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Democracy Taught: The State Islamic University of Jakarta and its Civic Education Course during *Reformasi* (1998–2004)

Amanda tho Seeth

Abstract

This article presents a qualitative content analysis of the instruction material used by the State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta for its mandatory civic education course, which was introduced in the year 2000/2001 in collaboration with US-based The Asia Foundation. Kicked off during the Indonesian democratisation process, the so-called *Reformasi* (1998–2004), the course aimed at socialising Muslim students into the values and norms of democracy, human and civil rights, and critical thinking. By focusing on the content of the chapter on “Democracy” in the course’s original and revised textbook, it is shown that the Islamic academics involved in the creation of the course acted as cosmopolitan brokers between Islamic, Indonesian and Western culture, but in the course of time shifted to promote democracy from an increasingly Islamic and Indonesian perspective, thereby engaging in a practice of localisation. However, the textbooks also featured several biases, inconsistencies and contradictions that mitigated their pedagogic quality and that are critically assessed in this article. Despite these shortcomings, it is argued that due to the course’s overall strong pro-democratic commitment and its strategic institutionalisation on campus, the State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, with its academic milieu, must be understood as a pro-democratic actor whose political agency during as well as after *Reformasi* deserves more scholarly attention.

Keywords: Indonesia, democratisation, Islamic universities, civic education, localisation

Introduction

Against the backdrop of the “religious turn” that started to gain ground in the humanities and social sciences from the 1980s onwards, scholars of political science are increasingly paying attention to the role played by religious actors

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in democratisation processes. Illustrating the premise that religion is Janus-faced, religious actors – defined as “any individual or collectivity, local or transnational, who acts coherently and consistently to influence politics in the name of religion” (Philpott 2007: 506) – take up multifaceted roles in democratisation processes (Künkler / Leininger 2009). They can support or hamper the introduction of democracy,¹ and because of impeding structural factors may also opt to abstain from clearly positioning themselves politically (tho Seeth 2020). In societies where religion plays an important role in shaping personal and group identities, attitudes and behaviour, religious actors can take crucial leading positions during a democratic transition² and publicly mobilise faithful followers for or against democracy, mostly legitimising their political position from within theological interpretation and argumentation. While existing research has looked at religious actors such as individual religious politicians, religious political parties, individual religious leaders, religious intellectuals, religious civil society leaders and religious organisations, which include churches, mosques, temples, foundations and a wide range of religious civil society organisations,³ the following sets out to introduce Islamic universities as an actor category in democratisation processes.

A closer look at the political agency of Islamic universities during times of political liberalisation is important for several reasons. From a historical perspective, Islamic scholars based at so-called mosque-universities for centuries constituted *the* authoritative source for questions concerning religious life, but also for advising on politics, the economy and a wide range of other public affairs. In the contemporary era, state Islamic universities such as Egypt’s al-Azhar, Tunis’s al-Zaytuna, Fès’s al-Qarawiyyin or Riyadh’s Imam Muhammad bin Saud form part of their respective countries’ official religious authority and elite, some of them even with outreach beyond national borders, impacting on the wider global Muslim community (Bano / Sakurai 2015). These Islamic universities represent what is perceived as the authoritative national interpretation of Islam, or orthodoxy; they set the standards, frames and limits for Islamic epistemologies, norms, values and knowledge production, many of them also producing officially acknowledged Islamic legal advice. By producing and disseminating specific theological and political thought patterns, they engage in religious and political legitimisation and mobilisation, reinforcing ongoing projects of nation-building.

1 See Cheng / Brown 2006, Philpott 2007, Künkler / Leininger 2009, Toft et al. 2011.

2 Democratisation processes are made up of three distinct sequences: the opening phase, the transition and the consolidation (O’Donnell et al. 1986, O’Donnell / Schmitter 1986). The transition is to be understood as a bridge that spans from the collapse of the authoritarian system to the realisation of the first free and fair legislative and/or presidential election, whose outcome then starts off the consolidated democratic era. The transition is a crucial sequence, as during its course the political and legal system is rebuilt, political parties, civil society groups and the media reorganise and format themselves, and new actors emerge in the public political arena. However, de-democratisation and backsliding into authoritarianism can occur at any time (Linz / Stepan 1996, Tilly 2007).

3 See Fuchs / Garling 2011: 129, Fox 2013: 69, Künkler / Leininger 2013: 26–28.

Although in the modern era of nation-states the former religious and political monopolistic authority of Islamic universities and their academic milieu have become undermined by the creation of new state entities tasked with shaping the religion-state nexus – ministries of religious affairs, national clerical bodies and official Islamic legal courts – they continue to exert significant influence on the religious, political and wider social sphere. It is not only that the future personnel of said official religious state entities are largely trained at Islamic universities and are thus shaped by them, but generally, through their educational and elite-producing function, these universities interact with great masses of the nation's future leading figures. In particular, they constitute an Islamic physical and social space for the educated middle class, which democratisation theory considers to be a decisive driving factor in democratisation processes. Islamic universities form a crucial social environment of opinion-making and empowerment, and they hold a rich potential for religious and political socialisation of the pious middle class, with possible spill-over effects beyond the campus walls.

While Islamic universities and their Islamic academic milieu are first and foremost social microcosms with concrete rules, procedures, a distinct atmosphere and considerable impact on students' behaviour and ethical outlook, they are simultaneously highly interrelated with and interdependent on the greater national and international setting. Against the backdrop of their authoritative role, their situatedness in several social spheres and their potential for legitimisation and mobilisation, their agency in democratisation processes can be of key relevance for the greater social acceptance of democracy in Muslim contexts. In particular, they can be a crucial counterbalance to Islamist actors who, based on their scriptural understanding of Islam, reject a democratic system and its values. For the Indonesian context, Mirjam Künkler has convincingly shown that Islamic intellectuals played a crucial role as a pro-democratic force during the country's democratisation process (Künkler 2011, 2013). However, her insightful analyses do not specifically focus on university-based Islamic intellectuals but discuss broader manifestations of Indonesian Islamic intellectualism that also include, for instance, the political thoughts of the leaders of Islamic civil mass organisations.

In contrast, the following focuses on the Islamic academic sphere and explores the agency of Indonesia's largest Islamic academic facility during the Indonesian democratic transition, known as the *Reformasi* (May 1998 to October 2004)⁴: the Institut Agama Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta (State Islamic Institute Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, IAIN Jakarta), which in the year 2002 was transformed into a full-fledged university, the Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta (State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, UIN

4 The Indonesian democratic transition spanned from 21 May 1998 (the resignation of dictator Suharto) to 20 October 2004 (the inauguration of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono as the country's first directly elected president).

Jakarta). The article seeks to understand whether after the collapse of the New Order regime in 1998, this Islamic academic entity supported or rejected the introduction of democracy or remained indifferent by limiting itself to non-political academic affairs in its ivory tower – and thus whether it can be understood as a pro-democratic actor. As I have suggested elsewhere (tho Seeth 2020), the pro-democracy engagement of Islamic universities in democratisation processes can be operationalised through three indicators, namely a discursive indicator,⁵ an institutional indicator⁶ and a mobilising indicator.⁷ I have argued that due to the high presence of all three indicators during the transition at IAIN/UIN Jakarta, this campus manifested itself as a strong pro-democratic actor. In the current article I focus on the second indicator and therefore discuss the teaching content of the obligatory civic education course, which was introduced for each IAIN Jakarta first-semester student in the year 2001 and which has remained on the curriculum until today. While the significance of the course's establishment has been pointed out in another work (Jackson / Bahrissalim 2007), so far no in-depth analysis of the teaching material has been undertaken.

This constitutes a research gap, as the textbook that was developed and revised during *Reformasi* has remained – after some additional revisions were undertaken during the period of consolidated democracy – the course's core source of instruction and thus continues to impact on the teaching of democracy to the Muslim studentship. I fill this gap by presenting a qualitative content analysis of the two textbook editions (the original from 2000 and the revised edition of 2003) that were in use on campus during the transition, with a particular focus on some aspects of the chapter “Democracy”, as well as by discussing additional instruction material. The analysis is based on a close reading and structuring of the teaching material and its content. My elaborations are accompanied by citations that I have translated myself from the Indonesian original. In 2017, I also conducted interviews in Jakarta with three key informants, two of which had been directly involved in the implementation of the course.⁸

5 University's input to public discourse as measured by university rector's media writings: Did the university rector publicly address topics of relevance to the transition process? Did he promote democracy?

6 University's input to student socialisation as measured by teaching material used on campus: Did the university curriculum include democracy education? Did it promote democracy?

7 University's input to political decision-makers as measured by research reports published by university: Did the university research projects address topics of relevance to the transition process? Did the research results aim to advise the government on transition-relevant problem-solving, especially for conflict resolution, and on how to support democratisation? Did the university researchers thus materialise as an epistemic community?

8 Interviews were conducted in Jakarta with Dr. Bahrissalim (2 May 2017), Dr. Ismatu Ropi (2 May 2017), and Dr. Achmad Ubaidillah (5 May 2017). Dr. Bahrissalim, head of Madrasah Pembangunan (Developmental Islamic School) at UIN Jakarta, was involved in the implementation of the civic education course with The Asia Foundation at IAIN/UIN Jakarta from the year 2000 onwards. Dr. Ismatu Ropi, research director at Pusat Pengetahuan Islam dan Masyarakat (Center for the Study of Islam and Society, PPIM) at UIN Jakarta, is an expert on research policies. Dr. Achmad Ubaidillah, lecturer in social sciences at UIN Jakarta, was involved in the writing of the textbooks for the civic education course at IAIN/UIN Jakarta from the year 2000 onwards.

The overall aim is to understand how democracy was portrayed and legitimised in the course and whether a specific Islamic or Indonesian cultural perspective on democracy was conveyed to the pious Muslim studentship. This is of particular importance because the course was introduced as a collaborative project by the US-based The Asia Foundation and must therefore to some extent be understood as a product of Western democracy promotion. By comparing the two textbook editions, however, I come to the conclusion that while basic historical key developments and principles of Western democracy initially featured strongly, over the time of its implementation and refinement the course adopted an increasingly Islamic and Indonesian perspective on democracy in order to be better accessible to its Indonesian Muslim target group. These findings support the characteristic of Indonesian Islamic higher education institutes and their academic staff, much discussed in the literature, as competent cosmopolitan brokers between different cultures.⁹ However, as I argue, the course's turn towards a more Islamic and Indonesian perspective indicates a practice of a localisation of the teaching on democracy, i.e. its adaptation to specific local requirements.

During *Reformasi*, most leading Islamic academics in Indonesia were able to quickly adapt to and participate in the democratising political environment, facilitated by the knowledge of and lived experience in democratic systems they had gained through extensive academic exchanges with democratic countries (e.g. Canada, USA, Netherlands) under the Suharto regime. The decades of sending Islamic academics to democratic countries had long-term effects, as it equipped them with theoretical knowledge of democratic principles and resulted in a gradual inner emancipation from the repressive New Order system and its doctrines. It has been observed that in the 1980s and 1990s the Muslim intelligentsia began “to dominate socio-political discourse in the Indonesian public sphere” (Latif 2008: 421), and seven years before the collapse of authoritarianism it was found that “Muslim intellectuals speak continually about the value of democracy to Islam and Indonesia” (Federspiel 1991: 245). While developing pro-democratic sympathies, Islamic academics did not lose sight of their Islamic heritage and continued to emphasise the centrality of the archipelago's local cultures and a distinctive *Keindonesiaan* (“Indonesian-ness”) for national identity politics. Against this backdrop, the civic education course presents further ample evidence of the particular skill of the Islamic higher education sector and its academic milieu in being able to draw on culturally different epistemic sources and perspectives and to blend them into a coherent, yet culturally hybrid, religious-political narrative. For the purpose of democratising Indonesia, the IAIN/UIN Jakarta campus activated this well-

⁹ See Kersten 2011, Lukens-Bull 2013, Allès / tho Seeth forthcoming, tho Seeth forthcoming a and tho Seeth forthcoming b.

institutionalised competence, which successfully underscored its agency as a pro-democratic actor throughout the democratisation process.

A critical reading of the textbooks

On another analytical level, this article critically engages with the two textbooks' contents and their underlying message on democracy as well as the narrative they presented on Indonesian political history. This is a crucial endeavour, firstly due to the obvious impact of the neoliberal American The Asia Foundation on the civic education course, and secondly due to the highly symbolically structured and consensual characteristic of Indonesian political culture, which leaves little room for discursive dissent and political alternatives (Duile / Bens 2017). The dominant mainstream political discourse in Indonesia is characterised by the avoidance of conflict and the imposition of a broad consensus on political issues, which, amongst others, circulates around the untouchable, overarching centrality of the *Pancasila*¹⁰ and the exclusion of leftist ideas (Duile / Bens 2017; see also tho Seeth forthcoming a). While the textbooks showcased a clear commitment to democracy, claimed ideological neutrality and to a great extent succeeded in objectively introducing the students to quite a wide range of Islamic and political perspectives, on the other hand, in some text passages inconsistencies and contradictions prevailed. The two textbooks at times stressed and exaggerated certain issues, while ignoring others. Hence, it is equally important to notice what is not taught in the textbooks, and I will discuss this matter throughout the article.

In order to guide the reader of this article into a critical reading of the textbooks, it is necessary to anticipate some key findings here. While the textbooks mostly assessed the authoritarian past and the dominance of the military very critically, they were silent about the involvement of the military and the Islamic civil mass organisation Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in the anti-communist mass killings of 1965. This indeed indicates a discursive reproduction of a deeply institutionalised taboo in Indonesian public political debate. On the other hand, against the backdrop that leftist politics is a delicate issue in Indonesia, the revised edition was quite progressive in that it indexed keywords such as “Karl Marx”, “Marxism” and “Communist Party of Indonesia” (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI).¹¹ However, in the respective text passages, elaborations on these former politically taboo issues remained vague, particularly when they were mentioned in the concrete Indonesian national context. As will be shown, the

10 *Pancasila* (“the five principles”) is the official Indonesian state ideology. It comprises 1) the belief in the One and Only God, 2) a just and civilised society, 3) a unified Indonesia, 4) democracy, and 5) social justice.

11 “Karl Marx” (pp. 60, 244, 245); “*Marxisme*” (pp. 26, 27, 28); “*Komunisme*” (p. 60); “*Komunis*” (pp. 104, 207, 208); “Partai Komunis Indonesia” (pp. 27, 207, 208); PKI (p. 132).

original edition already neutrally mentioned Karl Marx and his critical stance towards religion as a social construction, thereby broaching a taboo in a state that is inherently based on the idea of the existence of a monotheistic God.

Thus, the textbooks tended to treat politics paradoxically. Despite the course's enthusiastic aspiration to teach free thinking, it at times conveyed to the students a representation of Indonesian political history and an idea of democracy that was limited and selective, and at times even contradictory in its own argumentation. One example of this is that the Suharto regime was repeatedly called a "Pancasila democracy" – a questionable self-designation of the regime. The textbooks' use of the term "democracy" in such a flexible way is problematic as it then renders it an "empty signifier" (Laclau 2005) – a term that has no real content, that is consciously left open and inconcrete, and that is imagined and constructed according to situation and need.

On the civic education course

As in other Muslim-majority nations,¹² the Indonesian democratisation process was marked by a public renegotiation of the relationship between Islam and the state. The country witnessed a mushrooming of anti-democracy Islamist organisations, a deep polarisation of society by an Islamist-secular cleavage and numerous violent clashes between followers of different faiths and political ideas. Groups such as Front Pembela Islam (Defenders of Islam Front, FPI), Laskar Jihad (Jihad Army, LJ), Jemaah Islamiyah (Islamic Congregation, JI) and Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (Indonesian Party of Liberation, HTI) emerged, seeking to mobilise society for Islamist ideologies by peaceful or even violent means. The diversity within this Islamist camp was high, as can be seen by the different political goals they aimed at: while, for instance, the FPI sought to establish a "Unitary State of Indonesia under sharia law" (Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia bersyariah, NKRI bersyariah), HTI aimed at restoring an Islamic caliphate. In sum, during the Indonesian transition, the establishment of democracy and the public discourse about the compatibility of Islam and democracy were highly contested, and the threat of a backsliding to authoritarian structures or to nation-wide destabilisation and anarchy dominated the political climate.

The fact that democracy was successfully consolidated was to a great extent due to the ambitious engagement of several Islamic actor groups that upheld a pro-democracy discourse in the public sphere. This countermovement against Islamist voices was to a significant part rooted in Islamic civil society organisations such as NU, Muhammadiyah and Paramadina and their charismatic

12 Egypt (2011–2013, failed transition) and Tunisia (2011–2014, successful transition) are two recent examples.

leaders who publicly argued from within Islamic theological interpretation in favour of democracy. Most notably, NU leader (1984–1999) Abdurrahman Wahid served as President from 1999 to 2001 and the Islamic political parties affiliated with NU (Partai Kebangkitan Nasional, National Awakening Party, PKB) and Muhammadiyah (Partai Amanat Nasional, National Mandate Party, PAN) emerged as key pro-democratic forces.

From early on in the democratisation process, transition-relevant and pro-democratic debate also entered IAIN Jakarta. By actively shaping and contributing to a pro-democratic discourse, the campus manifested itself as an ardent pro-democratic actor. Individual Islamic academics from diverse Islamic as well as non-religious disciplines publicly commented on the positive compatibility of Islam and democracy. A prime example of this phenomenon of the politically engaged scholar and public Islamic intellectual was IAIN/UIN Jakarta rector Azyumardi Azra, who through his many media writings and public television appearances discursively supported and called for a pro-democratic Islam, thus supporting Indonesia's route towards democracy (tho Seeth forthcoming a). Moreover, the campus research projects were geared towards inquiries on transition-relevant topics, and research findings served to advise the government on how to resolve urgent (Islamist) challenges to the smooth implementation of democracy (tho Seeth 2020).

IAIN Jakarta's obvious competence in democracy promotion prompted international development agencies such as The Asia Foundation to offer support and collaboration. The foundation suggested an obligatory civic education course for every first-semester student as an effective tool for democratic socialisation. Hence, a course called *Pendidikan Kewargaan* (civic education) was kicked off as a pilot project in 2000 and replaced the *Kewiraan* and *Pancasila* courses that had tried to align generations of students to the New Order regime ideology.¹³ The Asia Foundation provided funding and counselling for the implementation of the course as part of its wider development programme "Islam and Civil Society", which it had been carrying out in Indonesia since 1997. The course's aim was defined as teaching "values of democracy, human rights, tolerance and civil society. The teaching methodology changed from doctrinaire to one that is more participatory" (Indonesian Center for Civic Education 2006: 4–5). According to interview partners who were involved in the establishment of the course, the introduction of pro-democratic teaching content and a participatory teaching methodology were key objectives from the start.¹⁴ The course intended to break with the limited political education and the *Pancasila* indoctrination that had prevailed in classrooms throughout the New Order era. It

13 These courses were dropped in 1999. The *Kewiraan* ("heroism"/"manliness") course taught various aspects of patriotism and military doctrines, in particular the concept of *dwi-fungsi*, i.e. the dual function the military held within the Suharto regime in security issues as well as in socio-political affairs. The *Pancasila* course taught the five principles of the state ideology in an indoctrinating manner.

14 Interview with Bahrisalim, 2 May 2017 in Jakarta and with Achmad Ubaidillah, 5 May 2017 in Jakarta.

sought to offer students the possibility to intellectually compare different political ideologies, which also included previous political taboos such as Marxism.¹⁵ While the course itself was of egalitarian character, its implementation was, due to the supervision of The Asia Foundation, assessed as “top-down”.¹⁶

The agency and interests of The Asia Foundation deserve critical reflection, as the organisation was founded in the context of the Cold War in 1954 by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (Gould Ashizawa 2006: 116–117; Klein 2017). With its headquarters in San Francisco, it claims to be devoted to the promotion of democracy, the rule of law and market-based development in post-war Asia, and it “advances US interests in the Asia-Pacific region” (US Department of State, n.d.: 819). Seen in this light, The Asia Foundation was put in place as a counterforce against communism in Asia, and until today it follows a neoliberal political and economic agenda in the region. This ideological orientation seems to have had consequences for the way democracy and politics were portrayed in the civic education textbooks. This particularly concerns the marginalised treatment of the issue of social and economic justice in political and economic theory and in the concrete Indonesian context precisely.¹⁷

In mid-2000, The Asia Foundation established the Indonesian Center for Civic Education (ICCE) on the IAIN Jakarta campus and tasked it with managing the civic education course. In the same year, the textbook *Pendidikan Kewargaan: Demokrasi, HAM & Masyarakat Madani (Civic Education: Democracy, Human Rights & Civil Society)*¹⁸ was published by IAIN Jakarta Press with funding and content advising by The Asia Foundation. In a preface, the book’s aim was defined by IAIN Jakarta professor of pedagogy Dede Rosyada (p. i):

This book can transmit ideas on the rights and duties students have as an integral part of the nation and within the realisation of the transition process towards democracy. [...] This study program is an educational program based on the wish to increase the students’ critical ability as an agent of social change and as an agent of social control towards the realisation of democracy and the strengthening of human rights on the local as well as on the international level.

Another preface was written by IAIN Jakarta rector Azyumardi Azra, in which he stated that through the civic education course IAIN Jakarta “tries to partici-

15 Interview with Ismatu Ropi, 2 May 2017 in Jakarta.

16 Interview with Bahrissalim, 2 May 2017 in Jakarta.

17 While in the original textbook edition the democracy chapter superficially discussed on one page the idea of the welfare state (Salim et al. 2000: 174–175), the revised edition replaced the term “welfare state” with “social democracy” (*demokrasi sosial*) and reduced its treatment to one sentence, explaining that this form of democracy aims at achieving social justice (*keadilan sosial*) (Rosyada et al. 2003: 121).

18 The book was edited by Salim / Ubaidillah / Rozak / Sayuti (2000). If not otherwise stated, page numbers in parentheses throughout the text refer to this textbook. When followed by a * the reference refers to the revised version of the textbook, which was published in 2003 by Rosyada / Ubaidillah / Rozak / Sayuti / Salim.

pate in building up a democratic political culture and to socialise for democratic norms in the midst of society by an academic and scientific approach” (p: vi).

After an intensive training of IAIN Jakarta lecturers, who were given incentives for their participation,¹⁹ the course was launched as a pilot project from September to December 2000 at the faculties of Islamic Law, Islamic Theology, Islamic Civilisation and Islamic Education. The heads of the project understood the ten participating student groups as “a laboratory for democracy”.²⁰ The overall success of the pilot project resulted in the course’s obligatory inclusion into each first-semester curriculum in early 2001 and its adoption by all IAINs and Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri (State Islamic Higher School, STAIN) in the country from September 2001 onwards. In the academic year 2002–2003, the course was even taken up by several private Islamic universities and colleges, for instance by the Muhammadiyah University in Yogyakarta (Jackson / Bahrissalim 2007: 47).

After IAIN Jakarta’s conversion into a full-fledged university in 2002, The Asia Foundation collaborated with the ICCE to revise the course’s teaching material and the applied teaching methodology, which resulted in the publication of a revised textbook in 2003. The revision of the textbook indicates that the civic education course was from the beginning seen not as a fixed study programme but as a flexible, adaptive learning experiment in the making. This flexible approach to the course implied that the Indonesian textbook authors and course instructors involved had to engage in critically rethinking the teaching content and methodology after having tested them in class. The flexible approach also shows that – due to the financial support of The Asia Foundation – enough resources were available to invest into the course over a longer period of time, allowing for mistakes, experimenting and costly redirections, in order to keep the campus active as an effective pro-democratic actor.

While the title of the textbook remained nearly the same – *Pendidikan Kewargaan: Demokrasi, Hak Asasi Manusia & Masyarakat Madani (Civic Education: Democracy, Human Rights & Civil Society)* – the content underwent significant changes.²¹ Compared to the original edition, the layout, structure and writing style of the revised textbook became clearer in order to make it more easily accessible to the Indonesian Muslim student readers. While the original edition tended to be intellectually overloaded, the content of the revised edition was reduced and tailored towards the Indonesian Islamic context. For

19 Interview with Bahrissalim, 2 May 2017 in Jakarta.

20 Interview with Bahrissalim, 2 May 2017 in Jakarta.

21 After the transitory period, this revised edition was again slightly revised several times and is still in use at UIN Jakarta today. In December 2004, additional teaching material for the civic education course was published in a “Supplementary Book” (Rozak et al. 2004) that was handed out to each student. This book offered for each chapter of the textbook copies of thematically relevant newspaper articles written by UIN staff or prominent national figures on up-to-date Indonesian political topics. It featured political cartoons that aimed to stimulate discussion in class.

instance, whereas the original edition predominantly made use of the foreign English term “civil society”, the revised edition mostly replaced it with the Indonesian term *masyarakat madani*, which has an Islamic connotation. Also, in the revised edition, an entire chapter was dedicated to *masyarakat madani* (*pp. 235–259), in which the concept was, however, portrayed as a simple translation of “civil society” and as deriving from Western Europe. It was stated that the term was introduced to Indonesia in 1995 by the Malaysian then-Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim (*p. 240), and there was only a superficial discussion of the term and concept, basically providing a historical overview of the idea of “civil society” in the West. This is a shortcoming, as the origin, definition, meaning and use of the term *masyarakat madani* are actually highly contested in the Muslim world.

Alatas (2010), for instance, posits that *masyarakat madani* – when used as an Islamised equivalent to “civil society” – is a utopian vision and even constitutes a misconception and a misunderstanding of the term. This is because *masyarakat madani* originally refers to a concept of society as a whole that is inclusive of the state. By drawing on works of Nurcholish Madjid, Dawam Rahardjo and Masykuri Abdillah, Alatas shows that in Indonesia the term is used with a plurality of conceptual twists and turns that are not always in line with one another. Seen from this point, the revised textbook’s unreflecting use of the term *masyarakat madani* as a simple translation of “civil society” presents yet another inconcrete “signifier” (Laclau 2005) that leaves much space for individual imagination and construction. The simplified and flattened use of the term *masyarakat madani* is symptomatic of the way the textbooks at times treated social and political concepts, ignoring the plurality of opinions and interpretations and the existence of conflicting debates on certain issues. In many other instances, however, quite a variety of opposing opinions on and multifaceted interpretations of theoretical concepts were discussed by the textbooks.

In some text passages, the original edition featured a more outspoken tone that was tamed in the revised edition. The revised edition was also updated with themes whose importance for the country’s democratisation became clear only over the course of the transition. An example of this is the inclusion of the chapter “Regional Autonomy”, which provided a theoretical background for discussion on the independence movements in Aceh and West Papua. The chapter “Good Governance” was included to guide debate in class on the heavy extent of corruption and money politics that accompanied the democratic transition. Another novelty in the revised edition was the extended appendix, which allowed the students to autonomously consult an array of key legal documents.

Despite the many changes introduced, certain continuities remained. In many instances, both textbooks cautiously tried to avoid presenting any singular truths. The textbooks mostly sought to objectively cover a wide range of opinions and

approaches – they often did so in a superficial manner – and to always refer to their sources. This was mostly done by balanced phrase constructions such as “according to author xy”. Furthermore, both textbooks aimed to present the standpoints of Western and Indonesian authors and Islamic scholars with relatively equal frequency. However, there were tendencies: while the original edition tended to more often refer to Western authors, the revised edition more often mentioned Islamic scholars. Generally, the revised edition was much more tailored to explicitly address the Indonesian Muslim students; it tended to argue more from an Islamic viewpoint and it transmitted its democratic message through an Islamic, Indonesian and *Pancasila*-ist perspective.

The promotion of a democratic Indonesian civil society was key in the revised edition. Azyumardi Azra’s preface specified one of the main goals of the course: “The growth and development of a civic culture can be named as one of the important goals of the civic education course” (*p. xi). On the role of UIN Jakarta within the democratisation process he stated (*p. xiv):

The State Islamic University (UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta as part of the national education system has already begun to accelerate the application of a new educational paradigm. Above all, it supports the development of democracy education through the teaching of the civic education course. [...] Against this backdrop, it is self-evident that I give my highest appreciation for the serious efforts undertaken by the Indonesian Center for Civic Education (ICCE) at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta for trying to peacefully contribute to the Indonesian transition on its way to a civilised democracy.

The revised textbook was from September 2004 onwards, accompanied by a “Manual for Lecturers”. This manual featured detailed explanations on innovative teaching and learning techniques, such as group discussions, role playing, quizzes, brainstorming, snowballing, mapping or poster sessions. The advantages and disadvantages of different seating arrangements, such as horseshoe, circle, small-group tables and large conference tables, were elaborated upon. The manual aimed to break with the confrontational teaching style and harsh teacher-student hierarchy that had shaped learning processes throughout authoritarianism, and instead it aimed to introduce an egalitarian, participatory pedagogy. The learning atmosphere in the civic education course was defined as “interactive, empirical, contextual, humanist, and democratic [...] it must be gender-sensitive and must put forward the principle of justice”.²² The overall concept of the course was “Everyone is a Teacher Here”.²³ This concept was explained as:

The lecturer is not everything. The lecturer is not the smartest one in class. The lecturer is not the one who knows most, but maybe the one who just knows more in the beginning. Thus, the source of knowledge does not come from the lecturer, but from all who are involved in the activity of learning. Each person is a teacher, each one is allowed to

22 [...] situasi pembelajaran yang interaktif, empiris, kontekstual, humanis, dan demokratis. [...] harus sensitive gender dan mengedepankan prinsip keadilan (Rosyada et al. 2004: 5).

23 Rosyada et al. 2004: 118, English expression in original.

have an own opinion and to share knowledge. Students will learn from the lecturer, and the lecturer will also learn from students, and students are also allowed to learn from all other students.²⁴

The manual also clarified the teaching goals of the course. It was expected that after having taken the course, students should be “democratic agents within society so that society will be able to internalise a democratic, tolerant and open attitude and will not violate human rights”.²⁵ Furthermore, by the end of the course, students should be able to understand the Indonesian constitution and the function and elements of a state. They should be able to compare different political ideologies, explain the system of a democratic government, the rights and duties of citizens, the importance of civil society, a diversity of theories on the relationship between state and religion and on the concept of the human rights in religious and cultural contexts. It was hoped for that after completion of the course the students would value pluralism within the nation.²⁶

Unfortunately, the course could not fully meet its goals. In 2006, the Indonesian Center for Civic Education conducted an evaluation study on the course and found that while in the short term the course had a strong impact on the positive perception among the Muslim students of democracy, in the medium and long term, the impact was only moderate. According to the evaluation study, the course’s teachings competed for students’ attention with other sources of political and religious information such as the media or religious teachings outside the campus, so that in the long run, the civic education course lost impact (Indonesian Center for Civic Education 2006). Another point raised in the evaluation study was the course’s lack of engagement with several central taboos within Indonesian society and politics:

[...] the Asia Foundation may need to think hardly about how the civic education curriculum should deal with delicate matters such as the human right for ex PKI members and detainees and for the Ahmadiyah followers and the separation of state with religion. [...] On those issues, the curriculum should take an advance role. Otherwise, the curriculum is nothing much different with what and how the media have been educating the public about democracy, human right and pluralism.²⁷

24 Dosen bukan segalanya. Dosen bukan yang terpintar diantara mahasiswa. Dosen bukan orang yang paling tahu, tetapi mungkin hanya lebih tahu dulu. Dengan demikian, sumber ilmu pengetahuan bukan dari dosen tetapi dari semua yang terlibat dalam aktivitas pembelajaran. Setiap orang adalah guru yang boleh berpendapat dan membagi apa yang diketahui. Mahasiswa akan belajar dari dosen, dosen juga akan belajar dari mahasiswa dan mahasiswa juga boleh belajar dari semua mahasiswa (Rosyada et al. 2004: 118).

25 [...] agen demokrasi di tengah masyarakat sehingga masyarakat mampu bersikap demokratis, toleran, terbuka, dan antipelanggaran HAM (Rosyada et al. 2004: 116).

26 Rosyada et al. 2004: 116.

27 Indonesian Center for Civic Education 2006: 35, English expression in original.

The content of the “democracy” chapter

Original edition (2000)

Throughout the chapter²⁸ a narrative is delivered that aims to convey a familiarity between democracy, Islam and the Indonesian nation. The concept of democracy is presented as an intellectual idea that has always existed in Indonesia, but whose correct political implementation was hampered until the collapse of the Suharto regime in 1998. The chapter critically reflects on the authoritarian past by pointing out democratic deficits of the Sukarno and Suharto regimes. The textbook’s definition of a democratic system follows the discourse of classical Western democracy theory and particularly stresses the importance of the division of powers, the rule of law and an active civil society. One text passage explicitly refers to the crucial role intellectuals and academia as a whole may play as a pressure group for the support of democracy (pp. 187–188), another passage focuses on university students as a strategic component of civil society that may build up a democracy (p. 202). These statements are clear references of the Islamic academic milieu to its own crucial political function.

The chapter first elaborates on the nature of democracy and refers to an array of Indonesian authors (Masykuri Abdillah, Inu Kencana, Moh. Mahfud, Deliar Noer) and Western authors (Robert A. Dahl, Sidney Hook, Franz Magnis-Suseno, Joseph A. Schmeter, Philippe C. Schmitter) and their thoughts on democracy. The concept of “the power of the people” is repeatedly mentioned as a decisive constitutive element of a working democracy. For instance, Abraham Lincoln’s statement that a government has to be “of the people, by the people and for the people” (the Gettysburg Address from 1863) is treated at length (pp. 163–165). The section highlights that in a democratic system a government receives its legitimacy through the outcome of the people’s vote and not through divine inspiration or a supernatural power. A government must be run by the people themselves in order to secure the management of their own affairs and interests, and needs to operate for the people by fulfilling the wish and will of the majority, while at the same time protecting minority rights.

The motto “government of the people, by the people, for the people” is used as an analytical template to show that the Sukarno and Suharto regimes did not meet the definition of a democratic system. One section states that the concept of “the government of the people” underwent “an extraordinary distortion” (p. 164) in Indonesia, because during both regimes power was monopolised

28 The chapter is divided into the following sections: “What is the Nature of Democracy?”; “What is the History and Development of Democracy in the Western World?”; “What is the History and Development of Democracy in Indonesia?”; “Which Components Strengthen a Democracy?”; “How to Measure Democracy?”; “Which Democratic Models Exist?”; “What is the Relationship between Religion and Democracy?”; “What is the Prospect of Democratisation in Indonesia?”.

by the president and shared only with cronies. Suharto's New Order is particularly criticised. It is described as "repressive" (p. 164) and "authoritarian" (p. 164). In this context, a definition of authoritarianism is presented (p. 164):

An authoritarian government is one in which the execution of power and the control of power are in one hand. [...] it is a leadership that merges the three state institutions which constitute the ruling structure (legislative, executive and judiciary) into one powerful hand.²⁹

The chapter then focuses on the history and development of democracy in the West. The concept of democracy is acknowledged as being of Western origin; however, its development in the Western world is not presented as a success story. Instead, emphasis is given to identifying democracy's many shortcomings and failures throughout Western history, in particular as caused by the repressive role of the church. Also, a rather rough and factually incomplete chronological treatise on the intellectual history of democracy is presented. It starts with the genesis of democratic thought in ancient Greece and continues with the decline of democracy in the Middle Ages, the birth of the Magna Carta, the Renaissance, the impact of Martin Luther, John Locke and Montesquieu, and it ends with a conceptualisation of the rule of law and a highly curtailed account on the welfare state.³⁰ Surprisingly, other key events in the development of Western democracy – such as the American War of Independence and the French Revolution – are left out. Some text passages claim a positive impact of Islam on the progress of democracy in the West. It is argued that this impact is due to the fact that Muslim scholars preserved ancient Greek knowledge, such as Greek philosophy on democracy, which was only much later revived in the West. On the Renaissance, for instance, the textbook notes:

This movement was born in the West because of the contact with the Islamic world, which during this time had already reached the peak of a glorious scientific culture. [...] So it is that the nature of Western democracy in the Middle Ages has its roots in the Islamic scientific tradition" (p. 171).³¹

The next section of the chapter is dedicated to the history and development of democracy in Indonesia. The chapter argues that historically there is a continuity of democratic thought on Indonesian soil, yet democracy was always prevented from fully developing. Nevertheless, Indonesia is preconditioned for a democratic system and has a high potential for democratic development (p. 176):

29 Pemerintah yang otoriter adalah pemerintah yang menggabungkan pelaksanaan kekuasaan dan pengawasannya di satu tangan. [...] yang menyatukan ketiga institusi Negara (legislative, eksekutif dan yudikatif) pada struktur pemerintahan dalam satu tangan kekuasaan.

30 See footnote 17.

31 Gerakan ini lahir di Barat karena adanya kontak dengan dunia Islam yang ketika itu sedang berada pada puncak kejayaan peradaban ilmu pengetahuan [...] alam demokrasi di Barat pada abad pertengahan bersumber dari tradisi keilmuan Islam.

Therefore, for the Indonesian nation, the tradition to have a democracy was actually already started in the time of the archipelagic kingdoms. This is the reason for the great potential of democracy's growth [in Indonesia].³²

While this text passage obviously functions to convince the student readers of the quasi natural, deeply embedded existence of democracy in Indonesia, it factually contradicts scholarly debate on the history of democracy in Indonesia. Scholarly consensus traces the origin of Indonesian democratic thought back to the late colonial era when young members of the Indonesian *priyayi* (the aristocratic bureaucratic elite) were sent to study at universities in the Netherlands, where they developed anti-colonial and pro-democratic sentiments that resulted in the formation of an Indonesian national consciousness and the independence movement. The Indonesian independence movement was also nurtured by criticism of capitalism and the domestic feudal structures in the archipelago as well as by demands for economic independence from Europe and therefore bore strong leftist elements³³ – a fact that the textbook does not mention. Referring to the many persisting reservations against democracy in the Indonesian elite discourse in the late colonial era, it has been critically remarked that “from the very beginning, then, the idea of Indonesia had weak, shallow and confused democratic roots” (Elson 2008: 53). Therefore, the relationship between Indonesian society and democracy is neither as historically deep nor as clear-cut as the textbook claims.

The authors then categorise Indonesia's alleged democratic history into four time periods. The first period covers the years from 1945 to 1959, i.e. from Indonesian independence until the declaration of Sukarno's Presidential Decree No. 5 (July 1959), which ended parliamentary democracy and introduced the so-called *Demokrasi Terpimpin* (Guided Democracy). It is explained that democratic deficits had already risen in early post-colonial parliamentary Indonesia, because of the fragmentation of party politics, immature coalitions and an unconstructive opposition (p. 177). The outcome of the general election from 1955 did not lead to political stability, thus prompting Sukarno to abolish democracy altogether in 1959 (p. 177). The Guided Democracy period that followed from 1959 to 1965 is assessed as “not a real democratic system, but it was of authoritarian shape” (p. 180).³⁴ The section elaborates on how Sukarno centralised his political power by restricting party politics, strengthening the role of the military, and finally by appointing himself as president for life.

32 Dengan demikian bagi bangsa Indonesia tradisi berdemokrasi sebenarnya telah dimulai sejak zaman kerajaan Nusantara. Karena itu potensi tumbuhnya alam demokrasi sangat besar. – The term *kerajaan Nusantara* (archipelagic kingdom) refers to several regional kingdoms, including the Buddhist kingdom Srivijaya (7th–13th century), the Hindu-Buddhist kingdom Majapahit (13th–15th century) and an array of Muslim kingdoms (13th–18th century).

33 See Elson 2008: 44–58. On the history of the independence movement see also Legge 1988, Kerstiens 1966 and van Niel 1960.

34 bukan sistem demokrasi yang sebenarnya, melainkan sebagai suatu bentuk otoriterian

All this was a “distortion of democratic practice” (p. 179)³⁵ and violated the democratic principle of the separation of the legislative, the executive and the judiciary (p. 179). The end of the Sukarno regime is vaguely explained by the (alleged) insurrection of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) and the *Gerakan 30* (Movement of 30 September 1965), which, however, failed (pp. 180–181). The involvement of the military or the NU in the mass killings that accompanied the transformation from the Sukarno to the Suharto regime is not mentioned, which constitutes a shortcoming: the book’s failure to come to terms with the violent past of these organisations. Interestingly, even in the corresponding section in the revised edition on the Suharto era, there is no reference to the PKI and the dubious events that accompanied the regime change from Sukarno to Suharto. Only in the preceding section on the Sukarno era is there a brief mention that “it was ended by the Movement of September 30 and the PKI” (*pp. 132).³⁶

Another noticeable point in the original edition is that the Suharto period from 1965 to 1998 is referred to using the regime’s falsely claimed self-designation as a “Pancasila democracy” (p. 182),³⁷ and not as a “Pancasila state” or “Pancasila dictatorship” – terms that come much closer to describing the political reality under Suharto. It is also extraordinary that the term “Pancasila democracy” was retained in the revised textbook edition from 2003. However, in one instance in the revised book, the term’s use is followed by the critique that the term “Pancasila democracy” was only a rhetorical expression and was an idea that never existed in practice, as the regime did not allow space for democratic life – as illustrated, for instance, by the dominance of the military (*p. 134). In the further course of the original textbook, the period of the “Pancasila democracy” is also critically assessed. It is described as a time in which the approach of the state to society was “confrontational and subordinating” (p. 183),³⁸ and in which “the state or government was very dominant” (p. 183).³⁹ This was caused by the dominant role of the military, the dominant state ideology, the centralisation and bureaucratisation of politics, the suppression of party politics and the incorporation and control of non-state organisations (p. 183). Suharto’s New Order focused on economic progress that only benefitted an elite group and furthered the socio-economic marginalisation of the common people (pp. 182–183). This period was characterised by autocracy and a strong cult of personality around Suharto (p. 182). The section concludes that the Suharto regime did “not at all give room for a democratic life” (p. 183),⁴⁰ so that accordingly

35 distorsi terhadap praktik demokrasi

36 G. 30 S/PKI telah mengakhiri periode ini

37 demokrasi Pancasila

38 berhadapan-hadapan dan subordinat

39 negara atau pemerintah sangat mendominasi

40 rezim ini sangat tidak memberikan ruang bagi kehidupan berdemokrasi

“the people were far from a democratic life” (p. 182).⁴¹ Against the backdrop of the strong criticism that the textbook voiced against the democratic deficits under Suharto, it remains unclear why the authors opted to refer to this political era as a “Pancasila *democracy*”.

The text goes on to focus on four elements that democracy theory understands as the backbone of a democratic system: the rule of law, civil society, political infrastructure and a free and responsible media. On the rule of law the section states (p. 183):

The concept of the rule of law comprises the understanding that the state grants the citizen legal security through legal institutions that are free and neutral, and it secures human rights.⁴²

Furthermore, it is said that (p. 185):

[...] the rule of law has become a precondition for the stability of democracy. In other words, democracy cannot stand upright without the rule of law.⁴³

On civil society the section says (p. 186):

[...] it is assumed that the political process of pressuring for democratisation is rooted in the struggle of an ethically conscious and self-responsible civil society for the improvement of its own fate.⁴⁴

And (p. 185):

Civil society with its trait of openness, its independence from any influencing control and state pressure, its critical perspective, active participation and egalitarianism forms an integral component for the enforcement of democracy.⁴⁵

The subsequent pages explain the role and makeup of the political infrastructure. According to the authors, the political infrastructure must be composed of political parties, movements and pressure groups, whose members share a political orientation, values and ideals, which they want to see articulated in political policies (p. 187). The existence and activities of political parties, movements and pressure groups are pointed out as important components of a democracy, because they put into practice the democratic principles of the freedom of organisation, opinion and speech, and the right to oppose the government (p. 187). In this context, intellectuals and academia are explicitly mentioned as a potential pressure group (pp. 187–188):

41 rakyat jauh dari hidup alam demokratis

42 Konsepsi negara hukum mengandung pengertian bahwa negara memberikan perlindungan hukum bagi warga negara melalui pelembagaan peradilan yang bebas dan tidak memihak serta penjaminan hak asasi manusia.

43 [...] negara hukum menjadi prasyarat bagi tegaknya demokrasi. Dengan kata lain demokrasi tidak dapat tegak tanpa negara hukum.

44 [...] diasumsikan bahwa proses demokratisasi sebagai proses politik dorongannya berasal dari perjuangan masyarakat yang sadar secara etis dan bertanggung jawab atas perbaikan nasibnya sendiri.

45 Masyarakat madani dengan cirinya sebagai masyarakat terbuka, masyarakat yang bebas dari pengaruh kekuasaan dan tekanan negara, masyarakat yang kritis dan masyarakat yang berpartisipasi aktif serta masyarakat egaliter merupakan bagian yang integral dalam menegakkan demokrasi.

Intellectuals, academia (higher education) and the media form a pressure group that often applies pressure and controls the executive in order to ensure that the performance of the state and government complies with the democratic system.⁴⁶

We can notice here once more a positive self-reference on the part of the Islamic academic textbook authors, who emphasise their own, and the Muslim students', responsibility to further democracy. As the fourth component that strengthens a democracy, the media is briefly mentioned. Because of its supervising role towards the government's work, it has a "very strategic role" (p. 188)⁴⁷ and is obliged to abide by the law and journalistic ethics (p. 188).

Next, the chapter elaborates on how to measure democracy. An array of Indonesian and Western authors, such as Amien Rais, Miriam Budiardjo, G. Bingham Powell Jr. and Robert A. Dahl, are referenced. Several indicators for the operationalisation of democracy that these authors agree upon, such as free and fair elections, equality before the law, free speech and freedom to form organisations, minority protection and political participation, are pointed out (pp. 189–191). The section also engages with the question of how to assess the actual democratic quality of a country, as the existence of democratic indicators alone does not necessarily prove the actual quality of the democratic system. This problematic issue is illustrated with reference to the New Order regime, which officially featured political parties, elections and non-governmental organisations; however, these were all strongly controlled and manipulated (p. 191). The section clearly aims to encourage the students' critical thinking on democratic reality, but in itself does not offer a clear-cut answer to the complex problematic of how to measure the quality of democracy, which leaves the reader alone with loose statements and without a concrete toolbox on how to tackle the important issue of the quality of a state's democratic performance.

Especially interesting is the textbook's presentation of different models of democracy. This section's intention seems to be to show that democracy is not a rigid concept, but that it is flexible and can be adapted to different socio-cultural environments, clearly conforming to the concept that Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt referred to as "multiple modernities" (Eisenstadt 2000). However, it is also noted that the implementation of democracy in the non-Western world is not always free from conflict. With reference to political scientist Giovanni Sartori the textbook rather rigidly remarks that democracy (p. 192):

[...] is one hundred per cent a Western product. That is the reason why Western values, viewpoints and lifestyles like individualism, capitalism and liberalism cannot be separated from the concept of democracy. This is why problems oftentimes appear when

46 Kaum cendekiawan, kalangan civitas akademika kampus (perguruan tinggi), kalangan pers merupakan kelompok penekan yang banyak melakukan tekanan dan kontrol kepada eksekutif untuk mewujudkan sistem demokratis dalam penyelenggaraan negara dan pemerintahan.

47 peran yang sangat strategis

non-Western states, which culturally and ideologically differ from the Western world, apply democracy as a political system and as a value order.⁴⁸

It is interesting to note that this quite fateful statement on democracy being “one hundred per cent a Western product” and inherently coupled to capitalism was not reproduced in the revised edition, which, in a more accurate manner, simply traces the origin of democratic ideas back to Greek antiquity.

In the original edition, the section then mentions different democratic models such as liberal-capitalist democracy, socialist democracy, Islamic democracy, *Pancasila* democracy, representative democracy, participatory democracy, direct and indirect democracy and constitutional democracy (pp. 192–193). It is vaguely argued that “in an Islamic democracy the democratic values are derived from universal Islamic doctrines such as justice and deliberative consultation” (p. 192)⁴⁹ and that “*Pancasila* democracy is derived from the noble values of *Pancasila*” (p. 192).⁵⁰ No further elaboration on these different democratic models is given. The fact that the values that define an Islamic and a *Pancasila* democracy were not again mentioned in the revised textbook edition may indicate that the authors recognised their inherent vagueness and the general problematic of defining these democratic models. While the term “*Pancasila* democracy” was retained in the revised edition, the term “Islamic democracy” was altogether eliminated. These choices point towards the persisting centrality of the *Pancasila* as a key reference and “consensus” in Indonesian political discourse as well as towards prevailing scepticism in the Islamic academic milieu on the workings and the realisation of an Islamic democracy. In this thematic section, both textbooks ignore the long history of debates on how to integrate Islam and democracy in Indonesia. In his study, Luthfi Assyaukanie has shown how, since independence, different models on the relationship between Islam and the state have been discussed in Indonesian intellectual and political circles, culminating in ideas of an “Islamic democratic state”, a “religious democratic state”, and a “liberal democratic state” (Assyaukanie 2009). This plurality of Indonesian opinions on the issue of the nexus between Islam, the state and democracy in the concrete Indonesian historical contextualisation is, for some unknown reason, not mentioned in the textbooks.

The relationship between religion and democracy is dealt with in a more general way. It is argued that religion and democracy constitute value systems and that humans are religious and social creatures. Religion and democracy strive for similar goals, because both offer ways for the realisation of a good

48 [...] seratus persen merupakan produk Barat. Karena itu nilai-nilai, pandangan dan cara hidup Barat tidak dapat dipisahkan dari konsep demokrasi seperti individualisme, kapitalisme dan liberalisme. Karena itu ketika demokrasi diadopsi oleh negara-negara non Barat yang secara kultural dan ideologis berbeda dengan Barat untuk diterapkan sebagai sistem dan tatanan nilai politik, seringkali menimbulkan problem.

49 [...] dalam demokrasi Islam nilai-nilai demokrasinya bersumber dari doktrin Islam yang universal seperti keadilan, musyawarah dan sebagainya.

50 [...] demokrasi Pancasila bersumber dari nilai-nilai luhur Pancasila.

life. For instance, both religion and democracy ask humankind to live a peaceful, prosperous life in which people respect one another (p. 194). Yet, religion and democracy have different origins – divine and worldly – which causes difficulties and problems for the integration of both into one coherent value system. On this point the section stresses the importance of human agency. It declares that the individual must be the one who manages the realisation and integration of religious and democratic values: “The practicing actor of the aforementioned two value systems is the individual” (p. 194).⁵¹

The rather complex and complicated relationship between religion, democracy and politics is then discussed by showing how some prominent scholars have positioned themselves towards the issue. First, the section refers to the so-called paradoxical or negative model represented by Karl Marx, Max Weber, Nietzsche and Sartre. According to the textbook, these thinkers held that the values of religion contradict democracy. Marx’s standpoint that religion is a compensation for social suffering is mentioned, as well as his famous expression that religion is “opium of the people” (p. 195).⁵² It is further explained how these scholars justified their rejection of religion, namely by pointing to socio-historical evidence where religion (de facto Christianity) was used as an instrument to secure power and where religion limited the autonomy and freedom of citizens (pp. 195–196). I would argue that the textbook’s uncommented mention of the existence of a systemic critique of religion as a social construct constitutes a progressive step in the Indonesian context, where atheism is societally not accepted and where the state obliges each citizen to register as an adherent of one of a limited number of religions.

Second, the so-called secular or neutral model is elaborated. This model separates religion from democracy and politics and reduces religion to the private sphere, where it is also protected from political interference. The section summarises on secularity (p. 196):

Modern society that supports the secularisation of politics should not be understood as rejecting religion, because modern people are still religious. Yet, the formal, institutional presence of religion in politics is not accepted, because it easily politicises religion for the interests of politics.⁵³

Finally, and thirdly, the so-called theo-democratic or positive model is treated. Out of the three models presented, this third one is given the most attention. This model advocates that (p. 196):

[...] religion does theologically and sociologically strongly support the democratisation of politics, the economy, as well as culture. [...] Many aspects of normative religious

51 Aktor pelaksana kedua sistem nilai tersebut adalah manusia.

52 candu masyarakat

53 Masyarakat modern yang mendukung sekularisasi politik tidak mesti dihakimi sebagai menolak dan anti agama, karena orang modern tetap beragama. Namun kehadiran agama secara formal institusional dalam politik tidak diterima karena hal ini sering kali membuat agama mudah dipolitisasi untuk kepentingan politik.

doctrine touch upon the normative values of democracy so that an interaction between the two can support both religion and democracy.⁵⁴

The section then illustrates the democratic values found within Indonesia's by then five officially accepted religions – Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism and Buddhism. On Islam, it is said (p. 197):

According to Ernest Gellner, Islam has similar basic elements as democracy. Such is also the viewpoint of Robert N. Bellah, who concludes that the state management created by the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Medina was of an egalitarian and participatory character and that it had the design of a modern state. The basic elements that Ernest Gellner and Robert N. Bellah refer to are the Islamic doctrines of justice (*al-'adl*), egalitarianism (*al-musawah*) and deliberative consultation (*al-syura'*), which were realised within the political practice of managing state affairs in the early Islamic period.⁵⁵

The chapter closes with a section on the prospects of democracy in Indonesia. It states that in Indonesia democracy has not yet been realised and consolidated (p. 199), and that the transition of a non-democratic regime into a democratic one will be a long-term process (p. 200). The text cites at length Azyumardi Azra and his opinion that in order to arrive at a successful democratisation, Indonesia needs to focus on the socialisation of democratic citizens through civic education courses (pp. 200–201). University students form a strategic part of civil society that may contribute to building up democracy. They have the potential to strengthen democracy if they appreciate differences, respect the law, participate in demonstrations or express their views through formal democratic institutions (p. 202). The chapter ends with a statement that hypothesises about the potential consequences of a failure of the democratisation process (p. 202): “Should the democratisation of this new Indonesia fail, then Indonesia will fall back into an authoritarian or dictatorial regime.”⁵⁶

54 [...] agama baik secara teologis dan sosiologis sangat mendukung proses demokratisasi politik, ekonomi maupun kebudayaan. [...] agama sebagai ajaran normatif dalam banyak hal mempunyai singgungan terhadap nilai normatif demokrasi, sehingga interaksi antara keduanya bisa saling mendukung.

55 Dalam agama Islam seperti dikatakan oleh Ernest Gellner bahwa agama Islam ada kesamaan unsur-unsur dasar dengan demokrasi. Begitu pula pandangan Robert N. Bellah yang sampai pada suatu kesimpulan bahwa penyelenggaraan pemerintahan yang dikembangkan oleh Nabi Muhammad saw. di Madinah bersifat egaliter dan partisipatif dan sebagai bentuk negara modern. Unsur-unsur dasar yang dimaksud Ernest Gellner dan Robert N. Bellah adalah doktrin Islam tentang keadilan (*al-'adl*), egalitarian (*al-musawah*), musyawarah (*asy-syura'*) yang terealisasi dalam praktik politik kenegaraan awal Islam.

56 Sedangkan bila demokratisasi gagal diwujudkan dalam Indonesia Baru ini, maka Indonesia kembali berada dalam rezim otoritarisme atau rezim diktator.

Revised edition (2003)

The revised edition that came out in 2003 adopted large parts of the chapter on democracy from the original textbook. However, some crucial changes were introduced. The narrative on democracy in the revised edition tends to be shaped more from an Islamic and Indonesian than from a Western perspective. This is evident in the greater inclusion of classical Islamic thought and increased reference to Muslim authors and personalities. As discussed above, the term “civil society” was translated and consequently replaced by the Malay-Indonesian Islamic *masyarakat madani*, but a discussion of its multiple meanings and controversial interpretations within Indonesia and the Muslim world was lacking. Furthermore, a section on “Islam and Democracy” was added to the chapter. The *Pancasila* is more often referred to than in the original edition, and it is explicitly portrayed as an ideological basis that Indonesian democracy could build upon. Focus is given to the official state interpretation of Islam, which theoretically subordinates Islam to the *Pancasila*. The tone and writing style in the revised edition more directly address the Indonesian Muslim readers’ personal responsibility and call for personal engagement to make democratisation succeed in Indonesia.

The citizens’ personal responsibility for a working democratisation process is, for instance, addressed in the newly included section “Democracy as a View of Life”. Here it is argued that democracy cannot be taken for granted, but that it needs to be nurtured through a supportive democratic culture, a so-called democratic view of life. This democratic view of life needs to exist deeply within civil society and within the governmental realm to make democracy work (*p. 112). “A good government,” it is stated, “can prosper and be stable if society has a fundamental positive and pro-active attitude towards basic democratic norms. This is why there must exist in society a widely diffused conviction that a democratic governmental system is the best one compared to other systems” (*p. 113).⁵⁷ By drawing on the work of the progressive Indonesian Islamic intellectual Nurcholish Madjid – who was not mentioned even once in the chapter on democracy in the original edition – seven norms that make up a democratic view of life are elaborated upon: pluralism, deliberative consultation, moral assessment in decision making, honest and sound consensus, economic stability/fulfilment of economic needs, a cooperative attitude and mutual trust among citizens and an education system in which citizens are democratically socialised (*pp. 113–116).

The implementation of democracy is depicted as a never-ending, open process that is always entangled with the local context of a society:

⁵⁷ Sebuah pemerintahan yang baik dapat tumbuh dan stabil bila masyarakat pada umumnya punya sikap positif dan proaktif terhadap norma-norma dasar demokrasi. Karena itu harus ada keyakinan yang luas di masyarakat bahwa demokrasi adalah sistem pemerintahan yang terbaik dibanding dengan sistem lainnya.

[...] democracy does not fall from heaven as a perfect object, but it merges with the history, experience and day-to-day social experimentation of how a society, a state and a government are formed. This is why the rise and development of democracy in a state need an open ideology it can build upon (*p. 116).⁵⁸

The Indonesian state ideology *Pancasila* is then portrayed as such an open ideology that is conducive to democracy, because it allows for “trial and error [...] correction and refinement” (*p. 117).⁵⁹ The aspect of correction is added at the end of the section, which states: “Democracy – with all its shortcomings – is the ability to correct oneself through openness” (*p. 117).⁶⁰

The original edition’s section “History and Development of Democracy in Indonesia” was updated in the revised edition with a new subsection on “Democracy Since 1998”. This subsection assesses the ongoing democratisation process as negative. It explains that the collapse of the New Order raised new hope that democracy would prosper in Indonesia, and it stresses that the current transition is a crucial phase for the direction democracy will take in the future (*p. 135). The realisation of democracy and its values are still waiting to be proven during the *Reformasi* era (*p. 139). It is acknowledged that since 1998 some positive democratic developments have been witnessed in Indonesia, such as the redefinition of the military’s role, the introduction of several amendments to the constitution, regional decentralisation and increased freedom of the press (*p. 140). However, the subsection questions whether this package of legal reforms alone can change a political system and guide democratisation (*p. 141). Other factors are considered as equally important for the victory of democracy, namely the democratic behaviour of the political elite, a participatory political culture and a strong civil society that stands for moderation, compromise and the respect of a plurality of opinions (*pp. 135–137). The current status of the Indonesian transition is evaluated negatively, because (*pp. 140–141):

[...] to this very day, there are indications for a return of the former status quo powers which aim to redirect Indonesian democracy back to the pre-*Reformasi* era. This is the reason why the current shape of Indonesia’s transition is still at a crossroads and the location of its harbour is still unclear.⁶¹

In the revised edition the newly introduced section on “Islam and Democracy” replaces the section “What is the Relationship between Religion and State?” of the original edition. It seems that this increased focus on Islam is presented

58 [...] demokrasi bukanlah sesuatu yang akan terwujud bagaikan benda yang jatuh dari langit secara sempurna, melainkan menyatu dengan proses sejarah, pengalaman nyata dan eksperimentasi sosial sehari-hari dalam tata kehidupan bermasyarakat dan bernegara termasuk dalam tata pemerintahan. Karena itu tumbuh dan berkembangnya demokrasi dalam suatu Negara memerlukan ideology yang terbuka. (English term in original)

59 trial and error [...] koreksi dan perbaikan (English terms in original)

60 Karena demokrasi, dengan segala kekurangannya, ialah kemampuannya untuk mengoreksi dirinya sendiri melalui keterbukaannya itu.

61 [...] sampai saat ini pun masih dijumpai indikasi-indikasi kembalinya kekuasaan status quo yang ingin memutarbalikkan arah demokrasi Indonesia kembali ke periode sebelum orde reformasi. Oleh sebab itu, kondisi transisi demokrasi Indonesia untuk saat ini masih berada di persimpangan jalan yang belum jelas ke mana arah pelabuhannya.

in order to reduce the intellectual overload and complexity of the original edition and to better tailor the content to the Muslim readers. The section starts with the claim that many Western scholars – including Samuel P. Huntington, Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz and Seymour Martin Lipset – are pessimistic about the successful working of democracy in the Muslim world. Also, the Sudanese Islamic scholar Abdelwahab Efendi is cited: “The wind of democratisation blows to all corners of the world, however, it blows not a single leaf to the Muslim world” (*p. 141).⁶² The section then turns to the US scholars John L. Esposito and James P. Piscatory, who defend the potential compatibility of Islam and democracy. Based on their writings on the Muslim world, the section sets out to present three paradigms on the relationship between Islam and democracy.

First, in the Muslim world, Islam and democracy are two mutually exclusive systems when democracy is regarded as a Western product and Islam is understood as *kaffah* (i.e. an all-encompassing religion, which regulates all aspects of life and human interaction). Famous representatives of this paradigm are the political regimes of Saudi Arabia and Iran, and the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb of the Muslim Brotherhood. Second, some Muslims do not see Islam as fitting with the explicitly Western definition of democracy. This implies that Islam can be compatible with democracy if Muslims themselves arrive at their own definition and interpretation of democracy. This paradigm is represented by Islamic thinkers such as the Pakistani al-Maududi, the Tunisian Rasyid al-Ghannoushi and the Indonesians Mohammad Natsir and Jalaluddin Rakhmat (a Shi’ite). Third, for some Muslims, Islam is a value system that justifies and supports the Western definition and interpretation of democracy. This third paradigm is said to be the dominant one in Indonesia and to be represented by Indonesian Islamic thinkers such as Nurcholish Madjid, Amien Rais, Munawir Sjadzali, Syafi’i Maarif and Abdurrahman Wahid (*pp. 141–142), thereby underpinning the central role of Indonesian cosmopolitan intellectuals in the national political debate.

Yet, the section explains that according to Esposito and Piscatory, the supporters of this third paradigm do not hold that democracy automatically and rapidly grows in the Muslim world, because they find that the mindset of the Muslim world impedes democratisation. This democracy-hindering mindset is composed of three aspects. First, the popular Muslim suspicion that democracy opposes Islam poses a serious problem for the implementation of democracy. A “liberalisation of the understanding of religion” (*p. 143)⁶³ is necessary in order to arrive at a synthesis of Islamic doctrine, democracy and freedom. Second, there exists a “cultural heritage within the Muslim society (community)

62 Angin demokratisasi memang berhembus ke seluruh penjuru dunia, namun tak ada satupun daun yang dihembusnya sampai ke dunia muslim.

63 liberalisasi pemahaman keagamaan

of habituation to autocracy and passive obedience” (*p. 143).⁶⁴ This is why a change in political culture is the key to making democracy thrive in the Muslim world. Third, the Muslim world has to internalise the idea that democratisation is a long-term process that needs to be backed up with sincerity and endurance (*p. 143).

The end of the section on “Islam and Democracy” – which also constitutes the end of the chapter “Democracy” – legitimises democracy by reference to the foundational era of Islam (*p. 144):

If very simple parameters are used, then an empirical democratic experience can be found during the rule of Allah’s Prophet, which was continued by his four successors [...]. [But] on the basis of historical sources, it is extremely hard for us to find any empirical evidence for democracy in the Muslim world that would have possibly existed after the rule of the above-mentioned fourth successor until today.⁶⁵

Conclusion: A localised teaching of democracy

This article has shed light on the structural challenges faced when teaching democracy in a transitioning country. In Indonesia, these challenges consisted of a deeply institutionalised political culture and discursive practices that seek harmony and the avoidance of conflict in the public political realm and that aim for a consensus on the unquestioned centrality of the *Pancasila* and that treat as taboo the leftist political ideas and the past violent eradication of communism in the country (see also Duile / Bens 2017). These aspects are mirrored in the two textbook editions, which at times represented Indonesian political history and democracy with several inconsistencies and biases. Furthermore, the textbooks tended to introduce the students to a plurality of rather inconcrete democratic concepts, which indicates that the term democracy came close to being used as an “empty signifier” (Laclau 2005). It seems likely that the circumstances under which the course was established – in a rapid manner shortly after the collapse of authoritarianism and under the supervision of the foreign neoliberal The Asia Foundation – had a share in contributing to this outcome. In this context it is worth recalling that the Indonesian side was aware of the course’s shortcomings. The Indonesian-led evaluation study from 2006 articulated criticism of the weaknesses of the course and an Indonesian interview partner assessed the course’s implementation as “top-down”.⁶⁶

64 [...] warisan kultural masyarakat (komunitas) muslim sudah terbiasa dengan otokrasi dan ketaatan pasif.

65 Dengan mempergunakan parameter yang sangat sederhana, pengalaman empirik demokrasi hanya bisa ditemukan selama pemerintahan Rasulullah sendiri yang kemudian dilanjutkan oleh empat sahabatnya [...]. Setelah pemerintahan keempat sahabat tersebut menurut catatan sejarah sangat sulit kita menemukan demokrasi di dunia Islam secara empiric sampai sekarang ini. (English term in original)

66 Interview with Bahrissalim, 2 May 2017 in Jakarta.

On the other hand, with regards to their core message and how they treated issues of individual liberties, citizenship rights and civil participation in politics, the textbooks constituted a clear and authentic commitment to democracy and at times featured progressive statements on politics and religion. Also, the books did not shy away from criticising the authoritarian past and shortcomings of the then ongoing democratisation process in Indonesia as well as addressing prevailing democratic deficits within the global Muslim community. Therefore, in overall perspective, the pro-democratic aim and nature of the textbooks and hence the course clearly qualified IAIN/UIN Jakarta as a pro-democracy actor during the *Reformasi* period.

For the purpose of legitimising democracy, the course and its textbooks reproduced the mainstream Indonesian Islamic academic practice of mediating between classical Islamic theology, Indonesian culture and Western dynamics, thereby once more underpinning the key role Islamic academics have always occupied as cosmopolitan brokers in Indonesian political processes and national agendas. However, the fact that the revised textbook edition shifted to adopting an increasingly Islamic, Indonesian and *Pancasila*-ist perspective on democracy showcases that the cosmopolitan approach also had its limits. In order to more accessibly speak to the pious Muslim studentship, democracy promotion was more tightly tailored to the official understanding of national, cultural and religious identity. The civic education course did not entirely lose its cosmopolitan outlook, but it did more intensely adapt to the cultural and religious realities found in Indonesia, and therefore started to localise the teaching of democracy, also by taming the language and removing the foreign overload.

In sum, the course is an important indicator that the IAIN/UIN Jakarta campus and the Islamic academic milieu in Indonesia manifested as an actor in the engagement for the dissemination of pro-democracy sentiments during *Reformasi*. The outstanding concrete pro-democratic agency of IAIN/UIN Jakarta becomes clearer when taking a comparative perspective on the role of Islamic universities during recent democratisation processes: with its organised, structured and institutionalised form of pro-democracy socialisation through the civic education course, IAIN/UIN Jakarta differed dramatically from the agency of, for instance, al-Azhar University, which supported democratic reforms in Egypt from 2011 to 2013 only in an occasional discursive fashion (see al-Azhar University 2011, Maged 2012), or of al-Zaytuna University in Tunisia, which did not at all promote democracy, but took an apolitical, passive role during the country's transition from 2011 to 2014 (tho Seeth 2020).

Due to the fact that after some revisions the core of the 2003 textbook is still in use at UIN Jakarta, it would be interesting to gain a more updated picture on the civic education course and its localised pedagogical practices in the consolidated democracy. As a democracy is always under contestation and under construction, research is needed for a better understanding of what role UIN

Jakarta is playing in today's citizenship formation and identity politics. Generally, this article has argued that the political agency of Islamic universities and their academic milieu in democracy and democratisation processes deserves more scholarly attention. This is because Islamic universities have access to a wide range of the educated Muslim middle class where they are largely accepted as a religious authority, as custodians as well as innovative creators of religious knowledge, especially in Indonesia.

Against the backdrop of some recent surveys that indicate that in Indonesia university campuses are hotbeds of intolerance and Islamism, a focus on Islamic universities seems more pressing than ever. In 2017, a survey found that 58.8% of Indonesian school and university students have radical Islamic views, while only 20.1% were classified as representing moderate Islamic views. In the same sample, 85% of the respondents said that democracy is the best political system, while simultaneously 91.2% also aspired for the establishment of a caliphate (PPIM 2018). Another – controversial – survey, which was conducted amongst students at ten Indonesian religious and non-religious universities in 2019, ranked UIN Jakarta as the second most fundamentalist campus, behind UIN Bandung (SETARA 2019a, 2019b). Outcomes like these underscore the centrality of campus ideology for the future of Indonesian society and politics, and follow-up research must be channelled towards verifying these findings to unravel what is going on at the universities and within the Islamic academic milieu.

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