EAI Working Paper Series 10

Southeast Asian Religious Organizations and
Democratic Consolidation:
A Conceptual Framework and
Case Studies in Indonesia and Thailand

Nobember 2007

Tun-jen Cheng

Professor, Department of Government
College of Wiliam and Mary

Deborah A. Brown

Associate Professor, Department of Asian Studies
Seton Hall University

East Asia Institute
www.eai.or.kr

Southeast Asian Religious Organizations and Democratic Consolidation: A Conceptual Framework and Case Studies in Indonesia and Thailand[1]

Deborah A. Brown and Tun-jen Cheng

ABSTRACTS: Religious organizations have been largely left out of the studies of East Asian democratic transition and consolidation. This paper introduces a conceptual framework for the study of the role of religious organizations in the democratic consolidation of East Asian societies and provides case studies for consideration in Indonesia and Thailand, two countries with young and challenged democracies. The case studies concern how Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, Indonesia's two largest Muslim organizations, and the unorthodox Santi Asoke Buddhist organization in Thailand, under the lay leadership of former general Chamlong Srimuang, are possible agents for the preservation and deepening of democratic practices as these countries confront forces that threaten their democratic consolidation.

Introduction

Religious organizations have been largely left out of the studies of East Asian democratic transition and consolidation. The literature concerning democratic change in Asia initially examined the role of the middle class in democratic fermentation, the interaction between the political opposition and the military or the ruling party, and the relevance of labor and capital to the transformation of the political arena. Scholarly attention subsequently has shifted toward institution building, constitutionalism and electoral rules, and economic conditions that may impinge on democratization. The current round of research is directed at how nonreligious social organizations inject issues such as social welfare, environmental protection, gender equity, and

minority rights into normal democratic politics and how democratic values are internalized. This paper addresses the role of religious organizations in democratic consolidation in two countries of Southeast Asia, as part of a larger investigation that we are undertaking to introduce important information concerning the roles of religious organizations into the ongoing study of democratic development in East Asia.

Some religious organizations have been instrumental to the transition to democracy in parts of East Asia, while others have either stood in the way of or laid low during the process of democratic change. Our recent study[2] advances three arguments to explain why some religious organizations stepped into while others eschewed the politics of democratic transition in Northeast and Southeast Asia. First, religious doctrines did not predetermine whether a religious organization would "go political," as religious doctrines could be and have been flexibly interpreted to permit political activism. Second, the legitimacy formula of an authoritarian regime was a good predictor for politicization of religious organizations in the process of democratic transition. Political suppression and coercion invariably prompted the persecuted religious organizations to embrace the cause of democratic change. In contrast, political co-optation and inclusion typically muted state-sanctified religious organizations in the political realm, an equilibrium that, however, could be upset as democratic opposition became too potent to contain. Third, corporate interests—maintaining the unity and institutional reputation of a religious organization—rather than leadership attributes shaped the choice between embracing or neglecting the cause of democratic transition. In our ten-case study, we found that the political opposition always initiated a united front with a religious organization, but the latter did not always respond. The decision to bless the political opposition and uphold the cause of democratic transition was less a reflection of a religious leader's beliefs and more an imperative of corporate interests.

The research that we are currently undertaking is a sequel to our previous study on religious organizations and democratic *transition* in East Asia. The new research addresses the roles of religious organizations in the *consolidation* of young democracies in the region. Only those religious organizations previously active in the process of democratic transition will be included in this larger study. They are Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah in Indonesia, the noninstitutional Santi Asoke Buddhist organization under the lay leadership of former

general Chamlong Srimuang, in Thailand, the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines, the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, and prominent Christian churches in South Korea. (Soka Gakkai, a modern, lay Buddhist movement in Japan, also will be included in the broader study as a control case, as will religious organizations that were mute in the past during the process of democratic transition but are now active in normal democratic politics, for example, the Catholic Church in Taiwan.) During the push for democratic change, these religious organizations, at one point or another, were incubators, purveyors, and willing partners of prodemocracy political forces. Retrospectively, acting on behalf of prodemocratic forces was not a strenuous decision to make. When political authoritarianism still prevailed, "going political" and supporting democratic transition could easily be construed as the call of religious duty. Such a decision often could not wait, as the situational imperative for democratization mounted. As the authoritarian regimes have fallen by the wayside, however, the proper relationship between church, mosque, or temple and state inevitably has become a salient issue in the consolidation of East Asia's fledgling democracies. For religious organizations involved in democratic transition, defining (or redefining) their roles in newly established democratic polities is the order of the day, an assignment that is operationally translated into a choice between "stay on" or "bow out," or as particularly apparent in Southeast Asia, something in between. This is not necessarily a pressing decision—although in Indonesia it has become increasingly so—but certainly the need to reach a resolution is a persistent concern, because if religious organizations do not address their ongoing roles in an established democracy, their political adversaries will.

The central thesis of this research is that previously politically "activated" religious organizations in East Asia have tried to depoliticize themselves in the wake of democratic change, but have not completely retreated from the political domain and moved back exclusively into the spiritual realm, an equilibrium that is arguably conducive to democratic consolidation. Detached but not insulated from democratic politics, these religious organizations in East Asia are creating a sort of "strategic depth" that may allow them to influence democratic politics on issues that they deem imperative, at a timing and even under the terms of their choosing. Neither directly and constantly players in democratic politics, nor completely withdrawn from the political arena, these religious organizations monitor, admonish, and if necessary, adjudicate, affording themselves flexibility and, hopefully, from their perspectives, legitimacy in the new

political landscape. Some previously muted religious organizations have also learned the art of deliberating over policy issues, without diving into partisan politics. Keeping a distance from the epicenter of democratic politics, religious organizations at least can preempt the critics who would clearly separate Caesar from God. Conversely, by not renouncing all political involvement, they can offer a response to religionists who maintain that religious organizations should be the vanguard of society's ethical evolution. When other institutions—such as the party system, electoral processes, and the judicial system—fail to function, the public, if only to prevent military intervention, may even entrust religious organizations to unlock political logjams and help the task of securing democratic consolidation.

In newly democratized Indonesia, the two leading Muslim organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, quickly organized political parties, assiduously engaged in electoral mobilization, and, indeed, were quite successful in forming or participating in a coalition government (a feat that took Japanese Soka Gakkai-supported Komeito several decades of praxis to accomplish). However, neither of the two Muslim organizations took advantage of Islamic doctrine to advocate the creation of an Islamic state. Indeed, after the first two post-Suharto elections (1999 and 2004), the leaders of the two moderate Muslim organizations, one traditionalist, the other modernist, decided to deemphasize parliamentary politics and focus on developing their own religious organizations. This does not mean that the two organizations will cease to mobilize their bases for electoral contests and policy advocacy, but it does mean that they seem to be helping to turn Indonesia into a polity that is more akin to democratic, nonsectarian, largely secular Turkey than to theocratic Iran. Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah also have every incentive to prevent slippage into a form of Islamism that demands the formation of an Islamic state, on the one hand, or military rule, a sort of Pakistani outcome, on the other.

The Roman Catholic Church in newly restored Filipino democracy and the Santi Asoke noninstitutional Buddhist sect under Chamlong in now democratic Thailand did not attempt to run politics as the two Muslim organizations initially did in democratic Indonesia. However, the Catholic Church and Chamlong's organization continued to display political activism in the Philippines and Thailand, respectively. Cardinal Sin lent precious support to the fledgling Corazon Aquino democratic government that was beset by constant attempts by opponents to

effect a military coup. As the threat of a military coup subsided in Manila, Cardinal Sin returned to his cathedral. In a similar trajectory, Chamlong's religious organization formed a political party that championed clean politics. As the ethical rules were overhauled in Bangkok (e.g., constitutional revision turned the senate into an elective, but nonpartisan body[3]), the electoral fortunes of Chamlong's party declined, and Chamlong returned to his ascetic life. Both Cardinal Sin and Chamlong remained attentive to distributive justice and matters of poverty, however. And both (as well as Cardinal Sin's successor, Guadencio Rosales) subsequently endorsed their organization's "episodic" direct involvement in democratic politics in their respective countries, driving out scandal-ridden President Estrada and later placing President Arroyo on a sort of probation in the Philippines, and forcing Prime Minister Thaksin from office in Thailand.

Religious organizations in newly democratized Taiwan and South Korea—beyond the focus of this paper, but part of the larger study—have been most conscious about depoliticizing themselves. Since democratic transition, they have not organized their own political parties and they are no longer committed to electoral mobilization. They have been mute on intractable conflicts in democratic politics, which have been largely dealt with by the judicial branch of government. They have been mute as well on post-materialist issues—gay marriage, ordination of homosexual clergy, capital punishment, school prayer, euthanasia, abortion, and so on. However, they have not shied away from the issues that they have deemed salient to their society, such as the plight of North Korean refugees and citizens, or historical education and regional development in Taiwan. For example, a consortium of Catholic Church bishops in Taiwan recently broke its silence and vehemently promoted civil and social rights for guest workers and foreign brides. Thus, it is not inconceivable that religious organizations in South Korea and Taiwan will become more assertive about post-material issues in the future.

Religious organizations under study in our research differ in their retrenchment into their roles in newly installed democracies, but they are all uniformly and astutely "repositioning" themselves in their respective new democracies in such a way that their selective political involvement can be justifiable, effective, and credible. The focus of this paper is how this is so in Indonesia and Thailand. To explain the mode of political engagement among the religious organizations that we are studying, this research advances an "institutional investment" model, positing that religious organizations see themselves and are perceived to be institutions

competing with other institutions for relevancy, public trust, and approval in the newly created democratic polity. To become involved in the democratic processes is to be assessed by other influential players in society and by the public at large, and to weigh in on a policy debate or political battle is to be judged by potentially critical opposition. Political involvement can allow a religious organization to gain or lose reputation and public trust, and the stock of reputation and public trust is essential to organizational maintenance or even to the organization's survival. Religious leaders as managers of their organizations, hence, are on the lookout for investment opportunities, but also are aware of the risks to which they may be exposed. These risks can include tensions between internal factions holding opposing ideological views.

Religious organizations are a permanent fixture in newly democratized East Asia. Understanding their roles in the process of democratic consolidation is essential to the study of comparative democratization in the region.

The Dilemma of Church-State Relations in Contemporary Southeast Asia

Religion is cherished in Indonesia and Thailand, but as these nations confront their abilities to become consolidated modern democratic societies, they are pressured by competing and sometimes hostile forces to come to grips with what they believe is the appropriate role of religious organizations in shaping the state and the contemporary public moral outlook. For example, when the Suharto regime in Indonesia was forced from power in 1998, the doors were thrown open not only to the role of religious organizations to lobby the government as autonomous agents in democratic civil society, but also to the rise of political Islam that could threaten the democratic future of the nation. In the West, the Enlightenment sought to end the domination of the church over the state and society, launching the traditions of Western separation of church and state and state-protected religious pluralism. Organized religion frequently was seen by political and business quarters, in particular, as a hindrance to a nation's modern progress, leading to the rise of secular nationalism. Religion became increasingly privatized in the West, and was to be kept in its "proper place and perspective."[4] There has been some resistance to this marginalization of religion in the public sphere. For example, the outcomes of the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections in the United States underscore the

influence of religionists in politics, even though some 61 percent of Americans say they believe that religious leaders should not try to sway the decisions of the government.[5] Some East Asian societies hold similar views.[6] Yet in Indonesia where the population is 88 percent Muslim, and Thailand where it is 85-90 percent Theravada Buddhist, the inclination to draw on religious organizations and authority to shape culture, society, and the outlook of the government, if not its structure, remains evident, despite democratic transition.

Current events in Southeast Asia highlight that some religionists are likely to continue to fight vigorously against separation of their organizations from the state. Further, there has been much discussion in contemporary Asia over "Asian values" versus "Western values," which elevates concern whether a government in Southeast Asia will remain committed to the protection of pluralism, as "Asian values" historically have suppressed the rights of the individual and minority points of view with the rationale of protecting the well-being of the majority. During Suharto's New Order in Indonesia (1966-1998), for example, the regime maintained that democracy and human rights were incompatible with Indonesian culture,[7] a view held by radical Islamists currently. Remarks made by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to Indonesian Muslim leaders, including those from Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) in February 2006, exemplify that the interpretations by some Southeast Asian authorities of democratic guarantees in a national constitution may be less progressive and more restrictive than in the West. When commenting on a pending antipornography and indecency bill (RUU APP) in the parliament, he asserted that pornography did not have to be part of media freedoms and observed, "The Constitution says that human rights are absolute *unless they contravene accepted values of decency and norms, or impinge on matters of security and public order* (emphasis added)." He declared that the content of some tabloids shows, "with their gratuitous, often unsavory treatment of stories," that they pose a threat to public morality.[8] The proposed bill provides for the imposition of a one-year prison sentence for women wearing miniskirts and five years for couples who kiss in public. It also would ban art of whatever medium that exposed the movement of sensual body parts. The puritanical restrictions of the bill would place the traditional dress of Balinese, Papuans, and Javanese under criticism. Although Yudhoyono, in June 2006, tried to reaffirm *Pancasila* (Sukarno's Five Principles of Nationhood)[9] as the embodiment of the nation's commitment to

secular government and tolerance of diversity, the chairman of the Society for Democracy and Education, T. Mulya Lubis, maintains that the president is too concerned about offending Islamist parties that have supported him in parliament to counter the trend of growing radicalism. Alarmed by the rise of radical Islamism, Lubis has launched a tour of schools and universities throughout Indonesia to emphasize the value of the moderate traditions of the country.[10]

Thus, where Southeast Asia's newly democratized societies draw the line defining what is acceptable practice and what is not has much to do with the demands of religious communities and may overshadow the prospects for tolerance of alternative views and ways of life despite a country's democratic transition. The matter of tolerance extends, of course, to concerns about how minority religious groups, some of which seek social harmony and others of which are virulent, will be treated in the future. Southeast Asians now contemplate—from different perspectives—whether matters such as freedom of conscience, which includes not only freedom of religious belief but also freedom to express one's belief publicly and to proselytize, will be— or, in some religionists' view, should be—upheld over the long-term. This is to say that there are religions and religious groups that have been marginalized in the past whose followers no longer want to be sidelined outside the mainstream, resent or fear either a call for—or existing— religious majoritarianism, or seek, themselves, to become the unchallenged seat of authority.

In Indonesia, for example, religious organizations were controlled, marginalized, and in other cases banned, and sometimes their leaders and followers were vigorously persecuted, during the regimes of presidents Sukarno and Suharto.[11] Under Suharto, only five religions were given state sanction (Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism); others were forbidden as part of the ongoing policy of Pancasila. Further, while religions were forced to retreat from the governmental sphere or, alternatively, were co-opted, that did not mean that various Muslim organizations permanently abandoned their goal to dominate society and the state. The radicalism of some religious organizations such as Darul Islam in the 1950s and 1960s, which sought an Islamic state and to impose shariah law in Indonesia, spread fear among moderate and liberal Muslims and non-Muslims that religious domination of government and society would end the hope of future democratic achievement. Radical Islamist groups such as Laskar Jihad (LJ, Jihad Troops, reportedly disbanded), Front Pembela Islam (FPI, Islamic Defenders Front), the Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI, Indonesian Council of Jihad Fighters),

Hizb al Tahrir, Abu Sayyaf, and Jemaah Islamiah (JI, tied to Darul Islam), more militant following 9/11, foster the same fear in Indonesian society presently. The newer groups among them have leaders from the Middle East, particularly Yemen, and rely on Middle Eastern ideology and tactics.[12]When she was in Indonesia in March 2006, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice observed, "Groups like Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiah want to destroy this region's dynamism and the traditions of tolerance and turn South East Asia into, literally, a ring of fire."[13]

Leaders of radical religious groups seek their organization's permanent integration into (even dominance over) the state, believing that integration will strengthen them as a moral and political force that is capable of shaping society and government. They reject Western acceptance that autonomous religious organizations in civil society can play an effective role as counter-witness to the government and other institutions of the secular domain when necessary. A challenge to democracy in Southeast Asia is that some political and religious leaders support extreme Islamist groups, primarily to obtain votes, thus giving extremist elements respectability and acceptance among the majority of the population.[14]

In Thailand, there are Muslim separatist challenges to democracy in the south. Additionally, there are tensions between Thaksin Shinawatra, currently "on leave" as prime minister, and activists who want to uphold Buddhist ethics, in part by purging the government of corruption, heightening accountability of officials, and preventing the country's return to authoritarian leadership—while also securing an idealistic, Buddhist (some would say impractical) imagining of Thai life and indigenous Buddhist culture. There also are strains between the orthodox Thai Buddhist *sangha* (Buddhist monastic order), historically the source of government legitimization, but also tainted by corruption, and heterodox Buddhists who are a challenge to the authority of traditionalists, and between those who seek a nonmaterialistic way of life and the realities of modernization and globalization that have affected the country.

Thus, a major challenge in Southeast Asia's new democracies is to strike an effective balance between the demands of religionists, whatever stripe, on the one hand, and what the government must responsibly do to progressively build a modern nation that can adequately provide prosperity and other forms of well-being, on the other. These realms of interest and commitment legitimately intersect, and in Southeast Asia, there is an interpenetration of the

traditional religious and contemporary secular orders that makes many hard-line Western advocates of separation of church and state uncomfortable. However, it is doubtful that in Southeast Asia religionists soon will allow their traditions to be treated as passing from the contemporary scene, or otherwise trivialized as has occurred in the West. Consequently, new democracies in this region for the foreseeable future may find the comfort zone for their state somewhere between "secular" and "religious," and the way forward in these democracies likely will have to be carefully negotiated. The majority of the public in Indonesia and in Thailand does not seem to want to be dominated by religious groups that would restrict their rights and freedoms.[15] However, these public majorities appear to envision a future in which religion plays a significant role in shaping the national outlook. A major burden is to define separation of church and state in such a way as to give religious organizations a role in shaping the national future without constraining them, or worse, persecuting them, thus leading them to preach that the state is corrupt or otherwise immoral, opponents of religion, or the persecutor of religionists.

For many religionists in Indonesia and Thailand, the troublesome question is what they should do when they view state policies and practices as counter to their interpretation of morality and tolerant of conduct or beliefs of others that they insist religious doctrine forbids. Yet central to democratic consolidation is a commitment to mutual respect, to religious pluralism and equality that goes beyond mere religious toleration,[16] and to preservation of the right to openly and rationally debate the way forward. However, in Southeast Asia, a chief criticism of the West is that its governments and societies have become so secularized that religionists are viewed as outside the mainstream; individualism and technology prevail, religious belief is viewed in many quarters as a quaint holdover from the unenlightened past,[17] and religionists are dissuaded from "confounding" progress in crucial matters of state. Societies in Southeast Asia, in contrast, still hold that religion is integral to shaping the future of the nation and its people. Thus, in Southeast Asia's new democracies, who defines the "mainstream" is a subject of great contention. How should religiosity be expressed in society and politics if and when there is democratic consolidation? In Indonesia, will the hope of resurrecting the Islamic *umma* (unified Islamic community in which Islamic law prevails) fade from view or gain strength with a growth of hard-line Islamist views? And in Thailand where the government previously gained legitimacy from the Theravada Buddhist institution that it supported, will these Buddhists and the

government be inclined to yield ground to nonmainstream Buddhist organizations and their persistent leaders as admissible influential forces in guiding the development of democratic civil society? To what degree will religionists insist on asserting their faiths, influencing politics, and neutralizing the secularism that customarily is associated with Western democracies? These are unanswerable questions for now, but the ultimate responses will have much to do with shaping the democratic outlook for the region.

In sum, following democratic transition or restoration, religious values and leaders remain central to the political landscapes of Indonesia, Thailand, and elsewhere in Southeast Asia, helping to define national priorities and identities. Yet in each of these countries, the religious organizations that helped to effect democratic transition are necessarily assessing their roles as major forces in society—trying to steer the difficult course between preserving the influence of their organizations, advancing their interests, and attempting to shape the religious and moral outlooks of the people and government, on the one hand, and upholding a commitment to pluralism that is vital to the ongoing and vigorous debates that are the essence of consolidated democracies, on the other hand.

The Indonesian Cases

Because Indonesia is only one of two examples of secular democracy in a Muslim society, study of the role of Muslim organizations in this country takes on special significance. It is often stated that the vast majority of Muslims in Indonesia, which has the world's largest Muslim population, are tolerant moderates, reflecting the pluralism of the country's ethnicities and patterns of life. The practice of Islam in the archipelago is less Arabicized than elsewhere, less hard-lined than in the Middle East, and historically influenced by local cultures and beliefs. However, support for the imposition of shariah is growing, and laws at all levels of government have been promulgated with Islamic elements. Islamic law has been formalized in about thirty local regions of the archipelago, from Aceh where shariah courts are active,[18] to Sulawesi (formerly the Celebes), to smaller islands farther west.[19] As evidence of the growing trend to impose shariah law in the provinces of the archipelago, in June 2006, fifty-six members of parliament signed a petition demanding that provincial laws that are unconstitutional and have Islamic overtones should be

annulled. They assert that Indonesia's constitution forbids the creation of laws which discriminate against any particular group. It appears that the intent of the petition is to create a legislative movement that will reverse the Islamization of the country.[20] However, while some citizens work to prevent Indonesia's becoming an Islamic state, some Muslims campaign for the establishment of a caliphate (*khilafah*) and the imposition of shariah law nationwide.

The country's largest and second largest Muslim organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, respectively, were instrumental in Indonesia's democratic transition in 1998. Both organizations were in the forefront of establishing a form of government that could pursue reasonable prosperity, health, educational, and social welfare benefits, and other advantages of a modern developed nation. As they ushered democracy into Indonesia, NU and Muhammadiyah demonstrated their moderate and pragmatic natures. Considered mainstream groups, they have voiced objection to radicalism and have attempted to promote a reasoned face for Islam that acknowledges the rights of people of other faiths and supports the continuation of multiconfessional nationalism in the archipelago.

However, important sign-posts for the future success of democratic consolidation in Indonesia will be the policies and actions of Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah down the road. Nahdlatul Ulama has some forty million members and is currently led by Hassyim Muzadi. The organization led demonstrations against American involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq and excluded representation of the United States at a June 20-22, 2006 Conference of Islamic Scholars (ICIS).[21] Muhammadiyah, an organization of some thirty-five million members, currently is chaired by M. Din Syamsuddin, a professor of Islamic political thought at Jakarta's National Islamic University, who also is an alumnus of UCLA's doctoral program in political science, vice-general chairman of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI),[22] Indonesia's top clerical body, which holds great influence over politicians, and president of the Asian Conference on Religion for Peace, based in Tokyo. Syamsuddin has publicly opposed the United States for its tack in the war on terror, claimed that the war in Iraq was launched because of a decline in the U.S. economy, and referred to President George W. Bush as a "drunken horse."[23] Both Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah have histories of undemocratic behavior, although they are considered to reflect moderate Muslim affiliation presently.

Since the fall of Suharto in 1998 and the planting of democracy, each organization has tried to hold to its religious views, while claiming to pursue a role in society that is commensurate with Indonesia's democratic political structure. This, at a time when Indonesia has been marred by the attacks of hard-line Islamist groups against religionists viewed to be a threat to their interpretation of orthodox Islam. Accusations of blasphemy have increased in Indonesia[24] and arrests of women for "improper dress," public beatings of women for their appearance in public with men who are not their husbands, and other impositions of a morality code by hardliners on local citizens are growing in frequency. Since 1998 when the state's authority began to diminish, there have been an increasing number of violent acts committed in the name of religion or morality. Azyumardi Azra has warned of Indonesia's drift toward "mobocracy."[25] Many observers are concerned that, in too many instances, the police have failed to enforce the law, and that authorities are fearful of pursuing hard-line Islamist groups, dreading a backlash from them and other angered Muslims. Azra observes, "There are groups out there in society that feel they have a mandate from God to straighten things out, including through the use of violence. ...here in Indonesia it seems violent acts are permitted, which I think is very dangerous."[26] Rumadi, a scholar at the Wahid Institute, maintains, "In all cases of violence against religious groups, there has been the involvement of the Indonesian Council of Ulema (MUI). MUI has acted as if it holds supreme authority over religious matters. Sadly, the government has seemed to follow the ruling of the MUI and acted as if it did not have any interest in the *fatwa* issued by MUI."[27]

Indonesia's democracy is threatened by religious leaders and scholars who promote intolerance, violence, obedience to their will, and fear of the West's destruction of the tenets and power of Islam. Many foreign observers and Indonesians are concerned that progressive Islam is coming under attack and that the guarantees of religious freedom in the nation's constitution (articles 28E and 29) will become worthless. Yet in a sign of confidence that Indonesia will stay on a democratic trajectory, when queried about United States-Indonesia military cooperation during her trip to Indonesia, Secretary of State Rice said, "The United States has now resumed military ties with Indonesia as this nation has chosen a democratic path." She emphasized the importance of Indonesia as a moderating influence among Muslims internationally and as a

bridge to Muslims in the Middle East, noting that, for every eight Muslims worldwide, one is a citizen of Indonesia.[28]

Important to whether Indonesia, in fact, will realize democratic consolidation is whether NU and Muhammadiyah will be stabilizing influences religiously and politically. Both organizations have maintained that radical groups are trying to politicize Islam for their own gain and do not represent the true tenor of Islam. Through open dialogue, joint programs, and the like, both organizations appear to be attempting to tame radical Islamist groups. Meanwhile, they have appealed to the government to crack down on transgressors of the law. The former head of Muhammadiyah, Ahmad Syafii, warned that the lack of harsh governmental measures would foster more radicalism.[29]

To be effective agents in strengthening democracy in Indonesia, however, NU and Muhammadiyah must effectively respond to the new wave of individualistic thinking that challenges their influence. Radical Islam in the archipelago, described by some as a response to the failures of secular governance,[30] appeals to many who are unsatisfied with the social, economic, and religious state of affairs in their own communities, who find the modern world not to their taste, and who seek alternative sources of leadership.[31] Although NU and Muhammadiyah have been the largest Muslim organizations in Indonesia for decades, there are a host of competing Muslim groups, some of which have issued a call to "purify" Islam and are at the center of the media's attention. Further growth of individualistic, anti-institutional movements in Indonesia seemingly would not be to NU's and Muhammadiyah's advantage. Whether NU and Muhammadiyah can counter forces for relativism and intolerance, and continue to support democracy as the legitimate forum for ongoing debate about what is right and wrong,[32] is their and Indonesia's critical test of commitment to democracy.

Nahdlatul Ulama (Awakening of the Traditional Islamic Scholars and Teachers)

Nahdlatul Ulama, founded in 1926, is younger than Muhammadiyah, established in 1912. It has roots in the rural Java countryside, giving it a different base historically than that of Muhammadiyah, whose membership has been drawn from Indonesia's urbanized coastal regions. A traditionalist organization, Nahdlatul Ulama has been the vanguard of moderate Islam in

Indonesia, and thus, in large measure, responsible for Indonesia's international reputation as a moderate Muslim country. However, it has been accused by critics recently of having moved to the religious and political right.

A Brief History of Nahdlatul Ulama

Nahdlatul Ulama has been accommodative in the past, in part to try to preserve a religious way of life without offending the ruling power. After the organization's founding when nationalists were calling for the end to colonial rule, for example, NU leadership issued a statement affirming that European rule and Islam were compatible[33] —strange to the contemporary ear. However, NU has not always been religiously or politically obliging, advocating violence when it has been in its perceived interest and that of Islam to do so. In 1965, both NU and Muhammadiyah were at the forefront of the call to purge Indonesia of communists, which led to the scouring of the country and the deaths of some 500,000 people. NU's daily paper, *Duta Masyarakat*, in October that year, called for the "annihilation" of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI, Partai Komunis Indonesia), at the time, the largest communist party in the noncommunist world, and for the liquidation of all accomplices in the Thirtieth of September Movement, one that had culminated in an attack by leftist forces, led by junior army officers, against prominent, senior anticommunist superiors. In concurrence with the views of NU, Muhammadiyah issued a fatwa in November 1965 calling for the "extermination" of PKI members and other "neo-colonialist imperialists."[34]

Notwithstanding this eventual foray into violence, Hefner observes that, "However much they railed against secularism and communism and spoke in favor of an Islamic state, the NU consistently showed itself more willing than the modernists to make concessions to the Soekarno government."[35] NU was criticized for opportunism because it dominated the Ministry of Religion and consequently benefited from a deep pool of patronage resources. Nevertheless, Hefner maintains that NU supported Sukarno as a matter of pragmatism more than from a desire for entitlement. He notes that NU's admiration for Sukarno was expressed as early as 1940, when its leadership overwhelming supported Sukarno to be the first president of independent Indonesia in preference to Mohammad Hatta, seemingly the logical choice of persons holding traditional

religious views. NU cast its lot with Sukarno, although, in 1940, Sukarno had published "articles in which he praised the Turkish secularist leader Mustafa Kemal Ataturk for having brought progress to Turkey by effecting a separation of Islam and state. He blamed much of the backwardness of the Muslim world on the tendency of the traditionalist Muslims to reduce Islam to matters of traditional jurisprudence (*fiqh*),"[36] ideas at odds with NU's traditionalist background and views on matters of religion and state. When later in 1952 NU withdrew from Masyumi (a unified Muslim political federation created under the Japanese to co-opt Muslims in state administration) because of its domination by modernist Muslims, it again exhibited its pragmatism by recruiting politicians into its new political party who had no previous affiliation with NU—evidence that it was willing to collaborate with "secular" politicians.[37]

The potential for NU to be committed to principled pluralism waxed during the early period of Sukarno's rule because its scholars approached the times with tolerance and creativity. As Hefner observes, they were secure in their Muslim identity and acknowledged that it was necessary for the organization to be pragmatic rather than utopian to be relevant. However, NU's commitment to pluralism did not become institutionalized, for as time passed, Sukarno leaned away from NU in his NASAKOM government (a government that attempted to unify nationalism, religion, and communism ostensibly to avoid the factionalism of parliamentary democracy)[38] and toward a deeper alliance with the communists. As previously discussed, the Sukarno-communist alliance placed NU and the communists on a collision course, undermining mutual respect on all sides and moving NU to collaborate with the army to destroy the Indonesian Communist Party.[39]

General Suharto's New Order regime came to power in October 1965 following the failed leftist officers' coup. During the early years of Suharto's rule, NU again showed its conservative stripe in its support of the imposition of shariah law. Some Muslims wanted to revive the Jakarta Charter, the principle of state support for Islamic law that was dropped from the preamble of Indonesia's constitution in 1945 at the insistence of Christians, Hindus, and nonreligious nationalists. At that time, NU convinced Sukarno to change the first principle of the government's Pancasila policy to read that the new state was based, not on "belief in God," but on "belief in a singular God," bringing the Muslim understanding of *tawhid*, or the unity of God, to the fore—an understanding of the nature of God that denies the validity of the Christian

Trinity, Hinduism's multiple expressions of the divine, and the polytheism of many indigenous religious practices of the archipelago.[40] Yet Pancasila did not make Islam the religion of state. In 1966, NU at first straddled the fence, maintaining that it sought shariah law but applied within a Pancasilist state. By 1968, however, NU maintained that the basis of Pancasila was the Jakarta Charter, *ipso facto*, Pancasila required the implementation of shariah. In the face of the tensions over the imposition of shariah law, a potential growth of Muslim political autonomy, and, thus, a potential Muslim claim to state power, the military curtailed further debate over the Jakarta Charter. Undaunted, prominent NU members went on to criticize the Suharto government's policies, demanding elections in 1967 that could benefit Muslims, a harder line on Israel, and limits on foreign investments and competition that could negatively affect Indonesia's Muslim enterprises.[41] By 1971, NU was the strongest critic of the Suharto government among Muslim groups, leading the government to harden its attitude against NU and other Muslim organizations and to a precipitous decline of both Muslim representation in the parliament and of Muslims' access to patronage.[42] Thus, the Suharto regime made a concerted effort to minimize the effect of religious organizations that could spawn political Islam and stand beyond the reach of state authority. This tack included removing NU from its previous control of the Ministry of Religion and its associated prestige and patronage power. The government strongly backed Pancasila as the state's ideological foundation, and promoted a "culturally conservative and politically authoritarian variant of multiconfessional nationalism" for twenty of Suharto's years of rule. Changes in society, however, made this approach difficult to uphold.[43]

During the 1970s and 1980s, the expansion of the middle class was accompanied by a resurgence of Islam. What the resurgence meant to differing Muslim communities varied, but Suharto would have to address the reality of the growing influence in politics of religious organizations. Pressures on the Suharto government to make concessions to Muslim concerns led the president to tilt toward conservative Muslim interests. During the last decade of his rule, Suharto attempted to co-opt NU and Muhammadiyah, which, independent since their beginnings—and with their emphasis on education and social welfare—had represented the basis for autonomous religious organizations in civil society. To Suharto's consternation, although NU and Muhammadiyah were willing to collaborate on educational and social welfare matters, they demanded democratic reform. Thus, Suharto tilted further away from the principle of equality

under Pancasila and moved to gain support for his troubled regime from hard-line anti-Christian, anti-Western Muslim organizations.[44] The tipping point for his forced resignation from the presidency was the Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998.

Although NU has had its political leanings, it customarily has been less ideological than its modernist rivals and driven more by "a way of life associated with the religious scholars (*ulama*) who comprise the party's core."[45] Because the leaders within NU have their own social and economic enterprises and followers, a pragmatic, nonideological outlook has helped to balance the multiple interests of NU's members, while collectively they have tried to preserve a traditionalist approach to Islam.[46] Since its founding, NU has had dual leadership, split between an executive body (Tanfidziyah) and a council of religious scholars (Syuriyah). The executive body has tended to be dominated by pragmatic Jakarta-based politicians. The council of religious scholars, who come from across Indonesia but who include an important core from Java, ensure that NU's policies are in accord with the Shafi'i school of Islamic law [47] which guides the organization. Structurally, NU has been compared to traditional Qur'anic boarding schools, or *pesantren*, organized around a charismatic religious leader who delegates authority in certain matters, but otherwise oversees a loosely structured, decentralized organization in day-to-day functioning.[48] During the leadership of NU by Abdurrahman "Gus Dur" Wahid and Hasyim Muzadi, the Tanfidziyah has encroached upon the Syuriyah. Progressive members of NU seek a restructuring of the relationship between the two bodies to strengthen the Syuriyah, with the view of steering NU away from political involvement. This may be the result particularly of the 2004 campaign of Hasyim Muzadi, who was the running-mate of former President Megawati Sukarnoputri; it was claimed that he used NU to advance his own political interests.[49]

Nahdlatul Ulama and Indonesia's Democratic Consolidation

Progressive Islam will be particularly at risk in Indonesia if its views are not reflected in NU's policies and practices. However, the delicate line that NU is attempting to walk between hard-line Islamists and progressive Muslims and secularists is causing the organization to reassess its former positions. Hasyim Muzadi, NU's leader, asserts that he would like to see the organization's membership reaffirm at a July 2006 conference that Indonesia's future should be

based on Pancasila and the 1945 constitution which protects pluralism. Treading a middle road in the midst of growing Islamist-secularist tensions, he claims that NU is not for or against the application of shariah. Consistent with the organization's accommodative past, he explains that shariah can be applied in civil society, but should not be applied within the nation-state. He speaks of a contextual application of shariah within the NU community, meaning that individual believers can be called upon within the contexts of their communities to live according to the commandments of God, but he draws a distinction between what religious organizations can expect of individuals and what they can expect of institutions.[50]

Addressing the fears of some Muslims that Indonesia will become a Western-style democracy in which religion is excluded from affairs of state, as well as the fear of secularists and moderate religionists that soon Indonesia will be governed by Islamic law, Muzadi maintains that the spirit of shariah can be included in the crafting of national legislation, but that laws must be created in a democratic manner that is in harmony with the national motto of "Unity in Diversity." Thus, he advises that conflict between religion and the state is not inevitable, because, with their interpenetration, the sectors of interest are in proportion to one another. To demonstrate how the interpenetration is possible in a democratic nation, Muzadi uses anticorruption legislation[51] as an example. Because the tenets of Islam (and all other religions) opposed corruption, he argues that there is no need to label the legislation the "Islamic Anti-Corruption Law," or to include specific Islamic text. However, this exclusion, he says, does not eliminate the influence of Islam on the law: a substantive implementation of shariah (rather than a literal application of shariah, which Muzadi claims would lead to the disintegration of the nation) still can be embodied in the legislation, without creating social unrest.[52]

Indonesia's politics is seriously unsettled not only by the demand for the imposition of shariah by some Muslims, but also by their hope to revive a medieval caliphate that existed following the death of Muhammad. NU maintains that such a caliphate is irrelevant to contemporary society, and more importantly, that Muhammad made no determination that there ever should be a caliphate;[53] indeed, most academicians agree that Muhammad did not provide any explicit instructions as to how the Muslim community should be governed following his death. Thus, NU's position is that a caliphate is man-made, not a directive from God. If, however, the evolved understanding of "caliphate" is in keeping with democratic thought and modernity,

the establishment of such a caliphate is a possibility that Muzadi says NU would consider. He does not elaborate on how a caliphate, historically associated with dynastic rule (sometimes hereditary-based) and Muslim empires would be in accord with democratic principles or compatible with the modern nation-state construct and matters of sovereignty. Further, Muzadi does not regard the campaign for a caliphate that would change the form of state to be subversive in the post-Suharto period of new reform, as long as this objective is pursued within the bounds of law.[54] Hence, NU leadership appears to stand on the side of Muslims who maintain that it is fair to use the democratic process to pursue the imposition of a caliphate, and associated Islamic law, arguing that such pursuit is an expression of freedom of speech and of personal and group aspirations, freedoms that are essential to a democracy. By extension, of course, the outcome could be that the imposition of an Islamic caliphate would be intended to undermine the very democratic process that brought it into being and could result in an illiberal form of society in which Islamists assume a dictatorial role. Proponents of these goals claim that this would reflect the demand and the will of the majority of the people, without concern for the protection of the vast number of minority views and ways of life that characterize Indonesia and other democratic societies. For NU not to clarify its position—support for the rights of minorities and pluralism, while accepting the rights of fundamentalist Muslims to use the democratic process to try to curtail them—is problematic for NU, as moderates seek democratic consolidation in Indonesia.

NU appears to be trying to hold to a centrist position on the imposition of shariah and the establishment of a caliphate. However, critics claim that NU's centrist position is not fact. They maintain that NU has moved to the right of center toward the positions of hard-line Muslims to advance organizational interests, pointing to NU's intolerance of Jamaah Ahmadiyah,[55] which has been the target of attacks by Islamists; NU's lack of opposition to local-level NU practices that have given rise to "morality police"; and NU's support for the proposed antipornography and indecency bill, which progressives maintain would limit freedom of expression and lead to the interference of the state in the private lives of citizens. Although NU publicly supports the pending antipornography legislation, it claims to seek provisions that acknowledge Indonesia's diversity. Muzadi maintains that legislation is required to address excessive public displays of sexuality that he insists negatively affect young persons who have become "hedonistic." He claims that NU stands in common cause with "parents, teachers, educators, and religious

leaders,"[56] all of whom, he implies, abhor contemporary undisciplined sexual freedom. Yet he acknowledges that, in a democratic society, exceptions must be made in laws that respect diversity of religious views, offering as an example, that, for religious reasons, Balinese sometimes go topless and Papuan men wear a penis sheath. Such practices, viewed as indecent by traditionalist Muslims, should, however, be confined to the relevant local environment, according to NU. Despite this professed appreciation of multiculturalism, particularly in semi-autonomous regions of Indonesia, NU holds that pornography is a critical problem in the archipelago, and urges a movement against it led by NU, Muhammadiyah, parents, and children. Muzadi asserts that law alone cannot raise the moral standards of Indonesians, therefore, an inculcation of morality must be forced through societal pressures. He justifies a campaign against low standards of morality by asserting that, unless the moral standards of Indonesians are improved, extremists will use law for violent ends. Muzadi denies that an antipornography and indecency law would signal the Arabization or Talibanization of Indonesia, or a softened application of shariah, hinting that such concerns may be generated by the pornography industry to rally persons to its protection.[57]

In answer to NU's liberal critics, Muzadi acknowledges that NU is moving to the right politically, but claims that NU is repositioning itself from the hard left, where it had been for too long, to the center, to enable the organization to serve as a forum for discussion among all elements within Islam. He assesses the Indonesian government as weak, and maintains that, consequently, it is necessary that NU engage in reform from within to strengthen itself, return to the "right faith," and "develop within the context of the nation and the global situation." Muzadi admits that he meets with hard-line Muslims, but explains this as an attempt to prevent their isolation or characterization as not Islamic. NU, he says, listens to all views, but then winnows the seeds from the chaff, with an eye to the need of Islamic thought to progress in keeping with technological, social, and other developments, but also with the understanding that religion cannot be disregarded. This position of accommodation is qualified, however, by the requirement that social and political developments must not harm Islam, the Qur'an, or Muhammad[58]—a requirement that is, of course, at the very heart of the raging debate in Indonesia about what compromises Islam and what is the best religious and political way forward.

Muzadi defines NU as opposed to injustice, hegemony, and attacks on the weak, but not anti-Western. Regarding the spread of Islam in the West, he notes that NU maintains branches around the world, but that its engagement in *dakwah* (Islamic predication) is a preferred method of spreading Islam to the approach of hard-line Islamists who attempt to change national constitutions, viewed as hostile assaults by Western governments.[59]

In sum, Muzadi's leadership of NU is aimed at creating a public image of an organization that seeks the practice of a practical form of Islam in Indonesia, in which religionists understand the application of shariah to be the furthering of prosperity, peace, and justice. Muzadi defines unproductive Islam as Islam that is centered on symbol and form rather than substance.[60] Essential to the pursuit of substance is the support of laws that embrace aspects of Islam and other religions, universal values, and a democratic process, he says.

NU has been closely associated with the Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB, or the National Awakening Party), which won 10.57 percent of the vote and 52 of 550 seats in the 2004 parliamentary elections. PKB was formed as the political party of NU in June 1998, immediately following the resignation of Suharto from the presidency, and became one of the most successful of the new post-Suharto parties.[61] Under the leadership of Abdurrahman Wahid prior to 1999, NU joined Muhammadiyah, at the time chaired by Amein Rais, in a demand for free elections and democratic reform. However, NU, now under different leadership, also has an association with the Partai Persatuan dan Pembangunan (PPP, or the United Development Party), a party with a radical Islamist element that seeks the imposition of Islamic law in Indonesia, and won 8.15 percent of the vote and 58 seats in the 2004 parliamentary polls.

The different political ties of NU reflect factionalism that could weaken the influence of the organization. When on December 2, 2004, Hasyim Muzadi was reelected as the organization's chairman, it was a major defeat for Wahid, regarded as a champion of democratic reform, and for youthful progressives within NU's ranks. Wahid had chaired NU for fifteen years prior to his becoming Indonesia's president in 1999. By 2004, a bitter dispute had arisen between Wahid and Muzadi, the former lambasting the latter for placing NU at the center of the contested 2004 presidential election when he agreed to be the running-mate in the failed bid of incumbent Megawati Sukarnoputri, head of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P). Muzadi countered the accusation by pointing out that he had stepped down temporarily as chairman of

NU during the campaign. Owed to the heated debate over the politicization of the organization, the 2004 NU congress revoked a 1999 directive that NU members should support the organization's then newly formed National Awakening Party. (The effectiveness of the 1999 directive was revealed when the party came in third, behind the ruling Golkar Party and the PDI-P, in the 1999 election, despite the PKB's political base being largely confined to East Java. Division grew within NU when Wahid selected non-NU members to lead the party.) Although the NU congress of December 2004 reaffirmed its commitment to pluralism and moderation in Indonesia and rejected extremism, it also rejected religious liberalism, which a group of younger NU clerics sees as essential to countering the rise of religious fundamentalism.[62]

Factionalism is also at the root of the struggle for the control of NU mosques. In the spring of 2006, Masdar F Mas'uda, chairman of the central committee of NU and widely known as a progressive Muslim thinker, pleaded for the unity of NU membership in the face of challenges to its mosques. He told an audience at the Wahid Institute in Jakarta on May 24, 2006, that, "Recently hundreds of mosques built by NU people have been taken over by fundamentalist groups. The reason they give us is that this is a house of god. They even say that the teachings of the NU are heretical."[63] Claiming that NU was under siege, Mas'uda maintained that hard-line Islamists were trying to foment dissention within NU and were taking over NU mosques by gaining control of the leadership and land.[64] Thus, although Muzadi insists that the move of NU rightward is a matter of principle and meant to enable the organization to facilitate discussions among all Muslim camps, it is also possible that the organization's move toward the right is to strengthen its traditionalist base and to counter—and perhaps appease—hard-line groups that are chipping away at the foundational base of Indonesia's largest Muslim organization.

The outcome of the ideological tension that exists in NU between conservative and liberal factions is important not only to the future of NU but also to the potential for democratic consolidation in Indonesia. The new stream of young intellectual Muslims that emerged within NU over the last decade that advocates a moderate, liberal, contextual approach to Islam,[65] is opposed by some conservative ulama within NU who argue that progressive Islam is based on Western secular views and that it is in conflict with the theology and legal interpretations of NU.[66] Thus, NU is in the throes of an internal struggle over the positioning of NU for the future. When incumbent chairman Hasyim Muzadi was reelected for another term in the face of stiff

opposition from Wahid in 2004, it was a significant defeat not only for NU's progressive element but also for the hope for renewal of Islamic legal methodology within the organization. Decisions made within NU are vital to the future of democratization in Indonesia because, in the NU community and the nation, the views of NU's ulama are very influential in determining how Muslims of the archipelago should approach justice, peace, modernity, and globalization. For now, NU seems to be on a course that promotes religiosity, mutual tolerance, and socio-economic and democratic progress. However, there are hazards to be avoided that could be deadly to the organization's claim to moderate views and to Indonesia's fledgling democracy.

Muhammadiyah (Followers of Muhammad)

Muhammadiyah is Indonesia's second largest Muslim organization. It was founded by Ahmad Dahlan, who studied in Mecca and was influenced by the Egyptian reformist Muhammad 'Abhud, who advocated the purification of Islamic thought and practice, defense of Islam against criticism, and promotion of these goals through a modernized system of Islamic education. The organization upholds the central doctrines of mainstream Sunni Islam, and sees itself, not as a political party, but as a modernist Muslim social organization and a voice of reason that represents moderate Islamic values that can coexist with Indonesia's further democratic development. Thus, Muhammadiyah supports the development of an "ethical" democracy based on Islamic values and laws founded on traditionally held beliefs, as opposed to the consolidation of a "secular" democracy. This view was emphasized by the organization's chairman, M. Din Syamsuddin, in a lecture at UCLA on May 1, 2006. In his remarks, Syamsuddin was optimistic about the democratic future of Indonesia and maintained, in reference to NU and Muhammadiyah, that, "The two groups have played a considerable role not only as a moderating force in Indonesian society, but also as the moral force that persistently strives for the betterment of social life."[67]

How does Muhammadiyah define better social life in Indonesia? It seeks to improve people's sense of moral responsibility,

and to purify the faith of what it regards as outdated traditions or corruptions of true Islam. To this end, it emphasises the authority of the qur'an and the sunnah [narrative accounts describing the actions and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad] as supremely normative, and as the sole legitimate basis for the interpretation and development of religious belief and practice, in contrast to the authority invested in the schools of religious law (shariah) as practised by the legists (ulama).[68]

Thus, the organization favors a conservative, "puritan" approach to Islam, and part of this is opposition to the seepage of Hindu, Buddhist, and indigenous animistic and spirit practices, which it views as heterodox, into Islam. However, Muhammadiyah is founded on the principle of "new *ijtihad*," or the belief that the individual believer should interpret the Qur'an and Sunnah, as opposed to bowing to the traditional interpretations that are propounded by the ulama. Muhammadiyah promotes the right for Muslims to follow the teachings of Islam in their private lives and in the social sphere, free from the imposition of Islamic rule by the state or any other political authority (although Syamsuddin has not opposed "internal debate" on the possibilities of Indonesia's adoption of shariah law,[69] raising speculation that he might have political ambitions). Also, the organization fosters interfaith dialogue and maintains that tolerance for other religious beliefs is central to Islam. Further reflecting its modernist approach, Muhammadiyah has urged a dynamic public role for women.

A Brief History of Muhammadiyah

Headquartered in Jakarta, Muhammadiyah claims to have historically refrained from political involvement.[70] After its founding, Muhammadiyah was ambiguous in its attitudes toward politics, and, although it held anticolonialist views, the Dutch government tolerated the group. The flexibility of Muhammadiyah was evident at its beginnings, for the founders, on the one hand, had a close tie to the Javanese royal palace (*kraton*), and, on the other hand, aimed to rationalize traditional practices and to modernize the social system.[71] Among the founders of the organization were devout and nondevout Muslim Javanese aristocracy (*priyayi*) and traders. The main thrust of the organization was the improvement of educational, medical, and social welfare

services to Indonesians. As a socio-religious movement, Muhammadiyah emulated Christian missionary efforts in its development of an enormous enterprise of infant-care through university-level educational institutions, hundreds of hospitals and clinics, family care centers, and orphanages. (Presently, it also runs banks, cottage industries and factories, and publications. Thus, its scope is wide and reaches into Indonesia's smallest villages.[72]) Increasingly, however, Muhammadiyah became more concerned with the religious observances of its members as the influence of members from Sumatra began to overshadow the views of members from Java, and after Wahhabism became dominant on the Arabian Peninsula with the founding of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932. With the creation of a law-making council (Majlis Tarjih) within the organization in 1927, and the rise of the influence of devout Muslims within Muhammadiyah, the organization became less embracive of the syncretic culture and religious practices of Java and simultaneously less appealing to the nondevout Muslims, who now were attracted to nationalist or cultural movements.[73]

As noted, in contemporary times, Muhammadiyah joined with NU in calling for free elections and Indonesia's democratization, and it formed the National Mandate Party (PAN, or Partai Amanat Bangsa) in June 1998, to ensure the voting allegiance of its members. PAN and NU's PKB both promoted non-Islamist platforms, but neither party was initially as successful as it had hoped.[74] In the 2004 parliamentary elections, PAN won 6.44 percent of the vote and fifty-two seats. The party has reflected a relatively secular stance in politics, which under the leadership of Amien Rais, has avoided "Islamic" issues.[75]

Muhammadiyah and Indonesia's Democratic Consolidation

Syamsuddin wants Muhammadiyah's members to support political parties that will promote the values of the organization.[76] Open to interpretation is why representatives of the radical Islamist Partai Bulan Bintang (PBB), or the Crescent Star Party, were invited in 2006 to make their case to Muhammadiyah's members. PBB won 2.62 percent of the vote and eleven seats in the 2004 parliamentary election. Syamsuddin claims that the invitation was extended partly in recognition that Muhammadiyah and PBB were both members in the Partai Masyumi that was banned by Sukarno in 1959. He maintains that Muhammadiyah has not abandoned its relationship with

PAN, a politically moderate party. By its approach to PBB, however, pessimists fear that Muhammadiyah is making overtures to hard-line Islamists, and that they may conclude Muhammadiyah's leadership has given the green light to them to cultivate its members. Optimists say that Muhammadiyah's leaders have decided not to give the organization's backing to any political party but instead to fulfill the role of an autonomous religious body by listening to different political voices.[77]

Stephen Schwartz, author of *The Two Faces of Islam: Saudi Fundamentalism and Its Role in Terrorism*, wrote in 2005:

> I had been told in an email by my Muhammadiyah contact that "Islamic fundamentalism is in vogue in recent years in Indonesia, including within the Muhammmadiyah community, even though not in the mainstream. [S]ome leaders of radical Islam have a Saudi academic background, and want to spread their understanding of Islam." A few young members of the movement with whom I met were influenced by the Wahhabi claim of purifying Islam, but one among them, Ahmad Najib Burhani, has published articles in *The Jakarta Post* opposing such acts of Islamic extremism as an attack on July 8 on a community of the Ahmadiyya, a "post-Islamic" group.[78]

Hence, the unsettled nature of Muhammadiyah's politics is owed to the emergence of two factions within Muhammadiyah at the end of the twentieth century. One group has insisted that the organization should move with greater speed to impose a puritanical agenda, while the other has argued that Muhammadiyah is too puritanical already and should avoid further rightist tendencies. The tension between the two groups mirrors the conflict within NU and in Indonesia, in general, between forces with competing views about the future of the nation. The tension within Muhammadiyah has been in evidence since 1999 in the organization's universities.[79] The increase in the number of persons wearing beards to demonstrate religiosity has been countered by the Muhammadiyah Student Association's emphasis on pluralism, liberalism, and Sufism.[80] Nevertheless, the domination of moderate, pluralistic Muslims in Muhammadiyah, which has advanced the organization's reputation as modern and temperate, remains at risk.

The fence-sitting of Muhammadiyah in the presently tense political environment is illustrated by its stance in the uproar over the proposed antipornography bill. Syamsuddin explained to his May 2006 UCLA audience that Muhammadiyah is acting as a mediator between groups that supported the bill and those that opposed it. Thus, like NU, Muhammadiyah is trying to serve as a facilitator among contentious religious and political elements. Syamsuddin went on to say, however, that Muhammadiyah (like NU) opposes pornography and "exploitative behavior," which the bill, he said, aims to eliminate. He publicly criticized the government in April 2006 for not preventing the publication of *Playboy*, which was published in Indonesia without nude pictures.[81] Thus, Muhammadiyah supports censorship of freedom of speech and expression when religiously deemed appropriate. The MUI, of which Syamsuddin is vice-general chairman, issued a fatwa in May 2006 urging that the antipornography bill be passed immediately and that provincial and local governments pass antisin laws, especially ones targeted against prostitution.[82]

Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhhamadiyah, and Radical Islam

Since the end of Suharto's rule and political liberalization, there have been growing tensions between Muslims who seek the domination of a unitary form of Islam in Indonesia, and those who want to preserve the pluralistic practices that historically have set Indonesia apart from societies of the Middle East. Sectarian brutality has scarred the democratic landscape, leaving thousands dead. In response, NU and Muhammadiyah claim to have initiated programs to promote peace and toleration, with an eye to safeguarding Indonesia—and, undoubtedly, their own positions of influence—against radical extremism.

Nevertheless, extremism thrives. Indonesia has more than fourteen thousand *pesantren* or *madrasah* (Islamic schools), five to eighteen of which are linked to Jemaah Islamiah, headed by Abu Bakaar Bashir, and proselytizers of his radical Islam.[83] Bashir, who expresses hatred for the United States and Jews and seeks an Islamic state in Indonesia, walked out of jail in June 2006, after serving little more than a year for criminal conspiracy in the October 2002 Bali bombing of two night clubs that killed 202 people. American and Australian officials maintain that Bashir had a direct hand in the Bali bombings of 2002 and in the bombing of the Marriott Hotel in

Jakarta that killed twelve people in 2003. Further, the 9/11 Commission reported a link between Jemaah Islamiah and Al Qaeda. Terrorist experts in Jakarta claim that Jemaah Islamiah has been severely weakened by the government's assiduous pursuit of its members, and that most of JI's military members have been arrested or killed.[84] However, some analysts argue that the government is duplicitous in that, on the one hand, it wants to give the impression to the West that it is intolerant of radicalism and terrorism—President Yudhoyono has maintained that he would pressure Jemaah Islamiah and actively root out terrorism—and, on the other hand, it is reticent to crack down on terrorists with the fear that it will be labeled as anti-Islamic and, hence, lose support. Bashir's release also opens to speculation why NU and Muhammadiyah and other moderate Muslim organizations do not give their full support to the government in its counter-terrorism efforts. Rather, they emphasize that the government's pursuits should not be linked to Islam; neither NU nor Muhammadiyah campaign among their members and the majority moderate Muslim community to counter the "violent ideologies and perceived legitimacy" of radical Islamist groups.[85] This, despite warnings of some observers such as Gary Lamoshi, *Asia Times* journalist, who maintains, "There is no doubt that violent religious extremism is on the rise in Indonesia, and it presents a greater challenge to democracy and freedom than spectacular acts of terrorism."[86]

Optimists expect that the leaderships and memberships of NU and Muhammadiyah will uphold civic ideals that promote and protect the pluralism and mutual respect for which Indonesia historically has been admired among Muslim nations. For Indonesia's democracy to mature, NU and Muhammadiyah will have to internalize democratic values and use their influence to promote them in the broad public sphere. If, believing that they are protecting their institutional interests, NU and Muhammadiyah pander to intolerant views—those of bigots and extremists regardless how they are cloaked—it is likely that the moderate form of Islam to which Indonesians and the world have grown accustomed in the archipelago will be eclipsed. Thus, the paths that NU and Muhammadiyah choose will have much to do with the prospects for Indonesia's democratic consolidation.

The Thailand Case

Unlike Indonesia where the country's two largest Muslim organizations claim centrist positions but seem to waffle regarding their political intent by trying to accommodate all political factions, some nonmainstream Buddhists in Thailand took to the streets in 2006 on the side of their nation's further democratization. Historically, the authoritarian government of Thailand gained legitimacy from its tie to and control over institutional Theravada Buddhism, based in the religious sangha. Co-option of institutional Buddhism through support from the state reflected the government's policy of inclusion in order to secure its approval among the people of Thailand, of whom 85-90 percent are Buddhist. Also, the co-option of institutional Buddhism minimized possibilities that political opposition would emerge from the ranks of religionists. Theravada Buddhists consider their beliefs to be closer than other forms of Buddhism to those of Siddhartha Gautama, the historical Buddha, who viewed the attainment of nirvana to be possible through a solitary self-help program of meditation and careful self-cultivation, achieved most readily through detached, unworldly living in the sangha. However, paradoxically, since Thailand's adoption of Theravada Buddhism in the fourteenth century, institutional Theravada Buddhism has been tied to wealth and secular power.[87] This tie to authority did not help the democratization of the nation, for when a prodemocracy movement emerged in the 1970s, it was not in the interests of the traditional Theravada religious institution to cast its lot with the activists who stood in opposition to the government.

During the 1980s, a civil society and middle class developed and Thailand was called a quasi-democracy. New interest groups emerged along with new social movements that became the source of progressive opposition forces. When state control diminished in the 1990s, the more liberal environment that developed gave an opening to heterodox Buddhists movements that were independent from the sangha and that identified with different social groups to attempt to influence the state. Led by charismatic leaders, some members of these movements called for Thailand's democratic transition. Thus, unorthodox Buddhist groups acted as independent agents in civil society to place pressure for change on the existing political order. Non-sangha-based Buddhist groups joined with students and the urban middle class to call for democratization, the nonconformist Buddhists having a particular mission to "purify" politics and promote Thai-ness.

A Brief History of Chamlong and the Santi Asoke Buddhist Sect

Of particular significance in Thailand's democratic movement was Chamlong Srimuang, associated with the austere Santi Asoke sect, known as the Dharma Army, normally politically inactive, but said to presently have tens of thousands of followers. The group is unconventional in that its members follow an unorthodox monk, Phra Phothrirak, or Samana Bodhirak, as their spiritual leader, and regard Chamlong, a former military general and politician, as the layman head of the sect. Through the political Palang Dharma Party (PDP, or Moral Force, also Phalang Tham) that he founded in 1988, Chamlong attempted to provide an ethical compass for Thai politics. Having introduced a new type of politics to Thailand in the 1980s, he and his followers became a major political force in Thailand in the 1990s, helping to effect Thailand's democratic transition. Thailand had been governed by the military intermittently between 1947 and 1992, when Chamlong led protests of hundreds of thousands of people that helped to oust the military-backed government of unelected General Suchinda Kraprayoon, who had led a coup in 1991, and subsequently was appointed prime minister. Although the Chamlong-led movement was successful in restoring democracy, Chamlong's leadership of demonstrations that led to "Black May" when the army fired on unarmed demonstrators would have negative repercussions for the retired general who had further political ambitions.

The background of Chamlong, who continues to have a profound effect on Thailand's politics, is an unusual blend of military leadership, devout Buddhist practices, and public service. He was graduated from the Royal Thai Chulachomklao Military Academy in 1960, studied on an American government scholarship at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, and served in the Thai Armed Forces Supreme Command. In 1980, he was chosen to be the secretary general to Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanond,[88] but suffered a political setback in 1981, when a group of young military officers, known as the "Young Turks" and who had been Chamlong's supporters, staged an unsuccessful coup against Prem. Shortly thereafter, Chamlong resigned as secretary general in protest against a pending abortion law that he opposed on moral grounds. He remained in the army, however, and was promoted to major general, but he left the military when he decided to enter politics as an elected official. In 1985, when constitutional revisions made the governorship of Bangkok an elected office, he ran for the post and focused

his campaign on building public morality. His attack on vote buying and his refusal to smear rivals or take compromising political contributions ended in Chamlong's election victory.

As governor, Chamlong earned a reputation for cleaning up Bangkok, providing order in the city, and projecting a selfless model for others to follow, with the view that small considerate actions on the part of individual citizens, if practiced widely, could make a significant difference in the quality of life for Thais. His example of leadership included his refusing his salary and the privileges of office, living and dressing simply, and practicing vegetarian austerity. He even took up a broom to sweep the streets of Bangkok, a sign of humility and the dignity of labor and that he was not asking others to perform tasks that he would not do himself. His administration attacked corruption and assiduously collected taxes in an effort to increase funds for services to the public. In appreciation of his leadership, voters reelected Chamlong by a landslide in 1990, and he held the post until January 1992. By early 1992, the Palang Dharma Party controlled thirty-two of Bangkok's thirty-five seats in parliament, raising Chamlong and his party to a national force. In March that year, Chamlong became a member of parliament, representing a Bangkok constituency. However, Chamlong soon was arrested when he led protests against Suchinda Kraprayoon to remove him as premier.[89]

Democratic renewal for Thailand was greatly advanced by Chamlong's ability to mobilize ordinary citizens to reject the unelected premier. This was achieved by his blending the roles of moral leader and political activist, epitomized in his hunger strike against the conservative Thai state in May 1992. Thus, Chamlong helped to conclude military rule in Thailand through "rally politics,"[90] a pioneer approach to public participation in Thailand's government by an individual who, in his personal life and promotion of "Thai-ness," was conservative, and in his own administrations pursued paternalistic and authoritarian practices.[91] Rather than attempting to deepen democracy in Thailand through party activity in parliament, Chamlong relied on plebiscitary leadership to build political opposition.

For decades, Chamlong has insisted that democratic elections are the only legitimate path to gaining political power. His mobilization of persons who wanted clean, democratically elected government provided a significant boost to the prodemocracy forces who hoped to end coups and attempted coups and to stabilize Thai politics. After the downfall of the military government and the establishment of democracy, the 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis was arguably the single

most important impetus in Thailand's democratic transition, for it continued to raise popular awareness of the need for good government that had been stressed by Chamlong.

As for the Santi Asoke Buddhist movement with which Chamlong is affiliated, while an unorthodox group at a time of social and political transition in Thailand in the 1980s and 1990s, it never provided a significant impetus for the mobilization of citizens itself[92] or for political change, despite the fact that its appeal was primarily to the dispossessed and disenfranchised.[93] The call for political change and the rallying of people to the democratic cause was primarily the work of Chamlong. However, the movement (in addition to Chamlong's military career) does in part explain the values that Chamlong advocates. When he joined the movement in 1979, Chamlong sold his home, gave away his possessions, took a vow of celibacy with his wife, reduced his diet to one vegetarian meal a day, and traveled throughout Thailand as a preacher.[94] Thus, he assumed the life of a Buddhist ascetic, not uncommon for persons who seek to build a huge following in East Asian societies;[95] those who knew him came to refer to Chamlong as "half-man, half-monk."[96] Santi Asoke, while its followers engage in conservative, self-denying practices, has a membership described as primarily anti-establishment,[97] a hallmark of Chamlong's political career. Further, among the lay communities of Santi Asoke, Panthom Asoke has been described as a Thai "'Buddhist utopia,' an attempt at the creation of an ideal community which is unique in Thai society."[98] Thus, the tie of Chamlong to Santi Asoke furthered the reputation of Chamlong as a self-disciplined, pious man who lived a life of renunciation and devotion and strove in a humble way to share clean, simplistic living and Thai-ness, from which he had spiritually benefited, with all of society—a moving model of moral persuasion for many Thais.

However, Chamlong's association with Santi Asoke has been complex, and not always smooth. McCargo argues that despite their interdependence, Chamlong and Santi Asoke fostered an appearance of detachment that served their purposes better than an open political alliance, and at the end of the day, Chamlong made use of Santi Asoke to further his political career, but "detached himself from the movement when it became politically expedient to do so."[99] It was through Chamlong that Santi Asoke became entangled in politics by approving the founding of Palang Dharma, enthusiastically supporting Chamlong in his 1985 and 1988 election campaigns, and fielding some of its members as candidates for parliament. And it was through association

with Chamlong and his and his party's building influence that Santi Asoke, long a thorn in the side of the orthodox sangha, became the target of the establishment's wrath, leading to its investigation as a dangerous, illegal, politicized cult that could undermine the relationship between the conventional sangha and the state and threaten national security. Charged with violations of the *Vinaya* (which governs the monastic practice of dharma) and for refusing to submit to the authority of the Supreme Sangha Council, Phra Phothirak, Santi Asoke's leader, was defrocked in 1989. Thus, the government and leaders of orthodox Buddhism attacked the popularity of Santi Asoke to undermine public support for the movement and, through association, Chamlong's popularity as well.[100] It was reported that, by 1991, Phothrik had ordered the devotees of Santi Asoke to abandon political involvement and to dedicate themselves to service to the movement.[101]

Chamlong and Thailand's Democratic Consolidation

Once military rule had been overcome, and although reelected as a Bangkok member of parliament in September 1992, Chamlong repaired to his ascetic life in 1993 to reassess his and his party's role in the newly democratized society. He resurfaced in politics in 1994 to lead his party again and to assume the post of deputy prime minister. However, Palang Dharma was in decline and he did not run for office in the general election of 1995. Thus, Chamlong and his party had helped to effect Thailand's democratic transition, but once the transition had occurred, the public no longer seemed inclined to support the austere Buddhist on center stage in Thai politics as an elected official. This did not mean, however, that Chamlong would not have significant influence over Thai politics in the future.

In its decline, Chamlong's Palang Dharma Party was taken over by one of its more secular-leaning members, and finally jettisoned when he formed the Thai Rak Thai Party (TRT) in 1998. That assertive secularist was Thaksin Shinawatra, one of Thailand's richest men,[102] soon to become prime minister in January 2001. Under his leadership, the TRT transformed Thai politics by creating a new image to project intellectualism, modernity, information-based, rapid decision-making, and the ability to cope with globalization. At a time when Thailand was emerging from the Asian financial crisis, Thaksin's leadership addressed concerns particularly

held by two ends of the economic spectrum, poor countryside farmers and elite urban businessmen. The prime minister was action-oriented about the need for economic recovery. He encouraged ambition and promoted consumption, at odds with traditional Thai values rooted in centuries-old Buddhist Dharma. Yet the TRT won the 2001 national election, largely because Thaksin and his party promised to help people with their daily difficulties at a time when there was deep distrust of international finance.

As prime minister, Thaksin advanced policies of low interest rates and inexpensive loans to farmers to put them back on their feet following the financial crisis, attributed to crony capitalists and politicians who collaborated with them. His popularity climbed along with Thailand's economic growth, which many observers had written off as troubled for the long term, not only because of the immediate effects of the financial crisis but also because of the growing power of China. By the end of Thaksin's first term in office, Thailand had the second fastest economic growth rate in Asia, after China.[103] As a result of his programs to help farmers, to provide affordable medical care, and to crack down on drugs, prostitution, and organized crime, Thaksin became a popular hero to those who felt that he was securing peace and prosperity for Thais. Indeed, many persons came to regard Thaksin as an economic visionary, and his policies became know as "Thaksinomics."

Despite his successes, however, during his first term as premier, Thaksin had his detractors who grew in number to include Chamlong, once Thaksin's political mentor. Challengers of Thaksin claimed that he was preventing Thailand from a necessary break from the crony-capitalist model, strongman rule, and corruption, endemic in Thailand history. They charged that Thaksin engaged in practices that undermined the democratic principles and clean government they had tried to instill in Thai politics during the country's democratic transition. Among the complaints were that Thaksin took measures to eliminate potential rivals to his grip on power by placing family members[104] and associates from his telecommunications and media empire into key posts in the military and government. Some critics pointed to Thaksin's targeting opponents in NGOs; others complained that his campaign against drug dealers in 2003 ruthlessly violated human rights, resulting in the deaths of more than 2,500 people.[105] In fact, Thaksin's hard-line tactics on law and order are rooted in his background as a police officer[106] and in his great admiration for strongman leaders, including Mahathir Mohamad of Malaysia and Lee Kuan

Yew of Singapore,[107] both highly critical of Western democracies. Undoubtedly for his opponents, Thaksin's denigration of democratic principles was capped when he declared, "Democracy is the means to an end...not the end itself."[108]

Nevertheless, undeterred by mounting criticisms, Thaksin swept back into power in February 2005, roundly defeating the old guard in the Democrat Party. Indeed, the month before, his public approval rating was nearly 80 percent.[109] Thus, the democratically elected prime minister completed a four-year term, a rare event in Thai history, and began a second consecutive term—appearing to be one of the most resilient leaders to ever have held office in Thailand. In part this was owed to his handling of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster that hit the west coast of Thailand on December 26, 2004. Despite extensive damage and the loss of some 5,300 lives, the destruction was not expected to impair Thailand's economy, largely because the government and state banks pledged huge relief funds and soft loans for businesses. Further, in the wake of the disaster, Thaksin insisted that Thailand did not require foreign assistance, shoring up commercial and public confidence.[110] Although there had been escalating criticism of Thaksin before the disaster, most voters, it seemed, appreciated his quick response and management style in mobilizing relief efforts in Thailand's tsunami-devastated regions. In point of fact, Thaksin had earned a reputation as a leader who could tackle intractable problems, whether economic, social (such as Islamic insurgency in 2004 in southern Thailand, which Thaksin approached with an iron fist), or horrendous acts of nature.

Early in his second term, however, Thaksin's popularity began to plummet. Prior to the February 2006 national legislative election, he had been criticized for populist handouts—assessed as bad economics—primarily aimed at securing the allegiance of the masses, but distorting the economy and leading poor people into untenable positions of mounting debt. A man with a keen eye for initiatives, it nevertheless was alleged that Thaksin engaged in conduct unbecoming a high official as he permitted his family-controlled businesses to be favored unfairly by government policies. This raised the specter of the resumption of the domination of patron-client relationships in Thai politics, against which Chamlong had fought hard. Added to these adverse views were characterizations of Thaksin's intolerance of criticisms, his inability, in fact, to end violence among Muslim separatists in the south, and his family's decision to sell 49.6 percent of its shares in Shin Corporation, one of Thailand's largest telecommunication groups,

for a huge tax-free profit. Further broadening anti-Thaksin sentiment, particularly in Bangkok and the south, was the fact that the sale of Shin Corporation for US $1.9 billion[111] to Singapore's state-owned investment firm, Temasek Holdings, included iTV and Advanced Info Services. Hence, the sale was portrayed by Thaksin's foes as a sell-out of Thailand's assets to Singaporean interests.

Although his political clout had waned over the years, Chamlong now reappeared on the political stage, albeit late, to organize demonstrations against Thaksin and to use his Dharma Army to deal a severe blow to the embattled prime minister. When Chamlong had headed the Palang Dharma Party, he had made Thaksin a cabinet member and later Thaksin had become a Palang Dharma member of parliament. Now, Chamlong would use his Dharma Army in a form of Buddhist warfare against Thaksin.[112] The sale of Shin Corporation and the controversy surrounding it went to the heart of Buddhist concerns about ethics. In the early 1980s, Chamlong had cited the view of prominent Buddhist sect leaders, and also of Mahatma Gandhi, that politics and religion could not be separated and that there was a need for "good people" to enter politics.[113] Further, he had argued that, if people lacked religion, they would fail in trying to modernize their ways of life.[114] As Bangkok's governor, Chamlong had rejected wealth and materialism, and was highly respected for it by ordinary Thais. Indeed, his attraction to voters was rooted in two seemingly conflicting appeals: he promoted traditional Thai values rather than liberal democratic ideals, but also he believed that political power should reside with ordinary citizens.[115] Thaksin seemed the antithesis of self-sacrifice, austerity, self-control, forbearance, integrity, and piousness that Chamlong had expected in a political leader. Although Thaksin's business dealings were not challenged on the basis of their legality, they were disputed on the grounds of their morality. Thus, Chamlong called on Thaksin in February 2006 to resign, pointing to "unprecedented" public opposition and to his "loss of legitimacy."[116] That Thaksin's TRT had the backing of nineteen million voters in 2001, Chamlong argued, did not allow the prime minister to claim political legitimacy *sine die*. He observed, "Election votes are not something irrevocable. They are not a license to do whatever you like. That's not democracy. Votes come and go, depending on legitimacy. Democracy belongs to the people all the time, not only on election day."[117] Regarding Thaksin's family's profits from the sale of business assets, he pointed to social outrage as the reason that Thaksin must step down: "Thai people—in

Bangkok and other provinces and including university lecturers and students—are up in arms like never before. They are speaking in unison—that the prime minister has lost legitimacy to rule the country," he said. He reminded Thaksin of four key virtues in the soldier's oath—patriotism, dignity, discipline, and courage—all of which required him to resign,[118] and added, "A patriot won't allow this kind of divisiveness to continue. And if you are a man with dignity, you have to listen to reason. If hundreds of thousands of people come out with good reasons, you have to listen to them. Discipline requires you to listen to those people, and you must have the courage to do what they want you to do."[119] Chamlong's annoyance with his former political colleague was exacerbated by an attack by Thaksin's "mouthpiece," Samak Sundaravej, against Privy Council president, Prem Tinsulanonda, under whom Chamlong had served as secretary general when Prem was prime minister. Although assuring that the military would remain remote from the political fray, Chamlong spoke of his "brothers" in the armed forces who had asked him to speak out,[120] a clear indication that he is not without continued military associations.

In response to criticisms against him, Thaksin announced in February 2006 that he would dissolve the legislative body in which his party held an overwhelming majority. However, with Chamlong's encouragement, demonstrators pledged to continue their protests if Thaksin did not resign. With large-scale street rallies against his continuation in office increasing, Thaksin called for a snap election in April 2006, by which he had hoped to achieve a fresh mandate. But to underscore their view that the pending election would be a sham, three major opposition parties boycotted the April poll, leaving Thaksin's party uncontested in 278 of 400 constituencies for the lower house of parliament. The boycott left thirty-nine constituencies undecided because the single candidate in each race failed to win 20 percent of the vote, a requirement to hold office (rounds of by-elections were held but they failed to resolve the political crisis). The remaining seats in the lower house of parliament went to the TRT, with the exception of one secured by a party in southern Thailand; thus, the TRT won 57 percent of the vote to gain 377 of the 500 seats in parliament. Hence, Thaksin declared that there was no need for him to step down as prime minister, because his party had won the backing of sixteen million voters, down from the nineteen million votes that it had won in 2005, but still a respectable showing. The TRT gained its strongest support in the rural areas of the north and northeast, where voters had benefited from the administration's generous social welfare and economic assistance programs. Yet all was

not well for the prime minister. Another disruptive factor in the election was that ten million voters responded to the opposition's campaign to "Vote No Vote," a vote of abstention read as a vote against Thaksin. Voters undermined Thaksin's political ambitions, particularly in Bangkok where anti-Thaksin sentiment is the strongest, and in southern Thailand where the Democrat Party has a large following, by selecting this voting option in unprecedented numbers.

In the face of stiff opposition, Thaksin called for a compromise with his adversaries—which was rejected—and also said that he would establish an independent committee to investigate the allegations against him and agree to resign from his post if the committee of three former prime ministers, three former supreme court chiefs, and three former heads of parliament determined that he should do so.[121] However, the effects of Chamlong and his followers were soon to be felt. Thaksin Shinawatra claimed victory in the national elections of April 2, 2006, but, following a consultation with Bhumibol Adulyadej (the beloved king whose sixty-year reign, currently the world's longest, would be celebrated by the people beginning in June), stepped down as prime minister by April 4. That the king interceded in the political tumult was a rare event and signaled that he believed national interests were in jeopardy. The two-month long demonstrations and the boycott of the national elections by parties in opposition to Thaksin had taken a toll and led to Thaksin's about face. Rejecting Thaksin's proposal for a compromise, Chamlong retorted, "We do not accept any proposal by Thaksin. We stand firm on our demands for Thaksin to quit,"[122] and attributed the political turn of events to the demonstrations against the prime minister—many of which he had led.[123]

Thaksin briefly stepped aside by taking a seven-week break from politics, but returned in May declaring that he was back at work. He said that he would remain as a caretaker prime minister until the process for selecting his successor had been completed, which according to Thai law must occur within thirty days of a parliamentary election. However, skeptics say that Thaksin remains firmly in control of the government, having technically taken a leave of absence for a summer holiday, but in fact being in control of the caretaker prime minister whom he has left in charge.[124]

Constitutionally, all five hundred seats of Thailand's parliament must be filled before the body can be convened. The results of the April 2 election, given the three parties' boycott, led the king to declare, "Having an election with only one candidate running is impossible. This is

not a democracy," and to maintain that it would be undemocratic to begin parliamentary deliberations with representatives of only one party present. Consequently, he turned to the country's top judges from the Supreme, Administrative, and Constitutional courts to sort out the "mess," with the admonishment, "If you don't help to make democracy move forward, it will be the country's downfall."[125] Hence, the Constitutional Court annulled the April 2 election by nine votes to five, and another election was scheduled for October 15.

Newly democratized Thailand thus fell into political stalemate. It was not clear who was truly running the country, and the tension between political camps remained high. Farmers, poor villagers, provincial chiefs, cab drivers, and other members of the grass roots who have benefited from the administration's populist policies, particularly in the north and northeast, remained loyal to Thaksin. The business community and foreign investors liked Thaksin as well for his decisive management style. Sandwiched in between were Thaksin's detractors who argued that his spending policies were aimed at buying rural votes, and that his Thai Rak Thai Party, following the announced boycott of the April election by the main opposition parties, bribed three small parties to field candidates and hacked into Election Commission computers to falsify their eligibility to run.

The opposition perceived that the TRT was a sinking ship and Thaksin was on board, thus, their strategy was to run a campaign stressing democratic principles with high hopes of winning.[126] The elections would be held under new rules, a new election committee, and constitutional amendments. If Thaksin had won, the opposition likely would not have been able to challenge the outcome based on irregularities in the election laws or procedures. Consequently, if Thaksin had won, opponents would have planned a challenge based on moral grounds[127]—the essence of Chamlong's long campaign against unclean government in Thailand and now against Thaksin. However, before a new election was held, the military staged a bloodless but surprising coup, suspended democratic processes, abolished the 1997 constitution, leading Thialand back to the old political instability-coup-constitutional making cycle. Prior to the coup, Chamlong's anti-corruption stand helped to ignite the public protest against Thaksin, though his followers did not seem to be a core member of the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD). In the wake of the coup, and called upon by the King, Chamlong joined interim parliament. There was little societal resistance against the abrogation of the people's constitution, even among those groups

that vehemently endorsed its adoption way back in 1997 (Stern 2007: 129). Interestingly, non-sanskrit religious groups joined the rural Thailand --- Thaksin's remaining support base --- to oppose the new constitution drafted by the junta appointed commission in the summer of 2007.

Conclusion

Indonesian and Thai politics are characterized by uncertainty, and Indonesia and Thailand, which are termed democracies, retain simmering leanings toward nondemocracies, making them "fragile democracies." One of the causes of uncertainty is that it is not clear in either country exactly what the public's position is on traditional religious values and what these values' appropriate breadth of influence should be in an East Asian democratic polity. As the NU and Muhammadiyah cases show, even among those who have had an instrumental role in Indonesia's democratization, there is a tendency to justify restrictions of rights and freedoms when deemed religiously warrantable. And in Thailand, while Chamlong supports democratization, he envisions a type of political system that is characterized by a Thai-ness that fosters ethical "Asian values" rather than a secular Western-style democracy. Although there are democratic societies where Islam and Buddhism dominate, most societies where these religions historically have prevailed have not been readily inclined toward democratic government. A second cause of the political uncertainty in Indonesia and Thailand is that it is unclear whether there is a broad commitment to democracy, for in both countries, there are powerful forces that would use it as a tool to grasp authoritarian power and these forces have significant backing. Even if there is a broad commitment, it is more likely to be to "ethical democracy," strongly influenced by religious views in society, than to "secular democracy," in which vigorous attempts are made to hold religious views at bay from political decision-making.

Notwithstanding such concerns, the religious organizations that have been the subject of reflection in this paper have each had a profound effect on the democratic transition of their respective nations. The case studies of Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and Santi Asoke under the spiritual leadership of Phra Phothrirak and the lay leadership of Chamlong Srimuang, focus on three religious organizations, the first, traditionalist, the second, modernist, and the third,

heterodox, that were instrumental in ending authoritarian regimes and planting democracy, but since democratic transition, have chosen to step back from active politics. However, it is evident that all three religious groups maintain a fervent interest in ethical developments and their interrelationship with political affairs, hence, they have not totally retreated from politics and speak out on matters that go to the heart of their religious convictions. Thus, from an institutional investment perspective, each organization has chosen a path between "stay on" and "bow out" from politics in order to continue its influence, maintain its relevance, and protect its flanks in a society in which there have been rapid changes since the early 1990s.

In the cases of NU and Muhammadiyah, it seems the organizations believe that, if they hug the middle-ground between "stay on" and "bow out," and assume an accommodative posture on controversial matters, they can continue to be voices of moderation and engage in dialogue with both political liberals and hard-line Islamists, adjudicating, but offending the fewest forces in a volatile political environment. Claiming to support democratic consolidation but holding fast to their Muslim identities, they seek to be credible and effective agents in a society that is torn by strong competing religious and political views. For each organization, it will be a question of emphasis. They may choose to emphasize the pluralistic and tolerant values that have made Indonesia distinctive among Muslim nations, or they may choose to emphasize, as Islamist groups do, that the West, globalization, secularization, and the loss of moral values has caused damage to the Qur'an, Muhammad, and Islam. As NU and Muhammadiyah are Indonesia's largest and most influential Muslim organizations, whether Indonesia is able to stem the spread of radical Islamism will be the major test of whether these organizations' appeals to rightist and hard-line elements has been a visionary strategic move to help to make them effective agents of religious and political negotiation, and thus of Indonesia's democratic consolidation.

Santi Asoke and Chamlong are no less concerned about how they reposition themselves in the current uncertain political period in Thailand. They retreated from politics when Phra Phothrirak was defrocked and Chamlong's and his party's political fortunes declined as a result of the effective attack by the governmental and religious establishment. Yet still adamant about ethical conduct in government, they have made an episodic but forceful reappearance on the political scene, to refashion the political order and to prove their continuing relevance to the future trajectory of Thailand's government.

In their choices to be detached from the center of politics, but to remain an influence in political affairs, all three organizations arguably can help to deepen democratic consolidation in their countries, depending on their future tacks. Certainly, they are attempting to influence politics on matters that they deem religiously imperative. All three organizations are attempting to shape governmental policies and practices, and particularly in the case of Chamlong and Santi Asoke, at a time and under the terms of their choosing. The political troubles that Thaksin now faces suggest that the vigorous admonishment he received from Chamlong had significant depth of public support. Indeed, at some level, persons who are disenchanted with the ethical conduct of the Thaksin administration may be turning to Chamlong and other democracy-leaning religionists to press for reform of a government, which at the moral level, seems to have failed. Paradoxically, in their direct role in democratic politics to help create the current political quagmire in the name of cleaning up corruption, deepening public ownership of government, and preventing Thailand's backslide into authoritarian governance, Chamlong and Santi Asoke have been afforded the opportunity to repair their damaged legitimacy.

Where the public religious and political sentiment will lie down the road in Southeast Asia's young democracies remains to be seen. However, monitoring the roles of significant religious organizations that helped to effect democratic transition in Southeast Asia will provide a very helpful bellwether as to the potential for the people of the region to enjoy the economic, social, and political benefits of democratic consolidation.

Notes

[1] An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Oxford Round Table, St. Anne's College, University of Oxford, July 30-August 4, 2006. The authors can be reached as follows: Deborah A. Brown, tel. (201)934-6660, brownden@shu.edu; Tun-jen Cheng, tel. (757) 221-3032, <thchen@wm.edu>

[2] See Tun-jen Cheng and Deborah A. Brown, eds*., Religious Organizations and Democratization: Case Studies from Contemporary Asia* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2006). Regarding some of our preliminary work on religious organizations and democratic consolidation in East Asia, see Deborah A. Brown and Tun-jen Cheng, "Religious Organizations and Democratic Consolidation: East Asian Exceptionalism," *International Journal of the Humanities*, forthcoming.

[3] Thailand's democratic constitution of 1997 has innovations aimed at combating corruption. One is that it grants independent prosecutorial authority, including the power to overrule the attorney general, to the National Commission to Counter Corruption. Another is that it requires a nonpartisan upper chamber of parliament. Members are elected for six-year terms and denied the right to immediate succession or to have party membership or political appointment. See Larry Diamond, "Institutions of Accountability," *Hoover Digest*, no.3 (1999), http://www.hooverdigest.org/993/diamond.html (accessed July 1, 2006).

[4] See, for example, Stephen Carter's account of how this occurred in the United States in *The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion* (New York: Basic Books, HarperCollins, 1993). It is widely held that people in the West owe their primary allegiance to their nations, not to prior religious values or institutions. Carter maintains that religionists have been ostracized for their beliefs by secularists and made to feel outside the mainstream in the United States.

[5] The Associated Press Poll, conducted by IPSOS-Public Affairs, May 13-26, 2005.

[6] For example, 68 percent of South Koreans believe that religious leaders should not try to influence government decisions. Ibid. See also the 2004 unpublished social survey conducted by Hai-yuan Chu of Academia Sinica in Taiwan, which shows that 28.3 percent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that government officials could even participate in the activities of religious organizations as private individuals. (Among respondents, 64.2 percent favored such association.)

[7] Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratizations in Indonesia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), xvi.

[8] Tony Hotland, "Indonesia: Address Porn, Poverty Muslim Leaders Tell SBY,"AsiaMedia, February 14, 2006, http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&lr=&q+Indonesian+Ulema+Council%2C+leaders&btnG= Search (accessed June 20, 2006).

[9] While still under Japanese domination but with the end of World War II drawing close, Sukarno proposed Pancasila on June 1, 1945, as a way to try to resolve the troublesome problem of the role of Islam in the soon-to-be independent state. Pancasila was to satisfy the demands of both the secular and the Islamic nationalists by embracing nationalist, Muslim, Marxist, and populist-Indonesian ideas. Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 41-42. In 1985, Suharto's New Order required Pancasila as the sole basis of all organizations. Since the fall of Suharto, it is claimed that Indonesia is a Pancasila state, meaning that it is neither an Islamic state nor a strictly secular one, as "Belief in the one and only God" is the first of the five principles of Pancasila and the 1945 constitution reads, "The state shall be based on the one and only God." Pancasila as the primary ideological basis of the Indonesian state is opened to debate, for some Islamic groups continue to press for Indonesia's transformation into an Islamic state governed by shariah law. In this effort, they are calling for a ban on "amoral and lewd" behavior and all-encompassing stricter codes of social, economic, and political conduct. Since 1945, government has been based on the tenets of Pancasila, the 1945 constitution, the Unitary State of Indonesia, and Unity in Diversity.

[10] Jane Perlez, "Spread of Islamic Law in Indonesia Takes Toll on Women," *New York Times*, June 27, 2006, A6.

[11] For example, under Suharto's New Order, the public practice of Chinese religion was prohibited and Chinese Indonesians were urged to convert to Buddhism or Christianity.

Numerous other religions, many of which were syncretic practices, were banned. Indonesians were forced to profess one of the five state-sanctioned religions, which the government claimed to treat equally. In the last years of his rule, Suharto moved away from this policy to cater to hard-line Muslims to bolster his failing regime. Robert W. Hefner, "State, Society, and Secularity in Contemporary Indonesia," in *Religion and Religiosity in the Philippines and Indonesia: Essays on State, Society, and Public Creeds*, ed. Theodore Friend (Washington, DC: Southeast Asia Studies Program, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, 2006), 41-43.

[12] Azyumardi Azra, "Radical and Mainstream Islam: New Dynamics in Indonesia," in *Religion and Religiosity in the Philippines and Indonesia: Essays on State, Society, and Public Creeds*, ed. Theodore Friend (Washington, DC: Southeast Asia Studies Program, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, 2006), 24.

[13] Peter Cave, "Correspondents Report-Condoleezza Rice Moves to Fix Asian Image," Australian Broadcasting Corporation, *ABC Online*, March 19, 2006, http://www.abc.net.au/correspondents/content/ 2006s1594358.htm (accessed June 20, 2006).

[14] C.S.Kuppuswamy, "Terrorism in Indonesia: Role of the Religious Organisations," Paper No. 1596, South Asia Analysis Group (SAAG), November 2, 2005, p.8, http://www.saag.org/%5Cpapers16%5Cpaper1596.html (accessed June 20, 2006).

[15] For example, a poll conducted in thirty-three provinces by the Indonesian Survey Institute in 2006 shows that there is considerable support in Indonesia for shariah-based laws (for instance, 54 percent of both male and female respondents believed that female children should receive only half the share of male children in inheritance, and 52 percent of women and 45 percent of men believed that fornicators should be stoned). Despite significant support for shariah law, support of Islamist parties has not been strong among voters. In 1955, Islamist parties received 48 percent of the vote; in 1999, 15 percent; and in 2004, 20 percent. (Greg Barton maintains that voter support for Islamic parties in 1955 and 1999 was 38 percent in both elections. In 2004, secular nationalist parties won 49.7 percent of the vote, Islamist parties, 20.9 percent of the vote, and radical Islamist parties, alone, 9.9 percent. He warns of opportunism and the lack of vigilance on the part of moderate parties that could allow the passage of legislation that would erode religious freedom, noting that such incremental infringements on personal liberty occurred in Malaysia and Pakistan and produced a ratchet effect. See Greg Barton, "Islam and Democratic Transition in Indonesia," in *Religious Organizations and Democratization: Case Studies from Contemporary Asia*, ed. Tun-jen Cheng and Deborah A. Brown [Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2006], 236-238.)Voting outcomes following the fall of Suharto and democratic transition indicate that, at least for now, there is no ground swell of public support for an Islamic state or for the political domination of conservative or radical Muslim views in Indonesia. The leader of Muhammadiyah, Indonesia's second largest Muslim organization, remarked in early 2006, "I don't think the idea of an Islamic state will happen in Indonesia, at least in this century." See "Support for Sharia & Islamic Radicalism," *Indonesia Matters*, March 17, 2006, http://www.indonesiamatters.com/181/ support-for-sharia-islamic-radicalism/ (accessed June 21, 2006). See also, Angilee Shah, "Indonesia, Democracy, and Playboy," UCLA Center for Southeast Asian Studies, May 2006, http://www.international.ucla.edu/cseas/article.asp?parentid=45510 (accessed June 20, 2006).

[16] In *The Faiths of the Founding Fathers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 21, David Holmes (Walter G. Mason Professor of Religious Studies at the College of William and Mary) makes a distinction between religious freedom and religious toleration: "*Religious freedom* means that citizens are free to worship in any way or not at all—and that the state protects that freedom. *Religious toleration* means that the state allows a group to exist and to worship, but retains the right to withdraw or limit that permission at any time." We would add that religious freedom is not restricted to freedom to believe what one wants behind closed doors; it includes the ability to publicly profess and proselytize one's beliefs.

[17] An example of the expression of this view is found in a survey of the class of 1969 (Al Gore's class) of Harvard University, conducted May 5-June 15, 2004. When asked to rank order the top three priority goals in the respondent's life, 6.9 percent maintained that spiritual growth was the number one priority, 1.9 percent said that it was the number two priority, and 3.4 percent declared it to be the number three priority. In answer to the question, "Do you believe in God?" 47.9 percent of the respondents said yes, 31.2 percent said no, and 20.9 percent said that they were not sure. Responding to the question, "Do you regularly take part in religious activity," 37.5 percent said yes and 62.5 percent said no. The vast majority of free-form comments made about religion showed a marked turn away from organized religion or from religion altogether.

[18] Islam, the religion of the merchant settlers of the Middle East, first took hold in the archipelago in Aceh, at the northern end of Sumatra, toward the end of the thirteenth century. Gradually, the sultanate of Aceh extended its rule southward across most of the coastal regions of Sumatra, overpowering local rulers. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, merchants from Aceh controlled much trade with China and India. When the Portuguese arrived in the sixteenth century, confrontation seemingly was inevitable. David Nicolle, *Historical Atlas of the Islamic World* (London: Mercury Books, 2004), 146.

[19] Perlez, "Spread of Islamic Law in Indonesia Takes Toll on Women."

[20] "MP's Denounce Sharia Laws," *Indonesia Matters*, June 14, 2006, http://www.indonesiamatters.com/ 445/mps-denounce-sharia-laws/ (accessed June 28, 2006).

[21] "Bridge to the West," *Indonesia Matters*, June 16, 2006, http://www.indonesiamatters.com/454/bridge-to-the-west/ (accessed June 28, 2006).

[22] In 2005, MUI issued edicts to win the "war of ideas against liberal Islam," and in opposition to secularism and liberalism, Western-influenced thoughts that MUI asserted had influenced Indonesia and "have brought chaos to the principles of Islamic teachings." Rendi A.Witular, "MUI to Formulate Edicts against 'Liberal Thoughts,'" *Jakarta Post*, July 27, 2005, http://www.thepersecution.org/world/indonesia/05/ jp_2707a.html (accessed July 6, 2006).

[23] Philip Hughes,"Main Story: An Up and Coming Leader, Din Syamsuddin," *German*ews, German Centre for Industry and Trade Indonesia, February 18, 2003, http://www.germancentre.co.id/ germanews_ showarticle.aspx?ItemID=244 (accessed June 28, 2006).

[24] Rumadi, lecturer, Faculty of Islamic Law, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, and researcher, Wahid Institute, Jakarta, "Threat of [sic] Religious Freedom," K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Institute, 2005, http://www.gusdur.net/english/index.php?option= com_content&task= view&id=729&Itemid=1 (accessed June 20, 2006).

[25] "Azyumardi Azra on Mob Rule," *Indonesia Matters*, April 27, 2006, http://www.indonesiamatters.com/ 288/azyumardi-azra-on-mob-rule/ (accessed June 28, 2006).

---

[26] Ibid.

[27] Rumadi, "Threat of [sic] Religious Freedom."

[28] Cave, "Correspondents Report-Condoleezza Rice Moves to Fix Asian Image."

[29] Azyumardi Azra, "Radical and Mainstream Islam," 25.

[30] Azyumardi Azra pinpoints the reasons for the rise of radical Islam in Indonesia: the government's failures to enforce the law; increased crime; corruption at all levels of society; widespread drug abuse; an abrupt decline of the authority of the central government after the fall of Suharto; and a demoralized police force. See ibid., 24. In addition, natural disasters, such as the devastating tsunami in 2004 (150,000 deaths in Aceh) and the earthquake on May 27, 2006 (6,200 deaths), and public health fears, such as the specter of a bird flu pandemic, could prompt some persons to turn to radical Islamist leadership with the view that the democratic government is unable to effectively lead recovery from natural or man-made disasters. Many people are subsistence farmers or laborers and radical Islamists play on their deeply seeded superstitions. In Aceh, for example, a shariah judge said that if women are good, a country is good, and concluded that the 2004 tsunami was owed to the bad behavior of women, providing justification for their persecution. "Tsunami Caused by Sin," *Indonesia Matters*, December 22, 2005, http://www.indonesiamatters.com/54/ tsunami-caused-by-sin/ (accessed June 28, 2006). Indonesia has had better financial management since the fall of Suharto, and analysts say that there has been slow, steady economic and social progress. The government is addressing the endemic corruption in public life, at least at some level, but there is high unemployment in towns and cities and clashes between secularists and Islamists have increased. See "Progress, with a Backdrop of Volcanoes," *Economist*, May 27-June 2, 2006, 37-38.

[31] See, for example, Reza Aslan, "A Coming Islamic Reformation," *Los Angeles Times,* January 28, 2006, http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-aslan28jan28,0,694513,print.story?coll=la-news...(accessed June 20, 2006). Also, Salman Rushdie, interview by Bill Moyers, *Faith & Reason*, PBS, June 25, 2006.

[32] Salman Rushdie asserts that democracy is a never-ending debate about what is right and wrong. Slavery, once considered right, later was deemed wrong; women, once forbidden to vote, later were enfranchised; and so on. Rushdie interview, *Faith & Reason*.

[33] Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 36.

[34] Ibid., 108.

[35] Ibid., 86.

[36] Andrée Feillard, *Islam et Armée dans L'Indonesie Contemporaine* (Paris: Editions l'Harmatten in association with Association Archipel, Cahier d'Archipel 28, 1995), 32, also chap. 3, quoted in Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 86.

[37] Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 87-88.

[38] Ibid., 44.

[39] Ibid., 89.

[40] As Islam slowly spread in Indonesia, existing faiths were accommodated, resulting in syncretic practices, especially in east and central Java and in inland areas overall, the areas providing the foundation of NU membership. The syncretic practices have helped to establish Indonesia's image as a nation of moderate Muslims. Reformist Muslims seeking to purify Islam regard these syncretic beliefs to be at odds with "true" Middle Eastern Islam. Some observers fear that

Arabization of Islam in Indonesia is overtaking the nation's moderate syncretic religious practices.

[41] Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 91.

[42] Ibid., 92.

[43] Hefner, "State, Society, and Secularity in Contemporary Indonesia," 41.

[44] Ibid. 42-43.

[45] Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 87.

[46] Ibid.

[47] This school holds that the Qur'an and the Sunnah are the supreme sources of legal authority.

[48] Hefner, *Civil Islam*, 88.

[49] Rizqon Khamami, "The NU Convention and Nonconventional Islam," *Jakarta Post*, November 24, 2004, *YaleGlobal Online*, http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/article.print?id=4929 (accessed June 30, 2006).

[50] Hasyim Muzadi, interview by *Gatra* magazine, reported in "Hasyim Muzadi Interview," *Indonesia Matters*, May 14, 2006, http://www.indonesiamatters.com/357/hasyim-muzadi-interview/ (accessed June 30, 2006).

[51] Of twenty-five nations ranked in regard to anticorruption law by Global Integrity, Indonesia ranks twenty-fourth as very weak. "Indonesia: Integrity Scorecard," Global Integrity, http://www.globalintegrity.org/2004/scores.aspx?cc=id&act=scores (accessed July 16, 2006).

[52] "Hasyim Muzadi Interview."

[53] Muzadi points out that Muhammad died on a Monday and was not buried until Wednesday because the burial was postponed until a decision could be made as to who would replace him as the next leader of the Muslim community. Thus, there was no predetermination as to who Muhammad's successor would be. Ibid.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ahmadiyah is a Muslim sect that recognizes another prophet after Muhammad, said by orthodox Muslims to be the seal of the prophets, or the final of God's prophets. In 2005, MUI branded Ahmadiyah as a heretical group. Thereafter, the Ahmadiyah centers were attacked by radical vigilante groups.

[56] "Hasyim Muzadi Interview."

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid. This view parallels that which was expressed in the Zen Buddhist tradition, when in the eighth century, the sixth patriarch ended the practice of passing down the historical Buddha's begging bowl and robe from patriarch to patriarch, with the observation that the tradition was confusing form with essence.

[61] Barton, "Islam and Democratic Transition in Indonesia," 224.

[62] "Wahid in Major Defeat," *Highlights*, December 6, 2004, http://www.dprin.go.id/ENG/Publication/ IndReview/2004/20041206.htm (accessed July 1, 2006).

[63] "NU Mosques Subverted," *Indonesia Matters*, May 26, 2006, http://www.indonesiamatters.com/385/nu-mosques-subverted/ (accessed June 28, 2006).

[64] "Nahdlatul Ulama under Threat," *Indonesia Matters*, June 16, 2006, http://www.indonesiamatters. com/439/nahdlatul-ulama-under-threat/ (accessed June 28, 2006).

[65] Included are the Liberal Islam Network (JIL), Islam Emansipatopry (P3M), Islam Leftist (LKiS), Islam Indigenous (Khamami Zada), Islam International (Nadirsyah Hosen), Post-Traditional Islam (ICIS), and Islam Post Religion (Rumadi).

[66] Khamami, "The NU Convention and Nonconventional Islam."

[67] Angilee Shah, "Indonesia, Democracy, and Playboy."

[68] Overview of World Religions, PHILTAR, Philosophy, Theology, and Religion, "Muhammadiyah," St. Martin's College, Lancaster University, n.d., http://philtar.ucsm.ac.uk/encyclopedia/indon/muham.html (accessed June 28, 2006).

[69] Hughes, "Main Story: An Up and Coming Leader, Din Syamsuddin."

[70] However, that does not mean that some of its members have not been active politicians. For example, the organization's current chairman, Syamsuddin, was a member of Golkar, the progovernment party, and thought to have had a bright political future, when, in 1999, a presidential decree was issued barring the membership of university professors in political parties.

[71] Ahmad Najib Burhani, lecturer, Paramadina University, Jakarta, "'Puritan' Muhammadiyah and Indigenous Culture," *Jakarta Post*, November 6, 2004, GusDur.Net, http://www.gusdur.net/english/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=593&Itemid=42 (accessed June 30, 2006).

[72] Stephen Schwartz, "In the Shadow of a Fatwa Religious Life Bustles in the World's Largest Muslim Nation: Pluralistic Indonesia," *Weekly Standard*, September 7, 2005, http://www.weeklystandard.com/ Content/Public/Articles/000/000/006/020avjbn.asp (accessed June 21, 2006).

[73] Burhani, "' Puritan' Muhammadiyah and Indigenous Culture."

[74] Barton, "Islam and Democratic Transition in Indonesia," 224.

[75] For example, PAN's chairman, Amien Rais, said in April 2006 that there were far more important considerations for the party and nation than the storm over pornography (stirred by the publication of a toned-down version of *Playboy* in the nation) which his party would avoid. See "PAN & the Big Picture," *Indonesia Matters*, April 17, 2006, http://www.indonesiamatters.com/259/pan-the-big-picture/ (accessed June 20, 2006).

[76] "Muhammadiyah Makes Overtures to Islamists," *Indonesia Matters*, May 25, 2006, http://www. indonesiamatters.com/386/muhammadiyah-makes-overtures-to-islamists/ (accessed June 20, 2006).

[77] Ibid.

[78] Schwartz, "In the Shadow of a Fatwa Religious Life Bustles in the World's Largest Muslim Nation."

[79] Burhani, "'Puritan' Muhammadiyah and Indigenous Culture."

[80] Ibid.

[81] Shah, "Indonesia, Democracy, and Playboy."

[82] "New Fatwas," *Indonesia Matters*, May 28, 2006, http://www.indonesiamatters.com/378/new-fatwas/ (accessed June 20, 2006).

[83] Kuppuswamy, "Terrorism in Indonesia: Role of the Religious Organisations," 3-4.

[84] Raymond Bonner, "Cleric Linked to 2002 Bali Nightclub Bombings Is Released," *New York Times*, June 14, 2006, A10.

---

[85] Kuppuswamy, "Terrorism in Indonesia: Role of the Religious Organisations," 9.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Tun-jen Cheng and Deborah A. Brown, "Introduction: The Roles of Religious Organizations in Asian Democratization," in *Religious Organizations and Democratization: Case Studies from Contemporary Asia*, ed. Tun-jen Cheng and Deborah A. Brown (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2006), 18.

[88] A survey conducted in Bangkok and surrounding provinces between June 21 and July 15, 2006, by Assumption University, showed that respondents viewed Prem as having outperformed Thaksin as prime minister in seven of ten areas.

[89] *Citation for Chamlong Srimuang: The 1992 Ramon Magsaysay Award for Government Service*, Ramon Magsaysay Award Presentation Ceremonies, Manila, Philippines, August 31, 1992, http://www.rmaf.org.ph/Awardees/Citation/CitationSrimuangCha.htm (accessed July 5, 2006).

[90] Duncan McCargo, *Chamlong Srimuang and the New Thai Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 2.

[91] Ibid., 3.

[92] Ibid., 68.

[93] Ibid., 84.

[94] Ibid., 2

[95] For example, Hsin Tao of the Wu Sheng Monastery in Taiwan, lived in dilapidated temples, a crematorium pagoda, cemetery tombs, and for two years in a cave to "purify" himself; he later amassed some 100,000 followers and substantial wealth as a Zen Buddhist leader.

[96] McCargo, *Chamlong Srimuang and the New Thai Politics*, 2.

[97] Ibid., 76.

[98] Sombat Chantornvong, Thammasat University, quoted in ibid., 77.

[99] McCargo, *Chamlong Srimuang and the New Thai Politics*, 69, 87.

[100] Ibid., 95, 99.

[101] Ibid., 99.

[102] Thaksin began to build his business empire in the early 1980s, when his company won a contract to supply computer equipment to the Thai police department. The company evolved into Shin Corporation, which owned iTV, Thailand's biggest commercial broadcaster, and Advanced Info Service, which operates Thailand's leading phone service. "Thaksin's Thailand," *BusinessWeek Online*, July 28, 2003, http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/03_30/b3843013_mz046.htm (accessed July 5, 2006). The building of Thaksin's empire was advanced by his cornering state monopolies. See "Profile: Thaksin Shinawatra," *BBC News*, April 4, 2006, http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co. uk/1/hi/world/ asia-pacific/1108114.stm (accessed July 5, 2006).

[103] Michael Schuman, "The Common Touch," *Time Asia*, January 31, 2005, http://www.time.com/time/ asia/magazine/printout/0,13675,501050207-1022661,00.html (accessed July 5, 2006).

[104] For example, Thaksin appointed his cousin as head of the armed forces and his brother-in-law as deputy national police chief. Ibid.

[105] "Thaksin's Thailand." See also, "Country Profile: Thailand," *BBC News*, May 25, 2006, http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/country_profiles...(accessed July 5, 2006).

[106] Thaksin was graduated from Thailand's Police Cadet Academy in 1973, and was sponsored by the Thai government to study criminal justice in the United States. He earned a master's degree from Eastern Kentucky University and a doctoral degree from Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas, before returning to Thailand to eventually become an officer in the Thai police force. Ibid.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Schuman, "The Common Touch."

[110] Michael Schuman, "Thailand's Leader," *Time Asia*, January 10, 2005, http://www.time.com/time/asia/ magazine/printout/0,13675,501050227-2025980,00.html (accessed July 5, 2006).

[111] "Thailand: Just Ignore Stupid Protesters, Thaksin Tells His Supporters," *South China Morning* Post , February 6, 2006, AsiaMedia, http://www.asiamedia.ucla.edu/print.asp?parentid=38436 (accessed July 5, 2006).

[112] Prior to Chamlong's and the Dharma Army's participation in a major rally on February 26 at Sanam Luang against Thaksin, a bomb exploded inside a Santi Asoke religious center, which Chamlong believed was intended in retaliation for his decision to lead the Dharma Army members to protest against Thaksin. "Dharma Army Links Bomb Attack to Rally," *The Nation*, February 23, 2006, http://www.nationmultimedia.com/ option/print.php?newsid=20001415 (accessed July 14, 2006).

[113] McCargo, *Chamlong and the New Thai Politics*, 85, 193-197.

[114] Ibid., 199.

[115] Ibid., 3.

[116] "Shin Corp Furor: Chamlong Tightens Noose on PM," *The Nation*, February 20, 2006, http://www.nationmultimedia.com/option/print.php?newsid=20001217 (accessed July 5, 2006).

[117] Ibid.

[118] Ibid.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Ibid.

[121] "Crisis Intensifies as Thai Leader Claims Victory," Agence France-Presse, the Associated Press, *International Herald Tribune*, April 4, 2006, http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/04/04/news/ web.0404.thailand.php (accessed July 6, 2006).

[122] Ibid.

[123] Thomas Fuller, "Thaksin Steps Down as Leader of Thailand," *International Herald Tribune*, April 5, 2006, http://www.iht.com.articles/2006/04/04/news/thai/php (accessed July 5, 2006).

[124] Promporn Pramualratana, "Opinion: Gloves to Come Off in Run-up to Thai Polls," *New Strait Times*, Online, July 3, 2006, http://www.nst.com.my/Current_News/nst/Monday/Columns /20060703074317/Article/index_html (accessed July 5, 2006).

[125] "Thai Court Calls for Resignations," *BBC News*, May 9, 2006, http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk.mapps/pagetoos/print/news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/4753157.stm (accessed July 5, 2006). See also, "Thai Judges Heed King's Appeal," *BBC*

News, April 26, 2006,
http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/4945196.stm (accessed July 5, 2006).
[126] Simon Montlake, "Targeting Thaksin," *Time Asia*, June 26, 2006,
http://www.time.com/time/asia/ magazine/printout/0,13675,501060703-1207873,00.html
(accessed July 5, 2006). On May 30, 2007 the Constitutional Court ruled against the TRT and its
two ally parties, dissolved the TRT and barred its officials from politics for five years. The
opposition was acquitted of all charges of boycotting the April 2006 election and destroying the
direct election process by advancing an unsuccessful bid for a royally appointed government.
[127] Pramualratana, "Opinion: Gloves to Come Off in Run-up to Thai Polls."