

engaged in studies surrounding nature/society interactions in the region to try to do the same.

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## Philippines

*In the name of civil society: From free election movements to people power in the Philippines*

By EVA-LOTTA E. HEDMAN

Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006. Pp. 268. Notes, Bibliography, Index.  
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This is a neatly constructed and tightly argued work derived from the author's doctoral dissertation on the emergence and development of 'civil society' in the Philippines since the 1950s. Using the prime examples of free elections and 'people power' movements in contemporary Philippine politics, the author, Eva-Lotta E. Hedman, competently analyses the role that civil society has played in preserving Philippine liberal democracy, mainly through the mobilisation efforts of major business, church, professional, non-government and other organisations. She basically frames her study from a number of theoretical perspectives, but especially from the writings of noted Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci on culture, history, politics and society. Hedman argues that Gramsci's framework on class formation, domination and conflict 'anchors the politics and discourse of civil societies in a field of contestation among and within secondary associations, whose identities and activities are structured by patterns of class formation and the continuous movement of an expanding block' (p. 7). This approach, Hedman adds, is broader and richer intellectually than earlier mainstream theories on civil society exemplified by Alexis de Tocqueville.

Much of the book is devoted to a detailed examination of the activities of the National Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL), the pre-eminent election 'watch-dog' in Asia from the Magsaysay years in the fifties through the Marcos dictatorship in the seventies and eighties and on through the first year of the current Arroyo presidency. Hedman has also extensively analysed the role of bishops, business people, and a host of professional associations like the Citizens National Electoral Assembly (CNEA) in defence of liberal democracy. Such mobilisation, the author asserts, has been crystallised in contemporary Philippine society by social networks, secondary associations and non-government groups reflecting Gramscian 'deeper patterns of state and class function'.

The book is a useful and significant contribution to current Philippine social science scholarship. Hedman has also thoughtfully indicated several areas for further research on the topic based on her analysis of the Philippine experience. Her work, however, could have been stronger with a more critical treatment of 'civil society' itself. While the concept has indeed flourished since 1986 after the original 'people power' revolution ousting Marcos and empowering Filipino social classes, it does not seem to have caught on as a viable alternative democratic system. A little-known work by Jun Atienza, not cited by Hedman, notes that in the Philippine context 'the civil society framework seems to make

sense if the country is going to charter a qualitative new road toward social change' ('The rise of civil society', *Intersect*, April–May 1994: 6) Otherwise, Atienza adds, 'Philippine society will be condemned to relive its past by oscillating between elite democracy and dictatorship – or perhaps fall by default into the failed experiment of statist socialism.'

Another provocative paper by Resil Mojares presented at a 2002 conference, also not cited by the author of the book under review, finds some problem with the 'urban middle-classness and English-ness' of 'civil society', which diminishes its power as a term. 'By its "Englishness" and abstractness, civil society/*lipunang sibil* will likely remain in the language of those with the power to speak for "others".' This 'power' group includes politicians, social activists, academics, journalists, specialists and so on ('Words that are not moving: Civil society in the Philippines', *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, 34, 1 (2006): 47). Mojares adds that this is not just a linguistic issue, but a political one as well. 'The political environment in the Philippines is such that *civil society* will continue to be used in public discussions', but 'for the moment, it is a word that has neither moved far nor moved deeply'.

And with regard to NAMFREL itself, while it has become an exemplar for free and honest elections, it has not always acted 'in the name of civil society'. Misgivings about its somewhat shady relationship with the CIA and its emergence as the handiwork of covert operative Gabe Kaplan and other counterinsurgency experts in the Cold War era abound in the literature. NAMFREL was really part of a larger project, a 'long-range investment' in Philippine democratic institution-building. In 1956, the Office of the Presidential Assistant on Community Development (PACD) was established to train 7,000 workers to be deployed all over the Philippines to teach villagers self-government, self-help and other values that would eventually alter the power base of Philippine society away from landlords and local bosses. The PACD experiment in the fifties and sixties should be included in Hedman's analysis as it involved full-scale psychological warfare mobilisation designed to democratise the barrio.

Finally, there are the usual misspellings of Filipino names and terms. The words in parentheses are the correct spellings: Eduardo Angara, p. 107 (Edgardo); Theresa Nieva, p. 120 (Teresa); *Pilinas*, p. 146 (*Pilipinas*); del Mundo, Cloualdo Jr., p. 237 (Clodualdo); Joceno, F. Lacanda, p. 242 (Jocano, F. Landa); *Magpagpalaya*, p. 262 and other pages (*Mapagpalaya*).

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## Thailand

*Mien relations: Mountain people and state control in Thailand*

By HJORLEIFUR JONSSON

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This book deals incisively with the history of inter-ethnic relations, more especially relations between lowland states and upland 'tribal' peoples in the general region of