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ARCHAEOLOGY AND ISLAM
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Michael Wood

ISLAMIC LAW VERSUS ADAT: DEBATE ABOUT INHERITENCE LAW
AND THE RISE OF CAPITALISM IN MINANGKABAU

Yasrul Huda

PATTUMATEANG AMONG PEOPLES OF CIKOANG,
SOUTH SULAWESI: A LOCAL PRACTICE OF MORTUARY
RITUAL IN THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY

Muhammad Adlin Sila

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Document

Strengthening Civic Values Through *Pesantren* and Madrasah

PPIM UIN Jakarta in cooperation with The Asia Foundation is conducting a two-year project to strengthen civic values in Indonesia through *pesantren* and *madrasah* education institutions. These institutions of Islamic learning use a number of program activities directed to implement the mission and objectives of the project. The communities of Islamic learning, and Indonesian Muslims in general, possess a strong engagement with the idea of civic values: democratic civic values, religious pluralism, human rights, and gender equality. Their engagement with these issues will eventually result in the creation of an atmosphere in which the worldviews of Islamic educational institutions are able to adapt to the diversity and complexity of the modern world.

The driving force behind this project is PPIM's great concern with the rising tide of Islamism in the Indonesian socio-political arena. In the last five years, a number of events tarnished the once well-regarded image of Indonesian Islam. So-called militant Islamic groups (such as Front Pembela Islam [FPI], Laskar Jihad [LJ], and Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia [MMI]) have at times resorted to extreme measures in their attempts to realize their goal of implementing *shari'ah* (Islamic) law in Indonesia.

The rise of these groups poses a threat to the consolidation of democracy and civil society, both of which have been experiencing positive developments in recent times. While these groups are fortunately still in the minority—as PPIM surveys testify—they are very vocal in articulating and promoting their ideas and agendas. Militant groups frequently use religion as the only source to legitimize their extreme and, at times, violent actions. These actions

often contradict the basic principles of human rights and civil liberties. Their understandings of Islam are solely based on textual and literal explanations, which tend to negate pluralism, a spirit that, actually, is very strong in all religions.

PPIM's programme intends to strengthen civic values in Indonesia through *pesantrens* and *madrasahs*, i.e. through in-service training for two target groups within these institutions of Islamic education (*pesantren* leaders [*kyai/nyai*] and teachers of religious subjects) in three locations on Java (West Java (including Banten), Central Java (including Yogyakarta), and East Java). This geographic limitation is in part due to the high concentration of *pesantrens* and *madrasahs* on the island, further to the fact that the areas are highly Islamized as indicated by their demands for the implementation of the *shari'ah* (Islamic law).

This project of the PPIM is designed to achieve a long-term impact on Indonesian Muslim communities. The objectives are as follows:

Capacity enhancement of Islamic learning communities—those involved in Islamic learning in both *pesantrens* and *madrasahs*—in order to be able to turn them into socio-intellectual agents of strengthening moderate Islam in Indonesia;

Enrichment of the *pesantren* and *madrasah* systems of knowledge and information conform the ideas and thoughts of moderate Islam as well as to contemporary issues such as democracy, civic values, religious pluralism, gender equity, and the currently much debated issue on environmentalism.

Improvement of *pesantren* and *madrasah* management for the sustainable development of these institutions in the future;

Since 2004, PPIM UIN Jakarta (together with PUSKADIABUMA of UIN Yogyakarta) has been involved in implementing the project of Mainstreaming Pesantrens and Madrasahs (MPM) sponsored by Danida. The MPM project is executed in six provinces in Indonesia which, compared to other provinces, have the largest number of *madrasahs* and *pesantrens* (South Sumatera, Banten, West Java, Central Java, East Java, and West Nusa Tenggara). The strategy of the MPM is the employment of in-service training for key persons in *madrasah* and *pesantren* institutions (teachers, students, headmasters, *kyai/nyai*, and stakeholders). They are exposed to a variety of issues connected with tolerance and multiculturalism, as well as to teaching-learning methods, networking, and fundraising requiring participatory approaches and community development. By doing so, PPIM expects

both institutions to gain experience of, and implement values viable to democracy and civil society and at the same time to build an effective and efficient system of management.

Taking into account the magnitude of the problems emanating from the rising tide of Islamism in Indonesia, the programme activities of this proposed project is designed to be more specific, with the intention that they have prolonged and substantial impact in strengthening civic values within the Indonesian Muslim communities. In-service training is the main component of the program activities of this project. This program is to continue the on-going project of mainstreaming *pesantrens* and *madrasahs*, with the exception of target groups, project areas, and training curriculum. In the last project of mainstreaming *pesantrens* and *madrasahs*, five (5) groups were chosen as training targets (*pesantren* leaders [senior *kiyai/nyai*], community leaders, *madrasah* principals, teachers of religious subjects, and student activists).

This in-service training focuses on targets from two (2) groups: *pesantren* leaders [*kiyai/nyai*], and teachers of religious subjects. This [re]-focusing of the targets of the training was made on the basis of experiences gained in the execution of in-service trainings in the on-going project, and indicates that the two groups mentioned proved to be the most effective and influential groups in determining social and religious lives in *pesantrens* and *madrasahs*.

Considering the aforementioned objectives and the expectation of the outcome of the project—that the activities should have prolonged and sustainable impacts within the Indonesian Muslim community—the decision to refocus the in-service training to the two groups mentioned was because of strong reasons and arguments. The target groups (*kyia/nyai* and teachers of religious subjects) are regarded as the potential and strategic group which can contribute to making *pesantrens* and *madrasahs* appear as centres of civic values and ultimately to foster progressive Islam in Indonesia.

As in the previous project, the items under the heading of Islam and civic values packages will form the main substance of the training materials. Changes will be made in terms of emphasizing specific aspects of the packages relevant to the idea of civic values (such as interdisciplinary Islam, gender in Islam, religious pluralism, and civic education). In addition, new items have been included in the curriculum, such as the currently discoursed issues of religious freedom.

One other important aspect of curriculum design is that this in-service training is directed to create a new *pesanten/madrasah* curriculum. This is especially the case with the training for teachers of religious subjects. They are involved in, and responsible for the learning process within *pesantrens* and *madrasahs*. As a result, they hold a strategic role in ensuring that civic values subjects are integrated into the *pesantren* and *madrasah* curriculum design.