



The Authority of *Ulama* towards Politics: The Role of *Teungku*, *Tuan Guru* and *Kiai* in Nation Below the Wind

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Article History</p> <p>Received: October 19, 2022</p> <p>Revised: November 23, 2022</p> <p>Accepted: November 30, 2022</p> <p>Published: Desember 1, 2022</p> <p>Keyword: <i>Authority; Islamic Leadership; Islamic Sharia; Politics; Ulama</i></p> <p>Copyright (c) 2022 M. Alkaf, Muhammad Said, Saiful Hakam</p> 	<p>This article discussed the relationship between <i>ulama</i> and politics in three types of elite Islamic leadership in Indonesia: <i>Teungku</i> in Aceh, <i>Tuan guru</i> in Lombok, Nusa Tenggara Barat, and <i>Kiai</i> in Java. The research was organized based on the central questions; what was the political role of <i>Teungku</i>, <i>Tuan guru</i>, and <i>Kiai</i>, and what was their authority in the dynamics of local and national politics? This research used qualitative methods with an ethnographic approach. Data was collected through direct observation, interviews, review of written sources, and documentation data. This article found that <i>Teungku</i>, <i>Tuan guru</i>, and <i>Kiai</i>, in addition to being religious elites, also played the role of political elites. With the capital of religious authority at their disposal, they were confident to engage in practical politics. <i>Teungku</i> in Aceh was actively involved in redefining the narrative of the Acehnese nation by promoting the formalization of Islamic Sharia through a policy of special autonomy. With this policy, <i>Teungku's</i> position became more substantial and strategic politically and religiously. While in Lombok, <i>Tuan guru</i> became a local strongman who seized legislative and executive power in Nusa Tenggara Barat. They succeeded in seizing local power from the Sasak aristocratic circles. Meanwhile, <i>Kiai</i> in Java appeared to color Indonesia's discourse and political system from the beginning. Nevertheless, they managed to become part of the power in national leadership history. The relationship of the three religious elites to politics was ultimately in line with the strengthening of authority, religious traditions, and religious institutions.</p>

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Introduction

In the era of democratization, *ulama* played a significant role in the world of politics in Indonesia. *Ulama* was no longer considered one of the groups that inhabit *pesantren* (Islamic Collage) or madrasahs as religious teachers, but could also play a role in determining the politic. As in the case of blasphemy of Basuki Cahaya Purnama (Ahok) in the hustle and bustle of the DKI Jakarta Regional Election, the MUI issued its religious attitudes and opinions stating that Ahok had committed blasphemy against the Quran, insulting *ulama* and Muslims. The MUI's attitude and opinion ignited significant actions from various Islamic groups in Jakarta. The involvement of *ulama* and politics in Indonesia was a long narrative in modern Indonesian history, such as the work of the Masyumi Party, the Darul Islam rebellion, the social revolution, and the Islamic party during the New Order (Sjamsuddin, 1990).

The study of the relationship between *ulama* and politics tended to look at three things mainly: *First*, the definition of *ulama* was too normative because it places *ulama* as an object rather than an ambitious subject of seizing power; *Second*, Indonesians attention has been more concerned with Javanese dynamics in the study of science related to *ulama* (Van Bruinessen, 1994); *Third*, the fragmentation of religious studies related to *ulama* through the construction of alternative *ulama* definitions through *Tuan*, *guru*, and *Teungku* was indeed more representative to counter the definition of *ulama* that focuses too much on *Kiai* which was too Javanese rather than Islam (Arrauf Nasution et al., 2019). The three trends above show that studies of authority, *ulama*, and politics in Indonesia tend to ignore the complexity of understanding these relationships. Each region has its uniqueness and differentiation in looking at the position of *ulama* in the political region and its religious authority.

The purpose of this paper was to complement the shortcomings of previous studies that should have paid attention to the diversity of dimensions of issues related to religious, *ulama*, and political authority. In particular, this paper shows that the construction of religious authority and the relationship between *ulama* and politics was a central dimension shown by various regions in Indonesia. In line with this, this paper proposes the argument that post-New Order democratization has contributed significantly to the vertical mobility of the clergy within the political sphere. The argument that the period of democratization after the New Order has contributed to the mobilization of the clergy in the political sphere has given a newer perspective on social change after what was taking place. To defend the thesis, the author discussed each theme in three regions. In Aceh, there was a socio-political transformation of the *Teungku* faction as the owners of religious authority. In Lombok, to analyze the authority of *the Tuan guru* and his political agency. Finally, in Java, there was political mobility between *Kiai* and *santri*.

Research Method

This article used qualitative research. The data in this research was obtained from in-depth interviews, documentation, and a literature review. The context of ethnographic methods in this study focused on the meaning of scholarly actors, namely *Teungku*, *Kiai*, and *Tuan guru*, along with the sociocultural constructions that shape them. The ethnographic approach was used to provide a holistic picture of the research subject by emphasizing the individual's daily experiences by observing and interviewing *Teungku*, *Tuan guru*, and *Kiai*. According to Cresswell (2012),

ethnographic design is a qualitative research procedure for describing and analyzing various cultural groups that interpret patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language that develop and are used by a community over time. Therefore, the design of this ethnographic research was a qualitative study that describes, and analyzes the authority of *the Tuan guru, Kiai, and Teungku* as part of a sociocultural group that aims to interpret various patterns of behavior, and beliefs that develop over time (Lecompte et al., 1993).

Furthermore, ethnography is a description, interpretation, or interpretation of a person regarding a culture or social system that develops in society. Therefore, researchers study various patterns of behavior shown by the community, habits, and ways of life, including grammar used as a means of daily communication. Qualitative research with ethnographic methods was expected to be able to find new concepts and theories based on the culture of a society, considering that qualitative aims to produce new theories, not a test of emerging theories. Therefore, the researcher must be intensive and careful in observing the object of his research.

The final result of ethnographic research was a comprehensive descriptive narrative accompanied by an interpretation of all aspects of life and describing the complexity of the social facts of life. The ethnographic design was included in the qualitative approach because it aims to describe an object studied in the research, be it social class, the status of a group, and so on. The assessment was based on written, and oral findings from the group of people studied, as stated by Bogdan and Taylor that qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words of people and observable behaviors.

In the context of this study, this qualitative approach with ethnographic theory would be used to decipher and interpret the agency of scholars such as *Teungku, Tuan guru, and Kiai* within the group he leads, and how they establish their authority, both in religious and political life. In summary, this research will provide an overview of how religious elites in Indonesian regions such as Aceh, Lombok, and Java play their role in the social structure of society, the state, and the changing political climate.

Results and Discussion

The commander of the Iskandar Muda Aceh regional command, Colonel M. Yasin, read a letter from Daud Beureuh, the supreme leader of Darul Islam, from his place of resistance in the interior of North Aceh. Daud Beureuh wrote about how long ago Aceh yearned for the formalization of Islamic law (Nur El Ibrahimy, 1982).

"Know, O beloved people of Aceh, that Islamic sharia was quite broad, perfect and alive, sufficient for all areas of life and human life."

"Ketahuilah wahai rakyat Atjeh jang terjinta, bahwa Sjari'at Islam tjukup luas sempurna dan hidup, mentjukupi segala bidang hidup dan kehidupan manusia".

The letter was his last resistance to the Central Government for nearly a decade to defend the so-called *maruah*.

Daud Beureuh's presence on the Acehnese political scene since the early 20th century, which ended in his decision to take up arms, was a new type of the presence of the Acehnese *ulama* after coming into contact with Islamic renewal. This idea of Islamic renewal then made Beureuh (in particular) and the *ulama*, who were members of *Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh* (PUSA) made group, a new social class in Aceh

during the colonial period and the national revolution. The legitimacy of the modernist *ulama* as religious leaders in Aceh was also inseparable from the rural social system of Acehese society at that time. For this reason, Daud Beureuh felt that the Acehese no longer needed the Sultan as a leader because, for him, it was not beneficial to replace one feudal form with another feudal (Sjamsuddin, 1999). According to Sjamsuddin, if what was measured was personal sacredness, the position of the highest leader of the Acehese people lies with him. According to *Teungku* David Beureuh, he has that qualification. Some people consider themselves no longer mere mortals but between men and angels.

Traces of the *Teungku* faction's wedges of authority, charisma, and politics in Aceh could be traced back to the late 19th century. The existence of the *Teungku* circle, which initially only became an advisor to the king for centuries, changed its role due to the insistence of the western colonial nation (Azra, 2004). This led *ulama* to be withdrawn from their communities in *dayah* to become political leaders, especially warlords (Alfian, 1987). Such a situation then made the *ulama*, who were members of PUSA, re-read the position of the *ulama* and politics in Aceh by constructing history through the statement that it was the *ulama* group (in the case of PUSA) who were absent as leaders of Aceh to replace the sultanate structure (Ali et al., 2008).

PUSA was a continuation of anti-colonial ideas in the body of an Islamic society inferior to Europeans. Therefore, the way to deal with the colonization was to accompany the modernity brought by the colonials and a re-reading of the involvement of religions and *ulama* in politics. Such an idea was called Islamism when thinking about Islamic ideals trying to be translated into every practice in the state (Tibi, 2012). The Islamic renewal group then saw this view of Islamism as the involvement of religious ideas in legislation and the involvement of the clergy in the management of statehood. The PUSA memorandum was one of the best explanations in Aceh. In addition, even during the Darul Islam rebellion, the idea of becoming an *ulama* as the highest political leader was even stated in the Batee Kureng Charter, which appointed Beureuh as the State Guardian in the *Negara Islam Indonesia/Negara Bagian Aceh* (NII/NBA) structure (Aisyah et al., 2008). The existence of this *ulama* certainly contributed to the growth of the idea of the absence of a secular division of roles in Aceh, as seen in the relationship between *Kiai* and politics in Java.

The Darul Islam rebellion contributed to the loss of the role of reforming *ulama* in Aceh which later began to be replaced by the traditional *ulama* (Sjamsuddin, 1990). The contestation between the two groups of scholars was typical of Aceh, which does not occur anywhere else, both in Java, West Sumatra, and West Nusa Tenggara. In other regions, such as in West Sumatra, tensions between reformer *ulama* and traditions were in areas of religious debate (Hamka, 1958). In the Aceh region, tensions between the two groups also involve political affairs (Miswar, 2019). The contestation of reformers and modernists in Aceh began with the struggle for religious authority. Each of the two groups of scholars forms its social structure through educational institutions, madrasas, and *dayahs* (Sulaiman, 1997). Reforming *ulama*, who were members of the All-Aceh Ulema Association, consolidated all madrasas in Aceh and even explicitly established a particular school to produce teachers (Nur El Ibrahimy, 1982). Meanwhile, *dayah ulama* maintain their religious structure and authority in *dayah* educational institutions (Mizaj, 2018).

In resolving the Darul Islam conflict, there was an agenda from Ali Hasimy to unite these two factions in the grand plan of Kopelma Darussalam. For modernist scholars, the place was in IAIN Ar-Raniry, while for traditional group scholars, *dayah Manyang Teungku Chiek Pante Kulu* was formed. Even specifically for *Dayah Manyang Teungku Chiek Pante Kulu*, a curriculum was compiled that maintains material that has long been developed in *Dayah*, as well as the addition of other materials (Feener, 2012). However, the offer was rejected by the traditional *ulama* class. They prefer to return to their old communities in rural areas. By returning to their communities, traditional *ulama* establish their religious authority and immunity from attempts at bureaucratic religion. This choice allowed scholars from traditional circles to develop their scientific networks. It was not experienced by reforming *ulama* who not only lost their influence in society because they lost the structure of madrasas in rural areas but even their religious authority because they were absorbed in the religious bureaucracy.

The absorption into the bureaucracy, especially during the New Order period, eliminated aspects of PUSA's political ideology, but it did not take away the spirit of progress they had for a long time. The presence of reforming scholars and *ulama* in the state structure at MUI of Aceh, such as Ismail Muhammad Syah (Ismuha) and Ibrahim Husein, alums of the Normal Islam School PUSA has provided an advanced Islamic theological and *fiqh* basis for the New Order development agenda. One of them was by issuing an MUI fatwa allowing the autopsy of corpses for the benefit of scientific work as a condition for establishing the Faculty of Medicine at Syiah Kuala University (Amiruddin, 2003).

However, in the context of the New Order, *Dayah Ulama* experienced marginalization, so his agency experienced a crisis (Nirzalin, 2011, 2012). It could be read because the *Dayah Ulama*, in contrast to the reformer scholars who have transformed the bureaucratic structure of the state, have not undergone a modernization process. The faction maintained its long-standing tradition, to the point of being a decades-old, as a rural *ulama* who was not involved in the bureaucratic agenda. This then implied the low social mobility they carried out, so they were not involved in Suharto's Islamization project at the end of his leadership. At the end of the New Order, Suharto began to make peace with Islam after previously being suspicious of the existence of an Islamic agenda that he considered inconsistent with national interests. One of the alignments and closeness was by forming of the Indonesian Muslim Scholars Association because of the logical consequences of the formation of a new middle class of Indonesian Muslims (Hefner, 2000).

The situation began to change when Suharto's leadership ended, which resulted in the emergence of democratization and demands for regional autonomy. In Aceh, demands for broad autonomy echoed loudly, one of which was to formalize Islamic law (Abubakar, 2020). This formalization of Islamic law then put the position of the *ulama*, which had been eliminated during the New Order period, back into a more strategic position through the issuance of *Qanun* Province Nangroe Aceh Darussalam (NAD) No. 9 of 2002 concerning the Relationship between the Working Procedures of the Ulema Consultative Assembly with the Executive, Legislative, and Other Agencies. The existence of the *qanun* has restored the position of the *ulama* in Aceh's political and governmental structure after the New Order. Of course, what the scholars mean here was from the traditional circles who gained their position after

the reformers lost influence in Aceh. one of the factors for the rise of traditional *ulama* was that the Free Aceh group during the conflict contributed to the dominance of the *ulama* group in social, political and religious relations in peacetime (Alkaf et al., 2022).

It could be seen in the rampant struggle for urban mosques, which initially became the base of Aceh's modernist Muslims (Miswar, 2017). In addition, topics such as *fiqh*, kalam, and Sufism, usually discussed in the traditional Muslim tradition in *Dayah*, were now delivered openly at the Baiturrahman Grand Mosque, Banda Aceh (Ramadhan, 2022). The rise of traditional *ulama* then has implications for the formation of intolerance to intra-religious minority groups. In its development, intolerance was awakened because of the state's support (Nirzalin & Febriandi, 2022). He most recent case was the issuance of a policy from the Bireueun Regency Government that prohibits the construction of Muhammadiyah mosques in Samalanga (Lintas Nasional, 2022).

Previously, the Aceh Consultative Assembly, now dominated by traditionalist *ulama*, had issued *Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama* (MPU) Fatwa number 09 of 2014 concerning the Understanding, Thinking, Practice, and Broadcasting of Islam in Aceh (AcehProv, 2014). He fatwa then resulted in the prohibition of salafi-style recitation (MPU Acehprov, 2014) and the rejection of Salafist preachers (Anthony, 2019; Mabruroh, 2019).

In addition, the clergy also took advantage of the political space that reopened by seizing executive and legislative positions. In some areas in Aceh, *ulama* contested the regional head election (Aceh.tribunews.com, 2016). The more open political space encouraged the clergy to form local political parties. Initially, this local political party was compensation for former combatants who made peace with the Indonesian Government (Isra, 2005). However, in practice, many local parties were founded not from other civic circles, including traditional Islamic groups founded by the Gabthat Party and the Partai Darul Aceh (PDA). However, the dominant victory was still obtained by local parties from combatant backgrounds (Nurhasim, 2016). After the Aceh Party experienced a decline (Setyadi, 2018), this political space was tried to be seized by a new party that also had a background in *ulama* and students who founded the Partai Aceh Aman Sejahtera (PAS) (Atjeh Watch, 2022; KIP Aceh, 2022). this political space was tried to be seized by a new party that also had a background in *ulama* and students who founded the Partai Aceh Aman Sejahtera (PAS) (Prioritas, 2022). The presence of PAS demonstrates the continuation of the close relationship between *ulama* and politics in any socio-religious movement in Aceh.

***Tuan Guru* and Political Agency in Lombok**

Michael Laffan's work entitled *The Making of Indonesian Islam: Orientalism and the Narration of Sufi Past*, he told at length about the development of Islam in the Archipelago and how the agency of scholars in the process of Islamization of this region. The cover of this book embedded a sketch of a bearded figure, a form of traditional guardian persona (Darwis Sufi) belonging to Kamil Yasin of the East Lombok Kelayu people that have been given to Snouck Hurgronje. Yasin was a Lombok who corresponded with Snouck and met Snouck in Makkah during the Hajj season. According to Snouck, the sketch was a form of "Haji Baok" (Sasak language), Haji Baok means Hajj with a long beard, which depicts the physical characteristics of the Darwis Sufis who were in Makkah in the late 19th century.

Kamil Yasin's meeting with Snouck in Makkah was undoubtedly possible because of the discovery of the steamer and the vital position of Labuhan Haji in East Lombok, which opened access to the mobility of the *Sasak* people across the ocean to Makkah (*Haramain*). According to historians, the *Sasak* people began to flock to Makkah to perform the Hajj or study. It has been going on since the 18th century. At first, the people of the Archipelago (*washable jawiyyin*) left for Makkah with the aim of Hajj, and then others chose to settle to study Islam for a long time. The role of the *Sasak* Muslim middle-class family undoubtedly supported the mobility of the "Lombok wandering students" studying in Makkah. Namely, parents who have financial capabilities. Thus, the *Sasak* Muslim middle-class family was essential in transmitting Islamic knowledge between the Middle East and Lombok. Later, when the wandering students return home, they get the title of *Tuan guru*.

Tuan Guru's position in Lombok was similar to that of *Kiai* in Java and *Teungku* in Aceh. The *Kiai* in Java were people who have charismatic authority because of their religious capacity, piety, and traditional leadership. In Aceh, *Teungku* was a religious title given to figures who knew Islamic religious books. Thus, it could be said that *Teungku*, *Tuan guru*, and *Kiai* were *ulama* or religious elites who became leaders of the people, actors of change, mediators, and inspirers in the socio-religious life of society. Etymologically, *Tuan guru* comes from two words, *Tuan* and "Guru." *Tuan* means people who have performed the Hajj. Meanwhile, *Guru* was people who had a qualified religious knowledge capacity. Thus, *the Tuan guru* was an exemplary *ulama* figure and became the leader of the people in the *Sasak* community. Nevertheless, in the socio-anthropological construction of the *Sasak* Muslim community, the legitimacy of *Tuan guru*-ness has strict conditions: Firstly, the figure of the *Tuan guru* must be a Middle Eastern alum; Secondly, it must have extensive religious knowledge (*tafaqquh fiddin*); Thirdly, gaining broad recognition from the local community; Fourthly, the *Tuan guru's* authority would be increasingly recognized if he has affiliations with specific Islamic organizations.

In addition to *Tuan guru*, in Lombok, several terminologies were synonymous with the capacity of *ulama*, such as *Kiai*, *Qadhi*, and *Dea Guru*. These terms were popularly used before *Tuan guru's* terminology was so well established. For example, it was used in *Babad Lombok* manuscripts. Nevertheless, since the 18th century, the term *Tuan guru* has strengthened. It has become a marker of the emergence of a new social class in the socio-religious landscape of *Sasak* Muslim society. Even in the culture of modern *Sasak* society, namely the late 19th and early 20th centuries, *the Tuan guru* became the highest social class in the social class hierarchy of the *Sasak* people, shifting *Sasak* aristocratic positions such as the titles *Lalu*, *Baiq*, and *Raden*.

The *Tuan guru* were the main actors in the formation of Islamic expressions and ideologies of the *Sasak* people. Some of the early *Tuan guru* generations, as Jamaluddin called were *Tuan guru* Umar Mbun Timbe, *Tuan guru* Abdul Gaffur Sumbekah, *Tuan guru* Amin Sesela, *Tuan guru* Mustafa Sekarbela, *Tuan guru* Umar Kelayu and other names. These figures came from middle-class families of *Sasak* Muslims so they could access Islamic education in *Haramain*. The role of Muslim middle-class families in the chain of Islamization of Southeast Asia could be read more broadly in Francis R. Bradley's work entitled "*Islamic Reform, the Family, and Knowledge Networks Linking Mecca to Southeast Asia in the Nineteenth Century.*"

From the lens of anthropology and history, Islam in Lombok was shaped by the influence of early Islamization from various directions: Java, Sumbawa, and Makassar. At this stage, Islamization and transmission of Islam were locally-regionally prolonged. However, from the 18th to the 20th century, the increasing number of Sasak people who studied Islam to Haramain also changed the sociological map of da'wah (Islamization) in Lombok. The backflow of *Tuan guru* from Makkah became a bridge connecting the distance of Islamic knowledge between the "peripheral" Lombok and the "central" Makkah. Therefore, the process of "the making homes of Islam" by the *Tuan guru* in Lombok was considered authoritative and presented a more comprehensive Islam.

In short, the *Tuan guru*'s conception and typology cannot be separated from the changes in the socio-cultural and political structure. In the colonial era, for example, *Tuan guru* was synonymous with people who had studied at *haramain* and later became *mursyid* in Lombok. The primary role of the *Tuan guru* in this phase was as the leader of the people and, at the same time, the resistance movement against the colonials. In the phases of the independence and post-independence revolutions, the *Tuan guru*'s base shifted slightly. *Tuan Guru* was synonymous with *Haramain* alumni who became leaders of the ummah, owned madrasas or boarding schools, and was affiliated with specific Islamic organizations. The main base of the authority of the *Tuan guru* shifted from the groups of the order to the masses of Islamic mass organizations. Meanwhile, post-independence, in modern Indonesian culture, the popularity and establishment of the *Tuan guru*'s authority was not only shaped by the capital of Middle Eastern alums, owning madrasas, and affiliates of mass organizations but the extent of his access to politics-power. Thus, the *Tuan guru* has a religious face and a political face at the same time.

In the era of the old order in the culture of liberal democracy, *Tuan guru* played his agency in local and national politics. At this time, two prominent figures were involved in politics, namely *Tuan guru* Zainuddin Pancor, Lombok Timur, and *Tuan guru* Faisal, Central Lombok. According to Wahid, when Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) left Masyumi in 1952, *Tuan guru* Zainuddin still chose to stay in Masyumi, while *Tuan guru* Faisal left Masyumi and joined the NU party. The second political *ijtihad* of *Tuan guru* in the political constellation of liberal democracy was undoubtedly to safeguard the political aspirations of Muslims in Lombok, especially from its main rival *Partai Nasionalis Indonesia* (PNI), which Sasak aristocrats filled so that the local political map in Lombok remains controlled and won by Muslims.

However, differences in political institutions between NU and Masyumi led to the fragmentation of the authority of the *Tuan guru* administration in Lombok. Especially between *Tuan guru* Zainuddin and *Tuan guru* Faisal. In 1953 *Tuan guru* Zainuddin founded the Nahdlatul Wathan community organization, which became a distinction from NU in Lombok. *Tuan Guru* Zainuddin founded this mass organization to strengthen his religious authority and support the network of madrasahs he had pioneered since the 1930s spread across Lombok. In short, the political dynamics of the liberal democratic period, followed by the rupture of NU and Masyumi, also influenced the fragmentation of authority and the polarization of identity among the Lombok Muslim community, especially between NU and Nahdlatul Wathan (NW) followers.

The 1955 elections in Lombok showed the *Tuan guru*'s active partisanship in the political arena. From the archives of documents from *konstituen.net*, it was reported that there were three *Tuan Guru* who passed to become constituents, namely 1) *Tuan guru* Muhammad Zainuddin Pantgor, East Lombok Regency, Member No. 108 of the Masyumi faction; (2) *Tuan guru* H. Abdul Hafidz Sulaiman, Kediri, West Lombok, Member No. 450 of Masyumi faction and; (3) *Tuan guru* Mustadjad, Pagutan of West Ampenan district, West Lombok, No. 349 member of NU faction. From this data, *Tuan guru*, as the representative of the Sasak community in the constituent assembly, was undoubtedly involved in the struggle of the Constituente Sessions in formulating Indonesian and Islamic relations.

The happening of tragedy of the September 30 Movement (G30S) of 1965 became the gateway to the fall of the old order. Then the appearance of the March 11, 1966 Supersemar (*Surat Perintah Sebelas September/ The Order of Eleventh March*) made Suharto, as the Security and Order Operations Command Commander, take over Sukarno's power. Suharto used this Supersemar magic letter to rule for 32 years. Amid that regime change, the *Tuan guru* played his political agency in negotiations with power. *Tuan Guru* Zainuddin, for example, chose to join Suharto's Golkar.

In comparison, some other *Tuan Guru* remained in NU (party). Save the author, the political *ijtihad* of *Tuan guru* Zainuddin joining Golkar was an effort to maintain his resilience and survival as *Tuan guru* and politician, of course, also to maintain the Nahdlatul Wathan mass organization he has founded. However, because *Tuan guru* Zainuddin had a political trauma, namely when he became opposition to Masyumi, his political career had to end along with the "forced dissolution" of Masyumi by the Sukarno regime.

During the New Order era, *Tuan Guru* Zainuddin was the most prominent figure in Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB). With all his charisma and authority as the leader of the largest Ormas in NTB, he became the backbone of Golkar's victory in this region. The *Tuan guru*, under the auspices of the Nahdlatul Wathan (NW) Community Organization, became Suharto's partner in the success of various development and social programs in NTB (Noor et al., 2014).

NW mass organization under the leadership of *Tuan guru* Zainuddin seemed to be very intimate with the New Order. However, during the 32 years that the New Order was in power, Suharto never gave NW cadres the opportunity to become regional officials, such as governors or regents. Instead, military officers filled the regent positions to the governor in Lombok-NTB from Java assigned by Suharto. Suharto's political strategy only made NW a granary of votes and *Tuan guru* as agents who campaigned for the New Order program but did not let NW cadres come to power. From 1945-1998, the local leadership in Lombok-NTB has never been held by the son of the region. Instead, the leaders of NTB, from time to time, were people assigned from Jakarta, both the Sukarno era and the Suharto era.

Based on data from the NTB Provincial Information Service, the leadership of local people as Governors began after the reform, namely when Lalu Serenata (Sasak aristocratic circle) succeeded in becoming governor in 2003-2008. In the following period, in 2008-2013 and 2013-2018, the local leadership (Governor) was seized by *the Tuan guru*, namely *Tuan Guru* Bajang (TGB) Muhammad Zainul Majdi. TGB Zainul Majdi marks the success of *the Tuan guru*'s political vertical mobility in Lombok-NTB because TGB became the first *Tuan guru* in NTB history to become Governor.

In the long course of his proselytizing and in the academic forums he attended, TGB certainly met with a variety of different groups, both ideologically, culturally, and politically. He met with Islamic traditionalist groups that were somewhat sentimental with Islamic modernist groups, and vice versa with Islamic modernist groups who did the same to traditionalist groups. He also met the 'pure nationalist' group and, on the other side, met the 'pure Islamist' group. He was present amid urban Muslim-urban groups and, at other times, in the majlis of agrarian—rural Muslim communities. Even TGB also spoke in front of non-muslim friends. Encounters with various colors of ideas, thoughts, beliefs, groups, and political orientations were challenging. The TGB must carefully convey constructive matters for Islam and nationality in proportion.

It was in many of those encounters that it could be said that the TGB played the role of its "Wasatiyyah Islam" and "middle ground politics." He was always in the in-between space, in the middle of two poles, paddling and surfing between the waves to maintain balance. TGB in this context, it was pretty ingenious to understand the context when the face of religion should be more raised and when the face of nationality should be more highlighted (Said, 2020).

During Ahok's events, for example, TGB personally included people who disagreed with Ahok. For TGB, Ahok's statement interfered with interpreting other religions' scriptures. Moreover, the remarks were ejected in public. Then TGB was involved in the 212 demonstration wave to demonstrate its religious commitment. After Ahok's case was handled legally, for TGB, the case does not need to be extended; let the law solve it. However, when some groups (212) continue to use Ahok's case as a "firing tool" and "political instrument" to win a political contestation. So TGB withdrew and did not want to get involved in the waves of action that volumes. Even when the 'roadshow' of 212 alumni to Lombok-NTB, TGB looked cold, did not have many comments, nor was he present at the event. As an Azhary in a religious mindset and a democrat in political stance, TGB feels that Indonesianness should remain anchored to two consciousnesses, namely Islam and nationalism. According to TGB, these two things should not be faced diametrically because nationalism in Indonesian history also emerged from Islamic consciousness and the struggle against the invaders.

Shortly, Indonesia's political polarization grew louder. The poles of "cebong" and "kampret" were getting stronger. The TGB then opened its voice, loudly expressing its disapproval of the use of war verses in political contestation in Indonesia. He disagrees with the jargon of "Allah's party" versus "Satan's party." He also disagreed with labeling "hypocrite" to fellow nationals who chose different political paths. A precarious stance amid the euphoria of the turbulent wave of "Islamic politics." Of course, the TGB has come under attack from a group that used to question it as one of Indonesia's presidential candidates. His name was crossed out by the Alumni Fraternity (PA) 212 as a list of Presidential Candidates. For its political attitudes and views, TGB was thrown into a situation of being 'loved' and then 'hated' by a group. Then in the other group, once 'hated,' then "loved."

TGB's track record in politics and religion has always been in an all-round situation between Islam and nationalism, tradition and modernity, and stagnation and renewal. TGB continues to surf concrete issues in the Indonesian space in those situations. He is looking for the most moderate points of two opposite poles. TGB does not seem to want to get caught up in banal cliché issues. He chooses to shy away

from all the non-substantive commotion that tends to lead to unnecessary tensions. TGB carried out its role and contribution as a political child of the nation. However, despite all the controversy surrounding it, the TGB has emerged as a representation of the face of Sasak *ulama* in the National political arena.

Nowadays, the work and success of TGB Zainul Majdi in politics have further influenced the involvement of many other *Tuan guru* to join political parties. Especially the *Tuan guru*, who were alumni of Al-Azhar Egypt. In addition, the authority of the *Tuan guru* of Egyptian Al-Azhar Alumni in Lombok was increasingly dominating, eroding the alums of Makkah and Yemeni Madrasahs. On the other hand, the more Middle East alums in Lombok, the more *Tuan guru* would be. This condition creates a geographical division of authority areas, and each *Tuan guru* has a "freedom" that was the base of his militant masses in proselytizing, even if one day it could be used as his voter base if in the future a *Tuan guru* decides to run in a legislative, regent, or governor election.

Java, *Kiai*, and Traditionalist Political Maneuver

Suppose we pay more attention to the political fact that the current vice president of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019-2024, was held by a *Kiai* whose age could be said to be elderly. In that case, it could be argued how strong the position of *Kiai* was in the Indonesian political universe, primarily in Java. *Kiai* continued to survive in his position as a teacher, exemplary Suri, and mass leader (Dhofier, 1982). But interestingly in the context of *Kiai* in Java, their motivation to enter politics was not to seize power but to protect religious rituals and traditions (Bush, 2009). So, politics is for religious purposes. This attitude was motivated by historical reasons when Modernist Islam, which calls themselves reformers, was critical and loudly attacking the customs and traditions by calling them *takhayul*, *bid'ah*, and *khurafat*. Intellectually, these reformers had new skills, namely the educated alumni of modern schools who had access to knowledge, capital, and symbols in the modern world at that time. Therefore, their appearance on the political stage and the indirect criticism also contributed to the shaking of *Kiai*'s authority as a firm holder of Islamic religious authority (Fealy, 1998).

Therefore, the political history of *Kiai* was not really to seize power but to strengthen the position of *Kiai* and the teachings and institutions it has face to face with modernist Islam (Bush, 2009). If traditional Islam was not political, recitation assemblies, huts, surau, mosques, sacred tombs, and madrassas could be abandoned and even faded. Therefore, the activities of *Kiai* in Java to protect and preserve traditions were extraordinarily remarkable. They did not hesitate to establish political parties, provide protection to non-Muslim minorities, and sit at the helm of the state as regents, governors, vice presidents, and even the president himself. The political context of the *Kiai* was the political context of saving tradition. Saving it from the attacks of Modernist and Salafist Islamists, whatever it was that could shake its authority and power over religion.

Ma'ruf Amin was an accomplished *Kiai* and politician who was a veteran. He probably did not think he would become the number two person in Indonesia all his life. Nevertheless, the zeal to perpetuate tradition with a plunge into the political arena permeates the heartstrings. Before his office at the vice president's palace, he served in the offices of the NU executive board and the Indonesian Ulema Council/ *Mejelis Ulama Indonesia* (MUI). Long before that, he had crossed the

parliamentary world representing the NU circle. His origins and curriculum vitae show that the status of *Kiai* he wears was not only naturally inherent but also a long career.

Although he was the son of a *Kiai* at the local level in Tangerang, he continues cultivating his *Kiai* identity by having a career as a politician in a political party founded by the *Kiai*, NU party and *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* (PPP). Previously, he also studied at Pondok Tebuireng, which was long known as the factory and warehouse of *Kiai*. He was also diligent in building people and Islamic boarding schools at the grassroots, especially in the environment he lives and has a career, namely North Jakarta, and in his hometown in Tangerang.

Ma'ruf Amin did not hesitate to present himself as a *Kiai* in public spaces. He always wears traditional *Kiai* Muslim clothes, namely sarongs, suits, and *peci*, traditional hat commonly worn by Muslims in Indonesia. Although it may seem trivial and symbolic, this outfit echoes to the public that the Islamic Tradition remains solid. The rows of *Kiai*, rows of students, and rows of Islamic boarding schools remained upright. That was, religious rituals and traditions still existed. He wore the official clothes of the *Kiai* and students in pesantren huts in all cities in Java. Note that symbols were essential in the political world.

Ma'ruf Amin's career in youth was pretty mediocre. It does not stand out, but it does not sink, either. However, Maruf Amin's position as a *Kiai* fluttered in the Reformation era. An Era When liberal politics and Islamic politics simultaneously grew stronger. At the time of SBY, Islamic politics gained ground. Islamic organizations outside nu and Muhammadiyah, usually small but loud-spoken organizations, were given space, assistance, and access to funds from the state. It was somewhat threatening to nu's position, as the actual Islamic organizations have this small mass, such as shaking the religious authority of the NU *Kiai* organization. These small mass organization groups were loud in polemics, especially related to religious issues, such as anti-Ahmadiyya cases, anti-Christianity, Christmas greetings, Shari'a Bank issues, interfaith marriages, and so on.

It was on this occasion that Ma'ruf Amin performed. He represented himself not as an ordinary member but as an authoritative *Kiai* leader. He joined the Indonesian Ulema Council during the presidency of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono as a new vehicle for Islamic politics with financial support and respect. Ma'ruf Amin worked actively in it. Like a pilgrim's prayer line, he does not stand only as a follower but as a priest. Again, it could be interpreted that in line with the Nahdliyin (members of Nahdlatul Ulama) doctrine, it was trying hard to block the pace of modernists in addition to Islamists. However, what Ma'ruf Amin did was hitch a ride on a new political wave to ensure that the *Kiai* continued to perform in that wave.

It is not the new actors performing. He appeared to be standing in the front row but was escorting the line, so it was not too far. It was evident in Ahok's case with the events of 212. *Kiai* Maruf Amin came to the front row as one of the leaders. Incident 212 was about accusations of blasphemy by the Governor of Jakarta, Ahok, which led to demonstrations by several Muslim groups and the Governor's detention. The events of 212 made the name of *Kiai* Ma'ruf Amin become popular person. He was hailed as the leader of the Muslims. The wisdom of this event, Jokowi regularly visited leading Islamic boarding schools in Java, building new affiliations from among the *nahdliyin*. This interpretation might have been too naïve. However, to be sure, the position of the *Kiai* still comes to the fore and comes forward, not in

the back row as a mere *makmum*. The mass of 212, who were anti-Ahok, was then very disappointed because Maruf Amin later became pro-Jokowi. He became Vice President from 2019-2024.

In the New Order era, Abdurrahman Wahid's name was known as a guardian as well as an intellectual (Barton, 2002). As a *Kiai*, every day, he receives visits from various remote villages and cities in Java. They ask for advice, from small things to big things. For example, suppose a request for a name for his grandson or child. Plea for a reasonable date for the wedding ceremony. Application for donations of funds for mosques in the village and others. Not infrequently, the guests who visited were also fellow *Kiai*, especially from remote villages, who asked for help to be connected with dignitaries in Jakarta regarding the construction program of boarding schools, madrasahs, and mosques.

The author once led a friend to visit the *Kiai* figure to ask for prayers and blessings to pass the scholarship exam to the United States. The *Kiai* unhesitatingly gave prayers and blessings, and then we both begged to say goodbye and did not forget to kiss the *kiai's* hand to get barakah. The comrade finally passed the scholarship and flew to America. When he became the general chairman of *Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama* (PBNU), the *Kiai* still casually went back and forth from home to the office, riding a public bus while carrying a newspaper.

As an intellectual, Gus Dur was good at writing, and his writings were often published in *Tempo Magazine*, *Kompas*, and *Prisma* journals. His essays usually contain stories behind the lives of the Islamic collage community. That was to proclaim to the public, the readers of educated people, the people of the city, that traditional Islam was not a threat and was not part of the aggressive politics of Islam. He established close relationships with the capital's intellectual circle, artists, and literati. Because he was probably so amazed at his extensive and deep knowledge of the world of film, the national film people appointed him as a member of the Jakarta Arts Council. They participated in selecting the best films in the *Citra Cup* nominations (Barton, 2002). This news stirred the world of *Kiai* in Java.

However, what made the image and charisma of this *Kiai* extraordinary was the political breakthrough to protect religious rituals and traditions, especially the *Kiai's* religious authority. It was worth remembering again that the country was so mighty at the height of the Suharto regime's glory. Financial logistics abound thanks to oil bombs and foreign aid from Japan and Western countries. At this time, when the country was strong, the regime implemented a harsh policy of authoritarianism. President Suharto, as the country's representative, carried out development in total. From top to bottom without any interference. In this situation, the organization of the NU *Kiai* bounced off the arena of power.

A General headed the Ministry of Religious Affairs. He ensured loudly and visibly that all employees obeyed the state, not the *Kiai*. Henceforth, the ministry was headed by an intellectual bureaucrat from modernist circles. As a result, the state provides more space for Modernist Islamists to access logistical sources of financial assistance from the state, including civil servants. This fact profoundly hurts the hearts of the *Kiai* ranks.

On the contrary, the organizations and parties of the *Kiai* were slumped and locked down. The culmination was when the regime imposed party fusion and the singular principle of Pancasila. The best *kiai* who had a talent for politics and built a career as a politician in parliament was completely bounced, displaced, and thrown

from the arena of power. Access to funds from the state was closed. In addition, the regime also strictly supervised the lives and activities of *Kiai* in all corners of Java. For example, the recitation assembly was supervised and must obtain permission.

Kiai Wahid then moves to break up the tradition to protect the tradition of stepping back to jump and lunge (Van Bruinessen, 1994). At first, he seized power in the body of the NU Executive Board. Then, declared a new doctrine of the 1926 NU *Khittah* (Sidiq, 1980). At the core of the declaration of the new doctrine of the *Khittah*, the NU accepted the single principle of Pancasila, which for the context of the time, meant that it was loyal to President Suharto (Van Bruinessen, 1994). The NU declared itself out of politics, and NU citizens were free to cast their votes, not necessarily with the PPP, which for the context at the time meant that NU *Kiai* and students could join the Party of *Golongan Karya* (Golkar), the official political vehicle of the government. President Suharto smiled happily and accepted the new ranks of NU's executive board. At the lower level, the state no longer supervises the activities of *Kiai*. Instead, state officials, regents, governors, ministers, and Golkar functionaries regularly visited *Kiai* and Islamic boarding schools. Not only visiting but also providing assistance and grants that were quite useful. At least, the *Kiai* could get logistical access from the state, although not as large and sophisticated as the Modernist Islamists, who had started infrastructure development projects for universities at that time.

The Suharto era was a difficult era for the *Kiai*. The military, technocrats, and bureaucrats dominated the state. There was no room for *Kiai* except in the realm of religious rituals. Unfortunately, even in religious rituals, the state exercised hegemony and ensured that *Kiai* did not control the ministry of religion as it was in Sukarno's time. Therefore, *Kiai* Wahid again made a breakthrough by reversing the classic course of Islamic politics in three anti, anti-tradition, anti-Christian and anti-Chinese. Such were the very naïve implications of the Islamic political history of the 1911 Syarekat Islam, Muhammadiyah 1912, and Masyumi 1950s, which continued until the 1970s when social and racial unrest persisted. *Kiai* Wahid seeks to protect tradition. For this context, local cultures include Balinese Hinduism, friendly with Christian communities, and protecting the Chinese people. In this case, he dared to support the Chinese couple's plea to enter into marriage in Confucianism (Barton, 2002). In addition, *Kiai* Wahid was active in the issues and practices of interfaith and interfaith relations. He was not infrequently invited to church to lecture about Islamic traditions.

On the contrary, it was not uncommon for him to invite pastors to visit Islamic boarding schools to meet *Kiai*. This breakthrough increased nu's new position and *Kiai's* when dealing with the state and predominantly modernist Islam. *Kiai* became known to be familiar and even gained support from indigenous communities, Christian communities, and Chinese communities.

In the last decade of his rule, Suharto began to face pressure from the military regarding his children's business. The strategic projects of the state were no longer controlled by the military but by the children of Sandalwood. Faced with criticism and displeasure from some military officers, Suharto built a new alliance with civilian politics, in this case, the Indonesian Muslim scholars association/ *Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia* (ICMI). Modernist Islamists. This new fact shocked the Islamic tradition, especially *Kiai* Wahid. For *Kiai* Wahid, Suharto's choice to embrace Modernist Islam caused a sense of disillusionment (Wahid & Fauzi Nasrullah, 1995).

Because the *Kiai* had agreed to accept the single principle of Pancasila, a decade later, Suharto even approved the establishment of a Modernist Islamic political organization. The presence of ICMI was like reviving the bitter memories of NU when it joined Masyumi and PPP. The position of *Kiai* would certainly lose prestige with reliable bureaucrats and technocrats. Wahid then founded the Democracy Forum to counter the advanced currents of Modernist Islam, which became a new vehicle for Suharto's politics.

When Western countries were no longer interested in supporting the monetary crisis that lowered the rupiah value, the IMF exerted policy pressures and increasingly strengthened domestic political pressures. Inevitably Suharto had to step down from power. He has been in power for thirty years and has the title of Father of Development. Before Suharto descended on cities in Java, there were anti-Chinese racial riots and the destruction of shops and churches. There was violence with casualties. *Kiai* Wahid also intervened to give orders to his followers, especially Banser, to protect Christians, Chinese citizens, and the church from violence. *Kiai* Wahid's attitude improved his image at the domestic and international levels.

After Suharto and the 1999 elections, one small but interesting fact was that the spectrum of national politics has again experienced polarization, like in the Sukarno era. Pure nationalists of the *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan* (PDIP), religious nationalists of Golkar, and Islamic nationalists, especially among Modernist Islamists who were divided into small political parties. Each faction needed to reach a consensus. In the 1999 General Assembly of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), electing the President and vice president, the nationalist faction received tremendous opposition from the Modernist Islamic faction that founded the central axis. The issue that developed at that time to attack Megawati, a woman should not be a leader according to Islamic law. The brief leadership of B.J. Habibie as President was a joyous time for Modernist Islamists as some of them managed to occupy ministerial positions and top leadership in the department. Recalls the heyday of Masyumi. However, the 1999 elections were somewhat disappointing among Modernist Islam and Political Islam. Because the votes obtained by Islamic parties, both traditional *Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa* (PKB) and PPP and modernist *Partai Amanat Nasional* (PAN) and *Partai Keadilan* (PK), were far below PDI-P and Golkar.

In addition, Modernist Islamists put forward presidential candidates from among little-known and less familiar and less rooted individuals. Aware of the shortcomings, the combination of Islamic parties except for the PKB, under the command of Amien Rais, one of the Modernist Islamic figures, the founder and general chairman of the PAN, a faithful cadre of Muhammadiyah, a graduate of a United States university, a UGM lecturer, a long-known prominent defender of Islam, founded the Central Axis Movement to mature a new political strategy against nationalists and unite the interests of Islamic parties. Here the political shah of Modernist Islam emerges, no longer through ICMI, which was closely related to Habibie and Suharto. At first, *Kiai* Wahid could have been more enthusiastic about responding to the central axis because *Kiai* Wahid and his followers tended to support Megawati's candidacy for President. However, the situation changed when the central axis approached the ranks of *Kiai* from among the Islamic Traditions. Here the term *Kiai* as a political force began to flutter.

The *Kiai* at Langitan. The Central Axis nominated *Kiai* Wahid as a presidential candidate. *However*, *Kiai* Wahid was not willing to be nominated if there was no blessing from the *Kiai*. Moreover, the names of the *Kiai* he asked for blessing did not mention except for the term *Kiai* Langitan. Here, *Kiai* Wahid shrewdly raises the *kiai's* position as a charismatic leader of society. It justifies the return of Islamic politics in the early days of the republic, the 1950s, when the NU was only transformed into a political party organization, where the most important decisions of the organization were not in the hands of the executive board who settled in the capital city of Jakarta but in the hands of the *Kiai* who settled in far corners of Java, in old Islamic boarding schools.

The figure of *Kiai* was again fluttering in the political universe in Java and nationally. In the end, *Kiai* Wahid managed to get a victory in the votes. The presidential election process in the Hall of the MPR Building took place in an Islamic Traditional atmosphere, interspersed with *Salawat* and loud mentions of the *kiai's* name. Such as repeating the debate in the constituent assembly of 1956 between religious nationalism and Islamic nationalism. The difference was that the constituent assembly failed to reach a consensus and was hastily dissolved by the President on the recommendation of the military, giving birth to the Presidential Decree back to the 1945 Constitution.

In contrast, the MPR general assembly presidential election was won by a central axis whose members were mainly followers of Modernist Islam and with a presidential candidate, a *Kiai*. Something that, when viewed in the political context of the 1950s, was highly implausible even for the context of the late 1990s. The Ark of the Republic of Indonesia entered the gates of the new era in 2000, with the President and head of state being a *Kiai*.

However, it was worth recalling the role of a *Kiai* who was now somewhat forgotten in the political breakthrough of Islam in Java. *Kiai* Wahab Hasbullah, for example, was a political figure who built the initial foundation for the political goals of the *Kiai* (Fealy, 1998). Namely politics for religious purposes, protecting and preserving religious rituals and traditions, especially the teachings and books of the four schools and their institutions, from cottages, and mosques, to sacred tombs. *Kiai* Wahab was known for several attitudes, one of which was to propose to his senior and teacher, Hadratus Sheikh KH Hasyim Asjarie, to give his blessing and approval to establish the *Nahdlatul Ulama* organization (Fealy, 1998).

The idea of *Kiai* Wahab Chasbullah was the best innovation of *Kiai* in Java and possibly the Islamic world. It was because *Kiai* Wahab Chasbullah founded the organization by imitating the social organization system that prevailed in the Dutch East Indies. There were administrators, regular meetings, fund collection and management, and systematic networks from the central, provincial, residency, district/city, sub-district, and village levels. Here the *Kiai* inevitably learn administrative and bureaucratic governance. The signboard signage was the best symbol legacy from this early era that can still be seen today. It was not uncommon to find signboards of *Nahdlatul Ulama* administrators in all districts, cities, sub-districts, and villages. Indonesia in the past was filled with signboards of administrators of various social and political organizations, such as Syarekat Islam, *Partai Indonesia Raya*/ Parindra, PNI, and Taman Siswa. However, most of them have disappeared with the changing times, except for two signboard signs, NU

and Muhammadiyah, because they have strong grassroots from cities to remote villages.

The second brave attitude in the early days of the Indonesian independence republic precisely in 1952, *Kiai* Wahab Chasbullah encouraged NU to turn into a political party (Fealy, 1998). At that time, NU was still merged with Masyumi. Masyumi *Kiai* Wahab dared to disagree with the Modernist Islamist faction, which at that time controlled the helm of the Masyumi party in terms of power. Masyumi elites were mostly graduates of Dutch schools, fluent in Dutch, and intellectual. It was not surprising that the Masyumi elite tended to doubt the skills of the *Kiai* who joined the helm because of the educational status of *Kiai*, who only graduated from Islamic boarding schools. Need to gain knowledge in managing modern organizations. This situation angered *Kiai* Wahab. He demanded equal rights and obligations as a fellow party administrator. *Kiai* Wahab decided to take NU out of Masyumi. He decided to turn NU into a political party. As a result, the decision to change NU to a political party raised a question mark (Zuhri, 1974).

This story was widely recorded in NU study books. When asked who would run the party's affairs, *Kiai* Wahab jokingly replied in *tamsil*. When I was going to buy a car, whether I should drive by myself, wouldn't I be able to hire a driver? Political parties were a vehicle for *Kiai* Wahab and the ranks of the *Kiai* behind him, who were his followers. Fifty years later, the national oligarchs formed their parties. At first, *Kiai* Wahab also lacked confidence in whether NU could succeed in becoming a party (Zuhri, 1974). However, because he was a *Kiai* worker who lobbied at the top level and did not hesitate to go downstairs to gather the ranks of *Kiai*, santri, and masses, in the 1955 elections NU as a political party managed to win 45 seats in parliament (Fealy, 1998).

After the PNI and Masyumi, the fourth number was the *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (PKI). In the historical context, the *Kiai* managed to gain power. A line of *Kiai* again curated the Ministry of Religious Affairs. From here, then, the Islamic Tradition circles could establish a position, stand on an equal footing, and face the Modernist Islamic circles. In working activities in parliament, *Kiai* Wahab, along with other *Kiai*, still wears sarongs, suits, turbans, or peci. Even when facing President Sukarno, leaders of the government's high bureaucracy, and military officers. They remain proud to wear sarongs and turbans. This outfit became an easy marker to see that *Kiai*, as veteran politician should be counted on and sometimes labeled as old-fashioned.

Conclusion

Based on the description above, Indonesia's relationship between scholars and politics was like a breath of breath. Nonetheless, the relationship was only sometimes consistent but volatile precisely. There was a time the relationship between *ulama* and power was not harmonious, and it was common to face each other. Primarily when secular and *Priyayi* groups dominated the political sphere, the role of the clergy was eliminated to the margins. The removal of the political role of the clergy could at least happen for two reasons; *First*, the inability of the clergy to adapt to the changing times, as happened to Masyumi activists after the New Order. *Second*, because of the regime's systematic marginalization, such as the New Order's political policy of wanting a rigid separation between religion and the state in its government. This study shows that the tendency to marginalize the political role of the clergy occurs when the centralism of power intensifies.

The political role of *the ulama* in various regions experiences its dynamics. The political reality in Aceh, for example, shows that the political position of the *Ulama (Teungku)* was getting stronger and more strategic, both structurally and culturally, when implementing the formalization of Islamic law. In Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, *the Tuan guru*, as a local elite, has an essential role in determining the dynamics of local politics. Even in some instances, *Tuan guru* builds relationships with national political elites. The power of the masses possessed by a *guru* as traditional leaders were essential in the map of power struggles in West Nusa Tenggara. Political battles at the local level, especially after the New Order, which has always been dominated by *the Tuan guru*, affiliated with the Nahdlatul Wathan Community Organization.

Meanwhile, in Java, *Kiai* and political relations have been going on since the beginning of independence. The NU mass organization as the factory of the *Kiai* has given birth to *Kiai* influential politicians in this country. Wahid Hasyim, Abdul Wahab Hasbullah, Abdurrahman Wahid, Hasyim Muzadi, and Ma'ruf Amin were some of the names that have captured national leadership. NU *Kiai* has always been a magnet for politicians in every election in this country.

This paper contributes to the finding that the social formation of scholars in Indonesia was not singular. Of the three variants of scholarship: *Teungku* in Aceh, *Tuan guru* in NTB, and *Kiai* in Java have shown a wealth of perspectives on the relationship between *ulama* and politics in Indonesia. However, the study was limited to tracing the political structures in those three regions. In addition, this study chose informants who were limited in the spectrum, so they could not explain the broader meaning. Similarly, the selection of units of analysis could have been more comprehensive, both on the aspects of actors and issues. Thus, this article suggests the need for further research by considering the representation of informants from various backgrounds who could explain the phenomenon of *ulama* and political relations in the three regions. In addition, it was necessary to note the diversity in this research area to capture aspirations regarding a more comprehensive relationship between *ulama* and politics. In this way, a more complete and indepth portrait of the relationship between *ulama* and politics in Indonesia is more comprehensive.

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