MODERNISATION WITHOUT SECULARISATION? CIVIL PLURALISM, DEMOCRATISATION, AND RE-ISLAMISATION IN INDONESIA

ERICH KOLIG
University of Otago

The position of Islam in the Southeast Asian nation of Indonesia is an issue both intriguing and of seemingly interminable, often poignant, topicality. On a very conspicuous level, riots, at least partially inspired by religious differences between Muslims and Christians, seem to be an unsettlingly frequent occurrence. And equally notable, the current Acehnese Islamically inspired 'insurgency' is no less spectacular than the several *Darul Islam* movements in various parts of the far-flung archipelago have been in the past. Some of these attempts to install a *Negara Islam* (Islamic state) have been outstanding for their bloodletting. Presumably, even though this is not always patently obvious, politics in Indonesia have always been made with at least half an eye to religion (cf. McVey 1983). First the Dutch, as colonial masters, tried to stem the social importance of Islam, recognising in it the major and most concerted resistor to colonial rule, and subsequently endeavoured to shape it in the Christian mould of an 'inner religion' – with little success one might add. Then with the Sukarno era and its emergent nationalism there was an attempt to harness the considerable moving force of Islam for the decolonisation effort. Later, Islam was an instrumental medium for purging Indonesia of communism.[1] Still later, and of great importance, was the uneasy relationship between Islam and Suharto's New Order regime, which was torn between a secular modernising vision and the need to curry favour with the Muslim masses.

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[1] Even though Muslims did not *en bloque* participate in the mass killings, it is conventionally accepted among researchers of Indonesian history that Muslims were at the cutting edge of the purge and displayed considerable zeal. Ideologically seen, the reason is quite clear: for Muslims it was a legitimate struggle, even a duty, to prevent the establishment of a godless state.

From whatever angle one looks at it, Islam, by far the most influential among a number of religions represented in Indonesia, features most prominently in the country's social and political landscape. Perhaps not so surprisingly, when considering its long history of fomenting political dynamics in Indonesia, Islam was prominently involved in the country's recent overthrow of Suharto's regime and the democratisation process (Hefner 2000). The election, in October 1999, of Abdurrahman Wahid, leader of an Islamic party (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa which came third in the popular vote), to succeed to the presidency of the republic immediately after the Suharto era gives a measure of the significance of Islam, even though his elevation was only a compromise and did not last its full term.

Wahid is an Islamic scholar, a *kiyai*, and the leader of Nadlatul Ulama (NU), the country's largest Muslim organisation with, reputedly, a membership of between 30 and 35 million. Shortly before his fall, Wahid's NU supporters, devout Muslims all, contributed substantially to the political fomentation through prayer rallies and their vociferous demands that the president not be impeached. Equally revealing is the fact that in the aftermath of elections, in June 1999, and prior to Wahid's elevation, newspapers published rumours that the leader of the strongest political party, PDI-P (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan), Megawati Sukarnoputri, could not become president by virtue of her being a woman. In a predominantly Muslim nation, it was said, the recognition of the Hadith that 'a people who entrust their affairs to a woman will never prosper' (see Mernissi 1991) must be a great impediment for her, although this notion was never clearly spelt out as a political canon. And even though she has meanwhile ascended to the presidency, it does not seem totally implausible that support for her was motivated largely by a perception of Wahid's inept performance. While previously a majority of parliamentarians had hesitated to make her president – whether because of their own biases or out of fear that doing so would not be acceptable to the Muslim masses remains unclear – the situation had obviously changed and it was felt that her elevation would not, under the circumstances, further aggravate an already volatile situation.[2] Significantly also, Amien Rais, another leading Islamic exponent and former chairman of Muhammadiyah (the second largest Islamic organisation with a reputed membership of 25 million), was made head of the People's Consultative Assembly. All things considered, and a secularist nationalist presidency notwithstanding, it seems a timely issue to ponder: whither Islam in a democratised Indonesia? What course will a strongly Muslim Indonesia take? And what understanding of global processes and of

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[2] There was considerable parliamentary support in July 2001 for Megawati Sukarnoputri to assume the presidency, the reason being clearly the prevailing perception that Wahid's performance was inept. A commentator speaking on radio from Jakarta on 27 July 2001 (Radio New Zealand news) remarked that Hamzah Haz, leader of the Muslim party PPP who had just been elected Vice-President under Megawati, had said that before as a Muslim 'he could not vote for a woman as leader,' but obviously had now changed his mind. (The *Otago Daily Times* 27 July 2001, p.7, reported a similar comment.) Quite clearly, the notion prevailed at that moment that such a move would not jeopardise political stability, at least not more so than a continuing leadership by Wahid, and that in a crisis leadership by a woman was acceptable. Significantly, Haz was brought into government as Vice-President 'to bring vital religious support' (*Otago Daily Times* 28 July 2001, p.14).

the trajectory of a globalised and universalised Modernity can we take from events in this country?[3]

Characteristically, Taufik Abdullah, an eminent Indonesian scholar, writes that '"Indonesia", "modernity" and "Islam" are the three words that capture the dynamics of contemporary Islamic discourse' (1996: 67). The challenge is to work out the constellation between them. Woodward, in rejecting Huntington's (1996) notion of a rift between the West and Islam, extols the virtues of the Islamic discourse in Indonesia as entirely 'embracing Modernity, religious pluralism, and tolerance' (1996a: 3). If Indonesian Islam is said to embrace Modernity, the question, then, arises in what shape Modernity is embraced and whether this includes all features, or at least the major ones, which conventionally are attributed to Modernity.

In attempting to interpret the role of Islam and modernisation in Indonesia, I am inspired by the thought-provoking work of Robert Hefner. His recent book *Civil Islam*, is a minute and brilliant analysis of Islam's complex involvement in the democratisation process, thus, whether rightly or wrongly, indirectly rebutting – or at least challenging – the notion that the Islamic ethos is uncongenial to democratic rule (Hefner 2000). But even more important, I find seminal an earlier article on Islam in which he discusses Indonesian Islam's relation with secularisation (Hefner 1998a). This paper offers both an insightful analysis of the condition Indonesian Islam finds itself in, and a very trenchant reconsideration of the important concept of secularisation.

Secularisation, of course, is a notion at the crux of our understanding of Modernity and its further trajectory. (I disregard here for the moment the distinction some scholars make between Modernity and Post-Modernity, the latter having superseded the former by adding new and salient features to present-day human existence; such as a splintering of a unidirectional sense of the scientific-rational advance and the concomitant progressive social change.) Hefner notes that, in the social sciences, as the comfortable sense of universalism and of the lawful progression of Modernity collapses, confident predictions of the shape of the future based on a notion of the determinacy of certain processes and pre-defined trajectory of trends disappear (1998a: 147). Social scientists influenced by post-modernism have largely abandoned the universalist assumptions common in the past and which were often based on the kind of essentialism that has now become a pariah among social science concepts. Essentialist generalisations have been replaced with notions of cultural relativism, of the incomparability of social processes in different cultures, and of the indeterminacy of current social change.

Consequently, hardly anyone would today confidently insist on an imminent cataclysmic disappearance and total demise of religion (not even in

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[3] It needs to be borne in mind that both of the numerically strongest parties, PDI-P and Golkar, are secularist and have a secular agenda regarding modernisation. However, it is equally true that their numerical and political strength is contingent on the fragmentation of Muslims who are divided amongst several political representations. The point to be made here is that, this fact notwithstanding, no party in government nor any regime, no matter how a-religious, authoritarian, and/or secularist it may be, can afford totally to ignore Islam – as Suharto's rule had clearly demonstrated. Therefore, even under the leadership of one of the secularist parties, Islam, either directly or in an oblique manner, cannot fail but shape the political trajectory of this country.

western society) through the cognitive predominance of the scientific world-view. Gone are the bold predictions about secularisation in the orthodox sense, as an inevitable development of intellectual evolution and which entails, eventually, religion's – *any* religion's – critical obsolescence. This was the very conservative view, *a la* James Frazer and Emile Durkheim, which for decades appeared a most sensible and reasonable assumption, born out by almost every empirically observable social indicator. Most reputable scholars, in the past few decades, have understood secularisation to work in this radical way, while only a few still do so today. More recently, if generalisations of a predictive quality are still being made, they incline towards understanding secularisation to mean religion's relegation to a more or less complete social insignificance and public obscurity, but not its total demise.

While secularisation certainly entails significant effects for religion, all social indicators point towards the fact that it does not spell either religion's obsolescence or its complete disappearance. Thus, a more updated view of the future of religion is that it is increasingly losing its all-comprehensive societal and public domination and becoming banished to the private sphere where it tends to become an ethos which delivers only personalised ethics and individual meanings (cf. Dobbelaere 1993: 23-25). Thus, the holders of such beliefs are embedded in a social discourse web that pulsates to a different, now thoroughly 'desacralised', rhythm (Berger 1967, Wilson 1976 and 1985). At the extreme end of this spectrum, religion seems destined to become a playful pastime with which people experiment for personal gratification and enhancement (cf. Heelas 1996). Although Luckmann (1967) argued this does not constitute a diminution of religion, only its obscurity in public discourse, secularisation, and the privatisation of religion it brings about, is a significant development insofar as the socially binding values and doctrines make little reference to the revealed and received truths of a traditional body of religious beliefs. Diminution of religion may not happen in substance, but it certainly does in terms of social importance. This process not only adds enormously to the complexity of Modernity, by creating two sharply divided spheres of the public and the private, but it also significantly alters the public, "official" face of society at large.

It has become clearer, precisely because of secularisation and the shrinking influence of religion in the public domain, that religion still has to perform vital functions which the scientific world view is unable to provide; functions such as providing sensible ethics and meaning for human existence (as Max Weber repeatedly pointed out in various contexts); and also supplying some form of theodicy and other 'compensators' (in Stark and Bainbridge's 1985 terminology). Such views have certainly profoundly influenced our understanding of what secularisation means.

Although western Modernity needs to be reconciled with such a revised notion of secularisation (in which religion is still seen to have a role to play, albeit a rather limited one when compared with its significance say in medieval European society), the western world and its form of Modernity unmistakably show the effects of secularisation. However, it is less easy to discern any similar, equally overarching process in the Islamic world of today. Secularisation does not seem to take so firm a hold on it, as Gellner has pointed out (1981). In fact, Islamic orthodoxy, or what is taken as such in various circumstances (for example, with the Iranian Islamic revolution, the

Taleban regime in Afghanistan, various fundamentalist movements in the former Soviet territories, and in Egypt, Algiers, etc.), moves to the fore; and as it does so and empowers itself politically, the trend seems to be reversed for the Islamic world as a whole. Does that mean that this sector of humanity, being in the grip of a very potent religion, is being seemingly rendered impervious to the secularisation effect as experienced in the West? Does Islam make a people resistant to Modernity (or Post-Modernity) *per se*? Is Muslim society, through religious coercion, simply locked into a "medieval" condition from which it will (have to) be dragged eventually as the pressures of a globalised world (dominated by secularised western political, economic and cognitive processes) mount relentlessly or will Islam be resilient enough to eventually manage to impress its own characteristic and unsecularised brand of Modernity on the globalised world? In other words, is the Islamic world falling behind in a universal, but ultimately inescapable evolution, or is it following a completely different historical trajectory, dissimilar from anything experienced in the West; one that will eventually produce a scenario in which a technologised and "scientificised" society is also devoutly committed to religious doctrines and their minute observance?[4]

If the latter seems more plausible, does the Islamic world, then, prove with finality that secularisation is not a universal, law-like process, but no more than a western fluke – which on top of being a random and regionally confined result may well be ephemeral and eventually reversed? While Weber seems to have been undecided, Hefner is confident in suggesting that secularisation is a peculiarity of European history and religion, and does not reflect a universal modernising tendency (2000: 9). It is not even true for all of Western society, he contends, as the United States shows. There, 'religion is pluralised and contested, but has not been reduced to the realm of the purely private' (ibid.).

It is certainly true that in the United States religion, though no longer having a mandate to coerce conformity with a social charter, is still important in public life. Yet it is also true that there is no institutionalised linkage between state and religion, no institutionalised consultative mechanism between administration and presidency on the one side and a particular religious denomination on the other; no formalised mechanism of intervention of religion in the legal and political process; and it is true that too close and ostentatious a link between political process and religious agenda would hardly be attractive to the majority of the voting public. These are certainly features of secularisation.

In the United Kingdom there is such an institutionalised wedding of (head of) state and a religious denomination (Anglicanism) in the person of the monarch, but no one would seriously suggest that this is more than a symbolic and largely empty formalism, a slightly anachronistic fusion, and no more than

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[4] The recent upsurge of Islamic orthodoxy and fundamentalism has been interpreted in various ways: as cyclical, as disillusionment with imported western ideologies and political systems, as intellectual and political crisis phenomenon, as anti-globalist, etc. (cf., for instance, Kepel 1994, Lawrence 1989, Esposito 1992, Lewis 1999, Gellner 1981). In some specific cases Islamic orthodoxy has emerged as a result of regime failure (for example, the former Muslim-dominated Soviet republics), in others Islamic orthodoxy precipitated this failure (for instance, Iran).

a tradition, increasingly less cherished with every year and for some time already without practical political consequence. In some European countries there is still in existence – as a relic of earlier days – a compact between the state and the Catholic or Lutheran church, but this is rarely called upon by either side. Secularisation is a process that may not have reached the point where traditional areas of fusion between church and state have been completely abandoned, but whose general direction and trenchant effects are very clear. Its hypothetical end result, at least in the medium term, is entirely foreseeable, barring a miraculous turn of events.

What is equally characteristic is that the Islamic world as a whole shows few of the tendencies evidenced in western societies of a reduced influence for religion in public discourse. Its development status strongly suggests the question: what would a modernised, but unsecularised society look like? A scientifically and technologically oriented, and thus truly modernised, society devoted at the same time to religious doctrines could only arise provided "science" is willing to forgo, or at least curb, the rational method so compellingly, if slightly exaggeratedly, thrown into relief by Karl Popper, with its unfettered scepticism, spirit of taboo-less and respect-less inquisitiveness, its ethos of enquiry without boundaries and acute intolerance of dogmatic authority.[5] While one might ask whether an "Islamic science" – in which enquiry confines itself, voluntarily or otherwise, to strict dogmatically defined perimeters and in which articles of Islamic faith form the final arbiter of acceptability – is hypothetically possible at all (cf. Tibi 1992), another question may well be: do Islamic societies display an interest in adopting even some of the characteristic and salient features of science, its culture of restless rational inquiry and its propensity towards respecting few boundaries? And equally important, in a wider sense, is the question: will Islamic societies allow the kind of civil pluralism and democratic institutions that appear to be a social precondition without which science cannot flourish?

Geertz saw secularisation mainly in terms of 'secularisation of thought', brought about by the growth of science and resultant loss of religious certainties (1968:88). Modernisation cannot occur without secularisation. Islamic societies, in his view, show little sign of secularisation and hence cannot truly modernise. On the contrary, they show a tendency to resist modernisation by engaging in anti-secularising movements, thus manifesting their inability to keep up with western society. This seems to be a view widely shared. Bassam Tibi, for instance, inclines to the view that Islam is in crisis; its adaptability to the modern world is stretched to its limits as it struggles to adjust to the culture of Modernity (1990 and 1991). Its response is rather one-sided: it is interested only in adopting merely the cultural products of Modernity, but not its 'culture', i.e. the methodologies and fundamental ethos which enabled the development of such products (for example, technological and scientific advances, standard of living) in the first place. If Islam will be able to make the adjustment at all, he concludes, it requires such a profound

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[5] This is not to say that such boundaries do not exist in Western society, but they have been much eroded over the last century. And while Popper may well have outlined with his rational method a socially, if not intellectually, unattainable ideal history (cf. Habermas 1971, Kuhn 1970, Feyerabend 1975), western scientific enterprise comes closer to it than anything else in human.

wrench that, as a consequence, this faith – and the society it inspires – will end up looking quite dissimilar from what it is now.

MODERNISATION *CONTRA* RE-ISLAMISATION?

Indonesia provides an interesting case in point: it is well known internationally for its huge modernisation drive, which not even the recent end of the Suharto era has basically halted. The climate of economic and industrial progressivism and quintessential capitalist-type development continues – Hefner calls it Patronal Capitalism (1998b). Industrialisation, a hunger for education, and economic rationalisation give this country a vibrancy in which it hardly lags behind other East Asian examples. And while as a country it is not at the cutting edge of scientific enquiry and research, nor of technological advance, it surely has ambitions to catch up with the so-called developed world as soon as possible. Simultaneously, it is also propelled by profound initiatives to re-Islamise state and society at large. In fact, it has been argued (Cone 2000) that mercantile and industrial development goes hand in hand with a distinctly Indonesian brand of 'neo-modernist' Islam (cf. Barton 1995). Propounded by such leading lights as Nurcholish Madjid and Harun Nasution, among others, and largely uncritical of Suharto's New Order (though not of some of the regime's features), neo-modernism had enjoyed if not active support then tacit toleration by the Suharto regime. It was thus allowed to flourish while other, more traditional and conservative, strands of Islamic thought had to contend with severe restrictions. The complexity of Indonesian politics and changing fortunes, however, meant that at one point Suharto did not favour (neo-) modernist Islam, turning instead for alliance purposes more to conservative Islam (Hefner 2000:167). Thus, because of its chronically rather lose and sometimes disturbed association with Suharto's New Order, neo-modernist Islam has managed to evade being discredited by the regime's fall.

While some Muslim groups became staunch supporters of the Suharto regime, others opposed it. This constellation had neither stability nor endurance. The pervading theme though was for Suharto to 'suppress […] Muslim politics while encouraging Muslim piety ...' (Hefner 2000:59). The Dutch had already tried this and failed. Rather, in both cases, this course of action achieved the exact opposite: Muslim associations became centres for frank discussions of politics as well as for public morality (Hefner 2000). Islam provided a space for the formulation of oppositional politics and a forum for its expression, which in turn further contributed to the politicisation of Islam.

The election of Abdurrahman Wahid had, to some extent, a strengthening effect on the move towards re-Islamisation of Indonesian society, even though the state's predominant policy needed to remain resistance to Islamic enthusiasm (in order for the state to retain its integrity), especially when combined with secessionist demands, as in the case of Aceh. While Wahid's sympathies appeared to lie with a pragmatic, unfanatical brand of Islam (The Jakarta Post 2000), the fact that he is a *kyai* (Islamic scholar) who has been instrumental in shaping one of the many Islamic *aliran* (streams) in Indonesia, meant he was poised to strengthen the cause of Islam and its aspirations in a general sense. Through his political demise this trend has been

cut short and will now tend to work itself out in more subliminal, roundabout ways. And perhaps it will be resisted by Megawati's more pragmatic and secularist leanings. The Islamic cause, of course, is not helped by the obvious fact that, as a more fine-grained review of the situation reveals, Indonesia's Muslim-hood is divided into numerous, often unstable *aliran* which seem to have very little in common beyond the most basic theological doctrines.[6] Hefner (2000) and earlier McVey (1983), as well as Boland (1971) and others have all shown clearly the enormous complexity of Islamic, and Muslim, involvement in Indonesian politics.

Obviously, Islam was not only capable of assimilating democracy, but even of rising to its defence and making itself the champion of civil pluralism. To what extent this required a reconfiguration of doctrine, happening in some sections of Islam-hood but not in others; and to what extent the real agenda was not so much the democratisation of society but a strengthening of the Islamic position, is a matter for debate. The hidden agendas of some sections of the Islamic population, in supporting democratisation by helping to tear down Suharto's regime, may in fact have been quite different. While some sections see merit in forcing citizens to virtue, others emphasise the scriptural view that there cannot be compulsion in religion, thus they are more congenial to the idea of civil pluralism. As Indonesia finds its own form of democracy (Hefner 2000: 216-7), it may just be conceivable that it will find also a Modernity without secularisation.

Broadly speaking, the plethora of Islamic factions and interest groups can be divided into a more conservative camp and a modernist one (so-called *moderen*) on the basis of the respective degree and intensity of concessions each is prepared to make to the conditions of Modernity. In rough approximation, the difference lies in where the onus of adjustment is placed: while conservatives, or traditionalists, are guided by the principle that Modernity has to be brought into line with Islam, modernists reverse this maxim in the sense that they are open to an adjustment of Islam to the demands and necessities of modern reality. Amongst the multitude of *aliran*, modernist and neo-modernist Islamic thinking occupies a prominent place. Some scholars distinguish carefully between Islamic modernism and neo-modernism (cf. Barton 1995). Unlike modernism, neo-modernism 'argues for a separation of "church" and state, maintaining that direct involvement of religious groups in party-politics along communal lines leads inevitably to the rise of sectarian tensions and the polarisation of society' (Barton 1995: viii). Thus, it appears to endorse the secular constitution, pluralism, and to oppose the creation of an Islamic state. It emphasises *ijtihad*, with a view of combining modern Western learning with classical Islamic scholarship and rejects blind faith as a guiding principle alone. At least in Harun Nasution's thought, reason and faith are co-extensive and share co-importance and co-responsibility in shaping human social existence (Muzani 1994).

The fluidity of such labelling as "modernists", "traditionalists", and "neo-modernists", and the abstract nature of this categorisation are brought home, however, when one looks at the actual grass-roots situation. For instance, Newland presents Nadlatul Ulama, as she observed it in Sunda, as

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[6] *Aliran* has a multiple semantic meaning (Echols & Shadely 1992). Here it is used in the sense of political grouping or religious faction.

traditionalist and *abangan*-inspired and thus finding itself opposed by the neo-modernist organisation Persis (2000: 212-220). Similarly, Liddle, for example, labels it 'non-modernist' (1996: 327). In my experience, in Jawa Tengah, NU is giving itself a distinctly *santristic* flare. Barton subsumes it, at least by implication, under the neo-modernist grouping, insofar as its long-time leader Wahid is ranked as a leading exponent of neo-modernist thought (Barton 1995; cf. Woodward 1996: 4). In contrast, Jenkins labels Wahid as the 'leader of Indonesia's conservative Muslims' (1998: 5). This shows a complexity in Islam and its organisational arms, the chameleon-like adaptability and changeability of which make such categorisation and description a highly uncertain affair.

Even so, on the whole, Indonesia's enormous modernisation drive seems to sit uneasily with Islamic sub-currents of all kinds, not only those which are striving to bring state and society more in line with Islamic orthodoxy, but also initiatives which revitalise the Islamic spirit in some form on an individual level. Even in its most liberal, 'neo-modernist' guise, which pays lip-service to a separation of church and state, Islamic renewal must seemingly grate against some features of Modernity, in particular secularisation, and be it only by placing ideological accents and social priorities differently from Modernity in the Western sense.

Hefner's attempt to reconcile this paradox (generated by the polar condition of modernisation and re-Islamisation) is interesting but invites critical re-evaluation and comment (1998a). Basically, Max Weber had addressed this paradox in his classical study *The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, in which he argued that religious fundamentalism in Europe had ushered in an era of rationalisation and economic innovation which in turn supported a rapid move towards secularisation (1985). In a similar vein – where religious impulses are instrumental in setting in motion far-reaching social processes – re-Islamisation also may be expected to go far beyond the level of theological and philosophical disputations in Indonesian scholarly circles. However, can we discern in present-day trends a trajectory propelling Indonesia towards the kind of rationalisation which Western society has undergone? Does Islamic revival in Indonesia perform the same function as Protestantism did in Europe? Weber implied doubts that Islam would have a similar rationalising potential (cf. Turner 1974). Or does the answer to this question hinge on a kind of crystal ball gazing regarding whether a progressivist, liberal neo-modern Islam or conservative orthodoxy will succeed politically?

Indonesia is the most populous Muslim nation in the world: of its approximately 210 million people about 90 per cent are at least nominally Muslims. The spectrum is as wide as one can imagine, ranging from extreme devotion, even fanaticism, to the *Muslim statistik,* as the less devout are called, sometimes derisively. While it is unclear in what proportion the devotional gradation is represented, it is without doubt the case that Islam has the potential to exert a profound influence on the country's future. Many Muslims are very much aware of this fact and, since colonial times, these people have developed within Islam a politically missionary consciousness. This proud awareness of their own political significance in the modern nation has cut both ways: manifesting itself in a mission to guide the socio-political fate of the nation as well as a mission to guide the development of Islam itself

within the context of a modern, globalising world. There is an unselfconscious and well-formulated notion of this fact, at least in more educated Muslim circles. As Indonesian Muslim scholars have repeatedly pointed out to me, they are irritated by the Western inclination to identify Islam *per se* with the Middle East and Arabism. Wahid, for example, is on record of having repeatedly pointed out that 'Islam and Arab culture are not the same' (Woodward 1996b: 136). From their point of view, Indonesian society has numerically the upper hand and, what is more, it possesses an intellectual cutting edge in Islamic scholarship. That is to say, from their point of view the Arab world is bogged down in conservatism and traditionalism while the most daring and pioneering attempts at modernising exegesis, so as to bring Islam into the twentieth (now twenty-first) century, are occurring in Southeast Asia (Malaysia and Indonesia; the southern Philippines are normally not included in this notion). Wahid is said to have demanded that Islam be 'indigenised' in Indonesia; i.e., it should be 'deeply planted in modern Indonesian soil' by adapting it to Indonesian conditions and shedding the Arabic precedence (Abdullah 1996:69). This view is counterbalanced by the fact that there are some sub-currents in Indonesia which take their cues from the Iranian revolution or Middle Eastern fundamentalism. Other sub-currents, such as Dewan Dakwah, respond to Modernity with radical orthodoxy and a willingness to return to what could only be called medievalism.

If pre-eminence is given to the neo-modernist position – which undoubtedly enjoys the best and most favourable publicity of all Islamic strands – distinct interpretative consequences emerge, which seem to be reflected in Hefner's perspective. *Prima facie*, one may infer from this position, for instance, that Tibi's misgivings about the crisis of Islam and its lack of adaptability derive from an "Arabic" or "Middle Eastern" bias, and, what is more, are unduly "essentialist" and, therefore, misjudge the Islamic ethos elsewhere. If Islam, in its definition, is less strictly bound to the Middle East the picture of what its intrinsic character and therefore its future prospects are, alters dramatically. Islam may be appearing in general to be more progressive and adaptive than it is usually given credit for. But just how influential is neo-modernism in Indonesia? Can it be expected to shape the nation's future so decisively and in a "progressivist" sense, as Hefner seems to imply?

VERSIONS OF RE-ISLAMISATION

At various points in history, but particularly in the last ten to fifteen years, vigorous initiatives have been set in motion, partially with state support, to re-Islamise Indonesian society (*dakwah*; propagation of Islamic faith); i.e., to strengthen *sharia*-centric and doctrinally based piety, and encourage external forms of devotion.

Some now see re-Islamisation as only the latest part of an Islamisation process that has been going on for the past 600 years (cf. Hefner 1987a: 54). Perhaps by taking the long view about the gains that Islamic orthodoxy has been able to make vis-à-vis other religious forms, such a contention becomes more plausible. Others, even more plausibly, see the current *dakwah*

atmosphere, however, as a conspicuously modern phenomenon, to a large extent characterised by the concerted efforts of such organisations as, for example, Paramadina in urban situations and NU in rural areas.[7]

Islamising initiatives have, in general, had to walk a tight rope (under the Suharto regime) so as to be allowed the freedom to operate, by the grace of the dominant and powerful (also tightly interwoven) agencies of state, regime and military. On the other hand, however, certain initiatives considered more moderate and friendly towards the regime, enjoyed – and still do – modest government support. Although perhaps not actively supported and sponsored, freedom of action and absence of censorship may also count as support in an otherwise domineering and authoritarian regime. Expressions of such support, for instance, can be seen in the form of a very active programme of constructing more mosques (major universities now have their own mosques), madrasah, increasing the influence of an Islamic-based banking system, supporting people to undertake the *haj*, setting up Islamic studies departments (Institut Agama Islam Negeri; IAINs), supporting religious school education (cf. Hefner 1998b: 233) and religious programs and sermons on TV and in radio, reduction of work hours for state employees during *ramadan*, provision of prayer rooms and mosques in universities and government departments, collection of *zakat*, support for *dakwah Islamiyah* programmes, setting up the Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (Muslim Students League), creation of ICMI (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Se-Indonesia, Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals), and the like.

Much of this activity goes, or is designed to go, well beyond the somewhat élitist, upper middle class, reflexive form of neo-modernism. For the sake of gaining some overview, I would distinguish three categories of Islamic initiatives with regard to their respective thrust, even though of course such a typology, having merely heuristic value, constitutes an oversimplification.

One initiative is directed towards internal unbelievers, *kafiri*, by which Muslims refer to non-monotheist believers, who are remnants of so-called "tribal people", *orang asli*, living for the most part in inaccessible forest areas as hunter-gatherers or swidden agriculturalists. Rightly or wrongly, they are

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[7] Re-Islamisation refers to a relatively recent rise of observable phenomena in which the present situation appears to differ from previous conditions. Firstly, there is the fact that the body politic is now more strongly and openly influenced by Islam than it previously had been (for instance, in the earlier years of the New Order). Secondly, there are strong efforts by Islamic organisations, through educational and outreach programmes, to inspire a condition of stricter orthodoxy and greater "purity" at the expense of religious laxity. Seen in a longer perspective, such initiatives are meant to instill a new vigour to the spread of Islam. Conversion, thus, may be perceived now as having been imperfect and in need of renewed effort. Thirdly, there is the widespread and popular – if scientifically poorly supported – notion that Islamic orthodoxy and orthopraxy have made considerable gains over the last twenty years or so. One often hears the opinion that more urban, middle-class women than ever before now wear Islamic dress (*hijab* or *jilbab*), that attendance of mosques has gone up dramatically, and that the five pillars of Islam are more widely observed (for instance, *ramadan*, is more widely and strictly observed, more people go on the *haj*, etc.). Often the younger generations are said to show more religious devotion than older ones. Hefner calls the current Islamic 'resurgence' 'unprecedented', thus also emphasising this phenomenon's discontinuity with the past and underlining its recent and quite noticeable nature (1997a:5).

seen to adhere to what educated Indonesians term "animistic" beliefs and perceive as rather primitive.[8] Such drives to proselytise internally and convert "animists" to the true faith of Islam is, I found, often rationalised in terms of the Indonesian constitution, the Pancasila, which prescribes, among its five articles (*lima desa*), Bertuhan, or perhaps more rarely called Ketuhanan, (monotheism) for every citizen. This not only makes adherence to Islam mandatory for all citizens, but also gives Christianity and, after some initial reluctance had been overcome, Hinduism and Buddhism equal status. It "legalises" in effect all major religions, which in the official Indonesian parlance are to be considered monotheistic religions, sharply distinguishing the condition of belief in God from atheism, which is usually seen as identical with communism. (Communism has been outlawed since 1965.) Tribal or animistic religions, *agama kafir/kapir*, being *kufer* (radical unbelief) are excluded from this tolerant religious definition (one suspects, perhaps more by oversight than design on the part of the authors of the Pancasila who had no conservative Islamic agenda) and, in Muslim interpretation, this invokes the urgent need to speedily convert the holders of such beliefs. Practically, conversion, however, is non-coercive (in contrast to the treatment meted out to suspected communist sympathisers) and usually packaged with sedentarisation, agrarification and education programmes.

The second, and probably more important, initiative is directed in the style of an internal Islamic missionisation, towards laissez-fair and nominal Muslims. Not surprisingly, this initiative seems to be concentrated on Java and there, above all, is directed towards adherents of so-called Javanism. *Kejawen* or *agama Jawa* (Javanese religion), or in Geertz's terms, the *abangan*ship (the following of syncretistic beliefs; who Woodward 1991/2 calls *Kejawen* Muslims) are notorious – from a *santrist* viewpoint – for deviating more or less from Islamic orthodoxy. The aim of this initiative is to bring about a purer Islamic devotion and purge people's lives of practices considered un-Islamic. (The essentialism behind it, condemning "syncretism" as non-Islamic, is the Indonesians', not the anthropologist's.) Especially on Java, spirit cults, ancestor worship, spirit healing and shamanistic forms (*dukunisme*), mythical traditions, and quite possibly residual Hinduistic practices are widespread and enjoy much popular support, especially in rural areas and in the courtly spheres. Widespread also are practices of worship involving mythical figures such as Ratu Adil, Ratu Kidul or Roro Kidul (Schlehe 1991, 1996, 1998), and *danyang* beliefs such as the Nyai Po cult (Hefner 1987b).[9] Often the interpenetration of clearly Islamic forms of devotion and these above-mentioned beliefs is considerable. Even people who are not actively involved

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[8] *Orang asli* as a category refers to "primitive, tribal people", such as the Kubus on Sumatra, some Dayaks in Kalimantan, Papuans in Irian Jaya, and other jungle dwellers on various islands. The term is often, though not always, used to distinguish these "primitive" people from *pribumi*, the denotation for "indigenous", "civilised" Indonesans – as distinct from immigrant minorities such as ethnic Chinese (*orang Cina*). While the term *asli*, in the sense of pure, original, pristine has predominantly positive connotations, as *orang asli* it bears a rather negative sense of unromantic and undesirable primitiveness and is a derogatory label.

[9] See the considerable ethnographic literature on Indonesian syncretic and mystical beliefs; for instance, Beatty 1999, Pemberton 1994, Psota 1996, Stange (cf. references in Woodward 1991/2).

in such practices seem to hold, at least residually, some of these relevant beliefs. For instance, a vague belief in Ratu Adil as a saviour figure pops up frequently and then may become attached to a variety of political figures or may remain a vague yearning, regardless of whether someone is a devout Muslim or not. (For instance, I was told that for some time Mrs Suharto widely enjoyed this image among the uneducated masses, many of them good Muslims.)

I shall eschew here a debate on whether this syncretism is not in fact that at all (i.e., an amalgam of Islamic and pre-Islamic religious and cultural features of Hindu, Buddhist and tribal origin), but instead is derived from either Sufism or a version of Islam inspired by Indian and Persian cultural influences. Subsequent to Geertz having put forward his evolutionary notion of Java's religion – as having gradually formed as tribal animism it became, over time, enriched with later accretions of Hindu-Buddhism, and then Islamic elements, eventually forming today's *abanganism* (Geertz 1975a; Anderson 1972; Jay 1969) – some scholars have vigorously argued the view of the *agama Jawa'*s independent and authentic status as just another form of Islam (Hefner 1997a; Bowen 1993; Woodward 1988; Roff 1985). Geertz's view of *abanganism* is identical to the *santris'*: they too see it as a corruption of Islam proper containing the remains of earlier "superstitions". However, in reality the situation is highly obscure. Not only is it debatable whether or not "syncretic" forms are authentically Islamic, equally unclear is where exactly the boundary should be drawn that delineates *abanganism* vis-à-vis *santrism*. That, too, is a matter of individual, highly subjective, and often conflicting interpretation. Wahid himself is a prime example of this kind of definitional difficulty. He is undoubtedly a *santri kiyai* but adheres to a form of Islam which may be regarded as syncretic or Sufi, and is dependent on personal views and interpretation of what true Islam means (cf. The Jakarta Post 2000). While undoubtedly pious and a foremost thinker on Islamic (modernist or, as some would have it, neo-modernist) orthodoxy, he is said, despite spurning empty ritualism, to have some mystical inclinations. Like many *abangans*, he likes to consult with the spirits of ancient kings of Majapahit and sultans of Mataram, and even visits Sukarno's grave (*ibid.*: 6) – all features of worship integral to Javanese folk Islam and tightly interwoven with traces of (ancient?) ancestor worship and belief in spirit beings. Secure in his 'Muslim-hood' (*ibid.*: 144) and never ostentatious in his worship, he dislikes fanatics and laissez faire Muslims alike.

Of course, it is a matter for debate whether it is justified to speak of Indonesian Islam, or more to the point Javanese Islam as being syncretistic (in the sense of its having incorporated pre-Islamic forms of beliefs). Doing so may well derive from a form of essentialisation of what true Islam ought to be and this view may well be based on an idealised view of Middle Eastern Islam. The point is that re-Islamisation endeavours, of whatever brand, are inspired precisely by this vision of having to purify Islam, in fact, of having to purge it of such features seen as syncretisms (or unwarranted intrusions) and considered *bida* (falsehoods, abominations, illicit innovations). The basis lies in the desire to achieve the realisation of an essentialised vision of true Islam and correct orthodoxy (*akida*).

While this *dakwah* type re-Islamisation – or inner missionisation – in general is inclined to emphasise the inner value of true belief, the third form of

re-Islamisation is an even more ambitious, highly politicised one which seeks to inculcate a specifically Islamic form of government and state based on the legislative recognition of *shari'a* (*syariah*). It derides the drift towards the secularisation of politics and polity and seeks a re-infusion of Islamic doctrines at an official level. Not surprisingly, such initiatives are usually combined with secessionist or separatist attempts. Abandoning the idea of a pan-Indonesian *umat* (community of believers) – i.e., creating a pan-Indonesian Islamically based state – such people endeavour to set themselves apart through territorial separation from other, often ethnically defined groups and areas which show less inclination to follow the same path. Such initiatives often show militant, "extremist" features such as the secessionist movement in Aceh and, not surprisingly, at least under the Suharto regime, were tightly controlled if not vigorously combated by the military.[10]

Distinguishing more finely, there are a wide variety of re-Islamisation initiatives as well as a wide range of ideas as to what exactly is to be achieved. The multitude of *aliran*, versions of Islamic thought and Islamic aspirations, in fact makes it difficult to detect a common denominator. The huge differences in devotion and commitment unsurprisingly engender an enormously wide spectrum of ideas about the ideal application and interpretation, *ijtihad* and *kias*, of Islamic doctrine (cf. Hefner 1987b). The Acehnese model of Re-Islamisation quite obviously means something different from that which such organisations as Persis or Paramadina seek to achieve. On another level, groups of so-called *kaum muda* and *kaum tua*, *kolot* and *moderen*, modernists and traditionalists, have in the past always sought their respective and quite different visions. What they do have in common, to some extent, is no more than a general re-thinking of the role of religion in society, government, economy, law and public life as a whole. The degree to which this role is to be intensified in relation to other factors within society is where various initiatives and ideas about re-Islamisation part company.

Organisations such as Nadlatul Ulama, Muhammadiya, and Paramadina all have their loyal following (and "card-carrying" membership numbering in the millions), but they also follow slightly different goals and philosophies. However, when compared with more "fundamentalist" initiatives (in the past often referred to as *Darul-Islam* movements), such as that in Aceh at the present time, they appear very much alike. And while these large Islamic organisations enjoy relative freedom from government intervention, so-called fundamentalist initiatives (or those perceived rightly or wrongly as such) usually attract unfavourable attention from the state (and previously the Suharto regime). For instance, when an allegedly fundamentalist movement on Java called Haur Kuning (wrongly [?] translated in an Indonesian daily newspaper as 'yellow bamboo') came to the attention of the authorities it was violently broken up by police and military with the loss of several lives, including that of the leader, a certain Abdul Manan (*The Indonesia Times* 5

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[10] The Free Aceh movement pursues a composite agenda in which economic and real-political reasons sit side-by-side with the religious aspirations of creating an Islamic state. While the so-called "insurrection" is clearly not driven solely by religious motives (there are also *transmigrasi* issues and other economic concerns), in my view, it is clearly a successor movement to previous Darul Islam expressions in this area, noticeable since Dutch colonial times.

August 1993: 1; *Indonesian Observer* 26 August 1993: 3). This violent intervention was justified on grounds that included a mixture of national security considerations and a theological critique to the effect that the sect had violated "Islamic teaching". One suspects that at the base of this aggressive intervention is a kind of historically based categorisation that all fundamentalist or radical Islamic movements are separatist and secessionist in intent (therefore threatening national unity and the integrity of the state and thus violating the Pancasila and especially its principle of *Persatuan*).

Ignoring distinct differences in detail, what all these re-Islamisation moves seem to have in common is an attempt to bring about a closer rapprochement of religion and everyday life. It is only fundamentalists – sometimes called *dekek* (Jav., fanatics) to distinguish them from *santrism* – that seems to subsume under the latter state and polity, and therefore endeavour to bring about a total fusion of religion and society/state. More "moderate" Islamists are content with changing social practice on an individual, conscience-based level. Fundamentalists aim at restructuring state and state law (with a view to bring about a *negara Islam*, a quasi theocracy or hierocracy), while moderates wish to influence people individually to achieve closer conformity between personal conduct and Islamic values and ideals. Doing so, of course, ultimately is meant to bring about a re-invigorated Islamic spirit in the society as a whole. One kind of re-Islamisation – the fundamentalist model – works from the top down (by wanting to change the legal premise, and bringing about the "shariatisation" of law, society and public life), while the other, more moderate model works from the ground up (by focusing on individual conduct, appealing to personal conscience and voluntary collaboration).

INDONESIAN-TYPE SECULARISATION?

Despite all the differences between the numerous Islamic *aliran*, there is, however, one leitmotif running through their diverse agendas: namely to stem what are seen as the undesired consequences of loss of religion through secularisation. In other words, the diminution of Islamic substance, whether in public or in private life, is to be reversed. Some see this in nostalgic terms, through a comparison with the past, while others believe it is desirable, for practical reasons, to move toward a form of society premised on Islamic ethics and ethos. In both cases it is argued that secularisation, so far as it has already had an effect, should be reversed.

Certainly, secularisation under Suharto was at times vigorously promoted, even though at other times Islam was conspicuously hitched to his propagandist cart. So, for example, Hefner notes that Suharto's New Order was expected to support *abanganism*, but to everyone's surprise he found it opportune in 1990 to authorise the formation of ICMI (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Se-Indonesia; Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals) (1997b: 75). This was all the more surprising as some members openly promoted the Islamisation of state and society. On the other hand, some Islamic groups, among them quite conservative ones, when favoured, for more or less brief periods, by the New Order regime, even supported secularisation under Suharto's terms, thus consenting to a complete religion-state separation

(Hefner 2000: 79). One must presume they were just paying lip service to such a condition for short-term gain. Apparently, secularisation in this context meant – after the western model – privatisation of religion, personalising ethics and not calling on religion to inculcate public order. However, this does not ring true in the light of Geertz's observation in his field work area in East Java from earlier decades. He pointed out the inability of *santri* to agree to an open split between religion and secular government. Only some compromise is possible 'with *santris* settling for less than an Islamic State [only] if the government does not transgress the religious law, i.e., is willing to allow a certain degree of state-church fusion to serve *santri* interests' (1960: 210-214). He also notes that even if a vision of theocracy is only a theoretical ideal, an ambition *santri* themselves realise is hardly feasible, then a Negara Islam should at least resemble a hierocracy, a form of rule dominated by the *uluma*.[11]

Leading thinkers of even the more moderate re-Islamisation movements, while embracing the idea of modernisation in every other respect, reject secularisation (in the sense of loss of religious substance in Indonesian life and the decrease of Islam's influence) more or less explicitly. For example, Nurcholish Madjid, in a portrayal by Hassan, advocates 'modernisasi ialah rationalisasi bukan westernisasi,' modernisation by rationalisation but not westernisation, by which he seems to understand mainly secularisation and its social effects. He does not reject a 'process of overhauling outmoded thought and action patterns [including in Islam] which are not rational … for the achievement of maximum utility and efficiency' and 'the application of scientific findings about laws governing nature [as their] application to life will render [Islam] more rational and therefore modern …' (1985: 366). But secularisation is firmly rejected. Even though Madjid was accused of being a 'secularist' (Hefner 2000: 118) and a near-apostate (Liddle 1996: 329-330), this seems to have been more a deliberate slur by stern Islamists who resented his modernist tendencies, rather than a critique of substance. Abdurrahman Wahid (1986) is quoted in a similar vein, *prima facie* seemingly accepting a formal church-state separation and rejecting the idea of Islam as a political ideology, but in the last analysis unable to embrace secularisation (in the "strong" sense). Hefner argues Madjid has advocated the principle of Tauhid – or the Tawidisation of doctrine – thus 'representing the starting point of … Secularisation' (2000: 117). This is quintessentially Hefner's view of "soft" secularisation: it amounts to no more than a form of rationalisation of religion, but not of society as a whole.[12] Whether in the long term religious rationalisation will usher in societal secularisation, and how logically the latter can arise out of the former, remains rather doubtful.

Not surprisingly perhaps, the rejection of secularisation forms a common denominator which links even the most "liberal" re-Islamisation moves with more "orthodox" ones. It is certainly true that at the very opposite end of the spectrum, and diametrically opposed to fundamentalism, there are Islamic pragmatist or progressivist moves (usually referred to,

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[11]As Geertz notes, this ideal results from the historical precedence of the prophet Mohammed having been spiritual leader as well as leader of the Muslim community (i.e., the incipient state) and army (1960: 210).
[12] Geertz has described such a process for Hindu Bali (1975b).

somewhat tautologically, as neo-modernist) which seek to reshape and reform Islam with the express agenda to make it more compatible with Modernity. The main intention seems to be to reconcile a revised Islam with state, regime, and nationhood, mainly by shaping Islam in the image of an "inner religion" which is entirely compatible with the initiatives and demands of a modern nation directed by rationalism. The doctrines of scientific rationality and *raison d'etat* are not seen as subordinate and subservient to Islamic dogma. Reason and revelation are seen as co-extensive and complementary. Neo-modernists, by and large, place themselves in the tradition of Mutazilah and the spiritual patronage of Mohammed Abduh. In this category I would place, for instance, the well known Islamic thinker Harun Nasution (see Muzani 1994) and in a general sense the corporate spirit of ICMI (Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals), even though some of its members are on record as supporting the creation of an Islamic state. Neo-modernism's main agenda appears to be to advocate the separation of religion and political agency, and the supremacy of reason over blind belief, validating, for instance in the field of state policies, such initiatives as birth control (considered a vital state strategy in a nation which grows by one to two million people every year), and a reconsideration of the position of women in (Islamic) society (pers.comm. H. Nasution).

This Islamic brand is most readily accepted by the business and management elite who are motivated by the wish to look for an ethical rationale for their activity and their position in society. (This is not unlike European post-medieval burghers, merchants and artisans who were grasping at Protestantism as the ideology most congenial to rendering them a social and moral *raison d'etre*, as Weber 1985 has argued.) Their main motivations are derived from mercantilism and the globalisation of capitalist structures, which they seek to combine with a liberal interpretation of Islam (Cone 2000). Yet, despite bowing towards the main features of secularisation, such as a formal church-state separation, the implicit intention of Islamic neo-modernism is to propagate the modern relevance and pre-eminence of this religion and its doctrines vis-à-vis human-devised ones. Though reason, for instance, may share co-importance with faith, it is ultimately a divine gift and as such not meant to challenge and undermine, but rather to supplement faith. And although a theocracy is neither desired nor planned, religious creed is meant to intervene strongly in public discourse through the shared commitment of individuals. The gist of it is that neo-modernism, in the last analysis, is not designed to compromise Islam for the sake of promoting a Western-type Modernity of which secularisation (in the strong sense) is an integral part, but rather to shape Modernity along lines acceptable to a reformulated, updated and synthesis-readied Islam.

IS THE INDONESIAN SITUATION REPRESENTATIVE?

Hefner (1998a) critiques Gellner's pronouncement that the Islamic world is the big exception to a universal process of secularisation. The sense in which Gellner evidently understood secularisation was of the more "traditional" kind in terms of seeing it as a universal, law-like process to which human *societas*

per se is subjected. It would be effective regardless of processes of globalisation in which conditions world-wide are influenced by Western society (and especially the US) through its political and economic domination and secularisation is encouraged and fostered as a byproduct of Western hegemony. No society can remain aloof from such pressures, exerted on the rest of the world, as globalisation is driven by a Western-induced agenda. Hefner, however, suggests a revised concept of secularisation – soft secularisation, as he calls it – and if this is adopted then Indonesia, despite its conspicuous drive towards re-Islamisation, can be seen to be in accord with a universal process of secularisation. But what Hefner calls (soft) secularisation, in effect, turns out to be the 'rationalisation of religion' as Max Weber outlined it (the process by which the ideal-typical traditional form of religiosity metamorphoses into the equally ideal-typical rationalised religiosity) and which, as implied in Weber's argument, may or may not lead to secularisation in the hard sense. Hefner cites the emphasis on an abstract concept of divine oneness (*tawhid, tauhid*) and the abstraction of the divine as the leitmotif in this process (1998a: 156). In adddition to *tawhidisation* of *agama Jawa*'s liturgical devotion, Hefner refers to the development of civic pluralism based on tolerance and the recognition of the fundamental sameness of civil values of all interest groups. This, in Hefner's view, is backed by an enlightened awareness on the part of Islamic groups of the danger of an all-too-close association of religion and power. This does indeed seem to re-trace, to some extent, the emergence of social rationalisation and secularisation in Europe, or at least, Weber's view of this process.

This tolerant and modernist inclination of Islamic intent in Indonesia – which seems to have served as the model for Hefner's interpretation – reflects only one among several positions in the multifarious amalgam of Muslim interests, organisations, agendas, and individual contributions of outstanding thinkers of varying degree of influence. The kind of re-Islamisation Hefner is referring to and which is based in tolerance, recognition of the value of secular state institutions, civil liberties, economic progress, and the like, is but one of the many strands jostling for attention and supremacy. It is based in an elitist culture, which is also to some extent Westernised. The neo-modernist brand of Islam, though perhaps the most conspicuous one, has emerged precisely as the most prominent one because it is represented by very articulate and well-published thinkers and because of its ability, in the recent past, to align itself by and large with the regime and the state. It is the expression of a compromise culture and is not necessarily the most widely supported brand.

Hefner's analysis is based on a notion of secularisation which somewhat misconstrues its "essential" nature, i.e. the sense in which it is conventionally understood. One of the cornerstones of secularisation, as usually construed, is the separation of church and state, a process by which the public normative and institutional sphere more or less clearly and sharply becomes delineated from the private inner and religious sphere. The essential thrust of much of the re-Islamisation endeavours in Indonesia runs completely counter to this process. Even initiatives of the kind one would call moderate (Muhammadiyah, Nadlatul Ulama etc.) on closer inspection contain ideological ingredients which logically contradict the unfettered process of secularisation. These initiatives profess to be endeavouring to bring about a closer affinity between the purified, Islamic ethos of individuals and their conduct and the

collective practice as espoused by the state. A collectivity of individuals being inspired by and acting strictly in accord with Islamic principles and doctrines, however reformulated to suit a vision of Modernity, would automatically generate not only a polity, but also a state informed by the same spirit and determined by the same principles of Islamic doctrine as fundamentalism. Admittedly, this is a different kind of Islam, but it is nonetheless a state of affairs in which social conduct would be benchmarked against religious imperatives. In this sense even neo-modernist Islam attempts to bring about an affinity between the two sides, and thus practically aims at avoiding the creation of two strictly separated spheres of a "privatised church" and a secularised polity/ collectivity, i.e. "the state".

Perhaps the difference between conservative Islamic visions for the future and those of neo-modernism can be glossed as the former aiming for a *negara Islam* (Islamic state), while the latter contents itself with *negeri Islam* (Islamic country).[13] Even so, the two visions differ by degree rather than in principle, and the practical results of either would hardly be distinguishable.

RE-ISLAMISATION VERSUS POPULAR SPIRITUALITY

Some critical attention must also be directed to Hefner's assertion that 'the reformist [Islamic] initiative has proved astoundingly successful, suppressing heterodox cults and canalizing public expressions of popular spirituality away from the *wujudi* (mystical) pantheism once characteristic of folk Javanese religion and into more *tauhidic* or monotheistic devotional forms' (1998a: 155; my italics).[14] This is a significant circumstance in terms of the direction Indonesian society as a whole may be presumed to take. In making this statement, Hefner presumably sees here a similarity with Protestantism, whose rationalised worship was linked by Weber with a subsequent social transformation of which secularisation was a salient factor. Interestingly, however, this assertion of Hefner's seems to be contradicted by an earlier view he expressed to the effect that 'it would be premature on the basis of the Pasuruan example to conclude that Javanist tradition [i.e., syncretism, abanganism] is everywhere in decline under the New Order' (1987b: 549). If anything, the contradictory nature of these statements demonstrates the difficulty the social analyst experiences when attempting to attribute a unifying sense and meaning to the plethora of observable phenomena.

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[13] *Negara Islam* refers to a state which is organised in terms of Islamic principles, recognises Islamic doctrine as binding constitutionally and jurisprudentially, and constrains its citizens to achieve a minimal standard of piety. *Negeri Islam*, in a weaker sense, refers to a condition in which a majority of people adhere to a "Muslim way of life", voluntarily and without state coercion, reinforced perhaps by more or less freely accepted social norms and conventions seen as inspired by, or at least in accord with, Islamic dogma.

[14] Hefner's use of the term *wujudi* as meaning mystical (in reference to 'mystical pantheism') is peculiar. The term literally seems to refer to fulfilling or granting a wish, or making a wish come true. The term seem apposite only in the sense that many mystical (Javanese) practices have the practical goal of making wishes come true through ritualistic procedures. At least in educated parlance, terms such as *mistisisme*, *animisme*, *dinamisme* are used.

        My own experience in Java and Sumatra totally fails to support the empirical base of Hefner's contention that re-Islamisation is making significant and empirically traceable inroads into, what may be loosely termed, folk beliefs and practices.[15]   I could not detect any evidence for the supposed ongoing diminution in importance of non-Islamic practices and beliefs (that is, those branded non-Islamic by the definition of Islamists), nor for the assertion that re-Islamisation has managed to push aside spirit cults and related beliefs in Java. In fact, as far as I could see these forms are thriving, even though I cannot make a quantitative comparison with the situation twenty years ago or with the conditions at the time Geertz did most of his field work on Java for his major book (1960). Hefner, for instance, refers to the advance of Islam vis-à-vis Hinduism and Javanism in the upland Tengger area in earlier decades of the twentieth century, but by the same token Christianity achieved gains later on, as a reaction to the bloodletting directed towards communism in 1965 (1990: 10). The next generation of people purged as communists, mindful both of the Pancasila requiring every citizen to adhere to a monotheistic religion and of the fact that Islam had been at the forefront of the mass slaughter, turned to the religious alternative available to them (Hefner 1993). In the absence of any hard data on religious commitment of Javanese, or Indonesians as a whole, then, of a value such as these data might be, it can only be an intuitive grasp of the situation which sways the researcher to detect trends.

        During my research work apparently informed sources were maintaining that non-Islamic forms of belief and practice remained as strong as, if not stronger than, before. (Of course, it is difficult to judge whether such views spring from a partisan involvement, wishful thinking and/or personal preferences, or can be called objective and impartially well informed in any sense.) In the absence of unambiguous statistics, one can only accept what one often hears, namely that such beliefs and practices as *agama Jawa* (*agami Jawi*), *kejawen, kaperjayan Jawi, kebhatinan* and the like are vigorous and strong, and apparently widely practised right through the Javanese population. The practice of *kebhatinan* (mystical powers required to perform outstanding tasks such as healing, puppet play), beliefs in *danyang* (guardian spirits), ghosts, etc. can hardly be said to have lessened. *Dugunism* (spirit healing) and beliefs in mythical spirit beings (such as Ratu Kidul, Ratu Adil) abound. *Juru kunci* (custodians of sacred places, *tempat keramat*) perform, for payment, invocations of ancestor spirits at *candi* sites (ancient pre-Islamic ruins) to ask, on behalf of their clients, for protection, health, success and good fortune. And people, as numerously as before, still perform pilgrimages to non-Islamic *tempat keramat* (holy places, e.g., royal cemeteries) to obtain mystical power (*kebhatinan*) or foresight through meaningful dreams. The number of Javanese who use mystical techniques (*sujud, meditasi, semedi*), rather than Islamic prayer, to seek power and personal enhancement does not appear to have significantly dropped off, if one is to believe Indonesian experts. It is well

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[15] My conclusions are based on randomly conducted, informal interviews, on observations of daily life, and on information supplied by Indonesian scholars, mainly of the Gadja Madah and Satya Wacana universities, interested and versed in this field. As I have not specifically obtained their permission to name them and they may be embarrassed by being linked with my conclusions, they shall remain anonymous.

to bear in mind that *santrism* and *dakwah* activity are neither doctrinally coordinated, nor uni-directional, nor homomorphous. When a leading "neo-modernist" (or "modernist", depending on one's viewpoint) Islamic exponent such as Gus Dur inclines towards techniques of *kebhatinan*, it becomes clear just how different Islamic interpretations are of what purification of creed and practice should mean.

From an extreme purist Islamic point of view even puppetry (*wayang*) is a syncretistic or perhaps even an un-Islamic form and should be banned; or at best should be considered acceptable only – as a quasi minimal requirement – if it is specifically premised on an invocation of Allah and his blessing (Susilo 2000). Clearly the evidence does not suggest that it has lost much or any of its popularity, even though the performance has undergone changes in structure, purpose and perception. Changes that have affected it seem to have to do more with economics than reasons of faith. *Ruwatan*, for instance, is still performed to avert evil and protect *sukerta* (the vulnerable), mostly without reference, either overt or implicit, to Islam (Susilo 2000). The reasons why shortened versions of *ruwatan* are preferred now seem to have little to do with a strengthening of Islam and its opposition to this supposedly pre-Islamic tradition.

This absence of a perceptible and wide-spread impact of Islamic purity (to repeat: this means the "purity" aspired to by Islamists) is clearly evident on the village level. Perhaps in urban situations and as far as the middle class is concerned re-Islamisation did make major and noticeable advances. In fact, its advances may have come at the expense of secularisation in the sense that it affected mostly those groups, urban and middle class professionals, who had previously left behind both an explicit commitment to Islam as well as so-called syncretistic forms of belief and practice; in other words, those that had been "secularised" more than any other socio-economic or ethnic group. In rural areas, we witness an increased involvement in Islamic liturgy and outward forms of devotion without this necessarily being accompanied by an abandonment of "syncretic" forms. *Abanganisme*, going with the time, now sees it as opportune to adhere to outward forms of pietism and the observance of devotional trappings, without abandoning traditions which from a "purist" Muslim viewpoint constitute non-Islamic accretions. (One may wonder, where exactly here the dividing line may be between an opportunistic insincerity and a strengthening of a devotionally ostentatious, but not entirely insincere, inherently syncretic form of Islam. One may easily and suddenly develop into the other at any time.)

In this sense it may be more apposite to speak of a re-spiritualisation rather than an effective "purification" of Islam. In this respect there is perhaps a parallel with the New Age in Western society and the spiritual search – by a relatively educated and affluent middle class uprooted from traditional religiosity – for meaning, ethical guidance, and personal empowerment. One is reminded of the function of New Age in Western society inasmuch as its increased emphasis on religiosity and spirituality also causes it to fall somewhat outside the conventionally expected frame of what secularisation means. Seemingly defying its thrust, New Age appears to prod society gently in the opposite direction, yet in its emphasis on tolerance and individuation of belief it does not challenge the church-state separation and the de-religionisation (or de-sacralisation) of public discourse. But beyond this superficial similarity the

courses that Western (post-) Modernity and Indonesia are taking seem to diverge markedly.

The immediate effect Indonesian *dakwah* is having is certainly working against societal secularisation (i.e., a lessening of Islam's influence in public discourse). In its attempt to reduce the influence of *abanganism*, the Islamic re-spiritualisation is unlikely to open the way for rationalisation, either religious or social – at least in the immediate and short term – and thus appears unlikely to have the same effect as Protestantism seems to have had in Europe, according to Weber. The this-wordliness and pragmatism of *abanganism* seem to be more congenial to societal secularisation, and to be a more suitable starting point to initiate this process, than *santrism* is. Whether Islamic enthusiasm is comparable to Protestantism in having the same effect of encouraging rationalisation and as a consequence bringing about secularisation, seems more than doubtful. If Weber is correct, it was a set of very particular doctrinal and exegetical points (i.e., predestination, the divine value of labour, and the soteriological hope for a materialist sign of grace) that made Calvinist Protestantism the harbinger of secularisation. These ideas are absent in Islam. In the absence of a doctrinal incentive, whether globalisation on Western terms is powerful enough to instill a sustained process of secularisation in Indonesian society seems equally doubtful under the present conditions of an ever-strengthening *dakwah*.

Clearly, Indonesia is following too diversified a path to allow a clear vision of a future trajectory. There is certainly a multifariousness of signals sent out by Indonesian society, so that in this religious and political cacophony one cannot detect a clear and active tone that would signal an unambiguous trend towards secularisation in the sense in which this concept is commonly understood. While undoubtedly there is an enormous push for (economic) "modernisation", it is of a distinctly Indonesian kind and is reminiscent of Tibi's critique that Islam wishes to appropriate the fruits of Western science and technology but not the "culture" that is actually responsible for them. I cannot see Gellner's thesis, that the Islamic world is notable for an absence of any decisive sign of secularisation, being disproved – especially if we adhere, as I suggest we should, to an interpretation of secularisation that is "harder" than Hefner suggests, i.e., a notion of the successive withdrawal of religion from the public discourse. At the moment the emphasis on *dakwah* shows little sign of that. Finally, the question must remain open as to whether or not democracy and a secular, rational civic discourse (as a completion of the mission of Modernity as proposed and envisaged by Jurgen Habermas) can take hold while there is at the same time a push towards the shariatisation of laws, courts and the personal lives of people.

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