

Productive Intolerance: Godly Nationalism in Indonesia

JEREMY MENCHIK

International Relations, Boston University

In Islamic jurisprudence one of the duties of the state is *hirasatud-din wa siyasatud-dunya*: guarding religion and managing the world. Guarding religion from the people who would tarnish, damage, and destroy it. In Indonesia, there is religious freedom but there cannot be freedom to defile religions that are followed by other citizens, either by harassment, undermining doctrine, or through activities that cause social conflict as was done by the deviant sects.

—Maman Abdurrahman, Chair of Persatuan Islam (Persis)¹

INTRODUCTION

Since the fall of President Soeharto in 1998, Indonesia has played host to a curious form of internecine conflict: Islamist vigilante groups have been attacking members of a small, socially marginal Muslim sect called Ahmadiyah. Ahmadiyah is a controversial sect with followers around the globe. Many Sunni Muslims charge that Ahmadis are not true Muslims due to their belief that their founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, was a prophet. The vigilantes claim that Ahmadiyah is damaging Islam by propagating the belief that another prophet came after Muhammad and have dubbed Ahmadiyah a “deviant sect,” invoking a 1965 presidential decree that demands all Indonesians adhere to one of the six religions sanctioned by the state: Islam,

Acknowledgments: This article is based on two years of field research in Indonesia, from September 2008 to October 2010. Archival material is from the National Library, the National Archive, and the archived publications of the organizations Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and Persatuan Islam. Ethnographic material is based on personal observation in the 2010 Constitutional Court hearings, interviews, and court transcripts. I gratefully acknowledge support from Fulbright-AMINEF and the Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center at Stanford University, as well as generous feedback from Graham Brown, Donald Emmerson, Greg Fealy, Howard Federspiel, Jeffrey Hadler, Yoshiko Herrera, Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, Rachel Beatty Riedl, Lisa Wedeen, and the anonymous *CSSH* reviewers. The Constitutional Court hearings would have been less intelligible without the patient guidance of Mark Cammack, Asrul Sani, and Luthfi Widagdo Eddyono. All translations from Indonesian are by the author.

¹ Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia, Court Transcript no. 140/puu-vii/2009 Concerning the Examination of Act No. 1 of 1965 Presidential Decree on the Abuse and/or Blasphemy against Religion based on the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (hereafter “Court transcript”), no. 140/puu-vii/2009, VI, 70–73.

Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. For over ten years, the pillars of Indonesian democracy—the state, the police, and Muslim civil society—have been either unwilling or unable to stop the attacks.²

What explains the prolonged violence toward Ahmadiyah?³ What, if anything, is significant about the targeting of Ahmadihs? The leading explanation treats the attacks as a product of democratization, decentralization, and the influence of small but vocal vigilante groups like the Islamic Defender's Front (FPI) and Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia, who use the issue to gain public support. As the International Crisis Group explained, "With the advent in 2005 of direct local elections including at the district level, hardline groups have found it expedient to lobby locally for policy changes, from banning alcohol to closing Ahmadiyah mosques."⁴ Human rights advocates have lambasted the state for bowing to pressure from these hardline groups.⁵ Against U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's lauding of Indonesia for its democratic transition, longtime human rights advocate Andreas Harsono branded

² Indonesian Muslim civil society is rooted in Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, which together run thousands of schools and universities, hundreds of hospitals and clinics, youth organizations, mosques, prayer circles, political parties, and women's wings, and choose leaders at the national, province, district, village, and neighborhood levels. Of Indonesia's two hundred million Muslims, 75 percent identify with one or the other. Saiful Mujani and R. William Liddle, "Politics, Islam, and Public Opinion," *Journal of Democracy* 15, 1 (2004): 109–23, here 120.

³ While there were similar instances of violence toward minority Christians and Shi'ites during this period, the attacks on Ahmadiyah members were more enduring and departed from the trend of decreasing ethnic conflict since 2003. My tabulation of acts of physical violence against Ahmadiyah members from 2002 to 2006 shows a peak in 2005, with nineteen incidents, and a low of two incidents each in 2003 and 2004. The Setara Institute's list of "acts of intolerance" for 2007–2012 extends beyond violence to include polemics, municipal regulations restricting religious freedom, and "state inaction" in preventing violence. Setara's data show a rise in such acts in 2008 and 2011, with a low in 2007. My data are compiled from *Koran Tempo*, *Bisnis Indonesia*, *Republika*, *Gatra.com*, *Jakarta Post*, *Suara Karya*, *Media Indonesia*, *Suara Pembaruan*, *Kompas*, *Detik.com*, and *Riauapos.com*. For Setara, see Setara Institute for Democracy and Peace, "Siding and Acting Intolerantly: Intolerance by Society and Restriction by the State in Freedom of Religion/Belief in Indonesia," 2009, <http://www.setara-institute.org/en/content/report-freedom-religion-and-belief-2008>; "Report on Freedom of Religion and Belief in 2011," 2011, <http://www.setara-institute.org/en/content/report-freedom-religion-and-belief-2011>; and "Report on Freedom of Religion and Belief in 2012," 2012, <http://www.setara-institute.org/en/content/report-freedom-religion-and-belief-2012> (all accessed 28 Feb. 2013); and Ashutosh Varshney, Rizal Panggabean, and Mohammad Zulfan Tadjoeddin, "Patterns of Collective Violence in Indonesia (1990–2003)," United Nations Support Facility for Indonesian Recovery (UNSFIR) Working Paper, 2004, www.unsfir.or.id (accessed 10 Oct. 2009).

⁴ International Crisis Group (ICG), "Indonesia: From Vigilantism to Terrorism in Cirebon," *Asia Briefing* 132 (2012): 10; see also Human Rights Watch (HRW), "In Religion's Name: Abuses against Religious Minorities in Indonesia," 2013, <http://www.hrw.org> (accessed 28 Feb. 2013); and ICG, "Indonesia: Implications of the Ahmadiyah Decree," *Asia Briefing* 78 (2008).

⁵ Human Rights First, "Blasphemy Laws Exposed: The Consequences of Criminalizing 'Defamation of Religions,'" 2011, http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/Blasphemy_Cases.pdf (accessed 28 Feb. 2013); HRW, "In Religion's Name."

Indonesia “no model for Muslim democracy” due to the state’s unwillingness to protect religious minorities.⁶

This explanation for intolerance toward Ahmadiyah is consistent with assumptions about the moderate character of Islam in Indonesia and the secular state; scholars have long argued that in contrast to Middle Eastern states, in the world’s largest Muslim-majority country Islamist movements have failed to find a foothold.⁷ For example, the historian Robert Elson asserts that Islam exerted little influence on Indonesian politics before independence in 1945 and thereafter remained “marginalized and relatively unimportant in a political sense” and “greatly overshadowed by a form of political thinking usually called ‘secular nationalism.’”⁸ Yet this assumption is not supported by empirical data. Contemporary surveys with leaders of Muslim civil society suggest that rather than being tolerant toward Ahmadis, an overwhelming majority believes Ahmadis should not be allowed to hold public office, build houses of worship, or teach Islamic studies.⁹ Those same leaders, however, believe that Christians and Hindus should be permitted greater religious and political freedom. Ahmadiyah, it would seem, marks the boundary of Indonesia’s much-lauded “generally tolerant brand of Islam.”¹⁰

Nor is intolerance toward Ahmadis a recent by-product of democratization; it preceded the establishment of the state in 1945 and continues to

⁶ Andreas Harsono, “No Model for Muslim Democracy,” *New York Times*, 22 May 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/22/opinion/no-model-for-muslim-democracy.html> (accessed 19 Feb. 2013).

⁷ Robert Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Marcus Mietzner, *Military Politics, Islam, and the State in Indonesia: From Turbulent Transition to Democratic Consolidation* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009); Robert Pringle, *Understanding Islam in Indonesia: Politics and Diversity* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2010); Saiful Mujani and R. William Liddle, “Muslim Indonesia’s Secular Democracy,” *Asian Survey* 49, 4 (2009): 575–90. The “greening” period of the state, from 1988 to 1992, and a current campaign of “stealth Islamization” are considered exceptions. R. William Liddle, “The Islamic Turn in Indonesia: A Political Explanation,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, 55, 3 (1996): 613–34; Thomas B. Pepinsky, R. William Liddle, and Saiful Mujani, “Indonesian Democracy and the Transformation of Political Islam,” unpub. MSS, 2010, <http://www.lsi.or.id/riset/385/Indonesian%20Democracy> (accessed 16 May 2012). For an alternative account, see Michael Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

⁸ R. E. Elson, “Another Look at the Jakarta Charter Controversy of 1945,” *Indonesia* 88 (2009): 105–30, here 106.

⁹ In a survey that I conducted in 2010, 75 percent of Muhammadiyah leaders and 59 percent of NU leaders said that no Ahmadiyah member should be allowed to become the mayor in Jakarta. Eighty percent of Muhammadiyah leaders and 67 percent of NU leaders said that Ahmadiyah members should not be allowed to build a house of worship in Jakarta. Eighty-eight percent of Muhammadiyah leaders and 82 percent of NU leaders said that Ahmadiyah members should not be permitted to teach Islamic studies in public schools. Jeremy Menchik, “Tolerance without Liberalism: Islamic Institutions and Political Violence in Twentieth Century Indonesia,” PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2011.

¹⁰ Benedict Rogers, “Indonesia’s Rising Religious Intolerance,” *New York Times*, 21 May 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/22/opinion/indonesias-rising-religious-intolerance.html> (accessed 19 Feb. 2013).

reflect its policies. The first closing of an Ahmadiyah mosque in Indonesia was by order of the Regent of Batavia in 1936.¹¹ Leading Muslim organizations deemed Ahmadiyah heretical in the 1920s and 1930s, and in 1980 and 2005 the quasi-governmental Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) and its regional bodies issued fatwas against the sect.¹² Municipal and provincial government bans on Ahmadiyah occurred throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.¹³ According to the Ministry of Religion (MORA), religion is a privileged category, and syncretic movements like the Javanese *kepercayaan* and heterodox movements like Ahmadiyah have long been refused recognition.¹⁴ Despite claims to being a “secular democracy,” the state is fully involved in the firm demarcation of religious orthodoxy.

In this essay, I suggest an alternative reading of intolerance of Ahmadiyah by excavating overlooked aspects of the tangled relationship between religion and nationalism. I suggest that the privileging of religious orthodoxy and the truncated pluralism of the Indonesian state constitute a theoretically neglected form of religious nationalism that I dub “godly nationalism.” The term “religious nationalism” is usually invoked as a conceptual placeholder for particular instances of Jewish, Islamic, Hindu, Christian, or Buddhist nationalism. Yet in demanding that citizens believe in God, while being ambivalent as to which path to God they should choose, Indonesia’s brand of nationalism is exclusively religious but not particular.

I theorize godly nationalism as an imagined community bound by a common, orthodox theism and mobilized through the state in cooperation with religious organizations in society.¹⁵ As long as citizens believe in one of the state-sanctioned pathways to God, they become full members of civil society and receive state protection and other benefits of citizenship. Conversely, the advocacy of disbelief is actively discouraged; not only are disbelievers thought incapable of ethical behavior, they are thought to make belief in God more difficult for the rest of society by confusing true beliefs with false ones, propagating falsehoods, and undermining religious education. For a

¹¹ *Al Lissaan* 5, 1 (27 Apr. 1936): 38.

¹² Melissa Crouch, “Indonesia, Militant Islam and Ahmadiyah: Origins and Implications,” Melbourne Law School Background Paper, 2009, http://alc.law.unimelb.edu.au/files/dmfile/crouch_final_website1.pdf (accessed 2 Apr. 2014); Jeremy Menchik, “Illiberal but not Intolerant: Understanding the Indonesian Council of Ulama,” *Inside Indonesia* 90 (Oct.–Dec. 2007), <http://www.insideindonesia.org/weekly-articles/illiberal-but-not-intolerant> (accessed 2 Apr. 2014).

¹³ Crouch, “Indonesia, Militant Islam,” 10–12.

¹⁴ Andrew J. Abalihin, “A Sixth Religion? Confucianism and the Negotiation of Indonesian-Chinese Identity under the Pancasila State,” in Andrew C. Willford and Kenneth M. George, eds., *Spirited Politics: Religion and Public Life in Contemporary Southeast Asia*, (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publication, 2005), 119–42, here 127; Niels Mulder, *Mysticism and Everyday Life in Contemporary Java* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1978), 5–6, 109.

¹⁵ Orthodoxy is locally and temporally defined. Talal Asad, *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 1986).

godly nation to endure, it must privilege some beliefs and prosecute acts of deviance as blasphemy.

Like other forms of nationalism, Indonesia's godly nationalism is a product of specific practices; I demonstrate that the persecution of heterodox and liminal faiths brings together groups that are otherwise at odds due to differences in religious doctrine, political interests, or economic class. In that respect, the answer to my question, "What, if anything, is significant about the targeting of Ahmadis?" is that intolerance and nation building are part of a mutually constitutive process. The campaign against Ahmadiyah is part of a broader effort by civil society and the state to constitute the nation through belief in God. In that respect, contemporary intolerance to Ahmadiyah is merely the most recent manifestation of a longstanding effort to promote godly nationalism while dislodging secular or Islamic alternatives.

Indonesia is not the only country to host debates over belief in God, religious freedom, and blasphemy. In one prominent case, the High Court of Egypt convicted a professor of Arabic language and literature, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, of apostasy on the grounds that he was no longer a Muslim because he supported liberal ideas. The international human rights community decried the verdict against Abu Zayd as an affront to freedom of religion, and labeled his accusers "intellectual terrorists."¹⁶ Such accusations of ideological intolerance are often read backward into debates over blasphemy. Yet, focusing on the ideological origins of intolerance overlooks the productive, community-forming practices that acts of exclusion make possible. Instead, I suggest that the debates over blasphemy are an attempt to affirm (by Muslim civil society) or disrupt (by liberals) norms and laws that help constitute the nation through belief in God. While highlighting the productive effects of intolerance may be normatively discomfiting to scholars, ignoring the results of intolerance means misunderstanding a long-standing and perhaps increasingly common form of nationalism.

In the next section I describe the trajectory of scholarship on religion and nationalism to highlight overlooked areas. Two empirical sections on "Productive Intolerance" that follow focus on key events in twentieth-century Indonesia to illuminate the coming together that the exclusion of heterodoxy enables: "Part I" explores primary-source archival material on the history of Ahmadiyah and its relation to early state formation. "Part II" shows how godly nationalism was institutionalized in 1965, and then draws upon ethnographic observations from the most important court hearing on religion and politics during Indonesia's post-1998 democratic period. I conclude the article by drawing parallels to other cases and intervening in a recent debate about religious freedom and imperial intervention.

¹⁶ Baber Johansen, "Apostasy as Objective and Depersonalized Fact: Two Recent Egyptian Court Judgments," *Social Research* 70, 3 (2003): 687–710.

NATIONALISM AND RELIGION

Studies of nationalism in the postcolonial period overwhelmingly rely on Benedict Anderson's definition of an "imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign."¹⁷ Anderson argues that beginning with the French Revolution and print-capitalism, groups of people began to see themselves as connected with other people through their linguistic and cultural practices. Nationalism developed slightly differently in postcolonial states: secular schools created an educated indigenous upper class; the census created categories of racial groups with which to organize formal political institutions; maps defined the nation's political boundaries, along which narratives of conquest and control were woven; and museums manufactured the archaeological truths of the nation.¹⁸

Anderson's conception of modern nationalism has been criticized for ignoring religion. In an influential early critique, Peter van der Veer suggested religious practice and discourse may be a constitutive part of national identity rather than epiphenomenal or a smokescreen for hoary political interests. He focused on everyday practices, including conversion, pilgrimages, and the deployment of religious symbols, to argue that the activities that underpin nationalism are dynamic rather than a relic of colonialism.¹⁹

Since the late 1990s, accounts of religion and nationalism that emphasize hybridity and fluidity have become dominant and, in doing so, have challenged the secularity of core concepts in political theory.²⁰ Drawing on a comparison of Asian and European nationalism, van der Veer and Hartmut Lehmann suggest that hybridity is not the exception but the norm.²¹ Van der Veer moreover suggests that the modern subject is produced alongside the modern public, and both are infused with religion. Likewise, in critiquing the history of nationalism, Partha Chatterjee suggests that classical nationalist historiographies often hide the religious solidarities that underpin national loyalties.²²

¹⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 2d ed. (London: Verso, 2003), 6.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 163–85.

¹⁹ Peter van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

²⁰ There are important exceptions. Juergensmeyer relies on a Geertzian conception of religion and a Weberian approach to politics to suggest that these two totalizing aspects of culture are in perpetual competition. See Gellner and Smith for parallel accounts of how religion constitutes nationalism. Mark Juergensmeyer, "The New Religious State," *Comparative Politics* 27, 4 (1995): 379–91; Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983); Anthony D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); and *The Cultural Foundations of Nations: Hierarchy, Covenant and Republic* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2008).

²¹ Peter van der Veer and Hartmut Lehmann, eds., *Nation and Religion: Perspectives on Europe and Asia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

²² Partha Chatterjee, "On Religious and Linguistic Nationalism: The Second Partition of Bengal," in Peter van der Veer and Hartmut Lehmann, eds., *Nation and Religion: Perspectives on Europe and Asia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 126. See also Anthony W. Marx, *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

While the first generation to rethink religion and nationalism crossed religious lines, the second has drawn its inspiration more from the Muslim world. Talal Asad built on his earlier work on the anthropology of Islam by arguing that the social solidarities of the Muslim *umma* (community) neither mimic nor compete with nationalism, since the modern community is theologically rather than territorially defined, self-governing rather than unified by an overarching political unit, and produced through embodied ritual rather than the formal institutions of the modern state.²³ Asad's student, Charles Hirshkind, echoed van der Veer in suggesting that the ethical sensibilities cultivated by modern religious movements redefine the boundaries between public and private, religious and secular. In doing so, religious movements return religious authority to the public sphere but do not undermine nationalism.²⁴

Like Hirshkind and van der Veer, Lisa Wedeen focused on everyday practices rather than formal doctrine or nationalist historiography. She argued that nationalism is no more static than any other aspect of culture. Drawing on the synthesis of theological and nationalist imagining in the Yemenese newspaper *al-Īmān*, Wedeen persuasively argued against teleological conceptions of secularism as either following religious nationalism or competing with it.²⁵

In parallel to these advances on Anderson's conception of nationalism, scholars of Indonesia have developed sophisticated alternative visions. Among the more underappreciated theoretical critiques of Anderson is Michael Laffan's 2003 book *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia*, which maps the writings of Muslims from Southeast Asia who studied in the Hijaz and Cairo during the late nineteenth century. Once abroad, Laffan found, members of the emergent Indonesian Muslim *ecumene* felt a heightened sense of belonging to Muslim Southeast Asia, and upon their return their periodicals *al-Imam* and *al-Munir* were instrumental in forming a sense of community.²⁶ The subtitle of *al-Imam*, "The voice of Indies Muslims who love their religion and their homeland," captures the reformers' overlapping commitments.²⁷ Rather than working against nationalism, Laffan suggests, Islamic reform played a key role in the imagining of the *Indonesian umma*.

More recently, Chiara Formichi and Kevin Fogg, though they emphasize the repeated failures of Islamists in national politics since the 1950s, have shown how religious and national commitments can be coterminous. While Elson claims, "Islamist ideas were late in emerging in modern Indonesia, and

²³ Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

²⁴ Charles Hirschkind, "Civic Virtue and Religious Reason: An Islamic Counterpublic," *Cultural Anthropology* 16, 1 (2001): 3–34.

²⁵ Lisa Wedeen, *Peripheral Visions: Publics, Power and Performance in Yemen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 9–14; Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

²⁶ Michael Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia: The Umma below the Winds* (RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 176.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

long remained marginal to Indonesians' ideas of what their nation should be and do,"²⁸ Formichi shows how, in fact, pan-Islamic and then Indonesian Islamic nationalist ideals endured beyond the late colonial period in the writings of the influential leader of *Darul Islam*, Kartosuwiryo.²⁹ On the grassroots level, Fogg reveals how pious Muslims experienced the 1945 revolution as an explicitly Islamist struggle, even while their leaders in Jakarta were hopelessly fractured by theology, political practice, and an inability to pass their legislative agenda.³⁰ Fogg, Formichi, and Laffan demonstrate that Islamism was crucial to the coming together of the Indonesian nation, and thus provide a vital historical corrective to Anderson's vision of the triumph of secular nationalism.

That said, insofar as Fogg, Formichi, and Laffan delegate religious nationalism to the dustbin of history or the geographic and intellectual periphery of national politics, these advances are incomplete. As I will show, Indonesian nationalism continues to be rooted in religious solidarities even while it is not an Islamic state. My argument challenges scholarly conceptions of the triumph of the "secular" state and the failure of its counterpart, the Islamic state, by mapping the genealogy of the godly state and its concurrent practices.³¹

As Indonesian politicians often point out, the Pancasila state is not secular. Pancasila is the basis of Indonesian national ideology; its five principles are belief in God, humanitarianism, national unity, social justice, and democracy as expressed through representatives of the people. In the 1950s, both secular nationalists and Islamists saw Pancasila as an alternative to Islamic nationalism. In the 1970s, Soeharto made it the ideological pillar of the regime and forced civil society organizations to pledge their allegiance to it. In the 1980s, opponents of the regime articulated a diverse set of goals employing the language of Pancasila. In a thoughtful text, Douglas Ramage described this hybridity and embraced Pancasila as supportive of nation building and democratization, and a bulwark against an Islamic state.³² Yet Ramage

²⁸ Robert Elson, "Nationalism, Islam, 'Secularism' and the State in Contemporary Indonesia," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 64, 3 (2010): 328–43, here 328.

²⁹ Chiara Formichi, "Pan-Islam and Religious Nationalism: The Case of Kartosuwiryo and Negara Islam Indonesia," *Indonesia* 90 (Oct. 2010): 125–46; and *Islam and the Making of the Nation: Kartosuwiryo and Political Islam in 20th Century Indonesia* (Leiden: KITLV, and Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012).

³⁰ Kevin Fogg, "The Fate of Muslim Nationalism in Independent Indonesia," PhD diss., Yale University, 2012.

³¹ See, for example, Mujani and Liddle, "Muslim Indonesia's Secular Democracy"; Arskal Salim, *Challenging the Secular State: The Islamization of Law in Modern Indonesia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008). Similarly, Anderson's most recent statement on Indonesian nationalism celebrates the unifying, productive power of secular nationalism against regional and ethnic particularism. His only mention of religion pejoratively links it to the mass killings of Indonesian Communist Party members in 1965–1966. Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, "Indonesian Nationalism Today and in the Future," *Indonesia* 67 (1999): 1–11, here 10.

³² Douglas E. Ramage, *Politics in Indonesia: Democracy, Islam and the Ideology of Tolerance* (London: Routledge, 1995).

ignores the place of heterodox faiths and the inherent limits of tolerance in a state that makes belief in God obligatory while defining religion narrowly. He celebrates the non-Islamic aspect of Pancasila but ignores the non-secular element. Similarly, Saiful Mujani and R. William Liddle tweak the definition of secular actors so as to include those who identify with Pancasila and its demand that adherents possess “belief in the one high God.”³³ Like Ramage’s view, this surprising redefinition is made possible by the endurance of a false binary between Islamic and secular nationalism. Since Pancasila is not Islamic, the reasoning goes, it must be secular.

Luthfi Assyaukanie, however, provides a hint of a middle category by delineating three “models” of state-Islam relations. The first is an Islamic democratic state governed by Islamic law. The second is a secular liberal democratic state. The third model is a religious democratic state. Importantly, in differentiating the religious democratic state from the liberal democratic state, Assyaukanie notes that followers of heterodox faiths are not recognized in the former.³⁴ Yet Assyaukanie’s sympathies are with the liberals and, as a result, he does not discuss the limits of his third model. This is likely deliberate, since making the state secular and liberal would demand a radical restructuring of Indonesian nationalism.

In what follows, I build on the work of van der Veer, Asad, Wedeen, Laffan, and Assyaukanie to argue that Indonesia contains a form of nationalism that is neither Islamic nor secular, but rather exclusively and assertively religious. Active state support for religion did not die in 1945 with the failure of the Jakarta Charter and the state’s embrace of Pancasila, or in 1952 with the rejection of Islamic law, or in 2002 when the parliament again rejected the incorporation of Islamic law into state law, or with the repeated failures of Islamists in electoral competition despite moderating of their demands. Rather, the privileging of religion is made manifest through state support for religious orthodoxy over liminal and heterodox faiths.

I define godly nationalism as an imagined community bound by a common, orthodox theism and mobilized through the state in cooperation with religious organizations in society. Godly nationalists feel that belief in God is a civic virtue that accrues both individual and social benefits. For individuals, belief in God brings an enlightened understanding of the world that is preferable to premodern beliefs such as animism, heterodox beliefs, or secular worldviews. Individuals who believe in God are seen to be wiser, more compassionate, generous, and tolerant. The archetype of a good citizen is one who believes in God and uses that belief to motivate his or her behavior.

³³ Mujani and Liddle, “Muslim Indonesia’s Secular Democracy,” 577–78.

³⁴ Luthfi Assyaukanie, *Islam and the Secular State in Indonesia* (Singapore: Institute of South-east Asian Studies, 2009), 155–58.

Likewise, social and political institutions are thought to perform better if individuals working within them believe in God.

While belief in God is a goal for good citizens, it is not necessarily based on coercion. Godly nationalism may be formally established by the state and coercively enforced by the police, bureaucracy, and courts, such as through personal status laws based on religious principles and limits on individual freedom. Alternatively, godly nationalism may be informally policed through social norms, religious organizations, media, and the family. Regardless of the degree to which godly nationalism is enforced, belief in God is seen as a virtue that should be promoted through education, ethical guidance, and social norms. A godly nation limits individual freedoms so as to ensure that disbelievers do not tarnish, damage, or destroy the world's religions.

Godly nationalism should not be conflated with being compatible with but contrary to secular nationalism, as Hirshkind and Asad contend is the case with religious nationalism. Rather, godly nationalism occupies one middle position between religious and secular nationalism. Nor does this make Indonesia an example of the ambiguity that accompanies modern secularism. In contrast to religious nationalism, godly nationalism is plural; the state promotes belief in God through multiple religions. In contrast to secular nationalism, godly nationalism is predicated on theological rather than geographic or ethnic exclusion; liminal groups, heterodox groups, and nonbelievers are denied the full benefits of citizenship. While Hussein Agrama's astute reading of Egypt suggests that the blurring of the religious and the secular serves the expanding regulatory capacity of the modern state, I detail an alternative that is not necessarily moving toward either liberal secularism or theocracy.³⁵ Godly nationalism is also distinct from Robert Bellah's "civil religion."³⁶ The state is not the focus of worship in godly nationalism; it is rather the conduit for religious belief, guiding its citizens toward proper faith and behavior.

In the next section, I delve into key events in the history of religion and politics in Indonesia to flesh out the argument that godly nationalism is an overlooked form of nationalism, in which intolerance toward heterodoxy constitutes the nation. I show that the earliest contacts between Ahmadiyah representatives and Muslim organizations were respectful but soured quickly, culminating in Ahmadiyah's exclusion from membership in the country's first important Muslim political coalition. This act of exclusion helped to congeal the fractious Muslim groups and contributed to the institutional foundation for the postcolonial state, thereby demonstrating the productive power of exclusion for generating solidarity in the emergent nation.

³⁵ Hussein Ali Agrama, "Secularism, Sovereignty, Indeterminacy: Is Egypt a Secular or a Religious State?" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 52, 3 (2010): 495–523.

³⁶ Robert Bellah, *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in a Time of Trial* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975).

PRODUCTIVE INTOLERANCE, PART I

Ahmadiyah is a small Muslim sect that originated in Qadian, South Asia, in the late nineteenth century and spread to Sumatra and Java in the 1920s. The movement's founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, was a controversial figure who made two claims that ran counter to mainstream Sunni doctrine. First, against the Sunni Muslim belief that the prophet Jesus had not died a natural death but had been taken from the earth by God and would return to earth on Judgment Day, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad held that Jesus had died a natural death and could not return. His second, related claim was that he was the Mahdi, the prophesied messiah of Islam heralding Judgment Day.³⁷

From 1923 to 1929, Ahmadiyah and the leading Islamic reform³⁸ movement, Muhammadiyah, were able to work together based on a shared commitment to Islamic modernism.³⁹ After 1925, however, Muhammadiyah leaders began to ask whether these two Ahmadiyah beliefs—that Jesus died a natural death and that Ghulam Ahmad was a prophet or “renewer”—were sufficiently deviant to be considered non-Muslim.⁴⁰ In 1928 Muhammadiyah's central board declared that, because Ahmadis believed in a prophet after Muhammad, it would be forbidden to teach the views of Ahmadiyah, and the next year the religious council proclaimed that members of any group that believed in a prophet after Muhammad were unbelievers.⁴¹ After the split, Ahmadis became objects of ridicule and were removed from their positions in Muhammadiyah.⁴²

³⁷ The two factions of Ahmadiyah Indonesia—Qadiani and Lahore—are seen as differing on the question of the finality of the prophethood of Muhammad. Qadiani Ahmadis believe that Ghulam Ahmad was a prophet who came after Muhammad. Lahoris believe that Ghulam Ahmad was a renewer (*mujaddid*) of Islam. Herman L. Beck, “The Rupture between the Muhammadiyah and the Ahmadiyah,” *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde* 161, 2/3 (2005): 1–33; G. F. Pijper, *Empat penelitian tentang agama Islam di Indonesia antara 1930–1950*, Tudijamah, trans. (Jakarta: Penerbit Universitas Indonesia, 1992).

³⁸ Indonesian “reformers” or “modernists” are part of the broader twentieth-century movement to revitalize Islamic societies through scientific and sociological modernization, based on the ideas of Mohammad Abduh and Rasyid Ridha.

³⁹ Moehammad Ali, *Pergerakan Ahmadiyah itoe apakah? Pengertian-pengertian salah* (Djakarta: Persatoean Moehammadijah, 1925); Beck, “Rupture”; S. J. Hasan, “Noeroellah dan Peradaban Moeslimin,” *Suara Muhammadiyah* 8 (1927): 349–50; “Ma’loemat dari Hoofdbestuur Moehammadijah,” *Suara Muhammadiyah* 10 (1928): 33; and “Poeteosan Congres 1928,” *Suara Muhammadiyah* 10 (1928): 34.

⁴⁰ Ichwan notes that a translation and exegesis of the Qur’an by Ahmadi leader Maulvi Muhammad Ali was condemned by Rasyid Ridha as including distorting verses to claim revelation for Ghulam Ahmad and for being a literal translation of a text that should be read in the original Arabic. While the condemnation influenced Muhammadiyah's break from Ahmadiyah, the translation continues to be used by Indonesian Muslims, and was even approved and certified by the MORA. Moch Nur Ichwan, “Differing Responses to an Ahmadi Translation and Exegesis: The Holy Qur’an in Egypt and Indonesia,” *Archipel* 62 (2001): 143–61; see also Hadji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (Hamka), *Ajahku* (Jakarta: Widjaja, 1982), 137–41.

⁴¹ Pimpinan Besar Muhammadiyah, *Pemandangan: Agama Islam dan Kaum Moeslimin* (Yogyakarta: P. B. Moehammadijah Almanak Moehammadijah, 1929), 63–64.

⁴² Beck, “Rupture,” 24.

Another Islamic reform group, Persis, underwent a similar evolution from embracing to repudiating Ahmadiyah.⁴³ From 1930 into 1931, Persis extolled Ahmadi as leaders of Islamic reform, promoted their founding principles, circulated speeches from the Ahmadiyah Lahore congress,⁴⁴ and published letters from Muslims who had been tempted to convert to Christianity but were “reclaimed to Islam” by Ghulam Ahmad.⁴⁵ In June 1931, however, Persis leader Ahmad Hassan published a critical study of Ahmadi, which examined whether they believed that Muhammad was the final prophet.⁴⁶ Ghulam Ahmad’s claim to prophethood rested on the notion that other prophets could be sent by God to reform religion.⁴⁷ Ahmad Hassan followed up by challenging the Ahmadiyah Qadian to three nights of public debate in which he interrogated Ahmadiyah representatives on whether the prophet Jesus had died, and thus whether he could return to earth on Judgment Day.⁴⁸ A second round of debates was held in November 1934. Between these two debates, Persis published an open letter to Ahmadiyah leaders, describing its disputes with Ahmadi belief and practice.⁴⁹ Persis invited the Ahmadiyah members to read foundational Ahmadiyah texts and see the teachings, and offered to visit Ahmadi’s homes. The March 1934 edition of *Pembela Islam* featured articles in which the beliefs of Ahmadiyah were derided, not merely categorized as outside mainstream belief.⁵⁰ An article on the opposite page told why Ahmadiyah doctrine betrays the pillars of Islam and declared its fundamental beliefs erroneous.⁵¹ This marked the first instance when Ahmadiyah was

⁴³ Founded in the early twentieth century, Persis is one of Indonesia’s oldest Islamist organizations, comparable to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Howard Federspiel, *Islam and Ideology in the Emerging Indonesian State: The Persatuan Islam (Persis), 1923–1957*, 2d ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

⁴⁴ “T. M. Ng. M. Djojosoegito,” *Pembela Islam* 1, 8 (May 1930): 17; “Ahmadiyah dan India (Dari madjallah Al-Fat-h),” *Pembela Islam* 1, 12 (Sept. 1930): 14; “Comite Pendirian: N. V. Drukkerij Moeslim Indonesia, Mataram,” *Pembela Islam* 1, 14 (Nov. 1930): 31–33; and “Soera Islam di Lahore-Congress: Choeth-bah Beiga Maulana Mochammad ‘Ali,” *Pembela Islam* 2, 19 (Feb. 1931): 32–35.

⁴⁵ “Soerat terboeka,” *Pembela Islam* 2, 22 (Mar. 1931): 23–25; “Kiaji masoek Kristen,” *Pembela Islam* 2, 29 (July 1931): 10; and “Doenia Islam,” *Pembela Islam* 2, 34 (Sept. 1931): 27–30.

⁴⁶ Ahmad Hassan, “Ahmadiyah: Keterangan tentang Nabi ‘Isa tidak berbapa,” *Pembela Islam* 2, 28 (June 1931): 37–39.

⁴⁷ Federspiel, *Islam and Ideology*, 151–54.

⁴⁸ “Mendjawab tantangan Ahmadiyah,” *Pembela Islam* 2, 56 (Dec. 1932): 48; “Perdebatan Antara Pembela Islam dan Ahmadiyah,” *Pembela Islam* 3, 57 (Jan. 1933): 37–42; and “Perslag Opisil dari Perdebatan: Pembela Islam—Ahmadiyah Qadian,” *Pembela Islam* 3, 61 (May 1933): 37–42; and continued in 3, 62 (June 1933): 25–30; 3, 63 (July 1933): 27–32; and 3, 64 (Aug. 1933): 20–25.

⁴⁹ “Soerat Terbuka Kepada Saudara-Saudara jang termasuk Ahmadiyah,” *Pembela Islam* 66, 4 (Jan. 1934): 6–7.

⁵⁰ “Si Goblok,” *Pembela Islam* 4, 69 (Jan. 1935): 17–18.

⁵¹ “Satoe i’tiqad jang sesat,” *Pembela Islam* 4, 69 (Jan. 1935): 19–20.

designated deviant (*aliran sesat*) by an Islamic organization. In later years the Indonesian state would echo this designation.

Designating Ahmadiyah a deviant sect was the first step toward excluding its members from Muslim civil society. In various articles in 1936, the Persis magazine *Al-Lisaan* labeled Ahmadiyah followers apostates, non-Muslims, and crazy, and repeatedly called Ghulam Ahmad a false prophet, liar, and deceiver. Seventeen Ahmadis who had left Ahmadiyah and joined Persis were celebrated.⁵² The back cover of the April issue featured a photograph of an Ahmadiyah Qadiani mosque in Batavia that had been closed by decree of the regent, and in June the magazine announced formation of the Anti-Ahmadiyah Committee, aimed at calling the issue of Ahmadiyah to the attention of Muslims.⁵³ Similarly, the Committee for the Elimination of Ahmadiyah in Medan was formed in November 1935 to issue a fatwa against Ahmadiyah.⁵⁴ The staff at the office of marriage in Medan subsequently refused to marry Ahmadis and prohibited them from entering prayer houses, mosques, or other Islamic sites.⁵⁵ In 1936, the Sultan of Deli in East Sumatra, the region's religious leader, determined that Ahmadis could not be buried in Muslim cemeteries, and in 1937 in Bukittinggi, 180 ulama declared that Ahmadiyah Qadiani were non-Muslims.⁵⁶ On multiple occasions, *Al-Lisaan* stated that Ahmadiyah was a "British tool" for destroying Muslims.⁵⁷ In short, by the end of 1936 Ahmadiyah had been pushed outside of the theological and social boundaries of the *umma*. In the coming years, as shared opposition to Ahmadiyah provided the glue for Muslim organizations to work together politically, the policies of the nascent Indonesian state would formalize Ahmadiyah's marginalization.

Like Muhammadiyah, the traditionalist⁵⁸ Islamic organization Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) warned its followers that Ahmadiyah denied the articles of faith.⁵⁹ In a debate between NU and Persis on the practices of *taqlid* (adherence to legal precepts set by the early schools of jurisprudence) and *ijtihad* (setting aside precedent in favor of a new interpretation), Ahmadiyah was cited as a

⁵² "Qoerban di Soekawarna," *Al Lisaan* 1, 3 (24 Feb. 1936): 38–39.

⁵³ *Al Lisaan* 1, 5 (27 Apr. 1936): 38; and "Comité Anti Ahmadiyah," *Al Lisaan* 1, 7 (25 June 1936): 31.

⁵⁴ "Comite Pembanneras Ahmadiyah Medan," *Al Lisaan* 1, 1 (27 Dec. 1935): 24–25.

⁵⁵ Pijper, "Empat penelitian," 39.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 39–40.

⁵⁷ "Roeangan Dadjdjal," *Al Lisaan* 7, 1 (25 June 1936): 15–17; and "Ahmadiyah Lahore mendjawab," *Al Lisaan* 7, 1 (25 June 1936): 26.

⁵⁸ In the Indonesian vernacular, a "traditionalist" is someone who identifies with practices of Islam laid down in the Syafii school of jurisprudence.

⁵⁹ *Swara Nahdlatul Ulama* 2, 5 (1928 [1347]): 102–3; and 2, 6 (1928 [1347]): 122–23. Harry J. Benda noted that opposition to Ahmadiyah was one of very few causes that NU and Muhammadiyah shared in the late 1920s; in *The Crescent and the Rising Sun: Indonesian Islam under the Japanese Occupation, 1942–1945* (The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1958), 54. Another was the dissolution of the caliphate.

problem that resulted from independent reasoning by individuals untrained in Islamic law.⁶⁰ Persis, meanwhile, used the question of Ahmadiyah to attack the NU practice of *talkin* (giving instructions to the deceased).⁶¹ As with NU and Muhammadiyah in the late 1920s, Ahmadiyah's deviance was one of the few issues on which NU and Persis took a similar stance.⁶² And when Sukarno was accused of being an Ahmadi, he too used the Ahmadi question as an opportunity to denounce his enemies. He wrote that while he admired Ahmadiyah for its rationalism and modernism, it was also "devoted to British imperialism."⁶³

This opposition to Ahmadiyah enabled a coalition that other pressing issues facing the Muslim community—Dutch colonialism, the dissolution of the caliphate, the restrictions on religious propagation, and opposition to Christian missionaries—did not. Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, events in which the major Muslim organizations came together were marked by clashes rather than cooperation.⁶⁴ In 1935, however, NU leader Kiai Wahid Hasjim called for traditionalists and reformists to set aside their differences concerning minor questions: "Do not make the differences [in *fur'iyah*] a reason for disunity, discord, treachery ... while our religion is one and the same, Islam! Our *mazhab* is one and the same, *Sjafi'i*! Our region is one and the same, Djawa! All belong to Ahlu Sunnah wal-Djama'ah."⁶⁵ Hasjim's use of the term Ahlu Sunnah wal-Djama'ah is instructive, since Sunni Muslims used it to describe themselves, usually in distinction to the Shi'ite and other sects.⁶⁶

Despite the growing cooperation of modernist and traditionalist Muslims, NU maintained its distance when the modernists created the Great Islamic Council of Indonesia (MIAI) in 1937. Two issues kept NU from joining. First, the meeting was framed as a continuation of previous congresses, in which modernists had derided traditional practices. NU's response was to propose that the previous congresses be treated as merely "provisional"

⁶⁰ "Al-Lisaan Contra B.N.O.," *Berita Nahdlatoel-'Oelama* 5, 7 (1 Feb. 1936): 6–10.

⁶¹ "Roengan Dadjdjal: Ahmadijah dan N.O.," *Al Lisaan* 1, 13 (23 Dec. 1936): 16; and "Ahmadijah dan Talqien," *Al Lisaan* 1, 13 (23 Dec. 1936): 16.

⁶² For example, the NU magazine *Berita Nahdlatoel-'Oelama* reprinted wholesale a Persis denunciation of Ahmadiyah, while other pages of the magazine were used to dispute Persis doctrine. "Achmadijah: Dari Pembela Islam Lahat kita terima soerat sebaran berikoet ini; Sifat Propaganda Achmadijah, Perloe Awas!" *Berita Nahdlatoel-'Oelama* 5, 11 (1 Apr. 1936): 14–16.

⁶³ "Soerat dari Ir Soekarno dari Endeh," *Al Lisaan* 1, 13 (23 Dec. 1936): 17–20.

⁶⁴ Martin van Bruinessen, "Muslims of the Dutch East Indies and the Caliphate Question," *Studia Islamika* 2, 3 (1995): 115–40, here 12.

⁶⁵ Quoted in Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia 1900–1942* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1978), 241. *Fur'iyah* is a term in Islamic jurisprudence that describes matters of difference among Muslims that do not affect basic belief and doctrine. *Fur'iyah* is contrasted with *usuliyah*, which are issues of core doctrine. Ahmadiyah's denial of the finality of the Prophet is considered a question of *usuliyah*.

⁶⁶ Howard Federspiel, *A Dictionary of Indonesian Islam* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1995), 10.

regarding future policies. The MIAI leadership agreed, and NU joined the 1939 meeting.⁶⁷ The second issue was that Ahmadiyah Lahore attended. NU questioned why Ahmadiyah was permitted to join MIAI when leading Muslims from both inside and outside Indonesia had made it clear that the organization was outside Islam.⁶⁸ From 1938 into early 1939, NU published a three-part essay on Ahmadiyah that focused on its collusion with British imperialism and Ghulam Ahmad's claim to prophecy.⁶⁹ This brought the issue of Ahmadiyah to a head, and at the 1939 MIAI meeting it was resolved: "During the proceedings of the Second MIAI Executive Council in Jombang, a question arose which demands answering: is the door of MIAI open to the Achmadijah? To the question, the Executive Council gave the answer: the doors of MIAI are closed to the Achmadijah."⁷⁰

From 1925 to 1939, then, Muhammadiyah, Persis, and NU pushed Ahmadiyah from the center of Muslim civil society to outside the incipient community united around MIAI.⁷¹ And while MIAI lasted only from 1937 to 1943, it profoundly influenced the nationalist movement. As Mizan Sya'roni wrote, "Its establishment marked a turning point in the history of the Indonesian Islamic movement in particular and the nationalist movement in general, since the federation was a pioneer in the drive for Islamic and to some extent national unity."⁷² Indeed, the coalition of Islamic organizations established in MIAI endured through the Islamic political party Masyumi, which, like MIAI, did not accept Ahmadiyah Lahore when it applied to be a member in the 1950s.⁷³

From 1942 to 1943, the occupying Japanese transformed MIAI from an Islamic federation into the political party Masyumi and embedded it in the institutional structures of the proto-state through the Office of Religious Affairs, which became the MORA. Harry Benda notes that by 1944, "The Masyumi ... had for all intents and purposes become part of the government itself."⁷⁴ When the Japanese occupation ended the following year, the Islamic

⁶⁷ Noer, *Modernist Muslim Movement*, 243–44; "T. Wondoamiseno dan Secretariaatnja 'Madjlis Islam Loehoer,'" *Berita Nahdlatoel-'Oelama* 7, 15 (1 June 1938): 12–13.

⁶⁸ "Ma'loemat Officieel tentang moendoernja Delegation H.B.N.O. dari Al-Islam Congress," *Berita Nahdlatoel-'Oelama* 7, 11 (1 Apr. 1938): 5–7.

⁶⁹ "Achmadijah," *Berita Nahdlatoel-'Oelama* 7, 22 (15 Sept. 1938): 8–10; continued in 7, 24 (15 Oct. 1938): 11–12; and 8, 1 (1 Jan. 1939): 30.

⁷⁰ Madjlis Islam A'laa Indonesia, *Soeara Madjlis Islam A'laa Indonesia* (Jakarta, n.p., n.d. [1941]).

⁷¹ Not surprisingly, MIAI's goals were those of an emergent *umma*: to strengthen bonds between Islamic organizations, defend Islam, and promote pan-Islamic ties. R. E. Elson, "Disunity, Distance, Disregard: The Political Failure of Islamism in Late Colonial Indonesia," *Studia Islamika* 16, 1 (2009): 1–50, here 28.

⁷² Mizan Sya'roni, "The Majlisul Islamil a'la Indonesia (MIAI): Its Socio-Religious and Political Activities (1937–1943)," MA thesis, McGill University, 1998, 2.

⁷³ Noer, *Modernist Muslim Movement*, 244 n. 106. While the coalition splintered when NU broke off from Masyumi in 1953, its position on Ahmadiyah remained unchanged.

⁷⁴ Benda, *Crescent and the Rising Sun*, 166.

organizations that had formed MIAI only seven years earlier became the governing religious authorities in the new state. Since the MORA's creation, those organizations' control over the ministry and its penetration into every level of government have allowed it to shape the meaning of religion and its place in public life. The ministry's mission included: (1) to make belief in the One and Only God an operative principle in public life; (2) to be watchful that every inhabitant is free to adhere to his own religion and to worship according to his own religion; and (3) to assist, support, protect, and promote all sound religious movements.⁷⁵ The first task is a reference to the national ideology of Pancasila, with belief in God as the first principle. The second professes freedom of religion, but the meaning of the Indonesian word for religion, *agama*, is narrower than its English equivalent. *Agama* was defined in 1952 as a monotheistic religion with belief in the existence of One Supreme God, a holy book, a prophet, and a way of life for its adherents.⁷⁶ This definition closely resembled Muhammadiyah's definition of religion.⁷⁷ Islam, Roman Catholicism, and Christianity (Protestantism) were recognized as religions in 1951, while Hinduism and Buddhism were later included under pressure from Sukarno.⁷⁸ The third task suggests the limits of official tolerance—"unsound" movements like Ahmadiyah were designated deviant streams (*aliran sesat*, from the Persis designation of 1935) or faiths (*kepercayaan*) rather than religions.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ B. J. Boland, *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), 108.

⁷⁶ Abalihin, "A Sixth Religion?" 121; Mulder, *Mysticism*, 4.

⁷⁷ Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, "Kitab Masalah Lima" (1942), in Asyumuni Abdurrahman and Moelyadi, eds., *Himpunan Putusan Majelis Tarjih Muhammadiyah* (Malang: Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah, 1999), 276–78.

⁷⁸ In contrast to its treatment of Ahmadiyah, the MORA worked with Balinese elites to mold their religion into a form of monotheism including a single holy book, a prophet, a system of law, standardized ritual practices, and origins in India. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 170–89; Jane Monnig Atkinson, "Religions in Dialogue: The Construction of an Indonesian Minority Religion," *American Ethnologist* 10, 4 (1983): 684–96; Anne Schiller, "An 'Old' Religion in 'New Order' Indonesia: Notes on Ethnicity and Religious Affiliation," *Sociology of Religion* 57, 4 (1996): 409–17.

⁷⁹ In 1948 the MORA published a book by the traditionalist Muslim author and activist H. Aboebakar which included an appendix listing the Ahmadiyah as one of many "false revelations" (*Sedjarah al-Qur'an*, Jogjakarta: Kementerian Agama, 325). A delegation of Ahmadiyah leaders protested their inclusion on the list. The response by the ministry was ambiguous. The young NU leader Wahid Hasjim distanced the ministry from the publication of the book and subsequent editions were published by a private publisher. One month later, however, on August 16, 1951, the MORA's Secretary General Mohammad Kafrawi responded to the Ahmadiyah in a letter saying that he had consulted with H. Aboebakar, who defended his conclusions. I am grateful to Kevin Fogg for sharing his notes on this incident. See Wahid Hasjim to Pengurus Besar Djema'at Ahmadiyah Indonesia, 20 July 1951, in ANRI, RA7 Kabinet Presiden, #163; Letter from the Ministry of Religion to Pengurus Besar Djema'at Ahmadiyah Indonesia, 16 Aug. 1951, in ANRI, RA7 Kabinet Presiden, #163.

Since the 1950s, adherents to deviant streams and faiths have been pressured to join the “sound” religious movements.⁸⁰ In 1954, the MORA set up a special section for the Supervision of Faith Movements in Society (Pakem) that monitored heterodox, heretical, and apostate faiths.⁸¹ As I will show in the next section, the policing of heterodoxy got a boost in authority in 1965 when President Sukarno affirmed that there were only six recognized religions and declared that any group that threatened these religions should be prohibited.

This history reveals that opposition to Ahmadiyah, as a heterodox faith, stretched across theological and political cleavages in Muslim civil society. To Muhammadiyah, Ahmadiyah was a fifth column within Islam. To Persis, Ahmadiyah stubbornly held onto beliefs that perverted the pillars of Islam. To NU, Ahmadiis were apostates and stewards of imperialism. That Ahmadiis deny the pillars of Islam while calling themselves Muslim has provoked opposition across the diverse Muslim world;⁸² different groups dislike Ahmadiyah for diverse reasons, but nearly everyone agrees on their distaste for the sect. This history further suggests that intolerance is a productive part of the process of transforming a latent identity into one that is politically salient, bringing new attitudes to the fore and enabling new political institutions to emerge. I now turn to showing how these patterns of productive intolerance endure in contemporary, democratic Indonesia.

PRODUCTIVE INTOLERANCE, PART II

The final years of the Sukarno administration were marked by tensions between Indonesia and its new neighbor, Malaysia. Sukarno saw Malaysia and its British military bases as an outpost of counterrevolutionary imperialism, and he mobilized the public behind a campaign of confrontation (*konfrontasi*), consisting of mass demonstrations, low-level military engagement, and support for revolutionary movements in Southeast Asia. Mass organizations proclaimed their support for Sukarno as the president, leader of the revolution, and commander in chief.⁸³

Sukarno also sought to mobilize support as the self-proclaimed leader of the Muslim world. On 27 January 1965, he signed Presidential Order No. 1: “Every person shall be prohibited from deliberately before the public telling, encouraging, or soliciting public support for making an interpretation of a religion adhered to in Indonesia or performing religious activities resembling the activities of such religion when the interpretation and activities are deviant from

⁸⁰ Mulder, *Mysticism*, 109.

⁸¹ Abalahin, “A Sixth Religion?” 134.

⁸² See, for example, Sir Muhammad Iqbal, *Islam and Ahmadiism* (Lucknow: Islamic Research and Publications Academy, 1974), 7.

⁸³ Yosef Djakababa, “The Construction of History under Indonesia’s New Order: The Making of the Lubang Buaya Official Narrative,” PhD diss., University of Wisconsin–Madison, 2009, 50, 55.

the principal teachings of such religion.”⁸⁴ Sukarno’s “blasphemy law” formalized the orthodox definition of religion that the Islamic organizations had long sought.⁸⁵ Mystical sects were only marginally tolerated; they were recognized as a category of faith (*kepercayaan*) rather than as religions, and were not entitled to resources from or protection by the state.⁸⁶

Six weeks after the signing, the law was publicly announced, flanked by a joint statement by NU, Muhammadiyah, Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia, the traditionalist group Jamiatul Washliyah, and the Indonesian Joint Trade Union declaring their support for Sukarno’s broader agenda of revolution, confrontation, and NASAKOM (Sukarno’s shorthand for uniting the streams of national politics: nationalism, religion, and communism).⁸⁷ In March 1965, Sukarno hosted a sequel to the 1955 Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung, the international body that became the Non-Aligned Movement. At this Islamic Asia-Africa Conference, leaders from thirty-two countries awarded Sukarno the title “Champion of Islam and Freedom in Asia and Africa.”⁸⁸ The front page of the newspaper shown in [figure 1](#) encapsulates what Sukarno was trying to do; the right side announces the law against blasphemy, while the left headline introduces Sukarno’s speech: “Bung Karno Is Also Leader of The Islamic World.” By demarcating the boundaries of tolerance, Sukarno brought together and placed himself at the head of a coalition of organizations, just as MIAI had done in 1939. In another act of productive intolerance, Sukarno strengthened the framework for godly nationalism put into place by the Muslim organizations, the MIAI, and the MORA.

Since 1965, the organization of godly nationalism has become more formally institutionalized in the state.⁸⁹ Laws concerning personal identity are based on membership in one of the six recognized religions inscribed on each individual’s identification card. The state privileges recognized religions, and any educational institution under the auspices of the MORA receives

⁸⁴ “Penetapan Presiden No. 1/1965 tentang Pentjegahan Penjahagun Dan/Atau Penodaan Agama,” *Suara Merdeka*, 9 Mar. 1965: 1.

⁸⁵ The law has been used to prosecute both blasphemy (offensive speech about sacred matters) and heresy (belief that runs counter to orthodox doctrine).

⁸⁶ Julia D. Howell, “Muslims, the New Age and Marginal Religions in Indonesia: Changing Meanings of Religious Pluralism,” *Social Compass* 52, 4 (2005): 473–93, here 473; M. C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1200*, 4th ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 340.

⁸⁷ “Pernyataan Bersama Partai-2 Dan Ormas Islam,” *Arsip Nasional (AN)/NU* 106. See also “Pernyataan Bersama Partai2 dan Ormas Islam,” *Berita Antara*, 18 Mar. 1965. NU’s youth wing issued a similar statement on 23 March: “Putjuk Pimpinan Gerakan Pemuda Anshor,” *AN/NU* 106, no. PP/616/B/III/1965.

⁸⁸ “Bung Karna Adalah Djuga Pemimpin Dunia Islam,” *Suara Merdeka*, 9 Mar. 1965: 1; Fogg, “Fate of Muslim Nationalism,” 411.

⁸⁹ Suharto’s attempt to make Pancasila the “sole foundation” (*Azas Tunggal*) for social organization’s policies strengthened godly nationalism by making belief in God mandatory, although mass organizations interpreted Pancasila in diverse ways. Ramage, *Politics in Indonesia*, 15–18.



FIGURE 1 Front page of *Suara Merdeka* with headlines, “Sukarno Is Also Leader of the Islamic World” and “Presidential Order No. 1/1965 Regarding the Prevention of Abuse and/or Desecration of Religion.”

funding while being subject to oversight. Other ministry mechanisms for promoting and controlling orthodox religious belief include support for mosques, guidance in Qur’an recitation, and organization of religious ceremonies. Most of the ministry’s work focuses on Islamic development, although there are also offices for Protestant, Catholic, and Hindu/Buddhist affairs.⁹⁰

While the institutional structure of religion crystallized in 1965, two new developments have since arisen: the creation of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) and the emergence of a new generation of intellectuals. In 1975, Soeharto created the MUI to co-opt domestic organizations and represent the government abroad in the Organization of Islamic States (OIC) and the World Muslim League (Rabithah Alam Islamy Kerohanian). The MUI was the first state agency to disseminate the views of the OIC. In April 1974, the OIC urged Muslim governments to declare the Ahmadi a non-Muslim minority, which led to anti-Ahmadi resolutions in Jordan, Mauritania, and

⁹⁰ Office for the Research and Development of Religion, “Organization of the Department of Religion” (Jakarta: the MORA, 1993). Confucianism was recognized by the MORA in 1950 and by President Sukarno in 1965, derecognized by Soeharto in 1979, and then re-recognized in 2000 after democratization. Abalihin, “A Sixth Religion?”

Mecca, and exacerbated conflicts in Pakistan.⁹¹ The MUI issued its own fatwa ten years later when it decried Ahmadiyah as a heretical sect. In 2005 it reissued its fatwa against Ahmadiyah with the support of vigilante groups FPI and Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia, as well as Persis.⁹² While the content of MUI sentiment harks back to the 1930s, the current scale of mobilization against Ahmadiyah is greater than ever before.⁹³

Since the 1970s, Indonesia has also witnessed a growing presence of intellectuals with liberal leanings, including former Muhammadiyah chairs Syafii Maarif and Amien Rais, former NU chair and former Indonesian president Abdurrahman Wahid, and the Islamic intellectual Nurcholish Madjid.⁹⁴ They influenced young scholars who today are prominent in promoting liberal notions of tolerance. These two developments have contributed to polarizing contemporary public opinion even while the origins of intolerance of Ahmadiyah and its institutional manifestation can be traced to the 1930s and 1960s.

In 2001–2002, local government bans on Ahmadiyah and physical attacks on Ahmadiyah mosques launched the most recent debate about heterodoxy.⁹⁵ In response, a group of human rights activists began researching legal remedies to the state discrimination against heterodox groups.⁹⁶ The activists gained momentum with the involvement of the National Alliance for Freedom of Religion and Belief (AKKBB), a network of interfaith organizations that in May 2008 published an advertisement calling for respect for Ahmadiyah, and held a rally that was attacked by four hundred vigilantes.⁹⁷ In 2009, the coalition

⁹¹ Yohanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous: Aspects of Ahmadi Religious Thought and Its Medieval Background* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 44.

⁹² While in the 1950s the MORA was trying to marginalize the Ahmadiyah, the Ministry of Justice apparently issued a letter of recognition to Ahmadiyah, a point of longstanding frustration to the MUI. See Tim Penyunting Majelis Ulama Indonesia, *Himpunan Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, (Jakarta: Majelis Ulama Indonesia, 1997), 71, citing Surat Keputusan Menteri Kehakiman RI No JA/23/13, 13 Mar. 1953; Menchik, “Illiberal but not Intolerant”; Syafiq Hasyim, “The Council of Indonesian Ulama (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI) and Religious Freedom,” *Irasec’s Discussion Paper* 12 (2011); Moch Nur Ichwan, “Towards a Puritanical Moderate Islam: The Majelis Ulama Indonesia and the Politics of Religious Orthodoxy,” in Martin van Bruinessen, ed., *Contemporary Developments in Indonesian Islam: Explaining the ‘Conservative Turn’* (Singapore: Institute of South East Asian Studies, 2013), 60–104.

⁹³ Indeed, my conversations with the younger generation of Persis leaders suggest they are more supportive of violence against Ahmadiyah than the older generation is. Author’s interviews, Tasikmalaya, 25–27 Sept. 2010.

⁹⁴ Carol Kersten, *Cosmopolitans and Heretics: New Muslim Intellectuals and the Study of Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

⁹⁵ Two Ahmadiyah mosques in West Java were attacked on 23 December 2002, following the local government’s decision to prohibit the activities of Ahmadiyah. Alfitri, “Religious Liberty in Indonesia and the Rights of ‘Deviant’ Sects,” *Asian Journal of Comparative Law* 3, 1 (2008): 1–27, here 3, n. 15, 23; Crouch, “Indonesia, Militant Islam,” 11.

⁹⁶ Uli Parulian Sihombing, interview by the author, Jakarta, 12 Feb. 2010.

⁹⁷ Crouch, “Indonesia, Militant Islam,” 13.

of Indonesian activists submitted a petition to the Constitutional Court to strike down the 1965 blasphemy law.⁹⁸

In positive legal terms, the activist's petition questioned whether the blasphemy law was consistent with the 1945 constitution. Article 28e, paragraph 1, provides that "Every person shall be free to adhere to a religion and to worship in accordance with his/her religion." Paragraph 2 states, "Every person shall have the right to the freedom to hold a belief, to express his/her thoughts and attitude in accordance with his/her conscience." These obligations are echoed in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Indonesia acceded to in 2006. The opponents to the petition—the government and the interested parties who submitted evidence—pointed to clauses in the constitution that recognize the state's right to limit individual rights to promote the community's values. Article 28j, paragraph 2, states, "In exercising his/her rights and freedom, every person must be subject to the restrictions stipulated in laws and regulations with the sole purpose to guarantee the recognition of and the respect for rights and freedom of other persons and to fulfill fair demand in accordance with the considerations of moral and religious values, security, and public order in a democratic society." The opponents pointed to laws from 1964, 1970, 2003, 2004, and 2009 that affirm the centrality of belief in the One and Only God by the state. They argued that since 1950–1951, when Mohammad Natsir was prime minister, promoting belief in God had been a part of the educational curriculum for all public institutions, helping to unify the country's diverse groups. While acknowledging that promoting belief in God could limit individual religious freedom, they suggested that only external practices (*forum external*) were limited, not internal faith matters (*forum internal*).⁹⁹

Subsuming the legal arguments was a set of abstract debates: how to govern religion, how to balance protecting religious freedom and promoting belief in God, whether groups can democratically curtail their own rights, and whether determining religious truth is less subjective than other policy issues. The petitioners argued, "The blasphemy law forces the state to determine the proper stream of religion: which is deviant, and which is an acceptable religion. When the state is involved in this decision it is no longer neutral. This is the problem."¹⁰⁰ This second set of debates shows how arguments over the

⁹⁸ The petitioners included the Indonesian Human Rights Monitor, the Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy, the Indonesian Legal Aid and Human Rights Association, the Center for Democracy and Human Rights Studies, the Equal Community Association, Desantara Foundation, the Indonesian Legal Aid Institute Foundation, Abdurrahman Wahid, Prof. Dr. Musdah Mulia, Prof. M. Dawam Rahardjo, and Maman Imanul Haq.

⁹⁹ For a thorough legal analysis of the decision, see Melissa Crouch, "Law and Religion in Indonesia: The Constitutional Court and the Blasphemy Law," *Asian Journal of Comparative Law* 7, 1 (2012): 1–46.

¹⁰⁰ Uli Parulian Sihombing, interview by the author, Jakarta, 12 Feb. 2010.

blasphemy law produced a consensus about the proper relationship between God and nation in Indonesia. Heterodoxy is excluded from that relationship.

Although both the AKKBB and the petitioners emphasized the need to expand religious freedom in the country to protect the Ahmadis,¹⁰¹ no Ahmadis were present in the courtroom. One of the lawyers for the petitioners, Uli Parulian Sihombing, stated that their inclusion would be “too sensitive.”¹⁰² His caution was inspired by the presence of vigilantes who dominated the courtroom’s second floor and the courthouse’s front lawn, and hung banners naming activists that they judged apostates.¹⁰³ Figure 2 displays the vigilante groups creating a tense atmosphere at the court. Yet an equally important reason for prudence in the court was the petitioners’ call for a radical reformulation of the social contract that prominent leaders of civil society believed to be in place.¹⁰⁴ Sihombing called for the state to be neutral in *all* matters of faith; as described already, the contemporary state privileges orthodoxy over heterodoxy. By excluding the Ahmadis, the petitioners hoped to sidestep the thorny question of whether the state must become secular in order to be neutral.

As a result of their exclusion, the Ahmadis were discussed as an example of the necessity of promoting proper belief in God. Amidhan from the MUI testified that human rights and religious freedom had nothing to do with the Ahmadi question because Ahmadiyah was not a recognized religion; if it were, members would be free to practice their faith.¹⁰⁵ Dr. Atho Mudzhar, a professor of Islamic law and head of the Office of Research and Development in the MORA, testified for the government that the Ahmadis were permitted to their internal beliefs, but the state was obligated to prohibit the dissemination of deviant religious beliefs in order to promote belief in God.¹⁰⁶ Sudarsono, from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, testified that belief was a matter of internal faith in which the state could not intervene. The expression of faith, however, was a public matter that could be restricted, as with the successful ban on the Ahmadiyah.¹⁰⁷ During brief mentions of violence toward Ahmadiyah by the intellectual Azymardi Azra, as well as Dr. Kunthi Treiewiyanti and Dr. Yunianti Chuzafah of the National Commission on Women, the crowd on the second

¹⁰¹ Author’s observation at the petitioners’ strategy meeting, Wahid Institute, Jakarta, 9 Feb. 2010.

¹⁰² Uli Parulian Sihombing, interview by the author, 19 Apr. 2010. Representatives from Jemaah Ahmadiyah Indonesia said that Choirul Anam, a petitioner, did not want Ahmadis to testify because he feared the debate would then revolve around them. Jemaah Ahmadiyah Indonesia, interview by the author, Jakarta, 22 Sept. 2010.

¹⁰³ Author’s observations, Constitutional Court Building, Jakarta, 10, 17, and 24 Feb., and 3, 10, 12, and 17 Mar., 2010.

¹⁰⁴ See Ramage, *Politics in Indonesia*, on the continuing debates over the social contract.

¹⁰⁵ Court transcript, 140/puu-vii/2009, III, 33. The court heard similar testimony from Muhammad Al Khotob and Wirawan Adnan from Forum Ummat Islam (FUI), Muhammad Al Khaththath from FUI, and Habib Riziek Shiyab from FPI.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, V, 93–95.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, X, 14.



FIGURE 2 Top left and right show vigilante groups dominating the courthouse's lawn and the courtroom's upper level. The banner at bottom left reads, "These are the defenders of heretics: They do not understand religious difference versus the defamation of religion." It shows photos of prominent activists, which are smeared with feces, some in the shape of genitalia. The bottom right banner reads, "The names below are intellectuals (hypocrites of learning) in favor of the heretic Ahmadiyah and thereby [they] lead Muslims to deviance.... Let us crush the AHMADIYAH, AKKBB, AND THEIR PATRONS." The names are those of signatories to the AKKBB petition of 2009. Author's photos, Constitutional Court Building, Jakarta, 10 Feb. 2010.

floor screamed at the witnesses until the chief justice threatened to clear the gallery and the lawyer for the MUI signaled for his allies to quiet down.¹⁰⁸ In sum, while the petitioners intended to support Ahmadiyah, the witnesses' testimony focused on the state's obligation to promote belief in God and prevent blasphemy.

Ahmadiyah's exclusion allowed the interested parties and the state to proclaim their commitment to a limited form of pluralism without extending religious freedom to heterodox faiths. Muhammadiyah supported maintaining the blasphemy law, and implicitly referenced its support for the ban on Ahmadiyah: "Muhammadiyah believes that freedom of religion or religious freedom is not freedom without limits."¹⁰⁹ Abdul Mu'ti, one of the leading advocates for tolerance in Muslim civil society, read from a "Guide to an Islamic Life for

¹⁰⁸ Author's observations, Constitutional Court Building, Jakarta, 10 and 12 Mar. 2010.

¹⁰⁹ Court transcript, 140/puu-vii/2009, III, 44–47.

Members of Muhammadiyah” to exemplify Muhammadiyah’s commitment to virtuousness with non-Muslim neighbors. The guide is a vivid expression of both the centrality of tolerance to Muhammadiyah’s values and how Ahmadiyah falls outside tolerable limits: “Islam teaches mutual respect and freedom to practice, but not by mixing religions and not by insulting the religious beliefs of others.”¹¹⁰

Mu’ti’s scholarship further confirms this relationship. His book *Kristen Muhammadiyah* describes the curriculum of Muhammadiyah schools in areas where the population is overwhelmingly Christian or Buddhist. Teachers of any faith can provide instruction in secular subjects to students of any religion, while the doctrines of each specific religion are taught by a member of that religion.¹¹¹ In a 2009 interview, former Muhammadiyah chair Syafii Maarif touted Mu’ti’s research as an example of the group’s tolerance, while also making it clear that there would never be a book titled “*Ahmadiyah Muhammadiyah*.”¹¹²

In its court testimony, NU also supported pluralism while emphasizing that freedom of religion has limits:

From the Islamic perspective on wellbeing, religious freedom is not a new thing. Long before the Western world’s campaign to guarantee the freedom of religion, Islam has for fifteen centuries guaranteed [religious freedom] using verses of the Qur’an, the Hadith, and practices of the Prophet and his companions demonstrating that granting religious freedom in Muslim society is religiously compulsory, just like religion is obligatory. ... But something that should be underlined is that this freedom to express diverse beliefs or practices concerns subjects related to *fur’iyah*, the branches.... The position and attitude of companions of the Prophet and the scholars are clear and firm on matters concerning the *usuliyah*: those differences of opinion or interpretation of religious practices that oppose points of religious doctrine, especially those ideologies and ideas that differ from the main/basic teachings of religion and are raised in a provocative manner to foment anarchy. If the problem concerns *fur’iyah*, then we will witness a high tolerance and appreciation by scholars against parties who have different views; yet the Islamic scholars will demonstrate an uncompromising attitude in matters of *usuliyah*.¹¹³

The lawyer for NU, Asrul Sani, built on the *usuliyah/fur’iyah* distinction to argue for democratically delineating the boundary between the two. Under Sani’s proposal, witnesses would be able to provide their opinions, lawyers argue their cases, and justices rule in a transparent manner:

The State has the right to determine if religious groups are deviant and force them to choose among the recognized religions.... The majority can decide in a democratic, transparent manner if a group is outside Islam. Catholics could object to Jehovah’s [Witnesses]

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 47–51.

¹¹¹ Abdul Mu’ti and Fajar Riza ul Haq, *Kristen Muhammadiyah: Konvergensi Muslim dan Kristen Dalam Pendidikan* (Jakarta: Al-Wasat, 2009).

¹¹² Syafii Maarif, interview by the author and Alfred Stepan, Jakarta, 30 Sept. 2009.

¹¹³ Court transcript, 140/puu-vii/2009, IV, 18–20. On *fur’iyah* and *usuliyah*, see note 65.

and ban them, Protestants could object to Mormons and ban them. Each community can regulate themselves.... [The problem of Ahmadiyah] could be solved if they were declared non-Muslim. As it stands, they are not entitled to the protection of being Muslim.¹¹⁴

Sani's proposal would allow the state to promote belief in God while creating a system for the definition of orthodoxies that could change over time. It would also allow the state to expand the scope of recognition to other religions; heterodox groups would be able to become orthodox and receive state support and protection.¹¹⁵ Although illiberal, his proposal attempted to balance the state's mandate to promote belief in God with the protection of minorities.¹¹⁶

While the National Protestant Council and National Catholic Council called for the law to be either revoked or revised, most representatives of the country's minority groups supported the law. Matakun, the High Council for the Confucian Religion in Indonesia, advocated maintaining the blasphemy law on the grounds that it helped protect the minority religions, although it also sought to extend the law to include "small religions."¹¹⁷ The government's witness for the Buddhists, Philip K. Wijaya, argued that the law was important to protect minority religions and maintain peace between sects of the same religion.¹¹⁸ The representative of the Indonesian Buddhist Community testified that the 1965 law was key to maintaining tolerance in the country.¹¹⁹ Yanto Jaya of the Indonesian Hinduism Society supported the law on the grounds that its revocation would lead to violence.¹²⁰

As in the 1930s, Persis enthusiastically backed the eradication of heterodoxy. Persis chair Maman Abdurrahman argued that the law was consistent with the values of the republic: "Indonesia is not a secular state that ignores the values of religion in national life and tolerates blasphemy. The founders of the Republic of Indonesia consciously made sure that religion was integral to the founding of the Republic."¹²¹ Persis leader Amin Djamaluddin listed ten examples of deviant sects whose leaders had declared themselves prophets or tried to merge multiple religions into one. He reported these cases to the police, who successfully applied the blasphemy law and imprisoned the leaders.¹²² Rather than being unconstitutional, he argued, the blasphemy law was more important than ever.

¹¹⁴ Asrul Sani, interview by the author, Jakarta, 11 Feb. 2010.

¹¹⁵ Expanding the scope of recognition of orthodox religions has precedent in the reformulation of Balinese religion into Hinduism (Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*).

¹¹⁶ A spokesperson for Ahmadiyah, however, rejected the proposal on the grounds that their religion is Islam and not Ahmadiyah. Ahmad Masihuddin, interview by the author, Jakarta, 22 Sept. 2010.

¹¹⁷ Court transcript, 140/puu-vii/2009, IV, 16–18.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, VII, 28–30.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, VI, 69.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, V, 13–15.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, VI, 70–73.

¹²² *Ibid.*, VII, 30–35.

The trial did include testimony about victims of the 1965 law. Arnold Panahal, from one *kepercayaan* group, The Coordinating Authority for Faith Organisations, described how *kepercayaan* followers have been discriminated against since the end of the colonial period. They are denied access to funding for their schools, cannot list their religion on their ID cards, are prohibited from entering the military, and often refuse to send their children to school because the state would force them to register and be educated in one of the recognized religions.¹²³ Representatives of other *kepercayaan* groups testified that the 1965 law degrades their beliefs, discriminates against them in favor of orthodox faiths, and leads to their stigmatization in society. They pointed to the elucidation of the law that treats *kepercayaan* as problems to be solved rather than beliefs that must be respected.¹²⁴

The response to the testimony of *kepercayaan* groups played out in a session when the chief justice asked the parties whether faith in God without subscribing to one of the six religions should be recognized. The answer came from Dra. Hj. Nurdiati of the Irena Center Foundation, which is dedicated to preventing religious conversions from Islam: The regulations of the MORA are clear; *kepercayaan* is not a religion but only a cultural practice. She went on to say that that the country had experience with another people without religion: the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). And just like the PKI, groups that do not believe in religion should be banned and their members socialized into belief in God.¹²⁵ Azam from the Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation said that because *kepercayaan* consisted of practices stemming from culture rather than religion, their experiences were irrelevant to the law and only germane to the Department of Tourism.¹²⁶

Two routine court practices reinforced the marginality of heterodox groups. At the start of each session, the chief justice asked the day's witnesses what religion they followed and then swore them in under their respective faiths. On 3 March 2010, the petitioners presented a witness, Sardy, who followed a *kepercayaan* faith. When it was time for the swearing-in, the chief justice asked, "What would you like to swear on?" and Sardy replied, "Pancasila." The courtroom erupted in laughter, and there was a moment of confusion while the court figured out what to do. Eventually the chief justice replied,

¹²³ Ibid., VI, 74–78.

¹²⁴ Ibid., XI, 79–85. The interfaith spiritual guru Anand Krishna, atheists, and Shi'ites have been arrested and brought to trial under the same law and could have testified as victims. I am grateful to an anonymous *CSSH* reviewer for this point.

¹²⁵ Court transcript, 140/puu-vii/2009 VII, 61. At least five hundred thousand members of the PKI were killed in a coup orchestrated by Soeharto from 1965 to 1966. It is still illegal to belong to the PKI.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 57–58. The dismissive invocation of ritual as cultural or folkloric has parallels in Turkey, where Alevism has served as the site for contestation over the religious imaginaries of the nation. Kabir Tambar, "The Aesthetics of Public Visibility: Alevi *Semah* and the Paradoxes of Pluralism in Turkey" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 53: 3 (2010): 652–79.

“There is no oath for Pancasila,” and proceeded to swear Sardy in on the basis of a personal oath: “I promise to state the truth and nothing but the truth.”¹²⁷

Similarly, most witnesses began and ended their statements with greetings from their respective faiths. For example, orthodox Muslims opened their statements with “*Assalamu alaikum*” (peace be unto you), to which the audience reciprocated with “*Walaikum salam*” (and also unto you). More secular Muslims said both “peace be unto you” and “good morning.” The five participants that adhered to *kepercayaan* began and ended their statements with *rahayu* (a Javanese expression of greeting) and *sangkalangkong* (thank you). While the chief justice reciprocated the *kepercayaan* greetings on two occasions, none of the other judges or participants acknowledged them. To the contrary, the *kepercayaan* greetings were challenged. Dr. Eggy Sudjana of the Fraternal Body of the Islamic Scholars for Madura Schools mocked the use of *rahayu* as an artifact of an outdated culture.¹²⁸ Only greetings based on religious or secular vernacular were deemed appropriate.

By the end of the trial the outcome was certain; eight of the nine justices and the overwhelming majority of witnesses supported the continued exclusion of heterodox faiths from state recognition. Recognition that the heterodox faiths had been discriminated against would have necessitated a redefinition of the meaning of religion in the state, reorganization of the MORA, redistribution of the state patronage system, and an end to the privileging of religious organizations like NU and Muhammadiyah as the backbone of civil society. The judges pointed to these organizations as partners of the state: “Indonesia as a country which upholds the concept that religion is not separated from the state has the MORA which serves and protects the growing and development of religions fairly.... religious organizations that are deeply rooted and have historical foundation are parent organizations of religions recognized in Indonesia. It is these religious organizations that in the end shall be able to become partners of the state in creating religious social order to respect and tolerate one another.”¹²⁹

The decision reaffirmed the existing structure of religion-state relations, and a consensus emerged that the law is vital to promoting the core national value of belief in God. A representative from the Irena Center summarized:

Honored Justices of the court, my name is named Sulaiman Zachawerus, the son of a mother from Ternate and the father from Sanger Talaud, both of whom were Christian from a family of Christians. The only Muslim in the Zachawerus family is me.... Although the law is being appealed by the petitioners, for us this is a blessing in disguise. Because before now, Act no. 1 of 1965 was lost. But now it is a blessing because laymen everywhere will know that we have a law against blasphemy. And they will know that

¹²⁷ Author’s observation, Jakarta, 3 Mar. 2010; court transcript, 140/puu-vii/2009 VII, 10.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 53–55.

¹²⁹ Constitutional court verdict, 2010, 140/puu-vii/2009, 3.58.

religion is the ultimate concern of humanity, the preeminent concern of every human being. And after [today], if religion is disgraced, then the cost is their soul.¹³⁰

The consensus that Zachawerus, NU, Muhammadiyah, Persis, the minority religions, and the justices helped constitute is plural, modern, and godly. Outside the courtroom, former NU chair Hasyim Muzadi has been a vocal critic of the vigilante group FPI and has refused its repeated requests to engage in dialogue.¹³¹ Inside the courtroom, FPI and NU were on the same side.

Some of the country's most public proponents of pluralism excluded Ahmadis from the jurisdiction of tolerance and characterized the blasphemy law as irrelevant to freedom of religion even while denying the political quality of this move. In the interview I conducted with Shaafi Maarif in 2009, I asked him the following: "Muhammadiyah is vocal in defending the rights of the Christians and Catholics. Why not Ahmadiyah?" Maarif responded: "Because Muhammadiyah sees this as politics! If Muhammadiyah is involved in defending Ahmadiyah, they will be seen as entering partisan politics. Muhammadiyah was fed up with politics in the 1960s when we exited Masyumi."¹³² Maarif defines the political in a way that allows him to deny Muhammadiyah's responsibility for the status quo, deny its exclusion of Ahmadiyah, and embrace the liberal injunction to avoid mixing religion and politics. His statement resonates with scholarship on the Islamic revival, where Saba Mahmood suggests that liberal secularism and Islamism compete on terrain that is often considered apolitical but is crucial for demarcating the influence of these two movements.¹³³ By excluding the Ahmadis, the discussion in the courtroom shifted from religious freedom and discrimination to a different set of priorities: promoting belief in God, maintaining the state's religious identity while respecting pluralism, distinguishing internal freedom from external freedom, combating deviant beliefs through law rather than violence, and protecting the dignity of religion. This is a vocabulary imbued with commitments to pluralism while differentiated from that of the ostensibly secular West:

The constitution of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia does not allow any possibility for a campaign for the freedom of non-religion, freedom of anti-religion as well as any possibility to insult or defile religious teaching or holy books serving as sources of religious beliefs or to defile God's name. This element constitutes one of

¹³⁰ Court transcript, 140/puu-vii/2009, VII, 56–57. Zachawerus's belief that the state has jurisdiction over the welfare of the soul hints at support for more aggressive coercion of individual belief than practiced by the MORA, which says individuals must publicly believe in God but possess absolute internal religious freedom.

¹³¹ Asrul Sani, interview by the author, Jakarta, 11 Feb. 2010; Wahid Institute, "Monthly Report on Religious Issues," June (2008): 11, 12.

¹³² Shaafi Maarif, interview by the author and Alfred Stepan, Jakarta, 30 Sept. 2009. Muhammadiyah left Masyumi in 1959.

¹³³ Saba Mahmood, *The Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), ch. 2.

the elements marking the existence of a principal difference between the constitutional state of Indonesia and the constitutional states of the West. Accordingly, in the implementation of state administration, the formation of law, and the implementation of government and judicature, the basis of belief in God and teaching as well as religious values serve as a benchmark to determine whether or not a certain law is good, or even whether or not a certain law is constitutional.¹³⁴

Rather than overturning the law, the case helped create a broad, institutionalized, and durable consensus on the values of state and society as rooted in godly nationalism.

CONCLUSION

We have to be able to differentiate between democracy and moral deviation.

—Hasyim Muzadi, Chair of Nahdlatul Ulama from 1999 to 2010¹³⁵

Indonesia's successful transition to democracy has not been accompanied by an increase in individual religious freedom. The promotion of belief in God and the exclusion of heterodox faiths help unify the country's diverse population behind a common theism: the state mobilizes religion against secessionist movements, in favor of economic development through family planning, against Islamist militants, and in civic education.¹³⁶ While the vigilante groups use antidemocratic violence, they share a common goal with those large swaths of civil society seeking to live in a nation where belief in God is part of the "overlapping consensus" necessary for a functioning democracy.¹³⁷ Their goal is a polity where individuals, organizations, and the state are partly responsible for one another's moral condition rather than it being the domain of self-determining individuals.¹³⁸

Godly nationalism is not limited to Indonesia. Globally, majorities in over twenty countries say that belief in God is necessary for a person to have good values.¹³⁹ These attitudes are not only influential in the private sphere; nine out of ten Americans would vote for a presidential candidate who is Catholic or Jewish, and eight out of ten for one who is Mormon, yet only 54 percent

¹³⁴ Constitutional court verdict, 2010, 140/puu-vii/2009, 3.34.11, my emphasis.

¹³⁵ *Jakarta Post*, "NU Opposes Blasphemy Law Review," 1 Feb. 2010, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/02/01/nu-opposes-blasphemy-law-review.html> (accessed 25 June 2010).

¹³⁶ Edward Aspinall, "From Islamism to Nationalism in Aceh, Indonesia," *Nations and Nationalism* 13, 2 (2007): 245–63; National Family Planning Coordinating Board, *The Muslim Ummah and Family Planning Movement in Indonesia* (Jakarta: National Family Planning Coordinating Board and Department of Religious Affairs, 1993).

¹³⁷ I borrow the concept of an "overlapping consensus" from John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 134.

¹³⁸ For a parallel social account of the role of *nasīha* (advice) in creating a public sphere distinct from that of the liberal tradition, see Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), ch. 6.

¹³⁹ Pew Research Center, "Worldwide, Many See Belief in God as Essential to Morality," Mar. 2014, <http://pewrsr.ch/1kmNuUG> (accessed 2 Apr. 2014).

would vote for one who is an atheist.¹⁴⁰ Likewise, in a speech to commemorate the four hundredth anniversary of the King James Bible, British Prime Minister David Cameron sought to link citizenship in Britain with holding strong religious values, whether Christian or another faith: “Those who say being a Christian country is doing down other faiths simply don’t understand that it is easier for people to believe and practise other faiths when Britain has confidence in its Christian identity.”¹⁴¹ Cameron suggests that religious values like belief in God underpin national values; here he echoes the arguments of the Indonesian modernist intellectual Mohammed Natsir, who in the 1950s argued that Islamic nationalists, not secular nationalists, provided the best protection of minority Christians due to their shared devotion to God.¹⁴² Cameron, like Natsir, sought to create a system of godly nationalism where diverse faiths are mobilized by the state and society is bound by a common theism.

Recent work on religious freedom has stressed its place in the production of a global power differential between imperial states and the developing world. Mahmood persuasively argues that the demarcation of groups as “minorities” is both descriptive and useful for projects of Western imperialism.¹⁴³ Mahmood’s comments elucidate the situation in Indonesia, where Christian missionaries have used the guise of religious freedom as an entry point for the conversion of Muslims. It was not an Islamist vigilante but rather Indonesia’s most outspoken spokesperson for liberal Islam, Ulil Abshar Abdalla, who expressed this sentiment most succinctly: “Even I think that too much liberalism is bad, like with the freedom of religion. That is how the Christians have spread their proselytization, via ‘freedom of religion.’ When I was in Washington, D.C., I met with a group of Christians and they had a very sophisticated operation to promote freedom of religion. But I think this is not the same freedom that I am talking about. That is Christianization.”¹⁴⁴ Abshar Abdalla distinguishes between the right of Indonesians to explore their country’s diverse belief systems and the right of foreign organizations to build churches in Muslim villages. He supports the first but not the second.

Yet there is more to the debates over religious freedom and religious blasphemy than imperial domination. The war against blasphemy under way in

¹⁴⁰ Jeffrey M Jones, “Atheists, Muslims See Most Bias as Presidential Candidates,” 21 June 2012, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/155285/atheists-muslims-bias-presidential-candidates.aspx> (accessed 2 Apr. 2014).

¹⁴¹ David Cameron, “Prime Minister’s King James Bible Speech,” Number 10 Downing Street: The Official Site of the British Prime Minister’s Office, <http://www.number10.gov.uk> (accessed 26 June 2012).

¹⁴² Mohammad Natsir, “Islamic Tolerance” (originally published 1954), in Herbert Feith and Lance Castles, eds., *Indonesian Political Thinking 1945–1965* (repr., Jakarta: Equinox, 2007 [1970]).

¹⁴³ Saba Mahmood, “Religious Freedom, the Minority Question, and Geopolitics in the Middle East,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54, 2 (2012): 418–46.

¹⁴⁴ Ulil Abshar Abdalla, interview by the author, Jakarta, 12 June 2009.

Indonesia is part of a productive effort by Muslim civil society to further develop a system of godly nationalism and communal tolerance¹⁴⁵ while avoiding the templates of liberal secularism or theocracy. Indonesia's Muslim civil society values the country's religious diversity but does not want to sanitize the public sphere of religion in order to promote liberal values; its vision for a godly democracy aims to balance individual rights, group rights, religious pluralism, and belief in God. Putting this vision into practice is difficult at a time when liberal secularism is equated with tolerance, and religion is synonymous with intolerance, but the rising influence of pious democrats in Tunisia, Turkey, and the United States hints toward a future of godly nations.

Abstract: Since democratization, Indonesia has played host to a curious form of ethnic conflict: militant vigilante groups attacking a small, socially marginal religious sect called Ahmadiyah. While most scholars attribute the violence to intolerance by radicals on the periphery of society, this article proposes a different reading based on an intertwined reconfiguration of Indonesian nationalism and religion. I suggest that Indonesia contains a common but overlooked example of "godly nationalism," an imagined community bound by a shared theism and mobilized through the state in cooperation with religious organizations. This model for nationalism is modern, plural, and predicated on the exclusion of religious heterodoxy. Newly collected archival and ethnographic material reveal how the state's and Muslim civil society's long-standing exclusion of Ahmadiyah and other heterodox groups has helped produce the "we-feeling" that helps constitute contemporary Indonesian nationalism. I conclude by intervening in a recent debate about religious freedom to suggest that conflicts over blasphemy reflect Muslim civil society's effort to delineate an incipient model of nationalism and tolerance while avoiding the templates of liberal secularism or theocracy.

¹⁴⁵ On the concept of communal tolerance, see J. Menchik, "Tolerance without Liberalism."