

THE CENTRAL ROLE OF THE VILLAGE *KIAI* AS SIGNIFICANT OTHER IN RURAL MADURA

PERAN SENTRAL *KIAI* KAMPUNG SEBAGAI SIGNIFICANT OTHER DI PEDESAAN MADURA

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Abstract

This research aims to comprehensively discuss the central role of the village kiai as a significant other in the social environment of rural Madurese society. The results of this study found twenty-two central roles of village kiai in carrying out social-religious activities in the social environment of the surrounding community. These include leading a four or seven-month pregnancy ceremony, a forty-day birth ceremony, a ceremony to descend the land, giving names to newborn children, giving consideration to choosing a potential life companion, solutions to plans to build a house, leading a wedding party, giving prayers for blessings, prayers when children are in the process of weaning, determining the implementation of the marriage contract process and the wedding party, giving prayers for safety during the wedding party, leading a seven-day death ceremony, and other social events in the local community. Meanwhile, the method used is descriptive qualitative, with a snowball sampling procedure to the kiai as the subject of the research. While the data analysis technique uses data reduction, data presentation to conclusion drawing.

Keywords: *village kiai, significant other, rural Madura.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk membahas secara komprehensif peran sentral kiai kampung sebagai significant other di lingkungan sosial masyarakat pedesaan Madura. Dari hasil penelitian ini ditemukan dua puluh dua peran sentral kiai kampung dalam menjalankan aktivitas sosial keagamaan di lingkungan sosial masyarakat sekitar. Yaitu di antaranya, memimpin acara selamat empat atau tujuh bulan kehamilan, upacara selamat empat puluh hari kelahiran, upacara turun tanah, memberi nama kepada anak yang baru lahir, memberi pertimbangan untuk memilih calon pendamping hidup, solusi rencana membangun rumah, memimpin acara pesta pernikahan, memberi doa keberkahan, doa ketika anak dalam proses penyapihan, penentu pelaksanaan proses akad nikah dan pesta pernikahan, memberi doa untuk keselamatan selama pesta pernikahan, memimpin upacara kematian selama tujuh hari, serta acara-acara sosial lainnya pada masyarakat setempat. Sementara itu, metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif, dengan prosedur snowball sampling kepada kiai-kiai sebagai subjek dalam penelitian. Sementara teknik analisa datanya menggunakan reduksi data, penyajian data hingga penarikan kesimpulan.

Kata Kunci: *Kiai kampung, Significant other, Pedesaan Madura.*

INTRODUCTION

In the trajectory of Indonesian history from time to time, whether in the classical or modern period, the existence of Madura island cannot be separated from the island of Java, both as a geographical and sociological existence (Mahmudah & Mansyur, 2021, pp. 8–10). However, from the inseparability between the islands of Java and Madura, it turns out that the two have significant differences in many ways. The most striking difference between Javanese society, in general, and Madurese society, in particular, can be seen in the use of a completely different language (Ruriana, 2018, p. 25).

The island of Java, with all its language levels (Hary Purwanto et al., 2021, pp. 61–63) can distinguish itself from other communities around. Javanese language with distinctive characteristics not possessed by other languages can be indicated by how its speakers use it in everyday life. So that the three layers of use by its speakers are used in communicating with certain people and for certain purposes (Suryadi, 2018, pp. 6–9).

Unlike the island of Java with the uniqueness of language level used, the island of Madura with all its specificities also has a way of using communication patterns with others. The existence of Madurese society which is linguistically far apart from Javanese in many way turn out to have different consequences for the character of the community (Hidayat et al., 2023, pp. 284–287). The Madurese community is known by many to have a different tenacity from the

Javanese community, especially in carrying out daily activities (Zulaihah, 2020, pp. 139–144).

Although the islands of Java and Madura are only separated by a strait of about seven kilometres, the fact that the separation is enough to prove that the Madurese community is different from the Java islands. Madurese society with all its differences in tradition, culture and customs makes the mindset in many ways of life different from the existence of culture and tradition on the island of Java. Madurese society, in this case, highly values *kiai* on its various sides. Whether in the realm of family or society in general.

The Madurese rural community's high appreciation of *kiai* as a significant other (Abercrombie et al., 2006, p. 348) turns out to bring a different lifestyle system from other communities. Madurese people are very respectful in all dimensions to the *kiai* around them, especially to the *kiai* who was *alif's* teacher (first teacher) when he was a child learning the Qur'an. This *kiai* is certainly a *kiai* figure who lives in the village around the community where they draw a lot from the role of *kiai* as an important person.

It means that the role of *kiai* in this context determines how the Madurese community, in general, is resolved in all steps of their life thanks to the participation of *kiai*. The dependence of the Madurese community in general on *kiai* is none other than because almost all social community activities in the village environment can and may only be

carried out by *kiai*. Thus, the central role of *kiai* becomes the main reference in carrying out joint social activities. Moreover, in this shared social context, *kiai* becomes a significant other in the eyes of the community (Susilo, 2008, p. 72).

The concept of significant other (Appelrouth & Edles, 2021, p. 316) was popularized by an American sociologist named George Herbert Mead (Mann, 1989, p. 226). Specifically, the concept is used in the stages of the socialization process experienced by a child or a person while in the social environment of the community. In the socialization process, according to Mead, there are important people (Szacki, 1979, pp. 430–431) who influence and determine the course of the peak maturity process of socialization, including the father and mother and other close people.

In line with the conceptualization above, in this context the village *kiai* is positioned in the generalized socialization process (Mead & Mead, 1985, pp. 152–153) as a significant other; an important person or party who is always a reference in social activities together in the community. Of course, in this realm, the intended socialization is that the role of the village *kiai* as a significant other is very decisive for the course of the community's social process, especially related to the institutionalization of religious social activities (Jannah, 2020, p. 19) which are very common in rural Madurese environments.

For this reason, the role of the village *kiai* in

the context of this research is none other than because of its role as the epicentre (Jannah, 2020, p. 18) of the social-religious process of the community in rural Madura, so with this work, the meaning of the significant other to the village *kiai* has its relevance in the contextualization of George H. Mead's thought.

Two major works specifically discuss *kiai* in Madura. The first work to be referred to is Abdur Rozaki's book entitled "*Menebar Kharisma Menuai Kuasa: Kiprah Kiai and Blater Sebagai Rezim Kembar di Madura.*" Meanwhile, the next work which is also the basis of literature on the study of *kiai* is the work of Mohammad Kosim with the title article "*Kiai dan Blater: Elite Lokal dalam Masyarakat Madura.*"

The work written by Rozaki and Kosim specifically reviews how a *kiai* in the context of Madurese, who has a special charisma in the hearts of the community, tries to build power relations (Rozaki, 2021, p. 123) for practical political interests in the context of village head elections, regent elections, governor elections, and presidential elections (Rozaki, 2021, p. 152). It means that in this concept, the work of *kiai*, which is the epicentre in the social-religious sphere in the Madurese social sphere, is then transferred to the interests of power by utilizing the charisma that is attributed to *kiai* (Rozaki, 2021, p. 127).

In addition, the charisma of the *kiai*, which has indeed been cultivated in the social environment of the community, does not

stop here, the power relationship with the blater, who is also a party that has an important role in the social system of the community, is also mobilized for the benefit of the seat of power (Kosim, 2007, pp. 165–166). With a looser cultural language, *kiai* who have charisma with gentle strength combined with the power of *blaters* (Kosim, 2007, p. 164) with a cultural dimension that can force finally gave birth to the reaping of power that became the target of the interests of *kiai* and his network.

On this basis, the study of *kiai* in the social environment of Madurese society is mostly oriented towards the role and work of *kiai* in influencing the surrounding community for the benefit of power, at the local, regional and national levels. To be honest about the progress and role of *kiai* before entering the world of power relations, *kiai* as a person and cultural force succeeded in first guiding the surrounding community as a civilization work area that he has carried out since he was given the freedom to foster the surrounding community.

For this reason, the work and role of *kiai* should not only be seen as power relations in political interests. However, more than that, as a cultural force, *kiai* should interpret their role and work in a more humane and civilized context. For example, how *kiai* builds socio-religious literature awareness in their place of residence, how *kiai*, together with the surrounding community, become important people in looking to the future by making themselves role models in social

religion.

For this reason, the study of the role of *kiai* must not only look at it in terms of power relations, but furthermore, the real role of a village *kiai* who donates his life to the surrounding community is more interesting to study than the power relations of *kiai* in practical politics. It is quite reasonable because, in essence, a *kiai* has a very noble task in his life mission by guiding people to the right path throughout his life. In this realm, *kiai* in many aspects can be interpreted as a significant other for the development of social religion where the *kiai* lives in it.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method approach used is qualitative with descriptive type. The research location is in Pragaan District, Sumenep Regency, Madura. In general, the role of village *kiai* in Madura is not much different from one another, so research in this place can be generalized to other places in Madura. In collecting data, researchers used observations and interviews with the local community where this research was conducted.

The research subjects were *kiai* in the villages in Pragaan Sub-district, with a sample size of sixteen *kiai*. These *kiais* can all be categorized as village *kiai* because their mobility only moves in the village and village environment and is not involved in practical political activities. While the data analysis technique uses data reduction by simplifying

the data that has been obtained at the research site by adjusting to the research theme studied. Furthermore, data presentation is carried out from what has been reduced earlier by presenting it following the findings related to the central role of *kiai* as significant others. Finally, concluding the data that has been obtained. This research will make a positive contribution to the meaning and central role of village *kiai* as significant others.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the Madurese tradition, one thing cannot be separated from the pattern of community life, namely the central role of *kiai* as a significant other (Sunarto, 2004, p. 22) in social life. Madurese society, in many ways, is not much different from society in general. Perhaps the only difference with other communities lies in the Madurese treatment of teachers, in this case, *kiai* (Baisuni & Gaffar, 2021, pp. 1738–1740). *Kiai* in the social system of Madurese society has its value that is very important than the status of other people except *kiai*. In fact, because of the importance of the role of *kiai*, the Madurese community can be ascertained that in every socio-cultural movement, it cannot be separated from the participation of *kiai* in doing something, either directly or indirectly. In this realm, it is not wrong to recognize the terms *bhuppa'*, *babhu'*, *guruh*, *rato* (Karimah et al., 2022, pp. 138–140). The application of this term in the context of Madurese society is in the form of social

stratification in relations of respect ranging from the top to the bottom. Parents, fathers and mothers are the highest strata, then *kiai* and finally government officials.

In interpreting the role of *kiai* as a significant other in the Madurese social environment, at least it can be seen from how Madurese people are very dependent on him (Syafiqurrahman & Hosnan, 2019, pp. 9–11). In this context, it can be found in the narrative of a series of cultures that exist in the social environment of the community. For example, the role of *kiai* in leading important community events that are carried out together. The four-month / seven-month pregnancy ceremony called *pelet kandung* (Mulyadi, 2018, p. 130) is the beginning of the earliest form of life that a person will experience and care involves the role of *kiai* who cannot be represented to others.

In this *pelet kandung* ceremony, Madurese people will invite neighbours and close relatives to jointly ask for blessings for the safety of the mother and the fetus until the baby comes out of the mother's womb. In this joint activity, the role of *kiai* is very central as the leader of the event from beginning to end. As long as the *kiai* has not come to the venue, it is certain that the event will not begin unless the *kiai* has permission not to attend and will be replaced by another junior *kiai* (Haris & Dardum, 2021, pp. 105–111).

The verses and surahs of the Qur'an that are usually read during this event are Surah Muhammad, Yusuf, Maryam, and so on (Anita & Hasanah, 2021, pp. 39–41). These

surahs are read by some of the invitees deliberately appointed by the host or his representative at that time. In the opinion of the Madurese community, Surah Yusuf and Maryam are the most popular surahs of the Qur'an in this event. It is believed that if the fetus is born male, it is expected to be handsome like the Prophet Yusuf. Similarly, if later born with the female sex, then beautiful like Siti Maryam.

The *pelet kandung* ceremony by the Madurese community is only carried out on the 14th to 15th in the Javanese or Hijriyah Calendar (Listyana & Hartono, 2015, pp. 131–132). For Madurese people, after the noon prayer, that day is considered to be the 15th. On the 15th, the moon shines perfectly (full moon) indicating the perfection of the baby-to-be when born later like a full moon.

Second, the process of giving birth is by asking the *kiai* for prayers. It is especially the case for traditional childbirth among Madurese. When a Madurese woman is about to give birth with various signs, the male party hopes that the birth process will run smoothly and follow expectations. So, it is considered urgent if the husband or those closest to him asks the *kiai* for blessings for the ease of the birth process that he will soon face (Azharghany, 2020, pp. 153–163).

Third, ask the *kiai* to name the baby after being born. As a highly respected elder in the village, the *kiai*'s role as a significant other does not end with the prayer process for the ease of childbirth. Then, the *kiai* is also still "responsible" for naming the baby. Within

the first week or three days after the birth, the father or someone close to him goes to the *kiai* again with a different purpose. The purpose of going to the *kiai* is none other than to inform him that the baby has been born, so he needs a name for the baby.

Fourth, if the baby always cries at night, then ask for prayers with the *kiai*. Before entering and asking for prayers to *kiai*, it is common for Madurese people to first look at the shape and characteristics when the baby is crying. With these characteristics, people will conclude and act to find a solution. Of course, one of the solutions related to the *kiai*'s role is to ask for prayers from the *kiai*, who is sometimes given water to drink or apply to the baby's body.

Fifth, leading the forty-day birth celebration ceremony (*mulang areh*). Among the lower classes (not *kiai* and those with in-depth religious knowledge), the celebration of thanksgiving, *walimatul aqiqah*, or after naming (*mulang areh*) by the Madurese community is done after reaching forty days for male babies and thirty-six days for female babies. The philosophy of the distinction between male and female babies is different in the number of days in *mulang areh* because the Madurese tradition of a virgin woman is oriented to a faster marriage practice at a younger age than a man. On this basis, the ratio of *mulang areh* celebrations between male and female babies is deliberately not the same in terms of the number of days.

In this *mulang areh* event, the prayers that

are usually read are in the form of *salawat barzanji* or *diba'* by first opening with the reading of Surah al-Fatihah, reading *salawat* and closing with prayer. It is the simplest form of the event carried out during the *mulang areh* celebration among the Madurese community (Ahyani, 2021, p. 57).

Following the general conditions of Madurese society, which relies heavily on agriculture with a less promising moor ecological system (Kuntowijoyo, 2017, p. 612), then in this *mulang areh* event, not all Madurese can carry out the event by slaughtering goats as a sign of *walimatul aqiqah*. What usually happens in slaughtering goats is adjusted to the basis of the ability of the family's economic system.

Sixth, the child is often sick or not well, so *kiai* becomes the focus. In the first three months of a baby's life, many things cannot be predicted about the development that the baby will experience. Various events that happen to children at this age make families "panic" not knowing what to do.

If so, it is not uncommon for *kiai* to change the baby's name. The name change does not necessarily have to be done by the *kiai* who gave the name in the first place; it could be done by another *kiai* on whom the family relies to overcome the baby's poor condition (Cahyanti et al., 2017, pp. 51–55).

Seventh, the ceremony of going down to the ground (*nyabe' ka tana*). The procession of *nyabe' ka tana* by the Madurese community is carried out when the toddler is seven months old. Before this, the toddler is not

allowed to touch the ground for various reasons that have been cultivated. So that from the age of zero to seven months toddlers can only be carried and placed on cots and others so that they are not allowed to touch the ground. During this age, Madurese people will continue to be careful to keep their toddlers from touching the ground before it is time. Abstinence from touching the ground for toddlers who have not reached this time has been deeply rooted in the Madurese cultural system which until now has been neatly maintained and institutionalized.

Eighth, weaning asks for prayers to the *kiai*. According to Islamic teachings, children should be weaned or stopped from breastfeeding their mothers at the age of two years (Mawaddah, 2018, pp. 220–221). Similarly, in the Madurese tradition, children are taught not to breastfeed in the early months before they reach the age of two years. That is, at the age of the late teens or the age of twenty months the child begins to be accustomed to drinking water or others, so that later when it comes to weaning the child begins to get used to not remembering breast milk.

Ninth, learning the basics of reciting the Qur'an to the *kiai*. After about three years of age, this is when a child begins to develop independence. His parents bring him to the Qur'an recitation teacher and then hand him over to learn the Qur'an at night. Learning to recite the Qur'an at night to the village *kiai* known as *guru alif* is primary learning

compared to other learning that children go through since childhood in the Madurese community.

Even in this Qur'anic learning, often a *kiai* receives full surrender from their parents in learning the Qur'an. Full surrender is meant in the form of a child who never had the basics of learning the Qur'an before they were taught in the mosque (*Langghar*) where the *kiai* taught the Qur'an (Adawiyah, 2020, pp. 3–7).

Tenth, someone who plans to continue to a higher level of education, then he consults *kiai*. After studying the Qur'an in the *kiai*'s *Langgar* for some time, and then feeling that he would like to study in a place that is considered higher, the child would be asked to stop studying in the *Langgar* and then continue to an Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) or another place. While asking the *kiai* for permission, the child's parents would also ask him to consider which *pesantren* would be a suitable place for the child to study.

Table 1.

The central role of *kiai*

Kiai as significant other	<i>leading a four or seven-month pregnancy ceremony</i>	Religious social activities
	<i>a forty-day birth ceremony</i>	
	<i>a ceremony to descend the land</i>	
	<i>giving names to newborn children</i>	
	<i>considering choosing a potential life companion</i>	
	<i>solutions to plan to build a house</i>	
	<i>leading a wedding party</i>	
	<i>giving prayers for blessings</i>	
	<i>prayers when children are in the process of weaning</i>	
	<i>determining the implementation of the marriage contract process and the wedding party</i>	
<i>giving prayers for safety during the wedding party</i>		

	<i>leading a seven-day death ceremony</i>	
	<i>social events in the local community</i>	
	<i>And so on...</i>	

Eleventh, when going to boarding school, to feel at home, ask for prayers from *kiai* to feel at home. The *kiai*'s blessing prayer for his *santri*, which aims to make the *santri* feel at home in the hut, is usually in the form of sugar, water, or other food. Sugar or water is suggested to be mixed with his food or eaten directly. With the hope and purpose that he feels at home, and comfortable in the hut, he does not think about the people who are at home far away.

Twelve, get a prospective companion and ask for blessings and prayers to the *kiai*. Likewise, after the child grows older and reaches the level of finding a mate, the role of *kiai* remains the decisive centre for the next step. The child who wants to get engaged and the family that accompanies him do not fully surrender to the fate that will pass, but the role of the *kiai* with all his considerations remains a reference that cannot be ignored. Start from matching the day and date of birth (*dempok*) to predicting the engaged couple's future (Mawardi & Konita, 2021, pp. 64–65).

Not all of these *dempok* systems can be practised, but many people still rely on *kiai*'s opinion, who is asked to explain everything. However, what is common to all of them is that against bad *dempok*, *lo' tellok* and *to' pettok* are believed by the Madurese community to be bad actions in the future. In illustrations and descriptions related to violations of this taboo, one of the couples

will die young, either the husband first or the wife. If death does not occur, the second possibility is the death of the sustenance they receive. In other words, even though they both work hard and work hard, there is still no meaningful result; no blessing of sustenance is obtained. These two taboos are then summarized in the cultural concept; *mun tak mateh orengah, mateh rejekenah* (if the person does not die, then the fortune dies) (Susantin & Rijal, 2021, p. 53).

Thirteenth, when deciding whether to propose to the prospective fiancé, the *kiai* should be prayed for. Having passed the *dempok* "worthiness" test described earlier, the *kiai*'s further role is to determine when it is appropriate to "ask" or propose to the intended fiancée. Often after the *kiai* has determined the time, the family of the male party also fully entrusts the *kiai* with the process of proposing to the female party. In this case, because the *kiai* is appointed as a messenger to propose together with other families, the *kiai* is called the *se mogher rembek* party. This means that the *kiai* is positioned as a broker of the results of the deliberation. In this realm, *kiai*'s dual role is very clear from his central role (Bahri, 2020, pp. 26–27).

Fourteenth, determining the wedding day asks for the *kiai*'s blessing. The day of the wedding party is often different from the day of the marriage contract. This difference is due to the factor of consideration of good days and not given by the *kiai* to the family who will carry out all of that. Usually, the

most consideration of good days does not lie on the day of the marriage contract. This day gets more attention than the calculation of other days because the day of the marriage contract is a very sacred day that is only expected to happen in a lifetime. However, this does not mean that other days do not receive attention, it's just that what usually happens specifically on this day is always exaggerated.

Fifteenth, the leader of the prayer for the marriage process is the *kiai*. After determining the day and time of the marriage contract and the wedding party program given by the *kiai* to the family, it is also no less important usually related to the time for invitations to family, family and the surrounding community. Regarding the time of this invitation, many people follow the instructions of the *kiai* when they can and have time to attend the wedding. The reason is that the *kiai*'s flying hours often clash with the invitations of neighbours and other communities so adjustments need to be made between the family and the *kiai*.

Sixteenth, for the event to run smoothly, ask for the *kiai*'s prayer. In the core events of the marriage contract and the party, Madurese also cannot be separated from their dependence on *kiai*. For the sake of smoothness and success, as expected, the family who has this wish comes to the *kiai* to ask for prayer connections in at least two ways; as a rain charmer, so that it does not rain for a day or two so that the event can run smoothly and all invitees can attend. *Kiai* is

also often asked to pray that all the dishes (especially the beef which is the main side dish) will be blessed enough to fulfill all the invitations. When these two kinds of prayers are answered, it is a special happiness for the family who has an event.

Seventeenth, migrating to look for work asking for *kiai*'s blessing. After a couple of months of marriage and the need for more than just their daily bread, it is not uncommon for the two of them, supported by their families, to look for work outside the region (Prasisko, 2018, pp. 74–75). Of course, before they leave empty-handed, saying goodbye, asking for permission and even the blessing of *kiai* remains the main reference before actually making up their minds to go far to look for work.

Eighteenth, getting a job asks for *kiai*'s consideration. Continuing from the plan to look for work in another area that was conveyed to *kiai*. On the same occasion, he also said that he had received a job offer from someone else. This job offer from someone else will be conveyed to the *kiai* regarding whether it is good for him or vice versa.

Nineteenth, if you want to build a house, ask for *kiai*'s prayer. When the blessing of life has been achieved with abundant fortune value, the most common next thing done by Madurese people is between two ways; going on a pilgrimage or building a new house. The consultation that many Madurese people do regarding these two things is more about making a new house. For the pilgrimage, there is no need to ask the *kiai*'s opinion,

because it is certainly good and follows the religious path, and the *kiai* will certainly approve of it.

Twentieth, when dying, asking for *kiai* prayers. In the last seconds of death, especially if the process of death is rather long and does not pass away, the Madurese people ask the *kiai* for a prayer connection so that they die in *husnul khatimah*. Even if there is difficulty in exhaling the last breath, *kiai* often comes to the place to accompany the last second of the person who wants to die. However, if *kiai* cannot come to the place, *kiai* usually leaves something that can be water, incense, sugar and others, to be drunk, rubbed on a dying person, or sprinkled in a certain place as a condition of blessing for the person who is about to die.

Twenty-first, *tahlilan* for seven days, 40 days, 100 days, a year, and 1000 days led by the *kiai*. When it is confirmed that someone has died and there is no *kiai* in the place. A family messenger will go to the *kiai*'s house to inform him that person A has died. The purpose of this notification is not merely to give news of someone's death, but it also implies that the *kiai* is expected to be present at the place to lead everything related to death affairs. Starting from cutting the shroud, purifying and sitting, putting on the shroud, praying, and later *mentalkin* in the grave after the funeral has begun to end.

The position that usually replaces this emergency when the *kiai*'s family is completely absent, the choice that arises can be Ustaz, madrasah teachers, boarding

school alumni, or those who have made the pilgrimage (Nasruddin, 2020, pp. 165–168). These options are an alternative last resort if *kiai* or his representative cannot be present to lead the *tahlil* event. However, as the event is fixed for seven nights or seven days, if there is another event at the same time involving the *kiai*'s family (*famili dhalem*), the custom is for the elder *kiai* to divide the other *kiai* among his family as needed to attend other places and others to attend the *tahlil* event itself. This is to anticipate that all events will continue as expected.

Twenty-second, the family's social events of the year are also led by the *kiai*. The latter and applicable in annual, monthly, and daily activities can be rokat pamengkang, jailanian, maulidan, bellasan, manaqiban, and kompolan in the community. These events depend on the leadership and participation of the *kiai*. Without the participation and intervention of the *kiai*'s leadership, it is *very* unlikely that all these activities will run as they should. So, it is natural that in certain months the schedule of *kiai* invitations in the neighbourhood for annual, monthly and daily events is quite busy and takes up a lot of time.

With this booming condition, *kiai* as much as possible also arranges the invitation schedule according to the ability of time and energy available so that one place and another can alternate even though it is in a rather close time. However, from all that *kiai* remains the epicentre of all social community activities as well as *kiai* as a

significant other.

From the data presented above, it can be articulated that *kiai* is an inseparable part of the social system process of Madurese society (Jannah, 2020, p. 18). The existence of *kiai* is the centre of community activities, both social and religious. This, of course, cannot be separated from the role and status of *kiai* as a cultural driver for the social environment of society. It is almost unparalleled in any culture, that the role of *kiai* is very dominant and very decisive for the success and failure of social religious activity, especially for the Madurese community.

It is inconceivable if a *kiai* does not lead to socio-religious activity. So it is certain that the activity will falter by itself, especially in its social meaning and value. This is because the leadership of *kiai* in an event in the social environment of Madurese society is awaited. And in this case, there seems to be no one who can replace his position in leading a social religious event without being practised by the *kiai*.

So it is not surprising that later in the findings of this study, social religious activities carried out in the Madurese social environment starting from before a baby is born into the world to later returning to the unseen world, always involve *kiai* as a patron in the succession of implementation (Jannah, 2020, p. 18).

From this discussion, it can be explained that the Madurese community carries out no social-religious activities without involving

kiai as the leader of the event. Therefore, the role of *kiai* becomes unrepresentable to anyone except other *kiai*. This means that *kiai* can only be represented by another *kiai* and not by someone other than him.

With an easily digestible conception, the role of village *kiai* in rural Madura is the key to the running of the social structure and system of the community. The reason is that *kiai* as the driving force of local community culture is no longer negotiable in its position in running the wheels of tradition recognized for their existence in the surrounding community. It can be imagined how high the frequency of the quantity of the *kiai*'s role in leading the social religious activities of the Madurese community in their daily lives is. Because these events are not centred on just one family, every family line may simultaneously or shortly hold such an event.

Therefore, the role of *kiai* as the mecca of socio-religious activities is a fixed price that cannot be transferred to other parties who are commensurate or not at all. This means that the *kiai*'s existence as an important person who can influence the social activities of the surrounding community is due to his charisma and traditional leadership, which are recognized as values by the local community.

CONCLUSION

This research has a very urgent contribution in seeing and interpreting the central role of village *kiai* as a significant other in rural Madurese society. This is because so far the

study of *kiai* has been dominated by his role and work in spreading charisma in capturing power because of the honour factor attached to him. For this reason, mainstreaming the central role of *kiai* as a significant other in fostering and building religious social civilization is undeniable in the social environment of rural communities in Madura.

The discussion and study of the central role of the village *kiai* as a significant other in rural Madura can be concluded that the *kiai* plays at least twenty-two main roles in playing himself as an important person whose position is irreplaceable in the social environment of the village community. The twenty-two roles are summarized in the entire social journey of a person starting before birth to the earth until death picks him up. That is, leading the procession of pregnancy ceremonies, *kiai* prayers for the birth process, giving names to newborn children, prayers when children are always crying, leading *mulang areh* ceremonies, *kiai* prayers when children are sickly, leading the descent of the land, plans for weaning toddlers, learning the basics of the Qur'an, plan to continue their education to a higher level, *kiai* prayers for children's survival in the hut, *kiasi*'s consideration for potential life partners, plans to propose to a life partner, determining the wedding day, leading the wedding ceremony, *kiai*'s prayer for the smooth running of the wedding party, one's plans to migrate, getting a job asking for *kiaiss* consideration plans to build a house, *kiai*'s prayer for death, *tahlilan* in the event

of death, and leading other social events within the family scope.

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