

Islamic Traditionalism in the 2005 South Kalimantan Gubernatorial Pilkada: The Persistence of *Kaum Tua* Teachings?

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Abstract

The paper discusses Islamic traditionalism as an important feature in the electoral campaign in the 2005 South Kalimantan gubernatorial *pilkada*. Islamic traditionalism took many forms; the most obvious one is the presence of *nahdliyyin tuan guru* (Banjarese *ulama* affiliated culturally or structurally with NU) in campaigns. It is also manifested in the exploitation of the high standing of *habib* (descendants of the prophet Muhammad) in order to appeal to traditionalist voters. Not least, it appears in the ‘rituals’ of candidates during the *pilkada*, such as *salat hajat* (a recommended prayer for those in need) and pilgrimages to saints’ tombs. While this appearance of Islamic traditionalism undoubtedly was highly political, I argue this explains something bigger: the persistence of the teachings of *kaum tua*. It is logical for aspiring candidates, in order to improve their popularity, to appeal to the strongest and the most rooted local current of Islam, which happens to be based on *kaum tua* teachings.