
CHANTAL MOUFFE AND RELIGIOUS PLURALISM: AGONISTIC EXPERIMENTS IN NON-WESTERN SOCIETIES

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ABSTRACT

This paper 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 "agonistics" as understood by Mouffe. This will be shown to be a valuable framework for conflict resolution and democracy in the ASEAN region.

Introduction

The occurrence of religious conflict around the world is intensifying, from the Middle East to South East Asia. So an understanding of mechanisms of dialogue and conflict resolution is becoming increasingly important. Religion has often been considered as a crucial and integral part of the fabric of the national solidarity. It provides a powerful "*comfort zone*" and spiritual cohesion for the identity of a culture. But in many regions, such as in Lebanon or even ASEAN itself, the strong attachment to religious identity is problematic, since it leads to religious domination or violence.

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