

who argues for the existence of distinct strategic cultures” (p. 267). But it would have been even more insightful for contributors themselves to include sections on methods of strategic analyses, as only Evans does so in his chapter on irregular warfare in Asia (pp. 251–256).

In the end, *Strategy in Asia* remains an impressive collection of insights by experts employing strategic studies to the Asian context. Strategic studies, as an interdisciplinary academic and applied field, does, indeed, add value to the study of Asia, both past and present, for strategy is universal as well as contextual (p. ix). Before getting to the substance of the volume’s subject matter, however, the reader would be well advised to develop a clear understanding of strategy itself, which Colin Gray defines in his chapter on strategy and culture as “the direction and use made of force, and the threat of force, for the purposes of policy as decided by politics” (p. 94). By studying core texts of strategy—by Thucydides, Sun Tzu, Clausewitz, and Gray—one may develop the “balance [which] is required for a reliable understanding of strategy” (p. 97), including in the Indo-Pacific.

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Islam and Democracy in Indonesia: Tolerance Without Liberalism. New York: Cambridge University Press. 224 pages. ISBN 978-1-107-11914-7, \$99.99 (Hardcover). Jeremy Menchik. 2016.

Ever since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, there is a burgeoning of new scholarship that seeks to address whether or not Islam is compatible with democracy and, if it is, to explain the sociopolitical contexts conducive for the adoption of democratic values and practices in Islamic societies.

Jeremy Menchik’s *Islam and Democracy in Indonesia*, which uses an eclectic mix of theoretical and methodological approaches, is one of the latest books on this topic. The author focuses on how tolerance—one of democracy’s main characteristics—is socially constructed in a non-Western society where “religion is central to politics rather than relegated to the public sphere” (p. 3). Menchik argues that it is possible for Islamic actors and organizations to institutionalize tolerance within their societies; however, their conception of tolerance differs from those based on liberal assumptions prevailing in secular Western societies. This conception, labeled by the author as “communal tolerance,” prioritizes group rights over individual rights. This kind of tolerance can be unequal as some religious minorities, but not others, may be tolerated better by the majority religious groups.

Menchik compares how three Indonesian-based Islamic organizations—the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, and the Islamic Union (Persis)—understand the concept of tolerance as it evolves over nearly a century, specifically from the Dutch colonial period to the contemporary, post-*Reformasi* Indonesia. He argues that the understanding of tolerance is affected by three causal

factors: historical interactions between an Islamic group and religious minorities; whether or not members of the majority and minority groups share a similar ethnicity; and the level of state support for religious minorities. To find empirical support for his argument, Menchik skillfully combines several research methodologies—primary historiography, political ethnography, discourse analysis, and an opinion survey of senior leaders and activists from the three organizations.

Through his historical narratives, Menchik explains why Indonesian Islamic groups are able to tolerate “mainstream” religious minorities such as Christians and Balinese Hindus, while simultaneously displaying intolerance toward the Ahmadis, a Muslim minority sect, and toward Indonesian atheists. It is not theological differences, but rather the political interactions within these groups within a specific time period, that best explain the development of tolerant or intolerant attitudes toward religious minorities. For instance, the groups developed an intolerant attitude toward Christians during the 1920s and 1930s because the Dutch government financially supported Christian missionaries and the construction of Christian schools and churches. This intolerance, however, gave way to more tolerant attitudes during the 1950s as Islamic groups sought an alliance with Christians in their political struggle against a bigger political rival—the Indonesian Communist Party. Nonetheless, the three Islamic groups developed intolerant, and at times hostile, attitudes against the Ahmadis because the sect claims that its founder is a new prophet—a clear theological heresy within Islam.

Despite their differences, the Islamic groups managed to develop a common platform that Menchik calls “Godly nationalism,” defined as “an imagined community bound by a common, orthodox theism, and mobilized through the state in cooperation with religious organizations” (p. 72). Building state institutions that regulated religious affairs in Indonesia led to the requirement that a faith community should have “a belief in the existence of One Supreme God, a holy book, and a prophet” (p. 135) to be classified as an official religion in Indonesia. By this requirement, Muslim sects like the Ahmadis and other beliefs are prevented from ever gaining the status of an “official religion” in Indonesia.

This requirement institutionalized the Indonesian Muslims’ attitudes toward minority groups that should be tolerated (e.g., Christians) and those that should not (e.g., Ahmadis). Menchik’s survey of NU, Muhammadiyah, and Persis activists showed that while the activists were more tolerant toward Christians, they were much less tolerant of the Ahmadis and atheists or communists. This tolerance, however, is conditioned on communal, rather than individual, rights. The survey showed that while 86% of respondents believed that Christians are allowed to hold public office, only 29% would accept the election of a Christian as an Indonesian president. Despite such limitations, Menchik concludes that it would be a mistake to consider communal tolerance as inconsistent with democracy. Instead, he argues that communal tolerance needs to be seen as part of an effort by Indonesian Islamic organizations to mediate between “individual rights, communal rights, and sacred and secular laws” (p. 156).

Menchik’s work contributes new insight in the subfields of religion and politics, as well as Asian politics. First, it adds to the ongoing debate on whether Islam and democracy are compatible by focusing on Indonesia, the largest

Muslim-majority country in the world and one of the few successfully consolidated democracies in the Islamic world. While Menchik does not make a claim that Indonesia's experience with democratization can be easily replicated in other Muslim-majority countries, the book suggests a possible path by tracing the historical relationships between Islamic and non-Islamic groups in these societies.

Second, Menchik's adoption of an eclectic theoretical and methodological framework makes the book accessible to any scholar studying Islamic politics, religion and politics, and Asian politics, regardless of their disciplinary (social science vs. humanities), epistemological (positivist vs. post-structuralist), and methodological (quantitative vs. qualitative) preferences. Menchik's work can potentially contribute to a more interdisciplinary and ecumenical approach to the study of Islamic politics as opposed to one that is bifurcated along certain epistemological or methodological commitments.

Nevertheless, Menchik's study has several shortcomings of which two of the most serious ones are explained here. First, he assumes that the adaptation of the concept of "Godly nationalism" in Indonesia follows a linear progression from Indonesia's independence in 1945 to the present day. Other historical accounts (e.g., Elson, 2009; Ricklefs, 2012) indicate that this is a contested process and that Indonesian Muslims did not fully integrate their ideas with those of the country's secularized political elites until the late 1980s. Consequently, secularism, at least in its "passive" form, was more prevalent in Indonesian politics until the late Suharto period.

Second, Menchik seems to base his study primarily on the historical and survey accounts of leading Indonesian Islamic organizations, namely, NU, Muhammadiyah, and Persis. He did not pay much attention to how Indonesia's religious minorities think about the regime of "communal tolerance" promoted by the dominant Islamic organizations. Specifically, how do the religious minorities feel about being granted certain rights (e.g., religious freedom) while being denied others (e.g., restrictions on proselytization activities)? If representatives of minority groups prefer to see a state that guarantees most of these rights instead of partially recognizing them, it is conceivable that religious minorities would prefer a more "secularist" state instead of a "Godly nationalist" one.

Notwithstanding these shortcomings, Menchik's study is an invaluable contribution to the field of Islamic and Asian politics and is surely worth examining.

References

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