



# The Refreshing Paradoxes of Indonesian Political Islam: Considerations on the Islamist Exception

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# **ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES AND INTEGRATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA**

**Edited by  
Ooi Keat Gin and Volker Grabowsky**

## CHAPTER 7

# **The Refreshing Paradoxes of Indonesian Political Islam: Considerations on the Islamist Exception**

Rémy Madinier

Those who are unsettled by the militant excesses of contemporary Islam may find in Indonesia an interesting counterexample to the current quandary in the Middle East. Since the anti-climax that followed the Arab Spring, several Muslim countries seem mired in a destructive conflict between a sectarian version of Islamism and a blinkered form of authoritarianism.<sup>1</sup> The main beneficiaries of this confrontation are local despots looking for Western support and those engaged in a form of terrorism whose only goal is to bring about a return to the original chaos—*jahiliyyah*—that preceded the advent of Islam.<sup>2</sup>

Indonesia, the most populous Muslim country in the world, stands in counterpoint to such volatility. Since 1998, it has undergone a successful transition to democracy during which the political representatives of Islam have managed to find a place for themselves on the political landscape, and this has been a significant factor in defusing the potential tension that the emergence of Islamism might have provoked in the body politic. Nonetheless, reference to Islam in public discourse and on the political stage is omnipresent; it is often expressed in different registers though, and the variety of its manifestations offers a striking rebuttal of the type of essentialism to which both radical Muslims and Western observers are so predisposed.

The debate on political Islam is one that attracts global attention, but it has also remained at an impasse since the Iranian revolution of 1979, and particularly since September 11, 2001. The term “Islamism” has come to take on very definite connotations of radicalism, despite the fact that it

originally denoted any political ideology inspired by Islam, whether or not it was compatible with democracy.<sup>3</sup> In many respects, the understanding of Islam that prevails in the West remains one of the main bastions of Orientalism as defined by Edward Said (1978). However, unlike the Sultanism described by Max Weber or the “oriental despotism” identified by Ernest Renan, both of which referred to an alterity that was both remote and exotic (Carré 1986), the threat posed by this “other” is now at our gates and, as it were, within our walls. As the world has become a smaller place, the associated increase in migratory movements and cultural exchanges have reawakened reciprocal ancestral fears, which would be amusing if it did not contribute to the self-fulfilling prophecy of the clash of civilizations. The specter imagined in Europe of “the great replacement,” which some widely read authors have seized upon, is the alter ego of the “moral panic” which runs through the Muslim world, which is seized by the fear of a Western invasion which, paradoxically, is imagined as both a religious crusade and a cultural perversion by a godless society.<sup>4</sup> In response to the supporters of a narrow-minded Islamism who proclaim that “Islam is the solution” comes the echo declaring that Islam is the main problem in the societies where it is the predominant religion.<sup>5</sup>

As a refreshing alternative to these coherent but mutually perpetuating positions, Indonesia offers us a novel paradox. It shows us that the link between Islam and politics is, thankfully, more complex, by allowing us to point to an obvious conundrum, namely, that while Islam has visibly occupied a greater place in Indonesian society over the past decades, the influence of Muslim parties has simultaneously diminished considerably. While in most Muslim countries, Islamist parties, particularly those affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood, are either in power or constitute the main opposition force, their progress in the world’s largest Muslim country seems to have hit a glass ceiling that limits their political destiny to being a complementary force to secular parties. Confirmed during the last parliamentary elections (April 2014) and presidential elections (July 2014), this limited influence of Indonesian political Islam is quite surprising.

Since colonial times, the political role of Islam in Indonesia has experienced similar evolutions to Egypt, Tunisia, Turkey, or even Iran. Muslim faith in these countries first inspired mobilization and revolt against the progression of the colonial order, then galvanized support for independence (Noer 1978). In Indonesia, as elsewhere, the leaders of the Muslim community had to establish political organizations and cope with competition from secular political parties (Boland 1982; Madinier 2015). In the same way that it did in Egypt, Syria, Tunisia, and Algeria, political Islam in Indonesia fell victim, in the 1960s, to the advent of authoritarian populist regimes that relied on the support of the army (Roy 1994; Hefner 2000). The repression of Islamists led to some of their number becoming radicalized, and consequently, during the 1970s, the term Islamism became synonymous in Indonesia, as elsewhere, with extremism (Feillard and Madinier 2011). The fall of authoritarian regimes and the return to representative democracy, which took place ten years earlier in Indonesia than in the Arab world, constituted a great opportunity for the Islamist cause.

Despite these similar circumstances, Indonesian political parties did not enjoy the same success as the AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, Justice and Development Party) in Turkey, Ennahda in Tunisia, or the Egyptian Freedom and Justice Party (FJP, Hizb Al-Hurriya Wal-'Adala), an Islamist party close to the Muslim Brotherhood. The Prosperous Justice Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, PKS), whose roots are in the Muslim Brotherhood, made an impact on the political landscape in Indonesia, and its organizational strength seemed to pave the way for a prominent position on the political scene. However, it largely failed in its mission of rallying the political forces that identified themselves with Islam.

The situation in Indonesia, one could say, is doubly paradoxical. Islam remains relatively marginalized on the political landscape despite a clear revival of different forms of Islamic worship, and the Muslim Brotherhood has been relatively unsuccessful there, quite unlike other parts of the Muslim world. It is this paradoxical situation that this chapter will attempt to elucidate through a combination of historical, political, and sociological analysis.



## Indonesia's Muslims: More visible in society but more muted politically

### The proliferation of outward signs of devotion

Since the end of the 1960s, and even more so since the 1990s, the country has experienced a significant process of Islamization, which has been widely noted by observers of Indonesian society (Liddle 1996; Van Bruinessen 2013; Ota et al. 2010). Places of worship with their easily recognizable oriental-style chrome-plated onion dome have sprung up across the country, and in the Javanese countryside one can hardly drive more than twenty kilometers without being solicited to participate in the construction of a new mosque. In certain regions such as South Sulawesi, West Sumatra, or Lombok, fair-sized mosques are dotted along the roads, though many of them remain unfinished. They often have a considerable capacity, being able to hold several hundred people, and are rarely more than a kilometer apart, which seems disproportionate given the population density. There has been such a marked increase in calls to prayer and improvised sermons broadcast by the crackling loudspeakers perched on *mushollas* that they have now become an accepted part of the soundscape of urban Indonesia.<sup>6</sup> Attendance at Friday prayer has increased to such an extent that the working day has been modified to fit around it in the country's public and private sectors. During Ramadan, numerous restaurants and food stalls close during the day, while others have their curtains pulled.

Indonesia's Muslim identity is also visible outside the observance of the pillars of Islam. The headscarf or jilbab, which was worn relatively rarely until the 1970s, apart from its traditional regional manifestations (the *kerudung* in Java, for example, which used to cover the hair only partially), is now much more common among younger generations and has become standardized. On a broader level, a consumer market has emerged geared specifically towards Muslims, notably in the food sector, where stocking *halal* products has become a necessity, and in the clothing sector, which has seen a sharp rise in the sale of Arabic-style clothes, sold mainly by the "Islamic corners" which have sprung up in the country's shopping malls (Rudnyckyj 2009;

Fealy 2008). The housing and leisure industries have also become Islamized with the appearance of Islamic housing estates; some of these, such as Bukit az Zikra, host members of the well-to-do Jakartan middle class for religious weekends organized by famous preacher Arifin Ihlam (Njoto-Feillard 2012, 267–72). Major companies have also come under this influence and have readily Islamized their management techniques (Rudnykyj 2010), while in the financial sector there has been an attempt similar to that made in other countries to give financial capitalism a Muslim flavor with Islamic banking (Juoro 2008).

The proliferation of these outward signs of religious identity is clear to anyone who has spent time in Indonesia over the past few decades. It has been accompanied by a more fervent practice of faith which, although it clearly exists, is not as easy to quantify. Indonesians claim to be more devout than they used to be in the various surveys carried out, and although these may not be an objective reflection of people's spiritual lives, at the very least they reveal which answers are considered to be socially acceptable. In the case of Java, it is estimated that during the 1950s and in the early 1960s between 60 to 90 percent of Muslims could be considered *abangan*, that is to say they showed low levels of observance of Islam's five pillars (Ricklefs 2012, 81–85; Boland 1971, 186). The surveys carried out by the PPIM (Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat, Centre for the Study of Islam and Society belonging to the Islamic University of Jakarta) in 2006 and 2008, however, have shown a much greater respect for the obligation to pray five times daily and for the Ramadan fast, with more than 90 percent claiming to perform these religious observances. This enthusiastic adherence to the values and duties of Islam has manifested itself in political public opinion, and several surveys since the beginning of the 1990s have shown that an overwhelming majority of Indonesian Muslims desire certain Koranic dictates to be incorporated into the country's legislation and idealize the prospect of an Islamic state (Feillard and Madinier 2011, 226–28).

In stark contrast to Indonesians' increasingly ostensive religious piety and their stated attachment to the principles and values of an Islamic republic, the electoral results of the parties that claim to represent political Islam have

dropped significantly since the elections in 1955 (which were the only free elections between 1945 and 1998).

### **The decline of political Islam and the lost hopes of the Muslim Brotherhood in Indonesia**

The parliamentary elections of April 9, 2014, confirmed the slow decline of political Islam since the return to democracy (table 7.1). In the four national elections held since the fall of the New Order, Muslim parties have performed comparatively poorly. They received 36.5 percent of the vote in 1999, 37.5 percent in 2004, and 29 percent in 2009. In April 2014, the five parties with a clear Islamic identity (the PKB, PAN, PPP, PKS, and PBB) garnered around 31 percent of the vote.<sup>7</sup> A comparison with the first parliamentary elections of 1955, when political Islam obtained 44 percent of the vote, allows one to measure the decline of this political trend in contemporary Indonesia.

**Table 7.1. Cumulative votes for political Islam (1955–2014)**

Parliamentary elections	Cumulative votes for Islamic parties (%)
1955	44.0
1999	36.5
2004	37.5
2009	29.1
2014	31.0

Among these Islamic parties, the case of the Prosperous Justice Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, PKS) deserves particular attention. It is the sole Indonesian political organization linked to the Muslim Brotherhood movement, and it seemed destined for years to experience a fate similar to the Turkish AKP, with a great number of analysts predicting its rise to power in a short number of years (see for instance Hamayotsu 2011). The PKS was directly inspired by the *al-ikhwan* political parties in the Middle East, where the founders of the party, Hilmi Aminuddin, Segaf Aljufri Salim Abdullah Said Baharmus, and Acep Abdul Syukur, were all educated (Damanik 2002).



Like its Arab counterparts, the PKS was born out of the semi-underground movements devoted to the propagation of the faith (*dakwah*) to which state authoritarianism had confined public expressions of Islam. It was organized according to the concept of the Tarbiyah movement (*tarbiyah* means both education and upbringing in Indonesian) theorized by Hassan al-Banna, the founder in 1928 of the Muslim Brotherhood. Beginning in the mid-1970s, his Indonesian disciples endeavored to accomplish a progressive re-Islamization of the country, starting with the individual and working up through the family and society before finally reaching the government. From Morocco to Indonesia—in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, and Turkey—the Muslim Brotherhood movement was less characterized by a single body of doctrine than a shared project to reach power.

The Indonesian movement inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood spread in the 1980s, specifically targeting the student population, who were often cut off from their original religious roots and were a promising target in terms of future influence. The group of activists that would eventually bring about the creation of the PKS thus took advantage of the marginalization of political Islam by the New Order and of the ban on political activity on campuses in the mid-1970s: religious practice became the sole authorized public activity among students, and so much of the discontent against the regime was crystallized at university mosques.

The PKS movement, initially illegal, took advantage of a much more favorable climate for Islamic militancy, which emerged in early 1990. Faced with growing discontent within the army, General Suharto had at that point made a timely return to religion, and informal groups inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood could now become officially recognized associations. In Jakarta, for example, Nurul Fikri proposed a program for high school students preparing for their university entrance exams, and the Al-Hikmah Islamic boarding school offering Arabic and theology courses soon became the place to be for the future elite of the Tarbiyah movement. The formation of the Khairu Ummah association, responsible for organizing preaching missions throughout the archipelago, gave the movement a national dimension. By the mid-1990s, the Tarbiyah movement was well established on all campuses. Its

excellent organization and the devotion of its members allowed it to easily win majorities in student parliaments (Permata 2008).

When the monetary crisis hit Indonesia in mid-1997, student demonstrations spread nationwide. In March 1998, the country's Tarbiyah groups merged into a powerful organization, the Union of Indonesian Muslim Student Action (Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia, KAMMI). After extensive consultation among its members, KAMMI founded the Justice Party (Partai Keadilan, PK) along the lines of the Muslim Brotherhood movements.

The PK campaigned for a "moral Islamic reform" in relatively uncompromising terms. This reflected its clandestine past and also explained its modest support (1.4 percent) in the 1999 election. Although relatively moderate compared to its counterparts in the Middle East, the PK was perceived to be quite radical on the Indonesian scene because of its frequent invocation of sharia and questioning of Pancasila, the state ideology that gives official recognition to six religions equally. Because it had not reached the minimum threshold of 2 percent to participate in the following election, the PK was then transformed into the PKS, and drew lessons from its electoral defeat by significantly moderating its political message (Tomsa 2012). This pragmatic shift was marked by its official recognition of Pancasila and the abandonment of any immediate claim for an Islamic state applying sharia. Inspired by the Turkish AKP, the newly formed PKS developed an image of solidarity, efficiency, and probity, which allowed the party to attract large parts of the devoutly Muslim middle classes who were benefiting economically from the economic upturn.<sup>8</sup>

During the 2004 election, the PKS obtained 7.3 percent of the vote in the parliamentary elections. Having opportunely rallied behind Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's coalition during the second round of the presidential election, it received three ministerial posts. Confident of being on the road to power, it deliberately chose to hold its 2008 convention on the Hindu island of Bali and officially opened its organization to non-Muslims, even appointing Christian candidates in some areas in preparation for the 2009 elections. But the results of the 2009 vote, marked by the spectacular re-election of President Susilo

Bambang Yudhoyono in the first-round presidential election, were relatively disappointing for the PKS. It only secured 8 percent of the vote, well below the 20 percent announced. However, in the context of political Islam's steep electoral decline, it became the largest Muslim party in the country and a leading member of the governing coalition, with four ministers.

During the following years, most observers predicted that the PKS would rise further on the political landscape. They pointed to its excellent organizational capacity and the devotion of its registered militants, whose number had increased from thirty thousand in 1999 to four hundred thousand in 2004. However, this breakthrough never materialized. The reasons behind the glass ceiling that Indonesian Islamists seem to face are multiple, but the most obvious one is a combination of the splintering of the movement and its inability to transcend the cultural differences of its various components.

### **The schisms within political Islam and its complex family tree**

While the splintering of political Islam into several branches is clear to see, the reasons that explain it can only be found by adopting a broad historical perspective on the evolution of the Indonesian Muslim community. In his impressive trilogy of works on Java, Merle C. Ricklefs successfully highlighted both the incremental and fractious nature of the process of Islamization and the reconciliation of Javanese and Islamic identities at the end of the eighteenth century (Ricklefs 2006). This "mystic synthesis" was composed of three inseparable elements, namely, a strong sense of Islamic identity, observation of the five pillars of Islamic ritual, but also acceptance of the reality of local Javanese spiritual forces. However, from the beginning of the nineteenth century onwards, it was frustrated by a growing polarization of religious life arising from the spread of Muslim reformist ideas across the country. Certain sections of Javanese society reacted against the reformist movement's requirements for Muslims to adopt a more orthodox version of Islam purified of the observances derived from preexisting local religious practices. They therefore distanced themselves from this form of Muslim

identity, which was now harder to reconcile with their Javanese culture (Ricklefs 2007). This rejection took place at various social levels: within village society but also the aristocracy and the newly emerging educated middle class. It led to the polarization of religious life, which brought about the emergence of two distinct groups, the *abangan* and the *santri*; *abangan* refers to Muslim Javanese people who practice a much more syncretic version of Islam than the more orthodox *santri*.<sup>9</sup> In the 1920s, the politicization of these conflicting identities took on a national dimension with the struggle for independence. An opposition developed between, on the one hand, Muslim parties such as the Partai Sarekat Islam initially and then Masyumi and Nahdlatul Ulama, an association of *ulama* formed in 1926 in East Java to defend traditionalist Islamic practices, and, on the other hand, secular parties such as the Partai National Indonesia but especially the Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI). This political rivalry was eventually to boil over into violent conflicts, culminating in the massacres of 1965–66.

The demands made upon Muslims by the reformist movement in the twenties also led to a schism within the *santri* community. Muhamadiyah, the main reformist organization founded in 1912, and Persis, an intransigent reformist movement founded in 1923 in Bandung, desired to rid Indonesian Islam of its “impurities” and return to the fundamentals of the Koran and the Sunna. It was in response to these movements that the traditionalist movement emerged in 1926 in the shape of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). It was attached to the dictates of the Shafi’i schools of jurisprudence (*madhhab*) and very tolerant towards certain traditions that came from Java (for example, the ritual of communal feasts known as *slametan*) and from the Sufi tradition (for example, the repetitive ritual prayer called *zikr* and prayers for the dead known as *tahlilan*) (Feillard 1995). It also represented those in rural society whose status was coming under threat from the emergence of new urban elites.

At the beginning of the 1950s, this opposition within the *santri* community also became a political one. The struggle for independence had brought about a spirit of unity that led to the formation of the hegemonic Masyumi party in 1945, but cracks began to appear in this united front

when disputes between the party leaders, who were products of the Dutch educational system, and the traditional elites caused the latter to leave the party. In 1952, they founded the Nahdlatul Ulama party, which obtained 18 percent of the vote in the 1955 elections. This first split in the party deprived Masyumi, who obtained 20.9 percent, of an overwhelming victory over its secular rivals in the PNI, which won 22 percent of the vote, and in the PKI, which won 16 percent. More importantly, it meant that rather than taking on the role of providing the electorate with an alternative to secular parties, the different Muslim parties took on instead the less ambitious role of providing those secular parties with the Islamic credentials they needed to govern (Feillard and Madinier 1999).

A second split was soon to take place between traditionalists and reformists over the degree of acceptance by the two sides of the constraints of democracy. Some Islamist militias who had fought against the Dutch during the period known as the “Physical Revolution” (a colonial war between 1945 and 1949) refused to abandon their demands of an immediate proclamation of an Islamic state, and continued the struggle in several areas of the country, but this time against the republic’s forces. These insurrections, which were loosely united under the banner of Darul Islam/Negara Islam Indonesia, were not only motivated by religious reasons however. They also reflected the general malaise in these regions, whose populations felt they suffered unfairly from Java’s stronghold over the country’s affairs, the new state’s excessive centralization of power, and its confiscation of natural resources (Van Dijk 1981).

The rebellions had two major consequences for the development of political Islam. The first of these was to confer a religious dimension to the latent conflict between Java and the country’s other regions. The disaffection of the so-called “outer” islands with the capital stemmed from the country’s lopsided economic development, which since the colonial period had favored Java (Kano 2008). Their discontent was stoked up further at independence by the young republic’s marked tendency towards Jacobin centralization following the failure of a federal system that the Dutch had tried to impose. Most of the power as well as control of the country’s resources were centered

in the capital, a system that continued to benefit Java greatly. The fact that a “belief in a unique God,” which was a noticeable feature of Javanese spirituality, was enshrined as the first of the five principles that constituted the country’s official ideology—Pancasila—was perceived as another sign of this domination by regions such as North Sumatra, West Kalimantan, and South Sulawesi, which had a strong Muslim identity. Moreover, it was in these regions that Masyumi recorded its best electoral results, which meant that the party was to become the natural mouthpiece for the “outer islands.” The crisis that shook the country at the end of the 1950s, then, was a combination of political, institutional, economic, military, and social factors.<sup>10</sup> Its religious dimension was only one aspect of these uprisings, but it meant that Islam was to become a perennial means of mobilizing and expressing insurrectionary desires.<sup>11</sup>

The second major consequence of these rebellions was to keep an intransigent branch of Islamism on the margins of its more mainstream version, which was an active participant in the parliamentary process. The uncompromising wing of Islamism justified the possibility of resorting to physical force for the sake of the necessary construction of an Islamic state. In certain regions, the distinction between Masyumi and Darul Islam had for long been a very blurred one. Kartosuwirjo, for example, was a former senior party member and recruited extensively from among the party’s ranks (Formichi 2012). The quest for a more open and moderate policy conducted by Masyumi’s liberal wing in the early 1950s had led to a split from those who, for various reasons, continued to demand the proclamation of an Islamic state. The governments led by Soekiman and later by Natsir, who were the main leaders of the party’s liberal wing, had pursued the repressive policies towards Darul Islam engaged in by previous administrations. As of 1957, however, the goalposts had been completely moved following the offensive initiated by President Soekarno and his supporters on the system of parliamentary democracy in which Masyumi was a major player. Some members of the party’s liberal branch who sought refuge in Sumatra from the increasingly hostile atmosphere in the capital joined a “Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia” (Pemerintah Revolusioner



Republik Indonesia, PRRI), which led to the banning of Masyumi in 1960. Contrary to all ideological coherence, links ended up being established between the routed members of the PRRI and certain Darul Islam rebellions.

The Sumatran exodus undertaken by Natsir and his followers had given free reign to the conservative wing of the party, embodied, among others, by Kasman Singodimedjo and Isa Anshary (Madinier 2015, 230).<sup>12</sup> For those members, the party's poor performance in the 1955 elections demonstrated the limits of the progressive policies it had pursued. The fiasco of the PRRI and the ensuing campaign of repression succeeded in convincing many activists that their strict respect of democratic rules had weakened the party. It also opened the way for a hardening of the party's stance, which was aggravated further by the advent of the New Order. Despite the fact that they modeled themselves as the heroes of the struggle for democracy and against communism, the Masyumi leaders were banished from political life under Suharto. The army forbade the party from reforming and instructed its former leaders to remain in the shadows and restrict themselves to their religious activities. Their decision to turn to *dakwah* was conducive to these leaders reflecting bitterly on their efforts of the previous decades. Their attempts towards openness and moderation had failed, which indicated that what was urgently needed was a heightening of Muslim awareness along much more intransigent lines (Feillard and Madinier 2011, 29–32).

### **No secular state to rally against**

As in other Muslim countries, the hope of seeing Islam and democracy reconciled failed when faced with the rise of a populist authoritarianism that produced favorable conditions for the radicalization of Islam. The repression suffered by the modernist Muslim movement in Indonesia during the 1970s could, as it did in numerous Middle Eastern countries, have led to the birth of a powerful unified movement capable of providing an alternative to the incumbent regime.

Unlike Muslim Brotherhood organizations in the Middle East, however, their Indonesian counterparts never benefited from the two-bloc logic that

has characterized the political history of Turkey, Egypt, and Tunisia in recent decades. In those countries, post-independence disillusionment led to the seizure of power by coalitions of secularists and security forces who were opposed by malcontents rallying under the banner of Islam. Corruption, repression and growing inequality in these countries allowed a devout middle class to rally around the theme of justice and morality alongside an urban proletariat.

The principal factor that prevented the formation of an Islamist opposition force was the decision by traditionalist Islam to maintain a quietist and legitimist stance. This strategy began in 1952 when Nahdlatul Ulama split from Masyumi in order to ally itself closer to the regime in power, and it continued to be pursued subsequently. Unlike Masyumi, Nahdlatul Ulama was never openly critical of President Soekarno's slide towards authoritarianism. However, it was concerned about the president's overtures towards the Communist Party, and it participated actively in the brutal repression that eradicated the Marxist movement following the coup d'état of September 30, 1965.

After the establishment of the New Order, the traditionalist Nahdlatul Ulama representing the mass of rural Indonesian Islam continued to provide Islamic endorsement for the new regime. From Suharto's point of view, its main role was to limit the impact of his critics, made up mostly of the reformist Muslim organizations (Muhamadiyah and Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia [DDII]), though it did have some symbolic success with the passing of the Marriage Act of 1974, for example.<sup>13</sup>

From the mid-1980s, the rapprochement of Suharto with these reformist organizations in order to overcome the growing criticism of his regime within the army prevented the new devout middle classes and the proletariat from joining forces. As in Malaysia, where Dr. Mahathir Mohamad skillfully co-opted Anwar Ibrahim, the leader of the ABIM (Angkatan Belia Muslimin Malaysia, Islamic Youth Association of Malaysia), a movement inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood, the New Order managed to enlist political Islam into its authoritarian developmentalist project. With the establishment of ICMI (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim se-Indonesia, All-Indonesia Association

of Muslim Intellectuals, founded in 1990), Suharto acquired, at little cost, a new religious endorsement in exchange for a few stipends and a symbolic recognition of the modernizing role of Islam (Hefner 1993). This clever manipulation allowed him to redirect popular Islamic discontent towards targets that were non-strategic for him, namely, the Christian and the Sino-Indonesian minorities.

As a result of this, the Muslim Brotherhood ideology that had begun to develop in Indonesia lost much of its potential as an opposition force. Some of those who supported the Tarbiyah movement chose to keep their distance with the New Order's manipulation of Islam, and they were to form the basis for the foundation of the Justice Party in 1998. Other Islamists saw in the regime's co-optation of Islam a unique opportunity to further their ideas and their careers. Such was the case, for example, of Immadudin Abdurrahmin (Feillard and Madinier 2011, 113–14) and of those who saw themselves as Masyumi's heirs, such as Yusri Izra Mahendra, the founder of Partai Bulan Bintang (PBB, Party of the Crescent Moon and Star). There were also those within the reformist branch of Islam who remained faithful to Masyumi's legacy of openness and attachment to democracy, and refused to either harden their ideological position or to allow themselves to be instrumentalized by the Suharto regime. This third group, which I have called Masyumi's "heirs," in contrast to the "perpetuators" embodied by those within the DDII, remained politically marginalized for a long time (Madinier 2011, 395–98). They followed the example of Nurcholish Madjid and Harun Nasution, preferring to turn their ambitions to the university world, where they held significant influence.

The post-Reformasi political landscape, then, inherited a wide range of political movements, all of them claiming to defend the interests of the Muslim community. Fourteen of them presented candidates at the 1999 elections; however, because of the electoral thresholds imposed subsequently, this number diminished, and during the 2009 and 2014 elections, five parties vied for the political Muslim share of the vote (table 7.2).

**Table 7.2. A comparison of the five Indonesian Muslim parties**

Parties	Origin	Orientation	Total votes (%)
PKS Prosperous Justice Party	Founded in 1998 by the Muslim Brotherhood (Tarbiyah) movement	Ultra-conservative at its foundation in 1998 (PK), then officially more open-minded	2009 : 7.9 2014 : 6.9
PPP Unity and Development Party	Official Islamic party in 1973	Ultra-conservative	2009 : 5.32 2014 : 6.64
PAN National Mandate Party	Founded in 1998 by Amien Rais, president at the time of Muhammadiyah	Represents the progressive and open-minded wing of Islamic reformism	2009 : 6 2014 : 7.5
PKB National Awakening Party	Founded by Abdurahman Wahid, Nahdlatul Ulama's main leader in 1998	Represents traditionalist Islam. Promotes an inclusive interpretation of Islamic doctrine focused on village communities	2009 : 4.9 2014 : 9.2
PBB Crescent Moon and Star Party	Founded in 1998 by Yusril Irzha Mahendra (close to Dewan Dakwah Indonesia). Claims to be Masyumi's heir but has neglected its open-minded dimension	Represents the intransigent wing of Islamic reformism	2009 : 1.8 2014 : 1.5

The Indonesian political landscape reflects, then, both the diversity of Islam's forms of expression and the different branches of its family tree. Unlike what has happened in numerous Muslim countries, no party has managed to rally under its flag all of Indonesia's Islamist sensibilities since Masyumi's heyday between 1945 and 1952; apart from a short-lived coalition to oppose the accession of Megawati as president of Indonesia in 1999 (the so-called *Poros Tengah*, central axis, which enabled Abdurrahman Wahid to come to power), calls for unity among Muslim parties have always gone unheeded.

The Muslim Brotherhood, which has become a major political force in other Muslim countries, has faced strong competition in recent years. To its right, the PKS has faced competition from both the PBB (Party of the

Crescent Moon and Star), which claims the most conservative aspects of Masyumi's legacy, through the DDII and the PPP (United Development Party), the official Muslim party created in 1973 by the New Order, which was now campaigning for the Islamization of law and the imposition of a strict moral code consistent with their literal interpretation of the sources of Islam. On its left, the PKS's efforts to moderate their political message since 2000 has faced two rivals who enjoy much greater legitimacy in this domain: the PAN (National Mandate Party) brings together the progressive elements of the great modernist organization Muhammadiyah (founded in 1912), while the PKB (National Awakening Party) defends the inclusive version of Islam inherited from Abdurrahman Wahid, the leading light of the traditionalist organization Nahdlatul Ulama.

The PKB's successful results in the elections of April 2014 (9.2 percent compared to 4.9 percent in 2009) were very disappointing for the PKS and can be explained by several factors. The first is the renewal of the PKB's relationship with Nahdlatul Ulama, with whom relations had previously become very sour. The chairman of NU, KH Said Agil Siraj, and other leaders within the powerful traditionalist organization, which counts tens of millions of supporters, had been quite distant towards the PKB during the preceding elections, but they supported and authorized the use of their image by the PKB in the 2014 campaign. The absence of the corruption scandals and internal conflicts that had characterized previous elections has also allowed the return of many local influential clerics to the party fold. Central and East Java, traditional bastions of NU, whose voters the PKB had failed to win over in the 2004 election, this time overwhelmingly voted for its candidates. The second element that may have facilitated the mobilization of voters was the skillful use by the party of a few celebrities: Rhoma Irama, a *dangdut* star (a very popular type of music in the Indonesian archipelago), and the rock star Ahmad Dani drew large crowds at rallies. The PAN, which increased its share of the vote from 6 to 7.5 percent, probably benefited also from a renewed link with its "parent organization," Muhammadiyah. Like the PKB it managed to attract Muslim voters disappointed with the corruption of the ruling party.

These ideological differences between parties with a clear Islamic identity is very important when trying to explain the collective failure of these parties. Firstly, because this splintering negates the central thesis of Islamism, namely, that Islam is the unique solution to all the country's woes, Indonesian voters understand that in dealing with political matters there is no unambiguous interpretation of religious texts. Therefore Islamists' proposals lose their sacred character because they clearly appear as being simply human and, as such can be compared with those of other Indonesian parties.

Moreover, after each election the harsh competition that opposes the various parties claiming to represent Islam in their efforts to join government coalitions and to obtain ministerial offices shows that they cannot claim that they have a moral compass that singles them out from other political parties. During the latest elections in 2014, for example, four Islamic parties (PKS, PPP, PBB, and PAN) which initially favored the candidacy of Jokowi—the preferred candidate among their members—finally agreed to rally behind Prabowo, a candidate who symbolized the return to the New Order and its nepotism.

The inability of political Islam in Indonesia to provide a credible alternative to secular parties by building a united front was above all due to political and religious reasons. However, this failure has a sociological dimension that needs to be examined.

## **The discarding of social criticism**

The countries in which Islamism has managed to become a major political force have assembled certain conditions that have provided the framework for a movement capable of capitalizing on the social misery of a large segment of the population. These include the economic marginalization of the traditionally devout classes within society, which are composed of small businesspeople, rural landowners, and small traders, but also the loss of social status suffered by the intellectual professions, such as teachers, engineers, and doctors. Countries such as Egypt, Turkey, Algeria, and Tunisia endured the usurpation of resources by an oligarchical elite associated with a regime



deemed hostile to Islam, and this allowed the underprivileged working class in society to join with a disenchanted middle class under the banner of social justice, one of the ideals embodied by the movements linked to the Muslim Brotherhood.

In Indonesia, political marginalization of Islam in the early 1970s was certainly accompanied by the economic marginalization of a Muslim trading middle class that found it difficult to hold its own against the new alliance formed by high-ranking military officers and Sino-Indonesian conglomerates. At the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, this social category of small businessmen had tried to use the parties of political Islam, particularly Masyumi and to a lesser extent Nadhlatul Ulama, to further their own causes. However, with the arrival of the New Order, they were left without a representative that could enable them to benefit from the liberalization of the country's economy, or at the very least, protect them from its potentially harmful effects (Hadiz and Robison 2012).

This marginalization, however, affected the rural Muslim middle class relatively little. They had been appeased by the eradication of the communist movement, which they had cooperated in, between 1965 and 1966. Through Nadhlatul Ulama they agreed to serve as a religious endorsement for the New Order, and indeed they benefited quite substantially from the new regime's rural development policy, which replaced Soekarno's agrarian reform.

The emergence of new middle classes (plant engineers, middle managers, university teachers, and military officers), which became the main actors of the Islamic revival, did not modify this disposition over the long term. The Suharto regime, as we have already seen, established the ICMI at the end of the 1980s in order to rally their support. Therefore, unlike Algeria, Egypt, Turkey, or even Iran, Islamic conservatives in Indonesia failed to channel the underlying popular resentment in the country against the New Order regime (Hadiz 2011). No Islamic mass movement launched an assault on the secular state, and Islamism in Indonesia never had to endure the repression that would have ensued. Even the extremely violent economic crisis that led to Suharto's downfall in 1998 did not create the conditions allowing the

formation of a wide-ranging union transcending social divisions in the name of religious values.

After 1996, the regime's manipulation of the most radical fringes of Islam (DDII, KISDI, and FPI [Front Pembela Islam, Islamic Defenders Front]) discredited the whole Islamist movement.<sup>14</sup> The new pious middle classes co-opted by the New Order had foregone their role as the providers of social and political critique, and by defending some of the concessions made to Islam by Suharto had brought along in their wake part of the Tarbiyah movement. After the president's fall in May 1998, the Muslim Brotherhood movement was drawn into defending President Habibie, Suharto's former vice president, leaving a powerful student movement dominated by nationalists to benefit politically from the struggle against the regime.

With the foundation of the Justice Party in 1998 and the chaotic early days of the Reformasi, the Muslim Brotherhood movement found itself in a better position to capitalize on the country's economic malaise. The party was very well organized and was the only one to mitigate the shortcomings of a state that was no longer up to the task of governing. It often intervened in the country's underprivileged suburbs and in zones struck by natural disasters. Its remarkable electoral success can be explained largely by its ability to take on social questions and to mobilize volunteer activists, which set it apart from other political parties. Its reputation as an incorruptible party and its moral rectitude pointed to a sense of social justice that the other parties (including other Muslim parties), which had become implicated in corruption scandals, seemed to care so little about. However, both the PK and the PKS lacked the necessary funds to consolidate their electoral success.

This inability to tap into the resources of the country's economic elite reveals another key element that needs to be considered when comparing Indonesia to Turkey, and to a lesser extent to Egypt, namely, the failure of the Islamist movement in Indonesia to gain access to the highest levels of economic power. The alliance between the Sino-Indonesian middle class and the heirs of the New Order's state corporatism has remained largely intact since 1998, prohibiting the emergence of a new entrepreneurial middle class closer to political Islam (Hadiz and Robison 2012). While in Turkey the

alliance between the AKP and powerful Anatolian companies has allowed the party to benefit from strong financial support, the PKS could only count on middle-class employees or small merchants. Once it had gained a place at the cabinet table and adopted the “pragmatism” of the prevailing system of party financing, the PKS failed to develop its entrepreneurial relationships beyond the level of retail traders, who were unable to provide the party with more than a modest financial contribution. The campaign for the 2014 legislative elections cruelly highlighted this hiatus between the party and the world of big business.

When Rusdi Kirana, the founder and owner of Lion Air, the leading low-cost airline company in Indonesia, decided to launch his political career, he chose to do so with the PKB, one of the PKS’s direct rivals. The Sino-Indonesian magnate justified his choice by referring to his admiration for former president Abdurrahman Wahid, who embodied a very inclusive vision of Indonesian Islam. His rivalry with the media mogul Hary Tanoesoebidibjo, who had joined General Wiranto’s Hanura Party some time before, and his desire to use his political influence to secure the opening of new air routes for his company no doubt influenced his decision greatly (Fealy 2014). The financial and symbolic support Rusdi Kirana brought to the PKB emphasizes all the more painfully the inability of the PKS to develop networks of influence within Indonesia’s powerful business class. In recent years, the PKS’s attempts to develop its financial support base have proved to be counterproductive, and they seem to reveal what one could call a process of normalization of corruption.

Among the reasons that allowed Islamists to come to power elsewhere in the Muslim world, the question of corruption has always been at the forefront. It was by exploiting this issue that the PKS enjoyed its first success in a country where the political class is notoriously corrupt. It was precisely because of the image of the party as “clean and responsible” (*Bersih dan Peduli*, to use one of its recent slogans) that it was tipped to play a significant role in Indonesian politics.

Long exemplified for their cleverly staged manifestations of intergity—their refusal of official cars or luxury hotels when they joined the

government—the leaders of the PKS were tainted in the months leading up to the elections by several major corruption scandals. In December 2013, the party chairman, Lutfi Hasan Ishaq, was sentenced to sixteen years in prison for having solicited, in exchange for a large sum of money, the PKS minister for agriculture to obtain an increase in beef import quotas for a company run, ironically, by a Christian. Despite the denials of other PKS leaders, the trial hearings revealed the existence of corrupt practices at the highest levels of the party. Apart from these practices, sadly indicative of the role of money in Indonesian politics, voters discovered with astonishment the impressive lifestyle of some of the party leaders, which seemed inconsistent with their declared incomes and in sharp contrast to the image of honesty and simplicity the party had conveyed for several years.

The involvement of the PKS in these corruption scandals and the exposure of their leaders' luxurious lifestyles has led to a "normalization" of its role in politics and put an end, at least for the moment, to its image as an anti-system party. Its leaders had become part of a clientelistic oligarchy that practiced politics recklessly as a money-making operation without any regard for decency.

The fact that the president of the PKS was convicted of corruption at the same time as Anas Urbaningrum, the head of Partai Demokrat, the ruling president's party, showed the prevalence of the clannish and nepotistic practices that had emerged during the New Order. The same was true also of leaders who had never actually held power during this period. The PKS was left considerably shaken by this transmission of a debased political culture, a culture in which the electoral process was merely the preliminary step in obtaining ministerial portfolios in exchange for parliamentary support. Once in office, the beneficiaries of this system were in a position to reap their rewards through the embezzlement of large amounts of money. Although the party has managed to limit the damage of this by reacting rapidly to it, deep rifts have appeared within the PKS. On one side is a small core of ideologues, such as Abu Ridho, Mashadi, Daud Rasyid, and Yusuf Supendi, who have remained faithful to the intransigent Tarbiyah movement and have become known as the "justice faction," and on the other is the current leadership of

the PKS, which, ironically, has been called the “prosperity faction.”<sup>15</sup> It was the latter, notably Anis Matta, Fachry Hamzah, and Hilmi Aminuddin, who led the move towards more pragmatism and openness in the early 2000s (Tomsa 2012).

The “justice faction” now argues openly for a return to a stricter Islamic ideology. Yusuf Supendi, who was a founding member of the party and vice president of its Sharia Council (Dewan Sharia) until his expulsion from the party in 2010, has widely denounced the accumulation of personal wealth by the main party leaders and the nefarious influence of the president of the Sharia Council, Hilmi Aminuddin, who is considered to be the most influential of its leaders. Another of the party’s founding members, Ustadz Mashadi, has openly called for the dissolution of the PKS and the liquidation of its assets, which, he argues, should be given back to the people along with a humble apology.

The “prosperity faction” have been given a small measure of comfort by the nomination of Anis Matta as the party’s new president and the party’s results in the 2014 elections, in which it did not lose as many seats as expected. However, it is clear to all that the balance between the two wings of the party is an extremely precarious one. It seems impossible to see a way out of the impasse that looms between those who favor a policy that accepts the normalization of corruption and those who are calling for a return to the party’s original intransigent stance. It is a dilemma that Hidayat Nur Wahid, the party’s designated candidate in the 2014 presidential election, would no doubt have had to face had the party managed to obtain a sufficiently high score for its candidate to stand for election. The party’s support for Prabowo Subianto, Suharto’s one-time son-in-law and a symbol of the New Order’s nepotism and authoritarianism, has done nothing to clarify the party’s identity, as its voters, according to opinion polls, were much more drawn to Jokowi’s image of an honest candidate ready to reform the system.

Political Islam in Indonesia has, then, become normalized by the multiplication of parties representing it, and is now just another element of an excessively clientelistic system. More generally speaking, this splintering of political Islam has led to the Islamist project being diluted, which explains

the paradox of Muslim parties' inability to capitalize on the rising tide of devotion in Indonesian society mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

### **The secular parties' usurpation of the Islamic high ground**

Indonesians were no doubt appalled by the violence that was unleashed during the brutal transition from Soekarno's Old Order to Suharto's New Order. It is a part of the country's history that they still cannot face up to and their apprehension led them to stop short of a revolution in 1998, preferring instead a reform. The distinction between "revolution" and "reform" is not merely a semantic one: despite some major upheaval and the increased freedoms enjoyed by Indonesians, the country's political culture remains heavily marked by a habitus inherited from the New Order (Winters 2013). It is striking to note, for example, the absence until recently of a renewal of the country's political and administrative elite. A considerable number of today's political leaders began their careers well before Suharto's fall from power, and indeed in some cases their record under Suharto should disqualify them completely from standing for public office. A good example is retired general Prabowo Subianto, the head of Gerindra (Gerakan Indonesia Raya, Great Indonesia Movement), the ultra-nationalist party that he established, and Suharto's son-in-law. He ran for the presidency unsuccessfully in 2014 and is currently the main opponent to President Jokowi, but remains under the threat of several indictments for war crimes related to his actions in East Timor and the kidnapping and murder of several student activists during the May riots in 1998. Another similar figure is retired general Wiranto, president of the Hanura Party and a member of the current coalition government, who has already come to the attention of the United Nations special investigators for his role in the East Timor massacres of 1999. His indictment has been stalled for the moment, but it may be revived at a future date.

What is perhaps most worrying for the future integrity of Indonesian politics is the behavior of the new generation that has appeared on the political landscape. They have shown an extraordinary aptitude for adopting their elders' clannish and predatory habits, as is testified by the number of



young up-and-coming politicians convicted of corruption. The general mediocrity of those in charge of the *res publica* seems to be the main cause of this predicament. Thirty years of indoctrination by the New Order's education system has left an indelible mark on the population in general and thus, by extension, on the country's elites also. This is all the more obvious when one sees the gulf that separates the current crop of political leaders and the generation that came to prominence during the earlier period of parliamentary democracy between 1945 and 1948 and that were molded intellectually by the Dutch education system and morally by the struggle for national independence. The country's refusal to examine its recent history has prevented the *aggiornamento* necessary to reform public affairs. It has thus been condemned to witness the emergence of a system in which dynastic legitimacy is asserted, as is evinced by the political ambitions shown by the children of former presidents (Megawati and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono).

The ambient mediocrity brought about by various instances of administrative misrule, betrayal of principles, and corruption scandals has contributed to a shameless race to occupy, for political purposes, the religious high ground. The politicians who have tried to usurp Muslim values for their own ends are the very ones who fear moral and religious condemnation of their behavior. If the religious values of justice and integrity had occupied the public consciousness after Suharto's fall in 1998, it could have invigorated Indonesian public life morally, which would have spelled good news for democracy. On the whole, however, this did not happen. Instead, the increase in manifestations of religious devotion by public representatives, which were motivated by a complex mixture of conviction, opportunism, and pusillanimity, led to an Islamization of public norms that was muddled and often nefarious.

This evolution could be seen on several levels. Nationally, it was marked by a certain number of debates, including one on the law against pornography between 2005 and 2008, and another on the possible abrogation of blasphemy as an offense between 2010 and 2011. During these debates, the whole political class, apart from the PDIP, aligned its position with that of the Islamist organizations. Moreover, all parties have now adopted a religious

dimension to their programs, including the PDIP, which has established a specific body to deal with this topic (the Baitul Muslimin, BAMUSI).

Locally, this orchestration of Islamic values has been much more disorderly and far less democratic. Although the 1999 decentralization laws gave local authorities no competence in religious matters, several provincial, regency, and municipal authorities have passed decrees imposing respect for the obligations of Islamic law.<sup>16</sup> Studies carried out on this phenomenon of *perda sharia* (local regulations that are said to be influenced by sharia, such as requiring women to wear the jilbab) have shed light on the process of Islamization of Indonesian law and more broadly on certain aspects of the country's religious revival. Firstly, the increased enthusiasm for Islam in Indonesia has manifested itself mainly through a desire to moralize society, thus echoing the "moral panic" movement mentioned earlier. These "anti-vice regulations" were aimed mainly at prostitution, gambling, and the consumption of alcohol; they sometimes, though not always, corresponded to the dictates of Islam, and they did not always make reference to religious norms. Secondly, these sharia-inspired regulations have contributed significantly to the blurring of boundaries between Muslim parties and secular parties. Locally, most of the *perda sharia* were instigated by secular parties—Golkar (Golongan Karya, Functional Groups), a governmental party formed under the New Order, in particular—or by moderate Muslim parties such as the PKB or PAN rather than by Islamist parties such as the PKS, PBB, or PPP. Although the PKS has campaigned for an Islamization of Indonesian law, it has hardly ever passed regulations of this type in the local authorities where it holds a majority (Bush 2008).

An examination of the geographic distribution of the *perda sharia* along with a chronological study of their adoption allows us to advance an explanation for the involvement of secular parties. The majority of the decrees were adopted in regions where the Darul Islam movement was very active in the 1950s. These regions include West Java, Aceh, South Sulawesi, and South Kalimantan, and although they have a pronounced Muslim identity, this religious dimension is not the only determining element. Darul Islam had developed in regions permeated with a sentiment of dissatisfaction regarding

the tight control over power and resources held by the central government. In contrast to this, the early stages of the Reformasi were characterized by a process of “dejavanization” of Indonesian politics. Where New Order politics were Java-centered and immobile, post-Suharto politics were marked by an anti-Javanese reaction. Consequently, in the regions imbued with a strong anti-Javanese disposition, affirming a religious identity that ran counter to the prevailing status quo in Indonesia constituted, for a large portion of the political class, a means to indicate to voters both their party’s allegiance to Islam and its distinction from the capital. A chronological study of the adoption of the *perda sharia* confirms this hypothesis, as most of the regulations were adopted during the opening years of the country’s decentralization. Once decentralization had been completed and the new disposition of governmental power and natural resources had led to a significant change in the balance of power in favor of the regions, their need to assert their regional identity through religious decrees became less pressing. In addition to that, the strategy of one-upmanship adopted by politicians, namely, those from the secular parties who wished to prove their Islamic credentials, rarely had the desired effect on the ballot box. Indeed since 2005, this type of political maneuver has often been sanctioned by the electorate, and has thus led to its practice being curtailed. Few new regulations based on Islamic law have been passed since 2006, and the existing laws have rarely been enforced. However, regional leaders’ penchant for staging themselves as “good Muslims” by opportunistically adopting decrees still remains. Since 2011, for example, several regional governors have promulgated regulations aimed at banning the Ahmadiyah movement, though they have often done this on the fallacious pretext of protecting it.

## Conclusion

As Merle Ricklefs has brilliantly demonstrated, the “mystic synthesis” adopted in Java around the seventeenth century has been contested via a “santri-abangan” dichotomy that has existed since the end of the nineteenth century (Ricklefs 2007, 2012). The process is still on-going through a

continued Islamization that has taken the form of a greater demand for orthodoxy, which, though overwhelmingly peaceful, has at times become violent. However, the process is limited, for the most part, to the confines of the Muslim community. By accepting the Indonesian nation-state, Islamic organizations have endorsed the defense of a multi-denominational country that includes some religious minorities, such as Hindus, Buddhists, and Confucians, not recognized in the Koran but protected by the state. Consequently, opportunities for Islamic proselytism have been limited: seventy years after independence, Indonesia still has the same proportion of Muslims (88 percent). Thus, it is only at a local level that balances have been modified, which could give a religious turn to various administrative, economic, and social disputes, as during the conflict in the Moluccas in the early 2000s (Wilson 2008).

Islamic revival was restricted to the Muslim community itself through a process of orthodoxification that primarily affects Islamic minorities like Javanese *abangans*, Ahmadis, or Shias (Formichi 2014). This orthodoxification of Indonesian Islam has been encouraged or at least tolerated by the state since colonial times: the first official closing of an Ahmadiyah mosque in Indonesia was by order of the Regent of Batavia in 1936, and the current leniency of the Indonesian authorities towards perpetrators of attacks against these minorities is striking (Menchik 2014). This shows that Indonesian Islamism has succeeded to some extent in imposing a project that had previously been officially abandoned, namely, the Jakarta Charter (June 1945), which provided for “the obligation for adherents of the Muslim faith to carry out the obligations of their religion.” At the same time, however, the growth of a brand of Islamist activism that has partly abandoned the political process has taken its toll on Indonesia’s Muslim parties, which are now in competition with secular parties in the field of religious rigor.

It could be said, then, that Indonesian Islam has developed more along the lines of Western countries than in accordance with Middle Eastern patterns (Boubekeur 2007). The country’s mode of manifesting its attachment to religion is now more cultural than political, including the way in which

people consume religion. Instead of political rallies, people now attend concerts or carefully staged collective prayer meetings, and in many cases wearing Muslim attire seems to have replaced voting for Muslim parties in the polling station. One can interpret this development in several ways. It can be likened to the decline of Catholicism on the political landscape, which began in the 1970s and led to the gradual disappearance in Indonesia and elsewhere of parties claiming to represent Catholics. Reference to Islam on the Indonesian political scene has become widespread: it is no longer the preserve of the parties of political Islam, but is used also within other political traditions. The fact that the expression of Islam has shifted towards the field of culture also reflects no doubt a certain disenchantment with the political sphere. In a globalized world where soft power rules, the political process has lost its appeal, and so, consequently, has political activism, while cultural forms of religious expression have become, in the eyes of the re-Islamized middle class, much more efficient (although they would not put it in those terms). For this middle class their identity as a community no longer comes from elaborating a common norm, which would constitute the ideal of an Islamic state, but simply from recognizing shared identities that make up an Islamic society, whose strict coherence and economic influence ensure their survival. In this respect, it comes more, to subvert the terms used by Max Weber, from disenchantment with politics than from disenchantment with the world (Gauchet 1985).

## Notes

1. The revolutionary wave of protest that touched the entire Arab world beginning in 2010 led to open conflict between Islamists and governmental forces, particularly in Egypt and Syria.
2. On the roots of the jihadi movement, see Kepel (2003). For an analysis of the concomitant process involving the rise of pro-Western authoritarianism and the radicalization of Islamism, see Burgat (2010, 60–65).
3. “The ideological criminalisation of Islamism . . . operates more than ever like an efficient machine for dissolving any opposition or resistance, however legitimate it might be, in a sea of emotion and unreason” (Burgat 2001).

4. “The great replacement” (*le grand remplacement*) is a term coined by the French writer Renaud Camus (2011). It refers to a conspiracy theory according to which the European population in France would be replaced, with the consent of the elites, by a non-European population, originating primarily from black Africa and the Maghreb. One such author is Michel Houellebecq (2015).

5. Islamists who state that Islam is the *solution* are met with the theories of those such as Kedourie (1992), Huntington (1996), or even Lewis (2002), affirming that Islam is the *problem*.

6. A *musholla* is an Islamic prayer room used to perform the five-times-daily Islamic prayer but not the Friday communal prayer, which should be performed at a mosque.

7. PKB (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa, Nation Awakening Party) is an inclusivist moderate Muslim party, close to the NU leader and the president of the republic, Abdurrahman Wahid. PAN (Partai Amanat Nasional, National Mandate Party) has a close affinity to Muhammadiyah. PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, Party of Unity and Development) was founded by the New Order in 1973 as part of the “rationalization of political life” that included all the country’s Muslim parties until the beginning of the 1980s. PBB (Partai Bulan Bintang, Crescent Star Party) has close links with DDII and calls for the implementation of the sharia.

8. Machmudi Nur Ismail, the only PKS minister present in the Abdurrahman Wahid government in 1999, was in charge of the Forestry Ministry and bravely tackled the problem of illegal deforestation, which many political clans were involved in. This led to his removal from the government less than ten months after his appointment.

9. Ricklefs (2012). The terms of the dichotomy between these two groups were coined by a team of American anthropologists at the beginning of the 1950s who showed the difficulty for Javanese in reconciling their indigenous culture with their Muslim identity (Geertz 1960; Jay 1960).

10. One of the main causes of the Darul Islam rebellions had been the refusal by the government to integrate Islamic militias into the national army after the war of independence.



11. This religious dimension came to the fore again after the Reformasi through the phenomenon of *perda sharia*, local unofficial rules inspired by Islamic law, which were adopted by numerous local authorities as a way of defying the Javanese centralism that they denounced. Likewise, it was by derogating from the Constitution and handing over autonomy to Aceh in the area of religion (the regional assembly is allowed to vote the *qanuns* inspired by sharia law) that Abdurrahman Wahid's government was able to quell the secessionist inclinations of this part of North Sumatra (Bush 2008).

12. The Sumatran exodus is called *hijra* by members of Masyumi who fled from Jakarta.

13. Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (Indonesian Society for the Propagation of Islam) was founded in 1967 by the reformist Muslims of Masyumi. DDII is basically a conservative Islamist movement.

14. FPI is a militia or vigilante group founded in 1998.

15. See for instance the interview given by Yusuf Supendi, *Tempo*, February 11, 2013

16. Not all of these regulations have been linked to Islam however. On the island of West Guinea, the Manokrawi regency, which has a Christian majority, adopted a decree to limit the building of mosques and the wearing of the Muslim headscarf. Although these cases were quite isolated, they were of course highlighted by the press and by Muslim organizations.

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