



## Max Weber's Perspective Charisma: Analysis of the Religious Reality Concerning Abuya Amran Waly and the Majelis for the Study of Tauhid and Tasawwuf

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### ABSTRACT

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This study aims to analyse the religious dynamics inside the Acehese social context through the perspective of Max Weber's charisma theory. This study focuses on the phenomenon of Abuya Amran Waly and the Majelis Pengkajian Tauhid Tasawuf Indonesia (MPTT-I), which has generated discussion among the public and scholars in Aceh. In Weber's sociology of religion, charisma is considered a fundamental component in the development and transformation of religious authority. The employed methodology is a literature review employing a qualitative approach and content analysis. The analysis indicates that Abuya Amran Waly's allure, comprising both wahby (grace) and kasbi (effort), functioned as the principal factor in maintaining his prominence despite resistance and repudiation from the majority of dayah scholars. This charisma is further entrenched through the MPTT-I organisation. This research illustrates that understanding charisma as a social construct clarifies how the impact of religious leaders can transform into a communal movement, despite substantial theological and political resistance.

### 1. Introduction

Religion profoundly impacts human existence, evident in all situations and epochs of life. Its existence has endured from the dawn of human life (Putra et al., 2020). During that period, humanity acknowledged and believed in a transcendent force that governed and influenced existence. This is evidenced by human efforts to contemplate and examine the origins of phenomena, especially natural events. They concluded that an external force may regulate the natural cosmos (Bahri, 2022).

The exploration of the roots of religion and the various ways in which humans interact with these forces has resulted in multiple ideas, including the view that religion arises from human awareness of the soul, shaped by the experiences of life, death, and dreams (Bowie, 2021). Another theory asserts that social religious conduct stems from the acknowledgement of certain phenomena that

defy intellectual explanation. A theory suggests that human religious sentiments emerge from the need to address life's crises, driving the quest for resolutions.

Alternative theories suggest that human religious behaviour emerges from atypical living situations and the encompassing natural world. A theory suggests that human religiosity arises from a resonance or emotion within the human spirit, shaped by a sense of collective togetherness. Moreover, there is a hypothesis suggesting that religious human behaviour originates from divine communication with God (Abbas et al., 2022).

Max Weber is a scholar who examines religion as a social phenomenon, he is a modern sociologist who analyses religion, evidenced by his substantial writings and related theories. Weber's contributions to the sociology of religion include *The Sociology of Religion* and *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Alumkal & Launay, 2022). Max Weber asserted that religion embodies a belief in a supernatural being that eventually influences and shapes the lives of modern social groups. He asserted that religions such as Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Jainism represent diverse pathways to salvation, but with differing techniques in their activities (Marotta, 2024). Weber asserts that religion satisfies the human need for theodicy, particularly in reconciling heavenly authority with earthly imperfections. Religion fulfils the human need for soteriology, which relates to the quest for salvation opportunities (Rust, 2021).

Weber emphasizes that religion is closely connected to individual social behaviors within the framework of community life. Max Weber asserted that religion serves as a cultural framework that shapes an individual's worldview, hence affecting their behaviors and interests. He also argued that religion aids individuals in achieving their goals (Kuswandi & Asmoni, 2025). He asserts that religion comprises a collection of shared beliefs, values, and ideas that create a cohesive identity. It includes behavioral aspects, such as rituals that indicate membership in a religious organization, and it provides meaning by clarifying occurrences that surpass ordinary existence. Religion may serve as a catalyst for social transformation (Abercrombie, 2024). Religious doctrines can offer ethical direction in conduct, influencing economic activities. Weber claims that Calvinism, a 16th-century Protestant movement, significantly contributed to the emergence of capitalism (T. Magalhães, 2022).

Max Weber's theories on religion are associated with the notion of charisma. This notion, first associated with general sociology, is highly pertinent to the sociology of religion. Weber believed that charismatic leaders were exceptional and frequently analogous to prophets or sorcerers. He believed that prophets constituted the paramount charismatic figures within his sociological framework. Weber posited that charismatic influence serves as a catalyst for transformation. Charismatic leaders distinguish themselves from regular individuals by their exceptional talents. Weber referenced charismatic prophets in the Old Testament, asserting that the political and ethical convictions of prophets like Amos, Jeremiah, and Isaiah informed his concepts of charisma. Weber posited that prophets were independent originators of ideals. They were distinct from priests and witches in that they were motivated by a personal vocation rather than by sacred tradition or institutional hierarchy. Weber posited that prophets offered a route to salvation via intellectual elucidation of suffering (Kronis & Zariņš, 2023).

The prophetic ideal of charisma diminished over time due to routinisation, resulting in a transition towards either conventional or legal authority, or a combination of both. Authentic charisma evolves into habitual charisma, resulting in derivatives and roles within numerous institutions that are established. Max Weber addressed the economic motivations underlying social symbolisation, including religion and magical rituals. Where charisma is occasionally employed for personal gain. Weber's concept is understood by Bourdieu as a way to maximize capital in society by using religious symbols by religionists and magicians by making the general public a part that helps the process run. There is an act (practice) of showing charisma that aims to maximize material and non-material capital. Max Weber who invented a political economy of religion, which departs from the idea of goodness and ideal interests (Raza, 2023).

Religious and magical behaviour or thought should not be separated from the set of everyday purposeful behaviour, especially since the purpose of religious and magical actions is largely economic. The end of all practices, including religious and magical practices are economically charged where it involves the accumulation of interests or profits by agents (professionals) in this phenomenon, such as religionists or psychics. In essence, Weber's idea of charisma has influenced the work of social scientists for decades, along with the rise and fall of charismatic figures, the strengthening and fading of charisma of some figures in the dynamics of local national and global history (Waluyo, 2022).

In the local context, in recent years the social religious phenomenon in Aceh has been enlivened by the emergence and development of the Indonesian Tauhid Tasawuf Study Council (MPTT-I) led by Tengku Amran Waly. Its presence in the religious scene in Aceh has caused pros and cons among Ulama, Santri and the people of Aceh. This phenomenon is unique, on the one hand the majority of scholars and santri reject the existence of MPTT-I and the teaching of tawhid tasawuf taught by Abuya Amran Waly, whereas, the people of Aceh have great respect for the fatwa given by the majority of dayah scholars and make their fatwa and teaching a guide and foundation in aqeedah, worship and muamalah including in terms of addressing groups or sects that are at odds with Aswaja teachings. On the other hand, the organisation continues to expand by establishing branches in other places at the local, national, and worldwide levels, as well as obtaining support from several Aceh political parties.

Why did Abuya Amran Wali and his MPTT-I not undergo the same disbandment as other groups or sects that were effectively dissolved upon the MPU's recommendation? This paper explores the charismatic attributes of Abuya Amran Waly, a figure esteemed by certain Acehnese individuals, despite the advantages and disadvantages associated with him and MPTT-I. It highlights that the predominance of dayah circles in Aceh and attempts to discredit MPTT have not succeeded in diminishing his influence and presence in the region.

This study will examine and analyse the phenomenon of Abuya Amran Waly and the MPTT-I organisation he leads in Aceh. This development is intrinsically linked to the relationship between the phenomenon and various variables, including the charisma of the prominent figure. This discussion will explore the implications of Abuya Amran Waly's charisma on the dissemination of his tawhid tasawuf teachings through various MPTT-I activities across different locations, despite facing rejection and criticism from dissenters.

## 2. Literature Review

The concept of charisma introduced by Max Weber will be the analytical knife for this research. The following are presented concepts related to the definition of charisma, charismatic authority, charisma components, self-meaning in order to build charisma, characteristics of charismatic leaders, relational power, charisma routinization, charisma success keys and charismatic leadership characteristics (Mendieta, 2019).

Etymologically, the word charisma comes from the Greek "Charisma" which means special gift or talent. People who are specially gifted are also called charismatic. The term charisma will be applied to certain personal qualities because of which he is different from ordinary people and is considered to be endowed with supernatural powers, powers above human or at least very special powers. Such things are not found in ordinary people, but are considered to come from God or as an example and on that basis the person is seen as a leader. In other words, charisma is an extraordinary power or quality possessed by a person or thing so that the person or thing is seen as having unique and magical powers. Charisma is a driving, creative force that flows swiftly through the rules that have been embedded, whether those rules are legal rules or traditional rules, which govern an existing order. is a special phenomenon that is not rational. Weber also describes Charisma as a sacred power, which maintains its extraordinary nature (Petlyuchenko, 2024).

In Weber's view, the basis of common life is built on two things, authority and legitimacy. Both are interrelated. Authority is divided into three, namely: **First**, traditional authority. This authority is based on the leader's claim and the followers' belief that there are advantages in the sanctity of old rules and powers. The leader in such a system is not a superior ruler, but a person. An important reason people adhere to this authority structure is their belief that it already exists. The relationship between the figure representing the authority and his subordinates is personal. **Second**, legal authority, which has various structural forms. But the form that attracts his attention the most is bureaucracy, which he sees as the purest type of exercise of legal authority. This authority relates to the instrumental rational. **Third**, charismatic authority, which is leadership that has extraordinary personal appeal, leading to high loyalty and devotion from followers. Charisma is often associated with leaders who emerge at times of crisis or social change, where they offer solutions or visions that can inspire crowds to follow them. Weber additionally posits that charisma can be categorized into two distinct types: Initially, charisma inherent in an individual purely as a divine endowment. This type of charisma is authentic and merits the designation of true charisma, unattainable by any methods. Secondly, manufactured charisma can be cultivated through exceptional endeavors undertaken during a life of asceticism or other mystical religious experiences (Bilimler et al., 2021).

Weber outlines the components of charisma as follows: first, possessing extraordinary abilities; second, emerging during a crisis; third, effectively resolving the crisis; fourth, captivating and enchanting followers who trust in transcendental relationships; fifth, demonstrating the validity of the proposed ideas. Weber highlighted a recurring theme in all histories: the conflict between charm and routinization. This is seen in the history of the Jewish Nation, where the revolutionary fervor of the Prophets ultimately evolved into the legalism of the priesthood. The notion of charisma accords authority to a singular charismatic individual, who receives qualities of privilege and distinction as a

bestowed gift. Concurrently, routinization transpires when this exceptional endowment is conveyed to others via inheritance or disseminated across groups of adherents. At this level, Weber focuses on religious authority and its representatives. Charisma possesses a transformative essence derived from religion, whereas routinization adapts and concedes to quotidian existence and specific interests (Kravis, 2021).

Concerning the mainstreaming of charisma, Weber claims that pure charisma, which is transformative in its initial phase, may not endure for an extended period. There will soon be a metamorphosis of charisma, either into conventional or legal power, or a combination of both. Unadulterated charisma devolves into habitual charisma, resulting in derivatives and roles within various established institutions. Consistent with the evolution of charismatic leadership, charisma may be inherited by biological relatives or become an inherent characteristic of an institution, irrespective of the individual in possession of it. In this context, charisma experiences depersonalization, signifying that previously personal charisma transforms into an impersonal form. According to Weber, the aforementioned transfer of charisma is justifiable provided that the family or authorities inside the institution are perceived to possess exceptional strength and capability to fulfill the social functions associated with charismatic authority (Valbruzzi, 2024).

Several factors for the routinization of charisma include, firstly, protecting the ideal and material interests of the followers and personnel occupying various positions following the passing away of the charismatic leader. Secondly, to preserve follower relations for the purpose of mission and community continuity. The routine of charisma emerges through: Firstly, the development of traditional norms, which may be grounded in lineage and primogeniture; Secondly, the invocation of rational-legal principles, wherein political leaders who have attained power ascribe importance to their paramount objectives. Consequently, political leaders must identify administrative personnel who can be relied upon as agents of authority (Davis & Vila-Henninger, 2021).

Consequently, the societal perception of a charismatic leader who has either deceased or been discredited will endure. Weber delineates the systematic patterns for sustaining charisma as follows: first, identifying an individual possessing qualifications akin to the preceding charismatic leader (searching); second, seeking insight or guidance (revelation); third, relying on the prior leader's appointment (designation by original leader); fourth, the incumbent leader's intent to assemble a team to select a successor who meets specified criteria (designation by qualified staff); fifth, through hereditary lineage (hereditary charisma); and establishing criteria that prospective leaders must fulfill (office charisma) (Hofmann, 2023).

According to Weber, the characteristics of a charismatic leader encompass aspects of personality traits, competencies, and focus. This encompasses verbal aptitude, self-assurance, commitment to one's ideals, idealism, unification, solution-oriented thinking, the capacity to inspire trust among followers, boldness in confronting dangers, empowerment, visionary thinking, opposition to the status quo, and strength derived from expertise and heroism (Marquez, 2022).

### **3. Methodology**

This study employs library research concentrating on character analyses to examine a religious social reality. This study combines library resources to thoroughly examine Max Weber's perspective on religion, particularly concerning charisma and how it relates to the phenomena of Abuya Amran Wali and his MPTT-I within the context of religious dynamics in Aceh. Data is gathered from primary and secondary sources, such as books, theses, academic journals, and newspapers. To get comprehensive insights into Max Weber's theory, researchers employ specific methodologies, including the examination, analysis, and critique of works authored by Weber, such as "The Theory of Social and Economic Organization" and "Sociology of Religion," which have been translated from the original texts. content analysis methodology to examine written material on Max Weber's perspectives on religion, particularly about charisma, to comprehend emerging phenomena in Acehnese society employed. The process commences with an endeavour to gather data, followed by the methodical organisation of the results, culminating in the presentation of the findings and the pursuit of significance.

Researchers examined the works of scholars who analysed Weber's theories, including Christopher Adair-Toteff in "Max Weber's Sociology of Religion," Steven Klein in "Between Charisma and Domination: On Max Weber's Critique of Democracy," Jay A. Conger in "Max Weber's Conceptualisation of Charismatic Authority: Its Influence on Organisational Research," Adair-Toteff, C. in "Max Weber's Charismatic Prophets," and Ralph Schroeder in "Max Weber on the Hegemony of Belief Systems." To gather data concerning the religious social reality, particularly the phenomenon of Abuya Amran Wali and MPTT-I in Aceh, researchers conducted a review of relevant scientific articles, analysed news and examined video recordings of ulama muzakarah discussing on the subject of Abuya Amran and MPTT-I.

### **4. Results**

#### *4.1 The Emergence of Abuya Amran Wali in the Social Dynamics of Religion in Aceh*

The socio-religious circumstances in Aceh is stimulated by the establishment and growth of the Indonesian Tauhid Tasawuf Study Council (MPTT-I), under the leadership of Tengku Amran Waly. A prominent individual recognised as a descendent of Abuya Mudawali al-Khalidi, a renowned scholar in Aceh. Amran Waly is acknowledged by certain Acehnese as a charismatic intellectual who continues his father's principles, particularly in advancing the doctrines of tawhid and tasawwuf throughout the community. MPTT proliferated rapidly across the archipelago. The progress of MPTT is evident, as it possesses branches not only in Labuhanhaji, South Aceh Regency, but also in other regions of Aceh, including Aceh Besar and Banda Aceh. MPTT is well-known in Aceh Besar and Banda Aceh, receiving favourable responses from both the community and government agencies. Consequently, MPTT activities frequently occur in these regions, attracting participants from all demographics, including parents, teenagers, and children.

The expansion and evolution of MPTT-I, alongside the prominence of Abuya Amran Wali, are inextricably linked to his charisma, encompassing both innate charisma (*wahby*), a divine endowment, and cultivated charisma (*kasbi*), which has been attained through extensive learning,

practical application of knowledge, and dedication. Abuya Amran's charisma, while inherent to him, is also linked to the charisma of his father, Abuya Mudawali, a renowned scholar whose influence has fostered numerous scholars in Aceh. The majority of scholars and dayahs in Aceh align with his intellectual approach, including the dayah education system and curriculum established and advanced by Abuya Mudawali. This can be comprehended through the notion of charismatic leadership succession, wherein charisma may be inherited by relatives with familial connections (gentile/familial charisma).

The endorsement of some individuals for MPTT-I is inextricably linked to the charisma of these two personalities. Ultimately, the organisation possesses charisma from the viewpoint of certain individuals. Charisma, while fundamentally an individual characteristic, is not universally granted to every individuals. Under specific conditions, charisma may be depersonalised and institutionalised, resulting in the transference of charisma from an individual to an institution. In other words, establishing charisma within an institution by a particular ritual or ceremony. Impersonal charisma may evolve into a familial trait associated with the charismatic leader, provided that the uncommon competence is inherited by family members.

#### *4.2 The Controversial Teachings of MPTT-I*

Normatively, the principles and methodologies employed by MPTT in the advancement of monotheism involve engaging in muzakarah tawhid tasawuf, reciting and commemorating rateb siribee, and establishing MPTT branches. The discourse on monotheism in MPTT is elaborated upon comprehensively; it encompasses not only the scientific and intellectual dimensions of tawhid kalam but also the manifestation of monotheism in the psyche, enabling the servant to perceive the majesty and grandeur of Allah in their heart (tawhid hakiki). MPTT not only explores theories regarding ultimate tawhid (irfani) but also implements practical methods to attain it. The discipline involves the meticulous execution of Sharia, encompassing both the commands and prohibitions of Allah. Upon proficiently practicing sharia, an individual is obligated to engage in tariqah, guided by a spiritual master (murshid) who is kamil mukammil. Practices within tariqah include musyahadah, tawajjuh, suluk, and dhikr rateb siribee. Moreover, through the essence of reality, one attains the illumination of Allah to achieve the objective of knowledge through authentic monotheistic mysticism.

This educational institution was established in direct response to the community's significant deviation from Islamic teachings in practice. Monotheism and Sufism aim at reintegrating with the authentic teachings of Islam as commanded by Allah SWT and His Messengers concerning His prohibitions. Majelis Pengkajian Tauhid Tasawuf (MPTT) is an academic institution focused on the principal religious issues of faith, Islam, and ihsan. This assembly also addresses akidah, fiqh, tasawwuf (ethics), and Sufism science, which facilitate an individual's closeness to Allah SWT in daily life.

Abuya Amran is seen by his supporters as having presented a manner of practicing religion that is orientated towards inner calm, so that it is perceived as something unique in the middle of the hustle and bustle of a materialistic and hedonistic lifestyle. His presence is thought to inspire new hope for a more authentic practice of Islam capable of satisfying the community's spiritual

yearning. According to the concept of charisma, one of the factors that can bring out a person's charisma is his appearance in times of crisis and the figure's ability to present a solution, so that his presence in society becomes highly anticipated and awaited, similar to the concept of omnipotence or messiah. Admittedly or not, for some Acehese groups, Abuya Amran's presence stands out in the midst of dayah academics' control over religious discourse in Aceh.

Dayah circles contend that the teachings of dhikr and suluk presented in MPTT-I incorporate an understanding deemed deviant by aswaja circles, specifically the doctrine of *wihdatul wujud*, derived from the *isyari tafsir* of Surah al-Ikhlās in the book *Insan Kamil* by al-Jily. During a meeting with several Ulama, Abu Tumin elucidated that the book "*Insan Kamil*" by al-Jili, acknowledged by Abuya Amran, is a complex Sufi text that is difficult for the layperson to comprehend. Throughout his studies with Abuya Mudawali and Abu Krungkale, two esteemed scholars in Aceh, he never imparted this book to his students. Abu Mudi contended that Abuya Amran's teachings on tawhid and tasawwuf had diverged, particularly when the third-person pronoun *huwa* in Surah Al-Ikhlās was attributed to the Prophet Muhammad rather than to Allah SWT, an interpretative approach that contravened established scholarly interpretations throughout history. Similarly, the designation of the tawhid tasawwuf variant of MPTT appears to suggest that *fiqh* holds diminished significance. The perspectives of Abu Tumin and Abu Mudi align with those of other influential academics, like Abuya Jamaluddin Waly Al-Khalidi and Abuya Muhibuddin Waly Al-Khalidi, who are siblings of Abuya Amran. Abuya Sheikh H. Abdussalam Al-Ghaliby asserted that Abuya Sheikh H. Amran Waly Al-Khalidi was affiliated with a faction of heretical Sufis, as indicated by the Acehese Tasawwuf text authored by Sheikh Samsudin Sumatrani Hakikatus Sufiyah and the book *Sirrul Asrar*, due to many characteristics inconsistent with the Sufi *ahlisunnah waljamaah*.

The advantages and disadvantages associated with Abuya Amran's teachings through his MPTT are still connected to the controversies surrounding the doctrines of *falsafi Sufism* that have been discussed in Islamic theology. The concepts articulated by Ibn Arabi, al-Hallaj, Sheikh Siti Jenar, al-Jily, and others continue to provoke debate among Islamic scholars, with some advocating for their significance while others criticize their relevance. The MUI's Kitab Pentashih Institute evaluated philosophical works such as *al-Insan al-Kamil* by al-Jili, *al-Futuhat al-Makiyah*, and *Fushus al-Hikam* by Ibn Arabi. The conclusion is that these texts are consistent with the verses of the Qur'an and Hadith, encompassing *mu'tabar* literature; nonetheless, they must be conveyed by professionals due to their profound meanings, which may miss the comprehension of ordinary people. The Naqshabandiyah Khalidiyah tarekat, associated with Abuya Sheikh H. Amran Waly Al-Khalidy, is a recognized tarekat under the supervision of JATMAN (*Jam'iyah Ahlith Thoriqoh al-Mu'tabaroh an-Nahdliyah*), ruled over by Rois Aam Habib Luthfi Bin Yahya.

In addition to Sufism or Islamic mysticism, these pros and cons are also examined in the context of Qur'anic interpretation. Scholars generally acknowledge three types of interpretation: *tafsir bil ma'tsur*, which relies on hadith and *atsar*; *tafsir bil ra'yi*, which is based on reason; and *tafsir bil isyari*, which is founded on intuition. Nonetheless, all three forms of interpretation may be compromised by narratives or perspectives that contradict the fundamental principles of Islamic theology. Consequently, heretical assertions emerge against those who attempt to read a text in a manner that deviates from these norms. The dayah circles in Aceh, regarding Sufism, follow the

teachings of Imam al-Ghazali. Regarding tafsir, they conform to the understanding of ahlussunnah wal jamaah, which contrasts with the interpretations of certain Sufi falsafi and their controversial perspectives.

#### *4.3 Social response to Abuya Amran Wali and MPTT-I*

Abuya Amran Wali's presence with his MPTT-I in Aceh's religious landscape generates both support and opposition among Ulama, Santri, and the Acehnese populace. There exist a minimum of three factions regarding the advancement of MPTT-I Sufism. The initial faction vehemently repudiates MPTT's existence, asserting that Amran Wali has imparted erroneous teachings to the populace; consequently, they advocate for the ostracism and prohibition of Amran Wali and his doctrines from proliferating in Aceh. The actions of the initial group resulted in the incineration of the MPTT hall situated adjacent to the residence of Herry Maulana, a member of the Pidie District National Narcotics Agency (BNNK), in Gampong Meunasah Jurong, Meurah Dua District, Pidie Jaya Regency. This act of dissent was executed by the eastern community, particularly in the Kuta Krueng area of Pidie Jaya. The MPTT is rejected by them on the grounds that the teachings may be misleading if conveyed to the public populace, resulting to opposition from residents of Southwest Aceh towards MPTT-I adherents, manifested by obstruction and acts of hurling. Additionally, from many other regions including Merdu, Sigli, and Bireuen.

This doctrine is seen by the Dayah Ulama as leading individuals into misguidance. Their assertions are grounded in the views of Abuya Sheikh H. Jamaluddin Waly Al-Khalidi, Abuya Sheikh H. Muhibuddin Waly Al-Khalidi, Abu Tumin Blang Blahdeh, and Abu Daud Zamzami, who contend that the discipline of Tauhid Tasawuf imparted by Abuya Sheikh H. Amran Waly Al-Khalidi was not instructed by his mentor, Abuya H. Sheikh Muda Waly Al-Khalidi. This also pertains to a work by Abuya Sheikh H. Jamaluddin Waly Al-Khalidi titled "Deviant Streams," where Abu Mudi Samalanga asserts that the teachings imparted by Abuya Sheikh H. Amran Waly Al-Khalidi were not conveyed by his instructor. Amran Waly Al-Khalidi, or MPTT, is deemed heretical because, according to Abu Mudi, it may mislead the general populace into adhering to Tasawwuf devoid of any sharia law. He asserts that the Tauhid imparted by Abuya Sheikh H. Amran Waly Al-Khalidi constitutes a flawed interpretation of Tauhid, and he urges the government to address this issue. Abu Bakongan further stated that while this doctrine is not heretical, it has the potential to mislead ordinary people who do not appreciate the Tauhid Tasawuf's extensive knowledge. Then Abuya Sheikh H. Abdussalam Al-Ghaliby stated that Abuya Sheikh H. Amran Waly Al-Khalidi was included in the group of heretical Sufis based on the Acehnese Sufism book by Sheikh Samsudin Sumatrani Hakikatus Sufiyah and the book *Sirrul Asrar* because he lacked many characteristics of Sufi ahlisunnah waljamaah.

Consequently, MPU Aceh requested the Aceh Government to cease all MPTT-I activities, and the suggestion made after careful evaluation of the circumstances on the ground. According to the taushiyah of MPU Aceh Number 7 of 2020, which was directly endorsed by the Chairman of MPU Tgk H. M. Daud Zamzami and his three deputies, Tgk H. Faisal Ali, Dr. Tgk H. Muhibbuththabary, M.Ag, and Tgk H. Hasbi Albayuni, the activities of studying and reviewing the book on tawhid tasawuf led to unrest and disturbances within the community. The disturbances that occurred in several areas and cities were instigated by the MPTT-I study. In light of these factors, to prevent disruptions within

the community, MPU Aceh recommended that the Aceh Government cease MPTT-I activities and issued a fatwa declaring that the book is not classified as muktabar, rendering it invalid as a guide. Although this fatwa did not explicitly reference heresy, the community comprehended that the organization employing it had encountered heretical beliefs.

The second group maintains that Amran Wali's Sufism teachings are not heretical; however, the dissemination of these teachings to the general populace is regarded as unsuitable due to the potential for theological misconceptions within the community. The issue lies not in the teaching itself, but in the audience of the da'wah, which is unprepared to comprehend the intricacies of the subject presented. The instruction is more suitably addressed among scholars and santri proficient in religious knowledge as a scientific discourse requiring examination and argument. This aligns with the legitimacy of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) as articulated in its decision Number: 306/LPBKI-MUI/IX/2020 on the Assessment Results directed to MPTT-I Aceh. In a decision dated September 20, 2020, signed by Chairperson Prof. Dr. H. Endang Soetari, Ad M.Si, and Secretary Arif Fahrudin, M.Ag, the Indonesian Ulema Council's Institute for the Study of Books and Islamic Content (LPBKI-MUI) permitted MPTT to examine the book *Insan Kamil* by Sheikh Abdul Karim Al-Jily, which remains classified as mu'tabar and aligns with the principles of aqidah and Islamic law. In 2020, MUI Indonesia issued a fatwa declaring the book as muktabar. In September, the Ministry of Religious Affairs published a statement declaring that the book *Insan Kamil* is a muktabar text. Consequently, MPTT in this instance continues to conform to the established traditions of the Naqshabandiyah Khalidiyah Tariqah, as acknowledged and practiced by the Jam'iyah Ahli Tariqah al-Mu'tabarah an-Nahdliyah (JATMAN). MUI recommended that the approach to teaching and elaborating on the content of the *Insan Kamil* book should consider the intellectual capacity of individuals to prevent misinterpretation of its meanings and specialized terminology.

The third group comprises individuals who wholeheartedly endorse and become steadfast adherents of MPTT. MPTT-I was founded in 1998 with the objective of encouraging individuals to tawajjuh (turn towards Allah) whilst conducting limited Islamic studies. Over time, this majlis expanded, attracting an increasing number of followers, culminating in the successful legal creation of MPTT-I in 2004. Political parties also provided both direct and indirect support and recognition for MPTT-I. During the West Aceh regional election, candidates Tarmizi and Sayed Fadhil, endorsed by the Aceh Party, Gerindra, PKS, and PAN, sought the blessing of Abuya Amran Waly as a symbol of moral endorsement for their candidacy. The peusujuk or bargaining flour ceremony at the Baiturrahman Grand Mosque in Banda Aceh for Abuya Amran Waly, who was designated as a religious guardian on December 22, 2024, was conducted by Darwis Jeunib, the head of the KPA in the Bate Iliék region, representing the elected Governor of Aceh, Muzakkir Manaf. This further reinforces the presence of MPTT-I in Aceh despite opposition from dissenting factions.

The three categories of community reactions to the matter of Abuya Amran Wali and MPTT-I exemplify the diverse viewpoints of the community on Abuya Amran and his doctrines. Individuals who regard Abuya Amran as a charismatic cleric often overlook the substance of his teachings, as their belief rests on the notion that he is the Prophet's SAW rightful heir, inherently devoid of misguidance and worthy of emulation in both speech and action. This aligns with the notion of

charismatic power in leadership, characterized by exceptional personal allure that engenders significant loyalty and dedication from followers.

The group that rejects and misleads looks more objectively at the substance of the teachings taught, which are considered wrong and deviant, even though they are delivered by a figure. It is precisely because his teachings are considered deviant that the charisma of the figure has faded. In the concept of charisma, it is stated that among the risks in charisma is the fading of charisma caused by many factors, including views that are considered to deviate too far from the principles believed. Actually, the *dayah* community really honors the descendants of Abuya Mudawali who have been very instrumental in teaching Islam to the people of Aceh. In the tradition of learning in *dayah* in general, there is a moral teaching that when someone learns from a teacher, he is obliged to honor the teacher and his children and descendants. The fading of Abuya Amran's influence in *Dayah* circles is mostly attributable to the pedagogical principles adopted and disseminated, which do not align with the *Aswaja* theological theory as represented by the *Tastafi* group.

The theses and antitheses of the two competing factions about the phenomena of Abuya Amran subsequently led to the emergence of a synthesizing perspective from a third group that sought to reconcile the two positions. The third group asserts that Abuya Amran is not heretical; however, the concepts presented are inappropriate for the laity due to potential misinterpretation. Similarly, the book *Insan Kamil* cannot be deemed heretical, as its narrative allows for various interpretations that are not readily apparent, and only the authors possess the profound understanding of its true meaning. Consequently, this group anticipates that the book is inappropriate for instruction to ordinary people, who may misinterpret a complex religious problem. Abu Krutlintang, during the *ulama muzakarah* event at *Dayah Paya Pasi* in East Aceh, likened Amran Waly's teachings or the contents of the *Insan Kamil* book for ordinary people to serving substantial adult food to an infant; the error resides not in the food itself, but in the negligent disposition of the individual who presented it to an inappropriate recipient. Abuya Amran did not instruct the congregation on the *Insan Kamil* book; rather, he was merely inquired about its contents, which he affirmed. This incident marks the inception of the heretical allegation, as stated by Tengku Syukri Daud Pango, Advisor of MPTT Aceh.

#### *4.4 Charisma Competition in Socio-religious Dynamics in Aceh*

Abuya Amran Waly's prominence in socio-religious matters in Aceh is inextricably linked to his charisma. In addition to deriving charismatic influence from his father, Abuya Muda Waly (gentile/familial charisma), he is also perceived by his followers to possess a generated charisma gained via a succession of difficult circumstances. In Amran Waly, there exist elements that contribute to charisma; notably, he shows a spiritual crisis within a community yearning for religious practices aimed at tranquility, rather than solely *fiqh*-centric doctrines that often incite polemics and conflicts. Amran Waly's presence is perceived as capable of significantly resolving this crisis, captivating and bewitching followers. He is thought to possess the ability to lead individuals in a transcending relationship with the Divine.

Amran Waly emerged in society with a bold and audacious persona, successfully instilling this mindset in his followers, who became prepared to embrace risks both professionally and physically.

This is evident from his resolve to impart the principles of tawhid and Sufism in which he believes, despite the adverse reactions from the majority of Ulama who critique him. In his recitations, Amran Waly addresses criticism with composure and a courteous yet assertive discourse, asserting that he is fundamentally a continuation of the teachings of his father, Abuya Muda Waly. Civility and composure can garner public compassion, particularly from individuals less preoccupied with theological matters. For instance, Abu Chik Ureung Gasin, during a broadcast, acknowledged his profound sympathy for Abuya Amran due to his capacity to abstain from harshly criticizing dissenters of his views. Conversely, Abu Chik vehemently condemned other intellectuals whom he accused of blaspheming and vilifying opposing factions.

Amran Waly is regarded by his followers as a visionary spiritual leader, capable of envisioning improved conditions and the means to attain them, possessing future orientation, discerning the distinction between reality and ideality, and formulating an actionable plan to actualize his vision. Extensive and public recitation activities, the establishment of organizational branches in diverse regions, the hosting of national and international seminars, and the cultivation of relationships with political elites constitute the strategy to enhance influence among the populace of Aceh and the broader archipelago for the pursuit of an ideal. This undoubtedly leaves a profound impact on the hearts of his supporters.

The local elections in Aceh appeared to serve as both a catalyst and an advantage for Amran Waly and MPTT-I to expand their prominence and influence inside the religious discourse of Acehnese society. Particularly when his political backing was extended to the local party that triumphed in the gubernatorial election, and at the zenith of Amran's confirmation as Qadhi Malikul Adil, this constituted a significant setback for his adversaries, as well as an indication that Amran and MPTT-I were no longer impervious to the dominance of Dayah power. Ultimately, competition within the religious domain merged with politics, evolving into a contest of charisma.

The charisma competition in this issue manifests on numerous levels. The initial struggle for charisma exists between the extended family of Abuya Muda Waly's descendants: Amran Waly on one side and Muhibuddin Waly, Jamaluddin Waly, and Ruslan Waly on the other. Each have charisma in the eyes of the Acehnese populace. Muhibuddin Waly and Jamaluddin Waly are frequently cited by the dayah to counter and critique Amran Waly's movement, wherein a son of Abuya Mudawali, possessing charisma, must contend with his siblings who have also inherited their father's charm. In this instance, ancestral charisma has been bequeathed to family members, resulting in significant ramifications that frequently incite intrigue and conflict among siblings. Familial charisma can monopolize economic, political, and social chances. The decline frequently observed in familial charisma is the misuse of aristocratic privileges by political elites, leading to social arrogance and the monopolization of diverse resources without corresponding merit.

Conversely, competition exists between the impersonal charisma of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), which continues to acknowledge MPTT as part of the *tariqat ahlussunnah wal jamaah*, and the Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama (MPU), which is inclined to embrace the perspectives of Dayah Ulama. Consequently, the MPU has urged the Aceh Government to cease all MPTT-I activities, a recommendation made after careful evaluation of the circumstances on the ground. The two governmental partner institutions undoubtedly exhibit disparities in outlook and organization. MUI

can evaluate the issue more objectively as they are not entangled in the local controversy; their assessment of MPTT is solely grounded in normative theological perspectives. Conversely, MPU's membership predominantly comprises dayah circles that have consistently criticized MPTT from the outset, rendering it challenging for them to maintain neutrality in their evaluation of the situation.

The rivalry for charisma exists between Amran Waly and the Dayah Ulama, institutionally represented by MPTT and Tastafi. The MPTT's Islamic instruction in Aceh, governed by dayah ulama, tends to overlook the Sufi aspect, which is considered crucial for enhancing prayer and devotion. Acehnese Muslims are confined to a practice of religion that is superficial and formal, resulting in a loss of essence and significance; thus, it is imperative to rejuvenate the spirit of worship that has diminished by expanding the understanding of tawhid and tariqat. The Tastafi community contends that MPTT diminishes the significance of fiqh, one of the three essential components of religion: tawhid, fiqh, and tasawwuf. The absence of any of these elements raises concerns about individuals potentially falling into a distorted interpretation of tawhid and tasawwuf. The contentious debates between these two organizations persist in invigorating the religious conversation inside Acehnese culture, facilitated by different muzakarah meetings, seminars, and recitations. Mutual critique and rebuttal transpired not only among academics but also among advocates and sympathizers, invigorating the political conversation in Aceh.

## **5. Conclusions**

The situation involving Abuya Amran Waly and MPTT-I demonstrates that charisma is crucial for the establishment and maintenance of religious authority in society. Max Weber posits that charisma represents a form of non-rational power that emerges in times of crisis and is ascribed to an individual regarded as having extraordinary qualities. Abuya Amran Waly attained charisma not only from his lineage, being the son of a charismatic priest, but also through a comprehensive spiritual and social commitment. The charisma transformed into a social and institutional force that produced a collective allure, notwithstanding critiques and fatwas from the predominant dayah experts and local religious organisations. Despite considerable opposition to MPTT-I's tenets, Abuya Amran's charisma managed to maintain the loyalty of a portion of Acehnese society, especially among individuals seeking spiritual comfort at a period of social and theological turmoil. The codification of charisma began concurrently with organisational development and participation in local political networks. This study confirms that Weber's concept of charisma is relevant for understanding contemporary religious dynamics, especially in communities with emotional and hereditary links to religious leaders. This event highlights the need of understanding the relationship between individual charisma, institutional routine, and socio-political conflict in the sustainability of religious authority.

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