

# THE ROLE OF KYAI IN THE 2004 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: A CASE STUDY IN EAST JAVA

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## Abstract

This article examines the role and influence of the Kyai in the 2004 presidential elections through an examination of the voting patterns in East Java. The Kyais, who are considered experts in Islam, traditionally have an important role in the history of Islam and politics in Indonesia as community and religious leaders. Since independence in 1945 until the reform era (1998) and even during the course of the first presidential and vice-presidential elections in 2004, the Kyai played a significant role in influencing the political dynamics of the community. East Java is known as the land of a thousand Islamic schools (*pesantren*) and had the largest number of voters nationally in the 2004 presidential elections. The role of the Kyai as a leader, and a leading figure in the schools and surrounding communities has a significant impact in determining the people's political choices. This article assesses the Kyai's political role in East Java in the 2004 presidential election and their impact on the political preferences of voters in choosing the presidential and vice-presidential candidates. This study uses the method of observation and interviews covering the presidential nomination stage, the implementation process and the post-election period. This study shows that although the Kyais were not the sole factor in determining the election victory in East Java, their role was significant in the outcome of the 2004 presidential election.

**Keywords:** Kyai, Indonesia, presidential elections, 2004 presidential elections.

## Introduction

Democracy in Indonesia entered a new era with the presidential and vice-presidential elections in 2004.<sup>2</sup> The presidential election is increasingly popular and indicates that democracy is highly valued by the people of Indonesia. Despite half a century of independence, Indonesians did not have the liberty to choose the president directly previously. Before the Presidential Elections of 2004, the people were not aware of their rights to elect a president. Moreover, it was not evident that the administration could conduct presidential elections in a democratic, secure and peaceful manner.<sup>3</sup> The first elections that took place on 5 July 2004 (first round) and 20 September 2004 (second round) provided a new experience in democratic norms. What became obvious was that, direct presidential elections involving the participation of people was not only possible but also conducted properly.

An important political phenomenon of the direct presidential elections is the Kyai's deep involvement in the political process. While it is true that the Kyai engaged in practical politics in the legislative elections since 1999,

their direct involvement in the presidential elections in 2004 was clearly different. The Kyai had traditionally played a significant role in the kingdoms of the archipelago and the dynamic development of Islam in Indonesia. The political events during the 2004 presidential elections are important instruments to assess the achievements of democracy in Indonesia, including the role of the Kyai and their political influence in country where Muslims are the majority. As the presidential elections were the first conducted in Indonesia, it served as the benchmark for the next presidential elections in 2009 and beyond to incorporate the five-year presidential election agenda. The role of the Kyai in the 2004 presidential election is important to discern scientifically and practically their influence on the political process.

One important phenomenon prevalent during the 2004 presidential election was the status of East Java as a centre of focus by all candidates for presidential and vice-presidential seats. This phenomenon is quite interesting, especially among the pairs of candidates who have a Nahdatul Ulama or an NU background as, for example, the Megawati-Hasyim Muzadi and Wiranto-Sholahuddin Wahid partnerships. This is in contrast with other areas in the country, especially outside Java, which are relatively less keenly contested spaces.<sup>4</sup> The main considerations that underlie the struggle for East Java was the size of the voters. According to the General Elections Commission (KPU) (Decision No. 16 of 2004), the total number of voters on 2004 Presidential Election roll was 147,310,885, and the largest number of voters were in East Java. This province recorded 26,506,670 voters spread over in 99,297 polling stations (TPS). With such a large number of voters in East Java, it is not surprising that all the presidential candidates and vice-presidential candidates concentrated their activities on this province to win. In short, East Java was a key area and whoever captured the area had the potential to win the 2004 presidential elections.

Another important consideration is the portrayal of East Java as a traditional Muslim community or *nahdliyyin*. The results of legislative elections from time to time show that NU parties and other political parties which receive support directly from NU, always secure the votes in East Java. This phenomenon is reflected in the elections held in this country from 1955 to 1999. The East Java province is also known as the land of a thousand *pesantren*. The *pesantren* is easy to find not only in rural areas but also in the urban areas. New *pesantrens*, whether traditional, modern, or a combination of both, continue to emerge. Based on data from the Directorate of Religious Education and Pesantren Schools for 2004-2005, the number of *pesantren* in East Java totalled 3,582 schools with approximately 1,169,256 students. This figure far exceeds the other provinces in Java.

This investigation stems from the four formulations of the research problems. First, this study assumes that political actions are encouraged by the Kyai for religious reasons. The political views and reasons of the Kyai's involvement in the 2004 direct presidential election needs thus to be answered first. Second, it is also important to ask about the forms of the Kyai's political roles. The third question focuses on the interaction that exists between leaders and the Kyai with the political actors, the presidential and vice-presidential candidates. Lastly, this study explores the influence of the Kyai's vision and political choices vis-a-vis the political preferences of the society, and how the Kyai can also determine the victory of candidates, as well as its post-elections role/s.

The investigation examines the relationship of the Kyai in East Java with the transition to democracy in the reform era as well as the political role of the Kyai in the implementation of the 2004 presidential elections. This includes the goals of the Kyai. It also examines approaches the Kyai uses during the election process to enable a certain candidate to win and how the Kyai shapes the political preferences of voters. The patterns of relationships and the role of the Kyai after the implementation of the 2004 presidential election in East Java will also be considered.

The scope of this study is the role of Kyai in the 2004 presidential and vice-presidential elections with a focus on the East Java province. The year 2004 refers to the entire electoral process as stipulated by the General Elections Commission (KPU), which includes the 'crawl' stage candidates, registration, selection, establishment of candidate, up to the general elections and until the inauguration of president and vice-president. In the 2004 presidential election, there were two rounds of elections in which the political role of Kyai was significantly apparent. The final stages of the presidential election are marked by the determination and announcement of the results of presidential and vice-presidential elections on 5 October 2004 and which is followed by the inauguration of the President and Vice-President on 20 October 2004.

## Kyai and political dynamics

The term 'Kyai' has much in common with the *ulama*, although sometimes there are significant differences. The word '*ulama*' is the plural (*jama'*) of 'alim meaning 'people who have knowledge'. In the original context, *ulama* means scientists in social, religious or cultural sense. In the Quran, the cleric is not the predicate of monopoly for interpreters, *hadith*, *fiqh*, Sufism, and so on-which is called *al-'ulum al-diniyyah* (religious sciences), but can also be given to the

astronomer, botanist, volcanologist, biologist, physicist, etc., commonly called *al-'ulum al-kauniyyah* (knowledge about the universe). In Indonesia, people who are acknowledged by the community as those who understand the Islamic sciences and became a reference in the life of Islamic societies have different titles in different areas. Such figures are called Kyai (Java), Ajengan (Sunda), Tengku (Aceh), sheikh (North Sumatera/Tapanuli), buya (Minangkabau), master teacher (Nusa Tenggara, South Kalimantan, East Kalimantan and Central Kalimantan).<sup>5</sup> Even so, it must be admitted that to use these titles to equate with the *ulama* could cause problems. In addition, each of these titles has its own peculiarities.

Dhofier's book still remains an essential reference that explores the meaning, philosophy of life and the behaviour of Kyai in Indonesia, especially in Java. According to Dhofier, Kyai in the Java language is used for three kinds of different titles. First, as an honorary title for the goods that are considered sacred. For example, Kyai Garuda Kencana is used as the name of the golden cart in the Keraton of Yogyakarta. Second, it is commonly used as a title of honour for old people. Third, it is the title given by the society to a scholar of Islam who has become leader of *pesantren* and has taught classical Islamic books to the santri. Kyai are also often called an 'alim (one who has in-depth knowledge of Islam).<sup>6</sup>

Kyai is essentially a scholar of Islam who is actively involved in Islamic education, in this case through the *pesantren*. Their role as educators has been grown along with the growth of religious educational institutions in various forms, such as council, *halaqah*, *maktab*, *jami'*, madrasah, shrine, *ribath*, mosque and *pesantren*.<sup>7</sup> Kyai usually, but not always, possess or care for *pesantren*. In addition to the *pesantren* being the centre of activity, Kyai is a charismatic figure, in the Weberian sense, which is acknowledged by the students, *ustad* (teacher) and the surrounding communities.<sup>8</sup> The emergence of *ulama* on the political stage is believed to be in line with the teachings of Islam which is believed to govern all aspects of human life, both as individuals and social beings. This belief encourages the *ulama* to be involved in the political arena where power can be an instrument to preach the teachings of Islam. The direct involvement of the *ulama* into the politics of power gave birth to the political power of Islam in the archipelago. The emergence of Islamic kingdoms in the archipelago - Pasai in Sumatra, Pajang, Demak, Mataram and Cirebon in Java, Banjar in Kalimantan, Gowa-Tallo, Bone, Wajo in Sulawesi, Ternate and Tidore in the Moluccas, to the kingdoms of Bima in Nusa Tenggara, is evidence of the *ulama's* political position in the early stages of the spread of Islam in the archipelago.

Not surprisingly, many Kyais became known as national heroes because of their involvement in national political life. K.H. Hashim Ash'ari (founder of Indonesia's largest Islamic organisation, NU) and K.H. Ahmad Dahlan (founder of Indonesia's second largest Islamic organization, Muhammadiyah) are known as *ulamas* who participated in the struggle for independence in Indonesia. In fact, Hashim Ash'ari is famous for his jihad resolution which called on Muslims to fight against the Allies who wanted to recolonise Indonesia. In addition to these two figures, there are a few *ulamas* (Kyai), who are also national political figures, such as K.H. Agus Salim, K.H. Wahab Chasbullah, K.H. Mas Mansyur and K.H. Masykur.<sup>9</sup>

The Kyais are also known to have taken part in the establishment of political parties. The political ideology of Kyai derives from religious beliefs and, therefore, the political parties which have the Kyai's support and endorsement are parties whose ideology is Islamic, as for example Masyumi, NU, Partai Syarekat Islam Indonesia (PSII) and the Islamic Education Movement (Pertti). The role of Kyai is not purely religious but also social, further strengthening its influence in the world of politics. In this context, it is clear that the Kyai can be regarded as part of the political elite. The Kyai eventually developed enormous direct political power. The strength of this could be utilized at least in political bargaining with other parties. Given the prime position of Kyai in Indonesian society, it is useful to examine their role in the 2004 Presidential Elections.

### **Kyai and the 2004 Presidential Elections**

In the 2004 Presidential Elections, the Kyais were active participants in the power struggle. Islamic leaders were among the candidates in the presidential elections. K.H. Hasyim Muzadi, chairman of the NU, paired with a vice-presidential candidate Megawati Soekarnoputri. Hamzah Haz, the presidential candidate associated with the United Development Party (PPP), was known as one of the NU leaders from Borneo. Hamzah Haz was very keen to get close to the Islamic leaders of Arab descent (*habaib*). Another candidate, Gen. Wiranto, took K.H. Sholahuddin Wahid, one of the NU chairman and grandson of K.H. Hashim Ash'ari, as partner. While Amien Rais, a presidential candidate promoted by the National Mandate Party (PAN), is well-known as a Muslim intellectual and Chairman of Muhammadiyah. In fact, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono also chose a partner with a religious background. Muhammad Jusuf Kalla, the vice-presidential candidate paired with Yudhoyono was a member of the Regional Board NU

Musyasyar South Sulawesi and a leader of KAHMI (Alumni Association of Islamic Students Association), an Islamic student organization in Indonesia

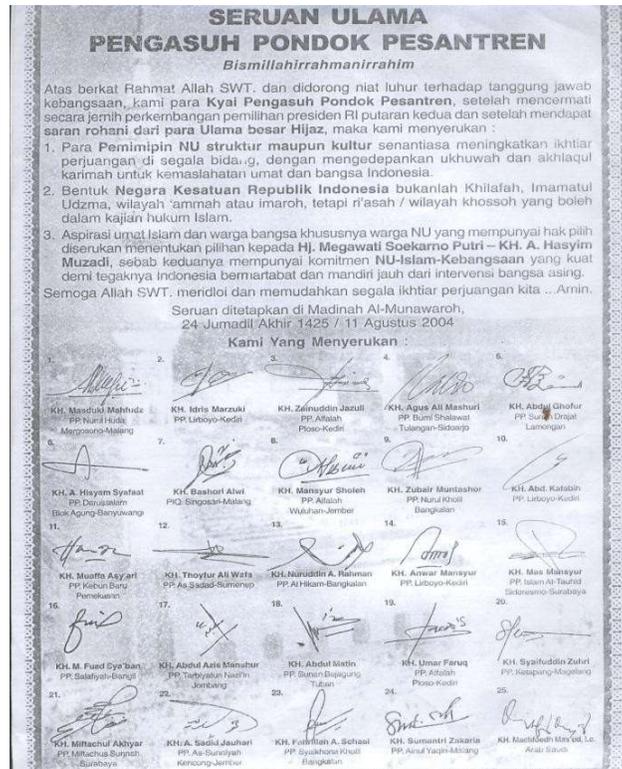
The Kyai nomination for presidential election directly influenced Kyai support at the grassroots level. Kyai's involvement in Situbondo is a clear example. K.H. Fawaid As'ad, caregiver of Pesantren Salafiyah Syafi'iyah Sukorejo Situbondo, the largest cottage with approximately 14,000 students, supported the Megawati-Hasyim partnership, while K.H. Sofyan and daughter, K.H. Cholil As'ad, who is also the younger brother of K.H. As'ad Fawaid, supported Sholahuddin pair Wiranto-Wahid.<sup>10</sup> In addition, as supporters, they also play a role as political actors as for example the role played by K.H. Hasyim. Whatever its role, it is increasingly apparent that the Kyais have much influence in determining or influencing the political choices of the people. With such influence, they function as a pollster (vote-getter) in the political competition.

The democratic transition in Indonesia was marked by the election of the president and vice-president directly for the first time in 2004. It had not only created uncertainty among political parties but also the Kyai communities in East Java. In East Java, uncertainty arose due to lack of clarity among traditional Islamic organizations in making decisions. Meanwhile, NU's decision was felt important enough to be a political guide for political parties that were culturally and historically linked to the organisation, as well as the National Awakening Party (PKB).

NU's obscurity here is borne out of the provisions (*qarar*) issued by the NU Syariah ahead of the 2004 presidential elections. Consequently, the Kyais who are part of the NU culturally made unilateral decisions. The Kyais who were previously active in the PKB, subsequently followed the party line. The Kyais at NU preferred to wait for Hasyim's decision as at that time he served as NU Chairman of Tanfidziyah. There was uncertainty in the aftermath of the emergence of two factions among the Kyai of East Java. In the early stages, crawl-presidential running mate, the Kyai, who were part of the PKB chose to campaign for his party's policies while still supporting the K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) as a candidate for President. In contrast, most of the NU Kyais supported Hashim who was paired with Megawati. Gus Dur did not join the presidential race due to health reasons. This did not ease tensions between the two factions. Instead, the conflict intensified when the Kyais, who were members of the PKB, nominated and supported Salahuddin Wahid as Wiranto's running mate.

Tensions continued with the first election cycle. Each faction used the entire social capital to ensure their candidate's win. Kyais who were members of the PKB gave full support to the pair of Wiranto-Salahuddin Wahid, while NU Kyais fully supported the Megawati-Hashim partnership. Other forms of support were quite diverse, ranging from the *santris* networks and *pesantren* alumni where each of them was run by Kyai, and the use of NU religious ritual as a media campaign like *istighatsah* was evident. Support for Megawati-Hasyim was endorsed nationally by a prominent Kyai of Medina with a *Fatwa Medina* (see image below). The *fatwa* contains a statement of support and also an appeal to the people for the Megawati-Hasyim tandem.

Interestingly, to disrupt the pace of the Megawati-Hashim pair, the opposing Kyai issued a *fatwa* which forbid a woman to become President. Issuing the edict did not fail to spark a debate among the public who supported pro-Megawati-Hasyim Kyai or those who opposed the pair. Broadly speaking, the involvement of the Kyai in providing support for presidential and vice-presidential candidates in the presidential election rounds I and II of 2004 succeeded in establishing grassroots political preferences.



However, it was not uniformly successful and was highly concentrated in certain areas in East Java. Throughout the city of Madura and the majority of Tapal Kuda, for example, the Kyai managed to convince the voters to follow their choice. Similarly, in the western coastal region of East Java, prominent Kyais dominated and influenced the preference of the people. In contrast, in the Mataraman, Kyai barely managed to influence grassroots' political preference.

To understand the configuration of the political role of Kyai in East Java during the 2004 presidential election, this article divides the object of study into four *pesantren* on the basis of different typologies, namely in Madura, Urban (Perkotaan), Mataraman and Tapal Kuda.

### The Category of Pesantren in East Java

In the first round of the presidential election in all the districts in the Madura not a single vote went to the SBY-JK tandem. Instead, the Wiranto-Sholah pair practically grabbed all the votes in Madura. More specifically, in four districts of Madura, the Wiranto-Sholah partnership managed to out-perform Megawati-Hasyim and SBY-JK. Moreover, the Siswono-Amin and Hamza-Agum partnership got part of the votes (see Table 1 below).



**Table 1 Presidential Election Results, First Circle in Madura**

NO	Kabu/Kota	SBY-JK	Mega-Hasyim	Wiranto- Sholah	Amin-Siswono	Hamzah-Agum
01	Bangkalan	100,495	125,651	127,363	24,287	7,425
02	Sampang	67,706	34,539	210,692	22,127	85,575
03	Pamekasan	89,613	52,694	136,417	60,709	99,419
04	Sumenep	106,279	116,969	243,347	75,881	26,886

Source: KPUD East Java, 2004

The table above shows that in the first round of elections in Sumenep, Wiranto- Sholah got the highest votes, amounting to 243,347 votes while Hashim got the second highest with 116,969 votes. In contrast, the SBY-JK pair only managed to be placed third with 106,279 votes. Meanwhile, Amin-Siswono got 75,881 votes and Hamzah-Agum were placed last with 26,886 votes.

The strong influence of Kyai in the formation of PKB in Madura and its influence on public political preferences can also be seen in the second round of presidential elections. The Kyai in Madura successfully steered the political choice to the SBY-JK- Wiranto partnership, causing them to advance in the second round (see table 2).

**Table 2 Presidential Election Results, Second Circle in Madura**

NO	Kabupaten/Kota	SBY-JK		Mega-Hasyim	
		Putaran I	Putaran II	Putaran I	Putaran II
01	Bangkalan	100,495	213,637	125,651	176,264
02	Sampang	67,706	258,169	34,539	172,055
03	Pamekasan	89,613	239,506	52,694	166,620
04	Sumenep	106,279	314,757	116,969	242,344

The above table shows that the Megawati-Hashim tandem did not get much support from any of the four districts. Instead the majority voted the SBY-JK tandem. Similarly, the success of Kyai in shaping political preferences in the first round of 2004 election also happened in Tapal Kuda. This area includes the district Makati, Makati city,

county Probolinggo, Probolinggo, Lumajang, Jember, Bondowo, Situbondo and Banyuwangi. In most districts and cities, the pair Wiranto-Sholah and Megawati-Hasyim dominated the vote (see table 3).

**Table 3 Presidential Election Results, First Circle in Tapal Kuda**

NO	Kabu/Kota	SBY-JK	Mega- Hasyim	Wiranto- Sholah	Amin- Siswono	Hamzah- Agum
01	Bondowoso	106,092	79,723	187,998	23,394	13,180
02	Situbondo	82,530	110,648	177,566	20,399	7,213
03	Probolinggo	214,611	114,550	228,480	27,431	34,457
04	Pasuruan	317,538	105,749	350,092	48,350	16,959
05	Lumajang	187,660	215,706	139,248	38,731	12,997
06	Banyuwangi	301,018	312,933	216,694	69,619	20,655
07	Jember	548,787	318,693	322,008	91,474	49,522
08	Kota Probolinggo	44,665	30,144	25,633	10,642	8,326
09	Kota Pasuruan	42,356	15,649	31,202	8,725	1,959

Source: KPUD East Java (2004)

From the above table, it can be seen that the SBY-JK pair got the highest votes. Even in Jember, Pasuruan, and Probolinggo, they managed to get the highest votes. Another factor that helped determine the high votes that went to SBY-JK in Jember was the open support of some influential local Kyais. Among the Jember Kyai who openly supported SBY-JK was Kyai Ali Yasin Ali who was also the caregiver of pesantren Mabrur, Petemon, Arjasa and Jember. In addition, strong support was also provided by Kyai Muzakki Shah, al-Qadiri pesantren caregiver, who was also popular as one of the spiritual teachers of SBY.<sup>11</sup> The strong influence of Kyai in shaping political preferences of the people in the Tapal Kuda is also apparent in the second round presidential elections. The Kyai who were members of PKB were still capable of directing the voters to vote for SBY-JK pair and not the Megawati-Hashim partnership. The Kyais' success here had implications for increasing the SBY-JK votes in round II (see table 4).

**Table 4 Presidential Election Results, Second Circle in Tapal Kuda**

No	Kabupaten/Kota	SBY-JK		Mega-Hasyim	
		Putaran I	Putaran II	Putaran I	Putaran II
01	Bondowoso	106,092	286,462	79,723	135,665
02	Situbondo	82,530	221,408	110,648	147,989
03	Probolinggo	214,611	396,247	114,550	190,711
04	Pasuruan	317,538	631,191	105,749	181,408
04	Lumajang	187,660	294,744	215,706	284,946
05	Banyuwangi	301,018	492,820	312,933	401,212
05	Jember	548,787	698,323	318,693	483,804
15	Kota Probolinggo	44,665	69,206	30,144	45,151
16	Kota Pasuruan	42,356	73,099	15,649	22,792

The above table shows that all districts/cities in the region of Tapal Kuda voted strongly for the SBY-JK pair. Further, the difference in margin between the votes for SBY- JK and Mega-Hasyim was quite huge. In fact, in some districts/cities such as Bondowoso, Probolinggo, Makati and Makati City District, the difference in votes ranged up to one hundred percent.

Outside of Madura and Tapal Kuda, it can be seen clearly that Kyais NU were less successful. Even in areas that fell into the Mataraman region, the role of Kyai in consolidating the support of the masses was barely visible. Consequently, in these areas Megawati-Hasyim significantly failed to gain the support of the voters in the 2004 election Round I. In the areas including Surabaya, Sidoarjo and Jombang, the failure of Kyai in shaping political preferences of the people was strong. It can be seen from the votes for, the Wiranto-Sholah and Megawati-Hashim, who were fully supported by powerful Kyais. Both Kyais are members of the PKB and structural NU Kyais (see table 5).

**Table 5 Presidential Election Results, First Circle in Surabaya and Sidoarjo**

NO	Kabupaten/Kota	SBY-JK	Mega-Hasyim	Wiranto-Sholah	Amin-Siswono	Hamzah-Agum
01	Kota Surabaya	445.422	496.088	179.423	209.008	11.516
02	Sidoarjo	423.740	231.477	171.706	131.825	9.905

The above table shows that in Surabaya, Megawati-Hasyim got the most votes compared to SBY-JK with a total of 496,088 votes. They were followed by Wiranto-Sholah with 179,423, Siswono-Amin, 209,008 and Hamza-Agum who obtained 11,516 votes. The Kyai supporting Hashim also failed to convince the mass of voters, especially from the NU, to vote for Megawati-Hashim in the second round. The SBY-JK partnership emerged the presidential winner in Surabaya and Sidoarjo in the second round. In fact, in the previous round, Megawati-Hashim had won in Surabaya.

**Table 6 Presidential Election Results, Second Circle in Surabaya and Sidoarjo**

NO	Kabupaten/Kota	SBY-JK		Mega-Hasyim	
		Putaran I	Putaran II	Putaran I	Putaran II
01	Kota Surabaya	445,422	774,721	496,088	617,284
02	Sidoarjo	423,740	643,993	231,477	294,186

It is also interesting to see the data on the 2004 presidential election Round I in the districts located on the west coast of East Java. In three districts, Gresik, Lamongan and Tuban, for example, the SBY-JK pair did not get much votes. Two districts, Gresik and Lamongan were controlled Wiranto-Sholah, while Tuban was controlled Megawati-Hasyim (see table 7).

**Table 7 Presidential Election Results, First Circle in Pesisir Barat Jawa Timur**

NO	Kabupaten/Kota	SBY-JK	Mega-Hasyim	Wiranto-Sholah	Amin-Siswono	Hamzah-Agum
01	Gresik	207,105	107,328	212,859	87,487	12,987
02	Lamongan	186,666	137,343	250,475	144,612	9,531
03	Tuban	182,002	206,243	174,591	53,906	22663

The above table shows that in Gresik the Wiranto-Sholah pair obtained 212,859 votes which put them on the top of the elections poll. In second place, the SBY-JK pair garnered 207,105 votes. They were followed by Megawati-Hasyim with 107,328 votes, and Amin Siswono, 87,487 and Hamzah-Agung, 12,937. In the second round of the presidential elections in the districts in the west coast of East Java, the Kyais managed to influence the political preferences of society in favour of the candidates they were endorsing. The failure of the Wiranto-Sholah pair did not necessarily result in a shift in support among the grassroots. Conversely, the people still followed the call of the local elite Kyai to provide support to the SBY-JK tandem (see table 7). In contrast, the Kyai support for Hashim was not able to capitalize on the failure of Sholah-Wiranto. The above table shows that the increase in votes obtained by the Megawati-Hasyim pair is not significant, as a consequence of the failure of its supporting Kyai.

**Table 8 Presidential Election Results, Second Circle in Pesisir Bagian Barat Jawa Timur**

NO	Kabupaten/Kota	SBY-JK		Mega-Hasyim	
		Putaran I	Putaran II	Putaran I	Putaran II
01	Tuban	182,002	315,058	206,243	293,820
02	Lamongan	186,666	428,246	137,343	240,867
03	Gresik	207,105	419,330	107,328	176,854

The Kyais failed to influence the people's political preferences in the more prominent areas within the subculture Mataraman area. Out of the 18 districts and cities, none cared much for the pair Wiranto-Sholah as the first winner in the presidential vote in Round I of 2004. Similarly, the Mega-Hasyim pair only excelled in five districts of the city. The rest, as many as 13 districts, city, or communities, provided support entirely to the SBY-JK pair (see table 9).

**Table 9 Presidential Election Results, First Circle in Mataraman**

NO	Kabupaten/ Kota	SBY-JK	Mega-Hasyim	Wiranto-Sholah	Amin-Siswono	Hamzah- Agum
01	Pacitan	268,398	24,046	12,579	12,101	2,398
02	Ponorogo	248,450	113,268	82,551	66,367	7,717
03	Trenggalek	156,052	125,535	79,879	26,956	4,832
04	Malang	512,906	454,326	289,627	75,453	26,481
05	Kota Blitar	33,576	29,143	8,384	5,058	1,319
06	Kota Malang	166,564	147,655	56,875	65,624	4,398
07	Kota Batu	44,638	29,847	24,834	11,090	1,297
08	Tulungagung	217,338	230,658	95,057	33,766	6,066
09	Blitar	247,250	270,638	96,112	29,333	10,007
10	Kediri	318,519	341,978	144,501	54,540	10,171
11	Kota Kediri	56,746	64,754	16,374	12,733	1,139
12	Mojokerto	256,386	168,975	111,887	44,477	9,405
13	Kota Mojokerto	29,575	20,315	10,237	8,732	532
14	Jombang	268,683	192,373	153,571	56,508	24,154
15	Nganjuk	242,497	206,356	113,784	56,508	7,283
16	Madiun	188,667	137,182	52,674	25,327	4,628
17	Magetan	171,641	135,756	41,952	34,620	4,528
18	Ngawi	197,719	172,886	66,757	54,981	8,011

The table above shows, in areas known widely as Abangan Muslim areas, Megawati-Hasyim could only win votes in Tulungagung, Blitar, and Kota Kediri. In contrast, the SBY-JK pair proved superior with significant votes in Pacitan, Ponorogo, Terri, Malang District, Kota Blitar, Malang, Batu, Mojokerto, Jombang, Nganjuk, Madison, Magetan and Ngawi. The Megawati-Hasyim defeat in these areas was surprising, because the voters were previously loyal to Mataraman PDI-P in the 2004 legislative elections. The SBY-JK dominance in the Mataraman area became increasingly unstoppable in the second round of the presidential elections. All districts and cities that fell into the Mataraman area almost entirely gave victory to the SBY-JK pair. From the 18 districts and cities, it was only in Blitar that Megawati-Hasyim won in Round II. The Megawati-Hasyim pair managed to get 322,838 votes, while SBY-JK earned 318,812 votes. Nevertheless, the margin of victory margin of about 4,000 votes is quite thin.

### **Kyai in the victory of the presidential candidate**

The SBY-JK partnership won a landslide victory in East Java in 2004. In the first round, the SBY-JK tandem gained 7.5 million votes from a total of 26,506,670 votes, far ahead of Megawati-Hashim. The SBY-JK pair continued to survive in the second round and eventually led the tandem to be the victorious presidential and vice-presidential candidates. As stated by the successful team, the target of SBY-JK votes in East Java was expected to increase a hundred percent, which is obtaining 15 million votes.<sup>12</sup>

At that time NU leaders were still undecided in the desire to have a president, or at least vice-president, after the success of Gus Dur as president in replacing B.J. Habibie. Hasyim's pairing with Megawati was expected to realise that dream, especially given Megawati's position as president. Inevitably, the organizational structure of NU with its leaders became political tools in the Megawati-Hasyim electoral campaign, especially in pockets of NU areas. The NU organization and its leaders were involved in a very intense political struggle for power in the 2004 presidential election. In East Java, a majority of the Kyai who were in the NU management structure gave their support to Hasyim. K.H. Masduqi Machfudz, one of the influential Kyais in East Java and Chairman of Syuriah PWNU East Java, openly

supported Hasyim. In addition, he also actively encouraged other Kyais to support the Megawati-Hashim tandem. It was the Megawati-Hashim tandem who had the support of the majority of NU Kyai and the elite. However, the political power of the Kyais was divided as Wiranto-Wahid also sought their support. While Jusuf Kalla came from the NU circles, his name was not considered as representative of NU Kyai. He was viewed as a representative of *nahdhiyin* students from outside Java and a successful businessman although the public largely associated him with NU. The SBY-JK pairing as it turned out did not get the support of many Kyais. SBY-JK considered a victory possible with the right campaign strategy. The SBY-JK campaign team said that the strategy adopted to win was based on 'modern-rational' principles, especially using the parameters of political research when it was still not known and understood among Kyai and the public at large.

Some analysts argue that the SBY-JK victory was considered as a public political dissent against the Kyai call. However, the reality on the ground is more complex than just defiance of the people against the Kyai. There are many factors that influenced the SBY-JK victory, in addition to an effective campaign strategy. At least five factors influenced the SBY-JK victory in East Java. First, the emergence of a new spirit in the community in regard to the use of their political rights directly and independently. This was part of the euphoria of the 1998 political reforms. Second, was the Kyai's uncertainty in practical politics. Many Kyais were hesitant to appeal to students and followers to vote for candidates they supported. Third, was the division among the Kyais. Even since the beginning, the Kyais and NU elites were divided in regard to the Hasyim nomination. The split was partly because with the advance Hasyim as vice-presidential candidate (who was then serving as chairman of the NU), the politicisation of NU might not be circumvented. Fourth, in the second round, the votes of other candidates who fell went to SBY-JK. In the end, the battle was just between SBY-JK and Megawati-Hashim. And as we know, the Kyai gave their support to SBY-JK. Fifth, was SBY-JK pair's effective strategies in approaching the Kyai. In a direct election, the people are everything and it is they who decide the outcome of the elections. Therefore, the strategy of approaching the Kyais they were able to reach the electorate. The Kyais were approached personally through visits. Since the beginning, this pair had always been close to the Kyais, especially the influential ones. In fact, the SBY presidential campaign has specialized staff whose only job was to connect the SBY world with the Kyai and pesantren.

### **Kyai response after the 2004 Presidential Election**

The response and attitude of the Kyais towards winning the presidential election is interesting. Many issues and situations which arose during the campaign period appeared to be resolved quietly as if they never happened, particularly the differences between Kyais who supported different teams. This phenomenon was amplified by visits conducted by Shalahudin with Wahid (Gus Sholah) after the 2004 presidential elections to a pesantren in Madura. In various meetings, Kyai reception towards Gus Sholah was calm and positive. In fact, the meeting was also attended by NU Structural Kyai who supported Hashim.

The Kyais good relations with Hashim and Gus Sholah can be seen from the perspective of the final election results. As we know, both Hashim and Gus Sholah did not emerge victorious. The Kyai deeply understood that the defeat of both these candidates meant that access to resources was much reduced. A second perspective was the emergence of a commonly shared view that politics was basically sociological politics, and that politics was not religion. This was despite the fact that in many instances religious doctrine was used as the basis for the legitimacy of the interests of each Kyai. With this common understanding, the competition and political differences that arose during the election lost its momentum in the post-election period. Moreover, after the presidential election the Kyais were faced with other pressing matters such as the governors' elections. Further, most Kyai realised, though not entirely, that involvement in practical politics did not benefit the *pesantren* and educational institutions under their management. Some of those who were initially keen to acquire political power began to withdraw and returned to horizontal mobilization. That is, the Kyai returned to their respective *pesantren* and back to their roles as local religious elite.

After the 2004 presidential election, the role of Kyai in politics nevertheless still continued. Communication and friendship between the Kyai and the people developed further. The Kyai became reconciliation actors (*ishlah*) in the community. The dissolution of Kyai factions occurred almost in all areas in East Java. All parties showed a reconciliatory attitude. Kyai Hasyim, for example, attended the inauguration of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Vice-President Muhammad Jusuf Kalla at the parliament building. In fact, Kyai Hasyim even sought consultations on the cabinet position of Minister of Religion whose candidate could probably be from NU. Amid the debate on the formation of a national cabinet, the Kyais united to vie for the cabinet position of Minister of Religion. Kyai Hasyim, as NU chairman, took on the role as a competitor but relations between the Kyais remained excellent in the post-2004 election period as a result of their common ground on the issue.

## Conclusion

The role of Kyai in Indonesian politics can be traced to the old kingdoms and colonial era and continued during the struggle for independence, the Old Order, New Order and the reform era. Even with the advent of the Presidential Elections in 2004, the role of Kyai still remained significant. The role of the Kyai in the implementation of the 2004 presidential election gave moral force as a political endorsement to any candidate during the campaign and was useful as a vote-getter. There are several reasons that encouraged the Kyais' involvement in the East Java 2004 Presidential Elections, both independent Kyai and partisan Kyai. Among these is the meaning of politics for a Kyai which differs from that of a politician in general. For a Kyai, politics is closely related to his position as religious leader of Islam that is central in his life. Religious reasons, the proposition of holy scripture and the rules of logic, have always been one of the reasons for a Kyai to take on political action. This motivation is driven by at least two reasons. First, the Kyais are part of the community so they can understand the problems and aspirations of the community. Second, the experience so far in which the Kyai and their followers are only used by politicians with no perceived benefits associated with their aspirations. This experience drove the Kyai to be directly involved in politics and no longer be merely a political object. Some Kyais have expressly stated that that involvement in politics was to prevent undemocratic actions.

The role played by the East Java Kyais are evident especially in 2004 stretching from the presidential candidature phase to the implementation of 2004 election and even in the post-election phase. In the 2004 Presidential Elections, the major role played by the Kyai was to lead the people to choose a presidential candidate and vice-president candidate. The role played by Kyai at the 2004 presidential elections was expressed in several ways: First, the Kyai issued a public statement of support for certain candidates, often before the media. Religious activities run by the Kyai, for example, *majlis* gatherings and *istighatsah*, usually become the primary means to urge people to choose a particular presidential or vice-presidential candidate. Second, is the appeal to vote for a particular partner. The Kyai who supports a particular candidate instructs all students and alumni of *pesantren* to support the candidate. The call is also usually addressed to parents, families and people in the family environment. Third, is to consolidate the *pesantren* as a venue for certain candidates. Fourth, issuing a religious fatwa that contains a call to pick candidates who are supported along with religious arguments, from al-Qur'an, *hadith* and other classical religious books. Religious *fatwa* can be signed collectively by many Kyais as well as by one Kyai. Fifth, consolidation among fellow Kyais to strengthen and support the efforts of certain candidates they support. Sixth is to become a campaigner. Many East Java Kyais became the president and vice-president candidate campaign team members. Seventh, to mobilise the masses. Even though this was not a general pattern, there were Kyais who assigned his santri to a specific area to gain mass support in the area to the pair of candidates they supported.

In East Java in the 2004 presidential elections, the Kyai became an important force that could influence the political preferences of voters. This phenomenon was particularly evident in the region of Madura and Tapal Kuda; two areas which are well known as a base for a community of santris who were obedient to the Kyai's call. In the Mataraman area and in urban areas, the influence of Kyai in determining the preferences of the voters was somewhat lesser. The influence of the Kyai is also very clearly visible in the SBY-JK pair's win. The post-2004 election period revealed a weakening of the influence of the Kyai on the people as the voters were embracing the spirit of choosing directly as free citizens in a democratic country. However, in East Java the Kyai's influence was still strong in determining the outcome of the national elections.

## Notes

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<sup>2</sup>The 2004 presidential election refers to the presidential and vice-presidential elections of 2004.

<sup>3</sup>Before 2004, Indonesia's president was elected by the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) every five years. MPR is a combination of members of the House of Representatives (DPR) and the regional representatives and groups. When

amendments to the Constitution of 1945 were made, Assembly members agreed to change the electoral system to one of direct presidential elections from 2004.

<sup>4</sup>Outside Java, an exception is the area of South Kalimantan, known widely as a base of traditional Muslims (NU). Its status as a NU base was of special concern to presidential candidates Wahid Hasyim and Sholahuddin who were members of the organisation. As a bastion of NU, it not surprising that in the 1955 elections NU won by securing 48.3 percent of the total votes. Suadi Asy'ari, 2009. *Nalar Politik NU*. Jakarta: LKIS, pp. 238-248.

<sup>5</sup>Omar Bakri, 1984. *Menyingkap Tabir Arti Ulama*. Bandung: Angkasa, pp. 34-35.

<sup>6</sup>Zamakhsyari Dhofier, 1982. *Tradisi Pesantren: Kajian Pandangan Hidup Kyai*. Jakarta: LP3ES., p. 55. In this definition, a Kyai is a person who is believed to have tremendous authority and charisma. This is because Kyai is a holy man who is believed to have received a blessing. See Max Weber, 1973. *The Routinization of Charisma*. In: Eva Etzioni Haavelly and A. Etzioni (ed.), 1973. *Social Change*. New York: Basic Book, 1973, p. 53.

<sup>7</sup>Azyumardi Azra, 1990. Ulama, Politik dan Modernisasi. *Jurnal Ulumul Qur'an*, vol. II, p. 6.

<sup>8</sup>Max Weber distinguished three types of leadership: charismatic, traditional and rational. Max Weber, 1957. *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. Glencoe: The Free Press.

<sup>9</sup>Imam Suprayogo, 1998. *Kyai dan Politik di Pedesaan: Suatu Kajian tentang Variasi dan Bentuk*

*Keterlibatan Politik Kyai*. Graduate Dissertation Airlangga University, pp. 2-5.

<sup>10</sup>Asrori S. Karni. Adu Kuat Dua Poros Kyai. *Gatra*, edisi 36, 16 July 2004.

<sup>11</sup>Kyai Muzakki from Kyai East Java is first interacted with SBY in 1997.

<sup>12</sup>SBY-Kalla team of Java target 15 Million Vote. *Tempointeraktif*. <http://www.tempo.co.id> (Accessed 1 June 2011).

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