

# Epilogue

## A National Unity of Citizens, Believers and Dissenters

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The 1955 Bandung Conference seems an almost forgotten conference, a relic of the past. But in the context of globalization and the resurgence of religions, the conference marks the increasing relevance of the choice at the time for a secular or religious philosophy of national unity. A nation can be defined as a community of people with binding factors such as language or culture – though there are communities that do not have these characteristics and still form a nation, such as Switzerland, for example. More decisive is the moral circle that reflects what a national community shares. What is shared are symbols, heroes, rituals and values. With these, the moral circle expresses a national identity. Philosophy, spirituality and religion are of great significance and at the core of creating the values of moral circles (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010, pp. 27-29). Much is required of a philosophy of national unity. It should connect and inspire citizens via shared ideals, provide a basis for equal citizenship, construct a national history and national identity, being the foundation for laws and institutions etc. Thomas Ndaluka's paper, *Recycling Ujamaa Philosophy in Tanzania*, examines, via Critical Discourse Analysis, the speeches Tanzania's late president Magufuli made. He emphasized Tanzania's national unity as a socialist and secular state by reconnecting, through both intertextual and interdiscursive means, to Nyerere's inspiring Ujamaa charter. Maintaining a communal stimulus, a moral circle, can be a challenge. From a teleological perspective, Olerato Kau Mogotsi addresses the struggle to follow the moral compass of Rainbow Nationalism. Here the principles of the Bandung Conference present, to a divided nation, a direction toward a renewed alignment with the South African ideal of unity in diversity.

Today the issue of whether a national unity should be secular or religious has become a great source of conflict in (inter)national politics involving global anti-secularist groups, from fundamental Christianity and Hinduism to Islamism (Haynes, 2007). A strong reaction in the face of national unity is fundamentalism.

Fundamentalist groups are convinced that Western-inspired, secular governments want religion to disappear. Christianity and Islam, especially, are world religions with transnational movements and widespread international exchanges of ideas. The radical interpretation by the Jama'ah Islamiya, which has its foundation in the Islamic seminary near Surakarta (Indonesia), has been inspired by Egypt's al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun. And within Christianity, in addition to mainstream denominations, fundamental Pentecostal and Evangelical churches create transnational structures and influence national unities worldwide. There was the assumption (Hofstede, 2010) that people worldwide are secularizing and moving away from religion through a process of advancing understanding. In this scenario, secularization would lead to a decline in religion, both at the level of national unity and that of the individual. However, ongoing globalization, with further rise of migration and demographic challenges, brings to light that religion determines the lives of the vast majority of the world's population.

Francis Fukuyama (1992) announced the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the beginning of an era in which national unities would converge globally toward democracy and capitalism. Such a hypothesis confirms the view of the Global South of neo-liberal globalization as a continuation of colonial exploitation, which was at the time justified by world religions either by their silence or by their collusion with the imperial powers, with the West as the centre of power (Amaladoss, 1999). It is argued that neo-liberalism, as the dominant type of globalization, is just a new form of colonization causing immense inequality. Neo-liberal perspectives lack a unifying vision for society as they claim that economy is autonomous from society. The only value of the individual is financial and the free market is central in all sectors of society. Globalization according to neo-liberal principles obstructs morals based upon humanism and politics based upon solidarity. As an alternative Frans Dokman proposes, in his paper *#Palaver Platforms*, a discourse of Ubuntu Consensus which brings together the promotion of Ubuntu principles and Asian–African solidarity within the domains of economy, technology, politics and culture.

## De-secularization theory

Secularization theory assumed that religion would disappear from the public domain as a result of modernization. This theory has since been abandoned or modified by its leading proponents and there is much literature on the global revival of religion and its effect on international relations (Fox & Sandler, 2004; Thomas,

2005). This is the age of religions. Earlier, Samuel Huntington (1996) projected the global resurgence of religions through the migration of believers to secular societies and the explicit public propagation of faith. And Peter Berger, who was initially a champion of the secularization movement, gave his book *The De-secularization of the World* the meaningful subtitle, *Resurgent Religion and World Politics*. Berger transformed here to a forerunner on the de-secularization theory:

*My point is that the assumption that we live in a secularized world is false. The world today, with some exceptions to which I will come presently, is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever. This means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists loosely labelled “secularization theory” is essentially mistaken. (1999, p. 2)*

Berger attributes the worldwide resurgence of religions to the fact that religions give people something to hang on to in uncertain times and that the masses have always been committed to some sort of religion.

We hereby would like to emphasize the numerous initiatives for dialogue, worldwide, between religious citizens themselves and with their governments, thereby strengthening civil societies and national unities. Together leaders of faith communities and government officials make it clear that radicalization and anti-democratic expressions are not inherent to religion (Vos, 2017). And as Rajendrakumar Dabee states, in his contribution *Indian Perspectives of Unity*, religion can have constructive roles. The Ten Principles or *Dasa Sila* that embody the Spirit of Bandung do even have their roots in Hinduism and Buddhism. Reet Hiimäe’s paper *Earth religion, “forest people” and environmental disputes* demonstrates also that the traditional Estonian folk religion is a sustainable source for the national identity. The national sense of feeling for nature supports unity, solidarity and democratic decision-making. Herewith it reflects a Spirit of Bandung.

## Identity markers

Consistent with research data (Crabtree, 2010) and literature (Thomas, 2005; Haynes, 2007) it can be observed that since the 1955 Bandung Conference, under the influence of globalisation and migration, people have become visibly more religious and less nationally oriented. There is an identity construction where religion is of value. The main question of the *Spirit of Bandung* concerns the relationship between national unity and secular and religious orientations. In our first chapter

*Indonesia's Public Diplomacy: Interfaith Meetings in the Netherlands* Frans Wijzen concludes that policy-makers in the Netherlands and Indonesia can learn from each other in protecting national unity. The public diplomacy program of the Indonesian government and the bilateral Netherlands–Indonesia interfaith dialogues show that the governments in both countries have one thing in common: they reject secularism and they promote some kind of neutrality.

However, when it comes to religious identity and ‘the good cause’, tensions can run high. Conflicts are also an undeniable dimension of world religions. More than a difference of opinion, religious conflict can also mean violence within a nation by members of one denomination or religion against other believers and dissenters. For instance, in Nigeria people place emotional value on their religious identity. In the past, the power struggle in Nigeria was between the three largest ethnic groups: Ibo, Hausa and Yoruba. Today, the struggle is both intra- and inter-religious. The intra-religious conflict between the Muslim Shi’is and Sunnis is taking shape in the fight between the Nigerian state and Boko Haram. Boko Haram wants a theocracy, a caliphate free of Western influences. There is a shift from an ethnic to an inter-religious power struggle between Muslims and Christians. One can conclude that national unity in Nigeria is also undermined by violence between Muslims and Christians. With an inextricable memory of the Biafra War, ethno-religious tensions are weakening national unity in this West African country. It is for this reason that Nigerian philosophers Uchenna Azubuike Ezeogwu and Umezurike John Ezugwu’s article *Intercultural Philosophy as Philosophy of National Unity* pleads for an inter- and intra-cultural philosophy at the national level.

In a globalized world of rapid changes people experience a loss of identity. Religion (Huntington, 1996) provides a way of constructing identity for individuals and communities. In a time of population shifts and economies of scale, many people need an identity marker. Religion, along with language, is such a marker and the most identity-sensitive. Believers’ religious identity includes interaction with fellow believers, dissenting fellow believers and religious dissenters. Believers strengthen their religious identity by turning away from other believers and dissenters. Nationality and religion are important identity markers. It is out of the question to separate religions from national unity because believers are national citizens too. We can observe that people have multiple identities of both a national and a religious nature that can be in an asymmetric relationship. Based on the view that people do not have a discrete identity, but construct it continuously in concrete contexts, social constructivism pays much attention to multiple identities based on nationality and religion (Hall, 1990). A personal identity is not fixed and immutable. People’s public emphasis on national identity or presenting a religious

identity depends on the situational logic. In *Ubuntu Worldview as a Condition of Possibility for National Unity* Antoinette Kankindi debates the colonial context of globalization and concludes that, at the Bandung Conference, the African voice was marginalized. Today's resonating of Ubuntu values in multiple identities, such as community spirit, offers a support for national cohesion.

## National and religious identities

The reason for such initially limited attention to religion in relation to national unity comes from a tendency to view humankind from the viewpoint of modernization (Dussel, 2006). Modernity is mainly characterized by the great importance given to technology, rationality, secularization and individualization. Most post-independence governments who took over from colonial rulers in Asia and Africa were based on secular-nationalist ideologies, such as Mao Zedong's Maoism (in reaction to China's semi-colonial status), Kwame Nkrumah's Pan-Africanism and Kenneth Kaunda's humanism, though not necessarily anti-religious. These political leaders were influenced by Western secular views of national unity and they anticipated early on the conflictual pitfalls of religion for social cohesion. In any case, it is clear that in Asian and African societies people place great value on religion, which greatly influences people's behaviour, social interactions and relationships. Their religious orientation influences the philosophies of national unity.

Religion is an environmental factor which, together with economy, politics, technology etc., affects all facets of national unity. But questions of religious identity, about who is a 'pure member' of a religion, often oust social and economic issues across nations (Barkey, 2011). The connected character is visible in Tanzania and Indonesia which are both in a time of transition from authoritarian rule to an open-market economy and multi-party politics. Both countries presume a national unity in diversity but do have autonomy movements in Aceh (Indonesia) and Zanzibar (Tanzania). Both nations struggle with diversities within religions, between liberals and radicals. And their philosophies of national unity found different origins. Pancasila was formulated before independence and inspired the Indonesian independence movement, while Ujamaa was formulated after the Tanzanian independence (Wijsen, 2013, p. 82). Since the 'liberalization' process in Tanzania and the 'reformation' process in Indonesia, citizens experience disunity and diversity; however, shortly after independence they were influenced to understand themselves as 'Tanzanians' and 'Indonesians' first, thus emphasizing their citizenship of a nation. This is not a phenomenon of the past, but currently a minority

tend to elevate their religious identity over their national identity, thus identifying themselves as believers of a religion before citizens of a nation (Ndaluka, 2012). In *Coping Intolerance and Separatism in Indonesia*, Cahyo Pamungkas and Qusthan Firdaus analyse a decline in Pancasila principles and the spirit of Bandung. The main reasons are the nationwide growth of religious intolerance, growing influence of Sharia and the fact that Pancasila has been deployed by successive governments to promote an unifying ideology, embedded in power structures, rather than a dialogue in which participants are allowed to have a diversity of opinions.

Worldwide, religious orientations do affect social cohesion and national unity. Through the Internet and social media, people inside and outside national unities are aware in an instant of affairs under the marker of religion. Neema Franklina Mbuta in her article *Pancasila and Ujamaa* rethinks the significance of philosophies of unity for presenting a spirit of tolerance in today's re-contextualized digital world, which is characterized by religious diversity and by homogenous groups. In the physical world there are tensions between and within nations and between and within religions (Jenkins, 2002). For example, the current number of 2.1 billion Christians will increase over the next 50 years. This increase is mainly due to the Evangelical and Pentecostal churches in the South, but the Catholic Church – with the exception of Europe – will also expand. It is expected that around 2050 about eighty percent of all Christians will live south of the equator. Of the 20 percent of Christians then living in the North, about half will be of African or Asian descent due to migration. Due to the dominance of Christians from the South, a Counter Reformation is developing within Christianity (Jenkins, 2002): an opposition by conservative believers to progressive views such as women in ministry, the ordination of homosexual church authority figures, same-sex marriage and a scientific-critical interpretation of the Bible. There is/was also intra-religious violence within Christianity, such as between the Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland.

Islamic countries, such as Turkey, had a secular elite in the 1960s and 70s. The Turkish constitution still defines the country as a secular state. It provides for freedom of conscience, religious belief, conviction, expression, and worship and prohibits discrimination based on religious grounds. The top-down secularization process stalled because the majority of the population remained religious. The religious masses then stimulated a Counter-Enlightenment of traditional Islamic values (Hamid, 2016). The current tension within Islam is mainly between conservatives and liberals. Islam is far more heterogeneous, leading to a diversity of interpretations of beliefs and practices. There are two major movements, the Sunni and Shia, with many variants and ramifications within them. Conservative

denominations like Tablighi Janmaat, Salafi and Deobandi are for instance pro-Jihadist, promoting a unity of religion and politics via a caliphate and strict gender separation then more liberal mainstream Sunni, Shia or Sufi. The vast majority of Muslims are moderate and peace-loving. They despise Islamic-inspired violence which affects themselves more often than Christians. These mainstream Muslims are also victims of Salafi and Deobandi militancy via IS, Boko Haram, and Al Shabab as are adherents of other religions (Moghadam, 2009). In some cases moderate Salafis and Deobandis themselves could not avoid the aggression from radical members within their own group (Syed et al., 2016). Their risk is more the (intra-religious) fanatic and not the adherent of another denomination or religion.

## National unities, secular and religious modernities

In addition to the *Spirit of Bandung*, there is also the *Spirit of Populism*, to quote a book title by Schmiedel & Ralston (2022). Due to globalization and migration, there has been a growth of religious diversity in Western secular societies. In response, there has recently been a resurgence of populist movements, with positive or negative attitudes toward religion determining the course of political thought and causing polarization. But also, religious leaders are speaking out about their desired form of society and national unity. Consistent with research data (Crabtree, 2010) and literature (Thomas, 2005; Haynes, 2007) it can be observed that, since the 1955 Bandung Conference, citizens have become visibly more religiously oriented. There is an identity construction where religion is of value. The main question of the *Spirit of Bandung* concerns the relationship between national unity, secular and religious orientations. In relation to debates about the 'clash of civilizations' another main question is: How can national unity be promoted in religiously diverse countries?

One logic is that for a nation with religious diversity, it is advisable to follow a national unity of secularism as a starting point. Not in the sense of a modern separation of religion and national unity, because religion is seen by many people as a part of life to which the nation also belongs (Vos, 2017). However, with a diversity of religious views and communities within a country, precisely a neutral, secular form of state indicates that all religions are approached with equal respect. Governing religious diversity begins with a common national model, without glossing over differences in cultural and religious views. In Tanzania the dominant discourse positions Julius Nyerere, as Father of the Nation, and the Ujamaa philosophy as stimuli for a secular state form. On the periphery, there are critical voices from

Muslims who see themselves as second-class citizens. And overly radical dissent is nipped in the bud. Then again, the return of religion to the public domain does not affect a continued strong social cohesion between Muslims and Christians. Citizenship of a nation comes first, loyalty to a religion second (Ndaluka, 2012).

However, the hypothesis that Asian and African countries will develop to only a secular model of national unity is incorrect. Crucial is the theory of secularization, religion and modernization. 'Modern' societies were often defined as Western and Asian-African societies as 'premodern', because – from a more holistic approach – they do not make the distinction between the religious and secular realms, or they make the separation less strict. In the West, the emphasis was and is on the West as the source of superior modernity. Mahbubani (2008, pp. 42-50) coins the term *Western triumphalism*, the hypothesis of mainly Western thinkers that the rest of the world will develop homogeneously, like a clone of the Western model of modernity. Influenced by Western triumphalism, all perspective on the role of religion in national unity has been marginalized. However, Westernization and modernity are not equivalent concepts. There are Asian and African concepts of religious modernity. One of the consequences of globalization is that these concepts become more manifest. Community-focused African Ubuntu and Asian Sangseang do, for instance, follow a scenario of continuing modernization and religion. Africans and Asians have interpreted modernity in an authentic way, not necessarily secular and not individualistic. Under the influence of secular hypotheses the religious factor in philosophies of national unity has been marginalized. But the global development of philosophies of national unities does not equal secularization of the world. The universal secular claim of modernity is rejected in a moderate way. We speak of religious modernities when religion is not at odds with modernity, but when there is modernization, contextually determined, on a religious basis. Some of the so called 'Asian tigers' and 'African lions' are modernized societies in the sense of being industrialized and religious, without becoming Westernized in the sense of becoming secular. For example, Malaysia combines a modern and neo-liberal economy with a national unity based on principles in which Islam is an important factor, thus proving that a modern neo-liberal economy and religion can coexist well in a society.

For many people, religion is not a reaction to modernity, but simply a way of being modern. Modernity is not an exclusively Western concept; apart from secularism, religious dimensions also determine modern national unities. Religion is an important social and political instrument for the construction of national unities – and hardly in theocracies only. In Asian countries, such as China, religion and national unity are interwoven. The religious traditions of Confucianism, Buddhism

and Taoism are promoted by the Communist Party with the aim of improving national unity by emphasizing their harmonious values. In South Korea, Christianity, Buddhism and Confucianism strengthen state legitimacy and national unity (Snyder, 2011). In Indonesia there is national unity, without a strict combination with secularism or religion. Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world but it is not an Islamic country. Nor is it a secular country, but a pluralistic one. Indonesian politics has given authentic expression to the institutional values of national unity, neither necessarily secular nor religious, but pluralistic. Pancasila's formal policy is attentive to the multiple identities of its citizens. In its aim to maintain pluralism, tolerance and respect for dissenters and believers, the Pancasila philosophy, notwithstanding Pamungkas' and Firdaus' justified criticism of its shortcomings, plays an important role for national unity (Mojau, 2014).

Studies in Tanzania and Indonesia indicate that religious diversity in itself is not a risk to national unity (Ndaluka, 2012; Cholil, 2014). These studies review the opinions on religion in relation to national unity or the absence of social cohesion. Their research focus is on the production of opinions of Christians about Muslims and Muslims about Christians. The respondents indicate the value of peaceful relations between members of diverse religions and its importance for social cohesion. Remarkable is that the respondents are nationally minded and prefer the Pancasila and Ujamaa ideologies. This is also echoed in the Indonesian elections in which the nationally-oriented parties that opt for harmony always win over religious political parties. Christian values such as love and human fellowship, and Islam values such as peace and justice are perceived by the respondents as politically transformed in the concepts of Pancasila and Ujamaa. The dominant voice of religious respondents in both countries is to favour national unity.

Migration and globalization are creating a diversity of views on the relationship between national unity and religion, and between religions themselves. These changes have only made the question of the role of religion in this post-secular era more pressing. The above-mentioned research refutes a prevailing view that national loyalty and religious affiliation can only be at odds (Laborde, 2002). At the time of the Bandung Conference the participating politicians, closely related to the dominant discourse in international relations, mostly though not exclusively considered secularism to be a hallmark of national unities. The Bandung Conference offered political space for both secular and religious philosophies of national unities. Since then countries have further adapted to the resurgence of religions. They have searched for a new understanding of modern secular and religious philosophies of national unity. Thereby, as the authors critically analyse, promoting with varying success peace and stability across contradictions.

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