

DEMOCRACY AND ISLAMIC DA'WAH: Study of the Politicization of Religion in the 2024 General Election in East Lombok Regency

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Abstract- This article looks at the politicization of religion in East Lombok Regency during the 2024 elections. The author collected data in the field using three techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. These three strategies generate primary sources. Meanwhile, secondary sources include scholarly publications such as journals, dissertations, scientific periodicals, and survey findings. After completing research, the author discovered that religion was politicized in East Lombok Regency through the use of religious symbols such as the imamah and white peci as traditional apparel that represents piety. Politicians also employ the narrative of friendship, politics as a platform for da'wah, ukhuwah Islamiyah, piety, and *sami'na wa atho'na* to politicize religion. Aside from that, their identity as a Tuan Guru is also used on pamphlets, billboards, stickers and even on ballot papers. At this stage, the role of a da'i is very reliable, because through religious pulpits they can provide enlightenment to the ummah about the main values in democracy, namely equality, freedom, justice, deliberation and tolerance.

Keywords: Democracy, Elections, Politicization of Religion and Islamic Da'wah

Abstrak- Artikel ini meneliti tentang politisasi agama di Kabupaten Lombok Timur pada pemilu tahun 2024. Dalam mengumpulkan data di lapangan, penulis menggunakan tiga teknik, yaitu observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Sumber primer datang dari tiga teknik tersebut. Sedangkan sumber sekunder berasal dari karya ilmiah seperti jurnal, disertasi, majalah ilmiah, dan hasil survei. Setelah melakukan penelitian, penulis menemukan bahwa di Kabupaten Lombok Timur memang terjadi politisasi agama dengan menggunakan simbol-simbol agama seperti imamah dan peci putih sebagai pakaian khas yang menandakan citra kesolehan. Para politikus juga menggunakan narasi silaturahmi, politik sebagai ladang dakwah, ukhuwah islamiyah, sholeh dan *sami'na wa atho'na* dalam melakukan tindakan politisasi agama. Selain itu, identitas mereka sebagai seorang Tuan Guru juga digunakan dalam pamflet, baliho, stiker dan bahkan di kertas suara. Pada tahap ini, peran seorang da'i sangat diandalkan, karena melalui mimbar-mimbar agama mereka dapat memberikan pencerahan bagi ummat tentang nilai-nilai utama dalam demokrasi, yaitu persamaan, kebebasan, keadilan, musyawarah, dan toleransi.

Kata Kunci: Demokrasi, Pemilu, Politisasi Agama dan Dakwah Islamiyah

Introduction

As a missionary religion, Islam is heavily reliant on the role of the preacher or preachers. Because of the significance of this duty, the principal sources of Islam have compiled a number of regulations for da'wah that serve as recommendations for preachers. The rules can be found in Q.S. al-Nahl: 125. This verse encourages preachers to prioritize *mau'izah hasanah* and argue effectively. In this context, Ahmad Ghalwasy describes numerous methods of preaching in Islam, including (1) understanding people's habits, life objectives, and beliefs; (2) living with preaching and comprehending its essential laws; and (3) honoring the community where you preach on an equal footing. (Ghalwasy, t.th). As a sacred duty, da'wah activities should also be directed towards holy goals (Jafar, 2010). However, it is very unfortunate that recent realities show that da'wah is no longer purely intended to invite people towards *sabil Allah, dar al-salam, and al-jannah*. The large number of preachers who have entered the world of practical politics is one of the factors that has changed the aim of the da'wah. In fact, many preachers and religious figures are often targeted by politicians to gain support, as happened in 2019 in East Lombok Regency (Amin, dkk. 2023).

In this location, a preacher known as Tuan Guru is no longer just a spiritual patron; some are also political supporters. Prospective legislators ask them for advice, direction, and support. This is because some of them have huge congregations and are prominent in Islamic organizations. Tuan Guru Bajang Muhammad Zainul Majdi's nominations in 2008 and 2013 provide an example. Tuan Guru

Bajang's success in government inspired Tuan Guru to follow in his footsteps and enter practical politics. This also indicates that Tuan Guru has altered the political dynamic in this Muslim-majority province. Reflecting on this political reality, it is not surprising that the 2024 election will become an arena for contestation by preachers who are leaders of Islamic boarding schools and Islamic organizations, such as Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiyah and Nahdlatul Wathan. Apart from that, they also have a number of taklim assemblies with tens to hundreds of active congregations. Based on this fact, it is not surprising that religious factors will also determine voters in the presidential and legislative elections in the 2024 general election. Because religious factors are important in influencing people's political behavior (Andriansyah, 2022).

The large number of Tuan Guru who are involved in practical politics is caused by three main factors; (1) Economic factors such as obtaining aspiration funds for the Islamic boarding school he manages is one of the factors that made Tuan Guru enter the political stage. Apart from that, da'wah activities are so intense that they require quite a lot of funds. (2) The experience factor is that many Tuan Guru's have become victims of lies by politicians with the false promises they make. This is because Tuan Guru is often targeted by politicians to advance their interests because of its large congregation base and the influence of its strong figure in community groups. Tuan Guru is disappointed with the attitude of politicians who do not do politics in the right way. So, to ensure that politics is handled by the right people, Tuan Guru ventured into practical politics. (3) The religious factor where Tuan Guru uses politics as an alternative or way to spread Islam to society. They believe that politics can provide legitimacy to power to spread Islam widely to society.

The presence of a significant number of Tuan Guru in this actual political order has resulted in the reality of religion being politicized in religious spaces, which frequently leads to polarization that appears terrible and produces friction due to differences in political choices. People who are less familiar with rationality and political knowledge will be prime targets for religious politicization since it is highly practical and easy to acquire their compassion and feelings. Aside from that, conservative religious understanding contributes to the politicization of religion. Preachers exploit this reality to obtain votes through the use of symbols, tales, and their religious identity. At this point, the election is no longer about the candidates' conflicting ideas and objectives, but rather about displaying piety and Islamic group flags. According to Pancasila, elections are a democratic party that promotes justice and equal rights (Sagala & Mirza Nasution, 2022).

The reality of Tuan Guru's preaching in the politicization of religion in East Lombok Regency in 2024 is analyzed using the politics of identity theory. There are fundamental differences regarding the origins of a person's inherent identity. The first school states that human identity is an innate gift that comes from God. Meanwhile, constructivism believes that human identity is shaped by the environment in which they are born, grow and develop (Mubarok, 2018). This second stream indicates the role of community groups in giving or assigning certain identities to individuals. In the context of religious identity, this second stream seems more relevant. This is because the identity of certain religious figures is based on the assessments and considerations of the community itself. Meanwhile, what is meant by identity politics is a political mechanism that relies on certain identities, whether religious, cultural, ethnic and racial (Firdaus. & Lusi, 2021). If what is meant by identity is the same religion, then the politicization of religion can be interpreted as the use of religion for certain political purposes. More specifically, the politicization of religion is the use of religious symbols to mobilize the masses, stir religious emotions, establish power, with the aim of political interests, not religious interests.

Literature Review

Studies on this theme have received a lot of attention from several previous researchers. The author found several works, including an article entitled *Da'wah and Democracy: Analysis of the Contribution of Da'wah in Establishing Democracy*, written by Choriyah and Zhila Jannati in 2020. Through a qualitative approach based on library research, the author concluded that Islamic da'wah makes a contribution to the level of democracy in several ways: (1) providing information about leaders

who are worthy of being elected from an Islamic perspective; (2) provide information regarding policies that must be taken by the government in accordance with the teachings of the Islamic religion; (3) determine the goals to be achieved by a leader (Choiriyah dan Jannati, 2020).

A similar theme was also written by Romanidah and Mokhammad Abdul Aziz in 2021 with the title *Islamic Democracy and the Development of World Political Ideology*. This paper also uses qualitative methods based on literature study. After carrying out a series of academic steps, the author reached the conclusion that the decline of Islam and the advance of western civilization required the Islamic ummah to re-formulate its own political ideology which originates from the Prophet. Apart from that, the author considers that the figure of Jamaluddin al-Afghani is a figure who is capable of carrying out this task. Because, he has succeeded in acculturating between western politics and Islamic principles (Romanidah & Aziz, 2021). The next scientific work was written by Cecep Suryana in 2021. This article, entitled *Politics as Da'wah: Political Communication of the Prosperous Justice Party*, describes the dynamics of communication carried out by PKS. In this article, the author also explains the concept of PKS da'wah which was inspired by Hasan Al-Banna's preaching thoughts with two forms of communication patterns developed by PKS cadres: (1) cadre communication patterns through Islamic and political studies; (2) election succession communication carried out in the form of social service activities, public lectures and direct outreach (Suryana, 2021).

The three articles above discuss the relationship between Islam and politics, while for the local case, the author found the writing of Agus Dedi Putrawan which was published in 2020. In the article entitled *Decharismatization of Tuan Guru on Lombok Island, West Nusa Tenggara*, Putrawan reveals that Tuan Guru is holder of absolute power in his Islamic boarding school environment. When a Tuan Guru leaves their territory, their honor and charisma will disappear, including when they participate in political contestation. Automatically, they will be more busy with technocratic matters than teaching or managing the Islamic boarding school they lead (Putrawan, 2014). Apart from Putrawan's writing, there is also Muhammad Amrillah's writing which was published in 2021. The article entitled *Tuan Guru's Role in Local Politics: A Study of the Political Role of Tuan Guru in Central Lombok* explains the role of Tuan Guru which is completely politics oriented, thus causing a shift in the identity of a person. preachers become political actors. According to Amrillah, there are several reasons Tuan Guru entered practical politics: (1) Channeling aspirations to the community; (2) Developing Islamic institutions, (3) Enforcing amar makruf nahi munkar; (4) Building public education about political participation (Amrillah, 2021).

Not much different from the two previous articles, articles written by Muh. Samsul Anwar in 2017 also discussed Tuan Guru's involvement at the political level. In this article entitled *Dynamics of Tuan Guru's Political Role in Lombok in the Reformation Era*, Tuan Guru's involvement in practical politics is divided into two parts. First, Tuan Guru becomes an active politician by concentrating on practical politics, where this activity is more important than providing teaching to the congregation or students. Second, Tuan Guru becomes a vote-getter or voter where they are not too involved in practical politics. Instead, he focused on providing education to the congregation, leading prayers, and teaching students at the Islamic boarding school (Anwar, 2017).

Some of the research the author mentions stems from the same academic anxiety as this paper. However, in several essential ways, this working paper differs from several previous studies. Some of these differences can be seen in: (1) This working paper uses identity politics theory which focuses on studying the reality of the politicization of religion, whereas the previous paper places more emphasis on aspects of the relationship between Islam and politics; (2) the identity politics theory used in this paper is different from the theory used in previous research, such as Putrawan which used Max Weber's charismatic theory in looking at the charismatization of Tuan Guru in Lombok; (3) at a practical level, the research objects of several previous papers are not the same as the research objects in this working paper, even the place and time of implementation are also different. In the previous article, no one conducted research in an election year, whereas this article was carried out during a political year; (4) This working paper starts from political realities in the field, whereas several previous studies started

from literature as a primary source. These four main differences lead to research results that are different from several previous articles.

Research Methode

This type of research is qualitative with a field study approach. In collecting data in the field, the author used three techniques: documentation, observation and interviews. In the context of interviews, the author conducts interviews directly with sources and uses a free question format. The criteria for the sources interviewed by the author are (1) a Tuan Guru who is contesting in practical politics in the 2024 election; (2) have connections with certain institutions, such as foundations, Islamic boarding schools or certain religious organizations; (3) have an active congregation and a regular religious study schedule; (4) domiciled in East Lombok Regency; (5) is in the campaign stage or has won the election. The reason the author uses several of these criteria is to specify sources according to the theme of this research. The types and sources of data that the authors collect can be classified into two; primary and secondary. Primary data comes from interviews, observations and documentation related to the main research theme. Meanwhile, secondary data sources come from several scientific works, such as articles, theses, dissertations, scientific magazines, survey results, and data from the Central Statistics Agency.

Results and Discussion

Some people view politics as a nasty thing, so they reject the idea that politics and religion should be combined. According to Nurcholish Madjid (2013), this reality is a transient symptom of Islam's deterioration. The separation of religion and politics could not survive long during the Islamic resurgence, whether in sovereign Muslim countries or in Islamic areas dominated by non-Muslims. Nurcholish's viewpoint is applicable to individuals and society who need confidence in all facets of their existence. Without faith, a society cannot have a good civilization, particularly in this modern period. The dominance of science and technology without belief produces technocrats without emotions. At this stage, the urgency of religion as a belief and politics as a path to power must be brought together. Dichotomizing the two (religion and politics) will only lead to a determinative attitude that leads to secularism.

In the context of Indonesian Islamic history and politics, the Dutch Colonial Government pursued a negative political agenda. During colonization, they established ethical policy, in which the colonial authority intentionally developed a neutral stance toward Islam as a religion while maintaining a strong and firm attitude toward Islam as a political force. Harri J. Banda commented on this reality, stating that as long as the Indonesian people, particularly its leaders, were Muslims, colonial connections would not result in long-term links between Indonesia and the Netherlands. On the one hand, the actuality of the Dutch colonial government's control was an attempt to separate Muslims from politics while also damaging Indonesia's Muslim ummah, which constituted the majority. On the other hand, the Dutch colonial authority was well aware that Muslims' sentiments, particularly in political concerns, had a significant impact on the process of resistance to colonialism and other social changes. Great social impact is unattainable without new legislation based on political authority. Thus, many Muslims cooperated with the Dutch colonial authority, either as religious advisors, religious court officials, or religious officers, to govern mosques and places of worship for the Muslim community (Al Qurtuby, 2018).

Apart from colonialization, the relationship between religion and politics is also an impact of industrialization, especially the dominant role of social science which has made individuals aware of the role of their environment. Individuals increasingly believe that their role is not only limited to certain groups. More than that, individuals increasingly believe that individual piety must be accompanied by social piety which fulfills their role as human beings. To achieve this social piety, politics is one of the paths taken. It is not surprising that "Islamic" parties began to take this path in opposing colonial policies and advancing the nation's civilization after independence.

Continuing the trend of Islamic movements during the colonial period, the ulama founded the first "Islamic" political party called Masjumi on November 8 1945 in Yogyakarta. The members of this political party are a combination of Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, the Islamic Ummah Association, al-Irsyad and the Islamic Community Association. In 1952, Nahdlatul Ulama officially left the Masjumi party. Nahdlatul Ulama as a political party managed to get the second most votes in the 1974 general election, below the Golongan Karya party and above Parmusi (another name for Masjumi). In the Bukittinggi area, the Perti party was also founded, which originated from the Islamic Tarbiyah Association organization on November 12 1945. Likewise, in 1947, the Indonesian Islamic Syarikat Party was re-founded. The relationship between Islam and politics is nothing new. Likewise, Tuan Guru's involvement in politics is also not an ahistorical reality.

Tuan Guru's involvement was the impact of government regulations during the Old Order in the 1950s. At that time, the government allowed several political parties to contest the general election, including allowing the establishment of Islamic parties. This openness resulted in the emergence of political awareness among Muslims in various places, including in West Nusa Tenggara (Anwar, 2017). As a strong religious cultural symbol based on charisma and tradition, Tuan Guru, who has gained public legitimacy as a religious leader, is positioned as a development promoter, agent for delivering government programs and an asset for political parties.

This reality can be observed when TGKH. Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid (founder of Nahdlatul Wathan) was appointed Consulate of Nahdlatul Ulama of Lesser Sunda in 1950. In 1952, when Nahdlatul Ulama and other Islamic organizations joined the Indonesian Muslim Shura Council Party (Masyumi) in West Nusa Tenggara, he was appointed became Chairman of the Lombok Regional Masjumi Party Advisory Board. In 1955, he and the Nahdlatul Wathan organization chose to affiliate with the Masyumi Party, so he was appointed as a member of the Constituent Assembly for the 1955-1959 period based on the results of the general election in 1955. Furthermore, on September 28 1970, Nahdlatul Wathan unanimously determined his political affiliation to the Party. Work Group and TGKH. Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid was elected as a member of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) of the Republic of Indonesia from this party based on the election results in 1971 and 1977. He was re-elected as a member of the MPR-RI Regional Representatives Fraction in 1982.

The romanticism of the relationship between religion and politics continued into the reform era. The election of Tuan Guru Bajang (TGB) Muhammad Zainul Majdi in the 2008 West Nusa Tenggara Regional Election is one of the characteristics of Tuan Guru's success in local politics during the reform era. After TGB's victory with all the achievements it achieved; including receiving an award as the best governor in the country in 2017, has had an influence on other Tuan Guru. At this time, the role of Tuan Guru has shifted from the informal elite to the formal elite, thanks to the santri network and their role as community leaders.

Apart from that, their involvement in politics also shifted their role from religious figures to political figures. In this context, Tuan Guru's involvement in practical politics can be categorized into three parts: (1) Religious-Politician, where a religious patron (read: Tuan Guru) is actively involved as a candidate in political contestation; (2) Religious and semi-political, where Tuan Guru is involved in being a party member or being on a winning team for a particular candidate. The intensity of their involvement in this context can be divided into two: active religious semi-politicians and passive religious semi-politicians. Tuan Guru's role is declared active if he participates in campaign moments, such as outreach in the community and other political actions. On the other hand, Tuan Guru is said to play a passive role when he supports certain candidates, but never appears during campaign moments. Even though they are not running for office, their involvement at this stage is very influential in the victory of the candidate they support; (3) Religious non-politician, where Tuan Guru does not participate as a member of a political party or as a winning team for a particular candidate.

The last category is the majority in East Lombok Regency. Most of them prefer not to get involved in practical politics and focus more on carrying out their functions as leaders of Islamic boarding schools and Islamic boarding schools, as is the initial spirit of giving the title Tuan Guru as an

informal elite. Meanwhile, the second category, semi-political religious, is the second majority, where Tuan Guru declares their support and political choices to the public, either directly or through short videos uploaded to social media. Interestingly, they also declared their political support in the da'wah pulpits when the taklim assembly took place. In this context, Tuan Guru's involvement in practical politics provides expressive and instrumental meaning. Expressively, Tuan Guru's involvement in politics is shown by the use of religious symbols. Meanwhile, instrumentally, their involvement is a political expression that focuses on the efficacy of directly influencing the decision-making process.

Meanwhile, the first category is a minority from a quantitative perspective. According to observations made by the author, this last category is only filled by 13 Tuan Guru who live in East Lombok Regency. This quantity comes from the use of the title Tuan Guru on the ballot papers for the elections for the DPD, DPR RI, DPRD West Nusa Tenggara Province and DPRD East Lombok Regency. Some of the names of these Tuan Guru are TGH. Wildan Zikrullah from the Prosperous Justice Party, TGH. Muhammad Dani Robbani Al-Auliya from the Perindo practice, TGH. Sukarnawadi from the Perindo office for the nomination of East Lombok Regency DPRD. Meanwhile, for the nomination of West Nusa Tenggara Province DPRD, there are several names, namely TGH. Sholah Sukarnawadi from Perindo, TGH. Fauzan Zakaria Amin from PKN, TGH. Muhanan Mu'min Mushonaf from PKS, TGH. Muhammad Hizbi Khaer from PKS, TGH. Gunawan from Gelora. For the DPR RI, TGH. H. M. Zainul Majdi from the Perindo and TGH parties. Hazmi Hamzar from PPP. Meanwhile for DPD, TGH. Muhaimin Yahya Mutawalli, and TGH. Lalu Gede Muhammad Ali Wirasakti Amir Murni. Meanwhile TGH. Lalu Gede Muhammad Khairul Fatihin is running for deputy regent of East Lombok.

Based on information from several sources, their involvement in practical politics was caused by several reasons: (1) the Islamic religion emphasizes that all humans are leaders and their leadership will be questioned; (2) they believe that da'wah is not only through recitation in Islamic boarding schools or taklim councils, politics is also a powerful way of da'wah; (3) to ensure that Islamic values, such as honesty and justice, thrive in every public policy; (4) complete forms of community service; (5) developing Islamic boarding school organizations and boarding schools; (6) following the orders and footsteps of Tuan Guru previous. Based on these six reasons, it can be concluded that religious figures taking part in politics is not something that should not be accepted and should be debated. This is because the presence of these religious figures provides a democratic feel that is in accordance with the 1945 Constitution and the teachings of Islam itself which cannot be contradicted.

Tuan Guru's Religious Politicization Mechanism

Tuan Guru's involvement in politics is prone to being infected by identity politics, more precisely the politicization of religion, because they are very close to religion, even Islamic verses become their daily intake. This is a normal reality. As religious figures, of course they will not be separated from the symbols, narratives and identities of their figures. For John L. Esposito, the combination of religion and politics is not a problem, Islamic symbols, slogans, ideology and actors have become an inseparable part of Muslim politics. Islam has been used by the government and by opposition movements (Esposito, 2004).

It should be noted that not all politicization of religion is negative. This needs to be emphasized, so that the assessment of the politicization of religion is not too a priori, as if it is just an abuse of religion that causes damage, even though in reality this is not the case. As stated by Franz Magnis-Suseno, identity politics is not aimed at a political, economic or other administrative action. The ultimate goal is justice, an end to neglect, humiliation and discrimination. They no longer want to submit as forced upon them by those in power, but instead they appoint their leaders (Suseno, 2018). In the local context, some religious politicians also do the same thing, although with varied religious politicization mechanisms. Some of them use symbol mechanisms, others use religious narratives and identities in political contestation. This profiteering of religious attributes is not without reason. There are mature political considerations in the use of Islamic symbols, narratives and identities in campaign moments in East Lombok Regency.

The religious symbols used can be physical objects or artistic values. For Catholics, the cross will remind them of the event where Jesus was hanged. The hexagram symbol or star of David or David refers to the Jews. The Kaaba or moon has been considered a symbol of Muslims. In addition, religious symbols can be clothing or decorations that are considered to represent a particular religion. The hijab, for example, is considered Muslim clothing that shows piety. In addition, religious symbols can be words, both written and unwritten, such as mantras or prayers that are considered to have spiritual power, as well as greetings to people of the same religion. The use of religious symbols during candidate outreach is intended to encourage voters to act and vote for them. Using Mead's perspective, religious symbols can be used to describe the stages of human action after being given stimulation (Agus, 2017).

In a practical political context, the physical dimension refers to the use of Islamic religious symbols in candidate photos on billboards, banners, stickers and ballot papers. The use of religious symbols in physical form usually consists of clothing or accessories that are identical to a religion. This is intended to do more than just show religious identity, but can also show their piety or religiosity. Meanwhile, the non-physical or artistic dimension can be in the form of support from Islamic organizations or the vision and mission of politicians. The use of religious symbols can be seen in the campaign attributes of the Tuan Guru who are contesting the 2024 election in East Lombok Regency.



Figure 1. Tuan Guru Using Imamah
In the 2024 Election in East Lombok Regency

In the picture, Tuan Guru Sholah (left) and Tuan Guru Fatihin (right) can be seen using religious symbols, namely the imamate. 'Imamah in Arabic is a piece of cloth, the plural of al-'ama'im which means wide clothing wrapped over the head to protect against heat and cold. The word ammamahu ta'miman is a person who wears a turban. Meanwhile, in the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), imamah means *surban* (wide headband). For the people of East Lombok, the imamate itself is a symbol of religion and religiosity, this is in line with Ibnu Umar's statement, "When the Prophet SAW wore the 'imamah, he spread his imamate between his two shoulders." (HR. Tirmidhi).

Apart from using the imamate, Tuan Guru who is running for office also wears a white cap. This religious symbol is a sign that someone has carried out the Hajj pilgrimage, completing the fifth pillar of Islam. For the people of East Lombok, the Hajj is a confirmation of the spirituality of the congregation's followers and at the same time becomes a medium for cultural and social transformation. As a social doctrine, Hajj has provided a number of institutions that can improve their social status. Hajj is the most popular option among some East Lombok people who want to improve their social status, regardless of the relationship of this title to their "religious qualities".



Figure 2. Tuan Guru Using White Peci
In the 2024 Election in East Lombok Regency

Not only at campaign moments, these religious symbols are also used at religious moments, such as recitations, maulid Nabi Muhammad, nuzul Al-Qur'an, and gatherings. Therefore, it is very difficult to differentiate the function of these symbols, whether they are religious symbols with political goals or religious symbols with the aim of implementing Islamic rules. On the other hand, the use of religious symbols has also become a culture among the people of East Lombok. At this stage, researchers see that the use of imamate is not only used temporally, during election seasons only. So that the symbol is inherent in them and is not made up. Its relevance to the election moment is when religious symbols are only used as a vehicle for seeking political support. Usually, this reality can be found in pure politicians who are not religious, where they only use religious symbols temporarily.

Apart from using religious symbols, two of the four Tuan Guru are also supported by Islamic organizations in East Lombok. According to Sugiarto (2020), religious institutions or organizations that support a candidate can also be considered politicization of religion. This is because religious institutions play a strategic role in elections by providing religious legitimacy to candidates and encouraging religious communities to become voters and follow their instructions. A candidate receiving official support from a religious organization or praying in person at community events is proof of their legitimacy as a representative of the religious community.

In the context of the 2024 election, there are several Tuan Guru who receive support from Islamic organizations, such as Tuan Guru Sholah and Tuan Guru Fatihin. Tuan Guru Sholah is supported by the religious organization Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiyah (NWDI). This organization is chaired by TGB. Muhammad Zainul Majdi. During organizational moments, Tuan Guru Sholah is often assigned as a translator. It is not surprising that he is very close to this organization, including TGB itself. According to Tuan Guru Sholah, TGB ordered him to go directly into practical politics in the 2024 Provincial DPRD elections through the Perindo Party. Apart from being close to TGB, Tuan Guru Sholah is also close to several Islamic boarding school leaders in East Lombok, where this closeness leads to political support.

It is not surprising that he received support from several Islamic boarding school leaders, such as support from the leadership of the Ittihadul Ummah Akbar Islamic Boarding School NWDI, the leadership of the Riadlusshalihin NWDI Islamic Boarding School, the leadership of Hawthoh Syafi'iyah Barokah, the Darul Hijrah Islamic Boarding School, the leadership of YPQ al-Fajr, the leadership of YPITQ al -Batthowi, head of the Arrobbani Islamic Boarding School. The video supporting the Islamic boarding school leadership was uploaded on social media and the Tuan Guru Solah Volunteer YouTube account and has been watched 1,540 times. In fact, the Facebook account: Santri Solah actively shares

snippets of videos of lectures from Tuan Guru Sholah who are given an intro about his candidacy as a member of the DPRD. West Nusa Tenggara Province from the Perindo Party.

Apart from Tuan Guru Sholah, Tuan Guru Fatihin was also given support and prayers by the leadership of the Nahdlatul Wathan organization, RTGB. Muhammad Zainudin Atsani at the Hultah Madrasah NWDI in Anjani in 2024. In fact, the general chairman of PBNW called on his congregation to fully support Tuan Guru Fatihin. It doesn't stop there, RTGB. Muhammad Zainudin Atsani also accompanied Tuan Guru Fatihin to the East Lombok Regency General Election Commission to register himself.

Apart from the two Tuan Guru, Tuan Guru Muhanan and Tuan Guru Wildan also received support from the congregation and students from the Islamic boarding school they coached. Apart from that, they also departed from the "Islamic party" namely the Prosperous Justice Party. As is commonly known, the five main components that make up this party are DDII (Indonesian Islamic Da'wah Council), which is led by Mohammad Natsir, LDK and Rohis activists, university graduates, especially from the Middle East, Islamic mass organization activists, preachers who graduated from Islamic boarding schools. With their respective functions and roles, the five elements work together, support and strengthen each other, and reinforce each other. Of the five elements, the DDII element is the most important in the emergence of this movement. DDII activists, who were previously members of the Masjumi Party which was disbanded at the start of the Soeharto government, became the first initiators of preaching on campus and at the same time laid the foundations for the campus preaching strategy which ultimately formed the Prosperous Justice Party.

Based on the success of the three Tuan Guru above, it can be said that religious symbols such as the imamate and white cap are still very effective in raising the voice of the community. However, this opinion is also not completely correct. Because, among the 13 Tuan Guru who took part in the 2024 elections, only three managed to win, the rest experienced defeat. However, if the imamah and white peci are combined with the support of Islamic organizations, such as Nahdltul Wathan and Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiyah, then the chances of winning are greater. Therefore, according to the author's observations, the success of the Tuan Guru is not caused by the use of religious symbols alone, but non-physical religious symbols have a much greater influence. This is inversely proportional to Tuan Guru who experienced defeat. Most of them do not receive support from Islamic organizations, either directly or indirectly.

In addition to religious symbols, religion-based rhetoric is also used by political candidates to doctrinization of voters' minds about things to consider when making political decisions. This means that someone may have considered a number of components before making a political judgment, so that their decision needs to be given additional consideration by presenting religious rhetoric or narratives. Therefore, political candidates will utilize this religious rhetoric to connect with voters or to bring down their political opponents. Several religious narratives that are often built by Tuan Guru and their sympathizers in the electoral succession in East Lombok are friendship, ukhūwah islāmiyah, pious, *sami'nā wa aṭa'nā* and politics as a field of da'wah. These five core slogans are usually found in campaign moments or in the campaign attributes of Tuan Guru in East Lombok Regency.

In the context of political contestation, the term friendship experiences a shift in meaning, namely visits to the community to ask for prayers on the one hand and political support on the other. The friendship agenda in this sense is actively carried out by Tuan Guru even in moments of preaching. Because, one of the traditions of the people of East Lombok that is still maintained is giving a banquet to a preacher who comes to give *tausiyah* at their place. It is at these moments that Tuan Guru usually ask for support from the communities where they carry out Islamic da'wah. Apart from this moment, this political gathering event was also scheduled by Tuan Guru or his success team, as is the case with other political candidates who do not come from religious circles.

This religious narrative is often echoed by Tuan Guru Wildan and Tuan Guru Muhanan. In several moments of recitation, this narrative is always emphasized. Although the intended friendship does not necessarily lead to political meaning. However, by echoing this narrative in political moments,

indirectly, the audience also interprets it as a political gathering. As far as the author has observed, the tradition of the people of East Lombok is that they are known to actively make friends with Tuan Guru, they come to him to ask for prayers, ask questions about religion or just to stay in touch without any motive behind it. However, at the election moment, it was the figure of Tuan Guru who visited his congregation more intensely. In fact, some of the list of Tuan Guru that the author mentioned earlier also asked for recitation schedules at mosques or prayer rooms that had never been visited before.

The Islamic *ukhūwah* narrative is still a strong consideration in regulating the lives of many people. This religious hope often appears during campaigns and becomes a political offer in itself. In addition to the issues that affect their congregation, they are also haunted by religious expectations that Muslims will find it difficult to gain public access if it is not for Islam to serve or lead them. Religious brotherhood is considered important, and it is rightly seen as the best way to overcome the challenges of Islam. The *ukhūwah islāmiyah* narrative is also closely related to the slogan "compact, whole and united" in the Nahdlatul Wathan and Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiyah organizations. This narrative is often conveyed at organizational moments, such as the 89th Hultah NWDI in Pancor, East Lombok. If we talk about the Nahdlatul Wathan and Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiyah organizations, it would be incomplete if we did not mention the *sami'nā wa aṭa'nā* narrative. This narrative has become the main jargon in the largest Islamic organization in West Nusa Tenggara.

For followers of the Nahdlatul Wathan and Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiyah organizations, the *sami'nā wa aṭa'nā* narrative means; Listen and obey instructions from organizational leaders. Historically, this narrative is taken from Wasiat Renungan Masa which was written directly by the founder of the two organizations, TGKH. Muhammad Zainuddin 'Abdul Madjid: "Let not my son ever say, We hear, but disobey, Even though he says for a long time "We Hear We Are Faithful". This testament is interpreted by Nahdlatul Wathan's followers to be eternally loyal to the orders of the organization's leadership (Wathoni, 2021). According to Fahrurrozi (2017), many of Nahdlatul Wathan's political policies failed due to a lack of *sami'nā wa aṭa'nā* (loyalty) to the instructions and direction of the organization's leadership. Currently, the *sami'nā wa aṭa'nā* doctrine towards the leadership of this organization is starting to erode and diminish. This situation is different from when the founder of this organization was still alive, because this mantra is considered sacred and auspicious.

Apart from that, Tuan Guru Fatihin's campaign attributes also play the *sholeh* narrative (a non-standard form of the word pious). It is hoped that this vocabulary will be able to convey an image of obedience and sincerity in worship, holy and faithful, as is the literal meaning in the Big Indonesian Dictionary. In simple terms, the word pious displayed on billboards, stickers and banners will create an image of the piety of Tuan Guru.



Figure 3. Use of Sholeh Narrative in Campaign Attributes

The sholeh narrative itself comes from the Islamic religion. This word comes from the word *shaluḥa* which means good. From the word *shaluḥa*, the forms of the words *ṣulhān* and *yaṣlah* are produced, which means the stopping of something from being damaged and turning into something good and useful. In the Qur'an, the word *iṣlāḥ* with all its forms changes 40 times. Meanwhile, the word *ṣalāḥ* with its various changes is found 140 times. This word has synonyms in the Qur'an, namely *khair*, *birr*, *ḥusn*, *ma'rūf* and *ḥaq*. All of these expressions contain the meaning of goodness, even though their focus is different (Yusran, 2015). Based on this explanation, the pious narrative is not related to the context of leader election, the same as the narrative of friendship and *ukhūwah islāmiyah* which tends to be politicized and separated from the context of the verse.

At the moment of the 2024 election, *Nahdlatul Wathan* and *Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiyah*, which were born from the same embryo, have different choices of political parties. *Nahdlatul Wathan* sided with the Gerindra party, while *Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiyah* sided with the Perindo party whose general chairman also serves as Chairman of the Daily Management of the Perindo Party, Tuan Guru Bajang Muhammad Zainul Majdi. In this framework, it is very natural that the *Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiyah* organization also supports candidates from the Perindo party such as Tuan Guru Sholah.

However, it seems that Tuan Guru Sholah rarely plays out the typical narratives of the *Nahdlatul Wathan Diniyah Islamiyah* organization as previously explained. He prefers political narratives as a means of preaching. *Da'wah* activities carried out through political channels are called political *da'wah*. The power that exists in the political field is used to spread and preach Islamic values. The power used to spread these values starts from the smallest level of power in a country to the highest level of power in that country. As a cultural product, *da'wah* cannot be separated from the world of politics. There are at least three paradigms related to the relationship between *da'wah* and politics, namely the symbiotic, integralistic and instrumentalistic paradigms. The symbiotic paradigm views that *da'wah* and politics need each other reciprocally. In this case, *da'wah* requires politics, because with politics, *da'wah* can develop. This is what is called preaching with politics. On the other hand, politics requires *da'wah*, because with *da'wah*, politics can become powerful in an ethical and moral framework. This is what is said to be politics with *da'wah* (Yanti, dkk, 2023).

In this context, *da'wah* is within the framework of idealism, namely spreading the goodness of religious teachings. If *da'wah* is carried out through politics, then the orientation is various benefits and goodness for society and getting the pleasure of The God. If someone preaches through politics and then obtains certain positions and powers, then this is a mandate and is solely to expand the area of preaching. Meanwhile, in the second phrase, namely doing politics through *da'wah*, the political aspect takes priority over the *da'wah* aspect. Someone who launches a political movement through *da'wah* often uses various attributes of *da'wah* in carrying out political lobbying. Here political power becomes the main goal of preaching. As a result, policies and the direction of the struggle can suddenly change according to existing political dynamics so that the political ideals concerned can be in the circle of power, gain public sympathy, including other things that strengthen their political interests through the vehicle of *da'wah* (Yakin, 2019). The identities used by a preacher when participating in political contestation are "Tuan Guru" and "Haji". As previously explained, Tuan Guru is an identity that is attached to a person based on his expertise in religious knowledge and his service to society. By using this identity, a politician gets more sympathizers than people who do not have that identity. The identities "Tuan Guru" and "Haji" are not only written on campaign tools, even on the ballot paper these identities are still used to make things easier for voters.

Tuan Guru leadership usually has three main characteristics. First, he leads the implementation of religious worship ceremonies (rites). Second, he becomes a place for other people to ask questions about various things, such as safety, treatment, and family life. Lastly, he became a role model in social behavior (*qudwah ḥasanah*). In the next stage, the Tuan Guru were divided into two main categories based on their social status. The first category consists of Tuan Guru with vertical social status, indicated by a clear organizational hierarchy at the national and global levels. The second category consists of

Tuan Guru with horizontal social status, who are usually concentrated in Islamic boarding schools. They have a great influence on society, even though they do not hold formal positions in community organizations. With this identity, politicians can form a leadership network consisting of Tuan Guru's family and congregation. The practical way they use to build solidarity and cooperation is by creating a tradition that their closest family members must be strong candidates to replace them in leadership. This tradition applies to Islamic boarding school leadership. developed a network of endogamous marriage alliances between Tuan Guru and his family, as well as a chain of intellectual transmission. In this way, the Tuan Guru are intertwined in a very strong bond. The more famous a Tuan Guru is, the more his family ties to other Tuan Guru, making electoral succession easier.

The Influence of Religious Politicization on Democracy in East Lombok

Politicization of religion to a certain extent will be bad if it is carried out with hatred towards other groups or candidates. As happened in the case of Al-Mā'idah: 51 in DKI Jakarta several years ago. This case is a lesson that the politicization of religion, which leads to a fragmented structure of society, giving rise to conflict, is a bad form of politicization of religion and does not reflect a democratic attitude. Apart from that, the negative impression of the politicization of religion also arises because of false presuppositions or assumptions, where religion is considered to only deal with matters of ritual and morality of the people. In fact, religion is also closely related to all dimensions of human life, including democracy and politics (Al Qurtuby, 2018).

If we trace backwards, religious-politicians emerged in the Khawarij movement. This group is the first political sect in Islam. The connection between Khawarij and politics shows that politics is one of the factors that can give rise to radicalism in Islam. Excessive politicization of religion also causes society to ignore humanity and the value of brotherhood. The politicization of religion is also unnatural and often has a negative impact on humanity and relations between individuals and social groups. This data is inversely proportional to the reality of the politicization of religion in East Lombok Regency. In this region whose population is almost entirely Muslim, the mechanism of religious politicization that has been played by the Tuan Guru has not had much influence on the electoral succession and the socio-religious conditions of the people.

Regarding the succession of elections, the politicization of religion did not necessarily result in Tuan Guru winning the political contest, even though it was carried out in the largest Muslim community area in West Nusa Tenggara. This is proven by the majority of them experiencing defeat in this year's elections. Of course there are many factors that cause this, such as (1) Tuan Guru has no experience in practical politics; (2) Party votes that do not reach the threshold; (3) The Tuan Guru are only "extra players" in the election contestation; (4) Congregants or sympathizers who are starting to be smart in distinguishing Tuan Guru's position as a religious figure and a politician; (4) Dichotomization of social class between Tuan Guru and his congregation; (5) Lack of resources owned by Tuan Guru; (6) Not getting support from Islamic organizations.

Several factors indicate that superior religiosity alone is not enough to win the most votes, many other technical and tactical matters are needed in political competition. Of course, their defeat in the election does not indicate that the Islamic religion has lost, or that Islam does not have political power. Because, it is necessary to distinguish between Islam and Muslims, or in Bassam Tibi's language, Islam and Islamism. Apart from that, the election cannot be interpreted as an arena for "religious war" as interpreted by radical Muslims. In fact, Tuan Guru's participation in political contestation indicates that they do not reject the concept of state and nationhood, which at the same time supports the democratization process in accordance with Islamic ideology.

Meanwhile, in socio-religious cases, violence in the name of religion in this region only occurs at the level of ideological differences, such as the case of the attack and expulsion of the Ahmadiyah congregation in 2000 in Selong and the attack on 24 members of the Ahmadiyah congregation in Greneng Village, East Sakra District on the 19th and 20 May 2018. Meanwhile, in a political context,

this kind of conflict has never occurred, at least in the 2024 political year. This is also confirmed by data from Lemhannas Republic of Indonesia in 2023 which states that the East Lombok Regency area is included in the low risk category in terms of election security. Apart from that, the politicization of religion in East Lombok also does not change the right of every individual to vote and be elected, in line with the spirit of the value of equality in democracy. These facts are proof that the mechanism for politicizing religion carried out by Tuan Guru is still at the level of using symbols, narratives and identities which are considered normal by the local community, due to their role as religious figures. Apart from the normal level, the politicization of religion carried out by religious politicians also does not attack or corner other candidates or groups. So, it doesn't create radical and extreme divisions.

The majority of Tuan Guru who are taking part in the 2024 election contestation also adhere to moderate Islamic ideology, where this ideology prioritizes the values of justice and balance. In the context of the state, this principle of moderation was also able to unite independence figures in the early days of independence who had various heads, various political interests, and various religions and beliefs. Everyone is moving towards finding common ground to jointly accept the form of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) as a mutual agreement. Willingness to accept the Republic of Indonesia as the final form of statehood can be categorized as a tolerant attitude towards accepting the concept of a nation-state (Saifudin, , 2021).

Basically, the concept of moderate Islam is not much different from the main concepts of the democratic concept, such as freedom, equality, brotherhood and justice. So it can be said that adherents of moderate Islam are very unlikely to reject democracy, because their values and principles are the same. Even though there are many democratic patterns, in the case of freedom, equality, brotherhood and justice, Tuan Guru and its moderate Islamic ideology supports political movements that lead to these values. This can be observed from the preaching materials they convey to their congregation. Moderate Islam, which is the ideology of the Tuan Guru, also refers to a set of values, ideas, norms, beliefs and convictions which are the basis for determining attitudes towards political events and problems they face.

However, we also cannot close our eyes that their politicization of religion has created polarization in society, especially between Islamic organizations in East Lombok. But once again, this polarization does not lead to social conflict. In Bassam Tibi's study, Tuan Guru's role is known as an institutional Islamist who rejects the use of violence, plays a democratic role and is willing to work peacefully within various existing institutions (Tibi, 2016). At this stage, Tuan Guru's politicization of religion is acceptable because it is done wisely and not excessively. Apart from that, religion can also be "politicized" as long as it is in the interests of social justice and the general benefit, not for the narrow interests of certain individuals or groups, so as to achieve a spirit of brotherhood between people, human values, democracy and national ideals.

Conclusion

The relationship between Islamic da'wah and democracy can be seen in the democratic themes conveyed by a preacher, including freedom, equality, brotherhood and justice. Apart from that, oral da'wah (al-da'wah bi al-lisān) alone is not enough to describe the role of da'wah in democracy. Because, democracy is also a system, so many Tuan Guru carry out da'wah through action (al-da'wah bi al-ḥāl) by participating in political contestation in order to uphold democratic values. A preacher who participates in the world of politics with the aim of gaining power will of course find it easier to apply Islamic law to his followers through implementing regulations that are made in stages. As a religious figure, Tuan Guru cannot avoid the politicization of religion. The same thing happened in East Lombok Regency, where the population is predominantly Muslim. The politicization of religion by religious politicians can be seen in the use of religious symbols, narratives and identities in political moments. The imamah and white cap are religious symbols used at this moment. Apart from that, the use of the Tuan Guru identity in ballot papers and campaign attributes is one of the characteristics of the politicization of religion. They also do not hesitate to use the narrative of friendship, politics as a field

for da'wah, ukhuwah Islamiyah, piousness and sami'na wa atho'na in carrying out acts of politicizing this religion. In reality, the politicization of religion does not disrupt democratic values in this region. In fact, the number of religious conflicts in this political context is non-existent at all. These two things indicate that the politicization of religion carried out by Tuan Guru is at a normal stage and cannot be considered completely negative.

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