

# ***Saprah Amal*, Democratization and Constitutional Rights The Habitus of Philanthropy Practices for the Banjar Muslim Society in South Kalimantan**

Ali Murtadho Emzaed,\* Kamsi,\*\* Ahmad Bahiej\*\*

\*IAIN Palangka Raya, Indonesia

\*\*Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Email: [ali.murtadha@iain-palangkaraya.ac.id](mailto:ali.murtadha@iain-palangkaraya.ac.id)

**Abstrak:** Partisipasi masyarakat sipil Islam dalam konteks demokratisasi di negara Muslim masih dipersoalkan, tidak terkecuali di Indonesia. Namun demikian, artikel ini memberikan bukti bahwa *saprah amal* sebagai bagian dari praktik filantropi Islam yang unik telah menjadi bagian dari upaya memperkuat demokratisasi di negara Muslim. Teori partisipasi dari Sherry R. Arnstein dipakai untuk menganalisis persoalan ini. Artikel ini menjawab pertanyaan tentang *saprah amal* sebagai *proxy* atas praktik kedermwanaan, cara negosiasi berderma, dan bentuk partisipasinya dalam memperkuat demokrasi di Indonesia. Temuan artikel ini, pertama, *saprah amal* merupakan tradisi unik dalam masyarakat Islam Banjar dan ia menjadi *proxy* atas praktik kedermwanaan yang bersifat *indigenious*. Lelang amal melalui *influencer* dalam tradisi *saprah amal* juga menjadi cara negosiasi yang unik dalam berderma. Kedua, spirit kebersamaan dalam *saprah amal* menjadi modal sosial yang baik untuk mengisi ruang kosong pembangunan yang tidak bisa dilakukan secara cepat oleh negara. Ketiga, praktik dan tradisi *saprah amal* ini merupakan bentuk ekspresi dan partisipasi masyarakat Islam Banjar untuk ikut serta dalam pembangunan bangsa yang keberadaannya diakui dan dijamin oleh konstitusi negara Indonesia.

**Kata kunci:** *saprah amal; filantropi Islam; masyarakat muslim Banjar; hak konstitusional; demokratisasi*

**Abstract:** Islamic civil society participation in democratization among Muslim countries is still being questioned, including in Indonesia. Nevertheless, this article provides evidence concerning the notion that *saprah amal*, as part of Islamic philanthropy practice, has strengthened democratization in Muslim countries based on Sherry R. Arnstein's theory of participation. To answer questions about the role of *saprah amal* as a reasonable proxy for the practice of generosity, how to negotiate charity, and its participation in empowering democracy in Indonesia. These several research findings, firstly, *saprah amal* is a unique tradition from Banjar Islamic

community and becomes a proxy for indigenous generosity practices. Charity auctions through influencers in the *saprah amal* tradition are also a unique way of negotiating in giving. Second, the spirit of togetherness in charity is an excellent social capital to overcome the limit of state developmentalism. Lastly, the practice and tradition of *saprah amal* is a form of expression and participation of the Banjar Islamic society to participate in nation-building, recognized and guaranteed by the Indonesian constitution.

**Keywords:** *saprah amal; Islamic philanthropy; Banjar Islamic community; constitutional right; democratization*

## Introduction

In principle, philanthropic activities can be studied in a comprehensive dimension, both material and immaterial dimensions.<sup>1</sup> The material dimension is assistance in terms of physical materials, financial funds, corporate social responsibility, infaq, zakat, alms, waqf, etc. While the immaterial dimension has non-material properties, for instance, assistance forms like community service and mutual cooperation, thoughts, kindness, good words, and other kinds. Both have a similar end, namely to behave and act charity based on people's heart kindness in a vast context, personal and group.

The nature of giving is essentially virtues and internalized human values.<sup>2</sup> Practically, giving can be religious or non-religious acts.<sup>3</sup> For example, philanthropy with a religious basis can be seen in Islamic philanthropy, like zakat, infaq, alms, and waqf. Basically, the value of Islamic philanthropy as a part of the Islamic religion stems from the Al-Quran and Hadith.<sup>4</sup> Also, this article reveals a new perspective following the discourse of Islamic philanthropy with the socio-anthropological approach based on the civil rights guaranteed in

---

<sup>1</sup> W.F. Ilchman, S.N. Katz, and E.L. Queen, *Phylantropy in The World's Tradition* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 9.

<sup>2</sup> Hilman Latief, *Melayani Umat: Filantropi Islam dan Ideologi Politik Kaum Modernis* (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2017), 29.

<sup>3</sup> Amelia Fauzia, *Faith and State: A History of Islamic Philanthropy in Indonesia* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Yusuf Qaradawi, *Hukum Zakat* (Bandung: Mizan, 1999), p. 153.

the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, especially the democratization of civil society in its national development.

However, the role of Islamic civil society in democratization practice in Muslim countries is still questionable. Ernest Gelner, an anthropologist, does not recognize that Islamic civil society<sup>5</sup> plays a primary role in the issue of democratization in Muslim countries.<sup>6</sup> According to Huntington, the non-participation of Islamic civil society for transformation and democratization in Muslim countries is because of a clash of culture and civilization between the Islamic world and the West. Islamic values are considered incompatible with the pure ideas of Western democratization.<sup>7</sup>

In this context, Fauzia offers a different perspective about the absence of the Islamic civil society to participate in developing democratization in a Muslim country because of the simplification of the practice of philanthropy associated with financing acts of terrorism. However, terrorism acts are a form of anti-civilization (uncivil). Indeed, the history of American philanthropy<sup>8</sup> also was classified as ant-civilization under the American puritan society, paradoxically, the practices of raising social funds ended in the 1830s and transformed into inclusive philanthropy. On the other hand, Fauzia also emphasizes that the practices of Islamic philanthropy with the noble aim of empowering civil society at the same time actually strengthened the democratization in the state.

According to Nakamura, Muhammadiyah, an Islamic mass organization representing Islamic civil society in Indonesia, has also

---

<sup>5</sup> Islamic civil society in this context is conceptualized for a society following Islamic values as its reference source. Its function is as a balancing force in the life of a democratic country. See Robert Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslim and Democratization in Indonesia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 12-13.

<sup>6</sup> Ernest Gelner, *Conditions of Liberty Civil Society and Its Rivals* (England: Pinguin Book, 1994), p. 17-29.

<sup>7</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations: Remaking of The World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), p. 112.

<sup>8</sup> Fauzia, *Faith and State...*, p. 18.

strengthened democratization through various charitable activities.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, Azra claims that Islamic civil society has an immense contribution to the practice of philanthropy through zakat, infaq, alms, and waqf (ZISWAF) activities. This practice had become a tradition since the 7<sup>th</sup> century, when Islam was the first time in the Archipelago until today. The realization of this tradition is in the form of da'wah activities, economics, education, health, orphanages, and other social activities supported by funds from Islamic philanthropy.<sup>10</sup>

Only limited people are concerned about the strong impact of philanthropic activity on social change and place it as a tool<sup>11</sup> to solve community social issues, such as social welfare, public good, poverty alleviation, the realization of social justice, and strengthening democracy. These actions collectively carried out by civil society became a good record when the state's role was weak in carrying out these functions.

*Saprah amal* is considered a unique practice in Islamic philanthropic. Indigenously, it is a habitus form of philanthropy practice for the Islamic community of Banjar, South Kalimantan, to finance the construction of public facilities<sup>12</sup> such as financing the construction of Islamic boarding schools,<sup>13</sup> *musala* or small public

---

<sup>9</sup> Mitsuo Nakamura, *The Crescent Arises over The Banyan Tree, A Study of the Muhammadiyah Movement in a Central Javanese Town, c. 1910-2010* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2012), p. xxv .

<sup>10</sup> Azyumardi Azra, "Negara, Filantropi, dan Independensi Masyarakat Sipil" in Fauzia, *Filantropi Islam: Sejarah dan Kontestasi Masyarakat Sipil dan Negara Indonesia* (Yogyakarta:Gading, 2016), p. ix.

<sup>11</sup> Robert L. Payton and Michael P. Moody, *Understanding Philanthropy: Its Meaning and Mission* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008), p. 10.

<sup>12</sup>Barasihannor, K.H. *Muhammad Zubri Ulama, Pejuang, dan Pendidik: Menelusuri Pemikiran Pendidikan dan Keagamaan*, (Makasar: PPIM UIN Alauddin Makasar, t.t.). See: <http://repositori.uin-alauddin.ac.id/92/1/full.pdf> . Accessed on 18 October 2021.

<sup>13</sup> The construction of the Ar-Raudhah Islamic boarding school in Pasar Senen Amuntai, South Kalimantan, held on 10-13 July 2021, attended by 3 Kiai instructors on different days, KH. Bahran Jamil, KH. Muhammad Ansari, KH. Saderiannor. See "Saprah Amal/Lelang Pon\_Pes Araudhah," *AL ANWAR*

prayer rooms,<sup>14</sup> mosques,<sup>15</sup> and making *gertak* (the small way made from wood in a riverside housing complex) and outhouse for the community.<sup>16</sup>

This article places *saprah amal* traditionally as a philanthropic practice for Banjar's Islamic civil society, studied from a democratization lens and citizens' constitutional rights. Its existence is distinctive because, in substance, it is a practice of infaq and waqf inspired by Islamic teachings.

Literature reviews and findings concerning *saprah amal* as a philanthropic practice are very limited, specially studied from the perspective of democratization and the constitutional rights of citizens. Specifically, Akhmad Dakhoir discusses *saprah amal* in the perspective of Islamic finance titled "Reactualization of The Islamic Social Finance System of *Saprah Amal* in Banjar Community, Indonesia". This paper reviews *Saprah Amal* as a generosity tradition of the Banjar people, which can be actualized in the Islamic economic and financial system.<sup>17</sup> Almost several existing literature discusses Islamic philanthropy related to general issues: from zakat, infaq, alms,

---

AMUNTAI Youtube Channel, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqrangQYGSU>  
Accessed on 18 October 2021.

<sup>14</sup> Musala Development in Sungai Tabuk, South Kalimantan on December 4, 2021. "Tabligh Akbar dan Pencarian Dana\_bersama Habib Musthofa Al-Haddar dan UAS Banjar," *Al Mabruk Media Yoube Channal*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfZm0RThPBM>. Accessed on 16 October 2021.

<sup>15</sup> *Saprah amal* for the construction of a mosque in the village of Rantau Bujur Darat, Sungai Tabukan, North Hulu Sungai, South Kalimantan. See Muhammad Akbar, "Saprah Amal, Tradisi Lelang Tradisional yang masih dipertahankan di HSU: Kue Bolu Bisa Tembus Jutaan Rupiah," *PROKalsel, Kamis 06 April 2017, 16:30 Wib.* <https://kalsel.prokal.co/read/news/8750-saprah-amal-tradisi-lelang-tradisional-yang-masih-dipertahankan-di-hsu> Accessed on 22 November 2021.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Ali Sibram, an academic at IAIN Palangka Raya from South Hulu Sungai Regency, South Kalimantan Province, on February 17, 2022, am (GMT +7). (replaced on November 5 2021).

<sup>17</sup> Ahmad Dakhoir, "Reactualization of The Islamic Social Finance Syatem of *Saprah Amal* in Banjar Community, Indonesia," *Journal of Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues* 21, no. 4 (2018).

and waqf to issues of social justice,<sup>18</sup> poverty and welfare,<sup>19</sup> Islamic economics,<sup>20</sup> Sufism,<sup>21</sup> gender,<sup>22</sup> politics,<sup>23</sup> socio-religious activities,<sup>24</sup> democratization,<sup>25</sup> dan and critical issues regarding the financing of terrorism.<sup>26</sup> However, this article also contributes to strengthening the issue of democratization in Indonesia through the participation of Banjar Islamic civil society in the practice of *saprah amal tradition*, considered unique Islamic philanthropy.

The primary research questions are approached through qualitative research with descriptive critical analysis, especially regarding how *saprah amal* plays the role of charity and mediating generosity acts, negotiating donations, and participating in

---

<sup>18</sup> Samiul Hasan, *Philantropi and Social Justice in Islam :Principles, Prospects and Practices* (Kuala Lumpur: AS Noordeen, 2007). See also Latief, *Melayani Umat: Filantropi Islam dan Ideologi Politik Kaum Modernis*.

<sup>19</sup> Najib Kailani & Martin Slama, “Accelerating Islamic Charities in Indonesia: Zakat, Sedekah and the Immediacy of Social Media,” *Southeast Asia Research* 28, no. 1 (2020), pp. 70–86.

<sup>20</sup> Euis Nurlaelawati, “Zakat and the Concept of Ownership in Islam: Yusuf Qaradawi’s Perspective on Islamic Economics,” *Al-Jami’ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 48, no. 2 (2010), pp. 365–385. See also and Ahmad Dakhoir, “Reactualization of The Islamic Social Finance Syatem of Saprah Amal in Banjar Community, Indonesia,” *Journal of Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues* 21, no. 4 (2018), p. 2-5.

<sup>21</sup> R. D. McChesney, *Waqf in Central Asia: Four Hundred Years in The History of a Muslim Shrine, 1480-1889* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 44-45.

<sup>22</sup> Amelia Fauzia, “Religious Practices: Zakat (Almsgiving): Indonesia,” in *Encyclopedia of Women & Islamic Culture*, General Editor Suad Joseph *BrillOnline Reference Work*. *BrillOnline.com* Accessed on 22 October 2021.

<sup>23</sup> Ali Murtadho Emzaed et.al, “A Politics of Recognition: The Legislation of Zakat Law in a Transition of New Order and Reform Era,” *Ulumuna Journal of Islamic Studies Published by State Islamic University Mataram* 24, no. 2 (2020), pp. 320–347. See also Asep Saepudin Jahar, “The Clash of Muslims and the State: Waqf and Zakat in Post Independence Indonesia,” *Studia Islamika* 13, no. 3 (2006), p. 353-395.

<sup>24</sup> Amelia Fauzia, “Penolong Kesengsaraan Umum: The Charitable Activism of Muhammadiyah during the Colonial Period,” *South East Asia Research* 25, no. 4 (2017), pp. 379–394.

<sup>25</sup> Fauzia, *Faith and State: A History of Islamic Philanthropy in Indonesia*.

<sup>26</sup> Evan F. Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida’s Jihad in Europe: The Afghan-Bosnian Network* (Oxford: Berg, 2004), p. 4.

democratization issues for the sake of the development of the Indonesian nation guaranteed by the constitution.

### ***Saprah Amal* as a Proxy for the Practice of Generosity**

*Saprah amal* is basically an Arabic term, *safarah al-'amal*. The word *safarah* means journey, while *al-'amal* means generosity.<sup>27</sup> Anthropologically speaking, this word is never considered initially by Arabs tradition but originally from the Islamic community of Banjar.<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, historically unknown when and who the first time this word was used precisely.<sup>29</sup>

At least the *saprah amal* tradition can be classified into two meanings. First, *saprah amal* means raising funds through auctions of goods based on the community's generosity, both as buyers and donors, specifically used to finance the construction of public facilities. Fundraising is similar to the terms *infaq*<sup>30</sup> and *waqf*<sup>31</sup> in Islamic philosophical teachings. However, it differs from others in that it is carried out through public auction. Meanwhile, the practice of *infaq* and *waqf* is still used by the Banjar Islamic civil society in the tradition of raising funds directly without going through an auction of goods.<sup>32</sup> *Saprah amal* is commonly presented alongside *tabligh akbar* and *madibin* tradition.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Akhmad Dakhoir, "Reactualization of The Islamic Social Finance Syatem of Saprah Amal in Banjar Community, Indonesia.", p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Taufik, an alumnus of Al-Azhar University who is currently a Lecturer at IAIN Palangka Raya in Palangkaraya, via WhatsApp on November 1, 2021, at 11.03 am (GMT +7).

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Ali Sibram, an academic at IAIN Palangka Raya from South Hulu Sungai Regency, South Kalimantan Province, on November 5, 2021, am (GMT +7). See Muhammad Akbar, "Saprah Amal, Tradisi Lelang Tradisional yang Masih Dipertahankan di HSU: Kue Bolu Bisa Tembus Jutaan Rupiah," *PROKasel*, Kamis 06 April 2017, 16:30 Wib. <https://kasel.prokal.co/read/news/8750-saprah-amal-tradisi-lelang-tradisional-yang-masih-dipertahankan-di-hsu> Accessed on 22 October 2021.

<sup>30</sup> Issuing part of the property for the public interest.

<sup>31</sup> Issuing part of the property or object within a certain period of time with the use for the public interest.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Usman, a South Hulu Sungai (Nagara) Regency community leader who lives in Palangkaraya, via WhatsApp on October 31, 2021, at 3.15 pm.

Usman confirmed a previous statement, one of the leaders of the Banjar diaspora Islamic civil society in Palangkaraya, that this term is closely related to the tradition of Banjar Islamic civil society towards raising *infaq* and *waqf* funds, especially in upstream areas, for example, South Hulu Sungai Regency, North Hulu Sungai Regency, and Central Hulu Sungai Regency, and South Kalimantan Province.<sup>34</sup> It has been practiced across generations for its devout religion as a living law reality for Banjar Islamic society.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, *saprah amal* is implemented at the dialectical level between indigenous culture and Islamic religion.<sup>36</sup> Thus, it is a tradition deeply rooted in the religious Banjar Islamic civil society.<sup>37</sup> Governor of South Kalimantan H. Sahbirin Noor also used this word when attending a charity event to raise funds for the building of Al-Mursyidul Amin Islamic Boarding School Gambut, Banjar Regency. Sahbirin "Saprah charity is excellent because this activity is a social worship also contains positive values, namely the spirit of giving and cooperation."<sup>38</sup> The reasoning is to

---

See also Noname, "Tabligh Akbar & Saprah Amal Ponpes Nurul Musthofa," *Youtube channel MAJTA Nurul Musthofa*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZzf5oirVmk> Accessed on tanggal 27 December 2021.

<sup>33</sup> *Madibin* has the Arabic term *madab*, means praise or advice. *Madibin* is part of the traditional arts of the Banjar people in the form of entertainment with traditional music accompaniment, and uses Banjarese rhymes. See Tajuddin Noor Ganie, "Identitas Puisi Rakyat Berbentuk Pantun Banjar" in *Identitas Puisi Rakyat Etnis Banjar di Kalsel* (Banjarmasin: Penerbit Rumah Pustaka Folklor Banjar, 2006). p. 113.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Usman, a South Hulu Sungai (Nagara) Regency community leader who lives in Palangkaraya, via WhatsApp on October 31, 2021, at 3.15 pm.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Abdullah, a Banjarese from Jejangkit, Barito Kuala, who has settled in Palangka Raya via WhatsApp on November 3, 2021, 10.30 am (GMT +7).

<sup>36</sup> Yusliani Noor, "Islamisasi Banjarmasin," *Jurnal Socius* 2, no. No. 1 (2013).

<sup>37</sup> Kamrani Buseri, "Spiritual Culture of Banjar Sultanate: Historical, Hermeneutic and Educational Approach," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 5, no. No. 3 (2017), p. 303–318.

<sup>38</sup> "Gubernur Terkesan dengan Saprah Amal Ponpes Al Mursyidul Amin," *Baritopost.co.id.*, 14 Oktober 2019 on <https://www.baritopost.co.id/gubernur-terkesan-dengan-saprah-amal-ponpes-al-mursyidul-amin/>. Accessed on 30 September 2021.



attract interest in infaq and waqf from the Banjar Islamic people, besides entertainment value.<sup>39</sup>

Second, *saprah amal* has a meaning of charity shop or *warung amal* as Usman said. The Banjar Islamic civil society initially used the tradition of the charity shop to obtain funding for the mosque's development. This charity shop is open every Friday when conventional stalls are not available. In charity shops, the price of goods sold is higher than the added value in regular shops. The extra value as profits from charity shops are used to develop and fund the mosque,<sup>40</sup> while the basic products value traded in the charity shop remains the seller's property. On another occasion, the charity stall is also part of *saprah amal* event, usually held at night. In contrast, the charity shop has been open from morning until the event's end.<sup>41</sup>

This paper tends to propose the first term, *saprah amal*, as a form of philanthropic activity for the Banjar Muslim community, to finance the construction of public facilities through auctions of goods to the community, which also come from public donations. Giving donations and waqf through auctioning these goods is not directly based on the authentication of Islamic teachings but following tradition with the spirit of shared values of togetherness taught by Islam.<sup>42</sup> Islam gives spirit to its people to donate, generosity, and charity.

In the study of cultural anthropology, there is a relationship between the giver, the recipient, and the religious spirit factor, known as the third party.<sup>43</sup> These relationships result in a Muslim's charitable

---

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Usman, a South Hulu Sungai (Nagara) Regency community leader who lives in Palangkaraya, via WhatsApp on October 31, 2021, at 3.15 pm

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Ali Sibram, an academic at IAIN Palangka Raya from South Hulu Sungai Regency, South Kalimantan Province, on November 5, 2021, am (GMT +7).

<sup>42</sup> Ahmad Dakhoir, "Reactualization of The Islamic Social Finance Syatem of Saprah Amal in Banjar Community, Indonesia," *Journal of Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues* 21, no. 4 (2018), p. 4.

<sup>43</sup> This term was raised in an important topic at a conference in *National University of Singapore (NUS), The Ethics of Religions giving in Asia: Historical and Ethnographic Explorations* on 9-10 October 2014 at the Asia Research Institute.

attitude and hope that life will be a blessing and benefit in the future.  
44

In the context of development, Goran Heyden suggests a strong correlation between civil society and social capital through religious values. The religious spirit has fostered the togetherness values used as social capital in civil society. Social capital refers to returns to normative values and beliefs practiced by civil society in their daily lives. Meanwhile, civil society is conceived as a space for breeding the habitus of religious practice.<sup>45</sup>

The value of togetherness, such as *gotong royong* or mutual cooperation, is valuable social capital. These values are evident in the *saprah amal* tradition; people can participate according to their capabilities. *Saprah amal* will not be realized without the spirit of togetherness among a civil society where the fundraising is done. It is used as a proxy for the Banjar Islamic civil society, for infaq and waqf through the auction of goods. According to Putnam, this philanthropy type can be categorized as philanthropy with the civil society participation on a religious basis that has a binding and exclusive nature strengthening community,<sup>46</sup> especially the Banjar Islamic civil society.

### Charity Negotiation for Banjar Islamic Civil Society in *Saprah Amal*

*Saprah amal* provides a unique charity negotiation space. This uniqueness distinguishes it from infaq and waqf, because it is uncommon in Islamic teachings. The uniqueness of this charity negotiation is demonstrated through the auction of goods to

---

<sup>44</sup> This philanthropic tradition is actually not monopolized by the Muslim community through the religious spirit they believe in, but it also appears in other religions traditions, such as Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and so on. See Latief, *Melayani Umat: Filantropi Islam Dan Ideologi Politik Kaum Modernis*, p. 30-31.

<sup>45</sup> Goran Hyden, "Civil Society, Social Capital and Development: Dissection of a Complex Discourse," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 32, no. 1 (1997), p. 4.

<sup>46</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), p. 437-439.

determine the highest price for the goods bid by the auction participants. In this regard, Usman said that bids on goods auctioned by buyers at high prices were intended solely for charity or *saprah amal*.<sup>47</sup>

In *saprah amal*, some influencers act as auction hosts. This influencer is usually a figure, scholar, official, or artist who is influential in society. The number of these influencers can be one, two, or even more. Practically, they are assisted by several people who are intended to facilitate auction activities, especially assistance related to the mobility of the movement of the goods being auctioned to the bidders. A good influencer can impact the selling value of the items being auctioned. Through this influencer, price negotiations with auction participants on the selling value of the goods are carried out, showing how much the value of the *infaq* or *waqf* is given by the auction participant. For example, when a regent in Balangan Regency, South Kalimantan, became an influencer, he auctioned a sponge cake up to IDR 10 million in a *saprah amal* event held on April 24, 2017, for the construction of the Sairuddawam Mosque.<sup>48</sup>

Likewise, a Guru Yannor, as an influencer, was once able to auction off his turban worth up to IDR 20 million for the interior construction of the Al-Hadi Nur Bahtera Mosque in Parenggean, Sampit, Central Kalimantan, on December 17, 2021.<sup>49</sup> In addition, Rusmini Halil and Wahidah Arsyad from Banjarmasin have also been an influencer in the 1960s in raising funds for the construction of the Great Mosque of Nurul Islam. His expertise in guiding *saprah amal* events increased the price of an item to be auctioned by using a sung

---

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Usman, a South Hulu Sungai (Nagara) Regency community leader who lives in Palangkaraya, via WhatsApp on October 31, 2021, at 3.15 pm.

<sup>48</sup> "Saprah Amal Jadi Tradisi Sekaligus Solusi Pembangunan Tempat Ibadah," *Info Publik*, Jumat, 28 April 2017, 18:58 Wib. <https://infopublik.id/read/200155/saprah-amal-jadi-tradisi-sekaligus-solusi-pembangunan-tempat-ibadah.html?show=> Accessed on 24 October 2021.

<sup>49</sup> "Guru Yanor Kalua Lelang Sendiri Sorbannya, Tembus 20jt," *Iri! Parenggean Youtube Channel*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i-kjAw7xErI> Accessed on 24 October 2021.

song offering.<sup>50</sup> It is proof that the presence of figures/influencers can grow the interest of bidders and increase the selling value of the goods being auctioned, essentially a charitable value being negotiated.

Concerning the uniqueness of the *saprah amal*, Dakhoir noted that there are at least ten unique values:<sup>51</sup>

- 1) Values focus on *saprah amal* aims. *Saprah amal* aims to develop infrastructure for the public interest, for example, establishing worship facilities such as mosques, prayer rooms, madrasas, Islamic boarding schools, traditional markets, and so on.
- 2) The location of the construction of public facilities becomes a place for the implementation of *saprah amal*. It is proof that public facilities will actually be built where *saprah amal* event is taking place.
- 3) *Saprah amal* carried out on the Muslim community, especially the Banjar society, as the dominant tribe.
- 4) Weekends are a very favorite time to do *saprah amal*, both during the day and at night. However, in many cases, it is carried out at night after the Isha prayer.
- 5) The capital used to implement *saprah amal* comes from the Muslim community. The collected proceeds then become part of the capital to finance the construction of a predetermined facility.
- 6) The products traded in *saprah amal* have many variants, such as traditional Banjar food, traditional cakes, handicrafts and traditional clothing, and amethyst agate (*batu akik kecubung*), a famous agate typical of Kalimantan.
- 7) The value of goods price traded in *saprah amal* is higher than the value of the price of goods in the market in general. This price difference is based on the spirit of charity worship.
- 8) *Saprah amal* activities are generally guided by people who have influence in the community, for example from among Islamic teachers or kiai and public government figures.

---

<sup>50</sup> Dakhoir, "Reactualization of The Islamic Social Finance Syatem of Saprah Amal in Banjar Community, Indonesia.", p. 3.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

- 9) *Saprah amal* presents musical accompaniment as a side event that can provide entertainment and can attract the wider community.
- 10) Participants in *saprah amal* event may not only come from the area concerned but sometimes from outside the region. They wish to participate in efforts to raise funds to construct public facilities.

### ***Saprah Amal* : The Role of Banjar Civil Society Participation in the Democratization and Nation Development Process**

Linking individual aid-giving activities to social interests in the context of philanthropy with their relationship<sup>52</sup> with the state is a feature of strengthening civic values.<sup>53</sup> This is evidence of civil society's contribution in the form of social responsibility to the life of the nation and state. Democratization is defined as a process of democratizing civil society in its participation in the running of the state in the political, economic, social, and cultural fields. This process can occur in a country that has made its government system based on democracy. According to Moh Mahfud MD, this choice is based on two things. Firstly, most countries develop democracy as a fundamental basis in the nation and state. Second, democracy provides direction for a space for civil society participation.<sup>54</sup> Thus, the interpretation of democratization is a process that brings space for the development of democracy. Indonesia is one country that chooses democracy as a form of a national government system. The spirit of togetherness contained in *saprah amal* tradition becomes social capital to fill empty spaces, for example, raising social-religious funds to build public facilities independently. This participation is a manifestation of the right of expression protected by the constitution in presenting public facilities, which are actually the state's responsibility. Within this framework, the concept of democratization

---

<sup>52</sup> Ilchman, Katz, and Queen, *Phylantropy in The World's Tradition...*, p. ix.

<sup>53</sup> Lawrence J. Freidman and Mark D. Mac Garvie(Eds.), *Charity, Philantropy, and Civility in American History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 4.

<sup>54</sup> Moh. Mahfud MD, *Hukum Dan Pilar-Pilar Demokrasi* (Yogyakarta: Gema Media, 1999, 25..?)

of Islamic civil society is interpreted. Theoretically, civil society can take at least three forms of public participation towards the state.<sup>55</sup> First, political participation is conceptualized as a form of political community participation channeled through formal institutions, such as the DPR RI, DPRD Level I, and DPRD Level II. Second, social participation is community participation in consolidating the data needed in a development project process. Third, citizen participation is a form of direct community participation to be involved in development by the state. Citizen participation has a dynamic nature, in that the community and the state are the subjects in carrying out national development, for example, participating directly in raising funds to provide public facilities. In the perspective of the participation theory, according to Sherry R. Arnstein, this citizen participation is included in the category of participation with the highest levels (degrees of citizen power), namely citizens who have complete capabilities, both in terms of funding sources and human resources.<sup>56</sup>

Degrees of citizen power as a form of community participation level that has the power to deal with the state, according to Arnstein,

---

<sup>55</sup> Teguh Yuwono, *Manajemen Otonomi Daerah : Membangun Daerah Berdasar Paradigma Baru* (Semarang: Ciyapps Diponegoro University, 2001), p. 16.

<sup>56</sup> According to Arnstein, 8 levels of civil society can involve for their state, namely *manipulation, therapy, informing, consultation, placation, delegated power, and citizen control*. These eight forms of participation are known as *the ladder of citizen participation* with a more straightforward categorization into three significant participation categories: (1) *non participation* or participation manipulated by the state through the approval of citizen leaders); (2) *therapy*, participation determined by the state, and (3) *informing*, namely participation in providing one-way information from the state to citizens without any negotiation. Second, *degrees of tokenism* contain *consultation* (participation in the form of reciprocity between citizens and the state but citizens have no bargaining power) and *placation* (formal participation to quell citizen anger). Third, *degrees of citizen power* which contains *partnership* (participation in the form of partnerships between citizens and the state in a common interest), *delegated power* (participation in the form of granting authority to citizens to plan and implement), and *citizen control* (citizen participation in the form of grants authority to exercise supervision). The forms of participation from the first and second categories as a form of civil society participation to the state are arguably weak and not as strong as the third form of participation. See Sherry R. Arnstein, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 85, no. No.1 (2019): 24–34.

can carry out activities from planning to implementation and complete supervision. Because at this level, civil society places its activities as an effort to participate, cooperate, and have equal partners from the state. Civil society is also mandated to carry out activity planning, implementation, and monitoring at this level. The delegation of authority is carried out responsibly.<sup>57</sup>

In the context of Arnstein's participation theory, social-religious fundraising through *saprah amal* carried out by Banjar Islamic civil society, is participation at the civil society level with the highest power (degrees of citizen power). The strength of the Banjar Islamic civil society, organized by *the saprah amal committee*, has *appropriately planned* to raise socio-religious funds for the construction of public facilities, such as mosques, prayer rooms, Islamic boarding schools, or other public facilities. The committee is given the authority to plan and conduct development with supervision. The committee's responsibility is realized through the availability of promised public facilities, which will also be returned to the community as *infaq* and *waqf* in the future.

In more detail, there are at least three forms of community participation in this *saprah amal* activity. First, as a provider of goods to be auctioned/sold. Second, as an auction participant who will buy donated goods from the community organized by the *saprah amal* committee. The auctioned goods come from the community and purchased by other communities at a higher price, even much higher than the price on the market.<sup>58</sup> Third, the executive committee uses

---

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Abdullah, a Banjarese from Jejangkit, Barito Kuala, who has settled in Palangka Raya via WhatsApp on November 3, 2021, 10.30 am (GMT +7). For example, a sponge cake can reach a value of IDR 5 million and even IDR 10 million. Another example is that a box of cakes auctioned by the number one person in Balangan exceeded the figure of up to IDR 4 million. One basket of langsung fruit can be sold at a price of IDR 1 million, then Lamang cake is sold at IDR 2 million, and many others. See Roly Supriadi, "Saprah Amal: Tradisi Sekaligus Solusi," *Antara*, Accessed on Thursday, 27 April 2017 6:43 am. <https://kalsel.antaranews.com/berita/45446/saprah-amal-tradisi-sekaligus-solusi>. Accessed on 30 September 2021. "Acara Saprah Amal: Dalam beberapa jam, Bupati H. Ansharuddin berhasil kumpulkan dana Rp. 125 juta", in <http://suarabanuanews.com/2020/02/12/acara-saprah-amal-dalam-beberapa-jam->

the funds obtained to build public facilities. For example, the community also became the Langgar Daarussaadah Development Committee in Piahung, South Kalimantan, on November 28, 2021, whose funds came from *saprah amal* activities.<sup>59</sup>

The process of democratization from *saprah amal* shows that this activity not only contributes to the community to nation-building based on socio-religious funds through charity, but the ecosystem from, by, and for the community itself. Like the 16th President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, in a speech Gettysburg in Pennsylvania in 1863, said the essence of democracy is, "...and that government of the people, by the people, for the people...".<sup>60</sup> The essence of nation-building democracy is to make society the epicenter through its participation in development. This form of participation certainly does not take over the responsibility for constructing public facilities, which are the domain of the state.

### **The Legality Aspects of *Saprah Amal* in the Indonesian Constitution**

Article 34, paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia expressly states, "The state shall have an obligation to provide sufficient medical and public service facilities." It implies that the responsibility for providing health care facilities and public services is the duty and responsibility of the state. Nevertheless, the public has the citizen right to participate in the provision of public service facilities as a form of freedom of expression, which is clearly protected by the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Freedom of expression as a constitutional right of civil society to participate in development is enshrined in

---

[bupati-h-anharuddin-berhasil-kumpulkan-dana-rp-125-juta/](#). Accessed on 30 September 2021.

<sup>59</sup> "Juru lelang *saprah amal* malam ke-3 di langgar Darussaadah PIHAUNG (3)," *Idam Las Youtube Chanael*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XN9QQuKIYCg> Accessed on 16 October 2021.



Article 28 of the 1945 Constitution, which states, "freedom of association and assembly, issue of mind with oral and written and so on is stipulated by law. "

The rights of civil society as citizens are recognized and protected by the constitution as human rights. Human rights are not gifts from the state or government but from God since humans are born as non-derogable rights.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, civil society's existence is solid in our country's constitution.

Civil society is a group of people to control and balance the domination of state power, not be authoritarian and corrupt, and carry out its functions, which are always perpendicular to the constitutional path.<sup>62</sup> In the context of democratization, civil society is required to be clean from the intervention of state determination. Therefore, civil society should maintain a distance from state power to avoid hegemony as a counterweight. Efforts to strengthen civic tradition have become necessary for civil society in the hope of being independent, including in raising social funds.<sup>63</sup> In fact, this effort is an alternative that can be conducted by civil society to strengthen the existence of their community (mutual self-help)<sup>64</sup> in front of the state.

Banjar Islamic civil society realizes that the availability of public facilities needed by the community, such as mosques, prayer rooms, langgar, schools, madrasas, religious schools, pesantren facilities, and so on, is not only the responsibility of the state but also their responsibility to participate in the availability of these public

---

<sup>61</sup> Forum Zakat (FOZ), "Ngobrol Santai Soal Pemerintah Mau Jadi Amil, Bareng Fitra Arsil FOZ Forum Zakat," *YouTube*, 20 November 2020, Accessed on 2 Desember 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yruhjnvmhDI>.

<sup>62</sup> Lord Acton (1834-1902) writes to Bishop Creighton that the same moral standards should be applied to all men, political and religious leaders included, especially since "*Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely*" (Kekuasaan cenderung korup, dan kekuasaan absolut merusak secara mutlak), <https://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/214>. Accessed on pada 30 April 2020.

<sup>63</sup> Mitsuo Nakamura, Sharon Sidique, and Omar Farouk Najunid (Eds.), *Islam and Civil Society in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2001).

<sup>64</sup> Latief, *Melayani Umat: Filantropi Islam Dan Ideologi Politik Kaum Modernis*,

facilities.<sup>65</sup> In this case, *saprah amal* must be understood as a small example of local wisdom or local genius that has lived amid the indigenous Banjar tribe in South Kalimantan. This proves that the *saprah amal* tradition has helped strengthen democratization in a Muslim country like Indonesia through philanthropic activities devoted to constructing public facilities as a form of social responsibility to build the nation. It is in line with Article 28C Paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which reads, " Every person shall have the right to improve him/herself through a collective struggle for his/her rights to develop his/her society, nation and state."

Thus, the practice of *saprah amal* does not only have a legal justification but its existence is recognized by the constitution of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia as civil society rights manifestation to participate in the construction of public facilities. Herein lies the relevance of Arnstein's theory of participation which incorporates the form of *saprah amal* participation into degrees of citizen power. On the one hand, the provision of public facilities is the state's responsibility. However, the community is also given the authority based on the right of expression guaranteed by the Constitution as a form of partnership in participating in state development. In other words, the state will be strong when its civil society has the power to be a check and balance and active in nation-building. This synergy can be demonstrated through *saprah amal* activities, which have become a tradition in the Banjar Muslim community.

## Conclusions

*Saprah amal* is a unique tradition that is closely related to the generosity of the Banjar Islamic civil society in South Kalimantan. Its uniqueness occurs because they make charity donations as a proxy for someone's motivation to *infaq* and *waqf*. In addition, its authenticity is also shown through how the Banjar Islamic civil society conducts charity negotiations. The greater added values in goods price

---

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Usman, a South Hulu Sungai (Nagara) Regency community leader who lives in Palangkaraya, via WhatsApp on October 31, 2021, at 3.15 pm.

auctioned by the event guide, in *saprah amal* activities, will not infrequently determine how much community members give the value of generosity.

In the name of togetherness (*gotong royong*) shown in *saprah amal*, the Islamic community of Banjar has been able to raise social-religious funds to finance the construction of public facilities infrastructure. It indirectly also shows that they can symmetrically place themselves on par with national development. In this case, the *saprah amal* tradition has helped fill the empty spaces that the state cannot solve issue quickly. The practice of *saprah amal* becoming a tradition in the Islamic society of Banjar that is in line with Arnstein's theory of participation which incorporates the form of *saprah amal* participation into degrees of citizen power, namely the ability of the Islamic community of Banjar to participate actively and independently in the procurement of public facilities which is essentially the government's responsibility. On the other hand, this *saprah amal* act is also a form of expression of the Banjar Islamic community participating in nation-building guaranteed by the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Thus, the Banjar Islamic civil society has become part of civil society in general, giving its legacy in the process of strengthening democratization in Indonesia.

### Bibliography

- Acton, Lord (1834-1902) writes to Bishop Creighton that the same moral standards should be applied to all men, political and religious leaders included, especially since "*Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely*"( Kekuasaan cenderung korup, dan kekuasaan absolut merusak secara mutlak), <https://oll.libertyfund.org/quote/214>. Diakses pada 30 April 2020.
- Akbar, Muhammad, "Saprah Amal, Tradisi Lelang Tradisional yang Masih Dipertahankan di HSU: Kue Bolu Bisa Tembus Jutaan Rupiah," *Pro Kalsel* , Kamis, 06 April 2017 16:30. <https://kalsel.prokal.co/read/news/8750-saprah-amal-tradisi-lelang-tradisional-yang-masih-dipertahankan-di-hsu> diakses 30 September 2021.
- Arnstein, Sherry R. "A Ladder of Citizen Participation." *Journal of the*

- American Planning Association* 85, no. No.1 (2019): 24–34.
- Buseri, Kamrani. “SPIRITUAL CULTURE OF BANJAR SULTANATE: Historical, Hermeneutic and Educational Approach.” *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 5, no. No. 3 (2017): 303–318.
- Dakhoir, Ahmad. “Reactualization of The Islamic Social Finance Syatem of Saprah Amal in Banjar Community, Indonesia.” *Jlournal of Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues* 21, no. 4 (2018).
- Emzaed, Ali Murtadho, Kamsi Kamsi, and Ali Akhbar Abaib Mas Rabbani Lubis. “The a Politics of Recognition: The Legislation of Zakat Law in a Transition of New Order and Reform Era.” *Ulumuna* 24, no. 2 (December 31, 2020): 320–347. <https://ulumuna.or.id/index.php/ujis/article/view/404>.
- Fauzia, Amelia. *Faith and State: A History of Islamic Philanthropy in Indonesia*. Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013.
- . “Penolong Kesengsaraan Umum: The Charitable Activism of Muhammadiyah during the Colonial Period.” *South East Asia Research* 25, no. 4 (2017): 379–394.
- Freidman, Lawrence J., and Mark D. Mac Garvie(Eds.). *Charity, Philantropy, and Civility in American History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Ganie, Tajuddin Noor. *Identitas Puisi Rakyat Berbentuk Pantun Banjar Dalam Buku Identitas Puisi Rakyat Etnis Banjar Di Kalsel*. Banjarmasin: Penerbit Rumah Pustaka Folklor Banjar, 2006.
- Gelner, Ernest. *Conditions of Liberty Civil Society and Its Rivals*. England: Pinguin Book, 1994.
- Hasan, Samiul. *Philantropi and Social Justice in Islam :Principles, Prospects and Practices*. Kuala Lumpur: AS Noordeen, 2007.
- Hefner, Robert. *Civil Islam: Muslim and Democratization in Indonesia*. Princenton: Princenton University Press, 2000.
- Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilizations: Remaking of The World Order*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997.
- Hyden, Goran. “Civil Society, Social Capital and Development: Dissection of a Complex Discouese.” *Studies in Comparative International Development* 32, no. 1 (1997): 4.
- Ilchman, W.F., S.N. Katz, and E.L. Queen. *Phylantropy in The World’s*

- Tradition*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998.
- Jahar, Asep Saepudin. "The Clash of Muslims and the State: Waqf and Zakat in Post Independence Indonesia." *Studia Islamika* 13, no. 3 (2006).
- Kohlmann, Evan F. *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe: The Afghan-Bosnian Network*. Oxford: Berd, 2004.
- Latief, Hilman. *Melayani Umat: Filantropi Islam Dan Ideologi Politik Kaum Modernis*. Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2017.
- McChesney, R.D. *Waqf in Central Asia: Four Hundred Years in The History of a Muslim Shrine, 1480-1889*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- MD, Moh. Mahfud. *Hukum Dan Pilar-Pilar Demokrasi*. Yogyakarta: Gema Media, 1999.
- Nakamura, Mitsuo. *The Crescent Arises over The Banyan Tree, A Study of the Muhammadiyah Movement in a Central Javanese Town*. Yogyakarta: Gajah Mada University Press, 1983.
- Nakamura, Mitsuo, Sharon Sidique, and Omar Farouk Najunid (Eds.). *Islam and Civil Society in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: ISEAS, 2001.
- Noor, Yusliani. "Islamisasi Banjarmasin." *Jurnal Socius* 2, no. No. 1 (2013).
- Nurlaelawati, Euis. "Zakat and the Concept of Ownership in Islam: Yusuf Qaradawi's Perspective on Islamic Economics." *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 48, no. 2 (2010): 365–385.
- Payton, Robert L., and Michael P. Moody. *Understanding Philanthropy: Its Meaning and Mission*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008.
- Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.
- Qarādawī, Yusuḫ. *Fiqh Al-Zakaḫ*. Beirut: Muassasat Al-Risalah, 1994.
- Slama, Najib Kailani & Martin. "Accelerating Islamic Charities in Indonesia: Zakat, Sedekah and the Immediacy of Social Media." *Southeast Asia Research* 28, no. 1 (2020): 70–86.
- Yuwono, Teguh. *Manajemen Otonomi Daerah: Membangun Daerah Berdasar Paradigma Baru*. Semarang: Clyapps Diponegoro University, 2001.

