



Working paper

**RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY,
SECULARISM,
CITIZENSHIP AND DEMOCRACY**

Report on the workshop organized
during the 8th Asia-Europe People's Forum by:

**Centre Lebret-Irfed, Pax Romana,
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I. Objectives of the workshop

This workshop pursues the discussions and debates that took place in the past AEPF workshops on issues concerning the rise of religious fundamentalism and extremism in Asia and Europe, the link of financial globalization with this phenomenon and its effects on people's lives,

The problems and conflicts linked to religious identities have become more grave and complex (strengthening of xenophobic movements, criminalisation of blasphemy, harsher discriminatory measures against certain ethnic groups, introduction of communitarian laws despite a secular constitution and legislation...).

This open space workshop aims at deepening the understanding of this issue by looking particularly into the following theme: "Religious diversity, secularism, citizenship and democracy". It further aims to address the general and particular situations and contexts, their evolution in various countries in the two regions (Asia and Europe), and the roles and approaches of governments and civil societies in dealing with them.

Guidelines proposed for the panel debates:

1. Assess the realities and challenges in various countries, within both regions: How is the issue of religious diversity posed in different Asian and European countries? How have situations linked to this issue evolved locally?

2. What type of guarantees do governments give to the different religious groups and beliefs interacting in their countries? Is a democratic society necessarily a society where all beliefs and religions can express themselves and coexist? In this regard, are there "European values" opposed to "Asian values" or is this a false opposition?

3. How is diversity addressed? In the name of the right to practice one's belief, should republican values on equality and those of democratic institutions be put to question?

4. How do civil society organisations approach this problem locally? Can they help governments to achieve a better coexistence between religious groups and beliefs? Are they themselves confronted with the growing fundamentalism trends? What type of solidarity can be concretely organized?

II. Introduction of the session by the moderator, Richard Werly

Richard Werly, French journalist of the Swiss newspaper "Le Temps", introduced the workshop by referring to the recent news of the June elections in the Netherlands, which resulted in the rise of a rightist populist anti-Islam party, the Freedom Party (Partij voor Vrijheid), now the third leading political party in the Netherlands.

Its leader, Geert Wilders recently posted a video on the internet entitled "Fitna", aggressively attacking Islam. The new Dutch government coalition now being formed between the center-right Liberals and the conservative Christian Democrats is openly supported by this Freedom Party.

These developments are interesting to follow because the Netherlands used to be a model of tolerance and coexistence of different communities. This problem of coexistence is now seen all over Europe and extremism has been rising: the vote against the minarets in Switzerland, in Sweden, the rising extreme right, and so with Hungary (although not towards Islam). In Western Europe, at the moment, the main engine of extremism is this anti-Islam propaganda. It is then a challenge not only for our democratic societies, but also for our democratic institutions and for our politicians. It is a challenge for Europe!

It is thus timely and interesting for us to gather experiences and lessons learned from Europe and from Asia.

III. Contributions from the three first panelists

Antoine Sondag on Religious diversity and the Secular state

Antoine is head of the International Research department of Secours catholique in France.

Identifying himself as rooted in France and in Roman Catholic Christianity, Antoine referred to the paper he wrote for “Development and civilizations” in preparation for the workshop, entitled “Democratic governance of religious diversity” (see *appendix 1*) and emphasized four key points:

Conflicts with a religious dimension are increasing in Europe and in Asia. In Europe we are witnessing not so much the rise of religious extremism but the rise or danger of populism with a religious touch or dimension. Everybody knows that the root causes of conflicts are not religious, but are due to economic reasons, social, ethnical aspects, nationalistic or political reasons. Religious identity is very often misused or manipulated.

In Asia, like in countries present in the Forum - Pakistan, in India, in the southern part of Thailand, in Indonesia, in the Philippines, even in China... there are conflicts concerning religious minorities, and not only between Christians and Muslims, but also between those who are in the mainstream as against the minorities in one's own religion.

Faith-based political parties as such are neither the problem nor the solution. When observing the situation in Pakistan or Indonesia, it is often said that Islamic political parties are a danger. However, in Europe many faith-based political parties, like the Christian Democratic parties are also in power, yet they are not seen in the same light. The representative of the EU Belgian presidency Yves Leterne, who will be addressing the AEPF, is himself a member of the Christian Democratic Party! Why is the Islamic League in Pakistan considered as a danger whereas the Christian Democratic Party in Germany is not accused of being a threat to democracy? Where is the difference between those faith-based political parties?

There are faith-based political movements almost in all the member countries of the European Union, and they are often in government, if not alone, in coalition.

A secular state is not the solution; possibly, it can only be part of the solution. If one considers the 27 countries of the European Union, many countries are not secular: starting

from Britain where the Queen is at the same time head of state and protector of the Anglican Church. Looking at the more democratic countries like Denmark, Norway (not France, in his own opinion...), again, in Denmark, the Queen is the head of Church and there is an official state religion. If he were a member of a religious minority, he would rather live in Denmark than in Turkey, which is a secular state. Antoine says he would feel more protected by the Danish system, even if the state religion is not his religion. I have nothing against secular states, France, for instance, is one of them, but be careful, among the 27 countries of the European Union, secular states are not the majority! In many countries, one, two or three religions are “privileged”, there is an official status in the public space for those official cults, as they are called. In some countries, Islam is one of those recognized cults, for instance in Austria. So, a secular state is not a magical solution to prevent conflicts. For example, in India, the fact that it is a secular state has not prevented the country to have terrible attacks against minorities, sometimes ending in killings.

To live with religious diversity, we need democratic governance. It is not enough to have good laws or a good Constitution (like the French Constitution). Democratic governance is, first of all, a matter of democratic culture: people should be educated in having a political way of behaviour in living with diversity. Living with diversity means a specific responsibility, if one is a member of the majority. Any member of a minority will agree with respecting religious, ethnical, linguistic, cultural diversity! The challenge comes for those who are part of the majority in the way they accept minorities.

Governance means not only politicians, political parties, governments, who should be involved in finding a solution, but also all the stakeholders, including the religious leaders. The religious leaders have a specific responsibility in shaping the country, the society, the culture to be in favour of diversity. For example it would be beneficial for a religious leader to say “I am a leader of a majority religion and I welcome members of religious minorities”. Religious leaders should say explicitly that they are in favour of religious diversity, since in today's world, homogeneity no longer exists because of migrations or whatever other reasons. Democratic governance is fundamental to deal with the issue of religious identity and diversity.

Amabella Carumba on the Tri-people approach for peace in Mindanao

Mabel is secretary-general of the Mindanao Peoples' Peace Movement (MPPM) in the Philippines.

The rich island of Mindanao, south of the Philippines has been the hotbed of armed conflicts for already more than 30 years. Mabel described the historico-political factors explaining the conflicts and the current lives and struggles of its tri-peoples (Muslims, Christians and Lumads) (see *appendix B for details*). To summarize some of the points she raised:

Why the absence of peace?

- In Mindanao, three different peoples live in one land but, they are faced with similar problems of coercion from external powers blocking their right to freely determine their lives and future. They were used by external powers with collaboration of their own leaders to fight against each other, while their natural wealth and resources were continuously exploited. The absence of peace has been created by outside powers drawing strength from the local elite to perpetually destabilize the situation, resulting in unhampered exploitation and suppression.

- Amidst diversities and differences between and among the three peoples, accommodation, understanding and unity has been possible and practiced. Barter was practiced; land and territories were occupied by mutually accepted and recognized boundaries; food was abundant and bounties of the land were never scarce for the three peoples. The traditional methods of managing and settling conflicts were practiced and proven effective.

These changed when big business interests occupied the lands and exploited its natural resources. Ancestral lands were declared as reservations; traditional methods of conflict management and resolution rendered useless; alien laws were introduced to the tri-people and became the basis of the Judicial System strongly implemented by the Armed Forces of the Central Government of the Philippines.

This encroachment into their lands resulted in the peoples' economic dislocation, political disempowerment and rendered their judicial system useless. The tri-people found themselves fighting each other, creating wounds which would become difficult to heal.

Unity in diversity

- In understanding the complex issue of Mindanao, one thing should be emphasized: Mindanao and its islands, like the rest of the country, are peopled by multi-nationalities. This needs to be set first, before any agenda for attaining genuine peace and development. When the peoples are united regarding their differences, then mutual respect and understanding follows. Objectively, they can discuss and reason out about bases/sources of their conflicts and resolve them on their own traditional methods. In this process, one can see the reality that in Mindanao, there are three peoples but they all are Mindanaons. The deeper they understand their distinctness, the more Mindanaons they become.

The struggle for self-determination and peace

- Considering historical and present realities in Mindanao, the vision for lasting peace should be anchored in the democratic participation of stakeholders - the Mindanaons. The struggle of the Moro (Muslims) for right of self-determination should be fully respected and supported by the Lumad and by the Mindanao Migrants and their Descendants.

The Lumad (indigenous peoples) peoples' struggle for self-determination should be fully respected and supported by other peoples' of Mindanao. The Mindanao Migrants and their Descendants can fully realize their vision for freedom and peace if the Moro and Lumad peoples are supporting their struggle for democracy and sovereignty.

-The peoples struggle for right of self-determination should be intertwined with the struggle of other peoples and nationalities for freedom and democracy. Where oppressed peoples from different nationalities can unite and struggle against the source of the existence of the national oppression, the more they are united against the common source of their miseries and oppression, the more they can understand each others differences and common vision. The respect that they have learned in the praxis of the struggle for right of self-determination enables them to stress more on unity and less on divisiveness.

The ***Mindanao Peoples' Peace Movement (MPPM)*** in its work has taken steps along these lines.

Nizamuddin Nizamani on the Threat of Islamic fundamentalism

Nizam is a professional trainer, researcher and peace activist from Pakistan.

Nizamuddin is from the Baloch ethnic group (a minority in Pakistan), and religion-wise from a Muslim Sunni community, and more particularly from the Wahabbi Hannafi school of thought.

According to him, while all religions, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, have been supporters of the rights of the minorities, the poor, the deprived, religious fundamentalism results when, at a certain point, people get lost and become rigid towards their own values at the costs of the others; Islamic fundamentalism is one case. Understanding Islamic fundamentalism requires a look into the historical process of political and economic development of the Islamic world since 4 000 years... To his mind, **the rise of political Islam was based on economic competition and control of resources**, with this triggering attempts at controlling other territories in the name of religion.

The partition of India in 1947 was a key political moment. Before the partition, people lived in harmony (Sikhs, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Parsees...) with the linguistic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds prevailing over religious values. **The creation of Pakistan was, again, not a religious issue but a political and economic one:** it was done in the name of giving political and socio-economic rights to the Muslims in India. The linguistic and religious minorities were deprived of their social, economical and political rights by the military rulers, dominated by one province in Pakistan; the people who migrated from India were the ones who enjoyed the

bounty of this so-called freedom, at the cost of the indigenous people living over there.

Political Islam

There are certain political parties, like the Jamaat-e-Islami, which, before the partition, envisioned rallying Muslims to be one nation or one group, called *Umma*. This agenda was supported by many other groups, themselves having different agendas, like the Tablighi Jamaat. They have been implementing indirectly the agenda of Jamaat-e-Islami to remobilize the Muslims all over the world towards their old values. Meanwhile, the rise of extremism in India, where Muslims have been killed, further supported the agenda of the Islamic extremists. The issues in India were exploited further by the Jamaat-e-Islami. The Lashkar-e-Taiba, though having religious opinions, is also politically-oriented, being basically an anti-India movement.

The military regime, which controlled the state, turned Pakistan into a security state that had an agenda to follow, supporting whoever was to provide them funds and money (the West, particularly the U.S.A.) again at the cost of the people...

The rise of the current fundamentalism also has its root in the anti-USSR war launched by the US and the supporters of the Allies. The people of Afghanistan and Pakistan have been the fuel of those wars, started by the West in our part of the world.

Islamic groups may have different agendas but throughout history, including today, they have been working hand in glove with Western powers.

To end the first part of the session, the moderator drew out the following summary **points from the above three contributions:**

- Political systems accommodating religious diversity are very diverse between themselves. There is no single European model, no single Asian model. One must be aware of what is going on in the context of a specific state.
- The Mindanaoan example shows the interaction between ethnicity and religion. Behind what is seen as religion are ethnic or historical factors that played their own roles at different point sin time. Religion sometimes became the way to simplify the difficulties in confronting situations.
- With the Pakistani case, one can very well see that religion is easy to be manipulated for power; politicians and military leaders use religion and then they realize that the problem they have created cannot be controlled anymore. This is not the specificity of Asia alone.

IV. Second Panel: Reactions to the issues raised

Elga Sarapung (Indonesia)

Elga is director of the Interfidei institute, in Indonesia.

In the last 10 years, the issues of religious pluralism and democracy have gone through tremendous disorder and violence in Indonesia, with the emergence of fundamentalist groups and religious radicals. The official philosophical foundation of the Indonesian state, the Pancasila, contains five principles reflecting religious pluralism, democracy, unity, social justice. The problem does not lie on the principles on which the state is based but on how the government implements these principles. **Governance is weak especially on issues related to the “relationship between religions and the State”**. Concretely, the present government is unable to protect and guarantee the rights of the citizens in the face of violence done in the name of religion and which has succeeded in destroying the dynamics of democracy in society. Radical religious groups (particularly Islamic ones) have also infiltrated formal and informal education, and citizens are not aware of these developments, also because of the low level of education, and the more basic concern to access jobs and good livelihoods.

Elga put forward three proposals to work on:

- There needs to be a **development of alternative educational processes** carried out between nations in issues related to ethnicities and faiths (intra and inter), by means of engaging various parties (comprising teachers, the government, law enforcers, NGOs, etc.) to do a collective learning in an open, creative, independent, and close-to-nature manner. The

issue of education does not only refer to raising awareness on the dynamics of diversity of ethnicities and religions, but – in principle, is closely related to the issues of citizenry and democracy.

- There needs to be a **joint research** on the aspects of “challenges and expectations” from each state-nation, on interfaith and inter-ethnic issues; or between faiths and ethnicities in the life of the nation and faiths in facing various challenges and threats towards humanity, where concrete issues should be the focus of members of the community of different religions and ethnicities, locally, nationally and internationally: education, health, political injustice, economy, laws, environment, HIV/AIDS, etc. An alternative is a **research on good governance in the issues of diversity, justice, democracy, and peace**. If economy and politics are the root causes of conflicts, how can we work on those problems with pluralism as basis?

- **Build and develop a collective power of multi-stakeholders** (the government - NGOs, etc., Asia and Europe) **as an AEPF concern**. Alternative education could be developed for members of communities in Asia-Europe on Human Rights, Religions / Faiths – Politic and the State; Pluralism – Diversity – Citizenry; Majority – Minority relations; and Religions and Social-Cultural Concerns. In addition, the governments still need to be encouraged to be strong, strict, and able to respond fast. In the midst of the government circle, collaboration needs to be built with progressive elements to implement above alternative education models.

Andrew is the chair of the human rights committee of the Bar Council of Malaysia.

His context: Christian Anglican in a Muslim majority country, ethnic Chinese in a predominantly Malay based country (left-handed in a majority right-handed country – a joke!); thus, he is quite used to being in a minority.

- In response to what Antoine said on the rise of religious identity in conflicts Andrew affirmed that in Malaysia there are also **conflicts between religions as such and not only as a religious aspect of conflict**. There is a law: if you are non-Muslim and want to marry a Muslim, you have to convert to Islam. In the situation where two non-Muslims get married and one decides to convert, this could be the ground for divorce – creating many complications especially if children are involved (usually the man is the one who converts, then the woman has difficulty to get the custody over the children...). Then comes the question of which court has jurisdiction. In Malaysia, the independence of the Sharia court is recognized, with jurisdiction limited only to Muslims. Non-Muslims who wish to fall under the Sharia jurisdiction cannot do so. Problem: where does the mother go if the Sharia court grants custody of the children to the father? So there are conflicts of religion *per se*.

- Regarding **faith-based political movements**, currently in the federal parliament (Malaysia has both state and federal governments) **there is in the opposition, a Muslim Party, the PAS**. However, in some ways, although a Muslim party, PAS has been more accommodating. For instance, the word Allah has been prohibited by government to be used by non-Muslims, but the PAS does not agree with this.

- On the secular state: because of the recent developments, the argument of whether Malaysia is a secular or a religious state has been revived. In the Constitution it is stated that Islam is the religion of the federation but other religions can be practiced. Is Malaysia an

Islamic state because of this? Even in England, bishops sit in the House of Lords: does this make England a religious state? In his opinion, **Malaysia is a secular state** (like Britain, or Denmark) since religious authority, even if present in the instances of authority does not sit above the elected government nor do government decisions need an express approval first by a non-elected religious body.

- On religious diversity: it is true that from the Muslim perspective, there is **diversity in dealing with other religions, but there is also that internal conflict and contestation amongst different brands of Islam**, with the Malaysian government saying that there is only one kind of Islam, the official Islam --which is Sunni not Shi'a, predominantly Shafi'i school of Sunni, not Hanafi, nor Maliki, nor Hanbali. What happens is that this is not publicized, but stability has been achieved by basically outlawing other schools: in some states Shi'a organizations are prohibited (Islam is governed by the state government and not the federal one). Another resulting problem, for example, is that there is a significant foreign population from Iran now staying in Malaysia but their brand of Islam is prohibited and Shi'a mosques are not allowed. In 1998 most states passed state law outlawing 25 Arabic words with religious connotation and 10 Arabic phrases could not be used by non-Muslims. It is only now that is this being challenged, using the courts because backdoor negotiations no longer work.

Certain things can be done, others not. Sometimes tolerance is shown administratively (but at the same time point on non-equality is clearly made). For instance, if two non-Muslim places of worship are to be built, a separation of 50 meters between the two is required but if one of the two places is non-Muslim, a separation of 100 meters is required. Today too, non-Muslim places of worship need approval from the local Islamic department aside from the water and the electricity departments...Can this be seen as a success story in dealing with diversity?

P.K. is affiliated with the Center of Indian Trade Unions - CITU and the India-Pakistan Forum for Peace.

-The Ayodhya land-ownership case, a 60 year-old case, had just had its verdict: both Hindus and Muslims are joint title holders (Read more at: <http://www.ndtv.com/article/india/ayodhya-verdict-allahabad-high-court-says-divide-land-in-3-ways-56063?cp>). This decision was meant to show that India is secular, (though the issue is now being debated). **The concept of secularism in India** is different from the West - it can be defined as **the respect for all religions**.

-In India, one should also see religion in relation to caste. Historically, Christianity was already in Kerala before it came to the West, and Kerala Christians are part of the upper caste. Later on, the conversion into Islam, Christianity, Sikhism signified the revolt against Hindu caste system - to get out of caste system.

-The creation of Pakistan-India-Bangladesh was a "successful" project for the British colonizers and the dominant class (in selling arms?). But the fact that the people divided in these countries all had the same language, are part of the same culture, was never considered. With the creation of East and West Pakistan, **the British colonizers and the local elite divided to rule, by opposing religions**, as they had

nothing more to offer positively to the masses.

What has made the situation really difficult is the violence that has been produced within each religion. There is no longer the respect for the other. The upper castes have the right to despise, kill, rape women, give no rights to untouchables, all in the name of non-violence. The BJP (*Bharatiya Janata Party, the Indian People's Party*) wanted a common code of conduct for all, but this code is not common but Hindu and extremist. The use of the burka was not there before, but came with the rise of Islamic extremism.

- There is nothing wrong for people to practice the fundamentals of their religion. But **the danger comes with extremism, with political extremism**. Bush was an extremist. And he allied with the extremist Sheiks of Saudi Arabia. The rise of Islamic extremism was nourished by imperialist politics in Afghanistan, Palestine... which used extremists (the U.S.A. created the Talibans, Israel used the Hamas to fight against Arafat in Palestine). Since there was no ideology capable of offering an alternative to the polarization going on, religion has now been used to fight against imperialism (before national liberation and Left struggles led this anti-imperialist struggle which is now absent).

- With this backdrop, which democracy are we talking about now?

Additional remarks from L.A. Samy (India)

Samy is director of the Association of Rural Education and Development Service (AREDS-India).

- Regarding India, do we have a religion or a system of dominance? Brahmanism is a system of creating a religion or a God which is not popularly believed in by all people in India. The caste system and discrimination should be seen in this light.

- On the harmony of living: religious harmony or a system of division? I see it more as an aggression of the majority and the defence by the minority.

- We cannot separate our history of dominance from colonization. Purpose of colonization was not equality, but to grab resources.

- There has been a history of culture which justifies poverty. Poor can be tolerated in the name of development. Today, with globalization, it is no more the alleviation of the poor but the annihilation of the poor. This is where sometimes religious churches play an aggressive role, like also the BJP who have their own belief systems which for me is not religion.

V. Issues raised by the other participants

Role and attitude of the State and religious leaders

1. How does one draw the line between the role or responsibility of the Church and the State? The Philippine example was given where the government though secular is highly influenced by the majority religion (Catholicism) and seeks endorsement of religious sects in executing its programs. One example is on the key issue of population control, which is seen as necessary but which goes against Catholic Church teachings.

2. In many countries, the principles are in the system but the state is weak in its governance and does not fulfil its role of protecting the people. Having a good law system is one thing, but the challenge is for the State to be strong enough to enforce the law, to find efficient ways to apply the laws it sets up.

3. There must be a separation of Church and State.

4. In multi-racial societies, religious leaders, whose authority is highly recognized by the people, should be able to come out with common statements. Sadly however, in

Malaysia, Islamic authorities do not sit with the others because of their status as the dominant religion.

5. Religious leaders are very powerful. Political leaders go to them for advice and not vice-versa. Both religious and state authorities need to be open-minded: through education, good governance, less corruption - these are also ways of fighting religious extremism.

6. We in AEPF need to put up political demands, address governments on the limits and malfunctioning of systems and how these can be corrected. But to do this, we need to do serious research not only on problems, but alternative schools of thinking. The tools we have are not enough to face religious-specific problems.

7. The proposal was made to address an appeal or peace statement to ASEM officials to ensure the freedom of religions and the protection of people's rights (also in the context of their religious practice in relation to imposed flexibility of work).

Education's key role in fighting extremism

1. Religious education is not only the responsibility of government but also of religious authorities. Furthermore, real education of both religious leaders and followers, even pertaining to their own religion (ex. Pakistan) is not always assured and this is where extremist attitudes come in or are erroneously enforced.

2. When the state doesn't assume its function of providing good and free education, madrasas (Islamic schools) fill the gap and become a refuge for the youth who cannot afford university.

3. In Mindanao, there have been conscious efforts to integrate Islamic schools and Moros

into the mainstream, but it is also important to know that madrasas have been supported by US Aid (which have been linked to the CIA).

4. The Mindanao peace movement sees education as a means of promoting the culture of dialogue, and has been working at convincing government to come up with an alternative curriculum for the tri-people – its history as a people – how to continue dialogue by understanding common culture, history, heritage. There is also the challenge to educate other Filipinos about Mindanao – not on its reputed violence but on the richness of its culture and the initiatives of tri-people movements for peace.

Role of the mass media

1. One must look at who dominates Communication and information channels. In Pakistan, there are 10 full time religious channels.
2. Mass media has ignited religious tensions. Media has to be responsible.
3. One result of irresponsible communication and information is that, among others, Pakistani students who wish to come to Europe to study are denied visas. The EU must be addressed about this problem as it is not at all a solution to the rising extremism.

Behind fundamentalism or extremism

1. Religion is sometimes used to hide racist discriminatory attitudes. Call it racism then and not fundamentalism.
2. Adhering to the fundamental values of one's religion is alright so long as there is respect for others.
3. Poverty and injustice brings rise to fundamentalism.

Majority - minority

A big challenge : how to articulate majority and minority. The human rights charter can serve as a pragmatic standard to regulate relationships between majority and minority populations.

Remarks by Achin Vanaik on the relationship between secularism, democracy and citizenship

Achin is an Indian journalist, fellow of the Transnational Institute.

Democracy and the secular state

A secular state may not be democratic. But a democratic state must be secular. Israel claims to be a democratic state, it is not a democratic state by virtue of the fact that it is a Jewish state. Malaysia claims to be a democratic state but it is not a democratic state although it has democratic rights in comparison to Saudi Arabia, which is much better; similarly of course, Arabs in Israel have rights which they do not have in other Arab states but neither of them are democratic states.

How does this relate to the question of citizenship? A secular state, therefore, formally, legally and by definition has to embody three values : liberty, equality and neutrality. Liberty in terms of the freedom of people to be able to worship what they want to worship; equality in terms of citizenship rights regardless of religious affiliation; and neutrality in terms of the state not being aligned to any religion (the formal aspect related to history is not so important as the practical aspect).

So this connection between citizenship, democracy and secularism is very, very important. Being a secular state does not mean that they do not practice shameful discrimination, which they do. It is like the difference between the United States that practices racism institutionally but is qualitatively different from apartheid in South Africa which of course institutionalizes, legitimizes itself.

So one can criticize the United States, India, France, for their terrible behaviour, but let's recognize that they are qualitatively different in the nature of the state from other states.

Explaining this religious resurgence

There are two lines of thought: one is that this is to be understood as the expression of the dynamism of the religious system. The second one, which I am more sympathetic to is that religious resurgence is much more related to the crisis of secularism and secular modernity and the problems of modernity.

It is very interesting, and this is connected to what was once called the politics of cultural

exclusivism, that this religious resurgence does not date from the middle of the 20th century, but dates from the beginning of the 4th quarter of the 20th century. In fact the period between 1950 and 1975 was a period when you had various kinds of secular nationalist currents throughout the world. ... It is really after that that fundamentalism, Jewish, Christian fundamentalism started to take place everywhere.

So, if this taking place everywhere since the beginning of the 4th quarter of the 20th century, it then means that the analysis and the understanding of the causes of why this resurgence has taken place must be, at the first level itself, generally universal and related to general universal causes like ideological disarray, socio-economic inadequacies, problems and limitations of political democracy. But having identified these general causes, one has to recognize that they will express themselves in national and regional specificities. And therefore there is no escape from understanding the rise of specific communalisms through a contextual analysis and understanding: Malaysia, Europe, etc.

Politics of religion

We, in India, use the term communalism in a negative sense (in the West and Western discourse it has a positive connotation - communal cooperation) referring to tensions and hostilities created between religious communities.

Can we simply say that the fundamentals of religion are all great and nice? No, we cannot!

Let's agree that the correct term is not fundamentalist, it is political Islam, political Hinduism, political Christianity. Fundamentalism can be referred to those groups which want to insulate and separate themselves, like the Amish. Calling it political Islam, like the moderator did, emphasizes that it is the politics that is most important. But all of these different groups we are talking about, Hamas, Hezbollah, Wahabi Islam, have varying degrees of the significance of religion in their programs. Therefore, there will be quite a variation in their social programs, some will be better, some will be worse.

Nonetheless, the religious dimension is also important for all of these groups in varying degrees and we cannot just simply say, "politics manipulates religion, religion is great".

If you look at the texts, whether the Bible or the Koran, these were historical projects and they comprise enormous ambiguity, resulting in big debates about the real interpretation of these texts.

Education and family

But looking at these political groups, there are two areas in which they are very significant insofar as they are influenced by religion. One is education. They want to shape and change education and they are inspired by their particular interpretations of religion. And the second area is family. Insofar as the family is a crucial side in relation to women's oppression, it means that these groups seek control and manipulate women, precisely because of that.

So we should not let religions off the hook by saying "oh, the fundamentals of religions are great": it is not so simple, they are historical products, they reflect historical products, but they survive because they are not static, because they change. What we have to do and what people are doing in many cases is to fight for the secularization of religion. The interaction of modern concepts of gender equality which were not historically part of religious systems means that there is a process of secularization that is taking place within religions themselves. Modern interpreters of Islam saying "but Islam is for gender equality"; and Christians saying "we are for liberation theology and the important distinction is not between believers and non-

believers, but between the oppressors and the oppressed" are forms of secularizing of religion that we have to be attentive to because these developments are more important.

Majority and minority

On the question of majority and minority: without moral distinction, all communalisms, as we call them in India, are bad, and they have a feedback relationship. If you want to fight against Hindu communalism, you have to oppose and fight against Muslim communalism, against Christian communalism and so on. But having said that, having recognized that you cannot separate the fight against communalism from fighting all kinds of communalism, we have to recognize the distinction between majority communalism and minority communalism. And that distinction is : the ultimate logic of minority communalism is separation, in a particular country (Pakistan's creation, for ex.) But the logic of majority communalism is nationalism, the transformation of the whole body of society in the name of nationalism. In other words, majority communalism can take on the powerful bang of nationalism in the way minority communalism cannot, and therefore representing a real danger.

In conclusion, to fight against communalisms means recognizing these basically as a reaction to the problems of modernity, and that successfully fighting against communalisms means not separating this fight from all other struggles, coming back then to the question of what kind of a society we want. I believe in a post-capitalist, socialist society and I am saying in those circumstances, the fight for socialism against capitalism is absolutely fundamental for

VI. Conclusions and perspectives, by Richard Werly

1. The question of how states and governments face and deal with religious diversity is an acute one, both in Europe and in Asia. It is therefore a subject **to follow-up, both by compiling facts and experiences, and offering a platform to think of possible solutions and strategies.**

2. This follow-up, nevertheless, needs to be built on a **more thorough research and analysis of common problems and differences.** Namely:

- The **definition of fundamentalism vs. extremism** is an important point. Distinction shall be made between religious fundamentalism insisting on more rigorous religious practice, and its political exploitation. At this stage, a kind of glossary would help. Where does fundamentalism cease to be a religious trend and start to be a political threat to democracy and harmonious coexistence?

- The **question of the secular state** has also to be explored. How can a secular state be defined? Can we agree on a certain number of criteria? Also here, a better "mapping" of religious diversity vis-à-vis governance and democracy is necessary.

To sum up, I would encourage the network to submit regularly their experiences, papers, and references. The word "mapping" seems to me appropriate. We shall aim at a better mapping

3. **AEPF is a good platform** to carry on this initiative of **networking around the theme of "religious diversity secularism and democracy"** and this project should be integrated by the IOC in its programme.

This could mean:

- Organizing at least a plenary on the subject in the next AEPF;
- Producing at least one or two concept papers;
- Organizing intermediate meetings;
- Looking at possibilities to finance such networking.

Next deadline: work towards next AEPF : work towards making more people interested in the issue. Work towards bringing in more Europeans (more difficult to have this debate in Europe).

Centre Lebrecht-Irled, with its network and in association with the different organisations represented in Brussels, is ready to commit itself to work in this direction. We need an agreement on such a basis and a common will to move forward in order to produce solutions and worthy reflections.

For a democratic governance of religious diversity

by Antoine Sondag

The cohabitation of religious communities is a daily challenge for European and Asian governments meeting in Brussels for the Asia-Europe summit. The Lebret-Irled Center, member of the Asia-Europe People's Forum, is organizing a workshop on religious diversity. How to assume it? How to achieve a strategy towards our ultimate goal: manage to live together?

Political religious movements: it's enough to pronounce these words for the average European people to think about the "Islam", get involved immediately in a debate about Muslim religion and its aptitude to adapt itself to Europe or to the bond between the state and the religious communities. It is important to take things easy, put everything in perspective and be sensible.

The following lines just have the ambition of underlining some paradoxes of this debate with the objective of helping the reader to break with the temporal stereotypes and be able to start an intercultural understanding, the previous base to "live together".

The mixture between religion and politics and the existence of denominational political movements aren't a privilege or an exclusive of the Islamic or Arabic world. I would like to go further of this trivial statement and reach some conclusions.

First observation: Currently it's widely spoken about the difficulties that the Islamic world has to separate politics from religion. It's said that the Islam would be religion and civilization at the same time. The separation of the Church from the State would be an invention of Western cultures. Some people even say: it's an indirect consequence of the influence of Christianity ("Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and give to God what is God's").

However, in most European countries political denominational movements exist. Some of them are Christian democrats, but some are trade unions and even a great amount of them are denominational associations in charge of social issues such as insurance, mutual help associations, sports, leisure, education, health, social services, etc.

The Crucial Role of the Christian Democracy

A short historical review. A lot of Christian Democrat parties were created at the end of the XIXth century or at the beginning of the XXth century with the objective of the

denominational defense mainly of the Catholic community. After 1945, these parties played a decisive role in the rebuilding of Europe. Not only the material reconstruction, but also a political reconstruction after the damages caused by the Nazism and the fascist ideologies. It could be said that these parties were the educators of the democracy for populations that had never been democratic. A new period of prosperity of these parties occurred after the fall of the Soviet Empire. The Christian Democrat parties were created in almost every state that ended with the system of a unique party to adopt a system of several parties and take benefits with the prosperity and a democracy in a European way.

Currently, these Christian Democrat parties exist in almost every country and are more or less important. They gave up the Catholic defense of their origin, and all of them became ecumenical and rearranged all their Christian denominations. Their ideologies are in central-right position, between the conservative position and the social democracy. In general, they are rooted in rural areas and in the middle classes. If it's possible to make a summary of their action in the last sixty years, we could say that they contributed to modernize the economy and the society, after the disasters of the World War. With a special sensitivity to an international opening, these parties avoided that Europe fall again in the nationalism or in the xenophobia that had caused so much damage since 1914.

Their universalism is also settled in the values of universal fraternity of Christianity. That's why these parties have been active in the European reconstruction, with the effort to find a way of living together, giving up violence, and looking for ways of solving the differences, promoting the state of law, the market economy and the democratic system. The main realizations were the European Union (27 countries) and the European Council (47, among them Russia and Turkey) with their highly developed system of protection of the human rights (European Court of Human Rights).

Europe, land of religious movements

There's no doubt in affirming that what has happened in Europe during the last sixty years is due not only to the Christian Democrat parties. It's also necessary to mention the contribution of the other political and ideological forces... It shouldn't also be thought that the Christians always participated or voted just for Christian Democrat parties.

No matter which are the main points studied by the politics analysts, it must be remembered that all the political religious movements were, and still are, a lot all over Europe. Their role has been important and even decisive in the reconstruction of many states of the continent, in the modernizing of the countries in ruins after the war or after the Soviet domination, in the democratization of the traditional societies and finally, in the "unification of the continent". And this process is not over. These Christian Democrat parties have a very important role, not only in Germany or Austria, but also in many countries among the most secular ones - if we understand as secular the countries or societies in which a great amount of their population without an activity explicitly religious, or without the feeling of belonging to a religious community- is important.

Second observation: the religious freedom. It's thought in Europe that the European countries respect the conscience and the religious freedom, and also the freedom of not belonging to any religion or of changing it. These freedoms are guaranteed by the constitutions of many states and are confirmed by the European Convention for the Protection of the Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

The non European people are evidently less enthusiastic about religious freedom in Europe. It isn't strange that certain Muslims, out of Europe or in Europe, think that religious freedom clearly exists for Christian and for agnostic people, but it isn't the same for Muslims: since the prohibition of the minarets in Switzerland, the xenophobic movements against the Islamic people in several countries, the prohibition of veil at schools, the burka in the streets of France, the difficulties of practicing certain Muslim ceremonies in the European society... which is not Muslim as regards meat, food, spaces, the time for praying, Ramadan, etc. As a summary European people value religious freedom over their continent and look down on the countries where the religious minorities are discriminated. Outside Europe this enthusiasm is not always shared!

It's necessary to underline this paradox: the respect to religious freedom doesn't need a secular state or a strict separation between State and Church. There are several countries in Europe that are not secular: in the United Kingdom the queen is, at the same time, Chief Of State, and the Head of the Church of England. The same happens in Denmark and Norway. In other countries, a group of laws of the public rights exists for religions or at least for certain cults, including Islam in Austria, for instance. In other countries there exists a system of separation more or less strict.

Religious freedom-Secular State

As a conclusion: it's difficult to reach a definitive conclusion of the complex religious realities of Europe. The freedom of conscience and religion, the change of religion, the practice of cult... are guaranteed by a general regime of freedom in a liberal and democratic state, that must protect the minorities. There isn't an obligatory statute for religions. But also the national legislation foresees a special statute for each religion. The secular state isn't an indispensable condition to guarantee the respect for religious freedom. Some of the most liberal European states, where the individual freedom is the best warranty, aren't secular, and some of them established certain official religion or state religion.

Third observation: The regime of separation between the State and the Church, for example the French system, doesn't constitute a model that is able to be transferred to any state or society in the world. There's a lot of idealism and ignorance of the history to transform the French laicism, into an ideal regime typical of the Church-State relationships. It's easily forgotten that this system, inaugurated in 1905 by law, has been object during its first century of many conflicts, to adjustment and modifications. The current system of the French laicism, which is designated as open laicism, is the fruit of the conflicts and of the compromises. It's spread all over French history. It cannot be transferred. In the places where it went beyond the limits, the system was betrayed and didn't guarantee the freedom either of the state, the church or the religious communities: Turkey, Syria... Who would pretend that in Turkey the Islam authorities would be under the influence of the state? The president of the Al Azar University of Cairo would be better accepted in the Muslim world community if his nomination were a religious fact instead of an Egyptian state government position.

Church-State: The Big Misunderstanding

Fourth observation: A big misunderstanding exists when we talk about the separation of the Church from the State. Is it a question of protecting the State from the intrusion of the Church, or a question of protecting the Church from the intervention of the State in internal issues? To understand what the misunderstanding is we have to compare France with the United States. Here we have two countries with lay constitutions, with a strict juridical regime that separates the Church from the State and with a secular regime inscribed in the political tradition and in the public institutions. On the one hand, in France, historically it was tried to let the State to establish its autonomy limiting the influence of the Catholic Church. On the other hand, in the United States it was tried to offer to the religious communities, particularly to the dissident ones, a space where they could live their religious identity without the interference of the denominational state; a secular regime to prevent the State from interfering in the Church issues.

A system is always a question of a historical construction featured by the risks of the political life, in the middle of a singular history and in a particular context. Each country has found a formula that gives certain satisfaction. We can say that the different regimes that are practicing in Europe, in general, respect the freedom of conscience, religion and cult. It must be added that in Europe the freedoms are respected due to a national and international system of juridical protection.

However, the European reality is quite different. There isn't a unique, perfect, democratic model of relationships between Church and State. This situation doesn't prevent from giving simplistic or reducing speeches about politics and religion. In the countries of Muslim majorities it would be a good idea to establish a system of laicism to guarantee religious freedom, particularly for religious minorities, among them Christian minorities of the Islam. The secular regime is, in fact, historically determined. There aren't magical formulas that can protect freedom of religion or cult. The French laicism has big merits in the French context. It's wrong to think that it can go beyond the limits of other territories without taking into account the historical contexts. This secular regime was imposed in some countries of Muslim majority. This gave birth to republican regimes, but not to democratic systems.

There some examples: some countries with Muslim majorities have become modern due

to authoritarian regimes. This modernization implied that the action of the state wasn't limited by religious authorities. That's the reason why some of these states had to struggle against the conservative forces leagued to religious traditions. This modernization consisted of create a nation and a state in a European sense of the word. For example Tunisia, Egypt, Iraq (under Saddam Hussein's regime), in Iran and even Pakistan. These secular systems have lost the popular support due to authoritarianism and corruption. In general these systems have stopped the birth of a dynamic civil society. Here we can notice the difference between a republican system and democratic system, and between secularism and democracy.

Currently, the promotion of democracy and the state of rights is not confused any more with the promotion of a secular state or with the separation between religion and politics. The respect for the minorities, the establishment of a democratic society, a society of debate, of respect for other people, the learning of "living together", all this means a culture for human rights. This is what was underlined by the Council of Europe when it published a white paper about intercultural dialogue entitled: "Living together as equals in dignity" (www.coe.int/dialogue). The democratic work on cultural diversity which is bigger in European states, has become a priority. How to answer to the diversity? How to work on ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity? How to imagine the future?

The solution of the Council of Europe, comprising 47 European States, is the following: the promotion of the cultural and religious diversity (is needed the values called "European"), it means, the promotion of the state of rights, the respect of the human rights, the promotion of democracy and the development of the societies funded on solidarity. It's not possible to "live together" in pluralists societies because of their ethnic or religious composition unless some conditions are respected: the people rights, democracy, and the primacy of rights, the equality of dignity, and the mutual respect to everyone and to all the minorities, the equality between sexes... Only at this point a multicultural march can be started, that will fall the barriers that stop dialogues. These are the bases of a democratic governance of cultural and religious diversity.

Antoine Sondag

Beyond the Religious Divide: The Mindanao Grassroots Tri-People Experience

by Amabella Carumba,
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Understanding the Organic Origin of Mindanao and its Peoples

Pre-Spaniards

Before the colonizers came, there was a certain level of development in Mindanao, Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Palawan and Sabah. It traded with China, Siam and other neighboring countries. Politically, the Sultanate of Sulu was already established and recognized by many countries.

In other parts of Mindanao, economic and political developments had also reached certain level of advancement. In the early 16th Century, the Sultanate of Maguindanao was established. The political influence of the Sultanates widened (islands of Visayas and Luzon). In this period, many inhabitants became islamized, but there were those who remain with their pre-Islamic beliefs and outlooks

Spanish Period

The Spaniards arrived and tried to conquer the islands they named after King Philip. They found the fiercest resistance from the peoples in Mindanao. The colonizers (Spanish later Americans) had never fully subjugated the islands and peoples of Mindanao; but succeeded in Christianizing some of the islands' inhabitants. The islamized inhabitants under the leadership of the sultanates continue to resist invasion of Spanish colonizers; economic growth became stunted but they were able to maintain their distinct political identity; never fully subjugated by the foreign invaders.

Meanwhile, the Christianized inhabitants in the islands of Luzon and other parts of Visayas had also resisted Spanish colonialism which tremendously weakened Central Spanish leadership based in the Northern island of Luzon. It was in this situation when so-called Annexation by the Americans of the Philippines from Spaniards took place. The already weakened Spanish rulers sold the Philippines to the Americans including the islands and peoples of Mindanao (which and who were never subjugated).

American Period

The Americans tried new methods and forms of subjugating the people in Mindanao. They used religion and education to penetrate the value system and formation of being distinct politically and economically. The tactic of divide rule was very effective in weakening the resistance and minoritizing the Moro people in the islands of Mindanao.

The Phil governments (supported by Americans) would later follow this and employed methods of breaking up the backbone of the Moro resistance. The Political objective: INTEGRATE and ASSIMILATE all the inhabitants of the islands of Mindanao with the rest of the country. The Moro people adopted different forms of resistance. The consistent struggle for Right to Self-Determination was mainly through armed resistance. For a time, they employed non-armed form like constitutional amendments and petition writings, but they were never listened to by the powers that be.

The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and later the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) were the product of the continuous and protracted struggle against colonialism. The use of armed means is a direct result of limited options that they have experienced.

What about the other inhabitants of Mindanao?

The Indigenous Peoples or the Lumad (the unislamized and mainly unchristianized), the Christianized inhabitants as well as those descendants of settlers from Visayas and Luzon, waged their own struggle to preserve and reclaim their ancestral domain and natural resources against the greed of big business (mainly based in Manila). Some joined the Moro Fronts while others joined other revolutionary groups fighting against big landlords and big business that they believe influence and control the powers of the Phil Government.

The people of Mindanao like the rest of the peoples in Philippines originated from the Malay race. They travel through the land bridges and have the same set of arts and cultures. So, when they settle, communities had developed with its own economic and political system such as the "balangay". Their development enhanced when

the traders and religious missionaries (as far as Middle east) with their beliefs and system of governance came. Islam was introduced and Sultanates were established from its already growing stage of traditional governance.

During this time, many inhabitants followed Islam; while others remained with their religious traditional beliefs. Islam with its complete outlook in life become dominant (as it brought with it more advanced economic system). This phenomenon peripherized the unislamized portion of its populations; but Monotheists and Polytheists co-existed in many of the land and territories.

When Spanish colonizers came, they not only brought different set of economic system but also new belief and religion-Christianism. Thus, portion of the population became Christianized; often used by Spanish colonizers to fight and proselytize the islamized and unislamized portion of the population. Christianity, though monotheist in outlook, like Islam, brought a new set of outlook and culture from different civilizations from Europe. Despite the three sets of beliefs, outlook and system in one territorial domain, co-existence persists.

Three People, Mindanaons

Three peoples in one land, but, faced with similar problems of COERCION from the external power blocking their right to freely determine their lives and future. They were used by external powers with collaboration of their own leaders to fight against each other, while their natural wealth and resources were continuously exploited. The absence of peace is created by outside power drawing strength from local elite to perpetually destabilize the situation, so, exploitation and suppression became unhampered.

Amidst diversities and differences between and among the three peoples: accommodation, understanding and unity has been possible and practiced. Barter was practiced; land and territories occupied by mutually accepted and recognized boundaries; food abundant and bounties of the land were never scarce for the three peoples. The traditional methods of managing and settling conflicts were practiced and proven effective.

This only change when big business interests occupied the lands and exploited the natural resources. Ancestral lands were declared as reservations; traditional methods of conflict management and resolution rendered useless; alien laws introduced to tri-people and became the basis of the Judicial System strongly implemented by the Armed Forces of the Central Government.

This encroachment into their lands resulted to

the peoples' economic dislocation, political disempowerment and their judicial system rendered useless. The Tri-people again struggled for the recognition of its distinctness. Divisions were emphasized and steps toward unity became suspicious. Leaders of the elite (tri-peoples) start to lose local advantages and fight to retained and regained lost privileges. The options became limited. Even in political arena, local elites start losing position and power.

In early 70s, armed conflict erupted. This was triggered by unlimited greediness of big business interests over the natural wealth of Mindanao. The tri-people found themselves fighting, creating wounds which would become difficult to heal.

The big business interests maintained their unseen presence as they used the elite and leaders (of tri-people) to fight the wars while they continue to rape and reap the bounties of Mindanao

Moro Revolutionary Fronts and Other Revolutionary Groups

The Moro fronts led the Moro struggle for Right to Self-Determination (RSD) aiming at principally attaining political freedom and later democratic freedom of its people. Other revolutionary groups aimed at uniting all the oppressed peoples of Mindanao with those from Visayas and Luzon. For them, oppressive situation created by the basic problems had led to the existence of NATIONAL OPPRESSION of the Moro people. Hence, solving the basic problems first would lead to the elimination of the National Oppression as if, losing the distinct identity of the people with their inherent right to freely determine their lives and their future starts and ends with solution of the basic problems faced by all the peoples in the Philippines. According to this premise, the basis for the RSD of the peoples would be removed when the basic problems had been resolved.

Meanwhile, the Big Business felt the need to unite the peoples of Mindanao with the rest of the country to facilitate development of one big market which would make production processes less expensive. Thus, ASSIMILATION and INTEGRATION of peoples of Mindanao was given paramount importance in its development strategy

In understanding the complex issue of Mindanao, one thing should be emphasized: Mindanao and its islands, like rest of country, is peopled by multi-nationalities. This needs to be set first before any agenda for attaining genuine peace and development. When the peoples are united regarding their differences then mutual respect and understanding follows. Objectively,

they can discuss and reason out about bases/sources of their conflicts and resolve them on their own traditional methods. In this process, one can see the reality that in Mindanao, there are three peoples but they all are Mindanaons. The deeper they understand their distinctness, the more Mindanaons they become.

Struggle for Right to Self-Determination (RSD)

The Struggle for RSD is an inherent right. To respect and actually support the struggle of people to freely determine their lives and future is a moral obligation of any people in any given time and place.

The Moro Struggle for RSD may be expressed differently using different methods and forms of struggle; but it can still be true to its essence when the aim is to free the people from any external coercion or force. BUT, this does not mean that it will struggle by itself and for itself excluding other peoples struggling for democracy and freedom. Most importantly, this does not mean that the democratic rights and peoples participation will be subsumed by the struggle against National Oppression.

The Peoples Struggle for RSD should be both democratic and political, i.e, while it aims to free itself from the National Oppression perpetuated by the majority nationality, it should ensure that in all stages of democratic participation of the peoples as the real stakeholders should be observed otherwise, it will only be a change of oppressors and mode of exploitation. It is only in this process where struggle for democratic and political rights of peoples can be qualitatively achieved and RSD is fully realized (even to a higher level).

Secondly, the peoples Struggle for RSD should be intertwined with the struggle of other peoples and nationalities for freedom and democracy. Where oppressed peoples from different nationalities can unite and struggle against the source of the existence of the national oppression the more they are united against the common source of their miseries and oppression, the more they can understand each others differences and common vision. There will be No situation where they can be divided, ruled and made to fight each other. The respect they have learned in the praxis of struggle for RSD makes them gives stress more on unity and less in divisiveness

Mindanaons will become freer when the Moro people will realize their right to determine their lives and the future.

Options of the Moro People and the Mindanaons

Considering historical and present realities in Mindanao, the vision for lasting peace should be anchored in the democratic participation of stakeholders-the Mindanaons. The struggle of the Moro for RSD should be fully respected and supported by the Lumad and Mindanao Migrants and their Descendants.

The Lumad (Indigenous Peoples) peoples' struggle for self-determination should be fully respected and supported by other peoples' of Mindanao.

The Mindanao Migrants and their Descendants can fully realize their vision for freedom and peace if the Moro and Lumad peoples are supporting their struggle for democracy and sovereignty.

The forms of RSD of Moro can either be: Independence, Autonomy, option to federate with other states, to have a free association with the central Government and to remain within the framework of one country. They are free to choose any of the forms and can even use different methods to achieve it. For centuries, they used armed method in achieving this political aim; other methods should be tried but not necessarily excluding other methods. Regardless of forms and methods, ONE thing should be considered-that the democratic participation of peoples should be realized in all stages of the struggle and in the realization of their vision. The democratic aspect should also include the participation of other stakeholders-i.e, other Mindanaons

In choosing appropriate form of self-determination, the Moro people need the support of other peoples, to ensure that coercion of big business and political elite can be neutralized. It should be considered that National Oppression exists and develop because of the collaboration of the elite Moro people, hence, it should be a big help to neutralize their influence in the process of creating the right atmosphere for full democratic participation of the democratic forces of the Moro people with other peoples in Mindanao

Only in this process, one can ensure that the other peoples of Mindanao can not be used to sabotage the full democratic and political exercise of the Moro people to freely determine their lives. In doing this, the other peoples in Mindanao can also become free and fully realized their vision of lasting Peace.

The ***Mindanao Peoples' Peace Movement (MPPM)*** has taken the steps towards this direction.

Amabella Carumba

Religious diversity, secularism, citizenship and democracy in the context of Indonesia

**by Elga Joan Sarapung,
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Plurality of religions and ethnicity in Indonesia serves as potential for the community and nation in building democracy. The questions are how do we use this potential to function as that for democracy? What needs to be done in conducting the efforts towards this direction?

Within the context of Indonesia, there are three basic strengths in living in this country and nation, namely: Pancasila (the Five Principles of Indonesia) as the foundation of the state; therefore, Indonesia is not a State of religion, nor is it a State of secularity; the Basic Constitution as the Charter, within which, among others, it is stated that freedom of religion and belief has to be guaranteed by the State through protection towards rights of the citizens to choose their religions and carry out their religious and faith activities; and lastly Bhineka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity) as the basic philosophy of the Indonesian nation, built and developed instead from, by, and for the existing religious and ethnic plurality that had lived far before the proclamation of the Republic of Indonesia.

In the last few years, say since 1996, there has been some instability, in the form of various horizontal conflicts generally “engaging” religions, despite the more dominant root and trigger of these conflicts in politic and economy. In specific, in nearly the last 10 years, the issues of religious pluralism and democracy have undergone tremendous disorder, with the emerging of fundamentalist groups and religious radicals in the midst of the community. These groups do not hesitate to judge fellow members of the society, on behalf of “the true religion and living the true religion, against untrue religion and living an untrue religion (in their belief)”. These acts of judgement are conducted with violent ways, whether for “defending the religion” or “defending the State”.

The next question is: what is the function of the State? Is it not true that with aforementioned violent acts, democracy in Indonesia is threatened? Or, could Indonesian democracy be built on the basis of the plurality of its own community with Indonesian specific characteristics comprising various local

ethnicities and religions; not only the “imported religions” (which have more and less undergone contextualization or inculturation with “Indonesianness”), but also all indigenous religions still living in the midst of various tribes in Indonesia?

Below, I would like to bring into attention 3 (three) factors of why these issues occurred for so long without any solution offered: a) the weak governance of the present, which tends to overlook various issues, especially ones related to “relationship between religions and the State”, instead of solving them strictly and undoubtedly. The system is already built, but the problem lies in the inability of the government staffs to observe the system as a strict “guideline” to solve the issues due to strong political-economic factors. However, we should definitely admit that there are a number of government staffs who have the capacity, but unfortunately not power, who are pressured by various interests. The question is: how far is the government able to implement the “message” of the Constitution, where protection for the rights of the citizens could be guaranteed and proven to be implemented, while violence on behalf of religion destroying the dynamics of democracy in Indonesia can be overcome? b) growth of the radical groups in Indonesia, which do not only move in aforementioned violent actions, but also in the world of “education”, specifically formal religious education at schools and non-formal education outside of schools. These groups’ actions and activities cannot be easily “prevented and overcome”, whether by the government or by the community in general. Even, everywhere there is “ignorance” of the violence taking place. The question then is how do we develop democracy in the dynamics of the plurality of such Indonesian community ruled by weak governance? c) low education and weak economy of the community, with low availability of work fields, while the political mechanism of Indonesia is still difficult to support efforts for improving the economic level of the community. Politic of the country is more aimed to fulfil the interests of an individual’s or a party’s power and wealth, instead of fulfilling the interests of the community.

The three above factors are not only about the issues of religions with their respective selves, but also about “citizenry”. Take as an example when the issue of “minority-majority” emerges related to constructing a house of prayer, how do we explain it from the view of the equal rights of all citizens?

In the midst of all the noises from real experiences as discussed above, civil society movement remains a hope for the society. One note is that it requires a collective power that is more solid and “united” in the togetherness, in addition to a new paradigm on how to build a relationship with the government in developing stronger multi-stakeholder – based works. It is undeniable that in the government’s personnel circle, there are individuals we could rely on to think positively and constructively with qualified and relevant paradigms and capacity to do open efforts for dialog and collaboration. In addition, there are efforts made by the government that could be perceived positively. However, these efforts are unfortunately not supported with a whole and sustainable implementation to turn into a comprehensive policy with distinct impacts in the community.

In my presentation in AEPF Beijing in the workshop on the Rise of Religious Fundamentalism and Extremism in Asia and Europe, the Link of Financial Globalization with this Phenomenon and its Effects on People’s Lives, and the Dialogue of Civilisations, Cultures, and Religions as an Alternative for Security and Peace, I would like to propose 2 (two) initiatives (numbers 1 and 2 below) for us to work on as Civil Society organizations:

1. There needs to be a development of alternative educational processes carried out between nations in issues related to ethnicities and faiths (intra and inter), by means of engaging various parties (comprising teachers, the government, law enforcers, NGOs, etc.) to do a collective learning in an open, creative, independent, and close-to-nature manner. The issue of education does not only refer to raising awareness on the dynamics of diversity of

ethnicities and religions, but – in principle, is closely related to the issues of citizenry and democracy.

2. There needs to be a joint research on the aspects of “challenges and expectations” from each state-nation, on interfaith and inter-ethnic issues; or between faiths and ethnicities in the life of the nation and faiths in facing various challenges and threats towards humanity, where concrete issues should be the focus of members of the community of different religions and ethnicities, locally, nationally and internationally: education, health, political injustice, economy, laws, environment, HIV/AIDS, etc. An alternative is a research on good governance in the issues of diversity, justice, democracy, and peace. If economy and politic are the root causes of conflict, how can we work on those problems with the basis of our plural situation?

3. I would like to add one more thing: the significance of building and developing a collective power through multi-stakeholders (the government - NGOs, etc., Asia and Europe) between participants of AEPF. This is important to face and overcome aforementioned issues. One alternative solution would be developing an alternative education for members of the community (Asia-Europe) on Human Rights, Religions / Faiths – Politic and the State; Pluralism – Diversity – Citizenry; Majority – Minority; and Religions and Social-Cultural Concerns. In addition, indisputably, the government still needs to be encouraged to be strong, strict, and able to respond fast. In the midst of the government circle, collaboration needs to be built to implement above alternative education models.

4. As a part of AEPF, if the three aforementioned issues could be jointly built (Asia-Europe), the collective power we have would be more solid and criticism in facing various issues would gain more maturity and would result in concrete, clear, and strict solutions.

RÉSEAU INTERNATIONAL LEBRET

UN RÉSEAU POUR RÉFLÉCHIR SUR LE SENS DU DÉVELOPPEMENT AUJOURD'HUI : REGARDS CROISÉS SUR LES QUESTIONS INTERNATIONALES



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- ◆ Un **réseau international** de 200 hommes et femmes, animé par le **Centre Lebrete-Irfed** à Paris, qui apportent des témoignages et des analyses, et échangent des pratiques, depuis des lieux d'engagement divers :
 - de religions diverses, originaires de tous les continents et de toutes disciplines,
 - appartenant à des organisations de terrain comme aux Églises ou au milieu académique
 - se reconnaissant dans le message et l'approche de L.-J. Lebrete mais conscients que ses analyses doivent être adaptées à notre temps
- ◆ Une **structure associative** qui reflète une solidarité internationale et l'interdépendance entre les peuples : 2/3 du Conseil d'administration sont des membres du réseau hors Europe.
- ◆ Des cycles de **rencontres internationales** sur deux thèmes de notre temps
 - **Société civile** : les relations société civile - autorités publiques (Prague, Haïti, Lubumbashi, Asia-Europe People's Forum) et l'appui à l'émergence et à la prise d'autonomie d'organisations de la société civile dans des contextes fragiles ou déstructurés (Timor Leste)
 - Le **dialogue interreligieux et interculturel** (Beyrouth, Mumbaï, Hanoi, Bangalore, Asia-Europe People's Forum)
- ◆ Des **produits**
 - Une **revue** « *Développement et civilisations* »
 - Les « **Cahiers de Développement et civilisations** », pour tirer les enseignements du travail mené avec le réseau
 - Des **comptes-rendus** de chaque rencontre internationale
 - Des **modules** de formation-débat :
 - Une **synthèse** sur chacun des quatre thèmes des rencontres internationales et des cycles de formation-débat.
- ◆ Une **méthode**
 - Appliquer à la préparation des rencontres une méthode inspirée de la recherche-action
 - Permettre aux personnes et groupes concernés d'être pleinement, et à leur rythme, acteurs de changement, et notamment veiller à ne pas étouffer les dynamiques endogènes,
 - S'engager sur la longue durée et permettre la prise de recul nécessaire à toute action durable.
- ◆ Une **équipe** de trois salariés et de personnes ressources volontaires mobilisées sur les activités d'animation, d'organisation, de réflexion, d'écriture...