantren* (*kiai* who lead *pesantren*) in politics during the New Order, however, does not indicate a change in stance among traditionally conservative *kiai* into reformed and progressive ones. Although there is a tendency for *kiai* to give their political support to Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP – the United Development Party), most Madurese *kiai* kept their distance from political parties during the New Order. Only a certain number of *kiai* openly participated in politics. The new patterns of *kiai* in politics, such as guiding older *santri* to opt for a certain political party, were only evident in *pesantren* where these elements were highly appreciated by the *santri*.

In Bangkalan, the celebrated *Pesantren Demangan* and its associated *pesantren*<sup>19</sup> as well as *Pesantren As Shomadiyah* were places that affirmed people's political aspirations during the Suharto administration. In Sampang, *Pesantren At Taroqqi* of *Kiai Alawy Muhammad* (this figure is further described in Chapter 5) served a similar function. So long as the *kiai* of these *pesantren* remained as functionaries or at least supporters of the PPP and championed the party, their constituents would likely vote for the PPP. A number of *kiai* whom I talked to emphasised the vital position of the *Kiai Kholil* family in this regard. During the New Order, the entire *Kiai Kholil* family openly supported the PPP. Some *kiai* in the family, such as *Kiai Amin Imron*, *Kiai Makmun Imron* and *Kiai Abdullah Schal* (*Schal* is an abbreviation of *Syaichona Kholil*, *Syaichona* is an honoured title for *Kiai Kholil*) became central figures of the PPP, not only in Bangkalan, but also at the national level. Most, however, endorsed the party in a more moderate way.

In other regencies, Sumenep for instance, not all areas are strongly influenced by orthodox Islam or the *santri* culture. For

<sup>19</sup> There are a number of *pesantren* that have close connections, or claim to have interrelated ties with *Pesantren Demangan*. These connections are not exclusively based on family bonds, though these are common. To name a few, *Pesantren Syaichona Kholil 2*, *Pesantren Ibnu Kholil*, and *Pesantren Al Muntaha Al Cholili*.

example, places in Sumenep such as Saronggi, Kalianget and Gapurana have preserved the *tayub*<sup>20</sup> tradition up to the present (Saputro, 2009: 54). Nevertheless, Sumenep is still highly regarded as a centre of religious schooling, for there are many respectable *pesantren*, such as those in Guluk-guluk and Prenduan. Moreover, among the modern *pesantren* in Madura, *Pesantren Al Amien* in Prenduan, Sumenep, is worthy of note, as it is particularly famous for its Arabic-oriented orthodoxy.

*Pesantren Al Amien* is located on the southern Madurese main road that connects Pamekasan with Sumenep, approximately 32 kilometres east of Pamekasan in the Prenduan sub-district of Sumenep. Since this institution is located on *tegalan* soil (dry and not irrigated land), people also call it 'Pondok Tegal'. Syarqawi, a man of religion who was influenced by Arabic orthodoxy, established the *pesantren*, perhaps in the second half of nineteenth century, although exactly when is unclear. *Kiai Achmad Chotib*, a renowned *kiai* in Prenduan, ran the *pesantren* in its early years. He seems to have had a good vision about the future of his *pesantren* by sending his six children to study under the guidance of prominent *kiai*, such as those of Tebu Ireng, Panji Sidoarjo, and Gontor in Java, so that in the future they would have wide knowledge about Islamic teachings and managing *pesantren*. Among his children, *Kiai A.H. Jauhari Chotib* went to Guluk-guluk in the 1930s and then to Tebu Ireng and finally, following the tradition within wealthy *kiai families*, he undertook Islamic learning in Mecca for three

20 *Tayub* or *tayuban* is a traditional Central and East Java performing art whose dancers are called *tledhek*, *taledhek*, *ledhek*, *tandhak* or *tandak*. It is not only a recognised form of entertainment, but also an integral part of spirit shrine ritual associated with the annual *bersih desa* (spirit shrine ritual) festivity. In Yogyakarta the word *tayuban* is said to derive from the words *mataya*, meaning 'dance' in the Kawi language, and *guyub*, which means 'communality or harmoniousness'; hence, *tayuban* is a social dance (Hefner, 1987: 75; Hughes-Freeland, 1990: 39). The *tledhek* themselves claim to be Muslim, with some insisting quite vigorously that they are good Muslims (Hefner, 1987: 77). *Tayuban* is also related to the traditional Javanese wedding ceremony, being performed soon after the ceremonial meeting of the bride and groom. This tradition is believed to have started in pre-Islamic times (Brakel-Papenhuyzen, 1995: 546). *Tayub* in Madura is associated with that in Tengger, Pasuruan. In Gapurana, however, *tayub* performance is not necessarily identified with the *bersih desa* activity like that in Tengger. It is held mostly during wedding feasts in which offerings to supernatural spirits play an integral part (Saputro, 2009: 54-55).

years. Shortly after, he returned home, got married, and helped by his brothers, he became the leader of the family *pesantren* after his father's death. During his study in Mecca, *Kiai* Jauhari became familiar with Tijaniyah *tarekat*. In addition to his duty as *pesantren* leader, he also acted as a teacher of *tarekat* (Van Bruinessen, 1995: 108).

In the 1950s, *Kiai* Jauhari rearranged the education system and made several changes to his *pesantren* in order to bring it more in line with the current situation of the education system in Indonesia. Gradually, formal schools teaching general subjects, such as Madrasah Mathlabul 'Ulum Diniyah (MUD), Madrasah Wajib Belajar (MWB), and Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), were set up. Following the establishment of these formal schools, the *pesantren* as the larger institution that encompassed all the schools, developed quickly and became famous not only in Madura, but also in Java. *Kiai* Jauhari seems to have paid close attention to forming future cadres for his *pesantren*. His three sons are known to have been leading figures in the development of Islam in Madura. *Kiai* Tijani Jauhari once worked at the office of the Secretary of Rabitat al-'Alam al-Islamiyya (Muslim World League) in Mecca, while *Kiai* Idrus Jauhari and *Kiai* Makthum Jauhari are both regarded as influential *kiai* in the vast religious sphere of Madura. In 1970, before *Kiai* Jauhari passed away, another formal school, Sekolah Menengah Pertama Islam (SMPI) was established. Since the 1970s, with *Kiai* Idrus Jauhari in charge, the *pesantren* became a leading Islamic centre, not only in Madura, but also beyond the island. Due to, among other things, the fame of this *pesantren*, the three sons of *Kiai* Jauhari Chotib became prominent, and one of them, *Kiai* Tijani Jauhari participated in the establishment of Bassra, the organisation that will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

With regard to this *pesantren* and the *kiai* in this religious network, it is worth noting how different the development of Islam was in Sumenep. The areas of Prenduan and possibly Guluk-guluk may be considered more orthodox in terms of religious orientation compared to the rest of Madura. Syarqawi, the founder of the *Pesantren Al-Amien* was a learned man whose ancestors came from Kudus, Central Java. However, his leadership of the *pesantren* was short-lived, because the more traditionally religious-

oriented people in the area rejected his strong Arabic orthodoxy and did not approve of the fact that he came from outside Madura. Following his expulsion, he established a *pesantren* in Guluk-guluk. His old *pesantren* in Prenduan was passed down to his disciple, *Kiai* Achmad Chotib (De Jonge, 1989: 242-244). The expulsion of Syarqawi from Prenduan by local people is similar to the situation the Muhammadiyah (the second largest Islamic organisation in Indonesia) has faced since its introduction on the island. The traditional features of Islam in Madura indicate that many modernist Islamic ideas, like the Muhammadiyah's attempts to 'purify' invented Islamic traditions (*bid'ah*), will not be well accepted. For outsiders, the differences between the Arabic orthodoxy of Syarqawi and the modernist ideas of the Muhammadiyah compared to the traditional features of Madurese Islam may not seem great. For Madurese Muslims, however, these seemingly small differences matter significantly.

### **Outlining the Nahdlatul Ulama as the 'religion' of the Madurese**

The NU seems to have had a great impact in Madura. For instance, in the 1971 general elections (*pemilu*), of the total number of votes in all regencies in Madura, 817,561 went to the NU party and 300,399 to Golkar, while in the East Java province only 4,379,806 went to the NU and 6,837,384 to Golkar (Panitia Pemilihan Daerah Tingkat I Jawa Timur, 1971: 170-171). At a glance, these figures show us how central the association (and the political party in 1971) to the Madurese in general and to the Madurese *kiai* in particular, since the *kiai* were the most important factor behind the success of the association in persuading the people to vote for the NU.

The NU is by far the largest Islamic organisation in Indonesia, with approximately forty to fifty million followers who are heavily concentrated in the Central and East Java provinces (Nakamura, 1983; Feillard, 1995; Mujani & Liddle, 2004: 111). The organisation, which has had close connections with the countryside and the *pesantren* established there, was founded on 31 January 1926 in Surabaya by a number of renowned *kiai*, most of whom owned Islamic boarding schools, including *Kiai* Hasyim

Asy`ari of Jombang and *Kiai* Wahab Hasbullah of Surabaya. The NU can be considered the heir to Nahdlatul Wathan, founded in 1916 in Surabaya by Abdul Wahab and *Kiai* Mas Mansur (who later turned to the Muhammadiyah). This older organisation was aimed at defending the authority of the four *madhhab* (Islamic schools of law) against Ahmad Surkati,<sup>21</sup> the ultimate religious authority of Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyah or known as Al-Irsyad, an Arabic-influenced socio-religious organization. Like its predecessor, the NU also sees its function as being the guardian of sacred tradition by maintaining the four *madhhab* teachings, although it is the Shafi'i religious school that has been predominantly embraced by Indonesian Muslims (Boland, 1982: 11; Feillard, 1999: 13). This indicates the NU's acknowledgement of the great *ulama* of the four *madhhab* in interpreting the Quran and *hadith*.

The foundation of the NU was, on the one hand, a reaction against the growth of reformist groups. The Muhammadiyah and Sarekat Islam were seen as a threat to traditionalist religious beliefs of Islamic jurisprudence, which depended strongly on strict devotion (*taqlid*) to the *madhhab* rather than *ijtihad* (the making of a decision in Islamic law by personal effort as opposed to *taqlid*) of the Quran and *Sunnah* (the practice of the Prophet, which is derived from the *hadith*). More importantly, however, it was founded in response to the changing global developments in the Islamic world in the 1920s: the eradication of the caliphate, the invasion of Wahhabi into Mecca and the search for a new Islamic internationalism (Van Bruinessen, 1994: 18, 28; Samson, 1978: 196-226).<sup>22</sup> From

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21 Sheikh Ahmad Syurkati or Sheikh Ahmad Muhammad Surkati al-Ansari was born in Dongola, Sudan in 1875. He studied in the prestigious Islamic centres of Medina and Mecca in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He came to the Dutch Indies in 1911 following a request to participate in Jamiat Khair, an education institution whose board members consisted of people of Arabic descent who claimed to be descendants of the prophet. After spending some years at the institution, he resigned due to a disagreement with other board members over equal rights between the Alawi group, the descendants of the prophet, and non-Alawi Arabs. Leading members of the Jamiat had denounced his idea that Alawi Arabs in the Dutch Indies could marry anyone as long as the person was a Muslim and had a good attitude. Following this dispute, Surkati, along with other non-Alawi Arabs founded Al-Irsyad in 1914. For an extensive account on Surkati, see Affandi, 1999.

22 Wahhabism remained marginalised until the rise of 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Sa'ud

its inception, the NU's main base of support has been rural East Java, including Madura where traditional Javanese practices and ways of life absorbed elements of Islam. Rural *kiai* have authority especially where their influence is bolstered by a web of marital alliances between leading *kiai* families and a network of *kiai-santri* relationships throughout East Java. This social base of support for the NU has expanded over time, attracting some urban and more educated followers (Samson, 1978: 196-226).

After its establishment, the NU became concerned with social, educational and economic affairs, and did not simply deal with religious issues. Efforts were made to improve communication between the *ulama*, upgrade *madrasah* (Islamic schools), and establish a special body that was aimed at advancing the Muslim rural economy. The dispute between traditionalists and reformists throughout the second and the third decade of the twentieth century steadily narrowed, as points of religious difference came to be identified as dissimilarities of practice, rather than of principle. From its beginning until Dutch power came to an end, the NU worked to uphold its position as a religious association with a critical standpoint against the colonial administration (Samson, 1978: 196-226). However, in the 1930s NU leaders issued a *fatwa* accepting the Dutch colonial authority (Mujani & Liddle, 2004: 112).

The first statute of the NU was created in 1928. Its format did not contradict Dutch colonial law, which indicates an eagerness to be approved by the Dutch administration. As a result, the NU obtained legal status under Dutch authority (Van Bruinessen, 1994: 41-42). The statute, however, did not include the relationship with Hijaz, a region in the west of present-day Saudi Arabia, which had been the foundation for its establishment, yet it explicitly stated that the NU would expand Sunni Islamic teachings and defend it from the deviation of the reformists and the modernists (Van Bruinessen, 1994: 43).

Under the auspices of notable *kiai* and their *pesantren* (d.1953) at the beginning of the twentieth century. He created a nation-state by relying on a combination of force and ideological mobilisation based on Wahhabism. 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Sa'ud played an important role in initiating an effort to place Saudi Arabia at the centre of the Muslim world and preparing the ground for the sustainability of this position (Hasan, 2007: 86).

network, the NU spread its wings during the colonial era. By 1929, its branches in Central Java already outnumbered those in East Java and West Java, with 31 branches in Central Java, 21 in East Java and ten in West Java. It claimed to have 40,000 members in 1933 and 100,000 in 1938. In 1935, the NU had 68 branches with 67,000 followers. In 1938, with 99 branches, the NU expanded its influence to South Kalimantan, South Sulawesi and South Sumatera. In order to become a large-scale national association, the NU held conventions not only in East Java, but also in Bandung (1932) and Banjarmasin (1936) (Feillard, 1999: 18-19; Fealy & Barton, 1995: ix-xxvi; Van Bruinessen, 1994: 48-49).

A definite enforced unity among the diverse Muslim groups was caused by the Japanese occupation during the Second World War. The Japanese attempted to politicise rural *ulama* by bringing them together in training courses and transforming them into Japanese propagandists. On 1 July 1943, the first training course (*latihan kiai*) was opened in Jakarta. It marked the beginning of the Japanese administration's Islamic grass-roots policy (Benda, 1958: 133-135). Moreover, the Japanese were assertive in confronting Muslim groups. In order to establish complete control over the Islamic movement, the Japanese banned Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia (PSII - formerly known as Sarekat Islam) and its offshoot, Partai Islam Indonesia; effected a complex network of control over the prominent *ulama* in the rural areas; and established a central body in a new Islamic association known as Masyumi (Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia) in November 1943. The creation of this organisation represented a victory for Japanese Islamic policy. The Japanese instigated a fundamental change to the traditional means of governing by the increase of power for Islam. The organisation had an impressive membership in the Indonesian archipelago and it constituted a working agreement between the NU and Muhammadiyah. Not surprisingly therefore, the Masyumi board consisted of members of the NU and Muhammadiyah. Hasyim Ashari became its president, with Wahid Hasyim and Mas Mansyur of Muhammadiyah acting as vice presidents who handled daily affairs in Jakarta. Ki Bagus Hadikusumo (Muhammadiyah) and Abdul Wahab (NU) were made special advisers to the Masyumi executive. Wahab Chasbullah and Ki Bagus Hadikusumo of

Muhammadiyah served as the organisation's advisors (Benda, 1958: 151-152, 262-263; Van der Kroef, 1958: 33-54; Van Bruinessen, 1994: 54-55).

The formation of Masyumi signalled a more tolerant policy towards Islam that was going to be of great importance for the future. The foundation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs started from this. During the Japanese occupation Islam was equipped as religious system so that afterwards it could be expanded to include a ministry with a network of regional offices all over the country. Masyumi was then a political power under the flag of Islam, and on 7 November 1945 it was reorganised into a political party with members from a number of Muslim associations, including PSII, Partai Islam Indonesia, Muhammadiyah, NU, and Al-Irsyad (Boland, 1982: 12).

In general, the NU participated in the anti-colonial battles only after the Japanese occupation (Feillard, 1999: 19). Nevertheless, it became partly involved in the national struggle against Dutch power through its younger activists, such as Mahfudz Shiddiq and Wahid Hasyim, before the Japanese occupation (Anam, 1985: 91). On 21 and 22 October 1945, representatives of the NU from Java and Madura gathered in Surabaya and declared the struggle to gain independence as a holy war. This declaration was known as 'Resolusi Jihad'. This resolution urged the Indonesian government to declare a holy war (Van Bruinessen, 1994: 59-60).

After independence, a deviation of interests led to a split in Masyumi. At its National Congress in 1952, the leaders of the NU decided to break their political ties with Masyumi and go their own way by founding their own party named Partai Nahdlatul Ulama. The dissatisfaction that led to the differences between the NU and Masyumi covered a wide variety of problems, among them:

[t]he dislike of conservative rural *ulama* and their business ancillaries for the socialistic and modernistic ideas of a younger, urban-centred group of Masyumi leaders for whom the future structure of the Indonesian economy was to be both collectivist and capitalist (Van der Kroef, 1958: 33-54).

In the decision-making process, senior leaders of the NU were downgraded within Masyumi. This was the result of the

growing dominance of reformist leaders at the top levels.

During the Sukarno administration, the role of Muslim leaders in Indonesian politics, as shown by Islamic organisations, indicates a series of struggles in formulating the Islamic system of state. On the one hand, the NU managed to align itself with the deep-rooted traditions of the Indonesian people, especially in Java. Masyumi, on the other hand, blended its reform Islam with modernistic, more Western-oriented but also nationalistic and secular current ideas. The development of several Islamic parties was the result of Muslim factions failing to realise the unitary political agreement of a single party.<sup>23</sup> The vast majority of NU followers perceived it primarily as a religious organisation, rather than as a political party. Their political support was channelled through the actions of the traditional Javanese and some Madurese *kiai*, whose support provided religious legitimacy to the NU. Although for many supporters the NU was a truly religious organisation, they also believed that it was a truly Islamic political party, with leaders whom they could trust to preserve Islamic principles in the political spheres. The NU was also a typically government-minded party and because of its extreme willingness to cooperate with other parties it was often accused of being opportunist (Samson, 1978: 196-226; Boland, 1982: 50).

Besides its 'patriotic' history in the colonial era, the NU has a dark side. The organisation has been deeply associated, along with the military, with the 1965-1966 massacres of communists. Fealy and McGregor categorise factions within the NU towards the stance on the mass killings. Most influential groups within the NU acknowledge its role in the mass killings. This acknowledgement is even frequently voiced with pompous tones to show their pride in eradicating communists. There are also other factions that tend to downplay the NU's involvement by accusing the military of being to blame. Both sections repeatedly emphasise that during the turmoil it was a matter of 'kill or be killed', and both employ

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23 In those days, during the Sukarno administration, the religious nature of the NU and Masyumi was also apparent in their organisational structure. In religious organisations, such a function devolves on a special board. A *Majlis Syuriah*, or *Majlis Syura*, Religious Advisory Board, safeguards the integrity of the party or organisation, supervising its actions to ensure that its religious doctrine is honoured (Van Dijk, 2009: 54).

religious justifications to argue that the actions were aimed at guarding the nation and defending Muslim religious leaders.<sup>24</sup> There is also a small and unpopular group within the NU that recognises the extremely inappropriate attitude of the NU in the mass killings. This faction encourages *nahdliyin* (NU followers) to confess their mistakes and apologise for the mass slaughter of communists (Fealy & McGregor, 2010: 37-60). Although not specifically confirmed, statements of several *kiai* urging young *nahdliyin* to 'smash the communists' (*mengganyang komunis*) were understood as an invitation to eliminate the communists. Moreover, *Duta Masyarakat*, NU's daily newspaper, explicitly declared that communists must be wiped out and that it was seen as the most appropriate and best decision (Feillard, 1999: 72). In the more recent period, it is not only influential leaders of the NU who have proudly acknowledged the eradication of communists, but also the government and the military forces have voiced similar feelings. For instance, in the 1996 Banser<sup>25</sup> grand rendezvous (*apel akbar*) in Kediri, Pangdam (Commander of Military Region) V Brawijaya, Major General Imam Utomo praised Banser for destroying the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). Meanwhile, Kiai Ma` shum Jauhari (Gus Maksum), a *kiai* of Pesantren Lirboyo, Kediri, who acted as commander of Banser Kediri<sup>26</sup> in 1965, proudly stated:

Kalau sekarang ada organisasi [lain] yang mengklaim dirinya sebagai penumpas PKI, itu hanya isapan jempol dan ambisi yang tidak mendasar (If now there are [other] organisations that claim themselves to be PKI exterminators, it is only myth and groundless ambition) (*Surya*, 1 September 1996).

Fealy and McGregor conclude that the NU was an active participant in the massacre. Furthermore, they believe that it was the NU elites who generated the anti-PKI campaign among NU

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24 As a result, not only hundreds of thousands died, but also survivors of the violence converted to Christianity, Hinduism and in larger numbers to Islam (Fealy & McGregor, 2010: 50; Van Bruinessen, 1999: 168).

25 Banser or Barisan Ansor Serbaguna is NU's paramilitary unit that consists mostly of young *nahdliyin*.

26 In Kediri, the mass killings were directed as a response towards 'aksi sepihak' (unilateral action) that was executed towards landowner *kiai*, such as Kiai Machrus Ali of Lirboyo (Van Bruinessen, 1994: 85).

followers. The use of religious elements by the elites was actually directed at protecting their privileged economic and political capital (Fealy & McGregor, 2010: 59-60). In Surabaya, the military exploited Ansor, a youth wing organisation of the NU, and Banser forces from Madura to carry out the eradication (Van Bruinessen, 1994: 85-86).<sup>27</sup> Ansor from East Java also took part in the killings in Bali (Eklöf, 2002: 124-125).

We now turn to the NU in Madura. As I have mentioned earlier, the SI in Madura played a significant role in introducing Madura to the modern world. In the first quarter of the twentieth century, the SI had a reasonably successful period when the association drew quite a number of sympathisers in Madura. However, in Surabaya, in the early stages of the SI, Madurese were refused membership due to their bad reputation for drinking alcohol and being volatile (Korver, 1985: 52). The SI leadership in Madura provided religious leaders with opportunities to occupy vital positions, although SI leaders disapproved of charismatic styles of leadership, which it regarded as incompatible with modern leadership. Another group in the SI was the local *priyayi*. The Dutch considered this group to be renegades who showed hatred and dissatisfaction towards the government. In addition, the importance of religious teachers, *haji* (a title given to a person who has completed pilgrimage to Mecca) and merchants were crucial in forming the SI leadership and membership. In recruiting members, religious leaders and *priyayi* made use of their social networks to enhance the political activities of the SI (Kuntowijoyo, 2002: 472-473). In the meantime, the Muhammadiyah found it hard to expand its influence in rural areas, since support from the *kiai* and their *santri* were not easy to gain. In fact, most *kiai* and their followers resisted the Muhammadiyah's movements.

In the later period after the establishment of the NU in 1926, the decline of the SI in Madura marked a new era in Madurese history. The association of the SI with modern and reformed attitudes was unsuccessful in drawing Madurese people to get involved in politics. Following the decline of the SI, the NU

<sup>27</sup> According to Cribb, the massacre of 1965-1966 was justified by the idea of vigilantism. Vigilantism here refers to a situation in which local communities became accustomed to autonomy in identifying and punishing crime (Cribb, 2005: 57).

replaced it as the organisation with the most rural followers who actively participated in politics. Nevertheless, the diminishing role of urban intellectuals eventually led to difficult circumstances in Madura, where the dominant roles of countryside *kiai* slowed down the modernisation process (Kuntowijoyo, 1988). NU devotees seemed to be attracted to the NU primarily because of the non-political orientation of the organisation during its early years, whereas the political orientations of the SI were responsible for the Sarekat gradually losing followers (Van Bruinessen, 1994: 47-48). As in Java, in Madura most *nahdliyin* perceived the NU primarily as a religious organisation, rather than a political association. The NU became popular and took over the SI's position in the late 1920s as an organisation that was able to spread out to rural areas.

After the SI lost its influence, the religious movement in Madura was dominated by the NU. One of the founding members was *Kiai* Doromuntaha of Bangkalan (Alfian, 1969: 356), and the NU in Madura was dominated by *kiai* from Bangkalan. The close proximity of Bangkalan to Surabaya, compared to other regencies in Madura, made the *kiai* who resided there more aware of what was going on in Java, such as the establishment of this new organisation (the NU). In the 1930s, the NU expanded in both members and branches. Meanwhile, although the Muhammadiyah was able to reinforce its influence among the younger generation, membership was still limited, with only sixty members in Pamekasan and 116 in Sumenep (Kuntowijoyo, 2002: 545). Even in the contemporary period, the Muhammadiyah has never succeeded in planting roots in the villages. In his findings, Mansurnoor reveals that in the 1980s a number of individuals in Pamekasan were able to gain information from outside their village and consequently showed interest in the Muhammadiyah, yet they did not dare to openly declare their allegiance to the organisation (Mansurnoor, 1990: 200).

The NU was able to attract local *kiai* and many villagers primarily due to its perspective that appreciated more traditional and syncretist aspects of Islam in Madura. In addition, the prominence of *Kiai* Kholil of Bangkalan was also used by NU leaders to encourage a sense of pride among Madurese religious leaders by signifying that *Kiai* Hasyim Ashari, *Kiai* Wahab Chasbullah, *Kiai*

Bisri Syansuri, and *Kiai* Maksum, all founding members, were once students of the eminent *kiai*. NU leaders expected, therefore, that Madurese *ulama* would be proud of their legendary *kiai*. Being members of the NU, or even just being sympathetic to the NU, was interpreted as protecting Islam from the potential threats of reformists and modernists. The success of the NU's top figures in rallying their colleagues to the cause was a reflection of rural Muslim life in the Archipelago that centred on *pesantren*. The NU was also far more hospitable than the SI or the Muhammadiyah to mystical-magical practices and it kept strictly to the old traditions, showing a lack of interest in shifting direction towards a more modern stance. The NU's conception of Islam seems to have fit the Madurese *santri* culture.

The NU in Madura was often organised by local aristocrats rather than by *kiai*. For instance, Raden Prawirowicetro became the NU commissary of Madura in 1937 (Kuntowijoyo, 2002: 553), a situation that was reversed after independence when it was *kiai*, rather than local *priyayi*, who held central positions within the NU in Madura and elsewhere. The emergence of the NU in the colonial era can also be seen as a 'rural' answer to an urban-oriented challenge posed by the reformists and modernists (Van der Kroef, 1958: 45). This corresponds to the general situation with *kiai*, both NU and non-NU, maintaining strong ties within their local village domain, rather than with the outside world.

Under Suharto's authoritarian administration, Indonesia experienced the enforced adoption of Pancasila (the official five pillars and philosophical foundation of the Indonesian state) as the state ideology. The Suharto administration used Pancasila to curb religious freedom, forcing Indonesians to accept it and to value it in a standardised way. There was almost no opportunity to disagree with or to oppose Pancasila (Colbran, 2010: 682). All Muslim associations, either in the form of political parties or socio-cultural movements, were forced to accept Pancasila as their sole philosophical base. In fact, according to Nurcholish Madjid, most Muslim groups concentrated themselves on ritual and social programmes or education, without entering the political arena (Madjid, 1998: 78). Meanwhile, some Muslim groups, such as the Muhammadiyah accepted this ideology without any real serious

institutional problems, while the PII (Pelajar Islam Indonesia - The Indonesian Muslim Students) openly rejected the idea, and the HMI (Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam - The Muslim Student Association) experienced internal conflict, with one group accepting and the other rejecting it. The NU, in the meantime, accepted the idea to varying degrees. Within the association, *kiai* and politicians competed with each other for ultimate leadership of the NU. This struggle was prominent after the 1982 general elections (i.e. in the immediate aftermath), when a group of Madurese *kiai* demanded that the NU avoid interfering in politics by leaving the PPP and becoming neutral. Despite its acceptance of Pancasila, a number of Madurese *kiai* in the NU refused to officially adopt Pancasila as the ideological base of the organisation (Mansurnoor, 1990: 379). Even today, many of the *kiai* in Madura who I had conversations with are still not in favour of Pancasila and consider the philosophical ideology a legacy of secular governments.

For many *santri*, being a Muslim means being a sympathiser of the NU. This strong identification with the NU does not automatically mean that they have to officially become a member of the organisation. They are considered to be born true *nahdliyin* who will guard the principles of Sunni Islam and obey instructions from *kiai*. In Madurese politics, this means that not voting for the NU party or NU-associated political parties is considered a sin.<sup>28</sup> During the New Order, it was even worse if political allegiance was made with Golkar, a government representative that was seen as the major threat to Islam.<sup>29</sup> Nonetheless, although there was a political barrier between the leaders of NU and the government, NU elites in Madura were aware that recognition from the state was crucial in promoting their organisation in the villages. For

28 After 1973 the support turned to the PPP, and in the post-Suharto period the majority support was given to the PKB with some to the PKNU. Prior to the 1971 elections, Kiai Bisri Syansuri issued a *fatwa* stating that it was an obligation for Muslims to participate in general elections and to vote for the NU (Van Bruinessen, 1994: 98). He issued another *fatwa* before the 1977 elections, this time asking Muslims to vote for the PPP (Van Bruinessen, 1994: 105).

29 Other areas showed a similar attitude. For instance, in Jombang, Kiai Musta'in Romly (d. 1985) of Pesantren Darul Ulum, Rejoso, was of Madura origin and never occupied a vital position within the NU. His choice to represent Golkar in the DPR (the national parliament) led to discrimination by his colleagues (Van Bruinessen, 1995: 99).

instance, prior to the 1984 Situbondo *muktamar* (congress), leading figures of NU Pamekasan repeatedly emphasised the recognition they had received from the government, which included the President's permission to hold the 1984 congress (Mansurnoor, 1990: 123-124).

Before the 1971 elections, the NU in Madura had openly sponsored many village festivities. Following the participation of Golkar in the 1971 elections, efforts to transform village officials into Golkar cadres and sympathisers became widespread. This led to the reluctance of village officials to overtly support the NU. Consequently, many village festivities were held neutrally under local initiatives. Furthermore, during the New Order, despite its departure from politics, the NU continuously attempted to maintain its dominance in the PPP. As a result, the government could not neglect NU activities in villages. Under the Suharto administration, this uneasy relationship manifested itself in the government limitation imposed on NU social activities. One of the most conspicuous consequences was preventing the NU from posting signs in front of any NU office or its leader's home in villages (Mansurnoor, 1990: 203-204).<sup>30</sup> Today, it is common to see NU signs in many places in Madura, including every fifty to one hundred metres along the main road in Bangkalan, which connects the regency with Sampang. Moreover, it is now beneficial to have a strong identification with the NU, especially for new and young cadres who have just become involved in politics, as the NU—despite its 'repression' by the New Order administration—has always been a favourable political vehicle capable of placing its

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30 This consequence seems to be a clear indication of the prevalence of the state doctrine of *massa mengambang/lepas* (floating mass) introduced in 1971. The doctrine was the ideological foundation of suppression of political activity of the people. According to this semi-official principle, people should be released from the restraints of political party activities that prevent them from devoting their full energy to economic development. This doctrine builds on the idea that people should cooperate in mutual assistance, consensus and Pancasila rather than fight for their own political interests (Antlöv, 1995: 36-37). The floating mass doctrine was not necessarily effective in de-politicizing the rural populace, not least because it did not target religious practices that often linked the supporters of non-government parties, especially the PPP, to their actual leaders, such as Friday mosque attendance and religious congregations (*pengajian*) (Ward, 2010: 27).

cadres in various important posts.

The withdrawal of the NU from the PPP after the 1982 elections caused bewilderment in the local context.<sup>31</sup> While in other places the removal was somewhat less problematic to accept, in Madura, NU followers were undecided on whether to vote for the PPP in the next 1987 elections. The uncertainty was generated by many *kiai* who, unlike most *kiai* in Java, were still strongly affiliated with the PPP. A number of *kiai* in Madura believed that voting for Golkar would mean treachery to Islam, while giving preference to the third party, the PDI was unlikely. As a result the PPP remained the only feasible party to pick. To avoid confusion, the *kiai* decided to employ a more pragmatic attitude and persuade the *nahdliyin* to vote for a party that defends and promotes Islamic values. This was taken by the *nahdliyin* as a plea to vote for the PPP.

Muslim organisations like the NU were not explicitly democratic when they were founded. Despite its undemocratic character, the NU was remarkably successful in gathering many followers, especially in rural areas. This was mainly due to the *kiai* networks and, as a result, the NU was successful in mustering *kiai* devotees into a more integrated group. In the New Order period in Madura, a more united group within the NU became the major force in rallying votes for the NU party and later for the PPP. This more integrated faction of the NU typically consisted of local religious leaders, such as *kiai langgar*, *ustadz (guru ngaji)* in local *madrasah*, or *imam/kiai* of village mosques. After the NU decided to depoliticise its agenda, these local religious leaders acted as political advisors for villagers' political concerns, primarily because of their awareness of the world outside the village. The higher-ranking *kiai* or *kiai* from large *pesantren* remained observant

31 Musyawarah Nasional Alim Ulama NU (Munas Situbondo 1983 - the 1983 Situbondo Convention) and Muktamar ke-27 Situbondo 1984 (the 1984 27<sup>th</sup> Congress) indicated reconciliation between the NU and the Suharto administration as well as marking the emergence of new elites onto the NU board. The 1983 Convention resulted in two decisions: the departure of the NU from politics and the adoption of Pancasila as its sole ideological base. The 27<sup>th</sup> Congress stressed this decision (Vatikiotis, 1993: 124; Raillon, 1993; Van Dijk, 1996; Van Bruinessen, 1994: 113-115). Prior to the 27<sup>th</sup> Congress, the chairman of the NU, *Kiai* Idham Chalid encouraged *nahdliyin* to have free political aspirations, being able to aligning themselves not only to the PPP, but also possibly to Golkar or the PDI (*Java Pos*, 31 August 1984).

and applied a 'wait and see' strategy, although in the end most Madurese *kiai* kept their allegiance to the PPP.<sup>32</sup> The PPP was still seen as a major channel of *kiai* socio-economic-political interests and as an important network for reinforcing their ties with other *kiai* and involving themselves in the wider world.

After the New Order collapsed, many Madurese *kiai* became more pragmatic in their political orientation. In the first two elections of 1999 and 2004, Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (the PKB – the National Awakening Party), as the party most-backed by NU leaders, enjoyed victory in all regencies in Madura.<sup>33</sup> The PKB in return provided the NU with opportunities and financial support. Several members of the East Java local parliament from the PKB faction donated a small part of their salaries to the NU of East Java in the early 2000s (Interview with *Kiai* Nuruddin on 4 March 2011). In the 2009 elections, although the party still won, the margin was insignificant.<sup>34</sup> Apparently, the atmosphere in the Madurese political context has changed. As a comparison, during the New Order the NU's financial support was derived primarily

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32 In other places, there were more *kiai* who were in favour of the departure of the NU from the PPP. For instance, prior to the 1983 Convention and after the 1982 elections, several regional-national functionaries of the NU, such as Yusuf Hasyim, supported the plan for the official withdrawal of the NU from the PPP. Hasyim became the most visible victim of PPP conflicts prior to the 1982 elections, as he was moved from number 1 to number 32 on the list of the future parliament members from East Java province (Van Bruinessen, 1994: 165-166). The position of general secretary of the PPP in its first *muktamar* in 1984 was eagerly sought by many factions within the party. The NU was one of them. In a meeting at the NU headquarters at the same time as the *muktamar*, *Kiai* Hasyim Latief, the head of NU East Java, declared that if the NU did not occupy the general secretary position, the NU would withdraw itself from the PPP (*Jawa Pos*, 22 August 1984.). Ultimately Mardinsyah, a non-NU politician, was elected as the general secretary of the PPP. He was assisted by six deputies, namely Yudo Paripurno, H.M. Ansyari Syam, Husni Thamrin, Ali Tamin, Djerkasy Noor and Ismail Mokobombang (*Jawa Pos*, 23 August 1984).

33 The collapse of the New Order also meant the end of a controlled three-party system. This is further explained in Chapter 6.

34 The number of seats in the DPRD Bangkalan achieved by political parties in the 2009 elections was as follows: PKB 10 seats, PPP 5, PKNN 5, Demokrat 4, PBR 3, PAN 3, Hanura 3, PDIP 2, PPD 2, PNBK 2, Republikan 2, Golkar 1, Gerindra 1, PDP 1, PKS 1 (*Radar Madura*, 22 April 2009).

from contributions. Moreover, trading companies and businesses were established and donations were collected to form stable financial resources for the organisation (Mansurnoor, 1990: 123).

Despite the accusation by some *nahdliyin* that the NU in Madura has been too involved in politics, some segments of the NU in Madura remain orthodox in terms of attitudes towards *shari'a* issues. A number of *ulama* in Madura, such as those of the MUI (the Indonesian Council of *Ulama*), the Muhammadiyah and the NU have responded negatively to and publicly disapproved of the discourse on Rancangan Undang-undang Hukum Terapan Pengadilan Agama Bidang Perkawinan (Legal Draft of Religious Court's Applied Law in Marriage Section), which penalises people who conduct an unofficial marriage (*nikah siri*), a marriage that is not recorded at the Office of Religious Affairs (Kantor Urusan Agama - KUA). Even though many Madurese *ulama* do not wish their daughters to become victims of *nikah siri*, they believe that *nikah siri* is lawful according to *shari'a* ([www.nu.or.id](http://www.nu.or.id), 23 February 2010, accessed on 6 September 2010). It should also be remembered that some *kiai*, predominantly those of lower rank in rural areas, still practice polygamy. The marriages that take place after the first official one are usually *nikah siri*. It thus seems that disapproval of the Rancangan is not solely derived from a religious point of view.

Furthermore, *ulama* in Bangkalan, such as those of the NU and Bassra have mutually supported the proposal of regional regulation (Peraturan Daerah - Perda) on the obligation for female government officers and female students above nine years old to wear *jilbab* (veil, headscarf), proposed by the NU of Bangkalan. The proposal has been frequently quoted as compatible with the characteristic of Bangkalan as *kota santri*. Two young *kiai*, *Kiai* Imam Bukhori Kholil and *Kiai* Nasih Aschal, descendants of *Kiai* Kholil, have underlined the obligation as a matter of urgency due to the number of female students and female employees in public spheres who do not completely cover their *aurat/awrat* (the intimate parts of the body, for both men and women, which must be covered with clothing) ([www.nu.or.id](http://www.nu.or.id), 31 July 2009, accessed on 7 September 2010). The proposal has generated various reactions. Many are in support, and some schools in Bangkalan openly support the proposal ([www.swarapendidikan.com](http://www.swarapendidikan.com), accessed on 22 August

2011), while only a minority of non-governmental organisations and academics are against it (<http://cmars.synthasite.com/syahadah>, accessed on 22 August 2011).

In addition to matters of dress, the *ulama* of NU Sumenep have voiced concerns about love affairs conducted via mobile phones. The *ulama* are convinced that these 'vulgar' conversations are incompatible with *shari'a*. The concern is not only restricted to what is said over the phone, as it is believed that the individuals involved usually decide to meet and have illegal and illicit relationships. It has been argued that many married couples have divorced because of these types of affairs ([www.kabarmadura.com](http://www.kabarmadura.com), 19 December 2009, accessed on 13 September 2010). Nevertheless, these attitudes towards *shari'a* should not be seen solely as absolute indications of strict orthodoxy by all *kiai* of the NU in Madura, as many tend to show no overt objection to traditional cultural elements such as *kerapan sapi* (bull racing) that contradict strict *shari'a* points of view.

The orthodox thoughts of the NU in Madura have been well preserved by the *kiai* as an ultimate symbol of *santri* Islam in Madura. This has ensured that the NU *kiai* are highly regarded among the *nahdliyin*. NU followers will participate in events organised by NU *kiai* if they know that many renowned *kiai* will also take part. Many of them blindly obey *kiai*'s words without further questioning the meaning behind the speech. *Istighosah* (communal prayer) is one of the most attended events organised by the NU, along with *muktamar*. Although other Muslim organisations also regularly hold the event, the NU usually attracts larger numbers. During the ethnic conflicts in Kalimantan, NU Madura frequently hosted *istighosah* to pray for the safety of people who were severely affected, especially the Madurese. One of the largest prayer meetings was held on 8 March 1997, when fifteen East Javanese *kiai* led around 50,000 *nahdliyin* in prayer at the *alun-alun* (square) of Bangkalan (*Jawa Pos*, 9 March 1997). Most *nahdliyin* were attracted by the presence of prominent *kiai*, such as *Kiai* Idris Marzuki of Lirboyo, *Kiai* Hasyim Muzadi, the head of the NU of East Java, and *Kiai* Abdullah Schal of *Pesantren* Demangan.

However, despite their participation in religious occasions, some *nahdliyin* are also familiar with *kemaksiatan* (sin, immoral

acts).<sup>35</sup> Regardless of this, the level of obedience among NU followers in Madura to NU *kiai* and the NU itself is so high that the NU can be considered the ‘religion’ of the Madurese. There is a popular anecdote that illustrates the strong connection between the Madurese and the NU. It is said that the late Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur, a former chairman of the NU and President of Indonesia) once visited Madura. A Madurese person proudly told Gus Dur that 99 per cent of Madurese people are Muslims, while only one per cent are Muhammadiyah followers. The story, despite its exaggeration, indicates that even today, the rejection of the Muhammadiyah and also of reformed and modern Islam is evident. It signifies a strong acknowledgement of the NU in Madura.

Therefore, the idea of the *santrification* (Indonesians are becoming more pious and observant in their faith) of Indonesian society in the post-Suharto era as suggested by Greg Barton, cannot be truly observed in Madurese society. Barton argues that the *santrification* process began in the mid 1980s when urban professionals became more devout in practicing Islamic rituals and thus became ‘more *santri*’. The establishment of the Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI) in December 1990 enhanced the newly emerging class of urban professionals, and the New Order administration gradually acknowledged the existence of this new group that formed the new *santri* class. The *santrification* process has progressed as the era after 1998 has provided opportunities for Islamic parties to come into existence (Barton, 2001: 245). In Madura, one cannot observe Barton’s term of contemporary *santrification* because the Madurese had been ‘*santrified*’ long before the contemporary phenomenon. Barton’s *santrification* is, in fact, a contemporary process that happened much earlier in Madura. Madurese people become *santri* (in the term of pupils of *pesantren*) as early as the age of four to six, when parents send their children to learn basic Islamic knowledge in *langgar*, under the guidance of *kiai langgar*. Whether they continue to study in *pesantren* or not, many customarily adopt the *santri* culture where

<sup>35</sup> *Kiai* Mashduki Fadly (a former parliament member as well as a leading *kiai* in Bangkalan) told me that he often noticed *nahdliyin* gambling and drinking alcohol. When approached, these individuals vowed never to repeat these actions, and proudly showed the NU identity card in their *peci* (prayer hat) (Interview with *Kiai* Mashduki Fadly on 1 December 2009).

Islamic rituals are performed without having the need to question the purpose. This is very different to Barton's *santri* where urban professionals do not have a *santri* life when they are young and are more critical of Islamic rituals.<sup>36</sup>

The NU in Madura, as has been demonstrated elsewhere, is fundamentally moderate in nature and has been triumphant in establishing political moderation (Barton, 2001: 252; Mujani & Liddle, 2004: 122). It clearly indicates a high degree of accommodation and adaptation. Since its foundation, the NU has officially and non-officially supported various political parties. Following the decisive 1983 convention, the NU chose to withdraw its political endorsement of the PPP. The following account from a local East Java paper illustrates how NU leaders attempted to adapt to and accommodate the current political configurations and cope with the confusion among *nahdliyin* generated by the withdrawal of the NU from the PPP. Mahbub Djunaidi, the deputy chairman of the NU, said that there was no prohibition on talking about politics, even for the *nahdliyin* whose organisation was the largest social welfare organisation in Indonesia. Furthermore, he stated that the NU had left the PPP, and thus the *nahdliyin* did not have to support the PPP, and in fact they had to *menggembosi* (literally means 'deflate') the PPP (*Jawa Pos*, 12 March 1987).

### The emergence of ulama as religious leaders

A strict distinction between the term *ulama* and *kiai* does not appear in this study. According to Deliar Noer, the term *kiai* might indicate two kinds of people. The first comprises those whose knowledge of Islam surpasses that of the ordinary man, and who typically devote themselves to teaching. The second type is more closely related to a *dukun* (healer) who teaches mystical and secret doctrines and practices all kinds of medicine (Noer, 1973: 8).

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<sup>36</sup> Earlier than Barton, Van Bruinessen argued that *santrinisasi* was a process of Islamisation of *abangan* and *priyayi* of nominal Muslims in the 1970s and 1980s. He stated that the process was stimulated by the political situation. Nevertheless, unlike Barton, he did not discuss the urban professionals as the main actors of the process (Van Bruinessen, 1999: 168). In addition, Woodward has observed a *santrification* process in Yogyakarta, mentioning the efforts conducted by *santri* communities in urging *kejawen* Muslims (Javanese Muslims) to participate in Islamic rituals in mosques (Woodward, 1989: 142).

Hiroko Horikoshi distinguishes between the terms *kiai* and *ulama*. For Horikoshi, the difference lies primarily in the more extensive charisma that a *kiai* possess. The *ulama* play more roles in the social system and the social structure of villages and their ultimate status is legitimised by hereditary factors. Among the people, the *kiai* are higher than the village *ulama* and their presence is regarded as a unifying symbol in society, since their moral and spiritual leadership is not tied to the normative structure of a village (Horikoshi, 1987: 211-212).

A number of authors associate *kiai* with traditionalists, incompatible with neo-modernist ideas and puritanist conceptions of Islam. For instance, Clifford Geertz underestimated *kiai*, and downplayed their roles, especially in brokering local cultures and modernity (1960: 249). In Madura the term *kiai* also has a meaning in terms of leadership. In a broader context, the term *ulama* refers to men of Islamic learning and Islamic religious leaders in general. Hence, I use both terms, *ulama* and *kiai*, interchangeably.

Over the centuries, religious leaders developed their own methods of disseminating conceptions of Islam in Nusantara. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, *haji* played a pivotal role in the spread of Islamic thought in the Netherlands Indies. In that period, larger numbers of returning pilgrims increased the number of religious leaders in the Indonesian archipelago (Kartodirdjo, 1966: 155). *Haji* were inclined to reject indigenous forms of Islam in the Archipelago and were supportive of 'true' Islam as it was practiced in the Arabian Peninsula (Van Bruinessen, 1999: 163).

The number of people who performed the pilgrimage increased every year. In Madura in 1880 there were 896 *haji*, while in 1885 there were 1,111, and five years later in 1890 there were 1,364. *Haji* who were not in charge of a *pesantren* were highly regarded, not because of their capability in religious knowledge, but mainly because of their financial ability to afford the expensive journey. In the second half of the nineteenth century, only a few farmers had the opportunity to perform the pilgrimage, compared to better-educated people such as village secretaries. This changed in the early twentieth century as more farmers and merchants—due to the improved economic conditions—were able to go to Mecca

(Kuntowijoyo, 2002: 333-335).

*Haji* constituted the reformist movement that first took root at the turn of the twentieth century. According to Noer, the reformist ideas in general can be divided into two large divisions: the educational and social movement; and the political movement. The reformists were concerned with the nature of Islam in general. They only recognized the Quran and *hadith* as the basic source of their ideas and thought. Furthermore, they sustained the idea of *ijtihad* and rejected the idea of *taqlid*. They also acknowledged the benefits of a scientific Dutch education. The modernist supporters also adopted organisational and educational methods and ideas from the West, including those of Christian missionaries, as long as these were not in violation of the principles of Islam. Moreover, Noer and Van der Kroef reveal that their ideas stressed a return to the Quran as the main source of Islamic belief, contesting folk Islam and traditional eclecticism, and aiming to bring Islam in line with modern scientific advances and empiricism. These ideas showed a willingness to examine the great social, political and economic upheavals of the modern world in light of Islamic 'truth', and above all urged a dynamic application of individual energy in the furtherance of one's social and economic status in life (Noer, 1973: 30, 296-308; Van der Kroef, 1958: 33-54). The modernists viewed the Quran and *hadith* not only as sources for religious ideas and practices, but also for social and political ideas. This certainty of the unity of religion and politics in Islam was reflected in the activities of the Muslim political associations (Noer, 1973: 307-308).

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, *haji* and *kiai* formed central elements of the religious circles in Madura. It is not easy to separate *haji* and *kiai* in that period, but Kuntowijoyo believed that *haji* and *kiai* were different in many ways. According to him, *kiai* were not appropriate figures for organising modern social movements. Their charisma alone was not sufficient if it was not accompanied by the capability to arrange social movements. On the other hand, *haji* were able to positively contribute to the ongoing social changes due to their high mobility and exploration of areas outside their places of origin. Even if a *haji* did not have adequate abilities in the religious realm, his socio-religious status was highly

appreciated. In distinguishing *kiai* and *haji*, Kuntowijoyo gives an example of a rebellious *kiai* in the village of Prajan in Sampang. This *kiai* acted not only as a religious teacher, but also as a *dukun* and a fortune teller. He delivered provocative sermons, requesting that villagers take an active role in combating discrimination from the Dutch. The resulting uprising ended in the deaths of twenty villagers and the injury of twelve (Kuntowijoyo, 2002: 337-345). Moreover, Kuntowijoyo argued that *haji* were more orthodox in identifying themselves with universal Islam. As an example from the *haji* group, he pointed to the *haji* of Sarekat Islam, asserting that *they* were pious individuals as well as being merchants and urban citizens. Meanwhile, *kiai* belonged to the peasantry and village elites. In sum, he considered the *kiai* to be power brokers able to mobilise the people, whereas *haji* were cultural brokers in an Islamic revival (Kuntowijoyo, 1988: 108-138). These suggestions seem to be inaccurate since it is not that simple to draw a distinction between *kiai* and *haji* in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries Madura.

For example, although the well-known reformist *Kiai* Jauhari of Prenduan, Sumenep, was a teacher of Tijaniyah *tarekat*, he associated his *pesantren* with an Arabic-oriented orthodoxy and sent his sons to the modern *Pesantren* Gontor. One of his sons even studied in Mecca, as I have explained earlier, and became a staff member of Muslim World League. To a large degree *Kiai* Jauhari was considered more progressive than most other Madurese *kiai* (Van Bruinessen, 1995: 91-117) and played a pivotal role in Islamic resurgence by adopting modern methods in his *pesantren*, which was rare in the Madurese *pesantren* circles at that time. *Kiai* Jauhari as both a *kiai* and a returned *haji*, along with other religious leaders in Prenduan, established a branch of the Hizbullah guerrillas. This guerrilla group, consisting of *santri* and former *santri*, was actively involved in the resistance against the Dutch during the Military Aggression of 1947 (De Jonge, 1989: 256). Under Kuntowijoyo's classification, *Kiai* Jauhari acted as both a power broker and a cultural broker. Nowadays, all *kiai* from *pesantren* have to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca in order to gain the respected title of 'Kiai Haji' (KH), which indicates the *kiai*'s pre-eminence in both religious and economic realms.

Another example of *kiai* who acted as both a power broker and a cultural broker is the legendary *Kiai* Muhammad Kholil of Bangkalan, the most celebrated *kiai* in the history of Madura. There are many stories about this legendary figure, and most are marked by myth. *Kiai* Kholil is probably one of the best examples of a returned *haji* who served as a religious teacher as well as a religious leader who spread his influence in society. He was born in the first half of the nineteenth century (between 1819 and 1835) and died around 1923-1925.<sup>37</sup> Among his fellow students in Mecca were the famous Nawawi and Abdul Karim of Banten and Mahfudh Tarmisi of Tremas, East Java. Before he studied in Mecca in the 1860s, he had studied Islamic knowledge in various *pesantren* in Bangkalan and Java. Among the boarding schools he attended were *Pesantren* Langitan in Tuban, *Pesantren* Cangaan, *Pesantren* Darussalam and *Pesantren* Sidogiri in Pasuruan, and *Pesantren* Syafi'iyah in Banyuwangi. He was known not only as a *wali* (saint), but also as an expert in Arabic letters, as well as a master in *fikh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and mystical power. He is regarded as an essential figure in the formation of a *santri* community in the Indonesian archipelago, where his renowned *santri* established new *pesantren* as soon as they returned to their places of origin. In other words, he produced *kiai* and laid down a strong foundation for the creation of a *kiai-pesantren* network. *Kiai* Kholil's *pesantren* differed from those founded in the eighteenth century, as esoteric sciences, which had become a leading element of learning in *pesantren* such as the legendary Tegalsari, were no longer offered. In fact, his *pesantren* appeared to be quite orthodox, as he transmitted *shari'a* elements that he had encountered and studied in Mecca. Today, a considerable number of Madurese and Javanese *kiai* consider him their indirect guru, because many leading *kiai* in Java, such as *Kiai* Wahab Hasbullah and *Kiai* Hasyim Asyari, two of the

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<sup>37</sup> No one knows the exact date of birth or death of this *kiai*, as his lifetime is not well documented. A recent book published in June 2010 gives a story from *Kiai* Muhammad Ghazi Wahib praising *Kiai* Kholil's heroic role in the struggle against the 'aggressors' on 10 November 1945 in Surabaya (p. 101). However, on an earlier page, the author writes that *Kiai* Kholil died in 1925 (p. 82). See Arrifa'i, 2010. Many lower ranking *ulama* I have met often mentioned *Kiai* Kholil's epic participation in the struggle against the colonialists, both the Dutch and the Japanese, without being aware of the anachronism.

founders of the NU, studied in his *pesantren* (Dhofier, 1982; Van Bruinessen, 1995; Rachman, 2001; Bakhri, 2006). *Kiai* Kholil is still alive in the minds of the Madurese, both those who live on the island and those who have moved away. To many pilgrims, his grave is considered the final place in a pilgrimage which runs from Banten to Madura. When I visited Bangkalan in the last quarter of 2009, the mosque and the surrounding area of his grave was under construction. When I went to Bangkalan again in the first quarter of 2011, the project was completed and several new facilities had been added. Therefore, it is not uncomplicated to draw a distinction between *kiai* and *haji* in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as Kuntowijoyo has, since a number of *kiai* in Madura, like *haji*, were identified with Islamic modernism and orthodoxy.

For the present-day Madurese, religious leaders are equated with *kiai*. However, the term *kiai* in Madurese tradition has not been static throughout time. In earlier periods, *kiai* was a title for people who had a special characteristic, either in a positive or a negative sense. Therefore, a criminal or even a Chinese Muslim merchant could be called a *kiai* if he demonstrated a special characteristic compared to commoners. *Kiai* was also a Madurese noble title (Zainalfattah, 1951: 68-69). The Madurese noblemen, especially the regents, had close relationships with each other as they had family ties. In Pamekasan, for instance, a significant number of the descendants of Adikoro (one of the rulers of Pamekasan in the eighteenth century) became *ulama* in Pamekasan (Sumberanyar, Banyuanyar, Batuampar, and Tattango), Sampang (Prajan), and even in some places in Java, such as Bondowoso (Blindungan, Pancagati, and Prajekan), Situbondo (Panjhi, Sukorejo, Asembagus, and Bajulmati) and Probolinggo (Klapasawit, Randupangger, and Kebonsari). Besides tracing their lineage back to Adikoro, these *ulama* were also said to be descendants of Sunan Giri and Sunan Bonang (two of the nine Javanese saints), as well as Pangeran Asmorokingking of Mataram (Zainalfattah, 1951: 107-108).

In contemporary Madura, there are several types of *kiai*. *Kiai pesantren* are generally regarded as the highest in rank. There are also *kiai tarekat* who usually lead a *pesantren* too, but who are more commonly recognised as *tarekat* teachers. The next category is *kiai dukun*, shamans or medicine men. The last and the lowest

in the hierarchy of *kiai* in Madura are *kiai langgar*, who run small mosques in villages. The discussion in this study is focused for the most part on the first type of *kiai*, since they are the real agents of socio-political-economic-cultural life in Madura and are the most ideal representatives of the *santri* culture. They are what Eric Wolf identified as cultural brokers, people who 'connect the local system to the larger whole' (Wolf, 1956: 1075) and who select what is appropriate for the local society. *Kiai pesantren* and also *kiai tarekat* are cultural brokers due to their relative wealth. *Kiai* take advantage of their possessions, which may be in the form of materials, such as land or money, or non-material capital, such as the accumulation of knowledge.

In the following chapters, *kiai pesantren* will be the main subject and form the heart of the discussion, whilst *kiai tarekat* will complement the former. Since the discussion of *kiai tarekat* in this study will only appear occasionally, it is essential to briefly portray *kiai tarekat* here. Madura in the nineteenth century, mostly through the *pesantren* of *Kiai Kholil* and others, became a profoundly Islamised area. The *pesantren* with leading *kiai* figures were engaged in the formation of *santri* communities. Meanwhile, *kiai tarekat* with their *pesantren*, which were chiefly located in isolated regions, came to represent ideological distance from political power (Van Bruinessen, 1995: 172-173). Although *Kiai Kholil* was not associated with any *tarekat* order, he was recognised as a renowned Sufi *ulama* (Zulkifli, 2002: 26), a condition that also holds true for almost all eminent *kiai pesantren* in Java who have been recognised as *wali* by their followers (Dhofier, 1980: 53). One other example is the founder of the NU, *Kiai Hasyim Ashari*, who is said to have performed Sufi ritual practices (Dhofier, 1999: 285).

There are three *tarekat* at present in Madura. *Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah*, known for its strong *shari`a* orientation, is the most extensive brotherhood on the island. The *Tijaniyah*, known for its controversial beliefs, has many similarities with Islamic reformist movements and also has many followers, but not as many as the *Naqsyabandiyah*. Lastly, the *Qadiriya wa Naqsyabandiyah* has lost popularity among the Madurese (Van Bruinessen, 1995: 92). In the second decade of the twentieth century, the centre of *Qadiriya wa Naqsyabandiyah* was located in the Kwanyar sub-

district of Bangkalan with *Kiai* Zainal Abidin as its key leader. This *tarekat* had a large number of disciples and an extensive network that spread to cities along the east, north and south coasts of the island. Due to its large following, *kiai* from this *tarekat* were appointed as advisers of Sarekat Islam of Kwanyar. The central figure at the Naqsyabandiyah was *Kiai* Zainal Arifin from Sumenep. He was exceptionally popular among the commoners, whilst his close contact with the ruling aristocracies transformed him into an influential leader among the elites. Another person in charge of this *tarekat* was *Kiai* Zainal Azim who lived in Bangkalan. The Naqsyabandiyah also had followers in Sampang and Pamekasan (Kuntowijoyo, 1988: 49-50). Another *tarekat* in Madura was the Syattariyah. However, there are no further records on this *tarekat* (Kuntowijoyo, 1988; Van Bruinessen, 1995: 92; Touwen-Bouwsma, 1992: 117-118).

In the nineteenth century, *kiai tarekat*, *kiai pesantren* and other religious figures, such as *guru ngaji*, *imam* (leaders of prayer), *jurukunci* (custodians of graveyards), *merbot* (gatekeepers of mosques), *modin* (muezzin), and *naib* (sub-district *penghulu*) were able to improve their positions within villages. This was particularly true for those involved in arranging religious life in villages, including maintaining *pesantren*. They were needed especially during ritualistic festivities, events that have been preserved until the present day.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, some *kiai*, besides showing their capacities as men of Islamic learning, also performed mystical Islam rituals, such as predicting the future, healing people's illnesses and giving martial arts lessons. Supernatural powers, drawn from mystical Islam, were important attributes when developing power and authority. Madura, as well as other places in the Netherlands Indies in the nineteenth century, witnessed these circumstances.

38 The most famous are *rokat desa* and *rokat bandaran*. The former is an annual ritual to bless a village and to provide village inhabitants with harmony, safety and prosperity. The latter is a sea-based feast to sanctify the fishermen and ensure a great catch as well as safety. Despite the strong association with pre-Islamic beliefs, religious leaders are needed to lead these ceremonies. In turn, the religious leaders enjoy a highly respected position among the villagers as well as receiving economic benefits.

Meanwhile, under pressure from the Dutch colonial administration, local elites were slowly incorporated into the administration during the nineteenth century. For religious figures and villagers, this meant that the elite had allied themselves with the infidel power. As a result, religious leaders and villagers were disappointed and dissatisfied, as they had viewed the elite idealistically as autonomous and influential leaders. The people then searched for others to provide guidance. The local elite had earlier enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship with prominent religious figures, because they had not been willing to acknowledge the authority of the rulers recognised by the VOC. They had turned to religion in order to preserve their high place in society. Before the nineteenth century, native kingdoms had had *mufti*, *qadi*, and law courts where, in many cases, *shari`a* was implemented, usually in harmony with the foreign authorities' laws and customary regulations (Van Bruinessen, 1999: 164). This situation changed in the nineteenth century when they became mere tools of the colonial bureaucracy. After the East Indies were placed under the authority of Governor-General Herman Willem Daendels in 1808, he reorganised the administration on the orders of King Louis Napoleon, the ruler of the newly established Kingdom of Holland (Atsushi, 2006: 143). The Dutch, who served as Governors-General of the Netherlands East Indies, showed little inclination to promote Islam. In fact, the advance of Dutch power threatened a potential separation of religious and political, sacred and secular authority (Moertono, 1981). Furthermore, Daendels created a centralist government. All government affairs were arranged from Batavia. The colonial government based the administrative mechanism on a western model, placed sultans and their families under the Dutch colonial government, and converted them into bureaucrats. Daendels's aim was to run the government under direct rule, so that he could rule the people without the local leaders as intermediaries (Kartodirdjo, 1966: 52).

However, people did not accept their leaders being integrated into the colonial administration. Unlike the local political elites, the religious figures such as *kiai* succeeded in preserving their independence. Villagers gradually turned to these religious figures. This does not mean that they only occupied a fundamental position

among the villagers after Daendels came into power. They had been central local leaders in religious, spiritual and limited social matters previously. The decline of the local elite's legal leadership led the *ulama* to reinforce their position in society. The changes to the local hierarchy due to the Dutch colonial government in Madura can be seen as the main factor in the *ulama* strengthening their position as religious leaders.<sup>39</sup>

In the Indonesian archipelago during the nineteenth century when the implementation of colonial power became effective, the emergence of religious leaders primarily appeared in the periphery and frequently acted against the local and Dutch authorities (Van Bruinessen, 1999: 164). In Madura, Islam in the nineteenth century reached a more systematic stage. Old *pesantren* grew fast and new ones were built. A number of well-off villagers became followers of *kiai* and facilitated them by financing their *pesantren*, a pattern that has continued until today. Hence, the emergence of *kiai* as religious leaders was, to some extent, a utilisation of local assets (Mansurnoor, 1990: 36). The discussion by the *kiai pesantren*, along with *pengajian* (Islamic congregations), gave *kiai* a sense of Islamic religious authority. Therefore, the patron-client relationship between *kiai* and their followers was predictable (Hirokoshi 1987: 174).

### The ties between elements of the santri culture

Madurese people have continuously preserved their own sacred values, as the three main elements of the *santri* culture, the *pesantren*, the NU and the *kiai* have had a great influence over society, in both religious and worldly domains. Moreover, these three main elements of the *santri* culture form religious networks in Madura. The networks are controlled by the *kiai*. Consequently, the *kiai* appear to have become a vital connector between the three elements of *santri* culture.

The oldest and most perceptible tie that has been present for hundreds of years is perhaps the relationship between *pesantren* and *kiai*. Although *kiai* are able to exert their influence beyond the

<sup>39</sup> In Aceh, a different situation occurred, as the *ulama* appeared to live outside the village world and were therefore not a natural outgrowth of the rural society (Siegel, 1969: 48).

*pesantren*, without a *pesantren* a Madurese *kiai* is like a captain without a ship (Interview with *Kiai Mashduqie Fadly* on 1 December 2009). Highly motivated *santri* with financial aid from *kiai* parents and who have finished their studies tend to build *pesantren* in their area of origin if they are able to do so. This often depends on support from the *kiai* of the *pesantren* where they studied, or marriage to a *kiai*'s daughter. The latter means that the future *kiai* will be supported by two families. These new *kiai* will uphold a continually unbroken tie with their old *pesantren*. If they study at various *pesantren*, there will be more than one bond between the new *kiai* and their *pesantren*. Certainly, the *kiai-pesantren* relationship also involves the *kiai-kiai* relationship, which ultimately forms the *kiai* networks. As is the case among the great *kiai* families in Java, in Madura this pattern is widespread.

The second important tie is between *pesantren* and the NU. Unlike the Muhammadiyah, whose formal schools are spread all over the country, the NU has never had many formal schools. NU *kiai* remain convinced that *pesantren*, even in their most modern form, are still the most appropriate place to undertake religious learning and secular education. They also believe that establishing a *pesantren* will help maintain a *kiai*'s personal reputation as a guardian of Islamic values. Therefore, it is not surprising that until 1974, the number of religiously-based educational institutions (*pondok pesantren* and *madrrasah*) in Madura was higher than the number of general schools (Mansurnoor, 1990: 170). To a large degree, NU *kiai* have encouraged the *nahdliyin* to educate their children in *pesantren*, rather than in general schools. The NU followers, in turn, have enjoyed the services of *kiai* in form of religious festivities and personal links and consultation when needed.

Last but not least is the tie between the NU and *kiai*. The NU has provided the *kiai* with extensive networks which link *kiai* to the wider world. The organisation has also introduced *kiai* to the world of politics and social welfare. In turn, the NU has enjoyed a large following due to *kiai* attracting villagers to the party and later on to NU-associated political parties such as the PPP, the PKB or the PKNU. *Kiai* support has also been instrumental in financing the NU's regular events, such as the grand *pengajian* or *tabligh akbar* (grand *tabligh*, as a term *tabligh* means propagation

of the messages of Islam). This perhaps indicates what Eric Wolf discusses in terms of group relations. He argues that the reliance of communities on a larger system affects them in two ways. Firstly, whole communities play specialised roles within the larger whole. Secondly, special functions pertaining to the whole become the tasks of special groups within communities in what Wolf calls nation-oriented groups (Wolf, 1956: 1065). The NU *kiai* rely heavily on the NU as the larger system. Along with the *nahdliyin*, the *kiai* preserve Islamic values as well as the sacred values of the Madurese. Within the NU, the special, political-economic, tasks are assigned to *kiai* who are more observant in worldly domains. These form the 'nation-oriented groups' who, according to Wolf, are 'frequently the agents of the great national institutions which reach down into the community' (Wolf, 1956: 1065).

