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## REPRODUCING RELIGIOUS LEGITIMACY: SYMBOLIC POWER IN THE *HAUL* TRADITION

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**Abstract:** *Haul*, which is celebrated in various regions in Indonesia, is aimed at commemorating the death of Islamic scholars or figures considered to have contributed significantly in the society. In Indonesia, several *haul*(s) are held on a large scale and involve hundreds of thousands to millions people. For example, the *haul* of Abah Guru Sekumpul in Martapura, South Kalimantan, and the haul of Habib Ali bin Muhammad Al-Habsyi in Solo, Central Java. In rural areas, *haul*(s) are held in a simpler mean to commemorate local Islamic scholars. *Haul*(s) are usually organized by the heirs, although over time, initiatives for *haul*(s) have also emerged from outside the family circle. Predominantly, the *haul* tradition is closely intertwined with *pesantren* tradition. *Haul*, as its literal definition, becomes an annual agenda as done by Pesantren Al-Munawwir Krapyak, Yogyakarta, in memorizing its late founder, KH. Muhammad Munawwir. This Quranic scholar not only established the *pesantren* but also founded a network of Quranic scholar epistemology in Nusantara. Passing away in 1942, his *haul* celebration becomes increasingly massive each year. As a tradition, *haul* is seen more in terms of ritual or *da'wa* aspects. This paper aims to scrutinize the political context behind the *haul* tradition. By utilizing Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power, this paper argues that *haul* is an effort to produce religious legitimacy over time. Through a case study method on the commemoration of KH. Muhammad Munawwir's *haul*, this research shed light on power relations through the analysis of arenas, modalities, and habitus behind the tradition.

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Proceedings of International Conference on Muslim Society and Thought  
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**Keyword:** *haul*, *pesantren*, symbolic power, legitimacy, KH. M. Munawwir

## Background

In the traditional Nahdlatul Ulama Islamic boarding school environment (*pesantren*), *kiai* are spiritual leaders who are respected, even after death. One form of this respect is an annual commemoration called a *haul*. This event involves pilgrimages, prayers, and religious lectures. At Al-Munawwir Islamic Boarding School, Krapyak, Yogyakarta, the *haul* is the biggest event of the year, attracting thousands of people and Islamic boarding school alumni who come from various places. This *haul* requires huge costs, reaching tens of millions of rupiah. *Haul* has become a recurring tradition, interpreted as a way to seek blessings from the *kiai* which is considered sacred. However, there is criticism that *haul* is *bid'ah* or a worship practice that is not in religious guidance. Apart from religious and cultural aspects, the *haul* also has a political dimension that has escaped discussion. Respected *kiais* have authority based on inherited religious knowledge and charisma. After the *kiai*'s death, *haul* became a way to reproduce the *kiai*'s legitimacy and maintain his and his family's social status.

Starting from the thoughts above, this research wants to question how symbolic power works in the *haul* tradition of KH. M. Munawwir Krapyak Yogyakarta? This article argues that power relations in the *haul* tradition work subtly and symbolically, constructing society's image without realizing it. This research aims to understand the dynamics of symbolic power in the *haul* tradition.

## Literature Review

Research on *haul* is still limited, particularly from a political perspective. Existing writings usually include *haul* as a complementary in traditional Islamic theological discussions, such as the works of Greg Fealy and Greg Barton, Dennys Lombard, and Nurcholis Madjid. Fealy and Barton in "Nahdlatul Ulama, Traditional Islam and Modernity in Indonesia" (1996) explain *haul* as a respect and ritual of honoring scholars driven by a *taqlid* attitude or a action of following the opinion of a Islamic jurist or imam without having sufficient knowledge of the evidence or legal sources underlying it. Lombard in "Nusa Jawa Silang Budaya Jilid Dua" (2000) views *haul* as a consequence of the personal bond between *kiai* and students, similar to an annual reunion. Madjid

in “Bilik-bilik Pesantren” (1997) describes *haul* as a form of cultural acculturation of Islam with pre-Islamic Hinduism.

Two studies focusing on the *haul* of Kiai Nur Iman in Mlangi village, Yogyakarta, are Ahmad Fikri A.F.'s works (2002), which views *haul* as a contest of legitimacy for the descendants of Kiai Nur Iman, and research on oral literature in *haul*, which reaffirms the legend of Kiai Nur Iman through the recitation of *manaqib* (biography).

Studies on *haul* are still fragmented and often discussed from a religious or cultural perspective. This research seeks to fill this gap by focusing on *haul* as a central phenomenon and using a political function approach to complement existing perspectives.

### **Conceptual Framework**

This research uses Pierre Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power to understand the phenomenon of *haul*. Bourdieu (1991) defines symbolic power as the force that shapes reality and social order, making society accept reality as something natural. Symbolic power operates through given relations between individuals or groups, using discourse as a mediator. This power is only effective if recognized or legitimized, often operating unconsciously over several generations. Bourdieu associates symbolic power with genetic structuralism, which involves the concepts of habitus, field, and capital.

#### ***Habitus***

Habitus is a theory of practice at the core of genetic structuralism. It is a dialectical medium between subjective internal structure and objective external structure. Habitus is formed from the agent's experience by internalizing social structures, resulting in practices that shape the social world. Habitus has several key characteristics. First, it is practical or "embodied" in cognition rather than discursive. Second, it is pre-conscious, not a result of rational reflection, but rather a repeated spontaneity. Third, it is durable and adaptable, and passed down from generation to generation. Fourth, the product of habitus is specific social conditions that can be transferred to other social contexts. (Swartz, 1997; Kleden, 2005)

#### ***Field***

Social reality manifests as fields, semi-autonomous areas that form the social world. Fields are divided into homogeneous domains

such as artistic, journalistic, artistic, religious, or political fields. Each field operates with its own mechanisms, laws, and logics (Aunullah, 2006). This division occurs through a long historical process, where in modern societies, each domain has formed semi-autonomous fields.

### ***Capital***

Bourdieu views fields as "markets" where agents stake capital to maintain or improve their social position. (Bonnewitz, 1998 dalam Haryatmoko, 2003) Capital is accumulated work that allows agents to have social energy in the form of reified work or life. According to Bourdieu, there are four types of capital; economic capital of money and property, cultural capital such as cultural goods and services including educational qualifications, social capital of social networks, and a symbolic capital of legitimacy. (Swartz, 1997)

These concepts help understand how symbolic power works in *haul* traditions, explaining the power relations that shape and maintain the legitimacy of *keiai* and their social status through repeated and inherited practices.

### **Method**

The article uses case studies as a research method to understand the phenomenon of haul. Case studies are chosen because they can answer the "how" and "why" questions, provide broad control over events and behaviors, and allow exploration of contemporary events. This method combines various data collection techniques such as documents, interviews, and observations.

Primary data is obtained from in-depth interviews with actors involved in the implementation of haul and observations of the social structure of the community. Secondary data as a supporting argument is taken from documents related to haul, literature studies, and relevant articles.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### ***Pesantren as a Cultural Arena***

The *haul* of KH. M. Munawwir is not only unique but also shares a spirit of respect with many other haul traditions. To understand this *haul* deeply, it is necessary to view *pesantren* as an arena where habitus is formed and symbolic power operates.

According to Bourdieu, a field is a realm of struggle for controlling essential resources for legitimacy, differing from the concept of institution by Goffman, Althusser, or Foucault. In a field,

agents agree on the value of the game (*illusio*) and the fundamental rules of the game (*doxa*). In this context, *pesantren* is understood as a broader culture or tradition, not just an institution.

PP. Al-Munawwir was established by KH. M. Munawwir in 1911 after he studied in Makkah and Madinah for eleven years. The initial focus of this *pesantren* was Quranic learning, later supplemented with the study of yellow books according to *salaf* traditions. After KH. M. Munawwir's death, leadership passed to his son-in-law, KH. Ali Maksum, who expanded and developed the *pesantren* to be more diverse and massive. (As'ad, 2011)

The tradition of *haul* as a major tradition among *pesantren* is shaped by the *pesantren's* mindset. To understand this *haul* tradition, one must grasp the unique philosophy of *pesantren* knowledge. Abdurrahman Wahid (2001) describes *pesantren* as a subculture with three elements: independent leadership patterns, preserved universal literature, and a value system different from the general public.

*Kiai* is considered to have charismatic authority due to their piety, high religious knowledge, and leadership. *Santri*, derived from the Sanskrit word "satri" meaning literate, is a class of literacy that learns together in *pesantren* under the guidance of *kiai*. *Kiai* and *santri* are connected in activities of studying religion using Arabic or learning from *kiai* who have performed the Hajj.

Knowledge in *pesantren* comes from the Quran and Hadith, explored through scholars as intermediaries. This exploration of knowledge demands practical application, making the *pesantren* culture always intersect with practice. The *pesantren* system is based on the doctrine of "blessing" or "barakah" emanating from the *kiai* to their students, demanding complete obedience to the teacher's orders.

Reverence towards the *kiai* appears in behaviors such as preparing sandals, drinking the teacher's leftover water, and honoring the teacher after death with visits and *haul* celebrations. The *haul* tradition, which is systematic and durable, becomes an effort to reproduce legitimacy by the descendants of KH. M. Munawwir, who consistently hold it annually. *Haul* becomes a stage to affirm the identity of KH. M. Munawwir's heirs, reinforce symbolic power relations, and perpetuate the dominant position of the *kiai* family within the *pesantren* arena.

The *haul* of KH. M. Munawwir is not only a tradition of respect but also a complex mechanism in the *pesantren* arena that creates and

perpetuates symbolic power. With a deep understanding of the philosophy of *pesantren* knowledge, the role of *kiai* and *santri*, and the *haul* tradition, we can see how symbolic power works effectively, creating lasting meanings and consolidating the dominant position of the *kiai* family in the *pesantren* social structure.

### ***KH. M. Munawwir and Capital Structure***

This section discusses Bourdieu's concept of capital, which involves various forms of power used to win social contests. Capital consists of economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capitals. Symbolic capital, which is the accumulation of other capitals, plays a crucial role in the strategy of perpetuating domination through symbolic power. The analysis focuses on KH. M. Munawwir, a famous scholar from Yogyakarta who is the subject of the *haul*. This analysis looks at how these forms of capital affect the *haul* tradition.

KH. M. Munawwir, born in the late 19th century in Yogyakarta, was known as a Quran expert and founder of Pondok Pesantren Krapyak. From an early age, he was directed by his family with a high religious background to memorize the Quran. KH. M. Munawwir studied in Makkah and Madinah for eleven years, memorizing the Quran and qiraah sab'ah. After returning to Indonesia, he established Pondok Pesantren Krapyak in 1910 in Dusun Krapyak, Yogyakarta, to teach the Quran. This *pesantren* grew rapidly and became a center of Quranic education in Indonesia.

KH. M. Munawwir's cultural capital lies in his possession of a Quranic *sanad* up to the Prophet Muhammad, making him a highly respected scholar. His expertise in the Quran, including memorizing *qiraah sab'ah*, enhanced his social status in the religious community. Economic capital, although not as significant as cultural capital, is evident from the facilities of Pondok Pesantren Krapyak, which was built and developed to support Quranic education. The *pesantren* grew rapidly, creating many *santri* and establishing various educational programs.

The tradition of traveling for knowledge to Haramain began in the 19th century. This was driven by transportation advancements and Dutch colonial government permits for performing Hajj. Many students from Indonesia began sending their children to the Middle East for study, and KH. M. Munawwir is an example of success from this tradition.

KH. M. Munawwir, who passed away over seven decades ago, left behind a legacy that is now in the hands of the third generation of his family. The annual commemoration (*haul*) of his death has become a deeply ingrained tradition in the Pesantren Al-Munawwir, held on the 11th of Jumadal Akhirah according to the Hijri calendar. This event is meticulously prepared weeks in advance, with the process becoming a well-established habit, reflecting Bourdieu's concept of habitus, where practices become embodied and automatic.

The preparation for the *haul* involves a systematic coordination led by the family of KH. M. Munawwir, with significant contributions from *santri* and the local community. Initially, the *santri* were only responsible for the technical execution based on the family's guidelines, but over time, they have gained more trust and are now involved in the conceptualization and planning of the event. This division of labor between the younger generation (*santri*) and the older generation (family and alumni) highlights a blend of tradition and innovation.

Community involvement remains a crucial aspect of the *haul*, though participation has declined over time due to societal changes. The organizing committee includes local residents, who are assigned specific roles such as security and hospitality. The consistent participation of community members, often across generations, demonstrates the transposable nature of this cooperative habitus. This pattern of collaboration extends beyond the haul, influencing other events organized by the *pesantren*, further embedding these practices into the community's social fabric. Despite changes over time, the *haul* of KH. M. Munawwir continues to be a significant event, sustaining the legacy and values he left behind.

The event includes various pre-*haul* activities, such as the Burdah recitation, Quran readings (*sima'an*), alumni gatherings, and a grand pilgrimage (*ziarah akbar*). The Burdah is recited by students and teachers, emphasizing the unity of the Krapyak community. The 77th haul in 2016 also included the recitation of KH. M. Munawwir's biography (*manaqib*), highlighting his life and legacy. The pre-haul activities culminate in the *ziarah akbar*, symbolizing the connection between students and their teachers. The main *haul* ceremony features the graduation of Quran memorizers (*khatmil quran*) and tahlil prayers, reaffirming the spiritual and educational heritage of KH. M. Munawwir, with his descendants playing a significant role in the proceedings. The event concludes with a religious lecture (*mauidhoh*)

*hasanah*), reinforcing the importance of KH. M. Munawwir's teachings on Quranic knowledge.

The *haul* of KH. M. Munawwir was attended by thousands of people, often referred to as *muhibbin* (devotees or admirers) Marnak and his wife, originally from Tasikmalaya, relocated to Yogyakarta in 2000. As devoted Muslims, they sought spiritual nourishment through religious studies, reflecting their routine back in their hometown. However, they found the religious gatherings in Yogyakarta unsatisfactory compared to the ones they were used to, especially the lack of communal *sholawat* (praises of the Prophet). Their search for spiritual fulfillment led them to the *sholawat majelis* gatherings led by Habib Syekh and other religious circles in the city, eventually joining *majelis* like Qolbussalim, Birrul Walidain, and Bil Musthofa at Krapyak. These *majelis* helped them reconnect with their traditions and offered a sense of belonging.

Their devotion to these *majelis* was unwavering. At Birrul Walidain, they participated in various *pengajian* (religious study sessions) five times a week. Similarly, they never missed the weekly *sholawat* sessions at Krapyak's Bil Musthofa. Over time, their engagement with these *majelis* grew, and they became key participants in organizing and leading their community to these gatherings, often filling a bus with fellow worshippers.

Their dedication to religious gatherings also extended to *haul* events, especially those honoring prominent religious figures like KH. M. Munawwir. Although Marnak's responsibilities as a mosque caretaker sometimes conflicted with these events, he and his wife remained committed, believing that these gatherings brought them spiritual blessings and peace. Their participation in these *majelis* and *haul* strengthened their emotional and spiritual ties to the Krapyak community, which became an essential part of their lives.

In addition to Marnak and his wife, others, like Asti, a graduate student, and Sugeng, a villager from Kulonprogo, also became regular attendees at these *majelis* and *haul* events. Each found personal and spiritual growth through these experiences, contributing to the continuity and cultural preservation of the religious practices in the Krapyak area. For all involved, these gatherings offered a sense of belonging, spiritual enrichment, and a connection to a broader religious tradition that shaped their lives and identities.

## Conclusion

With a combination of cultural, economic, and symbolic capitals, KH. M. Munawwir not only maintained but also developed the Quranic knowledge tradition, leaving a significant impact on Indonesian Islamic education. His legacy continues through the *haul* tradition, which perpetuates his symbolic power and the *pesantren's* authority in the social field.

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## Interviews

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Kunaini, Head of Krapyak Hamlet, on February 10, 2016

Mujiyo, Chairman of RT 06 Krapyak, on February 12, 2016

Sakir, Chairman of RT 05 Krapyak, on February 12, 2016

Ustadz As'ad Syamsul Arifin, Chairman of PP. Al-Munawwir Krapyak, on February 29, 2016

Ahmad Kharis, Chairman of the Haul KH. M. Munawwir 77th Committee, on March 2, 2016

Asti, Member of the Sholawat Bil Musthofa Congregation, on March 16, 2016

Sugeng, Member of the Haul KH. M. Munawwir 77th Congregation, on March 29, 2016

Marnak, Member of the Sholawat Bil Musthofa Congregation, on April 1, 2016