

might not necessarily require or lead to an entirely different racial ideology.

**Religion and Nationalism in Southeast Asia.** By Joseph Chinyong Liow. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016. 278p. \$105.00 cloth, \$35.99 paper. doi:10.1017/S1537592718003249

— Jeremy Menchik, *Boston University*

Joseph Chinyong Liow's departure point for his new book is Fred R. von der Mehden's 1963 text of the same name, *Religion and Nationalism in Southeast Asia*. Von der Mehden sought to investigate "the place of religion in a nation developing under the impact of agrarianism, the growth of a middle class, awakening political thought, and the multitude of ideas and changes which have assaulted the minds of the population of Southeast Asia during the past seventy-five years" (p. xii). He argued that religion was formative in the creation of nationalist movements in Indonesia, Burma and the Philippines. Launched in opposition to colonial religious "others," these movements gradually reformed into the intellectual and social foundation for more secular nationalism in the postcolonial period. Religion was ultimately unsustainable as the basis of nationalism since the goals of religious movements were unachievable. Given the similar religious background of both the colonizer and the colonized in the Philippines, Filipino nationalism took the slightly different form of anti-clericalism, which hastened the move toward secular nationalism. In short, von der Mehden's canonical text tells an empirically and historically grounded story of nationalism's modernization from pious to more secular modes of political belonging.

Von der Mehden's book was pathbreaking for its time. Yet, modernization theory has not held up well in Southeast Asia. Malaysia, one of the richest states in the region, has become more firmly rooted in Malay-Muslim nationalism as opposed to ethnic-Malay or secular nationalism. Indonesia, the sturdiest democracy in the region, has continued to be united by the truncated pluralism of theistic-nationalism, where belief in God is mandatory under the nationalism ideology of Pancasila but also plural, with multiple religions supported by the state. As a result of exclusivist Burmese Buddhist nationalism as well as an entrenched and politicized military, Burma's democratic opening has ushered in new forms of authoritarianism rather than a democratic transition. Finally, long-running autonomy movements in Southern Thailand and the Southern Philippines are grounded in both religious identity and regional inequality. While von der Mehden's text was crucial for understanding the role of religion and nationalism in the precolonial and immediate post-colonial periods, a successor volume was badly needed and the scholarly community is fortunate that Liow has taken up the task.

Liow investigates how and why religion has come to assume a prominent role in intrastate conflicts in Southeast Asia and how we should endeavor to understand this role (p. 2). Cases include Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Malaysia. The book opens with the basic premise that religion is not a premodern cultural artifact and teleological arguments about the decline of religion in the wake of modernity are incorrect. Rather, religion is a constituent element of identity and nationalism. Theoretically Liow relies on Rogers Brubaker's arguments about religion serving as an "idiom of nationhood" (*Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, 1992). Brubaker suggests that religion fosters and animates national consciousness, fosters a national will and aspirations for sovereignty, is used to defend community identity and cultural values, and serves as the idiom for questions of legitimacy. Following Brubaker, Liow argues that since other elements of national identity are available (e.g., class, civic ties, ethnicity), at the heart of seemingly religious conflicts in Southeast Asia lay clashes of competing conceptions of nation and nationhood, identity and identities. Liow defines religious nationalism as a "condition where religious identity and nationalism are blended together, resulting in a situation where religious groups are bent on asserting their presence toward the ends of establishing or defending their own conception of nationhood in religious terms" (p. 45). Religious conflicts arise when other groups in the state meet such assertions with resistance or opposition.

For brevity's sake, I will consider two of the four empirical chapters. Chapter 2 discusses the Muslim-majority regions in the Philippines of Mindanao as well as the Muslim populations in Sulu and Palawan. Liow pinpoints the creation of a Bangsamoro identity in the colonial period, when the Spanish, then American administrations lumped together thirteen distinct ethnic groups due to their common Muslim affiliation in contrast to the country's Catholic majority (p. 71). Liow convincingly demonstrates that even today, "in so much as we can speak of a Bangsamoro identity, it is grounded on distinction and difference from what is otherwise known to be Philippine culture, as well as a shared colonial experience, more so than any self-evident similarities that Bangsamoro communities enjoy" (p. 73). Yet despite the focus on conflict between Muslims and Catholics, the chapter also includes thoughtful disruptions to primordialist accounts of religious nationalism, such as Liow's observation that the Philippine government and Muslim separatists have spent far more time talking to one other than in active armed conflict (p. 75). Likewise, instead of presenting Moro-Muslims as internally unified and cohesive, Liow explicates key fractures between more secular Muslim nationalists that view "Moro" as an inclusive ethnicity, and more transnationally minded Muslim nationalists that are steering the nation toward Islamic law. He carefully

documents cleavages in the Spanish colonial period between internecine dynastic rivalries, and in the American colonial period between rival *datus* (clan chief) and sultans. A strength of the chapter is that despite the book's framing, Liow pays close attention to the legacies of land loss, military struggle, and local history for mapping the place of religion in conflicts in the Philippines.

Chapter 3 moves west to the Malay Muslim provinces in Thailand's southern region of Patani. Liow argues that conflict between Malay Muslims in the south and Thai Buddhists has been driven by an ethno-nationalist cultural and historical narrative with religious overtones, which is used to mobilize disaffected youth against an oppressive state (p. 100).

Chapter 4 delves into Malaysia's "sons of the soil" debates about Muslim supremacy that lead to mobilization in defense of the Islam against Christian "incursion." Liow is exceptionally insightful on the Malaysian case. He traces how at the inception of the Malayan nation-state in 1957, the special privileges for the Malay population were understood to be time-bound. Yet since the mid-1980s the state has taken an aggressive stance on Malay rights at the expense of minorities. Malay primacy (*Ketuanan Melayu*) is not in the constitution but is codified through other laws as well as the rhetoric of politicians, educators, and religious leaders. Non-Malays are frequently referred to in pejorative terms. Liow argues convincingly that such discourse is not peripheral to political institutions, but rather has become sedimented and Islamicized over time. While Islam and Malay identity were already fused in the 1940s, in the 1980s leading political parties followed the Iranian example and included clerics into the top party ranks in order to compete for voters who increasingly grounded their identity in religion. The result was a steady erosion of one form of religious nationalism in favor of another. "The ascriptive identity of Malay-Muslim supremacy has gradually eroded the Malaysian political-constitutional identity that accommodates non-Muslim minorities, and that was envisaged by Malaysia's founding fathers" (p. 152).

Chapter 5 on Indonesia examines violence in Maluku, North Maluku, and Sulawesi at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as well as the intra-Muslim conflicts between Sunni and minority Muslims. Liow again demonstrates that religious conflict is not a primordial reaction to modernity, but rather an outcome of negotiation, contestation, and redefinition of the nation using the idiom of religion (p. 222).

The book has two limitations as a successor to von der Meden. Notably missing is a sustained examination of religion and nationalism among Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Confucians, Animists, or other communities. Although Christians are prominent in the chapters on Malaysia and Indonesia, their identities are explored mainly as a function of being excluded from strains of

Malay-Muslim and Indonesian-Muslim nationalism. "Islam and Nationalism in Southeast Asia" would have been a more appropriate title, and Chapter 1 would have benefitted from engagement with the burgeoning Islam and politics literature. Likewise, one of the chief insights in von der Mehden's volume was that the trajectory of religion and nationalism among Buddhists in Burma, Catholics in the Philippines, and Muslims in Indonesia was more similar than different. Liow carefully and insightfully applies existing theory to the four cases. The book's theoretical contribution would have been stronger, however, by putting the cases into sustained comparative analysis. How do religious nationalisms in Muslim-majority (Indonesia, Malaysia) and Muslim-minority (Thailand, Philippines) populations differ? How do they vary between democratic (Indonesia, Philippines) and authoritarian states (Thailand, Malaysia)? How do the jumbled influences of secularism, urbanization, globalization, liberalism, Wahhabism, and authoritarian populism shape religious nationalisms in Southeast Asia?

Minor limitations aside, the book is a welcome introduction to the study of Islam and nationalism in Southeast Asia. The book is well conceptualized, well written, and well organized. It is suitable for advanced undergraduate classes on Southeast Asia, Islam and Politics, or the Politics of Identity, and thankfully is already available in softcover. I look forward to using the text in courses on Southeast Asia for many years to come.

**How Leaders Mobilize Workers: Social Democracy, Revolution, and Moderate Syndicalism.** By Konstantin Vössing. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. 316p. \$99.99 cloth.

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— Ruth Berins Collier, *University of California, Berkeley*

This is an ambitious and impressive book. It asks a big and important question about the types of class politics that emerged in cases of early industrialization and working-class development. It is theoretically ambitious in its integration of macrohistorical comparative and microgenial strategic/decisional analysis. It is empirically ambitious in its treatment of 20 countries: all independent countries (of at least 250,000 in population) that industrialized between 1863 and 1919 and had a working class of at least 15% of the population. The countries include not only 17 in Europe but also Argentina, Russia, and Japan.

Konstantin Vössing seeks to account for the emergence of five models of class politics by focusing on the strategic decisions made by labor-mobilizing elites: two types of social democracy, two types of revolution, and moderate syndicalism. The argument proceeds in three steps.

The first is macrohistorical. The five models of class politics are distinguished and analyzed as "fitting," or