Reconsidering the modern nation state in the Anthropocene
A Muslim's perspective

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This article presents the nature of conflicts in postcolonial societies as the consequence of being under external control and economic exploitation. Drawing on empirical cases from Indonesia and a comparative literature review of African states, this article reveals a huge dilemma within the desire to build a solid nation state in a deeply pluralistic society. The nature of the modern nation state, which from the start requires the forcible subjugation of the population, has become one of the greatest paradoxes. That is to say, the very idea of unity for the pursuance of equity contradicts the premise of democracy, because forcing unity onto diversity implies denouncing differences and thus violating universal individual rights to be different. On that account, Indonesia's struggle with diversity has falsified Huntington's thesis, according to which cultural differences necessarily tend to lead to conflict. On the contrary, Indonesia demonstrates that conflicts have stemmed from nationalism and political-economic ideologies rather than cultural differences. This article high-lights two issues of global relevance. Firstly, the inherent problems of coexistence that arise from the legacy of the Christian missionary tradition advocating the separation of the state and religion in the colonies, whereas Islam is a religion of politics and of law. Secondly, the concept of *al-din* is hardly compatible with the Western concept of religion. In contemporary globalization, the modern nation state and nationalism are increasingly contrasted with the 'cosmic' nature of religion, which claims allegiances transcending differences of race and nationality. On the bright side, a case study of a Muslim 'intentional community' offers a pragmatic solution whereby an implementation of Islamic jurisprudence as a response to ecological issues by an individual Muslim group is doable within the constraints of a nation state. Thus the thesis moves beyond the rigidity of state system and promotes a 'people to people' approach.

Introduction

What I am presenting in this article is a serendipitous finding within my doctoral research (Alkatiri 2016). It was an interdisciplinary work on environmental studies and development studies with a close examination of nationalism and post-colonial issues alongside ethnic and religious con-flicts, globalization issues and Islamic movements in Indonesian society. Broadly, my thesis contends with the problem of sustainability and envi-ronmental degradation against two main challenges. On the one hand is the

economic-growth paradigm and the concomitant consumption levels of the consumer-capitalist societies which have now become a global phenomenon, including in developing countries like Indonesia. On the other hand there are the poverty and development projects taking place in underdeveloped and developing countries. Both imply an exploitation of natural resources. Historicizing the social construction of insensitive attitudes towards the environment among either policy or opinion makers required me to look into the education system and an investigation of the symbolic function of nationalism as a source of ideas and meaning.

Nationalism can be a powerful force for good. It evidently underpinned a vibrant movement for independence from colonial rule. It was also used as instrument for social and political control in attempts to unify all of a nation's potential towards development programmes. However, an education imbued with nationalism and developmentalism may have become the main culprit in cultivating sustainability 'illiteracy'. All nations are exclusive projects with respect to who they are not, so cultivating a desire for competition in progress and economic growth[1] hinders students' self-reflection and the conscience needed to comprehend sustainability in the context of a finite earth. It inhibits the 'whole-earth, one-world family' vision and the spirit of global cooperation which is needed to tackle the ecological crises which have reached a global scale. Moreover, the combined power of nationalism, science, technology, economic growth and modernization may well be the case that has overshadowed traditional connections to nature which are to be found in the religions. With a pragmatic research paradigm that aims to seek solutions, I was inspired by the networks of local sustainable community in the 'relocalisation'[2] literature, namely the Global Ecovillage Network

1   Under the capitalist-development paradigm, education induces acquisitive materialism and carries the promise of material happiness that entails lust and a sense of greed which results in ever greater demands upon the environment. For more, see Orr 1991 and Trainer 2012.
2   'Relocalisation' aims to reweave the fabric of communities, rebuilding them into sustainable, largely self-sufficient communities, and establishing local self-governance. As the effects of economic policies that ignore the needs of people and the planet become blindingly obvious, in post-industrial societies there are groups of people trying to create what they believe would be a sustainable and just society. They often aim to achieve this by turning to the local economy, putting the means of production under social control (instead of market forces and profit), and instituting self-governance. These movements try to create room for social, ecological and spiritual values (Norberg 2002, Dawson 2006).

Massive Friday prayer in 'anti-blasphemy against Islam' rally, Jakarta, 2.12.2016.. ANTARA FOTO/Hermanus Prihatna.

(2017) and the Transition Network (2017), and I turned my research focus to an investigation of the potential of Muslim groups and their learning communities to advance similar movements grounded in 'Islamic environmentalism', discussed by Richard Foltz *et al.* (2003), Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1996), Tony Watling (2009), David Johnston (2010), and others. By doing so, the research was pragmatically looking for an alternative model for an environmental movement that potentially has more chance of being heeded by a wider reach of the population in Muslim-majority countries like Indonesia, and has the potential to be networked globally as well, given that 'religions are the largest NGOs (non-governmental organizations) in the world' (Grim and Tucker 2014).

Indonesia has the world's largest Muslim population. Despite being a majority in quantity, it is worth highlighting that Muslims in Indonesia have been marginalized in terms of political access and economic prosperity. This predicament has historic roots. The Dutch colonial government did not deliver widespread educational opportunities to others besides classes of indigenous peoples loyal to it (Ricklefs *et al.* 2010, Pringle 2010). Ewout Frankema (2014: 2) argues that this inequality was a consequence of the Dutch metropolitan commitment to secular rule in an overwhelmingly

Islamic society. Consequently, following independence, when the development programme began, the majority of Muslims were 'uneducated' in the modern sense of the term and therefore, unable to supply manpower to meet the demand for 'qualified' human resources to participate. Henceforth, the political and economic arena was dominated by actors who came from secular-nationalist, Christian and socialist backgrounds. They were even holding important positions within the circles of Suharto's New Order elites, and hence the Muslim circles came to the conclusion that the government had been hijacked by anti-Muslim alliances of Chinese, Catholics, former socialists, and armed officers. This situation led to a psychology of 'defeat', where, as a majority, they had to face the reality that in fact they were weak in power. They were a majority in numbers, but a minority in quality. Hence, the Muslim majority turned out to be a minority in mentality (Hasbullah 2002), as implied by Adam Schwarz (1997: 129): 'Muslim leaders often sound and act like members of a persecuted minority', which is clearly an anomaly. Despite these facts, my research finding reveals the present-day largest homegrown Muslim organization, Nahdlatul Ulama, has rejected the idea of an Islamic environmental movement with a 'relocalisation' approach, as mentioned above, due to, especially, the notion of self-governance which might have appeared to the top-level leadership of the organization, which engages closely with the Indonesian central government, to be inciting secession and promoting an antithesis to the ideal of the unity of the NKRI (the Negara Kesatuan Republic of Indonesia) nation state. Indeed, an investigation of the potential of Muslim groups to advance 'relocalisation' must be confronted with the reality of religious conflicts that have nowadays become more frequent. The most recent one erupted with the nomination of a Chinese and Christian governor candidate for the capital, Jakarta.[3]

Many have written on the rise of conflicts motivated by religion and ethnicity in all quarters of the globe. Amy Chua (2004) shows that it is free-market democracy that has triggered ethnic violence in Southeast Asia, the former Yugoslavia, Latin America, South Africa, East Africa, West Africa and post-communist Russia. Apart from political-economic issues, my investigation of Indonesia's national history has uncovered a 'social construction of intolerance' alongside firstly, a 'violent' passion for nationalism,

3   See, for example Cochrane 2016, Jensen and Nangoy 2017, Vatican Radio 2017.

and secondly, a 'violent' passion for the separation of religion and politics. In fact, this recalls Max Weber's classic definition of the modern state:

> The modern state is a compulsory association which organizes domination. It has been successful in seeking to monopolize the legitimate use of physical force as a means of domination within a territory. (Weber 1921: 5)

It also recalls Karen Armstrong's *Fields of Blood* (2014) in which she reminds us not to point our fingers only at religion and fail to remember the nationalistic motives underlying violence in Europe and older civilizations. The explanation for this follows.

There have been ongoing debates in the last few decades that the experience of modernity has not been the same for the West as for the rest of the world. For colonized societies, modernity – which was once a largely descriptive account of the social and cognitive transformations that first occurred in the West – came to be regarded as a largely 'normative account' (Featherstone 1991: 6), hence, the imperative of colonized societies to follow modernization at the expense of the conditions in local contexts. This article shows further that neither does the experience of Western democracy apply similarly in the multi-ethnic colonized societies as in the West. It isn't until we arrive at post-modernity that such a critique of modern ideas is possible.

Postmodernism runs counter to modernism, which adheres to a realist doctrine. While modernism is characterized by an acceptance that general laws and truths may be attained by way of reason, science, and technology, and thus progress is possible, postmodernism in many ways opposes such ideas. Postmodernism only accepts the relative as a meaningful category, banning the very category of truth from intellectual discourse, and thus, it rejects the idea of progress itself in favour of local, unique, personal, contextualized 'truths'. From that perspective, the rise of conflicts in multi-ethnic societies in post-colonial countries substantiates the inadequacy of the modern nation-state model and nation building as a means to achieve equality and social justice. This article presents African states and Indonesia as cases in point.

Desperately seeking unity

Despite the heavy centralization of nation-building processes that the African states have undertaken, Solomon Dersso (2012) writes elaborately on how ethnically-based claims for substantive equality, justice, and equitable political inclusion and socio-economic order continue to result in communal rivalries in Africa. In his analysis, Dersso examines the nature of the basic structure of the post-colonial African states as it was inherited from the colonial states. He seeks to explain why most African states have failed to gain the approval of members of all the constituent ethno-cultural groups. He further examines why the nation-building process has engendered conflicts, instead of serving as a basis for social co-operation and national integration. A correspondence between the experiences of the African states and that of Indonesia is presented in the rest of the article with the following summary in a nutshell:

1) Ethno-cultural diversity in Africa is comparable to religious diversity in Indonesia.

2) The issue of 'tribal remains' of the primitive past as the main targets of nation-building projects in Africa is comparable to Islam being the main target of the nation-building project in Indonesia through secularization of the religion.

Furthermore, alongside Dersso (2012) in Africa, Hikmat (2014) presents historical records of the Indonesian government's policies on religion and culture which are used to explain the epistemological background of the social construction of 'intolerance' in the society at large. Thus, while in Africa 'the separation of state and ethnicity' as Will Kymlicka (1995: 4) puts it, 'precludes any legal or governmental recognition of ethnic groups or any use of ethnic criteria in the distribution of rights, resources, and duties' (Dersso 2012: 82), this article highlights the historical events of suppression of political Islam in Indonesia, in favour of 'the separation of the state and the church' as a Christian missionary's tradition (Barnett 2011, Armstrong 2014b).

The legacy of the missionaries

Secularism as a notion denoting the separation of religion and the state emerged in pre-colonial and pre-capitalist Europe as a protest movement for individual freedom against a theocratic state. However, as capitalism and trade progressively expanded, it was largely the bourgeoisie and merchant capitalists who championed secularism and henceforth, secularism evolved to be primarily an offshoot of market morality:

> It was premised on the necessity of individual freedom required for manoeuvre in the market, that would not be hampered by one's religion, nor would religion obstruct the functioning of the market (Roy 2006: 158).

What is interesting is that secularism in the European colonies was propagated by the Christian missionary to inculcate loyalty to colonial administrations in the local populations (Barnett 2011). Colonialism was central to the spread of Christianity; 'the native populations were defined by what they lacked – beginning with Jesus Christ and continuing through a long list of items that they associated with the civilized, Christian West' such as hygiene, self-control and discipline, chastity, sobriety, and hard work, which were viewed as essential for a Christian character' (Barnett 2011: 67). Colonial administrators and foreign trades found such missionary projects highly desirable, because if successful, the local populations would become more compliant, easier to control, and develop tastes and values that were consistent with the interests of the West. To the missionaries, colonial power makes possible a Christian world order by providing unprecedented opportunities for spreading 'the word'. Hence, colonialism was good for Christianity, and Christianity was good for colonialism. Consequently, various rules were set up to avoid conflict and to teach the local populations to respect colonial administrations. Following the maxim of 'rendering unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's' (Matthew 22:21), the missionaries attempted to maintain a line between themselves and politics: 'Matters of governance were the domain of the state, matters of religion were the domain of the church, and both the government and the church needed to recognize each other's sphere of authority' (Barnett 2011: 72).

Against that background of a 'missionaries–colonial government' alliance, my article offers a sociological explanation for the rising tensions between Indonesian Muslim and Christian groups in present-day Indonesia. From that vantage point, a thesis of Indonesian religious conflicts can be suggested in contrast to the received wisdom. Instead of religion being the main obstacle to the attainment of a peaceful society, it is the concept of the modern nation state and its state-centric nation-building process that should be held responsible for the development of intolerant attitudes in society.

The imperative of nation building

One of the most arduous tasks that post-colonial states were faced with at the time of independence was how to address the demands of their diverse communities who were incorporated – often by force – into large nation states under arbitrarily contrived colonial boundaries and structures (Bodley 1990, S. V. R. Nasr 2001, Ricklefs *et al.* 2010, Pringle 2010, Dersso 2012). As for Indonesia, when independence was finally achieved, the people were not sure who they were – whether they belonged to their regional (Southeast Asian), or ethnic, or religious, or ideological identities. It was pretty much the same with the Africans, as Dersso explains:

> What made this problem particularly formidable is that almost all African states, as the product of the colonial process and its system of divide and rule, lack national cohesion. Not only did their populations lack any shared consciousness of belonging to one country, but they were also ethno-culturally divided and socio-economically and politically unequal. The fragility of the post-colonial states was further compounded by the weak institutional foundation and capacity of the independent governments (Rothchild & Olorunsola 1983), a situation exacerbated by extremely underdeveloped and fragmented economies (Nwabueze 1973). (Dersso 2012: 61–2)

Given that, nation building became the most plausible top priority on the agenda of the post-colonial states. Dersso (2012: 62) notes that the independent governments had two options. The first was based on the dominant model of the nation state that had been popular at that time. The other was what may be referred to as a 'multicultural model' of nation building exemplified by Switzerland and India. However, given the following

conditions and arguments concerning Africa (*ibid.* 65), the wholesale adoption of the dominant model of nation state was chosen by all African states:

1) There was deep ethno-cultural division in the population.

2) There was a lack of shared political history among diverse ethnicities.

3) It was widely held at that time that African ethnicity, dubbed as tribalism, was an impediment to modernization and national unity.

Against that background, African post-colonial states undertook the 'assimilationist' and 'integrationist' approach of state-centered nation-building processes. For the particular context of Africa – which I argue to be comparable with Indonesia – the following political paradigms were dominant in the newly-born states.

Firstly, the possession of a single, homogenous, national identity was seen as a condition necessary to the generation of the 'sense of common purpose' required for democratic government. Dersso notes further:

> For influential 19th-century liberals such as John Stuart Mill, a democratic system of government is possible only where the people of a country share a common sense of nationhood. Mill put it thus: 'Free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities. Among a people without fellow-feeling, especially if they read and speak different languages, the united public opinion necessary to the working of representative government, cannot exist'. According to him, therefore, it is 'a necessary condition of free institutions that the boundaries of government should coincide in the main with those of nationalities'. (Dersso 2012: 63)

Along this line, the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who strongly influenced the French Revolution and whose ideas have been powerful forces in the creation of nationalism within and outside Europe, expounded a more powerful argument on the need for homogeneity. It is believed that homogeneity is a necessary condition for popular sovereignty, or the 'general will', which is the basis for the legitimacy of the modern nation state. According to Rousseau, it will be difficult to form a 'general will' in a society where 'factions arise and partial associations are formed'. Thus, he saw the cohesion and homogeneity of citizens as a necessary condition

for the formation of the 'general will' as an expression of popular sovereignty. He puts it thus:

> The more concert reigns in the assemblies, that is, the nearer opinion approaches unanimity, the greater is the dominance of the general will. On the other hand, long debates, dissensions and tumult proclaim the ascendancy of particular interests and the decline of the State. (Rousseau 1762: 83)

Rousseau even went as far as saying that a state needs a 'religion'. That is, 'the religion of the citizen', which is:

> codified in a single country, gives it its gods, its own tutelary patrons; it has its dogmas, its rites, and its external cult prescribed by law; outside the single nation that follows it, all the world is in its sight infidel, foreign and barbarous; the duties and rights of man extend for it only as far as its own altars. ... [M]aking country the object of the citizens' adoration, teaches them that service done to the State is service done to its tutelary god. ... To die for one's country then becomes martyrdom; violation of its laws, impiety; and to subject one who is guilty to public execration is to condemn him to the anger of the gods: Sacer estod. (Rousseau 1762: 107)

Dersso comments that Rousseau's paradigm favours not only a majoritarian system of government but insists on the necessity for a state of achieving socio-cultural and linguistic homogeneity. In France, it offered the philosophical basis for the pursuance of a homogenizing nation-building process that turned peasants and distinct communities in the country into 'French men and women' (Dersso 2012: 64), but apparently, in post-colonial states it did not work that well.

Secondly, for the unity and political stability of a modern constitutional state, the possession of a commonly 'shared identity' by a state and its nationals was seen to be necessary. Thus a 'nation' was needed as the basis of the state. This is because, as Ernest Barker argued:

> There must be a general social cohesion which serves, as it were, as a matrix, before the seal of legal association can be effectively imposed on a population. If the seal of the State is stamped on a population

which is not held together in the matrix of a common tradition and sentiment, there is likely to be a cracking and splitting, as there was in Austria-Hungary. (Barker 1951: 42)

Thirdly, the nation state serves the functional requirement of the modern society. Gellner (1983) argues that the modern state requires a culturally homogenous society for its effective running, given that members of society must conduct transactions with each other, run the bureaucracy, operate the same court system and the like. Consequently, it necessitates a standardized language and common cultural attributes and historical symbols which are shared by all the people. Thus, Taylor (1998) noted further, that the constitutional state must enforce a kind of homogeneity of language and culture through the education system as well as media.

With the above-mentioned rationales, the nation-state model appeared to be the only legitimate form of political organization, and henceforth, in nearly all post-colonial African states:

The imperative of nation-building. Flags at the ONU Building, Geneva, 25.2.2005. Photo by Yann, Wikimedia Commons, CC-BY-SA 3.0.

1) National unity was pursued through homogenization. National unity in terms of homogeneity and unity was praised highly, whereas an ethno-cultural diversity was seen as a weakness and antithetical to the process of nation building.

2) Heavy centralization and restrictions of political and ethno-cultural pluralism were prevalent. The constitutions, laws and development policies of these states have all been used as instruments in a highly centralized, unitarist and homogenizing nation-building process. The former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan observed: 'too often, the necessity of building national unity was pursued through the heavy centralization of political and economic power and the suppression of political pluralism' (Annan 1998).

These paradigms were fully appropriated by the African elites. Francis Deng notes:

> After independence Africans were eager to disavow tribalism as divisive. Unity was postulated in a way that assumed a mythical homogeneity amidst diversity. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana outlawed parties organized on tribal or ethnic bases. Houphouet-Boigny of Cote d'Ivoire coopted ethnic groups through shrewd distribution of ministerial posts, civil service jobs, social services, and development projects. Julius Nyerere, a scion of tribal chieftaincy, stamped out tribalism by fostering nationalistic pride in Tanganyika and later, Tanzania, born out of the union with Zanzibar. Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya forged a delicate alliance of ethnic groups behind the dominance of his Kenyan African National Union party. (Deng 1997: 28–9)

In comparison, the following section highlights a similar nation-building process in Indonesia.

Separating the state and religion

From the sixteenth century onwards, the history of Southeast Asia has been marked by colonial aggression and exploitation carried out by almost all the great imperial powers (United Kingdom, France, Holland, Portugal, Spain and the USA). Indonesia was a Dutch colony. It was formed from the

nationalized colony of the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, VOC), which came under the administration of the Dutch government in 1800. Most Indonesians believe that they were under the Dutch for nearly 350 years with the arrival of the VOC in 1609 as its starting point. The archipelago was one of the most valuable European colonies and contributed to the Dutch's prominence in spice and cash crops trades. Even if some would disagree with the association of the Christian missionary activities as part and parcel of Western colonialism, historically it is true that much of Christian missionary activity happened during the heyday of the colonial enterprise (Evers 2014). To deal with the plurality of the populations in the archipelago, a politics of segregation was imposed. Hikmat Budiman (2014) highlights the historical events in pre-independence Indonesia which I argue have contributed to the social construction of intolerance by engendering vigilance against difference.

The colonial government divided the population into groups that were strictly monitored and was extremely discriminatory. The Dutch colonial law known as the *Algemene Baplingen van Wetgeving* (General Regulation on Legislature Principles) divided the population of the East Indies into two categories based on religious orientations, namely, Europeans who embraced Christianity; and natives, for that of all non-Europeans. In 1885, the colonial government divided the population, not based on religion but on race, into three groups: European, In-lander, and Foreign Orientals (Indian, Arab, Chinese). Perhaps at the missionaries' request, the colonial power in general (Barnett 2011),[4] and the Dutch in Indonesia (Pringle 2010: 47–9), were particularly hostile to Islam.

On 17 August 1945, Indonesia proclaimed its independence. The archipelago became a country of cultural diversity. Migration, trade, colonization, diffusion and adaptation have given rise to some 300 ethnic or cultural groups. The country consists of a large archipelago of more than 17,000

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4 The World Missionary Conference (WMC) in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1910, 'was particularly worried about "Mohammedism," as missionaries reported their lack of acceptance in Islamic societies and noted that Christianity was losing ground to Islam for the souls of non-monotheistic peoples in places like sub-Saharan Africa. Registering alarm and anxiety, the conference highlighted the urgent need to confront Islam, limit its gains, and, if at all possible, send it back to Arabia' (Barnett 2011: 70–1). The conference was attended by some of the period's most important religious, political, and economic figures.

islands straddling the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. The largest islands are Java, Kalimantan, Sumatra, Sulawesi, and Papua (formerly Irian, which is the western part of New Guinea). Indonesia's total land area measures 1.9 million square kilometres (750,000 square miles). This is three times the area of Texas, almost eight times the area of the United Kingdom and roughly fifty times the area of the Netherlands. Apart from fertile land suitable for agriculture, at the time of its independence in 1945, Indonesia was rich in a range of natural resources, ranging from petroleum, natural gas, and coal, to metals such as tin, bauxite, nickel, copper, gold, and silver. It is important to note that the country has also been characterized by cohabitation of both Muslims as the majority (slightly more than 87% in 2009) and Christians (less than 10% in 2009), together with two other significant minorities, that is Hindus (2%) and Buddhists (1%). Both Indonesian Muslims and Christians equally claimed a role in the nation building. Notably, each one's version was at odds with the other's.

Forcing unity onto diversity

After independence, the multicultural setting and all kinds of diversity were seen as a threat to national stability. Sukarno, the first President of Indonesia, seemed to be preoccupied by the idea of 'nationhood' and came up with the notions of *Natie* and *Nationale Staat*, according to which the

> nation of Indonesia embraces entire individuals who according to the geopolitics decreed by Allah coexists in the union of all islands across Indonesia from the Northern tip of Sumatera to the farthest end of Irian (Budiman 2014: 192).

By referring to the decree of God, Sukarno strove to formulate, in his passion for unity, a platform that could mediate the pre-Indonesian nation. In fact, his reflection invoked what Deng observed of the African states already mentioned: 'unity was postulated in a way that assumed a mythical homogeneity amidst diversity' (Deng 1997: 28).

It is interesting to note that Sukarno's doctrine of *Natie* and *Nationale Staat* might appear to be the veracities of Benedict Anderson's (1983) *imagined community* in the literal sense of the term. This too, should invoke Ernest Renan (1882: 892) who said that 'nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness; it invents nations where they do not exist'.

Towards that end, Sukarno established *Pancasila*[5] (Sanskrit 'five principles') as a state ideology that was hoped to become a foundation for national identity. It was hoped that it would be a guide in creating a harmonious society based on religious tolerance, humanism, nationalism, democracy and social justice. Pancasila seemed to be prescribed to serve the function of a 'religion of the citizen' as conceptualized by Rousseau (1762). Subsequently, as in post-colonial India (Roy 2006), the secularism adopted by Indonesia acquired a changed meaning; namely all religions should be treated equally under the dictate of nationalism.

Nationalism was the dominant force of Sukarno's regime with Sukarno as its chief commander. In 1957 Sukarno declared the institution of Guided Democracy, a non-system of personal, authoritarian rule. He assumed, and many Indonesians agreed, that he alone could achieve national unity (Pringle 2010: 67). Thus, his famous statement:

> I have made myself the meeting place of all trends and ideologies.
> I have blended, blended, and blended them until finally they became
> the present Sukarno (Latif 2008: 306).

In the same vein, the following remarks of African leaders are worth noting:

> In three or four years, no one will remember the tribal, ethnic or religious rivalries which, in the recent past, caused so much damage to our country and its population (Touré 1959: 34).

> We must insist that in Ghana, in the higher reaches of our national life, there should be no reference to Fantis, Ashantis, Ewes, Gas, Dagombas, 'strangers', and so forth, but that we should call ourselves Ghanaians – all brothers and sisters, members of the same community – the state of Ghana (Nkrumah 1961: 168).

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5   The five principles of Pancasila are: 1) belief in one supreme God; 2) a just
     and civilized humanity; 3) national unity; 4) Indonesian-style democracy; and
     5) social justice.

Nevertheless, Sukarno was fully aware of the incompatibility between Islam and the idea of a nation state. In one of his speeches, he rhetorically asked:

> … can the Nationalist movement be joined with the Islamic movement, which essentially denies the nation? … With full conviction, I answer: 'Yes!' (Sukarno 1970: 38–9, in Burhanudin and Dijk 2013)

It is worth mentioning, like the other infant post-colonial states, the history of the new Indonesian Republic was replete with civil war, social upheaval and horrific events. One of the five most significant is the Darul Islam uprising (1948–62). The Darul Islam rebellion proved that some Muslims put religion before national unity. It is worth noticing that Hidayatullah, the subject of the case study in section 'The khilafah reinterpreted' is allegedly associated with the Darul Islam rebellion. On account of the tension between Islam and the state, the Sukarno government banned and eliminated Islamic political power and in the 1960s also began to restrict the political activities of Muslim politicians (Hasbullah 2002). Many activists were put into jail. People became aware that his Guided Democracy was tyrannical, and therefore had to be overthrown (Noer 1987: 415, in Hasbullah 2002: 7). Moeflich Hasbullah notes further that Muslim hatred of Sukarno and his chief supporters, the communist party (PKI) was great, and perhaps this was why Muslims were active in helping the New Order demolish the Old Order.

After Sukarno, the second president, Suharto and his New Order, was also widely known for an emphasis on 'unity'. Because the Javanese ethnicity was dominant, the government attempted to homogenize the nation and create a common culture with symbols and values based on Javanese cultural style and values, thus inciting bitter indignation on the part of the Outer Islanders. For them nationalism was merely Javanization as part of the hegemonization policy of the ruler in Jakarta. Beginning in 1978, a national indoctrination programme, P4 (*Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila)* was undertaken to inculcate the values of Pancasila into all citizens, especially schoolchildren and civil servants. Pancasila as an expression of nationalism was now used as an instrument of social and political control. Further, the regime stipulated an *azas tunggal* (a 'single ideological foundation') policy which obliged all associations (including the Ulama Council,

Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI) to be based on Pancasila and nothing else (see Bruinessen 2013). Budiman (2014: 194–8) shows that the concept of a unitary state, which implies that the government prioritises the preservation of political sovereignty, often advanced at the expense of diversity of language, ethnic, local differences, indigenous normative ordering, and religious law. He also highlights three political instruments that the government invented, which, in my view, planted the seeds for the legitimation of intolerance in dealing with diversity in the future. They are:

1) Forcing unity onto diversity, whereby a homogenization policy was accompanied by rhetoric and practices that restricted diversity in terms of both political and ethno-cultural pluralism.

2) The standardization of ethno-cultural diversity, whereby diversity was encouraged, not as recognition of differences, but as a means of promoting economics of the state's tourism project.

3) The stipulation of 'official religions' whereby only five were acknowledged by the state (Islam, Catholic, Protestant, Hinduism, Buddhism). For Indonesia at the time, 'Islam' referred only to Sunni orthodoxy.[6]

When fixed features are adopted as defining features of the nation, a potential problem of hierarchy emerges. Conflicts between the Sunni majority and the nascent presence of Ahmadi and Shi'ite minority groups emanated from those.

Down to this day, Indonesian political figures continued to claim that Indonesia is a microcosm of the world's diversity (Alles 2016: 140): 'If, and when Indonesians will succeed as a nation, we will have to be optimistic on the fact that peace and harmony can be possible in every corner of the world', and Pancasila has always been glorified as the 'secret recipe' of its success story:

> Pancasila and Bhineka Tunggal Ika ['Unity in Diversity', Indonesia's national motto] can be a model for future relations between various religions and civilizations. Our experience with Pancasila demonstrates that it was the right choice (Alles 2016: 140).

6   The Shafi'i school remains dominant throughout Southeast Asia today.

Moreover, Pancasila is believed to be the solution that provides rooms for interreligious dialogue between Islam and Christianity:

> Pancasila is the only viable alternative if Indonesia is to maintain its unity and its diversity. In dealing with the two conflicting ideologies, the solution offered by Pancasila is that Indonesia would be neither a secular state, where religion is absolutely separated by the state, nor religious one, where the state is organized based on particular faith. In short, both Pancasila and 'secularization as differentiation' allow us to avoid choosing between a secular and a narrowly religious state. (Intan 2006: 18)

Nevertheless, this article would like to point out that in reality the history of Indonesia is characterized by religious warfare, interreligious conflicts, and political-religious divergences (see, e.g., Pringle 2010, Ricklefs *et al.* 2010, Bruinessen 2013). Beginning from the end of the twentieth century, Indonesia has been afflicted by massive ethnic and religious conflicts – generally motivated by religious hatred between Muslims and Christians. My investigation of the roots of the hatred suggests three main causal events:

Firstly, the legacy of the colonial system produced largely marginalized, pious Muslim groups, already mentioned.

Secondly, as the country had constantly been threatened by internal clashes along both ideological and regional fault lines, a fear of disintegration was nurtured. With the history of the tensions between Islam and secular nationalism that continued to plague the nation, Islam was identified as an 'internal enemy'.

Thirdly, bitter indignation was connected to a dispute over 'seven words' which were dropped from the first principle of Pancasila. This incident suggests an inherent problem of coexistence between Christians and Muslims in ex-colonized societies, inferred from previous discussion about secularization and the missionaries in the colonies. More elaborate discussion is provided in section 'Celebrating diversity'. To highlight the point of disputes, the following section presents a chronological outline of the events concerned with nation building and the development of Pancasila from two opposing viewpoints – of the Muslims and of the Christians respectively.

The 'seven words' that never went away

Pancasila was developed in the final days of the Japanese occupation of Indonesia (1942–5), forged by nationalists to create a social contract among the citizens of the future nation of Indonesia. A federation of Muslims, Masyumi (Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia; the Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslims), was established with sponsorship from the Japanese military authorities and was explicitly created to support the Japanese in World War 2. On March 1, 1945, the Japanese established an Investigating Committee for Preparatory Work for Indonesian Independence (BPUPKI) in order to draft a constitution. The representatives of Masyumi were present on the committee alongside secular and Christian nationalists. A draft version of the future state ideology, Pancasila, was signed on 22 June 1945, as the Jakarta Charter by the future president, Sukarno, the future vice president, Hatta, and others, including seven Muslim politicians as the representatives of Masyumi. On August 17, 1945, the independence of Indonesia was declared by Sukarno and Hatta in Jakarta. One day after the proclamation, seven of the words on the first principle (*sila*) of Pancasila stipulated in the Jakarta Charter (signed two months earlier), disappeared. In the charter it was specified as 'belief in God with obligation for adherents of Islam to carry out *Sharia* (Islamic Law)', but in the constitution proclaimed on 18 August 1945 it was altered to the simple 'belief in God'. The intrigues operating behind the incident were complex.

From the Christians' viewpoint, the original *sila* seemed to imply that the state would be responsible for implementing this provision, and would thus be some sort of quasi-Islamic state:

> From the beginning the Christians took part fully in the process of
> formulating the Pancasila or the Five Principles of statehood. It was
> primarily a result of Christian insistence that there should be no
> discriminatory treatment of any group that seven words in the original
> draft of the preamble of the constitution, which would have made it
> imperative for Muslims to abide by the Shariah, were dropped a few
> hours before the ratification of the constitution on 18 August 1945.
> Without much theological reflection, the Christians in Indonesia
> from 1945 on were protagonists of equal rights for all citizens, irre-
> spective of creed, race and ethnic origin, as expressed in the Pancasila.
> (Simatupang 1985: 81)

They [Christians] insisted on a revision of the Jakarta Charter by deleting the seven words that gave advantage to Islam; without this they would stand outside of the Republic of Indonesia. Ngelow argues that the removal of the seven words of Jakarta Charter was the Christian contribution defending the nation's unity and constituted an ahistorical moment in which Christians played an important role in the political arena. (Setyawan 2014: 101)

When the second term of the BPUPKI plenary sessions was held in mid July 1945, some of the members, including Johannes Latuharhary from the Christian faction, expressed their objection to the seven-word clause. He warned that the clause would place the other religions in serious danger and would bring disorder to the people's customs in regions such as Minangkabau and Maluku; meanwhile the Islamic faction argued that it would not cause any danger or disorder. After an endless debate the sessions were closed without any clear agreement or consensus. Sukarno closed the debate by recalling that the controversial clause was a compromise between the Islamic and the nationalist factions. On this basis he appealed that the main points in the Preamble be accepted. … Soekarno once again appealed … 'I know that this means an enormous sacrifice, very especially from the patriotic brothers Latuharhary and Maramis who are not Muslim. I beg with a weeping heart that you are willing to make this offer to our country and nation, a sacrifice for our desire that we can solve this quickly so that the independent Indonesia can be quickly in peace'. (Aritonang and Steenbrink 2008: 189)

It was reported that one day after the proclamation of independence, on 17 August 1945, the Japanese Navy intervened, claiming that Christians in its area of responsibility, eastern Indonesia, would separate themselves if the seven words were not deleted (Pringle 2010: 69; Aritonang and Steenbrink 2008: 189).

As a matter of fact, the seven words do not mention an 'Islamic state'. They merely say that Muslims, not anyone else, would be bound by the tenets of Sharia law. This situation in particular, recalls Karen Armstrong's opinion about secularization and the colonized people. Armstrong points out that in Europe, secularization emerged at a time when Europe was beginning

to colonize, and because of that, that came to exert considerable influence on the way the West viewed what it had colonized. Accordingly, the secular ideology cultivated by European colonizers – which, in Indonesia's case was adopted by the Christians and the secular nationalists – 'perceives Muslim societies that seem incapable of separating faith from politics to be irredeemably flawed' (Armstrong 2014b). Finally, the 'seven words' were aborted in response to objections by Indonesian Christians. For Indonesian Muslims, on the other hand, the loss of those seven words has stripped Pancasila bare of its spiritual meaning. The incident has been and continues to be a definitive sore point in the memory of conservative Muslims concerning secular and Christian groups altogether. Down the years, as the country's development has only brought about a wider gap between the well-off Christian minority and the deprived Muslim majority (see, e.g., *The Guardian* 2017), Pancasila has once again become a bone of contention and the dispute over the 'seven words' has resurfaced. The state's inability to bring about prosperity has put Pancasila into competition with religious ideologies (Sulaiman 2011). Above all, from the conservative Muslims' viewpoint (as of Islamists generally), an obedience to a purely secular Pancasila is always an act of going into partnership with God (*shirk*) – the greatest sin in Islam. Thus, Pancasila is regarded as a *taghut*.[7] In the light of this incident, Yusuf al-Qaradawi's statement (March 2014: 293) is pertinent. Qaradawi contends that secularism could be more easily accepted in a Christian society due to the fact that 'Christianity is devoid of a *shari'a* or a comprehensive system of life to which its adherents should be committed'. He says further:

> The New Testament itself divides life into two parts, one for God, or religion, the other for Caesar, or the state: 'Render unto Caesar things which belong to Caesar, and render unto God things which belong to God (Matthew 22:21). As such, a Christian could accept secularism without any qualms of conscience'. (March 2014: 293)

The 'seven words' continued to be a painful reminder of Muslim's defeat. From that time on, Muslim–Christian relations turned from bad to worse.

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7   *Taghut* refers to idolatry or to the worship of anything other than Allah.

Perplexed and assured

Despite all attempts to achieve a 'unity' at the national level, ethnic and religious conflicts continued to recur in Indonesia. Contemporary Indonesian society, after all, is characterized by a pervasive fragmentation that Edward Aspinall (2013) argues is associated with neoliberalism. According to his observation, fragmentation is visible virtually everywhere, with new or revivified local identities based on ethnicity and religion and with various forms of cultural revival. Additionally, Aspinall (2010) and Peter Blunt *et al.* (2012) show that contemporary Indonesia remains a society of patronage and patronage remains systemic within the government. Notably, money politics and corrupt practices continue to constitute and sustain this patronage (Blunt *et al.* 2012). In a study of environmental governance, Paruedee Nguitragool (2012) found a lack of large-scale social cohesion between civil society organizations in Indonesia and the public, in conjunction with a fragmentation along the axis of class inequality and identity politics. My own observation captured two dissimilar opinions widely pervading Indonesian minds these days:

1) In remembrance of the past, people believe that in fact Indonesia needs strong authoritarian governments that can keep any kinds of conflicts and disunities under control.

2) Many Indonesian leaders have continued to maintain a confidence that Indonesia is an excellent example of a peaceful society, albeit a diverse one, which deserves international recognition and admiration. These leaders claim, and their political supporters agree, that Pancasila is the secret of its success.

With the key findings of this research, my analysis disproves the first belief. The investigation shows, on the contrary, that today's problems in many cases are the legacy of an abusive past. The analysis also disproves the second belief, for the findings demonstrate the flawed assumption that a state-centric nation building will engender a harmonious society by imposing unity onto diversity.

Celebrating diversity: a Quranic perspective

The normative discussion of Islam and secularism in this section and the pragmatic approach adopted to deal with the contemporary challenges rest on my theoretical and empirical work (Alkatiri 2014, 2016). Being critical of secularism and the nation state, I beg to differ with many scholars from Muslim-majority countries who are 'frequently called upon to publicly proclaim endorsement of Western liberal, democratic institutions' (March 2014).

It is well known that among the world religions, 'Islam has perhaps the most unequivocal claim to a public political vision' (March 2014: 2828). In my opinion, that cannot be fully understood without a hermeneutical understanding of the differing concepts of 'religion' referred to by the Quran and the one understood in the Western tradition. Based on Ibn Manzur's standard classic, the *Lisan al-Arab* (1968), Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas (2013) elucidates the concept of religion couched in the term *al-din*. The word *din* derived from the Arabic root *DYN* ('debt'). The primary significations of the term *din* can be reduced to four: 1) indebtedness; 2) submissiveness; 3) judicious power; 4) natural inclination or tendency (*ibid.* 2). Man is indebted to God for bringing him/her into existence and maintaining him/her in his/her existence. Being indebted, one is under obligations which naturally involve submission. The moment one is created and given existence, he/she is in a state of utter loss, for everything in him/her is what the Creator owns. Being 'owned' by the Creator consequently means he/she is the slave (*abd*) of God and should direct his/her true loyalty to God alone. As a result, Al-Attas argues that

> The man of Islam is not bound by the social contract, nor does he espouse the doctrine of the Social Contract…for he has, nevertheless an individual contract reflecting the Covenant his soul has sealed with God. (Al-Attas 2013: 25)

The act of doing service to God is called *ibadah*, which refers to 'all conscious and willing acts of service for the sake of God alone and approved by Him, including such as are prescribed worship' (Al-Attas 2013: 11). Thereby, the meaning of *din* is closely associated with *ibadah* or worship in the manner 'approved by God'. The latter, in Islam, refers to 'words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad' termed as the *Sunna*.

In contrast, the term 'religion' comes from the Latin *religare* with the root meaning 'to tie' or 'to bind' – it is what binds humans to God. That word suggests a private domain of relationship, devoid of juridical details. For that reason, secularism might be embraced more easily within the Western mentality, whereas Muslims are bound to struggle with cognitive dissonance, as al-Qaradawi argues above. As a comprehensive system of thought and social order, Islam, as it is claimed in traditional Islamic lore, consistently supports religious diversity, and Muslim societies in the Islamic golden age were largely tolerant. This confidence is often proffered by conservative Muslims to repudiate liberal justifications of secularism as the most appropriate constitutional framework for a complex and morally diverse society.

Being the youngest of the Abrahamic faiths, Islam has been faced with religious diversity since its inception in the seventh century, and thereby has a theological basis in relations with other religions. The concept of a cycle of prophecy (*dairat nubuwwah*) according to which the Prophet Muhammad is believed to be the last Messenger of God, implies acknowledgement of the pre-Islamic religions, and a point of view of diversity as a natural phenomenon in the historical development of religions. Even though Islam evaluated pre-Islamic religious traditions critically it never rejected them as false (Aydin 2001, Sachedina 2001). Based on the Islamic belief that all communities have been visited by a 'warner' (Quran 35:24), the recognition of legitimate religion is not limited to Judaism and Christianity but extends to other major pre-Islamic religions.[8] Concerning Christianity and Judaism, the Quran states that each represents an authentic religious tradition revealed by God (Quran 5:46, 5:48) and it even confirms salvific efficacy within the wider boundaries of monotheism (2:62). Additionally, the mention of churches and synagogues along with mosques in the Quran is significant in analysing the Islamic view regarding religious diversity (Zia-Ul-Haq 2010):

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8 Sabianism is mentioned in the Quran (5:69, 2:62), and Magianism as well (22:17). According to Manazir Ahsan Gilani (Hamidullah 1999: 203), the followers of Buddha unanimously believe that Buddha received *nirvana* for the first time under a wild fig tree. Hamidullah considers the mentioning of 'Fig' at the start of surah Tin (Quran 95) to be a subtle way of mentioning Buddhism in the Quran.

> Had not Allah repulsed the people from one another, ruin would have befallen the monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques in which Allah's Name is mentioned greatly. (Quran 22:40)

In fact, Islam affirms that the core teaching of the communications of all prophets and messengers are submission to God (Allah) in the light of divine guidance communicated by the prophets. Therefore, all prophets are 'Muslims' (ones who submit to God), and God has repeatedly prohibited making a distinction between them (Quran 2:136, 2:285, 3:84).

The prophet Muhammad himself established in Medina the political space that gave freedom to practise one's own faith and pursue social justice as well as enjoy equality, brotherhood and the preservation of human dignity. This model has historically paved the way for maintaining balance and harmony among followers of different faiths in the Islamic world. Consequently, religious pluralism in Islam is not simply a matter of accommodating competing claims of religious truth in the private domain of individual faith, but a matter of public policy in which an Islamic government must acknowledge and protect the divinely-ordained right of each person to determine his/her spiritual destiny without coercion. The Quran declares explicitly that there is no compulsion in religion (Quran 2:256). From this verse, it can be inferred that Islam considers religious diversity as a concomitant of God's bestowal of free will and choice on human beings (Zia-Ul-Haq 2010). The rationale is buttressed further by a thought-provoking verse: 'And if your Lord had willed, He could have made mankind one community; but they will not cease to differ' (Quran 11:118).

Correspondingly, if God himself did not force people to embrace a 'unity', it is difficult to argue that it might be permissible for human beings to do so. Even to the extent of the *kufr* ('those who disbelieve Allah and Prophet Muhammad'), Islam teaches to let it go: '(say) to you your religion and to me mine' (Quran 109:6) which implies respect for the human right to have different opinions.

By contrast, historically, as soon as the Portuguese and Spaniards arrived in the Indonesian archipelago in 1511, Christianity was propagated aggressively (Ricklefs *et al.* 2010). On the other hand, encounters with Islam since the seventh century have notably not been followed by conversion. Professor A. H. Johns (see *ibid.* 78–9) attempted to explain why the local people only began converting to Islam several centuries after traders had been travelling through Southeast Asia. He speculated that it was not until the emergence

of Sufism as a dominant stream of Islamic faith throughout the Muslim world from the thirteenth century that the locals, whose religions before the coming of Islam were characterized by the mystical doctrines of Hinduism and Buddhism, might have been attracted to this new faith if it, too, was presented in a mystical form. Likewise, Richard K. Khuri (2001) reminds us that it took six centuries for the population in the Near East to shift from its Christian majority to one that is Muslim. These examples show that Muslims by and large did not resort to forced conversions.

Inventing the future with popular participation

In view of what has been presented concerning Indonesia, grouping and the creation of multiplicity seem to be intrinsic to human nature, and thus, seeking unity in diversity might be a chimerical dream. In the light of this, the act of forcing unity onto diversity – even for the pursuance of equality – can be paradoxical, for it necessarily denounces differences and hence the promotion of intolerance. Correspondingly, this article debunks Samuel P. Huntington's (1996) premise that diversity necessarily tends to lead to conflict. Indonesia reveals that culture and religion did not appear as a single factor in the conflicts; it is the 'desire to control' that manifested in 'forcing unity onto diversity' which was the major cause. Accordingly, from this perspective, Huntington's proposition appears as a 'power-trip' – namely, an expression of 'fear of losing control'. Along this line of argument, the state-centric nation-building process should be held responsible for widespread intolerance in present-day Indonesia, for it has cultivated vigilance against differences between people in the population. Besides, the history of Christianity as the 'religious arm' of colonial power in Indonesia and the West's continued domination of the Muslim world subsequently have tainted the Muslims' sociological dimension of an 'Islamic' *knowledge, meaning, action, and reality* (Alkatiri 2014)[9] concerning the 'Christian West'. That being the case,

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9   Drawing on Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's (1966) symbolic universe premise, I developed (2014) a theoretical framework to distinguish the 'sociological' from the 'philosophical' dimensions of religious *knowledge, meaning, action, and reality*. The former refers to the shared ideas, meanings, values, perceptions, and motivations stemming from religious doctrines that have been interpreted through the lens of histories of particular human collective interactions with 'the others', whereas the latter is the 'purely' intellectual and spiritual dimension of the religion.

history accounts for the devastation of Muslim-Christian relations despite the Quranic injunctions on the matter. Moreover, in the period we are living in, postmodernism confirms the general Muslim sense of feeling oppressed by a Western-led, neoliberal, corporate-run globalization process (Johnston 2010). Postmodernism as a hodge-podge of social movements and currents of thought in revolt against the certainties of the Western Enlightenment project dampens modernity's optimism and radically questions (even rejects) the Enlightenment's view of history as a unitary human march toward progress. It also rejects Enlightenment rationalism, which raises afresh the fundamental questions of epistemology, ontology, and hermeneutics. Notably, postmodernism often takes on radical political stances, as with Foucault's denouncement of the power dimension behind knowledge/discourse. These premises are central in my thesis (Alkatiri 2016), which concerns the relationship between science, technology, economic growth and 'power' in the post-colonial world and the Muslim's context.

The die was cast and the old cleavages have inevitably often justified mistrust and violence. Against this long-standing 'West-Islam divide' and the backdrop of the global ecological crisis that ironically calls for a global collaboration to tackle the problems, David Joseph Wellman (2004) contends that what is needed is a 'sustainable diplomacy' through a 'people-to-people' approach that moves beyond the rigidity of a state system. In environmental studies generally, the concept of the nation state has been critically revisited, since national sovereignty consistently stands in the way of creating an international framework for collective actions (e.g. Speth 2002, Park *et al*. 2008, Stern 2006, Alkatiri 2014). This recalls Arnold Toynbee's (1976) prediction:

> The present-day global set of local sovereign states is … not capable of saving the biosphere from man-made pollution or of conserving the biosphere's non-replaceable natural resources. … Will mankind murder Mother Earth or will he redeem her? This is the enigmatic question which now confronts Man. (Toynbee 1976: 593–6)

Wellman's 'sustainable diplomacy' values the role of popular religions alongside ecological histories and the consumption-waste pattern in the society. I analyse the potential to capitalize on the Islamic 'symbolic universe' to instigate sweeping socio-ecological actions in the Muslim world (Alkatiri

2014). In a similar vein, Johnston (2010) seeks to construct a Muslim-Christian theological discourse on creation and humanity that could help adherents of both faiths work together to preserve our planet.

To you be your way, and to me mine

Against the background of complex developmental/environmental problems and widespread poverty in Indonesia, my thesis (Alkatiri 2016) analyses the 'centralist vs. decentralist' debates in ecological politics (e.g. Radcliffe 2000). The centralists propose 'centralized expert government' and a largely authoritarian society including intellectual controls over citizens and oligarchical systems, for they do not see the present democratic institutions and economic structure as being able to cope with the ecological crisis. Conversely, the decentralists hold that the more severe the problem the more difficult it would be for a centralist and authoritarian group to manage, and hence decentralization is inevitable. The political organization along decentralist lines is increasingly perceived to be 'practical and desirable by activists in areas of politics which may not have as their original aim an ecological society' (Allaby 1977: 244). The 'relocalisation' model mentioned in the introduction of this article is a decentralist approach which I found to be practical and operable for Indonesian Muslim groups to espouse. 'Relocalisation' is a non-state-centric community movement in response to dominant economic policies that ignore the needs of people and the planet. Its primary aim is to reduce local un-sustainability as much as possible and enhance local resilience, rather than engage in much wider political projects (Barry 2012).

Relocalisation ideals are inspired by a Western thinker, E. F. Schumacher, who himself was inspired by local Asian communities in his well-known *Small is Beautiful* (1973). The Gandhian ideal of 'no affluence no poverty' has been one of the movement's fundamental principles. The movements believe that these smaller-scale communities nurture more intimate relations among people and ensure that everyone is seen, heard and recognized – thus providing a sense of individual identity that is lacking in the anonymity and isolation of mass society (Maser 1997, Norberg-Hodge 2002). Norberg argues further that when people live in smaller-scale social and economic units, where mutual support is necessary, the human capacity for caring and kindness is enhanced. In the relocalisation discourse, ecovillages provide models for living close to the land and in community with one

another – a vision that is inspiring for the increasing numbers of people who long to live in a way that is spiritually rewarding as well as ecologically sustainable. The relocalisation activists believe that all good intentions and sophisticated analyses of global problems and solutions by academics, politicians, think tanks and concerned lay people mean nothing until, and unless, individual citizens take personal action to change their lifestyles.

Under the circumstances of the changing global environment, this article aims to further the call for popular participation and collaborative action, hence, the need for social arrangements that could best serve the intrinsic nature of humans characterized by diversity, whereby grouping and creating multiplicities are deemed inevitable. Accordingly, it came up with a faith-based 'relocalisation' model for the Islamic community movement that allows Muslims from diverse forms of Islam to maintain their differences, implement what they 'believe', and exercise their visions of 'Islamic' societies within their own communities' jurisdictions. Neither secular nation states, nor 'Islamic states' in the modern sense of the term, could serve the diversity, self-sufficiency, self-local governance, and genuine creativities that such a scheme needs. Therefore, I contend the 'minimal' or 'night-watchman' states to be the most apposite.

A minimal or night-watchman state is a form of government in political philosophy where the state's legitimate function is only the protection of the individual from assault, theft, breach of contract, or fraud. Citizens are free to choose any social arrangements (see, e.g., Nozick 2013). The advocates of this school are called *minarchists*. They argue that the state has no rights to use its force to interfere with transactions between people. The only legitimate governmental institutions are the military, police and courts. In the light of pressing socio-ecological issues and the 'relocalisation' model as a possible and operable solution at community levels, and secondly, the potential of faith-based environmental movements (see, e.g., Alkatiri 2014, 2016), the minimal or night-watchman state is the most suitable type of state in the Anthropocene epoch,[10] for it allows a life of creativity that liberates people to freely choose their own social arrangements without the need to abide by a single-state ideology for the whole nation. My proposition corresponds with Wael B. Hallaq's (2012) *The Impossible State*. According to Hallaq, the modern state is incompatible with, if not altogether contradictory to, the

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10   The period in which human activities became the primary driver of global ecological change.

concept of the state in Islam. Given that the state in the Islamic sense should be organized organically around the centre of God's sovereignty, the weaker or more minimal the state, the more compatible it is with Islam. The following section provides an example of an intentional community model already undertaken endogenously by the Hidayatullah group in Indonesia that is worth considering in contemplating 'relocalisation' within a minimal state.

The *khilafah* reinterpreted: a case study

What follows is a brief ethnographic account of the Hidayatullah *pesantren*[11] learning community network in Indonesia. The fieldwork was conducted in the mother *pesantren* in Balikpapan, East Kalimantan, having two 'campuses'. A 'campus', for the Hidayatullah, is an enclave composed of schools, a mosque, a housing complex and a student dormitory. The first one in Balikpapan has been extended to include a reforested wood, a community garden, a large pond, a self-managed water facility and *pasar umi* ('mum's market'), selling household groceries. Campus 1 is located in Gunung Tembak, East Balikpapan, with an area of 200 hectares and a little more than a fifteen hundred inhabitants. When I visited, for this research, Campus 2, within sight of the gate of Campus 1, was under construction. Balikpapan is a seaport city on the east coast island of Kalimantan (Borneo). It is a resource-rich region known for timber and petroleum export products, and was once famous as Indonesia's 'oil city'.

The Hidayatullah community evokes a reinterpretation of the *khilafah*.[12] In fact, by subscribing to the ideals of the *khilafah*, the community has not been burdened by the demands of 'nationalism' and the nation-state system, hence, they have been able to gain greater control over their members' destinies through the community development enterprise. The 'clash of a symbolic universe' (see Alkatiri 2016)[13] and the Islamic utopia of the Medina society that had plagued the state-Muslim relations appeared as the main

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11   *Pesantren* is a home-grown traditional Islamic institute in Indonesia.
12   The caliphate, the first system of governance established in Islam. It is believed to be the perfect way of ruling the Islamic Ummah. It is worth noting that *khilafah* was not intended to be a religious authority, as Islam emphasizes a direct link between man and God (*ittisal*).
13   My thesis provides a historical narrative behind the formation of the community and ethnographic accounts that illustrate the meaning of the community for the leaders and the recruits.

themes behind the formation of Hidayatullah. In contrast to green intentional communities in the West, it is worth highlighting that Hidayatullah was not designed on the basis of ecological utopian principles and techniques embraced by, for instance, the 'ecovillages' discussed earlier. They did not intend to develop 'closed-loop, symbiotic, self-sustaining human habitats and production systems that do not result in ecological degradation and social injustice' (Lockyer and Veteto 2013). Nonetheless, as the community members reduce their dependence on the global economy and replace it with household and local economies, they have reduced the demand that drives current inequities. After all, it should be borne in mind that the ecological-utopian principles and techniques seek, essentially, to enable people to become more self-reliant, and in the process, relieve the social injustices and ecological degradation created by the global political economy. In a broader sense, Hidayatullah was developed upon the basis of a combination of the following:

1) The search for similarity and like-mindedness outside the Indonesian mainstream Islamic communities represented by Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah;

2) A yearning for close-knit ties of village communities, security, and the camaraderie of a large family;

3) Parents' concerns over their children's encounters with un-Islamic influences;

4) The leaders' political instincts to circumvent those hardships through the creation of their own space for self-governance, and by doing so, ignoring the state and the dominant political-economic order that it encompasses.

The Hidayatullah community in Balikpapan attracts people to join their activities although they do not necessarily become active members, or cadre, to be assigned to assume tasks in other branches. I came to know a lady, Rahima (whose name has been changed), who, together with her husband, joined Hidayatullah's activities for a number of years. Rahima's husband was a professional in an oil company in Balikpapan, and he had recently passed away when she was being interviewed.

> I decided to live inside the Hidayatullah campus in order to give my two sons a good Islamic neighbourhood and to have a 'village' for myself to settle down in for the rest of my life. It's really hard to raise children in the cities as you know the influences are so bad. My big son has been studying in another *pesantren* outside Balikpapan and my late husband wanted our little son to be a *hafiz* (a person who memorizes the Quran completely), he seems able to do so, so we put him here.

While all properties in Campus 1 were owned by the organization, Campus 2, which was under construction was intended to be purchased by the members on condition that it may not be transferred to anyone without the prior consent of the Hidayatullah. The condition was made in order to keep the campus inhabited by the members only. The price of the land was quite low. Rahima bought a plot of land, more or less 300m², and built a house with a vegetable garden at the back.

Fieldwork was also conducted at the Depok campus near Jakarta. It was built in 1991. Here the organization was not able to obtain a larger plot of land than the existing three hectares. Therefore, not every member was given a chance to live inside the enclave. There were some individuals who could afford to buy a piece of land adjacent to it and it was intended that the complex would expand gradually. It was a very troublesome journey negotiating traffic and tricky roads to the location which was on the farthest outskirts of Jakarta city. Shodiq, a member, had been living in the complex for fifteen years. He came from a nominal Muslim family farming background in Central Java. Both Shodiq and his wife had worked full-time to serve the schools and the students' dormitory and receive in-kind remuneration instead of salary.

> We live within a very small economy. We trust in God though, that His hand will always be extended to us whenever we need help. As you see we don't live like people out there; we don't have to have a TV and luxury stuff like them. We feel secure because we know that our children will be taken care of. In our network we have schools from kindergarten to university. For anyone who has tasted the life of being anonymous out there they will agree that it is a lot easier to manage your family if you live in a community where everyone helps and exhorts one another, like us here.

And, Ikhwan:

> The feeling of being in a large family is wonderful here, considering we're not related familially. Let me give you one example; my friends will give you more. My wife was advised by the doctor to give birth by caesarian. I was so shocked, how could I afford the surgery? [titter]. But it was done in the end, paid jointly by everyone. So, there's no shortage in here, insyaAllah.
>
> Because we perform prayer in the congregation, the sense of togetherness is maintained. If we have a problem, we share it with one another.
>
> Because we are like-minded, we can let our children play and make friends freely without being worried.

One of Hidayatullah's values is an insistence on the five-times-a-day prayer being conducted in the congregation (*jama'ah*) for those males who at the time of prayer happen to be around the campus. They believe it to be the most effective method of maintaining social capital among them.

Male and female focus group discussions gave identical answers to Shodiq and Ikhwan's reasoning for living in the Hidayatullah communities. It is interesting to note that among members living in the Depok campus were men who worked in government offices, and their wives served the Hidayatullah schools. Clearly all the people of Hidayatullah rank community living at the highest level of importance. They see small-scale communities like the ones they have established and networked, as a manifestation of the *khilafah*. Syaikhul at the Jakarta head office said:

> We're not the ones who got frustrated because *khilafah Islamiyah* is not there, we still can have it by ourselves, on a small scale.
>
> The members can make a living outside the Hidayatullah, but when they are going home they are going to the community.

And, Suharsono in Jakarta head office:

> What we are doing is in accordance with the Prophet's saying, that every collectivity must have a leader, 'When three men travel together, they should make one of them a leader'.

Hidayatullah has stated explicitly that rebuilding Islamic civilization is its vision. In its notary act of establishment, the organization was officially defined as a mass organization and referred to as an Islamic movement. Further, it was meant to be a medium for the holy struggle (*jihad*) and taking *jihad* as an injunction for all Muslims on board, individually (*infiradi*) and collectively (*jama'i*). The Hidayatullah members' families were proud to be families of *mujahid* (those who are engaged in *jihad*). Slogans such as '*Indahnya menjadi keluarga mujahid*' ('it's great to be *mujahid* family') are commonplace in this community.

The alumni of Hidayatullah rapidly produced a network. While initially the members were mainly from the Bugis ethnic diaspora, over the years they have become increasingly diverse. The network is managed by means of a system of organization with clearly defined criteria of zones, regions and areas for its branches. The male members in a focus group recalled the vision of Abdullah Said, the founder, for a model of Islamic society in Indonesia.

> He said we wanted to make a place so that when people come to visit and observe, they can tell what Islam is like, that Islam is beautiful [mutter] – that sounds like the title of Trans TV programme by Ustadz Maulana, *Islam is Beautiful*.

Zainuddin Musaddad, the head of *pesantren*, quipped: 'beautiful in story!' and the rest of them laughed,

> Well, yes, that's how the Muslim attitude is today, they only tell about Islam, that Islam is beautiful – but only in story, 'No-Action-Talk-Only'.

They articulated the bitter feelings they experienced as a consequence of the state's persistent attempts to discourage Muslim organizations from engaging in politics and to stick to purely religious pursuits. Due to perceived ties with the Darul Islam rebellion, Hidayatullah continued to be counted as a potential threat. The ICG (International Crisis Group) report (2003) on terrorism in Indonesia, and Solahudin (2013), identified Darul Islam as the origin of the Jamaah Islamiyah terrorist underground network in Southeast Asia. According to John T. Sidel (2007), in order to appreciate the broader context of Islamist activities and influence in Southeast Asia,

it is essential to understand the ways in which European and American colonial rule created lasting obstacles to the promotion of Islamist politics in Southeast Asia. Sidel argues that coverage of terrorist events in Southeast Asia focuses on description, rather than explanation, events, rather than causes. Furthermore, scholarship on Southeast Asian terrorism relies too much on official sources from the security services, which could have a professional interest in exaggerating the danger. Also, several individuals in Southeast Asian security apparatuses have personal and ideological reasons for not telling the truth.

In sum, I found two social phenomena in the Hidayatullah community in Balikpapan that made it seem like an appropriate medium for change towards sustainability principles. One is an image taken from a vision of Erich Fromm's 'community of being' rather than a 'community of having' in the context of debates over sustainable lifestyle. The other is Hannah Arendt's *vita activa* (de Geus 2009: 91). Erich Fromm's work on 'having and being' as two fundamental human orientations toward the self and the world posits that

> … in a less high-level consumption society the overall emphasis will not be on the outward characteristics of status and success, but on the inward aspect of human well-being. One can think of relaxation, balance, a focus on and attention for our fellow-beings (human and non-human), the enjoyment of pleasant and meaningful work, contributing to the community, but also the importance of the spiritual, just to be and exist in a dignified, relaxed and elegant way, instead of constantly being eager to accumulate possessions of whatever kind. (De Geus 2009: 91)

The Hidayatullah community also displayed a balanced configuration of Hannah Arendt's *vita activa* as described in her work entitled *The Human Condition* (Arendt 1985).

The premise of *vita activa* provides explanations for the formation, development and stability of community despite challenges on all fronts. Hannah Arendt argues that there are three fundamental human activities: *labour*, *work* and *action*. *Labour* is the activity that is linked to the biological process of the human body and the satisfaction of direct physical needs, like the provision of food and drink. *Work* is the activity that creates an artificial world of enduring objects, to provide a stable living environment for humans.

Action corresponds to the fundamental human condition of plurality and is directed at the creation of a public sphere in which people can enjoy political freedom (Arendt 1985: 7, 50–4). Arendt contends that while *action* was of the highest significance in ranking in the Greek 'polis' (followed by *work* and finally *labour*), in modern times the hierarchy has been completely reversed. Political changes resulting in the systematic loss of so-called spaces of political action and the loss of distinction between the private and public realms have contributed to this reversal. Nowadays, the value of *labour* and the production of consumption goods are consistently overrated, whereas the value of the more meaningful activities of acting in the public realm and creating lasting products have almost disappeared (*ibid.* 294–305). Arendt argues that in our era the goal of human activity (*vita activa*) is no longer to be found in sustaining a public sphere of political action or in creative work, but in routine labour, growing economic welfare, abundance and mass consumption. Nowadays, increasing wealth and the greatest consumer happiness of the greatest number are the basic aims of social and political life (*ibid.* 133).

In fact, unlike lay people in Indonesian society at large, Hidayatullah members have managed to undertake not only *labour* and *work* according to Arendt's definitions, but also *action* in terms of more meaningful activities in the public realm. By doing so, they have been living, indeed, in the 'imagined Darul Islam' which has then been reified. Even though they, too, have had to contend with growing problems in the Indonesian society at large, my observation of the two communities in Balikpapan and Depok, Jakarta, suggests that the institution is remarkably well and alive. In general, the communities have greater control over their own destinies compared to the larger society of Indonesia. In that respect, it is worth mentioning that in the focus group discussion with the male leaders in Jakarta, a flippant, jocular answer to my question regarding what their opinion about the multi-dimensional crisis in Indonesia was: 'That's true, but that's Indonesia, our neighbour [laughter].' As they created their own space for self-governance they felt they did not need to concern themselves too much with the state and the dominant political-economic order that circumscribes it. In addition, due to the fact that they were in a position of having to provide nearly everything by themselves with very limited funding, I observed everyone, men and women including the youth, always engaged in providing various kinds of public services to the community such as cleaning, gardening, building work, cutting wood for construction, maintenance and so forth, besides managing schools and the everyday needs of the students living in the dormitories.

Also, regular *halaqah* (learning circles) were being conducted in which some of the leaders were the *murabbi*[14] educators. A sense of connection with the other Hidayatullah members in different places seemed to have been well maintained by means of regular meetings held regionally or nationally, ranging from every three months to yearly, then to five-yearly, depending on the scope of the assembly.

Within its women's division, Mushida (Muslimah Hidayatullah), the women enjoyed equal opportunities for being active in public life as well as maintaining connections through the equally regular women's meetings. Besides being a school provider, Hidayatullah has been active in humanitarian work as well. They engage with other Muslim groups, national and international, in disaster relief activities. There are two sources of funding indicated by the leaders, namely, economic activities and *zakat*. Baitul Maal Hidayatullah (see their website) is the financial institution they founded to manage their funds. Economic activities of the organization include charitable businesses such as schools, and profit-making businesses such as a palm-oil plantation, a supermarket and many small-scale entrepreneurial undertakings.

It is all too easy to ridicule the Islamists and their utopian movement as 'dangerous'. Their movement often evokes negative associations with irrationality and a futile adherence to the past. In my research for realistic and practical solutions, I consider the Islamic utopia of the Medina society to be comparable to any other utopian imaginary that has inspired green intentional community movements in the West. Instead of seeing it as a daydream, a romantic and unattainable fantasy, it is the inspirational side of utopias that needs to be justly considered. The Medina society, aforementioned in the discussion about religious diversity in section 'Celebrating diversity', is believed by Muslims to be the most perfect Islamic society, a society according to which all other Islamic societies are 'judged'. Medina, the city where the Prophet Muhammad established the first Islamic political entity, recognizes religious, social, and cultural plurality among its citizens. This has been taken as a model set by the Prophet to reify Islam as a complete system governing all religious, social, political, cultural and economic orders, and encompassing all things material, spiritual, societal, individual, and personal. Interest in the Medina society has continuously revived among

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14   Trainer in personalized education.

Muslim communities whenever they face issues of a plurality of religion, Islamic politics and governance, and justice.

Nonetheless, apropos of the night-watchman state and 'relocalisation', which have been propounded as a possible scheme for the future, it is necessary to recognize the downside of the 'exclusive' nature of the like-minded intentional community. With that in mind, it is important to explore in what ways dialogical attitudes can be cultivated among the members to nurture intercultural communications between Islam and other groups in diverse societies. It is also important to explore under what circumstances such utopian movements may resort to violent action which may harm innocent others and damage the prospects for realizing the 'Medina society' exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad.

Conclusion

This article demonstrates the impossibility of pursing unity, either for a distinct nation state or a monolithic Islam. Against the need for popular participation in dealing with converging socio-ecological crises in Muslim-majority countries, this article offers a faith-based 'relocalisation' model for an Islamic sustainable community movement that allows Muslims from diverse interpretations of Islam to maintain their differences, implement what they 'believe', and exercise their visions of 'Islamic' societies within their own communities' jurisdictions. Neither secular nation states, nor 'Islamic states' in the modern sense of the word, could serve the diversity, self-sufficiency, local self-governance, and genuine creativity that such a scheme needs. Therefore, 'minimal' or 'night-watchman' states might be the most apposite for the Anthropocene era.

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