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## **Tuan Guru in Lombok: Their Role and Influence in Education and Local Politics During the Reform Era**

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**Abstract:** This study explores the evolving role of Tuan Guru (Islamic leaders) in Lombok during the post-New Order era, emphasizing their influence in both education and local politics. During the New Order period, Tuan Guru's roles were largely symbolic, with limited impact in the legislative or executive realms dominated by the Menak group. However, political reforms led to a significant shift, enabling Tuan Guru to gain a more prominent role in Sasak society's political and educational spheres, alongside the resurgence of Islamic political activism. The candidacy and subsequent victory of TGB Muhammad Zainul Majdi in the 2008 West Nusa Tenggara regional elections exemplify this shift, showcasing the transition of Tuan Guru from purely religious leadership to a more integrated role in political and educational domains. His success marked a departure from the traditional Menak dominance, highlighting the appeal of Tuan Guru as credible and clean alternatives in an era of political corruption. This qualitative study employs descriptive analysis and extensive library research, utilizing primary and secondary sources such as books, journals, archival documents, and relevant writings. The research underscores Tuan Guru's growing influence in shaping both the educational landscape and local politics in Lombok within the broader context of Islamic movements in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** education, Islamic politics, Lombok, Tuan Guru.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The involvement of Tuan Guru in politics is not a novel issue. Historically, debates about the role of religious leaders in politics have occurred among politicians, intellectuals, and religious scholars alike. This has led to various opinions regarding the role of Tuan Guru in politics (Atsani, Nasri, Walad, et al., 2023). Supporters argue that politics is a field for religious outreach, where entering the realm of power can enhance the effectiveness of their mission due to its extensive reach and authority. Conversely, critics believe that religion and politics are distinct domains that should remain separate (Atsani & Nasri, 2021). Islamic history documents that the involvement of religious leaders in politics dates back to the time of Prophet Muhammad SAW. Prophet Muhammad was not only a spiritual and religious leader, serving as a central figure for all aspects of daily life, but also a head of state who managed a diverse range of Arab tribes. Montgomery Watt (Aziz, 2021) describes Prophet Muhammad as both a religious leader and a statesman (Nasri, Wahid, et al., 2024, p. 134). After the Prophet's death, the leadership was succeeded by the four

Rightly Guided Caliphs—Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, Umar bin Khattab, Uthman bin Affan, and Ali bin Abi Talib. During their time, there was no separation between religion and politics. These caliphs held both religious and governmental authority due to their unquestionable religious qualifications (Nasri, 2016, p. 37). They were highly competent as both religious leaders and political rulers (Azra & Thaha, 2002). However, with the rise of the Umayyad Dynasty, many rulers of that period claimed caliphate without recognized religious scholarship or authority, and often showed disregard for religion. An example is Yazid bin Muawiya, known for his poor character (Rasyidi & Nasri, 2023). This marked the beginning of a dichotomy between political rulers and religious leaders (Anwar, n.d.).

The involvement of religious figures (Tuan Guru) in politics is not solely about bureaucratic power. Often, their participation is voluntary or based on religious doctrines. For example, Sunni scholars argue that security, tranquility, and political stability are prioritized over chaos, as political instability leads to disruption in religious practices (Nasri, 2016, p. 57). Thus, even unjust power might be tolerated if it ensures stability. Consequently, scholars have allied with and

legitimized rulers, even if their power was not legally acquired (Azra & Thaha, 2002). In Indonesia's historical struggle, religious leaders played crucial roles against colonial powers. KH. Zainal Mustafa in Singaparna near Tasikmalaya opposed the repressive policies of the Japanese military government. Hadratus Syaikh Hasyim Asy'ari, Kiai Zainul Arifin, Kiai Masykur, Kiai Abdul Wahab Hasbullah, and other NU scholars fought in the Battle of November 10, 1945, in Surabaya against the NICA (British) forces (Ismail, n.d.). Besides physical resistance, religious figures also engaged in diplomacy, exemplified by KH. Agus Salim, KH. Mas Mansyur, KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, KH. A. Wachid, KH. Masykur, KH. Abdul Halim, Abikoeso Tjokrosoejoso, and A. Kahar Moezadzakir (Mushoffa, 2002).

Henry J. Benda (1972), cited by Aziz Mushaffa, noted that Dutch colonialists faced challenges in dealing with Indonesian Islam. Their expansionist ambitions were frequently obstructed by local forces inspired by Islam, whether led by Indonesian leaders or village scholars (Mushoffa, 2002). Hasan Basri Munawar's *Gur Dur* thesis, quoted by Nasri, Gufran, et al. (2024), suggests that kiai from old pesantrens, particularly from East Java, were integral to the central power of Java's kraton (palaces) and the royal courts of Central Java and Cirebon. Over time, these kiai moved from peripheral to central positions of power in Java (Anwar, n.d.). In West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), especially on the island of Lombok, local leaders or Tuan Guru resisted Dutch colonial rule, despite the prevalent Sufi influences of the time (Misy, 2021). Tuan Guru Haji Ali Batu's resistance from 1891-1892 against Anak Agung Ngurah Ketut Karang Asem, although ending in his death, was continued by Guru Bangkol (Noor et al., 1904).

The resistance led by Tuan Guru against the NICA forces on June 7, 1946, in Selong, led by Tuan Guru Haji Muhammad Faisal, with support from Tuan Guru Muhammad Zainul Madjid and their students, including Ahmad Nursaid, Dahmuruddin, Mursyid, Sayyid Saleh, Umar, M. Thoyyib, Saparul Khair, and the Pringgesela community, resulted in the death of Tuan Guru Muhammad Faisal (Yusran, n.d.). Additionally, Tuan Guru have also engaged in cultural movements by establishing halaqah (gatherings) for dhikr (remembrance), such as Tuan Guru Haji Muhammad Amin in Pejeruk,

Tuan Guru Haji Muhammad Sidik in Karang Kelok, Tuan Guru Haji Muhammad Arsyad in Getap, Tuan Guru Haji Munawar in Gebang, and Tuan Guru Haji Muhammad Munir in Karang Bedil (Noor et al., 1904). These historical facts demonstrate that the involvement of elite religious figures, ulama, kiai, or Tuan Guru in political activities is an integral part of the struggle for Indonesia's oppressed society (Suparman et al., 2023). Hence, the role of local religious leaders, kiai, and Tuan Guru in Indonesia's political journey has deep historical roots (Astani et al., 2024). It is not surprising that the involvement of Tuan Guru in politics is both common and inevitable (Atsani, Nasri, & Walad, 2023).

## METHOD

This study employs qualitative research, which involves naturalistic settings with the aim of interpreting the phenomena occurring. This approach utilizes various existing methods (Moleong, 2007). The research requires a descriptive-analytical approach. Descriptive means presenting social phenomena as they are, while analysis involves interpreting these social phenomena (Anwar, n.d.). A library research study is necessary (Nasri, Nuha, et al., 2024). This research relies on data from both primary and secondary documents, such as books, journals, archival documents, and writings related to the topic (Nasri, 2023). Additionally, the study uses interview techniques to obtain data and information through questioning, posing several questions to informants or respondents. This interview technique provides direct information from knowledgeable informants or respondents in their respective fields.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Religious Leaders as Local Elites

Since the 1950s, there has been a tendency to view local aspirations as opposed to central government policies. Local aspirations were considered unnationalistic and contrary to national aspirations, and thus needed to be sidelined. Local cultures eventually became buried, leading to a uniformity of symbols and culture under the guise of unity (Nordholt & Klinken, 2008). After the fall of the New Order in 1998, regional political dynamics entered a

new phase. Local actors, institutions, and cultures resurfaced and began to play their roles in the local political stage (Nordholt & Klinken, 2008). This phenomenon is referred to as decentralization, where power is no longer centralized but dispersed. Decentralization transferred power from the president's institution to other high state institutions, and political and administrative authority from the center to the regions. Thus, studies on local politics and the role of elites are crucial.

Elites occupy a significant position in both development and politics. During the New Order era, elites were used as distributors of government programs from the center. It appeared that the New Order government adopted a form of neocolonialism, utilizing the roles of local elites to allocate or distribute local resources, including economic and political resources, to the community. Furthermore, local elites were used as political assets in five-year celebrations such as elections (Hadi, 2006). In the post-New Order era, elites were no longer constrained or patrons of the central government due to the impact of decentralization policies. These local elites began to spread across various community groups or bureaucracies, thus having opportunities to play various roles in both economic and political sectors. Additionally, the high social status of elites provided them with opportunities to be part of social changes mobilizing local resources (Hadi, 2006). In the realm of local politics, the emergence of new elites has shown rivalries among them, particularly during the allocation of power resources, especially with local elections indicating a transfer of power from central to regional elites. In political theory, Pareto (1848-1923) defines elites as a small group of people who possess the qualities needed to attain social-political power (Padiatra, 2020). Gaetano Mosca (1858-1941) describes elites as individuals skilled in leadership and social control. Robert D. Putnam defines elites as a few individuals who have more political power than others (Padiatra, 2020). In the history of elites in West Nusa Tenggara, which consists of two islands, Sumbawa and Lombok, each has different typologies. Thus, these islands also have different elite typologies due to their initially different settings and conditions. As cited in a summary of a research report by LIPI, which interviewed Rosiyadi Sayuti, it is said:

*“In Lombok, the reliance on informal leaders is higher compared to Sumbawa, so figures like Tuan Guru, leaders of Islamic boarding schools, often become political party leaders or even members of parliament. In contrast, in Sumbawa, such phenomena are relatively absent due to the more formal cadre training rather than informal”.*

This difference is due to the differing cultures developed in the two regions. Historically, the kingdoms in Lombok were likely supported by such organizations, so when these kingdoms disappeared and the republic emerged, the organizations and existence of informal leaders continued to persist. In contrast, Sumbawa lacked such organizations, leading to a more formal route in leadership. Thus, elites can be categorized into two types: formal and informal. Formal elites are represented by political positions such as governor, regent, and other official positions. Informal elites are represented by figures like Tuan Guru or religious leaders with followers. The larger the following, the greater the stature of the leader. For example, Nahdlatul Wathan, a social organization with the largest educational institutions in almost every village in West Nusa Tenggara, has elites who are prominent community figures with many followers. This position is significant and different from other elite positions (Yusran, n.d.).

Therefore, in the context of West Nusa Tenggara in general and Lombok in particular, there are two categories of elites: formal and informal. The formal elite consists of nobility (menak), while the informal elite consists of religious leaders (Tuan Guru or Kyai). Formal elites are chosen through legal-formal mechanisms such as elections or regional elections, including positions like governor, regent, sub-district head, and members of parliament. Informal elites gain recognition not through a process but through tradition and charisma. Usually, this elite possesses charisma that convinces people of their legitimate power. Thus, Tuan Guru as a local elite also has a significant role in social change. In Islamic tradition, the terms Tuan Guru, Kyai, Ajengan, Bendere, Buya, and others are not well-known. Instead, standard terms like alim, ustadz, syekh, and wali are used. Even in the early spread of Islam in Indonesia, figures were called syekh, wali, and sunan (Suprayogo, 2009). In Sasak

society, the term Tuan Guru is used, in Javanese society Kyai, in Sundanese Ajengan, in Madurese Bendere, in West Sumatra Buya, and in South Sulawesi Topanrita. While these are local terms, they are terminologically and culturally similar as titles for ulama (Suprayogo, 2009). This local term emerged due to the Dutch colonial strategy to make Islam a local cultural phenomenon integrated with royal traditions, aiming to isolate and prevent Islam from becoming a national movement (Suprayogo, 2009).

According to Hasan Basri Marwah, the term Tuan Guru can be traced back to the 18th century when three scholars first used it: Tuan Guru Umar Kelayu, Tuan Guru Abdul Hamid Presak Pagutan, and Tuan Guru Sekar Bela (Anwar, n.d.). They were known for their harmony and high tolerance for differing views and spent considerable time in Hijaz for pilgrimage and learning (Anwar, n.d.). In Sasak society, to become a Tuan Guru, an influential figure in the community, certain requirements must be met, although there are variations between regions. These requirements include having performed the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca, mastering the Quran, Hadith, and classical Islamic texts, receiving education in the Middle East, usually having a pesantren (Islamic boarding school) and followers within it, and receiving recognition from both their followers and those outside (Research Report Summary, Dynamics of Local Elite Roles in Rural Areas Post-New Order; Case Study of Tuan Guru's Role in East Lombok, 2023). The Sasak people view Tuan Guru as a “versatile,” “capable,” and influential figure (Kharisma, 2008). This is due to a Tuan Guru’s knowledge of Islamic teachings, often seen as someone who understands divine majesty and the mysteries of nature, and is regarded as having a status beyond the reach of most laypeople (Dhofier, 1982). Usually, the title Tuan Guru is given to ulama from traditional Islamic circles (Dhofier, 1982).

Tuan Guru, in Sasak society, is recognized as a charismatic leader, someone who influences others with specific exceptional qualities. A leader is considered charismatic when their leadership is derived from extraordinary power, known as charismatic authority (Johnson & Lawang, 1994). This type of leadership is based on psychological identification, which involves emotional involvement with others, linking one's fate to another. For followers, the leader represents hope for a better direction, a savior,

and a protector. The charisma and status of Tuan Guru increase as the number of followers or students grows. They conduct religious teachings not only at their homes but also in villages weekly or even monthly. Additionally, Tuan Guru is often invited to major Islamic celebrations such as the Prophet's birthday, major Islamic holidays, Isra’ Mi’raj, or other ceremonial events (Kharisma, 2008). Consequently, in Sasak society, Tuan Guru as a local elite has a dual role: first as a religious elite or spiritual leader providing enlightenment or solutions to religious issues, and second as a political activist involved in national and local politics, including running for governor, regent, and legislative positions.

### **Tuan Guru and the Political Dynamics of the New Order**

The struggle for independence and resistance against colonial rule could not disregard the role of religious leaders (ulama, kyai, Tuan Guru, etc.) in the nation's history, as explained in the previous chapter. After independence, the position of Islamic groups strengthened. This was evident when Masyumi, a coalition of Islamic organizations, emerged as the largest party holding the most seats in parliament. During this period, the political relationship between Islam and the state was still harmonious but did not last long. Tensions arose when President Sukarno delivered a speech in Amuntai, East Kalimantan, on January 27, 1953. He explicitly emphasized the importance of maintaining Indonesia as a national unity. "The state we want is a national state encompassing all of Indonesia," he said. "If we establish a state based on Islam, regions with non-Muslim populations, such as Maluku, Flores, Timor, Kei Islands, and parts of Sulawesi, will secede" (Noor et al., 1904).

Sukarno's statement offended Islamic groups. They felt Sukarno was undemocratic and exceeded his constitutional limits as a head of state defending a particular ideological group (Noor et al., 1904). On the other hand, PNI supported Sukarno's speech. Sukarno's speech revealed its political strategy to gain support from nationalists and secularists who feared the rise of Islamic power and the establishment of an Islamic state (Noor et al., 1904). The secularist and nationalists fought against the struggle of Islamic groups and Masyumi. The central government at that time was known to use the military to suppress Islamic groups and remove

Islamic leaders who opposed them. An example is the military operations in Aceh against Islamic figures who rejected the central government's policies. In contrast to the 1950s, which were characterized by religious and ideological tensions, the 1970s witnessed a significant shift in political dynamics. Under the New Order regime led by Suharto, the role of religious leaders became instrumental in stabilizing the political climate. Suharto's regime engaged with Tuan Guru and other religious leaders to gain legitimacy and consolidate power. The government utilized religious leaders as a tool to foster a sense of national unity while ensuring that religious sentiments were channeled in ways that would support the regime's stability (Hadi, 2006). This relationship between political and religious elites during the New Order era underscores the complex interplay between local and central power dynamics.

The New Order government employed several strategies to manage the relationship with religious leaders, including:

1. **Incorporation into Political Structures:** The New Order regime incorporated religious leaders into political structures to maintain control and support. Tuan Guru and other prominent figures were often co-opted into various governmental advisory boards or as part of official delegations, providing them with a platform while ensuring their alignment with government policies (Hadi, 2006).
2. **Regulation and Surveillance:** To prevent dissent and ensure that religious activities aligned with government policies, the New Order regime closely monitored and regulated religious practices. This included restricting the freedom of religious expression and ensuring that religious leaders did not challenge the regime's authority (Hadi, 2006).
3. **Development Programs:** The regime also engaged religious leaders in development programs and initiatives that were portrayed as part of the government's commitment to social welfare and progress. By involving Tuan Guru in development efforts, the regime aimed to project an image of benevolence and gain further support from local communities (Hadi, 2006).

In summary, the role of Tuan Guru and other local elites has evolved significantly from the pre-independence era through the New Order period. While initially marginalized by central policies, these leaders eventually became crucial

players in local and national politics. Their influence underscores the importance of understanding the dynamics between religious authority and political power in shaping Indonesia's socio-political landscape.

### **Tuan Guru in Lombok: Their Role and Influence in Local Education and Politics During the Reform Era**

Amid the significant changes occurring in Indonesia post-Reformasi, Tuan Guru in Lombok has undergone a significant transformation from being merely symbolic figures to becoming influential forces in two crucial areas: politics and education. Previously, during the New Order era, the role of Tuan Guru was largely limited to symbolic and ritual functions, often utilized in political campaigns without any real influence in legislative or executive realms (Rasyidi & Nasri, 2023). They were merely figures present at religious events and ceremonies, without significant political power (Astani et al., 2024). However, the Reformasi era opened a new chapter for Tuan Guru. With the onset of political liberalization, they began to have the opportunity to play a more active role in local politics. A clear example of this shift is the candidacy and victory of TGB Muhammad Zainul Majdi in the regional elections in Nusa Tenggara Barat in 2008. This victory marked a significant change, demonstrating that Tuan Guru are not only recognized as religious leaders but also as influential political leaders. This success also reflects a shift from the traditional dominance of Menak groups, with Tuan Guru emerging as a clean alternative amidst various corruption allegations against other candidates.

In education, the role of Tuan Guru has also experienced significant development. They are not only involved in the supervision of madrasahs but also play a crucial role in curriculum development and educational reform. Their leadership has positively impacted education standards in Lombok, with improvements in religious education quality and the integration of Islamic values within the educational system. Through their guidance and direction, Tuan Guru have promoted higher-quality education and contributed to the formation of a more educated and morally upright community.

This transformation reflects a shift from symbolic roles to practical leadership. In politics,

Tuan Guru are now actively involved in local government and political activities, leveraging their religious authority to gain greater political power. In education, they use their positions to support reforms and improvements in the education system, resulting in better educational outcomes and greater community engagement. Public perception of Tuan Guru has also changed significantly. From being traditional figures, they are now seen as key players in politics and education. This change indicates an increasing recognition of their contributions to community development and governance. In the socio-political context, the involvement of Tuan Guru has brought changes to local government dynamics, emphasizing transparency and integrity. In education, their influence is evident in the improved quality of religious education and broader community involvement in educational initiatives. Overall, this research reveals that Tuan Guru in Lombok have undergone a significant shift from symbolic figures to influential leaders in both politics and education during the Reformasi era. This change reflects a new dynamic in the socio-political landscape of Lombok, highlighting their role and impact in shaping community development.

## Discussion

### Tuan Guru and Elections in the Reform Era

During the New Order period, Tuan Guru were positioned as “development promoters,” acting as intermediaries for government programs and serving as assets for political parties during annual political rituals such as elections (Summary of Research Report, Dynamics of Local Elite Roles in Rural Areas Post-New Order; Case Study of Tuan Guru's Role in East Lombok, 2023). However, following the New Order's relaxation and political liberalization, Tuan Guru became active participants in elections, running for positions in regional and national legislatures, and even for gubernatorial positions. In essence, elections are affirmations of primordial political loyalties, and can thus be seen as manifestations of partisan politics. Therefore, both conceptually and practically, partisan politics is incompatible with Ulama (Tuan Guru), who are expected to be impartial across all factions (Azra & Thaha, 2002). This implies that Tuan Guru engaging in practical politics might exacerbate divisions within the Muslim community due to differing

religious interpretations and sects. Nevertheless, considering the crucial role Tuan Guru play in advocating for the community, their involvement in practical politics is seen as necessary. Tuan Guru's engagement in practical politics can be articulated in two ways: expressive and instrumental (Suprayogo, 2009).

Expressive political articulation by Tuan Guru involves exploiting or manipulating religious symbols and mobilizing the masses. In contrast, instrumental articulation focuses on effectiveness in directly influencing decision-making processes (Suprayogo, 2009). Azyumardi Azra suggests that Tuan Guru's involvement in politics should adopt a high politics framework, an independent moral politics that addresses low politics, which often does not align with Islamic teachings (Azra, 1999). In this context, Tuan Guru's political involvement is more about instrumental articulation, focusing on effectiveness in influencing or participating directly in policy decisions while adhering to a high politics framework in everyday political life. Thus, Tuan Guru are expected not only to serve as moral preachers advancing societal welfare but also to actively participate in achieving societal well-being and struggling alongside the community, akin to Antonio Gramsci's concept of organic intellectuals. In practice, Tuan Guru engage in politics similarly to other politicians, including campaigning, creating welfare programs, and socializing themselves to be elected as legislative members, among other activities. However, what differentiates their political involvement is the religious legitimacy they bring, framing their actions as divine mandates to uphold moral values. They often use majlis taklim (study circles) or weekly religious gatherings for campaigning, or issue ultimatums urging their congregations to vote for them in legislative and executive elections.

In the 2004 elections, several Tuan Guru ran directly for legislative positions at the district, provincial, and national levels. Examples include Tuan Guru Haji Junaidi Rasyidi Ahmad, LC from the Crescent Moon Party (PBB), Tuan Guru Haji Mahsup from PBB, Tuan Guru Haji Nasruddin from the Reform Star Party (PBR), and Tuan Guru Haji Musta'rif from PBR as candidates for the East Lombok Regional Representative Council (DPRD). Tuan Guru Haji Drs. M. Syafi'i Ahmad, M.A from PBB, Tuan Guru Haji Bahaudin Nur Badarul Islami from the National Awakening Party (PKB), and Drs. Tuan Guru

Haji Abdul Hayyi Nu'man from PBR were candidates for the West Nusa Tenggara Provincial DPRD. Tuan Guru Haji Muhammad Zainul Majdi, M.A from PBB, Tuan Guru Haji Muhammad Anwar MZ from PPP, Tuan Guru Haji Abdul Rahim Adjrun from PPP, and Tuan Guru Haji Salehuddin, LC from PBR ran for the National DPR. Tuan Guru Haji Muslih Ibrahim and Drs. Tuan Guru Haji Munajib were members of the Regional Representative Council (DPD) (Source: KPU East Lombok, 2005).

In the 2009 elections, some Tuan Guru successfully became legislative members at the district, provincial, and national levels, including Drs. Tuan Guru Haji Hazmi Hamzar from PPP, Tuan Guru Haji Husnud Du'at from PBB, and Drs. Tuan Guru Haji Abdul Hayyi Nu'man, M.Pd.I from PBR, all candidates for the West Nusa Tenggara Provincial DPRD. At the Regional Representative Council level, Tuan Guru Haji Lalu Abdul Muhyi Abidin, M.A was elected. The involvement of Tuan Guru in politics can be examined from two aspects. First, their understanding of the relationship between Islam and politics. Second, their stance on existing political formats (Asfar, 1997). In both classical and modern Islamic political theory, there are various views on the relationship between Islam and politics. Generally, they are grouped into three perspectives, as outlined by Bahtiar Effendy in his book *"Jalan Tengah Politik Islam"*. First, Islam encompasses not only ritual worship but also concepts of economics, politics, social matters, and state governance (Nasri, 2017, p. 73).

Therefore, Islam does not need to imitate Western state systems as it provides comprehensive solutions for worldly and hereafter issues. Notable figures in this view include Sheikh Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, Sheikh Muhammad Rasyid Ridha, and Abu A'la al-Maududi (Nasri, 2015, p. 33). Second, some believe that Islam concerns only worship and does not regulate worldly matters. This perspective holds that the Prophet Muhammad was sent only to guide human morals and not to lead in Madinah. Proponents include Ali Abdul al-Raziq and Dr. Tholhah Husain. Third, this perspective rejects the idea that Islam is a complete religion and denies that Islam addresses only worship. It asserts that while Islam lacks a state system, it provides values and ethics for governance. Dr. Muhammad Husain Haikal is

among the proponents of this view (Nasri, ed., 2022, p. 43).

Tuan Guru views the relationship between Islam and politics as inseparable, aligning with the first perspective that Islam addresses both spiritual and worldly matters (Fitriani et al., 2021, p. 45). Tuan Guru's involvement also relates to their stance on the existing political format. It is evident that Tuan Guru believe the current political system is sufficient, as demonstrated by their active participation in politics and running for office. Theoretically, a person's involvement or activity is influenced by their confidence in the system. Conversely, a lack of activity may indicate low confidence in the system (Asfar, 1997).

### **Tuan Guru and the NTB Local Elections**

The involvement of Tuan Guru in politics, particularly through Local Government Elections (Pemilukada), can be understood from two arguments. First, Tuan Guru's understanding of the Islam-politics relationship, viewing Islam as integral and not separable from politics. Second, Tuan Guru's belief that the existing political format is adequate. This is evidenced by Tuan Guru "Bajang," Tuan Guru Haji Muhammad Zainul Majdi, MA's candidacy for Governor of West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), and his subsequent victory in the 2008 Pemilukada.

### **The Victory of Tuan Guru "Bajang" in the NTB Gubernatorial Election of 2008**

Tuan Guru "Bajang," or in Indonesian, Young Tuan Guru, was born in Selong, East Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, on May 31, 1972. Tuan Guru Muhammad Zainul Majdi, known as Tuan Guru "Bajang," is the third son of Hj. Siti Rauhini and H. M. Jalaluddin. He is also a grandchild of the Nahdlatul Wathan founder, Tuan Guru Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid (1904-1997). Tuan Guru "Bajang" was raised in a religious environment, significantly influencing his thought development, leading to his legacy as both an Ulama and a politician. Tuan Guru "Bajang" was deeply connected with pesantren (Islamic boarding schools). He completed his secondary education at Pondok Pesantren Darul Nahdlatul Wathan in 1991. In 1995, he earned a bachelor's degree (Lc) in Tafsir Hadith and Quranic Sciences from the Faculty of Ushuluddin at Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt. He completed his postgraduate studies in the same field at Al-Azhar in 1999 (Majdi, 2009),

and recently obtained his doctorate from the same institution in 2010.

Tuan Guru “Bajang” views politics and religion as inseparable, describing them as twin siblings or two sides of the same coin. As Imam al-Ghazali described, religion (din) and state (daulah) are intertwined, with religion as the foundation and power as its protector. Denying the integration of religion and politics is seen as an incorrect stance, more reflective of European norms than Islamic principles (Majdi, 2009). Tuan Guru “Bajang” began his political career in 2004 as a member of the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI) representing NTB through PBB, at the invitation of Yusril Ihza Mahendra (<http://yusril.ihzamahendra.com/2008/07/09/tuan-guru-bajang>, 2011). Following discussions and approval from the PBB Syura Council, Tuan Guru “Bajang” decided to run for NTB Governor. Yusril’s blog recounts his encouragement for Tuan Guru “Bajang” to use his position to develop his career and contribute to the region.

Tuan Guru “Bajang”’s candidacy for NTB Governor was initiated by the East Lombok District DPRD’s endorsement. He declared his candidacy at a press conference on July 17, 2008, and was officially nominated as a candidate for the 2008 NTB Governor’s Election on August 6, 2008. The East Lombok District DPRD proposed Tuan Guru “Bajang”’s candidacy due to his popularity among the people and his educational background, which would help improve the region’s quality of life (Majdi, 2009). His involvement in the NTB gubernatorial election was supported by his network of followers and supporters, a significant asset in his campaign. The NTB 2008 election included three pairs of candidates: Tuan Guru “Bajang” paired with H. Ahmad Kertayasa from the Golkar Party, Drs. H. Zul Mahmud and Drs. H. M. Syafi’i M.Si from the PDIP and PPP, and Tuan Guru H. Ibrahim Husein and H. Zainudin Amali from the PKB and PAN. The results of the 2008 NTB gubernatorial election were as follows:

1. Tuan Guru “Bajang” and H. Ahmad Kertayasa: 1,102,760 votes (45.73%)
2. Drs. H. Zul Mahmud and Drs. H. M. Syafi’i M.Si: 1,010,334 votes (41.41%)
3. Tuan Guru H. Ibrahim Husein and H. Zainudin Amali: 350,075 votes (14.85%)

In the second round of the NTB gubernatorial election, Tuan Guru “Bajang” was re-elected with 1,508,975 votes, equivalent to

53.49%, surpassing the other candidates. His victory reflected the growing influence of Tuan Guru in politics and their ability to harness their religious authority for political gain. In summary, the involvement of Tuan Guru in politics, particularly in local elections, reveals a complex interaction between religious authority and political engagement. Their participation is not merely an extension of their religious roles but also a strategic move to influence policy and address community issues. Tuan Guru’s involvement reflects a broader trend of religious leaders actively shaping political landscapes, underscoring the evolving nature of political participation in Indonesia.

## CONCLUSION

The involvement of Tuan Guru in politics is an inevitability and has played a significant role in Indonesian history. During the New Order era, Islamic politics in Sasak, led by Tuan Guru, was suppressed, monitored, and controlled within the framework of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI). After the New Order, Tuan Guru resumed their role in practical politics. The political practice undertaken by Tuan Guru is one of instrumental politics, focusing on effectiveness in influencing or participating in policy decisions, complemented by their religious legitimacy. Tuan Guru Bajang’s victory as the NTB Governor in the 2008 election was not only due to his charismatic personality and his role as a Tuan Guru with followers across various regions in NTB but also because of the right timing. All other candidates were incumbents involved in corruption, making Tuan Guru Bajang the only clean alternative for the people of NTB, especially in Lombok.

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