Islamisation and Its Opponents in Java

M.C. Ricklefs

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Chapter 8

An Islamising society

Quite unlike Javanese life in the 1930s to mid-1960s, in the post-Soeharto era, from politics to government to culture to social practices to literature to academic life, Islam is prominent. Forty years ago an academic seminar began with the presenter saying selamat pagi or selamat sore (good morning, good afternoon) but by the turn of the 21st century, a seminar must begin

Illustration 17 Interior of the Great Mosque (Masjid Al-Akbar) of Surabaya, begun in 1995 and opened in 2000

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An Islamising Society

with assalaamu’alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh (peace be with you, and God’s mercy and blessing) or a similar pious phrase. Indonesian academic theses once opened with thanks to the author’s family and supervisors; now they are more likely to begin with thanks and praise to God.

Politics and government

Islamic symbols and Islamic concepts are prominent in political affairs. Just as religious leaders are expected to comment on public matters in the United States, so also are they in Indonesia. Indonesian Islamic organisations were prominent in the demonstrations against the American invasion of Afghanistan in late 2001. MUI also took a prominent stand and thus lent a semi-official legitimacy to the demonstrations. In late September 2001 it called upon Muslims to wage Holy War (jihad fi sabillillah) if the United States and its allies should invade Afghanistan, while also condemning the al-Qaeda attacks of 11 September as a violation of Islamic values. MUI’s head Din Syamsuddin, however, denied that jihad necessarily meant war. The MUI statement was criticised by the head of the Jakarta IAIN, Prof. Azyumardi Azra. NU and Muhammadiyah leaders condemned the American action (as did the Catholic bishop of Semarang) but urged people not to attack foreigners in Indonesia.\(^1\)

Anti-Americanism was (and remains) a staple in Indonesian public commentary, encouraged not least by United States military actions in majority-Muslim countries and the United States’ own public religiosity. Masdar Hilmy observes that,

> when uttered by ostensibly respectable mainstream politicians, anti-American sentiments are afforded a degree of social legitimacy. This in turn creates a space for militant and terrorist groups whose agendas rest on the belief that the United States poses a direct threat to Muslims in general and to Indonesian Muslims in particular.\(^2\)

The 2003 American-led invasion of Iraq provided more fuel to this particular religious fire. Sabili magazine announced that there was a ‘Crusader-Davidian’ (i.e., Christian-Jewish) conspiracy at work here. George

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W. Bush’s prominent Christian religiosity, use of words like ‘crusades’ and practice of holding prayers at the start of meetings was exploited. Citing the spoof website www.whitehouse.org (the real Whitehouse website is www.whitehouse.gov) as its source — and no doubt persuading many of its readers that the information was thereby authentic — Sabili reported that on Sunday 23 March (just three days after the invasion began) Bush assembled his ‘Prayer Team’ of leading evangelists, greeted them as ‘brothers in Christ’ and went on to say ‘Our mission in provoking a crusade against the Islamic ummah is now at an important juncture …. Let us take this moment to rise up and grasp this victory of Jesus!’

MUI, Revivalist groups such as LDII and Islamist organisation such as Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI, discussed below) were prominent in anti-American demonstrations, but so were thousands of followers of NU and Muhammadiyah.

Even political parties that have sometimes been depicted as ‘secular’ or ‘nationalist’ rather than religious — above all PDIP — have adopted religious symbols, either out of expediency or conviction. Megawati Sukarnoputri’s campaign posters and banners typically depicted her wearing a diaphanous kerudung (but not a jilbab). The PDIP in Kudus in 2004 was recruiting kyais and santris, and its village branches were said to be frequently involved in running local mosques. In 2005 the PDIP-supported candidate for Bupati of Kediri (Ir. H. Sutrisno) and his PKB running mate distributed

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3 Sabili cyber-news edisi 20, 22 Apr. 2003. I cannot rule out the possibility that the editors of Sabili themselves thought www.whitehouse.org to be the official Whitehouse website. In 2005 Sabili reported that American soldiers had thrown the Qur’an down a toilet, referring to a report published in Newsweek, after the latter had already admitted that the original report was wrong; Sabili cyber-news yr. 12 no. 23, 25 May 2005.

4 For example, TempoI, 25 Jan. 2003, 26 Jan. 2003; KmpsO, 7 Apr. 2003. Indonesian ideas on this issue were not so different from some Americans’ beliefs. A survey of 32,800 adult Americans in 2008 revealed that 32 per cent of Republicans agreed that ‘George W. Bush was chosen by God to lead the United States in a global war on terrorism’ and another 21 per cent said they were not sure, which was interpreted as most often meaning ‘maybe’, while 46 per cent said no; 4 per cent of Democrats answered yes, 7 per cent said maybe, and 89 per cent said no; Gary C. Jacobson, ‘A tale of two wars: Public opinion on the U.S. military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq’, Presidential Studies Quarterly vol. 40, no. 4 (Dec. 2010), p. 598.

5 Discussion with Noer Hartoyo (PDIP leader), Kudus, 28 March 2004. The leaders of the Islamist party PPP Himmatul Fu’ad, Masarah Bahtiyar and Noor Aziz commented that abangan no longer mattered in politics; discussions in Kudus, 28 March 2004.
prayer clothing to village women in the context of ‘Ritual Prayer Study and Guidance Activities’ (Kegiatan Bimbingan Belajar Salat) and distributed funds to mosque committees, village pengajian groups and suchlike, as well as to soccer clubs and other non-religious groups. PDIP announced in 2006 that it was establishing an Islamic proselytisation branch, which was welcomed by MUI, Muhammadiyah and NU leaders. PDIP in Kediri held a Qur’an study session (pengajian akbar) for 800 party cadres in 2007 and said that it hoped to be able to change the image of PDIP as a party of the abangan. PDIP’s repositioning was of course a process, and the idea that it was really abangan-inclined remained in many minds. Nevertheless, it sought to be seen as ‘wise, religious and nationalist’ — as a PDIP candidate’s 2009 banner in Yogyakarta claimed of himself. Such examples could be multiplied manifold across PDIP, Golkar and other parties. The Islamist PPP (like other parties depicting themselves as Islamic in inspiration and aspirations) continued to present itself as religious, with banners saying, ‘Bismillah — choose the ka’ba’ (the party’s symbol on the ballot paper) — yet it consistently did poorly in elections.

There was no revival of aliran politics in the post-Soeharto period. It was routine for candidates for office from all political parties to pay court to kyais, to make gifts to their pesantrens and to seek opportunities to be seen — and if possible endorsed — by major Islamic leaders of all persuasions. When Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono’s new Democrat Party appeared in the 2004 election campaign, some competitors sought to paint it as un-Islamic, but the party insisted that it was both ‘nationalist and religious’ (nasionalis dan agamais). In a social setting in which most Muslim Javanese and all political parties were more self-consciously religious, devout Muslims needed no longer to vote for parties that labeled themselves piously Islamic, with the consequence that such parties fared badly at the polls. That did not mean — as some political analysts have claimed — that the political system was now secular. Rather, it reflected the fact that politics — mirroring the society more generally — was more uniformly religious.

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6 Email from Suhadi Cholil, 6 Aug. 2005.
7 TempoI, 15 Nov. 2006.
8 RK, 30 Apr. 2007.
9 Struggling with this problem, Saiful Mujani and R. William Liddle classify Indonesia’s main parties as ‘secular’ (including Golkar, PDIP and Democrat), ‘Islamist’ (PKS and PPP) and ‘secular parties linked to … Islamic mass organizations’, NU and Muhammadiyah (PKB and PAN). They argue that there is a ‘trend to secularism’ and conclude that ‘secular political parties and secular politicians now dominate Indonesian politics’; see their article ‘Muslim Indonesia’s secular democracy’, Asian
A revealing survey of people who regarded themselves as being of the Traditionalist ‘NU family’ (warga NU) was conducted in the election year 2009. They were asked whether their electoral choices were influenced by religion. Some 40 per cent said no, 24 per cent that they were influenced...
to some degree, 12 per cent said they were influenced ‘enough’, 9 per cent responded that they were greatly influenced, and 9 per cent said not much.\textsuperscript{10} Asked about their party preferences in the national legislative elections of that year, these ‘NU family’ members divided as in the following table with regard to the parties with the largest followings among them and the two parties particularly closely associated with NU leaders.

Table 23 Electoral preferences of NU followers for major parties, 2009\textsuperscript{11}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>% supporting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDIP</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golkar</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPP</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PKB</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PKNU</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, among a group who regarded themselves as NU and of whom 45 per cent said that they were influenced, influenced enough, or very influenced by religion in their preferences,\textsuperscript{12} only 7 per cent preferred PPP, with its Islamist agenda. Still fewer preferred PKB, the party born from NU and led by Abdurrahman Wahid, and even less supported PKNU, another NU-born party led by kyais in opposition to Abdurrahman. This does not, in my opinion, show that electoral politics was secularised, but rather that religious positioning and politicking was so ubiquitous that santris could comfortably choose from across the party spectrum. No party wished to seem unreligious. This also reflects both a generally individualistic voting pattern that is seen across Indonesia and the limited ability of supposedly ‘traditional’ leaders to influence how their followers vote — a matter to which we will return below when we consider the declining influence of Traditionalist kyais.

\textsuperscript{10} Figures are rounded to the nearest whole number; source as in the following note. The original terms used here were tidak, berpengaruh, cukup, sangat and kurang.

\textsuperscript{11} Figures rounded to the nearest whole number. The survey was conducted by the research arm of Kompas newspaper (Litbang Kompas) in February–March 2009 and reported in Kmps, 1 Apr. 2009. There were 3,000 respondents across 33 provinces.

\textsuperscript{12} Grouping together those who answered that Islam was berpengaruh (24%), cukup (12%) or sangat (9%) influential.
The more religious style of Javanese life was visible also in the ongoing connections between governmental institutions and Islam. Such links had been promoted during the Soeharto era and continued in the post-Soeharto period. Religious education continued to be compulsory in state and private schools. A new law of 2003 required schools to recruit teachers of religion and to provide places of worship according to the students’ religious faiths. This was opposed particularly by non-Muslims as well as by former President Abdurrahman Wahid, who did so on the grounds that religion and the state should be separated, an idea with little traction in this Islamising environment. President Megawati signed the bill into law in July 2003.13

Government officials saw the promotion of Islamic piety as a proper task. This was notable in Kediri regency. We have referred above to the ‘Ritual Prayer Study and Guidance Activities’ in East Java promoted by Sutrisno. He set up local Ritual Prayer Study and Guidance Groups (Kelompok Bimbingan Belajar Sholat) while he was Bupati of Kediri regency (2000–10) to promote proper observation of Islamic prayer at grass-roots level. Many

Illustration 19 PKNU election banner in Kediri, 2009, emphasising the support of senior NU kyais

of these groups had become inactive by 2006, which was said to be because by then they had mastered the way to pray. In that year, at Sutrisno’s urging, the members of the Regional Executive Conference (Muspida) of Kediri — the senior level of administration — spent a month in optional nighttime prayer sessions from 0200 until the dawn prayer at the Kediri regency headquarters. Lesser officials and the surrounding populace were urged to join in. It was reported that these activities and a great growth in the number of mosques and prayer-halls had nearly eliminated more mystical forms of spirituality in the region.

A link between police forces and Islamisation grew stronger in the wake of the JI bombing campaigns and other terrorist acts. Such a link, it was believed, would make it harder for extremists to paint the police as anti-Islamic, while promoting acceptable forms of the faith would create something of a barrier against extremist ideas. Moreover, the more that police personnel knew of Islam, the easier it would be for them to gather intelligence from and infiltrate extremist circles. The last point was emphasised by the head of the Surakarta police in 2005 when he declared that all his police personnel who were Muslim must learn how to recite the Qur’an. To that end, he arranged Qur’anic recitation instruction at Surakarta police headquarters each morning during Ramadan. In Surabaya, in 2009 the East Java police chief advised all Muslim female officers to dress in Islamic style (i.e., to wear the style of uniform incorporating the jilbab), told Christian women personnel to say a prayer on starting work, and every broadcast announcement was to begin with the Islamic greeting and invocation of blessing assalaamu’alaikum wa rabmatullahi wa barakatuh. This constituted a previously unprecedented religionising of the East Java police. The Yogyakarta police chief organised an inter-religious meeting in 2008, where he emphasised that in Western nations religion might be a private matter (a common stereotype, of course), but that was not true in Indonesia. In Indonesia, he said, religious issues were shared issues. He ordered his personnel to meet with religious leaders at least twice a week.

The Yogyakarta police also arranged an all-day Qur’an study gathering.

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14 MmK, 3 Dec. 2006.
16 Email from Suhadi Cholil.
18 Email from Masdar Hilmy, 23 March 2009.
for all police personnel, which was also attended by senior Yogyakarta administrators. All Muslim policemen and women were ordered to know and be inspired by the Qur’an in their work and life. The head of the police anti-terrorist unit Densus 88 could be found among the dignitaries giving religious lessons during Ramadan. Religious promotion was found in the military as well. During a ‘Mental Cultivation’ session for the Central Java Diponegoro Division of the army, soldiers were admonished to take the Prophet Muhammad as their model; soldiers needed ‘spiritual ablution’ in these difficult times, they were told.

Even though the Indonesian constitution clearly reserves religious matters for national-level determination, devolved local governments sometimes introduced regional ordinances (peraturan daerah or perda) that looked like an attempt to introduce Islamic law (shari’a) at their level, it having been an utter failure at national level. Returning to the point above about the ‘secular/nationalist’ vs ‘Islamic’ political party distinction being moot, it is worth noting en passant that, as Robin Bush has shown, many such regulations across the nation were approved by Bupatis from the supposedly secular or nationalist parties such as Golkar or PDIP. Only few such regulations were passed in Central and East Java or Yogyakarta. Most were in areas where the Darul Islam rebellion had been strong, which did not include the Javanese-speaking heartland. It is reasonable to guess that local politicians believed a wish for shari’a to be so much a part of local identity in former Darul Islam regions that supporting it was a way to win votes. The wave of such local regulations peaked in 2003 and declined thereafter.

In Javanese-speaking areas, governmental efforts to promote Islamisation exist, but they rarely take the form of local legislation. Moreover, where there are local ordinances, they are more likely to be of the nature of anti-vice rules, which gain the support of many non-Muslims as well as Muslims. Practicing Christians, Buddhists and Hindus are just as likely as Muslims to support the suppression of drunkenness, gambling, prostitution and the like. As we know, however, in the Javanese context this also amounts to a campaign against the ma-lima — gambling, opium (or marijuana) smoking,

23 Robin Bush, ‘Regional sharia regulations in Indonesia: Anomaly or symptom?’ in Greg Fealy and Sally White (eds), Expressing Islam: Religious life and politics in Indonesia (Singapore: ISEAS, 2008), p. 188.
24 Ibid., pp. 179, 183.
thievery, womanizing and drinking alcohol — the entertainments regarded as characteristic of the *abangan*. When Bantul regency (south of Yogyakarta) introduced anti-prostitution regulations in 2007 at the urging of ‘Bantul people who are religious’ (as the head of the Social Department put it), it undermined a thriving trade at south coast beach sites. Raids followed, flimsy local huts were broken up and women were arrested, not all of them prostitutes, it seems. Protests followed about the damage to local tourism, which in other circumstances governments are always anxious to support. Business fell off not only for the prostitutes but also for all the others, from pimps to food-stall traders, who depended on the local sex-tourist traffic. The Bantul government — which was dominated by PDIP and PAN — was accused of marginalising women, but it denied this and stood firm.  

University student politics — so crucial a matter in Indonesia — was to a large extent Islamic student politics after 1998. Some senior figures claimed that younger people had become less interested in religion. The preacher and lecturer at UIN Yogyakarta Abu Suhud, complained that in his *pengajian* sessions, most attendees were either older people or women for whom it was a social activity that took them out of the house. Nevertheless student politics in the university town of Yogyakarta (like elsewhere) was largely dominated by organisations defining themselves in terms of their Islamic identities, some of them linked to NU, some to Muhammadiyah, some to PKS, some with ideas like those of HTI, and so on. The GMNI (Gerakan Mahasiswa Nasional Indonesia, Indonesian National Student Movement) was the main exception to this pattern, with its commitment to Sukarnoist (vaguely leftist) ideology and links to PDIP. The chair of the GMNI presidium for Yogyakarta, however, commented on the priority that must nevertheless be given to religion, for ‘in Indonesia, religion cannot be relegated to second place’. A 2007 study of 100 campus mosque activists aged 18–23 in five universities in Yogyakarta suggested that their social and intellectual inspiration was largely from Revivalist, Islamist and Dakwahist sources. The Book of the Unity of God (*Kitab al-Tawhid*) by Wahhabism’s founder Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhab and the thinking of the medieval

27 This pattern was clear in interviews conducted by M. Irfan Zamzami with ten activists from student organisations at UIN Yogyakarta and Gadjah Mada University during August–September 2008.  
scholar Ibn Taimiyya were the most prominent sources on theology used in these circles. Among admired figures few mentioned thinkers such as Abdurrahman Wahid or Nurcholish Madjid; far more popular were Abu Bakar Ba’asyir, some of the prominent Muslim televangelists and, predictably, Habiburrahman El Shirazy (the author of the popular novel *Ayat ayat cinta*, discussed below).29

**MUI and the state**

The most notable semi-governmental institution supporting deeper Islamisation of the society is the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI, Indonesian Islamic Scholars’ Council), which has appeared several times above. We noted that it was created in 1975 as part of the Soeharto government’s agenda to direct Islam, using religion as a form of social control. In the post-Soeharto period, it developed into a means for generally conservative — and sometimes quite radical Islamist and Dakwahist — views to influence the government. In the next chapter, we will see MUI playing a particularly active role in attempts to impose conformity on local Islam through its *fatwas*.

Before discussing MUI’s role, however, it would be wise to remind readers of the meaning of a *fatwa*, which can be misunderstood. It is sometimes thought to be a kind of binding edict, but it is nothing more than an opinion on a matter of Islamic law, given by a qualified legal interpreter (a *mufti*).30 Islam, like other religions — as Masdar Hilmy usefully reminds us — ‘is a wide and open text; its manifestations are as diverse as its adherents’ readings of the text’.31 Since there is a plurality of understandings of Islam, there is an equally wide range of interpreters, so that *fatwas* on the same point may dissent from one another. This gives rise to what has been called ‘fatwa shopping’, as people seeking guidance turn from *mufti* to *mufti* in search of a congenial ruling.32 In Indonesia, it has become conventional for

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32 See Nadirsyah Hosen, ‘Online fatwa in Indonesia: From fatwa shopping to Googling a *kiai*’ in Fealy and White, *Expressing Islam*, pp. 159–73. *Fatwa* shopping is, of course, a practice as old as *fatwas* themselves, which arose very early in the history of Islam.
Fatwas from MUI and the large organisations Muhammadiyah and NU to be thought particularly authoritative, although many other organisations and individuals also dispense fatwas. An example of the degree of dissent that can exist between fatwas was the profound disagreement between Muhammadiyah — which issued a fatwa declaring smoking to be forbidden on the grounds that it was tantamount to suicide, which is forbidden in Islam — and NU, which rejected this interpretation, and whose kiais seem to be almost universally addicted to tobacco and frequently rely on financial support from tobacco companies (notably in tobacco towns like Kudus, Kediri and Mojosongo). NU pointed out that tobacco was unknown in the time of the Prophet so that there is nothing on the subject at all in the Qur’an and Hadith.33

A fatwa can only have an element of compulsion if individuals, groups or organisations with compulsory capacity lend their powers of enforcement, and here we see a remarkable development in Indonesia. Particularly during the decade of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono’s presidency (2004–14), MUI — which nota bene has no constitutional standing — has been treated almost as if it were a legislative body. In opening MUI’s national congress in 2005, Yudhoyono made the following extraordinary statement:

We open our hearts and minds to receiving the thoughts, recommendations and fatwas from the MUI and ulamas at any time, either directly to me or to the Minister of Religious Affairs or to other branches of government. We want to place MUI in a central role in matters regarding the Islamic faith, so that it becomes clear what the difference is between areas that are the preserve of the state and areas where the government or state should heed the fatwas from the MUI and ulamas.34

In principle and in law, of course, there should be no ‘areas where the government or state should heed the fatwas from the MUI and ulama’, for

these have no legislative standing. The national head of the police was also at the MUI congress, as Yudhoyono added,

I am happy that the head of police is with us. The task entrusted by the ulamas to the government that I lead is not just to wipe out evil, but to fight all forms of evil and immorality. God willing and with the blessing and support of the ulamas — the various forms of wickedness and immorality, whether it is narcotics, gambling, pornography or pornographic actions, and other things connected thereto, we’ll have to face up to firmly in order to save our future, to save our generation.35

As we will see further below, this approach means that MUI fatwas have been upheld as if they had the force of law, not because they do, but because governments at the national and indeed lower levels (where there are also MUI local branches) have decided to treat them so. We may speculate why this is so — whether it arises from political calculation (that is, as a means to winning support in an increasingly Islamised society) or from personal piety, but we can hardly doubt that its implications are significant.36 For MUI fatwas came to be regarded by local authorities, police, and vigilantes as rulings requiring and legitimising their enforcement. Among the general populace there is a widespread but mistaken belief that MUI is legally an arm of government.37

MUI sought to encompass a broad range of Islamic opinions in its deliberations, with the result that it made itself open to influence not only by respected Traditionalist and Modernist muftis but also by figures locally dubbed ‘hard-liners’, in the terms used in this book meaning the more extreme versions of Revivalists, Dahwahists and Islamists. Some of these were MUI members and others attended its sessions and influenced its deliberations. A few members of MUI are regarded as supporters of HTI, with its agenda of seeking a global caliphate and the imposition of shari’a

36 The general issue of the relationship between governmental and religious authority is explored further in M.C. Ricklefs, ‘Religious elites and the state in Indonesia and elsewhere: Why take-overs are so difficult and usually don’t work’, in Hui Yew-Foong (ed.), Encountering Islam: the politics of religious identities in Southeast Asia (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, forthcoming). We will return briefly to this issue in Chapter 14.
37 Arif Maftuhin noted this in a report covering Yogyakarta from January to March 2009. I am confident that this misapprehension can be found virtually everywhere in Java at the level of the general populace.
law. Abu Bakar Ba’asyir’s MMI was able to influence discussions, as also were DDII and its Saudi-sponsored ally the Rabitat al-‘Alam al-Islami (Muslim World League).38

A Constitutional Court decision of April 2010 confirmed the constitutionality of the state’s integration with religiosity. Chapter 5 above referred to the Jakarta Charter, a form of words historically associated with the drafting of the 1945 Constitution that seemed (in the eyes of some) to oblige the state to impose Islamic law on all who professed to be Muslims. The 1945 Constitution continued in the post-Soeharto era in amended form, but Islamists failed in attempts to get the Jakarta Charter or something like it incorporated into the text of the Constitution itself. The Constitutional Court, while not asserting a state role in imposing shari’a law, did in some respects go beyond even the Jakarta Charter in its decision. The Indonesian law against blasphemy was being used to criminalise divergent sects of Islam and to validate the actions of Islamic vigilante groups, as we will see below. Human rights and pro-pluralism groups petitioned the Constitutional Court in October 2009, arguing that this law was inconsistent with constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion. MUI argued before the court in favour of the existing law, which was also supported by groups such as HTI and, predictably volubly, by FPI members who attempted to shout down those whose testimony they disliked. The Constitutional Court upheld the blasphemy law in April 2010, with one dissenting opinion.39 Its reasoning included the following:

The state — consistent with the mandate of the Constitution — also has a responsibility to upgrade piety and noble character. The religious domain is a consequence of the acceptance of Pancasila ideology. In the Pancasila state there may be no activities that cause estrangement from religious standards and religiosity. Thus the state may not provide an opportunity to disgrace another religion.40

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39 By Prof. Maria Farida Indrati, the Court’s only female (and Christian) justice.
The Constitutional Court’s decision thus seems to have sealed the integration of the state — implicitly at all its levels and in all its agencies — with religion. Now government was said to bear a responsibility to ‘upgrade piety’ and to prevent activities ‘that cause estrangement from religious standards and religiosity’ in general, that is to say, among the adherents of all religions, whereas the Jakarta Charter referred only to Muslims. That responsibility was not restrained by principles of freedom of religion. Moreover, since in the case of Islam it is only religious authorities — above all those in MUI — who can tell the government what Islam is, the court’s decision seems to confirm that the state should act as the servant of religious authorities more than the other way around. At the time of this writing, the longer-term implications of this ruling are not yet clear. It need hardly be said that supporters of pluralism, freedom of religion and human rights more generally were dissatisfied with the ruling,41 but there is no appeal from decisions of the Constitutional Court. Nor, however, does the Court have its own powers of enforcement.

Women

As is true in most religious traditions when undergoing intensification, the position, rights, responsibilities and freedoms of women became a central issue.42 Javanese society was one of those where this was particularly acute, since Javanese women historically enjoyed greater freedom than in some other Islamic societies, inherited equally with males (contrary to Islamic inheritance law) and, if wearing traditional non-santri or indeed modern dress displayed more of their body (e.g., hair, neck, shoulders, arms, and their figure generally) than thought proper by many Dakwahists and Islamists. As we saw in the census data of 1930, polygamy (polygyny) had been historically at low levels among Javanese. As Islamisation progressed, these historical patterns became contested matters. The very idea of gender equality was unacceptable to many Dakwahists and Islamists. A speaker at a Ramadan meeting of HTI women in Yogyakarta denounced gender equality as a

41 For example, see JktP online, 20 Apr. 2010.
42 Valuable essays on contemporary Islamic women’s issues may be found in Susan Blackburn, Bianca J. Smith and Siti Syamsiyatun (eds), Indonesian Islam in a new era: How women negotiate their Muslim identities (Clayton, Vic: Monash University Press, 2008).
Western secularist plot to undermine Islam and to destroy Islamic families (including polygyny), indeed a part of so-called ‘Jewish protocols’. A Javanese restaurateur named Puspowardoyo was a prominent promoter of polygyny, with four wives himself (the maximum allowed by Islamic law). His restaurants, called ‘Wong Solo’ (Solonese, i.e., Surakarta, people), had dishes coyly named to promote the joys of polygamous marriage (e.g., *juice poligami*), served by *jilbab*-wearing waitresses.

Opponents to gender equality and supporters of polygyny did not, however, monopolise public discourse. In 1998 an MUI *fatwa* declared that a woman could not be elected president. NU had issued a *fatwa* the previous year saying that there was no barrier in Islamic law to a female president, and NU activists and leaders quickly denied the authority of the MUI ruling. But NU (typically) was not of one mind on the question. *Kyais* addressed the issue again in 1999, were sharply split over the matter and ended up with a complicated decision on the qualities required by *shari’a* for a president that simply avoided mentioning gender at all. Because all candidates for the presidency had shortcomings, they said, the candidate with the least of these should be picked and would then be regarded as a leader ‘in emergency circumstances with *de facto* authority’.

Prof. Siti Chamamah Suratno, the dynamic head of ‘Aisyiyah, the Muhammadiyah-affiliated women’s organisation, rejects polygyny and patriarchal interpretations of the Qur’an in general. Islamic law allows polygyny with up to four wives on certain conditions, including the fair treatment of them all. But ‘Aisyiyah generally opposes polygyny, relying on Qur’an 4:129: ‘You will never be able to treat your wives with equal fairness, however much you may desire to do so.’ On the grounds of this and a previous verse in the same *sura* of the Qur’an (4:3) that says, ‘if you fear that you cannot be equitable [to your wives], then marry only one’, the Indonesian Minister of Religious Affairs Maftuh Basyuni declared that

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43 Bernas, 10 Sept. 2009.
46 Discussion with Prof. Siti Chamamah Suratno, Yogyakarta, 21 March 2008. See also Feillard, ‘Indonesia’s emerging Muslim feminism’.
47 Qur’an: *A new translation by Abdel Haleem*, p. 63.
48 Ibid., p. 50.
the government regarded Islam as essentially monogamous. It banned civil servants (in theory, at least) from practicing polygyny.49

On the Traditionalist side, the rights of women have been championed by the Cirebon-based organisation Rahima: Pusat Pendidikan dan Informasi Islam dan Hak-Hak Perempuan (Centre for Education and Information on Islam and Women’s Rights) led by Ky. H. Husein Muhammad. He is a Traditionalist kyai with command of the classical works of Islam, which he cites in support of women’s rights. With regard to the wearing of the jilbab, for instance, he points out that this was originally a means to distinguish free women from slaves. Since there are no longer any slaves, there is no longer an obligation upon free women to wear the jilbab, although it is of course permitted to do so. Rahima seeks to empower women, including their role in the public realm.50 Given that that is so, it is not surprising that Rahima has had to face hostility and even threats of violence from extremist quarters. Many other organisations are also active. Universitas Islam Indonesia in Yogyakarta, for example, held training sessions in 2008 for religious leaders (of all faiths) in order to create agents of change … to ground (membumikan) values of gender justice within families’.51

Feminism has considerable support among Javanese women and seems to be particularly strong among younger and middle-aged women of Traditionalist background.52 Interviews of a few younger women in Kediri in 2008 showed that most supported the idea of gender equality and opposed polygyny. Several said that they would seek divorce if their husband wished to take a second wife.53 In fact, divorce rates rose ten-fold across Indonesia from 1998 to 2009, which a senior Ministry of Religious Affairs official ascribed to women being more aware of their rights. Another factor, he

49 JktP online, 28 June 2007. These statements were made in a hearing of the Constitutional Court. Muhamad Maftuh Basyuni was Minister 2004–9. He was born in Rembang in 1939 and is a graduate of Gontor and the Islamic University of Medina.
50 See the Rahima website at http://www.rahima.or.id.
52 Smith–Hefner, Javanese women and the veil’, p. 403, makes the same observation.
said, was cross-religious marriages often ending in divorce. But the most frequently cited reason for divorce in Islamic religious courts was polygyny.\(^{54}\) This may, of course, reflect a rise in polygyny and/or an increase in women’s rejections of it. The topic continues to be hotly debated.

Popular culture promoted Islamisation and, for those opposing polygyny, a particular problem was caused by a runaway best-selling novel entitled *Ayat ayat cinta* (‘the love verses’) published in 2004. This is by Habiburrahman El Shirazy, who was born in Semarang in 1976 and who, to the best of my knowledge, has only one wife himself. He studied in a pesantren in Demak, a madrasah in Surakarta and then at Islamic institutions in Cairo.\(^{55}\) The novel charts the travails of a pious young Javanese, Fahry, who has been taught to be terrified of women. He goes to Cairo to study, where his great piety and other virtues make him attractive to several irresistible, emotional women. This is a sort of Mills-and-Boon style romantic novel, all weeping hero and swooning heroines, layered with saccharine piety. Fahry enters polygynous marriages with women who cannot resist him. Polygyny is justified on the grounds of the uncontrollable sexual appetites of men and the permissiveness of women, and is contrasted with the less acceptable practices of the West:

> In the West, the matter of polygamy in Islam is questioned. They regard polygamy as degrading women. They prefer their daughters to have extra-marital relations and cohabit outside marriage with hundreds [sic] of males — even those who are already married — instead of living within a family officially polygamous. According to them, a whore who freely satisfies biological lusts with anyone at all whom she likes


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is better and more respectable than a woman who lives properly in a polygamous way.\(^\text{56}\)

*Ayat ayat cinta* was so popular that it beat out Harry Potter stories (pitched at a similar readership level) for citation as the most favorite novel in a Muslim women’s magazine.\(^\text{57}\) Habiburrahman was propelled to national fame and his book was made into a wildly popular film. He followed with further novels on similar themes uniting Islamic piety and love, which also proved to be material for television soap operas.

The Islamic literary world was not, however, without its challenges for those who supported polygyny, even from within Dakwahist circles. Ust. Cahyadi Takariawan is from Surakarta, a prolific writer and a member of the Advisory Council (*Majelis Syuro*) of the quasi-Islamist and Dakwahist party PKS, several of whose leaders are polygynists. Among Cahyadi’s books is *Bahagiakan diri dengan satu istri* (‘Make yourself happy with one wife’, 2007), which promotes monogamy. This produced considerable controversy, particularly within PKS circles themselves both in Indonesia and among PKS’s overseas branches, which are strong among Indonesian students.\(^\text{58}\) Novels by the prominent woman writer Abidah El Khalieqy (b. Jombang, 1965, now based in Yogyakarta) promote anti-patriarchal views of women’s roles within an Islamic frame of reference, even depicting sexual relations candidly, including homosexuality, pre-marital sex and women’s pleasure in sex. One of her novels has been made into a controversial film, but her work cannot challenge the popularity of *Ayat ayat cinta*.\(^\text{59}\)

There is an important point to be made about this debate concerning the rights of women, and particularly polygyny: it is an Islamic debate. The proponents of polygyny base their views on interpretations of Islam. The opponents to polygyny are Islamic women’s organisations and prominent Muslims who based their views on contending interpretations of Islam. There are no secularist voices in this debate — at least none of significance known to me. There is no audible voice saying that Islam is wrong, or irrelevant, or

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\(^\text{57}\) *Majalah Muslimah* Jan. 2006, according to the dust jacket of *Ayat ayat cinta*.

\(^\text{58}\) Arif Maftuhin interview with Ust. Cahyadi Takariawan, Yogyakarta, 15 Sept. 2007. The PKS leaders Anis Matta, Tifatul Sembiring and Zulkiflimansyah are polygynists, but the practice is not widespread in PKS circles.

should be ignored on issues of gender equality. The terms of the debate itself are thus consistent with the depiction in this book of Javanese society as one that is now suffused with Islamic discourse.

Women's dress naturally becomes an issue in such a context. Those who demand that women wear the jilbab and other forms of Islamic dress based their views on the Qur'an, particularly 24:31 and 33:59. The former passage reads,

Tell believing women that they should lower their glances, guard their private parts, and not display their charms beyond what [it is acceptable] to reveal; they should let their headscarves fall to cover their necklines.

... They should not stamp their feet so as to draw attention to any hidden charms.60

The second reads, 'Prophet, tell your wives, your daughters, and women believers to make their outer garments hang low over them, so as to be recognised and not insulted.'61

Chapter 6 reported, based on Nancy Smith-Hefner’s work, that in the 1990s the jilbab became a symbol both of Islamic identity and piety and of protest against Soeharto’s New Order. Whereas in the 1970s, less than 3 per cent of female students at Gadjah Mada University wore the jilbab, by the turn of the century over 60 per cent did so.62 Muhammadiyah universities, UINs and IAINs required female staff to wear the jilbab and urged students to do so.63

In the post-Soeharto age, however, in the midst of the general wave of Islamisation, the jilbab and other forms of ‘Islamic’ dress also became fashion items, particularly in the sophisticated environment of Jakarta and Yogyakarta, but not only there. Designers competed to bring out clothing that was Islamic yet still fashionable, trendy and alluring.64 Models, media stars and musicians adopted more ‘Islamic’ styles.65 There were ‘jilbab creation’

60 Qur’an: A new translation by Abdel Haleem, p. 222; see also Abdel Haleem’s notes on that page regarding the ambiguities in this passage and the Hadith traditions understood to mean that a woman should show only her face and hands to strangers.
61 Ibid., p. 271.
62 Smith-Hefner, ‘Javanese women and the veil’, pp. 390, 397. This paper is the most authoritative study available of the jilbab issue.
63 For example, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta; Solopos, 27 Aug. 2003.
65 For example, the fashion models Okky Asoka (KR, 18 Sept. 2007) and Arzeti Bilbina (JktP online, 9 Aug. 2008).
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competitions during Ramadan. At Islamic fashion shows, attractive models demonstrated that one could wear Islamic styles including the jilbab yet remain beautiful in appearance. Different styles of wearing the jilbab were demonstrated and discussed, including something improbably called a 'sexy' jilbab (jilbab seksi). There was a 'Miss Jilbab of East Java' competition in 2007 and in Yogyakarta a 'Top Model Muslimah' competition in 2007.

All of this was, of course, rather contradictory to the purpose of dressing modestly, so that women did not 'draw attention to any hidden charms', as the Qur'an has it. Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's MMI denounced these departures from Islamic modesty. Muhammadiyah University Yogyakarta took steps from 2006 to standardise female clothing, including jilbabs, worn on campus. But fashion can have a logic of its own. It became possible to see young jilbab-wearing women in tight T-shirts and jeans, even sometimes bare midriffs, and even at Islamic universities. A campus dakwah group in Yogyakarta went out one Ramadan to give out complimentary jilbabs so that women would have the right sort to wear, but evidently found that they had too few takers, so also passed them out to the male drivers of pedicabs and parking attendants (presumably to take home to their wives). Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that the jilbab was winning as a more Islamic form of female dress. The loose, diaphanous kerudung, which one might allow alluringly to fall from the hair and then replace with elegant aplomb, was now found rarely, and mostly among the older generation.

We should note, however, that Java's historical and spiritual traditions could still interfere with this particular aspect of Islamic formalism. An Islamic activist and founder of a pesantren in Yogyakarta, Ky. H. Zulfi Fuad Tamyis, joined a group pilgrimage (ziarah) to the grave of Java's greatest king, the 17th-century Sultan Agung. They were escorted by one Ky. Amir, who claimed the ability to communicate with Agung's spirit. Among the group was a woman wearing a jilbab, whom the spirit of Agung

66 For example, KR, 6 July 2007, 5 Aug. 2007.
72 Prof. Siti Chamamah Suratno, head of 'Aisyiyah, has even found herself criticised by younger women for still preferring a kerudung, which she wears closely under the chin but which does not qualify as a jilbab; discussion with her, Yogyakarta, 21 March 2008.
reprimanded for her attire. Angrily, Agung demanded, ‘Where did you become a Muslim? If the rule here is to wear the *kemben*, then you have to wear the *kemben*’ — referring to the breast-cloth historically worn by women in a Javanese court, which leaves the shoulders and arms bare and the hair exposed, contrary to Qur’anic requirements. Zulfi Fuad accepted this on the grounds that there are different levels or stations of spiritual advancement (what Sufism calls differential *maqams*). ‘So, according to me,’ he said, ‘for persons at the level of Sultan Agung, culture and tradition are just external appearances and what is more important to measure Islamness is what is inside the heart.’

A more widespread clash between older Javanese traditions and Islamisation arose over proposals for a new law to ban pornography and ‘porno-actions’, the latter including improper public exposure of the body and such activities as kissing in public. A clash with Javanese traditions was inevitable, for older forms of women’s attire often left neck, arms, shoulders, and hair exposed, and the Javanese *kain* and *kebaya* could be very revealing of the female body form. This was particularly an issue with regard to dress worn in older forms of dance and drama in Java (as in Bali), including the most sacred sorts, such as the *bedhaya*, as well as less elevated art forms such as *tayuban* and the burlesque *kethoprak*. When this national law was first proposed in 2006, many performers of Javanese arts and those involved in modern theatre protested mightily. So also did various activist NGOs and those of generally liberal persuasions. The bill was equally volubly supported by demonstrators — many of them women — from Islamist and Dakwahist organisations. MUI and other Islamic organisations supported it. Prof. Chamamah Suratno of Muhammadiyah’s ‘Aisyiyah was among the prominent persons endorsing the bill.

The anti-pornography bill thus became a *cause célèbre* and was stuck for some time in a parliamentary committee while opponents tried to kill it. Eventually it emerged in much reduced form and became law in 2008. It was still widely seen as a legislative assault on artistic freedom, women’s rights and traditional arts. The law defines pornography sweepingly as

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75 *Suara Muhammadiyah* online, 17 May 2006. Opponents of the bill, she said, were acting on behalf of the ‘capitalist interests that dominate the entertainment industry in Indonesia’.
pictures, sketches, illustrations, photos, speech, sounds, moving images, animations, cartoons, talk, bodily movements or other messages ... which contain obscenity or sexual exploitation which offend the moral norms of the society'. Among the law's declared purposes is to ‘respect, protect and conserve artistic and cultural standards, customs and traditions, and religious rituals of Indonesian society which is pluralistic’, which has been understood as an exemption for indigenous cultural traditions such as those of Java. But its paragraph 20 declares that ‘The society may play a part in preventing the creation, spreading or use of pornography’ and this seems to constitute a license for vigilantism by religious zealots, the sorts of people whom we will consider in Chapter 12. In 2010 the Constitutional Court rejected appeals against the constitutionality of the law, but upheld the exemption for indigenous cultural traditions, literature, sports or scientific knowledge.

**Popular culture**

Islamisation activists have achieved considerable success in making religiosity trendy among the young. We noted above how, in the Soeharto period, Islamisation had become associated with progress and modernity; in the post-Soeharto period it was sometimes associated also with trendy fashion and youth culture. The fashionable jilbabs discussed above were symptoms of this. In a discussion about politics at the Jogokariyan mosque in Yogyakarta in 2009, a young man's T-shirt had the Javanese slogan, ‘Want to be more trendy? — hey, get with ngaji!’ (referring to Qur'an studies).

A good deal of this trendy Islam is associated with Sufism, which is experiencing a significant revival in Java and the rest of Indonesia, including in urban areas. In 2008, ‘Mahajava Production’ put on a monthly ‘Ashabul Cafe’ in Yogyakarta, which would provide a ‘Momentum Romantic Spiritual Talktainment’ (sic in English) with 72-year-old Prof. Amin Azis,

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76 The text of the law is available at http://www.bpkp.go.id/unit/hukum/uu/2008/44-08.
77 detikNews online, 25 March 2010.
79 The name comes from the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, the Men of the Cave (*ashab al-kahf*) found in *Qur’an* 18:9–25.
the author of a book entitled *The power of Al Fatihah*.80 Others would join him in a discussion of Sufism, accompanied by love poetry and songs.81 Sufi pop music was also a speciality of the Surabaya group Dewa which claimed inspiration from the medieval Sufi masters Al-Hallaj (d. 922) and Jalal al-Din Rumi (d. 1273).82 The band Ungu was another promoting piously Islamic music, its new album for Ramadan 2008 entitled *I and my God (Aku dan Tuanku)* being more influenced, so said the bass player, by the style of the British rock band Black Sabbath (one cannot avoid a certain sense of irony here).83 Emha Ainun Najib, whose theatrical and musical creations of Islamic inspiration were discussed in the Chapter 6, developed a Sufi-

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80 Published by Pinbuk Press, Jakarta, 2008. The *Fatihah* is the first brief verse of the *Qur'an* and part of the obligatory daily prayers, praising God and asking for his blessing and guidance.
81 *KR*, 26 Apr. 2008. Amin Azis was born in Aceh and gained a PhD in agricultural economics from Iowa State University; *KR*, 4 May 2008.
82 *Suara Muhammadiyah* online, 28 Apr. 2005.
style movement called Maiyah. This runs popular religious study sessions across Java and elsewhere in Indonesia, accompanied by Emha’s musical group Kiai Kanjeng, with its combination of Javanese gamelan, other folk instruments and modern instruments. Timothy Daniels describes Emha opening Maiyah events ‘with prayer, Qur’anic recitation, and short talks on a variety of religious topics, delivered with a great amount of wit and humor which often has those present bursting into laughter’. He leads the audience in slawatan and dhikr.84

The popular music world of dangdut split in the post-Soeharto era on lines of piety vs impiety. We noted in Chapter 6 how Rhoma Irama led the development of Islamised dangdut. In 2003 there burst onto the scene a lady from Pasuruan called Inul Daratista, whose raunchy dancing, prominently featuring ‘drilling’ movements of her hips that seemed anatomically improbable, was very far from Islamic modesty. Emha defended her with the memorable comment that ‘Inul’s bottom is the face of all of us’. Rhoma Irama, however, was scandalised and the East Java MUI declared her performance to be pornographic. This episode was among those that inspired Islamising activists to press for the anti-pornography law described above.85

Another young dangdut singer and actor, Dewi Persik — also from East Java, in this case Jember — was accused of being pornography in the flesh. It was reported that two mayors of West Java cities and the regency of Probolinggo banned her from performing — a suppression of artistic freedom that led to a critical editorial in the Jakarta Post. In 2008 she gave in, apologised to the whole country, and promised to mend her ways.86

The drive for deeper Islamisation was targeted not only at those young people who might be too enticed by modern styles — particularly among city dwellers — but of course also at the rural villagers still committed to abangan ways. In Gunung Kidul, Ann Dunham studied the village of Kajar

84 Timothy Daniels, *Islamic spectrum in Java* (Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2009), p. 138. Daniels’s extensive account of Maiyah is on pp. 134–55. On p. 147, Daniels — who writes very sympathetically of this movement — compares it to ‘liberation theology’ movements in Latin America and the Philippines.


over 1977–91, which she found to be ‘a strongly abangan cultural area’ and
where there was ‘no village mosque’.87 When Robert Hefner went to a nearby
village in Gunung Kidul in 2003, however, he saw ‘a full-blown Islamic re-
surgence’ which was the fruit partly of government activities, especially the
provision of religious education in schools, but above all the consequence
of Islamisation efforts led by NU and Muhammadiyah.88 Newspapers from
Java are full of reports of religious activities at local level, particularly dur-
ing Ramadan — pengajian, mujahadah, dhikr, observations at sacred graves,
Qur’an-reading competitions, breaking of the fast together, and much more,
led by kyais or other religiously educated persons. In rural villages, these are
overwhelmingly of the Traditionalist style and often Sufi in style and content.
The engagement of the local community makes these activities markers and
welders of village harmony and thus powerful agents supporting conformity
of belief and practice. As we will see when considering remaining abangan-
style and kebatinan activities in Chapter 11, such Islamic activities do not
have a monopoly at village level, but they are powerful, ubiquitous and (in
my view) constantly winning ground.

Business

Banking and other forms of commerce also grew more obviously Islamic
in style. We have already discussed the fashion industry above. Banking
according to Islamic rules — which means essentially the banning of interest
— began to grow in the early years of the 21st century.89 Bank Muamalat
Indonesia (Indonesian Commercial Transactions Bank) was the pioneer,
having been established in 1991. It was followed in the new century by
shari’a-compliant branches of established conventional banks. The collection
of zakat also increased, with several governmental and private organisations
being active in receiving the donations, among them the PKS-linked PKPU
(Post Keadilan Peduli Umat, Post of Justice and Care for the ummah). In
2001 the government made zakat contributions tax-deductible (in a country

87 Dunham, Surviving against the odds, pp. 116–7.
88 Robert Hefner, ‘Afterword: Ann Dunham, Indonesia and anthropology — a
generation on’ in ibid., pp. 340–1.
89 For example, KR, 2 Aug. 2008, reported that shari’a-compliant banking in
Yogyakarta had grown over 40 per cent over 2001–7, and as a consequence such bank
branches were facing staff shortages.
where, however, collection of personal taxes is notoriously lax, inefficient and corrupt). 90

Businesses sought to use Islam as a promotional tool. A few examples will suffice here. 91 During its nation-wide Ramadan ‘roadshow’ in 2007, Astra Motors came to Semarang and Yogyakarta and offered a new Honda car model at a special price. The ‘roadshow’ also encompassed religious advice from the popular young ustaz H. Jefri Al Bukhori (b. 1973), also known as UJE, as well as presenting television soap-opera stars, the singing of devotional songs (nasyid) and local bands. 92 In a similar vein, the mobile phone company Telkomsel promoted its phone-cards during the 2007–8 hajj season. Anyone who used these cards while on the pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia entered a draw to cover their hajj costs. Twelve winners received USD5,000 each. 93 Companies themselves frequently honoured Islamic obligations. Kediri’s giant tobacco company Gudang Garam — the financial pillar of local kyais — organises pengajian during Ramadan for its employees who, however, have to keep working while the lessons are delivered. The company also distributes symbolic zakat alms at the end of Ramadan to several thousand poor locals, each of whom gets IDR10,000 (about USD1, hardly enough to transform their circumstances significantly). 94

Publishing blossomed in the new atmosphere of freedom, and religious publications — of all world faiths as well as ‘new age’ spirituality and multiple ‘secret-to-success’ manuals — occupied prominent sections in book stores, but publishers and booksellers also found themselves the target of Islamically inspired vigilantism. The police were only rarely prepared to confront such actions. One example of such vigilantism was a campaign by organisations such as MMI against the new Indonesian version of Playboy magazine carried out by ‘sweeping’, i.e., invading bookshops to remove and destroy copies, but often finding that no bookshop dared to stock it. 95 In 2008 was published

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91 Several papers in Fealy and White, Expressing Islam, analyse the post-Soeharto commercialisation of Islam.
95 Photos in the Indonesian version of Playboy were more modest than in the American edition, but that did not inhibit vigilantes. The editor was eventually arrested.
Soemarsono’s book *Revolusi Agustus* about the 1948 Madiun uprising, written with the aim of defending the PKI’s interpretation of that critical episode, as noted in Chapter 3 above. Soemarsono’s account was serialised in August 2009 in the newspaper *Jawa Pos*, whose Surabaya headquarters then became the target of a demonstration of 200 people calling themselves the Anti-Communist Front. This Front consisted of the East Java FPI, East Java MUI and other Islamic activist groups, a veterans’ group and others. Soemarsono’s book was burned — and quickly thereafter became difficult to find in bookshops. The chief editor of *Jawa Pos* thanked the demonstrators for their visit and for their ‘correction’. Many devout Muslims indeed continue to regard Communism as an ever-present threat to Indonesia and to Islam, and can be mobilised by anti-Communist appeals.

This atmosphere promoted self-censorship by publishers and distributors regarding publications that were regarded either as leftist or anti-Islamic. In 2001, the leading publisher and bookseller Gramedia, with a large chain of bookshops across the country, removed books by Pramoedya Ananta Toer in the face of threats from the Gerakan Pemuda Islam (Islamic Youth Movement). Yogyakarta police conducted a pre-emptive confiscation of leftist books — all of them perfectly legal publications — from shops and street-stalls around the same time so that anti-Communist groups couldn’t destroy them in ‘sweeping’ raids. The police even suggested that private citizens who owned such books should hand them to the police for safe-keeping. They did not, however, explain why they were not protecting the book sellers instead.

While English-language versions of some of the major atheist books of the age could be found in a few outlets in Indonesia — those by Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens and others — big publishers were not prepared to publish Indonesian-language translations. Quite apart from the risk of attacks by vigilantes, this must have been at least partly a commercial judgment, for anti-religious books are unlikely to sell well in 2010 and sentenced to two years’ imprisonment for publishing pornography. He was acquitted of all charges by the Supreme Court and released in 2011. For some examples of coverage, see *RK*, 31 Jan. 2006; *Tempo*, 8 Apr. 2006; *KmpsO*, 9 Oct. 2010; *JktP* online, 24 June 2011.

97 *JP* online, 3 May 2001. Gerakan Pemuda Islam had its origins as an affiliate of Masyumi in the 1950s, but has carried on without specific party affiliation since.
such a thoroughly religionised society,99 where even the Constitution declares that the first foundation of the state is Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa (‘belief in the one God’, the first principle of the Pancasila). Gramedia thought about translating Dawkins’ The God Delusion but decided that it would be too provocative. The smaller publisher Serambi, which has rather specialised in religious books, also decided that Indonesia was not yet ready for The God Delusion. The small Yogyakarta press Pustaka Pelajar took the risk of publishing an Indonesian-language version of Sam Harris’s The end of faith but it attracted little attention. Certainly this and the few such works from other small publishers could not compare commercially with Ayat ayat cinta or, as the Jakarta Post pointed out, with Laksmi Pamuntjak’s Jakarta Good Food Guide.100 It was probably possible for a very few atheistic, anti-religious or specifically anti-Islamic works to be published by small presses in small print runs only because most religious zealots who would like to burn such books did not know of them, for they read nothing much other than Islamic devotional literature and magazines like Sabili.

Lack of interest on the part of many Islamic activists for older Javanese culture — and probably their weak command of the Javanese language — surely explains their failure to erupt furiously at the republication of three anti-Islamic Javanese books originally written in the 19th century.101 The original versions of these works seem all to have been composed in the Kediri area, and depict the Islamisation of the Javanese as a catastrophic civilisational mistake. Babad Kedhiri, written in 1873, presented a supposedly secret history of the triumph of Islam in Java, which is said to have relied on the grossly anti-filial treachery of the first Sultan of Demak and the walis who surrounded him. Here appears one Sabda Palon, the advisor of the king of Majapahit, who urges him to persevere in his Buda faith, and who is revealed to be in fact the god-clown Semar, the supernatural protector of all Javanese. Suluk Gatholoco — frankly rude, obscene and hilarious — was written by 1872 at the latest. It mocks Islam in many ways, even

99 There are a few, very low-profile, atheists in Indonesia, keeping in touch with each other mainly via the Internet and avoiding attention as much as possible. See JktG online, 24 Sept. 2010.
101 The original books are described in Ricklefs, Polarising Javanese society, pp. 181–211. Their republication is also discussed in idem, ‘Religion, politics and social dynamics in Java: Historical and contemporary rhymes’ in Fealy and White, Expressing Islam, pp. 132–3.
reinterpreting the Confession of Faith as a metaphor for sexual intercourse. The third book, *Serat Dermagandhul*, combined *Babad Kedhiri*’s revisionism and *Gatholoco*’s obscene hilarity. It prophesied that after 400 years (i.e., in the 1870s) Javanese would devote themselves to modern learning and become truly Javanese again, and would convert to Christianity.

These extraordinary books could still be found during the Sukarno era, but were banned during the New Order. In 2005 and 2006, however, *Dermagandhul* was republished in Surakarta and Yogyakarta by ostensibly different authors, in both cases *noms de plume* of a single writer who prefers anonymity, fearing that the legal ban on publication might still be in place. The book’s original prophecy that after 400 years Islam would cease to

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102 I do not know the full publication history of these books, but do have copies of *Tañdanagara, Dermagandul: Tjaritané adege negara Islam ing Demak beďahé negara Madjapabêti kang salaguné wiwité wong Djawa ninggal agama Buddha bandjur salin agama Islam; gantjaran basa Djawa ngoko* (7th printing; Solo: Penerbit “Sadu-Budi”, 1961); and *Prawirataruna, Balsafah Gatołotjo: Ngemot balsafah kawruh kawaskitan* (Solo: Penerbit S. Mulija [1958]).

claim the loyalty of Javanese was changed by the publisher to 500 years\(^\text{104}\) (which means c. 1978, thus leaving the predicted conversion away from Islam still behind schedule as well as utterly nonsensical). *Suluk Gatholoco* was republished at least three times in 2005 and 2007.\(^\text{105}\) The Siti Maziyah version in Indonesian omits the most offensive passages. The Joko Su’ud Sukahar version offers a summary in Indonesian, including the offensive passages. It also has a series of comments by various luminaries who generally say that this is a book best reserved for reading by scholars and the culturally sophisticated. The Wawan Susetya version is a light-weight, historically confused Indonesian-language account, with the really offensive sections explained — utterly bizarrely — as a form of *dakwah*; this silliness leads to the most objectionable parts of *Gatholoco*, such as the sexual interpretation of the Confession of Faith, being published. In 2006, *Babad Kedhiri* was also reprinted in Kediri by collaboration between the original publisher’s descendants and the local government, the Javanese text being accompanied by a high-quality Indonesian translation.\(^\text{106}\) We may be confident that no one in the government had read this account of the *walis’* perfidious conduct in Islamising Java. The most important thing to note about the republication of these anti-Islamic books is that no one from the more zealous end of Islamic activists took any notice at all. There was simply no reaction. The first printing of *Babad Kediri* of 2,000 copies is said to have sold out\(^\text{107}\) — probably collected by good citizens of Kediri who put it on their shelves without reading much of it. I do not know about the commercial fate of the others, which were undoubtedly brought out in small print runs.

**Superstitions and ‘science’**

Javanese culture has long been rich in superstitions, and even these seem to have become more Islamised. Islam, like other faiths, does not doubt that there are miracles that reveal God’s powers in the world. As with any other

\(^{104}\) Discussion with the writer, who requested anonymity, Yogyakarta, 12 June 2007.


\(^{106}\) Purbawidjaja and Mangunwijaya, *Serat Babad Kadhiri: Kisah berdirinya sebuah kejayaan* ([transl. Siti Halimah Soeparno]; pengantar Edi Sedyawati; Kediri: Boekhandel Tan Khoen Swie, 2006).

\(^{107}\) Discussion with Pak Kusharsono, Kediri, 28 Nov. 2007.
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religion, however, the authenticity or orthodoxy of a particular phenomenon may be debated. We will see below that many of the historically important art forms of Java that were thought to have spiritual powers are losing those spiritual meanings in the modern world and being degraded to mere entertainment, where they face tough competition from more modern diversions. So it is possible that for many Javanese something of a spiritual or superstitious vacuum opens up in these circumstances, which Islam offers to fill. This is not a case of superstitions disappearing, but rather of them becoming more Islamised. This is particularly true of Muslims of Traditionalist background.

In Yogyakarta, abstract paintings by Ky. H. Muhammad Fuad Riyadi were displayed one Ramadan. He explained that he painted when, having done dhikr, he achieved a spiritual state in which he wished to spread love to all of God’s creatures. His paintings consequently bore spiritual energies that inhered in them and which could spread blessings to others. Indeed the owner of one of his paintings might be ‘protected from black magic’ by this power. It was difficult for people to perceive this power, he said, but — reflecting some of the ecumenical style of much Javanese thought — if the Dalai Lama were to see one of his paintings he would ‘surely feel the aura’. If his paintings were transported from one place to another, they had to be tightly wrapped and prayed over so as not to be struck by ‘evil frequencies’ en route.108 Natural calamities — of which Java, like the rest of Indonesia, has a surfeit — and illness were readily interpreted as God’s judgment on humankind, requiring moral improvement and mass pengajian.109 In Cirebon, locals spotted what they thought to be a meteorite hitting the ground. Remarkably, when this object landed, smelling of sulphur, it melted in the shape of the word ‘Allah’ in Arabic script. The object turned out, however, to be not a meteorite but probably waste from a nearby sulphur factory.110

More remarkable than the persistence of Islamised superstitions is the spread of Islamised versions of science. We noted in discussing the 1970s how Modernists such as Sjafruddin Prawiranegara and Osman Raliby depicted Islam as fundamentally rational and expressed the view that it

110 TempoI, 19 Aug. 2010; JktP online, 23 Aug. 2010. Other reports from around the Islamic world of such supposed signatures of God (lafaz Allah) are found on the Internet. Miracles from all faiths may be found there, of course.
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should be understood in ways consistent with science. Osman and Sjafruddin accepted that scientific knowledge could elucidate the eternal truths of the Qur’an, but by the late 20th and early 21st centuries it was becoming more common to think the other way around, to understand science in ways consistent with Islam.

A prominent proponent of Islamised science (or perhaps ‘sciencised’ Islam) is Agus Mustofa. He was born in 1963 in Malang, where his father was a Sufi teacher of the Naqshabandiyya-Khalidiyya, and did a degree in nuclear physics at Gadjah Mada University. Thereafter he worked as a journalist with Jawa Pos for 14 years. Because of his journalistic networks, he probably gets more press attention than would otherwise be the case. He left his newspaper job and became a writer on Islamic subjects, hoping to meld mysticism and modern scientific ideas. He employs ideas from physics, astronomy, medicine or any other discipline to approach the Qur’an, which is, he believes, the source of all knowledge. He churns out an endless stream of books, which he publishes himself. He also conducts individual therapy sessions at his (rather grand) house.

His ideas are controversial and attract opposition from other Muslims. ‘Hard liners’, he said, sometimes demand that his books be withdrawn or object to his titles. One of his books is entitled Bersatu dengan Tuhan (To become one with God), which raises questions of orthodoxy, for union with a transcendent God who does not enter into his creation is not an acceptable idea to most orthodox thinkers. For Agus Mustofa, this can be explained and proved by mathematics. All of being is one and that is God, he says. ‘We are a part of Allah … Everything exists within God.’ We are the number 1, or 1,000, or any other number, but God is infinity. Any number divided by infinity results in zero, which shows that without God we are nothing,

111 Similar views were set out in Suryadi W.S. ‘Prestasi kaum Muslimin dalam sejarah perkembangan wayang’, in Jabrohim and Saudi Berlian (eds), Islam dan kesenian ([Yogyakarta:] Majelis Kebudayaan Muhammadiyah, Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, Lembaga Litbang PP Muhammadiyah, 1995), pp. 148–9, where he says that Qur’an 52 on there being fire below the earth (in fact a description of the fires of Hell) could now be understood as describing oil and natural gas, and 57:25 on ‘iron with its mighty strength’ was an account of magnetism, which produced electricity. Suryadi says that it is ironic that natural gas and electricity were discovered by non-Muslims even though Muslims were told of them in the Qur’an 1,400 years ago. Olivier Roy, The failure of political Islam (transl. Carol Volk; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 102–3, notes comparable views more widely in the Islamic world.
he says. As proof of anything this is nonsense. He uses a Kirlian camera\footnote{A device that is claimed to photograph auras, invented by the Russian Semyon Davidovich Kirlian in the 1930s.} to photograph people’s auras. Only Muslims can achieve a white aura, he believes, because only they believe in the absolute oneness of God. All of this, he claims, is empirical and rational — although less gullible observers might speculate about the balance among science, piety and salesmanship. When pressed by my colleague Masdar Hilmy, Agus Mustofa agreed that in order to be persuaded by this kind of thinking one must already believe in it.\footnote{Discussion with Agus Mustofa, Surabaya, 23 Oct. 2008. See also the interview with him published in JktP, 16 Sept. 2007.}

It is not difficult to find others who claim that the source of all knowledge and all technology is the Qur’an, even that it offers scientifically demonstrable medical benefits. Dr Muhammad Usman, a Surabaya HTI leader from the Pharmacy Department of Airlangga University’s medical school and former head of the Surabaya Muhammadiyah Hospital, and Joko Sarsetyoto who teaches at the Surabaya Institute of Technology and the Navy Technology College, and no doubt many another scientist, medical expert and technologist, shared the view that all knowledge is found in the Qur’an and that all the technology and scientific knowledge in the world comes from just one source, the ways of God (sunna Allah).\footnote{Discussion with Ky. H. Dr Muhammad Usman, Surabaya, 24 Nov. 2007; Suhadi and Imam Subawi interview with Joko Sarsetyoto, Kediri, 17 July 2007.}

Prof. H. Muhammad Fanani of the Medical Faculty of Sebelas Maret University in Surakarta reported computerised (and thus authoritative, it is implied) evidence that listening to recitations of the Qur’an reduced muscle tension in patients more effectively than hearing non-Qur’anic materials, even if the patient did not understand the Arabic. Hence, Islamic psychiatry should be developed.\footnote{KR, 4 Jan. 2009.} There were indeed efforts under way in Indonesia to define an Islamic school of psychology, building upon passages in the Qur’an and Hadith, and distinguished from Western psychological paradigms that were seen as implicitly atheistic.\footnote{See Nur Hamim, ‘Religious anthropocentrism: The discourse of Islamic psychology among Indonesian Muslim intellectuals’, Journal of Indonesian Islam vol. 4, no. 2 (Dec. 2010), pp. 341-57. Readers should be warned that, unfortunately, this interesting paper is marred by errors in the English language.} A medical colleague of Fanani’s (a graduate of the medical school at Airlangga) said in his inaugural address as Professor that his research confirmed that carrying out religious
obligations reduced the risk of heart attack. There was, he said, a ‘mystery of the heart’ that was still beyond science to understand.\textsuperscript{117} At the State University of Yogyakarta, the Islamic Medication Study Center hosted ‘Prophetic Medicine Training’, urging people to return to treatments taught by the Prophet as the best way to deal with various illnesses. These included the use of honey, cumin, \textit{Zamzam} water, fruit vinegar, dates, bloodletting and Qur’anic readings.\textsuperscript{118} It is, of course, entirely possible — even probable — that religious activity (perhaps like placebos in drug trials) can stimulate brain phenomenon with beneficial therapeutic effects.\textsuperscript{119} But the practitioners cited here were making different sorts of claims. On the evidence of these newspaper reports and interviews, it is hard to think that this is anything other than religiously inflected ‘junk science’ and ‘junk thought’, something that is, it must be noted, probably even more pervasive in the United States than in Indonesia.\textsuperscript{120}

For their part, Traditionalists had long-established ideas of religious phrases, powerful persons and sacred objects having healing powers, for which no modern scientific proof was felt necessary. Such ideas carried on. A ‘weekend \textit{pesantren}’ aimed at \textit{abangan} in the Yogyakarta region taught, \textit{inter alia}, a ‘health \textit{dhikr}’, consisting of repetition of the 99 ‘beautiful names of God’ (\textit{Asma al-Husna}) and ending with a prayer for good health.\textsuperscript{121} \textit{Ruqya} also continued to be practiced, consisting of healing by pronouncing magic formulae or applying sacred amulets (\textit{jimat}) bearing such formulae to exorcise evil spirits and black magic.\textsuperscript{122} These Traditionalist versions of Islam-as-medication were subject to denunciation from non-Traditionalist

\textsuperscript{117} \textit{Tempoi}, 10 Nov. 2007.
\textsuperscript{118} \textit{KR}, 8 March 2008. \textit{Zamzam} water is from the sacred \textit{Zamzam} well near the \textit{ka'ba} in Mecca.
\textsuperscript{119} There is growing literature on this. For example, see the research mentioned in Micklethwait and Wooldridge, \textit{God is back}, pp. 146–7.
\textsuperscript{120} A valuable account of contemporary American ‘junk science’ and ‘junk thought’ is in Susan Jacoby, \textit{The age of American unreason} (rev. ed.; New York: Vintage Books, 2009), Chapter 9. This is not just an Indonesian or American phenomenon, of course. For a fine example of spiritualist nonsense pretending to be science by a British professor, see David Fontana’s \textit{Life beyond death: What should we expect?}\textsuperscript{121} \textit{KR}, 6 Dec. 2007.
\textsuperscript{122} For example, a \textit{Ruqya} session at Kediri’s main mosque was advertised in \textit{RK}, 13 Sept. 2006. For further information on this practice, see T. Fahd, ‘\textit{Ruqya} (a.)’ in P. Bearman \textit{et al.}, \textit{Encyclopaedia of Islam} (2nd ed.), vol. 8, p. 600. Useful accounts of spiritual healing practices observed in Yogyakarta in 2003–4 are found in Daniels, \textit{Islamic spectrum}, pp. 67–80.
organisations such as the puritan Persatuan Islam.\textsuperscript{123} Natural phenomena could also be explained by Traditionalists from religious sources. In 2000, an organisation of NU-recognised Sufi brotherhoods explained on the basis of the opinions of ‘the majority of the ulama’ that lightning was the result of ‘the movement of angels under instruction from God’.\textsuperscript{124}

**The role of educational institutions**

We have noted how, under Soeharto, state schools introduced compulsory religious education. The rather controversial law of 2003 entrenched that role still deeper by requiring schools to recruit teachers of religion and to provide places of worship according to the students’ religious faiths. This law was resisted by pro-pluralists among Muslims such as Abdurrahman Wahid and by non-Muslim interests, but was signed into law by Megawati. As the population of Java has continued to grow, the demand for education has kept pace, which has produced both a demand for more state education and an opportunity for private providers.

The degree of Javanese society’s commitment to religious and general education may be exemplified by the village of Karangtengah in the Yogyakarta Special District. In 2008 the village decreed that there would be a compulsory study time from 6 to 9 in the evening. No one in the village would be allowed to turn on their television during this time. From the time for the \textit{maghrib} prayer (just after sunset, i.e., about 6pm) until time for the \textit{isha} prayer (when complete darkness has descended) children were to be taught religion. Thereafter it was time for school studies until 9pm. If villagers failed to conform, they would be admonished the first time, their television would be confiscated the second time, and if there was a third refusal, said the village head, ‘we are going to chase them away from our area’.\textsuperscript{125}

\textsuperscript{123} Persatuan Islam (Persis) issued a \textit{fatwa} in 2005 declaring \textit{ruqya} using amulets or magic formulae to be polytheism (\textit{syirik}, Arabic \textit{shirk}), but other forms of protecting oneself through prayer were accepted. This is a complicated matter since the Prophet himself exemplified such practices. The Indonesian text of the Persis \textit{fatwa} may be found at \url{http://pemudapersis-ck.blogspot.com/2009/05/bersiyasah-dalam-wawasan-jamiyah-jeje.html} and other locations on the Web.

\textsuperscript{124} Michael F. Laffan, ‘Lightning, angels and prayers for the nation: Reading the \textit{fatwas} of the Jam’iyyah Ahlith Thoriqoh’, in Feener and Cammack, \textit{Islamic law in contemporary Indonesia}, p. 67.

The state schools’ provision of religious education — although undoubtedly playing a major role in Islamisation of the young — was nevertheless thought too little by some. In primary schools this was only three hours per week and at higher levels just two, so there was a demand for extracurricular religious education. This demand created an opportunity for new schools to be established called Sekolah Islam Terpadu (Integrated Islamic Schools), which combined the national curriculum with Islamic studies in an all-day school. Because they engaged the pupils for the full day, they were particularly attractive to young urban couples where both partners were working, as a safe place to put their children.

Integrated Islamic Schools were pioneered by the Lukmanul Hakin school established in Bandung in 1995. These schools were particularly a project of the activists who also created the Dakwahist political party PKS. Their inspiration generally came from the writings of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood figure Hassan al-Banna, who had been a school teacher himself. These PKS-affiliated schools blossomed after 1998 until there were hundreds of them in Java and elsewhere, keeping in communication with each other through a network called JSIT (Jaringan Sekolah Islam Terpadu, Integrated Islamic Schools Network). JSIT has established its own teacher training college in Yogyakarta. Religious studies of course play an important part in the schools, and the books used reflect the ideology of PKS, including *Kitab al-Tawhid* (The Book of the Unity of God), the strict monotheistic interpretations of Islam by Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhab, the founder of Wahhabism. The schools come under the purview of the Department of National Education and attain a high academic standard which enhances their appeal to middle-class parents.

Not all such schools are the creations of PKS activists. The extremist (and notoriously anti-Christian and anti-Jewish) Hidayatullah organisation has such schools, as do HTI activists. Integrated Islamic schools have also been established by Gadjah Mada University mosque activists, by Amien Rais and by Muhammadiyah. These are not encompassed within JSIT. This is because, says a prominent HTI leader, JSIT is ‘exclusive’. Such

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126 Such observations were made by the Director General of Islamic Education in the Department of Religious Affairs, Prof. H.M. Muhammad Ali; *Bernas*, 29 July 2008.
129 Email from Muhammad Ismail Yusanto, 26 June 2007.
exclusivity is, of course, a common feature of movements of all persuasions that operate near, or beyond, the boundaries of doctrinaire ideologies.

Muhammadiyah has been working hard to create such integrated schools and has opened a ‘Muhammadiyah Boarding School’ — in other words, Modernist-style pesantren — in Prambanan, near Yogyakarta. Its aim is to ‘to cultivate faith, knowledge and character’, with Arabic taught as the language of religion and English as the international language. We may note en passant that the Javanese language seems not to be taught there. Fees are charged but scholarships are available for high achievers, poor students and orphans.130 Such schools are held in high regard, but their standing has attracted some criticism. Younger Muhammadiyah activists accuse them of becoming too elite and too expensive, so that they are beyond the reach even of most Muhammadiyah followers. In Sidoarjo, for example, only about one-third of the pupils in Muhammadiyah schools are from Muhammadiyah families and in Gresik the proportion is still lower.131 Whatever the truth of that complaint, there can be no doubting the decisive role that Muhammadiyah education plays in the deeper Islamisation of Javanese society.

Other Islamic primary- and secondary-education institutions are also important. Several thousand Traditionalist pesantrens continue to provide religious education across Java. A reliable total number is not available, but figures of 11,000 to 17,000 have been reported.132 NU collaborates with government in developing the general knowledge part of pesantren curricula, so that graduates are on a par with those from state schools.133 The famous school at Gontor continues to produce highly qualified graduates, although it is not difficult to find Gontor graduates who believe that the institution has drifted in more conservative directions in recent years. The Persatuan Islam (Persis) pesantren at Bangil remains important as well, and has a reputation for producing rather illiberal Wahhabi-influenced graduates. These include many Muhammadiyah leaders in East Java, who set the more conservative

131 Discussion with Prof. Syaﬁq Mughni, Sidoarjo, 23 June 2007.
132 Based on 2001 Department of Religious Affairs data, Riyadi, Dekonstruksi tradisi, p. 55 n1, reports 11,312 pesantrens, nearly 80 per cent of them in rural villages; RK, 24 Nov. 2005, quotes the figure of 17,000 from Ky. H. Anwar Iskandar.
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style for which East Java Muhammadiyah has a reputation. The Persis magazine *al-Muslimun* also exercises such an influence.\(^{134}\)

Muhammadiyah is prominent in higher education as well, with universities in major towns across Java that are held in high regard. Some of these — particularly the Muhammadiyah University in Surakarta — have been accused of housing extremist ideologies, but most have not.\(^{135}\) The scale of Muhammadiyah's contribution may be gauged from its role in Yogyakarta, where it is headquartered. There nearly 34,000 students are in Muhammadiyah institutions of higher education: Ahmad Dahlan University (some 13,000 students), Muhammadiyah University Yogyakarta (some 13,000), 'Aisyiyah Health Sciences College (some 6,000), the Muhammadiyah Polytechnic (around 800) and the teacher training college (around 1,600).\(^{136}\)

Another group of Muslim reformers also turned to education as a means of promoting their understanding of Islam, but with somewhat

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\(^{134}\) Discussion with Prof. Syafiq Mughni (then deputy head of Muhammadiyah in East Java and himself a graduate of the Persis pesantren at Bangil), Sidoarjo, 23 June 2007.

\(^{135}\) The Rektor of the Surakarta university denied that there was truth in these accusations; discussion with Prof. Bambang Setiaji, Surakarta, 4 Aug. 2006.

\(^{136}\) Discussion with Drs Agung Danarto, Head of the Muhammadiyah regional leadership for the Yogyakarta Special District, Kota Gede, 31 March 2009.
mixed success. From the late 1980s and 1990s there began to return to Indonesia graduates of the Saudi-funded LIPIA school who had gone to Afghanistan and fought in the anti-Soviet jihad. These were mainly Revivalists in epistemology and Islamists and Dakwahists in their agendas, and were known as Salafis in Indonesia (referring to the pious ancestors of early Islam, the Salaf al-Salih). They had a degree of social recognition for their command of Islam and Arabic, and for their demonstrated commitment to the struggle of Islam. Many set up schools that attracted poor students of abangan background and promoted more orthodox Islamic ideas among them. There were many of these in the Yogyakarta area, most of whose leaders were loyal to Ja'far Umar Thalib (the founder of Laskar Jihad, about which more below). In the wake of the 11 September 2001 al-Qaeda attacks in the United States, however, these schools came under more active police and intelligence surveillance and student numbers fell. Noorhaidi Hasan believes that these Salafi schools declined in appeal thereafter.137

The nation-wide system of State Islamic Universities (UIN), State Institutes for Islamic Studies (IAIN) and State Colleges of Islamic Studies (STAIN) has continued to play a major role. The leading institutions — the UINs in Yogyakarta and Jakarta — have been particularly notable for the promotion of high intellectual standards and commitment to a democratic and pluralistic Indonesia. As noted above, they promote what has been described as 'enlightened' or 'liberal' Islam.138 It is not only the top levels of this structure that operate in this way. For example, the small STAIN in Kediri grew from a mere 408 students in 2000–1 to 2,622 in 2009–10.139 In 2005 it held a seminar to which national-level figures (both Muslim and Christian) were invited on the theme of 'religion as social criticism: an effort to defend the weak and oppressed'.140 There are, however, some question marks over recent developments at the UINs. In order to make the transition from an ‘institute’ as an IAIN to a ‘university’ as a UIN it is necessary for faculties such as medicine, engineering and exact sciences to be added. As we will see below when we consider minority activist groups, it is just among students with such educational backgrounds that illiberal ideologies tend to

138 ‘Enlightened’ and ‘liberal’ are the terms used by, among others, Assyaukanie in Islam and the secular state, pp. 143–6.
139 http://www.stainkediri.ac.id/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=30&Itemid=29
find support. Illiberal groups themselves tend to denounce the UIN-IAIN-STAIN system as a source of corrupting liberal and secular influences, and researchers from this system sometimes find it difficult to gain access to Revivalist groups. In 2000, members of FPI's Yogyakarta branch in turbans and waving swords and machetes physically attacked the offices of student newspapers at the local IAIN, destroying computers and other equipment, obliging students there to admit that they were pro-Communist or be beaten up, and wounding two.

The increasing presence of Islam in education was seen even in the Taman Siswa schools, which historically sought to combine modern Western-style education with Javanese high culture. Taman Siswa was in effect a sort of Javanist priyayi answer to Muhammadiyah's educational initiatives before World War II. From the 1990s, the leadership of Taman Siswa began to show more sympathy to Islamic sentiments. Prof. Ki Supriyoko — himself from a Yogyakarta Muhammadiyah family and with no Taman Siswa background — was one of the leaders and eventually became head of the organisation until ill health required him to step down in 2007. He reported that some Taman Siswa people were unhappy when he built a mosque within a Taman Siswa school. After he stepped down, some in the leadership who supported his seemingly more Islamic agenda lost their positions and the issue evidently remains controversial within Taman Siswa circles. Ki Supriyoko himself established a pesantren that uses the national curriculum, but students must be able to read the Qur’an and memorise the 40 short suras.

Javanese society is religiously plural, if overwhelmingly Muslim — with about 2.9 per cent of the population of Yogyakarta and Central and East Java being Christian. Christian organisations have been particularly prominent as providers of education, particularly in larger towns and cities, where also the Christian percentage of the population is much higher, as we have seen.

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141 See Masdar Hilmy's comments in his *Islamism and democracy*, p. 12; and Kholil Ridwan's and others' denunciations of IAIN and those who go from there to do higher degrees in Western universities in *Sabili* cyber-news, 11 May 2003.
143 Discussion with Prof. Ki Supriyoko, pesantren 'Insan Cendekia', Donokerto, Sleman, Yogyakarta, 22 March 2008.
144 Leo Suryadinata, Evi Nurvidya Arifin and Aris Ananta, *Indonesia’s population: Ethnicity and religion in a changing political landscape* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003), pp. 109, 115, give a 2000 total for these three areas of 66,553,512 Muslims and 1,918,583 Christians.
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This Christian presence in education has produced considerable disquiet among Muslims. Indeed, part of the original inspiration for the creation of Muhammadiyah in 1912 was to counter Christian influence in education. Such a spirit of competition has continued in the midst of more intensive Islamisation. A 2010 survey of about 500 teachers of Islam in state and private schools in Java revealed significant levels of opposition to having a non-Muslim as school head (69 per cent of respondents) and even to having non-Muslim teachers at their schools (34 per cent). Fully 87 per cent told their pupils not to study other religions and 75 per cent urged their Muslim students to encourage non-Muslim teachers to convert to Islam.

The attendance of Muslim pupils at Christian-affiliated schools became a cause célèbre in Yogyakarta. In 2001 banners and posters demanded that Muslim parents withdraw their children from such schools. A large banner across one of Yogyakarta’s main roads proclaimed, ‘It is forbidden (haram) for the Islamic ummah to study at schools of Protestant and Catholic foundations’. This statement was a reiteration of an MUI fatwa of 1994 that ruled, ‘It is forbidden in law to send Muslim children to Protestant or Catholic schools’. Another banner read, ‘Do not sacrifice your children’s faith just because you choose the wrong school’. In the wake of these banners, the Yogyakarta government and police announced a prohibition on provocative banners that touched on religious or similar matters. In 2003 Din Syamsuddin, as Secretary General of MUI, declared that 1300 Muslim students had been converted to Christianity in Yogyakarta because they were educated in Catholic schools — an inflammatory claim for which he could cite no evidence.

H. Sunardi Sahuri — Yogyakarta native, supermarket entrepreneur, popular preacher and activist, and prominent in PKS — was among those most concerned about the threat of Muslim children being converted by

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145 JktP online, 9 Dec. 2010. The survey was conducted by the Centre for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) of UIN Jakarta; 45 per cent of those surveyed identified themselves as followers of NU and 24 per cent said that they followed Muhammadiyah.
attending Christian schools. He became a leader in a campaign to stop Muslims sending their children to such schools and claimed that success had been achieved. Over the period c. 2003–8, he said, many more Islamic schools had been created in Yogyakarta, Christian schools had lost students and some had even had to close.

Yet the education story in Yogyakarta was in fact more complex than Sunardi Sahuri suggested. There was certainly a decline in Muslim students at Christian schools, but specifically religious issues seem to explain little of that. The number of Muslim students in Christian (Protestant and Catholic) primary schools in the city of Yogyakarta declined by nearly 12 per cent over 2001–7, and two Christian primary schools that had previously had a majority of Muslim students actually closed. At junior high level, the number of Muslim students in Christian schools was halved over this period, from 1,098 in 2001 to 562 in 2007. At high school level, however, the decline was of the insignificant order of 3 per cent. Some of these changes are more likely to be explained by the decline in student numbers generally as a result of a falling birth rate, given that dozens of state primary schools had to be closed over the same period. At high school level, whereas Christian schools saw a decline in their total enrolments of around 3 per cent, other private schools in Yogyakarta faced a decline of over 20 per cent. Among private providers, Muhammadiyah remained dominant. Its junior high school enrolments grew by 15 per cent over 2001–7, while its high school enrolments fell by 23 per cent. During that time, the total number of all high school students in Yogyakarta fell by 25 per cent. Meanwhile, Integrated Islamic Schools were growing in Yogyakarta and, for the reasons set out above, were attractive to many parents, but statistics are not available to measure their impact in detail. Given the complexity of changing enrolment figures and the fact that the percentage of Muslim pupils in Christian schools in the city of Yogyakarta was never more than about 5 per cent of the total number of Muslim pupils in the city, the fear that Christian schools were a powerful agent of conversion seems to have been exaggerated. In fact, the whole fear of large-scale conversions to Christianity in Yogyakarta was somewhat exaggerated, as we shall see in Chapter 12.

The susceptibility of the young to religious persuasion made education at all levels a priority for Islamisers. Hence the spread of kindergartens that

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150 The following discussion of enrolments rests entirely on research done by Arif Maftuhin and emailed to me on 5 January 2009.
teach four- to six-year-olds to read the Qur’an (*Taman Kanak-kanak al-Qu’ran*). Religious education was proposed not only for those of an age to attend school, but also for infants just capable of communication. A senior official of the Yogyakarta government, who was also a Professor at the Universitas Islam Indonesia, observed when visiting an Islamic play group that it was extremely important to plant faith in the young from the earliest age. ‘Children between the ages of 0 and 4 are like a white page with no mark on it,’ he observed, who must be given ‘a foundation and basis which is strong for shaping human character so as to become pious persons.’

151 KR, 7 May 2008. This was Prof. H. Dahlan Thaib.