Business Associations and Civil Society in Southeast Asia

Chapter prepared for the *Civil Society in Southeast Asia Handbook*

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Southeast Asian business is by no means a liberal bourgeoisie, yet it has at times formed alliances with civil society associations to achieve seemingly liberal ends. Businesses in the region have a well-earned reputation for rent-seeking, corruption, attacks on labor, and environmental destruction (Hadiz and Robison 2004), but they also supported, for example, the People Power movement that toppled the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines (Hedman 2005). These examples suggest that business and civil society are not natural allies or enemies, but rather that the relationship between them is complex and contingent.

Under what conditions do businesses engage civil society? To answer this question, this chapter first conceptualizes business associations and civil society as partially overlapping spheres. Then, it proposes two conditions under which business associations find it convenient to participate in civil society, namely, when 1) the structural power of their members is limited, and 2) the profit motive of their members incorporates entrepreneurial interests. Finally, the chapter introduces a simple heuristic framework to illustrate that some associations are more “civil” than others.

The chapter reviews the literature on business politics to highlight variation among businesses and their associations. The dominant view of business in Southeast Asia is as a rent-seeking, national elite that deploys its structural power over capital to dominate the state. This characterization is often accurate at the commanding heights of the economy, but it glosses over important dimensions of variation. Importantly, the composition of businesses vary by multinational, national and local ownership, and the interests of businesses vary by sector between entrepreneurial and rent-seeking enterprises. Firm-level differences in turn shape the behavior of industry associations, making some associations more likely than others to enter marriages of convenience with civil society.

Table 1: Characteristic dimensions of organizations constituting civil society

	Associational	Private	Voluntary	Autonomous (from the state)	Rule abiding
Leftwich (1993)	X	X	X	X	
Diamond (1996)	X		X	X	X
Foley and Edwards (1996)	X	X	X		
Alagappa (2004)	X			X	
Weiss (2008)	X		X	X	X
Aspinall and Weiss (2014)	X			X	

Note: The table excludes dimensions that only appear in one author's definition.

CONCEPTUALIZING BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

The conceptual boundary between civil society and business is contested. While individual firms are generally excluded from membership within civil society on the grounds that their activities are private, business associations cannot be excluded on the same basis. To the contrary, business associations, both in Southeast Asia and other world regions, exhibit several defining characteristics of civil society.

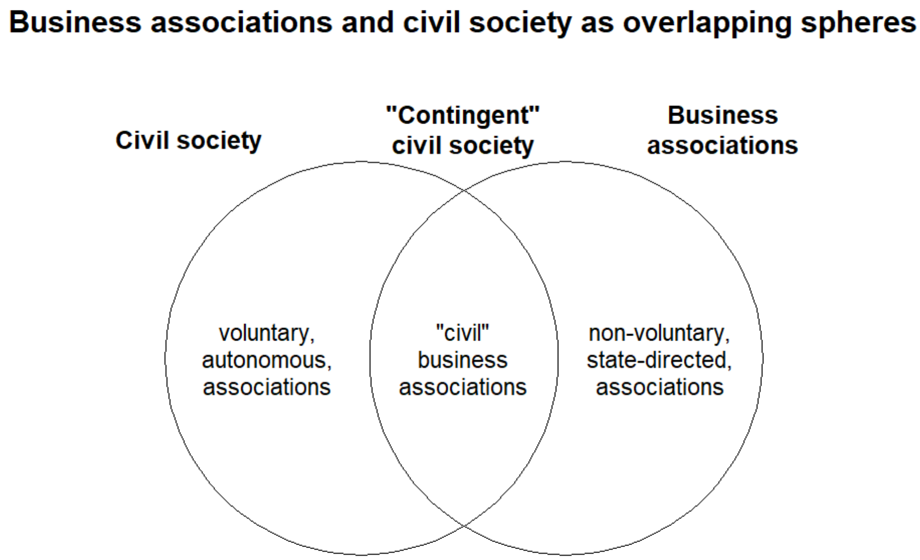
At its most general, civil society encompasses voluntary associations that are autonomous from the state (Aspinall and Weiss 2014; Foley and Edwards 1996; Leftwich 1993). Many business associations are both voluntary and autonomous, and thus fulfill these particular criteria. The position of business associations grows murkier, however, when scholars impose additional conditions on civil society. For example, Alagappa (2004) explicitly states that civil society is a public sphere in which groups "are not motivated by profit", a condition that arguably excludes business associations. Diamond (1996) imposes a similar condition, but only on "individual business firms", thereby carving out an exception for business associations. Synthesizing these competing viewpoints, Weiss (2008: 151) usefully shifts the standard for inclusion in civil society to actions that are "critically engaged with the commonweal", regardless of motive. Table 1 summarizes the differences across these scholars' definitions of civil society.

In light of these definitional ambiguities, I propose to conceptualize business associations and civil society as partially overlapping spheres (Figure 1). On the one hand, only some business associations meet the basic criteria for inclusion in civil society, while others do not and should be excluded. On the other hand, mainstream civil society organizations may share many qualities in common with business associations, but there are nevertheless certain characteristics unique to business associations that distinguish them from their civil society peers.

Business associations are "long-term organizations with formal statutes regulating membership and internal decision-making in which the members are individual businesspeople, firms, or other associations (that are not necessarily linked by ownership … or contractual ties)" (Doner and Schneider 2000, 280). As formal associations that encompass a diverse membership, business associations are distinct from other types of business organizations. For example, they are more heterogeneous than business conglomerates, and more formal than personal business networks.

Nevertheless, business associations exhibit significant variation with respect to the terms of membership and their relationship to the state (Schneider 2004). In Southeast Asia, many business associations are, or have been in the past, state-chartered and non-voluntary, such as Kadin in Indonesia. Others, such as the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, enjoy privileged status in dialogue with the state, even if they were founded as autonomous, voluntary associations. At the same time, voluntary associations held at arm's length from the state are even more numerous, representing various memberships based on sector, ethnicity, and location.

Figure 1



As a result of this variation, not all business associations should be considered a part of civil society. The three most commonly invoked characteristics of civil society are that groups must be associational, voluntary, and autonomous from the state. According to these minimal criteria, voluntary, autonomous associations such as Makati Business Club inhabit the realm of civil society, while associations like Kadin do not.

At the same time, business associations, including those that are voluntary and autonomous, share two additional attributes that set them apart from most other civil society organizations. Namely, business associations are constituted by members that are 1) profit-driven and 2) wield structural power based on their ability to allocate capital. As a result of these distinctive characteristics, the participation of business associations in civil society is contingent, because their interests and capabilities differ from their civil society counterparts.

First, business associations represent members that are motivated by private profit, tying their activities to a private sphere that is outside the realm of civil society. Profit-oriented business interests might be narrower than those of organizations motivated by civic engagement, and less likely to produce widely shared benefits. Nevertheless, it is possible that the pursuit of profit might lead some associations to critically engage the commonweal, as in the case of Thailand's competitive clientelism or Makati Business Club's anti-corruption campaigning (Doner and Ramsay 1997; Mikamo 2013).

Second, business associations comprise a membership that wields structural, or "'investment power'" (Fairfield 2015). Structural power accrues either from asset mobility or from highly concentrated control over strategic industries, and it confers a type of political capability that is unique to business. Whereas other civil society organizations articulate their interests by means of legal, electoral, or popular mobilization, businesses have the ability to constrain the actions of policy-makers simply by threatening to withdraw capital from the economy (Winters 1994). Furthermore, businesses need not coordinate with one another to take such actions, making businesses associations irrelevant to the exercise of structural power (Bates and Lien 1985). Thus, when business associations act politically in ways that resemble other civil society organizations, they are acting in addition to the underlying structural power of their members.

In sum, business associations that are voluntary and autonomous from the state resemble other organizations that constitute civil society, but the extent to which they behave like civil society is contingent upon the profit-making model and structural power of their members. Associations are most likely to find common cause with civil society when such engagement enhances the competitiveness of their members in ways that cannot be achieved by structural power alone. Accordingly, this chapter styles the overlapping space between business associations and civil society as "contingent civil society".

In the sections that follow, I review the debate on the nature of Southeast Asian businesses, paying special attention to the implications for the profit motives and structural power of business associations. Then, I build on that debate to propose a heuristic framework to distinguish the types of business associations that find common cause with civil society from those that do not. Finally, I illustrate variation across business associations by reviewing several recent, and one classic, studies of business politics in Indonesia and the Philippines.

Rent-seeking oligarchs

The dominant view of Southeast Asian businesses is that they are rent-seeking oligarchs. According to Winters (2014: 12), deep economic inequality in Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries has produced concomitant political inequality, as "a small number of ultra-wealthy citizens" use their towering economic power to dominate politics. The overriding concern of oligarchs is "wealth defense" against redistributive threats from the people below, the state above, and rival oligarchs beside (Winters 2011: 20-26). Many Southeast Asian states are too weak to guarantee property rights, so oligarchs use their wealth to influence the political, legal, and judicial systems that exercise discretion over redistribution and property disputes.

In Indonesia, for example, the politics of wealth defense have created "democracy without law", as oligarchs deploy their material resources to ensure that Indonesia's democratic process preserves and enhances their wealth (Winters 2014: 16). In some cases, the relationship between wealth and political office are intertwined to the point of being "fused" (Hadiz and Robison 2014). In practice, politicians need the financial support of wealthy donors to win elections, and the wealthy need access to valuable resource concessions, government contracts, and regulatory forbearance to maintain their fortunes. These dynamics are replicated at the local level, where well-connected contractors pressure local officials to corrupt procurement processes and businesses otherwise seek to capture local institutions (Hadiz 2010; Pepinsky and Wihardja 2011; von Luebke 2009).

In the Philippines, likewise, there is ample evidence that a national oligarchy overwhelmed an underdeveloped, patrimonial state to secure easy loans, monopoly licenses, import quotas, and other valuable rents throughout the twentieth century (Anderson 1988, Hutchcroft 1998, Kang 2002, McCoy 2009). At the local level, “bosses” built their fortunes by using political office to consolidate control over the “commanding heights” of the local economy (Sidel 1999).

In these accounts, business emerges as a predatory force whose profits depend on access to rents provided by the state. Accordingly, businesses invest heavily in cultivating corrupt relationships with public officials, because access to public office is the “key determinant of how private wealth and social power is accumulated and distributed” (Hadiz and Robison 2014: 35). According to Winters (2014: 29), “the biggest game in town is not energetic wealth creation via industry and services, but aggressive wealth redistribution among the powerful after it has been extracted from the country's declining natural resource endowments”. To this end, businesses deploy every tool available to them, including bribes, campaign contributions, running for office, hiring thugs, and reallocating capital. However, businesses rarely work collectively through associations, because they are in competition with one another for access to rents.

Entrepreneurs

On the other hand, a minority of scholars has challenged the dominant view by observing a growing entrepreneurial spirit among Southeast Asian businesses. Almost thirty years ago, Ruth McVey sought to distinguish “rent-seeking…from capitalism proper” in an essay that ultimately concludes that “Southeast Asian capitalism is losing its improbability” (McVey 1992: 8 and 33).

Haggard (1998) recognizes a "'modernizing wing'" among the "non-crony private sector opposition" in the Philippines and Aspinall (2013: 233-234) describes "a growing layer of middle-sized capitalists who neither need nor benefit from state patronage" in Indonesia, such as the owners of supermarket chains and transport companies.

None of these authors denies the prevalence of rent-seeking among Southeast Asian businesses, but rather, they highlight a wider range of interests among businesses than the literature on oligarchy acknowledges. Moreover, many businesses combine entrepreneurial and rent-seeking strategies (Khan and Jomo 2000). For such businesses, entrepreneurial activities give them a stake in regulatory regularization, even if they also desire private goods and preferential treatment in certain areas. For example, Indonesian contractors building sections of the Trans-Java Expressway benefited from their private connections to public officials, but they also collectively lobbied for favorable legislation (Davidson 2015). In other sectors, commercial enterprises require basic infrastructure to meet their logistical needs, even if they also desire state-enforced monopolies (Tans 2020). Likewise, property developers benefit from predictable building standards, even if they also depend on state-granted land concessions.

In these accounts, the profit motives of businesses are multiple. Some businesses profit from state-provided rents; some businesses profit from efficiency or innovation; and some businesses profit from both. Furthermore, entrepreneurial activities sometimes give businesses an interest in regulatory predictability and certain types of public goods. And when a whole class of businesses shares such interests, businesses can pursue those interests collectively by means of associations.

CHARACTERIZING VARIATION ACROSS ASSOCIATIONS

The view that business associations are little more than vehicles for rent-seeking dates back as far as Adam Smith (Haggard, Maxfield and Schneider 1997). Associations do indeed provide an efficient forum for allocating state patronage and other rents, and a considerable number of Southeast Asian business associations no doubt embrace the role. Such associations should probably not be categorized as members of civil society, as their autonomy from the state is questionable, and their engagement with the commonweal limited.

On the other hand, scholars more recently have described "developmental" business associations, both in and beyond Southeast Asia (Doner and Schneider 2000; Prichard 2015; Schneider and Maxfield 1997). These associations promote efficiency in various ways (for example, by promoting coordination and worker training) to serve the entrepreneurial interests of their members. These types of associations share much more in common with civil society than their rent-seeking counterparts. They are more likely to be autonomous from the state, and by definition they engage the commonweal.

Under what conditions do business associations participate in civil society? Engagement between business associations and civil society is contingent upon the existence of shared interests, which occur under two conditions. First, the structural power of association members must be limited with respect to a particular goal (Frieden 1991). Otherwise, businesses will have no need to act collectively because the fear of capital flight or concentration will prompt public officials to prioritize business interests. Second, associations must comprise a membership whose profit motive incorporates entrepreneurial activities. Otherwise, associations will focus their energies on capturing the state to expand access to state patronage for their members.[1]

In Southeast Asia, some business associations meet these conditions, while others do not. Therefore, I propose a simple, heuristic framework of two variables to indicate those associations that are more or less likely to be "civil" (Table 2).[2] In doing so, I draw on Aspinall's (2013: 234) observations of "middle-sized capitalists" in Indonesia.

The first variable is ownership. Locally owned businesses, in contrast to national and multinational firms, exercise limited structural power. Not only are they smaller, but they also are more likely to be integrated into their community socially and culturally. As a result, locally owned firms pose less of a capital flight risk than firms with larger footprints, and they are more likely to engage in collective action via associations to achieve their political goals. In contrast, national and multinational firms are more likely to command mobile assets and concentrated power over strategic industries, conferring structural power sufficient to achieve their goals.

The second variable is sector. Businesses in the natural resource sector, such as mining and plantations, depend on government concessions for their success. Accordingly, businesses in this sector are, by and large, rent-seeking enterprises. In contrast, businesses in the services sector and commercial enterprises tend to operate in more de-regulated industries, such as supermarkets, transportation, and restaurants, operate at arms-length from the government. The degree of rent-seeking prevalent in a given industry may vary from country to country within Southeast Asia, but

[1] "Encompassingness" across sectors is the characteristic most often associated with developmental associations in the literature on business associations. In contrast, I emphasize the profit motives and structural power of members, because engagement with civil society need not be oriented toward development.

[2] As a typology, my heuristic framework lacks the virtues of mutual exclusivity and comprehensiveness. For example, the secondary sector is absent. Davidson's (2015) fascinating account of the Indonesian Toll-Road Operators Association examines a secondary sector association that combines rent-seeking and entrepreneurial behavior, thus confounding my framework. Accordingly, I present the framework as a device to illustrate the range of associational behavior, not as a complete theory of associational action.

it is probably fair to generalize that natural resources tend to involve considerable rent-seeking while commercial and services enterprises tend to be more entrepreneurial.

Finally, it is possible to generate simple expectations about which associations will engage with civil society by combining these two variables. Locally owned enterprises engaged in commerce or services have entrepreneurial interests combined with limited structural power. As a result, they are most likely to act collectively via associations that find common cause with civil society. Accordingly, I call these "civil" associations. In contrast, national and multinational firms that extract natural resources have rent-seeking interests combined with considerable structural power. As a result, they are unlikely to act collectively via associations, because their needs are more likely to be met by one-on-one interactions with government officials. These are "weak" associations, undercut by their own members.

In between the extremes are locally owned natural resource enterprises and national and multinational commercial and service enterprises. In the case of the former, business profits depend on access to rents, but individual firms lack structural power to dominate government policy. As a result, locally owned natural resource enterprises must act collectively via associations to protect their access to rents and remain profitable. Hence, I call these "rent-seeking" associations. Finally, multinational commercial and service enterprises combine entrepreneurial interests and significant structural power, allowing their associations to work internally to enhance members' competitiveness while relying on structural power to secure favorable policies. I call these "apolitical" associations because of their tendency to remain above the fray with respect to contentious political debates.

Table 2: A heuristic framework for analyzing the behavior of business associations

	Local ownership	*National & multinational ownership*
Commercial enterprises and services sector	**Civil associations** • Entrepreneurial • Limited structural power	**Apolitical associations** • Entrepreneurial • Considerable structural power
Natural resource sector, including mining and plantation agriculture	**Rent-seeking associations** • Rent-seeking • Limited structural power	**Weak associations** • Rent-seeking • Considerable structural power

ILLUSTRATIVE CASES

Recent studies of Southeast Asian business illustrate these differences across associations. First, Warburton (2018) shows that Indonesian mining tycoons obtained favorable legislation by means of their considerable structural power, while industry associations languished. Second, Billig (2003) shows that sugar planters in the Philippines, many of whom were local to Negros Island, worked through confederations to promote protectionist legislation that, had they succeeded, would have benefited the industry but harmed food exporters and consumers. Third, Raquiza (2015), Tagaki (2017), and others show that the business process outsourcing (BPO) services industry in the Philippines, dominated by multinational firms, passively supported education reforms that benefited the industry and arguably improved education. Finally, Wardana (2019), Bräuchler (2018), and others show that associations representing Balinese-owned tourist enterprises in Indonesia collaborated with civil society to oppose the proposed reclamation of Benoa Bay. Together, these cases illustrate each of the four cells in the heuristic framework.

Mining in Indonesia

Associations representing Indonesian mining companies, such as the Indonesian Mining Association,[3] exemplify “weak” business associations. Warburton’s (2018)[4] fascinating study of resource nationalism in Indonesia demonstrates that mining associations exerted little influence over critical policy debates, and were often undercut by their own members, especially “an emergent class of mining magnates” (180). These tycoons, rather than working through associations to achieve shared policy goals, used “personalised and particularistic relations” to shape public policy for private gain. In other words, Indonesia’s mining associations were undercut by members who exercised both structural and informal power for rent-seeking purposes.

Rent-seeking is pervasive in Indonesia’s mining sector, which includes the development of coal, nickel, bauxite, copper, gold, and other mineral resources. Aspinall (2013: 234) specifically mentions “natural resources” as a sector in which “access to government decision makers can be critical.” In the mining sector, such access is critical because firms must secure licenses from the state to explore and extract mineral resources (Warburton 2018: 151-152). As a result, many local politicians and businesspeople leverage their access to government officials to generate rents. For example, Warburton (192-194) describes a scheme in Southeast Sulawesi in which local politicians and businesspeople purchase nickel licenses from district governments, and then “’sell’ or ‘rent’ the license to investors from outside of the province”. Rent-seeking is also common at the commanding heights of the sector. For example, “Indonesia’s most prominent coal magnate,” Aburizal Bakrie, rebuilt his fortune following the Asian Financial Crisis thanks to his “expansive assets and personal networks,” which “helped him engineer favourable loans, lines of credit, and access to licences and contracts at below market price” (163-164).

[3] In Indonesian, Asosiasi Pertambangan Indonesia.
[4] All page references in this section refer to Warburton (2018) unless otherwise noted.

At the same time, the structural power of Indonesia's domestic mining industry grew significantly as a result of the mining boom of 2003-2013. On the cusp of the boom, domestic firms began to take over ownership of coal and nickel operations (162-163), and by 2012, "'95 per cent of thermal coal production and 80 per cent of nickel production, came from domestically owned companies'" (World Bank 2015, cited by Warburton 2018: 167). As a result, coal in particular not only "brought some of the country's wealthiest tycoons back from the brink of financial disaster" (167), but it also endowed them with "unprecedented structural power" (161). The boom made the mining sector "less dependent upon foreign investors, and domestic capital…more liquid and more capable of taking on major mining projects" than ever before (180).

The mining sector's pervasive rent-seeking, and the considerable structural power of a handful of domestic tycoons, combined to handcuff industry associations, which were usually "divided" with respect to critical policy issues (205). For example, the Indonesian Mining Association (IMA) frequently found itself crosswise with its most influential members. Domestic firms such as Bumi Resources (owned by Aburizal Bakrie) and Adaro Indonesia used their informal connections and structural power to advance their private interests, even and especially when those interests conflicted with other mining firms. As one of Warburton's informants put it, "…lobbying by groups like Adaro and Bumi is *very* effective" (167, emphasis in original).

Warburton describes in detail how these dynamics affected policy debates over resource localization and industrialization. In both cases, domestic mining tycoons secured policies from which they stood to gain, even though IMA opposed to the policies. In the case of localization, or the transfer of ownership of mineral resources from foreign to domestic firms, IMA endorsed a regulation that foreign firms "divest at least 20% of their business to domestic ownership by the fifth year of production" (155). However, the IMA-supported regulation was superseded just two years later by a new requirement that foreign firms divest 51% of their business after ten years (156ff).[5] In the case of industrialization, or the goal of expanding domestic processing of mineral resources, IMA advocated the use of "government incentives (such as tax breaks)" to encourage domestic smelting (196). However, the government instead elected to compel investment in domestic smelting by banning the export of nickel and bauxite (186-187).[6]

In both of these cases, IMA opposed regulations that threatened the interests of its members. The divestment requirements threatened the investments of multinational mining firms, while the export ban devastated domestic nickel and bauxite miners. Yet at the expense of other miners, these regulations created profitable "new opportunities" for domestic mining magnates (206). The divestment rules laid the groundwork for a domestic takeover of gold and copper mines, which remained stubbornly in foreign hands, while the export ban conjured an urgent need for domestic conglomerates to step in and establish smelting operations.

Meanwhile, civil society was largely absent from these policy debates. While civil society groups supported resource nationalism broadly, Warburton notes that the specific implementing regulations favored by particular mining firms were "controversial and divisive" (206). It would appear that civil society distinguished the public benefits of resource nationalism from the private gain sought by the individual miners.

In sum, Warburton demonstrates that IMA was a weak association that could neither influence policy nor discipline its members. Instead, mining tycoons used informal connections to government decision-makers, backed by considerable structural power, to generate new sources

[5] The relevant regulations were Government Regulation No. 23/2010 and Government Regulation No. 24/2012.
[6] However, IMA successfully secured a three-year reprieve from the export ban for copper, a sector dominated by two giant multinational corporations. The export restrictions for all minerals were implemented by Ministerial Regulation No. 1/2014, issued by the Ministry for Energy and Mineral Resources (186).

of rents for private gain. As a result, civil society organizations had little reason to collaborate with IMA, and little interest in supporting the rent-seeking of domestic mining firms.

Sugar in the Philippines

During the 1990s, Philippine sugar planters were represented by rival confederations that exemplify “rent-seeking” associations. The late Michael Billig’s (2003)[7] classic study of the decline of the Philippine sugar industry traces a vigorous but ultimately unsuccessful lobbying effort by planter associations to ban the importation of sugar, thereby increasing demand for domestic sugar. Despite their rivalry, the Confederation of Sugarcane Planters (CONFED) and the National Federation of Sugarcane Planters (NSFP) were equally committed to protectionist trade policies that would have enhanced the profitability of sugar, and both confederations struggled mightily to sway public opinion and to build legislative support for the ban on sugar imports. Collective action offered the last, best chance to prop up a “’sunset industry’” lacking in structural power (2), even though a sugar import ban would have undermined the competitiveness of food exports.

According to Billig, Philippine sugar planters are “imbued…with the ethic of rent seeking” (158). Sugar had been “insulated from market forces” for decades, resulting in an industry characterized by “inefficiency, uncompetitiveness, labor problems, and a crumbling infrastructure” (260). Most importantly, Philippine sugar has enjoyed privileged access to the US market since the colonial era. During the 1990s, the Philippines possessed the third-highest import quota of any sugar-producing country (after Dominican Republic and Brazil), which enabled it to export 10-20% of total production to the US at prices approximately double the world market price

[7] All page references in this section refer to Billig (2003) unless otherwise noted.

(92-94).[8] In addition, the industry employs a share-classification system of allocating sugar between planters and millers by means of certificates, or *quedans*, that can be traded or converted between markets (103-123).[9] The share-classification system not only is beset by insider trading and smuggling, but it also increases transaction costs, reduces milling efficiency, and discourages innovation.

Despite their reputation as "sugar barons," planters have limited structural power. Even in sugar's heyday, planter power largely depended on collective organization and an ability to "deliver large blocks of votes" (2), rather than asset mobility or concentration. In the contemporary era, sugar plantations are as immobile as they always have been, but production has become highly decentralized. According to Billig, "the great majority of planters today have fairly small land holdings" (2), and they are dispersed throughout the country, albeit with a significant share of production located on Negros Island. Not coincidentally, the "industry is characterized by extreme disunity" (3). Dozens, if not hundreds, of associations represent planters in collective bargaining with the country's sugar mills.[10] For example, no less than twelve associations bargained with Victorias Milling Company in 1994 (237), to say nothing of associations bargaining at more than twenty other mills. The planter associations, in turn, are organized into rival confederations that bitterly opposed one another in the 1990s.

Lacking structural power and preoccupied with minimizing competition, the planters' confederations acted vigorously to arrest the decline of the sugar industry. However, the confederations' shared desire to protect the profitability of an uncompetitive industry put them at

[8] During the 1990s, the producer price of raw sugar was typically 21-24 cents per pound in the US, compared to 10-14 cents per pound on the world market (94).
[9] For example, the Sugar Regulatory Administration periodically converts reserve sugar to the Philippine domestic market or the US export market.
[10] There were 23 mills in operation when Billig's book was published (61). Currently, there are 27 mills spread across twelve provinces (Sugar Regulatory Administration 2021).

odds with other Filipinos, including food exporters and consumers. As a result, the sugar industry found itself isolated and even scorned for its political efforts.

The sugar industry sought salvation in House Bill No. 9252, introduced before Congress in 1993. The so-called "'import-rationalization' bill" would have banned the importation of sugar "unless there was a demonstrated shortfall in supply" (159). In the event of a shortfall, furthermore, the bill would have restricted import authorization to planters and millers, forcing food processors to purchase even imported sugar from sugar producers. The import ban would not only have increased consumer prices, but it also would have threatened the profitability of food exporters, whose export competitiveness depended on access to cheap, high-quality sugar that was most reliably supplied by the world market. Thus, a legislative and public relations "war" ensued over the bill between the sugar and food processing industries, with the sugar industry ultimately going down in defeat.

CONFED and NSFP aggressively promoted the import ban. Indeed, the bill's chief sponsor was none other than Congressman Romeo Guanzon of Bacolod, leader of NSFP. CONFED, for its part, attempted in vain to lead a boycott against major food processors, such as Coke, Pepsi, and San Miguel, to punish them for seeking to liberalize sugar imports (158). Above all, the industry placed its faith in the "'sugar bloc'" of approximately 40 members of Congress that represented sugar-producing districts (160). Yet while the bill passed the House in 1994 (189), the executive branch signaled that President Ramos would not sign it, and the Senate tabled the bill (198).

Civil society is conspicuously absent from Billig's account of the import ban controversy, aside from a brief reference to "small, uncoordinated, single-issue organizations" that presumably opposed the ban on the grounds that it would harm consumers (169). The silence suggests that the sugar industry had few allies in its effort to monopolize supply, despite its best efforts to "cloak itself in the mantle of nationalism" (188). Indeed, Billig characterizes "most Filipinos" as "skeptical, if not outright hostile" to the sugar industry's strategy of trumpeting "the plight of its workers for political effect" (197).

In sum, Billig shows that the sugar planters' confederations fought tooth and nail to secure protectionist legislation that would have redistributed profits from food exporters and consumers to sugar producers. However, they failed to advance the bill beyond the Senate because they lacked structural power, allies in civil society, and support from the public.

Business process outsourcing services in the Philippines

The IT and Business Process Association of the Philippines (IBPAP), which represents the business process outsourcing (BPO) services industry, exemplifies an "apolitical" association. A compelling collection of papers by Raquiza (2014, 2015, 2017) and Takagi (2017) document the far-reaching influence of the BPO services industry, despite a relative lack of direct political action. The industry's immense structural power induced other groups, particularly Philippine Business for Education, to campaign on its behalf for education reforms that would enhance the competitiveness of BPO services workers. In this case, the entrepreneurial interests of the BPO services industry overlapped with the goals of education reformers in civil society, yet public collaboration involving IBPAP was minimal because the industry's structural power was sufficient to achieve its policy goals.

The BPO services industry in the Philippines is competitive and entrepreneurial by virtue of its integration into global value chains. The industry provides voice-based customer care services via call centers, and to a lesser extent, high-skilled office services such as finance, accounting, software development and transcription. The Filipino labor force's facility with English and "cultural affinity" with Americans and Europeans "appealed to an international clientele", and foreign investments poured into the country in the 2000s (Raquiza 2015: 50).[11] Thanks to these advantages, the number of call center employees in Philippines surpassed the number working in India in 2010 (David 2016). However, the Philippines still trails competitors such as India, China, and Malaysia with respect to high-skilled services (Raquiza 2015).[12] The path forward for the Philippines BPO services industry therefore depends on increasing its competitiveness in high-skilled services in order to move up the services value chain (Raquiza 2017).

The size, potential for further growth, and composition of the BPO services industry in the Philippines endow it with colossal structural power. Between 2001 and 2014, the size of the industry grew by a factor of 50, to US$18 billion in revenue. At the end of that period, the industry employed approximately 1 million workers (Raquiza 2017).[13] Five years later, the industry had grown to US$26.3 billion in export revenue and added 300,000 workers. IBPAP forecasts continued growth as the world recovers from pandemic-related recession, with the possibility of reaching US$29 billion in export revenues and 1.4 million workers by 2022 (Everest Group 2020). Accordingly, three successive presidents have recognized the importance of the industry to sustained economic growth in their Medium-Term Philippine Development Plans (Raquiza 2015, National Economic Development Authority n.d.).

Furthermore, the distinctive composition of the industry compounds its structural power. Specifically, the industry comprises a "partnership" between "two sets of industry players"

[11] Like many of its counterparts, the Philippine state offers incentives to foreign and domestic investors in the BPO services industry, including "fiscal and non-fiscal incentives" from the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Raquiza 2015: 51). However, such incentives differ from private rents because they are available to an entire class of qualifying businesses.

[12] In 2005, for example, software and IT services contributed 70% of industry revenues in India, compared to only 13% in the Philippines.

[13] Put differently, the industry employed approximately 2% of the Philippine labor force and contributed approximately 6% of GDP in 2014 (World Bank 2022).

(Raquiza 2015: 51). On the one hand, BPO operations are dominated by multinational corporations, including third-party service providers such as Accenture and Convergys and in-house service centers for companies such as JP Morgan Chase and HSBC (Raquiza 2017). On the other hand, BPO facilities, including office space and telecommunications infrastructure, are provided by Philippine property developers, including many of the Philippines' richest business conglomerates. As a result, the structural power of the BPO services industry flows both from the mobility of multinational corporations, and from the influence of a "strong domestic commercial class" that is both "highly liquid" and politically well-connected (Raquiza 2015: 52).

The immense structural power of the BPO services industry has afforded IBPAP the luxury of enhancing its members' global competitiveness without directly engaging politically contentious issues. IBPAP is a highly active association that consults with the government, commissions industry reports, and promotes skills formation.[14] Yet in the politically contentious debate over education reform, IBPAP played only a supporting role despite that policy's considerable importance to the industry.

Instead, Philippine Business for Education (PBEd) led the charge for education reform (Takagi 2017). The reform in question was a proposal to expand basic education from ten to twelve years, moving the Philippines to a "K-12" education model. Reformers had been trying to achieve such a reform for nearly a century, and nine similar proposals had gone down in defeat before President Aquino signed the Enhanced Basic Education Act in 2013. The most prominent advocate of the K-12 reform was PBEd, an advocacy organization founded by business leaders associated

[14] For example, IBPAP and the Commission on Higher Education developed the Service Management Program, a "specialized course to be run by partner universities" designed to prepare graduates for entry-level positions in the industry (Raquiza 2015: 55).

with Makati Business Club and dedicated to workforce development and teacher training.[15] The K-12 reform was one of the organization's "first priorities" at the time of its founding in 2006 (Torres 2006).

Meanwhile, IBPAP supported the K-12 reform, but in the language of a passive observer. For example, Alfredo Ayala, president of IBPAP, was quoted in the *Manila Bulletin* as saying, "We fully support this initiative because once this is implemented, we can improve the quality of supply in the BPOs or the call center industry" (Manila Bulletin 2010). His passive language, however, belied the significance of the reform to the industry. In the same article, Ayala explained that the industry was struggling to fill positions because applicants possessed "inadequate communication skills attributed to…lack of educational training" and because fresh graduates "cannot be hired although qualified because of age requirement as provided under the law." Thus, the K-12 reform would help the BPO services industry by increasing both the skills and the age of entry-level applicants.[16]

While IBPAP remained in the background, PBEd convened "Education Nation", a movement that purported "'to bring together the largest ever constituency for Education Reform including teachers, parents, students, civil society organizations, business groups, local governments, donors and other education stakeholders to demand … and help attain quality education for all'" (Hernandez 2016). Rhetoric aside, PBEd collaborated with a broad K-12 reform coalition that encompassed not only business-adjacent organizations, but also civil society associations such as Kaya Natin! and the Eggie Apostol Foundation (Lerias 2012). These efforts

[15] While there was some overlap in the membership of IBPAP and PBEd, it consisted of domestic titans such as Washington Sycip of SGV and Jaime A. Zobel de Ayala II of Ayala Land, not multinational BPO operators (Takagi 2017).
[16] That is not to say that IBPAP was completely passive, however. For example, the association signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of Education to support the reform (Manila Bulletin 2010).

paid off in the form of public support for the bill approaching 60% approval (Calleja 2012). Finally, PBEd worked closely with the Department of Education and the Aquino administration to consummate the reform (Takagi 2017).

In sum, IBPAP was an active but apolitical business association. The association was dedicated to increasing the global competitiveness of its members, but the industry's immense structural power meant that IBPAP could avoid taking combative positions on contentious issues like K-12 reform. Instead, business-adjacent organizations like PBEd looked after the industry's interests, which in the case of K-12 reform intersected with the concerns of numerous civil society organizations.

Tourism in Indonesia

Bali Tourism Board, and its allies such as the Bali chapter of the Indonesian Hotels and Restaurants Association (Perhimpunan Hotel dan Restoran Indonesia, PHRI), exemplify "civil" associations. Work by Wardana (2019), Bräuchler (2018, 2020), and others show that the entrepreneurial interests of Balinese tourism enterprises intersected a broad cross-section of civil society that opposed a proposal to reclaim land in Benoa Bay, located in southern Bali. Acting through associations such as Bali Tourism Board, locally owned businesses aligned themselves with a heterogeneous anti-reclamation movement that opposed the project on cultural, economic, and environmental grounds.

Tourism in Bali is a highly competitive industry, the island's massive popularity among foreign and domestic tourists notwithstanding.[17] Passengers arriving at Ngurah Rai Airport encounter a bewildering array of lodging and dining options, ranging from five-star restaurants and resorts to roadside stalls and modest guesthouses. Hundreds of tour operators compete for

[17] Bali, with an approximate population of 4 million people, received 5 million foreign and almost 9 million domestic tourists in 2016 (Dinas Pariwisata Bali 2019).

passengers by day, while thousands of restaurants and bars compete for patronage by night.[18] The overabundance of capacity has resulted in chronically low hotel occupancy rates and a continuing (and largely fruitless) campaign by local businesses to limit further growth in the tourism sector (Bali Post, March 21, 2013; Dinas Pariwisata Bali 2019; Wardana 2019).

In addition, Balinese tourist enterprises lack structural power. The industry enjoys neither the mobility of the Philippines' multinational BPO operators, nor the clout of Indonesia's giant mining conglomerates. To the contrary, the industry is tethered to the island and highly fragmented. The industry is immobile because it is highly specific to Bali's scenic beauty and romanticized culture, and it is fragmented because of the proliferation of service providers and the divisions among them. Many of the largest enterprises are owned by multinational corporations or Jakarta-based developers, while in contrast many small and medium-sized enterprises are Balinese owned (Wardana 2019).

To compensate for structural weakness, Balinese tourist enterprises act collectively via associations. At the same time, their desire to remain competitive in a cutthroat industry gives them a stake in broad public debates concerning the common good in Bali. As a result, Balinese businesses are unusually well-served by making common cause with civil society. For example, Bali Tourism Board is an active and outspoken association that did not hesitate to align itself with the anti-reclamation movement and against the provincial government.

Bali's major business associations opposed the reclamation of Benoa Bay immediately upon learning of the project (Tans 2021). The project, awarded in 2012 to a subsidiary of the Jakarta-based developer Artha Graha, would have created 10 or more artificial islands intended

[18] In 2015, Bali had 400 travel agencies, 2,600 bars and restaurants, and 4,000 lodging establishments with a total capacity of 80,000 rooms. In 2019, those figures had grown to 450 travel agencies, 3,400 bars and restaurants, and more than 5,000 lodging establishments with a total capacity of almost 90,000 rooms (Dinas Pariwisata Bali 2019).

for high-end development, including resort hotels, luxury housing, commercial space, and parkland. Both Bali Tourism Board and PHRI opposed the project on the grounds that it would have increased competition against their members in the tourism sector, but association leaders also sought to inflect their opposition with concern for the common good. For example, Bali Tourism Board argued that new development should be redirected away from southern Bali to "equalize" development across the island (Bali Post, July 7, 2013). PHRI warned that the "artificial" attractions of reclamation would undermine Bali's unique cultural appeal (Rhismawati 2013). In addition, business leaders sought to link their opposition to the Balinese philosophy of Tri Hita Kirana, which emphasizes the "harmonious integration" of the human, natural, and spiritual worlds (Adityanandana and Gerber 2019: 1844; Bali Post, August 5, 2013). These initial pronouncements were ineffective, however, partly because they were issued without the imprimatur of civil society.

Opposition to reclamation only gained purchase after Balinese businesses aligned their opposition with the broader anti-reclamation movement led by civil society and Balinese customary institutions, especially customary villages. The alignment between business, civil society, and customary institutions occurred after ForBALI,[19] a civil society organization founded to oppose reclamation, published a map of "sacred sites" associated with Benoa Bay (Bräuchler 2018). The map was decisive because it united the diverse set of interests opposed to reclamation around the customary Balinese obligation to protect sacred sites (Wiranata and Siahaan 2019). Balinese businesses immediately embraced the new rationale for the anti-reclamation movement, endorsing the map before even the final version was published (Bali Post, January 19, 2016). In doing so, they implicitly acknowledged civil society's leadership of the anti-reclamation

[19] ForBALI is a portmanteau of Forum Rakyat Bali Tolak Reklamasi Teluk Benoa, or the Balinese People's Forum Against the Reclamation of Benoa Bay.

movement. As a result of its new coherence, the anti-reclamation movement mobilized massive demonstrations throughout 2016 that delayed the reclamation project indefinitely.

In sum, Bali Tourism Board and its allies embraced an alliance with groups in civil society to oppose land reclamation in Benoa Bay. Their participation in civil society was contingent on both their economic interest in limiting competition and their inability to block the project by other means. Even so, business interests in this case intersected a broad cross-section of Balinese society and compelled Bali Tourism Board to engage the commonweal.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have argued that business associations are "contingent" members of civil society. Their participation in civil society depends on the profit-making model and structural power of their members. Businesses that have entrepreneurial interests but lack structural power are those that are most likely to act collectively via associations and find common cause with civil society. In contrast, associations that represent businesses with rent-seeking interests, structural power, or both, are less likely to collaborate with civil society counterparts. These associations rarely share interests with civil society, either because their interest in rent-seeking does not intersect the goals of civil society, or because their structural power enables them to achieve their political goals without resorting to collective action.

In addition, this chapter highlights a range of exciting new research into business politics in Indonesia and the Philippines. This important topic has attracted the attention of scholars based in countries as wide-ranging as Australia, Denmark, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, and the United States, among other places. These scholars have documented the behavior of a diverse array of business associations that vary by sector and ownership. On the strength of their empirical work, they have reached important conclusions delineating the political power of business and exploring the effects of nationalism, economic change, the middle-income trap, democracy, and protest movements on politics in Southeast Asia. Taken collectively, this work demonstrates, among other things, the complex and contingent relationship between business associations and civil society.

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