Islamic Populism in Indonesia and the Middle East

In a novel approach to the field of Islamic politics, this provocative new study compares the evolution of Islamic populism in Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, to the Middle East. Utilising approaches from historical sociology and political economy, Vedi Hadiz argues that competing strands of Islamic politics can be understood as the product of contemporary struggles over power and material resources and the result of conflict across a variety of social and historical contexts. Drawing from detailed case studies across the Middle East and Southeast Asia, the book engages with broader theoretical questions about political change in the context of socio-economic transformations and presents an innovative, comparative framework to shed new light on the diverse trajectories of Islamic politics in the modern world.

VEDI R. HADIZ is Professor of Asian Studies at the University of Melbourne.
Islamic Populism in Indonesia and the Middle East

Vedi R. Hadiz

Asia Institute, University of Melbourne
Asia Research Centre, Murdoch University
For Adi Hadiz (1956–2010), who is greatly missed
Contents

Acknowledgements  ix

1 Introduction  1
2 Islamic politics and the emergence of a new Islamic populism  20
3 The genesis of Islamic populism: historical legacies  48
4 Modernisation and the Cold War: paving the way  75
5 Pathways of political failure: dissent from the fringe  97
6 A study in political marginality: the Indonesian Darul Islam movement and its heirs  116
7 Navigating through democracy: a pathway to power?  137
8 Navigating through neoliberalism: a pathway to power?  159
9 Conclusion  184

Bibliography  190
Index  215
I owe a great debt to many individuals and institutions, in fact far too many to detail fully, in undertaking the research for and writing of this book. It is necessary to acknowledge, however, that the book would not have not been possible without the Future Fellowship generously awarded to me by the Australian Research Council from 2010 to 2014 (FT0991885). It would not have been conceivable either without the incredibly supportive environment provided by the Asia Research Centre at Murdoch University and the many wonderful colleagues there – past and present – with whom I have had the great pleasure of working. A past director of the Centre, Garry Rodan, was the first to prod me towards seriously working on a topic that I had been only mulling over previously. He and Kanishka Jayasuriya, along with Craig McGarty, were instrumental in getting me to finally formulate the related ideas in a far more coherent manner than I had attempted before. Richard Robison, with whom I have collaborated previously on a number of writings, provided many reliably critical comments on an earlier draft of this book that have improved its organisation and structure considerably. Another past director of the Asia Research Centre, Caroline Hughes, also fully encouraged my research, as has its current director, Kevin Hewison. Tamara Dent assisted greatly in handling many of the administrative matters related to launching the project and its maintenance in the early period, while Sia Kozlowska and Ingebjørg Scarpello have provided invaluable help towards its completion. I would also like to thank a number of postgraduate students at the Asia Research Centre for their able research assistance over the years, including Nicole Andres, Asep Iqbal, Yanti Muchtar, Diswandi, Airlangga Pribadi and Hikmawan Saefullah.

Andi Rahman Alamsyah has been an irreplaceable research assistant in Indonesia and someone who has adeptly accompanied my explorations of Islamic politics in a number of different locales in the country. I benefited greatly from his own expertise on the subject matter and his dazzling array of contacts. My investigations were also enriched by the knowledge and contacts provided by Usep Wiramiharja (without whom it would have been impossible to meet some key Darul Islam veterans) and by Beni Setiawan in Central Java and Yogyakarta (together with Khelmy Pribadi, Akhmad Ramdhon, Eko
Acknowledgements

Prasetyo and M. Fajar Shodiq), as well as Abdil Mughis, Farihin and my old friend in Medan, Elfenda Ananda.

In Turkey, my fieldwork benefited immeasurably from the research assistance and local know-how primarily provided by Harun Ercan. In Egypt, Abdulla Erfan and, subsequently, Mohamed Sulaiman provided the same kind of valuable assistance and knowledge. I thank all of them for helping me navigate through the intricacies of Turkish and Egyptian politics and societies, respectively, as well as for being the first people with whom I usually tested – in conversations over meals – ideas pertaining to their countries. In the course of conducting research, I also carried out more limited fieldwork in Tunisia and Morocco. The assistance and guidance provided respectively by Bouaicha Béchir and Amal Bakkali Hassani are greatly appreciated. Without the help and thoughtfulness of all of the named individuals in these countries, it would have been far more difficult to develop the comparative framework that I offer in this book.

Among the institutions to which I owe a great debt, Labsosio at the Department of Sociology, University of Indonesia, stands out for its assistance in managing my fieldwork facility. I also thank the Institute of Developing Economies in Tokyo – particularly Khoo Boo Teik, who was formerly based there and with whom I enjoyed collaboration on an edited book that partly came out of my Future Fellowship as well. An invitation from the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (EHESS) in Paris provided a lovely milieu where I was able to put together the first full draft of the book in early 2014. I am particularly grateful to my hosts there, Rémy Madinier and Andrée Feillard. I must also acknowledge the role of the National University of Singapore’s Department of Sociology – the seeds of ideas to be developed much more fully at Murdoch originated during my last couple of years of teaching there; as well as the Institute of Social Studies in Holland, the Department of Sociology at the University of Indonesia and the Centre of Southeast Asian Studies at the University of Kyoto, where I spent several months each in 2009 – quite unintentionally preparing myself for what would soon become a multiyear project. Thank you as well to Cambridge University Press, particularly to Lucy Rhymer, for supporting the publication of this book and to the anonymous referees that provided insightful comments and much appreciated encouragement.

Last but not least, I thank my family for tolerating work habits that invariably involved long absences and too many hours in front of the laptop while at home. Thank you as always to Lina and Karla!