

Dissertation Title: CHANTAL MOUFFE ON PRUDENTIAL AGREEMENT AND  
ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR RELIGIOUS HETEROGENEITY

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Academic Year: 2017

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Abstract

This dissertation examines questions regarding the alleviation and management of religious conflict. It will first examine the philosophical framework of Chantal Mouffe as a response to Carl Schmitt's critique of pluralism. Then it will give examples of conflict resolution and the preservation of diversity in such regions as, Lebanon, Indonesia and Thailand. Finally it will examine these examples as exercises in agonism as understood by Mouffe. This will be shown to be a valuable framework for the future of ASEAN.

While Mouffe wrote much about agonism within the realm of Western politics. She does not deal with politics outside of the West. And while she defends pluralism in a secular sense, she does not deal with religious pluralism. Yet the problem of religious pluralism in non-western societies is becoming the big issue within contemporary globalization. This thesis will attempt to read Chantal Mouffe's idea of agonism as a possible defense of pluralism and demonstrate how certain aspects can be seen with the Middle East and South East Asia.

The researcher will attempt to demonstrate the significance of Mouffe's approach by examining various non-western models of diversity, particularly "*Confessionalism*," "*Pancasila*" *Confucianism*, *Buddhism*, *Musafikat*, *Musyawara*,

*Sufism Tawlid and "ASEAN Centrality."* The researcher is convinced that all of the above political and spiritual mechanisms recognize agonism as a strategy in managing pluralistic societies. Only in this way can we maintain agonal self-reinvention, which is more tolerant of each factional religious identity, since is only through the genuine respect of each other's plural religious identities could we really avoid the immanent clash of civilizations. The researcher would also demonstrate to the reader about the facade of western parliamentary democracy as the obsolete model of conflict management strategy in an age of globalization armed with multiple agonal conflicts, and proposed instead the innovative philosophical framework of radical democracy and its mechanisms of "*agonism*" / "*dissensus*" as well as "*prudential agreement*" as the new implications or experiments for the cultivation of "*civic identity*" and most importantly "*religious heterogeneity*" in the agonal plural world.

The issues of "*dissensus*" as well as "*prudential agreement*" would also be meticulously discussed in this dissertation, as it provided the framework for the whole research. In the further analysis, the facade of western parliamentary democracy would be attacked as an obsolescence not only just because it focused mainly on the formulation of consensus, but because it lacks the essential mechanisms to include the differences. The attempt to create harmonious society which neglected the "*plurality of differences*" is considered as unrealistic, unjustifiable and unattainable, especially in today's world when most of the oppressed and subjugated entities or marginalized social movements are so resilient and vehemently resist consensual public debates or negotiations.

The objectives of this research are intended (i) To study the challenges which obstructed religious pluralism and multiculturalism within contemporary global

society. (2) To analyze the weakness and shortcomings of Western democracy and the so-called façade of liberalism and, (3) To understand the powerful implications of Chantal Mouffe's philosophical framework of "*agonism*", "*dissensus*" as well as "*prudential agreement*".

The modern civil society needs to reformulate its political strategies and embark on a new philosophical journey by applying innovative philosophical experiments of postmodern thinker like Chantal Mouffe or Ernesto Laclau, such as "*dissensus*" and "*prudential agreement*" since it allowed more global opportunities for the cultivation of both religious pluralism as well as multiculturalism, without having to put the societies at greater risk of social and political heterogeneities.

The implications of "*dissensus*" and "*prudential agreement*" permeated every aspects of globalization in today's world, especially when one is frequently confronted with the grand narratives or political discourses of "*Civic Identity*" however, all those discourses and rhetoric seems to be meaningless when they failed to entirely include the plurality of differences.

Under the backdrop of globalization, there would always remains an everlasting cycle of agonism, that is because the nature of the societies have always been heterogeneous, fragmentary and agonal in their very intrinsic nature, therefore instead of eliminating the plurality of differences, we must at once refocus on dissensus in order to achieve divergence variations, this goal is only attainable when the global civil society reformulated its perception based on the ultimate acceptance of "*Civic Identity*" or inclusivity, which recognized heterogeneity through the experimental strategies of dissensus and prudential agreement to include differences..

The facade of democracy and western liberalism obviously failed to include differences, hence through its indigenous and obsolete governing practices of consensus, it only seeks to annihilate dissenting voices, antagonism and outlawed the demands of the minorities.

The contribution and implications of his research is to call for a reformulation of the public's perception over consensus. The main trajectory of this contribution is to hopefully bring about "*divergence variations*" under the mantle of globalization and heterogeneity, moreover, is to be able to convince and encourage the public with a new awareness that they must engage themselves in an everlasting dissensus without any bias or prejudice, and the only legitimate way to engage themselves fruitfully in this challenging chaos of perplexing multipolar pluri-verse is through the ingenious and discreet renegotiation of "*prudential agreement*"

