Introduction : dealing with diversity

INTRODUCTION

DEALING WITH DIVERSITY

Bernard Adeney-Risakotta

The Meanings of Dealing with Diversity

This book is about how we should deal with diversity. Hannah Arendt argued that true power is the ability of ordinary people to work together to actually change the world (Arendt, 1970, Adeney-Risakotta, 2005). Contrary to Max Weber, who saw power as domination, or Mao Zedong who famously said "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun", Arendt's insight was that real change comes from below, from people working together. Dominating power, which is one response to diversity, often creates more negative destruction than it does positive change. Diversity is a great barrier (in addition to all the normal vices), to working together. There are many kinds of diversity: religious, cultural, ideological, social, political, economic, etc. People are different from each other. A businessman commented, "Just staying together is success." The ongoing splits and divisions in our religious and other civil society organizations is a testimony to the difficulty of dealing with diversity. This book focuses on religious diversity as one of the most vexing phenomena of our times. Religious diversity encompasses both diversity between different religions and diversity within religions. Diversity between people of the same religious or non-religious community, is often even more conflict laden than diversity between people of different religions. Dealing with diversity in a positive way

creates endless possibilities for change. Dealing with diversity badly often leads to the destruction of our greatest achievements.

The term "dealing" has at least four meanings. The first is that we need to face and come to terms with reality, as in the slang expression, "Deal with it!" or more seriously, "dealing with grief". Diversity is a reality that is impossible to escape in our pluralistic societies. Whether we like it or not, we have to deal with it. We have to put up with it, come to terms with it and adjust to this reality of the diverse worlds in which we live. We have to deal with unpleasant realities as well as those that are fine and good. Some of the essays concern how we deal with unpleasant realities, like violence between diverse groups, discrimination based on gender, or disasters that demolish the worlds we have struggled to build. We didn't choose these realities, but we cannot escape them. The book examines diverse ways in which we may face these challenges. Many of the realities we face are not necessarily bad, but they are complex, like globalization, competing religious communities and dizzying social change. The following chapters consider how we should deal with the complex social realities that arise from religious diversity.

A second meaning of dealing is to lay the cards out on the table in an orderly manner. We cannot determine what are in the cards or in what order they will fall, but we deal them out and see where they land. In this meaning, we give everyone in the game their cards and order the entire deck of cards in a way that makes sense. Dealing with diversity in this sense means to lay out the complexity of our diversity and try to make sense of it. We order the cards and see who the players are. This is an essentially hermeneutic task. It is the task of interpretation. Diversity may seem like chaos, but the chapters in this book try to make sense of it, not by proposing one master meaning that everyone must accept, but by exploring multiple meanings, some of which are in conflict with other meanings. The authors of this book do not all agree with each

other (or with the editor), but all of them hold some of the cards and all of them propose diverse ways of making sense of them that are valuable contributions to the "game".

The third meaning of dealing is negotiation. A dealer is one who negotiates with people of different interests. Dealing in the marketplace means exchange. Different people have different "products" with which to deal. People need each other, but they don't always share the same interests, ideas or goals. If there is uniformity, there is no need to deal. Everyone thinks, sees and understands the same thing. But diversity forces us to deal with each other in creative ways. Dealing in this sense is an essentially political task. It is related to power, and to the challenge of negotiating reasonable exchanges that are "win-win" solutions that take into account everyone's interests. Dealing with diversity means to take into consideration the commitments of many different groups and individuals and negotiate for solutions to our common problems. Above all, the political task is to prevent diversity from devolving into chaos or violence. Many of the chapters in this book are concerned with how to prevent conflict and learn from each other, rather than destroy each other. However diversity is not just a problem, it is also a resource. Many of the problems the world faces need the insights of people from different backgrounds, cultures and religions. We need to deal with each other because we all have something that the other person needs and we all face problems that we cannot solve alone.

The fourth meaning of dealing is to manage diversity. Human communities need to deal with diversity in the sense of managing it. How different communities manage diversity has a long history. Every community has its own repertoire of strategies, some of them more effective than others. Part of the goal of this book is to expand our repertoire of strategies with which people manage diversity.

Repertoires for Dealing with Diversity

At one extreme is the strategy of annihilating the enemy. The last hundred years gave rise to two world wars and countless conflicts in which those who were defined as the enemy were mercilessly exterminated. The Holocaust against Jews in Germany, Stalin's Gulag, Mao's Cultural Revolution, the massacre of communists in Indonesia, Pol Pot's killing fields in Cambodia, slaughter of Tutsis and Hutus in Rwanda, ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, atrocities in East Timor, 9/11, shock and awe bombings in Iraq, are just a few of humankind's repertoire of death. And the list goes on…

At the other end of the spectrum of repertoires for dealing with diversity is the strategy of denying the reality of difference and pretending that we are all, at base, the same. "Make love, not war." Unfortunately denying diversity is sometimes as devastating as trying to physically annihilate it. Hegemonic attempts to create unity can lead to the destruction of cultures and elimination of the rich diversity of human communities. Even ideologies of liberal pluralism can lead to the "McDonaldization" of religion in which differences are smoothed out into a mild and tasteless uniformity of liberal beliefs, under the mistaken assumption that all religions are fundamentally the same.

The authors of this book all take seriously the diversity of religions and cultures. Managing diversity should not mean either annihilating it or denying its existence. These essays all propose strategies for dealing with diversity. Some take a historical approach, examining how people have dealt with diversity in the past. Some are more political, focusing on different political strategies, particularly in the relations between religion and the state, in the context of multiple modernities. Some are more empirical, trying to lay the cards on the table, so to speak, to see the actual realities of religious diversity in relation to, for example, globalization, class and gender. Some chapters are more theological, showing how certain religious beliefs affirm or deny diversity. Some

chapters compare diverse ways in which people make sense of the crises we face together. Other chapters focus on education and the role of inter-religious studies in helping find positive ways to deal with diversity.

The Indonesian Experience of Dealing with Diversity

Most of the chapters have a special focus on Indonesia. There are several reasons for this focus. One is that Indonesia is the fourth largest country in the world and includes the largest Muslim population (more than the whole Middle East put together) yet is severely under-represented in international discourse about religion. Ironically, according to a recent Gallop poll, Indonesia is the third most religious nation in the world.[1] Yet its voice is seldom heard internationally, in discussions of religion. We need a book that includes leading Indonesian perceptions on how to deal with diversity.

Secondly, Indonesia is one of the most diverse countries in the world, both religiously and culturally. With 17,000 islands, Indonesia includes hundreds of languages, cultures and religions. Religious diversity in Indonesia is an under-rated national treasure that is still waiting to be appreciated. Not only is there a great diversity of different religions, Indonesia also includes the greatest diversity among practicing Muslims in the world. A tradition of tolerance and constitutional guarantees of religious freedom provide structural protection for the growth of many different ways of interpreting and practicing Islam in Indonesia. Those who are tempted by a monolithic view of Islamicate civilization should read this book.

[1] See *www.realclearworld.com/lists/top_5_most_religious_countries/indonesia.html*. An earlier Pew Foundation study placed Indonesia as the most religious country in the world, with 99% of the population saying that religion was important or very important to them in their daily lives.

Thirdly, Indonesia has a long and ancient history of dealing with diversity. Indonesians have had relative success in managing great cultural and religious diversity for two thousand years. This long experience is rich social capital, which bodes well for the future. It has given rise to many institutional mechanisms for dealing with diversity that are strikingly different from Western institutions. The authors of this book include some of Indonesia's leading religious thinkers as well as foreign experts in religious studies. This book provides evidence that Indonesian experience is an important resource for the whole world, in learning to deal with diversity.

Fourthly, most of the chapters in this book were originally presented at a conference in honour of the launching of the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies (ICRS), held in Yogyakarta Indonesia in January 2007.[2] ICRS is itself evidence that Indonesia is an important voice to be heard in discussions of diversity. Based at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM),[3] ICRS is a unique consortium of "secular",[4] Muslim and Christian universities, including UGM, the State Islamic University

[2] Most chapters have been revised and some are new. The original conference on the theme of "The Challenge and Promise of Religious Studies in Indonesia" was held at the Graduate School of UGM in Yogyakarta on January 14-16, 2007. The chapter by Gerry van Klinken was first presented at an ICRS conference on the resurgence of religions in Southeast Asia on January 4-8, 2011 at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta and has been extensively revised since. A version of Bernard Adeney-Risakotta's chapter on social imaginaries was first presented at a conference on religion and business in Southeast Asia at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on July 27-28, 2012.

[3] Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) is the largest and oldest national university in Indonesia, with 41,000 active students. In 2012, it was the top ranked university in Indonesia in the Arts and Humanities. See: *www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/asian-university-rankings/2012/faculty-area-rankings/arts-humanities*. Overall it is among the top three universities in Indonesia and is rated seventh among the top ten universities in Southeast Asia. See: *worldranking.blogspot.com/2009/04/top-universities-in-south-east-asia.html*

[4] "Secular" is used here in the sense of religiously neutral or multireligious. Indonesians generally reject the idea of a secular public sphere (including universities) from which religions are excluded. National, state universities are better thought of as multi-religious rather than secular.

Sunan Kalijaga and Duta Wacana Christian University. This consortium, which offers an interdisciplinary PhD programme in inter-religious studies, is the only one of its kind in the world. In the West, as well as in most Muslim countries, it is difficult to imagine a consortium of leading secular, Muslim and Christian universities, jointly sponsoring a graduate programme in inter-religious studies. ICRS is international: it accepts students from many other countries; it includes visiting lecturers from all over the world; and it sends students to spend part of their programme at leading universities in many different countries.[5]

The task of building an inter-religious consortium is aided and abetted by Yogyakarta, "The City of Tolerance". The Sultan of the ancient, Javanese, Muslim Kingdom of Mataram, which is centred in Yogyakarta, cooperated in the opening of ICRS. He saw the urgency of establishing a world centre of excellence in the study of religions that was neither dominated by one religion nor isolated (secularized) from the religious experience and convictions of the great majority of Indonesians. ICRS is neither mono-religious nor a-religious, neither a theological nor a secular religious studies programme. It is not based on a particular theological understanding of religion, nor is it committed to "methodological atheism". Rather it is founded on the simple insight that we can all learn from each other, no matter what is our particular religious or non-religious practices, beliefs and community. The faculty and students of ICRS are diverse. They come from many different streams (*mazhab*) of Islam and Christianity, as well as from other religions and belief systems. They also come from many different academic disciplines, including anthropology, theology, political science, Islamic studies, literature, ethics, philosophy, history, biblical studies, sociology, etc.[6] ICRS is a laboratory for dealing with diversity.

[5] For more information see *www.icrs.ugm.ac.id*
[6] See: *www.icrs.ugm.ac.id*

It is an institution that is structured by mutual respect and tolerance for difference.

The Organization and Logic of the Book

The following 18 chapters are divided into six sections. The first section considers "Asian Ways of Dealing with Diversity" with special attention to Indonesia. In the provocative opening chapter, Anthony Reid argues that religious pluralism is an Asian tradition. In contrast with Europe, where religious wars raged on and off for centuries, devastating their societies, Asians dealt with religious and cultural diversity in a much more peaceful manner. In particular, according to Reid, Indonesia has a long history of religious toleration that was unheard of in Europe. Reid's analysis raises many questions. Although I am persuaded by most of his argument, we may question whether or not Indonesia was any more peaceful than Europe. While people did not apparently go to war in the name of religion, that does not imply there were no wars. Rival empires, kingdoms, tribes and ethnic groups experienced frequent warfare. Nevertheless, apparently Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Catholicism and Protestantism did not spread primarily by force of arms. People of different religions have lived side by side for millennia in Indonesia, often as members of the same family

In the second chapter, Mark Woodward responds to Reid's chapter, by locating Indonesian structures for relations between religion and the state, within a broad spectrum of options. Whereas Reid's analysis is primarily historical, Woodward provides us with a comparative perspective on religion-state relations in the modern world. Woodward's typology is a helpful conceptual scheme for understanding a nuanced range of options that he places between two poles. At one extreme are totalitarian states that either impose one religion or try to eliminate all religion. At the other extreme are secular states who grant complete freedom to all religions through a strict separation of religion from the

state. Woodward places Indonesia in the middle, or third type out of six in his typology, i.e. states that recognize multiple religions. Fair enough. But I found myself thinking that, in terms of the complexity of its practices with regard to religions and depending on your angle of vision, Indonesia might fit into any or all of the six types! Perhaps that is a unique way of dealing with diversity depending on the context.

The third chapter by Syafi'i Ma'arif, the former head of Muhammadiyah,[7] continues the discussion of the nature of "pluralism", by arguing that pluralism must first be considered a fact of history, rather than as an attitude, ideology, or even a political structure for dealing with diversity. Pluralism is a reality both of history and of present modernity. Ma'arif then turns to a theological-historical analysis to explain why most Muslims in Indonesia are tolerant and open to diversity. The implication of his theological argument, later echoed by Alwi Shihab in Chapter 7, is that the Qur'an affirms religious diversity as the will of God. Indonesia has been better able to practice tolerance of diversity, in comparison with some other Muslim states, because of the peaceful manner in which Islam penetrated Indonesian society. One question that is raised by this argument is whether or not Ma'arif's historical analysis, which echoes Reid, is overly influenced by his theological convictions. The fact that Hindus and Buddhists had to flee to the mountains or to Bali seems to indicate that the spread of Islam may not have been as peaceful as portrayed in popular Indonesian narratives of the peaceful spread of Islam. Of course even if the historical analysis of the spread of Islam in Indonesia is questioned, that would not negate the normative interpretation that Islam legitimates religious diversity.

[7] Muhammadiyah is one of the most influential religious organizations in the world. It includes around 30 million members and has started thousands of social institutions such as schools, universities, hospitals and NGOs. Muhammadiyah is generally considered a "modernist" Islamic mass organization that aims to reform and purify Islam with the aid of reason. Many Muhammadiyah members are theologically quite conservative.

Part II of the book considers "Multiple Modernities, Globalization and Religion. If there is an Asian, or Indonesian way of dealing with diversity (Part I), how has it been affected by modernity? The section begins with Chapter 4 by Bernard Adeney-Risakotta, which compares Indonesian and Western "social imaginaries". Social imaginaries (Charles Taylor) are the ways in which whole peoples understand the fundamental meaning and purpose of their societies. Using ideal type analysis, Adeney-Risakotta suggests that Indonesians generally imagine the meaning and purpose of society differently from people in the West. This has a profound effect on how they think the state should deal with diversity. However Indonesians are also influenced by Western, Middle Eastern, Indian and other social imaginaries, to the extent that Indonesian society has become a diverse *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977) of competing modernities with sharply contrasting imaginations about how society should deal with diversity. Adeney-Risakotta's analysis raises the question of how fundamentally different social imaginaries can exist side by side, not only in society, but even in a single person. Are the fabled Indonesian powers of synthesis up to the task of negotiating competing voices? Will one of the narratives overthrow the others, as happened in 1965-66? Will Indonesia's social capital of experience in dealing with diversity continue to empower society to live in relative harmony, in face of the onslaught of multiple modernities? These are all questions that many people are asking, and not only about Indonesia.

In Chapter 5, Vincent Miller asks this question in a different form: "What does Globalization do to Religion?" Miller's rich analysis refutes the simple thesis that globalization leads to greater and greater homogenization. It is true that great cities appear more and more alike, dominated by the same corporate logos. The hegemonic power of mass media seems to condition diverse societies into thinking, consuming and entertaining themselves in ways that resemble the practices of people in cities all over the world. But Miller argues that there is another process

going on which he calls heterogenization. Many communities react to globalization by "circling their wagons".[8] They make a sharp division between themselves and groups that appear to threaten them. In other words, they strongly assert their unique religious and cultural identity over against the foreign agents who threaten their way of life. One might think this is a good thing, since it preserves cultural and religious diversity over against the "McDonaldization" of the world. But Miller shows that this too can be a dangerous way to deal with diversity. So called "low level" or "small scale" conflicts are going on all over the world between groups that feel threatened by each other. An obvious question raised by Miller's chapter is, how can we strengthen internal solidarity over against the hegemonic power of global capitalism, without becoming exclusive communities whose primary identity is antagonistic to those who are different?

The last chapter in this section uses empirical data to measure the impact of class on attitudes to religion. Gerry van Klinken, in Chapter 6, moves us from the realm of qualitative, theoretical analysis into the realm of hard statistics to see how Indonesians actually think about how we should deal with diversity, based on the World Values Survey.[9] In general his findings are reassuring. For example, the great majority are strongly committed to democratic government, human rights and tolerance of diversity. As suggested by his title, "Religion, Politics and Class Divisions in Indonesia", van Klinken argues that there is a correlation between economic class and religious attitudes. Apparently, progressive religious attitudes correlate with middle to upper class, educated people, while conservative, or Islamist attitudes correlate with lower class, uneducated people. Not surprisingly, the comfortable, Muslim progressives hold leadership in most institutions, while the

[8] This metaphor is taken from cowboy movies. When the settlers are traveling by covered wagons and are attacked by Indians (Native Americans), they move their wagons into a circle to defend themselves from the attackers.

[9] *www.worldvaluessurvey.org*

majority of the poorer Muslim conservatives hold few positions of influence.

These findings seem to suggest that how people deal with diversity may be more related to their social and economic condition than to their dogmatic religious beliefs. However the chapter does not address the issue of in which direction, if any, is the causation. Are people poor because they are religious conservatives, because, for example, their religion does not help them adapt to a rapidly changing world? Or are people religiously conservative because they are poor, for example, the victims of an unjust system who seek meaning for their lives in pious practices? Of course correlation does not prove causation in either direction, but these are interesting questions for further research. Those who are radically dissatisfied and alienated from mainstream society may well adopt radical ideologies, including ones that sharply differentiate their religious identity from the society around them. That leads to the question of whether influencing people's religious beliefs is of any use, or if their beliefs are just a result of their being victimized by a globalized, modern, capitalist economy that has no place for them?

Part III of the book turns directly to the problem of Inter-religious Conflict and Violence. The section starts with Chapter 7 by Alwi Shihab, the former Foreign Minister (Secretary of State) of Indonesia who is also a leading Islamic scholar and one of the founders of inter-religious studies in Indonesia. Shihab's chapter is a reflection on the reasons why Islam has become associated with violence and terror in the minds of many people in the Western world. The context of his reflection is also the rise of radicalism in Indonesia, which he believes is a perversion of Islamic faith. Shihab views religious radicalism as the theological root of terrorism. Radicalism is the product of a painful history of misunderstanding and prejudice between Muslims and the West. Shihab denies that that there is a "clash of civilizations" or some kind of fundamental incompatibility between Islam and the West.

Rather, both sides hurt each other through distorted images and practices that demean the other and break down the possibility of trust. The best way to deal with our diversities, according to Shihab, is not just tolerance, but rather active and respectful dialogue, so that true understanding can replace the distorted images of radicalism. A question that arises from Shihab's analysis is, whether he has neglected structural factors, such as those suggested by van Klinken's research. Are the violent actions of radicals primarily based on misunderstanding, prejudice, and the perversion of Islam, or rather a reaction to an unjust world order? Of course these choices are too stark. Both factors may be involved. However which factors are given priority will influence what strategies are chosen for dealing with diversity. Is dialogue or social activism the best way forward? Perhaps a fruitful compromise would be to focus on dialogue, not primarily about the normative teachings of our religions, but about how, together we can address the economic injustices that lead people to despair.

Chapter 8 continues on the same theme, but with a different vantage point. Whereas Shihab's reflection is apologetic and normative, defending Islam from misunderstanding and condemning both sides for acting out of prejudice and hatred, Jim Veitch's chapter takes a more sociological approach, trying to understand how and why people become terrorists and then proposing a basic change in theological orientation as the best way to eliminate fundamentalism and terrorism. Veitch assumes that there are two main categories of religion that are incompatible with each other. On the one side is religious pluralism and on the other side is religious fundamentalism. Religious pluralism leads to constructive ways to deal with diversity, while religious fundamentalism, "more often than not", leads to violence. Veitch shows an admirable commitment to understanding the mentality and pressures that lead a person to adopt radical religion or fundamentalism. His basic assumption is that there is good religion (non-realist, liberal) and bad

religion (realist, fundamentalist). If so, then the best strategy for dealing with diversity and protecting us from terrorists, is to convert as many people as possible to a more enlightened understanding of religion. Veitch condemns the use of excessive violence against Muslims and argues for persuasion and dialogue rather than violence, as the best way to combat terrorism. There are a number of things I would question from Veitch's argument, some of which are discussed in the following chapters. One is the assumption that Muslims move in a logical manner from religious nominalism at one extreme to religious extremism at the other. It appears from Veitch's narration, that the deeper a person believes and is committed to their religion, then the closer he or she is to becoming a terrorist. In contrast, Miller's analysis of globalization suggests that those who have deeper and more profound understanding of their religious tradition are less likely to become extremists. Sometimes the terrorists are not recruited from highly committed, well educated believers, but rather from alienated and impoverished youth who move directly from petty crime directly into religious extremist groups.[10]

Responding to Veitch, Chapter 9, on "Religiously Linked Violence and Terrorism" is written by Azumardi Azra, the well known Islamic historian and former Rector of the State Islamic University in Jakarta. Azra objects to the term "radical religion", arguing that religions are not radical or violence prone, only people are apt to become radical if they misunderstand religion. But unlike Shihab and Ma'arif, Azra does not concentrate on a theological defence of Islam but rather suggests that religion, even the misunderstanding of religion, is not the main cause of

[10] I don't have any hard evidence to support this claim. However it is suggested by van Klinken's empirical analysis of the World Values Survey in this volume. There is good evidence that those who instigated the religiously related violence in Ambon in 1999 included gangsters (*premen*) flown in from Jakarta. According to some of my friends who were close to people within the Laskar Jihad during the volitile period between 1998 and 2002, many of their recruits were poor and alienated *premen* (young toughs), recruited from Yogyakarta.

terrorism. In fact, he says, all religious communities have given birth to terrorists, who are often formed by non-religious factors. Azra also focuses on practical strategies that Indonesian Muslim leaders have used in combating terrorism. He recounts the shock they felt when Muslim leaders first became aware that there were indeed Indonesian Muslims who were carrying out acts of terror in the name of jihad and Islam. This led to an Anti-Terrorism Team that devised strategies for educating young Muslims about *fatwas* from the Council of Indonesian Ulamas (MUI) that vigorously condemn all acts of violence and terror, as well as suicide bombs. Although Azra identifies non-religious factors as the primary cause of terrorism, the strategies he recounts for responding to the problem is a religious one, i.e. education of young people about the true teaching of religion. We may ask if religious leaders may find more integrated strategies for dealing with violence that combine religious and non-religious strategies for dealing with diversity.

In Chapter 10 Haidar Bagir, the Chief Editor of Mizan, a prominent Muslim publishing house, also responds to Veitch. Bagir's first point is to question the identification of fundamentalism with terrorism. According to Bagir, most fundamentalists are not terrorists. Even fundamentalists who might be termed radical are not necessarily violent. In fact many fundamentalists strongly condemn violence and are committed to peaceful activism within the framework of democratic institutions. Bagir also questions the Western hegemonic monopoly on who are termed terrorists. By mislabelling non-violent, Muslim, religious activists as terrorists, the West alienates potential allies and drives them towards sympathy with similarly outlawed groups. Bagir suggests that a wiser and more truly pluralistic way to deal with diversity is to respect the views of so-called fundamentalists, without assuming that they should convert to our more liberal faith. Bagir's insightful comments raise the vexing question of how tolerant should society be towards those who are intolerant? This is particularly

problematic in Indonesia where intolerant radicals try to silence, bar from the public sphere and even threaten to kill those with whom they disagree. In asserting their democratic freedom of expression, they try to silence others. What tactics should society use for dealing with the intolerant? In general I agree with Bagir that affirming diversity implies respecting all people with whom we differ, including "radicals" or "fundamentalists". Like all citizens they are required to follow the law and should be arrested if they break the law by attacking people with whom they disapprove. But they are fellow human beings with whom we share this planet. As Judith Butler argues, we need an ethic of "co-habitation", based on the idea that in pluralistic societies we do not choose the people with whom we share this planet (Butler in Mendieta & Vanantwerpen, 2011). We owe them our respect just by virtue of their being our neighbours.

Gender relations are one of the most volatile topics in dealing with diversity. Part IV of the book considers the difficult topic of how different religions deal with issues of gender justice. Chapter 11, by Rita Gross, asks the provocative question in her title: "No Girls Allowed? Are the World's Religions Inevitably Sexist?" Her answer is not terribly reassuring. Gross shows why all the world's religions are plagued by legitimations of gender injustice, even though each religion claims to be better than the others. Gross's analysis of religious texts shows how religious hierarchies have tended to legitimate male dominance over women. This has led to a debate among feminists about whether the world religions are hopelessly sexist, or capable of reform from within. Feminists who see religions as irredeemably sexist suggest that women who are religiously inclined should either create their own, non-sexist religion or abandon religions altogether. In contrast, other Feminists are deeply committed to their religious traditions and believe their religions can be reformed from within. Gross does not give a definitive answer to which side is right, although it appears, as a practicing Buddhist, Gross

is committed to reform within her own tradition. Indeed, we might ask if the idea of religion as inherently and hopelessly patriarchal is not rooted in an "essentialist" view of religion that does not acknowledge the fact that religions are in a constant state of interaction and negotiation within societies regarding their identity and meaning in response to specific contexts. Religions often reflect, as well as shape, the social inequalities that already exist in the wider society. As societies change, so do religions.

Chapter 12 is a reflection by Siti Syamsiyatun, the current Director of ICRS-Yogya and a feminist faculty member of the State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga, in response to Rita Gross' chapter. Syamsiyatun reflects on the differences and similarities between feminist approaches to religion in the West and in Indonesia. She identifies herself as strongly in the "reformist" camp of those who work for gender justice from within a religious tradition. Syamsiyatun's reflection shows how different assumptions about the nature of Scripture lead to different ways of "Rediscovering Gender Inclusive Religious Interpretations and Practices". As an Islamic studies scholar, Syamsiyatun respects the historical commitments of her religion to submitting to God's will as stated in the Qur'an. However she also shows how there are many new avenues of interpretation, which lead to greater gender equality, that have been ignored by male scholars. The rise of a new generation of highly educated women religious scholars in Indonesia has led to new insights about Islam's support for the rights of women.

Chapter 13, by Nawal H. Ammar, provides concrete evidence of the cogency of Syamsiyatun's argument. Ammar takes up the "hard case" of "Wife Battery in Islam" and shows how a variety of readings are possible for interpreting the primary Qur'anic passage that seems to justify wife beating. Ammar addresses this issue as a legal scholar, to show how appeal to religious freedom and the authority of the Qur'an in

Muslim life, should not be used to provide shelter for domestic abuse of women. Ammar outlines four alternative interpretations of the passage that seems to suggest that disobedient wives should be beaten. She herself favours the fourth interpretation, that the word that is sometimes translated as "beat", in fact is used in the Qur'an and Arabic literature to mean many different things. She suggests that the most logical use of the word in the context of the verses in question is "to separate from". An interesting aspect of Ammar's argument is that the fourth school of interpretation is not a new innovation stemming from greater secularization and awareness of women's rights. Rather it is an ancient interpretation that is conveniently ignored by modern scholars who wish to defend the legitimacy of male dominance over women.

Both Ammar and Syamsiyatun suggest that there are rich avenues for a feminist interpretation of the Qur'an and Sunnah. However neither of them directly addresses the problem that in many places the Qur'an and Sunnah reflect a society that assumes the inferior position of women in relation to men. No doubt male interpreters have made the situation worse by stating patriarchal interpretations of some passages and inventing stories to support male dominance. However this approach does not eliminate the problem. Abdullahi An Na'im suggests that a reformation of Syari'ah will require new principles of interpretation that distinguish universal teachings of the Qur'an from contextual interpretations that might have once been appropriate but are no longer relevant (An Na'im, 1990).

Part V of the book turns to the problem of Religion and Disaster. In recent years, many parts of the world have been struck by natural and human made disasters, some of which are related to climate change and environmental destruction. Perhaps nowhere have people experienced more suffering than in Indonesia. Earthquakes and tsunamis in North Sumatra killed as many as 200,000 people in Aceh alone. Earthquakes also struck Yogyakarta, killing over 6,000 people in a few minutes

(double the amount of the 9/11 tragedy), and leaving hundreds of thousands homeless. Earthquakes are reoccurring in many parts of Indonesia, along with volcanic eruptions, mud flows, landslides, floods, etc. The three chapters in this section consider differences of religious responses to disasters in Indonesia.

In Chapter 14, John Campbell-Nelson provides us with a case study of how religious leaders interpreted an earthquake on the small island of Alor. Campbell-Nelson suggests that there are three different competing explanations that are apparently incompatible. One views the disaster as a response of local powers, such as a witch or a dragon, whose displeasure with human activities causes the earthquake. Secondly, some religious leaders see the earthquake as God's almighty hand, reminding, warning and punishing human kind for their sins. Thirdly, scientific theory suggests that plate tectonics is the cause of earthquakes, which are the result of pressures within the earth's crust that have been building for thousands or even millions of years. Campbell-Nelson leans towards the scientific explanation but suggests some possible ways to bring in a theological interpretation of continuous creation, such that science tells us how the earthquake occurs, but theology gives it meaning in God's gracious care for the earth. I am impressed with Campbell-Nelson's argument, especially in attempting to integrate religious symbols with science. However I wonder if he is actually opting for the scientific explanation with a kind of religious gloss to give people comfort. Campbell-Nelson's analysis suggests, but fails to explore the possibility that there are deep resources of wisdom within local mythology that have to do with rituals of reverence for the earth.

The following Chapter 15, by Muhammad Machasin, the title of his chapter asks the painful question that Campbell-Nelson fails to resolve: "Where is God the Merciful when Disaster Strikes His Servants?" Machasin, the former Director of Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia, was one of the founders of ICRS and is now the head of research for the

Department of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia. In fact Machasin's paper also fails to answer the question in his title. Machasin appreciates Campbell-Nelson's synthetic approach to religion and science, but is still puzzled by the lack of an answer that satisfies logic. He concludes with Job, that we cannot know the greatness of God's will. In the end he returns to the Qur'an and the assumption that we must submit to the inscrutable will of God in the consciousness that all we have is from God and God may take it all from us at any time.

Chapter 16 is another response to Campbell-Nelson's paper, this time by Farsijana Adeney-Risakotta, an activist anthropologist and feminist who edited a book on Women and Disaster. Adeney-Risakotta's critical response asks whether women and men have different ways of approaching disaster in light of their faith. She suggests that the questions that appear so pressing for men, are abstract and less urgent for women. From her experience of working with women in response to the Yogyakarta earthquake of 2006, Adeney-Risakotta suggests that the most pressing question women faced was not theodicy, or how could a good God allow such suffering. Rather the pressing question is: What should we do? Women in Indonesia are used to taking care of their families and thinking of the practical aspects of life. It is not that they do not think of the abstract questions related to theodicy, but that they are much less urgent than the question of how to act to save their families and neighbours. Adeney-Risakotta's approach reminds me of the wise saying that when a question is unanswerable, perhaps it means that we are asking the wrong question. New insights are often not the result of new answers but rather of new questions. On the other hand I question the sharp distinction between women's and men's modes of reasoning. Some men think very concretely and some women think abstractly. The difference may not be based on gender, but rather on who we are talking to, their level of education and their role in the community.

Last but not least, Section VI explores the interaction between theology and religious studies in facing the challenge of dealing with diversity. The stimulus for this book came from the launching of the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies. Just like Indonesia, which is neither a mono-religious state nor a secular state, even so ICRS is building inter-religious studies in Indonesia that is neither a theological institution nor a secular religious studies programme. Rather ICRS brings the theological approaches of Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and other religions, into dialogue with the approaches of the social and human sciences. ICRS is neither pure theology nor pure religious studies, but a mixture of the two. In part this is because there is no concept of a secular public sphere where secular reason should be kept separate from religious reasoning. ICRS demonstrates that productive dialogues can take place between the social and human sciences and religion or theology.

In Chapter 17, St. Sunardi, the Director of a Graduate programme in Culture and Religion at Sanata Dharma (Catholic) University, applies the lens of post-colonial theory to stress the importance of religious studies over against theology. Sunardi shows how a simple model of theological inculturation or contextualization, are inadequate to explain what happened when a Javanese musician caused a scandal by introducing Javanese gamelan music into the Catholic liturgy. What happened was not the translation of eternal theology into a new musical idiom, but rather the formation of a new subject, who stood in a new position, both in relation to Western Christianity and to Javaneseness. Javanese royal music was played by Javanese peasants in the context of Roman liturgy. Sunardi suggests that theological approaches are not adequate for understanding the changing nature of religion and agency in Indonesian society. Colonial models of theological hegemony ensnare the post-colonial subject in webs of meaning determined by his oppressor. Sunardi suggests that new approaches in religious studies

from a post-colonial standpoint could help Indonesians raise up a Lacanian "hysterical discourse" in resistance to the hegemony of theology.

Sunardi's chapter is all too brief, but raises up some fascinating questions for further thought. Having taught in Western, religion departments, I would question whether secular religious studies approaches to understanding religion are any less susceptible to hegemonic discourse than is theology. Nevertheless, Indonesian approaches to studying religion have been so overwhelmingly dominated by theology that it is easy to imagine that this is the result of neo-colonial, Western theological hegemony on Indonesians. That raises the question of whether Islamic thought is not controlled by Arabic hegemony over the Southeast Asian subject. Perhaps in trying to introduce a religious studies approach to the study of religion, we are trying to balance the approach of theology with new kinds of analysis.

The final chapter of the book explores the mutual interaction of religious studies and theology, not in the spirit of post-colonial resistance to hegemonic regimes, but rather as complementary approaches that can inform and enrich each other. Chapter 18 is on "Inter-Religious Studies: Reconciling Theology and Religious Studies" by Yahya Wijaya. Wijaya is the Dean of the Faculty of Theology at Duta Wacana Christian University and one of the founding Board members of ICRS Wijaya rejects the sharp dichotomy between theology and religious studies, arguing that theological schools have been learning for a long time from the insights of religious studies. Similarly, religious studies have benefited from the long and deep scholarship of the theological disciplines. In fact it is possible to argue that religious studies are the child of theology, not the enemy. However, since social scientific and humanistic approaches to studying religions are relatively new in Indonesia, Wijaya sees a great need for theology to learn from religious studies and produce a new synthesis in inter-religious studies.

The urgency of this task is not just for the sake of abstract, academic satisfaction, but rather because of the many crises our pluralistic societies face in dealing with diversity. Inter-religious studies breaks down the walls between us so that we can learn from each other, not only across academic disciplines such as theology and religious studies, but also between different religious communities that all have to share our common planet.

Conclusion

This book offers new ways for thinking about how we should deal with diversity. It suggests that Asians, and in particular Indonesians approach diversity in ways that are different from the West. Western social theory has been dominated by a paradigm of development from traditional societies to modern societies marked by increasing rationality and secularity. Most social scientists would acknowledge that secularization theory has been largely discredited by empirical reality. For most of the world, increasing modernity has not been accompanied by any decrease in the power of religion in society. Nevertheless the old paradigm of development from traditional societies to modern ones, based on the European model still dominates popular imagination. An illustration of this is the provocative title of a book edited by Peter Berger, *The Desecularization of the World* (1999). Whereas Berger humbly acknowledges that he was wrong in his earlier advocacy of secularization theory, the title of his book still reveals the assumption that lies behind the theory, i.e. that modernity brought secularization, but that now there is an unexpected reverse process of desecularization.

However, for Indonesia and most of the world, desecularization is a misnomer because most societies, no matter how enthusiastically they embraced modernity, were never secularized in the first place, so how can they be desecularized? Indonesia is not experiencing desecularization, but rather changing modes of being religious. In 2010,

ICRS held a conference on the "Resurgence" of Religions in Southeast Asia. A striking finding of the conference was that there is no "resurgence" of religions. Religions have always been powerful forces in Southeast Asia influencing every aspect of social life. The apparent resurgence is rather a change towards more individuated expressions of public piety and a growth in mass movements that democratize religious consciousness, sometimes (but not always) in directions that lead to greater intolerance for others. This is not necessarily increasing religiosity, but rather changes in the expressions and practices of religious communities.

This book suggests that Western strategies for dealing with diversity by secularizing public life is not likely to work in Indonesia, nor perhaps in most of the world. On the one hand, it is a source of hope that Asia has a long tradition of peacefully dealing with religious diversity, without secularization. On the other hand, unresolved memories of the annihilation of communists from Indonesia (and of non-communists from Cambodia), and more recent outbursts of violence between religious communities, remind us that we cannot "essentialize" the "tolerant and gentle East" any more than we should stereotype an "aggressive and democratic West".

Dealing with diversity cannot be separated from dealing with globalization. This book suggests that globalization does not bring uniformity, let alone a linear march toward a single, monolithic modernity. Modernity is not singular but rather plural. In Indonesia there are competing social imaginaries that rely on strikingly different conceptions of a moral order. Indonesians resist conformity to a Westernized, hegemonic definition of the moral order and claim to have their own unique visions of what is a good society. Indonesians do not agree with each other on how to deal with the diversity of visions or the overwhelming influence of the global economy. However the book suggests that negotiation between religious and secular visions of the

common good is an ongoing process with no easy resolution. The book suggests that hegemonic dominance of one particular vision over the others, whether religious or secular, is a dangerous path that will not eliminate diversity but rather increase conflict.

Conflict is not necessarily bad. It can lead to creative solutions and compromises that accommodate different points of view. But one of the great challenges for dealing with diversity is to do it without violence. Violence destroys human community and breaks down trust. Diversity forces us to learn to co-exist with those with whom we do not agree. The book suggests that an ethic of co-habitation is necessary for our common survival on this planet. The Indonesian virtues of *ikhlas* (giving of yourself without holding anything back), *rukun* (living in harmony with others), *tanpa pamrih* (acting without self interest), *mengalah* (giving in to someone weaker because you know you are stronger), *pasrah* (submitting to the will of God, letting go), and *gotong royong* (working together for the common good), are all neglected skills for sharing common practices in spite of serious differences in our religious commitments. In dealing with violence, four themes emerged in this book. First, that all our religions contain resources for dealing with diversity without violence. Secondly, that understanding the "other" and negotiation are far more productive than violence for achieving positive ends. Thirdly, that justice is a critical issue for reducing the threat of violence. Those who are alienated and impoverished are far more likely to deal with diversity with violence. Fourthly, that dealing with diversity should not marginalize and oppress those with whom we strongly disagree. They are also part of our societies.

Gender justice continues to be a critical issue in dealing with diversity. This book suggests that gender injustice is a common problem that plagues all religious communities. The book makes no attempt to examine the diversity of views on relations and roles between men and women. That would take a book by itself to even begin. Rather the book

examines the problems of sexism within religious traditions and then shows a diversity of viewpoints on how to deal with them. Unlike in the West, religious believers in Indonesia are unlikely to leave their faith, start a new religion or convert to another religion because of the problems of patriarchy. While conversions do occur in Indonesia for a variety of reasons, most people's identification with a religious community is a deep part of their identity and is also linked with ethnicity, family and history. However that does not mean that Muslim women accept the status quo of patriarchy. This book shows how women are grappling with their tradition, negotiating with male dominated religious scholars and obtaining power within their communities through scholarship, which enables them to bring feminist interpretations to the sacred texts.

It might seem that disaster in Indonesia is a strange issue to bring to a book on dealing with diversity, but it is not. Dealing with disasters is a part of dealing with diversity in Indonesia, on many levels. This book shows that the diversity of ways in which people deal with disasters is deeply related to religious, cultural and scientific ways of reasoning. The book shows that how we perceive a disaster affects our identity and our relations with those who use a different symbol system to make sense of tragedy. Paradoxically, tragedies often help people deal with diversity. In the extremity of crisis, differences of religion, race and culture become much less important. On surveying the city on the day of the Yogyakarta earthquake of 2006, I was struck by the fact that no one was alone. Everyone was united in suffering. But sometimes disasters also bring out the worst in people and exacerbate conflict over differences. Scapegoating, discrimination based on religion, race or gender, corruption, manipulation of people's feelings for proselytism and conflict over resources, are all dangers that threaten communities as they deal with diversity in the midst of tragedy. This book has shown how differing symbol systems can dialogue to bring positive perspectives for

"facing tragedy without resorting to self-deceiving explanations" (Hauerwas, 1981).

The final section of the book shows the importance of inter-religious studies as an alternative to (although not a replacement for) both religious studies and theology. Inter-religious studies break down the Cartesian dichotomies between objective, rational, secularized social science and subjective, emotional, faith-based theology. This book demonstrates that both theology and religious studies need inter-religious studies in our increasingly pluralistic societies. Inter-religious studies offers rich prospects for inter-religious and inter-disciplinary dialogue that can help our multi-religious, multi-cultural societies learn to deal with diversity.

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