

## Indonesia's Approaching Elections

# POLITICS, ISLAM, AND PUBLIC OPINION

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How strong is Islamism in Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country? And what are the implications of that strength for the newly restored democracy, which in 2004 is slated to hold elections for the second time since the Suharto dictatorship fell in 1998? Journalistic observers often seem tentative or even puzzled in their assessments. In September 2003, for example, a *New York Times* article relayed that "some have begun to ask whether the Islamists who want to create a caliphate across the Muslim areas of Southeast Asia will at the very least eventually succeed in Indonesia."<sup>1</sup> Yet just a month earlier, the *Times* had dismissively portrayed a meeting of Islamic militants, intended as a show of strength. The gathering was sparsely attended, the paper reported, and "none of the invited mainstream politicians showed up."<sup>2</sup>

As the *Times* stories suggest, the behavior of Indonesia's leading politicians is one of the main sources of confusion about the political strength of Islamism in the country. President Megawati Sukarnoputri, leader of the secular Indonesian Democracy Party of Struggle (PDI-P), rarely comments publicly on any issue, seeming especially concerned not to polarize the country by taking stands on religious questions. Vice-President Hamzah Haz, leader of the pro-Islamic-state United Development Party (PPP), is more than willing to speak his mind: When the foreign press expressed alarm that Islamist cleric Abubakar Baasyir was sentenced to only four years in prison for plotting to overthrow the state, Hamzah leapt to Baasyir's defense. "Who are the terrorists? America, that's who. The U.S.'s war crimes in Iraq make it the king of terrorists."<sup>3</sup>

Despite the current uncertainty, there is a long-held near-consensus

among specialists that the vast majority of Indonesian Muslims are steadily moderate in their political views. These scholars cite anthropological studies of village life as well as work that political scientists and historians have done on various topics—including the democratic elections of 1955 and 1999, social organizations, and political parties (Islamic and otherwise)—and the policies that various governments have followed since Indonesia became a sovereign nation following World War II.

Missing from these analyses, however, has been the evidence of opinion polls, which would allow direct assessments of popular sentiment. During Indonesia's first democratic period (1950–59), public opinion polling was in its infancy. And for 40 years afterward—during the authoritarian regimes of Presidents Sukarno and Suharto—political polling was outlawed.

In November 2002, the Research Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM)—a survey research center at the Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University in Jakarta—conducted one of the first political polls of the post-Suharto era.<sup>4</sup> In Indonesia, the opinion survey is novel, and findings must therefore be evaluated with caution. The PPIM survey reported in this article is one of the first to be conducted on the basis of a nationwide random sample. And the interview protocol is the product of several iterations by a single team, which has enabled us to fine-tune many of the items, including questions about religion and politics. We discovered that while many Indonesian Muslims appear to be Islamists on the broadest construal of the term (they believe that laws should somehow be basically in accord with Islam), relatively few support policies advocated by Islamist activists, such as restricting the public role of women or amputating the hands of thieves. By our categorization, only 14 percent of our respondents can be classified as strong or even moderate Islamists, while the remainder are either neutral or opposed to Islamism.

In addition, we learned that at the mass level Islamism in Indonesia is a rural rather than an urban phenomenon.<sup>5</sup> Islamist leaders may be alienated urbanites, but their followers are disproportionately rural and subscribe to a particularly rural-Indonesian understanding of religion and society that we have labeled the “Village of God.” Finally, we affirmed that Indonesia's largest Muslim social organizations are significant obstacles to the further growth of Islamism. Not only are their leaders tolerant and pluralistic, as we know from other studies, but their broader memberships seem immune to Islamism's allure.

### **The Political Moderation of Indonesian Islam**

With about 200 million Muslims (88 percent of a total population of more than 230 million), Indonesia has a larger Muslim population than any other country in the world. Indonesian Muslims are virtually all

Sunni (rather than Shi'ite) and are predominantly followers of the classical school of jurisprudence founded in ninth-century Arabia by Imam Syafii—historically a quietist school of Islam, more inclined to accommodate than challenge state power.

In 1955, during the run-up to Indonesia's first parliamentary elections (after ten years of independence), it was widely expected that the country's large majority of Muslim voters would return an Islamic government. Two major parties, Masyumi (Indonesian Muslims' Consultative Council) and Nahdlatul Ulama (Awakening of the Traditional Teachers and Scholars) campaigned on platforms that included amending the constitution's declaration of belief in God by adding the phrase "with the obligation for Muslims to carry out the *shari'a* [Islamic law]."

Masyumi was originally an umbrella association of all major Muslim social and educational organizations. By 1955, its national leadership was dominated by the group Muhammadiyah, then and now Indonesia's largest association of Islamic modernists. Modernists abjure classical schools of jurisprudence in favor of direct readings of the Koran and the Hadith (sayings attributed to Muhammad). In 2003, Muhammadiyah claimed 35 million members. Largely urban and well educated, they are spread throughout the country, with concentrations in the Special Region of Yogyakarta in central Java, and in west Sumatra.

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) is the largest association of Islamic traditionalists, with a claimed membership today of 50 million.<sup>6</sup> Traditionalists continue to adhere to the Syafii school of legal interpretation, taught by charismatic *ulama* (or in Indonesian: *kiai*—scholars and teachers) in thousands of boarding schools throughout the archipelago. NU's members tend to be rural, less educated, and heavily concentrated in the ethnically Javanese regions of central and east Java.

Masyumi and NU failed to meet the expectations of observers in the 1955 election. The two parties received only 21 percent and 19 percent of the vote, respectively, and so were unable to advance their Islamic-state agenda during the rest of the first democratic period (which ended in 1959). They were matched by two secular parties, the Indonesian National Party (PNI, created in the 1920s by Indonesia's charismatic founding father, Sukarno), with 22 percent of the vote, and the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), with 17 percent.

In 1959, a coalition led by Sukarno and the leaders of the army overthrew the fledgling democracy, ushering in four decades of autocratic rule. In 1966, Major General Suharto replaced Sukarno, retaining the presidency for 32 years until he resigned in 1998. Democratic parliamentary elections took place the following year, and in October 1999—under Indonesia's unique hybrid political system—parliament elected NU leader Abdurrahman Wahid as president. In July 2001, the same body dismissed Wahid, replacing him with the vice-president (and eldest daughter of Sukarno), Megawati Sukarnoputri.

One important indicator of the political moderation of Indonesian Muslims today is the decline in popular support for pro-*shari'a* parties since 1955. In the 1999 election, seven parties won significant percentages of the vote. Only three of the seven are based on Islam: Hamzah Haz's PPP, with 11 percent; the Crescent Moon and Star Party (PBB), with 2 percent; and the Justice Party (PK), with just 1 percent.

The remaining four, which together took a resounding 76 percent of the vote, are all committed to the secular state. They include Megawati's PDI-P, with 34 percent; the Joint Secretariat of Functional Groups (Golkar), with 22 percent; the National Awakening Party (PKB), with 13 percent; and the National Mandate Party (PAN), with 7 percent. Golkar was the military-backed state party that regularly won well over half the vote in the tightly controlled elections of the Suharto period, but it now competes on equal terms with the other parties. PKB, headed by former president Abdurrahman Wahid, is the party of NU but opposes implementation of the *shari'a*. PAN was founded by Amien Rais, national chair of Muhammadiyah for much of the 1990s, and seems to have received much of its 1999 vote from Muhammadiyah members. Its national board includes several non-Muslims, and it also opposes implementation of the *shari'a*.

What accounts for the already modest levels of support for pro-*shari'a* parties in 1955 (40 percent in a population that was 87 percent Muslim) and the substantial drop in 1999 (to a total of 14 percent for PPP, PBB, and PK)? The most widely accepted answer to the first part of this question was provided by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz in his 1960 classic *Religion of Java*.<sup>7</sup> Among the ethnic Javanese who make up about half of Indonesia's population, Geertz argued, the main line of cleavage is between *orthodox* Muslims (including both the traditionalist and modernist camps limned above) and *syncretic* Muslims.

Among syncretic Muslim Javanese, indigenous animism and Hinduism—which came to the archipelago long before Islam—powerfully influence contemporary religious beliefs and practices. PNI and PKI voters were disproportionately Javanese and (at least ostensibly) syncretic Muslims. Though no independent figures were available, many observers in the 1950s believed that up to two-thirds of Javanese Muslims were syncretists. Since orthodox Muslims were deemed unlikely to vote for secular parties, the Javanese vote for PNI and PKI was often taken as evidence of the existence of a large group of syncretists.

Two explanations are typically offered for the decline in the pro-*shari'a* vote between 1955 and 1999. First, the pro-*shari'a* forces were never as strong as they appeared to be, principally on account of the traditional political quietism of Indonesian Muslims. In the 1930s, NU leaders famously issued a *fatwa* accepting the legitimacy of Dutch rule. In the 1950s, they joined in the call for *shari'a* mainly to avoid being outflanked by the larger and more assertive Masyumi. Moreover, very few

Masyumi leaders were in fact religious ideologues. Most were Western-educated, wanted to create a modern state and society, and were willing to join coalitions with secular parties. Their calls for an Islamic state were a device meant to attract unsophisticated village Muslims whom they assumed would vote automatically for a Muslim party.

The second explanation claims that Sukarno's and Suharto's repression of political Islam between 1955 and 1999—and the response of Muslim politicians and intellectuals to that repression—produced a sea change in Muslim political culture. A few turned to violence, but the government crushed them. Many more, notably the Masyumi ideologue Mohammad Natsir and his followers, maintained their pro-*shari'a* position but retreated into the world of education while awaiting a more favorable political climate. After the fall of Suharto, this group reemerged as PBB, winning only 2 percent of the 1999 vote.

The largest group, however, consisted of young Muslims leaving the schools and universities from the 1970s onward who wanted to make their peace with the secular state. They were led on the modernist side by the religious thinker Nurcholish Madjid and on the traditionalist side by the activist Abdurrahman Wahid.<sup>8</sup> They and their descendants today hold many key positions in government and civil society. They control Golkar, PKB, and PAN, and are responsible for those parties' opposition to state enforcement of the *shari'a*.

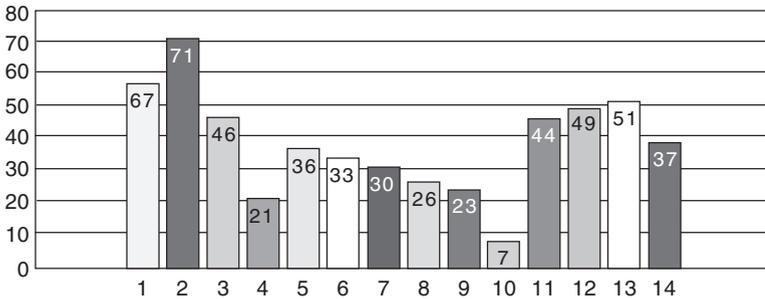
### Attitudes Toward Islamism

What can survey research add to this picture of Muslim political moderation in Indonesia? In 2001, PPIM began conducting annual surveys on Indonesian Muslim attitudes. The 2002 survey, reported in this article (see the Figure on the following page), attempts to assess the extent to which Indonesian Muslims subscribe to positions generally regarded as Islamist.

We used 14 survey items to help us determine the parameters of Islamism. We looked for broad support of the idea of a religious state, as well as various commitments typically associated with Islamism. Respondents were asked if they strongly agreed, agreed, were neutral, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with each of the items. The percentages in the Figure combine the “strongly agree” and “agree” responses.

First, the survey assessed Indonesian Muslims' general understanding of the connection between the state and Islam. Respondents were asked if they agreed with the statement that “Government based on the Koran and Sunnah [the traditions of Muhammad] under the leadership of Islamic authorities, such as *kiai* or *ulama*, is best for a country such as ours.” At this general level of assessment, more than two-thirds (67 percent) of Indonesian Muslims appear to express support for an Islamic state (see again the Figure). An even larger percentage (71 percent) say

**FIGURE—FOURTEEN INDICATORS OF INDONESIAN ISLAMISM IN 2002  
(PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS AGREEING OR STRONGLY AGREEING)**



1. Government based on the Koran and Sunnah under the leadership of Islamic authorities, such as *kiai* or *ulama*, is best for a country like ours.
2. The government must make obligatory (*mewajibkan*) the implementation of *shari'a*.
3. In elections we must choose the candidate who fights for the implementation of *shari'a*.
4. In elections there should only be Islamic parties.
5. The government must make obligatory the wearing of headscarves by Muslim women.
6. The sentence of cutting off of the hands of thieves should be carried out by the government.
7. The police should supervise (*mengawasi*) the implementation of fasting during Ramadan.
8. A woman may not become president.
9. A woman may not become a judge.
10. A woman may not become a member of parliament.
11. Priority in education should be given to boys.
12. Inheritance for daughters should be half that for sons.
13. In public women should always be accompanied by close relatives.
14. Polygamy should be permitted.

specifically that the government should require Indonesian Muslims to follow *shari'a*. Indonesian Islamist activists, as expected, have interpreted these findings to mean support for their point of view, believing that diffuse support for *shari'a* in the abstract indicates that the Muslim masses can become a resource for political mobilization.

But what of Indonesian Muslims' interpretations of the more specific dimensions of Islamic law? These should provide clearer indications of public opinion. For example, Muslims who are authentically in favor of implementing Islamic law through the state should also agree that they will elect representatives of the people who will struggle for the implementation of Islamic law. Interestingly, however, when given this choice, support for Islamism drops sharply, from 71 percent to 46 percent—which is to say that only a minority of respondents prefer politicians who advocate and struggle for the implementation of Islamic law.

The proportion drops even more sharply when Islamism is presented

in a still more concrete form. Knowing the motives and ideologies of many individual politicians is more difficult than knowing the ideology of a few parties. If members of the community really want Islamic law to be carried out by the government, we should expect them to support Islamist parties. They should vote for PPP, PBB, or PK, the three largest Islamist parties (all of which are well-known to survey respondents as Islamist parties). But in 1999, only 14 percent of voters (in a population that is 87 percent Muslim) cast their ballots for such parties.

Moreover, Islamist voters might be expected to support the idea that electoral competition ought to be restricted to parties which believe that the government must carry out Islamic law. But here, too, the reality is otherwise, with only 21 percent of voters favoring such a restriction. So there is a deep inconsistency between the widely supported ideal that the government should implement Islamic law and the practical proposition of carrying out that ideal.

Concerning women, the Koran stipulates that “men are leaders for women” (4:34). Islamists usually understand this passage literally, but contemporary Indonesian Muslims overwhelmingly do not. Only 7 percent of respondents reject the right of women to become members of parliament. Merely 22 percent consider women too weak to become judges. And an only slightly larger minority of 26 percent believe that Islam proscribes women from becoming president.

Islamist attitudes on social norms vary. More than one-third of our respondents (36 percent) agree that government should require Muslim women to wear the *jilbab*, or Muslim headscarf, in public. This is a hotly contested matter in Indonesia today, which may account for the relatively high level of support for enforcement: Whereas most Muslim women in Indonesia traditionally wore the *jilbab* voluntarily, many now claim that it is not a religious requirement. In response, Islamist activists have mobilized politically on this issue.

A majority of respondents (51 percent) support the norm that women should not be allowed to take distant trips unaccompanied by close family members. This is a prescription found in Islamic law (not in the Koran itself), widely and long accepted among the country’s Muslim population. But many now question whether this norm is still suitable, with virtually half of the population (49 percent) believing that it is not.

The same percentage of the population (49 percent) supports the Koranic stipulation that daughters’ inheritance should be half that of sons (4:11). A smaller proportion (44 percent) agrees that it is proper to give priority to educating sons when the economic capacity of the family is limited. A smaller proportion still (37 percent) believes that a man may have more than one wife. Feminists might see this as a very large percentage, but Islamists of course regard it as unacceptably small. For them, polygamy is the tradition of the Prophet.

Islamists want the government to play a proactive role in establish-

ing Islamic law—annually promoting, for example, fasting during the month of Ramadan. Islamists want places of entertainment closed during the same month, which would at least make it difficult for Muslims to break the fast in public. Yet only 30 percent of Indonesian Muslims believe that the government should supervise religious fasting.

Islamic criminal law is perhaps the most controversial issue area addressed by Islamists, and the most controversial law within it mandates the amputation of thieves' hands, which is also specifically mentioned in the Koran (5:38). In the PPIM survey, 33 percent of Indonesian Muslims support amputation.

What accounts for the difference between the high levels of diffuse or generalized support for the implementation of Islamic law and the much smaller levels of support for its specific provisions? First, we believe, the working conception of the *shari'a* itself varies widely among ordinary Muslims. Some, for example, define it narrowly as the five basic pillars—the avowal of faith, the five daily prayers, fasting during Ramadan, giving alms, and making the pilgrimage to Mecca—while others have a much broader conception. Second, many respondents may have understood the wording of the general survey question—which specifically says “under the leadership of Islamic authorities”—to reflect the current status quo, and therefore believed that they were affirming it rather than some “more Islamist” state of affairs.

At any rate, if we combine the findings from the survey's 14 items in an Islamism Index, we discover that only 14 percent of our Muslim respondents may reasonably be labeled either strong or moderate Islamists.<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, this is exactly the percentage of the vote that the three pro-*shari'a* parties won in 1999. A solid majority (67 percent) takes a neutral stance toward Islamism, with the remainder (19 percent) opposed to Islamism.

### The “Village of God”

Some observers, especially those who take the “ancient hatreds” or “clash of civilizations” approach to the politics of contemporary Islam, identify Islamist ideology with the values of traditional or premodern society—these values are allegedly held predominantly in rural areas less touched by modern social change than urban ones. These observers thus see Islamism as an attack on the present by reactionary defenders of the past, or alternatively on the city by alienated denizens of the countryside.

A second set of observers stresses the newness of Islamism. Islamist ideology, they believe, is a contemporary response by some Muslims to the strains and challenges of the modern world. After many centuries of isolation, Muslim societies from the nineteenth century onward have been under severe pressure from the West. The values and practices of modernity—including secular education, individual freedom and responsibility,

a scientific outlook, capitalism, industrialism, the separation of religious from political authority, and democracy—originated in the West and were first carried to the Muslim world by colonial rulers. The nationalist politicians who took power after independence in most Muslim-majority countries, from Algeria to Indonesia, adopted these values, at least in part. And although they or their successors by and large remain in power today, their records of achievement have been mixed at best. Economic development has been slow or nonexistent, inequality has worsened, and state officials and a few favored domestic businesspeople have benefited disproportionately. Officials remain in power through repression. There is little individual freedom and even less democracy.

Islamism, in this second account, has been a response by disaffected urban elites who share many goals with secular nationalist elites—in particular, their commitment to economic development and their embrace of modern science. At the same time, these disaffected urban elites have been disappointed by the economic-policy failures of their governments, angered at official corruption and favoritism, and antagonized by the repression of dissent. They have also been dismayed at the increasing liberalization of society and culture, which they see as a nearly inevitable by-product of the spread of secular education and modern urbanization.

To some extent, these are alternative interpretations of the rise of Islamism, one stressing the continuing power of traditional values, the other a modern response to contemporary problems. Where they meet, however, is in their common emphasis on the mobilization—by disaffected modern adherents to traditional values—of a political movement that challenges the dominance of secular nationalism. Such movements—some violent, some not—have arisen across the Muslim world, although so far they have taken power only in Sudan, Iran, and Afghanistan.

In the Indonesian case, Islamism has not to date become a mass movement, either in the cities or the countryside, but is instead the province of a small intellectual and activist urban elite. The primary organizational expression of this elite is the Justice Party (PK), a self-proclaimed cadre party which emerged from an Islamic study-group network centered on university-campus mosques in the 1990s.<sup>10</sup>

In the Suharto era, educational opportunities expanded greatly but authorities kept a tight lid on political expression, both in the universities and throughout society in general. The study-group movement, inspired by the Islamist ideals and cellular organizational structure of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, was one of the few places in society where young Indonesian Muslims felt free to share and develop their political views. The Justice Party was founded in mid-1998, shortly after Suharto's successor B.J. Habibie declared that democratic elections would be held within a year. Party leaders claimed, probably accurately, that they were beginning their electoral campaign with an initial cadre base of 200,000. Their campaign strategy was to deploy that base and mobi-

lize like-minded voters. In the 1999 election, they won 1.4 million votes in an electorate of one hundred million. Most of those votes were cast in urban areas. They were particularly concentrated in the neighborhoods around major state universities, indicating that at the time of the elections PK was still essentially a cadre rather than a mass party.

PK's minimal goal for the 2004 election is 4 percent, more than double the percentage of the vote that it received in 1999.<sup>11</sup> Its strategy is to continue to build its base of trained and loyal cadres, each of whom is instructed to persuade five to ten people to vote for PK. Party leaders see the 2004 election as the next step in a long, slow, but certain ascent toward a governing majority. What light does our survey shed on the prospect of PK or a similar party achieving such a goal?

As we interpret the findings, two things seem to be the case. First, Indonesian Islamism is disproportionately an ideology of villagers, and one that has grown organically out of their lifestyle. We have accordingly labeled this conception of Islam the "Village of God." Our suggestion is, first, that rural Indonesians might potentially be mobilized along the lines of this conception, as PK's cadre network broadens and deepens. Second, we believe that NU and Muhammadiyah—the massive Muslim social and educational organizations described above—appear to make up a popular alternative network linking rural and urban Indonesians to the country's non-Islamist parties. This is a major obstacle to the further growth of PK and other Islamist parties.

The results of the PPIM survey show a significant correspondence between residence in rural areas and Islamism. Villagers also have lower levels of education and income, and proportionately more of them are educated in religious schools. According to our data, Islamist tendencies are stronger among: 1) those who are less educated in general; 2) those who are educated in religious rather than secular schools; and 3) those whose household incomes are relatively low. More men than women are Islamists (see Table 1 on the facing page).

Indonesian Islamists who live in villages and have these other social characteristics tend to have similar political attitudes: They are less tolerant of non-Muslims and less supportive of democracy, and they identify less with the Indonesian nation (see Table 2 on p. 120). Islamists are more likely to object to neighbors of another religion, and they are likely to object if a Christian becomes a teacher in the public school or if Christians build churches in their neighborhood. By contrast, non-Islamist Indonesian Muslims tend to be quite tolerant. They do not object to their neighbors adhering to other religions, to Christians teaching in public schools, or even to Christians building churches in Muslim residential areas.

Islamists tend to have negative attitudes toward key democratic norms, like popular sovereignty (which they understand as being incompatible with God's sovereignty), recognition of minority rights, free

**TABLE 1—SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF INDONESIAN ISLAMISTS AND OTHERS**

|                            | ISLAMISTS   | NEUTRALS     | ANTI-ISLAMISTS |
|----------------------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|
| <i>Place of Residence:</i> |             |              |                |
| Rural                      | 70.2 %      | 57.7%        | 40.5%          |
| Urban                      | 29.8        | 42.8         | 59.5           |
| Total                      | 100 (N=258) | 100 (N=1208) | 100 (N=343)    |
| <i>Education:</i>          |             |              |                |
| Elementary                 | 63.5%       | 43.2%        | 27.5%          |
| Secondary                  | 27.7        | 47.3         | 55.3           |
| College/University         | 8.8         | 9.5          | 17.2           |
| Total                      | 100 (N=249) | 100 (N=1178) | 100 (N=338)    |
| <i>Educational Type:</i>   |             |              |                |
| Secular                    | 78%         | 85%          | 90%            |
| Religious                  | 22          | 15           | 10             |
| Total                      | 100 (N=237) | 100 (N=1106) | 100 (N=324)    |
| <i>Income:</i>             |             |              |                |
| Lower                      | 64%         | 54.8%        | 44.1%          |
| Middle                     | 28.3        | 32.8         | 35.5           |
| Upper                      | 7.8         | 12.4         | 20.4           |
| Total                      | 100 (N=258) | 100 (N=1189) | 100 (N=338)    |
| <i>Gender:</i>             |             |              |                |
| Male                       | 58.5%       | 49.6%        | 47.2%          |
| Female                     | 41.5        | 50.4         | 52.8           |
| Total                      | 100 (N=258) | 100 (N=1207) | 100 (N=343)    |

competition for public office, or equality before the law.<sup>12</sup> Islamists tend not to participate in nonreligious civil society organizations, such as the popular rotating-credit associations, recreational groups (like sports clubs), local cultural clubs, labor unions, farmers' associations, the Red Cross, NGOs, or professional associations. Nor do they want to be involved in public affairs involving the whole Indonesian community. Islamists are slightly less proud of their nationality than other Muslim Indonesians and would be less willing to go to war to defend the territorial integrity of their country.

Finally, Indonesian Muslims generally accept the modern norm that women have the same political rights as men. A woman can become president, a member of parliament, or a judge. The Islamist minority, however, asserts that all of these rights belong only to men (see Figure 1).

All of these attitudes are more characteristic of village dwellers than of town dwellers, because the attitudes reflect not just traditional religious values but also rural values and ways of life. Village society is relatively harmonious and homogeneous, compared to big-city life. Differences in religious understanding can therefore become major issues, setting one group of Muslims against another. The reading of one kind of prayer rather than another during morning prayers, for example, can produce palpable social tension.

**TABLE 2—POLITICAL ATTITUDES OF INDONESIAN ISLAMISTS AND OTHERS**

|                                       | ISLAMISTS   | NEUTRALS     | ANTI-ISLAMISTS |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|
| <i>Socioreligious tolerance:</i>      |             |              |                |
| Intolerant                            | 48.6 %      | 29.3%        | 15.6%          |
| Neutral                               | 47          | 53.2         | 54.4           |
| Tolerant                              | 4.3         | 17.5         | 30             |
| Total                                 | 100 (N=253) | 100 (N=1136) | 100 (N=327)    |
| <i>Support for democracy:</i>         |             |              |                |
| Prodemocracy                          | 72%         | 73%          | 84%            |
| Antidemocracy                         | 28          | 27           | 16             |
| Total                                 | 100 (N=246) | 100 (N=1162) | 100 (N=328)    |
| <i>Support for Indonesian nation:</i> |             |              |                |
| Positive                              | 73.7%       | 80.3%        | 80.1%          |
| Negative                              | 26.3        | 19.7         | 19.9           |
| Total                                 | 100 (N=246) | 100 (N=1162) | 100 (N=328)    |

In homogeneous villages, tolerance and religious pluralism are less relevant until there are newcomers with different religions. Usually such newcomers are not easy to integrate into an old community long accustomed to a homogeneous religious life. Most villagers are not prepared to practice tolerance toward other religions because their environment has never pressed them to. With regard to gender, relatively more village husbands expect their wives to be obedient to them, and village women have relatively fewer alternatives to obedience.

The “Village of God” imagined by Islamists does not need formal procedures to regulate leadership contestation. Rule-structured contestation is more a part of city life, just as the participatory political culture of modern democracy is more a part of an urban political culture. In village life, custom, consensus, and deference receive more emphasis.

### Muslim Social Organizations

Since the Islamism of Indonesian villagers conforms to many aspects of traditional rural culture, Islamist parties might be expected to mobilize village voters relatively easily, as more democratic elections are held. Our survey data suggest, however, that NU and Muhammadiyah will be standing in the way.

NU and Muhammadiyah each claim tens of millions of members, and our survey results affirm that the two organizations have enormous networking and civil-society-building capacity. They may even be said to constitute the “steel frame” of Indonesian Muslim civil society. NU’s organizational structure is based on thousands of traditional schools, most densely concentrated in east and central Java but present in many other regions. Muhammadiyah’s more modern organization is based on the struc-

ture of the Indonesian state, with branches in most provinces, districts, and municipalities. About 42 percent of our respondents think of themselves as part of the NU community, while 12 percent feel that they are part of the Muhammadiyah community. In addition, those who feel very close (short of actual affiliation) to NU total about 17 percent, and those who feel very close to Muhammadiyah, about 4 percent—meaning that 75 percent of Indonesian Muslims feel connected to either NU or Muhammadiyah.

Muslims who identify with NU or Muhammadiyah, as compared with those who do not, also tend to be active in non-Muslim social organizations. In other words, NU and Muhammadiyah loyalists are not socially closed. For them, on the contrary, activity in Islamic social organizations appears to open opportunities for involvement in other aspects of civil society.

A substantially higher percentage of NU and Muhammadiyah activists participate in secular as well as religious civil society organizations, as compared to nonactivists (79 percent versus 56 percent). NU and Muhammadiyah activists also tend to be involved in matters connected to public interests. NU and Muhammadiyah activists are generally more interested in politics than nonactivists (32 percent to 17 percent), discuss politics more often (22 percent to 11 percent), and contact public officials more often (16 percent to 5 percent)—all key ingredients in the participatory culture that is indispensable for a strong democracy. They also tend to be tolerant toward religious differences, to have strong commitments to democratic values, and to embrace Indonesian identity. NU and Muhammadiyah are thus a significant part of the social base of modern Indonesia's fledgling democratic culture.

Are NU and Muhammadiyah strong enough to resist the penetration of "Village of God" Islamism as an alternative to the project of Indonesian modernity? The news from our survey is at least partly reassuring. At the mass level, neither NU nor Muhammadiyah affiliation correlates, positively or negatively, with Islamism. Knowing whether a Muslim is active in NU or Muhammadiyah does not enable us to predict his or her attitude toward Islamism.

Muhammadiyah is often connected in the public mind with Islamism. Part of the reason for this is that historically most Indonesian Islamists have come from modernist rather than traditionalist communities. Modernists emphasize unmediated reading of the Koran and the Hadith, which has led some of them to conclude that specific injunctions, such as punishment by amputation and stoning, must be followed literally. Moreover, prominent Muhammadiyah members led the pro-Islamist Masyumi in the 1950s. But our survey reveals no such correlation between Muhammadiyah membership and Islamism.

Conversely, NU is often connected in the public mind with more inclusive religious attitudes. NU affiliation might therefore be expected

to correlate negatively with Islamism. But this is not so. At the mass level, both NU and Muhammadiyah are neutral toward Islamism.

What are the implications of these findings? Do these two giant social organizations enable or constrain the formation of an Indonesian Islamic identity that is inclusive and appropriate to modern nationhood? We believe that the neutral attitudes toward Islamism on the part of NU and Muhammadiyah members represent a positive change in the direction of inclusiveness. NU and Muhammadiyah once supported parties committed to the creation of an Islamic state, but they have now taken the opposite position. Our data suggest that their members have followed suit. Equally important, the density of NU and Muhammadiyah networks adds complexity and breadth to civil society, making them crucial sources of social capital for democracy-building.

Our findings support the long-held consensus that most Indonesian Muslims are politically moderate. At the most general level, we found large majorities expressing support for an Islamic state. We suspect, however, that the more general questions elicited an almost automatic positive response. When asked more specific questions, large majorities of Indonesian Muslims typically opposed the implementation of Islamic law as defined by Islamists.

We do not conclude that Islamism presents no challenge to the effort by Indonesian nationalists to create a modern state and society. It is true that only 14 percent of our respondents—to repeat, exactly the percentage of the 1999 vote won by Islamist parties—indicated that they share most of the beliefs held by Islamists. But we have also discovered that the ideology of Islamism appeals mostly to rural and otherwise disadvantaged Indonesians. Islamist activists will surely till this fertile soil in the 2004 and subsequent elections. The main obstacle to their success, our survey suggests, is the dense and pervasive network of moderate Muslim civil society organizations led by NU and Muhammadiyah, which together have the sympathies of as much as three-quarters of all Indonesian Muslims. These organizations have grown from the same soil as Indonesian Islamism, but their roots run considerably deeper, and they have in turn been enormously successful in entrenching political moderation in the world's most populous Islamic society. Their strength is one of the great causes for hope in Indonesian democracy.

## NOTES

1. Jane Perlez, "Islam Lite in Indonesia Is Looking More Scary," *New York Times*, 3 September 2003, A6.

2. Jane Perlez, "Militant Islamic Congress Is Sparsely Attended in Indonesia," *New York Times*, 11 August 2003.

3. Suwarjono, "Hamzah Haz: Siapa yang Teroris? Ya Amerika Itu," *Detikcom* (Indonesian online news service), 3 September 2003.

4. The leader of the survey team was Saiful Mujani, coauthor of this article. The survey population included all residents of Indonesia aged 17 or older, or who were married when the survey was conducted. The 2,500 respondents were chosen in a multistage (from province to village or urban ward) random sampling procedure. Interviews were carried out face to face by trained interviewers. By design, half the respondents were female. Urban respondents represented 59.8 percent of the total. In terms of age: 9.4 percent were 20 or under; 27.2 percent between 21 and 30; 29.3 percent between 31 and 40, 17.8 percent between 41 and 50; 10.1 percent between 51 and 60; and 6.2 percent over 60. Educational levels were: 49.8 percent elementary-school graduate or lower; 39.2 percent some or completed middle school; 11 percent some university or other higher education. Ethnically: 46.8 percent were Javanese; 16.8 percent Sundanese; 3.8 percent Madurese; 2.5 percent Batak; 2.4 percent Minangkabau; and 27.7 percent Other. Our analysis focuses on the Muslim respondents, who represent 89 percent of the total sample. For further methodological details, consult the authors.

5. According to the 2000 census of the Central Bureau of Statistics, 58 percent of the Indonesian population is rural, while 42 percent is urban.

6. Figures for both Muhammadiyah and NU are from *Republika*, 9 January 2003, Special Tenth Anniversary Supplement. *Republika* is Indonesia's leading Muslim daily newspaper.

7. Clifford Geertz, *Religion of Java* (New York: Free Press, 1960).

8. Fachry Ali and Bahtiar Effendy, *Merambah Jalan Baru Islam: Rekonstruksi Pemikiran Islam Indonesia Masa Orde Baru* (Bandung: Mizan, 1996).

9. To construct our Islamism Index, the item scores for each respondent were added and divided by the number of items to produce a five-point scale of 1) strong Islamism; 2) moderate Islamism; 3) neutral; 4) moderate anti-Islamism; and 5) strong anti-Islamism. The mean of this scale is 3.07 (standard deviation .49), indicating that most Indonesian Muslims are neutral toward Islamism. For the percentages in the text and tables, strong and moderate Islamism were combined as Islamism (1–2.50), and moderate and strong opposition to Islamism were combined as anti-Islamism (3.51–5.0). Neutral, by far the largest category, remained the same (2.51–3.50).

10. Ali Said Damanik, *Fenomena Partai Keadilan* (Jakarta: Teraju, 2002).

11. Interview, Justice Party leaders, Jakarta, March 2003, conducted by R. William Liddle.

12. Democratic norms or values were constructed from ten items: democracy is the best political system; democracy is bad for economic development; democracy is bad for political order; democracy is indecisive; minorities are allowed to demonstrate in democracies; all citizens are equal before the law; all citizens are free to organize; the mass media must be protected by law; free elections are harmful to national unity; and competitive elections are good for governance. Each was scaled on a five-point scale from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. An additive scale was then constructed and simplified into two categories, pro- and antidemocracy.