

CATHOLICS, MUSLIMS, AND GLOBAL POLITICS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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Abstract

This article discusses the role of Catholics, Muslims, and civic associations in the global politics of the Philippines and Indonesia. The two countries have shared in common with regard to the geographical feature (both are archipelagic countries), the diversity of societies and cultures, and the history of colonialism, dictatorship, ethno-religious violence, and political movement, to name but a few. In addition to their similarities, both countries also have significant differences in particular pertaining to religious dominance (the Philippines dominated by Catholicism, while Indonesia by Islam) and the structure of their societies: while the Philippines is a class-stratified society, Indonesia has long been ideologized by colonial and post-colonial religious and political powers. Apart from their parallels and distinctions, religion—both Catholicism and Islam—has marvellous role, negatively or positively, in global politics and public cultures, indicating its vigor and survival in global political domains. This comparative paper, more specifically, examines the historical dynamics of the interplay between religion, civil society, and political activism by using the Philippines and Indonesia as a case study and point of analysis.

¹ I wish to express my deepest thanks to Robert W. Hefner for his guidance and mentorship during my uneasy doctoral study at Boston University, in which the draft of this article was composed, and secondly to R. Scott Appleby at the University of Notre Dame for providing a research fellowship at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, which enable me to develop and finish this piece.

[Artikel ini mendiskusikan peran Katolik, Muslim dan asosiasi warga dalam politik global di dua negara; Indonesia dan Filipina. Kedua negara tersebut memiliki kesamaan, baik dalam hal ciri geografis sebagai negara kepulauan, keragaman masyarakat dan budayanya, sejarah kolonialisme, pemerintahan diktator, kekerasan etnik-agama, serta gerakan keagamaan. Terlepas dari kesamaan tersebut, keduanya memiliki perbedaan, utamanya menyangkut agama dominan (di Filipina didominasi oleh Katolik, sementara di Indonesia oleh Islam) dan struktur masyarakatnya (Filipina ditandai dengan stratifikasi masyarakat berdasarkan kelas sosial, sementara di Indonesia ditandai dengan ideologi agama kolonial, paska-kolonial, politik). Terlepas dari kesamaan dan perbedaan antara keduanya, agama -baik Katolik maupun Islam- memainkan peran penting, baik negatif maupun positif, dalam politik global dan budaya publik. Ini menandai kuatnya peran agama di kedua negara itu. Artikel ini menggunakan analisis perbandingan, utamanya terhadap dinamika sejarah hubungan antara agama, masyarakat sipil, dan aktivisme politik.]

Keywords: Catholicism, Islam, civil society, the Philippines, Indonesia

A. Introduction

In the 2009 roundtable discussion held by Boston University's Institute on Culture, Religion, and World Affairs, Peter L. Berger (b. 1929), the founder of the Institute and one of the world's prominent sociologists of religion, told the audience that he once saw a car with a pamphlet mentioning "Nietzsche is dead!". What the writer meant was certainly not the death of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche since he passed away in 1900, but the demise of his idea that claimed the "death of God,"² Berger mentioned. Recalling Nietzsche's audacious slogan, *Time Magazine* starkly printed "Is God Dead?" on its cover of 8 April 1966 edition by which the magazine addressed the growing atheism among Americans at the time. Two years later, through *New York Times*, Berger also predicted the sinking of religious influence, which later he

² This phrase first appeared in *The Gay Science* (Section 108). It is also found in Nietzsche's philosophical novel *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (German: *Also Sprach Zarathustra*), transl. Alexander Tille (New York and London: Macmillan, 1896).

admitted as erroneous.³

Since the emergence of secularisation that predicted the marginalization –if not to mention the end- of religion as logical consequence of modernity, many scholars, scientists and theologians had sided with the wave of secularisation thesis. Berger was among Western social scientists who previously keenly cheered the prediction of the end of religion in 21st century; that is losing its influence and role in politics, economics, and cultures. Responding to this trend, Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart in 2004 aptly wrote: “the death of religion was the conventional wisdom in the social sciences during most of the twentieth century.”⁴

As a result of these thesis and theories of modernization in general, debates among social scientists over the role of faith in politics and public cultures had inclined to be dominated by anti-religion specialists. However, it is recently that religion comes to appear in the academia and scholarly forums, directing the secularisation thesis to the other way around. The acknowledgement over the role of religion and its contribution to modern public cultures and politics began to come into a view when Western academic circles, particularly in the 1990s, notified to the so-called “the resurgent of religion”⁵ or, in the phrase of Georgetown sociologist, Jose Casanova, the coming of “public religion.”⁶ In other words, Berger mentioned as the “de-secularisation of the world”⁷ and the corrosion of secularisation theories.

However, the above pessimistic views toward the role of religion in public domains are highly influence by the Western context where religion had long become a source of calamity, bloodshed, despotism, and undemocratic political power. Muslim societies, by contrast, historically

³ Peter Berger, “A Bleak Outlook Is Seen for Religion,” *New York Times*, February 25 (1968), p. 3.

⁴ Pippa Norris dan Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 3.

⁵ See for example, Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Samuel Shah, *God’s Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011).

⁶ Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

⁷ Peter L. Berger (ed.), *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Washington, D.C.: Eerdmans/Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1999).

had no experience of a large-scale intra-religious violence such as the European wars of religion, a series of wars waged in Europe from ca. 1524 to 1697 following the onset of the Protestant Reformation in Western and Northern Europe. It is then understandable why the idea of religious freedom as well as of “religious bitterness” is not so strong in the Muslim world. On the contrary, by the Western supporters of secularisation theories, religion was portrayed, more or less, as the “burning motivation, the one that inspired fanatical devotion and the most vicious hatred” in the wars that plagued Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. As a result, despite the fact that billions of people structure their daily routines around the spiritual practices enjoined by a religious tradition, the backers of secularisation theories, in the words of prominent historian of religion Scott Appleby tend to “overlook or underestimate the complex, multiple roles and functions of religion in societies populated by believers who reserve final obedience to a sovereign deity or by adherents of a spiritual order.”⁸

Another objection to those who would increase the role of religion in public affairs, including the creation of public cultures of civility, common good, democracy, and peacemaking, as Scott Appleby has rightly pointed out, is the “persistence of religiously motivated conflict, intolerance, and anti-pluralist movements among some social groupings operating apart from (and sometimes in rebellion against) the state and government.” In brief, “relocating religion’s public expressions to the nongovernmental domain of civil society,” Appleby continued to argue, “did not remove the problem of religious violence, albeit fighting [“on behalf of God”] has been more ubiquitous in societies lacking strong civic institutions and social tradition of pluralism and tolerance.”⁹ In recent decades, violent conflicts and extremism in various part of the world, from Northern Ireland, the Philippines, the Balkans, Sudan, Iran, Kashmir, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Pakistan, to Indonesia, to name but a few, has been cloaked, in whole or in part, in religious dress.

Without a doubt, the dreadful record of religiously inspired radicalism and repression makes a more complicated picture of religious

⁸ R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), pp. 2-3.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

agency. On one hand, religion in some countries did contribute to the creation of intolerance and tyranny, and the initiation and escalation of communal strife. On the other hand, it played a great role in nonviolent movements, democratic civilian protests, and peace building processes in societies undergoing social discords as in the case of the Philippines, Indonesia, South Africa, and many others. Moreover, religion also contributed to the creation of democratic state and egalitarian political system. Unfortunately, religious teachings not only preach tolerance and advocate forgiveness and mercy in the face of opposition. The idea of killing, bigotry, and fanaticism is also abhorrent to all religious traditions. Despite the overwhelming peacefulness of every religious tradition, however, the fact remains that they are also filled with the symbols and language of violence.¹⁰ While some religious leaders use (or misuse) religious teachings and normative discourses to support their violent acts, radicalism, and tyranny, others utilize and “exploit” religion to sustain their nonviolent, peaceful, democratic, and pluralist movements.

Scott Appleby classifies religion used for supporting violence as a “weak religion,” in contrast to a “strong religion” which promotes conciliation, equality, pluralism, and other human’s universal values. Religion becomes “weak,” where it as an independent cultural and social presence has been weakened by oppression, a history of subordination to hostility, or by losing the struggle with the forces of modernization. When religion becomes “weak,” it is easy to use it as a vehicle of conflict and violence.¹¹ This is precisely what happened, for instance, in Maluku. In this archipelagic province, where communal violence between Muslims and Christians steadily fought each other for more than four years from 1999 to 2004, the weakening processes of Christianity and Islam by political power began since the time of Islamic sultanates (i.e. Tidore, Ternate, Bacan, and Jailolo in the northern part of Maluku) and European and Japanese colonialism until the New Order dictatorial regime.¹²

¹⁰ See for instance Mark Juergensmeyer and Margo Kitts (eds.), *Princeton Readings in Religion and Violence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011); R. Scott Appleby (ed.), *Spokesmen for the Despised: Fundamentalist Leaders of the Middle East* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1997).

¹¹ R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence*, pp. 77-8.

¹² I have discussed this issue in my dissertation titled “Interreligious Violence, Civic Peace, and Citizenship: Christians and Muslims in Maluku, Eastern Indonesia,

As the outcome of inconsistencies and incoherence within secularisation theory itself and as a result of the growth of “religious resurgence” and “public religion,” the classical variant of secularisation theory has been subjected to extensive criticism. The sociologist Peter Berger once said that believing in the secularisation thesis as a “big mistake,” albeit he previously supported the theory.¹³ It is certainly a “big mistake” in part because such a theory, when it first emerged, did not count facts of non-Western societies. In many societies, dress, eating habits, gender relations, democratic protests, popular movements, collective violence, conflict resolution, and peace building—all unfold beneath a so-called a “sacred canopy.” Around much of the world, politics and civil society are also suffused with religion. The case of the Philippines and Indonesia discussed in this article also proved the significance of religion in a public domain. The collective conflict, democratic movements, and peace building processes took place on the ground in the two archipelagic nations were concealed in religious garb. Hence, “if the core of the secularisation thesis remains intact,” Scott Appleby has remarked, “its corollaries require revision.”¹⁴

The secularisation thesis undeniably needs to be revised since it has proven a poor guide to global historical reality. In *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics*, Monica Toff, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Shah correctly state that “over the past four decades, religion’s influence on politics has reversed its decline and become more powerful on every continent and across every major world religion...religion has come to exert its influence in parliaments, presidential palaces, lobbyists’ offices, campaigns, militant training camps, negotiation rooms, protest rallies, city squares, and dissident jail cells... Once private, religion has gone public. Once passive, religion is now assertive and engaged. Once local, it is now global. Once subservient to the powers that be, religion has often become ‘prophetic’ and resistant to politicians at every level.”¹⁵ This article, in some part, is an effort to criticize the mainstream variant of secularisation theory and demonstrate the continuing vitality of religious traditions and

Boston University, Department of Anthropology, 2012.

¹³ Peter L. Berger (ed.), *The Desecularization of the World*.

¹⁴ R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence*, p. 4.

¹⁵ Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Samuel Shah, *God's Century*, pp. 2-3.

institutions in the modern world. It provides another compelling evidence of “religious resurgence” in global politics, especially in Southeast Asian archipelagos of the Philippines and Indonesia.

B. The Philippines: Catholics and Political Movement

Of all Southeast Asian countries, Republic of the Philippines (Filipino: *Republika ng Pilipinas*), the world’s 12th most populous country with some 92 million populations and one of the richest areas of biodiversity in the planet, has provided a unique feature with regard to the issues of ethno-religious identity, history of colonialism, and experiences of democracy. This predominantly Roman Catholic archipelagic state, for instance, had been the only country in Southeast Asia that experienced the longest colonialism of Spain and later the United States after this country defeated Spaniards in the four months of wars in 1898, as an outcome of American intervention in the ongoing Cuban War of Independence against Spanish rule.¹⁶ Aside from the brief period of Japanese occupation, the United States retained sovereignty over the archipelago until the end of World War II when the Philippines gained independence. Since then, the Philippines has faced a number of serious challenges, including Muslim resistance in Mindanao and sporadic cases of communist insurgency. In addition, the nation has had often tumultuous experiences with democracy and citizenship, and with popular people power movements overthrowing a dictatorship in one instance but also underlining the institutional weaknesses of its constitutional republics in others.

It is commonly known that colonialism had always profound effects to the formation of politics, religiosity, cultures, systems/structures,

¹⁶ Prior to the Spanish colonization, Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan arrived in the Philippines in 1521 and claimed the islands of Spain. Colonization began, however, when Spanish explorer Miguel Lopez de Legaspi arrived from Mexico in 1565 and formed the first European settlements in Cebu. In 1571, the Spaniards established Manila as the capital of the Spanish East Indies. By the turn of the 19th century, as a result of the Spanish-American War, the United States defeated the Spaniards and began to colonize the Philippines. On the history of the Philippines, see for instance, Onofre Corpuz, *The Roots of the Filipino Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2007); Luis Francia, *History of the Philippines: From Indios Bravos to Filipinos* (New York: The Overlook Press, 2010); Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America’s Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1990).

and divisions of colonized societies. Like elsewhere in the world, as an outcome of the colonization, particularly since the mid-19th century, the Philippine peoples (i.e. Filipinos) have been the most severely class-stratified in Southeast Asia. Such class-based stratification was mostly the product of the “Spanish creation” of social class within the Philippine societies. European immigration to the Philippines, for instance, created a new class of Criollos and Mestizos. The Criollos or Creole peoples were a social class in the caste system of the overseas colonies established by the Spain in the 16th century not only in the Philippines but also in Latin America, comprising the locally-born people of pure or mostly Spanish ancestry. In the Philippines, the Criollos referred to the archipelago-born Spaniards. The Mestizos, moreover, referred to Filipinos of mixed ingenious Malayan, European, or Chinese ancestry. This term is traditionally used in Spain or Latin America for people of mixed heritage or decent. When Spaniards opened the country’s harbors to world trade in the mid-19th century, the economy increased; consequently many Criollos and Mestizos became new wealthy family, well-established society, and respected business class that later had been one of the major players in the country’s post-independence politics.¹⁷

Despite its massive impacts on local societies, the Spanish colonialism actually only reached the northern regions of the Philippines, which are dominated by Roman Catholics. In other words, although Spanish colonizers had consolidated their hold on the northern tier of the country by 1600, they never accomplished the complete subjugation of the Muslim south. Accordingly, Muslims, comprising some 5% of the country’s total population and are geographically concentrated in the southwest Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago, are distinguished from Christian Filipinos in the north not only by their profession of Islam but also by their evasion of three hundred years of Spanish colonial domination.¹⁸ Against this backdrop, it is therefore doubtful when Mindanao’s Muslim leaders such as Hasyim Salamat (d. 2003) of the

¹⁷ Onofre Corpuz, *The Roots of the Filipino*; Luis Francia, *History of the Philippines*.

¹⁸ The historian Anthony Reid said that Islam appears to have first reached the Sulu archipelago in the late 14th century by way of the extensive trade networks of the Malay, with a Muslim sultanate becoming established in Sulu by about 1450. See Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450-1680* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), Aburajak Janjalani (d. 1998) of Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), or Nur Misuari, founder of Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), claimed that the Moro conflicts, which since the beginning of the 1970s resulted in some 50,000 to more than 120,000 casualties, are only the most recent phase of a continuous struggle that dated back in 1521 when, to quote Salamat's claims, "Spain invaded Bangsamoro homeland." For this reason, Hashim Salamat described the Bangsamoro struggle for freedom and self-determination as "the longest and bloodiest in the entire history of mankind."¹⁹

These "Islamic sentiments" expressed by some leaders of Moro Muslims do not necessarily represent a statement of historical fact of the Bangsamoro grievances during the Spanish and American colonialism, but merely a sort of "invention of (new) tradition" in the service of, to borrow Benedict Anderson's famous phrase, an "imagined community."²⁰ To be sure, the "modern myth of Morohood," namely the idea that a single, transcendent identity was forged among the Philippine Muslims, particularly Moro Muslims, in the course of a "four-century old history of Christian-Muslim bitterness" finds far-reaching support among scholars of the Southern Philippines. Such an idea has also been widely cheered by the partisans of Bangsamoro cause, and strongly resonates with "primordial's notion" of, in the words of Samuel Huntington, innately "civilizational fault lines."²¹ Challenging the view that Muslim Filipinos or 'Moro' identity was forged over three or four centuries of resistance against Spanish and later American colonial invasions in the archipelago, anthropologist Thomas McKenna²² chronicles the more recent appearance of a shared 'Moro' identity and aspirations for the nation-statehood in the twentieth century, especially from the late 1960s

¹⁹ Kit Collier, "Dynamics of Muslim Separatism in the Philippines," in Damien Kingsbury (ed.), *Violence in Between: Conflict and Security in Archipelagic Southeast Asia* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2005), pp. 156-71. See also in Sumanto Al Qurtuby, "In Search of Socio-Historical Roots of Southeast Asia's Islamist Terrorism," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* Vol. 4, No. 2, 2010, pp. 205-239.

²⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 2003).

²¹ Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilization?," *Foreign Affairs* 72 (3), 1993, pp. 22-49.

²² Thomas McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels: Everyday Politics and Armed Separatism in the Southern Philippines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

onwards when the desire for the creation of an autonomous region of the Southern Philippines began to unfold among the Moro-Muslim intellectual-activists. Since this paper puts emphasis on Catholic groups in the northern areas of the nation, I will not discuss this issue further, albeit the Moro case also indicates the appearance of religion (i.e. Islam) in global politics and public domains pertinent to this study. However, it is sufficient to say that the modern ethno-religious political movement for Muslim separatism in the country can be traced back in the late 1960s when a small set of Philippine Muslim students and intellectuals began to organize the political movement. It gained a popular support and public sympathy among Moro Muslims after the 1970 eruption of sectarian violence in Kotabato, and emerged as a separatist front in response to the declaration of Martial Law by President Marcos in 1972.²³

Despite issues of religious violence, Islamist radicalism, and separatist movement in the southern areas of the archipelago which recently ended with a peace treaty, the Philippines, aside from Indonesia where in 1998 an alliance of Muslims and non-Muslims had successfully toppled Suharto's New Order dictatorial regime,²⁴ has provided Southeast Asia's first and foremost remarkable examples of mass mobilization and massive civilian protests in favor of liberal democracy and "good governance" by religious and secular forces which are commonly typified with "civil society."²⁵ Since the Philippines gained its independence in

²³ Since that year and lasting in 1976, the "Muslim rebels" -under the banner of the MNLF- were involved in bitter wars against the Philippine authorities. Under the auspices of the Organization of Islamic Conference and President Muammar Qaddafi of Libya, the Marcos rule held negotiations with the MNLF reaching a treaty known the "Tripoli Agreement" in 1976. The pact contains, among other, an agreement in which each group would stop fighting and the southern Philippines would be granted as an autonomous Muslim region. Unfortunately, the Marcos regime never honored the accord, consequently the resistance reemerged in the following years. See Damien Kingsbury (ed.), *Violence in Between: Conflict and Security in Archipelagic Southeast Asia* (Clayton and Singapore: Monash Asia Institute and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005), pp. 44-5.

²⁴ Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000).

²⁵ On the literature and debate on the concepts of civil society can be read at, among others, John Hall (ed.) *Civil Society: Theory, History, Comparison* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995); Chris Hann and Elizabeth Dunn (eds.), *Civil Society: Challenging Western Models* (London: Routledge, 1996); Robert P. Weller, *Alternate Civilities: Democracy and*

1946, this archipelagic state, comprising some 7,107 islands, underwent at least four times of the immense mass mobilization and “people power” led by Catholic and secular leaders to protest the country’s corrupt and dictatorial regimes. Specifically, this massive mobilization was divided into two major categories: the election-watch campaigns (in 1953, 1969, and 1986) and the 2001 People Power movement.

I will specifically examine these movements aiming at comprehending the significant contributions of Catholic leaders, churches, and institutions, along with non-Catholic elements, in the global politics of the Philippines. The first vast mass mobilization and huge marches took place in 1953, when a coalition of religious and secular forces: Catholic churches, business communities, and veterans’ leagues created the National Movement for Free Election (NAMFREL), Asia’s earliest and well-known election-watch campaigns. Responding to allegation of money politics (“vote buying”) committed by local bosses and politicians linked to certain political parties, especially those affiliated to the ruling party (i.e. the Liberal Party), the NAMFREL fielded huge volunteers in election zones around the archipelago. The successful movement helped to thwart and report electoral fraud and violence carried out in the name of Elipidio Quirino (r. 1948-1953), former senator, lawyer, and incumbent president, and thereby paved the way for the election of the avowedly reformist politician from Nacionalista Party Ramon Magsaysay (d. 1957), ex-guerrilla leader during the Pacific War and former military governor of Zambales, to the presidency.

The second religious and civil society-based mobilization occurred in 1969, when the Citizens National Electoral Assembly (CNEA) mounted an election-monitoring effort aiming to prevent massive vote buying, electoral manipulation, and violence across the archipelago during the national election. Unfortunately, however, the CNEA movement failed to create enough momentum; as a result the dictatorial regime Ferdinand Marcos (d. 1989), whose reign from 1965 to 1986 was marked by massive authoritative government corruption, despotism, nepotism, political repression, and human rights violation, was successfully re-elected to be the country’s president. Nearing the end of his second term and constitutionally barred from seeking a third, President Marcos

Culture in China and Taiwan (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999).

in September, 1972, declared a martial law, an imposition of military rule by military authorities, by using the country's political divisions, extensive riots, the Cold War tension, and the specter of communist rebellion and Islamist insurgency in the Moro region as its political justifications. In 1986, spurred by accumulation of crises, fraud, corruption, violence, and dictatorship during the 20-year-old Marcos regime, once again National Citizens' Movement for Free Election (NAMFREL) dispatched hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of Philippine peoples to demand his resignation. This enormous display of the "People Power drama" compelled Marcos into exile and brought the popular candidate Corazon Aquino (widely known Cory Aquino, 1933-2009) into the Philippine presidency.

This 1986 movement was the third massive mobilization and civilian protest in the history of post-independence Philippine politics involving, among others, Catholic Churches and business class. Cory Aquino (r. 1986-1992), Asia's first female president, gained her fame after the assassination of his husband Benigno Aquino, Jr. Although she had no previous political experience, after the death of her husband, she became a new symbol of political opposition and unifying force of the movement against Marcos who proclaimed the 1986 election victory, despite widespread electoral fraud. After the elections were held on February 7, 1986, and the National Assembly (i.e. *Batasang Pambansa*) proclaimed Marcos the winner in the elections, Cory Aquino called for massive civil disobedience protests, declaring herself as having been cheated and as the real winner in the presidential elections. Filipinos enthusiastically heeded her call and rallied behind her. Aquino was finally installed as the 11st president of the Philippines by the relatively peaceful 1986 People Power Revolution (also known the ESDA Revolution) under the leadership of Aquino with the banner of NAMFREL.

Once again, by the turn of the twentieth century, the massive mobilization and gigantic marches recurred in the archipelago. In 2001, an enormous wave of people power composed of very broad-based religious institutions, civic associations, and nongovernmental organizations ranging from human rights, labor, women, and veteran activist groups to corporate executives and white-collar workers, Catholic clergy, and college students rallied on the country's streets protested against the graft,

corruption, and other abuses of power committed by President Joseph Estrada (r. 1998-2001). Known as the EDSA Revolution of 2001 or EDSA II (i.e. the Second People Power Revolution), this four-day popular movement or “street parliamentarians,” again, successfully overthrew the “drunken master” President Joseph Estrada and led Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (b. 1947) to the Malacanang Palace as the 14th president of the country. Thus, more than any other country in Southeast Asia, vast mass mobilization by an alliance of religious leaders and various civil society elements in opposition to authoritarianism and in support of liberal democracy remains a powerful, influential, and lasting force in the political life and sphere of the Philippines.

The four episodes of mass mobilization and civilian protests (three election-watch campaigns and one People Power movement) in the Philippine history and politics described above provide classic examples of what the Tocquevillean literature on transitions from authoritarianism has referred to, in the words of Eva-Lotta Hedman, as “resurrected civil society, fighting the good fight on behalf of democracy.”²⁶ Although those political movements had fruitfully deposed three corrupt presidents (Quirino, Marcos, and Estrada), Hedman however does not recognize the movements as the country’s achievement of religious-secular or civil society coalition, partly because the “driving forces” of the three election-watch campaigns and the 2001 People Power were constant, and the mobilization was only to serve the interests of the “power bloc” of the country consisting of three major elements: the United States (including agencies of the U.S. government and a set of associations and ‘intellectuals’ nestled within the U.S.-led transnational bloc), Catholic Churches (along with Catholic associations/groups), and capitalist class (business groups). This “power bloc,” Hedman has argued, played behind the scene of the mass mobilization once the country underwent crises of authority that are potential to undermine, not only oligarchic democracy in this state, but also the hegemony of the “trinity” of the country’s socio-political powers.

Borrowing Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci’s analytical

²⁶ Eva-Lotta E. Hedman, *In The Name of Civil Society: From Free Election Movements to People Power in the Philippines* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2006), p. 9.

frameworks,²⁷ Hedman regards the trio U.S. government, Catholic-related associations, and business communities as a “historic” or “dominant” bloc of the Philippines’ social forces. As a result, although the wave of massive movements were able to shift and replace the country’s dictatorial regimes, basic class structure and system do not change in part because the country’s class structure are still hierarchical (e.g. capitalist groups/bourgeois class or religious elites vs. workers, peasants, and subaltern classes who constitute the vast majority of the population, or big landowners vis a vis local bosses affiliated to particular political parties) and those trio social forces have still become major players to drive and control the Philippines’ politics and democracy. Based on her observation on unchanging phenomena of the post-people power revolution, Hedman, then, does not consider the election-watch campaigns (in 1953, 1969, and 1986) plus the 2001 people power as the civil society’s impressive accomplishment, but rather a sort of mass mobilization in the name of civil society. Hedman also highlights the continuation of electoral fraud, manipulation, and violence over the years in the domain of the Philippine politics, added with the long-term practices of presidential cronyism and money politics,” and considers these facts as the indicators of the limited impact of the above mass-based mobilization and movements.²⁸

Hedman’s emphasis on the powerful role of the U.S., along with its agencies and networks, the Catholic Churches, and capitalist class in the shape of the post-independence Philippines’ politics in general and in the process of the mass mobilization in particular can be understood partly because this “power bloc” has deep roots in the country’s history and politics since the times of colonial era, “with the very nature of both the state and the public sphere in the archipelago shaped first by the church, later by American colonial rule, and increasingly by capitalist class nurtured under both of their auspices.”²⁹ During the American colonial rule from 1898 up to the Japanese occupation in the 1940s, American administrators had enjoyed great success in stage-managing the process of decolonization through “the imposition of carefully crafted political

²⁷ Antonio Gramsci, *The Modern Prince and Other Writings* (New York: International Publishers, 1972).

²⁸ Eva-Lotta E. Hedman, *In The Name of Civil Society*, p. 5.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 20. Cf. Luis Francia, *History of the Philippines*.

institutions in the colony (e.g. decentralized presidential democracy), the diffusion of metropolitan culture (e.g. the English language), and the gradual transfer of power to trusted local allies (e.g. the oligarchy consolidated under the American rule).”³⁰

The Catholic Church, furthermore, had played a major role in the creation of both the state and the public sphere in the country’s lowland Christianized areas over more than three centuries of Spanish colonial rule. In addition to church-sponsored educational institutions—from primary schools up to universities, particularly since the 19th century—the Catholic Church has also expanded its authority and influence within civil society through the support of voluntary associational activity. Through private education, Hedman said, the Catholic Church has continued to combine its monopoly on the “sanctification of rites of passage” for most Filipinos with prominent role in the intellectual shape and socialization of the country’s ruling class. The Philippines’ leading representatives of Catholicism, furthermore, have closely channeled the church’s identity and interests to those of business class and government officials so that has given rise to “conspiracy theory” about the “Jesuit Mafia” and the “Octopus Dei.”³¹

The third dominant bloc Hedman stresses is the capitalist/business class which first came into prominence in the mid-nineteenth century with the opening of the Philippines’ seaports to foreign trade and overseas business, as well as the abolition of the monopolistic privileges of the Spanish provincial governors. These changes facilitated the easy access of European merchants, mostly the British, to the archipelago, with port cities around the country emerging as entrepôts for local commodities, especially sugar, and Western-manufactured products (e.g. textiles). This world trade, in turn, was able to create a new “middle class” and well-established business communities such as the Filipino mestizos (Filipinos of mixed descent: Malayan, European, or Chinese) and criollos (the Philippines-born Spaniards). By American officials, the interests of this new emerging capitalist group “were reconciled with those of the Catholic Church and the colonial state, under the auspices of a liberal framework of governance and economic development.” Over time, this

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-3. Cf. Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image*.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-34.

business class advanced an ever greater capacity to affirm its domination in the sphere of civil society.³²

Since the 1946 independence, Hedman has argued, the workings of what Gramsci termed “transformism”³³ have protected and secured this dominant position through “the sublimation of abiding tensions and threats from ‘above’ and ‘below’ within the realm of political society,” i.e. political parties and the state. Hedman says that it was under conditions of the country’s profound crisis of hegemony and authority (in 1953, 1969, 1986, and 2000/2001) that this bloc of social forces involved in counter-mobilization in the domain of civil society.³⁴ In short, Hedman’s arguments lie in the legacy of those three elements of the dominant bloc which enjoyed the central position in the Philippines’ public sphere since the Spanish colonial era, and these three socio-political forces have preserved a position of structural dominance in the face of diverse social change and returning challenge over the years since the country gained its independence.

Hedman’s pessimistic views towards the Philippines’ civil society movements can be understood in part because she used, and was influenced by Gramsci’s theoretical frameworks of civil society. Rather than viewing civil society as a “counter-balance” against state power or a potential element to challenge state’s dominant political authority, the Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci argued that the “assemble of organisms called ‘private’—including civic associations and religious groups, or let’s say “civil society,” helps to uphold the “power of the bourgeois state by facilitating rule through the mobilization of consent or hegemony.”³⁵ Thus, for Gramsci, civil society does exist but its function is to co-opt individual positions or as an instrument to secure the interests of the ruling groups (the power bloc) or the dominant

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 34-41.

³³ Hedman defines Gramsci’s “transformism” as follows, “the parliamentary expression of [the] political moral and political hegemony” of a ruling class and to the process of “gradual but continuous absorption, achieved by methods which varied in their effectiveness, of the active elements produced by allied groups—and even of those which came from antagonistic groups and seemed irreconcilably hostile.” See Eva-Lotta E. Hedman, *In The Name of Civil Society*.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-2.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7; Cf. Antonio Gramsci, *The Modern Prince*.

class in society. Through this Gramsci's concept of "state/dominant group-co-opted civil society," Hedman examines the Philippines' cases of mass mobilization described above. It is, then, understandable why Hedman views civil society-based movement of the Philippines as a sort of "pseudo-democratic impulse" mainly because the movement resulted in little change. In other words, the movement resulted in the "glass-half empty" (because the power bloc, political system, and basic class structure do not change) and not the "glass-full" (i.e. Western-style liberal democracy, in which every individual has equal rights and opportunity).

Although Hedman's study provides a useful resource to understand the religious and political dynamics of the Philippines, her claims and skeptical analyses seem inaccurate. Her overemphasis on the powerful role of the U.S. (including CIA), the Catholic Church, and the capitalist class as a "united single" is an exaggeration and tends to ignore the variety of Catholic associations, business groups, or even the U.S.-linked agencies and institutions, as well as the involvement of agents of change outside the church and business communities, such as civic associations, women's groups, NGOs, universities' students, peasants, and workers, among others. Her comments on unchanging democratic movements and "fruitless impacts" in the Philippines are also not entirely true. The 1986 mass mobilization and the 2001 people power in particular were led by very broad-based civil society and religious groups, not simply dubbed "three dominant blocs." Further, her views of static impacts of those pro-democracy movements are inapt. Such outlook tends to disregard the accomplishment of Quirino's successor: Ramon Magsaysay and Marcos's successor: Cory Aquino.

A vocal spokesman against communism during the Cold War, Ramon Magsaysay was considered to be the champion of democracy and civil liberties. Ushering, indeed, a new era in Philippine government, President Magsaysay placed emphasis upon service to the people, regardless of their ethno-religious origins. His administration was also regarded as one of the world's cleanest and most corruption-free at the time; thereby his presidency was cited as the Philippines' Golden Years. Throughout his presidency, trade and industry flourished, rural economies boosted as he initiated agrarian reforms, and the Filipino people were given international recognition in democracy, cultures,

and foreign affairs. As a result, the Philippines ranked second in Asia's clean and well-governed countries. Moreover, during the reign of Cory Aquino, a world-renowned advocate of democracy, citizenship culture, peace, and women's empowerment, she oversaw the promulgation of a new constitution, which limited the powers of the presidency and established a bicameral legislature, which is a vital democracy institution. Her administration also gave a strong emphasis and concern for civil liberties and human rights, and peace talks with communist insurgents and Muslim secessionists. Aquino's economic policies centered on bringing back economic health and confidence and focused on creating a market-oriented and socially responsible economy.

It is also imperative to point out that the historic and dramatic event of the 1986 revolution or momentous "coalitional" religious and civil society elements that was able to topple the dictatorial and corrupt regime Marcos was a significant moment of pro-democracy movements in the country, so were in the 1953 pro-democracy movement and the 2001 people power-based revolution. However, unfortunately, Hedman does not recognize it as the Philippines' civil society's accomplishment. Again, Hedman's accusation of the Catholic Church as the part of the "dominant bloc" that served sectarian interest groups has ignored the facts of the Church's support of democracy, public cultures of civility, political reforms, "green earth" (read, environmental issues), women's empowerment, as well as of the Catholic oppositions and struggle against tyranny or human rights' abuses committed by both state and society. By Hedman, the country's press freedom as the one of the main conduits of (liberal) democracy, political liberties, and egalitarianism has also been undervalued.

The data sketched above suggest that Hedman's pessimistic outlooks toward the Philippines' pro-democracy mobilization and religious/civil society movements are built upon her "ideal-type" of liberal democracy, in addition to suspicious views of religion, civil society, and state-level politics. The fact that the post-independence Philippines' class and religious-based associational life, as depicted in previous paragraphs, have some elements of colonial legacy, it does not mean that the nature and actors of civil society is unchanging. Indeed, there have been a great number of civil society associations or religious

institutions that serve as a vehicle of the interests of particular dominant groups, as Gramsci and Hedman believe, but there are also numerous religiously civic associations, notably the Catholic churches, function as a means to safeguard democratic civility and the implementation of civic culture as Alexis Tocqueville³⁶ and his followers have argued. Accordingly, emphasizing solely on “uncivil” aspects of civil society will be misleading. On the contrary, focusing exclusively on romanticist views of powerful and good civil society will also be misreading to the multiple facts and faces of civil society associations—and religious groupings and networks.

Furthermore, although there are numerous examples of “uncivil states” (i.e. intolerant, violent, and undemocratic governments), including those of the Philippines, it does not mean that there is no “civil” state (i.e. democratic governance). Focusing merely on dictatorial regimes is “unfair judgment” to other facts of political life. In the case of the Philippines, Ramon Magsaysay and Cory Aquino in particular deserve credits for their democratic efforts and political reforms. Even Marcos himself, apart from his dictatorship and corrupt behaviors, did some developmental programs and education projects for the Philippine societies. It is thus significant for scholars, commentators, and analysts in order to be fair, careful, and balanced in examining the varied social facts of political life whether in society or state-level politics, as well as varied cultural phenomena of human societies.

To sum up, it is unrealistic and unfair if one wishes or even forces to implement a sort of Western-style liberal democracy within non-Western countries. Each society has their own social-political structure, history, and “culture of politics” so that the strict implementation of liberal democracy might be inapt for a particular society. Looking at the political experiences of non-Western societies, especially in Southeast Asia, one can find numerous examples of the practices of “non-liberal” democracy that need to be appreciated. What society need is not the concept of “Western-style liberal democracy,” but, among other things, a representation of various groups in order to “make democracy works,” to borrow Robert Putnam’s famous phrase,³⁷ as well as to prevent the rise

³⁶ Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007).

³⁷ Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

and dominance of any single block whether based on religion, gender, class, ideology, ethnicity, or other sectarian groupings. Following the florescence of either continuing or new sectarian groups in modern era, such representation is vital to guarantee and secure the ideals of politics and citizenship of each individual, as well as the social stability and democratic civility of a nation and society.

C. Indonesia: Muslims and Political Activism

If the Philippines has been Southeast Asia's most severely class-stratified, Indonesian societies have been deeply ideologized. To put it differently, Indonesian history had long been marked by an ideology-based strict division since the times of European colonial era and radicalized during Sukarno's Old Order when "*aliranization*" (lit. streamlining) had been deeply politicized and exploited by both political and religious actors for their sectarian interests. During the course of Sukarno's reign, particularly since the 1950s, Indonesian nationalists, communists, traditionalists, and reformists were all "trapped" into unhealthy competition and violent conflicts on behalf of primordial sectarian societies. Over the course of Suharto's New Order, "streamlining-type politics" (*politik aliran*) was still strong, albeit ideological and cultural content were change, in part due to the spread of Islam and democracy. The prolonged ideological divisions of Indonesian society later led the country into a brutal carnage among the nation's inhabitants, especially the militia groups, first in the East Java's Madiun uprising of 1948, and the second was the national tragedy of the state-sponsored anti-communist killings of 1965-66.³⁸ Such severe societal divisions along religious and ideological lines, it should be noted, were not new phenomena, but rather were deeply rooted long before Indonesia gained its independence in 1945, especially during the Dutch colonial rule (and later Japanese). This paper, however, does not suggest that such split was solely by products of colonialism since there were various factors that contributed to the sectarian divides, including the "Middle East" influences, (especially Cairo,

³⁸ On the anti-communist massacre in 1948 and 1965-66, see Elizabeth Swift, *The Road to Madiun: The Indonesian Communist Uprising of 1948* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University SEAP Publications, 1989); Robert Cribb, *Indonesian Killings 1965* (Victoria, Australia: Monash Asia Institute, 1991).

Mecca, and Medina networks), print media, schooling, and the flow of Muslim reformists, among others.

Although the nineteenth-century in particular had been the turning point for the surge of Islamic reforms, thereby reformist Muslims (or reform-minded Muslims) that later became one of the main players in the state's history of politics and democracy, it was not until early the 20th century that the ideas of Salafi reformism and Islamic modernism began to influence and attracted a wider audience of "Jawi Muslim" in the archipelago, especially after the founding of some reformist Islamic organizations. G.F. Pijper (1893-1988), one of the last colonial administrators to be trained by Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936), the eminent Dutch orientalist and advisor for "Muslim affairs" on the Indies, wrote: "When Snouck Hurgronje left the Netherlands Indies in 1906, there was as yet nothing known in this land of reformism or modernism, the newer religious movements within Islam. During his seventeen-year Indonesian stay, Snouck Hurgronje knew Islam as the religion transmitted by the ancestors. In none of his writings of this period is there a trace to be found of the religious phenomena of the newer times."³⁹

Hurgronje's observation on the zero evidence of Muslim modernists and reformists throughout his stay in the archipelago could be incorrect partly because Wahhabism had already reached the shores of the Indies since the first decades of the 19th century, albeit did not experience any notable progress in the decades following the Padri War in West Sumatra.⁴⁰ His remark, however, indicates that the early 20th century actually had been the decisive moment for the growth of modernist and reformist Muslim groupings in this region. As historian of Indonesian Islam Michael Laffan has noted, the transmission from Sufism to Islamic reformism into the archipelago was shaped, not by reformist Arabs, by Malay Muslim scholars but "ultimately linked to Cairo, where printing and public activism were becoming a hallmark of the new Salafi movement of Muhammad Abduh and Muhammad Rashid Rida." As part of their platform and objective to "reorganize" and reorder Muslim society,

³⁹ Quoted in Michael Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam: Orientalism and the Narration of a Sufi Past* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), p. 177.

⁴⁰ See Michael Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia: The Umma below the Winds* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003).

Laffan says, this movement “called upon Muslims to break with the older patronage networks organized around the *tarekat* [Sufi orders] and the *sayyid*”⁴¹ [i.e. an honorific title accorded in Muslim societies to those who are reputed to descend from the Prophet Muhammad].

In contrast to radical Wahhabism, the modernist and reformist current were more successful in attracting—and influencing—“Jawi Muslims” in part due to Malay-language journals, called *al-Imam*, published in Singapore and Sumatra by pilgrims converted to the modernist notions of Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) and his students, especially Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865-1935). The publication of *al-Imam* was inspired by Egypt’s main voice of Islamic modernism and reformism, *al-Manar*, which was led by Rashid Rida. Through *al-Imam*, edited by Syekh Muhammad Alkalali, a native of Minangkabau of West Sumatra, the Malay reformists continued to voice Islamic reforms, battled against Sufis, restricted Sufism, and promoted extending a proper understanding of *shari’ah* to a widening circle of readers in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago. The surge of Salafi and modernist Islam, for the moment, resulted in the collapse of Sufism and the *sayyid*-led reforms, but later in 1926 by the emergence of the traditionalist Islamic organization Nahdlatul Ulama, Islamic Sufism and traditionalism gained their strong supporter.

Although there were a number of factors that contributed to the flow of Islamic reforms in the archipelago, two aspects on which the Dutch played in great parts worth mentioning. First was the pilgrimage (*ibadah haji*) to the Holy Lands of Mecca and Medina. The Dutch’s initial plan in support of the *haji* in the mid-19th century aimed at “domesticating” Indonesian Muslims, hoping that by the *haji* they would be pious; consequently they would be busy practicing religious rituals away from political activism. The previous cases of anti-Dutch movements since early 1820s led by Muslim leaders, notably the revolt of Padri in West Sumatra (from 1820 to 1838) and the Java War of 1835-30 under the captainship of charismatic Muslim figures such as Pangeran Diponegoro (1785-1855) and Kiai Mojo, made the Dutch aware of the danger of Muslim politics or political Islam. Unfortunately, however, the Dutch intention to domesticate Muslims by supporting them to do

⁴¹ Michael Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam*, pp. 177-189.

haji (pilgrims) went wrong and fumble because the *haji*, along with *keiais* (i.e. Javanese-type Islamic clerics), *ulama*, reformist Muslims and villagers or ordinary townspeople, became one of the main leaders of rebellions against the Dutch. Indonesian historian Sartono Kartodirdjo (d. 2007) in his fine “classic” works such as *The Peasants’ Revolt of Banten in 1888 and Protest Movement in Rural Java* has well described such anti-Dutch campaigns by these groups in the 19th and early 20th centuries.⁴²

Aiming at getting an easy access to the Holy Lands, the Dutch introduced steamship technology around 1850s. As an outcome of this policy, added with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, pilgrims from Jawi land (i.e. a term at the time refers not only to Java Island but also Indonesian-Malay archipelago) consisted of the single largest community in Mecca and Medina in the following years. However, this pilgrimage resulted in “unintended consequences” on the part of the Dutch, namely the massive impact of the notions of modernism and nationalism, as well as the flow of reformist Muslims. The second channel of the Islamic reforms was schooling (Islamic education). The pilgrimage provided a great opportunity for Indonesian Muslims to learn and study Islamic teachings from the main centers of Islam: the “Haramain” (Mecca and Medina). After returning to Indonesia, these pilgrims then built religious schools (*madrasah*) that later became one of the primary vehicles of Islamic reformism and revivalism in the archipelago. Islamic schooling also became a catalyst to look at a reformed Islam and society, and a canal for political movements. In addition to *madrasah*, pilgrims also established *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) which for centuries became engines of change and played a vital role in the spread of Islam in the archipelago, in addition to *tarekat* or the Sufi brotherhoods. Till today, as Andree Feillard and Remy Madinier have noticed, most of the

⁴² No doubt *haji* and *kiai* in the nineteenth centuries had enormously played significant role not only as a charismatic religious figure directing religious ceremonies and Islamization processes but also a political leader taking the lead socio-political movements against the Dutch colonials and the colonial-backed local aristocrats as in the case of Banten War in 1888, as well as the resistance of Kiai Ahmad Rifa’i, along with his Rifa’iyah in Central Java, and other Muslims and religious leaders in the 19th and 20 centuries. See Sartono Kartodirdjo’s studies, among others, *The Peasants’ Revolt of Banten in 1888: A Case Study of Social Movements in Indonesia* (The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966) and his *Protest Movements in Rural Java* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972).

religious education taught outside of schools is dispensed by thousands of *pesantren* (in 2004, according to the data from the Ministry of Religion, the number of *pesantren* reaches 14,556) to millions of students.⁴³

These Islamic reforms, however, did not constitute a single group that had similar views and understandings of Islamic teachings, discourses, and religious traditions, and how Islam should be performed.⁴⁴ An easy and obvious example of such sort was the division between the “old group” (*kaum tua*) and the “new group” (*kaum muda*). Interestingly, such religious separation or “religious classification” not only existed in Java, but also in Sumatra, particularly West Sumatra of Minangkabau and the Gayo highland of Aceh, and in Ambon and central Maluku.⁴⁵ Despite their characters as “reform-minded Muslim groups,” these new Muslim groups have had different features and understandings in terms of how Islam should be practiced in a society and state.

The *kaum tua*, although not fixed, were typically characterized by the following features: (1) traditionalism (prone to local traditions), (2) more loosing regarding Islamic teachings (e.g. veiling), (3) respecting on early generations of Muslim scholars and jurists (*fuqaha*), (4) utilizing

⁴³ Andree Feillard and Remy Madinier, *The End of Innocence? Indonesian Islam and the Temptations of Radicalism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011), pp. 6-7.

⁴⁴ The forms of reformed Islam and reformist Muslims, as described by Merle C. Ricklefs, varied ranging from Puritanism (purification-oriented Islam), anti Sufism faction, *shari'ah*-minded groups, *shari'ah*-based Sufism, reformed traditionalists, among others. The basic ideas of the Muslim reformists, however, mostly the same: the eagerness to make Islam to be more “pristine” as it was performed by *salafus-salib* (i.e. early generations of Muslims) by avoiding local and “non-Islamic” aspects. These reformists, hence, would never tolerate religious practices and communities that opposed their strict Islamic conviction and beliefs. As a result “syncretic Muslims” such as Java's *abangan* had become one of the main targets of the reformists' Islamization. See more on the discussion of these groups in the works of M.C. Ricklefs: *Polarizing Javanese Society: Islamic and other Visions (c. 1830-1930)* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2007) and his *Mystic Synthesis in Java: A History of Islamization from the Fourteenth to the early Nineteenth Centuries* (Norwalk: EastBridge Publishing, 2006).

⁴⁵ On the discussion on West Sumatra see Taufik Abdullah, *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in Sumatra* (London, UK: Equinox Publishing, 2009); on the Gayo Muslims see John R. Bowen, *Muslim through Discourse* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); on Maluku Islam see Richard Chauvel, “Ambon's Other Half: Some Preliminary Observations on Ambonese Moslem Society and History,” *Review of Indonesian and Malay Affairs* 14 (1), 1980, pp. 40-80.

multiple classical Islamic resources (e.g. *kitab kuning*) and methodologies (e.g. *qiyās*, *istihsan*, *maṣlaḥat mursalah*, and the like), (5) practicing *taqlid* (religious imitation) on certain religious issues, (6) accommodating local elements of cultures or *adat* (customs) as long as they are in line with the spirit of Islam (i.e. *bid'ah al-ḥasana* or “good innovation”). The *kaum muda*, moreover, was typified by (1) modernism, (2) more emphasis on the Qur'an and *ḥadīth*, (3) more ‘conservative’ and strict in religious beliefs, practices and understandings, (4) more excited about ‘secular’ sciences, (5) anti-*taqlid*, (6) anti-local traditions, *adat*, and cultures due to their beliefs in the “pristine” Islam. These two religious groups, as history has witnessed, were quickly defined into doctrinal lines with the formation of, among others, Muhammadiyah, Persatuan Islam, and NU, which were frequently involved in fierce religious disputes, not only in the field of Islamic understandings and practices, but also in the arena of political and public life.⁴⁶

As Australian foremost historian of Java Merle C. Ricklefs in his fine works, *Polarizing Javanese Society and Mystic Synthesis in Java* has observed, before the growing emergence of the Islamic reform movements in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in Java in particular, there had already been substantial numbers of professionally religious groups such as mosque officials, religious teachers, guardians of holy sites, and students of *pesantren*, who were known collectively as *kaum* (literally means “religious folk”) or *putihan* (literally means the “white people” but soon became a marker for the “pious Muslims”) since the 1840s. On the northern coast of Java, these particular Muslim groupings were sometimes called *kaum santri* (i.e. disciples of *pesantren*). One of the principle agents of Java’s Islamization, *santri* initially applied to students of *pesantren*, one of Java’s vital Islamic learning centers, but was gradually stretched to encompass very devout Muslims.

There is no clear evidence whether these groups had formed a force for Islamic puritanism, fundamentalism, or revivalism beginning in late 19th-century. However, there are similarities among these groups in the way they perceived Javanese *abangan* as ignorant, backward, impure, and impious. Literally means the “red people,” the term *abangan* was used

⁴⁶ On the modernist Muslim movement, see Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia, 1900-1942* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

by *kaum santri* to designate nominal Muslims who “did not fulfill the minimal obligations of their religion and who maintained or developed in loco attitudes that were unacceptable for their more orthodox fellow believers.”⁴⁷ Some Muslim puritans also called themselves *kaum putihan*, meaning “religious folk,” to differentiate themselves to the *abangan* group. At the same time, the *abangan* (sometimes called *abritan*) responded negatively to the pressures for a more purified form of religious life advocated by the *putihan*. The rivalry between the *abangan* and the *putihan* groups can be read in a number of Javanese “old” literatures such as *Serat/Suluk Gatholoco*, *Serat Cebolek*, *Serat Darmagandhul*, *Babad Kedhiri*, *Serat Centini*, among others. Thus, as Merle Ricklefs has rightly pointed out, more than one hundred years before the harsh conflict between the traditionalist, modernist, *abangan*, either linked to communist or nationalist groups, took place in the 1950s/1960s, Java and some parts of the country had witnessed the ruthless rivalry and unhealthy conflict among religious groups, particularly between the orthodox and heterodox Muslims.⁴⁸

The data sketched above suggest that the genesis of Indonesia’s religious-based polarization was since the mid-nineteenth century. This division and segmentation continued in the early twentieth century and even more institutionalized, politicized, ideologized, and became harder, deeper, and more conflictual. In the early twentieth century the forms of

⁴⁷ Andree Feillard and Remy Madinier, *The End of Innocence*, p. 8.

⁴⁸ While since the late nineteenth century the *abangan* appeared as the majority social category and opposed the *putihan*’s ideas of “the proper understanding of Islam,” a tiny minority of Javanese rejected Islam altogether and became Christians for the first time in the Javanese history led by some extraordinary figures as Kiai Ibrahim Tunggul Wulung and, above all, Kiai Sadrah Surapranata who converted thousands of Javanese to Christianity prior to his death in 1924 and then established the Javanese Christian Churches (Gereja Kristen Jawi), an amalgamation of European-Christian beliefs and Javanese cultures and concepts. Another faction of Javanese society was *priyayi* who enthusiastically embraced European learning and life style (Ricklefs called “westernizers”) but still regarded themselves as Muslims, not Christians. Not all *priyayi* were happy with, and pragmatically embraced Islam, however, some *priyayi* rejected Islam altogether and wanted to return to Buda age. For them, the Islamization process of Javanese society was a great “historical mistake” and as a result they advocated anti-Islamic movements and supported Budi-Buda teachings by tracing back to the pre-Islamic Java. The emergence of anti-Islamic literatures such as *Babad Kedhiri*, *Suluk Gatholoco*, and *Serat Darmagandhul* in the 1870s can be seen from this point of view. see more in M.C. Ricklefs: *Polarizing Javanese Society; his Mystic Synthesis in Java*.

organizing and mobilizing people and of distributing ideas were more modern. Religious and cultural practices, educational style, and social class were defined by formal organizations, and also began to be more political. To borrow Max Weber's term, the early twentieth century of Indonesia was marked by the process of "rationalization" and "systematization" of knowledge, cultures, and traditions of Indonesian/Javanese society.⁴⁹ Such a process is understandable in part because since the early twentieth century, the Dutch rule provided education for Indonesians as part of its new "ethical policy." As a result, the number of Javanese and Indonesians receiving a more modern education grew significantly. Although in the light of Indonesia's large and rapidly growing population (about 59.1 million in 1930) the number getting a modern education was a very poor performance on the part of colonial power, it contributed to the shape of tiny educated elite who played a vital role in the formation of anti-colonial and nationalist movements. During this period, Islamic organizations, whether associated with traditionalist or reformist Islam also expanded their educational activities.

Increasingly polarized Indonesian and Javanese society since the mid-19th century described earlier began to organize in a more systematic way in the form of a modern organization in the early 20th century. It was during this period actually that organizations, institutions, clubs, or political parties, with different ideology, religious or cultural affiliation and membership, began to emerge in the stage of modern Indonesian politics: Budi Utomo, Muhammadiyah, Taman Siswa, Sarikat Islam, Sarikat Dagang Islam, Partai Komunis Indonesia, al-Irsyad, Persatuan Islam, and Nahdlatul Ulama. Tragically these distinctive groups were deeply involved in violent conflicts (e.g. Sarikat Islam or Islamic Union versus Partai Komunis Indonesia or Indonesian Communist Party) and harsh disputes (e.g. Muhammadiyah and other *putihan* groups versus *abangan*; Nahdlatul Ulama versus Muhammadiyah and Persatuan Islam). These conflicting parties as well as ideological, or religious-based violence re-emerged in the post-independent Indonesia, and even it was far more violent, conflictual and deeply politicized. During this era one can see how political and religious leaders "vibrantly" provoked their opposition and

⁴⁹ Robert W. Hefner, *Hindu Javanese: Tengger Tradition and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

adherence on behalf of particular religion, Islamic school of thoughts, organization, ideology, and political party. In this historical schema, the tragic event of 1965-66 can be understood. It was not the incident without historical precedent. But rather this disastrous drama of anti-communist was deeply rooted in the history of Indonesia/Java: the history of conflict, hatred, arrogance, and violence.

The Japanese, by conducting training of militias' organizations and mobilizing modernist and traditionalist Muslims, also contributed to the formation of deepening "pillarization" of Indonesian societies. During the five years of Japanese occupation associational life, especially religious-based "civil" societies grew rapidly. In addition, Japan, driven by the need for their resistance against the U.S.-led alliance, participated in the process of "militanization" of the societies based on particular ideology (e.g. secular-nationalism and communism) as well as Islamic stream (traditionalism, modernism/reformism). It is within this historical context that the emergence of the Darul Islam's rebellion in 1948 in West Java (the rebellion re-emerged in the 1950s and 1960s, as well as in the 1970s under the banner of "Komando Jihad") and the 1948 "Madiun Tragedy" (this anti-communist killings reappeared in 1965-66) against radical communists can be understood.

Although the Japanese facilitated to the growth of associational life, "civic" associations, "primordial" groups, political society, even "civil" society associations, whether based on ethnic, region, religion, ideology, or profession, including a great number of Muslim groups, had already taken place prior to independence in 1945.⁵⁰ These facts suggest that, despite a "story of bitterness" described in previous pages which provide background to understand harsh conflict and tensions among religious divides in the post-independence period, Indonesian Muslims and society have a long history of intellectual and organizational pluralism. This pluralist precedent was rooted in the fact that Islam was introduced to

⁵⁰ Examples of these organizations, in addition to religious-based associations depicted in previous paragraphs, are Perhimpunan Pemuda Indonesia (the Indonesian Associations of Youths, an independent body whose main objective was to raise public awareness of nationalist movements), Bandung Study Club in which Sukarno became one of its members, Indonesian National Association (i.e. an embryo of Partai Nasionalis Indonesia), Jong Java, Jong Ambon, Jong Sumatra, Jong Celebes, the Indonesian Associations of Students, Pemuda Kaum Betawi, and so forth.

this country through a network of trade and city-states, not by a military conquest. Unlike their Arab and Middle Eastern counterparts, Islam was introduced and brought to Indonesia or Southeast Asia in general by, among others, peaceful merchants, Sufis, travelers, teachers, preachers, and gurus, and not by violent armed forces. During the colonial period, as anthropologist Robert W. Hefner has rightly pointed out, that “politically dispersive pattern was reinforced rather than diminished.”⁵¹ Thanks to the Dutch officials who strictly separated Islam from state domain, the colonial policy was able to drive Muslim groups and organizations away from state and global politics into the sphere of society and public cultures; consequently it helps to create a “remarkable Islamic tradition of grass-roots association and civic independence.” Although Islamic reform movements appeared since the mid or late nineteenth century as an outcome of the surge of *haji* and students coming from Arab and the Middle East that contributed to the complication of the process of pluralization, but “not done away with this intellectual and organizational pluralism.”⁵²

Nonetheless, despite these precedents for cultural pluralism and “civic” organization, some Muslim groups (as well as the “radical left”) remain ambiguous about civil democratic ideals. No doubt, the country’s early civic associations and associational life had different point of views with regard to the ideals of politics and citizenship in the late colonial and post-independence Indonesia. While some strict reformist Muslims, fantasizing a medieval Islamic golden age when Islam functioned as a religion and state at once and forgetting their historical plurality, idealized Islam as an “ideal-type” for Indonesian ideology. The Piagam Jakarta (the Jakarta Charter) was evidence of their desires to implement Islam, the Qur’an, and Islamic law as the political foundation of this new nation-state. Moderate, secular-nationalist, and neo-traditionalist Muslims, by contrast, believed that the new Indonesia should be built based on “all-encompassing ideology” conducive to fulfill the needs and interests of various social groupings coming from different religious and ethnic

⁵¹ Robert W. Hefner, “On the History and Cross-Cultural Possibility of a Democratic Ideal,” in Robert W. Hefner (ed.), *Democratic Civility: the History and Cross-Cultural Possibility of a Modern Political Ideal* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1998), p. 21.

⁵² *Ibid.*

backgrounds that also greatly contributed to the nationalist movements.

In post-independence Indonesia, these political and religious groups have different stories. During Sukarno's Old Order, four political parties deeply affiliated with particular religious and ideological streams came up to the stage of Indonesian politics and succeeded in the "struggle for existence." These political champions included Partai Nasionalis Indonesia (PNI, Indonesian Nationalist Party), Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI, the Indonesian Communist Party), Masyumi (modernist-reformist Islamism), and Nahdhatul Ulama (neo-traditionalism). In the 1950s, since society was deeply divided into nationalist, communist, traditionalist, and modernist ("*aliranization*"), Indonesian people feared of being associated into particular ideological groupings. Due to its leaders had been accused of being the backers of separatist uprisings in post-independence Indonesia held by PRRI (Pemerintahan Revolusioner Republik Indonesia); Sukarno banned Masjumi in 1960, and jailed a numbers of its leaders. One of the Masjumi leaders, in 1967, Muhammad Natsir (d. 1993) established Dewan Dakwah Islam Indonesia (DDII, the Indonesian Council of Islamic Mission) which has become the backbone of the Wahabi in the archipelago. The fate of PKI was the most tragic in the history of Indonesian politics since Suharto's New Order, allied with conservative, modernist, and traditionalist Muslims, bitterly cracked them down and murdered huge numbers of its members and sympathizers in the anti-communist campaigns of 1965/66. Although the New Order did not physically and publicly kill the supporters of the PNI, their political activities were domesticated, if not "mummified," at the corner of Indonesian history and politics under the banner of the newly established political party under the auspices of the New Order: Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (Indonesian Democracy Party).

Nahdhatul Ulama (NU), the country's largest Muslim organization which became a political party in 1950s by the name of Partai Nahdlatul Ulama (PNU), had shared the same story with the PNI. Along with other modernist Islamic elements such as Partai Muslimin Indonesia (Parmusi), Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (Perti), and Partai Sarikat Islam Indonesia (PSII), PNU was forcibly fused by Suharto into a new political party controlled by the government named PPP (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan) in January, 1973. During the early period of

the New Order, Suharto severely turned to control Islamist elements, albeit these Muslim groups contributed in setting up Suharto into power by participating hand-in-hand with then-the New Order to destroy communist members, as well as followers and sympathizers of the PKI. Suharto's "divide-and-rule" strategy was obvious throughout his 32-year-old rule. By 1984, however, PNU, under the leadership of K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid and K.H. Ahmad Siddiq, declared itself out of the PPP (and any political party) and devoted to the grassroots struggle (bottom-up model) or "cultural strategy," to borrow Wahid's term (as opposed to Amin Rais's "structural strategy" or "top-down approach"). Under the headship of K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid, NU was evolved and transformed into a powerful civil society force functioned as a means of counterbalance power of the authoritarian New Order.

Due to Suharto's ruthless treatment toward the reformist/Islamist groupings and the devotees of Islamism, a political movement aiming at establishing of an Islamic nation/state, Indonesian Muslims began to shift from the sphere of politics to culture. As a result, this archipelago witnesses the emergence of a new form of Islamic groups such as, first, the "renewalists," a group who were concerned about the ideas of cultural renewal (e.g. Islamic education, social movements, or Islamic democracy), and secondly, "Islamic resurgent group," namely a group of Muslims who emphasized the deepening piety (individual piety) and the implementation of the pillars of Islamic faith. President Suharto himself greatly contributed to the growth of this sort of Muslim grouping through the government-sponsored national developmental policy (*kebijakan pembangunan nasional*) which can be broken down into three programs: building-up program (*pembinaan*), schooling, and *dakwah* (Islamic propagation) movement.

Initially intended to eliminate the influences of communism, the *pembinaan* movement in particular greatly contributed to the shape of Islamic ideals and proper Muslims away from political activism. The New Order's impressive and extensive Islamic education programs, added with the *dakwah* movement, were able to enhance the production of Islamic piety and revivalist/puritanical Muslims as well as the decline of nominal

Muslim groups (i.e. the *abangan* and *kebatinan*).⁵³ As a result, by the 1990s, Indonesia has transformed itself from a secular, less-Islamic society to become a sort of a “green state” as many Muslims became “pious” or “religious.” Suharto himself, to perform his piety, began to shift his Islamic style from a Javanese-*kebatinan*-Muslim to a kind of a devout Muslim by conducting pilgrimage to Mecca (*ibadah haji*) and sponsoring the establishment of Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia (ICMI, Indonesian Muslim Intellectual Association). Against this backdrop, thus, seeing Islamic revivalism and resurgence separate from local political authority is misleading partly because, as the Dutch anthropologist Martin van Bruinessen has aptly pointed out, “it was Suharto’s turning against some of his erstwhile Chinese and Christian allies and co-opting a large part of the educated Muslim population through the establishment of the ICMI that strengthened radical political Islam.”⁵⁴

Equally important, the flow of reform-minded Muslims during the course of what Martin van Bruinessen has termed “*santrinizatio*n,” added with the government-sponsored developmentalism that campaigned about the “gender ideals,” contributed to a great damage of the role of women in public life and religious-related matters. As anthropologist Michael Peletz has noticed, throughout Southeast Asia, let alone Vietnam, due to their reproductive capacities were viewed as giving them regenerative, spiritual, and other religious powers that men could not match, women predominated in a good many ritual contexts linked to agriculture, birth, death, and healing. In addition to be “ritual specialists,” women played a major role in marketplace (e.g. local market) and household economy. Women also became a model of teaching politeness of their children. Accordingly it is not surprising when Peletz typifies traditional Southeast Asia as “relatively egalitarian relations between males and females.”⁵⁵

⁵³ The fear of being accused of atheism and communism drove the *abangan* to convert to Christianity, Hinduism, and notably Islam. That “great conversion” not only happened within local Javanese but also Chinese due to the ban of Confucianism since 1967. Besides those political factors, the emergence and the development of scripturalist and revivalist Islam also led to the decline of the *abangan* practices as well as *kebatinan* movements.

⁵⁴ Martin van Bruinessen, “Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in Post-Suharto Indonesia,” *South East Asia Research* 10:20 (2002), p. 27.

⁵⁵ Michael Peletz, “Transgenderism and Gender Pluralism in Southeast Asia since Early Modern Times,” *Current Anthropology* 47:2 (2006), p. 312.

Not only women that played a role in ritual practices did persons identified with “third-gender” that lead rituals or what Peletz calls “transgendered ritual specialists” also can be found in traditional Southeast Asia, such as *bisnu* in South Sulawesi’s Bugis.⁵⁶ Historically, traditional Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, society and local cultures also accepted the third category of sex. The local tradition of “Reog Ponorogo” that performs same-sex marriage and intimacy between “*warok*” and “*gemblak*” (both are males) also indicates local tolerance towards “transgenderism.” However, unfortunately, this traditional Southeast Asia’s pluralistic view of gender is no longer the case in large parts of the country. Government and world religions, including Islam, added with individuals having concept of Western ideals of sex as only male and female, all contributed to the decline of the “gender pluralism” and “transgenderism.”

Other “unintended consequences” of the Suharto’s developmental programs included the increase of high literate peoples and, this is the least significant part, the growth of moderate and democrat Muslims that later pioneered the reformation process and contributed to the collapse of Suharto’s New Order though a dramatic and historic People Power movement in May 1998. Although Suharto tried to build an alliance with Islamist elements (e.g. by establishing Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam or KISDI, Indonesian Committee for the Solidarity of Islamic World) and blamed Christians and Chinese as the main actors of Indonesia’s multiple crises, he failed to cease the surge of civil society-led democratic movements and political reforms.⁵⁷ Do these civil society movements and pro-democracy elements succeed in bringing Indonesia into post-Suharto reformation typified by the creation of public cultures of civility, egalitarianism, and pluralism or “citizenship culture”? Certainly there have been numerous answers regarding this question depending on how one measures the indicators of success or failure. Meredith Weiss, for instance, has warned us that the great hopes for post-Suharto reformation to implement the “1998 reformasi [lit. “economic-political reformation”] agenda” failed because civil society associations and pro-democracy forces were lack of what she termed “coalitional capital.”

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 309-40.

⁵⁷ Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam*.

In the absence of coalition among CSOs (Civil Society Organizations) and NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations), Weiss has argued, post-Suharto reformasi was fruitless, contrast to neighboring Malaysia, in which she saw post-Mahatir government as successful in handling a political shift and transforming Malaysia into a prosperous state.⁵⁸

Indeed, post-New Order Indonesia had been marked by the outbreaks of ethnoreligious violence scattered from Sampit, Poso, to Ambon and North Maluku. Such brutal ethnoreligious violent conflicts made the myth of the “smiling” Indonesia and “civil Islam” characterized by democratic civility and tolerant-in-pluralism in a question mark. However, seeing solely on the violent elements of Indonesia also leads to the failure of capturing the whole picture of Indonesian politics. Likewise, viewing post-Suharto Indonesia as “failed state” due to the failure of civil society and political society agents in bringing the *agenda reformasi* into the scene of Indonesian global politics is also unjust and tend to neglect the country’s achievements in attempts of implementing democratization (e.g. free election or press freedom), “regionalism” (e.g. regional autonomy), or conflict resolution (e.g. Aceh, Poso, and Maluku). Unlike Malaysia focusing on “coalitional capital,” Indonesia’s concern has been political/cultural capital, namely democracy. Judging post-reformation Indonesia as an “intolerant society” due to the rapid growth of Islamist groups is also a sort of “unjust judgment” partly because such views tend to ignore the flow of moderate elements and pluralist Muslims in the country who are concerned about civil democratic ideals. Indeed, the future of Indonesian Islam will be determined in large part by the struggle between these two visions of Islamic politics: Islamist groups and moderate Muslim forces.

D. Concluding Remarks

Looking back the modern history of Indonesian and Philippine politics, especially the dynamics of religious groups (i.e. Catholics and Muslims), civic associations, and state-level politics, a few reflections and lessons can be drawn as follows. First, civil society alone is no longer enough. To those who had placed great hopes in civil society as the chief

⁵⁸ Meredith L. Weiss, *Protest and Possibilities: Civil Societies and Coalitions for Political Change in Malaysia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006).

elements of democracy and civility needs to hold their desires since civil society associations cannot guarantee the accomplishment of civil democratic ideals. In other words, civic associations or associational life is necessary but never sufficient to secure the practices of a civil-democratic politics. Civil society is not sufficient because CSOs, as indicated in the Philippines and Indonesia, can be sectarian groups, either based on ethnicity, religion, or class, aiming at achieving sectarian interests that far way from “civil democratic ideals” and citizenship culture. In other words, civil associations can be a force of the creation of a “segmentary civility.”

Tocquevillian classical and ideal model of civil society as a “unified and coherent entity” functions as a vanguard of civic culture and a check against the tendency toward the centralization of state’s political power is, in many cases, no longer the case. However, I agree with Tocqueville’s argument that a “pluralist and self-organizing civil society independent of the state is an indispensable condition of democracy”.⁵⁹ One of the weaknesses of Tocqueville’s analyses with regard to civil society lies, among other things, in his tendency toward the “reification” and “celebration” of civil society as a powerful force of counterbalance of a state. Despite my criticism against Tocqueville’s notions, however, this does not mean that I cheer Gramsci’s theory of civil society. Although Gramsci’s analyses on competition, domination, and conflict among elements of civil society might be true, he failed to grasp various motives of social actors and the achievements of civil society movements. To conclude, while Tocqueville tended to see solely on the positive elements of civil society, Gramsci seemed to be in the opposite direction scapegoating civil society only as a canal of the ruling class. Gramsci also undermined the role of state in creating public cultures of citizenship, one that I disagree with because despite “uncivil states” opposing the ideas of democracy, freedom, egalitarianism, and pluralism, there have been “civil states” concerned about civil democratic ideals. Thus both Tocqueville and Gramsci were trapped in the extremist views. In this case, I am neither Tocquevillian nor Gramscian.

Second, equally important is that this self-organizing civil society must be part of a larger pattern of what Hefner has termed “political

⁵⁹ Cited in Eva-Lotta E. Hedman, *In The Name of Civil Society*, p. 3; Cf. Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*.

pluricentrism,” in which no longer social class, group, or organization affirms domination or monopoly control over the social, cultural, political, and moral resources of society. Third, in order to keep the balance of state and society, its norms must be scaled up into a “constitutional charter that enshrines equality, participation, and tolerance as principles of law, in a manner that protects them from political vicissitudes and socializes them among the public at large.”⁶⁰ This “mutually reinforcing equilibrium” is necessary to keep both state and society “on the right track.” If state is too strong while society is too weak it will create tyranny (e.g. Indonesia during the reign of Suharto or the Philippines under Marcos). On the other hand, if society is too strong while state is too weak, it will produce chaos and anarchy. Ethnoreligious violence in post-Suharto Indonesia was one of examples of the latter. The job of civil society thus, among others, is to maintain equilibrium and stability between state and society in order that both state and society do not fall into these “extremist poles.” This is to say that the implementation of “civic democratic ideals” needs the collaboration and synergy between state and society.

Last but not least, the Philippine and Indonesian case described in the previous paragraphs clearly shows the religious vigor as among the contributing factors for global politics and public cultures. The pivotal role of the world religions in the public domains of the Philippines and Indonesia is not a new phenomenon. While in the Philippines, Catholicism began to emerge as a driving force for mass mobilization since 1950s, Indonesia’s Islamic reforms that later contributed to the shape of “public Islam” and “political Islam” arouse since the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Till these days, Indonesia has been a cultural and political arena of debate and struggle between religious factions and Muslim groupings, indicating the vitality of religion. Such religious influence on political and public affairs is certainly not the unique case of these two archipelagic states. As Monica Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Shah have pointed out in their 2011 fine work, *God’s Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics*, similar cases can be found elsewhere on this planet. This is to say that, in the modern era, instead of dying, as secularisation theorists had mistakenly argued, religion has thrived.

⁶⁰ Robert W. Hefner, “On the History and Cross-Cultural Possibility”, p. 39.

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