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Pancasila in Indonesia a "religious laicity" under attack?

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Abstract

Unlike most Muslim-majority countries which, at the time of their independence, had to choose urgently and sometimes painfully between a secularized regime and the adoption of Islam as the state religion, Indonesia is one of the rare cases in which in-depth political debates were held on the relationship between religion and the state. If one were to attempt nonetheless to define the Indonesian approach to the place of religion within the state, one would be tempted to use an oxymoron: "religious laicity." Adopted at independence in 1945, the Indonesian official ideology enshrines as the first of its five principles (Pancasila) the "Belief in One Almighty God" (Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa) as the foundation of the Indonesian nation. This original formula, unprecedented in the history of religious policy of a modern state, is based on both spiritual inventiveness and a keen sense of political pragmatism. Pancasila was inspired by a plurality of spiritual references and founded a religious status quo still in force today in which Indonesia, home to *the* world's largest Muslim population, *gave equal recognition to six religions (Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism), despite large demographic differences. Defended by religious minorities and enshrined by various political regimes since independence, Pancasila is, however, regularly challenged, in various ways, by militant Islam.*

1 Introduction

Adopted at independence in 1945, the Indonesian official ideology enshrines as the first of its five principles (Pancasila) "the Belief in One Almighty God" (*Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa*) as the foundation of the Indonesian nation[1]. This original formula, unprecedented in the history of

[1] "Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa" has been Translated into English in many different ways : "Divine Omnipotence" (Sidjabat 1965: 20) ; "The Being of Supreme Deity" (Kafrawi, 1956) ; "Oneness of God" (Kafrawi, 1956: 2). Until the end of the 80's the most frequent official translation was « Belief in God » (Yayasan Proklamasi: 1978) but, interestingly, « Belief in the One and Only God » seems the new official translation. As was rightly noted by Darmaputera (1988:153), « God » is Allah in Indonesian, a particular God of Islam and Christianity. « Tuhan » is

religious policy of a modern state, is based both on spiritual inventiveness and a keen sense of political pragmatism. Pancasila was inspired by a plurality of spiritual references and founded a religious status quo still in force today in which Indonesia, home to the world's largest Muslim population, gave equal recognition to six religions (Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism and Confucianism), despite large demographic differences[2].

When speaking about Indonesia's approach to religion, it is difficult to do so otherwise than in terms of what it is not. The status quo established at the birth of the state reposes on a delicate balance of forces which is still operative today. This equilibrium was founded on a process of detachment from two antonymic notions – an Islamic state (*Negara Islam*) and a secular state (*Negara Sekular*) – a process which has deep historical roots.

Concerning the detachment from secularism, these roots can be traced back, first and foremost to the Indonesian nationalist movement's desire to emancipate itself from the Dutch colonial legacy which was closely associated with secularism. Although the Dutch term (*secularisme*) was transposed into Indonesian as *sekularisme* it soon acquired such a pejorative connotation that it became common to refer to "religiously neutral" nationalism (*netral agama*) when referring to the political writings of Soekarno, the nation's founding father and the inspiration behind Pancasila (Noer 1973).[3]

The notion of an Islamic state, on the other hand, was to the forefront of the Muslim nationalist movement's claims in the years before independence and was prevalent during the pre-war years. It was subsequently hijacked by *Darul Islam*, a regionalist rebellion which proclaimed an Islamic Indonesian state in 1949 and against which the Indonesian Republic was engaged in a constant struggle until the early 1960s. This rebellion forced a change upon Masyumi, a major political party whose goal was to establish a Muslim democracy and who had used the term *Negara Islam*

« Lord » in English. The prefix « ke-» and the suffix « -an » means an abstract idea or a concept. So the correct way to translate « Ketuhanan » is « Lordship ». The word *Maha* is from Sanskrit, meaning great, abundant, or mighty. *Esa* is also from Sanskrit and it means existence but in Malay and Indonesian it has taken on the meaning of "one". So a more literal translation of "Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa" should be "(belief) in the great one Lordship".

[2] In the 2010 Indonesian census, 87.18% of Indonesians identified themselves as Muslims, (Sunnis comprised more than 99%, Shias 0,5% Ahmadis, 0,2%), 6,96% Protestants, 2,91% Catholics, 1.69% Hindus, 0.72% Buddhists, 0.05% Confucianists, 0.13% other, and 0.38% unstated or not asked.

[3] Jean Baubérot (2014) provided another argument against the use of the term "secular" when he pointed out that it would run the risk of distorting the debate due to its "semantic proximity to the terms secularize and secularization." Secularism seems for some to be the notion associated with secularization, drawn from political ideology. This is the case for many people in Indonesia as shown at the beginning of the 1970's by the very negative reactions to the proposal of *sekularisasi* by the prominent Muslim scholar Nurcholish Madjid. Madjid himself misused the term, since he was only calling on the Muslim community to pursue de-sacralization (*desakralisasi*), that is to say to avoid the sacralization of human institutions. At the time, he faced very harsh criticism. In 2005, a fatwa from the Indonesian Ulema Council condemning secularism showed to what extent using this term was still fraught with risk.

during the independence struggle. Following the *Darul Islam* insurrection, however, it decided to remove references to *Negara Islam* from its manifestoes for fear of there being a confusion between the two.

In an attempt to avoid being confined to one of the categories ordinarily used to define the relations between the political and religious spheres, the Indonesian authorities insisted on pointing out that their country was "neither a secular nor a religious state." ("Bukan negara agama, bukan negara sekuler")[4]. The president of Indonesia from 1999 to 2001, Abdurrahman Wahid, a respected cleric who presided for many years over the fortunes of the main traditionalist Muslim organisation, *Nahdlatul Ulama*, and who had a certain way with words, spoke of a "*negara bukan-bukan*", a "neither-nor state" (Ridwan 2018).

If one were to attempt nonetheless to define the Indonesian approach to the place of religion within the state, one would be tempted to use an oxymoronic term: "religious laicity". The country is most decidedly religious, having placed a divine principle at the core of its foundations containing as it does one of the most religious populations in the world.[5]

As for the term "laicity", it is an accurate reflection of the remarkably ingenious way in which the state has developed its relations with religions. As was the case for France, the state approached the place of religion by setting out very precise rules. The difference between the two countries lies in the fact that where French law-makers favoured a principle of strict separation between the fields of spirituality and governance, their Indonesian counterparts on the other hand wished to fully assume their cross-pollinating relationship and to give it a framework.

By pronouncing the principle of "*Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa*", the nation's founding fathers gave the state the means to elaborate a "dialogic process of localisation of 'world religions' and globalisation of 'local religions'" (Picard and Madinier 2011: xi). Although it is not possible to speak strictly about a separation between the state's main religion and its institutions, one can nonetheless remark that the widespread use of very diverse references allowed the state to distance itself from Islam. The way in which it did so, however, has been and remains the subject of lively debate since independence.

2 The "birth of Pancasila", a subtle blend of diverse spiritual influences

[4] See for examples, the declaration made to this effect by the constitutional court judge, Patrialis Akbar, in 1964 or that in 2018 by Mahfud MD who had been the presiding judge of the same court between 2008 and 2013 and who is now a member of the Presidential working unit for the implementation of Pancasila as the state ideology.

[5] A study by the Pew Foundation in September 2008 of 23 countries showed that 99% of Indonesians consider religion to be important in their lives, with 95% saying it was very important. These results placed Indonesia at the top of the list, far ahead of other Muslim countries such as Jordan, Pakistan, Nigeria, Egypt or Turkey. *The Pew Global Project Attitudes*, September 2008.

Unlike most Muslim-majority countries that had to choose urgently and sometimes painfully at the time of their independence between a secularized regime and the adoption of Islam as the state religion, Indonesia is one of the rare cases in which in-depth political debates were held on the relationship between religion and the state (Boland, 1982). In most Muslim countries, debates on Islam and secularism ended with the victory of one over the other, either with the victory of Islam, such as in Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Malaysia, or the victory of secularism, such as in Egypt, Turkey and Tunisia. In Indonesia, the debates conducted during the last months of the Japanese occupation, over the course of a number of successive forums held between April and August 1945, led to the formulation of an ideology based on compromise, a Middle Path, taking into account the complexity of the country's spiritual legacy and its wide variety of religious and intellectual influences from elsewhere.

If one wants to have an idea of the diversity of references which nourished the collective debate and deliberation that took place between April and August 1945 and led to the adoption of Pancasila, one need only read Soekarno's famous speech of June 1, 1945, later called "the Birth of Pancasila"[6]. In this speech, the founding father of the Republic of Indonesia proposed to adopt five founding principles gathered under the term Pancasila with reference to Mpu Prapanca (Nagarakertagama) and Mpu Tantular (Sutasoma), two great thinkers and poets who lived under the Hindu Kingdom of Majapahit during the reign of Hayam Wuruk (XIV century). He explained that independent Indonesia needed a *Weltanschauung* (in German) or what was called in Dutch a *philosophische grondslag* (philosophical grounds). He acknowledged the influence of Adolph Baars, a Dutch socialist thinker, and of Sun Yat Sen, the founder of the Republic of China (Soekarno had read Sun Yat Sen's work *San Min Chu I* [The Three People's Principles]), he quoted Ernest Renan, the French historian of national identity, and also Mahatma Gandhi (Ismail 1995: 32–35). In the course of his speech, Soekarno laid out "five principles" – *Pancasila* in Sanskrit – as the cornerstones of the new Indonesian state. These five principles were nationalism (*Kebangsaan*), internationalism or humanism (*Perikemanusiaan*), democracy by consensus (*Permyusawaratan*), social prosperity (*Kesejahteraan sosial*) and belief in one God (*Ketuhanan*). The founding father of Indonesia, in his long intellectual journey which led to the « ketuhanan » proposal, also met, and to some extent absorbed, the secularist ideas of Mustafa Kemal Attatürk (1881–1936), the founder of modern Turkey who was responsible for separating religion from the

[6] For a complete (French) translation and analysis of this speech as well as an examination of the extraordinary political destiny of what still remains today the official ideology of the Republic of Indonesia, see Bonneff et *al.*, 1980.

state. But in Soekarno's mind, however, religion and state could be united, and in this he was also influenced by the ideas formulated by modernist Islamic thinkers such as Muhammad Abduh and Jamal al-Din al Afghani, whom he discovered during his stay in Surabaya with H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto—a Muslim intellectual and at that time the leader of Sarekat Islam.

The announcement of the fifth principle, "belief in one God" was greeted with a sigh of relief by the Muslim representatives, as it ruled out the prospect of a completely secular state.[7] Independent Indonesia would, then, as Muhammad Yamin had proposed a few days earlier, be religious (*akan berketuhanan*). However, Soekarno, explaining the nature of religion in the new state, said:

> "every Indonesian wants to be able to worship his faith in his own way. Christians according to the commands of Jesus, Muslims according to the Prophet Mohammad's, the Buddhists according to their Holy Books … It is within this fifth principle, my friends, that all religions which exist in Indonesia at the moment will be able to find their place." .

3 The reasons for the state's detachment from Islam – an old Javanese vision of religion.

Islam, then, was simply referred to in the same vein as the country's other religions. No reference was made to a particular status which Muslims considered themselves entitled to demand given their numerical superiority in the country. In the Soekarnist world-view, Islam was not a source of law, but rather a source of inspiration, a personal matter to be left to each individual's conscience. This proposals, though, ran into the stubborn opposition of Islam's representatives who, from the outset, refused to abandon the possibility of a special position for Islam in the new state. In response to the significant and persistent disagreements between nationalists and Islam's representatives, all the members of the Committee for Preparatory Work for Indonesian Independence (Badan Penjelidik Usaha-Usaha Kemerdekaan Indonesia, BPUKI) who were still present in Jakarta met again to nominate a special committee of nine members who were given the task of drawing up a compromise solution to this thorny problem. It came up this on 22 June in a document which Yamin subsequently called "the Jakarta Charter" (*Piagram Jakarta*). The charter was supposed to be the preamble to the future constitution of an "Indonesian state which is a republic resting upon the people's sovereignty and founded on the belief in God, *with the obligation for adherents of the Islamic faith to abide by Islamic laws*, in accordance with the principle of righteous and just humanity, the unity of Indonesia, and a democracy led by wise guidance through

[7] A few weeks later, the "belief in one God" became the first of *Pancasila's* principles.

consultations, ensuring social justice for the whole Indonesian people."[8]

In the absence of any specific detail on the nature of the duty owed by Muslims – it was unclear if the duty was a legal one or simple a moral one – and given the vagueness surrounding the notion of Islamic laws, the practical implications of these "seven words"[9] for the country's new institutions were entirely dependant on its interpretation and concrete application by those in power.

But in august 1945, with the imminent arrival of Allied troops, it was obvious that Dutch soldiers would soon return to the country with the intention of restoring the Netherlands' colonial authority there. On 17 August 1945, Soekarno and Mohammad Hatta declared independence; on the the same day, the latter, at the request of Admiral Mayeda, received a visit from a Japanese naval officer who alerted him to the violent opposition of the Christian community on the edges of the archipelago to the "seven words" of the Jakarta Charter (Anshary 1983). This threat of secession was raised by Soekarno and Hatta during their meeting with the representatives of Islam in the Constituent Assembly in the early hours of the morning of the 18th. It was, therefore, to ensure national unity that Muslim leaders agreed to sacrifice the demands of their political group. Indonesia was to be founded on a belief in God, but the "seven words" which defined an obligation specific to Muslims were replaced in the preamble and in article 29 by a much more neutral expression concerning the single nature of the divine being, *Ketuhanan yang Maha esa*.

Pancasila is thus an extremely clever blend of Javanese, Muslim, Western, and Oriental influences. This can also be seen in the manner in which Pancasila's first principle was enunciated. To use Sanskrit (*maha esa*) to express a strong tribute to the Muslim *tauwid* is for me the symbol of Indonesian ingenuity, an ingenuity that acknowledges a diversity of influences and refuses to occult any part of the country's history, and by so doing wishes to formulate a common basis for all spiritualities. The *Ketuhanan yang maha esa* principle reflected a deep-rooted religious reality, mainly elaborated in Java and later disseminated to the entire country. The spiritual vision, which "inspired" Soekarno on the day he delivered his famous speech of June 1945, was the product of a complex religious legacy which he elaborated on some years later. He explained that his grandfather had been initiated into Javanese mysticism, his father into Islam and theosophy, while his mother had been brought up surrounded by Buddhism and Hinduism. In addition, during his

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[8] The complete text of the charter can be found in B.J. Boland, *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia*, *op. cit.,* p. 243.

[9] In Indonesian, "*dengan kewadjiban menjalankan sjari'at Islam bagi pemeluk-pemeluknja"* ("*with the obligation for adherents of the Islamic faith to abide by Islamic laws*").

exile in 1934 on the Catholic majority island of Flores, he regularly visited the missionaries there who allowed him access to their library.

Apart from Soekarno's own personal history, the roots for his vision also came from a "religious imaginary" forged in Java during the first decades of the twentieth century. An imaginary which can be linked to Charles Taylor's "social imaginaries" (2004) which, according to the Canadian philosopher, embodied the theory of multiple modernities developed by Shmuel Eisenstadt (2002). Its formulation found its roots in what has been masterfully described by the historian Merle Ricklefs as a 'mystic synthesis' elaborated from the sixteenth century onward between a Hindu-animist substratum and Islam (Ricklefs 2006). This mystic synthesis was based on the increasing affirmation of Islamic identity in Java as well as on a growth in the observance of Islamic rites. It also included, however, the recognition of older local spiritual forces which were invoked both amongst the nobility and the peasant classes. An example of this synthesis can be found in the mystic experience of union with the divine which characterizes pre-Islamic monism and which was revived through Sufism. This inclusive Javanese spirituality had been threatened by the spread of Muslim reformism from the 1880s onwards but responded both by becoming more radical and also by reaching out to other sources of inspiration. From the beginning of the twentieth century, for example, it was enriched with Christian religious elements, which were gradually adopted from the European circles to which they had been confined until then (Ricklefs 2007).

It was the two principalities (*vorstenlanden*) of Sukarta and Yogyakarta, vestiges of the Javanese kingdom of Mataram, that saw the most accomplished form of that remarkable consensus which would give birth to the *Ketuhanan yang maha esa* principle. At the dawn of the 20th century, the two principalities' capitals were the scene of a remarkable hive of intellectual and spiritual creativity. This vibrancy turned them into unlikely laboratories for an alternative form of modern spirituality which strived to keep the demands made on it by Muslim and Western values at arm's length.

The repercussions in Java of the arrival of what one could call, for want of a better word, European modernity (the rapid rise of colonial influence, the development of its administration, the spread of literacy, and a more complex division of labour), had a particular effect in the Javanese principalities. Unlike the case of other South-East Asian colonized territories, the colonial government allowed the former Mataram territories to be the scene of a unique form of religious emulation. Such a development would have been difficult in Malaysia, where the British gave a protected status to Islam, or in the Philippines where the Spanish and the Americans both fostered Christianity, or even in other parts of the Dutch East Indies where the colonial government was wary about the fierce competition that could arise between religions.

Numerous religious communities (Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, Theosophists and mystics) lived side by and thus helped foster the idea that being modern meant being inspired by religious pluralism. The overlapping of religious identities – one could be Muslim and a theosophist, or Christian and an adept of Javanese mysticism – foreshadowed the approach of the future Indonesian state. This could also be seen in the complete rejection of religious exclusivism, which had been established under the authority both of the colonial government and the four ruling families who had been allowed to keep possession of the Mataram kingdom's royal burial place.
There was also an eminently political aspect to the religious consensus established by virtue of the role played by many of the religious organisations in the emergence of the nationalist movement which would eventually spread from Java to the rest of the archipelago. It was this consensus that Soekarno encapsulated ingeniously in his famous speech given on 1 June 1945: Islam constituted an overwhelming majority in the country and should have a special status, but not to the exclusion of other religions. The Muslim religion was recognised a part of a spiritual legacy which included other beliefs. The new Indonesian state's coat of arms reflected this delicate balance, in keeping with the principle of *Ketuhanan yang maha esa.* Pride of place was given to the star representing Islam in the centre of the shield, surrounded by four symbols, each representing one of Pancasila's principles. The eagle Garuda carrying the heraldry, however, was Vishnu's sacred mount, and it recalls, along with the nation's motto (*Bineka tungal Ika*) held in the eagle's claws and written in Sanskrit, both the long-standing and the important place of Hinduism in the country's heritage. Not only did Islam have to adapt itself in such a way as to make it compatible with local traditions and culture, it also, as Soekarno pointed out in his speech, had to ensure that it was consistent with the other principles of Pancasila, in particular that of "democracy by consensus" :

> "If we are truly a Muslim people, let us do our best to ensure that the majority of the seats we are about to create will be filled by representatives of Islam. If the Indonesian population genuinely contains a majority of Muslims, and if Islam is to be a religion that is alive and well in our country, then we, its leaders, must capture the people's imagination so that it sends the greatest number of Muslim representatives possible to Parliament. Let us say that there are one hundred seats in Parliament, well then we must strive to ensure that sixty, seventy, eighty, ninety seats are occupied by Muslim figures. It will go without saying, then, that the laws voted by this assembly will be Muslim laws." (Bonneff et *al.*, 1980).

Muslims still had a duty, a compelling duty even, to assist in the triumph of their religion's values, but these values would be expressed in Parliament. Islamic values were not a given, they had to

be fought for.

4 The political dimension of the state's role in the definition of religion.

This detachment from Islam, which was both in line with the syncretistic state of mind present in Java but also the result of a type of secularisation, went hand in hand with a very precise idea of how religion should be. The state's role in this definition reminds us of what Jean Baubérot (2014) defined as "laicity based on a state's sovereignty", (*laïcité régalienne*). Nonetheless, as the subtle negotiation exposed above showed, this secularisation also included a clear concession made in the direction of monotheistic religions, chief among which was Islam. Article 29 of the Constitution stipulated that "the state will guarantee the freedom of worship, each according to his or her own religion or belief". The freedom of conscience, then, was not provided for and atheism, in accordance with the first principle of Pancasila was, and remains, outlawed in Indonesia. What's more, by distinguishing between religion and belief, the Constitution opened the way for those two categories to be treated differently. The constitution preparation committee stipulated that religion (*agama*) must be understood as a monotheistic religion, while belief (*kepercayaan*) must be seen as based upon this religion (Yamin 1960, vol. III: 801–802).

With the creation of a Ministry of Religions in January 1946, *agama* gradually began to be defined in terms inspired by Islam that is to say monotheistic and possessing holy scripture, a prophet as well as a global character and recognition. Of the religions which went through the sometimes lengthy administrative procedures and political lobbying required to apply for official status, only the religions defined in such terms were allocated a division within the ministry, thus giving them access to the funds, which was the main motivation behind their application in the first place (Azra 1998). By the end of the 1940s, the Protestant and Catholic religions were granted divisions quite readily, though of course theirs was much smaller than that which had been allocated to Islam at the creation of the ministry. For the other major religions, however, divisions were obtained only after they had been forced to jump through an extraordinary number of theological hoops. In 1958, a special division for Hinduism was created and in 1965, President Soekarno issued a list of six recognized religions which included Buddhism and Confucianism, along with the four other religions already mentioned. It wasn't until 1980, however, that a Buddhist division was created, and the treatment received by Confucianism reveals the deeply political nature of the recognition procedure (Steenbrink 2015). The Confucians had gone to great lengths to conform to the requirements expected of them, resulting finally in their inclusion on the list issued in 1965, only to see Suharto remove them from it in 1978 in response to pressure arising from anti-Chinese

sentiment In 2000, President Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) abrogated Suharto's 1967 Presidential Instruction, which banned open celebration of Chinese religion, belief and customary practices, and the Minister for Internal Affairs rescinded the 1978 Circular, which stated that only five religions were recognized. The rehabilitation of Confucianism was finally completed in 2006 when a division was created for it within the ministry, thus giving Indonesia's public policy on religions a greater semblance of coherence.

The state's approach to religion, then, was to a large extent dependant on political contingencies. The government always turned to Pancasila, in particular the *Ketuhanan yang Maha esa* principle, as a sort of civil religion, which would act as a sounding board allowing it to determine who was true to the nation and who, on the other hand, was merely posing as such. This aspect of Pancasila was highlighted during the two authoritarian regimes of independent Indonesia: Soekarno's Guided Democracy (1958–1965) and Suharto's New Order (1966–1998). During these two periods the defense of Pancasila was transformed into a constraining ideology subordinate to the government. In 1959, when disagreement between those who supported a broader role for Islam and the advocates of Pancasila led the constitutional assembly to an impasse, Soekarno decided to dissolve the assembly and to forcibly reintroduce the 1945 constitution. The following year in 1960, invoking the necessity to defend Pancasila, he outlawed the major Muslim party, Masyumi.

Similarly, General Suharto's New Order imposed a strict interpretation of Pancasila, both to combat communism and to marginalize political Islam. Suharto also sacralised Pancasila, in order to justify his ruthless suppression of the communist movement, saying that "Pancasila has become a matter of life and death for our nation" (Ismail 1995: 143) and that "any group which would change Pancasila will meet with destruction" (Krissantono 1976: 25). The close symbolic association between the repression of the so-called coup d'état in 1965 and the defense of Pancasila, which could now be freed from its restrictive Soekarnoist interpretation, is reflected in the calendar of official celebrations in Indonesia. October the 1st became the Sacred Day of Pancasila, celebrated every year at the "crocodile pit" (*lubang buaya*) into which the bodies of the assassinated generals were thrown. At the centre of the memorial a sacred Pancasila monument was erected, composed of a giant Garuda dominating the statues of the seven assassinated officers who lie on a five-sided pedestal inscribed with the principles of Indonesia's national ideology.

Under the National Committee for the Formulation of Pancasila, an official interpretation called the Guide for the Understanding and Practicing of Pancasila (Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila─known as "P4") was widely circulated. Different interpretations were regarded as deviant and the P4 was taught from kindergarten and elementary school through university. All public servants were also required to pass a P4 training course. Finally, an 1985

law stipulated that Pancasila must be mentioned as the 'sole social principle' in the charter of all political, social and even religious organizations.

5 Towards religious community-based laicity and *agamaization*

The state's strict oversight of Pancasila's regulation contributed to a less expansive expression of spirituality and corralled Indonesians increasingly towards the main religions. The first reason was the fight against communism after the dreadful events of 1965, when a wave of repression cracked down on anyone who seemed in any way linked to Marxism, which for the state was synonymous with atheism[10]. In order to escape from this, most Indonesians "sought refuge" amongst the main religions which had been recognized by the state. It became obligatory to include on your identity card which of those religions you belonged to, making it difficult for the still numerous smaller religious communities in the country to survive. In the 1970s, these *aliran kepercayaan* strived to be recognised officially by the state so as to be granted the associated legal protections and in 1978, they succeeded in being included in the National Policy Guidelines (*Garis Besar Hukum Negara, GBHN*). However, faced with protests by Muslim organisations, the Minister for Religions transferred responsibility for the *aliran kepercayaan* to the Ministry of Education and Culture to assuage Muslim groups' fears that those communities would be treated as religions.

By thus, confirming the existence of a hierarchy between religions and spiritual movements, the state fostered a process which Sven Cederroth (1996) has called "agamization". The idea gradually took root that the adherents of indigenous religions were not yet sufficiently religious to be "agamized". This change was reinforced by the marriage law of 1974 which stipulated that all unions had to be celebrated according to the rules of each couple's religion. This new legislation sounded the death knell for civil marriage ceremonies and it also effectively led to a ban on inter-religious marriages.

This shift in attitudes affected the fluidness which had long characterized the field of religion, and in particular inter-religious relations. Each religious community soon perfectly understood the role of arbitrator played by the state and accordingly they set about prioritizing their own relations with

[10] On the evening of 30 September 1965, six generals and a lieutenant were captured and executed by a group of "progressive" officers. On the morning of 1 October, their leaders spoke on behalf of the "30th of September Movement," stating that they had acted to thwart the plans of a "council of generals" who were preparing, with the help of the CIA, a coup d'état to overthrow President Soekarno. In a few short days, the putsch was quashed by general Suharto and the failed putsch provided a golden opportunity for those who had striven for years against the growth of the Communist party and the increasing influence it held over Soekarno. With nearly 500,000 dead, the anti-communist repression was one of the most atrocious massacres of the 20th century (Cribb 1990).

it to the detriment of their relations with other faiths. This deterioration in relations was particularly noticeable between Muslims and Christians whose representatives, following independence, had joined forces in a relentless struggle against communism and had often found a common platform in order to influence public opinion. After 1965, relations between the two communities soured. Muslim organisations who had found themselves marginalized politically, notably the reformists, now criticized the Christian community for taking advantage unfairly of their close ideological proximity to the regime and for using their financial strength to encourage people to convert.

In order to stop this dispute from becoming acrimonious, the state decided that it had to take charge of interdenominational relations and created an inter-religious board in 1967. In 1969, a further measure was taken when a joint decree was issued by the Ministry of Religion and the Interior Ministry, regulating the establishment of new places of worship so as to prevent any potential conflict. This dialogue between the authorities and the country's different religions led each denomination to organise itself in such a manner as to speak with one voice in order to better defend their interests in their negotiations with the government. While Protestants and Catholics had already established unifying structures with the creation of the Council of Churches and the Episcopal Conference during the 1950s, the Muslim community still remained divided. It was composed of two groups: Nahdlatul Ulama represented traditionalist Islam and Muhammadiyah comprised reformists. Since independence, these two major associations had been jockeying for position to curry favour with the government and they regularly came to loggerheads over who should be appointed minister of religions. In 1975, the government encouraged the formation of an Indonesian Ulema Council (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia - MUI*) which would include all of Indonesia's Muslim organisations. It served as an influential representative for Suharto's New Order regime within the Muslim community, providing enlightenment but also serving as an informal intermediary for the New Order's religious policy and reconciling the sometimes-contradictory positions of the big organisations, especially on the issue of the start of the Ramadan. Funded by the state but independent of the Ministry of Religions, MUI received in the mid-1980s a way to greatly supplement its income through the attribution of the halal.

The period which covers the first twenty years of the New Order (1966–1985) had in the past been characterised as "secularism with limited religionization" (Ichwan 2011). But it is possible to find, during that period, elements of the "community based laicity" (*laïcité communautaire*) described by Jean Baubérot (2014). The imposition of Pancasila as the basis for the organisation of religions seemed to mark the apogee of the state's role as arbitrator between the different religious communities. However, it was this very imposition which, paradoxically, signalled the decline of "secularisation" for reasons particular to the regime itself.

6 Towards an identity-based laicity through a political orchestration of Islamic values

Faced with a dwindling power base, Suharto decided it was time to turn again to religion. From the mid-1980s, his rapprochement with the Muslim 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. With the establishment of the All-Indonesia Association of Muslim Intellectuals (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim se-Indonesia – ICMI) founded in 1990 and chaired by his Minister of Technology, B.J. Habibie, 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. He then supported various kinds of Islamization policies: in 1989 a law on (Muslim) religious courts was accepted, followed in 1991 by a presidential decree that a Compilation of Islamic Law in Indonesia, formulated by experts of the Ministry of Religion should be used in all these courts. The same year the first Islamic bank, Bank Muamalat Indonesia was created (Hefner 2000).

In 1998, the fall of the Suharto regime allowed the return of democracy and the beginning of a period, called *Reformasi*, which permitted new debates around Pancasila. In April 1999, the Government announced that Pancasila indoctrination (P4) courses were to be discontinued and the BP-7 (the agency responsible for administering the Pancasila courses) was to be abolished. The People's Consultative Council (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat ─ MPR) repealed the previous MPR Decree on Pancasila as the sole basis of mass organizations, but did not eliminate the Law on Mass Organizations on which the obligation was based. Most Islamic organizations and parties adopted Islam as their ideological principle, but did not reject Pancasila, at least not explicitly, as the foundation of the state. In 2000 and 2002, despite strong pressure from a few Islamic parties demanding the "seven words" of the Jakarta Charter be inserted into the preamble and Article 29 of the Constitution, the MPR—backed by the two biggest Muslim organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah—kept the "*Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa*" unchanged.

This steadfast loyalty to the Pancasila doctrine did not, however, stop the holier-than-thou approach to many policy areas concerning Islam which had also marked the final ten years of Suharto's reign. It is true that the state continued to proclaim its attachment to a form of secularism which would treat all religions equally, but at the same time the democratization and decentralization allowed by the *Reformasi* permitted the proponents of an inegalitarian secularism, (i.e. one favouring Islam), to attempt to impose their views in many areas by claiming that they

were the spokespeople of a silent Muslim majority. The state was powerless to arrest this new development which was in large part due to the political harnessing of an underlying social and religious transformation that had been at work for several decades. In this respect, it was merely the logical continuation of the New Order's decision, in its final years, to sacrifice Pancasila's egalitarian secularism in favour of the demands of a section of the Muslim community. Far from becoming a more secular society, Indonesia underwent a significant religious revival marked by an increase in the visible signs of people's faith.

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 domes have sprung up across the country and 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. Indonesia's Muslim identity is also visible outside the observance of the pillars of Islam. The headscarf, 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 (*djilbab*). At 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 § White 2008).

Strangely, this apparent desecularisation of society has had no direct effect politically as the parties claiming to be Islamic have, by and large, been in decline since 1999. The hardline groups who wish to call into question the spirit of Pancasila, notably through the reintroduction of the Jakarta Charter, have been particularly affected. However, there have been a number of significant knock-on effects caused by this social change. Although there has been important progress in the democratization of the country over the past twenty years, a political class formed under the new Order, or at least inspired by its corrupting and nepotistic practices, has been able to stay in power. This has made it easier for to capitalise politically on the afore-mentioned Islamic revival. The increase in displays 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. The ambient mediocrity brought about by widespread 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.

This evolution could be observed on several levels. Nationally, it was marked by a certain number of debates, including on the law imposing the implementation of Sharia in Aceh in 1999 (a local requirement rather than a national initiative) on the law against pornography between 2005 and 2008, and 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. Locally, this orchestration of Islamic values has been much more disorderly and far less democratic. Although the 1999 decentralization laws gave local authorities no mandate in religious matters, several provincial, regency, and municipal authorities have passed decrees imposing respect for the obligations of Islamic law. Studies carried out on this phenomenon of *perda sharia* (from local regulations, peraturan daerah, or 'perda', that are said to be influenced by sharia, such as requiring women to wear a jilbab, or obliging local civil servants to observe Muslim prayers, for example) have shed light on the Islamization process 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 characteristic of this revival. 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 in particular which was the governmental party under the New Order—or by moderate Muslim parties such as the PKB or the PAN rather than by Islamist parties such as the PKS, the PBB, or the PPP (Bush 2008). These regulations are in reality rarely implemented and what's more they are unconstitutional in the eyes of Indonesian law as religious questions do not come within the competence of local authorities. However, they clearly reveal the growing place of Islam in public debate and undermine the first principle of Pancasila upon which Indonesian-style secularism is founded. Most of the regulations are based upon the Jakarta Charter which set out an obligation for Muslims to respect the principles of Sharia law but which, as we have already seen, never received any official recognition.

This evolution of Indonesian society has been enthusiastically encouraged by the Indonesian Ulema Council. The Council it receives state subsidies and as such its semi-official role gives particular weight to its twin demands of an Islamisation of society and an increased orthodoxy

within Islam itself. It was not the only institution to participate in the transformation we are describing however. The justice system has shown on several occasions that it is not immune from the pressure imposed on it to confer a more Islamic hue to the religious status quo. A clear indication of this has been the broader implementation of the blasphemy law which was adopted in 1969. The law was issued in the form of a presidential decree issued by Soekarno in 1965 but had almost never been applied until 2004. In 2010, in response to the increasing rise in the number of convictions for "insulting Islam", several human rights defence groups who had criticised this broader application of the law and its criminalisation of religious differences filed an application before the constitutional court. The court's hearing took place amid impassioned public debate as well as demonstrations in front of the court building by Islamist militia groups. In an unprecedented ruling, the court suggested that the Indonesian Constitution struck a compromise status for the country between a secular state and an Islamic one and that the limitations of freedom of religion were thus based on firm legal grounds. In May 2017, the conviction of Jakarta's first non-Muslim and ethnic Chinese governor, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, known as "Ahok', was very much in line with this new broader definition of blasphemy. It reveals the influence of this new Islamic purism on the judiciary and was a shock for Indonesians attached to the religious status quo. For his supporters, Ahok symbolized the political renewal necessary for the continuation of the *Reformasi*. Elected vice-governor alongside Joko Widodo, (commonly known as Jokowi) in 2012, he succeeded the latter when he was elected to the presidency of the Republic in 2014, and was candidate for a second term as governor when he was arrested. In September 2016, Ahok had denounced instructions being circulated in mosques to prohibit Muslims (83% of the voters in the capital) to vote for him on the basis of Verse 51 of the Al-Maidah Surah (the table spread with food), a declaration which led to his conviction for blasphemy.

In response to this manipulation of religious tensions, supporters of a less identity-based and more liberal vision of Pancasila have on several occasions over the past ten years sought to renew the religious pact adopted at independence. On 1 June 2006, a demonstration celebrating the anniversary of Soekarno's foundational speech was attended by the then president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and included a wide spectrum of participants ranging from liberals and representatives of NGOs to religious minorities and proponents of Javanism (Raillon 2011). They were gathered to reaffirm the cultural roots of Indonesia's pluralism in response to the exclusive approach to religion of a growing number of the Muslim community. Since then, successive governments have regularly taken initiatives to remind the public of the state's attachment to the compromise struck in 1945. In 2017, after Ahok conviction, President Jokowi had little choice but to resort to the sort of measures which had not been seen since Suharto's fall. He launched, for example, an important

organization to promote Pancasila with the support of the army staff who were worried about past tensions resurfacing that could affect the armed forces. Later that year, for the first time since 1998, an Islamist movement the Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) which had been deeply involved in the demonstrations against Ahok was dissolved. This organization had been one of the most actively involved in the struggle against secularization which its president Muhammad Ismail Yusanto called “the mother of all destruction”. This dismantling of the HTI was effectuated via a legally binding presidential decree concerning the dissolution of “anti-Pancasila” organisations which had been adopted one week previously rather than by using the much longer legislative procedure normally required. The decree was accompanied by precise instructions sent to university presidents aimed at eradicating the HTI’s influence on their campuses. At the beginning of 2018, supporters of a liberal interpretation of Pancasila also won a major victory. A governmental decree and then the Supreme Court allowed Indonesian citizens to have their "traditional beliefs" (*aliran kepercayaan*) mentioned on their identity cards in place of one of the six recognized religions. In the future, they may even be able to not mention any religion, breaking with an obligation in force since 1966. These prospects are of great concern to the militant networks of conservative Islam because, beyond the imaginary danger of resurgent Communism, they could allow Indonesians to escape the growing pressures of orthopraxy within the Muslim community.

7 Conclusion

Pancasila constitutes an original solution for the political treatment of religious affairs, whether at a global level or at the level of the Asian continent. By gathering the main religions present within its borders under the premise of the “belief in a unique God” enshrined in its institutions, Indonesia refused to renounce either the primordial role played by the nation-state or the “sacred canopy” (Berger 1967) under whose shade the people found solace. The malleability of this principle with its many possible interpretations opens a space for exchange which corresponds perfectly to Paul Ricoeur’s notion of a space for “reasonable disagreement”, which he adapted from John Rawls and used to characterise French laicity (Ricœur 1995: 195). In Indonesia, as in most Muslim countries, a powerful religious revival movement has been calling into question a certain secularisation of society which they consider to be part of the colonial legacy. Though this revival has not managed to undermine the religious status quo adopted in Indonesia at independence, it has affected its application. At the same time, however, the advocates of a more liberal interpretation of Pancasila are well able to mobilise both arguments and people in defence of what they consider to be the core of the nation’s identity. The study of the Indonesian case thus gives

us a good illustration of what André La Liberté (in this volume) writes about the concept of multiple modernities. La Liberté's sees this concept as "an important corrective to the idea of a hegemonic and unchallenged Western modernity asserting its supremacy over non-Western civilizations that stood by passively". In light of this, the strength and originality of the Indonesian model is to have been able to draw from various sources of legitimacy. By not confining itself to the clash between Islamic references and Western secularism, Indonesia has reached an original compromise in which the invention of a religious modernity draw on the plurality of the past.

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