

Islamic Morality and Neoliberalism Disappointment in Indonesian Democracy

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Many Indonesians still remember the event at the end of 2016 when hundred thousands of Muslims were gathering in Jakarta to join a movement called as Defending Islam Act.

Some relates this event with mere religious sentiment, but others view that economic issue has also sparked the movement.

“There are two backgrounds of the movement, the first is the economic and social imbalances due to drastic change that stir anxiety among people. The second cause is primordial political sentiment,” said Dr. Inaya Rakhmani on Tuesday (17/7) at Faculty of Social and Political Sciences UGM in the seminar themed *Islamic Morality, Democracy, and Market*, organised by Research, Publication, and Community Service Unit of the Faculty.

Along with Prof. Vedi Hadiz from University of Melbourne and Andi Rachman, Inaya presented their research on this topic.



Inaya explained the act that was triggered by the case involving former Jakarta Governor, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, who was accused of blasphemy, has shown the correspondence between expression of Muslim solidarity and anger towards socio-economic condition. Many people, she said, were disappointed by promises of modernity and development.

Of the survey they conducted in 600 respondents who had joined the act, the researchers found that participants came from various education, occupation, and social backgrounds. Their act described fear of social injustice that was closely related to fear of the future, even among educated Muslim people.

“Most of the respondent have higher education than their parents, but they fear that their education cannot guarantee a good future for them,” said the Universitas Indonesia lecturer.

In this condition, the concept of *Ummah*, she said, became an idea that unifies individuals who were feeling victimised by market injustices. Vedi Hadiz added this union was not permanent due to the diverse and complex compositions of the participants, while they were only united by a conflict that occurred at a time.

“As a matter of fact, the *umamah* consists of people with different interests and backgrounds, but united by conflict. The tension or controversy that becomes their public enemy has unified them,” he said.

Even so, he said, this morality had the potential to provide plenty of resources to be exploited by the elite for political competition, especially ahead of the General Election. This potential, he said, needed to be observed closely.

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