เมื่อชาล์ส ทิลลี่พบเอ็ดเวิร์ด ชิลล์ที่สยามประเทศ:
ว่าด้วยการเมืองของความเป็นศัตรูในสถานการณ์ "สองรัฐสองสังคม"
Civil Society, Violence and the Breakdown of Democracy:
The Significance of Civility and Civil Politics of Edward Shils

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บทคัดย่อ

บทความชิ้นนี้เสนอว่าเพื่อทำความเข้าใจความขัดแย้งและปฏิปักษ์ทางการเมืองใน
สังคมไทยปัจจุบัน เราต้องให้ความสำคัญกับการวิเคราะห์ความสัมพันธ์ทางอำนาจอันซับซ้อนระหว่าง
ชนชั้นนำและโครงสร้างรัฐระดับบนไปพร้อมๆ กับการวิเคราะห์ความขัดแย้งและการต่อสู้ของ
ขบวนการเคลื่อนไหวทางการเมืองต่างอุดมการณ์ในระดับล่าง ความขัดแย้งทั้งสองระดับ
มีความเหลื่อมซ้อนกันเสมือนเป็นภาพสองมิติ ที่ในแง่หนึ่งเชื่อมโยงกัน แต่ในขณะเดียวกันก็ดำรงอยู่
อย่างเป็นอิสระจากกันและกัน ดังนั้น การวิเคราะห์ความเป็นปฏิปักษ์ทางการเมืองในส่วนใดส่วน
หนึ่งเพียงลำพังมิอาจทำให้เราเข้าใจบริบทของความขัดแย้งทางการเมืองที่ดำรงอยู่ในปัจจุบันได้

เพื่อที่จะเข้าใจภาพความขัดแย้งที่ซับซ้อนดังกล่าว บทความนี้ต้องการทดลองประยุกต์
ความคิดของ ชาล์ส ทิลลี่ (Charles Tilly, 1929-2008) และเอ็ดเวิร์ด ชิลล์ (Edward Shils, 1910-1995)
สองนักคิดทางสังคมศาสตร์ที่สำคัญและมีอิทธิพลทางความคิดอย่างสูงต่อการสร้างคำอธิบาย
เกี่ยวกับรัฐและประชาสังคมในศตวรรษที่ 20 มาอธิบายความขัดแย้งและปฏิปักษ์ทางการเมือง
ในสังคมไทยในปัจจุบันในมุมมองเปรียบเทียบทางทฤษฎีรวมทั้งเปรียบเทียบกับปรากฏการณ์
ที่เกิดขึ้นในประวัติศาสตร์ในประเทศอื่นๆ ทั่วโลก เป้าหมายสำคัญประการหนึ่งเพื่อชี้ให้เห็นว่า
ความขัดแย้งที่เกิดขึ้นในสังคมไทยในปัจจุบันไม่ใช่ปรากฏการณ์พิเศษที่เกิดขึ้นเฉพาะในสังคมไทยเท่านั้น
ในส่วนของชาล์ส ทิลลี่ ผู้เขียนประยุกต์ความคิดว่าด้วยการดำรงอยู่ของศูนย์อำนาจอิสระเหนือ/นอกรัฐ
(autonomous power clusters) เพื่อมาอธิบายปรากฏการณ์ที่ผู้เขียนเรียกว่า "สองรัฐสองสังคม"
ในส่วนของเอ็ดเวิร์ด ชิลล์ ผู้เขียนประยุกต์ความคิดว่าด้วย civility และ civil politics เพื่อมา
อธิบายความเป็นปฏิปักษ์ทางการเมืองในรูปแบบของการเมืองแห่งความเป็นศัตรูและหนทางใน
การก้าวข้ามพ้นวงจรดังกล่าว

คำสำคัญ: ชาล์ส ทิลลี่ เอ็ดเวิร์ด ชิลล์ การเมืองของความเป็นศัตรู ศูนย์อำนาจอิสระ การเมืองแบบ
ประชา-อารยะสังคม

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Abstract

This paper seeks to understand the political conflicts and contestation in contemporary Thailand by focusing at the level of state structure and ruling elites, as well as the political struggles between competing political mass-movements. These two layers of conflicts are interconnected and influence each other. To pursue this analytical task, this paper applies the theoretical and conceptual explanations of Charles Tilly and Edward Shils, two prominent thinkers in the 20th century, to examine the situation in Thailand. Tilly's concept of "autonomous power clusters" is highly important in the context of Thai state dual structure. According to Tilly, the reduction of the influence of autonomous power clusters will lead to the subjection of states to public politics and the facilitation of popular influence over public politics. Together, these two interacting processes of changes will promote democratization. As for Edward Shils, his ideas of civil politics and virtue of civility are highly relevant to questions concerning violence, civil society and democracy: how can a violent and confrontational civil society, which may be destructive to democracy, be replaced by a peaceful civil society?

Keywords: civility, civil politics, autonomous power clusters, politics of enemy, Edward Shils, Charles Tilly,

Introduction

The main arguments of this paper are twofold. First, the paper aims at examining the relationship of civil society, violence, and democracy. From existing literature, it is unsurprising that there are conflicting explanations of this relationship. In my discussion I will start with the commonly accepted explanation- namely, strong civil society is good for democracy. Then I will discuss the shortcomings of this conventional wisdom by employing scholarly works showing the negative effects of civil society on democracy. Under some circumstances, civil society can turn to be uncivil society and then lead to the breakdown of democracy. Second, I will propose how the notion of civility and civil politics of Edward Shils can significantly contribute to the debate on this issue, and rectify the negative effects of civil society.

A Robust Civil Society is Good for Democracy: Neo-Tocquevilleans's Thesis

The concept of civil society has regained importance as a central focus of debate in democratic theory and practice. Originally, this term was used since the eighteenth-century by moral and political philosophers to refer to a new "civilized" form of political society, marked by the devotion of individuals to productive and trading activities rather than the warlike characteristic of "barbarous" pre-modern societies.[2] Civil society in this conception expresses the growth of civilization to the point where society is "civilized." It is a social order of citizenship in which people regulate their relationships and settle their disputes according to a system of laws.[3] The meaning of the term, not surprisingly, was transformed radically and used in several different ways from time to time. In the past decade, however, the term "civil society" has undergone a rebirth. The popularity of the idea is importantly the result of the works of two groups of people: Eastern European intellectuals and American political scientists. Before and after the 1989 revolution in Eastern Europe, many Eastern European intellectuals have seen the construction or reconstruction of "civil society" as the salvation of their nations. The flourishing civil society was considered to have helped bring down the Communist empire. Moreover, they hoped that civil society would help post-communist societies out of their socio-economic problem and succeed in democratic experiments.[4] For the American political scientists, like Robert Putnam, a declining civil society is a threat to American democracy.[5]

In contemporary usage, the concept of "civil society" is actually a complex set of arguments, and the term refers to different things according to different thinkers.

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[2] Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1997), Parts IV, V, and VI; Krishan Kumar, "Civil Society: An Inquiry Into the Usefulness of an Historical Term," *British Journal of Sociology* 44 (September 1993): 375-395.

[3] Krishan Kumar, "Civil Society: An Inquiry into the Usefulness of a Historical Term," *British Journal of Sociology* 44 (September 1993): 376-77.

[4] Kumar, "Civil Society: An Inquiry into the Usefulness of a Historical Term," p.375.

[5] Robert D. Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy* 6 (January 1995): 65-78.

There is no complete agreement on the definition of the term.[6] Nevertheless, it is suffice to say that that there is one commonly accepted version of the term. "Civil society" is an intermediary entity standing between the private sphere (individual and family life) and the state. It is an area of public activity that involves citizens acting collectively to express their interests, passions, and ideas, to exchange information, achieve mutual goals, make demands on the state, and hold state officials accountable.[7] To put it in a nutshell, civil society, in this commonly accepted version, is a "dense network of associations." The realm of civil society encompasses a vast array of groups and associations, formal and informal, from private voluntary associations, neighborhood committees, social clubs, communities, interest groups, unions, social movements to philanthropic enterprises of all sorts.[8]

Now, both theorists and policy makers everywhere view this field of civil society as an effective remedy for democracy. According to Larry Diamond, in his synthesis of ideas on the role of civil society in democratic society, civil society can play a significant role both in "building and consolidating democracy."[9] For Guillermo O'Donnell and Philip C. Schmitter who studied process of transitions to democracy, both authors suggest that civil society is an agent of democratization. They argue that the transition from authoritarian rule entails not only the triumph of "soft-liners" over "hard liners" but

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[6] Michael Walzer, "The Civil Society Argument," in Chantal Mouffe (ed.), *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community* (London: Verso, 1992), pp.89-107; John Hall (ed.), *Civil Society: Theory, History, Comparison* (London: Polity, 1995); Michael Walzer, "A Better Vision: The Idea of Civil Society" *Dissent* 38 (1991): 293-304.

[7] See Larry Diamond, "Rethinking Civil Society: Toward Democratic Consolidation," *Journal of Democracy* 5 (July 1994): 8; Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), pp.19-24.

[8] Ken Thompson, *From Neighborhood to Nation: The Democratic Foundations of Civil Society* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2001); Michael Edwards, *Civil Society* (London: Polity Press, 2004). There are, however, politics of definition among different scholars; some types of groups and associations are excluded from the sphere of civil society. For instance, communitarian thinkers exclude profit-making enterprise of individual business firms and economic associations (trade groups, professional organizations, labor unions) from civil society. Political organizations like the political party is the issue of debate, as well whether or not it should be included as civil society. See Bob Edwards and Michael W. Foley, "The Paradox of Civil Society," *Journal of Democracy* 7 (July 1996): 38-52.

[9] Diamond, "Rethinking Civil Society," p.8.

also the "resurrection of civil society."[10] The impetus for political reform, they argue, comes from outside the government, by individuals or groups that provide the seed for the emergence or resurrection of civil society. It is soft-liners or moderates within the regimes that see the benefits of gradually loosening constraints on associability and political contestation.[11] Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato, in their seminal work, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, see civil society as essential for a healthy democratic society.[12] For Cohen and Arato, civil society permits participation and communicative interactions between individuals. They argue that a vibrant associational life is supplementary to the political institutions of representative democracy.

Several thinkers trace the value of civil society to Alexis de Tocqueville, who in his study of *Democracy in America*, saw an active associational life as the hallmark of democratic society. A century and a half ago, Tocqueville noted that "Americans of all ages, all stations in life, and all types of disposition are forever forming associations."[13] Today neo-Tocquevilleans thus puts special emphasis on the ability of associational life in general and the habits of association in particular to foster patterns of civility in the actions of citizens in a democratic polity. Robert Putnam, the American social scientist and noted neo-Tocquevillean, argued that civil society is crucial to "making democracy work."[14] He proposed that the associations of civil society can create "social capital," a set of social practices and network of social interaction which involves civic participation and ideas of trust and reciprocity between participants. According to Putnam:

Civil associations contribute to the effectiveness and stability of democratic government…both because of their "internal" effects on individual members and because of their "external" effects on the wider polity. Internally, associations instill in their members habits of cooperation, solidarity, and public spiritedness… participation in civic organizations inculcates skills of cooperation as well as a sense of shared

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[10] Guillermo O'Donnell and Philip C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1986), pp.48-49.

[11] O'Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, pp.48-49.

[12] Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992).

[13] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), p.513.

[14] Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

responsibility for collective endeavors… Taking part in a choral society or a bird-watching club can teach self-discipline and an appreciation for the joys of successful collaboration… Externally, what twentieth-century political scientists have called "interest articulation" and "interest aggregation" is enhanced by a dense network of secondary association.[15]

As for the significance of civil society, it becomes one of the central themes of contemporary democratic debate. It is seen as the basis for political participation, and also viewed as the stronghold for democratic action against the totalitarian or authoritarian regimes which sought to monopolize all political power in the hands of the one-party-state. For many theorists, associational life of civil society is the locus of democracy, a bastion against an all-powerful state, and as Tocqueville said, citizen associations are the "schools for democracy" instilling habits of civic virtue (tolerance, trust, cooperation) and public spirit into their members. Now it is widely believed among scholars and policy-makers that the robust civil society plays a fundamental role in promoting democracy, bringing democratic transitions and deepening democracy.[16] Civil society becomes a magic word for democrats.

Nevertheless, there are serious problems with these notions which deserve mention. Are contemporary theorists too optimistic in their view that civil society is the seedbed of participatory, public-spirited citizens, and democracy? More skeptical observers suggest that this depends upon the internal structure and degree of democracy which prevails in the group that make up civil society. In some of its manifestations civil society can take highly 'uncivil' forms. The problem is scholars tend to perceive and portray civil society as inherently democratic, or as an agent of democratization. In so doing, they overlook or ignore the existence of antidemocratic or undemocratic movements and associations within civil society which have potential

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[15] Putnam, *Making Democracy Work,* pp.89-90.

[16] For the role in transitions to democracy see e.g. O'Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, op.cit.; and Z.A. Pelczynski, "Solidarity and 'The Rebirth of Civil Society'," in John Keane (ed.), *Civil Society and the State* (London: Verso, 1988), pp.361-380. For the relationship between civil society and strong democracy, see e.g. Benjamin Barber, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age* (Third edition, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003); and Benjamin Barber, *A Place for Us: How to Make Society Civil and Democracy Strong* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998).

dangers to democracy. Suffice it to say that the contemporary theorists who promote civil society do not take seriously the problem of divisive or "dangerous" civil societies.[17]

Groups can develop an intense sense of particularity and loyalty to their own association. More importantly, in certain contexts, associational life of civil society can reinforce and exacerbate societal and political cleavages. This could contribute toward some tendencies that are hostile to democracy by emphasizing partial loyalties which might undermine a sense of common civic identification. Moreover, theorists often gloss over the real, and often sharp, conflicts among groups in civil society. These conflicts, in the absence of appropriate political settlements, may lead to civil disruption and violence, and eventually undermine, rather than strengthen, democracy.

The cautious argument concerning the relationship between civil society and democracy is that there is no direct and positive relationship between a rich associational life and stable democracy. The relationship between civil society and democracy is actually ambiguous and not deterministic; it would be shaped by the political context, the type of the state and the nature of associations that make up civil society. The following section, I will employ the relevant theoretical and empirical studies which clearly demonstrate the negative effects of civil society on democracy. I will focus particularly on the case of the Weimar Republic and Indonesian politics during the first two decades of independence (1945-65). Both cases are extreme cases in which vibrant associational life lead to the destruction of democracy.

(Un)Civil Society and the Breakdown of Democracy: Polarization of Society, Exclusive Politics, and Training Ground for Nondemocratic Movements

As I describe above, the concept of civil society has now attracted much attention from scholars and policy-makers, through a neo-Tocquevillean thesis suggesting that a vibrant civil society is vital to a healthy democracy. Nevertheless, this thesis is gradually challenged by some in-depth analyses of the internal and external effects associations actually have on individuals and the wider society. These critical

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[17] Putnam only mentions briefly that almost any type of secondary associations will serve democratic functions as long as it is not organized around vertical bonds of authority. See Putnam, *Making Democracy Work,* pp.89-90.

works demonstrate for us, the contrary, how a vibrant civil society can weaken, threaten, and/or undermine democracy.

Suffice it to say that a great deal of contemporary theory of democracy and civil society fails to recognize the dangers civil society can pose for democracy. I tend to agree with two critics, Bob Edwards and Michael Foley, when they point out that "if civil society is a beachhead secure enough to be of use in thwarting tyrannical regimes, what prevents it from being used to undermine democratic government?"[18] Similar arguments about the serious danger of civil society are made by John Keane in his work investigating the relationship between civil society and violence. Keane's thesis points to one of the most disturbing facts:

It is… vital to point out that civil society can never become a haven of nonviolent harmony. Those who work for a (more) civil society must recognize not only that violence is often the antithesis of civil society, but also that very known form of civil society tends to produce this same violent antithesis. This inner contradiction within the workings of civil society- that it tends to be a peaceful haven of incivility- has been obscured by the originally eighteenth-century theory of the upward spiral towards civilization and, more recently, by the strange silence about violence within the renaissance of the theory of state and civil society.

Why does paying attention to the negative aspects of uncivil society matter? I find that contemporary theorists are too optimistic in their perception that civil society is inherently democratic and the seedbed of democracy. The evidence we have considered weighs against such optimism. Therefore we should be careful not to presuppose that the strong existence of civic associations will necessarily support democracy and foster civic virtues. The conclusion derived from the literature in this section is: there is no direct and positive relationship between a rich associational life and a stable democracy. On the contrary, "civil society" should be considered a politically neutral term, neither inherently good nor inherently bad, but rather its effects are dependent on the various factors. Obviously, under the context of a weak and

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[18] Edwards and Foley, "The Paradox of Civil Society," op.cit., p.46.

ineffective democratic state during transitional period, the violently polarized and confrontational civil society can destabilize or even undermine democracy.

I agree with Sheri Berman that if neo-Tocquevilleans misunderstand the true connections between civil society and democracy, the policy prescription they offer should be called into question.[19] To respond to current dissatisfaction with the quality of democracy in many countries, many thinkers have argued that the solution lies in generating local associational life. This prescription may prove to be both misguided and counterproductive.

A crucial question arises: how is a divisive civil society, which may be destructive to democracy, be replaced by a peaceful civil society? The next section will discuss the significance of the notion of civility and the civil politics of Edward Shils.

Civility and Civil Politics of Edward Shils

Edward Shils is one of the most important liberal thinkers who had spent most of his academic life argued for and promoted the idea of civil politics and virtue of civility. His ideas and arguments are very constructive, and they are highly relevant to the question about the violence, civil society and democracy: how is a conflicted civil society, which may be destructive to democracy, replaceable by a peaceful civil society?

In 1958, Edward Shils published an essay under the title of "Ideology and Civility,"[20] in which he contrasted civil politics with ideological politics. By ideological politics, he means the politics that have faith on ideology. First and above all, ideological politics have an assumption that "politics should be conducted from the standpoint of coherent, comprehensive set of beliefs which must override every other

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[19] Berman, "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic," p.428.

[20] Edward Shils, "Ideology and Civility," *Sewanee Review* 66 (July-September 1958): 450-80. This seminal article appeared in many books published later in a slightly different form. In my paper, I use the version published in Edward Shils, *The Virtue of Civility: Selected Essays on Liberalism, Tradition, and Civil Society*, edited by Steven Grosby (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1997), pp.25-62.

consideration."[21] Ideology, Shils explained, have not confined itself to the political sphere. On the contrary, ideology is a set of beliefs radiated into every sphere of life: it replaces religion, it provides criteria for works of art, it rules over scientific research and philosophic thought, and it regulates the private sphere of people.[22] The aspiration of ideological politics is as follows:

Ideological politics have taken up a platform outside the 'system.' In their agitation, ideological politicians have sought to withdraw the loyalty of the population from the "system" and to destroy it, replacing it by a new order. This new order would have none of the evils which make up the existing system the new order would be fully infused with the ideological belief which alone can provide salvation.[23]

According to Edward shills, elaborated in the article "Civility and Civil Society: good manners between persons and concern for the common good in public affairs," ideological politics makes a sharp disjunction between 'we'- the organized adherents of the ideology- and 'they' those who do not adhere to it whole-heartedly. Ideological politics entails an irreconcilable conflict between the ideology's supporters and 'the others,' those persons who do not share it. Ideological politics, Shils points out, apply Carl Schmitt's distinction between 'Freund/Friend': the idea that political activity of any society is organized around the poles of friends and foes- "those who are not completely with us are our enemies!"[24]

In a nutshell, ideological politics are the politics of 'friend-foe,' 'we-they,' 'us-them.' Those who are not on the side of or share the same ideological belief with us are, according to the ideologist, against us.

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[21] Edward Shils, "Ideology and Civility," in *The Virtue of Civility: Selected Essays on Liberalism, Tradition, and Civil Society*, op.cit., pp.25-26.

[22] Shils, "Ideology and Civility," p.26.

[23] Shils, "Ideology and Civility," p.27.

[24] Edward Shils, "Civility and Civil Society: good manners between persons and concern for the common good in public affairs," in *The Virtue of Civility: Selected Essays on Liberalism, Tradition, and Civil Society*, op.cit., p.63. And see Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, translation, introduction, and notes by George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

Thus, moral separatism arises from sharp, stable, and unbridgeable dualism of ideological politics which makes the most radical and uncompromising distinction between god and evil, left and right, national and unnational, ... Admixtures are intolerable, and where they exist they are denied as unreal, misleading, or unstable.[25]

Interestingly, Edward Shils wrote the article "Ideology and Civility," proposed the concept of ideological politics in the late 1950s, the period of ferocious struggle for independence in Asia and Africa. He acutely observed the political atmosphere of this era as he pointed out that "ideological politics, Marxist, Islamic, Arabic, Hindu, Pan-African, and others, still exist in the new state outside the West in a vehement, irreconcilable form and often with great influence."[26] At that time, he criticized many Western scholars who inclined to believe that the ideological politics will pass soon when the new states become more settled and mature. Western intellectuals view the ideological politics of Asia and Africa as a kind of disease which afflicts a people only in childhood and being harmless to adults who become immune to it. The optimism of Western scholars in the 1950s has been proved wrong. Ideological politics have survived many decades after 1950s. If we consider politics in Asia and Africa carefully and seriously, it is not difficult to find that ideological politics is still alive in the present day of Third World politics.

In the case of Indonesian politics I discussed in the previous section, seven years after the publication of Shils' article, the world witnessed one of the most brutal mass killings of the twentieth century. The ideological politics between Nationalists, Communists, and Muslims created intense and irreconcilable conflicts within Indonesian society. Each ideology has its own strongly mass-based organization, its own devoted proponents, and moral and aesthetic criteria. The boundary between each ideology was drawn clearly along the organizational lines. The membership of each organization was not overlapping, and the loyalty of members to their organizations was impressively strong. This political situation in Indonesian in 1950s-1960s fits perfectly what Edward

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[25] Shils, "Ideology and Civility," p.28.

[26] Shils, "Ideology and Civility," p.32.

Shils calls the ideological politics, the politics of "friend-foe," "us-them," which finally paved the way to the mass killings as a "final solution" to resolve the irreconcilable conflicts and eliminate the political enemy. In the world of ideological politics, the violent consequence is hardly avoidable or at least predictable as Edward Shils suggests:

"…the ideological outlook is full of the imagery of violence and destruction, and its practice is often crowded with actual acts of brutality and a heartless asceticism, while preaching a message of an ultimate condition of love and peace enveloping all human beings."[27]

Nevertheless, it should be noted that I agree with Edward Shils's careful argument that it is not the values sought by ideological politics which generate the violent consequence. Rather it is the rigidity, the exclusiveness, and the extremity with which particular values of any ideology have been sought.

There is nothing evil about loyalty to one's community, national or ethnic or cultural, nor is there anything wicked in the appreciation of equality or the devotion to any particular ideal. What is so malign is the elevation of one value, such as equality or national or ethnic solidarity, to supremacy over all others, and the insistence on its exclusive dominion in every sphere of life.[28]

Fortunately, ideological politics are not the only possible form of politics human beings can have. For Edward Shils, he contrasted civil politics with ideological politics, and proposed civil politics as an effective alternative to ideological politics. By civil politics he means political activities and attitudes which did not regard difference as irreconcilable.[29] Difference of ideas and interests are acceptable and certainly normal in civil politics. Civil politics is the concern to reconcile, not abolish, divergent interests and different ideas. The common good of society is more important than partial or factional interests in civil politics. Civil politics is therefore a politics of moderation and compromise. The difference between civil politics and ideological politics lies in their different understanding of the nature of virtue. According to Shils, civil politics "require

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[27] Shils, "Ideology and Civility," p.42.

[28] Shils, "Ideology and Civility," pp.58-59.

[29] Edward Shils, "The Virtue of Civility," in *The Virtue of Civility: Selected Essays on Liberalism, Tradition, and Civil Society*, op.cit., p.337.

an understanding of the complexity of virtue, that no virtue stands alone, that every virtuous act costs something in terms of other virtuous acts, that virtue intertwined with evils, and that no theoretical system of a hierarchy of virtue is ever realizable in practice."[30] Ideological politics, on the contrary, think that "a coherent systematic doctrine could guide conduct unfailingly along a straight line which made no compromise with evil."[31] Suffice to say, the ideological politics' understanding of virtue is a foundation of political absolutism. And, in Edward Shil's opinion, this is a major fault of ideological politics which makes ideologists perceive politics in term of friend-foe. Shils explains that ideologists divide society into two fundamentally irreconcilable parts: themselves and all the others. In the worldview of ideological politics' adherents, all the others are "irredeemably and completely defective; there is no remedy for the defects of this group or groups except extirpation, suppression or exile."[32]

The ideal of civil politics is concerned with compromises among a plurality of values and ideas and with compromises of the demands of the individual or particular parts of the society with the common interest of the society. Civil politics have less specific content compared to ideological politics, but they need specific virtues. Civility is virtue and ethos of civil politics.[33] A civil politics in any society is one in which there is enough civility to keep the partisanship of ideological politics in check. To maintain a well-ordered liberal democracy, Shils posited, the institutions and citizens of liberal democracy have to embody civility; liberal democracy could not function smoothly without a certain minimum amount of civility.[34]

It is highly important, however, to examine the meanings of civility. The different notions of civility lead to different political practices. For Edward Shils, there are two kinds of civility: civility understood as good manners or courtesy and civility as the virtue

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[30] Shils, "Ideology and Civility," p.52.

[31] Shils, "Ideology and Civility," p.52.

[32] Shils, "Civility and Civil Society: good manners between persons and concern for the common good in public affairs," op.cit., p.69.

[33] Shils, "Civility and Civil Society," p.70.

[34] Shils, "Civility and Civil Society," pp.70-71; and Shils, "The Virtue of Civility," p.335.

of civil society.[35] Sometime he calls the former kind of civility as private civility and the latter as public civility.[36] Though the two kinds of civility are similar to each other and contribute to each other, there are significant differences between them. Civility in the sense of good manners or courtesy usually refers to behavior which is contrary to barbarous, crude, unrefined, improper, unmannerly and impolite. Thus the civility in the popular usage has been interpreted to mean refined speech, polite manners, effeminate styles of dress, moderation, self-restraint, "gentlemanliness."[37] These terms have been reserved for the code of conduct of individuals in the face-to-face relationship. It is generally believe that these civil manners serve to distance individuals from uncivil habits. Shils does not deny the important of civility of good manners. He acknowledges that good manners can hold angers and resentment in check, pacifying effect on the sentiment, making relationship among the members of society more agreeable, and easing social conflicts. However, civility in the sense of courtesy is not sufficient to deal with the problem of divisive civil society in open societies. Their meaning is too narrow and their practice, focusing on individuals practice in face-to-face relationship, could not make considerable difference to the political order.[38] Shils emphasizes in many articles that we need to think of civility in a broader meaning than good manners or courtesy. I absolutely agree with him especially if we are concerned with the danger of severe conflict and social disorder that uncivil society can generate. One noted Holocaust studies' scholar and political philosopher, Zygmunt Bauman, points to the shortcomings of defining civility as only good manners. Bauman points to one of the most disturbing facts in his work that there are times and places when civil manners or politeness can and do peacefully cohabit with mass murder.[39] A great deal of literature on genocide studies supports this observation. Scholars who studies perpetrators of mass killings do not find that persons who commit violence are more crude or barbarous than normal

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[35] Shils, "The Virtue of Civility," pp.337-39.

[36] Shils, "Civility and Civil Society," p.80.

[37] Shils, "The Virtue of Civility," pp.337-38. See also John Keane, *Civil Society: Old Images, New Visions* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), p.115.

[38] Shils, "The Virtue of Civility," pp.337-39; and Shils, "Civility and Civil Society," p.80.

[39] Quoted in John Keane, *Civil Society: Old Images, New Visions*, p.128.

people. On the contrary, it is common to find that perpetrators are generally polite, well-mannered, and well-spoken persons.[40] Applying the idea of good manners as private civility of Shils, it is understandable why civil manners can peacefully cohabit with mass murder. The civility of good manners has individual as the objects in face-to-face relationship in which "[T]heir good or poor manners in their immediate dealings with other persons make a difference in the quality of the daily life of the members of society but they are not directly important in politics."[41]

There is more to civility than good manners. Shils argues that we need to think of civility as a mode of political action. This is what he calls civility as the virtue of civil society or public civility. Civility is a mode of political action which views political opponents as members of the same society, and see his fellow men as fellow-citizens, not as fellow-kinsmen, that participate in the same civil collective self-consciousness.

Civility as a feature of civil society considers others as fellow-citizens of equal dignity in their rights and obligations as members of civil society; it means regarding other persons, including one's adversaries, as members of the same inclusive collectivity, i.e., as members of the same society, even though they belong to different groups or to different religious communities or to different ethnic groups.[42]

Public civility also includes concern for the good of adversaries as well as for the good of allies.[43] This is the important difference between civility understood as good manners and public civility. Civility as good manners treats other people in face-to-face interaction in a polite way but it does not necessary mean that polite person also concerned for the good of other persons or their adversaries.

Civility is a mode of political conduct which protects liberal democracy from the danger of extremes of partisanship or the threat of polarized civil society as we have

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[40] Christopher Browning, *Ordinary men : Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the final solution in Poland* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992); Charles Tilly, "Violent and Nonviolent Trajectories in Contentious Politics," in Kenton Worcester, Sally Avery Bermanzohn, and Mark Ungar (eds.), *Violence and Politics: Globalization's   Paradox* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002); And see the compelling case of Adof Eichmann, high rank Nazi's bureaucrat, in Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem; a report on the banality of evil* (New York: Viking Press, 1963).

[41] Shils, "Civility and Civil Society," p.80.

[42] Shils, "The Virtue of Civility," pp.337-38.

[43] Shils, "The Virtue of Civility," p.338.

discussed in the case of Weimar republic and Indonesian politics after independence. Civility as a mode of attachment of the individual or the particular group to the society as a whole is important because it is capable of placing a limit on the irreconcilable interests/ideas that parochial groups strive to achieve. The limit onto irreconcilability diminishes the intensity of conflicts, reducing the gap between conflicting demands, reducing the rigidity of the attachment to the parochial groups. To explain the genocide or mass killings, scholars proposed that the process of perceiving opponents as the "other" was a crucial condition of mass killings. It is the process that perpetrators do not view their adversaries as fellow-citizens in the same political society or as human beings in the same moral universe.[44] These were the conditions at work during the Holocaust and Indonesian mass killings. Having these cases in mind, we can understand more clearly why Edward Shils' notion of civility as the virtue of civil society must be nurtured.

Contrary to many thinkers who see civility as a conservative or unimportant virtue in a liberal democracy, Shils argues for the great significance of civility to liberal democratic society. Actually, in his opinion, liberal democratic societies stand in need of civility more than other political regimes.[45] The reason lies in the fact that liberal democracy accepts the diversity of interests and ideas, and allows diversity of the objectives pursued by individuals and groups. It guarantees the rights of the individual and groups in pursuing these objectives. It makes the conflict of interests more visible and audible than in other political systems. The rules of the liberal democratic systems not only permit open conflicts; they even acknowledge them and arouse them to greater intensity.[46] Without virtue of civility, a vibrant associational life in liberal democratic society can descend into a war of each against all.

Conclusion

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[44] Helen Fein, *Genocide: A Sociological Perspective* (London: Sage, 1993), pp.26-27; Ervin Staub, *The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and the Other Group Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp.58-62.

[45] Shils, "Civility and Civil Society," pp.75-77.

[46] Shils, "Ideology and Civility," p.50; Shils, "Civility and Civil Society," pp.75-76; Shils, "The Virtue of Civility," pp.333-34, 342-43.

In this paper, I argue that advocates of civil society have tended to idealize its beneficial on democracy, thereby overlooking the problem of incivility or uncivil society. The extreme case of which is a confrontational civil society facilitating the mass killings and the breakdown of democracy, as we have seen from the case of associational life in the Weimar Republic and in Indonesian politics during 1950s-60s.

Employing critical perspectives to investigate the role of civil society in democracy is strongly needed in order to balance the conventional wisdom that dominates the discussion in the present. A large number of literatures are highly optimistic about the role of civil society in promoting and strengthening democracy. For scholars who produced these works, civil society is both an indicator of healthy democracy and a prerequisite for it. The debate is thus an empirical rather than conceptual orientation, and focus on the structural aspect (weak or strong networks of civil associations) rather than the value aspect of civil society. Without the strong existence of voluntary associations in any society, scholars have argued, there is little hope for the emergence of more democratic politics in that society. This notion is, however, too optimistic as I have demonstrated in this paper. Democratic regimes can be weakened, not strengthened, when it faces a vigorous civil society. This is especially the case where associational life reinforces and exacerbates social and political cleavages. When the primary modes of action in civil society are violent and confrontational, maximalist, and given to polarization, democratic rule is unlikely to survive.

Finally, I argue and demonstrate that Edward Shills' notion of civil politics and civility is a remedy for violent and confrontational civil society. Civil politics of Edward Shils is a mode of politics in which a significant component of its institutions and citizens exercise the virtue of civility. In civil politics, according to Shils, civility works like a governor of civil society. However, civility in the notion of Shils does not simply mean or only refer to good manners. Civility as a virtue of civil society is a mode of political conduct considering others as fellow-citizens of equal dignity, and regarding other persons, including one's adversaries, as members of the same inclusive collectivity. To have a well-ordered democracy, it is required to ensure that the groups that compose civil society behave with civility toward their adversaries as well as toward their allies.