

The Genealogy of Islamic Scholarship in Tegal: A Study of the Sanad of Wali, Kiai, and Santri in Historical and Cultural Context

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Abstract

This study explores the genealogy of Islamic scholarship in Tegal, focusing on the sanad (chain of transmission of knowledge) of wali, kiai, and santri in a historical and cultural context. This research is motivated by the importance of understanding the origins of Islamic scholarship that is connected (muttasil) in order to avoid intervention and manipulation of religious genealogy. The method used is qualitative with a historical approach and textual analysis of classical manuscripts such as *Sérat Rambang* and colonial archives. The results of the study show that Islam in Tegal was spread through a network of scholars from Demak and Cirebon, with central roles played by figures such as Syaikh Maulana Maghribi, Syaikh Datuk Kafi, and Mbah Panggung. Sufi teachings, particularly the Shattariyyah Order, flourished and posed a threat to Dutch colonial rule. Additionally, this study highlights the contribution of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in Tegal, founded by K.H. Muchidin al-Churaifis, as a manifestation of the transformation of traditional knowledge into modern scholarship. These findings enrich the body of knowledge on Islam Nusantara by emphasising the importance of scholarly lineage in preserving the authenticity and blessings of knowledge.

Keywords

Scientific genealogy, sanad, Tegal, Sufism, Nahdlatul Ulama



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Introduction

Islam in Tegal has a long history that is inseparable from the role of saints, clerics, and students as the main disseminators of religious teachings (Rakhman, 2019). The genealogy of Islamic scholarship in this region reflects a network of *muttaşil* (connected) *sanad* from generation to generation, which forms the spiritual and intellectual foundation of the community. This study stems from concerns about the modern phenomenon where many Muslims acquire knowledge through self-study or digital media without a clear chain of transmission, raising questions about the validity of their knowledge (Annaba & Soleh, 2022). In the context of Tegal, this research emphasizes the importance of tracing the scholarly lineage of religious scholars to ensure the authenticity of the teachings being conveyed. Additionally, understanding this scholarly genealogy helps identify potential historical interventions and manipulations, particularly in the narrative of Islam's spread in Java. Thus, this study is not only academically relevant but also has practical implications for the preservation of religious heritage in Tegal.

This research has dual significance, both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the study of the genealogy of Islamic scholarship in Tegal contributes to the body of knowledge on Islam Nusantara, particularly in understanding the dynamics of knowledge transmission from the early days of Islamization to the modern era (Bulqis & Hanafi, 2024). In practical terms, the findings of this study can serve as a guide for the people of Tegal in preserving authentic scholarly traditions and avoiding doctrinal deviations. Additionally, this research highlights the role of religious leaders and their students as key actors in the socio-religious transformation of Tegal, a role that is often overlooked in national historical narratives. By delving into primary sources such as the manuscript of *Sérat Rambang* and colonial archives, this research offers a new, more critical and comprehensive perspective.

This study comprehensively aims to: (1) trace and analyze the genealogy of Islamic scholarship in Tegal, with a specific focus on the chain of transmission linking saints, clerics, and students within the unique socio-historical and cultural context of the region; (2) reveal the strategic role of the Shattariyyah Tarīqah as an intellectual-spiritual actor in the process of spreading Islam as well as a form of cultural resistance against Dutch colonial hegemony, manifested through the *mursyid*-students network, ritual practices, and Sufi doctrines as recorded in classical manuscripts such as *Tuḥfatul Mursalah*; and (3) mapping the transformation of traditional Islamic scholarship towards modernity through a case study of the establishment and development of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in Tegal, pioneered by K.H. Muchidin al-Churaifis, by exploring the dialectic between the preservation of traditional *sanad* and institutional adaptation in facing the challenges of the times, thus, this research not only presents a historical record but also offers a critical analysis of the multidimensional impacts—in the religious, educational, and political spheres—of the Islamic scholarly network that has shaped the Islamic identity of Tegal society from the pre-colonial to the contemporary era (Bisri, 2021).

The main question underlying this research is: How did the genealogy of Islamic scholarship in Tegal form and develop from the early days of Islamization to the modern era? To answer this question, this research outlines three more specific sub-questions: First, who are the key figures in the network of scholarly transmission in Tegal who played a major role in the transmission of religious knowledge? Second, what was the role of Sufi orders, particularly the Shattariyyah Tarīqah, in strengthening this scholarly network while also serving as a basis for resistance against Dutch colonialism? Third, how did Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), as a modern religious organization, continue and transform the scholarly traditions of its predecessors within the socio-political context of the 20th century? These questions are answered through an in-depth analysis of various primary sources such as the ancient manuscript of *Sérat Rambang*, Dutch colonial archives from the period

1901-1939, inscriptions on the tombs of the saints, and historical documents of NU Tegal, as well as secondary sources in the form of academic literature on the Islamization of Java and the development of *pesantren* in *nusantara*. This research also complements the document analysis with field data obtained through observations of historical sites and in-depth interviews with religious leaders, *pesantren* elders, and local historians to gain a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of Islamic scholarly genealogy in Tegal from a historical-anthropological perspective.

This study critically engages with various previous academic works, particularly the monumental research of Azzumardi Azra (Azra & Hasan, 2002) about the network of *ulama nusantara* who traced the transmission of Islamic knowledge from the Middle East to Southeast Asia, as well as Clifford Geertz's classic work in 'The Religion of Java,' which analyses the *abangan-santri-priyayi* trichotomy in Javanese society (Geertz, 1976). However, this study is significantly different and goes further with several original contributions: First, by making Tegal the specific locus of study—an area with unique characteristics as a 'border' region between the influences of Demak and Cirebon, but precisely because of this, it has become a melting pot of Islamic scholarly traditions that have not received adequate attention in previous academic literature. Second, methodologically, this study breaks new ground by integrating a historical approach (through critical analysis of ancient manuscripts such as *Sérat Rambang* and colonial archives) with an anthropological approach (Harahap & Kahpi, 2021) (through participatory observation and in-depth interviews with living sanad practitioners) - a synthesis that allows for a more holistic analysis than previous studies, which tended to be fragmented in their approach. Third, the findings on the 'double contract' system in marriage and the role of women in the transmission of knowledge provide a new perspective that corrects the androcentric tendency in many previous studies. Thus, this study not only fills a gap in the existing literature but also actively enriches academic discussions on Islam

in Java by offering a more comprehensive analytical model, demonstrating how Islam as a living tradition continues to evolve through the dialectic between universal religious texts and the specific local socio-cultural context in Tegal, while also making a theoretical contribution to the study of the intellectual networks of Islam Nusantara, which has so far been dominated by studies of central regions such as Demak, Cirebon, or Surakarta.

This study uses a qualitative approach (Komariah, 2019) using historical research methods (Karyanta et al., 2020) which focuses on text and context analysis (Ahmad, 2018). A historical approach was chosen to trace the chronological development of Islamic scholarship in Tegal, while textual analysis was used to reveal the meanings and values contained in the primary sources. Data was collected from various classical manuscripts, particularly *Sérat Rambang* by Syaikh Maulana Maghribi, which is the main source for understanding local Sufism and fiqh teachings in Tegal. In addition, this study also utilized Dutch colonial archives from the period 1901-1942, which provide an overview of colonial government policies towards Islam and religious institutions in Tegal. These written sources are complemented by field data obtained through in-depth interviews with *kiai*, *pesantren* elders, and traditional leaders who have special knowledge about the scholarly traditions in Tegal. Informants were selected purposively, considering their depth of knowledge and their connection to the *sanad* network being studied.

Data analysis was conducted thematically by identifying key patterns emerging from various data sources. The first stage involved source criticism (internal and external) to ensure the validity of historical data (Herdiani, 2016). Next, the verified data was classified based on key themes such as *sanad* networks, institutional transformation, and religious practices. An interpretive approach was used to understand the meaning behind religious practices and the relationships between figures in the *sanad* network. The analysis also took into account the socio-

cultural context of Tegal to understand how local factors influenced the development of Islamic scholarship in the region. This approach is highly suitable for exploratory and interpretative research, as it allows researchers to not only describe historical facts but also understand the dynamics and meaning behind the scholarly networks being studied. The combination of qualitative text analysis and a historical approach yields a comprehensive understanding of the genealogy of Islamic scholarship in Tegal over time.

The findings of this study reveal in detail that the spread of Islam in Tegal occurred through two main axes of religious networks—from the Demak Sultanate in the east and the Cirebon Sultanate in the west—which shaped the distinctive Islamic characteristics of Tegal (Zamzami, 2018). Through analysis of ancient manuscripts and colonial archives, the central role of Sheikh Maulana Maghribi as a disseminator of philosophical Sufism through his *Sérat Rambang*, which combines the concept of *waḥdatul wujūd* with local traditions, and Sheikh Datuk Kafi, who institutionalized Islamic education through the *pesantren* system, has been identified (al Adhim, 2016). Interestingly, the development of the Shattariyyah Tarīqah not only became a medium for spirituality, but also functioned as a network of cultural resistance against Dutch colonialism, as reflected in official colonial government documents that referred to this order as a ‘threat to order’ (Syam, 2013). This finding corrects the historical narrative that has been overly focused on the role of the Wali Songo (the Nine Saints), showing that Islamization in Tegal had its own dynamics and local actors that were no less important.

The institutional transformation carried out by K.H. Muchidin al-Churaifis through the establishment of NU Tegal demonstrates the adaptability of the traditional *sanad* system in responding to the challenges of modernity. Research data reveals that K.H. Muchidin successfully integrated traditional scholarly authority (through a chain of transmission traceable back to the Prophet) with active

involvement in practical politics as a constituent assembly member, creating a unique Tegal-style model of religion-state relations. This finding not only reinforces theories about the flexibility of Islamic scholarly traditions but also challenges the modernist-traditionalist dichotomy in Indonesian Islamic studies (Aminuddin, 2018). Furthermore, this study reveals the often overlooked political dimension of scientific genealogy—that *sanad* not only serves as a guarantee of religious authenticity, but also as social and political capital in resisting colonial domination and shaping community identity (Fata & Azhadi, 2013). The significance of this finding lies in its ability to reconstruct a more inclusive history of Javanese Islam by giving space to local narratives outside traditional centers of Islamic power.

For the people of Tegal, this research not only serves as an academic document but also as a practical guide in preserving authentic scientific traditions, particularly in maintaining the integrity of *sanad* amid the challenges of modernization, with concrete recommendations in the form of: (1) establishing a local manuscript documentation center specializing in manuscripts such as the *Sérat Rambang*, (2) the organization of regular workshops on *sanad* verification methods for the younger generation, and (3) the revitalization of the role of grave caretakers as sources of oral history; while for academics, the findings of this research offer an integrated analytical model that combines philological, historical, and anthropological approaches that can be adapted for similar studies in other regions of Indonesia, particularly in terms of: (a) the creation of a relational database of the network of ulema, (b) the development of new criteria for the authentication of local religious documents, and (c) the formulation of research methodologies that are more sensitive to gender dimensions in the transmission of Islamic knowledge, so that both the community and academics can synergistically contribute to the preservation of the intellectual heritage of Islam Nusantara, which is facing the threat of identity erosion in the digital era.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach (Mamik, 2014) with historical-descriptive research (Karyanta et al., 2020) which aims to comprehensively describe the genealogy of Islamic scholarship in Tegal. Data collection was carried out using three main methods: document study, field observation, and in-depth interviews (Syahrums & Salim, 2014). Documentary studies include analysis of classical texts such as *Sérat Rambang*, Dutch colonial archives, and literature related to the history of Islam in Java. Field observations were conducted at historical sites such as the tombs of *wali* and old *pesantren* in Tegal to trace the physical traces of the spread of Islam. In-depth interviews were conducted with clerics, *pesantren* elders, and local historians to gain an emic perspective on the scholarly tradition in Tegal. Informants were selected purposively based on criteria such as their in-depth knowledge of the scholarly chain of transmission or their direct descent from the spreaders of Islam in Tegal.

The primary data sources for this study include ancient manuscripts such as *Sérat Rambang* by Syaikh Maulana Maghribi, colonial archival documents from 1901 to 1939, as well as inscriptions and artifacts at the tombs of the saints (DAN, n.d.). Secondary sources include local history books, academic works on Islam Nusantara, and Nahdlatul Ulama publications. The types of data collected consist of textual data (transcripts of ancient manuscripts, colonial records), visual data (photographs of historical sites, old maps), and oral data (transcripts of interviews, oral histories). The data was verified through triangulation by comparing findings from documents, observations, and interviews to ensure its validity. Researchers also conducted source criticism of historical documents to test their authenticity and credibility before further analysis.

Data analysis was conducted in several stages: first, data reduction by classifying information based on key themes such as scientific *sanad*, the role of

tariqah, and institutional transformation. Second, the presentation of data in the form of descriptive narratives connects historical facts with the socio-cultural context of Tegal. Third, drawing conclusions through the interpretation of patterns found in the data. The specific analysis techniques used include content analysis (Drisko & Maschi, 2016) for ancient manuscripts, genealogical analysis to trace scientific genealogy, and historical-critical analysis to understand the development of Islam in Tegal in the context of colonial politics (Pratama, 2023). The entire analysis process was conducted in accordance with strict historical research principles, including external and internal criticism of sources, as well as maintaining objectivity in data interpretation. The research findings were then presented chronologically and thematically to provide a comprehensive understanding of the genealogy of Islamic scholarship in Tegal.

Results and Discussion

The Dawn of Islam in Tegal: Philological and Historical Accounts

This study reveals that the spread of Islam in Tegal in the 14th to 15th centuries AD was carried out through two main routes: from the Demak Sultanate in the east and the Cirebon Sultanate in the west. Colonial archives and ancient manuscripts show the central role of three key figures: Sheikh Abdurrahman (Mbah Panggung) as Demak's envoy, and Mbah Dalem Agung and Datuk Kafi as Cirebon's envoys (Inderasari et al., 2021). Interesting findings from field observations at ancient tombs indicate that Islam spread primarily along the northern coast of Tegal before expanding inland. Interviews with elders reveal that this pattern of spread is closely related to trade and marriage networks between communities. Physical evidence in the form of an ancient mosque in Kepandean Village (1526 AD) and a cemetery complex in Pesarean indicates the continuity of religious activities since the early period (Sugiri, 2021).

An in-depth analysis of *Sérat Rambang* found in Danaraja village reveals the philosophical structure that forms the foundation of Sheikh Maulana Maghribi's teachings, which can be grouped into four main pillars. First, the concept of *tawḥīd*, developed with a particular emphasis on the doctrine of *waḥdatul wujūd*, reflects a strong influence from the philosophical Sufi tradition, but with a distinctive Javanese interpretation that emphasizes the existential unity between the servant and the Creator. Second, the cosmological dimension of the manuscript provides a detailed exposition of the hierarchy of the universe and the position of humanity as a microcosm reflecting the macrocosm, a perspective that synthesizes the thought of Ibn Arabi with traditional Javanese cosmology. Third, spiritual anthropology centered on the concept of *insān kāmil* (perfect human) is formulated as a process of self-perfection through certain spiritual stages. Fourth, the discussion of the essence of faith, which is inseparable from the implementation of sharia, reflects an effort to bridge the exoteric and esoteric dimensions of religion.

The most unique aspect of this finding is the dual marriage system recorded in the manuscript, a concept not found in mainstream *fiqh* literature. This system includes two levels of marriage bonds: the formal marriage contract that fulfills the formal legal requirements of the state and the spiritual bond between the couple. Qualitative data from in-depth interviews with the descendants of the caretaker of the tomb of Syaikh Maulana Maghribi reveal that this practice persisted until the early 20th century, where couples who had legally divorced were still considered spiritually bound and retained moral obligations toward one another. This phenomenon demonstrates creative adaptation to Islamic law within the local cultural context, while also serving as historical evidence of the flexibility of Islamic scholarly traditions in Tegal. However, this practice gradually faded away with the process of modernization and formalization of marriage law during the late colonial era and the independence period, leaving its traces only in the collective memory of the community and in ancient manuscript records (Arif, 2025).

Table 1. Main Contents of *Sérat Rambang*

Teaching Aspects	Description	References
<i>Tawhid</i>	The concept of <i>waḥdatul wujūd</i> and the union of servant and God	QS. Qaf:16
Cosmology	The hierarchy of the universe and the position of humans	Manuscript pg. 23-45
Anthropology	The concept of the perfect human being (<i>insān kāmil</i>)	Manuscript pg. 67-89
Spiritual <i>Fiqh</i>	The system of double marriage	Interview with K. Agus (2023)

Source: analysis of *Sérat Rambang* and field interviews (2023)

Based on the Lebaksiu archival documents that were studied, it can be confirmed that the Shattariyyah Tarīqah began to spread in the Tegal region between 1650 and 1730 CE. This spread was carried out by the students of Sheikh Muhyi Pamijahan from Cirebon, who was one of the leading *murshid* of the *tarīqah* in *Nusantara*. The key findings of this research reveal three crucial aspects of the order's early development: first, the existence of a well-structured network of spiritual guides and disciples, as detailed in the manuscript *Tuḥfatul Mursalah*, which contains the lineage of knowledge and teaching methods. Second, the establishment of teaching centers for the order in the regions of Bumijawa and Slawi, which served as bases for the dissemination of its teachings. Third, the strategic role of the order in resisting Dutch colonialism through underground networks and the spiritual strengthening of the community, which demonstrates that the Shattariyyah Tarīqah functioned not only as a spiritual institution but also as a vehicle for cultural resistance against colonial rule.

Field observations at various traditional *pesantren* in Tegal reveal the impressive vitality of the Shattariyyah tradition. Of the twenty traditional *pesantrens* surveyed, 12 of them still consistently maintain the practice of Shattariyyah *wirid* in their daily curriculum. This continuity can be seen from several indicators: (1) the preservation of classical manuscripts as teaching materials, (2) the continuity of the unbroken chain of transmission (*sanad*), and (3) the adaptation of teaching methods that maintain the essence of the teachings. These *pesantren* are generally located in areas that have historically been centers for the development of Sufi orders, such

as around Bumijawa and Slawi. This finding not only demonstrates the resilience of Sufi traditions in Tegal but also highlights the ability of *pesantren* institutions to filter modern influences without losing their scholarly identity. The continued practice of the Shattariyyah *wirid* in the 21st century serves as tangible evidence that the spiritual values of Sufism remain relevant in contemporary contexts.

Analysis of the 1928 NU congress documents and in-depth interviews with the family of K.H. Muchidin al-Churaifis reveals the development of NU Tegal through three distinct historical phases: the consolidation phase (1928-1945), characterized by a focus on building a network of traditional *pesantren* as a basis for scholarship; the political phase (1945-1965), during which NU Tegal was active in the constituent assembly through the direct involvement of K.H. Muchidin as a representative of the *ulama*, and the socio-cultural phase (post-1965), characterized by the strengthening of NU's role as the vanguard of preserving local Islamic culture. Archival evidence from Dutch newspapers such as *de Locomotif*, edition of 2 October 1939, records a unique phenomenon where the 5th anniversary celebration of NU in 1939 attracted 3,000 participants—an extraordinarily large number for an Islamic organization during the colonial era, demonstrating NU's massive appeal among the people of Tegal. Contemporary institutional network maps confirm the continuity of K.H. Muchidin's influence, with findings showing that approximately 60 percents of NU *pesantren* in the Tegal region today still maintain a scholarly lineage clearly connected to the founder, reflecting the success of the intellectual consolidation strategy initiated from the early phase. This pattern of development not only reflects the organization's adaptation to changing times but also its consistency in maintaining traditional scholarly authority amid fluctuating socio-political dynamics.

This study successfully mapped out twelve main chains of transmission that form the Islamic scholarly network in Tegal, with three dominant characteristics that reflect the diversification of intellectual traditions in the region. First, the Sufi chain of transmission, which is mainly disseminated through the Shattariyyah Tariqah, shows the strong influence of the spiritual dimension in the local scholarly tradition. Second, the *fiqh sanad*, which developed through the network of traditional *pesantren*, indicates the continuity of the classical Islamic education system. Third, the *qira'ah sanad*, which has a direct link to the Haramain (Mecca), reflects well-maintained transnational connections. An analysis of the genealogical diagram reveals an interesting pattern of concentration, where eight out of twelve chains of

transmission are connected to three central figures: Sheikh Maulana Maghribi as the axis of the Sufi chain of transmission with his teachings on *wahdatul wujud*, Sheikh Datuk Kafi as the epicenter of the *fiqh* chain of transmission through the *pesantren* institution he founded, and K.H. Muchidin as the main node of the *qira'ah* chain of transmission linking Tegal to the Hijaz tradition. A noteworthy finding is the widespread practice of chain forgery in the 1990s, revealed through comparative investigations of fifteen *ijāzahs* documents from various historical periods. This phenomenon not only indicates the commodification of religious authority in the modern era but also signifies a shift in values within the knowledge transmission system, where the validity of chains is increasingly eroded by pragmatic interests. This data also underscores the importance of systematic documentation and verification of *sanad* to preserve the authenticity of Islamic scholarly traditions in Tegal.

The inventory of religious artifacts in the Tegal region has yielded a number of important findings that provide a comprehensive picture of the early development of Islam in the area, including seven ancient tombstones from the 15th to 16th centuries AD bearing Arabic-Javanese inscriptions, twelve *pesantren* manuscripts from the 18th until 19th centuries AD containing records of traditional Islamic scholarship, as well as five ancient mosque structures exhibiting architectural characteristics transitional between Hindu and Islamic styles. Epigraphic analysis of the inscriptions on the tombstones not only reveals dating patterns consistent with the early period of Islam's spread in Java but also indicates the adaptation of the local calendar system to the Hijri calendar. A surprising finding was the discovery of Chinese ceramic fragments around the tomb complex of the saints, which not only indicates the existence of a global trade network connected to Tegal at that time, but also suggests that the early spreaders of Islam in this region were likely part of a network of scholars also involved in international trade activities. These ceramic fragments, based on typological analysis, date back to the Ming Dynasty (14th until 16th centuries CE), which coincides with the period of activity of the Islamic missionaries in Tegal, thereby strengthening the hypothesis about the role of trade routes in the Islamization process along the Javanese coast. This artifact discovery not only enriches our understanding of material culture from the past but also provides material evidence supporting textual data about the scholarly and trade networks that served as a medium for the spread of Islam in Tegal.

In-depth interviews with *pesantren* leaders in Tegal reveal an interesting transformation phenomenon in which these traditional Islamic educational institutions are beginning to adopt modern certification systems in response to the demands of the digital age and the need for formal recognition, while simultaneously striving to maintain the authenticity of their scholarly lineage, which is their hallmark. The clerics explained that this adaptation emerged as a solution to two main pressures: on one hand, societal demands for qualifications that are recognized in the formal job market, and on the other, the moral obligation to maintain the unbroken chain of knowledge tracing back to Prophet Muhammad. Some senior clerics expressed concerns about the potential commercialization of education and the reduction of spiritual meaning in the transmission of knowledge when formalization is taken too far. This phenomenon reflects the complex dialectic between tradition and modernity in the *pesantren* world, where they must balance preserving the purity of classical Islamic scholarly traditions with meeting contemporary educational standards. Data shows that 65 percents of the *pesantren* interviewed still maintain the traditional *sanad* system in full despite adopting modern elements in their educational administration, while others face difficulties in comprehensively documenting the *sanad* due to the disruption of the oral transmission chain across several generations.

Sources that have long been overlooked, such as genealogical manuscripts from female *pesantren*, family archives, and oral traditions, surprisingly reveal the crucial role of women in maintaining the continuity of Islamic scholarship in Tegal. Historical artifacts such as yellow books with marginal notes (*hawāshī*) written in Javanese-Pegon script by 19th century *nyai* (female religious teachers) further reinforce this finding. This transmission mechanism generally took place in the domestic sphere through informal teaching, child rearing, and family networks, while also functioning as a backup system when the chain of transmission through formal *pesantren* channels was threatened with extinction or disrupted due to colonial pressure. This finding not only revises the genealogy of Islamic scholarship in Tegal by incorporating previously overlooked female elements but also challenges the general paradigm in the study of Islam Nusantara, which tends to marginalize women's contributions to the preservation of Islamic scholarly traditions.

Based on all findings, this study successfully reconstructed a genealogical map of Islamic scholarship in Tegal, illustrating the complexity of the intellectual and

spiritual networks that have formed since the 15th century to the present day. This reconstruction reveals a layered pattern of scholarly transmission through various intersecting main channels, reflecting the historical dynamics of the spread of Islam in the region. The research findings show that the scholarly network in Tegal developed not only through formal institutions such as *pesantren*, but also through family lines and the spiritual practices of Sufi orders, creating a unique and multidimensional scholarly ecosystem. The implementation of a genealogical model in the form of a relational database enables the tracking of various interrelated key parameters, resulting in a holistic understanding of how Islamic scholarly traditions have been preserved and transformed over time. Validation of the model against primary sources confirms the robustness of this approach in capturing the nuances and complexities of scholarly transmission, while also showing how these various pathways and patterns reinforce one another in shaping the Islamic intellectual tradition in Tegal. These findings not only enrich our understanding of Islam Nusantara but also offer a methodological framework for researching scholarly networks in other regions with similar socio-historical characteristics.

Fluidity and Multidimensionality of Islamic Scholarly Network in Tegal

The findings of this study reveal that the process of Islamization in Tegal developed through a unique dualistic network, with simultaneous influences from the Demak Sultanate in the east and the Cirebon Sultanate in the west, reinforcing Azra's (2002) theory about the pattern of Islam's spread in Java through centers of political power, while also demonstrating a distinctive characteristic of creative adaptation to existing belief systems and social structures. Unlike the dominant narrative of Javanese Islamization, which is often portrayed as monolithic, archaeological and textual data from Tegal reveal a more complex and organic process, where the initial concentration of Muslim communities in coastal areas aligns with Geertz's economic model (Geertz, 1976) about the spread of religion through trade networks - then spreading inland through subtle cultural integration mechanisms, rather than through confrontation or rejection of local culture. This pattern of accommodation is reflected in various aspects, from the architecture of ancient mosques that show a transition from Hindu to Islamic styles, to hybrid calendar systems in local manuscripts, to theological concepts in *Sérat Rambang* that blend Sufi elements with Javanese worldviews, forming a distinctive Tegal variant of Islam that is inclusive and contextual. In this context, Islam did not come to replace previous belief systems but rather grew through dialogue and cultural synthesis, producing authentic forms of religiosity deeply rooted in society (DAN, n.d.).

An in-depth analysis of Syaikh Maulana Maghribi's *Sérat Rambang* reveals a distinctive local variant of the *waḥdatul wujūd* doctrine, which shows significant differentiation from the Middle Eastern version in both conceptualization and practical implementation. The system of dual marriage documented in the text—which combines a formal legal contract with a spiritual bond-based inner contract—represents the creativity of local *fiqh* in responding to the socio-cultural needs of Javanese society at the time, while also reflecting the unique dialectic between exoteric and esoteric dimensions in religious practice. This finding not only enriches the academic discourse on the dynamic relationship between philosophical Sufism and the implementation of Islamic law at the community level but also affirms the existence of an indigenous Islamic epistemological model. The concept of the inner contract outlined in the text resonates with Schimmel's (1975) theory on the esoteric dimension within Islamic social structures, yet it possesses distinctive characteristics that reflect the Javanese worldview, which emphasizes harmony between the outward and inward aspects, and integrates metaphysical concepts into the framework of daily legal practices (Huda, 2016). The local variant of the *waḥdatul wujūd* doctrine in this book also reveals a process of creative adaptation in which universal Sufi concepts are reinterpreted through the lens of Javanese culture, resulting in a unique synthesis that remains faithful to the basic principles of Islam while also being responsive to the local context. This phenomenon indicates that the development of Islam in Tegal did not follow a pattern of cultural substitution, but rather through a complex process of enculturation where elements of Islamic spirituality assimilated with local paradigms without diminishing their depth of meaning.

The development of the Shattariyyah Tarīqah in Tegal during the 17th-18th centuries CE displayed a distinctive form of cultural resistance against Dutch colonial hegemony, in which the order functioned as a counter public sphere that preserved religious identity through spiritual practices and hidden scholarly networks. Unlike physical resistance, which is confrontational in nature, the resistance practiced by the order was symbolic and cultural, manifested through the preservation of Islamic scholarly traditions, the teaching of special *wirid* (prayers), and the formation of solid spiritual communities under the leadership of *mursyid* (spiritual guides). Dutch colonial documents explicitly refer to the activities of this *tariqah* as a threat to public order, demonstrating how effective this model of resistance was in maintaining the autonomy of Muslim communities amid colonial political pressure. Such patterns of resistance reinforce Van Bruinessen's (1992) thesis on the central role of Sufi orders

in preserving Islamic traditions under the colonial system, while also offering a new perspective on how traditional religious authorities were able to create autonomous spaces outside the control of the colonial state (Van Bruinessen, 1998). This phenomenon also reveals more complex dynamics in the relationship between colonial power and local communities, where *tariqah* not only served as a place of spiritual refuge, but also functioned as an alternative educational vehicle that maintained the continuity of Islamic scholarly traditions while subtly challenging colonial narratives and power structures through the formation of a collective consciousness based on religious identity.

The development of NU Tegal reflects the unique dialectic between tradition and modernity as described in Eisenstadt's theory, in which this organization has succeeded in creating a unique synthesis between religious values derived from traditional scholarly sources and the demands of modern political participation (Eisenstadt, 1999). The central figure of K.H. Muchidin al-Churaifis is a clear example of how religious social capital based on the scientific authority of *pesantren* can be transformed into effective political capital without compromising the authenticity of scientific transmission. The development pattern of NU Tegal offers a different variant from the general polarization occurring in Java between modernist and traditionalist groups, demonstrating that involvement in practical politics does not necessarily mean secularization or a reduction in religious values. The uniqueness of the NU Tegal model lies in its ability to maintain a strict *sanad* system while actively participating in constituent institutions, creating what can be called "tradition-rooted politics"—a form of political participation that derives its legitimacy from traditional scholarly authority. This phenomenon makes an important contribution to the discourse on religion-state relations in Indonesia by offering an alternative model that has not been widely explored in the literature, where religion is not only a source of values but also a living institutional framework for political engagement. In the context of Eisenstadt's theory, NU Tegal demonstrates that modernity does not have to clash with tradition, but can develop through a process of creative adaptation that simultaneously strengthens both (Eisenstadt, 1999). This pattern invites further study of the various possibilities for alternative forms of modernity rooted in local religious traditions, particularly in the context of post-colonial Muslim societies.

The findings regarding the falsification of *sanad* in the 1990s not only confirmed Gilsenan's concerns about the commodification of religious authority in

the modern era, but also revealed the complex dynamics within the system of transmission of traditional Islamic knowledge in Indonesia (Gilsenan, 2013). This phenomenon of forgery, which emerged as a result of modernization and increasing demand for religious legitimacy, has prompted a creative response from *pesantren* through various adaptation strategies. One of the most significant responses is the digitalization of *sanad* initiated by progressive *pesantren*, which aims not only to preserve the authenticity of the chain of knowledge but also to anticipate deviant practices. This technological adaptation demonstrates the resilience of the *sanad* system as a living tradition capable of responding to the challenges of the times without losing its fundamental essence as a guardian of scholarly authenticity. This finding reinforces Abdurahman's research on the extraordinary ability of traditional Islamic institutions to undertake endogenous modernization—a form of transformation that originates from within and aligns with its own epistemological framework, rather than merely passively adopting modern technology (Abdurahman, 2015). This process reveals an interesting dialectic between tradition and modernity, in which the pressure of modernity actually triggers strengthening and innovation in the traditional system, rather than decay or destruction. Thus, the *sanad* system proves itself not to be a rigid artifact of the past, but rather a dynamic and adaptive social practice that continues to evolve while maintaining its primary function as a guarantor of the validity of the transmission of Islamic scholarship.

Research findings on the role of *nyai* and the transmission of women's knowledge in the genealogy of Islamic scholarship in Tegal fundamentally deconstruct the androcentric narrative that has long dominated the writing of Islamic history in Java, where women's intellectual contributions are often overlooked or marginalized. Qualitative data obtained from the genealogical manuscripts of the al-Mubarakah female *pesantren* and oral traditions reveal an alternative knowledge system that developed through the maternal line, where *nyai* not only served as guardians of tradition but also as active intellectual actors in transmitting religious knowledge both within the domestic sphere and in non-formal educational institutions. While this finding aligns with Srimulyani's (2012) research on female *pesantren*, it offers a new contribution by highlighting the genealogical aspect that has long been overlooked in academic circles—namely, how the chain of knowledge is often preserved and developed through women's networks outside the formal *pesantren* structure dominated by men (Srimulyani, 2012). This reality reveals a dichotomy between the masculine institutional structure of Islamic education and the actual practice of knowledge transmission, which is

more egalitarian, where women play a key role as intergenerational connectors in maintaining the continuity of scholarly traditions. Such phenomena demand a methodological reorientation in Islamic historical research that is more inclusive, one that does not merely focus on grand narratives about male scholars and formal institutions but also captures the networks of knowledge that develop within domestic spaces and women's communities. Thus, this research not only fills a gap in Javanese Islamic historiography but also challenges the dominant paradigm in the study of scholarly lineages, which tends to overlook women's contributions to the formation of Islamic intellectual traditions in the archipelago.

An analysis of colonial policy towards Islam in Tegal reveals an interesting paradox in which the colonial government's systematic efforts to weaken the authority of the *ulama* through various repressive policies actually had the opposite effect - strengthening the solidarity and resistance of the underground Muslim community. This finding not only supports James Scott's theory of 'weapons of the weak' but also expands its scope by introducing a unique epistemological dimension, where traditional scholarly lineage becomes a powerful symbolic tool of resistance. In the context of intense colonial pressure, the *pesantren*'s knowledge transmission system underwent purification and refinement, with stricter and more selective screening mechanisms to preserve the authenticity of its teachings (Suhendra, 2019). The underground Muslim community developed sophisticated cultural strategies, in which religious practices such as reciting the Yellow Book, reading the *Maulid*, and performing Sufi rituals, which were originally spiritual in nature, became forms of cultural resistance against colonial hegemony. What is even more intriguing is that this external pressure spurred innovation in traditional teaching methods, with clerics developing a system of "secret study circles" and underground communication networks that maintained the continuity of knowledge transmission while evading colonial government detection. This phenomenon demonstrates the resilience of traditional Islamic scholarship in adapting to repressive conditions while preserving the core of its teachings.

The genealogical database developed in this study represents a significant methodological breakthrough in the study of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago, particularly in its approach to the study of traditional scientific networks. The analytical model designed integrates seven key parameters—including temporal, geographical, disciplinary, transmission pathways, key actors, supporting institutions, and forms of interaction—enabling a more holistic exploration of the

complexity of scholarly relationships that have often been reduced in conventional linear approaches. Unlike traditional stamboom methods, which tend to simplify teacher-student relationships into a single lineage, this relational approach is able to map multidimensional networks that reflect the actual historical reality, where a scholar could be part of multiple chains of transmission, connected to various centers of knowledge, and involved in multiple disciplines simultaneously. This model is particularly effective in revealing hidden patterns such as cross-connections between Sufi orders and *pesantren*, interactions between formal and informal channels of knowledge transmission, and the dynamics of changes in scholarly authority within specific socio-political contexts. Its main advantage lies in its ability to represent the fluidity and complexity of the intellectual network of Islam Nusantara without sacrificing the depth of analysis of each of its constituent elements, while maintaining the historical accuracy that is characteristic of qualitative research. The validation of the model through triangulation of various primary and secondary sources demonstrates a sufficient level of accuracy in reconstructing the intellectual network that has been fragmented across various scattered historical records.

This study makes a significant contribution to three interrelated areas of academic discourse. In the study of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago, the findings reveal local variations in Islamization in Tegal that differ from the general patterns that have dominated the literature, particularly in terms of a more organic model of acculturation between the philosophical dimension of Sufism and the local social structure, as well as the dual role of the *ulama* as both religious disseminators and political-cultural actors. In the field of anthropology of knowledge, this research demonstrates the resilience of the *sanad* system as a mechanism for the transmission of knowledge that is not static but dynamic, capable of adapting to colonial and modern pressures through creative cultural strategies, while maintaining its epistemic authority. From the perspective of colonial historiography, this research offers a re-reading of official colonial government documents through a subaltern lens, revealing how the dominant narrative of surveillance of Islam actually conveys a hidden resistance carried out through the preservation of traditional scientific systems. These findings collectively challenge several dominant assumptions in the three fields, particularly regarding the traditional-modern dichotomy, the power relations of knowledge in the colonial context, and the homogeneity of Islamization patterns in Java, thereby necessitating a theoretical

and methodological reorientation in understanding the complexity of Islamic development in the archipelago.

The findings of this study raise several crucial questions that require further exploration, particularly regarding the dynamics of Islamic scholarly genealogy in the context of broader social change. First, a thorough investigation is needed into how the waves of migration of scholars in the 19th century—both from the Middle East and other regions in the archipelago—have influenced the reconfiguration of the *sanad* network in Tegal, including its impact on the scientific hierarchy and local religious authority. Second, comparative studies with genealogical patterns in other Javanese regions such as Pekalongan or Banyumas are important to identify regional variations while uncovering common threads in the map of Javanese Islamic scholarship, which has often been homogenized in academic narratives. Third, in this era of digital disruption, urgent research is needed to examine how digital media has transformed the ecosystem of traditional knowledge transmission, including challenges of authenticity, the reconfiguration of scholarly authority, and the emergence of virtual *sanad* forms that may contradict the principle of *muttaṣil*. Exploring these three aspects will not only deepen our understanding of the resilience of traditional Islamic scholarly traditions amid changing times but also generate new conceptual models for mapping a more dynamic and multidimensional Islamic intellectual network, while testing the validity of these research findings in broader geographical and temporal contexts.

Conclusion

This study successfully demonstrates that the genealogy of Islamic scholarship in Tegal developed through a complex and dynamic network of *sanad*, which not only reflected the transmission of religious knowledge but also cultural resistance to colonialism and adaptation to social change. Key findings indicate that the scholarly *sanad* in Tegal functioned as a mechanism for preserving the authenticity of teachings while also serving as a tool for social transformation, particularly through the central role of figures such as Syaikh Maulana Maghribi, K.H. Muchidin, and the Shattariyyah Tariqah network. The concept of spiritual contract in *Sérat Rambang* and the system of knowledge transmission among women reveal local variations that enrich the Islam Nusantara. This pattern answers the research question by affirming that the genealogy of knowledge in Tegal is not merely a historical chain but a living tradition that continues to evolve. The logical implication of this finding is the need for a more inclusive reconstruction of the map of Islam Nusantara

knowledge, taking into account local dimensions such as those found in Tegal. For this purpose, three strategic steps are recommended: (1) digitizing ancient manuscripts and *sanad* to ensure preservation and accessibility, (2) strengthening the role of *pesantren* as guardians of tradition through the integration of modern methods without compromising authenticity, and (3) further research on the network of female scholars that has been neglected. These steps will not only enrich the study of Islam Nusantara but also strengthen the religious identity of the community amid the tide of globalization.

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