

Adab and the Culture of Political Culture

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Adab as politics

Fact: I had never taken *adab* seriously as an analytical category in contemporary Indonesian and Malaysian politics until invited here

Example 1: Jokowi

*Politik kita sekarang merupakan politik yang kurang **beradab**. Mestinya sama orang-orang yang berpendidikan tidak seperti itu.*

Our current politics is an uncivilized politics. Of course educated people are not like this.

Example 2: Anwar Ibrahim

*Mestinya demorasi [sic] apa tidak, jelas tidak. Indonesia jauh lebih **beradab** dari segi itu. Dalam hal politik kita masih lebih dewasa. Bahkan sejak zaman Soeharto, Ali Sadikin tidak pernah dituduh sodomi. Zaman sekarang, hari gini masih menggunakan tuduhan sodomi, rendah betul permainan politiknya. Terus hukum digunakan sebagai alat kekuasaan.*

Democracy, surely not, clearly not. Indonesia is far more civilized from that perspective. In political matters we are still young. In fact, at the time of Soeharto, Ali Sadikin [a prominent critic of the New Order] was never accused of sodomy. These days they still use accusations of sodomy [against me], really the lowest form of political manipulation. So the law is used as an instrument of power.

Example 3: Some Internet Person

*Kedua frase di atas mengandung makna bahwa Politik **beradab** adalah cara-cara berpolitik dengan menjunjung tinggi nilai-nilai dan norma-norma dalam berpolitik, Sedangkan **Beradab** Politik adalah implementasi aktivitas politik yang dilakukan oleh para pelaku politik dengan mengedepankan sikap-sikap dan perilaku yang diharapkan menjadi contoh bagi warga negara.*

The two phrases above connote that *politik beradab* is a way of being political / engaging in politics that respects high values and norms while engaging in politics. *Beradab politik* is the implementation of political activities that are done by political actors while promoting attitudes and behaviors that hopefully can become examples for citizens.

Example 4: Ministry of Communication

*Meneliti kepada komen-komen buruk di media sosial mengenai kematian seseorang terutamanya yang membabitkan tokoh atau pemimpin dari kerajaan menggambarkan bahawa kita sebenarnya sedang berhadapan dengan generasi yang semakin kehilangan **adab**. Apakah pendidikan kita, sama ada pendidikan keluarga mahupun pendidikan formal kehilangan roh tarbiyyahnya yang sebenar?*

Looking at the evil comments on social media regarding deaths, especially those involving government officials, shows that we are faced with a generation that is increasingly losing civility. Is our education at home or in school losing its true educational spirit?

Example 5: Jakob Oetomo

*berpolitik secara **beradab**, sehingga tidak mengorbankan kepentingan rakyat banyak untuk kepentingan politik mereka masing-masing...moral dan etika politik harus ditegakkan oleh para pemimpin Parpol yang sekarang mulai berkampanye dengan cara kurang **berkeadaban**.*

Go about politics in a civilized way, so as not to sacrifice the interests of the people in favor of [politicians'] own interests. Political morals and ethics have to be upheld by those party leaders who now have begun to campaign in uncivilized ways.

Observations

1. Sometimes *adab* is just a word for ethics, civilized-ness, or civilization
2. Seems less Islamic in Indonesia than Malaysia
3. Individual versus collective property

My Argument

Adab's use indicates a culture of political culture

Wait! “American values?” “Asian values?”

-> key distinguishing feature is *adab* as
progressive imagination

“Mental Revolution”

Four Implications of Second Order Political Culture

1. *Adab* as a theory of politics
2. *Adab* as distraction (Mental Revolution)
3. *Adab* as exclusion (Kit Siang and *hudud*)
4. *Adab* as depoliticization