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Hedman/In the Name of Civil Society

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In the Name of Civil Society

Of all the countries in Southeast Asia, the Philippines has provided the earliest and most impressive examples of mobilization in support of liberal democracy by forces identified with “civil society.” In the early 1950s, for example, business, Catholic Church, and veterans’ groups combined to create the National Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL), Asia’s first and most famous election-watch campaign. With NAMFREL volunteers working to prevent and report electoral fraud and violence around the country, incumbent president Elpidio Quirino was unable to “steal” the elections in 1953, and the avowedly reformist Ramon Magsaysay was elected to the presidency.

More than thirty years later, the Philippines witnessed another successful episode of such mobilization in defense of liberal democracy. Revived by business, church, and professional associations for the “snap” presidential elections of 1986, NAMFREL (National Citizens’ Movement for Free Elections) once again dispatched thousands of volunteers to cover precincts throughout the archipelago. Documenting and publicizing massive electoral fraud and violence around the country, NAMFREL mounted a frontal challenge to longtime president Ferdinand Marcos’ claims that he had won the elections of February 1986. Even as Marcos prepared for his official re-inauguration in Malacañang Palace, the same groups who had mobilized behind NAMFREL rallied hundreds of thousands of Filipinos in the streets of Manila to demand the resignation of a president whose long rule was widely viewed as corrupt and dictatorial. This massive display of “People Power” forced Marcos into exile and brought the popular opposition candidate Corazon C. Aquino into the Philippine presidency.

After a decade in which NAMFREL-style election-watch groups and People Power episodes multiplied as far afield as Eastern Europe and in nearby Thailand and Indonesia, “civil society” continued to mobilize in support of liberal democracy in the Philippines. Against the residues of Marcos’ authoritarian rule, the entrenched interests of business magnates and

local bosses, and the enduring practices of electoral manipulation and money politics in the country, a variety of Filipino nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) mounted campaigns to promote good governance and deepen the process of democratization in the late 1980s and 1990s. In 2000, moreover, corporate executives and white-collar workers, Catholic clergy and college students joined human-rights, labor, women's, and other veteran activist groups in street demonstrations against the excesses and abuses of then president Joseph "Erap" Estrada. At the same time, media scrutiny intensified to keep public attention focused on the president's numerous families and their luxury mansions, his shadowy inner circle and their nocturnal cabinets, and, most damaging of all, his alleged role as supreme *jueteng* (illegal lottery) lord of the country. By January 2001, as Estrada stood charged by Congress with "bribery, graft, and corrupt practices, betrayal of public trust, and culpable violation of the Constitution," the street parliamentarians of Manila once again succeeded in deposing a Philippine president through a massive display of People Power. Thus today, more than any other country in Southeast Asia, it seems, mobilization by civil society in support of liberal democracy remains a powerful and enduring force in the political life of the Philippines. This pattern of mobilization in the name of civil society in the Philippines constitutes the focus of this book.

Civil Society and Liberal Democracy in the Philippines in Tocquevillian Perspective

At first glance, the vigor of such mobilization in the Philippines appears to resonate with the growing body of mainstream academic literature on civil society, whose roots can be traced back to the early nineteenth-century writings of Alexis de Tocqueville. Tocqueville's early and influential study of democracy in America, after all, drew attention to the significance of the "independent eye of society" as a check against the tendency toward the centralization of power in the democratic state.¹ Reflecting Madisonian or Millian fears about the democratic state's propensity toward "the tyranny of the majority," Tocqueville saw the plurality of civic and professional voluntary associations—"established to promote the public safety, commerce, industry, morality, and religion"—as an effective safeguard against despotism in America.² In ancien régime (and post-revolutionary) France, by contrast, the relative weakness of such forces in civil society, according to Tocqueville, failed to provide the necessary infrastructure for channeling and defusing social pressures into institutionalized political procedures and bodies.³ Thus

Tocqueville provided an early formulation for the argument that a “pluralist and self-organizing civil society independent of the state is an indispensable condition of democracy.”

Traces of Tocqueville’s arguments about civil society’s organizational density and its significance for democracy resurfaced in American political science writings on “political development” in the heyday of “modernization theory” in the early postwar era.⁴ Drawing in part on scholarship about the origins of totalitarianism in the 1930s,⁵ modernization theorists emphasized the significance of secondary associations for mediating social mobilization and political participation in their writings in the 1950s and 1960s. With economic development, it was argued, comes social differentiation, thus prompting the proliferation of autonomous social networks that, in turn, favors democracy. In an influential 1959 article by Lipset, for example, “intermediary organizations and institutions” were identified as necessary “social requisites for democracy.”⁶

Such organizations serve a number of functions necessary to democracy: they are a source of countervailing power, inhibiting the state or any single major source of private power from dominating all political resources; they are a source of new opinions; they can be the means of communicating ideas, particularly opposition ideas, to a large section of the citizenry; they serve to train men in the skills of politics; and they help increase the level of interest and participation in politics.⁷

By the 1970s, moreover, new forms of resistance to authoritarian rule around the world anticipated rising interest in civil society in political theory and praxis alike. In Eastern Europe, dissident intellectuals argued that the Communist Party–state could be “rolled back by the revival or reconstitution of civil society.”⁸ For example, Adam Michnik has been described as the chief theoretician of the strategy of “new evolutionism” in Poland in the 1970s and 1980s, and advocated “the creation of all kinds of independent, self-governing associations and publications.”⁹ In the long term, this process of self-limiting, autonomous organization, it was theorized, would serve to circumscribe the intrusive reach of the state.¹⁰ Meanwhile, in South America, scholars suggested, bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes—after their initial frontal assaults on the institutions of civil society—saw a growth of horizontal ties within the sphere of civil society. For example, in the mid-1970s the formation in Brazil of numerous “intricate and creative horizontal relations of civil society with itself . . . helped interweave the weft and warp of civil society and give it a more variegated, more resistant fabric—the Church,

grassroots popular movements, new women's movements, and the new trade unionism."¹¹

In the 1980s, moreover, as changing political realities lowered the costs for oppositional pressures in both the Eastern Bloc and the Southern Cone, observers claimed that it was a mobilizing civil society that propelled transitions from authoritarian rule. Scholarship on the collapse of state socialism in Eastern Europe, for example, identified a new "mobilizational stage" in civil society's development "in which independent groups or movements undermine the legitimacy of the party-state by offering alternative forms of governance to a politicized society."¹² In addition, observers of "resurrecting civil society" in transitions from authoritarian rule in Latin America emphasized a more phenomenological dimension to these mobilizational efforts. A much-cited collaborative work dealing with the political liberalization of bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes, for example, referred to this mobilization of civil society as a "euphoric moment when a vast majority of the population feel bound together on equal terms, struggling for the common goal of creating not merely a new polity but a new social order."¹³ As this "third wave" of regime transitions from authoritarian rule in the spread from Latin America and Eastern Europe to other parts of the world in the late 1980s and early 1990s,¹⁴ one scholar noted, "'civil society' appeared as a convenient analytical 'hat-stand' in contexts as wide apart as Sub-Saharan Africa and Taiwan."¹⁵ Indeed, the last decade of the twentieth century witnessed a proliferation of academic and other research projects "in search of civil society" in locations as diverse as Africa and the Middle East, China and Russia.¹⁶

Finally, by the turn of the century academic research returned to the Tocquevillean linkage between the vibrancy of democracy on the one hand and the strength and density of associational life in civil society on the other. Studies of established democracies like the United States and Italy claimed that the quality of governance was closely correlated with the extent of "social capital" represented by voluntary associational activity in these societies.¹⁷ Scholars, activists, and international agencies working in more recently established and fragile democracies elsewhere in the world similarly stressed the role of civil society as crucial for consolidating transitions from authoritarian rule, stemming ethnic conflict, and fighting corruption and other abuses of state power.¹⁸

Viewed in the light of this mainstream literature in the Tocquevillean tradition, the election-watch campaigns by NAMFREL in 1953 and 1986 and the People Power episodes in 1986 and 2001 thus appear as classic examples of civil society mobilized in support of democracy in the Philippines. From this

perspective, the various associations that contributed to the recurring mobilization of NAMFREL and to successive “parliaments of the streets” attest to the increasing strength and density of civil society in the Philippines over the years and confirm the role of civil society as a check on state power and a force for the promotion of good governance and the deepening of democratization in the country. Pitted against authoritarianism in the 1980s and abuses of democracy from the 1950s to the present, the voluntary associations and NGOs of the Philippines thus provide an exemplary case of civil society’s importance for democracy in Southeast Asia and elsewhere in the world.

Civil Society and Liberal Democracy in the Philippines: A Gramscian View

On closer examination, however, the election-watch movements and People Power campaigns in the Philippines also suggest the limitations and weaknesses of the Tocquevillean approach to the study of civil society. As elaborated in the pages below, mobilization by major associations in support of free and fair elections and against corruption and other abuses of power in the Philippines has been remarkably infrequent in occurrence and limited in impact, if one considers the persistence of electoral fraud, manipulation, and violence over the years, as well as the enduring practices of presidential cronyism and “money politics” in the country. As discussed in the chapters to follow, moreover, the key associations behind the election-watch movements and People Power episodes that did achieve notable victories against Quirino in 1953, Marcos in 1986, and Estrada in 2001 cannot simply be taken as representative of civil society as a whole. Indeed, in the context of rising mass mobilization behind extra-electoral, radical social movements in the early 1950s and mid-1980s, and of the evidently popular—and quasi-populist—appeal of Estrada at the turn of the century, the success of conservative business and Catholic Church groups in claiming the mantle of “civil society” and mobilizing thousands of Filipinos in support of liberal democracy remains to be explained in itself.

The questions raised by the Philippine case point to more pervasive problems with the Tocquevillean approach to civil society. Tocquevillean accounts, after all, tend to reify civil society as a unified and coherent entity, to depict it in celebratory, universalist, and voluntarist terms, and to ascribe a single intrinsic meaning and automatic historical trajectory to its role in democratization. Contestation and class conflict within the realm of civil society and crucial questions about the conditions and processes of mobilization *in*

the name of civil society remain essentially unanswered. Why, for example, has such mobilization assumed the specific form of election-watch movements and People Power episodes in the Philippines? Why has such mobilization occurred at some moments in Philippine history, but not others, and with such varying outcomes and degrees of success? Why have some forces, but not others, succeeded in claiming the mantle of leadership in the name of civil society, and by what mechanisms and processes have they mobilized thousands of Filipinos?

As this book seeks to show, the writings of Antonio Gramsci, noted Marxist philosopher of political practice (praxis) and Italian Communist Party leader during much of the interwar period, provide a critical point of departure for addressing such questions. In contrast to the level of abstraction and the danger of reductionism associated with much Marxist theorizing, Gramsci sought to develop, in his own words, “a body of practical rules for research and detailed observations useful for awakening an interest in effective reality and for stimulating more rigorous political insights.”¹⁹ And yet as an organic intellectual of the Italian Communist Party and the foremost Marxist theorist of civil society, he also rejected the possibility of a political science conceived as an activity above and beyond politics, “as far as both its concrete content and its logical formulation are concerned.”²⁰ As a result, Gramsci’s writings on history, culture, and society, as well as political struggle, suggest themselves as a particularly promising perspective from which to engage questions of civil society and democratization in the Philippines and beyond. Of course, since Gramsci wrote under conditions of imprisonment and censorship, the essential meaning of his rather fragmentary but highly suggestive writings on civil society must be teased out so that their importance, implications, and applicability to empirical cases can be fully appreciated.²¹ It is hoped that this study of the Philippines, a country with some notable similarities to the Italy of Gramsci’s intellectual and political formation, will contribute in some measure toward such a rearticulation of his work.

In contrast to the Tocquevillean concern with the tyranny of the majority, the puzzle of minority (i.e., bourgeois) rule under conditions of formal democracy informed Gramsci’s writings on the significance and role of a “dense” civil society in complementing and reinforcing the coercive state under capitalism.²² That is, rather than viewing civil society as a limit upon or a counterbalance against state power, Gramsci argued that “the ensemble of organisms commonly called ‘private’”²³—including civic associations and religious institutions—helps to maintain the power of the bourgeois state by facilitating rule through the mobilization of consent, or, in his terminology, *hegemony*,

perhaps most commonly defined from his writings as “the spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group.”²⁴ Thus Gramsci drew attention to the role of schools, churches, and what are often referred to as secondary associations (e.g., Rotary Clubs) as transmission belts for the assertion of universalist leadership by what he called a “dominant” or “historic” bloc of social forces.²⁵

In contrast with the Tocquevillean tendency to reify—and to celebrate—a unified civil society, moreover, Gramsci’s writings describe the zone of associational life and activity identified with civil society in terms of class formation, domination, and conflict. Gramsci’s work sketches the continuous movement of an expanding capitalist class as it seeks, in a gradual fashion and with varying degrees of success, to absorb allied and even antagonistic groups into a dominant bloc of social forces through a range of methods and mechanisms. In this vein, Gramsci illuminated not only the role of pre-existing forms of sociality in recruitment and diffusion of mobilization, but also the embeddedness of secondary associations in unfolding structures of capitalist development and, thus, evolving processes of class formation. Indeed, the geography or density of such associational activities at any particular time in history reflects, in Gramsci’s words, “the degree of homogeneity, self-awareness, and organization attained by the various social classes.”²⁶ A Gramscian framework thus anchors the politics and discourse of civil society in a field of contestation among and within secondary associations, whose identities and activities are structured by patterns of class formation and the continuous movement of an expanding dominant bloc.

Gramsci’s own writings also point beyond Tocquevillean accounts of civil society toward a dialectical understanding of the temporal pattern of contested hegemony.²⁷ Such contestation takes on particularly acute, and therefore more easily discernible, proportions, Gramsci argued, precisely during moments in history when long-term changes in socioeconomic structures surface in immediate political realignments, which, in turn, reflect shifting patterns of class formation. Gramsci underscored the importance of studying such moments, which recur at “intervals of varying frequency,” for purposes of recovering something of the “dialectical mediation” at work over time—through the politics and discourse of civil society—between socioeconomic demographics of inequality and ideological-cultural imaginings of universality under parliamentary rule.²⁸

A Gramscian approach to civil society thus refocuses attention on the mounting of challenges—from above and below—to the domination and re-

production of a historic bloc of social forces during critical moments of contested hegemony when, in Gramsci's words, "the political forces which are struggling to conserve and defend the existing structure itself are making every effort to cure them, within certain limits, and to overcome them."²⁹ According to Gramsci, this kind of political struggle, or "war of position," takes on particular significance in the modern parliamentary state, where the complexity and density of social formations provide a certain bulwark against "the catastrophic 'incursions' of the immediate economic element (crises, depressions, etc.)." That is, "[t]he superstructures of civil society are like the trench-systems of modern warfare."³⁰ Gramscian analysis thus situates the emergence of mobilization in the name of civil society within a context of acute contestation not merely over access to political institutions and economic resources, but also, significantly, over claims to universalist leadership. The very definition of what counts as "civil" and who represents "society" is at stake.

Finally, Gramsci's writings help to illuminate the complex and inherently contingent mechanisms and processes of mobilization neglected by scholars of civil society working in the Tocquevillean tradition. While viewing voluntarist mobilization as "a surrogate for popular intervention," as well as "a solution of authority, from the top down," Gramsci also took seriously the social anchoring and linkages that allowed for such efforts, as well as the legitimizing role of "volunteers" as the "best elements" therein.³¹ Similarly, Gramsci also stressed the ideological significance of "spontaneity" as "a stimulus, a tonic, an element of unification in depth" for a movement, a notion further developed by later scholars following in his footsteps.³² Citing Gramsci's "acute, but fragmentary notes" on "private organisms" such as secondary associations, for example, Althusser further elaborated the role of a plurality of private and public institutions—or "ideological state apparatuses"—in the mobilization and reproduction of consent. The process of mobilizing and reproducing consent, Althusser argued, involves the "interpellation" of "the individual as a (free) subject . . . in order that he shall (freely) accept his subjection."³³ This acceptance hinges on active participation in certain ritual performances (e.g., Catholic Church Mass, parliamentary elections) prescribed by the institution (e.g., church, party) from which resonates a particular call of interpellation (e.g., to pray, to vote). Thus Gramsci and Althusser suggest that mobilization *in the name of* civil society is contingent on the success of interpellatory calls to *citizens* and performative displays of *citizenship*, as against other appeals and articulations of identity, such as class. Overall, through his fragmentary prison writings, Gramsci provides analytical tools for grappling with the key questions left unanswered by scholarship

in the Tocquevillean tradition: when, where, by whom, and how mobilization *in the name of* civil society is mounted.

To date, the prolific writings of Gramsci, which first appeared in socialist publications during his lifetime and subsequently through the posthumous publication of his personal letters and the so-called *Prison Notebooks*, have received their most serious consideration among Marxist intellectuals.³⁴ Perhaps it is unsurprising, then, as suggested by Hobsbawn, that the wider reception of Gramsci, especially outside his native Italy, “has . . . been and still remains, subject to the fluctuating fortunes of the left.”³⁵ However, as the zeitgeist of civil society has succeeded in drawing into its orbit national citizens and international observers in unprecedented numbers during the very decade designated as the beginning of “the end of ideology,” it seems increasingly urgent to reclaim something of the critical insights afforded by a Gramscian perspective on the politics and the dialectics of mobilization in the name of civil society. To that end, the key episodes of mobilization in defense of democracy in the Philippines provide ample material for spelling out the advantages, possibilities, and implications of a Gramscian approach to the study of civil society.

From National Citizens’ Movements to People Power in the Philippines

This book thus draws on Philippine history since Independence in 1946 to demonstrate the explanatory power and intellectual promise of a Gramscian reexamination of the mobilization of civil society in support of liberal democracy. As noted above, several episodes of mass mobilization in Philippine history suggest themselves as classic instances of what the Tocquevillean literature on transitions from authoritarian rule has referred to as a resurrected civil society, fighting the good fight on behalf of democracy. These episodes include the 1953 National Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL), the 1969 Citizens National Electoral Assembly (CNEA), and the 1986 National Citizens’ Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL). As collective efforts aimed at ensuring free, fair, and peaceful elections, these campaigns sought to mobilize support and resources on a nationwide scale from among affiliates of, for example, business clubs, Catholic organizations, civic associations, and veterans’ leagues. Such concerted efforts at mobilizing *nationwide* campaigns accompanied three—and only three—presidential contests in the decades that stretch between Philippine Independence in 1946 and the restoration of democratic institutions in 1986.

Since 1986, moreover, mobilization in the name of civil society in the Philippines has arguably developed another distinctive repertoire, popularly known as “People Power.” The first episode of People Power emerged against the backdrop of NAMFREL’s campaign across the Philippines in late 1985 and early 1986 and culminated in the dramatic overthrow of the entrenched dictator Ferdinand Marcos by way of nonviolent popular demonstrations in the streets of Manila in February 1986. In January 2001, another episode of People Power unfolded in the streets of Manila, with protracted peaceful protests forcing the resignation of president Joseph “Erap” Estrada, who stood accused of graft, corruption, and other abuses of office.

As explained in the chapters to follow, the timing of the three major campaigns for free and fair elections and the two episodes of People Power must be contextualized against the backdrop of mounting threats from both above (the state) and below (society) to the social reproduction of a dominant bloc of social forces and its — political, economic, moral, and cultural — hegemonic aspirations. Targeting the threat from above (i.e., the notorious “guns, goons and gold” of the incumbent president’s election machinery), these campaigns organized on what Gramsci referred to as the “terrain of the conjunctural,” typically characterized by “political criticism of a minor, day-to-day character, which has as its subject top political leaders and personalities with direct governmental responsibilities.”³⁶ At the same time, these mobilizational efforts also surfaced at what may be termed “Gramscian moments” characterized by especially acute threats from below revealed in the form of “organic movements” and “socio-historical criticism” “whose subject is wider social groupings—beyond the public figures and beyond the top leaders”—in other words, counter-hegemonic challenges from among peasant, worker, and other mass organizations.³⁷ As Gramsci wrote, such “situations of conflict between ‘represented and representatives’ reverberate out from . . . the parliamentary-electoral field . . . reinforcing the relative power of the bureaucracy, of high finance, of the Church, and generally of all bodies relatively independent of the fluctuations of public opinion.” Such situations reflect “the crisis of the ruling class’s hegemony, which occurs either because the ruling class has failed in some major political undertaking for which it has requested, or forcibly extracted, the consent of the broad masses, or because huge masses have passed suddenly from a state of political passivity to a certain activity, and put forward demands which taken together, albeit not organically formulated, add up to a revolution. A ‘crisis of authority’ is spoken of: this is precisely the crisis of hegemony, or general crisis of the State.”³⁸

Mobilization in the name of civil society in the Philippines thus emerged

at such Gramscian moments, characterized by participatory crises and presidential usurpations of extraordinary powers that threatened the interests—and the hegemony—of a dominant bloc of social forces in the Philippines. While widespread electoral manipulation, fraud and violence, and rampant graft and corruption have remained endemic to Philippine politics throughout the postwar years (and before), election-watch campaigns and People Power revolts have appeared during those conjunctures when underlying tensions in Philippine democracy have surfaced as full-blown crises, what Gramsci termed “crises of authority” and “crises of hegemony.” At such moments, the discrepancy between formal democratic institutions based on universal suffrage on the one hand and the real powers of an oligarchy comprising bankers, businessmen, and local political bosses on the other has given rise to forms of popular mobilization outside—if not against—the confines of liberal democratic institutions and ideals: peasants demanding land reform, workers organizing “political” strikes, student activists forming radical social movements, and the so-called *masa* of urban poor throwing their support behind quasi-populist political challenges. At such moments, moreover, the tension between state and class power³⁹—between a strong executive branch with a noted propensity for relative autonomy and an otherwise powerful legislature dominated by business interests—has surfaced in the form of presidential bids for *continuidismo* and usurpations of extraordinary powers.⁴⁰

Time and again, the mobilization of citizen volunteers and People Power supporters depended heavily on so-called “secondary associations” of war veterans, Catholic laity, and businessmen anchored to what Gramsci would have described as a “historic” or “dominant” bloc of social forces in the Philippines. Over the years, moreover, the ongoing processes of capitalist development and class formation in the Philippines increased the scope and density of such secondary associations in the country. Thus the leadership of NAMFREL by World War II veterans’ leagues closely linked to the U.S. government in the early 1950s gave way to separate church and business election-watch efforts in the late 1960s, and by the 1980s a set of Filipino business and Catholic Church associations had emerged as allied champions of “free and fair elections” and sponsors of People Power, leading virtual repeat performances in 1986 and 2001. The transnational linkages of this Gramscian dominant bloc in the Philippines also shifted over time, from clandestine Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) sponsorship of NAMFREL in the early years of the Cold War, to official U.S. disinterest in CNEA during the Vietnam War—era of the late 1960s, and the highly visible and variegated forms of backing for NAMFREL and the “revitalization of democratic institutions” in the Philippines

of the mid-1980s by foreign governments, transnational NGOs, and international media outlets. By the time of the People Power (II) campaign against Joseph Estrada in 2001, the downgrading of the Philippines' geostrategic significance to the United States since the end of the Cold War and the subsequent closure of the large American military base facilities in Luzon saw a commensurate decline in the international attention focused on political developments in Manila.⁴¹ Against this backdrop, the Filipino business community and Catholic Church hierarchy, having accumulated ample "social capital" of their own, emerged at the forefront of this most recent instance of massive mobilization in the name of civil society in the Philippines, as if to confirm that the processes of capitalist development and class formation in the country had rendered external assistance and encouragement superfluous.

From the first NAMFREL campaign of 1953 to the People Power II ouster of Estrada in 2001, the varying mobilizational path and reach of these campaigns were decisively shaped by the historical and geographical pattern of class formation in the Philippines. Centered on the national capital region and its crowded organizational and communications infrastructure, the election-watch campaigns of 1953, 1969, and 1986 radiated out to major provincial cities and, from there, to smaller provincial towns. The support supplied by Catholic parish organizations and educational institutions, as well as by Philippine business clubs and professional associations, tended to structure the composition, resources, and diffusion of these collective efforts in an essentially top-down, center-periphery pattern. Such support, in turn, helped these election-watch campaigns to gain a veneer of legitimacy and official accreditation, to increase media access and protection from repression, and to recruit skilled participants and extensive communications and transportations resources. Thus the increasing mobilizational capacities of successive election-watch campaigns over the years mirrored the expanding reach and depth of a national business class and properly "Filipinized" Catholic Church hierarchy in the Philippines. Similarly, the geographical pattern of NAMFREL's successes and failures beyond Manila in 1986 closely corresponded to the extent of provincial businessmen's resources and strength vis-à-vis local military commanders, rural bosses, and other entrenched fixtures of the Marcos-era Philippine state. Overall, the varying force and direction of mobilization in the name of civil society in the Philippines have thus reflected, in Gramsci's words, "the degree of homogeneity, self-awareness, and organization" attained by the dominant bloc.⁴²

Finally, mobilization in defense of liberal democracy has unfolded over the years in the Philippines through processes contingent not on the spon-

taneous support of secondary associations and individual volunteers along Tocquevillean lines, but through what Gramsci described as a “war of position” over the very nature and direction of “civil society.” Successive election-watch campaigns and People Power movements have emerged and attracted popular support in the Philippines through the projection of universalist leadership on the part of this dominant bloc of social forces in the country and the production of narratives and spectacles that hailed Filipinos as citizens, with moral duties and inviolable rights. On all of these occasions, Filipinos mobilized in growing numbers in response to such appeals and, through their very participation, brought into being that which they celebrated, “we, the (good) people” or, in other words, “civil society.” On all of these occasions, the willingness of thousands, if not millions, of Filipinos to participate in such performative spectacles hinged on the intensity of the returned gaze, the sense of being seen, most powerfully mediated by the—national and global—media. On all of these occasions, the hailing of Filipinos as citizens and the performative spectacles of civil society worked against the attractive power of alternative, insurgent appeals and dramas, most notably those that mobilized Filipinos in impressive numbers as members of an exploited working class and behind the banner of Revolution. It is in this sense that the election-watch campaigns and People Power movements in the Philippines must be understood as mobilization *in the name of civil society*.

The chapters to follow trace the pattern of this mobilization in the Philippines from the early 1950s up through 2001, paying close attention to the specific circumstances, social forces, and processes that rallied “civil society” time and again in support of liberal democracy in the Philippines. Chapter 2 shows how a process that Gramsci termed “transformism” worked to perpetuate oligarchical democracy in the Philippines in the years after Independence and describes a dominant bloc of social forces in the archipelago comprising the U.S. government, the Catholic Church, and the capitalist class. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 trace the pattern of recurring crises of authority that have resurfaced at fifteen- to seventeen-year intervals in the country since the early 1950s. These three chapters identify the key secondary associations that led the election-watch campaigns of 1953, 1969, and 1986 and link these associations to the dominant bloc described in chapter 2 whose hegemony was under mounting threats “from above” and “from below” during these crises. Chapter 6 traces the process by which these election-watch campaigns spread from the Philippines’ national capital in metropolitan Manila to major provincial cities and remote towns and villages in the archipelago, focusing on the most impressive of such campaigns, NAMFREL in 1986, and linking

the complex and variegated pattern of diffusion to subnational variations in class formation. Against the backdrop of these preceding chapters, chapter 7 addresses the question of popular participation in these election-watch campaigns and in episodes of People Power, arguing that it was through the interpellation of Filipinos as citizens and their participation in spectacles of democracy that mobilization in the name of civil society unfolded and attracted widespread support. Finally, chapter 8 concludes the volume with a discussion of the most recent episode of mobilization in the name of civil society in the Philippines—the People Power (II) movement that culminated in the ouster of president Joseph Estrada in January 2001—and situates it against the broad pattern of recurring crises of authority—and mobilization in the name of civil society—traced throughout the book.