

Symbolism, Signifiers and National Identity Cards: Indonesia's Engagement with the 21st Century Reality of Religious Diversity & Inclusion

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Abstrak

Artikel ini mengetengahkan pembahasan mengenai simbolisme agama dalam KTP (Kartu Tanda Penduduk) di Indonesia. Penghapusan status penunjukan agama di KTP adalah "isu sensitif" di Indonesia. Ia berhubungan dengan kelanjutan sisa-sisa alam pikiran Orde Baru, yang juga menyangkut bagaimana identitas agama kerap dipakai dalam pergaulan sehari-hari masyarakat Indonesia. Ditambah lagi, Indonesia sedang bergulat dengan keragaman agama, aktualisasi inklusi agama dan aliran kepercayaan di satu sisi serta perkembangan nasionalisme dan demokrasi di sisi lain. Makalah ini berpendapat bahwa perdebatan KTP dan simbol agama yang juga termasuk isu penting dalam kampanye Jokowi pada Pilpres 2014 lalu, adalah penanda bahwa keragaman agama dan inklusi merupakan aspek modernitas yang tak terduga. Sebagaimana hal itu dilihat oleh Peter L Berger. Makalah ini akan mengidentifikasi referen dari simbol KTP agama serta relevansinya dalam tata kehidupan keagamaan, demokrasi, dan sosial-politik Indonesia mutakhir.

Kata Kunci: *KTP, identity, symbol, modernity*

On the 9th of July 2014, the Republic of Indonesia held its third presidential election, featuring two candidates, Prabowo Subianto (“Prabowo”) and Joko Widodo (“Jokowi”).⁶¹ This is the third presidential election since the 1998 demise of the Suharto “New Order” autocratic administration and it has resulted in a close race.⁶² On June 18, 2014, the Jakarta Globe, “Indonesia’s most-read English-language newspaper,”⁶³ reported a Jokowi campaign declaration that if elected, Jokowi would remove religious status from Indonesia’s national identity cards, the *Kartu Tanda Penduduk* or (“KTP”) in order to prevent religious discrimination.⁶⁴ Musdah Mulia, a Jokowi campaign team member, confirmed this announcement citing as support for this stance the probable spawn of discriminatory practices in employment and victimization by “hard line groups.”⁶⁵ Instead, she stated, faith

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- 61 A former commander of the Army Strategic Reserve Command (KOSTRAD) under the Suharto regime, Prabowo Subianto (“Prabowo”) is not new to Indonesian politics; he was a vice presidential candidate in the 2009 Indonesian presidential elections. Prabowo has been described as a master strategist and who professed to run the country with a “strong hand.” However, his candidacy has been dogged by human rights abuse allegations of action during his service in the New Order. Joko Widodo (“Jokowi”), former mayor of Solo and current governor of Jakarta, is at the writing of this paper both the favored candidate and its unofficial victor. A reputed “man of the people,” he has run on a platform of democracy, religious tolerance, market reforms (foreign investments and domestic market stimulations) and anti-corruption. See collectively 2014 Indonesian Presidential Election Archives. *The Jakarta Globe*. Retrieved from <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/tag/2014-indonesia-presidential-election/>; Author Unknown. (2014, July 19). Prabowo urged to bow out. *The Jakarta Globe*. Retrieved from <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/07/18/prabowo-urged-bow-out.html>; Author Unknown (2014, July 18) Indonesia candidate admits role in abductions. *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved from <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2014/07/indonesia-candidate-admits-role-abductions-201471764933349773>; E. Bellman (2012, August 2) Indonesians Turn Gaze to Suharto-Era General. *Wall Street Journal Asia*. Retrieved from <http://www.indonesia-digest.net/2300elections2014prabowo.htm>; M.S. Aritonang & R.A. Witular (2014, May 21) Jokowi-Kalla hawkish on economic policies. *The Jakarta Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.indonesia-digest.net/2300elections2014-jokowi.htm>
- 62 Due to conflicting reports regarding the emergent victor, July 22, 2014 is the scheduled day election results are to be confirmed. However, thus far, reputable media reports indicate Joko Widodo has won the race. 2014 Indonesian Presidential Election Archives. *The Jakarta Globe*. Retrieved from <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/tag/2014-indonesia-presidential-election/>
- 63 Author Unknown. “About Us” *The Jakarta Globe*. Retrieved from <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/about-us/>
- 64 Paath, C. (2014, June 18). Joko, If Elected, Would Remove Religion Status on ID Card. *The Jakarta Globe*. Retrieved from <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/joko-elected-remove-religion-status-id-card/>
- 65 Specifically, according to the June 14, 2014 Jakarta Globe article, Musdah Mulia referenced as illustrative bases for the declaration the denial of a job applicant because his religious status was disparate from that of the employer, and the knowledge of one’s faith status “making it easier for a hardline group to conduct a religious sweep during a conflict.” However, it is unclear from the article if she was the primary or exclusive source of this declaration as the newspaper simply references the “Jowoki campaign team” as the source of this announcement. Paath, C. (2014, June 18). Joko, If Elected,

status should be recorded only for the purpose of collecting data on the population and for civil registry.”⁶⁶

However, this declaration proved to be premature and possibly inexact: on June 19, 2014, the *Jakarta Globe* reported a denial from the Jokowi camp of such an intention.⁶⁷ Headlined “Joko-Kalla Campaign Team Denies Plan of Removing Religion Status on ID Card,” the article cited Hamka Haq, the head of the religious and cultural affairs division of Jokowi’s political party and fellow campaign team member. In it Haq stated that while Jokowi was committed to preserving Indonesia’s diversity, it was neither Jokowi’s opinion nor a plan of his campaign to remove the religious designation from the KTP.⁶⁸ Haq explained this was because the religious designation served useful purposes such as the prevention of misapplied religious requirements and the provision of religiously appropriate funeral rites.⁶⁹

To glean anecdotal responses to this volte-face by the Jokowi campaign, the author of this paper conducted informal opinion polls with reputable faculty experts from Indonesia’s Gadjah Mada University (UGM) and NGO personnel.⁷⁰ It was the universal response that the removal of the religious status designation on the KTP was a “sensitive issue.” (UGM Faculty and NGO personnel personal communications, June 10, July 11, 14, 18, 2014). Furthermore, when indexed, the offered hypotheses for the volte-face collated into two basic perspectives each premised on the delicacy of the issue: 1) Jokowi’s plan to eliminate the

Would Remove Religion Status on ID Card. *The Jakarta Globe*. Retrieved from <http://http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/joko-elected-remove-religion-status-id-card/>

- 66 Paath, C. (2014, June 18). Joko, If Elected, Would Remove Religion Status on ID Card. *The Jakarta Globe*. Retrieved from <http://http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/joko-elected-remove-religion-status-id-card/>
- 67 Sihaloho, M.J. (2014, June 19). Joko-Kalla Campaign Team Denies Plan of Removing Religion Status on ID Card. *The Jakarta Globe*. Retrieved from <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/joko-kalla-campaign-team-denies-plan-removing-religion-status-id-card/>
- 68 Ironically, Musdah Mulia and Sihaloho Sihaloho are both known academics in Indonesia. Sihaloho, M.J. (2014, June 19). Joko-Kalla Campaign Team Denies Plan of Removing Religion Status on ID Card. *The Jakarta Globe*. Retrieved from <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/joko-kalla-campaign-team-denies-plan-removing-religion-status-id-card/>
- 69 Sihaloho, M.J. (2014, June 19). Joko-Kalla Campaign Team Denies Plan of Removing Religion Status on ID Card. *The Jakarta Globe*. Retrieved from <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/joko-kalla-campaign-team-denies-plan-removing-religion-status-id-card/>
- 70 On the matter of Jokowi’s volte-face and the KTP religious status designation issue, informal author led interviews were conducted with American Friends Service Committee (Indonesian chapter of global NGO) personnel, personal communications, July 18, 2014; UGM Faculty R. Panggabean, personal communications, July 17 2014; UGM Faculty S. Cholil, M. Rahayupersonal, M.I. Ahnaf, personal communications, July, 14, 2014; D. Sofjan, personal communications, June 10, 2014 & July 11, 2014

religious status designation from the KTP was prematurely announced as a matter of poor strategy, hence he denied it. Instead, he should have waited until he was elected president to declare his intention and 2) Jokowi never intended on making this change but the announcement was made (perhaps unwittingly, surreptitiously, unintentionally or insubordinately) as a result of the varied and perhaps divergent political interests correlative to the various interest groups in his coalition based campaign. (UGM Faculty personal communications, June 10, July 11, 14, 18, 2014).

Due to these paradigmatic events, it is the position of this paper that the KTP religious status designation and corresponding debate ("KTP debate") and the volte-face by the Jokowi campaign ("Jokowi volte-face") are interconnected symbols of the internalized conflicts Indonesia faces in its evolution of identity development as a fledgling democracy - described by some as neither religious nor secular (Picard, 2011; UGM ICRS/CRCS Faculty personal communications, June 10, July 11, 14, 2014)⁷¹ - as it continues to distance itself from the penumbra of the Suharto New Order shadow where the autocratic repression of publicized religion and the advancement of a uniform nationalism centered on the ideology of *Pancasila* reigned. (Bottomley, 2014; Picard, 2011; Cammack & Feener, 2012; Cholil, 2010). And as a result, Indonesia is wrestling with the existence of religious diversity and the actualization of religious inclusion while its burgeoning identity is at the nexus of underlying values and identities such as Nationalism, Democracy⁷² and Religion held within the larger national debate of the constitution of and relationship between "religion[s]" (*agama*) and "belief[s]" (*Aliran Kepercayaan*).⁷³ Correspondingly, this unique cocktail of Indonesia's characteristics poses important challenges to the assertions propounded by Drs. Clifford Geertz, Peter Berger and Samuel Huntington, in the areas of religion, modernity, and post Cold War global dynamics, respectively. This paper argues

71 Compare with Dr. Alexius Andang Binwan who on the one hand, describes Indonesia as a "non confessional state" in light of its state ideology *Pancasila*, which is comprised of five pillars: belief in one Almighty God, humanitarianism, nationalism, democracy guided by consensus and social justice and on the other, as a "religious state" because it "recognizes religion as an important factor in society." Binawan, A.A.L. (2011). Declarations and the Indonesian Constitution on Religious Freedom. *Al-Jami'ah*, 49(2), 361-392.

72 See generally A. Stephan. (2011). The Multiple Secularisms of Modern Democratic and Non-Democratic Regimes. In C. Calhoun, C. Jürgensmeyer, J. VanAntwerpen (Eds), *Rethinking Secularism*. (pp. 114-144).

73 For more information about the Indonesia's particular distinction between religion (*agama*) and belief (*kepercayaan*), as well as the distribution of power, agency and benefits ascribed between each, see Picard, M. (2011). *Introduction: 'Agama', 'adat', and Pancasila*. In M. Picard & R. Madinier (Eds.), *The Politics of Religion in Indonesia: Syncretism, orthodoxy, and religious contention in Java and Bali* (pp. 1-20). Abington, Oxon: Routledge.

that the KTP debate and the attendant symbol of the Jokowi volte-face are signifiers that religious diversity and inclusion⁷⁴ are aspects of modernity unforeseen by Berger, misinterpreted and unaccounted for by Huntington and misaligned with Geertz's model. This paper will identify the referents of the symbol of the KTP religious status designation and will address the relevance, applicability and veracity of these theorists' assertions to the current domain of religious diversity in the Indonesian landscape.

This is not the first time the public proposal to remove the religious status designation from the KTP has arisen.⁷⁵ This issue of the designation of religious status on Indonesia's national identity card has been a sensitive subject of significance in the Indonesian socio-political ethos⁷⁶ and despite submitted calls for its removal, in 2006 the Indonesian Parliament passed a law making its inclusion compulsory. (Bottomley, 2014; Cholil 2010). The KTP functions as the basis of individual identification in Indonesia, and it includes an individual's biometric information. It serves various purposes in Indonesian society management and services navigation, including the affording a myriad of benefits, determination of appropriate funeral rites, access to education and health services, eligibility for government employment, issuance of marriage certifications as well as the tracking of demographic data. (Bottomley, 2014; Soemartono, 2013). By law, in order for Indonesian citizens to vote or apply for a passport, driver's license, taxpayer identification, land rights, etc., their

74 The term "diversity and inclusion" is industry specific terminology used in social identity work in the United States, in which the author has been engaged for more than a decade. Due to the fact that the term "religious pluralism" includes implications referencing the constitution of belief which is not the focus of the piece. Inclusion, a much broader and less connotative term, is the more appropriate choice to capture the challenges with religious difference Indonesia is facing particularly as it references not only the presence of diversity, but also its respectful and equitable *inclusion* in systemic power systems and structures, decision making, resource distribution and value setting, among other components.

75 Among those calling for the removal of the religious status on the KTP were the Indonesian Democratic Party, Indonesian Legal Aid and the National Integration Movement. See Cholil, S. (2010). Freedom and Religion or Belief in Indonesia and the Challenge of Muslim Exceptionalism. In S. Sinn & M.L. Sinaga (Eds.), *Freedom and Responsibility: Christian and Muslim Explorations* (pp. 117-134). Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press/The Lutheran World Federation. Anonymous. (2011, September 9); A national identity card nightmare. *The Straits Times*. Retrieved from <http://sg.vlex.com/vid/national-identity-card-491087554>

76 Informal interviews conducted with American Friends Service Committee (Indonesian NGO) personnel, personal communications, July 18, 2014; UGM Faculty R. Panggabean, personal communications, July 17 2014; UGM Faculty S. Cholil, M. Rahayupersonal, M.I. Ahnaf, personal communications, July, 14, 2014; D. Sofjan, personal communications, June 10, 2014 & July 11, 2014 confirmed the importance and presence of this issue in recent Indonesian public discourse.

KTP must be available. (Bottomley, 2014). Without it, one cannot get married within the Indonesia legal system, receive end of life benefits or other such services.

Among the requisite identification details on the KTP, Indonesians must declare their religious identities from among the six state recognized religions: Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Hinduism or Confucianism (Bottomley, 2014; Binawan, 2011; Picard, 2011; Soemartono, 2013, Sirry 2006). And if none of these are fitting (such as for practitioners of *Aliran Kepercayaan*, a collective reference to various forms of traditional belief systems or indigenous religions) citizens can elect to orient their religious status within the “other” category or abstain from declaring a religious designation altogether – both relatively new state sanctioned opportunities. (Cholil, 2010; Bottomley, 2014). Despite these advances however, it is known that failure to mention a particular religion would be problematic, jeopardizing employment opportunities in civil and military service, as well as marriage registration and end of life ceremonies.⁷⁷ (Binawan, 2011; UGM Faculty personal communications, June 10, July 11, 14, 2014).

In his “Critique of Modernity,” Berger states that at its core, modernity is the “transformation of the world brought about by technological innovations” altering economic, social and political elements well as revolutionizing human consciousness. (Berger, 1977). This transformation has imposed 5 “dilemmas” on humanity in this current epoch. (Berger, 1977). Namely, they are 1) “abstraction”: addressing the intangibility of key social structures; 2) “futurity”: addressing the modern preoccupation with and focus on the future; 3) “individuation”: addressing the increased individuation of humans and its counterposition to the society; 4) “liberation”: addressing the burden of increased choice and 5) “secularization”: addressing the “massive threat to the plausibility of religious belief and experience.” (Berger, 1977). Yet what Berger neglected to include in his critique is the dilemma of being confronted by and living with the “other” in a way that the increased diversification of the planet has demanded.

77 According to Dr. Suhadi Cholil, Indonesia inherited its religion-as-basis-of-categorization from its Dutch colonizers. Dutch civil law as applied in Indonesia divided the populous by ethnicity and religion with the social hierarchy descending in the order of Dutch, Chinese, Indonesian Christian and Indonesian non-Christian. With its independence, Indonesia retained this framework and included divisions between Muslim and non-Muslim. Four months after its independence, it created a Ministry of Religious Affairs to serve all Indonesian religions, although in actuality the department has been in service primarily for the Muslim majority. Cholil, S. (2010). Freedom and Religion or Belief in Indonesia and the Challenge of Muslim Exceptionalism. In S. Sinn & M.L. Sinaga (Eds.), *Freedom and Responsibility: Christian and Muslim Explorations* (pp. 117-134).

It is a reality with which humanity is being confronted through enhanced access to countries via modern transportation and shifting migratory patterns, the teleportation of the “human rights” concepts (and, by extension, identity rights) throughout the globe and instant access to inexhaustible information on any subject via the Internet. Consequently, I would submit that one of the “dilemmas” of modernity is the engagement with diversity and the encounter with the “other,” with such confrontations occurring on all levels of human engagement: interpersonal, group (e.g. organizational and national) and intergroup (e.g. global affairs). The KTP debate and Jokowi volte-face depict this reality.

Indonesia, with a population of approximately 237 million, comprised of over 200 ethnic groups diffused among the more than 13,000 islands in the archipelago, is confronting this particular modernity challenge on all levels and especially through the social identity group of religion. (Cholil, 2014; US State Department, 2012). It is a religiously plural state featuring a populous of 87% Muslim, 7% Protestant, 3% Roman Catholic and 1.5% Hindu. (US State Department, 2012). Other religious groups, such as Buddhists, Confucians, Christians of various denominations and those practicing *Aliran Kepercayaan* (traditional/indigenous belief systems) as well as non responders to the census, comprise 1.5% of the population. (Cholil, 2014;⁷⁸ US State Department, 2012). The country’s Muslim population is largely Sunni (≥204 million); the minority Muslim groups are Shiites (1-3 million) and Ahmadiyyas (200-400,000). It is estimated that 20 million Indonesians comprise those considered *Aliran Kepercayaan* practitioners; there are approximately 400 different such communities, primarily located in the islands of Java, Kalimantan and Papua. (US State Department, 2012). Many of these practitioners commingle their beliefs with one of the state recognized religions under which they register their religious identity. (US State Department, 2012; UGM Faculty personal communications, July 14, 17, 2014).

Somewhat reminiscent of S.J. Tambiah’s descriptors of the role and function of the Thai government in Thai Buddhist polity, the requirement of religious status on KTPs indicates the Indonesian state’s influential relationship on Indonesian religious perspectives and practices. (Tambiah, 1978; Bottomley, 2014; Sirry 2006). This is elucidated by the Indonesian constitution, “the State shall be based

78 Cholil notes that Buddhists comprise .6% and Confucians comprise .1% of the populous. Cholil, S. (2010). Freedom and Religion or Belief in Indonesia and the Challenge of Muslim Exceptionalism. In S. Sinn & M.L. Sinaga (Eds.), *Freedom and Responsibility: Christian and Muslim Explorations* (pp. 117-134). Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press/The Lutheran World Federation.

upon the belief in the One and Only God;” which significantly, the latter clause is the translation of the word *Allah* and the concept an influence of Islamic tenets. (Binawan, 2011). Pursuant to this constitutional value, the KTP is a symbolic conduit sanctioned and used by the State to designate, establish and confirm the religious commitments and identities of Indonesian citizenry via the requisite religious status designation. (Bottomley, 2014). The religious designation also has been selected by the Indonesian state to connote specific realities which, as the controversy motivating the Jokowi volte face indicates, many in the public have adopted and certain factions therein have expanded. It is the threat of subversion to the realities collectively signified by the KTP religious status requirement that is the source of the express resistance to its elimination.

The role of the KTP in Indonesian society and the current realities it conveys mushroomed during Suharto’s New Order regime.⁷⁹ The autocrat used it as a chief way to differentiate non-communists from any survivors of his communist purge or former members of the Indonesian communist party (PKI) banned under his regime.⁸⁰ (Bottomley, 2014; UGM Faculty personal communications, June 10, July 11, 14, 2014). Over a short period, the function of the KTP accelerated from preventing communism to include religious issues: in 1977, the state legislated the inclusion of religious affiliation on the KTP and in 1978, mandated its limitation to the state recognized religions. (Bottomley, 2014). To leave this status blank was tantamount to a declaration of atheism, which during the New Order equated communism, and triggered discrimination and possibly death. (Bottomley, 2014; UGM Faculty personal communications, June 10, July 11, 14, 2014). Such action accords with Bottomley’s explanation that the “KTP ensures a ‘proper’ Indonesia, one where authentic

79 Dr. Daniel C. Bottomley explains the ubiquity and importance of the KTP began in Suharto’s New Order; its progenitor used during the time of Sukarno was the innocuous *Kartu Keluarga* (Family Card), the most commonly used governmental identification card which simply contained a list of family births and deaths. Bottomley, D.C. (2014). The KTP Quandary: Islam, the Ahmadiyya, and the reproduction of Indonesian Nationalism. *Contemporary Islam: Dynamics of Muslim Life*, (pp. 10-12). doi:10.1007/s11562-014-0302-2

80 Those identified as former PKI affiliates or political prisoners received special demarcations on their cards and discrimination from Indonesian bureaucracies. The cards were mandated by the state to be carried at all times in certain regions of the nation. The ban on communism fostered a sense of national community, the aim of the Suharto government. Bottomley, D.C. (2014). The KTP Quandary: Islam, the Ahmadiyya, and the reproduction of Indonesian Nationalism. *Contemporary Islam: Dynamics of Muslim Life*, (pp. 10-12). doi:10.1007/s11562-014-0302-2

citizenry is produced and maintained.”⁸¹ (Bottomley, 2014). The fears of communism also commingled with those of secularization, a deplored condition identified with the West.⁸² (UGM Faculty personal communications, June 10, July 11, 14, 2014). Here began the symbiotic relationship between ideology, citizenry, anti-Westernization and religiosity in Indonesia, as represented by the KTP. It also codified the “otherizing” of those who were communist and/or not religious as well as their demotion to being suspect and less than Indonesian. With this understanding, the first and primary reality the KTP religious designation signifies is that Indonesia is both secular and communist free, meaning for one to avoid the epithet of communist or secular, one must present oneself as religious. (Bottomley, 2014; Binawan, 2011; UGM Faculty personal communications, June 10, July 11, 14, 2014). Moreover, through the [symbol of the] religious designation requirement on the KTP, all are reminded that these diversities are not acceptable.

Second, the religious designation of the KTP signifies the fact that Indonesia is a Muslim country, as indicated by the majority of Indonesians who designate Islam as their religion on their KTP and by extension, that the Sunni tradition is the superior and most orthodox and correct of all other Muslim schools. Moreover, it signifies that as the dominant religion, Islam is the most powerful, imbuing state governance with Muslim principles and values. (Picard, 2011; Sirry, 2006). This depiction of reality has been manifested particularly during in the period of the *Reformasi* (the era of the post Suharto New Order regime Reform). (Picard, 2011; Sirry, 2006). For example, the Indonesian Ministry of Religion was designed to provide a state apparatus for all the state sanctioned religions. However, in reality it has been in service primarily for the Muslim majority (Picard, 2011; Binawan, 2011; Sirry, 2013). As proponents of christening Islam the official religion of Indonesia, the Ministry has “framed and shaped” the country’s debates about religion through endeavoring to restrict the definition of legally qualifying religions to characteristics comporting with the Islamic view of legitimate religion, namely that which is “exclusivist, congregational, scripturalist and universalist,” as well as publically imposed their conception of state and religion relations. (Picard, 2011). This collective reality signified by the KTP also has been manifested

81 Bottomley, D.C. (2014). The KTP Quandary: Islam, the Ahmadiyya, and the reproduction of Indonesian Nationalism. *Contemporary Islam: Dynamics of Muslim Life*, (pp. 10-12). doi:10.1007/s11562-014-0302-2

82 Notably in his assessment of the history of the “civilizations,” Sam Huntington observes that all political ideologies, including Marxist thought, came from the West, whereas the world’s major religions came from the East. Huntington, S. (1996). *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

through other means, such as in the laws requiring both legal and community approval for the erection of non-Muslim religious spaces (i.e. Christian churches) near proximate mosques (distanced defined by regulation),⁸³ or in the prevailing understanding that employment with the government is largely reserved for Muslims, a trend that is facilitated and maintained via religious status disclosures on the KTP. (UGM Faculty personal communications, June 10, July 11, 14, 2014).

As the representatives of the dominant religion, Muslim stakeholders such as Majelis Ulama' Indonesia (Indonesian Ulama' Council or MUI) as well as the Muhammadiyah and the Nahdatul Ulama (NUI) have been influential in shaping the receptivity of the country to religious diversity and inclusion. The MUI is a state sponsored organization consisting of Islamic clerics and Muslim intellectuals seeking a more Islamic Indonesia, although it was founded to produce fatwas to advise the Muslim community about contemporary issues and mostly responds to governmental initiatives. (Cammack & Feener, 2012). It has a complex relationship with the state and society as it is not consistently in accord with either of their perspectives. (Sirry, 2013; Cammack & Feener, 2012). In July 2005, the MUI issued a fatwa banning secularism, religious pluralism and religious liberalism, stating it was *haram* for the Muslim community to follow such perspectives. (Sirry, 2013) The fatwa distinguishes between religious pluralism and plurality of religions, clarifying that the former focuses on the veracity of the religious truths (all religions are considered the same, truth is relative, therefore claims of exclusive truth are wrong) while the latter focuses on the existence of religions (acknowledgement of the reality that adherents of different religions may share a certain country or residential area). Of the two, it is plurality of religions, not religious pluralism that is acceptable to MUI. (Sirry, 2013). While this is a comprehensible distinction, however, in the realities of daily Indonesian life, these terms' referents are interchangeable for many. Regardless, in furtherance of their prevention of religious pluralism advancement, the MUI issued a fatwa banning Muslims from attending Christmas celebrations, interreligious prayer

83 It is the author's understanding that this legal requirement is limited to the island of Java and is not required for the erection of mosques. Due to the Muslim majority comprising the island, this requirement has been challenging to meet given the many mosques in the area, and thus, the erection of the religious spaces have been generally due to the goodwill and inclusive attitudes of the community. However, where the majority community has been resistant to the presence of other religious buildings in their locale, responses have included a refusal to grant the requisite permission, a reporting of the absence of the precursory permissions or a filing of allegations of improper documentation. (UGM Faculty personal communications, June 10, July 11, 14, 2014).

if led by a non Muslim and marrying non-Muslims.⁸⁴ (Sirry, 2013). The MUI also addressed the purity of its own tradition issuing a corollary fatwa stating the Ahmadiyah is not part of Islam because of their identification of the last prophet as someone other than the prophet Muhammad. (Sirry, 2013). Ironically however, the power of the KTP designation has thwarted the impact of this ruling to some degree. Through the self-selection process for the KTP religious designation a member of the Ahmadiyah sect, choosing Islam as their religion can be legitimized in the eyes of the government process although perhaps not in those of the [Sunni] ulama or Sunni influenced government. (Bottomley, 2014). Bottomley characterizes this activity as the “Islam-KTP” phenomenon, which references an individual who is Muslim in KTP name only. (Bottomley, 2014). And due to this capacity for self-selection, one’s KTP declaration of religious identity can become disingenuous, misrepresenting both the citizen’s beliefs as well as the total number of Indonesian Muslims. But as being Muslim can be a smart and advantageous matter of civic survival, there emerges a necessary discrepancy between one’s personal (individual) and one’s public (governmental) religious life; all due to the signification of the KTP religious states designation and all it connotes.

In addition, the existence of Indonesian Muslim extremists groups such as the Front Pembela Islam (Islamic Defenders Front or “FPI”) and Negara Islam Indonesia (“NII”) confirm the signification of this reality. Each have been adamant against any belief or practice divergent from their interpretation of Islamic practice. (Rohmaniyah, I. & Woodward, M., 2012). Arguably fringe and admittedly comprising a small percentage of the populous, these groups are highly influential despite their low numbers comparable to the rest of the populous, and are at times tacitly endorsed by the state. (Rohmaniyah, I. & Woodward, M., 2012). Collectively, this has resulted in hate speech and violent attacks against those deemed deviant from their distinct Islamic values. In fact, the MUI’s fatwas and Indonesia’s blasphemy laws also

84 While these fatwas are mentioned for illustrative purposes, the author is careful to note Dr. Mun’im Sirry’s provision of context for the MUI fatwa forbidding Muslims to participate in Christmas celebrations. He states that the “fatwa was not born in a vacuum, but shaped by a long history of Muslim-Christian evangelical rivalry in Indonesia since the beginning of the twentieth century;” which intensified during the conversions of former communist Indonesians to Christianity which Muslims, despite also having converts, viewed as a threat. Sirry indicates this fatwa was motivated by suspicions of any means of proselytization of Muslims, and “issued at a time of intense mistrust between Muslims and Christians.” Like Indonesia’s practice of religious categorization, this rivalry has part of its roots in the practices of the Dutch colonial government. For further information on this subject, see Sirry, M.A. (2013). Fatwas and their controversy: The case of the Council of Indonesian Ulama (MUI). *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 44(1), 100-117.

have been cited as provocateurs of interreligious discrimination and violence. (Bottomley, 2014; US Commission on International Religious Freedom, 2013). As a reminder, these are the very concerns allegedly cited by the Jokowi campaign for the removal of the religious status designation, which other civic stakeholders also stated. In fact, rumors have abounded, reportedly, of the KTP being used to ascertain whom to attack during bouts of religious violence in Indonesia as well as to determine access to employment in civil service positions, education in preferred schools and other civic benefits. (Bottomley, 2014; US State Department, 2012; UGM Faculty R. Panggabean, personal communications, July 17 2014; S. Cholil, M, M.I. Ahnaf, personal communications, July, 14, 2014).

Indonesia's wrestling with this particular modernity dilemma of religious diversity and inclusion has not been a private matter. It has been witnessed on the international and regional human rights scene due to Indonesia's membership in various international organizations. Because Indonesia is a member of the United Nations, it is beholden to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR); as it is a member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and identifies as a Muslim [representative] country, it is obligated to the Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights (UIDHR) and is a signatory of the Cairo Declaration of Islamic Human Rights, respectively;⁸⁵ and due to its membership in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), it is a signatory to the Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok Declarations. (Binawan, 2011). As Dr. Alexius Andang L. Binawan outlines, each set of declarations hold differing views on the concepts of deity and religion, rights to religious freedom and the relationship between religion and the state. Despite being a signatory of all three declarations however, Indonesia has used Islamic parameters in its determinations of state sanctioned religions as well as its rejection of atheism and its historical resistance to recognizing *Aliran Kepercayaan* as religion. (Binawan, 2011).⁸⁶ Of significant note is the marker of

85 In his article "Declarations and the Indonesian Constitution on Religious Freedom," Binawan explains the Cairo Declaration of Islamic Human Rights was signed by the official representatives of the Muslim countries, and that the UIDHR is considered complementary to the Cairo Declaration because of the similarity of ideas contained therein. Indonesia is a signatory of both. Binawan, A.A.L. (2011). Declarations and the Indonesian Constitution on Religious Freedom. *Al-Jami'ah*, 49(2), 361-392.

86 In his article on Indonesia and Human Rights, Binawan explains that while the contents of Indonesia's constitutional granting of the religious rights to embrace ones religion and to worship are similar to the international standard (UNHR) and broader than those afforded in Islam, it has used Islamic parameters in determining religions and emphasizing the monotheistic character of its recognized deity. He also posits the influences of Islam in the state's limitations on the propagation of religion as well as the intervention of the state in each religion, especially in Islamic affairs. Binwan asserts that this is closer to the Islamic model of governance as opposed to the 'universalist' model which prefers

flexibility in its recognition of Buddhism and Hinduism. (Binawan, 2011).

Upon review of all these factors, Jokowi's volte-face is comprehensible as the religious status designation required by the KTP is laden with the signification of ideology, citizenry, nationality and anti Westernization, and if one is Sunni Muslim, also of dominance, superiority and religious orthodoxy and correctness. It also indicates how the KTP's religious status designation embodies difference and otherizing. In light of this, the mandated self-designation of religion status enables the state and society to monitor these signifiers because much more than census data is collected via this identity card mechanism. Indeed, in Indonesia religion is a cultural system, in accordance with Geertz's description of such in his seminal anthropological theory. (Geertz, 1973). The religious status of the KTP also symbolizes a particular role and function of religion, which as Geertz explains, is to address humanity's needs for meaning - particularly in the quotidian aspects of life - as well as to provide anxiety management for its existential angst. (Geertz, 1973). The irony is while under this rubric religion is designed to keep the [psychological] societal order, Indonesia is struggling with the anxiety evoked by the religious diversity and the demand for religious inclusion in its midst, particularly notable within its Muslim community. Due to this, its responsive coping mechanisms to this anxiety may include religiously intolerant, exclusionary, contradictory and/or discriminatory practices, policies or religious edicts as well as the hate speech and violence.⁸⁷ (Cholil, 2012; Rohmaniyah &

the separation of religion and state. But, he also argues the state's emphasis on the importance of national stability and religious harmony can be characterized as the Asian view on human rights, which emphasizes cultural relativity: a value mentioned in the Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok Declarations. Binawan, A.A.L. (2011). Declarations and the Indonesian Constitution on Religious Freedom. *Al-Jami'ah*, 49(2), 361-392; see generally A. Stephan. (2011). The Multiple Secularisms of Modern Democratic and Non-Democratic Regimes. In C. Calhoun, C. Juergensmeyer, J. VanAntwerpen (Eds), *Rethinking Secularism*. (pp. 114-144).

- 87 For example, while Indonesia's 1974 Marriage law does not expressly forbid interfaith or interreligious marriages, it mandates that marriage ceremonies must be conducted in accordance with a state sanctioned religion before it can be registered. While facially neutral, it has a disparate impact as some of these religions forbid marrying outside the faith (for example the MUI issued a fatwa forbidding Muslims from marrying non-Muslims). This has resulted in a commonly known practice that in Indonesia interreligious or interfaith marriages are forbidden. In response, the betrothed either will temporarily convert to net religious homogeneity, reverting back to the preferred religion after the nuptials are completed, or travel outside the country to be married as marriages performed in other countries are recognized by Indonesia. Sirry, M.A. (2013). Fatwas and their controversy: The case of the Council of Indonesian Ulama (MUI). *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 44(1), 100-117; see also Cholil, S. (2009). The Politico-Religious Contestation Hardening of the Islamic Law on Muslim-non-Muslim marriage in Indonesia. In G.W Jones, C. H. Leng, et al. (Eds.), *Muslim-Non-Muslim Marriage: Political*

Woodward, 2012; Berger, 1977; Bottomley, 2014; Binawan, 2011; Picard, 2011; Sirry, 2013; Sirry, 2006).

However, because religion serves a cultural function, Geertz argues that it also operates both as an interpreter and a shaper of the social and psychological processes of its creators and adherents. (Geertz, 1973). It is a rubric from which social and psychological functions flow. As a result, religion does not have to be [only] a hindrance to religious diversity and inclusion within such a system, it can become its ally and advocate. As verification of this, religion is currently functioning as both in Indonesian society, and paradigmatic of this dialectal conflict is Indonesia's participation in somewhat conflicting international and regional declarations.⁸⁸ As such, how could this state not lead to an atmosphere of equivocation? It is for this reason Geertz's theory, while useful for understanding religion's function as a monolithic entity, is not able to address the complexities that arise within the kiln of religious diversity that is the reality within the Indonesian Muslim community and starkly apparent in the larger Indonesian religious community.⁸⁹ Moreover, the social and psychological processes present within Indonesia's cultural collective are not all uniform. It is therefore misaligned with the current realities of religious diversity as illustrated by Indonesian society.

Yet, Geertz's theory does underscore that as a cultural system, religion is comprised of a "system of symbols" created by humans. (Geertz, 1973). And as a product of the creative process, religion and its role can be reimaged and redefined as often as necessary to respond

and Cultural Contestations in Southeast (pp. 139-160). Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. Or the lack of meaningful state recognition of practitioners of *Aliran Kepercayaan*. Picard, M. (2011). *Introduction: 'Agama', 'adat', and Pancasila*. In M. Picard & R. Madinier (Eds.), *The Politics of Religion in Indonesia: Syncretism, orthodoxy, and religious contention in Java and Bali* (pp. 1-20). Abington, Oxon: Routledge.

88 As aforementioned, Binawan delineates Indonesia's signatory membership in various international declarations based on its nationality, ethnicity and religiosity, respectively, and diagnoses how these obligations can be contradictory in key aspects. Binawan, A.A.L. (2011). *Declarations and the Indonesian Constitution on Religious Freedom*. *Al-Jami'ah*, 49(2), 361-392

89 And by way of further illustration, despite Dr. Clifford Geertz's familiarity with Indonesia, his theory neglects the tensions resulting from the practice of *Aliran Kepercayaan* as well as the underlying conflict between "religion" or "agama" (e.g. Islam) and "belief" (*kepercayaan*), which it has settled by officially recognizing and sanctioning the former and diminishing the latter through actions arguably described as demotive. For more information about the Indonesia's particular distinction between religion (*agama*) and belief (*kepercayaan*), as well as the distribution of power, agency and benefits ascribed between each, see Picard, M. (2011). *Introduction: 'Agama', 'adat', and Pancasila*. In M. Picard & R. Madinier (Eds.), *The Politics of Religion in Indonesia: Syncretism, orthodoxy, and religious contention in Java and Bali* (pp. 1-20). Abington, Oxon: Routledge.

to the evolving social and psychological processes of the collective. Accordingly, Indonesia can recreate religion (namely, what constitutes *agama* or do away altogether with distinguishing between religion and belief) and its role in society in order to have a more inclusive country where religious minorities are treated equitably and religious difference is not threatening or ascribed disparate power or dominion. Of strongest support of this ability to create is Geertz's assertion that the symbol and its referents are not identical. This assertion is the linchpin in the cornerstone of his theory of religion as a cultural system, and its veracity creates the room between symbol and reality for the alchemy necessary for religious inclusiveness to occur.

Samuel Huntington's post Cold War theory that global affairs will take the form of civilizational identity development, engagement and conflicts (Huntington, 1996) also does not incorporate the Indonesian realities of religious diversity symbolized by the KTP debate and Jokowi volte-face. Heralded as the "Clash of the Civilizations," Huntington argues that the post Cold War global scene will be "multipolar" and "multicivilizational" with humanity organized and identified by "civilizations" - serving as the basis of conflict - instead of ideology, nationality or economics, the identity organizing principles of the Cold War.⁹⁰ Further, he argues that religious difference is a distinguishing and determinative characteristic of civilizations, and as such, six of the eight civilizations he demarcates as culturally distinguishable by their religion. (Huntington, 1996). However, Huntington misinterprets the composition of post Cold War conflict presuming it will be informed according to his designation of civilizational identities, chiefly demarcated by a uniformly practiced religion. And as such, conflicts would occur across civilizations, and particularly religions, and not within them. According to Huntington's prediction, Indonesia would have no internal conflict as it constitutes both an Islamic civilization and an Asian civilization. However, Indonesia disproves his case, as its social identity based conflicts have abounded in both its Asian and Islamic civilization matrixes. Indonesia's Muslim community particularly illustrates this due to its intragroup diversity and attendant

90 Huntington delineates the following as the eight post Cold War civilizations: Sinic (Chinese), Japanese, Hindu, Islamic (comprised of Arab, Turkic, Persian and Malay), Western (comprised Europe, North America and the "European Settler Countries" Australia and New Zealand), Orthodox (comprised of Byzantine/Russian), Latin America and "possibly" Africa. He posits that the post Cold War era will be hallmarked by the emerging assertiveness by Asian and Islamic civilizations of their superiority to the West (which Huntington states "arguably" includes Latin America) and the collective resistance of non Western civilizations to the hegemonic power of the West as they grow in economic power and cultural pride. According to Huntington's criteria, Indonesia constitutes both Islamic and Asian civilizations. Huntington, S. (1996). *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

conflicts, assortatively found among the traditionalists located in the NU; the modernists, both conservative and liberal/expansive, located in the Muhammadiyah; as well as the Sunni, Shia, Ahmadiyah and the Muslim extremists. (Sirry, 2006; Rohmaniyah, I. & Woodward, M., 2012). Hence Huntington's prescience was amiss: the post Cold War conflicts he foresaw were tragically misplaced, relegated only to the arena between civilizations. Indonesia's intra-religious diversity is in direct opposition to Huntington's uniform categorization of civilizations, and in converse of his own schema, Indonesia's current religious habitat indicates that conflict can occur within civilizations as well as between them.

The 2014 Indonesian presidential election underscored the national import of the KTP debate as symbolized through the Jokowi's volte-face. As it illustrated, the KTP debate signifies Indonesia's confrontation with its religious diversity as well as its wrestling with religious inclusion, a collective critical "dilemma of modernity" not referenced by Berger, foreseen by Huntington or accommodated by Geertz's model. Therefore Indonesia must find its own way to respond to this reality, with its unique dialectic of Islamic proclivities, national universalistic aspirations (as embodied in the value of *Pancasila*) and "Indonesian" identity formation within its democratic pronouncement of human rights and religious freedom so that religious diversity can exist in an inclusive environment. To do this requires the political and social will to unshackle religion from its current referents of ideology, nationalism, citizenry, secularization, Westernization and exclusivity and to create new meanings for current symbols or entirely new symbols altogether. And while this may not be easy, as Indonesia is in the midst of developing its democratic identity, now is the perfect time to do so.

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