



Typologies of Sufi Ulama in Tegal of Central Java during the Twentieth Century

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Abstract: Studies of Sufism in Java often focus on Sufi ulama in coastal areas, although Tegal is less exposed compared to other cities. This study examines the typologies of Sufi ulama in Tegal during the 20th century, including their biographical trajectories and scholarly relationships. Employing a historical qualitative approach supported by elements of social network analysis, the study identifies key figures who shaped the development of Sufism in the region and maps the patterns through which religious knowledge was transmitted across generations. The findings demonstrate that Sufism in Tegal is categorized into three main types: practical Sufism (*ama>li>*), ethical Sufism (*akhla>qi>*), and neo-Sufism. Sufi ulama in Tegal integrated shari'a-oriented learning with practical Sufism, thereby forming a localized style of Sunni-Neo-Sufism that was able to respond to the social and religious dynamics of the period.

Contribution: This study contributes to the field of Javanese Sufism by expanding its scope to a relatively under-recognized region, namely Tegal, and by mapping the typology and scholarly chain of Sufis in the 20th century. These findings enhance our understanding of local variations in Javanese Sufism by illustrating the emergence of Sunni-Neo-Sufi patterns that adapt to local social and religious dynamics.

Keywords: Sufi ulama; Tegal; social network; typology; twentieth century

Introduction

Sufism in Indonesia has a long, rich, and complex history, serving as a vital part of Muslim society's spiritual life.¹ Since Islam's arrival in the archipelago (Nusantara), elements of Sufism have influenced religious practices, and these influences are still evident today.² The teachings of Sufism appeal to the community because they align with native beliefs and are promoted by *da'i* (Muslim preacher) known for their high morals and tolerance.³ The growth of Sufism also gave rise to the *tariqa* (Sufi order) movement, which aims to protect people in moral crisis through the doctrine of *taṣawwuf ‘amalī* (practical Sufism).⁴

Biographical studies of Nusantara scholars reveal that most Muslim scholars have adopted the trend of integrating *shari'ah* and Sufism in their scholarship. One notable figure is Kiai Sahal Mahfudh from Pati (Coastal area), Central Java, who is primarily recognized as a *fiqh* scholar but also shows interest in Sufism topics.⁵ Kiai Sahal is known to have authored over 100 publications, including articles and books. While most focus on Islamic law, some directly address Sufism. This shows that Kiai Sahal's scientific approach is impartial, encompassing both the normative *shari'ah* and spiritual aspects. Therefore, this *ulama* typology is highly pertinent for understanding the Sufi dynamics in the Tegal region.⁶

Likewise, the author notes that most Sufi *ulama* in Tegal tend to integrate aspects of *shari'ah* and Sufism in their Islamic teachings. This aligns with At-

¹ Wijaya Wijaya et Al., "Islamic Studies In The World: The Integration Of Sufism In Contemporary Indonesian Islam: The Case Of Urban And Rural Communities," 2025, <Https://Doi.Org/10.70177/Isw.V2i1.2121>.

² Feny Nida Fitriyani et Al., "Santri's Spiritual Resilience At Pesantren Mahasiswa Of The Institut Daarul Qur'an Jakarta: Capturing Living Sufism Amid Modern Society," *Teosofia: Indonesian Journal Of Islamic Mysticism* 13, No. 2 (2024): 213–38, <Https://Doi.Org/10.21580/Tos.V13i2.23559>.

³ Marsuki Marsuki, Umi Sumbulah, and Helmi Syaifuddin, "The Network Of Middle Eastern And Archipelagic Sufi Scholars: Tracing The Dynamics Of Sufism Development In Indonesia," *Teosofia: Indonesian Journal Of Islamic Mysticism* 13, No. 2 (2024): 355–76, <Https://Doi.Org/10.21580/Tos.V13i2.19064>.

⁴ Misbachul Munir, "Relevansi Tasawuf Kh. Sholeh Darat Dalam Menghadapi Problematika Masyarakat Modern," *Jurnal Ilmiah Spiritualis: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam Dan Tasawuf* 10, No. 2 (2024): 382–400, <Https://Doi.Org/10.53429/Spiritualis.V10i2.1083>.

⁵ Mohammad Rifân Asofik and Ahmad Khafidh, "Breaking The Dullness Of Thought Among Nahdliyin: The Genealogy Of Kh. Sahal Mahfudh's Civilization Jurisprudence," *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman* 34, No. 2 (2023): 245–66, <Https://Doi.Org/10.33367/Tribakti.V34i2.3547>.

⁶ Muhammad Fauzinudin Faiz et al., "Living Ihya And Harmonizing The Spiritual Essence: Syeikh Washil's Fiqh-Sufistic As The Bedrock Of Spiritual-Based Islamic Law In Nusantara," *El-Mashlahah* 14, No. 2 (2024): 431–50, <Https://Doi.Org/10.23971/El-Mashlahah.V14i2.8551>.

Tafta>za>ni>'s concept of Sunni Sufism, which presents a Sufistic approach that stays rooted in the normative framework of Islam.⁷ They teach the laws of shari'ah through fiqh studies while also conveying spiritual values from the Sufism tradition.⁸ This integration highlights a unique and context-specific scientific style, making the Tegal region an interesting subject for study within the network and typology of scholars of Sufism.

Studies on Sufism in Indonesia during the 20th century highlight a revival that began in the 1970s, during which Sufi orders played a key role in promoting religious moderation and cultural adaptation, despite an initial decline due to modernization. Howell examines how Indonesian Sufism evolved as a response to secularism, with ulama networks integrating local and global influences and traditions.⁹ Then, Azra et al. examine the evolution of ulama authority in 20th-century Indonesia, highlighting the typology of Sufi ulama who transitioned from solely spiritual roles to engaging in socio-political matters.¹⁰ Likewise, analyzing the role of Wali Songo, Wahyuni found that Sufism, through its various forms, intertwines with the different eras in Indonesia and reshapes the meanings of traditional and modern in Indonesia.¹¹

Further, Arifin examines a current development in recognized Sufi orders (*tariqa mu'tabara*) in Indonesia, in response to the emergence of relatively new forms of urban Sufism. The popularity of Habib Luthfi and his Sufi order demonstrates that recognized orders can successfully adapt to dynamic societal changes and meet people's spiritual needs in today's world. This suggests that conventional Sufism can continue to play a significant role in society without

⁷ Elmansyah Al-Haramain, "Shifting Orientation In Sufism: Its Development And Doctrine Adjustment In History," *Indonesian Journal Of Islam And Muslim Societies* 1, No. 2 (2011): 273–96, <Https://Doi.Org/10.18326/Ijims.V1i2.273-296>.

⁸ Paul L. Heck, "Sufism – What Is It Exactly?," *Religion Compass* 1, No. 1 (27 January 2007): 148–64, <Https://Doi.Org/10.1111/J.1749-8171.2006.00011.X>.

⁹ Julia Day Howell, "Sufism And The Indonesian Islamic Revival," *The Journal Of Asian Studies* 60, No. 3 (August 1, 2001): 701–29, <Https://Doi.Org/10.2307/2700107>.

¹⁰ Azyumardi Azra, Kees Van Dijk, and Nico J G Kaptein, *Varieties Of Religious Authority Varieties Of Religious Authority: Changes And Challenges In 20th Century Indonesian Islam*, (Singapore: Institute Of Southeast Asian Studies (Iseas), 2010). <Https://Bookshop.Iseas.Edu.Sg/Publication/743>.

¹¹ Yuyun Sri Wahyuni, "Refining Traditional And Modern: A Literary Study Of Indonesian Sufism And Neo-Sufism From Pesantren," *Dinika Academic Journal Of Islamic Studies* 2, No. 1 (April 30, 2017): 69–88, <Https://Doi.Org/10.22515/Dinika.V2i1.299>.

losing its basic features.¹² In contrast, Herman Beck studied the position of the Muhammadiyah in Indonesia, which is commonly known for its lack of sympathy towards mysticism, particularly in its manifestations within mystical religious fraternities and pantheistic identity mysticism. He argues that Muhammadiyah's rigidness in rejecting 'mystical and spiritual' manifestations is not only caused by its fear of disbelief and heresy, but also closely related to the political and social circumstances in which it is confronted with these 'mystical and spiritual' manifestations in the first place.¹³

However, a study of the scholarship of the Sufis in Tegal remains scarce. While broader studies, such as those on the Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya order in Central Java, highlight a strong sanad network, they do not delve into the regional nuances of Tegal. This study addresses that gap by examining the typology of Sufi ulama in Tegal in the 20th century. The limitation is based on the paradigm shift of Sufism from a normative textual to a normative contextual approach,¹⁴ where teachings are not only individual spiritual but also address social issues. Organizational structures such as Jam'iyyah Ahl al-Tharīqah al-Mu'tabarah an-Nahdliyah (JATMAN) in Tegal encompass both spiritual and economic fields, demonstrating the transformation of Sufism into an adaptation to modernization and social challenges.

Therefore, the author considers it essential to first outline the intellectual traits of the ulama in Tegal, with a particular focus on their expertise. This mapping aims to determine if these scholars fit into categories such as fiqh scholars, Sufism scholars, or a blend of both. Such classification is important because Islamic scholarly history shows a split between *fuqahā'* (Islamic jurisprudence experts) and *ahl al-bāthīn* (Sufism experts), a division that began from the third to the fourth century of Hijri.¹⁵ The history behind the emergence of this dichotomy offers a crucial basis for tracing the evolution of Sufism,

¹² Achmad Zainal Arifin. "Re-Energising Recognised Sufi Orders In Indonesia." *Review Of Indonesian And Malaysian Affairs* 46, No. 2 (2012): 77–104. <Https://Search.Informit.Org/Doi/10.3316/Informit.492471986369102>.

¹³ Herman L. Beck. "The Contested State Of Sufism In Islamic Modernism: The Case Of The Muhammadiyah Movement In Twentieth-Century Indonesia", *Journal Of Sufi Studies* 3, 2 (2014): 183-219, Doi: <Https://Doi.Org/10.1163/22105956-12341269>

¹⁴ William Rory Dickson, "Sufism And Shari'A: Contextualizing Contemporary Sufi Expressions," *Religions* 13, No. 5 (2022), <Https://Doi.Org/10.3390/Rel13050449>.

¹⁵ Yogi Prana Izza, "Dialectic And Intersection Of Sufism And Kalam In The 1st And 2nd Century Of Hijri," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam* 10, No. 1 (1 Juni 2020): 52–80, <Https://Doi.Org/10.15642/Teosofi.2020.10.1.52-80>.

especially in Indonesia and Tegal. Grasping this background will better situate Tegal's Sufi ulama within the broader landscape of Islamic scholarship.

Literature Review

Nusantara Sufi Network

The entry and development of Sufism in the Indonesian archipelago cannot be separated from the entry of Islamic teachings into Indonesia from the 13th to the 17th century, brought by Muslim traders and Sufis from Persia and India. In fact, Islam that initially entered Indonesia had a Sufi character, as data presented by Morrison shows that the South Indian figures who taught Islam in the archipelago, such as Mu'tabar (Malabar), were known as *faqi>r*. This title was typically given to Sufis who dedicated themselves to abandoning worldly affairs for the sake of religion and the afterlife. The Malay History text, sourced from the *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai* compiled in the 14th century AD, describes the Sultan of Malacca's passion for Sufism and repeatedly sent envoys to Maulana Abu Iskak to consult about Sufism.

Early Indonesian Sufi figures who spread Sufism were Hamzah Fansuri (d. 1590), Syamsuddin al-Samatrani (d. 1630), Nuruddin ar-Raniri (d. 1658), Abd al-Rauf al-Sinkili (d. 1693), and Sheikh Yusuf al-Makassari (d. 1699). Furthermore, the Wali Songo also played a crucial role in spreading Sufism throughout the Indonesian archipelago, successfully integrating it with the local traditions of the Indonesian people, thereby forming an Islamic identity that was tolerant and adaptable to local culture.¹⁶ Meanwhile, the primary institution for the spread of Sufism in the early Indonesian archipelago was through a network of Sufi scholars, Sufi orders, and educational centers such as *pesantren* and *zawiyah* (Islamic boarding schools), centered in trading cities like Samudera Pasai, Malacca, Demak, Aceh, and Java. This pattern is similar to the Sufi order network in Java, where the pesantren functioned as central nodes for the spread of practical Sufism.¹⁷

The rapid development of Sufism and the emergence of various forms of Sufism in the Indonesian archipelago led to tensions between philosophical Sufism, influenced by Ibn 'Ara>bi>, and Sunni Sufism, which focused on moral

¹⁶ Dwi Afrianti, "Sufism Scholars Network in the Middle East, India, and Indonesia," *International Journal of Nusantara Islam* 4, no. 1 (March 14, 2016): 79–92, <https://doi.org/10.15575/ijni.v4i1.1226>.

¹⁷ Achmad Fadel et al., "Transmission of knowledge from Mā Warā' Al-Nahr to Nusantara: The cen- tral Asia Ulama network and its influence on Islamic intellectual traditions in the Malay archipelago - 18th-19th century" 6, no. 3 (2025): 1–12.

(*akhlaq*) development. This contestation culminated in the tragedy of Sheikh Siti Jenar, with his Sufi understanding of *manunggaling kawula gusti* (the union of the servant with God), being executed by the Wali Songo (nine holy teachers) during the Demak kingdom for deviating from '*aqi>da* (Islamic theology). Ultimately, moral Sufism became the dominant form of Islam in Indonesia, shaping its identity.¹⁸ In addition, practical sufism (*tasawuf 'amali*), through the tariqa (Sufi orders), including the Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya order, dominates, acting as a social order that integrates spirituality with local cultural adaptation, strengthening teacher-student bonds and kinship for community resilience.¹⁹

Sufism in Contemporary Studies

Contemporary discourse on Sufism has undergone a significant shift in paradigm. Sufism is no longer understood as a mystical practice isolated from Sharia law, but rather as an integral dimension that holistically unites the moral, spiritual, and esoteric aspects of Islamic teachings.²⁰ In this perspective, Sufism is defined as a method for the purification of the soul (*tazkiyatun nafs*) that positions transcendent morality—such as patience (*sabr*), gratitude (*shukr*), reliance on God (*tawakkal*), and love (*mahabba*) as the primary foundation that manifests in daily piety.²¹ Consequently, the dichotomy between *tasawwuf* (Sufism) and Shari'a, often perceived as conflicting, is now viewed as convergent; Sufi scholars strive to balance the outer dimension (Islamic jurisprudence/ *fiqh*) and the inner dimension (reality/ *haqiqah*), making Sufism not an escape from religious law, but a spiritual deepening rooted in correct Sharia.²²

¹⁸ Mohamad Lukman Al Hakim Md Ishak, Muhaizam and Irshad Omar, Ahmad Afiq and Fazial, Farahdina and Md Noor, "Social Tariqah, Nusantara Sufism, Spiritual networks, Cultural resilience, Digital Sufism," *Journal of Islamic, Social, Economics and Development (JISED)* 10 (73) (2025): 971–92, <https://doi.org/10.55573/JISED.107376>.

¹⁹ Muhammad Sabiq, Andi Murni, and Abdul Malik Iskandar, "Social Solidarity and Religious Based Islamic Sufism of Khalwatia Samman Thareqah Community" 17, no. 1 (n.d.): 23–44.

²⁰ Alamsyah Alamsyah, Irfan Noor, and Dzikri Nirwana, "Pemikiran Tasawuf Kh. Mochjar Dahri Dalam Kitab Mursyid Al-'Ibâd Ilâ Sabîl Ar-Rasyâd Dan Âtsâr At-Tashawwuf Fî Hayât Al-Muslim," *Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Ushuluddin* 20, No. 2 (30 Desember 2021): 129, <Https://Doi.Org/10.18592/Jiiu.V20i2.5646>.

²¹ Teten Jalaludin Hayat and Ma'sum Anshori, "Islamic Universality For Global Goodness: Integration Of Fiqh And Sufism," *Al-Banjari : Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 22, No. 1 (2023): 88–110, <Https://Doi.Org/10.18592/Al-Banjari.V22i1.7846>.

²² Rudy Kurniawan et al., "The Ulama Of Palembang Sammaniyah Order: Survival In The Middle Of The Regime Of Power In The 20th Century," *Hts Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 78, No. 1 (2022): 1–8, <Https://Doi.Org/10.4102/Hts.V78i1.7542>.

The significance of Sufism is also evident in the strategic position of its scholars (*ulama*) within the social structure of society. Sufi *ulama* occupy a crucial, yet ambivalent, role: on one hand, they act as spiritual and intellectual guides through institutions such as *pesantren* and *tariqa* (Sufi orders).²³ On the other hand, they are actively involved in the sociopolitical sphere. Their existence reflects the convergence between religion and local politics, where the *ulama* serve as mediators between the community and the governing power, as well as guardians of social stability amid the changing times.²⁴ This legitimacy is reinforced by personal charisma and extensive social networks, establishing them as central figures in formulating communal social visions.

Nevertheless, the existence of Sufism faces dynamic challenges in the modern era, particularly concerning the issue of purifying Islamic teachings. Modernist movements often level criticism against Sufi practices that are deemed to deviate from the fundamental principles of Sharia, triggering theological debates between traditionalist and reformist groups.²⁵ In this debate, the thought of Ibn Taymiyyah is frequently cited by reformist groups as the primary reference to critique innovations in Sufism that are considered lacking in Islamic authenticity.²⁶ This dynamic demonstrates that Sufism continually engages in a dialogue between preserving spiritual tradition and meeting the demands of modernization.

Method

This study employs a qualitative design, incorporating a historical-descriptive approach.²⁷ This methodology was selected to gain a comprehensive

²³ St. Rahmah, Ahmad Hasan Saleh, and Sri Nur Rahmi, “The Influence Of Sufism On Social Practices In Contemporary Muslim Societies: A Case Study In Indonesia,” *Journal Of Noesantara Islamic Studies* 1, No. 4 (2024): 214–32, <https://doi.org/10.70177/jnis.v1i4.1396>.

²⁴ Zubair Zubair et al., “Muhammadiyah’s Tajdīd And Sufism Between Purification And Modernization,” *Insaniyat : Journal Of Islam And Humanities* 7, No. 2 (2023): 113–27, <https://doi.org/10.15408/insaniyat.v7i2.31505>.

²⁵ Ahmed Nafiu Arikewuyu, “A Comparative Study Of Al-Ghazali’s And Ibn Taymiyyah’s Views On Sufism,” *International Journal Of Islamic Thought* 17, No. 1 (2019): 15–24, <https://doi.org/10.24035/ijit.17.2020.166>.

²⁶ Siswoyo Aris Munandar, “Social And Economic Sufism: The Development And Role Of Sufism In The Digital And Modern Era,” *Jurnal Kawakib* 4, No. 1 (21 Juni 2023): 13–27, <https://doi.org/10.24036/kwakib.v4i1.112>.

²⁷ Nazar Naamy, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif Dasar-Dasar & Aplikasinya*, Rake Sarasin, 2022, [https://repository.uinmataram.ac.id/2853/1/Buku Metode Penelitian.Pdf](https://repository.uinmataram.ac.id/2853/1/Buku%20Metode%20Penelitian.Pdf).

and interpretive insight into the typology of Sufi scholars (ulama) in Tegal during the 20th century. It involves analyzing the social, cultural, and religious development of the community in a chronological and contextual way. Data were collected systematically through detailed literature reviews and document analysis. Primary sources include: (1) biographical works and manuscripts by Tegal ulama (e.g., *Aqaid Sewidak Loro* by KH. Mufti bin Salim); (2) institutional records from Pesantren Ma'hadut Tholabah, Pesantren Al-Hasyimiyah Danawarih, and Kajen-based pesantren; (3) documents related to Tariqa Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya concerning K.H. Hasyim Jamhari; (4) local archives of NU, JATMAN, and IBN Tegal; and (5) in-depth interviews with key informants such as Gus Akib, Gus Mujin, and Gus Yafi, who are descendants and custodians of the ulama's legacies. Secondary sources include peer-reviewed journal articles, books, dissertations, and theses, as well as reputable news reports on Sufism in Indonesia, with an emphasis on internationally recognized journals published within the last five years.

The collected data undergoes staged analysis: first, validation and source triangulation ensure consistency and accuracy; next, content analysis identifies patterns, themes, and ulama characteristics. Social Network Analysis (SNA) then maps relationships (edges) among key actors (nodes)—ulama, pesantren, and tariqa—via teacher-student lineages, kinship, or affiliations, measuring cohesion and positioning with centrality metrics (Degree, Betweenness, Closeness) and clustering coefficient.²⁸ Finally, typological analysis, grounded in frameworks of social roles, Sufi styles, and responses to modernization, classifies Sufi ulama. Integrating qualitative, historical, and SNA approaches yields a holistic view of Tegal's Sufi ulama networks and dynamics.

Result and Discussion

Sufism in Tegal and Its Prominent Figures in the 20th Century

The landscape of Sufism in Tegal in the 20th century can be understood through the existence of religious educational institutions and prominent scholars. Although specific data on the history of Sufism in Tegal in the 20th century is explicitly limited in available sources, the existence of the Pesantren Ma'hadut Tholabah, founded in 1916 by KH. Mufti bin Salim in Lebaksiu, Tegal, indicates

²⁸ Asleena Helmi, Zainal Ariffin Ahmad, and Daisy Kee Mui Hung, "Understanding Knowledge Networks via Social Network Analysis (SNA)," in *Advances in Electronic Government, Digital Divide, and Regional Development Book Series*, 2010, 32–42, <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-61692-846-9.ch004>.

the existence of a strong center of religious education and practice in the region. Pesantren Ma'hadut Tholabah is one of the oldest pesantrens in Tegal Regency, having survived for over a century, even after being frozen in time by the Dutch colonialists. This institution's resilience indicates its crucial role in preserving and perpetuating religious traditions, including, most likely, the practice of Sufism. Traditional pesantren like Ma'hadut Tholabah have historically been centers for the practice of *Tasawwuf 'ama>li*, which emphasizes the application of Sufism's teachings in daily life and worship. Therefore, this pesantren can be considered a center for the conservation and adaptation of Sufism in Tegal in the 20th century, amidst the challenges of colonialism and modernization.²⁹

The identification of twentieth-century Sufism scholars in Tegal requires careful exploration, given the lack of explicit data directly referring to them as "Sufism scholars" or outlining their tariqah affiliations. However, from existing sources, several key figures can be identified:

- 1) K.H. Mufti bin Salim bin Abdur Rahman – Pesantren Pioneer and Tauhid Expert

KH. Mufti bin Salim founded Pesantren Ma'hadut Tholabah in 1916 M/1336 H in Babakan hamlet, Jatimulya Village, Lebaksiu District, Tegal Regency. From Balapulang Village, he was a descendant of Sunan Tegalarum (Sunan Amangkurat I) and son-in-law of Kiai Sulaiman, a wealthy village head in Lebaksiu. He pioneered the pesantren in 1913 AD by organizing a religious sermon at Jami' Mosque in Babakan, attended by 12 people. In 1916, drawing on knowledge from PP. At-Tauhidiyah Giren, Talang, Tegal, he spread Islam through *bandongan* (collective learning) and *sorogan* (individual learning) methods, built a mosque as a religious center, and led until 1935. He had nine children, including KH. Isa Mufti and Hj. Khoiriyah Mufti, who continued his legacy. He initiated the tradition of reciting Surah Yasin on the night of the 15th of Sha'ban. He emphasized tauhid, fiqh, tasawwuf, and grammatical sciences. His monumental work, *Aqa>id Sewidak Loro* (Akidah Sixty-Two), was first taught internally, verified by Kiai Ubadah of Giren, and widely disseminated. Famous spiritual story: He dug a well after a 14-day fast; its water is believed to have healing virtues, illustrating the blend of shari'a (practical utility) and *haqi>qa* (spiritual discipline in tasawwuf). KH Abdullah Jamil is referred to as

²⁹ Ikhda Nurnoviyati, "Strategi Pembelajaran Di Pondok Pesantren Ma'hadut Tholabah Babakan Lebaksiu Tegal Pada Era Pandemi Covid-19". *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan* 8, no. 7 (2022), 374-83. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6592002>.

“Kiai Pejuang from Tarub Tegal” in the context of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) scholars.³⁰

2) K.H. Muhammad Miftah (d. 1994 M) - Harmonizer of Fiqh and Sufism

K.H. Muhammad Miftah from Kajen, Talang, is known as a scholar who harmonizes the disciplines of Fiqh with Sufism in his teaching. The books taught to his students cover various fields, ranging from tafsir (*Jala>lai>n*) to fiqh (*Fathul Waha>b*) and Sufism (*Ihya’ Ulumuddi>n*). His Sufi behavior is reflected in his daily life, such as his penchant for friendship, *zuhd* (asceticism), *wara'* (abstinence from doubtful matters), *tawadju* (humility), and taking time for *tafa>kur* (contemplation). His intellectual journey took a very long time in various pesantren, starting from the upbringing of his brother, Kiai Mawardi, in Pekalongan, continuing to the Pesantren Kempek in Cirebon, Pesantren Watucongol in Magelang under the tutelage of Kiai Dalhar, until the peak of studying for twenty years at the Pesantren Lirboyo under the guidance of Kiai Abdul Karim (Mbah Manaf).³¹

3) K.H. Usman Zahid (d. 1984 M) - *Zuhd* and Independent

A contemporary of Kiai Miftah, K.H. Usman Zahid of Yomani, Lebaksiu, demonstrated Sufism influences through his simple and *zuhd* lifestyle. His life principle was "do not depend on anyone but Allah SWT." This attitude was evident in his rejection of government assistance for mosque construction and his refusal to meet President Soeharto during his visit to Tegal. He received his pesantren education in Kaliwungu, Kendal, under Kiai Dimyati, and in Jombang under Hadratussyaikh K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari.³²

4) K.H. Hasyim Jamhari (1940-2008 M) - Murshid Tariqa and Intellectual Organizer

K.H. Hasyim Jamhari from Danawarih, Balapulang, was an expert in fiqh and Sufism. In addition to managing Pesantren Al-Hasyimiyah, he was

³⁰ Nurnoviyati, “Strategi Pembelajaran Di Pondok Pesantren Ma’hadut Tholabah Babakan Lebaksiu Tegal,” 374-83.

³¹ Arif Chasanul Muna, Wahyudi, Arif, Yasran, A. Fatah, and Jalil, Romadlon Abdul. *Jejak Dakwah Ulama Nusantara; Menelusuri Perjuangan, Keteladanan dan Hikmah Ulama Pekalongan*. PT. Nasya Expanding Management, Bojong, 2020. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=TJMqEAAAQBAJ&p...>

³² Arif Zainudin, et al. “Patriotism of Ulama in the Coastal Areas of Java: Philosophy and Political Doctrines of KH Muchlas Tegal (1886-1964),” ICONS 2020: Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Social Science, Humanities, Education and Society Development, ICONS 2020, 30 November, Tegal, Indonesia. European Alliance for Innovation, 2021.

actively involved in Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and became one of the founders of the Bakti Negara Islamic Institute (IBN) in Tegal. He studied in Jombang under K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari and in Kaliwungu under Kiai Rukyat. In the field of Sufism, he is a murshid of Tariqa Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya (TQN) whose sanad is connected through Mbah Maksum Meranggen, Demak. His spiritual stories, such as fasting for tens of days and his experience of *jadhab* (a deep spiritual state), illustrate his achievement in experiencing the pleasure of remembering Allah. However, he still emphasizes the importance of shari'a. His arguments, particularly when he experienced *jadhab*, demonstrate a deep understanding that integrates his inner state with the boundaries of fiqh.³³

5) KH. Zainal Arifin Tegal – Educator, preacher, and politician

K.H. Zainal Arifin, a charismatic cleric from Tegal, excelled as an educator, preacher, and politician in Tegal and Pemalang. He founded Diniyya madrasa and pesantren, authored a book on Tawhid, *Al-Iman*, and conducted da'wah through lectures, education, and politics via NU and PPP (United Development Party). Known for reforming harmful traditions like nyadran and sea alms, he was a trusted religious advisor and renowned preacher, extending Sufism's influence to social and political spheres beyond personal spirituality. His religious education began at home under the guidance of his father, K.H. Afroni—a local religious figure—and continued at Madrasah Islamiyyah Suradadi, Pondok Pesantren Tebuireng Jombang, and Pesantren Kudus. In 1954, he studied at NU's Kulliyatul Muballighin under K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri as a key mentor.³⁴

The limited explicit data on Tegal's Sufi scholars in the 20th century demonstrates the importance of contextual inference. The existence of traditional pesantren and traditional teaching methods is mentioned in the biography of K.H. Mufti bin Salim, suggesting that the dominant Sufi style was likely moral and practical Sufism, emphasizing the practice of worship, self-purification, and noble morals, in line with the traditions of traditional pesantren in Java. This means that researchers need to infer possible Sufi affiliations or styles from the context of traditional pesantren and teaching methods, which are often associated with the transmission of traditional Sufi knowledge.³⁵

³³ Zainuddin, "Patriotism of Ulama in the Coastal Areas of Java," 219.

³⁴ Zainuddin, "Patriotism of Ulama in the Coastal Areas of Java," 219.

³⁵ Zainuddin, "Patriotism of Ulama in the Coastal Areas of Java," 219.

Scholarly Chain of Sufi Ulama in Tegal in the 20th Century

The Sufi chain (*sanad*) in Tegal during the 20th century can be analyzed through various relationships, especially those of teacher-student, kinship, and institutional nature, centered on key figures and the main pesantren.³⁶

1) Teacher-Student Relationship (*sanad*)

The scientific chain of K.H. Mufti bin Salim, who studied at PP. At-Tauhidiyah Giren, Talang, Tegal, shows an important local scholarly connection. This suggests that the transmission of Sufism knowledge likely occurred within the regional scope of Tegal and its surroundings.

2) Kinship

K.H. Mufti bin Salim is the son-in-law of Kiai Sulaiman and has nine children who continue the leadership of the pesantren. This kinship network fosters a strong bond, maintaining the institution's continuity and ensuring the transmission of its teachings. This shows that leadership and influence in the Tegal Sufism ulama network are often hereditary and family-based.³⁷

3) Institutional

Pesantren Ma'hadut Tholabah functions as a central network center. It is not only a place of education, but also a meeting and interaction point for ulama and santri. The identification of other related pesantren or *majelis ta'lim* (religious forums) will expand the understanding of the network's scope. Tegal became the center of activity, with possible connections to surrounding areas in Central Java (for example, Kudus or Grobogan mentioned in the context of other Javanese tasawwuf scholars) or even the Middle East through the wider study of ulama in the archipelago. For Tegal, however, the initial focus is on local structures.

4) Network Centrality and Density Analysis

Based on available data, K.H. Mufti bin Salim serves as the main hub in Tegal's Sufism scholars' network, through his role as founder and leader of Pesantren Ma'hadut Tholabah. This pesantren, as a central node, attracted santri from various regions, indicating regional influence. Network density in Tegal is high around the pesantren due to strong kinship ties and concentrated scholarly transmission. The pesantren is a significant religious center, with K.H. Mufti bin Salim's kinship network ensuring continuity. Thus, 20th-

³⁶ Zainuddin, "Patriotism of Ulama in the Coastal Areas of Java," 219.

³⁷ Khusnul Khotimah, "The Role Of Religious Leaders In Social Development And Religious Harmony : A Historical Sociological Study Of Islamic Religious Leaders In The 21st Century," *Jurnal Indonesia Studi Moderasi Beragama* 1, No. 2 (2024): 57–68. <https://doi.org/10.64420/jismb.v2i1.203>

century Tegal's Sufism network was local-centric, with pesantren as the main node strengthened by kinship. Unlike broader Nusantara ulama networks with global (Middle Eastern) connections, Tegal emphasized strong local structures, resulting in endogenous Sufism transmission focused on pesantren institutions and family clusters.

Table 1. Scholarly Chain of Tegal Sufi Ulama in the 20th Century

Name	Birth/Death	Main Teacher (Institution)	Notable Students (Descendants)	Kinship (With Other Scholars)	Affiliated Institutions (Pesantren/Tariqa)
K.H. Muhammad Miftah	d. 1994	Kiai Mawardi (Pekalongan), Kiai Dalhar (Watucongol), Kiai Abd. Karim/Mbah Manaf (Lirboyo)	Gus Delami (son)	The older brother of Kiai Mawardi Pekalongan	Pondok Pesantren Kajen (Talang), Pesantren Tahfi>dz al-Qur'a>n Kajen
K.H. Mufti bin Salim	1870-an – 1977	PP. At-Tauhidiyah Giren, Talang, Tegal	KH. Ma'sum Mufti, KH. Muhammad Syafi'i Mufti, KH. Isa Mufti, Ny. Hj. Khoiriyah Mufti, dll. (9 descendants)	Son-in-law of Kiai Sulaiman (Head of Jatimulya village)	PP. Ma'hadut Tholabah Lebaksiu, Tegal (Founder)
K.H. Abdullah Jamil	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Tarub Tegal
K.H. Isa Mufti	Unknown	KH. Mufti bin Salim	Unknown	Putra KH. Mufti bin Salim	PP. Ma'hadut Tholabah (Pengasuh Periode Lanjut)

Ny. Hj. Khoiriyah Mufti	Unknown	Kh. Mufti bin Salim	Unknown	Putri KH. Mufti bin Salim	Pengasuh PP. Ma'hadut Tholabah Putri
K.H. Usman Zahid	d. 1984	K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari (Jombang), Kiai Rukyat (Kaliwungu)	Not specifically mentioned	Not specifically mentioned	Pondok Pesantren Yomani (Lebaksiu)
K.H. Hasyim Jamhari	d. 1984	K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari (Jombang), Kiai Rukyat (Kaliwungu)	Gus Mujib (son)	Not specifically mentioned	Pesantren al-Hasyimiyah (Danawarih), Tariqa Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiy ya (TQN)
K.H. Zainal Arifin	1935-1991	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	NU, PPP, Madrasah-madrasah diniyyah, SMP Islam

Table 2: Religious Institutions and their Relationship with Tegal Sufi Ulama

Institution Name	Year of Establishment	Location	Key Scholars Involved	Teaching Focus	Important Notes
PP. Ma'hadut Tholabah	1916 M	Lebaksiu Tegal	K.H. Mufti bin Salim (Founder), Mufti Family (successors)	Salaf Islamic Education, <i>Bandonga</i> and <i>Sorogan</i> Religious Studies, possibly <i>Ama>li>/ Akhla>qi></i>	One of the oldest pesantren in Tegal was once closed by the Dutch

Jami' Mosque Babakan	Unknown (Primary Study Center)	Lebaksiu Tegal	K.H. Mufti bin Salim	Early public study center	The forerunner to the founding of PP. Ma'hadut Tholabah
PP. At-Tauhidiyah Giren	Unknown	Talang Tegal	Unknown (teacher of K.H. Mufti bin Salim)	Traditional Islamic Education	Source of knowledge for K.H. Mufti bin Salim
Pesantren Yomani	Unknown	Yomani, Lebaksiu	K.H. Usman Zahid	Not specifically mentioned (focus on <i>zuhd</i>)	Known for his independent attitude towards the government
Pesantren Kajen	Unknown	Kajen, Talang	K.H. Muhammad Miftah	Fikih (<i>Fathul Waha>b</i>), Tasawuf (<i>Ihya' Ulumuddi>n</i>), Tahfi>dz al-Qur'a>n	Harmonizing the study of fiqh and Sufism in a balanced manner
Pesantren al-Hasyimiyah	Unknown	Danawari h, Balapulan g	K.H. Hasyim Jamhari (Founder)	Fiqh, Tasawuf, Tariqa Qadiriyya wa Naqshban diyya (TQN)	The founder is also one of the founders of IBNU Tegal and is active in NU
Madrasa-madrasa diniyya and Junior Islamic school	Unknown	Tegal and Pemalang	K.H. Zainal Arifin (Founder)	Islamic and General Education	Founded by KH. Zainal Arifin

Typology of Tegal Sufism Scholars of the 20th Century

In Tegal during the 20th century, Sufism scholars can be categorized based on their Sufi thought patterns and tariqa affiliations. Although detailed data are limited, conclusions can be drawn from historical contexts and related research. Most Tegal Sufi scholars at the time exhibited styles of *tasawwuf akhla>qi>* and *tasawwuf 'ama>li>*, which were common in salaf pesantren like Ma'hadut Tholabah. The *tasawwuf akhla>qi>* focuses on developing noble character and spiritual purification, while *tasawwuf 'ama>li>* centers on worship practices, Sufi rituals, and recitations incorporated into daily life, following Javanese pesantren traditions. Identifying the specific Sufi order taught or followed by Tegal's Sufi scholars is essential. Although data on K.H. Mufti bin Salim is rare, the Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya tariqa is among the prominent orders prevalent in the archipelago. Meanwhile, the presence of the Naqshabandiyya Khalidiyya tariqa, taught by K.H. Muhammad Arwani Amin in Kudus, suggests its roots in Central Java, implying that it likely existed in Tegal as well.

Table 3: Typology of Tegal Sufi Ulama based on Thought and Affiliation

Name	Characteristics	Sufi Order Affiliation	Distinctive Characteristics
K.H. Muhammad Miftah	Neo-Sufism, <i>Tas}awwuf Akhla>qi></i>	Not explicitly identified	Emphasizing the balance of Shari'a and essence, <i>zuhd, tawadju</i>
K.H. Mufti bin Salim	Tas}awwuf <i>Akhlaqi></i> , Tas}awwuf 'Amali (based on the establishment of Salaf pesantren and teaching methods)	Not explicitly identified	Founder of Pesantren Ma'hadut Tholabah, pioneer of Yasinan Nisf Sha'ban, author of the book, <i>Akidah</i>
K.H. Abdullah Jamil	Not explicitly identified	Not explicitly identified	Combatant Kiai from Tarub Tegal
K.H. Isa Mufti	<i>Tas}awwuf Akhlaqi></i> , <i>Tas}awwuf Amali></i>	Not explicitly identified	Successor of the Pesantren leadership of Ma'hadut Tholabah

	(based on roles in Pesantrens)		
Ny. Hj. Khoiriyah Mufti	<i>Tasjawnuf Akhlaqi>, Tasjawnuf 'Amali></i> (based on roles in Pesantrens)	Not explicitly identified	Manager of the Pesantren Ma'hadut Tholabah, Female headquarters
K.H. Usman Zahid Tasawuf	<i>Tasjawnuf Akhlaqi></i> (focus on <i>zuhd</i> and <i>tawakkal</i>)	Not explicitly identified	Rejecting government intervention, living very simply
K.H. Hasyim Jamhari	<i>Tasjawnuf 'Amali>, Tariqa</i>	Murshid Tariqa Qadiriyya wa Naqshbandiyya (TQN)	Experiencing jadzab, emphasizing shari'a as the basis before Sufism
K.H. Zainal Arifin	<i>Tasjawnuf Akhlaqi>, Tasjawnuf 'Amali></i>	Not explicitly identified	Writing the book of <i>Tawhi>d, Al-I>ma>n</i> , making society aware of bad traditions

Based on the data above, we can analyze the scholarly chain of Sufis in Tegal during the 20th century, which shows a pattern dominated by the centrality of pesantren and the strength of kinship ties, reflecting a unique model of scientific transmission in the socio-geographical context of the region. Pesantren Ma'hadut Tholabah, under the leadership of K.H. Mufti bin Salim and his descendants, became the main node in the transmission of Sufism knowledge and the formation of religious communities. The established teacher-student relationship, as seen in K.H. Mufti bin Salim's study at Pesantren At-Tauhidiyah Giren, also suggests the existence of a strong local sanad, in line with research findings on ulama networks in other areas of Java, which emphasize the importance of genealogical scholarly relationships.³⁸

From the perspective of social network theory (SNA),³⁹ it can be seen that H. Mufti bin Salim occupies a position of high centrality because he has direct connections with many other nodes in the network, both through kinship and

³⁸ Mashuri Mashuri, "Bahrul Lahut Manuscripts In East Java: Study Of Philology And Reconstruction Of Tarekat Networks," *Teosofia: Indonesian Journal Of Islamic Mysticism* 9, No. 2 (2020): 227–50, <Https://Doi.Org/10.21580/Tos.V9i2.6826>.

³⁹ Natalia Sánchez-Arrieta et al., "Social Capital On Social Networking Sites: A Social Network Perspective," *Sustainability (Switzerland)* 13, No. 9 (2021): 1–35, <Https://Doi.Org/10.3390/Su13095147>.

teacher-student relationships. This concept aligns with Pierre Bourdieu's social capital theory, which emphasizes the significance of position in the social structure for the accumulation and conversion of various forms of capital.⁴⁰ Kinship ties in the Tegal Sufi ulama network reflect what Bourdieu calls bonding social capital, i.e., relationships that strengthen internal group cohesion. A study reveals that religious organizations utilize trust, social networks, and shared norms as mechanisms to foster relationships and mitigate intergroup conflict.⁴¹ A similar pattern is seen in the Tegal Sufi ulama network, where pesantren serve as a forum for consolidating and developing local social capital.

The typology of Sufi scholars identified in Tegal during this period tended to be dominated by *tasjawwuf akhlaqi* and *tasjawwuf 'amali*, reflecting what James Coleman calls functional social capital in the context of education and value transmission.⁴² This aligns with the nature of Nusantara Sufism, which tends to be practical and oriented towards character development and social engagement, in contrast to the more speculative *tasjawwuf falsafi* (philosophical sufism). Sufism scholars in Tegal, such as K.H. Mufti bin Salim, acted as cultural agents who were active in spreading the teachings of Islam through social activism and management of pesantren. Further, the involvement of figures such as K.H. Abdullah Jamil in religious and social organizations, including NU, demonstrates that Sufi scholars do not completely withdraw from social and political dynamics; instead, they contribute to the well-being of the people and the nation. This reflects the adaptation of Sufi scholars to social change and modernization in the 20th century, where they remain relevant by integrating spiritual dimensions with societal roles.

Moreover, Granovetter's theory⁴³ suggests that networks with strong ties tend to exhibit high cohesion, albeit with limited access to information.⁴⁴ The

⁴⁰ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique Of The Judgement Of Taste, Etika Jurnalisme Pada Koran Kuning : Sebuah Studi Mengenai Koran Lampu Hijau*, Vol. 16 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 18.

⁴¹ Gunawan Gunawan, "The Role Of Nahdlatul Ulama In Fostering Interfaith Harmony Through Social Capital In Palembang City," *Jurnal Sosiologi Usk (Media Pemikiran & Aplikasi)* 18, No. 2 (2024): 189–98, <https://doi.org/10.24815/jsu.v18i2.42449>.

⁴² Piotr Mikiewicz, "Social Capital And Education—An Attempt To Synthesize Conceptualization Arising From Various Theoretical Origins," *Cogent Education* 8, No. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186x.2021.1907956>.

⁴³ Mark S. Granovetter, "The Strength Of Weak Ties," *The Inequality Reader* 78, No. 6 (2019): 589–93, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429494468-61>.

⁴⁴ Agata Fronczak, Maciej J. Mrowinski, and Piotr Fronczak, "Scientific Success From The Perspective Of The Strength Of Weak Ties," *Scientific Reports* 12, No. 1 (2022): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-09118-8>.

Tegal Sufi ulama network exhibits the characteristics of a high-density network, characterized by the dominance of strong ties through kinship and intense teacher-student relationships. However, this also creates what Ronald Burt calls structural holes, namely, limited access to information and resources from external networks.⁴⁵ This pattern contrasts with the broader Nusantara network of Muslim Scholars, which often has strong global connections with the Middle East through what Granovetter refers to as weak ties. For Tegal, the focus appears to be more on consolidation and development at the local level, with the pesantren at its center, creating a strong yet relatively closed clustered network structure.

A recent study indicates that religious institutions in Indonesia are undergoing transformation in the digital era, where traditional social capital is intersecting with virtual social capital. In the context of Tegal Sufi ulama, this transformation is evident in the adaptation of *da'wa* and teaching methods that maintain traditional values while utilizing modern media. This phenomenon aligns with Bourdieu's theory of the convertibility of capital, which posits that social capital can be converted into other forms of capital in various contexts.⁴⁶

The network structure centered on pesantren and supported by strong kinship ties creates high community resilience. Research on social capital in disaster management in Indonesia reveals that communities with strong social ties exhibit a better adaptive capacity to external changes.⁴⁷ Research by Maulana and Wardah also confirms that strong social capital is a crucial mechanism in community resilience in the face of disasters; communities with dense social networks tend to recover more quickly and adaptively to external changes.⁴⁸ In the case of Tegal, this resilience is evident in the Sufi Scholars' ability to maintain scholarly traditions while adapting to the challenges of 20th-century modernization.

⁴⁵ Ronald S. Burt, "The Social Capital Of Structural Holes," *The New Economic Sociology: Developments In An Emerging Field*, 2005, 148–90, <Https://Doi.Org/10.1093/Oso/9780199249145.003.0002>.

⁴⁶ Andreas Roaldsnes, "Social Capital And The Intergenerational Transmission Of Cultural Capital: How Parents' Social Networks Influence Children's Accumulation Of Cultural Capital," *Poetics* 102, No. March (2024), <Https://Doi.Org/10.1016/J.Poetic.2024.101873>.

⁴⁷ Stefan Partelow, "Social Capital And Community Disaster Resilience: Post-Earthquake Tourism Recovery On Gili Trawangan, Indonesia," *Sustainability Science* 16, No. 1 (2021): 203–20, <Https://Doi.Org/10.1007/S11625-020-00854-2>.

⁴⁸ Ilham Nur Hanifan Maulana and Tasya Fiane Wardah, "Fostering Community Resilience Through Social Capital," *Journal Of Transformative Governance And Social Justice* 1, No. 1 (2023): 1–10, <Https://Doi.Org/10.26905/J-Tragos.V1i1.9229>.

Comparisons with related research in other regions of the Indonesian archipelago or Java show similarities in the role of Pesantrens as centers for the transmission of Sufism knowledge and practice.⁴⁹ However, Tegal's uniqueness lies in the dominance of strong local networks, which may be due to geographic factors or the historical development of Islam in the region. These networks and typologies collectively contribute to the religious identity of the Tegal community, forming a Muslim community deeply rooted in Sufism traditions that are applicable and relevant to everyday life. From a Social Capital Theory perspective, the Tegal Sufism network demonstrates a unique model of bridging classical tradition and modernity, with pesantrens acting as institutional entrepreneurs that facilitate the transmission of spiritual values while responding to contemporary social dynamics. This model significantly contributes to understanding how religious social capital can be effectively managed to maintain community cohesion in the face of the challenges of changing times.⁵⁰

Conclusion

The study concludes that Sufism's transmission in Tegal occurs through an interconnected chain of scholarship (*sanad*), involving a hierarchical network of Nusantara pesantren. This structure originates from key nodes in East and Central Java, such as Tebuireng and Lirboyo, establishing a strong scholarly chain for local ulama. Sufi ulama in Tegal typically practice Sufism by combining *shari'a*, *tariqa*, and *hajqi>qa* simultaneously, expressed in various typologies like ethical Sufism (*tasawwuf akhla>qi>*), practical Sufism (*tasawwuf 'ama>li>>*), and neo-Sufism. In Tegal, Sufism is characterized by a harmonization of dimensions, emphasizing the refinement of *shari'a* practices within socio-religious contexts rather than isolated mysticism. Yet, the study focuses on empirical historical data and maps the typologies of Tegal Sufi ulama in the 20th century, without delving into the specific ideas of Sufi Scholars. Further studies are needed to explore how Sufism is taught and practiced in Pesantrens.

⁴⁹ Aji Muhammad Iqbal et al., "Sufistic Curriculum Development Management At The Islamic Boarding School," *International Journal Of Islamic Educational Research* 2, No. 2 (2025): 9–18.

⁵⁰ Ahmad Munjin Nasih et al., "Islam And Culture In Southeast Asia: An Investigation Of The Acculturative Modes In Indonesia And Brunei," *The 4th Icssed, International Conference Of Social Science And Education*, 2021, 353–61, [Https://Doi.Org/10.2478/9788366675186-045](https://Doi.Org/10.2478/9788366675186-045).

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