**THE ROLE OF KYAI ON PATRONAGE POLITICS BASED RURAL LOCAL DEMOCRACY AT TAPAL KUDA**

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**Abstract**

Sociologically, the village community in the East Java Tapal Kuda is dominated by the sarong people who have affiliation with certain Pesantren either as alumni or only as sympathizers. This is because the distribution of Islamic boarding schools in this area is relatively highand is socio-cultural educational basis of rural communities in the region. The indication is the domination of society *Nahdliyin* affiliated with *Nahdlatul Ulama* as a social organizationsocial largest in Indonesia. This study aims to describe the role of Kyai in the context of local democracyrural based on patronage politics in the East Java Tapal Kuda. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitativewith inductive approach. While the type study is a case study. The data collection instruments used were observation, documentation and in-depth interviews. In collecting data, this research uses Miles and Huberman’s interactive model, namely; data reduction, data presentation, drawing conclusions. In testing the validity of the data, researchers use triangulation, namely source triangulation, method triangulation, peer discussion and member check. The results of the study show that 1) Rural communities are ordinary people who do not have political awareness in local democracy so they are independent *patron* to Kyai as role models in their lives; 2) The role of the Kyai in the patronage politics of rural communities determines the flow of support for local democratic communities because politics is a subordinate area of ​​the religiosity of rural communities.

**Abstrak**

Masyarakat desa secara sosiologis di Tapal Kuda Jawa Timur didominasi oleh kaum sarungan yang  memiliki afiliasi pada pesantren tertentu baik sebagai alumni maupun hanya sebatas simpatisan. Pasalnya, sebaran pesantren di daerah ini tergolong tinggi dan merupakan basis sosial-budaya pendidikan masyarakat pedesaan di wilayah tersebut. Indikasinya adalah dominasi masyarakat *Nahdliyin* yang berafiliasi pada *Nahdlatul Ulama* sebagai organisasi sosial kemasyarakatan terbesar di Indonesia.Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan peran Kyai dalam konteks demokrasi lokal pedesaan yang berbasis pada politik patronase di lingkup Tapal Kuda Jawa Timur. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan induktif. Sedangkan jenis penelitian adalah studi kasus. Instrumen pengumpulan data yang dipakai adalah observasi, dokumentasi dan wawancara secara mendalam.  Dalam pengumpulan data, penelitian ini menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman, yaitu; reduksi data, penyajian data, penarikan kesimpulan. Dalam uji keabsahaan data, peneliti menggunakan triangulasi, yaitu triangulasi sumber, triangulasi metode, diskusi sejawat dan member check. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa 1) Masyarakat pedesaan adalah masyarakat awam yang tidak memiliki kesadaran politis dalam demokrasi lokal sehingga mereka berpatron pada Kyai sebagai panutan dalam kehidupan mereka; 2) Peran Kyai dalam politik patronase masyarakat pedesaan menentukan terhadap arus dukungan masyarakat demokrasi lokal sebab politik merupakan wilayah subordinat dari religiusitas masyarakat desa.

**Keywords: the role of kyai; rural local democracy; patronage politics; Tapal Kuda**

**INTRODUCTION**

Islamic boarding schools are the oldest religious education system native to the Indonesian nation, “One of the characteristics of Islamic boarding schools is the existence of dormitories for their students”, while santri means students or people who study at Islamic boarding schools. Pesantren is an institution that is used as a residential place for students who are studying religion. Mansur and Junaedi (2005) argue that pesantren are Islamic educational institutions that have at least three general characteristics, namely kyai, dormitories, and mosques.[[1]](#footnote-1) Kuntowijoyo (1988) states that Islamic boarding schools are a form of Islamic education that has been institutionalized permanently in rural areas.[[2]](#footnote-2) The forms of education are referred to as formal colleges and mutual assistance unions.

Zakiyah (2018) Pesantren is an Islamic educational institution that has an educational system and model that is different from the education system in other educational institutions.[[3]](#footnote-3) Therefore, Islamic boarding schools that use the concept of classical education are called Islamic boarding schools. Salaf Islamic boarding schools are Islamic boarding schools that maintain the teaching of classical Islamic books (salaf) as the core of education (Dhofier, 1984).[[4]](#footnote-4) Meanwhile, Sofyan, Yudistira, Muta'allim, Alfani & Ghaffar (2022) argue that Islamic boarding schools are places for students or students who are studying the Qur’an.[[5]](#footnote-5) Within the pesantren environment there are several terms called Kiai, Nyai, Gus, Ning, Lora, Bhindere, and Santri. As stated by Zakiyah (2018)[[6]](#footnote-6) and Khumaidi (2006)[[7]](#footnote-7) that in pesantren, there are special greetings for pesantren members such as kiai, nyai, gus, ning, kang, and cak. Kiai is the designation for the founder, caretaker, or leader of the pesantren, while Nyai is the designation forraji (wife) Kyai. Meanwhile, the term Gus, Lora, Bindere & Ning is a designation for the sons and daughters or in-laws of Kiai. Then the terms Ustadz and Ustadzah are designations for teachers (the book/Al-Qur’an) at Islamic boarding schools.

In order to gain knowledge from the kyai on a regular basis for a long time, the santri must leave their hometown and settle near the kyai's residence. The interaction intensive between the kyai and the santri raises a certain pattern in interaction them.[[8]](#footnote-8) The relation pattern of kyai and santri can be categorized as a dialectical relationship. That is, the pattern of dialectical relations is interaction reciprocity that is not only dialogic in nature, but goes beyond that. That is, the two parties interacting influence and influence each other. Morefrom that, in the next interaction can produce a synthesis that is continuous and not stagnant at the results of certain interactions. As for the relationship between the kyai and the santri or the relationship between the kyai and his students in the Pesantren, there can be three types of patterns: 1) the relationship between teacher and student, 2) the relationship between parents and children, 3) the relationship patron client.

Changes occur in various lines of life due to the flow of modernization and globalization of information and technology. This cannot be denied because every development necessitates change. One of the changes that is clearly visible in everyday life is the existence of humans who are easier to carry out their daily activities. Technology as well as communication tools has been able to change people’s perceptions of boundaries territorial space that has been considered almost unreachable. On the other hand, modernization opens up space for things that are local in nature, no longer closed, but open to interact with a broader scope both socially, culturally, politically and economically as well another etc. At this point, things that are considered sacred by certain local and closed communities, begin to experience a shift in values ​​and views. Pesantren as the oldest traditional Islamic institution in Indonesia has also undergone a transformation. Changes have touched this institution. Islamic boarding schools, which are basically a subculture in life after society, have shifted their role not only as institutions that produce Ulama or Santri but also Muslim intellectuals who are expected to be able to continue the ideals of Islamic boarding schools.pious salaf consistent with post *li i’ la* say it  or raise the teachings of Allah SWT.

One of the changes referred to is that we can see from the pattern of the Kyai's relationship or chaplain and the santri that we initially knew tended to be patron-client which presupposed the pattern of teacher-student relationships. Kyai's position in Islamic boarding school education is not only known for his scientific and akhlakul karimah aspects, but also has a very broad influence in society through the charisma they have. He is a figure the people aspire to and always has a noble and high place in the structure of society. On the other hand, santri are people who study and gain knowledge from the kyai and they are submissive and obedient in all matters. As followers, students must always obey,humility and respect for their teachers, but with the development of modernization that is happening, it is not imaginable that some Islamic boarding schools now no longer see the thickness of the *patron’s* culture client, but not a few are still cultivate it.

In East Java Horseshoe, there are not a few Islamic Boarding Schools which are still active and produce many intellectuals.intellectual competent Muslims. The birth of young intellectuals from Islamic boarding schools creates a separate narrative on the stage of political drama in Indonesia, moreover the character is a role model for many people or has high charisma, so it is not surprising that many political parties apply for this figure to become part of the party’s management. even asked to bless the party in the hope of getting votes from constituents who have an emotional connection with the figure. The concrete form of his character is participating in declaring as well as sitting on the leadership of the party elite. Especially in local political arenas, such as electionsgeneral, the role of a person's character is still very strong in influencing his congregation both in his position as a religious elite or a figurepublic.

One of the tendencies of the post-reform era is the strengthening of forms of community participation in the realm of national life. Practically all segments of the nation's life experience what some experts call the Indonesian nation's euphoria. Citizens' desire to form a more democratic government is a fixed price that cannot be negotiated after all this time they have lived under the shadow of an authoritarian government. This desire especially can not be separated from importance the political interests of Muslims Incidentally as majority citizens. By not looking down on the existence of other people, Muslims can be said to be one of the many influential variables in determining various policies taken.government Indonesia since the Old Order until now.

The facts about the existence of Islam are so influential is not the same absolutely no consequences. One of the consequences is the emergence of fundamental problems about how the relationship between Islam and democracy or about how the participation of Islamic society in democracy. This problem has been widely articulated by the public, especially academics. As it has also been mentioned by Verba, Schlozman, and Brady who said that public participation is the heart of democracy. For these experts, the condition for democracy is the free participation of the people in government.[[9]](#footnote-9)

In one of the studies on the relationship between Islam and democracy, it was found that the views of some experts doubted the ability of Muslims to be participate politics in a modern democratic system like in Indonesia today for the reason that the system is not known in the Islamic political tradition. Opinions are betweenothers are presented by Samuel Huntington who stated that the failure of democracy in Muslim countries was partly due to the character of Islamic culture and society that was not friendly towards Western-style concepts of liberalism.[[10]](#footnote-10) Huntington even goes so far as to say that the political participation of Muslims in a modern democratic system is impossible to become a reality because Muslim loyalty is so strong that it maintains the concept *ummah.* It differs by concept nation-state as the main element of modern democracy.

In modern Indonesian political history, Islamic political participation is truly an important factor in the nation's history that cannot be simply dismissed. The phenomenon of the involvement of Muslim communities in the national political arena from the Old Order era to the present is proof that Indonesian Muslims have a large role in political participation and determine the direction of the nation's struggle. A real example is the establishment of Islamic political parties, both those with Nationalist-Religious leanings or Islamist, from the Old Order to the present.

In addition to the involvement of these political parties, the political participation of civilians, such as the Indonesian Muslim community, in the dynamics of the nation-state has a purpose fight for Democratic values ​​are also presented by actors in large Islamic organizations working in the social sector such as NU and Muhammadiyah, two Islamic organizations with very strong mass bases. Nahdlatul Ulama as a social organization for example, he has consistently existed to support the creation of civil society for the sake of upholding democracy since the old order to post-reform.[[11]](#footnote-11) NU figures such as KH.Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) even gave birth to the National Awakening Party (PKB). The election results in 1999 even deliveredGus Dur became the 4th President of the Republic of Indonesia. And now, NU is not involved in practical politics but does not limit its citizens from being actively involved in political activities.[[12]](#footnote-12)

NU members in this area were mentioned as observers became a barometer to see the extent of their political participation in the process of the 2008 East Java Regional Head Election (Pilkada). The researchers reasoned that NU figuresAfter leaving KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, became a big figure in this area, let’s say for example KH. Ahmad Siddiq, KH. Yusuf Muhammad, as well as elders as well as national figures who are still actively fighting in the community, KH. Muchit Muzadi (Mbah Muchit).

That is one of the reasons or attractions why this study was proposed by the author, in addition to explaining the political participation of the NU Jember community, which was formerly known as a patrimonial cultured society that placed the elite public, such as the kyai as the most decisive figure in making decisions. Apart from that, there is another reason which is quite paradoxical with the previous condition of the Jember people, namely situation society which is currently experiencing symptoms of social change caused by the increasingly open flow of information and the process of development covering various fields, such as economics, education, politics, social and culture.

The open access to information and the development process for the people of Jember has brought many consequences, one of which is the creation of a transitional society which Fred W Riggs calls the prismatic model of society.[[13]](#footnote-13) The influence of this development also made the majority of NU members no longer categorized as members of the community traditional interior nor can it be called a modern society. They are somewhere in between, and of course they can't be avoid the effects of social change filled with dilemmas. They were faced with many choices, including making choices in the 2008 East Java Pilkada process. However, of the many members of the NU community who were able to quickly filter various information to make various decisions were educated NU members such as the kyai. As in various reports in the mass media, not a few of them were involved in political participation either directly or indirectly in the 2008 East Java Pilkada process.

So far, researchers have not found research on the role of Kyai in rural local democracy based on Patronage politics in the Horseshoe region. However, there are several studies that have similarities with this research, including research conducted by Nuha, U (t.t) on the Role of Kiai Politics in Political Processes in Political Parties (Case Study of the Role of KH. A. Haris Shodaqoh in the United Development Party). The research aims to the role of KH. A. Haris Shodaqoh in processing political parties. The results of the research show that Kiai is faced with a practical political world filled with uncertainty and interests. The variety of tactics and strategies that run political campaigns of political parties usually do not forget the importance of the role of the kiai as a “vote getter” in the forefront of collecting votes.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Villanueva & Salazar (2015) conduct research on Patronage Politics and Clientelism in Housing Welfare: The Case of Gawad Kalinga (GK) Villages in Parañaque City, The Philippines. Journal of Government and Politics. Patronage politics has become a defining characteristic of the Philippine political landscape. Clientelism, a form of patronage, is often studied as disadvantageous in governance and democratic consolidation. While the patron-client framework remains the most influential among schools of thought that explain Philippine politics, transformations in a clientelist exchange are evident given changes in political, cultural and economic settings. Using this frame of new clientelism, we look at and revisit the structure of patronage in the provision of housing welfare in the Philippines, focusing now on the roles of three important actors the nongovernmental organization, the state through the local government and the recipients or beneficiaries in an urban setting, thus deviating from the traditional conception of patronage and clientelist politics. This relationship of clientelist exchange is presented in our Accomplice-Principal-Accessory (APA) model of clientelism, with the local government unit of Parañaque City as accomplice, the Gawad Kalinga (GK) as the principal agent, and the recipients or beneficiaries as accessories in the provision of housing welfare.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Ramli (2016) conducted research on Political Patronage in Local Democracy (Analysis of the Election of Hj. Marniwati Pilkades in Jojolo Village, Bulukumpa District, Bulukumba Regency). This study aims to find out how the village head election process in Jojolo Village is to provide a new understanding of the farming community (klein) so that they no longer devote themselves to the political interests of community leaders (patrons). The results of the study found that the patron-client relationship in the village head election in Jojolo Village was very influential in winning Hj. Marniwati. The form of patronage in the pilkades that occurs in economic and political relations. In economic relations, what is meant is that community leaders *(patrons)* have the wealth and skills needed by their presence for farming communities (klein). So that the client feels helped by the help of a community leader (patron), then the client returns the kindness for the assistance given to him so that he can devote himself to the interests of a patron. Meanwhile, in political relations, community leaders *(patrons)* have an important role in every election, so that Hj. Marniwati can build communication against patrons with the aim of winning village election. As for the influence of patronage on voter participation in Jojolo village, namely: a) The control of votes in the pilkades was caused by community leaders (patrons) being involved in fighting over political positions to support Hj. Marniwati in the village head election (pilkades) in the village Cradle, then the form of this relationship is a remuneration from the client on the basis of the assistance given to him . b) high voter turnout in the pilkades because the farming community (klein) feelowe appreciation for patron assistance, causing the client to participate in selecting Hj Marniwati as a candidate for village head in Jojolo Village.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Cahyati & Lopo (2019) conduct research on Daily Patronage Politics: A Village Chief’s Route to Power. The research aims to explored the strategies used by the incumbent to contest the election and seek re-election. At the village level, the politics of patronage function differently than at higher levels of government. The result of the research show that the authors argue that incumbents do not only create patronage networks during elections, during which voters are provide money or other gifts; they create patronage networks during their everyday activities. Using the economic resources available to them, incumbents combine three approaches to patronage: benevolence politics, scare-off tactics, and money politics. In this research, the authors argue that the incumbent redefined money, transforming it from a means of conducting transactions into a means of appreciating and rewarding voters. By using this strategy, incumbents can guarantee supporters’ loyalty and receive their votes.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Muhammad (2020) conduct research on Politician’s Strategy After The Pandemic: Strengthening of Patronage Goods in The Form of Social Assistance. The research aims to describes and analyzes the strategies of politicians to attract voter support in electoral politics by providing patronage goods or club goods. The result of the research show that the academics' opinion, such as Edward Aspinall, who believe that giving from politicians with the motive of gaining mass support for party interests, and of course electoral politics, can be said to be an affirmation of patronage democracy. Through comparative analysis with several cases of social assistance distribution that have existed, this study strengthens the main thesis about patronage items as a binding of loyalty between the mass of voters whose numbers are very beneficial for parties and party politicians.[[18]](#footnote-18)

Asmawati, Tawakkal & Muadi (2021) conduct research on Religion, Political Contestation and Democracy: Kiai’s Role as a Vote Broker in Madurese Local Political Battle. The research aims to know how the kiai as religious figures who had the highest social status in Pamekasan Regency carried out their work as vote brokers. The result showed that kiai with their social capital as vote brokers mobilizing the masses properly attracted political bosses who competed in the local election. Kiai with their religiosity played as an intermediary in delivering material for intended voters. However, it was unethical when the kiai as a religious figure provided material for voters. As a local figure who has a good image in a community, Kiai became a major element in the progress of the democratic process. It can be concluded that the kiai as a highly respected religious figure contributed the democracy to be well organized in the future.[[19]](#footnote-19)

Alfisahrin (2021) conducts the research on the political culture of Kiai patronage in local democracy in West Nusa Tenggara Province. This study aims to describe the cultural practices of Kiai patronage politics as one of the challenges in the local democratic structure in West Nusa Tenggara Province and its implications. The results of the study show that the patronage culture of the Kiai is a strategy used as an adaptation mechanism for religious leaders in influencing orientation andpreference voter behavior to gain political power.[[20]](#footnote-20) Mahamid (2022) conducts research on Transnational Islamic Ideological Movements in Indonesia in the JKDN Film by Nicko Pandawa. The research aims to re-dissect the contents of the JKDN episodes I and II films, then link the history of the development of Islam with the transnational Islamic ideological movement in Indonesia contained in the film's narrative. The results of the research show that the communication link between the Islamic sultanates in the archipelago and the Islamic Khilafah, then the spirit of unity that arises between the two, as well as high dedication to upholding Islamic law. [[21]](#footnote-21)

Wahyudi & Setijaningrum (2022) conducted research on Village Head Election Policy Innovation in Reducing Patronage of Village Asset Utilization in Tuban Regency. The research aims to analyze and explain how innovations in village head election regulations *(Pilkades)* reduce patronage of village asset utilization, especially bengkok land. The findings of this research are that the innovation in formulating regional head regulations regarding *Pilkades* in reducing patronage of village asset utilization through regulations governing *Pilkades* in Tuban Regency in 2019, has created a new history of village governance. Prospective Village Head candidates are willing to give up their share of entitlements from the crooked land when elected later with varying percentages of the amount handed over. There is no objection to this regulatory innovation in its formulation and implementation, even though there are several deficiencies in the formulation of this regulation, including the weak sanctions and control from the district government in its function as a role of guidance and supervision of village administration so that it requires improvement in the future.[[22]](#footnote-22)

Muta’allim, Munir, Pathollah, Nawiroh, & Muhalli (2022) conduct research on concept of religious moderation education at Tapal Kuda with a linguistic approach and local wisdom. The research aim to explore and describe the concept of religious moderation education with a linguistic approach and local wisdom. The results of the research show that with a linguistic approach and local wisdom, violent conflicts caused by politics, radicalism, sentiment, extremism and others can be resolved by local wisdom, while misunderstandings, differences of opinion, etc. can be resolved and dammed through a linguistic approach.[[23]](#footnote-23)

Yudistira, Muta’allim, Nurcaya, Julhadi & Pattiasina (2022) conduct the research about the role of linguistics and local wisdom on knowing harmony between religions at Tana Toraja. This research aims to describe the role of linguistic concepts and local wisdom in knitting inter-religious harmony at Tana Toraja land with a phenomenological approach. The results of the research show that (1) the linguistic concept can prevent misunderstandings, violence, fanaticism, be sensitive and be able to make inter-religious people aware of the grace of diversity at Tana Toraja land so as to create humanist communication. (2) the role of local wisdom can build solidarity, togetherness, harmonious relations, and religious awareness in a plural society so as to create peaceful social relations.[[24]](#footnote-24)

Azharghany (2022) conduct research on power islamization: unveiling the islamic politics of kiai as leaders of the indonesian people. The research aims to review the politics of Islam Kiai by explaining the historical social arguments and strategies pursued by the religious elite to keep playing a role in the lives of Muslims. The result of the research show that the Islamic politics promoted by the Kiai are based on the Islamic teachings about social concern such as *maslahah mursalah* and *kulliatul khoms* which created the Kiai's movement concept, namely *mabadi’ khoiru ummah* (a path that shapes the best people) and *syuun ijtimaiyah* (social concern). The Kiai’s involvement in politics is based on this foundation. The significance of this study takes social history as a method by introducing a new approach in revealing the political and socio-cultural significance of the Kiai in his involvement in power-politics arena in Indonesia. So that it can fully demonstrate the values built by the Kiai towards Muslims in political education that leads to building awareness of the nation and state.[[25]](#footnote-25)

Maknun, Nugroho, & Libriyanti (2022) conduct research on Contribution of Archipelago Ulama to Islamic Science in Indonesia: Case Study of Manuscript Inventory of Tremas and Tebuireng Islamic Boarding Schools. The research aims to explore the works of Indonesian clerics who have become the cultural heritage of the Indonesian nation in Tremas and Tebu Ireng. The results of the research show that the indicate that the two Islamic boarding schools have a major contribution in the dissemination of Islamic studies through the works of the community that have been well-documented as subject matter guidelines or are still in the form of manuscripts; the scientific chain that is developed continuously and uninterruptedly starting from the original source, teachers to students so that it has recognition as a national and international source of Islamic studies history; In the process of inventorying manuscripts, it was found that there was a very detailed scientific classification making it easier to access as a reference; the library becomes an information center and database of the works of the Islamic boarding school community, although there are still works whose existence has not been found, the growing concern of families, pesantren administrators, and alumni in securing, disseminating, and searching for authentic works of the Islamic boarding school community is the capital for saving these works. So this result is the first step in the effort to record the work and can be developed to examine the contents of the work as a reference for Indonesian Islamic studies.[[26]](#footnote-26)

Azizah (2023) conduct research on Authoritarianism, Patronage, Family Pesantren and Elections: The Dynamics of Political Democracy in Indonesia. The research aims to prove that the Pesantren family, including chief officials, utilized country facilities and worried about dynastic politics. The find out additionally explores the roles of social, economic, and political capital in election wins. Furthermore, they learn about how dynastic politics has weakened the democratic system and proposes a revision of modern election approaches to ensure fair elections by strengthening election supervision and encouraging voter education.[[27]](#footnote-27)

Based on several previous studies, this research has several differences which include research objects and subjects. The object of this research is in the Horseshoe area, while the object is about the role of Kyai on Patronage politics based on rural local democracy. Based on several studies that have been done before, there is no research that examines it both in terms of object and research subject. Thus, this research is a novelty research and makes a very big contribution to the general public. Therefore, researchers are very interested in studying it and contributing to the challenges or role of Kyai in patronage politics at Tapal Kuda Region. Based on the background above, the researcher formulated the problem, namely how the role of Kyai on patronage politics based on rural local democracy at at Tapal Kuda?

This research is a descriptive qualitative research. The instruments used in this study were observation, interviews and interviews. While the data analysis used in this study is qualitative data analysis with the Miles and Huberman analysis modelcovers data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion and verification. In this study researchers used triangulation techniquesas a technique to test the validity of the data. While the triangulation used in this study is triangulation technique and source triangulation.

Some of the research that has been done before is research in 2007, regarding the Kyai’s political conflict and its implications for social disintegration of society, and research on the perception of the Kyai’s son towards the Kyai’s choice to engage in political activity in 2010,[[28]](#footnote-28) clearly depicting the portrait of the Kyai’s face in various forms. The debate about political Kyai[[29]](#footnote-29) and Kyai politics[[30]](#footnote-30) still leaves a sharp difference. Especially betweenthose who support and reject Kyai’s involvement in politics. Those who support it argue that Islam is a perfect teaching, a teaching that does not separate world affairs from religious affairs. Supporters of Kyai's involvement in politics reject the viewpoint of secular ideology which tends to separate religious affairs and matters of power politics. They argue that the Kyai, as the person who understands religious affairs best, should not stay away from political matters. Because basically Islam is a religion that obliges all its adherents to maintain the benefit (public good), one of which is through power politics. Furthermore, because kyai are considered to have proven integrity, have qualified religious knowledge and are believed to be able to bring goodness in political practice, they support them when kyai enter practical politics. Simply put, the supporters of the Kyai in politics believe that the involvement of the Kyai in politics will have positive implications for the movement and direction of politics.

Kyai is believed to be goal keeper for morality and divine values ​​in political processes and products. Such an assumption is not only based on religious postulates such as the hadith of the prophet, *al ulama’ waratsatul anbiyaa’* (scholars are the heirs of the prophets), and the words of Allah swt in the Qur'an surah Fatir 28, *innama yakhsallahu min ‘ibadihi al ‘ulama* (Surely those who fear Allah among His servants, are only scholars). But also rational postulates that are based on modern logic born from the analysis and study of contemporary political experts. The arguments of political kyai supporters are also based on some of the findings of previous researchers. For example Horikoshi’s opinion, which states that the leadership of the kyai is more firmly rooted in society than other elites. In this context, according to Horikoshi, the kyai as an informal figure in the community structure has a stronger influence than a formal structural figure such as the village head.[[31]](#footnote-31) Horikoshi’s opinion was used as a basis for argumentation by political kyai supporters. According to them, kyaipolitical is a logical choice where the benefits outweigh the harm. By being involved in politics, the kyai will be more effective in giving political color and all policies that are born from the political process.

Kyai becomes a player, not a spectator; the kyai is the determinant, not determined, is the sentence most often conveyed by political kyai supporters. However, not all parties agree that the kyai should come down from the mountain to engage in practical politics. The reason for this view is the existence of kyai who are vulnerable to being in a positionextreme in the pull of different interests in political struggles. Though on pointextreme there are also many parties (community) who should also be served by Kyai. Therefore, being political will force the kyai to be in the boxes of interests and that means that the kyai can no longer be servants for people who are not in the same box of interests as the kyai. However, not all parties agree if the Kyai comes down from the mountain to practice politics. The reason behind the disagreement is the conditional demands that make Kyai stand on pointextreme namely the point of interest where in politics there will be many interests that are different from other interests in the pointextreme other. Though on pointextreme there are also many parties (community) who should also be served by Kyai. Therefore, being political will force the kyai to be in the interest boxes and that means the kyai can no longer be servants for people who are not in the same interest box as the Kyai.

**The Role of Kyai in Local Democracy**

         The description of the data above provides a new understanding of the role of the kyai in contemporary political practice. The political role of the kyai in the process of electing the governor of East Java in 2008 was in the form of: (1) giving birth to the birth of the governor candidate, (2) determining the criteria for the governor candidate, (3) determining the political vehicle, (4) prohibiting abstentions and (5) preventing themoney politic. For example, Zamakhsyari Dhofier, who said that a kyai is a title given by society to Muslims who own a pesantren and teach classic books to their students.[[32]](#footnote-32)

The concept of the kyai put forward by Dhofier based on their role in this field has the new addition that the Kyai is not just a person who leads a pesantren and teaches classic books to his students, but is also actively involved in fighting for the interests of the community. The findings from these fields also add to the concept of the function of the kyai put forward by Endang Turmudi: the kyai is a protector, the Kyai is an educator, and the kyai is a motivator.[[33]](#footnote-33) First, In society, the Kyai are the protectors because the Kyai are the most respected people. People will come to the kyai when they want to solve a problem. In this case, the Kyai is an influential figure and becomes a reference for the community insolving various problems.[[34]](#footnote-34) Second, in fact, almost all Kyai in Indonesia have Islamic boarding schools. This view presupposes that the Kyai has a central function as an educator. Endang Turmudi in his writings also said that a Kyai is a person who has extensive knowledge about Islam. This mattercause kyai always had many followers, who always attended his studies and talks.[[35]](#footnote-35) Third, it is undeniable that the kyai who live in the midst of society is a figure who is very shrewd in providing motivation for the emergence of various community activities.

Compared to the findings as presented at the beginning of this sub-discussion, it can be added that the kyai is not only a figure who functions as a protector, educator, motivator, but kyai are also social activists who carry out enlightenment.in face change. Turmudi classifies kyai into four classifications: pesantren kyai, tarekat kyai, political kyai, and stage Kyai.[[36]](#footnote-36) The pesantren Kyai category, namely Kyai who has activities or focuses attention on teaching activities in Islamic boarding schools in order to improve the quality of human resources (HR) through education; The tarekat Kyai category, namely the Kyai who focuses his attention on efforts to build heart intelligence (inner world); The category of political Kyai, namely Kyai who is concerned with the development of the world of practical politics; The category of stage kyai, namely the kyai who is usually the interpreter of da'wah, is in charge of delivering religious lectures from one place to another every night.

In the turmudi classification, he divides the kyai into the category of political kyai. However, he has not stated in detail what kind of political behaviors underlie the birth of the political Kyai category in his concept. Therefore, this field contributes to the Kyai behavior variable which is classified by Turmudi in the category of political Kyai. Several indicators of the variable “political clerics” that appear in Turmudi’s writings become increasingly operational withfindings in the field. For example, the behavior of the participating Kyai determines the birth of potential leaders, the behavior of the participating Kyai determines the criteria for future leaders, the behavior of the participating Kyai determines political vehicles, the behavior of the kyai participates in prohibiting abstentions, and the behavior of the kyai prohibits the practice of money politics and prohibits the act of fraudulent acts in politics.

The field results can also be compared with a study conducted by Imam Suprayogo on the involvement of Kyai in political activities. In his work, Imam sees the involvement of the kyai in various community activities in general, one of which is involvement in political aspects in rural Java-Madura Tebon District, Malang. Imam explained that the participation of Kyai in politics is carried out in different ways. Political affiliation, for example, is carried out by Kyai by supporting parties that have the support of the government. This action was taken because of the desire of the Kyai to get government facilities to develop their missionary mission.[[37]](#footnote-37) Spiritual Kyai, namely Kyai who care for Islamic boarding schools that place more emphasis on efforts to get closer to God through the practice of worship; Kyai advocacy, namely clerics who are other thanparenting Islamic boarding schools and actively teach students at Islamic boarding schools, also pay attention to the problems faced by the community and always try to find solutions; Adaptive political kyai, namely Kyai who apart from caring for Islamic boarding schools are also always concerned about political organization and power; Critical political Kyai, namely kyai who are willing to adapt to the dominant power and take a critical position because of the courage to take a different stance from the dominant power.

The concept of a spiritual Kyai, according to the priest, is a figure of a static, closed and conservative Kyai who is functionally clearly unable to accommodate the characteristics of a kyai who have mobility and broad participation in political activities. Meanwhile, the concept of advocative Kyai with open, dynamic, and innovative characteristics does have affinity with the findings but an invisible political orientation, clearly not something that is typical ofcharacteristics Kyai in this field. This is also the case with the concept of a critical political Kyai, who does have the characteristic of using politics as a toolinstrument, close to the people than the government, buton the side others haveclosed characteristics, static, and conservative. Kyai’s involvement in national minded political activities as found in these field data strengthens the thesis that was put forward by Saiful Mujani, specifically about the existence of various elements in Islam and in and political dimensions that are interconnected with one another. According to Mujani, nothingnone elements contained in Islam are contrary to any dimension of political participation. Almost all the elements in Islamic teachings have a close relationship with the political dimension. Mujani in his field work specifically mentions that a person’s NU identity has a positive and significant correlation with campaign activities and community work.[[38]](#footnote-38)

**Village Communities and Local Democracy**

Rural community (rural society), as opposed to urban society (urban society), became one of the important themes in the study of sociology. Soekanto, marked rural communities with several parameters, among them areFirst,interaction of community members that is strong internally, but weak externally. Second, communalism on a kinship basis.Third, their dependence on the agricultural sector.[[39]](#footnote-39) Various parameters that characterize rural communities (rural society) actually has roots in the views of early sociologist figures. Take for example Sumner, who discovered the ideain group andout group. The two social typologies of Sumner's version are closely related to the first parameter where the pattern of interaction that exists in the internal members of the village community (in group) is so powerful. Conversely, as a consequence, their views on groups that are not identified as part of the members (out group), becomes weak.[[40]](#footnote-40) It’s just what Sumner calledin group andout group, does not refer directly to the meaning of the village in its fullest sense. Because, categorizationSource It places more emphasis on traditional community interaction patternsfounded have a high appreciation of local customs (folkways).

More or less the same, village community identification through characteristics communism above is also influenced by Charles Cooley's idea of ​​primary groups and secondary group. In the context of this division, the primary group is a typology of groups that have thicker interaction bonds, characterized by knowing each other among themselves.respectively members of the group. This indicates that rural communities in generalown a close and strong bond among its members. This close relationship is even stronger when, in reality, the relationship pattern in the village community is supported by a group life system that creates a very strong family principle. Not to mention, the cultural, religious and communication systems tend to be homogeneous, so the bonds between members of the community in the village are very strong.[[41]](#footnote-41)

Structurally, the social conditions of rural communities are not as complex as urban communities. This is based on the fact that the population of rural dwellers is not as dense as urban communities. This more limited population causes village communities to become more homogeneous. This condition is then coupled with their tighter level of openness, so that new changes that allow for the emergence of various new patterns are quite difficult to occur. This assumption is certainly not entirely correct, especially in the context of today's technological globalization. Social transformation has the potential to occur without forcing the village community to open up a wider space to accept new things. Likewise, the aspect of population density can no longer be fully attached only to characterize village communities. In fact, there are many areas or areas that have a fairly high population density, but cannot be categorized as cities because there are no conditions that allow them to be called cities.

In general, at least, there are two significant elements that influence the formation of social structures within village communities.First,is land(land), and which second belief system or religion. The existence of land has a vital role for society, because it is a means of fulfilling various increasing human needs. Meanwhile, the condition of the existing land is increasingly narrow because it is used for all kinds of needs such as utilizationsettlement residents, places of business and for agricultural land. Land for village communities is the main requirement for the development of an area in order to keep pace with the existing pace of modernization. Therefore, the role of land as a residential area or place of business is more beneficial if managed optimally in sufficient human welfare. Therefore, ownership of land is a characteristic that is enduring in the history of pre-industrial rural community life, until now. In its continuation, the issue of land or land ownership gave rise to an assumption that the factor of land ownership will determine the role and status played by someone in the village community structure.

Most of the villagers are those who work as farmers. Some are owners of agricultural land or land and some are agricultural laborers, i.e. those who do not own land (landless) to work on yourself. In this situation, landowners certainly have a more decisive role than land laborers. Not infrequently, the interaction between the two is also clientelistic, in which the land owner is positioned as an honorable patron, while the workers are subordinate as clients. That is, the factor of land ownership in the village tends to be one of the determinants of a person’s social status.

Second, In addition, the social structure of rural communities cannot be separated from the aspect of belief, both in its very primitive and mythical form, to belief in the practice of worshiping God in the religious sense. Compared to urban communities, villagers have more religious nuances, as a consequence of their great belief in a holy power outside of them. The struggle to survive amidst the limitations they have, as well as their very strong dependence on nature, forces the village community to look for a symbol of strength outside of themselves. Religion and/or other belief systems were chosen because they were considered and felt capable of providing valuable inner satisfaction for the village community.

In this context, the strong religiosity of rural communities is considered to reflect their irrationality compared to urban communities. Weber’s conception of purposeful rationality, value rationality, affective action and traditional action can be used as a reference for understanding rural communities.[[42]](#footnote-42) At least, with Weber's knife of analysis, the behavior of rural communities in relation to the system of beliefs and beliefs that guide them to act and carry out their activities can be studied through these two main categories, namely value rationality and traditional actions. Rationality of values ​​refers to values, one of which comes from religion, while actiontraditional related to ways of acting that are commonly practiced by the local community and are continuously reproduced to become a habit. That is, for rural communities, religion is the most important source of life values. They will always maintain the orientation of their life so that they are always focused on the hereafter (religious trend), this is certainly different from urban people who tend to be worldly oriented (secular trend).

This difference is caused by factors, homogeneity or similarities in social and psychological characteristics, language, beliefs, customs, and behavior that appear in rural communities so that when compared to urban communities it displays the opposite. In the city where the population is heterogeneous, consisting of people with a variety of behaviors, as well as languages, the population in the village is more heterogeneous with its life system which emphasizes the importance of a high degree of social differentiation.[[43]](#footnote-43) This strong religious orientation in village communities is one of the reasons why religious leaders have an important role in the social structure of society. Aside from reasons of socio-economic status, namely land ownership that is above the average village population in general, religious leaders also have better religious knowledge than other villagers. The village community always refers to religious-ritual issues or even social-community issues to religious leaders. They believe that religious leaders are figures who have the most legitimate authority over religious-ritual and social community issues.

Several studies have proven this assumption, for example, the Kyai as a religious figure in the Java region, has been considered successful in positioning himself as a reference figure for the village community. The Kyai have not only succeeded in proving that they are people who have in-depth special knowledge about religion, but they can also prove themselves as figures who have a vital role in society. Some of the studies referred to, for example the work of Clifford Geertz. Geertz sees the figure of a Kyai as a cultural leader who has the ability to communicate and behave flexibly in dealing with local traditions.flexibility This is the fruit of the kyai's point of view which puts forward social reality as the basis of his da'wah. One of the forms of da’wah highlighted by Geertz is the "Islamization" of the salvation tradition. TraditionCongratulations it combines local traditions with Islamic content, so that Islam can be accepted in a peaceful way by the Javanese people.[[44]](#footnote-44) Though, opinion Geertz this was corrected by Horikoshi. According to Horikoshi, kyai are not only cultural brokers, but more than that. According to him, the kyai can also act as an intermediary force (intermediary forces), as well as an agent capable of selecting and directing cultural values ​​that will empower the community. Kyai are also considered successful in becoming informal leaders who have a more important role than formal leaders in rural communities in Java.[[45]](#footnote-45)

The position of religious leaders and privileged landlords in the social structure of village communities, especially in Java, shows that the social stratification of society is strongly influenced by socio-economic status and religious knowledge. If backpointing according to Weber, social stratification is always related to three dimensions, namely economics, social status, and political power. These three factors each contribute to the formation of social stratification. Social stratification in the economic field is associated with differences in income and different access to economic resources, including goods and services. In this economic spectrum, the class system was born. Meanwhile, the occurrence of social stratification in the dimension of social status is motivated by the prestige of a certain person. This gave birth to a condition of inferiority that is owned by another group of people who do not have the prestige that makes them worthy of social respect, while political power underlies the birth of social stratification based on the power possessed by someone who is not owned by others.[[46]](#footnote-46)

In an economic context, stratification social status in rural communities is manifested in different forms of land tenure. Landlords, thanks to their ownership of agricultural land, will automatically be placed in a higher hierarchy than those who only act as agricultural laborers. The size of wealth becomes a determining factor in the context of the formation of social stratification in the economic field. Next, the aspect of honor prestige, which is owned by a person or a group in the village community, can deliver it to the top of the social stratification hierarchy. It is not difficult to identify figures who are in this dimension. Religionists and traditional leaders are examples of figures who occupy honorable positions in these rural communities. This respect arises because of their prestigious social status, as a manifestation of the religious representation attached to them, or the cultural authority they carry. This form of honor-based social stratification is very strong in village society which is still traditional. According to Pitirim A. Sorokin said that the layered system of social stratification in society is a fixed and common feature in every society that lives in an orderly manner.[[47]](#footnote-47) In this context, the kyai is seen in stratification in society as a figure who occupies the highest position in society structure social community, most have religious authority so that they are always the main reference for society in terms of ritual-religious and social community.

**Kyai’s Figure**

Research conducted by Geertz, which was eventually published as a book with an Indonesian translation, *Abangan, Santri* and Priyayi in Javanese Society. In this book, Geertz sees the figure of the Kyai as a cultural leader who has the ability to communicate and behave flexibly in dealing with local traditions. One of the forms of da’wah highlighted by Geertz is the “Islamization” of the salvation tradition. TraditionCongratulations Thismerger between local traditions and Islamic content. Kyai in Horikoshi’s view are regarded as informal leaders who have a more important role than formal leaders in society. Horikoshi too corrected the title of Kyai as cultural brokers, as Geertz argues, because according to Horikoshi, kyai can also act as intermediary forces, as well as an agent capable of selecting and directing cultural values ​​that will empower the community.

According to Dofir, Geertz’s opinion which states that the religious life of Islamic boarding schools only revolves around “graves and rewards”, the life of “old-fashioned” pesantren people needs to be corrected. Dhofir also gave notes on the role of the Kyai. The mass base of the kyai and santri communities rests on pesantren and villages where the kyai occupy a central position in their social life. This position also makes the leadership of the kyai among the santri and society rooted culturally. For Dhofir, kyai are an elite group culturally, socially, politically and economically. Imam Soeprayogo in his dissertation,Kyai and Politics in Rural Areas (A Study of Variations and Forms of Kyai’s Political Involvement), explained that the role and responsibility of the kyai towards religion, the state and society simultaneously, often creates a conflict of interest that puts the Kyai in a difficult position. This difficult position occurs when the relationship between the government and the people is in a face-to-face position. If the kyai cannot position themselves as part of the community, position themselves as defenders of the community’s interests, then it is not impossible that the kyai will be shunned by the community and their students.

**Patronage Politics**

As revealed by W. Pye in Azis, that the concept of political culture refers to a set of attitudes, beliefs, and beliefs of community members who have influence in setting political systems and processes. Nonetheless, by no means a trap concept theoretical anthropology is not capable to describe critically about the culture of patronage in power relations politics. This concept actually starts from the theory of social exchange or social exchange proposed by Blau, (1964) which conceptually can be categorized as having similarities with the term (reciprocity) or processes lead returned fromMalinowski. In the concept and context of exchange theory which has the basic assumption that an exchange transaction will occur if both parties can obtain benefits from the exchange. Anthropologists like Scott as someone who has expertise and long experience working in indirect patronage studies decide patronage relationship in exchange theory.

According to Gouldner, patronage is a patron client relationship that is a universal relationship and has two basic elements. First, the assisted party and secondly, the assisting party are both bound on interest social and practical. Patrons politically need political support from clients in order to gain power in government while clients help vote as remuneration.Second, it is this basic element that distinguishes the patron client relationship from coercion that occurs because of the existence of formal authority. There are 3 main causal factors in the formation of patronage relationships. First, strong market inequality in widely accepted possession of wealth, status and power as something legit. Second, there is no physical guarantee, status and position that is strong and personal in nature l. Third, Helplessness family unit as an effective vehicle for security and self-development. Sahlins (1972) identifies three types of models and patterns of reciprocal relationships that apply in society, namely;generalization, balanced and negative. In anthropological terms, reciprocity is a non-market exchange of goods or labor ranging from a direct exchange to a form of gift exchange in which return is ultimately expected.

In contrast the context is when the exchange is direct as in barter, it does not create social relations but when the exchange is delayed this pattern immediately creates both the relationship and the obligation to repay the debt i.e. debt. Therefore, several forms and patterns of reciprocal relationships can form a hierarchy if the debt is not repaid. Failure to perform a return can end the relationship between equals. Reciprocal exchanges can also have political effects through the creation of obligations and the establishment of leadership as in the exchange of gifts *(moca)* among the big men in Melanesia.

Scott completes the previous view by suggesting that the patron-client relationship is an exchange relationship between two people (dyadic) most of which involve instrumental companionshipWhere an individual with a higher economic status (a patron) uses his influence and resources to provide protection or benefits to someone with a lower status(klein) who in turn reciprocates the gift with support and assistance including personal services to the patron as employer. According to him, sometimes patron-client practices are in line with and complement each other with official political institutions. In contrast to the view of Ahimsa Putra (1988) which says that the relationship patronage or patron client, especially in the context of modern politics such as in the era of regional autonomy understood as a form of relationship that is achieved or achieved. Generally characterized by four criteria, namely; 1) exchange 2) dissimilarity 3) face to face and 4) expansion of relationships.

Berenschot and Aspinal in his bookDemocracy for Sale admit that practice the practice of patron-client power existed in the pre-colonial period and lasted until now and for quite a long time during the New Order government. Patronage, according to him, is an area of ​​informal political study that is engaged in transactional-based political phenomena starting from issues of money politics of vote buying to buying and selling arrangements public office. Findings from comparative studies comparing practices clientelism in Argentina, India and Indonesia and found different principal variants of political forms clientelism in a highly fluid or barrier free homeland free wheelin) relying more on individual political figures in gaining support than on political parties. Thus, by in fact client highly dependent on patrons who provide free services that can include economic obligations. However, when examined accurately in a patron-client relationship, it is difficult to determine who benefits most from the exchanges that occur between the two parties. The reason is, it could be that the relationship that occurs between the patron and the client takes place in a balanced way and contributes to each other, meaning that the patron provides kindness in the form of work and protection. Instead the client offers respect and political support to the patron in the form of loyalty, dedication and physical sacrifice in the form of labor and material in return for the assistance received from the patron.

**CONCLUSION**

Sociologically, the village community in the Horseshoe area of ​​East Java is dominated by the sarong people who have affiliations with certain Pesantren either as alumni or just sympathizers. This is because the distribution of Islamic boarding schools in this area is relatively high and is socio cultural basis of education in rural communities in the region. The indication is the domination of society *Nahdliyin* affiliated with *Nahdlatul Ulama* as a social organization social largest in Indonesia. This study aims to describe the position of Kyai in the context of local democracy rural based on patronage politics in the East Java Horseshoe. In this case, the Kyai acts as a role model in leading and upholding the religiosity of rural communities (laymen) who do not have political awareness in local democracy so that they patron to the Kyai as a role model in their lives. In addition, the role of the kyai in the patronage politics of rural communities determines the flow of support for local democratic communities because politics is a subordinate area of ​​rural community religiosity. This research needs to be carried out further research, which is not only about the role of the Kyai in rural local democracy but rather about the strategy of the Kyai’s role in rural local democracy as well political impact these are rural communities and the wider community.

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