

The Use of Magic in the Village Head Election in Tidore Islands City Indonesia

Irham Rosyidi,¹ Fatma Faisal,² Mahmud Hi Umar,³ Jan Alizea Sybelle,⁴ M Junaidi⁵

^{1,2,3}Faculty of Law, Universitas Khairun Ternate, Ternate, Indonesia

⁴Stellenbosch University, Matie Land, Stellenbosch, South Africa

⁵Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Surakarta, Indonesia

mj122@ums.ac.id

Abstract

In Indonesia, the Village Head Election is the implementation of people's sovereignty to choose village heads in a direct, public, free, confidential, honest, and just manner as stated in Regulation of the Minister of Internal Affairs No. 27 of 2020. This paper aims to analyze deviant behavior in the Village Head Elections that may bring harm to other people that involve the role of supernatural beings committed by Village Head Election participants. The importance of learning magic for the Village Head Election includes: (1) to influence the opinion of society who have suffrage rights; (2) to manipulate the obtainment of votes; (3) to make other Village Head Election participants die and/or sick; and (4) to influence the opinion of Village Head Election organizers. This paper employed the juridical empirical research method in the field of the legal anthropology scientific discipline. It used the behavioral approach. This paper aims to understand how mystical practices may influence election results that should ideally be carried out in a just and honest manner as well as to increase awareness of the risk of unethical behavior in the election process. Results showed that mystical things are always closely related to the culture of the Indonesian nation from era to era, including in its political culture. It can be seen that in every leadership of national figures, mystical activities are practiced. Contestants will visit shamans by sending voodoo to their political opponents so that they can win the political contestation. Apart from that, there are those who carry out rituals that are believed to be effective as a way to win the contestation in the political realm. The novelty of this research is that authors not only analyze the magical aspect of the Village Head Elections but also how magic is believed and implemented at the national level. The implication of this case is that it is rather difficult to prove magical cases. Thus, it leads to the occurrence of widespread suspicion among all parties.

Keywords: *Indonesia; Role; Supernatural; Village Head Election*

1. INTRODUCTION

The democratic system in Indonesia places the changing process of leadership in a civilized manner through the general elections. It is the most prominent and crucial thing in establishing a stately life. Even, Miriam Budiardjo as cited by Ahmad argued that in most democratic countries, the general election is one of the symbols and benchmarks of the democracy's implementation.¹ The democratic succession of leadership will lead to the creation of a relatively stable state administration establishment as compared to a succession of leadership through revolutions or violence.² On the other hand, general elections function to give the widest possible opportunity for society to choose a leader based on their votes.

The organization of general elections becomes a benchmark on how far the stately life order is maneuvered within the tracks of people's sovereignty and democracy. The democratic party in villages, i.e., the Village Head Elections is one of the forms of political

¹ Ahmad Ahmad and Novendri M. Nggilu, "Denyut Nadi Amandemen Kelima UUD 1945 Melalui Pelibatan Mahkamah Konstitusi Sebagai Prinsip the Guardian of the Constitution," *Jurnal Konstitusi* 16, no. 4 (2020): 785–808, <https://doi.org/10.31078/jk1646>.

² Ludger Helms, "Leadership Succession in Politics: The Democracy/Autocracy Divide Revisited," *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 22, no. 2 (2020): 328–46, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148120908528>.

democracy development that starts at the local level (villages) in Indonesia. Village Head Elections is also an event that is a part of the General Election practice that is organized to choose a Village Head candidate.³

One of its uniqueness is society's belief in the use of supernatural beings' roles. They believe that the victory in Village Head Elections can be seen from the signs of who is approved by supernatural beings who are believed to hold supernatural power that can bring a person to hold the position of power as the Village Head. Society's beliefs in supernatural powers and magical practices have existed for a long time. In this case, O'Keefe⁴ opined that magic cannot only be found in the Stone Age and among primitive societies. In this case, Malinowski as quoted by Hobson et al.⁵ argued that magic can develop a belief and trust in uncertain situations. Magic's negative impact is that it damages the trust between societal members considering that it is difficult to prove its perpetrator. Without a clear method to prove the perpetrator of magic, it brings a great implication that anyone can accuse other people and anyone can be suspected. An elected candidate may become illegitimate in the eyes of the public as people may regard that he/she won in a dishonest manner through magic. Another impact is that people with bad intentions can spread slander that their political opponents used magic, causing the decreasing popularity of the opposition village head candidate.

This research's state of the art refers to previous research. One previous research is that discussed the role of supernatural beings' usage in Village Head Elections was Yanuardi research. This paper also refers to and analyzes supernatural things and their relationship with the implementation of democracy, corruption, and politics in Indonesia.⁶ The differentiation with this research is that Yanuardi's research did not refer to any specific places. However, it was general research. The advantage of this research is that this research refers to specific places. Thus, it filled the research gap of previous research which, as general research, failed to refer to a specific place.

Humaeni⁷ in her research found that the village head election process should be carried out under democratic principles and that high respect for the aspects of honesty and justice has been defiled with magical practices. These magical practices are used by candidates to achieve victory in the village head elections. It was found that most village head candidates (although not all of them) use the magical skills of magical experts such as *kiai* (a Javanese term for a respected person or figure, especially religious figures), wisemen, shamans, and spiritual guides (i.e., people who have magical skills) in the village

³ Fence M. Wantu and Abdul Hamid Tome, "Dynamics of Village Head Election Arrangements," *Jambura Law Review* 3, no. Special Issue (2021): 96–116, <https://doi.org/10.33756/jlr.v3i0.8783>.

⁴ R. D. O'Keefe, "Innovative Attitudes, Values, and Intentions in Organizations," *Journal of Management Studies*, Wiley Blackwell 19, no. 2 (1982): 163–82, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.1982.tb00066.x>.

⁵ N. M. Hobson et al., "The Psychology of Rituals: An Integrative Review and Process-Based Framework," *Perspective on Socio Psychological Review* 3, no. 2 (2018): 260–84, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868317734944>.

⁶ Yanuardi Syukur, "Democracy, Corruption and the Politics of Spirits in Contemporary Indonesia," *Muslim Politics Review* 2, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.56529/mpr.v2i2.207>.

⁷ A. Humaeni, "Ritual, Kepercayaan Lokal Dan Identitas Budaya Masyarakat Ciomas Banten," *Jurnal El Harakah* 17, no. 2 (2015), <https://doi.org/10.18860/el.v17i2.3343>.

head election process. The differentiation was that Humaeni's research was conducted in villages on Java Island, Indonesia. Meanwhile, this research was conducted in North Maluku villages. The advantage of the authors' research was that it provided the information that in Eastern Indonesia (including North Maluku), magic for political purposes is the same as that in Java. However, this research is rare and it filled the research gap as previous research was conducted in Java.

Gunadi⁸ conducted research on the *pulung* tradition in the village head elections in Kramat Village, Bungah District, Gresik Regency, East Java Province, Indonesia. It was found that before the event of the Village head elections or the change to a new village head, Kramat villagers believed that a mystical event called *pulung* would happen. *Pulung* is a goldish-green ball that floats in the sky. They believe that if the *pulung* falls on the house of one of the village head candidates, that person will become the new village head. According to Kramat villagers, *pulung* is a blessing and a benediction for the recipient. *Pulung* is believed to be able to increase the degree of those who obtain it, bring unexpected wealth, maintain familial harmony, etc. The difference between this research and Gunadi's was that Gunadi studied the natural magic phenomenon among village head candidates. Meanwhile, this research studied black magic conducted by candidates. This research's advantage was that it provided information on the candidate's participation in magic to win the election.

The uniqueness of the author's research that has not been answered in previous research is that in Ternate, magic is not merely carried out with the goal of winning the general election. However, magic is also carried out with destructive goals, namely harming or hurting other candidates who participate in the election. The urgency of this research is that the village's democracy is threatened by magical practices. This is because if a candidate suddenly falls ill or if their family members become victims of accidents, the issue of magic will spread among society. Thus, the rest of the candidates will accuse each other or become the suspect. Family members of the candidate who fell ill or who became a victim of an accident often give vengeance in a physical manner. This often leads to an open conflict. Therefore, there needs to be clear efforts to protect the value of democracy and a more just local governance.

The urgency of this research is that there is a threat to the village's democratic process. There is also the risk of manipulation in the general election due to mystical practices. The urgency of this research may be linked to the effort to protect the value of democracy and just governance at the local level. Therefore, based on the background above, this paper aims to analyze the use of magic in the village head election process in Tidore Islands, Indonesia. The urgency of this research is that it will profoundly analyze the village head elections, especially in Tidore Islands City, which uses the role of supernatural beings. It is a strange and highly unique thing that truly happens in society which may

⁸ Gunadi Gunadi, "Tradisi Pulung Pada Pemilihan Kepala Desa Di Desa Kramat Kecamatan Bungah Kabupaten Gresik (Studi Tentang Antropologi Politik)" (UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 1995), <https://digilib.uinsa.ac.id/27119/>.

potentially become a source of widespread suspicion that influences public trust. This research was part of the legal anthropology science cluster which used the behavioral approach. The problems of this research are as follows: (1) Do participants of the Village Head Elections in Tidore Islands City use the role of supernatural beings to reach victory? and (2) What are the forms of deviant behavior committed by village head election participants involving the role of supernatural beings?

As for the general objective, this paper aims to analyze: (1) The effect of the village head election participants' usage of supernatural beings' role to achieve victory in Tidore Islands City and (2) The forms of deviative behavior committed by village head election participants that involve the role of supernatural beings. Then, the special objective of this paper is to encourage democratic village head elections that uphold the values of honesty and justice. This research needs to be continued due to its unique theme, apart from the sociological factor that happens in this case. This research was a pioneering study that requires further research from a different perspective or at a different location. This paper provides novelty and it is hoped to contribute to the development of legal studies, especially related to issues on village head elections. The novelty of this research is that researchers added a study on trust or the use of magic at the peak level of leadership in Indonesia. This proves that the application of magic is one of the findings that is aligned between the central level and regional levels of governance. The usage of magic certainly has implications for the values of democracy (such as justice, honesty, and political stability) in the Tidore local society, which will further be discussed in the research results.

2. METHOD

This paper employed the juridical empiric research method⁹ which functioned to see the law in its real situation. It also analyzed and reviewed how the law works in the societal environment. The juridical empiric research is also research that studies legal identification and studies on legal effectiveness.¹⁰ How the law works in society can be analyzed from the level of legal effectiveness, legal compliance, the role of legal institutions in law enforcement, the implementation of legal regulations, the influence of legal regulations on certain social issues and vice versa, as well as the influence of social issues on legal regulations.¹¹

This paper was conducted in Tidore Islands City, Indonesia, especially in North Oba District, Central Oba District, Oba District, and South Oba District. This paper utilized two types of data, namely primary data and secondary data. The primary data were sourced from the field. The researchers obtained them from interviewed respondents, informants, or interviewees who were directly related to the analyzed issue. Then, the authors also used secondary data, which were in the form of documents that supported the research.

⁹ Khudzaifah Dimiyati and Kelik Wardiono, *Metode Penelitian Hukum* (Surakarta: Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, 2004).

¹⁰ Kelik Wardiono, "Prophetic: An Epistemological Offer for Legal Studies," *Journal of Transcendental Law* 1, no. 1 (2019): 17–41, <https://doi.org/10.23917/jtl.v1i1.8797>.

¹¹ Sholahuddin Al Fatih, *Perkembangan Metode Penelitian Hukum Di Indonesia* (Malang: UMM Press, 2023).

To collect the data, the authors first looked for data on the participants of the Village Head Elections in 2021 to the Tidore Islands City Government. The next step was spreading questionnaires with closed questions to the Village Head Election participants who were chosen as samples (the population of six villages). Apart from that, the researchers also collected related scientific journals, legal regulations, literature, documents, as well as websites that were related to the analyzed issue. The authors sought literary materials that were relevant to this research, both in the form of books and media. Then, the authors analyzed the obtained data, i.e., the primary data and secondary data. These data were qualitatively analyzed using the theories that were relevant to the analyzed issue. Lastly, the authors drew a conclusion.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Leadership Mysticism in Indonesia

The belief in the supernatural realm and magical practices can be found in various Indonesian territories, such as Java. In this case, O'Keefe¹² argued that magical practices can be found almost anytime, in almost any society, and at almost any place. They are not limited to be found only in the Stone Age era and among primitive communities.

According to Barokah¹³ the belief on sacred and supernatural things demand special treatment. Therefore, there are various methods of treatment of sacred things. It is often that ceremonies, offerings, sacrifices, and other forms of rituals cannot be economically, rationally, or pragmatically understood. They are carried out as efforts to persuade those who are deemed sacred and supernaturally powerful. Thus, the treatment towards them cannot be juxtaposed with that of common or profane things. On one hand, when handling them, there are certain rules that must be complied with. On the other hand, there are prohibitions and taboos that must be avoided.¹⁴

The political current of each president's era of leadership in Indonesia has a strong bond with mystical or magical powers. If one analyzes the history of leadership in Indonesia, it can be concluded that many leaders of the Indonesian nation carry out mystical traditions.¹⁵ Mystical in this case does not always refer to a negative thing. Rather, it is a tradition or a belief that is not always believed by all people due to its hidden activities.¹⁶

Indonesian presidents who carried out mystical traditions are those who originate from Java, namely Soekarno, Soeharto, Abdurrahman Wahid, Megawati Soekarno Putri, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, up to Joko Widodo (Indonesia's first, second, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh presidents respectively). The third president, B. J. Habibie was not of Javanese

¹² O'Keefe, "Innovative Attitudes, Values, and Intentions in Organizations."

¹³ F. Barokah, "Mistisisme Politik: Eksistensi Magis Dalam Perpolitikan Indonesia," *JIIP: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pemerintahan* 8, no. 1 (2023): 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.14710/jiip.v8i1.13275>.

¹⁴ A. Humaeni, "Ritual, Kepercayaan Lokal Dan Identitas Budaya Masyarakat Ciomas Banten," *Jurnal El Harakah* 17, no. 2 (2015), <https://doi.org/10.18860/el.v17i2.3343>.

¹⁵ A. Chalik, "Sintesis Mistik Dalam Kepemimpinan Politik Jawa," *JRP (Jurnal Review Politik)* 5, no. 2 (2015): 254–278, <https://doi.org/10.15642/jrp.2015.5.2.254-278>.

¹⁶ Della Aura Novitasari, "Perubahan Bentuk Relasi Dukun Dan Masyarakat Desa Ranggeh, Kabupaten Pasuruan," *Kusa Lawa* 1, no. 2 (2021): 95–104, <https://doi.org/10.21776/ub.kusalawa.2021.001.02.07>.

culture). They were believed and were proven to have carried out mystical activities during their leadership.¹⁷

For instance, it is suspected that President Soeharto (Indonesia's second president) often meditates in haunted locations to seek “*wahyu keprabon*.” In the Javanese leadership mysticism, “*wahyu keprabon*” is the appointment of a leader by God.¹⁸ Soeharto also visited places that were deemed sacred to absorb energies from the past. This president who reigned over Indonesia for 32 years was believed to have carried out ancient teachings, such as fasting, organizing feasts during certain periods, and visiting places that were deemed to have supernatural powers.

President Soeharto also highly believed in the thick mysticism of rural Java. It is a belief/supernatural knowledge that only acknowledges Islam in an exoteric form and that religious laws only have a small power. In this realm, Soeharto finds spiritual peace, which can explain his calm leadership style that lasted for decades. Metaphysics is something that is beyond the physical realm. It is the study of non-physical things or things beyond the real, observable realm. Its objective is to understand science by seeking the object of that science.¹⁹ This paper focuses on two mystical powers, namely transcendence (God) and occultism (mysticism) which will be described in detail below

Mistitisme lay before Soekarno proclaimed Indonesia's independence, he first all visited the graves of Javanese kings in the Mamenang (East Java) area, which was the hermitage of Prabu Jayabaya. During his leadership, President Soekarno carried out efforts to mobilize power through mantras. Ancient chronicles have a special position in President Soekarno's heart. Apart from that, several ceremonies and rituals were clearly shown in *wayang* (Javanese shadow puppet) shows in the Presidential Palace with actors that were directly chosen by the president. In facing the issue of West Irian/Papua during the 1960s, Soekarno, who was the son of Ida Ayu Nyoman Rai and Soekemi Sosrodiharjo, involved various mystical figures and groups in the campaign to seize West Irian from the hands of the Dutch colonials. Another highly prominent thing was the establishment of a modern *lingga* (classical ancestral statue that was worshipped by Hinduists) in the form of the National Monument (*Monumen Nasional/Monas*) in Jakarta.²⁰

Then, according to the witness of Daud Tony²¹ in his book, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (popularly referred to by his initials “SBY”, Indonesia's sixth president) asked his wife for help to repel “*santet*” (Indonesian voodoo, which is a harmful type of magic) from a popular shaman from India. Another national-scale mysticism is that no Indonesian president has the courage to visit Kediri City, East Java, Indonesia. This was shown by the

¹⁷ Barokah, “Mistisisme Politik: Eksistensi Magis Dalam Perpolitikan Indonesia.”

¹⁸ Bahaudin, “Mistik Dan Politik: Praktek Perdukunan Dalam Politik Indonesia,” *Jurnal Keamanan Nasional* 1, no. 3 (2015): 365–386.

¹⁹ Barokah, “Mistisisme Politik: Eksistensi Magis Dalam Perpolitikan Indonesia.”

²⁰ Ratih Tyas Arini, Moh. Yasir Alimi, and Gunawan Gunawan, “The Role of Dukun Suwuk and Dukun Prewangan in Curing Diseases in Kediri Community,” *Komunitas: International Journal of Indonesian Community and Culture* 8, no. 2 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.15294/komunitas.v8i2.4461>.

²¹ Daud Tony, *Dunia Santet* (Jakarta: Penerbit Betlehem, 2009).

fact that Soekarno, Soeharto, Habibie, Megawati, and Joko Widodo never visited this place. There is a myth in Javanese mysticism that if a head of the state (sultan, president, or prime minister, for instance), visits Kediri City, he/she will immediately lose his/her power. This myth was also deemed to be true as after visiting Kediri, Abdurrahman Wahid fell from power in the middle of his ruling period. Then, when visiting Kelud volcano victims, SBY did not pass through Kediri, but he went through Blitar. He only had the courage to visit Kediri after his ruling period ended. The mystical belief that a ruler who has the courage to visit Kediri during his/her serving period will fall from his/her position is one of the types of Javanese mystical leadership.²²

This mysticism brings consequences to policies, that an Indonesian president will not feel safe enough with merely the physical escort from the presidential escort team. However, each president has special “escorts” for mystical things, such as what was written by Daud Tony. Another president who was known to have a line of mystical escorts was President Soeharto with Humardhani where in situations apart from the general election, the escort for mystical affairs will prepare spiritual needs.²³

Such mystical beliefs certainly influence the scope of policies, as Indonesian presidents do not want to carry out work visits to Kediri as they fear losing their power. Another policy is that presidents are surrounded by spiritual and magical teams to obtain protection from mystical things rather than merely having a presidential escort team that protects them from physical attacks. Irrational policies also happen due to mystical influences that are believed to bring good or bad influences in their power.

The relationship between these mystical politics and the values of democracy as well as how society accepts or criticizes the leadership using mystical approaches may be said as a confusing process. National political leaders (even those who were elected through democracy-based general elections) will certainly not admit that they believe in or use mysticism. Thus, they are not massively attacked with criticisms. However, some news spread that the public deemed as accurate, such as the (suspected) unwillingness of Indonesian presidents to visit Kediri or mystical news on spiritual (mystical) escorts of each president or political leader. Much of society believes that mysticism has a role in “strengthening” political leadership but they stay quiet. Then, they will choose leadership candidates that in their opinion obtained “*wahyu keprabon*”.

Politicians carry out many things when visiting *ulama* (Islamic scholars) and *kiai*. For instance, they seek approval or ask for prayers. Even, they ask for political support so that they may win in the political contestation. In this case, *kiai* becomes an important figure in political metaphysics. In Indonesian society, *kiai* holds the top leader position with great authority in various aspects of the societal life. This is because traditionally, societal

²² Suwardi Endaswara, “Falsafah Kepemimpinan Jawa,” UNY, 2019.

²³ Anonymous, *Mysticism, Related to the Rise and Fall of Soeharto* (Jakarta: Pustaka Pusat, 1998).

members link themselves to spiritual or mystic ethos, where each aspect of Javanese people's lives contains spiritual meaning or sense.²⁴

The role of *kiai* does not only have a religious characteristic *and sich*. However, they also have the role of offering things related to the agenda of society's socio-religious changes to the people.²⁵ In general, they are effective decision-makers in the social life system of the Javanese people. They are effective not only in the religious aspect but also in facing political issues.

Concerning the relationship between *kiai* and politics, Mohammad²⁶ explained that *kiai* are religious as well as political figures. They have played this dualistic role very well from decades ago up to now. *Kiai* currently has an important role in society's lives and they are highly used in Indonesia's political realm. Many candidates ask for the support of *kiai* in participating in political contestations. They believe that the *kiai* can provide the best solutions that are faced in society's lives.

According to Mawardi²⁷, *kiai* can be divided into four categories, namely *pesantren kiai*, *tarekat kiai* (*kiai* who have carried out ways to get close to God), political *kiai*, and stage *kiai*. *Kiai* were the ones who spread and developed Islam through Islamic missionary activities (*da'wa*). Mawardi argued that the *kiai* that can accept the existence of politics are categorized as political *kiai*. This type of *kiai* can be categorized into the mixed category. This refers to the *kiai* who are concerned over the political development of Nadlatul Ulama's teachings (Nadlatul Ulama or NU is Indonesia's largest Muslim organization). For a long time, the development of NU has been managed by this *kiai* category that does not have followers, unlike other *kiai*.²⁸

In another aspect, the *kiai* also has a crucial role in the *pesantren* environment. The word *pesantren* originates from the word *santri* (Islamic boarding school students), the prefix *pe-*, and the suffix *-an*. This word means the *santri*'s residential place. The *pesantren* has a special characteristic compared to other educational institutions, as the *santri* or students live with their *kiai* or teachers in a certain complex that is independently bound.²⁹

According to the perspective of Ziemek as quoted by Muali et al,³⁰ there needs to be a separate analysis of *pesantren*'s religious educational function and its function in

²⁴ Indra Setia Bakti, Alwi Alwi, and Saifullah Saifullah, "Eksistensi Dukun Di Tanah Gayo," *Jurnal Sosiologi USK* 12, no. 2 (2018), <https://jurnal.usk.ac.id/JSU/article/view/12599>.

²⁵ M. I. Malik, "Peran Kiai Sebagai Tokoh Sentral Dalam Masyarakat Desa Tieng Kejajar Wonosobo," *QuranicEdu: Journal of Islamic Education* 2, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.37252/quranicedu.v2i2.355>.

²⁶ M. Hidayatullah and S. Sudarman, "Kiai and Political Relations Reconciling Politics and Religion in Indonesia," *Al-Tahrir: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 18, no. 2 (2019): 371–94, <https://doi.org/10.21154/altahrir.v18i2.1384>.

²⁷ M. Mawardi, "Persepsi Masyarakat Terhadap Peran Kiai Di Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta," *Jurnal Analisa* 20, no. 2 (2013): 133–43, <https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/42016-ID-public-perception-on-the-role-of-kiai-in-yogyakarta.pdf>.

²⁸ Mawardi.

²⁹ Z. T. A. Rohim, "Pesantren Dan Politik (Sinergi Pendidikan Pesantren Dan Kepemimpinan Dalam Pandangan KH. M. Hasyim Asy'ari)," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam (Journal of Islamic Education Studies)* 3, no. 2 (2015): 323–45, <https://doi.org/10.15642/jpai.2015.3.2.323-345>.

³⁰ C. Muali et al., "The Role of Sufistic-Based Kiai Leadership in Developing the Character of Santri in the Pesantren," *Al Ishlah* 3, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v13i3.1012>.

environmental development. The centralization of *kiai*'s leadership and the *santri* has a great influence on the dynamics of the diverse, social, and political lives.³¹ This was according to the opinion of Geertz as quoted by Susan,³² who stated that the religious tradition that was formed by *santri* and *kiai* has influences on society's order in the religious, political, and social aspects.

Dhofier as quoted by Mujahid argued that the *kiai* are an absolute source of power and authority in the life and environment of *pesantren*.³³ There is a culture that is attached to *pesantren*, i.e., the *tadzim* culture, which is a total respect for the *kiai*. This culture encompasses almost all facets of the *santri*'s lives, including in the aspect of political choice. The *santri* regard that *kiai*'s political choices are more trusted in giving the best decision for their *santri*.

Kiai and *santri* are an inseparable unit, as the former exists due to the latter and vice versa. However, the *Kiai* and *santri* are currently used as a targeting point of politicians in building a political support basis. In every General Election, the voice of the *kiai* and *santri* are always fought for by various parties. They are not only fought for by Islam-based political parties but are also targeted by nationalist-based political parties.

Thus, *pesantren* is always located in the current attraction vortex of political interests. Many political parties or politicians carry out political visits to influential *pesantren* in various areas to gain political support. The relationship between *Kiai* and *santri* are not only limited to the religious, social, and moral aspects. There is also a relationship between them in the political aspect. This can be seen from the fact that the *kiai* does not only have the role to shift and give religious understanding in *pesantren*. However, the *kiai* are admired, complied with, respected, and idolized. They become the source of scientific knowledge and guidance for the *santri* and are the figures the *santri* depend on.³⁴

Mysticism still occurs at the political leadership level even though Indonesia has experienced modernization. Theoretically, even though Indonesian leaders are known to be well-educated people (Soekarno was an engineer, Soeharto was a graduate from command school, B. J. Habibie was a professor, Megawati obtained the Dr. (HC) and Prof. (HC) titles, Abdurrahman Wahid obtained his master's degree, and Joko Widodo is an engineer), they still require mystical legitimation in supporting their power. By making the "mystical power" as well as the line of "spiritual protectors" visible, it increases their impression of power in the eyes of the many Indonesians who still believe in mysticism. Apart from that, it gives the impression of "don't you dare disturb us".

³¹ Bayu Fermadi, "Transformasi Santri Pasca 1965," *Jurnal Ilmiah Spiritualis: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam Dan Tasawuf* 6, no. 1 (2020): 75–94, <https://doi.org/10.53429/spiritualis.v6i1.78>.

³² S. Susen, "The Interpretation of Cultures: Geertz Is Still in Town," *Sociologica* 18, no. 1 (2024): 25–63, <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1971-8853/18664>.

³³ Imam Mujahid, "Islamic Orthodoxy-Based Character Education: Creating Moderate Muslim in a Modern Pesantren in Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 11, no. 2 (2021): 185–212, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v11i2.185-212>.

³⁴ Kharisul Wathani, "Pesantren Dalam Politik Dan Kebijakan Pendidikan Di Indonesia," *Maalim: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 2 (2020): 128–40, <https://doi.org/10.21154/maalim.v1i02.2628>.

In the theory of power, legitimacy is an urgent thing and it may mystically be obtained if the majority of society believes in mysticism in leadership. If a president is deemed to have lost mystical power (called *wahyu keprabon*), there will be turmoil in society, which will lead to political or economic crises, such as how a president who visits Kediri will fall from power. When a president (in this case Abdurrahman Wahid popularly known as Gus Dur) visited Kediri, it was deemed that he had lost his *wahyu keprabon* which immediately led to a political crisis. Thus, in the end, he lost his power.

3.2. Whether or Not Village Head Election Participants Use Magic to Achieve Victory

This paper focuses on the role of shamans in the Village Head Elections in Tidore Islands City in 2019. Apart from that, it also analyzes the position of shamans in the Village Head Elections.³⁵ The role of shamans in politics encompasses everything they carry out towards political actors, especially when they interact with Village Head candidates to reach victory in a political contestation, in this case, it is the Village Head Elections.

Political shamans are shamans who are involved in politics in a certain capacity. Political shamans are people who have the authority as spiritual guides or teachers. Meanwhile, the political realm is deemed as a warzone where the competing parties use their own resource bases. Apart from that, the influence of myths that have been attached to Indonesian society keeps on influencing the people's belief system. To them, it may seem that they have reached real life when they have trust in each other

When political actors are faced with activities that are based on politics and that are related to political goals, the role of supernatural knowledge is highly apparent in the political realm. Political actors usually visit or ask for help from shamans in carrying out their responsibilities due to political reasons, such as during the Village Head Elections, Presidential Elections, etc.

The shaman stated as follows:

"It is a fact that people usually come here with a ton of problems and they hope to find a quick solution. It is not only common people who come here. However, there are also middle-level and common-level politicians that often come. Most of them ask my opinion on what they must do to face their political opponents, including those within and outside of the party. Concerning politicians that want to face political opponents from within the party, they usually ask for guidance on what they must do during the electoral process."

An example of the usage of magic in the Village Head Elections was shown in the research conducted by Maslihun, where he found in his research that all village head candidates used the service of shamans or magic in the Village Head Elections in Karangrejo Village, Pucuk Wangi District, Banyuwangi Regency, East Java Province. His research confirmed that the usage of magic in the village head elections of this village is a normal thing. However, these candidates admit that the usage of magic was still carried out at a moderate level without harming other people. This was because the magic was used in

³⁵ Nailun Najah, "Dampak Keterlibatan Kiai Dalam Politik Terhadap Pengembangan Sistem Pendidikan Pondok Pesantren Sabilul Hidayah Bangkalan," *Joecie* 1, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.62005/joecie.v1i1.10>.

the effort of these village head candidates to protect themselves in case there were unseen mystical attacks from the opponents as well as to obtain victory. The form of magic was a type of “*aji pemikat*” (the magic to attract) so that voters would be sympathetic when seeing the candidates’ photographs in the voting ballot during the voting process.³⁶

It is rather difficult to legally prosecute magic users in village head elections as it is difficult to find evidence. This difficult evidence process does not mean that it is impossible to carry out. Thus, the contrary may be applied; where if a person accuses another person of committing magic, the accuser has the responsibility to prove it. If he fails to prove it, he will legally be processed as someone who made a false accusation and committed an unpleasant act. This is because if such cases are not processed, it is prone to lead to chaos.

In Malinowski’s theory as quoted by Rashid, the usage of magic emphasizes that the belief in magic is an excess in a situation of uncertainty to achieve a certain goal.³⁷ This theory explains how participants of the village head elections feel the need to use magic to achieve victory. This uncertainty occurs from a sense of suspicion that the opponent will use magical methods to harm him. Thus, that person strives to seek a “magical barrier” or in turn send magical attacks. Such a suspicion will strengthen if a candidate suddenly falls ill (due to fatigue, sickness, etc.), leading to the spread of random accusations that will end in physical attacks.

The topic of magical usage in politics and the village head election system is also an interesting subject to analyze for certain reasons. The village head election process must be carried out in an honest, clean, and fair manner. Unfortunately, there are still dishonest competitions that are carried out using magical powers that are deemed to help the village head candidates in winning the election. Conflicts that depend on magic may damage the public trust in the democratic process. Apart from that, such a condition is prone to trigger conflicts in the case that if a candidate falls ill, other candidates will become suspects and they will physically be attacked. This condition is prone to cause chaos.

The Tidore Islands society which is known to be highly religious actually believes that magic can change their lives for the better. After conducting empirical research by taking 10 samples out of the population consisting of 70 people, the authors obtained the following information as shown in Table 1.

From Table 1 it could be explained can be seen that the entire sample (100%) believes that magic exists and believes that magic can captivate the heart or make people believe. And 30% believe that magic can bring disaster and death while 70% do not believe but 90% believe that magic can protect themselves and can attract sympathy in the election of candidates. Departing from the data above, it can be explained that the total number of Village Head Election participants in 26 villages, i.e., 70 people, used magic to achieve

³⁶ Maslihun Maslihun, “Penggunaan Jasa Dukun Dalam Pemilihan Kepala Desa Di Desa Karangrejo Kecamatan Pucakwangi Kabupaten Pati: Tinjauan Aqidah Islamiyah” (IAIN Walisongo, 2011).

³⁷ Saifur Rashid, “Meaning and Rituals of Death: An Insight into Selected Ethnic and Religious Communities of Bangladesh,” *Vietnam Social Sciences* 5, no. 193 (2019).

victory. The magic used by the Village Head Election participants had the following objectives.

Table 1. The Use of Magic in the Village Head Elections in Tidore Islands in 2021

No.	Question	Answer		Progress
		Yes	No	
1	Do you believe that magic exists?	10	0	100%
2	Do you believe that magic to attract the heart/ <i>garaki</i> exists?	10	0	100%
3	Do you believe that magic that creates harm/suffering (illnesses, death) exists?	3	7	30%
4	Do you believe that magic as a shield/ <i>pele diri</i> exists?	9	1	90%
5	Do you believe that magic to close the people's sympathy to their opponents exists?	9	1	90%

Source: Primary data, 2024 (Edited).

Indonesia has entered a disruptive era that is accompanied by information technology advancement with beliefs in magical things that still exist now. Indonesia's politics are closely related to magic. Since ancient times, society has already had a belief in supernatural powers and magical practices. This means that magic is a real social phenomenon that exists in both primitive and modern societies. Therefore, almost every person believes that magic truly exists and that it happens in the area of their lives. They believe that social situations can be influenced, changed, healed, destroyed, and transformed with magical actions. In this case, Malinowski³⁸ argued that magic can develop trust in uncertain situations.

The paradigm of the mystical realm that developed in Indonesia is certainly inseparable from societal life, including the political realm. It is no longer a shocking phenomenon. This is because the original culture of the Indonesian people's ancestors that believe in animism and dynamism has not truly been eliminated even though Abrahamic religions have become the official religions and beliefs that are guaranteed by the Constitution.

In the past, it was believed that the kings of Nusantara (meaning "The Archipelago" a name to call Indonesia, especially before its independence in 1945) must master the *kanuragan* (knowledge that functions as a tool to guard or protect oneself using supernatural means) dan *aji-aji* (amulets or secret weapons) to support their power. There are many types of magical or spiritual knowledge that are believed by the Indonesian people, namely shamans or magicians, magical activities, and representation.

Indonesians believe in the practice of shamans as magicians. Shamans are people who help society in the effort to heal diseases through supernatural powers. However, some of

³⁸ Bronislaw Malinowski, *Magic, Science and Religion: And Other Essays* (Michigan: Doubleday, 1954).

them misuse their supernatural knowledge to create new diseases in society.³⁹ Kapferer⁴⁰ stated that shamans and the practice of magic are local beliefs that are attached to the culture of a society. As a local belief, neither the shamans nor their practices can be perceived from the perspective of scientific knowledge as they have their own logic and rationality or rationality behind irrationality.

People then believe that shamans and their practices are not automatically categorized into traditional or tribal societies that reflect primitiveness.⁴¹ A person who has the ability to carry out some of these skills is called a common shaman or just a "shaman" without any specifications and he is the most important person. In traditional societies, common magical skills are useful for all people with illnesses (both physical and psychological). They are also deemed to be able to create prophecies (according to Javanese calculations and their own intuitions). Shamans are deemed to be able to give good luck. They are not shy about practicing magic or finding missing items.

In the current context, the term "shaman" or what is locally called "*dukun*" is no longer used for most of the shamans above, except for *dukun bayi* (people who help women give birth using traditional means) and *dukun pijat* (people who have the skills to massage others). Meanwhile, other types of *dukun* are called the terms "paranormal" or "parents/old people".⁴²

Another supernatural thing that the Indonesian people believe in is magical activities. It regards how paranormal or shamans use magic. In politics, magic is used to harm their political opponents or to bring benefits to a certain party. In this case, black magic has a prominent role in Indonesia's political realm. Black magic is the study of tricks, illusions, knowledge, and methods using the technique of manipulating the energy in the world; various influences with low vibration; powers within the human emotion; and invisible energies. These things are understood, learned, and then manipulated.⁴³

Politicians usually carry out magical activities to defeat their political opponents. A popular one is voodoo, which is locally called *santet*. *Santet* is black magic that harms other people and that can be fatal. *Santet* does not only develop in Indonesia but it is also used in other countries.⁴⁴ In Javanese, *santet* means witchcraft. It is an effort to harm another person from far or close distances using black magic. The victims may be inflicted with strange diseases and they may even die. *Santet* is carried out using various types of media,

³⁹ Barokah, "Mistisisme Politik: Eksistensi Magis Dalam Perpolitikan Indonesia."

⁴⁰ Bruce Kapferer, *Beyond Rationalism: Rethinking Magic, Witchcraft, and Sorcery* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2003), <https://doi.org/10.3167/9781571814180>.

⁴¹ B. Yuniarto et al., "Persepsi Masyarakat Terhadap Dukun Dalam Pandangan Islam," *Jurnal Sosial Dan Sains* 2, no. 11 (2022): 1160–1169, <https://doi.org/10.59188/jurnalsosains.v2i11.521>.

⁴² M. D. Huda, "Peran Dukun Terhadap Perkembangan Peradaban Budaya Masyarakat Jawa," *Jurnal Ikadbudi* 4, no. 10 (2015), <https://doi.org/10.21831/ikadbudi.v4i10.12029>.

⁴³ H. S. Bouk, "Metafisika Politik Menimbang Kekuatan Aristokrasi Dalam Pilkada Belu Dan Malaka Tahun 2020," *JAP Unwira* 3, no. 2 (2020): 130–140, <https://doi.org/10.30822/jap.v3i2.867>.

⁴⁴ L. A. Dharma, I. P. Hapsari, and H. Iskandar, "Analisis Kriminalisasi Terhadap Santet Sebagai Tindak Pidana," *Aktivisme: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan, Politik, Dan Sosial Indonesia* 1, no. 3 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.62383/aktivisme.v1i3.349>.

including hair, photographs, dolls, incense, various flowers, etc. The belief in supernatural powers or occultism is part of the human culture.⁴⁵

Another type of supernatural power is representation, which is a form of magical items that are deemed to have certain benefits or goals according to the desire.⁴⁶ There are several types of representations supernatural power, namely *susuk*, *wafak*, *jimat* (amulets), and mantras.

Susuk: *Susuk* is a type of magic that is used by magicians. It is a magical item that is inserted into the skin or body part of a person. Sometimes, it is swallowed. This *susuk* is believed to have various magical benefits. The tools or media that the magicians or shamans use for *susuk* vary. There are those in the form of diamond pieces, precious stones, gold, silver, iron, tin, tiger fur, etc. Each of these *susuk* has different magical benefits and uses.⁴⁷ It is believed that the *susuk* is beneficial in making people more charismatic and attractive to other people. This is especially beneficial for people who are faced with high competition against their peers.⁴⁸

Wafak: *Wafak* are usually in the form of Arabic, *Jawa Pegon* (modified Arabic writing that is used to write the Javanese language), or old Javanese language writings that are written on a piece of paper, fabric, or certain animal skin that are deemed to have magical benefits. *Wafak* is a form of magic that is believed to have benefits, such as giving the owner safety, courage, authority, charisma, compassion, etc. Usually, a *wafak* may have several benefits. By using this *wafak*, political candidates believe that they will be safe and successful in political contestations such as the village head elections.⁴⁹

Jimat: According to the Great Indonesian Dictionary in Anggriana et al, a *jimat* or an amulet is an item that is deemed to be powerful, such as having the capability to repel diseases, make a person immune to pain, etc.⁵⁰ *Jimat* are magical items that are used to achieve one's goals and desires using the *jimat's* power. Such magical items vary. There are those in the forms of a ring, a small *keris* (Javanese curved dagger), a black stone, a ruby stone, elephant sperm in the shape of a pearl, *wayang* (Javanese shadow puppets) with Arabic writing, etc. These magical items are deemed to be obtained after carrying out certain rituals or meditation in places that are believed to be sacred. There are those who were obtained through the dreams of the amulet owner. Usually, when the person wakes up,

⁴⁵ Faisal et al., "Pemaknaan Kebijakan Kriminal Perbuatan Santet Dalam RUU KUHP," *Jurnal Pembangunan Hukum Indonesia* 5, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.14710/jphi.v5i1.220-232>.

⁴⁶ A. Humaeni and F. Ushuluddin, "Penggunaan Magic Dalam Politik Lokal Di Banten The Use of Magic in Local Politics of Banten," *Masyarakat, Kebudayaan, Dan Politik* 27, no. 1 (2014): 14–26, <https://doi.org/10.20473/mkp.v27i1.2264>.

⁴⁷ Humaeni and Ushuluddin.

⁴⁸ Etis Duhita Rahayuningtyas and Tenny Setiani Dewi, "The Radiographic Finding of Charm Needles in a Woman with Orofacial Pain," *Jurnal Kedokteran Gigi Universitas Padjadjaran* 32, no. 2 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.24198/jkg.v32i2.23831>.

⁴⁹ Humaeni and Ushuluddin, "Penggunaan Magic Dalam Politik Lokal Di Banten The Use of Magic in Local Politics of Banten."

⁵⁰ L. Anggriana et al., "Jimat Dan Mistisme Pengikut Tarekat Syattariyah Di Sumatera Barat Abad Ke-19 M," *Hijaz: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 1, no. 3 (2022): 144–155, <https://doi.org/10.57251/hij.v1i3.913>.

he/she finds the amulet next to him/her or he/she finds it in places that are indicated by that dream.⁵¹

Mantras: According to Malinowski,⁵² mantras are an important part of the magical practice. They are magical words that are carried out during the magical activity that is only known by magicians or shamans. For the Indigenous people that were observed by Malinowski,⁵³ magic also means the study of mantras. It means that the people who know about mantras are deemed shamans or magicians. It was found that in observing witchcraft, rituals with pronounced mantras are always found. According to him, mantras always become the core of the magical performance.

4. CONCLUSION

Mystical things are always closely related to the culture of the Indonesian nation from era to era, including in its political culture. It can be seen that in every leadership of Indonesian national figures, there are always practices related to the mystical or supernatural realm, starting from Soekarno as the first president up to Jokowi as the current president. Each president has spiritual teachers who are used as supporters or guides in their political power. Even though the era has changed to become modern, mystical things still exist in Indonesian politics among political contestation participants. These mystical things can be seen from the closeness to God as well as things outside of that (shamans, paranormal). Magical actions in the political realm tend to be deviated in their use. Contestants will visit shamans by sending voodoo to their political opponents so that they can win the political contestation. Apart from that, some people carry out rituals that are believed to be effective as a way to win the contestation in the political realm. A new phenomenon occurred in 2022 before the 2024 general election, where many political elites visited *kiai* or *ulama* to ask for approval and blessings. They also ask for support in the general election. These findings were in line with the objective of the research, which was that mystical practices may influence the election results that should ideally be carried out in an honest and just manner. It was also according to the objective of increasing awareness of the risks of unethical behaviors in the election process by, for instance, accusing political oppositions of utilizing magic or the occurrence of chaos as one of the candidates falls ill and people suspect it as a result of magic. This research also provided novelty as it discussed magical practices in the Village Head Elections by comparing them with such occurrences at the national level. The authors also discussed magical practices with leadership theories to see the impacts and influences of magical practices on democracy and public trust.

⁵¹ Humaeni and Ushuluddin, "Penggunaan Magic Dalam Politik Lokal Di Banten The Use of Magic in Local Politics of Banten."

⁵² Malinowski, *Magic, Science and Religion: And Other Essays*.

⁵³ Malinowski.

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