ONE NATION UNDER GOD?

HISTORY, FAITH, AND IDENTITY IN AMERICA INDONESIA∗

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“One nation, one people, one language, one religion?”

Definitely not. The nationalist authors of the Youth Oath of 1928 left religion off their list of things they simultaneously claimed “Indonesia” was, hoped it would be, and pledged to see it become—one country with a single people united by the same Indonesian language.

In 1928 the only plausible candidate for a national religion was Islam. Its adherents formed a vast majority in the Netherlands Indies. They do so today in the colony’s successor—the Republic of Indonesia. According to census data, Muslim predominance stood at 87.5 percent in 1971 and 88.2 percent in 2000, while Christians in those years, respectively, were pegged at 7.4 and 8.9 percent of the population, with even smaller percentages assigned to Hindus (1.9 and 1.8), Buddhists (0.9 and 0.8), and “Others” (1.4 and 0.2).1

Indonesian Islam underwent a resurgence in the late 20th century. Striking in this light is a rarely noted anomaly: From 1971 to 2000, while both Christians and Muslims gained shares, Christians did so more rapidly than Muslims. The census figures are estimates; their precision is misleading. They do nevertheless suggest that Islamization was inward not outward—a gain in quality more than quantity—and that Indonesian Christians, for all the vicissitudes they have experienced, are hardly a vanishing group. Leo Suryadinata and his colleagues, on whose invaluable presentation of these data I rely, believe that in 1971-2000, while the Muslim population was expanding at an average 1.86 percent per year—a rate indistinguishable from the 1.83 annual growth of the Indonesian population as a whole—Indonesian Christians grew 2.48 percent per year.2

∗ I have Theodore Friend and Juwono Sudarsono to thank for especially helpful comments on earlier drafts. Shortcomings that survive are mine alone.
These statistics are essential to understanding why, in 1928, for Indonesian Islamists, upholding a vast-majority faith and installing that faith as a pillar of national identity were such different things. Religion—Islam—was not included among the unities so hopefully announced in the Youth Oath because it was uniquely divisive: normatively exclusive, internally diverse, and, especially to the non-Muslim minority, numerically threatening.

Calling for the Islamization of Indonesia would have forced upon non-Muslims an ugly choice: convert, suffer, or leave. Compared with choosing a religion, speaking a language was far less problematic. Belonging to an ethnic group with its own mother tongue did not preclude being and speaking Indonesian. But you could not be a mainstream Muslim and consider yourself a Catholic, a Protestant, a Hindu, or a Buddhist at the same time. Islamist hostility to apostasy made it difficult to do so even at different points in time: Once a Muslim, always so. Orthodox Islam was and remains normatively exclusive.

That a normatively exclusive religion could be internally diverse only seems paradoxical. Among self-defined Muslims, realities differed from the norm. The main stream was not the sole stream. Most notably, over much of the 20th century, “Javanese religion” asserted and accommodated heterodoxy inside Islam, syncretic borrowings included. But already in 1912 in the central Javanese city of Yogyakarta a mosque official, K. H. Ahmad Dahlan, led the forging of a modernist Muslim organization Muhammadiyah, or Followers of the Prophet Muhammad, precisely to scrape accreted Javanist barnacles off the ship of faith. In 1926, just two years before the Youth Oath was declared, the controversy intensified with the counter-founding of Nahdlatul Ulama—a rurally based Revival of Religious Scholars unwilling to be sidelined by Muhammadiyah’s modernist recourse directly to the Qur’an and Hadith.

Because of this diversity, Islam in Indonesia has resisted reification into a hermetic or even a consistent whole. Reflecting but also reinforcing this multistrandedness was Clifford Geertz’ influential 1960 trisection of The Religion of Java into three variants—orthodox santri, yes, but also abangan and priyayi. In contrast to the seeming homogeneity of Arabized Islam in the Middle East, the Javanese variety became noted for its variegation—decentered, open, theologically laissez faire. Nor was this understanding to be found among Indonesianists alone. Long focused on the Middle East, Bernard Lewis visited Java briefly in 1989 to lecture on Islam to Muslim audiences. Afterwards he remarked: “They were so relaxed!”

Cross-regional impressions aside, few would deny that the salience and character of Indonesian Islam have changed over time, since 1928. A full historical account would chart the waxing and waning of Islamism since precolonial times. Such a narrative would end with an upswing in Islamist imagery, orthodoxy, and militancy dating from the late decades of the 20th century.

If green is the color of Islam, Indonesia’s demography has been verdant. As already noted, “Muslim” is what nearly nine-tenths of Indonesians have told census-takers they are. But those nine-tenths have never formed a monolithic bloc. Aside from the country’s non-Muslims, heterodox Muslims, liberal Muslims, secular Muslims, and merely non- or semi-practicing or otherwise “relaxed” Muslims have also had reason to wonder just how light or deep or dappled their archipelago’s variously Islamic greenery was going to be. As the pattern fluctuated over time between Islam statistiek and Islam fanatiek—between being, respectively, “Muslim” only in
name or “Muslim” in militant word and deed—the sheer bulk of this vast majority appeared more or less numerically threatening to Indonesians anxious lest their body politic turn deeply green enough to grow an intolerantly “Islamic” state.

On a national scale, it never happened. Islamists hoping to translate the numerical predominance of Muslims into a fully Islamized society under an Islamic state repeatedly failed to achieve their aims. In effect, history thwarted demography. More precisely, the moderation of mainstream Muslims and the fears of non-Muslims combined to foil those few hard-line Islamists who wanted the state to impose Islamic law on all Indonesian Muslims. In 2004 the memory of this prolonged and ongoing failure still rankled in the minds of the defeated fringe. And some of the many Indonesians who feared that fringe’s radical agenda were less than fully reassured by its failure. In their anxious eyes, the largest national Muslim society anywhere retained its potential someday to sustain a theocracy—and thereby implement demography’s eventual revenge.

Just how history trumped demography lies beyond my allotted space. A longer essay could explain Islamism’s ups and downs in tandem with changes in society, politics, economics, and technology. Above such facts on the ground, however, in the last half of the 20th century, there were phrases in the air. Notably enduring and contending among these bits of script were seven words and five principles launched in the republic’s founding year, 1945—language directly relevant to the question whether Indonesia could ever become “one nation under Allah.”

The seven words would have empowered the state to enforce Islamic laws for all Muslims. Had Islamist politicians succeeded in their decades-long effort to include this injunction in the Indonesian constitution, the state would have been tasked, in effect, to render a patchwork-pastel Muslim majority more deeply and thoroughly green. In 1945, in the first of a series of defeats for the amendment’s supporters, the drafters of Indonesia’s first constitution failed to include the seven words. The amendment, Sukarno argued, would have split the country as it was being born. The makers of Indonesia’s first national charter chose instead to adorn that document with Sukarno’s paradigmatically nationalist Five Principles, or Pancasila. One of these principles did, however, accommodate the stress on monotheism that is typical of political Islam by including in the new state’s philosophy “Belief in a Supremely Singular God.”

If this injunction was ambiguous then, it remains elastic now. Depending on how it is spun, it can be rendered negligible, eclectic, selected, or Islamist.

Negligible It is reasonable to think that in the daily lives of ordinary Indonesians, Pancasila does not matter much. Ideological debates among elites need not always trigger contending interpretations in society at large. Absent ongoing controversy was to what the monotheistic precept in Pancasila “really” means, it may be solemnly invoked at independence-day celebrations every 17 August and pretty much forgotten for the rest of the year. In a future Indonesia where national identity based on pluralist tolerance has been institutionalized to the point of being taken entirely for granted—a rosy scenario—citizens may not take Pancasila seriously because they no longer need to.

Eclectic: An alternative to treating the religious credo in Pancasila as negligibly symbolic is to assign it the widest possible scope. If the fullest tolerance—the biggest tent—is desired, “Belief in
a Supremely Singular God” can be made to label and shelter almost any creed, including mystical appreciations of the unity of the universe and the argument that all religions are alike and equivalent in praising and sharing the same single deity. On this interpretive map, all religious roads, as it were, lead to Rome. When he floated Pancasila, back in 1945, Sukarno was eclectic in this unitarian sense.\footnote{9}

**Selected:** Equating religions is blasphemous to Islamists. For these believers, only Islam is complete and true, and the Christian Trinity smacks of polytheism. Without narrowing monotheism to faith in Allah alone, the state can name the specific religions that it deems to revere a “Supremely Singular God.” The result is a selection of faiths that have been officially certified as monotheistic, however arbitrary such labeling may be.

Selection summarizes Indonesian experience. Already, in August 1945, just two months after the enunciation of Pancasila by Sukarno, he and other nationalists had appeased Islamist feeling by promoting monotheism from fifth to first place and writing a revised version of the series into the preamble of Indonesia's first constitution. There the pentad was made the basis of the new state. The 1945 constitution has remained continuously in effect since 1959. Recent amendments have not altered the preamble. But the monotheistic principle has not escaped reinterpretation.

Sukarno’s successor as president, Suharto, fully in office from 1968 to 1998, limited the scope of the tenet to belief in one of a Big Five: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, or Buddhism—full stop.\footnote{10} Xx Disallowed, by implication, were syncretism across religions and deviation from one-God orthodoxy within any of the permitted five faiths. While retaining its constitutional status as a leading element of state ideology, monotheism in this five-part sense became as well, in 1985, a legally required credo of Suharto's authoritarian regime.

How on earth (or in heaven) could anyone monotheize a faith so blatantly polytheistic as Hinduism, or one so atheistic as Buddhism? *Raison d'état?* Seeing like a state?\footnote{11} Perhaps so. But one can also see in this cut-to-fit metaphysics a modestly placating gesture toward the most supremely and self-consciously monolithic theism of the lot—orthodox Islam. And that thought segues into a third way of spinning the one-God *sila*.

**Islamist:** However preferable even an implausible accreditation of monotheisms may have been compared with wide-open eclecticism, the Big Five turnstiles through which state-defined “monotheists” could pass were still necessarily unacceptable to Indonesian Muslims committed to the idea that theirs was the sole true religion. Yet allegiance to Pancasila had become mandatory. What to do?

One could, of course, reject Suharto’s dogma and risk the consequences. A few did. But other Islamists opted to do some theological engineering of their own, by Islamizing what had become the first *sila*. And this at least involved a lot less casuistry than did the state’s decapitation of the Hindu hydra, or its recapitation of headless Buddhism. For Pancasila’s first credo in Indonesian—*Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa*—could by changing a few letters be narrowed to an exclusively Islamic statement: *Ketauhidan yang Maha Esa*, meaning “Islamic Belief in Allah—the One and Only Supremely Singular God.” The Big Five shorn of the little four would thus leave only the Big One: Islam.
In this respect, and in retrospect, for all the rhetoric of eclectic tolerance with which Sukarno first conveyed Pancasila in June 1945, its monotheism did open an opportunity for Islamist nationalists, in effect, to amend the 1928 Youth Oath by adding a controversial fourth basis for Indonesian identity: one nation, one people, one language, one religion—Islam. Islamists never dared to propose such an amendment and suffer the backlash that would have ensued. Yet the future possibility of interpreting Ketuhanan as Ketauhidan remains: Islamization not against Pancasila but by means of it.

Suharto’s New Order is gone. Indonesians are freer to criticize Pancasila than they were under his regime. A hard-line Islamist today is more likely to deride and dismiss Pancasila than to bother appropriating it through wordplay. A case in point is Abu Bakar Ba’asyir, the radical who heads the Council of Indonesian Jihadists (Majelis Mujahiddin Indonesia) and has been identified as the spiritual eminence of the reportedly terrorist Islamic Congregation (Jemaah Islamiyah).

Ba’asyir and his few fellow jihadists are greatly outnumbered by mainstream political Muslims who are nonviolent and willing to work within the political system, including voting for parties with more or less Islamist identities and agendas. Generally speaking, in these larger and more moderate circles, Pancasila is not an infidel plot, nor even an unalterably rival design. Even a suspicious Islamist politician knows that the five principles were not wholly discredited by Suharto’s unpopularity and downfall in 1998. Of the 24 parties competing in the national legislative election held on 4 April 2004, 15 were self-identified with Pancasila—triple the five that based themselves on Islam.\(^1\)

If violence wielded against difference is the ultimate expression of intolerance, political Islamists are, by that measure, more tolerant than jihadists.\(^2\) The chance of a militantly Islamist state coming to power by violence in Indonesia is nil. And while they outnumber jihadists, nonviolently political Islamists in Indonesia are a historically diminished minority. Despite Islam’s nine-tenths majority, in the April 2004 voting for the national legislature, only 21 percent of all valid ballots went to one of the five Islam-based parties. The most successful of these was the Unity Development Party, or PPP, with only 8 percent of the vote, down from 11 percent in the legislative election of 1999. Clearly, most Indonesian Muslim voters do not support avowedly Muslim parties.\(^3\)

Islamist support does appear to have increased in April 2004 compared with the legislative election of June 1999. The historical trend has been downward, however. Comparing the results of legislative voting in 2004 and 1955, it would appear that half-century, support for Islamist parties as a proportion of all votes fell roughly in half.\(^4\)

There was little good news for Islamists in the results of Indonesia’s first-ever direct presidential election on 5 July 2004. Of the five candidates for the top office, the one most exclusively associated with Islam was the PPP’s Hamzah Haz, and he drew the fewest votes—just three percent. Another losing candidate with an Islamic background, Amien Rais, won fifteen percent of the vote. But he presented himself and his party as open to all Indonesians. All ten of the candidates, including the five running for vice president, were Muslims. But none advocated an Islamic state. Nine of the ten refrained out of conviction; they did not want a theocratic future for
Indonesia. As for Hamzah Haz, in an ideal world he might have welcomed Islamist rule, but he knew that the Islamic-state project had become a third rail in Indonesian politics.

In view of these conditions, it is tempting to preclude for the republic any Islamist future at all. But if the moderation that still marks most Indonesian Muslims continues to forestall either secularism or fanaticism, another possibility could arise. It could just conceivably be that sometime in this century, a distinctively Indonesian Islam—a moderate, tolerant, vast-majority Islam whose adherents will steadfastly refuse to use their suffrage to elect a divisively Islamic state—will take its place alongside the one nation, the one people, and the one language of 1928 as the one loosely defining religion of the republic.

This is a long-shot possibility. It is by no means a prediction. Nor can I predict the future repercussions of Islamist violence—including jihadist bombings Jakarta in August 2003 and Bali in October 2002, and Muslim-Christian clashes in Maluku and Sulawesi intermittently since 1999. But the lesson that Indonesians appear to have drawn from these cases is not that jihad works, or that it ought to work, or that the country can afford to indulge or ignore major Islamist attacks. It is rather that the costs of such violence are too great to sustain—in fatalities, damage, impoverishment, national embarrassment, and foreign reprehension. For whatever combination of reasons, as of mid-2004 in Indonesia, democracy was not about to usher in an Islamic state.

The risk is not that Indonesian voters will warrant Islamist intolerance, but rather that nonviolent political Islamists may in future elections fail to do well enough in votes and seats to keep them all peaceably within the country’s evolving democratic system.

Much will depend on the balance of overlap and tension between Islamism on the one hand and nationalism on the other—and on developments that Indonesians cannot control. Consider the extreme global downside: What if (and it’s a huge if) Americans are in the early stages of a long and borderless struggle between fanatic partisans of an Islamist jihad and no-less-Manichean wagers of Judeo-Christian-secularist counter-jihad? Then one can imagine Indonesia reverting to a variation on its anti-colonial past.

Other things being equal, the more unanimously Indonesians abhor American policy, including its Zionist tilt, the greater the inducement for Islamists to become nationalist and for nationalists to become Islamist. If colonialism unified its Indonesian opponents in the last century, in this one a lethal conjoining of Americanism with Christianism, Zionism, secularism, liberalism, and unilateralism could foster a new and increasingly Islamist Indonesian nationalism. And this could flourish with or without turning the islands into grounds for an Islamic state.

Some analysts might reply, against this worst-case speculation, that the very idea of Islamist nationalism is oxymoronic, that Islam is resolutely transnational and antinational, that it aims not to reinforce but to dissolve the inter-state borders that now separate Muslim societies. But the millennial and world-girdling dream of a resurrected caliphate that inspires some Islamists is not prophylactic against either the nationalization of Islamism or the Islamization of nationalism. It may be instructive to recall in this context how a comparably global fantasy of Marxism—the eventual withering away of states—failed to keep Communism and nationalism neatly apart during the Cold War.
Nor is American nationalism safe from chiliastic Christianism. If Americans want to understand and respond to the present intersecting of religion and politics in the world, they would do well to pay attention not only to the history of Indonesia and other mainly Muslim societies. Relevant too are the connotations and controversies that have surrounded the bits of civic scripture posted by America’s founding fathers, including the Cold-War-driven self-identification of the United States as one nation, “under God.”

In 2003-2004 an atheist challenged the phrase “under God” in the American pledge of allegiance. This is not conceivable in Indonesia. But the controversy may usefully remind American observers of Indonesia that it is not just in “new nations” that questions of national identity are debated—and that it takes more than a high standard of living to settle them.

As for the Bush administration, reportedly then-Senator and now-Attorney General John Ashcroft had this to say to an audience in 1999 at Bob Jones University, which had just awarded him an honorary degree:

Unique among the nations, America recognized the source of our character as being Godly and eternal, not being civic and temporal. And because we have understood that our source is eternal, America has been different. *We have no king but Jesus.*

An American Pancasila the Pledge of Allegiance is not. Yet the words “under God” are amenable to different American interpretations—negligible, eclectic, selected, or Christianist—already familiar to historians of Indonesia. And the American experience does at least bring to mind a future for religion and the state in Indonesia that is milder than the Armageddon intimated above.

What that alternative future entails, it seems to me, is the valorization of the belief, already widespread among Indonesian Muslims, that neither their piety, their identity, nor their self-confidence depends upon validation, let alone enforcement, by the state. That peaceable future may also involve, contrary to the solidarity with militantly Islamist Arabs that the ongoing Palestinian tragedy feeds in Indonesia, a rising aversion among the islands’ Muslims to attempts to Arabize their religion. The virulence and violence of fiercely Islamist groups, whose leaders are disproportionately of Arab (e.g., Yemeni) descent, has already triggered criticism among more moderate and liberal Indonesian Muslims.

To revisit the future one more time: Between terminal apocalypse and workable accommodation, the latter is far more likely. Yet majority-Muslim Indonesia will not become a nation that is only symbolically “under God”—civically, ceremonially, without sectarian controversy—except to the extent that Muslims themselves feel comfortable about their state and their religion, including respect for their religion by the state. Beyond theology and slogans hung in the air, much will depend on whether the country’s nascent democracy can make concrete progress on a non-religious agenda—less crime, more jobs, less corruption, better health and education—and thereby help weaken credence in state-dictated Islamism as the sole escape from troubled times.

Barring an Indonesian Ataturk or Ayatollah, and assuming some kind of democracy survives: The more secure and less resentful Muslims become, the safer all Indonesians will be from
intolerantly regimist\textsuperscript{21} or state-fostered Islam. Ironically, this seemingly “secular” outcome could eventually prove a boon to faith—a private faith relaxed enough to render harmless the prospect, so fearsome in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, that Indonesia could become “one nation, one people, one language, one religion.”

Although an Islamic state will remain hard to imagine and divisive to implement, that need not be true of an ethically “Islamic” but politically secular civil society—a masyarakat madani whose link to Medina is no more than etymological.\textsuperscript{22} Then again, like other wishfully thinking observers of Indonesian Islam, I did not anticipate the scattered but deadly outbreaks of jihadist violence that have marred the country’s transition from authoritarian rule. Once burned, twice shy.

The fact remains that in recent years Indonesians have experienced three democratic elections—legislative in June 1999 and again in April 2004, presidential in July 2004—that affirmed how truly marginal to the country’s political life extremist Muslims are.

Thrice heartened, once bold—or just bold enough to conclude that although the Youth Oath of 1928 will not be formally amended, one can conjecture with due caution along these lines:

If democracy and a correspondingly civic culture take hold; if Indonesians and their elected leaders make real headway in solving the country’s many pressing problems; and if “Western” and “Muslim” civilizations do not in the meantime collide . . . then the idea of Indonesia as one nation under one vaguely Islamic but mainly inclusive and tolerant God could be conceivable after all.

Having begun with a question, however, I cannot resist ending with one. Is this benign prospect crippled by its ifs—or not? That I leave to readers to decide.

[8 September 2004]
ENDNOTES


4 Quoting from a conversation at his home in Princeton, NJ. Lewis may be considered the doyen of Islamologists writing in English.


6 In mid-2004 a hard-line Islamist journal *Sabili* amply illustrated this resentment. One contributor, e.g., bemoaned the “collective amnesia” of (moderate) Muslims—an “acute sickness” that had prevented them from remembering how the Muslim community had been “shoved into the same hole, time and time again.” It would take patience and a “clever knockout blow” against the enemies of Islam to get out of that hole once and for all—that is, for the Muslim mass to climb up out of its inferior role as a merely “statistical majority” to become an effective “political majority” in Indonesia. (Kamarudin, “Pasar Politik Islam,” *Sabili*, Special Issue: *Islam Kawan atau Lawan* (July 2004), p. 183 [of 182-184].)

7 In Indonesian, the words are: “… dengan kewajiban menjalankan syariat Islam bagi pemeluk-pemeluknya.” “Pemeluk-pemeluknya” means “those who embrace it.” If “it” refers to “Islam” as a religion, the phrase could mean “… with implementing Islamic law obligatory for Muslims,” and that could indeed imply a mandate to the state to require all Muslims to observe Islamic laws whether they agree with them or not. A more plausible translation, however, would take *pemeluk-pemeluknya* to mean those who embrace Islamic law (*syariat Islam*). Can one embrace Islam without embracing Islamic law? The answer is yes in the minds of the many Indonesian Muslims for whom Islam is a personal, ethical, or mystical but not a legalistic faith. Would this translation of the seven words leave these anti-legalist Muslims free from punishment by official enforcers of Islamic law? Arguably, yes. The seven words never having been enacted since the constitution was first adopted, this benign understanding of their consequences has never arisen. In the unlikely future event of the words’ inclusion in the constitution, one might see a burgeoning of anti-legalist—Sufi?—Islam among Muslims eager to escape their reach. The benign meaning would, in any event, outrage orthodox Muslims unable to countenance the separation of Islam from Islamic law. It is probably the fear of triggering such rage that has kept out of public discourse the grammatically more accurate interpretation of the seven words.
A typical rendering of the Indonesian phrase into English follows the example of Azyumardi Azra in a recent paper—“Belief in One Supreme God,” or words to that same effect. (Azra, “Religion, Nation, and Society: Modern Dynamics in Indonesia,” April 2004, p. 1.) This amounts to treating, in the original Indonesian, Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa, the Sanskritic terms Maha and Esa as separate adjectives—in turn, “Supreme” and “One.” But Maha could be understood by many Indonesians who encounter or recite the phrase as an adverb that intensifies Esa, making God “Supremely One” or “Supremely Singular.” This phrasing is consistent with my understanding of the adverbial usage of maha in compound expressions such as maha kuasa, which I believe means not “supreme and powerful“ but “omnipotent,” or maha besar, which I take to convey not “supreme and big” but “huge.” In any event, to the extent that the monotheism of Pancasila is being either downplayed or stressed, one ought to prefer, respectively, Azyumardi’s translation or mine.


Though mainly eclectic, Sukarno was not consistently so. In 1965 he bowed to selectivity by according official recognition to a Big Six: the above-mentioned five plus Confucianism. Nor was Suharto, himself something of a Javanist, always selective. But in 1979 his cabinet decertified Confucianism, leaving the Big Five.


Calculated from “Election 2004: The Old, the New and the Not So New—An Overview of the 24 Political Parties Competing in the 2004 General Elections,” Van Zorge Report on Indonesia, 6: 2-3 (9 March 2004), pp. 5-25, where the remaining four parties are listed as committed to Nationalism-Socialism (2), Marhaenism (1), and Justice, Democracy, and Welfare (1).

Within Islamic discourse, I mean by “jihadist” a person or persons advocating or engaged in violence in pursuit of what the Prophet Muhammad is said to have called the “lesser jihad”—jihad asghar—in contrast to the nonviolent tenor of the activities covered by what he is thought to have labeled the “greater jihad”—jihad akbar. Needless to add, even within the Muslim world, let alone without, jihad is an intensely contested concept.

The 21 percent figure was calculated from official data in Komisi Pemilihan Umum (KPU), “Pemilu 2004: Hasil Perhitungan Suara: Rekapitulasi Perolehan Suara Sah untuk DPR-RI,” http://www.kpu.go.id/suara/hasilsuara_dpr_sah.php, including the PPP’s 8 percent. That party’s 1999 figure is from Dwight King, Half-hearted Reform: Electoral Institutions and the Struggle for Democracy in Indonesia (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), p. 78 (Table 4.1).


A case in point is Samuel Huntington’s *Who Are We? The Challenges to America’s National Identity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004) and the critical reviews it received, e.g., in the May-June 2004 *Foreign Affairs*.


In the Indonesian language, *masyarakat madani* is an Islam-tinged rendition of “civil society,” whose secular translation is *masyarakat sipil*. Intriguing in this context is a recent volume, *Indonesia Kita* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2004), by the dean of liberal Muslims in Indonesia, Nurcholish Madjid. Madjid begins by praising the system of rule established by the Prophet Muhammad in Medina in the 7th century as a suitable model for modern Indonesia. But at the end of the book, when he reaches the 21st century, he ignores the Medinan paradigm altogether. Instead he treats his country’s current plight and what to do about it in almost entirely secular terms. For all his early extolling of Medinan rule, Madjid does not see in Islam a practical blueprint for the state. In his eyes, that project would only alienate moderate Muslims and non-Muslims. Islam is instead, for Madjid, an ethical outlook—a call to goodness and tolerance that any and all Indonesians can accept. By implication, as a basis for Indonesian identity, Islam’s political failure is a necessary condition of its moral success.