

---

# PEACEMAKERS OR PEACE-BREAKERS? PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS AND RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP IN LOMBOK, INDONESIA

Jeremy J. Kingsley

## Introduction

In August 2007, I attended a meeting convened by NTB<sup>1</sup> government officials for police officers, intelligence officials, and non-government activists to address concerns about the upcoming 2008 gubernatorial elections. Halfway through the proceedings, a tense discussion arose, and people became concerned about my presence at the meeting, as “sensitive” matters relating to potential conflict were being discussed. Without being given any opportunity to allay their concerns, or protest my removal, I quickly was escorted from the meeting. I sat outside in the foyer of a Senggigi hotel, where the hotel acoustics fortunately kept me in earshot of the proceedings. I was frustrated by my ejection from the meeting, but the magnitude and difficulties involved in the preparations for the 2008 elections had been brought home to me. Underpinning my removal and the anxiety felt by all participants in the discussion was the fear that during the elections the provincial capital of Mataram, home to the various political party campaign headquarters, could explode into political violence.

Fortunately, violence did not erupt during the 2008 elections, and this raises the question of how conflict was avoided, the answer to which is the foundation of this

---

<sup>1</sup> Lombok, together with the island of Sumbawa, constitute the eastern Indonesian Province of Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB).

article. This essay provides a unique perspective on the study of conflict in Indonesia, as most literature to date has investigated situations where communal or political violence has occurred. With the fall of President Suharto in 1998, an event that sparked a wave of violence across Indonesia, including Jakarta, Solo, and Ambon, the study of Indonesian communal and political conflict has become a rich source of literature.<sup>2</sup> However, this article inverts the analysis by considering “where violence does *not* occur.”<sup>3</sup> Edward Aspinall has noted the importance of this approach, arguing that

... understanding the structural, contextual, and organizational dynamics of each violent episode is crucial, but if we want to understand overall patterns and develop general models, it is surely equally important to explore those instances where (presumably) mechanisms for peaceful regulation of ethnic and religious inter-group relations worked well.<sup>4</sup>

Studying the absence of violence is challenging, because violence is often vivid and its effects immediately apparent, while its avoidance is harder to assess definitively. However, if violence is anticipated and yet does not occur, it is useful to investigate why, and what, if any, conflict avoidance mechanisms were applied.<sup>5</sup>

This article’s direction is supported by the work of Ashutosh Varshney, who has studied places of “ethnic peace” rather than ethnic conflict.<sup>6</sup> Varshney’s research investigates several Indian cities and asks why communal and political conflict was avoided or resolved quickly in certain places, while other communities had turned violent. Varshney concludes that, in the Indian context, in places where violence was avoided, networks of professional relationships across ethnic and religious divides were integral to reducing social tensions and could therefore prevent violence from

<sup>2</sup> A significant amount of literature has been written about communal and political violence in Indonesia over the decade since the fall of President Suharto. These works include, among others, Freek Colombijn and Thomas Lindblad, ed., *Roots of Violence in Indonesia: Contemporary Violence in Historical Perspective* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002); Jacques Bertrand, *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Kasuma Snitwongse and W. Scott Thompson, ed., *Ethnic Conflicts in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005); Jemma Purdey, *Anti-Chinese Violence in Indonesia, 1996–1999* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2006); Charles A. Coppel, ed., *Violent Conflicts in Indonesia: Analysis, Representation, Resolution* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006); John Sidel, *Riots, Pogroms, Jihad: Religious Violence in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007); Jamie S. Davidson, *From Rebellion to Riots: Collective Violence on Indonesian Borneo* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2008); Ashutosh Varshney, *Collective Violence in Indonesia* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010). This survey of the literature is limited to the period following the fall of President Suharto. There is also a large body of literature on the period of Indonesia’s independence struggle and the anti-communist violence of 1965–66.

<sup>3</sup> Edward Aspinall, “Ethnic and Religious Violence in Indonesia: A Review Essay,” *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 62,4 (2008): 569.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 569–70.

<sup>5</sup> The issues investigated in this article surrounding conflict management should not be studied in isolation. The government officials involved, and their non-state counterparts, exist within a context shaped, in part, by a historical legacy, which includes the maintenance of security structures that existed under the New Order Suharto regime. However, there is a new socio-political context that has developed in the post-Suharto *Reformasi* period. Decentralization and democratization mean that the processes adopted for managing conflict during the New Order need to be reconsidered with fresh eyes and new semantics adopted. This article offers a fresh perspective and rhetorical framework.

<sup>6</sup> Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 5–9.

erupting.<sup>7</sup> Varshney's findings are context-specific, but they allude to mechanisms for conflict avoidance that rely on community relationships. The notion that relationships among political, religious, and community actors are key to maintaining peace is also drawn out in this article, and I demonstrate how religious networks have been integral to maintaining social harmony in Lombok.

First, I will discuss particular points of social tension and outbreaks of violence that occurred on the island to assist the reader in understanding anxieties in Lombok about potential election violence. The subsequent two sections center on the influential local religious leaders, *Tuan Guru*, and their involvement in conflict management during the 2008 elections. These religious leaders and their organizations played a broadly positive role during the elections. Their socio-political role is complex, however, and their actions in the past have sometimes led to violence, particularly in relation to their involvement in the creation of local militia groups and their arguably irresponsible behavior towards minority religious groups (including the Ahmadiyah sect).<sup>8</sup> The article then examines, as a case study, the 2008 NTB gubernatorial elections and the conflict-management strategy successfully deployed during that contest.

### Lineage of Violence

... we needed to cool our emotions—conflicts will not make us happy ...  
— Satriawan, Mataram Electoral Commission Member<sup>9</sup>

As Satriawan's words, quoted here, suggest, members of Lombok's local political elite were well aware of the need to keep tensions from boiling over during elections.<sup>10</sup> One of the major flashpoints concerning election planners was the political rivalry that coalesced along ethnic lines,<sup>11</sup> involving Sasak<sup>12</sup> and Bimanese<sup>13</sup> political coalitions, as occurred during the 2003 NTB gubernatorial elections.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 46–51. See, also, another example of conflict avoidance in India described from a historical perspective in Anna Bigelow, "Saved by the Saint: Refusing and Reversing Partition in Muslim North India," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 68,2 (2009): 435–64.

<sup>8</sup> Muslim religious leaders, as well as their counterparts in other faiths, can play constructive roles within society, but they have also been the instigators of social unrest and violence. As a point of comparison, the role of religious leader as provocateur has been discussed in relation to Indian communal conflict. See Stanley J. Tambiah, *Leveling Crowds: Ethnonationalist Conflicts and Collective Violence in South Asia* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 230–43; Paul R. Brass, *Theft of an Idol: Text and Context in the Representation of Collective Violence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 126–28; Paul R. Brass, *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press), pp. 241–43.

<sup>9</sup> Asrori S. Karni, "Roots of Tolerance Sprang Out from the Ashes of Conflict," in *A Celebration of Democracy: A Journalistic Portrayal of Indonesia's 2004 Direct Elections Amongst Moderate and Hardline Muslims*, ed. Asrori S. Karni (Jakarta: PT Era Media Informatika, 2006), p. 285.

<sup>10</sup> Direct elections of local government leaders have led to large demonstrations and political controversies elsewhere in Indonesia. See Nanyung Choi, "Elections, Parties, and Elites in Indonesia's Local Politics," *South East Asia Research* 15,3 (2005): 329–30; and International Crisis Group, *Indonesia: Preventing Violence in Local Elections*, Asia Report No. 197, December 2010. The potential for large-scale protests and conflict in Lombok thus has precedents elsewhere in the archipelago.

<sup>11</sup> Ethnicity is a means of mobilizing social activity and bringing people together in many parts of Indonesia. See Adam D. Tyson, *Decentralization and Adat Revivalism in Indonesia: The Politics of Becoming*

One of the major structural impetuses for violence and conflict has been, and continues to be, the island's high levels of poverty and economic marginalization, which can be used by provocateurs to foment trouble. Lombok's approximately 3.2 million residents are among Indonesia's most economically disadvantaged.<sup>14</sup> Approximately 25 percent of the population is designated as living in poverty,<sup>15</sup> and the Indonesian Bureau of Statistics consistently ranks NTB among the lowest three provinces on its "Human Development Rankings."<sup>16</sup> The levels of poverty in Lombok have been perpetuated by historical periods of famine and ongoing malnutrition among children and adolescents. With this level of poverty comes the potential for communal violence based on economic jealousies and distress that can be manipulated by political, ethnic, religious, or business interests.<sup>17</sup>

Poverty renders socio-economically disadvantaged people in Lombok more liable to be coopted by political leaders who seek to use them as a "rent-a-crowd" in order to advance a particular political agenda. This tactic usually involves the distribution of money to facilitate participation in demonstrations.<sup>18</sup> The former NTB governor, Lalu Serinata, for example, believed that money was distributed to secure participants for the January 2000 riots.<sup>19</sup> On this occasion, the monetary payment was estimated to be Rp 5000 per person (less than AU\$ 1).<sup>20</sup> Early in my time in Lombok, I also witnessed the distribution of money at a demonstration that turned violent outside the attorney-general's office in Mataram. Protestors stormed the grounds of the office but were deterred from entering the building by the ominous sight of riot police in full protective gear, thumping their shields with batons in a menacing manner.

The collapse of the island's tourism industry, a casualty of the 1997 Asian economic crisis, exacerbated this history of economic distress. The economic downturn had obvious social consequences, such as increasing the number of child beggars in Mataram.<sup>21</sup> Greater economic stress at that time led many residents in Mataram, and

*Indigenous* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2010), p. 105. Having said this, I would add that the manner in which ethnicity is understood and expressed varies across the Indonesian archipelago.

<sup>12</sup> Sasak are the indigenous ethnic group of Lombok.

<sup>13</sup> Bimanese are an indigenous ethnic group from Sumbawa.

<sup>14</sup> The dire economic situation is ongoing. There were reports of malnutrition leading to the deaths of two children in East Lombok during 2011. See Panca Nugraha, "Two Die as Malnutrition Continues to Ravage NTB," *The Jakarta Post*, May 23, 2011, at [www.thejakartapost.com/news/2011/05/23/two-die-malnutrition-continues-ravage-ntb.html](http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2011/05/23/two-die-malnutrition-continues-ravage-ntb.html)

<sup>15</sup> "24 Persen Penduduk NTB Miskin," *Lombok Post*, August 5, 2007, p. 1; "1,5 Juta Penduduk NTB Masih Miskin," *Lombok Post*, October 18, 2007, p. 9; and Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi NTB, *Nusa Tenggara Barat Dalam Angka 2010* (Mataram: Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi NTB, 2010), p. 67.

<sup>16</sup> The Human Development Rankings are a measurement of development calculated through combining factors such as life expectancy, educational attainment, and income.

<sup>17</sup> Poverty is considered one of the potential ingredients sparking violence in Indonesia, and, therefore, poverty alleviation programs have been a priority for international aid agencies. See Sidel, *Riots, Pogroms, Jihad*, p. ix.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Lalu Serinata, in Mataram, January 8, 2008. See also Jeremy Kingsley, "Democracy, Conflict, and Islamic Leadership in Eastern Indonesia: A Village Election Case Study," Islam, Syari'ah, and Governance Background Paper Series, Center for Islamic Law and Society, Melbourne Law School, the University of Melbourne, April 2011.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Lalu Serinata, in Mataram, January 8, 2008.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> "Anak Jalanan Menjamur Pasca Kerusakan Mataram," *Lombok Post*, February 6, 2000, p. 9.

Lombok more generally, to feel that their personal safety was under threat. Many people feared to venture out at night, afraid that they might be robbed or assaulted.<sup>22</sup> In the broader national context, the Asian economic crisis also led to serious political instability and large protests across Indonesia, eventually culminating in the downfall of President Suharto in May 1998 after over thirty years of authoritarian rule.<sup>23</sup> This event dramatically changed Indonesia's political landscape.

The national changes had profound symbolic and practical effects on Lombok. The end of the Suharto era, in Lombok and throughout Indonesia, brought on democratization, and, importantly, decentralization of political authority—this period is known as *Reformasi* (reformation).<sup>24</sup> These reforms saw a significant power shift to local political elites. For Lombok, this was a dramatic turning point, because the island had been subject to control by outsiders for over three hundred years,<sup>25</sup> starting with Balinese rule in 1677 and ending with the fall of President Suharto in 1998.<sup>26</sup> The political changes brought on with *Reformasi* had many positive effects, but also led to new political competition between rival ethnic and political elites. The local elites were not necessarily prepared for having such access to power, which created previously unconsidered points of tension.<sup>27</sup> It was in this volatile environment that government officials started planning the 2008 elections.

<sup>22</sup> For a discussion of this instability and the “insecurity” that had been generated in Lombok over this period, see Stein Kristiansen, “Violent Youth Groups in Indonesia: The Cases of Yogyakarta and Nusa Tenggara Barat,” *Sojourn* 18,1 (2003): 110–38; Kari Telle, “Dharma Power: Searching for Security in Post-New Order Indonesia,” *Social Analysis* 53,1 (2009): 141–56.

<sup>23</sup> The end of the Suharto era has been discussed in J. G. Taylor, *Indonesia Peoples and Histories* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 4; and Edward Aspinall, *Opposing Suharto: Compromise, Resistance, and Regime Change in Indonesia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005).

<sup>24</sup> The process of *Reformasi* in Indonesia, particularly the introduction of decentralization and democracy, is discussed in a broad body of literature. See Harold Crouch, “The Key Determinants of Indonesia's Political Future” ISEAS Working Paper No. 7, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002; Henk Schulte Nordholt and Gusti Asnan, ed., *Indonesia in Transition: Work in Progress* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2003); Marcus Mietzner, “Local Elections and Autonomy in Papua and Aceh: Mitigating or Fueling Secessionism?,” *Indonesia* 84 (October 2007): 1–39; Leo Schmit, “Decentralisation and Legal Reform in Indonesia: The Pendulum Effect,” in *Indonesia Law and Society*, ed. Tim Lindsey (Annandale, NSW: The Federation Press, 2008), pp. 146–190; J. G. Coen Holtzappel and Martin Ramstedt, eds., *Decentralization and Regional Autonomy in Indonesia: Implementation and Challenges* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009); M. A. Miller, *Rebellion and Reform in Indonesia: Jakarta's Security and Autonomy Policies in Aceh* (London: Routledge, 2009); Michael Buehler, “Decentralisation and Local Democracy in Indonesia: The Marginalisation of the Public Sphere,” in *Problems in Democratisation in Indonesia: Elections, Institutions and Society*, ed. Edward Aspinall and Marcus Mietzner (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2010), pp. 267–86.

<sup>25</sup> See W. Cool, *The Dutch in the East: An Outline of the Military Operations in Lombok [Lombok], 1894* (Batavia: Kolff, 1897); A. van der Kraan, *Lombok: Conquest, Colonization, and Underdevelopment, 1870–1940* (Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books, 1980), pp. 16–58; L. Avonius, *Reforming Wetu Telu: Islam, Adat, and the Promises of Regionalism in Post-New Order Lombok* (Helsinki: Yliopistopaino, 2004), pp. 4–5; John M. MacDougall, “Buddhist Buda or Buda Buddhists?: Conversion, Religious Modernism and Conflict in the Minority Buda Sasak Communities of New Order and Post-Suharto Lombok” (PhD dissertation, Princeton University, 2005), pp. 302–6.

<sup>26</sup> The decentralization laws promulgated in 1999 provided the legal infrastructure for this political transformation.

<sup>27</sup> Earlier attempts at local political empowerment in Lombok were swiftly quashed during President Suharto's New Order period. Members of the local political elite were “burned” politically in the 1980s when they attempted to appoint one of their own as governor. The renegade legislators were “dragged into military intelligence headquarters and [their] political careers were ruined.” See MacDougall, “Buddhist Buda or Buda Buddhists?,” pp. 76–77.

Adding to these general tensions, a series of violent incidents in Lombok during the decade preceding the 2008 gubernatorial elections heightened the uneasiness of the local political and religious elite. I have categorized these episodes variously as *communal violence* (related to religious or ethnic tensions), *political violence* (based on political competition), and *criminal violence* (or the fear of it). These disruptive incidents reinforced the belief that there was a serious potential for violence during the elections, and this led to the development of the provincial government's conflict-management strategy designed to avoid or resolve outbreaks of violence.

*Communal violence* was unleashed in Lombok during riots in January 2000 targeting the island's Indonesian Chinese minority.<sup>28</sup> The riots lasted five days and led to significant property damage, including the razing or demolition of churches, homes, and commercial properties.<sup>29</sup> Over five thousand rioters caused an estimated Rp 60 billion (AU\$ 7.5 million) in property damage.<sup>30</sup> The riots also led approximately 7,500 Indonesian Chinese (and other non-Muslim residents) to flee to Bali or further afield.<sup>31</sup> These departures subsequently hampered the region's efforts to recover from the riots, because many of the key local traders and businesspersons had fled.<sup>32</sup> It has been suggested that this exodus meant that at least 80 percent of the local entrepreneurs left the island, taking with them their business acumen and much of their capital. In order to entice entrepreneurs back to Lombok, provincial authorities compensated those whose property was damaged or destroyed.<sup>33</sup> While many Indonesian Chinese made their way back to Mataram and West Lombok in the following months, hundreds have

<sup>28</sup> The violence that affected Lombok was part of a larger pattern of social and political instability across Indonesia. To a large degree, this stemmed from the fall of President Suharto and the weakening of state structures, such as law enforcement. See Tim Lindsey, "The Criminal State: *Premianisme* and the New Indonesia," in *Indonesia Today: Challenges of History*, ed. Grayson Lloyd and Shannon Smith (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2001), p. 284. One of the consequences of the weakness of the state was the rise of militia groups across the archipelago. See Ian Douglas Wilson, "Continuity and Change: The Changing Contours of Organized Violence in Post-New Order Indonesia," *Critical Asian Studies* 38,2 (2006): 265–97; John M. MacDougall, "Criminality and the Political Economy of Security in Lombok," in *Renegotiating Boundaries: Local Politics in Post-Suharto Indonesia*, ed. Henk Schulte Nordholt and Gerry van Klinken (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2007). Also, for discussion of state weakness in Lombok during the period immediately after President Suharto's resignation, and its parlous status generally, see Jeremy Kingsley, "Tuan Guru, Community, and Conflict in Lombok, Indonesia" (PhD dissertation, University of Melbourne, 2010), pp. 33–46.

<sup>29</sup> The riots caused the razing or demolition of 20 churches, 740 homes, 62 shops, 24 restaurants, 5 bar/restaurants, 36 cars and motorbikes, 23 villas, 41 hotel bungalows, 11 shop houses, 30 warehouses, 20 public buildings, 1 hairdressing salon, 2 banks, 2 medical clinics, and 3 offices. See "Meredam Konflik, Menghidupkan Kasadaran Multikultur," *Religi*, April 16, 2007, pp. 17–19.

<sup>30</sup> "Kerusuhan Mataram, Keluguan Pemuda Yang Membawa Petaka," *Lombok Post*, February 22, 2000, p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> Jana Mason, "Shadow Plays: The Crisis of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in Indonesia," United Nations Refugee Agency (2001), at [www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6a5856.html](http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6a5856.html), accessed on January 16, 2012. The hasty departure by Lombok's Indonesian Chinese community was also discussed in Kari Telle, "Swearing Innocence: Performing Justice and 'Reconciliation' in Post-New Order Lombok," in *Reconciling Indonesia: Grassroots Agency for Peace*, ed. Birgit Bräuchler (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), p. 59.

<sup>32</sup> "Sebagian Besar Pengusaha Keturunan Alami Trauma," *Lombok Post*, February 3, 2000.

<sup>33</sup> "Korban Kerusakan Akan Dapat Bantuan," *Lombok Post*, April 18, 2000, p. 9.

not returned. Moreover, many of those who did return still live with a high level of anxiety about their personal and family security.<sup>34</sup>

During the violence, several deaths and injuries were reported. Those killed were rioters shot by police or the military. The exact number of fatalities is unclear. The International Crisis Group<sup>35</sup> and the local social affairs magazine *Religi*<sup>36</sup> placed the death toll at five. Academic Stein Kristiansen believes, however, that the death toll was seven.<sup>37</sup> There is also evidence to suggest that both these figures are underestimates. Anecdotally, I have been informed that several rioters were allegedly shot by soldiers outside a large charismatic church situated on an Indonesian military base in Mataram, and I believe these losses have not been incorporated into the figures cited.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, 152 people suffered minor injuries as a result of their participation in the violence.<sup>39</sup>

In the second category, I have defined *political violence* as conflicts that emerge from competition within Lombok's local and provincial politics. These clashes arose when *Reformasi* created a new political dynamic through democratization and decentralization, and the "rewards of office" led to intermittent violence in Indonesia, for "privileged control over vital state and societal resources" was at stake.<sup>40</sup> In the Lombok-based electoral politics discussed in this article, conflict emerged primarily, although not exclusively, between Sasak and Bimanese adversaries for political office.

In this category of political violence, three incidents that occurred in Lombok during the decade before the 2008 elections stand out. First, in 1999, there were clashes between supporters of local candidates for the national elections, leading to physical confrontations that left several supporters requiring hospitalization.<sup>41</sup> Second, on the morning of July 21, 2003, as local provincial legislators gathered to decide who should be the next NTB governor, a police cordon surrounded the provincial legislative buildings in Mataram. The barricade not only constituted a security measure, but was also symbolic of the tension generated by the first genuine legislative election for NTB governor.<sup>42</sup> There was concern that the situation outside the legislative building would erupt violently, and local police feared that supporters of the rival candidates would

<sup>34</sup> These anxieties were clearly expressed to me when I was looking for a rental property early in 2007. As I inspected potential houses with an Indonesian Chinese businessman, John, he kept stressing the importance of personal security. He mentioned these issues with specific reference to the 2000 riots.

<sup>35</sup> International Crisis Group, "The Perils of Private Security Groups in Indonesia: Guards and Militias on Bali and Lombok" (2003), <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-east-asia/indonesia/067-the-perils-of-private-security-in-indonesia-guards-and-militias-on-bali-and-lombok.aspx>, accessed on January 17, 2012.

<sup>36</sup> "Merendam Konflik, Menghidupkan Kasadaran Multikultur," *Religi*, April 16, 2007, pp. 17-19.

<sup>37</sup> Stein Kristiansen, "Violent Youth Groups in Indonesia: The Cases of Yogyakarta and Nusa Tenggara Barat" (2003) 18 *Sojourn* 18, 1 (2003): 123.

<sup>38</sup> My source for this information was a participant in my research, named John, who told me this confidentially.

<sup>39</sup> "Merendam Konflik, Menghidupkan Kasadaran Multikultur," pp. 17-19.

<sup>40</sup> Robert Hefner, "Religion and Violence in Post-Suharto Indonesia," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 67,1 (2008): 673.

<sup>41</sup> "Oknum TNI dan Polri Baku Hantam," *Lombok Post*, May 3, 1999, p. 1.

<sup>42</sup> Previous elections of NTB's governor in the provincial legislature were merely a formality. This issue is discussed in greater detail later in this article. See also Nankyung Choi, "Local Elections and Democracy in Indonesia: The Riau Archipelago," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 37 (2007): 330.

clash and then storm the compound. The concerns were proven to be at least partially correct, as fights broke out among rival groups. These clashes were between Sasak and Bimanese supporters of rival candidates for governor.<sup>43</sup> Neither of these clashes was particularly intense, however, they indicated that political competition did have the propensity to turn violent.

The third incident exposes the potential for election-related violence to turn deadly. In 2006, a major Mataram university, Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Mataram (IKIP Mataram, Institute of Teaching and Educational Sciences), elected a Sasak *rektor* (university president). Bimanese students protested against this election result, and it has been alleged that the newly appointed *rektor* or one of his associates paid *preman* (thugs) to beat up the protestors, although no one was ever brought to trial. The struggle caused the death of one student and the hospitalization of several others.<sup>44</sup>

Another aspect of this political violence, which was preying on the minds of people in Lombok, was that the local elite involved in the 2008 elections were under intense external political pressure. The pressure on political figures was particularly strong, as the national headquarters of political parties such as Golkar saw this as a litmus test of their local relevance.<sup>45</sup> The calm that prevailed during these elections is even more impressive if we take into account the fact that former governor Serinata was recently jailed for corruption and that investigations into his corrupt activities had commenced prior to the 2008 election campaign and potentially threatened to disrupt the electoral process.<sup>46</sup> During the election period and its immediate aftermath, there was a real possibility that the investigations could anger people and incite violence among Serinata's supporters and close allies. Given this situation, the avoidance of violence was a particularly significant accomplishment, as many of the key candidates and political operatives were under serious pressure to succeed in the contest because an electoral victory may have insulated them from criminal prosecution.

The third category of violence—*criminal violence* (or the fear of it)—emerged as a serious concern in Lombok in the wake of the economic crisis and the political instability of the late 1990s. Lombok residents perceived a “crime wave” to be afoot and expressed increased fears of theft and violent offences.<sup>47</sup> During this period, the

<sup>43</sup> R. Husaenie Sayuti and M. Faqih Langitan, *Perjalanan Orang Sasak Menjadi Gubernur* (Mataram: Pantheon Media Pressindo, 2006), pp. 55–62.

<sup>44</sup> “Rektor IKIP Bisa Jadi Tersangka,” Lombok Sumbawa Online (2006), at <http://www.lomboknews.com/2006/10/06/rektor-ikip-mataram-bisa-jadi-tersangka> A participant also discussed these events; see author's interview with Yon [pseud.], in Mataram, August 6, 2008.

<sup>45</sup> “Pilkada NTB Adalah Ujian,” *Lombok Post*, September 9, 2007, p. 1.

<sup>46</sup> The investigation was slow moving and marred by prosecutorial incompetence. See “Mantan Gubernur NTB Lalu Serinata Ditahan di LP Mataram,” *Kompas*, October 27, 2008, at <http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2008/10/27/19062253/mantan.gubernur.ntb.ditahan.di.lp.mataram>; Jeremy Kingsley, “D-Day for Corruption Reform,” *Inside Indonesia* (2009), at <http://insideindonesia.org/weekly-articles-96-apr-june-2009/d-day-for-anti-corruption-reform-24051763>; and Panca Nugraha, “Former Governor Sent to Jail to Serve his Sentence,” *The Jakarta Post*, July 29, 2010, at [www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/07/29/former-governor-sent-jail-serve-his-sentence.html](http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/07/29/former-governor-sent-jail-serve-his-sentence.html). See also “Izin Gubernur NTB,” *Kompas*, August 8, 2007, p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> The perceived “crime wave” is puzzling. Many informants told me of their genuine feelings of insecurity during this period of transition. However, the criminal matters lodged with the Pengadilan Negeri (Magistrates Court) Mataram do not necessarily support these claims about a crime wave. Even if one doubts the reality of the supposed crime wave, it remains true that feelings of insecurity among Lombok residents during this period were real and had tangible effects.

category of criminal violence was not necessarily marked by particular events, but rather reflected a general atmosphere of fear.<sup>48</sup>

*Pamswakarsa* (private militias) emerged in response to people's heightened sense of vulnerability to crime. These militia groups grew out of *ronda* (night watches) in local communities<sup>49</sup> where residents undertake shifts of guard duty to ensure that their community remains safe after dark. Although *pamswakarsa* were initially created in Lombok to combat crime, they were themselves often out of control. These groups launched an assault on "crime" between 1999 and 2007,<sup>50</sup> yet rather than suppressing criminality, they often left havoc in their wake.<sup>51</sup> Militia involvement in criminal violence fueled the overall socio-political tensions in the region, and *pamswakarsa* are alleged to have instigated sporadic outbursts of violence in the pre-election period.

These three categories of violence are interconnected, and the effects of these disruptions and fears combined to create an environment of apprehension and social instability. The violence just noted was considered the possible precursor to conflict during the first direct election for NTB governor. This situation necessitated the development of a conflict avoidance strategy by the provincial government. The next section considers one of the key players in the conflict-management plans—*Tuan Guru* and their organizations.

### Religious Leadership, Ritual, and Affiliation

The Sasak are obedient to *Tuan Guru*. They are too scared to ignore them.  
— Ustadz Kamarudin, Pagutan, Mataram<sup>52</sup>

*Tuan Guru* and their religious organizations are critical to any analysis of socio-political affairs and conflict management in contemporary Lombok. This section will examine their high social standing and how they leverage their socio-political authority and institutional strength to avoid or resolve communal conflict. *Tuan Gurus'* role as social mediators informs the manner of, and rationale for, their participation in the provincial authority's conflict-management strategy for the 2008 elections.

Knowing who these religious leaders are and what they do provides the necessary context to understanding their socio-political power and authority in Lombok. On a

<sup>48</sup> For a discussion of the fearful and strained environment on Lombok during this period, see Stein Kristiansen, "Violent Youth Groups in Indonesia: The Cases of Yogyakarta and Nusa Tenggara Barat," *Sojourn* 18,2 (2003): 110–38.

<sup>49</sup> See Joshua Barker, "State of Fear: Controlling the Criminal Contagion in Suharto's New Order," in *Violence and the State in Suharto's Indonesia*, ed. Benedict Anderson (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2001), pp. 26–28; and Stein Kristiansen and Lembang Trijono, "Authority and Law Enforcement: Local Government Reforms and Security Systems in Indonesia," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 27,2 (2005): 238–41.

<sup>50</sup> This was the key period of *pamswakarsa* anti-crime activities, although these groups are still operational and remain an important aspect of security arrangements on the island.

<sup>51</sup> For further discussion of *pamswakarsa* and their lawlessness, see the section "Are *Tuan Guru* Peacemakers or Peace-breakers?" below.

<sup>52</sup> Ustadz Kamarudin's assessment encapsulates a commonly held opinion about the degree and nature of Sasak obedience to *Tuan Guru*. Author's field notes, February 22, 2011.

basic level, *Tuan Guru* are akin to both Muslim religious teachers (*ustadz*) and leaders (*ulama*).<sup>53</sup> Among Lombok's largely pious Muslim population, *Tuan Guru* are pivotal socio-religious figures.<sup>54</sup> Yet, they are not a homogenous group, but rather hold a diversity of theological positions, political affiliations, and varying levels of influence.<sup>55</sup> The common denominator underpinning their role in conflict-management processes is the ability of *Tuan Guru* to act as respected mediators with the capacity to ease social tensions or resolve altercations.<sup>56</sup>

*Tuan Gurus'* authority is multifaceted, and they are active as spiritual, community, and political leaders. As politically active religious teachers, they reflect Islamic jurisprudential traditions that see religion and state as intricately connected.<sup>57</sup> Richard Antoun expressed this political configuration lucidly, "for Muslims, the community (*umma*) is simultaneously a religious and a political community under a single jurisdiction headed by God."<sup>58</sup>

These religious leaders are influential, and their socio-political status, so essential to their role as agents in conflict management, springs from their religious credentials. The authority of *Tuan Guru* is not derived from any official title, but rather from Sasak acceptance of their leadership.<sup>59</sup> This endorsement results from their religious knowledge, personal charisma, and institutional backing. Many scholars and social commentators have observed the profound nature of the leadership role that *Tuan Guru* possess. Sven Cederroth has asserted that among the Sasak, a "*Tuan Guru* is regarded as a person above ordinary human beings. He is close to Allah, and because of this cannot do anything wrong,"<sup>60</sup> while Judith Ecklund described them as having a

<sup>53</sup> *Tuan Guru* hold a similar role and function as do *Kiyai* in Java. See Sven Cederroth, *The Spell of the Ancestors and the Power of Mekkah: A Sasak Community on Lombok* (Gothenburg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1981), pp. 81–88; E. Turmudi, *Perselingkuhan Kyai Dengan Kekuasaan* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2004); and M. Cameron Hay, "Women Standing between Life and Death: Fate, Agency, and the Healers of Lombok," in *The Agency of Women in Asia*, ed. Lyn Parker (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic, 2005), pp. 28–29.

<sup>54</sup> See Cederroth, *The Spell of the Ancestors and the Power of Mekkah*; Bartholomew Ryan, "Alif Lam Mim: Reconciling Islam, Modernity, and Tradition in an Indonesian Kampung" (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 1999); E. Budiwanti, *Islam Sasak: Waktu Telu Versus Waktu Lima* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2000); and Avonius, *Reforming Wetu Telu*.

<sup>55</sup> Interview with Tuan Guru Hajji (TGH) Subkhi Sasaki, in Kediri, West Lombok, August 23, 2008.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Muhammad Dimiati, in Mataram, August 12, 2008. See also Kingsley, *Democracy, Conflict, and Islamic Leadership in Eastern Indonesia*.

<sup>57</sup> The complexity of the intersection between these leaders' religious responsibilities and their political activities, to a large degree, relates to the role and definition of *Syari'ah* (Islamic law) within state function, and, therefore, to the appropriate role of religious leadership within state affairs. See Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, "Shari'a in the Secular State: A Paradox of Separation and Conflation," in *The Law Applied: Contextualizing the Islamic Shari'a*, ed. Peri Bearman, Wolfhart Heinrichs, and Bernard G. Weiss (New York, NY: I. B. Tauris, 2008), pp. 321–41; Robin Bush, *Nahdlatul Ulama and the Struggle for Power Within Islam and Politics in Indonesia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009), pp. 8–16. When *ulama* (Muslim religious leaders) move from a focus on spiritual leadership to activity within the political realm, many risks emerge, as discussed in Gregory J. Fealy, "Ulama and Politics in Indonesia: A History of Nahdlatul Ulama, 1952–1967" (PhD dissertation, Monash University, 1998), p. 110.

<sup>58</sup> Richard T. Antoun, *Muslim Preacher in the Modern World: A Jordanian Case Study in Comparative Perspective* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 227.

<sup>59</sup> Sabirin, "Respon Pemikiran Tuan Guru Terhadap Penetrasi Ajaran Wahabi Pada Etnik Sasak di Pulau Lombok" (Master's thesis, Universitas Indonesia, 2008), pp. 44–50.

<sup>60</sup> Sven Cederroth, "Traditional Power and Party Politics in North Lombok, 1965–99," in *Elections in Indonesia: The New Order and Beyond*, ed. Hans Antlov and Sven Cederroth (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 80.

“cult-like” status.<sup>61</sup> *Tuan Guru*’ social authority has long been considered more potent in Lombok than the authority of government leadership.<sup>62</sup> The partnership between government and religious actors in conflict management thus allows for government policy to be effective in ways that would be otherwise unattainable.<sup>63</sup>

The authority of *Tuan Guru* is not just felt in the mosque, but has tangible effects across the island. Political leaders on the island are, for instance, well aware of the powerful role of *Tuan Guru*. I personally witnessed two Golkar members of the provincial legislature, both men of high social standing, waiting for over an hour to receive advice from an influential *Tuan Guru*.<sup>64</sup> Due to *Tuan Guru*’ high social standing, it is almost impossible to make social policy or gain public support for an initiative in Lombok without the active (or at least tacit) support of these leaders. A women’s legal aid organization, LBH-APIK NTB,<sup>65</sup> has recognized the importance of working with *Tuan Guru* and has appointed a specific religious liaison office to mediate between their organization and these influential leaders. This makes NTB the only Indonesian province where LBH-APIK has a dedicated staff member responsible for fostering relationships with *ulama*, an organizational strategy that attests to the powerful, and arguably unique, role of these local religious leaders.<sup>66</sup>

In order to contextualize the social status of *Tuan Guru*, it is necessary to explore religion and piety within Lombok’s cultural mores.<sup>67</sup> Lombok is known locally as the “island of a thousand mosques,” but since there are well over three thousand mosques on the island, this slogan is clearly an understatement.<sup>68</sup> Needless to say, the ubiquitous nature of mosques symbolizes the importance of Islam for the Sasak.<sup>69</sup> Islam

<sup>61</sup> Judith L. Ecklund, “Tradition or Non-tradition: *Adat*, Islam, and Local Control on Lombok,” in *What is Modern Indonesian Culture?*, ed. Gloria Davis (Athens, OH: Ohio University, Center for International Studies, 1979), p. 253.

<sup>62</sup> “Inflasi Tuan Guru,” *Tempo*, July 10, 1976.

<sup>63</sup> In the current political environment, *Tuan Guru*, who have, until recently, been largely non-state actors, are now using their socio-political authority to become elected officials. This was clearly illustrated when TGH Bajang, the religious head of the local Islamic mass movement Nahdlatul Wathan Pancor, was elected NTB Governor in the 2008 elections. Therefore, the categorization into “state” and “non-state” actors or activities used in this article has become blurred in recent years, as *Tuan Guru* have become actively involved in provincial and local politics. Despite this, I have found that the dichotomy of “state” and “non-state” remains a useful descriptive typology for understanding socio-political affairs in Lombok, even if the constituent elements are sometimes blurred and overlap at their edges.

<sup>64</sup> Author’s field notes, July 20, 2008.

<sup>65</sup> Lembaga Bantuan Hukum—Asosiasi Perempuan Indonesia Untuk Keadilan (Legal Aid Institute—Indonesian Women’s Association for Justice) is a national organization with branches in fourteen provinces.

<sup>66</sup> Author’s field notes, August 11, 2008.

<sup>67</sup> The prominent role of *Tuan Guru* on the island has been acknowledged in popular culture, as they have been featured as central characters in fictional accounts of life on the island. See, for instance, S. Faris, *Tuan Guru* (Yogyakarta: Genta Press, 2007).

<sup>68</sup> Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi NTB, *Nusa Tenggara Barat Dalam Angka 2010*, p. 155.

<sup>69</sup> Religious affiliation and ritual play a significant role in the life of members of other religious groups in Mataram and West Lombok, but this article focuses on the majority Sasak community. Additionally, although I often refer to “the Sasak” as being Muslim, there are small minorities, such as the Sasak Buda, that are not Muslim, and other minority Sasak groups that practice syncretic derivations of Islam, such as the Wetu Telu. See Budiwanti, *Islam Sasak: Waktu Telu versus Waktu Lima*; Avonius, *Reforming Wetu Telu*; and MacDougall, “Buddhist Buda or Buda Buddhists?”

is one of the primary forms of social organization and discourse in Lombok,<sup>70</sup> with *Tuan Guru* acting like a “social glue.”<sup>71</sup> TGH Sofwan Hakim, one of Lombok’s most senior religious leaders, echoed these sentiments, emphasizing that Islam was at the core of life for the vast majority of Sasak.<sup>72</sup> Edward Aspinall has highlighted the Acehnese perception that, for the Acehnese, “Islam and Aceh are two sides of the same coin.”<sup>73</sup> Replace “Aceh” with “Lombok” or “Sasak” in this quote, and it would adequately reflect the centrality of Islam to Lombok’s Muslim population.

The centrality of religious life is one of the major reasons that *Tuan Guru* wield considerable authority in their communities. Through their Islamic teaching in *pengajian* (religious education classes) and *khutbah* (Friday sermons), they develop the loyalty of *santri* (religious students/followers).<sup>74</sup> *Tuan Guru* also exercise influence through the provision of *fatwa*, which are non-binding socio-religious opinions made in response to questions asked by members of their community.<sup>75</sup> This jurisprudential role as *fatwa*-maker provides *Tuan Guru* with social leverage and influence on people’s daily lives and extends to them the role of guardians of local religious practice and interpretation.<sup>76</sup>

The authority that contemporary *Tuan Guru* exert needs to be analyzed within a historical perspective. Since the late 1800s, *Tuan Guru* in Lombok have progressively overtaken the *bangsawan* (Sasak nobility) as the leading non-state actors on the island.<sup>77</sup> During the Dutch colonial period in Lombok, *Tuan Guru* operated outside Dutch colonial structures and established alternative institutional and social networks that remain active today.<sup>78</sup> At the same time, their noble rivals were part of the colonial governance structures.<sup>79</sup> In recent times, the role of the *Tuan Guru* has only continued

<sup>70</sup> L. R. Bennett, *Women, Islam and Modernity: Single Women, Sexuality, and Reproductive Health in Contemporary Indonesia* (New York, NY: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005) p. 13.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Lalu Nurtaat, in Mataram, July 28, 2008.

<sup>72</sup> Interview with TGH Sofwan Hakim, in Kediri, West Lombok, August 13, 2008.

<sup>73</sup> E. Aspinall, *Islam and Nation: Separatist Rebellion in Aceh, Indonesia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 2009), p. 10.

<sup>74</sup> “Inflasi Tuan Guru,” *Tempo*, July 10, 1976; M. Noor, M. Habib, and M. H. Zuhdi, *Visi kebangsaan TGH Zainudin Abdul Madjid* (Jakarta: PT Logos Wacana Ilmu, 2004). This issue was also discussed in several interviews, such as with TGH Sofwan Hakim and TGH Munajid Khalid. Interview with TGH Sofwan Hakim, in Kediri, West Lombok, August 13, 2008. Interview with TGH Munajid Khalid, in Gunung Sari, West Lombok, August 24, 2008.

<sup>75</sup> Muhammad Khalid Masud, Brinkley Messick, and David S. Powers, “Muftis, Fatwas, and Islamic Legal Interpretation,” in *Islamic Legal Interpretation: Muftis and their Fatwas*, ed. Muhammad Khalid Masud, Brinkley Messick, and David S. Powers (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 3.

<sup>76</sup> The importance of this function for Indonesian *ulama* is discussed in R. Michael Feener, *Muslim Legal Thought in Modern Indonesia* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 151.

<sup>77</sup> Judith L. Ecklund, “Marriage, Seaworms, and Song: Ritualized Responses to Cultural Change in Sasak Life” (PhD dissertation, Cornell University, 1977), p. 9. Similar dynamics were also seen in Java during the colonial period, during which rivalry often arose between religious leaders and the nobility. See M. C. Ricklefs, “Religion, Politics, and Social Dynamics in Java: Historical and Contemporary Rhymes,” in *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*, ed. Greg Fealy and Sally White (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008), p. 118. For a discussion of one of the earliest religious players in this competition, see Salman Faris, *Guru Dane* (Lombok: STKIP Hamzanwadi Press, 2011).

<sup>78</sup> Asnawi, “Islam dan Visi Kebangsaan di Nusa Tenggara Barat,” in *Menjadi Indonesia: 13 Abad Eksistensi Islam di Bumi Nusantara*, ed. Komaruddin Hidayat and Ahmad Gauf (Jakarta: Mizan, 2006), p. 327.

<sup>79</sup> Kari Telle, “Spirited Places and Ritual Dynamics among Sasak Muslims on Lombok,” *Anthropological Forum* 19,3 (2009): 292.

to grow, while the *bangsawan* have seen their socio-political influence eroded.<sup>80</sup> This means that *Tuan Guru* are almost unquestionably the most dominant leaders on the island, and therefore, were essential to the conflict-management strategy for the 2008 elections.

Religious knowledge, charisma, and political savvy were important in the rise of *Tuan Guru*, but their dominant socio-political role was fostered most effectively by their practical activities, such as the provision of welfare services. The management of food stocks during cyclical drought periods allowed *Tuan Guru* and their organizations to provide sustenance via rationing to their community.<sup>81</sup> When discussing famines in Lombok, it is essential to understand the serious and cyclical nature of these events.<sup>82</sup> For instance, in 1883 a famine that affected Bali, Lombok, and Sumbawa saw an estimated 117,000 people die.<sup>83</sup> Droughts and food shortages have historically occurred every two to three years on the island, leading to “starvation due to crop failure.”<sup>84</sup> The last major famine in Lombok occurred during 1966, when approximately 10,000 people died (the starvation was concentrated in southern Lombok).<sup>85</sup> Conditions have improved in recent times, but the World Food Programme still manages several food distribution programs across the island.<sup>86</sup>

A *Tuan Guru*'s influence is often reinforced by an institutional infrastructure, often elaborate, that generates strong mechanisms for allegiance and sources of patronage. Organizational networks include *pondok pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), groups that provide social services (such as medical clinics), and businesses (including stores, catering services, and “savings and loans” providers).<sup>87</sup> These spiritual and practical activities have reinforced the powerful role of the *Tuan Guru*, and it is reasonable to suggest that the institutional network they have created is akin to a para-state, as their religious organizations' activities replicate many state functions—undertaking services including health, education, and security.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>80</sup> The expanding role and authority of *Tuan Guru* and the rationale for the increase in their power have been covered in Cederroth, *The Spell of the Ancestors and the Power of Mekkah*, pp. 276–84; Budiwanti, *Islam Sasak Wetu Lima versus Waktu Lima*, pp. 119–21; Noor et al., *Visi Kebangsaan Religius*, pp. 108–11; Masnun, *Tuan Guru KH Muhammad Zainuddin Abdul Madjid: Gagasan dan Gerakan Pembaharuan Islam di Nusa Tenggara Barat* (Mataram: Pustaka Al-Miqdad, 2007); Sabirin, “Respon Pemikiran Tuan Guru,” pp. 17–24, 44–47. A comprehensive historical analysis of the rise of *Tuan Guru* is covered in Jeremy Kingsley, “*Tuan Guru, Community and Conflict in Lombok, Indonesia*,” pp. 94–97.

<sup>81</sup> See A. van der Kraan, *Lombok: Conquest, Colonization, and Underdevelopment, 1870–1940* (Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books, 1980), p. 173; Cederroth, *The Spell of the Ancestors and the Power of Mekkah*, pp. 276–84; Sabirin, “Respon Pemikiran Tuan Guru,” pp. 17–24, 44–47.

<sup>82</sup> Cederroth, *The Spell of the Ancestors and the Power of Mekkah*, p. 284.

<sup>83</sup> M. C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c.1200* (Basingstoke: Palgrave: 2001), p. 173.

<sup>84</sup> Mary Poo-Mooi Judd, “The Sociology of Rural Poverty in Lombok, Indonesia” (PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1980), pp. 10, 18.

<sup>85</sup> Kari Telle, “Spirited Places and Ritual Dynamics among Sasak Muslims on Lombok,” p. 298.

<sup>86</sup> *Indonesia* (2010), World Food Programme, at <http://www.wfp.org/countries/indonesia>, accessed February 2, 2012. This improvement remains tentative and incomplete, as exemplified by the tragic death of two children who starved in East Lombok during 2011. See Panca Nugraha, “Two Die as Malnutrition Continues to Ravage NTB,” *The Jakarta Post*, May 23, 2011, at <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2011/05/23/two-die-malnutrition-continues-ravage-ntb.html>

<sup>87</sup> Interview with TGH Sofwan Hakim, in Kediri, West Lombok, August 13, 2008.

<sup>88</sup> Jeremy Kingsley, “*Tuan Guru, Community, and Conflict in Lombok, Indonesia*,” p. 94.

### **Are *Tuan Guru* Peacemakers or Peace-breakers?**

In this article, I emphasize the positive role *Tuan Guru* play in maintaining social harmony, but these religious leaders can also be peace-breakers, causing social havoc and violence. This section examines these two divergent roles and outlines the care with which the parties to conflict management should be enlisted and used. This discussion provides background to the nuanced nature of the conflict-management strategy that the provincial government adopted for the 2008 elections. It also acts as a cautionary note for other provincial and government institutions in Indonesia seeking to partner with non-state actors for conflict management.

The provincial authority's election strategy recognized not only the importance of *Tuan Guru*, but also one of their key political motivations—the desire to protect their own social standing. *Tuan Guru* have a vested interest in maintaining social stability, as violence has the potential to destabilize their authority. If a situation gets out of control, the prestige (and, consequently, the influence) of a *Tuan Guru* could be jeopardized due to perceptions that he and his fellow leaders cannot control their community. Given their strength in religious and socio-political affairs in Lombok, their desire to maintain the peace is significant.

The *real politik* interests of *Tuan Guru* in avoiding and resolving conflict are coupled with theological imperatives to act “peacefully” and disallow “anarchy.”<sup>89</sup> For instance, when interviewed, many *Tuan Guru* said that the rioters' behavior during the January 2000 disturbances was against the teachings of Islam, which dictate to Muslims that the need to strive to be “good” is at the core of their religion's belief.<sup>90</sup> Several *Tuan Guru* explained that this religious lesson was not just an intellectual exercise, but for many it was the key element of faith guiding them in their role as communal leaders.<sup>91</sup>

*Tuan Guru*'s role in conflict management is not limited to religious sermons or classes, as many *Tuan Guru* told me that, in times of trouble, they would take direct action, such as instructing their followers over their mosque's loud speakers to cease involvement with violence; such interventions proved decisive even during the island's most serious tensions and violence. The January 2000 riots comprised five days of social disorder and violence. Many people in Lombok feel that these days remain a stain on the island's good name and have led to a *kehilangan muka* (loss of face).<sup>92</sup> This embarrassment was clear when I spoke with TGH Sofwan Hakim, who felt that youths involved in the disorder had disregarded the lessons of Islam. They were, Hakim said, blindly following their emotions and being “anarchic.”<sup>93</sup>

To understand the complex and confused way that the situation in January 2000 unfolded for many *Tuan Guru*, and the manner in which they tried to regain control

<sup>89</sup> The Islamic teachings underpinning these notions are discussed in the next section of this article.

<sup>90</sup> For an in-depth account of this area of Islamic theology, see Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

<sup>91</sup> This idea was directly (and emotionally) described to me in several interviews, such as with TGH Mustiadi Abhar, TGH Subkhi Sasaki, and TGH Munajid Khalid.

<sup>92</sup> “Kerusuhan Mataram, Keluguan Pemuda Yang Membawa Petaka,” *Lombok Post*, February 22, 2000, p. 1.

<sup>93</sup> Interview with TGH Sofwan Hakim, in Kediri, West Lombok, August 13, 2008.

over their community, it is worth mentioning an experience described by TGH Sofwan Hakim. He told me how he and many of his students had gone to a *tabligh akbar* (solidarity rally) to show support for their Muslim brothers and sisters suffering in Ambon on January 17, 2000.<sup>94</sup> On this emotional day, Hakim noticed that some people on the periphery of the large ceremony were becoming feverish with excitement, as provocateurs stirred up the crowd. At this point, he did not realize the amount of anger that was building in the crowd or that this anger was about to explode into five days of riots.<sup>95</sup>

The true scope of the problems that were developing that day only dawned on Hakim when he returned home and found his students waiting for him. They wanted permission to participate in the riots. He sat with them and sought to calm their emotions. Sensing the anger expressed by his *santri*, he decided to issue an instruction (*printah*) to his larger community, making it clear that he did not approve of anyone participating in the violence. Hakim then deployed his students, instructing them to spread out across his hometown of Kediri, West Lombok, to communicate his message. They were to convey his theological explanation of why Muslims should not participate in the riots, and with this message came an implicit threat from Hakim: those partaking in the violence would be disappointing him and acting contrary to their religious obligations. People knew that Hakim's threat came with serious community sanctions if ignored.<sup>96</sup> One of the most serious punishments that a *Tuan Guru* could issue, according to TGH Humaidi Zaen<sup>97</sup> (and many other people with whom I spoke to informally), was the threat to ostracize a person from the community and thereby exclude him or her from communal life. In Sasak society, high levels of poverty necessitate the need to rely on friends and family as a "social safety net." Therefore, an individual's removal from his or her community has significant ramifications, as was seen in the Mataram community known as Kampung Lom.<sup>98</sup>

Members of this *kampung* (urban village) rioted in January 2000. They were then detained by their community leaders upon returning from the unrest in a building at the edge of the *kampung* and not allowed out until the events had ended. Over a decade later, the rioters still live in the area but are still not allowed to attend community events and celebrations, such as weddings, or to sit under the *berugaq* (Sasak pavilion) in the main parts of Kampung Lom. The effect of this latter prohibition means that they cannot attend their community's nightly informal gatherings.

<sup>94</sup> Some people in Lombok have suggested the riots were spontaneous, but this is unlikely. There is significant evidence to suggest this violence was pre-planned. For instance, it was alleged that, in the preceding six months before the rally, radical elements had distributed emotive videos calling for Muslim solidarity in response to the conflict in Maluku. To generate these primal and emotional responses, the videos drew upon the graphic imagery of dead Muslim women and children in Ambon. See John M. MacDougall, "Criminality and the Political Economy of Security in Lombok," p. 299. Additionally, senior political figures have noted that money was distributed to reward people for participating in the riots, another indication that the disturbance was planned. Interview with Lalu Serinata, Mataram, January 8, 2008.

<sup>95</sup> Interview with TGH Sofwan Hakim, in Kediri, West Lombok, August 13, 2008.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> TGH Humaidi Zaen, in Memben, East Lombok, August 9, 2008.

<sup>98</sup> Kampung Lom is a pseudonym used to protect the anonymity of one of the areas where I undertook research. I adopt the pseudonym here in compliance with the University of Melbourne Ethics Committee, which approved this project during 2007–08.

Consequently, they miss out on discussions of job opportunities and community decision-making, which serves further to exacerbate and perpetuate their social and economic exclusion. In short, the social stigma attached to their participation in the riots remained strong nearly a decade after these events.

The *printah* (instructions) of a *Tuan Guru* are perceived by many Sasak to constitute religious obligations, which believers are obliged to follow. Hakim's clear assertion that people should not participate in the riots was not just a statement backed with social sanctions, but it also had a religious resonance, because there is a strong belief in the community that individuals must behave properly and that proper behavior is defined in accordance with Islam's injunctions, as interpreted and communicated by *Tuan Guru*. If persons fail to adhere to these religious teachings, many Sasak believe that they will not be accepted into heaven, so that punishment is not confined to the earthly realm but also extends into the afterlife.<sup>99</sup> Sasak religious fatalism thus binds many people to follow their religious leaders obediently and shores up *Tuan Gurus'* powerful authority in the community.<sup>100</sup>

After the 2000 riots, a number of *Tuan Guru* sought to recompense victims of the violence for what had occurred. They saw it as essential not just to show their authority over their communities, but also actively to restore harmony and peace to their emotionally damaged island. As part of the reconciliation process, several *Tuan Guru* made visits to Surabaya and Bali in order to persuade those who had fled to return, promising them that Lombok was once again safe.<sup>101</sup>

These examples highlight the role of *Tuan Guru* as peacemakers, but in the remainder of this section I will evaluate their potential as peace-breakers, for one cannot praise the *Tuan Guru's* role in conflict management without adding some caveats. For example, Erni Budiwanti has suggested that some *Tuan Guru* deliberately provoked their communities during episodes of violence against Ahmadiyah,<sup>102</sup> a minority Muslim group, which was deemed a "deviant" sect according to Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI, Council of Indonesian Ulama)—a quasi-state, *fatwa*-generating body.<sup>103</sup> In response to a series of MUI *fatwa*, people in Lombok, and elsewhere in Indonesia, rioted at Ahmadiyah's places of worship and residences.<sup>104</sup> The aggression in Lombok against Ahmadiyah would best be described as a slow "reign of terror," as incidents occurred sporadically over a lengthy period, between 1998 and

<sup>99</sup> Sven Cederroth, "From Ancestor Worship to Monotheism; Politics of Religion in Lombok," *Temenos* 32 (1996): 7; Bartholomew Ryan, "Alif Lam Mim: Reconciling Islam, Modernity, and Tradition in an Indonesian Kampung" (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 1999), pp. 139–43.

<sup>100</sup> For a discussion of Sasak religious practices and the fatalism implicit in them, see Asnawi, *Agama dan Paradigma Sosial Masyarakat* (Jakarta: Sentra Media, 2006); and Asnawi, "Islam dan Visi Kebangsaan di Nusa Tenggara Barat." For a discussion of the impact of fatalism in the contemporary social environment of Lombok, particularly for women, see Maria Platt, "Patriarchal Institutions and Women's Agency in Indonesian Marriages: Sasak Women Navigating Dynamic Marital Continuums" (PhD dissertation, La Trobe University, 2010), pp. 52, 61.

<sup>101</sup> "Masyarakat Bersatu Amankan Lingkungan," *Lombok Post*, February 14, 2000, p. 1.

<sup>102</sup> Erni Budiwanti, "Pluralism Collapses: A Study of the Jema'ah Ahmadiyah Indonesia and its Persecution," ARI Working Paper No. 117, National University of Singapore, May 2009.

<sup>103</sup> MUI issued several *fatwa* between 1980 and 2005 to this effect. See *ibid.*, pp. 13–19.

<sup>104</sup> "Tak ada Pengamanan Khusus Untuk Jemaat Ahmadiyah," *Lombok Post*, April 30, 2008, p. 1; and "Tangani Ahmadiyah, Pemprov Tunggu Regulasi Pusat," *Lombok Post*, April 30, 2008, p. 9.

2006.<sup>105</sup> The violence varied in nature and severity, but the uniform aim of the attacks appears to have been the removal of Ahmadiyah members from the local community. Budiwanti has asserted that some *Tuan Guru* used inflammatory language during “sermons and preaching” to spur their followers into violent action.<sup>106</sup>

An alternative reading of the behavior of *Tuan Guru* during these episodes of violence came from H. Muhammad Dimiati, the young leader of a religious school in Pagutan, Mataram. He told me that *Tuan Guru* had to select their words, as well as their omissions, carefully in sermons and religious education classes due to their powerful ability to influence their followers. Consequently, great care was necessary when addressing their *umma* (community), especially on sensitive issues such as Ahmadiyah. Dimiati was not aware of any *Tuan Guru* who had deliberately been provocative, although he said it was possible that a *Tuan Guru* who was not sufficiently cautious might provoke violence, for the followers of such a leader could interpret his statements as tacit expressions of approval licensing aggression towards this group.<sup>107</sup> Sabirin, another scholar from Lombok, concurred with Dimiati, claiming that *Tuan Guru* must act with great sensitivity in relation to minority Muslim groups because of the propensity for Sasak to behave negatively towards them.<sup>108</sup> Dimiati and Budiwanti are reliable sources, and although they read these violent events differently, they both point to the ease with which *Tuan Guru* can sway the actions of their followers. Both, therefore, acknowledge the ability of *Tuan Guru* to be either peacemakers or peace-breakers. The reality is that a *Tuan Guru* can be a peace-breaker through direct instructions, insinuations, or simply through an imprudent choice of words.

The potential for *Tuan Guru* to act as peace-breakers, rather than peacemakers, is also demonstrated by their interactions with Lombok's *pamswakarsa* (private militia). These groups were initially founded as the result of a community-based response to the perceived crime wave in the late 1990s and the early part of this century, during a time when people believed that the police were ineffective, and, as a result, organized themselves to protect their communities. However, these original good intentions have been obscured by a plethora of reports that *pamswakarsa* have acted in a lawless and violent manner. The actions they took to stop crime quickly shifted and escalated to more questionable behavior. Yet all Sasak *pamswakarsa* have links to *Tuan Guru*. For instance, TGH Bajang,<sup>109</sup> the current NTB governor, is the head of Satgas (Satuan Tugas, taskforce), a militia controlled by Nahdlatul Wathan (NW), in Pancor.<sup>110</sup> The

<sup>105</sup> There are reports of violence against Ahmadiyah members that took place in a number of locations across the island: in the Keruak district, East Lombok, in 1998; Bayan, North Lombok, in 2001; Pancor, Medas, Sukamulya, and Sembalun, in East Lombok, during 2002; Ketapang, West Lombok, in 2005; and then Praya, Central Lombok, in 2006. See Institut Agama Islam Negeri Mataram (IAIN) Mediation Center, *Social Conflicts in Lombok* (internal document, 2006).

<sup>106</sup> Erni Budiwanti, “Pluralism Collapses,” p. 17.

<sup>107</sup> Interview with Muhammad Dimiati, in Mataram, August 12, 2008.

<sup>108</sup> Sabirin, “Respon Pemikiran Tuan Guru,” pp. 2–3.

<sup>109</sup> TGH Bajang's full name is TGH M. Zainul Majdi.

<sup>110</sup> Nahdlatul Wathan Pancor is a Lombok-based traditionalist mass movement. It shares a similar theological perspective with the national mass movement Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). “Pancor” refers to the town in East Lombok where this group is based. There is a rival NW organization based in another East Lombok town, Anjani. The dispute between these two organizations is discussed in “TGH Serukan NW Pancor-Anjani Bersatu,” *Lombok Post*, August 11, 2008, p. 9; Saipul Hamdi, “Reconciling Muslim Conflict in Nahdlatul Wathan in Lombok, Eastern Indonesia,” paper presented at the Fourth Asian Graduate Forum

*pamswakarsa* Amphibi is controlled by TGH Sibaway,<sup>111</sup> and Hizbullah by TGH Zainuddin Abdul Madjid.<sup>112</sup>

These militia groups are so large that they now can pose a direct challenge to law enforcement, and, more generally, social harmony. While some people have argued that Lombok's militias have decreased in significance, Amphibi reported in 2007 that its membership had actually grown to over 350,000 (approximately 10 percent of Lombok's population).<sup>113</sup> This is probably an exaggeration, but Amphibi remains a large group that is still relatively active in Mataram.<sup>114</sup>

This issue of militia activities in Lombok has real consequences, as the members of such groups often figure at the heart of social turmoil and violence.<sup>115</sup> For instance, in mid-December 1999, over forty trucks transported an estimated two thousand Amphibi members from East Lombok to a Hindu part of Kuranji village, West Lombok, searching for an alleged thief.<sup>116</sup> The raid on the village resulted in the death of one villager and the serious injury of another.<sup>117</sup> To cap off this inglorious event, one of the hands of the alleged thief, I Gusti Ngurah, was amputated. As the trucks headed back to eastern Lombok, they passed by the Beretais Market,<sup>118</sup> where the convoy took a victory lap, with one of the riders "waving the severed hand."<sup>119</sup> There is no evidence or reports of any of those involved in the Kuranji incident ever being prosecuted for the death or injuries emerging out of the raid.

More recently, in mid-August 2007, Amphibi members raided a police station in Sekotong, Central Lombok, where a police officer was kidnapped and badly beaten.

---

on Southeast Asian Studies, National University of Singapore, Singapore, July 2009; and Kevin W. Fogg and Muhammad Saleh Ending, "One Islamic Community, Two Rival Sisters," *Inside Indonesia* (2011), at <http://www.insideindonesia.org/weekly-articles-103-jan-mar-2011/one-islamic-community-two-rival-sisters-17121928>.

<sup>111</sup> MacDougall, "Self-reliant Militias," *Inside Indonesia* (2003), at <http://www.insideindonesia.org/edition-73-jan-mar-2003/self-reliant-militias-2907337>.

<sup>112</sup> "Hizbullah NW Blog," Nahdlatul Wathan Anjani, accessed January 17, 2011, at <http://hizbullah-nw.blogspot.com/>.

<sup>113</sup> "Anggota Pam Swakarsa Amphibi Banjiri Kota Praya," *Lombok Post*, August 6, 2007, p. 9.

<sup>114</sup> See interview with Subuh, Mataram, November 6, 2007; interview with Saonah, Mataram, November 7, 2007; interview with Ciman, Mataram, November 8, 2007; interview with Jupri, Mataram, November 9, 2007; interview with Mukhlis, Mataram, November 10, 2007; interview with Sahari, Mataram, November 11, 2007; and interview with Tumi, Mataram, November 12, 2007. I have used pseudonyms to protect the identities of the members of the organizations discussed here and the community in which I conducted my research.

<sup>115</sup> *The Perils of Private Security Groups in Indonesia: Guards and Militias on Bali and Lombok*, International Crisis Group (2003), at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-east-asia/indonesia/067-the-perils-of-private-security-in-indonesia-guards-and-militias-on-bali-and-lombok.aspx>; MacDougall, "Self-reliant Militias"; John M. MacDougall, "Buddhist Buda or Buda Buddhists?," pp. 252–62. Groups of this size are capable of directly challenging the authority of the police in Lombok. See Stein Kristiansen, "Violent Youth Groups in Indonesia: The Cases of Yogyakarta and Nusa Tenggara Barat," *Sojourn* 18,2 (2003): 110–38.

<sup>116</sup> "Kelompok Massa Hakimi Warga Kuranji," *Lombok Post*, December 18, 1999, p. 1.

<sup>117</sup> "Amphibi Minta Maaf dan Sepakat Kerjasama," *Lombok Post*, December 31, 1999, p. 1.

<sup>118</sup> Beretais Market is Mataram's largest market and a transport hub for goods being transported to and from Lombok. Interestingly, Amphibi now has the security contract for this commercial facility.

<sup>119</sup> MacDougall, "Buddhist Buda or Buda Buddhists?," pp. 260–61; MacDougall, "Criminality and the Political Economy of Security in Lombok," pp. 297–98. This story was also confirmed by a participant in my research who lives close to the Beretais Market. Interview with Zaini, Mataram, July 16, 2008.

The reason this kidnapping occurred is unclear. The challenge to state authority in this vicious attack led an obviously shaken senior provincial government official to tell me angrily that “they [militia members] do not respect the law, they do not respect the police, and they do not respect the state.”<sup>120</sup> This reaction highlighted the serious nature of the challenge that *pamswakarsa* present. These two examples raise the question of why *Tuan Guru* endorse and lead these groups, given the fact that their members are often violent thugs.

Issues in Lombok, however, are rarely simple. One of the major accomplishments of those working on preparations for the 2008 gubernatorial elections was to ensure that *pamswakarsa* were nowhere to be seen during the campaign or on election day. Several informants from the campaign teams said certain politicians and *Tuan Guru* who were closely connected to these *pamswakarsa* made sure that the militia members remained out of sight and that they did not become entangled in clashes between rival political groups.<sup>121</sup> Therefore, one of the key threats to social harmony during the 2008 elections was removed through the intervention of these leaders, highlighting once again *Tuan Gurus'* potential role as both peacemakers and peace-breakers.

Lombok's religious groups and the militia organizations affiliated with them have been peace-breakers in the past. These groups were directly implicated in violence during 1965–66, when Indonesia was undergoing a transfer of power from President Soekarno to President Suharto. During this period, an estimated 100,000 to two million people were killed during efforts to eliminate activists or sympathizers of the Indonesian Communist Party, PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia).<sup>122</sup> Lombok was not immune to the madness; according to Robert Cribb, “local memories report fifty thousand killings in early 1966.”<sup>123</sup> The bloodshed that spread across the archipelago was undertaken not just by the military, but was also, in part, facilitated by the youth wings of Lombok's main religious organizations<sup>124</sup>—Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and NW—rounding up alleged communists.<sup>125</sup> It is not known if this involvement was encouraged by *Tuan Guru*, but it would be reasonable to assume their tacit support of these activities, at the very least.

<sup>120</sup> Information from a meeting with a provincial government official in Mataram during August 2007. The participant will remain anonymous.

<sup>121</sup> It is worth remembering that there were also close connections between two of the key political adversaries in the gubernatorial race and groups of *pamswakarsa*; Lalu Serinata was linked with Amphibi and TGH Bajang with Satgas.

<sup>122</sup> Robert Cribb, “How Many Deaths? Problems in the Statistics of Massacre in Indonesia (1965–66) and East Timor (1975–80),” in *Violence in Indonesia*, ed. Ingrid Wessel and George Wimhofer (Hamburg: Abera, 2001), p. 82; Annie Pohlman, “Women and the Indonesian Killings of 1965–1966: Gender Variables and Possible Directions for Research,” paper presented at the Fifteenth Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia, Canberra, June 29–July 2, 2004, p. 2.

<sup>123</sup> Robert Cribb, “Problems in the Historiography of the Killings in Indonesia,” in *The Indonesian Killings of 1965–1966: Studies from Java and Bali*, ed. Robert Cribb (Clayton, Victoria: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1990), p. 25.

<sup>124</sup> Christian, Catholic, and other religious groups were also involved in the anti-communist actions in Lombok. See Zakaria, *Geger—Gerakan 30 September 1965*, p. 86. For a discussion of these groups more generally in relation to Indonesian religious organizations, see Greg Fealy and Katharine McGregor, “Nahdlatul Ulama and the Killings of 1965–66: Religion, Politics, and Remembrance,” *Indonesia* 89 (April 2010): 37–60.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

In 1965–66, loathing of those associated with the PKI emerged from many elements of Indonesian society, as many felt that Communist Party activists and members had cut themselves off<sup>126</sup> from traditional relationships, social structures, and community obligations.<sup>127</sup> This meant that in Lombok, PKI activists were, in many ways, perceived to be a direct threat to the authority and social position of *Tuan Guru*. This raises the possibility that *Tuan Guru* may act in less than admirable ways when their interests are challenged.

To understand the role of *Tuan Guru* as peacemakers or peace-breakers, one must comprehend their socio-political interests. They are religious and political players whose influence in Lombok society is contingent upon circumstance. The fluid role taken on by Muslim religious leaders more broadly has been astutely explained by Muhammad Qasim Zaman, who noted that, for these leaders, “there is no single way of defending their ideals or making them practical or relevant in the world.”<sup>128</sup> *Tuan Guru* are not ideal types; rather, they are leaders dealing with real world problems, who have their own interests and communities to protect (and control). The ambiguous role of *Tuan Guru* highlights the challenges involved in developing conflict-management strategies in Lombok. These strategies are not easy or straightforward to design. At the same time, once designed, they are not impossible to implement, as the case study in the next section highlights.

### The NTB Gubernatorial Elections

The case study of the 2008 NTB gubernatorial elections will be outlined in the next three subsections. This examination considers the logistics of the conflict-management strategy, starting with the role of ethnicity within political contestation and the arrangements designed to prevent these tensions from becoming a poisonous issue. The following section will consider government and religious cooperation, after which the implementation of the strategy will be examined. The case study relies heavily upon *Tuan Gurus'* own explanations of how they envisage their role in maintaining social harmony, as well as their descriptions of the specific activities they undertook as part of the 2008 election strategy.<sup>129</sup> All *Tuan Guru* interviewed were from Mataram or West Lombok, with the exception of TGH Humaidi Zaen, of East Lombok. In addition to discussing the role of *Tuan Guru* in the conflict-management strategy, I will also

<sup>126</sup> PKI members challenged traditional social structures, and this was part of what made them vulnerable. See David Levine, “History and Social Structure in the Study of Contemporary Indonesia,” *Indonesia* 7 (April 1969): 8.

<sup>127</sup> Many of those accused of being communists had merely challenged or would not conform to local power structures. See John Sidel, *Riots, Pogroms, Jihad*, pp. 28–48. According to Pipit Rochijat, “the slightest thing could get one accused of being a Communist.” See Pipit Rochijat “Am I PKI or non-PKI?,” trans. Benedict Anderson, *Indonesia* 40 (October 1985): 46. In essence, political and economic rivalries were being played out and opponents eliminated under the guise of capturing those alleged to be affiliated with the communist party.

<sup>128</sup> Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 191.

<sup>129</sup> The answers given by *Tuan Guru* are, to a degree, inevitably self-serving. It is likely that these religious leaders wanted to impress upon me (a foreign researcher) their positive socio-political role. Yet the teachings they spoke of to me during interviews were consistent with their teachings at *pengajian* (religious education classes). Their answers also reflected the ways I observed that they behaved in conflict situations. See Jeremy Kingsley, “Democracy, Conflict, and Islamic Leadership in Eastern Indonesia.”

explore their role during the January 2000 riots, for many of the *Tuan Guru* felt that their actions during these events reflected appropriate behavior for religious leaders when involving themselves in avoiding or resolving conflict.

Foreseeing a potential outbreak of election-related violence, the former governor Lalu Serinata delegated primary responsibility for preparing a conflict-management strategy to a team of provincial bureaucrats. This group was led by Ali,<sup>130</sup> who was, at that time, a senior public servant in Kesbanglinmas NTB.<sup>131</sup> Ali's regular duties included gathering intelligence on potential points of social tension and conflict in Lombok. A wall-sized map of Lombok and Sumbawa dominated his office, with markers pinpointing conflicts and social problems, coded according to their current status and level of seriousness. The intelligence he gathered was provided to provincial authorities so they could preempt escalation of these tensions.<sup>132</sup> Ali's accumulated knowledge informed the development of the conflict-management strategy for the gubernatorial election.

#### *Ethnic and Political Violence in Lombok*

The primary issue causing apprehension within government ranks was competition between local politicians who represented two ethnic groups: the Sasak (from Lombok) and the Bimanese (from Sumbawa). Both of these groups are Muslim. Therefore, ethnic rivalries, rather than confrontations between cadres of different political parties or ideological issues, primarily exercised the minds of Ali's team preparing for the 2008 election.<sup>133</sup>

Normally, the Sasak and Bimanese who live in Mataram coexist peacefully. However, problems can arise during elections, when members of these two ethnic groups challenge each other for the political and economic rewards of public office.<sup>134</sup> It is a commonly held perception in Lombok that the election of a Sasak or Bimanese politician to a senior post will give an advantage to his or her respective ethnic group, to the detriment of the other group. Citizens expect that Sasak and Bimanese leaders will give preference in the appointment of government jobs and potential business

<sup>130</sup> "Ali" is a pseudonym used here to protect the identity of a participant in this research, who is a senior provincial government official.

<sup>131</sup> "Kesbanglinmas" means "Kesatuan Bangsa dan Perlindungan Masyarakat" (Office of National Unity and Community Protection), essentially a local intelligence unit.

<sup>132</sup> Ali's role in these efforts was pieced together through several informal discussions I had with him during 2007–08, and my lengthy interview with him in Mataram, November 13, 2007.

<sup>133</sup> Edward Aspinall has argued that ethnicity is no longer a major feature in Indonesian electoral politics. He does not suggest that ethnicity is irrelevant, but rather that it is no longer a definitive political factor. There is significant merit in his arguments, but my findings in Lombok suggest that ethnicity still has a significant impact upon provincial politics there. See Edward Aspinall, "Democratization and the Weakening of Ethnic Politics in Indonesia," seminar, Indonesia Study Group, Australian National University, Canberra, June 30, 2010. Aspinall's argument was further refined in a recent article (coauthored with Sebastian Dettman and Eva Warburton) in which the authors explain that different factors, such as ethnicity or religion, have varying resonance depending upon the circumstances. I agree with this assessment. See Edward Aspinall, Sebastian Dettman, and Eva Warburton, "When Religion Trumps Ethnicity: A Regional Election Case Study from Indonesia," *South East Asia Research* 19,1 (2011): 55–56.

<sup>134</sup> The economic incentives for political competition and violence are discussed in International Crisis Group, "Indonesia: Preventing Violence in Local Elections," Asia Report No. 197, December 2010.

opportunities to members of their own ethnic group.<sup>135</sup> Tensions between these ethnic groups can also rise in Mataram during election periods due to the influx of campaign workers from other parts of Lombok and Sumbawa, amplifying the potential for conflict.

Over the decade preceding the 2008 elections, jockeying between local elites intensified as a result of political decentralization throughout Indonesia. The first signs of growing political competition in the region can be traced back to 1998, when Jakarta politicians decided to appoint Harun Al-Rasyid,<sup>136</sup> a politician of Bimanese origin, as governor of NTB.<sup>137</sup> Al-Rasyid was not considered a “local” politician, as he had not lived in the province for many years, and when he was nominated ahead of a locally active Sasak politician, Lalu Mudjithahid,<sup>138</sup> the decision angered many within the Sasak political elite, although Al-Rasyid’s appointment did not lead to any reports of violence. In fact, many considered Al-Rasyid’s appointment an improvement on previous NTB governors who had been Javanese bureaucrats or senior military officers.<sup>139</sup>

Ethnic tensions and conflict arose again in 2003 with the election of the first Sasak and locally active politician, Lalu Serinata, to the position of NTB governor.<sup>140</sup> Serinata’s promotion was not determined by officials in Jakarta, but rather by a vote of the provincial legislature. The election of Serinata caused clashes, as mentioned previously in this article, between his supporters and those endorsing Al-Rasyid. This conflict was essentially split down ethnic lines and led to an unknown number of casualties and injuries.<sup>141</sup> Repeated outbreaks of ethnic tensions, as noted earlier, also occurred in connection with the election of a *rektor* (university president) at IKIP in 2006. The fear was that, with the direct election of governor in the 2008 elections, these dormant tensions would be brought back to the surface.

### *Religion and Political Cooperation*

The conflict-management strategy for the 2008 gubernatorial elections developed by Ali’s team had three central elements. The first element was based on the

<sup>135</sup> Concern about the apportionment of roles in the NTB public service and its impact on ethnic relations had been reported since early in the *Reformasi* period. See “Ada Kecemburuan Etnis Penempatan PNS,” *Lombok Post*, December 19, 1999, p. 9.

<sup>136</sup> Harun Al-Rasyid was technically appointed by the NTB legislature; however, in 1999, this vote was a mere formality (as it would have been under Suharto during the New Order), confirming the will of Jakarta. For discussion of the New Order processes, see Choi, “Local Elections and Democracy in Indonesia: The Riau Archipelago,” p. 330.

<sup>137</sup> Sayuti and Langitan, *Perjalanan Orang Sasak Menjadi Gubernur*, p. 3.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 15–20; I Ketut Putra Erawan, “Tracing the Progress of Local Governments since Decentralisation,” in *Indonesia: Democracy and the Promise of Good Governance*, ed. Ross H. McLeod and Andrew MacIntyre (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2007), p. 61.

<sup>139</sup> MacDougall, “Buddhist Buda or Buda Buddhists?,” pp. 76–77.

<sup>140</sup> Serinata had previously been the *Ketua* (Chair) of the provincial legislature. For further details of these events, see Sayuti and Langitan, *Perjalanan Orang Sasak Menjadi Gubernur*.

<sup>141</sup> The reason for the lack of detail about these clashes stems from the fact that local people are sensitive about this period in many ways, more so than for the January 2000 riots. Questions about these events would often elicit only silence, or a quick change of topic. It never became clear to me what memories, concerns, or attitudes underpinned this sensitivity.

development of a close working relationship between Kesbanglinmas and many *Tuan Guru*. The second element was an “agreement” among members of the local political elite to guarantee representation of a Sasak politician and a counterpart from Sumbawa<sup>142</sup> on each ticket. The third element ensured localized security arrangements were negotiated to forestall *pamswakarsa* participation.<sup>143</sup>

Ali’s approach unknowingly reflected conflict-management strategies adopted by scholars, such as John Paul Lederach. Avoidance or resolution of communal or political conflict is best served, according to Lederach, by state actors combining their activities and thus cooperating with non-state grassroots actors and organizations.<sup>144</sup> These grassroots organizations are important because they form networks of relationships, mustering people who are able to facilitate and coordinate activity. It is important to deploy and utilize leadership and institutions that are respected, capable, and strongly networked, whether state or non-state.<sup>145</sup> Lederach emphasizes non-state leadership and social relationships when discussing conflict management, giving support to the idea that social order and stability are not just about police patrols or judicial sanctions.<sup>146</sup> Local Lombok intellectuals have come to similar conclusions. For instance, Abdul Wahid, a lecturer at the State Islamic Institute of Mataram, wrote an article in the *Lombok Post* endorsing partnerships between state and non-state leaders and organizations as effective means to manage social tension and conflict.<sup>147</sup>

In Lombok, *Tuan Guru* and their religious organizations fulfill this role of creating a web (network) of relationships between different levels of society and parts of Lombok.<sup>148</sup> An example of this is the network that surrounds TGH Mustiadi Abhar. He is the head of the Islamic boarding school, Darul Falah, in Pagutan, Mataram, which enrolls about 550 *santri* (students).<sup>149</sup> However, Mustiadi is actually at the center of a much larger religious, social, and political organization based on his links with the alumni of the boarding school, coordinated through an organization called IKADAFa (Ikatan Alumni Darul Falah, Association of Alumni of Darul Falah). This network includes an estimated 160,000 members and is built upon a coalition of approximately twenty *Tuan Guru* and a similar number of Islamic boarding schools spread across Mataram and West Lombok. These religious leaders work as an integrated group, under the stewardship of Mustiadi. IKADAFa is also affiliated with NU and its web of

<sup>142</sup> There are two ethnic groups on Sumbawa—the Sumbawa and the Bimanese. Each campaign ticket needed to list a representative from either one of these two communities.

<sup>143</sup> *Tuan Guru* and politicians utilized their connection with *pamswakarsa* to ensure these groups were kept inactive during the election period. See “Tuan Guru Bajang: Hindari Black Campaign,” *Lombok Post*, April 7, 2008, p. 1; and “Diintimidasi, Ismail Husni Ajak Semua Pihak Arif,” *Lombok Post*, April 24, 2008, p. 1.

<sup>144</sup> J. P. Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), pp. 38–55.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 114–15.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38–55.

<sup>147</sup> Abdul Wahid, “NTB Plural Perlu Gerakan Harmoni,” *Lombok Post*, August 11, 2008, p. 15.

<sup>148</sup> J. P. Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 83.

<sup>149</sup> For discussion of the history, organization, and size of Darul Falah, see Muhammad Dimiati, “Peran Pondok Pesantren Darul Falah Dalam Mendukung Pencapaian Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal Bidang Studi Pendidikan Agama Islam Siswa Kelas XI SMA Darul Falah Pagutan Kota Mataram Tahun 2010/2011” (Honors thesis, IAIN Mataram, 2011), pp. 45–65.

religious leaders and organizations across Lombok.<sup>150</sup> IKADAFa and NU, therefore, provide an example of the networks of leaders and communities that were mobilized in the lead-up to the elections in order to ensure conflict was avoided.

The weaving of non-state actors and institutions into government processes and strategies has been highlighted in the work of Peter Evans. He has suggested that “creative action by government organizations can foster social capital; linking mobilized citizens to public agencies can enhance the efficacy of government.”<sup>151</sup> This is exactly what happened when Kesbanglinmas worked cooperatively with *Tuan Guru* and their organizations, such as IKADAFa and NU. Public servants utilized non-state religious networks and thereby avoided taxing the government’s already limited resources. Reliance on non-state actors and organizations cannot be taken too lightly, as Joshua Barker and Gerry van Klinken have asserted, because “... the actually existing state in Indonesia is spread thin. It is fragmented, overwhelmed, and ineffective.”<sup>152</sup> The messages developed by Ali’s team were communicated through the religious networks in Lombok, which provided a respected and efficient mechanism for the dissemination of information.

Ali’s team used the authority of *Tuan Guru* to underpin this state initiative. One proponent of the strategy, TGH Munajid Khalid, noted that election violence had occurred elsewhere in Indonesia, and he felt particularly passionate about avoiding communal violence in Lombok in the aftermath of the January 2000 riots.<sup>153</sup> The *Tuan Gurus’* strong endorsement of the strategy was clearly communicated during Friday religious sermons (*khutbah*) and religious education classes (*pengajian*), thus proactively guarding against an escalation of tensions that had the potential to turn violent.<sup>154</sup>

When teaching about the importance of social harmony during the election preparations, TGH Muharror used the Islamic principle of *silaturrahim* (keeping good relations with others) to guide his followers.<sup>155</sup> The lesson, he said, is “not only related to fellow Muslims, but also requires people to keep peaceful relations with people from other religions.”<sup>156</sup> Muharror asserted that there is no religious prohibition for making friends with anyone, as long as they give respect to each other’s beliefs.<sup>157</sup>

When I spoke with *Tuan Guru* about conflict management, in general, and with particular reference to the 2008 elections, there was an almost unanimous response

<sup>150</sup> NU is strongest in western and central Lombok, although it does have a presence across the island. This large traditionalist Islamic mass movement provides a religious network that connects the *Tuan Guru* and their organizations to over half of Lombok’s three million residents through a web of interrelationships.

<sup>151</sup> Peter Evans, “Government Action, Social Capital, and Development: Reviewing the Evidence of Synergy,” *World Development* 24,6 (1996): 1130.

<sup>152</sup> Gerry van Klinken and Joshua Barker, “Introduction: State in Society in Indonesia,” in *State of Authority: The State in Society in Indonesia*, ed. Gerry van Klinken and Joshua Barker (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2009), p. 23.

<sup>153</sup> Interview with TGH Munajid Khalid, Gunung Sari, West Lombok, August 24, 2008.

<sup>154</sup> One community leader told me that there was a positive atmosphere during the campaign that allowed candidates on the different political tickets to visit his *kampung* without any problem. Interview with Drun [pseud.], Mataram, July 28, 2008.

<sup>155</sup> Electronic interview with TGH Muharror, May 11, 2009.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid. Very similar sentiments were expressed by TGH Wawan Stiawan; see electronic interview with TGH Wawan Stiawan, July 18, 2009.

<sup>157</sup> Electronic interview with TGH Muharror, May 11, 2009.

regarding the obligation to maintain social unity and build *ta'awwun* (an atmosphere of helping each other). Once again, their focus was not on interactions exclusively among Muslims, but also concerned interactions with non-Muslims.<sup>158</sup> Ali worked with *Tuan Guru* to coordinate their statements and actions, but each *Tuan Guru* tailored his message to the expectations of his community. For example, TGH Wawan Stiawan cited a similar theological dictate about the necessity of social harmony, but noted that the lesson he taught during *pengajian* or *khutbah* depended on the particular situation or problems that society faced.<sup>159</sup> Incorporated into every one of his lessons was the assertion that "Islam is a peaceful religion" and the reminder that Muslims need to follow this basic principle.<sup>160</sup> Religious teachings about social harmony are derived from Qur'anic injunctions. TGH Muharror and TGH Wawan Stiawan, for example, both pointed to one Qur'anic *Surah* (Chapter) in particular, *Surah Al-Hujurat* 49:10–13.<sup>161</sup>

10: The Believers are but a single Brotherhood: so make peace and reconciliation between two brothers; and fear Allah, that ye may receive Mercy.

13: O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other)."

Qur'an, 49: 10 and 13.<sup>162</sup>

These Qur'anic verses provide strong support to *Tuan Guru* who seek to maintain social harmony and calm during periods of tension, such as elections. TGH Muharror felt that this *surah* communicated two key messages to his *santri* (followers). First, he said, Muslims are brothers and sisters and should treat each other well. Second, the Qur'an says that God created all people, giving them different religions and ethnic backgrounds in order that they should seek to know and respect each other.<sup>163</sup> These parts of *Surah Al-Hujurat* are the theological backbone for promoting a plurality of opinions and political positions and also respectfully acknowledging a diversity of ethnic and religious backgrounds. Religious teachings from this part of the Qur'an provide *Tuan Guru* with a strong justification and source of authority if they choose to participate in conflict management.

In situations involving contests, such as elections, *Tuan Guru* often become active participants in avoiding or resolving tensions. The *Tuan Guru* told me that their efforts to prevent conflict involved two primary steps: first, engaging with protagonists by attempting to comprehend their position, while also calming emotions; and, second,

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Electronic interview with TGH Wawan Stiawan, July 18, 2009.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Electronic interview with TGH Muharror, May 11, 2009; and electronic interview with TGH Wawan Stiawan, July 18, 2009.

<sup>162</sup> A. Y. Ali (translator), *The Holy Qur'an* (Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 2000).

<sup>163</sup> Electronic interview with TGH Muharror, May 11, 2009.

taking direct action to mediate between potential antagonists.<sup>164</sup> More specifically, TGH Wawan Stiawan explained his approach to conflict management:<sup>165</sup>

The first time that I confront a conflict, I have to examine the case, what is its cause, why has it happened, and so forth. Most conflicts in society happen because of misunderstandings. And after finding what triggers it, then I ask the people to discuss it with me and together to find out the solution. Usually I ask representatives from each group that is fighting to come to me (or I go to them) and ask them what they want, and then try to find out the best way to satisfy all of them.

*Tuan Guru* often take direct action in the efforts to defuse tense situations that threaten to become explosive. TGH Subkhi Sasaki said he would go to the mosque to make statements over the loud speaker urging restraint, while TGH Munajid Khalid told me about “hitting the street” to ensure that potential provocateurs were calmed down.<sup>166</sup> Both these religious leaders stressed that they were prepared to confront people directly in order to try to dissuade them from participation in violence. For example, TGH Munajid Khalid told me about his experiences during the January 2000 riots, saying “I went walking around my community with government officials, trying to cool people down, and at night I called on the mosque loud speakers for people to stop their bad behavior.”<sup>167</sup> Khalid told me that he would continue to intervene during elections if necessary.<sup>168</sup>

*Tuan Guru* don’t just rely on persuasion through lessons grounded in theology, but also enforce sanctions on people who disregard their instructions. TGH Wawan Stiawan said that “The first time I call upon them [the protagonists] and give them advice about appropriate behavior according to Islamic teachings. But if, after this advice, they continue to create problems and ferment social disorder, I will punish them.”<sup>169</sup> As discussed earlier, this sort of punishment has tangible consequences for those who have been disciplined and strong religious resonance.

As has been seen, *Tuan Guru* played an important role in maintaining an atmosphere of calm during the 2008 elections. Provincial authorities also sought to prevent violence by working with the political elite of Lombok and Sumbawa to subdue tensions. Key political players came to an “understanding” among themselves and agreed to establish a power-sharing arrangement. The parties involved in the gubernatorial elections, which chose the candidates on the different political tickets, agreed to appoint a Sasak as *calon* (candidate) and a politician from Sumbawa as *wakil* (deputy).<sup>170</sup> While there is no formal documentation outlining this compromise,

<sup>164</sup> For a detailed example of how this occurs, see Jeremy Kingsley, “Democracy, Conflict, and Islamic Leadership in Eastern Indonesia: A Village Election Case Study.”

<sup>165</sup> Electronic interview with TGH Wawan Stiawan, July 18, 2009.

<sup>166</sup> Interview with TGH Subkhi Sasaki, Kediri, West Lombok, August 23, 2008; and interview with TGH Munajid Khalid, Gunung Sari, West Lombok, August 24, 2008.

<sup>167</sup> Interview with TGH Munajid Khalid, Gunung Sari, West Lombok, August 24, 2008.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Electronic interview with TGH Wawan Stiawan, July 18, 2009.

<sup>170</sup> Several members of the election teams that I spoke with described how an ethnic balance among leaders from Lombok and Sumbawa was a political reality.

anecdotal evidence from several campaign teams confirmed that a deal had indeed been struck.<sup>171</sup> A senior NTB Golkar official confidentially acknowledged the need to maintain an “ethnic balance” in gubernatorial tickets.<sup>172</sup> The hierarchy evident on the ballots, which favors a Sasak over a representative from Sumbawa, arguably reflects the demographics of the province,<sup>173</sup> since there are just over three million people living in Lombok, compared to approximately one million in Sumbawa.<sup>174</sup>

For the time being, this power-sharing agreement, which allocated the rewards of office between the political elites from Lombok and Sumbawa, seems to be working. However, its sustainability is questionable due to the inequitable nature of the arrangement, which effectively precludes any person from Sumbawa becoming governor. This restrictive (for Sumbawa) political arrangement is one of the reasons that there are now calls for Sumbawa to become a separate province.<sup>175</sup> This split would have a direct economic effect on Lombok because a significant portion of provincial revenue comes from the Newmont gold mine in Sumbawa, a reality politicians in Lombok certainly recognize.<sup>176</sup>

#### *Implementation of Conflict Management*

In order to prepare for the 2008 gubernatorial elections, the staff of Kesbanglinmas and other government departments were involved in intensive consultations with a

<sup>171</sup> This form of pairing of candidates to maintain “ethnic balances” has been seen elsewhere in Indonesia, for instance in West Kalimantan and Central Sulawesi. See Taufiq Tanasaldy, “Ethnic Identity Politics in West Kalimantan,” in *Renegotiating Boundaries in Post-Suharto Indonesia*, ed. Henk Schulte Nordholt and Gerry van Klinken (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2007), pp. 362–71; Rachel Diprose, “Passing on the Challenges or Prescribing Better Management of Diversity? Decentralisation, Power Sharing in Conflict Dynamics in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia,” *Conflict, Security, and Development* 8,4 (2008): 414; and Benny Subianto, “Ethnic Politics and the Rise of Dayak Bureaucrats in Local Elections: Pilkada in Six Kabupaten in West Kalimantan,” in *Deepening Democracy in Indonesia?*, ed. Maribeth Erb and Priyambudi Sulistiyanto (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009), pp. 344–47. The practice of setting up ethnic and religious coalitions more generally is discussed in Leonard C. Sebastian, “The Paradox of Indonesian Democracy,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 26,2 (2004): 256–79.

<sup>172</sup> Anonymous Golkar political operative, email message to author, May 19, 2009.

<sup>173</sup> This sort of political arrangement that accommodates demographic realities has occurred in other Indonesian provinces. See Subianto, “Ethnic Politics and the Rise of Dayak Bureaucrats in Local Elections,” p. 328; and Edward Aspinall, Sebastian Dettman, and Eva Warburton, “When Religion Trumps Ethnicity: A Regional Election Case Study from Indonesia,” p. 40.

<sup>174</sup> Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi NTB, *Nusa Tenggara Barat Dalam Angka 2010*, p. 67.

<sup>175</sup> Sumbawa’s proposed secession from NTB is promoted on websites, such as [www.sumbawanews.com](http://www.sumbawanews.com). The website carries the slogan: “Masa Depan Kami Provinsi Sumbawa” (In the future we will be the Province of Sumbawa). Until the end of 2010, there had been a moratorium on the establishment of new provinces. See “Moratorium on Regional Autonomy,” *Tempo*, August 5, 2009, [www.tempointeractive.com](http://www.tempointeractive.com). As of October 1, 2011, it is unclear whether this moratorium has been officially extended. However, the secession process appears to be moving forward, for the current NTB governor recently endorsed Sumbawa’s intention to become an independent province at some point in the future. TGH M. Zainul Majdi, Letter to Public, July 18, 2011. See also, “Gubernur Teken Rekomendasi,” *Lombok Post*, July 19, 2011, p. 1.

<sup>176</sup> The Newmont Mine generates over 35 percent of the province’s gross domestic product (GDP). This is over 10 percent more than any other sector of the economy, such as tourism or farming. See BAPPEDA Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Barat and Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Barat, *Tinjauan Perekonomian Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Barat 2006* (Mataram: Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Barat, 2007), p. 14.

broad range of local non-state community and religious leaders.<sup>177</sup> These briefings ensured that non-state leaders participated in the provincial authority's conflict-avoidance strategy and were carefully advised on how the policy would work. Ali attended seminars, liaised with *Tuan Guru*, and ensured that the police had carefully negotiated security arrangements with local authorities.<sup>178</sup> I observed Ali discuss the upcoming elections with community and religious leaders at a September 2007 seminar run by Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN).<sup>179</sup> In his presentation, Ali outlined a variety of ways that these non-state leaders could help maintain calm within their communities during the gubernatorial elections. At the seminar, he addressed the audience while seated symbolically next to a prominent *Tuan Guru*.<sup>180</sup>

With all these measures in place, the elections on July 7, 2008, then tested the NTB provincial government's conflict-management strategy. The atmosphere that day turned out to be calm, unmarred by disruptions, according to reports. The social control emanating from communal and religious leaders meant that there was not even a large police presence. While criss-crossing town on motorbike, I noticed fewer police than usual, and, in fact, I saw no police apart from those escorting local officials and *Tuan Guru* to polling stations.

An important tactical aspect of the police response on election day was that Linmas, the community auxiliary force, was recruited to help maintain order and essentially formed the core of the policing strategy. Linmas was present at all polling stations, while the police remained in their barracks (the police have said that they were prepared to act if large-scale protests and civil disturbances occurred during the elections).<sup>181</sup> Linmas volunteers who were involved far outnumbered the police. In Central Lombok, 510 police officers were on duty on election day, supported by 2,558 Linmas members. Similar preparations were made in other parts of Lombok and Sumbawa.<sup>182</sup> This open and very public role of Linmas, whose members are derived from local communities, contrasts with the prepared, but invisible, role of the police, again underscoring the importance of non-state (or, in this circumstance, quasi-state) actors in maintaining social harmony and avoiding conflict.

The election resulted in an overwhelming victory for TGH Bajang, who, at that time, was affiliated with PBB (Partai Bulan Bintang, Crescent Star Party) and PKS (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, Prosperous Justice Party), and the ousting of incumbent governor and Golkar candidate Lalu Serinata. Despite this dramatic outcome, no

<sup>177</sup> Even though this article focuses upon religious leaders, the strategy of Kesbanglinmas was not just limited to this category of non-state leaders. In my opinion, however, the religious leaders were the most important actors in suppressing potential disruptions during the elections.

<sup>178</sup> "Kodim 1606 Lobar Gandeng Pamswakarsa," *Lombok Post*, July 7, 2008, p. 9.

<sup>179</sup> Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara means Adat Society Alliance of the Indonesian Archipelago. The revival of *adat* practices and identification with *adat* has been discussed in the work of many recent scholars, such as Avonius, *Reforming Wetu Telu*; and Jamie S. Davidson and David Henley, eds., *The Revival of Tradition in Indonesian Politics: The Deployment of Adat from Colonialism to Indigenism* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>180</sup> Field notes, September 10, 2007.

<sup>181</sup> "Amankan Pilkada, Polda NTB Terjankan Kekuatan Penuh," *Lombok Post*, June 17, 2008, p. 1.

<sup>182</sup> "Pengamanan Pilkada, Korem Siapkan 10 SSK," *Lombok Post*, March 19, 2008, p. 9; "Show Force Pasukan Pengamanan Pilkada Lombok Timur," *Lombok Post*, April 19, 2008, p. 9; "Pilkada, Polres Loteng Siapkan 3068 Personil," *Lombok Post*, June 19, 2008 p. 9.

violence was reported during the election campaign, on election day or during the two-month transition period between the election and the inauguration of the new governor on September 1, 2008. Considering the corruption scandals that were circling Serinata and some of his supporters at the time, scandals involving the imminent threat of prosecution, the significance of the avoidance of conflict during and subsequent to the elections should not be understated. The strategies described here had contributed to keeping the peace, even though political power had changed hands after a tough election campaign and the threat of criminal prosecution was looming for the defeated candidate, Serinata.

## Conclusion

The NTB 2008 provincial elections are a lens through which one can look to understand social order and organization in Lombok society. The steps taken to prepare for these elections may be instructive for other provinces and local regencies across Indonesia preparing for the almost continual cycle of national, provincial, regency, and city elections.<sup>183</sup> I argue that customized local frameworks of partnerships between state and non-state actors and institutions have the potential for broader application across Indonesia. The case study developed in this article identifies the efficacy of theories of social capital promoted by Peter Evans, who analyzed the way that constructive interaction, or “complementarity,” between state and non-state actors can have a positive impact upon government programs and social/economic development.<sup>184</sup>

The case study investigated in this article does not provide a template for conflict management. Rather, it highlights the utility of local conflict-management processes. The strategy outlined used flexible frameworks that were able to change as circumstances necessitated and that relied on socially respected leaders. Importantly, this case illustrates the potential for effective, multi-layered conflict-management processes that combine state and non-state actors and institutions.

When one considers conflict management in post-Suharto Lombok, it is clear that state legal responses, such as statutes concerned with public order or criminal law enforcement, are important. However, during the 2008 gubernatorial elections in Lombok, these processes were not as effective as community-focused partnerships between state and non-state leaders. *Tuan Guru*, in this instance, were peacemakers, but they also had, and have, the potential to be peace-breakers. The *Tuan Gurus'* control of *pamswakarsa* and the allegations that they have sometimes played a role in marginalizing minority groups, such as Ahmadiyah, demonstrate their potential to be peace-breakers. Despite this, the violence that had marred earlier election processes in Lombok did not occur during the 2008 elections, and *Tuan Guru* played a significant part in the outcome. In this situation, the religious leaders contributed positively to the avoidance of violence.

<sup>183</sup> Jusuf Kalla, “Making Good Economic and Social Policy in a Democratic Indonesia: An Insider’s Perspective,” lecture, Indonesia Study Group, Australian National University, Canberra, June 10, 2010.

<sup>184</sup> Peter Evans, “Government Action, Social Capital, and Development: Reviewing the Evidence of Synergy,” pp. 1119–21.

While Ali's strategy related specifically to Lombok, these partnership arrangements between state and non-state actors and institutions may have broader application in Indonesia. They allow government institutions effectively to maintain, or regain, social stability during periods of potential or actual communal conflict, without resorting to police or military force. This approach, involving active cooperation between state and non-state actors in Lombok, added depth to the provincial authority's response and allowed for grassroots participation in the era of Indonesian democratization.